

**STREET BEGGING IN THE TAMALE METROPOLITAN AREA AND ITS
SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECTS ON BEGGARS CHILDREN IN THE
NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA**

BY

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AUGUST, 2016

DECLARATION

Student

I do hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

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ABSTRACT

This research is about the study of street beggars in the Tamale metropolis where some children are used as aides/guides. These aides are sometimes either the (beggars) biological children, children of relatives or hired for the purpose of begging. The study was carried out in the Tamale metropolis. The participants (respondents) in the study were beggars with aides (150), key informants from Tamale metropolitan Assembly and Department of children (3) and members of the public (almsgivers and non-givers) 20. The study is extensively qualitative in nature and data was analysed both manually (content analysis) and with the help of computer software (SPSS version 20). Purposive, sample technique was used to select respondents based on a specific purpose whiles convenience/accidental sampling techniques were used to select subjects who happens to be available, accessible and willing to participate. The study revealed that disability, poverty and cultural beliefs were the main underlying factors which compelled individuals to resort to begging. According to this study, beggars saw themselves as incapable and therefore deserved public sympathy (alms). Hired children accepted begging since they earned a living from it through the motivations and “payments”. Children of relatives under the care of adult beggars enjoy fewer benefits as compared to biological children. From this study, not all almsgivers gave to improve a beggar’s life but to solve their own problems. Non-almsgivers attested that beggars are a nuisance and so do not need any support since some of them own properties. The beggars in this study however reported that they are productive; able to cater for their children’s education and enrolled others into vocational/apprentice trainings with complete support from begging.



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my Parents

&

My wife, Jibbila Wafawu



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Individuals especially the poor and the vulnerable have various strategies of survival. Whiles some engage in simple jobs/trades according to their strength, skills, ability and level of “ableness” to earn a decent income, others simply resign themselves to their fate (poverty or vulnerability) by begging and therefore engage in street begging. “Street beggars” in this study refers to individuals, including children, elderly persons, people with disabilities, and families, who normally beg or make their living from the streets at public spaces such as shopping areas, churches and mosques by openly asking people for money and food. Begging which is also referred to as “panhandling” by Shah (2011) is a situation where people (the needy) openly ask for material benefits (usually money) from other well-to-do people. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Addis Ababa (MOLSA, 1992) as cited in Demezowu (2003) defined begging as a method of earning one's living from the income obtained from other sectors of society using age, health and economic conditions as a means of gaining sympathy. Street begging is a social problem that has become a source of concern to many nations. Begging which was done basically to meet the basic needs of survival has now become a major source of income and a profession to many people. Many urban centres and streets of cities are flooded with beggars; these include women, men, children, the disabled as well as the able-bodied individuals.



Available literature shows that there are various categories of beggars. These are classified as full time and part-time beggars based on their dependence on begging. Fulltime beggars are those who leave their families and go to beg. They do not receive any support from their families or friends and totally depend on begging. Part-time beggars are those who beg in order to provide additional income for the household. The families of this class of beggars provide support and usually discourage the act of begging (Reddy, 2013).

Namwata and Mgabo (2012), in their study grouped beggars based on their activities and their location (the street). They classified beggars into four categories namely, beggars on the streets, beggars of the streets, beggars in the streets, and beggars of street families. The categorisation of the beggars is based on the habitation of the beggars after begging hours and the contacts with their families.

The first category earns money (beg) on the street for themselves and their families. They spend most of the day on the streets begging but they have permanent homes and usually maintain family contacts. They return home to sleep after spending the day on the streets begging. Beggars of the street usually live and sleep on the streets, as such they have loose family contacts. They normally spend some nights or days on the streets but occasionally return home. Beggars in the street completely abandon their families and their immediate communities and are drifted into begging life. This group have no contact with their families or communities. The fourth group of beggars are those born and raised on the streets. Most of them have parents who are beggars. This group of beggars are trapped in the begging cycle with no means of breaking loose. Namwata and Mgabo (2012) in the theory of “vicious circle of poverty” explain the persistence of poverty in the society and indicate that poverty as a subculture passes from one generation to another and institutionalized amongst the



poor. Poverty is one of the characters which prepare the ground for the phenomenon of begging.

There are several reasons why people resort to begging. These may be political, economic, cultural or even social. Politically, people beg when they have no access or cannot afford basic welfare services which are supposed to be provided by governments. Economically, poverty acts as a power radiance that forces people into begging. Certain cultural beliefs also push many people into begging. Socially, most societies see weak people, the elderly, the sick and people with disability as incapable of fending for themselves. Therefore, many people provide economic assistance in the form of alms to these groups of people. Structurally, the environment also makes people with disability beg because of lack of or absence of disability friendly structures (in terms of education, healthcare and workplaces among others). As such, most people with disability feel they cannot function normally without external assistance, hence they resort to begging.

According to Augustina and Ayisha (2013), the term “disability” in Ghana refers to people with physical, intellectual, or sensory impairment and mental illness.

There are various causes of disability. Some occur through road accidents, amputation, and other diseases such as leprosy, measles, and polio. A study by Augustina (2010) reveals that persons with disabilities in Ghana struggle with poverty and disablism in the Ghanaian society. Low societal expectations of their capabilities combined with architectural barriers, lack of access to transportation, lack of information, inadequate education and educational facilities, inadequate medical systems, negative cultural beliefs and practices, and few social welfare benefits propel



persons with disabilities into poverty thereby forcing most of them to resort to street begging with the support and assistance of an aide (who are usually children).

Due to the lucrative nature of begging, certain able-bodied people are also engaged in begging. As observed by Reddy (2013), the larger the number of the population involved in begging, the heavier the burden on the working population and the lesser the availability of active human resource for constructive human development.

The economic and socio-physical implications of begging to the society are numerous. Beggars are found in busy streets meandering their way through high speeding motorists and vehicles begging. According to Jelili (2006), begging has serious implications on national economies because beggars are not economically productive and contribute nothing to the economy.

Inyingidimkpa and Wilcox (2007), assert that the presence of begging results in migration of families from rural to urban places, where they face profound deprivation. It is because of this social problem and pressure on urban areas that begging has been restricted and prohibited in some cases in many developed countries to preserve public order. For instance, in the United States and Canada, there are laws which prohibit panhandling and intimidative begging (Anupma, 2014).

According to Elli (2010), children are the foundation of every nation and the world's better future. The United Nations reported that more than 1 billion children are denied healthy and protected upbringing as promised by the 1989 Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2005, Agya, 2008).

Ironically, child birth in Africa and in Northern region of Ghana in particular is considered a joyous period in the lifetime of families and the society in general. Children are usually welcome with lots of smiles and celebrations both for the new born baby, the mother and the entire family/society. Child birth is such a cherished



moment in families such that couples who are unable to have children are negatively branded (Paul, 2010). Fortes (1960), has commented that the childless Ghanaian is regarded with pity not unmixed with scorn; he or she may be considered a wizard or witch or a victim of demonic forces. Children in African homes are therefore said to be gifts or blessings from God because it is these children who would continue the family tree while at the same time bring unity and happiness to Ghanaian homes. A continues future existence of societies relies in the hands and presence of children. They are believed to be the future of society and therefore needs to be trained well to lead the way. They need to be shown all the abilities, strength and capabilities they posses by parents, relatives or guardians; by helping them to unearth their talent, guiding and protecting them to become responsible adults. However, in spite of the belief in children as the future and bread-winners of “tomorrow”, the future of some children (through motivation among others) is becoming blurred as they are engaged in begging or used as aides to beggars due to certain reasons such as poverty.

1.2 Problem statement

Globally, child protection remains very weak and even worse in developing countries despite the universal ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC, 1989). In principle, all nations have agreed that children should be protected and not abused, trafficked, exploited or exposed to hazardous labour. However, global commitment to creating and sustaining protective environment for children is still very low and unclear in most national policies.



As one of the worst form of child labour (ILO, 2008, Kuchrov, 1980), street begging is also inhumane and an embarrassing activity that children are lured into voluntarily or otherwise (G. Yuva, 2013, Frimpong, 2014, UNICEF cited in Anupma, 2014).

Admittedly, few children participate voluntarily in begging. However, this is due to limited knowledge about the effects of begging. Majority of children participate in begging through persuasion and coercion.

In Ghana and specifically in the Tamale metropolis, the beggar population has increased over the years. The increasing population of beggars is an eyesore and a nuisance as they are highly visible in public spaces, worshipping places, shopping centres, restaurants, on the streets and major transport stations. Not only do they pose danger to themselves, the child aides and motorists but also to pedestrians as they (pedestrians) are forced onto the main roads to escape the “harassment” and “intimidative” begging. Furthermore, it is common phenomenon to see women beggars with babies (at their backs or clinging on their side) with their heads often dangling behind. These babies with their mothers are also often spotted at insanitary places as they bear brunt of the sun’s rays daily resulting in the babies looking pale and sick. Disabled as well as “able-bodied” beggars are also present on the streets. Majority of the beggars use children as aides/guides and to attract sympathy from people (almsgivers). The children provide support in terms of movements and carrying loads and /or babies as well as giving directions to where to actually beg. Consequently, children’s total development is majorly disrupted as their rights are violated; they are abused, denied education, exploited and are even exposed to dangers. They are also denied the basic human right such as love, protection and the right to childhood as they spend their childhood on the streets begging as against the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Children Act of Ghana



which set out to protect the child. The relevant authorities have tried to control and even rid beggars off the streets but due to the influence of religion and culture on it (begging), it appears difficult to actually curb. Due to this, the relevant authorities appear helpless in controlling the phenomenon as it keeps soaring.

This study was therefore carried out in order to gain insights to the begging situation as it manifest in the metropolis, what has been done about it and why beggar's numbers keep soaring in the metropolis in spite of the nuisance, dangers and legal frameworks against it. Aside these, it will also fill an academic gap on the socio-economic effects of begging on child aides and society as well as help the Tamale metropolitan Assembly to better understand the phenomenon of begging and how to deal with it.



1.3 Research Questions

According to Maxwell (2005), research questions reveal the ideas and issues the researcher wants to understand in his or her study. It frames the phenomena of the research and guides decisions about methods. The following questions will therefore guide the study to accomplish the goals of this research:

1.3.1 Main Research Question

What factors compel people to beg and what are the socio-economic effects of begging on beggars' children?

1.3.2 Specific Questions

1. Why do people beg in the Tamale metropolis?
2. How do beggars, aides and the public perceive begging?
3. What factors influence aides to participate in begging?
4. What are the socio-economic effects of begging on child aides?



1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 Main Objective

To identify factors that compel people to beg and to investigate the socio-economic effects of begging on beggars children as well as assesses the positive contribution of begging (if any).

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To find out the main reasons why people beg in the Tamale metropolis
2. To ascertain the perceptions of beggars, their aides and the public regarding begging
3. To unearth what influence aides to participate in begging
4. To examine the socio-economic effects of begging on child aides

1.5 Significance of the study

Wedadu (2013) asserted that in Ghana, it is mostly the media which reports on the subject matter and the nuisance of begging even though various researches have been carried out on the phenomenon of begging. There is however the need to study the socio-economic effects of the activity (begging) on beggars' children in the Tamale metropolis. In the Tamale metropolis, beggars are found in front of shopping centres, major places of worship, transportation centres, at major traffic intersections and sometimes at the entrance of banks. Others are often seen roaming in the suburbs of the metropolis begging. These beggars (some) are often sighted with children guiding



them, taking care of a baby/younger child (as in the case of a begging mother with twins/triplets) or merely participating in begging. This has necessitated the choice of Tamale metropolis for this study. The study therefore will unearth and provide vital information about the factors which influence people to beg on the streets, thus contributing to existing knowledge in this area. This knowledge will help the Tamale metropolitan Assembly to better understand the phenomenon of begging and how to deal with it.

1.7 Scope of the study

The study focused on street begging in the Tamale metropolis. The research therefore covered issues of why people resort to begging, what necessitates the involvement and use of children as aides, the perception of beggars, aides and the public regarding begging and the socio-economic effects of begging on beggars' children.



1.8 Organization of the Study

This research work is organized into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction which deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, justification/relevance and delimitations of the study. The second chapter deals with the review of related literature on street begging and aides in begging among others. The research methodology is chapter three which reports on the strategies of inquiry and methods by which data was collected, reported, analyzed and discussed in chapter four. Finally, the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations is captured in chapter five.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Literature review is an essential component of any scientific research since it provides the basis upon which a study will be built and also streamlined. The purpose of literature review is to situate the research in the context of what is already known about the topic. This study therefore reviewed books, journals, articles and newspapers related to the phenomenon of begging and streamlined with stated objectives.

Definition of Key Terms

Children of beggars/Beggars children (used interchangeable) refer to all types of children under the care of the beggars. These children may be grouped into two categories in this study: biological and non biological children. The non-biological children are made up of the children of relatives and hired children.

Biological children are the children born and raised by beggars and who benefit (directly / indirectly) from the proceeds of begging. These children may or may not participate in the begging activities.

Relative's children are the children of family members of the beggars. This group of children also benefits from the activities of begging and also takes part in the begging activities



Hired children are the children beggars hire to assist them in their begging activities.

There is usually an agreement between the adult beggar and the child in terms of payment and other benefits.

These children are made to provide support to the adult beggars in terms of movement from one begging spot to another, carrying loads (food stuff given to the beggars) as well as their babies (biological and or hired) and identifying and directing the blind beggars to potential begging spots

Socio-economic effects refer to various social and economic factors which impact positively or negatively on children's wellbeing such as education, health, family life, skills and living conditions.

2.2 Conceptual frameworks on Begging

The act of begging has received different and mixed reactions globally especially, under the ambit of the law, from the society and the citizenry as well as from the beggars themselves. The phenomenon of begging has various categorisations which legally and morally defines the space in which the activity takes place and the category of people who engage in it over time (Erskine and McIntosh, 1999). In the Tamale metropolis for instance, the phenomenon and operation involving begging is influenced by religious and traditional (moral) values of the society (Weiss, 2007).

Available literature reveals that begging is conceptualized as a coping or survival strategy of a category of vulnerable persons (Abebe, 2008) and as a form of employment or occupation, merely from the interpretation of the beggars (Kassah, 2009) and the public (Dean, 1999). As a profession, Dean (1996) sees begging as an 'extremely hazardous' work. According to him 'people who beg risk violence and



predation' from passers-by and other people who earn a living from the streets. Perhaps, this is the reason why Mortimer (2005), reported sexual harassment of female beggars as one of the major dangers of street begging. Other problems he highlighted were forced relocation (driven from one location to another) and exposure to the vagaries of the weather. The 'extremely hazardous' and dangerous nature of begging is evident in Ghana especially, Tamale. Beggars and their aides (mostly children) meander dangerously through vehicles and motorcycles seeking for alms.

Mijinyawa (2001) perceives begging as a derogatory habit brought about by unrestricted movement of the people engaged in the act. Yet begging is regarded by Horn and Cooke (2001) as an income supplement necessary for survival but related to addictive behaviours or the need for food, accommodation and health.

Perceptions about child begging from the perspective of the law and the society are varied across the world. Though it has not been explicitly conceptualized in terms of the universal child rights law (the CRC) (Cherneva, 2011), the International Labour Organization (ILO) categorizes child begging as a worst form of child labour (ILO, 2008; Kuchrov, 1980). The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) on its part has explicitly made reference to child begging and prohibited the use of children in all forms of begging. In the open literature, child begging is sometimes discussed in terms of child labour; highlighting its hazardous and exploitative nature even though others relate it to child trafficking, especially when it involves organized and forced migrations (Cherneva, 2011, EC, 2010; Save the Children 2011).

In the Tamale metropolis, it is not only "strangers/foreigners" who are engaged in the act of begging but also the indigenes/natives. Individuals from the metropolis, surrounding communities, neighbouring regions and countries make up the population



of the beggars in the metropolis. Locally, beggars are addressed by many names in Africa even in the same country. In Nigeria for instance, the Hausa people refer to beggars as ‘Alimajiri’; whereas the Ibo and Yoruba people call them ‘Onyearirio’ and ‘Onibara’ respectively (Yusuf et al.,2012). In the Tamale metropolis of Ghana where the dominant dialect is Dagbanli, beggars are called “barimaansi” (“barimanga” for singular).

In conceptualizing begging, this study discussed the varied understandings of the activity as an economic venture or survival strategy between beggars on one hand and its socio-economic effects on their biological children, hired children and children of relatives under their care on the other hand.

The theoretical framework of this study hinges on Oscar Lewis’s theory of the culture of poverty and Alport’s theory. Lewis’s theory of the culture of poverty indicates that poverty as a subculture passes from one generation to another and becomes institutionalized among the poor and forms the characteristics which prepare the ground for the phenomenon of begging. Some of these characteristics are:

1. Non-participation in public activities
2. Low level of associations and lack of voluntary associations
3. Feeling of anonymity in the urban society, social isolation and tendency towards hermitage.
4. Suffering from some chronic illnesses and sometimes malingering
5. Lack of professional skills.
6. Experiencing long-term unemployment periods (Lewis, 1998 cited in Ahamdi, 2010)



7. Existence of some spiritual and psychological characteristics such as low self esteem; weak self – concept; tendency towards indolence, lack of cognitive psyche; feeling of incapability; dependence on others and the feeling of unworthiness (Ahmadi, 2003 cited in Ahamdi, 2010).

In examining people's attitudes towards the phenomenon of begging, the theory of Alport (1935) was used. Based on this theory, the attitude of almsgivers and non-almsgivers towards begging was examined (be it positive or negative orientation). According to Alport, peoples' attitude and behaviour towards social phenomena (such as begging) is measurable in three dimensions: cognitive or perceptual (the awareness and knowledge of people towards the phenomenon of begging), emotional (pleasant or unpleasant feeling towards helping beggars) and action tendency (tendency toward helping beggars) (Baron & Byrne, 1978 cited in Ahamdi, 2010).

2.3 Factors that influence begging

Several factors influence various categories of individuals to resort to begging. A study by Wedadu (2013) revealed that begging in Ghana and in particular Tamale, is largely regulated and influenced by social norms (values) rooted in religion and culture. Like many problems embedded in societal norms and values, begging as it manifests in Tamale is multifaceted. In Ghana, begging is recognized as a problem by the state as reflected in the legal framework of the country; Control of Beggars and Destitutes Ordinance, 1957 and Beggars and Destitute Decree 1969-National Liberation Council Decree, 392 (cited in Weiss 2007, Wedadu 2013). However, at the societal level (generally perceived to be devaluing, stigmatizing and unacceptable),



begging appears to be permissible (at least) for certain group of people. For instance, it is seen as a legitimate activity for the most vulnerable (the poorest, the aged and the disabled) in the society. People with disability are usually those who are deaf, dumb, blind, crippled and mentally retarded. Observations have revealed however that it is not only these groups of people considered to be vulnerable that engage in begging. The act is practiced by various kinds of people including the able bodied, for different reasons. In fact, the reasons why people offer money or alms to beggars vary as well; for example, there are those who give alms out of pity for the beggars and those who offer the alms and expect spiritual reward and yet others who give to solve their own problems. Whatever the reasons, the acts of begging and giving alms to beggars appear to be guided by certain key norms and values rooted in religion and culture. Consequently, despite the fact that by law it is illegal to engage or even involve children in begging, the practice is tolerated and 'legitimized' by cultural and religious beliefs of the society.

The Tamale metropolis is predominantly a Muslim society as such the conduct and behaviour of the people are to a large extent regulated by Islamic values and moral ethos (Wedadu, 2013). In principle, Islam allows 'controlled begging' (Quran, 9:60). Thus, the very needy who have no alternative source of livelihood are allowed to beg for what they need to survive for just a day. These people are however encouraged to wean themselves off begging as early as possible as it dehumanizes and lowers the status of a Muslim. Muslims are encouraged to strive and work hard to obtain their means of livelihood. They are also encouraged to support (in kind or cash) the needy, poor and destitute in the society in order to obtain rewards from Allah. Therefore, Islam accepts begging as a last resort and preserve of the disabled, vulnerable and the extremely poor persons in society. The practical difficulty here is that this daily



restriction cannot be enforced given the nature of the act and the society. Furthermore, who determines who is vulnerable, destitute or extremely needy and as such qualified to beg? Finally, it is difficult for people to cease begging after earning their daily survival needs as stipulated by Islam. Muslims are expected to be guided to comply with Allah's directive and to accept laws and regulations. This act of submission to the will, guidance and regulations of Allah was expected to be regulated by checks and balances for Muslims who would engage in begging as a last resort. However, what was instituted and tolerated but regulated to solve some societal problems has rather become a nuisance to society due to the greed of people.

Aside Islam, which allows for the destitute in society to seek for alms in order to meet their daily survival needs, other traditional (cultural) norms and beliefs also encourage people to engage in begging in the Tamale metropolis (Wedadu, 2013). Wedadu reported that majority of beggars (both the disabled and the abled) justify the act of begging on the basis of Islamic teachings (almsgiving; Sara in the native language) although others (mothers with twins/triplets) cite beliefs embedded in the tradition and culture of the society. Even those who give alms to the beggars have these beliefs. For instance, Wedadu (2013) captured a 44 year old male almsgiver as saying that:

'The mothers with twins are on the street begging because they believe that the twins want to be used to beg. For many families, twins are special creatures whose desires and wishes must be met else misfortune will befall the family. So on many occasions, when these children are born and usually fall sick, consultations with traditionalists or spiritual leaders may reveal that they want the mother to send them out to the streets to beg. The mother has to oblige otherwise they may not heal or may even cause lots of misfortunes in the family'.



A 28 year old woman beggar with twins had this to say;

“My children fell sick soon after birth. They would not recover after administering medicine from the hospital. We then decided to send them to a native doctor who could help. My husband’s relatives therefore directed that I take them to begging to save the lives of my children. Initially I refused but after a while a spiritualist told me that I have no choice but to go out there and comply with the instructions of my in-laws; I did so and after sometime, my children got well” (GNA 2013, retrieved on 15th May, 2015).

Alms givers in the Tamale metropolis also differ usually depending on the rationale behind the offerings. Some consider giving alms as part of a religious duty. This group of people give alms of any amount, relative to what they have (income), to any disabled and vulnerable person seeking for financial and material assistance in order to fulfil religious obligation of catering for the poor and the destitute. Based on the religious requirements of alms giving, beggars may be profiled into genuine and fraudulent ones. There are also those who give alms (Sara) in order to avert misfortunes or to increase their fortunes. The rationale behind the offerings of this group of people may be rooted in the teachings and directives of some diviners, fortune tellers, herbalist or soothsayers sometimes referred to collectively as ‘mallams’. It is imperative to clarify some issues or misconceptions about the word ‘Mallams’.



2.4 Misapplication of ‘Mallam’

The word ‘Mallams’ in this context may be deceptive; the word is a Hausa term for a scholar, specifically an Islamic scholar. Since not every Islamic scholar is a diviner or fortune teller, this generalised use of the word is inappropriate. However, writers who are mostly unfamiliar with Islamic teachings, hence lack the appropriate words to describe such people use the word Mallams but put in inverted commas. In Dagbanli, an Islamic scholar is called an ‘Affa or Afa’. A person who has some Islamic knowledge but indulges in divinity or fortune telling as well as treating people with preparations and concoctions are also referred to as ‘Afa Tibrigu’. ‘Tibrigu’ is from the root word ‘Tibbu’, which may mean dubious ways. This group of people are called ‘Afa Tibrisi’ plural for ‘Afa Tibrigu’ because the society understands that Islam prohibits divination and fortune telling. Therefore, any Islamic scholar who engages in such divinity is labelled as an Islamic scholar with dubious ‘ways and means’, thus dubious ‘Mallam’ in Hausa and dubious ‘Afa’ hence the name ‘Afa Tibrigu’ in Dagbanli.

Therefore, individuals who seek material wealth, high position and prestige or desire to avert some kind of misfortune usually consult with some of these diviners, fortune tellers, soothsayers and ‘Afa Tibrisi’ who, after assessing their situations, usually direct their clients to give specific monetary or material gifts to particular kinds of the poor and the destitute (beggars) in the society. This phenomenon of people begging with the hope of receiving alms from benevolent wealth, prestige and power seekers as directed by the so called “mallams” is portrayed in a novel by a Senegalese political satirist, Aminata Sow Fall (*The Beggars’ Strike*, 1985).



Beggars, almsgivers and begging

A brief synopsis of the story as illustrated by Emmanuel Sarpong (Modern Ghana; 07/11/2011 retrieved on 18/08/2015) is set in a Muslim dominated African community where people, particularly powerful and affluent figures are required by their religion and their 'marabouts' (holy men/'mallam'/ spiritual advisers) to give alms or gifts to beggars and poor people. As revealed in the novel, the capital city in the story is flooded with filthy beggars who are called unfortunate names such as 'dregs of society', 'conglomeration of humanity', 'a running sore that must be kept hidden', etc. Though a story, this phenomenon of beggars branded with such names manifests itself even in real life situations as the major cities in the country are flooded with these beggars.

The story unfolds with a "public figure's" ambition of seeking power (vice presidency). Together with his competent assistant, they zealously rid the city's streets of beggars through constant intimidation, beatings and repeated imprisonment. Upon consulting a "marabout" (a holy man, a "mallam" or a spiritual adviser), he is told that his chances of becoming the Vice President will be enhanced only if he gives certain gifts to real beggars in their customary locations. Unfortunately on the part of the power seeker to rise to the position, all the beggars had vacated the streets following their persecution. The novel further unfolds as civil servants, prestige/power seekers, wealth seekers and businessmen whose success depends on regular charitable gestures to beggars and the poor begin to panic. Paradoxically, the so-called alms givers or donors now need the beggars more than the beggars needed them. This ties with Wedadu (2013) study which indicated that some people give out to beggars in order to solve their own problems and not just as a benevolent gesture extended to the poor:





“Some people give out to the beggars to solve their own problems. I for instance, when I have a problem or wish to get something, I usually consult my “Mallam” and based on his assessment of my situation, he will ask me to give such and such to so and so person. He can ask me to give say GHC 20.00 or pieces of white and red cola nuts or a mixture of rice, millet, corn etc to say a blind woman, or a mother with male twins etc. Once I do that, my problem may be solved or my wish will be granted (Quoted in Wedadu, 2013).

These cultural and religious practices therefore exacerbate the problem of begging as it manifest in the metropolis.

Available literature shows that the reasons why most people beg are economic in nature (Alexander 2008, Osiki 1999, Phelan, Bruce, Moore and Estueve 1997). For instance, majority of the beggars in the Tamale metropolis are vulnerable people (the disabled and the aged). These people have lost hope of living on their own earnings without depending on the society for their survival. With little or no capacity to engage in any economic activities and without support from the state or family, many vulnerable and disabled persons resort to begging for their livelihood. Almost all the beggars, particularly, the blind, the crippled and women with children among others employ the services of children as aides. The blind use these children as guides, some cripples in their tricycle are being pushed by children while they carry the children or babies (one of a twin/triplet) of the women beggars. Hence, children become partners to adult beggars.

Street begging has become an embarrassing social phenomenon across all nations. In Nigeria for example, people with disabilities flood the streets seeking and soliciting

for alms from passers-by, motorists, cyclists, foreigners and the general public (Olawale, 2007). Begging has assumed a serious dimension in African cities and Ghana is no exception particularly, the Tamale metropolis (Konkola, 1998). Perhaps, these are caused by the attitude of society towards people with disabilities; they are usually abandoned or over-protected. This attitude creates a negative mental posture of total dependency on other people. Other writers linked begging to sociological conditions like poverty, lack of education, under-privilege and homelessness (Phelan et al., 1997; Osiki, 1999).

Begging by people living with disabilities may be understood from four dimensions (Olawale, 2007). Some disabled persons are forced into begging due to their circumstance; this is categorised as begging for survival (survival begging). Secondly, other disabled persons beg not necessarily for survival, but because it is permitted as a norm for disabled persons (permitted begging). Some disabled persons also beg because they were introduced (by parents, guardians, or models) into it; they learnt and continue to beg (introduced begging). Lastly, some disabled persons beg because they are psychologically conditioned to do so due to lower self-esteem, lower achievement or lower motivation (psychological begging). The act (begging) is so pervasive in Africa particularly the Tamale metropolis that vulnerable people and some disabled persons, in some instances children who ought to be in the schools, roam the streets begging for alms (Olawale, 2007; Ammani, 2010). The menace and the threat begging poses to African societal fabric is obvious (Ammani, 2010) but appears unstoppable. For the Tamale metropolis, the threat is not just on the societal fabric but on socio-economic development because the streets are flooded not only with the disabled and the vulnerable but some able-bodied and healthy people begging (Jelili, 2010). This phenomenon (where able-bodied and healthy people beg) as



manifested in Tamale is not only limited to the Metropolis or Ghana and Africa for that matter. Available literature shows that norms (given permission to the poor to beg) and belief systems (such as deifying twins/triplets) in societies world-wide have laid the foundations for it. Beggars have been categorised into two broad groups: deserving (genuine) and undeserving (false) beggars due to the increasing number of beggars. The disabled persons who beg are generally seen as the most deserving (genuine) because of the physical evidence of their vulnerability. They are considered to be handicapped and powerless and therefore elicit more sympathy from the general public than the other (undeserving) beggars (Wedadu, 2013). In the Tamale metropolis, women beggars with twins or triplets even though not disabled, are also visible and are able to attract the attention and sympathy of the public because people of the metropolis culturally understand the plight of such women.

Therefore, the perceptions (the norms and values associated with) on disability in Africa, the Ghanaian society and the Tamale metropolis in particular, create (legitimizes) a socially acceptable basis for begging by the disabled though begging is legally forbidden and economically unacceptable.

2.5 Begging as an illegal survival strategy punishable by law

The phenomenon of begging cuts across many countries. However, the culture in countries like Finland has virtually no experience with begging. The recent influx of beggars therefore caught the people off-guard, and when beggars ask people for money and other material gifts, they seem to oblige. According to Han (2008), people aren't accustomed to begging, and the beggars make a lot of money. There are no laws against begging in Finland, and as long as the beggars do not abuse the Finnish social



security system, or commit crimes, they cannot be deported. As news of begging life spreads so does the influx of beggars as it is expected to increase. However, as people become more accustomed to begging, the amount of money the beggars earned began to decrease. This is because people have realised that giving is not the solution to the beggars needs and this led to beggars harassing especially older people for alms, as they tend to be more sympathetic towards them (Han, 2008).

Even though states like Finland does not prohibit begging (as there are no laws against it) (Han, 2008), Ghana as a nation state has taken a negative position with regards to begging as early as the 1950's (Weiss, 2007). Both the colonial state and subsequently the Ghanaian state had rigorous posture towards beggars and poor people. In the colonial and postcolonial era, begging was outlawed by state authorities as an offence, and this position was solidified through the law. Governor C.N. Arden-Clarke signed the Control of Beggars and Destitutes Ordinance in March 1957. This ordinance was valid until it was replaced by the 1969 Beggars and Destitutes Decree, which is still in force. The two texts contained in both the Ordinance and the decree declared begging as an offence and clearly stated that a beggar will be liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment (Weiss, 2007). The 1969 Beggars and Destitutes Decree further states that any person who permits or encourages another person to commit such an offence could be arrested and will be liable on conviction to either a fine or imprisonment or both. Worse for the potential offender, the decree even outlawed the intention to beg and this was contained in both the Ordinance and the Decree. That is someone wandering or placing him/herself in a premises or place for the purpose of begging was already regarded as an offender.



With regard to this decree (1969 beggars and destitute decree), the responsible Ghanaian authorities seems to have forgotten that begging or even encouraging another person to do so is liable for punishment as people “seem to be allowed” to beg irrespective of the fact that the law forbids it. Could it be that the authorities responsible are not aware of such a law? Acts of involving children are against the rights of the children and not only the national laws but the international legal frameworks as well.

For instance, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (Article 29b) to which Ghana is a signatory (prohibits using children in all forms of begging) and a number of ILO (2008) conventions and Protocols on child labour; as well as National laws such as the 1992 Constitution, the Children’s Act of Ghana (1998), and the Child Rights Regulation, 2002, LI1705 all prohibit the engagement of children in any form of labour (cited in Wedadu, 2013). In the Tamale metropolis, the beggars do not only break the law by begging but also infringe upon the rights of children (biological, family member/relative or hired for the purpose of begging) as they participate either willingly or unwillingly as aides to carry out this low self esteem, devaluing and stigmatising activity. Children who ought to be in school are contracted to push/ walk them (lead) on the part of the disabled beggar or assist in carrying a baby as they engage in begging.

The insights of the 1957 Ordinance as cited in Weiss (2007) has been replicated in the 1969 Ordinance as it presents the definition of a destitute person as:

“Any person found wandering about and unable to show that he has any settled place of abode or any employment or visible and sufficient means of subsistence and any



defective found neglected or abandoned shall be deemed to be a destitute” (Weiss, 2007).

The prohibition of begging by the Ghanaian legislation has posed a problem to many who are genuine paupers, disabled, destitute and vulnerable. As already discussed, these categories of persons are allowed to beg for what they need to enable them survive in a day. However, both the Ordinance and the Decree made provision to beg by way of soliciting or receiving alms in accordance with a religious custom or the custom of a community. In the light of these, both Christian and Muslim religious leaders alike agree that neither Christianity nor Islam promotes begging but rather encourages its adherents to strive and work hard for a better livelihood. This provision does make it difficult to control the phenomenon of begging as genuine and fraudulent beggars all lay their claim to seek alms in accordance with religious custom.

2.6 Religious perspectives on almsgiving

The ‘Christian-Muslim Sphere’

According to Weiss (2007) alms/giving is practised among many societies and not particularly Christian or Muslim philanthropic communities. It is a private act of compassion found all over the world. Christian and Muslim societies have much in common such as the act of giving alms as encouraged in their teachings and practices. This practice of almsgiving is recommended but not obligatory as it is seen as a form of piety. Weiss further opined that a further comparison between the Christian and Islamic doctrines on almsgiving reveals some clear differences in the understanding of giving and receiving. Whereas the mandatory aspect of almsgiving is not as visible



in Christian doctrines, Islam makes a normative distinction between obligatory and voluntary alms (Weiss, 2007). However, though alms/giving is an obligation that constitutes one of the five pillars of Islam, it is difficult to present a clear-cut definition. The main reason for the ambiguity of the term is that there are two ways in which almsgiving is interpreted in Islam, namely as zakāt or obligatory alms, and sadaqa (“sara”) or voluntary alms. Zakāt is commonly defined as a form of charity, almsgiving, donation, or contribution, but when these activities are arbitrary and voluntary actions, they are merely regarded as sadaqa (alms).

One must further distinguish between the moral obligation and the pious act when one discusses the difference between the two kinds of almsgiving in Islam. Zakāt is a moral obligation and becomes a tax for the Muslims in an Islamic state whereas sadaqa is a pious act by an individual and never has any collective connotations. However, zakāt is paid through the state, never as a tax to the state, i.e., the role of the state is to monitor the distribution of zakāt but the state may not itself use the incomes of zakāt for any purpose not specified in the Qur’ān. A common interpretation among Muslim jurist-cum-scholars is that 2½ percent of one’s income and wealth (and between 5 and 10 percent of one’s harvest) should be given to the poor and needy as zakāt (Weiss, 2007).

As revealed by Richard Finn (The meanings of Christian almsgiving), alms giving is usually featured as an exchange of material for spiritual gifts whereby the food or money given by the rich are reciprocated by the prayers of the poor. It is further specified in the Bible that “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work...” (II Corinthians 9:7-8).



2.7 Factors that influence children to beg

Globally, a variety of issues that push children to resort to begging have been reported (Anupma, 2013). One of such issues is extreme poverty. Most children who beg independently (without any parent, adult partner or guardian) do so because their parents are extremely poor; that is if the families they come from are below the poverty line. Parents in such families are usually the ones who choose begging for their children. This confirms the observations of Alexander (2008), Osiki (1999), Phelan et al., (1997) which identified economic reason as one of the reasons why individuals resort to begging. The earnings by the child through begging are used to support the family financially. Their involvement in begging is only to provide additional income for the household. Others may have lost their parents or may have been abandoned. Such children think they do not have any alternative than to resort to begging. Furthermore, just as in adult beggars, religious approval also makes some children beg. In India for instance, seeking and giving alms has the approval of all the major religions and people regard it as an opportunity to do “punya” (good, righteousness, virtue) (Anupma, 2013). Similarly, in Ghana and specifically the Tamale metropolis, children who engage in begging use the dominant religion (Islam) to seek alms. They use the name of God/Allah to solicit for alms generally and on specific days (Fridays and Sundays) at specific places (Major Jummah Mosques and Churches). The situation in the Tamale metropolis where beggars target certain days and places to beg is similar to what pertains in India (Anupma, 2014) where Tuesdays and Saturdays are targeted days for the temples of Lord Hanuman and Sai Baba. On Monday they seek alms near Shiva temples. The very act of giving alms also makes some children beg; naturally, people are distressed and pity children who beg for food or money hence they give alms to them. However, this humanitarian act may



encourage children to take up begging as a profession. Though some families may force or encourage their children to go and beg for alms, Alexander (2008) in his study also identified poverty among other issues; mobility needs, lack of education and employable skills as well as employment avenues as factors that account for the decision to engage in begging.

Another reason may be that the child may be an orphan and thus encouraged to beg by the other children or the families that are already into begging (Generation Yuvaa, 2013). Most children who are orphaned and do not receive any form of support from their extended family members in terms of basic needs are easily drawn into begging. This group of beggars are what Reddy (2013) categorised as full time beggars for they totally depend on begging. Conflict in any human establishment is an inevitable part of life. It can either be waged constructively or destructively. It abounds in all families as individuals have different opinions and interest. If not managed well (family level), it can tear families apart and is one of the causes of many divorces resulting in broken homes. Sometimes the child may have conflict with his/her parents and may run away from home and is directed into begging. Often, children who are unable to handle academic pressure from their parents may run away from their family and later engage in begging to support themselves (Generation Yuvaa, 2013).

In Ghana and specifically the Tamale metropolis, there has not been any recording of begging operated by an organised group even though it exists elsewhere (India). This organised group (gang) usually buys or rent the children and use them for begging hence the children get involved in the vicious circle and often find it impossible to break out. As explained by Namwatta and Mgabo (2012), poverty as a subculture



passes from one generation to another and becomes institutionalized amongst the poor.

2.7.1 Forms of child begging

Child begging as a social canker has become a topical issue in many countries globally especially in developing countries such as Ghana. Within the Tamale metropolis, native children engaging in active begging are a rare phenomenon as they constitute an insignificant population of the child beggars. However, child beggars from neighbouring countries are common to come across.

According to a study by Generation Yuvaa (2013), there are certain patterns that are observed in child begging. Some category of children who are engaged in begging directly beg for money and other material gifts from the public while others are used as a medium for begging. As observed in the Tamale metropolis, a mother-child begging is evident where a mother is seen carrying a child who is either conscious or unconscious as the child is often rented for begging. Generation Yuvaa (2013) opines that some of the children used for begging are made unconscious by giving them some drugs which makes them unconscious and then used to beg from people to be used for their recovery as well as to take them to hospital. This act of “drugging” children has not been witnessed or recorded in the Tamale metropolis but is practiced among some beggars in India (Generation Yuvaa, 2013). Such children who are usually drugged by their adult partners are not the adult partner’s biological children. They are either “purchased” from poor families or kidnapped from different places. Many of these children die or lose their mental balance due to this regular “poisoning” (drugging). This practice of kidnapping or “purchasing” children for the purposes of



begging has not been witnessed in the metropolis of Tamale. But there is evidence of children hired for the purposes of begging in Tamale;

“I don’t like begging. I get tired everyday walking around the streets with the beggar. Some people insult us and some will just ignore us. Sometimes I feel discouraged and ashamed but I have to continue because, through this, I get money to support myself. We also send money and foodstuff to my parents every month to help support the family. I chose to come to Tamale with him. I come from Bongo in the Upper East Region. When he was looking for a child to guide him, I told my parents I could go with him so as to support them and my younger siblings” (child beggar quoted in Wedadu, 2013).

Another pattern/form of child begging is where the child begs directly by amusing people; that is by putting up “shows” (performing certain tricky acts like walking on a rope etc). Some of the children amuse people alone without any external assistance while others do it with the help of an animal such as a monkey. Another pattern common in India is where a child paints himself like Gandhi and asks for money (Generation Yuva, 2013).

Also, a common form of child begging as observed in the Tamale metropolis is where children with minor handicaps use it as an opportunity to seek for alms. The traffic lights and major shops like Melcom, Quality first and Forsmuel shopping centres located in the city are usually the places where such children are found. In many developing countries/cities, being physically handicapped is a license to beg and Tamale metropolis is one of such cities. Most of the times, children who beg pretends to be handicapped while in actual facts they are not. It is a commonly observed



phenomenon in the metropolis that some disabled children of any form visit places of worship and seek for alms after worship (especially in the mosques). Other times children are forced to lose their limbs to become disabled so that they can be a medium for begging throughout their life (cited in Anupma, 2014). These kinds of atrocities (not yet observed in the metropolis) are usually done by certain gangs that operate in begging. Religion is also used as a medium for begging by children where the child is either in attire that represents certain religion or the child is seen carrying photos of gods while begging.

2.8 Grooming children into begging

“The people I beg with are many. If someone brings his mother or father I can go with them to make some money. It is scary moving in traffic but would you rather go hungry?” (quoted in Betty/citifmonline.com/Ghana, 2013 retrieved on 18th May, 2015).

The children who accompany beggars as aides/guides may seem like they are the adult beggars’ biological children but in reality, some of them (children) are business partners who pose as sons and daughters of the beggars in order to earn the sympathy of potential alms givers. Child begging may be largely due to the society’s understanding of the role of children (generational interdependence). As opined by Arhinful (2003), the people of Tamale live on the kinship social protection system which requires productive members of the family to lend support to non-productive members for the general welfare of the family. The disabled and the vulnerable are generally regarded as the most unfortunate in the Tamale metropolis, requiring



physical, emotional, psychological and monetary support from the society. Children therefore serve as major suppliers of such support. They run errands for the disabled and the vulnerable and support them to carry out their daily activities which sometimes include begging.

The nature of begging adopted by majority of the beggars with children as aides in the Tamale metropolis may be described as active and passive forms of begging (Dean, 1999; Delap, 2009; EC, 2012; Save the Children, 2011; Wedadu, 2013). Usually, with the support of child aides, beggars move from place to place asking for alms (money). Others are positioned at vantage locations such as the 'Barimansi line' (Beggars lane). Child aides used for begging are usually trained over extended periods. In this sense, 2 to 3 children could be seen guiding one beggar either at the same time or interchangeably (at different times of the day); those brought in to learn the rudiments of the activity as asserted by Wedadu (2013), the role of the child is to guide his/her adult partner from one vehicle to the other. The beggar then recites some incantations and prays for God's blessings on the potential alms giver. They do this before and after the receipt of money or other forms of support in the early hours of the day (starting on average at 8:00 am). This sort of child labour is unacceptable as ILO (2008) describes it as the worse form of child labour.



2.9 Days of Begging; "working days and retirement"

Just like any work, begging has working days. In fact, every day of the week is a working day for majority of the beggars in Ghana. In the formal sector, workers work averagely for eight hours each day from 8:00am to 5:00pm. Wedadu (2013) points out that an average fulltime beggar works approximately 10 hours a day (70 hours a week)

starting from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm daily. This confirms the claim of Frimpong (Ghanaweb 2014 retrieved on 27th May, 2015) that beggars are the most punctual and diligent “civil” workers in Ghana. In the Tamale metropolis however, some beggars usually begin work as early as 5:00 am, especially around the various bus terminals and close by 6:00pm. They work from Monday to Sunday, barely missing a day in the job (Frimpong, 2014). Most of these beggars do so not because they are in need but because they have come to accept it as a profession. No matter the amount of money these beggars make in a day, they will continue to beg (Frimpong, 2014). Therefore, it is safe to say that the beggars are just exploiting the generosity of the people of the metropolis and the weakness in the Ghanaian laws. The streets, bus terminals and other targeted places shall continue to be their enterprises for many years to come because these beggars simply do not retire; they die on the job (begging). The older they get, the better it becomes for their business because people are likely to have compassion for older beggars.

2.10 Average daily earnings of a beggar

The cash earnings as well as material gifts given to aides and their families influence their commitment and level of participation in the begging activity. If more is given, the aide increases his/her adherence to begging and vice versa. Weiss (2007) disclosed that on average, a beggar could make about seven Ghana cedis (GH¢7.00) daily. This is when the business is good but even on a bad business day, a beggar could get about two cedis and fifty pesewas (GH¢2.50ps) (figures stated in new Ghana cedis). Weiss further indicated that it is good business since it is non-taxable and every bit of the money belongs to the individual. In view of this, rumours that some beggars own houses, taxis and other properties could be true. The absence of



proper law enforcement agencies, encourages more persons (destitute/vulnerable, disabled as well as the able bodied) who are not cared for, to seek economic shelter in begging. The average daily earning of beggars on a typical day according to Wedadu (2013) is estimated at ten Ghana cedis (Gh¢ 10.00) even though some make up to twenty Ghana cedis (Ghc 20.00) or more. On a bad day however, they make about seven Ghana cedis (Gh¢ 7.00); which is above the daily minimum wage of six Ghana cedis (Gh¢ 6.00) of the Ghanaian formal worker in 2014 (myjoyonline.com, 2014) but equal to the current minimum wage of seven Ghana cedis (GH¢ 7.00) (mywage.org/Ghana, 2015). Out of this amount, some of the hired child aides are given Gh¢ 1.00 for lunch plus Gh¢ 2.00 or less depending on how good or bad a day is. Yet, some amount of money and foodstuffs are periodically sent directly to the immediate families of the hired child aides. Child beggars in India are reported to earn between 20 to 100 rupees everyday. Furthermore, a study conducted in Albania showed that families with multiple children begging earn 15 Euros a day, an amount greater than the average teacher's income (Anupma, 2014).

2.11 Forcing children to beg; a form of child labour

Some parents/guardians engage their children in various forms of labour. Some of these engagements are to train and ensure proper upbringing of the child (such as washing clothing and utensils, weeding around the house and other minor activities). However, most children are coerced to participate in activities which are beyond their capacity or strength. In Ghana, some children are involved in hazardous work such as forced begging as aides. Forced child begging is defined as a type of begging in which children under the age of eighteen (18) are psychologically and physically coerced to



beg (Anupma, 2014). This type of begging is often imposed by family members or with parental approval. The ILO reported that there are more than 600,000 cases of forced child begging worldwide (cited in Anupma, 2014). A study carried out in Senegal by Human Rights Watch (cited in Anupma, 2014) also projected that at least 50,000 children within the country have been trafficked for the purposes of begging. In fact, begging is reported to be profitable venture that exploiters are motivated and attracted by the economic returns so much that in severe cases networks of children are forced to beg (Anupma, 2014).

However, this practice has never been recorded or witnessed in the Tamale metropolis, perhaps due to the moral standards in accordance with the moral teachings of Islam. Therefore, religion and traditional values (norms) which appear to influence some people to beg in the Tamale metropolis may also act as checks (controls) on the exploitation of children in terms of forced begging. Yet, observation shows possible networks of increasing number of foreign beggars (from the Mali, Sudan and Niger) in the metropolis. These foreign beggars (adults) who are usually located at vantage points coerce their children to go and beg. These child beggars willingly participate and actually harass and intimidate people on the streets with their begging antics; once they get hold of a person's hand, they will not let go until they collect some money (Frimpong, 2014).

Anti-Slavery International, asserts that many families believe that forcing their children to beg is the best and only option available, given the lack of existing capabilities (Anupma, 2014). Capability deprivation - the routine absence of adequate resources to facilitate opportunities, may account for cross-generational forced child begging practices within families. UNICEF studies found that forced child begging is especially prevalent among families in which parents are incapacitated in some way,



leading children to be the sole providers (as cited in Anupma, 2014). However according to the World Bank, forced child begging is most commonly found in areas where laws prohibiting begging are ineffective.

It is reported that children who are forced to beg are often removed from their families, surrender majority of the income to exploiters, endure unsafe work and living conditions, and are usually maimed to increase profits (Anupma, 2014). However, forced child begging and the accompanying maiming of victims has not been recorded or witnessed in Ghana and in the Tamale metropolis in particular. Though children used as child aides for begging in the metropolis receive little or no education and work about 16 hours a day on the streets and around the Tamale metropolis. Whilst education is seen as one of the leading factors that can extricate one from extreme, endemic and cyclical poverty; one may thus ask: is there a bright future or hope for the child aides in the country and in the Tamale metropolis especially?

2.12 Begging strategies used to attract public attention and sympathy

Globally, the strategies beggars use to attract the sympathy and attention of the public are numerous. One of the strategies is to approach an individual for help while carrying a baby/child (often in tattered clothing and bare footed) or baby (with unkempt hair and pale looks) who may even be rented for credibility in the case of women beggars. Another is using the physical traits of disability; this cuts across the spectrum of disabled beggars. In Ghana, specifically Tamale metropolis, it is common to see women begging with babies strapped at their backs or clinging on their sides. The ages of child aides involved in begging range between 4 and 16 years old (with 4



-10 years preferred) whereas those of adult beggars range from 35 to 60 years (Wedadu, 2013). There are fewer girls than boys within the 12 - 14 age brackets. The beggars use the presence of these little child aides (4 – 10 years old) to attract sympathy and gain alms (money) from the public. As a result, most beggars usually change child aides; weaning out the older (11 – 16 years old) ones and introducing younger (4 – 10 years old) ones to continue to attract sympathy from the public. According to Wedadu (2013), the adult beggars revealed that on average, they have changed 5 aides since the start of their begging, with the average exit point for child aides being 14 years. The sight of a child with a beggar easily portrays image of extreme vulnerability, thus pushing more people to support them. Able-bodied beggars and grown up child aides are not able to elicit public sympathy; they are considered undeserving of support because they are seen as being capable of working to earn decent living both for themselves and for their vulnerable and disable counterparts. This is the major reason adolescent child aides quit (willingly or forced out) of the activity (begging) for other economic and productive ventures or often rendered redundant by their adult counterparts.

Some beggars also use religion (Islam) to attract public attention. They approach people with religious incantations; invoking the blessings of God before and after the receipt of money or other forms of support from potential donors (Wedadu, 2013).

2.13 Begging as survival strategy for the lazy

The traditional hospitality found in Northern Region and the Tamale metropolis extended to members of society sometimes encourages laziness leading to begging. Within the Ghanaian set up across most cultures and societies, poor/destitute or



vulnerable persons are usually catered for by their families. This has however made some people lazy. They make no effort to find any decent engagement to earn a better living but rather take to begging. A study by Weiss (2007) categorises beggars as lazy people thus:

“If you are a visitor and in town here, wherever you find yourself, people are not going to care whether you come with money but they are going to support you, prepare breakfast, lunch and supper for you. This attitude condones laziness, which leads to begging. It is not Islam itself that encourages begging, but the “sara” (alms) that we give is inspired by the traditional custom of helping those who do not have enough” (quoted in Weiss, 2007).

The study further reveals that begging has become a good business as some of the beggars are said to have a better standard of living than some non-beggars. Even though begging is degrading and associated with low self esteem in the eyes of many, its daily average income has motivated non vulnerable and able bodied persons to take it up as it provides cheap and tax-free income. This tailors into the argument that beggars do not need any special assistance or attention of any kind because they are not in any serious distress. According to Weiss (2007), each of the beggars has and belongs to a family which usually provide them support. They therefore only beg to earn a supplementary income. This does not however mean that all the beggars in the Tamale metropolis are there to make an easy living out of begging. There are some who are genuine and deserving of alms due to the consequence of the erosion or non-existence of traditional safety nets which used to be provided by immediate and extended family members. Yet still, others beg because they do not have any



relatives' while others beg because their relatives are not in any position to help them in their needs.

Most people in Ghana often argue that begging is a lucrative business. One of such arguments is contained in an article in the Accra daily thus: "Beware; begging is an offense" (Accra Mail 22/11/2001). According to the article, beggars make good money even on a bad day, even though the 'business' has its risks. Most important, however, is the emphasis of its illegality.

In spite of the laziness of people who resort to begging, some people still pity them. Weiss (2007) observes that begging is an unsolvable problem for the rich individuals in society as there are so many poor people and a few rich people who, if they (the rich) all help the poor would end up being poor themselves:

"It is really a pity to see people begging on the streets every day and if one decides to give money to all these beggars, it would rather end the giver on the street. The question is, does begging make these people's lives any better? Many of these beggars are strong enough to trade or engage in a trade of some sort, but still choose to be on the streets begging. There are many schools for disabled people and people come out of them successfully and engage in worthy employment. What is even sad is, these beggars do not beg on their own; some of them move about with their children or relations who are healthy and can do something more meaningful" (Accra Daily Mail 5/7/2002, cited in Weiss 2007).

As discussed in one of the editorials in "The Ghanaian Chronicle", neither begging nor the giving of alms is the solution to whatever problems the beggars face. They have carved the begging identity for themselves and therefore it will be difficult for anyone to alter that destiny no matter whatever kind of support is given out (financially or materially). Due to this, Herbert Spencer conceived of the poor as



being 'good for nothing vagrants' that find themselves in their situation due to their 'dissolute living'. This could be true as able bodied persons who constitute a significant population of beggars refuse to under-go any form of training or skills acquisition in order to be gainfully employed. Such people find themselves in that situation by their own will and therefore do not demand any form of sympathy. They should not be assisted in any way as they have no reason to beg.

2.14 Effects of begging on both the beggars and their child aides

The act of begging has far reaching physical, emotional, psychological and mental effects on the future and lives of children used as guides. It has been reported in some parts of the world that child aides do not have proper shelter, adequate food and access to healthcare (Human Rights Watch cited in Anupma, 2014). Even though not yet revealed in Ghana, many of the gangs which run networks of forced begging have heavy drug involvement and thus, the children under their control are often turned into drug addicts in order to have perpetual control over the children.

As indicated by Tambawal (2012), one of the major effects of the menace of street begging is the dependency syndrome which begging causes on beggars. This is because as soon as one gets used to going out and getting what one needs for a livelihood, then the question of thinking along the line of being useful to oneself and the society will not arise. Children of such when grown up and cannot do any meaningful trade or engage in any activity that can fetch them some decent income, will easily resort to drug addiction in order to ward off frustration. Other times, they may join gangs of armed robbers or religious misguided fanatics. As can be deduced, this does not auger well for the individual as well as for national development.



Anupma (2014) reported that children who beg and those used as aides have little hope for the future; they have little or no knowledge of their rights leaving them susceptible to exploitation. Furthermore, the conditions under which begging takes place commonly exposes the children to physical and verbal abuse, including sexual victimization and public brutality (Anupma, 2014). They are also prone to a variety of road accidents; they stand the risk of being knocked down by vehicles. Due to the severity of the issues raised above, coupled with the low self esteem exhibited by these children in later years, many organizations like the US Aid have called on religious (Islam) leaders to outwardly condemn begging (Trafficking of Children, 2013).

Generation Yuva (2013) explains that different domains of the child's development like behaviour, education, psychological development and various other domains are affected. Their behaviours are marred because there is a high possibility that the child may be exposed to issues that are not appropriate for his/her age. They may adapt to anti-social behaviours leading to issues like thefts, crime and other malpractices. For example, getting into drugs leading them into drug addicts or early exposure to sex are huge risks for the child's well-being which may lead to the female child being impregnated. Lack of education may also make them prone to HIV/AIDS and other diseases due to limited knowledge and awareness. Furthermore, children who are involved in this cycle of begging may automatically guide their next generation into same situation of begging as opined by Namwatta and Mgabo's (2012) vicious circle where begging becomes institutionalised among their family. These kinds of circumstances in which children find themselves may affect the society and country at large. According to Generation Yuva (2013), it is disheartening to see the youth of a



country being limited to or limiting themselves to begging either willingly or unwillingly.

Schooling which provides a brighter future for development is denied the child aides in the name of begging (either on their own accord or manipulated). Schooling has direct benefits such as academic and economic achievements, acquisition of literacy, numeracy and scientific knowledge. Arthur (2013) asserts that the established and acquired experience during the early childhood development is very important in affecting and shaping the long-term cognitive and socio-economic development of children and society in general in later years. Hence, education is considered one of the major components of the human capital. It plays an important role in fostering economic growth and enriching the overall quality of life. The developed economies invested so much in educating their children and most of the middle income and some low-income countries have also succeeded in enrolling a high percentage of their children into schools. On the contrary, many developing countries are still struggling to provide basic education to an appreciable number of their children. A number of researches on economic growth have established a close correlation between economic performance of a country and the literacy rate of its population and yet, majority of these child aides in the Tamale metropolis are not offered education merely because of begging.



2.15 Discouraging Begging

2.15.1 Almsgiving not a solution to the phenomenon of begging

According to Han (2008), Thailand beggars usually work under different gangs though there are independent beggars. Giving money to these beggars directly encourages begging (as many countries prohibit begging). The increasing number of beggars in a country's streets has a corresponding increase in the crime rates. These organisations of beggars which are not yet witnessed in Ghana and the Tamale metropolis, assign beggars to different posts around a city, and at the end of the day, the gains are pooled (Han, 2008). This act of begging as earlier discussed does not recognise weekends or holidays as everyday is a working day and the activity is carried out daily.

The perspectives from Jasvir (2013) also confirm that there are some beggars who are able-bodied. They can work to earn a living but they have taken to begging simply because it is the easiest way to earn money more than many honest and deserving beggars and workers alike. These able-bodied beggars virtually loot money in the name of religion/God. Disabled beggars such as the crippled deserve no pity and therefore should not use their disability as an excuse for begging. A self-respecting person with dignity (whether handicapped or not) will not resort to begging—they will always try to stand on their own feet. According to Jasvir (2013), crippled and other disabled people should be helped, but they should not be given alms. To Jasvir, begging is in no way justifiable.

A beggar, who is healthy (able-bodied) but lazy, is very clever and cunning. Most of such beggars are fit to work and can earn their living on their own. A lot of people (both able-bodied and the disabled) now take to begging as a profession instead of



doing some graceful work. Sometimes, some people especially the women with babies (twins/triplets) start this profession due to beliefs and later prefer it because it enables them to earn their living easily.

Begging is a stigma on the nation as opined by Jelili (2006). Charity may be given but would that improve the beggars' situation? Beggars will always keep begging, semi-enforcing grownups and old people to give them money. They will sometimes even go far to subject their children to horrid conditions as in the case of maiming them for the purposes of attracting more attention and sympathy thereby increasing their earnings.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

According to Al-hassan (2015), methodology constitutes the framework upon which a research is built. In other words, it may be understood as a science of studying how a research will be done systematically and therefore outlines the various steps that will generally be adopted by the researcher to study the research problem along with the logic behind them. This chapter therefore discusses how the data for the study was gathered and the characteristics of the research respondents (participants).

3.2 Profile of the study area

The Tamale Metropolitan Assembly was established by legislative instrument (LI 2068) which elevated the then Municipal Assembly to a Metropolis in 2004. Currently, the metropolis is part of the six Metropolitan Assemblies in Ghana and the only Metropolis in the three Northern regions with Tamale as the regional capital as well as the Metropolitan capital city (GSS, 2010 as cited in GSS 2014). According to Weiss (2007), it is the largest city in the North of Ghana and the second largest city by area size in Ghana per the 2010 Population and Housing Census (PHC).

In this fastest growing city, beggars and their aides are found in and around religious places of worship (major congregational mosques and the Roman Catholic Church - main), major shopping centres such as Melcom, Quality first and Forsmuel, behind Picorna Gardens Hotel, in front of Zenith Bank and the Standard Chartered Bank



(traffic lights), behind passport office (traffic lights), gumani/agric traffic lights as well as transportation terminals in the city. They converge in large numbers at these places with children some of whom are aides and others being a reason for their begging.

3.2.1 Population, Size and Location

The Tamale Metropolitan Assembly is one of the 26 district Assemblies in the Northern Region. It is located in the central part of the Region and shares boundaries with the Sagnarigu District to the west and north, Mion District to the east, East Gonja to the south and Central Gonja to the south-west. The Metropolis has an estimated land size of 646.90180sqkm (GSS 2014). Geographically, the Metropolis lies between latitude 9°16 and 9° 34 North and longitudes 0° 36 and 0° 57 West.

Tamale is strategically located in the Northern Region and by this strategic location, the Metropolis has a market potential for local goods from the agricultural and commerce sectors from the other districts in the region. There are 115 communities in the Metropolis. Most of the rural communities have a large expanse of land for agricultural activities and serve as the food basket for the Metropolis (GSS, 2014).

3.2.2 Social and Cultural Structure

Historically, the Northern Regions of the country had vast land cover with smaller population sizes and the Metropolis is no exception. This area begun experiencing high population growth after many people with different ethnic backgrounds started migrating from other areas to settle there, making it a cosmopolitan area. The



Dagombas are the majority and other ethnic groups such as Gonjas, Mamprusis, Akans, Dagaabas and groups from the Upper East Region are also residing in the Metropolis. Also found in the Metropolis are other nationals from other Africa countries. The area has deep rooted cultural practices reflected in activities such as annual festivals, naming and marriage ceremonies. Some of the festivals that are celebrated annually in the Metropolis are Damba, Bugum (fire festival) and the two Muslim Eid festivals (Eid Fitr and Eid Adha). The Metropolis is dominated by Muslims and followed by Christians, spiritualists and traditionalists (PHC, 2010). Administratively, it is the political, economic and financial capital of the region with the primary occupation of the people being subsistence agriculture (few engaging in commercial rice farming). Traditionally, the society is organized around the extended family systems of kinship relations (Oppong, 1977; Rolleston, 2011; TaMA, 2009 as cited in Wedadu, 2013).

3.3 Research Design

Qualitative research design was used in this study. In order to understand street begging which is a complex social phenomenon, the researcher requires thinking through all processes of the research problem and then trying to situate it in proper and relevant perspectives. As O'Leary (2010) asserts that research design guides the data collection and analysis processes. According to Punch (2004), a research design provides the bases as to how research questions will be answered in connection with the data as well as the required tools and procedures needed to respond to the questions. This study therefore makes an extensive use of a qualitative research approach.





Qualitative research methods are developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena. Qualitative research is naturalistic; it attempts to study the everyday life of different groups of people and communities in their natural setting. “....qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter; it attempts to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people make out of them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). According to Domegan and Fleming (2007), “Qualitative research aims to explore and to discover issues about the problem on hand, because very little is known about the problem. There is usually uncertainty about dimensions and characteristics of the problem. It uses ‘soft’ data and gets ‘rich’ data”.

According to Myers (2009), qualitative research is designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. Such studies allow the complexities and differences of worlds-under-study to be explored and represented (Philip, 1998). In qualitative research, different knowledge claims, enquiry strategies, and data collection methods and analysis are employed (Creswell, 2003).

Qualitative research according to O’ Leary (2010), “...works at delving into social complexities in order to truly explore and understand the interactions of processes, lived experiences and belief systems that are a part of individuals, institutions, cultural groups, and even the everyday life.” This approach (qualitative) was appropriate for the research as it enabled the exploration of street begging in the Tamale Metropolis and its socio-economic effects on beggar’s children. The qualitative approach further proved useful in exploring the depth of the aide’s perception regarding begging. For instance, Morrow and Richard (1996) suggested that doing any form of research with

children requires their full and absolute participation in the entire processes. Therefore, they are supposed to be seen as active agents and not passive recipients of the research activity. Once they are given the opportunity to participate actively, they will become more interested especially when the interaction between them and the researcher is less formal and it is through a qualitative approach that such an enabling environment and rapport for children's participation can be created. In-depth interview technique with open ended questions in addition to follow up questions was used. This allowed the aides to express themselves freely, explain their experiences and their understanding of the phenomenon in their own terms and its socio-economic effects on them. This proved useful as aides were not forced to select from fixed responses (as in the case of quantitative approach).

Both primary and secondary data were relied upon. This adequately helped to answer the research questions and satisfy the stated objectives. The primary data was collected from beggars (parents, relatives, guardians or partners), children (aides), public; almsgivers and non almsgivers and some key informants within the Tamale metropolis through in-depth interviews with the help of interview guides. However, non-participant and checklist observation was also used where applicable.

3.4 Target Population

Street beggars who engage the services of children as aides/guides were the main respondents targeted in this study. Beggars who beg alone without aides were not consulted to participate. This is because the study aims at acquiring responses from only beggars and that of their aides to deduce factors that compel them to beg, their perceptions about the activity and its socio-economic effects on the beggars children.



Also, children who were independently begging were not included in the study. The age range of the aides was between 8 – 17 years.

3.5 Sampling Procedures

A study of this nature demands an appropriate technique in order to effectively assess the research respondents. The target population or respondents were difficult to reach due to the frequency of their movement with few permanently stationed at one place. As they were difficult to define and with lack of comprehensive available data about the nature of their activity, purposive sampling technique was therefore purposefully used to select the study area because of the presence of beggars and their aides. It (purposive sampling technique) was used to select only beggars with aides. This technique was also used to reach out to key informants who were deemed to have experiences and knowledge on the phenomenon of begging in the metropolis. Purposive sampling technique as non probability sampling or purposeful sampling (qualitative sampling) refers to techniques which involve selecting certain units or cases “based on a specific purpose rather than randomly” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a, as cited in Teddlie and Fen, 2007). Accidental/convenience sampling techniques were used interchangeable to select subjects who just happen to be available, easily accessible and willing to participate in the study.

These techniques (purposive and accidental/convenient sampling techniques) were used to select 173 respondents in all; 150 beggars with aides (75 beggars and 75 aides), 3 key informants (from Tamale metropolitan assembly and from the Department of Social Welfare and the Department of Children respectively), 20 individuals from the public (10 alms givers and 10 non alms givers). This offered



flexibility of having access to them. According to O’Leary (2004), this form of “selection offers researchers flexibility when working with populations that are difficult to define and or access”.

3.6 Methods of Data Collection

The data for this study was collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary data was gathered using in-depth interviews with the help of questionnaires (interview guides) and checklist observation while the secondary data was collected from sources other than primary; related existing literature, journals, articles and newspaper archives.

In this regard, face to face interviews were conducted with the respondents. It was carried out separately for beggars and their aides. This was to gain insights into the begging activity as well as allow the aides to freely express and share their experiences and perceptions about the phenomenon. Also, separate in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants from the Department of Social Welfare in Tamale, Department of Children and the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly. The reason was to gain their perspectives on the phenomenon and their knowledge of the legal frameworks guiding begging as well as the measures they are adopting to curb the menace of this phenomenon. Individuals who offer alms as well as those who do not were also targeted in order to understand their perception regarding begging and what necessitates their giving or non-giving of alms. Open ended interview guides guided all discussions in this study with semi structured interviews employed. This allowed the generation of intended and unexpected data (O’Leary, 2005).



For the beggars and their aides, the interviews were conducted in an informal atmosphere using questionnaires (interview guides). Through this, the participants (beggars) felt as though they were engaging in a normal conversation and this facilitated the generation of information freely. The main spots the interviews were carried out with the beggars and their aides included Tamale central mosque and other congregational major mosques, Roman Catholic Church main, behind Picorna Gardens Hotel, in front of Zenith Bank, behind passport office (traffic lights), Standard Chartered Bank-(traffic lights), Agric/Gumani (traffic lights), main taxi rank and major shopping centres (Melcom, Quality first and Forsmuel). From observations, these spots are the central operation of their activities where beggars are mostly present. All the discussions/interviews were done in the local dialect (Dagbanli) – a native language of the researcher and most beggars as it is a common language majority of them used for begging. This therefore facilitated the rapport building process as the respondents were easily reached with no language barrier. However, the interviews with all the key informants were carried out in the English language. Observation (non-participant) which proves to be a useful tool in terms of data gathering was also employed to complement and facilitate the data collection processes. An observation guide (checklist) was developed to record certain behavioural patterns of respondents especially beggars.



3.7 Data Analysis

Qualitative research analysis aims at using data to describe a phenomenon by “drawing out patterns from concepts and insights”. Both manual and recorded data were gathered. The recorded data was first listened to several times, before being transcribed and then edited alongside the manual data. The edited data was then categorized into themes and sub themes based on the research objectives. The data was analysed using content analysis and with the help of computer software (SPSS version 20). According to Hancock (1998), content analysis is the categorisation of verbal or behavioural data, for the purposes of classification, summarisation and tabulation. The data gathered from note taking and observation were also organized along major themes and sub-themes and then merged with the transcribed data before the analysis and the discussions. However, certain key statements by participants were reported verbatim. The demographic characteristics of respondents (age, sex, marital status, hometown form of vulnerability, average daily earnings etc) were analysed using computer software (SPSS version 20) to generate frequencies.

3.8 Pre-testing of Interview guide

The prepared questionnaire (interview guide) was pre-tested prior to the actual data collection. This was to gain insights and firsthand experience as to what to expect on the field. The pre-test also helped to improve and re-word questions which were not properly structured in order to achieve responses that answer the research questions. It also helped to determine the estimated time for each interview session. A total of 14 beggars with aides were interviewed during the pilot stage (7 beggars and 7 aides). With their permission, recordings and manual note taking were combined to collect





the data. The recordings were played several times before transcribing to be compared with the manual data. This was then edited before analysing with content analysis. Because of the smaller number of respondents involved, frequencies and percentages were generated manually without the use of SPSS.

3.9 Ethical Challenges

To make sure that the research is morally acceptable (Skanfors, 2009), the researcher's own ethical responsibility was the basic foundation for this study. This was to ensure that both the legal and moral principles guiding research were clearly adhered to. The general ethical challenges and considerations followed in this research included; the principle of informed consent, the principle of no harm and the principle of confidentiality.

This research further considered the ethical standards for human subject research by following the four principles of Tom and Jim (1983); autonomy (respecting the rights of the individual/respondent), beneficence (doing good), non-maleficence (not doing harm to the subject or respondent in anyway) and Justice (particularly equity). Therefore, participants were told that participation in the study was purely voluntary and participation can be terminated at anytime even in the middle of an interview session. Participants consent was sought as well as the assurance of the confidentiality of their responses. They were told that information received from them would be kept confidential and their identity anonymous and that no one else would have access to their responses/data except the researcher and where their responses will be shared, will remain anonymous.

With the principle of informed consent, permission was sought both from the aides and their parents or “adult partners” and the nature of the research explained to them. There was however difficulty in getting aides to fully understand the nature of the study. The beggars did not want aides alone to be interviewed (perhaps for fear of the aides disclosing certain information but were given assurance of non harm). They were later made to understand that the entire research was purely for academic purposes and that their anonymity and confidentiality will strictly be safeguarded.

The principle of no harm requires the researcher to ensure that the conduct of the research poses no threat or danger to the participants whatsoever. This has therefore necessitated the researcher to avoid the use of respondents’ names in references to responses quoted.

3.10 Limitations

In order to conduct a thorough and comprehensive research on this subject, the research must be planned to cover the entire Northern region. However, due to financial and time constraints as well as the difficulties associated with data collection (especially primary data), the research was limited to only Tamale metropolis.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses and discusses the primary data gathered from the selected locations within the Tamale metropolis. The discussions encompasses; categories of people (beggars based on vulnerability/motive behind their begging), perception of beggars, aides and public regarding begging, the socio-economic effects of begging, aides participation (willingly or unwillingly) and the contribution (positive) of beggars if any to the society.

4.2 Begging in the Tamale metropolis

The phenomenon of begging as it manifest and upsurges in the Tamale metropolis is largely due to the hospitable and sympathetic nature of the residents. This has to some extent made people become lazier with the belief that they can easily slip into the phenomenon of begging-after all, they only need some form of tattered attire, a sack/stick, bowl in hand (if possible a child) and they are good to go! Though there are genuine beggars in the metropolis who can actually do nothing economically to earn a living and therefore may resort to begging on the basis of religion and social sympathy. Others have no reason whatsoever as they are able bodied and could engage in a trade/business or even undergo some vocational training to acquire skills in order to engage in some form of trade/business.



This study revealed that all the adult beggars interviewed were not aware that begging was a crime according to the laws of Ghana, not to mention encouraging others or the involvement of children in the act.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

As opined by Shah (2011), begging is a situation where people (the needy) openly ask for material benefits (usually money) from other people (well-to-do).

Table 4.1 Marital status and gender of beggars

MARITAL STATUS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Married	17	41	58	77
Divorced	3	6	9	11
Deceased (lost a spouse)	3	5	8	12
TOTAL	23	52	75	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

The results of the study as revealed on the above table (4.1) show the marital status and gender of beggars. As stated earlier, individuals engaged in begging because of various reasons as it manifest in the Tamale metropolis. From the table, majority of the beggars (77%) were married with many of their spouses engaged in various forms of income generation activities ranging from farming, shea processing, trading; petty trading/hawking/merchandising and labourer among others. The study revealed that 11% of the respondents confirmed to have been divorced or divorced a spouse and 12% who have lost a spouse (husband) and therefore staying single. Some of the divorced and widowed beggars (all women) stated that they resort to begging because there is no husband to support them and their children. Therefore, according to them, the only option opened for them is begging in order to meet their daily bread. They





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argued that had there been a support from preferable a husband, they would not have been on the streets. However, 21% of them indicated to have a spouse who ever begged in the past with 7% currently engaged in begging.

By gender, the study revealed a wide gap between male beggars and the female beggars. The female beggars were 52 representing 69% of the beggars while the males were 23 representing 31% of the beggars. This variation could be attributed to the vulnerability of females (women) as compared to their male counterparts. It could be due to the fact that only mothers are usually directed by families to take children who are “deified” to the streets to beg. It also indicates the dependency syndrome they suffer from even though some of them were bread winners in their respective families.

In terms of education, 94% of the beggars in this study stated that they have never been to school throughout their lives. Most of them indicated that their parents never took education seriously and so did not see the need to send them to school. Others (6% who could not complete Primary) confessed to voluntary dropout due to their inability to cope coupled with lack of support in terms of books, uniforms and other educational needs. According to them, this has resulted in them growing up to be total illiterates. Some of the disabled beggars also indicated that their disability was one of the hindering factors to their education. They revealed that their siblings who were “normal” were enrolled while they were left out with the excuse that they cannot be mixed with non-disabled/normal students coupled with lack of disabled schools and disability friendly structures by then. They were therefore left to sit at home while their colleagues/siblings were in various stages of schools acquiring knowledge. With lack of education and skills to gain them employment in order to make a decent

living, the only source of income left open for them was to take to the streets and with a bowl in hand, a sack and preferable a child to assist them, they were ready to beg.



Table 4.2: Form of vulnerability, age group and gender of beggars

Form of Vulnerability/Destitution	Age Range	Gender		
		Male	Female	Total
Disability	Age 30-34	0	1	1
	35-39	0	4	4
	45-49	0	7	7
	50-54	4	3	7
	55-60+	6	11	17
	Total	10	26	36
Culturally driven (Mothers with twins/triplets)	Age 25-29	0	7	7
	30-34	0	5	5
	35-39	0	3	3
	Total	0	15	15
Poverty driven	Age 25-29	0	0	0
	40-44	0	1	1
	45-49	5	0	5
	50-54	5	7	12
	55-60+	3	3	6
	Total	13	11	24
TOTAL		23	52	75
Percentage		31%	69%	100%

Source: Field survey, 2015

Beggars within the metropolis have varied vulnerability traits, with differences in age and gender roaming on the streets of the town begging for alms. Categorically, there are 36 disabled beggars, 15 begging mothers with twins/triplets (driven by culture) and 24 beggars who are driven by poverty to beg.

The adult beggars (males and females) fall within the age cohort of as young as 25 years to as old as 60+ years. The youngest age group is made up of mainly mothers with twins/triplets who fall victim to a cultural myth or misconception. There are no males found within this category which can be attributed to the fact that gender and what constitutes gender roles is misinterpreted by culture as there is no evidence of any male resorting to begging with twins or triplets due to a myth. As can be seen on the table, begging has a relationship with age. The older individuals grow, the likelihood of them resorting to begging especially if they receive support from



nowhere. The table shows majority of the individuals (17) begging within the 55 – 60+ age group. This is followed by those driven by poverty (12) who falls within 50 – 54 years age group. Could this mean that begging has come to stay in the metropolis especially with aging as high numbers of beggars are mostly the aged? This could be attributed to the fact that begging has indeed become an “addictive behaviour” to some people.



Table 4.3 Form of vulnerability of a beggar, age and the gender of child aide.

Form of Beggar's Vulnerability	Age of Aide	Gender		
		Male	Female	Total
Disabled	Age 8-10	5	7	12
	11-14	9	11	20
	15-17	0	4	4
	Total	14	22	36
Culturally driven (Mothers with Twins/triplets)	Age 8-10	0	4	4
	11-14	0	11	11
	15-17	0	0	0
	Total	0	15	15
Poverty driven	Age 8-10	4	7	11
	11-14	2	6	8
	15-17	1	4	5
	Total	7	17	24
TOTAL		21	54	75
Percentage		28%	72%	100%

Source: Field survey, 2015

From the above table (4.3) it can be deduced that the age cohort of the children used as aides ranged between 8 years to 17 years. In all, the results from the table revealed that 36 children guide disabled beggars, 15 guide / assist a mother with twins/triplets who are driven by culture to beg and 24 aides guide beggars driven by poverty. The results further revealed majority of the aides were within the 11-14 age brackets for the disabled and mother with twins/triplets beggars. However, 11 aides guiding



poverty driven beggars fall in the age cohort of 8-10 years. This is due to the fact that beggars who are driven by poverty have no visible vulnerability trait and so depend on the childhood innocence of their aides to gain alms from passersby.

By gender, male aides in this study were 21% as against 83% of the female aides. The female aides by far outweigh that of the males because of the roles they (females) played aside begging which are socially constructed. For instance, society has constructed its own gender roles to which male and females are ascribed and socialized into, such as caring for infant children and doing household chores which are deemed as feminine duties. This is evident in the above table as no male was a guide or aide to any of the mothers with twins/triplets. On the other hand, female aides guide all forms of beggars irrespective of their gender.

Religion, defined by Karl Marx as the “opium of the masses” plays an important role as far as begging and offering of alms in the Tamale metropolis is concerned. It is religion which encourages its adherents to share with the less privileged in society. It is the same religion which encourages individuals to strive and work hard to earn a decent income – “for the hand that gives is always above the hand that receives”.

Religiously, beggars in the metropolis are composed of Muslims and Christians with few others. The Muslim beggars constitute 84% while beggars of the Christian faith were 14% with 2% belonging to other religions other than Islam or Christianity. This vast difference was mainly due to the fact that the northern region and Tamale metropolis in particular is a Muslim dominated urban town. Aside this, it is also in the article of Islamic faith that the less privileged can seek for alms from the society even though it encourages striving to earn decent living than to resign to this act of living.

However, there is a disproportionate variation of the religious background of the child aides to that of their adult partners. The results generated revealed that 81% of the



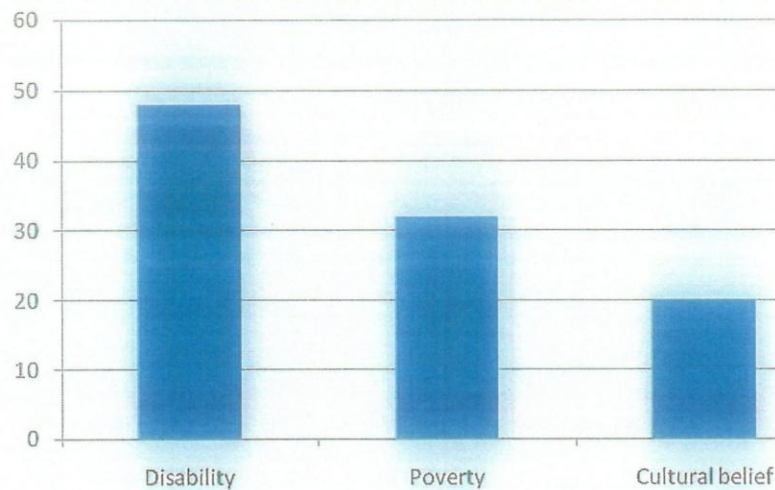
children used as aides belonged to the Islamic religion while 19% were Christians. This variation showed that the religious denomination of a child does not matter to the adult beggars as long as the children will serve them (as aides or guides). There are some beggars who claimed to belong to either Islam or Christianity, but in practice they do not. They confessed to only enjoy the benevolence of its adherents and the prospects that come with its festive seasons.

4.4 Beggars and Begging; the compelling factors

Available literature (Anupma, 2013) shows that begging is often carried out by organized groups. But has not yet been witnessed in Ghana or Tamale metropolis. However, certain factors compel some natives and others to migrate to the metropolis to engage in begging. The results from this study revealed that three major factors compel individuals to resort to begging. They are; disability, poverty and cultural belief/myths presented in the chart below.



Figure 4.1: Factors that compel individuals to beg



Source: Field survey, 2015

From the above chart (chart 4.1), it can be seen that disability as a compelling factor accounts for 48% of the reasons why individuals resort to begging in the metropolis. Disability is defined by Augustina and Ayisha (2013) as a physical, intellectual or sensory impairment and mental illness with various causes of it and mainly composed of the blind, crippled, mentally challenged/retarded, deaf and dumb among others. This group of beggars indicated that they beg not of their own accord but due to the fact that they cannot effectively engage in any economic venture either in the informal sector or gainfully employed in the formal sector due to their disability. All the disabled persons interviewed in this study lacked education/vocational skills and therefore were not gainfully employed in any sector (formal or informal). They are therefore part of the 80% to 90% disabled unemployed cited by Augustina 2010 (UNE, 2008b). This confirms the study that unemployment rates among persons with disabilities is high. Some of the disabled beggars themselves confirmed that their lack of education was mostly due to the unfriendliness of the structures and environments



where learning took place. Others indicated that their parents, relatives or guardians did not just enrol them into schools due to their disability as well as lack of special schools by then. This could be the case because until recently, provisions for disabled persons in most structures such as bus terminals and other places were non-existent. There was also the lack of special schools for the various forms of disabilities. These barriers (lack of education/vocational skills) prevented them from having access to available resources and opportunities in order to maximize their potential. As opined by Ahamdi (2010), begging develops in societies where there are no appropriate jobs for the people with a special profession or skills and the society cannot effectively solve the problems of the disabled poor. In line with Ahamdi's study, this research confirmed that majority of the beggars (disabled) were without any skills to engage in an appropriate job. This has therefore formed the basis for some of them engaging in begging as according to them, they are shunned/"branded" coupled with their non possession of employable skills. Without any skills to fit into the society, most of them easily resigned themselves to their fate (disability) by resorting to begging as a survival strategy than to "starve with unmet needs".

According to the Disabled Women's Network [DAWN, 2007,] this situation is even worst especially for women with disabilities as some of them are usually branded as witches who possess the machination of demonic forces based on their physical appearance and deformities. In Africa and Ghana, certain physical disability traits are linked to witchcraft (especially aged women). One of such characteristics is physical deformity. The aged women are mostly the victims of such perpetuations where the unlucky ones are usually lynched. According to some disabled elderly beggars (women), they were labelled as witches in their respective communities and were banished with threats never to return or else would be lynched. With no support from



any family/relative in order to survive in an urban town like Tamale metropolis, they indicated that the only source of survival for them was begging. These beggars whose experiences were not different from each other indicated that this treatment meted out to them created the foundation why some of them were totally neglected by their families. According to them, the allegation of being witches affected them since people avoided all contacts including transacting business or trading with them which compelled them to migrate to the Tamale metropolis. To them, these are some of the circumstances which compelled them to go into begging as the only survival option. This confirms Appiagyie (2006) and Kassah (2008) that disabled person's irregular and inadequate incomes forced majority of them to engage in menial and debasing activities such as begging as a means of survival.

Furthermore, poverty is major factor which drives some individuals to resort to begging in order to earn their daily bread. The Ghana Statistical Survey (GSS 2008b) estimated that about 40% of Ghanaians are poor with incomes below the poverty line and therefore struggles to meet basic human needs. The chart (4.1) on page 65 shows that poverty is responsible for 32% of reasons why some individuals beg. Follow up questions revealed that some of them were actually poor and could not afford to meet basic needs even for a day without dependence on begging while others are not, as further probing revealed they beg as an income supplement. Yet still, they all confessed that their very existence depended solely on begging. The study further revealed that most of this group of beggars constitute the elderly between the ages of 50 to 60+ and those who appear "able bodied" but hide under the shield of religion and poverty to beg. The presence of poverty affects the care that children and family deserve, forcing some poor parents to give out some of their children to other people



to cater for them while others “rent” them out. According to some participants in this study, they preferred to go into begging with their own children or those under their care or even hire other children to beg than to burden other people with the children’s care. This shows the extent to which poverty is pervasive in the region. According to Rockson (2002), there is a close connection between un/underemployment, vulnerability and poverty in the Tamale metropolis. According to the data, 21% of the beggars have a family member who has ever begged with 7% of beggars whose spouses are still begging. This confirms Oscar Lewis’s culture of poverty and the observation of Namwatta and Mgabo (2012) that poverty is usually institutionalised among the poor as generations of poor family are usually continually poor resulting in some other members also engaging in what they find their predecessors doing. Also, some individuals in the metropolis, driven by poverty, are quick to resort to begging using religion as an excuse but however disregard the provision of the religion that they are supposed to beg for only what can sustain them for just a day. With the exception of three beggars who adhered to the religious ordinance/decreed, all the other beggars (driven by poverty) interviewed in this study were full time beggars who begged daily starting from between 7:00am or even earlier to as late as 5:30pm depending on the setting of dusk. This was confirmed through a checklist observation of the daily routine time of begging (starting and closing times).

The three beggars described in this study as “genuine and deserving” beggars have this to say;



“I do not beg in order to become rich like others... I beg simply to meet my daily sustenance, which is to get what will take care of us (aide included) in a day” (Beggar 1).

“To me, it is a shame that some individuals have turned themselves to be beggars for life. It is a shame! As a muslim, I know that it is forbidden to resign oneself to begging in order to be rich as others have become and are still begging. Because of this, I only beg small and when I get what I believe can cater for me and something small for my aide (motivation), I go home. Sometimes I receive alms from only one person and once it is enough to take care of my food supply, I and my aide returns home (Beggar 2).

“Begging is only to meet food supply. However, some of us have used it to accumulate material wealth. I do not see why they should still be begging but they are always here everyday pretending to be poor begging for alms. As for me, I beg once in a week and that is only Fridays. Whatever I get, I manage it through the week until the following Friday” (Beggar 3).

The above shows that most of the beggars are not really in dire need; they only beg to complement what family and friends offer them. The reality of their continuous begging is that they will in the long run be richer than the benevolent giver. Evidently, the responses from the three beggars indicated and confirmed that some beggars beg not just only for survival.

Also, another factor which influences individuals in the metropolis to beg as can be seen on page 65 (chart 4.1) is cultural belief/myth. The results of the data revealed that 20% of the individuals who were all women are on the streets of the metropolis begging because of a cultural belief (myth). Culture as a way of life plays an



important role as far as the evolution of society and ethnic groups are concerned. It informs dressings, values and mores and guides behaviours as well. It is therefore a common practice to see women with twins/triplets begging as such children are deified by certain communities and cultures. The belief is that they are “special children” and have the “power” to cause misfortunes if their desires are not fulfilled.

Table 4.4: Age groups of mothers and number of children used for begging.

Age group	Mothers	Twins		Triplets		Total
		Males	Females	Males	Females	
25-29	7	8	6	0	0	14
30-34	5	6	4	0	0	10
35-39	3	2	2	3	0	7
Total	15	16	12	3	0	31
Percentage	20	52	39	9	0	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

As can be seen on table (4.4) above, 7 women between the ages of 25-29 beg with 14 children 8 of whom were males and 6 were females (each woman had twins). A further 5 mothers between the ages of 30-34 were begging with 10 children (twins each to a mother). However, only one woman whose age falls between 35-39 was begging with triplets (all males) with 2 other mothers in that same age group having twins each. Out of the total number of children used for begging due to a cultural belief (driven by culture), 19 of them were males while 12 children were females. Their ages ranged between 10 months and 3 years (the triplets being the oldest).



The mothers of the twins revealed that they were out begging because the children desired to be used for that. Some of them said their twins were frequently falling sick and not showing signs of recovering even though they were given different kinds of herbal treatment. Other mothers stated that they were begging because their twins were frequently crying unceasingly especially at night. Yet still, a mother revealed that certain mishaps and misfortunes were happening to her daily. As to how they came to know such misfortunes will cease upon engaging in begging, their answers were not too different from each other as they all claimed it was either their husband's or family members of their husbands who sought the services of a diviner. According to them, the diviner then prescribed what to do in order to avert such situation which is to beg with them. They claimed the diviner revealed that the children who were deemed as "special children" had interest in being used to beg else they would continue to fall sick or misfortunes may befall the family or the family may continue to wallow in perpetual poverty and misery. This confirms Wedadu (2013) study and Albert Oppong-Ansah article (GNA, 2012 retrieved on 27th May, 2015) in which majority of women with twins/triplets attributed their begging to cultural norms and beliefs. According to these studies, mothers of twins/triplets, out of fear of losing their children, succumbed to the cultural belief by carrying out begging in accordance with the advice of soothsayers and diviners.

"My children fell sick soon after birth. They would not recover after administering medication from the hospital. We then decided to send them to a native doctor who could not help. My husband's relatives therefore directed that I take to begging to save the lives of my children. Initially I refused but after a while a spiritualist told me that I have no choice but to go out there and comply with the instructions of my in-



laws; I did so and after some time, my children got well” (Quoted GNA, 2012 retrieved on May 27th, 2015).

Another of such ill-fated mothers revealed how she was pushed into begging;

“I was washing one morning when I was stung by a scorpion. Several herbs were applied to it but the pain never subsided. I wailed throughout the rest of the day. To compound my plight and suffering, one of my triplets broke into excessive crying throughout the night and wouldn’t stop. So my husband was asked to consult a diviner to know the cause of these misfortunes. He left for the diviners place in another village and returned in the evening to inform me that those mishaps were caused by the triplets and unless I take them out to beg, the scorpion pain would not go neither will the crying stop. He further added that the diviner said if I refuse, sicknesses will also befall the other two of the triplets and all these will cease if I take to begging” (Field survey 2015).

It is evident therefore that “twins/triplets have become victims of cultural belief who are used for economic gain. With every campaign for gender awareness and equality, women still suffer vulnerability as they are the only ones asked to beg with twins/triplets’. As to the specified period they will quit begging, mothers interviewed indicated that they were not told. It was only one mother with triplets who indicated that she was advised to quit after 5 years. However, none of the baby twins/triplets was taken to seek modern health care from hospitals perhaps due to the fact that the parents of such children have strong belief in the traditional health system.



4.5 Perception of beggars, aides and the public regarding begging

4.5.1 Adult beggars' perception

In spite of the fact that beggars earn their living from the streets through begging, they have different perceptions about themselves and their activities.

Table 4.5 Perception of beggars regarding begging

		Normal	Degrading/ Disgusting	Indifferent	Total	Percentage
Adult Beggars	Disabled	21	4	11	36	48
	Poverty	11	3	10	24	32
	Mothers	4	7	4	15	20
Total		36	14	25	75	100%
Percentage		48%	19%	33%	100%	

Source: Field survey, 2015

The above table (4.5) reveals that majority of the adult beggars (48%) perceived begging to be a normal activity. According to them, they saw nothing wrong with it and therefore should not be discouraged. They asserted that their lives would be worst-off without the earnings from begging. A 50 year old man had this to say; “I feel good begging because it solves our problems. Through begging, I am able to cater for my family”. For them, they have come a long way to accept begging as their source of livelihood and can therefore not quit. This confirms Horn and Cooke (2001) and Frimpong (2012) assertion that begging has become an addictive behavior and an income avenue for some individuals which makes it difficult for them to retire from it. The beggars further indicated that they only survived from the mercy of benevolent



givers whom they saw as “god sent” and therefore pray for them. Since they had no other alternative, they resigned themselves to begging and therefore looked up to the benevolent public to support their lives through alms offering. Though disability does not mean inability, the disabled beggars perceived themselves to be incapable of engaging effectively in any decent job aside begging. Beggars by virtue of being driven into it by poverty have no justification to back their action except poverty. According to them, since they could find solace in begging, they did not in any way view begging to be disheartening or odd as long as people supported them through alms. However, few of them had plans to quit the activity and were mainly the mothers of twins/triplets pushed into it by cultural beliefs. Some of these mothers (7) admitted that “begging was degrading as some form of stigma and shame was attached to it”. According to them, though they begged only to save the lives of their children, they accept the fact that begging offered material wealth aside saving a life. Apart from the shame and stigma attached, they were able to cater for other children within the family since begging with their twins/triplets had prevented them from engaging in any business. A disabled beggar satisfied with how begging had improved his life asserted that “...as I was neglected by my family members, I drifted into begging and they were complaining that no one in the family has ever begged so I am tarnishing their image. I continued begging and without their support, I married, gave birth and I am able to cater for my family”. This means that his choice of begging stemmed from the family neglect. This can be attributed to the effect of urbanisation and modernisation leading to the break-down of Durkheim’s mechanical solidarity (The Division of Labour in Society translated by George Simpson, 1933). Also, the development of urban space has resulted in migration of some individuals from rural communities to urban cities and with lack of skills to engage in any employment, they



resort to begging in order to survive. This in a way confirms the views of the Chicago school of thought which emphasized the development of urban space and its effects on social relations and man's life style as "the rapid and inconsistent development of urbanization which increases migration and the appearance of abnormal phenomena such as begging". Migrants who found themselves as beggars did not view begging to be anything other than normal and good as they depended solely on it.

4.5.2 Aides' perception

Whereas beggars themselves felt they deserved compassion from the public, their aides on the other hand had different perceptions about begging and their adult partners.

Table 4.6 Perception of child aides regarding begging

		Normal	Degrading/ Disgusting	Indifferent	Total	Percentage
Child aides	Biological	14	3	2	19	25
	Non- biological	7	12	5	24	32
	Hired	16	9	7	32	43
Total		37	24	14	75	100%
Percentage		49%	32%	19%	100%	

Source: Field survey, 2015

There were three categories of child aides who participated in begging. They include biological children of beggars, children of relatives and children hired for the purposes of begging. The biological children were the least (25%) used as aides followed by children of relatives (32%). Majority of the aides were the hired children (43%).



Some of the aides claimed to be from communities around Tamale metropolis and the northern region generally while others came from neighbouring regions particularly the Upper East region. All these categories of aides had different perceptions about begging as well as the compassion they had towards their adult partners. For instance, biological children had more compassion for their partners (parents) than the other two categories. This could be attributed to the closeness of blood relation between them and the love that exists between parents and their children. Therefore, 14 biological children perceived begging as normal and the only source of income to support them, their begging parents and siblings. The non-biological child aides (children of relatives) on the other hand had less compassion for their adult partners and indicated that they hated begging. Further probing revealed that their reason for the hatred was that the benefits they gained from begging could not be compared to the dangers the activity posed to their lives. According to them, they suffered daily but enjoy fewer benefits of the proceeds. They attested that the biological children of beggars rather enjoyed more "... some of them attend school while I am not..." These non biological aides (12) therefore perceived begging as a disgusting activity as they moved about seeking for alms from people who sometimes ignored them. Hired aides (16) to some extent perceived begging as a normal activity. According to them, since they earned something out of it for themselves and sometimes for their families, they felt okay with begging. They disregard the issue of schooling as they maintained that they could not sponsor themselves with the little that they earned from aiding.

From table 4.6, it can be realised that 49% of the aides perceived begging to be normal (comprising mainly of the biological aide and hired aides), a further 32% perceived begging to be degrading or disgusting (made up mainly of non-biological



aides) and 19% showed indifference regarding begging, majority of whom were the hired aides.

4.5.3 Public perception

The perception of the public with regards to beggars and begging was mixed. Whiles some saw beggars as vulnerable, others perceived them to be good for nothing individuals who found themselves in their situation due to laziness. To such people (non-almsgivers), they were a nuisance and should be rid off. The views of the public was analysed using Alport's theory of measuring perception which is in three dimensions perceptual, emotional and action tendency.



Table 4.7: Perception of the public regarding beggars using Alport's theory

PERCEPTUAL (knowledge of people towards beggars)	EMOTIONAL (feelings towards beggars)	ACTION TENDENCY (tendency towards helping beggars)
Almsgivers: <i>Beggars are vulnerable individuals who deserve support</i>	Remorseful (sympathy, pity, compassion, sorrow)	Offer support in a form of alms to solve beggars problems (others offer alms to solve their own problems)
Non-almsgivers: Beggars are lazy individuals who over portray their vulnerability	Beggars deserve no remorse	Beggars own properties and therefore deserve no support from people

Source: Field survey, 2015

As can be seen on table 4.7, almsgivers perceived beggars to be vulnerably in need and therefore an opportunity for them to do good in order to gain socially and spiritually. According to them, they feel pity and compassion towards individuals engaged in begging. However, some of them indicated that they sometimes gave alms not only to help improve a beggars life or situation but to solve their own spiritual problems (as usually directed by their “spiritualist/mallams/afa tibrisi”). They indicated that through this a misfortune could be averted or they could gain a reward such as prestige, power wealth etc. As such, they saw beggars as playing an important role as far as attaining spiritual piety and their social goals are concerned. Non-almsgivers on the other hand had no pity for beggars. They saw them as good for nothing people who did not deserve any sympathy. According to them, beggars used their predicament to cheat innocent almsgivers and earned more money than ordinary workers. To them, the more alms beggars received, the greater the likelihood that they would continue to beg. They therefore indicated that it was high time people realized they were being cheated by these beggars. They further argued that in spite of the money they received, their life had not improved in any way. Some of them also



attributed the reason for their non-giving to the “rumor” that beggars had become wealthier than the almsgivers themselves.

4.6 Factors that influence children to participate in begging as aides

The participation of children as aides in begging was due to a number of factors. Some were biological children of their adult partners’ whiles others were children of a partner’s relative and majority of them were hired mainly for the purpose of begging. The study revealed that children of beggars (biological) and those hired, participate more willingly and were more diligent than the children of relatives. Some of the aides (16 biological children of beggars) indicated that since they could not support their parents economically, their major contribution was only to guide them in their daily begging. They claimed that their parents used the earnings to cater for them and their siblings. Therefore, it was necessary to support the activity by aiding or guiding them. The aides who were schooling confessed that once they guide their parents “...and the day seems fruitful, we are given whatever need we request and are often given additional small money to our usual chop money”. Unlike children of relatives and those hired, the biological children were often persuaded to participate as an aide/guide. On the other hand, majority of the children of relatives (16) revealed that they participated sometimes unwillingly because they had no choice. For these aides (children of relatives), the benefits could not be compared to the suffering they were subjected to though some of them (11) said they were taken care of by their adult partners. According to them, this influenced most of them to either take part willingly or coerced into it. Just like the biological children, a child of a relative and those hired were driven by the degree of motivation behind their begging. If motivation could not



commensurate with their daily toil, there was an attempt to revolt or disengage from it. Thus the participation of all three groups of children was mostly influenced by monetary considerations. Some of the hired aides (23) indicated that they were able to meet their basic needs through begging. They added that they did not enjoy the benefits from begging alone, but other family members did as well. The implication of this is that the aides would continue to beg due to the benefits that come with their participation. It further means that the rights of these children were trampled as pointed out in Anupma's (2014) study that half a million children rights were violated. The influential power that the adult beggars or partners had on them also confirmed Kolosov's (2002) study that children are the world's most vulnerable component because of their dependency on adults who may manipulate and influence them both physically and mentally.

4.7 Socio-economic importance of begging on beggars and their child aides

Available literature (Jelili, 2006 and Reddy, 2013) indicates that beggars do not contribute productively to the development of a nation and that begging has serious implications on a nation's economy. According to Reddy (2013), an increase in the population of beggars will result in an increased burden on the working population. However, socially and religiously, the offerings/alms given to beggars could be termed as an extension/redistribution of wealth to the less privileged which could transform the lives of some beggars. Unlike Jelili and Reddy's view about beggars and begging, this study revealed that beggars were not actually unproductive. According to the beggars, they contribute significantly to the socio-economic wellbeing of their children as well as meeting the daily needs of their aides. As



revealed in this study, 17 beggars confirmed that the initial capital of their spouse's business was raised through begging. Their spouses (women) are currently engaged in petty trading, shea processing while others are food vendors.

Again, aides are able to make a living from the activities of begging. The study revealed that there was a mutual benefit for aides and their partners. Some of the beggars indicated that their aides are given their daily wages at the end of the day and other beggars even indicated that they sent food stuff to the families/relatives of their aides. This confirms Wedadu's (2013) evidence of sending money and foodstuffs periodically to the immediate families of their aides. Sometimes, the beggar's provided accommodation for their hired aides.

Moreover, beggars were able to meet the daily needs of their own children sometimes, at the detriment of their aides as their own children hardly took part in begging. Family needs were catered for through begging as this was confirmed by some of the aides. Whereas aides (hired and children of relatives) and some few biological children were not schooling, most biological children of beggars were in school with complete support from the proceeds of begging. The study revealed that 13 biological aides were at various levels of education; from primary 3 to as high as JHS 1. This is not different from the responses of the biological child aides themselves where 11 children confirmed they were school. Follow up checks at the schools of the aides indicated that 8 of the children were actually punctual whereas 3 were not punctual. Aside these biological child aides in school, some beggars also said they had supported the education of other biological children up to Senior High School and tertiary levels.

The implications of the above is that, though begging was considered degrading with its associated stigma, beggars and their families including children under their care



and those hired were able to meet their daily needs through begging. Also the educational needs of biological children were met though at the detriment of the aides (children of relatives and those hired). Beggars were also able to support their spouses economically. On the other hand, begging also had its associated socio-economic effects on the aides. As earlier indicated, some aides were able to support themselves and their families through their participation. Aside a few of them who enjoyed certain benefits, most of them were denied education/vocational training to compete with other children. Such denial was a detrimental to their future progress as they may end up just like their parents/adult partners – to continue a generational poverty. With lack of education to offer them knowledge and skills, they may appear prone to certain health hazards as well as their social rights. This may affect not only the individual aide, but the society and nation as a whole. After all, a nation's literacy level and development depends on its active human capital available.

4.8 Positive contribution of beggars to societal development

Begging in whatever form from the perspective of an ordinary person may seem degrading but the gains from it may be higher than the earnings a gainfully employed person. Individuals do not place any value on the little “donations” given to beggars but these “little drops make a mighty ocean” for them. Begging is becoming an income earning venture where people make easy no-taxable income. Whether it is due to disability, economic (poverty) or cultural reasons, beggars earn a reasonable amount of income more than what can sustain them for a day. The study revealed that the average daily earnings of the beggars varied in relation to the level of their vulnerability; reason for begging, presence and age of begging aides as well as



locational advantage. This study found out that beggars made an average daily earning of as low as between GH¢9.00 to GH¢30.00 to as high as between GH¢50.00 to GH¢80.00 (in the major Muslim festivals according to a begging mother with triplets). These amounts are above Wedadu (2013) estimated as average earnings of beggars which were pegged at GH¢20.00 on a good day and GH¢6.00 on a bad day. According to them, they made more income on certain days and festive seasons such as Fridays, “Eidul Fitir” and “Eidul Adha” days which are Muslim minor and major festivals respectively. Beggars further disclosed that Fridays were always cherished days in terms of prospects as they were able to make good income aside the two major annual festivals. Apart from the fiscal gains, they also indicated that they received other gifts such as foodstuff (cereals/sorghum), clothing (slightly used, fabric materials etc) as well as livestock (fowls and animals). A few of them (37%) however indicated they always sold the livestock while 63% said they kept them to be sold later.

As to what they did with the income from the sale of the foodstuff and livestock, the recipients indicated that they invested their income in various ventures which contributed significantly to the socio-economic development of their families. For instance, apart from the begging mothers with twins/triplets, a significant number of the beggars (27 out of 60 beggars) had been able to accumulate various properties from their earnings (outright monetary alms and the sale of the livestock). These properties include water tankers for hiring/renting, plastic chairs, houses, vehicles, tricycles, livestock etc.

Beggars who did not have their own residence were able to pay for their rent from the income. All the beggars interviewed indicated they had one spouse at a time with a minimum of 3 children some of whom were schooling (majority of whom never



participated in begging as aides). Others also indicated that their children “dropped out of school and preferred vocational/apprenticeship training to that of school, hence they enrolled them with some of the earnings from begging”. After meeting the basic needs of themselves and their families, beggars revealed that they often deposited the rest of their earnings at the bank and other micro finance institutions. The study revealed that 13% of beggars owned bank accounts in which they saved their income. Other beggars also indicated that they had accounts with micro-finance institutions (multi-credit, Utrak etc) while others saved with “Susu/Adaashi” associations where they contributed daily (GH¢2.00). Some beggars also indicated that they operated group susu among themselves in groups of 5-10 members to help meet their needs and that of their children. As to how they saved in the bank and micro finance institutions, some of them revealed that their children and sometimes children of their neighbours usually saved the money on their behalf. Others indicated that some of the bank agents visited them at home to collect the savings (unofficial arrangement). According to the beggars, it was through these savings/contributions that they were able to provide the needs of their families (education and training).

Their membership in the financial institutions has created employment for those who are employed as agents (whom they have personal arrangements to contact them for their contributions/savings). As to what beggars put this savings into when they “mature”, beggars indicated that they are used to; acquire mobility aides, accommodation and income generation business. These findings are in line with Weiss (2007) rumor that “...some beggars own houses, taxis and other properties”.

The ownership of properties by beggars is socially and morally unacceptable as begging was carried out to meet a survival need and not for wealth gathering. According to Robert Merton’s arbitrary dichotomy, beggars fall in one of the five



categories of people on the social structure (innovators). As revealed in this study, beggars (not all but majority) have accepted cultural goals but rejected how they should be achieved and therefore innovated their own means of achieving them. One of such innovations is the phenomenon of engaging in street begging not for survival but for the accumulation of wealth and properties as stated by the beggars themselves. Robert Merton's social structure and anomie theory therefore holds firm in the case of beggars in the Tamale metropolis who had already committed a crime by begging further by even acquiring properties through begging. Where then is the reliance and use of religious decree to beg as it allows earning for only what can take care of an individual for a day?

Additionally, beggars indicated that among their positive contribution to society were; the children they enrolled in vocational training. According to them, some of these children completed their training and had become professional artisans; masons, welders, tailors etc and others who were still under-going apprenticeship would equally become useful to the society through the services they would render.



CHAPTER FIVE (5)

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study identified the factors that compel people to beg and investigated the socio-economic effects of begging on beggars' children as well as examined the contribution of begging (if any) to society. This chapter presents a summary of the findings and its implications on beggars' children and the metropolis in general.

5.2 Summary of findings

Causes of begging

The study revealed that disability, poverty and cultural beliefs were the major conditions identified as the root causes of begging in the Tamale metropolis thereby confirming and validating similar findings (Wedadu 2013, Augustina and Aisha 2013,). All the beggars interviewed lacked education and skills to actively engage in any job and therefore considered themselves deserving of public sympathy. Others begged because they were driven by poverty due to the breakdown of mechanical solidarity (lack of family support). Certain cultural beliefs regarding twins/triplets had turned mothers into beggars to save the lives of their children.



Perceptions; beggars, aides and the public

It was also revealed that adult beggars, aides and the public had different perceptions regarding begging. Majority of the beggars (48%) made up of mostly the disabled beggars (21) and aides (49%) majority of who were the hired (16) and biological children (14) felt that begging was a normal activity. Due to this, biological and hired aides had more compassion for their begging parents/partners than children of relatives. On the other hand, 19% of the beggars perceived begging to be disgusting / degrading and composed mainly of begging mothers with twins/triplets (7) and children of relatives (12) who indicated that the activity was degrading. Due to this, it was realised that only the begging mothers and children of relatives showed interest in quitting the activity. Almsgivers on the other hand perceived beggars as vulnerably incapable and therefore deserves kindness and support in a form of alms. This confirms Anupma (2014) conclusion that almsgivers in India viewed beggars as an opportunity to do good in order to earn spiritual blessings and reward from God. Other almsgivers (8) offered alms in order to gain worldly rewards such as prestige, power/position or to solve their own problems confirming and validating Wedadu (2013) study. However, to non almsgivers, beggars deserved no sympathy and therefore should not be supported in any form (giving alms). According to them, they were aware that some of them were not totally neglected by their family but yet still took to begging. This could be true as people do know each other or a related relative in the Tamale metropolis due to the social functions and gatherings which bring individuals together. Another reason for their refusal to give alms was the fact that some of the beggars were rumoured to have acquired various properties. Coupled with all these, they (non almsgivers) totally have a negative perception about beggars and



their activity. To them, they are just an eyesore, a total nuisance and lazy individuals who hide under the pretext of tradition and religion to cheat innocent almsgivers.

Aide's participation

With regards to what influences aides to participate, non-biological aides (children of relatives) received low to no motivation at all as compared to biological and hired aides. According to the aides, biological children of beggars enjoyed the highest proceeds from begging followed by hired aides. The non-biological aides receive non to at most little motivation. Biological aides are often motivated to participate; hired aides are paid wages to participate whereas the non-biological children participate either through threats or coercion. Due to the cultural setup of the metropolis, family members (relatives) usually give their children to other family member for upbringing. Sometimes, such children are to provide support to whichever family member he/she is given to. As such, it is very difficult for such children to run back to their biological parents when they are maltreated as the likely of being returned is always great. Because of this, such non-biological children are usually subjected to all forms of inhumane treatments one of which is exploitation as in the case of begging as aides. As revealed, about 80% of the proceeds from begging went to the beggars and their biological children.



Socio-economic effects

Socio-economically, begging has several implications especially on the upcoming generation who are being used as aides. The biological children of beggars socially and economically enjoyed more of the proceeds from begging as some of them were

enrolled into schools or vocational training centres with complete support from begging. They were been equipped for a better future. For instance, the numbers of beggar's biological children used as aides in this study were 23 out of a total of 75 aides. Some of these (23) biological children of the beggars combined their roles as aides and at the same time schooling. However, none of the non-biological or hired aides were in school. In spite of their toil, children of beggars (those who participate and those who do not) developed their knowledge and skills at the detriment of their suffering as some of them (biological children) had been educated up to tertiary, others in secondary, junior high and basic levels respectively with total support from the proceeds from begging. On the other hand, non-biological and hired children who constituted majority of the aides were not given the same opportunity as the biological children. They were merely "employed" to engage in begging for life till they reach the exit (attain adulthood). Even though they are usually supported in terms of sending food stuff to their parents or relatives, giving incentives or allowances, how can this support them in the future? Their support is merely for a short term with a far reaching detrimental long term effects on them. Therefore, out of the three categories of aides, it was the non-biological children who enjoyed the least of the proceeds from begging as compared to the other aides (biological and hired). The non biological children's participation was as a result of coercion in the form of threats or being denied of food, shelter or to be returned to parents (residing in the village). The aides who willingly participated were mainly the hired children because of their total dependence on begging and their families as well. These groups of aides (non-biological and hired aides) may grow up lacking basic education and skills to gain them employment which could help them earn a decent living. Such children may grow up to be illiterates with low self esteem, develop health related problems due to



their continuous exposure to the vagaries of the weather. They may also grow up to become homeless adults and eventually end up on the streets. There is also the possibility of dependency syndrome (depending on others such as family/relatives, friends and the public for survival) as asserted by Tambawal (2012). Due to socio-economic pressure that comes with adulthood, some of them may join gangs of armed robbers or “religiously misguided fanatics”. However, unlike India where children were drugged to become unconscious so as to be used as a medium for soliciting alms, this study had revealed a rather different aim for the use of drugs among some beggars- that is to ease pain and stress from begging. Drugs such as Paracetamol, Gebedol and Tramadol pain killers are usually the self medicated drugs. They asserted that they normally took these medications to ease body pains/stress as a result of their daily movements. According to them, the medications were often given to some of the aides for the same reason. This self medication could have a detrimental effect on the health and development of the aides such as addictions. The regular medication or drugging of the aides may also cause them to lose their mental balance as asserted by Generation Yuva (2013). It may also result in some of them becoming drug addicts.

The study also identified native and foreign beggars on the streets of the metropolis contrary to Weiss’s (2007) claim that the natives of Tamale did not beg. Unlike Weiss who noted the non-involvement of natives from Tamale in begging, the study revealed that about 17% of the beggars were natives engaged in begging regardless of the shame and stigma attached to it. As earlier stated, they could be influenced by the earnings that non-native beggars were able to make through begging or pushed into it due to an economic or cultural factor. These native beggars fall within Namwatta and Mgabo (2012) beggars in the street as they usually went home to sleep after spending



the day on the streets begging. These native beggars revealed to have strong family contacts. Unlike the native beggars, few of the foreign beggars had family contacts. However, all the begging mothers indicated that they came from neighbouring communities and villages other than the Tamale metropolis. This implies that cultural beliefs were still embedded in rural folks as compared to their urban counter parts.

It was also realized that 21% of the beggars interviewed had a family member who ever engaged in begging with 7 beggars whose spouses were also begging.

Attracting sympathy

According to the findings of this study, the disabled (48%) and mothers with twins/triplets beggars (20%) attracted more sympathy than poverty driven beggars (32%) who in most cases appeared “abled”. The sympathy extended to the disabled and mothers with twins/triplets could be due to the visibility of their plight. However, the implication is that more disabled people would be influenced by the benevolent gifts received by disabled beggars and therefore also resorts to it.

Beggar's literacy

Also, all the beggars in this study had no previous/current education or skills of any kind as a result of which they justify their begging. According to some of the disabled beggars (whose disability were from childhood), their parents or guardians never enrolled them into schools or any form of training (because of their disability) leaving them illiterate and lacking skills. Such people preferred to beg to make ends meet resulting in a huge number of disabled beggars (some of whose level of disability



does not require them to beg). Their decision to take to begging could be due to the easy gifts that come with begging which had a negative effect on the metropolis as the larger the number of beggars, the heavier the burden on working population –since their income is non-taxable.

Furthermore, the begging mothers with twins/triplets revealed that they often advertised the gender of their children to passersby in order to gain more alms. They indicated that the gender of their children also influenced the amount of alms they received.

Begging and Productivity

Another discovery made from this study was that beggars indicated they were not unproductive as often asserted. According to them, they were able to cater for their families including their children's education from primary (16) through to junior high (8) and secondary (5) through to tertiary (3) with earning from begging. Out of these children, only 7 of them ever participated as an aide. Other beggars whose children had no interest in school were enrolled into vocational/apprentice trainings (6). According to them, some of the children had already completed their trainings and were offering their services as professional artisans.



Beggars and “properties”

The findings also corroborate the rumors that some beggars own properties (Weiss, 2007). Some of the beggars owned commercial vehicles such as taxis, tricycle (motor king) and livestock (sheep and goats) and birds (fowls). Others had their own places of residence and even gave rooms out for rent. This confirms Horn and Cocke studies that begging was only carried out as an income supplement but not due to the fact that beggars were extremely poor.

Genuine beggars

Three “genuine beggars” were identified in this study. Their identification was based on their commitment to an Islamic religious decree (begging for what will take care of oneself for a day). According to them, they beg to meet only a daily bread/need and not for the accumulation of wealth. One of them begged only on Fridays whereas the other two were part time beggars.

Quitting/Retiring

In terms of quitting the activity, the study revealed that only the mothers with twins or triplets and some children of relatives (non biological) indicated their willingness and desire to quit. All the other beggars showed no interest to disengage from begging. To them begging had become part of their living which validates Frimpong’s assertion that “beggars did not retire because the older they grew, the more compassion they were able to attract alms from people”.



Begging hazards

Begging as an activity had its own challenges or hazards. Beggars were faced with the challenge of “bad alms” from some almsgivers. These alms according to the beggars usually come in the form of charms such as talismans, live and predatory reptiles which according to them were usually offered in disguised forms. Four beggars indicated they had come across such offerings and majority (88%) of them had ever received alms with charms or talismans included. They further indicated that they were also at the mercy of the vagaries of the weather in the two seasons – rainy season and the hamattan season which affected their operations and the health of their children/infants (in the case of twins/triplets). Also, they indicated they faced the challenge of being driven from one location to another which compelled some of them to resort to the main roads resulting in occasional road accidents. Also, beggars revealed that they usually quarrelled among themselves for positions they deemed as having “good luck”.

As asserted by Nelson Mandela, education as the only weapon that can change the world was denied some of the child aides. The study revealed a high illiteracy rate among them (aides). With the exception of a few, most of the aides had never been to school while others dropped out. With the exception of 13% of the aides who preferred vocational trainings/apprenticeship, the rest however showed interest in going to school or returning to school.



5.4 Conclusion/Recommendations

Conclusion

This study specifically focused on street begging as it manifests in the Tamale metropolis and its socio-economic effects on beggars children. It also examined the perception of the beggars, their aides and the public regarding the activity and the socio-economic importance of begging to the beggars and its effects on the aides and the society.

Begging with or without children is unacceptable as stipulated in the legal frameworks of Ghana (NLCD 392, Beggars and Destitutes Decree, 1969) but it seems to be socially accepted. Begging to some extent is influenced by society's perception of vulnerability and religious teachings of supporting the less privileged. The absence of mechanical solidarity of society has forced the less well-to-do members to resort to begging as a survival strategy. The unfortunate children of relatives and those hired find themselves caught in the web of begging as aides to beggars at the detriment of their future. Their engagement in the activity is for varying reasons and obligations. Children hired as aides and some non-biological aides feel able to support their family through the occasional sending of gifts such as foodstuff to their families by beggars.

Though begging is seen by many as a social problem merely from the perspective of the public, it is an economic venture where beggars are able to make a living better than some workers. Beggars are able to support their families and cater for the needs of their aides as well. Besides that (except some) they are able to acquire properties that generate income.

However, the various authorities and agencies seem not to have a clue as to the rate of which begging and the use of children is increasing in the metropolis. The relevant



authorities (key informants) interviewed in this study appear unaware that it is illegal to beg in Ghana more especially encouraging others or the use of children. They consented to being aware of the growth and menace of begging in the metropolis but due to political reasons or the sensitive nature of the phenomenon, they turn a blind eye to it. The norms of the society as enshrined in religion also makes the relevant authorities unable to curb begging or protect the rights of children being used as aides as the state cannot support all beggars when they are rid of the streets.

Recommendations

From all indications, it will be very difficult for the authorities to clear beggars from the street partly due to the fact that dwellers of Tamale metropolis appear unprepared to change its hospitality and generosity towards vulnerable people such as beggars. There should however be controlled begging such that the use of innocent children in begging could be curtailed.

There should be sensitization of mothers with twins/triplets with regards to the belief in deifying their children (twins/triplets). They should rather seek medical help from qualified healthcare centres with regards to the health of their children rather than dealing with quack native doctors and soothsayers. They should be made aware that twins/triplets are as normal children as any other children and therefore there is no need to deify them by engaging in begging to meet their needs.

Rehabilitation and training centres should be created by government and NGOs to enable beggars and disabled persons undergo training according to their abilities and capabilities in order to be self employed to earn a decent living.



“No amount of help or giving of alms from the public to beggars can solve their problem or make them quit. While giving alms to any beggar, one should always keep in mind that giving a little money or food will not end their poverty. It is better to offer them work in order to end their poverty than to continuously give them offerings” as in the adage that “if you give a man a fish, he will have a single meal but if you teach him how to fish, he will eat all his life”.

“The best way to discourage begging is not giving. Apparently, a lot of people would not realize that even though many beggars are perfectly capable of working, they feign disabilities in order to be pitied. They should therefore be profiled into genuine and fraudulent beggars and the fraudulent ones cleared from the streets”.

The government through the metropolitan Assembly should/must ensure adequate legislation is in place to curtailed children who are forced to beg and that these laws must be effectively enforced. Children used as aides needs to be rescued and returned or enrolled into schools or vocational trainings to prepare them for a better tomorrow.



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Appendix A

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES

This project is an essential component of the academic curriculum of the University for Development Studies towards the award of Master of Philosophy in Social Administration. The main objective of this study is to identify the major factors that push people to resort to begging as a survival strategy and its socio-economic effects on beggars children. It is therefore purely for academic purposes and any information provided would be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. I therefore urge you to give genuine answers and opinions on the questions.

Consent:

Do you wish to voluntarily participate in this in-depth interview: [a] Yes [b] No

Interview guide for Adult beggars

Name.....
.....

Age:.....Gender:.....
.....

Town/Region of
origin.....Religion:.....

Marital Status [1] Married [2] Single [3] Spinster/widow [4] Divorced [5] Other
(specify)

If married, what work does your spouse
do?.....



Form of vulnerability/destitution/disability (Researcher's observation)

.....
.....



Factors that compel people to beg

1. When did you start begging?
2. What were you doing before you started begging?
3. Has anyone in your family ever begged?
4. If yes, what factors compelled them to beg (in your opinion)?
5. If no, what are the reasons that compel you to beg
6. How do you feel now as a beggar?
7. Is there anything you think I should know about begging that would help others understand your experience as a beggar?

Attracting attention and sympathy of the public

1. How do you attract sympathisers?
2. How do people feel about being engaged in begging?
8. Have you always been begging with a child? If yes, how long? If no, why do you now involve a child?
9. How do you use your child/aide to attract public sympathy to offer you alms?
10. What is your preferred age of children to use for begging? Why?
11. What is the best way that you are able to attract the attention and sympathy of people?
12. How much are you able to make in a day?
13. Which days are considered best in terms of prospects? If any why?

Effects of begging

1. Do you ever face challenges as a beggar? If yes, what are they?
2. How do you overcome those challenges?
3. What risks do you face as a beggar?



4. What mechanism do you adopt to minimise those risks (if you cannot eliminate them)?
5. How do you manage the stress-related as a result of begging?

(Socio-economic importance of begging)

1. Have you ever engaged in any other economic activity besides begging?
2. Why do you beg?
3. Would you want to engage in any different economic activity besides begging?
If yes, why? If no, why?
4. How do you relate to your aide? Do you meet his/her needs (economic and social?)
5. Have you ever changed aide? If yes why?
6. Does he/she attend school? If yes, which school? (name, where)
7. How do you feel about begging?
8. Could you share your experience about begging?
9. How do you manage the proceeds from begging?
10. Do you have children? How many? How old are they?
11. How do you support your family?
12. Have you ever travelled to another place to beg?
13. Do you have any other economic venture? If yes, how did you get money to do so?
14. Do you have your own house? If yes, built by you or inherited?
15. Do you have a bank account? If yes, what do you do with the money?
16. Have you been able to acquire any property from begging? If yes what are they?



17. Do you know of other beggars who own properties?
18. What types (kinds) of properties? Eg; Taxes, houses, another...?
19. Did you hire your aide or have you ever hired an aide?
20. Do you know of other beggars who hire aides or have hired aides before?
21. What do you think is your contribution to society?
22. Society gives you alms and money, what have you ever done for society?
23. Do you think beggars have no contribution to the society or development of the country?



Appendix B

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES

Interview guide for children used as aides

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Town/Region of origin

Religion:

1. Do you attend school?
2. If yes, what class are you?
3. How do you manage your schooling and begging? If no, why?
4. Will you like to go to school?
5. Tell me about yourself/ life:
6. What is your relationship with the beggar?
7. What is your average daily earnings?
8. How much do you receive for;

Lunch

As a daily wage

Any other benefits you gain from begging?

How long have you been an aide in begging?

9. What are the effects of begging on you? Positively.....

Negatively.....



10. How do you feel about what you do?
11. Do you have a choice to do it/not to do it?
12. What are the risks involved
13. What negative effects may arise if you want to stop begging?
14. What are the benefits involved in begging?
15. What would you want to do other than begging?
16. Do you have days/seasons/events for begging which you value?
If yes, what are those special days?
17. Why do you cherish or value those days (as a beggar/aide)?
18. What are your hopes for the future?



Appendix C

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES

Key informants Interview guide

(Tamale Metro-Assembly/Dep't of Social welfare/Children)

1. Do you have any knowledge about the legal framework on street begging in Ghana? Are you aware of them (such laws)?
2. If yes, what steps has your institution taken to address the phenomenon?
3. What are the implications of begging on the metropolis?
4. What measures has your institution taken with regards to people (vulnerable/disabled/destitute) who beg?
5. Is there any sort of inter-institutional cooperation/coordination between your institution and other institutions in terms of addressing the begging phenomenon?
6. If yes, which institutions/organisations do you cooperate/collaborate with?
7. How does information flow between your respective organisations regarding the phenomenon of begging?
8. What legal actions are taken against by your institution against
 - (a) begging in the metropolis
 - (b) use of children in begging/as aides in begging



Appendix D

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES

Interview guide for Almsgivers and Non-givers

Name:.....Age:..... Gender:.....

Ethnicity:.....Religion:.....

PROBE where necessary

1. Are you aware of beggars in the metropolis?
2. In your own perception, why do people beg?
3. Have you ever offered alms to any beggar? **[If No, move to question 15]**
4. Do you still offer alms? **[If No, move to question 15]**
5. How long have you been giving alms?
6. What is/was the motivation behind your offer of alms to beggars?
7. Do beggars actually deserve sympathy in form of alms?
8. Do you think beggars should be helped?
9. Why do you offer alms to beggars?
10. Do you think the alms you offer beggars can improve their life?
11. How do you feel about beggars?
12. In your opinion, should beggars be allowed to beg?
13. What do you think are the effect of begging on; beggars and the metropolis?
14. Do you think beggars contribute in any way to the society?



Non-Almsgivers interview guide

15. How long have you not been offering alms?
16. Are you aware of beggars in the metropolis?
17. In your own perception, why do people beg?
18. What is the reason why you don't offer alms?
19. Don't you think beggars deserve sympathy/help?
20. In your opinion, should beggars be allowed to beg?
21. How do you feel about beggars and begging?
22. In your opinion, what do you think are the effects of begging on the metropolis?

