

**UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, TAMALE**

**ANALYSING THE CHIEFTAINCY SUCCESSION DISPUTE IN  
MANDARI AND ITS SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS ON THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOLE TRADITIONAL AREA**

**SULEMANA HAZRAT ASHAHADU**

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**SULEMANA HAZRAT ASHAHADU**

**UDS/MDS/0350/14 (14014470)**

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AND  
GENERAL STUDIES, FACULTY OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT  
STUDIES, UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF  
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**FEBRUARY, 2018.**

### **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work, and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere. I declare further that sources that have been cited have been duly acknowledged.

Name: .....

(Candidate)

Signature: ..... Date: .....

(Candidate)

### **Supervisors' Declaration**

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University for Development Studies.

Name:

(Supervisor)

Signature: ..... Date: .....

(Supervisor)



## **Abstract**

In the wake of democracy and global enlightenment where the chieftaincy institution is expected to complement the modern form of governance to promote growth and development, it is rather seen as the main avenue to promoting instability and violence in some societies. The chieftaincy institution of Bole is one characterised by peace and smooth transitions. Except Mandariwura Kipo who was rejected by the elders of his gate, succession to Mandari has been peaceful, until the current dispute which started in March 2013. This study analysed the current dispute in the succession to the Mandari skin in the Bole traditional area and its accompanying socio-economic implications for the development of the area. It makes use of qualitative research techniques such as interviews and observation and quantitative method like questionnaire. The theoretical underpinning for this study is that of the relative deprivation theory whilst findings were analysed using the onion theory as basis. The findings indicate the following causes of the dispute: interference from the Yagbonwura, selfishness on the part of the elders of the Safope Gate and a large number of qualified princes in the various gates. The Socio-economic implications are weakening of the sense of family and unity, vacuum in traditional authority, disruption in agricultural (yam) production, drain on resources of District Assembly and undermining of the Yagbonwura's authority by the Bolewura. The following recommendations are made: the chieftaincy institution of the area should identify a conflict resolution framework that will satisfy both the sociopolitical and cultural dynamics of the people, and involve a team of independent arbitrators to discuss the issue with the family (Safope) and find the way forward.



### **Acknowledgements**

I thank the Almighty Allah for all the favors he showered on me throughout the period that I was engaged in this study. It was stressful but through his mercy, love and grace, I was able to draw the curtain on the work.

My supervisor, Dr. Salifu Natogmah Alhassan, was more than a supervisor, he was also a father and a guardian. But for his immense guidance and support, this work would still be in progress and not completed. May the good God that we serve abundantly bless you and your family for the kindness, support and patience with which you handled me throughout this lengthy period.

I also cannot forget the love and support of my beloved wife, Sidik Memunatu, who has been immeasurably helpful throughout my study at the University. Also worthy of my thanks are Amadu Mohammed Faisal, Seidu Khadijah, Sulemana Abdul-Mumin, my mother Helen Memuna Abudu, my daughters (Princess Haifawu Fuye-Esaede Jaga and Princess Naveda Benyipo-Eye Jaga), my assistant and brother, Sulemana Abubakari Sidik and Sulemana Hamdia for their contribution to making this work a success.

Finally, I wish to express my profound gratitude to the University authorities-my Head of Department Dr. Damasus Tuurosang, my advisor Mr. Dordah Amos, Dr. Africanus and to all those who contributed in diverse ways to make this work a success. I wish to say that may the Almighty God richly bless you all.



### **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my beloved sons and daughters; Hazrat Harris Borenyi Jaga, Hazrat Hamiz Boresa Jaga, Hazrat Haifawu Fuye-Esaede Jaga and Hazrat Naveda Binyipo-Eye Jaga.



### **List of Acronyms**

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CIKOD	Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development
DCE	District Chief Executive
DISCAP	DoD Information Assurance Certification and Accreditation Process
DISEC	District Security Council
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
GLYA	Gonjaland Youth Association
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
PRO	Public Relations Officer
TV	Television
WACSI	West Africa Civil Society Institute



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## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

In modern times, whatever role a chief or a traditional ruler is allowed to play in the governance of his state depends very much on the attitude of that state to the institution of chieftaincy. For, whereas the institution has been favourably handled in some states, it has been subjected to some harsh and disturbing conditions in other states (Acquah, 2006).

In the United Kingdom (UK), for example, the monarchy still plays a significant role in national affairs, though this role is symbolic and ceremonial in character. In Africa, the constitution of Uganda abolished kings and kingdoms in 1966 (Acquah, 2006). Before Africa was colonised, the various indigenous states had well organised systems of governance constituted by chiefs and their councils of elders. Chieftaincy is among one of the longest surviving traditional institutions of Ghana and Sub-Saharan Africa. It has displayed remarkable resilience through the pre-colonial, colonial and the post-colonial regimes of the African continent.

Ghana, then Gold Coast was colonized by the British from 1844 to 1957, but the end of colonialism left in its wake an additional system of governance; hence we have a system of government that combines the traditional system, which was practised long before colonialism and the modern state, a novelty in terms of governance in Ghana (Prah and Yeboah, 2011). The 1992 Constitution of Ghana recognizes the institution of Chieftaincy within its statutory democratic governance. This recognition emanates from the role chieftaincy played during three phases of Ghana's political history (pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial)







[Mensah, 2014]. [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) The traditional system which otherwise is referred to as the chieftaincy institution deals directly with the grassroots and is thus a medium for promoting participatory development in the country. Chieftaincy has been the bedrock of Ghanaian society over the years. Hence the 1992 Ghanaian constitution recognizes the existence and importance of the traditional sector and grants the National and Regional Houses of Chiefs a significant role in public governance and resource management. The inclusion and co-existence of a traditional chieftaincy system within the post-colonial state contributes to Ghana's stability and success (Chieftaincy Bulletin, 2011). Regardless of its numerous contradictions the traditional institution complements the current modern system of governance and has played a crucial role in the promotion of participatory development which is now proven to be quite sustainable. The evidence for this is that successive governments in Ghana have worked hand-in-hand with chiefs during the period of the indirect rule system to this current democracy. In the same vein, chiefs serve as —co-ordinators of developmental effort, public relations officers for their political communities and as guardians,|| (Brempong: 2006, 40 cited by Prah and Yeboah, 2011).

This notwithstanding, there has been a series of chieftaincy crises emanating from ethnic groups and families in northern Ghana and Gonjaland for that matter, which contravenes the definition of a chief by the Chieftaincy Act of Ghana.

The Act (2008) defines a chief as;

*—A person who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskinned or*

*installed as a chief or queen mother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage.”*

The importance of the chieftaincy institution cannot be overemphasized. In traditional Ghanaian society, chiefs performed a number of roles such as military leaders and defenders of their people, as chief priests who perform religious roles within their jurisdictions, as symbols of identity, as founts of honour, and as sole custodians of stool lands and unifiers. Indeed, it must be indicated that chiefs played an important role in the struggle against colonial rule (Prah and Yeboah, 2011). The chieftaincy institution will forever remain a distinct entity with distinct procedures and practices in the traditional system of governance. Therefore, as Ansu-Kyeremeh (1997) observes (as cited by Yussif 2013) that, the relevance of the chieftaincy institution in the present day cannot be overemphasized. Thus, the understanding of how the institution and its present and potential impact on local development present benefits to various categories of stakeholders as a pre-requisite to promoting sustainability of development and peaceful co-existence between the indigenes of the locality.

In short, chiefs combined executive, legislative, judicial, military, economic and religious roles to promote sustainable livelihood of the people they rule. This enabled them to go to war to defend, protect and extend their territories in time past (Odotei and Awedoba, 2006).

There are two systems of traditional leadership in Ghana – the centralised and the acephalous systems. Whereas the centralized system constitutes —the concentration of political power in the hands of a single ruler (a centralized authority) with an administrative machinery or a bureaucracy‖ (Abotchie 2006: 171), the acephalous communities are stateless societies, but currently, theses





[www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) states has become organised and has a clear system of ruling themselves. Belief in equality of all people and the granting of equal rights to all do not make a community a stateless society. Societies with centralised systems also have these principles. The state of Ghana is an example.

Acephalous societies are mostly controlled by family or clan heads and thus do not place much emphasis on chieftaincy. Societies like such as the Konkomba, the Bimoba, the Basaari, the Chamba, the Zantasi, the Talensi, and the LoDagaaba, all in northern Ghana, were considered as acephalous (Prah and Yeboah, 2011). However, these societies, for example the LoDagaaba have currently organised their chieftaincy system and thus practise an organised system of traditional governance.

The ethnic groups that practise the system of a centrally planned authority include the Akan (which is the largest ethnic group in Ghana and comprises Asante, Bono, Akyem, Agona, Akuapem, Adansi, Fante, Nzema and the Kwawu), the Ga, the Adangme, the Ewe and many dynastic kingdoms of northern Ghana, especially, the Gonja, the Dagomba (Dagbon), Mamprusi and Wala (Nukunya, 2003).

In performing these functions, Ghanaian chiefs are seen as the embodiment of the beliefs, hopes, fears and aspirations of their people (Abotchie, 2006:169) and for that matter, the mode of succession of one chief or the other desires much to be looked at in order to promote sustainable development in the Northern Region and Ghana for that matter.

There are four paramount chiefs in the Northern Region. They are: the Ya-Na, who is the overlord of Dagbon in Yendi; the Nayiri of Mamprugu in Nalerigu; the Bimbilla Naa of Nanung in Bimbilla and the Yagbonwura of the Gonja



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Traditional area in Damongo. All the paramount chiefs are members of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs and also the National House of Chiefs. The mode of ascension to the skins (thrones) of these four paramountcies is through the —gate system (a gate being one branch of a royal family). These paramount chiefs, usually in consultation with the kingmakers and their councils of elders, enskin sub-chiefs who pay allegiance to them within their respective traditional areas. The eligibility or otherwise to the throne is determined by revered kingmakers. Upon the death of a chief, a regent is selected from the eligible gate to act until the final funeral rites of the late chief are performed and a new one is enskinned. However, the selection of this new chief often leads to controversies and thus leading to conflicts and disagreements.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Ghana's reputation as a peaceful country is based on several peace-related indicators, a few of which are mentioned here; first, the country scores high marks on the democratization barometer. In the year 2000, the country achieved a major milestone, when for the first time in its history it was able to go through a peaceful transition from one democratically elected government to another. Secondly, Ghana has not only played a pioneering role towards the establishment of major regional and continental bodies (like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the African Union (AU), but has also used its leadership tenure vigorously to help resolve some of Africa's conflicts. Thirdly, as a result of its relative peaceful outlook, the country has become a major venue for peace talks and the signing of peace accords. Fourthly, Ghana has won international acclaim for its role in international peacekeeping under the aegis of the United Nations (Agana, 2008).

However, the country has had its share of violent clashes. Reading Ghanaian newspapers, listening to radio or watching TV, one cannot help but feel that there are succession crises in the various institutions of the country. Political parties cannot choose their flag bearers without rancour, even clubs and associations have difficulties filling vacant positions on their executives. The same is true when traditional communities have to find successors to fill vacancies created through abdications, deposition or death. While it is understandable that factions should emerge in any active competition for power and authority, the succession crises that we see in our communities most especially in the northern Ghana and Bole to be specific, generate such unacceptable costs that it calls for a concerted effort to find acceptable solutions to the problem (Awedoba, 2006). The chieftaincy





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institution is labelled as controversial due to the numerous chieftaincy disputes it registers in some traditional communities. Unfortunately, in Ghana today, no segment of the nation can be said to have monopoly of succession conflicts. Succession becomes necessary when a vacancy exists. Vacancies come about as a result of the death of the previous incumbent, his removal from office or his incapacitation (Awedoba, 2006).

Succession norms may take into consideration age and seniority, personal attributes, leadership qualities and capacity to empathise with others as its starting point. However, in Gonjaland these qualities are to a considerable level not considered relevant, as much emphasis is placed on lineage, and consensus, since this ethnic group still places emphasis on the class system. The non-adherence to these laid down principles—lineage and consensus – for the selection of chiefs has resulted in most of the succession issues currently facing the people of the North and much specifically Gonjaland (Prah and Yeboah, 2011).

About 600 disputes in Ghana are currently dominated by chieftaincy disputes (Abotchie, 2006). These conflicts are not recent developments; neither are they restricted to only one traditional area. By and large, almost every traditional area has encountered a chieftaincy dispute in one way or the other. Chieftaincy conflicts in northern Ghana are cyclical in nature and steeped in centuries of historically evolving relationships.

A disturbing phenomenon in the political landscape of the Northern Region of Ghana during the past twenty-two years has been the intermittent outbreak of either intra-ethnic or inter-ethnic conflicts. Following recent outbreaks of chieftaincy crises, various analysts have attempted to assign poverty,



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unemployment, shortage of arable land and political interference as the causes of such crises. These are factors that raise tensions and create the conditions for specific outbreaks, but they are not the root causes of such ethnic conflicts (DISCAP, 2002).

As a matter of fact, chieftaincy succession in Northern Ghana and for that matter Gonjaland has of late proven to be more treacherous than it used to be two decades ago and thus requires prudent and pragmatic intervention to curb future occurrences of these issues. Everywhere in Gonjaland, the position of a chief is vested in lineages or kin-groups. Societies like the Dagbon, the Nanun and Gonja have always recognised that kingmakers are only too human with their own prejudices and that their choices could be questioned. Hence their decisions have in some cases to be justified by invoking the role of supernatural agencies such as spirits of previous chiefs and office holders, the ancestors and the gods (DISCAP, 2002).

Some of such conflicts recorded in recent times as cited by Prah and Yeboah (2011) included the Dagbon crisis between the Abudu and the Andani gates which erupted in 2002, the Ga Mantse succession dispute in 2007, the Anlo chieftaincy conflict in 2007, the Adoagyiri crisis in 2007, Princess and Aketeki towns' troubles in 2007, the re-eruption of the Tuobodom chieftaincy conflict in 2010, the recent Bawku chieftaincy conflict, Wasipe chieftaincy succession conflict in 1994 at Daboya, the Waala chieftaincy dispute in the early 2000 and the Kiape chieftaincy crisis of the Bole traditional area in 2007 which is now resolved.

In the Bole traditional area, chieftaincy conflicts have erupted within the same ethnic group and between other groups in the area. For instance, the Gonja fought



the Vagla in the 1980's over [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) who should rule the Tuna area which led to loss of lives and property. Even though these have mostly been resolved, the conflicts erupting from succession issues are now gaining prominence in the area and thus posing serious threats to development. Recently, there have been outstanding succession conflicts in the area which are perceived to pose a great challenge if not addressed early. These recent conflicts include: the Mandari, Kibilma, Sonyo and Tinga chieftaincy conflicts in 2014 between the current Bolewura of the Jagape gate and the Safope gate all of the Bole traditional area. The toll in terms of lives lost, injuries to residents, destruction of property, including the loss of critical social and economic infrastructure that the conflicts have caused has been staggering. Moreover, scarce national resources have been used to maintain peace. In 1994 alone, the Government of Ghana was said to have spent six billion cedis in maintaining peace when the most devastating of the conflicts broke out (Brukum, 2007).

The mistrust in the kingmaker's choice of successors has resulted in most of the chieftaincy crises bedevilling our society today. In spite of the existence of laid down traditional and customary rules and in some cases traditional constitutions, succession disputes have in recent years become rampant among the Gonja. The Bole Traditional Area has witnessed its share of disputes in the past few years. There have been chieftaincy succession disputes at Mandari and Tinga in the Bole traditional area, Damongo, which is a much recent occurrence, and some other places in Gonjaland. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the succession crises over the Mandari skin in the Bole traditional area, and to analyse its accompanying socio-economic implications to the development of the area.



### **1.3 Research Questions**

This research seeks to ask the following questions.

#### **1.3.1 Main Research Question**

How has the succession crisis in the chieftaincy institution of Mandari in the Bole traditional area impacted on the development of the area?

#### **1.3.2 Specific Research Questions**

1. What modes of chieftaincy succession to the Mandari skin in the Bole traditional area exist?
2. Have these modes of succession to the Mandari skin resulted in disagreements in the area?
3. What are the social and economic implications of this conflict on the development of the Bole traditional area?
4. How can this disagreement be mitigated to promote development in the area?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

This research is intended to achieve the following objectives and thus answer the questions that have motivated the research above.

#### **1.4.1 Main Research Objective**

To analyse how the succession crisis in the chieftaincy institution of Mandari in the Bole traditional area impacted on the development of the area?



#### **1.4.2 Specific Research Objectives**

1. To find out the modes of chieftaincy succession to Mandari in the Bole traditional area
2. To examine how succession to Mandari has resulted into conflicts in the area
3. To identify and examine the social and economic implications of the conflict on the development of the Bole traditional area
4. To analyse how the crisis can be mitigated to promote development in the area

#### **1.5 Significance of Study**

The importance of the chieftaincy institution cannot be overemphasized. In traditional Ghanaian society, chiefs performed a number of roles such as being military leaders and defenders of their people, as chief priests who performed religious roles within their jurisdictions, as symbols of identity, as founts of honour, and as sole custodians of stool lands and unifiers. Chiefs played an important role in the struggle against colonial rule (Prah and Yeboah, 2011).

This study will add to existing literature like (The Gonja Revolution-The trial of Yagbonwura Mahama and Six others by Dr. A.A Illiasu, University of Ghana-Legon and Chieftaincy in Ghana, culture, governance and development by Odotei I. K. and Awedoba A. K. (2006) Sub – Saharan publishers, Legon Accra) about the disputes of the chieftaincy institution in Gonjaland and how to harness this for peace, and the promotion of development in the Bole traditional area. It will as well contribute to existing literature about chieftaincy conflicts in the northern region and the Bole traditional area to be specific. This research will set the pace





for further research into the chieftaincy succession crises in the Bole traditional area.

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## **1.6 Organization of Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction, statement of the problem, the research questions, the objectives, the significance of the research the organisation of the study and limitations of the study. Chapter two reviewed relevant literature of the study under the various thematic areas. Chapter three highlighted the profile of the study area and the methodology of the research. Chapter four is on the findings and discussions whilst chapter five presents the conclusions of the research conducted and presents the recommendations.

## **1.7 Limitations of Study**

This study encountered financial constraints. This is because; the researcher had to personally sponsor the whole process. Fortunately, friends and family members supported later with some finances which hastened the process of completing the work. Secondly, the work schedule of the researcher as well as family issues slowed down the process, this notwithstanding, some amount of time was dedicated to the work aside other family issues. Even though slightly slow, the work was completed in time.

Finally, the time given for the research is somehow limited more time should be allocated to students to fully engage in the process without fear. The department of African and General Studies should reduce the academic burden on students to enable students get enough time to conduct the research.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter explored both unpublished and published materials on the study and analyses the relevance of the literature to the present research. The discussion is presented in thematic areas covering the conceptual and operational issues of the study. The conceptual and operational issues were linked to the history of chieftaincy in Gonjaland as a whole and the succession crises in the Mandari skin.

### **2.2 Concept of chieftaincy**

The chieftaincy institution has been an important arm of local governance since pre-colonial times. The British colonial policy used the chieftaincy structure in implementing an indirect-rule system of governance (the Bond of 1844<sup>1</sup>). However, the chieftaincy institution has had varying roles in local governance in post-independent Ghana (Tanko and Frederick, 2013). The concept 'chieftaincy' can be looked at by first and foremost looking at who a chief is. A chief may mean different things to different people based on the world view of the person looking at it. In Ghana, a chief is 'a person who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as a chief or queenmother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage' (Chieftaincy Act, 2008:26). This constitutional definition alone is inadequate from a number of perspectives (Odotei and Awedoba, 2006). They argue that, this definition is circuitous because it seems to

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<sup>1</sup> The bond of 1844 was an agreement signed by the British and some Fante and Assin chiefs on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 1844 to enable the British extend their rule to the Gold Coast.

<sup>2</sup> Gonja faced bouts of instability till the reign of Yagbonwura Mahama Dangboga during whose





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 define a chief with reference to a chief or queen mother. They further argue that, if one did not have a prior knowledge of who a chief was, he could not possibly know from the definition who is or not a chief. The reference to 'family' and lineage or to enstoolment, enskinment or installation is not sufficient characterization of chiefs or queen mothers. Neither is customary usage an adequate criterion. Their argument further states that, in some societies, a distinction is made between the chief who may be male or female, and the queen mother. The latter may be a kinswoman to the chief, a mother, sister, niece, or some other relation who shares the chief's roles as ruler. Their argument continues that; a term like family is not precise. Lineages can differ in span and genealogical depth with minimal lineages nesting within major or maximal lineages. One may belong to the 'appropriate lineage' yet be excluded if it is not the turn of one's lineage to claim the chieftainship (as the case was in the Mandari skin succession crises and the Tinga succession dispute all in the Bole traditional area), or if one has been disqualified on some criteria like having one eye or being blinded or basically suffering one form of deformity or the other.

These objections point to the dangers and pitfalls of any definition of a chief that ignores the dynamic nature of the chieftaincy institution. This institution is the medium for the expression of social, political, religious and to some extent, economic authority vested in chiefs, queen mothers, priests, religious practitioners and other traditional functionaries in Ghanaian communities (Odotei and Awedoba, 2006).

Chieftaincy is basically and traditionally seen to be a complex institution with norms and traditions. These include achieved and ascribed statuses and roles, as well as sets of duties, privileges, rights and expectations that the stakeholders



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demand of each other or from the society. This institution is situated in complex belief systems of the people and is regulated by principle and as well surrounded by material and abstract symbols and artefacts. Not only is chieftaincy an institution, it links with other parts of the world and serves as an intermediary between the modern system of governance and that of the traditional system.

In some Ghanaian societies, the origins of chieftaincy are shrouded in myths and legends. However, in other societies it is of a fairly recent origin. Yet in others, the origin of chieftaincy remains a contested issue between local scholars and their expatriate counterparts (Odotei and Awedoba, 2006). The chieftaincy institution of Gonjaland has been in existence for several decades and stories about it are mostly told orally even though there is extensive documentation of the history and other related issues pertaining to the institution in the area.

Nyamekye (2009) concludes that chieftaincy in the Akan society is based on the kinship system and the chief is mostly selected from the maternal lineage. The chief is usually considered as the first citizen of the village, town or state as the case may be. He is viewed as the source of all traditional authority because he is regarded as representing the founding fathers of the state. In other words, he is the one who stands in the shoes of the ancestor as the visible representative based on the blood relationship between him and the ancestors of the clan.

In contrast to the Akan system, chieftaincy in the Northern Region and Northern Ghana for that matter is based on the kinship system altogether but by patriarchy. Gonjaland and Bole for that matter has reserved some chieftaincy titles for people related to the royal families but through their mothers (matrilineal). These chieftaincy titles are only contested for by those related to the royal households

but through their mothers. Some of these titles include; Seripe, Kulmasa and Wakawaka.

### 2.3 Overview of Chieftaincy in Ghana

In most sub-Saharan African societies, traditional authority and leadership find expression in forms such as religious leadership, lineage headship, leadership in extended families, and chieftaincy (Assimeng 1996) as cited in Dzivenu (2008). Dzivenu adds that Chieftaincy is, the fullest institutionalised expression of traditional rule; it embodies the basic features of —prescribed kinship and lineage succession to office; awe and sacredness of office and office holders; specific forms of contractual relationships between chiefs and their subjects; and institutionalised procedures for conflict resolution, decision-making and implementation mostly at the levels of community or kingdom (Assimeng 1996).

In the same vein, Valsecchi (2007) adds that, it is hard to define Ghanaian Chieftaincy as a ‘non-state’ player. It is an integral part of national life and of the state as well. Chieftaincy is explicitly recognised and regulated under the constitutions of the Fourth and Fifth Republics (Republic of Ghana 1979, 1992), which incorporated and consolidated a substantive corpus of legislation passed during colonial times and after independence: in particular the Chiefs Recognition Act (Ghana, 1959 cited in Valsecchi, 2007) and the two Chieftaincy Acts (Republic of Ghana, 1961, 1971). The 1992 Constitution, currently in force—recognizes the historic legitimacy of chieftaincy and guarantees its autonomy from state intrusions in its specific domains thus putting a stop—at least in legal





theory-to the heavy-handed government interference that had been going on since the days of Kwame Nkrumah (Constitution, 1992) cited in (Rathbone, 2000).

During the past two decades, chieftaincy has been experiencing a substantial revival in several Sub-Saharan African countries (Rouveroy & van Dijk eds. 1999; Perrot & Fauvelle-Aymar eds., 2003; Vaughan ed., 2003). In West Africa, this is particularly true of Francophone countries, where chiefs often found themselves in a weak position for most of the four decades following independence, sometimes to the point of virtual irrelevance (Benin) or near extinction (Guinea Conakry) (Valsecchi, 2007).

Chieftaincy has come to serve two major functions: statutory (settlement of chieftaincy disputes and the codification of customary laws) and non-statutory (socio-economic development). Chiefs are the custodians of the resources within their various communities. In resource-endowed areas, as is the case with Bole, chiefs exploit the resources for the general good of their communities (Bob-Milliar, 2009). In addition to the view of Millar, Kyed and Buur (2005) says popular views on chiefs and chieftaincy are acutely relevant since African governments, international institutions and donor countries are displaying a renewed interest in chieftaincy. However, many post-independent African governments saw chiefs as impediments to modernization and nation-building and tried to curtail their role in local government and national politics (Kyed and Buur 2005; Sharma, 1997).

Since the 1990s a large number of African countries like Mozambique and Uganda have enhanced or formalized the position of their chiefs (Englebert 2002; Kyed and Buur 2005; Ray, 2003b; Sklar, 1999 and Ubink, 2007). Chieftaincy culture in Ghana finds expression in a profusion of visual and oral symbolisms





and images. [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) Ghanaian chieftaincy is not only here and now, it is rooted in a rich past and in tradition. It is expected to preserve and transmit to new generations its traditional legacies and heritage, tangible and intangible, real or invented. As a governance institution, it commands considerable power and authority over its constituents. This enables it to legislate in some cases, to adjudicate in some contexts, as well as to protect and defend its own. Its managerial functions too are too patent. Its agents are often charged with the management of communal resources and their preservation. This makes the chieftaincy institution a developmental agency (Odotei and Awedoba, 2006).

Additionally, Valsecchi (2007) said that the Constitution explicitly forbids the abolition of chieftaincy by legislation and denies parliament the power to legislate to the detriment of the institution in any manner. The power of recognizing chiefs or withholding recognition, a crucial weapon in the hands of previous governments and regimes, is given collectively to chiefs themselves constituted in a hierarchy of corporate bodies. In fact the 1992 Constitution provides for an institutional structure networking a huge number of chiefly officeholders, from village or ward chiefs (and ‘queen-mothers’), up to Paramount chiefs, ruling over territorial units that are now more numerous than the native states were in the colonial Gold Coast administered by the British from the 1920s through to indirect rule (Valsecchi, 2007).

In Ghana, each paramount chief presides over a Traditional Council formed by his sub-chiefs and the chiefs of towns and villages under his jurisdiction. All the paramount chiefs within each region constitute a Regional House of Chiefs. There is also a National House of Chiefs, whose members are expressed by the 10



Regional Houses of chiefs and whose president ranks amongst the very top positions in the protocol of the Republic. The National House of Chiefs has the last word in matters pertaining to chieftaincy. The Houses of Chiefs have the power to recognize and withhold recognition to chiefs (Valsecchi, 2007).

For decades, the Governments of Ghana included a Secretariat for chieftaincy affairs. In late 2005, following a much debated decision, its functions were subsumed by a newly instituted Ministry for Culture and Chieftaincy Affairs: an association which is extremely revealing of a still unresolved ambiguity surrounding the collocation of chieftaincy within the national political system. Some members of the Council of State-the top advisory body, are nominated by the President in their capacity as chiefs. Moreover, Traditional Councils nominate their candidates to sit in the District Assemblies (the basic structure of local government) in the group of non-elected members (30% of total membership) appointed by the Head of State in consultation with traditional authorities and other interest groups (Valsecchi, 2007).

Chieftaincy is one of the few resilient institutions that have survived all the three phases of Ghana's political history during pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras irrespective of the general attitude of individuals towards chiefs, and the institution. Chieftaincy is the bedrock of the Ghanaian society; and consequently the political leadership cannot undermine its credibility without political and social repercussions (Mensah, 2014). According to the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development (CIKOD), a local non-governmental organization that focuses on the development of indigenous institutions in Ghana, 80% of Ghanaians claim allegiance to one chief or another. The people consider chieftaincy as the repository of the history and tradition of Ghana; and the



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custodian of indigenous traditions, customs and usage. Furthermore, the institution is considered as the bond between the dead, the living and the yet unborn and it occupies the vacuum created by the modern partisan political structures, in terms of customary arbitration and the enforcement of laws at the communal level.

In the 1920's, colonial authorities set about putting the various financial systems of what they called the 'native authorities' now known in the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana as the 'traditional councils' (Brempong, 2006).

The Nkrumah government which lasted from the year of independence, 1957, to the year of its overthrow in 1966, limited the political and judicial roles of traditional rulers, broke their financial backbone and made them passive appendages to the central government. Under the colonial administration, they had been active sub-agents in their native authority administrations and native authority tribunals. The various acts relating to chieftaincy in these respects was the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1959.

According to Brempong (2000), Article 13 of the 1960 Constitution states that 'chieftaincy should be guaranteed and preserved', but, apparently, in the form that the government wanted it. The Chieftaincy Act (No. 81) of 1961 consolidated previous enactments on chieftaincy. This act defines a chief as an individual who;

- a. has been nominated, elected and installed as a chief in accordance with customary law; and*
- b. is recognized as a chief by the Minister responsible for Local Government.*



Even though the first clause was contested by Awedoba and Odotei (2006) based on its pitfalls, the remaining provision of the act makes it clear that chiefs could function only in the manner that the central government deems fit and that all chiefs held office at the will of the government (Brempong, 2006). It may be concluded that in the post Nkrumah period, Ghanaians, generally, accepted the view of the Coussey Committee (1949) stated that chieftaincy must find a place in the governance of this country. This view then inspired the 1969, 1979 and 1992 Constitutions which have progressively favoured chiefs. Mensah (2014) categorizes chieftaincy into pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial regimes or eras. He observes that chieftaincy in the pre-colonial era was the main system of government that combined legislative, executive, judicial, religious and military responsibilities; and these functions were replicated at the appropriate level of the traditional governance structure, i.e., at the level of the community and up to the paramount chief.

### **2.3.1 Chieftaincy in the Pre-Colonial Era**

Before colonial rule, traditional authority evolved in correspondence with changing conditions, such as in the direction of major trade routes, in the location of international markets, struggles for the control of natural resources, including gold and the rise of expansionist ideologies (Brempong, 2006). The chieftaincy institution in the pre-colonial era proved more formidable and prestigious because of the level of authority vested in the institution. The lower-level chiefs received instructions from the higher chiefs in all aspects of administration. The communities and divisional chiefs had responsibility to report on the state of affairs of the community to the paramount chiefs during annual durbars (Mensah,



2014). He adds that the people of the pre-colonial days existed as separate ethnic states or kingdoms. Some of these states were the Asante, the Dagomba, the Gonja, the Anlo, and many others with boundaries geographically different from their current regional demarcations. For example, the Asante state spanned four different regions of contemporary Ghana (Mensah, 2014).

### 2.3.2 Chieftaincy in the Colonial Era

Over the long period of colonial rule, the chieftaincy institution was refined, restructured and integrated into the British colonial administration (Mensah 2014). This was an efficient means of facilitating control and effectively reducing the cost of governance, and this marked the genesis of the legal framework to regulate the institution. Prior to this period, chiefs with the support and recommendation of their council of elders, enforced law and order to regulate their jurisdictions. Three main considerations determined legislation regarding chieftaincy in the colonial era (Mensah, 2014).

Mensah adds that chiefs in these communities consequently lost their long-held community reverence, because they were considered betrayers, and consequently the stability of the social order with the chiefs as the foremost constituents became a concern for the colonial regime.

According to Ladouceur (1974), five ethnic groups, Mamprusi, Kusasi, Grunshi, and Builsa were merged with the Nayiri as the Paramount Chief. On the North West (present day Upper West Region) Wala, some Dagaaba and Sissala were combined under the leadership of the Wa Na which faced several objections by some majority of the Dagaaba and Sissala. Furthermore, several unassimilated



ethnic groups such as Nchummuru, Nawuri, Mo, and Vagala were subsumed with the Gonja chiefs, and the Konkombas and Chokosis were made subjects of Ya Na of the Dagomba kingdom.

Chiefs who were previously vicious adversaries during the pre-colonial period later came to appreciate the necessity of co-operation amongst traditional authorities and institutions, against the common imperial power, for mutual benefits and co-existence (Mensah, 2014).

Administratively, the Gonja Kingdom was divided into three units; one portion lying in the Tamale Administration District, one divided between the Districts of Eastern and Western Gonja, and yet another portion was under the Germans in Togoland administered by the District Commissioner of Krachi. It was also discovered that certain villages which served the Yagbonwura through some Eastern Gonja chiefs were cut off from their original landlords and put under Western Gonja chiefs while others were placed under Western Dagbon (Constitution of Gonja<sup>2</sup>, 1930).

### 2.3.3 Chieftaincy in Post-colonial Ghana

The erosion of the powers of the chiefs by the British colonial administration, made the relationship between chiefs and the central government after independence uncertain. The question arose whether chiefs should be allotted the

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<sup>2</sup> Gonja faced bouts of instability till the reign of Yagbonwura Mahama Dangboga during whose reign Gonja came out of a confederacy into nationhood. Two conferences were held in Yapei in 1923 and 1930, under the auspices of the British colonial administration. It was the 1930 meeting that was successful and which gathered momentum and gave Gonja its current constitution entitled 'Enquiry into the Constitution and organisation of the Gbanye Kingdom'

same powers they possessed during the pre-colonial past or be accorded the same treatment granted them under colonial rule (Mensah, 2014). He further

*states: “The 1969 Constitution recognized the institution with the Traditional Councils, Regional and National Houses of Chiefs to be an integral part of the state machinery; and all chieftaincy matters were to be handled by the respective constituent bodies of the institution. The recognition was further enhanced with the passage of the Chieftaincy Act, 370 in September 1971, which remained as the main and substantive legal instrument for the institution until the 2008 Chieftaincy Act was passed. And most interestingly, the respective military regimes of Ghana also embraced the institution and accorded it the required dignity it deserved, in spite of the initial skirmishes that infrequently ensued between them. The military accepted and supported the institution as a means of acquiring political legitimacy”*

(Mensah, 2014:267).

This is because the chieftaincy institution relates directly with the people and thus commands a lot of authority from the people. With the support of the people, the political institutions will face several litigations, thus, Articles 271 to 274 of the 1992 Constitution outline the establishment, functions, and jurisdiction of both Regional and National Houses of Chiefs. However, Article 276 of the 1992 Constitution departs from the previous Constitutions with legal frameworks on chieftaincy which debars chiefs from "active" engagement in partisan politics. Consequently, any chief who wishes to participate in "active"





partisan politics must abdicate his or her stool or skin to be able to do so. [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh)

The main objective of this provision is to uphold the sanctity of the traditional values and norms inherent in Ghanaian culture and vested in the chieftaincy institution. This, it is hoped, would absolve the institution from the rancour and wrangling associated with partisan politics (Owusu–Mensah, 2014).

According to the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, chiefs cannot join political parties and cannot become MPs, but they can be appointed to public offices for which they have individual qualifications and serve in public institutions that are formally non-partisan. District Assemblies are non-partisan bodies and a number of chiefs well beyond the provision of presidential appointees sit in assemblies in all capacities (Valsecchi, 2007). However, chiefs are appointed to serve on various Statutory Boards and Commissions such as the Forestry Commission, National Aids Commission, Constitutional Review Commission, Ghana National Petroleum Corporation Board, and many more. Chiefs are also appointed on emerging situations such as disasters, planning committees, etc. (Constitution of Ghana, 1992).

## 2.4 Chieftaincy in the Gonja Kingdom

The Gonja Kingdom, founded by Jakpa, was one of the kingdoms that arose in the savanna belt of present day Ghana. It stretches from beyond the Black Volta in the west to the Oti in the east. It has as its boundaries, the Dagomba and Mamprusi in the North-east, the Wala kingdom in the north and the Bono states in the south. It covers an area of about 14,469 square miles. There were various ethnic groups in the Gonja Kingdom, some of which include the Safalba, the Vagla, the Hanga, the





Nafana, the Nchumburu, the Choruba, the Mo, the Tampoloma, the Konkonba, the Nawuri and the Gonja themselves. The Gonja belonged to one of the twenty-eight Guans communities in Ghana. The Hausa gave the Gonja people the names 'gonjawa' that is Gon (Guan); Awa (people). Out of Gonjawa the Akan on arrival from the north formed the word Gonja (Wilks, 1971).

The Gonja are of Mande origin. Due to default of the payment of tribute by the emir of Bighu to the king of Mali, he sent a punitive expedition against him and his people. The expedition was headed by two war captains called Umar and Nabaga. Umar occupied Bihigu and Nabaga moved eastwards and carried out a raid on Buna, west of Black Volta. He crossed the Black Volta and established himself at a place called Nyanga. His descendants became known as the Ngbanya. When the Gonjas were leaving Mande for their expedition those remaining at home wished them good luck and asked them 'to be quick and return home quickly'. In the Jula (Wangara) language they said —Ar gbanya; tagjona, kana jona. It was from this expression that the Gonjas got their name Gbanya (Kagbanya, singular and Ngbanya, plural). Their expedition took them to the Songhai Empire.

This was the genesis of the Gonja people. Nabaga's successors conquered the area around Nyanga. Among them was Manwura, who was succeeded by his son, Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa Lanta, simply known as Ndewura Jakpa.

Manwura who was the seventh leader in order of seniority assumed the leadership and the Kuntunkure traditional drum history gives the title of his appellation as Mo-wura (king of the Mos). He came to be known as Manuwura (severeign of state) – Man or Oman being the Akan name for state.



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 Manwura was supreme commander from 1596-1614. He died at Lurinchira, where the Black and White Volta Rivers join, during an expedition. He sank in his boat and his body was not recovered. The sinking of Manwura's boat at Lur-chira and his drowning during the accident brought the exclamation —Lur Oku" that is, Oh River" the Kawlaw area from then on to the present day has come to be known as Lur-oku. The village between the two (Black and White) rivers is called Shaari, the corruption of Chaari. Since the Gonjas refer to their Paramount chief generally as —the horse" and not by his name or title, Shaari has come to be known as the name of the Ndewura's (severeign) horse as is found in the Kakalang instrument song Mbuni. On the death of Amoah, Lanta became the Supreme commander of the Ngbanya (Gonja) army and he was generally known as Dingoro Jakpa ( the Mandingo Jakpa.) he still remained at Kpuyase (Braimah, 1984).

In 1675 he was and could not take active command of his fighting forces. He assumed the title of Bure-wura and handed over the command of his forces to his son Jakpa. Ndewura Jakpa is credited as the architect of the Gonja kingdom. He conquered the area around Bole, Daboya, Kong and Jatong. He pushed eastwards and brought present day Gonja under his control. He met the Dagombas already established at Yapei and defeated them. The chief of the Dagombas, Na Dariziegu met his death at Yapei at the hands of Jakpa's warriors (Wilks, 1971).

It was this Jakpa who became Ndewura (Emperor) Jakpa after he had fought and conquered many territories to found the Gonja Kingdom (Goody and Braimah, 1967). Ndewura Jakpa, whose reign was from 1675-1697 after the death of his father Lanta Limu (1634-1675), embarked on his expansion agenda (Braimah, 1984 cited by Ivor Wilks, 1966). He annexed vast lands for Gonja and installed his brothers, sisters and sons accordingly for the divisions he crafted (Goody and



Braimah, 1967). [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) Sumaila had little difficulty in over-running a vast area and establishing his rule over the groups of antiochothonous peoples he met. But owing to the limitations in communications, the very size of his conquests proved to be a disadvantage (Tomlinson, 1954).

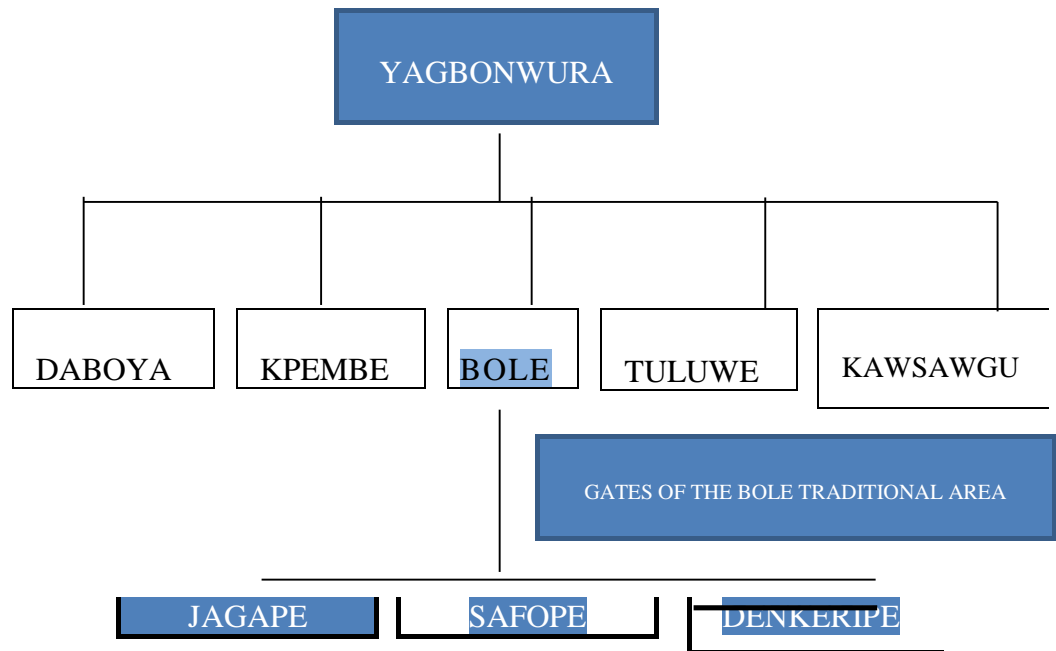
Brukum (2006) further narrates that after Ndewura Jakpa conquered a large area said to have stretched from Bole in the west to Sansan Mango in the east, he settled at Nyange and divided the empire among his brothers and sons. By virtue of its discipline, superior weapons and the prayers of Fatigi Morukpe<sup>3</sup>, the invaders defeated the indigenous people and founded the Gonja Empire (Brukum, 2006).

The divisions were said to be fifteen, but today there are only five: Bole, Daboya (Wasipe), Kpembe, Tuluwe and Kusawgu, and each of the five divisional chiefs claims descent from Jakpa (Ladouceur, 1975). This is because, some of the divisions; Kong and Kandie lost out because of the Samori invasion and the others were as a result of their proximity to the capital of the Gonja. It also led to the weakening of the civil and military organization of Gonja. Consequently, Gonja became more diffused and locally centered in its system of government (Illiasu, n.d).

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<sup>3</sup> Fatigi Morukpe was the religious leader of Ndewura Jakpa's battalion who supported the commander in spiritual related issues. This is the reason every Gonja chief is accompanied by an Islamic religious leader whenever they are attending a function.

Figure 1 Divisions in the Gonja Chieftaincy Institution



In Gonja political theory, any descendant of Sumaila is eligible for election to certain chiefship positions reserved for the ruling estate. This estate was as it still is, divided into fifteen segments, each resident in one of the fifteen divisions of the state. In each division, the primary segment is divided into two or three secondary segments through which the divisional chiefship is supposed to pass in rotation. The principle of rotation is also applicable to the succession to the paramountcy; it is occupied in turn by the heads of the divisions. (Illiasu, n.d pg. 141).

Gonja faced bouts of instability till the reign of Yagbonwura Mahama Dangboga during whose reign Gonja came out of a confederacy into nationhood. On ascension of office in 1912, Yagbonwura Dangboga or Yagbonwura Mahama moved to Zugu near Kusawgu, which is virtually centrally placed in Gonja and worked hard on Gonja unity. Two conferences were held in Yapei in 1923 and





1930, under the auspices of the British colonial administration. It was the 1930 meeting that was successful and which gathered momentum and gave Gonja its current constitution entitled —Enquiry into the Constitution and organization of the Gbanye Kingdoml (Gonja Constitution, 1930).

## 2.5 Chieftaincy in the Bole traditional area.

Ndewura Jakpa entered the Bole area through Sakpa a village near Bole. He later proceeded to Kilampobile near Bole where he settled for a while and made covenants with surrounding communities like Sakpa, Seripe, Buge and Mandari. His first nephew was made Seripewura. Ndewura Jakpa moved to Bangsen<sup>4</sup> and then to Wulase (Goody and Braimah, 1967).

He divided the empire into five divisions (Bole, Daboya (Wasipe), Kpembe, Tuluwe and Kusawgu) among his brothers and sons. The Bole division went to a son called Safo (Asumah), and his immediate brothers, Kwaja, Issifa, Wayo, Kiapewura Mahama, Alungu and Ajiramua Kotochi. Safo became the first Bolewura and had two sons Jakpa Sey and Bolewura Abdulai Amantana. Members of the Safope gate of the Bole chieftaincy trace their lineage to Safo and his sons. The second gate of Bole, which is the Jaga gate, traces their lineage to Kiapewura Mahama while the third gate Denkeri gate traces their lineage to Alungu (Braimah, 1984).

Consequently, the Bole divisional chieftaincy was established by a son called Bolewura Safo (Asumah) and his immediate brothers and children. Today succession to the Bole skin rotates among three gates (Safope, Jagape and

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<sup>4</sup> Bangsen is the royal mausoleum for the Bolewura's currently near Bole along the Kumasi road. All Bolewura's are buried here after their demise. It is regarded as a sacred place for the people of the Bole traditional area and thus people hardly will go there.



Denkeripe), but there is only one gateway skin to the Bole skin: Mandari. This makes the Mandari skin also rotatory, as each gate must occupy it at one time to be able to ascend to Bole. On the death of the Bolewura, or if for any reason he is unable to perform his functions either due to absence from town or illness or death or abdication the chief of Mankuma<sup>5</sup> (Mankumawura) becomes acting Bolewura and leads the council of elders for all rites leading to the enskinment of a new Bolewura. Though currently the Bole Skin has three gates a fourth gate has been created (Kotobiri/Jobodi gate) but yet to have its turn to elect a Bolewura. The reason for the creation of this gate was as a result of the fame Jobodi gained when his uncle (Bolewura Jamani) was to be exiled by the white colonialists. The story is that Bolewura Yahaya Jamani who ascended the Bole Skin in 1912 was exiled to Kumasi in 1917 and Darpewura (Kulmasawura) Natorma ascended the Bole Skin under the name Bolewura Jobodi (Goody and Braimah, 1967).

Before Bolewura Jamani was to be exiled, a large gathering of the Chiefs and people of Bole was called by the white colonialists on 11th February, 1918 and the news broken to them. The Bolewura's brothers and sisters were present in the meeting as well as other chiefs like the Mankumawura, the Mandariwura and the Kiapewura, the head of the Jaga gate where Bolewura Yahaya Jamani came from. When the Chief Commissioner of Northern Territories, Captain C. Armitage, asked the gathering who the next of kin of Bolewura Jamani was, no one responded. (Annual report for Northern Territories, 1918).

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<sup>5</sup> The chief of Mankuma is referred to as the Mankumawura. This village serves as the royal museum for the Yagbonwuras and thus the Mankumawura is the customary custodian of the royal tombs, and can never ascend the Bole skin.



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They kept quiet apparently because they were afraid to challenge the authority of the white man, and those against the Bolewura felt he, Bolewura Jamani deserved what had befallen him. But Jobodi was not ready to take any of that. He could not stand to see his Chief exiled and so got up and spoke vehemently in support of Bolewura Jamani to the surprise of the whites themselves who were highly feared and revered. Jobodi felt that no matter Bolewura Jamani's offence, he was still a son of the land and their chief and so allowing him to be disgracefully exiled was equally a disgrace to he Jobodi, Bole and Gonja as a whole, and thus he was prepared to face the consequences in place of Jamani.

Jobodi immediately became a hero and a household name after those brave comments. Unfortunately however, Jobodi could not succeed in preventing his uncle Jamani and the others from being exiled because the people themselves were divided. When it therefore came to the question of who was to succeed Jamani, Jobodi was the obvious choice of everybody including the white colonialists. The people quickly embraced him as their new chief for the bravery and courage he had demonstrated. The British Colonialist endorsed him as the Chief of Bole as well (Goody and Braimah, 1967).

After some years stay in exile, Jamani started petitioning and pleading to be allowed to come back to his native home and die there. When Jobodi was asked if he was in support of Jamani's return, he instantly answered in the affirmative. When Bolewura Jamani finally returned from exile in December 1920, Jobodi offered him back the Bole throne but he declined and said that for the love and courage that Jobodi had exhibited, he was never going to take back the Bole skin from him. Besides that, he said he was old now and just wanted to live a normal

life while waiting for his ancestors' call. When his ancestors finally called him, Jobodi made sure that he was given a befitting burial as a full Bolewura and not a deposed one (Oral narration by the PRO of the Gonjaland Youth Association).

Jobodi Gate<sup>6</sup> or House is yet to taste have their turn in the Bole chieftaincy skin after the first Jobodi that ascended the skin. Some people contest the legitimacy of the gate saying it is the female lineage of the Jaga gate and thus not eligible or qualified to ascend the skin irrespective of the fact that their great grandfather got that privilege. Originally, only two gates existed in the Bole traditional area- Safope and Jagape. As the years went on, the female side of Safope broke away and was given the mandate of running its own gate as Denkeripe. This is the reason the female<sup>7</sup> lineage of the Jagape where Jobodi is coming from are agitating to also have their own gate to increase the number of gates to four and thus square the division. Many say this may be another avenue to spark controversy when the fourth gate wants to take its turn in the Bole skin.

The ambassadorial system of customary governance is dominant in the Bole Traditional Area. This is a system of governance where the paramount chief controls a particular area and takes decisions pertaining to the area independently with his cabinet and report to the central government, who in this case is the Yagbonwura. In Gonjaland, there are five divisions (Kpembe, Tuluwe, Bole,

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<sup>6</sup> Kotobiri/Jobodi gate is a gate or lineage which was created from the Jaga gate. But they are referred to as the female line of the Jaga gate since Jobodi was a son of a princess whose father wasn't from the royal lineage. This gate was created because the people of Jagape have it that the Denkeri gate is the female line (children of their sisters) of the Safo gate and so they want their sister's children to also taste the chieftaincy to make the succession process even for both the Jaga gate and the Safo gate.

<sup>7</sup> Princesses from the royal gate are referred to as the female lineage of the family. They have the opportunity of becoming queen mothers but their children whose fathers are not from the royal lineage are considered as princes but do not have equal rights to some skins in the traditional area. They are only given selected chieftaincy titles and they remain there till their demise signifying that they are enjoying what their mothers could not enjoy.







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Wasipe and Kawsawgu) which are considered as separate independent operational zones and thus the overlords there take decisions and report to the Yagbonwura. This allows them to enskin chiefs or otherwise when the need arises. This system allows the superior chief (Bolewura) and overlord of the area to move or reshuffle chiefs around communities in the area as and when he deems the services of the chief to be more appropriate or needed. This is suggested by some opinion leaders as the reason for the controversies of chieftaincy in the area (unpublished report from Mahama Haruna, 2015).

## 2.6 Concept of Conflict

Conflicts and disagreements are part of social groups and are to be found in all societies. The extent to which they are exhibited may differ from one society to the other. In some societies, conflicts tend to be dominant while in others, there is a stronger tendency towards consensus. The reason for this varied situation among social groupings is manifold and sometimes tends to generate considerable controversy (Tonah, 2007). The concept of conflict is often confused with related terms such as violence. In clarifying violence, most discourses offer pre-theoretical examples as first aids. Some of these examples include knife-attack, savage beatings, shootings, bombing and physical torture (Idowu, 2005) as cited in Dordah, (2012). Ross (1986) states that psycho-cultural analysts perceive violence as a culturally learnt demeanour and personality constituent in a given society. She further argues that psycho-cultural disposition to violence in the early stages of socialisation and life experience is crucial in determining and creating images about the self and others and society's inclination towards violence. Ross (1986) adds that though this view is important, a society that is psycho-culturally



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disposed to violence may not define with whom one argues, contests and fights. Violent conflicts and situations of insecurity can greatly worsen poverty. Additionally, Coser (1956) argues that in relationships in which individuals are very deeply involved, both feelings of attraction as well as hostility are likely to arise. He continues that the closer the relationship, the greater the affective investment, and the more potential there is for ambivalence. In a further explanation to conflict situations in societies, Coser (1956) adds that the absence of conflict within a relationship cannot serve as an index of its underlying stability. Thus, parties are more likely to express their hostile feelings if they feel secure and stable in the relationship and that they are more likely to avoid acting out their hostile feelings if they fear the termination of the relationship (Coser, 1956).

A strategic conflict analysis provides a deeper understanding of the conflict context and is an important source of information for use in long-term planning regarding how to reduce poverty through development cooperation in areas affected by violent conflict and insecurity (Sida, 2006). However, in situations of rising tension, violent conflict or in post-conflict situations, development programmes and projects always run the risk of increasing tensions in society, thus reducing their intended positive impact.

The theoretical debate on conflict and consensus has pitched two major schools of thought against each other. On the one hand, a number of theorists of the structural functionalist school have conceptualized society as a social system with the various parts within the system contributing towards the maintenance of the entire system (Tonah, 2007). Therefore the structural features of a society be they,



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social, economic and political, determine the parties with whom one cooperates, competes and fights with (Dordah, 2012). Dordah (2012) further argues that violence is the expression of extreme, consistent and intense level of conflict. It can be said that all violence is an outcome of a conflict situation but not every conflict situation is violent. Conflict as defined by Idowu (2005) and cited by Dordah (2012) is an interaction between two or more parties whose actions towards achieving incompatible objectives or interests result in varying degrees of discord. Some psychologists and philosophers explain conflict as an inherent nature of man. The psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud, believes that the genetic material that codes the chromosomes of human beings makes them prone to conflict. So he writes, —there is no likelihood of our being able to suppress humanity’s aggressive tendencies (Bloomfield & Moulton, 1997 cited in Ahiave, 2013).

In line with this argument, Coser makes a distinction between two types of conflict: that in which the goal is personal and subjective, and that in which the matter in contention has an impersonal objective aspect. He notes Simmel’s claim that objectified struggles, which go beyond personal issues, are likely to be more severe and radical (Coser, 1956). He concludes his argument by asserting that conflict also leads to the formation of coalitions and associations between previously unrelated parties. If several parties face a common opponent, bonds tend to develop between them. This can lead to the formation of new groups or result in instrumental associations in the face of a common threat (Coser, 1956). Ahiave (2013) adds that Sigmund and Hobbes seem to conclude that conflict is simply built into the DNA of humans. However, Ahiave (2013) suggests that this



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perception of humanity fails to take into account environmental and other factors that can influence people to act violently. In the same vein, crisis is mostly confused with conflict. Crisis refers to a situation of near hopelessness, in which an external intervention is required, which intervention may mark a positive or negative turning point in the crisis. In view of this, Lund (n.d) explains as cited in the United States Institute of Peace, (2008) that crisis is a tense confrontation between armed forces that are mobilized and ready to fight and may be engaged in threats and occasional low-level skirmishes but have not exerted any significant amount of force. The probability of the outbreak of war is high.

In this case, crisis goes beyond the mere occurrence of conflict. In a crisis situation, conflict and violence often precede the crisis. Crises in this regard are seen as a disagreement based on interaction of the two succession parties in the Mandari skin. Experts in conflict studies have the propensity to differentiate between conflict and crisis. According to Frempong (1999), cited in Ahiave (2013), Zartman used conflict to describe the underlying issues in a dispute and crisis to refer to the outbreak of armed hostilities. To Frempong (1999) therefore, crisis is the violent expression of conflict. In this study however, both terms, conflict and crisis, are used interchangeably to describe the open hostility.

## **2.7 Chieftaincy conflicts in Northern Ghana**

Although chieftaincy conflicts are found throughout Ghana, there is a widespread perception in the country that northern Ghana is particularly prone to such conflicts. This is probably because some conflicts in the North have been very violent and protracted, involving several ethnic groups living over a wide



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geographical area. Most of the conflicts are typically chieftaincy succession disputes, involving two or more gates laying claim to a chieftaincy position or title. Such conflicts usually involve determining who is the best qualified person to occupy a particular position, which traditional rituals constitute the "enskinment" process, and whether the individual selected has gone through the appropriate rituals administered by the traditionally designated persons (Abubakari 2008; Anamzoya and Tonah 2012) cited in Tonah (2012). Generally, Chieftaincy disputes erupt when there are two or more rival claimants to a vacant "stool" or "skin", the symbols of kingship or chieftaincy in the "traditional" state. The rival claimants to such traditional authority may either belong to different ethnic groups or to different lineages of the founding family. These are exacerbated by direct as well as discreet political interventions in chieftaincy affairs (Agana, 2008). The violent nature of chieftaincy and other conflicts in the north has frequently been explained by the long period of colonial and postcolonial exploitation and neglect of the region, the widespread poverty and low levels of education and the dearth of socio-economic infrastructure in the area. Furthermore, Northern Ghana covers a wide geographical area and is generally sparsely populated, with a very minimal presence of state institutions and public personnel including the security forces, police stations, and courts (Botchway 2005; Plange 1979; Saaka 2001).

Tonah (2012) argues further that besides being violent and protracted, a few chieftaincy conflicts in the north have also been politicized, with ruling governments and the opposition parties interfering directly and indirectly in the conflict and supporting the different factions in the conflict. Additionally,

conflicts in the north have also been recurrent, often defying numerous attempts at a resolution by the government, traditional authorities and civil society (Linde and Naylor, 1999; Bogner 1996, 2009).

In northern Ghana and elsewhere, several succession disputes have daunted the image of the chieftaincy institution branding the institution as volatile and barbaric. For instance, there have been many of such succession conflicts between 1980 and 2002. In 1991, Dagombas fought among themselves at Voggu and Zabzugu. Between 1980 and 1986 the Mamprusi and the Kusasi fought three times in the Bawku area over succession to the Bawku chieftaincy. In March 2002, the Dagomba fought among themselves at Yendi during which Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II, the overlord of Dagbon (together with some 40 others) lost his live (Brukum, 2006).

The Bimbila succession crises date back to 1999 as well as many of such conflicts in the country. Even though the immediate causes of these conflicts differ, the remote ones are similar if not the same (Brukum, 2006).

Additionally, the conflict of who is the legitimate Bolga Naba (Between two claimants, Martin Abilba III and Awugiya) has also led to some violence in Bolgatanga between supporters of the two. In line with the Bolga chieftaincy affair is a number of succession and land disputes in the Upper East Region. One of such is the Zaare (Tendaana affair) which is essentially between the chief and the earthpriest and the question of which one of them controls land and has a right to dispose of land (Awedoba, 2009).

## 2.8 Chieftaincy conflicts in Gonjaland

The Asante invasion into the Gonja territories in 1744 weakened the central authority in Gonja. It loosened the links between the eastern and western parts of Gonja, where the eastern provinces looked to Kpembe rather than to Nyange (the seat of the paramount chief) as their capital. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, there was so little central control that the divisions appeared to have made alliances and conducted wars independently of other parts of the Gonja states. For instance, Salaga and Bole had become far more important than Nyange, largely because of their commercial links with Asante to the south and the Mossi and Hausa states to the north. Indeed so insignificant had Nyange become that the first European visitors to Gonja either overlooked the place altogether or gave the impression that the paramountcy had been destroyed without trace (Illiasu, n.d pg. 141).

One conflict in Gonjaland that claimed thousands of lives and almost annihilated the Gonja kingdom is that of the 1894-95 Samori war. This was narrated as a problem of succession to the Yagbon skin that led to the invitation of the slave raider to help solve the issue. Unfortunately, it led to the destruction of the kingdom. There was a serious conflict over the Yagbon Skin after the death of Yagbonwura Kurbang (Seidu Dushi) from Bole in about 1890 to 1895. Bolewura Kurbua (Seidu Dushi later Yagbonwura Kurbang) ascended the Yagbon Skins after Yagbonwura Pirku of Kusawgu was exiled from Nyange by the Chiefs and people of Bole.

Kongwura Kabondogodam heard of Samori and his people who were initially thought to be Muslims on their way to pilgrimage at Mecca and so went to plead with them to mediate by talking to the Chiefs and people of Bole especially to





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 allow him ascend the Yagbon skin because they were more hostile to him, little did the Kongwura know Samori and his people were slave raiders and would have raided the Bole area anyway whether they were invited or not (Braimah, 1970). Bole people were defeated and Samori and his fighters over run all the western part of Gonja (Braimah, 1997).

One legacy of the 1930 reorganisation conference of Gonja at Yapei was the identification and endorsing of mentoring titles to be heir apparent to the various divisions. This includes Yazori as the only one title next to Wasipe; Mandari to be next to Bole and Bunda to be next to Tuluwe, Later Yapei was added to be next to Kusawgu and Lipo, Singbun and Kenyasi to Kpembe (Government Press, 1932). This therefore made it easy in most traditional areas to identify the heir to the paramountcy, but one could be right to say that this system now has its antecedent problems. Most of the problems at the divisions are usually at the skins that are gateways to the various divisions with a few being ordinary chieftaincy titles. There have therefore been conflicts at every single entry gate in Gonja over the past years with that of Yazori at Wasipe beginning in 1994 and ending in 2004; Mandari for Bole beginning 2013 and still pending which happens to be the focus of this study, Bunda in the 1930"s and Yapei in the Kusawgu Traditional Area beginning 2001 and ending in 2010 (Awedoba, 2009).

Sonyowura (title for the chief of a village near Bole) which is one of the revered chiefly titles (kingmaker for the Yagbon skin and acting Yagbonwura upon the demise of the Yagbonwura) is equally bedevilled with two chiefs currently (the claimant to the skin and the candidate of the Yagbonwura). This has driven the claimants to seek legal redress in the Regional house of chiefs in Tamale.



Similarly in the Bole traditional area in 2013, the succession of the Tinga skin sparked controversy between two brothers of the same father all from the Safo gate. This resulted in the duplication of chiefs in Tinga making the village to also have two chiefs in addition to that of Mandari. There were two clashes in the area but for the intervention of the security personnel, lives would have been lost.

## **2.9 Causes of Chieftaincy Succession crises**

The importance of the chieftaincy institution has not wanned in most parts of Ghana despite the entrenchment of democratic rule and the expansion of state powers since the return to civilian rule in 1992. On the contrary, many people still hold their traditional leaders in high esteem and support for the institution and chieftaincy remains strong throughout the country (Tonah, 2012). Agana (2008) notes that, in Ghana, the struggle to become a —Chiefll may turn violent when the historical, political, economic and social circumstances around the establishment of the chieftaincy institution in a traditional state become contested; when the rules of succession become unclear; when successive national governments and political parties support one group against the other in a bid to serve their own parochial political interest; and when there are small and light weapons available to the factions in the dispute.

Similarly, Hagan (2006) elucidates three critical factors that may account for litigations and disputes with respect to stools and skins:

- 1. Affluent personalities in society with ambiguous claims to royal stools and skins fiercely contesting the position with*



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*the poorer royals who refuse to succumb to the illegitimate contenders, thereby generating perpetual litigation in the selection of occupant to the stool or skin.*

2. *Legitimate royals have increased in number over the years, as well. Hence the competitive-claims have become highly intense among the families and lineages. Consequently, some royal members are prepared to use fire-arms in the settling of disputes regarding election of occupants to stools and skins.*
3. *The tenure of a chief terminates only at death and this generates a lot of anxiety among legitimate royals who are potential candidates to the stools and skins. This leads to frivolous and wasteful litigations and strife in the communities.*



Similarly, Larbi, (2009) cited in Ahiave (2013) identifies four sources of chieftaincy conflicts. He opines that chieftaincy is associated with political power, which also translates into the control of economic wealth in the form of stool properties such as land, mineral deposits, regalia and servants who work for the chief. The pomp and pageantry that accompany the position of the chief make the institution so attractive that, both royals and non-royals desire to use every means to ascend to the throne, thus leading to conflict.



Ahiave (2013) adds that [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) misappropriation of communal resources, (such as royalties paid to the royal house) by incumbents is a cause of these chieftaincy disputes. The third source of chieftaincy conflict adduced by Larbi is that most of the disputes in chieftaincy occur due to lack of documentation on the mode of selection of chiefs.

Finally, Larbi, (2009) contends that the appointment of non-royals to stools/skins in the country provides the grounds for chieftaincy conflicts. He observes that some of these people are foreigners<sup>8</sup> who are recognised as a result of their immense contribution to the state in terms of infrastructural development.

## 2.10 Social Implications of Conflicts on Development

Over the last twenty years, Ghana has earned recognition internationally as the beacon of democracy in Africa. The nation has also earned a —democratic dividend as evidenced by greater international recognition, significant inflow of direct foreign investment, improvement in socio-economic conditions of the populace, a free and vibrant media, and through transparency in the governance space. The nation however, continues to cherish and maintain ancient traditional values as exemplified by the institution of chieftaincy based on custom and usage (Mensah, 2014). Like most post-colonial states, Ghana is a heterogeneous society characterised by the internal dualism of formal-informal, urban-countryside, and modern-traditional communities and institutions. The modern structures supersede but have not displaced the diverse socio-cultural, economic and political

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<sup>8</sup> In the past, slaves who rendered dedicated services to their masters were sometimes incorporated into the family. Some of them were rewarded with women in the community with whom they had children. The descendants of these slaves who are now part of the royal lineage could one day emerge as at the forefront to contest the vacant position of the stool. Problems occur when some members of the royal family try to discriminate against this crop of people, sometimes referring to them as 'intruders' or 'foreigners'.



institutions and practices of pre-colonial [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) Ghana.‘ In many instances, the enduring traditional structures complement the developmental and governance imperatives, especially in the rural and informal sectors (WACSI, 2011).

The West Africa Civil Society Institute (2011) adds that the role that the variegated traditional institutions and identities play in governance, security and development should not be underestimated. However, these often contradictory institutions and identities serve as potential fault-lines for violent conflict. Such conflicts undermine the sustainable development, governance and the security of Ghana (WACSI, 2011). Given the historically differentiated rates of social development between the southern and northern parts of Ghana, the prevalence of violent conflicts in the northern parts of Ghana serves as a double tragedy. The violent conflicts reverse the development clock and drive away potential resources necessary for the regions‘ development. Northern Ghana (Upper West, Upper East and Northern Region) constitute the main food basket of the nation and their instability undermines Ghana’s food security (WACSI, 2011).

The Institute additionally noted that, the conflicts equally adversely affect Ghana’s neighbours such as Burkina Faso, Togo and Côte d’Ivoire since the ethnic groups such as Bimoba, Kokomba, Kasena, Moshie, Chamba, Basari of northern Ghana share cultural affinities with groups in neighbouring countries. Instability in one area affects relationships and human mobility between and among the ethnic groups in question (WACSI, 2011). Prah and Yeboah (2011) support this argument of WACSI by adding that, most of these protracted disputes have resulted in violent conflicts. Indeed, such conflicts have always led to



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undesirable developments in the affected areas and the nation at large. These devastating effects of conflict include loss of lives, the displacement of people, loss of property, outright lawlessness which results in the imposition of curfews, a move that constrains the fundamental human rights of the people and impedes on economic activities. They further add that these conditions create an atmosphere of anxiety, insecurity and distrust, posing a threat to the peace and stability of the entire nation.

Adjaye and Misawa (2006) postulate that chieftaincy is not the mere and rigid preservation of the past. It requires continuous dialoguing and reinterpretation of the past with a view to making sense of the present and facing the challenges of the future, for tradition may be doomed to irrelevance if it ceases to meet the needs of the present as well as those of the future. They add to the social importance of chiefs and chieftaincy by suggesting that there is no need to reject the chief in the village in favour of an elected official, as long as we know his duties, responsibilities and compensations. Indeed, clearly defined chiefly roles can lead to the development of national symbols and unity. A properly installed chief and an elected official in Ghana or Nigeria can both carry out the ceremonial and governing functions that we so much desire at the local level. The African chief therefore cannot be perceived as part of the establishment; rather, he symbolizes and represents his region or community (Adjaye and Misawa, 2006).

Traditionally, the Bole traditional area is an embodiment of one family that ascends the chieftaincy skins of the area. The recent emergence of succession crises in the area have created divisions among brothers and sisters as well as friends. The four gates in the Bole traditional area appear to be divided and thus

traditional functions are organised separately, which poses threats of collision and conflicts of interest.

It is usually said in the Gonja language that *\_kpakpa bi eleng wo mbu kasartu na'*, which literally means the strength of the ram is in its waist. The long-existing bond between these families and gates which is their source of power and strength risks being disintegrated and thus creating room for hatred and individualism which are a barrier to development and social cohesion. The Mandari skin for instance, is contested by people of the same blood (uncle and son), which has divided the members of this same household into factions creating divisions amongst the same people. Even more worrying is the succession dispute over the Tinga skin, which is being contested by two sons of the same man (father) who now become enemies to each other.

### **2.11 Economic Implication of Conflicts on Development**

Dawda and Dapilah (2013) observe that Chiefs themselves recognise that all development projects depend on resources and most of them could be acquired using money. There is therefore, no doubt that collaboration between the chiefs and the District Assembly would put the traditional area in a better position to mobilise resources for the development of the area. Chiefs are seen to be contributing to development in the area of revenue mobilisation in collaboration with the District Assembly and its sub-structures such as the Area Councils and Unit Committees.

They further argue that Chiefs play an advocacy role in letting their subjects understand the importance of paying rates and taxes. They hold periodic meetings with revenue collectors and unit committee members to understand their



challenges in the area of revenue collection. This complements the efforts of revenue collectors and contributes to increased revenue for the district and the traditional area. The advocacy role of chiefs is proven to be helping positively in the area of revenue mobilisation. One area that chiefs were not seen to be doing well was in the area of environmental protection (Dawda and Dapilah, 2013).

In view of this argument by Dawda and Dapilah (2013), Adjaye and Misawa (2006) add that a new vision of the chief-global, modern, entrepreneurial-must be constructed. They add to this argument by suggesting that to achieve this, the institution of chieftaincy must recognize that it is capable of reinventing itself, of negotiating and modifying itself to sustain it into the future. Chiefs must continue to be considered not only as guardians of the public interest and custodians of the traditional state, but also brokers of the present and into the future. In emphasizing the fluid, syncretic, eclectic, constantly evolving and compelling character of chieftaincy, one is also thereby giving recognition to a more personalistic model. However, according to a former Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Hon. Charles B. Bintim, in a speech delivered at the National House of Chiefs, it was a matter of great concern to Government that developmental projects in certain communities had been frustrated and derailed, largely due to chieftaincy disputes, litigation and disunity. He therefore appealed to chiefs to strive to settle all disputes amicably without resorting to violence and also with the support of Presiding Members, opinion leaders and District Assemblies develop early warning systems to avert conflicts in their communities. This, he said, would accelerate the pace of development in our communities in particular and the nation as a whole (Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2005).



In view of this [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) Bob Millar (2009) adds that in trying to provide basic socio-economic necessities, chiefs either mobilize the material and human resources of their various local and expatriate communities, or approach nongovernmental agencies for assistance. More recently, chiefs have identified diaspora Africans as a potential source of assistance for their development agendas. But mobilizing and seeking resources to undertake development projects in their various communities are not recent phenomena but aspects of a role Ghanaian chiefs have played since pre-colonial times (Bob – Millar, 2009).

## **2.12 How to mitigate Chieftaincy succession crises to promote development**

Reimann (n.d) defines conflict settlement as outcome oriented strategies for achieving sustainable win-win solutions and/or putting an end to direct violence, without necessarily addressing the underlying conflict causes. Although violent fighting is suppressed, the underlying causes of the violence remain largely unaddressed. Moreover, conflict settlement approaches typically focus on mediations between ‘top-level’ leaders, such as political or military figures and high-profile representatives of the warring factions.

Chieftaincy as an institution has been integrated into the governance structures of Ghana. It is incumbent on the institution to find its relevance in the midst of westernisation of the Ghanaian youth, and the eroding of the Ghanaian culture due to growing sophistication via the evolution of and access to modern technology. In light of these challenges, the ability of the institution to be recognised transcends legal privileges and the status quo to command of reverence from the urban and rural Ghanaian (Mensah, 2013).





According to Appiah (2006), for chiefs and queen mothers in Ghana to be visible in the public sphere amongst the next generations of Ghanaians, the chieftaincy institution must develop an appropriate peer review mechanism, a system which will authorise a paramount chief from a traditional area to monitor and evaluate the custodian responsibility and programs of another traditional area, with the objective of invigorating the progress of that area. The peer review system will curtail wanton sale of stool lands to unscrupulous investors who connive with mendacious chiefs to exploit the resources of their communities, cited in Mensah, 2013.

Odotei (2006) cited in Mensah (2013) also advocated for a sustainable financial arrangement and framework for the institution. According to her, this will empower the state to provide relevant resources for the institution of chieftaincy in order to insulate the institution from direct political manipulation and control. The current arrangements where the National House of Chiefs is treated similarly to any other government agency is unhelpful. The meagre allowance of 80 euros per month for paramount chief must be adjusted upwards to ensure that the reverence Ghanaians have for their traditional leaders are maintained.

### **2.13 Theoretical Framework**

Mooney, Knox, and Schacht (2007) define theory as a set of interrelated propositions or principles designed to answer a question or explain a particular phenomenon; it provides us with a perspective. They further explain that sociological theories help us to explain and predict the social world in which we live. The functionalist perspective views society as composed of different parts working together. In contrast, this perspective views society as composed of



different groups and interests competing for power and resources. The conflict perspective explains various aspects of our social world by looking at which groups have power and benefit from a particular social arrangement (Mooney, Knox, and Schacht, 2007).

In this research, reference is made to the Relative Deprivation Theory. This theory talks about the experience of being denied something to which one believes oneself to be entitled to have (Walker & Smith, 2001). It also refers to the discontent or dissatisfaction people feel when they compare their positions to others and realise that they have less than them (Bayertz, 1999). According to Ahiave (2013), Schaefer (2008) defines relative deprivation as —the conscious experience of a negative discrepancy between legitimate expectations and present actualities (Schaefer, 2008). It is a term used in social sciences to describe feelings or measures of economic, political or social deprivation that are relative rather than absolute (Ahiave, 2013). Ahiave concludes on the theory that

*—The concept of relative deprivation has important consequences for both behaviour and attitudes; including feeling of stress, political attitude and participation in collective action. Therefore, when expectations do not meet attainment just as in the Mandari succession issue, there is a high tendency for people to confront those, who they hold responsible for depriving them of their ambition” (Ahiave, 2013).*

In line with this study, the two parties (claimants to the Mandari skin) are seen to have legitimate right over the title and thus are taking uncompromising stance on relinquishing the title. The Bolewura’s

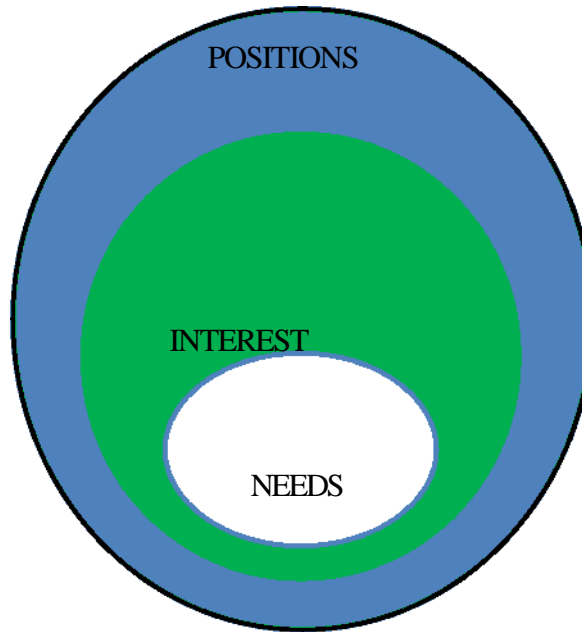


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candidate feels he is the rightful owner to the skin since Bolewura is the appointing authority and that was exactly what he did. On the other hand, the candidate of the Yagbonwura argue that the authority of the Yagbonwura is not subservient to any other skin in Gonja and thus his decision overrules that of the Bolewura making him the legitimate owner of the skin. In short, both parties are optimistic that the title is theirs and thus they are being deprived of their property.

#### **2.14 Conceptual Framework**

Moreover, the Mandari succession dispute identified was analysed using the onion/doughnut method where conflict situation is seen to be in layers and thus have various levels as the onion. Realizing the above, I used the onion/doughnut method for the analysis of the Mandari conflict of 2013. This method as said earlier is used to show that conflict has many layers and what appears on the surface is only a small element of the conflict. Like the onion, conflicts have many layers, and the use of this method enabled me to access that part of the conflict that exposes the needs and fears, which inform parties to take uncompromising stands (Best, 2006: 74). The onion method illustrates the position of parties in the outer part of the onion, the interests in the middle layer, and needs and fears in the centre of the onion.

**Figure 2 Diagram showing the onion method**



Source: Best, S.G. 2006, p.74

#### **2.14 Conclusion**

Chieftaincy succession disagreements in the Bole traditional area are recent and ultimately digging deep into the long standing and otherwise peaceful coexistence in the area. The causes and solutions of these disagreements may differ from elsewhere but all the same they may have some common underpinnings which make them similar. The literature reviewed has demonstrated the occurrence of such conflicts or crises in other traditional areas within the region and other places in the country, hence making them a matter of concern to promote the sustainability of the institution.



## **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

Methodologies carry philosophical assumptions about how an inquiry process should proceed, offering ways of thinking that help to shape the evaluation of research objectives, questions, and design (Carter & Little, 2007 cited in Goodyear, Jewiss, Usinger, and Barela, 2014). A method is defined as —an established, habitual, logical, or prescribed practice or systematic process of achieving certain ends with accuracy and efficiency, usually in an ordered sequence of fixed steps|| [www.businessdictionary.com](http://www.businessdictionary.com). Research methodology in this regard are the procedures, techniques, tools, and processes used in the identification and resolution of a social problem (Dordah, 2012).

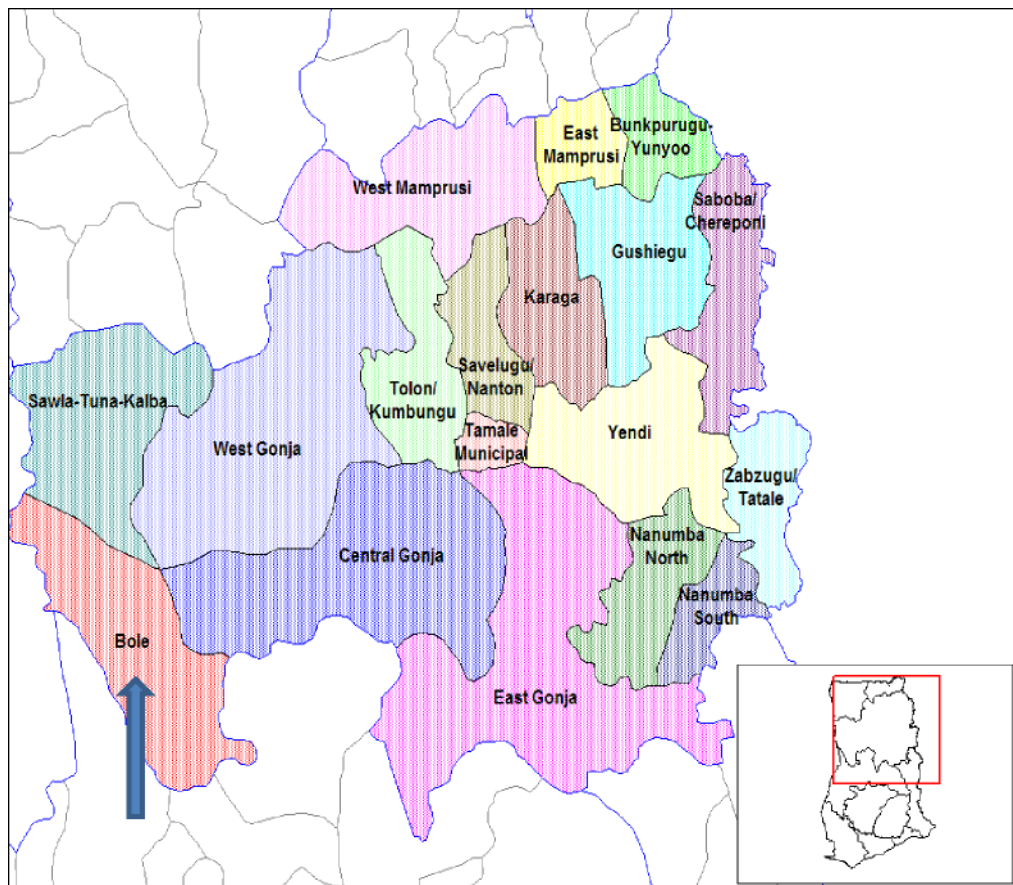
In this chapter, the profile of the study area, scope of the study, the general perspective of research, the sampling tools and techniques and methods of primary data collection are issues discussed.

### **3.1 Profile of the study area**

This aspect of the study explored the geographical location, political administration, the physical environment, socio-demographic features and traditional councils of the Bole traditional area and the community in question, Mandari. Below is a map of the districts in the Northern Region showing the location of Bole district.



**Figure 3 Districts of the Northern Region**



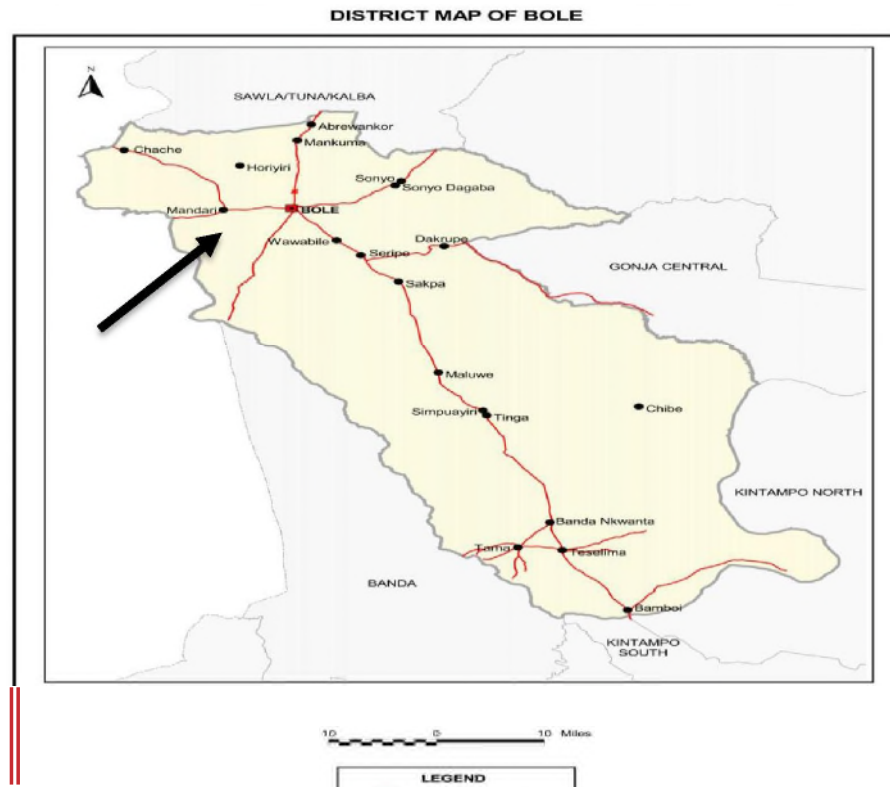
Source: ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern\\_Region\\_%28Ghana%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Region_%28Ghana%29)).

### 3.1.1 Geographical Location and Natural Environment of Bole District

The Bole district is located at the extreme western part of the Northern Region and is situated between latitudes 8°10.5' and 09° and longitude 1.50E° and 2.45 W. It is bordered to the north by the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba district which was carved out of the Bole district, to the west by the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire with the Black Volta as the boundary. It also shares boundaries with the West Gonja district to the East and to the south by the Wenchi Municipality in Brong Ahafo Region (GSS, 2014). The District covers an area of 6,169.2 square kilometres, out of the

total area of 69,766.2 square kilometres of the Northern Region. The District covers nine per cent (9%) of the total land area in the region.

**Figure 4.0 District Map of Bole showing Mandari**



*Source: Ghana Statistical Service, GIS cited in Bole District profile 2014*

### **3.1.2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Bole and Mandari**

From the 2010 Population census, the District has a population of 61,593 comprising 51.4% males and 49.6% females. The population is sparsely distributed with a population density of 10 persons per square kilometre (GSS, 2014). The population below 15 years (0-14) is 43%, while the population



between the ages of 15-64 years is 52.3% of the total population showing that potentially there are more people in the age brackets actively competing for chieftaincy (District Profile, 2014). The Bole Traditional Area of Gonjaland is one of the biggest in Gonjaland covering the Bole and Sawla- Tuna- Kalba administrative Districts. Mandari on the other hand is a town that is located about ten kilometers to the west of Bole towards the Cote d' Ivoire border. Mandari is predominantly a Safalba<sup>9</sup> Community. The Safalba people came from an area that is now within present day Cote d'Ivoire and settled in this place now called Mandari. Later on, the Gonjas arrived in the area and the Safalba surrendered to this more numerous and powerful group of people. Due to this peaceful submission, the Safalba were allowed to retain their chieftaincy alongside the Gonja chieftaincy and the Gonjas do not ask for any tributes from the Safalba and cohabitation between this group of people is friendly and peaceful (Haruna, 2015). Mandari has two minor chiefs (Safalba chief and the landowners- \_kadewura<sup>10</sup>) besides the Mandariwura. The Safalba are an indigenous people that have been assimilated into Gonja but still maintain their language.

### 3.1.3 Traditional Political Institutions of Bole

The major ethnic groups found in the Bole district include: Gonja, Vagla, Safalba, and Mo. There are migrant ethnic groups such as Brifor, Lobi and Dagaaba whose main occupation has been subsistence farming and pito brewing. Major festivals celebrated in the district are as follows: Deng, Damba, Jintigi, Achan, Eleishi and the Kachunu. All the ethnic groups that can be found in the district practice

<sup>9</sup> Safalba is a smaller indigenous group that inhabited the area before their conquest by Ndewura Jakpa

<sup>10</sup> The Kadewura is the traditional priest and his council of elders who perform traditional rites for the land and thus are considered the custodians of the land.





patrilineal system of inheritance ([www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) (that is from father to male child) (District profile, 2014).

The Bolewura is the most senior chief in the area and thus presides over almost all chieftaincy issues in the area. In the absence of the Bolewura, Mankumawura acts in his stead.

### 3.2 Scope of Study

This research work takes a look at the recent chieftaincy succession crises in the Bole traditional area, specifically the Mandari skin and explores the socio-economic implications of this disagreement to the development of the area. It analysed the causes of this succession dispute and further looks at the approaches that were used so far to resolve the Mandari succession crisis emanating from the succession process in the area.

### 3.3 Research Design

This research made use of the mixed research approach. This research placed emphasis on the qualitative research approach which Creswell (2009) explains as a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research, he adds, involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The underlying criterion for the mixed methodology adopted in this research is the idea of

endogenous development<sup>11</sup>. In as much as western traditional research methodologies featured prominently in this study, it was complementary to the indigenous (traditional) research methods, or better still, the worldview of the study community (Mandari) in the Bole traditional area (Yussif, 2013).

In addition to the qualitative approach, this study also made use of some quantitative strategies. In view of this, group leaders of the various gates were sampled purposively since the total number of youth in each gate could not be ascertained. The view of these leaders was seen as the view of the entire youth groups<sup>12</sup> and to create reliability and validity, all the secretaries to the youth groups were also contacted. This study also adopts participatory research methods. This is because, this method is another feature meant to achieve the overall endogenous research focus of the study (Yussif, 2013).

Participatory research is basically

*—...to enable participants to share their perceptions of a problem, to find common ground and then to engage a variety of people in identifying and testing out some possible solutions” (Laws, 2003:49).*

It is quite a comprehensive series of activities, and only adapted to suit the objectives here. Together with a cross-section of community members, the first

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<sup>11</sup> Endogenous development springs from the heart of each society. It is development which relies first on its own strength and resources and defines in sovereignty the vision of its future, cooperating with societies sharing its problems and aspirations. In short, it merges modern development strategies with that of the local strategies.

<sup>12</sup> Every gate has youth groups. These groups are the front line forces in the clashes that almost emanated when the two chiefs were taken to Mandari.





activity was to identify the major stakeholders of chieftaincy in the Bole traditional area—that is the kingmakers and some youth leaders of the various gates involved in the chieftaincy issues in the traditional area. This process provided a suggested list of respondents. Furthermore, an attempt was made to understand the perceptions of participants from across different groupings (gates) in the Bole traditional area.

The focus of this study is Mandari in the Bole traditional area in respect to the relationship between the chieftaincy institution and community development. The reason for this selection is the fact that the area is occupied by a centralized group of people (Gonjas) with a clearly functional chieftaincy system, and forms one of the majorities of the many ethnic groups in northern Ghana aside the Mamprusi, Dagombas, Wala, Nanumbas, etc.

The researcher was able to set aside his own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study since he is an indigene in the area and obviously belong to one of the gates in contention (Nieswiadomy, 1993).

### 3.4 Sampling of Respondents

A sample allows for the study of a part of a group and yet achieves a result that is representative of the larger group (Bryman, 2008; Sarantakos, 2005) cited in Yussif (2013). Sampling in other words, refers to taking a unit out of the whole for purposes of validity and reliability (Kish, 1967). Sampling is important in this research owing to the fact that, in almost all research situations, it is not practical to study all the members of a population. The rare exception is small populations. There are basically two sampling methods used in social research as cited in

Twumasi (2001); these include the probability and non-probability sampling techniques.

In this study, emphasis was placed on the non-probability sampling technique.

#### **3.4.1 Non – Probability Sampling**

In non-probability sampling, participants are selected based on the characteristics they possess or their availability to participate. Therefore, each population is not equally likely to be selected to participate (Scott and Deidre, 2009). Non-probability sampling as the name suggests, is the type of sampling technique that gives unequal chances to respondents to be selected and thus gives priority to some respondents (Twumasi, 2001). This technique was adopted for the selection of respondents. The reason for this selection is that, it is most suitable for qualitative research since it is usually subjective. The sample is usually chosen before and during the research, and they do not involve probability theory (Sarantakos, 2005). The qualitative bias of this study justifies the choice of such a technique so as to allow for more flexibility.

Using this method means that the selected sample is not representative of the population because, all the units in the population were not given the chance to be included in the sample. It did not call for systematic sampling design except for the selection of the chiefs for which all of them could not be contacted.

#### **3.4.2 Purposive Sampling**

Purposive sampling technique as a non-probability sampling technique was also adopted. According to Twumasi (2001), purposive sampling is where respondents who can answer the research questions are contacted. The respondents selected by





the purposive sampling [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) were selected at the convenience and perception of the researcher as to the ability of the respondent to accurately provide the needed information.

This is because of the qualitative nature of the study. Hence, respondent's (chiefs, and youth group leaders) selection was judgemental since they were selected based on the belief that they have knowledge on the issue at hand. It allowed the researcher to pass judgement on the relevance of subjects for the study, and made selection based on that (Sarantakos, 2005). The respondents sampled included some chiefs of the Bole traditional area and kingmakers (Nsuwawura, Mankumawura, Seripewura) Individuals within the area who are perceived to have requisite knowledge in chieftaincy around the area were also included in the sample through the snowball sample technique as well as some youth group leaders of the various gates whose actions and inactions greatly affect the development process of the area. In order to be objective and eliminate researcher bias, the three gates to the Bole skins were each contacted in different periods. Respondents were evenly selected from these gates to get a fair view of the issue at hand to eliminate the elements of subjectivity.

In the Bole traditional area, linguists and religious leaders (Sakpares) play a critical role in the nomination of chiefs and the adjudication of issues, hence the reason for their selection. Queen mothers in their wisdom are recognised in Bole and elsewhere in Gonjaland and are usually present during coronation ceremonies for chiefs but then, they do not actively participate in the coronation process of chiefs except for giving advice to the chief before he is enskinned.

### **3.5 Tools for Primary Data Collection:**

This study used both primary and secondary sources of data in the process. The secondary sources provided the background literature, thus putting the entire study into perspective. These methods outlined were not used separately; they are used co-currently to enable the researcher collect the primary data for the work. However, some methods were used more often than others. Basically, the interview tool was heavily relied on for the collection of the data. The following research methods were the specific tools adopted in the study: interviews, questionnaires and observation.

#### **3.5.1 Interviews**

The interview method is —a method of data collection that gathers information through oral questioning. (Sarantakos, 2005:428). Its oral nature makes it suitable for the oral-based traditional African community. This technique was used as a starting point or background to support other methods of data collection. It was the main tool used in the collection of the preliminary field activities or data. It was also relied upon for in-depth information from certain individuals (chiefs, kingmakers and the DCE) of the area that have the requisite knowledge in the succession process of the Mandari skin as well as the interventions so far in the issue. The basic type of interview that was adopted is the key informant interview which was aided with the use of an interview guide.

##### **3.5.1.1 Key informant interview**

Key informants who were interviewed were; the chief, sub-chiefs, linguist, elders and leaders of any identifiable communicative grouping in the traditional area.





They were chosen because they were considered by virtue of their positions to be well versed in certain aspects of the history, cultural, political and social life of the Gonjas and specifically the Mandari skin.

### 3.5.1.2 Semi-Structured Interview

The semi-structured interview —follow a form of interview schedule with suggested themes, but there is scope for the interviewees to develop their responses. (Willis, 2006:144). This wasn't an interview schedule in the strict form of the term, but was more like the researchers explanation of the interview guide as a brief list of areas used in unstructured interviews that somewhat can be properly arranged for a semi-structured interview. The rationale behind using this approach of interview is that, while the research has its general thematic areas, respondents may have ideas that can enrich the study. This also encouraged local control in line with the underlying focus of this study. More so, this form of interview created room for diversified opinions and thus promote objectivity and eliminate bias as well as ensuring validity and reliability. Aside its appropriateness in an oral society<sup>13</sup>, and the opportunities for further probing, the interview is adopted for other reasons. According to Sarantakos (2005), the interview has advantages which include: flexibility, correcting misunderstanding, and opportunities for observation. First, its flexibility makes it suitable in a traditional setting where supposedly formal meetings are conducted in an environment that is quite personal. Second, misunderstanding resulting from translation of questions and responses can be clarified. And third, it can be

<sup>13</sup> A society where most of its history is told orally by people.



combined with another method - observation – which is also proposed for this study (Yussif, 2013).

### 3.6 Questionnaire

Both open-ended and close-ended questionnaires were used for the sampled youth of the traditional area. This was to supplement the data collected through the interview conducted on the kingmakers and the chiefs as well as the district chief executive. The open-ended questions allowed for flexibility in the answering of the questions hence allowing for additional information to be added which the researcher did not actually expect to eliminate researcher bias and thus to promote reliability and validity of the research.

### 3.7 Observation

This is a method of data collection whereby the field worker goes to live and to participate in the daily activities of the people he is studying and starts to observe the situation in order to find answers to his research questions. He participates in some of the activities of the people which will allow him to get a relevant insight into his problem (Twumasi, 2001). Basically, he gets to know his respondents. A key reason for employing observation is the possible variation in what people really do and what they would report (Bryman, 2008; Sarantakos, 2005; Laws, 2003). It is therefore viewed as a background technique to inform the direction of interviews. This method of data collection is categorized into two – the participant and non-participant observation. In the participant observation, the researcher observed the succession process of the area during enskinment of new chiefs (not necessarily the Mandari skin) and thus, had a fair view of the procedure which





enabled him to objectively describe the process. Secondly the researcher observed some of the traditional rites and rituals performed, to be able to state categorically how succession is done which informed the study.

Fortunately, the researcher was privileged to have observed the process of the installation of Kachirasewura of the Bole traditional area. This observation was done from the consultation to the pronouncement of the chief and then to the coronation ceremony. The appointment of chiefs in the Bole traditional area is done usually on Monday or Friday. Vacancies are normally announced on Mondays and then all chiefs in the area gather at the Bolewura's palace on Fridays to pay their respect to him. After that, the chief (Bolewura) through his linguist will appoint his preferred candidate for the vacancy. If all are in support of the pronouncement, all the chiefs will greet the chief and the candidate will present cola and drink in acceptance of the appointment. Before this day, however, the candidate upon being notified of a vacancy, will present cola and drink to the Bolewura stating his interest in the title and will meet his family head and do same. After that, a date will be set aside for the traditional rites to be performed in the forecourt of the Bolewura's palace. On one occasion the researcher presented the drinks on behalf of the chief appointed (Kachirasewura) since he was not around and the researcher was privileged to be the first son of the candidate.

### **3.7.1 Non – participant Observation**

Another form of observation is the non-participant observation where the observer does not participate in the activities being observed (Sarantakos, 2005). The culture of Gonjaland, and for that matter the people of Bole, does not reject people observing the activities of the succession process, but not all individuals are given

the mandate to actively participate in all the processes. It is because of this that the researcher had to use the non-participant method to juxtapose it with what is explained for the Mandari skin to ascertain the differences emanating from the two processes or better still the similarities involved. The researcher critically watched and asked questions relating to issues he did not understand. At the end of the day, all the rituals observed were the same as that explained for the Mandari succession and thus there were no differences involved.



## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter centres on the research respondents and participants who were captured through interviews and questionnaires as well as observation. This chapter will unearth the genesis of the Mandari succession crises and highlight some of the interventions made so far and the recommendations for resolving the issue. The presentation would be done in a narrative form since all the findings are perceptions of the respondents.

### 4.1 Socio Demographic Characteristics of respondents

The questionnaires and interview guides consisting of both closed and open-ended questions were administered in Bole, Mandari and Damongo. In all, 22 respondents were covered in the three towns on the basis of their knowledge and involvement on the succession issue at hand.

#### 4.1.1 Gates of Respondents

The gate of the respondent plays a lot in the needs, fears and interest of the respondent. Since this is an intra-gate disagreement (Safope) and directly connected to the Jagape gate, the two gates provided more respondents than the third gate (Denkeripe). Denkeripe is considered an observing gate owing to the fact that they do not actively play any role in the disagreement, but from the responses provided by some of the respondents from the gate, they are divided among the two gates. The Table below depicts the number of respondents per gate.



**Table 1 Gates of Respondents**

Gate of respondents	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Jagape</b>	7	31.8
<b>Safope</b>	7	31.8
<b>Denkeripe</b>	4	18.2
<b>Neutral</b>	4	18.2
<b>Total</b>	22	100.0

*Source: Field survey*

The Registrar of the Gonja Traditional Council, the linguist of the Bolewura, the District Chief Executive and the Safalba chief (who is to receive the installed chief as a symbol of acceptance by the village) did not belong to any of the gates in the Bole traditional area. Hence, they were captured as ‘neutral’ people. In all 31.8% of the respondents were from both Jagape and Safope (the two gates having issues with each other in the Bole traditional area) and only 18.2% were from Denkeripe.

#### **4.1.2 Occupation of Respondents**

It is believed that a person’s source of income and finances are directly proportional to his ability to be influenced by material things or otherwise. The occupation of a chief determines his ability to devote time and resources in



support of the title he has acquired. The various occupations were categorized into civil servants (teaching, banking, etc.), farming, retired, student and trading.

**Table 2 Occupation of Respondents**

<b>Occupation of respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Civil Servant</b>	6	27.3
<b>Farmer</b>	7	31.8
<b>Retired</b>	7	31.8
<b>Student</b>	1	4.5
<b>Trading</b>	1	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field survey

Almost all the chiefs (over 70%) who were contacted as respondents were retired civil servants and thus do not do any active work. While 30% of them are still engaged in farming for their livelihoods and as well depend on royalties coming in from their various villages.

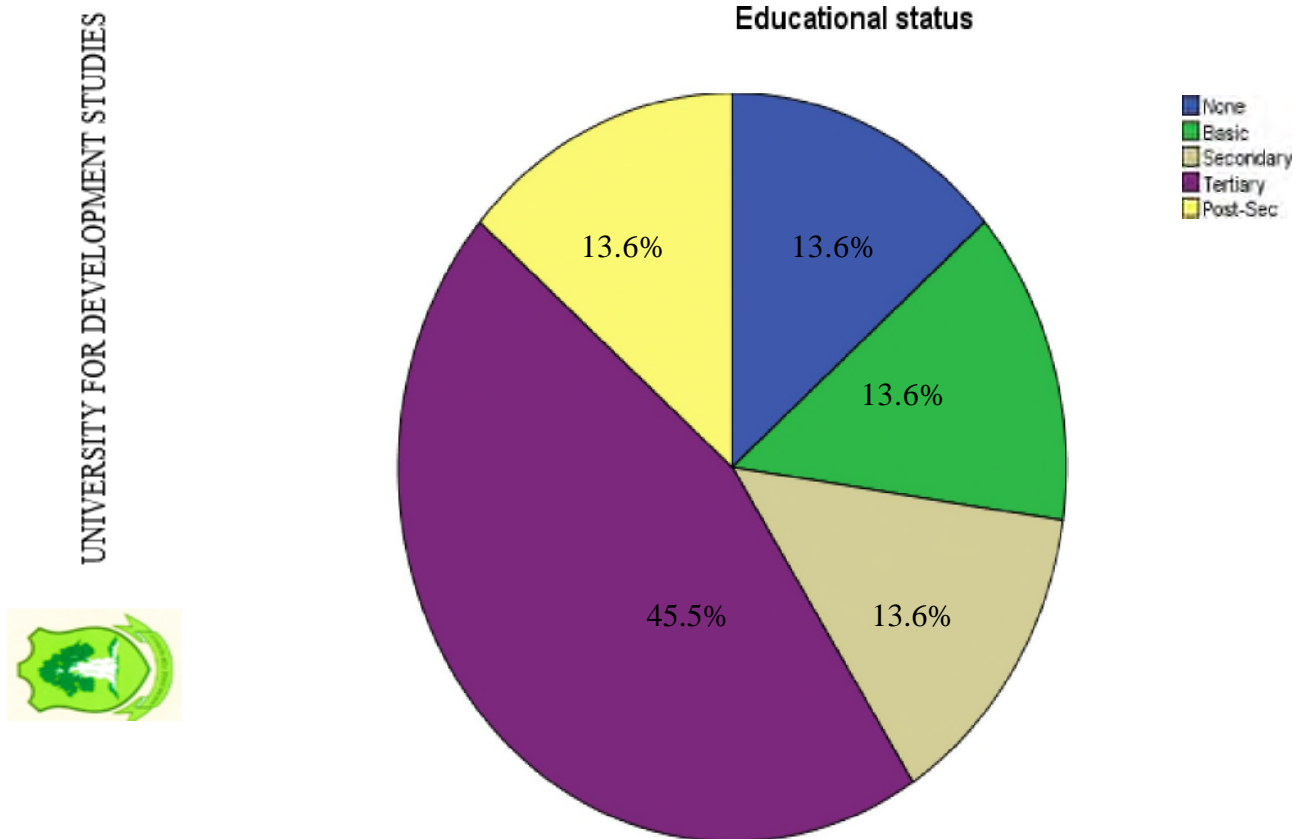
#### **4.1.3 Educational Status of respondents**

Formal education is a major factor that influences people's attitudes, behaviours and worldview. This goes a long way to motivate their interest, needs and position on issues of disagreements concerning chieftaincy and other related issues. These disagreements could be fueled or otherwise depending on the level of formal education attained by the stakeholders in this conflict situation. The reason is that



the attainment of some level of education by the chiefs has initiated them into logical rational thinking based on data and devoid of superstition. Therefore, they suggested the modern methods of resolving the disagreement instead of the traditional means which was the last resort. This has made almost any disagreement that erupts after the Mandari disagreement to be referred to the Regional House of Chiefs by the disputing parties.

**Figure 5 Educational attainment of respondents**



*Source: Field survey*

Forty-five and half per cent (45.5%) of the total respondents in the study have attained tertiary educational status. This is followed by all the other respondents attaining various levels in formal education. The tertiary educational status of the



[www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh)  
respondents is high and this ensured their logical reflection on the questions before reacting to them. This reduced the rate at which the researcher explained the questions to the chiefs. Chiefs who are educated preferred the questionnaires since they could read and write and this invariably hastened the data collection process. This implies that the research participants are affected by foreign and local attitudes and possibly assessed the implication of their responses.

#### **4.1.4 Age distribution of respondents**

The ages of respondents were grouped into three different categories to give a fair view of the situation depending on age. So far as culture and tradition is concerned, the aged are considered as the custodians of traditions and culture. The youth are perceived to be the agents of destruction in this situation, but then, they also play a greater role in maintaining and promoting peace and unity contrary to how others perceive them. It is the youth that almost raised guns against each other at the initial stage where the chiefs were both moved to Mandari, hence enabling them to be perceived as such. The ages of respondents are categorized into; youth (20-39), middle age (40-59) and aged (60+). This is to ensure that the divergent views of the various age categories in the chieftaincy institution and social life are well expressed.

**Table 3 Age distribution of respondents**

Age of respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-39	5	22.7
40-59	5	22.7
60+	12	54.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field survey

It can be observed from Table 3, that the aged (60+) dominated with a total of 54.5 per cent (54.5%). This is because most of the chiefs are retired civil servants. The youth were deliberately contacted to solicit their views on the issues and how to allay their fears and incorporate their opinions in the decision making process. They formed 22.7% of the total population of respondents. Additionally, 22.7% of the total respondents were between the ages brackets of 40-59.

#### **4.1.5 Marital status of respondents**

Almost all respondents were married (90.9%). Only 4.5% of the respondents were not married and the same percentage widowed. This level of marriage in a patrilineal society showed that there were more births among couples in the community since each respondent has not less than 3 children and the tendency of giving birth to young princes was higher, which invariably has increased the number of potential chiefs in the community. This in effect will increase the chances of them fighting for power and chieftaincy titles. Evidently, almost every indigene of the traditional area who does not belong to the Sakpare group belongs to one of the three gates or even two of the gates. Marriage in Bole is usually contracted by





relations; marrying your aunt's daughter or uncle's daughter. This phenomenon has given almost all the people to have a link with the royal lineage either matrilineal or patrilineal.

**Table 4 Marital Status of respondents**

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	20	90.9
Single	1	4.5
Widowed	1	4.5
Total	22	100.0

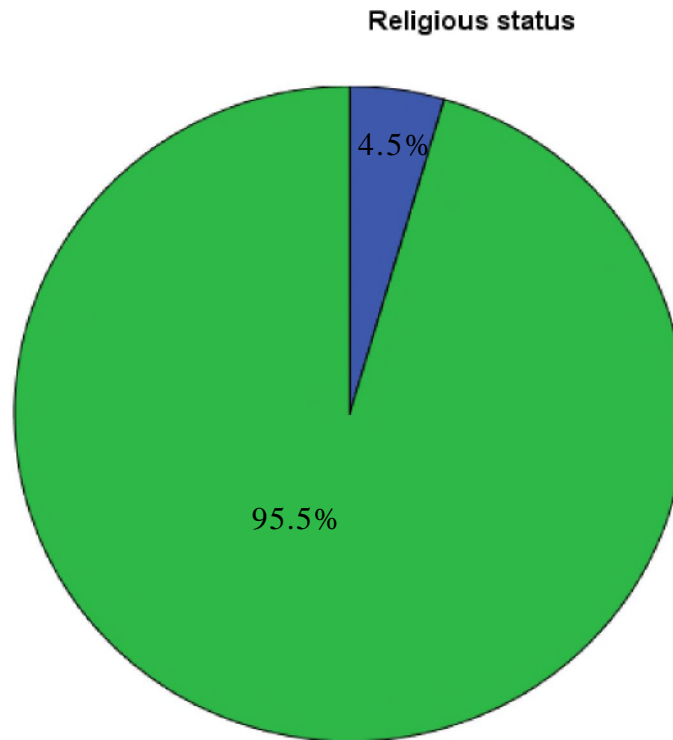
Source: Field Survey

#### **4.1.6 Religious affiliation of respondents**

Religion has an influence on the attitude's, perceptions and behaviour patterns of individuals and these have a reflection on the choices they make regarding matters that are customary in nature. The interview guide and questionnaire captured three main religious groups since they are the commonest in the area and at least every individual practices one or two of these religions (Christianity, Islam and Traditionalism). Additionally, the fact that some people may decide not to belong to any of these, informed a fourth component (None) added to cater for that.



**Figure 6 Religious affiliation of Respondents**



Source: Field survey

From the survey, 21 of the respondents were Muslims representing 95.5% of the total respondents and 1 person representing 4.5% was a Christian. This shows that a large number of people in the community basically from the royal lineage were Muslims.

#### **4.2 Genesis of the Mandari Succession Crises in Bole**

Before we can assess the causes and other issues relating to the Mandari disagreement, it is appropriate to take a historical overview of the situation so far. This will allow us to critically relate the causes and interventions so far to the general conflict mediation process. As per oral narration by the PRO of the





Gonjaland Youth Association<sup>14</sup> [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) and the Mankumawura (Kingmaker) of the Bole traditional area, the current Mandari Chieftaincy struggle is an intra-dynastic struggle that centers on competition for the skin of Mandari which became vacant after the demise in February 2013 of the late Bolewura Seidu Amankwah Gbeadesse II, and the subsequent enskinment in March 2013, of the current Bolewura; Mahama Awuladesse Pontoprung II, who was then the Mandariwura. For now as stated earlier, succession to the Bole skin is rotational<sup>15</sup> among the three royal gates of the Bole traditional area (Denkeripe, Safope and Jagape).

The late Bolewura Seidu Amankwah Gbeadesse II was from the Denkeripe gate and was succeeded by Bolewura Mahama Awuladesse Pontoprung II from Jagape Gate. In a narration unanimously agreed to by some of the chiefs of the traditional area, the custom demanded, the Safope Gate to be next to occupy Mandari, since succession to the Mandari skin is in turns between these three gates of the traditional area. For now, the other two gates have taken their turn except the Safope gate. The Safope Gate of Bole whose turn it was to select a new Mandariwura after Bolewura Mahama Awuladesse Pontoprung II (from Jagape gate) vacated the Mandari skin and moved to Bole could not do so after about eight indoor meetings and so sparked much controversy within the gate. The gate had four qualified candidates, known as grandfathers<sup>16</sup>: one of who should have

<sup>14</sup> The Gonjaland Youth Association is a nationwide association of all people from Gonjaland that sees to the peaceful co-existence of the people in the Gonja territories (land) and thus mediates in matters of disagreements on developmental issues. This association considers all the tribes in the land as a part of the association since the land is basically occupied by a lot of tribes and not only the Gonjas.

<sup>15</sup> This is done in succession among the three gates. That is to say if the first gate leaves Mandari to Bole, the second enskin a Mandariwura in waiting for the vacancy of the Bole skin, should the Bole skin become vacant, third gate will now move to Mandari whilst the second shifts to Bole in that manner.

<sup>16</sup> Grandfathers in Gonja chieftaincy refers to the eldest person in the family in relation to the family hierarchy. In this regard, there is no restriction as to who becomes a chief if nominated to a



been selected but three expressed interest. Later, almost all the recognised sub-chiefs of the gate, numbering about ten subtly and openly expressed interest and so the Gate could not settle on anyone. In a further narration by the Mankumawura, the Bolewura Mahama Awuladese Pontoprang II was therefore left with the authority and in accordance with the traditions and practice of Bole to help select a Mandariwura for the Safope gate. He therefore invited the elders of the gate on two different occasions for a discussion on the stalemate but there was no solution. The Safope gate elders then gave the Bolewura the go ahead to select someone from among them as the next Mandariwura.

#### 4.2.1 Yagbonwura's Intervention

In an interview with the PRO of the Gonjaland Youth Association (GLYA), he said that, before the Bolewura could select a Mandariwura from the Safope gate, the Yagbonwura Sulemana Jakpa Tuntumba Boresa I, king and overlord of the Gonja Kingdom invited the Bolewura to his Palace to get firsthand information on the issue and to advise him on what he the Bolewura needed to do. This event witnessed hundreds of Chiefs and royals accompanying the Bolewura to the palace of the Yagbonwura in Damongo. It was however speculated that some elders of the Safope gate secretly visited the Yagbonwura to complain that the person the Bolewura was bent on giving the Mandari Skin was a —grandson<sup>17</sup>. The Yagbonwura directed the Bolewura to give the Safope gate another chance to

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particular skin by the Bolewura. Any chief or person nominated to occupy the Kiape skin of the Bole traditional area automatically becomes the family head of the Jaga gate and thus the final authority in family issues of that gate.

<sup>17</sup> Grandson in the context of the Bole traditional area is a person from the family whose rank and level is determined by his relation to the elders of the family. Irrespective of the age of the person, his relation to the elders in the family makes him a grandson, son, father or a grandfather. This is to say that as to the family lineage, children of the founders were the sons who later became fathers after the demise of their fathers and later to grandfathers. The trend continues as such thereby making it possible for people to change status depending on the number of elders who are still surviving in the family.



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 choose someone from among themselves and if for the last time they were not able to do so then he the Bolewura should select the "appropriate elderly person of the "Safope Gate" as the next Mandariwura and that the skin should not be given to a "grandson". Upon the return of the Bolewura to his palace, he met with the Safope Gate royals and gave them a last chance to settle on someone by Friday 19th April, 2013. Unfortunately, the royals of the Safope gate told the Bolewura they had not been able to settle on anybody and the situation did not change after another bout of arguments at the Bolewura's Palace.

#### **4.2.2 Nomination of Mandariwura by the Bolewura**

It was narrated by 2 of the kingmakers (Mankumawura and Nsuwawura) of the Bole traditional area that the sub-chiefs and royals of the Safope gate gathered at the Bolewura's Palace on the 19th of April, 2013 for the nomination of a substantive chief to occupy the skin. The Bolewura put the question to them (the Safope elders), as to whether they were finally able to select someone within their gate for his consideration?

There was another round of argument among the elders of the Safope gate. While some said "Yes" others said "No" resulting in another bout of confusion at the Bolewura's Palace. The Bolewura therefore single handedly nominated a sub-Chief from among the members of the gate, Bugewura Issahaku Abdulai Kant as the new Mandariwura without any objection from anybody from the Gate. Indeed, it was reported by a number (90%) of the respondents that many of the sub-chiefs and royals of the Safope Gate as tradition demanded bowed in homage to the Mandariwura-elect at the Palace signifying their acceptance of the Bolewura's



decision. The Mandariwura-elect performed all the customary rites required of him at the Bolewura's Palace (that is presentation of kola and drinks) which were accepted without any protest and later chose his appellation as Mandariwura "Kotoge feeso" (germinating guinea corn).

#### 4.2.3 Yagbonwura's Second Intervention

As custom demands, the overlord of Gonjaland, the Yagbonwura tried to intervene again for the second time. But then it is said by some of the respondents that the day before the Bolewura nominated the Mandariwura, a section of the Safope Gate had rushed to the Yagbonwura at Damongo to lay a complaint that the person the Bolewura wanted to nominate (Bugewura Issakaku Kant) according to their intelligence was not the rightful person because he is a "grandson" by their hierarchy. They said there are "grandfathers" and "fathers" who under normal circumstances should be the first to be considered before a "grandson" and that as far as they knew, he the Yagbonwura had directed that an "appropriate elderly person of the Safope Gate" that is either a "father" or "son" be nominated but not a "grandson" (see footnote 17).

It was further explained by the Registrar of the Gonja traditional council that, the Yagbonwura therefore called the Bolewura on phone but the Bolewura told the Yagbonwura he Yagbonwura has the authority over the Bole Skin which he has given to him (Bolewura), but he the Bolewura also has authority to nominate a Mandariwura under the circumstances at hand. Later the Yagbonwura on hearing that the Mandariwura elect was about to be enskined dispatched an agent to Bole with a letter to the Bolewura and the Bole District Security Council that the



enskinment of Bugewura Issahaku Abdulai Kant as Mandariwura be stopped until further notice.

By the time the Yagbonwura's agent and letter got to Bole on the morning of 10th May, 2013, Mandariwura Issahaku Kant had been enskinned, outdoored and carried shoulder high as Gonja custom demands at the forecourt of the Bolewura's Palace in Bole signifying he was the new Mandariwura. However, 4 respondents making 57% from the Safope gate argue that the laid down procedure in enskinning a Mandariwura was not followed. The Yagbonwura therefore summoned the Bolewura to his Palace but the Bolewura said he was sick and would therefore not be able to visit Damongo. The Bolewura made the Mankumawura, (his traditional advisor) to represent him on the date but the Yagbonwura said his message was meant for the Bolewura and so he needed the Bolewura himself.

#### **4.2.4 Yagbonwura's Meeting with Bolewura**

Upon recovery, the Bolewura on Friday 31st May, 2013 decided to respond to the call of the Yagbonwura. There was a meeting between the Yagbonwura on one hand and the Bolewura and Royals from the Safope gate of Bole on the other hand. The Yagbonwura informed all gathered that the case could not be discussed because many of the members of the Gonja Traditional Council were not present since he had not been given advance notice of the Bolewura's coming. He told the Bolewura and his elders to come back to his Palace on Friday 7th June 2013, by which time he would invite all the members of the Gonja Traditional Council to sit on the issue so as to settle on a consensus devoid of bias and favouritism.

#### **4.2.5 Bolewura Fined**

The Registrar of the Bole traditional council-Wasipewura Bukari Amadu popularly known as 'Ndapewura' from the Jagape gate in an interview narrated that, on Friday 7th June 2013, all the royals of Bole gathered at the Yagbonwura's Palace in Damongo. After deliberations on the issue, the Yagbonwura fined the Bolewura two cows and one thousand Ghana cedis. The ruling was that the Bolewura had defied his authority. The Yagbonwura informed all gathered at the palace that he had —stamped his feet on the Mandari skin or in other words suspended any action on the Mandari skin because the Bolewura disobeyed his order in choosing someone for the Mandari Skin.

#### **4.2.6 Issahaku Abdulai Kant moves to Mandari**

The Mandariwura chosen by the Bolewura moved to Mandari on Monday 16th September, 2013. It is believed his action was meant to pre-empt a rumour that the Yagbonwura had notified another person, Nahariwura Bukari Abudu, to prepare to be enskinned as Mandariwura. On this day, there were threats of war by some royals with the explanation that the Yagbonwura had suspended all actions on the Mandari skin. This created tension in Bole as it was said some people went to block the road from Bole to Mandari. But this did not stop the Bolewura's chosen Mandariwura from entering Mandari town. Indeed, he was welcomed and accepted by the people of Mandari. He was later introduced to the elders and landowners of Mandari by the chief of the 'Safalba' people. This angered the Yagbonwura, who then sent a message summoning all those involved in the Mandari chieftaincy issues in Bole on Friday, 20th September, 2013 for his final judgment on the Chieftaincy dispute.





#### **4.2.7 Yagbonwura Nominates a Mandariwura**

The Registrar of the Gonja Traditional Council further narrates that the Yagbonwura adjudicated the Mandari chieftaincy disagreement of the Bole Traditional Area on Friday, 20th September, 2013 at the forecourt of his palace. He added that the Yagbonwura scolded the Bolewura for insubordination and disrespect for the chieftaincy institution, suspended him (Bolewura) for a period of six months, and then annulled the Bolewura's selection of Issahaku Kant as Mandariwura. He then chose Nahariwura Bukari Abudu also from the Safope gate as the new Mandariwura. The Yagbonwura in addition ordered the Mankumawura, Somawura and the Chief Imam of Bole to take care of Bole for the period of the Bolewura's suspension.

#### **4.3 Aftermath of Yagbonwura's Decision on the Mandari Skin**

The decision of the Yagbonwura literally meant there were two chiefs for Mandari, one recognised by the Bolewura and the other recognised by the Yagbonwura respectively. There was a big debate and argument over the Yagbonwura's decision with all sorts of traditional interpretations in the Bole traditional area. Interestingly, in an interview with chief Bandimawura of the Bole traditional area, he made reference to a similar situation that almost happened somewhere in the late 1970's and added that the then Yagbonwura had his way in getting his candidate, but through lobbying for the candidate from the Bolewura (Bolewura Braimah Jaga) also from the Jaga gate. Some argued that the Yagbonwura by custom and tradition of Gonjaland, does not nominate or enskin a Mandariwura, and that it is only the Bolewura who can nominate and enskin a Mandariwura. Some of the respondents argued further that, when any gate fails by





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consensus to get a candidate to fill the Mandari skin, they refer it to the Bolewura who has the prerogative to nominate somebody from that gate to occupy the skin and that was exactly what the Bolewura did by nominating Abdulai Issahaku Kant. They again added that, traditionally, the Yagbonwura has no say in who becomes Mandariwura, he can only suggest to the Bolewura as the overlord of the Gonja Kingdom upon the Bolewura involving him. Eight out of the twelve chiefs interviewed therefore believe the decision of the Bolewura was final and superseded that of the Yagbonwura.

This is because they think the Bolewura is the divisional chief of the Bole Traditional Area and has the right by tradition to nominate and install chiefs within his jurisdiction. Contrary to this, some also argue that the Yagbonwura has the power to appoint and dismiss both the Bolewura and any chief under the Bolewura, the reason being that, he (Yagbonwura) is the overlord and King and not subservient to any Chief in Gonjaland. They further argue that the Yagbonwura is the life President of the Gonja Traditional Council and it is this permanent, unparalleled and unequalled trinity of traditional authority and leadership that makes the Yagbonwura unique in the context of the institution of Gonjaland chieftaincy. This did not go down well with the Bolewura's nominee and so he resorted to legal means to get what he thought was rightly his.

There was then a twist to the situation for Issahaku Kant since the Yagbonwura was elected unanimously by the Regional House of Chiefs as the President of the house. With this, he doubled as the President of the Regional House of Chiefs and the President of the Gonja Traditional Council. This actually did not go down well with a youth group called the Concerned Youth of Gonjaland. Hence, they wrote a



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petition to the Regional House of Chiefs against his election and thus entreating the house to reconsider their choice of president for the house since they did not have confidence in the administration of the Yagbonwura in Gonjaland let alone the whole region.

#### **4.4 The Legal Battle**

##### **4.4.1 Issahaku Abdulai Kant Petitions the Judicial Committee of the Regional House of Chiefs**

All around the country, there are cases where the enstoolment or enskinment of an unpopular chief, against the expressed loyalties of the majority of the people, has brought development to a standstill, and has led to instability and even loss of life and property (Rawlings, 1990). Irrespective of the customary and traditional way of approaching disagreements in the chieftaincy institution, people largely resort to the western ways of addressing these disagreements. It is in view of this that the Regional House of Chiefs is the first point of call in situations like that.

On the 24th of September 2013, exactly two days after the Yagbonwura reversed the Bolewura's decision, Issahaku Abdulai Kant (the Bolewura's nominee) petitioned the Judicial Committee of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs stating that he is the legitimate Mandariwura because the —Safope Gate met several times and failed to get a candidate whereupon it fell onto the Bolewura under the circumstance and in line with time tested Gonja tradition and practice to choose the candidate of his own choice.¶

He therefore sought the following reliefs:

- a. Declaration that Bolewura is the sole and legitimate Chief by Gonja custom to enskin Mandariwura.*

- b. *Declaration that Yagbonwura by Gonja custom does not enskin Mandariwura.*
- c. *Declaration that the Petitioner Abdulai Issahaku is the legitimate Chief of Mandari as he was nominated and enskined by Bolewura in accordance with Gonja custom and practice.*
- d. *Declaration that the purported nomination and enskinment of 2nd Respondent (Alhaji Bukari Nahariwura) as Mandariwura by Yagbonwura is null and void.*
- e. *An order of injunction restraining 2nd Respondent (Alhaji Bukari Nahariwura) from holding himself out as Mandariwura and performing any duty relating to the Mandari skin.*
- f. *An order on injunction restraining 1st Defendant (Yagbonwura Tuntumba Boresa I) from interfering in the nomination and enskinment of divisional Chiefs in the Bole Traditional Area.*

Source: Regional House of Chiefs, Tamale.

Find the full petition in Appendix G.



#### **4.4.2 Bukari Abudu Replies Abdulai Kant's Petition**

Bukari Abudu replied to the petition of Abdulai Kant and among other issues said:

- a. *The 1930 Constitution of the Gonja Kingdom gave Yagbonwura the prerogative right to appoint (enskin) chiefs in the Bole Traditional Area, including Mandariwura, Wulasiwura and Jintilpewura.*
- b. *The Bolewura has no prerogative to nominate somebody from the Safope Gate to occupy the Bole skin because the Bolewura Pontonprong is not from the gate and*



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therefore has no capacity to nominate a candidate for members of the Safope Gate.

- c. *There is duty imposed on the Bolewura under Gonja custom to have immediately referred the Bole Chieftaincy matter to the overlord of Gonjaland for resolution but the Bolewura failed and acted without authority.*
- d. *Every role played by the Bolewura in the nomination and enskinment of 1<sup>st</sup> petitioner (Mandariwura Issahaku Kant) and whatever activity that accompanied the event is of no legal effect as same is null and void.*
- e. *The 1<sup>st</sup> respondent (Sulemana Jakpa Tuntumba Boresa I) has the authority under the Gonja constitution and customary law to enskin 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent (Mandariwura Abudu) as Mandariwura.*
- f. *The people of Mandari are aware of the customary law and practice of Gonjaland and so they are firmly behind the 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent (Mandariwura Bukari Abudu) whom they recognize as the only chief.*
- g. *The 1<sup>st</sup> respondent (Sulemana Jakpa Tuntumba Boresa I) contends that it is wrong in law for the respondents (Mandariwura Kant and co.) to sue him for exercising and performing his legitimate functions as the overlord of Gonjaland in the enskinment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent (Mandariwura Bukari Abudu) as Mandari Chief.*

The 1930 constitution with which reference is made by Bukari Abudu is attached in appendix G. Only portions are captured.

The case at the time this thesis was compiled is still pending at the Regional House of Chiefs even though the following intervention was made. During the compilation of this thesis for final submission, the unfortunate event happened, on



the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2017 the Bolewura Mahama Pontonprong II passed on at the [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) Korle-bu Teaching hospital in Accra. This results to some people becoming tensed since they anticipate violent clashes in the area between the two claimants to the Mandari skin.

In addressing this issue, the Northern Regional minister, Hon. Salifu Sa-eed, in his visit to the area during the three day funeral rites of the late Bolewura, warned the two parties who are claimants to the skin to tread cautiously since anyone who tries to spark violence will be dealt with. He adds that the government is particularly aware of the litigations on the Bole skin and thus has deployed security personnel to the area to beef up the security of the area.

#### **4.5 The President's Intervention**

##### **4.5.1 Damongo - Mole Summit**

In the midst of these controversies, President John Dramani Mahama, a Gonja from Bole, summoned a meeting between the Yagbonwura and the Bolewura at Mole near Damongo to find a solution to the Bole Chieftaincy Dispute. Some terms and agreements reached as reported by the secretary of the Bolewura Awuladese Pontonprong II were:

1. *The Yagbonwura agreed to lift the suspension on the Bolewura as a first step and a good gesture to lead to other resolutions.*
2. *The Yagbonwura agreed to write another letter or proclamation to effect the end of the suspension of the Bolewura and distribute it to the President and every office in Ghana, lifting the suspension of the Bolewura immediately and unconditionally.*

3. *The Yagbonwura agreed to send forward the necessary documentation to Gazette the Bolewura.*
4. *The Yagbonwura agreed to desist and cease from interfering in the traditionally mandated obligations and choices of the Bolewura.*
5. *The Yagbonwura agreed to relinquish his claim that, he has the powers and duty to enskin a Mandariwura and for that matter any sub-chief in the Bole Traditional Area.*
6. *The Yagbonwura agreed and promised to commit all these agreements into writing, hand deliver the complete agreement to the Bolewura at the Yagbonwura's Palace in Damongo personally, and send out copies to the President and all essential and appropriate offices in Ghana.*  
*This agreement will be distributed to all offices that Yagbonwura sent notices of the suspension of the Bolewura earlier.*

Source: PRO Gonjaland Youth Association.

#### **4.5.2 Aftermath of the Damongo - Mole Summit**

It was alleged (I did not get evidence to this allegation after verifying from the Registrar of the Gonjaland Traditional Council. He declined to speak on that issue.) that the Yagbonwura refused to implement the six-point agreement he reached with the President, John Mahama, and went ahead to ask the Bolewura to allow Bukari Abudu be the legitimate chief of Mandari. The Bolewura on the other hand was accused by the group secretary of the Safope youth (Prince Seidu Abudu) of turning the Bole Traditional Area of the Gonja Kingdom into a semi-autonomous one.





He enskinned all vacant skins including Buge which was occupied by his Mandariwura elect, Issahaku Abdulai Kant. The Bolewura further was conspicuously missing at the Gonja Traditional Council Meeting at Kong in the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba District from the 9th to 10th January 2014. He was also not present at the Yagbon Damba 2014 from 19th to 21st January 2014 at Damongo which event is used by all divisional chiefs to pay homage and to renew their allegiance to the Yagbonwura as the overlord of the Gonja Kingdom.

Nothing has changed since the Mole summit; Issahaku Abdulai Kant's petition against the Yabonwura and his nominee, Bukari Abudu, is still pending before the Judicial Committee of the Regional House of Chiefs, and the injunction on the Mandari chieftaincy dispute by the House of Chiefs is still in force.

#### **4.6 Bukari Abudu moves to Mandari**

It is again reported by the PRO of the Gonjaland Youth Association that Bukari Abudu the Yagbonwura's nominee started his enskinment process on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013 immediately he returned to Bole after Yagbonwura's judgment on the Mandari skin. By the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2013, two days after Yagbonwura's verdict, he had concluded everything. There were speculations that he could never move to Mandari since Issahaku Abdulai Kant had already moved to Mandari and had been accepted by the people. It was again reported by the Safalba chief that traditional drinks and kola nuts which were sent to Mandari as demanded by custom, were rejected by the people in Mandari indicating their acceptance of Abdulai Issahaku Kant as Mandariwura. However, reports from some of the chiefs who were respondents stated that on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2014, the Yagbonwura's Mandariwura Bukari Abudu moved to Mandari amidst tension in





the area confirming what the PRO reported. Before he went there, reports were that he and his supporters would be stopped by the Bolewura and those supporting Issahaku Abdulai Kant because, the Bolewura as divisional chief did not sanction his movement to Mandari and that there was an order of injunction at the Judicial Committee of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs restraining him, Bukari Abudu from holding himself as Mandariwura, and performing any duty relating to the Mandari skin. But this did not change anything. The intervention of the Security agencies forestalled any trouble since they took guard in between the factions around the palace in Mandari.

After a flurry of talks between the Bole District Security Council and the factions, it was decided that both claimants (Bukari Abudu and the Issahaku Abdulai Kant) leave Mandari and stay in Bole till further notice. Bukari Abudu therefore left Mandari under security but warned that he would move there any day Issahaku Abdulai Kant goes there.

Two days later, the two claimants and the Bolewura were invited by the Northern Regional Police Command but the Bolewura and Issahaku Abdulai Kant could not make it to Tamale. Bukari Abudu however went to Tamale and assured the Police command that, he and his supporters were peaceful people and would continue to maintain the peace in Bole.

#### **4.7 Modes of Chieftaincy Succession to Mandari**

Succession to any skin in Gonjaland (including the Bole traditional area) is either by having matrilineal or patrilineal ties with the royal families in the traditional area. But specifically to the Mandari skin, it was reported by 19 of the respondents representing (86.4%) that, succession is purely patrilineal and thus anyone with



only maternal ties with the families is disqualified. However, they (respondents) again added that, some chieftaincy titles are the preserve of people with only maternal ties with the royal families. These preserved titles can be equally competed for by people with paternal ties with the royal families, but in rare cases (example is the Sawla chieftaincy title).

Secondly, for one to ascend to the Mandari skin, one must be of sound mind and be free from any deformity. Any deformity outrightly disqualifies one from becoming a Mandariwura irrespective of how the deformity happened.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, 40% of the respondents add that a candidate vying for the Mandari skin should not be a convict or ex-convict. Anyone who is convicted for any crime either minor or major which is known in the public domain is not qualified to become a Mandariwura.

In the event that the individual is rightly qualified through satisfying these traditional and customary demands, he is duly eligible to lobby from the head of the family he belongs to. This is narrated by the secretary to the Bolewura (Ndapewura Amadu). He adds that, the said individual can equally lobby with the Bolewura privately to register his interest in the title that has become vacant. By so doing, the Bolewura is made aware of those interested in the title before the appropriate family or gate goes to lobby the Bolewura for what rightly belongs to them. It is at this point that the family head will present a candidate before the Bolewura for his acceptance and the necessary customary rites performed.

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<sup>18</sup> This custom disqualified Mandariwura Kipo of Jagape from becoming a Bolewura and thus unanimously removed by the people of the gate which is found in the list of Mandariwura's from 1930 in appendix A



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 It is argued that this process is sometimes not followed. The respondents add that in certain situations, some individuals rather lobby the overlord of Gonja for the title, and the overlord will then lobby the Bolewura for the title for the said individual. Where the interest of the Bolewura conflicts with that of the candidate the Yagbonwura is lobbying for, then it will result in either a disagreement or the two parties consulting each other to appropriately nominate a better candidate. In effect, this Mandari succession disagreement was a result of both parties having different candidates and failing to come to consensus on one of the candidates. It was unanimously reported that this disagreement is a novelty in the Bole traditional area and thus threatens the long lasting unity and togetherness that has existed in the area. This affirms the argument posed by Brukum (2006) that, in Northern Ghana and elsewhere, several succession disputes have dented the image of the chieftaincy institution.

#### **4.8 Different Opinions on the Dispute**

From my interactions with some of the respondents, 14 of them summing up to 63% think the interference of the Yagbonwura was the reason for the disagreement in the Mandari skin. On the contrary, 8 of the respondents making 37% think otherwise. Those in favour of the Bolewura's decision argue that the Bolewura is the custodian of the Bole skins and as per customary law and order, he is mandated to nominate and enskin a chief in the traditional area at the forecourt of his palace. In the event that the Yagbonwura is to interfere, he can do so only by lobbying the Bolewura secretly at his own convenience. The linguist of the Bolewura narrated in support of this argument that, somewhere in the 70's, the then Yagbonwura did same by lobbying the then Bolewura who was also from the

Jagape gate to get the Mandari title for his candidate. This was later revealed after the coronation where some parties protested and forwarded the case to the Yagbonwura who sided with the Bolewura knowing well the candidate was his choice not that of the Bolewura. He adds that the current Yagbonwura should have followed suit.

In contrast to this argument, those respondents in favour of the Yagbonwura also argue that, since by the 1930 Constitution of Gonja, the Yagbonwura can nominate a Mandariwura, the Bolewura should have conferred with the Yagbonwura in the nomination of his candidate to maintain peace and order. But the Bolewura acted out of disrespect to the Yagbonwura who is his superior and thus the dispute. They argue further that in the 70's, the Bolewura who was also from the Jagape gate faced the challenge of nominating a Mandariwura, but it was peacefully resolved since the Bolewura at the time consulted his superior and made a choice that was agreeable to both sides. They expected the current Bolewura to have done same, but he acted unilaterally.



Secondly, some of the respondents who are in favour of the Bolewura allege that the Yagbonwura is "corrupt" and that he was "bribed" to overturn the chieftaincy nomination of the Bolewura for monetary gain. But I did not get any evidence to that effect and thus I will not align myself to this allegation. The Mankumawura (in favour of the Bolewura) adds that, the Yagbonwura does not know the traditions governing chieftaincy in the Bole traditional area and thus acted out of ignorance. He states that, the Bole traditional area has a tradition unique and different from other divisions in Gonja, and so the Yagbonwura is acting in



accordance to the [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) customs and traditions in his former traditional area (Kawsawgu) which is different in the Bole traditional area. In short, the intervention of the Yagbonwura in supporting to nominate a candidate for Mandari is what resulted into the disagreement, they purported.

#### **4.9 Theoretical analysis of the Mandari succession disagreement**

Relating the causes of this disagreement to the theory (Onion theory of conflict) developed by Best (2006), it is true that the Mandari disagreement has many layers and what appears on the surface is only a small element of the conflict. Like the onion, conflicts have many layers, and the use of this theory enabled the researcher to access the part of the conflict that exposes the needs, interest, position and fears, which inform parties to take uncompromising stands like the Bolewura and the Yagbonwura. Agana (2008) notes that, in Ghana, the struggle to become a —Chief‡ may turn violent: when the historical, political, economic and social circumstances around the establishment of the chieftaincy institution in a traditional state become contested; when the rules of succession become unclear; when successive national governments and political parties support one group against the other in a bid to serve their own parochial political interest; and when there are small and light weapons available to the factions in the dispute. I find Agana's assertion rightly appropriate in explaining the Mandari succession dispute. From this research, the causes of the Mandari succession disagreement are attributable to a lot of things by a lot of people. 17 of the respondents representing 77% of the respondents attributed it to monetary incentives that individuals stand to achieve from the skin. In other words, one would say this is as a result of corruption. This has been the stance of those respondents, but none



could concretely [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) provide enough evidence to support this assertion. Secondly, verbal narrations during the interviews conducted, it goes a long way to attribute the disagreement to the families in question growing so much in numbers these days that eligible candidates (princes) have increased tremendously in numbers and thus making succession to any skin in the traditional area highly competitive. This is a major factor for the increase in competition when it comes to chieftaincy issues. This is evident from the fact that it was narrated earlier that the princes and grandfathers in the family were all interested in the skin when the challenge was thrown to the family. This finding is in affirmation to the findings of Hagan (2006) who postulates that; ‘legitimate royals have increased in number over the years, as well. Hence the competitive-claims have become highly intense among the families and lineages. Consequently, some royal members are prepared to use fire-arms in the settling of disputes regarding election of occupants to stools and skins’.

Thirdly, 6 of the respondents attribute the disagreement to Bolewura’s disrespect for the Yagbonwura and the Safope gate in question. This is because, they argue that the Bolewura should have given a listening ear to the Yagbonwura rather than going ahead to do what he was cautioned against. They added that if the Bolewura who is a divisional chief is under the Yagbonwura and thus has disagreed with him, what happens when some of his (Bolewura) sub-chiefs also decide to disrespect or disagree with him?

This study again found that the 1930 Constitution of Gonja contributed to sparking this dispute as reported by some respondents. It clearly gave the mandate to the Yagbonwura to nominate a Mandariwura for the Bole division and so



sowed the seed for potential conflict between the Yagbonwura and the Bolewura, especially as it did not give the Yagbonwura the authority to nominate subdivisional chiefs in the other Divisions of Gonjaland. With this, the Yagbonwura has the power to nominate the Mandariwura and so contradicts the authority of the two chiefs.

The aspect of the constitution that gives the mandate to the Yagbonwura to choose the Mandariwura, Wulasiwura, Jentilpewura without giving that mandate to the Yagbonwura over Kpembe, Wasipe, Tuluwe, and Kawsawgu clearly contributes to the disagreements arising in the Bole traditional area over Mandari.

Additionally, some of the respondents (20%) rather disagree with the Yagbonwura. They argue that he is the paramount chief and per Gonja custom and tradition, he supersedes every division but it is the divisional chiefs that install chiefs in their various divisional areas. The Yagbonwura as a mediator between the Safope gate should rather have implemented pragmatic measures to address this issue instead of installing another chief. To this end, they further argue that the Bolewura erred in nominating a grandson, but there is no law per custom that states clearly that a grandson does not lead a family. These two arguments put the blame on the Bolewura and the Yagbonwura for both installing different chiefs for the same village. They concluded their argument against the Yagbonwura with the allegation that he does not have in-depth knowledge about the customs and traditions of the Bole traditional area and thus he acted ignorantly.

Finally, 17 of the respondents attribute this disagreement to —greed on the part of two parties; the Safope grandfathers and the Yagbonwura. On the part of the Safope grandfathers, it was argued that they failed to select one amongst



themselves out of "[www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh)greed". They were four and this was enough reason for them to confidently settle on one. But all of them wanted to be the Mandariwura for material gains and thus forgot the repercussions of their attitude on the family in general. It is their actions that motivated the other family members to show interest in the skin even when most of them knew they could not get the skin. Secondly, the Yagbonwura is also accused of being "partial" since he could not resolve the issue without appointing his favourite candidate. It meant that he already had interest in the issue for personal gain.

#### **4.10 Social implications of the Mandari succession dispute**

Traditionally, the Bolewura is the head of the chieftaincy institution in the area and thus presides over almost all chieftaincy issues in the area. The next in line to the Bole skin is the Mandariwura, but in the absence of the Bolewura, Mankumawura acts in his stead until the return of the Bolewura. The Bole traditional area is known for peace and unity among its indigenes as people may marry their aunts' and uncles' children to continue the family lineage. In effect, the Bole traditional area is seen as one family even though the royal family is divided into gates. The beauty of this co-existence is what has held the bond of unity among the people of the traditional area.

##### **4.10.1 Weakening of the Sense of Family and Unity**

After the chieftaincy succession disagreement that erupted in the area, some families now live in isolation and assume other parties as enemies who can cause harm if they get close to them. Two respondents from the Safope gate said that "we can't even meet in the family house again to hold meetings or sit together to organise funerals and other social functions without factions, since the head who





presided over these issues after the demise of our father, the late Yagbonwura Kurabaso, packed out of the family house. He packed out because, he and his younger brother fought over succession to Tinga which erupted after the Mandari disagreement. Secondly, the shrine in the family house which was the symbol of our unity has been destroyed out of the disagreements emanating from the Mandari and Tinga succession issue.

The senior brother to Issahaku Abdulai Kant (Alex) also from the Safope gate lamented that, marriages between people have broken since parents of both parties decide to disagree with these relationships; he however could not give specific names of individuals to support this, since according to him, he had forgotten of the names of these couple at the time the interview was conducted.

#### **4.10.2. Potential for Violence**

Some respondents summing up to 19 representing 86% think if this issue prolongs, it will promote greater enmity among the people which has a potential of sparking violence with the little provocation. This confirms the argument of Prah and Yeboah (2011) that ‘these conditions create an atmosphere of anxiety, insecurity and distrust, posing a threat to the peace and stability of the entire nation.’ Speaking with the Safalba chief of Mandari, he lamented that the community is tensed and that there is fear and anxiety in the people which has pushed some parents to move their children outside Mandari to Bole and Sawla for schooling out of fear of future clashes in the community as in the case of the Kiape succession dispute that led to the death of two young men. He continued by citing himself and some of the elders around him to have done this after the



Yagbonwura's [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) linguist had threatened them following their rejection of the Yagbonwura's nominee. This he said scared them to send their children out of the village. He adds that people do not want to even attend most social gatherings for fear of violent clashes.

#### **4.10.3. Vacuum in Traditional Authority**

The Safalnaa concluded that he has been compelled to take up some of the duties of the substantive chief of the area since none of the two disputing chiefs is allowed into the community. He travels to Bole almost weekly to submit royalties to Bolewura and to report to Issahaku Kant on issues going on in the village, thus virtually acting as a chief for his people and for Bolewura and his Mandariwura elect-Issahaku Kant since he is the one the elders of the village recognise as their chief, he claimed. This he said has put pressure on him and thus limited his ability to even undertake his farming activities.

#### **4.10. 4. Undermining of the Yagbonwura's Authority**

A more serious consequence of the dispute is the threat that the dispute poses to the authority of the Yagbonwura. The Bolewura was not present at the Yagbon Damba organised by the Yagbonwura at the forecourt of the Yagbonwura's palace from 19th to 21st January 2014 at Damongo which event is used by all paramount chiefs to pay homage and to renew their allegiance to the Yagbonwura as the overlord of the Gonja Kingdom. The Bolewura further was conspicuously missing at the Gonja Traditional Council Meeting at Kong in the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba District from the 9th to 10th January 2014. Even though, the Bolewura may have other reasons for this attitude, it has undermined the authority and integrity of the



Yagbonwura. This was a summit organised for all chiefs in Gonjaland to reinforce unity and the sense of belongingness.

Finally, the candidate of the Yagbonwura for Mandari (Bukari Abudu) and Tinga (Alhaji Abudu Sampson) both celebrate their damba festivals at the forecourt of the Yagbonwura's palace instead of the Bolewura's palace and thus only the Bolewura's candidate Issahaku Kant and other chiefs in the traditional area join the Bolewura to celebrate the festival. In effect, it has marred the love and togetherness that long existed between the chiefs in the area and the Bolewura.

#### **4.11 Economic implications of Mandari succession dispute on the development of the Bole Traditional Area**

##### **4.11.1. Drain on resources of District Assembly**

The economy is one of the main drivers of a state or a nation. The succession disagreement is one that affects the economy of the area negatively. In an interview with the District Chief Executive (Mr. James Jaaga), he argued that the Mandari succession disagreement is eating so deep into the fabric of the district that he begins to fear looking at the threat it poses on the development of the area. He added that the Assembly has sought for security reinforcement from the Regional Security Council and this reinforcement affects its budget greatly. Specifically, he adds that the assembly spends at least GHC400 daily, which adds up to GHC 12,000.00 a month on the accommodation of these personnel. Secondly, the feeding of these security personnel again was something that caused financial burden on the Assembly all because of the Mandari succession dispute. These resources could have been diverted into sponsoring other developmental initiatives but it is rather used for just accommodation and feeding of security



persons, he said. For this reason, the District Assembly is stressed into finding other avenues to raise funds to pay other utilities and logistics that were initially not budgeted for. This he claimed drains the budget of the Assembly and retards development in the area. He concluded by saying that, the royalties paid by the Assembly to the Traditional Council has been reduced. This is because the Traditional Council is responsible for the increased burden on the assembly and thus resources to the council have been cut to support in fighting any future clashes. This has reduced the ability of the traditional council to adequately invest in the developmental interventions in the area thereby posing a threat to the development of the people as well as the area.

#### **4.11.2. Disruption in Agricultural (Yam) production**

The Safalba chief in addition to his earlier statement adds that a yam (water yam) popularly known as "Seidubille" originates from Mandari and that the people have duly instituted a "Seidubille Yam Festival" celebration in the town, an occasion that enables them to have most of their sons and daughters returning home to make some inputs in the development of the town and as well promote socialization among the youth. The celebration underscores the fact that the yam is contributing meaningfully to the socio-economic development of the Bole District and Ghana as a whole. The yam has spread to many parts of the country and it has virtually overshadowed the ordinary yam particularly during the lean season. He added that the production of this food crop is threatened because of the chieftaincy disagreement that has engulfed the community and thus for some time now such functions have not been organised in the community which gives him so much discomfort. In effect, he is afraid this occasion will lose its value if not



organised for a long time. He added that the situation has reduced the level of income to the individual farmer in the community since the large quantities of the food crop produced is from the village and currently there is no incentive to motivate its production in large quantities.

In a telephone interview with the one-time national best farmer in the area, Alhaji Alhassan Agarta, a native of the community who is currently residing in Accra, he lamented that he was not consistent with the monitoring of his farms since the issue first began, and that his yield has reduced drastically which almost made him lay off some of his workers. He added that, the Yagbonwura and the Bolewura should come to terms and resolve this issue as early as possible if not; it will push him to concentrate on his farms in the Sawla areas rather than Bole and Mandari.

#### **4.12 Respondents' views on how to mitigate the effects of the dispute on the traditional area**

Chieftaincy as an institution has been integrated into the governance structures of Ghana. Therefore, in situations of conflict or disagreements in the chieftaincy institution, it is appropriate to manage it effectively so as to eliminate fear and its associated damage to the society. In managing and resolving chieftaincy disagreements, it is important to note that it requires emotional maturity, empathy and above all self-control. On how to manage the situation, the respondents suggest that the two competing parties should make the relationship that exists in the family their priority and thus focus on the general interest of the family not their individual benefits. In addition to this, 70% of the respondents think the



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Bolewura and Yagbonwura are not members of the Safope gate and thus will suffer less should the family split and lose its relevance. So for that matter, the head of the family should stamp his authority and decide with the elders of the family who the family wants to lead them. This, they believe, will render the Bolewura and the Yagbonwura powerless in the situation since it is the mandate of the family to decide who goes to Mandari not the two chiefs in question.

Additionally, this dispute is seen as an intra-family disagreement and the best way to mediate it is to first address it at the family level. The questions to be posed here are: what is the stance of the whole family on this situation? What is the interest of the family as decided by the council of elders of the family? If the family is able to unanimously address these questions, it will go a long way to solving it. Hence, the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution methods (ADR). Irrespective of the situation, resolving it in court is inappropriate and thus it should be addressed using time tested customary ways of resolving disputes. In view of this suggestion, 50% of the respondents think involving a team of independent arbitrators to sit with the family and discuss the process of resolving the dispute and find the way forward in the issue, such that the two parties will feel their interest, needs and fears are addressed, which will motivate them to drop their current uncompromising positions. If this happens, the parties will then report to the Bolewura on their stance and again to the Yagbonwura.

On the contrary, some respondents (60%) suggest that Bukari Abudu the Yagbonwura's nominee should allow the will of the Bolewura to prevail since it is the Bolewura who appoints and installs chiefs in the traditional area. From interactions with many chiefs in the area (personal discussion), they are of the

opinion that they will rally behind the Bolewura since he was the one that gave them the titles they are bearing now and not the Yagbonwura.

Finally, 14 of the chiefs interviewed representing 63% suggested that the Yagbonwura's nominee should as a matter of urgency accept the will of the Bolewura and take back his chieftaincy title (Nahariwura) since that title is still vacant and thus it is only the Bugewura's title that has been replaced. This they think will eliminate any kind of disagreement.

#### **4.13 Conclusion**

The absence of a chief in Mandari undermines the successful succession of chiefs that Bole is known for and thus does not speak well of the chieftaincy institution in the area. The chieftaincy status of the Mandari skin in the Bole traditional area is so high that one will say it is without a chief. Two wrongs do not usually make a right, and thus in every disputing situation, a pragmatic solution is the wish of everyone in the area for the fear of violence and destruction of property.



## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

This research concludes that the Gonja kingdom is one of the kingdoms in Ghana that has exhibited some level of peace and tranquillity in the succession process of chiefs and other traditional leadership portfolios. The current incidence of disagreements in the succession process of some Gonjaland chieftaincy titles – Damongo, Sonyo, Tinga and Dakurpe among others is endangering the peace and unity in these areas and thus pose the danger of diversion of some important developmental initiatives from their intended purposes.

The inability of both the state and non-state agencies to sustainably and pragmatically resolve conflicts in Gonjaland and most especially the Bole traditional area in a traditional manner is attributable to the fact that the chieftaincy institution has been polarized recently. Again, many of the elders and chieftaincy decision makers do not have adequate knowledge and skills in the management of disagreements but rather resort to strategies used earlier to resolve one or two disagreements regardless of the changes in the social structure and the growing enlightenment in the country and the Bole traditional area for that matter. In view of these, the study tried to identify who is qualified to become a chief and who is not qualified. It was found that the chieftaincy institution of Gonja places emphasis on patriarchy, and for that matter, princes with paternal ties to the royal families are usually considered for titles more than those with maternal ties. In some rare cases, people with maternal ties are also considered and thus they also qualify for some chieftaincy titles. Another fact is the creation of chieftaincy titles







for only people with maternal ties with the royal families. However, the most acknowledged qualification mechanism that the study found out is that of deformity and criminality. Anyone with a deformity is not qualified to become a chief in Bole and Gonjaland for that matter and again, such a person should not be an ex-convict irrespective of the situation (whether he was convicted wrongfully or otherwise). Considering this fact, the two candidates, Issahaku Abdulai Kant and Bukari Abudu are both qualified.

Additionally, the study looked at how this situation has resulted into disagreement between these two qualified candidates. It is realised that the inability of the elders of the Safope gate to settle on one person as the preferred candidate, opened the avenue for other parties to interfere and express interest in the title. This increased the number of candidates thus leaving the Bolewura with no option than to appoint a grandson who was below the ladder to lead the family. However, reference is made to the fact that the family gave the mandate to the Bolewura to choose among them the rightful candidate, hence Bolewura's decision to nominate Issahaku Abdulai Kant. Considering the modern trend of development, this decision was flawless but tradition and family disagreements made it a contestable decision.

The study found out that selfishness was the major cause of the disagreement. The four elders who were qualified initially to the skin could not settle on anyone amongst themselves for the title and thus opening the avenue for competition by other family members who as per tradition are also qualified to the skin.



Secondly, in view of the argument posed by Hagan (2006), the Bole traditional area is equally affected by the fact that the tenure of a chief terminates only at death and thus generates a lot of anxiety among legitimate royals who are potential candidates to the skins. This leads to frivolous and wasteful litigations and strife in the communities and thus results in disagreements.

This study again found that the 1930 constitution of Gonja contributed to sparking this dispute. It clearly gave the mandate to the Yagbonwura to nominate a Mandariwura for the Bole division and did not do so for the other divisions. With this, the Yagbonwura has the power to nominate the Mandariwura and so contradicts the authority of the two chiefs. However, it did not give the power to all the divisions to have their sub-divisional chiefs selected by the Yagbonwura except for Bole. The aspect of the constitution that gives the mandate to the Yagbonwura to choose the Mandariwura, Wulasiwura, Jentilpewura (even though Wulasiwura and Jentilpewura have lost their reverence as next to the Bole skin owing to traditional reforms), without giving that mandate to the Yagbonwura over Kpembe, Wasipe, Tuluwe, and Kawsawgu clearly is a contributory factor to the disagreements arising in the Bole traditional area.

The question one would ask is; who told the Safope gate the Bolewura wanted to give the title to a grandson and thus making the Yagbonwura to caution the Bolewura against it? It presupposes that the people around the two chiefs (Bolewura and Yagbonwura) in one way or the other contributed to putting the chiefs against each other. Notwithstanding this fact, the Yagbonwura and the Bolewura did not help in the issue. It is found out that the two chiefs could have



unanimously discussed the issue amongst themselves and settled it between themselves without a third party to promote peace. Instead, they resorted to the display of power and authority in enskinning two chiefs for one place creating tension and anxiety.

Notwithstanding the authority each chief (the Yagbonwura and the Bolewura) commands, it was alleged that they were influenced by self-interest and personal gain to make such interventions in favour of their candidates. The Yagbonwura was alleged to have received money from his candidate and to pass judgement in his favour. This resulted in some members taking uncompromising stance on the issue. The Bolewura on the other hand was alleged to have made his choice out of his loyalty to a political party<sup>19</sup>. This is the reason the two opponents fail to reconsider their stance on resolving the disagreement. The two parties-Yagbonwura and the Bolewura exhibited greed in the appointment of their candidates for the skin.

One fact in the disagreement made in this situation is the increased number of qualified princes in all the gates. This situation has increased the competition for chieftaincy titles among the princes and thus making people to pay so much as cola<sup>20</sup> for consideration as chiefs. This increasing number of qualified princes always puts more than two or three qualified candidates for a single title thereby increasing competition among them. The number of qualified males born in the area has tremendously increased over the years and owing to this, many of them

<sup>19</sup> It is alleged that the Bolewura and his Mandariwura elect belong to the New Patriotic Party and thus his decision was motivated by this fact.

<sup>20</sup> Cola is a term used to represent gifts and money presented to a chief for consideration for something. This is a norm in the Bole traditional area since almost every chief presents these gifts or money to announce his interest in any title and again presents same after he has been considered for the title. Initially, it was just something small, but now, it is competitive.



will go to any length to acquire power thereby resulting into disagreements. A typical example in this issue is the full up of the cemetery allocated for chiefs in the Bole traditional area. The area allocated for the burial was considered more than enough for the burial of chiefs, but as it stands, the place is reported to have been filled up to capacity. Currently, graves are dug open to bury a chief who passes on. Based on this, the mortal remains of chiefs have to be packed aside for the burial of another.

On the social aspects of the disagreement, the study gathered that the situation has added to the increased migration of people out of the village (to seek greener pastures in neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire) and thus created tension and anxiety in some of the people in the area. Some parents withdraw their wards from the village to Bole and Sawla to school, since they now live in fear, placing financial burden on these parents.

Secondly, the failure of the Bolewura to pay his respects to the Yagbonwura during the damba festival leaves a lot of questions on the minds of people who expected to see him there. Again, the inability of the Bolewura to attend the Kong summit organised for chiefs does not speak well of the unity and peace that exists in the area all because of the Mandari disagreement.

This study revealed that the Assembly's budget has increased over the years since additional amounts are spent to accommodate security personnel. An average of GHC 400 is spent a day to accommodate security personnel and thus increased the expenditure of the district. There is therefore the need to increase the sources of



income to meet the [www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh](http://www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh) increased expenditure which has placed financial burden on the Assembly.

Additionally, the study realised that the moving of people from the village reduced the production capacity of water yam which is the major cash crop in the area. More hands are usually needed to increase productivity and the more these hands move out, the higher the probability of a reduced work force and subsequently a reduced level of productivity which is already happening.

Finally, the study premised the inability of the state to resolve conflicts in the chieftaincy institution as partly attributable to the failure of the traditional institution to identify a conflict resolution framework<sup>21</sup> that will satisfy both the socio-political and cultural dynamics of the parties in conflicting situations. Therefore, to mitigate the effects of this disagreement to the development of the area, it is necessary to integrate both formal and indigenous conflict resolution strategies to promote sustainability of resolved conflicts and thus enhance development in the traditional area.

The chieftaincy institution in Gonja and that of the Bole traditional area is gradually becoming polarized; and thus, the emergence of the disagreement on the Mandari skin, has given birth to some other disagreements in the area like the Tinga succession disagreement, Sonyo succession disagreement, Kibilma succession disagreement and recently, the Damongo succession disagreement. In lieu of these, Ray (2003) indicates that \_chieftaincy disputes have long been a source of minor and major political struggles for many Ghanaians. Most of these

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<sup>21</sup> A framework that will outline the mediation and resolution process in conflict or disagreement situations. This will formalize the process and thus strategically and systematically resolve disagreements. It will as well reduce the total number of cases referred to the Regional House of Chiefs.



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chieftaincy disputes have been resolved peacefully (Kiape succession dispute in the Bole traditional area) by the chiefs and courts invoking custom and customary law, the judicial procedures of the Houses of Chiefs system and the courts of the Republic of Ghana, or by mediation efforts and other offices of the state' (Ray, 2003). The relevance of the traditional authority in Ghana, most especially Gonjaland, continues to be recognized in constitutional politics. This disagreement if not resolved will see interesting days since the demise of either the Bolewura or the Yagbonwura will result to chaos. In my view as a researcher, the demise of the Bolewura will spark war in the Bole traditional area. This is because; the death of Bolewura will result into struggle as to who will be the next Bolewura and thus perform the 7 days' funeral of the Bolewura. As it stands now,

I will conclude by saying that Bole is sitting on a timed bomb and if the state and non-state actors do not act fast, the peace in the Bole traditional area will be a thing of the past. Secondly, it is the Yagbonwura that is to enskin a Bolewura, in this situation, he will not enskin anyone he does not sanction and thus the reason for the war. It is therefore incumbent on the chieftaincy institution to find its relevance in the midst of westernisation of the Ghanaian society, and the eroding of the Ghanaian culture due to growing sophistication via the evolution of and access to modern technology (Mensah, 2013).

## 5.2. Recommendations

This study recommends that the traditional or chieftaincy institution of the area should identify a conflict resolution framework<sup>22</sup> that will satisfy both the socio-political and cultural dynamics of the people such that in any situation of disagreement, the framework or model will be the basis for the final solution, and that, this document should be made readily available to all chiefs after installation. This study further suggests that the 1930 constitution of Gonja (portions found in appendix F) be given a second look by the Gonja Traditional Council, since it did not give priority to all the divisions to have their sub-divisional chiefs selected by the Yagbonwura except for Bole. The aspect of the constitution that gives the mandate to the Yagbonwura to choose the Mandariwura, Wulasiwura, Jentilpewura (the Wulasiwura and Jentilpewura have lost their reverence as next to the Bole skin owing to traditional reforms), without giving that mandate to the Yagbonwura over Kpembe, Wasipe, Tuluwe, and Kawsawgu clearly is a contributory factor to the disagreements arising in the Bole traditional area.

In addition to these, a code of conduct should be drafted for the chiefs in the traditional area to promote peace. This ethical code of conduct should be formulated in a general gathering for all the traditional leaders (chiefs, kingmakers, linguists, traditional warriors and the youth leaders) in the presence of the District Security Council (DISEC). Out of this, seminars can be organised for the chiefs by the Local Government Ministry to enhance their conflict resolution skills and thus promote peace and successful transitions as it has always been.

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<sup>22</sup> A framework that will outline the mediation and resolution process in conflict or disagreement situations. This will formalize the process and thus strategically and systematically resolve disagreements.



Finally, this study recommends that the family head of the Safope gate assemble all chiefs of the gate and seek their mandate to settle on one candidate that should be the Mandariwura. With this, a delegation can be sent to the Bolewura and the Yagbonwura respectively to notify them on the final decision of the family and thus any chief or youth who acts in contravention should be sanctioned to serve as a deterrent to the others. It is only the family that has the power to settle the disagreement.





### 5.3 Postscript

After the submission of the first final draft of this thesis, the Bolewura Mahama Pontonprong II passed away on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2017. The event has created a tense atmosphere in Bole and the likelihood of the outbreak of violence has increased. As indicated earlier, the successor to the Bolewura is the Mandariwura, a position which now has two claimants. Reasons that can be attributed to the tense atmosphere in Bole and its environs include;

- Who becomes the successor to the Bole skins as Bolewura?
- What would be the Yagbonwura's position in this situation, since he contributed to the duplication of the chiefs in Mandari?
- What would be the ruling from the judicial council of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs?
- What is the interest of the chiefs and people of the Safope gate and that of the entire Bole traditional area?
- What is the stance of the two claimants to the skin?

These questions can be answered after the 7<sup>th</sup> day funeral rites of the late Bolewura Mahama Pontonprong II since the successor as per tradition is mandated to perform the 12<sup>th</sup> day funeral rites of the late chief after which he can be installed. However, the 7<sup>th</sup> day funeral is postponed to a later date (pending) because the death of the Bolewura occurred in the Islamic holy month of fasting (Ramadan). Thus the funeral will be performed after the holy month.

After the 7<sup>th</sup> day funeral, the walking staff and sandals of the late Bolewura would be presented to the Yagbonwura who will intend hand them over the next



candidate to the skin. It is this point that the issue can either find a resting place or transform into clashes as in Yapei in 2001-2010 and Wasipe in 1994-2004.

In view of these lingering questions, the Northern Regional Security Council on June 6<sup>th</sup> 2017 ordered the suspension of the funeral rites of the Bolewura pending the final determination of the Mandari skin case by the Regional House of Chiefs (see Appendix I for a copy of the letter).



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APPENDICES  
APPENDIX A

Succession to Mandari Skins Starting from Mandariwura Kibelge In 1930

NO.	NAME OF CHIEF	GATE OF ORIGIN	FROM TO	ENSKINMENT AUTHORITY	REMARKS
1.	Mandariwura Kibelge	Jagape	Gbenfu - Mandari	Bolewura Jamani Yahaya (Jagape)	Smooth Transition
2.	Mandariwura Awusi	Denkerepe	Gbenfu - Mandari	Bolewura Takora Adama (Sarfope)	Smooth Transition
3.	Mandariwura Suropanyin Adam	Sarfope	Jetilpe - Mandari	Bolewura Awusi (Denkerepe)	<div><div>i.</div><div>ii.</div><div>iii.</div><div>iv.</div><div>Hippo caught someone in the Mandari village</div><div>Madman stabbed a woman to death</div><div>Two of his servants fought leading to stabbing of one of them to death</div><div>A taboo forbidding a chief from</div></div>

					Jentilpe entering Mandari
4.	Mandariwura Elect Mbabeso	Jagape	Jentilpe - Mandari	Awusi still Bolewura did not enskin Mbabeso	<p>A. Mandari people rejected him on the incidents above.</p> <p>B. Serious misunderstanding by princes and chiefs of Jagape gate.</p> <p>C. Abudu Mahama lobbied Yagbonwura Awusi and Jagape chiefs/princes lost the skins to Abudu Mahama.</p>
5.	Mandariwura Abudu Mahama	Sarfope	Esa Elikawu - Mandari	Bolewura Awusi Mahama	Abudu Mahama later became Bolewura & Yagbonwura.
6.	Mandariwura Kipo	Jagape	Kiape - Mandari	Bolewura Abudu Mahama (Sarfope)	<p>When the position of the Bolewura became vacant, Mandariwura Kipo was rejected by the elders of his gate and was subsequently tricked to allow his son Tunawura Braimah Kabange to ascend to the bole skins, cleverly sidelining him. By the rotational order, Braimah Kabange could not be at Bole while his uncle Kipo remained in Mandari, he was as a result dispossessed of the Mandari skins. Reasons adduced by the elders for this action were;</p> <p>(a) Old age</p>

					(b) Ear deformity and  (c) His maternal links with Kong whose people betrayed Gonja to Samori the slave invader.
7.	Mandariwura Abudu Awusu	Denkerepe	Gbenfu - Mandari	Bolewura Braimah (Jagape)	Mandariwura Abudu was moved from Gbenfu to Mandari to replace Mandariwura Kipo.
8.	Mandariwura Mahama Amantana 	Sarfope	Nahari - Mandari	Bolewura Braimah Kabange	When all the elders and family members of Sarfope gate agreed to the nomination of Nahariwura Mahama Amantana later Bolewura and Yagbonwura the father of the current Nahariwura, Wulasiwura Abudu disagreed and instead nominated one Yahaya Mahama the present Yipalawura. This action took all the elders to Damongo since Wulasiwura Abudu took the matter before the Yagbonwura. There the Yagbonwura sided with the elders of the Sarfope gate and the position of the then Bolewura who had already given the skins to Nahariwura Mahama Amantana. Nahariwura was subsequently enskined by Bolewura Braimah Kabange at bole.

9.	Mandariwura Mahama Gbeadese Amankwah II	Denkerepe	Dabori - Mandari	Bolewura Mahama Amantana (Sarfope)	Smooth Transition
10.	Mandariwura J.A. Mahama Pontompron	Jagape	Dagbigu - Mandari	Bolewura Gbeadese Amankwah (Denkerepe)	Smooth transition.  There has never been a period when the Yagbonwura (a primus inter pares) in the gonja traditional setting has nominated a prince/chiefs and enskinned him in any division in the gonja kingdom. It comes therefore as a novelty, and a travesty of custom and tradition if he does that.
11.	Mandariwura Abdulai Issahaku	Sarfope	Buge - Mandari	Bolewura J.A. Mahama Pontompron	Contested by some of the Sarfope members and thus taken to Damongo where the Yagbonwura also nominated and installed another person (Nahariwura) as Mandariwura

Source: Bole Traditional Council



## APPENDIX B

### Interview guide for District Chief Executive

#### Introduction

I am **Sulemana Hazrat Ashahadu**, a final year Master of Philosophy student at the graduate school of the University for Development Studies, with student registration number **UDS/MDS/0350/14**.

I am currently conducting research on the topic: *Study on chieftaincy succession crises in Bole and its socio-economic implication on the development of Gonjaland* as part of the requirement for the award of an MPhil Degree at the university, and wish to solicit your views and knowledge relating to the Mandari succession issue, which is the subject of my research.

This study is intended to accomplish five objectives: to find out the modes of chieftaincy succession to Mandari in the Bole traditional area, to examine how succession to Mandari has resulted into conflicts in the area, to identify the social implications of this conflict (Mandari succession) on the development of the Bole traditional area, to examine the economic implications of this conflict (Mandari succession) on the development of the Bole traditional area, to analyse how this crisis (Mandari succession) can be mitigated to promote development in the area.

I wish therefore to assure you that confidentiality is guaranteed for your responses and thus your response will be treated purely for academic purposes only.

**Code: .... / ..... / ..... / .....**



1 . D a t e : .

2 . T i m e o f I n t e r v i e w .

3. Interviewer: .....

4. Are you aware of the Mandari succession crises? Yes No

5. How did this succession conflict in Mandari emanate?

6. What are the social implications of the Mandari succession conflict on the people in the area?

7. What is the outcome of the Mandari succession conflict on the economic status of the people in the area?

8. How has the conflict affected the development of the district?

9. How has the assembly/government managed this situation so far?

10. How much has been spent in managing the situation as at now?

11. What do you think can be done to resolve the Mandari succession conflict?

12. How does this Mandari succession conflict affect government developmental initiatives in the area?

13. What is your recommendation to the traditional council to curbing future occurrence of such conflicts?

**THANKS FOR YOUR TIME**



## APPENDIX C

### Interview guide for Kingmakers and Chiefs

#### Introduction

I am **Sulemana Hazrat Ashahadu**, a final year Master of Philosophy student at the graduate school of the University for Development Studies, with student registration number **UDS/MDS/0350/14**.

I am currently conducting research on the topic: *Study on chieftaincy succession crises in Bole and its socio-economic implication on the development of Gonjaland* as part of the requirement for the award of an MPhil Degree at the university, and wish to solicit your views and knowledge relating to the Mandari succession issue, which is the subject of my research.

This study is intended to accomplish five objectives: to find out the modes of chieftaincy succession to Mandari in the Bole traditional area, to examine how succession to Mandari has resulted into conflicts in the area, to identify the social implications of this conflict (Mandari succession) on the development of the Bole traditional area, to examine the economic implications of this conflict (Mandari succession) on the development of the Bole traditional area, to analyse how this crisis (Mandari succession) can be mitigated to promote development in the area.

I wish therefore to assure you that confidentiality is guaranteed for your responses and thus your response will be treated purely for academic purposes only.

**Code: .... / ..... / ..... / .....**



### A. General Information of Respondent/ Bio-physical data

1. Date: ..... .
2. Time of Interview ..... .
3. Name of respondent..... .
4. Title of respondent
5. Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
6. Age of Respondent: 0-19 \_\_\_\_\_ 20-39 \_\_\_\_\_ 40-59 \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_
7. Gate of respondent: Jagape \_\_\_\_\_ Safope \_\_\_\_\_ Denkeripe \_\_\_\_\_
8. Occupation of respondent
9. Marital status Married \_\_\_\_\_ Single \_\_\_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_\_\_ Widowed \_\_\_\_\_
- 9b. If married, how many wives \_\_\_\_\_
10. Interviewer: ..... .
11. Educational status: None \_\_\_\_\_ Basic \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary \_\_\_\_\_ Tertiary \_\_\_\_\_ Post- Sec \_\_\_\_\_
12. Religious Status Christian \_\_\_\_\_ Muslim \_\_\_\_\_ ATR \_\_\_\_\_ None \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Objective one (1)

13. What is the qualification, (or are the qualifications) for becoming a chief in the Bole traditional area?
14. What is the process (or are the processes) for installing a chief?
15. Have there been instances when (in your opinion) the processes have not been followed?
16. Why were they not followed?
17. What was the outcome of not following the laid down processes?



**C. Objective two (2)**

18. How did the Mandari succession conflict emanate?
19. What in your opinion are the possible causes?

**D. Objective three (3)**

20. What is the outcome of the Mandari succession conflict on the social life of the people in the area?

**E. Objective four (4)**

21. How has this affected the economic status of the area?

**F. Objective five (5)**

22. What do you think can be done to resolve the disagreements in the succession process?
23. How would your suggestion promote development and peace in the area?

**THANKS FOR YOUR TIME**



## APPENDIX D

### Questionnaire for selected youth leaders of the various gates

#### Introduction

I am **Sulemana Hazrat Ashahadu**, a final year Master of Philosophy student at the graduate school of the University for Development Studies, with student registration number **UDS/MDS/0350/14**.

I am currently conducting research on the topic: *Study on chieftaincy succession crises in Bole and its socio-economic implication on the development of Gonjaland* as part of the requirement for the award of an MPhil Degree at the university, and wish to solicit your views and knowledge relating to the Mandari succession issue, which is the subject of my research.

This study is intended to accomplish five objectives: to find out the modes of chieftaincy succession to Mandari in the Bole traditional area, to examine how succession to Mandari has resulted into conflicts in the area, to identify the social implications of this conflict (Mandari succession) on the development of the Bole traditional area, to examine the economic implications of this conflict (Mandari succession) on the development of the Bole traditional area, to analyse how this crisis (Mandari succession) can be mitigated to promote development in the area.

I wish therefore to assure you that confidentiality is guaranteed for your responses and thus your response will be treated purely for academic purposes only.

**Code:.... / ..... / ..... / .....**



1. Date:	Female				
2. Time .....					
3. Sex: Male					
4. Age of Respondent: 0-19	20-39	40-59	60+		
5. Gate of respondent: Jagape		Safope	Denkeripe		
6. Occupation of respondent					
7. Marital status Married		Single Widowed	Divorced		
8. If married, how many wives					
9. Researcher: .....					
10. Educational status: None Sec	Basic	Secondary	Tertiary	Post-	
11. Religious Status: Christian	Muslim	ATR	None		



**B. Objective one (1).....**

12. What is the qualification, (or are the qualifications) for becoming a Mandariwura in the Bole traditional area?

13. What is the process (or are the processes) of installing a chief in Mandari?

14. Are the processes for the selection of a Mandariwura followed as laid down by custom?

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.....  
15. If yes, why is there a conflict or dispute?

.....  
.....  
16. If no why not?

.....  
**C. Objective two (2)**

17. What are some of the possible causes of the succession dispute?

.....  
**D. Objective three (3)**

18. What is the outcome of the current Mandari succession conflict on the social development of the people in the area?

.....  
**E. Objective four (4)**

19. What is the outcome of this Mandari succession conflict on the economic development of the people in the area?

.....  
**F. Objective five (5)**

20. What do you think can be done to resolve the Mandari succession dispute?

.....  
.....  
.....  
21. How would your suggestion above promote development and peace in the area?

.....  
.....  
.....  
What are your recommendations to the kingmakers on issues of this sort?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**THANKS FOR YOUR TIME**



## APPENDIX E

### LIST OF CHIEFS IN THE BOLE TRADITIONAL AREA

NUMBER	TITLE OF CHIEF	GATE
1.	Mankumawura	Jagape
2.	Mandariwura	Sarfope
3.	Kiapewura	Jagape
4.	Sigriuwura	Denkeripe
5.	Gbenfuwura	Jagape
6.	Nyoliwura	Sarfope
7.	Kulmasawura	Sarfope
8.	Kpongriwura	
9.	Tunawura	Denkeripe
10.	Somawura	Denkeripe
11.	Daboriwura	Denkeripe
12.	Kunfugsiwura	Denkeripe
13.	Nahariwura	Sarfope
14.	Kalbawura	Jagape
15.	Nakwabiwura	Sarfope
16.	Blemawura	Sarfope
17.	Sawlawura	Denkeripe
18.	Nasoyiriwura	Denkeri
19.	Dabgiguwura	Sarfope
20.	Kulibiwura	Sarfope
21.	Sanjeriwura	Jagape
22.	Balewura	Jagape
23.	Chachewura	Denkeripe
24.	Gbanpewura	Jagape
25.	Sikiriwura	Denkeripe
26.	Doliwura	Jagape
27.	Nteresowura	Denkeripe
28.	Wakawakawura	Jagape
29.	Banyukuonwura	Sarfope
30.	Tingawura	Sarfope
31.	Kamaakpesiwura	Sarfope
32.	Nuoyiriwura	Denkeripe
33.	Duwawura	Jagape
34.	Kuiwura	Denkeripe
35.	Dikpawura	Denkeripe
36.	Korlewura	Denkeripe
37.	Tangpewura	Sarfope





38.	Kpangkpasiriwura	Vacant
39.	Tinyekurawura	Denkeripe
40.	Ndape (Wasipe) Wura	Jagape
41.	Dasagawura	Jagape
42.	Kpaliwura	Sarfope
43.	Nakpalawura	Sarfope
44.	Gbogdaawura	Sarfope
45.	Nyinyawuwura	Sarfope
46.	Kansawura	Denkeripe
47.	Saruwura	Jagape
48.	Lampurgawura	Denkeripe
49.	Serepewura	Denkeripe
50.	Bugewura	Jagape
51.	Bugekakuremasuwura	Jagape
52.	Jilinkonwura	Jagape
53.	Jentilpewura	Sarfope
54.	Nasoyiriwura	Denkeripe
55.	Taribangwura	Jagape
56.	Sindiwura	Jagape
57.	Kachirasewura	Jagape
58.	Kpantaliwura	Jagape
59.	Kanzangwura	Jagape
60.	Jaapewura	Vacant
61.	Bandimawura	Jagape
62.	Yabalpewura	Jagape
63.	Tampoiwura	Jagape
64.	Gbegbeapewura	Jagape
65.	Wabiliwura	Jagape
66.	Vondieliwura	Denkeripe
67.	Kanchengwura	Sarfope
68.	Kporbayiriwura	Sarfope
69.	Abeesowura	Jagape
70.	Seseiwura	Jagape
71.	Babatowura	
72.	Zentigewura	Denkeripe
73.	Bekwaikura	Denkeripepe
74.	Nangbewura	Denkeripepe
75.	Gbilimpewura	Sarfope
76.	Kanbalawura	Sarfope
77.	Uriwura	Jagape
78.	Borgouwura	Jagape

79.	Kananipewura	Sarfope
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80.	Wulasiwura	Sarfope
81.	Jahoriwura	
82.	Mulewura	Jagape
83.	Takalpewura	Jagape
84.	Kulwuongwura	Denkeripe
85.	Bugaliwura	Jagape
86.	Daukpongyiriwura	Jagape
87.	Kananepewura	Sarfope
88.	Maluwewura	Jagape
89.	Saalawura	Sarfope
90.	Signyekurawura	Denkeripe
91.	Damiyiriwura	Jagape
92.	Manfulwura	Sarfope
93.	Sempirwura	Sarfope
94.	Jandarawura	Sarfope



## APPENDIX F

### 1930 Constitution of Gonja

1. SULIMANU KANYASEWURA X  
MARKS.

Before us at YAPEI in kingdom of GBANYA this 19<sup>th</sup> day of May,  
1930. (Sgd.) A. Duncan-Johnstone  
(Sgd.) A.W. Cardinall  
(Sgd.) E.F. Burn

WE, MUSI BUIPEWURA AND MAMA YAGBONWURA, do hereby state that  
the following Executive Councillors and Divisional Chiefs form the full  
GBANYA STATE COUNCIL and are empowered to make laws of the  
GBANYA STATE:-

BUIPEWURA, represented by KAGBAPEWURA  
YAGBONWURA  
SENYONWURA  
KPEMBEWURA  
DEBREWURA  
WASIPEWURA  
MANKPANWURA BOLEWURA  
CHORWURA  
TULUWEWURA  
DAMONGOWURA  
KAWSAWURA

THEIR

(Sgd.) MUSE BUIPEWURA X  
(Sgd.) MAMA YAGBONWURA X  
MARKS

AT YAPEI ON 19<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 1930.

(Sgd.) A. Duncan-Johnstone, C.S.P.  
(Sgd.) A.W. CARDINALL  
(Sgd.) E.F. BURN

Interpreters and witnesses to Marks.

Kanyah Grunshi x

Mark

(Sgd.) J.E. Mensah

His

Adamu Salaga x



Mark.

Certified True Copy  
(Sgd.) J.R.

TURKSON.

CHIFES ELEGIBLE TO SUCCEED TO THE KAWULPUTI  
(SKIN) OF YAGBON

WE, MUSI BUIPEWURA AND MAMA YAGBONWURA, do hereby state  
that the seven following chiefs are those only from whom the YAGBONWURA  
is selected.

KPEMBEWURA

WASIPEWURA (DABOYA)

BOLEWURA

TULUWEWURA

KWASAWWURA

THEIR

MUSA BUIPEWURA X

MAMA YAGBONWURA X

MARKS

At Yapei on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1930

(sgd) A. Duncan-Johnstone, C.S.P.

" A.W. CARDINALL

" E.F. BURN

Interpreters and witnesses to marks.

HIS

Kanya Grunshi X

(sgd) J.E.Mensah His

Adamu Salaga X

Mark.

Certifies True Copy



(SGD) J.R. Turkson.

RULES OF SUCCESSION TO DIVISIONAL SKINS

WE, the undersigned do hereby agree that the following are the correct rules of succession to our respective Skins.

BUIPE SKIN. Buipe names his successor from either SILIMAWURA or BIMBUNSUWURA

If he dies without naming a successor, SILIMAWURA succeeds, being the senior.

KPEMBE SKINS. Sunbunwura, Kanankulaiwura, and Kanyasewura in turn, in this order

WASIPE (DABOYA) SKIN. Yazoriwura, who must be the Wasipewura's own son or brother.

BOLE SKIN Mandariwura, Wulasiwura, Jentilipewura, chosen by Yagbonwura.

KUNG SKIN. In abeyance.

TULUWE SKIN Latepowura, Kajemowura, Bondanwura, in turn.

KANDIA SKIN. Templumawura.

KAWSAW SKIN. Chosen by Yagbonwura from Kawsawwura's sons or younger brothers.

MUSI BUIPEWURA	THEIR
SOALI KPEMBEWURA	X
ABUDU WASIPEWURA	X
TAKORA BOLEWURA	X
KUNGWURA (absent)	X
IDDISSA TULUWEWURA	X
KANDIAWURA (absent)	X
MAMA KASWSAWWURA	X

MARKS.

(Sgd.) A. DUNCAN-JOHNSTONE, C.S.O.

" A.W. CARDINALL

" E.F. BURN

Interpreters and witnesses to marks.

His

Kanya Grunshi X

Mark





(Sgd.) J.E. MENSAH

His

ADAMU SALAGA X

Mark.

Certified True Copy.

(Sgd.) J.R. TURSON..

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## APPENDIX G

### **Bolewura's Mandariwura's petition to the regional house of chiefs**









**APPENDIX H**

**Resolution by the chiefs of the Bole Traditional area.**



















## **APPENDIX I**

### **Suspension of issues related to the Bole skin by the Northern Regional Security Council**

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