



Gender Power Relations in the Upper West Region of Ghana:  
The Role of the Woman Peasant in the Education of the Girl-Child in Goripe.

A Research Paper presented by:

Juliet Anataba Baliebanoe

(Ghana)

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Major:

AGRARIAN, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES  
(AFES)

Members of the Examining Committee:

Prof. Wendy Harcourt  
Dr. Tsegaye Moreda Shegro

The Hague, The Netherlands  
December 2017

***Disclaimer:***

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

***Inquiries:***

**Postal address:**

Institute of Social Studies  
P.O. Box 29776  
2502 LT The Hague  
The Netherlands

**Location:**

Kortenaerkade 12  
2518 AX The Hague  
The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 70 426 0460  
Fax: +31 70 426 0799

# Table of Contents

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <i>Table of Contents</i>   | <i>iii</i>  |
| <i>List of Tables</i>  | <i>v</i>    |
| <i>List of Figures</i>   | <i>v</i>    |
| <i>List of Maps</i>  | <i>v</i>    |
| <i>List of Acronyms</i>  | <i>vi</i>   |
| <i>Acknowledgements</i>  | <i>vii</i>  |
| <i>Abstract</i>  | <i>viii</i> |
| <b>Chapter 1</b>   | <b>1</b>    |
| 1. <i>Introduction</i>   | 1           |
| 2. <i>Statement of the Problem</i>   | 2           |
| 3. <i>Research Objectives</i>  | 4           |
| 4. <i>Research Questions</i>   | 4           |
| 5. <i>Relevance and Justification of Study</i>   | 4           |
| <i>Structure of the Study</i>  | 5           |
| <b>Chapter 2</b>   | <b>6</b>    |
| <i>Research Process and Methodology</i>  | 6           |
| 2.0 <i>Introduction</i>  | 6           |
| 2.1 <i>Study Area</i>  | 6           |
| 2.2 <i>Selection of Research Respondents</i>   | 8           |
| 2.3 <i>Field Data Collection</i>   | 9           |
| 2.4 <i>Data Analysis</i>   | 9           |
| 2.5 <i>Ethical Consideration</i>   | 9           |
| 2.6 <i>Limitations of Study</i>  | 10          |
| <b>Chapter 3</b>   | <b>11</b>   |
| <i>Theoretical Framework/Literature Review</i>   | 11          |
| 3.0 <i>Introduction</i>  | 11          |
| 3.1 <i>Agency Theory</i>   | 11          |
| 3.2 <i>Women in Agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa</i>  | 11          |
| 3.3 <i>Women's Empowerment, gender power relations and the Feminist School of Thought in development</i>   | 13          |
| 3.4 <i>Women's Empowerment and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)/ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) informing the framework of gender and development</i> | 16          |
| 3.5 <i>The Theory of Access</i>  | 17          |
| 3.6 <i>Intra-Household (gender) Power Relations</i>  | 18          |
| 3.7 <i>Conclusion</i>  | 19          |
| <b>Chapter 4</b>   | <b>20</b>   |
| <i>Presentation of Findings, Analysis and Discussions</i>  | 20          |
| 4.0 <i>Introduction</i>  | 20          |
| 4.1 <i>Women's Land Rights</i>   | 20          |
| 4.2 <i>Gender Inequalities in the Family</i>   | 23          |
| 4.3 <i>Gender Bias/Care Work</i>   | 26          |
| 4.4 <i>NGOs and Governmental Support to Women Farmers in Goripe</i>  | 28          |
| 4.5 <i>Local Financing for Women</i>   | 30          |
| 4.6 <i>Conclusion</i>  | 30          |
| <b>Chapter 5</b>   | <b>31</b>   |
| <i>Findings, Analysis and Discussions of Enrolment Data and Women Support</i>  | 31          |
| 5.0 <i>Introduction</i>  | 31          |
| 5.1 <i>Women Support to Girls' Educational Needs</i>   | 31          |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <i>5.2 Educational Hopes and Limitations</i>                    | 33        |
| <i>5.3 Enrolment of Boys and Girls in Goripie Basic Schools</i> | 35        |
| <i>5.4 Conclusion</i>   | 35        |
| <b>Chapter 6</b>  | <b>37</b> |
| <i>Conclusions</i>  | 37        |
| <i>6.0 Introduction</i>   | 37        |
| <i>6.1 Summary</i>  | 37        |
| <i>6.2 Conclusion</i>   | 38        |
| <i>6.3 Recommendations and Implications for Future Study</i>    | 38        |
| <i>References</i>   | 39        |
| <i>Appendices</i>   | 43        |

## **List of Tables**

Table 5. Research Participant list

Table 6. Enrolment data

## **List of Figures**

Figure 2,3,4 Photo narration of field data collection

## **List of Maps**

Map 1 Map of Wa-East District of the Upper West Region where Goripie is located

## **List of Acronyms**

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| CIKOD   | Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development |
| DFID    | Department for International Development                       |
| E/A     | English/Arabic   |
| EMPOWER | Empowering Mutual Partnership for Economic Resilience          |
| FAO     | Food and Agriculture Organization                              |
| FGD     | Focus Group Discussion   |
| GES     | Ghana Education Service  |
| GSS     | Ghana Statistical Service                                      |
| ISS     | Institute of Social Studies                                    |
| J.H.S   | Junior High School   |
| MDGs    | Millennium Development Goals                                   |
| MEDA    | Mennonite Economic Development Associates                      |
| MoFA    | Ministry of Food and Agriculture                               |
| NGOs    | Non-Governmental Organisations                                 |
| PTA     | Parent Teacher Association                                     |
| S.H.S   | Senior High School   |
| SDGs    | Sustainable Development Goals                                  |
| UN      | United Nations   |
| VSLA    | Village Savings and Loans Association                          |
| WATSAN  | Water and Sanitation   |
| WID     | Women in Development   |

## **Acknowledgements**

It is said that, gratitude is the least of all virtues and ingratitude the worst of all vices. Against this backdrop, I will like to thank the Almighty God for seeing me through this programme successfully. Special thanks and acknowledgement go to my Supervisor, Prof. Wendy Harcourt and Reader, Dr. Tsegaye Moreda Shegrop for all their support and for giving me a listening ear anytime I called on them. Through their guidance, suggestions and constructive criticisms, I can confidently say that, today, I am a better researcher and will go out to the world beaming with confidence of what I have achieved. Members of the ISS Faculty also deserve commendation for honing my skills with various theoretical concepts which enabled me to carry out this study. I also thank the library staff, course mates and the ISS 2016/2017-year group for their support.

I would also like to thank the women of Goripie and other stakeholders who willingly provided me with information that made this research a success. Thank you to my family especially my mother, Magdaline Bonye for the role played in my life to reach this academic level. And to my husband, Francis Xavier Dery Tuokuu, I say a big thanks to you for your encouragement and all the academic discussions throughout my academic journey. Thanks to Fidelis Tuuli for his assistance with the data collection.

Special thanks go to the Dutch Government and the Netherlands Fellowship Programme for providing the funds which enabled me to successfully complete the programme. Without their financial support, it would have been impossible for me to pursue a Master's Programme at a prestigious university such as the Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus Rotterdam University.

## **Abstract**

This study sought to understand the multiple strategies women farmers in Goripie in the Upper West Region of Ghana employ to ensure the education of the girl-child, in spite of the numerous challenges they face on a daily basis. The study employed the use of qualitative research methods to examine the perspectives of various stakeholders (women, women groups, NGOs, teachers, agricultural extension officers) on how gender power relations play out in the study area especially in the allocation of resources such as land. Using agency theory, concepts such as gender power relations, among others to guide the study, the findings show that, women's access to land rights in Goripie is discriminatory because, customarily, women in this part of Ghana do not own lands. This infringement of women's rights has been a barrier to their empowerment. Additionally, findings from the study also reveal that from birth, there are gender inequalities in most households in Goripie and boys are given preferential treatment over girls. The study recommends that in order for gender equality to be achieved, efforts should be made by development actors to change the structures that create inequality between men and women. Resource investment in women will empower them and increase their incomes/livelihoods and decision-making power and this will directly contribute to the education of the girl child.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

When women are empowered, by having access to productive land and a stronger bargaining power in the household, it improves the nutrition levels of families, it enhances the livelihoods of many homes and translates positively in the education of the children particularly the girl child, hence, the socio-economic improvement of the people. And once there is both qualitative and quantitative improvement of the standard of living of people, then, development is said to have occurred. Development agencies, both local and international, policy makers and the government must therefore factor in the needs and concerns of women into their policy documents. Therefore, women, such as these farmers in Goripie must be seen as part of the development process in Ghana in its ambition to join the community of developed nations.

## **Keywords**

Gender power relations, empowerment, peasant women, farming, education, Girls, Goripie, Ghana.

# Chapter 1

## 1. Introduction

As rightly pointed out by a former United Nation's (UN) Secretary General; "No development strategy is better than one that involves women as central players. It has immediate benefits for nutrition, health, savings and reinvestment at the family, community and, ultimately, country level" (Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General, at the World Education Forum, 2000). Resources do not merely mean the conventional economic resources used for production. As defined by Naila Kabeer (1999), resources "can be material, social or human" and these resources are distributed through different institutions as well as processes, and are usually governed by rules, norms and practices of these institutions. The family, which is one of such institutions have household heads, clan heads and others to control the use of these resources. Unfortunately, however, most of these heads of families are men. Therefore, gender power relation plays a critical role in the allocation of resources. In many peasant farming communities, gender inequality exists between men and women, with the men controlling most of the productive resources such as land (Agarwal 1997).

In most rural areas in developing countries, women form more than 50 % of the rural population and contribute between 50-70 percent of agriculture labour (Sewpaul 2011). But women do not own land due to traditional and patriarchal structures which limit their access and control of this important factor of production. Agarwal (1997) indicates that, in the household, women even given this inequality in resource allocation, cannot be viewed as passive individuals, but they are actively engaged in strategies with the men who are in control of productive resources in order to pursue their livelihood activities.

Studies show that women in sub-Saharan Africa have been contributing towards the socio-economic development of the continent (Akyeampong and Fofack 2013; Dollar and Gatti 1999). However, their efforts have been unnoticed and unappreciated. It is important to understand the socio-economic contributions of women and the strategies they adopt to overcome the challenges that confront them. Policy makers need to design policies that will improve the productivity of peasant communities, and in particular to provide support for women peasant farmers to support their families especially their children.

Reports (Akyeampong and Fofack 2013; Glick and Sahn 1999) have also shown that, when women are empowered, it translates positively in the quality of life of their families particularly their children. Therefore, when women (mothers) are educated, it improves the welfare of their children, especially child mortality rates are reduced, and there is the likelihood of having fewer and healthier children who have higher chances of being educated (Ainsworth et al. 2000, Glick and Sahn 1999, Nath and Hadi 2000, King et al 1997, Jejeebhoy 1995). In order to understand how to improve education, it is important to look

at gender power relations in the family unit where these decisions are taken including education of children needs as the cost and benefits of educating the male child is usually different from the female child (King et al. 1997). “Specifically, many of the benefits of educating women in developing countries are public whereas many of the cost are private. This leads to the underinvestment in women’s schooling and thus to the persistent gender gap” (King et al 1997). However, education is not only a fundamental human right, it is the key to a secured future for every child.

Studies have been conducted on women farmers’ access to credit in Ghana (Akudugu et al. 2009), women and agriculture (Fonchingong 1999, African Research Bulletin 2012), women empowerment in agriculture (Alkire et al. 2013), gender, land and food security (Doss et al. 2014) and designing agricultural technology for African women farmers (Doss 2001). However, there is no known study that has looked at gender power relations and the multiple strategies women employ in the education and empowerment of their daughters. My study sought to bridge this knowledge gap. I will employ various concepts and frameworks to situate the peasant woman in order to understand the multiple strategies women farmers in Goripie in the Upper West Region of Ghana employ to ensure the education of the girl-child, in spite of the numerous challenges they face on a daily basis.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Across sub-Saharan Africa, women are responsible for the upkeep of their households, including; taking care of children, fetching water, drawing of fire-wood, and peasant farming (Rocheleau et al. 1996, Razavi 2003, Apusigah 2009, Sewpaul 2011). In spite of their contribution to the family and the economy as a whole, a growing body of literature points to the fact that, women face injustices on a daily basis. Haws (2006:41) argues that “abject poverty in the developing world is directly related to the absence of healthy water supplies and sanitation facilities. Until these fundamental human rights are afforded to all of humanity, especially women, poverty can never be eradicated.” According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, about 239 million people in sub-Saharan Africa are hungry, and to ensure food security on the continent, women need to be empowered (as cited in Africa Research Bulletin 2012) in terms of capital provision, land acquisition, and capacity training in modern agricultural practices.

Ghana, being a former British colony was introduced to Victorian Principles by the colonialists, where gender bias denied women access to land acquisition as men were seen to be the breadwinners of their homes (Asare 1995). This trend continued after the country gained independence in 1957, and has since been enshrined in the customary laws of the country (Asare 1995). For instance, 80% of lands are owned and administrated by customary laws while 20% is owned

and administrated by the government (Kuusaana 2015). In the Upper West Region of Ghana, customary lands are under the ownership and authority of the ‘Tendaabas’ (first settlers) who are usually males. Therefore, from colonial times till present, women in Ghana, including Goripie and many other communities in the Upper West Region, customarily, do not own lands (Neumann 2012). Their access to lands for livelihoods have always encountered challenges. In order to understand the impact of this, it is important to look at the household as a central unit of focus in discussing issues of women empowerment and how gender power relations within the household affect decision making (Agarwal 1997). Intra-household inequalities in terms of power positions within the families create imbalances in resource and property allocations and access, hence, affects the welfare of the individuals especially women.

Across Africa many tribes who pursue ‘man breadwinner ideology’ reduce women to second-class citizens, where they do not own land or find it difficult to access resources to support their livelihoods (Agarwal 2003). In the case of Upper West Region in Ghana, just like the other two savannah ecological regions of Northern Ghana (Northern Region and Upper East Region), lands are passed from one generation to another or through inheritance to male children, depriving the girl child of access to lands. This has become a barrier to women accessing resources to support their livelihoods leading to negative consequences on the standard of living of their daughters, and whether or not the girl child will be enrolled in school.

In order to overcome such gender bias and discrimination, the goal of ‘women’s empowerment’ is on the agenda of many policy makers, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Kabeer 1999; Kabeer 2003). According to Kabeer (1999), “Women’s empowerment is about the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such ability”. Hence promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment by bridging the gender gap in agriculture has been identified as a positive way of contributing to women’s empowerment (Alkire et al. 2013) and the standard of living of their children, particularly in the global south, where women rights have been abused and their contributions undermined (Asare 1995, Sewpaul 2011). However, as noted earlier, women’s land rights and their access for productive lands is a major barrier to gender equality and women’s empowerment in sub-Saharan Africa. The Geneva Declaration for Rural Women states that: “... in many developing countries women constitute more than 50% of the rural population and up to 50%-70% of the agricultural labour force. The undervaluing of rural women’s contribution to development and their under-representation in decision-making has increased their marginalization” (as cited in Sewpaul 2011). Women who engage in farming activities are considered as housewives rather than farmers (Sewpaul 2011) and their contributions are not added to national income accounting. Women usually tend to produce subsistence crops; and their produce is often referred to as ‘women crops’ and are used mostly for household consumption (Doss 2001). Without their effective participation, neither democracy nor development can be sustained.

In spite of the uneven allocation of resources between men and women, the latter is still able to find strategies and approaches to ensure that their daughters do not go through the same or similar struggles. This study goes further into these strategies as part of rural women's multiple contributions to the family, by exploring how they are able to overcome difficult challenges and still meet their aspirations and those of their children especially the girl child to attend school.

### **3. Research Objectives**

This research looks at how social and gender power relations play out at the local level in relation to land tenure and how this affects women's full participation in the family, community and the society as a whole. The research examines the contributions of women farmers to their household in Goripie in the Upper West Region and how they are able to overcome gender discrimination and unequal access to resources as they devise multiple strategies to ensure the education of their daughters.

### **4. Research Questions**

The main research question is: despite the multiple constraints faced by women, how do women farmers struggle, manoeuvre and negotiate the education of their daughters?

This is further explored through the following specific research questions:

How are Goripie women peasant groups organised and what support do they get to support their farming activities?

What support do women peasant farmers provide for their daughters to acquire basic education in Goripie?

How do women farmers relate to the educational needs of both their sons and daughters in Goripie and what influence their decisions?

### **5. Relevance and Justification of Study**

This study is relevant because it identifies the strategies women peasant farmers adopt to empower their children particularly to educate their daughters. This will help policy makers and rural families invest in the education of the girl child, going forward. The study is also relevant because it will help influence policy makers and NGOs in the design of projects and programmes that will support women farmers to acquire credit facilities, inputs, land for farming and others in order to improve their productivity. By feeding the results back into the community, the research will positively influence their standards of living which will translate into their children's education.

## **Structure of the Study**

This research is presented in six chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the research topic which explains the research objectives and questions and relevance of the study. Chapter 2 presents the methodology, ethical considerations and limitations encountered in the research. Chapter 3 explores the theoretical concepts that provide the analytical structure of the paper. Among them are Agency, Women in Agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa, Women Empowerment and the Feminist School of Thought, Women Empowerment and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)/Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Intra-Household Power Relations and the Theory of Access. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 presents the research findings, analysis and discussions and finally, chapter 6 gives the conclusion and recommendations.

# **Chapter 2**

## **Research Process and Methodology**

### **2.0 Introduction**

The study seeks to understand the multiple strategies women farmers employ, in spite of the numerous challenges they face on a daily basis, to ensure that their daughters acquire basic education. For every research, the processes and methods employed are very critical for achieving the research objectives. In this study, the processes and methods that were employed include the following; identification of study area, selecting of respondents for the research, field data collection, secondary data, analysis of data, ethical consideration, and some of the limitations encountered during the research. The study employed the use of both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The primary data collection employed qualitative data techniques to obtain empirical data from participants having in mind the dynamics that may come to play. The research was interested in stories from women peasants in Goripie, and how they influence the education of their daughters, and also, stories from organisations who were working with these women peasants were considered very critical. The methods used for the collection of the primary data consisted of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) which were complemented with relevant information from NGOs (Pronet North, MEDA and CIKOD). Also, some government institutions such as Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) at the district level and the Girl Child Officer at Ghana Education Service (GES), head teachers and teachers of the two schools in Goripie were consulted. Also, secondary data was also consulted to help situate the research in the current academic and development debate.

### **2.1 Study Area**

Goripie was chosen as the study area because majority of women in this community and others in the district are peasant farmers and some are traders. I previously worked in this community on a Small-Town Water System Project in the position of community mobilizer and part of the team for the training of Water and Sanitation Committee (WATSAN). Also, I was part of EMPOWER (Empowering Mutual Partnership for Economic Resilience) project and conducted leadership, marketing training as well as sheabutter soap making training for women in Goripie community which motivated me to conduct a study in this community. These encounters with Goripie exposed me to the levels of deprivation amongst women and children especially girls at first hand. Goripie is situated in the Wa East District of the Upper West Region of Ghana. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the Wa East District has a population of 72,074, with the male population constituting 50.5 percent and

the female population making up 49.5 percent. Out of this, Goripie has a population of about 2,339 of which 1,168 (49.93) are males and 1,171(50.06) are females.

Goripie is also among the 20 largest communities in the district that contribute to the food basket of the area as it produces majority of the region's foodstuff. Some of the staple foods that are grown in this community includes; maize, soya beans, yam and beans. Animals reared in the community are cattle, goats, sheep and poultry birds. Women in this community are mobilized into groups of women peasants with a membership of about 364 in 19 different groups. They are also made up of married women, widows and single mothers who are self-helped groups and sometimes receive support from some NGOs. These groups with a collective voice and with support from NGOs operating in the community have lobbied their husbands and other household heads to gain access to farming lands ranging between 1-2 acres for each woman to support their farming. These 19 Women groups carry out various activities including farming and processing of their farm produce for mainly for sale in the local markets.

Soy beans is one of the most cultivated crop by these women as they allocate a large portion of their lands for its cultivation and also some vegetables for household consumption and sale. It is interesting exploring how these women peasants contribute to productivity from the perspectives of beneficiaries and having in mind their challenges and how they contribute to girl child accessing basic education. It is interesting exploring how these contribute to productivity from the perspectives of beneficiaries and see if the girl child will be able to access basic education if their mothers are socio-economically empowered in the Goripie community.

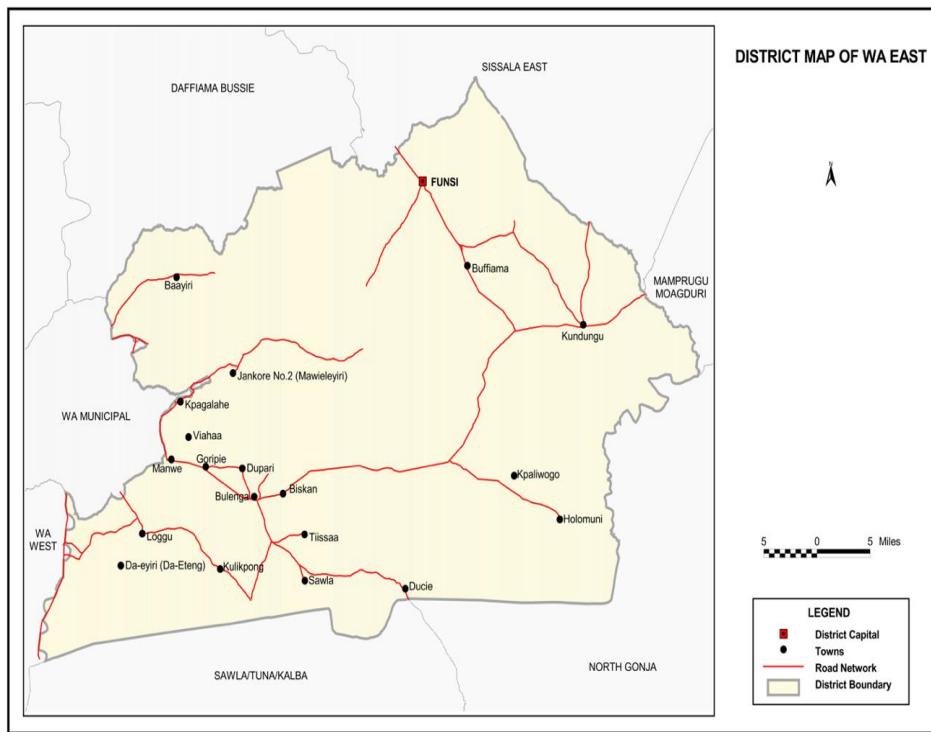


Figure 1. Map of Wa-East District in the Upper West of Ghana where Goripie is located

Source: *Ghana Statistical Service, GIS, 2014*

## 2.2 Selection of Research Respondents

The selection of respondents for this research employed purposive sampling technique to identify a particular group of women and people working with their children in Goripie. As stated by Devers and Frankel (2000), “Purposive sampling strategies are designed to enhance understanding of selected individuals or groups’ experience(s)”. This purposive sampling method therefore, helped the researcher engage with people who had in-depth knowledge on the subject matter and they provided relevant and rich information that aided the research. Also, some stakeholders who were key to this research as they work with these women to enhance their livelihoods activities were purposively selected, as they have relevant information to contribute to the study. The study in total engaged with 51 respondents which was made up of 43 women peasant farmers and 8 other stakeholders working with women farmers from GES, NGOs, and MoFA.

## 2.3 Field Data Collection

When planning this research, one of the challenges that I anticipated as a researcher was getting women peasant farmers to engage with considering that the data collection was at the peak of the farming season. So, initially, the plan was to go and live in the community so I could meet with the women after their farm work. However, after an interaction with an official of Pronet North, an NGO working in this community, who linked me with a contact person, I was able to organise these women for the research without having to go and live in the community. This community is a Muslim dominated area and so Fridays are reserved for their Islamic prayers and no one goes to the farm and if they have to even do so, then, it is usually after prayers.

With the help of the contact person, I was able to conduct three focus group discussions with the women and also in-depth interviews with individual women who had information regarding the research and who were willing to be interviewed on subsequent Fridays in the community. In line with this study, all-important stakeholders were engaged to obtain relevant data. For instance, interviews were conducted with Pronet North, MEDA, CIKOD and MoFA officials to establish the kind of support they offer to women peasant farmers in Goripie and to find out per their observations and perspectives on the relationship between socio-economic empowered women peasant farming groups and their daughters' ability to access basic education and if there is a change, what are the contributory factors of this change? Additionally, a survey questionnaire was administered to seek the perspectives of teachers and the Girl Child Officer who is also a native of Goripie with the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S) in the district in terms of children education especially the girl child. Data on school enrolment of both girls and boys between the period of 2005 and 2015 from Goripie E/A primary and J.H.S were obtained.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

In order to make critical meanings and understanding of the data from the field, the interviews with women and NGOs were first coded and grouped into categories. The themes that emerged from the categories were then analysed. Data on enrolment figures from E/A primary and J.H.S were analysed using excel from 2005 to 2015.

## 2.5 Ethical Consideration

This research was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of research. The research was also approached in a way that ensures that it is transparent, respectful to the participants as well as ensure that the confidentiality of the information they provided and their identity was secured. As O'Leary (2014:63) puts it, 'ethical obligations' were followed. Participants of this research

including the NGOs, teachers and the Ghana Education Service (GES) officials received letters of consent telling them the purpose of the research and their permission was sought before they participated. Also, the consent of the peasant women farmers whom I engaged throughout this research process was sought. I also got permission from the women and other participants of the study to take pictures to use for this research paper.

## **2.6 Limitations of Study**

My research used qualitative data collection methods to collect information from women peasant farmers which were audio recorded in the local language (dagaare). Since all the peasant women farmers were illiterate and could not speak English, information received from them during the research had to be translated into English, and in the process of transcribing some important data might not have been explained adequately or might have been misinterpreted. This can further set as a limitation to the study.

Also, the fieldwork was carried out from July to August, which was the period basic schools were on summer break, which usually is a long break in the academic calendar and hence, head teachers and teachers did not honour their appointments since they had their own deadlines to meet before school re-opens. During the vacation period, only one head teacher allowed me to collect some data whiles the others failed to pick up their phone calls. Others asked me to come back to the school when they reopen on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017, by which time I was back in the Netherlands. I had to employ a research assistant who followed up to collect the enrolment data from T.I Ahmadiyya Primary and JHS and also, E/A JHS. However, the research assistant could only get data from E/R J.H.S but, did not get enrolment data from T.I Ahmadiyya school. This further delayed my analysis of the school enrolment data and further limited my analysis to only one school instead of the two schools initially planned for.

# Chapter 3

## Theoretical Framework/Literature Review

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical concepts relevant and useful in the analysis of the data generated. The study was inspired by agency theory, literature on women in agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa, the concept of women's empowerment and the feminist school of thought on gender equality and gender power relations, the gender and development policy informing large development frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals/Sustainable Development Goals, the theory of access and intra-household power relations. All of these theoretical constructs have been used to inform my study of the various strategies rural women in Goripie adopt in order to educate their children in school.

### 3.1 Agency Theory

According to Kabeer, Agency is a process to one's empowerment during which the individual gain material as well as intangible resources which is usually visible in their "ability to define one's goals and act upon them" (1999:438). It goes beyond recognised actions for which individuals bring to their activity, their sense of agency, or 'power within to include meanings, motivation and purpose' (Kabeer 1999). Agency can also be expressed in many forms such as bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and resistance, and also a cognitive process of reflection and analysis although it mostly manifests in 'decision making' in most literature (Kabeer 1999). Agency could be employed by an individual as well as a group/collective and which could have a positive connotation of 'power to' life choices it could also have a negative connotation of 'power over' that suppresses someone's ability to have life choices (Kabeer 1999). Even though individuals may exercise their agency, they are sometimes confronted with limited resource due to scarcity and sometimes gender deference.

### 3.2 Women in Agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa

Agriculture is the mainstay of the economies of most countries in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of output, export earnings and employment. However, its performance in terms of output when compared to other continents continues to be below satisfactory and this can be attributed to African governments' failure to respond to the role that women play in the economy (Jiggins et al. 1997). Because women land rights and access continue to be a challenge in most parts

of the global south especially sub-Saharan Africa. Since the 1950s and 1960s, there have been debates on agrarian reforms. However, these reforms have often ignored the gender question until recent times when the gender question in agrarian reforms have witnessed a growing interest and its importance recognised by grassroots and policymakers (Agarwal 2003). Basset argues that in most British colonies, they used the system of communal nature of land ownership as a way of controlling lands for the interest of political stability and even up till the 1930s, they still did not want to transfer communal land ownership to individuals (Basset 1993). The colonial administrators themselves were interested in agriculture and communal land ownership became an obstacle for their individual acquisitions. Consequently, they facilitated individual land tenure registration of land titles. This led to the reliance on statutory and customary systems which affected women access to land as they lost cultivation or access rights while male household heads strengthened their ownership rights (Whitehead and Tsikata 2003).

In sub-Saharan Africa, in some cases, women managed lands that were given to men although these lands were registered in the name of the men. Even when couple purchase land together, it was registered in the man's name, which gave him exclusive rights to its usage and disposal (Whitehead and Tsikata 2003). For instance, in the Upper West Region, like many other parts of Ghana, women do not own lands and mostly depend on their husbands' fallow lands for farming (Tsikata and Yaro 2013). This means that women are excluded from land access right from birth as they are considered temporal members of their households, to the extent that when they are married, they still do not have access to land as the land continues to be in the control of the breadwinner, the husband (Tsikata and Yaro 2013). Recently, with the growing commercialization of land, population growth and the concurrent increase in the value of land continuously erodes women right to land (Gray and Kevane 1999). Also, the recent acquisition of land by foreign governments and companies in the global south is fast alarming as it is the tool towards responding to the current global crises in food security, renewable fuel and the speculation of profit which further deepens the existing gender inequalities or worsen the plight of the already disadvantaged (Tsikata and Yaro 2013). For example, in Ghana, women only have 10% access to all household lands (Deere and Doss 2006). Several attempts by governments and companies to approach development mostly do not take into consideration the existing gender inequality and instead of designing programmes and projects that address the gender needs, governments rather deepen the existing gender inequalities (Tsikata and Yaro 2013) through policies that are not favourable to women.

Further, the World Bank has established that the poorest people live in rural areas in the global south and depend on subsistence agriculture and related economic activities for survival (Ogunlela and Mukhtar 2009). In spite of all these discriminations in land right and access, women contribution to agriculture leads to more than half of the food grown on the continent of Africa, which makes it imperative to improve agriculture in such areas in order to fight against poverty

and improve the livelihoods of the rural poor, particularly women and children (Ogunlela and Mukhtar 2009).

Goal two (2) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) states that “500 million small farms worldwide, most still rain-fed, provide up to 80 per cent of food consumed in a large part of the developing world. Investing in smallholder women and men is an important way to increase food security and nutrition for the poorest, as well as food production for local and global markets. Since the 1900s, some 75 per cent of crop diversity has been lost from farmers’ fields. Better use of agricultural biodiversity can contribute to more nutritious diets, enhanced livelihoods for farming communities and more resilient and sustainable farming systems. If women farmers had the same access to resources as men, the number of hungry in the world could be reduced by up to 150 million” (UN 2016). Against this backdrop, Harcourt (2010) rightly pointed out that, there is the need for a change in gender and human relationship as sustainable development was unacceptable without that.

### **3.3 Women’s Empowerment, gender power relations and the Feminist School of Thought in development**

In the 1960s and 1970s, there were so many tensions around the world, various social groups protested and fought against the injustices of the international economic order, race and class privileges which did not favour a lot of minority groups as they were usually excluded (Kabeer 1994). As a consequence, the UN came up with the ‘decade of development’ which was the first declaration (between the period of 1961-70) and which had no specific reference to women issues. It was in the second decade that a brief reference was in it International Development Strategy to encourage the full integration of women in development process (Kabeer 1994). In 1980, it was further spelt out in strategy, which viewed women as agents as well as beneficiaries in the developmental process at all sectors and levels. This conscious effort to integrate women into development was evident in the organizational structure of the UN and its agencies (Kabeer 1994).

By the end of the 1980s, there were several organisations within the UN including Women in Development, and the first wave of feminism got women issues visible as a category in the international development agenda through the Women in Development (WID) strategy. It was further incorporated as one of the units in various bodies of the UN. This was one of the liberal development approaches, which narrowly looked at social welfare, and primarily domestic roles of women as a way of incorporating women into the development process.

In the 1990s, the UN declared that “the task is to translate greater understanding of the problem of women into altered priorities ...Empowering women

for development should have high returns in terms of increased output, greater equity and social progress" (UN 1989a: 41). The terms 'gender equality' and 'women empowerment' have been in the development arena since the 1980s and 1990s and have gained some success. However, the entry into the development arena for men and women has not been gender equal. While men entered as household heads and productive agents, women entered and were viewed on sex-specific terms where they are seen as housewives, mothers and at-risk reproducers (Jaquette and Staudt 1988). Mainstream development resources as directed towards market-oriented activities have also been occupied by men while women were relegated to the welfare sector. This bias further determines how power is distributed within the development process and who gets to control resources as a result of the division of roles between sexes, which have been part of the national and international agencies of development (Kabeer 1994).

According to Buvinic (1983), approaches in WID were mainly of welfare, anti-poverty and equity. Also, WID advocates and scholars who further reinforced Boserup's critique to shift the focus from welfare to equity as women were also affected by unequal access to new technologies and skills in the development process (Kabeer 1994). The approach of integrating women into the development process with the WID strategy only achieved a 'symbolic politics' but did achieve less in concrete terms (Staudt 1985). This can be attributed to the fact that it dwelled so much on the individual attitude rather than the economic, political and interpersonal power that is exercised by men over women.

Liberal neo-classical economics has also played a role in formulating development policies. This school of thought has always been associated with economic growth as a primary goal of development. The concept of development hence, has been seen as modernization and further associated with words 'modern man' and 'economic man' and not 'economic woman' or 'modern woman' which shows how little was done with regards to women by the early development theorists to address women issues in development (Kabeer 1994). Women empowerment has been a mainstream development strategy as it promises to help overcome poverty in families and community. This has gained popularity and may overshadow other efforts that are contributing to change in individual's life and society. Women empowerment has been one of the most used words by international, governments and organizations as an approach to include women in the development process. However, Cornwall and Anyidoho (2010) ask for a critical look at the development jargon as 'the word empowerment in its translation across languages, cultures and context seeks to face challenges and what this word means in the lives of different women with regards to their experiences in relation to power, oppression, liberty, pleasure, and the injuries of discrimination and structural violence and others'.

Women empowerment as mainstream development programme is also individualistic, instrumental, neo-liberal and this has similarly been translated as 'economic empowerment' of women. 'Economic empowerment' according to the World Bank is "about making markets work for women and empowering

women to compete in markets" (World Bank 2006) and this then questions the inequality that has existed between gender and how it will be addressed. According to Batliwala (2007), It is worrying to see the shift from the initial thought that generated from the radical action of mobilizing women to transform structural inequalities (cited in Cornwall and Anyidoho 2010). The term women empowerment has since received different reactions from different people and organizations. For instance, senior DFID bureaucrat referred to the term 'empowerment' as em-ment, thus the word empowerment has the 'power' taken out of it. There have been several of such discussions about women empowerment as little is been said or done about the structures and systems that created inequalities in the first place (Cornwall and Anyidoho 2010).

Gender relations have also played a crucial role in development process, as women from the initial stages of their integration into the development process were fit into the "bottom of an inherently hierarchical and contradictory structure of production and accumulation" (Kabeer 1994:63). For instance, "in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa where poorer peasants and labourers who have lost their rights to lands and common property resort to fetching of fuel, carrying water and processing food" (Ibid 1994:63). Some men also resort to migrating to towns or shifting to cash crops leaving subsistence farming entirely for women (Kabeer 1994). According to Harcourt (2010), "Women need to be seen not as carriers of the burden but as decision-makers with rights including property rights and access to assets". A gender-relations approach "seeks to avoid the universalist generalizations that characterize the more structuralist approach which sees women's oppression as produced by capitalist mode of production or by a global patriarchy" (Ibid 1994:65). It offers instead what Connell (1987) describes as "a gentler", more pragmatic but perhaps more demonstrable claim that with a framework like this, we can come to a serviceable understanding of current history" (Ibid 1994:66).

There is also a growing concern from contributors of the narrowness of looking at economic and political empowerment, as "women's bodies, desires and pleasures are left almost completely unaddressed by mainstream women's empowerment policies and programmes" (Cornwall and Anyidoho 2010). Also, "the strategy of gender mainstreaming has been emptied of its political meaning and instead of being seen as a tool, has become an end in itself" (Harcourt 2010). It only portrays women as hard working, caring, mindful and responsible than men and good for developmental investment (Cornwall and Rivas 2015). Cornwall has also pointed out that there is the need to go beyond the normative limitations of essentialist identity politics to build a network of alliance to incorporate the other vulnerable individuals as not all males benefit from the 'patriarchal dividend' that have always been associated with men as the beneficiaries (Cornwall and Anyidoho 2010). There are other scholars who think there is the need for re-articulation of the links between empowerment, marginalization and resistance. For some, there is the need for political engagement to demand accountability for the powerless and ensuring that women in particular are represented well in every development agenda (Kabeer 1994).

In spite of all these, women are not just a passive product of these development paradigms and the inequalities that it comes along with, they also have their own agency and have worked together to overcome some of these inequalities. Women for instance, are mobilizing themselves and in collective groups, having a collective voice to influence many existing power relations and the development arena. As elaborated by Kabeer (1994) that, “People, especially poor women, are capable of promoting their own development if their own efforts and initiatives are recognized and supported. The first step must be to build the ‘infrastructure’, the context in which women can feel some sense of control over their lives” (Antrobus 1987). This is a clear indication that women can only be empowered if the structures that create inequalities are removed and the infrastructure build to support women. “New forms of consciousness arise out of women’s newly acquired access to the intangible resources of analytical skills, social networks, organizational strength, solidarity and sense of not being alone” (Cornwall and Rivas 2015). Aside this dominant view of development, there is also an alternative development that grows from the grassroots. This alternative development is built based on the close and everyday interaction between organisations and the constituencies which facilitates and shapes policies that reflects on the needs of the people.

### **3.4 Women’s Empowerment and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)/ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) informing the framework of gender and development**

The Millennium Summit was one of the largest gatherings in the history of world leaders to adopt the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals were adopted in 2000, and signed by 189 countries to achieve eight development goals by the year 2015. These eight goals have goals 2 and 3 directed towards women and girls’ empowerment. Goal 2 is meant to “achieve universal primary education by ensuring that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling. Goal 3 sought to promote gender equality and empower women by eliminating disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015” (UN MDGs 2000).

Although women and girls have been mentioned as a target in the MDGs, “Feminists and civil society organisations have challenged the discourse of ‘empowerment’ and ‘gender equality’ within the framework of the MDGs but have usually stopped short of reflecting on how these concepts have acquired their meanings. Even calls for a rights-based approach to women’s empowerment and gender equality have been elaborated without deconstructing many of the assumptions inherent in how these ideas are discussed and invoked” (Cornwall and Rivas 2015). There have been critiques of the MDGs been a top-down approach in the development of the goals that was done by a few officials of the UN in New York and far from the people who will be most affected by its implementation. As Kabeer pointed out, “many of the women organisations that

had participated in the UN conferences in the 1990s were deeply committed to the frameworks and principles which had emerged from them" (Cornwall and Rivas 2015). Also, its goals concentrated on women and girls only focused on the role that women and girls will play within development projects and initiatives rather than making development work to ensure equality and empowerment as very little was done about the structural issues that discriminated and created these inequalities (Cornwall and Rivas 2015). As Woodroffe and Smee explain: "The targets chosen under a gender goal need to reflect a lasting change in the power and choices women have over their own lives, rather than just an (often temporary) increase in opportunities" (Cornwall and Rivas 2015). There have also been issues about how goals on human rights and social justices got lost in the process of translating them into 'actionable goals', targets and indicators.

At the end of the MDGs in 2015, came the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which adopted 17 goals in September that year, which seek to build on the MDGs, and complete what it did not achieve. The SDGs are under the theme "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (UN 2015). The SDGs focus on humanity and the planet as a critical area for achievement. They also have clear interest issues of empowerment of women and girls as they seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They also seek integration while ensuring that there is a balance in sustainable development in terms of economic, social and the environment. This is evident as they seek to achieve in the goals 4 and 5 respectively "Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning, achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" (UN Sustainable Development Goals 2015). Also for all these goals to be successful, there should be a conscious effort to change power relations as empowerment as perceived not just about improving women capacities to cope with the oppression and injustices that exist, but, their ability to question the things that they would have seen as 'normal' and also seeing empowerment as a process and not an end-point to have measurable outcome with targets attached to it (Cornwall and Rivas 2015).

### 3.5 The Theory of Access

In the development academic literature, the term 'Access' have mostly been used without a clear and adequate definition, hence, different meanings associated to it. According to Ribot and Peluso (2003), access and property are different, and one is not a substitute of the other. Access as defined by Ribot and Peluso, is "the ability to derive benefit from things-including material objects, persons, institutions and symbols" (Ribot and Peluso 2003:153). A property is "... a right in the sense of an enforceable claim to some use or benefit of something" (Ribot and Peluso 2003:155). Therefore, "property and access are concerned with relations among people in regards to benefits or value, their appropriation, accumulation, transfer, distribution, and so forth" (ibid).

The difference between access and property is ‘ability’ and ‘rights’ hence, access is about using possible means to benefit from something whilst property gives on the support to claims or rights that are socially acknowledged which could be backed by law, custom or convention. The theory of access explores more on who benefits from a resource and the processes that are used in benefitting. Hence, it establishes ‘who does what’ and ‘who does not get’ to use or benefit from something. In this research, women access to land focus on property relation and as well as social relations that either helps or prevent women from having access to land for their livelihoods.

### **3.6 Intra-Household (gender) Power Relations**

The household continues to be a focus when discussing women empowerment, gender inequality in terms of resource allocation especially with regards to land and other productive assets. There have been assumptions that one’s bargaining power can influence the allocation and access to resources within the family. This has led to debates that, in spite of the inequalities in gender, women access to income earning opportunities will subsequently go to a high bargaining power that affects gender relations within the household in terms of access to resources and decision making (Kabeer 1997). This assumption has led to the over reliance on Marxist, World Bank and some feminist on economic independence as a major way of restructuring inequalities between men and women which have also seen a growing number of establishment of wage-earn jobs all over the world, especially in developing countries (Kabeer 1997). However, Elson and Pearson (1981) cited in Kabeer (1997) point out that, as this trend of wage-earn employment grows, there is the need to relook at the kind of jobs that are being created as most of them are very exploitative and do little to address economic dependency of women which it seeks to address. There are also different reactions to women entry into public employment for different cultures, and reaction in a culture that accepts women working in public will be different from cultures that strictly do not support women working in public employment. And women who end up in these services are sometimes depressed by the very structures that push them into these jobs of which labour unions are seeking attention.

The household, where power relations are brought to bear in decision making within the family has been economically theorized, and one aspect is Beckarian concept of ‘Benevolent Dictatorship’ of the intra-household issues, where the benevolent dictator who heads the household rely on altruistic decision making outcomes. Resources are usually in a common pool to ensure welfare maximizing principles and increase in women wages are expected to have an increase in their share of the household resources as they are re-allocated resources from the common pool but usually not in the capacity to make decisions (Kabeer 1997). Alternatively, drawing on the game-theoretic bargaining models suggest that members of the family have different and possibly conflicting preferences and decision-making can only happen through negotiation and bargaining. It also points out that there are extra environmental parameters such as the sex

ratio in the relevant marriage market, laws concerning alimony/child support settlement especially in third world countries where women are not welcomed into their natal homes after marriage break downs as well as the acceptability of women working outside the home have further worsened women bargaining power within the household (Kabeer 1997).

However, Agarwal (1997) argues that, although they talk about bargaining power, little is said about the complex range of factors such as perceptions and the role of social norms as well as things that affect different genders in the exercising of self-interest in the bargaining process. Also, Sen (1990), also talks about the 'co-operative-conflict' model of the household decision making that is not based on the conventional economic theory but focuses on intra-household as well as extra environmental factors that are likely to influence bargaining power and further affect the allocation of resources within the household (Kabeer 1997).

Studies have shown that women's economic empowerment can have impact in negative ways in the household. For instance, a study by Kabeer (1997) shows how most men felt about women wage earnings and its effects on the household power relations: Most married men felt threatened and insecure as women wages disrupt the customary marriage decision making power of which power was vested in males and was not equally distributed between males and females. They were others who feel their wives working and earning income challenges their masculine identity. But at the same time males who are fathers, brothers and sons to these working females had a different view of women earning wages. Women account for entering into wage labour has always been to be able to support their children welfare including their education. This means that women wages have supplemented household income and contributed to their families' welfare.

### 3.7 Conclusion

Gender power relations in the household usually impacts negatively on women. The patriarchal system within some households have created gender-asymmetries that affect women. So even if women continue to contribute economically to support their families, they can still lack the bargaining power and voice on how the resources are allocated. However, according to gender and development theory (if not always practice) women can also find ways to overcome the lack of access to resources through strategies that development interventions can help design and support.

# Chapter 4

## Presentation of Findings, Analysis and Discussions

### 4.0 Introduction

This Chapter discusses the findings obtained from the field through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews with women peasant farmers and some government institutions and NGOs working in Goripie. The discussions are based on the main themes that emerged from the study, each under a separate heading. Also, in-depth interviews with NGOs were analysed to examine the kind of support they offer to women farmers for their livelihood activities and how these further affect their relationship and roles in the family.

### 4.1 Women's Land Rights

Land continues to be a valuable asset in agricultural production in most developing countries. It has even become more valuable with the increase in land use for other non-agricultural purposes. In most African countries, lands are under the control of customary tenure system, which seeks to govern lands by granting equal access to members of the families with a common interest in the land (Yaro 2010). However, this system of land ownership and allocation to individuals have been gendered in most parts of Africa and for that matter, the Northern Regions of Ghana. This has further maintained socio-economic inequalities between men and women, where women are always disadvantaged since they have to rely on their male counterparts for resources such as land for agricultural purposes (Apusigah 2009). For rural women, particularly those from Goripie in the Upper West Region of Ghana, their access and control over land usually depend on their social relationship with male family members such as fathers, husbands, brothers and uncles.

This was evident during a focus group discussion with women peasant farmer leaders. For instance, one woman said during the discussion that;

Women in this community like others in the region do not own lands, whether a widow, married or single. We ask for the lands from our husbands, brothers, fathers, or uncles and they give us the quantity that is available for us. It is the same way women do not inherit landed properties in this community (FGD, Goripie, on 14/07/2017).

This presupposes that, women in this community, like most parts of Africa generally, do not own lands or inherit lands, hence, they have to rely on men within the household for a portion of land for their agricultural activities. This

consistently affirms existing literatures on women land access in Ghana and many parts of Africa. For instance, Apusigah enumerates the injustice done to women and points out that, an analysis of the household unit in Northern Ghana traditionally place men as heads and boys aspire as potential household heads which puts them in a super-ordinate position whiles women and girls as wives and potential wives with subordinate positions (Apusigah 2009). This super-ordinate position/household heads assigned to men also makes them providers of their families' needs and also owners of the production system. Consequently, men assume full control of all assets and their allocation within the household setting. This is not different from the situation in Goripie. Theoretically, this relates to intra-household power relations, where those with power or specifically, stronger bargaining power are able to have easy access to lands compared to those who do not. Customarily, women have been relegated to the background and lack the power to influence in the allocation of resources in most parts of Ghana, including Goripie.

Confirming this, another woman in the focus group discussion with members of the peasant farmer group said;

Women are generally seen as someone else's property, almost all of us in this group are leaving in our husbands' houses, whether you are from this community or not, you cannot take your father's properties to your husband's house when you have uncles who possibly have male children or brothers to inherit the family land (FGD, Goripie, on 14/07/2017).

Similarly, a research carried out in the Upper West Region revealed that, women in spite of their contribution to agriculture and agro-processing, access and control of land is consciously entrenched in male-dominated culture as well as patriarchal structures that is passed on from generation to generation, which limits women access and control over land (Dery 2015). These cultural and patriarchy structures are expressed in different forms in terms of resources with regards to inheritance and its ownership and power to the control of resources. This follows the experience of the women in Goripie and what awaits their daughters and the super-ordinate position of their sons as these have been passed on from one generation to the other. Additionally, the theory of access which focuses on 'access' and 'right' of the use of a property further determines 'who does what?' and 'who does not get what?' and this has been the plight of women especially in the research area.

Ensuing the previous criteria through which women and for that matter, rural women access land for their farming activities, is usually determined by their social relationship with the male family members. Female headed households are the worse hit by this criterion. Women who are separated, divorced, widowed are affected as their relations with males' family members turn to end, hence, their access to lands allocation are forfeited (Rünger 2006). As these women cannot primarily rely on these social relationships, that is, the basics on which women mostly access lands has been the situation in Goripie among fe-

male headed households. As stated by another researcher, female-headed households usually embrace inferior situations as they have to deal with subsistence responsibilities coupled with limited access to productive resources (Brown 1996). These women will have to find other means of acquiring lands for their farming purposes. During this research, two of such women narrated their stories. One of them said she had to plead with community members who had lands that were not in use to grant her access whiles the other woman whose parents were just in the next community after Goripie had land from his brother where she has been farming for the past 4 years. This indicates that, although women are disadvantaged in accessing land, there are even more disadvantaged if they lose their social relations with male family members, and women will continuously do anything to maintain their marriages regardless of the challenges.

Further, it also confirms how women are disadvantaged within the household not to traditionally own or inherit land, which is the main factor of their livelihoods. Since it is usually determined by male headed households, even if they are allocated these lands, the quantity, type, and duration for the use still remains in the hands of the household heads hence, it exposes the vulnerability of women farmers and how much they can invest in these lands for their farming activities. This leads to women's inability to generate enough income to support their families especially their children ability to access quality education. Women in Goripie therefore, think they can only equip their daughters to escape from their current plight through education as articulated in an interview with a woman peasant;

For me, women do not own lands in this part of the country traditionally, but, I think women who have been educated and who have their own money have been able to buy lands and so for me, girls education is very important because they will have more power in terms of resource control within their communities (interview with a woman in Goripie, 21/07/17).

This means if girls in future after their education are gainfully employed, they can acquire land to engage in farming if they want to. Therefore, the benefits of educating the girl child are enormous as it will contribute to ensuring that women are empowered and able to acquire their own properties, as is the case in the western world, where women are free to acquire their own properties and be independent. This leads us to women empowerment which are enshrined in the MDGs and SDGs, and that, when girls are educated, they have a voice, are able to acquire their own properties and become independent women. This is the struggle of the women in Goripie as they seek to ensure that their girl child do not suffer the same fate as they are going through.



Figure 2. Focus group discussions with women peasants in Goripie to understand the strategies they adopt towards their daughters' schooling (FGD Goripie, 14/7/17)

## 4.2 Gender Inequalities in the Family

“The assumption that the family integrates the welfare of its members into an internally consistent family-unity function attributes a role to the family that undoubtedly exceeds its capacity as a social institution” (Kabeer 1994, p 95). The family continues to be the first point of contact for almost every human being and is said to be the foundation on which the society is built. According to the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, a family is “a group consisting of two parents and their children living together as a unit”. However, family refers to different people in different societies. For instance, in a polygamous society, a family will refer to a husband with more than one wife with or without children or a wife with more than one husband with or without children. Gender inequality continues to exist amongst people of the opposite sex and its tolerance is making it gain legitimacy which has become visible even in families, and seen as natural and very normal (Sen 1995). This is sometimes expressed in roles, rights, abilities, access to resources, benefits, health care, nutrition attention and which sex tends to benefit from and which sex do not.

These inequalities become more visible in polygamous families and the story is worse when it comes to women who are married to polygamous families of which most of these women in Goripie are, where the men have more than one wife. When this happens, each woman is responsible for fending for herself and her children with very little or no support from the husband. The husband might only provide a small piece of land for each wife to carry out their farming activities. Surprisingly, the women who are the wives of the man on daily basis are expected to cook in turn for him. Even with this, it is still a competition amongst the women, as each of them wants to cook the best meals to win his favour.

Additionally, women from both polygamous and non-polygamous families in Goripie access productive resources such as land differently due to their family size, who has favour from the husband and sometimes the sequence in which women were married. Hence, in a family where there is only one wife and children, the woman has the opportunity of being allocated a much bigger land and usually take part in some decision making in the family. Husbands in such families usually support in taking care of children especially in their education. For instance, a woman interviewed during this research who was the only wife to her husband narrated her story;

When my husband is taking decision about our children welfare and their education, he always consult me so we take decisions together. He also provides for my children's needs and also support me with the up-keep of the home. We work together on the farm and when we harvest we keep the proceeds for the up-keep of the family (Interview with a woman on 28/07/17).

When the same woman (above) was asked if she has access to land for her own farming, this is what she said;

I work with my husband on the farm and when I want to farm some other crops for household use and sometimes the market, I just tell him and he shows me where to cultivate (Interview with a woman, Goripie on 28/07/17).

Also, in most polygamous families, of which majority of families in Goripie are, women stories on land access and support for the up-keep of the family is different. Women usually have very limited access to resources such as land due to the number of wives the man has and even when they are rich and can allocate some resources to the women especially land, it turns out to be inadequate. For instance, an interview with a woman from a polygamous family narrates her story;

My husband has four wives and 13 children and has established a family farm where we all work. But as a woman, you need to have a plot of land where you can cultivate some 'women crops' for the household consumption and sometimes for the market to support myself and my children since the crops we get from the family farm is for the whole family and apart from my husband giving me some to feed my children. I cannot make a decision on the produce to solve any of my problems. So, when I asked for a land from my husband, he was willing to give me but because we are four he could not give me a big portion and his reason was that, he said he needs to leave part of it so that when the other wives ask for he can get them a portion. I have an acre of land now but I think I could grow more produce for the household and market if I had a much bigger land (Interview with a woman, Goripie on 21/07/17).

Women often reserve portions of the limited lands they secure from their male counterparts for the cultivation of 'women crops'. By women crops, it means vegetables and food crops meant for domestic consumption. Confirming

this, Apusigah (2009) indicated that, women cultivate these crops for the household consumption and when they are unable to do so, they will have to engage in other income generating activities to be able to acquire those foodstuffs for the household use. That is the extent to which women are discriminated. Whereas their crops are meant for domestic consumption, those produced by the men are mainly for the markets to raise money mostly for the man's use. Similar to what the women said with regards to land access, in an interview with the head of programmes at Pronet North, an NGO working in Goripie, she emphasised that;

Women especially from polygamous families usually have difficulty in accessing land and we have been working with chiefs, traditional leaders and men in the community to allocate at least one to two acres of land to women for their farming so that they can also support the family and children. Through these engagement women at least from these families have a plot of land for their farming. However, most of these lands where lands that man presume as not fertile and so left it to fallow. But, women were able to make good yield because most of the crops that were grown on these lands were soy and after a year or two, the land became more fertile since soy is a nutrient fixing legume. After a year or two of women farming on these lands, men were looking for those same lands from the women and a few women lost their lands to their husbands who in turn gave them new lands to cultivate, but then these women only agreed once they were offered bigger lands from their husbands (Interview Head of Programmes on 9/8/17).

Also, the up-keep of children in these families solely becomes the responsibility of the wives or mothers of the children. In an interview with one woman, she said when the children go to their father for any of their school needs, he always tells them to go to their mother and I have to get it for them because he has many wives and many children but I gave birth to just few. So, I have to do my best so that they can complete their education and get employed in future.

Regardless of the difficulties in accessing land by women for their farming activities, women in Goripie, which is populated with polygamous families, are usually excluded in family decisions. Decision concerning the household productivity and sale of products are solely in the hands of the males or husbands. They determine what crop will be cultivated on the farm and how much of it will be cultivated and the women or wives are responsible for providing labour with their children throughout the farming season and once these products are harvested and taken home, the man takes decisions about it. As pointed out by Brown (1996), most male heads usually use their power to exploit women labour and worse of it is that in most polygamous societies these female labour is given no significant economic value.

However, women in Goripie attested to the fact that although they do not take any decision with regards to the family farm, they take full decision on the small pieces of lands being allocated to them by their husbands and also added that, they are being consulted by their husbands when there is something that

their husbands want them to contribute to. This further suggests that women are not left out completely in decision making once they were earning some income and could contribute financially to address a problem in the family. This presupposes that financial empowerment of women will contribute towards empowering them in their households and communities and that will even come at a faster rate once they have the agency to change their current position. This will lead to a future of empowered women although they have a constrained agency as they are limited by choices.

### 4.3 Gender Bias/Care Work

Intra-household power relations continue to shape how the household is run. These power relations further determine 'who does what' and 'who does not' within the household. It is very visible in household chores which are carried out by certain group of people or gender. This is not different in Goripie; where all household chores such as cooking, drawing of water, sweeping, washing of clothes and utensils and others are assigned solely for the female and which rest with the girl child. So, when both boys and girls are back from school, the boys go about playing or doing their school work whiles the girls go to fetch water and help their mothers in preparing meals for the families. Girls are usually overburdened and this affects the time they spend at home doing their school work. In an interview with one woman in Goripie, she narrated her story;

When I was training my boy on how to do house chores, my husband said I should not turn his son into a woman, that household chores are for women and girls and not for boys so I stopped because I did not want to have problems with my husband. (Interview with a woman, Goripie on 21/07/17).

From another woman in an interview, this is what she had to say about household chores;

When my daughter comes from school she does her house chores, and sometimes when I'm around, I help but mostly is the girls that do all the chores because growing up, we the women have been the ones doing it so our daughters also do the house chores. In this community, if you ask a boy to do any house chores, and you the mother don't have power in the household, the men including my husband will say it is not the boy's duty to do house chores, so most of the time we get tired of these remarks and just leave the boys out of our house chores. (Interview with a woman, Goripie on 21/07/17).

From these stories, it clearly shows how inter-household power dynamics play out in the family and further shape up roles that are carried out by different members of the family based on their gender. It turns to be bias towards certain gender as it limits some activities in the home to a particular gender. However, it should be noted that, "Gender is not an essential category determined by biology but rather a constructed phenomenon that is reproduced in and through practices, policies and actions that shift and change over time" (Harcourt 2010). These are the social constructed norms that have been constructed by

these people which is common in most patrilineal societies as house chores are meant for the female and so, males should do not do house chores because once they do, it will reduce them to females and they will lose their masculinity. These gendered household chores are socially constructed norms passed on from generation to generation and it is not surprising that these boys/male children have a greater chance of passing it on to their children.

Also, girls do not only do their house chores but also take part in farming during the farming season. They are usually engaged in the sowing of seeds and the harvesting of produce. This unequal gender division of labour within the household further over-burden one gender particularly the female, which the mother has to deal with to ensure that it does not affect their future, thus, their daughters' education. They have devised a way of addressing this by supporting their daughters with the house chores so that they can also have some time to spend on their school work when they come back from school, and this has come in handy as girls now have time after school to also learn on their own.

Further, these roles performed by girls in the family sometimes affect them as they lose out in school during certain periods of the farming season due to the role that they play in farming. This is what a head teacher of one school said;

Some girls do not sometimes do their assignments and when I ask them they say they did not have time in the house to do it. And during the farming season, girls' attendance to school is also very low especially during the sowing and harvesting periods and we have been pleading with parents during our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings to do their best to let the children come to school all the time no matter the season, although it has reduced, we want to see it stopped completely (Interview with head teacher of E/A primary on 17/8/17).

In spite of all these challenges that affect the girls in terms of work load and the gender biases with regards to household chores that subsequently affect girls' performance, mothers are contributing their bid to help them because they anticipate that their daughters will give them more care throughout their lives when they are old if they have better livelihoods in future. Unanimously, the women interviewed indicated that, they would do their best to educate their girls because they have soft hearts and sympathy and if they able to acquire higher education and secure good jobs, going forward, they would support them (mothers) in future than the boys. These stories go to confirm the struggles women in Goripie and most parts of Ghana are going through on daily basis to ensure that their children particularly the girl child attain basic education. These struggles are what the advocates of the feminist school of thought envisioned in the 1950s and 1960s and sought to end. It is sad that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many women are still going through those same challenges that their counterparts suffered more than half a century ago.



Figure 3. Interview with a woman peasant farmer at Goripie during the research (Interview with woman, Goripie 28/7/17)

#### **4.4 NGOs and Governmental Support to Women Farmers in Goripie**

Support to women farmers is gaining grounds for some time now in most developing countries as a strategy to bridge the gender inequalities between men and women by enhancing women livelihood activities to achieve sustainable development. Supporting women in farming has been seen as one of the prime solutions to end poverty and hunger. This is so because women will at least be able to feed their children through their farm produce once they are empowered. Initially, capacity building on farm management, best practices and extension were fully organised for men since they are considered as family heads and owners of the farm and women as people who were working on the farms of their husbands. Nonetheless, NGOs are now designing projects that provide technical support to women to work on their own farms for high yields. During this research, an extension officer at the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) said;

We work with women farmer groups on how to take care of their farms, disease/pest control, land preparation, selection of seeds, planting, and post-harvest management. And currently, we are implementing a project call 'pass on the offspring' where women are given live stocks such goat, sheep to rear and when they litter, the woman keeps the young ones and pass on the big one to the next beneficiary and it keeping on moving until every woman get (Interview with extension officer on 4/8/17).

Also, an officer at Pronet North enumerated the support they give to women farmers in Goripie which were attested to by all the women in a focus group discussion. According to the Pronet official, the organisation work with extension officers to provide technical support and best farm management practices to women. That apart, they visit the women farmers to provide on farm support to ensure that they are practicing sound and modern practices on their farms, as well as teach them how to keep their produce to avoid post-harvest losses and ready market opportunities. During the farming season, women are

also linked with tractor services to have their fields ploughed on time for farming. Further, nutrition training is organized for them so that they can use their farm produce to improve family nutrition as well as processed their crops into sample food products for sale. This has reduced the limitations of women having to just grow crops and sell. Now, they are putting the woman at the centre production where she can add value to her products to attract higher prices and be engaged productively throughout the year, and also earn income to support their families and children's education.

Additionally, the Women and Gender Empowerment Programme Manager at CIKOD during this research mentioned that the EMPOWER project run by the organisation for the past five years have been focused on leadership trainings for women at the community, district and regional levels so that they can promote women's agenda at these levels. They also recognised the importance of the economic empowerment of these women and have introduced training programmes such as life skills training, livelihood activities training and alternative livelihood training to support them. Women with these trainings are able to engage in other activities during the off season to generate income to support their families.

It also affirms a shift from a development process that only relegate women to welfare sectors which was what the WID advocated against to a process that ensures equity by building women capacity to engage in productive activities that help them compete with their male counterparts as most women were affected by technology as well as skills in the development process (Kabeer 1994). Despite that women are affected by some traditional practices that limit their access to lands in most developing countries, including Ghana, women are adopting different strategies to overcome that for the future generation. These are some of the practices embedded in the MDGs and SDGs especially goal 3 of the sustainable development goals which seeks to empower girls and women to have equal rights with their male counterparts by 2030. This is achievable if all stakeholders are committed to ensure that no one is left behind.



Figure 4. Interview with MEDA Value Chain Officer at her office to find out what support they give to women peasant farmers in Goripie (7/8/17)

## 4.5 Local Financing for Women

Credit and farm financing has been a crucial component in the women's livelihood as they quest to engage in farming. Considering the nature of farming in Ghana and most developing countries which have often relied on rain-fed, many investors such as the banks are usually sceptical about it financing. Even when these banks have resources to finance these farming, they normally require a collateral before they can provide financial assistance to their clients. With these criteria, women are always at a disadvantage as they find it very difficult to acquire funds to engage in farming.

Most collaterals available to rural folks is land. Although women have access to portions of their husbands' or male family members' lands to cultivate, they cannot use these lands as collateral for credit and can neither pass it on to their daughters (Sen 1995) as women only have 'access' to use the property and not a 'right' to the property and so are limited in what they can use the land for, as elaborated in theory of access. Looking at these challenges, Pronet North and MEDA in their engagements with women peasants in Goripie used the 'group collateral model', where women came together as a group of 15-20 members and served as a collateral for accessing credit from a microfinance institution. Women then applied for an amount for the group based on how much money the individual needed for their farming and this was disbursed to the group. The group afterwards set up a VSLA, where individuals contribute weekly towards the payment of the loan after harvesting their farm produce. Through such initiatives, they were able to pay their loans as well as saved for the next farming season. This is how women were financing their farming activities in Goripie until VSLA came in to support with their own initiatives.

## 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter confirms with the existing literature that women in Goripie, like many communities in Northern Ghana do not have equal access to land as their male counterparts and this have had negative consequences on their economic emancipation and empowerment. The chapter has also revealed some of the gender biases against women which has translated into how male and female children are regarded in the household. In spite of all these challenges, women are still able to manoeuvre their way to ensure that their children attain basic education particularly the girl child. NGOs and MoFA have been of tremendous support to women empowerment through the provision of training programmes and financial support and this has also been explained in this chapter.

## Chapter 5

### Findings, Analysis and Discussions of Enrolment Data and Women Support

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the enrolment level of both boys and girls in two schools in Goripie (E/A and T/I Primary and Junior High School (J.H.S) between the periods of 2005 to 2015. The goal is to give further meaning to the stories from the women farmers elaborated in the previous chapter and the efforts the women have been making to support their daughters to have access to basic education. It presents the educational hopes of parents and the limitations that affect the education of the girl child.

#### 5.1 Women Support to Girls' Educational Needs

What my study confirms is that when women are empowered it translates into an improved family welfare especially the children. In Goripie, women aspire towards their own empowerment and channel their limited resources towards their families' improved welfare and further seek to empower their daughters' through education. My research is consistent with studies such as Brown (1996), who established that, women work hard to overcome disadvantages and recognize that, this is important not only for them but also for the next generation. My research has shown that prioritizing Girls educational needs is one of the strategies adopted by women in Goripie to ensure that these girls are able to stay in school. In an interview with a woman during this study, she said;

I provide for my children all their school needs. I give them their PTA dues, their school uniforms, school bags, books, pen, pencil, and also provide my daughters with sanitary pad when they are at time of the month so that they will be comfortable to stay in school during that period (Interview with a woman, Goripie on 21/7/17).

In an interview with a Girl Child Officer with the Ghana Education Service, she stated that, women in Goripie are improving in terms of the support to their children's school needs. According to her, in earlier times, mothers could do very little to support girls in school because mothers were considered as only housewives with no source of income and even if they worked on the family farm, they could not take any decision over the produce. She noted the change, and sees how women now use their income to support the girls who are now neatly dressed in uniforms and stay in school even when they are menstruating which hitherto was not the case. The Girl Child Unit was also working directly with the girls' clubs at the various schools in order to encourage them to learn

whiles helping them address some of the adolescent challenges. This is what the Girl Child officer said;

We organise girl clubs' sessions in the schools with girls, in these sessions several topics are discussed ranging from their reproductive health, sex education, role model talks as well as girls' camps to build their confidence and believing in themselves. We also encourage them to report any issues from their parents and community members that affects their lives both at home and school to the girls' club patron who is always a female teacher in the school and together with these club patrons we try and address these issues collectively to help girls stay in school and learn (Girl Child officer, GES Wa- East District, 15/8/2017).

Also in an interview with a Gender and Value Chain Officer at MEDA he narrated how in one of his encounters with women farmers, one widow said;

She has single-handedly supported her two children in school, a boy and girl. Currently, the boy is in the teacher training college in Tumu whiles the girl is in the senior high school. The widow supports them through her farming activities. When her husband died, the family did not take care of the children but instead gave her a piece of land where her husband used to farm and so she could engage in farming with her children and taken care of their education (MEDA Gender Officer, 7/9/17)

In an interview with a woman where I asked how she treats her sons and daughters' school needs, she stated that;

When I do not have enough money to provide for both my son and daughters needs when they both request, I normally talk to both of them and then give the money to my daughter to address her needs first because of vulnerability of the girl child and then later give to my son when I get money to address his needs too (28/7/17).

She also mentioned how men sometimes deceive them (girls) by exchanging sexual favours for gifts or other requirements for school and end up impregnating them. She believes that girls' basic needs are very crucial to their academic as well as social progression and its absence has forced a lot of girls to miss out from school. When they end up becoming pregnant, they are quickly given out for marriage in other not to have a 'bastard child' in the family which is seen as a taboo in many cultures. Hence, she underlined the need to ensure girls are not open to these pressures and she felt mothers need to prioritize girls' needs and education so they do not fall prey to anyone.

Such conversations confirm the struggles of many women in Ghana particularly rural women. But, when women are economically empowered, they are able to help the next generation by supporting their children through education.

## 5.2 Educational Hopes and Limitations

The care for children is the prime responsibility of every parent but it becomes different when one of the parents becomes irresponsible or not interested in the care of their children including their education. In the case of Goripie, most men especially in polygamous marriages do not take up these responsibilities to take care of their children particularly the girl child. With regards to that, this is what some women said in an interview;

For us in polygamous marriages when a man marries you into a family there is little he does for you and your children apart from the food stuffs that he provides. The responsibility of caring for the children becomes yours. And because we always have other mistresses we are forced to do our best to care for our children. I remember when I had my first child and she started schooling and one day when she came back from school asking me to buy her a book, I did not have money to do that and went to my husband for support and he told me to ask my other mistresses how they have been going about it. This was my reality and from then I try hard to do some work on my own so that I could provide my children needs (Interview with a woman, Goripie 28/7/17).

These responsibilities have shifted to their wives or the mothers of the children. Because of competition from rivals, some women go through daily struggles and pain to take care of their children, and also to win favour from their husbands and demonstrate that, they are industrious and would not disturb their husbands with demands. This has had an effect on how far mothers can support their children especially on their educational aspirations. Consistent with this claim, one-woman farmer in Goripie states;

I have four children, two girls who are the elders and two sons. My husband has two other wives and taking care of the school needs of these children became my responsibility when my husband got his second wife. I have been able to take care of my two daughters after basic school in Goripie and they furthered their education to Senior High School in Tumu. They have both completed and currently one has travelled to the southern part of the country to work so that she can save money to further her education to the tertiary level because I cannot afford it. My other daughter is in the community here and she got married because her results were not too good and she also said she will not re-sit her papers even though I encouraged her to do so. So, I am hoping the other girl will be able to raise some money so that I can also help her with the little money I have to go to the tertiary (Interview with woman Goripie 28/7/17).

The above quote from this peasant woman meant that, if she doesn't take care of her children, no one will, not even the husband as each woman takes care of their children. The husband only supports them occasionally when he thinks there is the need to.

The highest level of education reached for most girls in rural Ghanaian communities is the Senior High School (S.H.S). After high school, most girls are

unable to continue further and either stay with their parents to offer helping hand or find themselves in a man's house to begin same life cycle akin to their mothers. It is a problem that the high school certificate in Ghana does not provide a gainful employment in the government sector and does not equip students for entrepreneurial skill to be employable in the private sector.

The financial barriers to children's education generally is a worry to parents especially mothers since they are not able to fund tertiary education. This also discourages the younger ones as they see their elder brothers and sisters go to school and come back to stay in the community after completion and not able to continue to the tertiary level. Sadly, girls who after returning from the S.H.S end up staying in the house and are sometimes forced into marriage because they have no support to progress to the tertiary level. Some of the girls get married with the hope that their husbands will help them further their education. Boys are mostly able to find menial jobs to raise money to go back to school. For instance, during the research a woman mentioned that;

When both boys are girls complete school and are waiting for support to further their education. The boys are more successful as they mostly go to work at the 'galamsey' (illegal mining) sites close to the community but girls stay in the community and are not able to engage in any income generating activities except working on their parents' farms which they earn nothing in return and the few girls who go these 'galamsey' (illegal mining) sites to work mostly end up with men forgetting to further their education. Also, there are few girls who migrate to the southern part of the country to work in shops and also as head porters. My daughter who also left for the southern part last two years in search for money has since not returned to further her education and when she calls she tells me that she is still looking for money so I am hopeful (Interview with a woman, Goripie 21/7/17).

There are changes happening in educational policy that could address this situation. Education at the high school level in the Northern part of Ghana was free prior to the introduction of the current free secondary high school (SHS) policy across the country. S.H.S is easy to access as there is a S.H.S in every district in the country.

At the time of my data collection, the free high school educational policy across Ghana was at the initial phase of implementation. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all children are enrolled and attain high school education, whether the person is from a poor home or not. The government believes that is the surest way of achieving the sustainable development goals of universal basic education and reducing poverty in the country. However, with tertiary education, one has to pay for it which still remains a huge challenge for many rural women across the country including Goripie. Those who are not able to secure educational scholarships to further their education remain as poor peasant farmers due to myriad of challenges already discussed in the study.

### **5.3 Enrolment of Boys and Girls in Goripie Basic Schools**

Goal two of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was to achieve universal primary education by 2015. According to progress reports of the UN, Ghana was able to achieve 100% gross and 90% net enrolment rates at primary level and gender parity in enrolment at primary level in 2013/2014 academic year. Additionally, the percentage of children completing primary education stood at 90% in 2013/14 academic year and there is also now universal access to pre-primary education, hence, the country is looking forward to sustaining the gains and achieving quality education in post 2015 sustainable development goals (UN Ghana 2015).

From the analysis of the data of the enrolment from Goripie E/A, enrolment for primary as at 2005/2006 academic year stood at 94 boys and 71 girls and in 2015/2016 academic year, this increased to a total of 272 boys and 239 girls. In these same years 2005/2006, the J.H.S also recorded an enrolment of 84 boys and 41 girls. However, in 2015/2016, the girls' enrolment saw an increase of 51 girls whiles the boys' enrolment declined to 50.

Also, retention for lower primary school in 2005/2006 was 85% for boys and 117% for girls. In 2015/2016, it 85% for boys and 76% for girls which was a drop. For retention for upper primary also registered 108% for boys and 122% for girls in 2005/2006 and in 2015/2016 academic year, enrolment stood at 75% for boys and 65% for girls. Transition from lower primary to upper primary in 2005/2006 was at 68.42% for boys and 64.71% for girls, and in 2015/2016 academic year, there was an increase for both sexes as transition for boys was at 76.47% and girls at 94.73%.

Retention for the E/A J.H.S in 2005/2006 academic year also saw a percentage of 49% for boys and 100% for girls and in 2015/2016 academic year, it saw a rise in percentages as boys recorded 106% and girls a 104%. Transition stood at 17.9% for boys and 36.6% for girls within the same period. And in 2015/2016 academic year transition for boys was at 168% and 129.4% for girls. For all the percentages that are above a 100%, it was due to no information on transfers in and out which limits the full reflection of the data. From the figures presented, one can conclude that, enrolment for girls at the basic school levels are at par with that of boys but once one moves higher in the academic ladder, the enrolment for girls begin to decrease compared to boys. These differences can be attributed to early marriages, teenage pregnancy, the long-time history of priority and preference of boys' education over girls' education as interview from field data shows. 5.4 Conclusion

As the evidence given in the chapter shows, the strategies employed by women in Goripie to empower their daughters seem to be in right direction to overcome their gendered disadvantages that prevent their participation in the development process. The up-keep of children including their educational needs is the sole responsibility of most women in Goripie. This situation continues to

pose a huge burden on women. In facing that challenge, women are committed to changing the future of their children particularly their daughters. This, the women in Goripie have demonstrated by ensuring that, the girl child enrols in school and has access to educational materials in order to attain at least basic education which has contributed to the country's achievement of 100% gross and 90% net enrolment at the basic level as stated in the MDGs report in 2015. However, more has to be done at the senior high levels and beyond as this chapter has also revealed that boys' and girls' enrolment are often at par from the beginning thus the basic level, but, as one climbs higher in the academic ladder, the enrolment for girls begins to decrease compared to boys. This is often due to early marriage, teenage pregnancy and the preference to educate the boy child over the girl child.

# Chapter 6

## Conclusions

### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter offers a synthesis of the findings of the study and the main conclusions and the implication for policy makers interested in women issues. It revisits the research questions and the key conceptual discussions and framing, and reflections on how far the paper has answered the questions and contributed to the debates on the topic and its broader implications.

### 6.1 Summary

The study sought to understand the multiple strategies women farmers employ in spite of the numerous challenges they face on a daily basis and their daughters' ability to acquire basic education. This was guided by the main research question; *despite the multiple constraints faced by women, how do women farmers struggle, manoeuvre and negotiate the education of their daughters?* To answer this question, responses of women groups, NGOs, officials from the Ghana Education Service and the Ministry of Agriculture were analysed through women empowerment theories, agency theory, feminist school of thought and other concepts to understand the role of the peasant woman in educating the girl child, in spite of the challenges women commonly face in their daily lives.

The study shows that, women access to land rights in Goripie is discriminatory because, customarily, women in this part of Ghana do not own lands. This infringement of women's rights has been a barrier to their empowerment. Findings from the study also reveal that, right from birth, there are gender inequalities in most households in Goripie and boys are given preferential treatment over girls. Boys, therefore, grow up to enjoy all the privileges and this cycle continues into adulthood. Consequently, it is only by educating the girl child that this cycle will be broken, and that is what women in Goripie have been working assiduously to achieve. The study has also reveal that, the gender-power relations in Goripie determine how a household should be ran and who owns what, how and for what? It is worth noting that, NGOs have been very supportive in the struggle for women empowerment, women equality and the girl child education. This is evident in the findings from the study that, NGOs have either financially supported women or have organised capacity building training programmes or others to support the peasant woman in Goripie. Findings from the study further reveal that, there seems to be parity in terms of enrolment between girls and boys at the basic level but as one climbs the academic ladder, the enrolment for girls begin to drop compared to that of boys. The MDGs and its post 2015 agenda has therefore, helped to support enrolment and retention of the girl child

at the basic school level. Going forward, it will be good to extend it to the high school level.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

Conclusions could be drawn from the study by saying that, in spite of the difficulties encountered by women in Goripie, they are still able to manoeuvre their way to ensure that their girl child goes to school and stay. The women themselves have identified that education is one way that can help them out of poverty and that of their children particularly the girl child. Another conclusion from the study is that, the customary law that prevents women access to land is antiquated and has no place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century anywhere. Women should be able to have access to as much lands as their male counterparts as that is one of the surest ways of ensuring gender equality in Goripie and many other places.

## **6.3 Recommendations and Implications for Future Study**

It is suggested that, for gender equality to be achieved, cautious efforts should be made to change the structures that create inequality between men and women and also efforts should be made to invest in women as this will empower them and increase their incomes/livelihoods and decision-making power and directly contribute to girls' education. Therefore, policy makers, NGOs and development agencies should involve women in the decision-making process especially on issues that affect their land rights, education and total development. Once they are involved, solutions on matters that affect them will come from the women themselves and not from without. That would be a first step in empowering them and this will directly translate into their standards of living, their households and families as elaborated in the literature.

This study contributes to knowledge in gender power relations of the woman peasant which is a grey research area particularly in Northern Ghana. Studies such as this can be replicated in other areas to draw attention to NGOs, policy makers on the challenges of women and how they could be supported to overcome such challenges. Future studies could expand on the scope by covering the entire region of Upper West Region.

## References

Agarwal, B. (1997). "Bargaining" and Gender Relations: Within and Beyond the Household. *Feminist economics*, 3(1): 1-51

Agarwal, B. (2003). Gender and land rights revisited: exploring new prospects via the state, family and market. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 3(1-2):184-224.

Akyeampong, E. and Fofack, H. (2013). The Contribution of African Women to Economic Growth and Development in Post-Colonial Africa: Historical Perspectives and Policy Implications. Policy Research Working Paper; No. 6537. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank.

Akudugu, M.A., Egyir, I.S. and Mensah-Bonsu, A. (2009). Women Farmers' Access to Credit from Rural Banks in Ghana. *Agricultural Finance Review*, 69(3): 284-299.

Alkire, S., Meinzen-Dick, R., Peterman, A., Quisumbing, A., Seymour, G. and Vaz, A. (2013). The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index. *World Development*, 52: 71-91.

Apusigah A.A. (2009). The gendered politics of farm household production and the shaping of women's livelihoods in Northern Ghana. *Feminist Africa*, 12(12) :51-67.

Asare, B. (1995). Women in Commercial Agriculture: The Cocoa Economy of Southern Ghana. *Women and Sustainable Development in Africa*. Westport: Praeger: 101-12.

Brown, C.K. (1996). Gender roles in household allocation of resources and decision-making in Ghana. *The changing family in Ghana*, pp.21-41.

Cornwall, A. (2016) Women's Empowerment: What Works? *Journal of International Development* 28(3): 342-359.

Cornwall, A. and Anyidoho, N.A. (2010). Introduction: Women's empowerment: Contentions and contestations. *Development*, 53(2): 144-149.

Cornwall, A. and Rivas, A.M. (2015). From 'gender equality and 'women's empowerment' to global justice: reclaiming a transformative agenda for gender and development. *Third World Quarterly*, 36(2): 396 -415.

Deere, C.D. and Doss, C.R. (2006). Gender and the distribution of wealth in developing countries (No. 2006/115). Research Paper, UNU-WIDER, United Nations University (UNU).

Dery, I. (2015). Access to and control over land as gendered: contextualising women's access and ownership rights of land in rural Ghana. *Africanus*, 45(2):28-48.

Devers, K.J. and R.M. Frankel (2000) 'Study Design in Qualitative Research--2:

Sampling and Data Collection Strategies', *Education for health* (Abingdon, England) 13(2): 263.

Dollar, D. and Gatti R. (1999). "Gender Inequality, Income and Growth: Are Good Times Good for Women." World Bank Policy Research Report on Gender and Development Working Paper Series No. 1.

Doss, C., Summerfield, G. and Tsikata, D. (2014). Land, gender, and food security.

Doss, C.R. (2001). Designing agricultural technology for African women farmers: Lessons from 25 years of experience. *World development*, 29(12): 2075-2092.

Fonchingong, C. (1999). Structural Adjustment, Women, and Agriculture in Cameroon. *Gender & Development*, 7(3):73-79.

Gray, L. and Kevane, M. (1999). Diminished access, diverted exclusion: Women and land tenure in sub-Saharan Africa. *African Studies Review*, 42(02):15-39.

Harcourt, W. (2010). Development as if Gender Matters. *Development*, 53(2): 210-214

Harcourt, W. (2016). Gender and sustainable livelihoods: linking gendered experiences of environment, community and self. *Agriculture and Human Values*: 1-13.

Haws, N.J. (2006). Access to Safe Water and Sanitation: The First Step in Removing the Female Face of Poverty. *Women's Policy Journal* 3: 41-46.

Jejeebhoy, S.J (1995). Women's education, autonomy, and reproductive behaviour: Experience from developing countries. *OUP Catalogue*.

Jiggins, J.R., Samanta, K., Olawoye, J.E., Aguilera, J. and Tempelman, D.E. (1997). *Improving women farmers' access to extension services*. *Improving Agricultural Extension*, a Reference Manual: 73-80.

Kabeer, N. (1994). *Reversed realities: Gender hierarchies in development thought*. Verso.

Kabeer, N. (1997). Women, Wages and Intra-Household Power Relations in Urban Bangladesh. *Development and Change*, 28(2): 261-302.

Kabeer, N. (1999). Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and change*, 30(3): 435-464.

Kabeer, N. (2003). *Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals: A handbook for policy-makers and other stakeholders*. Commonwealth Secretariat.

King, E. M. and Hill, M.A. (1997). *Women's education in developing countries: Barriers, benefits, and policies*. World Bank Publications.

Kuusaana, E.D. and Eledi, J.A. (2015). Customary land allocation, urbanization and land use planning in Ghana: Implications for food systems in the Wa Municipality. *Land Use Policy*, 48: 454-466.

Neumann, R. (2012). Introduction in Robbins, P.(ed.) Political ecology: *A Critical Introduction* (second edition): John Wiley & Sons.

O'Leary, Z. (2014). *The essential guide to doing your research project*. Sage.

Oxford Learner's Dictionary. accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017

<http://www.Oxford Learner's Dictionary>

Razavi, S. (2003). Introduction: Agrarian change, gender and land rights. *Journal of Agrarian change*, 3(1-2): 2-32.

Ribot, J.C. and Peluso, N.L. (2003). A theory of access. *Rural sociology*, 68(2): 153-181

Rocheleau, D., Thomas-Slayter, B. and Wangari, E. (1996). Gender and environment: A feminist political ecology perspective. *Feminist political ecology: Global issues and local experiences* :3-26.

Rünger, M. (2006). Governance, land rights and access to land in Ghana: A development perspective on gender equality. Paper presented at the Promoting land administration and good governance regional conference, Accra, Ghana, March 8-11.

Sen, A. (1995). Gender inequality and theories of justice. Women, culture and development: *A study of human capabilities*: 259-73.

Sewpaul, V. (2008). Transforming Gendered Relationships: Rural Women in Africa. *Agenda*, 22(78): 43-54.

Stromquist, N.P. (2015). Women's Empowerment and Education: linking knowledge to transformative action. *European Journal of Education*, 50(3):307-324.

Tsikata, D. and Yaro, J.A. (2014). When a good business model is not enough: Land transactions and gendered livelihood prospects in rural Ghana. *Feminist economics*, 20(1):202-226.

United Nation Sustainable Development Goals. Accessed on 4th May 2017

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals>

United Nation Millennium Development Goals. Accessed on 12th May 2017

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>

United Nation Secretary General addresses world education forum on theme 'Building partnership for girls' education'. Accessed on 17th October 2017

<http://www.un.org/press/en/2000/20000426.sgsm7369.doc.html>

United Nations in Ghana, MDG 2. Achieved universal primary education. accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2017

<http://gh.one.un.org/content/unct/ghana/en/home/global-agenda-in-ghana/millennium-development-goals/mdg-2-achieve-universal-primary-education.html>

Yaro, J.A. (2010). Customary tenure systems under siege: contemporary access to land in Northern Ghana. *Geo Journal*, 75(2): 199-214.

## Appendices

### Appendix A

Table 5. Participants list

| Data collection |                 |                |                             |        |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| Date            | Time            | Activity       | Organisation/Person(s)      | Number |
| 14/7/2017       | 14:00-15:30 pm  | FGD            | Women Peasant Group Leaders | 10     |
| 14/7/2017       | 15:35-16:43pm   | FGD            | Women Peasant Group Members | 11     |
| 14/7/2017       | 16:55-18:10pm   | FGD            | Women Peasant Group Members | 12     |
| 21/7/2017       | 14:00- 17:48pm  | Interviews     | Women Peasants              | 5      |
| 26/7/2017       | 14:45-15:58pm   | Interviews     | CIKOD                       | 1      |
| 28/7/2017       | 14:10-18:03pm   | Interviews     | Women Peasants              | 5      |
| 04/8/2017       | 15:20-16:08pm   | Interviews     | MoFA                        | 1      |
| 07/8/2017       | 13:30-14:10 pm  | Interviews     | MEDA                        | 2      |
| 09/8/2017       | 11:00 -12:13 pm | Interviews     | Pronet North                | 1      |
| 15/8/2017       | 11:00- 11:43 am | Interviews     | GES- Girl Child Officer     | 1      |
| 17/8/2017       | 10:23-14: 12 pm | Enrolment data | E/A Primary School          | 1      |
| 20/8/2017       | 11:03-11:34     | Enrolment data | GES-Statistics              | 1      |

## **Appendix B**

### **Data collection**

#### ***Focus Group Interview guide***

1. Can you tell me how long you have been working together in this community?
2. What is the reason/motive behind the formation of these women peasant farmers' groups?
3. What activities do you carry out as a group?
4. How do you define socio-economic empowerment? (probe for probe for; Who control decision over the land in the community? who makes the decisions over who gets what in the community?)
5. How do you access land in this community?
6. How are decisions made on women land access in Goripie? (probe: community, family, household, men).
7. Where do you get support to achieve your livelihood options and what support are they? (probe: self-finance, family, Banks, NGOs etc)
8. In what ways do your group see girls' education as important?
9. How do you support girls to acquire education?
10. In what ways do you support these girls in their education?
  
11. What are your hopes for your children's future? probe: education, profession
12. What other comments with regards to the education of the girl child?

#### ***Interview Guide for Women Farmers***

1. How are decisions made about the education of both boys and girls in the family/household? (probe; who takes those decisions, at what stage of the child are those decisions taken?)

2. What support do you give towards your daughters going to school? (probe; school materials, share house chores etc)
3. How long do you want your girl to stay in school and why?
4. What about your sons? Do you want them to stay in school and how is that different from your daughters?
5. What influences your decision to educate your daughters?
6. What do your girls do or go after basic education?
7. What are your hopes for your children's future? (probe: education, profession)

***Ghana Education Service (G.E.S) Head teacher***

Head Teacher

Name of Organization:.....

Name of Officer:.....

Position:.....

Date:.....

Time:.....

**General information**

Which year was the school established?

.....

**Enrolment figures**

| Year      | Boys | Girls |
|-----------|------|-------|
| 2005/2006 |      |       |
| 2006/2007 |      |       |
| 2007/2008 |      |       |
| 2008/2009 |      |       |
| 2009/2010 |      |       |

|           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
| 2010/2011 |  |  |
| 2011/2012 |  |  |
| 2012/2013 |  |  |
| 2013/2014 |  |  |
| 2014/2015 |  |  |

What is your observation in terms of female enrolment and their schooling in general within the period of 2000 and 2015?

.....  
.....

What is your observation on the attendance of girls to school and what could be the reasons for that?

.....  
.....

What roles are mothers playing in the education of their daughters' in Goripie?

.....  
.....

### ***Girl Child Officer***

Name of Organization : .....

Name of Officer : .....

Position : .....

Date : .....

Time: .....

1. What is the state of girl child education in your district?
2. What measures are put in place to promote girl child education in your district and the region as a whole?
3. What activities do you carry out in schools and community concerning girl child education?
4. What are the challenges encountered in delivery of your work?

5. As a native of Goripie, what is your view on women empowerment and its impact on girl child education?

***District Extension Officer (Ministry of Food and Agriculture)***

Name of Organization:.....

Name of Officer:.....

Position :.....

Date :.....

Time:.....

What support do you offer to women peasant farmers in Goripie?

.....  
.....

How has that support improved the livelihoods of women farmers in Goripie?

.....  
.....

What are challenges in your bid to support women farmers?

***Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)***

Name of Organization :.....

Name of Officer :.....

Position :.....

Date :.....

Time:.....

1. Background information about organization (when it was formed, what you do? etc)
2. How long you have been working in this community?
3. What support do you offer to women peasant farmers in Goripie?
4. On what women farmers spend their income on?

5. What relationship do women who are socio-economically empowered (women who have access to land, information on agronomic practices and weather, inputs and as well as marketing) and their daughters in terms of their ability to access basic education?
6. What influences the relationship between these women and their daughters?
7. What is the way forward in terms of women socio-economic empowerment and the welfare of their children particularly girls' education?

## Appendix C

**Table 6 School Enrolment, retention and transition figures**

| Enrollment E/A Primary |      |       |      |       |      |       |      |       |      |       |      |       |
|------------------------|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|
| classes                |      |       |      |       |      |       |      |       |      |       |      |       |
|                        | P.1  |       | P.2  |       | P3   |       | P4   |       | P5   |       | P6   |       |
| Year                   | Boys | Girls |
| 2005/2006              | 32   | 30    | 14   | 15    | 13   | 11    | 12   | 9     | 9    | 6     | 14   | 0     |
| 2006/2007              | 35   | 25    | 20   | 31    | 27   | 22    | 19   | 17    | 15   | 12    | 12   | 5     |
| 2007/2008              | 31   | 17    | 26   | 17    | 28   | 35    | 24   | 17    | 15   | 11    | 13   | 11    |
| 2008/2009              | 22   | 28    | 25   | 15    | 24   | 12    | 25   | 32    | 23   | 16    | 12   | 13    |
| 2009/2010              | 26   | 23    | 27   | 34    | 32   | 18    | 22   | 23    | 23   | 24    | 18   | 13    |
| 2010/2011              | 25   | 21    | 27   | 25    | 34   | 25    | 26   | 26    | 25   | 26    | 23   | 20    |
| 2011/2012              | 26   | 26    | 32   | 30    | 40   | 18    | 32   | 15    | 24   | 24    | 25   | 19    |
| 2012/2013              |      |       |      |       |      |       |      |       |      |       |      |       |
| 2013/2014              | 65   | 68    | 53   | 45    | 23   | 27    | 28   | 24    | 37   | 24    | 28   | 22    |
| 2014/2015              | 74   | 66    | 53   | 56    | 52   | 43    | 28   | 23    | 30   | 27    | 35   | 24    |

| E/A pri-primary                    |       |                 |       |      |                                    |       |                 |         |       |   |       |  |
|------------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|------|------------------------------------|-------|-----------------|---------|-------|---|-------|--|
|                                    |       |                 |       |      |                                    |       |                 |         |       |   |       |  |
| Retention figures at lower primary |       | Retention rates |       |      | Retention figures at upper primary |       | Retention rates |         |       | Transition rates lower to upper primary |       |  |
| Boys                               | Girls | Boys            | Girls | Boys | Girls                              | Boys  | Girls           | Boys    | Girls | Boys                                    | Girls |  |
| 3                                  | 5     | 88              | 117   | 1    | 2                                  | 108   | 122             | 68.42   | 64.7  |   |       |  |
| -23                                | -13   | 69              | 48    | -7   | -4                                 | 63    | 76              | 112.50  | 129.4 |   |       |  |
| -13                                | 1     | 103             | 106   | -6   | -4                                 | 75    | 76              | 112.00  | 109.4 |   |       |  |
| 3                                  | -3    | 155             | 89    | -2   | -12                                | 92    | 63              | 109.09  | 52.2  |   |       |  |
| -8                                 | -5    | 154             | 78    | 3    | -4                                 | 114   | 83              | 123.08  | 69.2  |   |       |  |
| -25                                | -21   | 0               | 0     | -26  | -26                                | 0     | 0               | 106.25  | 166.7 |   |       |  |
| 1                                  | 1     | 88              | 104   | -4   | 7                                  | 88    | 147             | #DIV/0! | ##### |   |       |  |
| 43                                 | 43    | #####           | ##### | 35   | 24                                 | ##### | #####           | 0.00    | 0.0   |   |       |  |
| -17                                | -20   | 72              | 71    | 4    | 4                                  | 114   | 117             | 82.14   | 117.4 |   |       |  |
| -22                                | -14   | 85              | 79    | -7   | -8                                 | 75    | 65              | 76.47   | 97.7  |   |       |  |

| Enrolment<br>E/A<br>JHS |      |       | JHS 1 |       | JHS 2 |       | JHS 3 |       | RETENTION RATES AT JHS |          | TRANSITION RATES |          |
|-------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------|----------|------------------|----------|
|                         | Boys | Girls | Boys  | Girls | Boys  | Girls | Boys  | Girls | Boys                   | Girls    | Boys             | Girls    |
| 2005/2006               | 84   | 41    | 28    | 14    | 25    | 16    | 31    | 10    | 49                     | 100      | 17.9             | 36.6     |
| 2006/2007               | 81   | 48    | 27    | 16    | 24    | 18    | 30    | 12    | 0                      | 0        | 51.9             | 0.0      |
| 2007/2008               | 77   | 53    | 26    | 18    | 23    | 20    | 29    | 14    | 0                      | 0        | 46.8             | 28.3     |
| 2008/2009               |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | ###<br>#               | ###<br># | ###<br>#         | ###<br># |
| 2009/2010               |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | ###<br>#               | ###<br># | ###<br>#         | ###<br># |
| 2010/2011               | 62   | 44    | 21    | 15    | 18    | 17    | 24    | 11    | 55                     | 77       | 87.1             | 88.6     |
| 2011/2012               | 60   | 35    | 20    | 12    | 17    | 14    | 23    | 8     | 83                     | 143      | 115.0            | 171.4    |
| 2012/2013               | 58   | 46    | 19    | 15    | 16    | 17    | 22    | 11    | 67                     | 85       | 129.3            | 123.9    |
| 2013/2014               | 54   | 62    | 18    | 21    | 15    | 23    | 21    | 17    | 65                     | 56       | 0.0              | 0.0      |
| 2014/2015               | 50   | 51    | 17    | 17    | 14    | 19    | 20    | 13    | 106                    | 104      | 168.0            | 129.4    |
| 2015/2016               | 26   | 47    | 9     | 16    | 6     | 18    | 12    | 12    | 0                      | 0        | 403.8            | 153.2    |

Note: ##### or an empty box means there was no enrolment data available for the class in that year.

P: means Primary