

# Gender Characterisation Of Basic School Dropout In Rural Ghana

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**ABSTRACT**

Gender disparity continues as an unsolved concern for decades in Ghana particularly in rural Ghana, which has a bigger problem for children not completing the full cycle of basic education, especially for the girl child. This paper therefore critically reviews the gender characteristics of basic school dropout concerning issues of gender equity in the educational system of rural Ghana. The study was based on both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection which include observation, individual interview, focus group interview (discussion) and questionnaire with children as primary respondents followed by head teachers and education administrators. The study found out that most of the dropout students in the district were females and males form the minority group as buttressed by the field survey. The study further revealed that there is a relatively higher percentage of dropouts among girls than boys especially after grade 4. The accompanying proposals were made on the premise of those discoveries and conclusion; Poverty Reduction Initiatives, likewise, the District Education Directorate in conjunction with different partners of instruction ought to proceed with the customary battles in the different groups to teach guardians, watchmen and the whole groups to develop the consciousness of the requirement for young lady tyke training and education. Furthermore, national education policies and dropout Prevention Project must be introduced by the government since most of the dropouts happen to be from state schools, national policy on re-admission for teenage mothers must also be introduced and follow-up programmes should be arranged to bring back dropouts.

**Keywords:** Gender, Rural Ghana, Dropout, Basic school, Education

**1. INTRODUCTION**

In the course of recent decades, the industriousness of sex variance in education has been the anxiety of various African nations, including Ghana. This is because girls' education has been recognized globally to have a positive impact on the general economic development process. Indeed, all human societies past and present have had a vested curiosity in education, since education serves as social-sorting machinery and indisputably has a colossal impact on the total development fortune of the individual. Breton (2004) therefore put it; education is commonly seen as a commanding apparatus for empowering people and the achievement of economic advancement. Also, UNESCO (2007) similarly has it that education empowers people, improves the individuals' earning potential, promotes a healthy population, and is a major determinant of democracy and helps build a competitive economy. Access to equitable education is therefore at the core of the development agenda for lower-income nations like Ghana.

Undoubtedly Ghana, like many developing countries on the global scale, the quantity of youngsters getting to essential education and training keeps on ascending throughout the years; the Gross Enrollment Rates for essential has expanded from 2013/2014 from 107.3% to 110.4%. Enlistment expanded by 7.4%, 5.5% and 8.0%

for kindergarten, primary and JHS individually. With a worldwide normal of around 5%, Ghana spends more than 6% of GDP on education. Add up to spending on training and education in the year 2014 was about GHC 6.3 billion, denoting a considerable increment from 2013 of 10.4% with essential instruction representing the biggest extent of burning through 22.3%, with Ghana being the principal nation in the sub-locale in accomplishing the MDG 2; universal primary education (MoE, 2015). All the more thus, fundamental training (grades 1-9) is mandatory in Ghana's instruction framework, and the obligatory age for essential instruction is 6-15 years (UNESCO, 2012).

However, a significant number of children dropout of schools especially in the basic level of schooling with wide gender variations in dropout rates. Specifically, it has been accounted for that the volume of dropout cases varies by gender with the highest rates of basic school dropout known to occur in rural settlements (UNESCO, 2005). This is most evident in the circumstances of the girl-child, whose needs and interests are often marginalized by educational policies and intra-families priorities. It is not strange for guardians to deny their young lady the chance to go to school. Ideal conditions are generally made for the boy-child up to the time he achieves adulthood. In some provincial groups in Ghana for example, when a kid is conceived, he is considered as a higher person than a young lady. Such customary convictions and practice and saying propagate the sexual orientation unevenness regarding of educational attainments.

There is a marked difference between enrollment rates between boys and girls in schools. Although on the global scale, more has been done to conquer the sexual orientation hole in the formal education framework, there is still much work to be done. Despite progress in recent years, girls continue to suffer disadvantage and exclusion in education systems throughout their lives. As per the 2007 Education for All Global Monitoring Report, out of the 77 million youngsters who were not selected in either essential or auxiliary school Worldwide in 2004, 57% were young ladies. Sub-Saharan Africa alone represented 38 million (around half) out of the 77 million out of school youngsters while South and West Asia represented 16 million and East Asia for 9.3 million in 2004. Accessible information demonstrate that nations with the biggest quantities of out-of-school youngsters in 2004 were in Nigeria, Pakistan, India and Ethiopia. They were trailed by Saudi Arabia, the Niger, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Côte D'Ivoire, Mali, Ghana and Mozambique of which most of these dropouts were women (UNESCO, 2007).

Again, estimated 31 million young ladies of grade school age and 32 million young ladies of lower auxiliary school age were out of school in 2013. Sub-Saharan Africa has the most reduced extent of nations with sexual orientation equality. Just two out of 35 nations, and South and West Asia have the broadest sex hole in its out-of-school populace, 80 percent of its out-of-school young ladies far-fetched to ever begin school contrasted with 16 percent of its out-of-school young men (UNICEF, 2015). Many forces combine to spell an early end to education for girls. Pick a work area in an elementary school in the developing world, and the odds are that it

will be possessed by a boy (UNICEF, 1996). It is worthy also to note that, according to the UN Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, in most developing countries such as Ghana, gender inequality is a major obstacle to meeting the MDG targets.

This irony is much to be desired, in recent times, this sexual orientation imbalance in schooling has gotten significant consideration around the world, and many creating nations, including Ghana have been battling with the issue of accomplishing sex fairness for a very long while. At the 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, specific accentuation was put on female education as an essential ideal, as well as an imperative means for financial and social improvement (UNESCO, 2003). Despite the endeavors made by the Government of Ghana; GoG has executed various arrangements towards accomplishing quality and sexual orientation balance in fundamental schools in the nation. Some of these policies include the School Feeding Programme, Capitation Grant, Provision of Free School Uniforms among others. Again, Ghana has mainstreamed the MDGs into the national development framework that has driven the national socio-economic development agenda. Yet, 'Essential Education for All' is still exceptionally a long way from being a reality for some youngsters, especially the young lady tyke (UNICEF, 1999).

Inquiries of sex value have gotten moderately little consideration in localized education reform endeavors in Africa and most creating nations. Sadly, for most creating nations, young ladies appear to endure more separation with respect to get to and maintenance at all levels of instruction, especially in secondary and advanced education (UNESCO, 2007). Numerous young ladies need good examples and strong educators to guide them to higher accomplishment. Large portions of them are the first females in their close families to go to and the vast majority of their instructors are male. In spite of the fact that they go to class, young ladies are as yet anticipated that would play out their ordinary family obligations, for example, clothing, cooking, and offering products in the market (Harding, 1992)

It is, therefore, a great concern to academicians, development practitioners, policy makers and the citizenry on education, and the vital role it plays fallen short of expectations. A report on the state of education in Ghana by Akyeampong et al., (2007) and other studies confirm the reality of basic school dropouts among girls in Ghana's basic school system (MoE, 2009; GSS, 2003; MOESS, 2007; 2008; 2010). For example, in 2006 the non-completion rates among girls stood at 15% and 35% for primary and junior secondary school (JSS) levels (MOESS 2007). This paper, therefore, presents an in-depth analysis of gender characteristics of basic school dropout in rural Ghana using both qualitative and quantitative data accrued from the study.

Different studies have investigated the state of girls' education in different parts of Ghana (Asare, 2009; Nduru, 2003; UNICEF, 2003) and conclude the pathetic position of girls' education in rural areas of the country. While there is a scope of writing which covers the subject dropout, few have gender attributes as a focal topic. The general motivation behind this review was to discover the sex qualities of fundamental school dropout in

country Ghana, a contextual investigation of the Asunafo South District. The discoveries and recommendations of the study would therefore likewise help Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other development partners to create and actualize strategies and projects that can lessen the high rate of gender variations in schooling. The review, would, thusly be advantageous to education managers, teachers, guardians and every other partner in education as it would direct them in their work.

### **1.1. CONCEPT OF SCHOOL DROPOUT**

This section explores the concept of dropout. The very meaning of the term dropout is questionable. What makes an understudy a dropout and how to gauge dropout rates change from place to place and furthermore from nation to nation. The absence of a standard definition and recipe makes surveying school execution troublesome and looking at schools and educational systems is practically unthinkable (Kara Bonneau, 2007).

Several streams of ideas have emerged to inform and shape the new literature on dropout issues across the globe. While these streams have many ideas in common, they do not add to a single coherent conceptual framework for defining the concept dropout. The concept of dropout is most elusive and complex term to define. A child may stop attending school, but only for a brief time before resuming his or her education. Also, a child may change his or her school, which to begin with, makes any attempt at coining a proper term based on duration of withdrawing generally difficult. As indicated by Akyeampong et al., (2007) it is extremely hard to build up a straightforward meaning of dropout based on the duration of withdrawal. The school dropout wonder is regularly a continuous procedure instead of a solitary occasion that is gotten under way by a scope of components.

However, UNESCO (2009) defined dropout as the number of pupils from a cohort enrolled in a given during a given school year who are no longer enrolled in the following school year. That is pupils leaving school without completing. The Ministry of Education (EFA wing) Pakistan in 2000 also defined the term dropout. According to the Ministry, dropout is the withdrawal of children from school at any stage before completion of primary education. A critical look at both definitions agreed on the point of 'completion' which makes a child a dropout whether completion or no completion.

### **1.2 TYPES OF DROPOUT**

Different forms of dropouts have over the years been noticed among school age children, however, focusing on the consistencies and appropriateness for academic purposes, the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE) in 2010 using data from Ghana, have identified five types of school dropout. Three of these are temporary while the other two types are permanent.

#### **1.2.1 TEMPORARY DROPOUT**

There are three types of temporary dropout. These are sporadic dropout, occasion dropout and long-term dropout.

1. *Sporadic Dropout*: This kind of school dropout happens when pupils quit going to class due to an interim financial need for the short term.

2. *Occasion Dropout*: This type of school dropout occurs when occasions outside school that prompts dropout including the relocation of a pupil's family or the passing of one or both folks and other family unit stun including affliction and unemployment. This type of school dropout more often than not goes on for around a year.

3. *Long-term Dropout*: Some brief dropout includes prolonged period out of school for some children.

### 1.2.2 PERMANENT DROPOUT

In the case of some children, their dropout status shifts from a temporary to a permanent condition.

1. *Unsettled Dropout*: Unsettled Dropouts are for the most part more established children who don't go to school and are unrealistic to come back to finish the cycle.

2. *Settled Dropout*: This sort of dropouts exists where children are settled in an occupation or business. These kids are working specifically or learning a trade. Their decision not to do a reversal to school is an impression of their view of the estimation of more training.

### 1.3 MEASUREMENT OF DROPOUT

The measurement of dropout rates varies according to how the concept is defined. Studies show that a variety of definitions are used. However, to measure the phenomenon of dropout, the following steps and formula is used according to UNESCO (2009). The dropout rate is figured by subtracting the total of promotion rate and repetition rate from 100 in the given school year, again for cumulative dropout rate in primary education; it is ascertained by subtracting the survival rate from 100 at a given grade.

Formula:

$$DR_1^t = 100 - (PR_1^t + RR_1^t)$$

Where

$DR_1^t$  = Dropout Rate at grade 1 in school year t.

$PR_1^t$  = Promotion Rate at grade 1 in school year t.

$RR_1^t$  = Repetition Rate at grade 1 in school year t.

Data Required: Enrollment by grade for school year t and enrollment and number of repeaters by grade for year t+1.

Again in the work of Kara Bonneau (2007), Dropout Rate is the number of dropouts from a single age group or specific grade of students over a period.

### 1.4 DROPOUT RATES IN GHANA



The concept of basic school dropout is a relatively new focus of concern in developing countries especially Ghana for that matter. Amid the previous two decades, more consideration has been paid to kids' access to school, enrollment, the quality of schooling and learning outcomes.

However, with bigger quantities of defenseless youngsters and less assets per tyke, education frameworks have expanding trouble in holding understudies through finishing of the fundamental training cycle. Though access to Basic Education in Ghana has increased substantially over the last decade, irregular attendance and dropout from school continue to occur in many schools, especially in the rural schools. This has serious implications for achieving the Education for All (EFA) goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on access to education and now the Sustainable Development Goals.

Although education spending, for example, has increased over the past decade in many developing countries and access to education continues to improve. Presently, international aid to primary education is assessed to be around US\$ 1.5 billion every year. As of late, vows may expand this sum by an extra US\$ 2.0 billion every year throughout the following couple of years, however this figure still misses the mark regarding the assessed extra US\$ 5.6 billion every year required for accomplishing universal primary education by 2015 (Global Monitoring Report, 2008).

In view of the increasing cost of education, the persistent phenomenon of school dropout has become a constant worry to all stakeholders and education practitioners. However, investigation of the information uncovered a descending pattern in the dropout rates. At the grade school level, the dropout rate has lessened from 5.4 percent in 1998/99 to 4.5 percent in the year 2000/01 in most rural districts of Ghana. At the JHS level, the dropout rate additionally decreased from 9.7 percent in 1998/99 to 6.7 percent in 2000/01. This pattern was credited to the expansion of the pay wellsprings of guardians, which empower them to acquire more salary to deal with their wards in school (Baimah&Oduro-Ofori, 2005).

Further, according to the GPRS (2003), dropout rates in Ghana remained high at 20 percent for boys and 30 percent of girls at the primary school level. At the JSS, the dropout stood at 15 percent for boys and 30 percent of girls in 2000/2001. In one district in the North, dropout rates for boys and girls were 74 percent and 83 percent respectively. This situation of high school dropout is very prevalent in rural districts where many of the inhabitants are victims of poverty.

The Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) released in 2008, also reports that the dropout rate across all grades in Ghana are similar (4%) except for grade three, which is 5%. Males have higher dropout rates than females in almost all grades. From grade 1 through 6, dropout rates in rural areas stood at 3.9%, 4.1%, 4.6%, 3.4%, 3.6% and 3.9% respectively compared with 3.3%, 3.9%, 5.5%, 4.6%, 3.8% and 4.5% (GSS 2008). There are however wide regional variations in dropout rates. The regions with worse dropout rates are the Upper West, Northern, Central and BrongAhafo regions (GSS 2008).

## 2. METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY

This study was designed to explore what characterized basic school dropout in Rural Ghana. It also aims at comparing basic school dropouts among boys and girls in the basic schools of Rural Ghana.

Research design is the rationale that connects the information to be gathered and the conclusions to be attracted to the underlying inquiries of the review (Reid, 1985). Accordingly, mixed method research strategy is considered valuable to this study, particularly, in analyzing the findings of the study. The inclusion of both components is to provide a better understanding of the research problem than either type by itself or when one type is not enough (Tashakkori& Creswell, 2007). This, therefore, aids the study to get the right interpretation of the gender characterization of basic school dropouts in rural Ghana. The methods from the two strategies complement each other, increasing the validity and reliability of the results (Bryman, 2004). Qualitative research is focused on observing the social world and the occasions that occur in it through the eyes of the explored; its arrangement for get-together definite records of what portray dropout. For the qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions was analyzed manually, which includes transcribing the data, using content and text analysis, classifying the information under particular subjects and utilizing them to bolster dialogs in the review where proper. Photos were taken to bolster the perceptions and center focus group discussions that were made in the field.

However, relevant quantitative data that were also obtained from the field were organized, coded and descriptively analyzed using percentages, frequency charts, and cross tabulation with the use of the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS). For the comparison between boys and girls dropout, Excel software was utilized to build up patterns and examples of basic school dropouts in the area with the assistance of the line chart. The basic school dropouts (130) and their folks (31), the head educators/managers (13) of the schools and the authorities of the District Education Directorate (2) of the Asunafo South District constitute the aggregate populace for the review. The aggregate specimen size was 176. The dependability and legitimacy was guaranteed by pilot testing.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This aspect discusses the results obtained from respondents; first about the characteristics of dropouts and second comparing dropouts between boys and girls.

### 3.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF DROPOUT

It is observed from the study that 18.5% of the dropout respondents interviewed were students from Asufufuo D/A in the Noberkaw circuit and 15.4% respondents from Abuom D/A, however, Afodowa D/A in Asarekrom circuit and Wejakom D/A in Naketey circuit recorded 3.8% each. This testifies that the rate at which school children dropout are not even across the district, but rather some communities have higher rates than others.



Again, Out of 130 dropout respondents, 88 were female while 41 were male, but only 1 respondent did not mention his/her sex. Considering the statistics of female (67.7%) and male (31.5%) interviewed, it confirms other studies; (Braimah&Oduro, 2005) and (Imoro, 2009) that female constitutes high basic school dropout in schools. Obviously, a larger percentage of dropouts are females. This may be because of the way that in credit limitation homes in Africa, preference is given to males instead of females when it comes to education.

*Table 1: Gender distribution of Respondents –Dropouts*

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	41	31.5
Female	88	67.7
No Response	1	0.8
Total	130	100

*Source: Author's Field Survey, January 2016*

The study further uncovered that the greater part of the respondents is in the active age group (15 and above) and can, therefore, be regarded as active and physically disposed to pursue economic activities. This group of respondents was engaged in most farming activities in the communities. This agrees with the review of literature that the probability that children drop out of school increases with age, with the increase higher for girls than boys (Acheampong et al, 2007). The study again reveals that 36.4% of the dropouts are third born children, 32.6% are last born of their parents, and 19.4% of the respondents are second born while 11.6% of the respondents are first born of their parents. The findings of the study also confirm that large family sizes and poverty compel parents in the district to truncate education of some children, especially after struggling to take care of usually first and second born.

Persons to whom the respondents live with most of the time was also investigated. About 33.8% of the respondents interviewed are from single parenting taken care by mothers only, followed by father only 20.0%, and both father and mother 20.0%. 15.4 percent of the respondents interviewed said they live with another relation. In support of this, Agnes Boakyee, a respondent from Asufufuo emphasized,

“I have stayed with my grandmother since childhood, I don't know my father, I only grew to see my mother once when she visited my grandmother in the village and not too long ago I was told she is dead. I take my grandmother as my parents, and she has been very supportive even after I had dropped out of school for many years ago”.

At Sankore, a respondent further reiterated,

“I was handed over to my grandmother in the village whiles my parents stay at Bibiani in the Western Region. I am with my brother and we could not continue schooling since there is no money”



Figure 1: Focus Group Discussions, January 2016

Source: Author's Field Survey, January 2016

Table 2 shows the analysis of gender and grade level pupils' dropout. Gender issues characterizes dropout in most instances.

Table 2: Sex \* Grade level pupils dropout

Count		At which level of school did you dropout					
		class 1	class 2	class 3	class 4	after class 4	Total
Sex	Male	0	0	0	3	38	41
	Female	1	8	6	14	58	87
Total		1	8	6	17	97	129

\*Pearson Chi-Square value 11.6 Asymp.Sig. (2-sided): .170

Source: Author's Field Survey, January, 2016

Relatively, the high percentage of dropouts among girls, especially after class 4 clearly shows the relationship between sex and the level at which children drop out of school. It is also imperative to highlight that between the two; boys and girls, though some of the boys drop out at the basic school level before they reached their final grade, girl's dropout in the study communities remains high as compared to boys. Also, from table 2, the Pearson Chi-Square tests for the association between sex and the grade level at which children dropout from school in the Asunafo South District is determined. The Chi Square value is ( $\chi^2$ ) = 11.6. The test result indicates a statistically significant association between sex and the level at which children dropout, this means that, the sex composition of children affects the grade level at which they drop out of school.

### 3.2 ANALYSIS OF DROPOUT RATES OF BOYS AND GIRLS

Figure 1 analyses dropout rates between boys and girls. The study revealed that, relatively dropout is very high among girls than boys in the study district. For example, 1,195 female students enrolled in class 6 in 2011/2012 academic year, only 664 got to JHS 3 who sat for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in 2015 with 531 becoming dropouts within a four year period while 436 boys also dropped out within the same period. Also, 2.3% of male respondents dropped out of class 4 compared with 10.7% female respondents dropped out

at the same grade. No male respondent dropped out of class 1, 2 and 3. However, 0.7, 6.1 and 4.6 female respondents dropped out of class 1, 2 and 3 respectively for the 2011/2012 academic year.

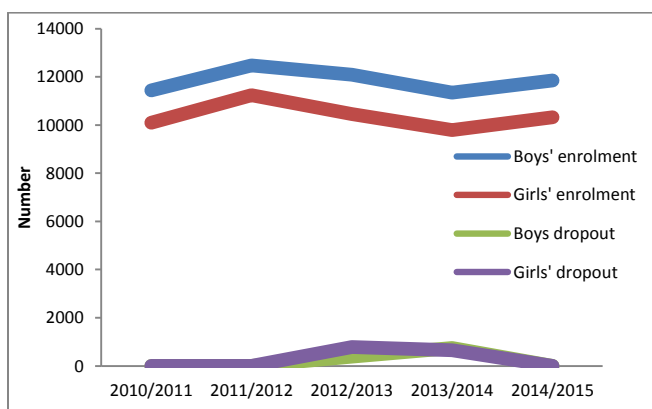


Figure 2: Comparing Boys and Girls Enrolments and Dropouts in the Asunafo South District (2010-2015)

Source: Author's Field Survey, January 2016

A growing body of literature shows that girl's dropout rates are higher compared to boys in most parts of the world as justified by this study taken Asunafo South as the area of study. This finding of the study has relation to the findings of UNESCO (2012). For instance, according to UNESCO, the dropout rate is higher for girls in 49 countries compared to boys. In the same vein, Chimombo (1999) also observes that though the enrollment in school is almost same for girls and boys, however, boys have a higher likelihood of continuing school compared to girls.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The review has made noteworthy commitments with respect to the methodology for the investigation of what portrays dropouts in basic schools and looking at dropout amongst young men and young ladies, especially in the rustic regions of Ghana pertinent for the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) and now global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). The analysis of data obtained from the field revealed certain issues relation with the main objective of the study.

From the analysis of the field data, the researcher found out that many of the dropout students interviewed were found in Asufufuo and also in Abuom while Wejakrom recorded the lowest dropout rate. Most of the dropout students in the district were females and males from the minority group as evidenced by the field survey. It again became evident that most respondents were within the age limit of 15 and above. The researcher also realized that families with large size are usually faced with early school dropouts than families with a smaller size. More so, from the study, it was identified that most of the dropouts were third born of their parents and also last born but usually first and second born are able to complete school.

The review additionally uncovered that there is a relatively higher percentage of dropout among girls than boys especially after grade four. There is also a link between sex and the grade level of children dropout of schools. With regards to factors that characterize basic school dropout, the study revealed that the majority of the dropouts were from female-headed households, with low level of education coupled with low incomes which is not sufficient to cover every cost of the family needs.

In view of the crucial role education plays in the advancement of society, every effort must be put to ensure that every child of school-going age completes at least the nine year Basic Education period. The accompanying recommendations were made on the premise of those discoveries and conclusion. Poverty Reduction Initiatives; Development of appropriate policies and intervention strategies to help poor people improve their livelihood through income generation, with particular attention given to rural industrialization, provisional of capital through loans and grants, and capacity building programmes. Again, sustenance of education campaigns; Education campaigns should be intensified throughout the country. Also, the District Education Directorate in conjunction with other stakeholders of education should continue with the regular campaigns in the various communities to educate parents, guardians and the entire communities to deepen the awareness of the need for education. Furthermore, national education policies; the government ought to treat the school dropout issue truly and make national instruction arrangements to help the poor proceed with their education. In addition, the Dropout Prevention Project must be introduced by the government since most of the dropouts happen to be from government schools, national policy on re-admission for teenage mothers must be introduced and follow-up programmes should be arranged to bring back dropouts. Lastly, motivation of teachers, especially in rural communities; Incentive packages must be given to instructors and teachers, particularly those in the country ranges to rouse them to put forth a strong effort.

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