

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF FOSTER CHILDREN IN THE TAMALE
METROPOLIS, NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA**

GRACE MONTO BAWA

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METROPOLIS, NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA**

BY

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(BACHELOR OF SCIENCE, HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT)

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UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL
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FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF
PHILOSOPHY SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION DEGREE**

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DECLARATION

Student's 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 to the best of my knowledge. Due recognition has been given to other works used in this thesis. I accept full responsibility for any lapses in this work.

Name of Student: GRACE MONTO BAWA

Signature of Student..... Date.....

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines of the graduate school, University for Development Studies.

Name of Supervisor: DR. ELIASU ALHASSAN

Signature of Supervisor..... Date.....



ABSTRACT

Fostering is a common practice in many parts of Dagbon in the Northern Region of Ghana. It is a socio-cultural barrier to quality education of many foster children in the Tamale area. The study sought to investigate the educational attainments of foster children in the Tamale Metropolis in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study adopted the mixed method approach. Snowball sampling technique was used to selecting or identifying respondents due to the nature of the study. Respondents for in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were purposively selected. Twenty-three in-depth interviews and three focus group discussions were conducted. The findings showed that majority of foster children were enrolled in school against few who were not enrolled. Also, there was regular school attendance by majority of foster children in the metropolis. Absenteeism was low among foster children. Majority of foster children were also found to be punctual to schools with few going to school late. The findings also showed that foster children were performing averagely well in school. However, majority of them were found performing below non-foster children in their respective households. The foster children were overburdened household chores, inadequate learning educational materials, late payment of fees, discrimination and abuse, and inadequate freedom to recreation or socialise with peers. The study concluded that fostering remains inimical to educational attainments of children in the metropolis despite signs of good school enrollment and attendance among foster children. There is the need for effective policy implementation and sensitisation against the engagement of foster children in too many chores that significantly affect studies both in schools and at home.



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my lovely husband Fuseini Musah and caring parents Mr. and Mrs Chief Kofi Bawa for their magnificent support.

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ACRONYMS

AFCARS	Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CBR	Crude Birth Rate
CREATE	Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity
CWIG	Child Welfare Information Gateway
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DfE	Department for Education
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GLSS	Ghana Standard Living Survey
GSS	Ghana Statistics Service
HIV/AIDS	Human-Inquired Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
JHS	Junior High School
JSS	Junior Secondary School
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NWFCE	National Working Group on Foster Care and Education
RAD	Reactive Attachment Disorder
SHS	Senior High School
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TMMTDP	Tamale Medium Term Development Plan
USA	United States of America
WSDSHS	Washington State Department of Social and Health Services



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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

According to O'Higgins et al (2015), different countries and regions use different terminologies to describe the status of children in foster care. It is known as 'out-of-home care' in the USA, Canada and Australia, and in England, it is referred to as 'Children Looked After'. Terminologies such as fosterage, fostering, adoption, child relocation and transfer, child circulation, child migration are used among English speaking African countries (see Isiugo-Abanihe, 1991). Terminologies such as 'children in care', foster children and children in foster care are also common among researchers. Foster children or fostering are commonly used and are preferred for this study.

Foster children are generally young people under the age of 18, for whom the state acquires some parental responsibility. According to Child Welfare Information Gateway ((CWIG), 2016), foster care refers to 24-hour substitute care for children outside their own homes and this may include, but are not limited to, nonrelative foster family homes, relative foster homes, group homes, emergency shelters, and preadoptive homes. Foster care is care for children outside the home that substitutes for parental care with the child placed with either a family, relatives or strangers, an institution or in a group home. In any form that it takes, foster care places the child in a situation that he/she must regularly adjust to different family, different location, different school, different peers, and different cultural environment all together. Their life decisions are taken by different people and institutions



other than their biological parents. In many cases foster children come from family backgrounds that are underprivileged in society and therefore lack many basic needs and care.

The Institute for Research on Poverty suggested that between 75% and 80% of foster children come from homes that the parents are unable to take care of them adequately. Also children may find themselves in foster care as result of a sudden calamity, such as death of biological parents, physical or mental illness or imprisonment of the care-giving parents as well as abuse, neglect, and abandonment by their biological parents. It is suggested that between 15 and 20% of foster children find themselves in child care systems because they have problems such as physical handicaps, mental illness that their parents cannot cope with. This may be very common in the developed world and may not necessarily be the case for only African countries which are less developed. The Institute for Research on Poverty further noted that about five percent of the causes of fostering are attributable to environmental factors such as financial need, inadequate housing, or chronic unemployment. Therefore, poverty is also a major factor that frequently contributes to the crises that require children to be placed in foster care (Pilon, 2003; Al-Hassan and Abubakari, 2015).

According to Berger et al (2015), children in foster care, on average, perform worse in school than other children, and this phenomenon raises concerns about the effectiveness of child welfare and educational policy for vulnerable groups, particularly foster children across the world. This is usually attributed to the level of emotional and social stress that is associated with fosterage due to the separation from primary caregivers, siblings and other family members. Separation of children from their biological parents (fostering) may





usually place the child in an environment where she/he suffers abuse, over-working and when placed in school, experiences frequent change of schools. These translate in poor academic performance and low educational attainment/achievement. Change of schools may present its effects depending on the setting of the new school the foster child is been moved to. Frequent school changes is a daunting challenge for foster children which do not only result in poor academic performance but results in dropping out of school (see Smithgall et al, 2010). That is, a child moved to a high or low quality school will result in better or worse academic performance of the child respectively.

According to Burley and Halpern (2001), the performances of many of foster children in then Washington State were found to be poor in schools and usually scored an average of 15 to 20 percentile points below non-foster youth in statewide achievement tests. It was further indicated that about 59% of foster youth enrolled in 11th grade complete high school by the end of grade 12 against the completion rate of 86% for non-foster youth. It was, thus, generally a case where children in foster care have lower test scores and graduation rates. Twice as many foster children also get repeated and change schools than non-foster children. This creates an educational achievement gap among foster children (Burley and Halpern, 2001).

In Africa, fostering is a traditional practice that seeks to strengthen family solidarity and traditional rights and obligations. It is estimated that about 20% or one in five households in some African countries have foster children or have fostered out their children. In West Africa, foster children are mostly between the ages of six and 14 which happens to be school enrolment age. About 20% of these children are between 6-9 and 25% between 10-14 years (Pilon, 2003). Pilon (2003) further noted that in West African countries, male

foster children are usually taken in order to socialize and enroll them in school while foster girls are taken for labour in the area of household chores.

In the context of Africa and West Africa, there appears to be an ambivalent relationship between foster care and schooling in that, some children are placed in foster care in order to attend school while others are also placed for purposes of helping the family in terms of labour which inhibits their schooling. That is, in as much as fostering negatively affects schooling of foster children, schooling is also in many instances the reason for fostering.

Foster children also perform a lot of household activities such as washing dishes and clothes, carrying water, helping out with the cooking and shopping etc. Engagement in these activities take up much of their study and resting times culminating in higher chances of repeating, failing and dropping out of school due to poor academic performance. This is mostly common with girls who frequently perform these activities.

Ghana is one of the West African countries with approximately one child in four between the ages of 10 and 14 living with neither parent and almost one child in five having both parents live but reside elsewhere. Fosterage is an important cultural practice in Ghana and particularly in Northern Region among the Dagbon kingdom. Traditionally, it serves to strengthen kinship solidarity and relationships among families including meeting needs for child labour. It is to promote kinship obligations and cultural rites. Fostering however serves as a barrier to children education in northern Ghana and in Dagbon (Tamale) in particular. It contributes to the low levels of educational access and progress in northern Ghana (Rolleston, 2011; Mahama, 2004).



1.2 Problem Statement

The practice of fostering is very common in Northern Region of Ghana, particularly Tamale, the regional capital. It is common among Dagomba and Gonja dominated areas (Mahama, 2004). Rolleston (2011) also found it common among the Mamprusi people in the Northern Region. It is common among Dagomba people because they see it as part of the process of upbringing and socialisation of children in the context of traditional extended family and kinship networks. Therefore some of their children are sent to stay with their relations. According to Alhassan (2013), an overwhelming majority of 91% of household heads in the Northern Region of Ghana practiced fostering against nine percent who did not practice fostering. He found that households fostered out both boys and girls to relatives of extended families in both rural and urban areas. However the study found fostering as common phenomenon in the rural areas with 67.8% of practice against 31.2% practice in the urban areas of Northern Region, Ghana.

In most cases children are sent to relatives for the purposes of them to get enrolled in schools. This however does not prevent them from performing household chores and other activities that severely affect their schooling. Many of them who get enrolled in schools may drop out due to irregular attendance and poor performance. This contributes to low educational attainment among foster children in Dagbon including Tamale Metropolis (Rolleston, 2011).

Rolleston (2009) found that the relative likelihood of foster children completing primary and secondary schools in the Savelugu-Nanton area, was 28% and 19% respectively compared to non-foster children. This indicates that there is lower progress in educational attainment among foster children in the area. On average, the enrolment of foster children



in school were also found to be less with higher drop out and less school achievement compared with non-foster children in the same home (Rolleston, 2011).

However, there have not been studies, to my knowledge, in the Tamale Metropolis that seek to examine fostering and educational attainment of foster children. It is therefore unclear whether fostering as a socio-cultural practice in the Tamale Metropolis affects the educational attainments of children who are fostered. Hence, this study seeks to investigate the educational attainment of foster children in the Tamale Metropolis in the Northern Region of Ghana.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are some of the factors that affect foster children educational enrolment in the Tamale Metropolis?
2. What are the school attendance rates of foster children who are enrolled?
3. What are academic performance of foster children under the care of their foster parents?
4. What other challenges do foster children face under foster parenting in the Tamale Metropolis?



1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 Main Objective

To assess the educational attainment of foster children under the care of their foster parents in the Tamale Metropolis.

1.4.2 Sub-Objectives

1. To examine some of the factors that affect foster children educational enrolment in Tamale Metropolis
2. To determine if foster children are able to attend school even if they are enrolled
3. To investigate the academic performance of foster children under the care of their foster parents
4. To examine some of the challenges foster children faced under foster parenting in the Tamale Metropolis

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study may serve as a source of reference for policy makers and civil society organisations (CSOs) in policy formulation and implementation of child education and welfare programmes in Tamale, Northern Region, and Ghana at large. Fostering and educational attainments of foster children in the Metropolis needs attention through advocacy. The findings of the study would therefore serve as pointers for NGOs and other stakeholders in the education sector in the metropolis to step up and develop appropriate programmes towards enhancing educational achievements by foster children.



The findings of the study will serve as source of knowledge and reference for researchers. The study will add to literature on the subject matter and hence contributing greatly to both academic and development knowledge. The findings of the study will add to literature particularly in the Tamale Metropolis as much studies have not focused on educational attainments of foster children in the Tamale Metropolis.

On the other hand, the gaps that will be discovered in this study will encourage other researchers and scholars to do further research to bridge those gaps so identified. The findings of the study may create research windows for other scholars with similar interest to undertake further research by identifying the issues that have not been captured and/or exhaustively addressed by this study.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The use of some terminologies or concepts was limited to the purpose of achieving the objectives of the study. The findings of the study could be useful to any institution or organization in policy planning and implementation in any part of Ghana and Africa at large. However, the study was also limited to the Tamale metropolis.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The thesis consisted of five chapters as follows:

Chapter one consisted of the introduction and background to the study, the problem statement, research question and objectives, the purpose of the study and how the



organization of the thesis. Chapter two contained an extensive review of relevant literature on the topic. Chapter three presented the profile of the study area and discussed the methodology of the study. Chapter four presented the results including analysis and discussing of findings of the study. Finally, chapter five presented a summary of the findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations of the study.



CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of some relevant literature on the subject matter of the study. It reviews relevant literature (both early studies and present studies) on the phenomenon of fostering, and it affects the educational attainments of foster children in (West) Africa and Ghana and particularly Northern Region. Some theories to back the study are also presented in this section.

2.2 Overview of Fostering

In many instances in the developed world, children are taken from the care of their parents and provided care for by state agencies, charities or private organisations because they have been, maltreated, orphaned or because their parents are absent, and neglected due to bad behaviours (Thoburn, 2010; Fernandez and Barth, 2010). Thoburn (2010) noted that estimating exact statistics on foster children from populations is complex since the definition of foster children varies and with many different ways of collecting statistics across countries.

However, the Adopted and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) report (2015) indicates that there were 415,129 foster children as of September, 2014, showing an increase from 400,989 foster children in 2013 in the USA. The report further indicated that, as of the same period in 2014, there were about 264,746 entries into foster homes



against 238,230 foster children who exited foster homes. Meanwhile, there were about 50,644 children who were adopted and about 107,918 children also waiting to be adopted by individuals and institutions into foster homes. In England, there were about 69,000 foster children as of March 2014, 67,000 in Canada as of 2007 and 40,000 in Australia as of 2012 (O'Higgins et al, 2015).

According to the National Working Group on Foster Care and Education (NWFCE - 2014), about 400,000 children and youth in foster care in the United States suffer negative effects of abuse, neglect, separation, and lack of permanency in their education. There were about 249,107 foster children of school age as of September, 2012 in the United States. Out of the number in school, it was found that the likelihood of foster children being absent from school was twice that of non-foster students. Regarding the number of foster children who change schools upon first entering care, the report found about 56%-75% foster children below 17 years changing schools. Foster children of age 17-18 who experienced five and more school changes accounted for 34%. The Working Group further indicated that the likelihood of foster children being expelled from school was thrice that of other students. Many of these foster children also experienced an average of 2.8 living arrangements by the end of 2011 in the United States (NWFCE, 2014). These children are almost twice likely to graduate from high school before leaving foster care (Pecora et al, 2006).

Several studies have shown that foster children frequently missed a substantial number of school days and therefore record higher school absence rates than their non-foster care peers. For instance, Castrechini (2009) found an average absence rate of about 12% among children in foster care compared to only 6% for non-foster children in San Mateo County



of California. The percentage of foster children leaving school at mid-year was also found to be 17% compared to only 2% for non-foster children.

2.3 History of Foster Care

The murder of infants in Europe reduced after the Middle Ages, when churches and workhouses came to take care of children whose parents were unable to take care of them due to poverty. Children of varying ages including infants were adopted by these institutions for care. Many of the infants placed in foundling homes died in their first year due to possibly less attention given by the care givers as compared to older children. Older children were given much attention because they could be engaged to perform some work activities unlike infants. Many of these working class of children were indeed not adults per their ages; a situation one could refer to as child labour in disguise. However, laws pertaining to cruelty to animals were said to be much more stringent than laws dealing with cruelty to children. Witnesses of this phenomenon relates that, at least one case, a child who was taken from the biological parents for reasons of abuse and neglect could be classified as been a member of the animal kingdom.

In the United States, 'The Placing Out System of the New York Children's Aid Society' was said to be the first foster family care programme that was established by Charles Loring Brace in 1853 to dispose vagrant children. The programme saw children taken from the streets of cities and from institutions and shipped to rural communities in the West or South of the United States to be taken by families. By 1923, there had emerged many private organizations in about 34 states which had shipped about 100,000 children between 1854



and 1929 in New York City to communities far from their homes. The evolution of ‘The Placing Out’ system also saw the emergence of public orphanages in about 20 states to provide temporary homes for destitute children. Foster family care system peaked in the 1930s and remained relatively stable until 1960, when they began to rise significantly across the United States and Europe.

The foster care system provides a situation where children are kept away from their biological parents for various reason including neglect, abuse, death and poverty. As children stayed in foster homes, they do not only become estranged from their biological parents but they are also faced with frequent movement and decision of adjusting to different environments and cultural settings.

2.4 The Phenomenon of Fostering and Foster Children

The phenomenon of foster care has placed individuals who spent their lives in fostering in disadvantage positions. These individuals are mostly in the category of people who are more likely than their peers in the general population to be unemployed, have mental health problems, spend time in prison or psychiatric institutions or experience homelessness at some point in their lives (Centre for Social Justice, 2015; Jackson and McParlin, 2006).

Children in care or foster children in many developed countries are taken care of by state agencies or institutions. Individuals can also care for children through adoption or through the establishment of orphanages where children who suffer neglect, abuse and lost parents at infancy are brought to care for. The state or institutions acquire some form of parental



responsibility over such children up the age that are matured and can care for their own. Foster children are usually taken from the care of their biological parents and provided with some form of support and alternative accommodation by state agencies, charities or private organisations (Thoburn, 2010; O’Higgins et al, 2015).

It has been a difficult task in estimating the size of the population of foster children across countries due to that fact that there has been variations in defining foster children and how they are cared for in different countries (Thoburn, 2010). That notwithstanding, there have been attempts at estimating foster children or children in care in some countries. It is estimated by the Australian Government (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2014) that, there were about 40,000 in Australia as of 2012 while in England, children in care were said to be close to 69,000 by the first quarter of 2014 (DfE, 2014b). Also, it was estimated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (2015) that there were over 400,000 children in foster in the USA by the close of the third quarter of 2013, and in Canada, there were about 67,000 foster children in 2007 (see Mulcahy and Trocme, 2010). In countries especially the developed countries where there are formal foster care systems for children who have been neglected, maltreated and have mental and other behavioral problems, the debate over the attainment gap turn to generate suggestions that place the blame on the care system (O’Higgins et al, 2015).

Several stakeholders including governments, policy-makers, practitioners, foster carers, teachers and including foster children themselves have shown great concern on the educational attainments of foster children across the world. Studies continue to show a significant educational achievement gap between foster children and their colleague non-foster children. According to the Department for Education (DfE, 2014b), in 2014 in



England, 71% of foster children in Key Stage 1 (age 7) achieved the expected level in reading; 61% in writing and 72% performed well at Maths compared with 90%, 86% and 92% of all children in those subjects respectively. This educational achievement gap widens, showing 48% of foster children achieving the expected academic level in English and Mathematics compared to 79% of all non-foster children. This results in fewer percentages of children in care getting to the tertiary education level compared to children not in care (DfE, 2012, 2014a).

Research has indicated that low educational attainment of foster children is a global challenge that has spanned over decades (Dill et al., 2012; Pecora, 2012), and has also manifested itself in areas of health, employment and general well-being of foster people (Blome, 1997; Buehler et al., 2000; Dill et al., 2012; Harris et al., 2009; Jackson, 2013; Social Exclusion Unit, 2003). As noted earlier, several studies have confirmed a wider educational attainment gap between foster care children and their peers in schools across countries in the world (Berridge, 2012; Forsman and Vinnerljung, 2012; Liabo et al., 2012; Tordön et al, 2014; Vinnerljung, et al, 2014; Rees, 2013, Townsend, 2012).

Also, Trout et al. (2008) found that children in care in the USA performed poorly at schools, as majority of them scored below average in class. There are some factors that are commonly associated with children in foster care which contribute to or affect their educational performance. Some of these include frequent school changes, high numbers of students been repeated in a grade, multiple absences and high exclusion rates (Scherr, 2007). It could therefore be said that the evidence of studies have been unanimous in concluding that foster children lag behind their peers on the educational attainment ladder



due to poor educational performance in class performance (examinations), school attendance, frequent change of schools and exclusions.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2011), attainment gap between children in care and their peers in every territory in Australia leaves for concern when it was found that children in foster performed poorly in literacy and numeracy tests than their non-foster peers (also see Townsend, 2012). In England, foster care children were found to perform below average in cognitive, reading and literacy test scores than children in the general school population (Rees, 2013). There is therefore enough evidence on the relationship between children in foster care and poor educational performance across countries in the world. That is, fostering appears to be negatively related to educational attainments of those children in foster care unlike their peers who are not under foster care.

According to Sylva et al. (2014), factors that affect the educational performance of children in foster care can be in the form of individual, family, school, community and policy issues. These and other several factors influence to some extent the educational attainments of children in foster care against their peers in the general population. Several studies on the educational attainment of foster children in terms of ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, gender, aspirations and special needs still reveal a wider performance gap between foster children and non-foster children in schools (see Burley and Halpern, 2001; Farrugia et al, 2006; Pears et al, 2013).

Geenen and Powers (2006), compared four groups of children namely, (1) children in care with special educational needs, (2) children in care who did not have special educational needs, (3) children with special educational needs who were not in care and (4) children in



the general population. They found that children in care with special educational needs performed worse than other groups. Also, children in care who did not have special educational needs were found to have similar outcomes to those children with special needs who were not in care. In another study, children in care were matched on socio-economic status to a community sample of non-maltreated children who lived with their parents. It was found that children in care performed worse than those living with their parents (Pears et al, 2010; Pears et al, 2013).

A study of different studies show that there exist a greater risk in fostering of children across the globe in terms of their educational outcomes as against their colleagues who are with their biological parents. It does not matter the factors at which the phenomenon of fostering is considered against, there is risk for children to perform poorly at school when they are taken in foster. This is because many foster children anywhere including Africa will most likely come from high-risk families that experience persistent poverty, low levels of education, unemployment, maltreatment, and other risks factors (Bhatti-Sinclair and Sutcliffe, 2012; Simkiss et al, 2012; Goodman and Gregg, 2010; Sylva et al., 2014). It is important to therefore focus on issues of much concern regarding educational outcomes of foster children since there is the tendency of the existence of other most influencing factors than what is commonly known in many studies.

Smithgall et al (2004) found that weaker academic performance may be attributable to some factors such as foster children attending lower-achieving schools, child maltreatment, racial inequalities and poverty. Fantuzzo and Pearlman (2007) indicated that children in foster care are more likely to be suspended, perform poorly and with low attendance at school than their colleagues who live with their biological parents. The maltreatment that



foster children suffer in foster homes turn to exacerbate their educational attainments and so therefore it remains a greater risk to children to be in foster care. Several studies have confirmed unequivocally that foster children on average, perform poorly in school than their non-foster colleagues. It is therefore important not only to discuss the factors that contribute to poor performance of foster children in school but for researchers and policy makers to discuss, formulate and implement effective educational and welfare policies for children in foster care across the globe.

According to Berger et al (2015), in 2012, about 6.3 million children were found to be in child protective services in the United States out of which, more than 460,000 were found in foster homes. Burley & Halpern (2001) also revealed that about 18,500 children in Washington State between 2000 and 2001 found themselves in foster homes due to abuse, neglect, abandonment, and/or family conflict. Majority of these (about 12,800 representing 70%) foster children were of school-going age. It is also the case that children in foster care are usually associated with multiple emotional and developmental challenges that requires special needs from foster parents and institutions. As some of these challenges and needs are easily observable, others may not. For instance, it may be somehow difficult for anybody to observe and report on the educational progress of foster children as compared to noticing their health challenges and needs in society (Burley and Halpern, 2001). This is because, unlike other challenges, educational challenges become difficult to identify or track due to regular changes in schools by foster children. Another factor is the high rate of absenteeism among foster children and the quality of schools they attend.

Several studies including the 1990 Oregon survey found significant educational gaps among children in foster care. In the survey, about 40 percent of foster parents indicated



that their foster children were performing below average at all levels (elementary, middle, and high school) compared to their peers who were not under foster care. Also, the Kidscreen pilot project by the Washington State Children's Administration found that about 45% of children in foster care had challenges in their respective schools out of about 55% of school-age children in foster care who had completed an educational status review. It has been found that foster youth are much less likely to have a high school diploma than their non-foster counterparts (Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (WSDSHS), 2001).

2.5 Factors Accounting for Lower Educational Attainment of Foster Children

The low educational attainment among foster children is attributable to multiple and interrelated factors that include pre-care experiences such as neglect and abuse, poverty, emotional challenges, and behavioral issues. It is important for institutions and individuals to understand these multiple interrelated factors so as to plan appropriately towards improving the performance of foster children in schools (Burley and Halpern, 2001).

Sawyer and Dubowitz (1994) opined that, even though some other factors contribute to low educational attainments of foster children, the pre-care experiences of these children such as abuse, neglect, and parental alcoholism turn to have everlasting effects on their learning abilities in school. A survey in the Washington State of the United States of America among over 8,200 found about 61% of foster care children entering into state care system due to neglect and child abuse on the part of their biological parents (WSDSHS, 2001). These pre-care experiences have the tendency of affecting their ability to develop



smart relationships with their instructors and peers in schools as well as other people they come into contact with (Seyfried et al, 2000).

Several research works have also established that majority of foster children have suffered emotional challenges which have affected their academic performance. The emotions that these children go through as result of poverty, abuse, neglect in both their biological parental and foster homes turn to contribute to a sense of abandonment and low self-esteem among foster children (Calix, 2009; Owusu and Adjei, 2009; Mahama, 2004). Consequently, foster children turn to become more vulnerable to frequent school withdrawal, anxiety, depression, inability to concentrate, and lack of social skills (dosReis et al, 2001). This is also evident in the Washington State report which found about 44% of foster children to be associated with learning problems, 35% had attention deficit disorder, 37% were found to be slow learners, 16% had a mental retardation or developmental delay, while 18% had challenges with speech or language (see WSDSHS, 2001).

Another factor that affects foster children's educational attainments include the instability they mostly experience in their schools as result of frequent changes or movements from one school to the other within a year or on yearly basis. The frequent changing of schools do not only disrupts the learning processes of foster children but also, it places children in perpetual new environments that lack continuity of relationships they developed with peers and teachers. Children will have to frequently adjust to different curriculum, standards, and teachers, and possible repetition of what they have already learned at their previous schools. There is also possibility of missing what they have not learned at their previous school in their new schools. According to Calvin (2001), an average of four to six months



of education is usually lost anytime students change schools whether they are in care or not.

It has been found that majority of foster children after leaving school become unemployed and lack self-sufficiency due to low educational attainments and lack of job skills (Seyfried et al, 2000). Mckellar (2010) noted that more than half of foster children are living in homes of non-relatives while about 25% also live with relatives which have regular contacts with the children and ensure that children are in school full-time. In the United States, schools that children in foster care attend are responsible for supervising the care of the children especially those living with non-relatives.

Mckellar (2010) also observed that the challenges that confront foster children are dynamic and unique and could not be generally applicable to all children in foster care. It is however mostly the case that majority of the biological parents of foster children are unable or unwilling to care for them. They are mostly neglected and abused in various ways. It is also the case that most of the foster parents are not able to take care by providing the needs including the educational needs of foster children due to household poverty (Al-Hassan and Abubakari, 2015). Even though foster children do not stay with their biological parents that will monitor their educational progress, it is not mostly the case that all foster children fail to achieve success in behavior change and education. Some foster students have thrived and become successful in life due to the level of stability, care, and guidance they enjoyed in their foster homes. Majority however turn to experience more physical, academic, and behavioral challenges than their peers who live with their biological parents (Mckellar, 2010).



2.6 Fosterage in the West African Sub-Region

The practice of parents placing their children in another family is an old phenomenon in many societies worldwide including Africa. Several studies found that the practice was especially common in West Africa (Isiugo-Ibanihe, 1985; Page, 1989; Pilon, 2003). This is because fostering is seen as a component in family structure and dynamics in the sub-region. English-speaking Africans use terms such as fosterage, fostering, adoption, child relocation and transfer, child circulation, child migration, child rearing delegation etc (see Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985, 1991). Fostering is by far the most commonly used word and adopted by this study. The diversity of all these terms and their definitions (which moreover are not always explicit) leads to a certain amount of confusion in the meaning and purpose of the practice of fostering.

Shepler (2005) noted that fosterage is a form of relationship that generally involves the exchange of children within an extended family or outside the extended family. It may refer to “the act of providing parental care and nurture to children who are not biologically related to the foster parent but who are children of the extended family members” (Alhassan, 2013:155). The practice of fostering is a common phenomenon in West Africa and takes different forms including kinship fostering, crisis fostering, alliance and apprentice fostering, domestic fostering, and educational fostering (see Kobiané et al. 2005: 473). Studies in some African countries indicate that between 5% and 28% of children are fostered in Burundi and Botswana respectively; while about 15% of households in Ghana are found to contain at least one foster child (see Akresh, 2009:977).

According to literature, the practice of child fosterage is widespread in West Africa resulting in about 25% to 40% of children been fostered. The practice has several





implications and drawbacks not only on education but on the health care of fostered children. As noted earlier, it is also abusive and child protection agencies, both national; and international, have often been loathe to embrace child fosterage in any form. They mostly argue that the arrangements drawn up between adults for children's care do not necessarily fit with what might be in the child's best interests (Oni, 1995; Shepler, 2005). Therefore, fostering is of increasing interest to child protection agencies and policy makers in West African countries and especially other parts of Africa where conflicts and HIV/AIDS is devastating adult populations and children are forced into novel living arrangements. It is of this context also that this study is very relevant to literature and development practice.

Fostering in Africa including West Africa may be explained by various varying factors including living environment, circumstances, age, sex, time periods and, societies in which the children find themselves. Also the traditional causes of fostering in West Africa widely vary from country to country. Children may be fostered due to death, divorce, illness, the parents' separation, mutual help among family members, child socialization/education and strengthening of family ties. Fostering in many West African countries like Ghana is commonly a form of not only showing family solidarity and a system of rights and obligations but it also helps maintain high fertility rates by evenly spreading out the economic burden of child-rearing (Pilon, 2003; Owusu and Adjei, 2009).

According to Pilon (2003), information from Demographic and Health Survey reports suggest foster children found in many households in most West African countries including Ghana were within the school enrolment age of between the ages of 6 to 14 years. A study



in three West African countries namely, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo, estimated that one out of four children between the ages of 10 and 14 lives with neither parents while one child in five does not live with both parents who are alive but reside elsewhere. This confirms the extent of child fostering in some West African countries. The study further revealed that fostering was higher in the most economically privileged households who are in the socio-professional categories such as middle or senior-level managers and the liberal professions. For instance, in the capital of Burkina Faso, it was found that fostering of girls was common among household heads with higher educational levels than household heads with low/no education. This was mostly common among female households than male households, especially in Togo. Urban female households hosted more foster girls. These foster girls provide labour for their household chores to the detriment of education. This also suggests that fostering was common in urban areas than in rural areas in some countries (Pilon, 2003).

While economists typically focus on economic motivations for fostering such as income, labour supply and resource allocation, anthropologists often emphasise kin obligations and traditions. Combining insights from both traditions, Isiugo-Abanihe (1985) identifies four major motives for fostering of children in West African. It might be expected that these would have rather different impacts on children's schooling access and outcomes.

Firstly, fostering may be motivated by a wish to improve a child's social mobility and opportunity, including by improving access to schooling. Secondly, it may be to manage an economic shock to the biological home such as death. Thirdly, it may be to satisfy the labour needs of the recipient household. Finally, it may be to meet kinship obligations and rights. In the first and second cases it may be expected that fostering could, potentially at

least, improve the access to education of the foster children relative to remaining in the biological home.

In the third it may be that fostering reduces the fostered child's access to education relative to her siblings, while in the fourth the outcome is more ambiguous and depends on the nature of kinship obligations. Moreover, sending and receiving households will typically differ not only in their resources and liquidity constraints but also in their preferences for education, among other factors (see Marazyan, 2009). Shepler, 2005 also noted that fostering may be done in order for children to have access to education or training, to increase family unity, to spread the burden and the benefits of child rearing throughout an extended family, etc.

Abubakari and Yahaya (2013) observed that fostering was common among polygamous families than monogamous families accounting for 66% and 34% respectively. This is because majority of fostered children were found to be living with large families or large household membership. About 46% of foster children were found to be living in families of between 6 and 10 people, 41% living in families of more than 11 people and only 13% were living in families of less than five people (Abubakari and Yahaya,2013). These fostered children in polygamous families tend to provide labour for domestic chores and also engaged other works especially girls, to supplement household income at the expense of their education/studies. Many of them are not being properly cared for by their foster parents. Owusu and Adjei (2009) also confirm that polygamous families result in child fostering. These children suffer all forms of discrimination, maltreatment and abuse in their foster homes.





There is growing concern about how fostering is affecting the education and wellbeing of foster children across West Africa and particularly in Ghana. Even though there exists an ambivalent relationship between fostering and education, school statistics and research have shown a significant educational achievement gap between foster children and non-foster children. The purpose of sending some children to relatives to attend school seem to be defeated in many instances in Ghana and other West African countries. These children in most cases rather turn out to be house helpers to those relatives they are staying with and this consequently keep them out of school (Owusu and Adjei, 2009; Jackson, 2013). This is usually attributed to the fact that some communities do not have schools and children have to attend school in other communities where there are schools especially in Ghana.

Consequently, enrolment of foster children in school turns to be low as compared to non-foster children or children of those they stay with. The academic performance of these foster children too are poor compared to biological children of their guardians. This situation was found to be common in Ghana, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo (Jackson, 2013; Pilon, 2003; Vandermeersch, 2000). However, orphans who were under care in Namibia, Mozambique and Nigeria were found to be more significantly likely to enroll in school than non-orphans (Nyangara, 2004).

Shepler (2005) also found that 41% of children in foster were attending school as against 49% who were not attending school. Meanwhile, eight percent were school dropouts and two percent were yet to reach schooling age. In terms of gender, the percentage of girls in school was far less than the percentage not in school. Thus, 29% of girls in foster were attending as compared with 61% girls not attending school, and about eight percent was said to be school dropouts while two percent was below school age. On the other hand,

35% of boys were not attending school as against 53% in school with five percent been school dropouts. About five percent was also undergoing training while two percent was below school age. In the case of girls, no girls were undergoing apprenticeship (Shepler, 2005). This further reveals how girls are negatively affected by fostering.

As a result of the foregoing situations of abuse and discrimination especially in the area of education, there is growing agreement especially in developed countries that children in care should be cared for in a community setting rather than in institutions (see Tolfree, 2003). Tolfree (2003: 5) proposes that “fostering programs need to be firmly embedded in the local community and supported by an agency with a solid knowledge of child development and child rights”. This is because “some traditional forms of substitute family care are not based on the best interest of the child and may both have negative impact on child development and infringe on children’s rights (Tolfree, 2003: 5). The primary concern is that there have not been equal treatment for foster and biological children, particularly in the areas of forced labor, access to health care and other family resources, and educational inequity between fostered and non-fostered children (Shepler, 2005).



2.7 Fostering and Foster Children in (Northern) Ghana

As noted earlier, the practice of fostering of children as a traditional obligation is generally West Africa and Ghana is no exception. Fostering is an important cultural practice among many ethnic groups in Ghana. According to the Ghana Living Standards Survey conducted in 2005/2006, the national prevalence of fosterage was about an average of 12% which Northern Region accounted for about 11%. It was particularly common among the

Dagomba and the Gonja in the Northern Region especially in past. It was found among the Gonja ethnic group that, about 20% of children were fostered (Goody, 1973). Traditionally, it serves to strengthen kinship solidarity and relationships among families including meeting needs for domestic labour. It is to promote kinship obligations and cultural rites. It also serves to meet labour needs of relatives as well as promote kinship obligations and cultural rites of those involved.

Studies have suggested that, fostering of children is a common phenomenon in northern Ghana and particularly common in Northern Region. It is also particularly most common in Dagbon and Gonja Kingdoms than other groups (Alhassan, 2013; Abubakari and Yahaya, 2013; Rolleston, 2011; Abukari, 2008; Mahama, 2004; Goody, 1973; Opong, 1977). Alhassan (2013) also found in his study that, an overwhelming majority of households in the Northern Region practice fostering. According to the author, fostering in Northern Region was more a rural phenomenon than urban since about 67.8% of the household heads were from rural areas while 31.2% were from urban areas. He however opined that fostering is/was an obstacle to education since many foster mothers and fathers were not willing to send their foster children to school. Foster girls were found to be most affected than foster boys in the area.

Majority of the people in the rural areas give out their children to other relatives in the urban areas to take care of. Men especially may not foster their children but even educated women would bring foster girls to their homes in the cities to perform household chores. Some of these relatives do not allow these children to attend school because they might not be able to complete household chores themselves. Where they are enrolled in school at all, they are sometimes withdrawn before attaining the basic school certificate. These girls tend



to be house-helps in the urban areas and are not allowed to attend school. Meanwhile their biological children will be attending school and doing less work too (Abubakari and Yahaya, 2013; Alhassan, 2013).

Fostering therefore serves as barrier to children education in northern Ghana and in Dagbon in particular. It contributes to the low levels of educational access and progress in northern Ghana (Rolleston, 2011). Despite the fact, attitudes towards schooling were largely positive, indirect costs were found to be the principal barrier to enrolment. It is suffice to say that the effects of fostering on enrolment and for that matter schooling can be positive if the cost of education is borne by the parents of the foster children and not the foster parents. It nonetheless still stands to reason that foster children experience lower levels of access to meaningful education than non-foster children due to some other factors. This is partly because they tend to live in areas and attend schools where meaningful access is lower (Rolleston, 2011; also see Rolleston, 2009). On average, the enrolment of foster children in school are less with higher drop out and less school achievement compared with non-foster children in the same home.



2.8 Fostering in Dagbon, Northern Region

As noted earlier, the practice of fostering of children as a traditional obligation is generally common in Northern Region and particularly in Dagbon. Fosterage among the Dagomba ethnic group is generally an old tradition that children are fostered out to mostly relatives who inherently become the guardians responsible for taking any decisions regarding the children. Male children are mostly fostered to paternal uncles while female children are

fostered to aunts. These children are mostly fostered at tender age of about five years. Children can also be fostered to their grandparents. However, children are sometimes fostered out to non-relatives who are family friends or professional such as Mallams (Islamic teachers) for purposes of learning a skill, trade, school, etc (see Mahama, 2004; Abubakari and Yahaya, 2013; Abukari, 2008).

In the traditions of the Dagomba kinship, upbringing and socialisation of children takes place in the context of extended family networks that are built mostly around patrilineal relationships. As such, children are believed to be well brought up and socialized by other extended family relations other than their biological parents. This ensures that the processes of child socialization and upbringing are not compromised by the biological parents of the child (see Oppong, 1977). This is also because “a child’s social parents according to Dagbon tradition are often paternal or maternal relatives who have exercised a customary right to raise and train children, often their nieces and nephews” (Rolleston, 2011: 4).

Children may also be fostered to sisters or mothers of their fathers in the event of divorce or of their mothers’ death. In this case, the fostered mother and her relatives may have more control or influence in directing the upbringing, schooling and work of these children. They perform various roles in the upbringing and socialization of the children. In this regard, the aunts of such children in particular tend to own such children than their biological parents. It said that in Dagomba tradition, the request for children especially girls by sisters of fathers of the children cannot be declined (see Oppong, 1973).

According to Abubakri and Yahaya (2013:66), about “43.2% of Dagomba women above 16 years, and 18% of men were brought up by people other than their biological parents”.





This explains how the traditional practice of fostering is cherished by the Dagombas in Northern Region. Children could be fostered at very tender ages of between two and four. Abubakri and Yahaya (2013) found that children as young as two and half years were fostered while many of them did not know the ages at which they were fostered. Children fostered at their tender ages turn out to be easy for their foster parents to control and properly brought up than fostering grown-ups. In such instances, children may grow up before knowing their biological parents since their biological mothers may not be allowed to visit their children. The visits of mothers are made minimal and gifts such as food, money, clothing or anything from mothers could be given to the children through the foster parents. This is to avoid or reduce the influence of mothers on the children at their foster homes.

The practice of fostering in Northern Region and particularly among the Dagombas is attributed to the fact that families want to maintain their ties among themselves. Abubakri and Yahaya (2013) found that over 60% of the fosterage cases in their study communities were as result of the fact that both biological and foster families wanted to maintain their family bonds and relationships. The people view fostering as an effective means of binding families together since the two families keep in touch with each other through visit to each other from time to time. In this case, the children are fostered irrespective of the economic conditions of both the biological and foster parents. “It does not matter where the relatives stay, parents are ready to send their children to their relatives under all circumstances; whether they live in town or in rural communities; it does not also matter whether they live in the same community or in different community; whether the foster parents are poor or rich. It does not also matter whether the community the child is being sent has school or

not, and whether the foster parent would hardworking, are careless, or do not know the traditions” (Abubakari and Yahaya, 2013: 69).

Fostering relationships are usually meant to serve some purposes which include training in skills acquisition, provision of domestic labour and in agriculture (Rolleston, 2011; CREATE, 2010). Among Dagombas, it is said that fostering a child to a relative may be seen as a ‘gift’ from the paternal home especially the case of foster girls to their aunts and grandmothers. This, according to Abukari (2008), is the reason why many foster children are treated as assets by their foster parents. These girls are given out in order to assist their aunts and grandmothers in fetching of water, washing dishes and other household chores. Biological parents may not also monitor to see how their children are faring at their foster homes. As a result, many these children who are fostered out for the purposes of schooling and or learning trade/skills end up as sources of domestic labour. Among the Gonja people of northern Ghana on the other hand, Goody describes the obligations of foster children as a form of paying back the foster parents in return for their upbringing in terms of care, support and training (see Goody, 1973).

It is however important to mention that, there is no clear-cut distinction of roles among foster and non- foster children pertaining to household or farm work performed by Dagomba children. All children in the household carry out household chores and farm work irrespective of their status as foster or non-foster children. It is culturally important among the people of northern Ghana for a man to foster a child mostly a girl to one of his sisters following the ritual roles she plays when the wife of the man got her first pregnancy to the delivery of that first child. Some rituals are usually performed when a married lady gets her first pregnancy in her marital home. Preferably, a sister of the husband performs these



rituals. Consequently, if the first child happens to be a girl, she is automatically fostered to that aunt who performed the rituals when the mother was pregnant. And if the first child is not a girl, the aunt waits until a girl is born and fostered to her (see Abukari, 2008).

As noted earlier, fostering is practiced for a number of reasons that are not exhaustive. Fostering as a traditional practice is intended to foster family relationships and ties among the extended family system in the form of kinship solidarity. Thus, fostering build family relations as children come to know their relatives better and also serve as link between the child's biological family and the foster family. Secondly, foster-parents may be considered more mature and experienced than the biological parents, and consequently may be less apt to 'spoil' or 'pamper' the child. Abukari (2008) emphasized on discipline, development of personal qualities and the development of Dagbon citizenship in explaining the reasons for fostering.

Also, in Dagbon tradition in particular, most children who are brought up by their biological parents are said have enjoyed unnecessary pampering and as result, such children mostly become 'spoiled' children. On the other hand, foster children are believed to receive the best upbringing since they are made to undergo hardships in the family (see Oppong, 1973). They grow to be better citizens who are not only capable of withstanding odds and hardships but also citizens who command social respect than children raised by their biological parents (see Abukari, 2008). As result, Abukari (2008) attributed the promotion of fosterage in Dagbon to the fact that male suitors in the past would usually prefer to marry ladies brought up by relatives other than the biological parents. He added that men could decline to marry girls who were brought up by their biological parents. This



is because foster ladies or children were considered to be more discipline with responsible personal qualities.

Fosterage is also seen as way of preparing children better for future life. The children are taught the values of life and grow up to be respectful to others and are well disciplined and hard working. The fact is that, biological parents tend to over pamper their children and are unable to apply stiff sanctions to the children when they go wrong. Many of these children turn not to respect people including elderly people, they are not hardworking, and they do not know the traditions in their families and communities as compared to foster children (see Abukari, 2008; Abubakari and Yahaya, 2013). In Dagbon in particular, girls are usually fostered to their aunts and grandmothers to acquire skills in household activities and others relevant for becoming a good wife. This is one of the major reasons why girls are mostly fostered to aunts and grandmothers. A study by Abubakari and Yahaya (2013) found that about 63% and 22.5% of fostered children mostly girls were living with their aunts and grandmothers respectively. Boys on the other hand are mostly fostered to their uncles and grandfathers to also learn how to become responsible men and husbands in society. Abubakari and Yahaya (2013) found that about 7% and 6% of children (mostly boys) were fostered to uncles and grandfathers respectively.

Fostering also tends to redistribute the wealth of other richer extended family members through taking care of some children from siblings to live with them. They take total care of the children in terms of everything that is needed for the upbringing of the children. The children also acquire knowledge, skills and other benefits (Rolleston, 2011; Opong, 1973). On the other hand, foster children also serve as source of domestic labour to their



uncles and aunts (foster parents). They carry out household chores which spare their foster parents time to attend to other activities (Oppong, 1973).

Children particularly girls can be fostered to maternal relatives in their marital homes due to death or infertility. In Dagbon, a woman who dies and leaves behind her young children may be fostered out to the sisters of her husband as well as her own sisters. Sometimes too, girls are fostered out as replacement for their lost (dead) aunts at the marital homes or as result of infertility of their aunts in their marital homes. The purpose, in this case, is to unite both sides of the paternal and maternal extended family and also to replace the deceased or infertile aunt to promote continuity of relations (Mahama, 2004; Eloundou-Enyegue et al, 2003).

Owusu and Adjei (2009) also indicated that fosterage is basically attributable to three main push and pull factors namely poverty, family disruption, and the death of a parent. According to them, the need for better living opportunities as a result of household poverty is a major push factor for fostering out children by their biological parents to their relatives or friends they presumed to of better economic standing elsewhere. Children from poor households who have to continue their higher education elsewhere are also fostered to relatives or people of better economic status in mostly the cities to continue education. It can also be partly said that the desire for a child to continue his/her secondary education may also result in fostering. The authors also noted that children may be fostered due to frequent family disruption particularly in polygamous marriages of the parents involved. Polygamous families are usually characterized with unnecessary rivalry, quarreling and mistrust amongst the co-wives and step-siblings. These may lead to broken homes and consequently resulting in school drop outs among affected children and fostering of



children concerned. Thus, fostering may be seen as a way of even relieving children from the frequent disruption (quarrels, rivalry, etc) in their families.

The third most important push factor, according to Owusu and Adjei (2009), for fostering is death of a parent or parents of children. Accounts from foster children in their study revealed that, death of one of the parents or both resulted in many of the children being fostered to their relatives such as aunts and uncles in other places. Single parent children especially due to death usually leave children in a state of neglect which compels their relatives (mostly aunts and uncles) to take the children to live with them (Owusu and Adjei, 2009; also see Owusu, 2007).

2.9 Fostering and Education of Foster Children in Northern Ghana

As noted earlier, there is an ambivalent relationship between fostering and schooling even though there are complex variety and range of fostering practices in West Africa resulting from the differences in culture. The differences and variations in cultures among ethnic groups is the reason for differences in fostering practices and the functions of fosterage. Accordingly, the effects of fostering on particularly schooling reflect the culture, gender of children and the context within which fostering is practiced (Rolleston, 2011; Rolleston, 2009; Pilon, 2003). Some children are fostered in order to access or improve educational opportunities, while fostering may also prevent or inhibit the enrolment of other children.

According to Pilon (2003), the effects of fostering on schooling or education depends on the nature of relationships between the family of origin and the host family; regarding who bears the cost of education and living of the child at the foster home. That is, a situation



where the biological parents of family of origin of the foster child still takes care of the educational and other expenses of the child, there effect on schooling may be positive since this will limit the level of authority and responsibility of the foster family on one hand and reciprocal responsibility of the child on the other. Conversely, where the cost of education and upbringing of the child are left solely to the host family, the effects on the education of the child will be negative since the host family has absolute authority over the child and the reciprocal responsibilities of the child will also be many for him/her to perform.

Fostering traditions and functions are thus, interwoven and cannot be separated from each other. As a result, the effects of fostering on education are equally not straightforwardly identifiable and are indeed highly contingent. Also, the effects and functions are evolving owing to cultural dynamics which are interlinked with rapid social, demographic and economic change in Dagbon (see Rolleston, 2011; CREATE, 2010). The effects of fostering on educational attainment of foster children is one with greater magnitude particularly in Dagbon. It is known that foster children provide for domestic and agriculture labour at their foster homes in many instances to the expense of education. They also work more than the biological children of their foster parents. An early study by Oppong (1966) found that households may foster out their children to attend school while some children will be reserved at home by the family head to provide for labour in the family.

However, fostering for education purposes does not appear to be a major reason for fostering particularly in urban areas like Tamale in the Dagbon kingdom. In one of the early studies on fostering, it was revealed that fostering for the purpose of access to schooling was only a reason in the early years of state education in northern Ghana. It was due to the long distances that children (mostly boys) had to journey to schools in the few





urban centers. These boys were usually fostered to other relatives in towns especially the regional capital, Tamale, in order to attend school (Oppong, 1973). Oppong (1973:70) noted further that, “while living in town, the boys would perform domestic chores in teachers’ or clerks’ households in return for a place to stay”. In recent years however, travelling distances to school in Dagbon and other areas have considerably reduced both in urban and rural Dagbon, due to increased number of schools which consequently reduced the need to foster to access school. The differences in status and roles of foster children presents significant burden that constraint their performance at schools compared to non-foster children.

Mostly, foster girls in traditional Dagbon live with female relatives which they may not be able to cater for their educational needs due to limited household resources. The family resources may not be adequate enough to cater for educational needs of extra children in the household. As a result, little attention may be given to foster children education (if even they are enrolled) compared the attention given to the education of the biological children (see Abukari, 2008; Al-Hassan and Abubakari, 2015).

Foster children particularly girls also do more work in the house. Besides, most foster mothers may prefer marriage for foster girls over schooling (Rolleston, 2011; Abukari, 2008). This is common when the girl is getting to her adolescent age (from age 9 and above) which also represents increases in the girl’s potential contribution in terms of labour. They are usually sent out to fetch water, gather shea nuts, harvest groundnuts, maize, guinea corn, rice, etc. They are even sometimes forced to go for Kayaye (head porting) in cities and towns in southern Ghana. At this point, girls who have already begun schooling start to face many difficulties in combining household work with studies which manifest in

decline in both attendance and performance at school, and consequently drop out (Abukari, 2008).

Abukari (2008) found in his study that between a third and a half of girls in Savelugu township were fostered to their aunts and grandmothers. Many of these fostered girls who were attending school were found in the English-Arabic schools while biological children of foster mothers were in different schools. The study further indicated that vast majority of biological parents of the foster children surveyed were illiterates and, in many instances, the provision of school uniforms and other expenses was the responsibility of foster parents. Besides, about two thirds of fostered girls were engaged as sales girls in their foster parents' businesses to the detriment of their education while some other foster children helped with chores and childcare. These interfere with their schooling by affecting performance due to irregular attendance, lack of study time at home and inadequate learning materials, etc (Abukari, 2008).

An analysis of information from the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) in 2005/2006 showed a significant educational or enrolment gap between foster children and non-foster children. It revealed that 45% of fostered girls and 57% of fostered boys had ever attended compared to 51% and 62% of non-foster children and 61% respectively. School dropout rate was twice as high among foster children than non-foster children in the Northern Region (GLSS, 2006).

According to Rolleston (2011), the enrolment of foster children in schools appear to be high at primary levels than Junior High School (JHS) levels and that the highest proportions of these children are found in the English-Arabic primary and rural basic schools. These



schools are often schools or school communities with lower average attainment scores and higher drop-out rates. The author found that foster children accounted for between around 9 and 33% of all children at primary level, and around 9 to 25% at JHS level. Rolleston (2011) found that, about 51.7% of surveyed children in the Savelugu-Nanton District were living in foster households. School dropout rates were higher for foster girls (about 25%) than non-foster boys (6%).

Further, Rolleston (2011) found that fostered children have 19% chance lower than biological children who are attending school. The study indicates a negative effect of fostering on attendance at school for both boys and girls. It also suggests that fosterage was almost twice as prevalent (at 18.7% of all children) in the Savelugu-Nanton District and that it was found to be higher for girls, at 22.6%, compared to 15.7% for boys. The study also indicates that foster boys were typically more over-age for their grades while foster girls were more likely to drop-out of school. This therefore serves as an obstacle and contributory factor to the disparities in the educational attainment among deprived children especially girls despite significant efforts by government in terms of policy interventions towards achieving universal basic education in Ghana.

The extent to which fostered girls are engaged in domestic chores affects their educational advancement. Some of the daily activities such as washing of dishes, fetching of water, cooking, sweeping the compound, among other activities make children so tired that they cannot focus on studies both at school and at home. These are activities that fostered children have to perform before they go to school and after they close from school. This contribute to late attendance at school by foster children. Sometimes, they have to forfeit



attending school to enable them perform these activities at home. It is common among foster girls that they may not attend school regularly as compared to foster boys.

Abubakari and Yahaya (2013) found that, in Dagbon, an average of 26% of foster girls and 16% of foster boys do not attend school regularly as result of performing household chores. The study further indicated some conditions such as no/poor electricity, overcrowded rooms, no study furniture, lack of concentration/interruption due to disturbance of siblings, etc serve as obstacles to learning of foster children at homes. It revealed that about an average of 59.5% of foster boys did not have conducive atmosphere to learn at home as against 65% in the case of girls due to one or more of the mentioned factors. It was suggested that on the average, approximately 42.8% of foster boys and 57.1% of foster girls do not have time to do their homework at their foster homes due to performance of household chores and other obligations. Also, an average score of 24.6% for foster boys and 30.2% for foster girls were found to frequently not return to school after break time in Dagbon (see Abubakari and Yahaya, 2013).

These reveal how fostering is affecting the educational attainments of affected children in northern Ghana and particularly in the Tamale Metropolis and its surrounding communities. The living conditions at the homes of most fostered children are not conducive for their educational development. The children also suffer all manner of maltreatment that put them at a disadvantaged position as compared to their counterparts who live with their biological parents. As a result, dropout among foster children in school turn to be very high. It is estimated that, there was an average drop-out rate of 34.5% among fostered children with about 31.9% for boys and 37% for girls in Dagbon (see Abubakari and Yahaya, 2013). This may be attributed to some reasons such as excessive domestic



work, poor performance at school, poverty, farming, lack of parental support, neglect, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, etc. It is especially the case where the biological parents of these children leave the total care of their children to the foster parents in terms of feeding, clothing, payment of schools fees and provision of uniform and books, etc. Suffice to say that, some children would probably never have had access to school in many West African countries including Ghana without the family solidarity practice of fostering (Shepler, 2005).

2.10 Theories Explaining Fostering and Educational Attainments of Foster Children

The study adopts the attachment and ecological theories for its theoretical framing. Therefore, these theories are discussed below.

2.10.1 Attachment Theory

The attachment theory posits that lack of a permanent emotional relationship of a child with a mother or mother substitute results in the children lacking affection and also unable to make permanent friends. They mostly also appear to be highly indifferent to what others thought of them (see Cassidy, 1999; van Dijken, 1998). The theory also draws on the observational studies to individual differences in attachment.

The Attachment Theory suggests that the earliest years of a child's life are critical for later development. Infants are born biologically predisposed to form relationships from which they can experience security and comfort (Golding, 2007). Bowlby, who proposed the theory, believes children are influenced by the multi-disciplinary environment of the child



guidance and so children are part of a dynamic relationship of society. He therefore took interest in the family and real-life experience of the children. As a result, Bowlby viewed the problem of maternal deprivation as a social problem, the impact of which would be felt through successive generations (see Bowlby, 2004). The Attachment Theory therefore seeks to provide a framework for understanding child development and especially its origins in early relationships. Much attention has been placed on infant attachment, individual differences, and ways to improve sensitivity of care-giving. This makes the theory a multi-level theory. The theory has been explored in particular interventions for children who have been maltreated and further traumatised by separation as they move into foster and adoptive homes.

Attachment Theory as a multi-level theory

The theoretical construct of the attachment theory also focused attention on the cognitive level of the child. This explains how early attachment experience guides later expectations about relationships and increases understanding about transgenerational continuities in attachment relationships. Thus, the cognitive skills of children progress through a series of stages in which new information from experiences is taken in and understood. These stages include the sensori-motor (ages birth to 24 months) and preoperational (ages 2–6 years) periods (Armstrong et al, 2014). During the sensori-motor period, children do not only learn to coordinate and repeat actions which are pleasurable but they also start to understand that symbols (words) may represent objects that exist, even when not visible. The preoperational period on the other hand is a period where children learn language by usually engaging in pretend plays, eg, they will take on roles such as Mommy or Daddy in

plays. Here, play becomes a significant means through which children learn and internalize social rules, which develops self-regulation, and relationships with others. However, children are still unable to comprehend the views of other people and therefore remain egocentric (Armstrong et al, 2014).

The attachment theory also posits that as infants mature they learn to actively seek attention, rather than just passively respond. It becomes necessary for providing for the needs of children both physically and emotionally. The ability of carer to ensure reliability in meeting the infant's needs also builds the ability of the infant to learn and control the interaction with different people. Trust in the availability and responsiveness of the carer develops. As infants start to discriminate between people selective attachment bonds are forming. The child also develops trust and preference for being comforted by carers rather than more unfamiliar people.

The theory further posits that children in their second year develops active attachment systems that predispose them to seek proximity to and protest separation from the attachment figure when stress or discomfort increases (Golding, 2007). Therefore, the child develops a secure attachment when the carer (foster parent) is attentive, reliable and sensitive to needs of the child which leads to an expanded range of exploration and interest in novelty. Thus, whereas safety expands the child's range of exploration, fear constricts the child's opportunities (see Fosha, 2003).

Continuous provision of sensitive care/needs makes children develop capacity for self-regulation. This makes children feel understood, handled and contained and are able to manage themselves (Howe, 2005). The relationship the carer or foster parent has with the



child serves as a sensor to the child's experience and future wellbeing (Howe, 2005; Fonagy et al, 2002). Thus, the form of care (good or bad) children in foster receive from their caregivers (foster parents) has direct relationship with mentalising capacities of the children concern.

The import of the theory is that the early social environment, mediated by the primary caregiver, directly influences wiring of the child system and the future social and emotional coping capacities of the child (Schoore, 2003). Therefore, children or infants tend to develop attachment relationships within which they experience contingent communication, psychobiological attunement and feelings of safety during the first two years after birth (see Siegal, 2003).

The attachment relationship offered by the foster parent or carer to children between two and four years is that of socialization. The focus of the foster parent or caregiver should be primarily on how the child learns to maintain safety and to socially fit well in society. This process of socialisation is mediated by the experience of both shame and feel of being loved through demonstration of different scenarios of misattunement and re-attunement. This provides the child with essential experience leading to the capacity for impulse control and socially appropriate behaviour (see Schoore, 1994).

Insecure attachment, difficulties in attachment and attachment disorder

According to the attachment theory, a child who is experiencing insensitive, neglecting or rejecting parenting is said to be in an insecure attachment which is usually reflected on how the child organizes his/her behaviour (see Ainsworth et al., 1978). Foster children behave



in response to the behaviour of the foster parents. For instance, in situations where the child feels rejected by the carer, he/she may minimise attachment behaviour in order to maintain closeness to his/her carer through passive and withdrawn behaviour with little display of emotional distress. This is known as avoidant attachment. On the other hand, the child may also adopt the ambivalent-resistant attachment form in order to maximise attachment behaviour to elicit care from inconsistent carers or parents. In this case, the child exhibits a demanding and clingy behavior with extreme emotional distress with resistance to being soothed and comforted (Golding, 2007).

Golding (2007:18-19) noted that “disorganised patterns of behaviour develop when carers are frightened or frightening to the child. The child is unable to organise his or her behaviour at times of stress because the carer is both the source of fear and the potential for safety”. Consequently, the child develops self-reliance and control mechanisms as remedy to the situation as he/she transitions into maturity. The child, based on early patterns of avoidant or ambivalent relations, adopts highly organised but controlling ways of interacting with the parent or carer (see Crittenden et al., 2001). However, these strategies only serve to provide a fragile feeling of security, which can quickly break down with increased stress and neediness (Howe, 2005).

These relationships in attachment are further simplified in the below table:



Table 2.1: Secure, insecure and difficulties in attachment

<p>Secure Attachment Sensitive responsive caregiving Child feels: Trust in self Trust in others ‘I am good, you are good’</p>	<p>Ambivalent Attachment Inconsistent, caregiving Child feels: Distress in self Needy of others ‘You will attend to me, but I fear abandonment’</p>
<p>Avoidant Attachment Rejecting caregiving Child feels: Trust in self Distrust towards others ‘I will do it by myself, I fear closeness’</p>	<p>Disorganized Attachment Frightening caregiving Child feels: Frightened of self Frightened of others ‘I am powerful, I am scared, I fear’</p>

Source: Adopted from Golding (2007:19)

The challenges in attachment are categorized as insecure attachment, attachment difficulties and attachment disorder to describe a series of difficulties children under care experienced from increased feelings of insecurity at one end to a failure to develop any selective attachments at the other. Insensitive parenting has the tendency of increasing risk and reducing resilience for children in the face of future difficulty. As a result, the child then develops relationship strategies as coping mechanism which get increasingly complex in the face of extreme insensitivity as the child matures. In summary, secure attachment makes children develop trust in others and self-reliance as well as articulate positive signals of attachment and explore their needs in a straightforward way, while insecure attachment impacts on how (positive or negative) children approach current and future relationships. Attachment difficulty results in trauma and thus, impacts on how children organise their behavior in relation to others. Lastly, attachment disorder (called Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD)) results in the inability of children to form meaningful intimate relationships and they lack opportunities for selective attachment due to complete lack of consistent caregiving.





Attachment theory posits that negative experiences such as maltreatment/abuse from early relationships are carried forward to other settings and other relationships which may include the children's cognitive models concerning the self and others formed through their history of interactions (see Bretherton & Mulholland, 1999). The Attachment theory thus, contributes to an understanding of the effects of foster care placement on the quality of relationships, well-being, and educational experience of foster children. The theory may also serve as a guide to interventions to building healthy relationships with foster parents, teachers, and other people in the lives of foster children. These attachments can be used to promote the education of youth in care as well as provide them with a nurturing and supportive environment.

Even though attachment theory contributes to the understanding of the effects of fostering on the quality of relationships, well-being, and educational experience of foster children, it has some limitations. A major limitation of the attachment theory is however that, the list of attachment behaviors is limited to those that occur with the primary attachment figure- usually the mother (Calix, 2009). The theory is also controversial and lacks acceptance by the psychoanalytic community because it is not comfortable with some social practices. This has called for focus on experiences of early child deprivation, and a renewed interest in the integration of multidisciplinary scientific understanding of these children (Golding, 2007; Bowlby, 2004).

2.10.2 The Ecological Theory

In the formulation of the ecological theory, the environment is conceptualised as a series of contexts, each located inside the next (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 1992; Bronfenbrenner 2001). Bronfenbrenner (1979) conceptualizes the environment as a set of four embedded regions namely the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem.

The microsystem, Bronfenbrenner (1992: 148) explained, “is a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief”. It is the individual’s immediate environment in which he/she directly participates and interacts with family, friends, neighborhood, and school (see Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The mesosystem “comprises the interrelation among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: 25). Thus, it “comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person” (Bronfenbrenner, 1992:148).

The exosystem is “one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: 25). It “encompasses the linkage and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not ordinarily contain the developing person, but in which events occur that influence processes within the immediate setting that does contain that person” (Bronfenbrenner, 1992:148). Lastly but not least is the macrosystem which “consists of the overarching pattern of micro, meso, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture,



subculture, or other broader social context, with particular reference to the developmentally instigative belief systems, resources hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options, and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems” (Bronfenbrenner, 1992:149). It reflects the larger cultural institutions that include the economic, social, political, educational, and legal systems of the society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

These four systems operate as one system both within themselves and in relation to each other. This conceptualisation provides significant insights for scholars to understand and research the dynamic multilevel environment in which a person is embedded (see Lerner 2005). Bronfenbrenner then opines that “the ecology of human development involves the scientific study of progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is embedded” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: 21).

The microsystem represents the child’s immediate social and physical environment and emphasises the role of proximal processes in development. According to Bronfenbrenner (2001:6) “human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects and symbols in its immediate external environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time”. Children of four years and above usually have interactions with their teachers in school, parents, their colleagues and other groups.





These proximal processes are not only limited to interactions with people, but include objects and symbols in the child's immediate environment which invites reciprocal interaction in the form of attention, exploration, manipulation, elaboration and imagination (Stivaros, 2007). Children may also engage in solitary play, reading, problem solving, making plans, learning new skills and studying. Participating in any of these activities over a considerable period of time exposes children to better practice and understandings of these activities. This improves the children competence and development since they serve as primary reciprocal actions within the child's immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner 2001).

The theory emphasises that, multiple factors influence and shape the course of development of a child. It is therefore important to take into account how different environments/systems affect the educational achievement of foster children because they spend a significant amount of time in a variety of systems, including their family, homes, schools, peer groups, and neighborhoods (Nash, 2002). Academic challenges among children do not occur in isolation but are usually caused or are exacerbated by the prevailing environmental conditions around them. For instance, in the microsystem which is the immediate environment of the child, factors such as family structure (e.g., living in a single-parent family), low parental involvement, child maltreatment, parental substance abuse, neighborhood social disorganization, and low family socio-economic status can negatively affect the educational achievement or performance of the child (Moffit and Caspi, 2001; Harker et al., 2003; Calix, 2009).

The practice of fostering therefore turns to introduce new factors into the microsystem of children which negatively affect their educational achievement. Fostering does not only

results in the separation from family of origin and friends, but it also results in multiple placement settings and school transfers. This process disrupts the degree of attachment (foster) children have with their foster parents, peers, social workers, and teachers which can significantly also affect their educational achievement (Emerson and Lovitt, 2003; Robertson, 2005).

Theory is of the view that, lack of regular contact with foster care children by teachers, foster parents, and social workers within the mesosystem of foster children may negatively affect their educational attainments (Stone et al., 2007). Also, factors such as structural inequality and racially/tribally biased decision-making within the exosystems of foster children may also significantly affect the educational achievement of these children (Chipunga and Bent-Goodley, 2004). Within the macrosystem of (foster) children, factors such as belief systems and cultural institutions such as economic, social, political, educational, and legal systems and the pattern of social interchange of these institutions in society determines/influences their educational attainments (Stone et al, 2007). For instance, effective educational policies and legal frameworks can call for public attention and premium placed on education and welfare of foster and other underprivileged children to better the educational outcomes of these children. Where this is lacking, it will negatively affect the educational achievements of foster children.

The Ecological theory however, has some limitations. It does not take into consideration time dimension in examining persons within their environment. The theory does not also take into account the context in conceptualizing the environment of persons vis-à-vis individual characteristics such as gender, class, tribe, race, etc (Calix, 2009).



2.11 Linking the theories to the findings of the Study

The attachment theory focuses attention on the cognitive level of children and posits that children in care (foster children) mostly lack permanent emotional relationship with their parents which results in lack of affection as well as making permanent friends among foster children. Therefore, Bowlby viewed the problem of parental deprivation as a social problem, the impact of which would be felt through successive generations of affected children (Bowlby, 2004). Thus, the theory posits that lack of cordial emotional relationship between foster parents and children results in the children lacking affection and also unable to make permanent friends. This was confirmed in the findings of the study where some foster children felt abused because their foster parents usually rain insults on them for the least mistakes they make at homes and also restrict them from having fun with their colleagues in most of the time. These mostly put them in a state of being indifferent to others.

The attachment theory also suggests that the earliest years in a child's life are critical for the future development of the child since children begin to form relationships of security and comfort. Therefore, the experiences foster children go through at their early ages in foster within the multi-disciplinary environment influences the development of relationship in society. Hence, biological parental deprivation has everlasting impact on the lives of these foster children as suggested by the proponent of the theory. The attachment theory also focuses attention on the cognitive level of the children to demonstrate how cognitive skills of children progress through a series of stages in which new information from experiences is taken in and understood. As result, children who start schooling at early stages tend to perform well academically, as suggested in the findings of the study.



The findings also confirm the position of the theory that foster parents (caregivers of children) have to facilitate by monitoring and providing (educational) opportunities for foster children to explore for development. The ability of foster parents to adequately provide the educational needs of foster children enhances their ability to learn and control the interaction with different people including teachers and school peers.

The children also develop a secure attachment when the foster parent are attentive, reliable and sensitive to educational and other needs. The study found that foster children who were provided with adequate educational needs and attention were performing well in school. Provision of sensitive educational and other needs serves as motivation for children be serious with learning and self-regulated their study times with household chores and other activities. This makes children to understand and be understood. It also makes them feel happy and secure in their foster homes. In the study, those foster children who were provided adequate educational needs were feeling and performing better than those who were not. Also, some foster adolescent girls who were provided adequate needs including menstrual pads by their foster parents were feeling more secure than those who did not have enough. Insensitive parenting was seen a factor for increasing risk and reducing resilience of children in their bid to attain higher academic levels.

From the foregoing, the findings of the study support the position of the attachment theory that the early social environment of foster children, mediated by the foster parent, directly influences wiring of foster children system, socially and emotionally including the educational attainments. The theory posits that negative experiences such as maltreatment/abuse from early relationships are carried forward to other settings which affects their cognitive models. Therefore, foster children that were found to have been



suffering some maltreatment in the form of discrimination and abuse mostly appear sad instead been cheerful. They do not have adequate free mind in the household and live with the fear of being abused. This affects their education in the sense that, they have no free mind to learn both at school and home.

In the school environment children form attachments with their schools, teachers and peers which is a motivational factor to their academic attainments. Therefore, frequent changes in placement settings and schools turn to greatly inhibit foster children's school attachments and sense of belongingness to their schools, and make them inaccessible to the positive and protective factors that school attachment provides. Foster children who experience frequent changes in schools are unable to enjoy such rich and beneficial student-teacher relationships.

The ecological theory on the other hand posits that, multiple environmental factors influence and shape the course of (educational) development of children. Therefore, different environments/systems affect the educational achievement of foster children in a variety of systems, including their family, homes, schools, peer groups, and neighborhoods. The findings of the study demonstrate a relationship to this from the fact that foster children leave their biological families to find themselves with a new family where they have to familiarize themselves with the new environment of family, school, teachers and peers. Some of them who are unable to cope with their new school environment in particular were found to drop out of school as contained in the findings of the study. The findings confirm that fostering does not only result in the separation from family of origin and friends, but it also results in multiple placement settings and school transfers, which may negatively affect the educational attainment of foster children.



The findings of the study also found that foster children who receive adequate attention and are not discriminated against in terms of educational needs by participating in extra classes at home together with their non-foster siblings were performing academically. This relates to the theory's position that children of four years and above mostly engage in solitary play, reading, problem solving, making plans, learning new skills and studying together over and over with friends within their immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner 2001).

The theory also posits that, academic challenges among (foster) children do not occur in isolation but are exacerbated by the prevailing environmental conditions around them. Factors such as low family socio-economic status, discrimination, child abuse and inadequate child freedom to recreation were found to negatively affect the educational achievement foster children. Within the macrosystem of (foster) children, factors such as belief systems and cultural institutions such as economic, social, political, educational, and legal systems and the pattern of social interchange of these institutions in society determines/influences their educational attainments. For instance, effective educational policies and legal frameworks can call for public attention and premium placed on education and welfare of foster and other underprivileged children to better the educational outcomes of these children. Where this is lacking, it will negatively affect the educational achievements of foster children.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) believes the immediate environment in which (foster) children directly participate and interact with family, friends, neighborhood, and school are key to their development including educational development. The theory therefore emphasizes on participation of the developing persons (herein the foster children) as active participants in



the learning and development processes of such individuals as foster children in the four types of environment.

In the case of this study, foster children are mostly in the exosystem where they are not involve as active participants, and are rather affected by, what happens in the setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, many foster children are not actively involved in the learning both at school and home due to over engagement in several household chores. For instance, many foster children do not attend high performing schools unlike non-foster children do. They are not mostly included in extra tuition classes at homes as non-foster children. These are due to that fact that, they are detached from their biological parents and therefore lack permanent relationship and affection, as noted in the attachment theory. Thus, the practice of fostering introduces new factors into the immediate of foster children which negatively affect their educational achievements.

The import of the ecological theory in relation to the study is that, the academic challenges among foster children do not occur in isolation but are usually exacerbated by the prevailing environmental conditions around them. So, factors such as family structure (e.g., single-parent family), low parental involvement, child maltreatment, parental substance abuse, neighborhood social disorganization, and low family socio-economic status can negatively affect the educational achievement or performance of foster children. `



CHAPTER THREE

3.0 STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the study area (Tamale Metropolis) and the methodology adopted by the study. It presents brief background of the Tamale Metropolis in terms of its background and location; population size, structure and composition; relief and climatic conditions; political system; social, religious and cultural structure; economic and educational characteristics of the people of the Tamale Metropolis. The chapter also outlines the methodology of the study, thus, it discusses the research design, sampling procedure, sample size, target population and methods of data collection and analysis.

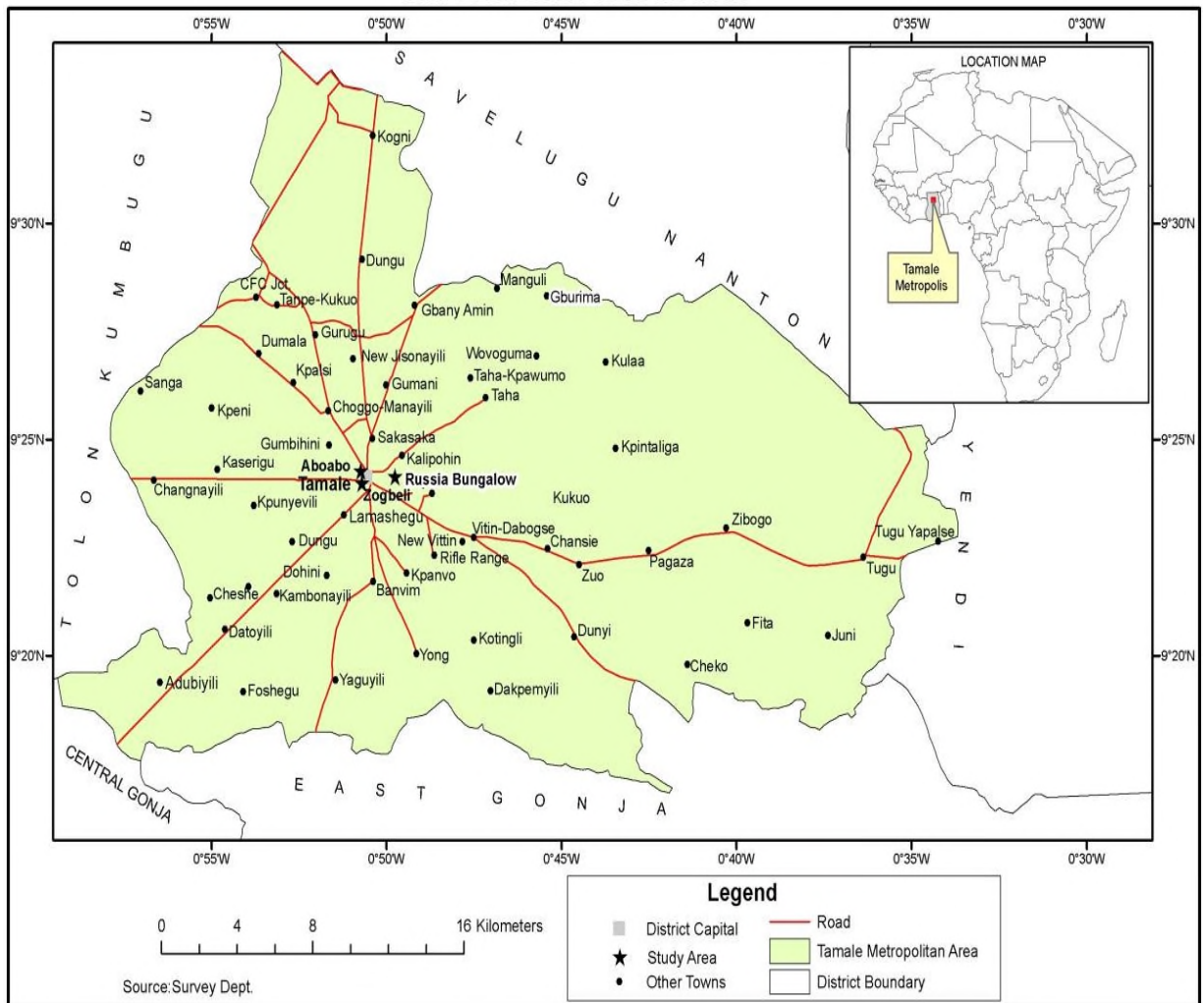
3.2 Profile of the Study Area

3.2.1 Background of the Tamale Metropolis

The Tamale Metropolitan Assembly was established by legislative instrument (LI 2068) which elevated the then Municipal Assembly into a Metropolis in 2004. At present, it is one of the six Metropolitan Assemblies in the country and the only Metropolis in the three regions of the North namely: Upper East, Upper West and Northern Regions. It has Tamale as the Metropolitan capital city and at the same time the regional capital of the Northern Region. The figure (Figure 3.1) below shows the map of the Tamale Metropolis.



Figure 3.1 Map Tamale Metropolis



Source: Survey Department (2011)

3.2.2 Location and Size and Physical Features

The Tamale Metropolis is one of the 26 districts in the Northern Region. It is located in the central part of the Northern Region and shares boundaries with the Sagnarigu District to the West and North, Mion District to the East, East Gonja to the South and Central Gonja to the South-West. The Metropolis has a total estimated land size of 646.90180sqkm (GSS-2010). Geographically, the Metropolis lies between latitude 9°16 and 9° 34 North and longitudes 0° 36 and 0° 57 West (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2012; GSS, 2014).

Tamale is strategically located in the Northern Region and by this strategic location, the Metropolis has a market potential for local goods from the agricultural and commerce sectors from the other districts in the region. Besides the comparative location of the Metropolis within the region, the area stands to gain from markets within the West African region from countries such as Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali and the northern part of Togo and also enroute through the area to the southern part of Ghana.

There are 115 communities in the Metropolis. Most of the rural communities have a large expanse of land for agricultural activities and serve as the food basket for the Metropolis. However, these communities still lack basic social and economic infrastructure such as good road networks, school blocks, hospitals, markets and recreational centers, thereby hindering socio-economic development, poverty reduction and reducing the general phenomenon of rural-urban migration.

3.2.3 Population Size, Structure and Composition

The population of Tamale Metropolis, according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, is 233,252 representing 9.4 percent of the region's population. Males constitute 49.7 percent and females represent 50.3 percent. Tamale has an annual population growth rate of 3% and the population is expected to be more than 1,000,000 by the year 2020. It is considered as one of the fastest growing cities in Ghana (Al-Hassan and Abubakari, 2015). The proportion of the population living in urban localities (80.8%) is higher than that living in rural localities (19.1%) of the metropolis. The metropolis has a sex ratio of 99.1. The population of the metropolis is youthful (almost 36.4% of the population is below 15 years) depicting a broad base population pyramid which tapers off with a small number of elderly



persons (60 years and older) representing 5.1%. The total age dependency ratio for the district is 69.4, the age dependency ratio for rural localities is higher (86.5) than that of urban localities (65.7) (GSS, 2014).

The metropolis has a total of 219,971 households, living in 19,387 houses. The average household size in the metropolis is 6.3 persons per household. Children constitute the largest proportion of the household structure accounting for 40.4% and heads of household make-up 16.1% of the household population. Spouses form about 9.4% and other relatives constitute 12.9% of the population. The proportion of households who live in extended household structure (head, spouse(s), children and head's relatives) constitute the largest proportion (46.1%) than that of any other type of household structure. Nuclear households (head, spouse(s) and children) constitute only 19.5 percent of households in the metropolis.

3.2.4 Relief and Climate

Generally, the Tamale Metropolis is about 180 meters above sea level. The land is generally undulating with a few isolated hills. The Metropolis receives only one rainfall season in a year and this has affected effective agricultural production in the area. Daily temperature in the Metropolis varies from season to season. During the rainy season residents experience high humidity, slight sunshine with heavy thunder storms, compared to the dry season which is characterized by dry Harmattan winds from November-February and high sunshine from March-May. The Metropolis is poorly endowed with water bodies and this has affected the regular flow of water into households within the Metropolis. The only natural water systems are a few seasonal streams which have water during the rainy season but dry up during the dry season.





The Metropolis lies within the savannah woodland zone in the country. The trees in this zone and for that matter the Metropolis are short scattered wood lots in nature. Major tree types in the Metropolis are *Dawadawa*, Nim, Acacia, Mahogany, Baobab among others. The Metropolis is endowed with naturally grown tall grasses during the rainy season which are used to make the local mats popularly called, “Zanamat” . The making of the Zanamat by most farmers during the dry season reduces the rural-urban migration levels of the youth from the rural areas to urban areas. Besides, the only economic tree is the Shea tree which has gained international recognition. The picking, processing and marketing of the shea nuts has over the years engaged almost all households in the area. Undoubtedly these shea nut related activities have contributed in employing the youthful population, increased household incomes and reduced poverty. Cashew is also widely grown in the Metropolis. The main soil types in the Metropolis are sandstone, gravel, mudstone and shale that have weathered into different soil grades. Due to seasonal erosion, soil types emanating from this phenomenon are sand, clay and laterite ochrosols. The availability of these soil types have facilitated real estate development in the area as estate developers have resorted to using these materials in the building industry.

3.2.5 Political and Administrative Structure

The Metropolitan Chief Executive is the political head of the Metropolis. There are three constituencies in Tamale Metropolis namely Tamale Central, Tamale South and Tamale North. There are also three sub-metros namely, Tamale Central, South and North Sub-Metros. The Sub-Metros have their offices at the following locations in the Metropolis. Tamale Central Sub-Metro is at Kaladan, off Aboabo-Nyohini road, Tamale South Sub-

Metro is at Banvim, off Lamashegu-Vittin ring road and Tamale North Sub-Metro is at Kalpohini. The main assignment of the Sub-Metro structures is to plan (participatory decision making and planning) and strategically design pragmatic ways of generating revenue for the Sub-Metro and the Assembly in general (Tamale Metropolitan Assembly Medium-Term Development Plan, 2010-2013). The Metropolis has a total of 59 Assembly members comprising of 18 appointed and 41 elected members and also a total of 205 unit committee members.

Apart from the Local Government structures, there are eminent traditional chiefs and sub-chiefs who are also working hand in hand with the Metropolis in promoting peace, stability and development in the area. Traditionally, the Ya Naa is the overlord of the area but he enskins the Gukpegu Naa as his subject over the traditional administration of the Metropolis.

3.2.6 Social, Religious and Cultural Structure

The metropolis is dominated by Dagombas with other ethnic groups such as Gonjas, Mampruis, Akan, Dagaabas and groups from the Upper East Region who also reside in the Metropolis. There are also other nationals from Africa and other countries across the globe residing in the Metropolis. The area has deep rooted cultural practices reflected in activities such as annual festivals, naming and marriage ceremonies. Some of the festivals that are celebrated annually in the Metropolis are Damba, Bugum (fire festival) and the two Muslim Eid festivals (Eid Fitr and Eid Adha) (GSS, 2014; TMMTDP, 2010-2013).



Religiously, the Metropolis is dominated by Muslims and followed by Christians, spiritualists and traditionalists. About 90.5% of the population in Tamale Metropolis are Muslims and Christians constitute only 8.8 percent. About 0.2 percent has no religious affiliation. Among the Christians, the Catholics have the highest proportion of 3.0 percent, followed by Pentecostal/Charismatic (2.4%) and Protestants (2.4%). The proportion of Traditionalists in the Metropolis is 0.3 percent (GSS, 2014; Al-Hassan and Abubakari, 2015).

3.2.7 Marriage, Fertility, Mortality and Migration

The majority of the people practice polygamous marriage mostly because they are Muslims and are allowed by the religion to marry up to four wives depending on the ability to cater for them equally. According to the GSS (2014), marriage was prevalent amongst persons with less education in the metropolis. It revealed that only 2 percent of persons married in the metropolis had tertiary education while married persons with no education constituted 57.5%. Married persons with higher education have lower proportions for all the age categories than those with no education. The figure was also higher in the female categories (65.5%) than the male (48.0%). Widows with no education constituted 84.9 percent and the proportion of males within this category was 68.3 percent while that of females was 86.6 percent (see GSS, 2014).

The proportion of persons aged 12 years and over with basic education who were not married was very high (50%) and cuts across both sexes, 49 percent and 52 percent for males and females respectively. The report also revealed a substantially more females who are widowed (51.5%) within the age group of 65 and older than males (5.5%) in the same



age group. The highest rate of divorce (3.6%) was within the age cohorts 55-59 and 60-64 years for males and 5.4 percent for females (50-54 years). The proportion of females married in age group 20-24 was more than thrice that of males in the same age group.

The Total Fertility Rate for the metropolis is about 2.8, which is slightly lower, compared to the regional fertility rate of 3.5. The General Fertility Rate is 79.9 births per 1000 women aged 15-49 years. The Crude Birth Rate (CBR) is 21.2 per 1000 population. The crude death rate for the metropolis is 5.6 deaths per 1000. Accident/violence/homicide/suicide account for 9.6 percent of all deaths while other causes contribute to 90.5 percent of deaths. Majority of migrants (54.9 percent) living in the metropolis were born elsewhere in the region while 45.1 percent were born elsewhere in another region. For migrants born elsewhere in another region, those born in have the highest proportion (19.6%) followed by those who were born in Upper East (18.7) (see GSS, 2014).

3.2.8 Economic Activity Status

About 70% of the people in the city earn income below the poverty line. In an environment where poverty rate is high such as in Tamale accessibility to urban services like potable water, good health and sanitation are not only poor but also people are often denied justice and respect of human right. About 63.3 percent of the population aged 15 years and older in the metropolis are economically active and 36.7 percent are economically not active. Of the economically active population, 92.6 percent are employed while 7.4 percent are unemployed. For those who are economically not active, a larger percentage of them are students (56.0%), 20.9 percent perform household duties and 12.4 percent are either too



young or old to work. About five out of ten (52.9) of unemployed persons in the metropolis are seeking work for the first time.

Only a small proportion (26.1%) of households in the metropolis are engaged in agriculture. In the rural localities, the proportion of households engaged agricultural (43.3%) is less than that of urban households which is 56.7 percent. Most (84.8%) of the agricultural households in the metropolis are involved in crop farming, 52.9 percent in urban and 47.1 percent in rural localities. Fishing farming is the agricultural activities that engages the least proportion (less than 0.1%) of households in the metropolis.

Of the employed population in the Tamale Metropolis, the highest proportion (33.0%) are engaged as service and sales workers. The second largest occupation is craft and related trade workers who constitute 21.5 percent of the employed population. The number of skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers represent 17.6 percent of the employed population. Those employed as professionals constitute only 8.1 percent.

3.2.9 Literacy and Education

Of the population 11 years and above, 60.1 percent are literates and 39.9 percent are non-literates. The proportion of literate males (69.2%) is higher than that of females (51.1%). According to the GSS (2014), five out of ten people representing 54.8% could speak and write both English and Ghanaian languages. Of the population aged 3 years and older (84,897) currently attending school in the metropolis, 52.9 percent were males and the remaining 45.1 percent were females. Among those who have attended school in the past, males constitute 58.6 percent and the females represent 41.4. It indicates that both among those who attended school in the past and those who are currently, males have higher



proportions. Among those currently attending school, 15.1 percent are in nursery, 18.2 percent in JSS/JHS, 12.5 percent in SSS/SHS and the largest proportion (40.0%) is in primary. Only 5.7 percent of the population 3 years and older in the metropolis are currently attending tertiary institutions (GSS, 2014; TMMTDP, 2010-2013).

About 81.5 percent of persons aged 3 years and older were enrolled in basic school (Nursery, kindergarten, primary, JSS/JHS/), 11.6 percent in secondary/senior high school, 0.7 percent in vocational/technical/commercial school, and 4.6 percent in tertiary institutions. There are more males than females enrolled in almost all the levels of education (GSS, 2014).

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Research Design and Approach

The study adopted a cross-sectional design which allowed for triangulation. This design allowed for the use of various/different data collection instruments such as questionnaires, interview guides or checklists as well as using both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. This approach was found suitable for this study because of the social, economic and cultural issues involved in this research (Babbie, 2007). It was also relevant because the study attempted to explore, describe and explain the phenomenon of fostering and the effects of it on the educational attainment of foster children in the Tamale Metropolis (see Rubin and Babbie, 2008). This approach also draws on diverse strategies of inquiry as well as methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009).



Thus, the study employed the mixed method approach where quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed to supplement each other. The mixed method uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches in sampling, data collection and analysis procedures (see Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007). As noted earlier, the study design was cross-sectional, and therefore also relied much on qualitative methods.

3.3.2 Sampling Design/Procedure

Sampling describes the process of selecting a portion of the population to accurately represent the entire population with which to conduct a study (Asamoah, 2012). The study adopted purposive and snowball sampling techniques for the selection of respondents for the study.

Purposive sampling allows for the picking of interview objects that fit the focus of the study based on the judgement of the investigator (Osuala, 2001; Sarantakos, 2005). In the judgement of the researcher, the selected individuals were usually those that could provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study. They were people with the required knowledge and experience on the subject matter of the study and were willing to share it with the researcher (Kumar, 2011).

According to Kumar, purposive sampling is more common in qualitative research and it is “extremely useful when you want to construct a historical reality, describe a phenomenon or develop something about which only a little is known” (Kumar, 2011:167). This was particularly why this technique was most appropriate for this study, because, to the best knowledge of the researcher, little is known about the educational attainment of foster



children in the Tamale Metropolis. Studies have turned to look at fostering and education of foster children in generality of Dagbon kingdom and Northern Region which only turns to include Tamale Metropolis and not the Metropolis as a stand-alone study area (see Abukari, 2008; Rolleston, 2009; CREATE, 2010; Rolleston, 2011, Abubakari and Yahaya, 2013). Therefore, Metropolitan Directors of Education and Social Welfare, school teachers and Plan Ghana were purposively selected for in-depth or key informant interviews.

On the other hand, snowball sampling technique was employed in sampling foster household heads and foster children for the study. Thus, since the researcher did not readily know foster children and households, the researcher relied on the first few identified foster children and households for referrals or identify other foster children and households after interview with each response. This process continued until the researcher gets the required number of respondents or reaches a saturation point in terms of the information being sought. This sampling technique was useful because the researcher knew little about who was a foster child or foster household in the Tamale Metropolis (Kumar, 2011).



3.3.3 Sample Size

The sample size included Metropolitan Director of Education, Metropolitan Director of Social Welfare, Metropolitan Director of Department of Children, foster household heads, NGOs, head/teachers, and pupils (foster and non-foster). The table below presents the sample sizes of the various study population in clusters.

Table 3.1 Distribution of Sample Size

CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS	SAMPLE SIZE
Metropolitan Director of Education	1
Metropolitan Director of Social Welfare	1
Metropolitan Director of Dept. of Children	1
Foster Household Heads	25
Non-Governmental Organisations	1
Foster children	25
Head/teachers	5
Non-foster children	25
TOTAL	84

Source: Author's Construct, 2018

3.3.4 Target Population

The target population for the study included foster household heads, teachers, foster children, non-foster children, Metropolitan Director of Education, Metropolitan Director of Social Welfare, and the NGOs assisting in child education in the metropolis. The Tamale Metropolis has three sub-metropolis and schools will be selected across these sub-metros.

3.3.5 Methods of Data Collection

The study collected data from two sources, namely primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected principally through interviews and focus group discussions and where necessary direct observations. The secondary data on the other hand was gathered from journal articles, published and unpublished documents such as theses, dissertations, reports, class registers, terminal examinations scores, etc, from the internet especially websites, and relevant textbooks. Attendance registers and terminal examination scores sheets were used to validate responses on school attendance and academic performance respectively.



3.3.5.1 Interviews

Interviews were conducted in different forms to suit the kind of data or information been solicited for from respondents. This mostly involved a face-face interaction between the researcher and the interviewee (s). In-depth interviews were conducted with some key informants such as school teachers, Metropolitan Director of the Department of Social Welfare, Area Manager of Plan Ghana, foster children and some household heads of foster children. In all, 23 in-depth interviews were held; comprising five interviews with teachers, seven interviews with foster children, nine interviews with foster household heads, one interview each with Directors of Department of Social Welfare and Education and one interview with Plan Ghana.

These key informant interviews were conducted through the use of interview schedule/guide. The (in-depth) interviews took the form of ‘repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed towards understanding informants’ perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words’ (Taylor and Bogdan 1998:77). In-depth interviews provided in-depth and accurate information because of the enhanced rapport between the researcher and informant as result of the extended face to face contact and interactions the two individuals engage in. It also strengthened the corresponding understanding and confidence between the researcher and the informant.

In-depth interviews were also appropriate for the study because they sought to “explore in detailed the respondents’own perceptions and accounts” (Brikci and Green, 2007: 11) of the subject matter of the study. They afforded the researcher the opportunity for in-depth



probing and questioning that was responsive to participants and their individual experiences and context (Arthur and Nazroo, 2003).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using semi-structured questionnaires in 75 respondents; comprising 25 foster children, 25 non-foster children and 25 foster household heads who were sampled using the snowball sampling technique. A field research assistant was engaged after he was orientated by the researcher. He assisted in identifying and administering questionnaires to foster household heads, foster children and non-foster children in each household identified to have foster children.

3.3.5.2 Focus Group Discussions

FGDs were held with some foster household parents and some foster children after they were identified. The researcher conducted three separate FGDs; one with foster children and two foster parents. Participants were drawn across the three suburbs due to the difficulty in identifying foster households and foster children. So, the researcher purposively selected few participants in each category for discussions after they been identified through the snowball technique. Participants for each group for discussion ranged between 6-8 individuals. Both males and females were mixed in a group. These FGDs were appropriate because they helped the researcher to explore the perceptions, experiences and understandings of a group of people who have some experience in common with regard to the subject matter of the study (Kumar, 2011). They were also flexible and responsive and thus, allowed the researcher to make further probing and clarifications on issues during discussions (Arthur and Nazroo, 2003). FGDs enabled



participants to explore into detail their understanding, experiences and account of the issues put forward for discussions (see File, 2015). Emerging issues were further discussed and corrections, verifications and confirmations were made.

The researcher facilitated the discussions to avoid unnecessary digressions and ‘one-man show’ of discussions. Members were free to express their opinions which were accurately recorded in the form of field notes, audio recordings. Permission was sought from participants before notes and the tape recordings were done. FGDs were conducted using a checklist.

3.3.5.3 Observation

The researcher also observed the behavior of foster children, foster household heads and other respondents during interactions. The researcher particularly observed the relationship between foster children and their foster parents and non-foster children at home during engagements. This was very helpful for confirming what some of the respondents were saying during engagements.

3.3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data collected from the field were edited both on the field and at home to ensure consistency and accuracy. Data collected from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were edited and analysed after every session so as to identify gaps and emerging issues that were built upon in subsequent engagements. Analysis and presentation of results were done through detail description, transcription/direct quoting and paraphrasing of



information given by the respondents as well as from literature. Microsoft Excel (2013) was used in the quantitative analysis and also in the generation of tables, graphs and charts in the presentation of findings. The results of the study were analysed and presented under four themes built from the four research objectives.

3.4 Limitations of the Study

There were some limitations to the study. The researcher confronted some challenges in the course of the study including unwillingness of respondents to freely give out information on the subject matter of the study despite several explanations of the purpose of the study to respondents. Many were grabbed by the fear of “Anas Aremeyaw Anas”; the ace investigative journalist in Ghana. The researcher has to show introductory letter from the department of the University as well as severally assured them of confidentiality and anonymity. Some households were not ready to have engagement on the subject matter and in such cases, the researcher would have to understand them and leave them out.

Secondly, there was inadequate funds for the researcher and this delayed printing and photocopying of materials, movement of the researcher and her field assistant, among other activities.

The researcher also encounter difficulty in having time with some key informants for in-depth interviews due to their busy schedules. Several appointments booked with some of them, after consultation with them, failed and this delayed engagement and prolonged the data collection and analysis process.



CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the data collected and also discusses the findings of the study. The results are presented, analysed and discussed under four themes that have been built from the objectives of the study. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are first presented and are later linked to discussions under the themes. The chapter is presented in the following order: demographic characteristics of general respondents, demographic characteristics of foster and non-foster children, factors that affect foster children's educational enrolment, attendance rates of foster children enrolled in school, academic performance of foster children, and some challenges that foster children face under foster parenting.



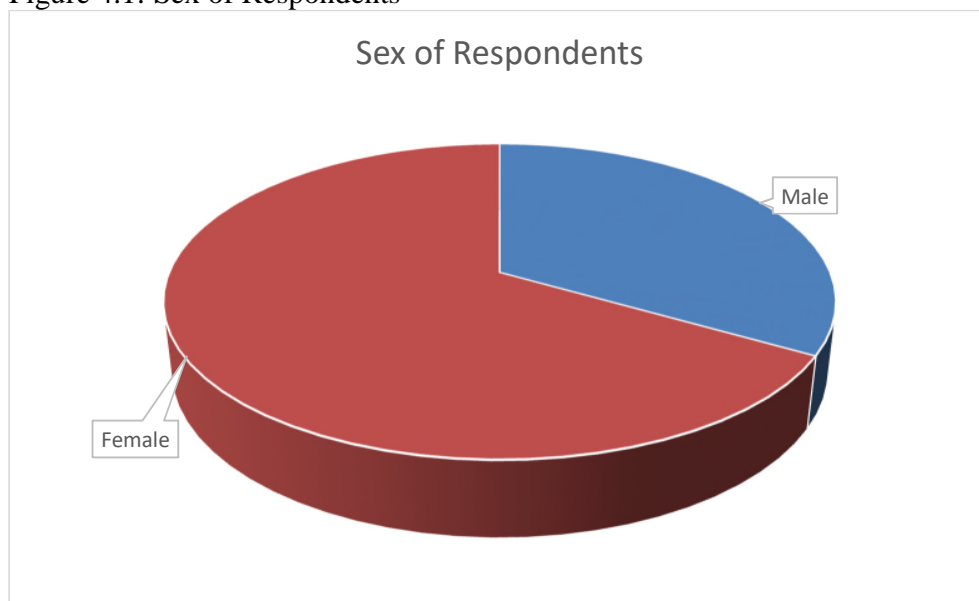
4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Here, the demographic characteristics are given for the total respondents of 75 on one hand, and then the demographic characteristics of the categories of respondents as foster children, non-foster children and heads of foster households on the other hand. The total population comprises 25 foster children, 25 non-foster children and 25 heads of foster households in three selected suburbs across the Tamale Metropolis as shown below.

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

The population comprised 25 males representing 33.3% and 50 females also representing 66.7% as illustrated in the figure (Figure 4.1) below.

Figure 4.1: Sex of Respondents



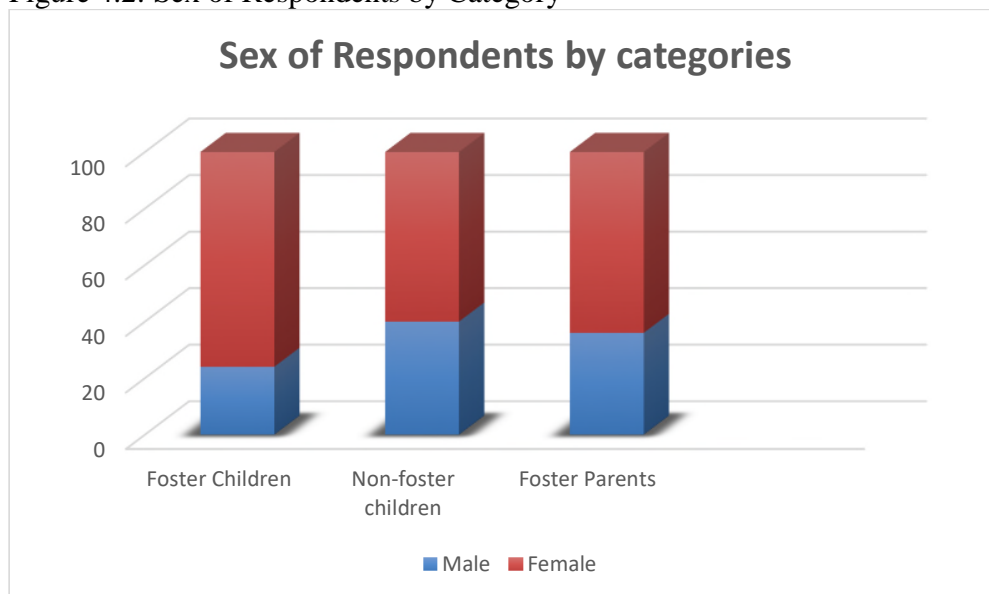
Source: Field Data, 2018

From the above figure, there is very significant difference between male and female population. This shows a kind of association of fostering with females in the area. That is, girls were more preferred to be fostered than boys and also, women or female heads of households were more likely to keep foster children. It may also follow the fact that, female population in Tamale Metropolis is more than male population (Ghana Statistics Service-GSS, 2014). The dominance of females also means that women and girls have been vulnerable in many respects in society including access to quality education

The sex of respondents is further presented by categorising respondents as foster children, non-foster children and foster household heads as given in figure (Figure 4.2) below.



Figure 4.2: Sex of Respondents by Category



Source: Field Data, 2018

The above figure presents the sex composition of respondents by their categories. Females form majority in all the three categories of respondents. In the foster children category, females constituted 76% while male population constituted 24%. This indicates that many girls were fostered than boys in the metropolis. This is also due to the fact that many of them are brought to partly assist in the performance of household activities such as washing of clothes and dishes, cooking, fetching water, setting fire, caring for babies, etc. which are mostly seen, in typical northern Ghanaian societies, as feminine activities. Thus, these activities are mostly performed by girls in many northern Ghanaian communities. This conforms to Abukari (2008) who found that girls were more fostered in Dagbon kingdom for reasons of serving as labour for household chores and other activities.

Females also dominate in the non-foster children category, making up 60%, while male population constituted 40%. This may be attributed to the fact that the population of Tamale Metropolis and Ghana at large is dominated by females. The situation was not different



from foster household heads category. Male population was 36% while female population was 64%. This is contrary to the fact the people of northern Ghana practice patrilineal system and men turn to dominate as household heads. The dominance of females in the household head category goes to confirm that fostering (particularly girls) was mostly common among urban female households than male households, as posited by Pilon (2003).

The reason, however, was that many of the household heads were married women who were not living together with their husbands due to their places of work. It also has to do with the fact that, some were polygamous families and therefore, the man could be living in a different suburb with one of the wives while the other wife or wives also live in another suburb. Some were also widows. It may also be attributable to the situation where women are seen as main players in the upbringing of children in northern Ghana in particular. The foregoing findings relate and conform to the findings of other scholars that fostering in northern Ghana was common in polygamous families (Abubakari and Yahaya, 2013; Owusu and Adjei, 2009).



4.2.2 Age of Respondents

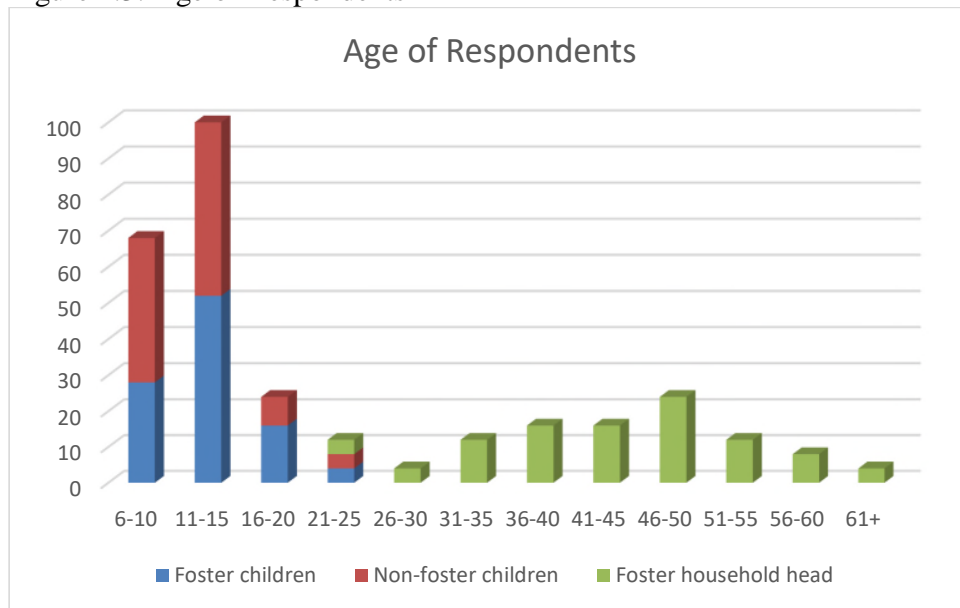
The age of respondents ranges from 6 to 61 and above. The results here are presented based on category of respondents and so the ranges vary; thus, the ages of foster and non-foster children were ranged from 6-25 while the ages of foster household heads were ranged from 21-61+.



The results show that majority of the foster children were between the ages of six and 15 years. The study did not consider children within 0-5 age group because they could not be engaged for the necessary information. From the figure below (Figure 4.3), 52% of the foster children were found within the age group of 11-15 years, followed by 28% within 6-10 age group. Also, 16% was within the 16-20 age group while the age group of 21-25 have four percent representing one respondent. This is as a result of the fact that children between 11-15 years are capable of performing some household chores such as fetching of water, washing dishes and clothes, taking care of babies and cooking. This relates to the findings of Pilon (2003). Pilon found that foster children in many households in many West African countries including Ghana were between the ages of 6 to 14 years and the author therefore concluded that an estimated one out of four children between the ages of 10 and 14 were in foster in three West African countries namely, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo.

Another reason could be what many key informants referred to but in a manner that many people will overlook. A female informant remarked during an in-depth interview session that; *“we (women) prefer girls below 16 years especially when she is coming from our (women) own families. This is because they will not pose as a threat to your marriage at those ages (less than 16 years). Your husband cannot admire her at that age”* (Female informant, 2018, in-depth interview). This was corroborated by their male counterparts during a focus group discussion, where a male discussant remarked *“our wives fear we (men) may turn to be making love with (mature) girls fostered from their families. They are especially not comfortable when they (women) are to travel for some days”* (Male discussant, 2018, FGD).

Figure 4.3: Age of Respondents



Source: Field Data, 2018

As in the above, the study did not also engage non-foster children who were within the 0-5 age group for the same reason as given above. From the above figure, 48% of the respondents in this category fall within 11-15 years, 40% within 6-10 years, eight percent within 16-20 and four percent within 21-25 years.



From the foregoing, there is a similar pattern in terms of age of both foster and non-foster children. In both categories, children within the age range of 11-15 dominated and followed by those in the range of 6-10 years. The least numbers are found in the ranges of 16-20 and 21-25 years for both foster and non-foster children categories. However, there is much difference in the gap between the age groups of 6-10 and 11-15 among foster children than non-foster children. This points to making a case that, many of the foster children were possibly fostered for a reason of been baby care givers before enrolment in schools.

From the above, majority of foster household heads were aged between 31 and 55 years, and hence implies that majority of them were within the active labour group of Ghana. The age group of 46-50 years was the highest, making up 24% of the respondents in their respondent category. The groups 36-40 and 41-45 had same percentage each of 16% and also, the age groups of 31-35 and 51-55 had equal number of three respondents, representing 12% each. The age groups of 21-25, 26-30 and 61+ had equal percentage of respondents (four percent each) while eight percent of foster household heads respondents were within the age group of 56-60 years.

4.2.3 Ethnicity of Respondents

The ethnicity of respondents is presented based on the categories of respondents as foster children, non-foster children and foster household heads.

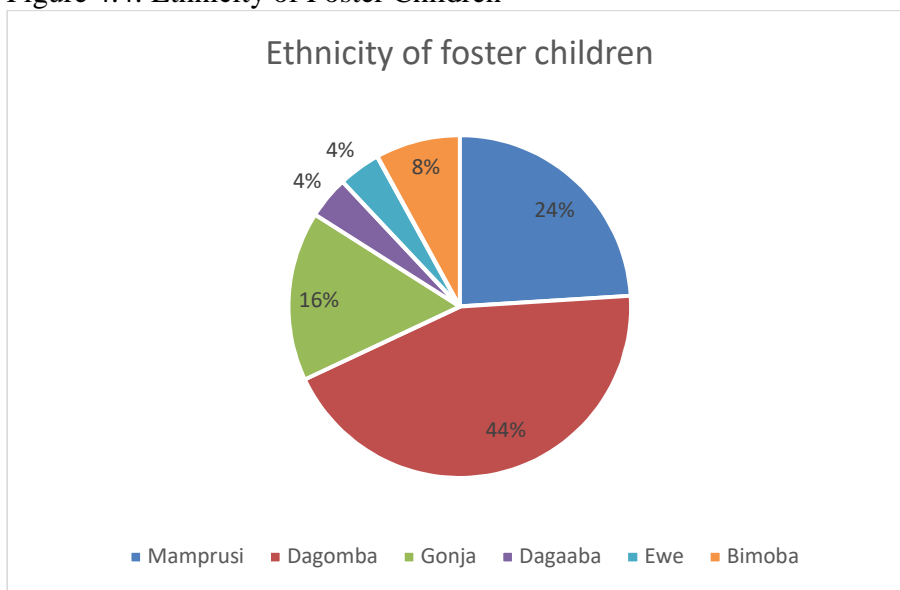
The figure (Figure 4.4) below presents the ethnic backgrounds of foster children respondents of the study. The results show that majority of the foster children were of Dagomba ethnic background, accounting for 44%, with 24% and 16% from Mamprusi and Gonja ethnic backgrounds respectively. Other ethnic groups collectively accounted for 16%, that is, eight percent each for Bimoba and four percent each for Ewe and Dagaaba ethnic backgrounds.

This gives a picture of reference to the study area which is the capital of Northern Region and dominated largely by the Dagomba people at the capital and then Mamprusi and Gonja people. The results indicate that fostering out children as a tradition in Dagbon is still practiced. This corroborates other findings of scholars that fostering was a common



phenomenon in Dagomba, Gonja and Mamprusi settlements (Rolleston, 2011; Abukari, 200; Mahama, 2004). Earlier studies by Goody (1973) also found fostering as a common traditional practice in Dagbon and Gonja ethnic groups of northern Ghana.

Figure 4.4: Ethnicity of Foster Children

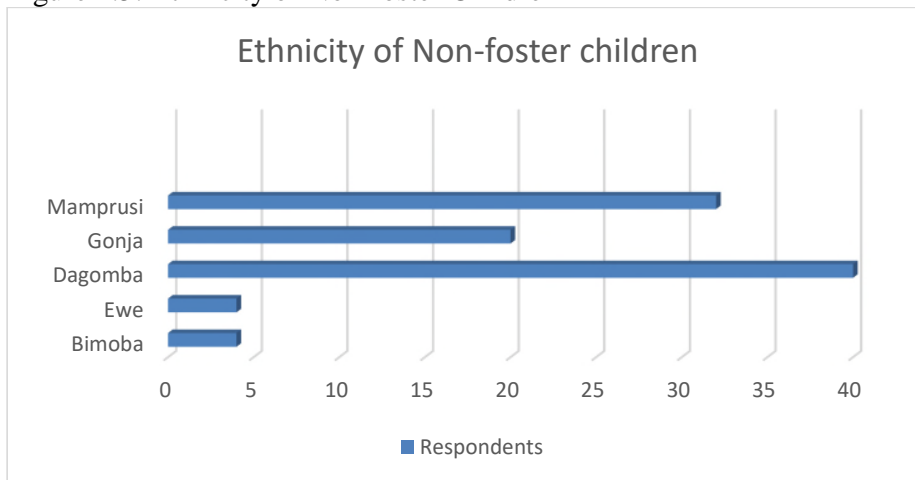


Source: Field Data, 2018

From Figure (4.5) below, non-foster children were also predominantly Dagomba, Mamprusi and Gonja constituting 40%, 32% and 20% respectively. Respondents with Bimoba and Ewe ethnic backgrounds made up four percent each as shown in the below figure.



Figure 4.5: Ethnicity of Non-foster Children



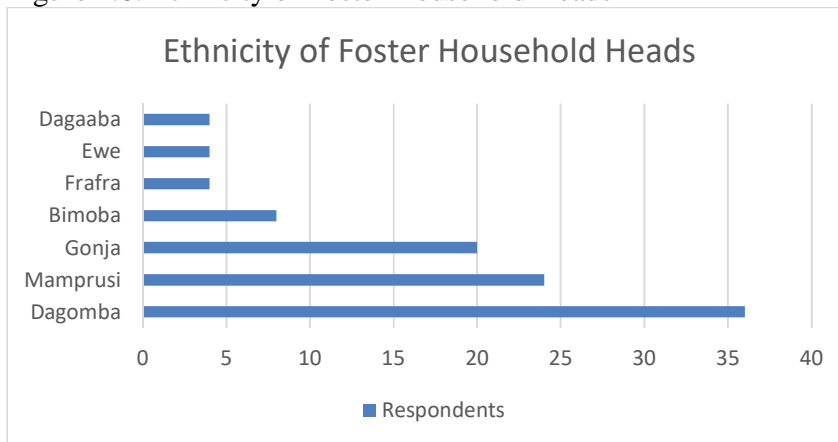
Source: Field Data, 2018

Clearly, the above figures (Figure 4.4 and 4.5) confirms the association of the practice of fostering in the Northern Region with three major ethnic groups, namely Dagomba, Mamprusi and Gonja.

In the household head category, respondent's ethnic background comprised 36% Dagomba, 24% Mamprusi, 20% Gonja, eight percent Bimoba and four percent each for Frafra, Ewe and Dagaaba ethnic groups as shown in the figure (Figure 4.6) below. The pattern reveals that, foster parents fostered mostly children from their respective ethnic groups and possibly their direct families. These foster children either come from the woman or man's family.



Figure 4.6: Ethnicity of Foster Household Heads



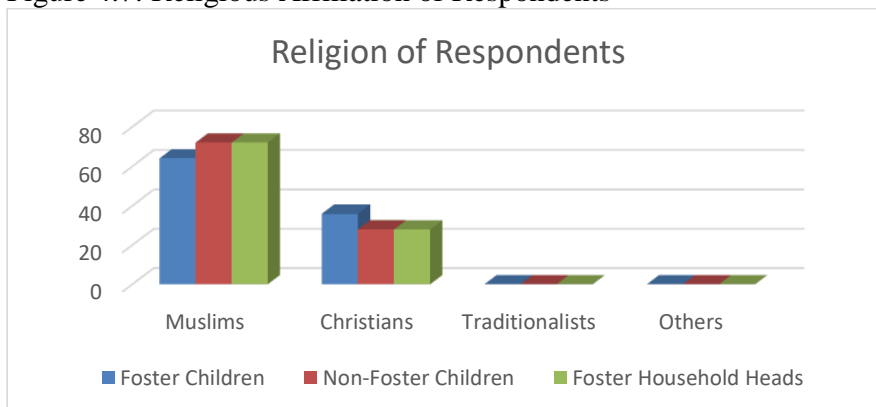
Source: Field Data, 2018

4.2.4 Religious affiliation of foster children

The results show that Muslims dominate in all categories of respondents as presented in the figure (Figure 4.7) below. In the foster children category, majority (16) of the respondents, representing 64% were Muslims while nine respondents, representing 36% were also Christians. Thus, respondents were either Muslims or Christians with no one found to belong to other forms of worship. This is shown in the figure below.



Figure 4.7: Religious Affiliation of Respondents



Source: Field Data, 2018

The high number of Muslim respondents may be of the fact that Northern Region is an Islamic dominated area. It is also a confirmation of the findings of some scholars that fostering is a common phenomenon in Muslim households and communities in northern Ghana.

The religious affiliations of foster household heads, as shown in the figure above, were the same for non-foster children. This indicates that children turn to practice the religion that their parents practice. The figure shows that Muslims household heads were the overwhelming majority, making up of 72% of the foster household head respondents against 28% Christians. As noted earlier, Islam is a dominant religion in Northern Region and so it was not surprising that foster household heads were predominantly Muslims. The findings show that fostering was common among Muslim households and people mostly turn to prefer fostering a child in the same religion.

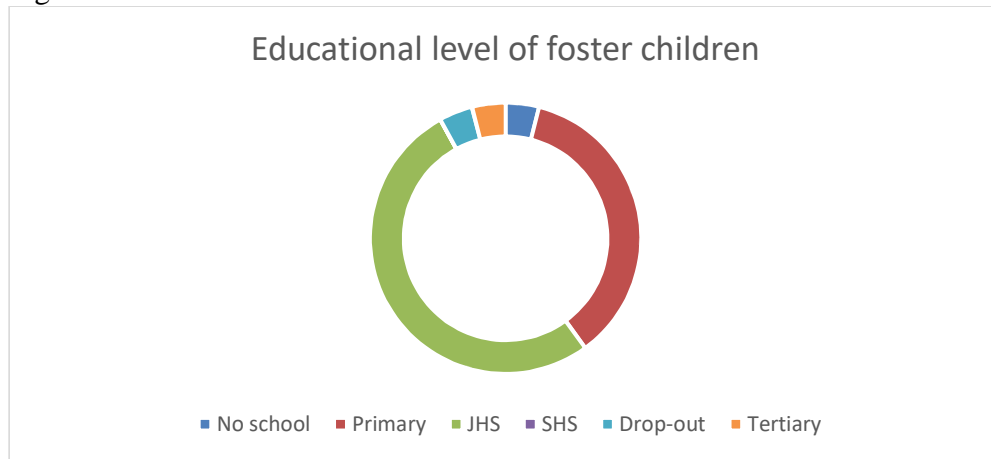
It is also for the fact that, most Muslim men marry more than one wife and have larger household sizes that warrant assistance in performing household chores. Fostering is also a cherished traditional practice among the people of Northern Region as it is seen as a way of fostering unity and strengthening families ties among individuals in Northern Region (Abubakari and Yahaya, 2013; Owusu and Adjei, 2009). It could also therefore be a coincidence that majority of the people are Muslims in Northern Region and not necessarily fostering is common among Muslims.



4.2.5 Educational Level of Respondents

The level of education of respondents is relevant in ascertaining and verifying the reasons for fostering and juxtaposing the findings of the study with the literature reviewed in chapter two. The educational level of respondents (foster children, non-foster children and foster household heads) are presented here and discussed by respondent categories. The figure (Figure 4.8) below presents the educational level of foster children.

Figure 4.8: Educational level of foster children



Source: Field Data, 2018



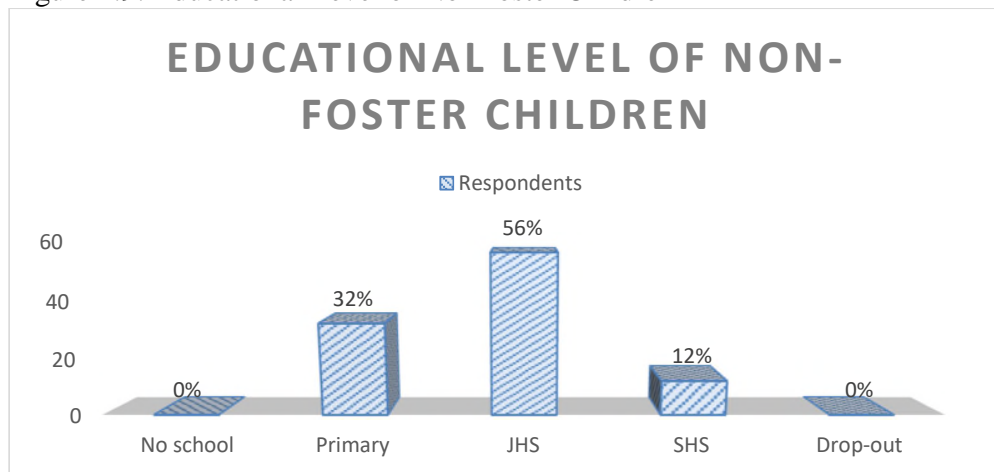
The results of the study reveal that overwhelming majority of the respondents were schooling. The results also show that 13 respondents, representing 52% had Junior High School (JHS) education and nine respondents, also representing 36% had primary education. One respondent, representing four percent of total foster children respondents had a tertiary education (University) and another four percent had no formal education. Other four percent was also found to be a school drop-out. There was no respondent who had Senior High School (SHS) education, which may partly be attributed to the timing of the data collection process which was done when schools were in session and many of

them could be in boarding schools. The foregoing findings confirm the findings of WSDSHS (2001) that foster children were much less likely to attain higher education.

The findings show that an overwhelming majority of foster children have been enrolled in school before. The findings also revealed that children could stay in foster home up to adulthood, a time they could attend and complete tertiary education. This can be seen in the case of the single tertiary student that has lived with his foster parents at tender age up to the university level. He still lives with them during vacations and performs household chores, by his own will.

The results show that majority of non-foster children, representing 56% had JHS education while 32% of the respondents had primary education. Those with SHS education were three representing 12% while no one was found to be a dropout or not schooling, as shown in the figure (Figure 4.9) below.

Figure 4.9: Educational Level of Non-foster Children



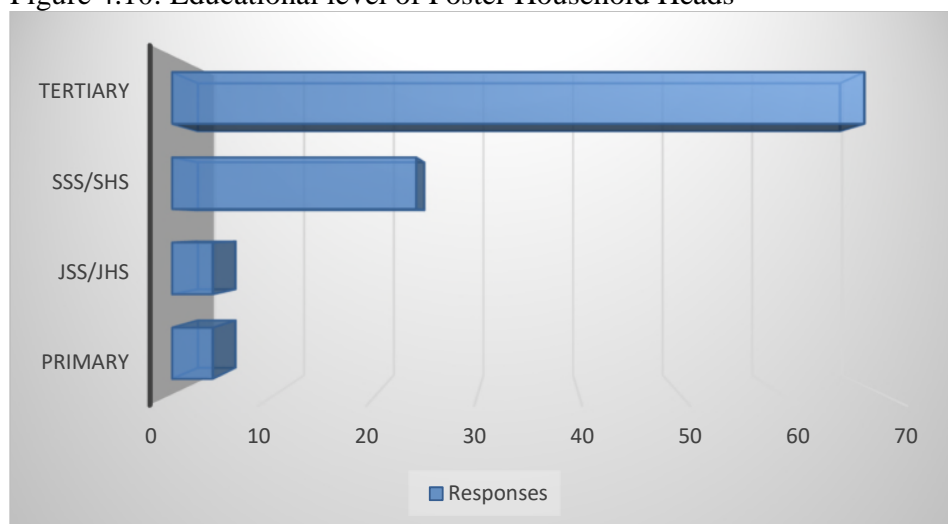
Source: Field Data, 2018

The educational level of foster households has been presented in the figure (Figure 4.10) below. From the figure, majority of the foster household heads, representing 68% had



tertiary education while 24% had SHS education. Four percent of foster household head respondents had primary education and another four percent had JHS education. Therefore, the findings indicate that many of the foster household heads had higher level of education. This is consistent with the finding of Pilon (2003) that, fostering of girls in particular, was common among household heads with higher educational levels than households heads with low/no education.

Figure 4.10: Educational level of Foster Household Heads



Source: Field Data, 2018



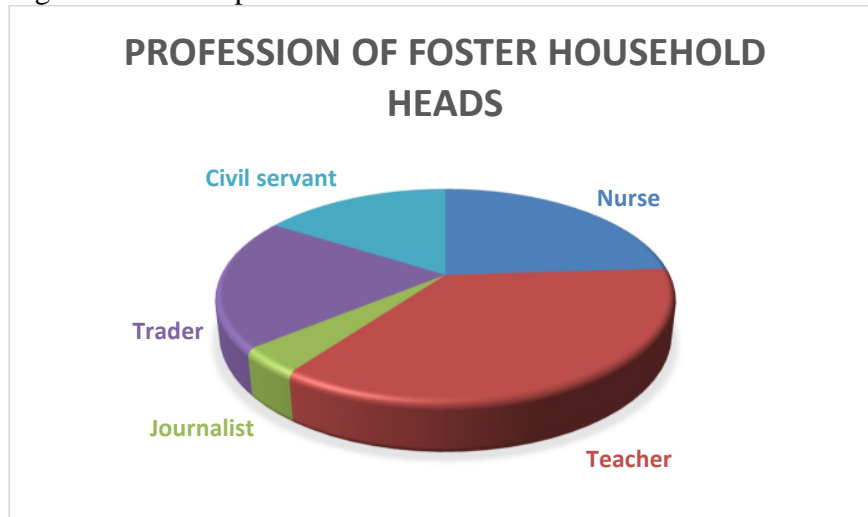
The above figure confirms why majority of the foster children had been enrolled in formal education. The foster parents been educated understand the need for children (be they foster or biological) to be educated, particularly in this 21st Century.

4.2.6 Profession/occupation of Household Heads

As noted in the above, the education of education of household heads mostly correspond with their occupations as presented in figure (Figure 4.11) below. From the figure, 36% of

the household heads were teachers, 24% were nurses, 20% were traders, 16% were civil servants and four percent representing one respondent was a journalist.

Figure 4.11: Occupation of Foster Household Heads



Source: Field Data, 2018

The above figure indicates that educated people who are professionals turn to bring their younger sister and brothers as well as their nieces and nephews to stay with them not mainly to school but to also serve as a source of labour for household chores. The findings therefore agree with the findings of Pilon (2003) who posited that fostering was higher in most economically privileged households who were in the socio-professional categories such as middle or senior-level managers and the liberal professions. The author further noted that, fostering of girls in particular, was common among household heads with higher educational levels who double as professionals in the formal sector of the economy than households heads with low/no education in the capital of Burkina Faso. These foster girls provided labour for their household chores (Pilon, 2003).



As shown in Table (4.1) below, the findings of the study also show that, 48% of the foster children were living with their uncles, 28% were living with their aunts, 12% of them were living with their sisters, eight percent of the children were living with their brothers while four percent of foster children were found to be living with or brought by their cousins. The study did not find any foster children living with their grandparents, as shown in the table below. This may be also attributed to the difficulty associated with aged people caring for children, especially the case that household poverty levels are high in northern Ghana (GSS, 2018). It is however important to state that foster children who said they living with their uncles did not in most cases imply that their uncles were not living with their wives. It in many cases, implies they were brought by their uncles and they were living with the uncle and his family (wife and children). The foregoing findings present a contrary view to the finding of Abubakari and Yahaya (2013), who found in their study that about 63% and 22% of foster girls in particular were living with their aunts and grandmothers respectively.

Table 4.1: Persons foster children live with

Person	Frequency	Percentage
Aunt	7	28
Uncle	12	48
Brother	2	8
Sister	3	12
Cousin	1	4
Grandmother	0	0
Grandfather	0	0
Total	25	100

Source: Field Data, 2018

The above table therefore gives us information on the personal relationships that foster children have with their foster parents, thus, those who brought them to their foster homes.



This information is relevant for the study in order to clearly appreciate the line of fostering as a traditional practice among families in the Tamale Metropolis.

The findings point out that brothers to foster children's biological parents are the majority among others in fostering of children in the Tamale Metropolis. This was attributed partly to the fact that, one's nephew or niece is traditionally one's child and therefore, behooves on you to care for him or her including giving them formal education. It is also as a result of the fact that, caring for the siblings of one's brother or sister helps build and strengthen good relations in the family. A respondent noted this during an in-depth interview session;

“In our tradition, your sister or brother's children are your children and so you need to cater for them just as you cater for your biological children. You command respect in the family and even beyond by the measure of how many of your nephews and nieces you have successfully educated and catered for in the family and society. Catering for your nephews and nieces also bring unity and peace in the extended family” (Male informant, in-depth interview).

This suggests how important it is to cater and educate the children of one's brothers and sisters in a traditional northern Ghanaian society including Tamale Metropolis. This is also confirmed with Rolleston (2011:4) who observed that “a child's social parents according to Dagbon tradition are often paternal or maternal relatives who have exercised a customary right to raise and train children, often their nieces and nephews” (Rolleston, 2011: 4).

The findings also reveal that, many women prefer to foster children particularly girls, from the husbands' families to their families. Thus, the husbands mostly rather foster children from their families for their households. This is because, the women fear that their



husbands may turn to love or admire girls fostered from their (women) families when grown. A female informant reveal this during an in-depth interview;

“Nowadays, we do not trust men. You may bring your younger sister or niece to stay with you and the time you realise, your husband has started making love with her. This is especially the case when the girl is in her adolescent stage where her breasts and hips are taking shape and attract men attention. The moment you travel...he has gotten a ‘night comforter’. As soon as this starts, the girl will begin not to respect you as an elder sister or as an aunt as she used to do...because she perhaps entertains your husband better in bed than you do” (Female informant, 2018, in-depth interview).

The above narrative clearly confirms why in this study children were mostly fostered by their uncles. There were only few cases where children were fostered into the families by their aunts as presented earlier. This was further confirm by the responses of non-foster children in figure (Figure 4.12) below as to who they living with in their respective households.



Figure 4.12 : Persons Non-foster children live with



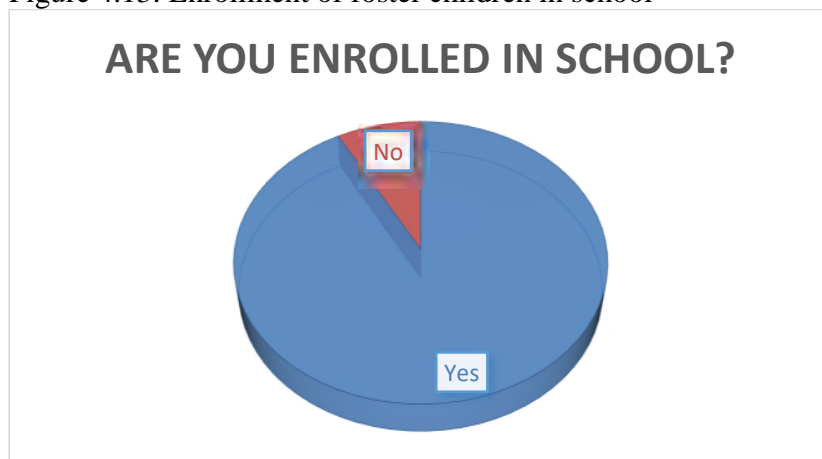
Source: Field Data, 2018

From the figure above, majority of the non-foster children, representing 64% were living with both parents (father and mother) in the household. Those living with their mothers constituted 28% while eight of the respondents were living with their fathers.

4.3 Factors that affect foster Children Educational enrolment in Tamale Metropolis

To find out the factors affecting foster children educational enrolment, the researcher first sought to find out whether foster children were enrolled in school. Foster children were therefore asked the question “Are you enrolled in school”? The results are presented in the figure (Figure 4.13) below;

Figure 4.13: Enrollment of foster children in school



Source: Field Data, 2018

It can be seen from the above figure that, an overwhelming majority of the foster children were enrolled in school. That is, 23 out of 25 foster children, representing 92% were enrolled in school with two respondents representing eight percent not enrolled. This findings disagree with other scholars (Jackson, 2013; Shepler, 2005; Pilon, 2003) that majority of



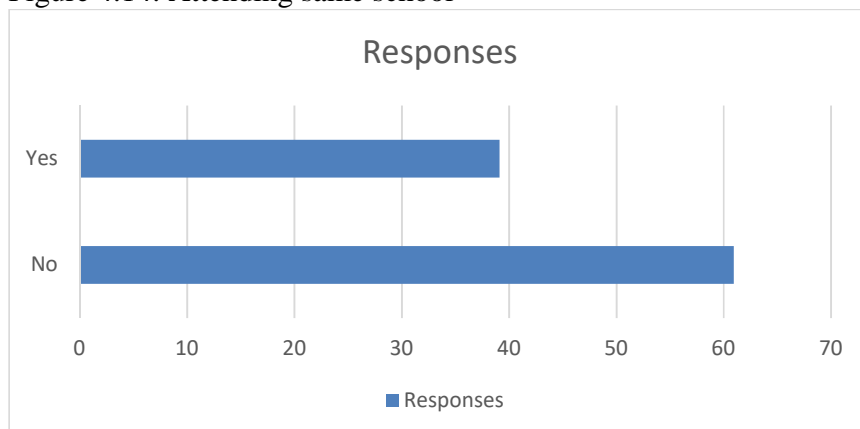
foster children are not enrolled in school. Among the two respondents who were not enrolled, one was found to be a drop out while the other one had not been enrolled at all.

For the one who dropped out of school, the reason was that, she was considered to be over-age to be in primary school after she was brought from her community to Tamale. She was rather asked to learn a trade (hairdressing) in place of schooling and also perform household chores and care for younger children of her uncle since the uncle and his wife were both workers in the formal sector. For the one who was not enrolled at all, the reason was that, he lost his mother at tender age and had to suffer all kind of discrimination in his biological family including not been sent to school. His father could not afford to pay for his education if even he was enrolled in school. It was until his cousin visited the family and saw him as an apprentice to a village carpenter and decided to bring him to Tamale. He was learning carpentry as a trade because he was almost 14 years (and considered overgrown to be primary one).

The results also reveal that many foster children were not enrolled in the same school with the biological children of foster parents. The figure (Figure 4.14) below presents responses of foster children to the question “Are you enrolled in the same school with biological children of your foster parents”?



Figure 4.14: Attending same school



Source: Field Data, 2018

From the figure above, about 61% of foster children were enrolled in schools different from the schools in which the children of foster parents were enrolled. The schools foster children attend were mostly found to be public or government schools and were relatively closer to their homes. Only about 39% of the respondents in the figure above said they were enrolled in the same school with the children of their foster parents.



4.3.1 Factors affecting foster children enrolment

Age of foster children: It was revealed that the age of children at the time of fostering determines whether to send him/her to school or not. When the child is less than 10 years at the time of fostering, then he/she can be enrolled in school but where she/he is more than 10 years, then she/he may not be enrolled. This is because the child will be considered as an overgrown child to be admitted into class one. One foster parent (a female) noted that, such overgrown children are usually mocked at by their classmates and other pupils in the school.

“...when the child is a female, she is usually nicknamed ‘P1 (primary one) madam’ in the school by the pupils and even some of the teachers. If a boy, he is popularly called ‘P1 master’ by the pupils in the school. These names and mockeries make them feel shy and embarrassed, and will not even want to go to school if even you enroll them”. (Female key informant, in-depth interview)

This narrative confirms why some foster children were not enrolled because they were thought to be overgrown. This confirms the finding of Rolleston (2011) that over-age girls usually drop out of school, if even they are enrolled.

A male discussant during a FGD also noted that *“a child is best educated when she/he is enrolled in school at the infant stage; thus, she/he starts with early childhood education and then primary”*. This goes to affirm children in their early stages have better abilities to develop smart relationships with their instructors and peers in schools (Seyfried et al, 2000). It also affirms the suggestion by Abubakari and Yahaya (2013) that children fostered at tender ages were easy to control and properly brought up including better education.

From interactions during FGDs, it also emerged that it was not also always the case that foster children come to take care of the biological children of foster parents but rather some of them come as age mates to keep each other company in the household. In this regard, both children start their early childhood education (from nursery to kindergarten) together and are likely to continue their primary school together in the same school without separation. This is because *“they are seen as brothers and sisters and putting them in*



different schools may negatively affect their academic performance” (a discussant concluded).

A female respondent also reveal during an in-depth interview that;

“in my household, I have two boys, both aged nine years and are in primary four. One is my biological son and the other is my husband’s nephew who was brought when he was less than four years. We wanted a company for our son; and back at the village my husband realised that his brother was not serious with the education of the children. He brought him and now they are like real twins. They attended the same kindergarten and now primary. They will continue to attend the same schools up to even the university level. There is no discrimination against any of them and both of them are free to do anything in the house. The presence of the boy has helped our son a lot; they have a good company by learning, eating and playing together. They perform the same household chores together” (Female informant, in-depth interview).



From the above narrative, it is revealed that children can be fostered at a tender ages of less than four years as noticed Abubakari and Yahaya (2013). The CWIG (2016) also noted that children in foster care were fostered in their infant stages. The narrative also indicates that fostering might also be practiced for reasons of keeping children in company or togetherness for enhancement of child-to-child socialisation within and outside of the household. The narrative reveal the zeal of other relatives within the family system that are concerned with education and wellbeing of the children of other relatives. It as well,

demonstrates the need for keeping ties between and among children within the extended family in our traditional homes without discrimination in any form.

Willingness of foster children to be enrolled and learned in school: The results also reveal that, willingness of foster children to attend and learned in school was a factor that is taken into consideration before enrolment or otherwise of foster children in school. Some children after they were brought to their foster homes were not be willing to go to school. This is mostly the case when they were already enrolled back at their communities before fostering. They may not be willing to continue because in most cases they come from deprived rural communities and find it difficult to mix with their colleagues in the new environment. It is even much particular with children who have to be demoted or repeated in their new schools due to their level of performance. In this case, foster children were found to prefer learning a trade to schooling as contained in the above findings. This relates to Scherr (2007) who opined that repetition and change of schools among foster children are factors that affect the education of foster children.

Financial ability of both biological and foster parents: An important factor that affected children enrolment was the ability of both the foster family and biological family to pay for the education of the child. The findings show that, foster children in wealthy foster households mostly stand the chance of been enrolled and catered for in their education even up to even the tertiary level, on one hand. On the other hand, when the biological parents are also economically well to do, it could result in the enrolment of the child while under the care of other relatives somewhere. In this regard, the family will have the ability of providing the educational needs of the child. The foregoing shows that, enrolment and for that matter the education of foster children depends largely on the financial ability of both



the biological and foster parents of the children. Situations where foster parents' resources are inadequate enough to cater for educational needs of extra children in the household and biological parents cannot also help due to the same constraint, the child will not be enrolled. In this regard if even the child is enrolled, little attention may be given to his/her education as noted by studies (Abukari 2008; Al-Hassan and Abubakari, 2015).

The point is further confirmed in this study by the overwhelming majority of foster children found to be enrolled in school. This was because majority of the foster parents were full-time workers or traders who could earn money to cater for their household needs including educational needs of the children living with them. From the table (Table 4.2) below, 96% of the foster parents were solely responsible for the provision of the educational needs of their foster children. Only one respondent, representing four percent of the foster parents said, the biological parents of the child were responsible for providing the educational needs of the foster child.

Table 4.2: Payment of educational cost of foster children

Who pays	Frequency	Percentage
Foster parents	22	96
Biological parents	1	4
Others	0	0
Total	23	100

Source: Field Data, 2018

Will or passion of foster parents for children education: The study also found that parents who have the will or passion for education of children will make sure that children, be they foster or biological children, are enrolled in school. The few foster children were not enrolled because they were considered over-age could have been enrolled if their guardians had the passion for education. So parents who have passion will also make sure



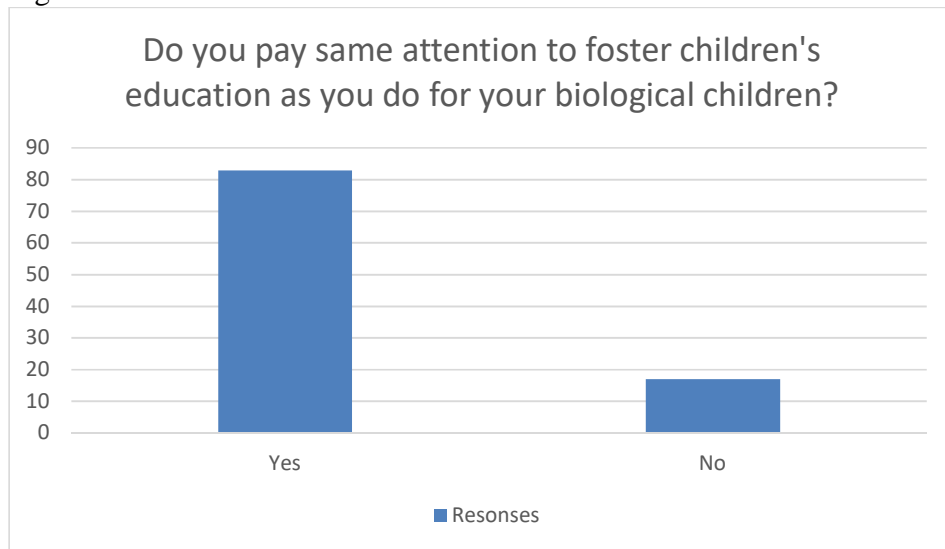
they enroll and provide all educational needs for the children including foster children, without discrimination. A female informant remarked that;

“we are in an era where education is the key to everything. Your generation will be doomed if you fail to educate your children and siblings. As advocate in ‘child education’ particularly the girl-child, I cannot limit education in my family and household to my biological children only. I have three children living with me, of which only one is my biological child, and he is in primary six while the other two (foster) are in JHS one. They are all attending the same school and do the same work at home”.

This remark indicates the level of seriousness some parents attach to children’s education. The foregoing results also indicate that many people have become aware of the need to enroll children in school and this was evident when almost every respondents mentioned education as the main reason for fostering of the children. It thus, appears that many parents will not willing to foster out their children if the potential foster parents are not willing to educate them. This confirms the suggestion of Marazyan (2009) that, sending and receiving households will typically differ not only in their resources and liquidity constraints but also in their preferences for education. Shepler, 2005 also found that fostering could be done in order for children to have access to education. The foregoing findings therefore reflect a situation where foster parents have some amount of attention for their foster children as their biological children. This is evident in the figure (Figure 4.15) below regarding whether they pay attention to education of foster children.



Figure 4.15: Attention on foster children education



Source: Field Data, 2018

From the above figure, about 83% of respondents (foster parents) said they pay equal attention to the educational needs of both foster and biological children while about 17% pay more attention to the education of their biological children than foster education. This finding indicates that many foster parents have become enlightened about the negative consequences of discrimination against foster children especially in the provision of educational needs. Hence, an overwhelming majority of foster parents had attention for the education of foster children as their biological children.

From the foregoing above, there were no major challenges inhibiting the enrollment of foster children in the metropolis. This was evident when an overwhelming majority of foster children were found to be enrolled in school. This was attributed to some policies and programmes by government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), though not specifically targeted at foster children. An interaction with school teachers revealed that the government policy of providing free school uniforms and exercise books has helped



and encouraged parents to enroll their children. This provided a lot of uniform and exercise to a lot pupils who would have otherwise been without uniform and exercise books.

The school feeding programme by the government was also important policy that has promoted enrollment of children including foster children in the metropolis. The provision of free meals to pupils was a good factor that encouraged foster parents to enroll foster children too in school because it takes the burden of providing children meals by giving them money every day to go to school. A teacher noted that

“the school feeding programme since its introduction by the government has attracted and increased school enrollment especially among less privileged households. Parents particularly the less privileged ones will chase their children to school because of the free meals the children will enjoy” (teacher, in-depth interview, 2018).

The provision of free registration and renewal of pupils under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) was yet another government policy that was found to have motivated the enrollment of foster children in the metropolis. The fact that foster parents were not to spend money in providing these services, there was need to put foster children in school to enjoy them.

The role of NGOs in the metropolis was also noted to be instrumental for the enrollment of foster children, even though not in specific terms. The sensitization and education of parents as well as provision of educational needs by NGOs such as Plan Ghana came up as a motivating factor for child enrollment including foster children. The program manager of Plan Ghana, noted that, Plan Ghana has for several assisted a lot of schools in the



metropolis and beyond in terms of building and renovation of classrooms (particularly deprived schools), provision of learning and teaching materials and promotion of children rights including right to education. According to the programme manager,

“Plan Ghana has done a lot in the educational sector particularly in northern Ghana. In the tamale metropolis, many schools have received assistance in terms of classroom block and teaching and learning materials. Some schools especially the less privileged schools have been assisted either building a new classroom blocks or renovating dilapidated blocks. The organization has also provided both text and exercise books and other learning materials for schools. ...though we are not specific on foster children, I think our initiatives have been assistance to their in a perhaps indirect or general way” (Plan Ghana manager, in-depth interview, 2018).

He further noted that cultural practices have been obstacles to achieving quality education and it was affecting the efforts of Plan Ghana, as an advocate of child rights and quality education for children in the metropolis. Fosterage as a cultural practice, was noted as one of the major challenges to quality education of affected children in the metropolis. He said, they were collaborating with other NGOs and Department of Social Welfare in identifying some of such children and getting them enrolled in schools. There have been sensitisation programmes on the need to enroll every child of school-going age, which parents are complying with in the metropolis.

Collaborating the above, the Metropolitan Director of the Department of Social Welfare revealed they have been rescued a lot of foster children and enrolled them in school. They



have also registered several of such children under the NHIS and they have met with foster parents and sensitized them. He noted that,

“sometimes they (foster parents) need to be talked to. Many of them do not still know that access to education is a right of children. So we have been collaborating with some NGOs particularly those in the education sector to carry out sensitization programmes and as identify children who have been denied education and get them enrolled. We are making it clear to hosts of foster children that, it is an offence to deny them education. ...so far it has been good because many of such and similar children are enrolled for fear of been summoned by Department of Social Welfare and other organisations” (Social Welfare Director, in-depth interview, 2018).

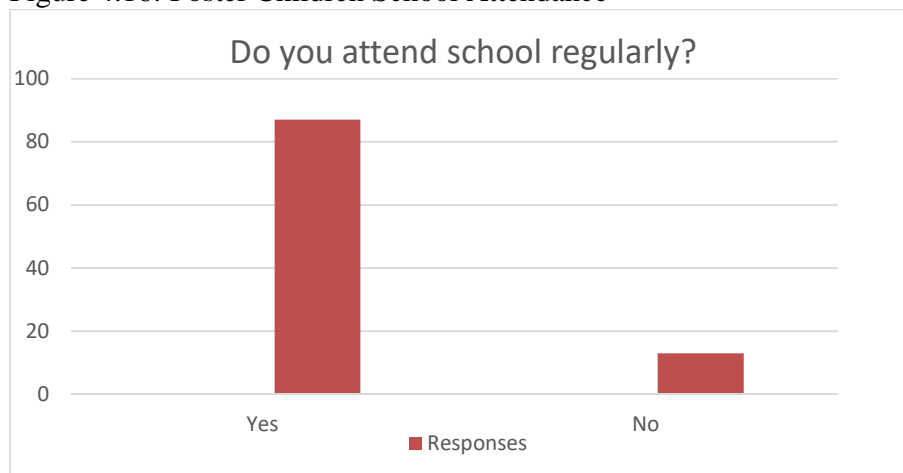
The above were some indications and efforts that have contributed to the enrollment and school attendance of foster children in the Tamale Metropolis.

4.4 School attendance of enrolled foster children in the Tamale Metropolis

The results show that foster children who were enrolled in school had regular school attendance as presented in the figure (Figure 4.16) below. The study found 87% of foster children, representing an overwhelming majority saying they attend school regularly and do not absent themselves from school for any reason. Only 13% of the respondents said they do not attend school on regular bases. These responses were validated or complemented by pupils' attendance from school attendance registers.



Figure 4.16: Foster Children School Attendance



Source: Field Data, 2018

From the above figure, it is clear that an overwhelming majority of 87% of the respondents said their school attendance was regular. This shows that there were low cases of absenteeism associated with foster children in terms of school attendance, and therefore disagree with Rolleston (2011) and Scherr (2007) suggestions that majority foster children are mostly associated absenteeism in schools. The 13% of the respondents who said they were not regular at school attributed it to been overburden with household chores that make feel tired to go to school some days, as well as selling goods on market days, illness and others. This finding therefore represents an increasing awareness level among parents, especially the educated ones, of the need to provide quality education for all children irrespective of their status in society. Respondents attendance were cross-checked from their respective class attendance registers so as to confirm or otherwise of the responses. Records from the class registers confirmed low absenteeism of foster children from schools.



The results also show that few respondents made up of about 22% reported of going to school late, as indicated in table (Table 4.3) below. They attributed it to the fact that they have to perform a lot of household chores in the morning before preparing to go to school. These household chores include sweeping the compound, scrapping washrooms, mobbing living rooms, preparing breakfast and fetching water.

Table 4.3: Punctuality to school by foster children

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Lateness	5	21.7
Punctual	18	78.3
Total	23	100

Source: Field Data, 2018

Also, majority of the respondents, representing 78% from the above table, were found to be punctual to school. This reveals that many foster children were punctual to school as non-foster children. What this findings suggests is that, foster parents are conscious of the need for children to be punctual to school, despite some activities that some of these children perform. That is, foster parents acknowledge the negative impacts of children lateness to school since many of the household heads were educated people with some been teachers. They are aware of the effects of lateness on productivity in terms of both learning and teaching.

The results show an encouraging situation of foster children attendance to school. No respondent rated his/her attendance as poor and very poor as shown in the table (Table 4.4) below. From the table, about 52% of the respondents rated their attendance to school as very good, implying they attend school for all the five days per week without absenting themselves. Also eight respondents, representing 35% said their attendance was good, implying they may only occasionally be absent for a day in a week. Three respondents



representing 13% rated their attendance as fair. They explained that they could absent themselves from school by two days during a particular week especially on market days when they go to assist their foster parents to sell on the market days.

This findings was consistent with the findings of Rolleston (2011). The author found that about two thirds of fostered girls assisting in their foster parents' businesses, with most of those being involved in selling wares. They may also be overwhelmed by some chores that they have to absent themselves from school to complete the work. These interfere with their schooling by affecting performance due to irregular attendance and lack of study time at home as noted by Abukari (2008).

Table 4.4: Rating of foster children school attendance

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	12	52.2
Good	8	34.8
Fair	3	13.0
Poor	0	0
Very poor	0	0
Total	23	100

Source: Field Data, 2018

The results also revealed that majority of foster children had their schools closer to their homes. About 83% of respondents said their schools were not far from their homes while 17% said their schools were far from their homes, as shown in the table (Table 4.5) below.

Table 4.5: School distance from home of foster children

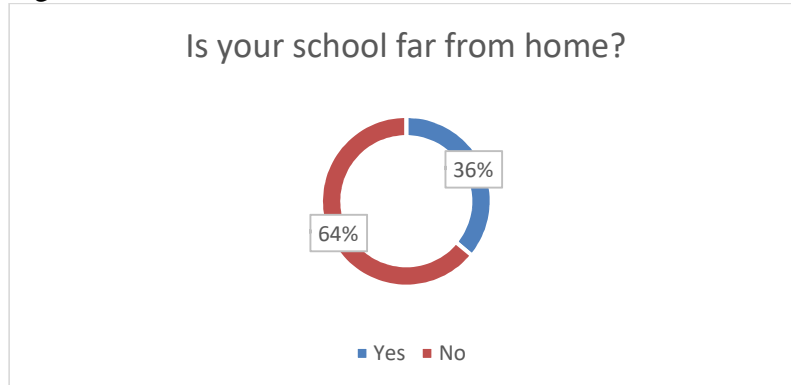
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Far from home	4	17.4
Not far from home	19	82.6
Total	23	100

Source: Field Data, 2018



Also, the response pattern for non-foster children was not significantly different from that of foster children regarding the distance of schools from homes as presented in figure (Figure 4.17) below.

Figure 4.17: School distance from homes of non-foster children



Source: Field Data, 2018

From the above figure, it came out that 64% of the respondents had their schools relatively closer to their homes while 36% of the respondents said their schools were relatively far from their homes. The results show that more non-foster children had their schools far from their homes than foster children in the metropolis. This is because of the fact that some foster children do not attend the same school with the biological children of their foster parents. Also, some non-foster children were found to have been placed in high performing schools, mostly private schools which have buses for transporting pupils to and from school every day. Another reason has to do with the fact that foster children perform household chores and a reason they were placed in schools which are relatively not far from their homes. One foster child narrated this;

“I perform a lot of activities in the house before and after school. Every day, I wake up early to sweep the compound, set fire and heat water for the children to bath,

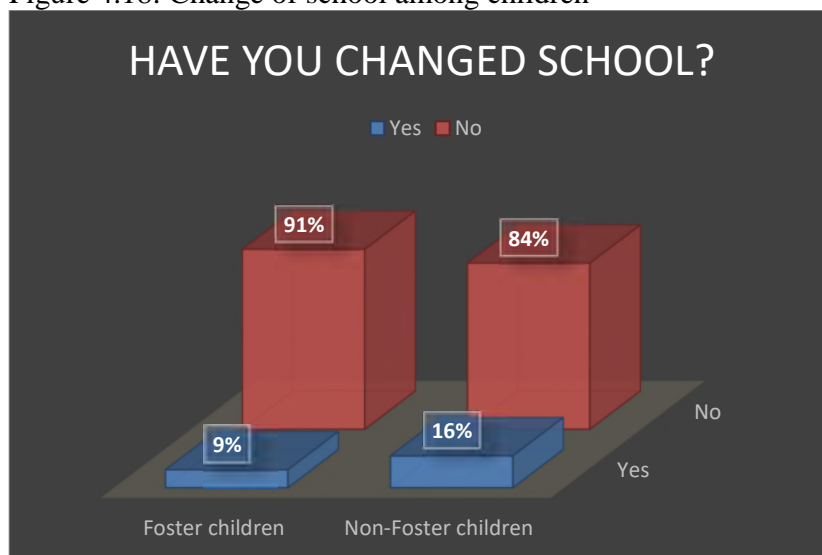


wash bowls, scrap the washrooms and mob the living room before I will take my bath and go to school. So if the school is far, I will always be late. And after school, I will come and fetch water, wash the children's uniform and start to prepare food for supper. My other sisters always come home late after school because they attend a private school which is far from home”.

From the above narrative, the study posits that foster children are not placed in distant schools because of the activities or household chores that they perform every day before and after school.

The study also sought to find out whether respondents have changed schools after enrolment. They were asked the question “Have you changed school”? The figure (Figure 4.18) below illustrate the responses of respondents.

Figure 4.18: Change of school among children



Source: Field Data, 2018



From the above figure, about nine percent (representing two respondents) of foster children respondents said they have changed schools while about 91% representing an overwhelming majority said they have never changed their schools of attendance. This finding disagrees with scherr (2007) that foster children are associated with frequent change of schools.

When compared with responses from the non-foster children, the results were not significantly different as shown in the above figure. The responses show that 16% of non-foster children said they have changed schools while an overwhelming majority of 84% said they have not changed schools since their enrolment. The reason(s) for change of schools included poor teaching and far distance of previous schools. Change of schools was not found to be a common practice among both foster and non-foster children either. This may be attributed to the fact that, parents are becoming aware of how frequent changes of schools affect academic performance of their wards, be they foster or biological children.

One foster hold head noted that *“moving a child from one school to another will affect the child’s performance...because she/he might missed the topics taught before her/his admission or she/he might to be taught the same topics that have been taught in her/his previous school”*. The narrative reveals that parents have become aware of the effects of frequent change of school on the academic performance of children. This relates to Calvin (2001) that children will have to frequently adjust to different curriculum, standards, and teachers, and possible repetition of what they have already learned at their previous schools as well as possibility of missing what they have not learned at their previous school in their new schools.



4.5 Academic performance of foster children under the care of their foster parents in the Tamale Metropolis

Regarding academic performance in school (class and terminal examinations), foster children were asked the question “do you perform well in terminal examinations as compared to your non-foster children? About 57% of foster children respondents believed that non-foster children were performing better than them in class and in terminal examinations. They believed their performances were below expectations as compared to the biological children of their foster parents. Meanwhile, about 44% also believed that their performances in school were better or the same as their non-foster colleagues, as presented in the table (Table 4.6) below.

Table 4.6: Academic performance of foster children

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	10	43.5
No	13	56.5
Total	23	100

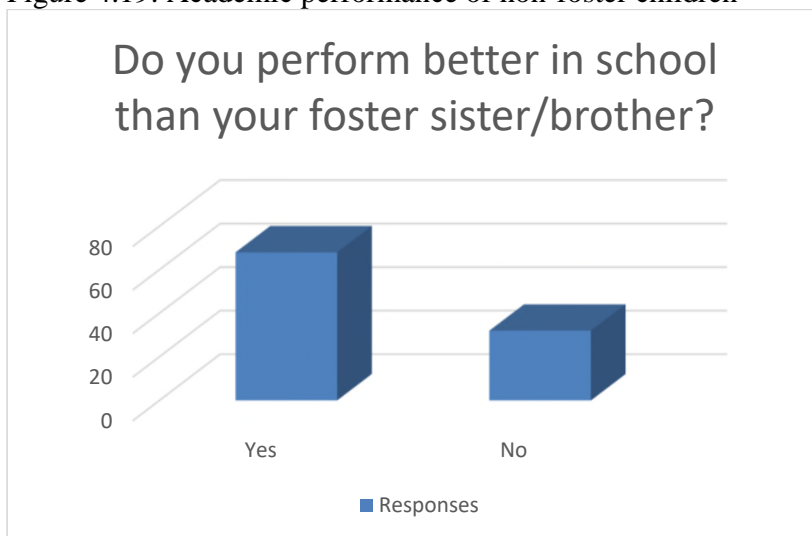
Source: Field Data, 2018

The above results therefore indicate that the performance of majority of foster children was lower than the performance of non-foster children. This is in conformity with the findings of other studies that concluded that foster children generally perform poorly as compared to non-foster children, which consequently results in educational achievement gap among foster children (DfE, 2014b; Dill et al, 2012; Rees, 2013; Rolleston, 2011).

The responses of non-foster children as shown in the figure (Figure 4.19) below further confirm that academic performance of foster children was relatively lower than foster children.



Figure 4.19: Academic performance of non-foster children



Source: Field Data, 2018

From the above figure, 17 respondents representing 68% of the non-foster children respondents said their performance in school was better than their foster sisters and brothers. Only 32% of the respondents said they were not performing better than their foster sisters and brothers.



4.5.1 Reasons for poor performance of foster children in school

Overloaded with household chores: Foster children mostly perform much of the chores in the house and hence have little time for studies at home, as confirmed in the figure (Figure 4.20) below. Some of the foster respondents noted that they were mostly overburdened with household chores to the detriment of their studies both at home and school. As a result they have less time home to learn. This finding confirms the finding of Abubakari and Yahaya (2013), who noted that foster children mostly have little time to study or do their home works at home.

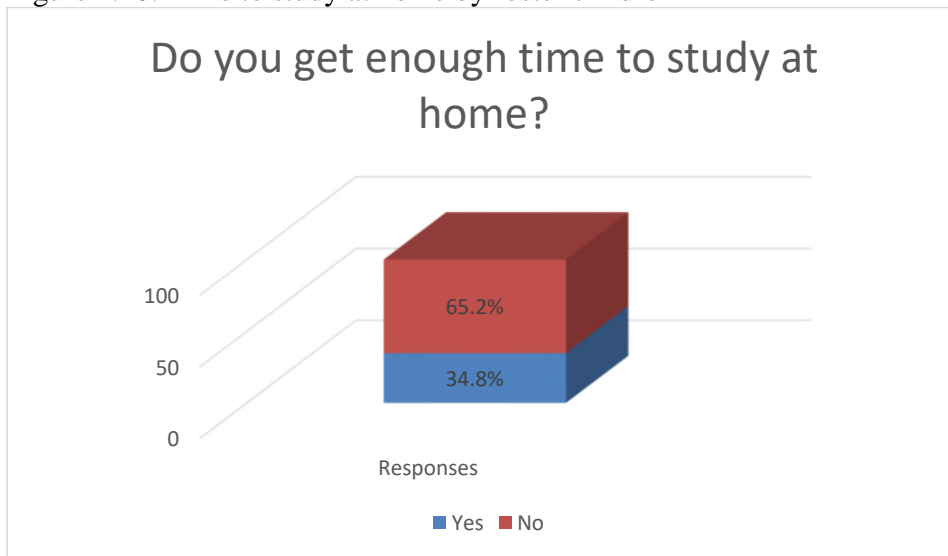
The findings show that some foster children perform a lot of household chores before going to school every morning which make them feel tired and weak during classes. As a result, some of them sleep in class during lessons and are unable to learn. A teacher corroborates this in the following narrative:

“some of them (foster children) may sometimes come to school late and when you ask them, they will tell you they were cleaning the house, washing dishes and many other household activities. Performing all these activities before going to school will definitely make one late.... In such instances, you as a teacher will have to empathise with that child and leave him/her (unpunished). The most disturbing issue has to do with the fact that some of them mostly sleep during lessons. It is because they feel tired and weak due to the activities they perform at home before they come to school. ...and they end up learning little if not nothing in class. So it is not surprising to see them perform poorly during examinations”.

This narrative also confirms the responses of foster children that they do not have adequate time for their studies at home, as shown in the figure below. It was found that many foster children have little time for learning or studying at home due to household work. It was revealed during interactions that many foster children usually may also sleep late but may be the first to wake up in the morning to perform some household chores before going to school.



Figure 4.20: Time to study at home by foster children



Source: Field Data, 2018

As evident in the above figure, majority of the respondents (foster children) did not have adequate time to do their homework and study when they go home due to performance of household chores and other activities. It thus, presents a concern for public sensitization on the need for foster parents to limit household chores for children in order to afford them adequate time for study and relaxation at home. This will refresh brains of foster children and provide them adequate time to study at home.

Attending low/poor performing schools: The study also found that, many of the schools foster children attend were the age-long local authority and English/Arabic schools that are usually clustered at some locations. Many of these schools are usually over populated and also do not perform well in Basic education certificate Examination (BECE) due to inadequate learning and teaching materials. This confirms the findings of Abukari (2008) who found in his study that foster children were mostly enrolled in English-Arabic schools.



This was common in situations where foster children were not attending the same school with the biological children of their foster parents.

Lack of extra tuition at home unlike biological children: The study also found that many foster children were not included in extra tuition at homes organized by foster parents for their biological children. Many parents acquired the services of private individuals that come to teach their wards at homes after classes and over weekends. Some parents did not include their foster children in the classes. As their biological children are taught at homes, foster children are engaged in performing various household chores. Some foster parents do not want to spend much on the education of children who are not their biological children. However, some foster parents were found to be non-discriminatory in organising private classes for the children (both biological and foster). One parent noted that;

“I have paid for two teachers who come to the house to teach them. Every child in this house is attending school and is part of this extra classes. Why should I discriminate against those children who are not my biological children? In fact, in our tradition, your brothers and sisters’ children are equally your children and you have a duty to take care of them. If they are not my children, why should I bring them to stay with me? All of them are attending the same school and they perform the same household chores. I go through their exercise books every weekend and this helps me to identify the weaknesses of each of them in the various subjects. I think, so far, their academic performances are encouraging” (Male informant, In-depth interview).



The above narrative shows the passion and seriousness some parents attach to the education of children irrespective of whether the children are fostered or biological children. It shows the level of importance that is attached to providing quality education for all manner of children in one's household.

Inadequate learning materials: One other factor that was noted to be affecting the academic performance of foster children was inadequate learning and teaching materials in most of the schools that foster children attend. Many of the schools do not have adequate teaching and learning materials such as textbooks, computers and conducive classrooms to provide effective learning and teaching. In addition, many foster children do not have the full set of learning materials such as books as compared to non-foster/biological children of foster parents.

Abuse and Discrimination: Foster children were found have been suffering some form of abuse and discrimination at their foster homes in terms of provision of educational and other needs. These did not however include physical abuse such as beating. It was found that majority of foster children, representing 78% (as shown in Figure 4.21 below) said they suffer abuse and discrimination such as in terms of provision of learning materials, uniforms, footwear and others including been overburdened with household chores, too many insults when they go wrong, provision of clothes, and freedom to move around and play with friends (recreation). One male foster child noted this;

“can you imagine a girl, that we are all in JHS, has to sit down while I am working at home? She eats and leaves the plates for me to wash whiles she goes for extra classes. I am the one who will wash all dishes, fetch water, set fire and prepare



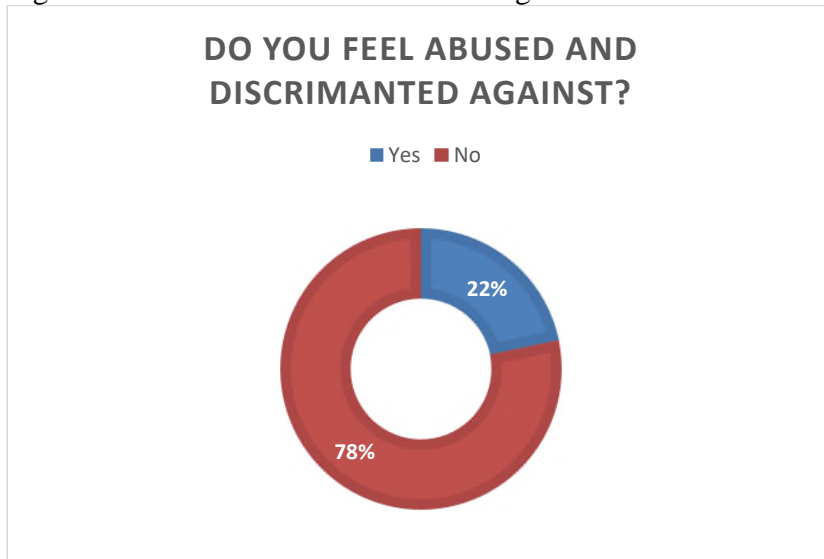
food and many other things in the house. I am in JHS 2 just as she is...but I do not have all the books I need. I do not even get time to study at home. I do my homework late in the night. She has all the books and has enough time for studies...meanwhile we are all going to write the same examination (BECE). She also gets extra tuition at home which I am part” (Male respondent, 2018, in-depth interview).

The above narrative reveals a form of discrimination against foster children in terms of performing household chores, provision of educational needs such as books and extra tuition at home. They are usually overburdened with household chores that they do not have adequate time to study and do their home works in their foster homes. This confirms Rolleston (2011) finding that fostered children are engaged in many domestic chores that turn to affect their educational advancement in Dagbon.

However, 22% of the respondents said there were not suffering any form of abuse and discrimination in the hands of their foster parents, as shown in the figure below. They said their foster parents treat them the same way they treat their biological children in the house. They provide all their needs including study materials. Also, household chores are divided among all of them to perform.



Figure 4.21: Abuse and Discrimination against foster children



Source: Field Data, 2018

4.6 Some of the challenges foster children face under foster parenting in the Tamale Metropolis

Among the challenges foster children face under foster parenting were identified under two categories; namely school and home challenges.



4.6.1 School Challenges

Late payment of school fees: The findings show that some foster children usually have their school fees paid late as compared to their non-foster colleagues. According to foster children respondents, the mentioning of names of pupils as defaulters of school fees and subsequent asking pupils to go back home for their school fees was embarrassing. Their names are mostly mentioned as those owing school fees and sometimes they are sacked from school due to non-payment of school fees. This is particularly common with the few who attend private schools. One of the foster respondents revealed this *“it takes long before*

my school fees is paid unlike their biological children. Sometimes they could pay my fees after I have been sacked from school". Corroborating this point, a teacher reveals during an in-depth interview session that;

"many times we have to ask some of them to go home before their guardians come to pay their school fees. So, one of the ways we get to know these foster children is through payments and provision of education needs. If it is taking too long for a particular child to pay his/her schools, it is likely that he/she is not staying with the biological parents. Also, if we realise that a particular child has inadequate learning materials such as books, pens, pencils as well as torn uniforms, it is possible that the child is not living with the biological parents" (Teacher, in-depth interview).

Inadequate learning materials and other school needs: According to the findings of the study, some foster children were found to have inadequate school needs such as exercise books, uniform, school sandals, drawing boards and other learning materials. This is corroborated in the narrative by the teacher above. This makes learning at school difficult for foster children which usually result in poor performance in class exercises and terminal examinations. The study found that many of the foster children have one pair of uniform and sandals as compared to their non-foster colleagues who could have two or three pairs of school uniform and sandals. These children were also found to have inadequate learning materials such as books, drawing boards, pens, pencils, sharpeners and erasures as compared to their non-foster colleagues.



Sleeping in class during lessons: It was revealed that most foster tend to sleep in class during lessons hours due to that fact they feel tired as result of performing some chores in the morning before coming to school. Performance of many household chores in the morning by foster children before coming to school makes them feel weak and tired to learn in class. As a result, they feel sleepy and/or sleep off during lessons. They may even lack concentration in class for the whole day. This results in poor performance in class because they end up learning very little, if not nothing. it was found that some foster children usually perform a lot of household chores including sweeping, washing utensils, scrapping washrooms, and fetching water before preparing themselves for school every morning. These activities make them feel weak and tired when they go to sit in class. As a result they turn to sleep in class while lessons are ongoing. They lose concentration in class and are unable to learn like their peers who do not perform such activities before coming to school.



4.6.2 Home Challenges

A major challenge confronting foster children is the fact that they are overburdened with a lot of household chores to perform at home. The engagement of foster children in sweeping the compound, washing dishes and clothes, preparing food, cleaning washrooms, going to market to buy and sell, among other households chores turns to take up much of the time of these children to the detriment of studies at home. Many of the foster children reveal they have very limited at home to learn and this significantly affect their performance academically. This findings agree with Abubakari and Yahaya (2013) who found that many

foster children in their study did not have adequate time and conducive atmosphere at home to learn.

Meanwhile some non-foster children were found to perform less of these household activities and have adequate time to do their exercises (homework) and study at home. The findings reveal a situation where many foster parents do not engage their biological children much in doing household activities like they do to foster children. In some other households however, household chores were equally shared among foster and non-foster to perform as well as given adequate time for learning at home including doing their homework. This was found to agree with Abukari (2008) that all children in a typical Dagomba household carry out household chores and farm work irrespective of their status as foster or non-foster children. There is no clear-cut distinction of roles among foster and non-foster children pertaining to household or farm work performed by Dagomba children.

Another challenge that was found to confront some foster children has to do with the fact that foster child have little freedom to socialise with their peers after school. Unlike non-foster children, foster children are engaged in lot of activities including going to buy and sell in the market and fetching water. They perform activities one after the other and particularly they are overwhelmed by activities over weekends and have no time to join their peers to play around. This restricts their relationship not only with their peers but also other people that could be their role models. Recreation is important for children as it forms part of the learning and development process of children.



It also came up that foster children were not allowed by their foster parents to regularly visit their biological parents. This makes them to miss the affection of their parents and has some emotional impact on their ability to have free mind to study. It was observed that many foster children wished they were living with their biological parents. Some of them could not see their biological for close to two except occasionally speaking to them on mobile phones through their foster parents.

Many foster children were not also included in home extra classes or home teaching as organized by foster parents for their biological children. This was common in some households as the researcher observed that a foster child could be performing some household chores while the biological child (ren) was/were been taught by a hired private teacher. This breeds a gap between the performance of foster and non-foster children in school.

Some foster children were been discriminated against and abused in one way or the other in terms of provision of educational and other needs, access to recreation and performing household activities. Some of them are also suffer insults from foster parents for the least mistakes they make in the household. These subject such children to emotional trauma that could affect them both socially and academically. Foster parents need to correct children rather than rain insults on them any time they do wrong.



CHAPTER 5

5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations. The study sought out to investigate the effects of fostering on the educational attainment of foster children in the Tamale Metropolis. To achieve this, the study sought to address four objectives which have been developed into four themes respectively as follows:

5.2 Factors that affect foster children educational enrolment in Tamale Metropolis

The study found an overwhelming majority of 92% of foster children been enrolled in school in the Tamale metropolis. Foster children were enrolled and there no significant cases of drop out of school. However, certain factors accounted for non-enrolment of the few who were not enrolled, which include the following:

Age of foster children: Foster children who were considered over-age were not enrolled in school. Their foster parents usually regard them as having past the schooling age or been overgrown to be in primary school. Even such children themselves prefer trade to school for reasons that they may be mocked as being too grown to be in lower primary with younger children in the school.

Willingness of foster children to be enrolled and learned in school: The study also found that, willingness of foster children to attend and learned in school was a factor that



influences decision to enroll foster children in school. Some foster children were not willing to go to school but rather prefer trading. These were mostly those children who have been enrolled in the community schools before being brought to live in Tamale as foster children. They refuse to continue for fear of being repeated or demoted in their classes. Others also think they were over-age and would not want to be given nicknames.

Financial ability of both biological and foster parents: The financial ability or position of both the foster family and biological family was found to be a determinant factor in the enrolment of foster children in school. Foster children in wealthy foster households mostly stand the chance of being enrolled and well catered for in their education even up to the tertiary level. Also, the biological parents of foster children who are economically or financially well to do, usually see their children enrolled in school, though they do not live with them. This is because parents are in position to pay for the cost of education.

Will or passion of foster parents for children education: The study also found that foster parents who have the will or passion for education of children will make sure that children, both foster and biological children, are enrolled in school. They will also make sure they provide all educational needs for the children including foster children, without discrimination. Many foster parents were found to have the passion for education of the children living with them.

5.3 School attendance of foster children in the Tamale Metropolis

The study found majority of foster children were attending school regularly with low cases of absenteeism. Many of the respondents (foster children) attendance were found to be



above three days per week. The few cases of absenteeism were attributed to been overburden with household chores as well as selling goods on market days, illness and others. Majority of foster children were also punctual to school with only few cases of lateness. The schools foster children were attending were not also far from their homes, and for that the distance of their schools were not disincentives to attendance.

The study also found that there was low rate of school changes among foster children in the metropolis. Over 90% of foster children did not change their schools since enrolment. This was relatively same with non-foster children too. Therefore, change of school could not be a factor to affect school attendance of foster children in the Tamale Metropolis.

5.4 Academic performance of foster children under the care of their foster parents

The study found that majority of foster children were said to be performing below the performance of their colleagues, non-foster children. The responses from non-foster children suggest that, they were performing better than their foster colleagues. Some reasons were found to have accounted for performance of foster children in school including the following:

Overloaded with household chores: Foster children were found to be engaged in performing household chores most of the time and have little time for studies especially at home. Some foster children even have to perform many of these household chores before going to school in many occasions. They get tired as result of that and mostly sleep in class during lessons and are unable to learn. Many foster children have little time for learning or studying at home due to household work.





Attending low/poor performing schools: The study also found that, many of the schools foster were enrolled in low performing schools, usually age-long local authority and English/Arabic schools in the metropolis. Some of these schools are usually over populated and mostly do not also adequate learning and teaching materials. They do not also have adequate furniture for the students to use and some of the furniture were broken. The school environments do not provide conducive atmosphere for effective teaching and learning. There were poor academic performances associated with some children were attending some of these schools in the metropolis.

Lack/denial of extra tuition at home: Many foster children were not included in extra tuition at homes organized by foster parents for their biological children. The services of private individuals who come to teach biological children of foster parents at home during weekends did not include foster children in some homes. As biological children were been taught at homes, foster children were engaged in performing various household chores. Thus, there was discrimination against foster children in terms of provision of educational needs and performance of chores in the house. However, some foster parents were found to be non-discriminatory in organising private classes for the children (both biological and foster). They did not discriminate and therefore provided all children equal educational needs. In such households all children performed the household chores without favour.

Inadequate learning materials: Inadequate learning materials among foster children was found to be affecting the academic performance of foster children. Many of the schools that foster children attend lack adequate learning materials such as computers, textbooks and conducive classrooms to provide children with effective learning and teaching. Some foster children were not also adequately provided with their educational needs such as

exercise books, textbooks, drawing boards, school uniform, sandals and school bags as compared to non-foster children.

Abuse and Discrimination: Some foster children were found to have been suffering some form of abuse and discrimination at their foster homes in terms of provision of educational and other needs. These did not however include physical abuse such as beating. Majority of foster children were been abused and discriminated such as in terms of provision of learning materials, uniforms, footwear and others. They were also overburdened with household chores, insulted for the least mistake committed, discriminated against in the provision of clothes, and denied freedom to move around and play with friends (recreation).

5.5 Some challenges foster children face under foster parenting in the Tamale Metropolis

5.5.1 School challenges

Late payment of school fees: The study found that there were delays in the payment of school fees of foster children as compared to their non-foster colleagues. There were instances where children have to be returned homes for non-payment of fees to compel foster parents/guardians to pay. This usually causes embarrassment and emotional discomfort to affected children and would not have free mind to study.

Inadequate learning materials and other school needs: The schools, particularly public/government schools that some foster attend usually lack adequate teaching and learning materials to enhance effective learning of pupils. Some of the children were not also provided with adequate school needs such as exercise books, uniform, school sandals,



drawing boards and other learning materials. This does not promote effective learning among children both in school and at home. Many foster children were found to have one pair of uniform and sandals as compared to their non-foster colleagues who could have about two or three pairs of school uniform and sandals.

Sleeping in class during lessons: The study also found that foster who were usually overburdened with household chores turn to sleep in class during lessons. This was attributed to tiredness in those children as result of performing chores before and after school. Children perform these chores in the morning before going to school and this sometimes result in late attendance to school. Some of the chores they perform include sweeping, washing utensils, scrapping washrooms, and fetching.

5.5.2 Home challenges

A major challenge confronting foster children was that they were overburdened with a lot of household chores at home. They performed such activities as sweeping the compound, washing dishes and clothes, preparing food, cleaning washrooms, going to market to buy and sell, among other activities, sometimes to the detriment of their studies at home. As a result, they have very limited at home to learn, which significantly affects their performance academically. Meanwhile some non-foster children were found to perform less of these household activities and have adequate time to do their exercises (homework) and study at home. Thus, much of the household chores were performed by foster children.



Another challenge that confronted some foster children was the inability of foster children to socialise with their peers after school. Unlike non-foster children, some foster children had little time or leisure to play with friends at home after school and during weekends. They perform activities one after the other and they were particularly overwhelmed by activities over weekends and have no time to join their peers to play around. This restricts their relationship, not only with their peers but also other people that could be their role models.

Abuse and discrimination: Some foster parents were found to have discriminated against their foster children in terms of provision of educational and other needs, access to recreation and performing household activities. Some foster children were also abused in the form of verbal insults from foster parents for the least mistakes they made in the household. These made affected children to lack the necessary affection from their foster parents.

5.6 Conclusion

Children education is an important issue that every parent takes seriously, and as such majority of foster children were found to have enrolled in school. The policies of free compulsory basic education and free senior high school education by the Government of Ghana must be advantageous to every Ghanaian child to get educated. There has been rising advocacy for child education by NGOs in the metropolis and as result parents have also become aware of the need to enroll children including foster children in school.



School attendance among foster children was good and there was low lateness and absenteeism among foster children. The school feeding programme and capitation grants by government have tremendously improved enrollment and attendance of pupils in schools in the Tamale metropolis. Policies such as the provision of free school uniforms and exercise books have also encouraged and improved both enrollment and school attendance of foster children and other deprived children in the metropolis.

The challenges confronting the educational attainment of foster children are both school and home-based challenges. However, the home-based challenges mostly and seriously affect foster children education achievement. These challenges are attributed to over engagement of foster children in the performance of domestic chores that affect foster children ability to study both in school and at home. The overburdening of foster children with household chores is a major challenge which has a lot of trickling down effects on their education.

This study concludes that there has been transformations in the practice of fostering with improved attention to the education of foster children by their foster parents in the Tamale Metropolis. There is more access to education by foster children than in the past and has suggested a promising future where the practice will be weaned off the negatives that affect foster children at their foster homes. There is increasing awareness of households on the need for equal opportunity to quality education without discrimination.



5.7 Recommendations

- The practice of fostering in the metropolis was seen not only in a traditional dimension of strengthening family ties but a phenomenon that is becoming much associated with the need for source of labour for household chores, particularly educated households. There is the need for regular monitoring by the Department of Social Welfare, Department of Children and other stakeholders in order to identify households that overburden children with household chore to the detriment of education and child welfare.
- There is a form of abuse and discrimination against foster children by their foster parents in terms of provision of educational needs. Foster children are not usually given the same attention as the biological children of foster parents which turns to affect their learning. Therefore, NGOs and other stakeholders need to intensify public education and sensitisation against child discrimination. Foster parents should be made to understand that child discrimination is an unhealthy practice and it is a form of child right abuse, which is a crime. Foster parents identified in these acts should be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate statutory and legal provisions.
- Schools particularly public schools of which many foster children attend usually lack adequate teaching and learning materials and facilities to provide a conducive atmosphere for effective teaching and learning. Therefore, government and NGOs in the educational sector should equipped these schools with the needed teaching and learning materials to enhance effective teaching and learning among pupils.



- There are no statistics on foster children by schools, Department of Children and Social welfare, and NGOs and so, this makes it difficult in identifying and tracking the educational progress of children who are living with people other than their biological parents. Therefore, institutions particularly the Department of Children and Social Welfare should collaborate and consider establishing a data base on children that spell out their status as foster, orphan, among others. This will provide data not only on foster children but also other deprived children that development interventions can be appropriately channeled to.

- Foster parents should limit household chores for foster children to provide foster children ample time for studies and rest. Household chores should be equally shared with all children to perform as in Dagomba practice.
- Foster parents should provide adequate needs for foster children as done to their biological children. There should no be discrimination in the provision of household needs that include educational needs for foster and non-foster children.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for foster children

The information provided here will be used for only academic purposes and shall be treated as confidential. Anonymity of respondents is also assured.

Background of respondent

1. Age.....
2. Gender 1 Male 2 Female
3. Ethnicity (tribe).....
4. Level of education 1 No school 2 Primary 3 JSS/JHS 4 SSS/SHS 5 Drop out 6 Tertiary
5. Religion 1 Muslim 2 Christian 3 Traditionalist 4 Others (specify).....
6. How many wives does your father have?.....
7. How many wives does your foster father have?.....
8. Suburb.....
9. Which community do you come from?.....
10. Whom do you live with? 1 Aunt 2 Uncle 3 Cousin 4 Brother 5 Sister 6 others (specify).....
11. Why are you staying with this relative/person?.....
12. How long have you been staying here?.....
13. At what age were you brought here?.....
14. Have you ever lived with someone else before coming here? 1 Yes 2 No
15. If yes, where..... and for how long?.....
16. How many children are you in the household?.....



17. How many of you are foster children.....and how many are not.....

18. How many are boys.....and how many are girls.....

ENROLMENT

1. Are you enrolled in school? 1 Yes 2 No
2. If yes, which school are you enrolled into?.....
3. Are you enrolled in the same school with the biological children of your foster parents? 1 Yes 2 No
4. If no, is your school better than their school? 1 Yes 2 No
5. Who pays your school fees and provide your educational needs? 1 Foster parents
6. 2 Biological parents 3 NGO 4 Others (specify).....
7. If not enrolled, why?.....
8. And would you like to be enrolled in school? 1 Yes 2 No



ATTENDANCE

1. Do you attend school regularly? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
2. How will you rate your overall school attendance? 1 Very Good [] 2 Good [] 3 Fair [] 4 Poor [] 5 Very Poor []
3. In a week, how many days do you attend school?.....
4. Do you go to school late? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
5. If yes, what account for your lateness?.....
6. Is your school far from your home? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
7. Have you changed school? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
8. If yes, how many schools have you been moved to and why?.....



ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

1. If yes to Q8 above, do you think change in school affects your academic performance? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
2. Do you get (enough) time to study and/or do your homework after school? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
3. Do you perform well in class or at end of term exams? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
4. If yes, what do you think account for your good performance?.....
5. If no, what do you think account for your poor performance?.....
6. Do you perform better than the children of your foster parents? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
7. If no, what do think account for their better performance?.....
8. Do you think your performance would have been better if you were living with your parents or receiving the necessary attention from your foster parents? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
9. What activities/responsibilities do you perform in your foster home?.....
10. Do you perform them with the biological children of your foster parents? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
11. Does the performance of these activities affect your studies? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
12. Do you feel discriminated against by your foster parents? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
13. Are you happy with your foster family? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
14. If not, why?.....
15. Do you suffer any form of abuse? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
16. If yes, mention some.....



17. CHALLENGES

1. What other challenges affect you both at home and school?
 - a. School.....
 - b. Home.....
 - c. Others.....
2. How do you want these challenges to be addressed?.....
3. Do you have anything to say that has not been covered in this interview?.....

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for non-foster children

The information provided here will be used for only academic purposes and shall be treated as confidential. Anonymity of respondents is also assured.

Background of respondent

1. Age.....
2. Gender 1 Male [] 2 Female []
3. Ethnicity (tribe).....
4. Level of education 1 No school [] 2 Primary [] 3 JSS/JHS [] 4 SSS/SHS [] 5 Drop out [] 6 Tertiary []
5. Religion 1 Muslim [] 2 Christian [] 3 Traditionalist [] 4 Others (specify).....
6. How many wives does your father have?.....
7. Suburb.....
8. Which community do you come from?.....



9. Do you live with both parents? 1 Yes 2 No
10. If No, who do you live with? 1 Father 2 Mother
11. How many children are you in the household?.....
12. Are there other children living with you who are not your biological siblings? 1 Yes 2 No

ENROLMENT

1. Are you enrolled in school?
2. If yes, which school do you attend?.....
3. Do you attend the same school with the foster child(ren) in the household? 1 Yes 2 No
4. If no, is your school better than their school? 1 Yes 2 No
5. If not enrolled, why?

ATTENDANCE

13. Do you attend school regularly? 1 Yes 2 No
14. In a week, how many days do you attend school?.....
15. Do you go to school early every day? 1 Yes 2 No
16. Is your school far from your home? 1 Yes 2 No
17. Have you changed school? 1 Yes 2 No
18. If yes, how many schools have you been moved to and why?.....

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

19. If yes to Q18 above, do you think change in school affect your academic performance? 1 Yes 2 No



20. Do you get (enough) time to study and/or do your homework after school? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
21. Do you perform well in class or at end of term exams? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
22. If yes, what do you think account for your good performance?.....
23. If no, what do you think account for your poor performance?.....
24. Do you perform better than the other children (foster children) in your household?
1 Yes [] 2 No []
25. If yes, what do you think account for your better performance?.....
26. And what do you think account for their poor performance?.....
27. What activities/responsibilities do you perform at home?.....
28. Do you perform the same activities with your foster siblings in equal measure? 1
Yes [] 2 No []
29. If no, why?.....
30. Does the performance of these activities affect your studies? 1 Yes [] 2 No []



Challenges

31. What other challenges affect you both at home and school?
- a. School.....
 - b. Home.....
 - c. Others.....
32. How do you want these challenges to be addressed?.....
33. Do you have anything to say that has not been covered in this interview?.....

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 3: Questionnaire for foster parents

The information provided here will be used for only academic purposes and shall be treated as confidential. Anonymity of respondents is also assured.

Bio data of respondent

1. Age.....
2. Gender 1 Male 2 Female
3. Profession/occupation.....
4. Ethnicity (tribe).....
5. Level of education 1 No school 2 Primary 3 JSS/JHS 4 SSS/SHS 5 Middle School 6 Tertiary
6. Marital status 1 Married 2 Single 3 Divorced 4 Widowed
7. If married, how many wives.....
8. Religion 1 Muslim 2 Christian 3 Traditionalist 4 Others (specify).....
9. Suburb.....

Background

10. How many children are you living with in your household?
11. How many are your biological children.....
12. How many are foster children?
13. Where does/do the foster child/children come from?.....
14. What is the ethnicity of the child/children?.....



15. What is your relationship with their (foster children) parents? 1 Parents [] 2
Brother/sister [] 3 Son/daughter [] 4 Uncle/Aunt [] 5 Others
(specify).....

16. Why have you brought him/her/them to stay with you?.....

ENROLMENT

17. Is/are she/he/they enrolled in school? 1 Yes [] 2 No []

18. If no, why?.....

19. If yes, who pay for his/her/their education? 1 Foster parent [] 2 Biological parents
[] 3 others (specify).....

20. Are they enrolled in the same school with your biological children/child? 1 Yes []
2 No []

21. If no, why?.....

22. Do you change schools for them? 1 Yes [] 2 No []

23. If yes, what are the reasons?.....

ATTENDANCE

24. Does/do the foster child(ren) attend school regularly? 1 Yes [] 2 No []

25. In a week, how many days does he/she/they attend school?.....

26. Does/do foster child(ren) go to school early every day? 1 Yes [] 2 No []

27. Are your biological children regular and punctual to school every day? 1 Yes [] 2
No []

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

28. Does/do your foster child(ren) perform academically well in school? 1 Yes [] 2 No
[]



29. If no, what account for their poor performance?.....
30. If yes, are their performance good compare to your biological children? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
31. Do you give the same attention to the foster child (ren) as your biological children at home and school? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
32. If no, why?.....
33. What are the foster child/children's responsibilities in the household?.....
34. Do your biological children perform these responsibilities everyday as the foster children? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
35. Do you think these responsibilities affect the schooling/academic performance of the child/children? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
36. If yes, what do you intend to do?.....

CHALLENGES

37. What are the challenges that affect foster children both at home and school?
- a. School.....
 - b. Home.....
 - c. Others.....
38. How do you want these challenges to be addressed?.....
39. Do you have anything to say that has not been covered in this interview?.....

Thank you for your time.



Appendix 4: Questionnaire for school head/teachers

The information provided here will be used for only academic purposes and shall be treated as confidential. Anonymity of respondents is also assured.

Background

1. Name of School.....
2. Type of school.....
3. Sub-Metro
4. Community/suburb
5. How long have you been in the service?.....
6. What is the total number of pupils in your school?.....
7. How many are boys.....and girls.....
8. What is the average number of pupils in a class?.....
9. How will you describe the general performance of your school in the BECE? 1
Excellent [] 2 Good [] 3 Fair [] 4 Poor []
10. What factors account for your response?.....

ENROLLEMNT

11. Are foster children enrolled in your school? 1 Yes [] 2 No []
12. Do you have specific measures for promoting enrollment of foster and other deprived children in your school?
13. If yes, mention them.....
14. What challenges do you encounter with the enrolment of foster children in your school?.....



15. How will you describe the general enrollment of foster children in your school? 1

Excellent 2 Good 3 Fair 4 Poor

ATTENDANCE

16. Do foster children in the school attend school regularly? 1 Yes 2 N

17. If no, what are the reasons?.....

18. Are they punctual to school every day? 1 Yes 2 No

19. If no, what account for their lateness?.....

20. How will you describe the general attendance of foster children in your school? 1

Excellent 2 Good 3 Fair 4 Poor

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

21. Do foster children perform well in class/examinations? 1 Yes 2 No

22. How will you describe the general performance of foster children in your school/BECE? 1 Excellent 2 Good 3 Fair 4 Poor

23. Do you have specific measures for promoting academic performance of foster and other deprived children in your school? 1 Yes 2 No

24. If yes, mention them.....

25. Do you think fosterage affects children educational attainments? 1 Yes 2 No

26. If yes, how does it affect children education.....

27. Have you recorded movement and reception of such children from and to your school? What are the reasons?.....

28. Do you think these movements affect children academic performance/educational attainments? How?



CHALLENGES

29. What do you think are some of the challenges affecting the performance of foster children in school?.....
30. How can they be addressed?.....
31. Do you have anything to say that has not been covered in this interview?.....

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 5: Checklist/Interview Guide for Directors of Education and Social Welfare

The information provided here will be used for only academic purposes and shall be treated as confidential. Anonymity of respondents is also assured.

Background

1. Name of Department.....
2. Position.....
3. What policies are there to promote enrolment and attendance of foster children in school in the Tamale metropolis?
4. What specific policies are there to promote the educational attainments (academic performance) of foster children in the metropolis?
5. What challenges does the practice of fosterage pose on children's educational attainments?
6. How can these challenges be addressed?



7. What is your outfit doing to promote the educational attainment of fosterage or stop/minimize the practice of fosterage?
8. Do you have anything to say that has not been covered in this interview?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 6: Checklist/interview guide for NGOs in education sector

The information provided here will be used for only academic purposes and shall be treated as confidential. Anonymity of respondents is also assured.

Background

1. Name of NGO.....
2. No. of schools working with in the Metropolis.....
3. No. of years of work.....
4. What specific programmes do you undertake towards promoting enrolment of foster children in school in the metropolis?
5. What specific programmes are tailored towards improving the attendance rates of foster pupils (boys and girls) in school? (probe on implementation and effectiveness of the programmes)
6. What kind of support/assistance do you give to schools/foster children to improve their academic performance? (probe on whether the real targeted children receive the assistance and what is the impact)
7. Do you think the practice of fosterage in the Metropolis affects children educational attainments? (Probe on how it affects education of boys and girls)



8. What do you think can be done to stop or minimize the practice?
9. What specific challenges do you think confront the educational attainments of foster children?
10. In your opinion, how can these challenges be addressed?
11. What are some of the challenges that confront your organization in your efforts towards promoting education of deprived children such as foster children?
12. What are you doing to address these challenges?
13. Do you have anything to say that has not been covered in this interview?

Thank you for your time.

