GENDER GAP IN ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT
Gender inequality in access to education has generally been seen as a major problem that needs to be addressed. This study investigates the factors that contribute to gender inequality in higher education. It also examines the challenges faced by Ghanaian girls that contribute to their discrimination in education. Government initiatives towards girls’ higher education have also been explored.

The study used mainly qualitative method, thus interview and field notes. Students, parents, faculty members were interviewed in order to understand their views towards girls’ education in higher education. The study was guided mainly by contemporary feminist theories. Relevant to this study are: theories of gender inequality which includes Marxist feminists, liberal feminists and radical feminists. These theories deal with marginalized group where girls and women in Ghana are not excluded, since they have usually been treated differently and unequally from boys and men. Furthermore, feminist theories serve as guides to the understanding of gender inequality and as guides to action. The literature discussed in this study reflect on the purpose of the study and try to derive some of the issues that the research question raise.

The findings of this study reveal that the major problem that affect girls access to higher education are poverty, the economic conditions of a families, social-cultural factors and negative altitudes of some parents towards girls higher education. It further, shows that girls face challenges such as pregnancy and lack of motivation.

The study exposed some educational interventions by the government aimed exclusively at increasing girls’ education in higher education, like the quota system and many others. In spite of these measures you would realize that the gap still persists. The study suggests to the government and other stakeholders in the higher education sector to embark on pragmatic and vigorous policies to curb the issue of gender inequality in the higher education sector. One such suggestion is that, there should be a policy which will enable
girls to go back to school after delivering a baby and of course sex education needs to be openly and publicly discussed. The solutions for implementing policies need also to be found in order to minimize the problem if not complete eradication. In addition, urgent attention is required in addressing poverty constraints. For proper economic take off it is expected that both sexes must be given equal opportunity in accessing higher education.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my long suffering mother, Agnes Boahene (AnteBei) and my beloved children, Betty Manu Fordjour and Ges Manu Fordjour.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When this journey was conceived, it looked so improbable and so far away. The prospect of leaving home for a long time and leaving you alone was difficult and unpleasant. You were undaunted and in fact you encouraged me. During those bleak moments, you were there for me and you never ceased to urge me on. You kept the home all by yourself and kept the family healthy. For these and all the things I cannot put on paper, I say a heartfelt thank you to my dear wife, Victoria Baidoo. I will come home to you soon.

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So many people have helped me on this journey and I risk sounding ungrateful by mentioning some names and leaving others out. That is why I say thank you to everyone whose support saw me through. Thank you very much.

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Finally my gratitude goes to my siblings Mr. Cletus Agyenim-Boateng, Josephina Manu and Emmanuel Manu for their morale and spiritual support, for making this dream possible, I say “Ayeekoo”

Patrick Maanu
Oslo, Norway
May 2008
### ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAWE</td>
<td>Forum for African Women Educationalists</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEMSA</td>
<td>Female Education in Mathematics and Sciences in Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCE</td>
<td>General Certificate Examination</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GETFUND</td>
<td>Ghana Education Trust Fund</td>
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<td>GLSS</td>
<td>Ghana Living Standard Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIPC</td>
<td>Heavily Indebted Poor Country</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>KMA</td>
<td>Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNUST</td>
<td>Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MOESS</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Science and Sports</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNDC</td>
<td>Provisional National Defense Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>Sub-Saharan African</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSNIT</td>
<td>Social Security and National Insurance Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSS</td>
<td>Senior Secondary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCC</td>
<td>University of Cape Coast</td>
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<tr>
<td>UEW</td>
<td>University of Education, Winneba</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>URC</td>
<td>University Realization Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1  Enrollment and Gender Breakdown by Education Level, Selected Academic Years, 1980-81 to 1990-91 ................................................................. 20

Table 2  Coding key of the respondents ............................................................ 42

Table 3  Composition of selected respondents by sex ....................................... 43
# ABSTRACT

# DEDICATION

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# ABBREVIATIONS

# LIST OF TABLES

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................... 1
1.2 The Objective and Research Questions of the Study ................................................ 2
1.3. Significance of the Study ......................................................................................... 4
1.4 The organization of the study ................................................................................... 5

## CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................... 7
2.2 Some facts about Ghana’s economy ......................................................................... 7
2.3 Higher education institutions in Ghana ..................................................................... 8
2.4 The role of the Universities in Ghana .................................................................... 11
2.5 The Development of Higher Education in Ghana ................................................... 13
2.6 Recruitment policies in Ghana Higher Education. ................................................. 17
2.7 Enrolment pattern of Higher Education in Ghana (male and females) ................... 20
2.8 Conclusion .............................................................................................................. 21

## CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 22
3.2 Gender ..................................................................................................................... 22
3.3 Culture and Gender ............................................................................................... 23
3.4 Gender Inequality and Poverty ............................................................................... 25
3.5 Review of Related Studies ...................................................................................... 26
3.6 Theories guiding the study ...................................................................................... 33
3.6.1 Theories of Gender Inequality. ............................................................................ 35
3.7 Conclusion .............................................................................................................. 37

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 38
4.2 Choice of methodology ........................................................................................... 38
4.3 Data Collection ....................................................................................................... 39
4.4 Selection of respondents ........................................................................................ 41
4.5 Administration of the Interview ............................................................................ 43
4.6 Analyzing Method .................................................................................................. 44
4.7 Limitation of the study ............................................................................................ 45

## CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 46
5.1 Overview of the responses of the interview guide by the respondents ................. 46
5.2 Factors that contribute to gender gap in Ghana’s higher education
5.2.1 Cultural influence and negative attitudes of the parents
5.2.2 Economic factor/influence
5.3 Challenges faced by Ghanaian girls/females
5.3.1 Pregnancy
5.3.2 Lack of family motivation and encouragement
5.4 Government initiatives towards female’s access to higher education
5.4.1 The quota system program
5.4.2 Other Intervention in the Education System

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION
REFERENCES
APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE RESPONDENTS
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Education significantly leads to the improvement of the productive capacity of all societies. It enables people to use their capabilities and better their livelihood. Again it empowers individuals to participate in the transformation of their own lives and the society as a whole. It is known that educated mothers tend to have healthier families than their counterparts who are not educated, a factor that contributes to an increase life expectancy and quality of live. This means that education is imperative to each and every individual irrespective of one’s gender. Despite the fact that education is crucial to everyone and of course a right to everybody, it appears majority of girls are marginalized in accessing higher education in Ghana.

According to United Nation Article 13(1966), discrimination in education in any form is considered as violation of human right. Despite the recommendations and suggestions made by UNESCO (2003a), women are still facing enormous problems relating to access and enrolment of higher education in many countries especially in the developing countries, which Ghana is not an exception. There have been several findings regarding gender inequalities in universities worldwide (Lie and O’Leary, 1990), Lie and Malik, 1994, Chamberlain, 1988, UNESCO, 1993, Acker and Piper, 1984) which indicate that women are under represented as students, faculty and administrators in most countries.

However, in many developed countries such as the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Finland and France female students have a higher enrolment at the
universities than men at the B.A level and have increased their representation considerably on the Master’s and Doctorate levels. In the developing countries the situation is different from what is happening in the developed countries male students outnumber their female counterparts. Gender inequalities persist mainly in the poor countries where the female students tend to be disadvantaged. Admission into higher institutions is very limited and, therefore, highly competitive, with an average of less than one-third of qualified applicants being admitted every year, where male students usually account for the high percent out the students admitted yearly (ibid). For example, in 1998, out of the total 32,181 applicants only 9,120 (28.3 percent) gained admissions into the universities, with females accounting for 9 percent out of 28.3 percent (ibid). Also, the fees at these institutions are very high for most qualified students, hence such high cost places limitation on entry to higher education, especially with the females who are usually at disadvantaged.

1.2 The Objective and Research Questions of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine the cultural, social and institutional factors that contribute to gender gap in Ghana’s higher education sector, and particularly gender gap in accessing higher education in Ghana. The study examines the gender gap, that is, the relative position of females and males in Ghanaian universities. The study intends to explain why gender gap persists in Ghana’s higher education and what factors lay behind this gap and how the people involved in higher education perceive this gap.

I have chosen to study the gender gap in higher education in Ghana, precisely the universities, because the universities have much influence and control over the
definitions of knowledge and the basic ideas of the state and society (Rendel 1984). It is in universities that ideas are generated for and transmitted to the state, through professors, lecturers, researcher as well as students in their participation in social and political activities in the country. And it is here that intellectual leadership is bred. This is the reason why there is the need for females to increase their participation in university education in order to contribute to the social, economic and cultural development of their nation. Academic women have potential in playing a critical role in transforming women and men of the future, in addition to changing the male perspective in faculty policy, the syllabus and learning experience provide for female and male students. The imbalance of sexes in senior positions is of particular interest because females are not seen to hold status positions. Consequently, other females are not provided with positive role models. Some young female graduates or undergraduates may see the existing distribution of posts as indicating the limits to which they can reasonably aspire.

The gender gap in the universities in Ghana will be considered as having both vertical and horizontal dimensions. Vertical dimensions mean rank, salary and power differentials among faculty and administrators. In this study the different ranks and power differentials among faculty will not be investigated because information regarding salary was not readily available. The horizontal aspect refers to field of study among students and faculty. The gender gap is the difference in enrolment between males and females.

Some researchers have touched on this topic already and they have come out some important findings like economic, cultural, parental educational attainment being some of the major causes of gender inequality in higher education, (Lie et al, 1994). However, their findings have not been given much attention they deserve by the policy makers both at home and abroad. It is expected that the policy makers would have done something about the findings in their quest to curb
the gap gender in the higher education. Therefore, this research seeks to investigate some of the factors that have not yet been identified by some researchers and to highlight those findings about which much has not been done by the policy makers, to bridge the gap. The study will also look at the perception of the various stakeholders in the higher education sector with particular reference to the students, parents and of course the administrators/faculty members. In line with this I have the following research questions.
1. What are the factors that contribute to gender gap in access to higher education?
2. What are some initiatives taken by the government on addressing gender gap in accessing higher education in Ghana?
3. How do people involved in higher education perceive the gap, precisely students, parents and faculty members?
4. What are the challenges faced by Ghanaian’s girls that can affect them in accessing higher education?

1.3. Significance of the Study

Gender inequality is among one of the global agendas discussed in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The goal, which is to promote gender equality and empower women, challenges discrimination against women and seeks to ensure that girls as well boys have equal opportunities to go to school. The rationale was to eliminate gender disparity in secondary and higher education, preferably, by 2005 and all levels of education no later than 2015 (World Bank, 2003a). Indicators linked to this goal also aim to measure progress towards ensuring that more women become literate, have more voice and representation in public policy and decision making, and have improved job prospects.
Without progress towards gender equality and empowerment of women, none of the MDGs will be achieved, that are to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve higher education for all, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development (World Bank, 2003). While there are signs of progress in terms of gender parity at the secondary level, the gap is still noticeable at the higher education level (UNESCO, 2005). This clearly shows that the problem of gender inequalities in access to higher education is a serious issue that needs to be examined. Factors that contribute to gap inequalities in higher education need to be identified for the policy makers to have a second look at them. The study is expected to expose the attitude and perceptions of students, parents and faculty members towards gender gap in higher education. To this end readers of the study will understand the reasons for females being marginalized in accessing higher education and the consequences of the situation. Again, this will encourage discussions, reflections and actions by policy makers to come up with clearer policy formulation and implementation that will provide more opportunities in access of higher education to females and of course the thesis will add to the existing literature on the subject.

1.4 The organization of the study

Chapter one introduces objective of the study, research questions, significance of the study and the organization of the study. Chapter two examines the background of the study. The background will cover the educational system in Ghana, especially higher education and how people get access into higher education institutions in Ghana. Chapter three examines various theories from the literature to explain gender inequalities in higher education. Chapter four will focus on data
collection procedures and methodology used in analyzing the data. Chapter five will focus on the presentation, analysis and discuss the findings of the data collected from the field. And finally, chapter six will present the conclusions and recommendations for policies to combat the gap.
CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will give an account of the development of the universities in Ghana, especially their establishment. The reforms that have taken place in the university education will be highlighted as well as the policies that promote equal opportunities. The roles the universities will be taken into consideration and specific examples of academic women’s commitment to the performance of such roles and the need for women to increase their representation in university education in general.

2.2 Some facts about Ghana’s economy

Ghana’s average Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita over the past decades was approximately US$ 300 (IMF, 2003). The proportion of the population living under poverty fell steadily from 51 percent in 1992 to 35 percent in 2000. Though human development indicators have generally improved over the period, a recent survey shows a rise in child and infant mortality rates. Again, Ghana still has significant disparities in the poverty distribution, especially in its northern region (IMF, debt relief report, 2003). Ghana is well endowed with natural resources, indeed Ghana has twice the per capita output of the poorer countries in West Africa. Notwithstanding this, Ghana remains heavily dependent on International financial and technical assistance. Ghana boasts of the following natural resource such as cocoa, timber, and gold, and of course major source of foreign exchange.
The domestic economy continues to revolve around subsistence agriculture, accounting for 36% of GDP and employs 60% of the work force, mainly small landholders (IMF, 2003). Ghana opted for Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative in 2001. Today, Ghana is one of the best performing economies in Africa. Real GDP growth averaged 5 percent from 1985-2006. Since 2005 it has hovered at 6 percent (World Bank Report, 2006). Following successful HIPC debt relief in 2004, and further cancellation by donors, Ghana’s external debt, about $ 6 billion in 2001, is almost entirely written off (ibid).

2.3 Higher education institutions in Ghana.

Higher education institutions in Ghana comprise of polytechnics, diploma awarding colleges and universities. The duration for course ranges between three and four years and fall under the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS, 1994). At the moment, there are 38 public post-secondary teacher-training colleges, 10 polytechnics and 6 universities in Ghana. The universities are: the University of Ghana, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Cape Coast University, the University for Development Studies, Tamale, the University of University Education, Winneba, and the Western University College, Tarkwa. In addition to this, the National Accreditation Board has accredited 10 private universities and university type institution that offer various programs. The Board has also accredited nine tutorial professional colleges, which prepare students for taking examination of accredited professional bodies within and outside Ghana, and two distance education centers that represent accredited universities outside Ghana (Keteku, 2000).
Income available to the public higher education institutions is derived mainly from government subvention and part also from the sale of application forms, fees from students registration, tuition paid by students, issuance of academic transcripts, consultancies, rent from university housing and from floor spaced leased for private catering and other businesses, the sale of products from university farms, hospital and veterinary fees, bookshop sales, monies generated from printing houses on campus and vehicle servicing at the estates’ organization. However, the private universities do not attract any government subvention. The universities are purely private inclined they generate their own income for the universities upkeep. Hence, their fees are on the high side as compare with public universities in the country. The study will only focus on the public universities, thus the focus will not be on the private universities for this particular studies.

University of Ghana is the premier university in Ghana. Then known as the University College of the Gold Coast, it came into being by an ordinance enacted by the Gold coast Legislative Council in 1948. It was established purposely to provide degree courses in the humanities and sciences (Antwi, 1992). The university had special affiliation with the University of London which was responsible for monitoring higher education in the colonies. University of London was charged with the task of supervising staff recruitment, controlling the degree structure, syllabus and evaluating the standard of examinations, advising the college on any matters of academic policy and research, and fostering of its development towards a university status (Antwi, and Agbodeka, 1998). In 1961 under the university of Ghana act 1961 the university college attained an autonomy status with the power to award its own degrees and to be governed by a council (Antwi, 1992).

The University of Science and Technology replaced Kumasi College of Arts Science and Technology which was established by a Government Ordinance. It
achieved its full university status in 1962 following recommendations of the International Commission on University education (Antwi, 1992, University of Science and Technology Calendar, 1992). The Kumasi college of Arts Science and Technology was opened officially on 27th January, 1952 with 200 teacher training students transferred from Chicot College to form the nucleus of the College. In October, 1952, the School of Engineering and the Department of Commerce were established and the first students were admitted. From 1955 to 1955 period the School of Engineering prepared students for professional qualification only. The school offered courses leading to the University of London Bachelor of Engineering in External degree Exams in 1955 (U.S.T. Calendar, 1986-1992)

The University of Cape Coast was established in 1962 to train graduate teachers for second cycle institutions, teacher training colleges and technical institutions. In addition, it has been offering training to educational planners, administrators and agriculturist since its establishment. Its general aim is the following; to provide higher education, undertake research, and transmit knowledge. The university achieved its full status as an independent university in October 1, 1971 by an act of Parliament, the University of Cape Coast Act 1971 (Act 390) and subsequently the University of Cape Coast Law 1992 (PNDC Law 278) (University of Cape Coast calendar, 1995-2005). The University of Education, Winneba was established by government ordinance in 1992 as a University College affiliated with the University of Cape Coast. It was established aimed at training teachers for education system of Ghana. The University of Education, (UEW, 2005) has three campuses in two regions of Ghana at the Winneba being the seat of the Vice-Chancellor and satellites campuses in Kumasi and Mampong all in the Ashanti regions of Ghana.

The University of Development Studies was established in May 15, 1992 by Provisional National Defence Council Law 279 (Agbodeka, 1998). The new
university is a novel institution not attached to any other university. It is free to explore integrated program directed at development in critical areas of agriculture and health delivery. One of the reasons for establishing this university is to break from the purely academic. The university has four campuses spread over the four regions of Ghana namely, Northern, Upper West, Upper East, and Brong Ahafo regions.

2.4 The role of the Universities in Ghana

The universities are charged with the development of high level human capacity. In Ghana and elsewhere in Africa the initial output of graduates were targeted mainly for management of the machinery of the independent state and its institutions. This function of the universities soon widened into that of providing high level skilled manpower for the public services, private commerce and industry. By the end of the 1990s, universities had been able to produce the skilled human resources required to staff and manage private and public institutions in the newly independent state. Government was the main employer of the graduates. The avenue for employment for the graduates was in the public service, the para-statal organizations and the teaching profession. Currently, there is an over production of university graduates in many fields in terms of traditional job expectations of university graduates. More than enough graduates are available for jobs that require a degree in the humanities (Antwi, 1992).

The second function of the universities is the generation of knowledge and transmission of ideology, and the provision of instinctual leadership (Trow, 2001). This is done through socialization of students; the direct participation of lecturers and professors in social and political activities; the publication of research reports
and policy proposals; and the organization and leadership of seminars, conferences and workshops; and the maintenance of the past links between the country and the World of knowledge outside the country. Going by this function, there is the need therefore for women to increase their participation in the higher education. Women in their position as professors or lecturers can re-socialize the students, both males and females, and counteract the inferior women socialization in the females. Cultural acceptance of mediocrity as being proper for women and the social perceptions of women’s capabilities are clear targets, for instance. At this stage of their education, they can be objective and confident in themselves. Through seminars and workshops, the Ghana Association of University Women Organization ‘Career Days’ for girls in some secondary schools to tell them career opportunities available to them and the training required for such careers, in an effort to interest them into the male preserve subjects and occupations (Dolphyne, 1991)

The increase in the number of women in academia will provide role models and potential mentors for young women students. An increasing proposition of females’ students in the universities will increase the pool of women with the education and training required for holding public office. This is very important for only women can effectively articulate women’s concern and ensure government policies, projects and programs have the desired impact and achieve desired goals because the concerns of the different sexes in the society has been taken into accounts. A clear example is the amendment that women representatives on statutory boards managed bring to the policy of maternity leave. Now women are entitled for three months maternity leave. Before their representation on the board women were expected to start their leave six weeks before confinement and resume work six weeks after delivery.
The third main function of the universities is the generation and application of new knowledge. The universities have been organizing courses for the public, and have been researching specific problems in agriculture, health, housing, and history, social and economic issues affecting the country. Academics have been serving on government commissions of inquiry or advisory boards in their numbers. They also engage in consultancy work for government agencies (Antwi, 1992).

2.5 The Development of Higher Education in Ghana.

Throughout the 1970s and the early 1980s conditions deteriorated within the tertiary education sector. Physical infrastructure deteriorated and financial resources available to cater for the needs of the institutions were inadequate as a result of budgetary constraints. The international economic downturn affected the country. The prices of raw materials which brought foreign exchange to the country fell and consequently, there was a decline in the university budget. There was low staff recruitment and retention which impacted on academic standards. Regular disputes between the government and both staff and students led to many interruptions in the academic calendar. University staff left in large numbers to teach in Nigeria or elsewhere (Girdwood, 1999). By the early 1980s funding was very low which made academic and financial planning virtually impossible. Capital projects was started and abandoned.

The Provisional National Defence Council therefore, undertook a major reformulation of tertiary education policy in the late 1980s. Comprehensive educational reforms had begun at the primary and secondary levels which necessitated reforms at the tertiary level as well. The University Realization Committee (URC) in 1986-1988 came out with proposals which were
subsequently re-formulated and formalized as a White Paper on tertiary education reform. It was entitled Reforms to the Tertiary Education System and approved by the PNDC Government in 1991 and it remained in place up to date. The reforms introduced the diversification of the funding base of higher institutions. Cost recovery and cost sharing were brought on board in that direction. The government provided students with loans through Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) to cater for their educational needs and expenditure.

Catering facilities were privatized and students were responsible for their own food from 1988. Accommodation charges were introduced in 1998; accommodation was de-linked from admission, ending the automatic entitlement of students to a place of residence. University provided accommodation was officially no longer guaranteed to all students. Students who refused to pay their accommodation charges simply lost their rooms to other students who were keen to gain residence. Tuition fee is free; however, students pay user fees. The reform also introduced income generating activities as a means of obtaining more funds to supplement government grants which were inadequate (Girdwood, 1999). Some of the sources of internally generated incomes are products of research, extension services through outreach units, linkages with industries and other centers of higher learning overseas, commercialization of municipal facilities such as hospitals, catering services, printing houses and bookshops. The policy made a special provision in a form of a national scholarship scheme for students who wished to study in areas of the greatest national need. These areas are the scientific and technical areas. These areas, however, are dominated by men. This is an instance where resources directed at the tertiary sector do not address equity.

The introduction of user fees, privatization of catering outlets or the cutting of food allowance, accommodation charges are all donor policies. Brock-Utne (1998) in her criticism of the World Bank policy of cost sharing enshrined in the 1994
World Bank paper on higher education, argues that, it will decrease the provision of university education available to low income members of African countries. It will make the universities in African a learning place for the affluent. World Bank figures attest to the fact that, an average of about 60 percent in Africa come from the small traders, peasants and workers ranks (Brock-Utne, 1998). Her argument is therefore, very substantial. Additional, anecdotal evidence in Ghana, Girdwood (1998) suggests that children of the well-to-do are largely, better represented than poor children within the higher education sector. The cost sharing policy seems to increase social inequality.

The origin of the 1986-88 education reform was criticized as foreign. The committee charged with the formulation of the education policy was criticized of reproducing policy proposals for the World Bank so as to attract its funding. The committee admitted that the policy was initiated by World requirement. Some activities of the committee were said to have been funded by the World Bank. However, the committee stressed it was an ‘indigenous policy agenda’ (Girdwood, 1999). The reforms also emphasized the need to increase access for qualified people and improve gender balance within tens years and suggested that government should provide incentives to achieve this, but this was not done. The disadvantaged groups targeted by access policy were not able to participate in the university or tertiary education because entry requirements were too demanding. Students graduated from the senior secondary school level with high grades but targeted group had no such grades because they could not afford additional or private tuition at the secondary level and consequently could not gain admission to the universities.

Children of the well-to-do are largely, better represented than poor children within the tertiary education sector. Females’ students are targeted by access policies to enroll in the universities. Government and the universities in Ghana
desire to achieve a 50-50 sex ratio enrollment in the universities. To this end the reforms made it possible for females to enter the universities with slightly reduced cut-off points on aggregate examinations from secondary education. Girls who gain admission under the scheme exceed the entry requirements (Girdwood, 1999). The University of Ghana was quoted in 1996 as having increased attention to the enrolment of females (ibid). The no discrimination policy on gender is stated in the University of Cape Coast Calendar (1999) in the following.

There shall be no discrimination against a suitably qualified person on account of gender to determine whether that person is to be admitted into an institution, appointed as an academic staff or other staff member. Thus nobody should be discriminated or favored on the grounds of gender. The laws of the land provide equal protection for both females and males, especially in the area of education, employment, health and so on.

Student numbers increased more rapidly in the 1990s. However, female participation was not broadened and at times, appeared to have decreased. The expansion was accomplished by increase rather than a decrease in educational inequality. This was because children of the better-off were better represented than poorer children. The reforms set out to improve and maintain academic standards through improved pedagogical practice and higher budgetary allocation to the academic and library sectors. Under the reform considerable attention was paid to improving excellence in research and post-graduate teaching. The reforms also aimed at achieving greater balance in subject provision. Small numbers of both sexes opt for science at the university while the country certainly needs more science graduates for the industrial and business sector of the economy (Girdwood, 1999).
2.6 Recruitment policies in Ghana Higher Education.

Generally, the requirements for the admission into the Ghana universities can either be a holder of General Certificate Examination (GCE) level or a holder of Senior Secondary School Certificate. Room has also been created for mature people to get admission into the universities and of course university of Education also give admission to the holders of The Teachers Certificate ‘A’. Admissions are purely based on merit since there is great competition in the various Faculties and Departments because of some obvious factors. Candidates must be holders of five (5) GCE level credits including English language, Mathematics and Science subject plus three (3) Advanced level passes with two (2) of the grade not lower than D. Senior Secondary School (SSS) candidates must have six (6) credits including English Language, Mathematics and Science subject and an overall minimum aggregate of twenty four (24). In addition candidates must satisfy Department and Faculty requirements. Thus the above is the general requirements but takes the various Faculties and Departments to do their own selection in relationship with their Department criteria. Hence admission into the universities is highly competitive because of the massification of higher education in the country. Mature people applying for admission who do not satisfy the requirements mentioned above must have reasonable education and working experience and should have attained the minimum of thirty (30) years at the time of submitting their application forms. Successfully candidates are selected on the basis of a series of test, a long essay, and an interview. Again, University of Education also offers admission to students with Teachers Certificate ‘A’, having gone through their entrance examination and interview (University Annual Report, 2006-07).

However, government has initiated number of policies to help curb the issue of gender inequalities in the higher education. Female students are targeted by access
policies to enroll in the universities. To this end, the reforms made it possible for females to enter the universities with slightly reduced cut-off points in aggregate examinations from secondary education. The University of Ghana was quoted in 1996 as having increased attention to the enrolment of females based on the government directive to all the public universities in the country to set aside a certain percent of their total enrollment for females (quota for females in the higher education (Girdwood, 1999). It is government policy that when both male and female applicants have the same aggregate, university authorities should consider the female for enrollment, especially in the sciences.

Under the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport, government has appointed a woman as a Minister in charge of tertiary education, the rationale for placing women at this sensitive position is to serve as a role model for females and to champion the cause of females in tertiary institutes and to enforce government directives to increase access of females to higher education (MOESS, 2001). Moreover, in 2001 government created a whole Ministry for women in Ghana for the first time. The Ministry of Women Affairs which is headed by a woman is to identify and address females/women concerns in the country, particularly access to education. In government quest to address the gender inequalities in accessing higher education, the government has, therefore, decided to improve the access at the basic and secondary level of education, being the catchments areas of the higher education. Government has subsequently, introduced the Capitation Grant and the School Feeding Programs. It has identified that one of the main reasons that children in Ghana do not attend school, especially the girl child is that their parents simply cannot afford to pay the levies charged by schools. Despite the policy of fee-free tuition in basic schools, many districts charge levies as a means of raising funds, for example, for school repairs, and cultural and sporting activities, this has the effect of deterring many families, particularly the poorest, from sending their to school, particularly the girl child.
The Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports (MOESS) has therefore set up a Capitation Grant Scheme. Commencing 2003/2004 academic year, every Primary School receives an amount of 25,000 equivalent to 2.5 US dollars per male pupil enrolled and 35,000 an equivalent 3.5 US dollars per female pupil enrolled. This should serve to remove the financial barrier created by these levies, yet more than compensate the school for any loss of revenue they face as a result of the policy. The utilization of the Capitation Grant has been designed to empower the schools to effectively use financial resources to plan and carry out school quality improvement activities. The move is meant to bridge the gap of the inequality even at the basic, since the female students have the greater part of the disbursement of the grant (MOESS, 2005).

Government has also introduced the School Feeding Program at the basic level of education. Under the program all the going children are expected to benefit from the scheme. Each student pupil is expected to be fed twice a day under the program and is restricted to pupils who attend school only. The rationale is to remove the financial burden of parents spending so much on their children feeding in schools and also to motivate parents to send their children to school in order for the government to realize her dream of universal basic education for both female and male.
2.7 Enrolment pattern of Higher Education in Ghana (male and females).

Table 1. Enrollment and Gender Breakdown by Education Level, Selected Academic Years, 1980-81 to 1990-91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary enrolment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Enrollment</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Student Enrollment</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Student Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>766,406</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>718,173</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>611,328</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>577,727</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,377,734</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,295,900</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University enrollment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>6,669</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>6,768</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>1,257</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1,425</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,926</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8,193</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 1 shows that at the primary level of education there was indeed difference between males and females, but the gap was not significant as compared with other level of education especially at the university level. The gap manifested as we moved from one level of education to other. During 1980-81 at the primary level of education males accounted for 56% whilst females accounted for 44% and in 1985-86 the percentages were 55% and 45% of males and females respectively. The percentages for females declined sharply at the both middle school and junior secondary levels of education. The situation of the inequalities became too
alarming at the higher education level of education. During 1980-81 according to the table, males accounted for 84%, whilst their females’ counterpart recorded 16% out of the total of the university enrolment. The table indicates clearly there is gender gap in the higher education in Ghana. The figures were true reflection of other higher education institutions in the country.

2.8 Conclusion

The chapter has given a brief presentation of Ghanaian higher education system. The chapter dealt with the role of universities in Ghana. Also, clear policies that aim at addressing gender inequalities of all level of education, especially at the higher education sector. The chapter gave a brief presentation of the enrolment trends in primary and higher levels of education. You realize that the gap between females and males at the primary level is not great as compare in the higher education level. The gap manifests from the primary level at very low rate, but as the level of education move along the gap begins to widen, thus from secondary to the universities, the rate of the gap at the universities thus becomes alarming. The efforts being put in place by the authorities to curb the inequalities in the educational system, seems not to be adequate to address the issues since the gap increases at the higher education level. In the next chapter, the study will present studies and theories that relate to the study.
CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The chapter will present a review of theories and previous research in respect to gender, gender inequality, the links between gender and culture and poverty, based on the theories and previous research. The final part of the chapter introduces the theoretical framework which guides the study. The purpose of this section is to discuss literature on the characteristics that explain differences in educational opportunities in Sub-Saharan African (SSA). The study will use the literatures as an eye-opener in order to gain more insight into factors affecting equality of educational opportunity in Ghana with main reference to higher education. The literature will be drawn from the local, that is, from Ghana and international, that is from Sub-Saharan African and other of the World.

3.2 Gender

Gender is different from biological sex that we are naturally given at birth. Such biological difference between men and women clearly define sex. Gender deals with the, “social construction of relationship between, people which shape their identity as men and women” (Mhina et al, 2004:37). It is worth noting that gender is more complex, multifaceted, culture-specific construct that directs women and men’s roles, access to productive resources, decision making authority and power (Gupta, et al, 2002, In addition, as argued by Chikovore (2004:19) “whilst the gender axis involves a power advantage of men over women in virtually all
societies, gender manifest itself in multiple forms, including relationship among groups of men and groups of women”. This attests to the fact that, gender power is neither unproblematic, nor consistently uni-directional. Hence the situation seems to be quite critical, as it points to the reality that there are in fact multiple or disaggregated masculinities and femininities which are contextually dependent.

3.3 Culture and Gender

The domain of “Culture” refers basically to essential aspects of collective social life, especially meaning and practices, “social customs, institutional ways of doing things and also person habits” McQuail (1994:62). Majority of researchers who investigate gender define sex as culturally constructed biological characteristics. Gender is accepted as a socially constructed, an ongoing culture process that constructs differences between women and men. Culture and society are twin factors which are seen as inseparable units; hence many researchers and theorists tend to associate these two terms together and try to explain gender as both a “culture” and “societal” phenomenon. Some of the empirical research has dealt on the impact of culture on girls’ access to education (higher education) due to the patriarchal system that separates the status of men and women.

“Patriarchal” is important term in feminist theory, has been used to explain the subordination of women in terms of historical and material and psychoanalytic definition Stacey (1993). Patriarchy describes the power of the father as a head of family or household but the term has been used within post-1960s feminism to denote to the systematic organization of male supremacy and female subordination, Mies, (1986). Mies argues that ‘patriarchy’ signifies the historical
emergence of particular forms of inequality between women and men, in contrast to the view that gender inequality is natural. All these three theoretical uses of the concept of patriarchy, the historical, material and psychoanalytic, have produced generalized explanations of the subordination of women. They offer analyses of how patriarchy is organized and power relations within it are reproduced at general level (Stacey, 1993). The main aim of using different definitions and terms that can explain patriarchy is to try to explain the historical roots and universality of women’s subordination in most of the World. Kandiyoti calls the term ‘classic patriarchy’ in which senior male hold authority in patriarchal extended households. He further laments that the gender asymmetry which existed in society is produced and reproduces through a wide variety of cultural practices that extend beyond household, class and labor market (Kandiyoti, 1995). It is therefore imperative to examine gender inequality in access to higher education and to what extend the forms of cultural practices of the patriarchy contribute to this situation. It is worth noting that the notion of patriarchy will surely assist us to understand and argue out of existing gender biases.

Countries dominated by the patriarchal system that attaches little social value to women and girls portray high levels of gender inequality in social and economic areas as well as within households. The system brings about socio-economic inequalities between women and men, girls and boys within society with the result of enhancing class division between the rich and poor, educated and non-educated, urban and rural (Mansah, 1992). Burn (2000) was of the view that in many cultures, biological differences between men and women indirectly led to men’s domination over women. In the same vein, psychologist Burn (2000) pointed out that women all over the globe continue to be overwhelmingly responsible for housework and child care, and this affect them negatively both economically and their political power. In Ghana, families differ in the resources available to them for supplying their children with the basic necessities that would enable them,
among others, to participate fully and successfully in schooling. The socio-economic means available within the family can be regarded as intermediate factors between family background and the students’ educational achievement.

Radical feminists, focus on women’s oppression by men through patriarchal curricular saved to alienate women from their own experience (Spender, 1983). It is against this backdrop that this study intends to look at the attitudes of society towards girls’ access to higher education. Through interviews we will be able to understand if culture and the patriarchal system have a pervasive influence on the decision as to whether to educate a girl or not, and what reasons account for such choice.

3.4 Gender Inequality and Poverty

Poverty has become a key area of focus for governments, development agencies and other international organizations for the past decade. Some commentators suggest that the poor are getting poorer and that the gap between the rich and the poor is alarming. Figures from World Bank (2001), indicate that actual numbers of people classified as poor are rising in most of the World. Poverty has several meanings and connotations but from sociological perspective, it can be seen as a relative deprivation defining levels of need in relation to other groups and individuals. Education has however become a privileged service for which households must pay. To this end, mass poverty means that many parents cannot afford to send their children to school especially in the higher education which it is believed that expenses are on the high side. Education charges take a variety of forms. They range from direct charges levied by both public and private institutions, the indirect comprises of expenses on the uniforms, tools of learning such as pens, pencils, books and other contingency expenses. Cost-sharing is a
catch all phrase that describes the distribution of education cost between the two main actors: parents and the state. In reality, though, it is a euphemism for the privatization of education financing, and a tax on attendance.

There are many reasons for the high cost of higher education to the poor households, but one near-universal factor is inadequate finance. The devastating interaction between household poverty and rising education cost hampers efforts to accelerate growth and reduce poverty, and exacerbating problems such as child labor. Public financing is not the only issue, but magnifies the other factors that are obstructing progress towards equal access to quality higher education. Where the quality of education is inadequate, or perceived as generating few benefits, poor households or parents are obvious not spend their scanty resources financing education. It is for fact that the children of the poor who account for those out of school, though there are other alarming sources of inequality based on gender, race, region and rural-urban divides. Under this circumstance women or the girl child becomes the victim because of our social structure which seems to favor men. Education charges interact with these factors, for instance, where low value is attributed to girl’s education; charges are likely to reinforce gender inequalities in levels of attendance and completion.

3.5 Review of Related Studies

For accelerated development and growth to occur, both men and women must have equal access to education for the benefit of individual and national development. Gender and socio-economic issues are imperative when discussing distribution of education. Socio-cultural and social-economic factors that inhibits girl’s education in Sub-Saharan African (SSA) are intertwined. Other constraints
arise from school-factors, political and institutional factors. A study by Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in 1993 found out that some factors inhibiting female education in SSA include:

- Persistence of negative traditional views on women’s roles in society.
- Widespread poverty.
- Inadequate learning and achievement opportunities in schools.
- Lack of balanced national investment in education; and
- Lack of job opportunities for women with low levels of education.

(FAWE, 1993)

Studies conducted to investigate the factors affecting enrolment, persistence in schools and educational attainments in Ghana were limited. Hence an attempt is made in this chapter to review some of the few literatures on Ghanaian education and some other from others from the rest of the world especially from developing countries.

A positive correlation between parental education and parental attitudes towards education has been identified in a number of studies. A study which investigated societal attitudes towards female education in Ghana reveals that parents without any educational background have little interest in educating their female children (Mensah, 1992). There is preference for boys to go to school whiles girls stay at home to help with domestic chores, an indication of the division of gender role. Mfuo et al (1997) indicate that, most parents now appreciate the value of girls’ education. However, when there are scanty resources, girls are sacrificed for their male counterparts. Akyeampong (1992) revealed that the educational status of parents is a benchmark for determining a child’s aspirations and achievements. On the other hand, Oppong (1992) support this assertion in a study examining the educational performance of boys and girls in the Kwabeng area in the Ashanti region. Indeed, there are some exceptions and some children of parents with low
educational levels aspire to reach at higher educational ladder. Owing to the growing awareness created of the benefits of education.

There is a direct relationship between mothers’ educational levels and children’s participation in schooling. The higher the educational attainment of the mother, the more likely she is to understanding the importance and benefits of sending her children to school, especially the girl child. Some cultural and traditional practices such as early marriages particularly affect enrolment of girls. Marriage is seen as a priority in many communities, with the result that girls of school going age become wives and subsequently mothers at the expense of their education. These girls have almost no education or skills let alone having experience to enter into gainful employment. They are usually ill informed to take part in decisions that border on their welfare as well as that of their children. Their children would of course miss out on the positive impact of mothers’ education on children (Oppong, 1992)

Bunwaree (1999:135) conducted a study on gender inequality in Mauritius, focusing on higher education. The study involved various actors, including parents, female students, teachers, policy makers, educational administrators and career advisers. The study used participant observation as well as structured and unstructured interviews. The findings of the study revealed that in times of financial constraint parents tended to favor boys as against girls. Some parents think that schooling is important for boys because girls will get married eventually. This implies that girls will get marry and depend on their husbands for survival. The researcher further elaborated that public higher education is not all that expensive, but an analysis of private tuition seems to highlight the overlapping of class and gender. Moreover, the study explained that there are many subtle mechanisms at work that push disadvantaged girls to the fringes of society. Exclusion from the labor market is a wider problem, affecting not only
girls from disadvantaged homes. Girls from middle-class backgrounds are also marginalized in the labor market for various reasons. In assessing the findings, this study has revealed that gender inequality is caused by different factors that needed to be explored in order to address the situation.

Parental attitudes to education also influence whether a child is educated or not. Some parents’ perception of the value of education is one of the reasons for the relative underdevelopment of education in certain communities in Ghana, especially in the rural communities. Many rural communities are relatively traditional and influenced by religion. Studies have shown that parental and familial attitudes determine the decision to invest in children’s education. The decision to send a girl child to the higher level of education is influenced by a number of factors Heneveld et al (1995). Heneveld et al revealed that parental attitude is an important factor in determining the gender inequalities in the higher education. Parental perceptions and attitudes towards girls’ education are the main determinants as whether or not to send a girl-child to school. Female Education in Science and Mathematics in Africa (FEMSA, 1997), in their study pointed out that women are traditionally perceived as nurturing beings who do not need any skill or knowledge from education to perform their gender roles, hence the negative attitudes towards female’s education. In addition, a study conducted by FAWE, reveals that most parents believe that their daughters’ education will only benefit their husbands and the husband’s family. To this end, the money spent on the females’ education by their parents will eventually go down the drain. The report also highlighted on the fact that females are normally unable to complete their education because of pregnancy, which renders investment in their education a waste and serves as an appetite for parents’ negative attitudes towards educating females. UNESCO (1999) survey revealed that some societies in Zaire, Togo, Cote d’Ivoire, and Gambia perceive females education as a “shameful” practice. But the education of boys is given top priority because of their future roles as
family leaders”. Sheikh-Nuamah (2001) asserted that Moslems parents in Ghana prefer to educate their males because they perceived them as their property, while their daughters are perceived to be property of their future husbands.

In a related studies conducted by Tembon et al, (1997) on factors inhibiting access to education in Guinea it is revealed that though parents generally value education, high costs involved in paying fees and buying learning materials hinder the education their children. It is believed that girls have a higher direct cost of education than boys (Lloyd et al, 1992), hence the parents prefer spending their limited income on the latter to the detriment of the former. In addition research in Ghana has shown that most parents are unable to meet the financial, material and equipment needs their children in school, particularly at higher level of their education. A poverty study in Ghana shows that most of school children out of school are from low income families (World Bank, 1996). A study by the Ghana Statistical Service (1995) reveals that on the average, households spent about 2 Ghanaian cedis, equivalent to 2 US dollars annually for member enrolled in school. This amount increases with urbanization across localities and with time, the amount becomes more serious at higher level of education in Ghana. In the capital, Accra, the amount is much higher than in other urban areas or in rural areas. The study further revealed the major items of educational expenditure as food, boarding, lodging at school (25 percent), school and registration fees (23 percent), uniform and spot clothes (17 percent), and books and other school supplies (12 percent).

The study conducted by Omari (2001) in Tanzania looking at the demand for secondary education quantity and quality. The study took samples from the levels of education, namely primary, secondary and tertiary education. The study among other things noted that Tanzanian children suffered from acute shortage of the supply of educational services, both quantitatively in terms of total school places
available, and quantitatively in terms of diversity of choices, efficiency, and effectiveness (Omari, 2001). Disaggregating data by gender, Omari further explained that, holding other factors intact, boys had a lower probability than girls of attending school at the young ages (7-14) but boys significantly higher probability of enrolment at the older ages (15-20). Arguing on the findings, Omari (2001) pointed out that this reversal may indeed reflect cultural traits and practices pointing towards differential opportunity costs as with age, girls increasingly entrusted with routine household chores such as care for siblings, fetching water and firewood, and cleaning the house. This implies that opportunity costs of sending children to school are usually viewed as greater for girls than boys as the former are usually called to assist their mothers with household chores hence tend to be recipe for gender gap in higher education, which goes a long way to have effect on the topic under discussion.

A study by Husen (1987) points out that higher education is the only way by which the gap between the industrialize countries and developing countries can be bridged. He further revealed that higher education is seen as an equalizer and an agent of social change. He pointed out that care must be taken in our quest to provide higher education to people without favoring any group of people especially the men as it was in the early 1960s. According to Husen, though the share of female enrolment in higher education has increased from 32 percent in 1960 to 41 percent in 1982 Worldwide, such increment has since been stagnated. The study shows that both developing and industrialized nations have done well in this regard, accounting for 11 percentage points of increase for both groups during the period 1960 to 1982. This means that the difference between the female participation rates in developing countries and industrialized countries has remained the same during this period.
The report further indicated that there has been an increase in higher education enrolment from 35% in 1960 to 46% in 1982, and from 24% in 1960 to 35% in 1982 in industrialized countries and developing countries respectively. The Study depict that the female share in enrolment is less than the male share in the regions as at 2008. It is against this background that this study seeks to find out what is causing the disparity and to make its findings available to the various actors in the sector, in order for them to make informed decisions to curb the situation. There is the need to remove the bottlenecks that impede females access to higher education, because it is only when higher education is made accessible to all that the gap between females and males, be it in politics, economic and all spheres of life can be bridged.

In a study in Ethiopia, Pauline and Tembon (1999) pointed out that cultural and socio-economic constraints affect household demand for girls’ education. In the case when household incomes are low parents tend to consider boys. In Sub-Saharan Africa, governments struggle to expand educational access, improve school quality, and advance equity. This is because the economic conditions of a country influences the educational opportunities of its citizens. Gertler et al (1989) indicated that gender gap between boys and girls are widest in the poorest countries and narrowest in the high income countries, especially tertiary levels. Countries with low income per capita are affected by low enrolment particularly for girls and rural poor. These macro level characteristics bring in insufficient quantity and quality of educational resources, limit students’ access to education and hold back the educational participation of children, especially girls and the poor. At the regional levels, economically sound regions have higher enrolment rates than that of poorer regions within the same country.

Mfuo et al (1997) indicate that most parents now appreciate the value of girls’ education, especially higher education. However, they were quick to argue that
when there are limited funds, girls are the ones not sent to school. Similarly, Damtew et al (2004) in their study indicated that African higher education still faces unprecedented challenges. African universities currently function in very difficult circumstances; in terms of the social, economic, and political problems facing the continent and the context of globalization. Of course, the road to future success will not be an easy one. Economic problems and poverty was evident when Acheampong (1992) investigated the formal status of the right to tertiary education for girls and women in one community in the western region of Ghana. The study revealed poverty to be one of the major underlying influences acting against girls and women’s realization of the right to higher education.

3.6 Theories guiding the study

The study is guided by modern feminist theories. It is worth noting that there are several feminist theories worldwide. I will therefore focus on theories which are related to the objective of the study and the research questions. Gimenz, (1998) provides us with instance of efforts to intentionally select elements from different theories which are useful and productive in the African context. To begin with, I will initially explain some of the feminist theories in order to provide a broader understanding of how these theories deal with gender issues.

Radical feminist theory basically focuses on men and patriarchy as the major cause of the oppression of women (Gimenz, 1998). The theory has revealed that women are “essentially” nurturing and cooperative. Men are “essentially” competitive and instrumental. It further suggests that there is need for separate women only programs (Meena, 1992). It is exceedingly clear that radical feminism views women’s oppression as a basic evil upon which human
relationships in society are arranged. It seeks to challenge this arrangement by rejecting standard gender roles and eliminate male domination and patriarchal structures. However, this theory has been criticized for generalizing from one trait or aspect of a person to the whole and ignoring possibilities of differences and change (ibid).

Liberal feminists focus on increasing opportunity and equality within society as it was constructed. The intent of liberal theory in education is to remove barriers which prevent girls from reaching their full potential, whether such barriers are located in school or a discriminatory labor market. Their strategies involve altering socialization practices, changing attitudes, and making use of relevant legislation (Acker, 1987). Liberal feminists have been criticized by lack of an explicit critique of imperial and capitalist structures and tend to adapt accommodating positions in the state. The critics have opinion that liberal theory seems to be reluctant to confront power and patriarchy (Meena, 1992).

Marxist feminists explain women’s oppression in terms of their location in class relations, with respect to ownership and control of means of production in the labor force. They have the view that women can gain a consciousness of themselves as a class of workers by insisting, for instance, that domestic work be recognized as real work. Marxist feminists have been criticized for focusing exclusively on economic issues and neglecting political, cultural and psychological discourses (Meena, 1992).

Odora (1993) identifies three broad categories of contemporary feminism; the first is theories of gender difference, which see location of women and their experience of most situations as different. The second category is theories of gender inequality which realize that the location of women in most situations is not only different, but is also unequal to that of men and directs the ensuring of a description of the
nature of that inequality. From the view point of Odora, within this school of thought, gender inequality are housed in the Liberal feminists and Marxist feminists. The third category is theories of gender oppression that includes Psychoanalytic feminism based on Freud and his psychoanalytic theories. It means that gender is not biological but based on the psycho-sexual development of the individual. Psychoanalytical feminism believes gender inequality comes from early childhood experience, which leads men to see themselves as masculine and of course women see themselves as feminine. Theories of gender oppression also include radical feminism and socialist feminism (Odora, 1993).

3.6.1 Theories of Gender Inequality.

Gender inequality theories include Liberal feminist and Marxist feminist (Odora, 1993). It has therefore been characterized by the ideas that:-

- Women are not only differently situated in society, but that they are unequally situated. Particularly, they get less material resources, social status, and power and opportunities for self actualization than men of a similar social location.

- All human being are characterized by a deep need for self actualization and freedom, and that what the conservative sees as “given differences” might in fact be an adaptation over time, by women to the situation of permanent constraint

- Both women and men will respond fairly easily and naturally to conditions of more egalitarian social structure and situations. It is thus possible to change the situation of the prevailing inequality (Odora, 1993:33).
Theories of gender inequality are important for this study because they deal with the marginalized groups in the society like females. Females have on occasions been treated differently from their male counterparts. Females are situated in unequal aspect of life, economically, socially and politically. In addition, it is concerned with the location of women and their experiences which are considered to be different from men. This is true in the Ghanaian society where some people tend to marginalize girls and women in different aspect of life by focusing on gender differences that are based on biology. Burn (2000) argues the same that in many cultures, biological differences between men and women indirectly led to men’s domination of women. In Ghana, culture treats men and women differently; men are usually seen as the head in all spheres of life. There is a strong perceptions and prejudices about how females and males should behave in the society. These stereotypes are used to justify traditional gender roles and men’s higher status. Gender stereotypes make it seem like women are not suited for anything other thing than child bearing, child rearing, and supporting men in their work whereas men are best suited for power and status position.

Burn (2000) pointed out that the majority of men who seem to dominate women are connected deep with culture with social norms condoning male supremacy and female subordination. This clearly shows that gender based differences in aggression seem to depend strongly on cultural acceptance and social norm. Our perception and interpretation of biological differences are results of social context and discourse, open to multiple and different kinds of meaning (Meena, 1992). Prevailing culture and norms in Ghana place boys in a greater social value than girls and this leads to discrimination of the majority of girls in higher level education. These theories explain the change of the situation of prevailing inequality as it is in this study. Liberal feminists argue that girls from the start are maimed and conditioned in to accepting an adult life as mindless, dependent, sub-
consciously depressed beings by the kind of gender specified roles they are fitted into (Odora, 1993).

Socialization at an early age is central to understanding how ideas, attitudes and beliefs are formulated in boys and girls, thus, determine their behavior. If boys see their fathers and other men being considered to be valuable than women, this kind of behavior may appear acceptable and normal to them. Similarly, if boys are given more autonomy and not expected to do household chores, this may be construed by boys to mean that they are inherently more privileged and powerful than girls.

3.7 Conclusion

The previous chapter presented the conceptual framework. The reviewed literature has revealed several factors that hinder the access of higher education of students, particularly girls. These include socio-cultural factors, socio-economic factors, religion and cultural factors, parent educational attainment and parents’ attitudes towards education in general and higher education in particular. The next chapter will focus on the data collection and the method used in analyzing the data.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the nature and size of the respondents/participants, the tools, and the procedures that has been used in this study. I also explain the reasons for adopting some specific methods and perspectives to collect and analyze the data and the strengths and weaknesses associated in this approach. Research by its nature is a complex process; hence it is very imperative for the researcher to stick to certain procedures in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data in order to maximize the validity of the findings (Bryman, 2004). Therefore, any researcher before going to the field of study has to develop a research design. Such design is viewed as “overall planning and preparing the methodological procedures for obtaining the intended knowledge” (Kvale, 1996:98).

4.2 Choice of methodology

In this study, emphasis has been put on qualitative methods for data collection and subsequent analysis. The study conducted in-depth interviews at the grass-root level, with primary focus on students, parents and some faculty member in the university selected. This study is, by its nature, largely descriptive situated and interpretive, as is characteristic of the qualitative approach. Bryman, (2004) “qualitative research usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the
collection and analysis of data. As research strategy it is inductivist, constructionist, and interpretivist”. The use of this research method allows for a more detailed picture to emerge and thus, a deeper understanding of the phenomena. Since the study is dealing with attitudes and perceptions of students, parents and faculty members towards female access to higher education, I felt that this is the most appropriate method to obtain detailed and relevant data within its real-life context.

4.3 Data Collection

The study was carried out in the University of Education, Winneba, specifically on the Kumasi campus of the university. I selected the University of Education, Kumasi campus as it one of the six public universities in Ghana. I selected the University for collecting and utilizing data so that desired information can be obtained with sufficient precision or so that hypothesis can be tested properly. My selection of the university stems from the fact that the university has a diverse population. Thus people with different cultural, social, economic, religion and political backgrounds, which seemed to be appropriate for the selection of the participants. The university is situated in Kumasi in the Ashanti region, the second largest city in Ghana. Kumasi is a city in Southern Central in Ghana. It is located near Lake Bosomtwe, in the Rain Forest Region and 365 kilometers Northwest of Accra.

Kumasi is approximately 300 miles north of the Equator and 100 miles north of the Gulf of Guinea. It is popularly known as “The Garden City” because of its many beautiful species of flowers and plants. Kumasi is an urban center, has a population of 1,517,000 and the largest ethnic group in Ghana. On the whole,
about 80% of the population is Christian and 20% Muslim, with smaller number of adherents to traditional beliefs. It is an Anglican diocesan and Roman Catholic archdiocesan see. There is evidence that the area around Kumasi has been kept cleared since the Neolithic age. The city rose to prominence in 1695 when it became the capital of the Ashanti Confederacy due to the activities of its ruler Osei Tutu. The city is a major exporter of cocoa and hardwood (Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly, 2007) (KMA).

I decided to select the university and of the city because I was a former student of the university and a native of the city, hence I had convenient interactions with my participants. Since, I am familiar with the cultural and social aspect of both the university and the city. Being an insider will certainly not influence the findings, since in the qualitative research, perspectives of those studied are important and significant. This study presents the perspectives of respondents. Being an insider will rather enhance the reliability and validity of the findings. In all 10 participants were selected including, students, parents, and some faculty members. Students were selected in order to get a better picture of what is being done at home and at school with regard to gender inequality. Parents were also selected in this study as they are involved in the decision of whether to educate a female or male. Faculty members were brought on board because of their knowledge on gender inequality in access to higher education in that society. Some of them are even involved in formulating educational policies that focuses on gender issues in education.

Semi-structured interview was used in this study. The interview method is known for its flexibility, ability to obtain more and in-depth information, and overcome resistance from participants. It also gives rooms for questions to be repeated if it is not well understood by the respondents. I prepared an interview guide before leaving for the field. According to Bryman, (2004) an interview guide is important because it ensures that the same categories of information are obtained from
number of people about the phenomenon being studied. Moreover, an interview guide provides some flexibility within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that elucidate and illuminate that particular phenomenon, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversation style but focus on a particular topic that has been predetermined. In fact, there is adequate flexibility to accommodate the pursuit of emerging themes. The names, professional and academic qualification of respondents were written down in interview guide sheet so that references can be made as and when the need arises. After each interview a description of each person were written down in detailed. I summarized all the interviews and wrote the important key words, issues and the themes that emerged from the respondents in order to have easy access during the write up process.

4.4 Selection of respondents.

Purposeful sampling was used to select students with the aim of having different points with respect to their views towards gender inequality in access to higher education. According to Patton (1990) purposive sampling involves the practice of selecting cases that are likely to be information rich with respect to the purpose of the study. In all, five students were selected randomly from all the four levels of the university. Among the selected students, were three female students and two male students. The selected students were interviewed individually and for confidentiality the students were denoted by the combination of figures and letters (1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, and 1e) in order as they were selected as shown in the table 2.

Two parents who were involved in this study were a man and a woman. The male parent was selected because his daughter recent completed four year program from the university. I thought it wise to include him since his input would be relevant to
the study. The other parent who is female has her daughter still in the university. Hence, I thought her selection was very important for the study. Parents were denoted by (2a and 2b), as has been clearly shown in table 2. Three faculty members were selected for the study, including two females and a male. They were selected based on their experience on the university policies, syllabus, curriculum, admission procedures and gender inequalities in access to higher education. Two said they have been in the university for the past seven years and the other has spent almost all her life in the university. The male among them is a senior faculty member and a lecturer with a Doctorate degree in humanities. One of the women selected is the dean of student affairs and the other woman is a secretary in the department of business education. They were denoted by (3a, 3b, and 3c), as indicated in the table 2. Table 3, shows the composition of the selected respondents by sex.

Table 2 Coding key of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee number</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Gender (female or male)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1d</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1e</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Faculty member</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Faculty member</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>Faculty member</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Composition of selected respondents by sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty members</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5 Administration of the Interview.

Before embarking on the field trip I took permission letter from my Department, Higher Education (Institute of for Educational Research). On my arrival in Ghana, I traveled to Kumasi of University of Education where I presented my authority letter to the authorities of the university. A short discussion was held as to how to select my respondents. I mention the purpose of the study and assured them of its confidentiality. Basically the interviews with the faculty members were carried out in their offices during working hours. I was given a temporary office by the university authorities where I interviewed the students individually. For the parents, I conducted the interviews with them at separate places; one at his private office and the other at her home in the evening. English language was language used for the entire interview, apart from the parents that we mixed the English language with their local language, Twi.

At the beginning of the interview, I gave a brief introduction of myself as a master’s student from the University of Oslo and of course made them aware of the purpose of the interview and assured them of confidentiality. Importantly, I gave them the chance to ask questions if they had any before the interview commenced. The interview session began by following the interview guide but it
was not restricted to that format. Each interview question was evaluated with respect to both thematic and the dynamic dimension: thematically with regard to its relevance to the research theme, and dynamically with regard to the interpersonal relationship in the interview. A good interview question should contribute thematically to knowledge production and dynamically to promoting a good interview interaction (Kvale, 1996). The setting for the interview was very quite as required by the occasion, and most of the respondents were neatly dressed to grace the occasion. They were confident and that opened up a new avenue of interest, whilst there was one student who seemed to be quite nervous. One of the parents was very talkative by nature. I will say I had a successful interview as planned before embarking on the trip.

4.6 Analyzing Method

Inductive analysis was used to analyze the data, because it helps to make sense of the situation without having pre-existing expectations on the phenomenon under study, and also gives the chance to understand the essence of the data in hand. Patton (1990) argues that inductive analysis means that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on prior to data collected and analysis. While collecting data some analysis was done since I was reflecting on what I saw on the field, though thorough analysis was done after collection of the data. The analyst makes sense of the data by looking at the natural variation in the data. The phrases and patterns of behavior of the subjects were kept in mind as I read through the data. Hence, such facts and ideas were put into groups and logically labeled according to the data.
4.7 Limitation of the study

As much as I tried to use an interview method with the view of an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, I realized some problems and limitations in the study. Because of financial and time constraints I could not reach out more universities and more participants like students, lectures, parents and faculty members. To this end, I should mention here that this study is not meant for generalization of the whole of Ghana. In that, the findings of this study can be generalized only to the population from which that sample was taken. That notwithstanding, one can think that the findings from the study have some kind of broader applicability. Being a former student of the university and looking for such opportunity (even at the time I was a Bachelor’s degree level) to find out why males outnumbered their female counterparts in almost all the disciplines in the university even though a look at the population of Ghana show that women form a majority. According to the last national census (1991), women account for 52% of the population as against 48% of men. I sometimes felt unsure whether the answers provided by the respondents were their own reflections on the phenomenon or they wanted to please me.
CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the data obtained through the interviews. The interviews were conducted with students, parents and faculty members. As indicated earlier on, 10 participants were involved in the interviews. The interviews were semi-structured and of course carried out with the help of an interview guide, as a tool to enable and initiate the conversation between me and my interviewees. The findings are divided into three main parts comprising factors that contribute to gender gap in Ghana’s higher education, the challenges Ghanaian females face in the Ghanaian society and finally, the initiatives by the state to improve female access to higher education. I have therefore decided to present the findings in sub-headings for clarity and simplicity.

Induction method was used in analyzing the data, as also known as “bottom-up” approach where themes ideally arise naturally from the data in line with the research questions (Blanche et al, 1999). It is worth noting, that not all of the issues discussed in the interviews are presented in findings but rather those are that have relevant bearings to research questions.

5.1 Overview of the responses of the interview guide by the respondents

When asked to give their perception on the low representation of female students in the University, most students held the view that because society recognizes male higher education more than their female counterpart. One student also gave
reason that he thinks the higher education structure does not create conducive atmosphere for the females to have access to the higher institutions. Two students were of the view that females are underrepresented in the higher education institutions due to the fact that they are not well motivated to access higher institutions. A parent holds the view that females are underrepresented because they usually engaged themselves in early marriage. The female parent said that society has made a gap possible because of the perception that females will eventually get married and stay with their husbands. Hence, higher education is irrelevant to them. In their response two of the faculty members have the same opinion that parents prefer to educate their male children to the higher level of education to the detriment of females in pretext of culture.

About their views on any policy in place by the authorities to address the gap, four of the students had a similar sentiment that there is indeed such policies by the government by the policies are “white elephant”. One of the students expressed that he is not aware of any such policies by government to help curb the inequalities in the higher education institutions. Two faculty members in separate interviews admitted that there are policies by the state, which are working gradually. Another faculty member admitted that though the state has such policies, they are not working well in the higher institutions.

When asked about their views on gender inequality in access to female higher education, all the respondents held the view that a gap indeed exist between males and females at the higher education level. One male was quick to add that the gap varies across disciplines and is especially wider in the sciences. A faculty member said the gap is on the increase. As the years go by, the enrolment difference males and females widens seriously.
When asked about the factors contributing to gender inequalities in access to higher education. The students were of the view that economic and social factors have contributed to the inequalities of accessing higher education. Thus all the answers given by the students have some element of money, cultural and social as reasons accounting for the menace. Parents’ views were not different from the students since they also pointed out social, political, economical and cultural as the main causes of the gap in accessing higher education. A male parent said “all boils down to social and economic factors” as the main factors hinder the access of higher education. The faculty members added their voices in a similar manner. Thus the gap is obvious because of social, political, cultural, economic and religious factors.

When they were asked to give their views about social cultural explanation for gender inequality in access to female’s higher education, four of the students said it is due to the biased nature of society, which recognizes males more than their female counterparts. A student was with the opinion that due to the fact that females enter into early marriages. The parents also put the blame at the door step of early marriages by females due to social cultural pressure and its attendant childbearing as their explanations. A faculty member said that the perception that the best place for women is kitchen is because of society’s notions about marriage. The other faculty members were of the opinion that the stereotype nature of the society on the issue of childbearing and child upbringing reflects in their attitude towards educating females.

When the inquiry was made whether economic condition of the families affects females in access to higher education in Ghana, almost all the participants were of the view that the economic condition of the families affects female access to higher education.
5.2 Factors that contribute to gender gap in Ghana’s higher education

5.2.1 Cultural influence and negative attitudes of the parents.

In Ghana culture has a very significant impact on education, especially with females’ higher education. Ghana has different cultural backgrounds and of course such cultural factors have a pervasive influence on female education. Culture defines the different roles performed by both boys and girls in patriarchal socio-cultural settings. Data from the interviews show that boys are indeed expected to be responsible and independent community leaders while girls are expected to be dependent housewives and always encouraged to be good mothers. Interviews show that most of the interviewees have almost the same feelings about cultural factors. The following are some the views expressed by the interviewees concerning the cultural factors.

_I think it is traditionally prudent to invest in the male’s higher education instead of the female. Senior secondary education is just enough for females because males are more important and brave than their female counterparts. It is not important to give females higher education because she will surely get married. Hence, it is not wise to educate her to a higher level. Once married, she is expected to live with her husband, bear and raise children and of course, become the bonafide property of her husband. But on the contrary, it is worthwhile for males to have higher education because they are seen as an asset since they get married, bring their wives who usually become part of the family home. So it is imperative for them to become economically powerfully (male parent, date 09/01/08)._
I think it is a taboo for a female to have higher education in my area, I am saying this because the highest education most of my colleagues in my society have is senior high education. Sir, I am here because I had the chance to be raised in the city. I would have been in the same mess if I had been nursed in the village. People have the perception that it is a waste of resources and time to give higher education to women because women are less importance compared to men. There is the notion that women will end up in the kitchen, hence she does not need high education to become a housewife but men have big responsibilities as important members of society so he needs higher education for him to get there. Women are traditionally treated as inferior and men are considered superior, hence such higher education disparities (student female, date 10/01/08).

In my viewpoint, boys and girls are equally important hence equal higher education opportunity should be accorded to all of them the same time without discrimination based on gender. Through education girls are able to struggle for better lives and solve their daily problems. Lately, marriage is not a guarantee. Not all girls are getting marriage as presumed. Due to economic constraints men and women need to work so that they can help each other, and I trust it is only higher education that can make this a reality (male faculty member, 10/01/08)

The aforementioned statements clearly indicate that indeed cultural factors have a negative influence on females’ quest to access higher education Ghana. Beginning with the discussion and taking the statement by the faculty member into consideration. Truly the statement portrays the way traditionally, Ghanaian society assign roles to girls and boys. It indicates that girls are assigned roles that are considered to be of less value than that of boys, which exceedingly lead to the marginalization of girls in education and it attendant effects on their higher education. Liberal feminists identifying sexual division of labor and location of women in the domestic sphere which “consists of endless rounds of mindless,
demanding, and undervalued task”, while men usually occupy the public domain where the true rewards of social life such as power, money, freedom, opportunities for growth and so on are found (Odora, 1993).

The whole process of socialization made women lose confidence and consider themselves as inferior and vulnerable. These views also strongly shaped the aspirations of girls both physically and intellectually causing many to drop out of the formal schooling system prematurely. Thus the system impedes their access to higher education. Liberal feminists in education support this argument by maintaining that girls are thought to be socialized by family, school and media into traditional attitudes and orientations which limit their futures unnecessarily to sex stereotyped occupation and family roles (Acker, 1987). All these lead to gender inequality in access to higher education since higher education of such vulnerable groups are not seen as important, considering their assigned roles in society.

Similar views were expressed by (Mansah, 1992) who argued that the attitude and values acquired through the socialization process determine the general social, economic, political and educational views concerning men and women and also concerning men and women’s self-perception in the education system as well as the general environment. Another study from Tanzania by Omari (2001) added that girls are faced with the “male supremacy belief” which is strongly rooted in the patriarchal culture that men are naturally more intelligent than women and being a female implies not being intelligent, ambitious or resourceful. Neuman (2000) has explained that research on stereotyped attitude in Ghana shows that girls internalize these attitudes early in the socialization process and hence they perceive themselves as inferior and less intelligent. This reflected in their performance at the secondary level. Hence, their inability to pursue their education to the higher level and consequently affect the choice of their career. Liberal feminists claim that girls, from day one, are mutilated and conditioned into
accepting an adult life as mindless, dependent, sub-consciously depressed beings by the kind of gender specified roles they are fitted into Odora, (1993)

Risman, (2004) also in her publication titled Gender and Society indicated the same sentiments about how the attitudes of society influence the education of women. She revealed in her study that whatever position a women is placed in, she is expected to play her role as a good mother as demanded by society. Such attitudes of the society normally impede access of women higher education thereby widening the gap between males and females in education. She further pointed out that no matter one’s education, occupation or status women are seen as inferior, while men are seen as superior. This has made it difficult for higher education disparities between men and women to be resolved. It is exceedingly clear that, the ideas portrayed, the way socio-cultural attitudes and traditions often determine the status of girls and women in society. It shows that, culturally, the place of women is in the home. The expectation that girls will eventually marry and become housewives means that what they learn at home is considered to more important than what they learn at school. Hence, the norm would be for girls to stay close to their mothers as they grow up and learn household skills and behaviors that prepare them to see their formal roles as wives and future mothers. These socio-cultural beliefs cause parents to see the formal and of course higher education of females as a deviation from accepted societal norms and practice. Higher education is, therefore, sometimes not perceived as appropriate for girls and is consequently not valued; these immensely contribute to females being excluded from the labor markets due to a gender gap in higher education.

Some of the statements derived from the interviewees show that in some families, girls are still regarded as temporary members and less important to the family. In the light of the above, it seems that some parents fail to understand that both female and males have equal value in the society and they need equal
opportunities for education. The views from the respondents that a girl will get married and become the property of her husband in contrast to a boy getting married and bringing home a woman to the family is indicated of the unfortunate perceptions of the roles expected of a husband and a wife. Men and women marry and perform their respective roles as equal partners. There is enough evidence to suggest that educated wives are of immense benefit to the whole family and the society in general. Bendera (1997) confirms this by pointing out evidence from many studies that demonstrates that educated women can improve the quality of life and enhance national development through economic production, improved hygienic and nutritional practices as well as reduced child mortality. To add this, there is an old adage that “if you educate a man, you educate an individual but if you educate a women, you educate a nation” by one of the Ghanaian pioneer educationalists, Dr. Kwagyir Aggrey.

Educated women are able to engage in productive ventures, find formal sector employment, earn good incomes and enjoy greater returns from higher education than uneducated woman, who suffer from nutrition and health problems, or become victims of domestic violence (World Bank 2003b). However, if parents are conservative and fail to change their negative attitudes and perceptions on female higher education, the important benefits of female education will be subsequently lost. Power in the household and social norms can change through the deliberate actions of the state and civil society, and in response to broader political and social development (UNESCO, 2003b). In reference to the statements by interviewees, it is clear that gradually, some parents are beginning to realize the importance of higher education for both boys and girls. The beliefs of some people are no longer based on the traditional ideas about the place and roles of boys and girls in society. Again, it shows that the concept of females marrying and depending solely on their husbands is archaic and naturally fading. In addition, the society has now realized that due to economic constraints women and men really
need to work hard for better lives. Based on the changing economic situations women can no longer entirely depend on men for their entire living.

The presumption that females would take care of their parents during their parents’ old age would entirely depend on the upbringing of the children and their sense of responsibility regardless of sex. It is exceedingly clear that, educated parents attach equal importance to the education of both boys and girls. It is imperative to note that cultural beliefs and negative attitudes towards girls’ tertiary education still exists today in some societies but the perception is gradually changing, taking some the respondents views into consideration. The patriarchal ideology in Ghana is faced by a lot of challenges because the society is not static. Negative norms and practices that impede progress can be gradually transformed through education and social processes that promote the equality of boys and girls. Mansah (1992) in his study indicated educated women have the flair to educate their children regardless of gender, because it is only education that will make one fit into the society. Today, because of economic hardships, men alone cannot take of the entire family. Hence, women are expected to work to support the family upkeep. This can only be realized when equal opportunity is given to both sex at all level of education, especially at the university level.

5.2.2 Economic factor/influence

At the end of the interviews one can easily draw the conclusion that economic difficulties is one major factors which impede female access to higher education. Economic constraints and poverty have forced parents to make choices on the education of their children. On my field work one thing that came to light was parents could hardly send even two children at the same time to tertiary
institutions because of the huge expenses that await the parents. The situation pushed them to make unpopular decisions to the detriment of the girl child because the bias of society is always in favor of boys.

The following are some of the opinions given by different interviewees when asked about the economic consideration in relation to girls’ access to higher education.

_I completed the same high school with my twin sister with almost the same aggregate, but our parents decided to take me to higher education because they cannot afford the high cost of higher education of both us since our parents are just peasant farmers with resultant low income_ (female student, date, 09/01/08).

_I decided not to send my girl into higher education not because I do not know the importance of higher education for girls but to due to economic constraints beyond my control. My income is very low. I cannot afford to pay school fees and other contributions. I am only surviving but not living. As for my girl child, I am sure she will get marry one day and live with her husband_ (male parent, Date, 10/01/08).

_Last year I had no option than to defer my course because they could not pay for the user fees and accommodation fees because they cannot make ends meet let alone such costs. I was advised by my parents to defer the program for two semesters to take on some part-time jobs to enable me pay the increasing bills on my higher education because they were not in the position to meet such expensive expenses. Or better still, I stopped school to marry_ (female student, 09/01/08).

The above sentiments by various interviewees concerning economic effects show that poverty contributes much to the decision of the parents as to whether to
sponsors the higher education of their boy or girl child. It is obvious that families, who are poor economically, find it extremely difficult to meet the university bills of their children in recent times. This trend of affairs have hampered a number of girls from accessing higher education because parents end up making favorable decisions for their male children for traditional reasons better known to them. Even before 1999 where public tertiary education used to be free, the females were lagging behind their males counterparts in terms of numbers (Effah, 2001).

5.3 Challenges faced by Ghanaian girls/females

5.3.1 Pregnancy

The problem of school-girl pregnancy worries both the parents and actors in the educational sector. It worries some parents so much that they are not even willing to spend their meager salary to educate their daughter in the wake of rampant pregnancy among the young girls, especially the school going ones. This is because pregnant girls usually get expelled from schools. The obvious consequence of the pregnancy is an increase in the existing cost burden of their parents. Most girls in Ghana face this challenge of pregnancy and its attendant effect on their quest to have higher education due to a lack of sex education and also lack protection from some male students and teachers who sometimes rape them. Ghanaians still see sex education as a “no go” area because it remains a controversial issues in the home, community and both in formal and informal places of learning. Parents find it exceedingly difficult to discuss with the children about issue bordering on sex because of cultural norms and socialization practices. Nowadays, some are mastering the courage and talking about sexual issues with their children, but still it is not a walk over issue. Actors in the educational sector
claim that sex education was emphasized by the government to be taught in all level education in Ghana, but the problem is seldom incorporated into the primary and secondary curricular. And even when it is incorporated, its content is generally limited to biological aspects of reproduction, and avoiding discussion of contraception, as well as the emotional and moral aspects of the human sexuality. On the issue of pregnancy, one parent responded:

*I prefer giving first priority to boy education because boys have a better chance of continuing and completing their education but a girl child can get pregnant on the way and subsequently be expelled from school, which decreases her chances of going to university. This, of course, would be disadvantageous to her and a big loss to me when I have already spent lot of money to educate her. And it will be a burden on the whole family because we have to take care of her and her baby as well (male parent,, date 10/01/08).*

The statement above indicates that some parents make generalizations on the issues of pregnancy as a reason not to educate females. It shows that some parents think that males have a greater chance to advance in his education career. They can go as far in school as they want as opposed to females who might get pregnant along the way and drop out of school. These generalizations made by some parents affects female access to higher education and increases gender inequality in higher education, hence depriving females of better jobs.

5.3.2. Lack of family motivation and encouragement.

Parents of some students spend very little time with their children. Due to this social distance, children lack both parental love and motivation for schooling. This
study found out that parents especially with low income and struggling to make ends meet do not have time to spend with their school going children, let alone to inspect their work and to find out what is happening in their schools.

Since my educational career my parents have never visited me whilst on campus or have asked about the program I am pursuing. All that they know is that currently I am in the university and as to what grades enabled me to get the admission they are not aware of it since they don't care to know about my educational plans (female student, 09/01/08)

This statement attests to the fact that some parents do not know the importance of being close to their children and assisting them with any problems that might face or encouraging good progress in school. The educational attainment of the parents are largely responsible for the problems above, since they are not informed about the importance of education and how to encourage their school going children.

5.4 Government initiatives towards female’s access to higher education.

5.4.1 The quota system program

The government of Ghana in her bid to encourage female participation in higher education introduced a quota system in the public universities (MOESS, 2001). The system directed that males and female should be treated differently; the universities have been directed to set aside about 40% of their total enrolment on each program for the qualified females. It is expected that when all the universities comply by the directive, the gap between the males and the females in the higher education will be reduced tremendously. The Ministry of Education, Science and
Sports has the oversight responsibility to make sure that public universities in Ghana comply with the directive of the government. The cut off point for the entrance into the universities has been asked by the government to be female friendly, in order to increase their access to the higher education.

5.4.2 Other Intervention in the Education System

During the interview with faculty, it was reported that a number of favorable government decisions concerning female higher education have been taken. For instance, there has been a nationwide campaign to encourage a number of women university lecturers to act as motivational figures for the females. Thus the females will use such lecturers as their role models. Moreover, the government is undertaking expansion projects throughout the public universities to meet massification of higher education with especially considerations to girl child. The government has committed a lot of funds to the projects through Ghana Educational Trust fund (GETFUND). Now the government has directed the universities to lower the entry barrier for females instead of the regular high cut off point. This is intended to bridge the gap between the males and females in the higher education.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

The study identified cultural influence and negative attitudes of parents and economic factors as the main factors that account for the gender gap in Ghana’s higher education. Ghana has different cultural backgrounds and such cultural practices have strong influence on female education. The study revealed that most parents preferred to send their male children to higher education because of different cultural explanations. Data from the interviews suggested that boys are expected to be responsible and independent community leaders whiles girls are expected to be dependent housewives and always encouraged to be good mothers. The data revealed further that most parents regarded higher education of the former as an investment and asset, since whatever education they acquired would be beneficial to the entire family whiles they see it as not prudent to give higher education to the later because they would end up getting married and eventually become her husband’s property.

The economic condition of families is one of the major factors that contribute to the gap in higher education in Ghana. The data gathered from the study reveal that the economic factor is one of the main factors that contribute to gender inequality in the higher education. The study revealed that economic constraints and poverty forced parents to make choices in the education of their children, which in most cases are not favorable to girls. It was identified in the study that some parents could hardly send two children at the same time to tertiary institutions because they could not afford to pay their children’s huge expenses at the tertiary level.

Apart from the aforementioned factors that contribute the gender inequality in the higher education. The study further identified other challenges faced by Ghanaian girls, which also militated against their quest to access higher education. Pregnancy and the lack of family motivation and encouragement by parents
usually forced some the girls out of school. This trend of affairs worry some parents so much that they even decline to spend their meager income on girl’s higher education. It was identified in the study that some parents spend very little time with their children; hence children lack both parental love and motivation for schooling.

It was abundantly clear that government has undertaken several measures to curb the issues of the gender inequality in higher education. Some of them are the introduction of the quota system, the creation of a Ministry in charge of Women affairs in the Ghana, the expansion of the facilities in the universities to meet the increasing demand of the students are some of the main policies put in place by the government to curb the issue of inequality in the higher education. Notwithstanding these efforts and the measures taken by government, the gender inequality in the higher education seems to be on the increase. Government needs to do more in order to bring the issue of gender gap to rest in the near future. The expansion and financing of higher education is likewise crucial if the Higher Education for All is to be fruitful and if Ghana is to develop its human capital and reach the middle income status by 2020. The solemn declarations from time to time on the theme “Education for All” and equality of educational opportunity for every child may not be transformed into reality and may remain a myth to many developing countries like Ghana unless pragmatic steps are taken towards the development of the whole education system.

Ghana is a country with diverse cultural, economic, social and geographic conditions. If Ghana is really poised to develop its human resources more research should be done in different communities, universities with the aim of uncovering the factors that militate against equality in access and attainment of education at all levels. It is against this backdrop that I recommend that government and other stakeholders to take the issues of the inequality in the higher education as a matter
of urgency and address it accordingly for sound economy take off. The government needs to intensify its search to bridge the gap between male and female in the higher education sector. Hence, the policy makers need to adopt aggressive measures to balance the gap in the higher level of education in Ghana.

There are number of limitations concerning this study. In the first place, the study was conducted in Kumasi campus of the University of Education. Due to financial and time constraints I could not cover the entire country. The data obtained in the research reflect a “snapshot” of the situation of the Ghanaian girl child in relation to higher education for a particular region at that particular time. The information cannot be extrapolated nationally since Ghana is a country with a great diversity in terms of cultural, social, ethnicity, geography and so on.

It is important therefore to note that the result of the study is limited to the situation in that part of the country the country, and it is difficult to draw generalizations for the country at large. Furthermore, because of time and financial constraints I could not cover a lot of cultural and geographical area of the country. It is against this background that I advice and encourages future researchers into this study to cover wider area, taking into consideration the cultural, geographic conditions and use a larger sample size to be able to make better generalizations of their findings.
REFERENCES


World Bank (2001): *Engendering Development*


**APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE RESPONDENTS**

Background information
Name
Male/Female
Academic qualification
Working experience

**General overview**

1. It appears that the number of females enrolled in the university is very low. For instance, female tertiary student per 100,000 women was 54 in 1995 according to the Statistical Yearbook of UNESCO. Could your express your opinion why this is so?
2. Is there any policy by the state to encourage higher representation of female students? How successful is the implementations?
3. Has the university policy on the enrolment of female student?
4. Is there any policy regarding discrimination? Discrimination in favor of women? For instance if two students a male and female have the same aggregate score, who is admitted?
5. Female students do cluster around the arts and humanities and participate less in the so-called traditional male fields. Could you give reason why this is so? What has been done to encourage females into traditional males’ field?
6. Do you have any idea about gender inequality in access to females’ higher education in Ghana?
7. In your view what are the factors that contribute to gender gap in access to female’s higher education?
8. In your opinion what are the socio-cultural explanation for gender inequality in access to females’ higher education?
9. Do you think that economic conditions of families affect females in access to higher education in Ghana?
10. Are there any challenges females faces in their quest to pursue higher education in Ghana?
11. If a girl is pregnant is she allowed continuing with studies after delivery? If not why?
12. Do you think that cultural practices that are taking place in some tribes’ affect the education of girls? Please explain.
13. If a parent has two children, a boy and girl who get first priority to be paid for school fees?
14. How do the parents contribute to the education of their children? What do they contribute?
15. In your opinion, do you think that it important to educate a girl up university level? Why?

- For females only
1. How many children are there in your family? How many boys and girls?
2. How many are you in higher education institution
3. In your opinion do the girls get equal opportunity as boys to access higher education?
4. Do your parents pay for your education without difficulties?
5. If parents fail to pay for fees what happen to you?
6. How often do parents visit on campus?
7. Do your parents sometime eager to know your school progress?
8. In your opinion, do think that girls need equal opportunity as boys in access to higher education?
9. Are there any obstacles that girls face in their education?