

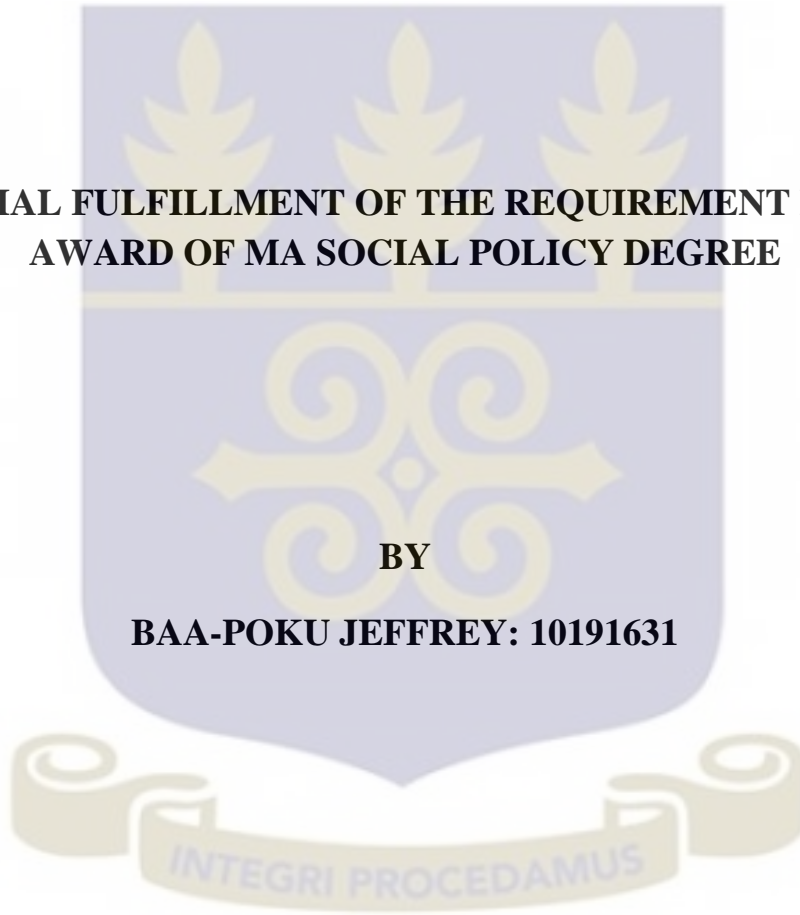
**GIRLS' RE-ENTRY INTO SCHOOL AFTER PREGNANCY IN THE  
ASHIEDU KETEKE SUB-METRO DISTRICT, ACCRA**

**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE  
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE  
AWARD OF MA SOCIAL POLICY DEGREE**

**BY**

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**JULY, 2016**

## DECLARATION

I, Jeffrey Baa-Poku hereby declare that except, for references to the works of other researchers, which have been duly acknowledged, this dissertation was carried out entirely by myself and has neither in whole nor in part been presented for another degree in the University of Ghana or any other institution.



## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my dear wife, Frimpomah, my mother, Victoria Adjaidoo and brother Richard Baa-Poku for their special love, financial and material support throughout my study.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, to thank God for his great love, favour and protection throughout my study. To my Supervisor, Professor Ellen Bortei-Doku Aryeetey for her usual encouraging and thought-provoking feedback. Your insightful guidance and useful suggestions brought clarity and focus to the study and I am grateful. I am also indebted to the Director of the Centre for Social Policy Studies (CSPS), University of Ghana, Professor Abena Oduro for her availability and readiness to guide and provide direction to students when needed. Also to the Dr George Domfe, Dr Antoinette Tsiboe-Darko and Dr Ernestina Dankyi (Coordinator of the CSPS, MA Programme) for their kind support and willingness to assist whenever I called on them. I also wish to express my profound gratitude to the following: Dr Isaac Mensah Bonsu, Director, Plan Coordination, NDPC; Mrs Catherine Mikaldo, Director of Girls Education Unit, GES; Mr Madeez-Issah, Education Specialist, UNICEF Ghana; Mrs Dora Owusu, Principal Administrative Assistant, CSPS; Mrs Faustina Opare, Secretary, CSPS; Madam Farida, Head of Accra Royal School - Primary, Accra; Madam Gifty, Nurse at the Jamestown Maternity Home, Jamestown; Juliet, Unit Head, Adolescent and Reproductive Health Unit, Ussher Polyclinic; Anthony Torsu-Lawson, my Field Assistant and my Colleagues, MA Class 2015/2016.

## ABSTRACT

Government directive on pregnant students' right and access to continued education and the provisions of the Inclusive Education Policy are intended among other things to address issues of exclusion in education and also ensure educational attainment among pregnant students in Ghana. However, it is not well known to what extent student mothers are taking advantage of this provision and the possible challenges encountered during implementation. This study sought to examine the factors and challenges that influence the decision and ability of student mothers in the Ashiedu Keteke Sub-Metro Assembly in Accra to return or not to return to school; as well as some of the challenges associated with the implementation of the girls' school re-entry directive. The study is based on the inclusive education theory and thus employed a conceptual framework described as a discriminatory/inclusive access model for basic school student mothers. Fifty-six (56) respondents comprising of 30 student mothers, 10 school heads, 10 teachers, 5 parents and an MOE official participated in the study. The respondents for the study were selected using purposive and snowball sampling methods. A predominantly qualitative approach was used based on semi-structured interviews. The study established that the decision and inability of student mothers to re-integrate into formal education and achieve their educational aspirations were influenced to a large extent by prevailing negative factors such as childcare responsibilities, poor economic background, and unsympathetic teachers and school mates. The study further identified the absence of specific guidelines to effectively execute the provisions of the directive as a constraint on the smooth implementation of the directive. The study recommended capacity building for key implementers of the directive and the preparation of a substantive policy with the required legal backing.

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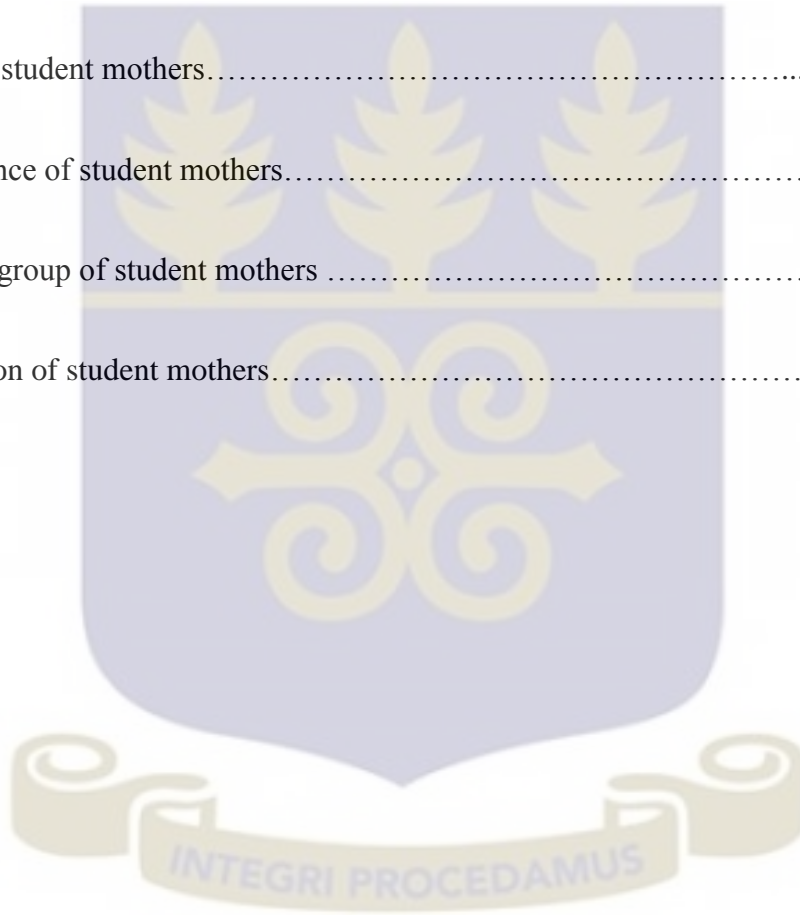
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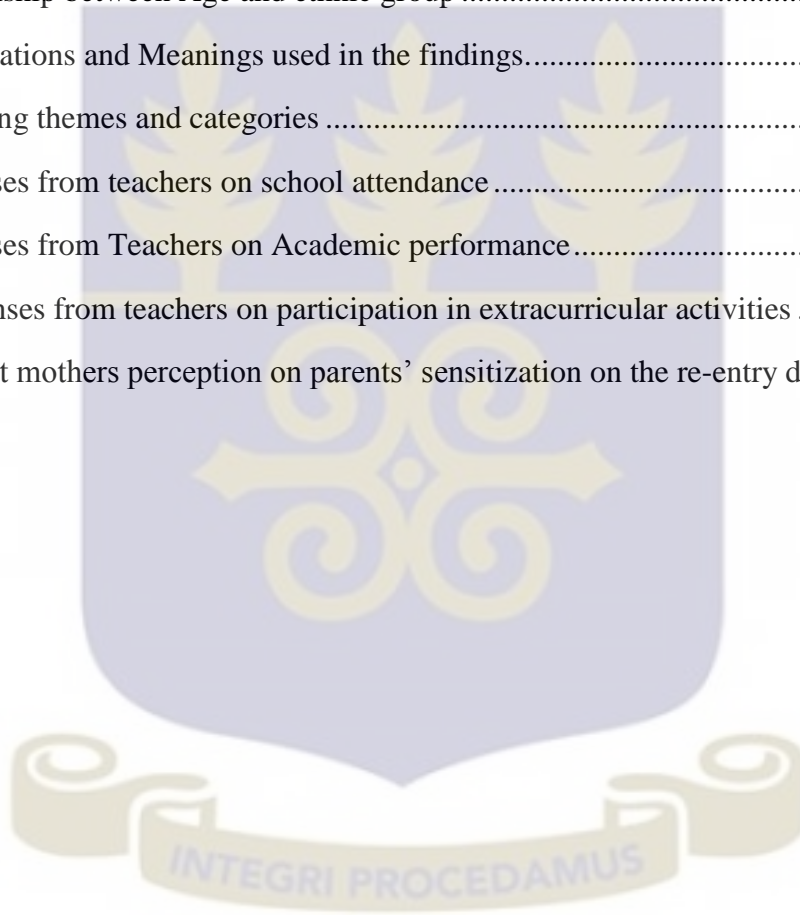
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## LIST OF ACRONYMS



AHU	Adolescent Health Unit
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Education
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
EFA	Education for All
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
GEU	Girls' Education Unit
GHS	Ghana Health Service
JHS	Junior High School
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
MSLC	Middle School Leaving Certificate
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SHS	Senior High School
SSS	Senior Secondary School

UDHR

Universal Declaration of Human Right



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background

The right to education remains one of the core human rights enshrined in most international Conventions and Declarations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989, Education for All (EFA) of 1990; and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of 2000. However gender inequality or disparity in education still exists particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, despite the efforts and progress made in addressing severe gender parity worldwide (EFA, 2015).

In Ghana the 1992 Constitution Article 25 (1a) and the Children's Act, 1998 both affirms the right to equal access to educational opportunities for all Ghanaian children including the girl child, yet education completion by girls of school going age still remains a challenge particularly at the basic school level. The development of the national vision for girls' education in Ghana, which culminated into the National Plan of Action on Girls' Education in December 1995 and the establishment of the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) in 1997 provided the basis and initial government commitment to addressing the disparity that existed in education among boys and girls. Further girls education is seen to be an important aspect of inclusive education which mainly addresses vulnerable children.

Reports however indicate that disparity in educational attainment between males and females still persist even though some improvements have also been observed over the years. The percentage of males (22.8%) who have attained MSLC/BECE/Vocational education was found

to be higher than that of females (19.3%), a pattern which was also observed among females (11.7%) in secondary/SSS/SHS compared to males (18.0%) (GSS, 2014).

Though girls education in Ghana has witnessed some significant improvements particularly at the primary level, where the gender parity index which was relatively high in 2008/2009 increased further to parity (0.99) in 2013/2014 (NDPC, 2015). Interactions with some basic school heads and teachers have also pointed to the negative impact of the phenomenon of school girl pregnancy and the lack of commitment of student mothers to return to school.

Teenage motherhood constitutes a major constraint to the active involvement and participation of girls and women in education in developing countries (Eloundou-Enyegue, 2004). Girls who disengage from school due to pregnancy decrease their chances of receiving education that will open them up to opportunities for a better life. Obonyo and Thinguri (2015) have argued that girls who dropout of school as a result pregnancy tend to be vulnerable and exposed to child labour, transactional sex, early marriages and a continuous cycle of teenage pregnancies. School re-entry opportunities that provides re-admission options for school girls to return to school after pregnancy has been one way in which some Sub Saharan African countries such as Kenya; Malawi; Namibia; Tanzania; Botswana; Swaziland; South Africa; and Madagascar have tried to control and manage the phenomenon (Maluli and Bali, 2014).

The concept of school re-entry as described by Obonyo and Thinguri (ibid) is an opportunity that provides children of school going age access to education particularly those excluded after the first entry or girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy. Girls' re-entry into school after pregnancy therefore in this study refers to girls' re-integration or re-admission into school after dropping out due to pregnancy. Ensuring that young mothers return to school after childbirth

offers several benefits. Some of these include i) opportunity for girls and women to participate in a country's economic development; ii) control of negative cultural practices such as early marriages; and iii) increased awareness and recognition of the importance of girl child education among others.

In Ghana, continuation or re-entry of pregnant girls' into school is facilitated by two government directives: re-entry directive and inclusive education policy that guarantees their access to formal education after child birth. The re-entry directive is in line with GEU strategies to reduce the dropout rate for girls in primary and junior high schools whilst increasing the transition rate of girls from junior to senior schools (GEU, 2002). The re-entry process for example involves: i) use of girls old school admission number for re-admission; ii) ensure girls remain in school once they are re-admitted; iii) offer of counseling services to girls; and iv) ensuring that the girls feel accepted and free from stigmatization. A recent preliminary study on girls' re-entry to school (GEU, 2015b) has however shown that only few girls participate in the process and eventually return to school after pregnancy.

Studies have shown that several factors influence a girl's re-entry into school after pregnancy. Dawson and Hosie (2005) have pointed to the lack of affordable and accessible childcare arrangements whilst Pricilah et al (2014) in a study also highlighted among other things girl mothers' unwillingness to return to school.

Chigona (2007) has also emphasized that the girls' ability to manage logistics associated with mothering and schooling simultaneously is one of the main reasons for their inability to return to school. Onyango et al (2015) have further attributed the causes to socio-cultural factors such as early marriage, gender preference and poverty. Madhavan and Thomas (2005) also noted that

child-care assistance and financial support play vital roles in the re-entry process. This study acknowledges the importance of the re-integration of pregnant school girls into school after delivery and therefore seeks to explore the experiences and general factors that influence their re-entry into school after pregnancy with the view to providing some in-depth understanding of the nature of the problem.

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

Considerable effort has been directed towards the promotion of girls' education in Ghana. Recent statistics from the GEU JHS Pregnancy Data Report (2015a) acknowledged the significant increases and improvements in girls' enrolment and completion rates particularly among nursery, crèche, kindergarten, primary and junior high schools, but also reported some regional disparities. In general there seem to be some daunting challenges that seem to militate against the full realization of the vision for girls' education in Ghana.

A preliminary study by GEU (2015b) on girls re-entry into school after pregnancy in ten selected districts throughout the country have also revealed that a greater proportion of girls who dropout of school due to pregnancy do not return to school inspite of governments directive to allow pregnant students to continue or re-enter school after childbirth. According to UNESCO (2003) the prevalence of school girl pregnancy remains one of the major challenges to girls' educational attainment. However, the factors that influence the decision and ability of student mothers in Ghana to re-engage or not to return to school have not been adequately explored. There seem to be limited empirical literature and a comprehensive study that explores the experiences and factors that inform their decision to re-engage or completely dropout from school after

pregnancy. Past studies have tended to focus largely on the pregnancy related school dropout but not particularly on their re-entry into formal education.

Even though the current government directive that seeks to address the policy gap in pregnant student education in Ghana is useful it does not provide documented guidelines or procedures to systematically guide the continuation or re-entry process in order to guarantee pregnant students' continued access to education. This lack of clarity and specificity of the directive is affecting implementation. The Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy of Ghana though key to addressing the reproductive and sexual health needs of in-or-out of school students in both primary and junior schools also does not address the specific issues of access to continued education by pregnant students and student mothers in Ghana (National Population Council, 2000).

An assessment study by Adu-Gyamfi (2014) on the impact of teenage pregnancy on primary education in Ghana has also suggested the need for an investigation into specific policy options for pregnant school girls and the re-integration into school after childbirth. Reports by FAWE Ghana (2015) have pointed to the absence of an official and comprehensive national re-entry policy that ensures the re-integration of Ghanaian girls into school after pregnancy. This need for the consideration and adoption of substantive re-entry policy has also been captured in the recently launched Ghana's National Gender Policy (MGCSP, 2015).

A substantive national policy is therefore needed to among other things effectively deal with the challenge and further demonstrate Ghana's commitment to SDG Goal 5 target 5c, which encourages member countries including Ghana to adopt and strengthen policies to promote gender equality and empower women including girls.

## **1.2 Objectives**

The general aim of the study is to investigate the reasons why pregnant school girls decide to return or not return to school; and what can be done to encourage them to go back to the classroom after delivery.

### **1.2.1 Specific objectives**

1. To explore the factors and reasons why student mothers are not returning to school after delivery;
2. To investigate the challenges faced by student mothers' who have returned to school; and
3. To examine the government directive on pregnant girls' continuation or re-entry into school after pregnancy.

## **1.3 Justification of the study**

Several education policies have been pursued by various governments since 1951, yet the goal of promoting and increasing access to education for all Ghanaian children has not been fully realized inspite of the achievements made in the education sector. Policy interventions such as the Accelerated Education Development Plan (1951); The Education Act (1961); PNDC Law 42 (1983); The Education Commission's Report on Basic Education (1986); and The Education Reform Programme (1987) have all been implemented with the view to achieving this goal, yet policy gaps in education still exist particularly with girls' education. Addressing this challenge is crucial for realizing gender parity in second cycle education and higher. The current re-entry directive for girls who dropout out of school due to pregnancy does not seem to address the challenge of girls' re-integration and participation in school after pregnancy schools hence the

need for a review of the directive that culminates into the introduction of substantive re-entry policy for pregnant students and student mothers.

## **1.4 Scope and Limitation**

### **1.4.1 Scope**

The study covered school girls in some selected basic schools and communities in the Ashiedu Keteke Sub-Metro district and other relevant stakeholders in the Greater Accra Region. The study particularly engaged girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy as well as those who subsequently re-entered school after childbirth.

### **1.4.2 Limitation**

The following limitations and challenges were encountered during the study:

- Due to lack of proper attention to records performance and general school participation of girls (student mothers) who had returned to school after pregnancy my assessment of student mothers in school was affected. This was attributed to the absence of specific guidelines on how to deal with student mothers who had re-entered school;
- Challenge of the expectations of the respondents to receive some financial support in order to return to school;
- Unwillingness of student mothers to adequately disclose information to the researcher particularly because it involved their personal life experiences and therefore some of them declined audio recording; and
- Refusal of some parents of student mothers for interviews to be granted by their daughters without reasons.

- Interview with re-entered student mothers in schools took place during their learning period and therefore was under pressure to end the interviews with them so they could join their lessons.

## **1.5 Summary**

This chapter presents the introduction to the study. This chapter consists of the background to the study which provides a brief overview of the study. This is followed by the problem statement which describes the identified problem, the motivation behind the study and research gap being filled; then the general and specific objectives. In addition the chapter presents the justification for the study. This gives an overview of the present and past educational policies related to the study and further identified the policy gap that the study sought to fill. The scope of the study; the limitations and challenges encountered during the study have also been captured.

## **1.6 Organization of the Study**

The dissertation is organized in five chapters. The first chapter gives an introduction to the study which comprises of the background; problem statement; objectives of the study; justification; scope and limitations; conceptual framework as well as the organization of the study. Chapter two is the literature review which consists of a review of literature on the phenomenon of school girl pregnancy; re-entry into school after pregnancy; and the relationship and impact of pregnancy on girls' educational attainment. Chapter three covers the methodology of the study consisting of research design, the study area, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, and instrument for data collection and data analysis. The analysis and discussion are presented in chapter four, whilst chapter five ends with the conclusion and recommendations with references and appendices.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature on girls' education and the experiences and factors that influence girls' re-entry into school after pregnancy. The review is presented using various themes derived from the general objective of the study. The chapter starts with an overview of gender parity and girls' education, and then examines the phenomenon of pregnancy and girls' school dropout. It further explores girls' re-entry in to school after pregnancy. The chapter then concludes with an overview of the nexus that exist between pregnancy, school re-entry and girls' educational attainment in Ghana. A summary of the major themes as well as the research and policy gap that this present study seeks to fill is also presented.

#### 2.1 Gender parity and girls' education

According to the World Bank (2011) girls education has witnessed significant improvement over the years. It is reported that globally, the gender gap has been gradually shrinking since 1999 especially in Latin America and East Asia, where girls have reached parity with boys. While some progress has also been made in countries such as Ethiopia and Senegal, countries such as Angola and Eritrea have retrogressed. In spite of improvements made in addressing gender parity worldwide (EFA, 2015) the phenomenon still persist in many sub-Saharan African countries. Statistics show that half of the worlds out of school girls can be found in Sub Saharan Africa (World Bank, *ibid*). Reports however indicate that Sub-Saharan Africa made the greatest progress in primary school enrolment among all developing regions – from 52 percent in 1990 to

78 percent in 2012 yet some disparities still exist. In a study of school dropout rates in 49 African countries, more girls were found to have dropped out of school compared to boys (UNESCO, 2012).

In Ghana, the Accra Accord on Girls Education; the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Reform and the establishment of the Girls Education Unit (GEU) within the basic education division of the Ghana Education Service in 1997 constituted the initial effort and commitment at addressing disparity in educational attainment between males and females or boys and girls. The primary aim of GEU was to ensure increased enrolment and participation of girls in school in relation to boys with the view to attaining the aims of the FCUBE.

A study by UNICEF (2004) notes that investing in girls 'education leads to more equitable development, effective participation in governance, stronger families and better child healthcare (UNICEF, 2004). However, challenges and setbacks including pregnancy among school girls continue to serve as a major constraint to the elimination of gender disparities in education in many countries in Africa (Hubbard 2008).

## **2.2 Pregnancy and girls' school dropout**

Several definitions have been proffered in an attempt to explain the school dropout phenomenon but the Girls Education Unit (2002) has defined a "school dropout" as someone who has left school and not returned. Awedoba et al. (2003) also notes that a dropout typically refers to a pupil's permanent withdrawal from school. This present study draws from these definitions and examines the concept in relation to pregnancy and therefore defines pregnancy-related school dropout as Junior High School (JHS) girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy.

The prevalence of teenage pregnancy and the consequent impact of girls' school dropout are widely discussed in literature. The incidence of teenage pregnancies and births in many developed countries have received increased attention in the past years due to the widespread belief that the phenomenon is linked to adverse socio-economic outcomes for the mother and the child (Paniagua & Walker, 2012). In Sub Saharan Africa, among the major obstacles to the educational attainment of girls is said to be pregnancy (Swainson, Bendera, Gordon & Kadzamira, 1998).

A study by Gorgen et al (1993) in Burkina Faso identified lack of contraceptive knowledge; ambiguous feelings about pregnancy and contraception; conflicting messages concerning the reproductive role of young women; and the girls' low self esteem in their interaction with older, experienced male partners as the main factors that influence school girl pregnancy. In a similar study of the phenomenon in Tanzania, Uromi (2014) also highlighted some of the causes of school girl pregnancies as low socioeconomic status; socio-cultural beliefs and practices; financial challenges; lack of information about sexual matters and exposure. Findings from a study by (Gyan, 2013; Adu-Gyamfi, 2014) in Ghana have also suggested that the causal factors of teenage pregnancy include poor parenting, poverty, peer influence, lack of sex education, mass media, curiosity, relationship affairs, breakdown of culture, self esteem and forced unprotected sex. Rosenberg et al. (2015) in study have also maintained that school enrolment was associated with lower teenage pregnancy rates. According to the study pregnancy occurred less commonly during school term than during school holidays and that girls who drop out of school may be at higher risk to teenage pregnancy.

Numerous empirical studies have pointed to teenage pregnancy as a significant cause of girls' school dropout (Boyle et al., 2002). Jones et al. (1973) revealed in a study in the United States that pregnancy was the major cause of girls dropping out of school and that pregnancy often implied the termination of a girl's formal education. According to UNESCO (2015) pregnancy is a major driver for school dropout among female secondary school students in sub-Saharan African countries, including Cameroon and South Africa.

Meekers and Ahmed (1999) also acknowledged the challenges posed by the phenomenon and suggested the need for improvement in programmes targeted at reducing adolescent pregnancy, and also increasing the number of young mothers who return to school to complete their education. Grant and Hallman (2008) have further suggested that prior school performance is strongly associated with the likelihood of a girl becoming pregnant while enrolled in school, dropping out of school if she becomes pregnant, and not returning to school following a pregnancy-related dropout.

In contrast, Mensch et al. (2001) have argued that although the prevalence of school girl pregnancy is a source of concern for policy makers in Kenya, pregnancy was not the primary reason for girls' school dropout. Eloundou-Enyegue (2004) in a study on the impact of pregnancy-related dropouts on gender inequality in educational attainment in Cameroon have also maintained that a reduction in the incidence of pregnancy-related dropout only complements efforts at bridging the gender gap and therefore should not replace deliberate efforts by policy makers to address other sources of gender inequality, such as advancing girls' primary education and reducing gender discrimination in investments in secondary schooling.

### **2.3 Inclusive Education and Girls' re-entry into school after pregnancy**

The Inclusive Education theory is a perspective that argues that no barriers should be allowed to stand in the way of education of young and adult learners alike. In its broad context it encompasses efforts to re-engage students who drop out of school including student mothers from basic to tertiary institutions. The concept and practice of school re-entry in educational systems is an integral component of the student mothers' re-entry programme. It provides children of school going age, particularly those excluded after the first entry or girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy access to education (Obonyo and Thinguri, 2015). The re-entry process that allows girls to return to school after pregnancy has been practiced in many Sub Saharan African countries since 1990 (UNESCO Gender report, 2015).

A review of national policies on pregnancy in educational systems in Sub Saharan Africa has identified three main categories: expulsion, continuation and re-entry policies. According to Chilisa (2002) expulsion policies which were used in countries such as Mozambique and Tanzania stemmed from the need to punish immoral behaviour which usually led to the expulsion of the girl from school. Continuation policies which were applied in countries such as Cameroon, Madagascar, Namibia and Sierra Leone constituted the emerging pregnancy policies that took into consideration critical issues such as childcare, girl mother's academic, physical, personal development as well as her physiological needs (Wamahiu, 1997 cited in Chilisa, 2002). This policy ensured that the pregnant girls' education is not interrupted.

Re-entry policies on the other hand allow re-integration of girls into the formal education system after pregnancy and are practiced in countries such as Botswana, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia and South Africa (FAWE, 1997; Vilikazi-Tselane, 1998 cited in Chilisa, 2002). In

countries such as Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Panama and Guatemala however rights of pregnant students and young mothers have been further enshrined in legislations and laws thereby expanding the legal protection for pregnant school girls (Hubbard, 2008).

Arguing from the perspective of theories of oppression, Chilisa (ibid) notes however that the application of expulsion policies constituted direct violence against pregnant girls whilst re-entry policies violated girl mothers' right to education through the temporary withdrawal of the pregnant girl from school. Readmitting girls into school after pregnancy offers several benefits. Among these benefits include: girls' ability to participate in development; reduction in the incidences of early marriages; and increased chances of educational attainment.

Following the introduction of policies for pregnant girls in schools in developing countries, several studies have been undertaken to explore the implementation and impact of the policies on educational systems in Sub Saharan Africa. A review of country experiences of education sector response to school girl pregnancy in Sub Saharan Africa by Birungi et al. (2015) revealed that only Botswana, Kenya, Zambia had official school re-entry policies while the remaining three countries such as Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda had school re-entry policies in draft form.

Mwansa (2011) in a study on the implementation of the re-entry policy in Zambia revealed that opposition from groups such as schools, churches, and members of parliament particularly those from opposition parties opposed the policy thereby rendering it ineffective. It was suggested that stakeholders be engaged more effectively in the development and formulation of future policies. The re-entry policy which was introduced in 1997 allows girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy to be readmitted after delivery.

A similar study on Kenya's re-entry policy (introduced in 1994) also identified a number of implementation challenges. According to Obonyo and Thinguri (ibid) the absence of clear and specific guidelines; limited access and awareness of the policy, negative community attitude towards pregnant girls stay in school, lack of financial and legal backings to the policy were some of the key challenges that hindered the smooth implementation of the policy.

Chilisa (2002) in a review of the impact of the re-entry policy in Botswana (adopted in 1977) revealed that the policy recorded minimal success due to the presence of cultural practices that reinforce unequal power relations between men and women. According to the review, the policy which made provision for boys to also re-enter school upon failing to access senior secondary schools further aggravated the existing imbalances in the opportunities for schooling between boys and girls.

Empirical studies on pregnant girls' school re-entry in Sub Saharan Africa have shown that several factors influence a girl's re-entry into school after pregnancy. In Kenya, socio-cultural factors such as gendered customary practices such as patriarchy, gender preference, early marriage as well as widespread poverty were identified as the main factors that influenced the re-entry of girls into school after pregnancy. The girl mothers' re-integration into formal education is also affected largely by the negative attitudes and perceptions exhibited by pupils, teachers and parents toward teenage motherhood often resulting in stigmatization (Onyango, Kiolis & Nyambedha 2015).

Sarah and Muthoni (2012) in a previous study also confirmed stigmatization and discrimination by teachers, parents, fellow students and the society as major causes of girl mothers' inability to continue school after childbirth. The feeling of guilt and shame experienced by girls also makes

it difficult for them to return to school. The study however concluded that girls who receive support with childcare from family, teachers, peers and the community are able return to school to continue their education. Chigona and Chetty (2008) in a study in South Africa further emphasized the role of support in facilitating school re-entry among girls after pregnancy and noted that some girl mothers also chose to continue schooling in order to increase their chances of employment after school.

Findings from a study by Lwiza (2014) in Zambia have also highlighted negative attitude of parents, peers and teachers; threatened health and welfare; lack of adequate guidance and counseling; inconsistent implementation of re-entry policy; shame and stigmatisation due to derogatory remarks; trauma as a result of unwanted sex; burden of childcare; and poverty as some of the factor responsible for girls' inability to re-enter school after delivery. The study recommended an active involvement of parents in facilitating girl mothers' school re-entry.

Madhavan and Thomas (2005) in a study also revealed that financial support and child-care assistance play very important roles in the re-entry process. A majority of the girl mothers who returned to school received support with childcare from their own mothers or their sisters and some financial support from fathers of the children. Meekers and Ahmed (ibid) explained that though parental support for girl mothers was critical to the re-entry process, some parents also insisted that the young mothers work to support their children often decreasing the mothers' chances of returning to school. A related study that explored the barriers to effective parental participation in teenage mothers' education has also identified girl mothers' unwillingness to return to school, the schools' failure to adequately sensitize parents of teenage mothers and lack

of follow up on teenage mothers who were at home as major influencing factors (Pricilah et al., 2014).

Studies on the experiences of girl mothers who re-entered school after pregnancy have also shown that girls who return to school encounter several challenges. Among some of the challenges identified by Maluli and Bali (2014) include responsibility of childcare and stigmatization.

In Ghana, the GEU supervises the re-admission of girls into schools following a dropout through a re-entry process facilitated by regional and district supervisors in schools throughout the country (GEU, 2002). The process which allows girls who disengage from formal education due to pregnancy to return to school involves: a) re-admission of the girl mother based on her old admission number; b) monitoring of the girls to ensure they remain in school till completion; c) offer of counseling services to the student mothers; d) creation of a conducive and non-judgmental environment for the girls to be able to integrate easily into school.

A study by FAWE Ghana (2015) on policy for student mothers in Ghana revealed that even though a re-entry provision exist there seem to be no specific and comprehensive national re-entry policy document for pregnant girls' education in Ghana. A similar study by GEU (2015) on the re-entry of girls into school following a pregnancy related dropout in ten communities in Ghana have also pointed to the absence of a standardized procedure for girls re-admission to school after delivery. This policy gap was also highlighted by Adu-Gyamfi (2014) in a study that recommended an investigation into policies for pregnant school girls and further captured in the recent National Gender Policy (2015).

Related and past studies on the phenomenon of school dropout seem to have focused primarily on the causes, consequences and challenges and not necessarily on the re-entry prospects of school dropouts particularly among girls who dropped out due to pregnancy.

A study that examined factors that affect school dropout at the basic level of education in Ghana, showed that factors such as weak family support, poor academic performance, poor school quality, and low value for education influenced school dropouts. The findings further noted that while others dropped out of school some children prevailed against the odds and remained (Sottie & Awasu 2011). Braimah and Oduro-Ofori (2005) in a study also assessed the trends of basic school dropout as well as the main causes and policy implications of the phenomenon in the Amansie West district of Ghana. The findings revealed a downward trend in dropout rates and further suggested that the factors that influenced basic school dropout were found to be poverty related.

In a study that investigated school pupils experience as they cross the threshold from being enrolled to being out of school in southern Ghana, Ananga (2011) argued that achieving the target of universal education required dealing with the school dropout phenomenon. The study showed that factors such as poverty and the opportunity cost of schooling; the teacher factor; and school practices and processes influenced the retention or dropout of children from school

Imoro (2009) in a study of the various dimensions of basic school dropouts in rural Ghana in the Asutifi district also established that the high rate of dropout was related to performance of candidates in the final examinations of the basic level as a result of the poor quality of teaching and learning in the rural environment. Poverty was also identified as one of the main causes of school dropout.

An investigation by Kneepers (2015) into the impact of school dropout on teenage girls in a deprived locality in the Northern region of Ghana showed that school dropout was a complex process in which familial, cultural, economic and institutional factors push and pull teenage girls from school. The study also revealed that poverty and household survival strategies, including migration and work, hindered the girls' schooling opportunities. Yokozeki, (1996) in a study on the nature of student drop-out from Junior Secondary School (JSS) in the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem district also identified financial challenges and pregnancy among others as some of the causes of school dropout.

Findings from a study by Afosaa (2009) on the effect of gender and region on school dropout showed that the region of a child has significant effect on the potential of a pupils' dropout of school whereas gender had no significant influence on the dropout rate.

The above listed studies on school dropout phenomenon focused generally on the various dimensions of the school dropout experience but did not cover girls school re-entry after pregnancy.

#### **2.4 Pregnancy, school re-entry and girls' educational attainment**

The critical role and impact of education has been advanced by various researchers from different fields of studies. Education has been described as the means by which countries equip and unearth the potentials of their citizens (Akhtar, 2007). Bernard (1999) also describes it as empowerment or building of capacities of children to be independent minded through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills and right attitudes. Education has therefore been viewed as key to development and a tool for poverty reduction and economic development.

Sen (2001) further emphasizes the important role of education to development and notes that people tend to experience increased freedom when there is development.

Girls' education has been found to be the most cost-effective measure a developing country can take to improve its standard of living (Paniagua & Walker, *ibid*). However the path to educational attainment and success among girls in Sub-Saharan Africa is paved with several barriers and challenges including the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy (Swainson, et al., *ibid*).

The school re-entry policy is one of the key strategies that has been employed to control the scourge and negative impact of the school girl pregnancy experience in countries such as Kenya, Zambia, Swaziland and Tanzania (Maluli & Bali, 2014). Policies and strategies that facilitate easy re-integration of girl mothers into school after childbirth therefore holds good prospects for girls' educational attainment and success.

## **2.5 Summary**

The chapter reviewed literatures on pregnant girls' education and the policies that influence girls' re-entry into formal education after pregnancy. The main themes that emerged from most of the literature reviewed above were issues of gender parity; pregnancy and girls' school dropout; girls' re-entry into school after pregnancy; and the relationship between pregnancy, school re-entry and girls' educational attainment.

The review has shown generally that most countries particularly in sub-Saharan Africa have made enormous efforts at controlling and addressing the negative impact of school girl pregnancy through the introduction and adoption of specific pregnancy policies; including re-entry policies that facilitates girls' re-admission into school after dropping out as a result of

pregnancy. The chapter also examined the experiences, challenges and factors that influence girls' re-entry into school after childbirth in sub-Saharan Africa.

However, literature on the re-entry process that allowed pregnant school girls to return to school after delivery in Ghana was limited. A three day consultative meeting on re-entry of girls into school in some ten selected districts in Ghana (GEU, 2015b) pointed to a low participation in the re-entry process. The preliminary findings however do not provide an in-depth understanding of the nature, experiences and factors that influence the mothers' re-entry into school. This study therefore seeks to highlight these issues with the view to creating awareness of the need for a policy review regarding pregnant girls' education in Ghana.

## **2.6 Conceptual Framework**

This section provides a conceptual framework (figure 1) that draws from various concepts and policy responses that address issues of access to continued education by pregnant school girls. The study is intended to provide an understanding of the factors that influence student mothers' decision to return or not return to school as well as the challenges faced by those who re-enter the education system after pregnancy. The following broad concepts deemed key and important to this study are analyzed in the framework: The Pregnant Schoolgirl; The Policy Response and Interventions [Expulsion, Re-entry and Continuation].

### **2.6.1 The Pregnant Schoolgirl**

In many societies, early pregnancy or sex among children is regarded as immoral and therefore not culturally and religiously acceptable. Chilisa (2002) in study on pregnancy policies in education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa notes that a girl becomes a mother only after being

married and therefore society frowns on and considers it inappropriate when school girls get pregnant. Kabaso (2012) describes the phenomenon as being responsible for the cycle of poverty and state of hopelessness found among most young mothers. The phenomenon of school girl pregnancy has therefore been conceptualized as both an economic and social burden. Other arguments have however pointed to an overstatement of these negative impacts and rather highlight positive outcomes of the phenomenon, given the tendency of the young student mothers to refocus and have a renewed commitment to their education (Madhavan & Thomas, 2005; Estrada 2012).

Even though pregnancy among school girls has been found to negatively impact the girls educational aspirations and attainment (Eloudou-Enyegue, 2004), pregnant school girls generally are faced with two main options; either to drop out of school or continue their education (figure 1). Student mothers who opt out or fail to return to school after childbirth deprive themselves of the educational opportunities resulting in exclusion from education. However, the pregnant schoolgirl who decides or opts to continue her education increases her chances of educational attainment and therefore moves from the zone of exclusion from education to that of inclusion.



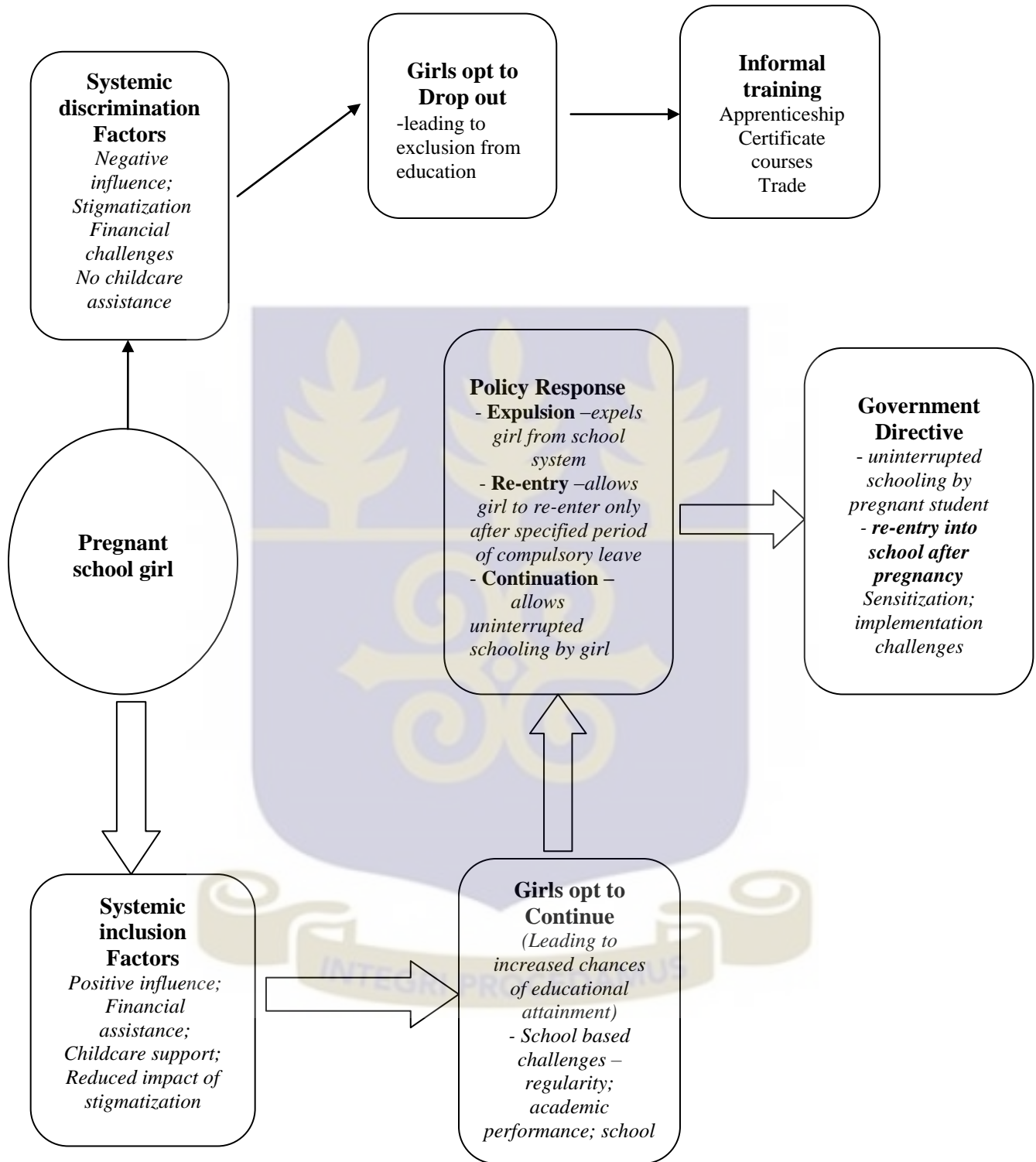


Figure 1: Conceptual framework showing the prospects, challenges and policy responses to pregnant students' education. **Source: Author**

## 2.6.2 Policy Responses and Interventions

The rights of pregnant school girls' and student mothers to education are enshrined and reinforced in many international conventions and declarations including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1984), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (1976). These agreements all recognize the principle of education as a basic human right for every child. Countries that are signatories' to these conventions and declarations are therefore required as part of their commitment to develop and implement policies that guarantees and ensures equal educational rights of children including pregnant schoolgirls.

Haddad and Demsky (1995:18) define policy as:

*An explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous decisions.*

Three main policy responses namely the expulsion; re-entry and continuation policies targeted at addressing the phenomenon of school girl pregnancy have been pursued in many sub Saharan African countries including Mozambique, Cameroon, Zambia, and Kenya among others. Pregnant school girls or student mothers who decide to continue their education are therefore met with these policy options.

The expulsion policy expels pregnant students from the school system with no prospect of returning. It engenders direct violence against pregnant students and is more common in countries with poor human rights records. The re-entry policy disengages the pregnant girl from

the school system and subsequently allows her to re-enter school only after specified period of compulsory leave. This policy also violates pregnant students' right to continued education through temporary withdrawal. Continuation policies on the other hand are more progressive as they facilitate uninterrupted and continuous schooling of the pregnant student. This policy though relatively progressive also denies the pregnant students' right to support and comfort during pregnancy and after childbirth.

In Ghana, pregnant students or student mothers' access to continued education is guaranteed by a Government directive (Revised Head Teachers Handbook, 2016) which is operationalized by the GES in collaboration with GEU and other stakeholders (in the education sector) in all public schools in the country. The directive flows from government's commitment to the rights of all Ghanaian children to education as enshrined in the 1992 Constitution; and other international declarations and conventions such as EFA, CEDAW, the MDGs now Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) all of which call for actions that ensures continued schooling of pregnant students. The directive also seeks to ensure that the rights of pregnant students or student mothers are not violated as such actions affects performance and quality delivery of education (Appendix D). The specific details of the directive include the following i) school girls found to be pregnant whilst in school should not be punished or expelled from school; ii) pregnant students should be allowed to continue school insofar as they are able and willing to participate in academic work; iii) pregnant students must be encouraged and allowed to participate in national or final school examinations.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methods and specific procedures that were used in conducting the study. These include the research design, the study area, target population, sample size and the sampling procedure and instrument used for data collection. This section also outlines how the data obtained was analyzed in order to answer the research objectives and concludes with a summary.

Table 1: Summary of data collection and analysis

No	Objective	Sampling Method	Data Collection Method	Analysis
1	To explore the factors and reasons why student mothers are not returning to school after childbirth; with particular reference to negative influence; stigmatization; financial pressures; childcare arrangements.	Purposive/ Snowball	Qualitative Semi structured interview/guide	Thematic analysis (qualitative data); Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software (basic quantitative data)
2	To investigate the challenges faced by student mothers' who have returned to school, with special attention to issues of school participation, attendance and academic performance; and school support.	Purposive/ Snowball	Qualitative Semi structured interview/guide	Thematic analysis (qualitative data); Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software (basic quantitative data)
3.	To examine the directive on pregnant girls' continuation or re-entry into school after pregnancy; in terms of rationale; sensitization and awareness; as well as		Qualitative Semi structured interview/guide	Thematic analysis (qualitative data); Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software

	implementation challenges.			(basic quantitative data)
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### 3.1 Research design

This study sought to examine the factors that influence pregnant girls' decision to return to school after delivery. It also attempted to explain the experiences and challenges of student mothers who returned to school after childbirth as well as perceptions of various stakeholders on the current directive to allow pregnant girls to continue or re-enter school after pregnancy. Given the nature of the research objectives this study could best be approached using a predominantly qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is useful in exploring the deeper meaning of people's experiences and providing rich descriptions of a phenomenon (Rubin and Babbie, 1989). Creswell (2009) has also described qualitative research as the means by which a researcher understands the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Basic quantitative data was collected to provide information on the background of the student mothers in school and their school participation.

### 3.2 Study area

The study was conducted in the Ashiedu Keteke Sub-Metro District in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The district which is located in the Accra Metropolitan Area of the Greater Accra Region consists of several communities including the Ga Mashie area which comprise of the oldest neighborhoods in Central Accra namely: Ussher Town and James Town. Other communities located in this district include Atukpai, Asere, Abola, Gbese and Otublohum, Ngleshie and Sempe among others. The study area is principally inhabited by the Ga people, of the Ga-Dangme ethnic group, who speak the Ga language; although other ethnic groups such as

Akans, Ewes, Guans and Mossi-Dagomba also reside in the area (Quartey-Papafio, 2006). Communities in this area are socially, economically and politically marginalized. Inhabitants of the area are mainly involved in fishing, fish mongering and petty trading.

The choice of the study area was informed by anecdotal evidences from interactions with the girl child coordinator at the Accra Metro Education Directorate and statistics from the Accra Metro Education statistics office who pointed to increases in girls' school dropout. The phenomenon of teenage pregnancy and the subsequent teenage motherhood was found to be a major challenge in the area. It was therefore important to explore how the education of girls in basic schools in the area is being affected by the phenomenon and ways in which those affected are able to return to school as well as maintain positive progression rates.

### 3.2.1 Selection of basic schools and communities for the study

A visit to the Accra Metropolitan Education Directorate provided me with a list of the schools within the Ashiedu Keteke Sub Metropolis. Schools in the study area have been categorized under three main circuits, with each circuit being headed by circuit supervisors. Upon official introduction (letter) by the Accra Metropolitan Education Office to the Circuit Supervisors I was able to interact with the various school heads of most of the basic schools in the area. The selection and identification of schools within the communities was facilitated by the head teacher of Independence Avenue 1 JHS. As a result I was able to select ten basic schools within the three circuits (namely Independence Avenue - circuit 12; Adedenkpo - circuit 13); and Ayalolo - circuit 14). The selected schools included: i) Independence Avenue 1 ii) Independence avenue 2 iii) Accra Royal JHS; iv) Bishop Girls Basic school; v) Nii Odartey Lamptey JHS; vi) Ayalolo 1

& 2 JHS; vii) Ashia Mills JHS; viii) Amamomo JHS; ix) John Wesley Methodist and x) Akoto Lante JHS.

A focal person who knew the communities very well was identified with the assistance of one of the school heads I interviewed during the study. Anthony also had many former school mates in the area and could introduce me to their mothers. Communities visited during the study include Bukom, Jamestown, Gbese, Sempe and Akoto Lante.

The Adolescent Health Unit (AHU) of the Usher Polyclinic, one of the main health facilities that serve the communities in the district was also visited as part of efforts to facilitate the identification of my primary target group, the student mothers.

Upon clearance following an official permission letter from the regional office of Ghana Health Service (GHS), I was granted access to records on the statistics of pregnant teenage girls who visited the facility (Usher Polyclinic) for antenatal services. The records obtained from the unit however did not specify the educational backgrounds of the pregnant mothers. Therefore I was unable to get the specific number of pregnant school girls since the records also included teenage pregnant girls and mothers who were illiterates. I was therefore directed to the Jamestown Maternity Home where I had access to the antenatal records which provided the educational backgrounds and contact details of my target group. This enabled me to identify some of the primary respondents, student mothers.

### 3.3 Target population

The targeted population of the study consisted of i) girls in basic schools who dropped out of school due to pregnancy as well as those who have returned to school after childbirth; ii) school

heads, iii) teachers, iv) parents and v) an official from the Ministry of Education (MOE). Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) define population as a group of individuals or objects with similar or common observable characteristics. The target population therefore refers to that segment of the population that is chosen or selected for a study.

The primary target or respondents of the study were student mothers as the research objectives sought to find out the factors that influenced their decision to return or not to return to school as well as the challenges encountered by those who returned to school after childbirth. Information gathered from the respondents constituted the experiences and perspectives on school girl pregnancy and its impact on girls' education.

The choice and selection of the other key informants was informed by the multi-dimensional nature of student mothers' challenges emanating from the school, family and the community. School heads and teachers were selected because they could provide information on pregnancy-related dropout, re-enrolment of student mothers as well as the challenges faced by re-entered student mothers. Parents and guardians of student mothers were included in the study due to the useful information they could provide by virtue of their direct involvement in their daughters' condition whilst the MOE official represented the policy making arm of the government from where the girls school re-entry directive emanated.

#### 3.4 Sample size

Sample size refers to the number of persons or a portion of the total set of objects which together constitute the subject of a study (Seaber, 1988). The total sample size was fifty six (56) respondents comprising of thirty (30) student mothers (23 student mothers who had not returned

to school; and 7 student mothers who had returned to school); ten (10) school heads; ten (10) teachers; five (5) parents; and one (1) MOE official.

### 3.5 Sampling procedure

Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to sample the respondents. Purposive sampling involves the deliberate selection of participants who possess the relevant experience

**Table 2: Summary of Number of Respondents and Interviews**

No	Respondents	Number of Respondents interviewed
1	Student mother (who have not returned to school)	23
2	Student mother (who have re-entered school)	7
3	School Head	10
4	Teacher	10
5	Ministry of Education Official	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>56</b>

with the phenomenon under study (Creswell and Clark, 2007). Snowball sampling approach on the other hand is useful when the information about a population is scanty (Marshall, 1997). A focal person is therefore required to facilitate the identification of the targets of the study.

Student mothers' between the ages of 14 – 20 years were identified from three main sources: the schools, communities and a health facility, all in the study area. The snowball sampling approach was used in the identification and selection of the student mothers and their parents. In all the basic schools visited student mothers who had returned to school were identified with the help of the school heads together with the girls coordinators in the schools and colleague students; whilst the student mothers who had not returned to school were identified in the communities with the assistance of a nurse from the Jamestown Maternity Home and focal person, resident in the study

area. Parents of the student mothers were also selected along with the student mothers in the communities visited.

### 3.6 Instruments for data collection

A research instrument has been described by Kothari (2011) as a tool that a researcher employs to elicit information or data from a respondent. Given the nature of the study, individual interviews in line with the research objectives using a semi-structured interview schedule were used to collect data from all the respondents. A semi-structured interview guide was used because it provides both open and closed ended questions that offer the opportunity to probe the respondents for descriptive information resulting in deeper and better understanding. An audio recorder was also used to capture data during the interviews. However, the use of the recorder was dependent on the agreement with the respondents. The recorder was therefore not used in cases where its use made the respondents uncomfortable, as experienced in most of the cases with the respondents of this study. However detailed notes were taken with the help of the field assistant. Most of the student mothers surprisingly declined an audio recording due to past experiences with other researchers but agreed to their responses being used as quotations.

### 3.7 Procedure for data collection

The data collection sources consisted of both primary and secondary data. Primary data was gathered through field studies and visits to the study area whilst secondary data was obtained through desktop literature; information from the Girls Education Unit, Ghana Education Services and other relevant stakeholders. Prior to the interviews initial visits were made to the study area to seek both formal and verbal consent from the relevant institutions and the potential respondents. During these meetings respondents were assured of confidentiality and purpose of

the research was clearly outlined and communicated. Interviews with the student mothers who had returned to school took place at an agreed location on the school compound whilst that of those who had not returned took place in the homes of the mothers. The parents of the student mothers were also interviewed in their homes. Interviews with the school heads and teachers were carried out in their offices during working hours. As part of efforts to elicit information on the re-entry directive I visited and interacted with an official from the Ministry of education, the Director of the Girls Education Unit; an official from the Ministry of Education. Each interview lasted between 30 – 45 minutes depending on how readily and openly the respondents answered the questions.

### 3.8. Data analysis

The basic quantitative information on the student mothers collected were analyzed using excel. The qualitative data collected from interviews with the student mothers, school heads, teachers, parents and an MOE official were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis has been described as an approach used to identify, examine, describe and record patterns observed within a data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data gathered during the study were therefore described and grouped into themes for interpretation.

### 3.9 Summary

This chapter presents the research method used in the study. The chapter has been organized under the following sub headings: introduction; research design; study area; target population; sample size; sampling procedure; instrument for data collection; procedure for data collection; data analysis. A predominantly qualitative approach was used to elicit information from the respondents using semi-structured interviews. The qualitative data obtained was analyzed using

thematic analysis whilst Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to generate frequencies and percentages out of the basic quantitative information collected on the student mothers. Fifty-six (56) respondents comprising of 30 student mothers, 10 school heads, 10 teachers, 5 parents and an MOE official participated in the study. The respondents for the study were selected using purposive and snowball sampling methods.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. Introduction

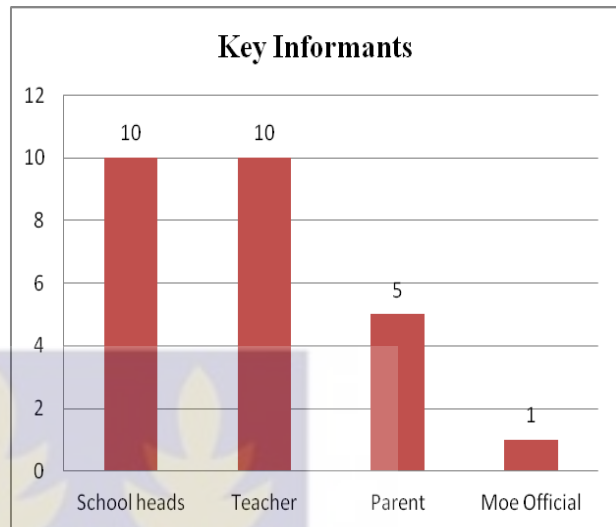
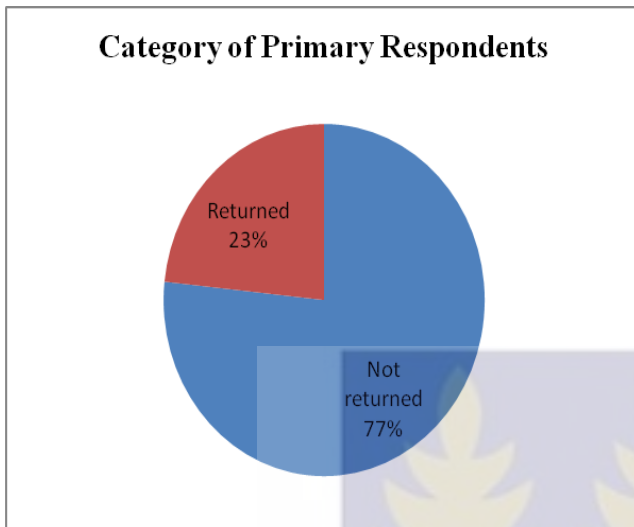
This section presents the analysis of the background characteristics of the respondents interviewed. The data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software. The table below shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents

**Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Primary Respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	16	1	3.3
	17	8	26.7
	18	16	53.3
	19	4	13.3
	20	1	3.3
Ethnicity	Ga	11	36.7
	Akan	13	43.3
	Ewe	4	13.3
	Hausa	2	6.7
Religion	Christian	28	93.3
	Muslim	2	6.7
Residence	Akoto Lante	2	6.7
	Bukom	4	13.3
	Gbese	8	26.7
	Jamestown	14	46.7
	Sempe	2	6.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

The background characteristics and category of the primary respondents that participated in the study have been descriptively presented in Table 3 and figure 2. The composition of key informants that were also interviewed during the study have also been presented in figure 2. Of the total number of key informants interviewed school heads and teachers constituted the majority (77%) with most of them being females (figure 3).

### a) Background Characteristics of Respondents

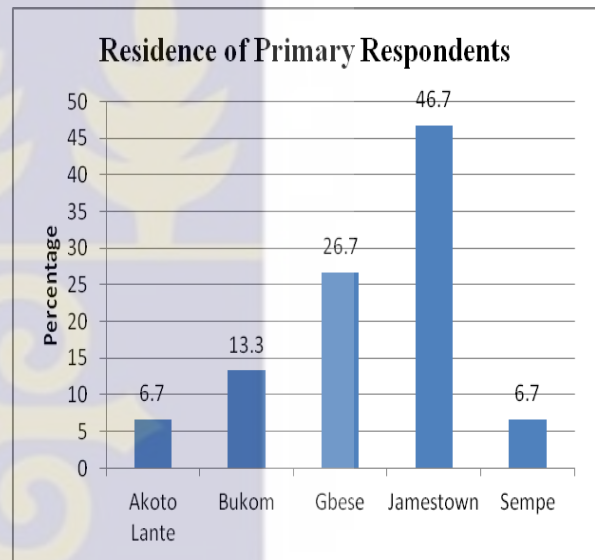
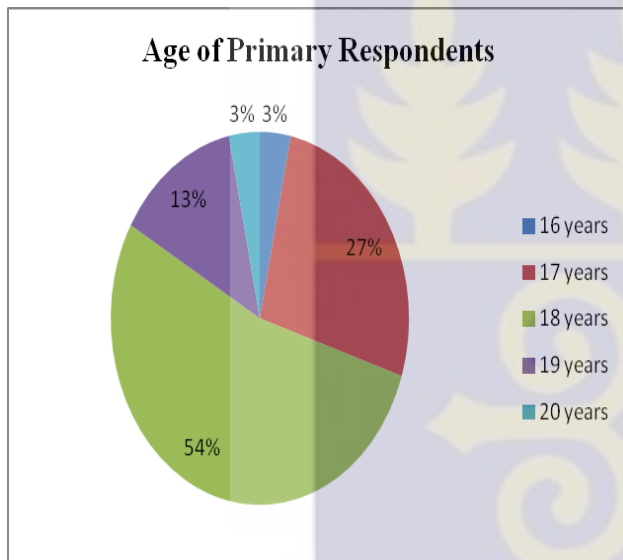


**Figure 2: Category of student mothers**

**Figure 3: Other Key Informants**

The primary respondents of the study comprised of 77% of student mothers who had not returned to school with only 7 out of the 30 mothers returning to school (figure 2). A majority of girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy had not returned to school. This probably is an indication of how the increasing phenomenon of school girl pregnancy is affecting girl child education in the study area. Interaction with the respondents pointed to some of the causes of school girl pregnancies in the study area. Among these include peer pressure, prostitution, poverty, lack of parental control, ignorance of the adverse effect among others. This is consistent with a study in Tanzania by Uromi (2014) that also notes some of the causal factor of the phenomenon to include low socioeconomic status; socio-cultural beliefs and practices; financial challenges; lack of information about sexual matters and exposure among others. Other studies including Gyan, 2013; Adu-Gyamfi, 2014 have also suggested factors such as mass media, breakdown of culture, self esteem and forced unprotected sex.

The ages of student mothers interviewed ranged between 16 to 20 years with 54% of the total number of the respondents being 18 years. Majority of the primary respondent in the study area that fell pregnant whilst in school were 18 years (figure 4). The time and age of school girls who fall pregnant whilst in school are important factors as they give an indication of the stage at which appropriate intervention and support should be given both by parents and schools particularly in terms of sex education and guidance.



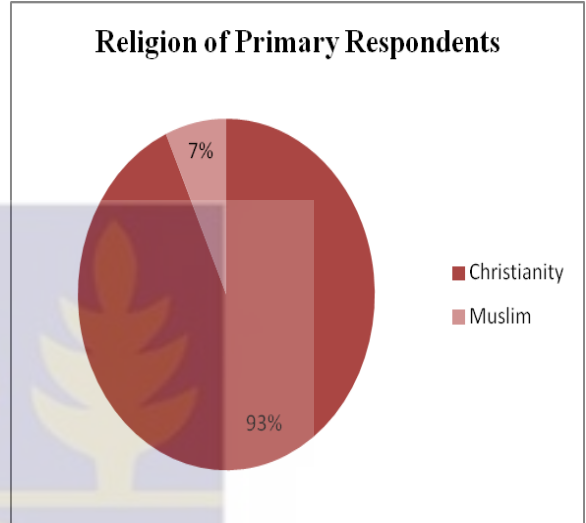
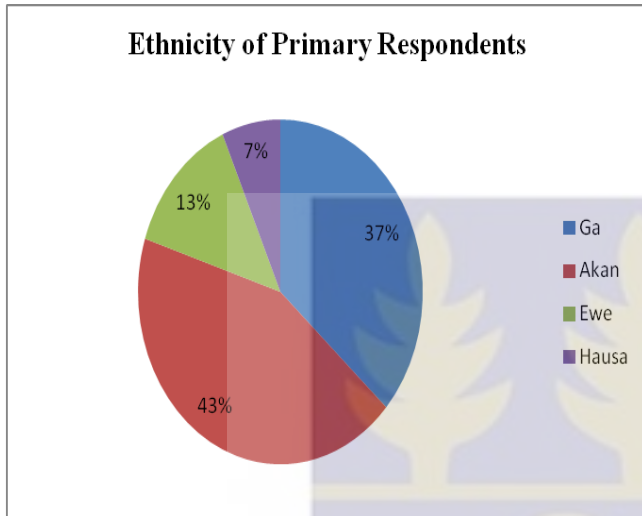
**Figure 4: Age of student mothers**

**Figure 5: Residence of student mothers**

Communities in this study area are socially, economically and politically marginalized with most inhabitants engaging mainly in fishing, fish mongering and petty trading. In finding out the communities in which respondents resided in, it was observed that almost half of respondents (47%) live in Jamestown, one of the typical fishing and densely populated communities in the study area (figure 5).

The high incidence of pregnancy among school girls in this area is a reflection of a breakdown in social control and moral discipline among school girls. School girl pregnancy remains one of the

major challenges to girls' education in many communities, countries and regions particularly in most Sub Saharan African countries (Swainson, Bendera, Gordon & Kadzamira, 1998).



**Figure 6: Ethnic group of student mothers**

**Figure 7: Religion of student mothers**

According to Quartey-Papafio (2006) the inhabitants of communities in the study area are predominantly Gas even though other ethnic groups including Ewes, Akans, Hausas' can also be found in the area. Responses from respondents on their ethnic group however showed that majority (43%) were Akans, followed by Ga (37%) (figure 6).

In terms of religious affiliation responses from respondents mirrored the two major religions practiced in Ghana. Majority of the primary respondents (93%) interviewed were christian with a small proportion being Muslims (figure 7).

**Table 4: Relationship between Age and Place of Residence**

Age of respondent \* Residence of respondent Crosstabulation

Count

		Residence of respondent					Total
		Akoto Lante	Bukom	Gbese	Jamestown	Sempe	
Age of respondent	16 years	0	0	0	1	0	1
	17 years	0	0	3	5	0	8
	18 years	2	4	4	5	1	16
	19 years	0	0	1	3	0	4
	20 years	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total		2	4	8	14	2	30

The study also sought find out if a relationship existed between the age of respondents and their place of residence. The results showed that respondents residing in Jamestown had the highest number of school girls (18 years) becoming pregnant mothers at an early age more than any of the communities (table 4). This therefore showed that there was a positive relationship between the two variables

**Table 5: Relationship between Age and ethnic group**

Age of respondent \* Ethnicity of respondent Crosstabulation

Count

		Ethnicity of respondent				Total
		Ga	Akan	Ewe	Hausa	
Age of respondent	16 years	1	0	0	0	1
	17 years	3	5	0	0	8
	18 years	6	5	4	1	16
	19 years	0	3	0	1	4
	20 years	1	0	0	0	1
Total		11	13	4	2	30

Results from the analysis of the relationship between age and ethnicity of respondents showed that even though a majority of the student mothers belonged to the Akan ethnic group, the majority of the respondents who fell within the 18 year category were Gas (table 5).

## 4.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data

In order to facilitate the identification of the individual respondents the following codes or abbreviations were used (table 6).

**Table 6: Abbreviations and Meanings used in the findings.**

No	Abbreviation	Meaning
1	SM NR1	Student Mother (have not returned to school)
2	SM R1	Student Mother (returned to school)
3	SH 1	School Head
4	TSCH 1	Teacher
5	MOE 1	Ministry of Education Official
6	P1	Parent

### 4.2.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings and analysis of the data collected through interviews from the respondents. In analyzing the qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed to describe and categorize responses elicited from the interviews in line with the research objectives. Recurring themes and categories were generated and interpreted. Three broad themes emerged from the various data sources namely: Re-entry constraints; ii) School based challenge; and iii) level of knowlegde and effectiveness. The themes were further grouped into categories and analyzed in details in line with the study objectives: i) Why student mothers do not re-enter school; ii) Challenges faced by student mothers in School; and iii) Government directive on pregnant students education.

### 4.2.2 Why student mothers do not re-enter school

The practice of re-entry into the school system provide children of school going age, particularly those excluded after the first entry including girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy

access to education (Obonyo & Thinguri, 2015). However the extent to which this provision is being exploited is influenced by a number of factors. Even though pregnancy and the subsequent motherhood do not always result in the disruption of a school girl’s education, they present challenges and a new set of circumstances that influence her educational aspirations. The focus of this objective was to explore the factors that hinder student mothers from continuing their education given the provisions of the directive to continue or return to school after childbirth. The current directive does not encourage the expulsion of pregnant students from school and therefore this study did not explore issues of expulsion. Several factors influence student mothers’ decision and ability to return to school after childbirth; however this study sought to examine the extent to which factors including negative influence; stigmatization; financial; and childcare contribute to the phenomenon. Under this objective re-entry constraint was the main theme that was identified from interactions with the respondents.

**Table 7: Emerging themes and categories**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Sub-categories</b>
4.2.2.1 Theme 1: Re-entry constraints	a) Negative attitude and bad influence  b) Challenges of childcare responsibilities  c) Social stigma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents’ or guardians’ reluctance and loss of interest in education</li> <li>• Bad examples of other out of school girls who did not want to go back to school</li> <li>• Low academic performance prior to pregnancy</li> <li>• No childcare support</li> <li>• Parental support</li> <li>• Support from other sources, friends</li> <li>• Negative reactions from family</li> <li>• Unpleasant remarks from friends and relations outside the community</li> </ul>

	d) Poor economic background or status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No financial support</li> <li>• Large family sizes</li> <li>• Lack of income generating activities</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
4.2.2.2 Theme 2: School based challenges	<p>a) School attendance and regularity</p> <p>b) Academic performance and participation in school activities</p> <p>c) School support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor and irregular school attendance</li> <li>• Average academic performance</li> <li>• Low engagement in school activities</li> <li>• Inadequate support services for student mothers</li> </ul>
4.2.2.3 Theme 3: Level of knowledge and effectiveness	<p>a) Purpose and benefits</p> <p>b) Awareness and sensitization</p> <p>c) Operationalizing the directive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for re-entry directive</li> <li>• Inadequate sensitization of stakeholders - parents, student mothers</li> <li>• Absence of specific guidelines or documented procedures for implementation of the directive</li> </ul>

#### 4.2.2.1 Re-entry constraints

Under this theme the factors that negatively influence the educational needs and aspirations of student mothers have been identified and reported. The theme is further sub divided into factors and reasons that prevent student mothers from returning to school after childbirth. These factors include: negative attitude and bad influence; challenges of childcare responsibilities; poor economic background or status; and social stigma (table 7).

a) Negative attitude and bad influence

The study established that the decision of student mothers not to re-enter school was influenced by their parents' or guardians' reluctance and loss of interest in their education. Parents insisted that their daughters stay in the house and get some work to do. This attitude of the parents discouraged them from reconsidering returning to school as one student mother narrated:

*... "I can't go to school, my mother is saying it is a waste, time and money so am there, maybe she is tired with me" ... [SMNR 1, Jamestown]*

A parent said

*.. "All of them give me trouble when they go to school, o four girls, this last one has also given birth, yes, she will look for work, the baby" [P1, Gbese]*

Responses from interactions pointed to a generally low parental involvement in the education of their children including their daughters. Discouraging remarks and negative attitude of parents particularly in relation to the education of their children is a reflection of the level of appreciation or importance that parents attach to education. This is consistent with a study by Onyango, Kiolis & Nyambedha (2015) which emphasized the impact of negative attitudes and perceptions of parents among others on the re-entry of student mothers into school.

The findings of the present study is however contrasted by the results of a study by Pricilah et al (2014) which revealed that student mothers discouraged their parents from assisting them in the school re-entry process. The study which examined the barriers to effective parental participation in teenage mothers' education in Kenya pointed to the unwillingness of student mothers to return

to school as one of the major barriers that discouraged and prevented parental involvement in the education of their daughters.

It was also found from this present study that student mothers' decision to return to school was influenced by the bad examples of other out of school girls who did not want to go back to school. In finding out if low academic performance prior to pregnancy was a factor, 15 out of 23 student mothers answered in the affirmative. A majority of the respondents indicated their readiness to re-enter school even though most of them did not seem to have a clear career goal that could secure them a good future. This finding is also shared by Grant and Hallman (2008) in a study that also notes a strong positive relationship between prior school performance and the likelihood of a student mother returning to school.

This study therefore notes that negative attitude and influence particularly from parents, bad examples and low academic performance largely influenced or contributed to student mothers' inability to return to school. According to NCSET (2006) parental participation in education remains one of the key contributors to school completion and educational attainment. It is imperative therefore that parent consciously and deliberately present a positive outlook about life to their daughters who become victims of teenage pregnancy by providing the necessary support for their educational success.

#### b) Challenges of childcare responsibilities

The phenomenon of teenage pregnancy and the subsequent childbearing responsibilities are among the major societal problems confronting our world today. Teenage motherhood is by no means a new experience since women over the years have tended to begin childbearing during their teens and early twenties. The phenomenon has been identified as one of the major reasons

for girls' school dropout (Kaufman 2001). According to Theron and Dunn (2006) child bearing responsibilities presents disruptions to the educational aspirations of young mothers and is responsible for many students mothers inability to return to school.

This present study also revealed that childcare posed a challenge to the re-entry of student mothers into school. Five (5) out of 23 said they did not receive help with childcare and therefore did not have anybody to leave their babies. Four (4) out of 23 indicated friends; and one said her "partner" helped. One of the young mothers said:

*" I do all the things, I bath her, feed her and all the other things, There is no one because I stay by a friend, she also has baby, it is not easy" .... [SMNR 3 Bukom]*

The study further found that parental support was the main source of childcare assistance that student mothers received. Other sources of help identified include aunts and grandmothers. While a majority of student mothers acknowledged receiving parental support they indicated that they always bore a lot of the burden since their parents left the children with them when they had to go and work outside the home. These are some excerpts from my interactions:

*.. "It is my grandma, who helps with the child, but she is old and not working, so go and sell small to get somethings, and I go with the child". [SMNR 5 Gbese]*

*.. "The child is with my mother, she cares for the child, play with him, put him at her back, but she leave house early to sell, so I have take care of him, with this I can't go to school"*

**[SMNR 2 Jamestown]**

The burden of childcare was highlighted as a challenge to girls school re-entry after pregnancy by school heads and teachers. Four (4) out of 10 school heads also attributed the situation to the attendant challenges associated with childcare.

*“..Some of these girls stay with their grandmothers, who are at times sick and can't move, some also single mothers who also feel they should also struggle and survive, not all of them get help from their family”.* [SH 1 Ayalolo 1 & 2 JHS]

Adequate childcare support which was found to be one of the hindrances to school re-entry in this present study is also corroborated by Madhavan and Thomas (2005) in an investigation on the impact of childbearing on schooling in South Africa. They pointed out the availability of childcare support and socioeconomic status of household as the key factors and conditions that facilitate student mother re-entry to school after childbirth. The important role of childcare assistance in the re-entry process is further emphasized by Hubbard (2008). There is therefore, the need for adequate support in terms of childcare for student mothers in order reduce their burden and increase their chances of continuing their education.

#### c) Social Stigma

Stigma has been described as the attitudes and beliefs that cause people to reject, avoid, or fear those they perceive as being different. This attitude of people including peers, teachers, community members, and family among others towards pregnant school girls and student mothers can potentially affect or reduce their chances of re-entry into school. Several studies have noted the impact of stigmatization on the re-entry of pregnant student and student mother into school. Finding from this study revealed that stigmatization to some extent affected student mothers ability to return to school. Two (2) out of 23 student mothers indicated that they

experienced negative and unpleasant comments and remarks from their parents; whilst 14 out of 23 pointed to friends and relations outside the community. A student mother residing in Sempe narrated:

*“...Oh yes! my mother at first talk small, my cousin also told me that I am not of use anymore, this place we ok, people who don't come from here are the ones talk and insults us...”*

**[SMNR 6 Sempe]**

Interactions with a teacher at the Bishop Girls JHS revealed:

*“...sometimes they are not able to return because they feel their mates will laugh at them and look down upon them because maybe they are repeated ...”* **[TSCH 3 Bishop Girls JHS]**

The findings are in line with a study by Oyaró (2010) on teenage mother's education which identified stigmatization and discrimination as major factors that caused student mothers to stay away from school. Sarah and Muthoni (2012) further confirmed this in a study (on de-stigmatizing student mothers) that identified sources of stigmatization including teachers, parents, fellow students and the society.

d) Poor economic status of family

The study identified financial constraints as one of the factors that prevented many of the student mothers from returning to school. Communities in this area are socially and economically marginalized. Inhabitants in these areas are mainly fishermen and petty traders with the major ethnic group consisting of the Gas (Quartey-Papafio, 2006). The study further revealed that poor economic background of families of student mothers was a major challenge and this made life

difficult for a student mother and her child. Nineteen (19) out of 23 student mothers indicated that they were unable to continue their education because they had no financial support. When asked where they expected to receive financial support for their education, 9 out of 23 said their parents (referring to mothers, aunties, grandmothers and at times fathers) whilst 14 out of 23 pointed to friends outside the study area.

Below are excerpts gathered from our interactions:

*“I sell at the market, the situation nowadays is not easy, but by the end of the day, I get something small to take care of her and her other brothers, money is everything, as for school fees again hmmm” [P3 Akoto Lante]*

*..”my mother said I should stop the school because when I go back there will be no one to help me continue, when my child grows a little I will look for work.....”*

**[SMNR 6 Jamestown]**

Findings from the study also showed that some parents desired that their daughter pursued some income generating activity in order to support the child. This has a tendency of reducing the chances of the student mother from returning to school and this is consistent with a study in Botswana on pregnancy related school dropout by Meeker & Ahmed (1999) that also pointed out parents insistence of the daughters to work to support their children, a situation that often decreased the mothers’ chances of returning to school. Hubbard (2008) further adds that apart from childcare assistance, financial assistance is also critical to the re-entry process. The study also found that most student mothers belonged to large households or family sizes, ranging from 3 to 8 members. Most student mothers also did not receive any financial support from the fathers

of their children. Low economic status of families was found to be responsible largely for the failure and inability of student mothers to return to school.

### **4.2.3 Challenges faced by student mothers in school**

While several studies in Sub Saharan Africa have established that student mothers and pregnant students are less likely to complete their education as a result of childbearing and childcare, new evidence from studies by Madhavan and Thomas (2005) have suggested that childbearing does not necessarily prevent a student mother from achieving her educational aspirations. Student mothers who return to school after childbirth however are faced with several challenges (Maluli & Bali, 2014). This objective sought to examine the challenges encountered by student mothers who return to school particularly in relation to their school participation; academic performance; as well as school support. The main theme identified from interactions with the respondents was school based challenges.

#### **4.2.3.1 School based challenges**

Student mothers who decide to continue their education are faced with challenges within the school environment which threaten or reduce their chances or likelihood of completion or achieving their educational aspirations. This theme describes the various school based challenges in relation to student mothers who have returned to school. The theme is further discussed under the following: i) school attendance and regularity; ii) academic performance and participation in school activities; and iii) school support.

## a) School attendance and regularity

School attendance has been identified as a critical factor that has strong implications and relationship with the academic performance of a student. Lamdin (1996) notes in a research on truancy and absenteeism that students who attend school regularly compared to their frequently absent peers record higher academic performance. Among the many factors ascribed to student absenteeism include poor school climate; health concerns; transportation problems; and financial challenges among others (Teasley, 2004).

**Table 8: Responses from teachers on school attendance**

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Regular	0	0
2	Irregular	4	57.1
3	Poor	2	28.6
4	Very poor	1	14.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>100</b>

The study revealed from interactions with school heads and teachers in schools were student mothers returned to school after childbirth that school attendance was a challenge among the student mothers. Responses as indicated in table 8 showed that over fifty percent (57.1%) of teachers interviewed pointed to irregular attendance whilst 14.7 percent of them indicated that attendance was very poor. Even though low school attendance was also observed among regular students it was relatively significant among student mothers. Most of the teachers indicated that the observed poor or irregular school attendance among the student mothers was due to the challenge of combining academic work with childcare responsibilities. One teacher answered:

*“...Her mother, first she was helping but now, the girl has to do everything, and she sells at Makola here, hmmm, she is not always in school”*,

**[TSCH 3 Independence Avenue 2]**

A student mother also narrated:

*“I have to wait to feed and bath before coming, so I am always, get to school after 7:00 am times am one hour late and at times I don’t come”.... [SMR 1 Jamestown]*

Student mothers interviewed acknowledged relatively low academic performance due to various factors including lack of concentration, childcare responsibilities among others.

Findings from this current study are similar to a study in Namibia by Hubbard (2008) that also pointed to the dual role schooling and parenting as factor to the poor attendance by student mothers. Chigona and Chetty (2008) also agrees with this observation and also reports that poor school attendance by student mothers was attributable to baby care demands or absence of other care givers.

b) Academic performance and participation in school activities

**Table 9: Responses from Teachers on Academic performance**

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Excellent	0	0
2	Good	1	14.3
3	Fair	5	71.4
4	Poor	1	14.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>100</b>

Over 70% of teachers interviewed reported average or fair academic performance among student mothers in their schools (table 9). The study established from the responses that the student mothers interviewed who had returned to school had academic challenges. It was also found that 5 out of 7 student mothers had performed averagely academically compared to their regular peers prior to becoming pregnant. Grant and Hallman (2006), and Hof and Richters (1999) in s study

have pointed to a possible relationship between poor school performance and teenage pregnancy. An exceptional case was however recounted by a teacher who said:

*“ oo she is good, she use to top the class, even now that is back she is still doing well although she has fallen slightly. She is currently the president of the girls club and a lot of the students look up to her but I don’t know what happened...”* [TSCH 2 Odartey Lamptey JHS]

Responses also indicated that most of the student mothers were reluctant to ask questions in class, a situation that was attributed to low confidence levels and self esteem. They also experienced challenges with completing assignments on time compared to their regular peers. The study also noted that majority of the student mothers did not actively engage themselves in school activities. This was reported by over eighty percent (85.7%) of teachers interviewed (table 10).

**Table 10: Responses from teachers on participation in extracurricular activities**

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Good	1	14.3
2	Fair	6	85.7
3	Poor	0	0
Total		7	100

c) School support

The school environment is an important determinant and a critical factor to success in educational attainment, even though factors outside the school environment may also influence a student’s likelihood of educational success. Structural and functional factors within the schools can influence the way in which student mothers educational needs are responded to.

Findings from this study showed that the schools had guidance and counseling units that provided counseling services for all students. Asked whether their schools provided childcare services, most teachers admitted there was no such services except for cases when the student mother wanted to enrol her child at a nursery or kindergarten. Student mothers interviewed however indicated that there were no childcare services in their school. Teachers however mentioned providing personal financial and material support to the student mothers. Most of the student mothers also indicated that deliberate plans and systems have not been put in place to address the challenges of student mothers. This is also highlighted by a study by Mutombo and Mwenda (2010) in which they asserted that the needed support that student mothers require have not been adequately considered and provided for by the school system. The study also found out that challenges associated with the student mothers were addressed on adhoc basis, a situation that was attributed to the absence of specific and documented guidelines for the implementation of the re-entry directive.

#### **4.2.4 Government directive on pregnant students education**

Policy responses towards pregnant girls education has been employed in several sub Saharan African countries (Chilisa, 2002). These policies include the exclusion; re-entry; and continuation policies. In Ghana, however no substantive policy on pregnant girls' education exist nevertheless there is a government directive (Revised Head teachers Handbook, 2016) that allows pregnant students to continue or re-enter school after delivery or childbirth. The directive which constitutes governments' official instruction on the subject guarantees among other things the right to continued education of pregnant school girls and student mothers in public schools in Ghana. The provision therefore discourages the expulsion of pregnant students and student

mothers from school but rather facilitate their continuation or re-entry into the school system even after childbirth. This objective therefore examined the views of respondents on the nature and effectiveness of the directive. The theme that was identified from response elicited from the interviews was level of knowledge and effectiveness.

#### **4.2.4.1 Level of knowledge and effectiveness**

In the light of the governments' directive to public schools on the rights and access of pregnant girls to continued education, it is imperative that the level of knowledge, understanding, perceptions of the intended beneficiaries and the relevant stakeholders are assessed with the view to examining the level of responsiveness and effectiveness of the directive. This theme analyses and describes the views of the various respondents on the directive. The theme is further subdivided and discussed under the following sub themes: purpose and benefits; awareness and sensitization; and operationalizing the directive.

##### **a) Purpose and benefits**

Many of the respondents interviewed were of the view that the directive was needful and useful for pregnant students, their families and the nation in terms of girls' education and therefore were in support given the attendant benefits. The MOE official explained that the directive was given in line with the principle of the right to education for every child including girls, as captured in the 1992 Constitution and the FCUBE. The Ghana Education Service which is the implementing arm of the Ministry of Education has been at the fore front of the implementation of this directive. Some of the intended benefits of the directive highlighted during the interaction include its potential impact on the girl child education efforts of the country. According to the official education of the girl child has important effects on the girl, family and community. He also

pointed to the role that education can play in empowering women and their families which eventually contribute to development and women also finding their place in society. The official further said in explaining that

*“..The directive was important, and it was meant to also address the problems of girls becoming pregnant whilst in school. Girls’ education is important to the government because of its role in the development. When we have an educated woman, chances are that they can affect their families positively...” [MOE 1].*

One school head said:

*“...Look it’s a good thing, hmmm as for this area, teenage pregnancy is a real problem and it looks normal my brother. I am parent and a teacher at heart, I will always go for putting them back to school, as for that...”[SH Amamomo JHS ]*

These views reflect UNICEF (2004) assertion on the vital role of female education in governance, development and the building of strong families and better child healthcare.

Responses from teachers further pointed to a support of the directive indicating that educating girls empowered them and enabled them to be self reliant and independent. According to them equipping girls through education will help build their self esteem and make them conscious of their rights. Based on the responses there seemed to be a general support for the directive.

b) Awareness and sensitization

While many acknowledged the important role and useful benefits of the provisions of the directive, perceptions and views of respondents including student mothers, parents, school heads, teachers and the MOE Official generally revealed varied levels of awareness and sensitization about the directive

**Table 11: Student mothers perception on parents' sensitization on the re-entry directive**

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Sensitized	5	16.7
2	Somewhat sensitized	16	53.3
3	Unaware	9	30.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

In assessing the level of sensitization among the respondents, perceptions of student mothers (who had returned to school and those who had not) on parents' sensitization on the re-entry directive were gathered given the critical role of parental involvement in school completion and educational attainment (NCSET, 2006).

A majority of the student mothers (53.3%) interviewed indicated that their parents rarely received sensitization on the re-entry directive, whilst 9 constituting 30% said their parents were not aware of the re-entry provisions (table 11). Only about 17% acknowledged that their parents were aware and had been sensitized on the directive. It can therefore be inferred among other factors that the reason why student mothers do not return to school after childbirth was also because parents had not been sufficiently sensitized on the purpose and benefits of the provisions of the re-entry directive. A call for increased and frequent sensitization for parents and student mothers as well was made. A student mother narrated:

*"...me its my mother that they told her, when they call her to my school to see the head and they told her. I mean the time that I was pregnant, at first my mother said will they pay your fees, so they have to tell people about it"* [SH 5 Amamomo JHS ]

Responding to questions on how schools are sensitized on the re-entry directive, the MOE official indicated that the Ghana Education Services (GES) who are the key implementers of

policies sensitized the schools through the regional education offices. This is done through workshops and correspondence. The regional offices are then expected to communicate the information to the District Education offices. The district officers then disseminate the information to the supervisors or coordinators of the schools in the districts. Asked if there was the need for more sensitization and possible ways to do that, the official answered in the affirmative and suggested sensitization must be done more often by the school heads in the schools and community focal persons or officers in the communities where the student mothers reside. The MOE official admittedly indicated that increased awareness was needed for all stakeholders to better appreciate the essence and value of the directive. According to him the observed low levels of awareness among parents was attributable to the ineffective sensitization strategy and consultations with the relevant stakeholders by the schools.

On how they were sensitized on the directive the school heads admitted that it was communicated to them through correspondence and in their meetings with their Circuit Supervisors (CS) who also receive information from the Accra Metro Education Directorate. The directorate also receives information from the GES head office.

Concerning how the directive was disseminated in their schools 2 out of 10 school heads said they discussed matters regarding adolescent reproductive health, sex education as well as issues regarding school girl pregnancy in their girl clubs meetings. According to some of the school heads interviewed the clubs are recognized key sensitization platforms used in some of the schools visited even though participation in the activities of the clubs was optional. Three (3) out ten (10) school heads indicated that they encouraged parents during their Parent Teachers Association (PTA) meetings to guide their wards in order not be victims of teenage pregnancy,

while two (2) out of ten (10) school heads disseminated general information on sexual relationships and the effects of pregnancy during school assemblies. School heads interviewed however admitted that they did not directly disseminate the information on the directive to students since they felt it had the potential of encouraging the practice of teenage pregnancy; but instead sensitized parents of girls who got pregnant whilst in school as well as the pregnant girl. School heads however generally added that they were also constrained because of the absence of specific guideline document or procedure that detailed how they needed to implement the strategy. It can therefore be inferred that sensitization of parents and student was inadequate.

When asked whether they were aware of the directive, the teachers interviewed acknowledged that information on the directive was disseminated to them in meetings with their school heads.

Three (3) out ten (10) teachers however said girls' coordinators in their school were responsible for sensitization of the students' particularly pregnant girls. Two (2) out of ten (10) teachers also said it was the duty of the guidance and counseling unit in the school. The study revealed from the responses that effective sensitization among the intended beneficiaries and stakeholders will require some clarity with regards to the details of the directive.

#### c) Operationalizing the directive

Responses from school heads and teachers revealed some practical challenges in terms of the implementation of the directive. The absence of clear documented guidelines or procedures that provided specific details for implementation of the directive was a major constraint that was reencountered by the school heads and teachers. The provision of such documented guidelines or procedures for implementation of the provisions of the directive will spell out clearly the roles and responsibilities of the key implementers and stakeholders such as parents, student mothers as

as well as the appropriate strategies and how specific situations should be handled. As one school head responded:

*“..Oh no we don't have any material, we handle the case as they occur, the directive did not come with any document.” [SH 3]*

The observed implementation challenges reported by respondents in this present study are consistent with findings of Obonyo and Thinguri (2015) study on Kenya's re-entry policy. The absence of clear and specific guidelines; limited access and awareness of the policy, negative community attitude towards pregnant girls stay in school among others were identified as constraints to the effective implementation of the policy.

The study also found out how school heads and teachers handled the following: i) detecting pregnancy; ii) response upon detection; iii) leaving school to deliver; iv) absence from school - duration; and v) student mothers' return and retention in school.

On how they detected pregnancies among the school girls most school heads said they received information about pregnant girls from their teachers. Two (2) out of 10 teachers interviewed indicated they relied on their colleagues of the pregnant girls for information, 5 out of 10 teachers further said they discovered pregnancy by themselves and at times request for pregnancy test upon suspicion of pregnancy. Most school heads however pointed to challenges in keeping accurate records of the pregnancies as most cases are discovered after the girls' have aborted the pregnancies or dropout of school without the school heads' consent.

Responding to questions on the schools action upon discovering pregnancy cases, school heads said they invited the parents of the girl and discuss the options available to them in line with the

re-entry directive which allowed the girl to continue schooling until time of delivery and return to school after childbirth.

Even though responses from the school heads pointed to the absence of a specific time for the pregnant girl to leave school for delivery, most school heads indicated that the girls were allowed to leave when they were due for delivery. The teachers admitted that the directive allowed for pregnant girls to continue schooling but failed to clarify the timelines.

Regarding how long the student mother was expected to absent from school, school heads were unclear about the time frame, as the directive did not provide those details. This was therefore left at the discretion of the schools. Most school heads however indicated that the duration before re-entry depended entirely on the student mothers. Most teachers also said that staying away from school for a long period can affect the likelihood of returning to school as well their academic performance. Asked how they handled student mothers who return to school after childbirth, some school heads indicated that were treated as regular or ordinary students and that there were no formal guidelines or procedures that helped them to address the potential challenges associated with student mothers who had returned to school.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study, the conclusion and recommendations emanating from the study. The study broadly explored and investigated the re-entry of student mothers into the formal education system in Ghana but with specific focus on the following: a) the reasons why student mothers do not re-enter school; b) the challenges faced by student mothers who re-enter school; and c) an examination of the government directive on pregnant girls' education. In order to understand the factors and challenges associated with student mothers' education in Ghana and the policy context, the views of school heads, teachers, parents, the Ministry of Education and the student mothers were gathered through individual interviews.

#### 5.1 Summary of findings

The category of primary respondents that participated in the study comprised of 23% of student mothers who had returned to school while a majority of the student mothers had not re-entered school after childbirth. The causal factors that contributed to pregnancies among school girls in the study included peer pressure, prostitution, poverty, lack of parental control, ignorance of the adverse effect among others.

One of the main findings of the study was that student mothers did not re-enter school because of negative attitude and bad influence; challenges of childcare responsibilities; poor economic background or status; and social stigma. In terms of influence on decision making by the student mothers the following factors were reported: parents' or guardians' reluctance and loss of interest in education; bad examples of other out of school girls who did not want to go back to

school; and low academic performance prior to pregnancy. The study also revealed that lack of adequate childcare support largely affected their chances of returning to school. In terms of stigmatization, the study observed that student mothers experienced negative reactions and unpleasant comments with majority from peers, friends and people outside the community. Another major constraint to the student mothers' re-entry into school that was identified was the poor economic background of families of student mothers that were interviewed. This also made life difficult for the student mothers and their children.

The study also revealed that student mothers who re-entered school after childbirth were constrained in many ways particularly in the pursuit of their education. Student mothers who returned to school were found to experience challenges in terms of school attendance. Poor and irregular school attendance was reported as one of the challenges that student mothers faced a situation that was attributed to the demands of academic work and the burden of childcare responsibilities. In terms of academic performance and participation in school activities, over 70% of teachers interviewed reported average or fair academic performance among student mothers in their schools. Student mothers experienced challenges with completing assignments on time compared to their regular peers, while a majority of them did not actively engage in school activities. School support was also found to be inadequate since there were no specific deliberate plans and systems to address the challenges of student mothers.

Findings of the study further established through interaction with an official from the Ministry of Education that the government directive on pregnant students' education guaranteed the rights of pregnant school girls and student mothers to continued education. Among some of the intended benefits of the directive highlighted during the study included its potential impact on the

country's' girl child education efforts. While many acknowledged the important benefits of the provisions of the directive, there were varied views on the level of awareness and sensitization on the directive. The study showed that parents were hardly sensitized on the directive. A call for increased sensitization among all the relevant stakeholders particularly parents and student mothers as well were made. The absence of clear documented guidelines that provided specific details for implementation of the directive was also identified as one of the major constraint to effective implementation of the directive.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The study established and concluded that the decision and inability of student mothers to re-integrate into formal education and achieve their educational aspirations were influenced to a large extent by the following factors: negative attitude and bad influence; challenges of childcare responsibilities; poor economic background or status; and social stigma. The investigations also concluded based on the findings on the school based challenges that most of student mothers lacked support in terms of childcare and this probably may have affected their regularity in class, academic performance and general participation in school activities. The study further noted and concluded that the absence of specific guidelines to effectively execute the provisions of the directive is constraining and hindering the smooth implementation of the directive.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

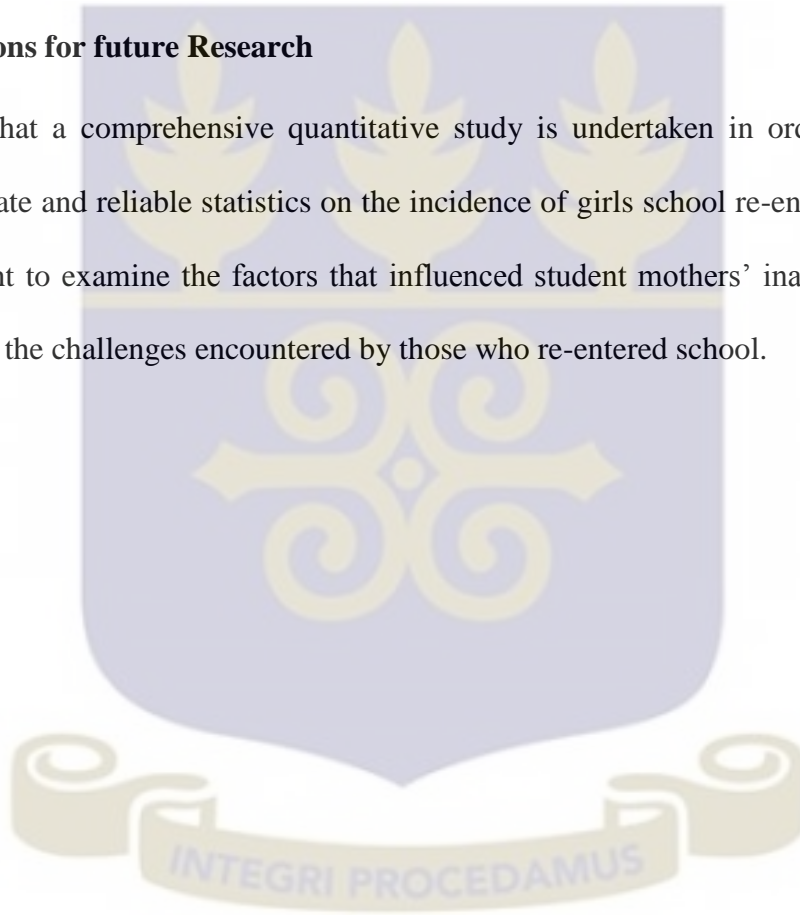
The following recommendations were suggested based on the findings of the study:

- The development of policy guidelines or documented procedures to enhances effective implementation of the current re-entry directive in schools
- Strengthen of monitoring systems to enhance effective implementation of the directive

- Increased sensitization among the various stakeholders including parents and student mothers
- Capacity building for all the key implementers of the directive including school heads and teachers
- The introduction and adoption of a substantive re-entry policy

#### **5.4 Suggestions for future Research**

It is suggested that a comprehensive quantitative study is undertaken in order to establish a consistent, accurate and reliable statistics on the incidence of girls school re-entry as this present study only sought to examine the factors that influenced student mothers' inability to return to school as well as the challenges encountered by those who re-entered school.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTION LETTER FROM THE ACCRA METRO EDUCATION OFFICE TO SCHOOLS IN THE ASHIEDU KETEKE SUB METRO DISTRICT

# GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

*In case of reply the number and date of this letter should be quoted*

Ref. No.: GES/ACD/PG. 48/Vol 9/028

Your Ref. No.



Republic of Ghana

METRO EDUCATION OFFICE  
POST OFFICE BOX 337  
ACCRA

Tel. No.: 030-2632370  
030-2676199

Email:metroeducationoffice@gmail.com

January 13, 2016

**ALL CIRCUIT SUPERVISORS  
ASHIEDU KETEKE SUB-METROPOLIS  
ACCRA**

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION  
MR. JEFFREY BAA-POKU**

I write to introduce the above-named graduate student of the Centre for Social Policy Studies, University of Ghana to you.

Mr. Jeffrey Baa-Poku is pursuing a Master's Degree programme in Social Policy and as part of the requirements for the award of the Degree, he is undertaking a research work on "Girls re-entry into school after pregnancy in the Ashiedu Keteke Sub-Metropolis".

Permission has therefore been granted for that purpose since the results could help in planning or taking pertinent decisions.

By this letter, you and all Headteachers are kindly requested to assist Mr. Baa-Poku to fulfill this academic requirement.

Thank you.

  
**ANGELA TENA MENSAH (MRS)  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
ACCRA METROPOLIS**

Cc: DD. Management & Supervision, Accra Metropolis  
The Basic Schools Coordinator (Public), Accra Metropolis  
All Headteachers, Ashiedu Keteke Sub-Metropolis, Accra

**APPENDIX B: INTRODUCTION LETTER FROM THE REGIONAL OFFICE, GHANA  
HEALTH SERVICE TO USSHER POLYCLINIC**

In case of the reply the number and the date of this letter should be quoted.



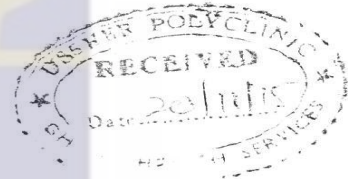
GHANA HEALTH SERVICE  
REGIONAL HEALTH DIRECTORATE  
GREATER ACCRA REGION  
P. O. BOX 184  
ACCRA.

Tel: 021-226203

NOVEMBER 11, 2015

My Ref. No. GAR / ADM

Your Ref. No



**THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT  
USSHER POLYCLINIC  
GHANA HEALTH SERVICE  
ACCRA.**

**INTRODUCTORY LETTER - MR JEFFREY BAA-POKU  
M.A. SOCIAL POLICY STUDIES**

This serves to introduce to you the above named student from the University of Ghana who has the instructions to report to you to undertake his research on the topic 'Re-entry of school girls into school after childbirth' in your facility.

Attached is an introductory letter from the University of Ghana for your perusal.

Kindly give him the necessary support and assistance.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Mensah".

**MR. PETER MENSAH  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION  
FOR: REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES  
GREATER ACCRA REGION**

23 11 15  
*[Handwritten signature]*

**APPENDIX C: INTRODUCTION LETTER TO POLICY AND PLANNING DIVISION OF  
THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**



**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA  
CENTRE FOR SOCIAL POLICY STUDIES**



University of Ghana, P.O BOX LG72, Legon. Tel: +233-302502217,  
Email: [csps@ug.edu.gh](mailto:csps@ug.edu.gh) Website: [csps.ug.edu.gh](http://csps.ug.edu.gh)

May 3, 2016

The Director  
Policy and Planning Division  
Ministry of Education  
Ministries  
Accra.

Dear Sir/Madam,

**INTRODUCTORY LETTER  
JEFFREY BAA-POKU**

The above-named M.A. Social Policy Studies student with I.D number 10191631 is collecting data on girls' re-entry into school after pregnancy in the Ashiedu-Keteki Sub Metro District.

This is purely an academic work and shall be treated as such. It will therefore be appreciated if you could assist him with the needed information to enhance his work.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

*Abena Oduro*  
Prof. Abena D. Oduro  
Director, CSPS

APPENDIX D: PUBLIC AGENDA NEWSPAPER PUBLICATION, 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2016 ON  
GES DIRECTIVE ON PREGNANT STUDENTS' EDUCATION

# DIAGNOSIS - GSA



## Don't sack any Pregnant student

- GES boss warns heads of schools and supervisors



Prof. Jane Naana Opoku Agyemang, Minister for Education

By Christian Yaw Adu-Adinkra

While the start of this year's Basic Education Certificate Examination beckons, all heads of schools, examination supervisors, invigilators and teachers of basic schools are warned not to sack or punish any student in the name of pregnancy or any other act that is not outlined in the educational Acts and policies of the Ghana Education Service.

In the light of this, the Greater Accra Regional Director of Education, Mr Peter Attefuah, has cautioned that "anybody caught in any act of violation of a students' right that could prevent him or her from writing any examination will be sanctioned".

According to Mr Attefuah, in the past, students' rights were violated wrongly and these situations affected performance and quality delivery of education at many levels of education in

Ghana, and performances of candidates were not truly reflective of their academic capabilities.

In an interview with the *Public Agenda* during the 8<sup>th</sup> Congregation of the Accra College of Education, which took place on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2016, Mr Attefuah expressed the view that, adherence to the educational policies were crucial for achieving quality delivery of

Cont'd. on Pg. 3

- **Source:** Adinkra, C. Y. A. (2016, June 6) Don't sack any pregnant student – GES Boss warns heads of schools and supervisors. *Public Agenda newspaper publication*, No. 1010.

essential control on the quality assurance mandate.

The head of the public affairs department at the Standards Authority, Mr. Kofi Amponsah Bediako, disclosed to Public Agenda in an exclusive interview that many of the health facilities, both public and private, don't submit their instruments for calibration. The situation, he observed, is very worrying because

instruments and equipments must be calibrated at least yearly to make them efficient, because of possible wear and tear effects. Correctly performed calibration increases productivity, optimises resources, and assures consistency, comparability and compatibility of products and services, as well as their acceptability anywhere in the world.

the public to collaborate with GSA to help enforce standards and meet calibration requirements by reporting non-conforming products (those not bearing the Standards Authority insignia) to the Authority. He advised visitors to health facilities to look out for green stickers of the GSA on all medical devices that will be used for diagnosing their condition. "If you find a green GSA sticker on the

calibrated, if the sticker is red it means the equipment is faulty, and if there is no sticker, then the device has not been calibrated." He advised patients to ask and insist on calibrated machines when being attended to by medical personnel to avoid being misdiagnosed. This, he said "will also put the health facilities on their toes to get their instruments and equipment properly

certification and verification logos on products before purchasing them. This has led to the increase in the production and consumption of low quality goods and services which is the primary cause of many health conditions suffered by Ghanaians today. He conceded that, the Ghana Standards Authority does not have the capacity to take absolute control of every product on the market, and needs the citizens to partner with the institution to ensure that all products and services meet the quality standard of the country.

He assured the public that, the process for getting certification and verification of products is not cumbersome and therefore appealed to all producers to walk to the national or any of the regional offices for testing and verification of their products to prevent the proliferation of the market with inferior goods. He advised the general public to be quality conscious and also to "check the expiry date, name of product, Ghana Standard Authority certification and verification stickers on products, examine the condition of the products before purchasing. These measures if adopted by Ghanaians will ensure quality service delivery and production of high standard goods which will contribute to the growth of the Ghanaian economy.

# DON'T SACK ANY PREGNANT STUDENT

## - GES boss warns heads of schools and supervisors

education and incident free conduct examinations and as such "I do not want to hear any head teacher, teacher or supervisor sacking students or engaging in any examination malpractice this year".

According to him, the Ghana Education Service is poised and ready to support the West African Examination Council and all stakeholders to organise incident free BECE this year with efforts to support all schools to prepare their students for the final examinations scheduled to start from 13<sup>th</sup> of June, 2016.

To prevent examination leakages, Mr. Attefuah urged parents, students and teachers to

avoid the temptation of trying to have fore-knowledge of examination papers which in most cases affect the quality and credibility of the examination.

He added that "cancellation of examination results due to malpractices affected the emotional and psychological domain of the students and re-sitting for cancelled examination papers brought a lot of stress on the students and all stakeholders and these situations must not be tolerated nor encouraged".

Mr. Attefuah, urged teachers to work hard to prepare their students for the BECE while encouraging them to be discipline and law abiding during the examination periods.

The Public Relations Officer of the Ghana Education Service, Rev. Jonathan Betsey who added his voice to the call maintained that, any pregnant student, if by the state of her condition is ready to write the final examination, should be permitted to do so, and that it will be illegal and inappropriate to prevent such students. He said "It is the policy of the GES that no student should be prevented from writing a national examination on the basis of natural phenomenon and that pregnancy is not a crime that prevents people from enjoying their rights".

Rev. Betsey, explained that head teachers and teachers were to support and prepare all students for

the upcoming BECE irrespective of their predicaments but not to condemn and intimidate them; "encourage and create conducive atmosphere needed to boost their confidence to write the exam with sound mind; that is what we expect from all stakeholders in this year's BECE."

He said that, his outfit will not take it lightly with any head teacher, teacher and supervisors whose acts violate the rights and freedoms of any student, urging parents and students to play by the rules of examination and not to engage in any acts that run contrary to the policies put in place to ensure incident free conduct of all examinations.

**APPENDIX E: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE PRIMARY RESPONDENTS - STUDENT MOTHERS**

**Dear Respondent,**

I am a student at the Centre for Social Policy Studies at the University of Ghana carrying out a research on girls’ re-entry into school after pregnancy. The purpose of this study is to explore and examine the factors and challenges that influence the decision and ability of student mothers in the Ashiedu Keteke Sub-Metro district in Accra to return or not to return as well as some of the implementation challenges. This discussion is intended to elicit information purely for academic purposes and will be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality. You are therefore encouraged to be as objective as possible in your responses.

**Instructions**

Kindly provide answers either by writing; underlining or by ticking where appropriate.

**SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

1. Current age of respondent: [    ]
2. Age at time of pregnancy [    ]
3. Age at time of re-entry into school [    ]
4. Grade at time of pregnancy: JHS 1 [    ] JHS 2 [    ] JHS 3 [    ]
5. Grade enrolled in at re-entry: JHS 1 [    ] JHS 2 [    ] JHS 3 [    ]
6. Marital status: Single [    ] Married [    ]
7. Which community do you live in: .....
8. Religion: .....
9. What is your ethnicity: Ga [    ] Akan [    ] Ewe [    ] Hausa [    ] Other [    ]  
specify.....

**SECTION B: WHY STUDENT MOTHERS DO NOT RE-ENTER SCHOOL**

10. Do you have siblings? If yes [    ] No [    ] If yes how many? .....
11. Who do you stay with? Mother [    ] Father [    ] Both parents [    ] Aunt [    ] Grandmother [    ]
12. What was your parents’ reaction when they got to know that you were pregnant? .....
13. Did you drop out of school after you realized that you were pregnant? If yes [    ] No [    ] why? .....
14. Has there been anyone else in your family who fell pregnant around that age or while at school? Yes [    ] No [    ] If Yes, how old was she .....
15. How did you feel when you got to know that you were pregnant as a school girl? Discuss.....
16. Do you think you were influenced by friends or peers into getting pregnant? Explain .....
17. Do you feel you are treated differently from the other members of your family? If Yes why, If No Explain .....

18. What do you think are people's views about girls who fall pregnant while at school? .....

**a) Influence on decision**

19. Whose attitude would you say influenced your decision not to return to school? And why?  
.....
20. Do you think at times your parents' attitude towards your education discourages you from going back to school? Explain .....
21. How was your academic performance prior to your dropout of school? .....
22. Would you say low academic performance prior to pregnancy discouraged you from going back to school? Yes [ ] No [ ] Explain .....
23. How do you feel about other girls in the area who are not going to school? .....
24. Do you sometimes also feel like becoming free like those girls? Yes [ ] No [ ] Explain....  
.....
25. Are there any other factors that discourage you from taking the step to return to school  
.....
26. To what extent do these factors prevent you from deciding to return to school  
.....

**b) Stigmatization**

27. What do people in your community think about teenage pregnancy and teen mothers?  
.....
28. Do people in the community talk or gossip about you because you have a child. Discuss .....
29. Do you get stigmatized by people outside the community? Yes [ ] No [ ] Explain .....
30. How do your former classmates/peers treat you when they meet you? Explain.....  
.....
31. How does your family treat you as a student mother? .....
32. To what extent does stigmatization discourage you from going back to school? .....

**c) Financial pressures**

33. Do you receive any financial assistance from your family? Yes [ ] No [ ] If No answer how do you take care of yourself financially as a young mother? .....
34. Are you engaged in any kind of work or trade? Explain .....
35. Are there people outside the community who can assist you financially to continue your education? Please explain .....
36. To what extent do financial challenges affect your ability to return to school.....  
.....

**d) Childcare arrangements**

37. Do you receive any kind of childcare support from anywhere? Yes [ ] No [ ]
38. How does your family support with your childcare responsibilities? .....
39. Please list other sources of childcare assistance that you receive? .....

- .....
40. To what extent does childcare responsibilities affect your decision and ability to go back to school.....
41. Has the father or “partner” of the child taken responsibility for the child? Yes [ ] No [ ] If Yes how does he contribute to the upkeep of the child .....

**SECTION C: CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENT MOTHERS IN SCHOOL**

**a) School attendance and regularity**

42. Are you able to attend school regularly? Please give reasons for your answer .....
- .....
43. How would you describe your school attendance prior to becoming pregnant? Regular [ ] Irregular [ ] Poor [ ] Very poor [ ]
44. How would you assess your punctuality to class? .....
45. List some of the challenges that prevent you from being punctual to class and attend school regularly? .....

**b) Academic performance**

46. Can you describe your performance school in terms of test results (examinations?) .....
- Excellent [ ] Good [ ] Fair [ ] Poor [ ]
47. Do you get enough time to do your class assignments? Please explain answer .....
- .....
48. Please share with me about your academic performance prior to becoming pregnant .....
- .....
49. List some of the challenges you face with your school work .....
- .....
50. Are you able to ask or answer questions in class? Please explain answer .....

**c) Participation in extra curricula activities**

51. Were you involved in any school activities apart from your academic work prior to dropping out? .....
- .....
52. How would you assess your participation in non academic or extra curricula activities in school? Good [ ] Fair [ ] Poor [ ]
53. List some of the challenges you facing in interacting with your classmates now that you are a student mother .....

**d) School support**

54. Does the school support student mothers in any way. Please explain .....

- 55. Share with me some of the general challenges you face in school .....
- 56. Does your school offer counseling services to student mothers who return to school? Explain. ....
- 57. Does your school provide childcare services? Explain answer.....

**SECTION D: GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVE ON PREGNANT STUDENTS' RIGHT TO CONTINUED EDUCATION**

**a) Purpose and rationale**

- 58. When was the directive given? .....
- 59. What was the underlying motivation or rationale behind the directive? .....
- 60. What was the directive intended to achieve? .....
- 61. Kindly share with me some of the details of the directive.....

**b) Awareness and sensitization**

- 62. Have you heard about MOE directive to allow student mothers to continue or re-enter school after childbirth? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- 63. How did you hear about it? .....
- 64. How is sensitization of teachers on the directive done in school? .....
- 65. How is sensitization of student mothers on the directive done in school? .....
- 66. How do other stakeholders such as parents get to know about this directive? .....
- 67. How would you assess the level of sensitization of your parents on the directive? Sensitized [ ] Somewhat sensitized [ ] Unaware [ ]
- 68. What is the general attitude of teachers and students towards the directive.....
- 69. Do you think the dissemination and sensitization of the directive should be improved? Explain your answer .....

**c) Implementation challenges**

- 70. How was the directive intended to be implemented? .....
- 71. What kind of support does the school receive from MOE/GES in relation to implementation?.....
- 72. What are some of the constraints and challenges that have affected the implementation of the directive? .....
- 73. Do you think it will help student mothers to continue their education? Explain
- 74. Who are those responsible for making this directive work in schools?.....



## APPENDIX F: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL HEADS

**Dear Respondent,**

I am a student at the Centre for Social Policy Studies at the University of Ghana carrying out a research on girls' re-entry into school after pregnancy. The purpose of this study is to explore and examine the factors and challenges that influence the decision and ability of student mothers in the Ashiedu Keteke Sub-Metro district in Accra to return or not to return as well as some of the implementation challenges. This discussion is intended to elicit information purely for academic purposes and will be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality. You are therefore encouraged to be as objective as possible in your responses.

### **Instructions**

Kindly provide answers either by writing; underlining or by ticking where appropriate.

### **SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

1. Age of respondent: [     ]
2. Sex of respondent: Male [   ] Female [   ]
3. Level of education of respondent: Basic (Primary/JSS/JHS/Middle) [   ]  
Secondary (Secondary/Vocational) [   ] Tertiary (Training college/Polytechnic/University)  
[   ]
4. Marital status of respondents: Single [   ] Married [   ] Divorced/Separated [   ]  
widowed [   ]
5. Residence: .....
6. Religion: .....
7. Ethnicity .....
8. How long have you served as a school head.....

### **SECTION B: WHY STUDENT MOTHERS DO NOT RE-ENTER SCHOOL**

#### **e) Influence on decision**

9. What or who in your opinion are the key in terms of influence on a student mothers decision not to return to school and why? .....
10. Are there any other demotivating factors that discourage student mothers you from taking the step to return to school .....
11. To what extent do these factors prevent them from deciding to return to school .....

#### **f) Stigmatization**

12. What in your opinion are some of the sources of stigmatization that are likely to affect a student mothers decision to return to school?.....
13. To what extent does stigmatization discourage student mothers from going back to school after childbirth? .....

**g) Financial pressures**

14. Is financial challenge in your opinion key to student mothers' inability to return to school?  
Explain .....
15. What in your opinion are some of the sources of financial assistance that are available to assist a student mother to continue her education? .....
16. To what extent do financial challenges affect a student mothers ability to return to school.....

**h) Childcare arrangements**

17. How does lack of support with childcare responsibilities affect a student mothers' ability to return to school? .....
18. What in your opinion are some of the sources of childcare assistance that student mothers can fall on in order to also make time to continue their education? .....
19. To what extent does childcare responsibilities affect you decision and ability to go back to school.....

**SECTION C: CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENT MOTHERS IN SCHOOL**

**d) School attendance and regularity**

20. How would you assess their school attendance and punctuality in class prior to becoming pregnant? Regular [ ] Irregular [ ] Poor [ ] Very poor [ ]
21. List some of the challenges that student mothers face in terms of school attendance and regularity.....

**e) Academic performance**

22. Can you describe their performance school in terms of test results (examinations?)  
Excellent [ ] Good [ ] Fair [ ] Poor [ ]
23. List some of the challenges that they face with their school work .....
24. How would you assess their confidence level in class? Please explain answer .....

**f) Participation in extra curricula activities**

25. How would you assess their participation in extra curricula activities? Good [ ] Fair [ ]  
Poor [ ]
26. List some of the challenges that student mothers face especially in their interaction with their classmates? .....

**e) School support**

- 27. What efforts or actions does the school take in addressing issues of stigmatization that student mothers who return to school face? .....
- 28. Does the school support student mothers in any way. Please explain .....
- 29. Does your school offer counseling services to student mothers who return to school? Explain. ....
- 30. Does your school provide childcare services? Explain answer.....

**SECTION D: GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVE ON PREGNANT STUDENTS' RIGHT TO CONTINUED EDUCATION**

**d) Purpose and rationale**

- 31. When was the directive given? .....
- 32. What was the underlying motivation or rationale behind the directive? .....
- 33. What was the directive intended to achieve? .....
- 34. Kindly share with me some of the details of the directive.....

**e) Awareness and sensitization**

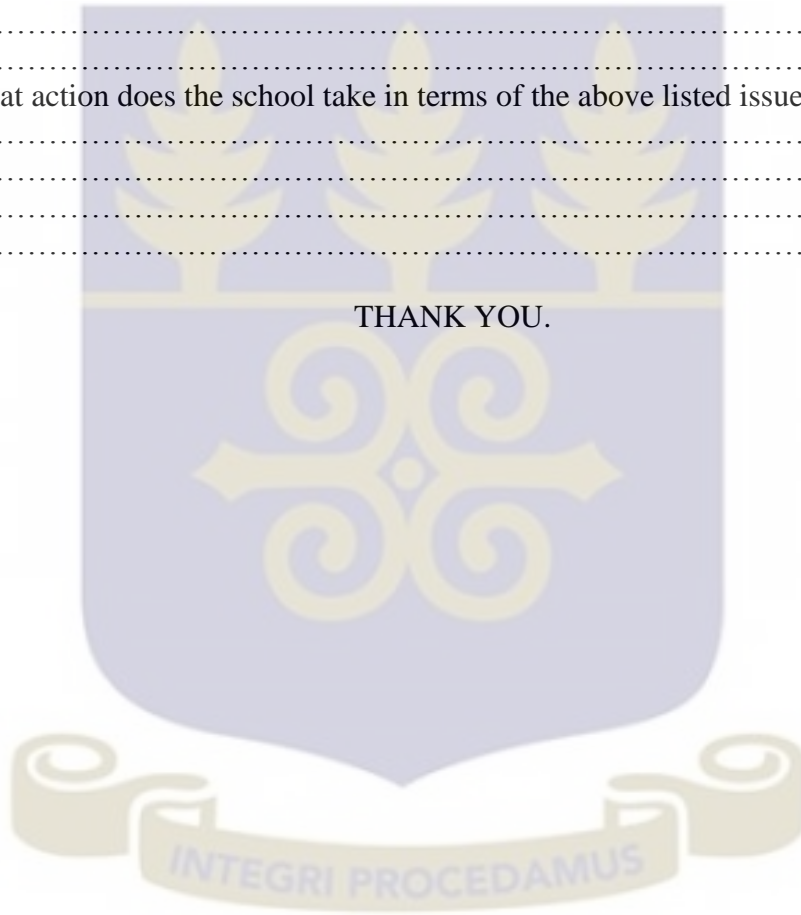
- 35. Have you heard about MOE directive to allow student mothers to continue or re-enter school after childbirth? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- 36. How did you hear about it? .....
- 37. How is sensitization of teachers on the directive done in school? .....
- 38. How would you assess the level of sensitization of your parents on the directive? Sensitized [ ] Somewhat sensitized [ ] Unaware [ ]
- 39. How is sensitization of student mothers on the directive done in school? .....
- 40. How do other stakeholders such as parents get to know about this directive? .....
- 41. What is the general attitude of teachers and students towards the directive.....
- 42. Do you think the dissemination and sensitization of the directive should be improved? Explain your answer .....

**f) Implementation challenges**

- 43. How was the directive intended to be implemented? .....
- 44. What kind of support does the school receive from MOE/GES in relation to implementation?.....

45. What are some of the constraints and challenges that have affected the implementation of the directive? .....
46. Do you think it will help student mothers to continue their education? Explain
47. Who are those responsible for making this directive work in schools?.....
- .....
48. Does the ministry provide any documented procedures or guidelines for the implementation of schools? Yes [ ] No [ ]
49. If Yes what procedures do you follow in terms of the following: i) detecting pregnancy ii ) response upon detection; iii) leaving school to deliver; iv) absence from school; and v) student mothers return and retention. Please explain .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
50. If No what action does the school take in terms of the above listed issues. Please explain
- .....
- .....
- .....

THANK YOU.



## APPENDIX G: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

**Dear Respondent,**

I am a student at the Centre for Social Policy Studies at the University of Ghana carrying out a research on girls re-entry into school after pregnancy. The purpose of this study is to explore and examine the factors and challenges that influence the decision and ability of student mothers in the Ashiedu Keteke Sub-Metro district in Accra to return or not to return as well as some of the implementation challenges. This discussion is intended to elicit information purely for academic purposes and will be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality. You are therefore encouraged to be as objective as possible in your responses.

### **Instructions**

Kindly provide answers either by writing; underlining or by ticking where appropriate.

### **SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

1. Age of respondent: [     ]
2. Sex of respondent: Male [     ] Female [     ]
3. Level of education of respondent: Basic (Primary/JSS/JHS/Middle) [     ]  
Secondary (Secondary/Vocational) [     ] Tertiary (Training college/Polytechnic/University)  
[     ]
4. Marital status of respondents: Single [     ] Married [     ] Divorced/Separated [     ]  
widowed [     ]
5. Residence: .....
6. Religion: .....
7. Ethnicity .....
8. How long have you served as a school teacher.....

### **SECTION B: WHY STUDENT MOTHERS DO NOT RE-ENTER SCHOOL**

#### **a) Influence on decision**

9. What or who in your opinion are the key in terms of influence on a student mothers decision not to return to school and why? .....
10. Are there any other demotivating factors that discourage student mothers you from taking the step to return to school .....
11. To what extent do these factors prevent them from deciding to return to school .....

#### **b) Stigmatization**

12. What in your opinion are some of the sources of stigmatization that are likely to affect a student mothers decision to return to school?.....

.....  
13. To what extent does stigmatization discourage student mothers from going back to school after childbirth? .....

**g) Financial pressures**

14. Is financial challenge in your opinion key to student mothers' inability to return to school? Explain .....

15. What in your opinion are some of the sources of financial assistance that are available to assist a student mother to continue her education? .....

16. To what extent do financial challenges affect a student mothers ability to return to school.....

**h) Childcare arrangements**

17. How does lack of support with childcare responsibilities affect a student mothers' ability to return to school? .....

18. What in your opinion are some of the sources of childcare assistance that student mothers can fall on in order to also make time to continue their education? .....

19. To what extent does childcare responsibilities affect you decision and ability to go back to school.....

**SECTION C: CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENT MOTHERS IN SCHOOL**

**f) School attendance and regularity**

20. How would you assess their school attendance? Regular [ ] Irregular [ ] Poor [ ] Very poor [ ]

21. How would you assess their punctuality to class? Punctual [ ] average[ ] Always late [ ]

22. List some of the challenges that student mothers face in terms of school attendance and regularity.....

**i) Academic performance**

23. Can you describe their performance school in terms of test results (examinations) compared to their classmates? Excellent [ ] Good [ ] Fair [ ] Poor [ ]

24. Do they ask or answer questions in class? Yes [ ] No [ ]

25. If yes how often? Very often [ ] Not too often [ ] Not at all [ ]

26. Are they able to complete their home assignments in time? Yes [ ] Not always [ ]

27. List some of the challenges that they face with their school work .....

28. How would you assess their confidence level in class? Please explain answer .....

**g) Participation in extra curricula activities**

29. How would you assess their participation in extra curricula activities? Good [ ] Fair [ ] Poor [ ].

30. List some of the challenges that student mothers face especially in their interaction with their classmates? .....

**f) School support**

31. What efforts or actions does the school take in addressing issues of stigmatization that student mothers who return to school face? .....

32. Does the school support student mothers in any way. Please explain .....

33. Does your school offer counseling services to student mothers who return to school? Explain. ....

34. Does your school provide childcare services? Explain answer.....

**SECTION D: GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVE ON PREGNANT STUDENTS' RIGHT TO CONTINUED EDUCATION**

**j) Purpose and rationale**

35. When was the directive given? .....

36. What was the underlying motivation or rationale behind the directive? .....

37. What was the directive intended to achieve? .....

38. Kindly share with me some of the details of the directive.....

**k) Awareness and sensitization**

39. Have you heard about MOE directive to allow student mothers to continue or re-enter school after childbirth? Yes [ ] No [ ]

40. How did you hear about it? .....

41. How is sensitization of teachers on the directive done in school? .....

42. How would you assess the level of sensitization of student mothers on the directive? Sensitized [ ] Somewhat sensitized [ ] Unaware [ ]

43. How is sensitization of student mothers on the directive done in school? .....

44. How do other stakeholders such as parents get to know about this directive? .....

45. What is the general attitude of teachers and students towards the directive.....

46. Do you think the dissemination and sensitization of the directive should be improved? Explain your answer .....

**l) Implementation challenges**

47. How was the directive intended to be implemented? .....



**APPENDIX H: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MOE OFFICIAL**

**Dear Respondent,**

I am a student at the Centre for Social Policy Studies at the University of Ghana carrying out a research on girls’ re-entry into school after pregnancy. The purpose of this study is to explore and examine the factors and challenges that influence the decision and ability of student mothers in the Ashiedu Keteke Sub-Metro district in Accra to return or not to return as well as some of the implementation challenges. This discussion is intended to elicit information purely for academic purposes and will be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality. You are therefore encouraged to be as objective as possible in your responses.

**Instructions**

Kindly provide answers either by writing; underlining or by ticking where appropriate.

**SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

1. Age of respondent: [     ]
2. Sex of respondent: Male [     ] Female [     ]
3. Level of education of respondent: Basic (Primary/JSS/JHS/Middle) [     ]  
Secondary (Secondary/Vocational) [     ] Tertiary (Training college/Polytechnic/University) [     ]
4. Marital status of respondents: Single [     ] Married [     ] Divorced/Separated [     ]  
widowed [     ]
5. Residence: .....
6. Religion: .....
7. Ethnicity .....
8. How long have you served in the Ministry .....

**SECTION B: WHY STUDENT MOTHERS DO NOT RETURN TO SCHOOL AND SCHOOL BASED CHALLENGES FACED BY THOSE WHO RETURN**

9. Does the ministry have statistics on students who have fallen pregnant or found responsible for pregnancy? Yes [     ] No [     ]
10. What are some of the reasons why student mothers do not report back to school ...
11. Do you think their inability to provide for themselves can prevent them from returning to school? If yes, how, if no explain. ....
12. Is it possible that student mothers do not return to school because they are looked down upon or not taken seriously by their peers, families or in the communities in which they live? Explain .....
13. Can responsibilities of childcare prevent them from returning to school? How? .....
14. What do you think are some of the school based challenges that student mothers who return to school face? .....

**SECTION C: GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVE ON PREGNANT STUDENTS' RIGHT TO CONTINUED EDUCATION**

**a) Purpose and rationale**

15. When was the directive given? .....
16. What was the underlying motivation or rationale behind the directive? .....
17. What was the directive intended to achieve? .....
18. Kindly share with me some of the details of the directive.....

**b) Awareness and sensitization**

19. Have you heard about MOE directive to allow student mothers to continue or re-enter school after childbirth? Yes [ ] No [ ]
20. How did you hear about it? .....
21. How is sensitization of teachers on the directive done in school? .....
22. How is sensitization of student mothers on the directive done in school? .....
23. How would you assess the level of sensitization among the schools on the directive?  
Sensitized [ ] Somewhat sensitized [ ] Unaware [ ]
24. How do other stakeholders such as parents get to know about this directive? .....
25. What is the general attitude of teachers and students towards the directive.....
26. Do you think the dissemination and sensitization of the directive should be improved?  
Explain your answer .....

**c) Implementation challenges**

27. How was the directive intended to be implemented? .....
28. What kind of support does the school receive from MOE/GES in relation to implementation?.....
29. What are some of the constraints and challenges that have affected the implementation of the directive? .....
30. Do you think it will help student mothers to continue their education? Explain
31. Who are those responsible for making this directive work in schools?.....
32. Does the ministry provide any documented procedures or guidelines for the implementation of the directive in schools? Yes [ ] No [ ]

33. If Yes what procedures do they follow in terms of i) detecting pregnancy ii) response upon detection; iii) leaving school to deliver; iv) absence from school; and v) student mothers return and retention. Please explain .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
If No why are there no guidelines yet?. Please explain

.....  
.....  
.....



## APPENDIX I: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

**Dear Respondent,**

I am a student at the Centre for Social Policy Studies at the University of Ghana carrying out a research on girls' re-entry into school after pregnancy. The purpose of this study is to explore and examine the factors and challenges that influence the decision and ability of student mothers in the Ashiedu Keteke Sub-Metro district in Accra to return or not to return as well as some of the implementation challenges. This discussion is intended to elicit information purely for academic purposes and will be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality. You are therefore encouraged to be as objective as possible in your responses.

### **Instructions**

Kindly provide answers either by writing; underlining or by ticking where appropriate.

### **SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

1. Age of respondent: [     ]
2. Sex of respondent: Male [     ] Female [     ]
3. Level of education of respondent: Basic (Primary/JSS/JHS/Middle) [     ]  
Secondary (Secondary/Vocational) [     ] Tertiary (Training  
college/Polytechnic/University) [     ]
4. Marital status of respondents: Single [     ] Married [     ] Divorced/Separated [     ]  
widowed [     ]
5. Residence: .....
6. Religion: .....
7. Ethnicity .....

### **SECTION B: WHY STUDENT MOTHERS DO NOT RE-ENTER SCHOOL AND CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENT MOTHERS IN SCHOOL**

8. How many children do you have? .....
9. What is the size of your family? .....
10. What was your' reaction when you got to know that your daughter was pregnant? .....
11. Has there been anyone else in your family who fell pregnant around that age or while in school? Yes [     ] No [     ] If Yes, how old was she .....
12. Do you think your daughter was influenced by friends or peers into getting pregnant?  
Explain .....

#### **a) Influence on decision**

13. Whose attitude would you say influenced your daughters' decision not to return to school?  
And why? .....
14. Do you think at times parental attitude towards your education discourages you from going  
back to school? Explain .....

15. Can you assess your daughters' academic performance prior to your dropout of school?  
.....
16. Would you say low academic performance prior to pregnancy discouraged your daughter from going back to school? Yes [ ] No [ ] Explain .....

**b) Stigmatization**

17. What do people in your community think about teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers?  
.....
18. Does your daughter get stigmatized by people outside the community Yes [ ] No [ ]  
Explain .....
19. To what extent did stigmatization discourage your daughter from going back to school?  
.....

**c) Financial pressures**

20. Are you involved in any kind of work? .....
21. Is your daughter engaged any kind of work or trade? Explain .....
22. Are there people outside the community who can assist your daughter financially to continue your education? Please explain .....
23. To what extent does lack of finance affect your daughters' ability to return to school.....

**d) Childcare arrangements**

24. Does your daughter receive any kind of childcare support from anywhere? Yes [ ] No [ ]
25. How does your family support her with her childcare responsibilities? .....
26. Please list other sources of childcare assistance that you receive? .....
27. To what extent does childcare responsibilities affect you decision and ability to go back to school.....

**SECTION C: GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVE ON PREGNANT STUDENTS' RIGHT TO CONTINUED EDUCATION**

**e) Purpose and rationale**

28. When was the directive given? .....
29. What was the underlying motivation or rationale behind the directive? .....
30. What was the directive intended to achieve? .....
31. Kindly share with me some of the details of the directive.....

