# UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES TAMALE

# FACULTY OF EDUCATION

# FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GIRLS IN THE TOLON DISTRICT

## BY

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## (UDS/ MDE 0006/ 18)

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YAKUBU ABUKARI

2021

# DECLARATIONS

**Candidate's Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere except for where due acknowledgement has been made in the context.

Candidate's Name: YAKUBU ABUKARI

Candidate's ID: UDS/MDE/0006/18

**Candidate's Signature**:……………………………. Date:……………………..

**Supervisor's Declaration**

I declare that the preparation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University for Development studies.

Supervisor's Name: REV.FR. DR. THOMAS ASANTE

**Supervisor's Signature**…………………………. Date:……………………….

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated into the factors influencing girls' academic performance with focus on the Tolon District Assembly in the northern region of Ghana. Parental support on children's education in the district is poor, particularly the girl- child. The main objective was to investigate into the factors influencing the academic performance of girls in the Tolon District. The specific objectives for this study identified the causes of poor academic performance of girls in the district, effects of girls' poor academic performance and possible suggested solutions to the problem. The researcher adopted Survey and Case Study Designs for the study. A combination of both Quantitative and Qualitative research strategies such as questionnaires and interviews were used for data collection. A population consisted; parents, teachers, officers from the district education office and pupils. One hundred and thirty (130) respondents were selected as the sample which was made up of fifty (50) teachers, thirty (30) parents and fifty (50) students. Simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of respondents. Interviews and the use of questionnaires, were used in collecting data. Data collected were analyzed in tables and charts based on research objectives and questions for easy interpretation .

The study revealed that the academic performance of girls is influenced by socio-cultural and economic factors such as; poverty, illiteracy, school environment, ineffective teaching strategies, the influence of outmoded cultural practices, high birth rate, inadequate female role models among others. The major hindrance of girls' academic performance is through the failure of parents to encourage and provide adequate care and support for girls in school. According to Stephen et al (1999), many

of the girls struggle with poverty and this will eventually affect their participation in decision making later in life. To improve the academic performance of girls, stakeholders including parents, District/ Municipal/ Metropolitan Assemblies, Central government and NGOs should make a commitment to provide incentives and educational programs that will sustain and motivate girls to perform in school. Provision of support for girls should include enough financial care, reduction of their roles in home chores, instituting bursaries and scholarships, establishment of special girls' schools and provision of books and other stationeries by NGOs and the District/ Municipal/ Metropolitan Assemblies.

Above all, parents and the society at large should develop positive attitude towards girls' education. This will help the girl-child to build up a strong ego and confidence to go through school.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

My ultimate appreciation and thanks goes to the almighty Allah for his guidance throughout my life. My sincere gratitude also goes to my supervisor Rev. Fr. Dr. Thomas Asante who spent his valuable time despite his heavy schedules in reading through the draft. His objective suggestions and guidelines had helped to improve the quality of this work. I also wish to acknowledge the support of my wife Mrs. Hawa for the moral support she gave me, as I was carrying out this research. I cannot forget my lovely kids; Zaidatu Abukari, Jalal- deen Abukari, Fadil Abukari and Farid Abukari, I am grateful to them and may God richly bless them all.

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## DEDICATION

First and foremost, this research work is dedicated to almighty Allah for his guidance and protection in all my endeavors. I also dedicate it in memory of my late brother, Alhassan Yakubu, may Allah grant him "Jennah".

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS**

JHS- Junior High School

SHS -Senior High School

NGO- Non-Governmental Organization

MA -Metropolitan Assembly

CPP- Convention People's Party

NRC- National Redemption Council

PNDC -Provisional National Defense Council

BECE -Basic Education Certificate Examination

WASSCE -West African Secondary School Certificate Examination

GPRS -Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy

GNP -Gross National Product

GDP -Gross Domestic Product

UNESCO -United Nation's Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

MOE- Ministry of Education

JSS- Junior Secondary School

HIV/AIDS-Human Immune Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

WB- World Bank

KNUST -Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

UNFAO -United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

UN -United Nation

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**Definition of significant terms used in the study**

A number of concepts were adopted and used in the course of the study. In order to gain a deeper understanding and develop a strong appreciation for the concepts and terms used, it is necessary and appropriate to explain them.

**Child Abuse** - Physical, sexual, or emotional mistreatment or neglect of a child.

**Culture** - refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, and attitudes.

**Girl child -**is a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen (18) years of age..

**Mentor-**a wise trusted counselor / teacher.

**Poor Academic Performance-**is a performance that is adjudge by the examinee and some other significant as falling below an expected standard.

**Role model**- is an individual who is looked up to and revered by someone else. A role model is someone who other individuals aspire to be like, either in the present or in the future. A role model may be someone who you know and interact with on a regular basis, or may be someone who you've never met, such as a celebrity. Common role models include well-known actors, public figures such as police men or political officials, teachers or other educators, and parents or other family members.

**Sexuality**- The condition of being characterized and distinguished by sex that can be used to define whether you are male or female.

**Performance:** Performance has been defined variously by deferent educational thinkers, to Hornby, (2000), it is the ability to do something that can be measured. For example, the

performance of girls' in integrated science test can measure the academic abilities among girls. According to Hornby, (2000) Performance can be measured through internal or external examinations done by students. The study used the word performance to refer to the scores scored or performed by girls after undergoing a series of test or examinations after a given period of time.

**School: A** school is defined as a functional unit of the educational system. It is the main pillar through which the educational system meets the aspirations and needs of the society. It is the place where wards acquire knowledge and positive behavioral changes through teaching and learning. A school is a community of students and teachers, classrooms, teaching and learning facilities (Hornby, 2000). The concept, school used by the researcher referred to structures which have been put in place in the community or society where wards are enrolled to go through formal education.

**Society:** Society refers to the people who live together with shared ideas about how they live. A society makes laws to protect the welfare of the people within the respective society. According to Hornby (2000), a school as a society is made up of all the people within the school and around the school such as students, students' parents, guardians and other members of the society. The study used the word society as people who live around the school and participate in building the community.

**Stereotype:** It is an over generalized belief about a particular category of people. It is an expectation that people might have about every person of a particular group. The type of expectation can vary; it can be for example, an expectation about the group's personality, duty, preferences or ability. It can also be defined as a widely held but fixed and

oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or a thing. Stereotype is used in this work as traditionally assigned roles for girls.

**Teacher:** A teacher is a person who teaches lessons, especially in a school. They are those people who have power to mould students. Thus, they shape students in academic matters as well as moral values (Hornby, 2000). In this study the word teacher refers to qualified person who has ability to mould student behavior together with teaching students in learning environment.

**Student:** A student is a person learning lessons at a school, college or university. A student can be learning history, mathematics or any other subjects. Simply, a student is a person who is enrolled in a given school, college or university for the purpose of learning (Hornby 2000). The researcher used the word student as a person who is enrolled in community secondary schools for the purpose of learning.

**Participation:** The act of taking part in an activity or event. It also refers to consenting to do something with other people for the realization of a common goal. The right to participation is a basic human right and essential for realignment of power in favour of disadvantaged groups for social and economic development (UNFAO, 1992). For purposes of this study, the working definition of participation adopted is the act of a enrolling a child in a school or an institution of learning to undergo a programme of studies which is assessed at fixed periods to determine the learning outcomes of the learners.

**Reform**: According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2002) the term reform means a change initiated to a system or law or an organization to improve its operations in a fairer or more effective way to remove unfairness and imbalances.

Education reform is which is our area of interest is therefore process of initiating a change to an educational system because of perceived or observed disparities or lapses and/or inefficiencies so that it can operate in an effective way to improve upon its operations to achieve efficiency of resources and meet set targets of a nation or state. For purposes of this study, we will adopt this working definition (UNESCO, 1979).

**Factor**: An event whose behaviour or operations produces some desirable or undesirable results in a particular circumstance.

## CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

**Overview**

This chapter consists of the background of the study, literature on girls' education in the national and international context, purpose of the study, significance of the study, statement of research problem, main and specific objectives. It also covered research questions, delimitations, limitations and the geography of the area.

**1.1 Background of the study**

**1.1.1 Girls education in the national context**

Formal education in Ghana started in the 16th century by European merchants who settled along the coast of the country. One of the first schools build in Ghana was established in 1471 at Elmina by the Portuguese. However, formal education got to the north in 1951 after several years of its inception in the coast of Ghana. This form of education came to replace our traditional African education, which only aimed at developing the individual socially and vocationally so as to enable him/her shoulder responsibilities of life. This education aimed beyond only the individual's development, but that the system of education should serve the individual's needs, of the society in which he/she lives and the nation at large (Vaadi, 2003).

The new education reforms 1987 by the DZOBO committee for example held that our country's education should aim at instilling in the individual an appreciation of the need for change directed towards the development of the human resource of the country. The

government of Ghana recognizing the importance of education has directed efforts at providing equitable education for all its citizens. In spite of the significant progress in the development of education in Ghana since independence, the level of participation of girls in Ghana has not met public expectations. This situation is worst in the five Northern regions in Ghana, most particularly in the Tolon District where the research study was conducted. Some of the factors contributing to the poor patronage of females in education and their academic performance in the area include parental neglect, poverty, socio-cultural influences, child labour, bad attitude of the girls themselves to mention but a few. The study was able to unearth the causes, effects and the impact of poor girls 'performanceinTolon District.

Since 1925 female education had already received official recognition and backing in the educational policy of this country. The Guggisberg's Sixteen Principles helped to put female education in the national context. Two of the sixteen principles (4 and 2) advocated equal opportunities for both boys and girls in basic education and the provision of secondary education with an educational standard that will help young men and women to enter a university (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1958, p. 58). The education reform programme of 1987 already mentioned above provided a great boost for the important role of female education in the development process of this nation. The legal framework for the reform which was set under the constitutional arrangement of the 1992 Constitution enjoined the government to put in place a system of education that will allow all children of school-going age to access a free compulsory universal basic education (FCUBE) within five years of the assumption of office by the year 2005. In the same vein, the 1992 Constitution also required the government to intensify

efforts to achieve functional literacy and stressed the need for the provision of secondary and higher education. Additionally, the government was required to create equal access to technical and vocational education on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means with progressive introduction of free education (Graham and Hormeku, 1996, p. 73). Gender equality has received attention in all spheres of the Ghanaian national life. The Ghana Government has promulgated many acts on gender issues and also ratified some existing conventions with the ultimate aim of evoking contributions from all and sundry in the national development process. For instance, in 1986, the government ratified the convention on the "Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and Children (CEDAW) (Awumbila, 2001, p. 56).

### 1.1.2    Girls Education in the International Context

Since time immemorial, education has been recognized as one single significant contributory factor to economic development (World Bank, 1999, p. 16). The recognition of education as key to sustainable development, peace building and effective participation in the democratization process or governance system of a nation has informed several international gatherings. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights highlights the importance of education in this light. In the Article 26 of the Declaration, education was considered first and foremost as a fundamental human right of everyone. The Declaration recognized that "elementary" education would be free and compulsory, and that higher levels of education would be equally available on merit for the realization of the benefits of education. The World Conference on Education held in Jomtein, Thailand in 1990, introduced an expanded vision of "Education for All" with its six main goals which anchored

education into a local, national and global context. Building upon the Jomtein Conference, after the World Education Forum in Dakar in April 2000 most governments in the world committed themselves to ensure that by 2015 all children would complete a full course of good quality primary education, significantly expand learning opportunities for youth and adults, halve illiteracy levels and eliminate gender disparities at all levels of education by 2015. The overriding importance of achieving universal primary education by 2015 and eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005, and at all levels of education by 2015 are a part of the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2000. The eight goals that the 189 countries signed included commitments to education, health and environmental sustainability.

## 1.2 Geography of the area

The Tolon District Assembly was created in the year 2011. The district was part of the Tolon/ Kumbungu District which was created by the then Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) in 1988. The District was carved out from the then Tolon/ Kumbungu District. The District shares boundaries to the North with Kumbungu, North Gonja to the West, Central Gonja to the South and Sagnarigu District to the East. The District has nine (9) sub-chiefs who pay allegiance to the "Yaa-Naa", the king of Dagbon. They include; Nyankpalana, Tolon-Naa, Waribugulana, Gburimanilana, Kasulana, Lingbunlana, Kpeendulana, Dimabi-Naa and Zantaani-Naa. Inhabitants of the district are predominantly Muslims. The majority of the inhabitants are peasant and subsistent farmers making it difficult to offer some of their produce for sale. This has culminated in most of the youth travelling to the South for non-existing jobs.

A number of largely untapped tourist attractions abound in the District. These include, the Jaagbo Sacred Grove and Shrine. The grove for instance, have been revered by the people all over Dagbon. It is located near Tali in the District and about 36 kilometers west on the Tamale Daboya road.

## 1.3 Purpose of the study

Following a move toward gender sensitive societies in Ghana, the role of women is well recognized and therefore, girls education is vital for development of societies. The purpose of the study was to examine the factors influencing girls' poor academic performance in the Tolon district. The study also aimed at finding the causes of the factors influencing poor girls 'academic performance in the district and possible solutions to the problem. Admittedly, several related studies have been carried out on the topic and have made significant impact on the situation. Arguably however, not many of these studies have delved into factors influencing girls' poor academic performance and the attendant problems in the northern sector.

## 1.4  Significance of the study

This study may provide insights and information regarding girls' poor academic performance. The findings of this study may help education actors to come up with new ways to improve women education. It may also help educational planners to adequately plan education systems by considering all recommended strategies for improving girls' academic performance. The findings may also serve as a base for other researches (prospective) as well as to policy makers in eliminating statements and actions that could influence girls' poor academic performance.

**1.5 Statement of the problem.**

Education provision has formed an essential service in the social sector of both developed and developing countries over the years. In the last thirty to forty years there has been an increased demand for education provision in the developing countries. As a result of this, enrolment increased dramatically at both primary and secondary levels in these countries within the period. For instance, in 1960, fewer than half of the children aged between 6 – 11 years in developing countries enrolled in primary school. By 2002 the world average net primary enrolment reached 81 percent (UNESCO, 2006).

Within the period, girls' participation in education has been on the increase. From the last three-and-a-half decades, girls' enrolment witnessed considerable increase. In the 1970s, girls represented 38 per cent and boys 62 per cent of primary enrolment in the least developed countries. By 2005, the gender gap has narrowed. While girls represented 48 per cent boys represented 52 per cent of primary enrolment (OECD/UNESCO, 2005). The increased demand for education contributed to a decline in the number of children who are out of school. Between 1990 and 2006, the number of children who were out of school worldwide declined from about 100 million to 75 million.

Notwithstanding improved access to education, female participation and performance in education inmost developing countries is still characterized by disparities. Girls continue to constitute the majority of children out-of-school and the least performing academically. Girls represent 55 per cent of all children who are out of school worldwide. Available data have indicated that worldwide, for every 100 boys out of school 122 girls are also out of

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school. This varies from country to country. For example, in Benin, for every 100 boys out-of-school, 127 girls are also out-of-school (UNESCO, 2006)

Poor academic performance of girls is an issue in Ghana most especially the northern part of Ghana particular in the Tolon district, where most girls perform poorly in school. Most girls usually fail the BECE examinations making it difficult to proceed to Senior High Schools (SHS). This factor has resulted to low enrolment of girls in higher learning institutions and increase of gender discrimination in the society. The problem comes as a fact that BECE results in different years indicated low performance on the side of girls than boys and indeed the worse performing schools are public schools. Girls' poor academic performance has been related a number of factors including; socio-cultural and economic factors, poor learning environments in some schools, inadequate number of female teachers, inadequate sanitary facilities and materials as well as out of school factors such as location of schools which makes students travel long distances from their homes. A good number of studies have been done on girls education hider to, these studies were either too general and indeed which did not focus attention on factors affecting students' performance in terms of gender. In the Tolon District for example, there is this problem and not much of those studies have raised their concern in the area. It is therefore, necessary to conduct a study of this nature by raising concern on factors influencing girls' poor academic performance in schools inthe Tolon District.

## 1.6 Main Objective

The main objective of the study was to examine the factors influencing girls' academic performance in Tolon District.

**1.7 Specific Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study include:

1. To examine socio-cultural phenomena that hinder girls' academic performance in the Tolon district.

2. To examine reasons for factors influencing girls' poor academic performance in schools in Tolon district.

3. To examine the impact of poor academic performance of girls in the.

4. To suggest appropriate measures to address the challenges that hinder the girl-child academic performance.

**1.8 Research Questions**

The study provided some research questions to aid the researcher in the investigations

1. What are the socio-economic-cultural phenomena that hinder girls' academic performance in Tolon district?

2. What are the reasons for factors influencing girls' poor academic performance in the Tolon district?

3. What is the impact of poor academic performance of girls in the Tolon district?

4. What has been the role of District/Municipal/Metropolitan Assemblies and NGOs in improving girls enrolment and performance?

**1.9 Limitations of the study**

All issues relating to resources and time were very important in this study, yet they were limited since time and money could not allow the researcher to reach all schools in the district. This was due to the fact that the researcher was collecting, analyzing as well as synthesizing the information while still undergoing other activities to enable him earn the

amount of money that could enable him fulfill this study. The financial limitation comes because of the fact that the researcher was self-sponsored. Due to time challenge, the researcher was not able to reach out to the students who had already written their final examinations in the district, whose responses would have been important to this research. However, triangulation of the research methods and instruments addressed the limitation.

This is due to the fact that some participants were biased in their replies, and in replying honestly to certain questions. All in all it was above average, the hope was that the results of this study were to benefit all education stakeholders.

## 1.10 Delimitation

This investigation was conducted to determine the factors influencing girls' poor academic performance in the Tolon District. The aspects looked to were the factors affecting girls' academic performance, reasons for the factors affecting girls' academic performance and measures to improve girls' academic performance in the district. Moreover, the study involved five schools and parents around the study area.

## 1.11 Organization of the study

The entire research is presented in five (5) chapters. Chapter one constitutes the introduction to the study, background to the study, profile of the study area, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions and significance of the study, delimitations limitations and organization of the study. In chapter two, other research findings and related literature on girl-child education was reviewed. Chapter three was devoted to the methodology and design of the study. In addition it provided the research instruments that were used as well as the sample and sampling procedure. It also

stated some of the challenges that were encountered during the administration of the questionnaires and interview guides. The fourth chapter dealt with data analysis of all information gathered from the field of research. The last chapter presented the summary of the main findings, conclusions, and recommendations as well as directions for future research.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

**2.0 Overview**

This chapter seeks to highlight on what other people have said about girl-child education, the impact of poor academic performance of girls in education, the causes and effects of poor academic performance of girls in schools in Ghana and most particularly in the Tolon District Assembly of the northern region. Literature was reviewed under the following sub-headings: Theoretical framework of learning, importance of girl- child education, factors that influence girls academic performance in schools, effects of poor academic performance of girls and suggested solutions to the problem.

**2.1 Theoretical Framework**

**2.1.1 Education:** There is no single and definite definition of the concept education. The concept connotes different meanings to different groups and cultures. There is, however, a thin thread of commonality among all scholars and cultures regarding the meaning of the concept. "Education". The basic principle governing the concept education generally from the view of all scholars is, it has to do with teaching and learning. Schultz (1963) sees education as a process "to draw out of a person something potential or latent; to develop a person morally and mentally so that he or she is sensitive to individual and social choices and is able to act on them; to fit a person for a calling by systematic instruction and to train, discipline and form abilities" (Schultz, 1963, cited in Lecture Notes of Dr. Nsiah-Peprah, 2008). In another classic definition, "Education is taken to mean all sorts of self-improvement in addition to the transfer of knowledge and skill" (Smith, 1985, cited in

Lecture Notes of Dr. Nsiah-Peprah, 2008). The Collins Colbuld Advanced Learner's English Dictionary (2003) also explains the concept of education as the process by which an individual develops his or her mind through learning at a school, college or university, and in the process of doing so he or she gains knowledge and skills from what is being taught. From the definitions given above, education connotes a process of sustained and systematic interaction that helps an individual and the society at large to realize self improvement and enhanced quality of life through the transfer of knowledge and skills (UNESCO, 1975, cited in Lecture Notes, Dr. Nsiah-Peprah, 2008). For purposes of this study, the working definition of the concept of education adopted is the one that perceives the concept as the process of enrolling a child in an institution with demarcated physical structures provided with teaching-learning materials, equipment, and trained pedagogical professionals who impart knowledge and skills to people within specific time frame with the intent of making the child a useful individual or person and one who contributes to the realization of the development potentials of his or her community or nation (Abosi and Brookman-Amissah, ed.,1992, p. 56).

According to Indira (1985), "Education is a liberating force and in our age it is also a democratizing force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances." "Plants are developed by cultivation and men by education" John (1978). According to him, this world would have been enveloped in intellectual darkness if it had not been illuminated by the light of education. It is right to say that the story of civilization is the story of education. Thus, education is an integral part of human life. It is the basic condition for a development of a

whole man and vital instrument for accelerating the wellbeing and prosperity by the light of education.

According to Parankimalil (2012), education is a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience, skill and sound attitude. He added that it makes an individual civilized, refined, cultured and educated. For a civilized and socialized society, education is the only means. Its goal is to make an individual perfect. Every society gives importance to education because it is a panacea for all evils. It is the key to solve the various problems of life. He posits that education has been described as a process of waking up to life and its mysteries, its solvable problems and the ways to solve the problems and celebrate the mysteries of life. He again saw education as a means of waking up to the inter-dependencies of all things, to the threat to our global village, to the power within the human race to create alternatives, to the obstacles entrenched in economic, social and political structures that prevent our waking up. He added that education in the broadest sense of the term is meant to aid the human being in his/her pursuit of wholeness. Wholeness implies the harmonious development of all the potentialities God has given to a human person. True education according to him is the harmonious development of the physical, mental, moral (spiritual), and social faculties, the four dimensions of life, for a life of dedicated service.

According to Parankimalil (2012), education is an embodiment of several components . He posits that education is a life-long process thus, education is a continuous and lifelong process. It starts from the womb of the mother and continues till death. It is the process of development from infancy to maturity. It includes the effect of everything which influences

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human personality. He again posits that education is a systematic process- It transacts its activities through a systematic institution and regulation.

He added that education is development of individual and the society- It is called a force for social development, which brings improvement in every aspect in the society. Education can also be seen as modification of behaviour- Human behaviour is modified and improved through educational process. To him, education is purposive: every individual has some goal in his life. Education contributes in attainment of that goal. There is a definite purpose underlining all educational activities. Education can also be seen as training- Human senses, mind, behaviour, activities; skills are trained in a constructive and socially desirable way.

Education is instruction and direction- It directs and instructs an individual to fulfill his desires and needs for exaltation of his whole personality. He added that education is life- Life without education is meaningless and like the life of a beast. Every aspect and incident needs education for its sound development. Education is continuous reconstruction of our experiences- As per the definition of Dewey (1982), education reconstructs and remodels our experiences towards socially desirable way. Education helps in individual adjustment: a man is a social being. If he is not able to adjust himself in different aspects of life his personality cannot remain balanced. Through the medium of education he learns to adjust himself with the friends, class fellows, parents, relations,neighbours and teachers etc.According to Parankimalil (2012), Educationist balanced development: Education is concerned with the development of all faculties of the child. It performs the functions of the physical, mental, aesthetic, moral, economic, spiritual development of the individual so that the individual may get rid of his animal instincts by sublimating the same so that he

becomes a civilized person. It is also dynamic process**:** Education is not a static but a dynamic process which develops the child according to changing situations and times. It always induces the individual towards progress. It reconstructs the society according to the changing needs of the time and place of the society.

In the words of Adams (2013), education is a bipolar process: According to him, education is a bipolar process in which one personality acts on another to modify the development of other person. The process is not only conscious but deliberate. He added that education is a three dimensional process: John ( 2016), has rightly remarked, "All educations proceeds by participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race." Thus it is the society which will determine the aims, contents and methods of teachings. In this way the process of education consists of three (3) poles – the teacher, the child and the society.

Education as growth: The end of growth is more growth and the end of education is more education. According to John (2016 ), "an individual is a changing and growing personality." The purpose of education is to facilitate the process of his/her growth. Therefore, the role of education is countless for a perfect society and man. It is necessary for every society and nation to bring holistic happiness and prosperity to its individuals.

### 2.1.2 Types of Education

Education has been categorized into three domains by scholars. According to Dr. Nsiah-Peprah ( 2008) these are formal, informal and non-formal education. Formal education is learning about things taught in school and school-related experiences like sports and drama in a specially designed environment. Non-Formal Education constitutes educational activities like adult literacy courses and agricultural extension services like evening classes organized outside of the school setting. Informal education is a non-organized learning

experience related to on the job training, culture and norms of a group or society which one can acquire depending on how fast one acquires the skills imparted to learners (Dr. Nsiah-Peprah, 2008)

## 2.2 Framework for Assessment

In an attempt to assess the impact of poor performance of girls in the Tolon District, a three-pronged framework was used. Level I – looked at the relationship between education and development, the relevance of female education to development; highlights national and international conventions advocating female education for a holistic human resource development. The evolution of secondary education in Ghana from colonial times and the Education Reform Programmes in Ghana from 1908 to 2007 is provided. Level II – looked at the factors which restrict or hinder female access affect female access and participation in education, e.g., socio-economic-cultural practices and conditions, political and institutional policy practices and school-environment or school-related conditions. Level III – looked at the impact of the factors including policy initiatives and/or interventionist measures implemented to mitigate the challenges of female participation in education e.g., government policies, NGO programmes, municipal/metropolitan gender-specific programmes supporting girls 'participation in education etc.

### 2.2.1 Relevance of Education to Development

Education is intrinsic to development. Education is key to a nation's development. Education enables individuals to acquire knowledge and skills which constitute the most important key to development and poverty reduction in the current international dispensation where knowledge is the leading generator of wealth (UNESCO, 2002).

The presence of human and natural resources in a nation is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for development. Education provides the medium through which quality human resource is produced to exploit the natural resource endowment for economic growth and development in a nation. Referring to the invaluable role of education in training human capital for national development, Addai-Mensah (2006) states that "A nation's most treasured and dynamic assets are its human resources. A country's growth and sustenance of development depends on the development of its human population through the provision of quality education. Putting adequate resources into and paying attention to the provision of quality education normally results in considerable strides in economic development and social transformation, and raises the quality of life of peoples".

Education also helps people to make informed choices or decisions regarding lifelong issues such as life styles, diet and family size which have direct implications for health, fertility, life expectancy, productivity and per capita income growth levels of individuals and nations at large (UNESCO/OECD, 2002). Provision of universal primary education for both girls and boys on equal footing is the starting point for the realization of the invaluable contributions of education which should be supported with further training at secondary and tertiary levels.

## 2.2.2 Female Education and Development

Education is the prime mover in the lives of individuals and in a nation's development. Education also provides the key to economic asset for individuals and nations. According to Psacharapoulous and Patrinos every year of schooling lost

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represents a 10 to 20 per cent reduction in girls' future incomes. They argued that countries could raise per capita economic growth by about 0.3 per cent points per year or 3 per cent points in the next decade if they attained gender parity in enrolment (Psacharapoulous and Patrinos, 2002). When girls are educated it has implications for improved infant/child and maternal health with rippling effects on household incomes and nourishment. For instance, a literate woman gains access to employment more easily than the illiterate woman and tends to manage scarce capital better by bringing to bear the knowledge and skills acquired in training to ensure greater success. There is a direct relationship between female education and poverty reduction. Educated women tend to have smaller family sizes and reduced fertility which has great potential benefits for their future generation. For instance, UNDP's statistics have indicated that the high fertility rate in Tanzania and Ghana in the early 70s (1970-75) dropped drastically from 6.8 births per woman to 5.1 and 6.9 to 4.1 respectively between 2000 and 2005 due to continued and sustained efforts at ensuring the participation of girls in education in the two countries (UNDP, 2004b). Female education is important for a nation's development. The relevance of female education to Ghana's national development process has long been recognized by scholars in the past. Dr. J. E. Kwegyir Aggrey once stated that when a man is educated it is an individual who has been educated but if a woman is educated it is a nation that has been educated (Cited in IBIS Survey Report on Female Education, 2007,p.1)

**2.2.3 Development of Secondary Education**

The provision of secondary education in Ghana dates back to the 1880s. Initially, the Christian missions established schools in their operational areas but later the government took up the task of establishing schools. For instance, the Wesleyan mission established two secondary schools; a wholly boys' school in 1876 and a girls' school in 1884 which developed into the Mfantsipim School and Wesley Girls' School in Cape Coast respectively. Also, the Anglican mission established the St. Nicholas Grammar School in 1910 now Adesadel College in Cape Coast. The desire of the colonial government to provide quality education in the Gold Coast informed Governor Rodger's decision to set up the Phelps Stoke Commission which studied the education system and made recommendations leading to the establishment of the Prince of Wales co-educational secondary and training college now Achimota School in 1924 with some degree of autonomy and financial support of **£68,**000 grant annually representing about a quarter of the whole colony's educational budget. Meanwhile, the government continued to give financial support to the mission schools.

Between 1945 and 1955, due to the colony's improved external trade earnings, the government increased its expenditure on education from £347,561 in 1944– 45 to £6,325,672 in 1945– 55 with greater support to secondary education. Within the period, the government established the Prempeh College and Opoku Ware Secondary School in Kumasi and the first secondary school in Tamale in the Northern Territories respectively (McWilliam and Kwamena-Po, Third Edition, 1975, p. 81). As a result, the number of recognized secondary schools increased to 12 in the Gold Coast. Some

level of private participation was involved in the provision of secondary education at this time. For example, the Accra Collegiate and Grammar School was established. The private schools charged fees to cover tuition and boarding for courses with duration of four to six years which led to the award of Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (Abosi and Brokman-Amissah, 1992, p. 14). Between the 1950s and 1960s a phenomenal increase in student enrolment and school facilities occurred. Sixth Form education was extended and this contributed to new dimensions in student assessment. For instance, in 1950, 29 candidates from Achimota School sat for the Cambridge Higher School Certificate Examination for the first time. They all passed. Also, in 1956, 930 candidates obtained the West African School Certificate. By 1966 when the CPP government was overthrown, the number of public secondary schools had increased to 105 with a total enrolment of 42,111. By the end of 1957, student enrolment in the 38 government-assisted secondary schools stood at 9, 860 and in middle schools it was about 115,831 (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, Third Edition, 1975, p. 87). However, the number of secondary schools was not enough to absorb the increasing number of middle school leavers and to facilitate university education during this time. Therefore, when the Busia regime assumed power it established a number of Continuation Schools, secondary schools and diversified the curriculum. For instance, subjects such as commerce, agriculture, metal work and domestic science were introduced and accorded the status of academic subjects. During Limann's regime, the government in an attempt to reduce the cost of providing secondary education and increase its coverage, the government "deboardinized" boarding secondary schools

and established new day secondary schools. Later, the Rawlings' regime initiated education reforms in September 1986 to promote technical and vocational education and achieve cost-effectiveness and cost recovery within the educational system. The government continued the policy of deboardinization and instituted quota allocation in admissions to public secondary schools (Abosi and Amissah-Brookman, 1992, p. 23)

### 2.2.4 Educational Development in Ghana, 1908 – 2007

In order to espouse a deeper appreciation and understanding of the issue of educational reforms in the evolution of education in a developing country like Ghana, it is important to make a distinction between educational reforms and reforms in education here. Educational reforms constitute programmes and actions that are initiated in the education system intended to bring about major improvements within the existing educational system while reforms of education are transformations in goals and objectives generally linked to social or political changes outside of the education system (UNESCO, 1979, p. 48).

Following from the realization that the nation's educational system did not meet the developmental needs of the newly independent nation for rapid socio-economic development, past and current regimes in the nation initiated a process of reviewing and/or reforming the nation's educational system to provide quality education (Abosi and Brookman-Amissah, 1992, p.17).

The genesis of educational reforms in this nation goes back to the 1900s. Educational practices and development in African-American schools in the United States informed Governor Sir John P. Rodger of the Gold Coast to set up a committee in 1908 to

consider various matters in connection with education in the Gold Coast which led to changes in the colonial government's educational policy and the introduction of the Education Rules of 1909 intended to provide direction to improve teaching methods, introduce agricultural and vocational courses into the primary curriculum and establish a combined institution for elementary, technical and teacher education (Gold Coast Report of the Educationists' Committee, 1920).

In 1920, Governor Guggisberg introduced his Sixteen Principles in a bid to strengthen the educational policy of the Gold Coast. The principles among other things called for the provision of universal primary education; quality secondary education; equal educational opportunities for boys and girls; trade schools with a technical and vocational education, and quality university education for men and women. (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, Third Edition, 1975, pp. 57-58). It is worthy to note that the introduction of these principles constituted a major educational policy direction for the nation's education under colonial rule well into the 1960s. The Convention People's Party government introduced some changes to education during its regime. With the introduction of the Accelerated Development Plan for education in 1952, a fee-free elementary education was implemented and a number of secondary and teacher training colleges were established. When the CPP regime was toppled in a military coup by the National Liberation Council (NLC) junta in February 1966, there were 8,144 public primary schools with a total enrolment of 1,137,494 children and 105 secondary schools with a total enrolment of 42,111 students. The nation's educational policy continued to drape around the colonial master's education policy. This did not address local needs and challenges for rapid

socio-economic development of a newly independent nation. The National Liberation Council (NLC) opposed the concept of free compulsory education and put a halt to the policy. Some public primary schools were closed down. By the end of 1966, enrolment in public primary schools in the Northern territory of the nation declined by one-third (Cited in McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, Third Edition, 1975, p. 116). Enrolment in primary schools in Asante and Southern Ghana registered further growth due to expansion in private preparatory schools.

The NLC regime set up two bodies to look into aspects of the education system with the view to improving its operations. In 1967, one of the committees, the Mills-Odoi Commission made the following recommendations: that the management of secondary schools and teacher training colleges by the Ministry of Education should be decentralized and given to Regional and District Authorities; establish a teaching service division of the Public Service Commission; improve the remuneration and other conditions of the teaching service. Although the government was not too happy with these recommendations they were implemented (Education Review Committee, 1967). In July of the same year, the other body, the Education Review Committee under the chairmanship of Professor A. Kwapong also submitted its report. The report acknowledged a fall in "educational standards" due to inadequate supply of qualified teachers and the appointment of some politicians and other public office holders with little amount of education to serve in the education sector (McWilliam and KwamenaPoh, Third Edition, 1975, p. 117). The Committee recommended among other things that six years of primary education; ten years elementary education but at the end of eighth year pupils could be selected for secondary school and those who were unable

to enter secondary schools should undergo two years continuous schooling with prevocational bias. Also, there should be five years of secondary education and two years of sixth form education which should lead to a School Certificate of the same standard as the Ordinary Level of the General Certificate of Education and the Advanced Level of General Certificate of Education respectively.

Also, during the Busia regime, the government set up a committee which enquired into the problems of the education system. As a result in 1971, the Ministry of Education issued a document, "Curricula Changes in Elementary Education" which recommended Ghanaian Language as the medium of instruction in the first three years of primary education and the use of English language from the fourth year onwards though in places in metropolitan and urban areas where children had exposure to the use of English language the change from Ghanaian language to English language could start earlier than the fourth year. Ghanaian language was therefore studied as a subject in the curriculum.

In 1972 a military junta led by Colonel I.K. Acheampong overthrew the Busia regime and set up a committee under the chairmanship of Professor N.K. Dzobo to study the education system and make recommendations for its improvement. Upon the Committee's recommendations, in 1974, the government introduced education reforms characterized by the acquisition of practical skills in vocational and technical subjects such as carpentry, cane-weaving, home science, textiles and masonry under the Experimental Junior High Schools and reduced the duration of pre-university education from 17 years to 13 years. A nine-year fee-free compulsory basic education was approved: six of primary schooling and three years of Junior Secondary

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education. The Ghana Teaching Service was converted into the Ghana Education Service and a Book Development Council to coordinate activities in the book industry was established (Abosi and Brookman-Amissah, ed., 1992, pp. 21 - 22). The changes constituted major reforms because the content and structure of education were affected.

In 1986, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) initiated a new reform programme which took off in September 1987. The objectives of the programme included increased access to basic education especially in the northern half and other areas of the country where enrolment had been persistently low, increased access to senior secondary education to 50 per cent of junior secondary school leavers and tertiary education to 25 per cent of senior secondary school leavers. Six years of primary education, three years of Junior Secondary education, three years of Senior Secondary education and four years of tertiary (university) education were introduced. The nine years of basic education was free and compulsory for every Ghanaian child of school-going age. pre-university education duration was reduced to 12 years. For purposes of assessment, continuous assessment was introduced. At the end of the nine years pupils sat for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) to determine those who will continue to secondary schools to offer programmes in general education, business/commercial, vocational/technical, agriculture and those who will terminate their education (Abosi and Brookman-Amissah, ed., 1992, p. 23). The reform constituted significant changes to the content and structure of education in the country. By 1990, the focus of the reforms had shifted to Senior Secondary education. An Education Review Committee was set up to look into perceived

weaknesses in the reform programme. In 1994 a National Education Forum was held. Some challenges were identified in the education system and recommendations made. On January 17, 2002, the New Patriotic Party under the leadership of J.A. Kuffour set up a committee on the Review of Education Reforms under Professor J. Anamuah Mensah, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Education, Winneba (UNEW). The Committee studied education development and delivery in the country. On the Committee's recommendations, the government introduced educational reforms which took off in 2007. Significant changes were made to the curriculum and structure of education. The changes included 11 years of basic education: comprising two years of pre-school, six years of primary education and three years of Junior High School; four years of Senior High School; three years of technical and vocational education and three years of university education.

On the issue of funding technical training, the government would absorb the cost for the first year and the trainee will shoulder the remaining years' cost (White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, 2004, pp. 14 – 15). There has been significant improvement in female enrolment at various levels in the educational system in Ghana since the 1960s. Notwithstanding this, the phenomenon of gender disparity or inequality persists. We now turn to examine the factors which restrict or affect female participation in education in the world.

## 2.3 Importance of girl- child education

Female education is equally important as their male counterparts and their contribution to national development cannot be under estimated. They must therefore be given the

necessary education and training to enhance their self-confidence and capabilities to enable them participate effectively in development process of themselves, their families and the communities. The educational level of a woman has a strong influence on the health of her children and the entire family. According to a World Bank report (2008), improving women's education helps reduce fertility and child malnutrition and improves maternal child survival. According to Flero and Wolf (1990), King and Hill (1993), with increase in the educational level of girls, the main national development indicators such as infant and maternal mortality, longer life expectancy, lower fertility rates, health etc improve. A report by Catholic Relief Services (1996) reveals that the World Bank estimates that every year of girls schooling reduces fertility rate by 10%.According to Lawrence (1996), Educating female yields far; reaching benefits for girls and women themselves, their families and societies in which they live. He further indicated that investment in the education of girls may well be the highest return investment available in the developing world. This line of reasoning is the human capital theory which argues strongly in favor of positive returns of investment in educating girls. It must be stated that financial issues remained significant in most cases of dropout. Families often think that the cost of education, both monetary and psychological is wasted on a girl because of her decreased earning potential and this selfsame expectation of domesticity.

The economic benefit thereof is not immediately apparent to most families. Overall, the expectation of the girl child's participation in family life seems to be a hindrance in her participation in schooling. Although including girls in the scheme of Ghana universalized education, these causes seems to make one thing clear – the causes are ingrained in systems that are larger than education. While temporary solutions are rampant and popular, it will

take attention on the long-term scale to ensure that girls across Ghana are able to freely, safely, and consistently attend school and access an education.

## 2.4 .0 Factors that hinder the performance of the girl-child in school

The theoretical framework for this research draws on available international and national literature. A synthesis of studies conducted in Ghana, Africa and the world at large has identified a cascade of factors that contribute to girls' poor academic performance . These factors are multi-faceted and interrelated. They are synthesized into socioeconomic-cultural practices and conditions, school-environment or school-related conditions, political and institutional policy practices of government.

## 2.4.1 Socio-economic-cultural practices that influence girls' poor academic performance

Ademola (1989) in the study about Culture and girl education noted that in Sisala tribe in Ghana, girls are equipped with powerful skills of being home wives but are denied that part of education that will make them more favorable in other sectors as opposed to boys. With this view, even when girls get access to schooling, they fail to get motivation on what they do hence poor academic performance. A study by Stella et al (2014) identified that different traditions and customs can affect students' academic performance. It has been identified that in Tolon district in Ghana, girls performed poorly academically compared to boys in examinations. This performance has been related to traditions and customs which undermine girls by making them unable to compete with boys. This in the end may lead to low girls academic achievement in National examinations, which will impact negatively on the society because lack of education for girls has a negative influence on child mortality,

economic growth and fertility rate. Another study by Mampele (1994) also identified that, parents have different attitudes toward their daughters and sons. Daughters are brought up for female roles such as domestic activities and taking care of children while males or sons have a whole working life to devote to career building. This reason has affected much female education especially in rural areas where education is taken as a male privilege.

Marzano (2003) argued that parental involvement in students' academic affairs can also affect their academic performance in schools. On the other hand school administrators use to council parents to take their part in children academic affairs starting from home. The situation will prepare their children for academic achievements. Another study by Meena (1996) revealed that, mothers tend to rely on the support of their daughters for labor inputs during crisis periods to complete their works or as part of socialization. According to a study by Muola (2010) shows that there is a significant relationship between parental level of education and students' educational aspirations. This statement reveals that if a parent is educated will consider future outcomes of education to his/her child by taking charge of all necessary demands for academic achievement. A family which attaches itself to school education determines the motivation with which its children pursue basic education (Mwaura, 2004). Mwaura's study is in line with that by Ogoye (2007) which argued that, illiterate parents are unable to assist their children to perform their homework. Furthermore, Beegleet el (2005) observed that, home environment is the only place where a child can get motivation and be motivated for learning. The role played by parents will influence a child to take part in learning effectively.

Another study conducted by Moyi (2011) support other studies on home based factors affecting academic performance by reviling the situation in Kenya that children from poor

family settings normally combine schooling and other social or economic activities. Under this circumstance, it is difficult to attend school as required and sometimes these students tend to disappear from school settings until when examinations begin. A study conducted by Ogoye (2007) concur with the other studies on academic performance by arguing that illiterate parents are unable to assist their children even to perform their home works. Another study conducted by Kivuli (2006) investigated the influence of school based factors and home based on girls' academic performance and revealed that there is a relationship between parent's level of education and good performance achieved by girls in their examinations. This argument makes sense in that the more parents are educated the more they come close with their children to see how they progress academically. They are also accountable with gender sensitivity as well as provision of school requirements on time unlike those who are not educated.

Moreover, Mwaura (2004) observed home environment as a factor affecting academic performance. Results from this study indicate that the family can motivate a child in the learning process through encouragements and providing academic needs like books. The role played by parents in shaping behavior for instance, influences a child in academic activities. Another study by Walberg (2003) reported that through "alterable curriculum of the home" parents are able to monitor their children's academic achievements through conversations with them concerning school and everyday events. Furthermore, cooperative efforts by parents and educators can modify alterable academically stimulating conditions that have had beneficial effects on learning process (Walberg, 1984).

It is worth arguing that students who combine schooling and other social activities and especially domestic affairs are mostly vulnerable to poor academic achievements than those

who do not. Although different studies on academic performance have been conducted, still the problem of girls' poor academic performance in schools persists. This study therefore, examined factors influencing girls' poor academic performance schools in the Tolon district. According to Eggleston (1992), "boys who are encouraged in homes and communities to be more dominant, assertive and adventurous and enjoy approval for such behavior perform differently in the classroom from girls who have often received a very different early encouragement. This in one way or the other deprives the girl-child and makes her performance low in class because of no encouragement from the house and even the community as a whole. He again held that, children come to school with different physical, mental and emotional capabilities. This expectations and attitudes are largely a product of their social background and spring from the value system of the parents, their extended families and adults in their communities. This tells us that if parents do not have a good attitude and higher expectations from their children, it dampens their spirit of learning and will lead to poor performance especially in girl-children.

Also, in the words of Lawton (1981), opponents of the ideal equality education opportunities often make fun of the Egalitarian view point by suggesting that it is obvious to everyone that children are not equal when it come to education in gender. He said, it is deliberately to confuse the issue. He said the essential point being made by Egalitarian is that all children at say the age of 11 (or any other age) should have equality of access to worthwhile educational experience irrespective of their sex. This reveals that girls are performing poorly because parents already claim that girls are not equal to boys. This assertion is wrong because if they are all given equal access to worthwhile educational experience they will perform better.

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According to Theresa (2005), parents spend their resources on unnecessary things at the expenses of their children education. She stated that the education of more girls would help to accelerate the country's quest for sustainable development. Parents spend their monies and resources on other things at the expenses of the girl child education and even some drop out at the end. In some cultures in Ghana she added, the birth of a boy will be greeted by the gift of a cock, but if a girl is born nothing is done or given. This send a strong message about the value of the girl-child and how she enjoys full care as enshrined in the constitution when her value is diminished right from birth. This makes the performance of the girl-child in life not satisfactory and education is not exception. From Cecilia (2005), The attraction among parents in Nkwanta to send girls to school remains low despite the nation's campaign to increase female enrollment and performance in schools. She said some parents in Nkwanta see the only place of the girl to be is the kitchen and performing of the household chores and this has made them pay little attention to those girls already in school and making them perform poorly.The UN Human Development Report (1995) revealed that globally and even locally, women form about one half of the total population. In Ghana, 52% of the total populations are women, yet certain socio-economic imbalance in the society, total way of life act in conjunction with poverty and ignorance to prevent girls from taking their rightful place alongside their boy's folk in the permit of socio-economic development.Wanjiku, 1994, observes that where resources are limited, education of boys comes first. Girls have been socialized to accept this and usually dropping out of school or not attending classes regularly for the benefit of their brothers. When parents are confronted with constraints of limited opportunities or resources for schooling, they generally favor the education for male children. The argument that the

socio-economic background of students tend to influence the performance is advanced by supporters of the 'good home' theory (Tyler, 1997). According to Tyler (1997), parents who are educated tend to provide an enabling environment that facilitates the acquisition of education. The children are enlightened by their parents of the need to acquire education; they are also able to purchase the proper learning materials that will facilitate them perform better thus achieving better grades in schools. Studies that have been carried out in developed countries have shown that performance of boys and girls was significantly related to the social- economic background of their parents (Duncan, 1989). According to Duncan 1989, the economic status of parents determines the type of school the child will go to. Those who go to public schools have a higher chance of not accessing all the facilities required to facilitate them get good grades. The girls who go to public schools may lack the instruments needed for practices thus leading to poor performance in practical subjects which include Physics, biology and chemistry. Studies conducted in Kenya reveal that the distance from home to school has direct influence on performance in examination (Bunyi and Okelmo, 2000) cited in (Ayoo, 2002) carried out a research on the influence of distance on education of girls. The study established that distance has a strong effect on the retention rates and regular attendance of school which affects the performance of the girl child. In most cases girls who are affected are the poor as their parents cannot afford to pay for school bus services. They trek for long distances thus increasing the probability of getting to class late, getting to class while tired which might make the student dose in class or reduce the concentration span of the girl child. The distance may also demotivate the students which might make the student lose interest in school thus dropping out in school or making them attend their classes once in a while thus affecting their academic

performance. Globally, 150 Million children currently enrolled in school may drop out before completing primary and secondary schools and 100 Million of these are girls. In slums girls usually use cotton wool or they collect used sanitary towels in dumping sites they wash them and reuse which can cause diseases thus affecting the performance of the girl child. Most girls from poor families are used as sales ladies so that they can generate income for the family. They sell pea nuts, bananas and engage in street hawking which eats their study time thus affecting their performance. Some parents are not able to provide food for their school going children. Children who are hungry are not able to concentrate thus they are forced to skip lessons or classes so that they can go to look for food. They are also not able to read at night because of lack of electricity and lamps to read at night. Most girls living in the slums are not able to read during the day because of noise. The houses they live in are very crowded and during the day there is a lot of noise which discourage them from active reading hence resulting to poor performance in schools. Undeniably, the number of child laborers in Ghana is on the increase. Most children work due to poverty, to supplement household budgets, to assist the parent, pay rent, pay school fees and meet basic needs like food and clothes (Eliab, 2010). In poor homes, there is a high dependence on children's contribution towards household labor and income greatly challenging the elimination of child labour that affects performance of most girls. The children act (2001) states that a child is any one below 18years section 56 (2) of the employment act is subject to abuse since there is no regulation of what is light work or otherwise therefore there is need for a revisit so that the rights of children are protected. The link between work and schooling is complicated by the fact that there are factors that hinder both a child's ability to go to school and her need to work and factors that affect one or the other. It is however

an obvious fact that, working affects the ability to attend and succeed in school as a child more particularly the girl-child. (Offorma, 2009).In some communities, girls are an important source of income for their families, the need for additional house hold income often takes priority over education (Cammish and Brock, 1994). Cammish & Brock hold that in many communities child labour is the major source of income for the survival of many households and schooling becomes a hindrance and represents a high opportunity cost to those sending children to school. They added that although child labour for agriculture, domestic and marketing tasks cut across both gender lines when it comes to child care, girls are more likely to involve than boys. According to Fatuma and Daniel (2006), child labour greatly affects the performance of girls in school most particularly in secondary schools as they do not get enough time to balance their studies and chores allocated to them by their parents or guardians. Rapid growth in urbanization has also increased the demand for domestic labour. It is observed that poor households have usually send their daughters into the domestic labour especially in the cities in exchange for regular cash or income. Some school going girls work as domestic workers during the weekends, holidays and even after school. This denies them of study time and leaves them with little or no time to work on their assignments or read through what they were taught in school by their teachers thus affecting their performance. This practice draws the young girls away from schools. Their parents receive payments for their services which serves as a motivating factor for the parents leaving the girl child with little or no chance of going back to school (Fatuma and Daniel, 2006) .Such girls rarely attend their classes they just sit for their exams for the sake of getting certificates thus affecting their academic performance. House hold chores can greatly affect the performance through undertaking heavy

household chores the girl- child sleeps late and tired and must be the first in the household to wake up the following morning to start the day with early morning chores, thus making them exhausted and unable to concentrate when they eventually go to school. They mostly sleep in class or their absorption capacity is very low thus integrating little or no content. A young daughter's domestic labour may substitute that of her employed mother, while parents who have an urgent need of income for subsistence or debt repayment, may exchange or sell their daughter directly or inadvertently into occupations that can be hazardous and exploitative ( Croll, 2006). Poor performance by females in schools especially in marginalized areas is attributed to a greater demand imposed on female children to assist in household chores such as fetching water, cleaning, cooking and taking care of young siblings as well as the sick relatives (Karani, 2006). According to a study by Guha and Sengupta( 2002 ), the necessity of a girl to work, in other to supplement family income, reduce drastically her chance of ever attending school and which also influences a higher probability of her dropping out of school. According to Mwiti (2006), psychological effects include learning disabilities, extreme depression, sense alienation and emotional breakdown and distrust, feeling of rejection, fear and confusion. Socially abused children tend to exhibit low self-esteem lack of confidence and slow intellect. According to Cammish and Broch (1994), the high status accorded to marriage and motherhood in many communities impact negatively on female participation in education. They also hold that cultural expectations and values also play an important role in influencing the pattern of women's participation in secondary schools. They added that there are regions where parents wish to protect their daughters from contact with foreign cultures. In regions where there is acceptance of the importance of education for women, some religions or people

discourage girls from becoming highly educated as they will encounter some difficulties in finding husband (Fatuma and Daniel, 2006).Others claim that educated women are not co-operative and they are extremely independent thus making marriages impossible. Western education according to them leads to certain unacceptable innovations which contradict the accepted view held by male members of the society of an ideal wife and bring about changes in the prescribed roles of women, which have been rigidly defined by religion and custom (Fatuma and Daniel, 2006), this stance is in line with the findings of other researchers. They tend to see an ideal woman as submissive, obedient and content to enjoy the status of her husband. The teachers influence at school has also been found to be a hindrance to girls opting for science and mathematics. According to Whyte (1984), teachers tend to carry the societal expectation of girls into the school and therefore treat boys differently from girls. Some teachers are said to actually discourage girls by uttering statements such as "Mathematics and science are not meant for girls", even girls are discriminated when it comes to sitting arrangement in the classroom, and they are separated and made to sit in front. Also teachers direct all the challenging questions to boys and also boys are made leaders when it comes to groupings. Abdo, (2001) points out that while the strength of a nation depends on the quality of its educational systems, the systems can only be as good as the qualifications and levels of motivation and commitment by the teachers and these are directly dependent on the social culture. In schools with strong culture, teachers are motivated and tend to be more committed, hardworking, loyal to their schools and students and satisfied with their jobs (Sergiovanni and Starrat, 1993). They also point out that motivated teachers have positive impact on learners learning thus being able to create an appropriate classroom atmosphere, have reasonable control of their work and

activities and are willing to accept responsibility and are personally accountable for outcomes. Vail (2005), asserts that teachers are the group who can have the single most significant influence on culture and learners' achievements and it is important to note that a teachers' attitude whether good or bad filters down to the norms such as discipline, hard work, issue – based research problem solving and equality. He carried out a research on two schools to find out how culture influences the performance. The two schools were Umzamo and Fundiseka. Umzamo's culture was that of independent thinking, there was no ownership thus no feelings of belonging or pride in the school on the other hand in Fundiseka there were feelings of belonging, trust and pride in the school and each other and the determination to do best to preserve these and the name of the school. Fundiseka engaged more in extra- curriculum activities more than Umzamo. Fundiseka referred their teachers as 'our teacher' and 'our students' while in Umzamo they referred their teachers as 'The teacher' and 'The Student'. In conclusion Fudiseka's performance was 10 much better than that of Umzamo. There was no comparison between the two schools in terms of performance and discipline. That implies that when the culture of a particular institution can affect the performance. Ethnographic studies suggest that parents have very different expectations for girls and boys in that the sons are uniformly expected to live with or near parents, provide long term support and succeed in education, career or other income generating activities on the other hand girls are supposed to stay at home and learn the domestic chores so that they can become good wives in the future and acquire just basic education to facilitate them manage their homes (Croll, 2006). According to him, discrimination in girls access to education persists in many areas due to the society's stance that boys should be given the priority to educate at the expense of girls, that since girls are

traditionally natured to get married and take care of children later in life, and so priority to education comes second. Family preference for boys' education and the need for children's labour service within and outside the household often limit the education of girls (Beneria and Bisnath, 1996). Husain(1999), has studied that most adults and school girls pointed that women think more about becoming good wives and mothers and should get concerned with home management and not professional career. Such mentality really affects the girl- child performance as they do not give their best in schools. The same study established that most of the adults, local officials, elderly people and religious leaders indicated that parents prefer not to invest so much on the girl- child education compared to that of boy-child.(Sengupta and Guha, 2002) note that in many regions, girls are married off at a young age. Their education is viewed as a poor investment, because it yields no long –term benefits to their natal families. Sometimes education may instill 'no-conformist' behavior in girls thus not being able to get spouses or sustain marriages (Sengupta and Guha, 2002).The traditional notion of mentorship frequently invokes the positive image of an older, wiser adult providing compassionate guidance to a young individual. Indeed, the modern-day version of mentorship continues to emphasize the importance of a supporting relationship between an adult and adolescent. However, increasingly, mentoring is being seen as an essential component in the enhancement of an adolescent's educational, social, and personal growth (Brody, 1992).Sadly, these naturally occurring relationships are not available to every developing adolescent which leads to poor performance in schools. Caring and supportive adults who help develop natural mentoring relationships are few in high-risk areas, as the familial, educational, and community structures are unstable for at-risk youth (Darling, Hamilton and Hames, 2002). Many different individuals in an

adolescent's life provide guidance, encouragement, and emotional support. "Natural" mentoring occurs when an adult voluntarily offers guidance, encouragement, and emotional support, as part of a young person's normal life course, and usually occurs between parents or related individuals and children. These types of positive relationships, it is argued, lead an adolescent to adopt positive behaviors and acquire specific skills (Darling, Hamilton and Hames, 2002). According to Amania(2003), students drop out of schools or take education less seriously due to lack of role models within the community and immediate family cycle. She further asserts that children especially girls in Malawi drop out or take education less seriously not necessarily because of poverty but because they see no tangible benefits of continuing with school or putting much effort in their studies. Guha and Segupta, (2003) holds that lack of female teachers, female doctors, pilots, female leaders or women who've made it in life as a result of acquiring education makes women not value education as they ought to. Research shows that certain behaviors and environmental circumstances are valid predictors of poor performance achieved in schools (Brown, 2008). Poor academic achievement and anti-social behaviors are mainly caused by lack of role models and mentors in schools. The women who've made it as a result of acquiring education are fewer and they face a lot of challenges before making it. This problem is also observed where there are no educated women in the society or community. Role models in communities mainly do the simple jobs like cooking and serving food, selling in the markets or by the road side. That has a great influence on the girl child in such communities as they believe that these women with less education earn money and are well off thus making them not perform as they ought to. These factors adversely affect the demand for education. Ayoo (2002), observed that learning among young children occurs through modeling which is

determined by relations in terms of sex as cherished by parents, teachers and fellow children. According to a study done by (Holmund and Sund, 2005) girls out performed boys in subject areas where women teachers outnumbered their male counter parts. Teachers are therefore seen as role models for the students and if students identify themselves more with the same sex role models, it is possible that performance will be enhanced when students have a teacher of their own gender. According to Grossman and Rhodes (2002),  adolescents who are in mentor relationships that last less than three months suffer feelings of lower self-worth and less feeling of achieving academic success contributing to poor performance in schools. Adolescents in relationships longer than 12 months are most likely to report increased feelings of self-worth, social perception, and belief in achieving academic success, and will have better relationships with parents and peers. Swainson(1995), notes that the assigning of roles and development of skills are defined socially and culturally on the basis of gender. From an early age children develop behavior that is appropriate to their sex roles by imitation of parents and other role models. He further argues that girls for example in rural areas and slums experience some kind of alienation in view of the many overlapping relationship within as well as outside the family. As such teachers treatment of boys and girls in classroom reaffirms gender in accordance with cultural norms which defines masculinity and femininity.Heeden (1995), shared same stance with Stella et al (2014), according to him, some fathers particularly in rural areas and slums, do not attach much value to education. They regard schooling for girls as unnecessary and a waste of money because girls would in any case stay at home after marriage to attend to their children and household. Boys on the other hand should be earning money from an early age so as to sustain their families. It has also been reported in

(BBC News, 2006), that African patriarchal society viewpoint, favor boys over girls because boys maintain the family lineage. Additional reasons why girls do not have adequate access to education in Africa include the fact that many have to stay at home to nurse relatives with HIV/AIDS. In Ethiopia the girl child is married off at a very tender age and they face early pregnancy, assigned responsibilities of taking care of their children and thus rarely go to school or attend classes. Their husbands don't allow them to mix with other men thus limiting them to accessing education especially where the schools available are mixed schools and the demand for girl- education is very low thus affecting the performance of the girls who are privileged to attend schools. The resources are scares and environment for studying is very hostile as the practice is not acceptable (Beneria and Bisnath, 1996).

**2.4.2 Sexuality as a factor that influences girls academic performance**

According to Ahearn and James (2003), sexual abuse of children generally need not cause injury; any sexual act performed on a child can be considered abuse. Similarly, state statutes categorize as child abuse as any neglect of a child that places the child at risk, regardless of whether the child is actually injured (Ahearn and James,2003). Another factor that influences poor performance of girls is attributed to pre- marital pregnancies (Fatuma and Daniel 2006). According to them, most girls sit for their exams when they are pregnant or when they are fulfilling their responsibilities as mothers, thus making them have divided attention leading to poor performance. They added that the most overwhelming data in girls' problems in their schooling is the high rate of teachers having love relationship with students. According to them, over 85% of the students reported that teachers try to have love relations with students ……all of whom are male teachers dating female students

such behavior disrupts the learning process. The girls are given high marks in their class assessment tests but when it comes to the final exam poor performance is experienced (Fatuma and Daniel, 2006).The motivating factors of these relationships include money, gifts, high marks or 'leakage' of the class exams which discourage pro- active reading and class participation resulting to poor performance (Fatuma and Daniel, 2006). Most girls experience divided attention as they spend most of their time worrying about petty things like looking good which greatly affects their academic performance. There are cases where teachers preying on female students, threatening to fail them or publicly humiliating them to probe them into sexual relationships ((Fatuma and Daniel, 2006). In such cases the girl's performance goes down due to fear and low self-esteem resulting to poor academic performance. The works of Youri (1993), revealed that secondary school girls who have been pregnant are twice more likely to report poor health than those with no history of pregnancy. The probability of such a girl who is still going to school and has a young one to take care misses lessons as a result of poor health leading to poor academic performance. Girls usually experience cramps as well as mood swings due to the effects of menstruation. There are some times when the pain is very sharp and the girl child may not attend school/lessons resulting to poor performance. The mood swings can also affect the performance of the girl child as it may disrupt the normal learning processes resulting to poor performance. Some girls and women find that they feel sad or easily irritated during the few days or week before their periods. Others may get angry more quickly than normal or cry more than usual. Some girls crave certain foods. These types of emotional changes may be the result of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) (Mary, 2010) .PMS is related to changes in the body's hormones. As hormone levels rise and fall during a woman's

menstrual cycle, they can affect the way she feels, both emotionally and physically which can greatly affect the performance of the girl child. Some girls, in addition to feeling more intense emotions than they usually do, notice physical changes along with their periods — some feel bloated or puffy because of water retention, others notice swollen and sore breasts, and some get headaches which may result to absenteeism during specific days of the month resulting to poor performance. PMS usually goes away soon after a period begins, but it can come back month after month which may constantly lead to poor performance. According to a report from human rights watch 2001, if left unchecked, sexual violation in schools has negative impact on education and emotional needs of girls and acts as barrier to attaining education. (Nieuwenhuys, 1999) shows that sexual relations between teachers and school girls in sub- Saharan Africa were common even in the 1950's. It has been made more common by the bias and prejudice that exists against women. A survey carried out indicates that eight in ten young men believe that women were responsible for causing sexual violence and three in ten thought that women who were raped 'asked for it' ( Human Rights Watch, 2001).Adolescents also get involved in sex due to certain reasons. The imposition of school fees which include tuition, uniforms and text books charges, forces girls whose parents cannot afford to educate their offspring or who are expected to be financially independent by virtue of their student status to acquire older sexual partners. The partners include the 'sugar daddies' or 'sponsors' they give girls money for sexual favors. Parents are unlikely to provide informative guidance to girls on sexual development and safe sex, or on interpersonal aspects of sexual relationships (Mturi and Henniker, 2005). Parents who did raise issues with daughters were likely to do so in a subjective, moralistic and protective context. Furthermore, most parents felt discomfort and

embarrassed in discussing sexual issues (Mturi and Henniker, 2005). In part, this was a reflection of cultural taboos in discussing sexual issues, but evident was the belief of fathers that providing sexual education would endorse premarital sex and promote promiscuity. In addition, parents felt that they did not have adequate knowledge, skills or vocabulary to discuss sexual issues (Mturi and Henniker, 2005).He further says that girls do not have tactic to negotiate on sex and that sex education needs to be included in the curriculum in addition to adequate training for teachers in delivering sex issues.  Sexual behavior can have undesirable consequences such as sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS; unplanned pregnancy leading to drop out or interrupted learning; high risk of pregnancy complication; illegal abortion; child abandonment and high mortality rate of children born to the teenage mothers (Nyatuka and Wasongo, 2010).

### 2.4.3 School- Based Factors Influencing Girls' Poor Academic Performance

School administrators have a bigger role to play in ensuring that the school environment is made conducive and save for learning to be effective, and this can only be achieved through the establishment of clear rules and policies.(Kipngeno and Kyalo, 2009). According to Omolo and Simatwa, (2010), although learning institutions are seen as abodes of peace globally, they have been reported to experience serious cases of insecurity, aside general safety measures in schools, there are some that are specific and crucial to girls. To Karemera (2003) in his study about the effects of academic environment and background characteristics on students' satisfaction and performance gathered that students' performance is significantly correlated with satisfaction with academic environment and services received. He however, posited that this could only  be attained if learners are fully and effectively placed at the center of the teaching and learning process. Students'

academic performance can also be affected by school based factors like relationship between students and their teachers, class room participation, school infrastructures as well as psychological factors that are influenced by school environment.

Hyde (1994) also argued that female students are subjected to verbal and psychological harassment when they show signs of good performance. In Mwaura (2014) works, he reported on sexual harassment that, there is a tendency of male teachers to approach girls for sexual matters. This situation can affect girls academically because sometimes they have to accept the situation and if they start relationships with their teachers they become affected psychologically hence drop academically.

MacFadden (1993) in Meena (1996) also pointed out that sex is one among basic human activities. Studies on sexual matters in schools have identified that both boys and girls engage in sexual relationships at a very young ages mostly at school level. Moreover, studies have revealed that there is lack of knowledge about sex and sexuality in their learning process that perpetuates academic failure. Fatuma and Daniel (2006), reported that there is a good number of male teachers having love affairs with female students in Junior and Senior high schools. Such behavior impedes learning process for, it affects learners psychologically and emotionally. Apart from that, teachers who are having love affairs with their students are said to award them good marks. But when it comes to final exams, the same student(s) performs poorly. Hallak (1977) argued that parents sometimes hesitate to entrust their daughters to male teachers as due to the fact that these teachers can pursuit them sexually. Presence of female teachers sometimes dissolves the situation and as it is argue, they contribute much to girls; academic performance.

Another study by Kainja and Mkandawile (1989) indicated that parents are unwilling to send their daughters to school when that school environment is not safe to secure them from disturbances. Girls require a very clear and sensitive guidance at their early ages because they can be persuaded by boys easily sexually. This area requires attention so as to create a friendly environment for girls in academics. Sentamu (2003) argued that, schools are social institutions in which groups of individuals are brought to share educational experiences. The same interaction can result in positive or negative outcomes to learners. It is argued that girls are suffering much from this interaction and especially when it comes to sexual relationships with male teachers. Although several studies have been conducted to investigate factors affecting academic performance in schools there is still lack of enough information relating to socialization processes leading to girls' poor academic performance. Another study by Hyde (2005), pointed out that, class room environment that perpetuate gender disparity also can affect academic performance. Teachers' attitude toward girls in case of participation normally influences inequalities in performance. This is because girls are treated like they cannot participate in class as boys do. It is even worse when it comes to subject selection in which male students are given a high priority to select science subjects while girls are sometimes forced to take arts subjects. Despite all measures taken by the government of Ghana to reduce gender disparity still the problem persist and it is related to girls' poor academic performance in schools.

Engin (2009),in his works mentioned that, "Education is not a charity rather a fundamental human right for all people irrespective of their sex, race or economic status". O'banya (2005),stated that an educated female is likely to become a more competent and knowledgeable mother, more productive and better paid worker, an informed citizen, a self-

confident individual and a skilled decision maker. Despite critical analysis on girl child education, little has been done to unearth the plight of poor performance among school girls in Ghana's education system. Therefore, this study examined factors influencing girls' poor academic performance in schools, taking the Tolon district as a case study in a fresh bid to fill up this knowledge gap. Menstruation for girls without the access of sanitary towels affects the performance of girl child greatly. Girls from poor families find difficult to access sanitary pads and other sanitories, this make them uncomfortable and unsettled as they fear that they might end up staining their garments making them the laughing stock of the school. Most adolescent girls in primary and secondary schools miss a good number of instructional hours in school every month due to lack of money to buy sanitary pads and underwear combined with inadequate sanitary facilities at their schools (MOE, 2007). Girls lose instructional hours daily and monthly which hinder their ability to compete in classroom with their counterparts, boys which leads to low self-esteem hence affecting the performance of the girl – child (Muthui, 2012).

## 2.5 Effects of low girl performance in school

The low attention given to girl-child education has a great impact in the lives of the girls, their families, communities and the nation as a whole. The above enlisted causes have called on prominent people to look into the impacts or effects these could have on the individuals and the society at large. Theresa (2005), observed that low girls education can bring about an increase in the cycle of poverty, high population growth. She stressed that not until we have taken the education of the girl-child seriously, the agenda that the government has set for development of the nation will be a mirage. Magus (2012) also called on parents to educate their daughters to be bold to take up positions in society. He

quoted Aggrey as saying that "when you educate a man, you educate an individual, but when you educate a woman, you educate a nation". He added that if mothers today were to be educated, our population would have been low and poverty will be minimum. Magnus again called on parents to continue to sacrifice to ensure that the girl-child get good and quality education, if not they cannot be the best social security they (parents) could give themselves in their old age, since those educated stand the better chance of taking good care of them in their old age.

According to Isaac et el (2001), low female education would lead the increment in the risk of them contracting sexual transmitted diseases such as AIDS, decrease in their level of literacy and numeracy, deprive them of employment opportunities, reduce their confidence and status in the family and this eventually leads to high rate of social vices such as prostitution, drug abuse and increase in teenage pregnancy and also leading to increase in population growth. They also assert that, low girls education can also affect the community in which they are. They hold that low girls education can lead to decrease in economic productivity and increase poverty rate in women because they will not be lucratively employed, have better household management because they (mothers) will not know how to organize their homes, will not give better education to their children and will not be role models for the young girls. In their opinion too, if girls are not educated, the nation will experience a decrease in productivity and cannot enhance national development. There would be an increase in birth and mortality rate in the country, increase in social problems like prostitution and domestic violence because the women will remain unemployed.

**2.6 Suggested solutions to increase girl's performance in schools.**

As the saying goes, "Every problem has a solution", the problem of low girls performance in schools is of no exception. Following the research work, the researcher has reviewed the relevant literature on the ways to curb the problem and make girls perform like their male counterpart. Mary (2006), suggested that the girl child should be supported academically in other to achieve maximum potentials to improve her living conditions. Theresa (2005) also called on girls to be determined and work hard to achieve their goals and good moral lives, she also advised them (girls) to belief in their dreams to become useful citizens in future. She indicated that some girls have not yet identified their potentials and therefore make them reluctant and perform poorly. She is of the opinion that if girls are helped to identify their potentials they would sit up to achieve them and perform very well in school like their male counterparts. Isaac et el (2001) hold that the following measures put into practice can bring about high girls enrollment and performance in schools. Among the measures are; Parent should be counseled to give equal opportunities and attention to female education as in the case of male education, instead doing away with the mind that, education is not for girls, their place is in the kitchen and finally get married. Ministry of education through the Ghana education service should subsidies the cost involved in girls education by granting girls bursaries. Also, District Assemblies and NGOs should provide awards and scholarships for girls. They hold firmly that if these are put into practice, will ensure proper girls performance. Cecilia (2007) said, every child has a right to the same measure of education irrespective of sex. Therefore, traditional believes such as birth of girls not greeted with the same enthusiasm as boys, the feeling that the girl is not a human being and cultural practices that do not favor girls example the Trokosi system, early marriage and

betrothal should be stopped immediately to prevent further problems as they have already caused. If these practices are curbed, would promote girl enrollment and performance in the Nkwanta District. She revealed as she was interviewed by the Ghanaian times news agency. Also, Sadker and Sadker (1994) cited examples of studies showing that; in general parents expect less from girls and therefore girls develop and learn helpless, boys also receives more praises, rewards from parents than girls. They then disclose that parents should give equal praises, rewards to both boys and girls for the girl-child also be motivated to perform.

Education panel (2001) brought out the following suggestions to curb the problem of low academic performance of girls in schools:Parents and the community should show much concern and support to girl child education as they do to their male counterparts, also that girls nowadays should be encouraged in education to serve as role models in the future to come to solve problems and added that domestic and child care responsibilities on girls at house should be reduced and possible stopped.

Mills (1998), underscored the importance of girl child education when he said, "we also can not fail to emphasis the need for educating the girl child. This is because; it is only by so doing that we can hope to accelerate the rate of development not only in Ghana but in the whole of what has become the global village". He ended by entreating parents, government, organization, non-governmental organization and interested people in girls education to do well to increase the patronage of girls in school and their performance

**CHAPTER THREE**

**METHODOLOGY**

**3.0 Overview**

This chapter centered on the procedure and methods that were employed by the researcher in investigating into the problem. It also explained among others the research design, population and sampling techniques as well as tools that were used for collecting data and how the final data was analyzed.

**3.1 Research approach**

According to Walliman (2004), it is possible to use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research strategies in collecting data. For the purpose of the study, a blend of qualitative and quantitative strategies were adopted because the study required both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative strategy of data collection involves data that can be expressed in terms of quantity while qualitative on the other hand is concerned with qualitative phenomenon and since the study required both quantitative and qualitative data, the two were adopted for the study.

**3.2 Research design**

In the view of Bryman (2008), research design refers to techniques that guide the selection of appropriate research methods or tools used for data collection. According to him, the selection of a particular research design will indicate the type of methods that will be used to collect data for a particular research activity. The Case Study Design was used for the study because, case study is based on specific situation, the research problem was restricted to an identified population and so findings of the study could not be generalized, according

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to Bryman, case study is an in depth study of a particular situation. This method narrows down a very broad field of research into one easily researchable topic, this justified the selection of the case study design for the work.

## 3.3 Population

The population of the study was 1000 comprising parents, teachers, officers from the district education office and pupils (girls). Best and Kahn(1989) are of the opinion that the primary purpose of a research is to discover principles that have universal application but to study a whole population to arrive at generalization would be impracticable if not impossible. The ideal is to study a sample.

## 3.4 Sample

The sample of the study was 130 respondents. This figure comprised of 50 teachers, 30 parents and 50 female students.

## 3.5 Sampling techniques

A careful and painstaking procedure was followed in selecting the sample since the ability to generalize the findings of a study largely depends on the representativeness of the sample. David and Sutton (2004) are of the view that the representativeness of a sample is a product of the sampling technique. A list of all schools in the district was obtained. Simple random sampling technique was used to select five (5) schools in the district. This sampling technique according to Sarantakos (2005), will give equal chance for every population to be selected for data collection. The names of all teachers in each of the schools selected was stratified into two groups of male and female. Proportional sampling methods was used to select both male and female respondents for each school

**3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

A letter of introduction will be obtained from the department addressed to the District Director of Education of the District for permission to carry out the study in the district.

**3.7 Data collection instruments**

The researcher upon identifying the problem, chose different but relevant instruments to gather information from both parents, teachers and pupils (girls). Among these instruments were questionnaires, interview guides and direct observation.

**3.7.1 Questionnaires**

This is a way of obtaining information from other people's view on a situation like this. It is a list of questions that are used to solicit information from other peoples view on a problem. This helps to check the various answers given by respondents, their similarities and differences on the situation under study.

The questions were distributed among fifty (50) teachers and fifty (50) students (girls). They were asked to administer their opinions on the questionnaires within one hour, after that the researcher collected the questionnaires back to continue his own findings. The questionnaires were both closed and open- ended ones. The reasons behind using questionnaires for data collection was among others; Pupils were free to give concrete and the right information. In spite of the strengths, the opportunity to build a report with respondents was limited. Another weakness of questionnaires is probing for details or explanation of responses not possible.

**3.7.2 Interview**

This is a face -to- face interaction between two people where one is trying to source information from the other. The researcher conducted face- to- face interviews with parents to elicit more information about the situation. In this method, the researcher had a face-to-face interaction with parents and pupils within one hour thirty minutes. This means that the researcher serves as an interviewer whiles the parents and pupils were the respondents and at the end of that particular exercise, the researcher again gathered his information to continue his findings. The advantages of this instrument are that it is flexible, that is it can be adjusted to meet diverse situations. Interviews attract relatively high responds rates as compared to other methods. Despite the advantage of this instrument, the respondents may not give the right information due to shyness.

**3.8 Observation**

This is another way of eliciting information from people. It is the process by which one critically examines the way of life or behavior of another. The researcher observed a number of girls in Tolon Junior High school and found out that parental support was very poor as far as the education of the girl child was concerned. Some of the girls observed were seen quietly sitting during break because they had nothing to eat or to buy food to eat. Some walked from far distances to school while others always slept in class, some also in tattered school uniforms in the school. The target group was observed and this continued for a period of time without interfering in their work. The reason for the choice of this method is for the fact that, it offers data when other methods are not effective. This was manifested in this work as it offered data during data collection as respondents were

unwilling to give some vital information. The researcher used this instrument because most of the people's would not have given the right information if they were confronted directly either out of fear or shyness.The demerits of this method however was that, it was not effective with large group of pupils, for the fact that it was extremely difficult to see all what everybody was doing at the same time.

**3.9 Data analysis plan**

Data collected was analyzed based on the groupings selected; thus teachers, parent and pupils of the district. The analysis was also based on how each group of questions were answered. There were two groups of questions representing the two categories of respondents; teachers and pupils. In most cases, the descriptive explanations were given while in some cases statistical evidence was provided to highlight the research findings through percentage tables. Data collected was processed manually, raw data collected from the field was processed first by reading through the responses to identify possible errors, non- completion of questions, misclassification  and general gaps in the information gathered from the field. A similar exercise was done by reading through the interview notes and cross- checking with the interview schedule/ guide in order to ensure that responses given by the interviewees reflected the true intent of the questions. Finally, the data gathered was analyzed using tables and charts.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### 4.1 Overview

This chapter presents research findings as obtained from the field visits. The chapter presents data which were collected through questionnaire, interview guides and observations. It is upon this chapter where all these forms of data will be presented and related to match the research questions and objectives. In relation to the research objectives, the researcher wanted to examine the factors that influence girls' poor academic performance in the Tolon district. The chapter describes the analysis of data followed by a discussion of the research findings. The findings relate to the research questions and the objectives that guided the study. Data were analyzed to identify socio-cultural and school-base factors that influence poor academic performance of the girl- child in education, its effects and solicited solutions to the problem in the Tolon District. Data was obtained from self administered questionnaires, completed by 94 respondents (n = 94) constituting 44 teachers and 50 female students, a 94 % response rate out of 100 questionnaires that were administered. Also, thirty (30) parents were interviewed.

A total of 100 questionnaires were received out of which, only 94 questionnaires were usable for this study and met the required inclusion criteria as discussed in the previous chapter. This represented 94 % of the expected population. The reasons for refusal to participate were not known, of the remaining 6 questionnaires deemed unusable, 4 respondents did not complete some vital sections of the questionnaires whilst the remaining 2 were returned blank.

There were two sets of questionnaires, one designed for teachers and the other for female students and an interview guide for the conduct of the interview on parents. The teachers' questionnaires comprised of three sections, the first section comprised of demographic data such as age, sex, qualification and years of experience. The second section comprised of data describing the causes of low girl- child performance, and the third section describing possible solutions to the problem. Whilst the students questionnaires had only two sections, section one comprised of personal information and the other section comprised of challenges girls face both at home and in school. Below were the findings:

**4.2 Factors that influence girls poor academic performance.**

Low girl's enrollment and performance in schools is a global issue. However, this situation is worse in developing countries including Ghana. Some of the factors that contribute to poor academic performance of girls include:

**4.2.1 Socio-Cultural and Economic Factors**

Early marriage at an early age is common in the rural areas especially in areas where girl-child education is low. Statistics may be elusive; estimates however show that 50 to 60 percent of marriages in Ghana is contracted between girls under 18 or boys under 21, the legal ages for marriage. In fact, as per National statistics (2006), 46 percent of women of 21-25 years were married before the legal age of marriage of 18 years, compared with 50 percent, as reported in 2010.Often it is said that girls will continue the studies after marriage, but owing to reproductive health and other responsibilities girls tend to lose interest in studies. The statistics also revealed that, apart from the unwillingness of girls, it is also the school policy which does not motivate them to return to school. Most often,

those students are not usually fed with information regarding future educational possibilities due to which most of the girls do not continue schooling or any other course or training after marriage.

It also had it that, the education system in Ghana has not only given up on girls, the girls themselves have not given up on education. There is a strong desire and enthusiasm for education. It is this enthusiasm that we clearly need to tap. Many a times, girls are engaged by the time they reach to higher secondary education, though it is not a hindrance for their education, willingness to study further is hampered as education is no longer a priority for them. De-prioritization of education takes place owing to multiple reasons, such as: Added responsibility of in-laws, no permission to do the job after studies, loss of interest in education as it is not encouraged by fiancé and lower literacy level of fiancé (As high number of Muslim males are educated till higher education only)Thus, education not only affects the school continuation prospects, it also hampers the willingness of girls to study further. This assessment was well endorsed as from the findings; interviews conducted on parents revealed that over 50% of the respondents interviewed had it that girls are naturally created as child bearers and home keepers so majority of the parents laid emphasis on how to prepare their daughters for marriage. Below were the findings:

**Table 1: Socio- cultural factors that hinder the performance of girls in education**

| Determinant | No. of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| The birth of a boy is celebrated whilst nothing is done for the birth of a girl. | 6 | 20 |
| Girls play second fiddle to boys in the society | 8 | 27 |
| Women/ girls are traditionally stereotyped as child bearers and home keepers whilst men/ boys go out to work to provide for the family. | 16 | 53 |
| TOTAL | 30 | 100 |

Pie chart for table 1
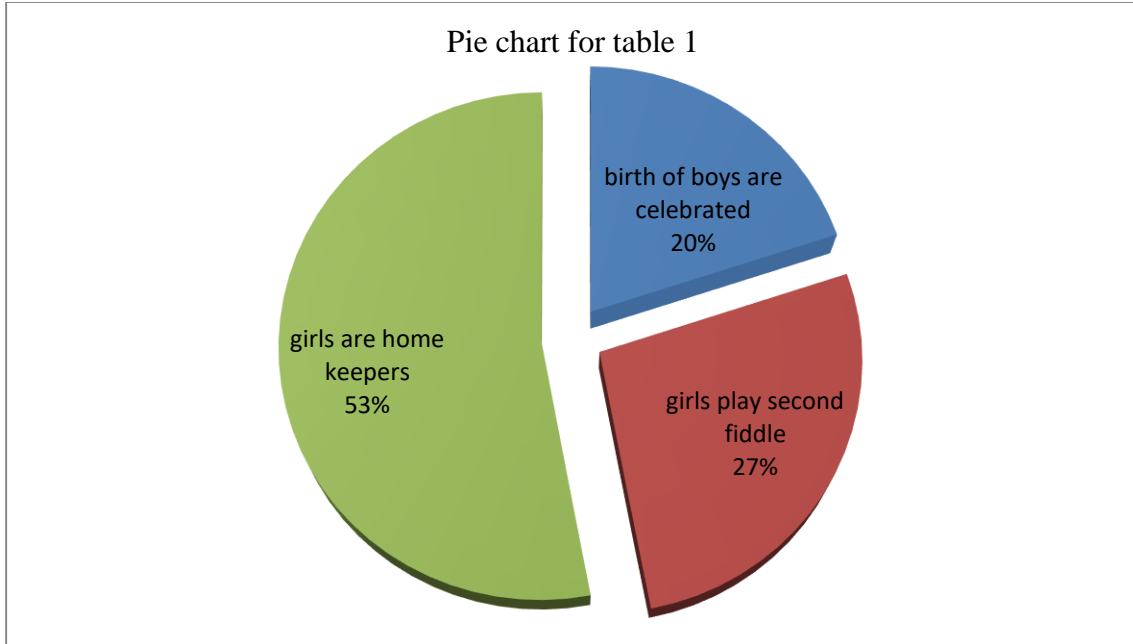


From table 1 above, six (6) respondents out of the 30 parents interviewed representing 20% of the sample claimed that the birth of a boy is cherished and celebrated with a cock but nothing is done when a girl is born, this attest to the fact that the girl is not valued and for that matter the justification of parents poor support for the girl- child. Eight (8 ) respondents representing 27% of the sample had it that women/girls play second fiddle to men/ boys and that if a woman rears an animal a man sells it, so parents do not want to waste their resources on the girl- child's education who will eventually get married and leave the family. A bigger chunk of the sample which was the modal class with sixteen (16) respondents, representing 53% of the sample proclaimed that women/ girls are stereotyped to be child bearers and keepers of the home whilst men/boys go out to work to provide for the family's needs, for that matter, there is no need to waste resources on the girl- child.

These were the socio- cultural factors identified which hindered the performance of the girl- child. Findings confirmed Ademola (1989), according to him, in the Sisala tribe in

Ghana, girls are equipped with powerful skills of being home wives but are denied that part of education that will make them more favorable in other sectors as opposed to boys. With this view, even when girls get access to schooling, they fail to get motivation on what they do hence poor academic performance. It was further established that celebrating the birth of a boy- child in the locality meant no value was given to the girl- child and everything that concerned her including her education, also, the woman/girl is relegated to play second fiddle to their male/boy counterparts and are also seen as people who will eventually be married away to some other families, because of these factors, parents saw it as a waste of resources spending on the education of the girl- child, they prefer to spend on boys who will stay to take care of the parents. Their responses also showed that, the girl's place was the kitchen and child bearing and that it was a waste to spend resources on the girl's education. These were the views of parents which accounted for the poor support of parents for girl- child education which contribute immensely to the low performance of the girl-child in education.

### 4.2.2 Inconsistent Academic Performance

School performance indicator is often considered as one of the tools to measure the performance of school children at school. Transition from basic school to senior secondary school is one such phase wherein academic performance makes a difference. Students studying in schools where level of education is compromised, often have to face the pressure of academic performance in senior classes. If the foundation of the child at the primary school is not very strong, they lack performance in higher classes. This problem is all the way more grave for girls as they have to make adjustments in their home study schedules. Girls reaching to higher classes are expected to invest time in domestic chores.

This leads to less time for school studies, leading to lower academicperformance. One of the teachers, teaching in Tolon JHS, stated that "It becomes very difficult for us to expect that girls students would complete their homework on times. Even after strict instructions some of them would fail to complete the assigned task, and the reasons which are always given is lack of time at home to complete the task. Because of reasons like these we give a separate time in the school for the girls to do self study."Girls living in families with unfavourable academic environment at home, and even in schoolthe teachers lack motivation to teach, as a result of which the incidence of failure is very high among them. It was observed that most of the time girls discontinue their education becauseof poor academic performance. Further, it was reported that even after repeating the samegrade they could not understand the subject matter and as such started losing interest instudies. Thus, most of the students who failed had difficulty in understanding all the subjectsbut they found Maths, Science and English very difficult. The works of Boyle etal, 2002, supports this view from the findings. They also had it that early elementary dropout rate was high as many students were observed to be dropping out before they got to class six. They added in their work that those who reached secondary schools with weak grades found it difficult to sustain. On the other hand, girls who secured good grades tend to continue their education at least till SHS level.

### 4.2.3 Reproductive Health

Reproductive factor is one of the most integral factors as far as involvement of women is concerned into mainstream society. Right from the onset of menstruation, women undergo lots of physical changes. Onset of menstruation is a phase where it is expected that girls develop into maturity, special care and attention is required towards safety of girls at this

phase. One of the major reasons why girls are not comfortable in attending school is that of menstruation. Most of the schools are not well equipped with the facility of proper toilets and hygienic facilities. As this is the most life-changing experience for an adolescent girl, they tend to hesitate in going to schools, especially when schools have co-educational background. During this stage, parents prefer to send their girls to Girls Schools only, but these schools are very less in number in the country.

In Rural areas, because of long distance that needs to be covered to go to schools, parents are not comfortable in enrolling their daughters to far off schools. Let us analyze the condition, with the background of villages located near the city of Tamale, on an average out of three villages, only one village has Senior Higher School because of which large number of girls drop out as parents are not willing to enroll their daughters out of the villages. Later in life, women with less education possess limited or no right to take decisions regarding reproduction. Multiple pregnancies are one of the predominating factors responsible for deteriorating health conditions. As less priority is given to woman's health, possibilities of Infant Mortality rate increases in the Ghanaian context. Large numbers of girls are getting married before the age of 20 years, as a result they get more prone to added responsibilities in their life. Moreover, muslim families are suffering from one of the biggest myth and that is, as a muslim one should not use any form of contraception, which means an individual does not possess any control over number of children. This myth has lead to imbalance in family size, lower family income and higher number of family members often led to improper distribution of resources. The biggest sufferer of this is girl child. The Tolon District is not an exception, as many households

have large family sizes as a result of lack of education on reproductive health. This made it difficult for parents to take care of their households let alone send the girl-child to school.

### 4.2.4 Poor Sanitation Facilities in Schools

Adolescence is the phase in the girl's life, which is marked by the onset of puberty, this comes out to be a really challenging situation, wherein a girl undergoes series of changes in body. If the school infrastructure lacks sanitation facilities, girls have no option except to drop out as menstrual hygiene plays very important role. This can be a hindrance to girls in terms of their attendance and learning achievements, particularly in higher grades. Lack of basic sanitation and privacy is driving adolescent girls out of school. The findings also revealed during the survey that, less than 30% of the schools sampled had enough sanitary facilities such as toilets, good drinking water, urinals and sanitary pads for girls which in most cases compelled most adolescent girls to drop out. Below was the data collected:

**Pie chart 2: Poor State of Sanitary Facilities in Schools in the Tolon district**
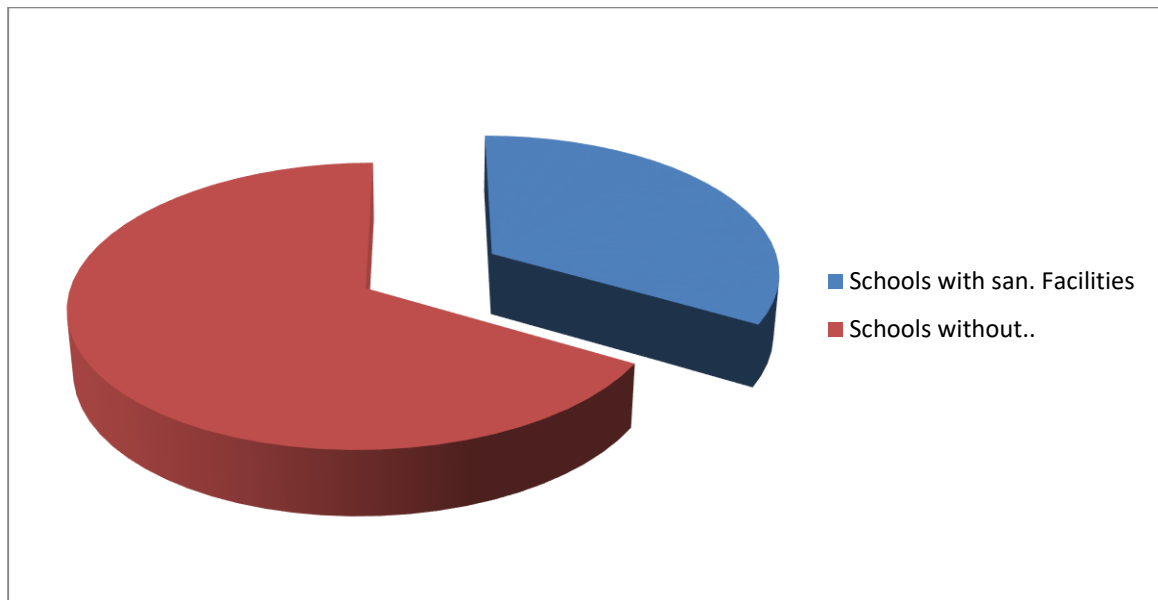
The district as at the time of the study had 18 schools, 2 SHS and 16 JHS. From the chart above, survey showed that only 6 schools had some measure of sanitation facilities such as toilets, urinals and sanitary pads, the remaining 12 schools had no sanitary facilities.

According to one headmaster, " The lack of sanitary pads in their schools in most cases make the girls soil themselves with their menses, this causes them so much embarrassments thereby making it difficult for them to stay in the class for lessons". The lack of water, inadequate supply of sanitary pads, inadequate sanitation, and lack of separate toilets for girls in the Tolon District result in fear of being sexually assaulted, and hence reflect in their extremely low attendance in schools.

### 4.2.5 Poverty

Educational expenditure has two main sources namely, public and private. Public expenditure refers to the money the state in cure in providing infrastructural arrangements for education such as creating facilities in the form of school building, maintenance of schools, provision and training of teachers, payment of teacher salary, and other planned and non-planned grants are all considered as public expenditure. Private expenditure on education on the other hand refers to monies spent by parents and other stakeholders on education. These are monies usually used for the payment of fees, private tuition, stationery, uniform, transportation among others. A number of studies highlights the relationship between poverty and dropping out from the school (Birdsall et al, 2005; Boyle et al 2002; Dachi &Garrett, 2003). A few research studies have indicated that the cost of schooling, including fees, is one of the main reasons for dropping out. This was confirmed during data collection, as poverty being a factor that influences girls academic

performance, as many parents were not able to provide the educational needs of their wards especially the girls as priority was placed on boys education, below was the data collected:

**Table 4   Occupation of parents**

| Occupation | Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Farming | 18 | 60 |
| Government | 4 | 13.3 |
| Trading | 5 | 16.7 |
| Others | 3 | 10 |
| Total | 30 | 100 |

Pie chart for table 4
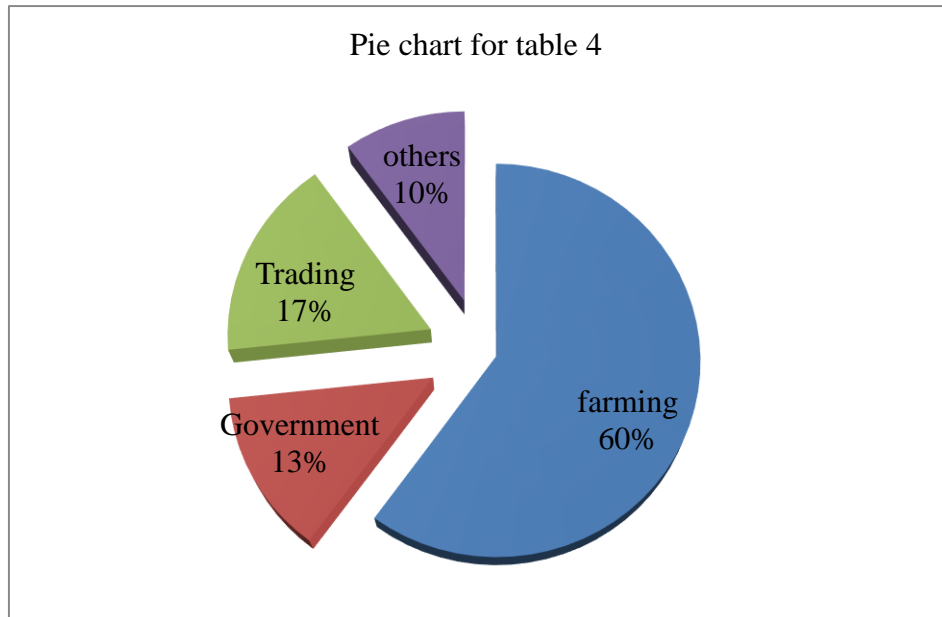
Judging from table 4, 60% of respondents were peasant farmer's 13.3% government workers, 16.7% traders and 10% were with other vocations. It was therefore evident that

most people in the study area were peasant farmers, they only farmed to sustain their families and barely have little to sell for income, this explains why they are poor and for that matter unable to support their wards in school most especially, the girl- child as priority for education is given to male child. According to a parent who was interviewed, " In case of financial crisis, girls are expected to discontinue their education and male child is given priority". Unequal distribution of resources leads to imbalance in the gender stereotyping. It was observed in the study area that girls were more inclined towards education as boys preference was on doing business rather than job, as a result to which males find no need to study further or aspire for higher education. The presence of Muslim Youth is marginal in higher education, even if it is there, very few are seen enrolled in Professional courses, and the number declines further more for Muslim Girls. The quality of education plays very important role in this phenomenon as higher enrolment is seen in schools providing quality education. Consequently, girls do take education, but it becomes very difficult to translate that into job. For instance, after Graduation in Arts or Commerce, possibilities of job decreases, as they do not possess any specialization. The ultimate objective is to be a productive member of the society, and no society can prosper unless the base of education is strengthened. This was confirmed by Basant (2012), who stated that, "The employment situation has deteriorated because globalization and liberalization processes appear to have affected Muslim occupations more adversely than others, especially for women".

### 4.2.6 Community's expectations.

The biggest problem that a girl has to face in higher study is the mindset of the community that a girl will lose out on her basic role of obedient wife. It is believed that an educated

girl will become deviant of her expected roles and responsibilities. Hence, parents become hesitant to let their daughters pursue higher education, this was also affirmed during data collection as parents saw no need at all for the girl- child's education, below was the data gathered:

**Table 5 Parents' interest in girls education.**

| Responses | Respondent | Percentage (%) |
|-----------|------------|----------------|
| Yes | 9 | 30 |
| No | 21 | 70 |
| | | |
| Total | 30 | 100 |



Pie chart for table 5
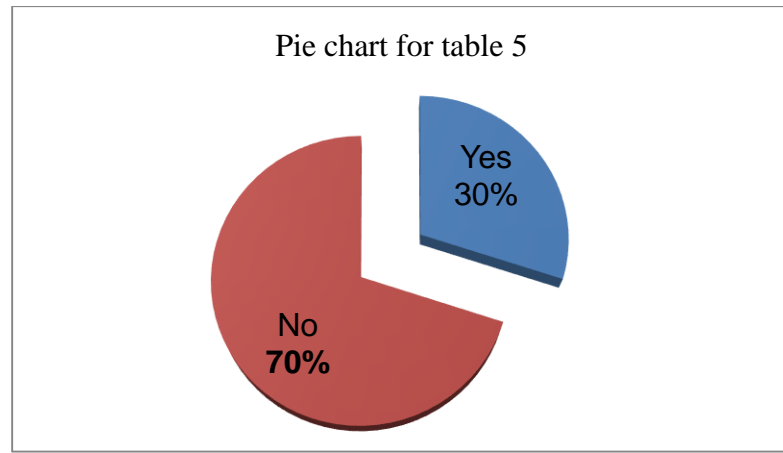
From table 5 above, 30% of parents preferred to give equal opportunity to both boys and girls education while 70% preferred the boy's education to girls.

Also, another reason that a girl has to face is that educated girls are likely to be more modern in her approach, hence she is incapable of sticking to her religious role. According to a parent interviewed, "Educated girl cannot become religious girl" this mind set leads to

less focus on education for her parents. Nobel (2005),disagreed with the parents' stand point when she expressed her concern over educational status of Muslim adolescent girls across the globe. She stated that global conflicts and epidemics are keeping the girls out of school, and the world cannot afford this condition. She is making constant efforts to bring about change by intervening at International level. She stated again that, "A full secondary education must become the ordinary expectation of every girl in the world"

**4.2.7 Social Norms and Cultural Expectations**

Pressures to conform to social norms and cultural expectations have a heavy influence on the life span of the adolescent girl, even beyond shaping household and reproductive roles. Many parents feel that their daughters traditional life styles and values will be adulterated leaving them future bad wives. Low interest is laid on female education, women who desire to pursue formal education often receive little financial or other support from family and even with community. Sometimes due to concerns about the learning environment, but most often due to outmoded cultural attitudes towards girls and their need for schooling. It is more compounded when classes are held some distant away from home, clashing with household chores and commitments at times coming at the part of the day when it is not considered safe for women to leave their homes especially at dourn and midday. This was again confirmed from the findings as girls were given more domestic chores than boys. Also, in the case of Muslim community, males are not educated much because of the fact that they will be involved in business. Since males are not educated, parents of girl children fear that if their daughters are highly educated, it will become difficult to get suitable men for the marriage who will live to the expectation of the girl. This was the main reason for

parents in the district not wanting to send the girl-child to school.

## 4.2. 8 Rural Dwelling

Life in a rural setting affects access to education for both boys and girls at the beginning of primary school, but as children progress to higher grades only girls are negatively affected. The reasons for this phenomenon may be that in rural areas, as girls grow up, more demands are made on them to perform household chores. In rural areas, girls also receive less encouragement to pursue their education as they are stereotyped to be prepared as home keepers and child bearers. Since a girls alienation after marriage usually belongs to the family of her future husband, any investment on her is considered as unnecessary. According to a parent during an interview, " if woman rears an animal, the husband sells it so there is no need for a parent to invest in a girl's education otherwise she carries every thing to the husband". This goes to affirm the fact that indeed, boys in rural communities are favoured over girls in terms of education.

## 4.2.9 Gender stereotyping at school

Teachers at the school act as major catalysers to the way girls receive schooling. It is often noted that teachers themselves do not believe in making an effort in proving quality education to the girls. With this mindset, girls often face discrimination even at schools. When a teacher does not believe in spending on girls education, results are always lopsided. It implies that teachers express values that systematically differentiate expectations and treatment of boys and girls in education and reinforce gender stereotypes. For example, in the two secondary schools in the district where the study was conducted, teachers hold the view that science and mathematics are male subjects which girls are

neither expected to understand or enjoy. Gender stereotyping is also visible in the course design. A student is supposed to study common subjects till Junior High School, which means that even if the student has low interest in mathematics and science, they have no other option but to study that. At the secondary and junior high school levels, the availability of female teachers as role models can have an important impact on motivating girls to pursue high education and more importantly, towards technical education.

From the survey conducted, a number of factors that influenced poor academic performance of girls in the Tolon district were discovered, among others included:

**4.2.10 Low interest of parents in girls education.**

Ademola (1989),in the study about Ghanaian culture and girl education mentioned that in the Sisala community in Ghana, girls are given powerful skills as been house wives but are not given the needed attention to go through that part of education that will make them more favorable in other sectors as opposed to boys. He added that, even if girls are given access to education, they fail to get motivation which eventually results in low performance. This was confirmed during the interview session of the data collection as parents openly saw no need to send the girl-child to school. Questionnaires that were administered to teachers presented the data below as parents attitudes towards the girl-child education in schools in the Tolon district:

**Table 6**

Attitudes of parents towards girl-child education.

| Determinant | No. of respondents | Percentage (%) |
| --- | --- | --- |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Girls are given much work at home than boys which interfere with their studies | 11 | 24 |
| Parents pay much attention to boy education than girls. | 12 | 26 |
| Parents do not provide girls' educational needs | 8 | 17 |
| Girls live with foster parents | 10 | 22 |
| Girls often come to school late | 5 | 11 |
| TOTAL | 46 | 100 |



Pie chart for table 6
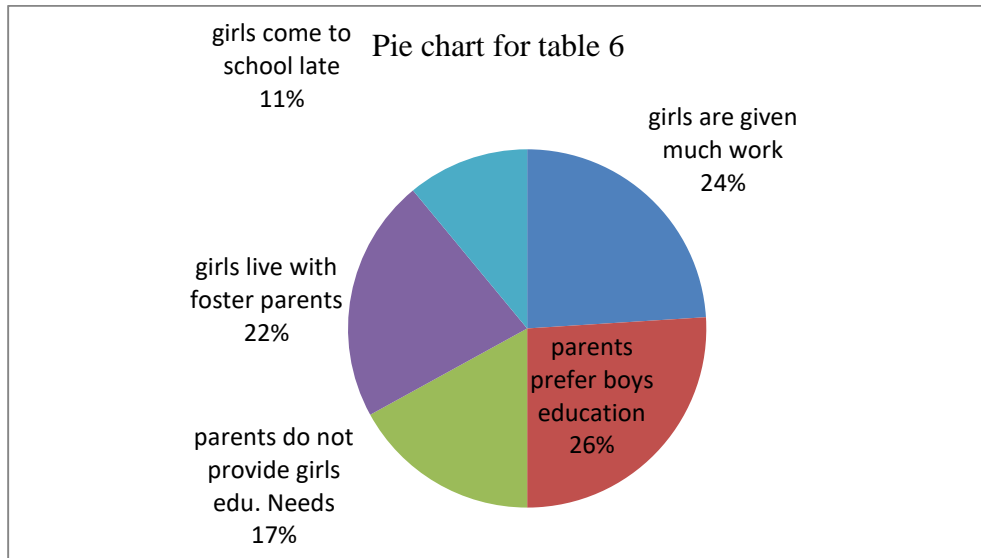
Considering table 6, 11 respondents representing 24 % of the 46 teachers who were administered questionnaires, attributed low girls performance to girls been given much chores (work) at home than their boy counterparts which interfere with their studies. During interview sessions with heads of schools the researcher managed to get information that matched with information obtained from students. One head of school for example,

proclaimed that there were several factors that could affect girls in their academic performance, one being their excessive involvement in domestic activities especially during planting and harvesting seasons. In the Tolon district girls are classified as home assistors and in this regard when mothers are away from home; their daughters take charge of all activities. The more they are subjected into home related activities the more they lose studying time and school attendance; this has resulted to their poor academic performance". From the above explanations the researcher concluded that there is a problem of girl students' involvement in domestic activities in the Tolon district as provided by other respondents that has resulted to their poor academic performance.12 respondents which happened to be the modal class representing 26% of the sample associated low girls performance to parents high expectation and attention to boys education at the expense of the girl- child education.8 respondents representing 17% of the sample associated girls low performance to parents failure in proving girls educational needs particularly learning materials. Data obtained from interviews conducted by the researcher to heads of schools also indicated that some students got that assistance but majority did not get that assistance. The following quote reveals information given by one headmaster in a particular school, "Some students get assistance including; school uniforms, stationary and pocket money but majority do not get that assistance because of the attitude developed by their parents relating to their interest in boys education at the expense of the girl-child*"*. Another headmaster argued that most students were not getting assistance relating to their school needs from their parents. This argument concurs with students' response and it created some conditions that made girls fail to attend school because they lacked basic needs including good school uniforms and other basic needs. This poor attendance to school

contributed to their poor academic performance. It is also argued that girls are very much sensitive with their appearance than boys, sometimes they cannot attend school without having needed materials especially dress.5 respondents representing 11% also attributed lateness of girls to school as a factor that contributes to low girls performance in education. Among the determiners as indicated above, the dominant cause of low girl performance was associated to parents strong interest in boys education at the expense of their female counterparts. This goes to confirm Ademola's work.

### 4.2.11 Illiteracy as a factor that influences girls poor academic performance.

According to Ogoye (2007), illiterate parents do not place much premium on their children's education especially that of the girl- child, for this reason, they do not provide their educational needs. Another study conducted by Moyi (2011), support other studies on home base factors affecting academic performance by reviling the situation in Kenya that children coming from poor family settings normally attend school simultaneously with other social or economic activities. He added that this circumstance makes it difficult for the child to stay in school. Kivuli (2006), investigated the influence of school based factors and home based factors on girl's academic performance and revealed that there is a relationship between parent's level of education and good performance of girls. This argument makes sense in that; the more parents are educated the more they can come close with their children to see how they are progressing academically. The findings of this work go to confirm the works of the above referenced researcher. Below was the data collected on parents level of education:

### Table 7parents level of education

| Level of education | Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| No education | 15 | 50 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Middle school certificate | 5 | 16.6 |
| "O"/ A" Level and "cert" | 5 | 16.7 |
| University Degree/Diploma "cert" | 2 | 6.7 |
| Others | 3 | 10 |
| Total | 30 | 100 |
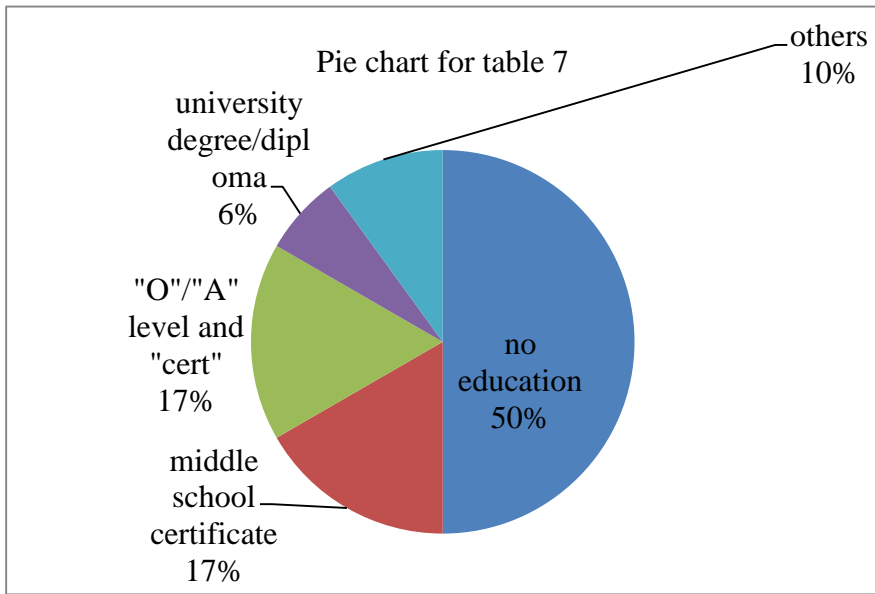
The data from table above revealed that 50% of parents were not educated, 16.6% of parents were holding middle school leaving certificates and " O" / "A'' / cert " A" respectively, while 6. 7 were degree and diploma holders and 10% were holders of other certificates. It is revealed in this table that majority of parents were illiterates hence do not know the importance of the girl- child education.

**4.2.12 Large family size as a factor that influences poor academic performance of girls.**

Inhabitants in the study area consider family planning as a taboo. Also there is virtually no education on the need to plan their families. This compel them in raising large families which puts much load on them, hence making it difficult for them to provide for the needs of the family, especially, the girl-child's educational needs. Data was collected on number of girls per head:

**Table 9 Number of girl-children in school**

| Response | Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| One | 8 | 26.7 |
| Two | 12 | 40 |
| Three and above | 10 | 33.3 |
| Total | 30 | 100 |

Pie chart for table 9

one
27%

Three
and
above
33%

Two
40%
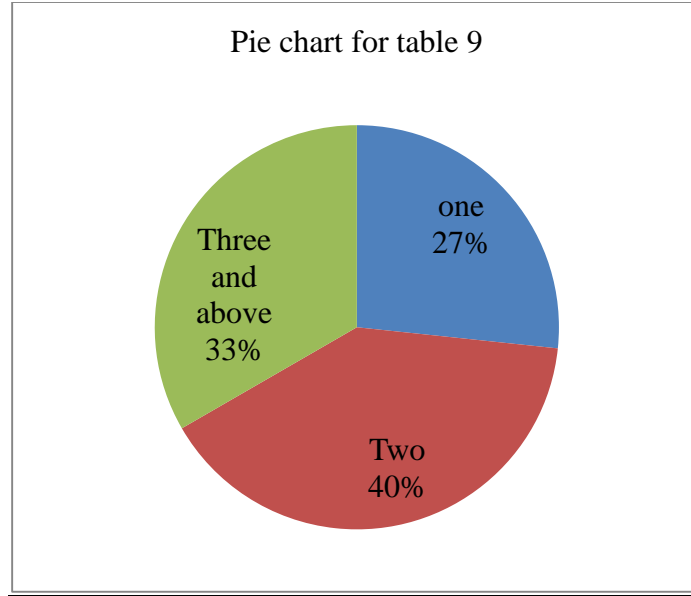
According to table 7 above, 26.7% of respondents had 1 girl-child each in school, 40% of respondents had 2 girl-children in school and 33.3% had 3 and above girl-children in school. It is therefore evident that majority of the people of the area had 2 and above girl-children in school. This made it difficult for parents provide basic needs including pocket money for their wards.

### 4.2.13 Failure to provide the girl- child's educational needs

Marzano (2003), argued that parental involvement in students' academic affairs can also affect their academic performance in schools. He added that school administrators use to council parents to take their part in their children's affairs starting from home. One of such duties of parents is secure private teachers to assist their wards at home. Contrary to Marzano's stance, little or no interest of parents is shown in the education of the child especially the girl-child in the Tolon district, a survey conducted on parents who employed private teachers for their wards is presented below:

**Table 10 parents who had private teachers for their daughters**

| Responses | Respondent | Percentage (%) |
|-----------|------------|----------------|
| Yes | 9 | 30 |
| No | 21 | 70 |
| Total | 30 | 100 |

Pie chart for table 10
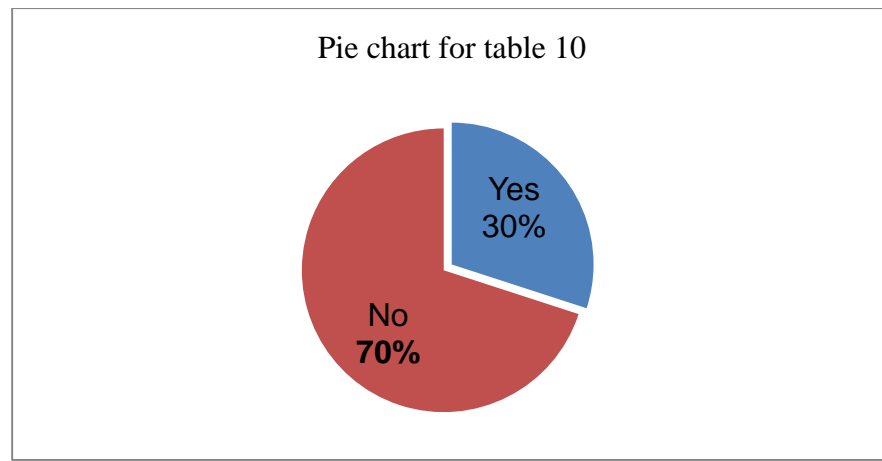


From table 8 above, 30% of parents were able to organize private teachers for their daughters while 70% were unable. Wards who had private teachers at home seemed to be doing better than those who did not have, this goes to confirm the works of Marzano (2003).This is evident that most parents could not afford financially or do not even see the need to do so.

**4.2.13 Analysis of questionnaires for students on factors that influence poor academic performance of girls in the Tolon district.**

**Table 11**

| Challenge | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Do parents delay/ do not pay my school levies | 8 | 16 |
| Do Parents fail to buy me basic school materials | 7 | 14 |
| Are girls are given too much work at home than boys. | 12 | 24 |
| More chores deny me study time | 6 | 12 |
| Parents view has been that I do not require as much education as boys. | 8 | 16 |
| Parents feel that boys are better than girls when it comes to academic work. | 9 | 18 |
| TOTAL | 50 | 100 |

Pie chart for table 11
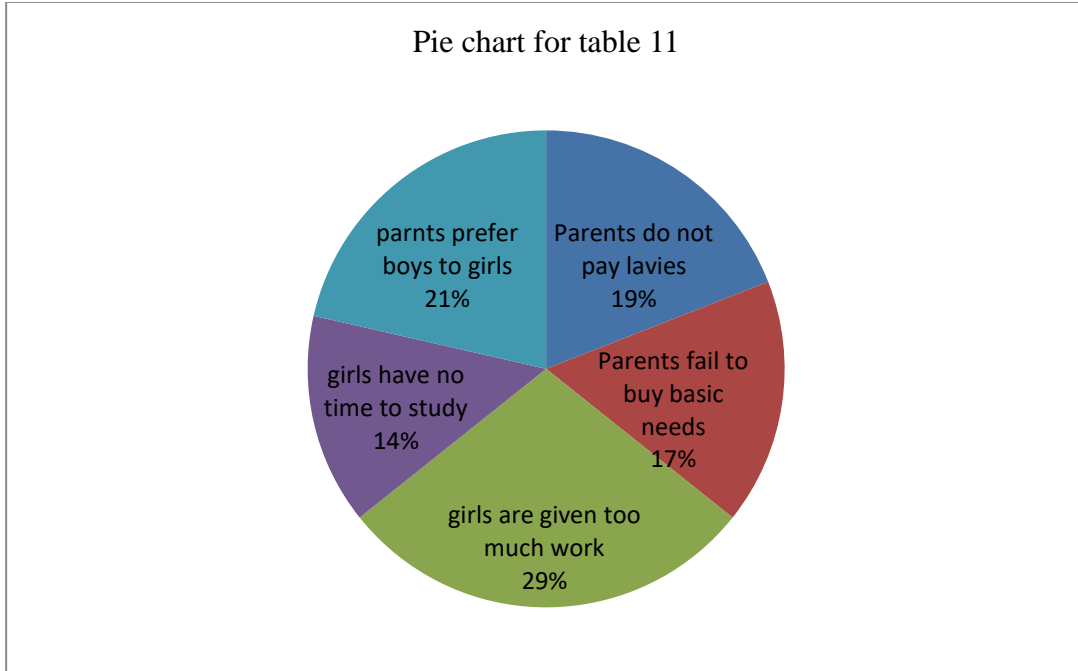


From table 11, 16% of the respondents claimed that their parents delay/ do not pay school levies. 14% of the respondents also claimed that parents fail to buy school basic materials for girls. 24%, which was the modal class held that girls are given too much work than boys at home. 12%, of the respondents said that house chores deny them study time. 16%, of the sample said that parents view has been that girls do not require much education as boys since they will eventually get married. 18%,of the respondents claimed that parents feel that boys are better than girls when it comes to academic work.

**4.3 Effects of Poor academic performance of girls.**

The low attention given to girl-child education has a great impact in the lives of the girls, their families, communities and the nation as a whole. The above enlisted causes have called on prominent people to look into the impacts or effects these could have on the individuals and the society at large. Theresa (2005), observed that low girls education can bring about an increase in the cycle of poverty, high population growth. She stressed that

not until we have taken the education of the girl-child seriously, the agenda that the government has set for development of the nation will be a mirage. Magus (2012) also called on parents to educate their daughters to be bold to take up positions in society. He quoted Aggrey as saying that "when you educate a man, you educate an individual, but when you educate a woman, you educate a nation". He added that if mothers today were to be educated, our population would have been low and poverty will be minimum. Magnus again called on parents to continue to sacrifice to ensure that the girl-child get good and quality education, if not they cannot be the best social security they (parents) could give themselves in their old age, since those educated  stand the better chance of taking good care of them in their old age.

According to Isaac et el (2001), low female education would lead to the increment in the risk of them contracting sexual transmitted diseases such as AIDS, decrease in their level of literacy and numeracy, deprive them of employment opportunities, reduce their confidence and status in the family and this eventually leads to high rate of social vices such as prostitution, drug abuse and increase in teenage pregnancy and also leading to increase in population growth. They also assert that, low girls education can also affect the community in which they are. They hold that low girls education can lead to decrease in economic productivity and increase poverty rate in women because they will not be lucratively employed, have better household management because they (mothers) will not know how to organize their homes, will not give better education to their children and will not be role models for the young girls. In their opinion too, if girls are not educated, the nation will experience a decrease in productivity and cannot enhance national development. There

would be an increase in birth and mortality rate in the country, increase in social problems like prostitution and domestic violence because the women will remain unemployed.

## 4.4 Measures adopted to improve girls academic performance.

### 4. 4.1 Implementation of the Advocacy model

As the saying goes, "Every problem has a solution", the problem of low girls performance in schools is of no exception. Following the research work, the researcher has reviewed the relevant literature on the ways to curb the problem and make girls perform like their male counterpart.

The main advocacy model employed by the project was the 'Grassroots' or Community Organizing Theory by Saul Alinsky (1971). According to Alinsky (1971), undesirable situations or behaviors are best addressed by collective action especially at the community level and in order to address the poor academic performance of girls in the Tolon district, all members of the community who constitute the stakeholders must be organized to put their hands on deck fora better outcome in the district's educational sector. This would yield good and timely results, and then lead to community ownership and sustainability (Stachowiak, 2013). Unlike the Power Politics theory, grassroots or community organisers view power as changeable and dynamic, not something held exclusively by elites

hence the inclusion of community members (parents and guardians)as stakeholders and not only the education managers. The proponents of the Grass roots theory believe that groups of people can create power by taking mutual action to achieve social change like the poor academic performance of their wards for the betterment of all. *Alinsky assumes that;* Power exists when people cooperate or obey, which is in-line with the principles of this project piece because it involves all and sundry in the district.

Power bases can be shifted through actions and events; this has to do with the fact that, due to the consultative meetings held with various stakeholders, an action plan was drawn and implemented accordingly shifting or changing certain actions and events in the society such as reducing the work load on girls at home such as domestic chores, engaging in family business, attendance of funerals and going to the farm. Again parents changing their mindsets about the girl-child such as the stereotype that girls are naturally created to be home keepers and child bearers among others, teachers now ready to go the extra mile to ensure the successful outcome of the students especially the girl-child in particular.

Organizing efforts reflected the wishes of people directly affected by the problem; the sensitization sessions with community members brought to light the wishes and aspirations of the people, especially the programme on girl-child protection, where parents expressed the desire for positive change in their wards education and how they hope for their better future. It was their wish that, the drop- out rate be reduced, early marriages, teenage pregnancies and any other issues that may hinder the progress of their wards.

Organizing requires building the capacity of those affected by the problem to address it; this was also seen when the sensitization workshops for the various community members were organized and a resource person took them through series of topics ranging from conceiving to delivery to their whole wellbeing from childhood to adulthood. After the programme, the community members expressed their gratitude to the organizers and said they were educated enough to be apart of their wards education from start to finish and making a pledge to the organizers of their commitment hence forth towards their wards education.

Efforts should focus on changing institutions and policies, not on changing individuals; here, the resource person's talk made both the education managers and the parents to understand and accept that, the problem was with the institutions and policies. It was accordingly agreed that, the students be kept in school for most part of the day especially the candidates to do more studies for a better outcome. Therefore, the application of the model focused on working with the many, not with the few hence the inclusion of education managers, parents/ guardians, teachers, head teachers and the students alike in being the target group and forming the respondents respectively. Also the model helped to facilitate the efforts of teachers and parents collectively to achieve the high academic performance of girls the district so desires. The project therefore included training/capacity-building, community mobilizing, awareness building, action research, policy analysis, etc According to the grass root theory, advocacy projects and organizations seeking to create positive social change should therefore play the role of conveners and capacity-builders. Considering the poor academic performance of girls as a social and economic issue, the grassroots theory was therefore adopted to seek the stakeholders view on the poor state of the academic level of the girls, come up with interventions they felt could be used to address it and strategies for its sustainability. Based on this, the project organized a number of stakeholder meetings and sensitization fora for teachers and educational managers, students, parents andguardians (community members) to seek for the way forward for addressing the menace.

**4.5 Summary of findings**

Overview

The data below presents the key findings of the study which are derived from the data analysis. The findings relate to : inconsistent academic performance, poor sanitation facilities, socio-cultural and economic factors including early marriage, poverty, community's expectation, social norms and cultural expectation, rural dwelling, gender stereotyping, low interest of parents in girls education, high rate of illiteracy among parents, large family size and failure to provide the girl-child educational needs was identified as factors that influence the academic performance of the girl-child in the Tolon district. This chapter also discusses how these factors identified influence the academic performance of girls.

**4.6 Discussion of Findings**

**4.6.1 Inconsistent academic performance**

Pupils in the rural areas usually begin with poor foundation at the basic level for lack of good educational infrastructure and as they progress to higher grades, face difficulties and challenges most especially girls living in families with unfavourable academic environment. The place of this study Tolon, is not an exception. This had a link with the problem at hand as survey showed girls coming from homes that were less endowed with

academic environments such as homes that had private tuition for wards, supplementary reading materials and enough study times showed signs of poor academic performance.

**4.6.2 Early marriage**

Per National Statistics(2006), 50- 60% of marriages in Ghana was contracted between girls under the age of 18 years and boys under 21, it is often said that girls will continue the education after marriage which in most cases fail or leads to a tremendous drop in performance. This had a correlation with girls performance in the district as a huge number of teenage mothers was recorded during the survey, many of whom who were interviewed on their inters of going back to school answered in the negative, those who attempted after marriage couldn′t cope and had to advise themselves to stay away from school.

**4.6.3 Poor sanitation facilities**

Onset of ovulation and menstruation happens to be a phase where girls develop into maturity. Menstrual hygiene plays an important role in the life of the adolescent girl. It is a hindrance to girls in terms of their attendance and performance, particularly in higher grades. The Tolon district is not endoubt with basic sanitation facilities and materials. Finding revealed that less than 30% of schools in the district have enough sanitary facilities such as toilets, good drinking water, urinals and sanitary pads for girls which compel most girls to absent themselves and in most cases drop out of school. According to a head teacher in Tolon JHS, ″The lack of sanitary pads in their schools in most cases make the girls soil themselves with their menses, this causes them so much embarrassments thereby

making it difficult for them to stay in the class for lessons ″. The head teacher's

proclamation had a relationship to the academic performance of girls as he eventually

acknowledged at the latter part of his pronouncement.

### 4.6.4 Failure to provide the girl-child educational needs

Marzano (2003), argued that parental involvement in students academic affairs can also

affect their academic performance in school. Marano's postulation was confirmed by the

findings. In the Tolon district, 30% of parents who are educated had the required support

for their  daughters in school such as the provision of financial needs and other educational

materials. This created a disparity between wards in the district as wards who descended

from the educated families performed more than their counterparts.

### 4.6.5 Girls' Involvement in Domestic Services

The study revealed that about 10 percent of female students who are not in the Tolon

township and attending the Senior High School in the Tolon district live with foster or

surrogate parents. These girls live with surrogate parents because their parents cannot

afford the boarding fees in their schools. Often these girls provide numerous domestic

services such as cooking, washing of clothes and utensils, and assist their surrogate parents

on their farms as a form of support to these surrogate parents. As a result of the regular

provision of such services, these girls end up stretched to the limit leaving them little

or no time to study. Sometimes some of these girls attend school late missing their

lessons         and         this         affects         their         participation         at         school.

The study showed that the involvement of girls in home or domestic services does

not, however, affect female participation and performance in education in the Tolon district

it was realized that parents in this area rely on the services of their sons and daughters to provide their domestic services. Often while boys are assigned duties which involve weeding around the compound of their homes, tidying or cleaning up rooms in the house girls are given tasks such as cooking, care of siblings and washing clothing. In certain instances, very few parents, about 5 percent, rely on the services of house helps to carry out their domestic services at home. Besides parents assigning their children responsibilities to perform at home, they also make arrangements for them to undertake their studies. Parents allow their children to either learn in the morning before performing their house chores or study in the evening after performing their duties before they go to sleep.

### 4.6.6 Gender stereotyping at school

An observation made in a number of schools in the district during the survey provided the data below: it was revealed that teachers themselves do not make an effort in providing quality education to the girl-child. Teachers discriminated against girls in a number of ways; their style of questioning, giving examples to support questions, student engagement among others. At the lower grades, boys were often used to set examples. Teachers at the senior high school level also in their posture prepared the minds of girls to develop the mindset that science and mathematics are male subjects. True to type, this has a correlation since less than 5% of girls in the district is offering the sciences in the district.

However, in some schools, the story was different, the attitude and work of teachers in those schools had not adversely affected the participation of girls in the schools. The study showed that the conduct of teachers' professional duties was guided by a

code of conduct of their profession which did not allow them to engage in acts of discrimination and segregation. Due to this, teachers in the act of questioning students in classrooms in an attempt to elucidate correct or appropriate responses about issues did not direct their questions to selected students in a particular sex group or even base their questions on students' abilities but rather they often tried to involve all groups of students (brilliant and non-brilliant; female and male students,) to allow them to express their opinion on issues or make contributions to issues under discussion at any time.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 5.0 Overview

This chapter summarizes the findings, conclusions and recommendations for future research.

### 5.1 Summary

The research findings on the factors that influence the academic performance of the girl-child education (academic performance) in the Tolon District Assembly, revealed that parental support has made positive impact on the academic performance of girls in school for the period covered in the study. The research findings also revealed that majority of people of the study area were illiterates. For instance, from table 9, 50% of the responsible respondents were illiterate.

This pre-supposes that more than half of the population were illiterates who in most cases had perceived girls education as a waste. This is in line with the findings of Janet and Andrew (1999) on the situation of girl child education in the Tamale district. Evidence from analysis of the research data also showed that poverty, lack of sanitary facilities, gender stereotyping at school, low interest of parents in girls education, early marriage were the contributory factors to the poor academic performance of girls-children in school. Information from table 10 revealed that 60% of parents and guardians in the study area were peasant farmers who depended mostly on rains for the cultivation of crops such as maize, yam among others. Further investigations also showed that people of the study were

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prone to floods, drought and other natural disasters which usually affect crop yield, hence making farmers in the study area poor (poverty).

Furthermore, the analysis also showed that people of the study area were traditionalist. From table 9,it was revealed that 50% of parents interviewed were serving lesser gods, and were so attached to the beliefs and practices such as girls play second fiddle to their male counterparts, girls are created to serve as housekeepers and child bearers, if a woman rears an animal the man sells it among others that they do not see any importance attach to education, most particularly girl-child education, as it is spelt out in their traditions that educating a girl is like looking after somebody's goats.

On the question of problems or effects associated with poor academic performance of girls in school, it was revealed that social vices such as prostitution, drug abuse, high population growth, low productivity were some of the effects of the situation. Another equally important revelation was that some parents still do not support their wards (daughters) in school despite the efforts made by the researcher. This situation could improve if measures such as; provision of  school uniforms by non-governmental organizations like UNICEF, Catholic Relief Services, granting bursaries and scholarships to girl, sensitizing parents on the importance of girls education among others were factors suggested that could enhance the girl-child's academic performance.

**5.2 Conclusion:**

This research work provides an over-view on poor academic performance of girls in education in the Tolon District and suggests approaches that may helptoimprove the academic performance of girls in school. While it is important to continue to expand

educational opportunities for girls, some parents find it difficult to continue to finance the present educational needs for their wards (girls) due to their poverty level. Some parents also still hold the belief that educating the girl-child is a waste because they were illiterates. Some too still maintain their cultural belief that educating the girl-child is like looking after somebody's tree. Socio-cultural factors such as gender stereotyping at school and at home, lack of sanitary facilities in schools were also uncovered as some factors that militated against the academic performance of girls.

**5.3 Recommendations:**

Considering the importance of girls education and the low participation of girls and most particularly their low academic performance in Ghanaian schools as a whole and the Tolon District in particular, efforts should be directed towards arresting this unhealthy situation, parents should try not to be hostile to their children (girls). They must be friendly with their teenage children, particularly girls, to enable them to come out with their problems in the homes for discussion. They should also reduce household chores on girls so that they can learn in the house too. Again, District, Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies, NGOs government and other stakeholders should roll out effective and motivating programs to improve the academic performance in school.

Illiteracy is a hindrance to children's education in general and particularly girls' education. The government should therefore intensify her campaign on girl-child education especially in the northern part of Ghana, precisely the Tolon District Assembly.

Poverty is seen to be one major cause of poor parental support on girl's education. Therefore the poverty alleviation strategy put in place by the government should be strictly

adhered to by district assemblies in order to reduce the poverty level of parents which is a contributory factor to the poor support of children particularly girl-child in the Tolon District in the northern region of Ghana. Government should also encourage non-governmental organization such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS), UNICEF among others to provide help to deprived school children precisely girls.

**5.4 Direction of future research:**

This research work devoted itself to finding the causes, effects and possible remedies to curb the problem of poor academic performance of girls education. The researcher narrowed the scope to only Tolon District, also not all girls were used in the process.

Therefore, the researcher wishes to direct further or future researchers to find out the causes and effects of poor academic performance of girls in a larger or broader perspective and possibly suggest ways to curb the situation nationwide.

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UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

**APPENDIX I**

**QUESTIONNAIR FOR TEACHERS**

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Please , I am MPhil Development Education student at the University for Development, Tamale campus. This questionnaire is designed to collect information about the impact of low girl- child performance in the Tolon District. Please, you have been selected as a respondent to this questionnaire. This research is for academic purpose only; your identity and responses will not be disclosed. Could you please spend some few minutes to fill this questionnaire?

**Please (√) tick the most appropriate response.**

SECTION A: PERSONAL PROFILE OF RESPONDENT

1. What is your age?  A) 21- 30 [   ]   B) 31- 40 [   ]   C) 41- 50 [   ]  D) 51- 60 [   ]
2. What is your gender?  A) Male  [   ]  B)  Female  [   ]
3. What is your highest educational qualification?

    A)  Diploma                          [   ]

    B)  Bachelor's Degree            [   ]

    C)  Master's Degree               [   ]

4. For how long have you been teaching?

    A)  1- 5 years                        [   ]

    B)  6- 10 years                      [   ]

    C)  11- 15 years                    [   ]

    D)  16- 20 years                    [   ]

    E)  21 years and above          [   ]

**SECTION B**

**CAUSES OF LOW GIRL- CHILD PERFORMANCE IN EDUCATION**

Please, provide brief responses.

1.What do you say about the performance of girls as compared to that of boys in your school?..................................................................................................................

2.What reasons will you give to the above?...................................................................

……………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………...

3.What problems do girls experience at home that interfere with their performance?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

4.Are there problems that girls at school that may interfere with their performance?, if yes, can you list three (3) of the problems?

I…………………………………………………………………………………..

II…………………………………………………………………………………

III…………………………………………………………………………………

5.How many girls are regular in your school?............................................................

6.How many girls come to school with the required writing materials?

…………………………………………………………………………………..

7.What percentage of girls complete JHS successfully every academic year?

.................................................................................................................

8.How many girls drop out of school every academic year?...........................

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9.In your candid opinion, state three (3) measures that can be adopted to improve girl performance in school.

I………………………………………………………………………………..

II………………………………………………………………………………..

III…………………………………………………………………………………

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**THANKS FOR YOUR TIME, MAY GOD RICHLY LESS YOU.**

**APPNDIX II**

**STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE**

Kindly respond to all questions

**Section A, Personal Information**

Please indicate your gender          Male  [   ]        Female  [   ]

2. What is the occupation of  your parents?

a. Father…………………………………..

b. Mother………………………………….

c. Guardian…………………………………..

Section B

**Check (√) the appropriate opinion**

| Challenge | Always | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  Do parents delay/ do not pay school levies | [   ] | [   ] | [   ] | [   ] |
| 2.  Do parents fail to buy you basic school materials. | [   ] | [   ] | [   ] | [   ] |
| 3.  Are you given too much work at home compared to boys? | [   ] | [   ] | [   ] | [   ] |
| 4.  Do activities at home deny you study time | [   ] | [   ] | [   ] | [   ] |
| 5.  Do parents claim you do not require as much education as boys. | [   ] | [   ] | [   ] | [   ] |
| 6.  Do your parents feel that boys are better than girls when it comes to academic work. | [   ] | [   ] | [   ] | [   ] |

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