

Factors That Account For Low Enrollments in Community-Based Senior High Schools in the Ashanti Region of Ghana

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Abstract:

The study was to explore the factors that account for low enrolments in senior high schools in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors that account for low enrolments in the community-based senior high school in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The purpose of the study was to investigate socio-economic factors, school related factors, geographical factors and individual characteristics that influence enrolments, participation, retention, attendance, progression and dropout in community-based senior high schools in Ashanti Region of Ghana. The purposive and quota sampling were used to select a sample size of 120 respondent make up of 10 heads, 10 Districts Directors of Education, 10 PTA chairmen and 90 parents of sampled schools. The instruments used to collect data from the respondents were the questionnaire for heads, structured interview guide for parents. PTA Chairmen and the District Directors of GES and observation guide on school building and furniture. The reliability co-efficient of the study was 0.82. The co-efficient is high enough and hence the items were deemed reliable for the study. Data were analysed by the use of frequencies, percentages and apparent cohort method. The finding of the study indicated that most of the sampled senior high schools do not have school bus to convey day students to and from schools. The sample senior high schools do not have workshops for all programmes, classrooms and standard science laboratories and science equipment to enhance academic work.

Key Words: Secondary school admission, Progression rates, The transition rate, Access, Participation, Dropouts, Wastage, Retention, Net enrolment rate, Gross enrolment rate, Gross admission rate, Net admission rate, Schooling, Community based senior high schools

Background of the Study

Education is a life-long learning process. The future of our society depends on informal educated and skilled citizens who, while fulfilling their own goals of personal and professional development, contribute to the social, economic and cultural development of their country and the world at large (Benneh, 2001). Education provision takes various forms including, formal education, on-the job training and adult literacy programmes. In school education offers greater opportunities for providing literacy education to more people than do the other forms of education. Especially at the early stages of life before entry in adulthood, formal education is the most appropriate form of providing literacy education to people. Schooling teaches students more than how to read and write. It teaches how to organize one's thinking and how to express one's ideas clearly and logically. Lack or incomplete schooling perpetuates low self-image and the perception of inferiority.

At the basic level, in-school education introduces pupils to general and basic literacy skills and predisposes them to rudimentary practical and vocational skills which help expose their innate practical abilities (Owusu, 1981). However, the value of schooling, socio-economic and otherwise, becomes well-defined at the secondary and tertiary levels. At these higher levels, the recipient of school education becomes more mature

and capable of gaining a better understanding of the world around them. The exposure of students at the stage of more complex problems and skills is a key ingredient for stimulating high productivity as well as promoting greater personal advancement and self-fulfilment (Meier, 1976). After political independence occupied by the colonizers; the machinery of government necessary to the workings of the new state had to be set up. In the early days this twin necessity bred rapid upward social mobility, carry a small number of nationals to the highest echelons on the strength of education. It is easy to see how this impressive social promotion must have powerfully bolstered the belief in the benefits of schooling, thereby fuelling demand for secondary and higher education whose scope quickly outstripped the actual possibilities of upward social mobility (Foster 1977)

The school, “as both a thinking and independent agency” contributed political and ideological change. As a result, the demand for education grew, which explains why, from this time on, the pressure of this demand began to squeeze out the imperatives of economic development. Since independence, the school’s ideological role, which is aimed at legitimizing the authority of the state and the growth of national feeling, continue to act as the driving force behind educational expansion (Martin, 1975). A well-educated population has become a defining feature of a modern society. Education is seen as a mechanism for instilling civic values, and as a means for developing individuals’ productive and social capacity. Early childhood programmes prepare young children socially and academically for primary education. Primary and secondary education provides basic skills that serve as a foundation for young people to become productive members of society. (Adanusa, 2006).

It has become increasingly clear that the development of human resource is essential for economic growth as well as development of natural resource (Busia, 1968). International evidence suggests that the quality of secondary education especially in mathematics and science has strong impact on economic growth than years of schooling. Equitable access of secondary education for poor students and especially girls is an additional factor enhancing countries economic growth performance (World Bank, 2007) Education constitutes a cornerstone in any country’s efforts toward accelerated national development. However, secondary education has a greater potential than primary education of sustaining literacy levels attained, raising political awareness and thus advancing democracy, as well as supplying sufficient middle-level manpower crucial to national development (Quist, 2003). The crucial problem of sufficient number of people who possess the specialized skills and competence necessary for building and operating a modern nation. Education has a part to play in economic growth.

Hornby (2004) defines education as the process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools or colleges to improve knowledge and develop skills. Education either formal or informal is to inculcate into educands the pattern of behaviour, techniques, values beliefs, ideas and knowledge which that society has accumulated and used (Agyeman, 1993). Marshall (as cited in Mincer, 1974) pointed out that education not only helps the individual to improve his or her life within each social class but also acts as a “latent abilities” of those who would otherwise “have died unknown”..

In education “industry”, it is not only government that are decision takers. Individuals and/or their parents are also involved in taking decisions on the amount and type of education to demand and invest in. It is frequently argued that if education is not a profitable investment to individuals or their parents, the amount of investment made would decline over time (Akanbou, 1987). The fact that more and more education is demanded by Ghanaians over time may suggest that individuals and/or their parents feel that education is a profitable investment. Some economists have agreed that education determines earning differentials in some parts of the world. For instance, in the United State of America, some consensus has developed among economists that about two-third of earning differentials associated with different amount of education in American be attributed to education alone (Akanbou, 1987). This suggests that when one climbs the educational ladder to the highest point one gets more he period of schooling income as compensation to the amount of resources one sacrifices during the period of schooling.

The right to free and compulsory secondary education stipulates that every citizen shall have the right to participate in a full time secondary education and to complete it. Also central government is duty bound to provide timely and adequate subventions in realizing this right. Education as right moves beyond the basic

level of education since it is most time prerequisite for the job market (Constitution, 1992). It went further to say that secondary education in its different forms including technical and vocational education shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means and in particular by the progression of free education and development of system of schools with adequate facilities at all levels shall be actively pursued. Senior high schools provide a comprehensive academic education for students with the principal objective of preparing them for further education and training in tertiary institution (Anamuah-Mensah 2002). Secondary education according to the Addis Ababa Conference Report (1961 cited in Antwi 1992), embraces the post-primary levels of education which with the variations required by particular circumstances may consist of further six years of school life in two stages. The first of the two stages is expected to enrol students between age 12 and 15 and the pre-university institutions such as vocational schools, technical institutions, teacher training colleges and general secondary schools.

It becomes apparent that the function of the secondary school is not only to train young people for entry into the professions to provide middle-level manpower necessary for economic development but also to prepare those few who are to proceed to university and other forms of higher education (Antwi 1992). The second principle of Governor Guggisberg's sixteen principles laid emphasis on the provisions of secondary school with an education standard that will fit young men and women to enter university (Akyeampong, Djangmah, Oduro, Seidu & Hunt, 2007). The need to expand secondary education had been an issue for sometimes young need more years of education to consolidate what they have learned in basic schools, prepare them for work and help them think for themselves. At secondary level, adolescents learn how to be, how to do and how to live together. They acquire basic competencies in language, science, mathematics and other life skills (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] 2007). It went further to say that at macro level; countries need a more educated work force in order to compete in an increasingly globalized world. Whereas universal primary education remains crucial to national development, a project started in 1951 in Ghana to promote secondary education. As Ghana marches into twenty-first century there is the equal need for increased attention to secondary education, particularly since it is the most accessible form of high education (Quist, 2003). He went further to say that there is need for accelerated secondary education that produces 80-85 percent enrolment nation-wide, paralleling the present appropriately 85 percent enrolment. Hornby (2000) defines enrolment as the act of officially joining a course, school or education institution.

Purpose of the Study

The study seeks to investigate the factors that account for low enrolments in community-based senior high schools in Ashanti Region.

Specifically, the study aims to examine:

1. Socio-economic factors mostly affect enrolment in senior high schools.
2. School related factors mostly affect enrolment in senior high schools.
3. Geographical factors causing low participation, low retention and high drop-out rate in senior high schools.
4. The individual characteristics influencing enrolment, attendance and progression in senior high schools.
5. Suggestions to improve enrolment in less endowed senior high schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. Which socio-economic factors mostly affect enrolment in senior high schools?
2. Which school related factors mostly affect enrolment in senior high schools?
3. What geographical factors affect low participation, low retention and high drop-out rate in senior high schools?
4. What individual characteristics influence enrolment, attendance and progression in senior high schools?
5. How can enrolment be improved in less endowed senior high schools?

Significance of the Study

The result of the research brought to light the negative factors affecting enrolment in senior high schools in Ashanti region of Ghana. This hopefully would lead to development of policies to help reverse this trend. It is also hoped that this study would be of significance for parents to contribute their quota to improve upon enrolments in senior high schools in their towns. School counsellors would use it to advise the parents the need to send their wards to senior high school in their towns. It would help policy members (Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service) to formulate and implement policies that would promote secondary education in Ghana.

Socio- Economic Factors and Education

The concept “economic accessibility” means the factor preventing clientele of education are not only physical but financial. Economic accessibility relates to the socio- economic status as measured by parental education level, family income and parents` occupation. Higher education is not yet equal attainable for all Australians, or seen as equally relevant by all Australians. With regards to rural and isolated people, James, Baldwin and McInnis(1991) found that the imbalances in higher education participation in Australian reflect differences in family and community attitudes towards relevance of education rather than distance to campus. In other words, the casual factors in low participation rates are predominantly socio-economic in character rather than vocational. James 2002 reported that in Australia, in the 1990s, 14.6 percent of domestic student in Australia Universities were identified as people from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Socio-economic and regional participation imbalance can be found in most developed nation, despite the mystification of higher education system. In 1997, the organization for economic co-operation and development (OECD) report that socio-economic concern lie at the core of many of the issues of equity, access and participation in education and training in OECD countries (OECD, 1997). In the United Kingdom evening participation rates across the socio-economic strata has emerged as a major policy issue. Addea-Mensah, Djangmah and Agbenyegah 1973 conducted a study on family background and educational opportunities in Ghana and they found out that even though people in special schools form just 2% of all the pupils in the primary 1-6 in Ghana, they take averagely 5% of all admissions to public secondary schools. The figures were: 1968\69:5.2%, 1969\70:6.3% and 1970\71:4.2%. the over representation of the children from special schools` in the secondary school is more glaring when they analyzed the intake of some of the top schools like Achimota, Mfantsipim and Wesley Girls were dominated by children from special schools` For example, Achimota 80.3%, Wesley Girls 65.6%, and Mfantsipim 61.9% of the intakes were from; special schools. Turning to income level of the parents of the students who were admitted to the top ten secondary schools in Ghana between 1968 and 1970, the researchers discovered that 43.5% of the students came from high – income families, 27.3% from middle income families and low income families and only 14.4% came from farmers, fishermen and labourers families and 14.8% had no occupation. Moreover, in 1973, of the number of scholarship and bursaries offered by the government to children who entered the top ten secondary schools, 43.8% went to children of high –income parents; 27.5% to middle and low income parents and only 14.8% to children of farmers, fishermen and labourers. 13.9% went to other children.

They reported that in Ghana, a son of university graduate has a brighter chance of entering secondary school than a son of a man with primary education. Mensah as cited in Care International, (2003); Johnson and Kyle, (2001); Montgomery, Kouame and Oliver (1995) their studies suggest that parental education particularly the mother`s education has a bigger influence on the children`s schooling (attendance and achievement). Akyeampong et al. (2007), study on access to basic education in Ghana reported that participation in JSS and SSS is much higher for wealthier families and because cost are higher at secondary education level. Okojie, Chiegwe and Okpokunu (1996) reported that in Nigeria, uneducated parents are aware of the benefits of sending their children to school. With parent`s occupation, while father were mainly farmers, mothers were mainly traders. It was found that most parent try to send their children to school, if possible senior high school. But where a choice has to be made by low income earners, it is girls who are likely to dropout. In Uganda, mother`s educated has a great impact on the academic aspiration on their daughter`s. (Muranga, 1997).

In USA, class position of a family is an important source of its children`s culture capture capital. Class position of a family`s power a consumer of education, just as it determines a family ability to consume

other goods and services from autos to health care. The consumer power of the affluence is quite a bit greater, than that of the poor and working class and that quality of education that members of these groups are likely to be able to consume is not the same for each group (Neubeck&Glassberg, 2002).

Gender and Education

Gender is a concept that refers to roles and responsibilities that are expected of men and women as members of society. These roles and responsibilities are determined not by biological differences but are socially defined and shaped by traditions and beliefs (Centre for development and Population Activities (CEDPA), 1996). Of particular concern is the considerable evidence of a growing gender disparity in educational participation and achievement. Lamb, Dwyer and Wyn (2000) report from the longitudinal survey of Australia youth data sent that male up to 56 percent of non-completer in the early 1980s, but by the mid-1990s, this population had increased to 64 percent. The percentage of the male non-completers who are from low socio-economic backgrounds also increase from 35 to 44 percent between 1980s and mid 1990s not only males less likely to complete school but also females. They are also considered less likely to enter higher education. Augles, Karmel and Wu (2000) estimate that, the lifetime probability of males entering higher education is 38.1% compared with 52.6% for females. The study carried out on children labour and sexual exploitation in Philippines shows that in CAR girls are being favoured for school when resource are limited over boys (Murray, 2004). The statistic paints a grim portrait of the education of African women and girls. Nineteen sud-Saharan countries have a literacy rate for females below 30 percent, while corresponding rates for males are twice as high. Less than half of 6-11 year-old girls are estimated to be in school (Association for the Development of Education in Africa 2000).

Gendered schooling pattern are context specific with research indicating differentiation across Ghana. Shabaya and Konadu-Agyeman (2004) state that girls are generally disadvantaged compared to boys in terms of educational access, but the probability of attending school is further worsened for those girls living in the rural areas and peripheral regions. However, research by Fentiman. Hall and Bundy (2001) revealed that there were more girls enrolled in schools in Fumbusi than boys (46 percent girls, 30 percent boys) which appear to be against the norms of the Upper East Region. John and Kyle 2001 speak of higher dropout rate for girls, whereas Avotri(2000) suggest that boys tend to drop out more than girls. Also there are many religious and cultural practices in some communities that discriminate against the education of girls(Sutherland-Addy, 2002; Chao &Alper, 1998; Stephen, 1998).

Yeboah(1997) provides an interesting study on how household made decision about girls' primary school in Ghana. She carried out qualitative interviews with fifteen families in Accra and Koforidua as well as observations in 1995. It was found that there was some favouring of boys over girls issue to families when they were obligated to make decision about either a daughter's or a son's access to school. Moreover, Ankomah(1998) conducted a study on participation in secondary education in Ghana. The case of females in rural areas of BrongAhafo reveals that girls were generally under-represented in schooling in rural area of BrongAhafo. The under-presentation was much greater at the secondary stage than it was in the basic level. Averagely, there are three boys to every two girls at the basic level in the rural areas. The sex ratios of selected basic schools over a five years period ranged between 149 and 169. At the secondary level , there were five boys to one girl in the school located in the rural areas(with sex ratios of selected rural secondary schools ranging between 458-572) while those located in the urban centre of the region had about three boys to one girl(with sex ratios of selected urban secondary schools ranging between 268 and 244) .

Adu (1999) opined that many African parents, especially in the rural areas where traditional values are more prevalent have misgivings about education. They fear it may course unwanted attitudes, emboldening daughters to defy culturally significant norms and practices considered sacrosanct. In such matters, parents often have different perception about education their son s and daughters. Even when families cost for education for sons and daughters are the same, parents may perceive the expected returns as greater in the case of boys.

Njeru and Orodho(2003) carried out research on access and participation in secondary education in Kenya found out that there were major regional and gender disparities with best performing districts in the non-ASAL regions. Among the first 14 best performing districts in the country (ranked by GER),five were in

Central province, four in Rift-Valley, two in Western, two in Nyanza and only one Coast province. None of the districts with GER above the national mean figure of 20.5% were either from Nairobi (urban) or the predominant ASAL, north Eastern and Eastern province. The district with several gender disparities as of 2000 includes Wajir (GER: girls 2.7%, boys 8.8%); Mendera (GER: girls 3%, boys 6.9%) and Garissa (GER: girls 4.7%, boys 13.1%) in North Eastern province.

In contrast, the district with overall high GER and near gender parity were Kaimbu Njeri, Nyandarua, Moranga and Kirinyaga in Central province, Taita-Taveta in Coast province and Kakamega in Western province. In some of the non-ASAL high economic potential regions, fewer boys than girls enrolled in primary and secondary school, including more positive attitude and high premium, attached to the education of girls than their ASAL counterparts (Njeru & Orodho, 2003).

Research in Malawi and Uganda suggest that lack of money may in some case be an excuse for the reluctance of parents and families to invest in the education of girls because they do not perceive the value of education of girls also because of socio-culture perception about the role of women in society (Fleuret, 1992; Kapakasa, 1992). Casely – Hayford and Wilson (2001) described the difficulties in getting female teachers into remote rural areas of Ghana and the poor supply of female teachers in these areas. They highlighted the need to design strategies to attract and retain more female teachers in deprived rural areas of the country. Studies indicate the reasons why girls tend to have low enrolment rates than boys, high dropout and less transition to the secondary school.

The Academy for Educational Development (2002) calls for barriers to education for girls, multifaceted and interrelated but not a common denominator to poverty. Other factors influencing female enrolments have been identified as: beliefs, practices and perception of the role of girls by families and communities (Academy for Educational Development, 2002). Thomas (1994) conducted a research on like father, like son, like mother, like daughter and data were derived from household surveys conducted in the United States, Brazil and Ghana. In all three countries, mothers were found to allocate more resources to daughters while fathers channelled resources towards sons. Maternal education was found to have a larger effect on the height of daughters than sons, while sons benefit more than daughters as paternal education increased. The benefits accruing to all are greater when the woman is the beneficiary of education. The notion of girls today being the women of tomorrow is universally lauded. While boys continue to benefit from the new and changing knowledge, girls do not. Their primary source of information remains inherited maternal guidelines. The reason for not sending daughters to school and the high dropout rate can be attributed to traditional and attitudinal, financial and infrastructural factors.

Another factor restricting girls' enrolment in secondary school and as a consequence, in higher learning is the limited availability of secondary schools for girls. Most secondary schools in Ghana are boarding institutions and there are more such schools for males than for females. Even in co-educational schools, more dormitory facilities are reserved for boys (Dolphyne, 1987; Manuh, 1984). The tendency for girls to attend lower-quality schools is one explanation for their poorer performance in national examinations in Ghana (Hyde-Karen, 1993). When girls succeed in gaining entry to secondary and post-secondary schools, there is strong evidence that stereotypes regarding males and females' roles lead to different curricula for girls and boys. Several studies show that the educational structure in Ghana channels girls into arts and humanities and boys into sciences (Dolphyne, 1987; Manuh, 1984).

Data substantiates that the enrolment of women in technical and scientific fields is quite low. In 1987/88, approximately 60% of undergraduate female students in Ghana were studying arts and home science (CEDAW, 1991). The research shows that students' enrolment according to the area of study at the University of Ghana. The percentage of female students doing arts and humanity courses are always higher than the percentage of male students (Agyei-Boadu, 2005). In sub-Saharan Africa, for every 100 boys there are only 77 girls in primary school and girls are less likely to complete school (UNICEF, 2006). In the research areas as well, the problem of non-enrolment and dropout appeared more prevalent among girls than boys. Whilst gender ratios are relatively equal in the lower classes, there is an under-representation of girls in higher primary classes and beyond (Lange, 2007). In 2005, Garu-Tempane district hosted 22

kindergarten/preschools, 67 primary schools, 16 Junior Secondary Schools and 1 Secondary School in the village of Tempane.

Child Labour and Education

Child labour is often defined as a work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity and that is harmful to their physical and mental development (Githito-Murithi, 2007). Some people have argued that compulsory and universal education for all children would effectively eliminate child labour. Proponents of this view cite history. They claim that the link between child labour and education was established in the 19th Century when child labour law in industrialized countries made it compulsory for children to complete basic education up to a specific age and established it as a requirement for employment. Myron Weiner and others who hold this view have argued that the universal extension of state-funded education in Europe, North America and Japan has been the most powerful magic wand for the abolition of child labour. "No country has ended child labour without first making education compulsory. As long as children need not attend school, they will enter labour force". Policy makers in most countries believe that mandatory education is a prerequisite for the eventual abolition of all forms of child labour (Weiner, 1990). Those who hold this view reason that where compulsory education is effectively implemented, children will be less available for full-time work at least during school hours, parents will be encouraged to keep their children in school, and employer will be dissuaded from hiring children.

According to Murray 2004 many experts argue that compulsory schooling alone cannot overcome all social and economic obstacles that combine to keep children out of school and in the labour force. In their view, compulsory schooling alone cannot overcome all social and economic obstacles that combine to keep children out of school and in the labour force. In their view, compulsory education is necessary but the sole condition for the elimination of child labour. Murray 2004 carried out a survey on girls child labour domestic work and sexual exploitation and found that in Philippines, half of or more of the Child Domestic Workers (CDWs) in two regions, Metro Manila and Bacolod city have dropped out 7.5 percent of the respondents had never attended school. By contrast in Ecuador the region assessed only a third of CDWs had dropped out. In general child domestic workers in the two countries often lag behind their peer at school because of their irregular attendance.

In Ghana, Canagarajah and Coulombe 1997 analyzed the linkages between child labour and decision-making around schooling, using national household survey conducted from 1987 on children aged 7-14 years in 1992. The following observations were made: 28 percent of children were involved in child labour in Ghana. In 1992 two-thirds of the children in child labour were simultaneously schooling.

There were some clear gender based distinctions in the type of tasks performed by girl and boy workers. Girls do more household chores, whilst boys are more likely to be in labour force. Girls tend to work more hours more than boys, especially if household chores are taken in consideration. More than 90 percent of child labour is in rural areas (Canagarajah&Coulombe, 1997). Children of private informal sector wage earners and food crop producing farmers had the highest incidence of child labour. The majority of children were unpaid family worker involved in family farm and enterprises. Overall, there was a significant negative relationship between going to school and working. Also presence of children less than 6 years old tends to increase the probability of girls schooling and not working (Murray, 2004).

Heady (2000) carried out research in Ghana which analyzed the effect of child labour on learning achievement. His study reveals that the children mathematics and writing scores were low. He found out that regular class attendance was more important requirement for learning mathematics than for writing achievement. Heady suggests that for those children who both attended school and worked learning achievement was lower than it should have been, possibly because of exhaustion or because the children's attention was focused elsewhere. Heady (2000) found that those children who worked in their home did slightly better than those who worked more achieved lower scores on tests. Girls did worse than boys in all tests and in fact they tended to work more than boys in the sample group tested.

Murray (2004) carried out a study on girls child labour in domestic work and sexual exploitation and found out that 40 percent of the children of child domestic workers had never attended school, half or more of the child domestic workers had dropped out. The study showed that 51 percent wished to go back to

school in Ghana. Boateng(2005) investigated the causes of girls dropping out of schools and found out that child labour accounted for a fifth at all dropouts. Other studies in different region of the world have also found evidence of the adverse consequence of child labour on school achievement.

Stern (as cited in Murray, 2004) reported that working more than 15 hours per week while in secondary school in the USA led to lower grades, less time spent on homework, increased likelihood of dropout and a lower likelihood of entering post-secondary education. Sanchez (as cited in Murray, 2004), using information of pupils in the 3rd and 4th years in Latin America found that in all ten countries tested, performance in mathematics and language tests was lower when the child worked outside the home, and the impact becomes more pronounced when children reported working more than a few hours.

The international community's efforts to achieve education for all children and the progressive elimination of child labour are very closely linked. On one hand, education has little alternative than to enter the labour market. On the other hand, child labour is once the main obstacles to education for all, since children who are working full-time cannot go to school. The academic achievement of children who combine work and school often suffers and there is a strong tendency for these children to drop out of school and enter into full-time employment (Murray, 2004).

Education is intricately linked to efforts to combat child labour. For girls in particular, there are factors that create a conflict between child labour and education and they are clearly reflected in the large gender gaps in schooling; sixty percent of the children around the world who do not go to school are girls, children, mainly girls are often exposed to cruel treatment, forced to work excessive hour and prohibited from attending school (Murray, 2004).

Gonza and Moshi (2002) carried out research into children working in commercial agriculture-tea pointed out in Tanzania; most children engaged in tea farming are enrolled in primary schools and work on a seasonal basis a situation that leads to poor overall school attendance and a high number of dropout, Martin, Gunther and Caglar(2003) conducted a study on child labour in Europe and central Asia and one of their respondents who was a twelve-year old boy in Tajikistan said "I get up at 5:30 am and go with my mother to milk the goats. We come back to prepare breakfast for the younger children and my father. I then prepare lunch and at 7:30 am I leave the house to walk to school, which is five kilometres away. I used to board the bus, but now we cannot afford the fare and in my case.it often does not come. I get home from school mid-afternoon and help prepare the meal or do the laundry. After tea I milk the goats again, clean the kitchen and go to bed. I want to be an engineer, but I'll probably have to leave school soon and help on the farm".

A comparative study of the child labour and schooling in Africa found that one way to reduce child labour and increase incentives to keep the children in the educational system is to improve access to credit, when the family can pay back later (Canagarajah& Nielsen, 1999). Njeru and Orodho (2003) conducted research on access and participation in secondary education in Kenya and it was found that children in low income urban areas especially young girls are not attending school due to child labour and prostitution.

Alexandrescu (2002) conducted a study in Romania on working street children in Bucharest and one frequent result is that the child can be encouraged to work by the family, even obliged to do so, or the family's survival. The following excerpt from a rapid assessment show how family destitution pushes some children living in Bucharest, the capital of Romania to leave school and beg. The parents' occupation underscores the economic difficulties these families are going through as well as the impossibility of providing their children with a decent living. In this context, sending their children to beg becomes an attractive alternative. They are encouraged to continue to do so by the lack of serious sanctions on the part of the government or police. Children themselves think that there is no other way and that they have to contribute to the family's expenses. The children's income is an important resource for the family, and 54.7 percent of the children working in the streets who were interviewed said they gave their family all their earnings.

However, only 23.3 percent of them said they were forced by others to work, the rest reported that they started working on their own initiative. Their financial contribution is vital for the family's survival, as most of the families live below the poverty line. Both parents and children think that the child should make a

financial contribution to the family's income. The study revealed that 27.9 percent of the families interviewed thought that child labour was a positive thing and that a child should work. Of the 75 children who declared that they have stopped going to school in order to work, 50 had quitted school because of the family's extreme poverty and their need to contribute to the family's income.

Women bear a large share of household chores than men do, and the perception that these tasks are feminine continues. Mothers therefore are more likely to assign domestic tasks to their daughter than to their sons, particularly in rural areas where girls are expected to assist their mother with household chores such as fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking and caring for young children. A study has observed that teenage girls in Ghana work longer hours than boys whether or not they are enrolled in school (Lloyd & Gage-Brandon, 1993). They went further to report that heavy domestic responsibilities interfere with schooling, depress performance and in extreme cases, lead to school withdrawal.

Obodan, near Nsawam, in the Eastern region is an educationally deprived community where child labour, affecting girls mostly is extensive. Most adolescent girls, in and around the surrounding communities, dropout of school to earn family income by working on pineapple plantations located in the area. Consequently, they get involved in all manner of social vices including sexual abuse, which often results in teenage pregnancies and also expose them to HIV/AIDS. Galamsey activities, as illegal mining is popularly referred to in Ghana, are common in all mining areas including the Wasswa Amenfi East District. Traditionally, galamsey has always been the preserve of desperate, young males, young males, who have found themselves in unfortunate situations such as those who have dropped out of school, with no employment opportunities mostly, go into galamsey (Gender Equality in Education Project [GEEP] 2007).

Illegal mining is a predominantly male activity. Women who get involved are normally married adults or single parents and their activities revolve around carrying sand, sifting sand for gold ore extraction or selling cooked food. However, in recent times, an unfortunate trend is developing. Young school girl between the age of 12 to 16 years are dropping out of school to engage in galamsey. Poverty and the inability of parents to cater for these girls is the main reason for this. What is most disturbing is that these girls are not just carrying sand and selling cooked food but they are also engaging in prostitution at the mining site (GEEP,2007). According to Ghana Statistical Service (2003) the number of working children in the Upper East Region (UER) represent a little over one in three (34%) of the total population aged 7-14 years. The proportion of males of school-going-age who are working is 35.3% and that of female is 32.7%. From the statistics it is clear that in the studied areas, many children are engaged in economic activities, mainly agriculture. Domestic work in the own home, albeit not a significant part of these statistics, is also known to be a major activity for rural girls (Kielland&Tovo, 2006).

School Related Factors and Education

Ample research exist to show that boys receive far more attention in school at all grade level, no matter what the sex of the teacher (Wilkerson &Marret; Jone; Okele; du Plessis as cited in Anamuah-Mensah, 2000). When teachers express more interest in and more positive feedback to be actively engaged in learning process while girls become passive and restrict their involvement (Wellestey as cited in Neubeck&Glasberg, 2002; Kasente, 1995).Distance to school from the community has significant impact on student attendance at school. In Nigeria, it was found that communities that had basic school and senior high schools enhance access to potential candidates. However, in an area where there was no senior high schools and those who wanted to attend senior high school had to travel or walk to another village or town, limited the access of students secondary education (Okojie, Chiegwe&Okpokunu, 1996).

Murray 2004 pointed out that other factors that limit girls' educational opportunity range from the distance to school, which places their security at risk, to the provision of relevant curricula sensitive to their need and aspiration. He went further to say that, in certain cultures, girls' chances of going to school might depend on the ability of separate school facilities for girls (who cannot for cultural or religious reasons sit in the same school rooms with boys) or the presence of a female teacher. These and other problems often deprive millions of girls of an education. Distance to school was also cited in other research reports in Ghana as a factor in non-enrolment (Avotri, 2000); late-enrolment (Fentiman, Hall & Bundy, 1999).The most obvious reason that may undermine enrolment and increase school dropout rate is the actual availability of schools

themselves. Secondly the proximity of the schools to primary school-age children is also vital. Herz (1995) quoted a study by Robinson done in Egypt in 1987, which showed that the enrolment and the persistence of boys and girls were a function of distance to the available schools. Thus for instance the location of a school within 1 km of a community resulted in an enrolment rate of 94 percent for boys and 74 percent for girls; when the distance was increased to 2 km, boys' enrolment fell only slightly to 90 percent, but girls' enrolment plummeted to 64 percent.

There has been some limited research on the practice and processes of schooling and their effects on educational access in Ghana. But more work is needed to provide greater understanding of the push-out and pull-ins generated through schooling. The major work of this kind is no general school experience (Dune & Leach, 2005). Dune and Leach. (2005) studied environment in six junior secondary schools (three high achieving and three low achieving schools two in urban areas, two in Peri-urban and two rural areas in Ghana (and six in Botswana also) to identify schooling practice which promoted gendered schooling experiences. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data, they look at these gendered experiences in the context of retention (and achievement) of girls and boys at the junior secondary level; they raise issues around connectivity and the interlocking factors contributing to retention and achievement and indicate the case studies provided a wealth of evidence to show how the gendered experience of both students and teachers contribute to rational data (Dune & Leach, 2005). The study Dune and Leach 2005 makes the experiences and rational observations as follows:

1. Similar gendered experiences were recommended in all schools for students and teachers.
2. General dropout rates were much higher in Ghana (than Botswana); girls drop out more than boys often for reason linked to early marriage and pregnancy. However, in low performance schools in Ghana boys dropped out more than girls-reasons for this are suggested or are poor quality schooling and local opportunity for boy income generation.
3. Truancy and poor punctuality were higher amongst boys, particularly in low performing schools in urban areas where there was more income generating possibilities.
4. Absence and lateness for girls excused more easily as sickness or domestic, emergency, whereas boys were attributed to casual income generation, seasonal labour and corporal punishment.
5. In the school teachers were teaching conventional male and female subjects. In Ghana the female teachers were predominating in the language and home Economics with a few teaching agriculture.
6. Female teacher tends to stay longer in teaching and be concentrated in urban schools.
7. Institutional practices maintained and perpetuated the gendered nature of schooling, with gendered hierarchies firmly established in classroom duties and activities, as well as outside the classroom (as in assembly queues).
8. In the classrooms boys almost always sat at the back and in round the side are the girls at the front and in the middle. Boys thus dominated the physical and verbal classroom space, which discouraged the girls. As they worked around the boundaries imposed, the girls' opportunities to excel in the public area and in the presence of the teacher were limited and they demonstrated low level of classroom participation.
9. Teacher and student relations tended to be authoritarian, with some reports by boys of sexual relations between male teachers and female student, open questioning by boys of female teachers' authority.
10. Corporal punishment was still used (despite national legislation) in both countries, and tends to be worse against boys. Female teachers tend to use verbal abuse (especially boys) which students reported as being worse than physical abuse. There were high levels bullying, aggressive behaviour and sexual harassment among students (especially boys towards girls).

Poor performance is more discouraging to girls. When girls fail, they prefer to drop-out to repeat whereas the boys stay on to repeat the class. Poor performance by girls will also discourage parents who would prefer to spend such money paying school fees for boys (OkojieChiegwe&Okpokunu. 1996). The number of female science teachers in the secondary schools who can be role models is low when compared to their male counterparts. Available data for 1989 indicated that women formed 20% of the number of graduate science teachers in Ghana. In Ashanti Region out of 157 science teachers only 11 are females and

this does not encourage girls to pursue science in secondary schools (Anamuah-Mensah, 2000). Njeru and Orodho (2003) opined that based on 1999 statistics provinces in Kenya except North Eastern showed low student-teacher ratios. The highest student-teacher ratios, in decreasing order, were found in North Eastern (23:5). Western 17:4, Nyanza 16:7, Rift Valley 16:7 and Central 16:5 with lowest student-teacher ratios in Nairobi, Coast and Eastern (11:5, and 15:7) respectively. The national student-teacher ratios were 15:1 while the student-trained-teacher ratios were 16:3. Low student-teacher ratio allows better and more individualized teaching and learner supervision, but commitment to very low student-trained-teacher ratios. For instance, below 20 students per teacher, makes little sense as it results to increased secondary school unit cost.

VanBelle-Prouty (1991) found that, over time, Zairean and Rwandan teachers perceived boys as being more competent and scholarly students than girls. Wamahiu's (1994) review of the literature on the atmosphere of the classroom environment for girls in Africa concludes that girls' lack of involvement further marginalizes the classroom. Girls watched while boys took part in hands-on learning activities, particularly in the science and mathematics. Furthermore, even when girls attempted to interact-either positively or negatively-they frequently were ignored.

In addition, teachers' perceptions that girls chose not to involve themselves in classroom activities, absolved the teachers of any accountability for girls' academic performance in their classrooms. Teachers praised and encouraged the boys for doing what was expected of them. The silencing of girls by their male peers and teachers was not uncommon. Teachers made comments such as "Oh, girls say they do not know; let's move on to boys and see," or teacher responded in a shocked manner when a girl gave a right answer (Anderson-Levitt, 1995). One of the more dramatic examples of this was observed in a secondary level classroom when a girl was ignored and thereby silenced when she tried to share with the class during a lesson on female circumcision: The sole girl raised her hand and hold it up as the teacher continue to call on boys. Eventually a boy sitting behind her repeatedly pulled her arm down. She, however, persisted: raising her arm and rising in her place (Anderson-Levitt, 1995). Eventually the teacher recognized the girl and called her-but not before she has been subjected to a powerful lesson that her views were less valued than those of her male peers, even with regard to matters about which she held unique perspective.

VanBelle-Prouty's (1991) identified a "push-pull" force that had a significant impact on the attitudes and behaviours of both men and women teachers in Rwanda classrooms. Teachers' believe that gender had little influence on the learning potential of boys and girls were a "push" for gender equity. But cultural norms that define gender roles and frame teachers' thinking about teaching practices were a "pull" that resulted in teachers defining clear gender in expectations in their classrooms. These gender-defined boundaries also included the abuse of girl students. While the focus of that paper is the coeducational school environment, the teaching and learning enterprise in single-sex girls' schools also reflects and constructs the male-centeredness of the education system. China's highly prestigious Shanghai Girls' Middle School, teachers explained that "girls are at the top of the class in primary school, at the middle of the class in middle school, and at the bottom of the class in college" because of their natural inclination toward social interaction (Ross, 1993). Teachers linked what they perceived to be girls' failure to develop abstract and logical thinking skills with their tendency to interact sociably and in caring ways. Rather than lauding social interaction and caring at strengths, teachers attempted through the pedagogy to counteract these tendencies. In so doing, teachers reinforced the message that areas of achievement are biologically fixed and that strengths and weaknesses are gender-related, with strengths defined by male characteristics (Ross, 1993).

The literature suggests that teachers believe gender stereotypes such as girls' laziness, gossipy and indecisive natures, and lack of ambition as reasons why boys were better students. Examples include Malawi teachers who identified girls' immoral actions as one of the reasons that boys outperformed girls in the classroom (Davison & Kanyuka, 1990). Other teachers reported that girls were cooperative, easy to control, obedient, easy to work with, quiet, calm and submissive (Kainja & Mkwandawire, 1991). While these characteristics can appear to favour girls and girls' learning, they can also severely limit learning opportunities in an aggressive and competitive, male-dominated classroom environment.

Ghanaian teachers encouraged girls to internalize the view that men have authority over women both at home and in the work place (Wamahiu, 1994). Possibly in no act is this gender-differentiated pattern of

authority more apparent than in Malawi's schools, where girls assume the customary stance of going forward on their knees when turning in work or receiving punishments (Davison & Kanyuka, 1990). These differentiated lines of work and authority are so clearly demarcated in some classrooms that VanBelle-Prouty asserts girls take part in an apprenticeship for marriage. In this apprenticeship, girls model and internalize roles, responsibilities, and relationships of power and authority that will pervade their future roles as wives and mothers. In the coeducational classrooms of other African studies, teachers' and students' assumptions that an ambition was to be wives and mothers strongly influenced teacher-student conversations and interactions.

One case that illustrates clearly the importance of the Gender-Based Approach to Planning (GAP) is the strategy of increasing the supply of women teachers to order to improve girls' access to schools. Consistently the data show that a low percentage of women teachers accompany a low enrolment of girls in school (Tietjen, 1991). The presence of women teachers in schools can be a critical factor in parent's decisions to send their daughter to school. In environments where sexual harassment and gross misconduct by male teachers is not uncommon, the mere presence of women teachers is essential for girls' safety and comfort and for parents' peace of mind. Yet at present, where no prohibitions barring women from teaching exist, only 33 percent of teachers at the primary level in the developing world are women. Percentages are significantly lower in specific areas, such as Nepal, where fewer than eight percent of primary school teachers are women, and in Africa, where women's representation in the profession is significantly lower than elsewhere in the developing world (Cummings, 1990; Zewide, 1994). National patterns reveal that more women teach in urban than in rural areas but that the positive impact of women teachers is more notable in rural areas where far fewer women are available to teach (Bellew, Raney & Subbarao, 1992). Despite the argument for women teachers as a reassuring presence for parents and for girl students, the qualitative research studies cited above offer convincing evidence that the mere presence of women teachers does not contribute to a girl-friendly learning environment. In fact, women teachers can create an environment of discouragement just as easily as men teachers. The GAP highlights the importance of involving teachers in the process of change, allowing them to examine gender attitudes and classroom practices that are harmful to girls rather than simply hiring more women teachers. The GAP also focuses on the importance of examining classroom interactions for developing gender-sensitive education policy. At a broader level, policymakers and education ministries must also engage in three major tasks, according to a study of women technical teachers in Benin, Ivory Coast, Mali and Senegal.

The study concludes that to effectively recruit more women into the profession, related institutions must introduce policies that speak directly to gender issues and that create an environment that is more responsive to women; develop plans that address unfair working practices such as class loads, hours of teaching, and opportunities for staff development; and aggressively address the general inequalities that exist at the primary and secondary level (Perez as cited Adjei-Boadu, 2002). Similarly, Bellew, Raney, and Subbarao (1992) argue that schemes to attract more women into teaching, such as, local recruitment and posting, tutoring, stipends, and transportation allowances, concomitantly must address the quality of education for girls.

Most learning institutions are in short supply of classrooms, facilities and learning materials. In many countries, teachers are paid relatively low salaries compared with other sectors or they are not paid regularly. The result is teacher absenteeism, lack of motivation or attrition. There are also conditions where schools and teachers are forced to search for alternative incomes from parents or to use student labour. This situation has had a negative impact on girls' education, because it discouraged parents from sending girls to schools or shortens the time spent on teaching and learning.

Distance from school has been another deterrent for girls' education in many countries in Africa. (Odaga & Heneveld, 1995) refer to a large distances girls (particularly rural girls) travel to school has two major problems: one relates to the length of time and energy children have to spend to cover the distance, often on an empty stomach, the other relates to the concern and apprehension parents have for the sexual safety of their daughters. The problem of distance from school also has implications for the motivation of girls to stay in school. In Guinea, studies show that close proximity of schools had a positive motivating

impact on girls' participation in schools while in Mali, most girls stated that living far away from school and having to walk discourages them (Odaga&Heneveld, 1995).

Teacher attitudes and teaching practices have important implications for the success and persistence of girls in schools. Studies from several countries in Sub-Sahara Africa indicate that both female and male teachers believe that boys are academically better than girls (Anderson-Levit, 1994; Brock &Cammish, 1991; Long &Fofanah, 1990; Davison &Kanyuka, 1992). In many countries there are indications that teachers paid more attention to boys than girls in the classrooms. Still in others there are conditions where boys are being given priority in the distribution of books and other learning materials.

Curricula, textbooks and learning materials are often related to girl dropouts in Sub-Sahara Africa. Studies refer to parental doubts as to the relevance of curricula to their daughter's life. They sometimes prefer more learning related to practical skills for future employment and the daily life of students (Brock &Cammish, 1994; Kinyanjui, 1993; World Bank, 1992). These studies also indicate the limited options available to girls within the present educational systems, the gender bias in subject choices as well as the negative and inaccurate presentation of female images in textbooks as push factors for girls from schools. With reference to gender bias in subject choices, it is commonly reported that girls are often streamed out of the Science and Mathematics into the traditional 'female' subjects.

Female Challenges and Their Participation in Education

Today's teenagers become sexually active at early age. The average age of the first intercourse is estimated to be 16, but many children become sexually active even earlier. According to US Center for Disease Control (as cited in Neubeck&Glasberg 2002) the number of 15 – year – olds with sexually experience increased from 17 percent in 1980 to 26 percent in 19988. It is not uncommon for girls to confront the challenges of motherhood while in high schools (and even in junior high schools.) many of these girls face discrimination within school, both when they are pregnant and after they have their children, school staff exert little effort to have the girls continue attending school, making them feel like second-class citizens whose presence somehow contaminates the rest of the class (Wellesley as cited in Neubeck&Glasberd, 2002). One study found that for 12 percentage girls who had both conceived a child and drop out, conception had preceded the drop out, conception had preceded the drop out (Polit& Kahn, 1978 as cited in Neubeck&Glasberg, 2002). However, more recent research qualifies this conclusion. Girls who have conceived are likely to graduate as those who do not become pregnant. But girls who become pregnant and drop out of school are less likely than the other to graduate (Upchurch & McCarthy as cited in Neubeck&Glasberd, 2002).

There is a high level of teenage sexuality in Bostwana. About 85% of teenage girls are sexually active by age 19, some of them experiencing their first intercourse at an age as low as 12 years. The problem is compounded by the fact that girls do not limit their involvement to one partner. A majority of the girls involved in this study had experienced multiple sexual partnerships before and after pregnancy. This high rate of sexual practice by girls results in a growing number of school dropout due to pregnancies (Bayona&Murangi, 1996). Murray (2004) pointed out that a high dropout rate of girls was due to pregnant and the subsequent drifting of girls into premature employment was a matter of concern in Tanzania.

In Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, the vast majority of children trapped in commercial sexual exploitation are girls. Overall, traditional gender roles and stereotypes do not favour girls. They often lack access to education and other services that can enhance their employment possibilities in life (Murray, 2004). He conducted a research on girl child in commercial sexual exploitation and found that about 93 percent of respondents from Bacolod city in the Philippines had stopped going to school. Twenty – seven percent had been out of school for at least two years. Nearly two-third of respondents expressed an interest in going back to school. The same study was carried out in Ecuador; the girls surveyed in Guayaguil had been to school. Other findings were that 2 out 22 dropped out and of 22 completed some primary school. In Ghana, BoatengAgyemand-Dua, Osei and Brew-Ward (1997) conducted a national study and found that poverty, cost, pregnancy, early marriage, betrothal and sexual harassment affect girls' access to schooling. Boakye et al, (1997) conducted a national study into factors affecting girls' education. Their study revealed that poverty, cost pregnancy, early marriage and betrothal were critical factors included sexual harassment,

household chores, emotional, instability, and parents' inability to provide for school needs. Poverty, long-held negative attitudes about women's intellectual capabilities, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, examination failure in mathematics and science and the traditional division of household labour are among the many factors that continue to keep vast numbers of girls out of the classroom in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite dramatic gains in enrolment over the past 30 years, the gender gap in access, attainment and achievement persists (Association for the Development of Education in Africa 2000)

Pregnancy and/or marriage can also precipitate the exit of females from school. Pregnant primary and secondary school students are expelled from school and may experience difficulties re-enrolling after giving birth. Although female students at institutions of higher learning are not expelled from school when they get pregnant, they are nonetheless often subjected to penalties like losing their boarding house privileges. It is important to note that male students are not punished for impregnating women (Dolphyne, 1987 & Manuah, 1984). Let's face it; it is very traumatic when one has an unwanted pregnancy especially at a time when one is yet to complete her basic education! The future suddenly becomes bleak with the realization the "you are pregnant." More often than not such announcements are unwelcome news. Therefore it is only natural to sympathize with the female victims of elopement and early marriages. However, issues surrounding instances of elopement and early marriages are becoming so complicated these days that one is tempted to just ignore them. The elopement of 14 year old Alice Akpok, formerly of the Gbedema Primary school in the Builsa District, is a case in point (Gender Equality in Education Project [GEEP] 2007).

The statistics paint a grim portrait of the education of African women and girls. Nineteen Sub-Saharan countries have a literacy rate for females below 30 percent, while corresponding rates of males are twice as high. Less than half of 6-11 year-old girls are estimated to be in school (Association for Development of Education in Africa [ADEA] 2000). Mblama noted that despite early access to education the percentage of girls participating in the education system drops dramatically in later years of schooling. Girls face problems of sexual harassment and a lack of female role models. She noted that Benin has introduced a programme named "Equity in the Classroom" which monitors gender-sensitive teaching practices. The speaker also noted a need to change socio-cultural attitudes towards the education of girls. In particular, Ministers of Education were asked to consider instituting policies where by girls would be allowed to return to school after pregnancy (AEA, 2000). Nebe, Coordinator of the Education and Vocational Training Unit, Ministry of Basic, Secondary Education and Literacy, Chad. Nebe said that two studies had been undertaken to identify those factors which exert a negative effect on school attendance of girls. Some of these socio-cultural: for example, the position of women in society; early marriage; the economic exploitation of girls in agriculture; and the perception, which stems from the practice of exchange of dowries, of girls as economic commodities. The girl child must contend with factors which impede her progress, including a school environment which is not conducive to females and a male-oriented school curriculum which does not make provision for the fact that in reality, girls' needs are different from those of boys (ADEA, 2000).

The new programme designed to encourage the enrolment of girls in Chad, includes the following measures: a large-scale sensitization campaign involving public and private media, for a, meetings, and workshops; training of teachers and facilitators; provision of school supplies, textbooks and a school uniform to each girl; payment of subsidies to communities to enable income-generating activities and to alleviate typical feminine work; provision of food rations through the World Food Program (WFP); elimination of school fees for girls; relaxation of age restrictions for girls; creation of early childhood care so that girls who were traditionally responsible for this kind of work are now able to attend school; the inclusion of household matters (home economics) in the curriculum; and the establishment of quotas for the recruitment of female teachers (ADEA, 2000).

These confines are based on the postulation that a very educated girl will have her chances of getting married reduced and the parent has a task to protect the girl's best interest. Sometimes girls are denied education due to misguided perceptions of the parent that girls are vulnerable and could either get pregnant or get into company or diminish their chances to get married (Subrahmanian, 2002; Rose & Tembon, 1997). Subrahmanian (2002) observed that in India, this fear makes parents withdraw girls soon as they attain puberty. "For girls, we stop education as soon as they will find difficulty in finding boys (for marriage).

They agree to educate girls only up to the time when they grow up, and then stop. In the present times, which are sensitive, let any man come (forward); we feel we should unburden our responsibility as soon as a good man arrives that is all (there is) to it’.

Schooling Cost and Education

The private direct cost of education covers such expenditure on tuition fees (if charged) books, transport to and from school or university, uniform, sport, among others (Akangbou, 1987). Public secondary education Ghana is tuition free. However, a high non-tuition cost of schooling has been known to discourage some poor households from sending their children to school. Several studies have shown that the direct cost of schooling including school levies, fees are one of the major causes of non-attendance of school (MOYS/UNICEF, 1992/1993 & Oduro, 2000). According to Oduro (2000) the high cost of expenditure items facing households are the cost of providing food and clothing, school levies and registrations. When asked why their children were not in school, parents and guardians in Fentiman, Hall and Bundy’s (1999) study indicated that one of the major obstacles was economic. This was in terms of school fees, costs on uniform and transport and the opportunity cost of sending a child to school. This is confirmed by Canagarajah and Coulombe (1997) who opine that the high cost of schooling pushes children into labour market to enable them to afford school or pulls them away from school as they cannot afford it. Hence, the official and unofficial fee charged for schooling is negatively correlated with school participation. Avotri (2000) noted that direct and indirect costs are the main factors affecting access to schooling (especially in rural areas and for girls who are required to do more household chores). Although officially, there may be no fees for entrance to schools, costs are required for uniforms, exercise books, stationary, furniture and transport.

According to Avotri (2000) faced with affordability constraints parents tend to send boys to school over girls. If poor families are sending children to school, their education is a significant part of household expenditure. The Ghana National Education Coalition Campaign [GNECC] (2005) carried out a case study of basic education costs to household in Ga West District of Accra. The study indicates that, the introduction of capitation grants may not be sufficient as remover of the barrier to access. In study of household decision – making around schooling in rural Ghana based on data drawn from a survey of 1902 primary school age children, Lavy (1992) concludes that the cost of advanced levels of education influence primary schooling decisions. Based on rural household survey data, Lavy (1992) finds that costs associated with distance to secondary schools is a significant determinant of enrolment at the primary level. Bearing in mind, cost of junior and secondary education in Ghana influence enrolment, access and attendance at primary school level. William (2003) conducted a study on girl child labour in commercial sexual exploitation in Ghana. He found that children predominantly industry. A number of factors lead children into prostitution. Some of them are extended poverty, lack of employment opportunities or alternative livelihood and high costs associated with schooling often leave poor families with few other option.

Murray (2004) also reported that the move from schooling and towards work in poor households in Tajikistan compounded by a so – called “principal-Agent” interactions problem linked to the costs and benefits of education. In the Principal – Agent situation, the “Principal” wants to induce the “Agent” to take some action that is costly to the Agent. In the school versus work context, this means that the child wants the parent to invest in the child’s education, and this is expensive for parents. The benefits of going to school are mostly long-term which will affect the children rather than the parent. On the other hand, the costs have to be incurred in the short-term. This situation might cause parents not to send their children to school, or to withdraw them from school.

The Ghanaian government subsidizes primary education through the Capitation Grant, which should cut fees for primary education. Nevertheless, “lack of money” was still the main reason given by parents for (some of) their children of primary school-going-age were not being enrolled. Teachers and governmental officials seemed to show little understanding for the poverty argument and insisted that this could only be a question of “wrong priorities”. However, several household heads (mainly the poorest) insisted that the financial costs were still main barrier to educating all their children. Costs mentioned included uniforms, exercise books and pens/pencils and sometimes, a table and chair to be able to work at home. Although uniforms are not compulsory, parents and children indicated that it is shameful not to wear one. For those children who

wish to enrol on their own initiative, without their parents' consent or support, the simplest costs can be an obstacle to their plans. Those who are determined choose to work first so as to earn enough to pay for uniforms and other fees (Lange, 2007).

A significant cost for parents is the PTA (Parent teacher Association) fee, which is levied to pay for volunteer teachers. Whilst the Capitation Grant cut all direct costs, PTA fees increased. The governmental subsidy and its education campaign have increased enrolment figures, but they have not been met with a parallel increase in numbers of trained teachers, and thus PTA fees cover the cost needed to provide for additional teaching staff, in the form of volunteer teachers. The most significant cost-related reason for non-enrolment concerns the costs related to senior secondary schools. Senior secondary school does indeed bring with it much higher fees, and so, with that prospect, in combination with (as discussed above) the fact that primary education alone is not given much credit as a stand-alone achievement, parents sometimes choose to discard the primary school in the first place (or they enrol only the number of children whom they believe they will be able to financially support all the way through to the completion of secondary education (Lange, 2007).

The child labour survey furthermore indicates that costs of education are indeed a major reason for non-enrolment and/or non-attendance. On a national level, unaffordability was, with 44.2%, the most cited reason for children who had never attended school. In the Upper East Region, the most economically deprived region of the country, the percentage was 63.7%. On the other hand, researchers on education in Africa have also argued that, taking direct and indirect costs as the sole reasons for non-enrolment is too simple. The importance given to education by very poor parents is likely to depend on the way they perceive the impact on their daily or long-term subsistence (Lange, 2007). Matz (2003) argues that the decision to enrol a child in school is the result of the household's evaluation of costs and benefits associated with schooling.

Schooling Access and Geographic Difference

Research suggests there are large differences in schooling access in rural and urban areas of Ghana within rural areas on the whole having significantly lower levels of educational access. Demand and supply – side factors interest to produce these differentials. Kraft, Adupala, Dzinyela, Anku, Gala godwyll, Larcom and Okyere (1995) described the inequalities in the quality of educational provision between urban and rural schools in Ghana. They recorded the 'dramatic difference' between the opportunities of the children in rural setting compared to those in the urban and pre-urban setting. This difference could be found in most aspects of schools including buildings, curriculum, furniture, toilets, textbook, management, quality and motivation of teachers, parental wealth and education. There was significant emphasis on the need for teacher parental support and supervision in rural areas. Many of these differences appear to perpetuate today. The 2004 EMIS report shows that rural schools have weak indicators of quality, for example, the least number of qualified teachers, the highest pupil – teacher ratio and the lowest gender parity rates.

UNESCO (1979) carried out research on wastage in primary education and the survey gives some idea of the extent of repeaters in different regions of world around 1976. While as a general rule there is a high percentage of a repeated year Africa (14 percent), Asia (14 percent) and Latin America (12 percent), the disparities between countries within a single region are nevertheless very large. They are undoubtedly widest in Africa, where countries are strung out along the entire spectrum of repetition rate and where the rate exceeds 30 percent in certain countries. This survey points out that the 16 Africa countries with repetition rate of over 20 percent are ex-French, Belgium or Portuguese colonies, while the 9 countries with repeater rates of under 10 percent are ex-British colonies. It attributes these differences to the impact of traditions inherited from the colonial era. It points out that the colonial period still exercises on educational systems of many countries France, Portugal and particularly Belgium had a higher percentage of repeaters than the other European countries (9.2%, 11.0% and 23.4% respectively) while the United Kingdom practises automatic promotion. Supply of schools in some districts and for some communities in Ghana is problematic. This is especially the case for post-primary education and communities living in poor, rural areas.). a study by CARE international (2003) describes distance to school and supply of schools for small settlements as key challenges facing educational access in deprived rural areas in northern Ghana.

Hashim (2005) looks at the rural Northern Ghana to urban households in central and southern Ghana, and relationship with educational access. In the northern, village (TempaneNatinga) where the northern study originated, she describes how in 2001, 77 out of 447 children (17 percentage) had independently migrated out of the village (48 children were also within the village, but not living with immediate family). She carried out interviews with parents of the migrated children and child migrants from the Kusasi ethnic group (the numerically dominant ethnic group of the sending area) who were living in Kumasi and a 100 mile radius around. Thirty – nine of the children she spoke to migrated for employment; 20 for education and 19 to help a relative (although education could be a secondary consideration with movement). Hashim (2005) describes how in villages specially in out – migration, children frequently drop out school before the completion of compulsory education to migrate to cities, although the earnings of these migrants might be used to pay for the education of a sibling. She also spoke of how increasing demand for educational access in the south might lead to domestic labour requirements being filled by child migrants from the north. She went on ‘my field diaries and interviews notes are full of references to young people travelling south because they had dropped out of school as they had failed an examination or been unable to acquire the funds to continue schooling. However, she said the ‘my field diaries and interview notes were also littered with examples of young people who, rather than dropping out, had migrated to acquire the funds to re-sit exam or further their education’.

Hashim (2005) undertook a study on education access in northern regions in Ghana. She paints a picture of access which evolving, not static; where perceptions and expectations of childhood play a role in how the demand for education is constructed. She reported that majority of the population in TempaneNatinga was not yet certain of the value of education. Consequently, in contrast to the ‘modern’ conceptualization of childhood, discussed earlier, education was not implicated in ‘normal’ childhood in the same way and the inability to attend school was not perceived as an opportunity denied. Transformations were occurring in the meaning of education as a result of the changes in the life experiences of individuals in Tempanenatinga, in particular due to the manner in which the labour market has changed and the increasing importance of the ‘modern’ sector economy. However, education was not fully implicated in the construction of childhood but rather viewed as a new form of recruitment to work, responding the possibly of alternative livelihood (Hashim, 2005).

Studies in Ghana have shown that access issue tends to be more pronounced in areas that are prone to a range of interlocking socio-economic factors. For example, high levels of illiteracy, low levels of human resource development, low levels of economic development, low level of democratic participation, high levels of infant mortality and low levels of general family health among others (Ministry of Education, 2002). In Ghana these are more likely to be found in the north of the country. The research indicated a range of interconnected factors influencing the low levels of access in northern Ghana. These include socio-economic status of households (Action Aid REV programme survey Report, 2000); the nature of community settlement (small, sparsely populated and widely scattered) (CARE International, 2003); low community perceptions and demands for education Hashim (2005), limited community – school relationships (Dune & Leach, 2005), a rigid schooling system, which does not cater for particular needs of local rural communities; high teacher absenteeism; migration out of communities particularly of girls (CARE International, 2003).

UNESCO (1979) undertook a statistical study of trends and patterns of repetitions and dropouts and reported that in Latin America fewer than 60 percent of children entering primary school reach the fourth year. Dropping out is less frequent in Asia although the rate is still high. It was found that the Arab countries of North Africa and Asia achieved retention rates well above average for their respective regions. For example retention rates increasing by 26 per cent in Morocco, 32 per cent in Libya and 42 per cent in Algeria. Furthermore, it was found that retention rates vary between 29 percent in Chad and 96 percent in the Ivory Coast, in Africa; between 41 percent in India and 100 percent in Japan or Kuwait, in Asia and Oceania, between 23 percent in Nicaragua and 97 per cent in Guyana. The dropout rates are often especially high in the first year of school. This is particularly frequent in Latin America where the percentages of children leaving school before their second year of study were (around 1975); 45.7% in Brazil, 42.9% Nicaragua, 35.7% in the Dominican Republic, 35.5% in Guatemala, 32.7% in Colombia, 29.4% in El Salvador, and 21.1% in Ecuador. Similar situation was found in Chad, 31.3% in Madagascar, 29.8% in Gabon, 25.9% in

Benin, 24.6% in Zaire (Congo), and 22.5% in Cameroon. The problem is not quite so acute in the other regions, except in India with rate of 32.3 per cent in 1969.

Sudaprasert, Tuniri and Ta Ngoc (as cited in Carron &Chau, 1981) carried out research on changes in the transition rate from lower upperprimary education between 1968 and 1976 in Thailand and reported that the percentage enrolment in the first cycle is very close to the percentage represented by the total population. Admission to first cycle is more or less universal, and disparities between regions are small. But the situation changes utterly and soon as they move on the higher echelon. In the North-East region, the proportion of the total enrolments dropped rapidly from 36.3 percent in lower-primary education to 26.6 percent in upper-primary education, 23.2 percent in lower secondary education, 14.5 percent in upper secondary education and finally 7.3 percent for admissions to higher education. In Bangkok, they found exactly reverse situation. Although the population of Bangkok represents only 10 percent out of the total population, the percentage of candidates accepted for higher education reached 48.3 percent. They pointed out that this figure refers to new admissions according to parent's place of residence, and not according to location of university, and that the percentage given reflects the over representation of families living in Bangkok and does not stem from the impact of admission to Bangkok's university of students coming from other provinces. They went further to report that in general, rural schools are much smaller than the town ones. They have very few qualified teachers and higher number of pupils per teacher than urban schools. As for the relations between regional disparities, they examined the correlation between the rate of urbanization (the proportion of urban-dwellers to total population of each province) and different educational variables. In the case of Thailand, the correlation coefficient, calculated on the basis of 70 provinces were rate of access to lower-primary education 0.14, rate of access to upper-primary education 0.52, rate of access lower-secondary education 0.75, rate of access to upper-secondary education 0.87 and percentage of qualified teachers in primary education 0.81.

The correlation between the urbanization rate and the rate of access to lower-primary education is very low, because access to this level is practically universal and there are no longer any notable differences between urban and rural areas. On the other hand, the correlation grows stronger as one move up the educational ladder. This obviously accounted for by the fact that the supply of lower and supply – secondary education is mainly concentrated in the towns. A stronger correlation is also to be needed between urban population rates and the percentage of qualified teachers, resulting from the existence of separate school systems and the difficulty of recruiting qualified teachers prepared to go and teach in rural areas (Court &Kinyanjui cited in Carron &Chau, 1981).

Research Design

Descriptive research studies are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena. They are directed towards the determining of the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of study (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, 1979).The design that was used for the study is therefore the descriptive survey. Descriptive survey is the method of research that simply looks at the phenomena under consideration with intense accuracy and description of precisely what the researcher observes or sees. Therefore, it was felt that it would provide a comprehensive picture of the study without altering it, since it gives room for effective examinations of the situation. Furthermore, the descriptive survey design allows for in-depth follow up questions so that unclear items can be explained (Sarantakos, 1998). Osuala (1993) also explains the descriptive surveys are versatile and practical, especially to administrators. Moreover, policy makers highly recommend descriptive design in the social science where larger sample sizes are dealt with (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, 1979).

Population

The target population of this study was all parents of senior high schools students in Ashanti Region, all heads of the senior high schools in Ashanti Region, all Parent Teacher Association (PTAs) chairmen in the senior high schools in the region, all District Directors of Education in the region and the Regional Director of education in the region.The accessible population of the study were all parents of 2840 students in the 10 senior high schools whose enrolments are below 400, all the 10 headmasters of the ten senior high schools in Ashanti Region, all PTA chairmen in the said schools, , all District Directors of Education in the districts

where the said schools are located. The senior high schools for which the participants were drawn from Akrofuom Secondary/Technical School, Beposo Senior High School, Bodwesango Senior High School, GyaamaPensan Senior High School, Ofoase Sec/Tech school, Owerriman Secondary/ Technical school, St. Hubert Sec/Siminary school, St. Joseph Secondary/technical school, Sekyeredomase Senior High School and St. Jerome catholic Senior High School.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

Purposively 10 senior high schools whose enrolments are less than 400 students at the time of the study which was about 12% of 86 senior high schools in Ashanti Region were selected. Ten heads of the 10 senior high schools whose enrolments are less than 400 students were purposively selected. Ten PTA chairmen were also purposively selected and ten District Directors of Education in the districts where the said schools are located were also selected. These respondents were selected because they were directly concerned with the enrolments of the schools and were in a better position to provide relevant information for the study. According to Amedahe and Asamoah-Gyimah (2002) quota sampling attempts to obtain representatives of the various elements of the total population in the proportion in which they occur there. Quota sampling was used to select 90 parents in the communities where the said schools are located. Since the students are males and females 40 parents of female students were selected and 40 parents of male students were also selected. That is 4 parents of female students in each school were selected and 5 parents of male students in each school were also selected. I chose quota sampling technique to select the sample size for the study because there was the need to fairly represent all the parents of the target population with respect to gender.

Instruments

The instruments used for the study were a questionnaire for headmasters/Headmistresses, structured interview guide for parents and PTA chairmen, structured interview guide for District Directors of Education and observation guide on school buildings and furniture. A questionnaire which consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended items was used to collect information from the headmaster/headmistress. The questionnaire was sub-divided into sections A, B, C and D. Section A catchment area, transfers, retention and strategies to increase enrolment. Others are the effectiveness of the schools to attract young men and women, trends in SHS 1 admissions and school enrolment, problem militating against the school, suggestions to improve enrolment, attendance and retention in the school. Section C deals with staffing of the school, while section D deals with enrolment figures from 2006/2007-2008/2009. Structured interview guides were used to elicit information from parents and PTA chairmen. The interview guide sought information on bio-data, young men and women participation in secondary education, the range, incidence of non-participation of young men and women trends in school enrolment and suggestions to improve enrolment, attendance and retention. For the District Directors of Education interview guide sought information about the support of education system was giving the schools in terms of human, materials and financial resources. Observation guide was used to collect information on the type of building the furniture. Moser and Kalton (1971) describe an interview as a conversation between interviewer and respondent with the purpose of eliciting certain information from the respondent. Grebenik and Moser (1962) describe a structured interview as a form of a questionnaire or checklist that is completed by the interviewer rather than by the respondent. There is always the danger of bias creeping into interviews, largely because, as Selltitz, Jahoda, Deutsch and Cook (1962) point out, 'interviewers are human beings and not machines, and their manner may have an effect on the respondents'. Many factors may influence responses, one way or another. Borg (1981) draws attention to a few of the problems that may occur. The eagerness of the respondent to please the interviewer, a vague antagonism that sometimes arises between interviewer and respondent, or the tendency of the interviewer to seek out the answers that support his preconceived notions are but few of the factors that may contribute to biasing of data obtained from the interview. These factors are called response effect by survey researchers.

Reliability

Reliability is the consistency of a measurement or the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same condition with the same subject (Trochim, 2002). Crocker and Algina (1986) discussed reliability as the degree to which individuals' standard scores remain relatively consistent over repeated administration of the same test or alternate forms of the test. To test the validity and reliability

of the items in the questionnaire and structured interview guides I carried out a pilot testing for which the questionnaire was administered to four heads of senior high schools namely Adubia SHS, Mansoman SHS, EsaaseBontefufo and Oppong memorial SHS and structured interview guides were used to solicit information from sixteen parents, four PTA chairman and two district directors of education. The coefficient alpha (α) developed by Cronbach (1951) was used to test the items the choice of this test was due to the fact that the scores obtained had a range of values between 1 and 4. According to Tuckman (1972) coefficient alpha is a useful where a respondent's score on each item could take on a range of values the calculated coefficient was 0.82. The coefficient is high enough and hence the items were deemed reliable.

Validity

With regard to the face validity of the instruments for the study, the items were submitted to my supervisors and lecturers in the field of Educational Planning and Administration of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration who have adequate and expert knowledge on validation of research instruments. The content validity and construct validity of the instrument were also established through experts' judgements and modification.

Pilot Testing

I conducted a pilot testing of the instruments that involved four senior high schools in Amansie East and Amansie West. The schools are MansoAdubia Senior High School, Mansoman Senior High School, EsaaseBontefufo Senior High School and Oppong Memorial Senior High School. These schools and the selected senior high schools have the same characteristics. The four headmasters and 16 parents including chairman of the PTA and the two District Directors of Education were used in the pilot testing. The purpose of the pilot testing was to test the effect of wording and items sequence and to determine the appropriateness of each item in the first draft of instrument. The pilot testing also enable the researcher to adopt upon welcome approaches in eliciting particular pieces of information from respondents such as the importance of establishing a rapport, during the interviews and sustaining respondents interest throughout the interview, and avoiding sensitive comments that would help me to remove ambiguity, to achieve the degree of precision necessary to ensure that subjects understand exactly what the researcher is asking to check that the researchers language is jargon free, to decide which question type to ensure that the researcher will be able to classify and analyse responses (Bell, 1999).

Data Collection Procedure

An official letter of introduction written by the Director of Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) of University of Cape Coast was delivered to the school authorities in selected senior high schools in Ashanti Region. A copy of the letter was given to the Assistant Director of Education in charge of secondary education in Kumasi. The co-operation of the school authorities and the Director was sought. This facilitated the administration of the instruments in the selected senior high schools in Ashanti Region. The required number of questionnaire for headmasters or headmistress of the selected senior high schools was personally given to them. The data were collected through personal contacts by me. The personal contact was adopted because of poor postal system in the selected senior high schools in Ashanti Region, and also to ensure good return of the questionnaire. The structured interview was preferred to other techniques in gathering data from parents since most of the parents have low educational background. In case of the chairmen of the PTAs and The district Directors of Education in the selected district, it was meant to save their time.

Data Analysis Procedure

The raw data gathered were coded. In the case of the quantitative data the computer programme, statistical Package for Service Solution (SPSS) was used for the analysis. The documentary data (Enrolment) were manually analysed. The frequencies and percentages were used for the quantitative data and apparent cohort method was used to determine the growth rates in SHS 1 admissions and total school enrolment, the flow or progression rates for the forms and the dropout rates for SHS 1 to SHS 3. The Apparent Cohort method was preferred to the True or Reconstructed Cohort method because the true or reconstructed cohort method can only be used when adequate data on repeaters and promotes are available, while apparent cohort method can be used when these data are missing (Carron & Ngoc Chau, 1981). In the Apparent Cohort method, the enrolment for successive forms are compared to enrolment from each form to the next is due to wastage

(Pandit&Asiamah, 1988). The major disadvantage associated with this method is that when repetition rates are high and vary between grades, the methods may over-estimate or underestimate the level of dropout (UNESCO, 1993).

This is similar to the finding of Ankomah (1990) that there was a low literacy rate among parents in the rural areas in BrongAhafo Region of Ghana and that of Okojie, Chiegwe and Okpokunu (1996) who reported that in Nigeria, illiterate parents are now aware of the benefits of sending their children to school. Parents' and PTA chairmen's occupation was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Table 1

Occupation	Parents	P.T.A
Farming	51	51
Petty Trading	17	17
Teaching	17	17
Others	15	15
Total	100	100

The distribution of occupation of parents and PTA chairmen interviewed is presented in Table 4 which indicated that fifty-one percent (51%) of the parents and PTA chairmen interviewed engage in farming as their main occupation. Seventeen percent were petty traders; seventeen percent were teachers and other professionals such as postal agents, hairdressers and security officers were fifteen percent. It is therefore vividly clear that parents and PTA chairmen in the area of study are mainly farmers. This finding is in agreement with a similar one by Ankomah (1998). He discovered that parents in rural areas of BrongAhafo of Ghana are mainly farmers. The study also confirms the findings by Addae-Mensah, Djangmah and Agbenyega (1973) on family background and educational opportunities in Ghana. Their study found that 14.4 percent of students in ten top secondary schools came from farmers, fishermen and labourers families. This finding shows that the majority of children who attend less endowed senior high schools come from families of farmers. It shows, therefore, that the majority of the parents and PTA chairmen interviewed were of low socio-economic status.

Parents' and PTA chairmen's responses to income generating activities in their town/district preventing JHS leavers from attending SHS was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Parents' and PTA chairmen's response to income generating activities in their town/district preventing JHS leavers from attending SHS. Figure 1 depicts that thirty-four (34%) of parents and PTA chairmen interviewed responded 'strongly agree; eighteen (18%) of them responded 'agree' while thirty-one (31%) responded 'disagree' and seventeen (17%) responded 'strongly disagree'. The finding reveals that more than 50% of the parents and PTA chairmen agreed that income generating activities prevent JHS leavers from attending SHS. This finding is in conflict with Canagarajah and Coulounbe's (1997) research on the linkage between child labour and decision-making around schooling in Ghana, and they found that children engaging in income generating activities were simultaneously schooling. However, this finding confirms Alaxandreseu (2002) study in Romania on working street children in Bucharest, which revealed that 75 of children interviewed responded that they have stopped going to school in order to work.

School-related Factors Affecting Enrolments

Parents' and PTA chairmen's preference for type of school was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of parents and PTA Chairmen's Preference for Type of School

Type of School	Number	Percentage
Boarding	66	66
Day	34	34
Total	100	100

Parents and PTA chairmen who preferred boarding schools were sixty-six (66%) and those who preferred day schools were thirty-four (34%). This finding shows that majority of the parents and PTA chairmen interviewed prefer boarding schools to day schools. This means that many parents prefer boarding schools to day schools. Parents' and PTA chairmen's reasons for their preference for boarding schools was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Table 3

Table 3: Distribution of Parents and PTA chairmen's reasons for their preference for boarding schools

Reasons for Boarding Schools	Number	Percentage
Boarding students perform better	26	39.4
Concentration on academic work	29	43.9
Discipline and socialization	8	12.1
Prevention of joining bad peers and teenage pregnancy	3	4.6
Total	66	100.0

Table 3 shows that twenty-six (39.4%) said that students in boarding houses perform better than day students, twenty-nine (43.9%) said that students in boarding schools concentrate on academic work, eight (12.1%) said that students in boarding schools are more disciplined and socialized, three (4.6%) averred that boarding houses prevent students from joining bad peers and boarding schools prevents and PTA chairmen interviewed preferred boarding schools to day schools assigned better academic achievement as the main reason for their preference for boarding schools. Parents' and PTA chairmen's reasons for their preference for day schools was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Distribution of Parents and PTA chairmen's reasons for their preference for day schools

Reasons for Day Schools	Number	Percentage
Parents exercise control over their wards	3	8.8
Lower and affordable fees	4	11.8
Boarders cheat their parents	1	2.9
Boarding house has had influence on students	1	2.9
Day students help their parents at week ends	25	73.5
Total	34	100.0

Table & shows parent and PTA chairmen's reasons for the preference for day schools. Three (8.8%) of them said that day schools help parents exercise control over their ward, four (11.8%) said that day fees are lower and affordable, one (2.9%) said that students in boarding houses cheat their parents, one (2.9%) said that boarding house has bad influence on students in boarding schools. Example, occultism, prostitution, premarital sex and 'wee' smoking and twenty-five (73.5%) said that day schools help students to help their parents at weekends.

Parents' and PTA chairmen's responses to enrolment growth rate of senior high schools in their towns was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Figure 2. **Figure 2:**Parents and PTA chairmen responses to the enrolment growth rate of senior high schools in their towns. Figure 2 depicts that eighty-one (81%) of the parents and PTA chairmen interviewed responded 'increasing rate'; four (4%) responded 'constant rate' four (4%) responded 'decreasing rate' and eleven (11%) responded 'fluctuating rate'. The findings reveal that majority of the parents and PTA chairmen responded 'increasing rate'. This findings is in conflict with Anamuah-Mensah (2002) report that showed that enrolment groth rate of led endowed senior high schools is low. Heads' responses to school bus that convey day students to and from school were established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Heads' responses to distance students travel to School

Distance	Number	Percentage
1-20km	6	60
21-40km	1	10
41-60km	1	10
81-100km	2	20
Total	10	100

Table 6 shows that six (60%) of the heads responded that students travel 1.20km to school, one (10%) responded that students travel 21km-40km to school, one (10%) of the heads responded that students travel 41-60km to school while two (20%) responded that students travel 81-100km to school. This finding reveals that students cover few kilometres to attend school. This finding confirms Okojie, Chiegwe and Okpokunu's (1996) research which revealed that distance to schools from communities has significant impact on students' attendance at school. Murray (2004) also pointed out that other factors that limit girls' educational opportunities range from the distance to schools which places their security at risk. Ribinson (as cited in Herz,1995) and Odaga and Heneveld (1995) found the same in their research. Heads' responses to school bus that convey day students to and from school were established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Distribution of heads' responses to school bus that convey students to and from school. In Figure 3 only one (10%) of the heads responded 'agree', while four (40%) of them responded 'strongly disagree' and half (50%) of the heads responded 'disagree'. This finding reveals that many rural senior high schools do not have school buses to convey day students to and from school. This finding confirms Anamoah-Mensah's (2002) report that many senior secondary schools in Ghana lack infrastructural facilities including school buses. Akyeampong (2004) found the same in his research on secondary school development in Ghana. Heads' responses to students' attendance is a problem in their schools was established. The distribution of the responses is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Distribution of students' attendance is a problem in sampled schools. In figure 4 two (20%) of the heads responded 'strongly agree' to students' attendance is a problem in the sampled schools five (50%) of the heads responded 'agree' while one (10%) of the heads responded 'disagree' and two (20%) of the heads responded 'strongly disagree'. This finding reveals that half (50%) of the heads' responses show that attendance is a problem in their schools. This implies that truancy is rampant in the sampled schools. Heads' responses to students' transfer from their schools to sampled schools was established. The distribution of responses is presented in figure 5.

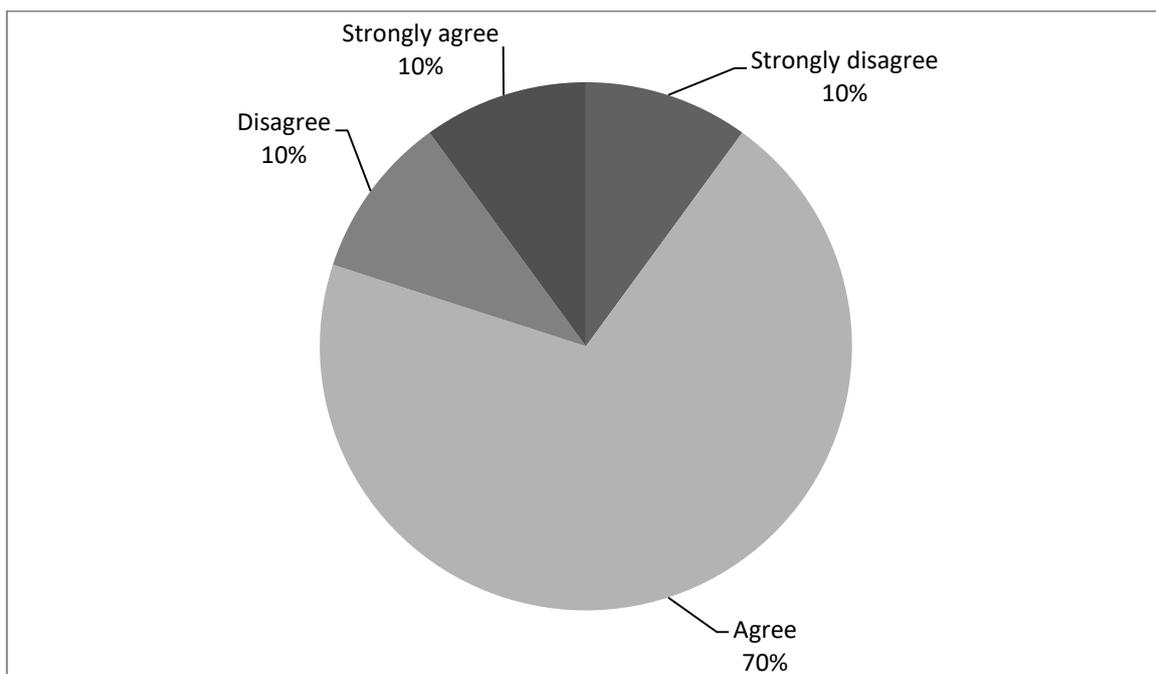


Figure 5:Heads' responses to students transferred from other schools to sampled schools.

In Figure 5 only one (10%) of the heads responded ‘strongly agree’, seven (70) of the heads responded ‘agree’ while only one (10%) of the heads responded ‘strongly disagree’ and only one (10%) responded ‘disagree’. This finding reveals that some students are transferred from other senior high schools to sampled schools. Heads’ responses to students’ transfer from the sampled schools to other schools was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Figure 6.

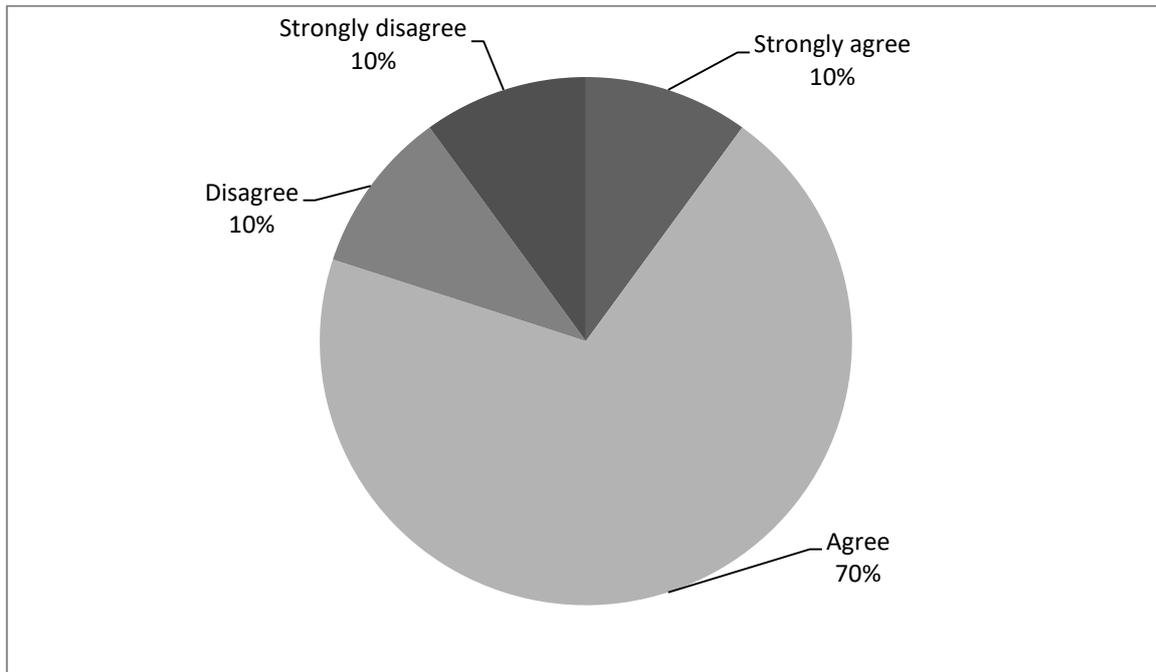


Figure 6: Heads’ responses to students transfer from their schools to other schools.

In Figure 6, only one (10%) of the heads responded ‘strongly agree’. Seven (70%) of the heads responded ‘agree’ and while one (10%) responded ‘disagree’ and only one (10%) of the heads responded ‘strongly disagree’. This finding reveals that students are transferred from sampled schools to other schools which causes low enrolments in the sampled schools. Heads, responses to most of their students who enter SHS1 complete SHS3 was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Figure 7.

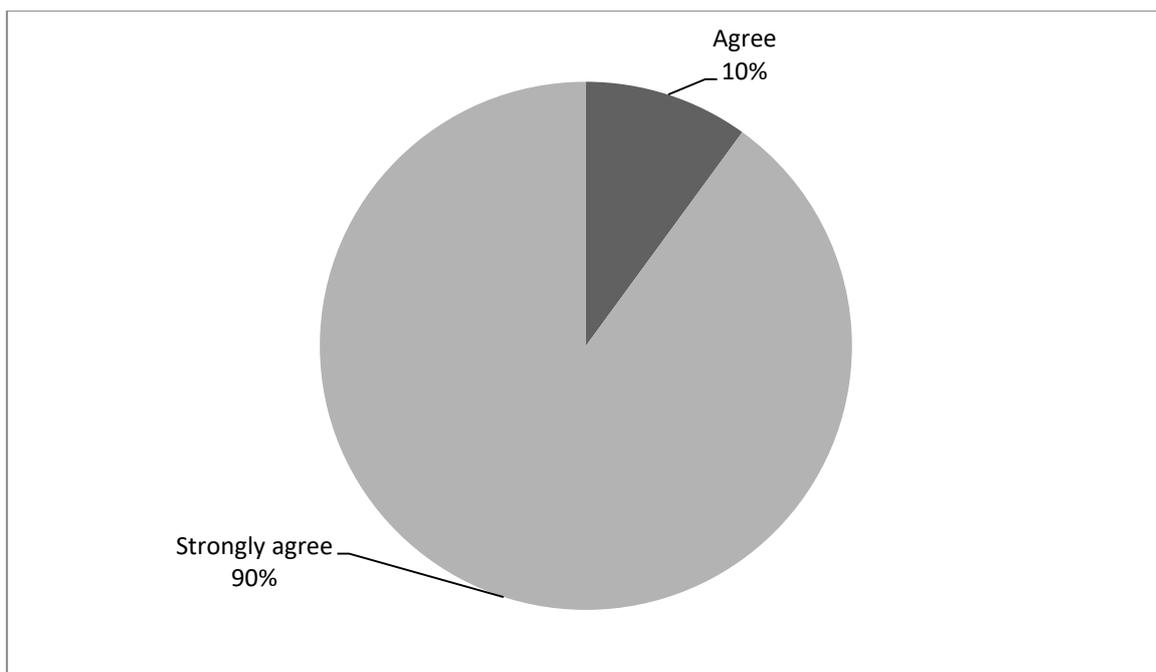


Figure 7: Distribution of heads’ responses to students who enter SHS1 complete SHS3.

In Figure 7, nine (90%) of the heads responded 'simply agree' to students who enter SHS1 complete SHS3, only one (10%) responded 'agree' to most students who enter SHS1 complete SHS3. This finding reveals that most of the students who enter SHS1 in the sampled senior high schools complete SHS3.

Heads' responses to their sample schools having workshops for all programmes was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Figure 8.

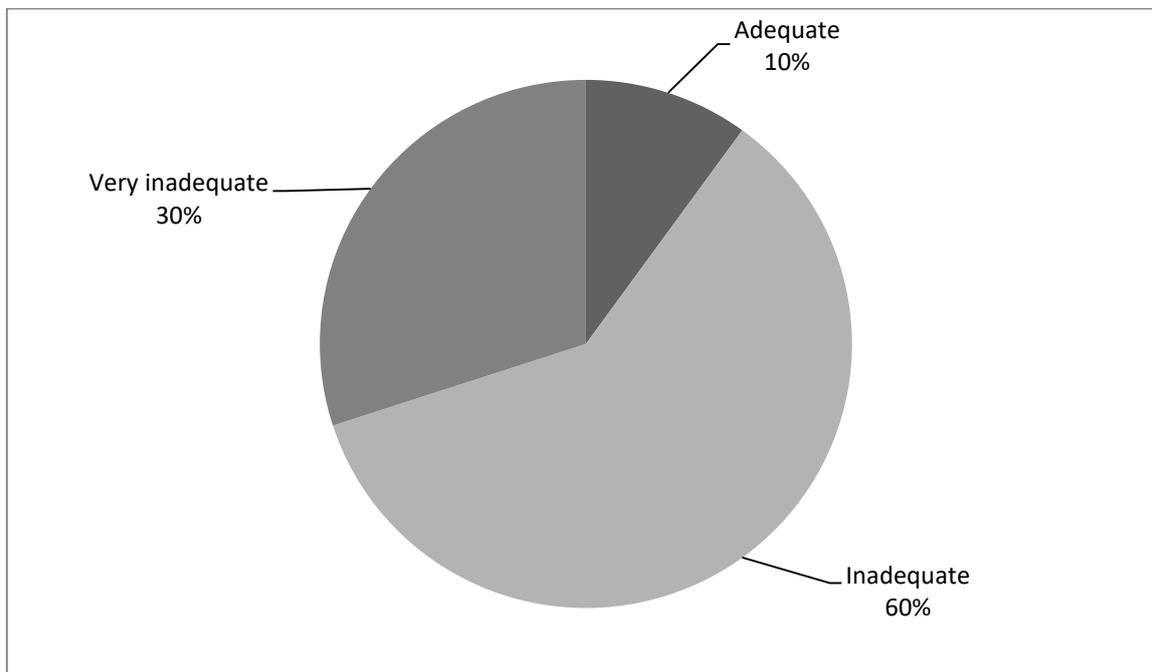


Figure 8:Heads' responses to sampled schools having workshops for all programmes.

In Figure 8, one (10%) of the heads responded 'adequate' to their schools having workshops for all programmes, six (60%) of the heads responded 'inadequate' to availability of workshops for all programmes in their schools and three (30%) responded 'very inadequate' to availability of workshops for all programmes .The findings reveals that sampled senior high schools do not have enough workshops for all programmes. This finding confirms Okojie, Chiegwe and Okpokunu (1996) finding in Nigeria that lack of workshops affects access and participation in secondary education.Heads' response to availability of classrooms was established. The distribution of their response is presented in Figure 9.

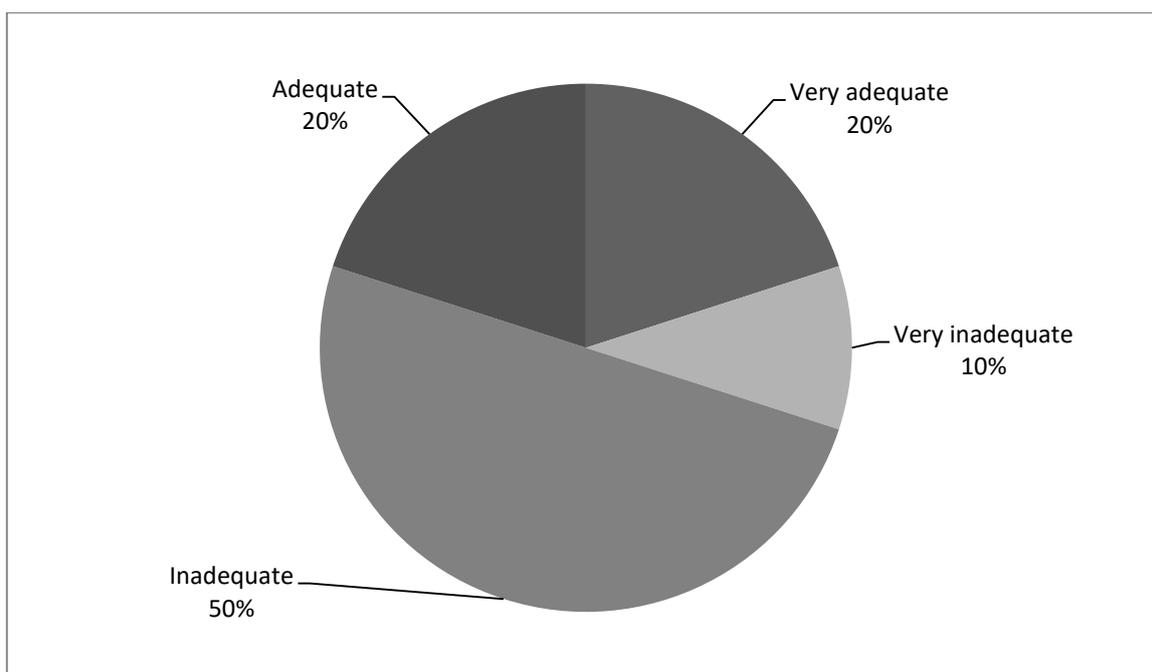


Figure 9: Heads' responses to availability of classrooms in sampled Schools.

Figure 9 shows that two (20%) of the heads responded 'very adequate' to the availability of classrooms in their schools, two (20%) responded 'adequate' to the availability of classrooms in their schools while five (50%) responded 'inadequate' to the availability of classrooms in their schools. Only one (10%) of the heads responded 'very inadequate' to the availability of classrooms in the sampled schools. This finding discovers that the sampled senior high schools do not have enough classrooms to accommodate more students. This implies that inadequacy of classrooms in the sampled schools may be one of the causes of low enrolments in the sampled schools. This finding confirms Anamuah-Mensah's (2002) report that many senior secondary schools lack infrastructural facilities including classrooms. Heads' response to the availability of standard science laboratory was established. The distribution of their response is presented in Figure 10.

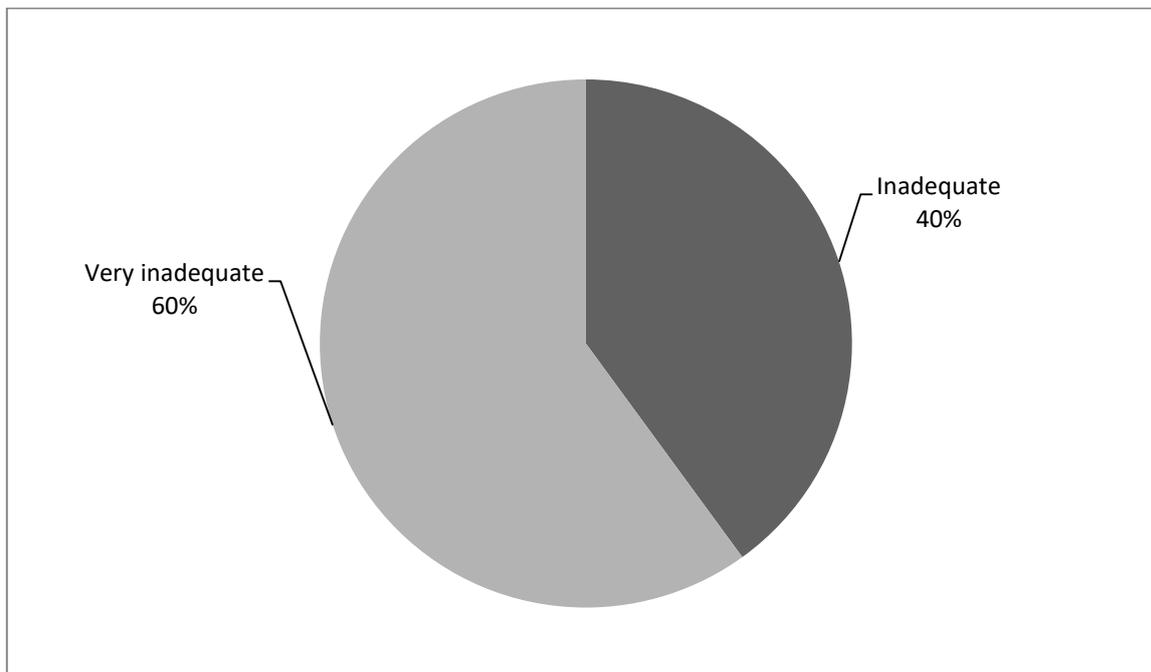


Figure 10: The response to the availability of standard science laboratory in the sampled Schools.

In figure 10, four (40%) of the heads responded 'inadequate' to the availability of the availability of standard science laboratory in their schools while six (60%) of the heads responded 'very inadequate' to the availability of standard science laboratory in their schools. This finding discovers that the sampled schools do not have standard science laboratory. This finding confirms Okojie, Chiegwe and Okpokunu (1996) finding that quality of schools affects access and participation in secondary education in Nigeria. Heads' response to the availability of science equipment was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Figure 11.

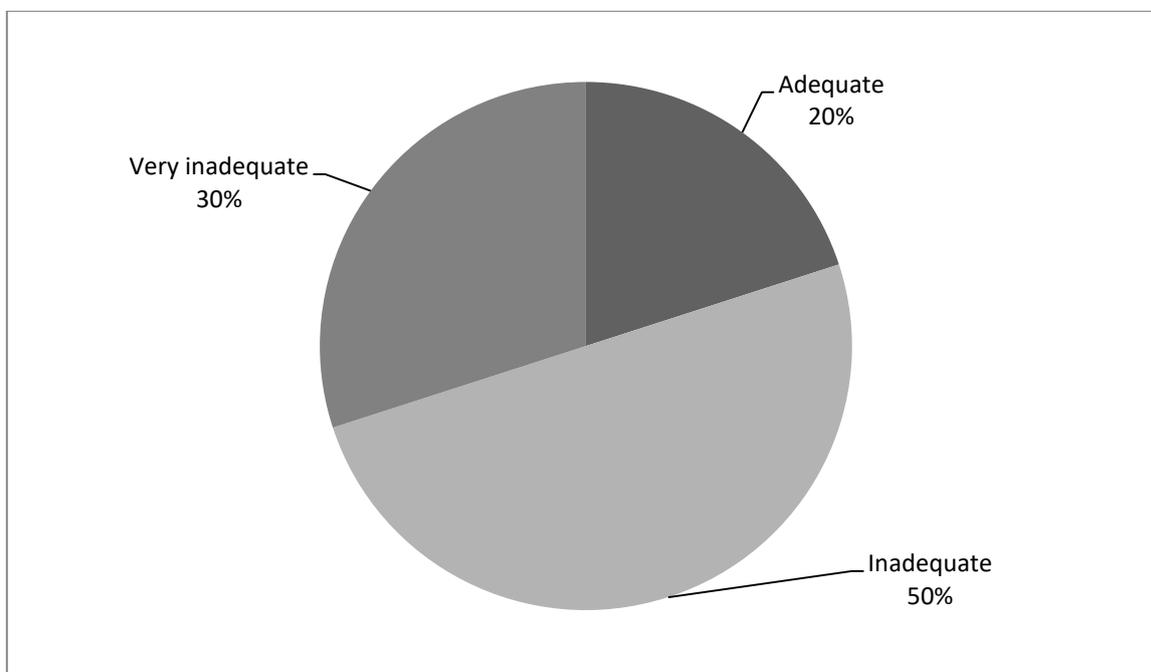


Figure 11:Heads' response to the availability of science equipment in the sample senior high schools. Figure 11 depicts that two (20%) of the heads responded 'adequate' in availability of science equipment in their schools while half (50%) of the heads responded 'inadequate' to availability of science equipment in their schools and three (30%) of the heads responded 'very inadequate' to the availability of science equipment in in their schools. This finding shows that the sampled senior high schools do not have enough science equipment. This finding confirms Okojie, Chiegwe and Okpokunu (1996) finding that lack of equipment in science laboratories in four secondary schools in Nigeria leads to poor performance in the secondary schools. Heads' response to the availability of teaching staff bungalows was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Figure 12.

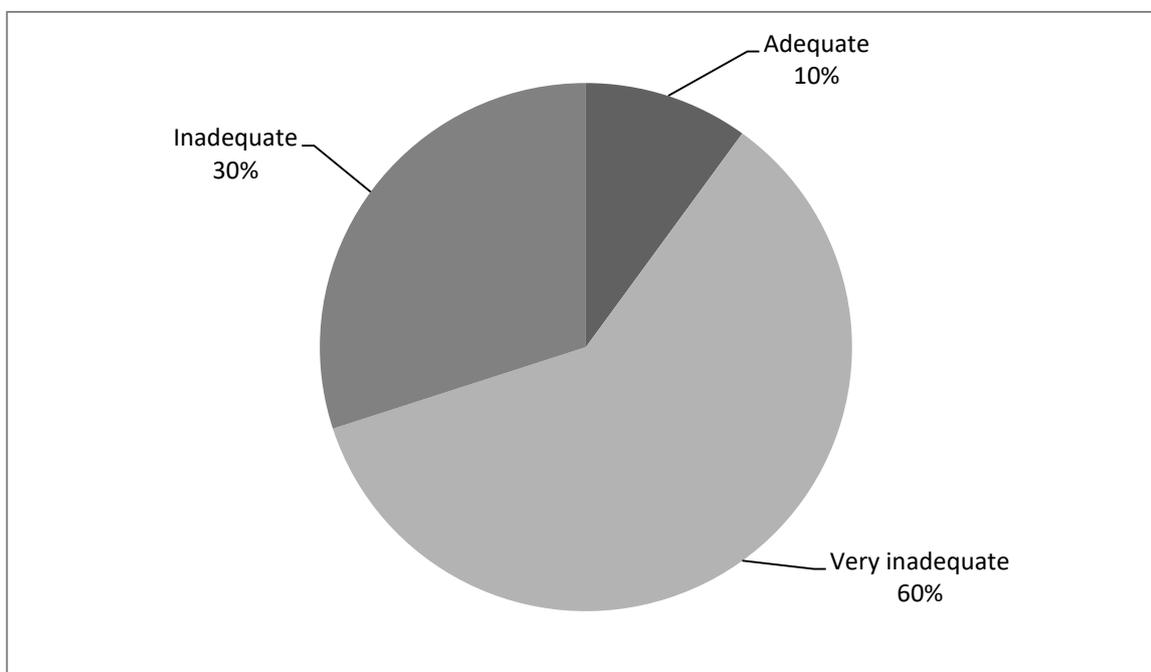


Figure 12:Heads' response to the availability of teaching staff bungalows in the sample senior high schools. Figure 12 depicts that one (10%) of the heads responded 'adequate' to the availability of teaching staff bungalows while three (30%) of them responded 'inadequate' to the availability of teaching staff bungalows and six (60%) of the heads responded 'very inadequate' to the availability of teaching staff bungalows in their school. This finding shows that sampled senior high schools in Ashanti Region do not have teaching staff bungalows.

Geographical Factors Causing Low Participation, Low Retention and High Drop Out

Heads' responses to the number of towns their schools serve was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Distribution of number of town their Senior High Schools Serve

Communities	Number	Percentage
1-15	5	50
16-30	2	20
31-50	1	10
The whole country	2	20
Total	10	100

Table 9 shows that five (50%) of the heads responded that their senior high schools serve 1-15 communities, two (20%) of the heads responded that their senior high schools serve 16-30 communities, one (10%) of the heads responded that their senior high schools serve 31-50 communities while two (20%) of the heads responded that the sampled schools serve the whole country. The finding reveals that half of the heads responded that their senior high schools serve few catchment areas. This finding confirms Akyeampong (2004) which revealed that community senior high schools serve smaller catchment areas and therefore those schools had low enrolments. Parents' and PTA chairmen's awareness of existence of senior high schools in their towns was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in figure 13.

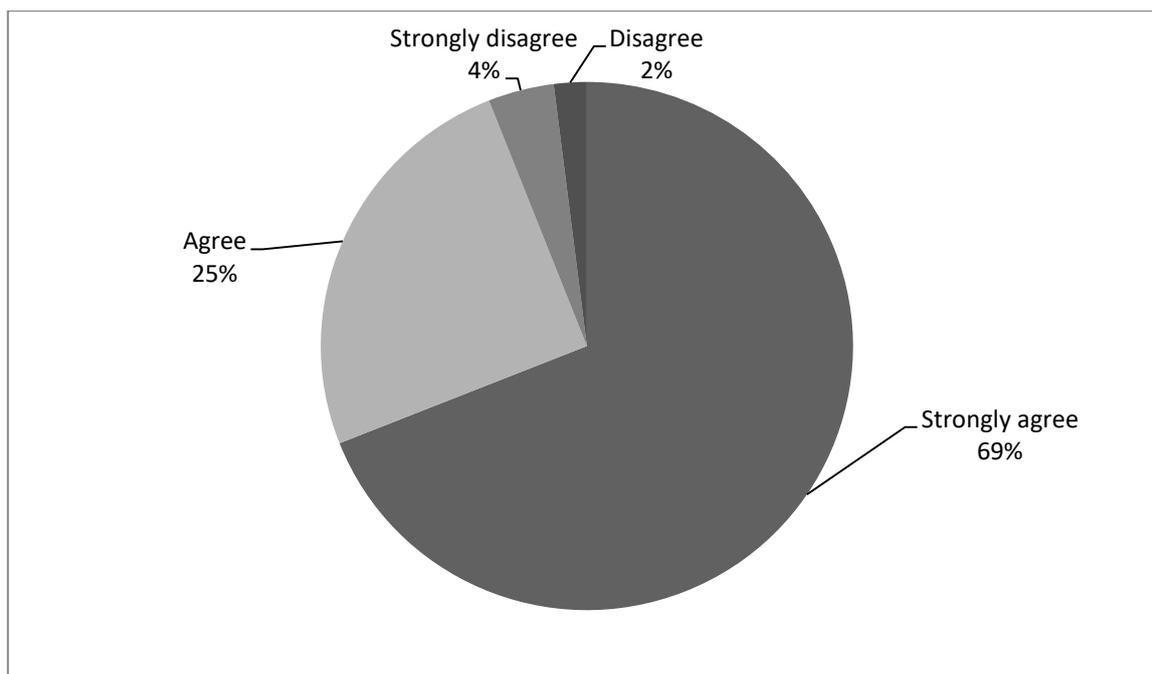


Figure 13: Distribution of Parents' and PTA chairmen's of awareness of existence of senior high schools in their Towns. Figure 13 shows that sixty-nine (69%) of the parents and PTA chairmen responded 'strongly agree', twenty-five (25%) responded 'agree' while two (2%) responded 'disagree' and four (4%) responded 'strongly disagree'. The finding reveals that majority of the parents and PTA chairmen in the area of the study are aware of the existence of the senior high schools in their towns. Parents' and PTA chairmen's happiness if their wards attend senior high schools in their towns/district was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Figure 14.

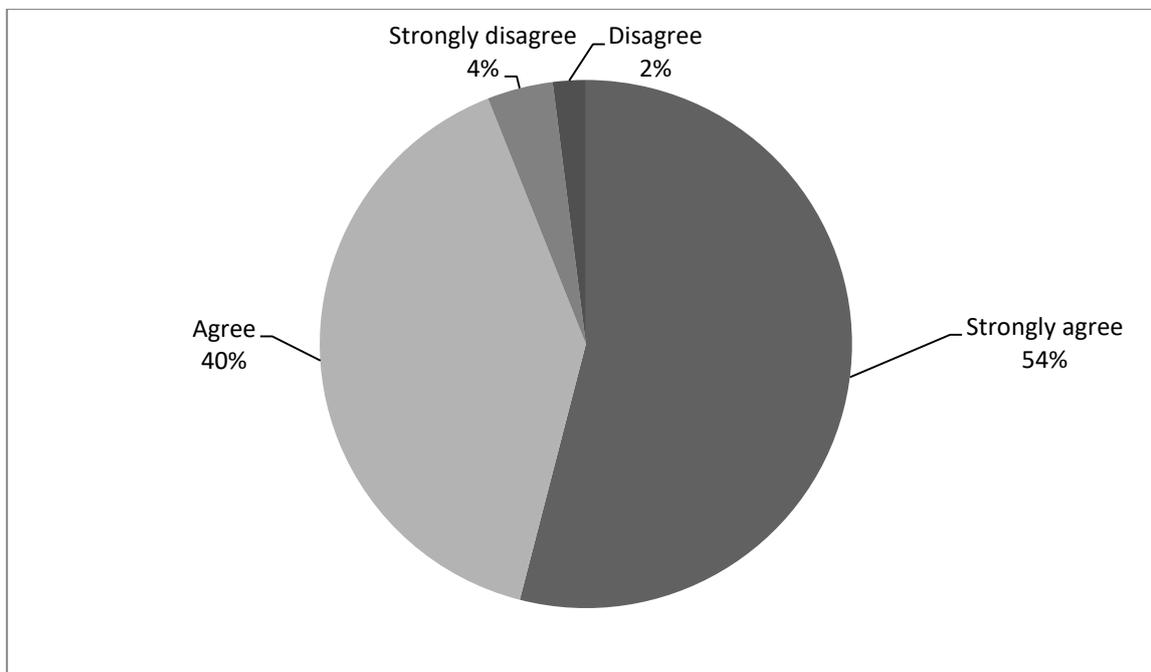


Figure 14: Distribution of Parents' and PTA chairmen's happiness if their wards attend senior high schools in their towns/district. Figure 14 shows that, fifty-four (54%) of parents and PTA chairmen responded 'strongly agree', forty (40%) responded 'agree' while (2%) responded 'disagree' and four (4%) responded 'strongly disagree'. The finding reveals that majority of the parents and PTA chairmen are happy that their wards are enrolled in senior high schools in their towns or districts. Parents' and PTA chairmen's responses to junior high school (JHS) leavers who are not enrolled in SHS in spite of its existence in their towns was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Figure 15.

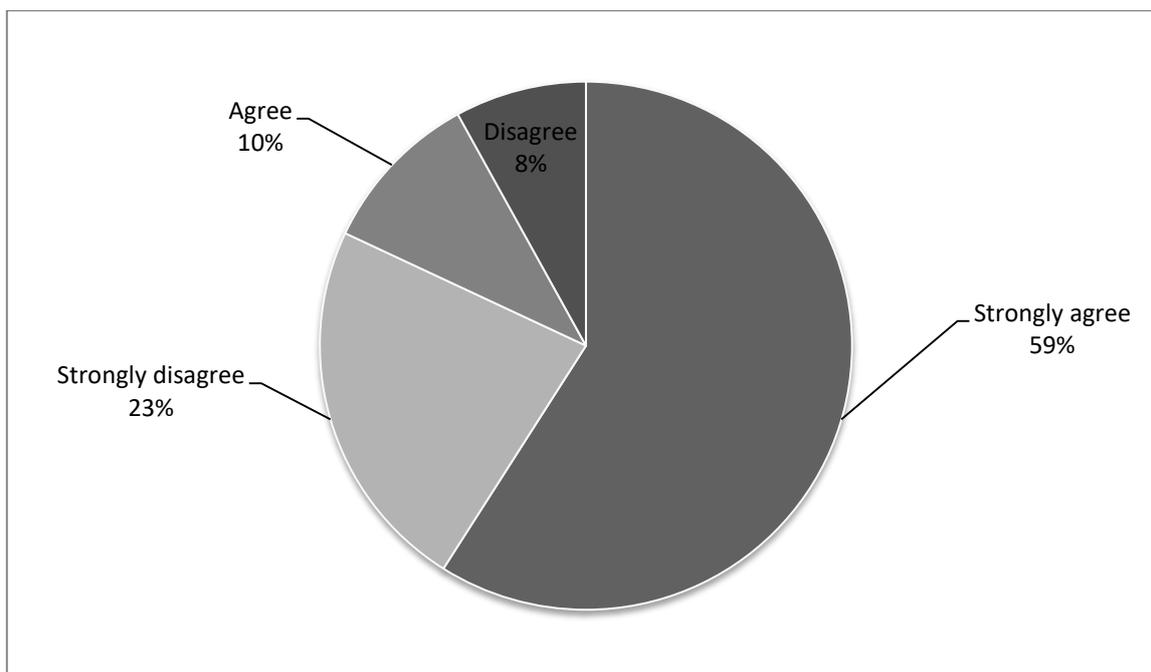
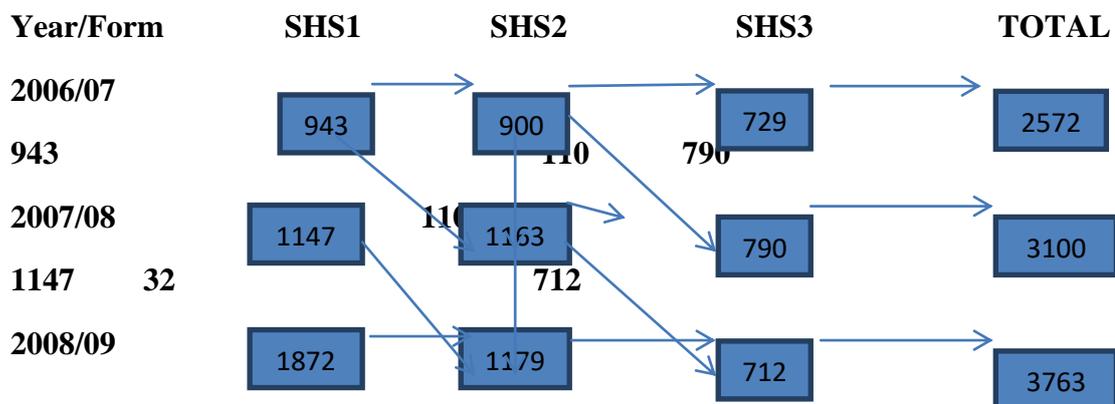


Figure 15: Parents' and PTA chairmen's responses to junior high school (JHS) leavers who are not enrolled in SHS in spite of its existence in their town. Figure 15 shows that more than half fifty-nine (59%) of the parents and PTA chairmen responded 'strongly agree' ten (10%) responded 'agree' while eight (8%) responded 'disagree' and twenty-three (23%) responded 'strongly disagree'. This finding reveals that there are JHS leavers in the area of study who are not enrolled in senior high schools, in spite of the existence of senior high school in their towns or districts.

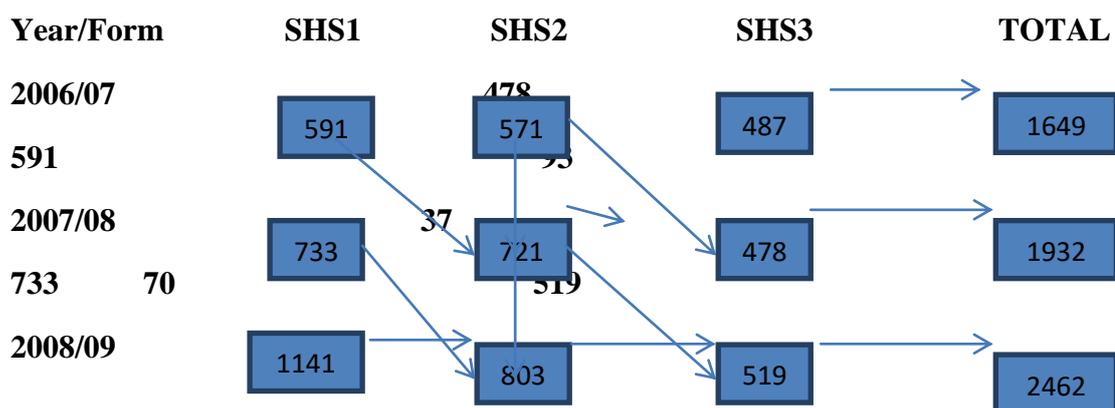
Individual Characteristics Influencing Enrolments, Attendance and Progression

The progression rate of students of sampled schools was established. The progression rate of sample schools is presented in the Approach Cohort Method and figure 16.



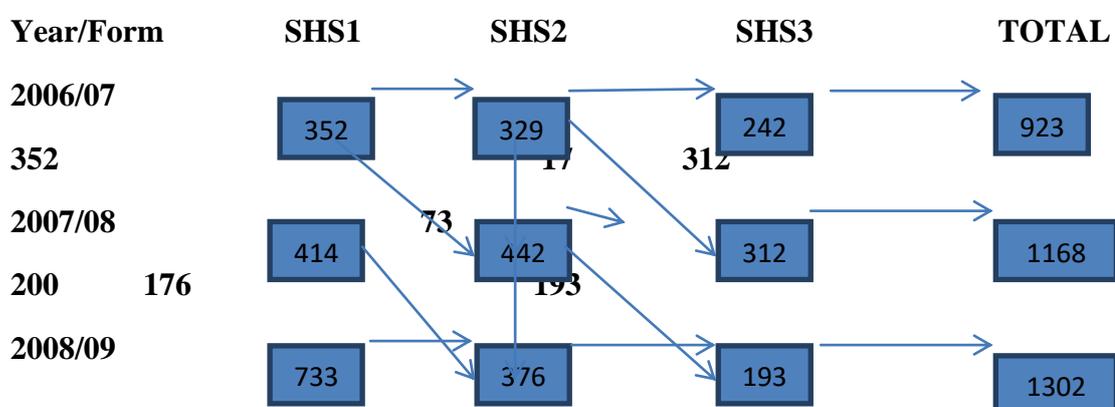
Apparent Reconstructed Cohorts (boys and girls) by Forms In schools used for the study-2006/07-2008/09

BOYS



Apparent Reconstructed Cohorts (Boys) by Forms In schools used for the study-2006/07-2008/09

GIRLS



Apparent Reconstructed Cohorts (Girls) by Forms In schools used for the study-2006/07-2008/09

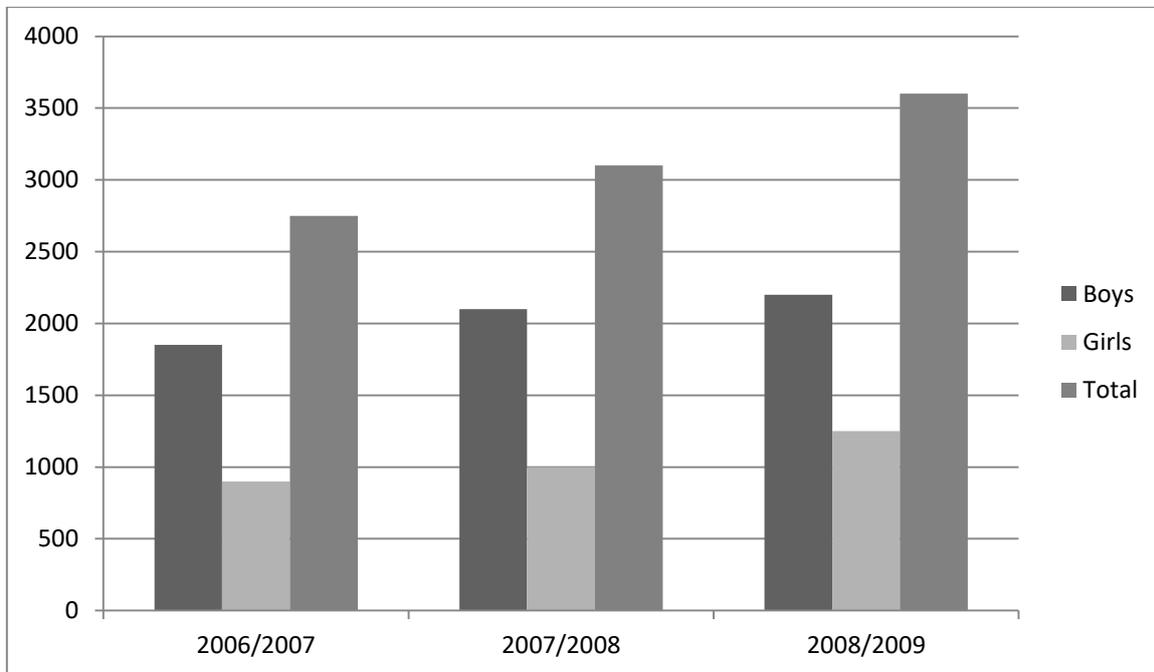
Table 8: Distribution of the students flow (progression) rate 2006/2007-2008/2009

Form/Year	Rates(percentages)		
	Boys	Girls	Total
SHS1 (2006/2007)	100	100	100
SHS2 (2006/2007)	83.71	94.83	87.78
SHS1 (2007/08)	100	48.31	100
SHS2 (2007/08)	71.98	43.67	61.22

The students Flow (progression) rates as shown in Table 10 was derived from Fictitious or Apparent Cohort reconstructed from documentary data on enrolments from sampled senior high schools. The cohorts were selected to show the flow rates between 2006/07 and 2007/08. 100 percent rate indicates that there was no repeater in SHS1 in the sampled schools. It is observed from Table 10 that the flow rates from SHS1 to SHS2 when compared with flow rates from SHS2 to SHS3 were greater. This is an indication that wastage (drop out and repetition) rates are higher for SHS2 than SHS1. This finding confirms the finding of the studies in dropouts reported by Carron and Chau (1981), Lockheed (1980) and Pandit and Asiamah (1988). A number of factors could lead to this situation. These include financial burden, internal migration and school related factors. In some rural areas parents send their children to senior high schools without providing their wards with the requisite inputs (textbooks and stationery) due to poverty. Thus if some parents are faced with problem of paying school fees of their wards they could withdraw their wards.

Internal migration is prevalent in the area of the study. And if the parents are to leave, they would likely leave with their wards in SHS2. Some senior high schools especially where there are inadequate classrooms, poor facilities, poorly maintained buildings, inadequate laboratory equipment, absence of teaching and materials and insufficient teachers may induce some parents to transfer their wards to other senior high schools. This reduces the number of students who are promoted to SHS3. Moreover, from the apparent reconstructed cohort by forms in schools used for the study from 2006/07 to 2008/09 shows that girls are generally under-represented in those senior high schools. This finding is in agreement with Ankomah's (1998) finding on female participation in secondary education in rural areas in Brong Ahafo Region in Ghana. Also, the study reveals that there is a high drop out rate for girls than boys. This finding also confirms Johnson and Kyle's (2001) research on the determinant of girls' educational enrolment in Ghana. Enrolment by gender and admission rate by gender in the sampled senior high schools were established. Enrolment by gender and admission rate by gender in the sampled senior high schools are presented in Figure 16 and Figure 17

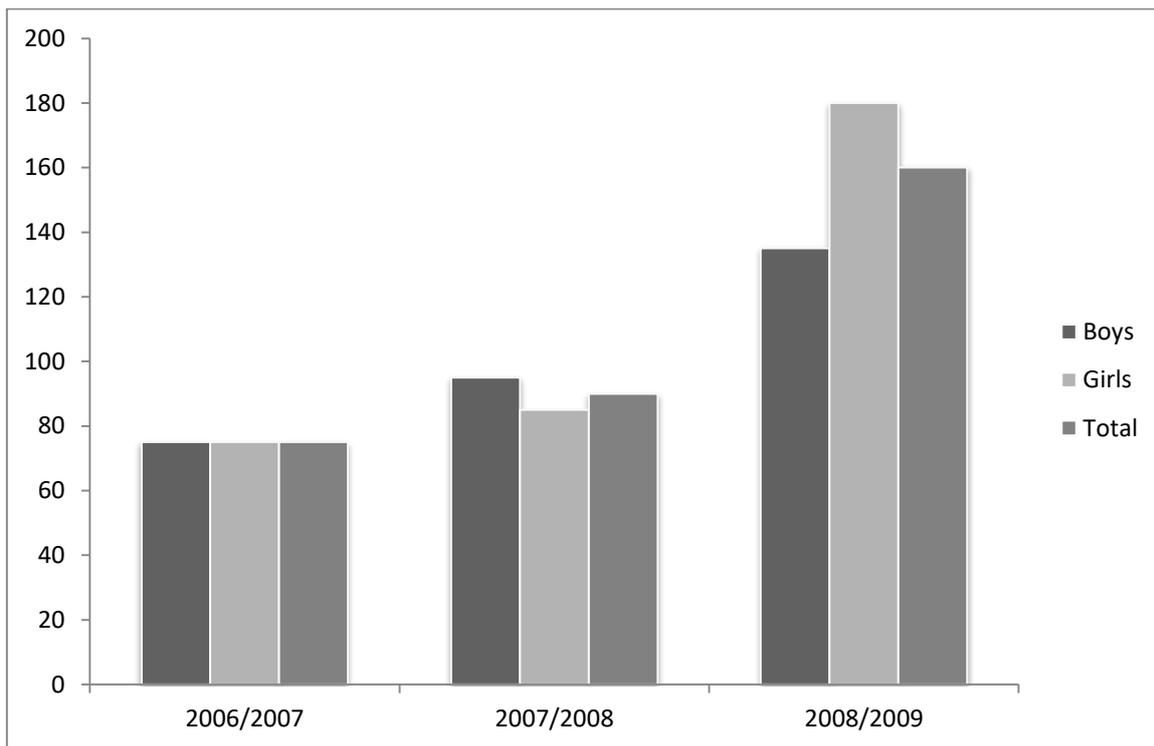
NO. OF STUDENTS



ACADEMIC YEARS

Figure 16:Enrolment by Gender in the selected Senior High Schools 2006/07-2008/09.

PERCENTAGE



ACADEMIC YEARS

Figure 17: Admission Rate by Gender in the selected Senior High Schools 2006/07-2008/09.

Figure 16 and 17 shows than in 20007/2008 the total enrolment growth rate was 20.53%. Boys' enrolment growth rate of the same period was 17.16% and that of girls was 26.54% in 2008/2009 the total enrolment growth rate was 0.8%, boys' enrolment growth rate was 10.27% and that of girls was-15.07%. Moreover, total admission growth rate for 2007/2008 was 21.53%, boys' admission growth rate was 24.03% and that of girls was 17.6%. In 2008/2009 total admission growth rate was 41.675 boys' admission was

31.50% and that of girls was 59.44%. This finding shows that girls drop out of school than boys do at secondary level of education. This finding supports Forum from African Women Educationists (FAWE, 2001) which reports that studies conducted in sub-saharan African countries show that more boys than girls in school and boys achieving higher levels compared with girls.

Suggestion to Improve Enrolments

Heads' response to suggestion to retain teachers in their sampled schools was established. The distribution of their responses is generated in Table 9

Table 9: Heads' suggestion to retain teachers in their sampled Senior High Schools

Strategies	Number	Percentage
Motivation, building of more staff bungalows and good transport network	8	80
Building or more classrooms, provision of school bus and good communication network.	2	20
Total	10	100.0

From Table 9, eight (80%) of the heads suggested that motivation, building of more staff bungalows and good transportation net work could retain teachers in their schools while two (20%) of the heads opined that building of more classrooms, provision of school bus and good communication network could retain teachers in their senior high schools. This finding discovers that motivation in the form of attractive remuneration and provision of teaching staff accomodation could retain teachers in rural senior high schools. This confirms Anamuah-Mensah (2002) report that motivation in the form of attractive salaries and allowance could retain teachers in teachind service. Parents'and PTA chairmen's suggestion to improve enrolment, attendance and retention was established. The distribution of their responses is presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Distribution of suggestion to improve enrolment, attendance and retention in senior high schools.

Responses	Number	Percentage
Provision of teaching and Learning materials	16	16
Provision of boarding facilities and school bus	16	16
Enrolment drive and building of more classrooms and dormitories	62	62
Good academic achievement and good academic performance of tutors	6	6
Total	100	100

From Table 12, sixteen (16%) of the parents and PTA chairmen opined that provision of teaching and learning materials would boost enrolment, attendance and retention rates of the sampled senior high schools, sixteen (16%) of parents and PTA chairmen opined that provision of boarding facilities and school bus would improve enrolment, attendance and retention rates of the sampled senior high schools. Sixty-two (62%) of the parents and PTA chairmen suggested that enrolment drive and provision of classrooms and dormitories could improve enrolment, attendance and retention rates of the sampled schools. Less than ten (6%) of the parents and PTA chairmen thought that good academic achievements could boost enrolment, attendance and retention rates of the sampled schools. This finding reveals that enolment drive and provision of more classrooms and dormitories could imrove enrolment, attendance and retention rates of the sampled senior high schools.

Summary

Senior high schools provide a comprehensive academic education for students with the principal objective of preparing them for further education and training in tertiary institutions. The need to expand secondary

education to people had been an issue for some time. Young people need more years of education to consolidate what they have learned in basic schools, prepare them for work and help them think for themselves. At secondary level, adolescents learn how to be, how to do and how to live together. This study was therefore an attempt at investigating factors that account for low enrolments in senior high schools in Ashanti Region of Ghana. A descriptive survey was adopted for the study. A sample size of 120 people made up to 10 heads of sampled senior high schools, 10 District Directors of Education, 10 PTA chairmen and 90 parents were used for the study. With regard to sampling technique, proportional stratified random sampling, and purposive sampling were used to select the sample. For the collection of the data, four main instruments were developed. They are questionnaire for headmasters/headmistresses, structured interview guide for District Directors of Education, structured interview guide for parents and PTA chairmen and observation guide of school buildings and furniture. The validity and reliability of the instruments were established through a pilot testing. Concerning data analysis frequencies, percentage and apparent cohort were used.

Key Findings

1. Majority of the parents and PTA chairmen of the sampled schools have attained low level of literacy.
2. More than half of the parents and PTA chairmen of the sampled schools are farmers.
3. Majority of the parents and PTA chairmen of the sampled schools prefer boarding schools to day schools. That is sixty-six percent of parents and PTA chairmen prefer boarding schools to day schools.
4. Majority of the parents and PTA chairmen assign better academic achievement as the main reason for their preference for boarding schools.
5. The sampled senior high schools serve few catchment areas.
6. The sampled senior high schools with the exception of St. Hubert Seminary do not have school bus to convey day students to and from schools.
7. The sampled senior high schools do not have workshops for all programmes, classrooms and standard science laboratories and science equipment to enhance academic work.
8. The sampled senior high schools do not have enough teaching staff bungalows to house the teaching staff.
9. Majority of the heads suggested that attractive remuneration and provision of staff accommodation could retain teachers in sampled senior high schools.
10. Girls drop out of school more than boys do on secondary education.
11. Girls are under- in the sampled senior high schools.

Conclusions

From the findings, the following conclusions can be made. Low level of literacy of the parents and PTA chairmen and majority of the parents and PTA chairmen are farmers. This implies that the socio-economic status of the students in the sampled schools is low. Since more of the parents and PTA chairmen are aware of the existence of the senior high schools in their towns/districts, they do not send their children to said senior high schools. This causes low enrolments in the sampled senior high schools.

Though majority of the parents are happy that their wards are enrolled in the senior high schools in their towns/districts, those who are unhappy to send their children to cause low enrolments in the sampled senior high schools.

The fact that some junior high school graduates in the area of study do not go to senior high schools in spite of the existence of senior high schools in their towns/districts shows that majority of the secondary parents in the area of study are ignorant of the private and social benefits of education and also education is not affordable to some parents of the area.

Income generation activities prevent some junior high school graduates from being enrolled at senior high schools. This is an indication of poor parenting. The people in the area of study believe that instead of investing huge some of money on the secondary education of the children it is better to involve them in the family business or income generation activities right from youth.

Since the sampled senior high schools do not have school buses to convey day students to and from school, some of the students may be truants and attendance could be a problem in said senior high schools.

Inadequate classrooms, workshops, science laboratories, science equipment and teaching staff bungalows may cause some competent tutors and some students to go on transfer to other well-endowed senior high schools. This makes the sampled senior high schools have low enrolments.

Since girls are under-represented in the sampled senior high schools it shows clearly that gender balance is not well implemented in our sampled senior high schools or girls drop out of senior high schools due to challenges that confront them while they are in senior high schools. Moreover, some parents are ignorant of the importance of female schooling.

Recommendations

In view of what I found on my study and the conclusions drawn from the findings, it is considered pertinent to make some recommendations which would be of importance to increasing enrolments in some senior high schools in Ashanti Region of Ghana.

1. Immediate action should be taken on government's policy through provision of well equipped libraries and workshops like well-endowed senior high schools.
2. To improve enrolments in those senior high schools, government subsidy on payment of some fees in senior high schools which was instituted in 2001/2002 academic year should be limited to less endowed senior high schools. The savings from the subsidy to well-endowed senior high schools should be channeled to improve academic and physical facilities in less endowed senior high schools.
3. Creating an attractive and gender sensitive school environment. In addition to providing for instructional materials, it is necessary to invest in school structures including classrooms, libraries, gender sensitive facilities, water supply, good transportation network, good communication network as well as in teachers so that they come regularly to work. Increasing the number of female teachers and headmistresses and providing them encouragement creates a reassuring environment and also brings role models very close to girls.
4. Provision of school buses to less endowed senior high schools. The government should provide school buses equitably so that students in less endowed senior high schools could get buses to convey them to and from schools even where the distances are long. Moreover, the chiefs in the areas where said senior high schools are located should make appeal to natives of the area living abroad to donate school buses to ease transportation problem in those senior high schools. PTAs should also contribute their quota provided the sampled senior high schools with school buses.
5. The general conditions of service for teachers should be improved through payment of competitive salaries, provision of decent accommodation and enhanced retirement benefits among others. Teachers in less endowed senior high schools should be paid hardship allowance of 20% of their basic salary.
6. Senior high school should be located at central places where roads are tarred to serve many local communities to improve upon enrolments in such senior high schools.
7. District assemblies and traditional councils should embark on enrolment drive to increase enrolment appreciably in those senior high schools. District Assemblies and traditional councils should organize durbars and tell the people the importance of secondary education and also institute scholarship for needy but brilliant students in their communities.

Areas for Further research

1. In this study, I limited the scope of my research to ten senior high schools in Ashanti Region whose enrolments are below four hundred. The study could be replicated in other regions of Ghana so as to make generalizability of the research findings and their recommendations more reliable.
2. It is worthwhile conducting a study into low female participation in secondary education in Ashanti Region. This will help unearth factors that affect female participation in secondary education in Ashanti Region.

3. It is also necessary to further investigate the factors responsible for high drop out rates in senior high schools in Ashanti Region.
4. There is the need to undertake studies to identify the factors responsible for high female dropout rates in senior high schools. These studies could help in developing appropriate strategies for improving retention and completion rates in senior high schools.
5. It is appropriate conducting study on factors affecting attendance, retention and completion rates in senior high schools in Ashanti Region. This could help policy makers to draw educational strategies to promote secondary education.

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