

# Assessing Girl Child Education and Parental Consciousness and Involvement in the Ashaiman Municipality

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## ABSTRACT

### Article Info

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The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees Free and Compulsory Basic Education to every child of school going age irrespective of gender, religion, ethnicity or geographical location however, this is far from reality as some children in Ghana lack education especially the girl child. Hence the objective of the study is to assess parental consciousness and involvement in the education of their girl child in Ashaiman Municipality and identify intervention measures specifically to improve girl education in the area. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods where interviews and questionnaires were used for data collection as well as utilizing the multistage sampling and purposive (focus group discussion) sampling methods for the selection of the respondents. The analysis of the data was done using Descriptive statistics and the Thematic Analysis (qualitative) using Microsoft Excel. According to the study, poverty, lack of awareness, negative behaviours of household heads toward female education among others correspond to the increased girl dropout in the community. Intervention measures such as awareness creation, provision of financial resources and adequate teaching and learning materials, eliminating retrogressive cultural practices, among others have been proposed.

### Article History

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is generally acknowledged as a tool to foster economic development. It is defined in simple terms as a platform for teaching, learning and acquiring knowledge. Apart from the acquisition of knowledge, one may earn respect from society when educated

because to be uneducated is sometimes associate to one being a low life person. Education has been a necessity in the lives of individuals over the years especially in this 21<sup>st</sup> century and hence considered as a compulsory action in most parts of the world. Interestingly, education has been a goal to be achieved by individuals, societies, communities, organizations, governments

and the world as a whole. The awareness of its importance has become one of the most talked-about topic today and with that regard, much effort is sorted to bring education to all humans.

According to the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, a child is an individual under the age of eighteen, therefore a girl child refers to every female who is below the age of eighteen. Eighteen years is mostly considered as the legal age of independence for individuals in most countries. At this age, majority of individuals have the liberty and capability to make decisions and cater for themselves whereas below this age, majority of individuals are subjected to the care, control and supervision of the elderly ones who could be parents, family, guardians amongst others. Striving to extend education to all has been a great effort towards a positive direction but there has been a deficiency towards the recipient. This deficiency is characterized by gender biases and inequalities against girls. Globally speaking, Africa has the highest population of uneducated girls in the world due to various reasons (UNESCO, 2015). It is worth mentioning that, the choice of the sex of an individual does not lie in the bosom of another thus girls' education is a human right and should not be considered as a favor. As said in the popular adage that 'when you educate a girl child you educate a nation'.

On the International Day of the Girl Child 2019, United Nation women have declared that "It's time we encourage girls to pursue their dreams, uplift their self-esteem and celebrate all their talents" (Keitzman, 2019). The United Nations emphasized the achievement of universal primary education, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It also stated the insurance of inclusive and equitable quality education, the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all and the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations Educational & Organization, 2016). As matters of girls' empowerment rise many scholars,

government agencies and NGOs pinpoint that the major element to empower girls is through education. Education is the key factor for girls' empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare. Therefore, giving girls' quality education is the most critical way of empowering women in African and the World. The importance of educating the girl-child is largely documented by most scholars.

Education continues to be a key to growth and development of a country as well as a major factor in the reduction of poverty and migration, and also improvement in the quality of institutions and social conditions of citizens. Investigating and identifying the challenges facing girls' education in a country is always important, especially, in developing countries where the school enrolment remains low and dropout remains high, mainly for females and in rural areas. Therefore, this study focuses on assessing the parental consciousness and involvement in the education of their girl child in Ashaiman Municipality and identify intervention measures specifically to improve girl education in the area.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the works of Agbemasie-Grooms (2011), the importance of education especially for girls has been inclusive in every political administration policy in Ghana history (precolonial, colonial and postcolonial). Formal education may be considered as the path to socio-economic growth to an individual and this is seen as an investment venture for parents and guardians. The population of Ghana consists of about 51% of females of the entire population. Earlier researches carried out in the early nineteen-nineties by Klasen, Dollar and Gatti (1999), Blackden (1999) and Bhanu, Kane (1999) all reported that that gender equality in education has a substantial effect on income growth and that increases in girls' participation many African countries. They also believe that countries that invest less in girl-child education grow more slowly. Discriminating against girls is not an efficient

economic choice for national development. Thus, education can empower girls within society, assisting them to make well enhanced decisions about their welfare and enables them to resume active positions in their societies. Some factors that contribute to the low girl-child education in the Kassena-Nankana District of Upper East Region in Ghana were reported by Adetunde, Akensina & Peter (2008). These factors include 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 labor that continues to keep vast numbers of girls out of the classroom. Danso Addai (2013) reported that majority of girls in Ghana face many challenges with respect to the right and access to education right from the point of enrolment, retention and completion of their education.

According to a World Bank report published in 2012, the ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education (%) in Ghana was last reported at 96.38 in 2011. A little over 6 out of every 10 men, but only 4 out of every 10 women are literate. 59% of females compared to 17% of males are said to be involved in trade apprenticeship since they are not encouraged to further their education. The Ghana Statistical Service (May 2012) pinpointed that the country has great improvement regarding literacy rate. Compared to the 2000 statistics, the level of literacy has appreciated from 54.1 % to 71.5 % in 2010. The change is more visible related to females; it has improved by 19.6 % and for males, the increase was 15.4%. In contrast, the gap still exists regarding a girl's education as there is 80.2% male literates and just 68.5 % female literates (GSS,2012). Moreover, the age of children that never attend school is greater for females (14.3%) than males (9.1%). On the other hand, rural areas where economic poverty and traditional practices are higher have more illiteracy affecting women than men. In 2012 FAO points out that just 29% of females are literate compared to 52% of males. At the same time, 71% of women have never attended school, compared to 59%

of men (FAO, 2012) and this percentage increases significantly in rural areas. The negative attitude towards the girl child attending formal school has been dissatisfying and this is reflected in the high rate of girls dropping out of school (Agbemasie-Grooms, 2011). On average, girls stay in school for only 4 years and drop out due to early marriage, pregnancy, sexual harassment, poverty among others in Ghana. Eppenauer (2018) reported that 10,000 children do not transition from basic to secondary education each year because of poverty. In 2017, the gross ratio of tertiary education enrolment for girls was 13.53% in comparison to 18.68% for boys. This shows that there is still room for significant improvements in girls' education in Ghana.

Agbemasie-Grooms (2011) emphasize that Ghana is still a developing country with the majority of children facing many difficulties attending school; however, this problem is greater regarding economically disadvantaged girls. The government of Ghana in an attempt to improve education in Ghana came about with the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2030 to focus on an inclusive education system that is accessible and equal for all. Still focus on improving education, the Ghanaian president Nana Akufo Addo made secondary education free, this couldn't cater to all but about 37% of the students. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has given a helping hand to improve girl child education in Ghana. USAID made scholarship provision for 7,000 girls in Ghana by partnering with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ghana Education Service (GES). USAID's education objective for Ghana is to improve reading performance for 2.8 million Ghana primary schools by 2020. According to Barrigan (2018) the problem of girl child education exists, the efforts to improve access to girls' education in Ghana are step in the right direction.

According to Obour (2013), Challenging Heights (a local child rights advocacy non-governmental organization in Ghana) made mention of a bleak future

for about one million Ghanaian children who are out of school. These child migrants are within the school-going ages of children under the Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education policy. The contributions these scholars have brought to light an understanding of dropout and migration in general terms but little is known about how migration influences the progress of girl child attaining education in Ghana. In recent times, girl-child migration is gradually gaining research attention. This can be attributed to the fact that child migration was often regarded in the past as an association with adult migration.

An argument by Obonyo and Thinguri (2015) is that girls who drop out due to pregnancy tend to be vulnerable and more exposed to child labor, transactional sex, early marriages and a continuous cycle of teenage pregnancies. To control and manage this phenomenon, some sub-Saharan African countries like Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, and Madagascar have setup school re-entry opportunities for school girls after pregnancy (Maluli & Bali, 2014). A study in Ghana by Gyan (2013) suggested the casual factors of teenage pregnancy to stem from poor parenting, Poverty, peer influence, lack of sex education, mass media, curiosity, relationship affairs, breakdown of culture, self-esteem and forced unprotected sex. (Adu-Gyamfi & Vol, 2014). A study by Rosenberg et al. (2015) maintained that school enrolment was associated with lower teenage pregnancy rates since pregnancy occurred less commonly during school term than during school holidays. Therefore, according to their study, girls who drop out of school may be at higher risk to teenage pregnancy. According to UNESCO (2015), pregnancy is a major driver for school dropout among female secondary school students in sub-Saharan African countries, including Cameroon and South Africa There seems to have been a shift in policy emphasis around the world away from seeing teenage pregnancy as a problem, to see it as a consequence of inequality (UNESCO, 2015). However, there is still a lack of research into the experiences of young mothers (Arai,

2009; Pillow, 2006). In 2017 the Adolescent pregnancy statistics (APS) reported that 14% of girls in Ghana aged between 15 and 19 have at least one child. Almost 52% of girls have endured gender-based violence whilst at school and this has deterred them from attending school. Many Ghanaian girls have experienced sexual violence during their time at school. According to Action Aid (2018), 26% of girls in schools have reported sexual violence during their education. In July 2018, 10 female students reported sexual violence against eight teachers at a high school in Ghana, with only four being indicted for their crimes.

Parental involvement refers to a situation where parents are directly involved in the education of their children, they involve themselves and are involved by the school and teachers in the learning process of their children, and they fulfil their duties as parents in making sure that the learner is assisted in the process of learning as much as they possibly can. It does not just refer to parents enquiring about the performance of a learner in schools, but also in them taking a role in communicating with their children with the aim of having a healthy relationship with them, so that the process of encouraging, mentoring, leading and inspiring may be genuine (Clinton & Hattie, 2013).

Many researchers recognize the important role that strong positive bond between homes and schools, play in the development and education of children (Edwards & Alldred, 2000; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Richardson, 2009; Sanders & Sheldon, 2009; Sheldon, 2009; Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017). The theories put forward have been supported, and reaffirmed, by numerous studies that have shown that good co-operation between schools, homes and the communities can lead to academic achievement for students, as well as to reforms in education. Research has also shown that successful students' have strong academic support from their involved parents (Sheldon, 2009). Epstein (2001, 2009) alleges that there are many reasons for developing and establishing a partnership between school, family and community. The main

reason for such a partnership is to aid students in succeeding at school. Other reasons include improving school climate and school programs, developing parental skills and leadership, assisting families in connecting with others in the school and the community, and assisting teachers with their work. All these reasons emphasize the importance of parents playing an active role in their children's education and keeping a strong and positive relationship with schools. Parental involvement in the education of students begins at home with the parents providing a safe and healthy environment, appropriate learning experiences, support, and a positive attitude about school. Several studies indicate increased academic achievement with students that have involved parents (Epstein, 2009; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Rumberger et al., 1990; Swap, 1993; Whitaker & Fiore, 2001). Garcia and Thornton (2014) agree that current research show the involvement of family in learning helps to improve student performance, reduce absenteeism and restore parents' confidence in their children's education. Learners with parents or caregivers who are involved in learners' education, earn higher grades and test scores, have better social skills and show improved behavior. Ideally it would help to have a greater percentage of parental involvement in their children's education. The study looks at how parental involvement benefits female child education.

Salm and Falola (2012) claimed that families are dynamic institutions which integrate members with customs, decent, lineages and religion. In Ghana, there are two types of family organization which are the patrilineal and matrilineal family. Various ethnic groups have particular family system they practice. The Akans, for example, practice the matrilineal family system. In the patrilineal system, every member of the family is part of the extended family of the father. Children belong to a father's family and males inherit the father's properties, while women receive items related to domestic activities (but sometimes women can also receive land). Matrilineal cultures also confer

greater levels of independence on women than patrilineal societies do, perhaps making gender relations and decision-making more egalitarian (Dodoo 1998; Takyi and Dodoo 2005), which could have a spillover effect. Moreover, the structural change has dramatically changed the traditional norm in which the man was always seen as the head of household and the breadwinner for the family, enabling women to be free to make decisions by themselves as stated by Brown (1994). Familial relationships which emerged in this study reflect the prevalence of patrilineal and matrilineal family systems. Women from matrilineal societies are more involved in decision-making than those from the patrilineal. On account of this, women from matrilineal societies have more say in their daughters' education than their counterparts in the patrilineal family system. The Women's Manifesto for Ghana (2004) states that, apart from rural-urban differences, it has been observed that women in matrilineal areas are more involved in decision-making than those in patrilineal areas.

In addition, the influence of pupils' household size on completion rate among primary school pupils by Kanoi (2017) revealed that family size was a factor in completion rates of students. Heads of schools also confirmed that in big households, there is strife in caring for wards and some students drop out to work so as to support their siblings. A study in Australia by Boyle (2004) indicates that the number of children within a household is plays a major role in access to education. Chugh (2011) and Enyegue (2000) stated that student with few siblings were likely to enter school while those with more siblings were susceptible to being late, repeating classes and leaving school earlier. In addition, Enyegue (2000) stated that students from larger households facing economic challenges were more likely to have high irregular attendance and dropout rates. A meta-analysis research conducted by Aranowska-Rataj et al. (2015) on the significance of family size on child educational performance in order to systematically compare the

effects reported in various studies were carried out in different countries. According to the resource dilution model, children with many siblings receive less support from parents compared to those raised in small families.

The concept is designed from the objectives of this study which are to identify the parental consciousness and involvement in the education of their girl child in the Ashaiman municipality as well as intervention measure from the views of educational stakeholders. These are factors that influence girl child education. The broad concept deemed key and important to this study are analyzed in the framework: parents' consciousness and involvement; intervention measures. In this research appropriate intervention measures will be identified to satisfy the problems of low girls' school enrolment rate, high girls' dropout rate and low girls' retention rates.

1) Parents' Consciousness and Involvement

Parental consciousness and involvement refers to a situation where parents are aware, responsive and directly involved in the education of their children. It is the amount of awareness, knowledge and participation of a parent has when it comes to the education of their children

2) Enrolment

This is the number of people officially registered as a member (pupils/students) at a school or college. Gross enrollment ratio is the ratio of total enrollment, regardless of age, to the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the level of education shown. School enrollment (secondary; female (% gross) - Secondary education completes the provision of basic education that began at the primary, and aims at laying the foundations for lifelong learning and human development, by offering more subject- or skill-oriented instruction using more specialized teachers. School enrollment (primary; female (% gross) - Gross enrollment ratio is the ratio of total enrollment, regardless of age, to the population of

the age group that officially corresponds to the level of education shown. Primary education provides children with basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills along with an elementary understanding of such subjects as history, geography, natural science, social science, art, and music.

3) Retention

Retention is the process of ensuring the success or graduation of students. The student retention rate indicates the percentage of students who remain at an educational institution after they begin studying there.

4) Dropout

Drop out is the early withdrawal of the girl child from school without completing the required school years failing to enroll back to school. Dropout rates imply the percentage of students/pupils who withdraw from school eminently before completing the primary school cycle against those who are enrolled in class one.

The concept is represented below:

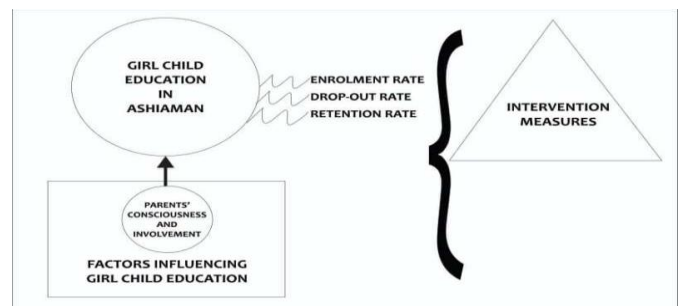


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

III. METHODOLOGY

The area under study is the Ashaiman Municipality located in the Greater Accra region of the Southern part of Ghana and a Municipality in the Greater Accra region. The study seeks to examine girl child education in Ghana particularly in Ashaiman municipality where studies have identified the widening gap of gender inequality and unbalanced representation of females in education and socioeconomic activities.



Figure 2 Map of Ghana and the location of Ashaiman Municipality (Source: Google map)

The study employs qualitative and quantitative research design. The methodology will combine both the quantitative and qualitative method for data collection. With this research design, various hypotheses will be test to establish relationships between variables. For quantitative method, data retrieval will be from both primary and secondary data source. The primary data will be based on the critical role of archival data in doing research, the survey questions will be designed after a careful review of related literature such as published articles, journals, academic papers and policy documents on the state of girls’ education in Ghana. The secondary data and knowledge will be collected from works written by experts in the field or non-profit organizations and panel data from World Development Indicators (WDI) official website. The information which will be presented in the paper is with respect to the notion of

girl child education in Ghana. The purpose of the use of qualitative resources is because it is observed that it provides a degree of evidence different from that obtained from quantitative resources. Qualitative resources used include interviews. This study focuses on understanding the mindset that underlines every aspect of the girl child education, and it is deeply rooted in their daily lives.

The primary target of respondents of the study were household heads and education stakeholders as the main theme for the research. This group focuses on households living in the Ashaiman municipality, teachers and head teachers from Ashaiman No. 5A Basic, Ashaiman No. 4JHS, Presby "B" Basic, S.D.A Basic, Nii Amin JHS, St. Augustine R/C JHS, Presby "A" Basic, Bethel A.M.E Zion JHS, Ashaiman Technical / Vocational Inst., Ashaiman Secondary school, Ashaiman No. 1 Basic, Blessed Clementina R/C Basic, Ashaiman No. 1 JHS, Nurumstafia JHS and Ashaiman No.2 Basic, as well as counselors and government officials of the Ghana Education Service (GES), social welfare departments, and non-governmental organizations and agencies. The research targeted a total sample size of 210 respondents. Respondents were divided according to the main groupings with regards to the type of questionnaires and interview given to satisfy the objectives of the study. The unit sample includes 165 household heads and 45 education stakeholders. Table 1 shows the Sample Respondents of the study.

Table 1 Sample Respondents

Groupings	Sample size
<b>Household Heads</b>	165
<b>Education Stakeholders :</b>	
<b>Teachers</b>	22
<b>Headmaster/ headmistress</b>	9
<b>GES</b>	8
<b>NGO</b>	6
<b>Total</b>	210

The study utilized both the probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select respondents for the study. With the Probability sampling technique, the researcher employed a multistage sampling procedure to select the household heads as respondents. A multistage sampling procedure is described as the sampling technique where by the sampling is carried out in the various stages using smaller sampling units at each stage in the sampling procedure (Kothari, 2004). It is used when the members of the population are spread over a wide geographical locations and it may not be possible to obtain a fair representative sample with only one sampling technique (Creswell, 2009). In the first stage, the Ashaiman municipality was divided into clusters namely North, South, East, West and Central. In the second stage, from each of the clusters, the researcher used the simple random sampling method specifically lottery method. With this method, pieces of papers were written with inscriptions Yes and No, thoroughly mixed in a container which are picked by the household heads as researcher moved from house to house. Any household head who picked the piece of paper with the inscription Yes' was selected to become a respondent for the study. In this case, the respondents selected proportionally equal sample from each cluster to form the total sample one hundred and sixty-five (165) household heads. The purposive sampling method was used to select key informants who were the major stakeholders in the girl child education in the study area. These respondents comprised Girl Child coordinators in the schools, guidance and counselling coordinators, the headmistresses and headmasters, the municipal girl child coordinator for Ghana education service, the social welfare and NGO from the study area. These respondents were directly in charge of the girl child education in the study area.

The study utilized the semi-structured questionnaires and interviews as the main instruments. The use of

questionnaires provides a wider coverage and gives assurance of greater anonymity. The questionnaire items used to address research objective were inspired by (Salm and Falola 2002;Grissmer 2003; Alissa 2010; Hashim and Thorsen 2011; Uchena 2013; Gracia and Thornton 2014; Young-Clark 2014; Aranowska-Rataj et al 2015; Ngure and Amollo 2016; Fan et al 2017; Kanoi 2017; Fummi Bammeke 2017; Abie Ntekane 2018) who used them to measure parental consciousness and involvement in their girl child's education as well as previous study which bothered on sociocultural and economic factors that affect girl child education. Again, the non-structured key informant interviews were employed to obtain data from the key stakeholder informants purposely selected for the study. The non-structured key informant interviews involved open questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee. The key-informants' interviews took the form of personal face-to-face interactions and the interview focused on eliciting the key information from respondents on the factors influencing the girl child education in the area and intervention measures to improve girl child education in the area.

The data from the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as mean, frequencies, standard deviations and qualitative narratives where results were presented in statistical tables, charts and graphs. The representation of the data will involve figures, tables and diagrams to graphically translate the findings of the study.

In addition, Permission was also obtained from the District Education Office and informed consent from the participants (see appendix). The Ethical procedures were considered during the study, which included, letters of introduction sent to the schools' authorities to seek permission before conducting the interview.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



### Social and Demographic Characteristics

The social and demographic information consist of statistical or numerical data of the respondents. The information is used in social sciences’ research as well as identification and creation of policies among others. Respondents were asked to indicate their gender, age ranges, educational background, marital status, religion and household size. This section presents the analysis of the background characteristics of the respondents interviewed. The data was analysed using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software.

#### 1. Descriptive Statistics of Household Head Respondents

The researcher wanted to know the social and demographic information of the household heads to investigate socio cultural and economic factors that affect/influence girl child education as well as identify the parental consciousness and involvement in the education of their girl child in the Ashaiman municipality. The total number of household respondent was 165 (N=100%). Respondents were asked to indicate their gender, age, marriage status, religion, education, household size and employment status. Figure 3 shows the results of respondents of household head.

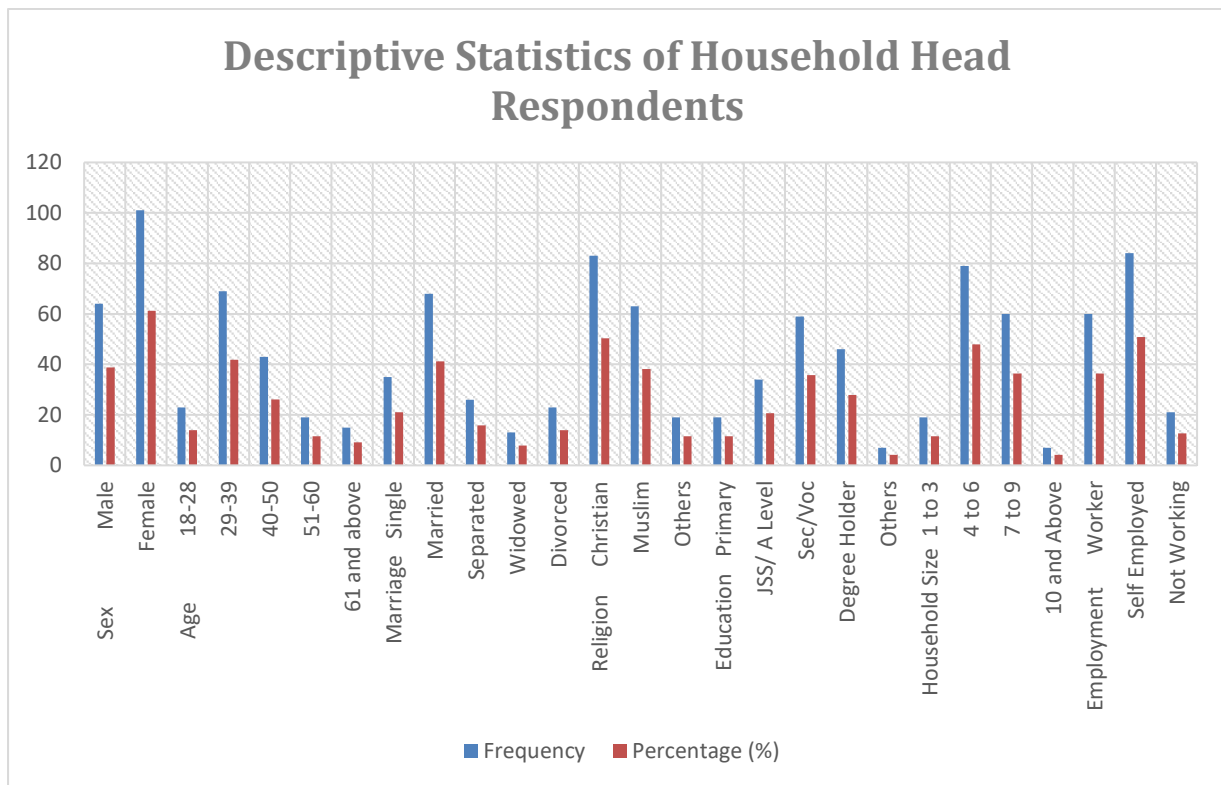


Figure 3. Result of household head respondents)

Source: field survey, 2020

The researcher wanted to know the gender of the household head therefore asked respondents to indicate their sex. From the results, majority of household heads were female representing 61.2% (n=101) and males representing 38.8% (n=64) of the total respondents (165).

Respondents were also asked to indicate their ages. Here, the results indicated a high percentage of household heads were in the age bracket of 29-39 years (41.8%, n=69), followed by respondent in the age bracket

of 40-50 years (26.1%, n=43) and then respondent in the age bracket of 18-28 years (13.9%, n=23) while 11.5% (n=19) were aged 51-60 years. Only 9.1% (n=15) of the respondents were 61 years and above.

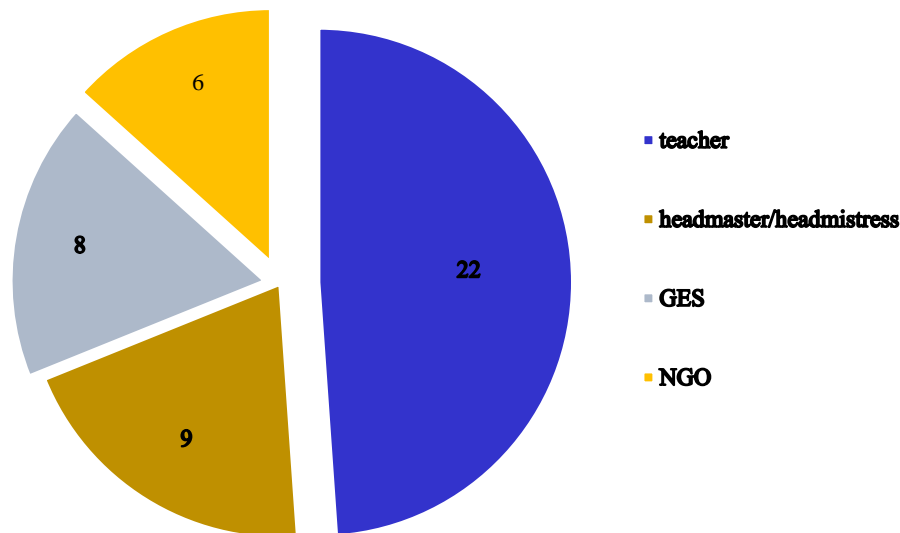
In trying to know the family background of the respondent, this study sought to know the marriage status, religion and education of the household head. From Figure 3 results, 35 household heads (21.1%) were single, 68 household heads (41.2%) were married and 26 household heads (15.9%) were separated, 13 household heads (7.9%) were widowed and 23 household heads (13.9%) were divorced. Also, among the total respondent of 165 household heads, 83 (50.3%) of the respondents were Christians, 63(38.2%) were Muslims, and the remaining 19 (11.5%) belong to other religions. In addition, majority of the respondents had completed secondary or vocation school representing 35.8%, followed by degree holders with 27.9%, and the combination of primary and junior secondary or A-level indicated 32.1% of total respondents while others were 4.2%.

The collection of data on the number of household members of the respondent was done purposely to determine whether the household size has any effect in the education of the girl child. Ying Shen (2017) in his research concluded that big families i.e. those with many children has negative effect on schooling the girl child in the family since some parent give priority to their boy child than their girl child. According to the result 19 respondents had a household size range of 1-3 people representing 11.5%, 79 respondents had a household size range of 4-6 people representing the majority of 47.9%, 60 respondents had a household size range of 7-9 people representing 36.4% and 7 respondents had a household size range of 10 people and above representing 4.2%.

Respondents were also asked to indicate their employment status in order to understand the background of the respondents and to know whether the nature of household heads' occupation contribute as a factor to girls dropping out of school or whether there is a stereo type or some kind related to the employment status of the household head. The findings then presented these results; majority of the respondents indicated that they were workers (36.4%, n=60) while respondent who indicated to be self-employed were 50.9% (n=84). Respondents who are not working were 12.7% (n=21).

## *2. Descriptive Statistics of Education Stakeholders*

Figure 4 shows the descriptive statistics of education Stakeholders. It is important to involve educational stakeholders when undergoing an educational research. Educational stakeholders refer to anyone who is invested in the welfare and success of a school and its students, including administrators, teachers, and other staff members, students, parents, families, community members, local business leaders, and elected officials. These people are in charge of educational matters and they are the immediate persons to the girl child in terms of their education. Educational stakeholder respondents were asked to indicate whether they were teachers, headmaster/headmistress, GES staff or NGO personnel to understand the perspective background of their ideas or views on girl child education. The educational stakeholder's respondents were interviewed to satisfy the fourth objective. (To identify appropriate intervention measure from the views of educational stakeholders towards the girl child education, specifically to minimize dropout and improve retention rate); what appropriate intervention measures can be implemented to solve the problem of school dropout and retention rate of the girl child from the view of educational stakeholders. Results from Figure 4 shows that out of 45 (100%) total respondents, 22(48.9%) respondents were teachers, 9 (20%) respondents were either headmasters or headmistresses, 8 (17.8%) respondents were GES staffs and 6 (13.3%) respondents were NGO personnel.



**Figure 4.** Descriptive Statistics of Stakeholders Respondents

### Parental Consciousness and Involvement in the Education of their Girl Child in the Ashaiman Municipality

Parents' participation in their children education is very important. A lot of researchers including Richardson (2009), Sanders and Sheldon (2009) and Sheldon (2009) recognised the importance of the role of the bond between the school and home and its positivity on the education of children. The researcher seeks to know the parental consciousness and involvement in the education of girl child in the Ashaiman municipality. As elaborated in the works of Đurišić and Bunijevac (2017), a good cooperation between the homes and schools can lead to academic achievement for students and that successful students' have strong academic support from their involved parents. Questionnaires were distributed to the respondents to answer the research question "What is the level of parents' consciousness and involvement in their girl child education in Ashaiman?" The respondents for this objective were the household heads. A total number of 165 respondents were surveyed for this section. The respondents were asked about their understanding and consciousness, involvement and their perceived challenges on girl child education in the Ashaiman municipality.

#### *Parental Understanding on Girl Child Education*

The need for parents to be conscious and involve in the education of their girl child is that they should have an understanding of what girl child education is and what it entails (Abie Ntekane, 2018). Respondents were asked whether they have heard of girl child education and what they think girl child education is about. Table 2 presents the understanding of girl child education of the household head respondents.

Table 2 Parental Understanding on Girl Child Education

ITEMS	N	Yes	No
		Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Have you heard of girl child education?	165	135 (81.8)	30 (18.2)

Source: field survey, 2020

Table 2 above presents the result of the household head respondents on the question “Have you heard of girl child education?” A maximum of 135 household heads representing 81.8% of total household head population (N=165) indicated “Yes” as their response whereas a minimum of 30 household head respondents representing 18.2% of the total household head population indicated “No” thus they have not heard of girl child education. In relation to the results, we can say that a high proportion of the respondents are not ignorant or naïve to girl child education and may have an understanding of what it entails.

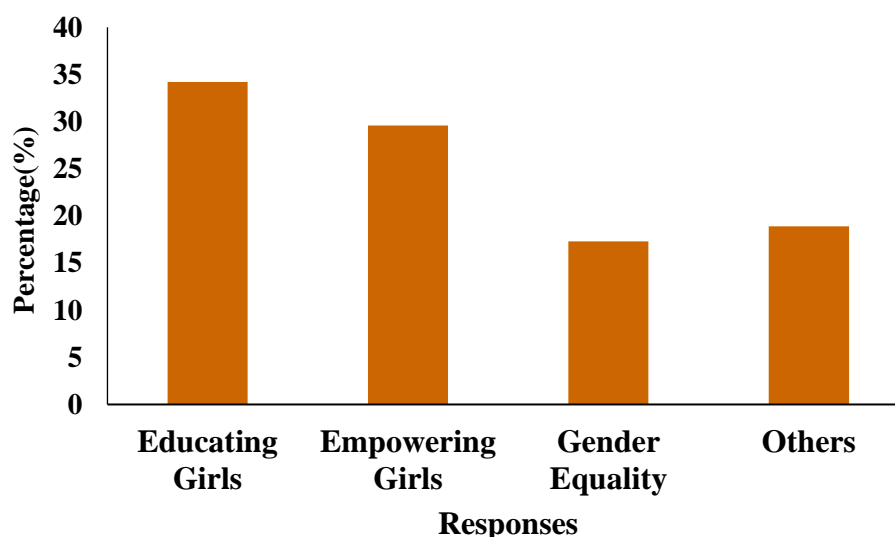


Figure 5. Respondents (household heads)

From Figure 5, household head respondents were asked to indicate whether girl child education was about educating girls, empowering girls, gender equality or they had other ideas of what girl child education is about. The result from the chart above shows that 34.2% household indicated that girl child education is about educating the girl child, 29.6% indicated that girl education is more about empowering the girl child, 17.3% indicated that girl child is all about gender equality and 18.9% of the household head respondents had other understanding of girl child education. From the result, we can see that majority of the household head respondent have the understanding of girl child education as educating girls whereas a minimum of the household head respondents related girl education to gender equality. This proportionate strata of respondents revealed that a high percent of household head respondents were not ignorant about girl child education and one way or the other have heard of girl child education or have a fair idea of what girl child education is about.

#### *Parental Consciousness and Involvement in their Gild Child's Education*

The researcher after collecting data on the household head respondents' understanding on girl education further ask about whether the respondents are conscious and involved in educating their girl child. This section

seeks to identify the parental consciousness and involvement in the education of their girl child in the Ashaiman municipality. Household heads were asked questions to know their consciousness and involvement in the education of their girl child. As inspired by Ntekane (2018) children with parents or guardians who are involved in their education tends to earn higher scores, have better social skills and show improved behaviour in schools. Table 3 shows the results of Parental Consciousness and Involvement in their Gild Child's Education.

Table 3 Parental Consciousness and Involvement in their Gild Child's Education

ITEMS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Yes Frequency (%)	No Frequency (%)
1. Do you visit girl child in school?	165	0.9030	0.29682	113 (68.5)	52 (31.5)
2. Do you attend parents-teachers (PTA) meetings in your girl child's school?	165	0.9636	0.18776	138 (83.6)	27 (16.4)
3. Do you motivate the educational interest of your girl child?	165	0.9212	0.29192	150 (90.9)	15 (9.1)
4. Do you know what is going on with your girl child in school?	165	0.6424	0.48075	106 (64.2)	59 (35.8)
5. Do you check your girl child's homework after school?	165	0.9394	0.23933	127 (77)	38 (23)
6. Is the girl child needs considered for receiving education?	165	0.9273	0.26048	135 (81.8)	30 (18.2)
7. Do you keep in touch with the teachers of your girl child?	165	0.9939	0.07785	150 (90.1)	15 (9.1)
8. Do you make sure your girl child attend school regularly and on time?	165	0.9455	0.27618	145 (87.9)	20 (12.1)
9. Do you know the performance of your girl child at school?	165	0.9697	0.17194	152 (92.1)	13 (7.9)
10. Are you aware of the national curriculum for schools?	165	0.6606	0.47495	109 (66.1)	56 (33.9)

Source: field survey, 2020

The table above provides a comprehensive result on the consciousness and involvement of respondents in their girl child's education. From Table 3, it could be seen that 68.5% of respondents visit their girl child in school while 31.4% do not visit their girl child in school with a mean difference of 0.9030 with standard deviation (SD) of 0.29682. The implication here is that household heads who do not visit their girl child in schools have a risk of their girl child absenting themselves in school without their knowledge as stated in the works Garcia and Thornton (2014) that families that often check up on their children in school helps reduce absenteeism and restore parents' confidence in their children's educations.

83.6% respondents indicated *yes* when asked about their attendance to parents-teachers (PTA) meetings in their girl child's school. The remaining 16.4% responded *no* to the attendance of parents-teachers (PTA) meetings. Their responses had a mean difference of 0.9636 and 0.18776SD.

From the result, the responses of the household heads for the question "Do you motivate the educational interest of your girl child?" and "Do you know what is going on with your girl child in school?" were 90.9% and 64.2% for *yes* and 9.1% and 35.8% for *no* respectively. The mean differences were 0.9212 (0.29192SD) and 0.6424 (0.48075SD).

Furthermore, household head respondents were asked if they check the homework of their girl child after they come home from school. Household heads who check their girl child's homework were 77% whereas 23% household head do not check their girl child's homework when they get back home from school. Responses of respondents had a mean difference of 0.9394 (0.23933SD)

To add up, out of the total respondents (165) 135 respondents (81.8 %) think the girl child needs are considered for receiving education in the Ashaiman municipal whereas 30 respondents (18.2 %) thinks the girl child needs are not considered for receiving education in the Ashaiman municipal. Their responses had a mean difference of 0.9273 with SD of 0.26048.

In addition, household heads were asked if they keep in touch with the teachers of their girl child. Approximately 90.1% keep in touch with the teachers of their girl child. Meanwhile the rest 9.1% do not keep in touch with their girl child's teachers. Their responses had a mean difference of 0.9939 with SD of 0.07785.

Respondents were further asked if they make sure their girl child attend school regularly and on time and also if they know the performance of their girl child in school. 87.9% and (92.1% responded *yes* and 12.1% and 7.9% responded *no* respectively. The mean differences of their responses are 0.9455 (0.27618SD) and 0.9697 (0.47495SD). Finally, the responses to the question "Are you aware of the national curriculum for schools" were 109 respondents (66.1%) for *yes* and 56 respondents (33.9%) for *no*. The mean differences of their responses is 0.6606 (0.47495SD).

### *Causes and Intervention Measures from the views of Educational Stakeholders towards the Girl Child Education*

In the past few years' important reforms which focused on finding the solution to the high percentage of illiteracy regarding the girl child were adopted by the government of Ghana and other NGOs. The government of Ghana in an attempt to improve education in Ghana came about with the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2030 to focus on an inclusive education system that is accessible and equal for all. Still focusing on improving education, the Ghanaian President Nana Akufo Addo made secondary education free, this couldn't cater for all but about 37% of the students. According to Barrigan (2018), the efforts to improve access to girls' education in Ghana is a step in the right direction but the problem of girl child education exists. The section presents the findings and analysis of the data collected through interviews from the respondents. In analyzing the qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed to describe and categorize responses elicited from the interviews in line with the research objectives. Recurring themes and categories were generated and interpreted. The main theme identified from interactions with the Ghana Education Service (GES) staffs, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) personnel, Head teachers and teachers. The interviews were intended to give additional insight into the present situation and to provide intervention measures. The theme is further discussed under the following:

- 1) Comments on present day girl child education in Ashaiman

- 2) Main Causes of School Drop-outs among the Girl Child in the Ashaiman Municipality
- 3) Measures to Increase Girl Child Enrolment and Retention Rate in Ashaiman
- 4) Measures to Improve Girl Child Education in the Ashaiman Municipal.

#### 1) Comments on Present Day Girl Child Education in Ashaiman

The problem of girl child education in the Ashaiman municipality is on the high and an issue that needs to be solved. However, the extent to which one can provide an accurate estimation of the state of the problem proved difficult since reliable estimates on their numbers are difficult to obtain. The researcher decides to find out the current state of girl child education in the study area thereby asked the education stakeholder respondents which includes headmasters, headmistresses, teachers, GES staff and NGO personnel to comment on present day girl child education in the Ashaiman municipality. The responses of the educational stakeholder's respondents showed a majority reporting that girl child education seems to be problematic in the municipality due to some reasons as most responses were

..." Present day girl child education is very problematic. This is because parents neglect them at the expense of their daily duties. They, therefore, put everything about educating the girl child in the hands of the government"

..." The present day girl child education in Ashaiman is poor because it is a deprived community and most girls have to trade to support their parents so children drop out of school early age"

..." The present day girl child education in Ashaiman is poor because it is a deprived community and most girls have to trade to support their parents so children drop out of school early age"

Others commented that the state of girl education in present day Ashaiman has improved compared to before but there is still more room for improvement. A headmaster and a teacher from one of the basic school described the situation as a high intake for enrolment but the girls eventually drop out as he stated

..." Girl child education in Ashaiman presently has improved especially when they are in JHS 1 but somewhere along JHS 2 and 3, a lot of them become dropouts"

..." Better than before due to more education on girl child education but still a lot has to be done due to the high rate of school dropout and teenage pregnancy"

From the interviews done through the key informant, it can be deduced that there is a general dissatisfaction with the current state of girl child education in the Ashaiman municipality. The study established from the responses that girl child education deficiencies still exist in the municipality and therefore a need to curb the situation. Below is a summary of their views and comments.

Table 4 Summaries of Present Day Girl Child Education in Ashaiman

CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
• <b>Very problematic</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Present day girl child education is very problematic. This is because parents neglect them at the expense of their daily duties. They, therefore, put everything about educating the girl child in the hands of the government.</li> <li>2. They stay with their guardians and they only make them sell in the market. So now girls don't have time for studies.</li> <li>3. Girl child education in present day Ashaiman is very challenging due to the high rate of illiteracy on the part of parents as well as indiscipline part of children due to factors like broken homes.</li> </ol>

4. Relatively, girl child education in Ashaiman it at a slow rate. Parents with good educational background have their girl children in school. On the other hand, those whose parents are not educated have a very poor attitude towards educating their girls. Such Children are mostly fond in social vices such as prostitution, smoking etc.
5. Girl child education in Ashaiman entails many influences. This includes the poor academic performance during external examination such as B.E.C.E and WASSCE.
6. Generally, about 60% of the ladies Girl Student in the various institutions are not doing well in academics though a great percentage of them are now students.
7. Girl child education in Ashaiman sees a massive enrolment at the beginning of their basic School Education (Primary schools especially) but their enrolment decreases as the years go by.
8. Girl Child Education in Ashaiman is not the best due to a lot of challenges that girls face at home school and community.
9. The present day Girl Child Education in Ashaiman is poor because it is a deprived community and most girls have to trade to support their parents so children drop out of school early age.
10. Currently, girl child education in Ashaiman municipality is below average because most of the girls in the township are not enrolled in schools and few in school do not attend it often.
11. The Education system in Ashaiman is below average and girl child education in this community is very bad. There are a few girls in Schools.
12. Currently, only a few females are enrolled in schools in Ashaiman. Due to tribal and cultural practices, most girls are usually made to stay out of school.
13. The population of girls in schools as compared to boys is very low. Only a few girls are enrolled in the various schools in Ashaiman.
14. The present girl child education in Ashaiman is not encouraging because they may drop out of school because they may get pregnant and without any motivation they stop schooling.



<p>• <b>Better than before but still more room for improvement</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Most responsible parents send their young girls to school. The majority of teenage mothers prefer their young girls to run errands or sell at the market.</li> <li>2. Better than before due to more education on girl child education but still a lot has to be done due to the high rate of school dropout and teenage pregnancy</li> <li>3. Some of the girls are doing well. They even do better than the boys academically others too are afraid to compete with the boys. The idea of the girls' place is in the Kitchen remains in their minds.</li> <li>4. There has been an improvement in girl child education in Ashaiman due to education is given to parents and the girls themselves.</li> <li>5. Girl child education in Ashaiman presently has improved especially when they are in JHS 1 but somewhere along JHS 2 and 3 a lot of them become dropouts.</li> <li>6. There have been massive improvements in the Girl Child Education here in Ashaiman. Unfortunately, along the line the girls still drop-out of school.</li> <li>7. There are a number of girls' issues in Ashaiman municipal but the Ghana education office has trained a lot of teachers to support the girl child education. But there is still more room for improvement.</li> <li>8. Girl Child Education in Ashaiman is getting better. Because the enrolment of girls in schools is better than the previous years.</li> <li>9. The Girl Child Education in Ashaiman has improved over the years but there is a nosedive when they go up the academic ladder the number decreased.</li> </ol>
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Source: field survey, 2020

## 2) Main Causes of School Drop-outs among the Girl Child in the Ashaiman Municipality

To solve a problem, you need to know and understand its causes (Einstein). For additional insight into the situation, the researcher asked the education stakeholder respondents the main causes of school drop-out among the girl child in the Ashaiman municipality. Ashaiman municipality is characterized multicultural and socio-economic place due to the high percentage of migrants mostly seeking greener pastures. Children are often used in running errands, house chores, petty trading as well as herding animals. Most of the children who engage in these activities at the early stage of their ages start to lose interest in going or continuing school. Many girls drop-out to pursue a life that they think can provide a better living for them, as a teacher commented, *... "some of them were introduced to trading early so they become less interested in school as they climb the ladder of education and eventually drop-out. They end up giving preference to money making than going to school"*

According to the data gathered, respondents mentioned a lot of problems that cause the girl child to drop-out. A head teacher from one of the senior high schools said

*... "in all my ten (10) years serving as a head teacher here in the Ashaiman, I have observed and experienced girls enrolling and dropout in short periods and most often their reason is that their either pregnant or employed. Teenage pregnancy and child labor is high in this area"*

Another respondent who is a staff of GES said

...” *Lack of Parental Care and Assistance from the parents or guardians is the major cause of drop-out in Ashaiman municipality because parents or guardian have the upper hand in controlling their kids*”

Many rising concerns came from the respondents as they gave numerous causes and reasons for girl child drop out of school. Some cultural practices negatively affect the girl child continuation in school. Some of the cultural practices which cause dropout of a girl from school mentioned by the respondents included early marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM) and ritual servitude. Some cultures allow parents to give their girl child out for marriage at a very tender age of 9 years. These girls are given out to older men for marriage and more often become a stumbling block to their education. Girls are also given out for marriage early because of the FGM practices since the practice showcase them as fit for marriage and thus cutting short their education lifer. A headmistress stated that despite of the capitation grant, supply of free school uniforms and exercise books and School Feeding by the government, only 200 students of the total population of 700 pupils are girls. She claims that the main reason for the gender gap is the belief that

...” *a woman will eventually end up in a man’s house as a wife, no matter the success she achieves in education*”

The economics of early marriage is also obvious in high in Ghana, where a high school principal explains that the basic ability to “*read and write is unnecessary for girls*” since “*girls are forced to get married when they are young*”. A teacher from Ashaiman No. 5A Basic also commented saying,

...” *you will be surprised if I tell you the Trokosi system (ritual servitude) is still in practice. It is also a cause our girls are not in school and a reason some drop out*”

According to Gadri (2010) in his works “The Revealed Myths about Trokosi Slavery/Human Rights Violations” Ritual servitude is a traditional religious practice were shrines take human beings, usually young virgin girls, in payment for services, or religious atonement for alleged misdeeds of a family member. Most of the education stakeholder testify to the recent rise in their enrolment but the retention, transition and sustainability are very low in the municipality. The theme’s summary responses are shown in the table below.

Table 5 Summaries of the Main Causes of School Drop-outs

CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
• <b>Irresponsible parenting</b>	1) Poor parenting, lack of parental care and control 2) Most Girls are staying with guardians 3) Broken homes 4) Child Trafficking 5) Child Labour 6) Single parenting
• <b>Financial Constraints</b>	1) Poverty 2) Insufficient fund to meet the girls’ needs 3) System Hardship
• <b>Peer Pressure</b>	1) Peer Group Influence 2) Indiscipline on the part of the girl child
• <b>Teenage Pregnancy</b>	1) Lack of Sex Education
• <b>Social and media influence</b>	1) Exposure to early-life social vices 2) A lot of entertainment centres like clubs in the town

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Some cultural practices</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Early marriage</li> <li>2) Trokosi system (ritual servitude)</li> <li>3) FGM</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lack of interest in education</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Some of them were introduced to trading early so they are not interested in school.</li> <li>2) Preference to commercial activities</li> <li>3) Low Enthusiasm</li> </ol>

Source: field survey, 2020

### 3) Measures to Increase Girl Child Enrolment and Retention Rate in Ashaiman

Under this theme, the measures that positively influence the educational needs and aspirations of the girl child to increase enrolment and retention rate in Ashaiman municipality have been identified and reported. The theme responses were directed to a focus group. Respondents' responses were categorized. They include the girl child, guardians, community, and law enforcement agencies, education staff, governments and NGOs.

Education stakeholders' responses for measures pertaining to what the girl child should do regarding their education is that the girl child should be able to voice out all their concerns in relation to their education to persons they trust and can help them resolve issues. They should be able to seek counseling whenever the need arises and at the same time listen and take pieces of advice giving to them by parents, teachers, counselors among others. Respondents further suggested that the girl child should avoid bad peers so that they are not influenced by their bad characters and they should also show a positive interest and attitude when it comes to teaching and learning. In this way guardians are also encouraged to support them with their needs in achieving their academic goals.

Secondly, respondents focus on measures guardians or parents must take to increase girl child enrolment and retention rate in Ashaiman. A lot of respondents complained about how irresponsible some parents are and suggested that there is a need for parents or guardians to have a good relationship with their wards as reported by a GES staff

*... "most parents have no relationship with their kids and the ones who are ensuring discipline too are doing it the wrong way. It is very easy for a girl child to feel timid and when this happens a lot of things go wrong"*

They reported that apart from providing the girl child with basic needs including provision for schooling, they should also have an interpersonal relationship with them. They should give their wards proper care and attention needed for their educational success and advised to give birth to a number of children they can properly fend for.

Furthermore, the education stakeholder respondents pinpointed the need for the community and media contribution to increasing enrolment and retention of the girl child in Ashaiman municipality. The respondents suggested that community leaders like assemblymen can come together and form girls' clubs which will help bring the girls in the area together and educate and encourage them about education and enrolling in school. They can also organize talk shows and seminars using female role models in the community. Respondents also pinpointed the role of the media. A vast number of respondents made mention of the things the media should focus on and things they should promote. A teacher from the Ashaiman secondary school stated

*... "in recent times no one can avoid social media so there is a need to control what happens on social media. Girls learn to be slay queens and start prostitution from there. Social media has become a necessary evil and what we can only do is to promote the positives rather than the negatives"*

Policymakers and law enforcement agencies have a role to play to ensure enrolment and retention of the girl child in school. Law enforcement agencies like Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) should be vigilant on child labor and child abuse. These agencies should be having random checks and monitor girls on the street and market who should be in schools especially those who do not live with their biological parents. In addition, respondents stressed that laws against child marriage and age-range to enter clubs, discos and other entertainment centres and avenues should be enforced properly. They suggested that policymakers should also make policies which can put a limit to the number of birth per family.

Education stakeholder respondents including the teachers, school counselors, GES, head teachers among others also made mention of the measures they can take to increase enrolment and retention of the girl child in Ashaiman. They think making the school environment attractive, conducive and comfortable for the girl child is the first step to increase enrolment and retention rates in the area. In addition, they suggested a need for them to educate parents about the benefits of educating the girl child at PTA meetings and other school gatherings and also creating fun clubs for girls to encourage them. Some respondents made mention of the need for sex education and suggested that it should be added to the educational curriculum.

Lastly, the Government and NGOs have a supporting role to play according to the respondents. According to respondents' government should build more schools in the township to enable more girls to enroll in. Also, the governments and NGOs can contribute by making available funds (whether in the form of donation, grants or loans) for girls especially the ones who have a high interest in going to school. The respondents think that more scholarship schemes for girls who excel in their examination can increase the retention rate in the area. As a parent themselves they indicated that the government should provide jobs so that parents can support their children and provide adequate facilities for teaching and learning in schools.

The importance of economic development and rising family incomes has a relation with the expansion of schooling and the narrowing of gender gaps in enrolment and attainment (Duflo, 2012). With economic development and the rise in family income, there has been a steady improvement in educational enrolment and attainment around the world as well as a narrowing of gender gaps, as families increasingly see the advantages of education for girls and are at the same time more able to afford the direct and opportunity costs of sending their girls to school. They also encourage the government to continue the school feeding programme and free SHS. Pappas et al., (2008) reviewed a nutrition programme in Pakistan, where women were employed by the government to cook and serve a nutritious meal to primary school girls. Enrolment increased by 40 % whilst stunting and wasting decreased, but the authors cautioned that this measure is for temporal gains and may diminish over time. Respondents proposed measures are summarized below.

Table 6 Summaries of the Measures to Increase Girl Child Enrolment and Retention Rate

CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Girl Child</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) They should voice out their worries and concerns</li> <li>2) Counseling</li> <li>3) Avoid bad peer company</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guardians</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) They should give proper care and attention to their wards</li> <li>2) They should allow their ward to voice out they worries and hear them out when they do</li> <li>3) Parents should have an interpersonal relationship with their girl child</li> <li>4) Provide basic necessity of life for their girl child to stop them from going after men for money to assist them</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Social Intervention measures by the community</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Girl-Child Club Formation</li> <li>2) Effect of Peer Pressure on education</li> <li>3) Promoting the importance of pursuing high academic goals before entering into marriage on social media.</li> <li>4) Putting band on disco, clubs and other related programs</li> <li>5) Frequent public education on the benefits of girl-child education to society.</li> <li>6) Girl-Child Education forums for Parents</li> <li>7) There should be constant education of Girl Child on the need to take education seriously</li> <li>8) Females in key positions in the country should organize talk shows to encourage them.</li> <li>9) Using female role models to educate girls on the importance of girl education</li> <li>10) Seminars about the importance of education.</li> <li>11) Sex education should be added to the education curriculum</li> <li>12) Educating student on the negative effect of teenage pregnancy</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strict Punitive measures on irresponsible parenting and Population control measures by Law Enforcing Agents and Policy Makers</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Law Enforcement on child labour and child abuse</li> <li>2) There should be constant monitoring of the girl ward by parents.</li> <li>3) Laws against child marriage should be enforced properly</li> <li>4) Parents should be advised to give birth a few children they can cater for</li> <li>5) Policies to reduce the number of births per parent</li> </ol>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Educational Supports from Education Staffs /Personnel</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Motivation from parents and teachers</li> <li>2) The school environment should be attractive and conducive for them</li> <li>3) Parents should be educated at PTA meetings about the benefits of providing the girls with their needs both at home and in school</li> <li>4) Creating fun clubs for girls in schools</li> <li>5) Girls must allow to participating in any activities taking place in schools.</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Government and NGOs support</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) There should be more schools in the township</li> <li>2) Make available funds and donations to help the needy girls in school</li> <li>3) More scholarship schemes should be given to girls who excel in their examination</li> <li>4) Provision of Adequate facilities for teaching and learning</li> <li>5) The school feeding programme should be extended to our junior high schools</li> <li>6) The government should provide jobs so that parents can support their children.</li> </ol>

Source: field survey, 2020

#### 4) Measures to Improve Girl Child Education in the Ashaiman Municipal

It is evidence for the expansion and improvement of girls' education in the Ashaiman. The central research question that this review set out to investigate the appropriate intervention measures that can be implemented to improve girl child education from the view of educational stakeholders in the Ashaiman municipality. The respondents distinguish between the kinds of interventions. More studies included for review and ranked as high-quality deal either with interventions associated with infrastructure and distribution of resources or interventions associated with changes in institutions. Other researchers dealt with intervention measures to change the norms governing the education institution and make the decision to reflect the aftermaths. Most work has been based on resource inputs and supply among others which are mostly quantitative. This study gives a greater preponderance of qualitative which Maxwell (2013) argues are a feature of qualitative research, which is much less well established.

In response to the question about improving girl child education in Ashaiman, education stakeholder respondents opted for a massive mass education or campaign to create awareness for the people in the area. Respondents proposed for educating all education stakeholders through lectures, symposiums, street-drive, campaign etc. Unterhalter et al (2014) stated in their work that there is reasonably strong evidence that interventions that engage with teacher education, training, attitudes and levels of support can yield positive results in terms of improving girls' access, participation in school and learning outcomes. Respondents think this will not only bring awareness to the people of Ashaiman but also create an avenue for girls and guardians to talk about their concerns about education and gave an example with A2Z Firm Movement, a nongovernmental organization who launched a protection of girls' right campaign in April 2018.

Supporting, encouraging and motivating girls is also another way to improve girl education in this area, say the respondents. The district assemble can organize award programmes to give prizes for girls who excel in the academic field. Incentives like school uniforms, school bags and shoes may be given to girls in school. There

should be constant involvement of women in public affairs well-structured counselling sections in all schools. The needy ones should be provided with necessary items for their education. For example, in Pakistan, there is evidence that the girls' stipend scheme, which is restricted to use in the government schools, has improved education enrolment (Alam, Baez, & Del Carpio, 2011).

In addition, government should make policies on the recruitment of professional education staff and strictly enforce the employment of qualified teachers as well as insist on training currently employed teachers. The findings from some quantitative studies and a number of qualitative research projects suggest that the training of teachers formally with regard to subject knowledge, pedagogy and gender equality, and informally to develop attitudes of inclusion and tolerance, play a significant role in improving the education system (Lloyd et al., 2011; Antecol et al., 2012; Unterhalter and Heslop, 2012; Unterhalter et al., 2013). As stated in the works of Unterhalter E (2014) the evidence indicates that teachers are crucial to the expansion and improvement of girls' education and the development of gender-equitable dispositions. There is reasonable evidence that engaging with teacher education, training, attitudes and levels of support can yield positive results in terms of improving girls' access, participation in school and learning outcomes.

Finally, the respondents proposed that the school environments should be girl-friendly and the government should make allocations for girls in school from deprived areas. School access and quality can be important factors in improving girl child education. This is the same in the research of Kazianga et al. (2012) where they looked at the effects of the provision of girl-friendly schools in Burkina Faso. Their study result proved that well-resourced schools provided in poor areas and had certain enhanced amenities like separate latrines for boys and girls, canteens, and resource interventions, including the provision of textbooks, increased enrolment of all children aged 5-12 by 20 percentage points and test scores by 0.45 standard deviations. According to them girls benefited disproportionately. The theme's summary responses are shown in the table below.

Table 7 Summaries of the Measures to Improve Girl Child Education in the Ashaiman

CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mass Education/ Creating Awareness</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Educating parents through lecture</li> <li>2) Symptomatic support for parents who have less than three girls in schools</li> <li>3) Educating young girls on issues about their well-being</li> <li>4) Education for both parents and guardians on the benefits of a girl child education.</li> <li>5) Enrolment street-drive campaign for girl education</li> <li>6) Creating avenues for girls to talk about their issues.</li> <li>7) Public education and sanctification on the need to educate your Girl Child.</li> </ol>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support and Motivation</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prizes for girls who excel in the academic field</li> <li>2) Incentives like school uniforms, school bags and shoes may be given to girls</li> <li>3) Role models, women who are making it in life may be asked to talk to the girls</li> <li>4) Involvement of stakeholders, parents and teachers.</li> <li>5) The constant involvement of women in public affairs in order to raise the importance of the need to educate the Girl Child</li> <li>6) There should be a well-structured counseling section in all schools.</li> <li>7) The needy ones should be provided with necessary items for their education.</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Government Policies and Law Enforcement</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Parents, Teacher, Government and other stakeholders in the society should reinforce discipline on the Children</li> <li>2) Recruiting qualified workers</li> <li>3) Government Policies on girl child enrolment in schools</li> <li>4) Free Education</li> <li>5) Free School Feeding</li> <li>6) Scholarship</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>School Environments and Facilities</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The school environment should be girl friendly</li> <li>2) The government should make allocations for girls in school from deprived areas</li> </ol>

Source: field survey, 2020

## V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Education is of great importance to all and therefore one of the critical ways to empower girls as explained in Somani's (2017) study titled "Importance of educating girls for the overall development of society: A Global Perspective" to better understand the importance and impact of educating girls and increase awareness. Educating girls is a way of giving them the chance to enable them to make genuine choices over the kind of lives they wish to live. The purpose of this study was to assess parental consciousness and involvement in their girl child's education in the Ashaiman municipality and identified appropriate intervention measures from the views of educational stakeholders towards the girl child education specifically to minimize dropout and improve retention rate in the area.

The objective (to identify the parental consciousness and involvement in the education of their girl child in the Ashaiman municipality) targeted household heads living in the area. The results of household head respondent survey for parental consciousness and involvement was that a greater percentage of above 60% household head respondents responded positively to all questions concerning their consciousness and involvement in their girl child's education while a lower percentage below 40% of household head respondent responded negatively about their consciousness and involvement in their girl child's education. This is to say that according to the result of the findings more household heads in Ashaiman municipalities are aware and involved as well as participate in the education life of their girl child. Educating girls is a way of giving them the chance to enable them to make genuine choices over the kind of live they wish to live. The purpose of this study was to



assess the girl child education in the Ashaiman municipality. This research identified the parental consciousness and involvement in the education of their girl child. Girl child education in the municipality according to respondents is said to be problematic and being characterized with dropouts and lower retention of the girls in school. The study concluded that household heads try to be involve and participate in their girl child's education.

Also, the objective which seeks to identify appropriate intervention measure from the views of educational stakeholders towards the girl child education specifically to minimize dropout and improve retention rate employed education stakeholder as respondents. The qualitative research method was used. 45 respondents including 22 teachers, 9 headmasters/headmistress, 8 GES staff and 6 NGO personnel were interviewed. Purposive focus group discussion was used as a sample technique and thematic analysis was selected as an analysis tool using Microsoft excel for presenting results. From the interviews, the researcher deduced that there is a general dissatisfaction with the current state of girl child education in the Ashaiman municipality and therefore a need to curb the situation. Respondents mentioned that pregnancy, early marriage, poverty, irresponsible parenthood, child labor and retrogressive culture practices are the key factors leading to low enrolment, high dropout and low retention rate in the area. The study established from the responses that girl child education deficiencies still exist in the municipality and therefore a need to curb the situation. Respondents suggested some intervention measure to minimize dropout and improve retention rate as well as to improve girl education in the community. These measures include creating awareness, provision of financial resources and adequate teaching and learning materials, eliminating of retrogressive cultural practices, mentorship forums for girls by female role models, strictly enforcement of laws regarding child abuse and allocation of schools for girls in deprived areas.

Girl child education in the municipality according to respondents is said to be problematic and is characterized by dropouts and lower retention of the girls in school. The study concludes that some sociocultural factors and economic factors have a high influence on girl child education in the area. Some of the factors include poverty, peer pressure, teenage pregnancy and some cultural practices such as early marriage, FGM and ritual servitude hinder girls from participating fully in school. The study also identified some intervention measures from respondents and from their views everyone has a role to play to curb girl education problems in the community thus the government, NGOs, education staff, parents and the girl child. Some of the measures to improve girl education includes improving the quality of education and making it more girl-friendly, building schools in the deprived areas of Ashaiman, reinforce discipline in school and recruit qualified workers amongst others.

Based on the findings and contribution of the study, it is necessary to make some recommendation for all education stakeholders including the government, non-governmental organizations, head teachers, teachers, students, parents and the general as a whole on the need to encourage girl-child education. After assessing of the girl child education in the Ashaiman municipality, the researchers would like to make some contributions which is aimed to serve as a guide for education stakeholders. Some policy recommendations by the study are as follows;

- 1) The government should formulate policies that will intervene to control some outmoded cultural practices that prevent the girl child from going to school or making the girl child drop out of school.
- 2) The government should formulate policies to control the number of births per household so that parents do not give birth to children they cannot cater for and leaving the burden on the government.

- 3) The government should enforce laws that guard the girl child as well as intensify punitive actions on child abuse which includes child labor, sexual harassment and domestic violence.
- 4) The government should come up with a legal framework that will eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child and her education.
- 5) Educations donors (government, NGOs, individuals) should make policies that supervise the use of their donations to schools or the girl child so that their donations are used for its purpose.
- 6) The district assembly should make girls' education as one of its objectives and focus on providing solutions to the problems facing these girls.

Other recommendations include

- 1) Government, NGOs and individuals are encouraged to give scholarships to girls. This will help girls access education to any level without them citing a lack of sponsorship as an excuse.
- 2) Parents should avoid bias against the girl child at home and reframe from the old minds set of girls are meant to be in the kitchen thereby restricting their girl child to household chores.
- 3) Heads of schools and teachers should serve as a link between parents and students to educate the importance of education and informing parents of the needs of their wards.
- 4) There should be an improvement in the standard and quality of education by the government especially in rural areas.
- 5) Teachers are to exhibit high moral standards in schools.
- 6) Social workers should collaborate with women, youth and leaders to create avenues to enlighten local populace on the need to educate the girl child
- 7) The community should involve themselves in the education life of the younger ones. They should pay close attention to the education

system knowing what is being taught in schools to ensure that the younger ones are getting a quality education.

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