

# School-Related Factors That Affect Girls' Access To Education At The Basic School Level In The Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality Of The Western Region Of Ghana

Daniel Asamoah

Benjamin Sundeme

Eric Quainoo Jnr

Derkye Charles

Department of Education and Psychology, University of Cape Coast,  
Ghana

**Abstract:** *The purpose of the study was to explore the school-related factors that affect girls' access to education at the basic school level in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality of the Western Region of Ghana. The study used the descriptive survey design with quantitative approach. Survey questionnaires were used to gather data from 451 Form one and two girls who were selected through purposive sampling. The gathered data was analyzed by using frequencies and percentages. The findings of the study revealed that school factors such as lack of teaching and learning materials, distance to school from where pupils stay and lack of basic needs in school such as books and pens affect girls' access to basic education in the municipality.*

**Conclusion and recommendation:** *It was concluded that the factors that affect girls' access to education at the basic level do not operate in isolation. Therefore finding solutions to these factors, should be done in their totality rather than providing solutions to each of the factors separately. Recommendations were made based on the need for the provision of adequate teachings and learning materials, and basic needs such as books and pens by stakeholders of education, and provision of transportation to pupils who stay at distant places from their schools.*

**Keywords:** *School-related factors, basic school level, girls' access to education*

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to Schultz [14], education helps individuals to acquire knowledge and skills through teaching, learning, training and research. It is in this regard that UNESCO [16] posited that for a successful achievement of educational goals, there should be no discrimination or whatsoever with respect to gender. It should be pointed out that, education for girls is one of the ways to promote social and economic development. World Bank [17] notes that increasing the educational level of girls has a favourable impact on economic growth. Looking at the relevance of educating women in national development, special emphasis has laid on female's education. For instance,

Adamu-Issah, Elden, Forson and Schrofer [1] stressed the need to educate girls and have access to a complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality. According to the report of the Pan African Conference (as cited in UNESCO [16], Africans have been behind other continents in female's participation in education and this was attributed to the belief in male superiority and female subordination.

From the view of Kabira [9], discrimination of girls in education persists in many African societies due to customary attitude, gender biased and prioritized child education systems. Okojie and Christiana [12] however note that in Africa, over 18 million girls are without education and more than two-third of Africa's 200 million illiterate adults are women. To enable

girls participate in education, stakeholders in education are expected to provide adequate teaching and learning facilities, protect girls against early pregnancy and marriages, supply materials like sanitary pads and encourage less house work for girls. This will enable them have ample time for school/homework. Others according to the World Bank [17] include prompt school fees payment, clothing and nutrition, positive motivation to change attitude, good accommodation at home and above all be role models to their children. With gender parity being a basic human right and key indicator of achievement of education and a source of economic growth, coupled with the fact that every additional education a girl receives increases the survival rate of that girl by 15% as noted by Kabira [9] and World Bank [18], the girl-child education should be taken extremely serious.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The relatively low enrolment of girls in the basic schools in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality has become a great concern for stakeholders of education in the area. According to a report by the District Parameters in Education [6], more boys access basic school education than girls. Despite the effort of the Government of Ghana in various ways to show her commitment towards the achievement of universal basic education, gender parity at the basic level continues to prevail with regard to enrolment of girls, their retention and participation in education, and the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality is of no exception. According to the District Parameter Report [6], less than 75.7% of females averagely access basic education as compared to more than 90% of their male counterparts. This raises a concern regarding the factors that affect girls' access to education in the municipality. The From the views of Adamu-Issah et al. [1], factors such as unnecessary punishment, over-burdening girls with household chores, lack of care and inability of parents to provide basic needs affect girls' education. Other factors according to Suleman et al. [15] and Oguta [11] include lack of effective teaching, lack of interest in subjects, distance from school and peer pressure affect girls' education. With the current situation of low girls' enrolment in the basic schools in the municipality, there is the likelihood that some of these factors are present in the schools thereby preventing girls' access to education. Looking at the relevance of girls' education and with problem of low girls' enrolment in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality, there is the need to explore the school-related factors that affect girls' access to education in the municipality. It is in this regard that the study sought to explore the school-related factors that affect girls' access to education at the basic school level in Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality in the Western Region of Ghana.

## III. RESEARCH QUESTION

- ✓ What are the school-related factors that affect girls' access to basic education in Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality?

## IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

### THEORETICAL REVIEW

The theoretical review that was used in the study was the Maslow's [10] Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow [10] came up with five ladders of needs which are arranged in hierarchical order. The needs include physical needs such as hunger, thirst, shelter, sexual drive and sleep and safety needs which comprise security, protection from physical and emotional harms. Other needs include social needs which are composed of affiliation, belonging, acceptance and companionship, esteem needs such as self-respect, autonomy and achievement, status, recognition and attention and, self-actualization which emphasis the growth, achieving ones potential and fulfillment. From Maslow [10], as each need is substantially satisfied, the next need becomes dominant which cause the individual needs to move up the hierarchy. At the base level of hierarchical needs are the physiological needs which is essential for the survival of human's life. According to the Forum for African Women Educationalists [7], in cases where children are deprived of these basic needs, girls for example, are more disadvantaged than boys. Maslow's [10] theory is therefore relevant in this study because it emphasis the provisions of the basic needs for one to achieve the higher needs. The theory is concerned with achievement of self-actualization at the top of the pyramid which can be attained through education. Unfortunately, Arnot and Phipps [3] stipulated that the girl-child needs to be motivated at school and/or home to attain greater heights in their educational endeavors which has made access to education one of the basic needs. The basic needs as indicated include hunger, thirst, shelter, sexual drive and sleep. In the school situation, things such as provision of learning materials as well as the general atmosphere of the school have become part of the basic needs for a successful education. Teachers are therefore encouraged to careful to guide girls to divert their sexual libido at adolescence to some vigorous school activities and games like soccer, rugby or basketball rather than the in-door games and stereotype daily routines that the girl-child is permanently engaged in at home (Arnot & Phipps, [3]). This can reduce the problem of early pregnancy which happens to be one of the causes of school dropout for girls. When girls feel that they are not secured at school and at home, proper learning may not take place. The buildings, toilets and other physical structures and the distance they have to cover to school should be taken into consideration.

### FEMALE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Psacharapoulous and Patrinos [13] contended that every year of schooling lost represents a 10 to 20% reduction in girls' future incomes. According to Psacharapoulous and Patrinos [13], countries can raise their per capita economic growth by about 3% in the next decade if they attained gender parity in enrolment. In particular, Psacharapoulous and Patrinos [13] posited that when female are educated it has implications for improved infant/child and maternal health which have a rippling effect on household incomes and nourishment. For instance, the Ghana Education Service [8]

posited that a literate woman gains access to employment more easily than the illiterate woman and tends to manage resources better. The Ghana Education Service [8] however noted that there is a direct relationship between female education and poverty reduction. This is because, educated women tend to have smaller family sizes and reduced fertility which have great potential benefits for their future generations. Addae-Mensah [2] stressed that the high fertility rate in Ghana in the early 70s dropped drastically from 6.8 births per woman to 5.1 and 6.9 to 4.1 respectively between 2000 and 2005 due to the continued and sustained efforts at ensuring the participation of girls in education. Female education is important for a nation's development and as a result, the relevance of female education to Ghana's national development has long been recognized by scholars in the past. Notable among these scholars according to the Ghana Education Service [8] is Dr. J. E. Kwegyir Aggrey who 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 and this carefully underscores the relevance of female education in national development.

#### SCHOOL FACTORS THAT AFFECT FEMALE EDUCATION

Studies have shown a lot of factors that affect girls' access to education. Prominent among them are self-esteem, availability of school plant, location of the school and teachers' attitude towards female students in the school, among others. According to the Forum for African Women Educationalists [7], females' low self-esteem has been identified as a factor which affects female participation in education. As a result of girls' poor perception of their academic prowess, they tend to shy away from offering subjects such as mathematics and the physical sciences. This has affected female participation in scientific and technical education in most developing countries. The pervasiveness of the notion that girls are academically less intelligent than boys extends its influence beyond the home environment into the school system. Debele [5] in a study of female education wastage identified the role of women in a society and the organization of school system as major underlying factors which restrict female participation in education. At the school level, teachers indulge in segregate acts against girls. According to Debele [5], the lack of female teacher role models, male discriminative attitudes and male image projection are some of the institutional barriers which affect female participation in the study of mathematics and the physical sciences at school.

Sex role stereotyping in school textbooks is also a significant influence. It is in this regard that Biraimah [4] notes that the characterization of women in educational materials was found to be only 10% and in the few illustrations found, they were portrayed as weak and passive characters, and providers of household chores. The classroom interaction between boys and girls, and students and teachers exercise significant influence on the performance of girls. Male attitude especially among peers has been found to have negative effects on girls' aspirations in science. Biraimah [4] stressed that adolescent boys consistently undermined girls'

efforts to participate in science classes by making disparaging remarks about them and asserting that they (boys) considered science to be a male domain. It has been found by the Ghana Education Service [8] that in science and technology studies, teachers tended to answer boys more often than girls in mathematics and science classes but at the same time this also provided major explanations why teachers give more attention to girls in non-science classes. Empirically, Suleman et al. [15] revealed from a sample of 120 teachers and 480 students who were selected through simple random sampling procedures in Karak District in Pakistan that school factors such as unpunctuality of teachers, unfeasibility of the school buildings, lack of competent teachers, lack of proper security arrangement and long distance to school affected girls' access to education. In addition, Oguta [11] showed from a sample of 33 principals, 66 class teachers and 66 head girls who were selected through census sampling procedures in the Migori District, Migori County, Kenya, that lack of uniforms, punishment, high school fees, distance from school and lack of teaching and learning materials affect girls' access to education. Most importantly, if these factors are not addressed, they would have a lasting effect on girls' access to education and this might have happened in the case of the girls in the study area.

#### V. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive research design with quantitative approach. The study area was the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality which is one of the municipalities of the Western Region of Ghana. The target population included 1500 Junior High School Form 1 and 2 girls in in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipally. The form one and two girls were used in the study because they were available during the time the study was conducted. Through simple random sampling, four basic school that formed the accessible population were used. Particularly, through purposive sampling, all the 451 girls from sampled schools were selected for the study. A self-developed survey questionnaire was used to collect data on the school factors that affect girls' access to education at the Junior High level. The survey questionnaire contained nine (9) items which were measured on a two point scale 1= yes and 2 = no. The items demanded respondents to elicit responses on the school factors as affecting their access to education. To improve on the validity and reliability of the instrument, it was given to experts in the field of measurement and evaluation in order to judge each item in the context of clarity, generality and ambiguity. Before the field work, permissions were sought from the authorities of the sampled schools for the data collection exercise. On the field, the administration of the instruments was done in two weeks and the researchers administered the instruments to the respondents themselves. While collecting the data, respondents were assured of the necessary ethical issues such as confidentiality, anonymity and right of participation. At end of the data collection, all the 103 questionnaires were completed and collected. The data was coded into SPSS for cleaning, and also to check errors and missing values. The statistical tools that were used to analyse the data were frequencies and percentages.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the background characteristics of respondents is presented in Table 1.

School and Class	Frequency	Percentage
School A: JHS 1	44	9.8
JHS 2	59	13.1
School B: JHS 1	60	13.3
JHS 2	68	15.1
School C: JHS 1	48	10.6
JHS 2	54	12.0
School D: JHS 1	57	12.6
JHS 2	61	13.5
Total	451	100.0

Source: Field survey (2018).

Table 1: Pupils' Class

From Table 1, 209(46.3%) of the respondents were in JHS 1 whereas 242 (53.7%) of the respondents were in JHS 2. The results shows that there were more JHS 2 pupils than JHS 1 pupils in the responses that were surveyed.

The results on the research question is presented in Table 2.

Statements	Percentage	
	Yes	No
My school lacks the teaching and learning materials to support learning	402(89.1%)	49(10.9%)
My school is very far from where I stay	388(86.0%)	63(14.0%)
Teachers in my always tell me that education is for boys	103(22.8%)	348(77.2%)
I am always sacked from school because of non-payment of school charges	156(34.6%)	295(65.4%)
I lack the basic needs such as books and pens in school	401(88.9%)	50(11.1%)
I am generally not happy when I go to school due to the nature of my school's environment	201(44.6%)	250(55.4%)
I am always being punished unnecessarily any time I go to school	209(46.3%)	242(53.7%)
	111(24.6%)	340(75.4%)
	40(8.9%)	411(91.1%)

Boys attitudes towards girls in my school prevents me from going to school

Teachers in my school give more attention to boys than girls in class

N=451

Table 2: School factors that negatively affect girls' education

Results from Table 2 show that majority of the pupils agreed to the statement "My school lacks the teaching and learning materials to support learning". This is because 402(89.1%) of the pupils agreed to that statement whereas 49(10.9%) of the pupils to disagreed. In addition, majority of the pupils agreed to the statement "My school is very far from where I stay". This is because 388(86.0%) of the pupils agreed to that statement whereas 63(14.0%) of the pupils to disagreed. The respondents further agreed to the statement "I lack the basic needs in school" as 401(88.9%) and 50(11.1%) of the sampled respondents agreed and disagreed to the statement respectively. The result shows that the school factors that affect girls' access to education in the municipality are lack of teaching and learning materials, distance from school to where pupils stay and lack of basic needs in school.

The objective of the study was to explore school-related factors that affect girl's access to education at the basic school level in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality. The finding of the study showed that lack of teaching and learning materials, distance from school to where pupils stay and lack of basic needs in school affect girls' access to basic education. The finding is in line with Suleman et al. [15] and Oguta [11] who indicated that factors such as lack of proper security arrangement and long distance to school as well as lack of teaching and learning materials affect girls' access to education. This is obvious because from the view of Oguta [11] when pupils finds themselves at distant places from their schools, and especially where they have virtually limited means of transportation, they feel lazy and even may not concentrate when they are in school. This is because they might be in the hurry to go home due to lack of security. According to Suleman et al. [15], lack of girls' access to education becomes worse when there are lack of teaching and learning materials, and lack of basic needs such as books, pens, after after they have travelled the long distance to school. It is obvious that the presence of these factors will prevent pupils (girls) from going to school in the subsequent times which consequently affect girls' education. In line with the theoretical review of the study, Maslow [10] notes that education has become one of the basic needs in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. There is therefore the need for every individual at school going age to receive the basic education that he or she needs. The school which serves as the learning and one of the immediate environments must make efforts to make available the basic needs such as teaching and learning materials without which learners cannot learning meaningfully. This means that, when individual seek to satisfy their basic needs such as education, the school which is an organised place for teaching and learning should help the individuals to fulfil their



educational needs by providing the logistics for learning. This according to Maslow [10] will serve the basis for girls' self-actualization needs as well as other needs.

## VII. CONCLUSION

With reference to the finding of the study, it can be observed that when pupils and especially girls stay at distant places from the school, they might be lazy in walking for a longer distance to school which will affect their access to education especially when they have no or little means of transportation. In the same way, when pupils and especially girls come to school and lack the teaching and learning materials, and the basic needs such as books and pens, it contributes to lack of interest and laziness which will support the idea of staying at home especially if they have to come from distant places. It can therefore be concluded that the factors that affect girls' access to education do not operate in isolation, and that one of the factors might leads to the other.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made from the findings.

- ✓ First, the study recommends the need for the provision of adequate teachings and learning materials by stakeholders of education especially to the schools located in the municipality. When the materials are provided, it would enhance pupils' understanding and also sustain pupils' interest in school.
- ✓ Lastly, the study also recommends that efforts should be made by stakeholders in education such as parents, school authorities and government agencies especially in the municipality to provide a means of transportation to pupils who stay at distant places from where their respective schools are. This would help pupils and especially girls to avoid laziness and also enhance their security any time they come to and move out of school.
- ✓ It is further recommended that in finding solutions to these factors, it should be done in their totality rather than providing solutions to factors in isolation.

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