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**THE EFFECTS OF HEAD PORTERAGE ON GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION  
IN THE TAMALE METROPOLITAN AREA OF GHANA**

**By**

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**FEBRUARY, 2017**

**i**



## DECLARATION

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

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### ABSTRACT

. This thesis examines the effects of head porterage on children engaged in it. The study uses the qualitative methods to examine how head porterage which has become an economic venture for many affects the education of the girls engaged in it. The research sampled respondents using purposive sampling, snow ball sampling and convenience sampling. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and migration stories.

Major findings in the study revealed that there was a significant difference in enrolment of males and females at the rural community level. Poverty and patriarchy in rural communities were found as significant determinants of enrolment of females in schools and causes to their low retention.

The study recommends that, national policies should seek to remove cultural practices that adversely affect the advancement of girls especially in rural communities. The Free Basic Compulsory Universal Education programme should be accompanied by sanctions on parents who allow their wards to engage in head porterage.



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### DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Alhaji Shamrock Abdulai Mahama and Hajia Rahinatu Rabin Fuseini and siblings, Dr. Shamrock Dokurugu Abdul Latif and Shamrock Deishine Mabruk.



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### LIST OF ACRONYMS

AERA	American Educational Research Association
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
GYEEDA	Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency
ICT	Information Communication Technology
JHS	Junior High School
MTDPF	Medium Term Development Policy Framework
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPA	National Plan of Action
NYEP	National Youth Employment Programme
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals



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SHS	Senior High School
TaMA	Tamale Metropolitan Assembly
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences



## GLOSSARY

**Biiyoli** - A **Dagbani** word meaning a spoilt child.

**Ewuraba daa** - A combination of **Twi** and **Dagbani** words meaning rich people's market day.

**Susu** - Petty savings made by individual members of a group or association into a pool.

**Kayayei** - A combination of **Hausa** and **Ga** words used to call females who engage in head portorage.

**Kayayoo** - The singular form of **Kayayei**.

**TayiYsi** - A **Dagbani** word meaning thieves.



## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The importance of education cannot be underestimated in the development of any nation. Today countries and regions are paying greater attention to the threat of future security (Arjens, 2012). All over the world and especially in Africa, countries make every effort to collaborate with multilateral and bilateral organisations to enhance their level of education. In Cambodia, 2,000 children through the efforts of the government in partnership with World Education Services have provided reading materials to boost reading in children (World Education Report, 2014).

In Ghana, post-independent governments saw the importance of education by implementing reforms such as the Free Compulsory Universal Education (FCUBE) reforms making education free for all children of school going age (Baiden, 2006). This reform was further enhanced through the capitation grants and the free school uniforms (Baah-Ennumh, Amponsah, & Adoma, 2012).





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According to McMahon (2011), education does not produce students but human capital relevant to ensuring sustainable development in all countries. This may in fact be the reason why most countries all over the world are enhancing strategic policies and programmes in their educational sectors to best serve their interest as a nation as well as remove obstacles that hinder their citizens from enjoying educational facilities and tuition. In Ghana, educational reforms face the problem of being misunderstood, wrongly approached and accidentally implemented (Pryor et al 2013). These obstacles vary from country to country and society to society and may take the form of cultural, economic, political, environmental or social dimensions.

Colonialism in West Africa saw a one sided form of educational development that served the interests of the colonial governments but not the colonised country (Songsore and Denkabe, 1995). In Ghana, this resulted in the southern parts of the country being more developed than the northern areas (Zaami, 2010; Buske, 2014), supporting Lipton's (1976) concept of urban bias in economic development. Emerging post-colonial governments were faced with a couple of problems resulting from the skewed educational interests of the colonial governments, the continuous rise in population, the resultant imbalances in development between the north and the south, the economic crisis of the late 1970s, and the poor quality of policy formulators within the post-colonial governments (Buske, 2014).



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In Ghana, gender concerns have always been on the agenda of many governments, nongovernmental organisations, interest groups and stakeholders particularly in relation to education. This is due to the disadvantaged situation in which Ghanaian women find themselves in the country's socio-economic and political issues affecting their lives (Agyare, 2013; Ahlvin, 2012). This is especially worse when one moves towards the northern parts of the country. According to Awumbila (2007), pre-independent governments never sought to develop the northern parts of the country as these parts were considered non resourceful and only served to provide labour for the factories set up in the southern parts of the country. Facilities during pre-colonial times were only made available in the southern parts of the country as this was to serve as means through which resources in the south could be better maintained and exploited (Songsore and Denkabe, 1995).

Several factors account for the inability of stakeholders to achieve equity in the delivery and development of education of women. In Ghana, a quick solution for most girls is to engage in head portorage popularly termed *Kayayei*. This is an activity mostly carried out in big cities and in big markets around the country. Originating from Hausa and Ga words *kayayei* implies women who carry items, goods and wares for others for a fee (Opare, 2003). *Kayayoo* which is the singular form refers to the woman who engages in this activity and is highly characterised by individuals who migrate from rural areas in the northern part of the country to the southern urban centres (Opare, 2003). Most of these migrants from the rural north engage in this activity in their



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pursuit of escaping from the harsh poverty situations and cultural practices they face in their home communities. According to Assuah (2005), changes in weather conditions in the north of Ghana is another factor that has resulted in the influx of women to the south of Ghana to engage in head portorage business because they see farming as a failed venture and would prefer to join their counterparts in the south of Ghana already engaged in the activity. Today a majority of these girls engaged in head portorage are between the ages 8-16 (Buske, 2014).

Within the northern parts of the country, illiteracy rates are relatively high (FAO, 2012; GSS, 2008). Due to this, the majority of these girls who find themselves in this activity have very little or no formal education placing them at a disadvantage when bargaining with customers on fees charged for goods and services they render (Abdulai, 2013). Head portorage is fast growing in Ghana today as more and more women continue to engage in such activity which leaves very little for them to save after the day's work. More so, due to the continuous growing inflation rates in the country, the amount of money these girls make from carrying loads for others continues to fall adversely reducing the value of money they earn daily.

Women and girls engaged in head portorage are faced with vast difficulties day in, day out (Opare, 2003). They encounter problems with accommodation or finding a decent place to rest their heads at the close of day. Most of these girls end up sleeping under bridges, in the company





of relatives and in most cases on the verandahs of shop owners who might even charge them for doing so. This exposes them to a lot of health risks as well as making them defenseless from criminal acts (Ahlvin, 2012).

Today, what used to be north-south migration still persists; however, this activity of head portering has become more pronounced in the Northern Region of the country. Women and children as young as seven and as old as fifty can easily be seen today caught up in head portering in the streets of Tamale.

### **1.1.1 General Situation of Head Portering in Ghana**

In most developing countries poverty situations are worst experienced at rural areas in the country (Twumasi et al, 2013). This has resulted in migration patterns being predominantly rural-urban (Addo, 1968; De Graft-Johnson, 1974; Twumasi-Ankrah, 1995). In Ghana, according to Adu-Gyamfi (2001), poverty and unemployment have been identified as the main drivers behind the migration of people from the north to the south. Migrants engaged in head portering are mainly from the northern parts of the country, comprising primarily young girls from the rural areas of northern Ghana (Opore, 2003; Kwankye et al, 2009; Twumasi et al, 2013).





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Historically, according to Bibir (2012) an NGO in the northern region, the kayayei phenomenon was intensified in Ghana around 1966 after the overthrow of Nkrumah's government. This overthrow saw the coming to an end of numerous policies and development programmes such as the construction of basic schools in the northern parts of the country, and the award of educational scholarships from the basic levels to the tertiary level come to an end. Northern Ghana is primarily rich in land and hence the move by the then Nkrumah government to construct irrigation dams such as the Veia irrigation dam as a show of commitment at improving the socio-economic life of the northern people of Ghana. Inkoom and Nanguo (2011) agreed that with the effective provision and utilisation of dams, migration from the north to the south of Ghana would be reduced. The discontinuation of development programmes in northern Ghana as a result of the overthrow of the Nkrumah government saw a lot of people migrate to the southern parts of the country in search of jobs (Twumasi, 2013).

Coincidentally, this era saw the passing of the Aliens Compliance Order of 1969, which saw millions of foreigners from neighbouring countries return to their home countries (Kwankye et al, 2009; Awumbila et al, 2008). The Aliens Compliance Order of 1969 affected trading activities with citizens from other nations; it also affected employment since aliens resident in Ghana returned to their home countries with their capital (Brydon, 1985). The overthrow of the Nkrumah government together with the Compliance Order of 1969 further worsened the plight



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of the people of northern Ghana. Migration from the north to the south of Ghana reached its peak during this period.

In addition, Black et al (2006) observe that conflict activities in the northern parts of the country were also factors that forced people from the northern part of the country to the southern part. Migrants from the north of Ghana perceived the south a suitable location to do menial jobs and a place they could escape from harsh cultural practices. These northern migrants would only return to their communities when they were satisfied with the monies they earned, a relative died or to get married. With the growing number of people from the Northern Region, Upper East Region and Upper West Region experiencing difficulty in finding sustainable jobs to cater for themselves and family, they tend to migrate to the southern regions of Ghana to engage in informal activities such as head portering to make a living. These migrants largely comprised men who engaged in mining activities and trade in the southern Ghana (Nabila, 1975). Along with the items they returned with, these migrants had a change of personality which earned the envy of many rural inhabitants. Monies and other items they brought home served as a source of motivation to young men back at the rural communities to move to the urban regions in search of jobs (Opare, 2003). This rural-urban movement within the country was largely characterised by men; however, they were later joined by their women folks who for a long time were negatively affected by colonial and post-colonial policies and programmes. These women migrated to the urban regions but for their illiterate background could not engage in any formal employment opportunity that came their way hence their engagement in head portering which demanded very little skill and a relatively small capital to start since one just needed a head pan to start with .



The practice of head portage by these women in the urban regions was seasonal, and when the farming or harvesting season was due these women returned to their rural communities to engage in farming. However, with the passing of time the stay of these women in the urban centres became a little longer and more permanent. Gradually these women started taking along their children and other family members. With the rising population in the urban regions and the scarcity of jobs, migrant women and their families were forced to actively take part in head portage.

The dichotomy in the pattern of development was a catalyst that contributed to the permanent stay of women involved in head portage in the urban regions. The construction of harbors, railways, roads, factories and schools also contributed to a person perceiving the south as a place of higher opportunities.

At present, many men and women migrate to the urban regions for other reasons such as schooling or job transfers. Several studies have alluded to the fact that migration has benefited many and their families (Afsar, 2009; Anarfi and Kwankye, 2011; Mahmood, 2011; Ranabahu, 2004). Nonetheless, this comes at a cost to the relatives and children left back at home, depriving them of parental care (Twumasi et al, 2013).





Today, quite a significant number of people still migrate to urban regions to take part in head portering activities. According to Opare (2003), most of these people involved in head portering are being forced by and supported by their parents. Caldwell (1969) also asserted that some are motivated by their friends already involved in the activity, while others out of hardships faced at their rural communities take the initiative themselves.

### **1.1.2 The Study Area**

The Tamale Metropolitan area where the study was conducted is the capital of the Northern Region. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the projected population of the Tamale Metropolis was 223,252; comprising of 111,109 males representing 49.7% of the population and 112,143 females representing 50.2% of the population. Tamale shares boundaries with the Sagnarigu District to the North-West, Mion District to the East, East Gonja to the South and Central Gonja to the South-West. The metropolitan area is positioned 600 km north of Accra, the capital of Ghana, 165 km from Bolgatanga, the capital of the Upper East Region and 196 km from Wa, the capital of the Upper West Region. Geographically, the metropolis is located between latitude 9°16 and 9° 34 North and longitudes 0° 36 and 0° 57 West. The metropolis is surrounded by 116 communities; comprising 41 urban communities, 15 peri-urban and 60 rural communities (TaMA, 2014).



Tamale is highly populated by the Dagomba people who speak Dagbani and are mostly followers of the Islamic religion. The king of the Dagombas is the Ya-Na who resides in Yendi the paramount seat of the king of Dagombas. Tamale has been identified as one of the fastest growing towns in Ghana because of its geographical location in Ghana (TaMA, 2014). The town today has a mixture of indigenes from all over the country and neighbouring countries that troop in to engage in all forms of businesses. The busy nature of business activities in the metropolis has resulted in the steady urbanisation of the town, leading to a situation where rural inhabitants in surrounding communities move to the metropolitan area to engage in all forms of political, economic and financial activities.

The Tamale Metropolitan Area and its ability to draw people from rural communities to engage in head portage in its markets is the major driver that has informed the researcher's choice of area for the study. Today, the Tamale Central Market, Aboabo Market and Bawku Market in Tamale serve as destination for young women to engage in head portage in the metropolis. The lorry stations in the Metropolis serve as transit point for people from other regions and countries and therefore create an enabling environment for people to engage in head portage. Returned migrants from the southern regions of Ghana today find the Tamale Metropolitan area a suitable location where they can enjoy some social amenities they lacked at their former places of destination (McKay and Quartey, 2008). Children in rural communities around the metropolis are faced with multitudes of problems which are likely to determine their chances of engaging in





activities such as head portage in the urban centres. The rural household's immediate wellbeing which may demand a partial reduction in expenses such as those associated with education would demand that some children drop out of school or substitute school time to engage in activities that supplement family income (Hashim, 2005).

### **1.1.3 Efforts by Non-Governmental Organisations in Limiting Head Portage in the Tamale Metropolitan Area**

There have been a great deal of efforts by non-governmental organisations in light of the poor education and immense involvement of girls in head portage in the Tamale Metropolitan area. These exertions come to supplement efforts by government at improving educational access to all in the Tamale Metropolitan area as well as discourage the involvement of young girls in head portage. The interest by NGOs in curbing the head portage phenomenon comes as a result of the direct and indirect effects head portage brings to bear on individuals engaged in it and the effects it has on the community where it is practised. Assistance through the provision of farm inputs, micro-credit financing of small scale businesses, medical check-ups in schools and communities, sensitisation programmes, provision of educational materials, ICT training workshops and seminars and the construction and renovation of classrooms are among the various attempts made by NGOs to help prevent young girls from engaging in head portage in the metropolis. In selected cases where young girls do not want to be educated the formal way, NGOs engage such girls in local small-scale businesses and trade which include; batik making,



sewing, hairdressing and bee-keeping among others. Within the Tamale Metropolis, it is common to see young girls out of school due to lack of money to pay school fees and pressure from family members to engage in head portering. Non-governmental organisations carry out all these activities in their bid to prevent young women from engaging in head portering in order to empower them and provide them with some decent income-earning jobs.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Defining the problem is more important than its solution (Rajasekar et al 2013). The emerging trend of girls engaging in head portering in the Tamale Metropolis and how it affects educational enrolment and retention necessitated the study. Tamale is the third largest settlement in Ghana according to the 2010 census projected population of 223,252 in Ghana and according to Ziem et al (2011), is the fastest growing city in West Africa; this may be true for the fact that a lot of people find Tamale a suitable location to do all forms of business. Being a transit point between Burkina Faso, Northern Togo and the national capital Accra has created the opportunity for businesses to flourish and markets to thrive as population in the region continues to rise. As a result of this rising phenomenon in population and the growth of markets in the regional capital, the activity of head portering is fast growing and taking centre stage in the developmental potential of the region in terms its effect on educational enrolment and retention of girls. Of even greater concern is the tender age at which children are involved in this activity and the support



given by their parents and guardians who consider them as a potential source of income (Opare, 2003).

Another concern is the future of these girls who have left school to engage in head portorage. Most of these girls have entirely forsaken their dreams of going to school as well as their childhood dreams of becoming a “big person” in future. With poverty levels in the Northern, Upper West and Upper East Regions comparatively higher than other regions in Ghana (GSS, 2008), females in JHS as well as SHS are likely to drop out of school, migrate to urban centres and engage in head portorage. Despite moves by governments and NGOs to send these girls back to their places of origin, they still find their way back to the urban centres. This phenomenon is partly due to the unchanged circumstances they meet and the social integration challenges these girls face at their sending communities.

Ranging from ages 6-18, these children comprise mostly females with little or no hopes for any formal education in the future. Due to its immense growth and fast growing markets, Tamale has been able to draw a lot of girls from within and surrounding communities of the Metropolitan Area who come to engage in head portorage business for its supposed benefits. This trend is raising concerns as more and more young girls of school-going age tend to join in the head portorage business. This act of children engaging in head portorage is illegal as it goes against the Children’s Act 1998, which stipulates that children under the age of fifteen should not be allowed to work.





Young girls who engage in head portering are exposed to very severe weather conditions especially on very hot or rainy days. To counter these harsh weather conditions they hide on the verandahs of stores and under the shelter of their head pans. Rainy days are bad days for head porters. These girls find it very difficult to operate, and in extreme cases where the rains persist throughout the day, they earn very little or nothing at all, depriving them of their source of income for the day.

These girls loiter around the entrances of big shops and supermarkets where they can have easy access to customers who purchase goods from the stores. Most especially for these girls who hang around the shops is the sole purpose of establishing some form of reliance between them and customers as this is essential at developing familiarity with a customer who seeks her services to the disapproval of colleagues also engaged in head portering (Abdulai, 2013).

Harnessing the potentials of children through education is essential in ensuring the nation has clear chances of a bright and sustainable future by achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of providing equitable and inclusive quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all as well as attain gender equality, and empower women and girls everywhere. As stated earlier, past and present governments have continued to develop strategies to ensure all



children are given the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of sitting in a classroom. This push by governments would not be realised if more and more girls in the northern parts of the country continue to engage in the business of head portering further widening the educational gap between the north and the south. In trying to repatriate girls engaged in head portering in the urban markets of Accra and Kumasi Governments and NGOs only send these girls back to continue the same activity in the Tamale Metropolitan area.

Despite numerous studies conducted on head porters with regards to education, health and sanitation, income and employment, and migration of persons engaged in head portering in Ghana (Addison, 2005; Abdulai, 2013; Adu-Okoree, 2013; Anarfi and Kwankye, 2011; Awumbila, 2011; Caldwell, 1969; Hashim, 2005; Ziblim, 2013), there still remains a gap in literature on how this affects the educational enrolment and retention of girls engaged in head portering in the Tamale Metropolis, especially when migration does not involve the migrants moving from rural communities in northern Ghana to southern Ghana but migrants from rural communities within the Northern Regions engaging in head portering in urban markets within the Tamale Metropolis.





### 1.3 Research Questions

The main research question is:

What accounts for the rise in head portorage activities in the Tamale Metropolis and how does it affect school enrolment and retention of girls?

The study seeks answers to the following specific questions:

- i. What is the nature of the head portorage business in the Tamale Metropolitan area?
- ii. Why is the girl-child involved in head portorage in Tamale Metropolitan area?
- iii. How does head portorage affect school enrolment and retention in the Tamale Metropolitan area?
- iv. What cultural factors account for the indulgence of girls in head portorage in the Tamale Metropolitan area?
- v. What economic factors account for the indulgence of girls in head portorage in the Tamale Metropolitan area?

### 1.4 Research Objectives

The main research objective is to ascertain what accounts for the rise in head portorage activities in the Tamale Metropolis and how it affects school enrolment and retention of girls in school.

The study seeks to ascertain the following specifically:



- i. To identify and describe the demographic characteristics of girls involved in head porterage in the Tamale Metropolitan area.
- ii. To identify why the girl-child is involved in head porterage in the Tamale Metropolitan area.
- iii. To establish how head porterage affect school enrolment and retention in the Tamale Metropolitan area.
- iv. To establish cultural factors that account for the indulgence of girls in head porterage in the Tamale Metropolitan area.
- v. To establish economic factors that account for the indulgence of girls in head porterage in the Tamale Metropolitan area.

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

The study will give a clear picture of the current state of head porterage in the Tamale Metropolitan area to help private and state institutions gain an insight into the level the phenomenon has got to in the Tamale Metropolis.

The study will bring to light some challenges in Ghana that hinder the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (4) of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, goal (5) achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, as well as goal (10) reduce inequality within and among country in the Tamale Metropolitan area.



More importantly the study will ascertain if there is any link between head portorage and education of the girl-child.

It will also fill the gaps in the literature on the state of head portorage in Tamale markets.

Policy makers such as the government, international organisations, multilateral and bilateral organisations could find this research useful in their policy formulation and will aid them in developing interventions.

The study primarily focuses on the girl-child. This will create an awareness of the challenges faced by girls in rural communities in the Tamale Metropolitan area in attaining some significant education and how this prevents the nation from harnessing the full potential of its human resource.

## **1.6 Organisation of the Study**

The study is organised in five chapters. The first chapter focuses on the background of the study, the problem statement, research questions and objectives, the significance of the study and the organisation of the study. Chapter two reviews existing literature, highlighting various concepts and theories upon which the study is built. Chapter three focuses on the methodology used to



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conduct the study. It focuses on the sampling techniques, data collection, data analysis, and processes as well as ethical considerations of the study. Chapter four focuses on the outcomes of the study, data analysis and presentation of data. Chapter five presents major findings, conclusion and recommendations.





## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature related to the study. The chapter reviews existing literature on the factors influencing girl-child involvement in head portering in Ghana, cultural factors responsible for girl-child involvement in head portering in Ghana, economic factors responsible for girl-child involvement in head portering, female face of internal migration in Ghana, Ghana's public policy response to education and child protection, the Children's Act 1998 of Ghana and gender location and school enrolment in Ghana. This chapter also establishes the conceptual framework for the study.

#### 2.1 Factors Influencing Girl-Child Involvement in Head Portering in Ghana

The decision to take part in head portering does not mostly reside in the individual but is influenced by the factors surrounding the individual. The benefits of migration are enjoyed not by only the individuals or groups involved but by the community and household in the rural community from which the migrants originate (Effa, 2013; Nkansah-Okoree, 1995). Stemming from the uneven distribution of wealth and natural resources, most people would prefer to relocate to a place where they can achieve their goals and objectives (Anarfi and Kwankye, 2003; Adu-Okoree, 2013; Buske, 2014). Opare (2003) asserts that, individuals tend to migrate



more when conditions surrounding them are not skewed in their favour. Most people would remain at their communities if conditions there were favourable and future aspirations could easily be met or guaranteed. Decisions to leave are influenced not only by poverty in the rural communities but by other factors such as government policy, environmental changes, polygyny, peer pressure and vulnerability of young girls in society (Agarwal et al, 1994; Opare, 2003; Buske, 2014). These factors boost the degree to which women involve themselves in head portorage. In the first chapter, it was mentioned that the more women migrate to the urban regions the more likely they are to carry along their children or give birth there. This has resulted in mass involvement of children in head portorage in the urban regions of the country (Agarwal, et al. 1994). These children tend to have very little or no education at all, adding to the multitude of individual migrants involved in head portorage who have no or limited education (Agarwal et al, 1994; Opare, 2003).

## **2.2 Cultural Factors Responsible for Girl-Child Involvement in Head Portorage in Ghana**

The term culture has many meanings and its meanings are overlapping and still evolving. According to Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952:181), cited by Adler (1997:14), “Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered



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as products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of future action”. Similarly, Spencer-Oatey (2008: 3) defined culture as, “a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioral conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member’s behavior and his/her interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behavior”. According to Ghana’s 1992 Constitution:

*Every person is entitled to enjoy, practise, profess, maintain and promote any culture language, tradition or religion subject to the provisions of this constitution, Article 26 (1).*

The constitution also states;

*All customary practices which dehumanise or are injurious to the physical and the mental well-being of a person are prohibited, Article 26 (2).*

Despite this provision in the 1992 Constitution people still practise cultures that are injurious to the people involved. The Women’s Manifesto (2004) described Ghanaian cultures like other cultures as dynamic in nature. Cultures that do not respond to change with the passing of time have the propensity of becoming obsolete while undesirably affecting the society in which they are practised. Culture has been branded as one of the factors responsible for the migration of people from their rural communities to the urban regions in Ghana (Agarwal et al, 1997; Opare, 2003; Baah-Ennumh, Amponsah, & Adoma, 2012; Buske, 2014).





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The people within the northern parts of Ghana practise the patrilineal system and hence the man is seen as the head of the family. Inheritance of titles, rights and properties is identified through the male kin. Men are in charge of making all decisions at the household level. Within the community level decision making is left to the chiefs and elders who are made up of only males. The presence of a woman is only to serve as a mouth piece to communicate back to the women in the community decisions made by the chiefs or elders. Women are not greatly represented at the higher levels of the community institutional structure and this has greatly affected decisions which are skewed in favour of their male colleagues. Research has shown that most patrilineal customary societies do not provide any direct laws that protect women's rights (Jackson et al, 2002). Awumbila (2007) agrees that most men in Ghana fortify patriarchal relationship through gender-based violence, while others maintain that many young women run to the urban regions to engage in head portorage to escape depraved cultural practices at the community (Opare, 2003; Awumbila, 2007; Buske, 2014) . Studies have shown that people justify discriminatory practices with culture (Women's Manifesto, 2004). Women's subordination in society is supported by culture, religion and customs and hence paves the way for men to treat women in ways that are inhuman while further exacerbating the subordinate position of women. This practice has pushed women away from societies in which it is practised to urban settings where they can escape from these harsh practices whilst making a living for themselves through head portorage.

Within the rural areas in northern Ghana, polygyny is widely practised by men; the culture of marrying more than one wife has resulted in competition among women who share a single man





(Opare, 2003). This has resulted in women travelling to engage in head portorage in order to outshine their colleagues when they return (Opare, 2003). Polygynous families breed hatred among women and bias among men. This ultimately results in circumstances where some of the women enjoy some financial security from the man to the detriment of others. This further result in women leaving their husbands to practise head portorage in order to find some source of security for themselves and their children (Nukunya, 1969).

Families would prefer to further the education of the male children rather than that of the female in the rural savannah (Lambert, 2012). The reason is that they feel educating the female would not result in any future financial security for the family. This is primarily based on the fact that there are more male-headed households than female headed households GLSS, (2005) and with the males dominating there is surely going to be discrimination in school enrolment among males and females (FAO, 2012; Lambert, 2012).

The preference given to males in the family is a common culture found in rural people who have very little money to allocate to educational fees and also the feeling that educating the female is a total waste of resources as she will eventually be someone's wife or mother (Lambert, 2012).



### **2.3 Economic Factors Responsible for Girl-Child Involvement in Head Portage**

Past colonial domination and frail economic policies by successive governments have been a major contributor to the underdevelopment of Ghana (Women's Manifesto, 2004). The introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme in the 1980s saw some significant economic growth; however, it was accompanied by labour retrenchments, industrial decline, the removal of subsidies and institutionalisation of user fees in basic services (Briggs & Yeboah, 2001; Women's Manifesto, 2004). Structural Adjustment policies resulted in the widening of the wage gap between the rich and poor contributing to an unending flow of migration from rural societies to the urban regions (Yeboah et al, 2011). This further aggravated the plight of women who mostly found themselves in farming activities (Aryeetey et al, 2000). The removal of subsidies on education, health and agriculture greatly affected people in the northern parts of the country because of their historical neglect by the colonial governments as well as the lack of proper implementation of policies by succeeding governments. According to Akanji (1986), the structural adjustment resulted in the reduction of capacity utilisation in the private sector which saw the laying off of many workers resulting in an increase in the numbers of people employed in the informal sector, particularly women. Women dominate the informal sector due to the ease of entry, reliance on accessible resources, labour requirement, employment of adapted technology and the fact that skills are acquired outside the school system (Owualah, 2005). This eventually resulted in great discrepancies in poverty levels between the north and the south and especially the rural and urban sectors of the economy (Assibey, 2014). According to Opare (2008), because women are the most affected by poverty in Ghana, they are being compelled to



migrate to the more urban parts of the country to engage in head portering which promises them some form of income. Buske, (2014) described this phenomenon as the “bright light syndrome”.

Todaro and Smith (2012) reveal that the decision to migrate is as a result of the anticipated urban-rural real wage differential. According to Kwankye et al (2011), the decision to migrate for some of these girls is to earn some decent income in readiness for marriage. Although marriage in this sense is a social factor, the expected earnings which migrants perceive that pushes them out from their rural communities are considered economic. According to Buske (2014), the parental requirement to send the girl-child away to the market serves as a “strategic economic investment” against poverty; this allows the parents the opportunity to wean themselves of the cost of living for the departed girl and at the same time the migrant girl is expected to repatriate money to them through her head portering activities. Though some of these girls agree to move to the markets to work and support their parents and families financially, a lot of them affirmed that it disrupts their education and school attendance (Buske, 2014).

#### **2.4 Female Face of Internal Migration in Ghana**

In the previous chapter, it was mentioned that migration of women in Ghana to urban centres was either forced or voluntary based on some cultural and economic conditions surrounding their





place of origin. According to Chant and Radcliffe (1992), migration patterns are in various forms. These forms are; rural-urban migration, rural-rural migration, urban-rural migration and urban-urban migration; however, these forms of migration vary in size, frequency and geographical location. The most common form of migration in most African countries is the rural-urban form of migration (Dungumaro, 2013). It is an established fact that individuals have certain needs, dreams and aspirations and would prefer to stay at locations where these needs, dreams and aspirations can easily be accessed and fulfilled. The lack of a clear path in fulfilling these needs dreams and aspirations may well force individuals to seek other means of achieving their ambitions which might call for a total relocation of their place of residence to other locations where they feel they can satisfy their ambitions (Opare, 2003). According to Agarwal et al (1994), migration patterns appear to be quite common amongst rural folks who have a preference for migration to the urban centres to find alternative sources of livelihood.

According to Dungumaro (2013), migration was seen to be a male dominated activity, while women were seen as dependants and followers of their male spouses; however, women have always been part of migration flows. The past decade has seen a tremendous number of women migrating independently of their spouses and in greater numbers. There have been a lot of studies on internal migration in Ghana (Hill, 1970; Thomas, 1973; Plange, 1979; Arhin, 1988; Duodu, 2004; Adu, 2005; Awumbila et al, 2008). Most people migrate for varied reasons; however, the most common among these reasons are the economic factors that push people to leave their areas





of origin to settle at other locations (Thadani and Todaro, 1984). Most people who migrate out of their places of origin send remittances back to their families; these monies serve as security for their relatives contributing to poverty reduction and improved livelihoods for their respective families back home (Addison, 2005; GSS, 2006; Dungumaro, 2013). According to Quartey (2009), the greater part of remittances are used to finance recurrent expenditures and for private consumption by the families of head porters.

Many people migrate for multiple reasons; however drivers of migration work at different levels and influence the individual, household and community in a different way (Quartey 2009), and may benefit the individuals, groups or family depending on the opportunity they get at their receiving community (Afsar, 2003). The migratory patterns in the late 1960s in Ghana saw a majority of men moving to the southern parts of the country to engage in farming. Today these migrants are mostly made up of teenage girls from the rural areas in the Northern Region, Upper East Region and Upper West Region of Ghana. One reason these girls give that motivates them to engage in head portage in the urban areas is the polygynous families they come from back at their places of origin. Rural communities in the northern parts of the country are highly characterised by polygyny; hence family members rely a lot on the produce from farming activities for feeding and financial security. However, irregular rainfall and bad weather conditions have resulted in low yield for crops leading to low harvest and very little to feed or sell. Harsh weather conditions coupled with low crop yield has resulted in a situation where



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money derived from the sale of farm produce is inadequate to cater for individual needs of family members. Females who are more vulnerable in most families in the north are very much highly likely to migrate in search of money to cater for their needs.

The distribution of land and land ownership in the rural communities serves as a trigger that sets girls migrating to find alternative sources of livelihood for themselves in the urban regions. Farming constitutes the main occupation for rural inhabitants and their primary source of income and livelihood (Huijsmans, 2012). With the dominance of male patriarchy in the rural communities, women have very little chances of owning family land to engage themselves in subsistence or commercial farming activities. This factor of male patriarchy affects the distribution and ownership of land as well as womenfolk's chances of earning some income through farming in order to satisfy their needs or sustain some meaningful livelihood. With the difficulty in ownership of land and its associated discrimination against females, most girls are more likely to migrate to the urban regions to engage in other activities that secure them some form of income to satisfy their needs.

The gender dimension of migration is also manifested in inequalities seen by most rural inhabitants in the light of modernisation and development in the urban regions. The classical Economists also maintain that rural inhabitants are attracted to the urban areas by high industrial



wages. This is the evidence of the modernisation theory (Baah-Ennumh, Amponsah, & Adoma, 2012). The Human Development Index Report on Ghana (UNDP Ghana 2007: 151) provides clear evidence of uneven development in Ghana.

## **2.5 Ghana's Public Policy Response to Education and Child Protection**

Post-colonial governments of Ghana, in their pursuit of providing economic opportunity for all developed some programmes to help the underprivileged and especially the youth in society. Governments of Ghana have proposed and implemented a number of programmes and policies aimed at addressing the gender gap and disparities as well as promoting social inclusion in education. For the purpose of the study, five of these programmes are examined. These are; (Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme, capitation grant, School Feeding Programme, National Youth Employment Programme, and National Plan of Action). The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme (FCUBE) was initiated to provide free compulsory education for all pupils of school going age in the country. The FCUBE was aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools as well as infrastructure of schools in the country. One major setback for the FCUBE programme was that most schools continued to charge what they termed “administrative fees” to cater for repairs and other administrative needs of the schools. These fees were charged to supplement government funds in the acquisition of resources for the schools. The FCUBE’s aim was to offset the cost of fees but according to Buske (2014), the “real cost” of tuition which included school uniforms, one textbook, pens,





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pencils, book bags and transport cost did not serve the best interest of most rural folks especially girls and hence most of them could not enjoy the benefits of the FCUBE programme.

In 1999, the government of Ghana through the education ministry, after intense deliberation and research shifted their focus from improving infrastructure and teaching in schools to creating a programme that would seek to subsidise school fees for the average Ghanaian as well as increase the level of enrolment of pupils in schools around the country. This move by the government of Ghana saw the introduction of the education capitation grant which started as a pilot programme in 2004. The overriding objective of the policy was to address poverty and gender inequality in the educational sector. The Capitation grants are government funds which are provided to schools on a per-child basis based on enrolment (Buske, 2014). This move by the government saw enrolment figures at the kindergarten level go up in 2004-2005 to about 500,000 and in 2005-2006 by more than 800,000. During the same period primary net enrolment rate increased from 59.1 per cent to 68.8 per cent, net enrolment at the Junior High School increased from 31.6 per cent to 41.6 per cent in the same year (Chachu, 2011). Gender figures recorded during the year showed a higher rate of enrolment for girls compared to boys (Chachu, 2011; Kwabi, 2013).

In its quest to increase and maintain enrolment figures for pupils especially in the rural areas and more specifically girls, the Government of Ghana launched the School Feeding Programme in





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2005 as a pilot programme under the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to provide nutritious meals for pupils who maintain some appreciable level of attendance at the selected schools (Kwabi, 2013). This programme was to support moves to encourage parents send their wards to school while trying to reduce the cost of feeding by the parents on the children. The success of the school feeding programme saw the move from its pilot stages in 2005 to a full nationwide initiative in 2008. The programme however faced some setback as not all schools in the country benefited from the programme. Monies allocated for the programme by the government were not judiciously used for their purpose and hence the ultimate goal of the programme was threatened. The programme also aimed at creating some revenue for local farmers in addition to developing the agricultural sector. The government would purchase locally produced food from farmers and encourage the setting up of school farms and gardens to train students in practical agriculture. The inadequate flow of funds, delayed payment from the government of Ghana and the lack of a set criterion for monitoring beneficiary schools defeated the programme's focal objectives consequently affecting local farmers whose produce could not be bought due to lack of funds.

Another programme initiated by the government of Ghana was the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP), which seeks to provide jobs for underemployed and unemployed youth (Yeboah et al, 2011). The NYEP which was later changed to the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GYEEDA) was part of strategic moves by the



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Government of Ghana to employ the youth in the country given the high unemployment rate among Ghanaian youth. This programme however had its limitation in that, it only focused on individuals who had attained some significant level of education with a minimum of Junior High School Certificate. This specification by the programme discriminates against youth in the rural parts of the country who are most likely not able to attain that level of education and hence do not benefit from the programme (World Bank, 2011).

To address the issue of head portorage which is largely seen as a form of child labour, the government of Ghana formulated the National Plan of Action in 2004 for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (NPA). The NPA which is under the umbrella of the Medium Term Development Policy Framework (MTDPF) aimed at reducing all forms of child labour to the barest minimum by 2015. The NPA sought to satisfy constitutional provisions aimed at eliminating the worst forms of child labour in the country while laying a strong policy and institutional foundation to prevent other forms of child labour apart from head portorage.

Notwithstanding these policy interventions by the Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Education, there have been some significant factors that create barriers to female education in the country. According to Lambert et al (2012), cultural predispositions towards gender inequality is a strong limitation to female education in Ghana.



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In Ghana, the northern rural traditional societies hold negative views about girls who advance in education. These negative perceptions range from such women not being able to find a man to marry in future due to their status or becoming unsuitable wives in marital homes. These assertions negatively affect females who have the aims of attaining higher education in life. Jackson et al (2002) agree that, this belief creates bias against girls when traditional customs and norms cause a situation where there is greater willingness by parents to invest in boys' education over girls. They added that, dropout rates are higher amongst girls in the Northern Region of Ghana for reasons such as marriage and pregnancy.

More so, the forced and early marriages of teenage girls encouraged by their parents especially in the rural communities do not allow them the opportunity to attain higher education. In most instances girls are forced to cut short their education to get married. This is very common among rural poor families who in their quest to prevent additional cost of taking care of the girl marry her out.

Also, the policies and programmes set out by the governments of Ghana are to offset school fees and boost enrolment of pupils in the various parts of the country. However they do not cater for other costs such as transportation, uniforms and registration fees among others. These other costs mentioned above become a burden to families who are most likely to give preference to boys compared to the girl when all the children cannot be educated due to limited finances (Lambert et al, 2013).





### 2.5.1 The Children's Act 1998 of Ghana

The rights of children have always played a fundamental role in developing a plan for an all representative and democratic environment where everyone including children has their rights protected by legislative instruments. The Children's Act of Ghana, the five hundred and sixtieth Act of the parliament of the republic of Ghana, a document prepared on the 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1998 spells out the rights of the child. According to Article 81 (1) and (2) of the Children's Act, "No person shall engage a child in exploitative labour" and "Labour is exploitative of a child if it deprives the child of its health, education" (Children Act, 1998). However, most parents and guardians allow their children to engage in all sorts of labour that are exploitative and deprive the child of a meaningful education in life. With respect to working as head porters, the Children's Act describes this activity as hazardous. According to the Children's Act, Article (91) "the minimum age for the engagement of a person in hazardous work is eighteen years" yet according to Buske, (2014), most of the children fall within ages ten to sixteen years making them fall within the brackets of what the Act describes as hazardous employment. Activities termed hazardous according to the Children's Act include; going to sea, mining and quarrying, portering of heavy loads, manufacturing industries where chemicals are produced or used, work in places where machines are used and work in places such as bars, hotels and places of entertainment where a person may be exposed to immoral behavior.





The Children's Act in this case describes head portorage as a form of employment that is hazardous and violates the fundamental rights of the child.

## **2.6 Gender Location and School Enrolment in Ghana**

In Ghana, school attendance has increased consistently and appreciably over time (GLSS6). Enrolment figures in Ghana generally show the Northern, Upper West and Upper East Regions as being the lowest in both gross and net enrolment in education (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). Historically, this has been attributed to the skewed and targeted educational interest of colonial governments and the level of poverty experienced at the regions (Langer et al, 2007; Buske, 2014). With rural infrastructure being poor and with the level of discrimination and deprivation of the girl-child in northern Ghana; school enrolment, retention and performance are likely to be poor.

Within the spheres of education, studies have shown gender inequalities in education (Asare, 2009; ISODEC & UNICEF, 2011; Lambert, 2012; Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). The education of women is vital in Ghana's strive at achieving the universal primary education targets (Awumbila, 2007). However, according to the national analytical report, enrolment of females in schools is especially very low compared to their male counterparts in the three northern regions of Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010).



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To a large extent the degree of discrimination against women is predominant especially in Northern, Upper West and Upper East regions of Ghana (Jackson et al, 2002). Nonetheless, there have been tremendous efforts by the government of Ghana at achieving significant gender equality at all levels of education. However, Wood (1987) asserts that achieving equality in education alone does not guarantee equal chances in life and before females can be liberated from their state of servitude other sectors such as the social and environment sectors needed to be tackled. Yet the reality remains that women lag behind at all levels of education in Ghana (EACEA, 2010). In the area of enrolment, female representation in the classroom fell compared to their male counterparts with the continuous rise in the educational ladder (Higgins, 2009). Close commitment to patriarchal systems has created an avenue for males to discriminate against females in choosing who attends school and who does not. This has resulted in a situation where women achievers are less compared to the males in various organisations and institutions (EACEA, 2010). This was clearly shown in a 2000-2005 study of heads of public and private tertiary institutions by the Ghana Statistical Service.

The Northern, Upper West and Upper East Regions have been major contributors to the total number of women migrating to the urban centres of Ghana to engage in the head portorage. Research has shown that a lot of women go into head portorage because it is informal and one of the easiest ways of making money with little or no training at all (Opore, 2003). Studies have also shown a majority of these girls have no or very little formal education (Agarwal et al, 1997;



Opare, 2003). In fact this even goes to affect the very activity they engage in as negotiation becomes a major problem for head porters. The majority of them who cannot bargain for better charges on goods carried just settle for whatever they are given by customers. The majority of head porters, because of their illiterate background, find it difficult to access and utilise health services. The consequences of this are that, they seek medical advice from unqualified persons resulting in a situation where illnesses are misdiagnosed and drugs administered wrongly. Access to security personnel proves challenging when head porters are subjected to abuse by the public due to their lack of education regarding the processes to follow to access justice. In the urban regions people do not regard these women as humans or equals and would create an inimical environment for them to work in as a result of their weak education. Other contributory factors such as adolescent pregnancy, socio-cultural constraints and sexual harassment cause low educational retention of girls.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

Despite numerous measures and interventions set up by the Governments of Ghana to boost the education of girls and prevent them from taking part in practises such as head portage, the literature reviewed revealed the existence of some cultural practices that continue to impact negatively on these policies and programmes, impeding the advancement of women in society. Cultural practices in the traditional Ghanaian communities such as polygyny and patriarchy among others serve as contributing factors to women's and girl's subordination. The outcomes of these adverse cultural practices are that females affected tend to look for a way out of the society





in which they are practised. This mostly results in their migration out of their social settings to other settings that promise to provide them with their needs and wants.

The literature revealed that, programmes such as the Structural Adjustment Programme by the Government of Ghana contributed to some economic growth in the 1980s. However, this was followed by industrial decline and labour retrenchments among others, further worsening the economic plight of rural inhabitants in the country and contributing to an increase in rural-urban migration by rural dwellers in search of jobs.

Wage differentials among rural and urban dwellers according to Todaro and Smith (2012), also account for the migration of most women to urban centres to engage in informal activities such as head portorage.

It has been established from the literature reviewed that most parents decide to send young girls to engage in head portorage in urban centres in order to wean them off the economic cost of taking care of these girls. Buske (2014) described this decision as a “Strategic Economic Investment” by the parents of girls in rural communities who decide to send off their daughters to urban centres to practise head portorage.





Drawing from findings in the literature reviewed, girls who are victims of bad cultural practices and who find themselves engaged in head portorage in urban centres have the propensity of stopping short their education careers. The inadequacy of funds and the reluctant attitude of parents of these girls from rural communities create some level of psychological barrier to their attaining any significant level of education.

## 2.8 Conceptual Framework

Girl-child involvement in head portorage and its effects on their chances to get enrolled or remain in educational institutions have been captured by a number of researchers in their examination of head portorage (Agarwal, et al. 1994; Opare, 2003; Arriagada, 2005; Awumbila, 2007; Van den Berg, 2007; Yeboah et al, 2009; Yeboah et al, 2011; Ahlvin, 2012; Baah-Ennumh, Amponsah, & Adoma, 2012; Ziblim, 2013; Buske, 2014). While others have shown a link between the children not going to school and migrating to engage in informal work (Castle and Diarra, 2003), others have also argued that children engage in migration because their parents have not been able to get them enrolled in school (Beauchemin 1999). For the purpose of the study, the conceptual framework I would use is derived from Doeringer and Piore's (1971) model of dual labour market. The framework postulates the existence of two markets in the economy each possessing distinct features (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Kurekova, 2011). Though the conceptual framework makes emphasis on advanced economies, this theory can be



adapted and applied in the case of Ghana (which is not considered advanced) to better explain the study of the research.

According to Doeringer and Piore (1971), the economic organisation in advanced economies is divided into two. While some refer to the division as primary and secondary sectors (Bennett, 1979), others refer to it as capital intensive and labour intensive (Kurekova, 2011). The primary sector is characterised by higher wages, greater returns to human capital, stable employment and desirable working conditions while the secondary sector has features of lower wages, less returns to human capital, unstable unemployment and undesirable working conditions. The dual labour model like the world system model highlights structural changes in the economy to migration but makes emphasis on the demand side (Massey et al, 1993). The model maintains that migration is as an outcome of unskilled labour moving from the secondary or labour intensive sector to the primary sector to engage in jobs that are generally low paying, unstable, and generally unattractive (Kurekova, 2011), and which inhabitants in the primary or capital intensive sector are reluctant to engage in. Bennett (1979) adds that with the people from the secondary sector characterised by labour intensive skills and the inability to purchase skills enhancement; restrict their ability to demand higher wages especially at the primary sector where higher wages are paid to primary sector workers because of their ability to purchase skills enhancement. The unstable nature of the job market makes it very difficult to form unions or associations (Bennett, 1979), and hence the exploitation of these workers at the primary sector (Abdulai, 2013). With



respect to the study, unemployment at the rural communities is a motive for young women to migrate to the urban centres to engage in all sorts of activities to earn some form of income (Hashim, 2005). Farming a major source of occupation for families in the rural communities does not guarantee a stable and adequate source of income for households in the rural communities. Limited income for households at rural communities informs the choice of who gets to attend school and who does not. However, decisions to get enrolled in school are mostly skewed towards the male child (Jackson et al, 2002).

In addition, the illiteracy of most heads of households creates a situation where they are unskilled and are not able to take up jobs that demand skills and expertise. The poverty of most heads of households in the rural communities is likely to affect all members of the household as they are unable to invest properly in individual members of their families. The model also supports the notion of poor institutions in the secondary sector which accounts for the poor nature of patronage of rural inhabitants in institutions at the secondary sector. The poor nature of schools and teaching staff makes education unattractive to the rural inhabitants. The effect is that most people do not see the importance of education and hence there is no motivation for parents and guardians to enroll children in schools.





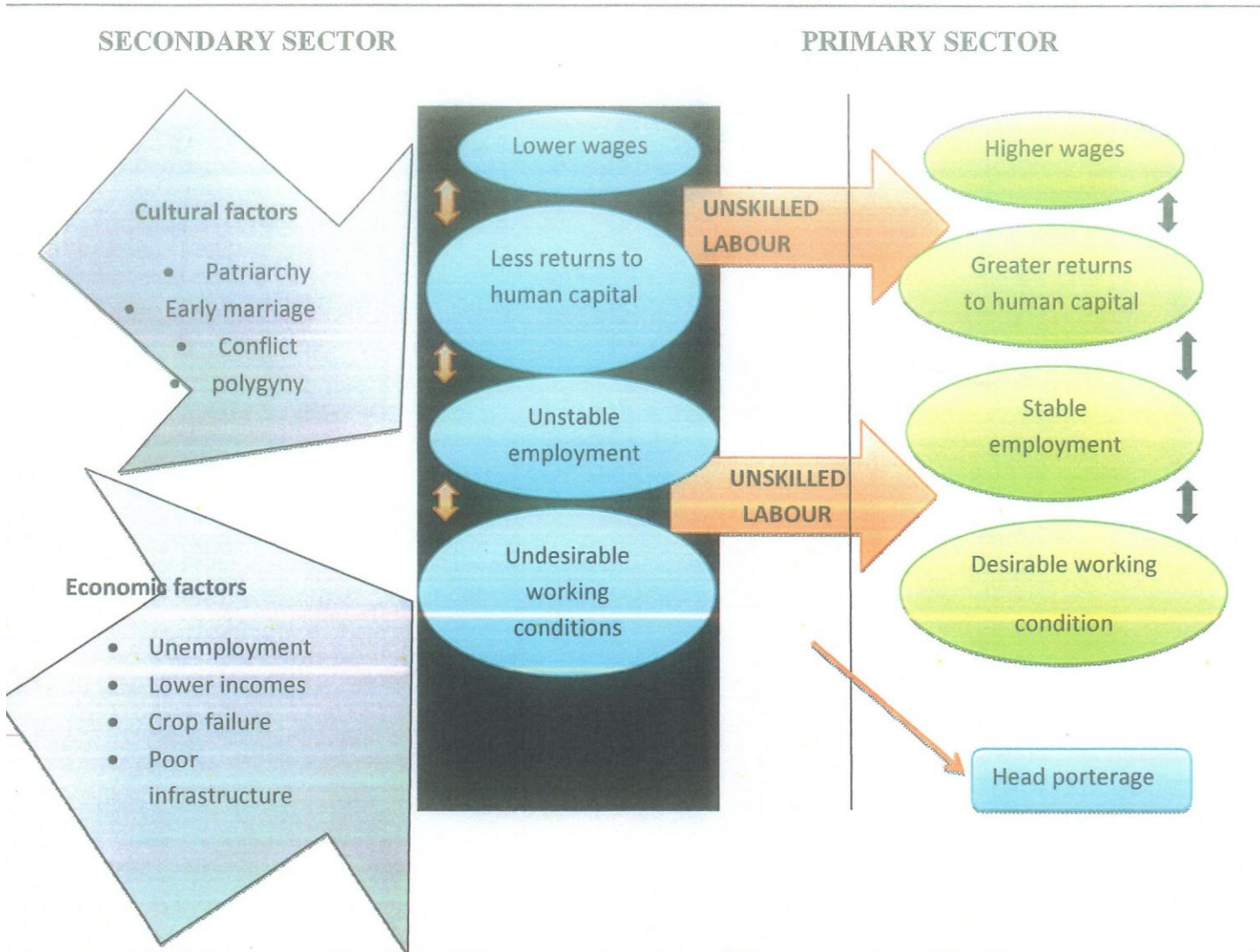
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The model goes further to explain that in the secondary labour market, tasks are simple, repetitive and demands very little skills, which would explain the problem of secondary sector workers finding it difficult to acquire higher paying jobs at the primary sector (Bennett, 1979). Supply to the urban labour market is infinite as the labour demands from the secondary sector are often learned quickly, easily, and demand no form of formal training. The model offers a fair explanation of the reasons why rural inhabitants migrate to urban areas to take part in some specific jobs. With respect to the research, it explains why more and more girls from rural communities go into head portering in the Tamale Metropolis.





Figure 2.1 Migrations of Head Porters to Urban Centre Conceptual Framework



Source: Author's Construct, 2015.

Figure 2.1 gives further clarity to the conceptual framework of the study. The diagram depicts the existence of two sectors, the primary and secondary sectors which have distinct features and



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characteristics. The secondary sector which is characterised by lower wages, less returns to human capital, unstable unemployment and undesirable working conditions sees the movement of people who in general are attracted to the primary sector which has better features of having higher wages, greater returns to human capital, stable employment and desirable working conditions. Movement within this framework is not devoid of skilled labour moving from the secondary sector to the primary sector but a considerable number of unskilled labourers migrate to the primary sector compared to skilled labour from the secondary sector. Cultural and economic factors in the diagram are push factors that may contribute to the movement of people from the secondary to the primary sector. Baah-Ennumh, Amponsah, & Adoma, (2012) labeled culture as one key factors that induce girls to migrate from their place of origin to urban centres to engage in head portorage. In the above diagram cultural factors such as patriarchy, early marriages, conflicts and polygyny have been named drivers of migration especially for women and young girls. Economic factors at the place of origin such as unemployment, lower incomes, crop failure and poor infrastructure have been identified as key in the movement of people and especially young people from their places of origin. According to Baah-Ennumh, Amponsah, & Adoma, (2012), most people will prefer to migrate if economic opportunities available at their destinations outweigh those at their places of origin, especially if the economic prospects at the destination are easy to access and demand very little income investment.



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According to the diagram the movement of unskilled labour from the secondary sector to the primary sector will mean finding a suitable job that best fits the level of qualification or skill of the migrant at the primary sector. This would mean according to Kurekova (2011), finding jobs that are too generally low-paying and largely unattractive to primary sector inhabitants due to status (Kurekova, 2011). The element of head portering introduced in the diagram shows the informal and easy-to-enter type of job most people from the secondary sector are likely to engage themselves in, in the primary sector. According to Buske (2014), most people do not call head porters by their names, instead, negative and contemptuous names are attributed to them. They continue to be ridiculed and abused verbally by both market women and the public in general.

However, critics of the theory such as Wachter (1974), stress that the dualists only concentrate on comparing sectors based on the strict distinction between good and bad jobs at the primary and secondary sectors respectively. The theory also suggests that economic mobility is sharply limited between both sectors hence workers in the secondary sector are essentially trapped there. The theory also seems to suggest that the secondary sector is characterised by high job instability as compared to the primary sector where jobs are more stable and moving frequently among jobs is less.





## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

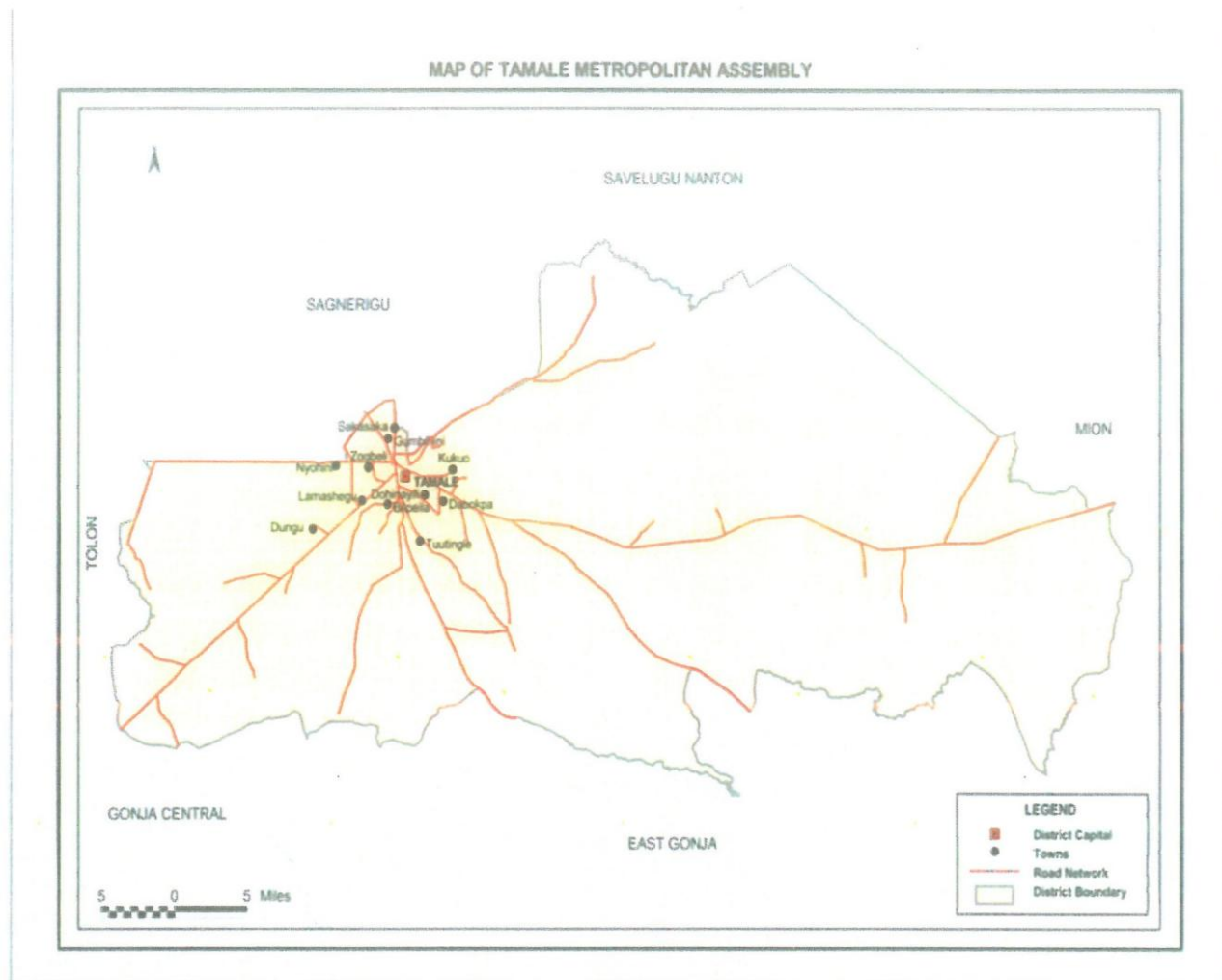
This chapter elucidates the study of this study. The chapter provides information on, the choice of the study area, the research design, sampling design and sample size, data collection strategies, and method of data analyses. The chapter also highlights the role of the researcher and some of the ethical considerations in the conduct of this study.

#### 3.1 Selection of the Study Areas

The choice of Tamale Metropolis as a research area is as a result of the poor level of educational access for inhabitants observed in the metropolis (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). The dearth of social amenities in surrounding rural communities has been a major push factor for people in the rural areas to migrate to the metropolis to engage in all sorts of income earning activities (Tamale Metropolitan Assembly, 2015). Of even greater interest to the researcher is the effect this movement has on girls who substitute education for engaging in head portering. More so the limited literature on study of migrants from around the metropolis who engage in head portering within Tamale and not in the south of the country contributed in selecting the metropolis as an ideal area of study.



Figure 3.1 Map of the Study Area



Source: Ghana Statistical Service, 2010 Population Housing Census

### 3.2 Research Design

The study seeks to broaden the understanding of why and how head portorage affects the educational prospects of girls engaged in it. The research in this sense makes use of the



qualitative research design. This research methodological paradigm is best suited for this study as it brings about a clearer understanding of human behaviour, coping mechanisms and adaptation strategies of the target population for the study. This study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data.

### **3.3 Sampling Design and Sample Size**

The sample population in the research included young girls engaged in head portering in the Tamale central markets, the market men and women who sell within the market, market authorities, staff of the Department of Labour, staff of the Department of Social Development (formerly, Social Welfare Department), staff of an educational institution that has head porter girls, staff of the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly and customers of the market all in the Tamale Metropolitan area.

The study makes use of a non-probability sampling technique. Non probability samples are based on convenience sampling, judgment, and quota sampling techniques. For the purpose of the study, the snowball sampling technique, purposive sampling technique and convenience sampling technique were employed. With the snowball technique the researcher was able to utilise well-informed persons to identify participants who had knowledge on the phenomenon under study. The purposive sampling technique was used because the study is centred on the





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effects head portage has on the education of girls who are engaged in the activity and hence only head porters of school going age were sampled for the study. The technique was also used to identify institutions relevant to the study. The convenience sampling technique was used to identify head porters for focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews.

The heterogeneity of the sample frame which consisted of market women and customers, staff of an educational institution that has head porters, market authorities, staff of the Labour Department, staff of the Department of Social Development (formerly, Social Welfare Department), staff of The Tamale Metropolitan Assembly and girls engaged in head portage guided the researcher's choice of the sample size. One hundred and seven (107) people were sampled for the study. This was made up of 15 market women, 15 customers, 2 officers of the an educational institution that has head porters, 1 market authority, 2 officers of the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly, 1 officer of the Labour Department, 1 officer of the Department of Social Development (formerly, Social Welfare Department), and 70 head porters.



**Table 3.1 Distribution of Sample Frame and Size**

<b>Sample Frame</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
Market Women	15
Customers	15
Educational Institution Staff	2
Market Authority	1
Tamale Metropolitan Assembly	2
Labour Department	1
Department of Social Development	1
Head Porters	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>

Source: Field survey, 2016

### **3.4 Data Collection Strategies**

A range of data collection strategies were employed for the study which consisted of the following:



### **3.4.1 Focus Group Discussions**

The focus group discussions took place on weekends because, according to the head porters weekends were the busiest days in the week. Head porters involved in the focus group discussions were selected through the convenience sampling techniques because they were difficult to access or locate and only girls who turned up for the discussions were interviewed and their responses recorded on a field note book by the researcher. The focus group discussions were held in two sessions on Sundays which was the preferred day chosen by head porters amongst other days of the week. Focus group discussions enabled the researcher gain an insight into some demographic characteristics of girls engaged in head portage in the metropolis as well as the motives behind their engagement in the activity.

### **3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were used because of the lack of comprehension abilities by some of the main respondents (head porters) and some other individuals sampled in the course of the study. Some questions used to conduct interviews with the head porters had to be rephrased so respondents could understand and explain their responses. Interviews were semi-structured to enable the researcher come out with some descriptive statistics to explain some variables about girls who engaged in head portage. The technique provided invaluable information about their educational history, their current state of education, their daily earning rates, their conditions of work as well as how and why they engaged in head portage.





### 3.4.3 Migration Stories

This technique provided information on the various backgrounds of head porters and their migration patterns. It allowed for an in-depth understanding of why many of these girls migrated from the rural communities to the urban metropolis to engage in head portage. The technique provided information on the abilities of girls to return to their various communities taking into consideration factors such as distance and availability of transportation and cost of transportation. Migration stories allowed the researcher gain insight into why some rural communities had greater numbers of girls engaging in head portage compared to other rural communities.

### 3.4.3 Field Notes

Interviews administered to various individuals and institutions mostly took an unstructured and informal nature and hence information that were not expected but relevant in giving a further understanding on head portage and its effects on education in the metropolis were written down in a field note book. Field notes were relevant in taking down additional information which was not expected from field visits and from persons and institutions visited. Field notes taken at each level of data collection provided additional information as well as an insight into some of the responses given by various persons and institutions in the course of data collection. This method of data collection also served as a source of reference to information written down



during focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews conducted in the course of the research.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse some of the data obtained in the study. This allowed the researcher draw up descriptive statistics to explain some variables.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

Ethics in social research must be stressed to regulate the relationship between the researcher, the people and fields they intend to study (Flick, 2009). Similarly, the Ethical Standards of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) states, “It is of paramount importance that educational researchers respect the rights, privacy, dignity, and sensitivities of their research populations and also the integrity of the institutions within which the research occurs. Educational researchers should be especially careful in working with children and other vulnerable populations” (American Educational Research Association, 2002, p. 3). In conducting the study, girls were actively involved and hence, their rights as children, teenagers or participants needed to be protected in the course of the research. The study mostly consisted of children who were of school-going age but for one reason or the other were engaged in head



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porterage. Conducting the research meant a total disclosure of the research objectives, goals, implications and the roles the children will be engaged in the research process. According to the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2008), even though a child may not be legally competent to give consent, researchers should gain informed consent. Gaining informed consent implied the use of language that fits into the cognitive capacity of the children used in the study.

In view of the above, data collection processes began with a full disclosure of the rights of respondents. Children involved in the study were given a full explanation of what the research entailed and how their contributions aided in attaining some of the objectives the research was set out to achieve.





## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

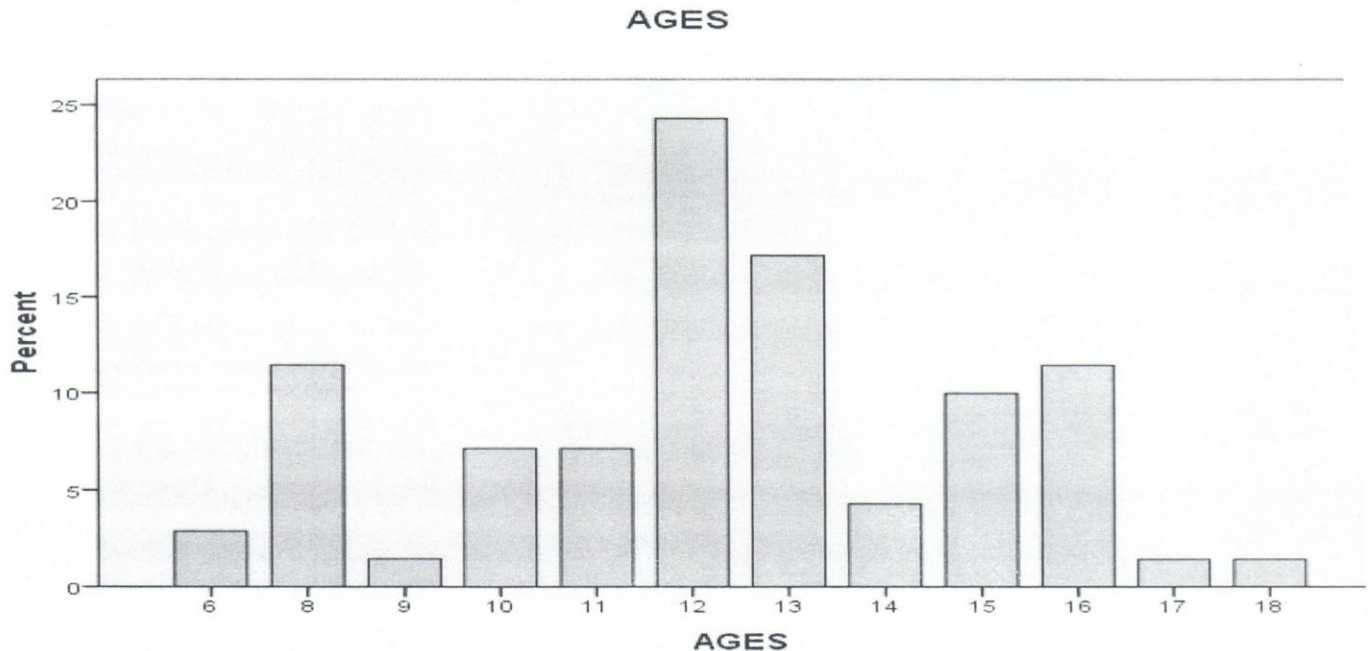
#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter relates to analysis of data collected from both primary and secondary sources. The chapter provides information on how head portorage affects the school enrolment and retention of girls engaged in it. By examining the demographic characteristics of respondents in the research, the chapter goes further to analyse the level of education of persons engaged in head portorage, the cultural and economic factors that push girls from surrounding rural areas to engage in head portorage and how that affects their educational enrolment and retention in the Tamale Metropolis. Stressing the cultural and economic factors that push girls into head portorage, the analysis establishes a link between the both factors and how they contribute to their indulgence in head portorage. Finally, the head porter's motives, intentions and how money derived from this activity is spent is established in this chapter.



#### 4.1 Description of Samples

Figure 4.1: Bar Chart Showing Ages of Head Porters



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

From the total sample of head porters, analysis from semi-structured interviews revealed that, 24% were ages 12; comprising the greatest age group that dominated among girls engaged in head portage. Other age groups that dominated in the study were ages; 13, 8, 16 and 15 representing 18%, 14%, 12% and 11% respectively. This confirmed information collected from the staff of the Department of Labour and focus group discussions with head porters that most of



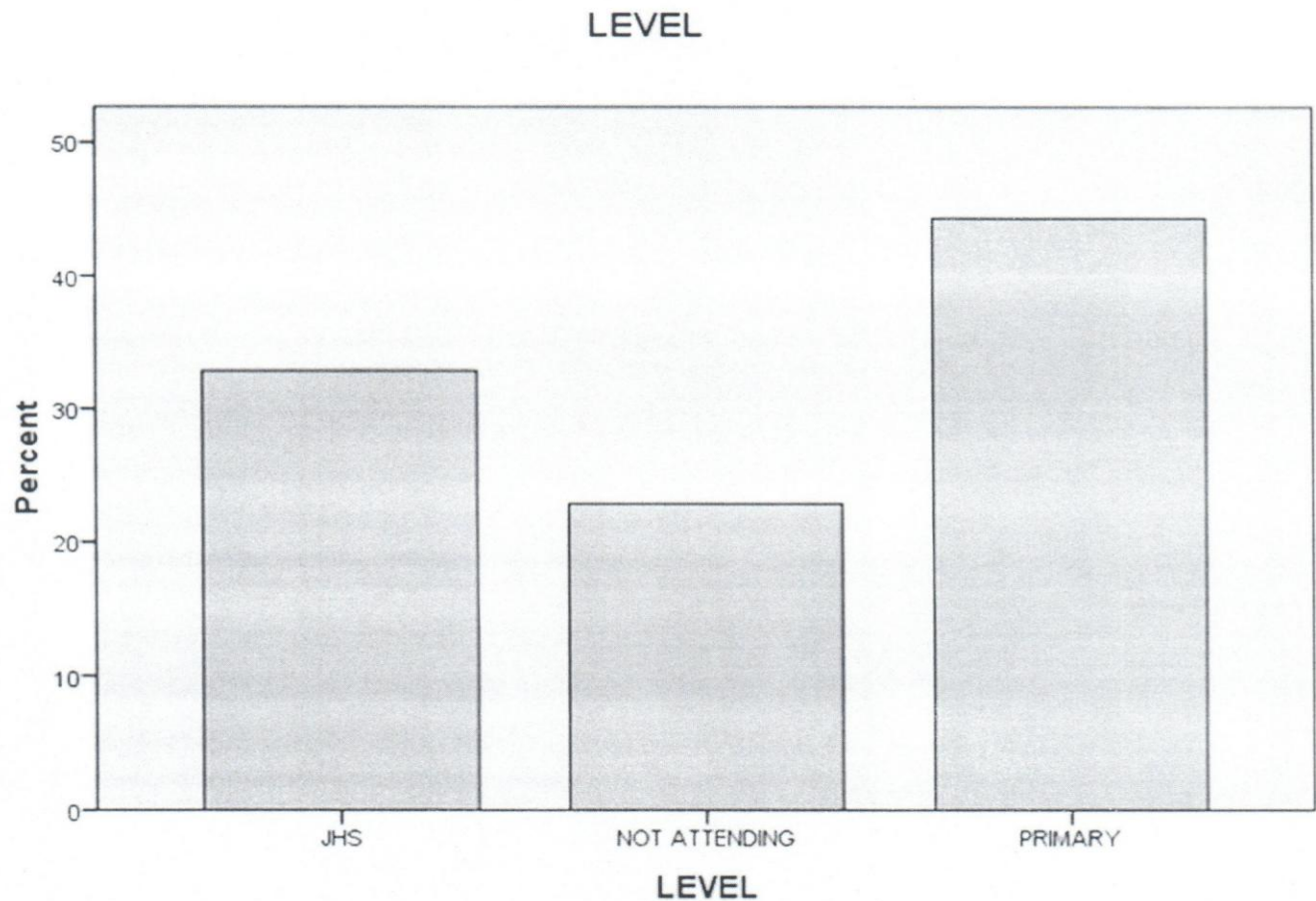
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the girls in this age group were easily influenced by their friends who were already engaged in head portorage. Interviews conducted with the headmaster and teachers of Kulnyevilla T.I Ahamadiyya located at Kulnyevilla a community close to Tamale revealed that; girls within the age range of 12-13 are at the JHS level and where they need to pay a lot of money for mock exams and registration for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), hence their active involvement in head portorage to earn some money to settle some of these educational expenses. According to the headmaster, Nassam Suhununu, pupils at the JHS have to look for money through other means because their parents do not give them money for feeding and for examinations charges. According to him, the desperation to pay fees at school as well as satisfy some basic needs by female students push them to engage in head portorage or involve themselves in sexual affairs with older men, who are ready to give them money (Nassam Suhununu, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2016).





Figure 4.2 Bar Chart Showing Level of Education of Head Porters



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

From the study conducted, analysis on the various education levels of head porters revealed that 45% of girls engaged in head portage in the Tamale Metropolis have ever attended primary



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school, followed by 33% ever being in Junior High School, whilst 22% of the head porters never attended school. Those who admitted they never set foot in a classroom blamed poverty at the family level as their reason for not going to school. Abdulai Mohammed Muniru, a JHS teacher at Kulnyevilla T.I Ahamadiyya School in an interview stated:

There are times school authorities have to call on parents of pupils who have not paid their examination fees to meet them. In most cases, the parents tell us they do not have money to pay for the examination charges and if the school has got some money it should pay so they pay back such monies to the school on a later date. The pupils who engage in head portage are found in JHS 1 and JHS 2. The last time I confronted a girl in my class I saw her at the market practising head portage, she confided in me that she needed money to pay for her BECE examination fee and it was through head portage she could put together that amount of money she was expected to pay. As for the males in the JHS 1 and 2 levels, they drive motor tricycles to support them pay for their examination fees. Most pupils who practise head portage miss school 2 to 3 days a week; those students who manage to come to school the whole week yet practise head portage spend the better part of school hours sleeping on their desks because of the stress they go through when practising their trade (Abdulai Mohammed Muniru. 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2016).



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He added that girls involved in head portage were mostly pupils from Islamic schools who did not take education seriously (Abdulai Mohammed Muniru. 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2016). This last statement by Abdulai Mohammed Muniru agrees with Anane (2010), that most head porters who found themselves in educational institutions attended Islamic schools.





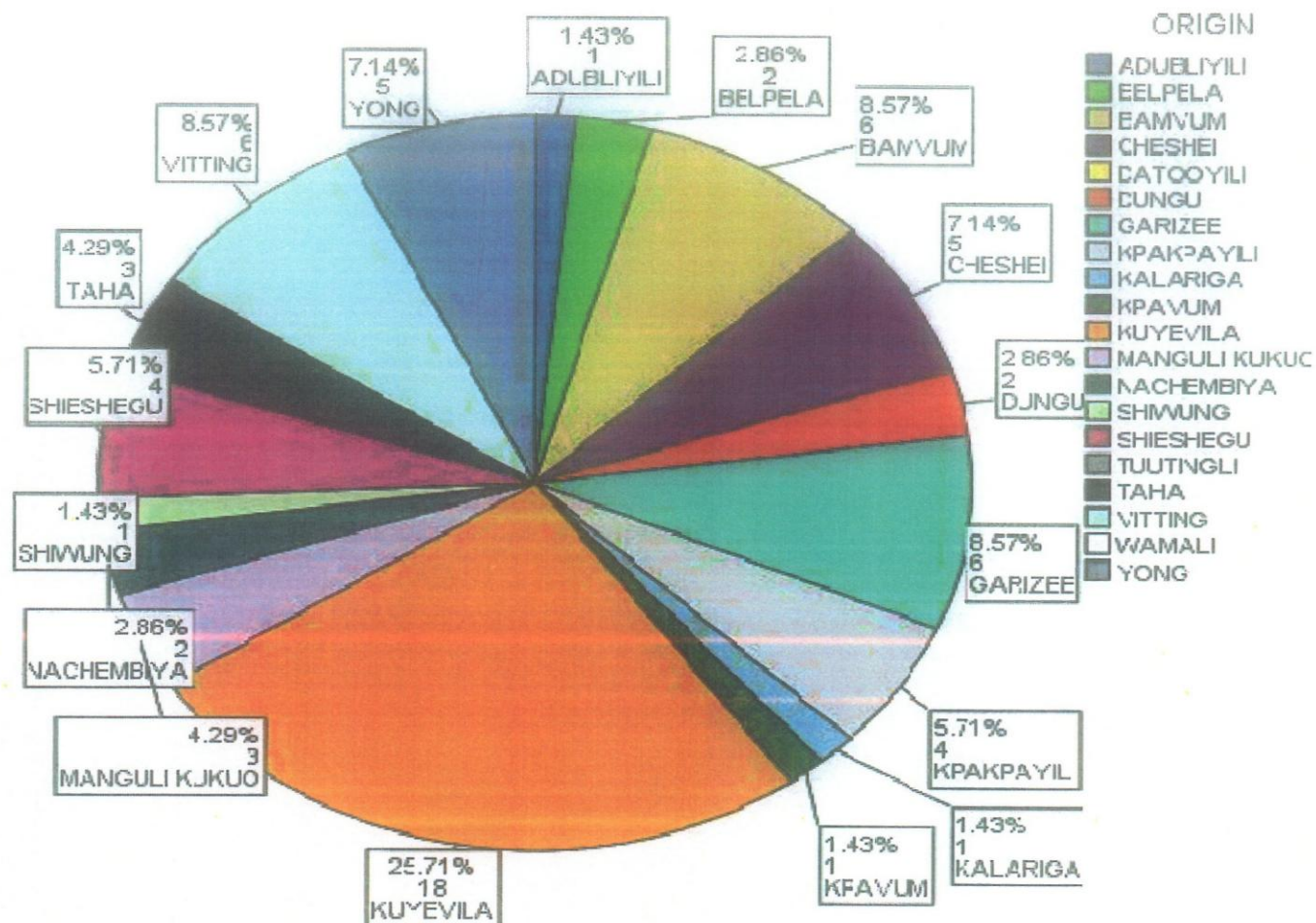
Table 4.1 Showing Places of Origin of Head Porters

ORIGIN	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMMULATIVE PERCENT	
ADUBLIYILI	1	1.4	1.4	
BELPELA	2	2.9	4.3	
BAMVUM	6	8.6	12.9	
CHESHEI	5	7.1	20.0	
DUNGU	2	2.9	22.9	
GARIZEE	6	8.6	31.4	
KPAKPAYILI	4	5.7	37.1	
KALARIGA	1	1.4	38.6	
KPAVUM	1	1.4	40.0	
KUYEVILA	18	25.7	65.7	
MANGULI KUKUO	3	4.3	70.0	
NAHEMBIYCA	2	2.9	72.9	
SHIWUNG	1	1.4	74.3	
SHIESHEGU	4	5.7	80.0	
TAHA	3	4.3	84.3	
VITTING	6	8.6	92.9	
YONG	5	7.1	100	
TOTAL				

Source: Field Survey, 2016



Figure 4.3: Pie Chart Showing Places of Origin of Head Porters



Source: Field Survey, 2016.



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Out of the total number of 70 head porters sampled for the study, the maximum of 18 head porters were from a community called Kulnyevilla. This confirmed what the market Chief, Abdulai Imoro in an interview had to say about the harsh poverty conditions of some of the communities these girls came from some which he mentioned as Cheshei, Kulnyevilla and Garizee as communities extremely affected by poverty, which may possibly present the larger population of girls in the market practising head porterage (Abdulai Imoro, 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2016).

Zumah, a tomato seller also mentioned in an interview that Kulnyevilla was noted as one of the communities where a lot of head porters came from. In focus group discussions with the head porters, it was observed that these girls from Kulnyevilla knew each other very well. The familiarity spanned from the family one belonged to, to the house one came from and the school and class one belonged to. Most of the girls from this community were related in one way or the other. They were either very good friends or attended the same school (Zumah, 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2016).

At Kulnyevilla, the Headmaster of Kulnyevilla T.I Ahamadiyya School Nassam Suhununu mentioned in an interview that:





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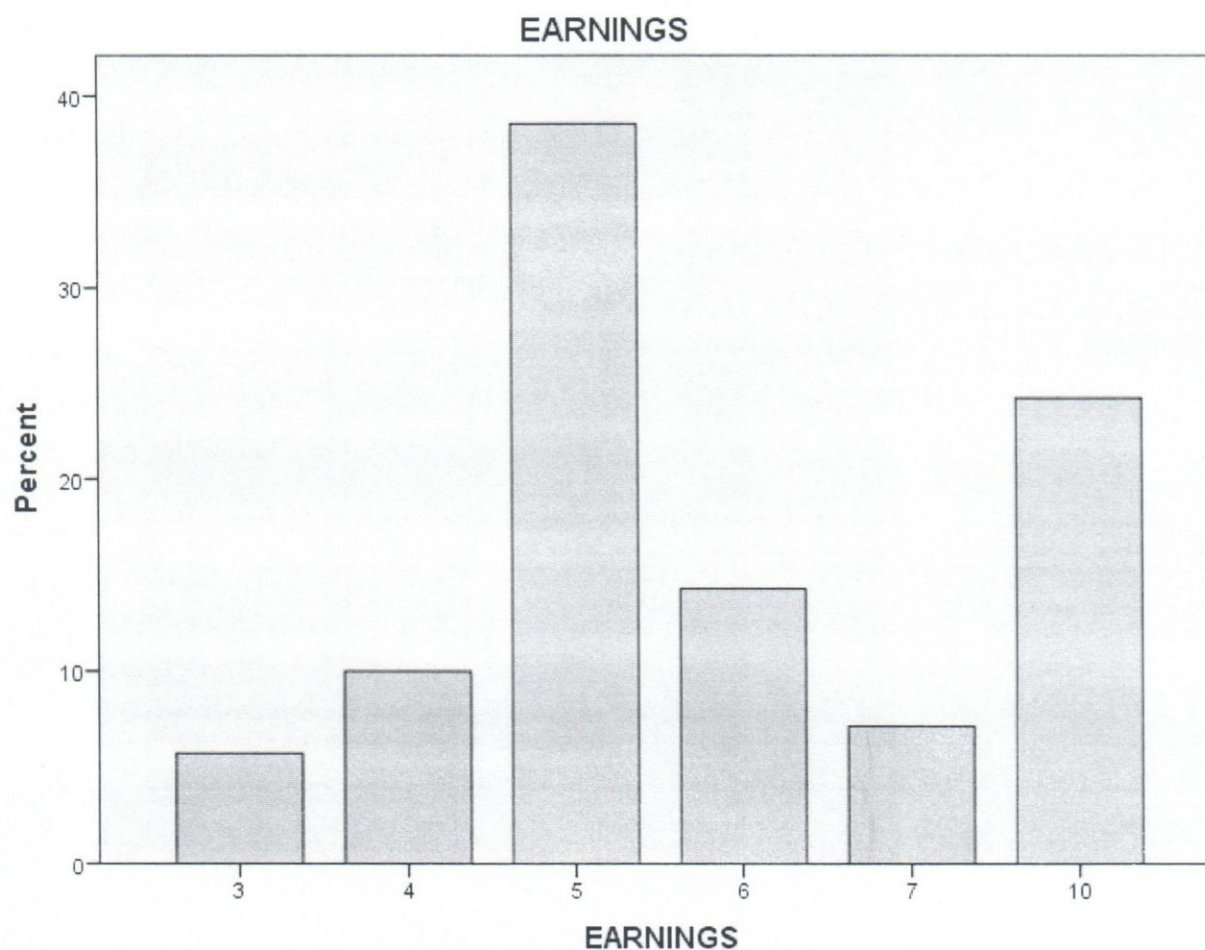
Classmates at the school level easily influence one another into head portering and this mostly succeeds because the girls who practise head portering earn some money to help them solve some of their immediate needs and wants which included, paying for their school fees and other examination expenses.

He added that the dominance of the motor tricycle used as taxis facilitated the movement of pupils after school hours to the market and back to the community at the close of day at a reduced amount compared to taxis. (Nassam Suhununu, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2016).

In the course of the study, the researcher's interviews with the head porters revealed and staff of the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly revealed that the majority of these girls preferred to engage in head portering at the Tamale Central Market compared to other markets such as the Aboabo Market or the Bawku Market located in the metropolis. The reason given was that the central market had the greatest numbers of customers and hence more loads to carry. Most of the girls conceded that their friends who doubled as their trainers introduced them to head portering in the Metropolis.



Figure 4.4: Bar Chart Showing Earning Rates in Ghana Cedis of Head Porters per Day



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

A comparative analysis of the different incomes earned by head porters through semi-structured interviews conducted revealed that 40% of head porters earned an amount of 5 Ghana Cedis a



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day from carrying loads. The next greater amount earned from the sample was 10 Ghana Cedis representing 25% of total amount earned a day by head porters. The study revealed that the older girls were those who earned 5-10 Ghana Cedis whilst the younger girls earned less because they were less patronised by customers.

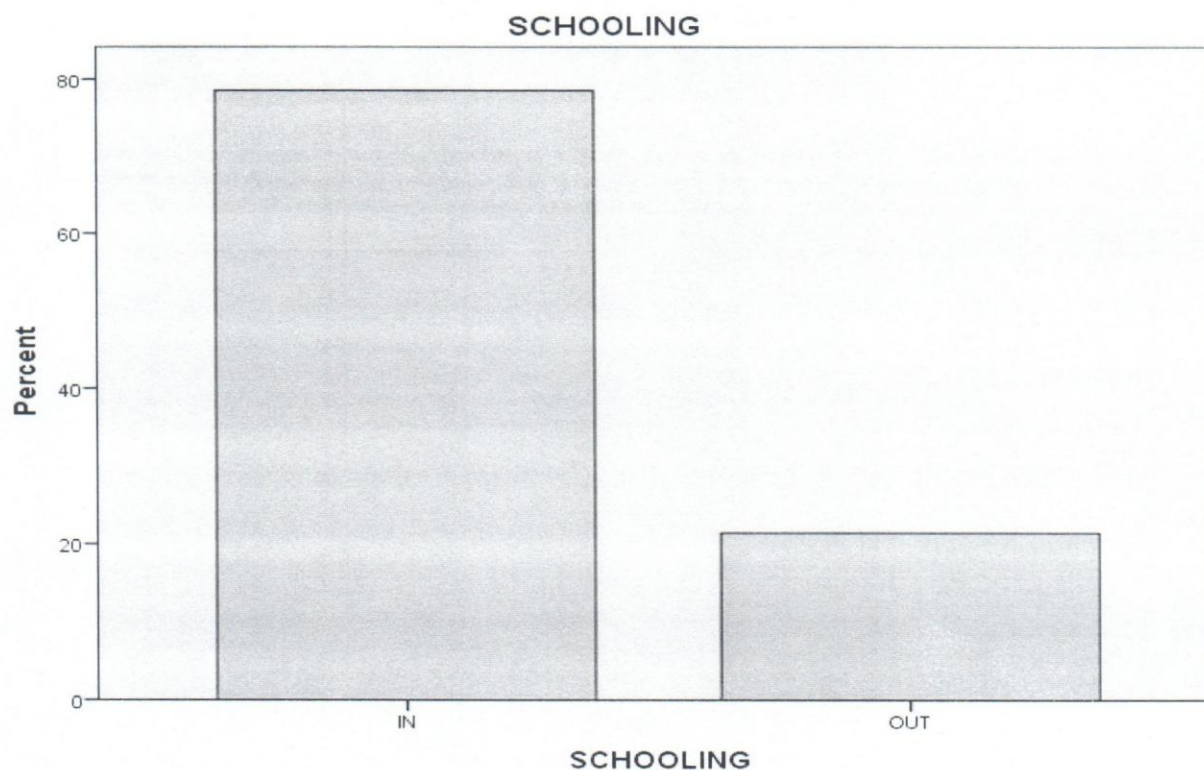
According to staff of the Department Of Labour and semi-structured interviews with head porters revealed that younger head porters felt intimidated by customers and hence were not able to give a definite amount charged on services rendered when asked by the customer when they were done carrying loads for the customer. According to Andaratu a provision seller in the Tamale Central Market, the younger ones solicit help from the older ones when the load gets too heavy for them. One form of assistance given to the younger head porters by the older ones comes in the form of exchanging loads. When this exchange takes place, the older ones give the young ones an amount of money ranging from 1 Ghana Cedi to 50 Ghana Pesewas to take over their customer's load. She added that, stopping head portage especially for the younger girls would be very difficult for the reason that the money they accumulated at the close of the day was so small due to the feeding and transportation expenses incurred by these girls this statement was also supported by staff of the Department of Labour. Putting a stop to head portage by these girls according to her will prove futile on the basis that they have to keep working to accumulate money to offset some recurrent educational expenses they incurred in their daily activities. (Andaratu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2016).





Also, most customers generally did not fancy allowing very young girls carry their loads for them. This has resulted in the situation where the younger head porters earn less than the older ones.

Figure 4.5: Bar Chart Showing the Percentage of Head Porters Currently In or Out of School



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Analysis from the research revealed that 69% still attended school, whilst 31% of the head porters sampled had never been to school or had to stop schooling due to poverty. Head porters who admitted they still attended school but were engaged in head portage attested to the fact



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that they sometimes missed classes because of the fatigue they felt in the mornings after a previous day of carrying loads. This they said, made them miss classes and had very little concentration in class when they are able to make it to school. According to Abdulai Mohammed Muniru, the majority of pupils who miss school in a week comprise girls who practise head portering. The worst part of them missing school was that their parents and guardians did not monitor them enough to know if their wards have missed school (Abdulai Mohammed Muniru, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2016).

According to Abdulai Mohammed Muniru, their absence resulted in very low academic performances in class due to the number of missed classes, and the total lack of attention and understanding in class when they are present. In the words of Abdulai Mohammed Muniru on academic performance of pupils involved in head portering in the classes he handled, “these young girls cannot even speak English”. (Abdulai Mohammed Muniru, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2016).

### **4.2 Association Between Economic and Cultural Factors Affecting Educational Enrolment and Retention of Head Porters.**

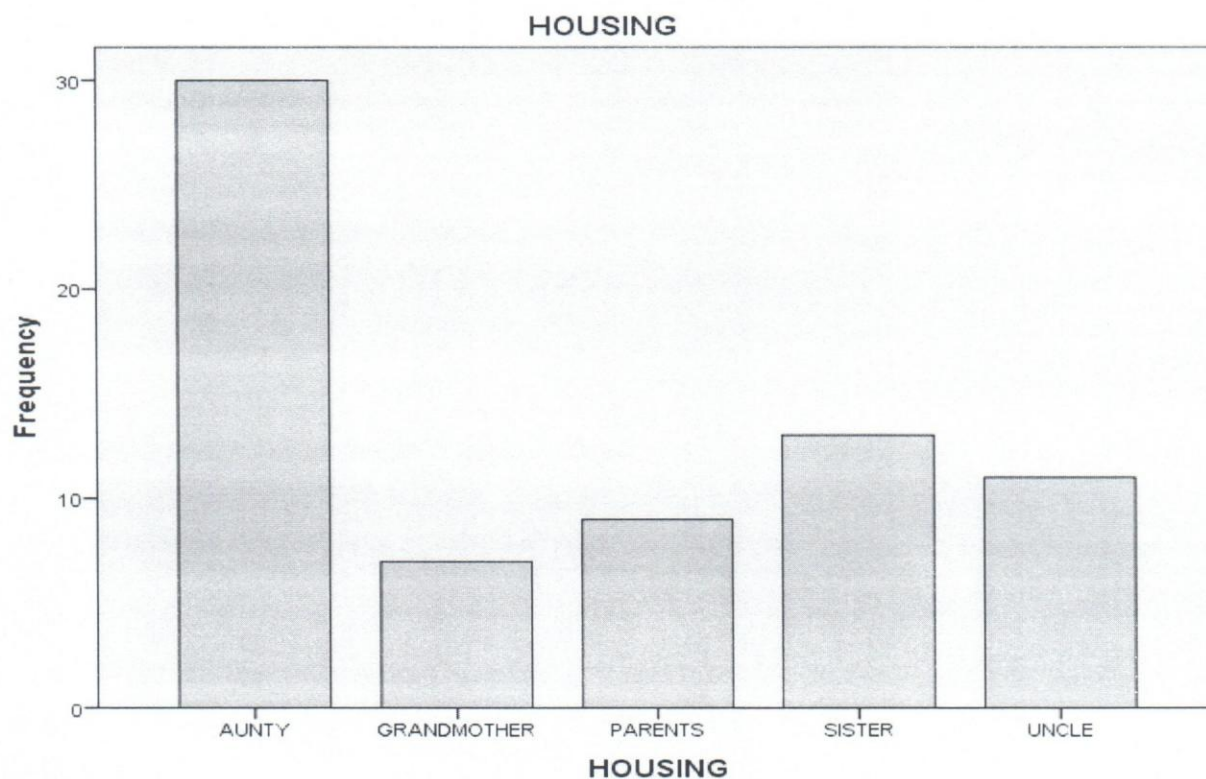
From the research conducted it was found that some of these girls lived with other relatives who were not their parents. Focus group discussions among head porters revealed that a great number



of them lived with aunts, uncles, grandparents or sisters. The effect of this was that these relatives especially those who were elderly provided little financial assistance to the girls.

The study reveal that a total of 30 head porters said they stayed with their aunties, 7 head porters said they stayed with their grandmothers, 9 head porters they stayed with their biological parents, 13 head porters said they stayed with their sisters, and 11 head porters said they stayed with their uncles.

Figure 4.6: Bar Chart Showing Type of Guardian Head Porters Stayed With.



Source: Field Survey, 2016.





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These aunts, uncles, grandparents or sisters who could afford to properly cater for them, according to the head porters, preferred to cater for their biological children. This phenomenon of giving one's children to a different person to be brought up is traditionally termed as *wupsibu* (fostering). Abdulai Imoro, the market chief in an interview remarked:

These head porters are the ones who look after the guardians they are handed over to, especially when they are handed over to an aged person. In fact, the clothing they wear makes it look like they have no parents or guardians to cater for them. They have very poor manners and always look hungry. The girls are also very influential in persuading their colleagues from the village to practise head portage with them. When you look round this market you will realise a lot of them are from the communities around Tamale especially Bamvum, Taha, Manguli Kukuo and Kulnyevilla. They leave very early with a motor tricycle popularly known as *yellow-yellow* from their respective villages, pick up their pans from the shops they store them in and start work as soon as possible. At the close of day, they return their pans to the shops they store them in and go back to the villages with the *yellow-yellow*. (Abdulai Imoro, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2016).

In a related interview with Zummah, a tomato seller at the central market, she acknowledged the fact that because of the patriarchal system practised in the northern parts of Ghana most girls are not given the same educational attention as their male counterparts and hence they have to engage in activities such as head portage to earn a living for themselves. According to Zummah:

Those from the villages such as Tuutingli, Kalariga, Kasalgu, Kulnyevilla, Shiehegu, Banvum, Kpakpayili, Taha, Shiwung, and Gurulana Yeipala where patriarchy is highly practised have the greatest number of girls practising head portage in



Tamale. The problem I have observed is that these girls earn so little a day. They have to buy their daily meals from the monies they earned as well as use the same money to transport themselves back to their various villages. (Zummah, 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2016).

Andaratu, a provision seller at the central market admitted that, the younger girls are the highest number of people engaged in head portorage in the markets. According to Andaratu, from their infant beginnings the young girls have been made to believe that they are under the control of men and hence they engage in activities that are considered feminine. She mentioned that:

I do not have a problem with the older girls who engage in head portorage in this market. My worry is the young girls who carry heavy loads for a petty charge which is not even determined by them but decided by the customer who seeks their services. Last week, I stopped a head porter and asked her how old she was. She told me she was 8 years old. When I asked her who she stayed with, she told me she stayed with her grandmother. When I asked her who provided her with money for feeding, she told me she gives her grandmother 5 Ghana Cedis every two days to buy foodstuff. When I asked her whether she had brothers and sisters, she said; she had two brothers who stayed at the village. Her brothers according to the little girl were attending school at the village but she was brought to Tuutingli to stay with her grandmother and practise head portorage. (Andaratu, 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2016).

#### 4.3 Conclusion

A review of the literature revealed that, head portorage is a major problem in Ghana and despite numerous interventions from stakeholders affected by the phenomenon, the practice still persists and the number of head porters in the urban areas of Ghana keep rising. From the literature, it



was revealed that a range of economic and cultural factors accounted for girls' engagement in head portage. These factors ranged from unemployment, harsh cultural practices, poor infrastructure, crop failure and peer pressure among others. From the literature reviewed it was discovered that children aged 8-16 took part in head portage. According to the literature, in Ghana engaging children aged 18 and below is considered hazardous and violates their human right. From the literature it was revealed that girls who engage in head portage do so at the expense of educating themselves formally. The research revealed that because of the informal nature of the activity, anyone could take part in it with just a head pan.

Data collected using various tools and techniques revealed that, head porters were found in the busiest parts of the metropolis, specifically the Tamale Market Centres and the bus stations. The reason was that these places were patronised by a lot of people and customers, resulting in their higher chances of finding luggage to carry.

At the market square most market women had little affection for head porters. They spoke harshly to them and verbally assaulted them, especially when a customer had a misunderstanding with a girl carrying her load. A common insult heard throughout the market directed at head porters was, *biiyoli* a Dagbani word meaning useless child.





The study revealed that, the market was less busy during week days. The busiest days of the week for both head porters and market women were Saturdays and Sundays. These days were termed *ewuraba daa* by the head porters and market women meaning, rich people's market day. Head porters on weekends could easily be spotted at almost every corner of the market busily carrying loads for customers.

Focus group discussions among head porters revealed that, they used the greater part of money earned from the day's activities on feeding and transportation expenses. They earned so little that they were not able to save much and used up what was saved the previous day if they started the day with no loads to carry.

The research also revealed through semi-structured interviews that, most of the shop owners were familiar with the head porters, especially, those who sat at specific shops. Some shop owners admitted they did not trust some of the head porters and termed them as *TayiYsi* a Dagbani word meaning thieves. They only recommended girls they trusted to their customers to safeguard them against losing any item through theft.

Focus group discussions amongst head porters revealed that some of the girls were ready to talk and respond to questions when they find themselves in the midst of their colleagues. The focus



group discussions provided a lot of information on where some of these girls came from and where they stayed at the close of day. In the course of conducting the focus group discussions, head porters shared their experiences on the challenges they faced in the course of carrying out their activities. Amongst the customers interviewed for the study, a number of them admitted that these girls were too young to engage in such an activity and deserved to be in school instead of engaging in head portage. Some customers disclosed that, they preferred to engage the younger ones because they felt the younger ones needed the money more than the older head porters.

Contrary to this admission, some market women revealed that customers preferred to use the younger head porters because they could not engage so well in bargaining and took whatever amount of money was given them. Nonetheless, some customers who were spotted engaging the service of older head porters admitted that they did not want to engage the younger ones because monies given to them encourage them to stay away from school. They were of the view that the more monies given to the younger ones the more likely they are to engage in head portage as an alternative to attending school.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary and conclusions of findings of the research. It covers empirical findings based on the research objectives of the study. The main thematic areas presented in this chapter are as follows: demographic characteristics of girls involved in head portering, cultural and economic determinants to enrolment and retention of head porters, head portering and its effects on enrolment and retention, and motives and intentions of girls involvement in head portering within the Tamale Metropolis. The chapter ends by making recommendations based on the findings.

#### 5.1 Summary of Major Findings

Major findings are based on the objectives and research questions of the study:

##### 5.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Girls Involved in Head Portering

The study revealed that, the majority of girls engaged in head portering were aged 12, followed by ages 13, 8, 16 and 15 respectively. The majority of head porters within the age group 12-13 comprised head porters who were in JHS 1 and JHS 2. The dominance of girls from these academic levels engaged in head portering according to the headmaster of Kulnyevilla T.I





Ahamadiyya School was because they needed money to cater for their mock examination fees and BECE examination fees. The inability of parents to pay for their examination fees was the dominant reason given by head porters who engaged in head portage yet attended school.

The majority of head porters came from Kulnyevilla, a community around the Tamale Metropolis. It was revealed that head porters from communities that presented the highest numbers were acquainted with one another or had family ties. This accounted for the high influence head porters had over other girls. Also major findings revealed that, head porters from dominating communities served as trainers and mentors to other girls entering into head portage. The research also revealed that the majority of girls who engaged in head portage yet attended schools went to Islamic schools. The reason was that, teachers of Islamic schools did not go to school early and left early or did not attend school at all on Fridays and hence the reluctant attitude of head porters to be present in school on Friday.

### **5.1.2 Motives and Intentions of Girls Involved in Head Portage**

The research established that the majority of head porters wanted to earn some money to cater for their needs. Most head porters especially those who still attended school and practised head portage were now money-driven with time and did not bother themselves much with their educational advancement. Their initial mindset to earn enough money to go back to school or



pay for examination charges was fast giving way to earning more money to establish businesses of their own.

### **5.1.3 Head Porterage and Its Effects on Enrolment and Retention**

The study revealed that, 69% of head porters from the sample were currently attending school while engaging in head porterage, while 31% of head porters comprised those who have never attended school or those who used to attend but have stopped because of economic and cultural factors such as poverty, patriarchy or unemployment. When asked the number of days they missed school in a week, the majority of head porters said they missed Mondays and Fridays. Explaining why they missed these particular days, the girls disclosed that on Mondays they got too tired from Sunday's load carrying and could not attend school. Fridays according to the head porters, was not a serious day in school because most teachers did not come for their lessons and hence it was a day one could miss school to engage in head porterage.

Teachers in T.I Ahamadiyya School located at Kulnyevilla admitted that indeed pupils who engaged in head porterage missed schools on Fridays and Mondays. Their parents on the other hand did not bother to visit school premises to find out if their wards missed classes or check to find out the academic performance of the wards. From the study, a number of head porters said they were eager to accept any form of assistance from stakeholders to halt their indulgence in head porterage and put them fully in school.



#### 5.1.4 Cultural and Economic Determinants to Enrolment and Retention of Head Porters

The study established that the northern Ghanaian culture of depriving females of the means to education and other social opportunities in the rural communities plays a crucial role in contributing to the large numbers of girls involved in head portage. From the data collected, most heads of households in rural communities did not pay much attention to the education of girls in the family. This lack of attention given to girls by their guardians created a sense of self dependence for the young lady who at an early age develops the mentality of identifying social opportunities that offer her the chance to earn some money to provide for her immediate needs and wants. According to school authorities and personnel of the Department of Social Development, the cultural attitude of paying less attention to girls affected their enrolment in educational institutions. School authorities added that even if girls go pass the enrolment stage, retention subsequently becomes a problem for them. The study revealed that, most of the sampled head porters acknowledge the fact that their parents were aware of the kind of activity they were engaged in yet did nothing to stop them. A very disturbing trend that was discovered from interviewing some head porters was that, their guardians were the ones encouraging them to take part in head portage as an alternative to going to school.

The study revealed that, the head pans they used to carry their loads were provided by their mothers or other female relatives. More so, their mothers or other female relatives doubled as *susu* collectors with whom they saved their earnings at the close of a working day. According to the head porters, their mothers and other female relatives used this money to buy cloths and





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cooking utensils in preparedness for marriage for the head porter. The data reveal that what was earned from head portage was so little to save to offset school fees and examination charges. Most men interviewed in the study, when asked if a boy or man could engage in head portage, expressed surprise and laughed over the question, saying, it was impossible for a man to carry a load on his head, as he lacks the skills and would be ridiculed if seen carrying out such an activity. The study further revealed that some boys were affected by the inability of parents to pay school fees and examination charges, however, they resorted to driving motor tricycles in order to make some money to pay for their school and examination fees.

From interviews conducted with school authorities in Kulnyevilla T.I Ahamadiyya School, teachers acknowledged the fact that most of the girls in the school did not relate with their colleagues who were males. The male students mostly mingled together and if there was going to be any form of influence it was likely to take place among girls who were friends to head porters. This supports the notion that men and women were given different orientations in life and hence were not supposed to socialise at certain points in their development.

Focus group discussions among head porters revealed that, the majority of girls engaged in head portage in the Tamale Metropolitan area preferred to do so in the area as an alternative to practising it in the southern part of Ghana because of the cost of transportation and accommodation problems they anticipated facing in those places. In an interview with one of the head porters, she admitted that because of her young age she could not survive alone in the



southern urban regions and hence preferred to practise head portorage in Tamale which was closer to her community.

From the study it was established that, there was no head porters association as seen in other parts of the country and hence they were not represented in any hierarchy of authority in the Tamale Markets. The inability to form such an association meant they had no groups with which they could contribute money in the form of *susu* where each girl would be entitled to a cumulated amount of money at the end of a defined period when it got to her turn. In an interview with the head porters, a number of them said, the existence of a *susu* group could have helped them save a little money for them to pay their academic fees and charges or go back to school. The majority of head porters who were sampled confirmed that, they saved very little of what they earned per day because they had to pay for their transportation and feeding from the same money they earned through head portorage. When the researcher visited the school premises, teachers confirmed that the parents of girls from the rural communities often did not give them any money and this resulted in circumstances where the girls had to find a way to support themselves financially. Some teachers admitted that some of the girls who engaged in head portorage dropped out of school because they owed school fees and were practising head portorage to amass funds to return to school but could not come up with the money in earnest and therefore had to be kicked out from school.



From the interviews with head porters, a number of them acknowledged that they came from polygynous homes and hence had many siblings. This resulted in a situation where family heads could not cater for the educational needs of all members in the family and hence girls who mostly comprise the unfortunate individuals in the family had to engage in head portage.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The study based on the findings concludes that out of 100%, 24% of sampled head porters numbering 70 were aged 12 presenting the highest percentage of girls engaged in head portage in the metropolis. This shows the level at which children who should be protected from this form of child labour were practising head portage in the metropolis.

The study revealed that, the majority of the children engaged in head portage were from surrounding rural communities in the Tamale Metropolis. Kulnyevilla a community close to Tamale had the highest representation of girls engaged in head portage in the Tamale metropolis, this finding supports Opare (2003) assertion that individuals have a tendency to migrate when conditions surrounding them are not skewed in their favour. Also, it corroborates Agarwal et al (1994) assertion that migration patterns appear to be quite common amongst rural folks who have a preference for migration to urban centres to find alternative sources of livelihood. Buske termed this movement of head porters from rural areas to urban areas as





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“Bright Light Syndrome”. Other communities that presented high numbers of girls practising head portage included; Garizee, Cheshei, Bamvum, Kpakpayili and Yong. Interviews conducted at Kulnyevilla T.I Ahamadiyya School revealed that head porters were mostly influenced by their friends who were already engaged in the activity.

Cultural factors and economic factors such as fostering, unemployment, patriarchy, and polygyny were some of the contributory factors fueling girls engaging in head portage in the Tamale metropolis. The reluctant attitude of parents given to the education of girls contributed to the high number of girls engaged in head portage in the Tamale metropolis. The outcome of this finding supports Buske (2014) claim that poverty alone cannot be blamed on reasons why girls engaged in head portage.

On the influence of cultural and economic factors, the study concludes that, 45% of head porters were at the primary level or had dropped out at the primary level. 33% were at the JHS level or had dropped out at the JHS level, while 22% had never attended school in their lives as at the time the study was conducted.

On the analysis of girls who were still schooling, 69% were attending school at the time the data was collected while the remaining 31% admitted they had never been to school.



On the motives of girls involved in kayayei, the study concludes that, the majority of head porters practised head portage because of inadequate funds to pay for their academic fees. However, this activity was fast eating into the time they were supposed to allocate to school and hence affected their educational careers adversely. This effect advanced by respondents were similar to what Buske (2014) noted. Thus, though some head porters agree to move to urban markets to work and support their guardians financially, a lot affirmed that it disrupts their education and school attendance.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the Government of Ghana through the Ghana Education Service should take steps to address the challenges and concerns faced by circuit supervisors for effective monitoring in schools especially community schools to ensure teaching staff are at post during school hours.

In view of the fact that some parents paid little attention to their wards in school, especially girls, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme should be married with sanctions on parents to ensure their wards remain in school and not engage in head portage.

Also, national strategic policies and programmes such as the Capitation Grant Policy and School Feeding Programme need to be addressed to ensure women and girls are empowered. National



policies should seek to remove cultural practices that adversely affect the advancement of girls especially in rural communities.

The Government of Ghana through the Ghana Education Service should develop educational infrastructure and create incentives for administrative and teaching staff who accept posting to community schools. This will offset a section of the conceptual framework which seems to suggest the movement of unskilled labour to the primary sectors as a case of poor infrastructure in secondary sector.

The majority of girls engaged in head portering lived with relatives other than their parents, hence the family support system of giving children out to other relatives should be closely monitored by parents and local authorities in order to reduce the chances of girls found in that circumstance from engaging in head portering.





### **5.3.1 Suggestions for Further Research**

It is suggested that further research on head portorage with regards to education should be made on how head portorage affects the educational performance of girls engaged in it.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX (I): INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEAD PORTERS

GENERAL INFORMATION			
NO	QUESTION	RESPONSE	SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS
1	How old are you?		
2	Where are you from?		
3	How long have you been in Tamale?		
4	Are you married?	Yes.....  No.....	
5	What religion do you practice?	Christianity.....  Islam.....  Others (specify).....	
6	What ethnic group do you belong to?	Dagomba.....  Dagaati.....  Mamprusi.....	



		Hausa.....  Others (specify).....	
7	Do you feel marginalised and stigmatised due to your ethnicity?	Yes.....  No.....  Not sure.....	
<b>EDUCATION OF GIRL-CHILD</b>			
8	Have you ever attended school?	Yes.....  No.....	
9	Are you still attending school?	Yes.....  No.....	
10	If yes, what is you level of education?	Nursery.....  PRIMARY.....  JHS.....  SHS.....	
11	How many times do they attend school in a week?		
12	Do you combine head portorage with school?	Yes.....  No.....	



13	If yes, how does this affect your schooling?		
14	Who takes decisions on your school enrolment?	Mother..... Father..... Brother..... Sister..... Grandmother..... Grandfather..... Self.....	
<b>FACTORS THAT PROPAGATE HEAD PORTERAGE</b>			
15	How did you get to know about head portorage?		
16	How did you start your work as head porter?		
17	How did you get the bucket/ head pan?		
18	Did you receive any orientation prior to taking	Yes..... No.....	





	up this job?		
19	How did you decide to come to this particular market?		
20	How much money do you earn in a day?		
21	How much do you charge per load?		
22	Is it possible to save money?	Yes..... No.....	
23	How do you do that?		
24	How do you select your customers?		
25	How do the customers treat you?	Good..... Bad..... Very bad.....	
26	How many hours do you work in a day?	5-10..... 10-15..... 15-20..... More.....	



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27	Do head porters help each other?	Yes..... No.....	
28	If yes, how do they do that?		
29	Do you do other work besides head portage?	Yes ..... No.....	
30	What do you do when the load is too heavy to carry?		
31	How do you spend your leisure time?		

## HOUSING, HEALTH AND LIVING CONDITIONS

32	How is your stay pattern here in the metropolitan?	Permanently..... Partially..... Do not stay.....	
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33	What types of housing do live in?	Kiosk..... Verandah..... Others (specify).....	
34	With whom do you live there?		
35	Do your guardian(s) know you practise head portorage?	Yes..... No.....	





APPENDIX (II): QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MARKET WOMEN

NO	QUESTION	RESPONSE	SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS
1	When is your market open in the week?		
2	Which people carry the luggage and loads of travellers and shoppers?		
3	How old are these people?		
4	Are you aware of the girls of school-going age moving round the market carrying head-pans during school hours?	YES.....  NO.....	
5	What makes them leave school and come to work as head		



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	porters?		
6	Do you think these children can have a better future?	YES..... NO.....	
7	What is your view on the effects head portorage will have on these girls' in the future?		



APPENDIX (III): QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

NO	QUESTION	RESPONSE	SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS
1	What is the name of your institution?		
2	For how long have you been in operation?		
3	Do you handle issues of head portorage as part of your institutional mandate?	Yes .....  No.....	
4	What are some of the interventions made so far by your organisation with regards to head portorage?		
5	Do head porter girls in Tamale know about	Yes.....  No.....	





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	the existence of your organisation?		
6	How do you see the issue of head portorage in Tamale?		
7	What solution(s) can you put in place as an organisation to address head portorage in Tamale?		



APPENDIX (IV): QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS OF HEAD PORTERS

NO	QUESTION	RESPONSE	SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS
1	What is your name?		
2	What is the name of your school?		
3	Do you have students practicing head portage and how often do they miss school?		
4	How many times do they attend school every week?		
5	How old are they?		
6	Which classes do they belong to?		
7	How is their academic performance?		
8	What is the school		



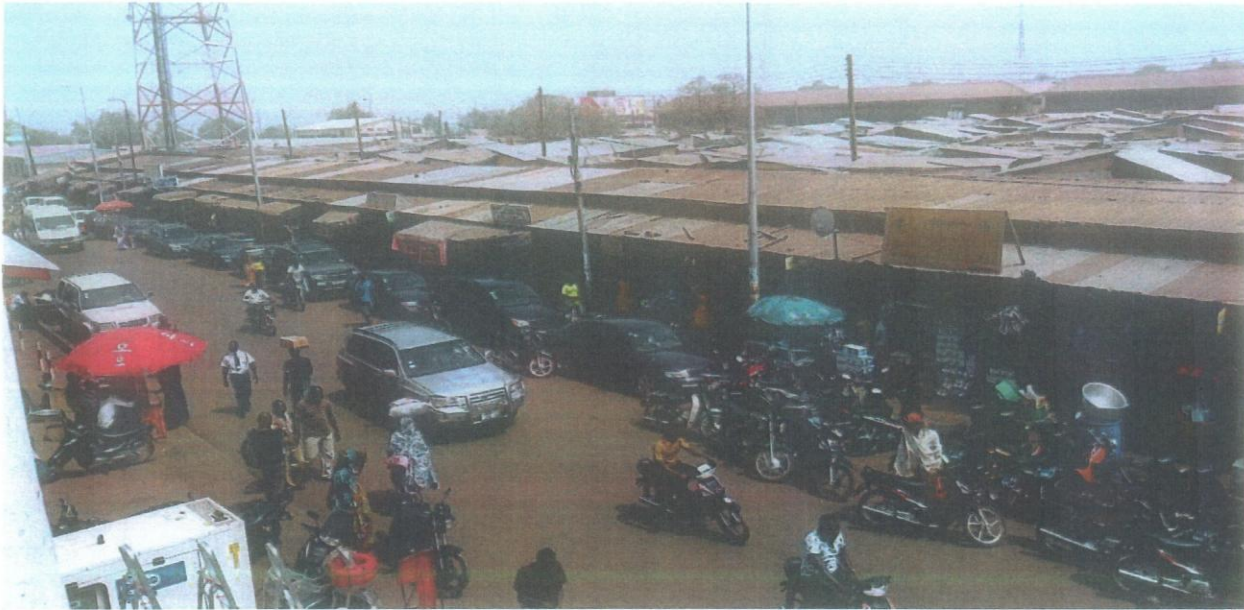
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	doing to check this problem?		
9	How do you see their future?		
10	What solution can be put in place as teachers, individuals and the government to address head portage?		





APPENDIX (V): PHOTOGRAPHS OF FIELDWORK AND PRACTICAL WORK



**Tamale Central Market**



**Researcher Interviewing Staff from the Department of Social Development (formerly,  
Social Welfare Department)**



**Head Porters Waiting At the Entrance of Shops for Customers**



**Head Porter Carrying a Load for a Customer**



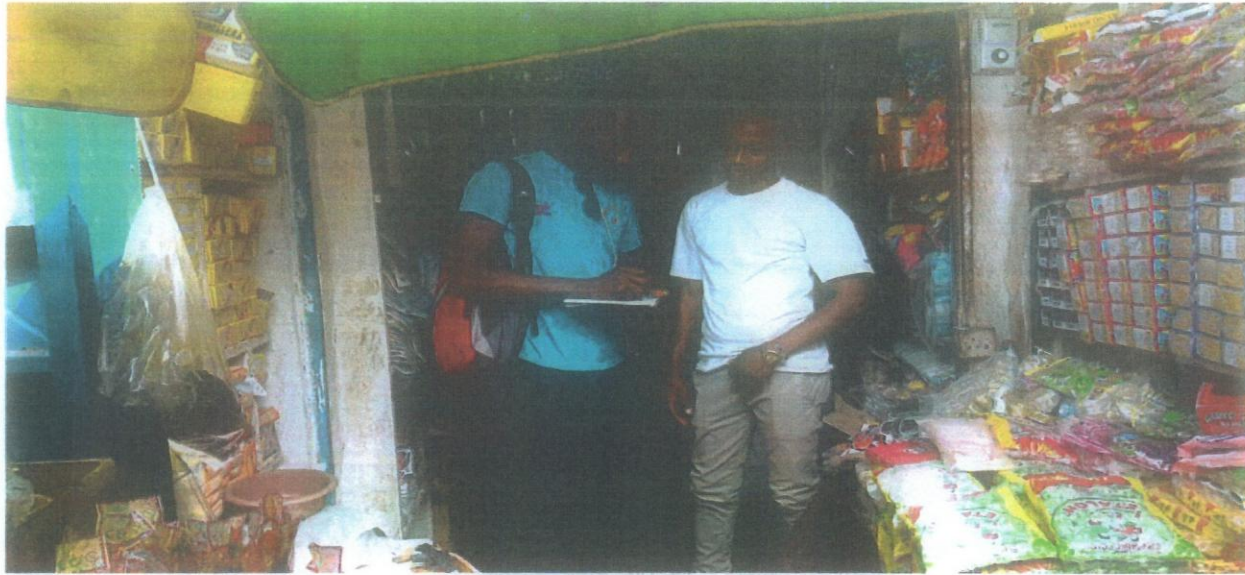


Storage Place for Head Pans of Head Porters at the Close of a Working Day



Researcher Interacting with Head Porter Girl





**Researcher interviewing Issah Zakaria, a Provision Seller in the Tamale Central Market.**



**Researcher Interviewing Abdulai Imoro, the Market Chief in the Tamale Central Market**





**Researcher Interviewing Andaratu, a Vegetable Seller in the Tamale Central Market**



**Researcher Interviewing Zummah, a Vegetable Seller in the Tamale Central Market**



**School Girl Engaging In Head Porterage**



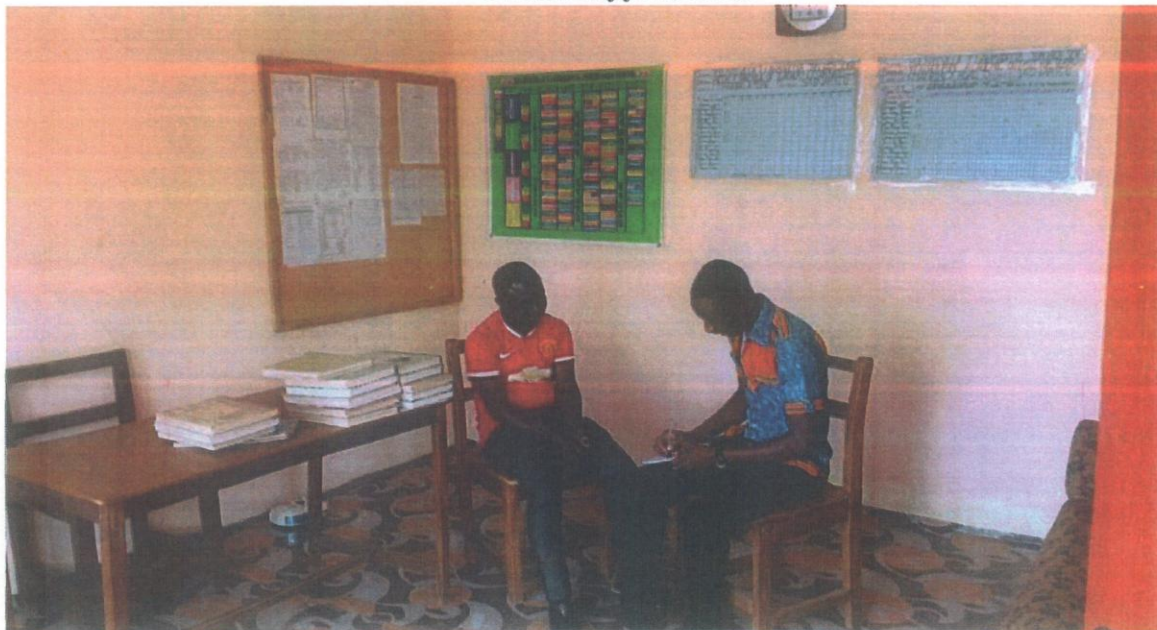
**Focus Group Discussions with Head Porters of School Going Age**





**Researcher Interviewing Nassam Suhununu, the Assistant Headmaster at Kulnyevilla T.I**

**Ahamadiyya School**



**Researcher Interviewing Abdulai Mohammed Muniru, the JHS 2 and JHS 3 Teacher at**

**Kulnyevilla T.I Ahamadiyya School**





**Young Boy Operating a Motor Tricycle.**