UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

MALE PRIORITIZATION OVER GIRLS' EDUCATION IN THE GOMOA EAST DISTRICT OF GHANA

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Christopher Adu-Yeboah, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: ....

DATE:...

SUPERVISORS' DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.
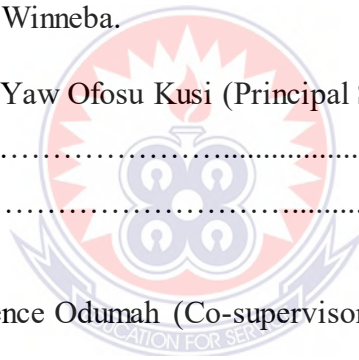
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Date:…………………………………............

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the night to write and read whenever I came home on weekends. As students themselves at the university my children knew the ordeal I went through at this stage of my life. For my wife I can never thank her enough for her love and for taking good care of our children during my absence. At long last I can come home every weekend to play the role of a loving father.

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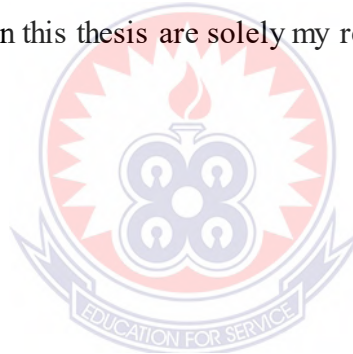
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ATUS	American Time Use Survey
BPFA	The Beijing Platform for Action
CAMF	Campaign for female education
CEDAWE	limination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIACentral	Intelligence Agency
CSA	Centre for the Study of Adolescence
DED	District Education Directorate
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GES	Ghana Education Service
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GCC	Girl Child Coordinator
GD	Ghana District
GEHD	Gomoa East Health Directorate
GLSS	Ghana Living Standard Survey
GOG	Government of Ghana
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
JHS	Junior High School
ICWA	Indo Canadian Women Association
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LGE	Law on Gender Equality

ISODEC	Integrated Social Development Centre
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Development
PTA	Parents Teacher Association
PRR	Private Rate of Return
SCF	Survey of Consumer Finance
SHS	Senior High School
SSA	Sub Saharan Africa
STMIE	Science, Technology, Mathematics, Innovation and Education
SWA	South and West Asia
UNO	United Nations Organisation
UNESCO	United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WAEC	West African Examination Council

ABSTRACT

One of the basic goals of ameliorating gender inequality is education. This is recognised as a pivot for advancing women's well-being. However, the obstacles to achieving gender inequality are overwhelming, given the entrenched patriarchal positions in some cultures. Worldwide, boys are given more resources and opportunities than girls. This bias systematically weaves its way into how parents treat their children based on sex. The social positioning of the male child as linchpin of support for older persons and the perceived future role of girls as mothers, the patri-local marriage system, community pressure and the usefulness of girls at home affect the decision-making process regarding girls' education. The situation continues to remain a staggering problem in Ghana even though official documents and data give the impression that girls' participation in school has improved tremendously in the past decade. In this qualitative study, I sought to understand male prioritization on girls' education in the Gomoa East District of Ghana, a matrilineal society. The study was conducted in four selected communities within the district. Data collection was done through interviews, focus group discussion and direct observation. Parents, girls, community leaders and education officers served as participants for the study. The findings show consistency in parental arguments on values assigned to male education. While some differences existed between the views of urban and rural communities on girls' education, the common understanding was the need for girls to be educated. The implications drawn from this study are that gender awareness campaign and sensitizing parents on the need for education for all should be key in stakeholders' intervention to eliminate male priority. Else gender division as a form of deprivation will continue to operate in relation to the decision-making process by parents regarding girls' education.
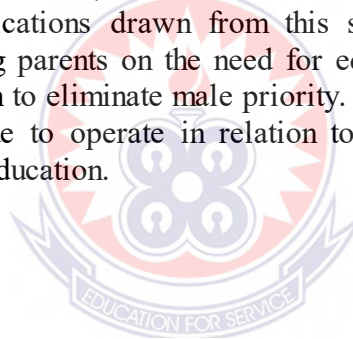
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The education of the female child more than any other single initiative, is a matter of concern for the nations of the world especially those of the developing world. In most countries the participation rate of girls at school has been proven to be lower than boys (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, 2011). Girls generally face discrimination and marginalization on the basis of their gender in relation to formal education (Global Campaign for Education (GCE), 2012). The unequal distribution of gender in education happens in most countries in the world. As a result, under representation of girls in schooling has become a global priority and efforts by several nations had been made to promote the right to "education for all" (Jomtien, 1990) as a development tool with emphasis on reducing the disparities in enrolment in basic education between boys and girls (United Nations Organisation (UNO), 2011). The Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) (1995) identifies education as a right of all citizens. This means all are entitled to education; regardless of one's social status and gender. But the reality is that the gender gap in the educational sector has become the main factor that affects girls globally.

Nkwantabisa (2012) posits that education trains up the girl child's mind, ending up in equipping her with knowledge which can be applied to situations to achieve better results. There is no doubt that schooling is an important tool to empower girls within their societies. It is evident that school experiences as well as engaging in early literacy activities, are widely believed to help prepare young children for the benefits that go with education. Therefore, whether girls or boys have the same access to

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education is of interest, from an educational equity standpoint, so far as universal education is concerned.

In most communities in the world that follow the patrilineal descent system, gender-imbalanced presumptions are significant. They prefer to prioritize male education. This is because girls do not need to get higher education as they would end up in the kitchen. In these societies parents hold distinct ideas on their children's education based on the sex of the child (Mazonde, 2010). Specifically, there is division of labour to the type of education that children can obtain, which is gendered in nature. In most societies tradition endorses the preparation of girls for domestic roles through informal education. Formal education thus is not presumed as necessary for girls to meet adult role (Mazonde, 2010). This is a trans-cultural phenomenon that is embedded in the culture and value systems of several societies though it varies from one society to the other (Nnadi, 2012). This cultural commonality which takes place in families can cause discriminatory practices against children of the less desired sex as these practices can cause unfavourable social consequences due to parental gender preference (Kana, 2013).

Despite the growing body of literature such as UNESCO (2013) and Shauka, Siddiquah, and Pell (2014) detailing discriminatory practices against women in most institutions in the world, cross country evidence shows that modernization does not appear to bring down male priority. For example, in South Asia, according to Filmer and Schady (2008), male priority is greater for women with more education and is increasing over time. This brings to mind issues of girls' education so far as enrolment and attendance in school are concerned. It is therefore important for issues of

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accessibility, enrolment and under representation of girls' education to be addressed sufficiently at all levels of education.

Globally, under representation in education between male and females remain everywhere. The gender gap is greater in Central Asia, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa (Stotsky, Shibuya, Kolovich, & Kebhaj, 2016). In China and South Korea where the issue of female education had been rigorously examined male prioritization has brought adverse social consequences (Chung & Das Gupta, 2007). Again, in some parts of Asia, as in China, continued and fast economic growth is not accompanied by dramatic change in traditional value, many peasant farmers still hold on to male prioritization leading to discrimination in education. For example, utilizing census data and drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in Beijing and its suburbs, Wang (2005) examined children's educational opportunities and observed that continued male value, based on traditional views, leads to a lower educational attainment among daughters. This was particularly so in the rural areas of China. With entrenched male prioritization values that promote patriarchal family systems, parents often do not see the importance of educating girls. This translates into poor educational outcomes for females.

In sub-Saharan Africa male priority is an important issue. In a research review done by Osadan (2014) on the enrollment of girls versus boys in the Sub-Saharan African region, Osadan found that ―male students have higher enrollment and completion rates" (p.218). Osadan also stated that ―for every three students who were denied full and equal primary education, two of them were female. This basically relegates girls to the traditionally-held gender role of staying at home, doing household chores, taking care of children, and performing other unpaid work. Despite the fact that

educating girls yields a higher investment return for a country's economic development" (2014, p.218). According to Elder and Kring (2016), the likelihood of exclusion from education continues to be most problematic among young women in sub-Saharan Africa where still one-half (49.8 per cent) of the female youth population had either no education or limited education.

In Ghana the situation is not different. The World Economic Forum (2013) in its Global Gender Gap Report indicated that high gender gaps remain in education and that Ghana ranks closer to the bottom on educational attainment. It indicated that out of 136 countries surveyed Ghana ranked 111. UNICEF (2015) also reports that in Ghana the gender gap is quite high, especially in the Northern region, where 78.7% of girls complete primary school, against 92.4% of boys. To achieve equity and human rights goals, many countries including Ghana have made girls' access to education a priority on its agenda. This is because ―sustained and meaningful access to education is critical to empowerment of women and reductions in inequality" (Lewin, 2007, p. 2). If current trend in education against girls continue it means that more than half of the population in Ghana are unlikely to benefit from education (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2014). The consequence of this gap is that girls may not participate fully in decisions that shape their lives and their communities.

Addressing the issue of male priority is beyond access and higher enrolment rates of girls. It involves looking at attendance, progression and completion rates of girls. Key obstacles are related to the attention given to certain cultural codes in tradition which seriously undermine attempts of making female education more functional. If girls were to enjoy full citizenship, they should benefit in education throughout their life cycle. Governments must therefore ensure that there is equal access to education. As

an educator I find this to be an important element in national policies especially what might influence parents' decision to prioritize male education at the expense of girls. This is the subject which has captured my attention and which I intend to investigate in the Ghanaian context.

1.2 The role of the Researcher

My identity, Positionality and Philosophical inclination

According to Chereni (2014), the challenge for qualitative researchers is how to leverage processes of identity and positionality in order to garner the collaboration of fieldwork participants. It has been stated that one way to do this is by theorising or situating the subjective viewpoint of the researcher (Harvey, 2013). This process has been termed as achieving ‗theorised subjectivity' which is defined as ―... a reflexive approach that acknowledges the significance of both intellectual and personal auto/biography of researchers and of respondents" (Letherby, et al 2012:90). According to Brennan and Letherby (2017:159), when writing about others but recognising the subjectivity of the biographer, auto/biography is more appropriate. In theorising subjectivity, researchers are encouraged to celebrate their life experiences in acknowledging their impact upon knowledge production (Mills, 2011; Thompson and Gunter, 2011).

Using my own life experiences as an example, has provided the inspiration which has been the driving force behind my research. Within this section I discuss some of the experiences that have helped shaped my opinion on the central issues on which my research is based; namely, male prioritization over girls‗ education in the Gomoa East District of Ghana. I decided I wanted to carry out a research in a subject that was close to my heart that is, female education. Inevitably, I based my research around the subject of parental priority for male education. Specifically, I wanted to investigate

the complexities of the identities of females who through socio-cultural norms may not have the opportunity to go to school. I wish to argue that this provides the ideal terrain upon which to consider my position within the research especially in matrilineal societies in Ghana. I agree that a thorough interrogation of how researchers find themselves personally in the field may affect the research outcomes of any study. This helped me to culturally probe for underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions that parents hold about girls' education and to know what is driving their biases for male education.

Researchers carry personal values, beliefs, experiences, and biases which tend to shape their perception and role in the data collection process. As a male social researcher doing feminist research, my study is based on the premise that feminist research is not only limited to women researchers nor is it only about women as subjects. For example, existing literature demonstrates that a researcher can achieve multiple identities which can be influenced by his/her cultural background as well as his/her social location (Muhammad, et al 2015). This multiple identity has contributed to my understanding of social inequities in education. Taken together, I agree with Adichie (2014) that, we should all be feminists. This shift fits well with key tenets of modern feminists' theory which emphasises on diversity (Collins, 2017). Therefore, I bring my interest and experience with feminist studies to my research. I believe that male priority and lack of education for women can perpetuate gender disparity. When females are educated they are more likely than men to utilise resources to benefit themselves and their societies (United Nations Development Group [UNDG], 2010). This is part of my belief, position and philosophy as a researcher. My role as a feminist researcher is to advocate change with respect to traditional feminist issues. I attribute my keen interest in studying about female educational experience to my

upbringing, my work as a professional teacher and Headmaster of a Senior High School (SHS), my personal observations in Ghana and my experiences in Japan, the United States of America (USA) and United Kingdom (UK).

My own upbringing may provide a contemporary example and effective case study. However, my upbringing and family history may have inspired my interest in gender studies and feminism, but not deliberately. Conservative, fundamentalist cultural views defined my parents' worldview during my childhood, and as such my development could not have been more distanced from feminist ideology. I was raised up in an urban area and attended one of the prestigious boys' Senior High School and later moved on to a mixed school. As the only boy, I was so much privileged. My father always instilled in me the desire to further my education to higher levels. My sisters were encouraged to reach certain levels of education and were not obliged to continue to higher level. I had an unequal access to education in relation to my sisters. My education was prioritized over my sisters. This inequality could be due to their early sex roles and occupational inclination. My parents saw me as the future bread winner of the family especially in terms of old age support which am sure influenced their mind set on my sisters' education. I was thus socialised into a very conservative culture. My parents especially my father, espoused conservative values including traditional roles of men and women. This was modelled for me in my formative years. I thus grew up in a patriarchal home where male education was privileged. Even though none of my sisters is illiterate, I am positive that their lives would have been different if they had had the opportunity to continue their education to higher levels. My sisters continue to inspire me with what they had achieved without any higher education. They had sacrificed their education for me and have been my inspiration and support to achieve what they never had as a result of conservative cultural values.

I believe that there are several women living in Ghana and other developing countries today whose stories are the same. Therefore, for this history and story not to be repeated there is the need to ―provide some of the foundation for equal opportunities for men and women in the educational process" (Madigan, 2009 p. 11).

As I grew into adulthood, I began to question myself about beliefs particularly those related to male and female ‗appropriate'' roles in society. In my own relationships with my sisters, and in my general observations about women, I came to agree with Alilunas (2011) that, there is an incontrovertible and disturbing inequity embedded in efforts to keep men and women in ‗traditional'' roles. These efforts kept men in positions of power over women, justified through arbitrary and contradictory evidence based mostly in traditional beliefs. Biologically, boys and girls are not the same they are undeniably different, but socialisation process magnifies the differences. This is the problem that affects parental attitude and mindset. As Adichie (2014) puts it, ―But what matters even more is our attitude, our mindset. What if, in raising children, we focus on ability instead of gender? What if we focus on interest instead of gender?" (p. 14). These are the fundamental issues that need to be addressed when raising children.

My experiences outside the country (Japan, USA and UK) also shaped my beliefs about female education in Ghana. In these countries where I visited I observed that female students were given the necessary encouragement by their parents to attend school. In Ghana, despite all the necessary measures to encourage female access, a lot of them continue to drop out of school even at the basic level due to parental attitude. As a researcher, my conclusion is that females in Ghana continue to face economic, social and cultural barriers that considerably affect their education.

Again, my own professional experience as a teacher and a headmaster played a significant sense of responsibility in the subject of female education. My career as a teacher in the Junior and Senior High Schools and Colleges of Education has given me the opportunity to respect and appreciate diversity. Throughout my entire teaching career and as an administrator there was always one constraint without exception. I was surrounded by men. As a Headmaster of two Senior High Schools, the applications I routinely receive for assurances there would be single female candidate that would apply in certain fields like Science Education and none for Technical Education. Most of these women were in the Humanities or Home Economics. The ratio of boys to girls I saw in my classrooms as a teacher were an accurate reflection of my experience in the teaching profession. Even though there is free education in Ghana from basic to Senior High School level, girls are still underrepresented and the differences in enrolment is dramatic. This I have come to understand, is a worldwide problem.
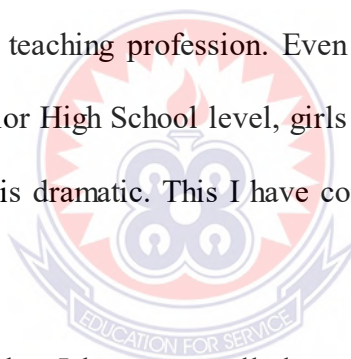
In my life time as a teacher I have counselled many women who are single parents struggling to make a living by enrolling in school to obtain the necessary skill to support themselves and their children. These women, I am told, never needed education as it was the preserve of their brothers. I must say that these experiences have coloured my perception and in no small part have influenced my course of this study. The experiences and observations obviously influenced me but the theoretical approach employed for this study was influenced by my own philosophical inclinations to feminist theory and the research process. In sum, my philosophical position has largely been influenced by certain aspects of the educational setting,

especially, the differential treatment girls receive in education. This has led me to my passion for girls' education.

In qualitative research, in dealing with identity and positionality the concept of insider versus outsider status of researchers has received much attention in recent years (Shariff, 2014). The insider researcher has long been viewed as better positioned to access fieldwork participants and to generate trustworthy data with relative ease (Revees, 2010). In this study my identity was important because of my personal experiences and positionality. My participants and I shared a number of cultural commonalities, including the Akan language as well as some cultural practices and beliefs. My experiences and familiarity to the research setting labeled me as an insider. As an insider, I had better insight within the study area and also gave me a good rapport with the local people. However, as an insider I acknowledge the fact that I brought with me certain biases that have the potential to limit the effectiveness of my research. My opinions accompanied me throughout the research process shaping each methodological and analytical decisions that I made. Whereas occupying an insider position was necessary, I realized that even though I had some experiences related to girls' education one can never truly understand an issue unless he or she has actually experienced it himself or herself. I must admit that my knowledge about the study area was superficial as I had less understanding about the culture of the local people. This made me an outsider to the issue being investigated. The fact that I shared their beliefs and practices did not make me a native of Gomoa. The discussions I had with the participants brought to the fore my own ignorance and limitations of their experiences. Being aware of this, I put aside my assumptions and constantly reminded myself of the need to be open minded in learning by relegating to the background all personal attachments and preconceptions at every stage of the study.

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With this, I constantly reminded myself that I was on a fact finding mission to explore new ideas by undertaking participatory and emancipatory research to understand from the perspectives of parents what their views on male and female education is. This helped me to tread cautiously my claims of knowledge and their interpretation.

Often qualitative inquiry draws on a critical review of hierarchical relations of power between researchers and participants in terms of inviting participants, collecting and interpretation of data (Karnieli-Miller & Pessach, 2009). All these are mediated by the ethical orientation of the researcher and the research practice of the community of professionals and/ or academics to which he or she belongs. In qualitative research, the various identities that the researcher and participants bring to the research encounter can shape the negotiations of power in accordance with the established norms between the researcher and the researched. My social status as a former Headmaster in a SHS in the Gomoa East District where the participants were situated predetermined an unequal relationship with the research participants and culturally positioned me with a command for a kind of authority and respect that had the potential to earn me the privilege of accessing the information I needed from the participants. Being aware of this, I took into account the issue of a dominant-free environment based on a free exchange of viewpoints which did not force them into their private lives. This made the participants comfortable by reducing the hierarchical relationship between the researcher and participant.

In my interaction with participants the issue of positionality was relegated to the background by allowing participants to have a say in the research process by creating friendship with them in order to delineate boundaries and expectations within the research relationship. This took place when initially some participants declined to

participate in the study. Again, I told the participants those who had consented to participate in the study that they possessed the power to decide how much detail they wished to disclose, as well as whether to share their experiences or not and withhold information on some aspects of their lives. In addition, I also told them they had the right to exercise their power to decide whether to validate the data or not. Prior to the interview participants were told they had the rights not to respond to questions, or withdraw if they felt the interview was not what they had expected, or were uncomfortable with it. Some actually did not respond to some questions as they impinged on their beliefs.

In the process of interactions an atmosphere of power equality was established between the researcher and participants. This brought about a feeling of intimacy fueled by anti-authoritative and nonhierarchical atmosphere (Karnieli-Miller & Pessach, 2009). In consonance with feminist themes of recognising and reducing power imbalances, I had intended to share with participants my experiences if they wanted to hear them. The purpose was to reduce the hierarchical relationship between the researcher and participant. During the focus group interview, for example, Efua asked questions about my background; I shared who I was and my experiences. I made an effort not to tell my entire family story. Even though it is culturally inappropriate to quiz an elderly about his personal life, I wanted to respect the participants by providing them with the answers to their questions. As I shared some of my experiences, with participants we connected somehow on a common ground. Through their exercise of power I played by their rule by not delving too much into some aspect of their private lives.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Growing evidence and research support the importance of investing in girls' education (Herz, 2011; Sperling & Winthrop, 2016). From my observation and personal experience, the experiences of girls in Ghana, especially in the rural communities are almost absent in published literature. There is limited research on parental decisions on girls' experiences in the underserved communities in Ghana and as a result, there exists insufficient data to serve as a basis for rectifying gender imbalances in education. The scarcity of published literature does not imply total lack of education of girls in the underserved communities in Ghana. It must be emphasized that some aspects of girls' education have been investigated by scholars in Ghana (Sutherland Addy, 2002; Pryor & Ampiah, 2003; Palmer, 2005; Adetunde and Akensina, 2008). The above statement portrays a picture of worthy attempts to make female education visible, but it falls short to answer the question of why girls are underrepresented in education in underserved communities in matrilineal societies. These studies do not highlight parental lived experiences on male education over female education. What factors contribute to perpetuate this phenomenon, how it is manifested and its impact on girls and how this phenomenon can be eliminated. This study sought to understand factors influencing parental mindset on male education in the Gomoa East District. More research focusing on both micro level and macro level factors are needed to understand the factors influencing parental decision for male education. These multiple factors influencing parental bias for male education is complex, it therefore requires listening to parental experiences to understand the complexities involved.

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According to Todaro and Smith (2011), education is ─fundamental to the broader notion of expanded human capabilities that lie at the heart of the meaning of development" (p. 359). However, there is overwhelming evidence from around the world to show that girls are more disadvantaged than boys in their access to education. Persistent gender inequality influenced by parental biases greatly affect girls' capability. Global statistics, according to UNESCO (2015), indicate that in sub Saharan Africa (SSA) 64% of girls were out of school. Out of this, 31% of girls were not in school in West and Central Africa (UNESCO, 2013).

In Ghana, the gender gap in education has decreased significantly over the past decade, particularly among the younger generation. Enrolment rates of boys and girls in basic schools at the national level are very close, and have increased consistently since the 2000s reaching the Millennium Developments Goals (MDGs) well ahead of the 2015 deadline (UNICEF, 2013; EFA, 2014). In spite of these laudable achievements overall numbers point to a gender imbalance in favour of boys. Ghana has a long way to go as gender gap remains a persistent challenge. In rural and deprived districts, females continue to be under-represented in educational enrolment in basic schools especially at the Junior High Schools (JHS).

In the Gomoa East District of the Central Region of Ghana where the focus of the study is concentrated, the pattern of representation in schools reveals that girls' enrolment at the basic level of education is encouraging. This may be due to the sensitization of parents on girl-child education and the MDGs which place emphasis on gender parity in basic education as a right of children. Even though female enrolment has improved significantly this has not been large enough to equal male achievement rates in access and participation in the educational system in the district (Sutherland-Addy, 2002).

Another pattern that is visible is the transition rate from the primary to the Junior High School. Although the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) at the primary school favoured girls (95.3%) as against boys 91.4% in 2015 a considerable number of girls dropped out at the JHS Level (MOE, 2015). Education Management Information System (EMIS) (2016) data reports that with the highest enrolment at 2,799 in P3 as at P6 girls enrolment had gone down to 2,384. At the JHS level out of 2,468 only 1,934 girls entered JHS 3 in 2016. The low enrolment of girls and dropout rate brings to the fore a number of factors that make female education unattractive within the Gomoa East District.

In view of the above, a lot of efforts have been made by various governments of Ghana since independence to bridge the disparity gap in enrolment and attendance through various policy formulation. These include the free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy which placed emphasis on achieving access, quality and equity in basic education. The creation of Girl Child Education Units within the Ministry of Education and District Girls Education Officers as well as appointing a minister in charge of gender, the institution of the Capitation Grant, a subsidy provided to all pupils against charged fees to encourage parents to send their children especially the girl-child to school. The School Feeding Programme by the government to improve enrolment and attendance in basic school. There is also the introduction of free school uniforms as well as free supply of textbooks. These educational policies were intended to promote affordable and equal education for all school-going children with special reference to young girls living in the rural and deprived areas.

In spite of these efforts, it appears that not much is known about the extent to which such policies have influenced the distribution of education in the country as disparities

still exist in the basic schools in Ghana especially the underserved districts. In-depth studies concerning parental attitudes on the educational experiences of girls are needed to address the challenges they face for generations. Understanding parental responses to critical questions could help generate a framework to bring uniformity and guidelines that offer solutions to the above challenges and also help address sufficiently issues of accessibility. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate parental male priority over girls' education in the Gomoa East District of Ghana.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study was to investigate male prioritization over girls' education among the people in the Gomoa East District of Ghana.

1.5 Research Purpose

Specifically the purpose were to:

1. determine why males are prioritized.

2. investigate how male prioritization is manifested.

3. examine the impact of male prioritization on girls' education.

4. ascertain how male prioritization can be eliminated.

1.6   Research Questions

From the objectives of the study the following research questions were posed to guide the study.

1. Why do the people of Gomoa East District prioritize males over girls?

2. How is male prioritization manifested in the Gomoa East District?

3. How does male prioritization impact on girls' education in the Gomoa East District?

4. How can male prioritization be eliminated in the Gomoa East District?

1.7 Significance of the Study

In Ghana, feminist issues are recent development. Not much has been delved into issues affecting girls' education especially in the area of policy frame work. The study hopes to create general awareness about the potential effects of social norms that impact on girls' education. This will enable policy makers, planners and decision makers to design gender sensitive programmes in schools which will serve as feminist literature in Ghana.

The findings would serve as a source of information to the District Assembly, District Education Directorate, NGOs and the state in a bid to eliminate male prioritization in the District. The recommendation, would help in the improvement of policy planning and implementation of girls' education in the district.

It is also hoped that the study will provide the basis for a research model for further inquiry into girls' education. This will help Ghana Education Service (GES) to come up with different perspectives on trying to make education an equal right for girls and boys. The information obtained from this study will create insights on importance of girls' education. This will drive parents to create equal access to education to both girls and boys. The study, thus, would help parents to change their attitudes toward girls' education.

The study is expected to serve as a reference source to the GES and the District Education Office by adding up to the already existing knowledge on factors causing gender inequality, impact of gender inequality and appropriate ways of addressing gender inequality in education. For this reason, it is expected that the existing policies on gender may be reviewed for realization of equal access towards achieving gender parity in enrolment and attendance in education in the country.

1.8 Operational Definitions of Terms

The study is based on six main concepts. These are impact, male prioritization, tradition, social norms, basic education and girls' education. In order to gain a deeper understanding of and develop a strong appreciation for the concepts and terms mentioned, it is necessary to explain them.

Impact

There are many conceptions of impact and may be used for many purposes. From the broadest definition adopted by the Organisation for Economic Development (OECD, 2002), impact may refer to positive and negative long-term effects on identifiable population groups, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. These effects can be socio-cultural, institutional, economic, environmental (or) technological. It may be used to describe an action taken by a particular group that may have positive long-term effects on a society. Although, hypothetical it will help to establish the extent to which actions of people can exert influence especially on the role of females in modern day society.

Male Prioritization

Priority means status established in order of importance or urgency which explains the degree of privileges accorded to males in some cultures. In this study, the term male prioritization is used contextually to describe the desire of biological parents and the society for a male child and the premium accorded to males. The attitude is founded on the belief that girls are inadequate and of lesser value than boys. This can be a form of gender discrimination. In some extreme cases, for instance, it leads to the neglect of girls in terms of withholding access to health, education, economic opportunity and in some cases other basic necessities. It can give way to an array of practices harmful to girls and women. To achieve their desired goals, parents use a

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range of detestable methods such as infanticides in extreme cases and sex-selective abortions to achieve that result. In patrilineal societies, the necessity for a male birth is important. The system specifies in detail the roles and status of each member of a household and lineage. This leads to the unchallenged authority of the male who is seen as the head of the family. Some societies tend to favour males for immediate utilitarian reasons and eventually as a way of social security system especially support in old age, a role purportedly played by men. It has its historical and cultural rationale. The existence of patriarchal models among the Gomoa people explains this age old tradition.

Tradition

Tradition is transmitted through time from one generation to the next generally by informal means. It entails a complex set of ideals which influence the present patterns of behaviour in a group. Tradition serves the purpose of identifying a particular group, symbolising the identity of that group of people. It consists of behaviours, as well as the values, worldview and beliefs that underlie peoples' behaviour. It is a way of life, or mode of expression, which guides particular acts and beliefs. According to McCormick and White (2011), tradition is understood as a set of preexisting values and materials particular to a group. In the performance of a tradition, these preexisting values are of greater importance than the performers' individual tastes and judgment. The relative success or failure of the performance is based on the ideals of that particular tradition. Within the Gomoa East, traditions consist of the practices of everyday life and are purposely maintained by the people in the present due to its near sacred role. For the people of Gomoa East, tradition establishes a connection between them and their ancestors. There is an understanding that tradition is important as it links the past to the present and serves as a guide for the future. While traditions are

the beliefs of the members of a given society, there could be an element of continuity of an inherited culture characteristics that continue despite modernity. It is this core of inherited system of male priority that influences the people of the Gomoa East. According to McCormick and White (2011), the continuity over time venerates a particular tradition as something of central importance to the group. It is therefore important to consider the operation of the system of male priority over girls' education within the district which has continued over time despite the changing role of girls' education.

Social Norms

Social norms are the patterns of behaviour that govern a particular group or society. This is seen as normal which everyone accepts. Its main aim is to constrain behaviour or to bring about social order. According to Bicchieri and Muldoon (2014), norms play a crucial role in an individual's choice by shaping individual needs and preferences and serve as criteria for selecting among alternatives. Norms influence behaviour because, through a process of socialisation that starts in infancy, they become part of one's motives for action through long-term interactions with others (usually parents). In order to avoid sanctions people internalise the values embodied in those norms. It is perceived that through norms, thinking is dominated by rational choice through a process of conscious decision-making based on assessing costs and benefits and then choosing the option with the highest expected net benefit to the individual. Norms often serve a useful purpose and create the foundation for correct behaviours. According to Marcus and Harper (2015), gender norms may relate to gender differences to help girls develop specific skills which would be useful to them as future mothers and care givers. However, in some context social norms can become problematic when they encourage a behaviour that is damaging to certain groups

especially the role of childhood gender socialisation, which is a key factor in underpinning gender discriminatory social norms. In most cases, gender norms often reflect and contribute to inequalities in the distribution of resources that often disadvantage women and girls. Many gender norms in practice limit girls' development opportunities and undermine their wellbeing. Discriminatory gender norms are not only upheld through the rules of behaviour in everyday life but by wider social life such as education systems where boys are given preferential treatment due to their sex.

Basic Education

Basic education is referred to as the whole range of educational activities that take place in different settings and that aim to meet basic learning needs as defined in the World Declaration on Education for All. It comprises formal schooling as well as a wide variety of non-formal and informal public and private educational activities offered to meet the defined basic learning needs of groups of people of all ages. The notion of _basic education' has been defined in a much broader sense referring to the acquisition of knowledge and know-how in complementary fields such as food, nutrition, hygiene, health and family planning.

In Ghana basic education is made up of pre-school (kindergarten), primary and Junior High School (JHS). It consists of 2 years pre-school, 6 years primary and 3 years JHS. Currently, the total number of years in basic education is 11. Ghanaian children start school at the age of 4 completing JHS by the age of 15. At the end of the basic school course (JHS) students take the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) which is administered and evaluated by West Africa Examination Council (WAEC). Students who obtain aggregate 6 and 36 in their best subjects normally qualify for admission into Senior High School (SHS) but those with better aggregate

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stand better chances of transition to SHS. One of the main problems emerging in education at this level is related to the restricted access created by the huge number of graduates from JHS seeking admission into SHS in rural communities. Another issue of much concern is high dropout rate among girls at the JHS level to which Gomoa East is no exception. It is therefore important to pay attention to the difficulties girls go through in accessing education in the Gomoa East District. In this context I hope to reflect on parental attitudes and the different conditions that need to be fulfilled for girls to access education beyond basic education.

Girls' Education

Girls' education refers to every form of education that aims at improving the knowledge and skill of women and girls in areas of gender equality and access to education. Gender equality refers to the equal valuing of the roles of women and men. It works to overcome the barriers of stereotypes and prejudices so that both sexes are able to equally contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political developments within their society. According to Tsikata (2000), girls' education may be explained as a fundamental right and an empowerment right for girls' full access to quality education. The aspect of quality described by Tsikata includes both literary and non-literary education which may also include all forms of education whether general, vocational, technical or professional. This brings to the fore the importance of female education as a major source of human capital and wealth. In Ghana widening access to education has been a major policy goal. This reflects the idea that education is essential to economic and social development. Yet, economically, socially and politically, girls are marginalized as they lag behind males in education. This in effect has a negative impact on girls' achievement levels in all spheres of life.

The concern for girls' education at all levels of education has become a national issue. I hope to examine the extent of perception and attitudes of parents towards girls' education in the Gomoa East District as a result of certain socio-cultural practices that favour male education.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

There are five chapters in this thesis. Chapter One is an introduction to the study. It consists of a background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study. Other important areas include definitions of terms and organization of the study.

Chapter Two focuses on the review of relevant literature. The review of literature consists of introduction, why males are prioritized and how male prioritization is manifested. It goes on to examine the impact of male prioritization on girls' education and how male prioritization can be minimized or eliminated. Gaps are identified because much of the literature reviewed rarely explains male priority that occurs in education and which of the variables are likely to affect disparity in favour of males or females in Ghana especially in the Gomoa East District. Then follows the theoretical framework for the study and summary of the chapter.

Chapter Three discusses the methodology of the study. It begins with introduction, the research paradigm and research method. It follows with the philosophical considerations, focusing on qualitative research, research design, sampling procedure and selection of participants. The chapter continues with data collection procedure, data recording and analysis and finally data verification. Chapter Four deals with presentation of findings and discussions while Chapter Five deals with summary of findings and limitations of the study, it continues with contributions to the field,

conclusions, implications for policy and recommendations. The following chapter presents the literature review relevant to male prioritization and girls' education.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of issues on why the education system seems to favour males. As a result females are less likely to have access to school and remain in school as compared to males. The literature review, which is presented in sub-headings is important in explaining the situation of the education of males and females internationally, nationally and locally. In order to fully understand the contextualization of the education of males and females internationally and specifically of the Gomoa East District in Ghana, this section first tries to bring to the limelight the development of education in Ghana, how girls' education has evolved from the colonial era till today, post colonialism and girls' education in Ghana. Secondly, it continues to explain the role of women in the Gomoa East district. These empirical issues are necessary to help frame up the study. To fully understand the issues of the study the following sub-topics were further explored, namely, why parents prioritize males, how male prioritization is manifested, and the impact of male prioritization on girls' education and how male prioritization can be eliminated. All the above issues are important in assessing directly or indirectly the overall impact of male prioritization on girls' education peculiar to Ghana and generally in developing countries. The chapter concludes with a theoretical framework of the study. Based on the above general highlights, this section attempts to review global, regional and local perspectives on male priority in the educational set up.

2.2 Colonialism and Educational Development in Ghana

Educational development in Ghana has been the result of foundation work by the missionaries and the British colonial government. As was the case in many colonies during the colonial period, the main aim of education was to impart literacy skills that were geared towards teaching Christian values. In order to do so, the Christian missionaries realized that they needed well educated local assistants and that could be done through education. Thus a Western form of education was introduced into Ghana in the sixteenth century to serve the primary needs of spreading Christianity (Adu-Agyem & Osei Poku, 2012). Education was thus meant to sustain Christianity. Missionaries' zeal for spreading the Christian faith accounts for the spread of education in Africa but does not have much explanatory clout with respect to British colonial education in Ghana.

According to Oba, Onyije and Eboh (2011), European nations used education as a weapon, for the realization and purposes of colonialism. The type of education offered was for the interest of the colonial administration and not necessarily to empower the colonies. According to Djamila and Djafri (2011), the whole process of Britain's colonial education in the Gold Coast was to provide an impulse to its economy at home. It is essential to note that it was through commerce that the Europeans intended to civilize the natives of Africa and had very little interest in educating them. There is also a view that education was used to legitimize the domination of the British colonial needs (Oba et al. 2011). It is therefore significant to note that the desire to institute education was not for altruistic reasons but for economic considerations.

In Ghana the expansion of education became more evident in the nineteenth century. Education was provided in the castles and forts under chaplains attached to the castles with financial assistance from the European merchants companies (McWilliam &

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Kwamena Po, 1975). During the whole period of the nineteenth century, Christian missionaries were recognized as instructors to the natives. According to Foster (1965), demand by the local people for education was limited. Most of the children in the castle schools were recruited from the castle mullatoes, that is, the wealthier African merchants' children and later the children of African chiefs. Some of the boys who were products of the castle schools were sent abroad to be trained to serve as catechists and ministers for further evangelisation. The Basel Missionary Society of Switzerland played an important role in establishing an education network in Ghana (Sill, 2010).

By 1874 the British colonisation of Ghana, and for that matter, Africa had been completed but the colonial administration did not take up the responsibility of providing education for all. The lack of public involvement in education was consistent with education in England which had no public body in charge of education. According to Foster (1965), in England it was not until 1833 that an education committee was empowered to administer grant in aid to voluntary schools. This was to revolutionise the educational system in the country. But starting from the 1880s, the British became aware that native education had to be undertaken under the control and supervision of the colonial administration. This change in Britain's position towards colonial education came after the British government had officially started its involvement in the field of education at home resulting in the issue of the Education Act of 1870. This was mostly due to the reports, which were written by Matiew Arnold who worked as Inspector of elementary schools from 1851 to 1856, criticising the state's indifferent position towards the field. The Education Act of 1870 set a system of co-operation between voluntary and government schools. It aimed to build schools in the areas lacking educational facilities, and to provide assistance to

poor children (Djamira & Djafri, 2011). By 1881, 139 schools had been established which included mission schools as private and local authority as public schools run by the British colonial government. Of these, one was in Cape Coast and two were in Accra under direct government management. The Basel Mission had 47 schools, the Wesleyans 84, the Bremen Mission 4 and the Roman Catholic Church, one (Graham, 2013).

In the Gold Coast, widening education became necessary as a result of expansion of political and economic activities which saw more expatriates employed in the various sectors of the economy in the colony. The problem was that it was highly expensive to pay the European staff as climatic conditions and diseases made it impossible to recruit Europeans. More schools were therefore needed to train Africans as source of cheap labour to take over as clerks, accountants and artisans especially in the absence of Europeans who might be on leave (Djamira & Djafri, 2011). It was on these grounds that the Government began its involvement in native education and issued the first Education Ordinance of 1882 under the chairmanship of Governor Rowe to guide the development of education in the Gold Coast Colony (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975). This was patterned on the English Education Act of 1870. The ordinance provided for the establishment of local boards of education, office of an inspector of education and provided an annual grant for building and equipment and a pass in the inspector's examination in reading, arithmetic, writing and English Language. With a new ordinance passed in 1887, the boards of education were enlarged and empowered to make their own rules to administer grants-in-aid and expand the hitherto curriculum to include the teaching of drawing, singing, elementary science, book keeping and industrial instruction in higher grades (Bartels, 1965). In addition to the nature of funding, the structure of organisation and curriculum were modeled on England's

educational system. In 1902 the administration of grants on the basis of "payment by result" was introduced. The government gave grants to schools in the value of two shillings per head per annum for each pass in arithmetic, reading, writing and additional amount from six pence to one shilling for other subjects in an annual examination conducted by the Inspector of schools. In 1909 Governor Roger appointed a committee to look into education provision in the colony. Education rules were implemented with the intent to improve teaching methods, introduce agricultural and vocational courses into primary school curriculum and establish a combined elementary technical and teacher education in Accra (Abosi & Brookman Amissah, 1992). By 1901 there were all together 204 government and government assisted schools with a total enrollment of 25,496 in the entire country. It was not until the arrival of Governor Guggisburg in 1919 that an initiative was pursued to reform the existing educational system.

On the basis of the suggestions made by an educational committee, Guggisberg drew up his sixteen principles of education to solve the country's problems. These included the reduction of the size of classes, increase in the number of places for girls, building of new training colleges, instruction in local history, teaching of local languages, character building activities and organised games. Another important feature was the removal of untrained teachers and the closure of improperly organized schools. An education ordinance fixed standards which non-government schools must satisfy to qualify for grants. Grants were now to be given to technical secondary schools and training colleges. All these steps were expected to improve the standard of teaching in the schools and to produce more and better teachers. In 1927 Guggisburg built Achimota School, as a model to put his ideas into practice. Guggisburg also built four trade schools to serve the colony, Asante and the Northern Territories. In these

schools, regular education was combined with instruction in the latest methods of cultivation of agricultural products. He also built technical schools where surveying and engineering were taught. Finally, he moved the Accra Training College to Achimota and gave it better facilities.

Although the formal education system established by the British colonial government provided a solid foundation for education in Ghana, it was geared towards producing a small educated elite to run the colonial economy, while the rest of the population had little access to education. Limited educational access resulted in creating an educated elite with social, economic and political power over the masses. Due to notions of male dominance and sexist hiring practices, limited efforts were made to encourage the education of females in colonial schools (Fletcher, 2013).

2.3 Colonialism and Education Investment in Girls

The British government was in cooperation with missionaries concerning education throughout most of the 19th century. It is significant to note that missionaries played a significant role in the spread of education before and during the colonial period in Africa (Frankema, 2011; Nunn, 2012). Colonial rulers realized the importance of education as a means for the development of a western kind of society (Dimico, 2014). Recent research however, has shown that colonial-era investments had a persistent effect on educational outcomes (Nunn, 2014; Okoye & Pongou, 2014; Bai & Kung, 2015). One thing that was significant with colonialism was the negative effect on girls' education. This is likely to be entirely related to the educational effect of early Christian missions and the colonialists. According to Heldring and Robinson (2012), colonial educational legacies of stereotypes and miss-conceptions about Africans account for the immense problems in most African countries about girls'

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education. Throughout the colonial period, the educational system promoted male advancement while discriminating against women (Ejikeme, 2010). With the advent of Europeans and the British, in particular, the idea was that the influence of Western education could have created a lot of positive impact on the education of women. However, during the colonial period discrimination against women became deep-seated in the social system as there was no revocable changes to customary laws that affected girls' education. According to Okoye and Pongou (2014), the predominant effect of missionary activity on female education led to labour market discrimination against females.

In Ghana by 1835, greater interest in female education seemed to have been kindled among both Europeans and Africans. By the 1850s a foundation for girls' education had been laid. The 1880s registered some remarkable growth in girls' enrolment in the Gold Coast, both in government and mission schools. This was mostly due to the reports, which were written by Matiew Arnold who worked as Inspector of elementary schools from 1851 to 1856, criticising the State's indifferent position towards education. Under the governorship of Major Stephen John Hill who was the Commander-in-Chief and was popularly called Commander Hill, the 1852 Educational Ordinance was promulgated. Its preamble was stated, among others, that: ―... it is essentially necessary that some effort should be made to educate the rising generation of females within Her Majesty‘s forts and settlements on the Gold Coast" (Educational Ordinance, 1852, p. 37). The 1852 Education Ordinance also provided for the setting up of teacher training colleges to train both males and females to become professional teachers (Graham, 1971, p. 35). Similarly, the 1887 Education Ordinance under the administration of Colonel Frederick Benjamin Price White sought to promote girl-child education. Article VII, (5) provided: ―That the

subjects taught include reading, writing of English language, arithmetic, and, in the case of females, plain needlework ..." (Educational Ordinance, 1887, p. 2). These were indications that the 1852 and the 1887 Education Ordinances sought to promote girl-child education in the then Gold Coast. Colonial governments continued to promote girl-child education after the period of the ordinances. In the 1900's, the colonial government decided that education in all African territories was meant to serve the following purposes:

> i. *To spread education as widely as possible among the people in order to give them both the desire and the capacity for social, economic and political progress.*

> ii. *To train as many African men and women as possible for higher posts in production, industry, commerce, the professions and the government services, and as leaders in politics, local government, trade unions and the co-operative movement.*

This was contained in a communiqué that was issued by the colonial government to the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs at their meeting at Dodowa in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana in November, 1948 (Asare-Danso, 2017). Under the governorship of Sir Gordon Guggisberg, he formulated sixteen principles of education. Three of these principles sought to promote girl-child education as follows:

> *2nd Principle: The provision of secondary schools with an educational standard that will fit young men and women to enter university.*

> *4th Principle: Equal opportunities to those given to boys should be provided for the education of girls.*

> *5th Principle: Co-education is desirable during certain stages of education (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975, p. 57).*

Even though by the 1850s female education had become important, the Education Act of 1870 which sought to provide assistance to poor children with its grant-in-aid enabled the greatest number of children in the country to be acquainted with elementary education. As a result, it led to an increase in enrolment for both boys and girls in the 1880s in the government and missionary schools as greater interest was shown in girls' education.

By 1890 the German mission apparently showed greater interest in female education. Despite the noticeable growth in female education, inequalities clearly existed in the sex ratios of enrolment and average attendances to the disadvantage of girls. Even though girls were not denied education greater attention was paid to boys' education. According to Adu Boahen (2012), this inequality was attributable not only to African parents disinclination towards educating their daughters, but also to European officials preference for boys schooling through their constant encouragement of Ghanaian parents to enroll their sons. Adu Boahen (2012) further states that the strong stakeholders' proclivity for boys' schooling, implied that Ghanaian women were destined for marginalization in the occupational structure. Whatever, the motive, colonialism tended to circumscribe girls' education. Unlike the mulatto children, African pupils enrolled in the early schools were all boys. The negative impact of colonialism on girls was so powerful and pervasive that parents thought there was no need for girls' education. This seems to reflect the ideology that only males were suited for extra-domestic activities while females were moulded for domestic activities.

Highlighting students' enrolment in schools in 1890 in the Gold Coast, Foster (1965) concludes that out of the 5,076 that enrolled there were 1,030 girls. This seems to suggest that female education was not considered by stakeholders of education

equally during the colonial period. Another thought is whether male value system influenced female enrolment and retention in schooling at that time. Sefa Dei and Opini (2007) are of the opinion that the inferior status of girls, although endemic within African communities was buttressed by the colonialist whose Victorian values about girls' education further reinforced the subordination of women. According to Lewin and Akyeampong (2009), the influence could be attributed to the cultural system which reflected inequalities. This ideological factor may be attributed generally to the way the traditional system reflected attitudes to education which in turn reinforced inequalities through practice. The near exclusion of girls from formal education during the colonial period still reflects female participation and enrollment in schools in Ghana. We might imagine therefore that the level of governmental and colonial policies during the colonial period is related to the magnitude of the gap, though it is not clear ex ante in which direction the relationship would have gone till now.

In colonial Africa, girls' education had been considered as a site of struggle where ideals of femininity and domesticity were translated into curricula and practices that sought to shape and regulate their lives. It means that where girls were educated the pattern of the colonial curriculum introduced by the British, however, had a strong bearing on female education. Education acquired by the girls initially was to meet the expectation of domestic needs. As a result, the colonizers developed education systems and used those systems to define the societal role of women. It is significant from the foregoing that earlier education in Ghana was available mainly for boys. Against this backdrop, girls were from the onset disadvantaged in acquiring formal education.

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In "Women's and Gender Studies in English Speaking Sub Saharan Africa" Ampofo, Beoku-Betts, and Njambi (2004) argue that colonial women's education was designed to prepare women as housewives and subsistence farmers. In contrast, education in pre-colonial African societies served a conceptual and practical purpose designed to fit the needs of the social and physical environment. This observation is critical. Instead of preparing education to shape the lives of women to be citizens of their own communities, colonial education prepared women to be subordinate citizens of the European colonial system. In this instance, European colonizers subjugated women to suit their own whims and caprices according to the colonizers' needs. Throughout the colonial era, African women were educated to fill a role that was viewed as inferior to that of men. With their patriarchal assumptions European missionaries brought with them traditional notions of women's appropriate place within society. These roles were becoming Christian mothers and good wives. In this context, colonial policies sought to spread European notions of domesticity to African women which became one of their prime objectives for female education. According to Walter (1972, p. 248), under colonialism social, religious, constitutional, political privileges and rights of African women disappeared, while economic exploitation continued and was often intensified. The fate of many African girls educated in the British colonial system is illustrated by this 1959 report from a British colonial governor:

> *The girls come in straight from the hill pagan villages, without having previously attended any kind of school, to learn simple cookery, baby craft, health and hygiene and local crafts. At the end of their two years they can qualify for a Housecraft Certificate or, if they can read a little a Certificate of Merit. The girls usually marry at once on returning to their villages and they make excellent housewives (Adams, Great Britain, 1959, p. 166).*

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The issue here reflected the biases of the overwhelmingly male colonial administrators who viewed African women with low intelligence who had no use of education. By excluding girls from being able to receive training to become interpreters, clerks, and other skilled professionals, the British promulgated the creation of a two-tiered African society in which women became second class citizens in their own societies. The assumption here is that the British who with their patriarchal ideology under Christianity thought that too much education of the African woman would make her unwelcome in the traditional society and may assert herself and look with contempt at their husbands and traditional rulers who were not educated. To the Europeans:

> *Literate Africans were useful in many ways, although too much literacy was considered dangerous and undesirable. A certain amount of technical training was essential to provide cheap semi-skilled labour, but it could not be allowed to continue beyond a given standard or the African would soon be competing with whites* (Barnet & Mueller, 1974).

This was precisely what happened in Ghana under colonialism. There was poor quality of education as the content of the curriculum would only reflect elementary knowledge of what the people needed to know to equip him/her to read and calculate to reach certain levels of education.

2.4 Post Colonialism and Girls' Education

Considering the trends in education reforms, it is important to know that the realisation of major education policy initiatives were carried out after independence in 1957 to promote equal education for all. At the secondary level, following the establishment of the Ghana National College, Dr. Nkrumah began expanding the frontiers of education with the establishment of the Ghana Education Trust schools

which were co-educational. Besides, an all-female secondary education was provided at the Mfantseman Secondary School at Saltpond in the Central Region of Ghana. On the basis of equal education, various education acts were passed to reduce discrimination against girls' education. These included the Education Act of 1961, the Djobo report of 1974 and the 1987 and the FCUBE (1996). The central idea behind the 1974 reforms was to enable school leavers to develop skills which will enable them secure job opportunities or be employable irrespective of the time of exit from the system. The enactment of this reform began on an experimental basis where new subjects such as Tailoring, Woodwork, Catering, Dressmaking, Technical Drawing, Masonry and Automobile Practice were introduced. The 1987 reforms sought to expand and improve the level of quality education in the sector, make basic education free and compulsory. The Free Universal Basic Education Programme (FCUBE) (1996) made every child of school going age to attend school. The outcome was the steady rise of both sexes attending school. According to Global Education Digest (2011), by 2009 at the primary level, enrolment for boys increased to 53% and 42% for girls. To address the growing gap between boys and girls in 1997, Girls' Education Unit (GEU) was created under the Ministry of Education to give girls access to education. Since its establishment in 1997, GEU has made it possible to have a Girls Education Officer in every district and region of the country. The use of Free Education as their manifesto message in 2016 elections by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and its implementation have resulted in higher enrolment rate for girls.

2.5 The Role of Women in Traditional Gomoa Society

Like any other traditional society, the Gomoa society is basically a patriarchal one characterized by the dominance of men in virtually all spheres of life. The role of the woman is to become an ─obedient" and ─good" wife so to speak. Female autonomy is virtually non-existent (Edewor, 2001) especially in rural areas. Society's main aim is to socialize girls towards a feminine ideal. Naturally, the Gomoa society is basically rural and agriculture is the main occupation of the people. Crops mainly grown are cassava, maize, plantain (as food crops) and pineapple (as cash crop). Fishing is also a major occupation among those in the coastal communities like Fetteh, Nyanyano and Dampase. However, the seasonal nature of fishing has contributed immensely to the poverty situation in the district. Typically among traditional Gomoa society division of labour is mainly on the basis of gender. While land preparation that is slash and burn, is mainly the work of men (assisted by their sons), women and daughters do the planting, weeding, harvesting, processing and marketing of farm produce. Most women in commerce are involved in petty trading and hawking. These activities are strongly concentrated in highly perishable, low profit goods including agricultural produce like pineapples and traditionally processed goods like *gari*. In most Gomoa society girls are often seen at home doing baby-sitting, assisting their mothers in the farm or doing petty trading with their mothers. Sons are often found in schools more than daughters. It is therefore of prime importance to get a better understanding of the factors that drive the decision of parents to prioritize male education in developing countries like Ghana.

2.6. Why do Parents Prioritize Males?

2.6. 1 Gender socialisation and girls' education

In patriarchal societies, different attitudes and behaviours are expected from boys and girls. Boys are raised to conform to male gender roles and girls are raised to conform to female gender roles in order to acquire the characteristics of the social group they belong to. The process through which people learn and acquire the characteristics of a particular social group to which they belong is termed socialization. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2007) specifically defines gender socialisation as the process by which people learn to behave in a certain way, as dictated by societal beliefs, values, attitudes and examples. UNICEF (2007) continues that gender socialisation begins as early as when a woman becomes pregnant and people start making judgments about the value of males over females. These stereotypes are perpetuated by family members, teachers and others by having different expectations for males and females. The socialisation of individuals enables the preservation and sustainability of the characteristics, values and social norms. In all cultural communities, predominant norms, values, and beliefs are instantiated in childrearing practice and form the basis for socialising subsequent generations (Usta, Farver & Hamieh, 2015). Thus gender socialisation process occurs first in the family. A study conducted by Usta et al. (2015) on the effects of socialisation on gender discrimination and violence in Lebanon indicated that:

> *Good deal of role-gendering occurred during childhood. In particular,*
> *male adolescents were expected by their parents to be strong as adults,*
> *to be like their fathers, and to control and protect women; parents*
> *reinforce this by being proud of boys if they are tough, strong, brave,*
> *and more of a 'man', and by being proud of girls if they are helpful in*
> *performing household chores, obedient, and beautiful. Boys were given*

priority and entitlement over their female siblings by being their providers and being made responsible for their security and honour.

From the study, it can be concluded that traditionally values and expectations are ascribed to the male child from birth so as to have more access to available resources and welfare services at the expense of the female child. From the onset the boy is perceived to be the provider for the family, a decision maker, an authoritarian, a protector who is powerful and strong (Usta et al., 2015). This is a situation where inequality had already been determined biologically as a result of behavioural component of societal attitude towards males and females which involves the differential treatment of people based on their biological sex (Helgeson, 2016). The socialization of gender within society assures that girls are made aware that they are unequal to boys in all aspects of life and that boys are treated differently, in this case, education. From childhood, a girl internalises these social norms, including those that define women's status as subordinate to those of men. Traditionally, women are expected to be subservient to their husbands. Men's decisions take precedence over family matters. Such decisions relating to personal and reproductive aspects of women is the sole prerogative of men. As Usta et al. (2015) put it: "Men consider the woman's role in terms of being dedicated and devoted to her family: a role which, if fulfilled, will grant her the trust of her family and husband. Men consider respect, obedience, and marital obligation as non-negotiable rights." (p.4). Social norms which support these gender relations are culturally transmitted from one generation to another. According to King and Winthrop (2015), social norms can create powerful incentives that can guide people's attitudes and behaviours and that behaviours outside the accepted social boundaries can unleash formal and informal

systems of social sanction. It is in these situations that women find themselves in the developing world, which sometimes hinder their engagement within the society.

Given the social circumstances, any direct engagement by the parent in the struggle against the dominant ideologies of the system leads to violation of traditional systems and conventional standards of the society which are vehemently frowned upon. The result is that girls are not given equal opportunities as boys so that the girl acquires the education and opportunities she needs in order to realize her full potential and enjoy her rights as a child, and later on as an adult. When the norm of male prioritization determines opportunities for education then the idea of innovation and human capital development of the girl is at stake. The different pattern of socialisation and treatment which females receive at home and in the society at large puts them in the position of an educationally disadvantaged group. As noted by Daniels (2015), ―When the appropriation of dominant social values and normative relations in communities are patrilineal, they might be engaging with girls as if they are neither smart nor worthy of education" (p.159). In the socialisation process perceptions towards femininity play a crucial role in schooling. Parents feel that girls do not need any education to carry out their roles as an assigned care giving in the family. It is upon this reason that most parents, whenever money is scarce, will invest in their sons' education.

2.6.2 Household Decision

In most societies the bond among family members gives birth to altruistic activities. In an ideal family situation, most parents will do everything possible to take good care of their children's needs by making sure that good decisions are made. According to Achal and Tangonyire (2014), real parents will always sacrifice their

own comfort for the sake of their children's welfare. This is in support of Becker's (1968) household production framework which stipulates that parents are the primary decision-makers of their children's schooling, and secondly parents or families are altruistic, and due to their altruism they not only care about their own welfare, but also about the welfare of their children. The framework suggests that when parents or families make investment decisions about the members of their households, they first must think about how to maximize the resources of the entire family. Allocation of resources is done after careful consideration of what the family has. Notwithstanding the altruistic nature of parents, the household unit has become the locus of women's social restrictions as family decisions are relayed through and into it. In the household where individuals both cooperate and compete for limited resources, competition within the household can lead to positive and negative outcomes for its members and children. Certain conditions are therefore attached to making decisions on how to allocate resources. Whatever the reason for educating a child, household decision becomes an important issue as far as school participation is concerned if this were to benefit the family as a whole. Household decisions are therefore an important factor associated with education when it comes to opportunity cost of sending children to school. According to Shimamura and Lastarria-Cornhiel (2010) in South Saharan Africa (SSA) decisions on investment are weighed heavily between sons and daughters when it comes to allocating resources and if parents were interested in eventually realizing the benefit of the value of a son, parents would rather have sons educated (Lin & Adsera, 2013).

In most homes in SSA and in the developing world, important decisions are often made by households rather than by individuals. This particularly goes to who is in charge of the household. Traditionally, economists have tended to view the

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household as a single unit, based on the existence of an altruistic husband, who pools income, allocates resources and investment as if it had a single set of preferences. This kind of arrangement, referred to as the unitary model, inhibits equalities between household members in decision making. In contrast with the unitary model, current research suggests that households do not act as a single unit, but rather that the allocation of resources within a household is a function of the characteristics of the household and its members (Anderson, Reynolds & Kay, 2017). This idea of 'collective model' suggests that household decision is determined in a bargaining process by every member of the family that leads to an efficient use of the available resource. Accordingly, if mothers have a strong bargaining power, then mothers are more likely to participate with their husbands in making household decisions a factor that may be relevant when examining educational decisions for girls (Shahidul, 2013). Although collective models allow for the participation of both spouses in the decision-making process within households, women are traditionally constrained by social norms as they have no money, or make no financial contribution to the household income. With less bargaining power and participating less in the household decision-making process, the likelihood is the result of gender bias of fathers and, consequently, the likelihood of daughters not attending school (Shahidul, 2013). This indicates that mothers' participation in making decisions reduces the likelihood that their daughters will attend school because mothers either prefer daughters or they exhibit a more altruistic preference than do fathers regardless of the gender of the children. Based on this assumptions, a lot of researchers and scholars contend that more efforts should be focused on household decisions for education (Kaliba & Ghebreyesus, 2011) since in a male-dominated society, household

decisions are made, for the most part, solely by husbands which can affect the education of girls.

2.6.3 Household Asset

Existing literature shows that parental assets, independent of income, are significantly associated with children's educational outcomes these include school enrollment and completion (Chowa et al., 2013; Attewell et al., 2012; Huang, 2013; Deng et al., 2014; Bleemer & Zafar, 2015). According to William Shanks, Kim, Loke & Destin (2010), further evidence from observational research supports these findings by showing that assets are positively associated with children's educational outcomes, emotional and behavioural competencies and educational expectations. Sherraden et al. (2017), also posit that wealthy households have more assets to use to leverage towards endeavours to obtain income than do poor households. This is echoed by Nam and Huang (2011) who contend that parents with low resources are unable to increase investments when it comes to the education of their children. This means that household assets can have positive or negative effects on children schooling. For example, assets like electricity and closeness to sources of water can increase return to schooling among boys and girls. While it has been shown that children influence household financial behaviours, it has also been argued that household size has a significant effect on household asset allocation (Bogan, 2015) and schooling.

In households total real wealth can be measured on the basis of estimates of property ownership of physical assets, such as television, refrigerator and automobiles (Du Caju, 2012). Wittenberg and Leibbrandt (2017) define assets as goods that provide a stream of benefits. The number of assets within households and type of assets may

indicate its socio-economic status relative to other households. More assets mean that parents are more likely to afford additional costs to schooling by investing the proceeds from their assets in their children's education. Chowa, et al. (2013) conducted a field experiment among Ghanaian youth and found evidence of asset effect on child educational outcomes. The results were based on five key assets that are considered primary indicators of socio-economic status in Ghana, namely: television, refrigerators, electric iron, electric or gas and kerosene stoves. Youth from households that own at least one of the five assets outperformed the youth from control households in English test scores by at least one more point. However, certain types of assets that require labour to maintain such as farm and livestock negatively affected children's schooling outcomes.

On girls' education, research has shown that better household economic conditions, that is the number of assets are accompanied by more gender-equitable household decisions regarding children's education, and in developing countries girls' educational participation responds more strongly to improvements in household assets than boys (Deng et al., 2014). For instance, in rural areas where children have to trek several kilometres in search of water can have a deleterious effect on girls' education. This may not be so in urban areas where household assets like pipe borne water can impact positively on girls' schooling. Given that household assets are important economic resources particularly for girls' enrollment and with no assets to serve as buffer against shocks, there will be less schooling for girls than for boys, especially when encountering household resource constraint (Deng et al., 2014) since parents invest favourably in boys compared to girls because the latter have lower expected returns from education (Akresh, Bagby, deWalque, & Kazianga, 2012; Akresh, deWalque, & Kazianga, 2013). When assets increase the opportunity cost of

schooling girls are likely to be moved out of school to household activities. If this conceptual relationship between assets and education holds true, then transfer of assets may have unfavourable implications on girls' schooling. Despite some evidence of correlation between assets and children's educational outcomes, there is little evidence, however, to show that different types of assets have negative effects on children's educational attainment. In developing countries, the nature of property relationships between males and females reflect the wider socio-cultural control exercised over women by males. In this case women with no asset to use as bargaining power may find it difficult to influence their daughters' education.

2.6.4 Household Birth Order and Sibling Sex Composition

Sibling rivalry in educational investments in developing countries is well documented (Edmonds, 2007; Dammert, 2010). Both Edmonds (2007) and Dammert (2010) find evidence consistent with this sibling rivalry interpretation that impinges on girls' education. A number of arguments suggest that siblings are unlikely to receive equal shares of the resources devoted by parents to their children's education (Booth & Kee, 2009). This is because parents often have preferences for certain siblings over others based on their birth order and sex, as well as other characteristics.

Extensive empirical evidence suggests that firstborns have an educational advantage over their later born counterparts. It puts firstborns in a favourable position since they experience a period of exclusive parental investment, time and attention (Feifei Bu, 2014). In such instances, greater parental time inputs translate into higher educational achievement for first born children (Booth & Kee, 2009). This may not always be the case for females in developing countries. Traditionally, girls often play

a significant role in raising their younger siblings and therefore less likely to go to school if they are firstborns. Thus the number of younger siblings within a household may have a negative effect on girls' education given the strong gender division in work responsibilities. Moreover, when parents face budget constraints in making educational investment decisions, older children, especially girls are particularly vulnerable (Zheng, 2015). Given such instances older children are more likely to work because they are more physically developed and can obtain higher wages and face higher schooling cost.

In an ethnographic study of family life in Mexico, Chesnekova and Vaithianathan (2014) found that first-born siblings gave up their own education and entered the work force in order to contribute to supporting the education of their younger siblings. In such cases of patriarchal culture, girls voluntarily gave up educational opportunities to cater for boys (Wu, 2011) in an impending role of credit constraints for children's schooling (Lindskog, 2011). With special preference to boys in the allocation of resources, parents either reduce investment in education for girls or urge girls to work to ease the financial burden for the family and provide for younger siblings' education. For example, Chu et al.'s (2007) study in Taiwan on intra family resource transfer, concluded that, younger siblings may dilute parental resources by increasing the burden on the family's budget. Whereas older sisters expand such resources by stopping schooling and devoting themselves to the job market to contribute to the family's income pool. The son-preference culture suggests the likelihood of sacrificing the educational opportunity of older girls.

Despite the volume of literature in this area, the debate over birth order effects that influence parental decision on girls' education remains unresolved, due partly to criticisms about the types of data and the analytic methodologies used. In addressing

the issue of sibling's effect on school attendance and child work, Seid and Gurmu (2015) found no evidence that suggests birth order affects the probability of school attendance in Ethiopia. However, among children who attended school, hours spent studying increases with birth order.

Sibling Sex Composition

In addition to birth order, sibling sex composition matters as a determinant factor that influences parental decision on girls' educational attainment within a particular household. Studies suggest that having brothers affects girls' education in several ways. Even though there is weak evidence supporting the effect of sibling, sex composition in developed countries (Jacob, 2011), studies in developing countries, however, have revealed negative effect of sibling sex composition on girls' education. Evidence from China by Ye and Wu (2011) and Bolivia by Zeng et al. (2012) concluded that having brothers is detrimental to educational attainment for girls.
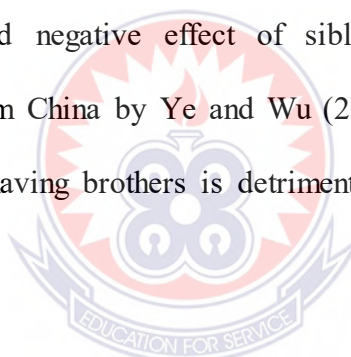
2.6.5 Household Composition

In addition to birth order, household composition matters as well. For example, if parents are more altruistic toward their sons than their daughters, as is often the case in traditional societies, the total investments in sons' schooling will be larger (Makino, 2012). In South Saharan Africa, the structure of a household composition determines the ability to finance children's education. In developing countries, most homes are headed by female single parents due to early marriages and child neglect. Homes headed by female single parents may face tighter labour constraints and this may necessitate the use of child labour at the expense of schooling (Huisman & Smits, 2015). In Africa, a large percentage of female household heads are members

of a polygamous marriage, in which case they are encouraged to consider themselves the head. Such households may face impoverished conditions due to large households as a husband's income support is distributed over a number of families (Chikwature & Oyedele, 2016).

Competition within the household can lead to negative outcomes for its members and children. This suggests that the ability to access finance is likely to be absent. Large households can create a great deal of conflict, particularly on issues to do with allocation of resources and in particular the payment of school fees. A large family means dependency ratio is often higher. This means that parents may not be able to save for their children's school expenses. Using data from the 1983-1986 Survey of Consumer Finance (SCF), Yilmazer (2008) investigated the expected expenditure on children's college education in terms of 8 parents' savings. She found that monetarily parental support for each of their children's college expenses is negatively related to the number of children in the households. If this assertion is true this will negatively affect the ability to send all children to school. For instance, in large families where one of the parents might no longer be part of the household, it is considered better to let one or more children leave school to help in the house (Huisman & Smits, 2015). In this case, girls will have a lower probability of going to school as some parents may invest in boys rather than girls taking into cognizance future prospects of each child, reflecting perhaps some socio-cultural norms that influence parents in their decision to educate their children.

2.6.6 Poverty and Girls' Education

Over the past decade, the unfortunate reality is that income gap continues to widen between people in the low-income bracket and the more affluent families. Worldwide, children from households that are relatively well off economically are expected to be more likely to be enrolled in school than children from less endowed households who will be under intense pressure to contribute to the economic well-being of the household via work at home or in the labour market (Mabika & Shapiro, 2011). Research by Bacolod and Ranjan (2008) indicates that in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa, children from the poorest households have the lowest probability of attending school and of being behind in school performance than children from higher household wealth categories. In Philippines, according to Bacolod and Ranjan (2008), the majority of children who are in school are those from the top end of the household wealth distribution. McKay, Pirttilä & Tarp (2015) in analyzing trends in consumption and non-monetary poverty outcomes in Ghana since the early 1990s concluded that in Ghana inequality is one of the key reasons leading to poverty outcomes. This has played a significant role in the education gender gap as girls and boys from the poorest households experience greater disparities in terms of access to education, compared to those from richer households. Whatever the reason for educating a child, poverty becomes an important issue as far as school participation is concerned. Poverty coupled with resource constraints may inform parents' decision on who should be sent to school (Grogan, 2008). Financial constraints linked to poverty at the household level may limit girls' education capabilities through limited access to education (Bantebya, Kyoheirwe & Watson, 2015). Within the household if parents were interested in eventually realising the benefit of the value of a son, parents would rather have sons

educated, to help generate income for the family in the future to offset financial shock. In cases of resource scarcity the male child is always given the nod. This is because girls' prospects for education is considered second class in favour of boys. The reason is that they are needed to help their mothers in business activities to get money to train the male child while the girl has to stay at home helping the mother pending the time a good suitor will come (Ikebude et al., 2013).

This brings to the fore the direct cost of attending school which is usually too high for poor families to afford. Even with free education, direct cost of schooling such as textbooks and uniforms can impose a financial burden on rural households and widen gender gap in access to education (Lucas & Mbiti, 2012). According to Hertz (2011), direct fees associated with schooling, such as tuition and books, can consume from about five up to ten percent of the income of a middle-class family household and from twenty up to thirty percent of the income of a poor household. These expenses are often seen as an unnecessary expenses for females when other basic needs are yet to be met. The issue of affordability associated with the cost of education also explains further why parents do not send their girls to school. In households whose earnings are hardly enough to pay for basic needs, it will be difficult for children to access education when parents cannot even buy essential resources such as pencils, pens, erasers, exercise books and reading materials. Added to this constraint is extra study fees, voluntary contributions for Parents Teacher Association (PTA) projects, buying materials for practical work, for example, during Home Economics lessons may put poor households off from educating their girls.

In terms of real financial and opportunity cost, parents in poor families may perceive that schooling is more costly for girls (Sperling & Winthrop, 2016). This is always the likelihood when parents lack resources to enroll all children in school (Allanana,

2013). In schools whether day or boarding items on girls' prospectus are always so tall that it almost doubles the school fees for girls than boys. When girls' education is perceived to be expensive and less necessary in terms of opportunity cost and in societies where opportunities tend to be circumscribed by patriarchal attitudes, parents may attach greater importance to the education of boys than girls. This can bring about unfavourable gender bias. This holds true in spite of the fact that studies show that in developing countries the education of girls is a way to increase economic development. In a study exploring the link between poverty and poor educational access and attainment in Ghana, Higgins (2009) found that there is a strong correlation between poverty and low primary and secondary net and gross enrolment rates. She observed that the three regions in northern Ghana with the highest levels of poverty recorded the lowest enrolment and achievement rates in the country. This was especially so among girls. As Hunt (2008) noted:

> *Household income is found to be an important factor in determining access to education as schooling potentially incurs a range of costs, both upfront and hidden. Upfront costs include school fees, while the more hidden costs include uniforms, travel, equipment and the opportunity costs of sending a child to school* (p.7).

In Ghana, examining economic activities status of households McKay et al. (2015) concluded that highest levels of poverty by far are among those reliant on agriculture for their economic activity. Studies show that income from farming is a major determinant of schooling investments in children of rural households in the early stages of development (Otsuka, Estudillo & Yamano, 2010). Cases of crop failure could lead to income shock and this can affect girls' education as the little money that is left would be used to cater for boys due to traditional preference. Despite all these assertions Huisman and Smits (2009) contend that even in poor communities of any

society, people still value education because it bestows knowledge on those who possess it. In Ghana, as in many parts of the developing world, in almost all institutions one can find a large number of girls accessing education who come from underprivileged families.

2.6.7 Female Domestic Labour and Schooling

The prevalence of girls' domestic work is not a new problem. Despite the efforts to eliminate child labour, an increasingly large share of children still perform domestic chores. Existing literature concludes that when it has to do with parental poverty gender biases exist in parental decisions about which children are sent to school and which are to work (Assaad et al, 2010; Self, 2011; Moyi, 2013). As expected, a greater number of girls are engaged in domestic work than boys in all societies and doing housework seems to be more common among older girls (Bilgen, Inanc-Tuncer and Kologlugil, 2016). Girls' domestic work is often accepted in the societies where it exists, and it is often viewed as a safe form of work (Hesketh, Gamlin, Ong & Camacho, 2012). In developing countries most domestic work performed by girls take place in family-owned businesses, which makes it difficult to distinguish from household chores such as cleaning, cooking and washing. While work done at home is not counted in official child labour statistics, some studies document that it is a widespread phenomenon with its extent varying across countries (Assaad et al., 2010). In households, fetching of water, cooking, washing, childcare responsibilities and cleaning substantially increase the domestic work burden, leading parents to rely heavily on girls labour, often at the expense of their schooling.

Traditionally, the burden of housework among girls is simply to make her socially fit as she enters adulthood and then to be a good house wife with the necessary housework skills. In cases of opportunity cost for parents when making decision of whom to send to school the need for female domestic labour affects decisions and for how long she should stay at home. Parents, anticipating a girl's contribution to domestic work in later years may not feel that it is worthwhile to enroll their daughters in school (Assaad et al., 2010). They thus avoid the costs associated with girls' education. With regard to the effects of child work on children's rights to education, empirical evidence has suggested that girls' work is one of the main obstacles to education for all children (Chanda, 2014).

In developing countries part of the explanation for the apparent increase in child labour may be related to gender bias, in which household labourers are primarily girls. In most countries, local norms dictate that girls should confine their activities to the domestic settings as people still think of women as less capable (Wang & Dai, 2010). The differences in work type are informed by the expectations parents and society at large have of females on one side and males on the other side. This reflects in the kind of work allocated to the male and the female. In most households the male child hardly does any domestic chores. It is the female child who is largely responsible for the household chores. In this way, the male child has more time to study after school than the female child. In sub-Saharan Africa, the issue of time use is especially important because of the high workload carried by girls. Time use issues have strong gender dimensions, as girls often have to work long hours for domestic chores and the collection of water and wood apart from working in the fields or in other labour market activities (Bardasi & Wodon, 2010).

The effect of domestic work on girls' education within particular household may not be patriarchal alone but motivated by an economic rational choice. According to King and Wintrop (2015), low household income coupled with parental absence due to employment push girls into household work. In poor households when parents enter the labour market, girls take over domestic duties as mother surrogate. This is referred to as the substitution effect (Self, 2011). The main assumption here is that a mother's participation in the labour market would help improve the economic conditions within the household by helping supplement the meager wages of the father. This is what Self (2011) again defines as income effect. It would imply finding money to fend for the family and sending children to school by decreasing the burden of housework on daughters. In many homes families need to spend additional time to maintain the basic functioning of daily life and due to poverty they may not be able to afford household basic amenities like pipe borne water and appliances such as washing machines, blenders, gas stoves, and girls become involved in fetching water, washing and collecting firewood. The practice is more intense in rural areas where social services like water and electricity are scarce. The issue of household chores may have deleterious effect not only on their health but on girls' schooling.

In schools, girls' achievement level can be determined to a greater extent by household activities. According to UNICEF (2016), girls spend 40% more time, or 160 million more hours a day, on household chores such as cooking, cleaning, collecting firewood and caring for family members, than boys of the same age. Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) (2014) posits that as working hours are intensified, it will lead to a decline in children's leisure time and schooling hours. The reason is that children may be tired after work, may be late for school, may not have enough

time to learn or perform home works and have irregularities in attendance rates. For those who attempt to combine work and schooling, attendance and performance become very poor and eventually they drop out of school to concentrate on work. According to Bhattacharya and Guha (2016), the prevalence of girls' domestic work may be directly correlated to children's dropout before completion of primary education and educational deprivation play a key role in determining and controlling the whole life of the girl. Even though child labour may include aspects of work that are beneficial by promoting social development for some children at the same time, it may be exploitative and destructive for girls schooling (Moyi, 2013).

2.6. 8 Rural-Urban Residence and Distance

Research has shown that in the developing world place of residence either urban or rural can favour boys in school enrollment (Kirchsteiger & Sebald, 2010). Kazeem, Jensen and Shannon (2010) emphasize that there are interactions among gender, and place of residence so differences in one dimension may vary depending on the status of the other dimensions. For example, gender differences may vary by place of residence, and given place of residence, they may also vary by economic well-being of parents. Exploring an interaction effect in their study Huisman and Smits (2009) found out that girls were disadvantaged compared to boys in rural areas. In Ghana, Cooke, Hague and Mckay (2016) posit that households in urban areas continue to have a much lower average rate of poverty than those in rural areas (10.6% versus 37.9). Given the rate of poverty in rural areas and cost involved in girls schooling, Odonkor (2008) claims that rural parents should rather be seen as people dissatisfied with the education system than as illiterates ignorant of the value of education. Due to poverty and ignorance of education, most families in rural areas rely on their

female children as house help, support on the farm and in the market. Often the support of children is required for additional income for the family (Ahmadu & Tukur, 2007). For some girls in rural areas the necessity of earning income involves being sent away to urban centres to find work, placing them in extremely vulnerable and isolated conditions. As these girls search for work in cities they may be exposed to sexual exploitation and as commercial sex workers. In these circumstances, the opportunities for girls to continue their education are severely restricted (Plan, 2012). Rural areas thus provide less opportunities for girls' education. According to King and Winthrop (2015), being a rural girl decreases the likelihood she will complete primary school. Data from a demographic and health survey for twenty-four low-income countries shows that living in a rural area and belonging to a family in the lowest income group is a disadvantage particularly for the rural girl (Sperling & Winthrop, 2016).

In Ghana, notwithstanding the gains chalked by the FCUBE programme in promoting gender equity, the rural setting which holds about 55 percent of the entire population never had access to education fully (GSS, 2014). In rural areas the issue of education is largely overlooked. The growth of urbanization and the change in the balance of political influence also make policy makers become more attentive to urban issues than to education in rural areas necessitating a shift that favours boys. In rural areas it is very difficult to find strong female role models. There are few female teachers throughout the country and even fewer in rural schools. There is therefore typically no encouragement from educators for girls to further their education past the primary level.

Again, an important barrier to girls' education in developing countries is the refusal of teachers to serve in rural areas. Most teachers who accept to go to the rural areas are young men fresh from college. These young teachers not married sexually abuse school girls and impregnate them. In such instances teachers may abscond leaving the village to seek teaching appointment in a different district or region. The stigma and shame may deter parents from sending girls to school. Urban areas, however, provide many opportunities for girls' education. Most urban areas exhibit some form of modernity which stresses the importance of education and equality between the sexes and the state influence in education may put pressure on parents to allow their children to stay in school (Huisman & Smits, 2009). While urban children have better access to education this is not so in many rural areas. In urban areas there are more private as well as government schools than rural areas. In cases where schools are far away better roads and transportation network make accessibility to school easy. The issue of security and safety, that is, vulnerability to sexual abuse whilst walking to school which is a key factor in stopping daughters from going to school, may not be of particular concern for parents.

In urban areas through the mass media parents may come face to face on issues on gender and education. This can take place on televisions and radio discussions. This may influence parents to send their children to school. In rural areas, however, illiteracy coupled with the lack of understanding of girls' education may inhibit the effectiveness of national laws and policies designed to reform the education system. Rural-urban residence is thus an important factor for understanding the differences in children's education in various developing countries including Ghana. The foregoing discussion suggests that more needs to be known about how, rural-urban residence,

affects female school enrollment in a particular context. This setback has created gaps between rural and urban centres so far as girls' education is concerned.

Studies continue to show that distance to school can be a significant deterrent in girls' schooling (Mingat, 2007). In an intervention on access to primary education in Afghanistan, Burde and Linden (2013) found that opening a school in a village increases the enrollment rate of girls by 52 percent. This became conclusive as a result of a study done within 31villages. The study also concluded that gains for girls were large enough that in the treatment villages the gender gap in enrollment was virtually eliminated. The study again revealed that the demand for education for both boys and girls was present. However, due to conservative cultural norms, families were not willing to send their daughters to school if the school was located outside the village. The intervention demonstrated that in areas such as rural Afghanistan, proximity to schools can be an effective strategy to increase girls' participation in education. This can virtually eliminate the gender gap in enrollment.

In many countries the introduction of free primary education has led to a rapid expansion of school infrastructure in order to keep up with rising enrolment rates. However, demand still far outstrips supply and long distances to the nearest school remains one of the main reasons for nonattendance. A study conducted by UNICEF (2012) in Ghana indicates a correlation between distance to school and girls' school attendance. In rural areas, proximity of schools had been a problem to girls' education. In Ghana in some community day schools pupils have to walk long distances in order to attend school. Walking long distances on a daily basis is such that pupils may become tired and late to school. This can lead to poor performance, absenteeism and high dropout rates. Students may go home very late and are unable to do their homework. If a school is so far away a girl needs to be escorted by

parents. This can add to the parents' burden as they may not have the time to do that always. Traveling long distances means that parents would be concerned about their children's safety (Huisman & Smits, 2009). In Pakistan, for example, cultural mores disallow unmarried girls in public or traveling far from home and concerns about the safety of teenage girls means the need for girls to be chaperoned to and from school by their older brothers or fathers when in public, implying greater transportation costs (King & Winthrop, 2015). When schools are far away, girls sometimes ask for lifts from *okada riders* (motorbike taxis) who in turn seek sexual favours, increasing their chances of teenage pregnancy and early marriage. Other students walk long paths that leave them at risk of being attacked by animals. In most cases girls are sexually harassed when they have to travel far to reach a school. The stigma of rape by gangs along the way to school and getting girls pregnant outside wedlock make parents not to send their daughters to school, but instead put them to work in and around their households.

Again, since girls do not have the physical strength to walk long distances fatigue may deter girls to lose interest in school and may drop out. Huisman and Smits (2009) found distance to school to be less important for children from fathers with a non-farm job and working mothers. This reveals the alarming number of disparities and inequalities between the rural areas and urban centres. Greater distance to school or the absence of a nearby school has stronger negative impacts on girls' than boys' enrollments in many settings. The alternatives include boarding schools or sending girls to rented rooms in towns not far away from school. These, however, involve additional costs that must be found in limited family budgets which may deter parents from sending girls to school.

2.6.9 Initiation and Teenage Pregnancy

The existence of discriminatory attitudes towards the schooling of girls is informed by initiation and teenage pregnancy. The onset of adolescence may bring competing demands in school, at home and in the community with the risk of pregnancy. In Ghana, girls undergo initiation rites when they have their menstruation for the first time. These ceremonies contribute significantly to school dropout. As soon as a girl starts her menstruation, puberty and menarche are considered as times of transition to adulthood. Girls reaching this biological age means becoming eligible for marriage, regardless of whatever age they find themselves. In many societies when girls reach puberty, they are confined inside the house in a special room for a specified period. For some this can take up to a month, where they will be undergoing some training from elderly women. During their confinement girls are trained to behave in the society as grown up adults and how to take care of themselves by observing cleanliness especially during menstruation.

Moreover, they are trained to avoid irresponsible sexual behaviours before marriage. During the initiation session girls are also trained about sexuality and sexual pleasures that go with it and how to satisfy their husbands with sexual pleasures when they get married (Hamdani, 2012). They are purposely confined to be taught the wisdom and knowledge of their society. The education girls receive prepares them as wives and mothers. Girls' movements and also associations are strictly curtailed, for her virtue has to be guarded in order to preserve the family honour. At puberty girls' education may be cut short if she attends a mixed school and her teachers are mostly male for fear that she might be impregnated. She is often withdrawn from school. If she continues her education, the restrictions on her movements, such as the need to be back home early before dark limits her education.

This can contribute to the low turnout of girls in school. In SSA initiation ceremonies serve as honour and prestige to parents especially mothers. They are therefore ready to sacrifice what it takes to initiate their daughters other than keep their daughters in school. The behaviour of the girls themselves during puberty may compel parents to initiate their daughters early against any promiscuous act which may bring disgrace to the family. Since initiation prepares young girls for married life, the girls choose to put into practice what they learn at the initiation ceremonies rather than continue with schooling. In most instances, some initiated girls feel that they are now grown up women who ought to marry. This attitude prevents parents from educating their daughters rather than their sons as they see education of their daughters as waste of resources. It is common for girls to be married soon after the initiation ceremonies which results into early marriages and pregnancies.

Like most communities in Africa, Gomoa East, which is the study site, has high teenage pregnancy and teenage births rates. According to the Gomoa East Health Directorate (GEHD) (2010), the number of teenage pregnancies was 589 which formed 12.8% of total pregnancies of the district. Adolescent birth were 289, representing 13.6% of total deliveries recorded in the district hospital. In 2011 adolescent pregnancies were 587; 13.3% of the total pregnancies and deliveries were 343, which was 11.6% of total deliveries. It is recorded that the district topped the teenage pregnancy ladder of the Central Region for some time (GEHD, 2010). Reasons for the high pregnancies and birth rates among adolescents in the district are not altogether clear. However, the contributions of some negative societal norms may account for this situation. Culturally, there is a general belief among the people of Gomoa that a woman without a child at 18 years would remain barren hence the

early exposure to sex resulting in teenage pregnancies and early marriages. This can affect the chances of girls' schooling.

2.6.10 Early and Forced Marriage

Low enrolment patterns of girls in education results from cultural forces like early and forced marriage. According to Field and Ambrus (2008), child marriage continues to be a strong social norm, particularly for girls in the developing world. In settings such as in Bangladesh, traditional customs that sanction adolescent marriage are frequently blamed for low female schooling attainment because they raise the opportunity cost of educating girls (Field & Ambrus, 2008). The result is that female schooling is substantially constrained by marriage opportunities at young ages. In most social environment in sub Saharan Africa in traditional marriage market girls' education is rarely valued. If the socialisation process of the girl has taken place in a social environment where early marriages are approved, then this turns out to be a major constraint to parents' decision in girls' schooling (Yüksel-Kaptanoglu, 2014). Social norms around girls' education may mean that girls are not prioritized in a household's education investment decisions as women and girls are traditionally assigned a lower status than men and boys within the household, the community and the society (Scolaro et al., 2015). When a family is constrained with high poverty level, young women's education may be compromised, leading to early and forced marriage. Where poverty is cute, parents may assess the costs and benefits of marriage and decide to marry their daughters early if they were seen as an economic burden. In so doing parents encourage the marriage of their daughters while they are still children with the hope that marriage will benefit the girls and her family financially. According to UNICEF (2015), 21% of girls in Ghana are married before

they are 18. This is more common in rural areas and among women with only primary education or no education (Pozarny & Rohwerder, 2016). When parents marry off their daughters, there are often economic and social reasons for them to make that choice. The underlying factor of early marriage is to get the necessary financial help to use the money to take care of their sons' education who is seen as an economic asset. Early marriage for girls is viewed as a means of economic survival that is, if a girl is married early, the family has one mouth less to feed, and the hope is that the girl herself will be better off. Many parents genuinely believe that marriage will secure their daughters' future and that it is in their best interests if they marry early.

Culturally, women are expected to marry early to bear children since much education will delay birth. To parents therefore, the number of years spent in school reduces the number of children that girls may have (Atta, 2015) as a result girls are often married shortly after puberty to maximize their childbearing potential especially to give birth to many sons who are counted as worthy within the society. According to McCleary-Sills, Hanmer, Parsons and Kluman (2015), data across 11 countries in Europe and Central Asia show that on average one quarter of men and an equal share of women believe that it is morally wrong for a woman to delay getting married to further her education. This further reveals the degree to which parental choices are constrained by marriage opportunities and hence the added schooling that girls would receive. Egun and Tibi (2010) opine that in most societies in sub Saharan Africa girls are usually kept at home to attend to farm activities during planting and harvesting of crops. Consequently, early marriages of girls are encouraged to serve as source of cheap labour in the farms of their new homes. In most households in developing countries virginity is regarded as a family's honour. The fear of loss of

virginity and the respect for tradition dictate that girls should marry early. In this case, virginity becomes a necessary prerequisite to marriage. Parents may marry off a daughter at an early age to ensure that she marries as a virgin and to prevent out-of-wedlock births. This is because having a child before a girl gets married means that the family cannot demand a high bride price if she eventually got married. This can also be shameful to the family.

World Bank (2016) reports that the most common reason given for preferring to educate sons is that girls may be abused, often married or became pregnant which leads to withdrawal of girls from school and before finishing primary school. According to Pratt (2012), inadequacies in enforcement, monitoring, legislation and setting legal age of marriage for girls is particularly problematic. This is because the short-term economic (or social) reasons that influence parental choice do not serve the long-term interests of girls (Parsons et al., 2015) as far as education is concerned. Thus creating awareness on the negative consequences of early and forced marriage is likely to allow girls to access education and delay marriage (Lane, 2011). Karam (2015) argues that marrying girls under 18 years old is rooted in gender discrimination, as the aim is to encourage premature and continuous child bearing and giving preference to boys' education. Unfortunately, this has served as a depressing factor in the availability of girls' education. As summarized by Kibret et al. (2014).

> *In many communities, child marriage is a long-standing tradition, since a delayed marriage would not be acceptable in the eyes of the community. Getting a daughter married early may be seen as a means of ensuring her families safety, sexual abstinence and virginity are also considered important values that if not protected will affect the family honour. Moreover in families where parents cannot provide daughters*

> *a safe space to live, child marriage is considered to be a protection*
> *from risks such as abuse than giving priorities for education (p.544).*

The practice of dowry also inhibits girls' education in favour of boys. Kabeer (2011) states that in Bangladesh, the practice of the dowry favours the groom's family in marriage transactions and makes daughters economic liabilities to their parents. Parents are therefore motivated to send their daughters to work in order to pay for it. Subsequently the pressure of marriage leaves girls vulnerable to enter a marriage at which they have no choice (Hossain, 2012). In the traditional area of Bawku, in the Upper East Region of Ghana, the dowry system demanded that any young man wanting to marry has to pay four cows to the family of the bride. With less resources many young girls are taken out of school and forced to get married so that the families can get the cows for their sons marriage. According to Tanye (2008), in some areas in the northern regions of Ghana, the initial dowry is seven cows and three are added when daughters are able to give birth to three boys in succession. Early marriage of daughters is therefore seen as providing valuable dowry which also serves as a prestige for the family. Parents and families believe that the dowry reduces in value when daughters get pregnant, thereby jeopardizing the full potential of customary marriage rites. The dowry system plays a crucial role in giving daughters out in early marriage. The dowry also devalues when girls spent many years in school. The two constraints inhibiting girls' education, that is: initiation rites and early marriage are therefore interrelated. Emphasis on early marriage or forced marriages and pregnancy restricts girls' right to education.

Again, the main problem for estimating parental decision to marry off their daughters is likely due to girls' academic ability and their contribution to society. Girls with lower education prospects, for example, because they are weaker academically, face

smaller expected losses in future earnings as against boys and thereby have lower incentives to continue to study. These girls may be more willing to marry early or their parents may be more inclined to let them marry early (Nguyen & Wodon, 2014). The influence of traditional and tribal norms and customs emphasizing gender roles reinforces the assumption that early marriage is the only way to ensure a girl's future, and therefore the earlier it occurs, the better. This is because it is often assumed that women will neither be active in the community's life nor contribute to the economy and development of the society as males do. Women are therefore assigned responsibilities within the household, covering the role of caregiver, wife, and mother. This view of women's roles, in particular, is often closely linked to the patriarchal structure of the family (Scolaro et al., 2015) which inhibit girls' educational attainment in favour of boys. Whatever the reasons for early marriage they hinder the educational progress of girls and violate their rights. The literature suggests that early marriage may cause women to start and have larger families, which may have negative educational consequences for the girls within the family. But the negative consequences of early marriage go beyond daughters as individuals into the next generation as daughters of uneducated mothers will have high tendency of dropping out of school, marry while young and begin the cycle all over again (Plan, 2012). As summarised by Mahmud's (2003) report on gender and education for all, the pressure for early marriage remains a powerful force that shapes the alternatives girls have and constrains their access to education.

2.6.11 Religion and Girls' Education

Religion and gender have always been important determinants of educational attainment of girls by parents. Religious leaders are regarded by their followers as repository of wisdom. Through their religious teachings and dogma, women are

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always regarded as inferior to men especially regarding their submission to men in all aspects of life. This has invariably influenced people's attitudes and values in taking key decisions (Raji, Muhammed, Abdulbaqi, Sulaiman & Joseph, 2016).

Adherents to religious beliefs have always prioritized sons' educational attainment over daughters. This has led to gender disparity in education. As a result, most scholars have tried to find out how religions, cultural norms and doctrines may affect educational attainment by determining how much emphasis is placed on religious knowledge versus secular education, and if there is gender parity in educational attainment (PEW, 2016). For example, a look at all the major religions of the world reveal that they are controlled by men in the form of clergy and religious authorities (Raji et al., 2016). Religion has therefore been used as an instrument in defence of a class society and patriarchy which discriminates against women (Allanama, 2013).

Onwutuebe (2013) asserts that religious interpretations of certain portions of the Holy Books have fueled general descriptions regarding women's submission to men. The sustenance of patriarchy, mostly through religious conservatism still significantly influences the persistence of unequal gender relations and son priority. These forms of religious understandings often emphasize certain portions of religious texts while disregarding other areas in a bid to sustain the institution of patriarchy. According to Seguino (2011), religious norms and prejudices reflect patriarchal values which are characteristic of all societies of the world religions which are strongly correlated with gender inequitable attitudes. In this way, patriarchal dominance in all spheres of life is likely to be replicated in religious organizations leading to marginalization and under investment in girls' education. As Klingorova and Havlicek (2015) put it, the status of women in society is an outcome of the

interpretation of religious texts and of the cultural and institutional set-up of religious communities. Ethical considerations as well as the unique roles played by men in religious activities may prompt parents to act on their defence for sons' education. Various studies by Kojima (2012) and Rossi and Rouanet (2014) had examined the nexus between religion and male child priority. Rossi and Rouanet (2014) analysis of gender priorities in Africa unveiled a negative relationship between religion and gender preferences in Sub-Sahara Africa. Extensive research in Korea on the influence of religion on male child preference discovered that at the regional level, religion rather than the socio-economic factors is more associated with male child preference. That is, the higher the prevalence of Buddhism, the higher the prevalence of male child priority. In the Hindu tradition, for instance, sons have a greater role in cremation of their deceased parents, because only sons can light the funeral pyre. Again, only sons could pray for and release the souls of their dead parents and only males could perform birth, marriage and ancestral rituals after death (Jayachandran, 2017). The unique role boys play in religious activities go to a large extent to explain why boys are prioritized.

Another explanation for the decision of households regarding who should be enrolled in school is underpinned by traditional religious practices (ISODEC and UNICEF, 2011). In Ghana, for instance, inimical religious practices deny girls of the right of access to education and contribute to the disparity (Asare, 2010). For example, in Ghana girls can be enslaved by a traditional priest to atone for the alleged crimes of some family members or ancestors or to protect their family against certain curses placed on it at a shrine. In the Volta region of Ghana, the practice is known as "trokosi" which means "slaves or wives of the gods". Within the sub region, this traditional practice also occurs within the Republic of Togo and

Benin (Gillard, 2010; Akpabli Honu, 2014). In Ghana, the trokosi practice is common in the Southern Volta and the Greater Accra Regions. The practice is persistent in the Tongu, Ketu, Akatsi and Keta districts. Some communities within the Dangbe East and West are equally culpable. In Dangbe East and West, the practice is referred to as ―woryokwe". It involves families offering their young virgin girls, sometimes as young as five to serve village priests at shrines in compensation for the sins of family members or even as a gift in appreciation for significant events. The girl stays in the shrine as a ―slave" and owes allegiance to the deity for the rest of her life. Once these young girls are in the shrines, the priest prohibits all fetish slaves from attending school (Aird, 2007). In certain instances girls are withdrawn from the classroom and taken into the shrines. Education for an individual ensures the free choice of means to achieve progress in one's life, and is stated to be a human right. Article 25 (1) of the Constitution recognises this right and also makes education compulsory. The Education Act of 1961 (Act 87) provides for compulsory education in Ghana. The overall negative effect is that girls are denied their basic human right which includes access to education. This is quite disturbing due to its negative impact on women's empowerment through education. Instances where girls are freed, they find it difficult to continue their education. Essel (2013) captures the consequences of women abuse as follows:

> *A victim finds it difficult to mingle with relatives, friends and the public at large for fear they will know about her predicament. This isolation has its own devastating effects such as depression, stress, fear, low self-esteem and even emotional or psychological problems. It also hinders her from participating in public life. Their contributions towards building the economy of the nation are cut off... limits the educational opportunities and achievements of girls... undermines human rights and women's educational and employment*

opportunities and the well-being and development prospects of children (2013, n.p.).

This cultural practice could damage girls' opportunities to education. It allows parents to hold negative attitude towards girls' education. Realizing that girls would be sent to serve at these shrines they are denied access to education since education would not benefit the girl nor the parents. In this case, parents would prioritize male education at the expense of girls. This to, a large extent, accounts for the low enrollment and high level of drop out in the areas affected by the "trokosi" cult.

Again, the role of religion as a powerful tool has always been used by various religious sects in defence of early marriage which helps to deny girls' rights to education. In his examination of religion and educational attainment of immigrants in the USA, Mukhopadhyay (2010) concluded that religion has a strong negative association with educational attainment for Muslim women and women from ―Other‖ religions. Association with the Islam reduces educational attainment of women by about 1.3 years and association with ―Other‖ religions reduces educational attainment of women by about 2.1 years compared to women who are not associated with any religion. A case study by Gemignani and Wodon (2015) in Bobo Dialousso, Tenkodogo and Djibo District of Burkina Faso also suggested some important differences in the role played by the Muslim faith in child marriage between different Muslim communities which are located further away from urban centres. The idea gathered was that early marriage was important to the Islamic faith and that child marriage is fixed according to Islam (or that it is linked to menarche). Accordimg to Karam (2015), in Ethiopia, for instance, conservative interpretation of shari'a and religious practices of orthodox Christian communities in the Amhara region endorses child marriage. In most cases of adolescent marriage through

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religious activities the relevant decision makers are parents who underestimate the value of education for girls either intentionally or unintentional. In the Chibok area in Nigeria where the people are predominantly Moslems, the fear that by sending their children to school the children will be Christianised by western education as against shari'a laws influenced parents decision on their children's especially girls to access education (Hammajam, Moh'd & Idris, 2014). Many scenarios portrayed above show that religion inescapably denies girls from exercising their right to education due to negative religious interpretations as it raises the opportunity cost of female schooling attainment. Thus conservative values and beliefs can be antithetical to girls' education.

2.6.12 Parental Attitudes and Influence

Parental attitudes and influence have been identified as an important factor affecting girls' education. In most societies parents have different attitudes towards their sons' and daughters education. In a situation analysis of children and poverty in Uganda Pereznieto, Walker, Villar and Alder (2011) concluded that community and parental attitudes towards girls' education were mentioned as a very common reason for girls stopping going to school, often as young as 12 or 13. In South Saharan Africa (SSA) negative attitudes of parents toward female education are very common in rural areas. The idea that when women get married they tend to pay attention to their husbands' families and their new home influences parents to enroll their sons in school. Socially, it is believed that education makes girls discontented and immoral as they will have to stay in the same classroom with boys for so many hours engaging in immoral acts especially in co-educational institutions. In effect, it is argued that mixing with so many boys can eventually lead to promiscuity and girls

may find it difficult getting husbands. Inability to attract husbands will encourage prostitution.

In SSA the belief that men are the sole breadwinners in the household also affect girls' education. Traditionally, men have to work outside the home to bring money while women do household work including raising children and caring for the elderly. In most societies the belief is that if girls stayed in school for a longer period it will affect reproduction as they may desire to give birth to few children which can hurt the survival of the lineage. Again, there is always the fear that if a girl is highly educated she may not be a good wife as she may be less willing to engage in heavy labour and would not care for the home. She may frown upon her family's choice and desire a husband who is highly educated and less likely to find one as it may be difficult for her to make a marital match as she has higher standards. It is also argued that when educated women get married success in the labour market may come with some challenges. These include, among others, working long hours outside the home, night shifts, earning higher income, delaying birth, fear of disrespect, assertiveness, entering into certain fields, which would make it difficult for her to follow her husband in case of transfer of residence and eventually taking over the role of the husband as the breadwinner in the household. All these can interfere with marriage. The overall net effect is that it may lead to status tension which can result to divorce which in turn may affect the family's reputation and honour. This runs contrary to traditional norms. As Juma and Simatwa (2014) put it, education can interfere with the cultural authenticity of women.

Among rural dwellers, it is believed that if girls are educated it may encourage migration to city centres to escape early marriages which are a source of worry to parents (Lam and Hoang 2010; Temin et al., 2013). It must be emphasised that even

though girls may migrate because of gender-based structural inequalities and discrimination, it may also be argued that girls do not always migrate because of early marriages. In most cases girls migrate to enhance economic opportunities by seeking jobs that are lacking in their villages which in turn benefit the whole household through remittances. For many households, migration is a critical strategy for increasing wealth, with children sending or bringing home money (Jensen & Miller, 2011). Migration may, therefore, be used as a kind of poverty reduction strategy for families. In the developing world motives for migration may be in three folds; to help the household to overcome liquidity constraints, need to assist old aged parents and financing the education of younger siblings. This is given credence by Delpierre et al. (2017) who assert that:

> *An altruistic migrant anticipates that, in the absence of a formal pension system, together with her altruistic siblings, she will contribute to their parents old age support on a voluntary basis. Since better educated siblings will have higher earnings and will therefore contribute higher amounts, it benefits the migrant to send remittances to finance school age siblings' education (p. 2).*

This tends to indicate that education dominates the motive for migration. On the other hand, migration motive may be based on parental decisions and in itself may even affect girls' education. In pro-male biased societies when parents face a number of trade-offs in allocating resources among their children, due to either limited household resources or (perceived) different returns to the migration investment, older siblings, especially firstborns, are more likely to migrate, while having more sisters than brothers may increase the chances of migration, especially among females (Bratt, Fiore, & Mendos, 2016).

In rural areas the fact that formal education is viewed by most people as having little relevance to village life further influences parents' decision from sending their daughters to school, for example, Osita-Oleribe (2007) came out with how un-educated parents in Katcha, a small settlement in Nigeria, accepted cultural indoctrination and used it to influence their daughters education. Parents in this area, according to her, made their children believe that education (the western type) is not needed and thus advised girls to run their lives without it. Girls were made to believe that their place of fulfillment was in their husbands' homes and since education was not needed, they should focus just on getting the right man, accepting the parent's choice and making such a man happy. This level of indoctrination made all female children focus on marrying rather than studying. Thus, even the few that were privileged to go to school could not wait for the right time, so whenever the man arrived, they drop out of school. This shows parents ambivalent attitude towards girls' education in general. It further reveals that low level of education or background contributes to the negative perception of western education by parents. This can negatively affect enrollment of girls and their retention.

2.6.13 Aged-old Support and Parental Expectation

The capacity of old persons unable to fend for themselves makes the issue of insurance important in all societies. In particular, rural families may rely more on children because they have lower access to pension schemes (Oliveira, 2016). In the absence of a broad-based public pension schemes, rising income uncertainties and pension reforms, the majority of the elderly in developing countries are left to rely on their own pension benefits which are sometimes insufficient to cover their living expenses. The value of children as insurance in old age is therefore crucial. Traditionally, in most societies children especially males are widely regarded as

linchpins of support for older persons. The economic importance of male children is evident from the fact that while less pressure is put on the daughters to make contributions towards the support of their parents, sons are morally obliged to take care of their parents in old age. In China, Ebenstein and Leung (2010) found that parents who have at least one son were less likely to enroll in a pension programme. Parental priority in sons' investments are therefore common in many societies (Chen & Liu, 2014) leading to higher school enrolment rates for boys and higher spending on a son's private education (Choi & Hwang, 2015). The low esteem accorded girls is that they do not contribute substantially to parents' welfare in old age (Jayachandran, 2017). Parents realizing this may envisage that the future expected returns for educating sons rather than daughters is certain as sons retain lifetime contractual relationships with their parents more than their daughters who are regarded as fugacious members of the family. Consequently, girls may be sent to the labour market or to do household chores to the benefit of boys. The persistence of patri-local marriage practised in many societies' means that, when considering the education of their children, parents may be more inclined to invest in their sons rather than their daughters (Huiman & Smits, 2014).

In China, Huang, Jin and Xu (2015) found that parents who expect old age support from sons were more likely to match-make their sons to daughters-in-law who would be more suited to household production. Huang et al. (2015) continues that parental match- making is associated with more children for the couple and lower schooling for wives in rural areas. This assertion supports Becker, Murphy and Spenckuch (2016), who posit that parents would meddle with children's preferences to ensure their commitment to providing old age support as a source of insurance (Lambert & Rossi, 2016).

With respect to economic considerations, boys may be considered to have a higher probability of earning income, and are expected to provide support for their parents during their old age through remittances especially if they work outside home. Given the reliance of parents on sons for old age support, it is important to find out whether son biased investments from old age support makes daughters as 'useless' in that respect as customarily believed (Ho, 2017). With the advent of urbanization, increasing proportions of people have obtained formal education and access to social support reducing dependence on children. The greater physical mobility associated with non-agrarian life means that sons may no longer be near their parents to care for them. Urbanization has also contributed to the decline in patri-local marriage, and daughters are now just as likely as sons to live near their parents and contribute to their economic support, further weakening the pattern of sons caring for their parents and reducing the gap between the value of daughters and sons education (Chung & Das Gupta, 2007). Research suggests that daughters remit more to their parents than sons, and that as their level of education rises remittances to their parents increase substantially (World Migration, 2010). Findings by Jieyu (2014) and Rittirong et al. (2014) in China also concluded that daughters play a key role in age old support. Similar observations were made by Teerawichitchainan and Knodel (2016) who argued that in Myanmar, there are accounts of daughters who play an equally or more important role than sons in elderly support. Recent research by Ho (2017) in China indicates that daughters reciprocate parental monetary investments in their education by increasing old age support. This suggests that daughters may be a viable source of support to parents and that encouraging parental investments in them may lead to an increase in family provided old age support. The conclusions drawn from the studies show that even though daughters contribute to age old parents,

families are not so keen in educating their daughters especially in rural areas. This may explain the perceived differences in responsibilities towards their daughters schooling. Such biased investments have been attributed to various reasons such as persistence in patriarchal values and the perception that sons may generate greater economic returns provide greater old age support (Jayachandran, 2017).

2.6.14 Sexual Harassment, Verbal Abuse and Girls' Education

In educational institutions sexual harassment and verbal abuse of girls by male teachers and boys are often cited as one of the major areas of concern affecting participation in education (Tabane, 2014). A study conducted in America by Smit and du Plessis (2011), shows that nearly two thirds of all college students experience sexual harassment during their tuition and that female learners are predominantly the victims. According to Smit and du Plessis (2011), this reinforces the idea of male heterosexuality and the authentication of male masculinity which are often the cause of females becoming victims of the sexual harassment in an educational environment. According to Sang et al. (2016), even though most sexual harassment is perpetrated by male students against female students there are also cases of harassment by women against men, and of same sex harassment perpetrated by either sex. In general, researchers found that given the gendered context of sexual harassment girls are more frequently harassed than boys (Young et al., 2008; Ortega, 2010; Gruber & Fineran, 2016). As Aderinto (2010) puts it, the special circumstances in which girls find themselves, expose them to possible risk of sexual abuse. Chiodo et al. (2009) concluded that when girls reach puberty they are at increased risk for sexual harassment and verbal abuse because of inappropriate attention by males.

In Ghana, Norman et al. (2013) found out that in the first and second years, women in medical schools were more likely to be sexually harassed by men. According to them, academic dependence means predicted attacks. This had a lot of negative impact on girls' education. Jordan et al. (2014) make it clear that women who attend academic institutions are at substantial risk of experiencing sexual assault and this impacts heavily on retention. In Zimbabwe, Mutekwe and Odiba (2013) in a focus group interview held with sixth form girls' participants in their study showed that sexual harassment of girls in the co-educational schools studied accounted for a large number of the high school dropout rate for girls. In schools negative gender-based messages like name calling, teasing as well as gestures or actions which tend to annoy, abuse, demean, humiliate or embarrass girls can create hostile environment which may affect adolescent girl learners' learning. Sexual harassment can therefore be considered as a developmental risk factor for psychological problems which could interfere with social adjustment of girls' schooling. Uduma, Effiong, and Oloaluwa (2015) posit that sexual harassment is a major public health crisis that significantly hinders education of the girl-child, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where the practice is high, largely because they are victims of practices which are embedded in traditional institutions like patriarchy and female genital mutilation (FGM).

Ranging from unwanted sexual remarks to forced sexual contact, these experiences cause students, especially female students, to feel upset, uncomfortable, angry and disappointed in attending school (Smit & du Plessis, 2011). The persistence of any form of the act might lead to mental and emotional states such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic disorder and low self-esteem and poor self-image, which in turn leads to poor performance (Ah Hing, 2010). This can have a direct correlation to psychological impairment in adolescents schooling (Eom et al., 2015). This, again,

may adversely affect the girl as she is unable to focus her attention in the classroom especially if she has to return to the same situation that put her life in danger (Sang, Kemboi, & Omenga, 2016). When sexual harassment and abuse cast a pall on school environment, that results in alienation and estrangement for girls' education the perception is that girls do not belong to the school. In such instances, parents may be forced to withdraw their daughters from school. This may give preference to boys' education.

2.6.15 The Labour Market and Girls' Access to Education

The labour market has an important role upon perceived benefit of children's education. Parents are presumed to be concerned with wealth maximization when making decisions about their children's schooling. The educational investment that parents make about the schooling of each member of their household especially children is guided by expected differences in future returns to schooling from each child. If parents were to pay large sums of money and realizing that the returns are to be low, constrained by little income, the desire for equal treatment and investing in the child may result in a trade-off between the boy and the girl. Thus, when it comes to education parents will only invest in the children who have great academic potential and the ones for whom the labour market offers better employment outcomes in the future. The notion that parents would only invest in the children who will have the greatest employment opportunities may help to explain some of the gender differences in investment in schooling by parents.

According to Edgerton et al. (2012), education is frequently seen as a crucial instrument in the fight against poverty as it may help individuals to access better jobs that raise their labour earnings and thus contribute to the improvement of their lives

and their families. Educational achievement is therefore crucial to occupational status attainment. However, high youth unemployment may influence households' perceptions of the benefits of education. In rural areas in particular, job opportunities for school leavers are fewer compared to urban centres. This has resulted in high levels of unemployment. This has become a hindrance after completing school. As a result, parents get increasingly disappointed after investing in their children's education. According to McCaig and Pavcnik (2016), poorly educated female and rural workers have little prospect to attain formal wage jobs. In Burkina Faso, for example, the World Bank (2014) database indicates that there are few wage jobs available in the rural areas and the employment sector distribution is very similar between males and females. In Ghana, Christine et al. (2016) assert that females are more likely to work in the household enterprise especially in the agricultural sector and in comparison, their male counterparts in urban areas have more than twice as many wage jobs than in rural areas. The argument here is that if schools were seen as not adding value to their daughters' lives and career prospects, girls may be less likely to be given the chance to enroll in school (The World Bank, 2012). This is given credence by Huisman and Smits (2015) who state that if it is easier for men than for women to find jobs, parents may take their child's sex into account. Johannes (2010) states that in rural Kenya parents used to keep girls at home. This is based on parents' belief in the myth that there are no jobs for women in the labour market. Parents begin to question their daughters' education by believing that it is a waste of time and money to invest in girls' education. If the private returns from education were not sufficiently high to provide any alternative economic path for girls many parents may not see how their daughters' education will be put to use in their local labour market (Huisman & Smits, 2009).

Wallace (2017) writes:

> *There is a shortage of formal employment opportunities in...Ghana and particularly in rural areas. While the informal sector provided more wage employment opportunities for young people, they were by no means abundant. Those who did have paid informal sector work typically found it doing casual labour or by working in small businesses. Moreover, despite considerably high literacy rates at the national level, many young people face enormous hurdles in finding and keeping work. This issue has also been noted in vocational and technical schools, where training has not kept pace with advances in the private sector. In Ghana, over half ... were out of school and the majority were still living with their parents (p.2).*

Judging from Wallace's statement, one can conclude that children are less likely to pursue further education if there are no job opportunities for people with qualifications. The labour market structure might also be important for the decision to continue schooling. If people with higher education earn substantially more, parents may decide to let their children stay longer in school (Huisman & Smit, 2015). In Ghana where the economy is unable to generate enough jobs for university graduates (UNICEF, 2012) with its attendant result of 'Association of Unemployed Graduates', parents may not be motivated to educate their children especially girls. Since most parents send their children to school with the hope that they will continue on to higher education and perhaps obtain a wage-paying job, they view their sons as having a greater chance of realizing this goal than their daughters. Ghaffar et al. (2013) noted that in Pakistan, one of the issues coming out of parents of children's education is whether education is the only tool to get good government jobs. Parents will be seen quoting examples of people who even though have completed higher education are seen roaming here and there without any government job. Ghaffar et al. (2013) continued to say that parents and more specifically the ignorant parents are

unable to see any substantial changes in the life and behaviour of their educated children. Most of them seem to be in favour of complete staying-away of their children from the hustle and bustle of educational life and academic engagements.

Recently, enrolment of girls at all levels of education has increased. Yet globally, women are not in jobs that appear to be well matched to their qualifications. Preliminary observations show an apparent disconnect between female education and labour force participation rates in various countries. Mukherjee (2015) argues that in almost all countries female unemployment rates are higher and even those with certificates, more are engaged in unskilled manual jobs in areas like garment making where they earn low wages. This may influence expectations of how much a girl in education can expect to earn in later life. If the degree of relationship between cost of education and earnings (Private Rate of Return) (PRR) is a determining factor in making decisions about investment choices in education (Cegolon, 2014), it presupposes that families or parents may fail to send their daughters to school because the future monetary returns from their education are lower than that of their sons. It is therefore suggested that households may be forced to reduce their investment for girls if it is realized that the current earning capacity of women are low. For girls local norms and values can influence the degree to which parents value education. This can reduce the time they spend in school (Husman & Smits, 2015). In more patriarchal cultures, for example, investments in girls' education are expected to be lower, as women are supposed to remain in the private domain and not to engage in paid employment (Gunduz-Hosgor & Smits, 2008). Research work by Cancho and Elwan (2015), in Bosnia Herzegovina shows that the gender gap in employment is stark: 47 per cent of males are engaged in the formal employment

sector, compared to 29 per cent of females. To Cancho and Elwan (2015), this happens due to traditional views of women's role in the society.

In patriarchal societies, the major task of women is producing offspring. An important role of men is to provide income and security for their families with strong emphasis on the male breadwinner role. This attitude shared by both men and women, associate men with career and women as bearers of children. These biases affect women's rewards for participating in the labour market both directly and indirectly, by persuading girls that they are not as good as men and for some particular jobs (Duflo, 2012). This leads to disparity in the labour market and affects girls' education. As a result, most girls in developing countries limit their career choice to the Humanities and Home Sciences, which leads to stereotyped occupations leading to skill gap for employment. In this instance men are more likely to be employed than women as the impact of schooling on occupational choice may be greater for males than for females. Further, the only choice left for women is to go into self-employment (Aggarwal et al., 2010). The labour market is thus what Kabeer (2012) describes as a ―bearer of gender", as men and women are appointed different roles by the virtue of their gender. Findings by Aslam et al. (2013) conclude that in Pakistan education increases gender equality in labour market outcomes. Nonetheless, the positive effects of education were limited by cultural norms that led to possible discrimination of women in obtaining employment. The explanation was that parents allocated less education to daughters than sons, even if the labour market rewarded women's education more, since the returns accruing to parents from a daughter's education are lower than those from a son's education.

The problem may be exacerbated by gender segregation in recruitment. Aslam (2007) explains that a large part of the gender gap in earnings is due to potential

discrimination in the labour market which is not explained by differences in men's and women's productivity endowments, such as education and experience. According to Aslam (2007), gender segregation in the employment sector explains why parents do not see the need to educate their girls who they think have fewer chances of getting work after schooling. As Burchell et al. (2014) put it, the interest in segregation arises mainly from the role it plays in gender inequality, through its effects in shaping opportunities for women and men and on earnings and working conditions. Segregation limits employment choices and access to higher level jobs and may lead to higher risks of job loss. With low participation in the labour market and a wide gender gap existing in employment as well as gender discrimination in the labour market, girls may have fewer chances of getting employed especially as most firms do not employ low-skilled employees, who are often female (World Bank, 2015). When education benefits sons, lower investment in girls' education could be an efficient economic choice as girls do not become earning hands in the family.

2.6.16 Parental Education

Parental education is seen as an important index of socio-economic status, and often associated with whether a child goes to school or not. Most scholars have therefore concluded that parental education is the foremost determinant of child education and higher level of parental education is allied with higher access to education, higher attending rates in school and lower school dropout rates for children. It is believed that lower levels of parental education negatively affect the children's academic attainment, which had a significant effect on dropped out rate. Research by Edgerton et al. (2012) indicate that students whose parents attended post-secondary institutions are more likely to pursue post-secondary education themselves, more likely to attain

a first degree, and are more likely to continue on to graduate or professional school. For instance, students whose parents attended a post-secondary educational institution are twice as likely to complete a bachelor's degree as first generation students than those whose parents did not attend.

Again, it is believed that parents who have received some education themselves know the value of schooling and that there are several advantages when children have educated parents. According to Huisman and Smit (2015), if parents with a higher education earn substantially more, they may decide to let their children stay longer in school. Such parents can provide a better learning environment by helping with children's home work. They may even employ the services of an external teacher when parents have no time to offer such services. In this case girls may be less involved in household assignment due to the presence of house helps. To demystify the fear of rape and harassment of girls, parents might, for example, arrange transportation when traveling distances to school are far. In cases where there are problems in the school as a result of low quality, wealthy parents may strike the right acquaintance with the heads to ensure that children are kept in school and disciplined. In most cases, gender differences in education are likely influenced by mothers' education as educated mothers are more conscious about the future success of their children and try to promote the well-being and success of their daughters knowing that women are so often neglected by society. Agüero and Ramchandran (2010) posit that in Zimbabwe more educated mothers have better-educated children than less-educated mothers. Thus for girls, their mother's education is probably most important, because mothers who have succeeded in completing a certain level of education have experienced the value of education and know that it is within the reach of girls to obtain schooling (Webbink et al., 2010).

As a result of higher education women can use their bargaining power to make sure that their daughters are educated. Thus, mothers' altruism or preference for daughters is important for their daughters' educational attainment when fathers have a propensity to favour sons. However, despite mothers' altruism, they usually cannot act upon it, as they have no autonomy or power in the household decisions (Shahidul, 2013). When mothers have no income or make no financial contribution to the household income, they do not even have the autonomy to bargain with their partners regarding household decisions especially in their daughters' schooling. This can affect their daughters schooling. Indeed there is a large correlation between the education level of parents and their children (Björklund & Salvanes, 2011) and that the differential effect of mother's education always favours daughters. However, Ermisch and Prozanto (2010) in results based on Norwegian data indicate that there is evidence that father's education is more important than that of mothers in influencing children's educational attainment. According to Holmlund et al. (2011), an additional year of father's schooling was found to increase Swedish children's schooling by 0.11 years, whereas the effect of mother's schooling was small and statistically insignificant.

Similar findings were reported in Norway by Pronzato (2012), where the effect of father's schooling was stronger than the mother where 1 year more of mother's education seems to matter more for low educated mothers. Research by Gitter and Barham (2008) in Nicaragua concluded that the effect of women's power within the household was by the number of years they went to school relative to their husbands. The difference in effects between mothers and fathers education on children's academic attainment could be explained by differences in social interactions across genders. What still remains is how to discover the aspects of 'what parents do' that

enhances their children's educational attainments and how these aspects are correlated with parents' education (Ermisch, 2008). Being well educated does not guarantee girls' education. Leaper, Farkas and Brown (2012) investigated a sample of 579 girls aged between 13 and 18 and found that their parents' educational level was not a significant motivating factor in relation to Mathematics, Science and English. In a study with first-year college students, Alarcon and Edwards (2013) found no significant relationship between the parent's educational level and student retention in school. This is also corroborated by Ogunsola, Osuolale and Ojo (2014) who concluded that the education of parents do not have any significant relationship with students' academic achievement. In Ghana, there are many instances where highly educated people have abandoned their daughters' education and are learning trade or hawking along the streets. There are also cases where illiterate mothers and fathers have been able to educate their female children up to the university level. Illiteracy, on the part of parents, is not the only factor that will undermine the education of daughters but it may play a role to some extent. It must also be borne in mind that children born to less educated women can also attain higher educational levels and sometimes children born to higher educated women do not report a higher level of education. Psychologically, whether educated or not mothers show much interest in sons' than daughters' education. In most homes more educated mothers usually give equal opportunities of higher education to both daughters and sons without any form of gender discrimination. Several studies have substantiated the observation that the effect of parents' education is not independent of the gender of the parent (Pedro, 2010; Borkotoky et al., 2015). It must be noted that positive correlation between parental and children's education can be biased in that in most

societies educated women marry more educated men and this has an influence in girls' education.

Despite all these arguments, parental illiteracy can influence education for girls. In rural areas most uneducated parents do not value girls' education, investments in girls' education are therefore expected to be lower, as women are regarded as baby makers. The negative attitude of parents regarding girls' schooling can prevent their children from accessing education. Illiteracy means less parental support in school work, low level of motivation, low interest among girls to learn.

2.7 Manifestation of Male Priority

The desire for males has long been recognised as a significant determinant of child bearing decisions throughout most of the developing world. Priority for males is inherently patriarchal in nature. Male priority manifests itself in different forms globally. It comprises a variety of norms and rituals deeply embedded in obvious favouritism of the male child with sometimes blatantly disregard for the female child. For a young couple in some African societies prayers for fecundity would either wish for males only or for males and females with males taking precedence over females. It is always males and females never females and males. At the first sign of pregnancy, a woman receives unsolicited prayers from her family-in-law for the safe delivery of a baby boy (Osarenren, 2008). In most societies the birth of a male child is often heralded with great joy. The rituals are more elaborate with the mother receiving compliments for producing a male child as compared to a female child. The father enjoys great pride with the assurance of continuity of the family line and the protection of his property. In some cultures priority for a male child is so pervasive that the birth of a girl is not a welcomed occurrence. The birth of a girl is

less ritual with reduced value attributed to the mother. The reception ceremony is minimal and less colourful. Having a daughter is regarded as a social stigma. It is said that "the birth of a son enhances his status, while that of a girl lowers his head" (UN Agencies, 2011, n. p). A reflection of this attitude is demonstrated in an old saying that ―raising a daughter is like watering the neighbour's garden" (Attane & Guilmoto, 2007, p. 425). Thus rather than happiness the birth of a girl is usually met with guilt, sadness or even depression from the mother for failing to give birth to a boy. The birth of a girl means that the family is incomplete because it lacks a male child (Indo Canadian Women's Association (ICWA), 2012).

In high fertility contexts, the main manifestation of male priority will be discrimination during the postnatal period. For example, in India, differential feeding practices have been found where boys are fed better and breastfed more than girls leading to a higher mortality rate amongst young girls (Agrawal et al., 2014). In another way, priority for boys has also manifested itself through the practice of sex selective abortion (Jha et al., 2011). Clinics in India and China are cited as practising early sex detection to get rid of a baby girl. The availability of scientific equipment such as ultrasound machines for determining the sex of a foetus demonstrates that expectant parents desire to know the sex of their unborn foetus. This desire to know the sex of the unborn child is strong in societies partly because parents prefer one sex to the other (Fuse, 2010). A small family culture and easy access to sex selective technologies had led to sex-ratio imbalances. These imbalances can affect the reproductive age groups. The biological norm for birth ratios is said to be about 105 boys born for every 100 girls worldwide. This norm has been drastically altered in some countries where the sex ratio has been skewed since the mid-1980s. High sex ratios at birth ratio has reached 133 boys born for every 100 girls which is

manifested in East and South Asia, including China, South Korea, and India resulting in a significant increase in the imbalance of the number of men and women in the world. The problem is not about discrimination against girls but practised perhaps unconsciously by parents who have internalized certain norms favouring males over females (Das Kupta, 2008). This indicates a conscious parental strategy to manipulate the sex composition of their children and especially to avoid raising several girls who are deemed unworthy. According to Hesketh et al. (2012), in China, male priority and sex-selective abortion had led to 32 million excess males under the age of 20 years. It has been assumed that the lack of opportunity to fulfill traditional expectations of marrying and having children has resulted in low self-esteem. Again, men for whom marriage is unavailable are assumed to be psychologically vulnerable and may be prone to aggression and violence. In most households, boys will tend to grow up in smaller families with fewer siblings while girls will have more siblings and be more likely to receive fewer resources in terms of education by caring for younger siblings. According to Aslam (2007), in Pakistan parents' priority for males is manifested in school selection for their children. Parents generally select comparatively better schools, in context of fees, for their sons. Daughters are ignored or enrolled in the schools having lower fees and fewer facilities.

2.8 Priority of Males and its Impact on Girls' Education

In sub-Saharan Africa and Ghana in particular education has been identified as the key component of development (World Bank, 2010) as it enables individuals and the society to make an all-rounded participation in the development process by acquiring knowledge, abilities and skills. There is no doubt that education and development are intertwined. In particular, there is a relative scarcity of research on the impact of the

parental male priority in determining differential educational opportunities for female children. According to Bhatti et al. (2010), education plays a pivotal role in human capital formation and a necessary tool for sustainable socio-economic growth. Education also combats unemployment, confirms sound foundation of social equity. Since Ghana's independence, successive governments have demonstrated their recognition of the importance of education to national development, by pursuing policies aimed at making education accessible to all, yet, "a differential treatment of boys and girls emerge at the early stages with many girls informally educated" (Ofosu-Kusi, 2004 p.25). Globally the existence of male priority have been a prominent issue because of its potential negative implications (Fuse, 2010). This has had a lot of impact in the overall development of girls in several ways which ought to be addressed.

2.8.1. Priority for Males Lower Educational Attainment among Girls
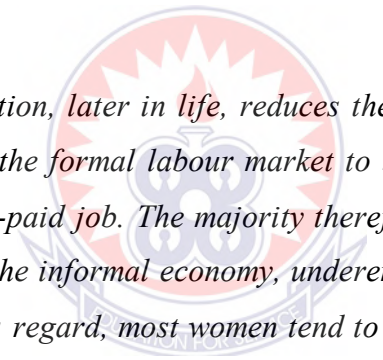
Priority for boys based on traditional views and perceived future financial returns to families can have a negative impact on girls' educational attainment. Lower educational attainment among girls has the implication that there is lack of competitiveness and comparative cost advantage for girls towards career development and little prospects ahead in higher and continuing education. This tendency perhaps is the cause of the multiplying effect of male domination in education and public life. This is so in many developing countries like Ghana. It must be noted that lower educational attainment by girls can have a rippling effect on the overall development of the girl.

2.8.2. Priority for Males Weakens Women's Human Capital Development in the Labour Market

There is widespread agreement that the education of girls is one of the most important investments that any developing country can make in its own future. Education gives women employment opportunities and higher occupational positions which lead to economic independence from men. Employment also empowers and enlightens women. This weakens their understanding of traditional gender roles and their belief in equal gender role strengthens. It gives women the opportunity to experience less gender bias. On the contrary, weak female schooling due to male priority means that women's human capital is not well utilized in labour markets in many countries. As Steinberg and Nakane (2012) put it, getting more women in the work force would mean not only a larger labour force, but possibly a more skilled labour force given that women on average have completed more years of education. Given this situation, it is not surprising to find stark gender differences in adult labour market outcomes. The fact is that women lag behind men in labour force participation and perform mostly unskilled jobs, and have lower earnings in employment than men. Lack of education may lead to few women in managerial positions. In effect, few female leaders can serve as role models for girls, shaping parents' beliefs about what women can achieve. This role model effect can help close gender gaps, as higher aspirations translate into investments in girls' education (Pande & Topalova, 2013). Girls' access to education is important for harnessing their resource potentials.

2.8.3 Low Education Levels Lead to Vicious Cycle of Poverty

Low education levels will trigger a vicious cycle of poverty as uneducated women are left ill-equipped to obtain well-paid jobs, and this, in effect will further reduce parental motivation to invest in girls' schooling. Girls' access to education is important for harnessing the human resource potential of any nation. As more women enter the labour force, economies can grow faster in response to higher labour inputs. There is clear and convincing evidence, amassed over the past two decades, that investing in girls' education, can contribute to a substantially better future not just for the individual girls, but for their families. However, discrimination among females in education can have its dire consequences. As Ofosu-Kusi (2004) had earlier reported:

> *Such discrimination, later in life, reduces the ability of a number of women to enter the formal labour market to benefit from secure and relatively better-paid job. The majority therefore end up as marginal participants in the informal economy, underemployed and financially insecure...in this regard, most women tend to be in a weaker position in Ghana and elsewhere (p.25).*

As education is evenly spread it leads to attainment of employment thus reducing poverty levels and increasing household incomes especially in rural and deprived communities. Girls will have access to higher-paying jobs, which will impact their families' finances as well as contribute to the national economy. When women are provided with equal rights and equal access to education, they go on to participate in business and economic activities. This could be one reason why countries with higher investment in girls tend to have lower poverty rates. Women's education is essential for poverty reduction not only because of the income it generates but also because it helps to break the vicious cycle of poverty (Tembon & Fort, 2008). When

girls are educated, they will be able to access credit, engage in economic activities, income levels will rise and this will slow down poverty. Increasing female educational attainment of girls will not only enhance economic growth but will also improve the quality of life of women. The impact of investing in girls' education is intergenerational. A mother with a few years of formal education is considerably more likely to send her children to school, breaking the intergenerational chain of poverty. However, if women do not have education, it is likely they may not understand the value of education. This may not translate into her children remaining in school. Hence under-utilization of girls' education will mean a loss of human capital in education not only in the Gomoa East but also in Ghana as a whole. However, with higher education attainment levels for females, skill levels will rise among females, resulting in a smaller gender gap in education. In effect, low levels of education of females can contribute more significantly to loss of human capital development, not only in their own generation but also in the next generations (Syomwene & Kindiki, 2015).
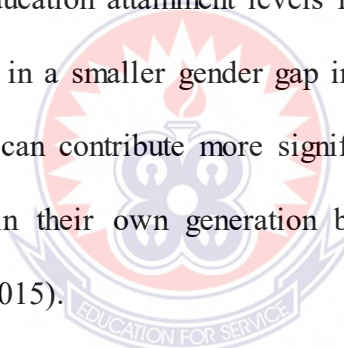
2. 8.4 Increase in Male Dominance

When learning outcomes are unevenly distributed in all the grades to reflect more boys participating in schooling than girls will, reflect the history of dominance of males. The implication is that transition from one level to another will have a higher percentage of males entering the next level in education. In the case of girls who could not enter secondary schools they have to enter apprenticeship. Others may turn into early marriage. Others will migrate to the urban areas in search of non-existent jobs. This will create unemployment, slums and in some cases prostitution widening the vicious cycle of male priority as uneducated women are left ill equipped to obtain

well-paid jobs. This, in effect will further reduce parental motivation to invest in girls' schooling as they see girls' education as waste of resources. Investment in boys' education makes women ill prepared to compete with men in any field of endeavour.

Again, by numerical implication and access to education, there is the likelihood of high illiteracy rate among girls. This means women may not be able to challenge traditional gender roles. Uneducated women are expected to be biased in their desire for future children. They may not adhere to contraceptive behaviours that limit their fertility as they would be bounded by social norms. They may see males as a necessity but not as an option. This may not encourage them to reevaluate traditional gender roles. Non education means women may be passive participants in any decision taken that affects their overall development. Illiteracy confers low standard of living on women leading to low level of self-esteem and lack of confidence. This can lead to inter-generational illiteracy where education is given little or no value in the family setup. Female children that come along will thus see illiteracy as the norm and not make any effort to learn how to read and write. In effect, men will still have a dominant role and may be in a position to translate their intentions into behaviours deciding on family planning choices and family size which can be detrimental to women's health.

2.8.5 Limit Girls' Freedom, Perpetuate Adverse Cultural Practices and Gender Violence

Education can empower women to have a say over their life choices by giving them the confidence and opportunity to demand their rights by defying all social limits. Recent research by Aslam (2013) finds that higher schooling for Pakistani girls is related to their perceived role in spouse choice. However, earlier research in Ghana

has shown that low level of girls' education can limit their freedom and in turn truncate the opportunities underlying rights and responsibilities (Ofosu-Kusi, 2004). When women have no voice due to low education it affects their empowerment. This can perpetuate adverse cultural practices like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and gender violence. More education reduces the rate of violence against women, enables them to leave abusive relationships, and encourages them to reject Female Genital Mutilation (Tembon & Forst, 2008), trokosi and widowhood rites, among others. A survey conducted in Egypt by Van Rossem, Meekers and Cage (2016) concluded that opposition to FGM was always strongest among women with higher levels of education. Educated women tended to be guided less by tradition and less subjected to social control. It can be concluded that educated women are more likely to participate in house hold decisions and resist violence by challenging their traditional roles as house minders and baby sitters. This will help to break the monopolistic power inherent in patriarchal values.
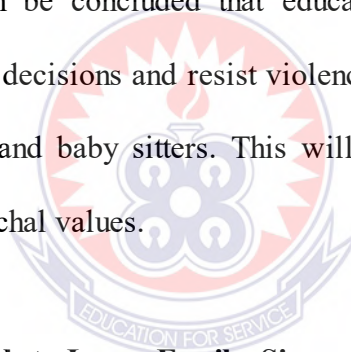
2.8.6 Male Priority Leads to Large Family Size

One of the major problems facing developing countries like Ghana is high population growth. In countries with a greater gender gap, the negative effect of education on fertility is stronger among women. Adebowale and Palamuleni (2015) report that priority for males contributes to high fertility levels. Pande and Astone (2007) concluded that women's education especially at the secondary and higher levels is linked with weaker son preference irrespective of desired family size. Probably, this may be due to factors such as access to mass media and increased socio-economic status. Women who are more educated might be given more freedom and autonomy thus, resulting in them viewing the utility of sons and daughters in ways that are

different than the traditional norms (Pande & Astone, 2007). These women might demonstrate a weaker priority for male as they are able to make decisions regarding family size irrespective of how many females they have. On the other hand, less education for women would rather be the opposite. Women would still adhere to traditional male priority given rise to large family size. This can contribute immensely to high population, gender discrimination and low girl-child empowerment (Milazzo, 2012). Casterline (2010) argues that high fertility poses health risks for children and their mothers. At the household and individual level, high fertility means not only a large number of births but also typically a high incidence of pregnancies at young ages, of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies which can affect household and individual welfare. A surveillance system data in Bangladesh revealed that women with five or more pregnancies have a significantly higher risk of dying due to pregnancy-related mortality (Casterline, 2010). A specific study on Nigeria indicates that women with first-born daughters were significantly more likely to end up in a polygynous union to be divorced, and to be the head of the household as a result they also give birth to more children (Milazzo, 2012). This can lead to a history of preterm births.

Another negative effect of non-female education is the correlation between fertility and decrease in savings by women. Instead of parents channeling money into profitable future ventures parents would spend money on child-rearing rather than saving for the future. High fertility can lead to economic inequality with higher birthrates in lower-income families mostly in rural areas leading to poverty. According to Kravdal, Kodzi, and Sigle-Rushton (2013), children are more likely to be stunted if they have more siblings and if the birth interval is less than 2 years. This can have adverse effect on female education. The transfer of women in rural areas to

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cities in search of better available economic conditions due to lack of education would mean high population growth rate in cities, unemployment, slums and prostitution with its attendant health risk and poverty.

2.8.7 Leads to Distortion Effect in Access to Technology among Women

Apart from inequalities in access to employment, gender bias in education can affect women's access to improved technology, "particularly improved seed, fertilizers and other agro-chemicals, machinery, and irrigation" (Sheahan & Barrett, 2017, p. 86) since women are unable to read and write they may not be able to apply these chemicals effectively. This can lead to poor yields. A study in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda found that educational opportunities through farmer field schools increased the value of crops and livestock, as well as resulting in a 61 percent increase in income. The education programme was particularly effective for women farmers across the three countries, which suggests that farmer field schooling can have a large impact in agricultural wage employment (Davis, et al., 2012). This greater productivity means reduction of poverty levels among women especially in rural areas.

2.9 Eliminating Male Priority

The issue of male priority is at the heart of discrimination against girls in most societies. This is manifested in various aspects of life especially in the area of education. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), specifically Goal 3A is set to ―eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, at all levels" (Am & Gergel, 2009, p.2). However, challenging an entrenched custom and mindset is not a simple task and cannot be achieved easily. Modernization seems not to shaken its root causes. For change to effectively take place, it must be a gradual process and

therefore it is suggested that vigorous and concerted efforts are needed by all concerned (Nnadi, 2013). A number of strategies therefore should be developed to serve as protective measures for women against biases in education. These strategies are discussed below.

2.9. 1. Law on Gender Equality (LGE)

The existing legal framework in Ghana is favourable to gender equality. The law which is aligned with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) serves as a critical instrument for public awareness of gender by promoting gender equality and anti-discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation. In spite of the law supporting gender equality, there are weaknesses due to lack of awareness of the laws by women as well as inaccessible data on discriminatory practices. Policy measures aimed to tackle multiple gender equality barriers are negated by various traditional practices stemming from patriarchal social norms. More is needed, in addressing issues of poverty, security for the aged and advancing women's economic empowerment that serve to devalue girls' education in Ghana.

2.9.2 The Role of the Mass Media

An essential requirement for an action to take place is information. It is in this area that the electronic and print media will be a major instrument of change. The media in Ghana should play a powerful role by disseminating information on the importance of girls' education and economic growth to address issues of gender awareness and women's rights. The media should generate mass awareness on sex bias and their legal implications. There should be improvement in the overall access to information through local media about women's employment opportunities. There

should also be legal reforms to harmonise media laws specifically with the LGE to ensure equal gender representation in leading positions of employment and elimination of gender discrimination. This will help provide a range of support to strengthen performance of the media sector regarding gender issues and women's empowerment (Pozarny & Rohwerder, 2016).

2.9.3. Role of Civil Society

On the part of civil society, there should be continuing education and campaigns that stimulate discussion and debate on gender equality especially in the area of education. States should support advocacy and awareness-raising activities that stimulate discussion and debate around the concept of equal value of boys and girls. This view is supported by what is obtainable in the Republic of Korea where priority for sons has largely been overcome through a combination of strategies, including attention to gender equality in laws and policies, advocacy, media campaigns and economic growth (UN Agencies, 2011).
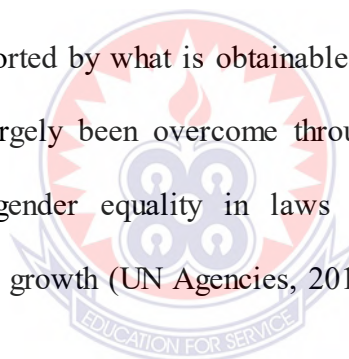
2.9.4 Improving the Status of Women

Education is an important fulcrum through which society is built. Due to socio-cultural beliefs, religious practices and the gender-biased interpretation of laws, women suffer unequal treatment, rights and opportunities. Literacy should be a high priority. This could be done through initiatives and cultural sensitization. Education and training programmes for boys and girls are needed to eliminate a gender-segregated labour market. This could be done by introducing training programmes and vocational courses for women within traditionally male-dominated areas. In order to change the lives of women, conditions relating to poverty, discrimination, entrenched traditional practices and marginalization should be addressed. More

emphasis on programmes and policies that actively improve the status of women and change the attitude of the society towards gender preference should be enforced.

2.9.5. Increase Women's Participation in Decision-making

An enabling environment should be created by providing skills training courses for women especially in rural areas in decision-making and self-assertion. This could be done through the efforts of NGOs and local women's associations. On the side of government, the ministry of women, gender and social protection could also be strengthened to promote bye laws to regulate its activities regarding decision making in rural areas which tend to reflect the values of males. Increasing women's social engagement is a priority to achieving gender equality and robust democratisation (CEDAW, 2013).

2.9.6 Female Teachers as Role Models

In most societies, lack of female teachers in schools can affect girls' participation in education. Girls require female teachers to confide in and emulate them. In most cases, parents worry about sexual safety of their daughters in an environment dominated by male teachers. The presence of female teachers may facilitate enrolment and attendance as parents see them as source of security. It is well documented in the literature that the absence of female teachers as role models affect the education of girls (Camfed Ghana, 2012). Research suggests that female role models also significantly increase parents' aspirations for their daughters and adolescent girls' aspirations for their own education and careers. Moreover, research has demonstrated that the gender gap in educational attainment decreases in communities with more exposure to female leaders, and that girls in these communities perform fewer household or domestic chores (Beaman et al., 2012).

2.9.7 Abolishing School Fees

One of the strategies to encourage girls' education is the abolishing of school fees in primary schools. This will address direct cost which affect parents' decisions about sending their daughters to school. This strategy has worked in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Mozambique (World Bank, 2009). Even though there is little empirical evidence regarding their relative merits, in these countries the abolishing of school fees has led to improvements in girls' enrollment.

2.9.8 Supportive Measures for Girls

A number of measures such as monetary incentives can be given to women to help increase girls' enrolment in school. These could be direct subsidies or financial incentives to families with daughters only. This could help raise awareness and change people's mindsets and attitudes towards girls' education. The introduction of bursaries and scholarship programmes that are gender focused can significantly increase girls' enrollment. In the Gambia, the institution of a girls' scholarship programme increased secondary enrollment by nearly 10 percent. This positive effect was even experienced by girls in primary school, whose enrollment also increased significantly, by about 9 percentage points. This finding suggests that scholarship schemes can propel parents to invest in the schooling of their daughters, in anticipation of lower costs for future levels of schooling (Ousman, 2016).

2.10 Summary: Gaps in the Literature

There are considerable evidence in the literature reviewed supporting the view that there is indeed a pro-male bias in parental investment in children's education (Murphy et al., 2011; Hesketh et al., 2012; Kojima, 2012; Rossi & Rouanet, 2014; den Boer & Hudson, 2017) and that son priority is found mostly in patriarchal

societies (Guilmoto, 2012). There are many possible explanations offered for this discrimination in parental priority to male education. Unfortunately, there is no empirical research investigating this subject in a particular matrilineal society and its impact, how it is manifested and its elimination. The study was therefore designed to fill the gap by exploring factors that aim at finding out whether boys are prioritized in the Gomoa East, a typical matrilineal society in Ghana.

2.11 Theoretical Framework

Theories of patriarchy

The tendency to dominate in all fields remain a natural phenomena in the human race. One of the main issues affecting women today is male domination bias which operates in all sorts of subtle ways and gives absolute priority to men and to some extent limits women's human rights. The literature reviewed so far indicates that there is inequality, disparity, discrimination, domination and subordination of females in all aspects of life. Conceptualizing the problem of inequality between women and men, in terms of male bias, past studies indicate that gender biases are not intentional or stem from a conscious desire to impede the progress of women but that people's behaviours are shaped by implicit or unintended biases, stemming from repeated exposure to pervasive cultural stereotypes (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012).

International debates and practices on gender bias and discrimination in all spheres, including education during the past decade, have assumed different dimensions amongst feminists. There is therefore the need for a theory that examines the inequality, discrimination and subordination of women since such theory may give specificity to women's discrimination and may provide ways of understanding the cultural, social and historical differences in women's situation both in the private and

public domains. The study therefore employed the use of feminist theory of patriarchy which contextualizes gender prejudices, inequalities, discrimination and domination within a patriarchal framework as a guide to investigate male priority over girls' education in the Gomoa East District of Ghana.

The term "patriarchy" has assumed a central place in feminist literature recently. There is not a single explanation for when, how and why patriarchy originated. Feminists theorists have, over the years, tried to understand the origins of patriarchy by asking questions on how patriarchy originated, whether men and women had ever been equal in society and when subordination of women began. The answer to these questions is that it provides directives for addressing the unacceptable social phenomenon of patriarchy in order to understand its history so that society can be created with equal rights for both men and women (Wood, 2013). Having the patriarchal system to constitute the theoretical framework, it is important to examine its assumptions and arguments.

When feminists address questions on women's subordination and analyse particular forms of patriarchy they use ―patriarchy‖ as a social structure and sets of social institutions where men are dominant over women in wealth, status and power (*Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2007*). Thus a theory of patriarchy is an attempt to describe the social relationship between men and women as well as to find out the root cause of women's subordination (Sultana, 2012). In Walby's (1991) words, ―It is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women‖ (p.20). According to Allanana (2013), the concept of patriarchy often includes all the social mechanisms that reproduce and exert male dominance over women. It may therefore be seen as a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex, which provides material advantages to males,

while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females.

Weber (1993), one of the leading sociologists in history, used patriarchy to explain the structure of social organization in which the father was considered the head of the kinship network and the one who controlled its economy. For Weber, patriarchy is the power of men over women exercised on daily basis and experienced by all women. He defines power as ―the opportunity which permits one individual to impose his will on the behaviour of others even against their will" (p. 20). According to Weber, "domination is gained by influencing others through precise verbalization of what one expects and having these instructions obeyed" (p. 20). It is through this system that patriarchy hinges on to ensure subordination of females. Weber's illustration of patriarchy was related to family and household relations. Referring to the definitions, some major commonalities emerge which offer concrete explanations as to what patriarchy is all about. These, indeed, are issues concerning male power and male domination over women in the Gomoa East District. This can be described in the African context as male hegemony and female subordination. Subordination here means, ―something else is less important than the other thing" (Collins Cobuild, 2010, p.1559). It is in this light that male priority is seen as discriminatory and subordination of women's right in all spheres of life.

According to the *Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics* (2013), the concept patriarchy is seen as a universal phenomenon with a wide range of tools at its disposal. These tools include, among others, domination, inequalities, subordination, gender hierarchies which are useful in theory building. The universality of patriarchy is reflected in Watson et al.'s (2014) argument that patriarchy as a phenomenon has a global view and linkages which presupposes that its linkages transcend from one

generation to another. Patriarchy, as an oppressive force, has a long history that stretches across national and cultural boundaries and is a system that regulates women by means of male dominance (Maseno & Kilonzo, 2011). Patriarchal construct is spread in every sphere of human activity whether matrifocal or matrilocal. This paradox has developed due to entrenched socio-cultural norms that favour men among various societies. In patriarchal societies families are structured in the form of power and controlled hierarchy where the male is the dominant figure. In feminist theory the entire process of this hierarchy results in marginalization. From a feminist view point, socio-cultural norms help to perpetuate the disparity and hierarchies in society between male and female in the assumption of roles, either in private or public affairs (Heintz, 2008; Ray, 2015) and that prevailing social-cultural systems which are discriminatory, if not checked may erode modest inroads made by women with regards to political and public sector participation (Bawa & Sanyare, 2013).

To Ray (2015) gender disparities are man-made which are approved and sanctioned by the patriarchal system within traditional institutions. Thus patriarchy is entrenched by traditional roles of men which leads to gender inequality. Haralambos and Holborn (2008) however, de-emphasize the traditional notion of patriarchy suggesting that gender relations must rather be a tradition of enlightenment having the principle of democracy, justice, rationality, citizenship, human right and equality. De-emphasizing the traditional notion of patriarchy in this context rather appears to be an egalitarian system. That is, a concept based on equal opportunity and also an approach for articulating the principles of modernization. This feminist standpoint contradicts the notion of patriarchy. The radical approach of placing all humans at equal levels makes it more reactionary. It must be noted that gendered power

relations are manifested in all aspects of culture irrespective of geographical locations, class and ethnicity. Male privilege appears to be an organizational structure describing the social identity of the male as a leader rather than being equal to his female counterpart. This is what tradition upholds as a social system.

The concept of equality may sound more of a political right based on principles of modernity. For Alabi, Bahah and Alabi (2013) men and women play different roles from one culture to another and it is yet to be established in any society in the world where women are more powerful than men. In their view the roles that men play are more respected and valued than women. To Alabi et al. (2013) patriarchy is recognized as a common phenomenon that has persisted across time and cultures. The main point feminists have stressed about gender inequality is that it is not an individual matter, but is deeply ingrained in the structure of societies. Gender inequality is built into the organization of marriage and families, work and the economy, politics, religions, the arts and other cultural productions, and the very language we speak. Making women and men equal, therefore, necessitates social and not individual solutions (Lorbe, 2010).

Historically, even in the primitive society, men had dominant roles and responsibilities that distinguished them from the women's folk. Their superiority in most spheres of life was not contestable. Patriarchy is basically seen as a form of social stratification. According to Sachaefer (2008), stratification is universal in that all societies maintain some form of social inequality among members depending on its values, a society may assign people to distinctive ranks based on their skills. Patriarchy is therefore a structure or some kind of positioning in society. The context of stratification makes males culturally chauvinistic. This is seen by women as gender bias.

Most of the explanations of why women are discriminated are based on certain social and ideological construct which considers men as superior to women (Rawat, 2014). The main victim of this inherited ideology are females. Many feminists have argued that the ideology of patriarchy is a major cause of inequality. The ideology of patriarchy suggests that the dominant ideas in society tend to favour men and operate to keep women in subordinate positions. Feminist theories see socio-cultural norms as a means by which ideologies, relationships and social institutions are maintained (Sen et al., 2007; Watson, 2014). Sen et al. (2007) maintain that:

> *Norms are vital determinants of social stratification as they reflect and reproduce relations that empower some groups of people with material resources… while marginalizing and subordinating others by normalizing shame, inequality, indifference or invisibility. It is important to note that these norms reflect and reproduce underlying gendered relations of power, and that is fundamentally what makes them difficult to alter or transform (p.28).*

Keleher and Franklin (2008) also argue that socio-cultural norms are powerful elements as they are deeply embedded in social structures. Gender norms manifest at various levels, including households and families, communities, neighbourhoods and the wider society. They ensure the maintenance of social order by governing and constraining behaviours of both women and men, maintain and perpetuate gender inequities. Contextually, the issue raised generally means that equal opportunity and equal right do not exist in the patriarchal system. This does not mean that the patriarchal system is a fixed (static) phenomenon because it can recreate (reinvent) itself after a time period in the space of cultural or social settings of any society (Berendt, 2010). The changes, however, may depend on institutions and individual interest and needs. Perhaps modernization as an emerging phenomenon may change

the situation through culture repositioning which may involve the reconstruction of the cultural concept of a society (Chigbu, 2015).

The main goal of feminist theories is to reform and liberate women everywhere through political action. Despite this laudable idea, patriarchy as a theory has been a little problematic. According to Hunnicutt (2009), although political action is essential, feminists have not fully developed a gender-centered theory on one of the most important elements of patriarchy that is violence against women. One of the reasons is that the concept of patriarchy oversimplifies power relations by casting men in a singular group. Regarding the concept of domination, Hunnicutt (2009) stresses that theories of violence against women must focus on male power by placing that power within a patriarchal order, to see how men are situated in their own scheme of domination relative to males and other groups of domination. Thus, Hunnicutt (2009) advocates theorising varieties of patriarchy, and defines violence against women as a product of patriarchal social arrangements and ideologies that are sustained and reinforced by other systems of domination. In today's modern society, and globalizing system, patriarchy remains relevant as part of the social structure and cannot be ignored or wished away. This view to some does not undermine the functional relevance of patriarchy in any society. Therefore, an attempt to change the status quo would not be conducive.

2.11.1. The Relevance of Patriarchal Theory to Girls' Education

What could this theory mean in concrete terms? What usefulness or applicability has patriarchal theory to girls' education in Ghana? How does it help us understand the gender inequality phenomena in education? To what extent are girls' educational experiences attributable to patriarchal ideas? The bone of contention among

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feminists has been how patriarchy affects girls' education. My goal in this study is not to add to the argument but to limit myself to the patriarchal ideas influencing girls' education in Ghana and to find out if this confirms the study or otherwise .

As previously stated, girls' education is largely shaped by socio-cultural beliefs, practices and parental attitudes that tend to favour the education of boys to the neglect of girls. In patriarchal societies males are valued and are given the support they need to continue their education in order to preserve the superiority of men in all areas of life. As a social system, it asserts that males are naturally dominating and superior to females, and have the right to suppress women and maintain their power and control. This is carried out through the internalisation of norms through the process of socialisation (Habiba, Ali & Ashfag, 2016). The daily life of girls in many developing countries therefore happens in different contexts. They engage in different activities daily such as household chores and work to contribute to the family's meagre income. Patriarchy as a concept is a social construction which has its roots in socio-cultural structures which help to solidify male domination and impede the education opportunities of girls. Alabi et al. (2013) observe that some patriarchal structures include among others: ―paid employment, patriarchal relations within the household, patriarchal culture, sexuality, and violence toward females" (p.58). These factors can affect attendance, completion, and continuation of children's education. The result of these factors is the persistent disparity in girls' education in many developing countries. This characteristic of gender as socially constructed is consistent with the patriarchal theory. The patriarchal theory focuses on a lot of issues affecting women's social inequalities which calls for multi-sectoral support from all stakeholders in order to address the issue of barriers to girls' education.

The patriarchal theory involves social relationships. This includes daily experiences, and human interactions in educational set ups, work place and even access to material wealth. Several research works have concluded that the issue of girls' education whether enrolled in school or drop out depends on factors such as cultural practices like initiation and early marriage, poverty, perception, parental education, access to the labour market, distance to school and sexual harassment among others.

Like other social theories, there are certain weaknesses and critiques which have been leveled against the patriarchal theory. The theory is criticized for the lack of a definitive answer to all the factors involved in girls' education. Okin (2008), a feminist critic argues that ―while the concern that the family limits equality of opportunity is legitimate and serious, theorists who raise it have neglected the issue of gender and therefore ignored important aspects of the problem" (p.55). Okin (2008) continues that, those who discuss the family without paying attention to the inequalities between the sexes are blind to the fact that the gendered family radically limits the equality of opportunity of women and girls of all classes. In understanding the role patriarchal ideology plays in feminist theories the idea put forward by Walker (2008) is helpful. Walker basing her argument on ethics states that:

> *...feminism's traditional critique challenges morally the coercive, cruel and oppressive powers of men over women in many systems of gender. Feminism claims for women on moral grounds economic, political, social, sexual, epistemic, discursive, and symbolic powers denied by individual, institutional, and cultural male dominance. Feminism must also oppose domination structured by hierarchies or exclusions of class, race, sexuality, age and ability for these always partly organize gender (p. 4).*

This makes patriarchal theory necessary. The patriarchal theory embrace many of the factors influencing girls' education. Overall, the patriarchal system as

discussed in this study helps to explain the socio-cultural norms influencing girls' education. The major challenges facing the task of executing gender-sensitive and gender-parity policies today is the patriarchal cultural norms, attitudes and practices which have been accepted as the natural order of events. As a result of the patriarchal social structures that exist, culture, tradition and custom play very important roles in establishing and perpetuating gender roles and relations. In most communities stereotypes pervade the educational system. At all levels of education, subjects and courses are stereotyped as masculine or feminine. Careers that reflect care giving roles like nursing, teaching, catering and secretarial work are regarded as feminine, with girls encouraged by parents and teachers to opt for these courses (Fatile & Ejalonibu, 2016). While we may not be able to gather all the information about what influences parental priority for male education, it is without doubt that the factors influencing parental decisions according to the findings are complex and situated within the systems of patriarchy.

2. 11. 2 Summary

This chapter addressed two major issues that are pertinent to the study; the literature review and the theoretical framework. The literature revealed that disparity in girls' education continues to be persistent worldwide despite the numerous studies that have indicated the importance of girls' education. Indicators influencing girls' education are social, cultural and economic. There are many possible explanations offered for this discrimination in parental allocation of resources. These explanations form an interconnected web that constantly and daily affect decisions as to whether to send girls to school or not. The literature gives credence to pro-male bias in parental investment in their children's education. In the context of a range of factors

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explored, decisions that parents often make mean that girls' opportunities are severely constrained by ignoring their knowledge base, skills and their academic capabilities which invariably affect the nation as a whole.

This study was grounded in the patriarchal framework. It provided the perspectives to understand the phenomenon of girls' education in Ghana and, in particular, the Gomoa East District. The argument here is that gender is a social concept influenced by multiple socio-cultural factors; therefore, to improve girls' educational experiences demands the use of a multi-sector approach. This means that girls' education requires the concerted effort of various stakeholders, such as parents, community members, teachers, district assembly, and the government. The next chapter describes the methodology, involving the process of data collection.
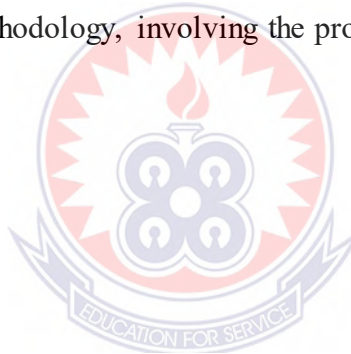
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological choices I made in order to answer the study's questions. Some of the specific issues the chapter examines are the research designs and strategies used, philosophical consideration, research site, and description of participants chosen, data collection and the process of data analysis. In this chapter, discrimination of girls in education is privileged in accordance with feminist research perspective. The main purpose of the study was male priority over girls' education in the Gomoa East District of Ghana. In examining the prioritization of boys in education I acknowledge the fact that girls marginalization within the educational process has been analysed over the years. Words frequently used by researchers in this analysis were sexism and sex-stereotyping. They were used to understand ways in which girls were socialised and excluded from the educational process. Since the main purpose was to determine prioritization of boys' education, it was important to identify the impact of gender inequalities in education. There was, therefore, the need to interview not only parents but also girls and the officials at the education office. The choice of education officials was to help gain insight into policies for addressing inequalities in education. This helped me in search of the methodological choices I made.

3.1 Research Design

The case study design was used for the study. The design mainly dealt with how male prioritization affected girls' education in the Gomoa East District. This method helped to provide evidence by describing and documenting aspects of a phenomenon

as it occurred in its real world settings. According to Yin (2014), the fundamental goal of a case study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of an issue, within its context with a view to understanding the issue from the perspective of participants. This allows the researcher to explore, understand and present the participants' perspectives and get close to them in their natural setting. A case study is important for developing different views of reality, including the awareness that human behaviour cannot be understood merely as an act that is driven by a theory (Starman, 2013). According to Bryman and Bell (2015), "a case study entails the collection of a body of qualitative data in connection with more variables which could be examined to detect patterns of relationships" (p.62). This design therefore allows triangulation of qualitative methods at a certain point in time. The researcher further noted that a case study is often possible to use when the real purpose of an issue is unclear. Closely linked to a case study is interpretivism which emphasizes subjective experiences and the meanings they have for an individual. According to Starman (2013), the subjective nature of the research views of a researcher on a particular situation play a vital part in the study results. In this context, the issue of male prioritization in the Gomoa East District is appropriate.

3.2 Philosophical Considerations

The question of whether or not it is possible to identify a set of specifically ―feminist‖ research methodological tools has spawned a heated debate among researchers. Much of this dialogue has centred on what could be called the ―quantitative–qualitative divide‖. Underlying this dual model is the notion that these paradigms are deeply rooted in different epistemological positions. From an epistemological point of view, qualitative research is often thought to value

subjective and personal meanings whilst quantitative research is constructed in terms of testing theories and making predictions in an objective and value freeway (Metso & Le Feuvre, 2007). In studying social and educational issues qualitative and quantitative approaches extend into different philosophical research paradigms, namely those of positivism, interpretivism and critical theory (Gratton & Jones, 2010; Rubin & Babbie, 2010).

Positivism originates from empirical philosophy which follows the natural science in thinking and assumes that things are seen objectively. This view of positivism maintains that the objects of the social sciences, namely people, are suitable for the implementation of scientific methods. Gratton and Jones (2010) firmly believe that, for the positivist, there is an emphasis on methodology to facilitate replication and quantifiable observations for statistical analysis. Here, the researcher is independent of and neither affects nor is affected by the subject of the research. This implies that the generation of data should be independent of human opinions and judgment. For the positivist, the role of the researcher is neutrality and non-interactive position. This enables the researcher to assume the role of an objective analyst. To the positivists, the end product of the researcher is the production of generalisations similar to those produced by the natural scientists. In this respect, understanding of phenomena in reality must be measured and supported by evidence (Hammersley, 2013).

Interpretivism stems from symbolic interactionism and phenomenology, and believes that both reality and knowledge is constructed and reproduced through communication and practice (Tracy, 2013). According to Thahn and Thanh (2015), there is tight connection between qualitative approach and interpretivism and that researchers who use interpretivism often seek experiences, understandings and

perceptions of individuals for their data in order to uncover reality, instead of abstract statistics and numbers. From an interpretative point of view, which is also termed constructivism or constructionism, reality is not something out there, which a researcher can clearly explain, describe or translate into a research report. As opposed to the positivistic belief of reality, interpretive researchers' believe that reality is socially constructed by humans which can be changed and understood subjectively (Blumberg et al., 2011; Kroeze, 2012). The purpose of interpretivism is understanding and interpreting everyday happenings (events), experiences and social structures as well as the values people attach to these phenomena (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). This is consistent with Creswell's (2015) claim that interpretivist researchers discover reality through participants' views, their own backgrounds and experiences, by such methods such as examination of documents, interviews, narratives and observation. Through this method, qualitative researchers tend to collect data in their natural setting. The researcher engages in active collaboration with the participants to address real-life problems in a specific context; these are directed towards the offering and implementation of feasible solutions to the problem (Blumberg et al., 2011, p.17). This method allows participants to have sufficient freedom to determine what is consistent for them (Flick, 2014). The conclusion could be drawn that quantitative methods of generating data are more suitable for the positivist paradigm, while qualitative methods are more suitable for the interpretive paradigm.

Critical theory places a strong emphasis on historical and social contexts, in order to make sense of social phenomena (Lincoln et al., 2011). Rooted in Marxism, critical theory provides a framework of both philosophy and method for approaching research and evaluation (De Vos et al., 2011). Its mission is to understand the human condition in a social and historical context, and also to improve it. Critical theory is concerned

with how people are constrained by society and freeing them from repressive ideologies, institutions, and structures (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017). According to the critical theory the role of research is to discover or gather facts to gain a profound understanding of society that can inform actions with a potential to change social reality (Ragin & Amoroso, 2010). Babbie and Mouton (2008) refer to the critical theory as the exposure or liberation from historical, structural and a value-basis of social phenomena. For them, the critical approach emphasises becoming part and parcel of everyday life-worlds of the people to be studied. The intention of the critical theorists is not merely to understand situations and phenomena, but rather to bring about change in understanding situations and phenomena by being personally involved. The focus of the critical paradigm is on an understanding and practical transformation of social circumstances for emancipation. This should be done through a critique of ideologies that reinforce inequality. The critical approach stresses that reason is the highest potential of human beings, and by using reasoning it is possible to criticize and challenge the nature of existing societies (Blaikie, 2007). The role of theory and interpretation in critical theory is to both diagnose and inform change (May, 2011).

According to critical theory, humans behaviour is the outcome of ―particular illegitimate, dominatory and repressive factors: illegitimate in the sense that they do not operate in the general interest, one person‗s or group‗s freedom and power is bought at the price of another freedom and power ‖ (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.31). In sum, the critical theory ―situates its research in social justice issues and seeks to address the political, social and economic issues, which lead to social oppression, conflict, struggle, and power structures at whatever levels these might occur. Because it seeks to change the politics so as to confront social oppression and

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improve the social justice in the situation, it is sometimes called the Transformative Paradigm" (Kivunja & Bawa, 2017). In other words, critical theorists believe that ―research should contain an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of participants" (Creswell, 2007:21). Critical action theory research is a validation and extension of action research or participatory action research processes that combine critical theory with the action research paradigm. To the critical theory reality is socially constructed through the media, institutions and society.

In the role of the researcher, positivism is about objectivity. The researcher examines the outside world without being involved personally. Interpretivism considers that the researcher is a learner whose aim is to seek information from his informants or the participants while critical theory views the researcher as the advocate of social change. In empirical studies these three theoretical perspectives significantly have dominant research approaches. However, in researching the social world these three approaches appear to adopt different attitudes to knowledge. Their relationship is demonstrated below:

Table 3.1: A relationship between the three theoretical perspectives and research approaches.

Positivism	Interpretivism/Phenomenology	Critical Theory
Quantitative Approach	Qualitative Approach	Action Research/ Participatory Action Research

Bryman (2012) defined quantitative research as, "a research strategy that emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data" (p. 35). It means quantitative research denotes amounting to something. Flick (2014) claimed that "Qualitative

research is interested in analysing subjective meaning or the social production of issues, events, or practices by collecting non-standardised data and analysing texts and images rather than number and statistics" (p.542). The interpretations given by Bryman and Flick show that quantitative approach sticks to the positivist tradition, focusing on pattern-measuring while the qualitative research follows the naturalistic tradition meaning-seeking through the interpretive paradigm. The former focuses on attempts to investigate the answers to the questions starting with how many, how much, to what extent (Rasinger, 2013) whereas the latter is particularly useful for exploring how and why things have happened. The distinction here is that in positivism knowledge is derived from empirical testing; while knowledge in interpretivism is obtained from the meaning of events (Richardson, 2012).

Literature on feminist concerns reveal that quantitative research approach dominated from the 1990s to early parts of 2000s. In dealing with feminist concerns earlier researchers like Miner-Rubino and Jayaratne (2007) as well as Peake (2009) argued in favour of quantitative research. According to them, quantitative methods can identify patterns in women's oppression and violence and that quantitative methods can inform decisions about the best course of action to implement social change. Scot (2010) also argued that quantitative approaches are essential to examine the processes of selection and exclusion that reflect and create gender inequalities as manifested in changing lives and structure. In an examination on the use of quantitative methods to advance feminist-inspired understandings of inter-sectionality, Scott and Siltanen (2016) acknowledged conflicting opinions about the suitability of current quantitative techniques. To them quantitative methods usually ignore the contextual complexity of organizational life and that research questions about women's issues cannot be accurately addressed by this method. To Austin and

Sutton (2014), quantitative methods leave very little place for women's voices to be heard because they lack a direct connection between researchers and the participants when collecting data (Rahman, 2017). Counteracting Peake's (2009) argument on importance of the quantitative method Testa, Livingston and Van Zile-Tamsen (2011) also stated that experiences of women cannot be understood in a purely quantitative manner divorced from their context. In view of this, many researchers like Metso and Le Feuvre (2007) further contend that qualitative research is believed to be more open and empathetical. It is often thought to value subjective and personal meanings and is said to be conducive to giving a voice to women. There is therefore the need to adopt qualitative method when dealing with feminist concerns.

Notwithstanding, qualitative research has come under scrutiny in recent times. It is said that qualitative methods tend to generate large amounts of detailed information about a small number of settings. As a result one cannot generalize qualitative findings to a wider population. This is because the findings of the research are not tested to discover whether they are statistically significant (Atieno, 2009). The subjective nature of the information from qualitative methodology means that they can be open to misinterpretation and observer bias as researchers could unwittingly interpret the data in a way that suggests what they wish to show. Based on this debate I agree with researchers like Thomson (2011) and Anderson (2010) that the decision of what research stream one uses lies within the essence of the research questions and the phenomenon under investigation should determine the methodology to be used rather than on which method is considered to be most important or feminist. The methods chosen should enable participants to express themselves openly and without constraint (Zubin & Sutton, 2014).

3.3 Justification for using Qualitative Research

In order to describe and interpret how certain cultural norms and views influence the social identity of the individual requires a paradigm which appropriately fits into this inquiry. The appropriate approach to describe this phenomenon is the qualitative approach despite its criticism that the approach is too subjective and difficult to generalise. I found the qualitative approach to be the most relevant philosophical choice because of the subjective nature of the research topic under investigation. According to Denscombe (2007), "qualitative research is an approach that emphasises subjectivity, description and interpretation and deals with people's perceptions and meanings, attitudes, beliefs, feelings and emotions" (p. 75). Maxwell (2013) also states that qualitative research works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values and attitudes, which corresponds to a deeper space of relationships, processes and phenomena that cannot be reduced to the operationalisation of variables. Based on Denscombe's (2007) and Maxwell's (2013) arguments, I found the qualitative approach to be more suitable for the study of girls' education since the data which were obtained from both the parents and girls was difficult to quantify because it dealt with feelings, beliefs, attitudes and emotions.

In dealing with human experiences the subjective nature of qualitative research approach makes data collection more detailed as the researcher interacts with the participants directly. In this situation complex issues were understood easily. Again, qualitative research was adopted for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribed to a social or human problem by understanding holistically the human experience through different voices, meanings and events as it unfolds in specific settings (Rahman, 2017). Here, the different voices included parents, girls and education officials. The responses of parents and girls as well as

education officials helped to gather more in-depth data about how girls experienced education. In my desire to understand and gain insight into girls' education, the qualitative methodology was useful in understanding the socio-cultural nuances inherent in the issue of girls' education within that context and how girls are navigating and shaping it. This is because any effort to share what is learned from the parents and educators require an awareness of the context through description and interpretation. In this respect, the qualitative research approach is required to capture these dynamics. The idea of using qualitative research was to uncover trends in thought and opinions, and dive deeper into the problems of girls' education through different voices. As a researcher, therefore, my intent was to help change not only lifestyles but also systems within particular societies that impact on girls' education. This, to me, could be done through a qualitative approach because of its flexibility in collecting data as the study involved a complex social process shaped by the attitudes of people.

In this research the way of knowing reality is by exploring people's own assumptions, intentions, attitudes, beliefs and values regarding a specific phenomenon, in an attempt to see how others have constructed reality. A qualitative stance was therefore required in this research because it attempts to penetrate the human understanding and constructions about it. These personal perceptions can be biased and subjective, but qualitative research accepts them as true for those who have lived through these experiences (Nieuwenhuis, 2010).

In recent times there has been a response to calls to adopt qualitative approaches to understand and probe issues better. My decision to adopt a qualitative research therefore was prompted by the need for a research strategy that would not only enhance society's understanding of girls' education in the Ghanaian education sector,

but also in response to calls for more qualitative approaches to research into educational problems particularly in developing countries that could be used as basis for policymakers in appreciating problems of marginalized groups. In Ghana over reliance on quantitative research in the social sciences had not been able to reveal in-depth knowledge about gender inequalities in education. This situation has led to misinformation and misunderstanding of critical issues like discrimination against girls' schooling. Even though quantitative approaches are essential in examining gender inequalities they have not fully addressed gender issues which are sensitive to context. My view here is that qualitative research can help to fill the gap by helping understand the voices of the actors. In spite of the inherent diversity within qualitative research, I tend to agree with Denzin and Lincoln (2011**)** that:

> *Qualitative approach can transform the world as it makes the world visible through field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos by studying things in their natural settings in an attempt to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (p. 3).*

Since my intention in this study was to obtain an in-depth understanding of girls' exclusion from education I did not plan to measure their exclusion as the positivist approach would adopt, and on the other hand, I did not also aim at purposefully facilitating girls' education through action research. I recognized that, by participating fully in the study, parental ideas about girls' education might be affected, either more quickly or in a different way. Again, my aim was not to use this as a deliberate attempt for change. According to Maree and van der Westhuizen (2010):

Epistemological assumptions can be viewed in two ways namely 'hard, real and objective', and then quantitative methods are considered, or a softer more subjective approach, requiring a more interpretive stance (p.31).

Thus, I intended to describe and explain girls' exclusion from education account from their angles by situating my study in the interpretivist perspective within the qualitative approach. I hold the view that understanding a phenomenon or situation or an event comes from exploring the totality of the situation through interviews and narratives. This, I thought, would help me to understand girls' educational experiences and how their lived experiences facilitate or impede their present lives. In this way the positivist view would not agree with this approach.

3.4 Research Site

The study was conducted at the Gomoa East District in the Central Region of Ghana. The purpose of selecting the site was due to my identifiable connection with the site. As a former Headmaster of one of the Senior High Schools in the Gomoa East District, I observed that in every year of new admission of students, the number of boys admitted was always higher compared to girls. I became particularly interested in understanding the dynamics of girls' education in the district due to its geographical location which had both homogeneous and heterogeneous groups for personal contact and familiarity. My cultural background and personal beliefs about girls' education informed my decision. My aim was that the selected district would simplify data collection process since the researcher was familiar with the stakeholders in the district. It would also help to gather and analyze sufficient data that would lead the researcher to draw informed conclusions regarding the district on male and female education. I believed that my identifiable connection with the site

would help understand my role as a participant-observer in data collection. According to Patton and Cochran (2002), researchers' popularity in a researched area helps to build positive relationship and it helps to increase the number of respondents to volunteer information. Again the site was chosen because the researcher was proficient in the language spoken by the majority of its members. With this I saw myself as an insider. This I thought would allow me to be become a subject of my own research, thereby increasing my abilities to conduct reflexive analysis of the community and myself.

Population, Location and Size

The Gomoa East district has a total population of 207,071, representing 9.4% of the regional population, according to 2010 Ghana Housing and Population Census. Females account for 52% of the total population (McClafferty et al., 2016). The Gomoa East district is one of 17 administrative districts of the Central Region of Ghana. It was carved out of the then Gomoa District in 2008 by the Legislative Instrument (1883) and became operational on 29th February, 2008. The district is situated between latitude $5^014'$ north and $5^035'$ north and longitude $00^022'$ west, and $00^054'$ west. It is located in the south-eastern part of the Central Region. It is bordered by a number of districts, to the north-east by Agona East, south-west by Gomoa West, on the east by Awutu Senya and Ga South in the Greater Accra Region (GAR) and to the south by Efutu Municipality. The Atlantic Ocean borders the south-eastern part of the district. It occupies an area of 539.69 square kilometres. The direction of settlement is towards the N1 road and the Swedru road. Settlements along the coastal belt are highly populated. This is probably due to economic viability of the fishing and the salt industry. The north western part of the district produces lumber and foodstuff.

Demographic and Socio-Cultural Characteristics

Gomoa East district is inhabited mainly by people of Gomoa origin who form over 92% of the population with the remaining 8% being the minority tribes, and includes people from the Northern and Volta regions and other Akan ethnic groups because of the fishing and cocoa farming activities in the area.

Figure 1: DISTRICT MAP OF GOMOA EAST
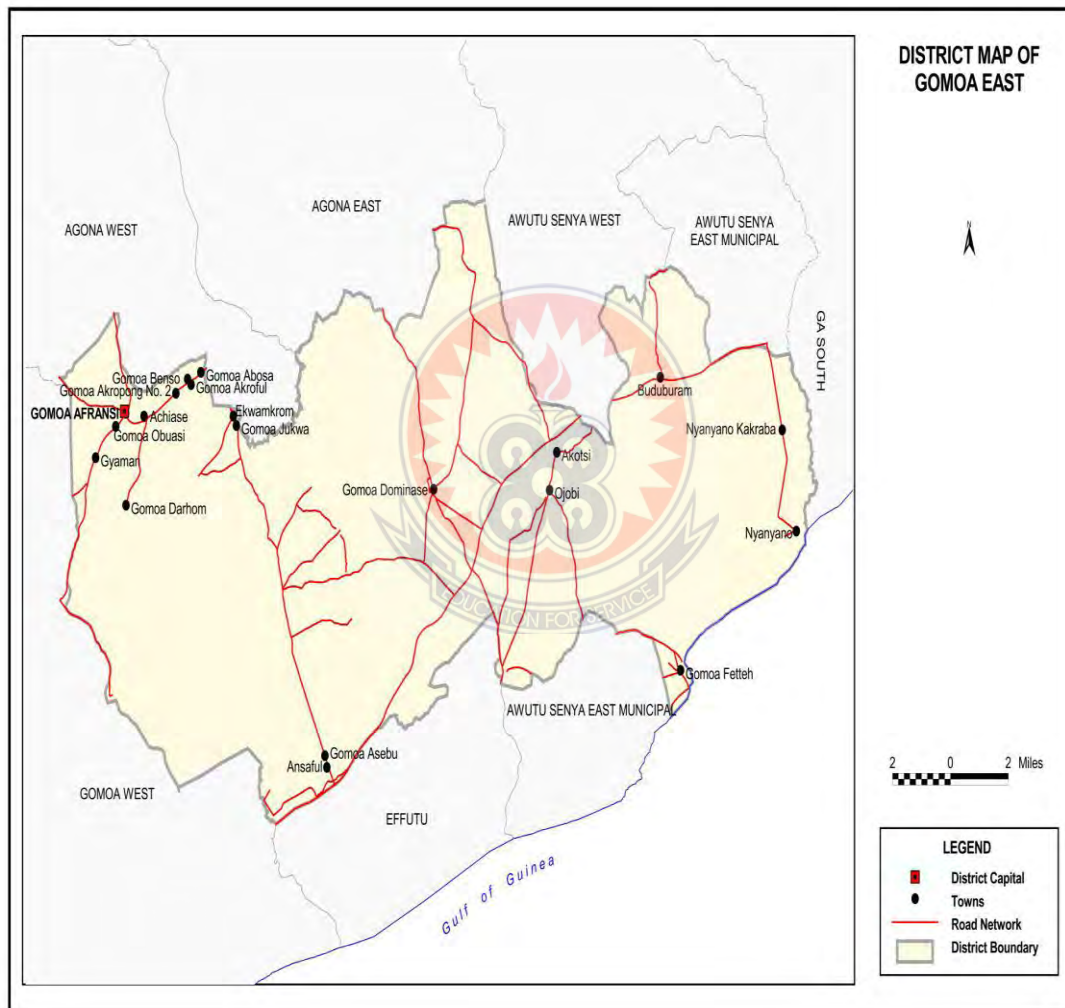
Source: Ghana Statistical Services (GSS) (2014).

The district exhibits the characteristics of both urban and rural settlements. There are more rural communities than urban communities in the district. About 97% of the district population live in the rural areas. Only two of the towns are exhibiting some characteristics of urbanization namely, Buduburam and Nyanyano.

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The people in the district are mainly engaged in farming and fishing for their livelihoods. The seasonal nature of economic activities, namely, fishing and farming has contributed immensely to the poverty situation in the district (Ghana District League (GDL), 2016). As high as 33.7 percent of households in the district are engaged in agriculture. In the rural localities, 57.5 percent households are agricultural households while in the urban localities, 12.5 percent of households are into agriculture. Most households in the district (91%) are involved in crop farming. Poultry (chicken) is the dominant animal reared in the district. The district is inhabited mainly by people of Gomoa origin who form over 92 percent of the population with the remaining 8 percent coming from Northern Ghana, the Volta region and other Akan ethnic groups (GSS, 2014). Four settlements were selected for the study that is; two urban, Buduburam and Nyanyano and two rural, Fetteh and Ojobi. This combination enabled me to compare how rural-urban settlement influences education. It also gives two coastal settlements and two non-coastal settlements to enable me to compare how the major occupations of crop farming and fishing influence the dynamics of education. These were also carefully selected to enable me to obtain data from diverse populations based on the historical and cultural significance and settlement patterns.

3. 5 Population and Sample

In this study, the target population comprised all parents in the district since they are within the researcher's reach. I used the purposive and snowball sampling methods to select a sample of 26 participants. Out of this, 20 parents were selected from four settlements within the district. The parents were considered appropriate as population of the study area because they constitute the dramatis-personae responsible for

making decisions towards their children's education. Again, the parents were considered as the focal people of the study who were more valuable, knowledgeable and experienced for studying the phenomena (Creswell & Plano, 2011; Tracy, 2013). The sampling was done in accordance with Merriam's (2014, p.34) and Dworkin's (2012) suggestion that in qualitative research, it should be purposeful and small. I also selected a smaller number of cases to yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge (Patton, 2015). This is because qualitative research methods are often concerned with garnering an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon or are focused on meaning which are often centred on how and why a particular issue, process, situation, scene or set of social interactions occur. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) state that "qualitative data often focuses on smaller numbers of people than quantitative data, although the data tends to be detailed and rich" (p.461). I also considered that the sample should be chosen in a deliberate manner and that the purpose for selecting the specific population was to have those that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data, given the topic of study (Yin, 2014, p.109).

Even though the central focus of the investigation involved participants who were primarily parents, it was important to hear the perspectives of girls and some key players in education. The purpose was to understand the contradictions and the patterns in the perspectives and to further validate my findings by seeking confirmation whenever necessary. The girls were those still in school and those who had dropped out. They were included because they bore the brunt of either dropping out or remaining in school due to the socio-economic and cultural challenges they faced in their quest to access education. The requirement for selecting girls were based on their maturity, ability and articulation to respond to questions on the kind of

data sought in relation to their educational experiences. They were also to respond to questions with the hope that they would provide adequate knowledge on their personal experiences in schooling and what they perceive as parental attitudes towards girls' education. One elderly community leader was chosen as he was regarded as a repository of culture. The reason was to tap into his cultural knowledge and experience as to whether his views had a relationship with the research aim. His view provided me with in-depth knowledge of the family system among the Gomoa people. Those in the education sector who were policy implementers were included because of their direct or indirect role in promoting girls' education. Their special knowledge or expertise regarding the group under study was very helpful. They also helped to feed me with direct information about parents' attitudes towards girls' education. This helped to give a holistic approach to issues of girls' education in Ghana.

In sum, the population involved parents and girls who were still in school and those who had dropped out, a community leader and a policy implementer mainly from the District Education Directorate (DED). The policy implementer included the District Director of Education (DDE). Even though I had earlier on planned to interview the Girl Child Coordinator it was difficult getting her due to heavy schedule. Through sampling different groups, I was able to compare the information I garnered from one group with the other. In qualitative enquiry, the most useful strategy is maximum variation sampling, which is not only important in reducing the possibilities of bias perspectives but also those who represent the widest possible range of the characteristics of interest for the study (Merriam, 2014). The number of years participants had lived in the district ranged from 1 to over 20 years. Having carefully

sampled the right participants, I sought their consent and willingness to participate in the study.

Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was used in selecting participants for the study. Patton (2015) provides the following description of purposeful sampling: ―The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding‖ (p.264). According to Merriam (2014), ―purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore, one needs to select a sample from which one can learn most‖ (p.77).

Purposeful sampling is also known as a criterion sampling in that the researcher needs to set criteria on the basis of which respondents will be selected. The use of purposeful sampling in this inquiry treats cases of people who represented a culturally defined society with their attitudes examined "on the basis of their judgment of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought " (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.115). My rationale for using purposeful sampling was to ensure sampling from the same group who may have similar perspectives, have broad information-rich subjects, and whose input could help illuminate the research questions outlined for this study. The notion of purposeful sampling was used to indicate that interviewees were selected on the basis of their knowledge and verbal eloquence to describe a group within a society to which they belong (van Mannen, 2014).

The second purposeful sampling technique I used was snowball sampling. Neuman (2014) explains snowball sampling (also called *network, chain sampling*) as a method for sampling (or selecting) the cases in a network. It begins with one or a few people or cases and spreads out based on links to the initial cases (p. 275). For example, in the course of an interview, one might learn of other persons who can be interviewed and this could take place when new interviewees point out other possible interviewees. At the end of each interview session, I asked parents to refer me to other parents. Similarly, a community leader suggested other community leaders to participate in the interviews. Some of the girls also recommended other girls I could use for the study and suggested possible places in the community where I could find girls who had dropped out of school. This strategy helped me to link informants from one community to another especially in the case of Gomoa East where the communities are widely scattered. There was thus a chain order technique in locating participants who met the criteria I had established for participation in the study. By making use of purposive and snowball sampling the objective was to select unique cases that were especially informative.

Sample Size

In qualitative research, the sample size is often not determined prior to the data collection, so as to ensure that data is collected until no new information is obtained. It was therefore decided that the researcher would continue with data collection until data saturation was detected to further contribute to the effort to obtain information-rich data (Guetterman, 2015:18). The rationale for interviewing 20 parents and 4 girls was that after interviewing 20 parents and 4 girls, the researcher realised that additional interviews or focus groups did not result in identification of new concepts

(Joan Sargeant, 2012). This was in line with Green and Thorogood's (2009) proposal that ―the experience of most qualitative researchers conducting an interview-based study with a fairly specific research question is that little new information is generated after interviewing 20 people belonging to one analytically relevant participant category" (p. 102). The sample size also agrees with Crouch and McKenzie's (2006) suggestion that small number of less than 20 participants in a qualitative study helps a researcher build and maintain a close relationship with the respondents thus improve the ―open" and ―frank" exchange of information. This can help mitigate some of the bias and validity threats inherent in qualitative research. The 4 girls were selected based on Krueger and Casey's (2014) suggestion that in dealing with focus group discussion the purpose of the study and participant characteristics yield clues as to the ideal size of the group. If the study is to gain understanding of people's experiences, the researcher typically wants more in-depth insights. This is usually best accomplished with smaller groups. Also, smaller groups are preferable when the participants have a great deal to share about the topic or have had intense or lengthy experiences with the topic of discussion as in the case of this study. They therefore suggested 4 to 6 as the ideal number for focus group discussion. According to Krueger and Casey (2014), larger groups of people work well when the participants don't have a lot of knowledge about the topic. Thus, this study is within the range of suggested participants. For the purpose of this study, the sample size was determined by data saturation. This means that data was collected until it became repetitive and no more new information was provided by the participants (Kumar, 2011:213).

3. 6 Data Collection

The process of data collection for this study involved two approaches: A preliminary survey which helped me to identify and select the right kind of participants and interviews for the study; and how the data gathering exercise was conducted.

The Preliminary Survey

In order to check the accurateness of the study, a preliminary exercise was conducted in the four communities within the catchment area as a form of a preliminary survey. The introductory activity was also extended to the District Education office about their concerns and contributions to the study. In the preliminary discussions brief interviews and questions raised were informal. Particularly, one thing I asked was about their willingness or otherwise to participate in the study. This was to enable me to identify and locate those who were suitable and willing to participate in the study.

Gaining Entry and Access

In qualitative research of this nature, the question of entry and access was central since the wealth of the data to be collected ultimately depended upon what access was given to what resources of data. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) commenting on the importance of access in conducting research, point out that:

> *The problem of access is not resolved once when one has gained entry to a setting, since this by no means guarantees access to all data available within it ...not everyone may be willing to talk, and even the most willing informant will not be prepared or perhaps even able to divulge all information available to him or her. If the data required are to be obtained negotiation of access is therefore likely to be a recurrent preoccupation (p. 61).*

According to Seidman (2015), when interviewers try to contact potential participants whom they do not know, they often face gatekeepers who control access to those people. Before conducting the preliminary survey entry and access to participants was negotiated through the help of a 'local man' and two former students whom I recruited from my previous school who posed as volunteers as well as language interpreters especially in the rural communities where some Ewes and people of the northern descent lived. Their presence helped to eliminate any suspicion and to assist where necessary in the case of a local dialect. With the help of the volunteers I briefed participants on the importance of the study. I then presented to them introductory letters, stating the purpose of my study.

In both the rural areas and urban centres I found out that my position as a former headmaster in one of the SHS in the district and my presence as a headmaster and researcher did not allow them any other option than compliance although some appointment days and times had to be rescheduled. At the District Education Office and the communities where I visited, participants looked at me as an insider who did not need any formal introduction. This was especially so due to the comments made by the District Director of Education who was my former director and had expressed interest in my study. In almost all the communities I visited, parents and community leaders especially the educated became fascinated about the attempts to help explore a social canker within the district. Consequently, they pledged their support to provide the needed information. This contributed to my easy access to the communities. The interviews appeared to have been granted more out of respect for my position as a headmaster and also a former headmaster of a Senior High School in the district.

Main Data Collection Process

As the main purpose of the study was to listen to the people, know their thoughts, observe their feelings, intentions and behaviours as well as the meanings people attach to what goes on in their world, I needed to talk to people from many diverse backgrounds in order to obtain a special kind of information that will help build a holistic snapshot of the area under study (Patton, 2015). Interviews therefore formed the main data collection strategy. This is because it enables interviewees to speak in their own voice and express their own thoughts and feelings (Berg, 2007, p.96). According to Beck and Manuel (2008), if one wants to understand or explore human issues, then questions must be best answered in prose rather than with numbers. In this case interview then becomes a good choice for data gathering. Based on this assumption, I used face-to-face interviews to gather data from the parents, community leaders and education officers in order to enter into their perspectives. In addition, I employed focus group discussion to collect data from girls who were in school and those who had dropped out. The interest of this study was to understand the low level of girls' education in the district and this required that all possible data be explored in order to obtain the needed information. I conducted in-depth interviews that lasted about one hour with each of the participants, using conversation and narratives in a more flexible manner. I began my fieldwork on 15th August, 2017 and this lasted for a period of five weeks.

Planning the Interview

According to Seidman (2015), a contact visit before the actual interview aids in building a foundation for the interview relationship. This helps to determine the best times, places and dates to interview participants. The first meeting was therefore intended to establish some kind of rapport and to make arrangement for the actual

meeting. This meant fitting into their plans by suggesting time and date that could be convenient to the participants. In view of this, I made phone calls to the participants to arrange when to meet them. It was surprising to know that at the initial contact with the participants I realised that some of the participants in the villages who were illiterates had mobile phones. Those who did not have phones had to be contacted through other relatives. This made the contact very easy. The purpose of the meeting was also to further explain to them the procedure for the interview, to understand what the research was about, and how the interview will differ from others they might have experienced, how long the interview will take and to give interviewees the opportunity to ask for any necessary clarification (Bell, 2014). It was also to convince them that the research was of some value to them so that they offer a spirit of co-operation during the interviews. I needed to explain issues to them in the light of the sensitivity of the research as it involved certain cultural issues. It was also to assure participants that any personal information collected, that could identify them, will remain strictly confidential and access to the information will be restricted to the principal investigator. In certain types of research, where necessary and practical, personal information on participants that could identify them will remain anonymous at all times through the use of pseudonyms. At the initial meeting I reassured the participants of their confidentiality and anonymity, thereby making them choose a convenient place that made them feel comfortable and secure. With the exception of the participant in the district education office, all participants chose to have the interviews carried out in their homes, where they felt more at ease in their surroundings and thus allowed them to speak more freely and openly on the research topic. During the preliminary meeting, I tried to observe the socio-economic status of the communities, the physical locations and surroundings, the setting in which the

respondents work and live. This was to provide the necessary information about the climate in which the interview took place (Scott & Usher, 2011).

The Interview Process

Seidman (2015) asserts that "if the researcher's goal is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing people provides a necessary, if not always sufficient, avenue of inquiry" (p.11). Sheard (2011) also states:

> *Qualitative research places importance on understanding the social world through the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of individuals. In-depth interviews represent one of the best possible ways in which to access the experiences, thoughts, and opinions of women on sensitive topics through the medium of a "conversation with a purpose (p.623).*

Tharenou, Saks and Moore (2007) point out that if a researcher is testing a hypothesis or theory, then a questionnaire or structured interview is a good choice (p.106). The present study is investigative and descriptive, neither deriving theory from data nor testing a hypothesis. As a result, it employed semi-structured interviews since it specified predetermined questions and sequences for the interviewer. However, the interviewer allowed interviewees to discuss other factors deemed relevant to the questions, bearing in mind that the intention of employing interviews in this study was to yield qualitative data. This is because interviews allow the interviewer to follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motive and feelings, which a questionnaire cannot do (Bell, 2014). Probing was important because it helped me to clarify issues where things were not clear during the interviews. I used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to solicit for responses from parents, education officers and a community leader. Since I was

examining a phenomenon, the semi-structured interview kept me along a particular line of responses. Silverman (2010) argues that open-ended questions can be administered to small samples. The use of the open-ended questionnaire allowed for anonymity because the participants did not use their real names, and was an economical way of accumulating information in terms of time, effort and cost (Silverman, 2010, p.123). In all, four different sets of questionnaires were used for the study. They varied slightly from each other. These are attached as appendices C1, C2, C3 and C4. The rationale for using different interview guides was to provide a clear set of instructions for interviewers that can provide reliable and comparable data. The importance of using the semi-structured interview was that it allowed respondents to express themselves freely, and because of its flexibility, freedom and spontaneity in contents and structure, it allowed for more probing into issues which may not be well explained by respondents (Kumar, 2014). Its flexibility also helps to elicit more information from participants as it helps them to answer questions on their own terms. The method has an added advantage as it gives insight into the meanings that individuals and groups attach to experiences, social processes, practices and events (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick (2008) also view the interview method as a way of exploring the views, experiences, beliefs or motivations of individuals on specific matters that influence their practices. In cases where little is already known about the study phenomenon, interviews are most appropriate and can provide a deeper understanding of a social phenomenon under study.

I administered the semi-structured interviews in person. This afforded me the opportunity to establish rapport with the participants. In all the interview started with broad questions that allowed me the freedom to establish a conversational style around the predetermined themes (Patton, 2015). In the rural areas the problem was that the questions had to be translated into the local language other than that everything went on well to my estimation. The interview began with the parents, education officers, girls and a community leader in that order at different times agreed with participants.

Focus-Group Discussion

Apart from the one-on-one interview I also conducted a focus group discussion with the four girls. According to Tracy (2013), the focus group interview refers to a group interview with three to twelve participants, marked by guided group discussions, question and answer techniques, interactive dialogue and other activities (p. 167). For this study, the focus group consisted of two dropped out and two school girls of the same age group who comes from similar social and cultural backgrounds and have similar experiences. The idea was to appreciate how the girls see their own reality. The discussions accorded me the opportunity to explore the range of opinions and ideas about how a group for whom the research is relevant, thinks about an issue in terms of beliefs and experiences. Particularly, I wanted the girls to be involved in the research project since the research was focused to meet their needs (Liamputtong, 2013).

The advantage of focus group interviews is that they can provide insight that might not otherwise have been available in a straightforward interview. This form of interviewing is also economical as it saves time, producing a large amount of data in a short period of time. In focus group interviews, participants are able to build on each other's ideas and comments to provide an in-depth view not attainable from individual interviews, while unexpected comments and new perspectives can easily be explored within the focus group and can add value to the study (Niewenhuis, 2010). Cohen et al. (2011) interpret focus group interviews as useful to triangulate other forms of data generation methods.

In all, focused group interviews require that interviews run within a certain required plan. The researcher therefore has to give careful attention and enough time to prepare. This covers the duration of the interview, selection of participants, the size of the group, preparing the environment, conducting the focus group and supporting participants during the interview (Doody, Taggart & Sleven, 2013). On the day for the interview as participants arrived, I greeted them warmly and invited them to help themselves to refreshments which consisted of canned malt and a meat pie each. This was followed by self-introduction and the purpose for the research.

The discussion with the girls lasted for 60 minutes. Due to earlier arrangements, participants were ready to take part in the discussions. All the girls were interviewed in the home of one of the drop outs. One of the problems I faced was that the house where the interview took place was not private enough to help the girls voice their feelings. During the discussions I realized that the ability to communicate in English was also a problem and the girls could not participate fully in the discussion.

Realizing this handicap, I had to ask them to use the local language to express themselves. This helped to tap more information from them.

3.7 Data Recording

In order to make sure that everything that was said was preserved for analysis and to provide an accurate account of the interviews I decided to seek permission to record the interview. This could be played back several times for in-depth analysis (Yin, 2014). Thinking about the potential complications that may occur, many of the participants declined to be audio taped. Most of the participants especially the illiterates asked several questions since some of the questions bothered on culture which they thought could attract sanctions from the community members. However, upon several appeals and explanations that it would be replayed to them and only their voices would be heard but not their names, all the participants agreed to be audio recorded. I told them that during the audio recording I will place the tape or disc recorder within easy reach of the interviewee, and explained to them before the interview started that they might use the pause button at any time to consider their response to a particular question or reflect on an issue. I further mentioned that participants could stop the recording if they wished. Again, I also suggested that interviewees would be given the opportunity to listen to the tape at the end of the session and alter their words to more accurately express their views if they wished (Oliver, 2008, p.46). After saying this almost all the interviewees nodded their heads as a tacit endorsement that I could go ahead and record their voices.

The pragmatic approach to the location of face-to-face interviews would suggest finding a space that is available for use, convenient and accessible to the participant and researcher, where one could avoid interruption and make adequate sound

recording of the conversation. Yet, even though participants agreed to be recorded, in some instances it was practically impossible because of locations where interviews were held. In the case of parents it was in their homes as in the case of the dropped out girls. The noise of children and interruptions by relatives made recording a little uneasy. The use of the voice recorder was that I could not capture important information that was observed. This confirms Back's (2010) assertion that "the fact that the recorder captured the voice and the precise detail of what informants said meant that social researchers have become less attentive as observers" (p. 23).

To address this problem, I kept different diaries with me to take down field notes for my personal reflections. Keeping different diaries was to avoid confusing different places I visited for data collection. I also kept a personal diary to record my reflective information. In this diary I wrote down my ideas, thoughts and concerns about my field experience. This helped me to distinguish between my direct observation and my personal opinions. It also helped me to think about my personal reaction to issues raised by participants. In order to mitigate the possibility of forgetting important information I recorded data as soon as an incident took place. This took place when I found myself in a quiet place. Note taking was very helpful, as it ensured that I listened carefully and decoded information, what I found informative contributed to my ability to form an overview on re-reading. I periodically reviewed the notes as it helped in reducing biases.

3.8 Data Analysis

In this section, data from the qualitative research is presented, analysed, described and interpreted in a systematic way as the next step of the research process. The aim of the analysis was to identify trends and relations in accordance with the research aims. This enabled the researcher to understand parental perceptions on girls' education and suggest ways of mitigating pro male bias in education in rural and deprived areas in Ghana. The research results were presented as an analysis of the qualitative data obtained from the individual semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion.

My personal connection at the time of data collection was critical to this study because it helped support my analysis. This provided opportunity to gain insight and understanding of the dynamics of girls' education in the district. My understanding of participants in their cultural and social context created meaningful chances for data collection. I became aware of my subjectivities and the impact on how I approached the analysis of the data. To reduce the impact of my biases and increase credibility, I employed member-checking strategies where participants were given the chance to review and make the necessary corrections on the contents of the interview after transcription (Creswell, 2013).

Merriam (2014) explains data analysis as "the process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read. It is the process of making meaning" (p.176). From this explanation, data analysis involves constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data had revealed (de Vos et al., 2011, p.397).

Therefore one could infer that data analysis requires some sort or form of logical reasoning to describe, illustrate and evaluate data to determine patterns. Put together, all my interviews and observations were a copious amount of data that had to be analysed. The data were so overwhelming that analysis had to be done systematically so that there was some order in the process (Mthiyane, 2013). According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014:73), the researcher has to ―determine the code for a chunk of data by careful reading and reflection on its core content or meaning. This gives the researcher intimate, interpretative familiarity with every datum in the corpus". To Creswell (2015), coding is an act of ―winnowing" (p. 160). Therefore, while not every line of data may end up with a code label attached to it, the researcher had to familiarise himself with the data in order to decide what code to label.

Creswell (2013:44) states that data analysis is both inductive and deductive and establishes some patterns or themes. According to Zalaghi and Mahdi (2016), qualitative research analysis and interpretation of data generally begin with inductive reasoning and change their course towards a deductive approach in order to improve the theory. Thus in qualitative research inductive and deductive research methods are not mutually exclusive, as they are usually used to supplement each other.

In this research, the researcher employed inductive reasoning in analysing the data. This involved detailed reading of the raw data to derive patterns and relationships to generate meanings from the data collected, in order to draw conclusions or to create a theory from a set of specific observations. Using case study in conducting the research, I had to rely heavily on my experience to be able to read through the lines, the information provided by the participants. According to Schurink et al. (2011:397),

in order to build a coherent interpretation of data, qualitative research should involve an inseparable relationship between data collection and data analysis. This means that there should be some form of order when analyzing data.

Schurink, Fouché, and De Vos (2011:403) contend that there are always variations in the number and description of steps for the same process of data analysis by different authors. Neumann (2014) argues that, there is no single qualitative data analysis approach that is widely accepted (p. 518). It can thus be inferred that each qualitative data analysis to some extent will be a uniquely designed act. This means the mass of words generated by interviews or observational data needs to be described and summarised through the clear thinking on the part of the analyst (Robson, 2011, p. 468). Leedy and Ormrod (2010) contend that qualitative researchers construct interpretive narrative from their data and try to capture the complexity of the phenomenon under study. Thus, qualitative researchers use personal literary style, and they often include the participant's own language in constructing the analysis. Robson (2011:468) further argues that qualitative analysis remains much closer to codified common sense than to the complexities of statistical analysis of quantitative data.

When engaging in qualitative data analysis, the researcher not only wishes to highlight recurring features, but also different steps, procedures and processes that are at the disposal of the researcher. According to Creswell (2014), the analysis of qualitative data is a process that begins once the data are obtained and transcribed. This process is followed by a scientific method to identify themes, sub-themes and categories that depict the main ideas shared by the participants. Then the interpretation of the data begins. Employing this framework helps the researcher to bring ―order, structure and meaning to the quantity of the collected data" (Schurink et

al., 2011:397). Despite these analytic differences depending on the type of strategy used, qualitative inquirers often use a general procedure and convey in the proposal the steps in data analysis. An ideal situation is to integrate the general steps with the specific research strategy (Creswell, 2014). With this in mind, my data analysis followed Roberts (2010:160) five steps. This procedure provided a suitable framework to analyse the data in a structured and systematic manner. The steps of data analysis were as follows:

- Transcription and Initial Reading

- Coding and Categorization of Responses

- Organization of Patterns and Themes

- Final Review of all Transcripts to Validate Patterns and Themes

- Completion of Data Analysis and Report Writing

Process of Data Analysis

After organizing and managing the data through a file naming system, verbatim transcription of the responses from the interview commenced as soon as possible. This was to ensure a speedy completion of the analysis. In addition personal field notes were transcribed. I personally transcribed all the interviews, printed them out and subjected them to thorough reading and re-reading and then applied my intuition to its systematic analysis. The entire transcribed text and field notes were thoroughly read over and over again in order to obtain an overall and comprehensive impression of the content and context before the process of coding began. It was also to develop corresponding patterns, themes, categories and similarities (Cohen et al., 2007). According to Patton (2015), recording and tracking analytical insights that occur during data collection are part of fieldwork and the beginning of qualitative analysis.

In order to ensure credibility and confirmability of the data, the verbatim transcribed interviews were presented to the respondents to verify.

Faherty (2010:59) reports that there are ―no absolute hard-and-fast rules" to coding, nevertheless, it was important for the researcher to be open to data coding methods to effectively review the qualitative data. I decided to manually code the data using highlighter pens as opposed to using computer software for various reasons. Personally, I felt more at ease with highlighter pens and paper spread out over my desk and floor. This was the way that I had always worked; using this method gave a tangible quality to my research; I began to know exactly which sheet held which comment, and I felt this approach gave me an overview (cognitively and literally) of the data and allowed for connections to be made (Blair, 2015). To the researcher there were some pragmatic issues to consider; human analysis is popular due to its perceived high accuracy. The computer software does not do the analysis for the researcher. Neither does it identify relations nor write report (Gibbs, 2011). Patton (2015, p. 530) notes that using software is not a requisite analysis as the real analytical work takes place in your head. These were some of the issues that informed me to use the manual approach.

The coding process for the field notes and transcripts consisted of three steps described by Corbin and Strauss (2015) namely: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. They embody rather different ways of working with the data that can be combined with each other and between which the researcher can move back and forth if needed (Mey and Mruck, 2011).

Open coding

The first step in analyzing qualitative data involves data reduction. The data reduction process began with open coding. Open coding involved the identification and naming of segments from the field notes and transcripts in relation to the research topic. It simply means labelling and categorising concepts that are found in the data. The intent of open coding is to break down the data into segments in order to interpret them. It helps to ask sensitive questions such as, ―which phenomenon is described?‖, ―which people are involved?‖, ―which aspects of the phenomenon are dealt with?‖, ―what for?‖, ―what is it?‖ and ―what does it represent?‖ (Mey and Mruck, 2011; Grbich, 2013) about each sequence, comparing the text step by step to label similar phenomena. During open coding phase, individual participant responses were coded for emergent key words. The overall goal of open coding was to develop a wealth of codes to describe the data. The focus of open coding was on wording, phrasing, context, consistency, frequency, extensiveness and specificity of comments. As progress was made with the analysis, further sub themes and sub categories were included to identify meanings, connections, relationships and trends. This finally led to new discoveries.

Open coding followed this process. After all the responses had been transcribed, they were coded by assigning different conceptual labels for each of the research questions. That is the segments of meaning from the field notes and transcripts were clearly highlighted and labelled in a descriptive manner. Coding all of the data was done in order that similarities and differences could be recognised. This was also done in order to make data retrieval and categorisation simple and less burdensome. I then applied my intuition to categorise and group the responses according to the given labels which were suggestive of common themes. This led to a central phenomenon.

Actions, events and interactions were compared with each other to find differences and similarities within the central phenomenon. I then cut the themes out from small papers fragments with the themes and adhered the paper fragments on large index cards in preparation for the next stage of assessment and axial coding.

Axial coding

Axial coding was done by reviewing and examining the initial codes that were identified during the previous procedure outlined above. It helped to identify whether there were causal conditions that influenced the central phenomenon, the strategies for addressing the phenomenon, the intervening conditions that shaped the strategies and the consequences of undertaking the strategies. During this period repetitions of codes were searched for and drawn together. Codes were merged where substantial overlap was identified, and coded aspects were analysed for sub-themes.

After coding all the responses, I started abstracting themes from the codes. I went through the codes, grouped them to represent common and significant themes. What I did was that I wrote the code headings on pieces of paper and spread them out on a long table in some cases on the floor. This gave me an overview of the various codes and allowed me to cluster them into various themes. In reassembling the codes I tried to find out by inferring from the interview transcripts or from the repeated use of words (phrases) whether a pattern was developing, that is, all activities which have been recorded are being understood in a similar way (Scott & Usher, 2011, p. 89).

At this stage of noting patterns and trends I realized that the data had been fully organized and were beginning to make sense. As Roberts (2010) indicates, "data analysis is making sense of the data and interpreting them appropriately so as to not mislead readers" (p.160). In support of Roberts, Yin (2014) also states that

"regardless of whether you are following the coding or non-coding option, during the reassembling process you should constantly be querying yourself by finding out if the emerging patterns make sense " (p 302). In this way, I, again read the transcript several times to complete the final coding in order to validate my findings. During the review new codes, themes and patterns were identified which were added to my findings to fully help the data to make sense.

The coding process was built around open and axial coding. Using these two approaches allowed for a more analytical view of the issue and helped to develop a theory with a deep understanding of the topic. I did not use the selective coding. My idea was not to generate propositions (hypotheses) or statements that interrelate the categories in the coding paradigm. Again, selective coding is analysing on a more abstract level. It is very similar to axial coding, the difference is that the core category is put in relation to the other categories and all the categories are also related to each other. Not all the categories were equally relevant for the research topic.

The last step in the data analysis process was presenting my findings. Chapter 4 which presents the findings examines how my data answered the research questions set forth in chapter 1. I reviewed all the transcripts a final time to ascertain that the findings and the main themes and patterns were consistent with the data. A continuous comparison was made between my findings and relevant literature to ascertain which findings supported or contradicted the literature on girls' education. The findings of the study in detail based on the emerging themes, patterns, and categories that were derived during the data analysis process were largely categorized based on the research questions for the study. It is important to mention that pseudonyms were used to maintain anonymity of all participants.

The qualitative analysis process for this research was concluded by the description of thematic relationships and patterns of relevance to the research. The process of the qualitative analysis outlined above served as a framework to ensure that the initial data (semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion) were systematised by thematic organization. The identified themes were used as a basis for reasoning and deliberations to formulate ideas and conclusions on male prioritization in the Gomoa East District of Ghana. For clarity of purposes and a better understanding of the qualitative analysis process for the current study, the qualitative analysis process for the semi-structured interviews and focus group is illustrated using the spiral approach.

Figure 2: The Data Analysis Spiral Approach

Managing data

Transcription and initial reading

Coding and categorization of responses

Organization and patterns of themes

Review of transcripts to validate patterns and themes

Completion of data analysis

Findings
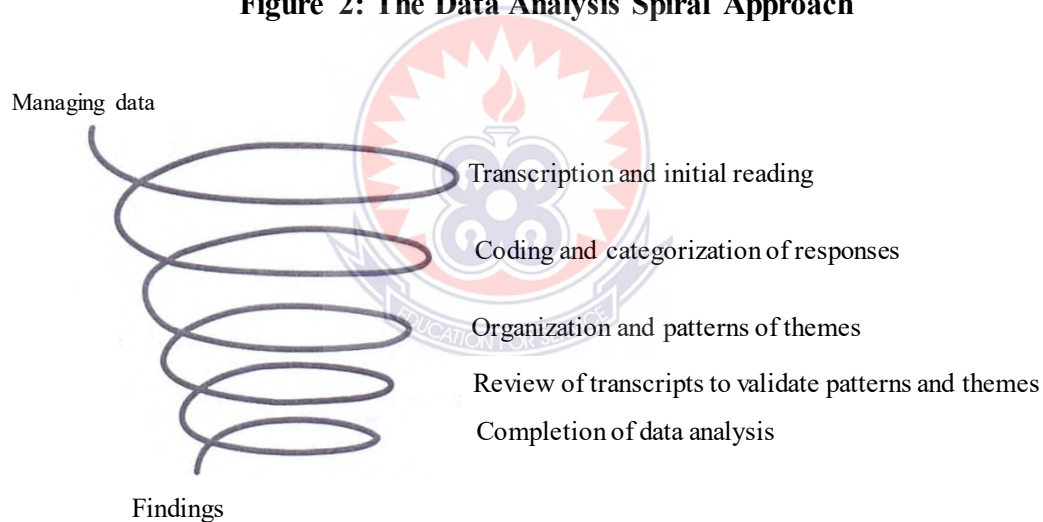
The outlined process enabled the researcher to follow a logic step-by-step approach in the analysis to discover the rationale and motivation for responses (Thiétart, 2007). It is important to note that in analysing the data and interpretation, the researcher engaged in the process of moving in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach.

3.9 Method of Data Verification

Since qualitative researchers do not use instruments with established metrics about validity and reliability, it is pertinent to address how qualitative researchers establish that the research study's findings are credible, transferable, confirmable, and dependable. Creswell (2014:251) explains that data verification or validity in qualitative research is based on determining the trustworthiness of the findings from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers. It is also based on the consistency of the research methods used over time and provides an accurate representation of the population being studied (Thomas and Magivy, 2011:151). The level of confidence in a research project's data, interpretation, and quality methods is referred to as rigour or trustworthiness (Connelly, 2016). In order to explain the basic question of qualitative research rigour, Guba and Lincoln, (2005) posed this question ―How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?" (p.290). The term trustworthiness or rigour of a study refer to the level of confidence in data, interpretation and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Pilot & Beck, 2014). According to Bashir, Afzal and Azeem (2008), qualitative researchers have to salvage responsibility for reliability and validity by implementing verification strategies during the conduct of inquiry. This ensures the attainment of rigour using strategies inherent within each qualitative design for incorporating and maintaining credibility and dependability from external reviewers' judgments to the investigators themselves. Trustworthiness or truth value of qualitative research and transparency of the conduct of the study are crucial to the usefulness and integrity of the findings (Cope, 2014). Amankwaa (2016) justified the establishment of research trustworthiness or rigour by explaining that the lack of this attribute in qualitative research results in a perception

of low value, unreliability, and invalidity. Due to the kind of philosophical nature of its inquiry and assumptions underpinning qualitative research, there is the need to establish different protocols or techniques for a study to be considered worthy of consideration by readers. Techniques such as prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field, triangulation of data sources, peer debriefing, presenting negative or discrepant information, referential adequacy, reflective journaling, and member checks are all suggested to establish credibility (Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba, 2007; Creswell, 2014; Amankwaa, 2016; Connelly, 2016).

According to Guba and Lincoln (1985), trustworthiness in a qualitative study is determined by four indicators these are: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability and it is these four indicators that reflect validity and reliability in qualitative research. Each of these indicators has an equivalent criterion in quantitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2016).

- Credibility, parallels internal validity
- Transferability, parallels external validity
- Dependability, parallels reliability and
- Confirmability, parallels objectivity

While others like Creswell (2014:251) has more recently presented expansive and flexible markers of quality in qualitative research (Tracy, 2010), the researcher chose to use the original, widely accepted, and easily recognized criteria introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to demonstrate trustworthiness of the study. This ensured the trustworthiness of the qualitative research study and is viewed as a classic framework. More recently Schurink et al. (2011:429) adapted this model. This adaptation guided the researcher to verify the data obtained in this research study, as follows:

Credibility

Research credibility deals with the focus of the research and refers to the confidence in how well the data address the intended focus (Polit & Beck, 2012). According to Trochim and Donnelly (2007:149), credibility focuses on ensuring that the research findings ―are credible or believable from the perspective of the participants‖. The researcher must therefore ensure that what the participants shared matches how the data is described in terms of the identified themes, subthemes and categories. In this study, credibility was ensured by means of the interview guide and interviewing techniques, as well as methods of data recording and analysis. Data triangulation was also used to achieve credibility. According to Carter et al. (2014), "data triangulation involves the collection of data from different types of people, including individuals, groups, families, and communities, to gain multiple perspectives and validation of data" (p.545). The researcher combined data collection strategies to achieve credibility. This is because in qualitative studies, trustworthiness is of utmost importance (Niewenhuis, 2010, p.69) as interviewer influence can be a limitation. Triangulation was needed to manage biases (Creswell, 2015). To achieve credibility there was the need to check and re-check the consistency of the findings from different, as well as from the same sources (Yin, 2014, p. 94). This helped the researcher to compare different views held by the participants and also as a way of challenging my own findings and revisiting my interpretations. There was also member check in which transcripts of the interviews and focus group discussions were sent to the participants for feedback to establish credibility. This process involved taking data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they can react to the accuracy and credibility of the account that had been organized by the researcher (Creswell, 2014, p. 251). This enabled them to

correct the interpretation and challenge what they perceived to be wrong interpretations. To further ensure that participants played a major role in the results of the research, the following steps were also taken; communication with participants occurred after all significant research activities such as interviews and data analysis had been completed, all member check feedback was recorded electronically (Amankwaa, 2016). Thick description through extensive accounts was used to convey the findings. This procedure was used to increase the credibility of the study.

Transferability

This criterion refers to the extent to which the findings can be transferred to other applicable studies, settings or groups (Polit & Beck, 2012). Schurink et al., (2011:420) and Kumar (2011:150) explain that this is a ‚problematic' aspect in qualitative research studies. This is because it may not be possible to demonstrate that findings or conclusions from qualitative research are applicable to other situations or populations (Drury et al. 2011). The researcher utilised a thick description of the participants and their responses were documented. The open-ended questions that was implored was detailed to provide clear responses in an effort to enhance the transferability of this study. When ample details are given for a specific phenomenon, the extent of the transferability of conclusions to other time periods, settings, and people can be appropriately evaluated (Amankwaa, 2016). Examples of these necessary details include ―the location setting, participants present, attitudes of the participants involved, reactions observed that may not be captured on audio recording, bonds established between participants, and feelings of the investigator" (Amankwaa, 2016, p.122). Through the interviewing process it was necessary to prepare open-ended questions that implored detailed and clear responses, to ensure consistency for

all interviews, questions, sub questions, and document participant responses of the phenomena in a rich, thick manner (Amandwaa, 2016).

Dependability

The dependability of a qualitative research study is based on a logical and well-documented research process. To establish dependability, involves the cross examination of the study conducted through an audit technique. An audit trail is the process to insure qualitative research dependability. The aim of the audit trail is to evaluate the research accuracy to find out through examining if the data support the study findings, conclusions, and interpretation (Amankwaa, 2016). The dependability of a study is high if another researcher can readily follow the decision trail used by the initial researcher (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Cope, 2014). Dependability also refers to the consistency of the data in different context with similar condition (Cope, 2014). To establish dependability means conducting a step-by-step repeat of the study to see if results might be similar or to enhance the original findings. An audit trail is achieved by (a) describing the specific purpose of the study; (b) discussing how and why the participants were selected for the study; (c) describing how the data were collected and how long the data collection lasted; (d) explaining how the data were reduced or transformed for analysis; (e) discussing the interpretation and presentation of the research findings; and (f) communicating the specific techniques used to determine the credibility of the data (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). To achieve dependability the researcher ensured that the methods and techniques that were employed in this study were described in detail and supplemented with a literature control once the data were analysed. The researcher also checked to see whether the analysis process was in line with the appropriate research practices and that the research process was logical and clearly documented.

Confirmability

This criterion refers to the neutrality or level of consistency and absence of bias of the findings. Cope (2014) posits that research's confirmability is achieved when the researcher succeed in demonstrating that the data represent the participants' perspectives and responses and cleared from the researcher' biases. The research confirmability is achieved when credibility, dependability, and transferability of the research have been established. Confirmability requires evidence of how the findings were reached and interpreted. Its main aim is to establish that the researcher's interpretations and findings are clearly derived from the data. Its relevance to application is similar to credibility (Moon et al., 2016). To ensure confirmability the qualitative research must be reflective. This requires a self-critical attitude on the part of the researcher about how one's own preconceptions affect the research. Following each individual and focus group interview, the researcher will write or audiotape field notes regarding personal feelings or biases. In addition, the researcher makes a conscious effort to follow, rather than lead, the direction of the interviews by asking the participants for clarification of definitions and metaphors (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Dependability judgment was obtained through rich quotes that emerged from participants. The researcher made use of transcripts and field notes to document the findings. Data analysis and methods audit also resulted in a confirmability judgement (Connelly, 2016).

Reflexivity

One aim to ensure credibility of results is to reduce the chances of researcher bias through impartial analysis. In addition, the researcher also made use of reflexivity as a method to verify the qualitative data in this study. While analysing the data each step was reflected on to draw a link between the methodology and the way in which it

influenced goal attainment. The researcher applied self-reflection during the course of the interpretation of the findings. This meant that the researcher continuously reflected on his own experiences with the awareness that his own perceptions, assumptions, emotional reactions and cultural positioning could influence the interpretation of the findings. In this study, the researcher made use of the above criteria for credibility and confirmability as part of self-reflection and to ensure that the data obtained from the participants influenced the interpretation of the findings rather than his own assumptions (Roller and Lavrakas, 2016). Apart from verifying the qualitative data of this research study, the researcher also implemented ethical practice to gain the support of participants and to protect their privacy.

3. 10 Ethical Considerations

All researchers, regardless of research designs, sampling, techniques and choice of methods, are subjected to ethical considerations (Gratton & Jones, 2010). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), interviews are considered an intrusion into respondents' private lives with regard to time allotted and due to the level of sensitivity of questions asked, a high standard of ethical considerations should be maintained. In social research, ethical practice ―refers to the system of moral principles by which individuals can judge their actions as right or wrong, good or bad" (Denscombe, 2010:59). Prior to conducting the interview, my attention was therefore directed toward certain ethical issues which needed to be addressed, namely "ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, privacy and anonymity" (Cohen et al., 2007, p.51). Houston (2016) identifies the following key elements to be considered for ethical practice for research in the social sciences:

- *Obtaining ethical clearance*: In this study, the researcher requested ethical clearance from the University of Education, Winneba through a research proposal that first had to be accepted by the Department of Social Studies Education before he could commence with the research.

- *Ensuring the validity of the findings*. The process of data verification described earlier addressed this aspect of trustworthiness.

- *Privacy, confidentiality and informed consent*: The implementation of these actions are discussed below:

Informed consent: According to (Denscombe, 2010:67), informed consent means that ―the person involved should have legal capacity to give consent, should be situated as to be able to exercise free power of choice, without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, over-reaching or any other ulterior form of constraint or coercion". In this research study, voluntary participation was guided by inviting participants and providing potential participants with the relevant information to be able to make an informed decisions. Through verbal explanations and consent forms, participants were fully informed of what will be asked of them, how the data will be used, the implications of participating in the research and their right to withdraw at any point of the research work. This was done to ensure their willingness to take part in the research without any pressure or coercion. (See Appendix A consent forms).

Confidentiality, anonymity and privacy: The researcher's assurance of confidentiality to protect the privacy of the research subject is very important as it extends beyond signed consent forms. According to Allen (2017), ―Confidentiality and anonymity are ethical practices designed to protect the privacy of human subjects while collecting, analyzing, and reporting data. Peoples‗ behaviours and experiences are of great interest. Researchers are expected to respect their participants but are not as interested

in reporting the actions of a named person" (p. 228). In order to protect participants' identity and privacy of those who voluntarily agreed to participate in the research the researcher used pseudonyms to protect their personal dignity. With this assurance participants decided to participate in the interview.

3.11 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the qualitative methodology used to study male prioritization in the Gomoa East District of Ghana. The study was conducted in four main communities with two considered urban and the other two rural. The participants involved in the research included parents, a community leader, girls and the District Director of Education. The process of data collection and analysis were outlined. In the next chapter, I present the findings of this study in detail.
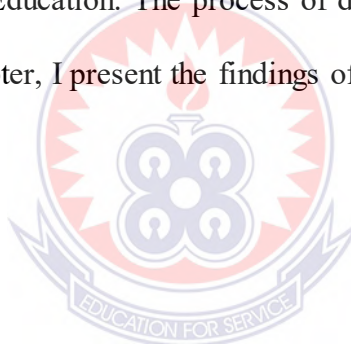
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATIONS OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The aim of this study was to describe the essence of the shared lived experiences of parents on why they prioritize males over girls' education in the Gomoa East District. Using pseudonyms for parents, girls and education official, this chapter provides a rich portrait of each participant who took part in the study. The previous chapter presented the methods of sampling, data collection, and data analysis that were used to explore and describe their experiences and perceptions. The purpose of this chapter is also to present an in-depth discussion of the clustered themes and meanings from the verbatim responses derived from participants through the research questions. These themes and meanings emerged through the analysis of data collected from interviews and focus group discussions. This chapter concludes with narrative answers to each of the study's research questions utilising the data collected and corresponding themes that were developed. The findings will be compared with existing literature.

4.1 Background of Selected Participants

The central focus to this study was to give parents the platform to share their views and experiences on why they prioritize male education through interviews. This was an attempt at finding out from their own stories their perceptions and beliefs which often were neglected. Through interviews and focus group discussion many of the participants boldly shared their feelings on male prioritization. In this study, parents served as the key participants comprising 10 males and 10 females for equal gender

representation. A heterogeneous group was thus provided to give account of male prioritization over girls' education in the Gomoa East District.

Personal (Biographic) Data of the Urban and Rural Level Participants

To provide a background to the findings, profiles of the parents and the girls who took part in the interview process are shared to showcase who they were. This section therefore covered the respondents' age, occupation, family and educational background. Though not central to the study, the personal data helped to contextualise the findings and the formulation of appropriate recommendations by ascertaining how family background affect girls' education. It must be noted that in order to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality of the information they provided, pseudonyms have been used throughout this thesis.

Parents from Rural Areas

Mr. Abbey, aged 49, was a farmer. He owned a small piece of land which was bequeathed to him by his father. Apart from his farming activities, he worked as a daily wage labourer in a pineapple plantation to support the family. He had never attended school. He has six children, four girls and two boys. His first and second daughters aged 24 and 22 respectively had married and were staying with their husbands after dropping out of school due to teenage pregnancy. His two sons and two daughters were all attending school during the time of my visit.

Madam Efua, aged 55, was a petty trader. She was not literate and the mother of three daughters and two sons. Her two sons by the time of interview were in school. Of her three daughters one attended school and was at JHS 2 while the first girl had dropped out of school. According to Madam Efua, the poor health of her last born had been the reason for her other girl to drop out of school in order to take care of the child. She,

along with her children, worked on the family's farm as her contribution to the family's earnings.

Mr. Eduful, aged 53, was a fisherman and semi-literate who lives with his two daughters and two sons in one of the fishing villages. His two sons attended school as at the time of interview while the first daughter, fifteen years old, Anita, a JHS 3 student, had dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy. His first daughter was still at school when l interviewed him.

Ante Awoyaa, aged 58, was a widow with five children: four girls and one boy. She was a trader who never attended school. Out of the four daughters three had married. The last daughter, 14, was living with her at the time of the interview while the boy was in school.

Madam Adoma, aged 53, had no formal education and lived in one of the rural areas, and was a farmer. Madam Adoma had seven children six girls and one boy. Her first two girls had married and lived with their husbands. Her son was in school during my interview.

Madam Otuwa aged 35, was semi-literate and married with two children. She married at the age of 20 after dropping out of school. She was a petty trader and was determined to see her children go to school. All her two children attended a public school and were living with her at the time of my interview.

Ante Ama, aged 38, was also a semi-literate and had four children. She helped her husband to run a small poultry farm. Aside the poultry farm, she owned a piece of land on which she had planted cassava. She had one daughter who was staying at home due to nonpayment of PTA dues. Her husband had planned to enrol his daughter in a different school as result of a quarrel between her husband and the head

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teacher over payment of PTA dues and examination fees. Although she wanted to see all her children in school, she felt powerless as her husband had threatened to divorce her over the children's fees.

Mr. Tetteh, aged 58, was a fisherman and semi-literate. He had three daughters with his first wife. He had married a second wife after the death of his first wife and had a girl and a boy with her. The second wife was a fishmonger. Three of the girls were attending public schools while the two had left home to join their husbands. His only boy attended a private school.

Mr. Nketsia, aged 55, was a farmer with no formal education. He had married a second wife after the death of his first wife. He had three sons with his first wife with whom one had completed SHS and the two JHS and were working outside the village. Mr. Nketsia had three children (two daughters and a son) with his second wife. All the three younger children were attending school at the time of my visit.

Mr. Adams, aged-40, was semi-literate and a fisherman. He had four daughters by his first wife all of whom had completed JHS, and, according to him, two were trading in assorted items at the local market. He had married a second wife because he needed boys to inherit his property. Mr. Adams had one daughter and two sons with his second wife. All his children were in school at the time of my visit.

Parents from Urban Areas

Mr. Sani, aged 40, was literate and a poultry farmer. He had completed SHS but could not continue his education due to poverty. He had three children: one boy and two girls. He had once served as a PTA chairman and all his children were attending school at the time of my interview. His wife was a petty trader. He was confident and very vocal.

Mr. Nkansah, aged 34, had no formal education and had four children, three girls and one boy. He was a fisherman. His wife was a fishmonger. His children were very young, the eldest was 8 and the youngest was 4 years. All the children were in school at the time of interview.

Mr. Teiko, aged 48, was semi-literate and economically better off. He was a fisherman. According to him he owned two canoes. He had four children: two girls and two boys. He had withdrawn his children from a public school to a private school. He was a pupil teacher in the basic school before becoming a fisherman.

Madam Esibu, aged 32, was not literate. She was the mother of four children: two boys and two girls. She was also the step mother of two daughters. She lived in one of the urban areas. Though she had not gone to school, she had persuaded her husband to send all her children to school; she was a petty trader.

Mr. Nfum, aged 40, was not literate. He was a farmer, and had three daughters and one son. His only son studied in a private JHS situated in a nearby town. But his two daughters were attending a public school within the town. His wife was a petty trader.

Mr. Ofori, aged 34, was literate. He has three children: two girls and one boy. All his children were in private school at the time of my interview. His level of education I was told ended in SHS 2. He was formerly a poultry farmer. At the time of my interview, he had opened a provision store and a drinking spot after the collapse of his poultry farm.

Ante Anita, aged 33, was not literate and married. She was the mother of three children. Her only daughter had dropped out of school after JHS 2 in order to take care of her due to poor health. She was a petty trader. As at the time of the interview, she was not working because of her ill health. Her sons were attending public school during the time of the interview.

Maame Biya, aged 50, was a widow and semi-literate. She was married and had four children. She was engaged in petty trading. Out of her four daughters, one had obtained a diploma certificate in basic education and was teaching. The other three children were attending school at the time of my interview.

Ante Konu, aged 35, was not literate and a trader. She had two sons and two daughters. Her first daughter dropped out of school when she was at JSS 2 to take care of her younger brother when her mother felt sick. The other children were all attending school.

Ante Anita, aged 33, was not literate and married. She was the mother of three children. Her only daughter had dropped out of school after JHS 2 in order to take care of her due to poor health. She was a petty trader. As at the time of the interview, she was not working because of her ill health. Her sons were attending public school during the time of the interview.

Ante Maggie, aged 43, was semi-literate. She runs a drinking spot. Her husband was a trader. She had four children: two boys and two girls. His son attended a private school situated in an adjacent town. The two girls attended a public school in the town.

Girls (drop out)

Baaba, age 16, had dropped out of school at JHS 2. She dropped out as a result of poverty and poor academic performance. She had two brothers and two sisters and was the oldest girl. Her father was a fisherman while her mother was a petty trader. She sold plantain chips. The two brothers and the younger sister were all in school at the time of the interview.

Kuukuwa, aged 15, dropped out of school at JHS 1 as a result of poverty. Her mother was a petty trader while her father was a plumber. She had two brothers and one sister. Her elder sister had married while her two brothers were in school.

Girls (in school)

Araba, aged 13, was in JHS 3. Her father was a teacher and her mother a secretary to a private company. She attended a private school in one of the urban centres. Araba was very bold and articulate. She had one sister and two brothers who were all attending school when I interviewed her.

Efua, aged 14, was in JHS 3. Efua's father was a teacher and her mother owes a provision store. She had two sisters and one brother. Efua and her brother attended one of the public schools in the urban centres. Her mother who was educated supported her father to pay her school fees and bought them books to read.

4.2 Findings and Discussions

My findings by parents and other participants' perspectives on prioritization of boys' education in the Gomoa East District would be presented on the basis of the research questions. Also, the patriarchal system and the feminist perspective provided the framework for the analysis of the findings. Accordingly, the analysis would be in

line with the themes from the perspectives of the participants. This implies that participants' positions and various assumptions in the context would be examined and the interpretation in the inquiry would form the basis for advancing policies on issues that affect girls' education.

4.3 Theme development

Throughout the process of data analysis, four major themes emerged from the thorough analysis of individual interviews and focus group discussions. In addition, the four major themes also included sub-themes which provided greater illumination for their respective categories. As stated by Clarke and Graham (1996), it was imperative during the analysis process of theme development to purposefully engage in reflective activities in order to make sure that perceptions, assumptions, emotional reactions and cultural positioning did not influence the interpretation of the findings. ―By engaging in reflection people are usually engaging in a period of thinking in order to examine experiences or situations. The period of thinking (reflection) allows the individual to make sense of an experience...faced with complex decisions, thinking it through (reflecting) allows the individual to separate out the various influencing factors and come to a reasoned decision or course of action" (Clarke and Graham et al., 1996: 26). This level of awareness and detail recognition was only possible through repeated readings of the transcripts. As Moustakas puts it (1994, p.93), ―with continued looking, with the adding of new perspectives...things became clearer as they were considered again and again."

The four major themes, detailed in Table 3.2 below, were utilized to answer the study's central research questions which was designed to describe the essence of the shared lived experiences of parental prioritization of males over girls' education in the Gomoa East District of Ghana. Table 3.2 below summarises the themes, sub-themes and categories of the findings that describe parental prioritization of males over girls' education.

Table 4.1: Summary of research questions, themes, sub-themes and categories

Research questions addressed	Major Themes	Sub Themes	Categories
Why do the people of Gomoa East District prioritize males over girls' education?	Why parents prioritize males	Gender socialization/ female domestic labour	i Preservation of values ii Influence roles of boys and girls iii Influence on girls' education
		Influence of sexual harassment on girls	i. Teenage pregnancy ii. Drop out
		Birth order effects	i Female firstborn affected by familial responsibility
		Religion and girls education	i Moral codes affect girls' education ii adopt submissive and less powerful roles
		Socio-economic factors	i Poor living standards /Poverty iii affects parental mindset on children education
		Distance to school	i Fear of girls safety ii Withdrawal of girls from school
		Asset and education	Type of asset affects status and education
		Labour market and girls' access to education	i Choice of subjects/ ii Unemployment
		Parental attitude and teenage pregnancy	i Lack of support ii Lack of motivation iii Influence dropout iii Encourage early marriage
		Culture and traditional beliefs	i Belief in social norms ii Perception of girls' education iii Issue of procreation iv Age old support

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		Rural urban divide	i Location affects education ii Living in rural area have negative effect on girls' education iii Encourages migration
How is male prioritization manifested in the Gomoa East District?	How male priority is manifested	Manifestation of male priority	Modes of manifestation i Functions in a variety of norms and rituals ii Changes in fertility patterns iii encourages polygamy
How does male prioritization impact on girls' education?	How male prioritization impact on girls' education	Impact on girls' education	i Illiteracy ii. Inequality in labour market/ employment iv Poverty v lack of support and motivation
How can male prioritization be eliminated?	Eliminating male prioritization	Ways to eliminate prioritization	i Strengthen laws on gender ii Changing parental mind set iii Role models iv Abolishing extra fees

The findings will be discussed in terms of verbatim responses and existing literature on the topic.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: Why do parents prioritize males?

Recent research has highlighted the importance of girls' education. The aim of this study was to find out why parents are interested in boys' education and to what extent it had affected girls' education. Responses from the majority of parents in all communities visited indicated that male priority is an age old problem. This was evidenced through ethnicity and culture. This, to a large extent, is seen as generational and an inherited living experience. In all the villages and towns visited, it was evident that families still have a dominant male figure. Yet in some communities, this had become less of a norm as women were also the breadwinners within the family unit. Rather than accepting the age old tradition of male

prioritization majority of parents and girls both in the rural and urban communities hold different views on girls' education. To most participants, the understanding of the special roles of males was the basis for determining education. This, in effect, affected attitudes and perceptions of parents towards girls' enrollment and gave rise to prioritizing male education within the district.

Gender Socialisation and Female Domestic Labour

Gender socialisation theory has frequently been used by social scientists to explore why males and females act differently (Carter, 2014). Gender socialisation theory posits that males and females develop different wants, skills and desires as they are treated differently from birth and usually subjected to different learning environments. Within the Ghanaian culture the division of labour socialises children into gender appropriate roles which they consider normal and perform without question. What is seen to be the norm in the Ghanaian culture of socialisation is that girls, whether younger or older than boys, do all the house chores that is cooking, cleaning and fetching water as well as caring for children and to be submissive. Boys run errands and go to the farm, especially in rural areas.

In order to investigate everyday habits of parents on the concept of girls' familial responsibilities within the household as a socialisation process and how that had impacted on girls' education within the district, I tried to find out the nexus between girls' familial responsibilities that is society's sanctioned domestic activities that girls perform on a regular basis at home, and how it influences gender opinions of parents. Through individual interviews, parents expressed their views differently. Most views, however, were similar. Narrating the daily experiences of her children Madam Otuwa said:

Traditionally, men are supposed to earn a living to support their families. They exercise authority in the home especially in decision making. Boys have to be groomed into accepting a superior identity as the one to be in control of the home. For girls household work prepares them to be good wives and mothers.

According to Madam Efua, Ante Maggie, Madam Otuwa, Ante Ama, Maame Biyaa and Ante Awoyaa it was normal for girls to work. For example, Madam Efua put it this way:

It is normal for girls to work before they go to school and they do not need to complain. This prepares them for their future responsibilities as good wives. Boys are the future breadwinners and they need to learn hard to take good care of their wives and children.

According to Ante Maggie, household responsibility was a normal female work. This makes them responsible wives. She also said:

It makes them responsible when they get married and are more capable to undertake their assigned role as future mothers. If girls are not taught their functions at an early age it can limit their ability to function well when they get married. It makes them also function independently when they get married without consulting their mother. It is a shame if girls are unable to perform household chores when they are married and cannot take good care of the house.

Ante Anita, on her part, also said that:

Boys are treated differently because they are the bread winners and they need special care. When they grow up they would take care of us. We need to groom them to take up that responsibility by allowing them to have the best. Whether we like it or not women would need to be in the kitchen.

In defence of gender socialisation, Mr. Nketsia said:

Traditionally, parents expect their sons to be strong as adults, to be like their fathers in order to protect their families. Parents need to reinforce this as a social norm. This must start from infancy so that when he grows up he knows his role in the community.

Talking about security for parents in old age, Mr. Sani stated that:

It is the man that provides security for the family in old age. Boys are given priority in education as society needs them to perform that role as breadwinners. It is important that they are supported from the beginning to perform this role. They must be strong and brave that is why they go to hunting while girls should perform household chores.

To Madam Adoma, boys and girls are created differently. She stated:

Boys and girls are created differently, and as such they should be treated differently. We know that the responsibilities girls perform can affect their academic work but they should be able to cope with it. It is their duty and not the duty of boys to perform household chores. Boys have their roles to play in the society.

Continuing, Ante Awoyaa said;

Household responsibilities enable girls to care for themselves when they are old. They learn skills that would make them good wives. If girls learn too much it means that their school is important than their assigned role. Those who have had too much education may not know how to cook. They sometimes buy food from the chop bars (restaurants). This can lead to divorce. As a woman you should cook for your husband, clean the house and wash his clothes. This is the ideal woman.

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Even though Mr ofori saw socialisation as a social norm, he admitted that it has dire social consequences for girls. He explained that:

This is a social norm and we cannot change it. The socialisation of individuals enables the preservation and sustainability of our values as individuals. We expect different attitudes and behaviours from boys and girls. In order to do that we need to groom them to conform to their gender roles in order to fit into the social group they belong to. But I must admit that it has its consequences. It gives man the upper hand over the woman.

Most parents I interacted with were interested in their daughters' education. However, to the parents, children's contribution to household work was an important means of modeling and teaching teenagers what it meant to belong to a family. As stated by Madam Esibu:

It makes girls competent and responsible in handling issues themselves especially when they are married. It allows them to relate and cooperate well with their husbands and this instills pride and accomplishment in their marriage. It also gives them valuable life skills by modeling positive attitude in her future home. I don't understand why some people complain about housework. They are rather teaching girls not to be good wives. This can lead to divorce. They need to understand that housework is part of a woman's life. If my girls fail in cooking I would be blamed and not her father. Household chores not only get practical things done, they demonstrate how children can contribute to the household unit.

From the narratives, the views expressed by parents indicated that the burden of domestic work among girls is simply to make her socially fit as she enters adulthood and then to be good house wife with the necessary skills. These skills include preparation of meals, washing utensils, taking care of young children, sweeping the rooms and compound, laundry and fetching water. These are the values of a competent housewife to be learnt and achieved before adulthood.

Again, from the narratives socialisation was seen as a social norm that ought to be adhered to without question. Boys are prioritized because of their unique position in society. Gendered division of labour was seen as normal. Even though Madam Adoma and Mr Ofori commented that the socialisation process had a negative effect on children's academic work, they failed to recognise that it can lead to low achievement of girls and consequently their eventual drop out. Parents also failed to understand that assigning more work to girls could result in lack of time for doing school activities such as homework. When these happen teachers see girls as lazy and punish them. This can lead to truancy and drop out of school as girls are unable to combine or balance academic work and household duties. This confirms Stephens' (2000) study of girls' education in Ghana. In both the rural and urban Ghanaian communities where he conducted his study, he found that the girls in his study were socialised to do most of the domestic chores in addition to their schooling. According to him, those who were unable to combine and balance the two were often considered academically ‗weak' and ‗unacademic'. When girls have a lower probability of accessing, staying in and completing school, parents will see their daughters' education as useless and waste of money leading to prioritization of male education. This again confirms Chanda's (2014) assertion that girls' work is one of the main obstacles to girls' education.

It was interesting to know that educational background as well as location of parents did not change attitudes to the process of socialisation. For Example, Mr. Sani, Mr. Ofori, Mr Teiko and Ante Maggie, who were literate and lived in the urban centres, saw nothing wrong with gender socialisation especially in the areas of girls' familial responsibilities. Mr. Sani stated that:

> *Boys should be trained to become men and girls to become women. This is all about it. Training is important to shape boys and girls for their future role in society.*

According to Mr. Ofori, the role of a woman is to provide care work irrespective of her social status. He stated that:

> *Whether educated or not, whether she is financially responsible for her family or not the woman is socially expected to perform care work since she is the subordinate sex. This is normal.*

Mr. Teiko, a teacher also saw nothing wrong with her daughter's responsibilities. As to why he was educated and knew the value of education and yet treated his children differently, he had this to say:

> *Even when women had jobs they continued to be in charge of the domestic chores. We sometimes share workload at home and I even sit at the store. I take the children to school. I attend PTA meetings. The boy also washes the dishes, puts the house in order and clean the bathroom. The girl would become a mother one day and she should be able to keep her house well. For the boy when he marries he may decide to help his wife. But for the girl it is an acceptable norm. After all we are help mates.*

From the conversation I realized that the tasks performed by Mr Teiko and his son were considered some kind of help. This was contained in the words of Ante Maggie who said, "*It is our duty and they only help us*".

As to why parents treat boys in different ways, most parents tried to explain the differences in the way they treated boys and girls based on each child's individual features and differences. Socialisation process seems to legitimize the explicit statement of difference in the treatment according to the sex of the person. Socialisation into gender norms, both in childhood and through everyday practice in adolescence and adulthood serves to naturalise gender inequalities. This makes people unaware of other ways of thinking or acting (Marcus & Harper, 2014). Socialisation embedded in patriarchal ideals seems to stifle decision making by women. Stereotype gender roles can contribute to the lack of investment in the education of women as they cannot articulate their feelings in relation to the right to educate their daughters. This is seen as a pernicious manifestation of the unequal power relations between females and males which severely limited girls' access to education (deSilva-de-Alwis, 2008). Consequently, socialisation process can provide undercurrents that influence preferences. This in effect can encourage parental choices about whom to send to school.

The fact that parents saw these roles as normal is an indication that male and females have internalised behaviours without reflecting on its negative impact on their schooling and learning opportunities for girls. This supports recent literature on social norms by UNICEF (2010) that people comply with norms because they internalise the values embodied in those norms.

In order to compliment the narratives from the parents, the girls were also interviewed to find out how familial responsibilities affect their schooling. Specifically, discussions centred on type of work done at home, how it affected their schooling and how often they attended school. On the type of work done, the

difference was on location of participants. Some complained that since there was no pipe borne water in their homes they had to fetch water from nearby public stand pipes on daily basis. Others who had containers had to fetch water sometimes twice or three times in a week depending on the daily usage of water at home. Girls living in the urban centres did not complain since they had access to pipe borne water in their homes. The girls said that they had to help their mothers at home after school. In both rural and urban centres, all the four girls I interviewed bemoaned the amount of work they were expected to do before going to school. In a statement, 16 year old Baaba, a drop out, expressed that:

> *So many household chores affected my education I always go to school very late, missed first periods and sometimes I couldn't concentrate. I needed to support my mother but there was too much work for me to do in the morning. I don't have enough time to study at home. I come home and continue with the house chores. I can't even do my homework when I go home. I tried to do the home work after the house chores but because of tiredness I quickly answer those I can and leave the rest. Sometimes I have to collect a friend's work to copy. My parents did not know how it affected my class work. Anyway, I can't complain because I felt it was normal with all girls as household work prepares us for a better future as good mothers.*

In another statement Kuukuwa complained about the amount of time and energy required of her to meet her intense familial responsibilities, which in one way or the other, contributed to her drop out. She stated that:

> *I dropped out of school due to so much house work. My mother would not understand me when I complained about the amount of work I had to do before going to school. She saw it as normal. I always sleep in class. The boys teased me and even gave me a nick name. I could not cope with the academic work especially my homework. My parents saw my performance as weak and thought I was not fit to go to school I*

became disinterested in school. By the time am ready to do my homework am tired and would feel sleepy. My mother can call me at any time to do some kind of work for her. My brother would be relaxing or playing outside or reclining on the sofa chatting with my father. He has enough time for himself. I don't go to school early. This affected my academic work. I dropped out from school not that I wasn't doing well but because my parents saw my grades as very weak. I was brilliant during my primary school days. But I wasn't doing well and could not even concentrate when I go to school.

Efua though still in school, and had literate parents, also complained about the amount of work she had to perform at home. Efua narrated her daily work thus:

I wake up very early in the morning sweep the dining hall before going to school. At home I help my mother in the kitchen. My educational performance would have been better if I did not have to do too many chores at home. At times, I wish I could have as much time as my brothers or male cousins have just to focus on my school work so that I can have better grades to achieve my dream of becoming a nurse.

In another development Araba also expressed that:

I have the belief that girls would have done much better in school if they did not have too much chores to do at home. My brothers have enough time to study when they come home from school. They are always free and would be watching television. They can't cook and would not even help with the sweeping and washing of the utensils. They eat and leave the bowl for me to wash. Before I finish with the first assignment I may be called to do another one. My brother does virtually nothing at home. Sometimes I go to bed a little late after going through my homework. I feel that boys perform better than girls in some subjects like Mathematics because they have more time to study at home than girls.

Expressions from the faces of the girls indicated the dissatisfaction household chores had on their schooling experiences. It really showed how gender affect schooling in the household context. This is the belief by parents that household chores are solely the responsibility of girls. All the girls interviewed expressed the view that they were unable to do their homework and could not study in the evening. Their work at home was routine and interfered with their homework.

From the narratives girls' domestic work had a lot of negative impact on their academic work. Girls could not go to school early due to numerous assignment. They were often late to school and sometimes do not go at all. Underperformance by girls was reflected in the lower enrollment rates for females compared to males. This corroborates Manacorda's (2012) argument that girls are at a greater risk of absenteeism and have lower achievement rate than boys. When girls are late and underperformed, parents interpret this as a weakness on the part of girls. Low achievement in school is interpreted as an academic weakness and waste of resources and this often led to withdrawal of girls from school. In this instance, in deciding who should go to school, males often have the upper hand compared to females. With parental concern about the roles of girls at home and their preparation as future mothers, it was no wonder this affected girls' education.

The narratives by the girls suggest that the educational dreams of girls are being jeopardized by responsibilities at home if parents continue to expect them to know how to effectively perform domestic chores without consideration to school attendance and performance. On the whole, the girls were overwhelmingly interested in education. The reason was that it would help them at least to be socially acceptable and if by design they gain employment, they would be able to take care of

their parents. Age old responsibility seemed to dominate their minds as to why schooling was important to them. Even though the girls expressed their desire to succeed in their education, familial responsibilities made them disvalue education especially those from the rural areas. If parents could see the need for their girls' education as future investment as expressed by the girls, this would ensure equal opportunity for both boys' and girls' education.

In an interview with the District Director of Education concerning girls' familial responsibility and its effect on education, he had this to say:

> *Girls from the rural areas wake up early in the morning to fetch water prepare breakfast, wash the cooking utensils and sweep the compound before going to school. In the evening when school closes, the routine continues. They have to fetch water for cooking and for the family to bath. Before they go to school they are already tired. They cannot do their homework. Some of them are very brilliant but the problem is with their numerous housework. This affects their academic work as they can't pay attention in the classroom. Even though most of them have the desire to go to school, they may be disinterested in school. This is a problem that ought to be addressed.*

On a question on how this problem could be addressed, the District Director further said:

> *The whole issue centres on the socialisation process that girls go through. Parents need to understand the importance of girls' education and at least reduce the workload of girls. In almost all homes especially in the rural areas parents refuse to understand that women can also be breadwinners if given the chance. Until this is done girls, would continue to lack behind boys. Addressing the problem could be done during PTA meetings where parents could be sensitised on the values of girls' education. In the district the girl child unit helps to counsel girls on the importance of girls' education.*

The issue here seems to suggest that household responsibilities can affect girls' schooling experiences. Until parents understand that house hold responsibilities can be shared equally to all sexes, girls would continue to suffer when it comes to parental decision on their children's education.

Sexual Harassments and Girls' Education

Sexual harassments in schools have been identified as one of the factors preventing girls from attending school. Through individual discussions, I sought to find out from parents their awareness about sexual harassment and its implications on girls schooling. Eight parents showed awareness while the others showed lack of awareness in schools. One parent, Mr. Mfum, reacting to the question explained that:

> *Sexual harassment means touching and hitting the person in a certain way in order to sleep with the girl. It goes on in all institutions. It is not a new thing.*

Another parent Mr. Abbey commented that:

> *Teachers had power and they act on their own interest to satisfy their sexual gratification without any provocation from our innocent daughters. They always harass the girls in school.*

Madam Adoma said that:

> *It happens in all schools sexual harassment takes place in all schools and girls always suffer from it.*

Ante Ama commented that:

> *When girls are sexually harassed we had no option than to withdraw them from school.*

According to Madam Otuwa, sexual harassment can lead to teenage pregnancy. She said:

> *When teachers harass the girls and if they give in it can lead to teenage pregnancy. This can bring shame to the family if a girl's virginity is broken.*

In a more elaborate answer, Mr. Nkansah who was a teacher commented by saying:

> *Sexual harassment occurs in most schools. This is said to be perpetuated by teachers who intentionally would touch the young girls or send them to buy them something. Sometimes comments made by the teacher can also affect the girl. This can traumatise* the girl. *It can lead to school dropout* and low academic achievement. *This recently happened in my school where a girl was withdrawn from the school by the parents.*

Mr. Ofori and Ante Maggie who were literate added to the comments made by Mr. Nkansah by saying that:

> *Sexual harassment is a common phenomenon in schools. It is easier for boys to find jobs or extra work to pay for their education while girls run the risk of giving in to their teachers in order to get money for school. In such instances girls would easily give in to their teachers and the consequences would be pregnancy.*

Even though the participants showed awareness, they did not fully understand that sexual harassment can also be caused by male students. They also failed to understand the psychological effect it had on girls when the school becomes unfriendly to them. Six parents also showed lack of awareness to sexual harassment in schools. Ante Konu had this to say:

> *They say some teachers touch the girls anyhow. If the girls decide not to give in then they punish them. My daughter has not reported that incidence to me.*

Madam Esibu stated that:

> *They say some of the teachers try to force the girls to sleep with them.*
> *But my daughter hasn't reported any incidence of that nature to me.*

Two parents whose daughters were in private schools showed lack of awareness by saying that sexual harassment generally happens in the public schools not in private schools. Mr. Sani said:

> *In the private schools the teachers are concerned about children's*
> *academic work and not any other thing.*

Mr. Teiko also commented by saying that:

> *Sexual harassment happens in public schools. In the private schools*
> *teachers have to concentrate on academic work since proprietors are*
> *concerned about results.*

The comments made by Mr. Sani and Mr. Teiko showed that they lacked awareness to sexual harassment in schools. Perhaps, what they lacked was the understanding that sexual harassment knows no boundary. It can take place in either public or private schools. The fact that they had no idea does not mean that it does not take place at all.

In the interview process, I realised that there was a discrepancy between parents and the District Director of Education's perception of whether it was male teachers or the female students who were to be blamed on the issue of sexual harassment. The District Director blamed its occurrence on young school girls' quest for favours from teachers. He said:

> *Sexual harassment is a problem in Ghanaian schools. I have had*
> *several cases from parents accusing some teachers of harassing their*
> *teenage daughters. In some cases parents had to withdraw their*
> *daughters from that particular school. Even though teachers are to be*
> *blamed the attitude of girls is also a factor. Some of the girls*

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> *intentionally harass the teachers especially the young ones with the*
> *hope that teachers will favour them in examinations*.

In a further discussion with the District Director of Education on how gender norms influence sexual harassment in the district and its effect on girls' education he explained that the traditional gender norms were to be blamed rather than attitudes of male teachers. He puts it this way:

> *Traditionally, the woman has to stay at home and take care of the*
> *house as well as early marriage influences sexual harassment. In*
> *school female students do not focus on their studies as much as the*
> *male students as they are taught to think more about love and*
> *marriage than their male counterparts. In some cases female students*
> *take the first step towards sexual relationship by seducing male*
> *teachers for money and marriage. Again, girls see the opportunity in*
> *engaging in sexual activity with a teacher as a kind of social status.*
> *They are hopeful of a future husband who could ensure economic*
> *security. But it is wrong for teachers to give in to the girls whatever the*
> *situation, knowing that it can lead to their dismissal and termination of*
> *girls' schooling.*

Potentially, the most common negative verbal behaviours reported by the girls as a kind of sexual harassment were demeaning comments about attractiveness rating and sexual comments. While three of the girls were exposed to verbal behaviours repeatedly, to one it was rare and not serious. All the girls reported that they knew what sexual harassment was and that the media was the most common source of the information. In a focus group interview, Baaba, a drop out girl, shared her views this way:

> *You can't resist. There is a risk by saying no to a teacher if he wants to*
> *have sex with you. If you refuse the teacher will not promote you. He will*
> *spread your name to the other teachers. They will give you bad names in*
> *the school. This happened to me. I used to help a teacher carry his books*

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home. Once, when we were alone in the classroom, he started saying that I was beautiful and that he wanted to marry me when I grow up. His gestures meant that he wanted to have sex with me. I replied that I wasn't interested because I was young and a student and that he should not behave like that. He said that he would give me good marks if I agreed.

Continuing her narration she said:

He continued asking me if I had thought about what he had told me. I did not mind him. Later a teacher came and asked me why I had decided not to carry my class teacher's books to his home. I told him what my class teacher said to me. It became a rumour all over that I don't respect and I was forcing myself on the teacher. I couldn't stand it so I told my mother. My mother came to the school but my teacher insulted her and told lies about me and she withdrew me from the school.

On the other hand, Kuukuwa, another drop out, also commented this way:

I was having bad marks at school so I told one of the boys to help me and he started demanding sexual favours from me. He told me if I resisted he won't help me again. Anytime we were studying he would sit close by me and be touching me. Sometimes he would block my way. His friends started teasing me. I felt upset and threatened I did not know how to deal with the situation. If I had reported the boy he would be sacked. I also ran the risk of being discriminated against in school. I couldn't concentrate in class. It affected my grades so my parents were forced to withdraw me from school.

Efua also commented this way:

Teachers harassing female students is prevalent. Both teachers and boys have done it to me several times. In class the boys will be calling you names and rubbing their bodies against you. We do not have the power to report. If you do, you would not feel happy in class. I don't know if our bodies attract them. They do it frequently. Sometimes if you are not careful you cannot concentrate in class. If you are free with a boy or a male teacher, the rumours will be that you are having sexual affairs with them.

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Araba, a 13 year old, said.

> *The boys have done it to me twice but I did not mind them. It is not so common in my school. I told them if they do that to me I will report them. That stopped them. For me no teacher has ever harassed me.*

While all the girls were aware of sexual harassment and complained that they did not have the power to report, it became obvious that it was perpetuated by both male teachers and male students. This is in conflict with parental perceptions that sexual harassment is perpetuated by teachers alone. It can be deduced that request for sexual favours by teachers and male students can lead to psychological problems among girls. This can have direct correlation with academic achievement and retention leading to truancy and stoppage of school.

Household Birth Order and Girls' Education

According to the literature, a number of family characteristics have been found to influence children's educational outcomes. These include sibling features such as birth order, family size and gender of the child. Within less developed countries, social norms may also shape parental preferences towards children of different birth orders that can lead to different birth order effects (Jayachandran & Kuziemko, 2011). With this in mind, I tried to check whether birth order had any significant effect on educational attainment of girls in the Gomoa District. I was particularly interested because in an individual discussion, I realised that the drop out girls from the rural areas were over aged before they entered school. What I found was that these girls who were early born children entered school late than their later born siblings. This was not so among the two girls living in the urban centres. In most cases family size had a negative effect on education especially if one has so many siblings. One of the

girls I interviewed (Baaba) said a lot of work at home and that poverty made her go to school as an over aged girl. She said:

> *I was grown when I went to school. Initially I felt shy but my class teacher encouraged me to learn. My mother didn't want me to go school after the death of my father. My mother found it difficult to take care of us. As the first girl I had to take care of my younger sisters and my brother as my mother goes to the market to sell. Sometimes in the morning I had to sell corn dough from house to house before my mother goes to the market. But a teacher who came to teach in our village and stayed in our home encouraged me to go school. She told my mother the importance of girls' education. Initially my mother didn't want to understand but upon her consistent advice she agreed. I had never dreamt of going to school. I want to become a nurse when I complete school.*

Kuukuwaa, on the other hand, also said that:

> *I wanted to go to school but I dropped out because I was the first born. We were six children. My parents never had education. Even though they were determined to send all of us to school due to poverty I dropped out from school after JHS. I had to do all the house chores. I was the first born and the only girl. Yet my mother insisted I do them before going to school. After school I help my mother to cook and wash the utensil before going to sleep. On weekends I go to market with my mother to sell cassava.*

In an interview with the parents, I tried to find out why first born girls were denied education. The reasons they gave were the same: poverty, girls labour at home and assisting in looking after their younger siblings. These factors denied girls the right to education. For example, Ante Ama puts it this way:

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Not that we do not want to educate our daughters but that the money to educate all children is the problem. Girls have to work to supplement the family's income. I was also a first born but I never attended school. I had to sacrifice for my younger brothers who had to go to school.

Asked why his first born was not in school Mr Nketsia said:

Her mother is not well and she has to take over her mother's responsibilities. I planned sending her to school but her older brother cannot cook. If she leaves home, it means there would be nobody to do all the housework. When her brothers are old enough she can go to school. Even if she goes to school who would take care of my wife. If I stay home the children would not eat.

The above revelations by Ante Ama and Mr. Nketsia support the literature in developing countries which finds that birth order effects are positively related to education outcomes (De Haan et al., 2014). This also agrees with Wamalwa and Burns (2017) that the levels of education of first born children are lower than their later born siblings in poor households. This shows to some extent how birth order can affect parental education decision.

Religion and Girls' Education

Even though religion did not play much influence in the study, it was realized that in a bid to sustain patriarchy, socialisation process significantly influenced the persistence of male priority among some parents through religion. Quoting the Holy Scriptures, either correctly or wrongly, to support their claims on male priority, a parent, Madam Adoma, in one of the rural areas, was bold enough to say that:

Even the Holy Scriptures clearly support that women are subordinates. They are to be submissive, as such priority should be given to boys in all areas of life especially when it is about education. They lead in all areas of life. We are to go to school but more importantly take care of the house.

One of the participants Mr. Nketia added that:

> *It is good for girls to go to school but sometimes they come home with certain bad behaviours. They can argue with you before carrying out household work and may even try to assert themselves. I believe that such behaviour is also acquired when they attend school to higher levels. The Holy Scriptures even support that women should always be submissive and respect their husbands' views. How many women do you see in Ghana as preachers. Women can't be equal to men.*

In most societies education is recognized by many religious traditions as an important part of putting faith into action. Based on cultural and religious norms women are expected to adopt submissive and less powerful roles in society. The perception that girls are not supposed to speak or express themselves before their parents is still strong in some communities worldwide. This is an affront to the Capability and Social Justice Theory by Sen (2007) which states that girls should be included in all activities that are likely to affect them in school. Excluding girls discourage them to develop their potentials and capabilities. This reinforces Marcus and Harper's (2014) argument that socialisation may relate to religious or moral codes of behaviour which may marginalise and subordinate others by normalising inequality. Again, this confirms Seguino (2011), Onwutuebe (2013) and Klingorova and Havlicek (2015) assertion on religion and women's status in society. It appears as if moral laws make girls ―not worthy of education" (Daniel, 2015).

Socio-economic Factors

According to the Ministry of Education's rule, teachers are not allowed to send students home for not paying certain amounts of money, particularly, the indirect cost of education. Materials for practical work especially for Home Economics make education expensive which directly or indirectly affect girls' education. Parents interviewed indicated that in most cases they found it difficult to get money to pay for extra expenses for girls to attend school. Among the rural and urban dwellers the complaints were the same on extra cost of fees. As reported by Ante Anita:

> *People can't send their children to school due to extra classes fees.*
> *More especially when the girls had to cook in school during Home*
> *Economics period. Teachers are always demanding money from us.*

Ante Konu said:

> *I have to pay extra classes fees which is too expensive for me. Sometimes*
> *my daughter has to go to the market to sell before she gets money for*
> *school. Teachers are always demanding money from us. They should*
> *know that it is not easy for us.*

Mr. Ofori commented that:

> *My daughter attends a private school. They charge us PTA dues and*
> *extra classes fees. If your ward doesn't pay, she would be asked to go*
> *home. We want the best for our children. Sometimes we have to borrow*
> *money to pay for these extra fees.*

Mr. Abbey, a fisherman, commented:

> *Taking care of girls schooling is not easy when you have to buy*
> *cooking utensils and all the things she needs for her Home Economics*
> *course. We are very poor and the fishing business is seasonal. Where*
> *do we get money for all these things.*

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The only difference was from Ante Maggie, who even though found extra fees as deterrent to girls schooling, said it was necessary to pay for these fees as government could not bear the burden alone. She said:

> It is true that parents sometimes find it difficult to pay for all these extra fees but we should know that the government alone cannot bear all these huge burden. Government needs money for development. Parents should not shoulder all the burdens on government.

This brings to the fore the issue of affordability. It is not that parents do not want to pay these extra monies but parents sometimes feel powerless to cater for their children's needs due to lack of money for school. In a focus group interview, three of the girls expressed resentment about extra fees while Efua saw nothing wrong with it. For instance, Baba stated:

> Sometimes I went to school without money to buy food from the canteen and it was difficult for me to get money to pay for extra classes fees. My parents are poor and we are many. It wasn't easy for my parents to find money for all of us. At school my class teacher would come and mention my name in class and everybody would be laughing at me for not paying extra classes fees. It was so embarrassing. Sometimes I don't go to school I have to go and sell to find money. Gradually, I dropped out.

Similarly, Kuukuwa, a drop out, also commented that:

> My father sees my education as one that could make me earn enough money to support the family in the future but in the village there is no job for him to practise his vocation. He only goes to work when he gets a job. With this he was not able to support the family of five. Life was very difficult for the family. With this situation my father could not afford to pay my extra classes fees. It is an embarrassment when your name is mentioned that you haven't paid your dues and extra classes fees. It was difficult for my father to support my education financially. I had to go to the city to live with an aunt who owned a restaurant with the hope of furthering my education. I woke up very early, do all the house chores

before going to school. On weekends I had to go the restaurant to help I could not cope with it so I had to come back to the village.

Araba also commented that:

My class teacher would always come to class and demand for his extra classes fees. If you don't pay it means that day you would not be happy in class. He would mention your name before the whole class. You would feel so embarrassed. For me because I don't want to be embarrassed I force my father to pay. It is not everybody's father who has money to pay.

Efua stated that:

As for me my father buys us everything we need and pays for the classes fees himself. We don't even owe any fees. Sometimes the monies are given to the students but they won't come and pay. It may be embarrassing when the class teacher mentions your name in class that you have not paid your extra classes fees. It happened to one of our class mates. She comes from a very poor home she told me her father lost his job. She had to stay at home for sometime before coming to school.

When parents feel powerless due to lack of money for school, individuals may find ways and means of developing themselves. In the case of Baaba, she had to engage in commercial activities as she saw no way of continuing her education. With parental mindset on girls' education as an economic cost they will quickly agree to their daughters' request. The issue of poverty as a contributing factor affecting girls' education was confirmed by the District Director of Education. He said:

Sometimes parents are forced to withdraw their girls from school in order to engage in commercial activities to supplement the family's income since there are no jobs in the district. Girls' education are not taken seriously. Most of the girls are selling at the toll booth am told.

Financial constraints can be embarrassing when people cannot make ends meet. In most instances, parents have no option other than to withdraw their daughters from school when they realise that girls may not find jobs to do after school. In the Gomoa East District the occupation of most parents is mainly fishing and farming with most of the women engaged in petty trading. This was a determinant factor of parents' sources of income in terms of support for their children's education. During a face-to-face interview, I sought to find out how parental occupation in the district had impacted on girls' education. In an interview with the fisher folks, Mr. Eduful commented that:

> *Fishing, though lucrative, is not profitable these days. There is not enough fish when we go to sea. Sometimes we don't get enough fish to help us pay for our children's school fees. We have to buy premix fuel and it is even sometimes rationed. The problem is that if you are not able to get fuel for that day it means you cannot go to sea. The fishing business is not good. The government should come to our aid else we can't take care of our children.*

Mr Tetteh, another fisherman, said:

> *You are aware that our job is seasonal. We don't get fish every day when we go to the sea. This makes it difficult for us to make ends meet. Our children need to go to school but where is the money. The government should come to our aid and give our children scholarship like the cocoa farmers.*

Mr Adams also commented:

> *When we pull the net we don't get fish in abundance as we used to. These days people use trawlers to fish in our waters. They catch all the fish and we can't get fish to sell to look after our wives and children. In addition, our work is seasonal. We don't catch fish all year round. It is not easy for us as fishermen. This affects our children's education.*

Mr. Nkansah, another fisherman, on his side blamed the government for its inability to deal with foreigners who had the will power to fish in Ghanaian waters. This, to him, had depleted all the fish stock in the sea. He puts it this way:

> *I blame various governments for their inability to stop owners of big trawlers who have depleted all the fish stocks in the sea. Fishing is a seasonal activity yet these trawlers are always around with their small and big nets in our territorial waters. We don't get anything when we go to sea. I want to stop fishing and look for another job. If I had gone to school it would have been different. This is the reason why we want to educate our children but where is the money.*

Of the five farmers interviewed each of them lamented that there was no ready market for their farm produce. This made it difficult for them to take good care of their children's education. Mr. Abbey commented that:

> *Our farming activities are seasonal. The cassava and plantains that we grow are yearly products. Sometimes when we harvest them we have no buyers. Even when we have buyers the market women would come from Accra and buy them cheaply. We have to sell it to them cheaply since we have no place to store them. We don't get enough money from what we sell to cater for our children's school needs.*

On her part, Ante Ama said:

> *You will send your farm produce to the market and nobody will buy them. Last year I planted garden eggs but I couldn't get buyers. There were a lot of garden eggs in the market and I had to sell them cheaply to market women from Accra. We work for them. We are unable to store them for better price in the lean season so that we can get money to take good care of our children.*

Madam Adoma, a farmer, also had this to say:

> *Farming is seasonal and we find it difficult to abide by our obligations as parents especially when it comes to our children's schooling. If farming had been all year round for us things wouldn't be so tough. We cannot even access loans from the banks to expand our farms. We want to help our children financially so that after school they can get better work to do. You would toil all day planting, hiring labourers yet you don't get any profit. We have to sell our produce so cheap other than that they would go bad.*

Mr Nfum made this statement:

> *Due to the seasonal nature of my job as a farmer, I find it very difficult to cater for my children's needs. My children do not go to school regularly sometimes the girls had to follow their mother on market days and assist her in trading in order to get money for our basic needs. The boys will help carry the things to the market but they have to go school.*

From the narratives participants were engaged in agriculture specifically in food-cropping. The view is that the seasonal nature of economic activities, namely, fishing and farming have contributed immensely to their inability to take care of their children's education as parents were unable to save for the future welfare of their children due to post harvest loses. This is suggestive of the poverty situation in the Gomoa East District. Since there are no ready market for their agricultural produce suggests that access to education depended on occupation and income of parents. Eight women out of the 20 parents interviewed indicated that they were petty traders. This, again, may suggest that their incomes may not be able to take care of their children's needs fully in cases where the women are household heads. The economic prospect of parents' occupation was that there was no potential wealth generation for parents, and this affected girls' education.

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Having little to provide for educational resources means that boys have advantage over girls though there is the likelihood of them dropping out. Even though some parents were of the view that education could better the lives of their children, to most parents it made sense to prioritize schooling for boys as they saw girls' education as waste of resources. In my interaction with the parents, I realized that in order to complement their efforts for subsistence the female child was often involved in farming activities with their mothers. Most mothers involved their female children in farming as they could not cater for their children's needs. Some of the girls had to go to farm after school to uproot cassava for the daily meal while others go to the farm early in the morning. Planting, weeding, harvesting, processing and marketing of farm produce affected enrolment and attendance of girls. The case was a bit different in the urban centres. Commenting on poverty as the main cause of low enrolment of girls in school, the District Director of Education expressed reservation that poverty was the main cause of the phenomenon. He had this to say:

> *Instead of spending money on their daughters they rather spend money lavishly on funerals while neglecting their daughters' education.*

Distance to School and Girls' Education

Distance to school had been an important factor that prevented girls from going to school. In such instances, girls stayed behind and took care of household activities while boys who were allegedly strong were allowed to walk to school. Narrating his story on why he had disallowed his daughter from attending school, Mr. Abbey, a farmer, shared his personal memories.

> *I have stopped sending my daughter to school after SHS 1 because of lack of security. She had to walk along the road sometimes alone and that was risky. As a teenager she may be harassed or raped on her way to school and I am not comfortable to take that risk. I am planning to send her to the city to stay with her aunt so that she can continue her education there.*
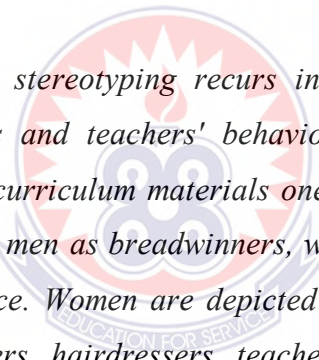
The fear of sending girls to school due to distance loomed on the minds of most parents. In the villages, long distances which could impact negatively on girls ability to cope with school work and fear of insecurity, was entrenched in parents' perception. In order not to expose girls to danger parents preferred to send their daughters to school which was closer to their homes.

Asset and Education

Within most homes where the research was conducted, it was realised that most participants did not have access to pipe borne water but had dug out wells. In that case, children did not have to travel long distances to fetch water. However, certain types of assets that required labour to maintain such as farm and livestock negatively affected children's schooling outcomes. With low resources parents were unable to increase investments when it came to the education of their children particularly girls, as they had lower expected return from education. This confirms Bleemer & Zafar's (2015) argument that the number of assets within households and type of assets may indicate its socio-economic status relative to other households. This is significantly associated with children's educational outcomes including school enrollment and completion.

Labour Market and Girls' Access to Education

From the literature review, it was realised that the pursuit of girls' education had been hampered socially by colonisation which sought among others the segregation of boys from girls. Colonialism was viewed as having perpetuated the marginalization of women by limiting educational content to domestic education which prevented girls to participate in the market economy. I therefore explored the differential treatment girls experience in their career and choice of subjects which has resulted in the persistence of gender inequality in the Ghanaian educational system. In an interview with the district director of education, I sought to find out his views on how career choice by women has influenced education in the district. He expressed his views this way:

> *In Ghana gender stereotyping recurs in the official curriculum, teaching materials and teachers' behavior inside and outside the classroom. In the curriculum materials one finds stereotyping of sex roles which depict men as breadwinners, workers, heroes and people with self confidence. Women are depicted in more traditional roles such as dressmakers, hairdressers, teachers and housekeepers who perform mainly domestic and caring roles. In the Gomoa East this is not different, most girls end their education at the JHS level. A lot of women have not gone to school most of them are at home as dressmakers, hairdressers and caregivers. This has marginalised women in the district.*

This sentiment expressed by the Director reflects the Ghanaian curriculum after independence which is still based on educational systems of British design. This corroborates Fletcher's (2013) idea that the educational systems have promoted inequality by limiting participation to an elite few and marginalized women. In a focus group discussion with the girls I realised that three of the girls offered Home

Economics as the major programmes while one offered General Arts. Asked why they were interested in Home Economics, Kuukuwa had this to say:

My teacher advised me to choose Home Economics this is because it was easy to pass. The subjects there are manageable. I don't need to do difficult work. It teaches students practical skills. It is about sewing, cooking and home management. I hope to become a good mother and take good care of the home. My teacher also said I can become a nurse, a seamstress. I can sell "check check" (fried rice) even if am not able to continue my education.

Araba also said that:

I chose Home Economics because I want to be a fashion designer. After SHS I will go to Polytechnic and offer designing. I will establish a sewing school and employ more girls. My cousin who is a seamstress said she went to Polytechnic and she knows how to sew. She has a lot of money and has time for her husband. She advised me to choose Home Economics.

Baaba, a drop out, said that;

I chose Home Economics because it teaches us about home management. My desire was that after school I would become a dressmaker. I was also interested in taking care of people. But unfortunately I couldn't continue but it has helped me. If I get enough money I will fry the plantain chips myself. Later on I can go and polish up my dressmaking.

Efua, who was the only girl who had chosen General Arts, had this to say.

My teacher advised me to choose General Arts when I told her I wanted to be a newscaster. Again with general arts I was told I won't learn Mathematics. Initially I wanted to be a nurse but I was told I had to read science but science is very difficult. Only brilliant people especially boys can do it.

These narratives by the girls imply that boys are assigned special programmes in the Ghanaian educational system reminiscent of the colonial system. The curriculum still channel girls towards subjects or careers that are perceived to complement their roles as caregivers. It is not surprising that most girls in secondary schools opt for nursing, catering and trading after their education. This corroborates Oladejo's (2017) assertion that the kind of education women had access to though qualitative lacks relevance due to contemporary realities. On students' choice of Home Economics a parent, Maame Biyaa, who also offered Home Economics during her secondary days, said:

> *Even though not all girls become parents yet those who become mothers, Home Economics teach them responsible parenting skills. It equips them to take care of their child's basic needs. Home Economics is beneficial to students who wish to pursue jobs in child care. As a mother it has helped me a lot. I know how to take good care of the house as a wife.*

Even though Ante Konu was not educated, she added her voice by saying that:

> *My daughter is also offering Home Economics. I hear it is a very good subject. It helps them to prepare nutritious meals, clean the house and how to plan their budget. I hear it helps the girls a lot by making them good wives.*

In an interview with Ante Efua, she indicated that, she wished her daughter could continue her education to secondary school and beyond so that she could become a nurse. However, unavailability of job opportunities made her to learn dress making after her JHS education. She said emphatically:

> *If you go to the offices they are all males only few women are there as secretaries or typists. I hear they are not even well paid like the men who occupy the top positions. Go to the schools majority of the teachers are all men.*

Continuing the discussion, Madam Esibu also said that:

> *There are no jobs in the village all the boys who completed JHS and could not go to secondary school have left here to find jobs in the big towns. I hear it is not easy over there. Some of them are sleeping in kiosks. For me I won't allow my girl or boy to sleep in a kiosk. After school I will ask my daughter to go to Accra and stay with her aunt she owes a store there. She will be a sales girl for her or even learn dressmaking.*

In the text the women failed to explain in detail how Home Economics had helped them. They failed to understand that the educational path they have chosen did not give them the opportunity to acquire skills that allowed them to participate in the job market. Rather, the skills they acquired relegated them to the home. When the skilled girls have acquired failed to help them find jobs they are regarded by parents as not worthy of education.

In an individual discussion I tried to examine parents' awareness of marginalisation of females in the labour market. Five parents expressed awareness of the marginalisation of females and ten parents expressed lack of awareness. Mr Teiko indicated that: "*Due to the subjects girls study at school it has made them incapable of finding jobs*".

Mr Sani stated that:

> *Education has brought positive changes to women. Today we see women as lawyers, newscasters and professors in various fields of endeavour.*

Mr. Nkansah also expressed his opinion this way:

> *Many girls schools we see around like Wesley, Mfanteman and Krobo Girls have produced a lot of Ghanaian dignitaries.*

These statements do not indicate there is marginalisation in schools. Ten of the parents denied that the curriculum promoted marginalisation of women. They attributed it to the traditional system that prevailed before the arrival of the white man. Mr. Abbey said:

> *The traditional set up has influenced the curriculum writers. Those who wrote it took into consideration what they saw as good in the traditional set up and added what they thought was right.*

On his side, Mr Adams also said:

> *The system prevailing in the country has prompted the curriculum writers to take certain actions on girls' education.*

Ante Anita reechoed the same words by adding that:

> W*omen were already marginalised before the white man came this was due to the traditional set up.*

Six others made the same comments (Maame Biya, Madam Adoma, Mr Nktesia, Madam Efua, Mr. Eduful, and Ante Esibu). These parents expressed lack of awareness by refusing to understand that the choice of subjects has affected the job market for girls. Madam Otuwa and Mr. Adams refused to acknowledge the fact that there is female marginalisation in education. The two expressed the same sentiments. For example Madam Otuwa stated:

> *Today everybody has access to education especially with introduction of free education at the basic level. There are so many schools and there is no restrictions to any person going to school.*

This assertion fails to admit inequities in female enrolment and completion rates as well as financial positions of individuals which serve to hinder female education. On his side Mr. Mfum also stated:

> *Today the woman's place is not the kitchen as it used to be. We live in modern Ghana where things have changed. Everybody is going to school.*

This comment does not indicate awareness of parents on the continued bias in the social construction of gender roles of females as domestic workers which tend to hinder their educational career and achievement. In a similar question on female marginalisation in the job market and how it has affected female enrolment in schools, the District Director of Education, even though he demonstrated awareness, he however, demonstrated lack of awareness of female marginalisation in contemporary society in Ghana. He stated:

> *In the colonial period girls were marginalised, only few of them could go to school. Today we have more girls' schools like Wesley girls, Holy child, Saint Roses, Mfantseman Girls and more co-educational schools in Ghana. Comparatively more girls are going to school and they are doing better than the boys.*

The District Director even though demonstrates awareness, his comments failed to recognise the continued discrimination of girls in education as seen in disparities in female enrollment and the choice of programmes which often impede their access to equal opportunities in the job market. This, in effect, suggests that the education women continue to receive in Ghana has not equipped them educationally and technically to play prominent roles in the industrialisation process. This, in one way, or the other, can affect parental decision on girls' education. Until the people of Ghana intentionally and deliberately redefine the educational systems put in place by

the coloniser, and restructure the curriculum to reflect the needs of the contemporary Ghanaian situation those educational systems will continue to reproduce the conditions of colonialism (Freire, 2000).

Parental Attitude and Teenage Pregnancy

One major problem revealed by the study was the high rate of teenage pregnancy in the district. When parents were engaged on why so many girls were pregnant in the district, they came up with different responses. The major response was poverty. For example, the incidence of teenage pregnancy scared many parents from educating their daughters. In the communities I realised that girls who got pregnant were unable to return to school. Girls were scared of going back to school because of insults and stigmatisation from colleagues and teachers. This did not only affect girls psychologically. It also affected parents emotionally due to embarrassment and shame to the entire family. To be able to ascertain the effect of teenage pregnancy and its relationship to boys' enrollment, it was realised that teenage pregnancy affected academic performance among girls. The ultimate result was that the girls performed poorly in examinations. Realising that girls were not doing well parents were compelled to withdraw them from school to engage them in economic activities. In a focus group interview two of the girls who had given birth posited that their performance were below average when they got pregnant. For example, Kuukuwa narrated her story this way.

> *My parents had no money for me to pay for extra classes fees. I sometimes went to school without money. I always stayed in the classroom during break time then one day one of my friends introduced to me a young man in the village who had come from Accra. Initially he told me he was a contractor and that if I gave in to him he will marry me. I became happy not knowing he was telling lies.*

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> *For the first time I had sex I became pregnant. As I speak, my son doesn't know his father. I was very brilliant but when I became pregnant I couldn't concentrate in class. My father withdrew me from school. I had to trade in order to take care of my baby.*

Narrating her part of the story, Baaba said that:

> *My mother was always shouting at me and calling me names. My parents had no time for me. They always quarreled in front of us especially when we asked for money from them. It appeared my mother had a strong liking for my brother. He would ask for money and it would be given to him. I didn't know what I had done to my mother. When I needed money for school, she would shout and shout before giving it to me. My friend introduced me to one of her male friends in town. I always went to him for money. Later on, I realised that I was pregnant. In the classroom I couldn't concentrate. This affected my academic work. Realising that I wasn't doing well, my parents withdrew me from school. I had to help my mother with her petty trading to fend for myself and the baby.*

When mothers who are supposed to show love to their teenage daughters but rather treat them differently the girls seek refuge from those who have the means. Poor parenting and lack of love can lead to girls seeking refuge in men which can affect their education.

Again through focus group discussion I realised that parental attitudes had great implications on the lives and attitudes of children especially girls. This became evident from what some parents said. For example, Mr. Eduful a fisherman whose first daughter had dropped out of school while in JHS 3 complained bitterly about girls' education. Asked whether it was good to educate girls, he said:

> *Look at that girl. One of the school boys slept with her and she is pregnant. This is shameful. I have lost my dignity as an elder of the village. To me, there is no point in educating a girl when we don't even*

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have the means. That is why it is good to spend your money on your son's education. I wish she could continue her education but her grades are very weak. When she gives birth she will learn a trade.

Maame Biyaa also thought that educating a girl was wasteful due to teenage pregnancy.

These days schools girls would not sleep early. Instead of studying they would keep awake all night especially during funerals. You would see them with boys in the 'corners' and the result is teenage pregnancy. It is wasteful to spend so much on girls.

Maame Awoyaa said:
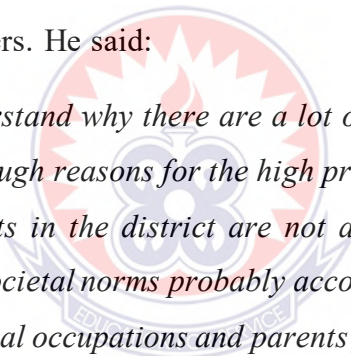
School girls of today are not serious about education. They are only interested in mobile phones. Instead of studying at school, they become interested with boys who own mobile phones and they take advantage of them. Parents need to be strict with their girls.

According to Mr Teiko, parents are to be blamed for girls getting pregnant before they complete school.

I believe that if parents were to take care of their children's school fees teenage pregnancy would be minimised. It appears that some parents do not care about their daughters' education. The belief is that they would one day leave home and marry. Parents sometimes see girls' education as useless and are not willing to pay their school fees. In the Gomoa traditional set up, the mindset among parents is that at 18 years a girl should be able to give birth. I don't know if that is why we see a lot of teenage pregnancy cases in the district. Anyway, one cannot also ignore the issue of poverty which drives parents to give out their children for marriage. But things must change. This time, we see women who are doctors and lawyers.

As reiterated by Mr. Teiko, when parents see girls' education as wasteful and do not show concern it is obvious that they would also refuse to pay their school fees. This can result from girls going after men for money, resulting in early sex and its associated teenage pregnancies. Again, the mindset of parents and poverty as claimed by Mr. Teiko were also to be blamed.

According to the District Director of Education, parental occupations and traditional norms were to be blamed for teenage pregnancy in the district. This assumption reinforces the words of Mr. Teiko who sees poverty as one of the causes of teenage pregnancy in the district. According to the District Director of Education, farming and fishing activities as well as traditional norms made it difficult for parents to take good care of their daughters. He said:

> *One cannot understand why there are a lot of teenage pregnancies in the district. Although reasons for the high pregnancies and birth rates among adolescents in the district are not altogether clear, parental occupation and societal norms probably account for this. Farming and fishing are seasonal occupations and parents find it difficult to pay for their children's fees in lean seasons. The second contributory factor may be due to some negative societal norms. In Gomoa, traditionally among the people, the general belief is that a woman without a child at 18 years of age would remain barren hence the early exposure to sex resulting from teenage pregnancies and early marriages with its attendant problems of low school enrolment and ultimately low literacy levels among girls. When girls cannot get their basic needs they would definitely seek for love from others who can help them.*

A community leader provided a broader perspective on teenage pregnancy. To him, issues about adolescence and lower educational levels of parents account for teenage pregnancy in the district. He stated that:

> *The challenges of adolescence and the lower educational levels of parents can lead to teenage pregnancy. If parents were highly educated they would understand the importance of education and provide the basic needs of girls. This could end the problem of teenage pregnancy. Lower educational levels as well as illiteracy is to be blamed for this menace. Uneducated parents are only interested in their daughters giving birth as if it is a prestige to do so. This ultimately can lead to lower school enrolment and low literacy levels of girls. This could inform parents' decision on sending girls to school. With teenage pregnancy parents may not be ready to sponsor girl' education. As girls' education may be seen as waste of scanty resources.*

In my interactions with the girls, I realised that they had had no sex education and did not even know much about the consequences of unprotected sex. For example, the two drop out girls shared their views this way: Baaba said:

> *I met a man who said he would take care of me if I allowed him to have sex with me. I became happy thinking what he said was true and that he would even marry me. The first time I had sex with him I became pregnant. I didn't know anything about sex education. I could have had AIDS. The man did not even take care of me. When I became pregnant my parents withdrew me from school.*

Kuukuwa also narrated her story this way:

> *In our society it is a taboo to talk about sex. My parents never discussed with me anything about sex. The first day I menstruated I didn't know what to do. It was my friend who advised me on what I should do. I couldn't tell my mother until the third day when she asked me why I was so quiet. What she said was that it is normal for every*

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woman and left for the market. I was left alone to find money to take
care of myself. In school my teacher didn't teach us anything about sex.
I learnt a lot from my friends. I had sex with an elderly man and got
pregnant. My parents became so much annoyed with me and withdrew
me from school. My crime was that I had disgraced them.

From the conversation, it is evident that girls can be lured into sex by older men with the aim of promising to take care of them. This normally ends up in teenage pregnancy. As the girls shared with me, their aspirations of becoming nurses, teachers and journalists they concluded that their lives were shattered and that the only thing left was to engage in commercial activities. This in their view was the reason why parents were not ready to educate them.

Culture and Traditional Beliefs

In the rural areas of Gomoa East cultural and traditional beliefs have a more defining influence on girls' education. In the areas I visited some parents were obsessed with the misconception that females could hardly become educated to a higher level. Traditional beliefs about women undervalue the role of women. This discouraged parents to send their female children to school but rather encouraged males to pursue education. Education among girls seems to have some links with socio-cultural life as the people thought the higher education the girl receives, the lesser her chances of getting a husband. It was not surprising to hear some villagers citing women who hold high positions and had not married. They saw marriage as an important asset for girls. In trying to find out why parents wanted their children to marry early, the common responses from them was on procreation, social obligation and a source of pride. Three of the parents shared their views as follows: Madam Efua commented thus:

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> *There are so many women who have gone to school and cannot get husbands. We have heard that those women with big positions in the government are not married. More education is not good for women. When they go to school, they are not able to cook for their husbands. Their marriages do not last. These days you see a lot of educated women walking about without husbands. Nobody respects the unmarried woman.*

Ante Awoyaa also continued this way.

> *If a girl goes to school, it will be difficult to get a husband. This is because she would want someone who has also gone to school. Sometimes men don't want to marry such women. They see them as very quarrelsome. The more school they go means delaying pregnancy. Without children when you die who would bury you? Marriage is necessary for all women. It accords them the necessary respect.*

Madam Adoma also said that:

> *Every woman needs to marry. Without it, nobody will respect you. A woman needs to marry and give birth. It is a prestige to see your children married and your grandchildren beside you. Everybody wants to have grandchildren.*

From the various interviews conducted, marriage was seen as a cultural value among the people of Gomoa East. In most rural societies, many parents held the view that there was no value investing in girls' education especially to the highest level as there will be no livelihood opportunities for them in the village. The following quotations summarise responses from some of the parents:

> *Early marriage is good for women. It gives the couple the number of children they desire. Too much education involves controlling the number of children one wants. No one knows who will take care of you when you are old. Who will marry you in the village with too much education* (Ante Ama).

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Too much education is not good for women. Who is going to marry such girls in the village. The only thing left for them is to leave the villages to the urban centres in search of jobs after school and may not find husbands. This can be worrying not only to the girls but also to their parents (Madam Adoma).

Marriage is sacred. The unmarried are disrespected whatever her social standing. That is why sometimes too much education may not be good for women (Ante Anita).

In an interview on marriage and child birth, some parents intimated that it was a taboo for women not to give birth. Females were made to believe that they exist to get married and raise children. Some even advocated early marriage as it makes the woman fertile. This idea was even perceived by participants in the urban areas as well as some educated individuals. Madam Otuwa a semi-literate had this to say:

It is a taboo not to give birth. Educated women sometimes use pills to prevent pregnancy. These pills can lead to barrenness and cause problems for the woman. If you are not able to give birth who will take care of you when you are old.

Ante Maggie who was literate added that:

Sometimes too much education is not good for the woman. I married late and I was even fortunate to have had a husband. My parents were worried when I had to marry at the age of 30 years. Everybody thought I wasn't going to get married. I gave birth to my first born at the age of 31 due to a whole lot of complications. I'm not saying that it is not good for a woman to be educated. What am saying is that a woman needs to marry early when a suitor comes then she can continue her education.

Even though education may delay birth, parents forgot to understand that naturally some women may be barren. For others, child spacing may be normal without any contraceptives. This system conflicts with family life education which sought among others better marriage life through education and delayed birth. It was therefore not surprising that there was a limited number of women in the skilled sector due to lack of education as a result of early marriages. The assumption is that with limited number of women in the formal sector directly or indirectly may affect girls' education which will give rise to male prioritization.

Rural- Urban Divide

UN Global Monitoring (2012) highlights that where young people live can determine their educational opportunities with rural /urban or regional divisions reinforced by gender. Similarly, I was curious about how, the rural-urban divide affected girls' education. In my interview with parents, it became obvious that living in rural areas was more intense and challenging for girls as compared to the urban centres. In an interview, Ante Maggie said:

> *The tradition of spending less on daughters may be slowly changing particularly among those living in urban areas as more people are exposed to the mass media and have more contact with relatives living in urban areas.*

Mr. Ofori also said that:

> *Not only are urban dwellers exposed to the mass media but also the awareness that education is good for all. In urban centres the challenge to send children to school is stronger than the rural areas. In rural areas, parents are only interested in marriage and procreation.*

Of particular relevance for this study were challenges associated with girls in rural areas that tended to be explained by traditional concerns of parental support. In rural areas, girls were denied educational opportunities as they were seen as less able to support the family financially. Mr. Abbey a rural dweller had this to say:

> *Girls are unproductive in their ability to support the family financially.*
> *You spend money on them and it goes waste. Traditionally, women are*
> *limited to life at home as their major tasks include cooking and raising*
> *children. They will marry and leave for their husbands home without*
> *any financial support from them.*

This kind of belief gave limited opportunities and choices for girls. In the urban centres, however, the views on parental support by girls were mixed. Among the more educated mothers, the belief was that daughters could reciprocate parental monetary investments.

Ante Konu said that:

> *You see it is good to educate girls but whether they are educated or not*
> *they owe allegiance to their husband's family. This makes it difficult to*
> *support their parents economically.*

Ante Maggie had this to say:

> *With increasing economic hardships girls need to be educated in order*
> *to participate in income generation activities to complement the efforts*
> *of their husbands who are mainly the breadwinners of their respective*
> *families. If they are educated they can also take good care of their*
> *parents.*

Ante Ama said:

> *The issue of rural poverty which mostly affects women means that*
> *there is the need to educate women to enable them engage in*
> *productive activities to support their families economically.*

Maame Otuwa said:

The contribution of women in domestic work and care giving leaves them with little income to support their parents in old age. They need to be educated in order to support their aging parents.

In one of the villages, it was confirmed by a parent that there had been monthly remittances from her daughter who lives in the city. Ante Awoyaa had this to say:

My daughter sends me money every month. I use some to pay for her younger brothers' school fees.

This explains that daughters may also be a viable source of support to parents as suggested by Ho (2017) and that encouraging parental investments through education may lead to an increase in family provided old age support. Perhaps, this is what is lacking in the rural areas in Ghana which goes to buttress Odonkor's (2008) claim that rural parents should rather be seen as people dissatisfied with the education system than as illiterates ignorant of the value of education.

In the rural areas, parents' illiteracy also appeared to be a disadvantage for girls' education. This was rather contrary to those girls who lived in urban communities. The views expressed by the girls and parents summarised below verify the assertion. Baaba said:

I dropped out because my parents did not go to school. In rural areas, it appears parents do not know the importance of education. I was often perceived as a utility asset to undertake all household chores in the home. Sometimes, I thought my mother did not like me. My mother would not entertain my father's opinions to allow me go to school early. My mother would yell at me if I made the slightest mistake. My mother never had any positive attitude towards my education. This affected my school attendance and academic achievement. My parents allowed my brothers to go to school because they expect greater returns from them and not me.

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Kuukuwa hinted that:

> *My parents never had education. This did not favour my schooling. I remember my parents arranging marriage with a man who had come from the city to marry me when I complete school. My parents feared that too much education may 'corrupt' me by encouraging unwanted attitudes towards the man whom I later found out to be a mechanic apprentice. Since then, my parents tended to see little value in my education. They did not motivate my interest in school work. The arduous task of running the household became intense. I did not have enough time in the day to complete my domestic tasks and attend class. I had to drop out of school ostensibly to get married to that man.*

It appears that in rural areas, girls are brought up with a subconscious affinity for parenting and for that matter motherhood. Therefore, the education of girls seems to be unimportant. However, it can be concluded that urban parents have better knowledge on the necessity of girls' education and have more understanding about their education and its impact on social development. This conclusion is drawn up from the narratives by the girls, which is summarised below.

Araba, a 15 year old, girl whose mother was a teacher had this to say:

> *My parents are committed to give me good education. I wish that all hindrances to girls' education could be eliminated. I do not understand why girls should not go to school especially in rural areas. We are two girls with one brother. My parents treat us equally. I have a friend who is studying in the university. I'm studying hard so that I can also go to the university to become a journalist so that I can fight for girls. For me, I do not sell anything. I only sweep the house in the morning and help my mother to prepare supper. My mother is a teacher. She always encourages us to study hard. She helps us to do our homework every day before we go to bed.*

Efua whose parents were educated and lived in one of the urban centres said:

> *My parents are all educated though not to higher levels. My mother*
> *traveled outside the country so we had to stay with our grandmother in*
> *the village. When she came back we came to stay with them in the*
> *town. In the village we went to school at any time and the teacher*
> *would not query us. In my present school if you don't do well you will*
> *be repeated. Though the fees are expensive, my parents are committed*
> *to give us quality education. My mother encourages us to study hard so*
> *that we can go to the university and get good jobs in the future. My*
> *mother supports my father to buy all the things we need for school. My*
> *brother helps with the house chores.*

Madam Biyaa, a parent, intimated that:

> *I did not go school but leaving in an urban centre I have come to know*
> *the importance of education. Girls' education is very important. I have*
> *persuaded my husband to send all my children to school. I get worried*
> *when I see girls not going to school. Boys' education is important but I*
> *dream of seeing my daughters become like women parliamentarians so*
> *that they can take care of me when I can't work anymore.*

These narratives, again, bring to the fore parental education and place of residence
which can affect girls school attendance. It appears that parental attitudes towards
girls' education had not changed significantly in the rural areas due to illiteracy. In
these circumstances, the opportunities for girls to continue their education are
severely restricted as stated by Plan (2012). This, in effect, accounted for the
prioritizing of boys' education. As a researcher the different views of parents, well-
articulated, brought to the discussions, dimensions that would never have been
understood. I found the views of parents and girls very interesting as they shared
different views on boys' and girls' education.

Migration and Girls' Education

Even though migration was not part of the research objectives, I realized that a significant characteristic of the district population was high rate of emigration. Parental migration accounted for male prioritization within the district. In my interaction with some parents, I found out that a majority of the population were migrant farmers. It was observed that the migration trend was towards the cocoa growing areas of other districts and regions. The people had the tendency of moving their children frequently from one farming community to another which affected schooling and academic performance. According to the parents children especially girls had to be connected to their parents in order to protect and check risky behaviours which might lead to teenage pregnancy. Parents reiterated that girls residing with non-biological families may not receive quality training from biological parents especially living with grandparents or step families.

In an interview with some parents, it was confirmed that some of the girls who were pregnant had stayed with non-biological caregivers especially grandparents as a result of less access to resources in the household and lack of proper supervision. This corroborates Sherr et al.'s (2017) explanation that the youth living with non-biological caregivers may be exposed to reduced parenting quality. This also confirms Fomby's (2013) study on family instability and college enrollment which indicated that young adults living with step families had less access to resources in the household which negatively influenced their educational outcomes. In order to enjoy full access to parental control and for fear of bad behaviour through peer connectedness, many parents frequently moved with their girls from one community to another during farming seasons. Older boys were encouraged to stay behind with their relatives to continue their education with the perception and belief that

education was necessary for them. The common belief was that with education boys will earn and support parents financially after securing a good job. Given this set of social concern parents were unwilling to live their children behind to attend school for reasons other than capability. In order to support the findings I sought to find out from the District Director of Education on issues of parental migration and its effect on girls' education. He confirmed the situation and said:

> *One of the major problem with low attendance of school in the district is migration. The people are seasonal farmers and they tend to move to the cocoa farming areas during planting seasons. They often go with their children. They don't even stay in one community. If you go to the schools in the villages, you will see few students. The classrooms are always empty. This is the situation at the district.*

The above revelation by the District Director of Education confirms that he was aware of the problem. However, he lacked awareness as he overlooked parents lived experiences and perspectives on children's education due to lack of direct connection between himself and the parents. His only concern was on numbers in the classrooms. Failing to understand parental concerns was a problem that affected girls' education in the district.

Government Officials and Girls' Education

In order to substantiate their role in promoting girls' education and to assess the credibility of my findings, I sought to find out from education officials their versions on boys' and girls' education in the district. Reports I received from the education officials at the district education office indicated that girls' enrolment was at par with boys due to certain governmental policies and some initiatives put forward by the district. These policies included among others, the capitation grant, the free compulsory universal basic education (FCUBE) and Science, Technology,

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Mathematics, Innovation and Education (STMIE). At the district level, it was confirmed that to encourage more girls there were girl child coordinators in all the schools which sought to encourage girls, participation in school. According to the District Director of Education, these policies had encouraged more girls to enroll. Figures were presented which showed increase in enrollment for girls in all the educational circuits at the JHS level from 2014 to 2017. The figures according to the education officials, demystify boys priority in the Gomoa East District.

Table 4.2: Enrolment figures

	2014/2015			2015/2016			2016/2017		
	JHS1	**JHS2**	**JHS3**	**JHS1**	**JHS2**	**JHS3**	**JHS1**	**JHS2**	**JHS3**
Boys	1615	1424	1233	1542	1492	1449	1566	1449	1536
Girls	1545	1484	1116	1502	1525	1431	1527	1541	1450
Total	**3160**	**2908**	**2349**	**3044**	**3017**	**2880**	**3095**	**2990**	**2986**

Source: Gomoa East District Education Directorate (2017).

In spite of the figures presented by the education officials, which seem to indicate that girls' enrollment had increased and was almost at par with the boys in the district, many factors that serve as barriers to girls from enrolling in school were not highlighted. The use of enrolment figures as an indicator of children's school attendance to serve as parameters about girls' education was misleading to some extent. This is explained by the fact that increase in numbers alone cannot be used as a yard stick to indicate gender parity in schools. It is also worthy to note that there is a difference between enrolment and attendance at school. The number of years of schooling or grades as an indicator of girls' educational attainment was also missing in the data presented. These quantitative measures do not provide adequate

explanations to why disparities still exist within the district. Also, the reasons for the changing relationships between boys' enrolment and the various determinants that affect girls' enrolment were not qualitatively ascertained to give an in-depth understanding of the numbers and the relationships. Again, the statistics did not highlight girls' daily lived experiences which affect attendance to school. One thing that is significant is that looking at the figures closely, in all the years, at JHS 2 girls' enrolment was higher than boys. Yet a substantial number of girls dropped out and could not continue to SHS 3 in all the academic years. This shows a gap between enrolment and completion. For example, in 2014/2015 as many as 368 girls as against 201 boys could not enter SHS 3. One thing that the district education officials failed to recognise was that boys still dominate in enrolment when it comes to completion rate. Despite promising results in enrolment rate for girls, several factors discussed above acting in concert inadvertently affected girls' participation in school which in turn served as catalyst to propel boys' education at the expense of girls within the district.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2 How is Male Priority Manifested?

Various studies on boys' preference have found out that priority of boys are manifested in different forms. While the manifestations can be similar they may be different from one community to another. Male priority is manifested in a variety of norms and rituals deeply embedded in obvious favouritism of the male child with the idea that the girl is simply made for the kitchen. Even though the matrilineal system is practised in the Gomoa East, I found out that in the rural areas regard for boys were more pervasive than in the urban centres. The reason is that girls are needed to help their mothers in business activities to get money to take care of the family. The issue of age old support also accounted for this phenomenon. The mode of

manifestation differed slightly from the rural areas to the urban centres. Asked why her son was in school even though his grades were not encouraging, Madam Efua described it this way:

> *In our society, people give more attention to boys because they will one day support the whole family. I thank God I have two sons who will take care of me when am old. Girls are considered other people's property. They will marry and go to their husbands house.*

These comments reechoed the importance of the male child in all the areas visited. I found out that the male child was an important specie and that the birth of a male child is often heralded with great joy and the parents received a lot of compliments. There is the assurance of continuity of the family line and the protection of family property especially in rural areas. The issue of age old support was eminent. Most people were concerned about who would bury them when they die. Participants recognised the role of boys in relation to bread-winning and conversely domesticity and child-care assigned to girls. This was manifested in their relationship with their children. For example, Mr. Abbey remarked that:

> *Not that we do not regard girls. They are important. But you see traditionally it is men who bury their parents and not women. For women as they are, their role is to take care of children.*

Mr. Eduful said:

> *It is always with great joy when a male child is born. Not only would they inherit your property they would support you physically when you are old.*

Madam Efua said:

> *My husband married a second wife when it became obvious that I could not give him a male. It was a great joy when finally my last born was a boy. The issue was that who was going to support us in old age.*

Even though matrilineal, the wish for sons were pervasive in some communities I visited. This was manifested in increased polygamy and high fertility rate among some family members though not wide spread. As Mr. Nketsia hinted:

> *In the olden days our fathers would consult mediums and witchdoctors to change the sex of their children especially if there were no boys in the family. If your wife can't give birth to a son then you are compelled to marry another woman. If you don't want to engage in polygamy then you continue to give birth until you get a boy. This time things have changed. I hear that people go to the hospital to find out if their baby is a boy or girl.*

This statement confirms the idea about the Ghanaian society in which gender is associated with sex from the very time a child is born. From birth, the male child is preferred to the female. The desire to know the sex of the unborn child is strong in societies partly because parents prefer one sex to the other. Among the Akans of Ghana the first question usually asked when a child is born is ―is it a boy or a girl?" When it is a boy the words used to welcome the baby is "woawo nipa" literally meaning you have given birth to a human being.

Another area of manifestation was the change of fertility patterns among couples. Women whose first children were females had given birth to more children than those whose first children were males. This made the use of contraceptives rare due to preference for males. In an individual interview, Madam Adoma, aged 44, an illiterate in one of the rural areas who had given birth to seven children remarked that:

> *In our society people give more attention to boys than girls. I have several children because my husband wanted a son. I had no choice but to continuing giving birth till I had a boy. My husband threatened that he would marry another woman if I did not give him a boy. It was a joyous occasion when the boy came.*

Again, manifestation of boys' priority was seen in the area of education. In a face- to-face conversation, I realized that one of the participants Mr. Mfum had his son in a private school while his daughters were in a public school. Asked why, he said:

The boy is too young to trek with the girls to school. The school he attends has a vehicle that picks him every day. I don't have enough money to pay for transportation for all of them.

Perhaps, Mr. Mfum had a different motive for sending his son to a private school. The assumption may be based on male priority. This may confirm Aslam's (2007) assertion that in Pakistan parents preferences for boys affect school selection for their children. To him, generally, parents select comparatively better schools, in the context of fees, for their sons and that daughters were enrolled in the schools having lower fees. Again, I observed that in some rural areas parents who could not educate their children due to financial constraints had sent their sons to their family members in the cities who are socio-economically better off to enroll their children in school. I also found out that boys were encouraged by parents to study more than girls. The intention was clear, as future breadwinners and perceived future financial returns to families. Perhaps this also goes to explain the special role men play in both patrilineal and matrilineal societies.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: How does male prioritization impact on girls‛ education?

Education has been identified as the key component of overall development of an individual as it makes him or her acquire knowledge, abilities and skills. Globally the existence of male priority have been a prominent issue because of its potential negative implications (Fuse, 2010) on girls' education. Priority for boys based on traditional views and perceived future financial returns to families, can have a negative impact on girls' educational attainment. Lower educational attainment

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among girls has the implication that there is lack of competitiveness and comparative cost advantage for girls towards career development and little prospects ahead in higher and continuing education. This tendency perhaps is the cause of the multiplying effect of male domination in education and public life especially in the district and in the nation as a whole.

In terms of impact, there was high illiteracy rate among women in the various communities. This denied them of their potentials and capabilities. This means women will be incapable of excelling in both public and private spheres where they can demonstrate their academic prowess (Lewis, 2012). The high rate of illiteracy had led to unequal power structures as well as discriminatory gender norms within the rural communities where women had little or no say in family affairs.

Negative schooling experiences leading to high rate of attrition and lower educational attainment had led to extreme poverty. In the Gomoa East District women's lives continue to be governed by patriarchal value system. The main obstacle to gender development. Women's improved access to education is associated with increased female participation in the labour force and employment rates. However, there remains a gender gap in employment in favour of men with women experiencing challenges in accessing economic opportunities. The chunk of school dropouts and a greater number of illiterates who are not gainfully employed meant that women may not be able to generate income to support their children's education. The capacity to engage in large scale trading might not yield much result as they cannot read and write. In the district most of the women were into traditional occupations such as small-scale retail trading and engaged in subsistence farming.

This made it increasingly hard for women to access credit to expand their businesses. In this instance they had no control over local market prices as they are unable to extend the scope of their commercial activities. This has further exacerbated the poverty level in the district. The gap in unemployment is at its worst among women who are very poor with limited or no educational achievement. Lower attainment of education means women cannot seek for white collar jobs as many women were not as career-oriented as their male counterparts.

In some communities I realized that there was no parental support or motivation for girls' education as they were unconvinced of the benefits of girls' schooling. This was reflected in some girls wearing old and tattered uniforms as well as absenteeism from school. The lack of interest by parents had led to some girls dropping out of school. This I realized was due to parental low educational level, illiteracy and poverty. All the rural girls interviewed hinted that their parents did not discuss school matters with them neither did they spend time with them on their studies nor visited their school. Parents support perceived by girls was negative. The non-supportive attitude of parents had impacted negatively on their self-esteem and aspirations. This can be true for girls living in poor rural communities (Patton et al., 2016). Efua a dropped out girls had this to say:

> *I was not motivated to go school by my parents. My school uniforms were torn but my parents did not buy me a new one. The other one I had had faded. I couldn't wear it to school. I complained and complained. Finally I had to stop school.*

During a focus group discussion one could read from the facial expressions of the dropped out girls a sign of hopelessness. They told me they wished they had not stopped school as it had impacted negatively on their lives. In a conversation with the District Director of Education, he commented that:

Lack of family support and interest in girls' education had affected so many girls in the district. In the rural areas, most of the girls come to school with the aim that one day they may leave school either to marry or follow their mothers to the market. They lack the motivation to come to school.

Education can improve the capabilities of a person, and that person can bring positive social change within his or her society (Andres & Chavez, 2015). If girls are educated, they better understand themselves and can deal with life challenges through interaction, knowledge and skill acquisition. Since education involves social interaction without education, girls may not seek any support from their peers to enhance their individual capabilities. This may limit girls from participating in many activities which could benefit her and the wider society through innovative ideas. Unequal access to education may deny girls a path towards their full potential, economically and socially as they do not have a better understanding of their lives. This can lead to a sense of self worthlessness and decrease of social status as they may not be able to positively influence their lives through transfer of knowledge and values acquired through education. Again, they may not be able to inspire themselves and others to pursue education as they are not good role models themselves. They cannot take on leadership roles, especially within the community and focus on societal development. They therefore cannot positively influence their lives and the lives of their families and the wider communities. Denying the girl-child access to education implies making her a dysfunctional member of the society. It is important

therefore to provide an environment where girls are motivated and supported to complete their educational dreams.

RESEARCH QUESTION 4: How can male prioritization be eliminated?

An important area of concern which I noticed in the Gomoa East was the disconnect between girls' access to education and the ability to participate fully at all levels of education which had a lot of impact on girls' education. In most societies geographical, economic and socio-cultural barriers make education inaccessible to girls throughout the educational cycle; this was not different from the district. Even though governmental policies had yielded some results the issue of preferential treatment for boys mostly in the rural areas based on perceived social and economic benefits had led to few girls enrolling in school. This denies girls the concept of equal opportunity in education, thus weakening government general policies on girls' education. It means that regardless of their capabilities, girls and boys may not be rated at the same level when it comes to education.

In trying to find out from parents how male prioritization could be eliminated five parents shared their views as follows: Madam Efua said:

> *How can this be done. I want to believe that it is practised everywhere. It is part of our culture. We came to meet it and there is no way we can put a stop to it. It is my hope that government can do something about it. We need our daughters to go to school but it is not easy. We are poor and have to decide what to do when there is no money to take care of our children.*

Madam Adoma commented that:

> *It is difficult to change a traditional system that has been handed to us by our forefathers. It is only the government that can change it. It is part of our culture. I believe that girls should be given the opportunity to go school.*

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Ante Awoyaa continued this way:

For me boys should always be given the chance to go to school. Even though girls' education is good after all the years spent in school they will marry and leave home. Well if they want to do something about it I have no problem. It is up to the government.

Madam Otuwa a semi-literate had this to say:

Girls' education is better and the government must try and pass a law to enforce it once and for all. Am saying this but I am afraid it may not work in the rural areas. Education for girls is not so popular there. It is important to educate girls so that they can also take care of themselves and their children. They are human beings like boys and they ought to be given the right to pursue education and develop their potentials. The world cannot only be run by men only. But I still wonder if this can work.

Mr Teiko stated that:

Girls' education is good because it is a powerful tool to change perceptions and belief systems. Families with educated girls have a broader outlook towards society. Girls who are educated can easily influence their peers and inspire their communities. It enables them to be confident, earn self-respect and independence. They are able to pursue their desired dreams and professional careers. But the problem is, can this be eliminated in the rural areas where gender norms are so stringent. It is part of our culture. I hope something can be done about it, which I still doubt.

In a similar question to the girls it became evident that eliminating male priority could pose a problem. Baaba emotionally commented:

I think it would be very difficult. It is the mindset of our parents that boys are better than girls in everything. To me there is the need to impose laws on our parents to send all children to school. I believe that

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> *if I had stayed in school longer things would have been better for me.*
> *Look at the way am struggling in life. Because I couldn't go to school*
> *look at where I find myself. Siting in the sun every day. Shouting for*
> *people to come and buy my goods. Running after vehicles all day.*
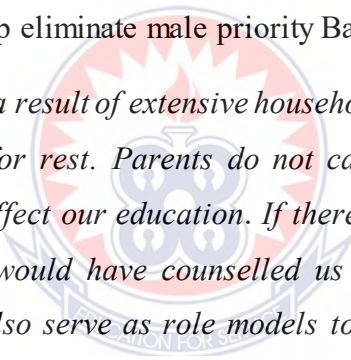> *Sometimes I blame my parents for not allowing me to continue my*
> *education.*

Baaba further continued that:

> *I must be frank I feel proud about women who are educated. I don't*
> *think they suffer the way I do. I would also be sitting in my office and be*
> *paid at the end of the month. We no longer live in an era where the*
> *intellectual contributions of women and girls can be ignored. To*
> *eliminate this problem the government should talk to our parents on the*
> *importance of girls' education.*

Even though participants showed awareness about importance of educating girls it must be acknowledged that this did not translate into their belief about how male priority can be eliminated. From the responses one thing was certain that male priority was embedded in culture and there was the need for stringent laws to curb it. The values of males was very high and eliminating it could pose a problem. This explains how culture can blind the minds of people. Despite all the shortcomings, the general observation seemed to suggest that parents and girls were in support of equal opportunity for both sexes, the assumption being that when girls are educated, it will help build women's capacity in bridging the gap between male and female education. The lack of attention in girls' education is a stark reminder as to why countries need to make progress not only in enrollment figures but how male prioritization can be eliminated. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), specifically Goal 3A is set to ―eliminate gender disparity at all levels of education" (Am & Gergel, 2009). Until the issue of equal right becomes the concern of all, it could pose a challenge to the

district assembly since there will be the tendency of government policy and practices being weakened as a result of beliefs and practices which have dented the minds of individuals.

Studies on barriers to girls' education have consistently found that lack of female teachers in schools affect girls' participation in education. This is so in rural areas where few female teachers willingly accept postings. While the girls interviewed addressed factors affecting their education, there were considerable differences between the rural and urban girls' education. It became evident that in the urban centres the presence of female teachers had facilitated enrolment and attendance. This was not so in the rural areas. In a focus group discussion on how the presence of female teachers could help eliminate male priority Baaba stated that:

> *In rural areas as a result of extensive household obligations, girls have no leisure time for rest. Parents do not care about how household responsibilities affect our education. If there were female teachers in our school they would have counselled us to go to school. Female teachers would also serve as role models to our parents. If that had been the case I wouldn't have been where I am are today.*

Araba added that:

> *My class teacher is a female and she always encourage us to study hard. She told us that she is furthering her education so that she can go and teach in the Senior High School. She is very brilliant and I want to be like her. She stays closer to our house. Sometimes I visit her. Because of her the girls always come to school. My parents always tell me to be like her. She has been talking to my parents on the effects of household responsibilities on girls' education.*

Mr Nkansah expressed his opinion this way:

> *In rural areas, some parents do not value education. The problem is that they can't see any benefit of keeping their girls in school for a longer period. In order to influence girls' education, efforts should be made to raise the image and status of teachers whilst supporting female teachers who have been posted to the district as incentive for them to stay on in the villages. In this sense entrenched traditional practices and marginalisation regarding girls' education can be addressed. Parents would see them as role models for their daughters.*

Ante Konu remarked:

> *Female teachers don't want to teach in the villages but would want to teach in the urban areas where there is water and electricity. If they stay in the villages parents and girls will follow their example. This will help parents to maintain their girls in school.*

In a face-to-face conversation with the District Director of education he intimated that lack of female teachers in the rural areas was a source of worry to him. This is because girls need female teachers to confide in and as role models. He stated that:

> *In most cases parents are worried about sexual safety of their daughters in an environment dominated by male teachers. In the urban centres due to the presence of more female teachers and with some competition on dressing this had contributed to the neatness of the girls but more importantly punctuality to school. Serving as role models can significantly increase girls' aspirations for education. This can also help to demystify the notion that boys are academically better than girls.*

This idea corroborates Camfed's (2011) idea that the absence of female teachers as role models affect the education of girls. This also support existing research work which has demonstrated that more exposure to female leaders decreases the gender gap in educational attainment in communities and that girls in these communities

perform fewer household or domestic chores (Beaman et al., 2012). Until this is done the gender gap in education will continue to widen.

Continuing his conversation the District Director added that:

> *In the rural areas most of the female teachers who were posted there often applied to go on transfer apparently to join their husbands. Female teachers who are at post did not stay in the villages for various reasons. This has affected teaching and learning due to lack of continuity. I think lack of social amenities in the rural areas make female teachers reluctant to serve in rural areas. If girls' education can be solved then there is the need to increase female teachers sent to rural areas this should of course go with incentive package. This can be a better way to eliminate male priority.*

Even though education is free, financial cost associated with schooling had a lot of impact on girls schooling. My visit to the study area revealed that financially, many parents in the Gomoa East District were handicapped in supporting their children's education. This had resulted in opportunity cost with overall preference in prioritizing boys' education. On the question of whether the government was doing enough to promote girls' education as a result of abolishing of school fees, both parents, education officials and girls were on the view that it was good but the policy did not go far enough to resolve girls' education. In a probing question to find out what could be done to send more girls to school, a lot of the parents commented that PTA dues and extra classes should be abolished. The collective view was that these serve as a barrier to enroll children and maintain them in school, which mostly affect girls.

In an answer to the question whether government was doing enough to encourage girls' education, Mr. Abbey remarked emotionally:

> *Even though the government had made education free at the basic level, it did not go far enough I wish girls would not be running after vehicles selling plantain chips and bread at the toll gate. What do they get after that. The government should do more to motivate everyone to go to school. This would break the cycle of poverty which affect girls' education.*

On students' performance at the district level the District Director revealed that some girls were exceptionally good but in most cases they did not complete school due to poverty. He said:

> *Girls' education is a big challenge in the district. Some of them are exceptionally good. The main issue here is poverty. There is the need to find a way of supporting girls to go to school. If parents understand education even if they were poor it will prevent teenage pregnancy and early marriage. What needs to be done is to address the issue of poverty which affect parents' decisions about sending their daughters to school.*

The views expressed by the respondents go to buttress the fact that government policy on education is not enough until the issue of rural poverty is resolved through supportive measures in terms of financial support to parents. Parents in rural areas could also be compensated through financial support to offset issues of opportunity cost. This could be a top priority in government agenda on education if prioritization of male education is to be eliminated.

In a probing question to find out what the district education office was doing to eliminate male priority the District Director said:

> *We have been engaging with the community on the importance of girls' education. This is normally done by the District Girls Education*

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> *Officer. Our main aim is to engage community leaders particularly*
> *male members through discussions which we think will gradually*
> *eliminate their reluctance to educate their daughters. This is a cultural*
> *issue and we must tackle it cautiously.*

The views expressed by the District Director indicate that elimination of male priority is not an easy task. It needs systematic and concerted effort on the part of all stake holders. There is the need to strengthen the law on gender equality. There should be improvement in overall access to information through continuing education and campaigns that stimulate discussion on gender equality especially in the area of education.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the themes that emerged from parents, education officials, focus group discussions with girls and general observations I made during my visit to the study area. The main focus of this chapter was prioritization of boys over girls' education. For effective discussion, four major research questions were used to guide the findings. The first research question dealt with why parents prioritize males. Responses from the majority of parents indicated that male priority is part of a traditional system and this is evidenced through ethnicity and culture. In the study it became evident that parents, government officials and girls hold different views on male prioritization.

The second section dealt with how prioritization is manifested. While the manifestations can be similar, it differed from rural areas to the urban centres. Even though matrilineal system is practised in the Gomoa East, I found out that in the rural areas regard for boys were more pervasive than in the urban centres.

In section three, I discussed how cultural norms and perceived future financial returns to families can have a negative impact on girls' educational attainment. In my interactions with some parents, I found out that some parents did not have any expectation for girls' education especially in the rural areas due to certain cultural norms. Some parents interviewed indicated that girls' education was a financial burden for the family. To them, it was ideal to educate their sons to higher levels particularly because of job opportunities for boys. Parental support perceived by girls was negative. The non-supportive attitude of parents led to lower educational attainment by girls. This has the implication that there is little prospect ahead in higher and continuing education for girls.

The last section of this chapter dealt with how male prioritization can be eliminated. Most parents were of the view that it would be difficult to eliminate male prioritization due to socio-cultural reasons. It needs systematic and concerted effort on the part of all stake holders if male prioritization can be eliminated. To most parents the only way to do this is to strengthen the law on gender equality (LGE).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The main objective of this study was to examine and offer an understanding of male priority over girls' education in the Gomoa East District. It was based on my understanding of the challenges girls face in Ghana as a result of cultural practices regarding men's special role in society. It was also based on my assumption that gender inequalities in education are a form of patriarchal cultural practices which can be eliminated through laws which can make education accessible to all irrespective of gender. By examining lived experiences through the voices of parents, girls and education officials, shared realities emerged. This chapter presents, summary, major findings, implications for policy and theory, conclusion and recommendations for future research.
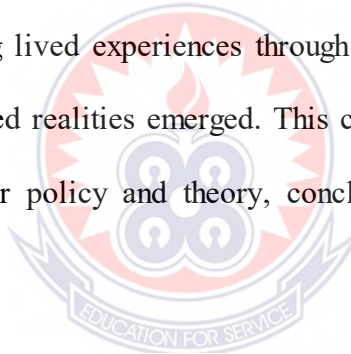
5.2 Summary of the Study

The research was conceived as a result of my familial positionality that placed my education on a higher premium at the expense of my sisters. As a Headmaster of a Senior High School in the study area, I observed the hardships girls go through in order to access education. Gender inequality is not a new thing. The idea behind this study was to contribute to the debate on the widening gap between boys' and girls' education in Ghana and to understand why parents still adhere to certain cultural values that put men at the forefront of women. The knowledge acquired through reading and personal experiences about the Ghanaian culture indicate that men are assigned special roles in society as superior to women. This knowledge was to shape

my understanding of the socio-cultural practices girls go through everyday due to their subordinate nature in the society. On the basis of the issues raised, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Why do the people of Gomoa East District prioritize males?

2. How is male prioritization manifested in the Gomoa East District?

3. How does male prioritization impact on girls' education?

4. How can male prioritization be eliminated?

To be able to formulate policies on issues affecting female education in Ghana, it is important to get a better understanding of the factors that drive the decision of parents to invest in their sons' schooling as expressed in their own words despite the progress that has been made in promoting gender equality in education. This research could be used by policymakers as evidence in promoting girls' education in Ghana.

Relevant literature reviewed covered areas such as male prioritization and how it can be eliminated. The main issues discussed were on obstacles that lead to prioritization of males and its manifestation within the communities as well as the impact and elimination of male prioritization in order to achieve gender parity. The study was grounded in the patriarchal framework. It provided the perspectives to understand the phenomenon of girls' education in Ghana and, in particular, the Gomoa East District. The use of the qualitative approach and the feminist perspective formed the basis for the methodology for the research work. Feminist research brings gender to the foreground and endeavours to understand the perspective of women and girls. The idea of listening to the experiences of parents so far as girls' education in their own voices was concerned was drawn from the works of many feminist researchers like Oakley (1981), Harding (2007) and Adichie (2014). Interviews and focus group

discussion were used to listen and to understand personal experiences of parents and girls.

The use of interviews was to bring to the fore the importance of individual voices on issues that affected them by paying specific attention to the language used by participants in expressing their lived experiences. These individuals needed the space to speak out in their own voices about their experiences (Hussain & Asad, 2012). The participants in the study included parents, girls, government official and a community member. The incorporation of these groups was to lead to greater and more accurate confirmability and to obviate any bias in the data. The study was conducted in four communities in the Gomoa East District. The site was selected because of easy access and my earlier association with the study area. The discussion of the results was presented through participants' own voices. This helped to reveal the themes that helped to understand the lived experiences of these individuals. The summary provided a platform for discussing the meanings attached to the lived experiences of parents and the interpretations they gave to girls' education.

5.3 Major Findings

In this section I present a summary of major findings of the study. The major findings covered themes such as socio-cultural practices, socio-economic status, place of residence and policies promoting girls' education.

Socio-cultural Practices

In most African societies societal image of women is that of a low class citizen. Overall, the above studies have shown that girls' low schooling outcomes are frequently the result of entrenched socio-cultural practices, subsumed in the larger frame of biased gender socialisation practices rather than poverty (Njie, Manion &

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Badjie, 2015). Right from birth, girls receive conflicting messages about their worth within the family. Higher value is placed on the role men play within the traditional set up. The socialisation processes girls go through have the tendency of hampering their pursuit of education. Socially, girls are given more domestic work. Consciously or unconsciously, parents try as much as possible to encourage male education. Girls are expected to marry early as they go through initiation processes. In some societies religion had also been used to demean girls' education as part of the socialisation process.

Socio-economic Status

A parent's socio-economic status plays an important role in providing educational resources. This greatly impacts on the child's educational outcomes (Vellymalay, 2012). From the research, socio-economic factors such as poverty and parental level of education were prominent in affecting girls' enrolment and participation in school. Due to higher poverty levels boys and girls are not treated equally when it comes to attending school. Many of the findings are consistent with what the literature revealed. For example, financial constraints linked to poverty within household levels limited girls' education capabilities in the study area and this corroborates the ideas of Bantebya et al. (2015). Another area that was consistent with Tin-chili and Adsera (2013) was that in the rural areas most parents seemed to be interested in the value of sons. As a result, parents would rather have sons educated instead of girls as it was believed that boys would generate income for the family in the future. In terms of real financial cost and opportunity costs, parents in poor families perceived that schooling was more costly for girls corroborating the ideas of Sperling and Winthrop (2016). In the study it was revealed that there were higher dropout rates among girls as parents could not afford to cater for all children due to indirect cost of education.

Poverty also meant that parents found it difficult to pay for transportation when schools were far away from home. In such instances boys were given the opportunity to go to school as they have the energy to trek long distances than girls who it was believed could encounter problems like harassment and rape on their way to school. Girls were therefore kept at home to help in domestic activities. Socio-economic status to a larger extent jeopardized girls' education. Throughout the study it was revealed that many parents realised the importance of education but were constrained due to poverty. In the urban areas the situation was different as many parents were able to afford their children school fees with some attending private schools, this was not so in the rural areas. This agrees with the ideas of McCracken et al. (2015) and McKay et al. (2015) that in Ghana inequality is one of the key reasons leading to poverty outcomes. This has played a significant role in the education gender gap and that children from the poorest households experience greater disparities in terms of access to education, compared to those from richer households. Promoting girls' education means that there is the need to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor.

Place of Residence

Participants' area of residence influenced access to education. As found in the literature research has shown that place of residence can favour boys in school enrollment (Kirchsteiger & Sebald, 2010). In the rural areas there were less opportunities for girls' education and the likelihood of completing school. This was largely influenced by economic conditions of parents which made parents to enroll their sons. In the urban areas access to school was easier. There were many opportunities for girls' education. These included among others better transportation system which aborted the issue of security and safety. To bridge the gap between the

rural and urban areas, schools should be built within communities. There should also be better transportation system to demystify the fears of parents on possible rape which tends to limit girls' access to education in rural areas. As well, there should be better economic conditions in rural areas through the provision of cottage industries which could serve as source of employment to parents. This could help decrease the number of disparities and inequalities between the rural areas and urban centres.

Policies Promoting Girls' Education

Formulating policies on girls' education is at the forefront of every nation. Yet the socialisation of girls as well as the patriarchal culture in Ghanaian societies makes it almost impossible to eliminate it. The commitment of the district education office to establish and implement gender policies at the various school levels is very laudable. Yet policy measures aimed to tackle gender inequality are undermined by various traditional practices like early marriages and patterns of inheritance. More is needed in addressing these issues through the use of legislation, the mass media, continuing education and campaigns that stimulate discussion and debate on gender equality. Conditions relating to poverty, discrimination, entrenched traditional practices and marginalisation should be addressed.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The purpose of using qualitative analysis was to arrive at a complete and detailed description of the phenomenon under study. However, I must acknowledge that this study has some limitations due to the relatively small sample size. The use of one district out of 17 districts in the Central Region cannot be representative enough, as such the findings cannot be generalised to cover wider populations of girls in all districts in Ghana with the same degree of certainty that quantitative analyses can. In

order to fully ascertain inequalities in the system, it would have been useful to include more districts within the region especially matrilineal societies which are known to be heavily male-dominated. This would help formulate policies that could be applicable to districts in Ghana with similar problems. Again, the volume of data made the analysis and interpretation very difficult and time consuming. Moreover, the scattered nature of the district made it impossible for me to visit the places very often. Another limitation of this study was the limited time frame for my fieldwork. Staying on the field longer would have worked but my work as a Headmaster of a Senior High School was so demanding as I have to oversee daily activities of the school and attend to a lot of workshops and conferences. Despite the limitations, this study provided insight and understanding of parental perceptions and attitudes towards girls' education in the Gomoa East District of Ghana.

5.5 Contributions to the Field

In the field of research this study makes three main contributions namely: substantive, theoretical and methodological.

Substantive Issues

In view of the limited research work in Ghana on male dominance in a particular matrilineal area in the Central Region this study is seen as an initial work on girls' education in the district. The substantive body of knowledge that this study contributes to relates to the traditional cultural values on the subject of male dominance with its potential problem of equal right and its impact on girls' education. Despite the cultural hegemony of men giving rise to preferential treatment for boys' education, the study revealed that parents were poised to send their daughters to school. This was evident from the conversations of parents who saw

education as an important need for self-development. The study therefore shows that even though patriarchal values had been used to explain girls' low participation in education patriarchy is not opposed to the concept of modernisation but may be identified as a traditional norm which stresses the importance of power relations within certain societies. Perhaps, the changing situation is due to modern day economic situations where women are seen as helpmates to men.

Theoretical Issues

Literature supports the view that there is a pro-male bias in parental investment in children and that male priority is found mostly in patrilineal societies. In Ghana research on how pro-male bias impact on girls' education in matrilineal societies are scarce. This research was informed by a feminist standpoint and research process which brings gender to the foreground and endeavours to understand the perspective of women and girls' education. In trying to understand women's discrimination and subordination and how cultural, social and historical differences in women's situation both in the private and public domains affect their education, the study employed the use of feminist theory of patriarchy as a discourse to investigate male prioritization over girls' education in Ghana. Such discourse brings to the fore, gender prejudices, inequalities, discrimination and domination by men in all spheres of life including girls' education.

By adopting this theory, parents through narratives were able to share their stories on how they understand girls' education. In this case the study makes a contribution to the micro domestic literature in the field, by adding to the discourse on the system of patriarchy that legitimises women's subordinate position and its deleterious effect on girls' education. The study therefore becomes one of the few research works

conducted by an insider in Ghana on how the patriarchal system of male domination affect girls' education in matrilineal societies. Internationally, it also contributes to the macro literature on gender issues which are mostly conducted by expatriates in the developing countries. These studies have mainly been conducted in patrilineal societies. The study also contributes to the socio-economic constraints affecting girls initial and post entry into education.

Methodological Issues

In Ghana the use of the qualitative method on girls' education is rare. In the social sciences most scholars prefer using the quantitative method because of its standardisation as well as its statistical analysis as it findings are likely to be generalised to a whole population (Rahman, 2017). In order to understand and gain meanings into people's perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, feelings and emotions, this study employed the use of the qualitative method as one of the most appropriate methods of researching into girls' and women's lives. This method helped to understand the interpretations individual parents gave to their explanations of boys' education in a particular context through interviews and narratives. Again, it helped to explore the totality of the phenomenon under study as individuals narrate their own stories and experiences. Through the use of this research approach, I was able to interact directly with the participants by collecting more detailed data. This helped me to understand the experiences from the participants themselves. Given the above situation, this research work contributes to the methodological literature on qualitative research which can serve as a reference material for research work especially in the area of girls' education.

5.6 Conclusion

The study examined parental male bias over female education in the Gomoa East District of Ghana. Making girls' education a high priority and implementing a range of interventions have proved effective in increasing girls' enrollment in school. However, consistent with the patriarchal theory, the study found that socio-cultural practices and economic factors consciously and unconsciously had a strong bearing on parental attitude towards female education. The theory is therefore too focused on what roles males and females are supposed to do. Consequently, the rights of females are circumscribed by traditions, customs and the chauvinism of male patriarchy. This has led to inequalities in the social set up. The patriarchal assumptions by parents in the Gomoa East District, especially in the rural and underserved areas and their inability to look beyond the future and the immediate wellbeing of females has exacerbated the problem of female education.

In the Gomoa East District, traditional socio-cultural practices and beliefs put preference on boys' education rather than girls. Despite social changes in the Gomoa East District, male priority continue to persist in rural communities due to deep rooted reasons. Men are generally presumed to have greater economic and social value than women, they are seen as strong and able to serve as a form of social security and also valued for their perpetuation of the family lineage. When sacrifices need to be made, it is most common for girls to bear the brunt of the burdens. Girls are often the first to stay home or are put to work in order to help with the immediate needs of the family. This has contributed to discrimination and marginalisation of females which ought to be addressed.

Socialisation process, parental migration, female domestic work and large families are common practices that are still predominant in the deprived and underserved areas in the Gomoa East District. In addition, parental education, age old security, teenage pregnancy and sexual harassment constituted some of the other barriers that prevented girls' access to education.

This study also revealed that the goal of providing _education for all' may not be achieved if measures are not put in place to enhance female education for gender equity. Even though urban residents did not show male bias in education as compared to the rural communities, biases could be traced among some educated people. This demonstrates that irrespective of one's level of education traditional pattern of thought with regards to educating females is still prominent.

Addressing the issue of male priority may not be achieved until parents are involved in discussion on the importance of girls' education especially in the rural and deprived areas of the district. This means, changing the mindset of parents regarding their attitudes towards male and female education. This can be done by addressing it from a cultural point of view. Government should impress upon traditional leaders to modify certain socio-cultural practices and norms that hinder female education. This may include among others, inheritance and succession. This will help place equal value on male and female education.

Again, the absence of effective governmental and progressive legislative reform laying emphasis on gender which is mutually not articulated and consistent must also be addressed, other than that, female education would remain an illusion. Achieving parity in enrolment and school attendance should be an important step towards equal opportunity for females in social and economic wellbeing of women in the Gomoa

East District. Therefore, access to education by females is a right that is guaranteed by the government of Ghana. Girls should have equal right to quality education (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2014). Closing the gap in education and ensuring that females are educated is essential not only for building a just society, but also a pre-requisite for sustainable development.

5.7 Implication for Policy

The findings of this study provided insight into the educational challenges of girls as a result of social values which place much emphasis on male education in the Gomoa East District of Ghana. The study has revealed that several factors acting in concert, such as socio-cultural practices and socio-economic factors undermined girls' education. As a former teacher, I observed that lack of financial support greatly influenced parents' decision to send their male child to school at the expense of their daughters. Analysis of the findings confirmed that the experiences revealed by parents and the girls is what goes on among the wider societies within Ghana. The implication of this research is important to policymakers to re-examine social construction of gender, particularly socio-cultural factors that heavily impact on girls' education. It is important for policymakers to redefine policies that facilitate equitable treatment of all sexe*s*. The government in collaboration with the district assemblies should evaluate policies and programmes on girls' education. This would be beneficial in guiding governments in formulating policies that would be beneficial to girls in Ghana. This could serve as a policy framework on equity and equality.

5.8 Recommendations

A lot of strategies have been implemented to widen girls' access and participation in education. Based on the findings presented above, a number of recommendations are suggested in this section in respect of socio-cultural and economic factors that affect girls' education.

In this study it had been demonstrated that socio-cultural factors negatively affect the education of girls. Policy makers need to reexamine social construction of gender, and redefine policies that will facilitate equitable treatment of all sexes particularly socio cultural factors that impact on girls' education in rural and underserved areas. It is very important to proactively engage community leaders, particularly male members on conservative social norms and stereotypes; such open discussions will assist in eliminating their reluctance to discuss issues concerning girls' education.

In the context, gender inequality was produced and manifested in everyday life with the result of parental male bias for education. This was evidenced with the perceptions of gender, the values connected to males such as property relations in family life, the labour market which result in girls' low attendance in school and the perception that boys are academically better than girls. A community awareness campaign should be intensified on the values and benefits of educating girls. The campaign needs a collective effort by all public and private-sectors, schools, teachers, media, NGOs and religious institutions to work together to develop a comprehensive gender inequality programme highlighting the problems associated with girls' education and strategies for combating male prioritization in Ghana. Therefore, the study recommends for more research in this area.

Mentorship programmes may also be helpful in which educated girls, celebrities and women role models support other girls in rural communities to develop their potentials to provide inspiration and encouragement. It may be beneficial to use existing women leaders, and female students for such awareness campaign to inspire parents on the benefits of girls' education. The awareness campaign programme can be in the form of community discussions and during Parent Teacher Association meetings.

Another challenge confronting girls' education remains the various forms of verbal and sexual harassment that adolescent girls experience, studies in Ghana for example, Norman et al. (2013) and Apaak and Sarpong (2015) show that sexual abuse is wide spread. Adolescent who are sexually abused may not do well in school because they may be traumatized psychologically. Thus policy makers and other stake holders in education must enact effective policies on sexual abuse and harassment in schools in order to strengthen the law and change attitudes. This will help change parental attitude toward girls' education.

Teachers and educators should be trained to increase their self-awareness on the evils of prioritizing male education and to educate existing learners including boys about gender disparities and the importance of educating girls. These learners may then create further awareness through educating their families and other members of the communities.

From the current study and previous research works, it is obvious that free education does not eliminate gender inequalities. To be able to promote girls' education and eliminate boys' priority, there is the need for policy formulation by the government on certain cultural practices that impede education of girls. These policies should be

in the form of legislation which will help change attitudes and perceptions of parents concerning societal norms that demean the value of girls' schooling.

To eliminate parental male priority, there should be measures to improve parental income by government in rural areas. This could be done by providing cottage industries to rural areas. Financial institutions should target rural and deprived inhabitants in their provision of soft loans for operating small scale businesses to empower them financially to cater for the educational needs of all their children. As an incentive to rural dwellers and deprived areas intervention programmes such as, the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) should be extended to cover all rural dwellers to boost their incomes.

In this study, it has been demonstrated that the different pattern of socialisation and treatment which females receive at home and in the society at large puts them in the position of an educationally disadvantaged group. This means that there is the need to step up campaigns and activities on girl-child education especially on gendered domestic work especially in rural areas. Thus community leaders and District Assemblies should sensitise parents about the need to share household responsibilities equally among all sexes to enable both males and females to participate in education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: COPIES OF ALL CONSENT FORMS

Informed Consent to Participate in the Research (Parents)

My name is Chris Adu-Yeboah and I am a doctoral student in the Social Studies Department, University of Education, Winneba. I am conducting this research on how male priority impact on girls' education in the Gomoa East District. I am particularly interested in understanding the factors influencing male education in the district. I have selected your community to interview you about why males are prioritized by parents when it comes to education. I am seeking your help to volunteer to participate in a one-hour interview. If you agree to participate, you are not obliged to answer any question that you are not comfortable with and you may choose to withdraw from the interview at any time. Please note that the activities I observe or record during my meetings and your responses to interview questions are for my educational purposes. However, the outcome of this study may be used by stakeholders to improve girls' education in the district. All information will be held in the strictest of confidence. If you have any questions regarding my status as a researcher please contact the administrator Social Studies Department or the Post Graduate Department University of Education, Winneba.

My signature below certifies that this consent statement was read to me.

I personally grant Chris Adu-Yeboah consent to interview me for the purpose of collecting data.

Signature / Date

Parental Permission/Informed Consent

(Parents of minor participants)

Your daughter is being asked to participate in a study about male prioritization in the Gomoa East district. The aim of this study is to find out factors influencing male education. I will be grateful if you would grant me the permission to interview your daughter in order to share her own experiences. If you decide to let your child take part in this study she will be asked to tell me about her experiences as a girl in school. This will take the form of interviews or a focus group discussion. This will take about 45 to 60 minutes. During the interviews and focus groups, I will audio tape the discussions and also take notes. This is only for the purposes of remembering what will be discussed during the interviews and focus groups. Please note that your decision to allow your child to take part in the study is voluntary she may withdraw from the study at any time at her own will. Any information obtained from your daughter including observations and responses to interview questions will be kept strictly confidential. I will also protect your daughter's confidentiality by using different names so no one can find out who she is. Please note that the data derived from this study could be used in reports, presentations, and publications but your daughter will not be individually identified.

The interviews are for my educational purposes. However, the outcome of this study may be used by stakeholders to promote girls' education in the district. If you have any questions regarding my status as a researcher please contact the administrator Social Studies Department or the Post Graduate Department University of Education, Winneba.

My signature below certifies that this consent statement was read to me. I personally grant Chris Adu-Yeboah consent to interview me for the purpose of collecting data.

Signature /Date: ....

Statement of Consent (To be returned to the researcher)

I understand the procedures described above. I agree/disagree to allow my daughter

....to participate in this study.

Please kindly tick the box that applies:

Agree	
Disagree	

Name of Parent/Guardian

....

Signature of Parent or Guardian

....

Date ....

Assent to Participate in Research (Girls)

My name is Chris Adu-Yeboah and I am a doctoral student in the Social Studies Department, University of Education, Winneba. I am conducting this research on how male priority impact on girls education in the Gomoa East District. I am particularly interested in understanding the factors influencing male education in the district. I have selected your community to interview you about why girls are neglected and your experience when it comes to education. I will be seeking the help of girls who are in school and others who have dropped out of schools in your community to take part in a focus group discussion for not more than one hour. At the focus group meetings I will be asking you to share your educational experience with me as a girl. If you agree to participate, you do not have to answer any question that you are not comfortable with and you may choose to withdraw from the focus group at any time. Please note that the activities I observe or record during my meetings and your responses to interview questions are for my educational purposes. However, the outcome of this study may be used by stakeholders to improve girls' education in your district. All information that you give will be confidential.

If you have any questions regarding my status as a researcher please contact the administrator Social Studies Department or the Post Graduate Department University of Education, Winneba. My signature below certifies that this consent statement was read to me on ....(Date).

I personally grant Chris Adu-Yeboah consent to interview me for the purpose of collecting data.

I certify that I have read and understand this assent form and agree to participate in the research.

Name ....   **Signature**...................................

Informed Consent to Participate in the Research

(District Director of Education)

My name is Chris Adu-Yeboah and I am a doctoral student in the Social Studies Department, University of Education, Winneba. I am conducting a research on how male priority impact on girls education in the Gomoa East District. I am particularly interested in understanding the factors influencing male education in the district and how it has impacted on female education in the district. I have selected your district to interview you about why males are prioritized by parents when it comes to education. I am seeking your help to volunteer to participate in an hour interview. If you agree to participate, you are not obliged to answer any question that you are not comfortable with and you may choose to withdraw from the interview at any time. Please note that the activities I observe or record during my meetings and your responses to interview questions are for my educational purposes. However, the outcome of this study may be used by stakeholders to improve girls' education in the Gomoa East District. All information will be held in confidence.

My signature below certifies that this consent statement means that you personally grant Chris Adu-Yeboah consent to interview you for the purpose of collecting data.

Signature...

Date...

APPENDIX B

MAP OF GHANA SHOWING CENTRAL REGION

CENTRAL
REGION

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Appendix C1: Interview Guide for Parents

Background component

1. What work do girls perform in the house?

2. Why do they perform those works?

3. Has your daughter been to school before?

4. Is it important for girls to go to school?

5. What subject would you want your daughter to pursue in secondary school?

6. What are some of the factors that affect girls' education?

7. Would you encourage your daughter to marry early?

8. Does distance between school and home affect girls' education?

9. Why do you treat boys differently from girls?

10. How can this be eliminated?

11 What is sexual harassment and how does it affect education?

12. Is it necessary to post female teachers to schools?

13 What is the government doing to encourage girls' education?

14. Is there anything you want to add?

Appendix C2: Focus group discussion with girls

1. Would you please introduce yourself?

2. Tell me about your family?

3. Do your parents treat you differently from your brothers?

4. What makes it difficult for girls to attend school?

5. Are there any advantages of sending girls to school?

6. Do you think early marriage contributes adversely to the education of girls?

7. Who takes decision in the family?

8. What can be done to encourage girls to go to school?

9. What is sexual harassment and how does it affect girls' education?

10. Do you think posting female teachers in your school can encourage girls to go to school?

12. Do you have enough support from your parents when going to school?

13. How can male prioritization be eliminated?

14. What are your dreams for the future?

Appendix C3: Discussion with education officers

1. For how long have you been working in the education service?

2. What are your major responsibilities?

3. What are some of the reasons that prevent girls from absenting themselves from school?

4. What are the general perception/attitude regarding girls' education in the district?

5. How this can be eliminated?

6. Are boys prioritized when it comes to education in the district?

7. If yes how does it manifest?

8. If yes how does it impact on girls' education?

9. What can be done to increase girls' participation in school?

10. What is your opinion on sexual harrassment?

Appendix C4: Interview Guide for Community Leader

1. Tell me about yourself and your life growing up in the community.

2. Tell me about your work as a community leader.

3. Tell me about girls' education in this community?

4. What are your views regarding boys' education?

5. What is the importance of sending girls to schools?

6. Why is that parents don't want to send their daughters to school?

7. What can be done to encourage girls to go to school?

8. Is there anything you know that the government is doing to encourage girls' education?

9 What are the causes of teenage pregnancy in the district?

10. Are there other things you have not told me you would want to add?