

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

**PATRIARCHY AND WOMANHOOD: THE CASE OF THE KONKOMBA
WOMAN IN THE NANUMBA NORTH MUNICIPALITY OF THE
NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA**

MARK MANASSEH NAKOJAH

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BY

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



DECLARATION

Student

I do hereby declare that (with the exception of the references duly cited) this dissertation titled; “Patriarchy and Womanhood: the case of the Konkomba woman in the Nanumba North Municipality of the Northern Region of Ghana” is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other University.

NAKOJAH MARK MANASSEH

Signature.....

Date.....

Supervisor’

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University.

DR. BAATAAR CUTHBERT

Signature

Date



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the almighty God and to my wife and son.

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ABSTRACT

The Konkomba society, like many other African societies is patriarchal in nature with associated imbalanced gender relations which cast women in subservient positions. This study examined the existing patriarchal structures of the Konkombas and how this system determines the womanhood of the Konkomba woman in the Nanumba North Municipality in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and a mix method approach. It employed questionnaire in collecting quantitative data while in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used to gather qualitative data. In all, 177 respondents were sampled for the study using both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. The study used descriptive and inferential statistics. Some of the key findings of the research were that an ideal Konkomba was defined as a wife and as a mother. The study also identified the various dimensions of gender inequality and discrimination, and discussed socio-cultural, political and economic factors such as child marriage, polygyny, inheritance rights, widowhood rites, household work, family headship and sexual rights that lead to discrimination against women among the Konkombas. The conclusion of this research is therefore, that, if the principle of democracy tolerates diversity of opinion and participation of different interest groups, then, the same cannot survive without women, who constitute more than half of the world's population.

The work recommends that all spheres of inhuman discrimination and gender inequality must be challenged through a deliberate, sensitive, consistent and systematic approach of gender relations including gender mainstreaming in all facets of life.



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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| ACHPR | African Charter on Human and People's Rights |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| DFID | Department of International Development |
| DHS | Demographic and Health Survey |
| DOVVSU | Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit |
| FAWE | Forum on African Women Educationists |
| FIDE | International Federation of Women Lawyers |
| GDO | Gender Desk Officer |
| GNP | Gross National Product |
| GSS | Ghana Statistical Service |
| ICCPR | International Convention on Civic and Political Rights |
| ICESRC | International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights |
| ICRW | International Centre for Research on Women |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| LBW | Low Birth Weight |
| LEAP | Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty |
| LDCs | Least Developed Countries |
| MCE | Municipal Chief Executive |
| MICS | Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey |
| NCCE | National Commission on Civic Education |
| NCMD | National Commission on Women and Development |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |



| | |
|--------|--|
| NNM | Nanumba North Municipality |
| NNMA | Nanumba North Municipal Assembly |
| NYEP | National Youth Employment Programme |
| OECD | Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PHC | Population and Housing Census |
| PNDC | Provisional National Defense Council |
| SSA | Sub-Saharan Africa |
| UDHR | Universal Declaration of Human Rights |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNIFEM | United Nations Development Fund for Women |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| VAM | Violence Against Women |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WiLDAF | Women in Law and Development in Africa |



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Women's status is a multi-dimensional concept that encompasses both material and ideological features and draws its meaning from comparison with the status of men. It is measured in terms of degree of equality and freedom (Bala, 2004). However, definitions of what constitute higher and lower social status are culturally bound hence value judgments about the attainment and demonstration of prestige may vary from one society to another. Because men's experiences and concerns are often privileged over women's, systematic relations between men and women typically ascribe greater value to men's status. Women have been traditionally defined through the institution of family and marriage while men have been individualized and defined through public institutions (Janeway, 1980). Both men and women are therefore socialized to perceive roles as opposite. While the latter is socialized to perform chores the former wields a sense of entitlement to dominant roles in man-woman relationships (Adomako, 2001; Adomako & Boateng, 2008). These underscoring features serve as a conductor for power relations between men and women in the society where men are mostly associated with superiority and dominance

while women are associated with care-giving and subservience.

The consensus among writers is that the African society is patriarchal in nature where gender roles are distinct and evident and gender relations are informed by the dynamics of patriarchy which casts women in subordinate roles (Makama, 2013). The African society is one where there are clear and distinct gender roles and individuals live their lives in compliance to these roles. According to Azodo (2007), in traditional African societies, a woman's place is seen to be in the home space where she is confined to domestic chores, bearing and raising of children



whereas the man roams the wild looking for adventure in work and war. Women hold key positions within the domestic sphere and are responsible for the wellbeing of members within this unit and yet they are without the necessary resources such as education, access to and control of resources for empowerment to effectively enhance their roles (Daplah, 2013). Kathewera-Banda et al. (2011) also notes that men as a group generally have more rights and privileges than women and that women's rights and enjoyment of certain privileges are snarled to their relationship with men. For instance, Strobel (1982), writing on African women notes that in many patrilineal societies in Africa, land was allocated to men and women only had access to land as daughters and more securely as wives. Lack of education, early marriage, absence of absolute property rights are considered as some reasons of inequality of sex in the socio-economic field (Ibid).

Several writers on women in Ghana have revealed how parents socialize their boys and girls in a discriminatory manner and these same boys and girls grow up to assume super-ordinate and subordinate roles respectively in their adult lives. Adusah-Karikari (2008), Annin (2009) and Dadzie (2009) have all added their voices to the socialization processes in Ghana maintaining that the process nurtures and sustains patriarchy. Manuh (1993), Tsikata, et al. (1997), Allah-Mensah (2005) have also identified the undue patriarchal nature of the society to be the culprit

behind this dichotomy between men and women. Patriarchy is a structure of power relations which endorses male supremacy and female subordination (Goldberg, 1993). Every facet of life: the family, the economic systems and indeed political systems are real examples of well-orchestrated patriarchal units serving the interests of men and disadvantaging women. These institutions interrelate not only with each other to support the structures of domination of men over women, but also with other structures of exclusion, oppression and/or domination based on



actual or perceived differences between humans and also creating states that respond only to the needs and interests of men.

The subordinate position of women in relation to men have not only attracted worldwide attention but have also influenced policies and guidelines to empower women for improved gender relations at international, national, local and family levels (European Commissions, 2012; UNDP, 2012a). This is because the inequality and subordination is a global problem (Neema, 2015). The empowerment of women is therefore advocated as a crucial intervention strategy for transforming worldwide gender inequality and discrimination against women (UNDP, 1995). The 1992 Constitution of Ghana has provided a framework for equal opportunities to men and women by granting them equal political, economic, and social rights (Article 17(2) of the Constitution, 1992). However, more than two decades have passed and yet this framework has not produced results close to any desirable level. Women in Ghana are still largely oppressed and confined to the domestic chores of life (Daplaah, 2013).

1.2 Problem statement

Globally, the population of women is experiencing an exponential growth (Uchem and Ngwa, 2014). United Nations facts and statistics indicate that women constitute more than half the world's population and do three-fourths of the world's work yet, women earn just one-tenth of the world's income, own one percent of the world's property, three-fourths of women are starving, and above all they represent over two-thirds of non-literate adults (UN, 2013). The UN's population projections also put the world's population at 7.2 billion people, with women constituting more than half of this number (Ibid). This population report puts it this way: "high population growth rates prevail in many developing countries, most of which are on the UN's list



of 49 least developed countries” (LDCs) (United Nations, 2013:9). This trend of population signals a turning of the tides of the global workforce from male to female which has started and will possibly continue. This shift in the workforce further builds up the indispensability of the women folk to the development of the present-day society. Regrettably, this major shift in the workforce from over-dependence on men to the inclusion of women has not yet effectively transformed the image of womanhood in many patriarchal societies including images from Africa (Uchem and Ngwa, 2014). Examples are such images of women as inferior, weak, subordinate, mediocre, dependent and subsidiary which have lingered into the 21st century largely on cultural and religious bases (Ibid).

On the African front, women are oppressed with humiliating and dangerous widowhood rites, relegated to low income jobs, denial of the right to own land or property, as well as denial of the right of daughters and widows to inheritance (Uchem and Ngwa, 2014). Thus if women’s marginalization is still a talking point in contemporary Africa, it is because culture, psycho-social, religious and social institutions in general remain the bases under which women are consistently subjugated. Many have hidden behind the saying that ‘a man’s culture is his identity’ to perpetuate these acts of injustice on women in the name of identifying with their culture. This has even become so serious that some of these victims of injustices have accepted



their fate and see such oppressive culture into which they were born as immutable and sacred (Ibid). It is not surprising to see female advocates of gender equity being criticized or victimized by their fellow women for attempting to “tamper” with the culture of the land. Consistently, women have been consistently deprived of for example their right to own property till date (Uchem and Ngwa, 2014). This has been aggravated by women’s lack of the right to inherit their husband’s or parents’ property in these societies. For instance, in a situation where a woman’s

deceased husband wills to her property they jointly acquired, in-laws in the name of culture often go against the will of the deceased spouse to share the property among themselves. Another way in which African women have continuously been economically oppressed by men is the refusal of their right to gainful employment by some husbands (Uchem and Ngwa, 2014). Some men see their wives only as reproductive machines, sex objects, food gatherers and domestic servants and nothing else. As such, they frown at the possibility of their wives taking any gainful employment (Ibid).

Politically, the participation of all citizens in the management of public affairs is at the very heart of democracy. However, in most African countries, the political arena remains largely dominated by men (Uchem and Ngwa, 2014). Apart from very few and rare exceptions, women are often “not allowed to express their feelings in political gatherings, hold leadership positions or participate in decision-making over important community issues” (Author, 2002:19). All these result from the continuous adhering to traditional practices and beliefs that forbid women from involving in the management of public affairs. For instance, the common belief about women in most African societies is that they have no other societal role than serving as reproductive agents and home managers. As a result, women continue to hold a disproportionate share of household and family responsibilities which often keep them busy indoors and away from political gatherings (Norris and Inglehart, 2001). However, the achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences.

In Ghana, existing literature on women’s empowerment have also highlighted challenges that women face and how these challenges influence their status in the society (Agarwal, 1997; GDHS, 2008). These works have attributed women’s subordinate positions to disparity in the



levels in educational attainment, differential levels of income, culture and the absence of an operational social support system to serve as a “fall back” to enhance negotiations. According to Tayne (2008), socio-cultural or traditional barriers which include societal norms, laws, rules, beliefs and practices militate against women’s access to education. The socio or traditional environment which is rooted in culture creates the barriers that rob women of their human identity and social rights. Akita (2010), notes that in Ghana, when a woman gives birth, it is common to hear men ask whether it is a human being (boy) or an “animal” (girl). This statement speaks volumes about the environment in which females operate in Ghana, and how that affects their access to education and every other sphere. The reduction of a gender to the level of an “animal” reveals the level a dominant group could go to degrade the existence of another gender. These expressions notwithstanding the dreadful orientation they connote, shows the widespread manifestation of the “domination-subordination” contrast. This kind of mindset incessantly recruits and prepares women for subordinate positions in the society without any prospect of getting out of the domestic circle.

Among the Konkombas of the Nanumba North Municipality (NNM) of the Northern Region, it is observed that women as in most African societies are discriminated against from acquiring formal education, mistreated and kept as housewives while men are responsible for distributing power and resources. The exclusion of women has led to their subordination and marginalization. This has brought about tremendous misrepresentation of women right at the level of the family down to the circular society. This practice has also limited the possibilities of entrenching the principles of democracy in a society and hindering economic development and discouraging the attainment of gender equality. While male domination and exploitation of women is a developmental problem, it poses threats to marital and family relations as it helps in



reducing women to tools in the hands of men among the Konkombas in the Nanumba North Municipality.

1.3 Research questions

1.3.1 Main research question

How do the existing patriarchal structures of the Konkombas determine the womanhood of the Konkomba woman in the Nanumba North Municipality?

1.3.2 Specific research questions

- 1) How is womanhood defined among the Konkombas in the Nanumba North Municipality?
- 2) What socio-cultural factors influence women's positions in the Municipality?
- 3) How do the existing pattern of social relationships that relate to power, roles and responsibilities of men and women affect women in the Nanumba North Municipality?
- 4) How can the observed gender-based inequalities be addressed?

1.4 Research objectives

1.4.1 Main research objectives

To examine how the existing patriarchal structures of the Konkombas determine the womanhood of the Konkomba woman in the Nanumba North Municipality of the Northern Region.



1.4.2 Specific Research Objectives

The specific objectives that this research sought were:

- 1) To establish how womanhood is defined among the Konkombas in the Nanumba North Municipality.
- 2) To analyze the socio-cultural factors that influence women's positions in the Municipality.
- 3) To discuss the existing pattern of social relationships that relate to the power, roles and responsibilities of men and women and how they affect women in the Nanumba North Municipality.
- 4) To determine how the observed gender-based inequalities could be addressed.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The theme of this research, 'patriarchy and womanhood' is one of the utmost important subjects in gender research and interventions. However, there is a scarcity of formal scholarship on patriarchy and womanhood particularly in Ghana. The few studies that have been conducted (Swai, 2006; Akita, 2010; Abeda, 2011) had limitations for which this research has come to fill. Abeda (2011), in her article theoretically analyzed patriarchy and women's subordination. Swai (2006) focused on ways in which women negotiate their womanhood identities and the factors that influence their decisions. Akita (2010) also analyzed patriarchy and male hegemony and the experiences of women in navigating politics within a seemingly entrenched socio-cultural framework in Ghana. All these studies have been limited in scope in addressing much more issues of womanhood in patriarchal societies. A good body of social anthropological literature; Cassiman, (2000), Tengan (2000), Mahama (2004), Abukari (2005) and Bierlich (2007) have also been generated on the cultures and traditions of the people of the Northern region of Ghana.



None however, has taken up the issue of women experiences in patriarchal settings. The foregoing exposition was indicative of a gap in research on patriarchy and womanhood in Ghana and particularly in the Northern region and there was the critical need to fill this gap.

An investigation of women's experiences in patriarchal systems and related issues has come to help in designing interventions to serve these women in determining social change actions. The findings of the study are of immense importance to Ghana as a nation governed under a democratic dispensation. It may well benefit Ghana's numerous women's organizations among which is the National Commission on Women and Development (NCWD) Ghana and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) whose mission is to promote gender equity and equality. The third women's organization which would benefit from this study is the International Federation of Women Lawyers, FIDA-GHANA which was introduced in Ghana in 1968 by a group of Ghanaian women lawyers. This study has helped in creating awareness about the conditions of women under patriarchal settings significantly. The study has also amplified awareness of the negative consequences of our socio-cultural framework and drew the attention of our people to the need for a change in attitude toward female in areas of education, politics and every sphere of human endeavor. Academically, this study has also added to knowledge on women's empowerment and its related areas in the municipality, region, Ghana and the world

and this has served as a source of reference to readers and researchers.



1.6 Definition of Terms

Some of the words within the study were given operational definitions as they are used in the context and scope of the research.

Patriarchy: The rule of men, promoting male privilege, by being male dominated, male-identified, and male-centered.

Neopatriarchy: It is a distorted form of traditional patriarchy which is based on male domination in the family where new form of power and control structure is guided by women but supervised by men in the family.

Womanhood: The composite of qualities deemed appropriate to or representative of women. It is experienced as a connection which is created through common experiences, though not necessarily similar, such as the physical development and processes of being female and living as a female in patriarchal society.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The study was divided into five chapters. Each chapter dealt with a series of relevant themes. Chapter 1 provided an introduction of the study including background, statement of the problem, research questions, and research objectives, significance of the study as well as the scope and organization of the study. Chapter 2 focused on the relevant literature reviewed of already existing studies about patriarchy and womanhood worldwide, in Africa and in Ghana. The section on the theoretical framework discussed the main theories underpinning the study. Chapter 3 presented a brief background/history on the Konkomba people and the study area respectively and discussed the methodology that was used which included the research method, research design, population, sample size, sampling procedure, data collection methods and



instruments, reliability and validity, and method of data analysis. Chapter 4 synthesized the empirical literature while Chapter 5 outlined the summary, major findings and conclusion of the study. It further contained the recommendations based on the findings for policy guidance and future research.



CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter addressed two essential and fundamental issues significant to the objectives of the study; theoretical framework and literature. First of all, the chapter examined the impact of patriarchy on society through the lenses of theoretical framework that informed the study. Secondly, the chapter reviewed relevant literature. The literature review section drew extensively from earlier scholarly works, references from studies of women in various parts of the globe, dissertations and academic journals which have dealt with the experiences. The chapter also reviewed selected topical areas linked to the research theme.

2.1 Patriarchy

The word patriarchy comes from the Latin word “pater” which means father. It is most often used to refer to as the political power and authority of males (Akita, 2010). Patriarchy has been generally practiced as to appear natural rather than as a socio-culturally constructed social order that is both changing and changeable. Connell (1987:41) notes that “it (patriarchy) appears in several logically different forms of theory and takes on different meanings according to its context”. In Max Weber’s usage, patriarchy refers to “a system of government in which men rule societies through their position as heads of households” (as cited in Walby, 1990:19). Also, according to Ehrenreich (1995:284), “patriarchy is the intimate power of men over women, a power which is historically exercised within the family by the male as breadwinner, property owner, or armed defender of women and children and the rule of the father, including the rule of older men over younger men and of fathers over daughters, as well as husbands over wives”.



Goldberg (1993:25) also defines patriarchy as “any system of organization (political, economic, religious, or social) that associates authority and leadership primarily with males and in which males fill the vast majority of authority and leadership positions”.

Patriarchy is the most pervasive and powerful force of traditional and modernized societies. It is beefed up by societal and cultural norms, religious teachings and portrayals of gender roles in media. There are numerous social structures of patriarchy which hold the foundation of power and control system e.g. family, community and the state (Walby, 1990; Sultana, 2012). These structures reinforce patriarchy and infuse the roots of patriarchy at all levels. Patriarchy comprises two elements; its structure and its ideology (Akita, 2010). The structural aspect of patriarchy is apparent in the hierarchical organization of institutions and social relation. The maintenance of such a hierarchical order and the continuation of the authority of the few to some extent are dependent upon its acceptance by the many (Ibid). The patriarchal ideology serves to reinforce this acceptance (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). In its present form patriarchy has become more an ideology and belief system than the explicit social and political systems of earlier times (Goldberg, 1993). This is so because it permeates every sphere of human endeavor. Seen along the same lines as capitalism and socialism, patriarchy and feminism have become bedfellows. Even in countries where legal equality of women and men has been established, the deep psychological and cultural roots of patriarchy survive as a belief system in the minds of many women and men (Ibid). A society is patriarchal to the degree that it promotes male privilege, by being male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered (Johnson, 2005). Patriarchy which is also put forward as a theoretical explanation for the subordination of women describes the political and social control of women by men. Entrenched sex/gender role definitions and ascriptions, a coding system which distinguishes men from women, and a generalized



subordination of women are the primordial characteristics of patriarchy (Mohammed, 2004; Nukunya, 2003).

In general, patriarchy is a social structure that is built on systematic oppression of women through societal and institutional conditions, norms and rules that perpetually disenfranchise women and are intrinsically linked to issues of power and control (Akita, 2010). When a society identifies “maleness” as the standard of thinking and behavior for human beings in general, it follows that men will be seen as superior, preferable and of greater value than women (Johnson, 2005). Patriarchy is male-dominated in that, positions of authority, be they in the political, economic, legal, religious, educational, military or even in domestic sphere, are generally reserved for men. Lerner (1986, 1989) believes that patriarchy is the demonstration and internalization of male dominance over women and children in the family. She explains patriarchy from public to private domain where male dominance is institutionalized through social structures. Patriarchy is not a static phenomenon; it transforms and is modified over a time period through different mediums and tactics.

2.2 Theories of Patriarchy

There are many lenses of patriarchy and feminism has glanced through most of them. This research grouped these feminist theories into three categories: Liberal, Radical and Marxist feminisms. These streams of feminist theoretical thoughts though not all, are offered in this literature to provide an understanding to women’s subordination. These strands of thought are important for women and gender activists as they are premised on the belief that these theories should be their guide for examining social situations and for political action in response. The various streams also offer women a variety of political practices; institutionalized (the state) or



non-institutionalized (margins of society) that they may use to contest their social positioning in response to feminist analysis.

2.2.1 Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism could be regarded as the mother of all feminist thoughts. Nurtured in the cradle of the social contract theories of Rousseau and Locke and liberalism propagated by philosophers such as John Stuart Mill, liberal feminism primarily addresses the autonomy of a person and the rights of the individual (Leach, 1997). With its emphasis on the importance of the civil and political rights of the individual, liberal feminism draws on the argument that women and men have essentially the same reasoning capacity and so they should both have equal political and social rights. Liberal political theory begins with rights, autonomy, reason and rationality and arguably depicts men's natures only (Ibid).

Liberal feminist theory is premised around a number of assumptions. These premises are based on the understanding that individual ignorance has contributed to gender prejudice and in order to address this prejudice, the affected individual has to take some action. Education is therefore seen as a variable that can be used to improve the situation. Liberal Feminists have moderate aims, their views do not radically challenge the existing values or upsetting the existing status quo and as such they aim for gradual change in the political, economic and social system.

Gender disparities are attributed to a number of factors. Such factors include culture and the way men and women are socialized within that culture. The other factors are closely related to the attitudes of the individual. So, as a forerunner for liberal feminism, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1796) contests the traditional thinking of her time in regards to the Enlightenment's ideal of one universal human nature. She urges her peers to have the same concern for human rights for



women as they do for men by exposing the flaws of gender and sexual difference. She challenges the fundamental social construction of women's abilities and roles by exposing the deficiencies of male reasoning and truth (as cited in Griffin, 1994). Wollstonecraft maintains that this construction results in there being two codes in practice; one code for women and another for men. From this premise she argues for the rights of women to access education, economic independence, and political representation from within her understanding of citizenship (Ibid).

Theoretically, liberal feminism claims that gender differences are not based in biology, but that women and men are not all that different and their common humanity supersedes their procreative differentiation. If women and men are not different, then they should not be treated differently. Women should have the same rights as men and the same educational and work opportunities. Strategically, liberal feminism is reformist in its approach and does not politically seek a disconnection from the state but to 'appease' and 'assuage' devoid of calling for basic structural reform (MacKinnon 1982:518). The liberal feminist theory encourages activities such as lobbying, petitioning and participating in political process (as voters or as candidates in elections).

Arguably, of all the feminist theories, liberal feminism still attracts extensive public acknowledgement and recommendation as the most commonly known. It is also seen as the least

theory that is "offensive to men". The main contribution of liberal feminism is showing how much modern society discriminates against women. It has also been successful in breaking down many obstructions to women's entry into previously male-dominated jobs and professions, helped to level wage scales and got some reproductive rights legalized. But liberal feminism has not overcome the prevailing belief that women and men are intrinsically different. It has



somewhat been successful in proving that even if women are different from men, they are not inferior.

2.2.2 Radical Feminism

Radical feminism can be branded as an overarching theory about the sex/gender system in the society. Radical feminism grew out of the recognition that society had been structured to the disadvantage of women, for their subjugation and the related empowerment of men and all the while working for the eradication of domination and elitism in all human interactions (Egan, 1999). Radical feminism differs in its theories of the constitution and origins of women's subjugation, which in turn is reflected in the explanations offered for the end to patriarchy. From within the radical feminist theoretical framework, the state is male in the feminist sense as it treats women in the way men see and treat women and is a reflection of the society (MacKinnon, 1989). The theory explains that patriarchy is maintained by the structures of the male-dominated system not by physical strength but the acceptance of a patriarchal value system. From this standpoint, there are differences to be emphasized between women and men (Millett, 1970). Catharine MacKinnon who is probably the most influential and best known radical feminist sought to use the law to proscribe the domination of women (Egan, 1999). She contends that women as a class have been socially construed as different to men and that their very existence is defined in relation to men. By this, she stands that construing gender as a difference, termed simply the gender difference, obscures and legitimatizes the way gender is imposed by force (Mackinnon, 1987). Research suggests that radical feminists argue that the gender divisions in society are social constructs rather than biological determinism (Dworkin, 1983; Mackinnon, 1987; MacKinnon & Dworkin, 1997). A basic opinion acknowledged by radical feminists is that



any woman in the world has more in common with any other woman irrespective of race, age, class, ethnic group, nationality, than any woman has with any man. The writing of women such as renowned feminist philosopher, theologian and author, Mary Daly (1984), is faithfully associated with this position. Radical feminism argues that the main oppressor of women is seen to be the patriarchal system; a system of structures and institutions created by men to sustain and recreate male power and female subordination (Bell & Klein, 1996). From within this conceptual framework women are constructed as weaker, submissive, irrational, mediocre as well as less intelligent. Men on the other hand are constructed as the ‘natural’ owners of intellect, rational with the power to lead (Bell & Klein 1996:15). Radical feminists again argue that women’s subordination is not rooted in relations of production but in specific relations of reproduction and sexuality. They contend that housework can be looked at as reproducing and not producing labor power. Firestone, a radical feminist argues that ‘unlike economic class, sex-class sprang directly from biological reality and that man and woman were created different, not equals (Firestone, 1972).

Radical feminist theory is criticized for putting too much emphasis on women’s sexuality which endorses the dominant view of women as the receptacle of men’s fantasy and inhibits the exploration of how women can and do create themselves and how a celebration of this can form

the basis for freedom and equality (Cornell, 1990). The position of the radical feminists has also been criticized for putting too much emphasis on reproduction. It gives the impression that women are subordinated mainly because of their role of giving birth to children. But we do know that the subordination of women goes beyond reproduction. Some scholars have pointed out that it is curious that feminists should yield to such an obvious biological determinism (Jackson, 1999).



2.2.3 Marxist Feminism

Marxist feminists see the intersection of class and gender as the primary starting point for their critique of women's social and economic positioning. Different from liberal feminism, the Marxist feminist theoretical perspective is revolutionary and not reformist in its approach to the state; an approach that requires a revolutionary approach to capitalism and concentrates on issues mainly in relation to women's work (paid and unpaid). Women's oppression is theorized as resulting from their positioning within the family under the political, social and economic structures associated with capitalism (Hennessy, 2002). Under capitalism, the work of women within the family is either unpaid or trivialized and devalued or underpaid within an economic system that requires a low-paid and increasingly casualized workforce.

Marx's analysis of the social structure of capitalism was supposed to apply to people of any social characteristics. If you owned the means of production, you were a member of the capitalist class, and if you sold your labor for a wage, you were a member of the proletariat. This is true of women as well because the source of women's oppression is their economic dependence on their husbands. This theoretical perspective endeavors to encourage revolutionary consciousness in working women as necessary to challenge capitalism and the state. In earlier theoretical work, Marxist feminists focused on the relationship between the state, the family, and women's

oppression. They focused on the inherent contradictions between the needs of capitalist production and the need for reproducing the labor force (Siim 1990). This contradiction is addressed with the arrival of the welfare state allowing for the next generation of workers through this intervention. As in Marxist theory, the family is understood as the primary site of women's oppression as a result of the family wage system reproducing women's economic dependence (German, 1981). In her analysis, a primary Marxist feminist theorist, Eisenstein



(1979), transforms the concept of patriarchy to one of interdependence with capitalism. This interdependence is understood as two relatively autonomous but dialectically related systems of oppression with patriarchy been changed by the mode of production. One significant feature of this theory is its concern with class oppression.

The researcher therefore regards it as the best theory to explain the existing patriarchal structures of the Konkombas and how this system determines the womanhood of the Konkomba woman. Marxism has however, been accused for its failure to understand gender and its unknowing appropriation of capitalist and patriarchal presumptions, such as the importance of the production of food and objects over the satisfaction of human needs. Marxism has also been exposed significantly for lacking appreciation of gender relations which constitute a central component of society. Another criticism against the Marxism conception is that there is too much emphasis on material factors and class analysis. In fact, some scholars argue that for most Marxists, it was unthinkable that those working class men might be oppressors in their own homes or that 'bourgeois' women might also be oppressed (Delphy and Leonard, 1992).

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Conceptually, this research is stirred from the Dependency Theory of Andre Gunder Frank. The dependency theory is a model of economic and social development that explains global inequality in terms of the historical exploitation of poor countries by rich ones. The theory is defined as an explanation of the economic development of a state in terms of the external influences (political, economic, and cultural) on national development policies. It is a historical condition which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favors some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate



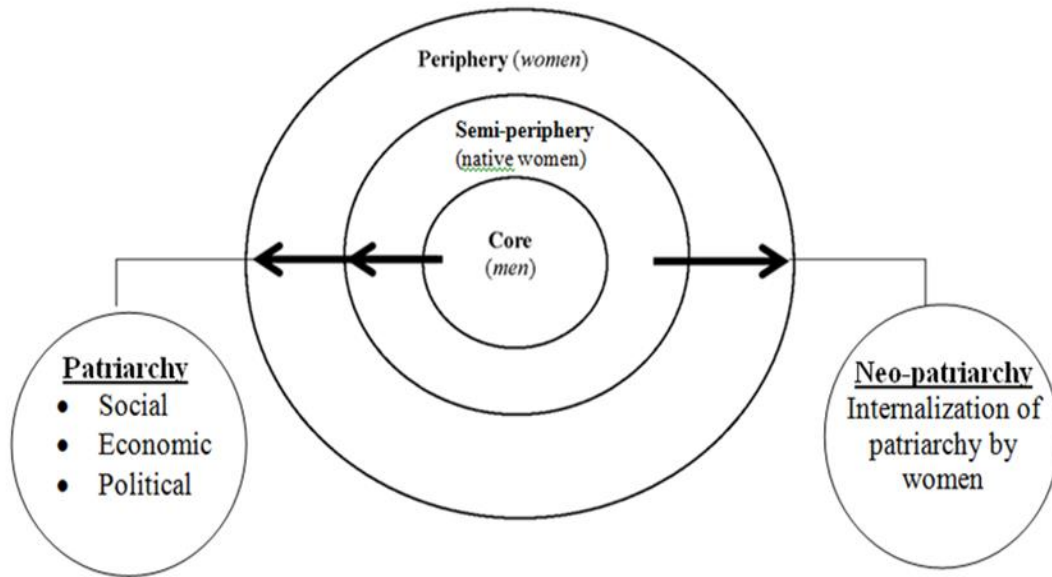
economies, a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected (Dos Santos, 1971). There are three common features to this definition which most dependency theorists share. First, dependency characterizes the international system as comprised of two sets of states, variously described as dominant and dependent or center and periphery or metropolitan and satellite. The dominant states are the advanced industrialized nations in the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The dependent states are those states of Latin America, Asia and Africa which have low per capita GNPs and which rely heavily on the export of a single commodity for foreign exchange earnings and the importation of variety of goods from the western developed dominant states. Second is the assumption that external forces are of singular importance to the economic activities within the dependent states. These external forces include multinational corporations, international commodity markets, foreign assistance, communications and any other means by which the advanced industrialized countries can represent their economic interests abroad. Thirdly, the definition of dependency indicates that the relationships between dominant and dependent states are dynamic because the interactions between the two sets of states tend not to only reinforce but also intensify the unequal patterns. Although, dependency theory is a Western economic model which is related to capitalism and



the concept of state dependency, it is suitable to explore power relations in the African context of family structures where patriarchy prevails in a hierarchal structure. This model has been selected to explain the phenomenon of patriarchy because the family is an organization like a state where there are relationships hence interactions take place between these relations. The cycle of dominancy is seen everywhere (country to country, city to city, village to village, region

to region and relation to relation) hence the use of this theory in this study to explain patriarchal structures among the Konkombas in the NNM.

Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework



Source: adapted from Gunder Frank's (1966) concept of dependency theory



From the model, the women (wives) and native women (mothers and sisters) have been culturally and historically socialized into being thoroughly dependent upon men for everything (socially, economically and politically). This dependency creates a condition which shapes a certain structure that favors the men to the detriment of women and limits their development possibilities. The family is therefore understood to be the primary site of women's oppression as a result of the family wage system reproducing women's economic dependence (German, 1981). In the same manner, semi-peripheral relations (mothers/sisters-in-law) also exploit and

marginalize the peripheral relations (daughters-in-law) and this practice is referred to as neopatriarchy. The Konkomba families are structured in the form of power and control hierarchy where the male is the main figure and so any woman who is close relative such as mother or sister to the male can also exercise some control over his wife.

2.4 The Concept of Womanhood

Expectations about attributes and behaviors appropriate to women or men and about the relations between women and men are shaped by culture. Gender identities and gender relations are therefore critical aspects of culture because they shape the way daily life is lived not only in the family, but also in the wider community and the workplace. Socially sanctioned understandings of womanliness create “implicit cultural guidelines for women on how to behave in womanly ways, including how to be a “good woman” (Stoppard, 2000:92), and a “value system of niceness, (and) a code of thoughtfulness and sensitivity” (Brownmiller, 1984:17). Implicit modes of conduct or gender roles assign prescribed characteristics with male and female opposing one another. Women are ascribed such characteristics as emotion, passivity, co-operation and art, and each of these attributes associated with women is devalued compared to the male counterpart (Stoppard, 2000). Traditional and contemporary discourses of womanhood have thrust a woman

down a path that has little to do with whom and what she really is, impelling her toward a destiny that is hardly her own (Hancock, 1990).

Gender, like race or ethnicity, functions as an organizing principle for society because of the cultural meanings given to being male or female. This is evident in the division of labor according to gender. In most societies there are clear patterns of “women’s work” and “men’s work” both in the household and in the wider community and culture explains why this should be



so. The patterns and the explanations differ among societies and change over time. While the specific nature of gender relations varies among societies, the general pattern is that women have less personal autonomy, fewer resources at their disposal, and limited influence over the decision-making processes that shape their societies and their own lives. This pattern of disparity based on gender is both a human rights and a development issue.

Historically, what constitutes womanliness has rarely been agreed upon (Lisle, 1999), although characteristics of servility, nurture, and motherhood are widely perceived as ways of women.

This division within the self creates barriers to creating a meaningful, whole identity for women who live in patriarchal societies as they are turned against womanly strengths that lie at the core of their identity. African traditional society therefore views the concept of “womanhood” with a high level of seriousness and responsibility. A young girl that attains the age of puberty is seen as a woman and at that level she begins to be groomed for the higher responsibilities ahead of her. She is given lessons on social etiquette, wifely duties on how to serve her husband and everything that defines her womanhood. These lessons do not exclude her responsibility to the society. From what she sees around her and the lessons given, the young girl is consciously aware of the importance of her sex and the role she is to play in the society. The African woman’s resilience and hard work is therefore entrenched in the consciousness of every young



girl from this stage of her life. Womanhood is defined in the language of “wifehood” (Hey, 1989). So a woman enters the peak of her womanhood when she marries thereby assuming the responsibility of a wife and mother, most especially her independent role as a contributor to the socio economic wellbeing of her family and society.

The concept of womanhood in this study is understood as cultural representation of women, where cultural meanings are used to mark and maintain differences between men and women.

Under this interpretation, gender differences and their meanings are used to assign women different roles and positions in society. Womanhood is therefore, a cultural artifact mediating both women and men's thinking and actions. In other words, womanhood as a concept shapes the ways in which people (men and women) perceive women's roles and position in family and larger society. As a mode of intelligibility, womanhood ideas are projected in society to describe what women are and what they can do and cannot do.

2.5 Womanhood in the Ghanaian Society

The perceptions about women in the Ghanaian culture are very important. Such perceptions are important as they shape the way people think about women and inevitably the way women think about themselves too. In view of these perceptions the immediate question to rise therefore must be: What constitute a woman in the Ghanaian culture? In Ghana, as everywhere else in Africa, women's lives are a complex mix of joy and pain, of power and vulnerability (ISSER, 2016). The Ghanaian woman plays very vital roles in the Ghanaian domestic and socio economic settings. This is believed to be one of the reasons why she has remained as a subject matter for so many commentators in Ghana. Over the years her image has been projected in different spheres, for example in politics, industry, commerce, science, poetry, music and drama only to mention a few. A considerable number of the research and writing about Ghanaian women's lives is on the past two centuries. Some historians however, have tried to reconstruct women's lives as they were before contact with the West and with colonialism. They put forward that in the area that became the Gold Coast and then Ghana, gender relations were complementary, with men and women having different but equal roles in a society where their economic enterprise and independence were valued, and their rights (to property and in relationships protected (Aidoo,



1998; Arhin, 1983; Hagan, 1983). Hence the imbalance relations we see today, according to these researchers, can be attributed to the disruption of African traditions by colonial ideas and practices. Others argue that rather than creating gender inequalities, colonization in British West Africa merely reinforced them (Bakare-Yusuf, 2003). Policies that were implemented constrained women to fit prescribed roles and behaviors. In the area of work, for example, the colonial state basically repudiated the fact that women of the Gold Coast had always worked outside the home and instead sought to confine women into exclusively domestic roles. Women were less likely than men to enter school and if they did, they would receive a substandard education that underscored domesticity over the technical skills that might gain them entry to the then burgeoning formal sector (Graham, 1971). The few ones who made it into salaried employment were required to resign from their work on marrying or conceiving (Tsikata and Darkwah, 2013). To further disfavor women, policies in agriculture assumed male control over land and productive labor, and subsequently made available resources as capital and agricultural inputs to men to cultivate cocoa (Allman, 1996). Additionally, policies that made agriculture and the extractive industries the basis of the colonial economy endorsed the commercialization of land, which further disadvantaged women in terms of access to their primary livelihood (Agbosu et al., 2007).



By the late 1970s and 1980s, female traders had gained great income and power from their work, and had leveraged that power through associations) to become a powerful economic and social force. They faced a counterattack during the military coups where they were incriminated by the military for the corrupt practices, such as hoarding and price-hiking that were given as the major reason for the country's economic problems. A classic case of this violence was the demolition of Makola market by a military regime in 1979 (Bentsi-Enchill, 1979). As much as women were

expected to be industrious, they were also expected not to pose a challenge to men's power (Manuh and Anyidoho, 2010). Violence against women may no longer be state-sanctioned, but it is still unbearably present in the private space. Beyond the instances of physical assault that receive some attention from the media, women also suffer from everyday forms of violence such as sexual harassment and psychological abuse (ISSER, 2016). It must be said that men's actions and attitudes are not the sole problems when it comes to violence against women; rather it is the broader culture that informs both men and women's perceptions of violence against women as a normal part of gender relations (Cole et al, 2007). In a recent nation-wide survey, more female (28%) than male (13%) respondents indicated that a man was permitted to beat his wife for any of the following reasons: if she argued with him, burnt the food, went out without telling him, neglected their children, or refused to have sex with him (GSS, 2015).

Although women have been made largely invisible in the accounts of nation-building in Ghana, they have made great contributions to the development of the Ghanaian state and economy. Women have sliced out spaces for themselves in the informal economy mainly as food crop farmers and traders. They have also made improvements in government, in business, education, literature and entertainment, to name a few domains. These improvements cannot be attributed to women's own resilience and resourcefulness, but also to a democratic environment and

progressive policy-making. Tsikata (2009) describes the transformation of women's organizing from the apolitical welfare organizations to a focus on power inequalities and rights as the political space for self-expression expanded with a deepening commitment to democratic governance. Examples of such women's movements are the coalition that drafted the Women's Manifesto and the National Coalition on Domestic Violence Legislation that advocated extensively for the passing of the Domestic Violence Act in 2007. These coalitions are made up



of individuals as well as civil society organizations that work for women's rights. However, their good work is hampered by governments that are often slow to act on women's issues and also by the public; both men and women that sometimes perceives these activists and their ideas about gender equality as alien and threatening to Ghanaian "culture" (Ibid).

2.6 Dimensions of Women Inequality and Discrimination

2.6.1 Women and Education

Citing the influential 20th century educator in Ghana, Dr. J. K. Aggrey, who said that "if you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a nation" (cited in Adusah-Karikari, 2008:20) is to underscore the point that, women are the social and emotional glue of any society; reflecting the need for girls' education. The returns of girl-child education can be observed in diverse settings. As revealed by research studies, uneducated women are more likely to suffer from poverty, illness and malnutrition (Scully, 2006). Besides helping generate additional income and breaking the vicious cycle of poverty, investments in women education results in other economic and social benefits (Tembon and Fort, 2008).

Women's education adds other social benefits to the women's lives and to the whole society.

There is a direct relationship between literacy, power and empowerment. By increasing their

political and democratic participation and reducing domestic violence, education offers greater

empowerment for women (Subrahmanian, 2007). Roudi-Fahimi and Moghadam (2003) assert

that educated women become more aware of legal rights and they are politically more active.

Dilli (2006) also points out that women's education is an important determiner of children's

educational attainment and opportunities. When mothers/women are educated, children

especially girls have higher level of educational enrolment and attainment (Roudi-Fahimi and



Moghadam, 2003). Another benefit of women's education is related to the reduction in women's fertility rates. Murphy and Carr (2007) assert that reproductive health risks of adolescent girls including early and unwanted fertility declines with their educational attainment. Fuke (2007) notes that the number of live births, lower infant and maternal mortality rates and increased likelihood of a mother's health care for her children are health outcomes associated with girls' education. Educated women have fewer and healthier children than women with no formal education as they have greater awareness of contraceptives use and family planning methods and delayed age of marriage and childbearing (Sabrahmanian, 2007; World Bank, 2009a). Women's education contributes to health at family level by increasing access to and use of information, improving use of health service and by increasing the proportion of family income earned by and allocated by women (Population Council, 2010). "As education expands women's horizons, opens up better earning opportunities and improves women's position in the family and society, couples tend to have fewer children and to invest more in the health and education of each child" (Herz and Sperling, 2004:4). Women's increased earning capacity resulting from higher level of education also has a positive effect on child nutrition as well (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003). Therefore, the children of educated women have higher survival rates and they tend to be better nourished and healthier as women with some formal education are more conscious of child immunization, nourishment and hygiene (World Bank, 2009a). Likewise, education reduces maternal mortality as educated women are more likely to have better knowledge about health care practices. For instance, they tend to have fewer and better-spaced pregnancies and seek pre and post-natal care (World Bank, 2009a). Thus, an additional year of schooling for 1,000 women is estimated to prevent two maternal deaths (Summers, 1994).



Women's education is therefore recognized as the most cost effective measure that developing countries can embark upon to improve the standard of living of their people (2012Tanye, 2008; Lambert et al.,). This is confirmed by Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary General, at the World Education Forum in 2000 in Dakar in this statement: "No development strategy is better than one that involves women as central players" (cited in Atta, 2015:13). Despite the numerous advantages of women's education, being born as a girl into this world seems to be a curse mostly in Africa (Atta, 2015). Women have and continue to suffer various degrees of injustices and inequalities spanning from cultural, social, economic, religious, and political matters. These negative attitudes have affected their educational opportunities (Ibid). The barriers to girls' education have been an old phenomenon in society and have proved too problematic to resolve. The socio-cultural beliefs, practices and attitude of society tend to favor the education of boys to the neglect of girls.

A World Bank survey report in 2011 of young people aged 21 to 24 in Ghana revealed that 84.1% of girls started primary school as against 90.7% of boys. Out of these, 86.5% of girls completed primary school compared to 90.7% of boys. With respect to transition rate from primary to junior high, girls (91.5%) were lagging behind boys (96.7%). However, for those who started junior high school, girls were seen to have the higher tendency of completing (89.7%)

than boys (88%). Again, the transition rate from junior high to senior high school showed girls (51.2%) fallen behind boys (65.1%) (Confed Ghana, 2013). The estimate of the national gender ratio for completion of senior high school is 67.5 percent indicating that "two girls for every three boys complete SHS" (Confed Ghana, 2012:8). The gender ratio shows a very low figure in the rural areas (51.6%) as compared to urban areas (73.3%), representing as low as 28.8% "in the bottom welfare quintile whilst reaching 82.4% in the top quintile" (Confed Ghana, 2013:9).



Thus, girls living in rural areas as well as those in households where welfare is very low seem to be disadvantaged as compared to boys living in the same conditions (Confed Ghana, 2013). For instance, UNESCO (2012) report stated that “53% of poor girls living in the Northern region of Ghana had never been to school, compared with 41% of poor boys” (Confed Ghana, 2013).

Socio-cultural or traditional barriers such as societal norms, laws and rules, beliefs and practices hinder women’s participation in education (Tanye, 2008). The traditional environment is culturally entrenched and as such prevents girls from enjoying their human identity and social rights. Alabi et al. (2013), stressed that the girl-child is neglected and rejected immediately before or after birth when it is announced that there is safe delivery to the family. Also, the cultural mindset with respect to women’s education, the dowry system, control of women’s lives, male privilege, time constraints, women’s lack of self-esteem and a number of roles that women play prevent their education (Tanye, 2008; Lambert et al., 2012). The cultural mindset surrounding women education is changing, “but there is still strong, pervasive sexism in Ghana” (Lambert et al., 2012:17). The traditional Ghanaian culture has negative perspective towards women advancing in education, particularly in the rural areas (Lambert et al., 2012). In these communities, many parents hold the view that the traditional roles of girl-children are to marry, procreate, care for the family and remain in the kitchen and as household laborers, therefore

investing money into their education is a waste of resources (Lambert et al., 2012; Plan, 2012).

In Ghana, the rate of transition from primary to tertiary education decreases as students move up the academic ladder. Indeed, Ghana’s educational system resembles a pyramid; as one ascends the academic ladder, the numbers decrease. Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) instituted by the government of Ghana ensures that the majority of Ghanaian children attend school. At the primary level, most children attend school and there is little disparity



between boys and girls. Like the typical pattern in sub-Saharan Africa, dropout rates beyond the primary level of schooling tend to be higher for girls than for boys, a trend that has been attributed to various economic and socio-cultural factors (Sackey, 2005). In explaining low female participation in education, Manuh (2002) contends this is the result of the attitude about educating females, who are commonly perceived to need only the necessary skills to prepare them for marriage and childbearing.

2.6.2 Women and Marriage

The union of man and woman is universally and socially acknowledged by the institution of marriage. Even though marriage is a union that binds two consenting people together, its recognition in society and the rights therein is extensively dependent on law (Kuenyehia, 2006). Marriage is an important part of the traditional African society and is one of the largely reflected issues in African literature. In the traditions of Africa, marriage is between families and not just only between two individuals (Tumusiime & Bichachi, 2011). Marriage in Ghana takes different forms namely, marriage by Ordinance (legally valid civil marriage), Marriage of Mohammedans (Islamic marriage) and customary marriage. Among all three, customary marriage appears dominant with eighty percent of marriages in Ghana organized under customary law (Deere et al., 2013). In practice however, all marriages pass through the traditional/customary system of marriage depicting the unification between the two families. Marriage amongst Africans is mainly an institution for the control of procreation. Mbiti (1986) contends that marriage in African societies is highly valued as the continuity of family systems, especially for procreation. Procreation, particularly of male children, is seen as the most important means for maintaining the family tree, lineage and its posterity through rightful inheritance of the family property. The



basis of marriage among Africans implies transfer of a woman's fertility to the husband's family group (Ngcobo, 1986) hence every woman is encouraged to marry and get children in order to express womanhood to the full. Chukwuma (1989) claims in her article, "Positivism and The Female Crisis", that the true test of a woman continues to be the marriage institution. Through marriage, a woman attains a status acclaimed by the society and fulfills the biological need of procreation and companionship (Ibid). But with this social practice of marriage comes with other traditional customs which are very much indispensable in the African society without which the marriage is incomplete. Bride price is one of the widely practiced social customs of Africa within the marriage institution wherein the prospective groom has to pay in terms of money or properties to the bride's family. Bride price is paid mostly in the form of money, however, other items such as palm wine, cowries, yams, labor and animals such as cows, goats, guinea fowls etc. Emecheta (1976) writes of the dilemma of African women in the male dominated society. Without any hesitation, Emecheta, out rightly exposes the abuses and inhuman treatments done by African men on women. Women have been represented as the "weaker sex" or the "second sex" and stereotyped with negative qualities such as sensitive, emotional, fragile, indecisive, submissive etc. To quote Simone de Beauvoir in this context: "to be feminine is to appear weak, futile, docile" (Beauvoir, 1956:334). Such stereotyping of women exists in Africa within the institution of marriage. One of the institutions through which traditional African men enjoy authority and supremacy is marriage. With marriage comes the power of African men to suppress their women. The African husband overpowers and leads his family while the wife is restricted within the domestic walls of household chores and the rearing and nurturing of children. This has led to the notion of "Father is Supreme" or "Father is the shelter" in every patriarchal society (Emecheta, 1976:12).



Forced marriage is a common practice in Ghana (Abdul-Mumin, 2012). It has been suggested that forced/child marriage occurs when one or both spouses are below the age of 18 (Bayisenge, 2010; UNDP 2011). Early marriage can be interchangeably known as forced marriage. It is sometimes called forced marriage because there is an imposition of a marriage partner upon a child. Marriage is considered as a moment of joy and celebration, however, the harmful practice of forced/early marriage creates a sad moment for this type of celebration of the union for most girls (Bayisenge, 2010). While boys can be affected, the practice predominantly impacts girls. It disregards or restricts the consent of the girl-child. Early marriages among girls have negative impacts on girls' educational and economic outcomes, as well as their sexual and emotional development (Bayisenge, 2010).

Parents most often give out their daughters to marriage when they are in their teenage years either to friends, benefactors, visitors, strangers, or even betroth them to respected persons, thus ending their education prematurely (Lambert et al., 2012; Alabi et al., 2013). At times girls are forced to marry older men who are in their 50s or 60s. The practice of early marriage is most common in the rural traditional areas of Africa and Southern Asia. Early marriage is common in rural areas because people living in rural settlements are highly involved with traditions compared to their counterparts in urban cities (Adedokun et al., 2011). According to statistics



from the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) as cited in WiLDAF (2014), a third of the world's girls marry before they turn 18 and of that figure, 1 in every 9 girls is married before they turn 15. It is also noted that the highest concentration of brides under 18 are found in Western and Sub-Saharan Africa and Ghana has been recorded as one of the regions where the practice of child marriage is prevalent, with just 11% decrease since 2003-2008 (WiLDAF, 2014). The statistics also indicate that on an average, one out of four girls will be

married before their 18th birthday and this act is predominantly performed in the Northern part of the country (Ibid). The Ghana Demographic Health Survey in 2008 indicates that about 25% of the women aged 20-24 were married or were in union before age 18, implying a decline of 11% since 2003 (which scored 28%). However the 2011 Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) scores Ghana about 28% for age of marriage before 18 and about 6% for age before 15 years. At the regional level in Ghana, according to Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) (2014), previous surveys gave the indication that prevalence is highest in Upper East (50%), followed by Upper West (39%), Northern (36%), Volta (33%), Brong-Ahafo (33%), Central (28%), Ashanti (23%), Western (18%), Eastern (18%), and Greater Accra (11%). Currently, the statistics show that the following percentages of girls are married before the age of 18 (by region): Upper East (39.2%), followed by Western Region (36.7%), Upper West (36.3%), Central (31.2%), Ashanti (30.5%), Volta (29.3%), Brong Ahafo (29.1%), Northern (27.4%), and the Eastern region (27.2%), and the lowest in Greater Accra (12.2%). According to National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) as cited in Atta (2015), an estimated number of 407,000 girls are expected to get married by 2030 in Ghana. This trend in the statistics emphasizes that early and forced marriage is a problem in Ghana hence the need to develop strategies to combat it.



2.6.3 Women and Poverty

The word “poverty” originated from the Latin word pauper meaning poor. It has its roots in the words pau and pario, which is “giving birth to nothing”; referring to unproductive livestock and farmland. Poverty is the oldest and the most resistant virus that brings about a devastating disease in developing countries (Tazoacha, 2001). Its rate of killing cannot be compared to any

disease from the genesis of mankind. It is worse than malaria and HIV/AIDS which are claimed to be the highest killer diseases (Ibid). Poverty does not go for break or summer and poverty never goes to sleep. Over one billion out of the total population in the world exist on one dollar per day while 2.7 billion are managing to leave on below two dollar daily (Johnson, 2013). Poverty in the under developed world is more than just lack of income. It means trudging for over one mile each day for the purpose of fetching firewood and water, suffering from sickness that have been eradicated for quite a long period of time in the developed nations (Ibid).

There are many definitions of poverty according to how it is viewed. In its most extreme form, poverty is a lack of basic human needs to sustain a useful and working efficiency such as adequate and nutritious food, clothing, housing, clean water and health services. According to the United Nations Human Development Report, (1998), poverty is defined as a complex phenomenon that generally refers to inadequacy of resources and deprivation of choices that would enable people to enjoy decent living conditions. Yunus (1994) on the other hand defines it as the denial of human rights relating to the fulfillment of basic human needs. According to the World Bank (2005) as cited in Addae-Korankye (2014:2) “Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and

freedom”. Poverty can also be said to be the other side of wellbeing which is not only concerned about income, but rather includes the inability to own a piece of land, have access to credit, health care service, quality education, exposure to violence, external economic shock, natural hazard, voicelessness and social exclusion. Development Assistance Committee (2001), opine that poverty comprises of various dimension of denial that is associated to human abilities, consumption and availability of food, healthcare, quality education, rights, good job, protection



and dignity. Richard and Sonja (2008) reports that poverty is not only limited to inability to have access to material resources, but include lack of access to education, health services, inability to take part in the process of decision making and exposure to external circumstances. In attempting to summarize the definition of poverty, Englama and Bamidele (1997) asserted that poverty in both relative and absolute terms refers to a circumstance where a person is not able to fend or provide sufficiently for his or her necessities or fundamental human requirements such as clothing and decent accommodation, food, the fulfillment of social and economic responsibilities, non-access to productive employment, lack of skills, resources and confidence; and has restricted admission to economic and social infrastructure. These include access to health, education, potable water, sanitation, and roads. These preclude the person from advancing in welfare which is limited by the scarce availability of economic and social infrastructure.

For more than decades now poverty is being seen as a women issue or affair. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India once said “you can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women” (as cited in Nachiappan and Rajan, 2008). The feminization of poverty is a feature that is common in most of the under developed nations, of which halve of the world Population is women who account for 70% of those people living in poverty in the whole world

(Chant, 2003). Women constitute over 80% of farmers in Africa, and over 40% of women are illiterate without access to formal education in Africa (Johnson, 2013). Although, it is hard to differentiate the claim that poverty is a women affair because the different yardsticks for measuring poverty have no specific reference to gender, history has shown that there is the tendency of women to be poor than their men counterparts and are prompt to being in danger of lack of food and lack of necessity of life due to discrimination they encounter in search and



access to job, healthcare service, education, ownership and being in absolute control or charge of properties (Kaka, 2013). Poverty is very common and more prevalence in women with great implications without some fundamental rights to getting better job, medical services, clean environment, access to good drinking water (Ibid).

Quisumbing (1996) and Kehler (2001) have shown that the position of economic reforms, globalization of the policy of the world bank and IMF to privatize public services and utilities and the universal quest for reduction in social spending are some of the things that reduces the participation of women in employment and increase their poverty level. Women do depend more on social services and any reduction in expenditures would have great effect on them since they are regarded as the care takers hence the major recipients of such services. The reduction on social expenditure and the resultant reduction of the services given by the state would raise women's care taking and reproductive responsibilities or tasks. These scenarios give way to feminization of poverty instead of socio economic empowerment and lifting the standard of living of women. The above indicate that women access to opportunities and resources, together with the present changes in the economy leads to inequality and poverty and hence, contribute to the reduction in their socio-economic position. This shows clearly and openly the reasons why African rural women are the poorest of the poor and the reason for experiencing poverty and lack

of fairness in a different way as does the men and the reason for the variation in the changes on their socio economic impact (Kehler, 2000). African women inability to have basic services and resources together with lack of equity in the right of the family, unfairness to household resources such as livestock and land. This justify why rural women in Africa are not only poorer in their family, but rather in their communities and the state at large, as well as explain the reason of their poverty level and the nature they are which is more than that of men. Geisler and Hansen



(1994) conclude that, since men take charge of productive resources such as labor, credit, housing, tools and land, women's prospects may be different from that of men's most especially when there is economic pressure.

3.6.4 Women and Widowhood

In the words of Owen (1994), (as cited in Adefemi, 2015:10) "Death is always shocking to those close to the dead person, whether it is sudden or the result of a long illness". However for women in many parts of sub-Saharan African countries, the death of a husband represents not only the loss of a partner, protector, provider and breadwinner, but also her relegation to the restrictions of the society and her subjugation to discriminatory, oppressive and humiliating widowhood rituals that are not imposed on widowers (Ibid). Widows in most sub-Saharan African countries continue to be subjected to such rituals and discriminatory cultural practices despite the promulgation of international and regional conventions that affirm non-discrimination, equality, right to dignity and right to inherit amongst others. While it is true that mourning rites in Africa reflect important cultural values, often the behavior surrounding mourning is inherently gendered (Ibid). It is obvious that the term 'widowhood' may refer to both widows and widowers, but in the context of this work, it is used strictly for widows which is of course, the most common

usage.

Widowhood studies in Africa follow three clearly defined stereotypes (Tasie, 2013). First are scholars whose major concern is to register the perceived miseries of widows. For these scholars widowhood marks a new beginning in a woman's life. Oduyoye (1997) calls it an extremely intense period. The rituals involved with this transition have also been variously described as; inhuman, harmful and odious (Chidili, 2005: Chima, 2006). For this group of researchers, to



borrow the description of the work of Adeyinka, widows are no more than “Wives of the Graves” (Adeyinka, 2000 as cited in Tasie, 2013). The second classification of scholars however, appeared to be more fascinated with the quest for the possible factors that give upsurge to widowhood practices and the subjugation of women. In his study, Adeyinka (2000), sought explanation for the pervasiveness of widowhood rites within cultural and the social structure. His findings among others reveal that the patriarchal nature of many African communities functions in a way that propagates and sustains this practice. Within this category of scholars, there are still some who are mindful of the impact of the social structure and culture on widowhood rites but nonetheless feel strongly that vengeance and a strong desire to get even are at the very root of the practice. Effah et al. (1995), for example, have argued that widowhood is a time for settling scores, especially where the widow was never favored by her late husband’s family. In almost the same way, Chidili (2005) posits that widowhood rite is the unbridled desire in the married daughters of the land to insist on revenging their brother’s maltreatment on the widow, or trigger a hate action on the widow so as to get even from the hurt they incurred from their own part of the world. Another reason is that, because most African countries are polygamous, the widow may be believed to have killed her husband out of jealousy (Ibid). Widowhood practices are therefore often observed to determine the innocence or guilt of a



woman for the death of her husband. It is believed that a man could not have died of a natural cause, and it is necessary to ascertain the cause of his death (Oyeniya & Ayodeji, 2010).

Unfortunately, the wife of the deceased is often the prime suspect who undergoes excruciating rituals to prove her innocence. As a result of the humiliating treatment to which widows are subjected, they suffer a variety of forms of psychological, mental, and physical illness (Ibid). The last category of scholars hold strongly that widowhood rite in Africa is cruel and uncivilized and

need Christianity and western civilization to purge them of the practice. Thus the cardinal aim of Chidili's study of Igbo widowhood ritual was to see how it could be nuanced and updated with Biblical messages (Chidili, 2005). Studies in this category often stigmatize African widowhood practices as inferior to those of Christianity and as crude and an undeveloped system to which Christianity must refine and teach the right attitude.

The United Nations' brief on widowhood estimates that 44 percent of women between 45-59 years in SSA are widows (UN, 2001). In addition, there is evidence that proportions of widows are increasing, especially in SSA and other regions (Mfono et al., 2008; Chapoto et al., 2010). In Ghana, there are 823,562 widowed persons out of a population of about 24,000,000. Eighty-six percent (86%) of these are women, which means there are over 700,000 widows (statsghana.gov.gh, 2010 as cited in Musah, 2015).

For most widows in sub-Saharan African countries, the loss of a husband is one of the most stressful life changes that they experience (Wilcox et al, 2003). While both widows and widowers have lost loved ones, the effect is different. A widower can easily remarry but most widows live lives as single and self-sufficient adults. To widows, "the psychological effect of widowhood is double" (Kehinde, 1997 as cited in Adefemi, 2015:25). First, apart from the initial emotional reaction, expressed in wailing and outbursts of cries and grief, she is faced with

various inhuman and humiliating widowhood practices. Second, she is worried about the financial consequences the loss of her husband will cause. The enormous effect of these losses is compounded by discrimination under both customary and religious laws and the engrained attitude of the community leaders towards the widow or widows, as the case may be (Adefemi, 2015). However, disorientation has a tendency to impact far more traumatically on most widows. Becoming a widow often means loneliness, extreme poverty, loss of status, reduced



income or none at all, fear of the future and depression. At the death of her husband, she loses properties to her late husband's relatives. In most cases, it is the brothers of the deceased who seize the property or evict the widow from her home under the pretext that they are the rightful heirs under the customary law of the community. When this happens, she is left hopeless and homeless. Becoming a widow also exposes a woman to the risk of contracting Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and other sexually transmitted diseases. For example, some widowhood rituals require the widow to go through a ritual cleansing. This ritual cleansing involves an observance of series of rituals and ceremonies meant to signify the spiritual departure of the deceased from his surviving spouse and in most cases; it is done through sex, often with a relative of her late husband, a total stranger or even a group of male relatives as the case may be (Idialu, 2012). This ritual cleansing is deep-rooted in the belief that a woman who loses her husband and is not cleansed may be haunted by her husband's spirit. Additionally, it is believed that a widow who has not been cleansed may cause the whole community to be haunted (LaFraniere, 2005).

Inheritance of the deceased's property by widows is also problematic. Traditionally, while a widow has no formal inheritance rights, she could remain in her family homestead, and continue farming and grazing livestock after her husband's death for the remainder of her life, in her capacity as guardian of their children (Adefemi, 2015). Widows could also depend on the protection of their sons, once they grew up. These practices have gradually been eroded, and increasing numbers of widows are facing evictions and property grabbing after their husbands die (Izumi, 2007). Young widows who do not have children, and who are likely to form new relationships with other men when their husbands die, are often forced to return to their natal homes. Older widows are in a stronger position to stay in the marital home because of their well-



established social networks and relations (Aliber et al, 2004). Widows without sons tend to be more vulnerable to eviction and dispossession than those who have male children. A fertile wife, for whom the bride price has been paid, may continue to belong to her husband's lineage. After his death, his brother(s) will help to honor him by making his widow pregnant. This process in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa is called levirate or widow inheritance (Owen, 1994). According to Owen (1994, as cited in Adefemi, 2015:61), "levirate is the process by which a widow is taken in marriage by her husband's brother, the levir, or heir nominated by the family". Traditionally, this involved full-time re-direction of conjugal rights and wifely services to the levirate (inheritor), but this has gradually evolved into one-time consummation, to fulfill customary prescription, followed by relative independence from the levirate (Ibid). Potash (1986), notes that most widows accept the levirate relationship because the children's ties must remain in their father's community as a means to insulate the sanctity of kinship and guarantee the remnant family's social legitimacy within their wider familial system. Also significant is the fact that most widows have no right to return to their natal home, relatives may refuse to shelter a separated widow, and should a widow insist on leaving, her bride price paid must be returned by her family (Ibid). Some scholars describe levirate as a continuation of the lineage and regard the consort as the husband's successor. This is because it is also seen as an institution designed not only to tie a woman and her children to her dead husband's family but also designed to provide for the widow and her children (Oboler, 1986). However, leviratic relationships are of secondary importance in the lives of widows. In most cases the "levir" is a married man who lives in his own house; his responsibilities and interests are directed primarily to his wives and legal sons who form his personal line of descent. These sons will inherit from him and carry on his name (potash, 1986). Exploring and examining the conditions in which widows live among the



Konkombas in the NNM is therefore necessary because widowhood leaves them largely unprotected, despite the various provisions enshrined in international/regional conventions. In the Konkomba patriarchal society, the widow herself is regarded as property to be inherited by her late husband's relatives.

2.6.5 Women and Decision Making

In 2009, the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women conducted a world survey on the role of women in development and indicates that women in many parts of the world continue to face discrimination (Daplaah, 2013). This comprises every domain of their lives including the household unit. Ironically, women hold key positions within the household realm and are responsible for the wellbeing of members within this unit, yet, they are not equipped with the necessary resources for empowerment to effectively enhance their role at the household level. Hoddinott and Haddad (1995) found that women's incomes were spent on goods for their children and for collective household consumption while men spent their incomes on personal forms of consumption such as alcohol, meals eaten out, cigarettes and female companionship.

In spite of the key roles played by women within the household, their involvement in household decisions is limited. This is because the structure of the household is deeply entrenched in social norms and values which are largely patriarchal in nature (Agarwal, 1997; Tamale, 2004).

Empirical evidence has shown that the sex of the person owning wealth or earning income appears to have a systematic effect on patterns of resource allocation within the household (Clark, 1994; Pahl, 1980; Warren, 2009). The sex-differentiated patterns in the disposal of resources (based on what one contributes) assume an enhanced power position of women in household decision making. The intra-household dynamics of power are however, affected by



factors such as education, age, occupation, as well as level of income contributions, among others. The interplay of these variables is important in determining the attitude of the household in terms of decision making.

Studies suggest that women's resource contributions play an important role in improving power positioning for intra-household decision making (Agyeman & Casterline, 2002; Tamale, 2004; Apusigah, 2009). Reviewing empirical works on women's resource contributions and its relative effect on women's participation in household decisions, two main findings emerged. First of all, it emerged that women's contributions to household expenditure increase their relative influence in household decisions. This view is supported by Oppong (1975), Adomako (1999). The second emerging conclusion ascribe to the notion that culture is the determinant of power distribution in the household (Oppong 1974; Angel-Urdinola and Wodon 2010). Major decision making at the household level still remains the prerogative of the male spouse. Women influence decisions on food and children's welfare, thus, those socially ascribed roles labeled as "women's matters" (Nwanesi, 2006).

There is also an extensive body of literature demonstrating the significance of education to women's development and education as an empowerment tool for women (Varghese, 2011; FAWE, 2004; Adomako & Dakubu, 2009). Theoretically, the more education a woman has should improve her bargaining power in two ways; through her knowledge empowerment effect and through her income earning power. (Malhotra et al, 2003). As is commonly said in Ghanaian parlance "Knowledge is power", education makes a woman aware and informed of her rights and gives her the confidence to demand them in a bargaining process. According to Sikod (2007:61), "Education is increasingly becoming a major factor enabling women to break down obstacles to some socialization factors, giving rise to the division of household labor. The more educated a



woman is, the more likely it is that she is going to venture into spheres traditionally considered male areas". Education can therefore provide an even playing field for both men and women hence, balancing the playing field for household decision making. Research in Ghana supports this finding by showing that households in which the wife's education is closely approximate to the husband's education, reported joint decision-making on children's education and welfare (Oppong, 1970; Antwi-Nsiah, 1993; Adomako, 1999). For instance, Adomako (1999), established that the less educated a wife is, the higher the likelihood for her husband to achieve his reproductive preference on the number of children they would have. Alternatively, other studies including that of Ezeh (1993), and Doodo (1993), have shown that women's education actually have less influence on women's reproductive decisions. The impact of education here is intercepted by culture and in those traditions, reproductive decisions are the prerogative of men.

The notion of age as a basis for power distribution is also deeply entrenched in traditional social norms and values in most African societies (Daplaah, 2013). Various researchers have also sought to explore the effects of seniority in power distribution at the household level (Adomako, 1999; Barbier et al., 2005; Angel-Urdinola and Wodon, 2010). The significance of age cannot be overemphasized since age can be understood in terms of the biological exigencies of socialization and the need for the transmission of social behavior and values from generation to

the other (Eisenst, 1954). In the traditional African society, seniority is associated with respect and authority. The degree of authority among members within a group is characterized by age differences (Eisenst, 1954). Oyewumi (1997), notes that the organizing principle within the family among the Yorubas is seniority based on relative age. Also, among the Akans, for example, women are deemed to assume men's status when they grow older. These women are deemed fit to give wise counsel to the community members (Miescher, 2007). These cultural



phenomena convey the relative importance of age in African societies. They also lend support to the notion that age is a determinant in decision making power. The household decision-maker, by virtue of age is ascribed privileges such as authority and respect. The household structure on the basis of age stages a platform for unequal power relation in respect of the prevailing social norms. Women therefore, become powerless by virtue of being typically younger than their spouses. Indeed, the wider the age gaps between husbands and wives, the greater the power of the husbands. In most African societies, husbands are generally older than their wives and as a result are more likely to influence decisions by virtue of seniority (Gyekye, 1996; Adomako, 1999; Igboin, 2011). But how is it likely that men will relinquish power to wives who are older or even of the same age given the cultural norm that surrounds the institution of marriage that demands submission from women. These authorities and power associated with men either by reason of seniority or by some other factors are re-constructed in terms that reflect male right and entitlement over their partners (Adomako and Prah, 2009).

2.9 International and Regional Conventions Taken to Address Women's Issues

2.9.1 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (UDHR) was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. The Declaration is labeled by some scholars as a potent document, the preliminary surge of zeal and perfectionism, concise, more general and outstanding than most treaties and in some sense it is the single most invoked human rights instrument (Steiner et al., 2007). The UDHR provides for the elimination of every form of distinction between men and women in the pursuit of their civil, social, economic and political rights (Bond, 2003). This is why the term “sex” was explicitly included in the definition of



prohibited discrimination. The foundation of contemporary discourse on women's rights, feminism and gender equality is the 1945 Charter of the United Nations. The Preamble of the UDHR states that "members reaffirm [the] faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women, and of nations large and small as well as the institution's goal to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" (UDHR, 1948 Article 2 as cited in Adefemi, 2015:30). Thus the UDHR is highly relevant to the protection of the rights of women. It undertakes measures to ensure adequate universal respect of both sexes (Mutau, 2001).

In spite of this promising beginning, women continue to suffer widespread human rights violations. Since the drafting of the UDHR, women's human rights activists have battled to assert women's rights within the UN human rights framework (Bond, 2003). Accordingly, the quest for the protection of the human rights of women needs further discussions.

2.9.2 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is one of the most comprehensive and extensively accepted international human rights instruments. The



International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) is the primary international instrument dealing with economic, social, and cultural rights, often called "positive rights" (Eide & Rosas, 2001). These two covenants spell out specific rights in accordance with the common standard elaborated in the UDHR. The goals of equality and non-discrimination were echoed in both covenants (Langley, 1987). The ICESCR and ICCPR also contain other important provisions, including the right to life, the right to adequate food, nutrition, clothing and

housing, the right to be free from all forms of torture, slavery and genocide, and the rights to non-discrimination on the basis of race, gender, language, religion, culture, family, and ethnicity (Truyol, 1999).

Granting that the “principle of equality between sexes forms part of the basic human rights instruments, in practice the interpretation and implementation of these instruments has fallen far short of ensuring their full applicability to women as an oppressed and vulnerable social group” (Reanda, 1981 as cited in Adefemi, 2015:32). The struggle for women to be adequately protected from all forms of discriminatory practices has left them in a disadvantaged position, especially in relation to widowhood rituals, property disinheritance, custody of children, sexual assault, interpersonal violence, widow inheritance and widow cleansing. These discriminatory practices are not usually handled as abuses of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women in terms of existing international instruments (Ibid). The shortfall of international enforcement mechanisms to protect and implement women’s rights persists even though many African countries including Ghana are not only State parties to international laws but have also incorporated international law obligations into their domestic laws.

The general comments of the Human Rights Committee of ICCPR suggest a framework to guide State parties in reforming country-specific laws that preserve discrimination and inequality for women. For instance, Article 40 of the Human Rights Committee of ICCPR states, “inter alia: Inequality in the enjoyment of rights by women throughout the world is deeply embedded in tradition, history and culture, including religious attitudes. The subordinate role of women in some countries is illustrated by the high incidence of pre-natal sex selection and abortion of female fetuses. State parties should ensure that traditional, historical, religious, or cultural attitudes are not used to justify violations of women’s rights to equality before the law and to



equal enjoyment of all covenant rights. State parties should furnish appropriate information on those aspects of tradition, history, cultural practices and religious attitudes which jeopardize, or may jeopardize compliance with Article 3, and indicate what measures they have taken or intend to take to overcome such factors” (as cited in Adefemi, 2015:32). The ICESCR is unique in its acknowledgement of efforts to alleviate the injustice and inequality suffered by women. For instance, the drafters of ICESCR unanimously voted to include Article 3, compelling States to ensure that women enjoy economic and social rights at levels compared to men (ICESCR, Article 3).

In spite of the ICCPR and the ICESCR, African societies still struggle towards a complete realization of the civil, social cultural, political and economic rights of women. They are exposed to a collection of humiliating practices under the pretense of customs and to painful forms of violence. They are constantly deprived of their rights of inheritance notwithstanding existing “paper rights” under domestic law (Truyol, 1999). For instance, widows who married under customary law are even worse off, especially with respect to issues related to inheritance, ownership of land, and the trusteeship of children. In addition, because cultural rights are believed to be “private”, those who want change in order to ensure adequate protection for women’s legal rights in the society must usually struggle with those who want to assert the

legitimacy of the power they hold within the status quo (Nash, 2011). It is now widely understood that economic, social, civil, and cultural rights are crucial for women thus ineffective implementation and enforcement of these rights is directly related to the on-going neglect and subordination of women.



2.9.3 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) also known as the Women’s Convention is regarded as the most definitive international legal instrument requiring respect for and observance of the human rights of women, asserting that women like the rest of the human race, have an inalienable and indivisible right to be free of every form of discrimination (Minor, 1994; Koh, 2002). CEDAW is not the most comprehensive international charter of human rights however, it is the only major international instrument concerned with the rights of women (Cartwright, 2000).

Regrettably till date, the document’s practical effects have not been equal to its contents and ideals behind it (Minor, 1994). CEDAW for more than a few decades now has been used to argue against discrimination against women in human rights declarations and challenging the exclusion of women from the humanity they construct (Nash, 2011). For example the meaning of “discrimination against women as employed in the Convention prohibits any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field” (CEDAW, 1979:

Article 1). Like other international documents, CEDAW sees culture as an obstruction to the full realization of the protection and promotion of women’s rights. This is the reason why two provisions in CEDAW are particularly worth noting in the context of the present discussion. Article 5 places on States “the responsibility of taking measures to modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women with a view to achieving the elimination of bigotries and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority



of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women” (CEDAW, 1979: Article 5). Article 16 places a “duty on the State to act against discrimination against women within marriage and the family and to ensure that men and women have equal rights within marriage and the family” (CEDAW, 1979: Article 6). These provisions are unambiguous and in principle require States (including Ghana) to eliminate all aspects of social, economic and cultural life that contribute to women’s inequality. Even though many scholars have observed that CEDAW lacks some substantial provisions, such as the right to be free from violence, CEDAW still provides a platform that protects the rights, security, dignity, and integrity of women.

Notwithstanding the provisions of CEDAW, traditional customs and values in sub-Saharan Africa associate different roles with women and men; equality in a strict legal sense collides with the customary fact of entrenched difference and inequality. De jure provisions exist on paper but in the certainty of rural settings, de facto inequality prevails. In several rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa, women especially widows face serious challenges owing to the traditional land tenure systems, inter-personal violence, inheritance practices, and degrading widowhood rituals (Adefemi, 2015). All the same, this does not mean that we should overlook the potential significance of these international conventions as one of the means to reverse the inequalities and discrimination that have branded the lives of African women. Rather we should focus on how to



make these laws part of everyone’s lives and how human rights can be translated into practical and meaningful progress for women at the grassroots level. To allow for and stimulate the rights of women, it is essential to create local expressions of globally generated human rights norms. Only by “vernacularizing” human rights at the local level can violations of women including widows be effectively addressed (Peggy & Sally, 2009).

2.9.4 The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) on the Rights of Women in Africa (African Women's Protocol) was adopted in Maputo in July 2003. (Benedek, 1995) notes that the African Women's Protocol underscores the basic rights of African women. It surpasses cultural boundaries and deals with all aspects of social functioning, particularly gender equality. While the African Charter gave recognition to women's rights in general terms, many African women's rights activists and feminists believed that the commitment of the African Charter was fettered by its overwhelming emphasis on African traditional values and concepts. The African Women's Protocol seeks to abolish gender-biased and oppressive traditional values and all forms of discrimination taking into account that economic, cultural, and social rights are significant for the protection of women's rights (Davis, 2009).

In Article 2, the Protocol instructs African States to combat discrimination by a diversity of means, including amending constitutions and legislative instruments to guarantee equality, mainstreaming, prohibition, and taking corrective and positive action in areas where discrimination against women continues to manifest (African Women's Protocol, Article 2).

Acknowledgment that "women experience discrimination not only as a result of law but also

social practice" is why the expression of Article 2(2) of the African Protocol was adopted from

Articles 2(f) and 5(a) of CEDAW to provide that States parties shall oblige themselves to amend

the social and cultural patterns of conduct of women and men through public information,

education and communication strategies, with a view to achieving the elimination of harmful

cultural and traditional practices including other practices which are based on the idea of the

inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes, or on stereotyped roles for women and men



(Ibid). In an effort to address the negative impact of widowhood practices on women, Articles 20 & 21 of the African Women's Protocol state: States Parties shall take appropriate legal measures to ensure that widows enjoy all human rights through the implementation of the following provisions; that widows are not subjected to inhuman, humiliating or degrading treatment; a widow shall automatically become the guardian and custodian of her children, after the death of her husband, unless this is contrary to the interests and the welfare of the children. A widow shall have the right to an equitable share in the inheritance of the property of her husband. A widow shall have the right to continue to live in the matrimonial house. In case of remarriage, she shall retain this right if the house belongs to her or she has inherited it. Women and men shall have the right to inherit, in equitable shares, their parents' properties (African Women's Protocol, Articles 20 & 21). This provision is intended to protect African women, especially widows, from cultural practices that deny them of their right to inherit property, their right to the use, control, and ownership of land, and their right not to be subjected to any form of inhuman treatment by way of widow inheritance or widow cleansing.

In most African countries, under customary law and laws particular to tribal affiliations, women are effectively barred from owning land. Women's freedom to use land is further regulated by customary or tribal laws dictating what crops may be planted (Katherine & Murray, 2003). Upon



divorce or separation from their husbands, or upon the death of their husbands, women can be deprived of rights to land and matrimonial home. In addition, a patrilineal system of inheritance in which property is passed to the deceased's male children rather than to his wife is obvious in African cultures. Thus, if the deceased does not have any male children, the deceased's property is largely treated as if it belonged to an unmarried man. A woman, who works and uses the land for herself and her family's livelihood can be deprived of ownership and, ultimately, control of

the land at the death of her husband (Ibid). Under the African Women's Protocol, a woman's right to be free from all forms of violence is enunciated in Article 3 which states that "State parties must ensure the protection of every woman's right to respect for her dignity and protection of women from all forms of violence, particularly sexual and verbal violence" (African Women's Protocol, Article 3). In addressing the issue of culture, the African Women's Protocol presents new hope and significant promise for promoting women's rights in Africa. There are three important ways in which the Protocol promotes that hope for African women (Bond, 2011). First, the Protocol offers credibility within the region. This is very noteworthy in the sense that the Protocol is a locally grown instrument put together by Africans for African women. It legitimates the fight against gender domination as an African struggle and no more can critics aver that women's rights are transfers from the western world with no roots in African values and norms. Second, the Protocol has solid functional provisions for the protection of women's rights in the region. This is confirmed in the words of Professor Alpha Oumar Konara; the Chairperson of African Union Commission, that the Protocol is arguably one of the progressive and visionary rights instruments for gender equality not just in Africa but internationally (as cited in Adefemi, 2015). Third, the Protocol provides captivating but hardly discussed procedural rights that if well operationalized, could lay the basis for an engaging grassroots discourse that promotes women's voices in the process of cultural definition and expression of customary norms.



The Protocol's procedural provisions open the door for systematic engagement with traditional leaders vis-à-vis application of women's human rights at the local, community level (Bond, 2011). Compared to CEDAW, the Protocol addresses issues that are of singular concern to African women and locates the CEDAW in African reality (Viljoen, 2012).The Protocol also

offers specificity where imprecision prevailed in the past, as for example, when it states that “positive African values are those based on the principles of democracy, peace, freedom, justice, dignity, solidarity and equality” (African Women’s Protocol, para 10). The gaps left by the African Charter and CEDAW are filled by the Protocol, striking a suitable balance between issues arising from culture and equality that may conflict, and by recognizing the positive aspects of culture while declining observance to customs that are harmful to women (Bond, 2011).

From the above exploration, it is obvious that the African Women’s Protocol is comprehensive enough to cover the loopholes the African Charter failed to fix. However, women in most African countries are still stressed to ensure sufficient protection for their rights. Not only do the States need to reinforce enforcement mechanisms but NGOs also need to develop strategies to ensure appropriate modes of resistance to unjust and oppressive cultural practices that act as impediments to the enjoyment of the women’s rights.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THE PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

3.0 Introduction

Research is a structured body of knowledge which is based on accurate classification of facts, discovery of new facts and logical conclusions. Research work therefore, can be completed and meaningfully fit for effective decision making only if its data collection can be well processed into useful information. This chapter discussed methods that were used in collecting data for the study. It covered population, sample size and sampling techniques, pilot testing of questionnaire, data collection instruments that were used for data collection, processing and data analysis. The chapter also focused on a brief profile of the study area and a brief history of Konkombas

3.1 Profile of the study area

3.1.1 Location and Size

Nanumba North Municipality was created as a separate district in 2004 under LI 1754 when the then Nanumba District was split into two (North and South). The municipality covers an area of 1,986 sq km. It is located in the eastern part of the Northern Region and lies between latitudes 8.5° N and 9.25° N and longitude 0.57° E and 0.5° E. It shares boundaries with the following districts. Yendi Municipality to the North, East Gonja to the West and South-West, Nanumba South to the south and East and Zabzugu-Tatale to the North-North-East (GSS-District Analytical Report; 2014).



Figure 3.1: Map of NNM

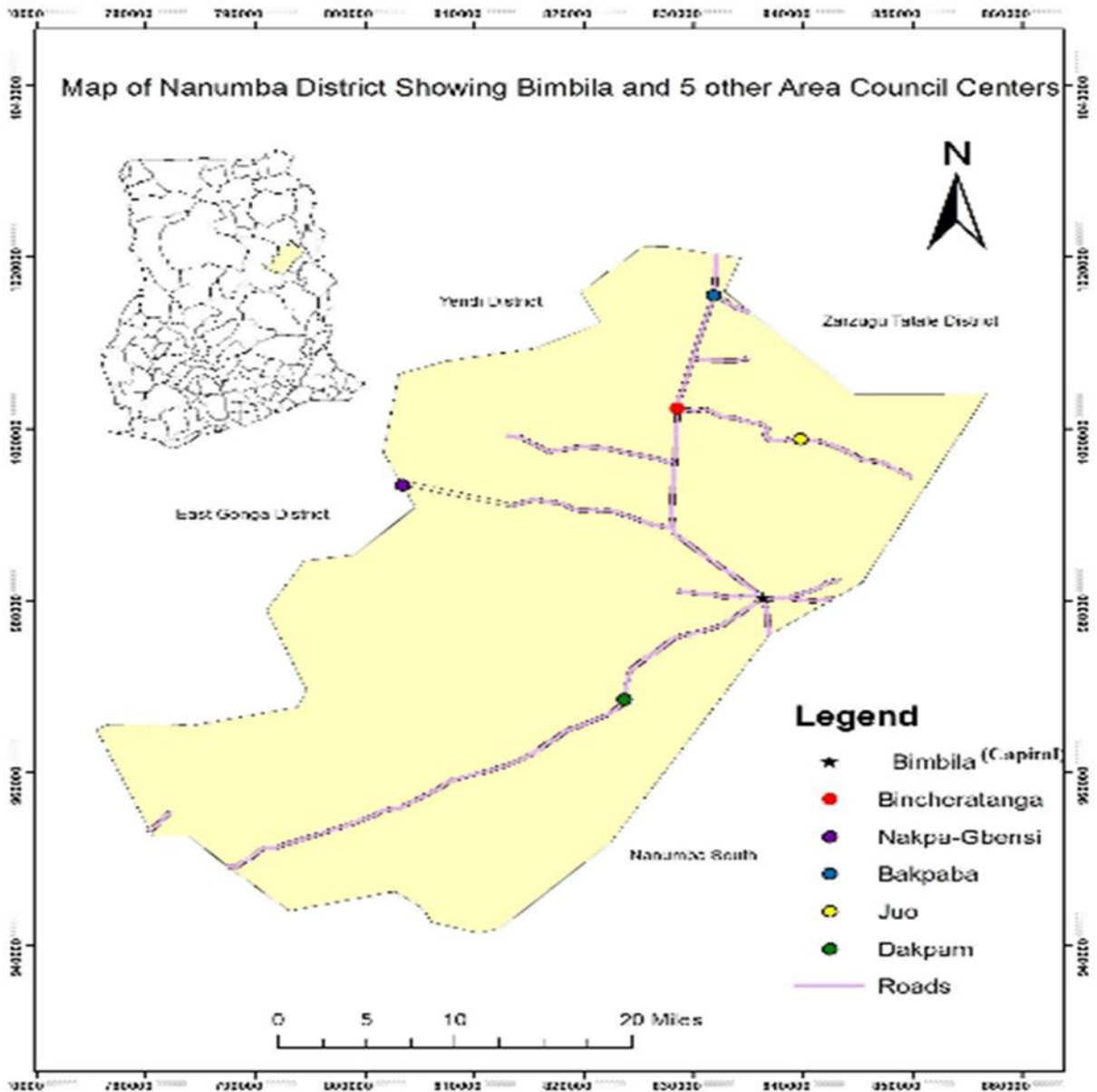


Figure 3.1: Map of Nanumba North showing six town and area councils
Source: (GSS-District Analytical Report; 2014).



3.1.2 Climate

The municipality lies entirely in the Tropical Continental climatic zone, characterized by high temperature throughout the year. Temperatures range from 29°C to 41°C. Just like any other part of West Africa, the influence of the wet south west monsoon and the dry North East trade winds. During the harmattan, temperatures can fall as low as 16°C during the night and mornings. Annual rainfall averages 1,268mm with most of it falling within six months (April to September). This is the busiest periods for farmers in the municipality. During this period, streams overflow their banks and cause wide spread flooding of settlements and farmlands. This brings some hardships to the people. The rest of the year is virtually dry and a fallow period for most farmers. It is also the period of wild bushfires, sometimes set by the youth in search for bush meat. During this time, there is a huge burden on women as they embark on long distance in search of water for their families (GSS-District Analytical Report; 2014).

3.1.3 Vegetation

The vegetation of the municipality is the Guinea Savannah type with tall grass interspersed with drought resistant trees. Shea nut, dawadawa, acacia, baobab and other drought and fire resistant trees are the main tree species found here. This influences to a large extent the activities engaged by the people in the district. The women, especially engage in local industrial activities such as shea butter processing, dawadawa spice making and groundnut oil processing as a result of this great potential, (GSS-District Analytical Report; 2014).



3.1.4 Sex Composition

The population of Nanumba North Municipality, according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, is 141,584 representing 5.7 percent of the Northern region population of 2,479,461. Males constitute 49.4 percent and females represent 50.6 percent. The majority (71.7%) of the population in the district reside in rural localities. The municipality has a sex ratio of 97.8, meaning that for every 100 females there are 98 males. The municipality has a youthful population, with close to half (47.6%) of the population aged below 15 years. The elderly population (population aged 60 years and older) is relatively small (5.7%) and coupled with the youthful nature of the population, the population pyramid for the district has a broad base which tapers off at the top. Age dependency ratio for the municipality is 106.8, meaning that on the average; one person in the working age has one more person to take care of (PHC, 2010).

3.1.5 Ethnic Composition

The ethnic composition of the municipality is diverse with no particular ethnic clearly dominating the population. Konkombas constitute 43.3%, followed by the Nanumbas who constitute 41.1%, Dagomba 9.8% with Akans and Hausas constituting 1.3%. The Konkombas who are mostly farmers reside in the rural areas where there is abundant land for farming whiles

the Nanumbas are mostly in the urban settlements (PHC, 2010).



3.1.6 Religious Composition

The Religious composition of the municipality largely gives an indication of ethnicity, especially with the dominant groups. Whilst Nanumbas are predominantly Moslems, Konkombas are largely atheist and Christians. The majority of the populations in the municipality are the

traditionalists, representing 42.1 percent of the total population. Islam (35.1%) is the next dominant religion, followed by Christianity (15.1%). Islamic religion predominates in the urban areas (91.8%) whilst Traditional and Christianity dominates in the semi-urban communities (PHC, 2010).

3.1.7 Economy

The Economic potential of the municipality lies in its vast arable land with a huge agricultural investment potential. The municipality is predominantly agricultural with about 85.6% of the people engaged in the agriculture and forestry sector (GSS, 2002). Out of the total land area of 173,459 hectares in the municipality, about 130,094 hectares representing 75% are agricultural lands. However, only 46,566 hectares representing 28% is under cultivation. There is currently no area under irrigation despite the fact that two major rivers Oti and Daka run through the municipality. The municipality also has numerous productive valleys: the Kaleogu, Sabonjida, Juo, Jua and Salnayili for commercial rice production, but all these are underutilized. Crops grown are roots and tubers, cereals, legumes and tree crops such as teak and cashew nuts. Animal rearing including poultry keeping is an integral part of every household. The remaining 14.4% of the population are engaged in non-agricultural enterprises and are found mainly in the large settlements doing trading (mostly the women), self-employed artisans and in the formal/government employment, (NNDA, 2010)

3.1.8 Education

The municipality currently has 62 kindergarten (KGS) and nurseries, 92 primary (5 private and 87 public) schools, 23 Junior High Schools (JHS), one senior high school and one college of



education. The municipality has a total of 405 teachers out of which 190 are trained and 215 untrained (pupil teachers). There are also volunteer teachers under the NYEP. Only three of the KGS, 42 of the Primary and 14 of the Junior High Schools have permanent structures. About 39 schools are still operating under trees and a total of 151 schools have no or inadequate sanitary facilities and water, (NNDA, 2010).

3.2 The Konkomba People

The Konkomba are agrarian people who live in the eastern half of the Republic of Ghana's Northern Region and across the border in the adjacent territory of Togo. The Konkomba have for almost five hundred years, occupied the Oti flood plain, a region that suffers from flooding and severe drought (Dawson, 2000), stretching from the ridges of the Gambaga escarpment down into the Northern edge of the Volta region. The Konkomba refer to themselves as Bikpakpaam and their language as Likpakpanl. However, 'Konkomba' has been the term generally used to refer to both the people and the language. They are a Gur people, a branch of the Gur linguistic stock whose language bears considerable resemblance to that spoken by the neighboring Mole-Dagbani people (Dawson, 2000). Linguistic similarities aside though, the Konkombas have since being forcefully displaced eastwards from their traditional center of Yendi hence maintaining an almost continuously antagonistic relationship with their closest neighbors; the Dagbani people.

Konkombas are divided into two groups; the Northern Komba and Southern Bimoateb, which the Konkomba refer to as two of the "tribes" of Bikpakpaam. The Komba reside primarily within territory claimed by the Mamprusi chiefdom around the town of Nalerigu, the traditional center for the Mamprusi and the seat of power for the Na-Yiri; the Mamprusi paramount chief. On the other hand, the southern Bimoateb Konkombas' traditional center is located at Saboba. Both



groups of Konkomba have, all through the colonial and post-colonial period, resisted the investing of political authority in one particular individual as their own traditional political organization but have always been decentralized, and their experience with the institution of chiefship, in their relations with the Dagomba people has been one of oppression and extortion by Dagomba chiefs. In the 1950s, the period leading up to independence, Ghanaian societies in the Northern Territories (Konkombas in particular), were characterized as 'stateless', lacking the formal, hereditary chiefly structures which typified neighboring Mossi, Dagati, Dagomba, Nanumba, Mamprusi and Gonja chiefdoms. There are several Konkomba tribes which are divided into patrilineal clans or lineage. The clan members inhabit one or more villages. The village comprises several homesteads and one of these is usually inhabited by 20 to 30 persons, belonging to a few families of brothers or their sons. Some homesteads are joined to form a major lineage which can be divided into smaller groups. Two or three lineages are usually found in a village. The smallest group is the family which appears in monogamic and polygynic forms. The Konkomba have a segmentary system in which authority is wholly vested in the elders of the oldest village inhabitant or the oldest clan member (uninkpel)

The Konkomba have lived in close proximity with the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Nanumba and Gonja for almost two-hundred and fifty years, and have continuously resisted any movement

towards assimilation and incorporation and have been only too well able to strike back at any attempt at subjugation (Dawson, 2000). Despite the pressures on them, the Konkomba have been able to maintain themselves for a considerable period of time as a distinct and forceful group, maintaining their own "social structure and religious system, their own beliefs and culture throughout the centuries" (Tait, 1961:12).



Through skillful monopolization of the yam in the north of Ghana and penetrating into the markets of southern Ghana, the Konkomba have been able to establish themselves as important players in the economy of the Northern region. Indeed, Maasole (2006) intimates that Bikpakpaam (Konkombas) have always been on the move in search for fertile farmlands. From Accra, the nation's capital, to Tamale in the north and throughout the guinea region of West Africa, the Konkomba are considered to be the primary producers of yams and a number of grain crops such as sorghum, guinea corn and ground nuts. It is therefore not surprising to see huge numbers of Konkombas residing in other regions such as the Volta, Brong Ahafo, Eastern, and Greater Accra. Saboba, Chereponi, Tatale-Sanguli, Nanumba Districts (North and South), Gushiegu, Karaga and Zabzugu districts in the Northern Region and the Nkwanta North and South Districts in the Volta Region are a few examples of administrative districts where Bikpakpaam are seen in huge populations. Other key towns of Konkombas in Ghana are Atebubu, Kintampo, Techiman, Yeji in the Brong Ahafo Region. Bikpakpaam are also found in the republic of Togo, a sister West African country to Ghana. In Togo, Bikpakpaam reside mainly in Kara, Central and Plateaux Regions.

However, the old stereotype persists and they are still considered by many to be little more than roaming, itinerant farmers with little order or structure to their society (Dawson, 2000). But

“proud and industrious, oblivious to considerations of status, the Konkomba are making a useful contribution to the economy of Ghana as well as to their own pockets; their voice will soon be heard and the hierarchy will receive a rougher jolt from these new migrants whom it has rejected than from the old ones whom it has assimilated long since” (Goody 1970:128).



3.3 Research Methodology

3.3.1 Research Design

A research design is a plan which specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analyzed. Yin (1994) describes a research design as a bridge in the implementation of the research and the research questions. It can also be regarded as the vehicle that conveys an investigator from the state of ignorance to the state of knowledge. There are very many types of research designs and the design that is used by the researcher depends on his/her level of mastery of research methodology. The research design that was chosen for the study is a descriptive survey. The choice for this design was because it was appropriate for the study as it helped in bringing the results needed for the study. It was also because a study of this nature that sought to find out the situation of women on their social, economic and political conditions best fits well in a descriptive survey. According to Osuala (2001), descriptive surveys are versatile and practical, especially to the researcher in that they identify present conditions and point to the present needs. Best and Khan (1995) notes that descriptive survey is concerned with the conditions of relationships that exist, such as determining the nature of prevailing conditions, practices and attitudes, opinions that are held, processes that are going on or trends that are developed. On the basis of the above, this design was deemed appropriate for the study.



3.3.2 Research Approaches

Despite the fact that there are debates on the use of quantitative or/and qualitative approaches of research, the use of either or both approaches depend on the topic of inquiry and the objectives of the research. Patton (2002) and Patton (1990) argues that there are no standard rules for any researcher to determine any study but rather it is based on the researcher's method and

objectives. This indicates that the suitability of an approach depends on its ability to shed light on the problem to be investigated. This study deployed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in an integrated research design. The purpose of combining both approaches was partly to overcome the loopholes in using only one approach. Flick (2008) emphasizes that mixed approaches give results that are more grounding, while Swanborn (2010) explains that the mixing of methods brings out a studied phenomenon “in its width”. Finally, Blommaert and Van de Vijver (2013) argue that whereas one approach is good, in actual research practice “good is not good enough.” The two approaches were also used because the issue that was under investigation was about culture which centered on the way of life of a of people, hence the critical need for a larger coverage (i.e. quantitative) in order to get varied opinions on such practices as well as in-depth facts (i.e. qualitative) through interviews with key informants. The qualitative and quantitative data were collected sequentially. The researcher initially collected qualitative data from key informants and focus group discussion participants. After this, the researcher developed and expanded the study to cover a large sample which was representative of the entire population from whom quantitative data were collected. Creswell (2003) justifies this approach by stating that the main reason for the collection of data in phases and collecting qualitative data first is to first of all explore the topic under study in-depth using

key informants and secondly to help design quantitative instruments.



3.3.3 Selection of Study Area

The study was carried out in three Konkomba communities of the NNM. The Nanumba North Municipality was selected for the study because the researcher grew up from this municipality and had observed the gender-based inequalities between and women. All the three communities

were selected using the simple random sampling technique. The communities were sampled through a random number generator so as to give each community the same probability of being selected. The names of the various communities in the Municipality were written on pieces of papers and put into one container. The researcher then took turns to pick three papers one after the other. At the end, the selected communities were Bincheratanga, Bakpaba and Dipah.

3.3.4 Target Population of the Study

In research, a population refers to the “entire aggregation of respondents that meet the designated set of criteria” (Burns & Grove, 2003:86). It is the group of individuals who are the focus of the study to which research results would be generalized. Such a population should be characterized by specific index characteristics or a particular index characteristic. The study focused basically on a population of women (both married and unmarried) where unmarried included the single, separated, widowed and divorced. They were chosen as the target population for this study because they are the victims of the patriarchal structures/systems among the Konkombas. In selecting the target respondents, the household was used as the primary sampling unit. Opinion leaders and men were also interviewed.



3.3.5 Sample Size

A sample is a subset of a research population which is selected to participate in a study representing the research population (Cohen et al, 2007). Leedy and Ormrod (2005:199) reiterate that the sample should be so carefully chosen that, through it, the researcher is able to see all the characteristics of the total population in the same relationship that they would be seen by the researcher, in fact, to examine the total population. Bearing in mind factors such as level of

confidence, data precision and accuracy, degree of variability in the population (homogeneity), a statistical formula was used to determine the sample size for the study.

$$n = N / (1 + N(\alpha)^2)$$

Where;

n = sample size,

N = sample population and

α = alpha = the confidence level that provides best outcome when the value of α is 0.1.

The number of households in the district according to Mahama (2014) is 5,658. So from the above formula, 98 (n) households were sampled from the sample frame (N) of 5,658. This means that 98 women were interviewed. Other respondents included 45 men (15 from each community), 21 elderly women (7 from each of the three communities), 8 opinion leaders, 3 chiefs, the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) and the Municipal Gender Desk Officer (MGDO). This brought the total number of respondents to 177.

3.3.6 Sampling Techniques

Sampling may be defined to mean the selection of smaller but representative group out of the total number of elements to be considered in a study (Bryman & Bell, 2003). This smaller and representative group so chosen is then the sample. Sampling technique on its part is then a plan, specifying how the informants will be drawn from the population. By means of cautious selection and background information, the researcher uses his/her knowledge and opinion to decide or determine who to interview based on the information needed to answer the research questions (Gall et al 2003). The sampling technique determines how representative the sample is of the population of interest. In addition to reflecting the population's characteristics such as



age, socio-economic status, education, gender and marital status, a representative sample is one where every member of a population has a statistically equal chance of being selected (Oppenheim, 1992). Both sampling techniques (probability and non-probability) were however, used to collect data for this research work. While Probability sampling is typically associated with quantitative research, non-probability sampling is associated with qualitative research (Kemper et al., 2006). Both techniques of sampling were therefore used due to the fact that the research employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods/approaches.

3.3.6.1 Probability Sampling Technique

Probability sampling is best for obtaining a representative sample which allows researchers to make statistical generalizations about a wider population (de Vaus, 2002). Simple random sampling was employed under this technique. Simple random sampling is the basic selection process of sampling and is easiest to understand and also guarantees equal chance of the population to be chosen for the survey. This technique was used to sample 98 women and 45 men for the study. All the households in the selected communities were numbered on pieces of papers and put into one container. The researcher then took turns to pick in turns the papers represented by the households. At the end, the household numbers that were picked had a woman

interviewed from such households. The same process was repeated for the men respondents.

3.3.6.2 Non-probability Sampling Technique

Non-probability sampling does not allow researchers to make statistical generalizations but it is commonly used when the selection of participants is based on a known common characteristic (McGuirk and O'Neill, 2005; Patton, 1990) but population demographics are



unknown. Under the non-probability sampling, purposive sampling was applied in selecting respondents for the study. According to Merriam (1998:48), “Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn most”. This study gathered data from different perspectives and different participants. The purposive sampling helped the researcher to select specific number of respondents; the elderly women, opinion leaders chiefs the MCE the GDO. The logic and power of using purposive sampling for this study was derived from my quest for an in-depth understanding and appreciating more meaningfully the way women and men with varied background and training to unravel the issues. This technique was used to sample the 21 elderly women (7 from each of the three communities for focus group discussions), 8 opinion leaders and chiefs, the MCE as well as the GDO. Because the respondents’ knowledge in the research theme, they were specifically/intentionally selected for the study.

3.3.7 Data Collection Methods and Instruments/Tools

Data collection methods are very crucial in any research encounter and are therefore tied to the quality and the outcome of the study. Descriptive surveys primarily use interviews and questionnaires for data collection (Cohen et al, 2007:331; Leedy and Ormrod, 2005: 184; Van Vuuren and Maree, 2000:281). However, the researcher added a third one (focus group discussions). This offered me the opportunity to ascertain many issues that needed to be examined in the study.



3.3.7.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a well-established tool within social science research for acquiring information on participants' social characteristics, present and past behavior, standards of behavior or attitudes and their beliefs and reasons for action with respect to the topic under investigation (Bulmer, 2004). The principal requirement of questionnaire format is that questions are sequenced in a logical order, allowing a smooth transition from one topic to the next. This ensures that participants understand the purpose of the research and carefully answer questions to the end of the survey (McGuirk and O'Neill, 2005).

The questionnaires for this research were both open-ended and close-ended. Open-ended questionnaire gave the respondents the opportunity to provide their own responses to the questions. Open-ended questionnaire items, according to Nardi (2006:72) "allow respondents to state their responses in their own words". They capture diverse and complex perspectives of the respondents on research questions without any limitations (Cohen et al., 2007, Denscombe, 2003). Close-ended questionnaire on the other hand restricts respondents to a given set of responses from which they could select their responses. Closed questionnaire items provide the respondents with standardized responses from which to select (Cohen et al, 2007).

Each questionnaire mode of delivery has advantages and disadvantages and selection depends on each mode's suitability to the study and available resources (Oppenheim, 1992). Factors that should be taken into account when selecting delivery mode include sample size and distribution, types of questions, nature of the population, survey topic, availability of resources (e.g. skilled interviewers, equipment, funding) and time constraints (de Vaus, 2002). The questionnaires were designed in the English language however, Likpakpaaln was used during its administration. The questionnaires were executed through self-administration with a total of 143 respondents (98



women and 45 men). The choice of this method of data collection was due to the fact that most of the research participants could neither read nor write. The method therefore provided the researcher the opportunity to explain questions they could not have understood in his absence while observing non-verbal communications for probes especially for open ended questions. The researcher filled answers as were given by the respondents in the spaces that were provided in the questionnaire.

3.3.7.2 Interview

It is a social or face-to-face interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee where the latter responds to questions raised by the former. The tool used here is the interview guide which is preferred as a device for data collection because it provides flexibility and the ability to probe and clarify responses. It notes non-verbal as well as verbal behaviors and provides high response rate (Mcmillan and Schumacher, 2006). Interview guide was used to ascertain in-depth information on the concepts of womanhood and patriarchy. By this, the researcher posed series of pre-arranged set of questions and recorded responses that were given by the interviewees. The interviews were conducted in an unstructured and informal manner. This made it flexible for the research participants to choose locations and times that were convenient for the researcher to

interact with them. Thirteen participants were involved in the face-to-face interviews. This included 8 opinion leaders, 3 chiefs, the Municipal Chief Executive and the Municipal Gender Desk Officer. The lists of questions for the interviews were designed in the English language. Interviews with the Municipal Chief Executive and the Municipal Gender Desk Officer were conducted in the English language while interviews with the 8 opinion leaders and the 3 chiefs were conducted in the local dialect of the people (Likpakpaaln). Through this method, the



researcher had the opportunity to ask follow up questions in order to establish deeper appreciation of the individual's experiences on the research theme. In order to gather comprehensive data for the study, the interviews covered broad topical areas through lists of questions in an open ended format.

3.3.7.3 Focus Group Discussion

Apart from the use of questionnaires and interviews, the researcher also conducted Focus Group Discussions (FGD). FGD is a research tool that is used to gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009)). The group of participants is guided by a moderator or group facilitator who introduces the topic for discussion and helps the group to participate in a lively natural discussion amongst themselves. The strength of FGD relies on allowing the participants to agree or disagree with each other so that it provides an insight into how a group thinks about an issue, about a range of opinions and ideas, and inconsistencies and variation that exists in a particular community in terms of belief and their experiences and practices. FGD is used to explore the meanings of survey findings that cannot be explained statistically, the range of opinions/views on a topic of interest and to collect a wide variety of local terms (Ibid).



Three FGDs were organized with 21 elderly women in all. All the FGDs were held in serene and conducive atmospheres that were devoid of any interruptions. The number of participants in each of the groups was 7 elderly women. This is justified by Kvale & Brinkman (2009) when they note that the ideal size of a FGD should be between 6-10 participants. Each of the FGD lasted between an hour and two hours. All the FGDs were conducted in the local dialect of the people (Likpakpaaln). The FGD elicited more information about women's perceptions as a group about

their womanhood ideas and their experiences at their families and in the community. The FGDs was facilitated by the researcher and transcribed under the themes that were generated from the key issues that formed the discussions. These included education, employment, politics and culture and other relevant themes.

3.3.8 Sources of Data Collection

Although the result of this research was highly dependent on primary source obtained from the field through questionnaires and interviews, however, it also required some secondary sources to understand the concepts, definitions, theories and empirical results. The researcher therefore used several books, research literatures, articles, journals and other thesis materials as secondary sources for the study. Internet sources were used as part of the secondary sources for the study.

3.3.9 Data Analysis

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) define data analysis as “working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others” (p. 145). It can also be said to be the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the data that have been collected by the researcher. All the interviews and discussions put together were voluminous. It was therefore important to arrange, categorize, and reduce the data to make sense to readers.

The quantitative data were coded, edited and entered into the computer and Statistical Package for Social Scientists (IBM Statistics version) was used for the data processing after which the researcher did the analyses. Frequency tables, percentages, bar, pie, means, standard deviation and t-test were used for the description of the data at the uni-variate level. On qualitative data,



the researcher transcribed interviews with key informants and focus group discussants with the aid of Microsoft word. Also, responses from the open-ended questions were sorted out to identify similar characteristics and responses for analysis. Descriptive narrative was therefore used to analyze the qualitative data by grouping them into themes and sub-themes.

3.3.10 Reliability and Validity of Data Collection Instrument

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments, the instruments were piloted on the women who were not sampled for the study. The purpose of this was to remove ambiguities and unnecessary items in the questionnaire. It also checked the wording and the sequence of questions, the length and the clarity of instruction. By so doing, any inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the instrument were corrected and amended for use in the actual survey.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The goal of this chapter was to discuss the meaning of the findings and what this meaning meant to the construction of womanhood identity. The chapter reported results of data collected. The first part dealt with the demographic characteristics of respondents. The second part presented results from the study and this was organized around the research objectives.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The general characteristics of respondents (age, marital status, educational level, employment status and religious affiliation) were based on three (3) studied communities in the Nanumba North Municipality. These communities were Bincheratanga, Bakpaba and Dipah.

4.1.1 Age Distribution of Respondents

The study covered respondents of various age groups grouped into six, namely: 19 and below, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60+. The research revealed that the majority of key respondents (women) were within the age range of 30-39 representing a percentage of 32.7 while the age group of 60 and above was the least with 3 respondents representing 3.1%. With the men as depicted in the table below, large proportions were between the ages of 40-49. This group comprised of 17 respondents representing 37.8%. This was closely followed by the age group of 30-39 and 50-59 with 10 (22.2%) and 7 (15.6%) respectively.



Table 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

| Age group | Men | | Women | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| 19 and below | – | – | 6 | 6.1 |
| 20-29 | 9 | 20.0 | 21 | 21.4 |
| 30-39 | 10 | 22.2 | 32 | 32.7 |
| 40-49 | 17 | 37.8 | 25 | 25.5 |
| 50-59 | 7 | 15.6 | 11 | 11.2 |
| 60+ | 2 | 4.4 | 3 | 3.1 |
| Total | 45 | 100 | 98 | 100 |

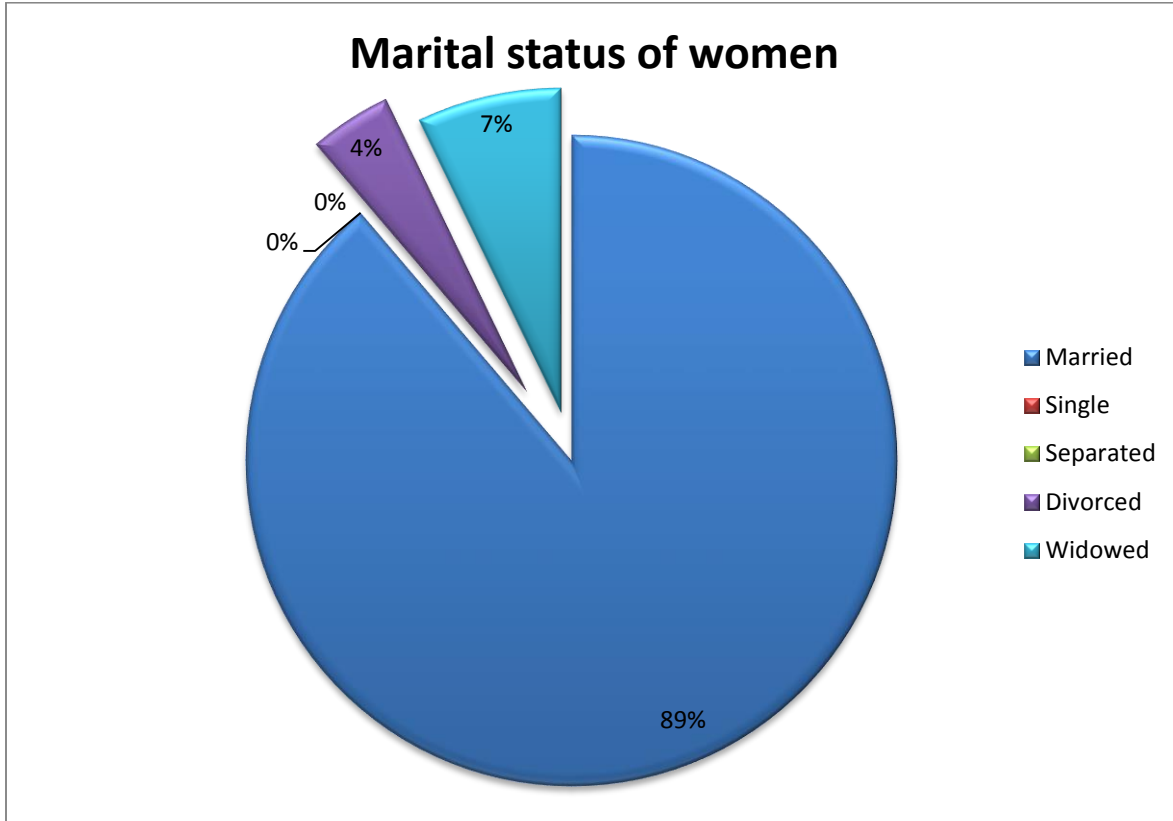
Source: Fieldwork, 2017

4.1.2 Marital Status of Respondents

Marital status was considered critical for the study because it constituted one of the criteria for defining and identifying the target population for the investigation. Therefore, to ensure that the respondents coincided with the target population, the researcher inquired about the marital status of respondents. Married women were 87, 7 were widowed, 4 were divorced and none was single or separated. On the part of the men, 30 (66.7%) were married, 9 (20%) were widowed, 4 (8.9%) were single, 2 (8.9%) were divorced while none of the respondents was separated. Figure 4.1 illustrates the marital status of women in this study.



Figure 4.1 Marital Statuses of Respondents



Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The high number of respondents in marital relationship could be attributed to the fact the Konkomba community just like any other African society upholds marriage to the highest esteem. This finding goes to affirm the contention of Mbiti (1986) that marriage in African societies is highly valued as the continuity of family systems, especially for procreation and so almost everybody wants to be in some form of marital relationship hence implying a high tendency for increased fertility. As noted by Nunkunya, (2003) the reproductive implication of high marriage rates is philosophical of the cultural importance placed on procreation and expansion of the lineage system by most societies in Ghana. This is symbolic in relation to the celebration of womanhood and the consequent social stigma and negative stereotypes attached to singleness and separation.

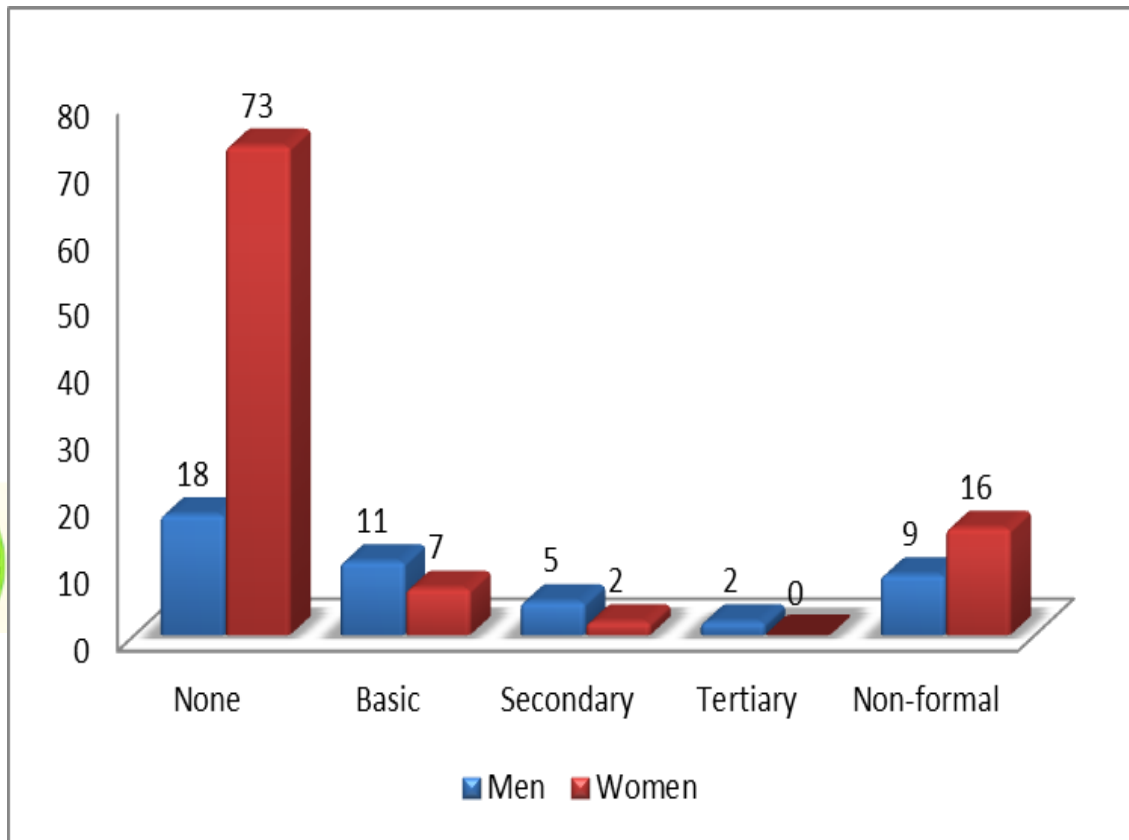


4.1.3 Educational Levels of Respondents

In recent years education has been promulgated as a crucial weapon against subordination. Education helps in generating awareness, makes an individual well informed about the overall changes taking place all around, liberates his/her mind from ignorance, sharpens him/her for logical thinking, mobilizes and generates capacity building, and thus increases the ability to understand the problem and to take effective decision. To ascertain the educational levels of women who were involved in the study, respondents were asked to indicate their highest educational levels attained. Figure 4.2 shows the educational status of respondents.



Figure 4.2 Educational Levels of Respondents



Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The data revealed that majority of the women respondents 74.5% have had no form of education (are illiterate) and very few (16.3%) haven had completed or attended courses in Non-formal education. On the other hand, 37.8% of the men were illiterates, 20.0% had acquired non-formal education, 26.7% had also acquired basic education while none of the respondents had attained either secondary or tertiary education. From the above figures, it is true to say that there is a marked record of females' educational attainments. The perception that girls are homemakers or belong to the kitchen can be one factor which results in high illiteracy among females. The figures also reveal the lack of educational opportunities for the rural folks in the NNM hence this study strongly takes the position that the denial of women's knowledge and the lack of education among Konkomba women contribute absolutely to constructing them as silent in that, their way of thinking, communicating and knowing have been marginalized. This finding confirms the observation made by Eliasu (2013) and Gmalifo (2013) on the low levels of education among the Konkombas most especially for girls. This means that parents among the Konkombas are less likely to send a daughter than a son to school. Early marriage was therefore cited as the reason behind the high rate of illiteracy among women. This finding is not different from the findings of Lambert et al. (2012) where they argued that the traditional Ghanaian culture has negative perspective towards female advancing in education, particularly in the rural areas. They contended that in these communities, many parents hold the view that the traditional roles of the girl-child is to marry, procreate and care for the family.



4.1.4 Employment Status of Respondents

Economic self-independence empowers individuals to take their own decision, so a critical analysis of the nature of employment helps to understand the economic liberty of such

individuals. Tsikata reports that low status of women in wage employment has resulted in their insignificant role in the national decision-making process (Tsikata, 2007). It was therefore important for the researcher to establish the employment status of respondents particularly women and how it affects their lives. The table below illustrates the employment status of respondents.

Table 4.2 Employment Status of Respondents

| Occupation | Women | | Men | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Farming | 87 | 88.8 | 41 | 91.1 |
| Trading | 11 | 11.2 | 4 | 8.9 |
| Public service | 0 | 00.0 | 0 | 00.0 |
| Unemployed | 0 | 00.0 | 0 | 00.0 |
| Total | 98 | 100 | 45 | 100 |

Source: fieldwork, 2017

Table 4.2 reveals that 88.8% of the women population worked as agricultural employees (farmers) working in the farms of their husbands. On the part of the men, 91.1% were farmers.

On the other hand, 11.2% percent of women were self-employed and were engaged in such activities as petty trading, charcoal production, hair dressing, dress making, pito brewing and local industrial ventures as, ‘dawadawa’ processing, soap making and shea butter processing.

The 11.2% Percent of the self-employed women further indicated that they were engaged in other farming activities to augment their earnings. A less percentage of 8.9 of the men were engaged in trading. A critical look at the occupational background of respondents shows that the most predominant occupation is farming. This can be attributed to the fact that the agriculture sector is the largest sector in Ghana and as such farming is the most common occupation



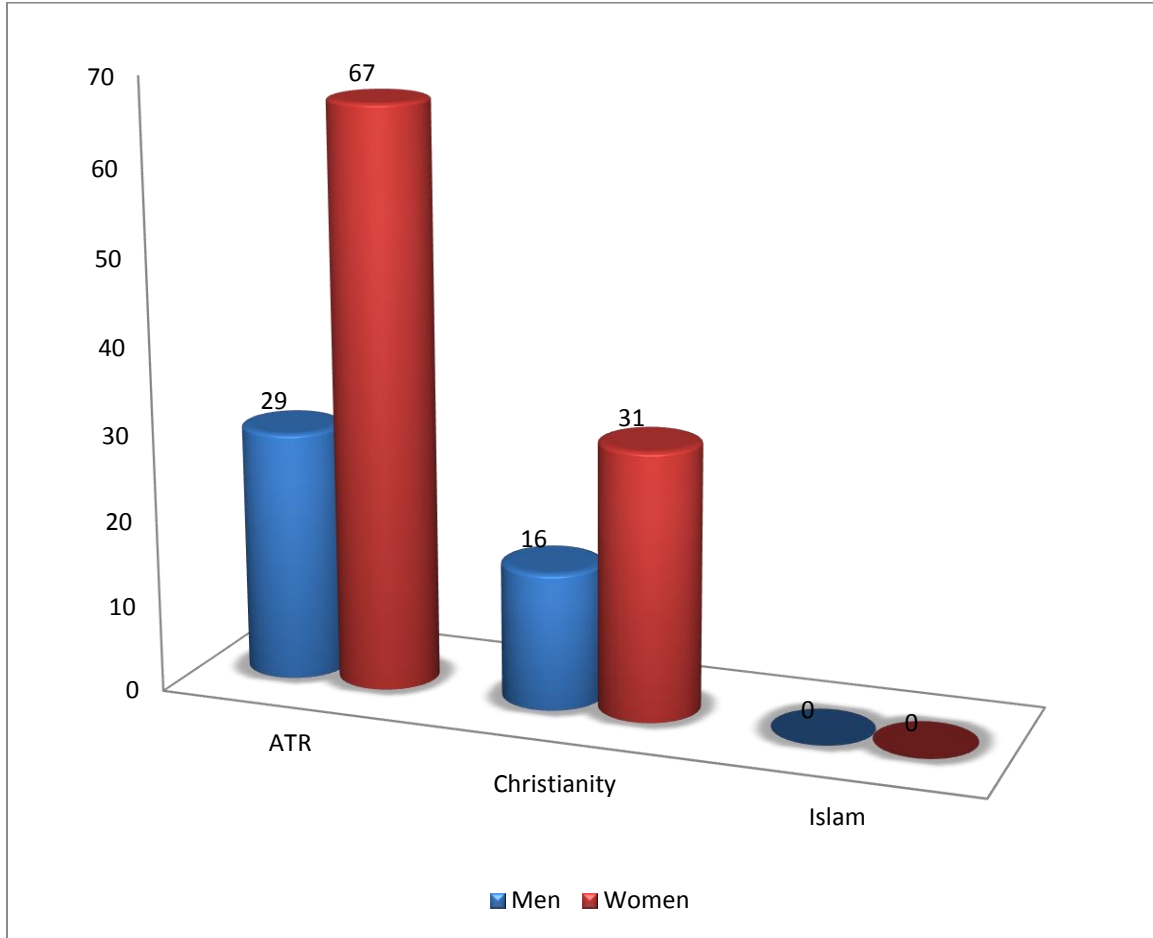
particularly in the three Northern regions. The employment pattern depicted in the figure also conforms to the general employment trend where women are mostly found in the informal sector. It further confirms Dawson (2000) observation that the Konkombas are agrarian people considered to be the primary producers of yams and a number of grain crops such as sorghum, guinea corn and ground nuts. More importantly, the findings revealed that all the women who responded to this research worked in their husbands' farms. The women had no farmlands on their own except small pieces of farmlands that were given out for the cultivation of pepper, okro and other vegetable crops. The lack of access to farmlands had economic implications on these women. African rural women are therefore poor and the reason is the inability to have basic services and resources together with lack of equity in the right of the family/household resources such as livestock and land. A further analysis of educational background and occupational background also shows that one's educational background goes a long way to determine one's occupation. The overly dependence on agriculture as the only form of occupation of the people could also have a rippling effect on poverty alleviation given the unfavorable rainfall pattern especially in northern Ghana.

4.1.5 Religious Affiliation of Respondents



In Ghana, the freedom of worship guaranteed in our constitution has made it possible for citizens to join any religious denomination of their choice. However, the three main religions in the country are Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion. The religion of an individual may necessarily be directly related to issues of deprivation, subordination and discrimination so the researcher deemed it necessary to assess the religious backgrounds of respondents. In figure 4.3 are the details of the religious affiliations of respondents who were involved in the study.

Figure 4.3 Religious Affiliations of Respondents



Source: fieldwork, 2017

Figure 4.3 shows that the majority of respondents (both women and men) constituting 68.4% and 64.4% respectively were African traditional believers. On the other hand, 31.6% and 35.6% respectively for women and men of the respondents were Christians. There was however, no Muslim among the people interviewed. This reiterates the position of the Population and Housing Census (2010) that whilst Nanumbas were predominantly Moslems, Konkombas were largely atheist and Christians. Given the high numbers of respondents being traditionalists, it is not surprising as would be seen later that women emancipation efforts have not seen much



improvement given the fact that African traditional believers are largely conservative and would often resist change as posited in the research work of Chidili (2005).

4.2 Cultural Understanding of Womanhood Among the Konkombas

Every culture is characterized by a set of discourses which concern gender and position people to behave and interact in certain gender-appropriate ways. This section addressed objective one of this research which was concerned with the cultural understanding or the representation of womanhood among the Konkombas in the NNM. This objective sought to establish how the discourse of womanhood is characterized in the day-to-day activities and interactions of Konkombas.

Through interviews with respondents, Konkomba women are experiencing the consequences of womanhood ideology; an ideology that sets and regulates their conduct. The most significant indicators of womanhood among the Konkombas as the interviews revealed are being a wife and a mother. These two features are respectively epitomized as ‘belonging’ and ‘producing’ and to be one and lacking the other renders a woman incomplete. This confirms the assertion of Hey (1989) that womanhood is defined in the language of “wifehood”. It further reiterates Chukwuma (1989) claims in her article, “Positivism and The Female Crisis”, that the true test of a woman

continues to be the marriage institution and that through marriage, a woman attains a status acclaimed by the society and fulfills the biological need of procreation and companionship.

Women are therefore presented as people whose honor is in getting married and giving birth to children. From focus group discussions and other interactions, it emerged that a Konkomba woman’s social acknowledgment and sense of womanhood suffer seriously when she is unmarried and even when she is married but unable to have a child or children. Marriage among



the Konkombas, as in most African communities, conveys status hence being married, being somebody's wife for that matter gives the woman decency because of the strong presumption that a married woman is necessarily guarded in her behavior while a single woman living alone is perceived as a 'freelancer' who does what pleases her. On record, an elderly woman stated that *"an unmarried woman is regarded as a dam where everybody goes to swim"*. The perception therefore is that while a woman stays unmarried, she is opened to everyman interested in making sexual proposal.

Besides marriage, womanhood among the Konkombas is also enhanced by an additional dominant feature in their lives which is 'producing' or 'mothering'. Motherhood is the traditional way of defining a woman's status. A woman is seen as a woman only if she is a mother. Maternity is therefore the sole biological, psychological and social fact that marks and determines a woman's personality. The respondents revealed that a childless wife could easily be thrown out of the husband's house either by the husband, mother in-law or sister in-laws. They indicated further that the condition of a childless wife becomes worst in the event that her rival is able to bring forth a child for the husband. Childless women therefore tend to be more vulnerable to eviction and dispossession after the demise of their husbands and this has also been established by Aliber et al, (2004). Within the discourse of mainstream womanhood among the



Konkombas, wifhood and motherhood were adored as the "purpose of a woman's being". An elderly woman from one of the FGDs had this to say; *"marriage and child-birth are occasions for celebration, commendations and festivity and it is every woman's dream to experience it"*.

The study also revealed that apart from being a wife and a mother, other prevailing ideologies that define the boundaries of an ideal woman are divided into three cardinal virtues; purity, submissiveness and domesticity.

Woman purity was highly revered among the Konkombas. Without sexual purity, a woman was no woman, but rather a lower form of being, a ‘fallen woman’ undeserving of the love of her husband and unfit for his company. In order to meet the requirements as an epitome of this virtue, it was indispensable to suppress all overt sexuality. The trend of purity denied that women had natural sex drives. The prevailing view was that the best mothers, wives and managers of households knew little or nothing of sexual indulgence. However, love of home, children and domestic duties were the only passions they felt. The idea of the essential purity of the Konkomba woman however, did not mean that the virtue had to be preserved until marriage, but that marriage brought an end to any other sexual relationship. The respondents indicated that should a woman cheat on the husband and subsequently conceive, she would not be able to deliver safely unless until she confessed publicly.

Woman submissiveness was also one of the most feminine of virtues. Women were to be passive participants, succumbing to destiny, to duty, and to men. Women were told that this was the order of things. A key informant had this to say on the submissiveness of women: *“It is certain that in whatever circumstances of life a woman is placed, a spirit of obedience and submission, softness of temper, and humility of character are required from her”*. An ideal woman knew her place, and knew what qualities were required of her. She was in a measure dependent. This

statement from another respondent reiterates this position: *“A truly levelheaded woman feels her dependence. She does what she is able to do, but she is mindful of her inferiority and therefore appreciative of any support given”*. The research also revealed that the woman’s place was in the home. A woman’s role was to be busy at those decently uplifting tasks directed at preserving and accomplishing her purity. Housework/domesticity was deemed such an uplifting task. Women



were regarded as managers of the home, busy about her tasks of wifely duties and childcare and keeping the home.

The cultural understanding of womanhood among the Konkombas is therefore being a wife and a mother. Other distinguishing characters of a woman according to the research are purity, submissiveness and domesticity.

4. 3 Socio-cultural Factors Affecting Konkomba Women

4.3.1 Early/Child Marriage

One major socio-cultural factor that affects Konkomba women/girls in the NNM as identified by the respondents was early marriage which was often accompanied with some element of force. Early/child marriage as used in this study refers to any form of marriage that takes place before a child attains the age of 18 years whether with or without the consent of the partners. The 1985 Marriage Ordinance Act 127 of Ghana makes the legal age for marriage as 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys respectively. However, customary practices among the Konkombas in the NNM lead to early marriage (usually through exchanges and in some cases through early betrothal). The study found that girls marrying even before the age of eighteen years was still a practice (even though in a declining trend). This confirms the research finding of Eliasu (2013)



on early marriage of young females and poverty in the Northern Region. The practice of early marriage was very common among the believers of the African Traditional Religion (ATR). Out of the 67 women who were believers of ATR, 49 of them indicated that they were given out in marriage before they attained 18 years. While some spoke of the pain they went through with respect to respect to child marriage, others saw nothing wrong with the practice as was remarked by one of the FGD discussants in this statement: *“It is the duty of every mother as tradition*

demands to bring up her daughter in a responsible way to the status of a woman, so as a girl grows up, you are required to find her a husband". Those households which do not practice early marriage were mostly Christians. All the 47 Christians (16 men and 31 women) who were interviewed spoke strongly against the practice of child marriage. This finding is evident in this statement of one of the Christians in an interview. "Churches like mine are putting up schools. So how will I get returns from the contributions I make towards building these schools if I give out my daughter in marriage at an early age? I have to send her to school so that she can look after me at my old age".

The research discovered that women who were betrothed dropped out of school or were never sent to school at all because they were meant for marriage. This deprived a lot of girls/women the opportunity to acquire education. This was revealed by a respondent in the statement below: *"I dropped out of school because I was given out in marriage in my childhood and when I started growing up, my betrothed husband came to marry me and so I had to stop schooling".*

Data gathered from the field indicated that the prevailing socially endorsed roles for wives put excessive burden on these young wives to meet the challenging responsibilities of wives. It also represents a grave denial of sexual and reproductive rights of the girl-child. It can be concluded therefore that married young girls would be voiceless in the hand of their husbands in matters of

reproduction decision-making. Early marriage further has severe concerns on the power dynamics which result into uneven partnerships in the marriage, social isolation, low decision-making powers and coercion between the spouses. Social norms regarding access and control of productive resources within the household can be aggravated in circumstances where girls marry early and have very little or no decision-making power. The tendency of newlywed girls becoming widows at very early ages because of age gaps becomes common phenomenon. To



worsen their conditions, the cruel customary inheritance laws which discriminate against women may extremely distress married girls and result in further poverty for such girls and their surviving children. The lack of power and independent source of income and autonomy of married girls in addition to social pressure to bear children will add to their vulnerability to poverty. Therefore, the younger the age at marriage the more vulnerable she will be to poverty. Early marriage resulting into early childbearing is detrimental to both mother and child, not only because of the higher risks associated with adolescent pregnancies but also because early marriage usually deprives young women the opportunity of pursuing other activities such as schooling.

4.3.1.1 Parents' Perceptions on Girl-Child Education

A paired samples t-test was conducted to compare the perceptions (benefits and barriers) of parents about girl-child education and the result is presented in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Means and Standard Deviations of Parents' (Men And Women) Perception on Girl-Child Education

| | | M | N | SD |
|--------|---------|--------|-----|--------|
| Pair 1 | Benefit | 4.3643 | 143 | .54716 |
| | Barrier | 1.9268 | 143 | .83163 |

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

From table 4.3, a paired samples t-test indicates that there is a significant difference in the mean scores for benefits to girls' education (M=4.36, SD=.55), and barriers of girls' education (M=1.93, SD=.83). Results indicated that parents (both men and women) had higher mean score for the benefits of girls' education. Thus, it can be said that parents gave more importance to the benefits of girls' education even if they perceived some barriers for the girls' education.



Although the respondents were given out into marriage early and are therefore illiterates, they had very positive attitude towards girl-child education.

Table 4.4 Results of Paired Samples T-Test for Comparing Perceptions of Parents on Girl-Child Education

| | | T | Df | Sig.(2-tailed) |
|--------|-----------------|--------|-----|----------------|
| Pair 1 | benefit-barrier | 34.333 | 142 | .000 |

The P-value from the t-test is .000 hence the result is statistically significant.

4.3.2 Polygyny

Polygyny was also identified as a socio-cultural factor affecting the welfare of women. Polygyny is defined as the type of marriage in which a man is married to more than one wife. It is a traditional practice that is sanctioned by customary law which governs marriage and the family.

Among the Konkombas, polygyny is common and continues to reinvent itself in light of broad social changes. Seventy-five (75%) of the men that were interviewed cited the traditional reasons for polygyny. This was also collaborated by the opinion leaders and chiefs. They indicated that

the familial institution has been polygynous. Generally, they saw more benefits than weaknesses to this type of marriage system. The benefits which they stated included a large family size and the ability to bear children if the first wife were barren or dead. Polygyny therefore seems to serve as a way of accomplishing the wish of men; to have many children. To some degree, it may be perceived as having to do with giving security to the man. One of the opinion leaders narrated that *“if you are married to more than one and unfortunately one of your wives should pass on, you would not have to worry about not having a woman to cook for you. It is with this*



understanding that our elders say that ‘to have one wife is like having one eye’”. They indicated that with more children, the man and his family are able to increase their wealth because of a larger workforce. The researcher’s interactions with the opinion leaders also revealed that immoral sexual behavior is much less common when men have legitimate access to other sexual partners. Others also stated that marrying several women show your wealth as a man hence polygyny carries solemn obligations and duties. One of the chiefs stated this in this voice: *“It takes intelligence to keep peace with more than one wife”*. It seemed to believe that the ability of managing a polygynous marriage shows how much wisdom a man has and reveals in many ways his capabilities as a man. The women that were interviewed observed polygyny very differently from the men. All of them said they did not enjoy being in polygynous marriages but for their children, they felt they must preserve their marriages. None of them liked the idea of sharing their husbands with other women. They all spoke of the tension that often comes in-between them and their rivals because of the feeling of jealousy.

4.3.3 Inheritance Rights

The constitution of Ghana guarantees the right to own and inherit property regardless of sex, yet customary laws make it difficult for Konkomba women to inherit the properties of their deceased husbands and fathers despite the fact that they provide a greater amount of agricultural and food production labor. The opinion leaders and chiefs indicated that the Konkombas’ inheritance system is patrilineal and every child belongs to the father’s lineage and will accordingly inherit the properties of the father. The patrilineal inheritance however, shows great reverence and respect to the maternal relationships, which is mainly seen and used as a second place of asylum in times of patrilineal hostilities. In this social structure of the patriarchal family, women are



deprived of their property rights. The rules of inheritance are mainly dictated by culture and accepted rules of conduct. Women therefore do not have any say in the sharing of the properties. A widow stated in this quote, *“I did not get any share of my late husband’s properties even though I contributed money for him to buy yam sets to make a farm. Our tradition is such that women don’t have any contribution to make in the distribution of their husbands’ properties”*.

Under the customary law, the son or the eldest male relative of a deceased man inherits all the property (this includes the land and matrimonial home) and then holds the property in a representative capacity for the beneficiaries. In an interview session with one of the women, she explained that, *“here, when a man passes on, brothers and male children are invited to a meeting after the final funeral rites are performed. At the meeting, a brother of the deceased then shares the properties among the children of the deceased”*. It is revealing from the above quote that widows do not receive any portion of their husbands’ properties. The usual practice is that they consider the widow but only the male children. What this means is that if a widow had no male-child with the deceased, then she has limited rights through the female children to her deceased husband’s properties. The widows even become “properties” that are shared among the brothers and at times the elderly sons of the deceased man. Wife inheritance therefore is still a cherished institution among the Konkombas. This is known as widow/levirate inheritance. A



fertile wife, for whom bride price has been paid, may continue to belong to her husband’s lineage. Among the Konkombas therefore, culture dictates the manner in which men and women relate to each other including how property is shared. This is interpreted to mean that marriage does not even guarantee women an integral place in the man’s family or lineage.

4.3.4 Widowhood Rites

Another socio-cultural factor that was identified by the respondents to be affecting women is widowhood rites. The treatment of widows is used as a tool or instrument to perpetuate various obnoxious customs and cultural beliefs and traditional practices. These include widowhood rituals and widow cleansing amongst others. This socio-cultural practice was common among believers of ATR. Fifty-six women out of the sixty-seven women who were believers of ATR, remarked that widowhood rites was something they were not comfortable with. They questioned why a woman would lose her husband and the period of mourning to the final burial is marked by a series of rites, taboos, and observances for the widow but when a man loses his wife, he is not taken through similar rites. At a FGD, an elderly woman lamented as she gave the following narration. *“Early in the morning of the fifth day of the final funeral rite, the widow led by a female leader is made to visit several homesteads. The widow, dressed in white attire, holds in her right hand a calabash containing shea butter. The shea butter is used to ‘anoint’ any baby she comes across against heart-related sickness as if to say that an unpurified widow has some ‘spirits’ with her that can inflict diseases on babies”*. On the other hand, all the 31 Christian women who were interviewed indicated that their faith (Christianity) prohibited them from going through such customary rites to be cleansed. They however, mentioned the practice was

humiliating as they had seen many women taken through the widowhood rites.

4.3.5 Household Work

Data from the field showed that the burden of household work was mostly on the women and girls. All the women (98) interviewed indicated that they were solely responsible for different household activities such as child caring, cooking, laundry, fetching of firewood, and fetching of



water (sometimes several kilometers away). Only 23 of them further indicated that their husbands often helped them by taking care of their babies while they engaged in other household chores. Thirty-two of the men mentioned that they mostly leave for their farms very early and return late and so they are left with little time for other domestic duties apart from weeding round the compound. All the 3 chiefs and the 8 opinion leaders mentioned that in the past it was culturally inappropriate for a man to be found in the kitchen when there were women around and that it was no more the case. Even though household chores were still performed by the women, it was not as a result of serious cultural limitation but for other socio-economic reasons.

4.3.6 Male Headship of Families

Another item that featured as a socio-cultural factor affecting the status women was male headship of their families. Respondents from FGDs indicated that by tradition, the head of Konkomba family is a man and so in practice the successor to his property is a male-child. This practice is at variance with the 1992 constitution of the Republic which underscores the inclusion of the wife or wives and children of the deceased as heirs regardless of their gender. It was revealed that even where the men did not essentially provide basic necessities for their families, they were still regarded as heads of their families. One of them conveyed it in this tone: “*a male*



is a male no matter how small or irresponsible he is”. A related position was stated by another participant of a FGD, she indicated that: “*the society refers to a built house in reference to a man as its head even when the house was jointly built by the man and the wife*”. These statements point to the conclusion that the traditional approval of male headship and the subordinate position of the woman in the family order still lingers in the face of women’s contributions to the welfare of their families. The respondents added that this lack of acknowledgement of the

contributions of women, most of them resort to transferring their assets to their brothers in their natal homes. This male headship phenomenon collaborates very well with Max Weber's usage of patriarchy as "a system of government in which men rule societies through their position as heads of households" (as cited in Walby, 1990:19). Until the traditional notion that the man is the automatic head of the family changes, then the call for the liberation of women will remain a dream.

4.3.7 Wife Beating

It also emerged that wife beating was a socio-cultural factor that affects women in the study area. From the interviews and FGDs, it became clear that wife-beating was common. A key informant had this to say; "*a woman could be beaten mercilessly with little provocation*". In the Konkomba society therefore, men are allowed to physically discipline their wives. This confirms the findings of the work of Issahaku (2012) on male partner violence in which he established that wife-beating was a common and an accepted phenomenon in the Northern Region.

An elderly woman at a FGD mentioned that domestic violence is never discussed and that it is implicitly understood that a man has the right to beat his wife. The research revealed that while being beaten, women were advised never to fight back, not only on the grounds of imbalanced strengths but also not to cause more anger and injury from their husbands. To this advice, a key informant explained: "*when a wife was beaten, she would not fight back. She was expected to run to an elderly man in the family for rescue, run away for safety or keep quiet*". Most participants of FGDs stated that, silence was expected of a married woman as a tool and sign of her concession to avoid the wrath and violent confrontations from her husband.



Reasons for wife-beating pointed to the wives' arrogance or nagging personality, non-performance of household work, issues of hygiene, sexual denials and rumor mongering.

In conclusion, these developments contravene the communal interests of fundamental rights of people such as the rights of equality, freedom and personal dignity of women in the society. These developments also fail to satisfy the orders of the principles of the Affirmative Action and the Beijing Conventions on the inalienable rights of women. This trend of actions poses severe dangers on the Konkombas' path to democratic consolidation and sustainable development in the NNM and the country in general.

4.4 Pattern of Relationship Relating to Power, Roles and Responsibilities

4.4.1 Roles Played by Konkomba Men and Women

Marriage is a significant institution in the Konkomba community. In it, ideals and taboos as well as gender values are shaped and framed. It is within this institution that gender roles are determined in household productive activities. The nucleus family is not just a basic unit of social organization but also an economic entity. Mutually, men and women play important roles. Although this is a patriarchal society in the sense that men are recognized as being superior in status, there is a clear division of labor between the sexes. The research revealed that there were specific tasks carried out by both men and women. Men for example would go and clear farmlands and break the earth and the women would plant crops except the planting of yams and cassava which was the sole responsibilities of the men. Often times, the women would help the men to weed the crops. In essence, the duties carried out by men and women complemented each other. Indeed, survival in an environment of scarcity dictated gender partnership based on common toil. So men and women needed one another's labor for social production. Table 4.5



graphically represents some of the gendered responsibilities of the sexes as stated by the respondents.

Table 4.5 Gendered Responsibilities of Men and Women

| Duties of men | Duties of women |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Hunting | Taking care of the home |
| Breaking the ground | Planting except yam and cassava |
| Providing security | In charge of domestic chores |
| Feeding animals | Gathering firewood |
| Providing food stuffs | Cooking and serving food except meat |
| Weeding the surrounding | Fetching of water |

Source: fieldwork, 2017

It was established from the field that in the past, the outlined gendered division of labor was reinforced by a set of taboos that governed the family unit, but that these taboos were almost becoming irrelevant.

Table 4.6 Result of T-Test Statistics of Female and Male Activities/Roles Within Domestic Units

| | Variable | T | Sig. |
|--------|---------------------------|----------|------|
| Pair 1 | Women's roles-Men's roles | 13.380** | .000 |

**Significant at $p < .01$

This result is significant at $p < .01$. This result implies that there is significant difference between activities/roles involvement of female and male within domestic units.



4.4.2 Decision Making role of Konkomba Women

The power to take decisions is very critical from the angle of women empowerment. Real development cannot therefore take place without the active involvement of women. So in this study, the participation of women in decision making in the economic and social spheres, both at household and community levels was examined.

On economic decision, results show that decisions relating to daily family expenditures and personal necessities were usually taken independently by women. However, major financial decisions involving investments were taken mostly with the permission of the husband. The patriarchal social setting of the study area could perhaps be attributed to the male dominance in the economic related matters. On decision-making on childbearing, statistics show that a majority of the respondents (79%) reported that childbearing decision was taken solely by their husbands. On the other hand, 21% stated that they together with their husbands took the decisions. However, none of the respondents ever took the decision alone. These figures generally revealed that women play no active role in childbearing decision-making.

Family planning is an asset for both the family and the society. It has socio-economic benefits of providing families with better opportunities to plan for nourishment, care, housing and education of their children (Pietila, 2007). Burns et al, (1997) acknowledged that family planning increases women's opportunities to study, earn income, participate in community activities, and enhances their status and generally facilitates population control measures. The research therefore sought to explore the respondents' role in decision-making on family planning. The data show that majority of the respondents constituting 74% reported that decisions on fertility regulation were taken by the husband. However, 26% stated that family planning decision was jointly taken by



them and their husbands. This finding confirms the assertion of Brown (1994) that the traditional role of the male as a decision-maker is evident in the area of family planning. Undoubtedly, within the cultural setting of the Konkombas where the subordinating role of women is evident and expected, the power of women to negotiate on reproductive issues is minimal as revealed in the study. Partner's approval was also found to be associated with the use of contraceptives. In a focus group discussion, a woman narrated that *"approval is needed from your husband before you can use contraceptives since it is perceived that women who use contraceptives without their partners' knowledge are likely to engage in promiscuous and extramarital affairs"*. Given the fact that spousal consent was relevant, contraceptive related campaign messages should target both males and females. Involving men in contraceptive related activities has the possibilities to increase contraceptive use among women.

The whole idea behind patriarchy is power and control. Whereas the control over women in the natal family begins right from the birth of a girl child, it is reshaped after marriage. Data from this study on the role of women in power and control demonstrate the ways and means through which this control was reinforced (internalization of patriarchy by women). An informant in this study shared her experience connected to this power and control retaining spectacle. She explained that she visited her relatives who were also inhabitants of the same village without the

knowledge of any member of the husband's family. Her in-laws were dissatisfied and angry at this act. The following is what her sister-in-law said to her. *"You don't have to leave the home without a notice"*. Obviously, her husband's family felt disrespected for the fact that she took a decision without the approval/knowledge of the family. The state of power thrives through direct and indirect agency that transfers this governing activity in social system with the aid of diverse



channels. So patriarchy (governing activity) is not only exercised by men but also accomplished by women in the society. So women serve as an instrument against women.

4.4.3 Male Dominance in Decision-Making in the Household

Table 4.7 Result of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Male Dominance Within Household Units

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | 2.382 | 2 | 1.191 | .295 | .496 |
| Within Groups | 387.510 | 96 | 4.037 | | |
| Total | 389.892 | 98 | | | |

*Significant at $p < .05$

Table 4.6 shows the analysis of variance (ANOVA) of male dominance within household units. From table 4.6, F value is .295 and the significant value is .496. This result is not significant. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis that there is no significant variation in male dominance within domestic units in the various communities and conclude therefore that male dominance within household units is still very widespread among the Konkombas. The study however, shows that there is strong and close social relationship between women and their kinfolks in the studied area which is largely rural. So because kinship still continues to influence women's decision-making, development agencies in rural areas should recognize and consider existing kinship groups as indigenous social organizations in the design of policies and implementation.

4.4.4 Decision at Community Level

The decision-making autonomy of Konkomba women at community level was also very low. The study revealed that apart from utilizing their voting rights, the women were rarely engaged



in any community-level decision making. Data from FGDs revealed that they could not even exercise their voting right as they were often dictated to vote for the preferred candidates of their husbands during elections. So politics in the municipality is controlled by men to a large extent. The researcher's interactions with the Municipal Gender Desk Officer revealed that the whole district had only one elected and four appointed women representatives in the municipal assembly and none of these representatives was a Konkomba woman.

All the participants (both men and women) of this study indicated that, the lives of women within the municipality were greatly influenced by the power and authority of men since most decisions were taken by the men or with the approval of the men. So, women in the study area depend on men for their social, economic and political needs. Similarly, mothers and sisters-in-law who are referred to as native women in this study also command some level of power and authority over these women as a result of their positions in the family. This is reflected in the conceptual framework of this study where the exploitation and marginalization of the periphery (women) by the core (men) and semi-peripheral relations (native women such as mothers/sisters-in-law) is as a result dependency that creates conditions and structures that favor the men to the detriment of the women. Also, respondents indicated women were mainly responsible for household work such as cooking, washing and cleaning, fetching of water and firewood etc. So



while they busy performing these tasks, the men were either taking their leisure or engaged in other activities that could bring them economic returns. This supports the theoretical position of this study (Marxist theory of patriarchy) that the work of women within the family is unpaid, trivialized or undervalued.

In conclusion, the unequal social relationship that relate to power, roles and responsibilities between men and women impacts negatively on women empowerment. Owing to gender-role

stereotyping, women tend to be passive participants in the exercise of power and authority right from the family level up to the community level.

4.5 Challenges Confronting Women in the Municipality

By identifying challenges and opportunities women face in their everyday life and finding ways to deal with them, women are able to negotiate and redefine traditional customs and male authority in specific spheres of life. The women experienced social, cultural and economic structural constraints in their lives.

On the economic front, challenges confronting women in the municipality included difficulty in gaining access to credits due to collateral requirements, attempts by men to control their business, difficulty in managing business and family responsibilities as well as excessive control from the men.

Politically, the involvement of the women in community-level decision making was worst. It was revealed from the opinion leaders from the three communities and also from the Municipal Gender Desk Officer that no woman from those communities held a political post either as a unit committee member or as an assembly woman. The Gender Desk Officer indicated that the low level of involvement of women in decision-making at the community level was due to challenges

such as cultural limitations, low self-esteem, fear of competition and lack of funds to carry out campaigns. The other challenges included lack of support from spouse/relatives, lack of media or publicity and family obligations. She concluded by stating that *“the poor representation of women in the municipality limits their political roles and contributions in terms of ideas towards household and district development. These challenges have restricted women to a large extent in progressing on their political prosperities in the municipality so as to influence the roles they*



can play towards the municipal and national development. The challenges have also limited the women's efforts in taking active part in most social activities such as community meetings.

Another challenge that was also identified by the respondents was the limited access to female teachers. It is documented in literature that cultural barriers in many countries play crucial roles in determining whether girls have access to education. Women teachers have therefore been recognized as a critical pillar in impacting girls' access, retention, and achievement (Kane, 2004). However, Konkomba women/girls in the municipality do not have access to female teachers as role models to give them emotional and moral support in guiding them to higher achievement. This constraint they said impedes them from realizing their life goals.

4.6 Strategies to Address the Gender-Based Inequalities in the Nanumba North Municipality.

This part of the study looked at the suggestions made by the women to arresting the exposed socio-economic and political challenges that limit the women's efforts. To overcome the challenges confronting women in the district, respondents suggested that upsetting negative cultural practices through a number of engagements.

Regular public sensitizations, encouraging girl-child education, motivating and supporting women financially, and public sensitization on women potentials among others are pragmatic solutions to the challenges women struggle with within the municipality. The role of the state they argue is necessary in the planning and implementation of women's social and economic empowerment strategies.

On the issue of sensitization, respondents suggested incessant public sensitization programmes on the important roles women can play when given political platform in the municipality. They



suggested further that, women's advocacy organizations and government institutions in the municipality such as the Action-Aid, Songtaba, Resilience In Northern Ghana (RING), Integrated Democracy Centre (IDC), National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and other donor societies should influence support for women to mount campaign platforms during any election especially the district level election.

On the economic front, encouraging women's networking particularly by the Municipal Assembly and the financial institutions was also suggested by respondents. Women should be targeted with very clear programmes in order to reduce their vulnerability to poverty. Respondents suggested that government should take steps to initiate programmes with clear agricultural and economic-specific policies to support women. They also asked for the current poverty alleviation programmes of district assemblies (e.g. the LEAP) to be increased. Another suggested strategy is committing a percentage of the municipal's budget to rural women initiatives or programmes. It is anticipated that through this initiative, rural women would be targeted with specific programmes in order to ease their exposure to poverty.

On the social problems, both women and men (respondents) suggested that, more media (local radio) platforms should be opened to women to discuss topical issues that affect their lives.

Progressive steps by the media on the issues raised or any other issue that has the likelihood to

advance the course of growing the number, presence and influence of women in politics and public bureaus is most critical. Also, community by-laws should be enacted and enforced by the

traditional authority to support women friendly-initiatives to make them active social actors. To arrest the low self-esteem and make women active in the social development process, it has been suggested that women role-modeling should be stimulated to indoctrinate in the women and girls the spirit of determination. An outstanding suggested strategy by all respondents was the



significance of education as a development tool for elevating women's status. Education in all its facets has long been acknowledged as an effective tool through which the behavior of a person can be sharpened to fit into the expectations of the society. This recommended strategy has over the years been championed by liberal feminists as they see education as a variable that can be used as a tool for the emancipation of women. Functionally, education is critical because it guarantees the survival of a society. At the same time, its technical role integrates and manages tension in the society. The assumption is that education equips/prepares individuals to play societal roles; whose absence may lead to societal disintegration.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a synopsis of the findings which served as the source for conclusions and recommendations. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section centered on the summary of major findings of the research which are linked to the themes of the study. The second section comprised conclusions relating to the findings of the study and the last section contained recommendations for future research.

5.1 Summary of Findings/Observations

5.1.1 Cultural Understanding of Womanhood

The research revealed that the most significant markers of womanhood among the Konkombas is being a wife and a mother; two features respectively epitomized as ‘belonging’ and ‘producing’ and to be one without the other renders one incomplete. The study has also shown that apart from being a wife and a mother, other prevailing ideologies that define the boundaries of acceptable woman behavior by which a woman is judged by her husband, her neighbors and society, is divided into three cardinal virtues as purity, submissiveness and domesticity.



5.1.2 Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting the Women in the Municipality

Patriarchy has been identified as a structural system which positions women in subordinate position in a number of ways. The male dominance in the society takes several forms, these include; discrimination, contempt, control, exploitation, oppression and violence. The socio-cultural factors discovered in the study illustrate specific forms of discrimination as aspect of patriarchy to include, burden of household work on women and young girls, lack of educational opportunities for girls, wife beating, and lack of inheritance or property rights for women, male control over women's bodies and sexuality, control over fertility or reproductive rights. Others include widowhood rites, early or child marriage, polygyny and male headship.

5.1.3 Pattern of Social Relationship Relating to Power, Roles, and Responsibilities of Wife and Husband

The findings of the research on the existing pattern of social relationship of husband and wife in decision-making that relate to power, roles, and responsibilities in the household can be concluded as follows:

The study results of social pattern in decision making of husband and wife show strong inequality in decision-making. The result shows that women are only able to make independent

decisions regarding expenditures on family consumer products. Men are therefore authority in decision-making and women are considered as really dependent partners. The women are also passive participants in decision making at community level. While there are no legal hurdles to women's involvement in politics, cultural norms have well preserved and portrayal politics as the job for male. In the tradition of the Konkombas, men are highly valued than women and so women may never acquire the self-confidence and independence necessary to strive for power or



exercise it. Culture is therefore affecting women's political demeanor by depriving them of the self-worth required for political leadership.

Respondent did also indicate that in most cases they were not involved in reproductive health decision-making such as in childbearing, fertility and family planning issues. The cultural element of male dominance in decision-making became very obvious in the investigation hence male dominance was strongly established. Consequently, women's power and control over issues that affect their lives is weak in the municipality. The research findings attributed this to a number of factors. These factors include lack of awareness creation, inadequate access to reproductive health information and education. Further concerns included women inadequate understanding and appreciation of reproductive health issues obviously due to lack of education.

5.1.4 Strategies to Address the Gender-Based Inequalities in the Nanumba North

Municipality

To overcome the challenges confronting women in the municipality, respondents suggested that upsetting negative cultural practices through a number of engagements. Regular public sensitizations, encouraging girl-child education, motivating and supporting women financially, and public sensitization on women potentials among others are pragmatic solutions to the entire challenges women struggle with within the municipality. The role of the state they argue is necessary in the planning and implementation of women's social and economic empowerment strategies.



5.2 Conclusion

The researcher drew the following conclusions from the findings of the study and theoretical propositions of the related literature. The study area is educationally backward and so the plight of Konkomba women have been characterized by lack of representation, absence of access to education, excessive male dominance, poverty and the overall disparities associated with the partial treatment of the women in its totality. The creed of womanhood which epitomizes women as mothers and wives is institutionalized to classify perfect/complete and uncharacteristic women. The expected roles of family life and the teaching of young women about their roles as women and women's passive position come together in a that depicts them as nurturers and caregivers as according to tradition and culture. These features are not developed from out of an individual's choice. However, they are developed within the interplay of power in the day-to-day interactions and experiences of women as mothers and wives. These ideas are developed as symbols of power that aim to restrict women in subservient position. This dominant ideology, which is fashioned from patriarchal structures, is visible in all parts of social relations. These gender-based discrimination, marginalization and stereotypes do not only damage women but men as well. There is the need to rethink the idea of what is male or female. Humanity would be better off when men and women could live without these limitations. Men must act in partnership with women to appreciate that gender norms are destructive for both women and men and make efforts to give up patriarchal honors or privileges. Depriving women of their human rights degrades men as human beings. When men and boys embrace the equality of women and girls, the world would become a more just place and we would move from seeing gender equality as a zero-sum game of women versus men to seeing it as good for both men and women.



5.3 Recommendations

The overarching aim of this study was to examine how the existing patriarchal structures of the Konkombas determine/regulate the womanhood of the Konkomba woman in the Nanumba North Municipality. Consequently, the study has come out with some prescriptions to guide policy makers in engendering women friendly interventions so as to influence their roles and positions in the society. The following recommendations are therefore suggested to government, chiefs, youth leaders, parents, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations:

- ❖ Women should be provided with opportunities for leadership training.
- ❖ Re-orientate societal perception about women through organized seminars, training and workshops, adult education as well as introduction of gender studies in the primary, secondary and other tertiary institutions.
- ❖ Scale-up processes that can economically empower women to include among other measures such as women's access to land, property, and technologies and to other means of production and through initiatives such as gender-sensitive budgeting and creating an enabling environment that empowers more women through affirmative action measures to work in the formal sector.
- ❖ Review and amend gender related laws and processes to enforce compliance to guarantee women's access to productive resources and sustainable economic empowerment facilities. Having comprehensive laws without the basic implementation arrangements and resources is not acceptable. The provision of well-coordinated gender responsive facilities is critical so actions must be scaled up to set up entrepreneurial programs and women centered credit institutions or women centered development funds.



- ❖ Enrich the capacity of advocates to enhance the incorporation of gender perspectives in the development process.
- ❖ Incorporate the roles and responsibilities of women in all the processes of community and national development.
- ❖ Organize durbars and use such occasions to raise awareness on the issue of discrimination against women and educate boys and men to view women as valuable partners in the process of socio-economic development towards conditions of equal justice, peace and security are as important as taking legal steps to protect women's human rights.
- ❖ Eliminate customs and traditions that seek to oppress women.
- ❖ Enforce laws that are against forced or early marriage.
- ❖ Enforce laws on compulsory basic education to ensure that all children of school-going age are in school.
- ❖ Take measures to change societal attitudes about the capabilities of women. Not only should mothers teach their daughters and sons about the limitations imposed by stereotypical roles, but fathers should also educate their sons that domestic or household chores are not for women alone, but a shared responsibility. Men and boys are critical allies in the fight for gender equality and must positively engaged at a tender stage.



5.4 Contribution to Literature

The contribution of this research to literature is in twofold. Firstly, the reviewed literature exposed different works that have been carried out on women in the area of fundamental socio-cultural forces such as women oppression, marginalization, child/early betrothal, politics just to

mention a few. Additionally, my experiences as a Konkomba were brought to bear in this study on a wide-range situation of Konkomba women and so the results of this study would lead to further researches focused on the liberation of women.

5.5 Recommendation for Further Research

In the present study, the womanhood of Konkomba women under a patriarchal system has been investigated. This research obtained a general indication of the situation of Konkomba women. This study was however, limited to only three tribal communities due to time and resource constraints. Therefore, further research could be carried out in several other parts (especially in remote areas) of the district with large samples so that the generalizability of the study could be achieved. It is further suggested for extra studies on motherhood and fatherhood to be conducted in order to circumvent imposing hegemonic identities on people's experiences. Such studies may help in linking viewpoints on how rambling images restrain people and limit the realization of their life goal(s). Carrying out research on such specific issues of gender equality could be highlighted in a more detailed way. Above all conducting a Participatory/Community Action Research is required on women empowerment. This approach would permit women, kin group (local social group), community members, and development agencies to participate in the various stages of project design, implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

FACULTY OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AND GENERAL STUDIES

Questionnaire for women respondents

This is an academic research carried out as part of my work towards fulfilling the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy degree in Development Studies. The research is intended to solicit your views and opinions on Patriarchy and Womanhood through a case study of the Konkomba woman in the Nanumba North Municipality of the Northern Region of Ghana. Your responses and views expressed are solely meant for academic purposes. You are hereby assured of utmost confidentiality. Thank you.

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1) Age:

I. 19 and below []

II. 20-29 []

III. 30-39 []

IV. 40-49 []

V. 50-59 []

VI. 60 and above []

2) Educational background

I. None []

I. Basic (Primary, Middle, JHS etc) []



- II. Secondary (SHS, Vocational Inst. Etc) []
- III. Tertiary []
- IV. Any other (please specify) []

(3) Occupation

- I. Farmer []
- II. Trader []
- III. Public Servant []
- IV. Unemployed []
- V. Others (specify) []

4) Marital Status

- I. Single []
- II. Married []
- III. Separated []
- IV. Divorced []
- V. Widowed []

5) Religious Affiliation

- I. Christian []
- II. Traditionalist []
- III. Moslem []

IV. Any other (specify).....

SECTION B: WOMANHOOD DEFINITION

6) Who is an ideal woman?

.....



7) What was your experience in becoming a woman (In transitioning to adulthood)?

.....

8) Do you have a sense of the womanhood (the collective of all women)?

I. Yes []

II. No []

9a) If yes why?

9b) If no why?

10) What are particular women's perceptions about womanhood identity?

.....

11) How would you describe your identity as a woman?

.....

SECTION C: SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN

12) Describe your role as a wife.

.....

13) How is the relationship with the husband? (Do you understand each other?)

.....

14) How would you describe your tribal beliefs through which you were brought up?

15) What socio-cultural factors affect your lives?

16) What socio-cultural factors in your opinion hinder women's representation in public spheres?

.....

17) What in your opinion is the reason for the low representation of women in the public sphere?

.....

18) What will be different if women became equitably represented in our political life?



.....
19) Which aspect of our socialization do you suggest we need to change in order to reverse the current trend of women's participation in the public sphere?.....

20) How will the increased participation of women ensure, enhance, and promote the welfare of women?.....

SECTION D: PATTERN OF RELATIONSHIP RELATING TO POWER, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

21). Who does the following?

A. Childcare

I. Self []

II. Husband []

III. Both []

IV. Others, specify.....

B. Getting rid of household waste

I. women/girls []

II. men/boys []

III. Both []

C. Fetching water

I. women/girls []

II. men/boys []

III. Both []

D. Cleaning the house and the surrounding

I. women/girls []



II. men/boys []

III. Both []

E. Providing residence for family

I. Self []

II. Husband []

III. Both []

IV. Others, specify.....

22) How is the level of cooperation in the family? (when it comes to agricultural production)

.....

23) Would men's household activities/roles involvement within the domestic units affect their socio-economic status?

I. Yes [] II. No []

24) Are you able to take part in decision-making?

I. Yes [] II. No []

25a) If yes can you influence the decisions?.....

25b) If no why?.....

26) Do you think men's opinion has more weight in this community than women's?

I. Yes [] II. No []

37a) If yes why?

37b) If no why?

28) Do you think women leaders can effectively solve the problems of women?

29a) If yes why?

29b) If no why?



30) What is your opinion regarding to decision-making power in a family between men and women?.....

SECTION E: STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

31) What major factors hinder women in the following?

A. Economic Activities

B. Political Participation

C. Social development.....

32) Suggest ways to overcome the challenges of political participation among women.

.....

33) Suggest ways to overcome the economic obstacles women’s encounter in the municipality.

.....

34) Suggest ways to make women active players in social development.

.....



Appendix B

Questionnaire for men respondents

This is an academic research carried out as part of my work towards fulfilling the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy degree in Development Studies. The research is intended to solicit your views and opinions on Patriarchy and Womanhood through a case study of the Konkomba woman in the Nanumba North Municipality of the Northern Region of Ghana. Your responses and views expressed are solely meant for academic purposes. You are hereby assured of utmost confidentiality. Thank you.

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1) Age:

I. 19 and below []

II. 20-29 []

III. 30-39 []

IV. 40-49 []

V. 50-59 []

VI. 60 and above []

2) Educational background

I. Basic (Primary, Middle, JHS etc) []

II. Secondary (SHS, Vocational Inst. Etc) []

III. Tertiary Institution (Coll of Edu., Poly.University etc) []

IV. Any other (please specify) []

3) Occupation

I. Farmer []

II. Trader []

III. Entrepreneur []

IV. Public Servant []

V. Unemployed []

VI. Others (specify) []

4) Marital Status

I. Single []

II. Married []



III. Separated []

IV. Divorced []

V. Widowed []

5) Religious Affiliation

I. Christian []

II. Traditionalist []

III. Moslem []

IV. Any other (specify).....

SECTION B: WOMANHOOD DEFINITION

6) Who is an ideal woman?.....

7) Are women accorded the same respect as men among your tribal people?

I. Yes [] II. No []

8a) If yes why?.....

8b) If no why?

9) How would you describe your wife's identity as a woman?.....

SECTION C: SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN

10) What socio-cultural factors in your opinion hinder women's representation in public spheres?

.....

11) Do you believe that men and women should be equal in social, political and economic spheres?

I. Yes [] II. No []

12a) If yes why?

12b) If no why?

13) What in your opinion is the reason for the low representation of women in the public sphere?

.....

14) What will be different if women became equitably represented in our political life?

.....

15) Which aspect of our socialization do you suggest we need to change in order to reverse the current trend of women's participation in the public sphere?

.....



16) How will the increased participation of women ensure, enhance, and promote the welfare of women?.....

SECTION D: PATTERN OF RELATIONSHIP RELATING TO POWER, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

17) Do you help your wife in domestic chores in the family?

Yes []

No []

If no, why.....

18) Do men and women play different roles in this community?

I. Yes [] II. No []

19) If the answer is Yes, what are the specific roles played by

(a) Women:

(b) Men:

20) State whether you agree or disagree with the following statements on opinions on husband and wife gender role.

A. Men should also be involved in domestic chores

B. Men and women should have equity in making a decision for family affair.....

C. Husband should help his wife for house caring and child rearing

D. Income generation for the household should be done only by husband.....

E. Basic commodities for family member's daily life should be the responsibility of husband and wife

21) Would men's involvement in household/domestic activities lower their socio-economic status?

I. Yes [] II. No []

22a) If yes how?

22b) If no why?.....

23) Do you involve your wife in household decision making process?

(I)Yes [] (II) No []

24a) If yes how would your assess her contribution?.....

24b) If no why?.....

25) Do you think men's opinion has more weight in this community than women's?



I. Yes [] II. No []

26a) If yes why?

26b) If no why?

27) Do you think women leaders can effectively solve the problems of women?

28a) If yes why?

28b) If no why?

29) What is your opinion regarding to decision-making power in a family between men and women?.....

30) In your own view, what role(s) can women play in the following areas in the society;

(a) Politically:

(b) Economically:

(c) Socially:

SECTION E: STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

31) What major factors hinder women in the following?

A. Economic Activities:

B. Political Participation:

C. Social development:

32) Suggest ways to overcome the challenges of political participation among women.
.....

33) Suggest ways to overcome the economic obstacles women’s encounter in the municipality.
.....

34) Suggest ways to make women active players in social development.
.....



Appendix C

Focus group interview guide

This is an academic research carried out as part of my work towards fulfilling the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy degree in Development Studies. The research is intended to solicit your views and opinions on Patriarchy and Womanhood through a case study of the Konkomba woman in the Nanumba North Municipality of the Northern Region of Ghana. Your responses and views expressed are solely meant for academic purposes. You are hereby assured of utmost confidentiality. Thank you.

1. Please tell me your educational backgrounds.
2. What do you currently do?
3. What were your experiences while you were growing up as children, your life in your homes, what your parents and your extended family did to shape your life?
4. What are the traditional roles of women in this community?
5. Can these roles be change?
6. What socio-cultural factors affected/affect your lives?
7. Can you take me through how widowhood rites are performed here?
8. What in your opinion may be the reason behind the low socio-economic status of women?
9. Which aspect of our socialization would you suggest we need to Change in order to reverse the trend of current participation of women?
10. What will be different if women became equitably represented in our political life?
11. What is the perception of women about women in leadership positions in the public sphere?
12. What are your own perceptions about women in leadership positions in the public sphere?
13. In your opinion what do you think is the perception of men about women in the public sphere?
14. How can women be more visible in the public sphere?
15. In your own way, what strategies can we adopt to mitigate the socio cultural structures that affect women?



Appendix D

Interview guide for opinion leaders/chiefs

This is an academic research carried out as part of my work towards fulfilling the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy degree in Development Studies. The research is intended to solicit your views and opinions on Patriarchy and Womanhood through a case study of the Konkomba woman in the Nanumba North Municipality of the Northern Region of Ghana. Your responses and views expressed are solely meant for academic purposes. You are hereby assured of utmost confidentiality. Thank you.

1. What is your role as an opinion leader/chief?
2. Do you consult other women leaders when taking decisions concerning the community?
3. What is the reason the answer given above?
4. As a traditional leader, do you consider the interest of women when taking decisions?
5. What is the position of a woman in the Konkomba culture?
6. Do you encourage girl-child education?
7. What socio-cultural factors affect women in this community?
8. Will you support any effort that seeks to abolish any of the socio-cultural factors that have negative consequences on women?
9. Do you believe in women's empowerment?
10. Do you have any intervention that seeks to empower women?



Appendix E

Interview guide for the gender desk officer

This is an academic research carried out as part of my work towards fulfilling the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy degree in Development Studies. The research is intended to solicit your views and opinions on Patriarchy and Womanhood through a case study of the Konkomba woman in the Nanumba North Municipality of the Northern Region of Ghana. Your responses and views expressed are solely meant for academic purposes. You are hereby assured of utmost confidentiality. Thank you.

1. Can you tell me a little of the overall situation of women in the municipality?
2. Please briefly describe the work you do.
3. What socio-cultural factors affect women in this municipality?
4. What national or legal frameworks seek to promote women's political participation in Ghana?
5. How do you think women's rights can be incorporated into the communities without conflicting with the right to practice traditional laws or practices?
6. How does your work empower women to fight against the subordination of women in the municipality?
7. What roles can government, local actors, international actors, media etc. play to empower women?
8. What problems do you face while working for rural women?
9. What are the necessary interventions to empower your office?



Appendix F

Interview guide for the Municipality Chief Executive

This is an academic research carried out as part of my work towards fulfilling the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy degree in Development Studies. The research is intended to solicit your views and opinions on Patriarchy and Womanhood through a case study of the Konkomba woman in the Nanumba North Municipality of the Northern Region of Ghana. Your responses and views expressed are solely meant for academic purposes. You are hereby assured of utmost confidentiality. Thank you.

1. What is the overall situation of women in this municipality?
2. What socio-cultural factors affect women in this municipality?
3. What policies have you taken to bring young women/girls in politics?
4. What national or legal frameworks seek to promote women's political participation in Ghana?
5. How do you think women's rights can be incorporated into the communities without conflicting with the right to practice traditional laws or practices?
6. What roles can government, local actors, international actors, media etc. play to empower women?
7. How many assemblywomen do you have in the assembly?
8. What percentage of the municipality's budget goes into women's empowerment?
9. Is the percentage adequate?
10. If not what other avenues for funding women's empowerment programmes are available?

