

## Historical Study of Girl Child Education in Ghana (1828-2014): A Review of Basel Mission Educational Policy

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### Abstract

Universal access to quality basic education is a key global developmental issue. However, despite the efforts being made by governments and stakeholders in education to increase girls' access to basic education, it remains an elusive goal. This paper focuses on girls' education in Ghana, which was introduced by the Basel Mission, sustained by colonial and post-colonial governments, but continues to face challenges under the current Ghanaian educational system.

A qualitative research paradigm was adopted for the study, using a historical research design. Data were collected using observations, interviews and content analysis of educational policy documents. The research findings revealed that girl-child education was introduced by the Basel Mission based on its theology of marriage and family. This educational legacy was sustained and promoted by colonial and post-colonial governments in Ghana. However, girl-child education faces many challenges, which have institutional, cultural and social dimensions. The paper recommends that NGO's, civil society groups, philanthropic organisations and individuals complement government efforts towards the promotion of girl-child education in fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goal 3 which seeks to promote gender equality.

*Key words: Education, Girl-child education, Basel Mission education, Educational policy*

### Introduction

Girls' education is not a concern for only Ghanaians, as evidenced in the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000). The vision of the World Declaration on Education for All in Jomtien in 1990 re-affirmed that all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs. It is an education geared to tapping each individual's talents and potential and developing learners' potentialities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies (UNESCO, 2000). According to the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition report, girls enrolment continue to decline progressively from the basic to the tertiary level of Ghana's education despite several international and local interventions that have been put in place to promote the Education For All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). For instance the goal three of the MDG seeks to promote gender equality and promote women empowerment. This important goal can only become a reality when women are given quality education to the highest level of the educational ladder.

Even though many young girls, especially those in the rural communities in Ghana have the desire to complete school, they become drop outs due to several factors that impede their education. These factors have been put into various categories. For example, some have put them under school-related factors, political and institutional factors, socio-cultural factors and socio-economic factors (Lungwangwa, Kelly & Sililo, 2005; Odaga & Heneveld, 1995). According to Randell & Gergel (2009), the four main factors that affect girls' education in Nigeria are macro-level factors, legal and policy factors, school-related factors and socio-cultural factors. The macro-level factors are poverty, inadequate educational resources, HIV/AIDS, continued economic dependence on former colonial powers, and urban versus rural resource disparities. The legal and policy factors are lack of government funding for schools and teachers, lack of free basic education and lack of financial incentives for girls education. They outline the school-related factors as curricula that

reinforce traditional gender stereotypes, inadequate sanitation facilities and lack of provision of sanitary materials for teenage girls, lack of female teachers as role models and sexual harassment by male teachers and classmates. Randell & Gergel (2009) give the socio-cultural factors as sexual and gender based violence, child labour and domestic labour, early marriages and the priority given to education for boys by the traditional communities. Bista (2004) and Houston (2003) were of the opinion that social and cultural beliefs, practices and attitudes often do not favour girls in their pursuit of education as compared to boys. A number of socio-cultural barriers to girls' participation in education that have been identified include negative beliefs towards girls' roles and value of education, early marriage, teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Adetunde and Akensina (2008) cite some of the factors that influence the girl-child education in the Kassena-Nankana District of Upper East Region, Ghana, as 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 that continues to keep vast numbers of girls out of the classroom.

Kasente (2004) and Kuku (2003) identified early marriage as a factor that influences girl-child education in Uganda. They found out that when the girl-child grows and marries, it helps the family to escape the route of poverty. The authors found that parents thought that if their girls were sent to school, they will get pregnant, and the parental investment they made in them will be a waste. Holmes (2003) expounds that overall, females receive less education than males, and they tend to drop out, or are withdrawn earlier for economic and socio-cultural reasons. Furthermore, Wilson (2010) added that some of the barriers to girls' education were low levels of parents' education, religious practices, poverty and pregnancy. Wilson (2010) stressed that due to these factors some girls in Africa, especially Malawi, were unable to go to school as their male counterparts. As a result, girls have been relegated to the background and find it difficult to forge ahead in life. The analysis revealed that access to basic infrastructure and better school facilities tends to have larger beneficial impacts for girls than boys, and that illiteracy at household level tends to hurt girls more than boys (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 39). This study sought to provide a historical account of girl-child education in the Gold Coast and in Ghana, as provided by the Basel Mission. It also examined the institutional, cultural and social challenges facing girl-child education in Ghana, and offered recommendations that will influence educational policy and promote good educational practice.

### **History of the Basel Mission in Ghana**

The Basel Evangelical Mission Society (which will hereafter be referred to as the Basel Mission) was formed in 1815 in the city of Basel in Switzerland. It was formed as an international and ecumenical missionary society. Its patrons were drawn from the pietistic circles of Switzerland and Germany (Jenkins, 1989). It was formed for the purpose of recruitment of trained missionaries to be sent to designated foreign fields to evangelise (Agbeti, 1986, pp.17-18). The Basel Mission had a biblical, evangelical, ecumenical and international character (Smith 1966, p. 21).

The Basel Mission initially worked in the Gold Coast for a period of ninety years (from 1828 to 1918) when its members were deported from the Gold Coast during the First World War (1914-1918). They were deported because the British government in the Gold Coast accused them of being fourth columnist to the Germans. The Mission made its first appearance in the Gold Coast in the year 1828 in response to an invitation from the Danish Governor, Major de Richelieu. The aim of the Governor was two-fold, namely "evangelization" and "civilization (Omenyo, 2006, p. 53).

On 18<sup>th</sup> December 1828, four pioneer missionaries were sent to the Gold Coast. Their names were Gottlieb Holzwarth, Carl F. Salbach, J. G. Schmidt and J. P. Henke. Unfortunately, all the four died of sickness within three years. In March 1832, a second set of missionaries was sent to Christiansborg, Osu. Their names were Andreas Riis, P. Jaeger and C. F. Heinze, a medical doctor. Heinze died within six weeks, and Jaeger followed a few months later. Only Andreas Riis survived but he was even saved by a traditional medical practitioner (Isichei, 1995). He was employed in the Government School at the Christiansborg Castle, Osu, and also acted as a Chaplain until the year 1835 when Jorsleft arrived in the Gold Coast to take up the Chaplaincy position. Riis decided to resign and move into the interior part of the Gold Coast to do the work of mission. In view of this, upon the advice of Mr. George Lutterodt, an Osu trader, and through the influence of Dr. Paul Erdmann Isert, a Danish physician and botanist, Andreas Riis moved to Akropong-Akuapem on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1835 to establish a mission station there (Smith, 1966, p. 30). It was at

Akropong-Akuapem that the Basel Mission succeeded in the fulfilment of its aim of “evangelization” and “civilization”. After its initial setbacks, the Basel Mission succeeded not only in the establishment of the church but it also became a pioneer in the introduction of an educational system comprising infant school or kindergarten, junior school, senior or middle school, teacher education and seminary education.

### **Theoretical Framework**

To have a better understanding of the educational policy of the Basel Mission which related to girl-child education, it would be appropriate to examine its “theology of education” in general, and its “theology of marriage and the family” in particular, and use them as theoretical framework for the study.

#### **(i) Basel Mission’s Theology of Education**

The Basel Mission had a theology of “education”. The mission believed in providing education for the masses or the common people. The root of education for the common people goes back to the Reformation, and especially to John Calvin. The modern idea of popular education, i.e. education for everyone first arose in Europe during the Protestant Reformation. John Calvin indicated that the purpose of education was to lead people to know God and to glorify Him. According to Calvin, in our vocation and in our life, we must have the knowledge of God, who is the Creator and Redeemer. He therefore suggested that the content of education must begin with scriptures, and continue into God’s creation.

Zwingli for example suggested that in addition to the classical languages and instructions in the scriptures, Nature Study, Music, Arithmetic and Physical Exercises should be included in the school curriculum. The physical exercises involved the study of vocational and technical subjects (Odamtten, 1978, p. 124). This made skills training become an integral part of Basel Mission education. According to Odamtten, the system was perfected in Geneva and in other protestant countries by John Calvin. Based on this theology, the Basel Mission understood education as not being complete without the knowledge of one or more industrial skills (Odamtten, 1978, p. 124).

Calvin also emphasised the importance of education having moral relevance (*How the Reformation Changed the World*. [http://www.frontline.org.za/articles/howreformation\\_changedworld](http://www.frontline.org.za/articles/howreformation_changedworld). Accessed on 29th October 2011). It was this theology of education that made the teaching of Religion a core subject in the Basel Mission schools in the Gold Coast until educational policies introduced by post-independence governments of Ghana changed the Basel Mission educational policy.

#### **(ii) Basel Mission’s Theology of “Marriage” and “Family”**

The Basel Mission had a theology of “marriage” and “family”. Martin Luther who was a reformer, a theologian, a Bible translator, a writer and a composer of hymns, was also a husband and a father of six children. He saw marriage as an institution that was as much in crisis as the church and for that matter needed reform. During the Middle Ages, leading a single or celibate life (or having ascetic sexuality) was considered a Christian ideal. Sex was not to be enjoyed in marriage. Augustine believed that sexual relations within marriage should be without emotion, and that it should primarily be meant for procreation. Jerome declared that anyone who is passionate in love with his own wife is an adulterer. Luther criticised the church fathers for not writing anything good about marriage. He also rejected the idea of promoting single celibate life and brought a great revolution in the home which he considered to be at the centre of the universe.

Luther transferred the praises and esteem that Christians in the period of the Middle Ages gave to the celibate monks and nuns to “marriage” and the “home” (or the “family”). Furthermore, Luther described marriage as the only institution where a chaste life could be maintained. He insisted that there was no way one could be unmarried and live without a sin. Luther advocated the dignity of women because he saw them as the ones that provide the foundation of marriage. He placed the home at the centre of the universe and taught on marriage and the family. Luther had a high regard for women and believed that women have the ability to transform society by moulding children and the youth, and civilizing men through the institution of marriage

(*How the Reformation Changed the World*.

[http://www.frontline.org.za/articles/howreformation\\_changedworld](http://www.frontline.org.za/articles/howreformation_changedworld). Accessed on 29th October 2011).

Throwing more light on the theology of marriage and family, Odamtten added that:

the educated mother would in the home base the training of her children on the Christian principles she herself had learned. The products of the girls' school would, therefore, change society much more quickly and effectively than an equal number of boys (Odamtten, 1978, p. 112).

It was this theology of "marriage" and "family" that led the Basel Mission to promote Christian womanhood by introducing girl-child education. According to Sill, "the Mission's objective in educating girls was to introduce women to a respected and respectable domestic sphere of proper female activity" (Sill, 2010, p. 126). The education for girls was given in two forms. At first, girl-child education was given in the form of apprenticeship. Rosina Windmann, the wife of Rev. Johan George Windmann started teaching twelve girls lessons in Sewing and Needlework while they were serving as house helps in the homes of missionaries at Akropong-Akuapem in 1844. According to Odamtten, girls were kept in the houses of individual missionaries whose wives taught them domestic duties (Odamtten, 1978, p. 114). Later, boarding facilities were provided, and the girls were taught in Housecraft, Sewing, Cooking, Needlework and House cleaning. This marked the beginning of female education, as well as vocational education and apprenticeship training in the Gold Coast (Knispel & Kwakye, 2006, p. 49).

The girls were prepared to become good mothers and wives in the homes. In an interview with Rev. Mrs. Gladys M. Nyaku, the Principal of the Presbyterian Women's Vocational Training Centre at Begoro, she said that ministers in training at the Trinity College (now Trinity Theological Seminary at Legon) used to select their spouses from the Training Centre. She added that the spouses of a number of the early Presbyterian Ministers had their training at the Presbyterian Women's Vocational Training Centre at Begoro. To ensure the stability of marriages, the Basel Mission made *Provisional Regulations* for its congregations in the Gold Coast. It discouraged temporary marriages among members. It discouraged wives absenting themselves from their conjugal homes and residing in the house of their family of origin or with a kin. Regulation number 47 which was translated by Paul Jenkins was quoted by Ulrike Sill as follows:

No young woman is allowed to leave her husband for one to three months in order to live in her parents' house. In general, the pernicious (*venderbliche*) custom that a wife takes up residence in the house of her parents or her (blood) relations not to be tolerated. Her duty is to reside with her husband ... .. (Sill, 2010, p. 121).

These measures were put in place to ensure that women would be given the right education and training that would fully equip them to render service to God and service to humanity through the activities they perform at home as mothers and wives.

#### Basel Mission's Contribution to Female Education in Ghana

The Basel Mission has made a very significant contribution to girl-child education in Ghana. In 1844, while Rev. Johan Georg Windman was teaching the boys at Akropong-Akuapem, his wife, Rosina Windman (Nee Binder), also began to teach twelve (12) girls lessons in Sewing and Needlework. Initially, the practice was that while the boys entered the Middle School to continue their Primary Education, the girls were made to further their education by staying with the Basel Missionaries and serving them as house girls (or "Mmaawa", as they were called in the Akan language). This offered them the opportunity to acquire informal education and practical training in housecraft, like cooking, sewing, needlework and house cleaning, among others. By the year 1849, the number of girls in the school had been increased to seventy (Agyemang, 2006, p. 126). This school provided a boarding facility, and it marked the beginning of female education and vocational education / apprenticeship training in Ghana's educational system (Knispel & Kwakye, 2006, p. 49).

After Rosina Windman's pioneering efforts, the Basel Mission formally opened the first Primary Girls Boarding School at Aburi in the year 1858 and transferred the Akropong-Akuapem School to Aburi. It was a junior school that recruited pupils to have Primary Classes 1 to 6 (Standard 3) education. The school admitted pupils from Osu, Abokobi, Odumase and Akropong-Akuapem mission stations. In the year 1916,



a Girls' Senior School (which later became the Middle School) was established to allow those who completed the Standard 3 (or Class 6) to continue their education in the Middle School from Standard 4 to 7 (80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Brochure, PWCE, 2008, p. 9).

The second female boarding school to be established by the Basel Mission was located at Odumasi-Krobo. The girls' boarding school was introduced at Krobo Odumase in 1860. Mrs. Catherine Mulgrave-Zimmermann ran the school. It was to serve the purpose of educating girls to become good Christian wives and mothers. Initially, the girls stayed with the Zimmermann family until 1872 when they moved to occupy the ground floor of the Mission House (Arlt, 2005, p. 181). By the year 1930, the Basel Mission in the Gold Coast had established only these two Middle Girls' Boarding Schools (Agyemang, 2006, p. 152).

At the 1928 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast, a decision was taken for the Basel Mission to establish a Girls' School in Ashanti. This decision led to the establishment of the Agogo Girls' Boarding School and the Agogo Women's Training College on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of March 1931. The two institutions were established in the same year, and the Girls' School was to serve as a Practice School for the Women's Training College. Two Swiss missionary teachers, namely Miss Helena Schlatter (who later became Mrs Haegele), and Miss Gertrude Goetz founded the Agogo Girls' School and the Training College. These two missionaries visited the homes of some Reverend Ministers, Catechists, church elders and members of the congregation of the Presbyterian Church to appeal to them to send their daughters to the Girls' Schools to receive Middle School Education (85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Brochure, Agogo Presbyterian College of Education, 2006, p. 33).

In an interview with Mr. S. S. Ewool, a pioneer male teacher of the Agogo Girls' School, he revealed that the Agogo Teacher Training College was established with the aim of producing teachers for the Girls' Boarding Schools. In line with the educational philosophy of the Basel Mission, the girls were educated to help them in developing not only the cognitive and the affective domains but also the development of psychomotor skills. The girls were not only taught in the classroom, but they were also taught how to manage themselves, their homes and their environment. This was achieved by using co-curricular activities. An old girl of the Girls' School wrote:

We were given routine tasks to do in the classroom in the morning. There were those who would be engaged in the kitchen to cook the three meals. Other jobs were shared out such as sweeping the classrooms, dormitories, Teachers' rooms, the Mistresses rooms, sweeping and tidying the lawns and open spaces as well. Every Saturday, each student did her laundry and then swept or scrubbed her portion of the compound allocated her to clean. We put the cutlass to good use by weeding the surroundings, planting grass and also for cutting firewood for the cooking in the school kitchen (85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Brochure, Agogo Presbyterian College of Education, 2006, p. 33).

The girls were encouraged to use their hands in cooking, sewing, knitting, stitching, mending, pounding fufu and splitting firewood with axe. All the seventy-two school uniforms for the first batch of thirty-six girls were sewn by Mrs. H. Haegele (formerly Miss Schlatter), with the help of Florence Birikorang, one of the pupils. This information was obtained from a manuscript written by Mrs Haegele, a tutor of Agogo Presbyterian College of Education, dated 1956.

While in the boarding school, the girls were prepared for confirmation. The first confirmation took place at Agogo Girls' School on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1934. The girls in Standard VII were prepared for the confirmation. They were twenty-one in number. The girls were taken through scripture lessons twice a week for nine months from July 1933 to March 1934. This information was obtained from a manuscript written by Mrs Agnes M. A. Dako, a teacher of the Agogo Girls' School, dated 1956. According to her, each girl had to

sew her own dress. The sewing was done under the supervision of Miss Gertrude Goetz who later became Mrs. G. Hofer. She was a Needlework teacher. The confirmation cloth was white.

She added that on the Saturday preceding the confirmation, the parents of the confirmants arrived at Agogo. The Headmistress welcomed them. On the next day (Sunday), the parents attended the Confirmation service with the other girls and the staff. The girls formed a queue and marched from the college to the Presbyterian Church at Agogo. Reverend E. Ballon, the Basel Mission Secretary who was stationed at Kumasi, conducted the confirmation ceremony.

After the service, the Agogo Presbyterian Singing Band with songs accompanied the confirmants to the Girls' School. The congregation also presented a goat, twelve head-loads of cocoyam, yam, plantain, onions, garden eggs, tomatoes, pepper and eggs to the school. In the afternoon at about 4.30 p.m., the students to be confirmed and their relatives were invited to a tea party with the staff in the college orchard. The parents went back to their various destinations the following day (Monday).

The Basel Mission Education was not limited to the four walls of the classroom. Rather, the Mission made room for out of class activities or outreach programmes. Sharing her experience which was recorded in a manuscript dated December 1955, Ms, Cecilia F Asare, a student indicated that at Agogo, the girls were sent to the outstations like Juansa, Krofa, Akutuase and other nearby towns to do evangelism or street preaching on Sundays. In a report, she wrote:

We the students of Agogo Presbyterian Training College visit some neighbouring villages each Sunday, and preach to the people. Throughout the past years of this college, street preaching has been carried out by many students. Though we are not trained much in theology, we try to collect some knowledge of the words of the Bible and of what we are being taught. With such inadequate knowledge and understanding, we preach the Gospel to the villagers whom we visit. We do hope that the Lord Himself waters our little seeds sewn into the hearts of those people, so that they may flourish with spiritual gifts.

Besides, they went on excursions to places of interest. One of their excursions took them to the northern part of Ghana to visit Tamale, Bolgatanga, Bawku, Gambaga and Paga. In a report, Cordelia Boadi, one of the students wrote in 1954 that their journey to the northern part of Ghana exposed them to transportation on the Volta Lake at Yeji. She also wrote about their visit to the Crocodile Pond at Paga where there lived dozens of crocodiles.

Similar Girls' Schools were opened at other places in the country after the Aburi, Odumase and Agogo Schools. For example, in an oral interview, Mr. Kofi Osafo of Abetifi-Kwahu indicated that a Girls' Middle School was established by Reverend Ramseyer at Abetifi-Kwahu to absorb the girls who passed out from the primary school. I will now examine how the Educational philosophy of the Basel Mission influenced them in making certain educational policies.

### **The "Boarding" and "Day" School Systems**

It has been the policy of the Basel Mission to establish Day and Boarding Schools. However, they gave priority to the establishment of Boarding Schools in preference to the Day Schools. The Boarding School System was established by the Basel Mission in the Gold Coast in line with the philosophy, which led to the creation of the "Salems". According to Addo-Fening (2008), the Boarding Schools originated from the need to isolate pupils from the uncongenial atmosphere of their parental home in order to promote good academic work. In line with this educational philosophy, the Basel Mission used the Infant Schools (Kindergarten) and the three-year Junior (Primary) Schools as Day Schools. The Senior (or Middle) Schools and the Seminaries were established as Boarding Schools. The explanation I gathered through an oral interview with Mr, Gyamera Konadu, Headmaster of Awisa Boarding Schools revealed that the pupils in the Middle Schools were between the ages of 14 and 18 years. Therefore, they looked more mature to stay away from direct parental control and to take good care of themselves by way of maintaining personal hygiene and environmental cleanliness. At that age, the pupils could wash their clothes, weed their surroundings and render some domestic services not only to themselves but also to their teachers.

One major characteristic of the Boarding Schools is that boys and girls were not put in the same boarding facility. For example, Madam Cynthia Quartey of Abokobi said in my interview with her that at Abokobi when the Basel Mission established the Middle Mixed School in 1945, only boys enjoyed the boarding school facility. The girls were made day pupils.

In 1920 the Phelps-Stokes Commission presented its Report, indicating the daily programme of Boarding School activities, using Aburi Girls' Boarding School as an example as follows:

5.45 am – 6.15 am	Rising
6.15 am – 6.30 am	Prayers
6.30 am – 7.30 am	Domestic work
8.00 am – 11.00 am	School (Classes)
11.00 am – 12.00 noon	Play
12.00 noon – 12.30 pm	Dinner
12.30 pm – 2.00 pm	Play
2.00 pm – 4.00 pm	School (Classes)
4.00 pm – 6.30 pm	Play
6.30 pm – 7.00 pm	Supper
7.00 pm – 8.00 pm	Preparation (Prep)
8.00 pm – 8.30 pm	Prayers (Jones, 1922, p, 137)

The period between 7.00 pm and 8.00 pm has been used in Basel Mission Boarding Schools as a period of “preparation” for the next day’s lesson. Boarding institutions in Ghana have adopted this terminology (“Preparation”) which was introduced by the Basel Mission and the students have simply shortened it as “Prep” Time. This is another important legacy that the Basel Mission has given to the Ghanaian educational system.

The pupils in the Boarding Schools were placed directly under the care and guidance of dedicated teachers who were to serve as *in loco parentis*. They were to lead a very good life that would be worthy of emulation by the pupils. In an interview with Mr. S. S. Ewool, the first male teacher of the Agogo Girls' School, he indicated that only unmarried women (or spinsters) were allowed to stay in the Boarding House with the girls. Any woman who decided to marry had to vacate the school compound and look for a rented apartment in town, so that she could enjoy marriage life with her husband. The reason he gave was that this decision was taken in order to take the minds of the female pupils and students away from early marriage, so that they could concentrate on their studies.

In 1942, the Synod Committee of the Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast commended the boarding system as serving the purpose of providing one of the finest opportunities for the pupils to learn how to live in a Christian community. They however expressed their dissatisfaction with the increasing numbers of Day Schools in the country. It was the desire of the Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast that all Basel Mission Senior Schools would be turned into boarding. Consequently, at a Synod Committee Meeting held at the Christiansborg, Osu from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1942, it was decided that special letters be sent to congregations like Mampong-Asante, Kukurantumi, Bechem and Mpraeso, asking the people to build dormitories for their Senior Schools, in order to convert them into Boarding Schools.

### **Girl-Child Education in Pre-Colonial Era**

Girl-child education in Ghana can be traced to the era of the Castle Schools. As far back as 1740, King Poku of Ashanti was believed to have sent twelve boys and two girls to the Dutch authorities at Cape Coast Castle School to learn Reading, Writing and Music, and he agreed to pay for their school fees with elephant tusks (Graham 1976, p. 3).

Jacobus Capetein, one of the Africans who was educated by the Dutch in Holland came back to be appointed as the first African Protestant priest to the Elmina Castle. In 1740, he had 45 pupils in his school; four were mulatto boys, seven mulatto girls and five were African girls. At the time of his death in 1747, Jacobus Capetein had 400 boys and girls in his school (Graham, 1976, pp. 3-4). Within this pre-colonial era, girl-child education was provided in co-educational institutions that were run by European merchants companies (Graham, 1976, p. 5). The first girls' school in the country was believed to have been established in the Castle School in Cape Coast in 1821 (Sill, 2010).

### **Girl-Child Education in the Colonial Era**

The colonial government built upon the foundation that was laid by the Basel Mission by promoting girl-child education in the Gold Coast in the 1880's. Under the governorship of Major Stephen John Hill who was the Commander-in-Chief and was popularly called Commander Hill, the 1852 Educational Ordinance was promulgated. Its preamble was stated, among others, that: "... it is essentially necessary that some effort should be made to educate the rising generation of females within Her Majesty's forts and settlements on the Gold Coast" (Educational Ordinance, 1852, p. 37). The 1852 Education Ordinance also provided for the setting up of teacher training colleges to train both males and females to become professional teachers (Graham, 1976, pp. 35-36). Similarly, the 1887 Education Ordinance under the administration of Colonel Frederick Benjamin Price White sought to promote girl-child education. Article VII, (5) provided: "That the subjects taught include reading, writing of English language, arithmetic, and, in the case of females, plain needlework ..." (Educational Ordinance, 1887, p. 2). These were indications that the 1852 and the 1887 Education Ordinances sought to promote girl-child education in the then Gold Coast.

Colonial governments continued to promote girl-child education after the period of the ordinances. In the 1900's, the colonial government decided that education in all African territories was meant to serve the following purposes:

- i. To spread education as widely as possible among the people in order to give them both the desire and the capacity for social, economic and political progress; and
- ii. To train as many African men and women as possible for higher posts in production, industry, commerce, the professions and the government services, and as leaders in politics, local government, trade unions and the Co-operative Movement.

This was contained in a communiqué that was issued by the colonial government to the joint Provincial Council of Chiefs at their meeting at Dodowa in the Greater Accra region of Ghana in November 1948. Under the governorship of Sir Gordon Guggisberg, he formulated sixteen principles of education. Three of these principles sought to promote girl-child education as follows:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Principle: The provision of secondary schools with an educational standard that will fit young men and women to enter a university.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Principle: Equal opportunities to those given to boys should be provided for the education of girls.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Principle: Co-education is desirable during certain stages of education (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975, p. 57).

### **Girl-Child Education in the Post-Colonial Era**

In the 1950's under the era of the nationalists, girl-child education continued to receive the support of governments. At the secondary level, following the establishment of the Ghana National College, Dr Nkrumah began expanding the frontiers of education with the establishment of the Ghana Education Trust, which was charged to open secondary schools and teacher training colleges. The secondary schools that were established included Ofori Panyin Secondary School, Techiman Secondary School, the Winneba Secondary School, Swedru Secondary School, Apam Secondary School, Dormaa Secondary School, Tema Secondary School, Oda Secondary School, and the Labone Secondary School. All these were co-educational



institutions. Besides, an all-female secondary education was provided at the Mfantseman Secondary School at Saltpond in the Central Region of Ghana.

Indeed, students who entered those secondary schools would need teachers to impart knowledge. And in ensuring that this became a reality, the country's First President went to initiate the setting up of about 16 teacher training colleges, to be added to the existing ones that were provided by Christian missions. The 16 included the Atebubu Training College, Berekum Training College, Fosu Training College and the Enchi Training College.

The 1987 Education Reform promoted equitable male and female education for all children, youth and adults (UNESCO, 1990). Subsequently, in 1987, Science, Technology and Mathematics Education (STME) Clinics for girls were opened to encourage girls to pursue science-related courses in tertiary institutions. The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme was another educational policy that was introduced in Ghana to increase access, participation and retention in basic schools (MOE, 1996).

In 1997, Girls' Education Unit (GEU) was created under the Ministry of Education to give girls access to education. Currently, a Minister of State responsible for Primary, Secondary and Girl-child Education has been appointed to deal with issues affecting female education in Ghana.

### Challenges facing Girl-Child Education in Ghana

In spite of all the efforts that have been made to promote girls education in Ghana, in the past, and at present, girl-child education faces many challenges, which have institutional, cultural and social dimensions. One major institutional challenge that faces girls' education in Ghana is the fact that vocational education which was an integral part of Basel Mission education has not been adequate attention by post-independent governments of Ghana, especially under the era of democratic regimes. Currently, out of the 126 Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, only 26 GES Technical Institutes have been placed directly under the Ministry of Education (See Table 1 for the list of TVET institutions).

Table 1: Number of TVET institutions (Public and Private)

Type of TVET Institutions	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
1. Ghana Education Service (GES) Technical Institutes	24	25	26	26
2. National Vocational Training Institutes (NVTI) Centres	28	21	28	24
3. Integrated Community Centres for Employable Skills (ICCES)	31	35	33	34
4. Social Welfare Centres	11	13	13	13
5. Leadership Training Institutes	7	9	5	7
6. Opportunities Industrialisation Centres (OIC)	1	1	0	1
7. Community Development Centres	22	22	23	20
8. Agriculture Training Institutes	1	1	1	1

9. Roads and Transport Training Centres	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Number of TVET Institutions</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>126</b>

Source: Education Sector Performance Report, 2010.

The rest have been placed directly under the Ministry of Youth, Employment and Social Welfare where they cannot be supported by the GET Fund (Asare-Danso, 2012, p. 290). This policy must be reviewed if girls' education is to be promoted in Ghana.

**Table 2: National Apprenticeship Programme by region, 2012**

Region	Female	Male	Total
Greater Accra	650	370	1,020
Ashanti	660	340	1,000
Volta	300	150	450
Central	275	155	430
Northern	280	140	420
Eastern	210	200	410
Western	280	90	370
Brong Ahafo	250	100	350
Upper East	250	100	350
Upper West	120	80	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,275</b>	<b>1,725</b>	<b>5,000</b>

Source: Education Sector Performance Report, 2013

If we also consider the fact that more girls pursue apprenticeship programme, as compared to their male counterparts (See Table 2), then it can be concluded that girls' education has not been taken serious in Ghana. In 2012, out of a total of 5,000 people who enrolled on the National Apprenticeship programme, 3,275 were females, while their male counterparts who were on the programme were only 1,725 in number. Other institutional challenges facing girls in their education include teasing; sexual harassment; inadequate sanitary facilities; discrimination against girls; and bullying.

The cultural challenges include the preference given to boys' education; traditional domestic role expectations of girls; early marriages; and betrothal. The social challenges facing girls' education also include teenage pregnancy; cost of education to parents; distance that girls have to cover to get to school; and the absence of role models for girls to emulate their lifestyles.

## Conclusions

The study has revealed that girl-child education was introduced by the Basel Mission based on its theology of marriage and family. The policy to educate the girl child was meant to train girls to become good Christian mothers and wives. Boarding Schools were provided to help girls to acquire good moral values, practical training, and to socialize with others. The Boarding School concept has helped to promote national integration and for that reason, the Basel Mission should be commended for its contribution to the Ghanaian

society. Similarly, the Basel Mission should be commended for the promotion of vocational education in Ghana. The colonial and post-colonial governments of Ghana must also be commended for sustaining girl child education in Ghana. However, girl child education continues to face many challenges, which have institutional, cultural and social dimensions. These challenges require the collective efforts of all stakeholders in education to help in finding lasting solutions to them.

### Recommendations

A number of strategies that could be used to eliminate barriers to girl-child education in Ghana have been recommended in the Education Sector Performance Report (Ministry of Education, 2013). These include: gender responsive teacher training; community sensitization and mobilization; incentive packages (e.g. take home ration programme); girls camps/vacation clubs; and the enforcement of child rights, protection laws and protocols. I would like to add that the removal of barriers to girls' education in Ghana requires the collective efforts of NGO's, civil society groups, philanthropies, organizations and individuals. It is therefore recommended that all these stakeholders in education complement government efforts towards the promotion and improvement of girl-child education in Ghana, in fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goal 3 which seeks to promote gender equality.

I would also like to recommend to the Ministry of Education that all institutions which are running the TVET programme be placed directly under the Ministry of Education, so that such institutions could benefit from the support of the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GET Fund). This will help to overcome one of the major institutional challenges facing girl-child education in Ghana. Why is it that colleges of education and nursing training institutions that provide learners with specialized skills are not placed under the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment (MoMYE), but they are rather placed under the Ministry of Education?

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## MANUSCRIPTS

1. Mrs. Agnes M. A. Dako (formerly Miss Agnes Wiredu), a former teacher of the Agogo Girls' School shared her experience as a confirmant in the year 1934 when she was a standard seven pupil of the Agogo Girls' Middle School. The information was contained in a manuscript, which was retrieved from the Agogo Presbyterian College of Education. It was dated 1955.
2. Miss Cecilia F. Asare, a student of the Agogo Presbyterian Training College wrote down her experience in a manuscript which was entitled "Street Preaching", dated December 1955.
3. Miss Cordelia Boadi provided information through a manuscript which she wrote entitled "Our Journey to the North" in December 1954. The writer was a student of the Agogo Girls' Training College at that time.