

## ENROLMENT AND GENDER PARITY IN BASIC SCHOOLS IN GHANA: A CASE STUDY OF EASTERN REGION

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**ABSTRACT:** *With data covering the period from 2001 to 2011, this study investigated trends in basic school enrolments and gender parity in the Eastern region of Ghana using the combined paradigm or the mixed research approach. The population of the study was the enrolment of basic schools in all the districts in the Eastern Region of Ghana and the sample comprised enrolment data from 2001 to 2011 in all the Districts in the Region. The main objective of the study was to investigate the trends and gender parity in the eastern region. The study analyzed the existing EMIS data on enrolment and compared the gender parity index (GPI) from 2001/2 to 2011/12 academic years. Specifically, the study looked at GPI at the regional and districts levels focusing on 2001/2, 2006/7 and 2011/12 academic years. The Braiman (2003) Excel was used to analyze the data. The study found that there had been an improvement of enrolment in the Eastern region from the 2001/2 academic year to 2010/11 academic year. The analysis showed that there had been an increase in the enrolment in both the primary school and junior high school levels especially the period from 2006/7 to 2010/11 academic years. However, the increase in enrolment of girls in the primary schools did not reflect the same trends in the junior high school levels in the Region. There had been a wide gap between the primary school and the junior high total enrolment within the study period. The study also found some disparities of GPI in the districts of the region. In other words, the GPI varied from district to district in the region. It is recommended that further research using primary data be conducted to find other reasons necessary for the decreasing enrolment in girls particularly as they climb the academic ladder. The study emphasized that Girl child retention should be a primary concern of policy makers. The emphasis over the years has been how to increase enrolment in schools and not retention. Measures should therefore be taken to ensure that girls complete full cycle of their education.*

**KEYWORDS:** Basic School Enrolment, Gender Parity, Gross Enrolment, Net Enrolment, Retention, Trends in Basic Schools.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Government of Ghana committed itself to the achievement of Universal Primary Education (UPE) by ensuring that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike would be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. The government's commitment towards achieving the educational goals is reflected in several policy frameworks and reports. In May 2003, for instance the Ministry of Education and Sports came out with the Education Strategy Plan (ESP) for 2003- 2015. The Education Strategy Plan (ESP) was informed by many documents and policy frameworks, especially the goals for Education for All, the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) and the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Education Strategy Plan (ESP) served as the framework by which Ghana was to meet its commitments to achieve the

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in education that is the Gender Parity by 2005 and Universal Primary Education by 2015.

Despite the enormous benefits derivable from female education there is consistent and acute gender imbalance in education in favour of males.

UNICEF (2003) Education Report in sub-Saharan Africa indicated that the number of girls out of school each year rose from 20 million in 1990 to 29 million in 2002.

In Ghana, the situation is not different as the boys in school continue their dominance over girls in enrolment statistics. The situation is exacerbated in the northern and Eastern fringes of the country.

Within the Education Strategy Plan (ESP), primary education is designated as a sector priority and various measures and decisions were taken by the Government to accelerate its efforts in achieving the MDG 2 by 2015. Some of the measures taken include the institution of the Capitation Grant to all public basic schools, as part of the Free Compulsory Basic Education (FCUBE), the introduction of a school feeding programme, special programmes to bridge the gender gap in accessing education and targeted programmes to improve access in deprived area.

In the last three decades, the UN has also been at the forefront to champion the course of women. Its focus has been on gender and education. It has therefore developed a comprehensive plan of action aimed at addressing gender imbalance in education. This is because all countries around the globe have now realized that education is the major tool for promoting and improving the status of women.

All these efforts, it is believed, will result in positive progress in the education sector, especially in the basic education. For example the government believes the primary school enrollment increased significantly as a result of the capitation grant and the waiving of all remaining fees and levies. The Ghana Government also believes that the policy has helped bridge the gap between gender enrollments in schools.

However, others chastised the government for poor policy formulation, implementation and monitoring, which is retarding progress in the national educational advancement and so injuring the future of the current generation. It has been observed that the government of Ghana has to spend between 5-7% of her Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education, as this will be in line with the views of the association of African universities and World Bank position on quality education. It is interesting to note that Burkina Faso spends 7% of her GDP on education, Togo 8%, Namibia 8%, South Africa 7%, and Botswana 15% whilst Ghana spends a paltry 3.1%. This raises much concern as to whether the government would be able to achieve her vision of education for all at the basic level (Kwabia, 2006).

In the light of the above, this study sought to assess the impact of these policies by the government on enrolment and gender parity of pupils in the basic schools since the target year, 2015 is over using Eastern region of Ghana as a case. Not much research has been conducted on the issue of gender parity since the introduction of these policies by the government of Ghana.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the World today, education is the main key to success. It is believed that one of the major ways to reduce poverty in a nation is quality education for all. It is for this reason that the

Government of Ghana commits large chunk of its resources into the provision of education, especially, at the basic level in the form of budgetary allocation, with the aim of achieving hundred percent enrolment and gender parity. According to the Educational Sector Performance Report 2010, only 87.1% of pupils enrolled in the primary schools had completed P.6 and girls' enrolment stood at only 48.7%. At J H S level, only 66% of the students completed that level and the girls' enrolment rate was only 47%. This shows that, there are many children, especially, girls who are not enrolled in school and/or have dropped out of school. In recent times there have been interventions by government by providing free school uniforms, free feeding and the capitation Grant. The main aim of these interventions is to improve enrolment and to bridge the gap between males and females of school going age..

These efforts are intended to result in positive progress in the education sector, especially, with regards to increased enrolment and improved quality of teaching and learning. According to Ems (2008), there has been significant increase in enrollment, especially in the Basic schools across the country.

However the effect on gender parity is not clear. In this regard, with EMS data covering the period of 2001/2, 2006/7 and 2011/12, this study sought to examine the extent to which these policies over the years bridge the gap between boys and girls in the Eastern region of Ghana.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the trends in basic school enrolment in the Eastern region for the years 2001/2, 2006/7 and 2010/11?
2. How does girl child enrolment trends in the Eastern region for the years 2001/2, 2006/7 and 2010/11 compare between primary and JHS levels?
3. How does the gender parity index for 2001/2, 2006/7 and 2010/11 compare in the Eastern region?
4. How does the gender parity index for 2001/2, 2006/7 and 2010/11 compare in the districts in the Eastern region?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Framework**

A number of theories have been advanced to understand the phenomenon of gender parity of pupils in school.(Coleman 1988, Newmann *et al.* 1992, Ogbu, 1992) cited in Rwechungura (2014). These theories originated from some of the Social Science disciplines such as psychology, Sociology, Geography and Economics and identify a range of specific factors related to gender parity in schools. This study is therefore guided by two of these theories:

### **Poor Family Socialization Theory**

The Poor Family Socialization goes back to a child's development within his/her family. A student's performance in school is directly affected by his family history including divorce, stress and parental behaviour. The most critical aspects of this theory are the education level of the students' parents and their future plans for the child. Highly educated parents demand more

education for their children (Ngau, 1991). Many illiterate parents have low academic expectation for their daughters and therefore do not want to spend more on them. Some believe that higher education is for boys only and that boys are more brilliant than girls and perform better than girls.

### **Radical Feminist Theory**

According to Cain et al (1979), Patriarchy is defined as “a set of social relations with material base that enables men to dominate women”.

It is believed that African patriarchal societal viewpoint favours boys over girls because boys maintain the family lineage..African societies are characterized by gender inequality between males and females. The ideological foundation for gender, inequality is their patriarchal structure. Social roles are classified as superior or inferior, and the bases of these classification are age and sex.

Women activities are largely confirmed to the household or the female sections of family compound. Thus, women are expected to get married and care for their families, formal education is not regarded as a prerequisite for being a wife and mother. Boys are rather expected to have formal education.

### **The Concept of Education**

Education is the impartation of knowledge, skill and values into a person to enable him or her fit well into the society (Farrant, 1980). From the above, it is clear that education provide information to a person to help him/her develop physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, politically and economically in his/her society.

Education is one of the fundamental rights of individuals. According to Nwangwu (1976), Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December, 1949 stipulated that:

Everyone has the right to education. This shall be free at least in the elementary and primary stages.

Elementary education shall be compulsory while technical and professional education shall be made generally available.

### **Trends in Basic School Gross and Net Enrollment in Ghana**

The Trends in basic school enrollment have been an issue of concern since the introduction of formal education in the Gold Coast in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. According to Akyeampong (2007), king John of Portugal commanded his representatives in Elimina in 1529 to provide reading, writing and religious teachings to Africans. This marked the beginning of formal education in Ghana. It took about 380 years before the first government primary school, the Tamale School was established in northern Ghana in 1909. Primary education was then extended to other towns in the north. Primary education reached Gambaga in 1912, Wa in 1917, Lawra in 1919 and Salaga in 1923. As at 1944, there was only one middle school serving all the Northern Territories. The number of children in primary and middle schools in the North increased from 2,218 in 1945 to 23,340 in 1957. This figure was about 10% of children of school going age compared with 60% of children in the south who were in school (Mc William and Kwamena – Po, 1975).

The 1987 Educational Reforms with support from the World Bank were extended to expand primary education and introduce greater cost recovery for higher education. The policy also reduced pre-tertiary education from 17 to 12 years. Substantial government and donor funds were directed into funding the basic education sector (Acheampong et al, 2007). This resulted in the opening of new primary schools and Junior Secondary Schools throughout the country. The reforms sought to improve teacher efficiency, student quality and enrollment levels, especially for girls.

Determined to get more children into schools, the government of Ghana launched the policy of free compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) in 1995 supported by the World Bank Primary School Development Project (PSDP). With this, parents were expected to bear a limited educational expense. More importantly, no child was to be turned away from school for non-payment of fees. Unfortunately, the initiative did not work well as expected

One significant observation is that for three consecutive academic years - 2005 / 2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 the central region had GER exceeding 100%. The upper West region also had GER exceeding 100% in the 2005/6 academic year. Therefore, GER exceeding 100% in the two regions might be due to two factors. First, significant number of overage and underage children might enroll. Secondly, in locations with small population, a slight over reporting of enrolment may result into GER more than hundred (Mehta 2003). In the subsequent years, there was no significant difference between the north and the south. What is significant is that the central region has been recording the highest NER figure during the period under study, recording 99.4% in 2007/08 academic year.

According to the data (Ems 2008) on JHS enrolment, the GER appears to show significant gap between the three northern regions and the other regions in Ghana. The highest GER for the 3 northern regions in 2001 / 02 was 45% in upper West. This significant increase in GER might be because of the introduction of the capitation Grant Scheme and the school feeding program in the 2004/05 academic year. Enrollment figures compiled by the statistics unit of ministry of Education for Ghana Education Service after the introduction of the capitation grants show that general enrolment levels have increased nationwide over the years since the introduction of the policy. The wider gap between boys and girls for GER in comparison to NER prompts more follow-up investigation to understand why such may be the case. A similar pattern of growth is seen in the junior secondary school gross and net enrollment ratios although actual participation in JSS is at a markedly lower percentage.

### **Trends of Basic School Gross and Net Enrollment in Sub-Saharan Africa**

The education for all global monitoring report (2008), stresses that, to reach universal primary education, all children of the relevant age group should be enrolled in school.

However, several countries mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab states will find it very difficult to approach UPE in the coming decade.

This report highlighted that 'rapid Progress towards universal enrolment and gender parity at the primary level in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Mozambique, Tanzania, Yemen and Zambia showed that the national political will combined with international support can make a difference. According to Tomasevski (2006), it was estimated in 2004 based on the statistics available in the Global Education Digest 2004 that 30 percent of the children in Burkina Faso, Central Africa Republic, Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Mali and Niger, never started schooling let



alone attended regularly. Africa has registered strong progress. During a period in which the size of its school age population increased by 20 million, sub-Saharan Africa reduced its out-of-school population by almost 13 million or 28% (UNESCO, 2010). The issue of inaccessibility of preconditions to achieving UPE is concisely reported by the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009 is that enrolment in sub-Saharan African increased significantly at all education levels between 1999 and 2006. In fact the current status indicated that, there have been some real gains, especially in getting more children to primary school, many governments have taken measures to reduce the cost of schooling and tackle obstacles to girls' education but there are still challenges. There are no enough schools teachers and learning materials. Poverty and disadvantaged to access to primary education remains a major barrier for millions of children and youth. Policies that address both access and quality do exist, but they require much bolder action from the earliest age, to reach the most vulnerable groups and dramatically expand literacy programs for youth and adults. In a similar manner, Mulugeta (2007) suggests that increase in population; poverty, low average private schooling, and limited and weak institutional capacity remain as main constraints to achieve Universal Primary Education in many countries.

### **Trends of Enrollment and Retention of Boys and Girls**

Globally, girls represent the majority of children out of school and face some of the biggest challenges in getting an education. In 2006, 75 million children of primary school age were not enrolled in school; in 2007, 101 million were not attending school. Most out-of-school primary school-age children (88 per cent) live in Africa and Asia (UNICEF, 2009) cited in Chishimba *et al* (2013). According to Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE, 1996) comparative data for Latin America, Asia and the Middle East indicate that both the gross primary and the secondary enrolment ratios were significantly lower in sub-Saharan African region than in developing regions. It explains further that as many as 36 million girls in sub-Saharan Africa are missing from school, and those who gain access to education are often poorly served. While the same number of boys and girls enrolled in first grade, by fourth grade, 50% of the female students have dropped out. In other words, enrolment decreases, the higher one ascends the educational hierarchy. The centrality of women's contribution to national development cannot be underestimated. Several studies have shown that an investment in girls' education is an investment in the family, community and nation (Adetunde & Akensina, 2008; Government of the Republic of Zambia, 1996, p.13). It improves overall quality of life. However, for a long time now, it has been noted that the education sector has not been able to give equal access to girls nor has it been able to retain many of them in school for many years. According to Mwansa (1995, p.3), Some factors responsible for imbalances in female access to education are: wage discrimination, quality of education offered to girls, type of school, religion and ethnicity. Studies in West Africa indicated that parents, unless wealthy, preferred to educate their sons on the assumption that education "pays off" in life time wages more handsomely for males than for females (Ram, 1982). According to Mumba (2002), among the major problems identified in the research studies were that in primary school, the enrolment, retention and completion rates of girls were lower than that of boys; and many parents prefer to spend the little money they have on the education of boys rather than of girls.

### **Gender Parity Index**

.Gender contributes to a child's lack of access and attendance to education. Although it may not be as an obvious as a problem today, gender equality in education has been an issue for a long

time. Many investments in girls' education in the 1900s addressed the widespread lack of access to primary education in developing countries (Dowd, 2001).

Despite significant progress in increasing access to and coverage of education, attempts to narrow the gaps in regional and gender disparities have been slow. Gender and regional disparities also persist as quality indicators such as dropout rates, repetition rates, etc. lack of meaningful local actions to surmount social and cultural barriers to access to education of girls and members of the minority communities and their completion of a given level of schooling has been one of the contributing factors to overcome gender and regional disparities (MOE, 2002). According to UNESCO (2010), in Equatorial Guinea, Liberia and Togo, for example, greater parity has been driven not by expansion of the education system but by the fact that boys' enrolment has declined. Gender disparities are more prevalent and even greater in secondary and higher education than at the primary level, but follow more complex patterns. As it was reported in the EFA global monitoring report summary 2008, physical and psychological violence perpetuated by teachers and other staff and by children themselves are still found in many schools. Boys are more likely to experience frequent and severe physical violence, particularly corporal punishment. Girls are more likely to be affected by sexual violence and harassment, often resulting in low self-esteem and early dropout. A comparative study in Ghana, Malawi and Zimbabwe according to this report, found that many girls reported aggressive sexual advances by older male students and male teachers. The physical environment of schools is equally important. Young girls, particularly after puberty, are less likely to attend classes if the school lacks suitable hygiene facilities. One study contends that half the girls in sub-Saharan Africa who drop out of primary school do so because of poor water and sanitation facilities (UNESCO, 2008).

According to the World Bank (2008), Gender disparities against girls are higher in Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali and Togo, with fewer than 60 girls per 100 boys entering secondary education. In the report, factors affecting participation of girls in secondary education includes policy and direction of aid flows at the international level, economic policies at the national level, family level economic decisions, and socio cultural norms. The report concluded that impact of dominant economic regimes such as structural adjustment has been noted for its effect on girls' education. School fees for instance as part of cost-sharing regime have been observed to lead to dropouts with families opting to forgo the education of the girls' where there are severe financial constraints.

### **Interventions to Improve Gender Parity Index (GPI) in Sub-Sahara Africa**

Achieving Universal Primary Education is an international priority set by the United Nations (UN). In 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, Education for All (EFA) was declared (Baaden, 2002). In April 2000, a World Education Forum was held in Dakar to achieve the EFA goals. In the same year, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were declared by the UN to assist developing countries in their efforts to increase the living standards of people. Countries worldwide are making good and encouraging progress towards reducing the number of out-of-school children. Specifically, Sub-Saharan Africa has witnessed an unprecedented 25% increase in enrolment between 1998/99 and 2002/03 (Mumba, 2002). Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have been exploring ways of improving their education systems in order to achieve their commitment to education for all. Ensuring that children have access to free, compulsory and good quality primary education is receiving considerable attention from governments and aid agencies alike. Two main systems through which certain governments are using to achieve this aim are the abolition of school fees and the School Feeding Programmes.

In Ghana, the government has put in place useful strategies to encourage enrolment, daily attendance and retention of pupils in basic schools across the country. This is an attempt to realize the objectives of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy as well as the provision of Education for All (EFA) agenda. These strategies include the provision of school pupils with teaching and learning materials, school uniforms, the school feeding programme and the introduction of the capitation grant per child enrolled. All these policies have contributed to reducing the gender gaps in education at the basic level.

## METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted the combined paradigm or the mixed research approach. Mixed methods research is a research approach with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry (Kwabia, 2006). As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process (Kwabia, 2006).

Quantitative data on school enrolment for both primary and junior high schools in the Eastern region was used. The data comprised total enrolments, gross enrolment and net enrolment for both boys and girls for the districts across the region. The data was used to measure the enrolment trends. The data was analyzed and interpreted qualitatively to bring more understanding and meaning to the quantitative data collected

The research design used was a case study. A case study is a research work about a single social group, entity or phenomena and its characteristics (Kwabia, 2006). According to Stake (2000), a case may be an object of social inquiry. The researcher considered Trends and enrolment in basic schools and the nature of Gender Parity Index as a case. The researcher also considered Eastern region as a case because it is a unique geographical area. This is because Eastern Region is one region out of the ten (10) regions in Ghana. In other words, a study, especially a qualitative one, takes place in a well-defined geographical area, which is also referred to as a case or the setting of the study”.

The population of this study was the enrolment of basic schools in all the districts in the Eastern Region since the research seeks to examine the trends in enrolment and gender parity. According to Kusi (2012), population is used to refer to the entire group of individuals to whom the findings of a study apply. It is whatever group the investigator wishes to make inferences about.

Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used for the study. The simple random sampling was used to select the region for the study while the districts in the region were purposively selected. Kwabia (2006) stated that, in purposive sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand a phenomenon.

All the districts in the Eastern region were intentionally selected for the study to better understand the trend in basic school enrolment and gender parity in the region. With this research, three years were purposively sampled (2001/02, 2006/07 and 2010/11). The period from 2001 to 2006 is before the government implemented major interventions and the period 2007 to 2011 is after the interventions. The interventions are the School Feeding Programme, and the capitation Grants and the distribution of free school uniforms.



The researcher relied on documented evidence. A document is defined as a written or printed paper that bears the original, official or legal form of something and can be used to furnish decisive evidence or information ([www. the free dictionary.com/documented](http://www.the-free-dictionary.com/documented)).

The researcher used the Educational Management Information System (EMIS) document from the Ghana Education Service (G E S). This document contained the total enrolment of all school children in Ghana from the pre-school to the second cycle. The researcher was limited to the EMIS document on the enrolment of Primary and JHS in the Eastern region to analyze the trends in enrolment in 2001/02, 2006/07 and 2012/11 academic years.

The data was extracted from existing research works by the Ministry of Education on enrolment and Gender Parity Index (2001 to 2011). Specifically, it was extracted is from the Educational Management and Information System (EMIS). After extracting, the data was then organized into themes and then analyzed using the qualitative method. This was done with the assistance of the Braiman (2003) excel statistical tool.

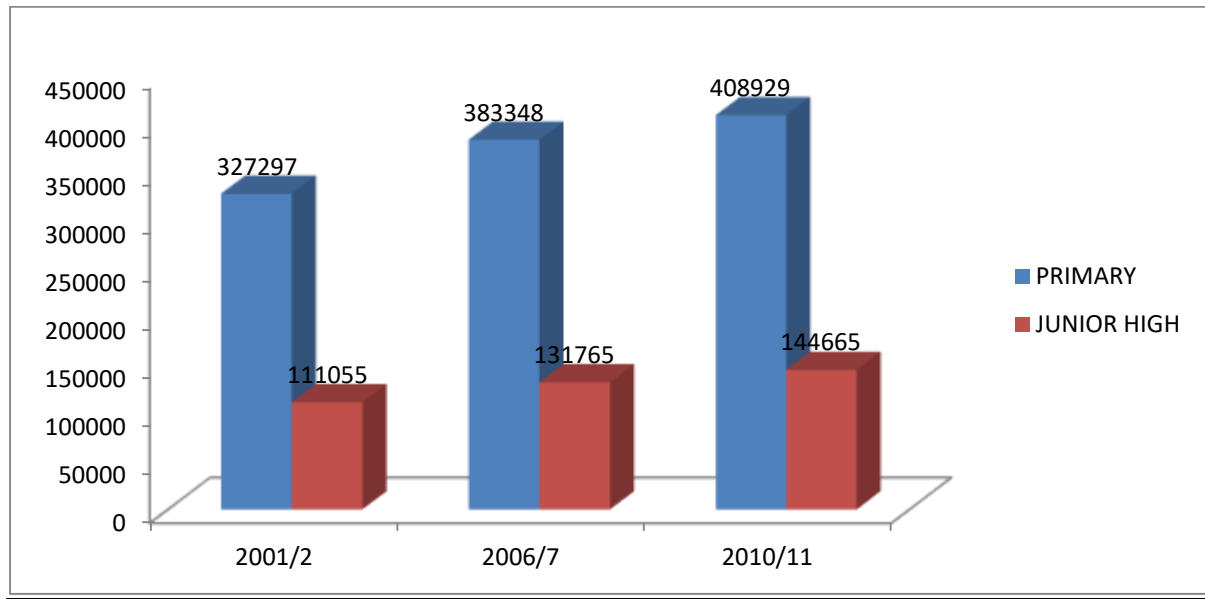
## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Trends in Basic School Enrolment in Eastern Region for 2001/2, 2006/7 and 2010/2011**

Trends in Basic school enrolment in the Eastern Region in general have shown a tremendous increment from 2001/2 through 2006/7 to 2010/11. A look at Fig 1a: indicates that, both JHS and Primary enrolment have shown a positive trend for the years under consideration.

Another point worthy of note is that, the increment in enrolment from 2001/2 to 2006/7 for the primary schools was 17.13% while the increment in 2010/11 over the 2006/7 enrolment for the same primary was only 6.67%. In the JHS the same trend is observed.

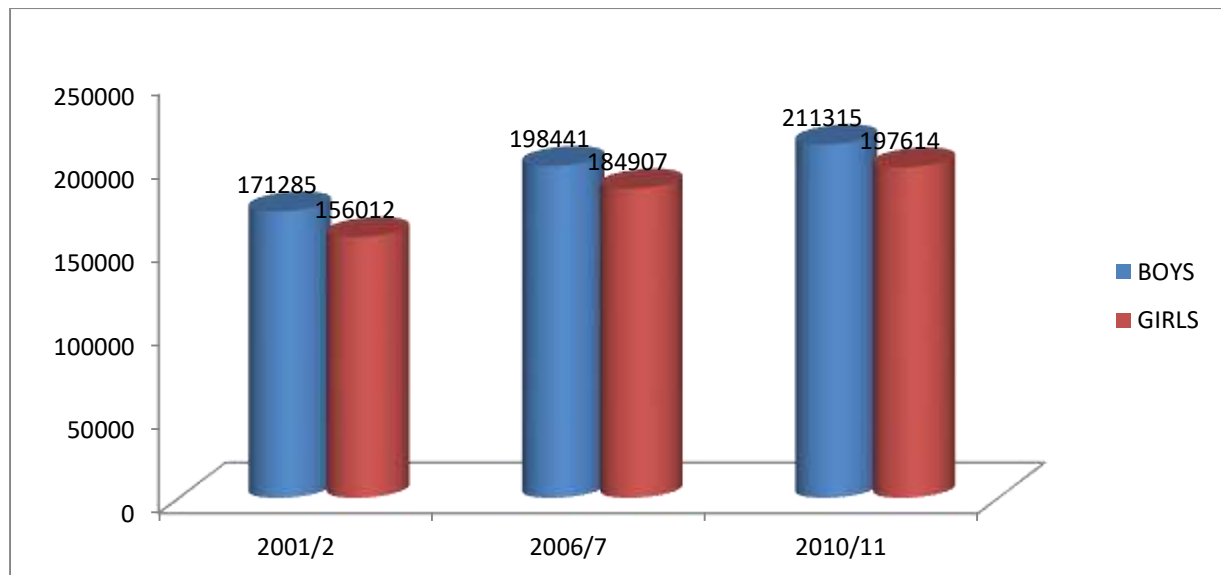
In 2006/7 the enrolment figure increased by 18.65% over the 2001/2 enrolment figure while in 2010/11 the enrolment only increased by 9.79%. This is an indication that even though enrolment in the Region is increasing, it is increasing at a decreasing rate. This confirmed the assertion by Akyeampong (2007), that even though, Ghana has made progress in providing basic education for all children, even after fifteen (15) years of reforms, gross enrolment rates have only risen by only about five (5) percentage points.



**FIG4. 1A: Trends in Basic School Enrolment in Eastern Region (Total)**

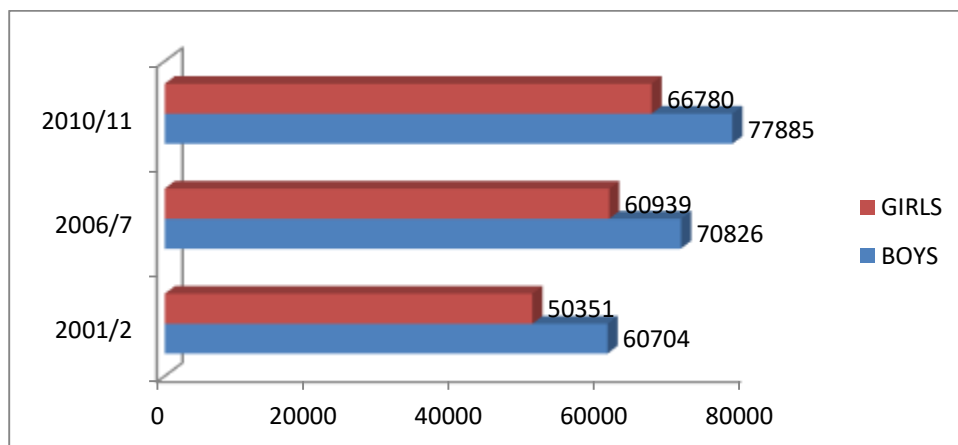
**Source:** Calculate from Ministry of Education EMIS Report, 2001-2011.

Looking at it from the junior high and primary levels (fig. 1b and fig.1c) the trend is the same. Enrolment increased steadily from 2001/2 through 2006/7 to 2010/11. In both fig.1b and fig.1c, it is clear that increment in enrolment for both the JHS and the primary are increasing at a decreasing rate. In other words, the increment is very slow.



**Fig 4.1b: Trends in Basic School Enrolment in 2001/2, 2006/7 and 2010/11 (Primary Level)**

**Source:** Calculated from Ministry of Education EMIS Report, 2001-2011.



**Fig 4.1c: Trends in Basic School Enrolment in Eastern Region (Junior High Level)**

**Source:** Calculated from Ministry of Education EMIS Report, 2001-2011.

Another interesting dimension was the trend in enrolment between girls and boys in the region. In all the years under consideration, the numbers of boys in each of the years have always exceeded the number of girls. This is shown in Table 1.

From Table 1, enrolment of boys in the primary schools recorded a marginal reduction from 52.33% in 2001/2 to 51.77% in 2006/7 and finally 51.68% in 2010/11 academic years. In the case of the girls, there was consistent gradual increments from 47.67% in 2001/2 to 48.23% in 2006/7 and finally 48.32% in 2010/11 academic year. This suggested that more girls were enrolled into primary school in the region than the boys.

Another trend observed from table 1 is that, both boys and girls show some fluctuation in percentages in the years under consideration in the JSS level. Boys' enrolment in the JHS dropped from 54.66% in 2001/2 to 53.75% in 2006/7 and later increased to 53.84% in 2010/11. Their girl counterpart recorded an increase from 45.34% in 2001/2 to 46.25% in 2006/7 and a drop to 46.16% in 2010/11 academic year.

It is also worrying when one compares enrolment percentages of the sexes between primary and JHS. Whereas the percentage of boys showed an increment (in 2001/2, 52.33% for primary and 54.66% in JHS) from primary to JHS, the percentage of girls recorded a reduction (in 2001/2 47.67% for primary and 45.34% in JHS) from primary to JSS. This probably indicates that girls drop out more before JHS

**Table4. 1: Percentage of Boys and Girls over the Total Enrolment in Eastern Region**

ACADEMIC YEAR	PRIMARY LEVEL		JHS LEVEL	
	BOYS %	GIRLS (%)	BOYS	GIRLS
2001/2	52.33	47.67	54.66	45.34
2006/7	51.77	48.23	53.75	46.25
2010/11	51.68	48.32	53.84	46.16

**Source:** Ministry of Education EMIS Report, 2001-2011.

In keeping with what other researchers have found about the trends in Basic school enrolment in Ghana, the current study found that there had been an improvement of enrolment in the Eastern region from the 2001/2 academic year to 2010/11 academic year. The analysis has

shown that there has been an increase in the enrolment in both the primary school and junior high school levels especially the period between 2006/7 and 2010/11 academic years. These confirmed findings by the Ghana Statistical Service (2008), that the introduction of the school feeding and capitation programmes led to an increased in basic school enrolment in Ghana. However, the findings showed the following two major interesting scenarios in the region:

1. Boys enrolment decreased in percentages over the years under study whiles girls enrolment increased over the same period.
2. Boys enrolment increased in percentages as they move from the primary school level to the junior high level whiles girls enrolment decreased as they move to the junior high level.

In other words, the increase in enrolment of girls in the primary schools did not reflect the same trends in the junior high school levels in the Region. There has been a wide gap between the primary school and the junior high total enrolment within the study period.

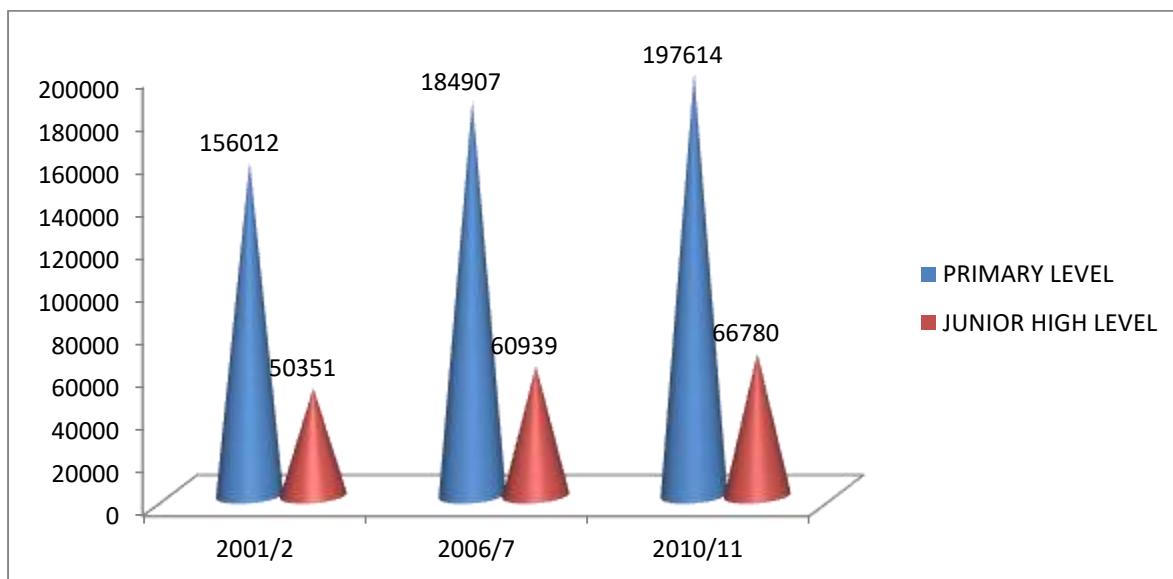
The region experiences a constant decrease in boys' enrolment from 2001 to 2011 for both levels. This can be seen in Table 1.

#### **Girl-Child Enrolment Between Primary and Junior High School Levels for 2001/2, 2006/6 and 2010/11 in the Eastern Region.**

Fig.4.2 shows a comparison of the girl-child enrolment in the eastern region between primary schools and JSS for the years 2001/2, 2006/7 and 2010/11. From fig. 3, the total enrolment of girls at the primary school and JSS level for 2001/2 academic year was 156012 and 50351 respectively.

In the 2006/7 academic year, primary school enrolment for girls was 184907 and that of the JSS enrolment was 60939. The enrolment increased to 197614 in the primary school for the 2010/11 academic year and 66780 for JSS in the same year.

From the analysis, it is clear that there is a sharp drop in the number of girl's enrolment from the primary to JHS. In Table 1, It is indicated that whiles boys enrolment increased in percentage from primary to JHS, their girl counterpart reduced. Figure 4.2 is a confirmation that as you move up the educational ladder from primary school level to JSS level, the number of girls dropped considerably.



**Fig 4. 2: Comparison Between Girls' Enrolment in the Primary and JHS**

**Source:** Calculated from Ministry of Education EMIS Report, 2001-2011.

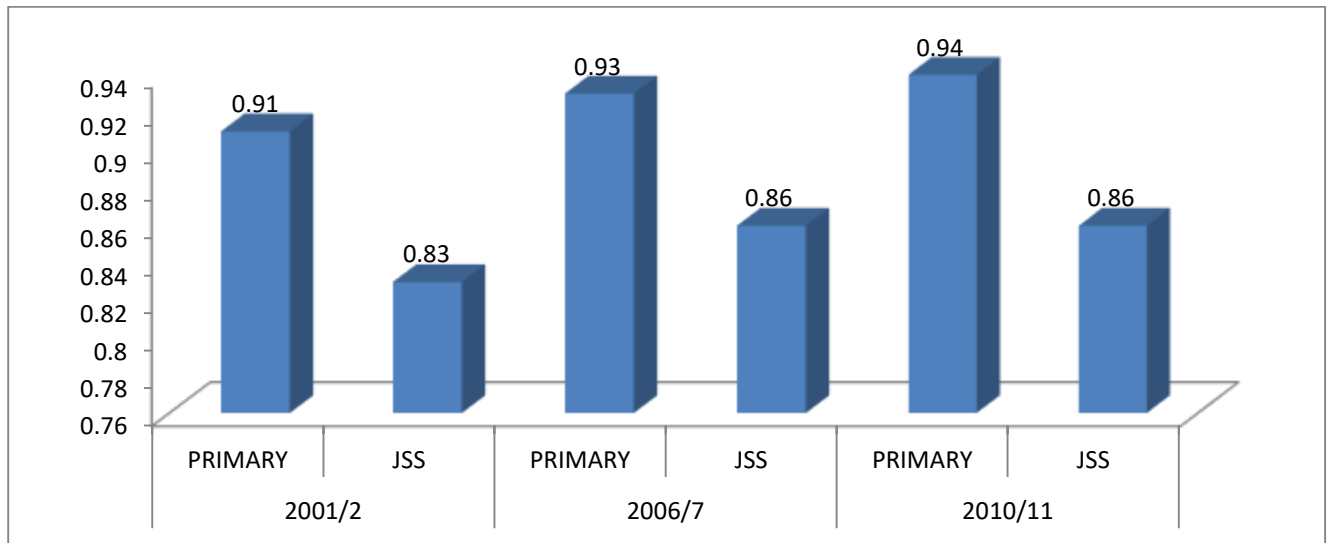
The research revealed that there is a significant difference between girls enrolment at the primary school and junior high levels in the region. Enrolment is very high at the primary school and very low at the junior high level for all the study period indicating that girls drop out at the end of the primary six or earlier.

#### **Gender Parity Index for 2001/2, 2006/7 and 2010/11 in the Eastern Region.**

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is the ratio of boys to girls' enrolment, with the balance of parity being 1. It is calculated by dividing the number of girls by the number of boys. When it is greater than 1, it means the girls outnumber the boys and when it is less than 1, it means the boys are more than the girls.

From fig 4.3a, the gender parity index in the region is lower at the junior high school level than at the primary level. There is also an improvement of the GPI in the primary level from the 2001/2 academic year to 2010/11 academic year. For instance, in the years under study the GPI was 0.91, 0.93 and 0.94 respectively. However, in the junior school level, the trend is different. Whereas there is an increment of GPI between the 2001/2 academic year and the 2006/7 academic year, the GPI is constant for the 2006/7 academic year and the 2010/11 academic year. The picture in fig.4.3a confirmed that as girls move from the primary school level to the junior high school level in the region, most of them drop out of school. These may be as a result of certain factors.

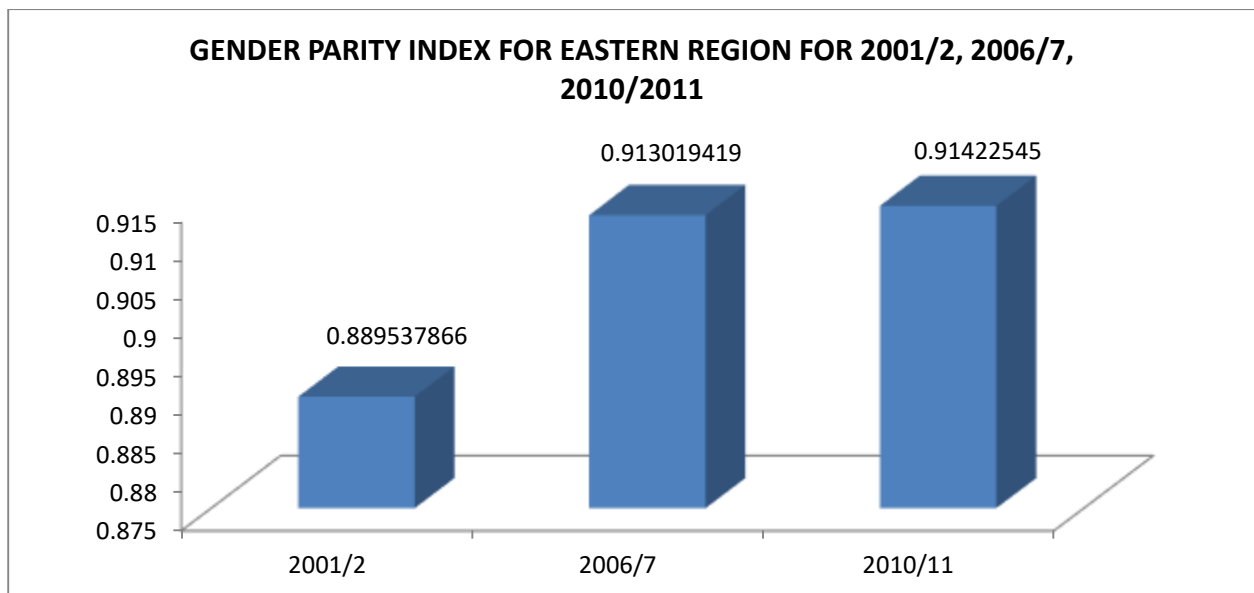




**Fig 4. 3a: Gender Parity Index of Basic Schools in Eastern Region.**

**Source:** Calculated from Ministry of Education EMIS Report, 2001-2011.

Generally, the gender parity in the region for all the years under consideration is less than one. This is seen in fig.4.3b. This therefore means that over the years boys enrolment have always exceeded girls enrolment in the region and less drop out as compare to girls. From fig.4.3b, the GPI for the 2001/2 academic year in the region was 0.89 and 0.91, for the 2006/7 and 2010/11 academic years respectively. This figure is even below the national average of 0.95. However, it must be noted that there has been an improvement in the enrolment from the 2006/7 academic year. This was the year that girls' enrolment in the region increased from 0.89 to 0.91 and therefore bridging the GPI gap in the region. These might be as a result of the introduction of the capitation grants and the school feeding programs in the 2005/6 academic year.



**FIG 4. 3b Gender Parity Index For Eastern Region for 2001/2, 2006/7, 2010/11**

**Source:** Calculated from Ministry of Education EMIS Report, 2001-2011.

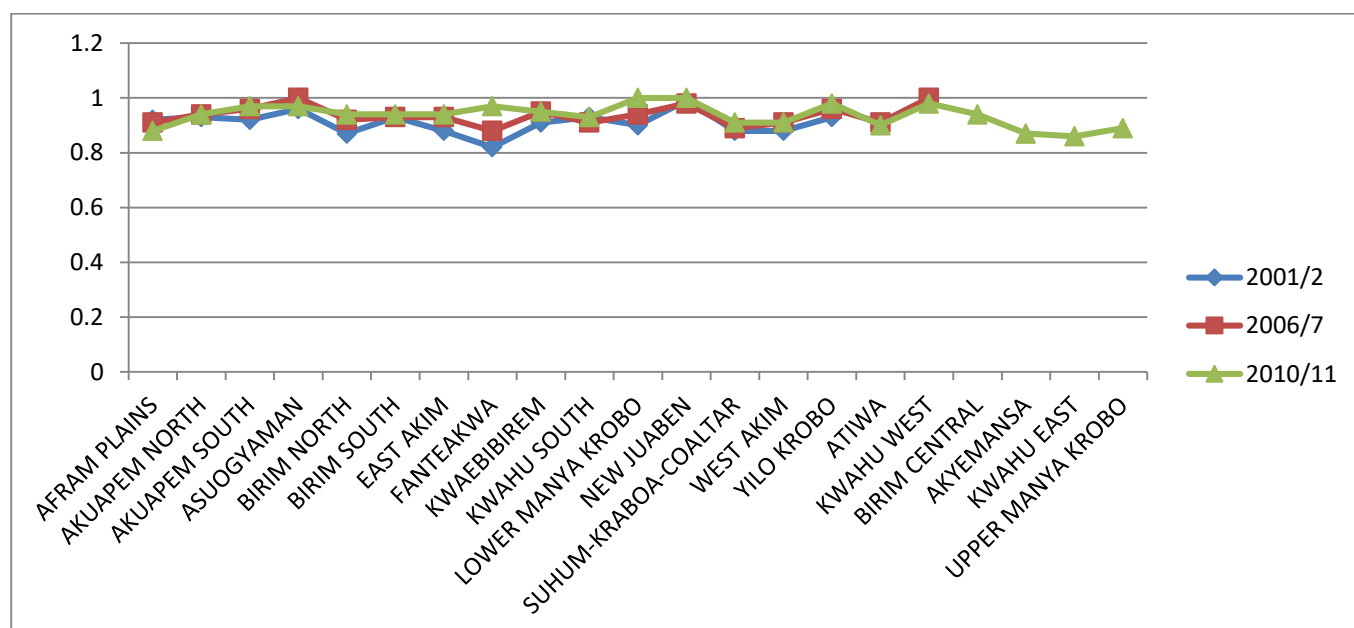
**Gender Parity Index for 2001/2, 2006/7 and 2010/11 in Districts in Eastern Region.**

The gender parity index for the years 2001 / 2002, 2006 / 2007 and 2010 / 2011 academic years in the districts of the Eastern region is coupled with a lot of disparities. Looking at the GPI from the primary school and the junior high school levels across the districts in the region, it can be seen that there is an improvement in the primary school levels than that of the junior high schools. However, within the primary school levels across the districts in the region for the years under study, there are disparities. For instance, in fig.5a, it is clear that with the exception of Asuogyaman and New Juaben districts in the 2001/2 academic year, all the districts recorded GPI below the national average of 0.95 with the Fanteakwa district being the lowest in the region with 0.82.

In the 2006/7 academic year there was a tremendous improvement of GPI across all the districts in the region, with the exception of Afram plains and Kwahu south due to the creation of new districts like Kwahu west and Atiwa districts. The number of districts with GPI of one (1) or almost one increased from two to six in that academic year.

In the 2010/11 academic year, three different scenarios can be observed. While the GPI of some of the districts were constant or improved, others have their GPI declined. For instance, from fig. 5a, districts like Akuapem north, Kwaebibirem and West Akim GPI has been constant from 2006/7 academic year to 2010/11 academic year. On the other hand, the GPI of Afram Plains, Asuogyaman, Atiwa and Kwahu West had declined between the 2006/7 and 2010/11 academic year. Apart from that the rest of the districts in the region have recorded an increase in the GPI over the years.

An interesting observation is the impressive increase in the GPI of the Fanteakwa district. In the 2001/2 academic year, the Fanteakwa district recorded the lowest GPI of 0.82. In the 2010/11 academic year, the district moved from that figure to 0.97 being the second highest in the region after New Juaben.



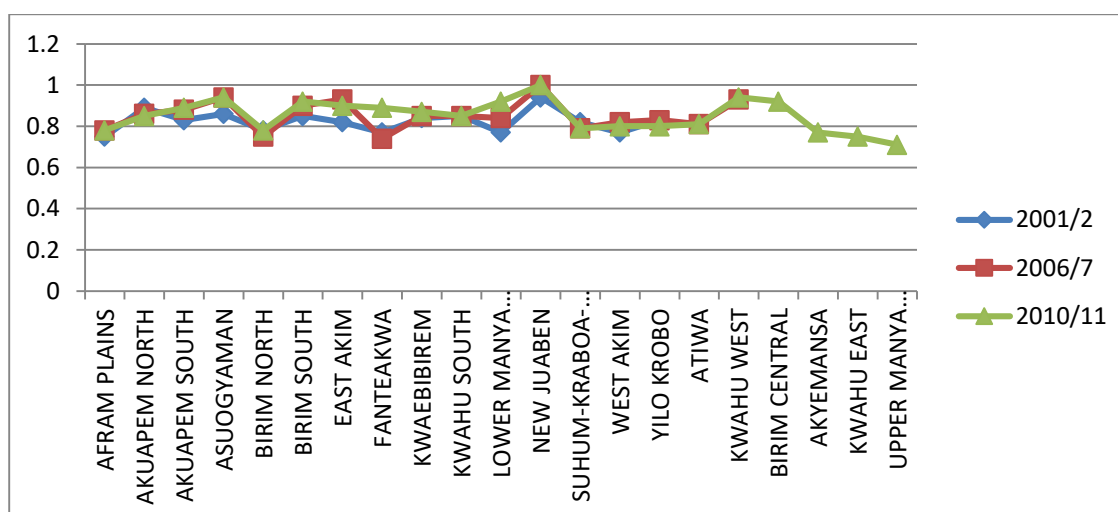
**Fig.5a: Gender Parity Index of Districts in the Eastern Region (Primary level).**

**Source:** Calculated from Ministry of Education EMIS Report, 2001-2011.

Fig.5b shows the disparities of GPI in the junior high school level among the districts in the Eastern region for the years 2001/2, 2006/7 and 2010/11 academic years. As indicated earlier, the GPI among the districts in the region for the years under study is generally lower in the junior high school than that of the primary schools. From the figure, none of the districts in the region recorded GPI of one (1) for the 2001/2 academic year. New Juaben district which recorded the highest GPI of 0.94 for that academic year is even below the national GPI average. With the exception of New Juaben and Lower Manya Krobo districts, there had not been any much improvement of the GPI of the various districts for the 2006/7 and 2010/11 academic years. The worrying trend is what is seen in 2006/7 academic year between the primary school and the junior high school levels. In the 2006/7 academic year, six districts recorded GPI of 1. One would have expected an increase trend to reflect in the junior high school level between the 2006/7 and 2010/11 academic years. However, the trend is rather declining in the junior high school level. Between the 2006/7 and 2010/11 academic years, it is only the New Juaben district that recorded GPI of 1.

Despite the wide disparities of the GPI in the region, generally there has been a significant improvement among the districts especially in the primary school level in the region. Except the Afram Plains and the Kwahu South districts, all the districts have recorded an increase in the GPI from the 2001/2 academic year to 2010/11 academic year. The rather unfortunate observation is the declined in GPI of the Afram Plains and the Kwahu South districts from 2001 to 2011.

For instance, in the 2001/2 academic year, the GPI of Afram Plains for the primary school level was 0.92 and in 2010/11 academic year it declined to 0.88. The GPI for the JSS was 0.78 in the 2006/7 academic year and in the 2010/11 academic year it was still at 0.78. The Kwahu South district was constant throughout the years under study. The GPI was 0.93 and 0.85 for primary school and junior high levels respectively from 2001/2 academic year to 2010/11 academic year. Among all the districts in the region, it is the New Juaben district that received much improvement in the GPI over the years. The GPI for the district in the 2001/2 academic year was 0.94 and in the 2006/7 academic year it recorded GPI of 1. Since then the district had recorded GPI of more than 1 over the years. The district with the lowest GPI of 0.71 is the upper manya krobo. This is one of the districts that was created in 2010.



**Fig.5b: Gender Parity Index of Districts in the Eastern Region (JSS Level)**

**Source:** Ministry of Education EMIS Report, 2001-2011.

The study found a lot of disparities of GPI in the districts of the region. In other words, the GPI varies from district to district in the region. In the 2001/2 academic year, the data showed that all the districts in the region except Asuogyaman and New Juaben recorded GPI below 1. The study further revealed that no district in the region recorded GPI of 1 in the JSS level for the 2001/2 academic year. In the 2006/7 academic year, there was an increase of GPI in all the districts at the primary school level except Afram Plains and Atiwa districts. In the same year even though an improvement of GPI in some of the districts, only the New Juaben district recorded GPI of 1. In the 2010/11 academic year, while some districts GPI improved, others were constant or declined in their GPI. The data analysis indicated that Akuapem north, Kweibibirem and West Akim districts GPI was constant from the 2006/7 academic year to 2010/11 academic year while Afram Plains, Asougyaman, Atiwa and Kwahu West had their GPI declined in the same period.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the findings and discussions above I recommend the following among others.

- That further research using primary data be conducted to find other reasons necessary for the decreasing enrolment in girls particularly as they climb the academic ladder.
- More education or sensitization on the need for girl child education be done especially in the various districts in the region to improve girl child enrolment in the Junior High schools. This is because most parents still do not know that it is equally beneficial to educate a girl.
- More programmes to encourage enrolment like the capitation grant, school feeding be introduced and strengthened.
- Girl child retention should be a primary concern of policy makers. The emphasis over the years has been how to increase enrolment in schools and not retention. Measures should therefore be taken to ensure that girls complete full cycle of their education.
- Sex education should be included in the school curriculum at the lower levels to minimize the rate of teenage pregnancies. The study revealed that many girls drop out of school because of pregnancies and early marriage. A law should be enacted that parents who allow their daughters to marry before the age of 18 years shall be prosecuted.

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