

# Education and Girl-Child Empowerment: The Case of Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District in Northern Ghana



Elijah Kombian Fant

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of Social Sciences,  
University of Tromsø (Norway) in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirement for Master of Philosophy in Indigenous Studies  
Spring 2008

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## **DEDICATION**

In loving memory of my late daughter: Louisa Yennumi Fant

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I am solely responsible for any shortcomings, error of omissions and commission found in this study.

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## ACRONYMS

ADP - Accelerated Development Plan  
BED - Basic Education Division  
BYD - Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District  
BILFACU - Bimoba Literacy Farmers Co-operative Union  
CAMFED - Campaign for Female Education  
DDE - District Directorate of Education  
ESP - Education Strategy Plan  
FCUBE - Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education  
GER - Gross Enrolment Rate  
GES - Ghana Education Service  
GPI - Gender Parity Index  
GPRS - Growth Poverty Reduction Strategy  
HIV/ AIDS – Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome  
IMF – International Monetary Fund  
JHS - Junior High School  
MDGs – Millennium Development Goals  
NER - Net Enrolment Rates  
NGOs - Non-Governmental Organizations  
NT - Northern Territories  
NTDE - Northern Territories Department of Education  
RAINS - Information and Network System  
SHS- Senior High School  
WB – World Bank  
WFP - World Food Programme  
UNICEF- United Nations Children's Fund

## ABSTRACT

Education is a human right. It is guaranteed under the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child. This convention is the most widely ratified international treaty in the world today. Ghana has ratified the Convention on the Rights of a child and makes education a Constitutional right. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees Free and Compulsory Basic Education to every child of school going age irrespective of gender, religion, ethnicity or geographical location. Yet, 'Basic Education for All' is still very far from being a reality for many children, particularly the girl-child.

This study emphasizes that a major barrier to girl-child access and participation in formal education is the cultural and traditional values and the daily realities of poverty stand between girls and their prospects for educational opportunities. Traditional beliefs, practices and sayings perpetuate gender imbalance in terms of educational attainments. This paper argues that the education of girl-child would improve their life chances, and also enhance the welfare of their households, thus its resultant benefit of the girl-child being empowered. In the light of these challenges in the girl-child education, this paper further brings to the fore the efforts of a growing number of NGOs and international agencies complementing the government's efforts in the Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo in promoting greater participation towards girl-child education.

This study shows that early marriage is somewhat a reality among many of the target girls for this study. Girls are also more likely to drop out of school because of their domestic responsibilities. The study also shows that girls are often discriminated against when it comes to parents' decision to fund their wards education.

In the light of this, the study makes the following recommendation towards improving girl-child education: Educating parents on girls' education, Abolition of schools fees and other related at the Junior High School level, enforcement of laws on early marriages, enforcement of laws on child labor, expansion school feeding programme and Engagement of men and civic groups as advocates for girls' education.

# CHAPTER ONE

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### **1.1. Background to the Study**

Many African countries continue to face problems in providing stable and adequate access to basic economic infrastructure and social services. The manifestations of these problems range from persistent poverty, poor public services, and environmental degradation, and inefficient or low yielding agricultural sector. In the educational sector, besides poor facilities, lack of teachers, textbooks and desks, and negative attitudes such as denying many children access to education, local cultural beliefs and practices are worsening the situation. This is most evident in the circumstances of the girl-child, whose needs and interests are often marginalized by educational policies and intra-families priorities.

A common proposition advanced to explain falling educational expenditure in African countries is that it has been ‘crowded out’ by other pressing demands on government budgets (Noss 1991: 23). After decades of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) sponsored programmes which have not led to any significant improvements in living conditions in many of African countries, the public policy emphasis have shifted towards tackling poverty itself. This has contributed to poverty analysis gaining currency in the search to identify the poor and also to properly design the public policy, as well as providing safety nets for the vulnerable. As one of the major factors whose lack thereof perpetuates poverty, education has long been regarded as a human right. But, in most developing countries, unequal access to education among various social groups is staggering ([www.crefa.ecn.ulaval.ca/develop/appiah-kubi.pdf](http://www.crefa.ecn.ulaval.ca/develop/appiah-kubi.pdf)). While heavy external debt and spending on defence are most commonly cited as responsible for this situation, negative effects of colonialism of and bad cultural practices within certain countries too have contributed to the gendered and regional disparities in educational opportunities.

#### **1.1.1. Colonialism and Educational Opportunities**

During the colonial era, Britain introduced the western or formal type of education in Ghana. However, this was mostly concentrated in the southern part of Ghana, leaving and reserving the northern part as a pool for unskilled labor in the cocoa and coffee plantations, and in the mines in the southern part of the country. According to Bening (1990), the continuing disparities and contrast in the educational development between northern and southern Ghana have their origins in this colonial policy. The colonial policy deliberately limited the number

of government and mission schools in the protectorate of the Northern Territories (NT) of the Gold Coast, allowing the churches considerable freedom of action in the South. Another factor was the political and economic superstructure of the colonial system that directed investment to well-endowed regions and sought to retain the poorer areas mainly as source of labor for the exploitation of natural resources.

The colonial legacy of uneven acquisition of education by different ethnic groups, or by different regions in Ghana thus undermined education in the North. This disparity in education could somewhat be attributed to the discriminatory colonial policies which favored one group or section against another. In effect, the late arrival of formal education in northern Ghana in general is one of the major causes of the low level of literacy in the Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District.

### **1.1.2. Post-Colonial Educational Policies**

When Ghana attained her independence on March 6, 1957, from Britain, education became a high priority on the government's policy. The educational policy revolved around free and compulsory basic education, free textbooks for all students and, the creation of local educational authorities with responsibilities for buildings, equipment and maintenance grants for primary schools. There was a drastic increase in the number of elementary and secondary schools from the immediate post-colonial era to 1970s.

Since the early 1980s, Ghana has adopted the restructuring policies, which are sponsored by the WB and IMF, to fine-tune its economy. This new economic policy regime shifted the cost of social services to most families, as the reduced public expenditure on education, health and food subsidies amounted to a shift of cost to parents. Importantly, this means that in household where resources are scarce, girls are kept out of school to reduce domestic expenditure and to help discharge repetitive chores, such as childcare, preparing and serving food, fetching water and washing cooking utensils.

Besides the factuality of the general low-level of education in northern Ghana, the people of the Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District (BYD) have not given equal opportunities to both female and males. That is, the needs of girl-child have not been prioritized in the limited educational opportunities at the present study area. It is the case that, even though nobody in the Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo area directly prevents girls from attending school, people use all manner of indirect means to discourage girls from attaining higher level of education. It is not unusual for parents to deny their girl-child the opportunity to go to school. Favorable environments are usually created for the boy-child up to the time he reaches adulthood. In

area the for instance, when a boy is born, he is considered as a higher human being than a girl. Such traditional beliefs and practice and saying perpetuate the gender imbalance in terms of educational attainments.

The neglect of comprehensive educational opportunities for the girl child has grave implications, not only for the girls as individuals, but also for the larger society. Therefore, the consequences of the neglect of the girl-child's access to education are enormous. For example, it leaves the girl with the only option of earning a living in the informal sector, with its attendant problems of insecure daily income and lack of long-term pension benefits. Most of them engage in meager income generation activities before the age of fifteen. Some of them also migrate to the cities to do menial jobs, such as *Kayaye*<sup>1</sup>. In many cases, girls are at various forms of risks such as sexual abuse, economic exploitation, engagement in criminal activities, indoctrination, teenage pregnancies, giving birth at early age, etc.

However, girls with formal education are much more likely to use reliable family planning methods, delay marriage and childbearing, and have fewer and healthier babies than girls with no formal education. According to Kabeer (2003: 176), it is estimated that one year of female schooling reduces fertility. The effect is particularly pronounced for secondary schooling. Girls with formal education are more likely to seek medical care, ensure their children are immunized, better informed about their children's nutritional requirements, and adopt improved sanitation practices. As a result, their infants and children have higher survival rates and tend to be healthier and better nourished.

### **1.1.3. Efforts of NGOs**

In the light of the challenges in girl-child education, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and international agencies are complementing the government's efforts in the Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District through the provision of teaching and learning materials, school uniforms, recreational facilities and payment of school fees. They also provide food rationing based on attendance and bicycles for long-distance school commutes. Providing uniforms particularly has a very positive impact on girls' self-esteem. New clothes are valued in many rural communities and the sight of large numbers of girls walking smartly and confidently to school raise parental and community pride. In many schools in the Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District, it is not unusual for ten or fifteen children to share one textbook, as a significant number of children cannot afford to buy textbooks.

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<sup>1</sup>Kayaye is a local term for head porterage. It is a common job that so many girls from the North of Ghana engage in the larger cities in the southern regions. Girls as young as 11 may travel the distance to earn extra income to support their families.

## **1.2. Demographics Features**

### **1.2.1. Location of Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo**

Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo is one of the twenty-eight newly created districts in 2004. The district capital is Bunkpurugu. It was carved out of East Mamprusi district. The district is located in the northeastern corner of Northern Region. It shares boundaries with Garu-Tempani District in the Upper East Region to the north and the Republic of Togo to the east. Gusheigu and Saboaba/Chereponi Districts border it to the west and East Mamprusi to the south. (Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District Assembly Medium Development Plan, 2006-2009)

### **1.2.2. Population**

The population of Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo is estimated at 153,329, with an annual growth rate of 3.1 %. This is made up of 73,598 males and 79,731 females constituting 48 % and 52 % respectively. The average density of population is 59 persons per square kilometer. There are five urban settlements with population of 5,000 and above. They are Bunkpurugu, Nakpanduri, Binde, Bimbagu and Nasuan. The people in the urban settlement constitute about 18.1 % of the total population of the District. Thus, the District is mainly rural of about 81.9 % of the total population. (Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District Assembly Medium Development Plan, 2006-2009) There are one hundred and ninety one (191) communities in the District. The Average household size was 7.8 in 2000 (2000 Population and Housing Census).

### **1.2.3. Topology and Drainage**

The topography is generally gently rolling with the Nakpanduri (formerly, Gambaga) escarpment marking the northern limits of the Volta in Sandstone Basin. Apart from the mountainous areas bordering the escarpment there is little runoffs when it rains. This implies that for a greater part of the District rainwater seeps into the ground. The White Volta, which enters the region in the northeast, joined by Red Volta is important drainage features in the District. The Nawonga and Moba rivers also drain the south – western part.

### **1.2.4. Climate and vegetation**

The District lies in the tropical continental belt western margin and experiences a single rainfall regime in April to October as it is influenced by tropical continental air masses. The mean annual rainfall is about 100cm to 115cm. A unimodal rainfall pattern that last for 5 to 6 months (May-October) in the year, peaking in August and September. The rest of the year is virtually dry. Rainfall is between 90 mm to 100mm per annum. The annual range of

temperature is high about 110C, as compared to 70 C in the middle belt and 60C along the coast. The district lies in the interior woodland savannah belt and has common grass vegetation with trees like shea nut trees, baobab, and acacia. Grasses grow in tussocks and can reach a height of three meters or more. (Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District Assembly Medium Development Plan, 2006-2009)

### **1.2.5. Geology and soil**

Two main types of soils are found in the district. These are the Savannah Ochrosols and the ground water literates. The Savannah Ochrosols, which covers almost the entire district, is moderately well drained up land solids developed mainly on Voltain Sandstone. The texture of the surface soil is loamy sand to with good water retention. It has high potential for wide range of crops (Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District Assembly Medium Development Plan, 2006-2009). The food crops grown in the include cereals such as maize, rice, millet, sorghum, legumes like groundnuts, bambara beans, soya beans, pigeon pea, cowpea and neri, root and tuber crops like yam, potatoes and cassava, vegetables such as tomatoes, pepper, garden eggs and export crops such as cotton and cashew.

Some areas do not appear to be fully utilized although they are under considerable pressure in the District. In farming on this land, good farming practices focusing on soil conservation are imperative. The labor force is largely dependent on the family. Family members provide about 62 % of farm labor. Female dependence on hired labor is slightly higher (2%) than male dependence in all the communities (Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District Assembly Medium Development Plan, 2006-2009).

## **1.3. People and Social Organization**

The district is a heterogeneous society consisting of many ethnic and religions groups. The main ethnic groups are *Bimobas*, the *Konkombas* and the *Mamprusis*. They speak *Moar*, *Komba* and *Mampruli* respectively. Other groups found include *Moshi*, *Talensi*, *Hausa*, *Fulani*, *Dagombas* and *Chokosi*. Traditional and Christian religions are the main religions practice by the people. There is also Islamic religion that is usually practiced by settlers. There is high communal spirit among the people especially, the small communities. The factors that account for this are the size of the communities, high functional literacy and education by Community- Based Organizations and local Non- Governmental Organizations such as Bimoba Literacy Farmers Co-operative Union (BILFACU).

The major festival celebrated by almost everybody is Christmas. This brings families and friends both home and abroad together. Others are Damba, Fire festivals and funeral celebrations. These are opportunities to mobilize the citizenry for development, such as communal labor, information dissemination, organizes development seminars and investment promotion. The celebration of expensive funerals that run into midnight comes with some attendant problems such as waste of food, sexual promiscuity and poor performance of students. Other traditional and religious practices militating against development are widow inheritance, child betrothal and wife exchange as well as ethnic, land and chieftaincy disputes.

### **1.3.1. Marriage among the Bimoba People**

Bimoba people are basically polygamous and this is buttressed by the saying that ‘a man with one wife is considered as a bachelor’. The Bimoba people also called Moab (Moa singular) live in the northeastern part of Northern Region, Eastern Upper East Region and Northern western Togo. There are two major distinct groups that are Bem and Dagbem with different facial markings. These are further subdivided into smaller clans that have their independent areas. According to Konlan (1988), there are, however, considerable intermarriages between them. Both the Bem and Dagbem are exogamous except some clans among the Bem (Buak and Konduak which practice both exogamy and endogamy).

### **1.3.2. Child Betrothal**

Bimoba practice the betrothal of infant to men. Infant betrothal is a situation where parents promise to give their daughter to men to marry when she comes nubile. The promise may be made even when the would-be wife is not yet conceived, let alone born. Betrothal is formally done at the house of the lineage head (Konlan, 1988). If a girl is betrothal to a particular young man, it means that the girl in that case knows her husband. On the other hand, an elderly man with many who has a girl betrothed to him does not always specify the son who is going to marry the girl even though consideration is always given to seniors. Under such a situation whichever son the elderly man instructs the bride to heat water for him to bath and to sweep his room becomes her husband (Ibid).

### **1.3.3. Wife Exchange**

An exchange marriage comes about when two men exchange girls. The girls exchanged may either 'sisters' or 'daughters'; actual or classificatory, to the men. The girls are usually not the same age because it is believed that if they both marry the same year some misfortune will befall one of them. Among the Bimoba an elderly man without son is especially likely to seek to exchange some of their daughters for a wife for him with the hope of giving birth to males. According to Konlan (1988) all Bimoba marriage are centered on exchange marriage because whether you elope with your wife or she is betrothed to you, it is considered a 'debt' which you suppose to 'settle' by giving your in-laws a girl for marriage at any point in time you have one. As head of the family it is one's incumbent to make sure that if boys elope their wives the 'debt' is 'settled' by betrothing a daughters to ones in-laws. Under this circumstance they cannot allow their daughters free choice of spouse while they have 'debts' (Ibid)

### **1.4. Socio-economic Infrastructure**

The bedrock of every nation's development is education and yet the first primary schools were established in 1950 and 1951 at Bunkpurugu the district capital and Nakpanduri respectively and the first secondary school was in 1993. The district has in all 44 Day-care centers, 101 primary schools, 24 Junior High Schools (JHS) and 2 Senior High Schools (SHS) at Nakpanduri and Bunkpurugu. Most of these schools are concentrated in the big towns and the structures are dilapidated. About 63.3 % of primary schools do not have permanent structures and 91.6 % JHS suffer the same fate (Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District Assembly Medium Development Plan, 2006-2009).

There is no general hospital in the district, but there are 8 health centers in Bunkpurugu, Yunyoo, Kambagu, Gbingbani, Binde and Nakpanduri that provide primary health and child care services. Four of the centers are private owned and the rest are public own. The ratio of people to a health centre is more than 1 to 22000. The district, as of 2004 had 10 nurses but had an additional number of 8 nurses in 2005 and this shows a significant increase of 80 %. The district has only one doctor serving the entire population. Number of midwives also shows an increase of 22.2 % but not withstanding the increase, 11 midwives in the district is certainly inadequate. Mothers who sought antenatal and postnatal care at various health centers in the district give an aggregate figure of 554 in 2004 and a figure of

607 in 2005 (Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District Assembly Medium Development Plan, 2006-2009).

The district has a total road network of 284.43km. 233.63km of the network are engineered roads, representing 74.40 %. The rest are non-engineered roads. Only 17 % of the roads are in good shape. Most of the non-engineered roads are not motorable during the rainy season. The commonest means of transport are bicycle, motorcycle and donkey cart. The only regular transport services are commutations between Bunkpurugu- Tamale, Bunkpurugu- Nalerigu and Bunkpurugu- Kumasi. The other areas have transport services only on market days (Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District Assembly Medium Development Plan, 2006-2009).

### **1.5. Statement of the Problem**

The stifling of girl-child access to education does not result solely from colonial and post-independence policies. This is particularly noted in Education Department Report of 1938/39 as to the effect that the education of girls was 'far removed from local life and giving the girl nothing with which could be of real value to them (Bening, 1990: 95). Despite these factors, some few girls had access to education. While the marginalization of the girl-child's access to educational opportunities has been attributed to colonial and post-colonial policies, cultural practices too cannot be discounted.

Wolf and Odonkor (1999) argue that cultural dimensions that often draw boundaries for changes are not specific, while customs and traditions which form an integral part of a people usually are used to perpetuate situations which subordinate women to men. For example, the District Education Director remarked about the cultural norms that do not allow the girl-child to enroll and complete schooling. Girls' education in the Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District is under threat because some parents are betrothing their girls in junior secondary schools to men and also replacing girls with boys at the primary level. The Director said: 'This practice does not only deny girls the needed education to unearth their talents but also jeopardizes their lives in the long run, making them social misfits.' (Ghana District News, 2007) The aim of this study is to identify these cultural beliefs and practices of the Bimoba people in Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District that accounts for the low level of girls' access to education.

## **1.6. Hypothesis**

This study hypothesizes that:

1. Certain cultural norms and practices of the people Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District keep the girl child out of school.
2. The education of girls would improve their life chances, and enhance the welfare of their households.

## **1.7. Research Questions**

1. Why do families keep their girl-child out of school?
2. What are the impacts of institutional arrangements on the enrolment of girls?
3. What are the enrollment and dropout patterns between the boys and the girls?
4. Does performance among the girls affect their dropout rate?
5. What are the activities of NGOs and the nature of their support schemes vis –a-vis the child-girl education?

## **1.8. Methodology**

### **1.8. 1. Selecting the Study Area**

Nakpanduri and for that matter Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo was selected for this research for the reason that most research on girls' education have been carried at the national level. Though no authentic source is readily available, the researcher can ascertain that illiteracy is high in the study area. This is not an amazing observation, considering the fact that the colonial legacy had denied the north formal education. This has been exacerbated by cultural practices in the area which deprive girls the right to formal education. National statistics indicate that the literacy rate among adults in Northern Ghana is lower than 5 % and less than 40 % of children aged 14 years attend school. This leaves about 60 % of children out of school, most of whom are girls (Ghana Living Standards Survey GLSS 2000). Since BYD is found in the Northern Ghana, it can certainly not be ruled out that the same scenario pertains in the area.

I have interest in the issues of girls' education with the belief that when girl-child is educated, they would be in a better position to fight discrimination held against women in the area and the nation as whole.

### **1.8. 2. Sampling Selection**

The structure of the study demands a carefully targeted sample of girls who are in school and are at the Junior High School (JHS) level, where the drop-out rate is high due to the prevalence of cultural practices like early marriage, exchange of girls for marriage. Poverty is also a contributory factor.

Random sampling with the advantage of getting unbiased representative group was impracticable in this study. The purposive sampling selection technique, otherwise referred to as a judgement samples, was therefore employed in this study to get information rich girls for this research. The purposive samples allowed the selection of informants that fit the focus of the study (Osuala, 2001). In this study the researcher selected the sampling units that were to be representative of the population. Since the chance that a particular sampling unit would be selected depended on the subjective judgement of the researcher; it did not satisfy the probability-sampling requirement where every unit has a known probability chance of being selected (Graser and Straus, 1967).

The researcher also had to use convenience samples that allowed him to select whoever was conveniently available and ready to be interviewed. This was due to the fact that, at the time the researcher got to the field it was the farming season, making it extremely difficult to get parents for interviewing as most of them were engaged in their farms.

### **1.8.3. Data Sources and Collection Strategies**

Two types of data were used in this work namely, primary and secondary data. Primary data is made up of data collected using in-depth interviews and it formed the main focus of the analysis. Secondary sources of data involved an intensive reviewing relevant literature from books, journals, magazines, newspapers and individual writing exercises. The aim of this is to review literature on education and girl child empowerment. This is to further supplement the data that is gathered during the fieldwork.

The data collection phase focused on the case study of Nakpanduri a village in the Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District in the northern Region of Ghana. The research student traveled and lived in Nakpanduri from June to August 2007 with aim of collecting data.

### **1.8.4. Interviews**

Ackroyd & Hughes (1983: 66) define interviews as 'encounters between a researcher and a respondent in which the latter is asked a series of questions relevant to the subject of the research. The respondent's answers constitute the raw data analyzed at a later point in time by the researcher'. Cohen & Manion (1989: 283) grouped interviews into four major types

namely, the structure interviews, unstructured interviews that are the open situation, having greater flexibility and freedom, the non-directive interviews and the focused interviews. In the case of this study, the researcher opted for the unstructured and focused interviews.

#### **1.8.5. Unstructured Interview**

Data collection entailed unstructured interviews or opened ended questions based on key informant interview. This was to allow them to express themselves freely about their lives and not limit them. This made me to get more information that I was not aware of, because the opened ended questions yielded rich information, new insights and provided me the opportunity to explore the topic in-depth. Few questions were added during interviewing for clarification that was to allow the interviewer to explain or clarify questions, increasing the likelihood of useful responses. I interviewed girls at JHS level; this is because it is at this stage most girls are held out of school for early marriage, siblings' care, and household chores and supplement family income. In this study, the researcher interviewed parents of the girls sampled. This gave the researcher the opportunity to find the views of parents concerning their girl child attending school. Teachers were also interviewed to find out the enrollment and retention patterns of girls in the Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo area. The researcher also interviewed officials of non-governmental organizations. This was to helping the researcher to know their activities and the sort of support their organizations give to schoolgirls in the study area.

#### **1.8.6. Focused Group Discussion**

The focus groups combined elements of both interviewing and participant observation. The focus group session was, indeed, an interview as noted by Patton (1990), that focus group discussion is not a discussion group, problem-solving session, or decision-making group. At the same time, focus groups capitalize on group dynamics. The hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to generate data and insights that would be unlikely to emerge without the interaction found in a group. The technique inherently allows observation of group dynamics, discussion, and firsthand insights into the respondents' behaviors, attitudes, language, etc. Focus groups are a gathering of 8 to 12 people who share some characteristics relevant to the study (Patton, 1990).

The researcher had planned to use focused group interview with the teachers collectively but I had to interview them individually because when the discussion session began, I soon realized that contribution and answers from informants were not varied and that they were all giving the same answers to the same questions. Again, out of the ten teachers

interviewed, there was only one female teacher who was not contributing to the discussion. What I did was to interview them individually with the permission of the headmaster of the school.

### **1.8.7. Informal Interview**

Beyond formal interviews and focus group discussions, I engaged in informal interview with local community members to help situate and understand the factors that hinders girls' education in Nakpanduri and surrounding villages in the BYD.

A few old and experience people were also interviewed for detailed accounts about the traditional and other issues concerning the Bimobas. The informal interview was successful because I had interviewed the first head teacher of the primary school and the surviving pioneers through this method.

### **1.8.8. Field Experiences**

The people were warm and hospitable. The researcher is from the Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District and familiar with the culture and behaviors of the people of the study area. I speak *Moar*, the predominant language in the area, very fluently hence there was no language constraint in data collection. The researcher had fair knowledge of the informants and the informants knew the researcher or his parents. This made the data collection less tiresome.

But, as Aguilar (1981) and Messerschmit (1981a: 9) cited in Narayan (1993), argue, since culture is not homogenous, a society is differentiated, and a professional identity that involves problematizing lived reality inevitably creates distance. They conclude that the extent to which anyone is authentic insider is questionable. The fact that the researcher comes from the area and differing views of the cultural practices of area was not an easy task. Since some 'conservative' parents would not understand why people including me, who is a native of the area, would want to bend their culture for them refused to be interviewed. These barriers were manifested in age difference between me and the informants and differentiated Bimobas.

Since was a man and interviewing young girls, generated mixed reaction among the local people. There was element of suspicion and of lack of trust on the part some parents in allowing me to interview their daughters. On the other hand, some parents saw it as positive sign for man to be interested in the issues of girl-child education in an area where girl's education is not discussed frequently.

The fact that I was a teacher by profession; I faced two main problems in relation to the informants namely, the teachers and the schoolgirls. My colleague teachers thought the

study would expose some unprofessional misconduct such as absenteeism, lateness to school, alcoholism and sometimes some male teachers turn to abuse schoolgirls they are supposed to teach. This was the case where the only female teacher informant who was interviewed complained about. In my opinion, this might have accounted for the issue of suspicion and lack of trust on the part of parents in allowing me to interview their daughters since the I myself belong to the same profession. The other problem was shyness on the part of the schoolgirls. So I had to crack jokes to do away with their shyness and establish the relevant rapport with the primary informants.

I encountered unanticipated problems while in the field (serendipities)<sup>2</sup>. Before I went to the field my aim was to understudy a particular a Tamale-based NGO, Information and Network System (RAINS)/Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), but my focus had to change due to unanticipated observation in the field. The programme officer of the NGO whom I was to interview had gone missing before I got to the field. It was alleged that his mysterious disappearance was due to the fact that he had misappropriated an amount of 140 million Ghanaian cedis belonging to his Canadian-based friend whom is alleged had kidnapped and murdered him. Since he did not have an assistant who knew how the educational programme was ran.

It became impossible for me to get the needed information for research work. This has brought new insight and direction to the study. For instance, if the allegation was true that he had misappropriated a friend's money, the question then is what then happens to the organization's money?

Existing records often provide insights into a setting and/or group of people that cannot be observed or noted in another way. This information can be found in document form. Lincoln & Guba (1985) defined a document as 'any written or recorded material' not prepared for the purposes of the evaluation or at the request of the inquirer. Books, journals, magazines, newspapers archives and individual writing exercises assisted me in gathering information about the larger community and relevant trends. Such materials can be helpful in better understanding the study and making comparisons between groups or communities.

Records were available at the regional archives office. It provided me the opportunity for determining value, interest, positions, political climate, public attitudes, historical trends or sequences. But this also proved to be costly; their access was difficult since the researcher had to pay some money which was not receipted. At the end of my field work, I was able to

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<sup>2</sup> Serendipity is the effect by which one accidentally discovers something fortunate, especially while looking for something else entirely.

get the necessary documents from the regional archives department at Tamale, Northern Region though at a cost. I got excited since I got to know when education actually started in Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District, the old people and pioneer girls.

### **1.9. Relevance of the Study**

A society committed to fighting poverty and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), girls' education should be given a priority. There are evidence that demonstrates strong benefits of girls' education, which span across a wide range of areas including maternal and child health, social stability, environmental benefits and economic growth. Girls' education and the promotion of gender equality in education are critical to self and national development, and policies and actions that do not address gender disparities miss critical development opportunities. Girl's education is a significant variable affecting children's education attainment and opportunities. A mother with a few years of formal education is considerably more likely to send her children to school.

The study aims at giving insight as well as an appreciation in helping to check negative cultural practices that hinder human development and progress especially with regards to the girl-child. It is my hope that, this study will be of immense help to the government and non-governmental bodies in their planning process. It is my belief that this work would add to the body of knowledge and would also be the genesis of studies and research on girl's education in the Bimoba areas, for that matter Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District and the nation as a whole.

### **1.10. Organization and Scope of Study**

The work is made up of six chapters. Chapter One comprises two sections; section A comprises introduction to the study, research problem, hypothesis, research questions. Section B is also sub-divided into two parts. The first part looks at demographics and spatial feature of BYD and the selection of the study area. The second part looks at data collection techniques and field experiences. Chapter Two looks at formal education and human development in Northern Ghana. Chapter Three is the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter Four is about presentation of findings and analysis. Chapter Five is a continuation of data presentation of findings and analysis of the study. Finally, Chapter Six focuses on the conclusion of the whole study with a summary of the principal findings and policy planning. The next chapter is about formal education and human development.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **FORMAL EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

When asked how much superior educated men were to those uneducated, the legendary Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC), answered, ‘as much as the living are to the dead.’ In consonance with Aristotle’s thoughts on the value of education, William Ellery Channing (1780-1842); a U.S Unitarian clergyman and writer, also asserted that, ‘man is to be educated because he is a man, and not because he is to make shoes, nails and pins’. (Daily Graphic, 2007: 11) The remarks of these learned men of history underpin the fact that education is an inalienable right of every human being; even as far back as Aristotle’s era. In his view without education, man is as good as dead, while Channing believes it is a non-negotiable right. Thus countries, governments, aid donors, religious bodies, individuals and the business community all invest in formal education as a means of developing human capital.

This chapter focuses on formal education and human development with particular emphasis on the benefits of formal education at society and individual levels. I will focus on educational policies taking into consideration the colonial period and post-independence eras in Ghana. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) especially goals 2 and 3 would also be looked at. I will also look at Non-Governmental Organizations’ (NGOs) contribution towards formal education.

#### **2.2. Formal Education and Society**

Schools (formal education) may be assigned different social and cultural roles at different times and places, but severing the linkage between schools and socioeconomic achievement is never a viable option (Bills, 2004). Hence, formal education is the path to socioeconomic success and schooling as an investment in economic future is never far from the surface. Bills, sees education as an investment because, according to him the economic value of education by the American society was in a 1995 report entitled: *Educating America: An Investment for Our Future*. This document is virtually paradigmatic in its depiction of the proper role of formal education in modern society. The report builds a powerful case, delineating not only the contribution of education to individual social mobility, but to the economic growth of nations as well. These sorts of sentiments are not of course, peculiar to America society alone, but other societies as well.

Studies by Klasen (1999), Dollar and Gatti (1999) and Blackden and Bhanu (1999) cited in Kane (2004), show that gender equality in education has a significant impact on income growth and that increases in girls' participation and higher levels of gender equality in secondary education are associated with higher income in middle and upper-income countries. Klasen also believes that countries that under-invest in girls' education grow more slowly. Discriminating against girls is not efficient economic choice. One World Bank study found that extra year of formal education increases girls' wage by up to 20 %, and that the overall returns on primary education were slightly higher for girls than boys (Roman, et al, 2006). Therefore education can empower women within their families and communities, enabling them to make better choices and decision about their welfare and to take more active roles in their communities.

In Abdi (2006), people greatly value education, not necessary for its direct utilitarian or economic purposes only, but continuously for its overall contributions to the socio-cultural and other community-based advancements. It could bestow upon the individual and society at large. In this direction, Folson (2006) says education has led to the creation of sociopolitical consciousness among people in rural and poor urban areas. To reinforce this is to say that schooling may have its drawbacks but it certainly has its rewards too. Sending your children, both boys and girls to school, if even at the end of the day they learned nothing, at least they can help keep their surrounding clean, and is in itself good.

### **2.3. Education and the Individual**

According to Bills (2004), students increasingly see the linkage between formal education and work as the maximization of their prospects for social mobility. In that framework, in the Millennium Development Report, some of the benefits of education are freedom to choose what kind of life to live and the ability to express oneself confidently. The possession and use of formal education can improve the quality of life without necessarily increasing economic freedom. An example of how knowledge on its own goes a long way to improve quality of life through health is the knowledge of how to prevent AIDS. Any life is made worse off by disease. Many aspects of life can be changed merely by the use of available knowledge, which can be provided through formal education.

In the same vein, Cremin paraphrased Dewey's definition of education as the reconstruction or reorganization of experience as 'a way of saying that the main aim of education is not merely citizens, or workers, or fathers, or mothers, but ultimately to make

human beings who will live to the fullest' (Goodlad, 1994: 36). To sum up, Cremin's view on formal education is, learning to read and write, and being able to use that knowledge to solve everyday problems, is an end in itself. Therefore, girls with formal education are able to articulate their interest in an oppositional way to the elite, and organize themselves to seek social justice.

The reasons why individuals invest in education include, the possibility of having higher wages, being in a certain social class, acquiring desired skills and being of social benefit, just to mention a few. Expectations and goals vary greatly per person. In that direction, Havighurst and Levine (1979), observe that the amount of education one has is a good indicator of socioeconomic status, from lower-working class up through upper-middle class, for education leads to economic opportunity. Young people, through education, secure higher-status jobs than their parents. With greater incomes, young adults from lower-status families tend to associate with persons of higher status and adopt their ways. It may be concluded, therefore, that education provides the channel not only to better socioeconomic status, but also to social mobility in the broader sense. According to World Bank, formal education is a basic human need, which acts as a crucial step towards meeting other basic needs like clothing, shelter, health care, and food (World Bank, 1995).

#### **2.4. History of Formal Education in Gold Coast**

Formal education started on the coast of today modern Ghana in 1752 through the effort of the Catholic Reverend Father Thomas Thompson who opened a school at Cape Coast in the Central Region of Ghana (Graham, 1976: 5). His aim of formal education in the Gold Coast was understandably dual. That is to train interpreters to translate the English language in which the Gospel was written and to train clerks for colonial administration and in some case as soldiers. This consequently made educated indigenes useful as teachers, interpreters, clerks and traders. Later, a school for translators was established.

In the case of northern Ghana, Muslim scholars (Mallams) first introduced formal education that resided where a considerable number of muslims lived. The Mallams instructed children in reading and writing in the Arabic characters and in the repetition of passages from the Koran. Although several of these schools thrived especially in the large commercial towns on the major caravan trade routes, the influence of Islam was not greatly on the increase and the British administration neither encouraged nor stifled these

institutions. The Catholic Priests also preceded the British government by two years in the establishment of the first Western-type educational institution (Bening, 1990: 251).

By the year 1890, education had developed in the colony or the present southern belt of Ghana with a total of 5,076 pupils whom 20 % were females (Ibid). The development of education received a major boost during the administration of Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg, the Gold Coast Governor from 1919-1929. Before him, the ratio of boys to girls in Accra, the Capital, was 100 to 11 in 1890 and it grew to 100 to 33 in 1938. In the countryside, where education had not penetrated sufficiently, the situation was very different. In order to prepare boys for their new positions as 'white color' workers, they were encouraged to persevere but girls were allowed to drop out, especially if money was a problem. Another reason that hindered the education of the girl child was that it was very difficult to persuade parents to send their daughters to school.

#### **2.4.1. South-North Division**

The widening gap in educational attainment between southern and northern Ghana has its roots in the British colonial system. The North was denied education and made a labor reserve to work the mines and plantations in the South. The first Senior Secondary School in the North was established in 1951 about hundred years after the first School in the South (1850s).

Since the infrastructure development was focused on cocoa and mineral producing areas, development was lopsided leaving the Northern Territories (NT) underdeveloped. Guggisberg was particularly concern about the development of education in the NT of the Gold Coast, he created a new administration.

According to Bening (1990), Guggisberg became convinced of the increasing desire for education among the people of northern descent. In 1925, he noted that:

*There is now, if not a widespread demand, at least an appreciable one for education. This arises from the fact that every year sees thousands of the young men traveling South to work in the gold mines, on the railways, and in the cocoa fields... Their experience among the more civilized tribes of the south, together with the manufactured articles, which they bring back, is steadily bringing to the northern tribes some appreciation of the material comforts to be got out of European civilization. They see young men employed by Government, Missions, and Mercantile Firms; they are beginning to ask themselves why they should not have the same opportunities, and their desire for education is encouraged by Political Officers, who wish to obtain natives of the country for employment as clerks, and in other subordinate positions. It can be safely said that there is steadily growing desire for education, a desire which, though by no means universal throughout the country, shows that the time is getting ripe for giving it to them.*

This statement was a clear recognition of the opportunity to provide more educational institutions all over the country within easy reach of most people. Again, the statement suggests that the people of the NT realized that education would offer them some opportunities and that would make them enjoy life to the fullest.

There was an attempt for the education of the Gold Coast to develop well-rounded and engaged citizens, and build more cohesive and participatory societies especially the colony. But this was not the case of NT, where schools were not enough, let alone the level of quality. Bening (1990) intimated that the colonial educational system adopted in the Northern Territories until 1951 was intellectually repressive and tended to foster unfounded and undesirable notions of superiority and inferiority. It failed to provide for the adequate training of the varied personnel required for the economic, technological and social progress of the North and the political integration of the Gold Coast as an emergent and independent nation.

There was a remarkable neglect in the provision of facilities especially at the primary level until after 1947 when the native authorities were permitted to establish such institutions. The impressive performance of a northern student at the Common Entrance Examination in 1949 broke the myth that had imperceptibly developed as to the inherent inability of northerners to profit by formal education. The above scenario shows that the human resource base of NT was not developed leaving the entire NT as place for the need of unskilled labor.

## **2.5. Education in Ghana (1951-2000)**

The British were already preparing themselves for the day they would grant full independence to their African colonies by the mid-1950s. They realized that in order for a colony to be successful after independence, strong educational and governmental institutions were required (David and Brandl, 1996). Convinced that the expansion of the formal education system bequeathed to Ghana by the colonial government would help to reduce tensions among ethnic, linguistic and religious groups and close the gap between the 'elite' and the 'masses'. Thus to integrate the people both horizontally and vertically, Nkrumah's government introduced education for accelerated development (Agyeman, 1988: 17-18).

When Dr Kwame Nkrumah assumed the office as Leader of Government Business in 1951, he set in motion the Accelerated Development Plan (ADP), which was to expand education in preparation for active participation of Ghanaians in the building of the new nation that was on the threshold of independence. In the 1950s, which is considered to be a period of economic prosperity in the Gold Coast, the gap between the enrolment of boys and

girls narrowed considerably (Graham, 1976: 34). The further improvement in the narrowing of the gender gap had a lot to do with introduction of free basic (Primary and Middle) education in 1961 (Ibid). Graham cites the then Eastern Province (now Eastern, Volta and Greater Accra regions as having a ratio of 100 boys to 60 girls at the primary level.

According to the Education Report of 1958-1960, education was meant to develop its students as socially responsible citizens of a democratic nation, who upon leaving school will take their places as fellow-citizens in a vigorous and forward-looking community, and who should have some appreciation of the duty they owe to their families, to their immediate social environment and the state as whole.

Post-independent governments have all recognized the importance of formal education as an instrument for social advancement. Several educational reforms have been instituted, at one time or the other, to make formal education more accessible to every section of the society. These include change of curricula, training of more teachers, introducing technical and vocational subjects, reducing the number of years of pre-university education and the introduction of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) for all children in 1996. Research carried by Ghana Statistical Service (2000) shows that there is significant improvement in the establishment of schools and enrolment of children. These improvements have been shown to be more significant for boys and girls in the South than in North.

The policy outcomes at the educational level helped to shape education in the North. For example, The Accelerated Development Plan 1951 and Education Act of 1961 helped in the establishment of the primary boarding schools in Bolgatanga and the Dabokpa Girls Middle Boarding School. Faith based schools (mission schools) were also established; St Paul's at Navrongo and St Anthony at Jirapa for boys, while St Anne's at Damongo, St Jude at Jirapa for girls. Some training colleges were also established to encourage girls' education; examples of such were the Bolgatanga Women's Training and Tamale Women's Training Colleges while some colleges admitted both males and females. The FCUBE policy has also helped to widen access to education for both boys and girls in the North.

Another policy that has made tremendous improvement of access to education in the North is the Capitation Grant, which has drastically increased enrolment in schools. All these policy interventions are due to the fact that education is useful to the development of the society and the individual.

As part of public policies, most governments in the developing countries adopted Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) as a way of improving on their economies, but SAPs in a way also affect educational budget, hence low level of human development in their

respective countries. The irony is how the World Bank, with the best-funded research on education in the world, misses the simple point that poor countries with depressingly low primary school enrollment ratios such as Mali with 42 percent could have any room to maneuver in reducing education funding, and what impact that would have on the long-term development of their people (Abdi, 2006).

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

The MDGs are eight goals to be achieved by the year 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. The goals range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, by all the target date of 2015.

For the purpose of this study, I will look at goal 2 and 3. Goal 2 is on achieving universal primary education. That is, to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of their primary education. Goal 3 has to do with the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women that would be the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education not later than 2015. Compliance of the MDGs 2 and 3 by governments as an important step for the reforms of policies and empowerment of the girl child is of paramount importance.

Ghana, as a member of the international community, has used different means to show her commitment towards the achievement of universal primary education (MDG 2) by ensuring that all children of primary school age enroll and complete by 2015. The government has shown this commitment through policy directives and interventions like the Education Strategy Plan (ESP) for 2003-2015, the Growth Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), and the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE). Strategies used to operationalize the policies include the introduction of the Capitation Grant (School fee Abolition), and introduction of nutrition and school feeding programmes. For Ghana to achieve universal access to equality primary education, it is equally necessary for the country to achieve gender parity in education. Considerable strides have been made towards increasing the number of girls attending school. For example, in 1997 a girl's education unit

was established as part of the Basic Education Division (BED) of Ghana Education Service (GES) to co-ordinate the implementation of activities related to girl-child education.

All the above have resulted in significant progress in the educational sector, especially in the past years. For instance primary school enrolment has increased significantly. Primary school Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) rose by nearly 10 %, thus bringing total primary enrolment to 92.4 % nationwide. Primary Net Enrolment Rates (NER) increased from 62 % to 69 %. Every region in the country experienced a rise in enrolment; Northern Region (where rates were lowest) experienced the largest increase. For instance, the overall enrolment in basic schools has increased by 16.7 % in 2005/2006 academic year (UNICEF Ghana, 2006). Progress has also been made towards achieving gender parity through a significant increase in girls' enrolment. Gender Parity Index (GPI), which is a measure of the level of girls' participation in formal education also showed some improvement in 2005/2006, after stagnating for the previous years. For example, enrolment of girls increased slightly more than that of boys, 18 % and 15.3 % respectively (Ibid).

Although Ghana's school enrolment rates are high compared to some other African countries, a persistent 40 % of children between the ages of six and eleven remained out of school as of 2003 (Ministry of Education, 2006). There are some parts of the country where access to basic education is lower and in other places persistently underserved. For example, Northern Region has persistently lower school attendance than the national average (Ibid: 2). With GPI, most regions in Ghana experience significant gaps between the number of boys and girls in school. Again, these disparities are particularly noticed in the Northern Region. For instance, about 65 % of girls are enrolled, compared to 77 % of boys. In several districts of the Northern Region fewer than half of primary school ages are enrolled (UNICEF Ghana, 2006).

The situation is not different in the Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District, which is located in the Northern Region. The data obtained from the District Directorate of Education (DDE) suggests that MDGs is unlikely to be met. For example, at primary level enrolment are 11,387 for boys and 9,532 for girls in 2006/2007 academic year. At the Junior High School (JHS) enrolment is 2,912 for boys and 1,778 for girls (Field work, 2007). Though there has been much improvement in GER, GPI, NER and NAR, there has not been sufficient increase to meet the MDGs 2 and 3 by the year 2015 in the Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District. The major challenges in the area are the late arrival of formal education, ignorance of the benefits of education, discriminatory practices

## **2.7. Discriminatory Values and Norms against Girls**

Goodlad (1994) astutely notes that the benefits of formal education to society and individual have been a philosophical issue in education for centuries. Presumably, Plato was reaching in part to challenges to the authority of the state excessive individualism when he wrote *The Republic*. He proposes an ideal state characterized by unity and harmony to which citizens, thinking of them as an integral part of the state, would give loyalty and obedience. Developing individuals to their fullest potential often has been argued as the antithesis of educating the individual to serve the state in the platonic scheme of things.

In another development Durkheim (2006), in the cities of Greece and Rome, education trained the individual to subordinate him or her blindly to the collectivity, to become the creature of society. In that framework, Bista (2004) says social and cultural beliefs; practices and attitudes often do not favor girls in their pursuit of education to the same extent as boys. She cites an example where discriminatory values and norms against girls are deeply rooted in society.

## **2.8. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

NGOs are independent, service-providing, not-for-profit organization involved in a range of activities, including the provision of aid to less developed countries. They are often driven by issues, and the services and support they provide include funding volunteers, and organizing action to promote peace, environmental protection, human rights, social and economic justice, education, sustainable and equitable development, health, and aid. There are debates into the activities of NGOs in development circles. According to Townsend, Porter & Mawdley (2004: 871), NGOs have been accused by some of being new instruments of control, domesticated by the neoliberal project. Yet others, they elaborate and pursue alternative dreams.

NGOs have been criticized on the use of the funding they have received. Criticisms range from pointing out that only small percentages of funds go to people in need, which a lot goes to recover costs, and some even have been used to pay very high salaries of the people at the top. In some cases, this is fair criticism. Governments have often voiced concerns about the accountability of NGOs. Unlike democratically elected governments or politicians, NGOs are not generally accountable to the wider public- only to their members or supporters or those who fund them.

In addition, transparency regarding issues such as funding or criteria for choice of activities is often optional for some independent NGOs. In other cases, those who wish to paint a dark picture of NGOs in general because NGO research may ultimately criticize their practices have used these arguments. NGOs on the other hand also suffer from a set of basic organizational weakness that inhibits their impact. For example, Bratton (1989) says NGOs projects are often isolated from one another and from planned government interventions, and are difficult to replicate in dissimilar setting. Tandler (1982) in Bratton (1989) in a telling critique of inflated claims for effectiveness, Tandler has assembled evidence from Latin America that NGOs do not always deliver sustainable benefits or reach their clients. This is the case in the study area where support from these NGOs does not get to the beneficiaries.

Despite that some people in the pursuit of wider visions, and sometimes seeking individual, material needs, make spaces by using NGOs, this cannot be said to be the true picture of all NGOs. Some NGOs are more concern with making positive impact on the lives of their clients. NGOs play different roles in supporting education service delivery. Some NGOs are primarily involved in advocacy with the aim of putting pressure on government to fulfill their commitment to ensuring access for all children to an education of acceptable quality. According to Townsend et al (2004: 873), they are referred to as 'alternative NGOs'. Although majority of NGOs have been co-opted to serve hegemonic development agenda, they offer something new and important to their clients.

The process of education towards empowerment, as a facet of development, truly embodies the concept of nonlinearity, as does the majority of development constructs. Therefore NGOs sees formal education towards human development in which all people have equal access to education. They also recognize that formal education is a human right and the path to generating sustainable development for the individual and for society. NGOs emphasize activities that will expand access increase participation; improve quality and relevance of the education. They further believe formal education would help the youth, especially the girl-child acquire skills training for self-reliance that constitute the core of youth development programmes.

There are number of programmes and policies that have been put in place by NGOs in the study area to promote education, especially the girl-child. For example, attendance based food rationing by World Food Programme (WFP), bicycle support for long-distance school commutes by United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and support schemes by Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED).

Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED). CAMFED's original name, in 1993, was 'Cambridge Female Education Trust'. CAMFED has worked in Ghana since 1996. Their work is concentrated in the Northern Region of the country where girls' access to education is particularly low. Girls are particularly disadvantaged in access to education due to a combination of cultural and economic factors. The Northern Region is the largest region in Ghana and is culturally diverse. CAMFED provides girls from very poor backgrounds with full bursaries. Support includes, where necessary, accommodation at boarding school or safe lodging when a school is too far to walk daily, school fees, uniform and shoes, stationery and examination fees. The core socio-cultural factors that stand as barriers or as potential points on intervention in girls' education remain to be addressed by any of these programmes.

## **2.9. Summary**

This chapter attempted to look at formal education and human development by concentrating on the MDGs 2 and 3. It has been noticed in the chapter that, the government of Ghana has made great strides in enrolment of children and attempts have also been made to bridge the gender gaps in school at all levels. Notwithstanding the efforts made so far, it does not seem capable of achieving the MDGs 2 and 3 by the year 2015. This is clearly manifested by the situation in the Northern Region.

The historical developments of education have been outlined in this chapter taking into consideration colonial and post-colonial policies of education.

Formal education is an end in itself and has tremendous benefits for society and individuals. Education is therefore first and foremost the vehicle through which societies reproduce themselves. The definition or characteristics and types as well as the debates about NGOs have been dealt in the chapter. Particular NGOs that the research student wanted to have a look into their activities did not work because of the absence of the programme officer. CAMFED's contributed significantly to the improvement of basic formal education in the study area. The next chapter is about the theoretical framework of the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **GENDER ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter attempts to situate the study within the gender analytical framework. The gender analytical framework adopted in this study reinforces the shift from perceiving the issue of women's status in terms of biological fixities to a focus on social relationship with men. I shall attempt to discuss the concept of gender, taking into consideration the biological and social construction of gender and how formal education could be a tool for girls' empowerment. Therefore, the gender analytical discourse in this chapter is somewhat a review of early and modern feminist analysis of the status of women. This approach makes the gender analytical framework of this study somewhat eclectic. That is borrowing simultaneously from different conceptual traditions to generate parameters for data analysis.

#### **3.2. What is Gender?**

The concept of gender can be understood in many different ways, making the usefulness of the concept dependent on the purpose of usage and the intellectual tradition in which it is being introduced (Robeyns, 2006).

Dewar (1989), in his contribution, looks at gender in a different construct. First, when gender is defined in biological and behavioral sciences, it is examined as a personal attribute and the focus is how differences between males and females explain the gap in their performance levels. Second, when gender is defined in socio-cultural sciences, it is viewed as a social issue and the focus is on the analysis of the ways in which plays, games and sport have been socially constructed to produce and legitimize male hegemony. By treating gender as an issue of sexual differences, he opines that it explains gaps that exist in performance capabilities. He focuses on the problems of resource allocation and the distribution of opportunities as issues of gender in-inequality.

Therefore to adopt a gender perspective is to distinguish between what is natural and biological and what is socially and culturally constructed. What is biologically determined is relatively inflexible but what is socially constructed is relatively transformable. Society assigns roles based on a person's sex. Some of these roles are arbitrarily assigned, and some are shaped by history, ideology, culture, religion and economic development. Gender roles are learned behaviors in a given society or community or other social groups that is,

activities, tasks and responsibilities that are perceived as males and/or females. They differ from one society to another, from place to place and overtime.

### **3.2.1. Society's Construction of Gender**

*From the moment a girl infant is wrapped in a pink blanket and a boy infant in a blue one, gender role development begins. The colours of pink and blue are among the first indicators used by society to distinguish female from male. As these infant grow, other cultural artifacts will assure that this distinction remains intact. Girls will be given dolls to diaper and tiny stoves on which to cook pretend meals. Boys will construct building with miniature tools and wage war with toys and tank.... The incredible power of gender socialization is largely responsible for such behaviors. Pink and blue begin this lifelong process. (Lindsey, 1990: 36, cited in Nung, 1996)*

From the above statement, gender roles are learned throughout childhood and during adulthood. The family, schools, institutions, media, tradition and culture all play a part in reinforcing certain behavior for boys and girls, while discouraging others. The gender roles of boys and girls within a given social context may be flexible or rigid, similar or different, and complementary or conflicting. As a result of these, there are gender disparities and gaps that are not just male-female gaps because they are not biologically based. They are gaps that arise from the different roles and social locations of boys and girls. This, therefore, means that relations between males and females are social, and are therefore, not fixed.

These gender roles that are learned lead to gendered division of labor. In the light of this, Josephides (1985:116) thinks there is a gendered division of labor, which has both ideological and practical aspects. In using the Kewa society, Josephides says women tend gardens, pigs and children. Women usually cook for household and keep the house clean. Men prepare farms, hunt, and fight wars and lead religions. In citing Modjeska (1982: 62), Josephides refers to the social division of labor as effectively defining men as potentially independent, and women as necessary dependent. Sex domains also extend to items, which are thought to belong to females or males. For instance lands belong to males, while firewood belongs to the female.

The situation in Josephine's Kewa society is not very different from what exists among the Bimoba people in Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District in Ghana, where men are usually responsible for clearing land for cultivation and growing cash and food crops of high commercial value, while women are more involved in the production of food crops for domestic consumption. While in other times, men and women may jointly cultivate, wives often times combine work on the household farms with independent economic activities that provide them a fair degree of economic independence (Oppong, 1974). Parental

responsibilities for the financial costs of childbearing and household maintenance are similarly divided along gender lines. Fathers typically assume responsibility for housing and children's education while mothers take responsibility for food.

From the above, one can postulate that the social life division between the sexes is maintained, both in terms of their imputed potentialities and the social roles expected of the sexes. Women, as shown, are being identified with the domestic domain and men ideally with the public. Most women still retain the primary responsibility for caring and domestic work, thus the concentration of women and men into different occupation. Though gender is universal concept, it has a culture-specific manifestation. As societies change to become more complex, there is a corresponding change in trend of gender manifestation in cultures.

### **3.2.2. Different Cultural Construction of Gender**

Different cultures construct gender categories differently and symbolize male, female and their relations differently; there is little doubt that distinctions on gender lines are universally made. The particular cultural instances of gender ideology may indeed diverge, but the function of this ideology universally is to distinguish and rank the sexes. In short, cultures value their gender differently. Within the social organization and cultural beliefs of a society, the gender complex is made up of propositions which when applied to individuals may bestow on them social approval and power, dignity and prestige; or they may have the opposite effect and imply that a person is unworthy or second rate.

Pauline and Tembon (1999) say that socio-cultural attitudes and traditions often determine the status of girls and women in society. Culturally, the place of a woman is in the home. The expectation that girls will eventually marry and become housewives means that mothers consider what they learn at home as important as, if not more important than, what they learn at school. Therefore the norm would be for girls to stay closer to their mothers as they grow up and to learn household skills and behaviors that prepare them for their future roles as wives and mothers. These socio-cultural beliefs cause parents to see the formal education of a girl as a deviation from accepted societal norms and practices. Formal education is, therefore, sometimes not perceived as appropriate for girls and is consequently not valued. Cultural attitudes are so entrenched that even young girls of school age feel that they need only to learn how to cook: '*Girls are not allowed to go to school because of tradition... girls are born for boys and it is enough for a girl if she knows to cook and how to keep house*'. (Ibid)

In traditional societies gender roles are ascribed. They are universal and operated in closed domains and spaces. Women have to marry, bear children and look after a family. In contrast to the ascription of gender roles and the closed gender exclusion and division of labor, females are now able to acquire any role by choice and these are generally based on personal ability, aspiration, and educational and professional qualifications. The degree to which this is possible is determined by the society and the authority structure. This becomes particularly obvious when one identifies the main factors in the evolving gender roles and perception, for example formal education.

### **3.3. Formal Education and Women's Empowerment**

Gender equality and women's empowerment is the third of the MDGs.<sup>3</sup> According to Kabeer (2003) empowerment is therefore explicitly valued as an end in itself and not just as an instrument for achieving others. The term empowerment, as conceptualized in various disciplines, has been used to explain different ideas and notions about individual and group power in the family and society. Empowerment is manifested as a redistribution of power, whether between nations, classes, races, genders, or individuals. Taken to its limit, empowerments can mean equalizing, or near equalizing. This implies, on the one hand, empowering those who do not have power and, on the other hand, dis-empowering those elevated on power in society (Moses, 2004).

Again, most scholars working on empowerment point out that the concept is multi dimensional, often loosely defined, and can have slightly different meanings within different fields (Zimmerman, 2000, Page and Czuba, 1999, Laverack and Wallertein, 2001). Rappaport (1984, in Page and Czuba, 1999) therefore says it is not difficult to define empowerment by its absence, but difficult to define it in action the reason being that it takes different forms in different people and contexts. Empowerment is a central concept in the field like economics, education, social work, etc. Because the concept of empowerment is so dependent on the context in which it is studied, empowerment is almost impossible to come up with a single definition. Zimmerman also recognizes that limiting empowerment to one definition would contradict the concept (Page and Czuba, 1999). The exact complexity of the phenomenon can be seen both as its strongest asset and its weakness when it comes to using it in research (Pensgaard and Sorensen, 2002: 62).

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<sup>3</sup> Millennium Development Goals

On the one hand it is argued, 'it is only by a focus on change to existing patterns of power and its use that any meaningful change can be brought about' (Oakley, 2001: 14). However, it can be said to involve 'recognizing the capacities of such groups [the marginalized and oppressed] to take action and to play an active role in development initiatives' (Ibid: 14). Oakley identifies five key uses of the term empowerment in development studies, which empowerment and the individual is one (Ibid: 43). Therefore the marginalized girl child as an individual when given the opportunity to formal education, she becomes an instrument in the regeneration of her society and the eradication of poverty in the next generation.

### **3.3.1. Agency and Achievement**

Kabeer (2003: 170) defines empowerment as 'the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability. In other words, empowerment entails a process of change'. She further goes on to indicate that empowerment could be explored closely through the following inter-related pathways: agency, resources and achievements. Agency, in relation to empowerment, implies the ability to actively exercise choice, which challenges power relations. Despite the fact that beliefs and values legitimate inequality, the process of empowerment can begin within (ibid, 171, 172). The ability of girls to take educational opportunities seriously will enable them to decide for themselves, since they will have their own power, which will give them the capacity to take decisions, protest, negotiate and bargain.

Meanwhile, agency is exercised not in the abstract but through the mobilization of resources, which are the medium of power (ibid, 172). Men have authority over women in so far as institutional rules, norms and conventions are concerned. Therefore, women's ability to gain access to resources is as important in processes of empowerment as the resources themselves. Empowerment requires a change in the conditions under which resources are acquired, likewise an increase in access to resources (Kabeer, 2001). Access to educational opportunities improve girls agency within the family. The reason being that, girls who have had access to educational opportunities have an independent job and source of income and thereby strengthen their 'fall-back' positions from which to bargain or negotiate (Kabeer, 2003: 172). Girls access to independent job and source of income matter because, the greater it's public visibility, the value of its returns and its independence from familial structures of authority, the stronger its effects on girls' fall-back positions. Girl's capabilities and their potential for living the lives they want, comes as a result of their access to resources and

agency. This will give them the capability to build their livelihoods. Achievement in this case refers to the extent to which girls potentials in terms of resources and agency are realized or fail to be realized. In other words, it is the outcome of their effort (Kabeer, 2003: 173). Therefore girls access to educational opportunities are seen as evidence of progress in girls empowerment, especially in situations where it is seen as contributing to their sense of independent (ibid, 173) and not only serving as a livelihood strategy.

Empowerment is fundamentally a relational concept, emerging out of the interaction between males and females and their environment. This takes place through the rights, rules, norms and process governing the interaction between females and more powerful actors (Narayan, 2005). Narayan (Ibid: 4) therefore defines empowerment as the expression of choice and action to shape one's life, as well as the control over resources. Girl's access to education opportunities is unfortunately curtailed by their powerlessness in relation to a range of institutions, both formal and informal. Since powerlessness is embedded in culture of unequal institutional relations, a relational definition of empowerment has been adopted: 'Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor People to participate in negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives'. Narayan (2005) states that this definition can be use to understand and track changes in gendered relationships within and beyond the household. This definition places emphasis on institutions and interaction between females and more powerful actors (males).

According to Kabeer (2003: 175), the positive findings of formal education suggest that it brings about change in a number of different ways. Firstly, it has certain effects at the level of individual cognition and behavior. These are relevant to all marginalized groups in society because they promote agency as 'the power to'. Secondly, it improves access to knowledge, information and new ideas as well as the ability to use these effectively. These changes apply to boys and girls. The way formal education opens up new ideas may underlie the positive association between girls' formal education and family welfare. Thus girls who have had a certain level of formal education are better in processing information and are able to use goods and services. Females with formal education are better able to use contraceptive effectively and to understand how improved health standards can protect the well being of their children (Ainsworth, 1994).

There are also other effects associated with formal education that may impact on power relationships within and outside the household. Formal education may lead to a greater role of females in decision-making and a greater willingness on their part to question male dominance in the home and the community. This point is supported by Behrman and Kenan

(1991), Hartnett and Hensveld (1993), Ainsworth (1994) and Al-Samarrai and Peasgood (1997) in Benders (1999), on household characteristics in Tanzania shows that an educated woman is likely to improve her bargaining power within household and her preference for educated children will play a greater role in the decision of her children education. Heward (1999) reinforces this position that, women with formal education have more autonomy than uneducated women, but was quick to add that in highly patriarchal society women autonomy increases only when they have higher education. While this proof is undoubtedly pervasive, the value given to education and how it is utilized may be influenced by the wide context in which formal education is provided.

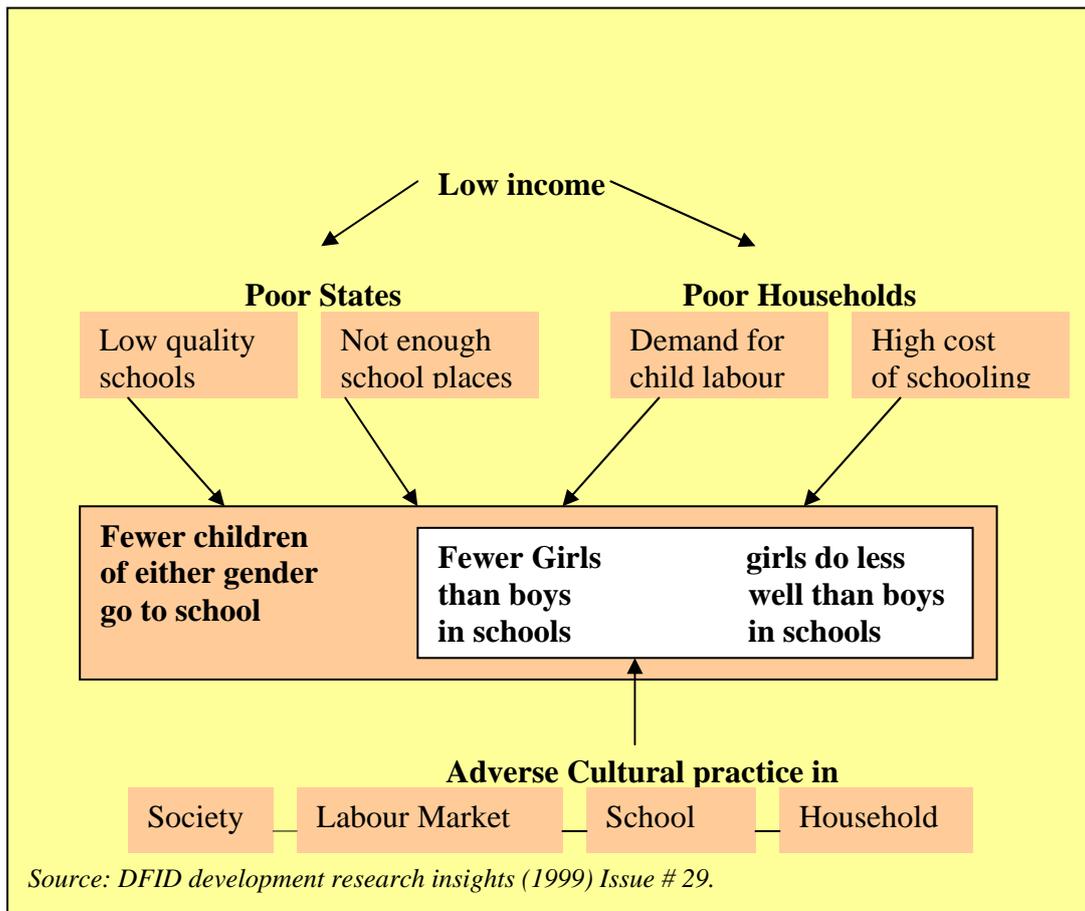
In societies that are characterized by extreme forms of gender inequality, girl's access to education is more likely to be curtailed by various forms of restrictions on their mobility and by their limited role in the wider economy. The effects of education are also more limited. Where women's role in society is defined purely on reproductive terms, education is seen as equipping girls to better wives and mothers or increasing their chances of getting a suitable husband (Kabeer, 2003: 177). Although these are legitimate aspirations, given the realities of the society, they do little to equip girls and women to question the world around them and the subordinate status assigned to them.

Although the concept of 'women's empowerment' is of recent origin in feminist discourse, it too has raised several important implications for the formal education of girls the world over. World feminist and their organizations took up the concepts of 'conscientization' and popular participation and began formulating their own notions of empowerment for women. The goals of women's empowerment, most clearly articulated are to enable poor women to gain access to and control over material and informational resources for survival needs and to satisfy more strategy gender needs (Moses, 2004). However, placing importance on generating feeling of common female identity at the local, regional and national levels, gender empowerment is often critiqued for not addressing individual and group differences in class, race and location, at all levels which may serve to divide women. Correspondingly, by focusing too much on the individual at the local level, gender empowerment is also critiqued for not addressing commonalities which rural girls may face in regards to gender, class and other issues at all levels(Ibid). These limitations to education as path to girls, empowerment does not negate the positive contribution of formal education as tool for girls' empowerment in the present research area.

Colcough, Rose & Tembon (1998), refers that there is a marked gender gap in access to, and achievement in, school in many developing countries. According to them there is still

low enrolment among girls in these countries. Whilst admitting that poverty at both national and household levels is associated with under-enrolment of school-aged children, the gendered outcomes of such under-enrolment are more a product of adverse cultural practice than of poverty.

The figure 1 below outlines the Relationship between poverty, cultural practice, gender and schooling.



In this figure, I look at the interplay between poor states, poor household and adverse cultural practice that is helpful in understanding the key factors that interact to the detriment of girls' educational attainments. The above noted factors are the main levers, which convert poverty at the level of state and the household, into a situation where not all children in the eligible age group attend school. There is, however, an array of non-economic factors that cause rationed enrollment opportunities to be unequally allocated between boys and girls. In poor states, shortages of school places and low school quality remain major problem where fewer children of either gender to go school. At household level an important reason why children are not sent to school is the direct costs parents have to meet are often too great. The gender

imbalances in educational attainments are the result of deep-seated adverse cultural practices where gendered roles in society change the balance of incentives for girls and boys to educational attainments.

### **3.4. Summary**

In this chapter, I attempted a theoretical discourse of women's status in terms of biological fixities to a focus on social relationship with men. Gender relations, like all social relations, are multi-stranded: they embody ideas, values and identities; gender allocates labor between different tasks, activities and domains; gender determines the distribution of resources; and gender assigns authority and decision-making power. This means that gender inequalities are multidimensional and cannot be reduced simply to the question of material or ideological constraint. Gender equality and women's empowerment as the third of the MDGs, efforts were made in the chapter to conceptualize the term empowerment. Empowerment has been used to explain different ideas and notions about individual and group power in the family and society. Therefore, empowerment as a concept is multi-dimensional. Empowerment is also critiqued for not addressing commonalities, which rural women may face in regards to gender, class and other issues at all levels.

The next chapter is the presentation of data and analysis where I would look at specific field returns.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the field returns and discusses formal education and the empowerment of the girl-child. It is a discussion of the effects gender representation on the girl-child's educational opportunities. The main informants were Junior High School (JHS) girls, with their teachers, and parents providing supplementary information. The presentation begins with background of the respondents.

#### 4.2. General Characteristics of all Respondents

The social characteristics examined include these variables: age, household size, distance to school, and educational background of parents, occupation of parents and professional qualification of teachers by sex.

##### 4.2.1. Age of Respondents

The age of schoolgirls somewhat gives idea as to whether they are in the educational system and their potential off-school roles, which could also have implications for schooling. The educational system in Ghana currently involves nine years of basic education. The first nine years are further divided into six years of primary education and three years of JHS.

**Table 1. Age of Respondents**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Absolute Figure</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
15	6	30
16	8	40
17	6	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Fieldwork, 2007.*

Table 1 show that 30 of respondents representing 70 % were within the bracket of 16-17 years. For age 15, there were 6 informants, age 16, 8 were interviewed and age 17, 6 were equally interviewed. It is also clear from Table 1 that 30 percent of the girls are in the age group of 15.

The data returns in Table 1 further gives a detailed picture of the age of respondents. For instance, this was the breakdown at the various levels of the JHS. Out of a number of 6 girls, aged 15, who were interviewed, there were: 4, 1, and 1 in JHS1, JHS2 and JHS3

respectively. At age 16, it was also observed that the class distribution was 2, 4 and 2 for JHS1, JHS2 and JHS3 respectively. For age 17, it was observed that, 1 was in JHS1, 1 in JHS2 and 4 in JHS3.

The age distribution in the Table 1 seemingly contradicts the national standards. This is because at ages 16 and 17 those are about 70 %, by which time they should have been near completion of Senior High School (SHS). The reasons responsible for this, as this research unraveled, are varied. For instance a girl informant at the age of 17 who ordinarily should be in SHS but now in JHS1 explain her circumstance as suggest. That she was made a herds-girl.

#### 4.2.2. Household Size of Respondents

The household is the smallest task-oriented and culturally defined framework for meeting the welfare needs of individuals (Carter, 1984: 52-53). The household is usually organized around human needs, which have social, cultural, historical and psychological dimensions. These socially constructed needs include food, shelter, sleep, cleanliness, clothing, sex, reproduction, companionship and recreation (Yanagisako & Mackintosh, 1979 in Gardiner 1997: 14). The composition of household include parents, children and other dependents living under the same roof and, at least sharing some meals together. Netting & Wilk (1984) have identified production and distribution of resources as two of the most important categories of activities that households across cultures have been observed to perform. There could be inequalities in the distribution of resources on the basis of gender and age.

Rakodi (2002) in Ansoglenang (2006) has argued that the household size or composition is a determinant factor of the capabilities, choices and strategies available to it. Therefore, the viability of girls' education may be affected in terms of distribution resource.

**Table 2. Household Size of Respondents**

Household Size	Absolute Figure	Percentage (%)
7-10	1	5
11-14	7	35
15-18	1	5
19-22	9	45
23-26	2	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Fieldwork, 2007*

Table 2 shows that 45 %, 35 % and 10 % of the informants have quite a large household size of 19-22, 11-14 and 23-26 respectively. Also, 5 % has a household size of 7-10 while another 5 percent has a household size of 15-18.

From Table 2, the informants live in large households. This clearly depicts that most of schoolgirls' informants are members of large households. This can be attributed to the extended family relations and the prestige associated with having more women and children in the study area. According to my informants, a normal household size in the area should be three to fourteen. It is clear that, even according to their standard, the area still has large household size. The result of large household size on girl's education is that where the income of the household is inadequate to cater for the members of the household, girls are denied the opportunity of access of education. The socio-cultural values of the area glorify polygamy. Thus prioritization of children as a socio-cultural is the argument for the practice of polygamy. According to Cutrufelli (1983: 133), 'the motives behind the desire for large family have been institutionalized through various and complex rites, taboos, social behavior and beliefs.'

#### **4.2.3. Distance to school**

The distance between homes and schools often affect school enrolment, retention and completion. For example, as noted in Chapter One, the area has 24 JHS and they are mostly concentrated in the big towns. Parents were not comfortable with sending their daughters away from them since most schools are far from where they live. Increased the likelihood of non-enrolment or non-attendance and dropping out after enrolment.

**Table 3. Distance to school**

<b>Distance in km</b>	<b>Absolute Figure</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
2-3	8	40
4-5	10	50
6-7	2	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Fieldwork, 2007.*

Table 3 reveals that 50 % of girls' informants, representing 10 girls, walk 4-5 kms from their homes to school daily. Also, another 40 %, representing 8 girls, walk 2-3kms from their homes to school daily, while 10 %, representing 2 girls, also walk 6-7kms daily from their homes to school.

This data shows that most of the schools girls walk at least 3 kilometers from their homes to school. Due to the nature of girls work at home, which they have to do before going to school, distance to school gives most of them a lot of problems. Distance prevented parents from sending all their children to school. Therefore, in most cases distance impeded enrolment especially the girl child. Issues of safety and security of school girls is a concern for parents and parents less likely to allow their daughters to attend school if they have to travel long distances. A girl informant had this to say about the distance to school: *‘My village is far away, it takes more than two hours on foot to attend school everyday. This makes me late for school, tired and I cannot concentrate in the classroom’*. (5<sup>th</sup> June 2007)

Similarly, a parent informant noted that: *‘Since schools are located far away between towns, and since children have to walk these distance, our daughters are weak as compared to boys to survive these long walks’*. (5<sup>th</sup> June 2007)

Therefore long distance to school is a concern to schoolgirls and their parents. This could then be noted as one of the many obstacles for girls’ enrollment, retention and completion of school especially at the JHS level.

#### **4.2.4. Parents Level of Education**

The level of education of parents play crucial role in the decision-making process as to which of their children will be allowed to attend school and the type job they are involved in. Education equips the individual with the skills to read, write, record receive training and seek information. Parents’ level of education makes critical contributions to children achievement from preschool through high school. A home, the environment encourages learning that is more important to children achievement than income.

**Table 5. Parents Level of Education**

<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Illiterates	8	7	75
Low Education	1	2	15
High Education	1	1	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Fieldwork, 2007.*

Table 5 above indicates the percentage of respondents with no formal education at all (illiterates), low or high education. Low education is defined as elementary education (classified as primary, JHS), and high education as SHS, Polytechnic, Teaching Training College, university education. 15 of the total population of informants for the interview had

no education. Three of the informants had low education. Only 2 of the informants selected for this interview had high education. Table 5 further shows that 7 of female informants were illiterates. Two of the female informants had low education and 1 of the female informant had high education. On the male side, 8 the informants were illiterates. One had low education and another 1 had high education.

Table 5, is suggestive that level of education of parents in the area is generally low. Most parents themselves have had no opportunity of attending school. Many reasons could be attributed to this. The late introduction of formal education by the colonial government, because of its colonial policy of favoring or ‘protecting’ one group or section against another denied most people from the area educational opportunities. The fact that the area is poverty endemic has also contributed to the high illiteracy rate in the study area.

When I asked a parent informant why he did not go to school as a child. His response was as such: *‘In those days schooling was perceived as something fearful and therefore only orphans who were sent to school to suffer. But we those of us who had our parents alive were not sent to school’*. (10<sup>th</sup> June 2007)

#### 4.2.5. Occupation of Parents

The study also investigated occupational composition of parents to determine the extent to which their occupation has impacted on the girl child schooling.

Table 6 below shows the occupational background of the parents informants.

**Table 6. Occupation of Parents**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Farming	12	2	80
Non-farming	1	5	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Fieldwork, 2007.*

Table 6 illustrates that 14 out of the total 20 informants were farmers, while the rest of the 6 of the informants were engaged in non-farming activities. Table 6 depicts that whereas 12 of 13 male informants were farmers, 1 was engaged in non-farming activity, which is trading. On the female informants, 2 out of the total number of 7 were farmers while 5 of female informants were also engaged into non-farming activities for example income generating

activities. The overall picture in this table depicts that majority of the males informants were farmers. Also, a large number of the female informants were engaged in non-farm activities.

From the data it is suggestive that most parents in the study area are predominately small-scale farmers. Who depend on their own labor service and that of their household. Again, as result of population explosions, lands accessible to households are fast diminishing. With diminishing farmland, increasing cost of farm inputs, the yields of household were beginning to drop. The rainfall pattern is becoming more and more erratic making the main occupation of parents' insecure and also poor. Thus, parents either have to their children from going to school during school days or drop out of school to help them in the farm.

As we can discern from Table 6 that majority of the female informant are into non-farm activities is due to fact that in the study area, females traditionally do not have control over household productive activity like farming. Due to the patrilineal descent practice in the research area, where land is passed on from fathers to sons, daughters are always excluded from land ownership, though land constitutes the major source of rural work. Therefore, according to (Ansoglenang, 2006:4), for women to free themselves from such predicaments and also to contribute to meet the domestic expenditure requirements, women have resorted to income generating activities. This is to afford them income to pay children school fees, buy cloth and everyday household provisions for the family.

#### 4.2.6. Professional Qualification of Teachers by Sex

The study further looked at male teachers and female teachers' ratio in the study area and whether this could have an impact on the girl child access to educational opportunities. The research student also wanted to find out whether teachers in the area of study have professional qualification.

**Table 7. Professional Qualification of Teachers by Sex**

Qualification	Male	Female	Percentage (%)
Trained Teacher	6	1	70
Untrained Teacher	3	-	30
Total	9	1	100

*Source: Fieldwork, 2007.*

The data generated from the fieldwork shows that 6 teachers out of the total number of 10 informants were males. While there was 1 female teacher out of the total number of 10 informants. On the professional qualification of teachers, 6 out of the total of 9 male teachers were trained teachers, whilst 3 were untrained teachers. The only female teacher informant

was a trained teacher. Therefore, the overall picture painted by this table is that a greater majority of teachers selected for this research were trained teachers.

The data reveals, that the number of male teachers outnumber that of the female teachers in the study area. In this case, girls in the research area do not have female teachers who will serve as mentor. Mentors are advisors, people with career experience willing to share their knowledge; supporters, people who give emotional and moral encouragement; models, of the kind of person one should be to be successful. With this, one observes in Table 7 that the girl-child would lack all these due to absence of female teachers who would serve as mentors. The explanation to this disparity may be due to cultural beliefs of the people of the study area where girl-child education has long not been given the necessary encouragement like that of the boy-child. Another reason has to do with the cost-benefit relationship of the education of girls to the family. A parent said:

*I assessed the benefits of education for only boys and I felt it a waste of time and funds educating girls who on completion would go to marry and become part of a different family, leaving us with no material benefits. (15<sup>th</sup> June 2007)*

### **4.3. Summary**

In this chapter, I attempted a presentation of the major characteristics of the girl child; parents and teachers have been presented. From the above, it has been shown that main informants were in the age group of 15-17 years. It also came to light that, the household size of respondents is large. Schools are far from homes thus making them walk at least two kilometers day. The field evidence showed that a staggering 75 % of parents' informants are illiterates. With this high illiteracy rate, parents may not come to terms with the cost-benefit relationship of girls' education. Occupation of parents was looked at and most of the parents informants were predominately small-scale farmers for the male parents and the females are into income generation activities. It also came to light that teachers in the study area are professional teachers.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I began the presentation with the background study of the respondents. The main informants were Junior High School (JHS) girls, with their teachers, and parents providing supplementary information. In this chapter, I will mostly use the qualitative methods including interviews, focus group discussions. The generated data will be interpreted and discussed within the gender analytical framework in chapter three.

On factors that account for the poor state of girls' formal education, I found different approaches in their categorization. King and Hill (1993: 6) group the factors into two main headings, namely, demand and supply factors; Mehran (1995: 37) gives in-school and out-of-school factors; Hyde (1993: 110) categorizes the factors into household, societal and institutional factors. But Odaga and Heneveld (1995: 4) took a cue from the demand and supply divisions proposed by King and Hill and further grouped them into school-related factors and political and institutional factors (representing supply) and socio-cultural factors and socio-economics factors (representing demand). According to Bista (2004), social and cultural beliefs, practices and attitudes often do not favor girls in their pursuit of education as boys.

Such factors as early marriage, cultural norms, and the belief by most parents that the girl child is only prepared for another family to benefit from, do undermine the education of the girl child. No wonder that is a common philosophy among the Bimobas that: 'why invest in a resource that will soon be someone else's?'

#### **5.2. Cultural Practice**

##### **5.2.1. Early Marriage**

Birth, marriage and the death are the rites of passage in the lives of people. Of these rites, only marriage is the one that is a matter of choice. Yet many girls and a small number of boys enter marriage without any chance of exercising the right to choose. Young girls within the Bimoba area are often times given out in marriage without their consent. The marriages are usually contracted for them at a very tender age.

The findings from the field reveal that, this is a common practice of the people. A key informant in response to a question as to his view(s) on the main factors that affect girls' education in area attributed the culture of the Bimoba people as the main factors. He also cited such practices as infant betrothal and exchange marriages as the problem that affect girls' educational attainments. A parent interviewed consequently indicated that his colleagues have been mocking him of sending his girls to school instead of giving their hands in marriage.

When a woman in her mid 20s was interviewed on why she did not get the opportunity of going to school, she said: *'my father values marriage more than education. I stopped schooling because I got married at age 14'*.

This can be likened with an interview I had with the first head teacher of Bunkpurugu primary school, he complained that retention of girls in school is not encouraging and he cited early marriage as a factor. He asserted:

*When the Bunkpurugu primary was opened, as the first head teacher, by law I was asked to admit six pupils, but a girl was later on brought to be admitted which I had to seek for permission from Gambaga as to whether the girl could be added to the six pupils already admitted. Because she was a girl, the law was relaxed and I was given the go head to admit her to make the number seven. However, the girl could not even complete her schooling, because she had to marry'. (10<sup>th</sup> July 2007)*

From the aforementioned, it is seen that early marriage affects girls' education. Girls are either taken out of school or not even given the opportunity to attend. Early marriages inevitably deny girls of school going age their rights to education, which is crucial for their personal development and their effective contribution to the future well being of their families and societies.

Lack of access to formal education also means that these girls are also denied the needed technical know-how and professional skills that is a pre-requisite to their attaining jobs that can earn them a good living. It is uncommon to observe that illiterate girls who are abandoned, widowed or divorced, or even who are victims of growing urban poverty are forced into commercialized versions of their work as wives: cleaning, cooking, child-minding. They even stand the risk of entering into commercial sex trade.

### **5.2.2. Traditional Gender Roles**

Traditional gender roles within household delegate certain areas to women in the study area. All that has to do with childcare, what the family eats, firewood and water, cleaning and washing, traditionally was and still is within women's domain. In the area of study, women

are for the entire household works except renovating the house are the preserve of girls. Among the Bimoba people, although it is socially accepted for a man to do some cooking if he has no woman in the house, he will invariably try hard to find a female relative to save him from the social stigma. Girls help in all domestic work, boys can be asked to do most things, but among the Bimoba people usually boys only help if there are no girls around. It was noted that as girls and boys grow older, they share more workload of their mother and father respectively. The girls' share of work in the household would keep especially female children busy all day.

Most informants bemoaned the work burden of girls in the study area that do not allow girls to educational attainments. For example, a parent told me in an answer to a question as who does domestic work in the home she said:

*It is the girl child, for example cooking, sweeping, fetching of water is the preserve of the girl child in the Bimoba culture. She further said that, because they are girls, they have to be taught how to do some of these domestic works so that when they get married, they would not bring disgrace to family for not knowing how to do these domestic jobs that makes them complete women. (5<sup>th</sup> July 2007)*

Another parent had this to say: '*It is the creation of God that girls are made to do whatever they do in the home*'. (4<sup>th</sup> July 2007).

This field interviews reveals that this above assertion cuts across. Families are therefore reluctant to send their girls to school for the fear that they will learn new values, and become less inclined to accept domestic work. Consequently, girls perform less well than boys in school due to among other things, gendered division of labor at home whereby girls get to do almost all the household chores.

Josephides (1985: 116) in alluding to gender roles within households, using a model of gendered division of labor among the Kewa, posits that women tend gardens, pigs, and children. Women usually cook for the household and keep the house clean. Nowadays they do washing, most market selling, and a lot of coffee picking, and cleaning. Men prepare gardens sites, hunt, transact exchanges, and arrange pig kills fight wars and lead religions. This gendered division of labor is effectively defining men as independent, and women as necessarily dependent.

### **5.2.3 Teenage Pregnancy**

Though not a cultural issue, but it is social problem. It has become a way of life among girls Bimoba area. This has equally become a bad habit among girls. The issue of Teenage pregnancy was frequently popping up especially among parents, teachers and opinion leaders.

As a result the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the study area most parents felt that, it is not worth investing in their daughters' education even if they are aware the benefits of educating their girls. Teenage pregnancy will ruin the future of girls or set back their clock of development. A parent in answering a question as to which sex he prefers to send to school said the boy child.

When asked why the choice of the boy child and not the girl child, he had to say: *'The fears of pregnancy are always a worry to us as parents for this bring about disgrace and frustration upon us. The girl child terminating her education as a result of pregnancy is also a waste of resources'* (5<sup>th</sup> July 2007).

A survey conducted on Teenage Pregnancy in schools by Ghana Education Service (GES), reports that teenage pregnancy is one of the main cause of girls dropping out of school at the JSS-level. The Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) states that in 2003, 14 percent of Ghanaian 15-19 year-old girls had begun childbearing; a high percentage given that it does not take into account pregnancies that had not reached them, either because of miscarriage or abortion (Daily Graphic, 2007).

The Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District Director of Health Service (DDHS) also raised a similar concern when he said that the district was going through what the district public health nurse describe as a teenage pregnancy epidemic. According to the director, teenage pregnancy is a serious threat to the future of development of the district. She claimed: *'the future of the district is in the hands of the young boys and girls. Unfortunately, the future of these boys and girls is jeopardized by teenage pregnancy and child parenting in the district.'* she disclosed that, the District Health Management Team (DHMT) and Ghana Health Service (GHS) between January and June this year registered 134 cases of teenage pregnancy, explaining that what makes it more alarming is that the ages of pregnant girls range from eleven (11) to eighteen (18) years with most of them being schoolchildren (Primary and JSS) dropouts. She further disclosed that there are many other unreported cases since many of the girls deliver at home for lack of money to attend antenatal care.

### **5.3. Socio-economic Factors**

#### **5.3.1. Need for Farmhands**

Smallholder depends on the labor services of their households' members. Family labor is considered crucial for the survival and viability of smallholder. Small-scale farming is labor intensive. Smallholder makes use of traditional hand tools like hoe and cutlasses. The use of

traditional tool is tedious and therefore tends to limit the size of holdings. The purpose of production is mainly for household consumption. Smallholders sell their surplus at the local market centers.

This is what a parent has to say on the need of farm hands:

*I as a parent would very much like their children to go to school for my children to be working on farms depend on me. I do not have enough money to cater for the children, the mother and ourselves. This compels me to engage the children in my farm. Again, I cannot afford to hire labor and since I am a smallholder, I need to deep on the labor service of my household members.*

Another reason is the fact that lands on which parents cultivate have been continual cultivated and has lost its nutrients; hence parent cannot get the same yield as compared to first. They need more hands to help in their farm activities. A question to the girls informants attest to these phenomena. When asked how many days they have absented themselves from school during the term. Their responses ranged from one day to ten days. When probed further as to what was the reason for their absenteeism during the term, fourteen out of the twenty girls said they were asked by their parents to accompany them to farms. This new development has led to additional burden on the girl child in the area since she has to combine the sexed domestic work and farming.

### **5.3.2. School/User fees**

The introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) has placed a growing burden of user fees on educational services on poor families living at the margins of society and the formal economy. The worst affected are the rural poor families that rely on crops that do not command cash. Most parents in the area are subsistence farmers with little or no surplus to sell for basics, let alone school fees.

Therefore, at the household level, most families began to cut back on their expenditure. The first casualty on a typical household expenditure is the school fee. Most children in Ghana have to pay to go primary school, paying increasing amount as they rise through the grades, leading to exclusion of many children, especially girls.

A parent said: *'for we poor people, formal education means a trade-off, usually between obtaining food and going to school'*. From the perspective of parents in the study area, it might mean having to sell their grains and livestock to buy notebooks, pen and pencils and other educational materials, hence the scenario of prioritization among children within the family.

As result of the prioritization among children and due the traditional obligation for boys and not girls, to support parents in old age, provides strong incentives for parents to favor the formal education of their sons. In such a scenario, the economic incentives for parents is probably of the key barriers to equal treatment of sons and daughters, and would be so even if returns from education of girls vis-à-vis boys were evenly matched.

## **5.4. International Agencies Interventions**

While it is true recognizing that it is the primary responsibility of the state (central, regional and district assemblies) in ensuring the achievements of MDGs 2 and 3, most commentators agree that international agencies and NGOs, both field-based and those working as support centers, have an important role to play especially in reaching out to the hardest-to-reach, for example girls. Other international agencies and NGOs have contributed in different ways to bring in 'difficult to reach' section of children, both rural and urban into world of education and schooling.

NGOs consider girls' education an important entry point to begin tackling gender inequality in developing countries. NGOs thus work to change the attitudes and practices that currently create barriers to full and equal participation of girls in education systems. These NGOs and the international agencies such as World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED).

Interactions with District Director of Education (DDE), heads of basic schools, teachers, parents and schoolgirls reveal a number of supports they have received from international agencies and NGOs to promote girls education in the district.

### **5.4.1. WFP Food Rationing Programmes**

Of the food rationing programmes, the most notable are those put in place for girls by the World Food Programme (WFP). Within this programme, girls in selected schools, with excellent attendance records, for example monthly attendance of 85% or more are allocated food rations for example, rice, maize, oil, wheat and sorghum in order to encourage other girls to attend regularly. WFP assistance to the programme to educate girls in Ghana's northern savannah areas encourages parents to enroll their daughters in primary and Junior High schools (JHS), and to retain them once in school. The girls receive food rations to take home to complement their family income, especially during the dry season when food production is low and the dropout rate for girls is the highest. In the case of the Take-home Ration for girls, the mothers of girls who qualify are expected to ensure regular and punctual

attendance of their daughters and to go to the school to collect the ration when their daughters qualify as seen in Figure 2.

According to a teacher informant, the programme was yielding positive results. The WFP assistance programme has contributed to the achievement of gender parity the JHS in the area of study. It had contributed significantly in increasing school enrolment, attendance and retention. The incentive of take home food ration also reduces absenteeism. Most drop-out rates decreases. Food kept girls in school instead of going out to sell goods along the street to make enough money to buy food for the household.

Girl informant had this to say:

*My parents do not want me to miss a day. And if I do not go to school one day, they tried to find out what was wrong. She says, at the end of the month, she receives food ration to take home and supplement what the family has. I am always present in every school day.*

A parent informant had this to say:

*The programme has made me to send my children to school, especially the girl-child. Sometimes past I found it hard to understand why schooling is important for my girl-child as it does not provide any immediate benefit to her life, now at least I know that my girl-child will get take home food ration. I do encourage her attend regularly to qualify for the food ration.*

**Figure 2.** Girl and parents receiving food ration



*Source: field survey, 2007*

### 5.4.2. UNICEF Bicycle Support

UNICEF provides Bicycle support for needy girls whom often travel long-distance by foot to school. According to the UNICEF, some 6,000 girls in Northern Ghana have received bicycles over the past three years. In rural areas, this simple means of transport is giving them the opportunity to get an education. The long distance to school is one of the major obstacles for girls' enrolment, especially at the JHS level. The UNICEF, in cooperation with the local education officials and the schools, identified girls from poor families who live far away from their schools and who are committed to continue schooling as the recipients of the bicycles.

A girl informant at age 16, who has benefited from the bicycle project, noted that:

*I fetch water in the early morning, without my bicycle, I could never make it to school on time. My village is far away. It takes more than two hours on foot. This bike has made it possible for me to attend school. (30<sup>th</sup> July 2007)*

Another schoolgirl had this to say:

*Life was very unbearable as I always got to school very late. It was impossible for me to satisfy either my parent or my school authorities. However now with the bicycle, I am able to get up early, do my house chore in the morning and report to school very early. I also get home very early from school and discharge my house duties without any problem and do my home assignment, because I no longer walk and become tired. (30<sup>th</sup> July 2007)*

Meanwhile, the bicycles attract other girls to school, bringing them closer to the opportunities of education. According to teachers interviewed in the study, the bicycles have helped increase school enrolment and attendance levels, improve academic performance and reduce drop- out rates.

**Figure 3. Girls with bicycles**



*Source: field survey, 2007*

### 5.4.3 CAMFED Support Schemes

Girls from very poor backgrounds are provided with full scholarships or bursaries that include school fees, uniform and shoes, stationery and examination fees. The cost of a pair of shoes, a school shirt or school fees make a difference between a child dropping out of school or continuing at school. School uniforms to schoolgirls are to ensure the retention of girls in school and enhance learning.

**Figure 4:** Girls smartly dressed in their school uniform



*Source: field survey, 2007*

In an interview with District Director of Education, she said:

*Most girls dropped out of school because they lack common basic teaching and learning tools, school uniforms, adding, if the girl-child especially those in the deprived areas are given the necessary educational tools, she could perform creditably well and even more than her urban and more endowed counterparts. (21<sup>st</sup> July 2007)*

Therefore the aim of these supports is to ease the burden of parents, so that these girls can continue with their education. NGO's focusing on girls' education means they are working towards a fully nurtured woman for the family, community and the nation at large. To NGOs, educating the girl-child is of major concern.

## 5.5. Potential Benefit of Formal Education

The role of state in basic education service delivery is considered relevant both given education's strategic importance in national identity formation, as well as due to the benefits that accrue in terms of social and economic development (Colcough, 1982; Lewin, 1995; and Hannum and Buchmann, 2005). For individuals and households, these benefits are anticipated to develop over a lifecycle and across generations (Harper et al; Rose and Dyer, 2006). It became clear in the field that parents and schoolgirls were beginning to see the benefits of formal education.

When I asked a female informant of fifty years old whether sending her daughter to school would be beneficial, her response was that: *'ending my daughter to school would make her learning basic knowledge and skills that help her improve her health and livelihood and also empower her to take her rightful place in society'*. (4<sup>th</sup> August 2007)

Another informant tried to link the benefit of educating girls to marriage, by saying that:

*Illiterate girls marry prematurely whilst some do not get happy marriage and remain poor. He noted that, the role of women have changed and boys and girls now prefer educated partners only, and for that matter, if girls are given the opportunity it would enhance their marriage* (4<sup>th</sup> August, 2007)

On the schoolgirl's front, they foresee some benefits associated with having formal education, since most of them want to be doctors, lawyer, teachers, nurses etc. The most striking point raised by one of the schoolgirls was that: *'Education will make me have knowledge that I will bring to bear no issues related to my health and nutrition, unwanted pregnancies, domestic welfare environmental and sanitation'*. (4<sup>th</sup> August 2007)

A key respondent drew my attention to one girl and this is what she had to say:

*Having seen the case of this girl who as a result of her education got good marriage and able to help her brothers who are now resident in the United State of America and her immediate family members' lives have changed for good. This, I see as motivation to also send my girls to school.* (18<sup>th</sup> July 2007).

Formal education forms an important aspect of human development as noted in Chapter Two. According to Ellis (2000), this can be developed through investment in education and training. Education plays a significant role in equipping an individual with skills, like being able to read and write, as well as enhancing the ability to seek information. The issues raised by the informants on the potential benefits of formal education can be operationalized within the framework of empowerment.

Thus empowering women starts with educating the girl child and them to become self-reliant and develop their capabilities to enable them to be competitive within the global village of equal opportunity. These empowering effects of girls' formal education is manifest in a variety of ways, including ability to bargain for resources within the household, decision-making autonomy, control over their fertility, and participation in public life. Any intervention that helps a woman develop and expand her personal and intellectual resources and improve her potential for participation in society, in the economy and in the family is a source of empowerment. Educating girls does all these things.

## **5.6. Summary**

In this chapter, I attempted a presentation of factors accountable for the poor state of girl-child education. In Bunkurugu/Yunyoo area, the factors were early marriage, traditional gendered roles and teenage pregnancies were some of the barriers that affect girls' educational attainments. Early marriages are common practice among the Bimoba people. The household work of the girl-child indeed has played against them in the study area. The field interviews are suggestive that traditional gendered roles within the household are performed by girls.

Indeed international agencies and NGOs have played an important role for reaching out to the hardest-to-reach, such as the girl-child. Girls receive take home food ration, especially during the dry season when household food production is low and the dropout rate is high. The bicycle support given to girls by UNICEF is also helping to compressing the distance from homes to school. Most Girls in the study area are provided with school uniform, school fees. This is to help increased school enrolment, attendance levels and reduce dropout rate.

Moreover, based on the field returns, informants expressed the fact that formal education is an intervention that empowers women starting with the girl-child and enabling them to make better choices and decisions about their welfare and to take more active roles in their communities. Moreover, parents now want to enroll both sexes in schools instead of the preference always give to boys.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

This study has focused on formal education and girl-child empowerment. It has attempted to find out the factors affecting girl-child's access to formal education, which has enormous potentials for self-empowerment. In this final chapter, I summarize the study and findings and make some concluding remarks for policy planning within the sphere of girls' formal education and empowerment.

#### **6.2. Summary and Principal Findings**

In the educational sector, besides poor facilities such as lack of teachers, textbooks and desks, denying many children access to education, local cultural beliefs and practices are worsening the situation. This is most evident in the circumstances of the girl-child, whose needs and interests are often marginalized by educational policies and intra-families priorities. Socio-cultural beliefs cause parents to see the formal education of a girl as a deviation from accepted societal norms and practices. Formal education is, therefore sometimes not perceived as appropriate for girls and is consequently not valued. Cultural attitudes are so entrenched that even young girls of school age feel that they need only to learn how to cook.

In contrast, girls are now able to acquire any role by choice and these are generally based on personal ability, aspiration, and educational and professional qualifications, for example formal education. Therefore the marginalized girl-child as an individual when given the opportunity to formal education, she becomes an instrument in the regeneration of her society and the eradication of poverty in the next generation.

In the study area, local culture has marginalized and discriminated against girls in terms of access to attainments of formal education. It came out that, the discrimination of girls in the study area begins at birth. Unless it is a couple that has been eager to have a girl the ordinary reflexive reaction against the baby girl is a big frown: 'it is someone else property'.

Moreover, it was realized that girls are denied education because formal education is an investment to be reaped tangibly in the future by which time they would have been married. It also came out that boys are preferred to girls because the boys will plough back into family any benefits associated with formal education. The local culture perceives formal

education as a time wasting as it delays marriage and the related bride price and children the ultimate symbol of womanhood.

The majority of informants told me that early marriages are common practice in the study area. These practices do not allow the girl-child to enroll and complete schooling. The field returns also reveals that some parents were giving their daughters hands in marriage and also replacing girls with boys at the primary level. As noted in Chapter Five, the first head teacher remarked that the enrollment and retention of girl-child in schools is not encouraging due to early marriages. One female informant in her mid 20s also did not get the opportunity of going to school, because she got married at the age of 14.

The field returns further reveals that the local culture has assigned certain roles to girls. All that has to do with childcare, with the handling of what the family eats, with firewood and water, cleaning and washing, traditionally was and still is within women's domain. A parent informant said it is the creation of God that girls are made to do whatever they do in the home. The findings further reveal that because they are girls, there is the need to teach them how to do these domestic works. It came out that when girls are not taught, they would bring disgrace to their family. Indeed girls in the study area are faced with different roles within the household where they have to combine these works and academic work.

Ever increasing teenage pregnancy also result in increasing issue of drop out rate of girls. The study reveals that most parents have fears of their girls becoming pregnant. As noted in Chapter Five, a parent informant remarked that the fear of pregnancy is always a worry to them, since this bring disgrace and frustration on the family and waste of resources.

Land on which families cultivate have been continual cultivated and has lost its nutrients; thus families as it were cannot get the same yield as compared to first. Therefore, some parents cultivate the habit of removing their girls from the classroom to farm during farming seasons as noted in Chapter Five. The field returns is therefore suggestive that the girls absented themselves from school during the term because they were asked by their parents to accompany them to the farms.

It is also worth mentioning that, some NGOs have played an important role in providing educational support for children, especially girls in the study area. For instance, UNICEF, WFP and CAMFED have all lend great support to girls by providing bicycles and school uniforms, including take home food ration among other things with the aim of encouraging girls to stay in school. All these were in line with the NGOs mission to ensure the retention of girls in school, enhance learning and of quality education.

As noted in Chapter Two of this study, the current Policy of Fee-Free Compulsory Basic Education in fact dates back to the days of Ghana's First Republic under President Kwame Nkrumah who in November 1960 announced the forthcoming introduction of fee-free compulsory primary and middle school education and caused an Education Bill to be introduced the following year in Parliament. Government is now more concerned about the need to educate girls than before. For instance, the FCUBE has come out with several objectives one of which has specific emphasis for the girl-child in schools.

The Government of Ghana in 2004/2005 academic year, introduced, on pilot basis, capitation grants in 40 deprived districts throughout the country. Under the policy initiative, each child enrolled at the basic level of education was entitled to a government grant of ₵30,000 for boys and ₵25,000 for girls to enable them attend school free of charge. The introduction of the Capitation grant has led to a substantial increase in enrolment in public primary and junior secondary schools. The gender parity ratio has also improved. The number of primary school-aged children not enrolled, according to a GES source is less than 10%.

### **6.3. Conclusions for Policy Planning**

The role of formal education in modern society is not only its contribution to the individual social mobility, but to the economic growth of nations as well. The possession and use of formal education can improve the quality of life. Many aspect of life can be changed merely by the use of available knowledge, which can be provided through formal education. Formal education provides the channel not only to better socio-economic status, but also to social mobility in the broader sense. In that direction, World Bank (1995), reports that formal education is a basic need, which acts as a crucial step towards meeting other basic needs like clothing, shelter, health care and food. Thus, the girl-child must be educated in such a way that she finds her foothold in all sectors of the society. There is therefore the need for all stakeholders to put in measures in order to improve on the education of girls in the country.

#### *1. Educating parents*

As a way of increasing access to the girl-child education, parents and guardian should be educated and be reminded of their primary responsibility in caring for and ensuring that their children especially the girl-child obtain minimum formal education. Both boys and girls can wear the same colors in clothing; not blue for boys and pink for girls. This means that both the boy child and the girl child will grow up not to discriminate each other. Lindsey, (1990:

36), cited in Nung, (1996) point out that the colors of pink and blue are among the first indicators used by society to distinguish female from male. The incredible power of gender socialization is largely responsible for such behaviors. Pink and blue begin this lifelong process. Fathers should equally take special interest in their girls, spend time with them and get involved in their upbringing for that will change their attitude.

### *2. Enforcement of Laws on Early Marriages*

Despite the fact that early marriages continue to occur, it is a form of human rights abuse. Ghana's law prohibits families from forcing their girl-child into marriage. The law also allows girls to refuse betrothal and early marriage before they reach 18 years of age. The Children Act of 1998 Act 560 states: 'No person shall force a child – to be betrothed; to be the subject of a dowry; or to be married' and gives the minimum age of marriage of whatever kind to be 18 years.

Although laws are in place, the problem is with enforcement and advocacy. It is important that parents know the consequences of pushing their children into marriages. They must be made aware that there is a price to pay when they do that. Girl-child victims should be used as part of the educating process, and also churches and other faith-based organizations should take part in the campaign, since people tend to listen to them. Parents need to be empowered economically, since most cases are as a result of poverty.

### *3. Enforcement of Laws on Child Labor*

There is the need to discourage child labor, especially those that hinder the education of children and further I recommend that there should be enactment of laws to ban children from roaming the street or selling at certain hours of the night. Policy makers should ensure that those who violate the laws and conventions on child rights are made to face the full rigours of the law. Greater emphasis on extensive public education to be carried with all actors dealing with children due to the high level of ignorance of the laws by various partners who are always in contact with children. Change of attitude and beliefs by parents that children are seen and not heard. Children are not robots; they need to be allowed to develop properly

### *4. Abolition of schools fees and other related costs*

Majority Parents in the area are poor and so cannot pay their children school fees and other costs related to education such as school uniforms. The government of Ghana is providing free school uniforms to schoolchildren but very selectively. Selectively because government

will continue provide school uniforms to only ‘poor but brilliant’ primary school pupils as a means of ensuring primary education for all. Therefore, poor but not brilliant pupils whose parents cannot afford school uniforms for them cannot benefit from the initiative, unless they can prove their worth academically.

Therefore, the government must see it as a responsibility to equitably distribute support to all who need it. If two pupils are poor, help must be given to both of them. Selectivity will only foster the exclusion that is being fought for. The government should be reminded that Ghana’s commitment to the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary school completion by 2015 might be dashed if government continues this selectivity.

#### *5. Expansion School Feeding Programmes*

School Feeding Programme is a good initiative and can be use to boost the new educational reform programme. The School Feeding Programme marks the beginning of the first step on a journey to feed deprived Ghanaian children who have no access to food during schooling periods. The programme had eased the burden on both parents and teachers in their quest to provide their children with the quality food.

The government needs to continue supporting this programme of feeding school children in the country. The time has arisen for the School Feeding Programme to get legislative backing to ensure continuity and its sustainability irrespective of the government in power. Not only does it create legitimacy of the programme but it also shows government's commitment of meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

#### *6. Engagement of men and civic groups as advocates for girls' education*

Men, community leaders and civil society groups should be sensitized through radio; television and other media network about the laws protecting the interest and the right of children and the penalties these laws attract should be published especially that of the girl-child. Community leaders should create a forum where matters concerning formal education are discussed periodically.

### **6.4. Overall Remarks**

Formal education has had positive and significant effect on girls’ educational attainments and women empowerment. Findings in others studies such as Kane (2004), UNFPA (2004) and Schultz (2002) threw light on the success of formal education as a way of reducing poverty, and most of their arguments are in favor girls’ formal education are based on the fact that it

affect the well being of others, that is national productivity, population reduction, and the welfare of household and children. It is also, of course, a basic human right and contributing to the well being and empowerment of the girl herself. Educated girls are better equipped to exact the most benefit from available services and existing opportunities and to take advantage of alternative opportunities, roles, and support structures. These empowering effects of girls' education are shown in a different ways: increased income-earning potential; ability to bargain or negotiate for resources within the household; decision-making autonomy; control over their own fertility; and participation in public life.

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# APPENDIX 1

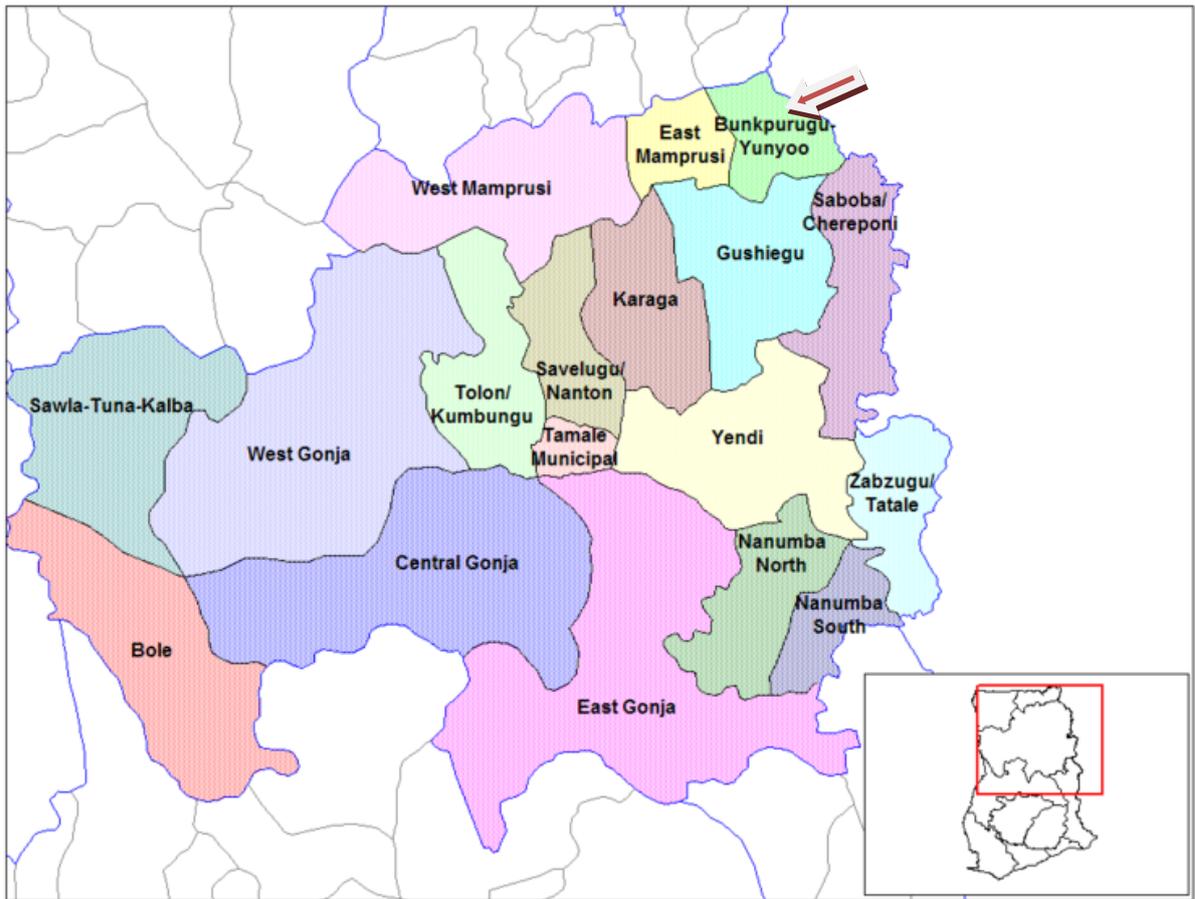
## MAP OF GHANA



Base 802503 (A00953) 6-96

Source: Internet: <http://www.pinetreeweb.com/ghana-map-pol1996.jpg>. May 18, 2008

**APPENDIX 2**  
**MAP OF NORTHERN REGION AND**  
**ARROW SHOWING STUDY AREA**



Source:

Internet:[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/8c/Northern\\_Ghana\\_districts.png/776px-Northern\\_Ghana\\_districts.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/8c/Northern_Ghana_districts.png/776px-Northern_Ghana_districts.png). May 18, 2008