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CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN HOUSEHOLD WORK IN THEIR FAMILIES IN THE SEKYERE SOUTH DISTRICT OF GHANA

Dedication

This work is dedicated to God almighty for given me strength and knowledge in carrying out the study, my late father, my dear mother for her advice, my wife and lovely daughter Benedicta Tabuaah Brobbey.

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Abstract

There has been a lot of research about children's household work. However, most of these researches in developing countries give less importance to children's views and rely mainly on perspectives of adults when talking about what children do. It is for this reason that I decided to look at children's unpaid household work mainly from children's point of view.

The main purpose of the study was to explore the everyday life experiences of children who take up many responsibilities within their own families in the Sekyere South District of Ghana. It examines the role children play vis-à-vis the position they occupy in their families and the society at large. The study also examines how a lot of workload on children in households can affect their education and social life. With increasing cost of living couple with high poverty in rural areas parents (adults) try any means possible to get money and food for their families leaving much of domestic work in the hands of children.

The study made use of both children and adults as informants, though children were the main informants. The aim was to get in-depth information about the topic. As a qualitative study, it made use of qualitative methods which included participant observation, interviews and focus group discussions. As a framework the study is guided by the new sociology of childhood. In addition, some concepts and perspectives that have been employed to guide the study include responsibility, children as social actors and childhood as socially constructed children's rights in relation to their work and gender.

The findings from the study suggest that several factors and reasons make it impossible for parents to release their children from household work. It was also realized that in spite of children's significant contribution to family economy, many of them feel that they do not get the needed respect, support and care from their parents. The study also revealed that in relation to household work both adults and children are co-participants. They complement each other's role. Findings from the study also indicate that many children willingly and enjoy participating household chores.

The study concludes that one, unpaid household work can be exploitative and also harm children like waged work. I argue that adults and children must be seen as depending on each other in an effort of sustaining families. Also children's voice should be listened to with respect to what, how and when they ought to perform household chores.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.0 Introduction

One can easily see many children in Ghana, particularly those in the rural areas, performing different tasks either on their own initiatives or based on the instructions of the parents. Children's work in the family can be described as a survival strategy for many families and also have a contractual meaning. Children receive a lot from their parents in terms of food, clothes, expenditure on their education and the rights to inherit them (the parents) in the future; children are, therefore, expected to reciprocate support from parents by contributing their labour in their families. Almost all the tasks perform by children in the study area are unpaid household work since children do not receive any direct pay or reward whatsoever for their services. ILO survey in Ghana establishes that more than 70% of working children were unpaid family workers, working in a family business (ILO survey in Ghana 1996). Over 90% of these children also go to school. A study by the Ghana Statistical Services (GSS) also shows that half of rural children were economically active and 88% of the working children were unpaid family workers (GSS, 2003). The above statistics show that the number of children working in family enterprises in Ghana is on the increase. The above among other reasons suggest why the topic, "Children's perspectives of their responsibilities in household work in their families in the Sekyere South District of Ghana" is worth investigating.

Why this topic? This topic is underpinned by two main reasons among others. One I have personal interest in the subject because as a child I contributed a lot towards my family's livelihood and I have seen many children doing same. Two, I have also been encouraged by the research works in similar areas of study by scholars like Punch in 2001, Nieuwenhuys, 1996, Abebe, 2007 and Bourdillon, 2006. Traditionally, children in my study area are expected to learn and take on some gender-specific roles as they grow up which make them useful members in their families and the community at large. However, in recent times gender division of children's household work seems blurring (Abebe, 2007). Children, particularly, those in the rural areas participate in various household works in their daily life. Most children in the study area combine school and family work. There are some unnoticed ways in which children's involvement in household work can affect their performances in school activities. Children may become tired for working long hours the previous night and dose off in the class, children may have little or no time to do their home work.

I have deemed this study important based on the discussions as to whether children should work or not. According to modern western perspectives, childhood is connected to school, play and leisure (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998). But many societies in the global south including Ghana believe that household works undertaken by children are 'normal to the proper upbringing' of children and also train them to become responsible adults (MMYE-Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment, (2008). It is, therefore, important to look at children's work from the children's own point of view: That is to find out what the children think and feel about their involvement and contributions towards their families' livelihoods.

The new social studies of childhood have been employed as a theoretical framework that guides this study. Concepts that are used in the study include: children as social actors, responsibility, gender, children's rights and childhood as socially constructed. Childhood is not a natural phenomenon (Jenks, 1996) and indeed talking about universal childhood is difficult. The employs qualitative methods with specific methods like interviews and participant observation. The sample size of my informants will be sixteen children and seven adults

1.1 Background and aims of the study

The problem of child domestic work in Ghana is not a new phenomenon. Historically, parents and guardians expected children to contribute to household chores such as cooking, washing, child minding, petty trading and so on Tedam (2005) and as Williams (2000:215) cited in Tedam 2005 states "child work is part and parcel of the fabric of Ghanaian society". Children performed different kinds of roles based on their age, gender, maturity and so on. Children's household work is regarded as vital equipping them with skills and also nurturing them into responsible adulthood. This study aims to look at children's involvement in household activities from children's perspective. That is to offer children the opportunity to tell their experiences in their everyday life. There is a debate as to whether children should work at all. With the coming into force of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the new social studies of childhood, the place of children is believed to be in school and at play but not work. "If they are seen to be working (either in paid employment or in household domestic or caring work), the reflex is towards constituting this as an aberration or an outrage–a social problem remised on children's vulnerability and need of protection" (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998) The UNCRC does not in any way assign any responsibility to

children. Through the inspiration of the UNCRC a lot of regional bodies on the rights and welfare of children have been formed. One of such bodies is the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. This charter in its article 31 clearly gives some responsibilities to children towards their families and superiors. But more responsibilities of children towards their families will affect their own use of time for school work, play and leisure as indicated in Ekuman's Mphil thesis at NOSEB, conducted in Accra, Ghana. Important issues to be addressed should include, what kind of responsibilities should children have and at what age should children have responsibilities?

While there have been great evaluations by many studies of children working for pay and outside their families, the unpaid household work of children especially that of girls have been under-valued and least recognized and so have received less attention (Abebe, 2009; Niewenhuys, 1996; Punch, 2001). For some time past, most studies on children's involvement in unpaid household work have been conducted by seeking only parents' views about their children's contributions (Punch, 2001). However, within the new social studies of childhood children are seen as competent social actors who should be given the opportunity to express their own views about matters which concern them (Boyden et al 1998 in Punch, 2001).

As this study aims to show, children's views may differ from that of adults that is why it is important also to ask children about their own involvement in household work rather than relying only on what parents say children do (Punch, 2001). The under-valuation of children's contributions is perhaps due to the description of what children do for their families in many cases as not work or productive but social expectations which children ought to do. The aim of this study is not to discuss child labour as a concept or children working in factories or outside their families for pay and whether it should be eradicated or not but to look at the 'useful child at least within the household' (Zelizer, 1985:223) and his contributions. Children are embedded in families (Levinson, 2000). For this reason adults' perspectives were also sought, even though children's perspectives were the main focus.

1.2 Childhood in Ghana
The notion of 'proper' childhood in Ghana is changing due to factors such as economics, socio-cultural and political situations. Due to little or lack of research on childhood in Ghana, I will rely on a paper written by Agya Boakye Boaten (2010) for the Journal of International Social Research, Volume 3/10 and on my own childhood experiences in Ghana in discussing the concept of childhood (s) in Ghana. Other relevant master theses on children's life from

Ghana include: 'Schooling, Leisure and work: Experiences and perspectives of some school children in Accra, Ghana,' by Bright Abbakah Ekuman (2010) and that of Isaac Sawadong, Meyir on 'Children's participation in Family decision-making in the Lawra District of Ghana' (2010).

Among many Ghanaian adults children are seen as economic asserts of their families, who must contribute in different ways to improve their own well-being and that of their families. Children are trained to perpetuate the existence of their families and cultural legacies. Traditionally, from about the age of seven in some cases even six, children in Ghana are expected to participate in the adult world of work. Boys are expected to engage in manual types of work while girls follow their mothers mainly at the domestic chores. Work is more of a common feature of rural children than those in the cities. Children in rural areas start to work at very early ages, for example, between five and seven years (Canagarajah and Coulombe, 1997). Work, especially, which is within the family is seen as something positive for children's future (Tedam, 2005) and children themselves see it as something good for them (Meyir, 2010). In view of this the family and the community as whole join hands to inculcate this vision into children and young people.

Though factors like globalization are making the upbringing of children the duty of the individual families, children in the rural areas still operate within the parameters of the extended families and the community solidarity. In Ghana children are born into a particular socio-cultural context that is either in urban, semi-urban or rural area. And any of these places where a child is born will determine that child's involvement in work and the extent of the community involvement in her/his upbringing. There are different experiences of childhood among children in Ghana. Children of the rich families experience protected and happy childhood while for those of the poor and poorest families the opposite is the case. For example, in Ghana most children, particularly those from poor families, engage in various kinds of work activities compare to their counterparts in households of relatively higher income (Ekuman, 2010; GSS, 2003). This means most children combine family work and schooling in their daily life. The changes in the social structure have truly changed the roles and responsibilities of many social actors in Ghana. However, children remain children in many ways and they continue to participate in shaping their image in the country (Boakye, 2010). From the discussion above it can be said that even in the same relatively homogeneous society there cannot be a single childhood due mainly to cultural practices and economic

inequalities. Therefore, for proper understanding of childhood it should be contextualized within a socio-cultural context.

1.3 Socio-cultural context of children's work in Ghana

"The socio cultural milieu within which *child work* is examined is important to help the correct interpretation of the various activities of the child that are categorised and the circumstances of the child involved in such activities" (MMYE, 2008:6). In Ghana, one important thing to consider when looking at the circumstances of the child is the influence of the extended family system. It is common to find children not living with their own parents but other family members such as aunts, older sisters, uncles and grandmothers. In most situations parents can even send their children to go and live with relatives even when they (parents) live in the same town with those relatives. There are several reasons behind this. For instance, a child can be send to go and live with a sick or old relative and work to support that family member. Also, due to poverty a couple can send their child to stay with a relatively rich relative. The child will help in household chores and his school needs, clothes and so on food are catered for by such a relative. However, Tedam (2005:2) argues that "The practice has developed over the years into a back door unregulated practice of unpaid child work, where the welfare of the child is secondary to the domestic expectations of the host families"

As I have pointed out above, the household works that children are involved in are widely regarded as normal and necessary for the proper upbringing of children *ibid.* Culturally, working with parents/guardians on family farms, on small businesses of families and in the home is seen as part of the processes by which children are trained for responsible parenthood in future. Girls are taught to get closer to their mothers at kitchen to learn cooking skills to be used when married. Boys are encouraged to participate more in perceived difficult chores to make them resilient. Thus cultural norms play a vital role in children's household work.

1.4 Statement of the problem

In the majority world of which Ghana is part children contribute significantly towards the livelihoods of their families. In Ghana for instance, children are active agents in the unpaid household work where parents rely greatly on the services of children in this enterprise (ILO, 1996). Unfortunately, much of the studies and research in developing countries about household work ignore children's perspectives of their responsibilities (Punch, 2001;

Nieuwenhuys, 1996). Due to this children's agency and capabilities are not visible in the societies. Those studies rely much on the perspectives and contributions of adults. Again, in Ghana it appears there is lack of research into unpaid household work where children are asked to express their perspectives about the theme. In most cases research on children have been less valued and considered; even in research studies which concern the everyday life experiences of children, they (children) have become invisible (Holloway & Valentine, 2000). This especially is common in developing countries. This is also applicable to children in Ghana, especially those in my study area, whom I viewed as active participants and contributors in their families and communities yet their contributions are not seen and recognized by the adult world. Thus this study among others aims at bringing to light how useful these children are from the children's own perspectives.

With the coming into force of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1985, children have got the right to leisure and play, rest, education among others. However, children's heavy involvement in household works prevents them from fully enjoying these rights. Thus studies and experiences have shown that children in rural areas are the most victims. Many children in rural areas in most cases are denied education, abused, exploited, suffer from hunger and are burdened with many work activities. Learning from children's perspectives and experiences of their household work may reveal how children live their childhood and can also contribute to knowledge that childhood needs to be studied in context. Also, in reference to the new sociology of childhood, Mayall argues that "an important issue is children's own perspectives of their daily experiences, and these may be sought in order to construct an account of childhood" (Mayall, 2002 cited from Ekuman's master thesis, 2010:6). This is the main reason why this study seeks to explore perspectives of children's household work mainly from children's own points of view.

1.5 Objectives
The central aim of this study is to explore everyday life of children and their perspectives about the part they play in the unpaid household work, their feelings and thinking about their roles and their worth in their families. Other sub-objectives of interest include:

- To get knowledge about children's rights and responsibilities in the family
- To identify challenges related to children's responsibilities in household work
- To explore the difference between parents' perspectives and that of children concerning children's contributions to their families' livelihood
- To identify factors that influence children's household
- To identify ways household works influence children's schooling

1.6 Research Questions

The main research question the study seeks to answer is, how do children perceive their involvement in unpaid household work in their families? Some specific questions include:

- ❖ What are children's everyday life experiences of household works in their families?
- ❖ What are the reasons/factors which either motivate or compel children to take up responsibilities in their families?
- ❖ How do parents regard their children's contributions towards the well-being of the family?
- ❖ How gender influences work and responsibilities in households?
- ❖ How does children's involvement in household work affect their wellbeing and education?

1.7 Significance of the study

Based on De Lange's research in Ghana (2009), I argue that, the notion that household works, especially those that take place in rural areas, benefit children but do not harm them is debatable. She argues that the unfavourable life conditions in rural areas challenge that assertion. For example, children going to bush to cut firewood with cutlass, cooking on hot fires, young children selling on the streets all can expose children to risks. Knowledge about children's responsibilities and participation in work in their families and how this affects children's wellbeing and possibilities for education is crucial. The government of Ghana and other stakeholders are making efforts to make life better for children and to make education accessible to them and also improve their performance in schools. However, the overreliance on children by parents for their services in the unpaid household work may have some effects on children's education, wellbeing, and their rights. It is therefore expected that this study will

bring to light the various ways children's involvement in household work influence their schooling, welfare and rights. Also, teachers, ministries such as Education and Youth and that of Women and Children's affairs and other organisations working with children may find this study useful as it may help them to make policies and interventions for children.

1.8 Structure of the thesis

This study contains seven chapters. Chapter one provides introduction, background information and aims of the study. It presents a general picture about children's work and how it is viewed in Ghana. The chapter also gives brief idea about childhood in Ghana. Problem statement, research objectives and questions and significant of the study are also dealt with in the chapter. Chapter two presents relevant information about the context in which the study is conducted. In chapter three a presentation is made about the theoretical perspectives and concepts related to this study. In chapter four I will discuss the methods I employed in the study. The challenges I faced during fieldwork and how I cope with them and ethical issues are also included in this chapter.

The analysis of the study has been presented in chapters five and six. Some issues analyzed in chapter five include household structure in the study area, factors influencing allocation of chores in homes, poverty and children's work and children's everyday responsibilities. In chapter six I present children's perspectives and that of adults in relation to children's household work. Chapter seven, the last chapter, deals with the summary of the main ideas and recommendations for policy and future research.

CHAPTER TWO: INFORMATION ABOUT COUNTRY AND THE DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

2.0 History and Geography

Ghana before her independence was called Gold Coast. Ghana was formed from the merger of the former British colony known as the Gold Coast and the Togoland Trust located at the western and eastern parts of Togo and Ghana respectively and it is the first Sub Saharan country in colonial Africa to gain her independence on the 6th of March, 1957 (www.travelblog.org/world/gh.geog.html). The first political party the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) was formed in August, 1947, but it was the Convention People's Party (CPP) that won independence for Ghana. Upon her attainment of independence, Ghana joined the Commonwealth. Ghana was among the 32 independent states that signed Africa Union charter in 1963. Ghana is also a member of United Nations and it is the first country to have ratified the UNCRC.

The republic of Ghana is located in the western part of Africa. It shares boundaries with Cote d' Ivoire on the west, Togo on the east, Burkina Faso on the north and the Atlantic ocean at the south. It covers a total area of about 239, 460sqkm of which land forms 230,940sq and water represents 8520sq *ibid*. This implies that most parts of Ghana are accessible by land. The capital city is Accra where the seat of government is located. The climate of Ghana is tropical but temperatures vary with season and elevation. There are two main seasons in the country – the Wet and Dry seasons. Apart from the northern part of the country the two rainy seasons occur from April to July and from September to November. Annual rainfall ranges from about 1100 millimeters in the north to about 2100 millimeters in the southeast (www.ghanaweb.com/ghanahomepage/geography/climate.php). The country normally experiences dry season where there is no rainfall between December and March. During this period a dry desert wind, *harmattan* which originates from Sahara desert, blows from north into the country. This lowers the humidity and creates warm days and cool nights particularly in the north. Because there is no rainfall this weather condition brings a lot of hardships to the people of Ghana. Food crops don't do well and river bodies dry up. People who are hard hit by this unfavourable weather condition are women and children because the country faces food shortages around this time; they also have to walk some distances in search of water,

particularly, in communities where rivers and streams are the main sources of water. The situation affects the life quality of children. Ghana is divided into ten administrative regions each with a regional capital.

2.1 Population characteristics

Ghana has seen tremendous increase in her population figures since independence. As at the year 2000, its population has nearly tripled in size from about six million at independence to a little over 18 million (population census, 2000) Children between 0-15 years constitute about 43% of the total population. Ghana can thus be described as country which's child population is high. This calls for policies and interventions that support children. The provisional result released by the Ghana statistical service from the 2010 population and housing census puts Ghana's population at 24, 233,431 of which males form 11,801,661 representing 48.7% and females constitute 12,421,770 representing 51.3% (www.gss.gov.gh). According to UN, the annual population growth rate for 2000-2005 is 2.17% with a projected population of between 26-27 million in 2015. Ghana is gradually becoming urbanized. The age structure and their percentages are as follows: 0 – 14 years forms 37.2%; 15 – 64 years forms 59.2% and 65 and above constitute 3.5% (CIA World Fact book 2010). It could be seen that the older population has a small percentage perhaps because they do not have access to good health care facilities. Results from the 2000 national population census indicate that the literacy rate of the total population is 57.9%. However, of the male population 66.4% are literate and the rate for the female population stands at 49.8%. This result shows that a lot of women in Ghana are illiterates. Several factors might have accounted for this. Possible factors include lower completion rate of girls in schools, parents pushing girls into early marriages, teenage pregnancy and lack of interest in girls' education in some local cultures.

In spite of government's effort to improve on health care delivery for Ghanaians, infant and child morbidity and mortality continue to be a challenge. Available data suggest that infant and under five mortality rates stood at 50 per 1000 births and 80 per 1000 births respectively in 2008 (GSS et al, 2009).

Table 1Trends of infant and under five mortality rates of Ghana between 1988 and 2008

Year	Infant mortality rate	<5 mortality rate
1988	77	155
1993	66	119
1998	57	108
2003	64	111
2008	50	80

Adopted from Meyir, 2010, Master thesis at NOSEB

The underlying cause of the problem includes drinking of contaminated water, high incidence of malaria, guinea worm infection and cholera and the difficulty in accessing health care especially in rural areas.

2.2 A glance at Ghana's economy

Ghana is endowed with several natural resources. Examples are gold, cocoa bauxite, timber among others that form the bulk of her foreign exchange. However, it still relies heavily on international agencies like the IMF, World Bank and donor countries for financial and technical assistance. Ghana's economy is still agrarian because the agricultural sector accounts for about 36% of her GDP and employs about 60% of the total labour force. (ghanaweb.com). Ghana signed a Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact in 2006 which aims to assist in transforming Ghana's agricultural sector (2010 CIA World Fact book). Apart from the cash crops Ghana also produces many food crops such as cassava, maize, rice, yams, banana, plantain and many more. Vegetables like cabbage, tomatoes, and garden eggs are produced and livestock in the likes of cattle, sheep, goats and poultry are also reared by farmers. Ghana has a vast track of land yet the food production is insufficient. So Ghana continues to import large tones of food particularly rice and fish to supplement the local production. For instance, Ghana currently spends 450 million dollars annually on rice importation to augment local demand (source: Ghana News Agency, 9th August, 2010). Food shortage and insecurity in Ghana is as a result many problems bedeviling agricultural sector. These problems include input supplies, post harvest losses, processing, marketing, access to and/or management of credit facilities. The industrial sector accounts for around 25.3% of GDP and employs only about 15% of the work force and the services sector contributes about

37.5% of GDP and also employs around 29% of the labour force. Average annual growth rate between 1990 and 2008 is 2.1% (UNICEF March, 2010).

Ghana opted for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) program in 2002 and so benefited largely from multilateral debt relief. However, she has since opted out of the HIP initiative. Inflation which increased from 18.1 % in December, 2008 to 20.6 % in April 2009 has declined further to 14.23 % as at February, 2010 and it is likely to decline further to a single digit within the year (Ghana Statistical Service 2010). Ghana has discovered oil at the western part of the country for which commercial quantity drilling is expected to commence in the third quarter of 2010 or early 2011. The Thematic priorities under its current Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy are: macroeconomics stability, private sector competitiveness, human resource development, good governance and civic responsibility'' (Ghana Economy 2010, CIA World Fact book).

2.3 Poverty in Ghana

According to a study by International Labour Organization (ILO) in Ghana four of every ten Ghanaians live in poverty (ILO, 2004). Most Ghanaians are engaged in micro small businesses, many also try to find survival income through casual labour daily. From the same study it was established that two thirds of the working population are found in the informal sector and women are the poorest people in Ghana. The National Population Census in the year 2000 puts Ghana's population at a little over 18 million. Out of this figure a study in Ghana - Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS), conducted by Ghana Statistical Servie in 1998/1999 found that over seven million were classified as poor. Farmers are the category of workers mostly affected by poverty in Ghana.

Due to the category of people mostly hit by the poverty situation in Ghana (farmers and women) the situation has a trickling down effects on children. The reason is that the situation compels many children particularly those in rural areas to work either as paid or unpaid family workers to support the livelihoods of their families in some cases even at the expense of their education. This situation became evident in my observation to some households during fieldwork. I observed that some children particularly girls between the ages of 8 to 11 are some days asked by their mothers to stop going to school and stay home and take care of younger siblings as the mothers go to trade, farm or work. It has been argued by some scholars and studies that poverty is one of the main factors, if not the absolute one, that

influences children's work especially in the global south (Abebe, 2009; Bourdilion, 2006) "Children's work contribution to the family economy can be perceived as an indicator of poverty, if not its cause" (Nieuwenhuys, 1996:240). Bourdillon (2006) argues that in general, children in poorer countries work greater than their counterparts in the richer countries. But in my opinion there are differences among children at work. All children in poor countries do not work in the same way or have the same work load. This is because even in the same society children of the poorest families work more than those of the richest. For example, the Ghana Child Labour Survey in 2003 conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) found that children from the poorest households are more likely to be engaged in the labour force than children from households with higher per capita income or expenditure (GSS, 2003 cited in De Lange 2009:9). In Ghana poverty of families is worsened by factors such as low educational background of most parents especially women, low level of families' income and unemployment of many parents and large household size.

To move out of poverty the government of Ghana has realized that what people need is decent jobs. It is therefore working hard with partners in development to achieve this goal. The government has then in collaboration with the development partners like ILO designed the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) in 2002. The GPRS addresses most of the developmental challenges the country faces; for example macro-economic stability, rural development, vulnerable groups and governance. The ILO in conjunction with the development partners have planned to introduce its Decent Work Pilot Program in the country to help strengthen the GPRS to generate more and better jobs. The national partners have identified the following five areas for policy development:

- More and better jobs in micro and small enterprises: a strategy to address the problems of the informal economy
- Skills development for gainful employment
- Maximizing the employment benefits of infrastructural development
- Integration of persons with disabilities into society
- Increasing productivity and fair distribution through a wages and incomes policy
  (ILO 2004 – Ghana)

2.4Education (Basic Level)

Since independence Ghana has made great improvement in her educational system. Successive governments had worked on improving education in the country. The Education Act of 1961 the first education Act made primary education free and compulsory for every child of school going age – for six years they should have access to education. The 1992 constitution of Ghana section 28 has extended the free education beyond primary level to include junior high school. Broadly, Ghana's education system is made up of basic education, secondary education and tertiary education which consists of various forms.

Until 1987, the duration of basic education in Ghana was ten years with the structure 6-4. Thus, six years primary education and four years of middle school education. Four main subjects- Mathematics, English Language, Geography and History were taught. In 1987/88 Ghana introduced a new educational reform which changed this system to nine years with six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education. In 1996 a program dabbed free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) was introduced to indeed make the free idea of basic education achieved. Currently, the structure of basic education in Ghana is 2-6-3 representing 2 year's kindergarten education, 6 years primary education and 3 years of junior high schooling. According to the 2008 Education Sector Performance Report (ESPR), Ghana had 17,315 primary schools and 5450 junior high schools. This appears to suggest that many children in Ghana have access to basic education at least. However, the practical situation seems opposite in some parts of the country particularly rural areas. For example, during the state party examination of Ghana's second periodic report by the Committee on the rights of the child in Geneva, 2006, it came to light that 1.5 million children remained out of school. Several factors account for this. For example, some hidden charges such as Parents Teachers Association (PTA) dues by some schools, examination fees, the distance some children have to walk to and from school each day and the cost of materials like books, uniforms and shoes.

But I must say that the situation is changing and Ghana is now doing well in education. The following statistics by the Ministry of Education (2008) show improvements. For instance, the number of kindergarten (KG) schools increased from 14,246 in 2006/07 to 15, 449 in 2007/08. The reason is primarily the government's policy that every primary school should have a kindergarten attached to it. The percentage increase in enrolment for KG between 2004 and 2008 is 84%. There has also been improvement in enrolment at the primary level. For example, the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) increased from 93.3% in 200/07 academic year to

95.2% in 2007/08. The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) for the same period also saw an increase from 81.1% to 83.4%. The completion rate at junior high school is 67.7% but the rate for girls is consistently lower than that of boys (ESPR, 2008 Ministry of Education). The report also adds that the gender parity at all levels seems to be improving.

One aspect of education that Ghana has recently started well is the Early Childhood Education and Development (ECCD). The strategic plan of the ministry of education (2003) provides for the inclusion of ECCD into the mainstream of basic education. The Children's Act, 1998, provides the legal framework for the full development of the child. Based on the Act, the government has come out with a comprehensive ECCD policy. This is to provide a good start in life for all children in line with the global goal of providing a World Fit for children (Ghana's Second Periodic report to UNCRC Committee, 2005). Though there has been a remarkable improvement in education sector, some problems still exist. For example, drop outs among children, non-attendance, high cost of education, many schools in rural areas study under trees and so on. However, with the introduction of programmes such as capitation grant, free uniforms and exercise books and school feeding programme further improvements are likely to be seen at the basic school level which will improve children's welfare in Ghana.

2.5 Description of Sekyere south district (specific study context)

2.5.1 Location of the district
This study has been conducted in the Sekyere South district in Ashanti Region of Ghana. Ashanti region is located in the middle part of Ghana. Sekyere South District is one of the twenty seven administrative districts in the Ashanti Region of Ghana; with a total land area of 584 square kilometers. This represents about 2.4% of the total landmass of Ashanti Region. The district lies between latitude 6° 50'N and 7^0 10'N and Longitude 1^0 40'W and 1^0 25' W.

The district shares boundaries to the North with Ejura-Sekyeredumsi, Mampong Municipal to the East, Sekyere East and Kwabre East to the South and to the West with Afigya Kwabre. Agona is the district capital.

 The major rainy season occurs between March and July with the minor rainfall season occurring between September and November. Mean annual rainfall ranges between 855mm and 1,500mm. Little or no rainfall is recorded in the months of December to February. The onset of rains is usually characterized by storms and are very torrential which brings about

destruction of some crops especially plantain. The resultant effect is food shortage and consequently, high food stuff prices.

Temperatures are very high especially during the dry periods with mean monthly temperature hovering around 27^{oc}. The dry season is characterized by harmattan wind which is dry, dusty and cold. During the months between December and February Non-farming activities take place as farmers tend to engage in other activities rather than farming. Similarly, several hours are spent by households in search for water as most water sources dry up.

2.5.2 Population characteristics of the district

The 2000 National Population and Housing Census put the district population at 119,093 which is about 3.3% of the regional population (2000 population and housing census). Currently, the population of the district has been projected to 139,736 (www.ghanadistricts.com) The 0 – 14 ages group who are considered as children and non-economically active group forms 46.06% of the district population, 15 – 65 age group the economically active group takes 48.03% while those of 65+ take 6% (Sekyere South District Profile). From the statistics above it can be seen that the district has a lot of children since their percentage takes almost half of the entire district population. The re-demarcation of the districts in Ghana affected the total land area as well as the population size of the district. The population growth rate of the district currently stands at 1.3%. This population is spread across the several communities, towns, villages and hamlets in the district. The most populous town in the district is Wiamoase with a population of about 11,000 people (2000 population census). The population distribution of the district is directed positively towards the Eastern Constituency of the district. This scenario may be attributed to the availability of basic social services and the easy access to marketing facilities in that parts of the district. Regional statistics indicates that the district has low fertility rate, but the trend of population increase in the district does not support this point and also about 50% of the population in the district, particularly, females either have no formal education or have only pre-school education. The most dominant tribe in the district is the Asante and some smaller tribes include Kussase and Dagaaba.

2.5.3 Household Size and Characteristics

Reports from the sample socio-economic survey conducted by the District Planning Coordinating Unit (DPCU) in 2010 shows little changes in the household size and characteristics of the district over the years. The table below indicates the trend in household and housing trends in the district.

Table 2 Household and Housing Trends in the District

Issues	2006	2010
Household size	6.5	5.4
Household Occupancy rate	14.3	9.0
Room Occupancy rate	3.2	
Habitable rooms per house	7.1	
No. of rooms per house	8.5	

Source: Socio-Economic Survey, 2010

The table above indicates that each household contains between 5 and 7 people, and not less than 3 people live in a room. I guess the data did not include especially, children below two years as there was no information on that and also in statistics where the family is used as the unit for its members, it is its adult members who matter when counting is done; children are at times hidden under family categories (Qvortrup, 2002). If children of all ages are included i believe there will be congestion in households and rooms. This is because regional social characteristics indicate that children constitute the greater proportion of household members in the districts. This will mean that children's privacy and access to resourses will be affected which will in turn affects their wellbeing.

2.5.4 The Structure of the Local Economy/Economic activities

The major economic activity in the district is farming. Agriculture which is the dominant sector in the country is also the major driving force of the district. It employs about 63.2% of the total work force of the district. The services and industrial sectors employ about 22.4% and 14.4% respectively (Socio-Economic Survey by the district, 2010).

Cocoa is the major cash crop cultivated in the district. The major food crops cultivated by farmers include maize, plantain, cassava, yams and cocoyam. Farmers also grow vegetables such as tomatoes, pepper and garden eggs. It must be noted that almost all the farmers are peasant farmers growing mainly for household consumption.

Apart from farming most of the women are engage in petty trading. Only few people are engage in livestock production.

2.5.5 Education

Sekyere south district has a total of 311 educational facilities made of 109 kindergarten, 111 primary schools, 84 Junior High Schools (JHS) and 7 Senior High Schools (SHS). The district has been divided into seven (7) circuits. Enrolment levels in schools have increased over the years. The following table shows enrolment trends from 2006 to 2010

Table 3 Trends in enrolment

	2006/7		2007/8		2009/10	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
KG	5341	5290	6408	6224	6502	6325
PRIM.	12397	11176	13919	12989	14055	13121
JHS	4658	3938	5359	4486	5512	4586
SHS	2491	2022	4155	3289	4639	4206

Source: District Annual Report GES 2009

From the table it is clear that enrolment has increased for both girls and girls at all levels. This partly can be attributed to the capitation grant and school feeding programme that has been introduced by the government to increase enrolment in schools. Even though enrolment has increased over the years, there has also been some drop outs at various levels. At the primary school level, out of the total 19270 pupils promoted, 10301 were males forming 53% and 8909 females forming 47%. At the same period, there was a drop out rate of 66.9% for males and 33.1% for females. The drop out rate at JSS level is however 0.7% for males and 0.7%

for females. (www.ghanadistricts.com). The picture above calls for policies and interventions that go beyond enroling children to retaining them in classrooms.

There is only one known youth training institute in the district – Agona Women's Vocational Institute. There is also only one special school that is school for the death at Jamasi.

Generally there have been improvements at all levels and this could be attributed partly to the introduction of Capitation Grant, Ghana School Feeding Program as well as the implementation of the New Educational Reforms. It can be deduced from the table that, males outnumber their female counterparts over the years indicated.

2.5.6 Health, Water and Sanitation

The district has a total of nine (9) health facilities. Out of this figure five are private institutions where accessing health care is relatively expensive. When I look at a population of over one hundred thousand making use of nine health facilities, the conclusion I drawn is that the people in the district has difficulty accessing health care. This situation may be more serious for children and women who are the most vulnerable and poor in the district.

The population trends in the district indicate an increasing one with most of the communities attaining Urban Status. This means that water supply in the district needs to be increased to march with the population increase. In addition the existing ones the district currently is benefiting from one hundred and twenty (120) bore holes under the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative phase two. There is also Small Town Water Supply Systems in some communities. This may appear to portray that all communities have access to potable and clean water. However, some communities do not enjoy safe water particularly the smaller ones as they continue to rely on streams and rivers as their source of drinking water. Life in these communities become unbearable during the dry season since most of these water bodies dry up as has been stated above. Children and women then have walk for some distances in search of water for the households. This in turn affects school attendance of children in such communities.

Environmental Sanitation is very important aspect human development as it affects quality of life. There is indiscriminate disposal of refuse which cause environmental concerns. Lack of effective refuse collection from premises has led to the use of unauthorized places for disposal of both solid and liquid waste. More than half of all reported diseases at the district health

facilities are related to poor environmental sanitation (The District Assembly Report, 2010) with its attendant social and economic costs. Not many communities have access to improved sanitation facilities. Even though most communities can boast of public latrines the state of some of these facilities are very deplorable. Many people in the communities rely on public latrines since most households do not have toilet facilities. The district is now making it a policy to encourage more households to own their toilet facilities.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY CHAPTER

3.0 Introduction

In this methodology chapter, I discuss the methods and procedures employed in collecting data during the field work for the study. Some steps and actions taken before fieldwork will be explained. The study is mainly about qualitative approach for collecting, discussing and analyzing data. In this study I used three qualitative methods which are participant observation, interviews with children and adults and focus group discussion. Detail discussion of the use of these methods is also given. The challenges I faced and how I tried to deal with them during fieldwork will also be discussed in this chapter. Brief explanation or work after fieldwork has been done.

3.1 Before going to the field

3.1.1 Methods to be used: Before going to the field and with the topic (children's unpaid household work) in mind I carefully considered which methods will suit the study. I planned to use observation, interviews and focus group discussions. I chose these methods because I felt they could help me to get the perspectives of my informants concerning the topic for study.

3.1.2 Choosing the field site: In deciding on which place will be appropriate for the study, I chose the Sekyere South District of Ashanti Region in Ghana as the field site. The study was conducted in a relatively small farming/rural community in the district (name withheld). The selection of this particular community as field site was based on my previous knowledge of it. I knew the people there to be mainly farmers and so their children work alongside with their children. The family system in the area is the extended type. The majority of children go to school though many of them end up at the primary level. My personal relationship with the members in the community can be described as fluid. For instance, I had some extended family members in the community; I had lived and started school in the community in my childhood days so some school mates and old friends in the area may know me. Therefore, I had anticipated that all these relationships may influence me in diverse ways. Also, in this community many children's everyday life experiences are filled with different unpaid household chores. This community is a typical example of communities in Ghana where children work a lot for their parents. Therefore in trying to get children as well as adults' perspectives about children's household work I considered the community as an appropriate study site.

My fieldwork has been informed partially by my longtime previous knowledge of the study area. The report for this study will come from the empirical material I got from my two months child focused qualitative fieldwork with children and adults from the field.

Before embarking on fieldwork I also considered the number of respondents to take part in the study. Gender and age range of will be informants were taken into account. I planned to use sixteen children, nine (9) girls and seven (7) boys for the in-depth interview with their ages ranging from eight to fifteen. I also decided to interview seven adults; four women and three men. Two separate focus group discussions one for girls and another for boys will be organized. Reasons behind my choices are given later in the chapter. Also, appropriate institutions to be contacted were decided on. Before leaving for fieldwork I also obtained a letter of introduction from my department, Norwegian Centre for Child Research (NOSEB) which I believed could help me get access to the field and my informants.

3.2 Being on the field: My experiences

Here I discuss step by step methods I employed in the study. Issues such as informed consent, confidentiality will be dealt with. It is here I tried to bring to light some challenges I faced and how I managed to deal with them.

3.2.1 Observation

Observation was one of the three methods employed in this study. I considered participant observation as a useful method because I agree with Mason, (2002) that knowledge can be generated by observing or participating in a natural setting and also I believe that the method can help me to answer some of my research questions. Participant observation as Bryman (2008) argues may imply just observation, but in practice it goes beyond that. Participant observation refers to a method of generating data whereby the researcher immerses herself or himself in a research 'setting' so that they can experience and observe at first hand a range of dimensions in and of that setting (Mason, 2002). This is done when the researcher is interested in, say, the social world of a group; for example, their work, the way they behave, dress and daily routines. A participant observer does immerses herself in a group for an extended period of time, observing behavior, listening to what is said in conversations both between others and with the field worker, and asking questions (Bryman, 2008). This means

that in participant observation the observer in one way or another tries to become some kind of a member of the observed group, "This involves not only a physical presence and a sharing of life experiences, but also entry into their social and 'symbolic' world through learning their social conventions and habits, their use of language and non-verbal communications" (Robson, 2002:314).

In view of the above discussion I stayed in the community for the two-month period of the fieldwork. Before the actual observation I spent one week introducing myself and the topic of study to each of the six households to be observed. I visited each household two times. I did this to build up friendship and trust with the households. Each of the household having known who I was and the motive of my visits willingly accepted and cooperated with me. I then used about three weeks to conduct participant observation and holding of informal discussion on the various household activities children were engaged in. This informal discussions were not recorded but notes were taken on the spot and quickly afterwards. This gave me some kind of idea about the social life of children in the community. Participant observation as a means of listening to and interpret children's experiences and perspectives are embedded in and express through the social practices in which they interact (Clark, Kjørholt &Moss, 2005).

In participant observation, the observer can decide to take active role or at times decide not to have too much impact on the researched. I took active positions some times by participating actively in the social life of my informants. For example, I attended funeral celebrations on two occasions; I sat with some children and conversed with them as they sell items arranged on small tables. I also joined some children when they were performing some household chores. For example, in one of my visitation tours, I found myself with [Charlotte, not her real name] a 11 year old girl who was preparing evening meal. I tried to help her by grinding the ingredients in a local bowl. But, not long after I have started she begun laughing at me, because I was not doing it well and more also in that community such chore is not for males. This revealed to me how incompetent and handicap I was in performing that chore. However, I must say that in doing all these things I was careful in refraining myself from what Bryman describes as 'Going native' *ibid*.

Members of the community and the informants ascribe to me multiple positions and research roles. For example, because I had already told them I was doing research they looked to me as a researcher in some cases. I was also seen as a friend by those who knew me already and those who did not know me regarded me as a 'stranger'. Upon realizing that I had come from

Europe (Norway) many of them called me 'Burger' a local term which means one is rich because he had traveled to Europe, America or elsewhere. My child informants were divided on what status to give me. Some called me sir (teacher), others called me daddy and others uncle. I have to say here that I did not know which of these identities I should admit. All these various positions may influence my data in one way or the other.

Before using the other methods (interview and focus group discussions) I first used the observational method. This was to give me the opportunity to use the notes from the observation to make follow up questions to clear some points during the interview and focus group discussion sessions. I saw this as good because as Robson argues, observation can be used as supportive or supplementary method to collect data that may complement data obtained by other means. For example, imagine that the main method in a study is interview; observation might then be used to validate the messages obtained in the interviews (Robson, 2002). The observation offered me the opportunity to see for myself the various activities that go on in the community. I observed the surrounding and family environment in the community in which children live such as type of houses lived in, different kinds of food eating, adult-child relations and so on. During the participant observation it was interesting to see children taking part in different activities both inside and outside the home such as cooking, pounding of *fufu* fetching of water and selling in the streets of the community.

3.2.2 Interviews

I made use of individual face to face interviews in attempt to obtaining primary data for the study. Interview is an effective method of eliciting the views and perspectives of interviewees and hence production of knowledge. As Christensen and James, put it ''only through listening and hearing what children say and paying attention to the ways in which they communicate with us will progress be made towards conducting research with, rather than simply on, children'' (Christensen and James. 2000:7). But before the actual interview I did a pilot interview with two children, who were not among the selected respondents, where I tried out the interview questions with them. The rationale behind this was to allow me make the appropriate changes where necessary. I must say that this was fruitful because the responses they gave offered me the opportunity to restructure some of the questions and my questioning techniques because they found it difficult to understand some of the questions and so could not give any response.

I conducted an in-depth interviews with fourteen children whose ages range from 8 to 15 years. All the children I interviewed attend school. I also interviewed six adults – three men and three women with ages ranging from 44 to 65 years. The adults I interview were not the same parent of the children in the study. The reason was to give these children the opportunity to express themselves freely without any fear or intimidation from the parents. I believe this was in order because as Tingstad puts it, interviewing children and parents together or separately has the merits of identifying different practices, positions and dynamics within the family (Tingtad, 2007). In trying to understand a child's lived experiences in relation to household work it was important to talk with children as well as adults. This will lead to gaining deeper understanding on the topic under investigation. Within the new sociology of childhood it is now considered one - sided only to ask adults to speak on behalf of their children. In the new social studies of childhood, children are widely recognized as competent social actors who should be given the chance to express their own views about issues which concerns them (James and Prout, 1990; Boyden et al 1998 cited in Punch 2001). Children's perspectives may differ from that of their parents, for this reason it is important to ask household members about their own involvement in household work rather than relying on reports of what others say they do (Punch, 2001).

To answer my main research question – what perspectives do children hold in relation to their unpaid household work, I realized that talking and discussing issues with children and parents was imperative hence semi-structured interview was designed with the help of my supervisor. Semi-structured interview was deemed appropriate for the following reasons: one, as a young researcher it will give me the opportunity to modify my interview questions, research roles and strategies when appropriate during fieldwork (Smith, 2008). This type of interview also gives respondents the chance to freely express themselves without many restrictions. The above reasons made me adopt interview as a method of getting to know the perceptions of both children and adults about unpaid household work of children in the community. As said earlier, in-depth interviews conducted on children as well as adults. The interview with children took place in the three schools in the community. The reason for choosing to interview children in the schools was that from my observation I found out that children were busily engaged in different household activities after school and at week-ends. So the only time to get them was when they were in school. Also the choice of schools as a way of getting access to children is based on factors and considerations such as conducive place to conduct one to one interview, be able to interview children in groups during the focus group

discussion and time saving factor (Solberg, 1996). However, there were some challenges which I will talk about in later section of this chapter.

The interview with parents took place at their respective homes mostly in the evenings since this is the time most of them had returned from their farms. Even though the interview guide produced from the research questions was used during the interview session, the informants and I were not strictly bound to it as some flexibility was made. Both the interviews with children and adults were conducted in the local language *asante twi* which both the researcher and the informants could speak and understand. Due to this I did not employ the services of a translator. The use of the local language made it easy for me to clearly understand what my informants were telling me. During the interview session I took notes of all the proceedings and also to make sure that I get every bit of what the respondents said, I used the digital voice recorder given to me by my department (NOSEB) to record all the conversations. The form of interviewing the children and the questions in the interview guide for both children and adults were relatively the same because studying and interviewing children are not so significantly different from that of adults and so does not necessarily requires different methods and strategies (Solberg, 1996).

3.2.3 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group interviews which widespread use started after 1950s by market researchers have become a popular method in qualitative and social science research in recent times (Kvale & Brinkmann2009; Robson, 2002; Smith, 2008). The goal of a focus group interview is not to reach a consensus about or find solution to the issue being discussed, but to encourage the participants to bring out their different opinions of the theme under discussion (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). It consist of small group of members usually between six and ten who meet to discuss a topic defied and led by a moderator (researcher) (Chrzanowska, 2002 cited in Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The researcher does not put question to each focus group member in turn, but rather facilitates the discussion and encourage group members to interact with each other. The interaction among group members is a key feature here and this distinguishes focus group interview from the one to one interviews (Morgan, 1997 cited in Smith, 2008). Focus group interview looks more natural because it resembles the everyday conversation setting which includes a range of communicative process like storytelling, laughter and disagreement.

During the fieldwork I conducted two focus group discussions to get more insight about children's household work in the community. One group was for girls and the other for boys. The boys' group consisted of five members while that of the girls was made up of six members. Why I chose separate gender groups was to create a room for freedom of expression of opinions without intimidation and heckling. Also, as Robson argues, homogeneous groups have a common background and experience which may facilitate communication, promote an exchange of ideas and gives a sense of safety in expressing concerns and may also result in a group thinking. No focus group discussion was organized for parents because of limited time and the difficulty of bringing the members together at one place for the discussion.

The children who formed the group were selected from the only junior high school in the community. The ages of members ranged from 12 to 15. This category of children was chosen because they belong to the adolescent group and was perceived that they are eloquent and can contribute meaningfully o the discussion. The children have different background experiences and so were able to contribute effectively to the topic under discussion. As expected, and as usual with focus group discussion the proceedings at certain stages saw some disagreement among members where members did not agree with each other. The focus group interview was conducted in the school when children were not engaged with classroom work. Reasons why focus group interview was chosen as a method include the following: one, to give me an idea of a collective perspective of children on the topic and engage children in discussion and use what they say to complement or get clearer understanding of what has been said in the one to one interview. Also, ''interviewing children as a group gives a unique way of understanding how children think about a subject among peers and how the children's answers may lead to new questions and thought'' (Pramling and Doverborg-Ostber, 1986 cited in the master thesis of Becidan 2008:42).

3.2.4 Secondary sources of data

The collection of primary data was tea in focus of this study for which observation, interviews and focus group discussion were used. However, secondary data was also collected to help in the writing of the report. Secondary data is used to gain initial insight into a research problem. Secondary data was used because some information was not readily available on the field. I

collected data on issues such as the district profile and the pupils' enrolment from appropriate institutions like the Sekyere South District Assembly Office and the he District Directorate of Education. I also collected data from the internet, articles, and some previous work related children's work in and outside Ghana. These data helped in the analysis of this report on the issue of children's unpaid household work.

3.2.5 Selection of informants

During the field work I chose my informants from among the three schools in the community. I selected sixteen respondents for the interview. However, for lack of time and other reasons fourteen respondents out of the sixteen were interviewed. With the help of head teachers purposive sampling was used to select some of the respondents. This was done because the teachers said they stay in the community with the children and so know children who are burden with household work. Also the age, maturity and experience levels of the pupils were taken into consideration in choosing the informants. Random sampling method was also employed to select some of the respondents. This was to offer all the children in this category equal opportunity to be selected. The respondents' ages ranged from eight to fifteen years. I chose this wide age-span with the aim of making selection of informants relatively easy. Also, I had an idea that with wide age -span the probability of getting children who are well articulated will be high. They were made up of nine girls and seven boys and they were from grade three to eight.

Also, I selected seven adults or parents as informants in this study. This was made possible from my initial familiarization visit and informal discussion with them. They were made up of four women and three men whose ages ranged between forty and sixty five. This category of adults was chosen because of their level of experience and other factors such as their family size, occupation and so on.

3.2.6 Getting access and Gatekeepers

The nature of children and young persons' lives in families, schools, day care and institutions means that they are rarely entirely free to decide for themselves whether or not to participate in research. They are surrounded by adults who act as 'gatekeepers', controlling researchers'

access and children's and young persons' opportunities to express their views (Mason, 2004:45,46)

Adults have control over places such as schools and homes which act as some of the best venues for interviews (Mason, 2004). Therefore, in order to have access to children at these places it is important to have permission from adults who control these places. The reason is that gatekeepers in one way or the other can become barriers to researchers and they can also use their power to 'censor' children and young people (Mason, 2004). Researchers also need to know that gatekeepers have got a positive role to ensure that children under their care are protected from all harms. So for a researcher to have access to these children it is necessary for the researcher to negotiate with these gatekeepers how the re going to take part in the research.

The first group of gatekeepers I had to deal with included the district administration, the district education office under the Ministry of Education and schools in the community. In line with the argument above I had to show the introductory letter I took from my department (NOSEB) to the directors or heads of the above mentioned institutions for permission to conduct interviews in the schools. The purposes, objectives and intentions of the study were explained to these institutions. When that was done, I also gave copies of the introductory letters to the heads and teachers of the selected schools for their consent. But before this I had already visited the schools and introduced myself to them. Initially, some teachers became suspicious but after explaining that the work was purely for academic purpose and having showed them copies of the introductory letter and the permission from the district education office, they welcomed me and cooperated with me favorably. The heads of the schools gave me their classrooms and in some cases their offices to conduct interviews there.

Parents were the second gatekeepers I had to deal with. I visited the parents, particularly the fathers, of the children I interviewed I their homes and explained to them who I am, where I am studying, the topic and purpose of my study and the need for their children to take part in the study without any fear. These parents also willingly accepted me. As I have already said three of my adult respondents were women. So when it was time to interview the adults I had to obtain permission from the husbands of these women. This is because in Ghana as it is in many African cultures husbands are usually the heads of households. I therefore talked to these men that I will be having conversation with their wives on the topic under study.

On the part of the children themselves, after they have been selected I met them in their various schools and introduced myself to them. I again explained to them the topic we were going to have interview about, the need to discuss the topic and made friendship with them. I asked the children if they willingly wanted to be part of the study for which they all responded in a positive way. This I did for two different times before the actual interview took place.

3.2.7 Ethical considerations in the study

Ethical issues usually concern with moral issues to be considered in research. These moral issues relate to practical skills and intellectual virtue of identifying and responding to what is most important in a situation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Ethical issues are important to consider in order to protect the rights and dignity of the people involved in any piece of research, in my case children in particular. Kvale and Brinkmann argue that ethical issues are not issues to be solved once and for all at the start of the interview but they are issues which come up and should continually be addressed and reflected upon throughout the qualitative interview. Some of the areas of ethical issues I considered were informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.

3.2.8 Informed consent

I sought the consent of my research participants before carrying out the interview with them. I explained to them their right to take part in the research and also to withdraw from it anytime any of them feel appropriate to do so. I also made it clear to them that their participation in the study is not compulsory but voluntary. Participants were also informed about the possible benefits, purpose and the procedure of the research project. Permission from parents towards their children is an important ethical consideration. Even where children have agreed to take part in a research their parents consent is still paramount. In this light I sought the permission from parents to talk with their children. This was done verbally as all but one of the adults interviews were illiterates. The fieldwork then started after I have obtained permission from participants, parents and other institutions that play vital roles in children's lives. These institutions include the district education office, district administration and heads of schools.

3.2.9 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality in research means that information that has the tendency of disclosing the identity of participants should not be disclosed (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The concern about who should have access to information participants provide in a research is very important. Because of this I assured children of confidentiality by telling them that whatever they tell me will be kept confidential and will be used only for the purpose for which the data is being collected and neither their parents nor teachers will hear what they say. The informants were also informed that if there is information they wish to keep to themselves they have the right to do so. This is in agreement with what Ennew and Boyden say, that, "Children have a right to keep to themselves information that might put them in danger once the researcher has gone" (1997:44). This was clearly realized on the field as most participants felt reluctant to answer some questions which they thought if they do will be revealing how their parents treat them. However, a dilemma which concerns disclosure of confidential information of children came up during some interview sessions. For example, a 12 year old girl told me about the death of her mother during an interview when she had wanted not to tell me about that. I realized later on that this girl had wanted to keep this information secret to herself but it came up unconsciously in the middle of the interview. Thus "confidentiality can be compromised without the participants knowing or being prepared to inform about personal or emotional matters" (Bostock, 2002 cited in Abebe, 2009:457)

To ensure effective confidentiality anonymity is one ethical demand that can protect the participants. This is because with anonymity respondents names or any description that have the potential of making them known are not used in the final report. So I assured the children that their real names will not be used in the transcription, analysis or report process. However, one problem of anonymity researchers have got to deal with is that, it denies participants their voice in research which might have been argued as the aim of the research (Parker, 2005 cited in Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Some participants who have spent their time and contributed to a research project might wish to have some credit by seeing their names in the final report. For example, in a follow up interview when I asked one of my child informants if a researcher interviews her, she will like to see her name in the final report said: *Yes........because if it is not me you cannot get the ideas. Also whoever reads the notes must now who said what* (A 13 year old girl).

3.2.10 Challenges faced during fieldwork and how I tried to deal with them

I did not face much problem with communication. The reason is that I could speak, write and understand the main local language in the study area. However, there were some challenges I had to deal with.

With the interview with children the first challenge was how to get children who don't feel shy and/or willing to participate voluntary in the interview. With this I listened to the request from the teachers to help me choose the respondents especially those at the primary school level. Finally, sixteen children were selected but fourteen were interviewed for lack of time. Of the fourteen eight were girls and six were boys. Their age differences are as follow: These ages (8, 9, 10 & 11) had one respondent each. Two of them were of twelve years old and three thirteen year olds. Fourteen years had the highest number – four children and there was only one fifteen year old child among the respondents. During the actual interview I realized that some of the respondents were, indeed, talkative. This implies if you have more of such respondents among your informants it makes your interview lengthy and analysis difficult. Out of the fourteen children interviewed only two felt shy and spoke few words, the remaining twelve contributed well. After I have got my respondents the next task was about their time. That is when to get them at their free time to interview them. The reason is that at that time school was in session and so I could not disrupt their classes by interviewing them while their friends in the classroom learning. If I have to wait till they have closed from school, there too I have a problem because they find themselves busily occupied with different household tasks and I cannot get them. What I did then was to negotiate with the teachers to conduct the interview on occasions such as their long break time, whenever they have outdoor or physical activities, the revision week prior to their term examination and the week after the exams. I must confirm that this was the main reason why I could not interview all the sixteen children I had initially planned to interview.

Another difficulty faced on the field, was how to find appropriate place to conduct interview. In some instances, some of the school children were anxious and curious to see what was happening whenever I sat with any of my respondents for discussion. Some would enter the interview room pretending to be looking for something. Some would simply come closer just to observe of hear the interview proceedings and so there could be the possibility that such children might have heard some issues being discussed. I felt uneasy and could not sack them. Because, I thought in doing so would mean depriving them access to their own school compound. To overcome this challenge I discussed the problem with the heads of the schools

who then agreed to give me their office rooms to conduct interviews there. I also conducted one interview with a girl in public place like a place where one informant (girl, 12) sells bread for her mother. I, therefore, side with Abebe (2009) that finding a space to do interview with children requires flexibility.

In relation to the adult respondents how to convince them initially to willingly accept to participate in the study was a problem band also how to convince the husbands of my female interviewees was another big task. I had to visit each of them in their house two times to explain at length the purpose of the whole study. All the six adults interviewed were farmers and petty traders. They go to farm five out of the seven days in the week. Tuesday is a local area market day so all the women among my informants may go to market to sell their farm products. They go to church on either Saturday or Sunday. So they do not really have free time. I, therefore, decided to talk to them in the evening after they have returned from and have had their super. This was between the hours of 6pm and 9pm. I also talk to some of them on the afternoons of the days they don't go to farm but to church. In fact to sit any of the adult interviewees even for 30 minutes was a problem.

3.3 Leaving the field

After two months stay and interaction with my study subjects I left the study community for Norway where transcription, analysis and interpretation of findings and writing of final report took place.

3.3.1 Data analysis

Since the study was a qualitative in nature the data collected was analysed qualitatively. In qualitative research it is difficult to separate out the data collection and analysis phases. Analysis takes place during data collection and this is used to shape the development of the whole study. With this in mind I reflected on how to analyse and interpret my data while I was still on the field. This I did by reading through the notes I took during observation and at interview sessions at the end of each day. This was to help me get the meaning therein and also how to categorise the data. Interviews were tape recorded so after each interview the tape was replayed for understanding. The data gathered in this study has been used to have insight into the social life and about the household work of children in the study area. I have to stress

that the observation I made into children's life helped me to interpret some findings based on how and when they took place.

After the fieldwork I translated all the interviews conducted from local language *twi* into English. This was followed by transcription of the data collected. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) argue, transcribing from audio recordings to text involves series of issues such as verbatim versus written style; I did verbatim transcription of the focus group interviews and the in-depth interviews from audio recording and notes into a written text. This was done to avoid leaving out any important point respondents might have raised. Data were the organized into themes to help in analyzing and interpretations. The data were analysed in accordance with the theories and concepts discussed in the theoretical chapter. During fieldwork both children and adults were interviewed. So in the analysis I paid attention to the differences and similarities between adults and children's responses. Characteristically, qualitative research is fluid, flexible, data-driven and context-sensitive (Mason, 2002:24). With this in mind while I was doing the analysis and interpretations of the data I kept on moving forward and backwards by reading over and over the research questions, the data and the concepts used to see possible relations and also make necessary changes.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE THEORY CHAPTER

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the theoretical framework and concepts that are important and relate to my study will be presented. Theories and concepts are important in research work as they help researchers to position themselves in research studies and also help in making meaning of the world being studied. Theories are the 'lens' through which we see the world and guide us in the interpretation of our data. Theories make possible the building of a piece of a research work on an existing one particularly in related field. The perspectives and concepts presented here help give further explanations to the topic being studied.

I have employed the New Social Studies of Childhood as the broad theoretical framework guiding this study. According to James and Prout (1990) and Morrow (2008) the new sociology of childhood, unlike the developmental psychology and socialization models which construct childhood as a period of dependency, immaturity, becomings and as incompetent, rather sees children as beings and active people who are capable of constructing their own social worlds and that of others around them. However, this claim seems problematic. The reason is that children's agency and activeness have a limit. In certain situations children are competent and active and in another they are inactive and dependent. So children as are also adults are both competent and dependent. This must be realized to avoid a seemingly idea that children need no guidance whatsoever. In this study children's perspectives will be the main focus, though adults' perspectives are considered. So I see the concepts and perspectives discussed in this chapter as important in understanding what both children and adults think about children's involvement in unpaid family work. In this study, I collected data from children through semi-structured interview and the aim of the study as said before s to explore an aspect of children's everyday life in relation to their involvement in household works.

Concepts and issues discussed in the theory chapter are: The new social studies of childhood, childhood as socially constructed, responsibility, children as social actors, children's rights responsibilities and children's unpaid household work, the concept of work, gender and concept of wellbeing in relation to house work.

4.1 The New Social Studies of Childhood

Before the introduction of the new social studies of childhood in the 1980s research particularly in the social sciences and studies on children had been mainly dominated and guided by ideas from developmental psychology and concepts like socialization in sociology. Developmental psychology talks about and supports the idea of the naturalness of childhood (James & Prout 1990). The universality of childhood is another explanation offered by developmental psychology, an idea which appeared unchallenged. This dominant approach teaches that children irrespective of where they are have a natural growth (Jenks 1982). That is, universally, children pass through specific pre-determined stages of growth and development in the same way. This passage is believed to be leading children from their path of irrationality to the perfect world of adult rationality and competence (Lee, 2001). The socialization concept looks at children as cultural dupes (Holt, 2004; James & Prout 1990) who only receive adult culture rather than makers of their own culture. However, children are also actively interpreting and producing culture in own ways. With socialization framework children are seen in societies as human becomings who are waiting to be led to human beings status. Adults were regarded as complete human beings and as having reached a journeys' end while children were seen as travelers on a journey yet to reach complete human being status. (Lee, 2001) This picture seems to portray adults as autonomous and children as dependents.

The new social studies of childhood/sociology of childhood was introduced in the 1980s as a response to the silence on children. Children's voices for a long time have not been heard even in the studies that concerned them. So what, the new sociology of childhood aims to do is to give a voice to children by seeing children as human beings to be studied in their own right (James and Prout, 1990). Studying children in their own right in one sense means that taking them as units of observation (Saporiti, 1992 in Qvortrup, 2002). In the new social studies of childhood, children are seen as people with agency. Thus, children are capable of acting and taking decisions in specific contexts. Children are again seen as having agency because they actively influence and are influenced by structures, systems and events in the family and society (Mayall, 2002; Qvortrup, 2002). Structures such as poverty and adult power constrain children, but children may have their own ways of responding to such structures. The new sociology of childhood sees childhood as socially constructed. It thus connects childhood to time and place. The paradigm emphasizes the need to study childhood and children's life in particular cultural context

4.2 Childhood as Socially Constructed

There are several ways of understanding and explaining the concept of childhood by different scholars, societies and cultures. Montgomery (2003) sees "childhood as an idea which is a product of particular times, places and cultures" (2003:46). International discourses and western view of childhood is that, childhood must be time of schooling and play but not working. The basic rational behind this view of childhood is to protect children from harm and exploitation. Those with this opinion see childhood as a time to be cared for by adults, for learning and leisure and without any responsibility (Bourdilon, 2006). This stand posits that children may work as a means of learning for their own good but not for the economic benefits of others even their families.

Another school of thought holds different conception of childhood. It sees childhood as been influenced by different cultural factors like age and gender. It also sees children as an integral part of adult world moving slowly into adult position and so work is normal and good for children's development. Bourdilon (2006) argues that in order to discuss children and work we must start with conceptions of childhood.

It is, indeed, difficult to talk of childhood as a single or universal category. The reason is that there exist variations and differences of childhood (s) in different societies. For example, it will be problematic to easily compare childhood of Ghana and that of another country say Norway. This is because factors like gender, income, class, economic, socio-politico and ethnicity are different in these two societies and all these factors influence the way childhood is understood and make meaning of in the respective countries. Jenks (1996) argues that childhood is not and cannot be understood as a natural phenomenon but rather it must be understood as a social construct. Ennew et al (2005:27) are of the view that "social constructs are cultural ideas that differ between actors, histories, contexts, and purposes". An important fact is that there are different ways of seeing and understanding a social phenomenon. We need to appreciate the social definitions of childhood because any society's perspectives on and dealing of child work depend on the way that society constructs childhood (Ennew et al 2005). A social phenomenon is subject to changes and variations. Ideas about children and childhood change because these ideas have their meanings based on social, cultural and historical times of societies in which children live as societies and cultures themselves do change. So I argue that for proper understanding and analysis of childhood it should be related to and situated in a specific cultural context.

4.3 Responsibility as a burden?

Responsibility has been employed as a concept in order to give further explanations and meanings to a range of household tasks children engage themselves in. Since the study is about the contribution from children toward the livelihood of their families it is important to understand the numerous household chores children participate in as a burden or something children themselves appreciate and see as positive in their lives. This is because as Bourdillon, (2006) argues if children see some positive value in their work it must be considered seriously but not dismiss it. My use of the concept here is motivated and guided by an article "Responsible children and children's responsibilities…......by school-age children" written by Virginia Morrow in 2008. The reason is that there are commonalities in what she said about children's babysitting work and the situation in Ghana particularly in my study area. Parents, more often than not, use the term responsibility but not work in talking about children's household tasks. For the wellbeing of the family and children's own welfare they are to engage in household work. Parents use criteria such as gender; age in allocating responsibilities to their children. What is responsibility about? The concept of responsibility has got several meanings and explanations depending on who is speaking and where she/he finds herself. I will refer to responsibility as the daily tasks people are supposed to perform with or without instructions. Macmillan Dictionary offers the following as some meanings of the concept. "A duty that you have to do because it is part of your job or position" and "the state or job of being in charge of someone or something and of making sure that what they do or what happens to them is right or satisfactory".

Boys and girls of different ages in my study take different household responsibilities. Children, particularly girls, normally act as caretakers of younger siblings and sick, old or weak parent/relative. In domestic arena children take duties ranging from fetching of water, pounding of *fufu*, cooking, cleaning the house and so on. In agric children frequently accompany their parents to farm. Some of them help in weeding, planting of crops and searching of firewood. Most children also help in running of family shop. This picture clearly supports the view of Morrow (2008) that at any stage children as people has the capacity to take on different responsibilities and they should be seen as such. But how do the parents and children think about and understand these responsibilities? Do the children see it s a burden or something they appreciate? The Ghanaian society and in some cases including children themselves mostly use the word dependency in describing who children are. That is children are group of people who depend on their parents (adults) for their needs; and that childhood is

a period of dependency (Morrow 2008). This view about children seems to suggest that children do not have any responsibility. And so children in most cases are looked at as only consumers and recipients from adults and not as co-workers who also contribute to their own survival and that of their families (Morrow, 2008). In Ghana it may appear that children's involvement in household works has reduced because of modern schooling as indicated in Ekuman's study in Accra. In the opposite, children's involvement in household works, particularly, in rural areas may be on the increase despite the fact that they also go to school. Of course this may differ from household to household. Children's involvement in household works is usually understood as preparing children and making them resilient for future adult life and not as intrinsically useful here and now.

Children make important contributions towards the livelihood of their families. However, the construction of children as dependents and childhood as a period of dependency do not allow us (adults) to see these important contributions from children. Morrow (2008) is of the view that the construction of children as dependents has excluded them as people with responsibilities in their everyday lives but as mere consumers and not as contributors. She, therefore, advises that there is the need to move away from the dualistic assumption of childhood as dependence as the opposite of adult independence and see family members as interdependent at different stages. This is because "While children are dependent on their families, they also contribute to varying degrees within households" (Morrow, 2008:118)

4.4 Children as social actors

Throughout history children in different societies and at different times have been useful members in their own families and in the society at large. Children's contribution from 19th century Europe and in today's developing societies is regarded as constructive activity because it has economic value, (Qvortrup, 2002). Children contribute in diverse ways towards their own well-being and that of their families and also people around them. As James and Prout argue, "children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of societies in which they live" (James and Prout, 1990). Children are not just the passive subjects of social structures and processes. *Ibid*. Unfortunately, instead of viewing children as active agents who are capable in shaping their own lives and also provide for their families economically, they are rather looked at as victims of circumstances in most situations.

Bourdillon rather argues that, "if we want to understand children, we need to learn from them" (2006:1206). Studies have shown that children in most cases feel proud and highly elated to contribute to their own well-being and the livelihood of their families (Bourdillon, 2006; Punch, 2001; Zelizer, 1985). This raises the self-esteem of children and makes them feel that they are useful members in their families and the community as a whole. Children's work benefits them in many ways. For instance, through work they get friends and learn lessons and skills that are not usually taught in schools (Bourdillon, 2006; Nieuwenhuys, 1996). Our view of children, therefore, needs to be reconsidered and instead of seeing them as objects of pity in need of protection and care, we should see them as active participants in their own social life and that of their families. This does not, however, mean that children can act as equally as adults and so should not be protected from works that have the potential to harm them. As article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of Children says, children must be protected from economic exploitation.

Parents and community members especially of the south expect their children to be responsible and to contribute in diverse ways in societies in which they live. For instance article 31 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child among other things states, the child subject to his age and ability……, shall have the responsibility:

(a) To work for the cohesion of the family, to respect his parents, superiors and elders at all times and to assist them in case of need;
(b) To serve his national community by placing his physical and intellectual abilities at its service;
(c) To preserve and strengthen social and national solidarity;
(d) To preserve and strengthen African cultural values in hi relations with other members of the society, in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and consultation and to contribute to the moral well-being of society;

4.5 Children's Rights and Children's unpaid household Work
The importance of the child as a being who needs special human rights gave birth to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989. One regional legal instrument also dealing with the rights of the child inspired by the UNCRC is the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). With the coming into force of the UNCRC, nation states, policy makers and development organizations have adopted what is

known as right based approach in dealing with children. Article 3 deals with best interest of the child and 12 deals with the expression of opinions by children on issues that concerns them. This implies that the voices of children should be the central point in exploring whatever goes in their lives (James, 2007). Therefore in arguing for or against children having responsibilities why not seek responses from the children themselves? The ILO which intends to eliminate child labor through its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) does not claim all work is bad for children; only works which interferes with their development, schooling and general well-being are considered bad. The ILO is against exploitative work but not domestic chores of children within their own families; "we have no problem with the little girl who helps her mother with the housework or cooking, or the boy or girl who does unpaid work in a small family business…" (ILO, 1993 quoted from Nieuwenhuys, 1996:239). There is growing demand for children's labour by parents. Due to economic hardships families' income is dwindling and there is always pressure on children to help parents to sustain family economy. But what we need to ask ourselves is how does the increasing demand for children's labour by parents affect children's right to important things like education, play and leisure? The laws of many countries on child work equate child labour with work for pay and works in factories and exclude numerous non-factory works which include unpaid household work. The implication is that these legislations sanctify unpaid work in the home under parental supervision (Nieuwenhuys, 1996) regardless of its consequences for the well-being of the child. Again, the assumption appears to portray that children working in their families will face less risk of harm and right abuse than in other situations. These assumptions are highly debatable because, the question is, are all domestic work exploitative free? Can't some domestic chores interfere with children's schooling and well being? Therefore, as has been said earlier, the study tries to find answers to these and other issues from children's own perspectives.

Children in most cases are expected to perform house chores without questioning or arguing with parents about the conditions under which a chore is to be done. That is, children usually cannot raise questions of how, when, where, and what about a chore. This raises question about the implementation of the provisions in Article 12 of the UN CRC which guarantees children the right to express their opinion about issues concerning them. The CRC and ACRWC are two good examples of international and regional legal instruments respectively. Some their articles deal with children's work. Both instruments recognize children's right to be protected from all forms of work that interfere with children's education and development

be it economic or non-economic activity. Articles 15 of ACRWC and 32 of UNCRC state that *every child shall have the right to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or interfere with the child's education or be harmful to the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development*. However, children, particularly those in the global south of which Ghana is not an exception, are found to be engaged in various types of household works, which, though, according to international bodies such as ILO are not considered exploitative and hazardous, have some considerable effects on children's education and social development. The term exploitation is not clearly explained by the UN CRC and ACRWC. Children normally spend more hours on their unpaid household chores. This situation also raises debates as to whether or not unpaid works within families correlate with exploitation; and whether asking children to participate in household work is in their best interest or not. Articles 31 and 12 of UNCRC and ACRWC respectively recognize the child's right to rest, leisure and play. However, many children's heavily involvement in household works prevents them from engaging in any meaningful leisure or play activities. As this study is about children's contribution in their families my aim here is to link children's *rights* to their *household work* and how the later influence the former.

The child as a right holder is understood differently in different societies and cultures. Even in the same society the understanding is different among the various traditions. Ennew et al (2005) argue that the controversy surrounding conflicting ideas of rights is more pronounced with respect to child work and working children than in any other area of childhood.

In my opinion, with regard to the child's rights and work the issue should not be whether children should work or not. Rather, we should concern ourselves with issues such as: how children go about their work in societies, which ways do children's work infringe upon their rights, who do children work with? And where and when do children work? An attempt to find solutions to the above questions will make societies regard children as human beings with rights whose rights and dignity as human beings should be respected and that works that interfere with their rights and dignity will be avoided. The view that childhood is understood and constructed as a social phenomenon also determines the types of rights available to children and the extent to which those rights can be exercised by children. Montgomery (2003) argues that, the way in which a category will be constructed will affect how members of that category will be treated or looked at (2003:46). It presupposes that if children are seen as people who have rights, those rights will be respected.

4.6 Children and Work: key debates

Work which is seen as a social phenomenon has got several meanings and definitions and this makes the universal application of the concept problematic. According to Ennew et al (2005) work can mean any activity from household chores, to formal sector employment to any kind of purposeful activity. Children particularly from the global south are involve in any of these types. Some household chores of children that can be considered as work include fetching of water and firewood, selling on the streets, taking care of younger siblings, cooking, house-cleaning, feeding livestock and accompanying parents to farm. But the question is whether parents (adults) regard these unpaid household activities of children as work or social responsibilities? Thus something children ought to do to help their families. How do children themselves regard these activities?

Work in many cultures is understood as a way of making a living and in Ghana many traditions regard the unpaid household activities of children as a means of socialization preparing children for meaningful adult life in future. The idea of work as a tool for socializing is based on the assumption that the conditions of the work such as autonomy help shape the values of the players involve. Most literature on work has contributed to the difficulty in defining work by reducing the meaning of the concept to employment with pay and leaving out unpaid activities taking up by children within their own families. Official definitions of the concept of work have also in many situations equated work with economic participation. And in so doing children's work in domestic arena and unpaid agricultural contributions to family economy are not counted or undervalued (Bass 2004; Ennew et al 2005; Levison 2000). Again, local labour laws of many countries turn to deal with waged work and leave or pay little attention to unpaid work children do to at home. All these make children's unpaid work in their families and its accompanying influence on children's well being concealed from our sight. The term 'work' as used in this study refers to unpaid activities performed by children within their own households.

The debates about children's work are done from three main perspectives. These are work-free childhood, socio-cultural and political economy which I present below (Abebe, 2009 Bass, 2004).

4.6.1 The perspective of work-free childhood(s)

The discourse surrounding this ideology is that work is not good for children. This approach sees child labour/work as a problem and must be eliminated. With this perspective childhood is viewed as a period of dependence and vulnerability which demands parental responsibility both morally and economically (Abebe, 2009) With the coming into force of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the new social studies of childhood, the place of children is believe to be in school and at play but not work, "If they are seen to be working (either in paid employment or in household domestic or caring work), the reflex is towards constituting this as an aberration or an outrage – a social problem remised on children's vulnerability and need of protection'' (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998:101). Childhood is a time for children to be in school and at play, to grow strong and confident with love and encouragement of their family and caring adult. As such childhood is deemed as a precious time in which children should live free from fear, safe from violence and protected from [work] and exploitation'' (UNICEF 2004:3 adopted from Abebe's lecture notes). This stand sees work as harmful to children's 'proper' development and that work deprives children of their childhood and takes away their leisure time. The argument here is that children may work to learn and for their own benefits but not for economic gains of others. This perspective appears to complicate the conflict between the increasing demands of families for the labour of their children and the rights of children to education, play and leisure. The perspective fails to appreciate cultural diversity in relation to children and work. It therefore relates to the modernization theory which sees the western world as an ideal that the rest of the world should follow (Abebe, 2009). Because of this perspective views childhood as period of dependency in need of protection, I argue that children's agency is ignored in its argument. I intend using this perspective in relation to the actual situation on the ground, especially, in developing countries where despite children's increase involvement in school, they still participate in various chores to help sustain the family economy.

4.6.2 Socio-cultural perspectives

Another approach from which we can visualize children's work is from socio-cultural perspective. This perspective paints a very complex picture for child work/labour. This perspective argues that children's work has its own socio-cultural meanings (Abebe, 2009) and so should be contextualized within the culture from which it takes place. Over here, children are deemed to benefit from work by learning and maintaining the cultural skills

handed over to them by their parents and grandparents. Children's work contributions to the family economy are seen as very essential and of great importance for the children's own well being. In many societies children have always worked and continue to work in order to ensure family livelihoods therefore preventing children from 'work' will be Eurocentric since their work is an integral part of everyday life (Abebe, 2007, 2009). Work is seen as one of the critical domains in which poor children can contest and negotiate childhood (Nieuwenhuys, 1996). Ali Muzrui, a social historian, in his television series 'The Africans' gave the triple heritage concept of children's work in Africa. According to Muzrui, indigenous cultural perspective one of the triple heritage, explains that children's work in families is regarded as part of household production, sustenance, socialization and as a means of vocational education and social reproduction (see Bass, 2004). Children learn useful skills and lessons while working with or without parents that are normally not taught by school curricula (Bourdillon 2006). Children in Ghana start to participate in work from an early age in life. For example, Bass 2004 referring to Oppong (2000) explains that in Ghana, from an early age of five, children start to learn to take part in house and farm works and their tasks increase as they grow up. The argument in support of children's work is based on the explanation that it transmits skills and provides apprenticeship into appropriate adult roles. Children's work has therefore become accepted part of childhood in Africa (Bass, 2004). The socio-cultural perspective provides a useful tool in understanding children's work in context. However, it falls short of contemporary structural forces (Abebe, 2009) and events in societies that influence childhood and children work.

4.6.3 The political economy perspective

The third perspective from which children's work can be visualized is from the political economy approach. The argument here is that children's work must be situated in a particular socio-economic and political economy in which children find themselves. There are some structural factors in every economy that affect the lives of people especially children. Factors such as poverty, debts, corruption, inappropriate policies conflicts, epidemics such as HIV/AIDS (Bass, 2004) bedeviling many countries, particularly those at the global south couple with the adoption of some economic policies like the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) have had adverse impacts on the population especially women and children. With adoption of SAP in 1980 Ghana had to liberalize its economy, cut down expenditure on social services like education, food, health and so on. This had negative effects

on the lives of children particularly those in the rural areas. Again this had the effect of increasing the unpaid work load of women both in home and in the communities. For instance, as Partart et al argue, with prices rising and food subsidies being removed in the south and with household incomes declining, women's unpaid work in the home is increasing as women try to stretch their resources to meet their families' needs (Parpart, Connelly and Barrteau, 2000). In effect works in households that are shifted to women tend to be shared with children and in some cases completely transfer on to children (Abebe, 2009). This implies that children's work cannot be separated from material difficulties facing children and their families (Aitken et al 2006 cited in Abebe, 2009).

The economies of most poor countries where children's work is more pronounced are agrarian. And as Bass (2004) has shown, the rates of child work are higher in countries with lower level of income and where agriculture forms a greater part of national income. But child work tends to be low in economies with higher incomes and agriculture forms only small percentage of national income. The backbone of Ghana's economy as discussed in chapter two is agriculture. This partly explains why in rural areas most children are always found taking part in family agricultural activities. An important issue this study partly seeks to address is the relationship between social, economic and political situations in Ghana and children's involvement in unpaid household work.

4.7 Gender and household work: Different responsibilities for boys and girls?

The concept of gender can be taken to mean an individual identity and a social relation that positions men and women differently in different aspects of life in different societies. Thus our social identities as men and women, boys and girls are socially constructed rather than as something which is biologically fixed. Rogers Stainton (2003) explains that gender is created and re-created through human interaction and it is a product of human meaning making. She further has this to say that "Gender is something we do rather than something we are" (2003:198). Gender is, therefore, not a biological construct but rather a social construction which varies over time and space. The way gender is perceived and understood in a particular society will, to a large extent, determine how men and women in that society see themselves and treat each other, how boys and girls see themselves and treat each other and how adults will treat boys and girls. The idea of gender will also determine role expectations of the members involve. Thus what the members should or should not do.

Gender in all cultures and societies, powerfully determines how the members of those societies and communities perceive and treat children, how children see themselves and relate to others, what children can and cannot do, their access to opportunities and to resources, their life-opportunities and so on. (Stainton, 2003:198).

Gender is an important factor in allocating household chores to children. As far as house work is concern gender, work and responsibilities are intertwine. As has been said this study mainly focuses on participation of children, particularly those in rural areas, in family work. This study is therefore conducted in a relatively rural area since children there are often engage in different houseold work. Children's house work is mostly determined based on cultural roles expected of boys and girls. For instance, it is the practice in my study area that a boy is not expected to go to kitchen and cook or clean up a younger sibling who soils her clothes while girls or a girl are/is available. Rural economies are mostly agricultural driven and so children usually work with parents on family farms or gardens. However, boys are, usually, engaged more in agricultural work than girls (De Lange, 2009). In the domestic arena girls usually spend more hours on domestic chores than boys. Girls are mostly occupied with activities such as cooking, child care fetching firewood, washing clothes and preparation of meals (De Lange, 2009; Punch, 2001) gender plays important role in this direction. In the context of household unpaid work girls take on more responsibilities than boys. Studies from Ghana and Benin confirm that all different unpaid household chores are mainly done by girls (ILO 2004; UNDP 1998 in Kielland and Tovo 2006 cited in De Lange 2009). Though there is some level of gender based division of household chores, this is fluid as some chores are co-performed by both boys and girls. A typical example in Ghana is fetching of water which culturally is seen as a genderless chore. For the purpose of this study the concept of gender is being used to understand how the idea of the concept has influenced and continue to influence children's household work in my study area.

4.8 The concept of wellbeing in relation to unpaid household work

There appear not to be one generally accepted definition of quality of life in the literature. There are a lot of definitions and measurement criteria of wellbeing. For example, a World Bank paper says that we can think of a person's well-being as that person's command over commodities in general; because people are better off if they have a greater command over resources such as food and housing: *http://info.worldbank.org/*. Quality of Life is a broad

concept and complex and can be explained in many different ways. The concept is not only about the issue of economics because economic welfare only is not sufficient enough to describe and evaluate the whole of a person's life condition; social indicators are also important to show how well people in a society are living (Bognar, 2005). Applications of the concept range from specific domains of wellbeing such as economic, material, environmental social, to all other domains impacting upon people. To Greg Bognar, "The concept of welfare refers to how well a person's life goes for that particular person" (2005:566). Due to this sadness or happiness in life should be from people's own life experiences. Thus cultural dimension of welfare/wellbeing has been emphasized by some researchers. They argue that wellbeing is related to a person's own experiences and perceptions of what constitute a 'good life' (Blake, 2004 cited in Kjørholt & Tingstad, 2007). However, the concept does not specify what constitute a good life. This in part explains why there are a lot of debates about what wellbeing actually means and the best way to measure it.

Two ways of discussing quality of life are from the subjective and objective points of view. Subjective dimension is about feeling good and being satisfied with things in general while objective dimension is about fulfilling the societal and cultural demands for material wealth, social status and physical wellbeing (Bognar, 2005). He argues that instead of limiting the debate to subjective and objective indicators; it will be more accurate to describe the concept based on 'descriptive' quality of life indicators and people's own 'evaluations.' The reason is that most objective indicators may be best measured by people's own descriptive reports. Due to this, people's own evaluations, in recent times have been accepted as an essential component of any effective quality of life measurement tool. The main idea I wish to elicit here is that though there are a lot of debates about what actually constitutes welfare, in every society there may be an agreement on which particular goods and services that promote people's welfare (Bognar, 2005). So the availability of these goods to children and the extent to which they are able to access certain services and opportunities are likely to promote their wellbeing. "Welfare is often discussed in relation to a macro perspective in terms of provision and access to resources" (Esping Anderson 2000 cited in Kjørholt and Tingstad 2007:186). Kjørholt and Tingstad (2007) referring to Allardt (1976) argues that analyzing welfare can also be related to a person's needs as 'Having', 'Loving' and 'Being'. According to this discussion "having refers to access to resources; loving refers to social integration, friendship and community while being refers to self-realization and human efficacy" (Kjørholt & Tingstad 2007:186). Children's access to resources including time is therefore reflected upon

in this study. This is because some researchers have added time dimension to the quality of life concept, arguing that having time and controlling one's own time can be valued as a source of quality of life (Zeiher, 2007). In her article, 'Valuing Children's Temporal Quality of Life' Helga Zeiher raises concern about people's complaint about lack of time and time pressure. As a result 'time welfare' has become an important discussing issue in social sciences. Children perform house chores before and after school. Their weekends and holidays' times are also occupied by unpaid household duties. So some important questions to be dealt with include: do children have enough time to engage in their pastime activities? Do children also suffer from lack of time? What are the effects of the families' lack of time on children's time welfare?

Time welfare is important in children's life because time can be said to be a property. "Time appears to be an asset that can be owned and manipulated by individuals" (Zeiher 2007). However, is it always true in the case of children? Who regulates children's time for them? Children's time is being regulated in schools, in the home and in every arena in society. It is based on the above discussion that I find quality of life a useful concept to understand the lives of children as influenced by the societal and families' time crisis.

In this study my intention is to use the concept as a lens to look at children's access to goods and services such as food, school materials, TV, electricity which in my study area are seen as things that bring happiness. Because there is controversy as to whether descriptive indicators are sufficient to tell how well people are living or people's own evaluations of their life situations are an appropriate indicators of their welfare, I share the view that any effective measure of quality of life/wellbeing of a group of people must include the people's own evaluations. "Therefore, measurement by descriptive indicators and measurement by people's own evaluations are both indispensable" (Bognar, 2005:566)

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA – Part One

5.0 Introduction

It is here that I present and discuss the findings from my fieldwork. In doing this the research questions and objectives of the study will be reflected upon. Attempt is also made to link the discussion to the theories and concepts used in this study. I will examine the children's everyday life experiences in their families focusing mainly on the works children do in their families. My informants comprise both adults and children. They all live in the same village. Though the findings may not be a representative of the whole country, I believe they will share similar characteristics portray by many rural communities in the country. Before I analyse the data from the field I will first describe what I know about the *Asante* people. The reason is that with the exception of one, all my informants were *asantes* and they are also the main people found in the study area.

5.1 The Asante people

At this section I will describe what I know about this tribe. The *asantes* belong to the *Akan* the major ethnic group in Ghana. They are mainly found in the middle part of Ghana (Ashanti Region). With the akans, society is divided into clans and the clans into smaller families based on Matrilineal System (Danquah, 1997). With the matrilineal system practise by the *asantes*, the mother's brother is the head of the family. It is believed that asantes children (akans) inherit their soul/spirit (ntoro) from their father and their flesh and blood (mogya) from their mother (Awusabo-Asare, 2011). Once the flesh and blood are the source of existence *asante* (*akan*) children belong to their mother's family. In event of divorce children usually stay with their mother or go to stay with their maternal grandmother. The extended family system is still popular among the *asante* people in the community. Communal use of resources such as lands, cooking utensils and one family house is a common feature. With matrilineal system children do not inherit from their fathers. Property is inherited from the uncle through the mother. However, there is nothing like inheritance right. That is no child can say because I am the child of my mother, this or that property of my uncle is definitely mine to inherit. Upon the death of an uncle the elders of the family elect from all available children of qualified age and status to succeed the uncle, and normally a son with good standing in the family and society is selected. So it can be that an elder son is there but his younger brother with supposedly good character will be chosen to inherit a dead uncle. Though the *asantes* children

do not inherit from their fathers, their discipline, training and total upbringing is the responsibility of the father. Since the *akans* inherit through the mother and the rest of the ethnic groups in Ghana inherit through the father, if an *akan* woman marries a non-akan man, the children have dual inheritance. That is they can inherit through both parents, but when a non-akan woman marries an *akan* man the children have no inheritance at both sides *ibid*.

However, with the enactment and coming into force of the Intestate Succession Law – PNDC L. 111, 1985, inheritance practices in Ghana seem changing. The law seems to invest intestate household property in the surviving spouse and children. For example, if a man dies intestate (without making a will) and he has only one house, that house must go to the wife and children. Among the *asantes* if a man dies intestate and he has brothers one of them is the rightful person to inherit his estate, in some places including the wife. One popular saying among the *asante* people is that 'If mother's sons (ie brothers) are there a nephew does not inherits.' If there is no brother then a son of the deceased's sister (nephew) succeeds him. It is this second type of inheritance 'Nephew inheritance' which is the most popular among the *akans*. A normal practice is that the surviving wife and the children of the deceased come under the control of the successor. He is supposed to provide and care for them and also looks after the children in school. If the deceased is a female her estate goes to her mother if she is still alive, if not the deceased sister inherits her. In the absence of the deceased's mother or sister her daughter is the next to inherit the estate. A son can also inherit his deceased mother's property because it is matrilineal system of inheritance. A husband hardly has a claim over his wife's self-acquired intestate property.

One important thing to note is that among the *akan* people the family is seen as the basis of socio-economic organisation. Most often decisions on aspects of one's life are expected to be taken in partnership with members of the family. For example, marriages contracted without the consent of other family members, particularly elders, can be regarded as not valid and be rejected. The main type of marriage among the *asantes* is the customary marriages and an important feature of this type of marriage is that it must have the approval of the families of the man and woman involved since it is believed that marriage unites not only the couples, but the families as well. Due to factors such as formal education, Christianity and so on the nuclear family is gradually emerging as a unit of wealth accumulation *ibid*. There appears to be a growing sense of individualism, especially, among the educated elites in urban areas.

5.2 Family structure, relationships and household composition

The concept of family is an important institution in children's lives and in any social system. At least in my study area, my field observation and interviews reveal that family is not limited to only mother, father and children. It rather goes beyond that to include other members such as brothers, aunts, grandparents, uncles and in some cases tenants as well. In occasions where the unity and ones among family members is clearly demonstrated is when a member is going to marry or dies. In such moments all family members burry their differences and pool their resources (financial and human capital) towards a common purpose.

From the observation interviews I conducted I realized that the structure and composition of families differ from one family to the other. Some households are large containing between 5-10 children. On the other hand many families have one, two or at most three children. An interesting aspect is that many of the households are headed by grandmothers or women who are either widow, divorced or separated. Despite so many families live in one big family houses, individual couples try to maintain their own identity within households by doing things such as cooking separately. This is what I have termed as family within a family. As indicated in chapter two, a Socio-Economic Survey conducted by the Sekyere South District Assembly in 2010 indicates that on the average a family in the district had a household size of seven in 2006 and five in 2010. This supports what I observed that though the extended family system still exists it is losing its strength. The reason is that many couples and individuals are moving away from family houses and establishing small family units in their own built houses. This means that in recent times many families are becoming nuclear in nature.

Only few children in my study live with both parents because in the community one common practice is husbands living in houses or communities different from that of their wives. This situation is partly caused by high rate of divorce in Ghana, hence in the community. For example, available statistics at the Accra Metropolitan Assembly on customary marriages for Accra alone indicates that a total of 618 marriages were dissolved in 2007 out of 1,511 marriages contracted. In such cases the children usually live with the mothers. This became evident in my study as many of the children interview told me that they live with only mothers or grandmothers.

I live in this community with my mother and my brothers and sisters. My father lives in Bedomase (a nearby community). Why? I asked …*because they have divorced,* she replied. (Mat a 14 year old girl)

 No child indicates that s/he lives with only the father or grandfather. This explains why in the community children are in most cases closer to their mothers than fathers. It was not surprising to hear my child interviewees often use the word 'mother' instead of parents. The situation is compelling many women to become heads of households. For instance a 63-year old woman I interviewed told me she is the head her house. She does not have a husband; she lives with her only daughter who also has no husband but has six children. Polygamous was also found to be in practice in some households. Here is my interview with John a 15-year old boy.

I: Which of your parents/relatives do you live with?

R: I live with both of my parents, but my father has two wives.

I: Does he live with all the wives in the same house?

R: Yes! He lives with all of them. We all live in the same house.

By this I argue that in polygamous households there are usually many children. It has its own advantages and disadvantages. In relation to household work all the children take part so workload on one child is not too much. However, children's access to resources such as food, clothes, money is limited.

5.3 Female headed households and children's house work

In recent times many women are becoming breadwinners in many households due to factors such as separation, divorce, death of a husband and economic hardship. The women assume this position because field observation show that in the event of divorce as stated above children normally stay with their mothers. This occurs for one main reason among other reasons. For instance among the *akan* tribe, the major tribe in the study area and Ghana, in marriage children are seen as valuable property belonging to the mother's clan. So in the event of divorce children stay with their mothers or go to stay with maternal grandmothers. It has been argued that female headed households are among the poor families in societies. For this reason children in such households are likely to take up more responsibilities than their

counterparts in male headed homes. My experiences from field work in some cases support this argument and in some cases different picture was seen. The experience of Janet a 48 year old widow and head of household of five children whom I interviewed after she has finished her usual frying of yams in a community's street suggest why children in female headed households take up more responsibilities.

You know I am the only one taking care of my children (5). *I don't have a husband or monthly income job. I struggle with many income generating activities. So I have shared the house work for them. They do all kinds of household work to help me.* (Field notes)

This is in line with what Abebe (2007) says that "When families live in economically precarious situations, adults must engage in alternative livelihood strategies, partly by transferring the burden of domestic work to children" (2007:83). However, my field observation and discussion with some female headed households show that many households headed by women are not poor and are doing better than some households headed by men. In the study area cultural practices and traditions allow women ownership over properties like land, house and farms. Women have the right to work and control over their income. Those in can decide to keep their incomes solely, though most women join their income to that of their husbands to take care of the family. These female headed households were not poor because the women have access to properties like land, some were in gainfully employment and some have grown up children who are working in the cities and were remitting their parents regularly. The 63 year woman mentioned above in response to my question of how she manage to cater for her family said:

Though I did not go to school to highest level, I have a lot of lands bequeathed to me by my grandparents. My daughter and grandchildren help me to make farms. I sell some of the farm produce and get money. From this I am able to take care of the family. Another woman 47 without husband who trades in fish business in an observational informal discussion told me that from her fish business she was able to put up the five bed room house she lives in with her two daughters and a foster child. *I am able to feed them and also pay their school fees. Each of them has her own room.* She reiterated. This implies that children in some female headed households may do less work and enjoy their childhood than most children in many male headed homes.

5.4 Evidences of children's responsibilities in families

In many families children's responsibilities are inseparable from the families' survival strategy. Children's unpaid household work has immense contribution to the households' economies. Children I interviewed mentioned a range of activities which they said are their responsibilities. I have categorized these under the following three main themes – chores limited to the confines of the home such as sweeping, washing of cooking utensils, cooking; outdoor activities like shopping for the family, selling on the streets, fetching of water, helping to run family shops and agricultural work such as helping parents on the farm and carrying food stuffs and firewood from farm to home. Similar findings were reported by Meyir's master thesis carried out in the Lawra District in Ghana. *I sweep, cook food, I wash cooking utensils, I fetch water, I sell things on the streets and I also accompany my grandmother to farm on weekends and on holidays…………* (A 13-year old girl telling her responsibilities). Another example, *I run my grandmother's bar* (where they sell soft and alcoholic drinks), *pound fufu, fetch water, run all errands…..* (11-year old boy). This supports what Morrow (2008) says that children at any stage have the capacity to take on responsibilities and they must be seen as such. Thus children are social actors.

Some children understand their responsibilities in the context of heavy workload on parents particularly mothers. *When my mother is preparing food at the kitchen I help her, I also sell kenkey for her…… because my mother finds it difficult to do everything at times.* (A 14-year old girl). In a focus group discussion one boy stress the need to help parents because they cannot do everything all the times. Taking care of younger siblings (almost entirely for girls) is an important contribution children render to their families. Many children described how they look after their younger siblings. For instance, a 9-year old girl told me how she does it:

I look after my younger sister and my senior sister's daughter (both about 3 years) when my mother and sister go to farm or market. I cook for them, bath and dress them and play with them. At times I stop going to school to take care of them (field notes). What my informants told me as their responsibilities suggest that other children in the community perform similar responsibilities. However, the degree of workload, number of hours spend on chores differ from one child to another. This is because among other things there is a relationship between family status, place such as home, school and responsibilities children take on. In poor homes and homes where parents don't have secured jobs children are likely to take on more responsibilities than children in a relatively rich home and in homes where parents are educated and have secured jobs. In a focus group discussion the children discussed that in rich

homes parents can afford the services of housemaids and where parents are educated they don't ask the children to do much work as they want them to go to school. I observed that school as an institution is a good place that provides children with the opportunity to play, interact with friends hence making them happy. However, school is not free from responsibility. For example, when I asked Boat a 13-year girl about what is not good of being a child in the community she replied: *what is not good is that if you are a child most of the household works are upon you, …….also in school the seniors don't do any work but they ask the juniors to do everything.* This implies that the idea that the home and school are the best social units that make childhood a happy moment is situational and relate to a particular social context.

An important issue that needs to be addressed is whether children see their responsibilities as a burden or something they appreciate. From the interviews I conducted with children it appears they don't see their duties as burden but rather something meaningful preparing them for the future. It becomes a burden when a chore to be performed is above the ability of the child concern. This is how a 10-year old girl responded to the question of why she wishes to participate in house work. *If we like work that will help us in future* … Other children appreciate their responsibilities because they receive praises from parents and other people. *When I fetch water people say good things about me. Also when I pound fufu in the home my mother usually says as for Sammy* (not his real name) *he is a good child or hardworking* (A 14-year old boy). Other children also appreciate their responsibilities because by that they get their needs satisfied. A 14- year old girl also said: *I do my household work willingly because if you work to help your mother if you need something she will give it to you.* This is in line with what Ekuman found in his study in Accra, where some children said they assist in household work so that they can get money from parents for school. From the views above, I argue that, due to several reasons children appreciate their responsibilities instead of seeing it as a burden. However, many of them express sentiments that most of the tasks they perform are normally above their strength. In this regard one can argue that household work becomes a burden for children. Discussion about children's responsibilities supports the view that children are active social actors capable of influencing their own world and that of others around them (James et al 1998; James & Prout 1990). Therefore, in my opinion children should be seen as active co-contributors towards the livelihoods of their families though their capacities have a limit. However, the construction of children as dependents and childhood as

a period of dependency in need of provision and care does not make adult group see the valuable contributions from children in families (Morrow, 2008).

In my research both children and adults used the term responsibility in describing children's unpaid household work. But their understanding of the term appears to suggest that responsibility means toiling to provide food, money, shelter and so on for the up keep of the family. It means adults have responsibility, what children do is only giving a helping hand to parents. One parent explains: *Parents have the responsibility to provide for the children and the family, but we are in financial difficulties so parents cannot do everything that is why children must help.* When I asked Jackie a 13-year old girl about what is good of being a child she replied: *what is good about being a child is not having enough responsibilities.* Both children and adults understand responsibility as a burden of providing for welfare of the family. That is having the difficult to plan how the family get something to eat and a place to sleep in all situations. Their use of the term 'responsibility' in relation to children's unpaid household work does not mean work or burden but social and cultural expectations which children must fulfill. By this as discussed in the theory chapter I am in support of the stand that the term 'responsibility' has not got a single definition but several. Its meaning depends on the angle and society and the position of who is speaking.

5.5 Who does what in the home? Influencing factors

From the study community, in the past, gender had been an important factor by which parents allocate chores to their children at home. This had been so because the idea that boys' roles are and must be different from that of girls preoccupied and in some cases continue to preoccupy the minds of many parents. Some parents share their experience about how household chores were organized for boys and girls when they were children:

That time, for the girls, our duty was to cook and the boys fetched water (48-year old mother) A 52-year old man also replied "*Girls did the house cleaning, cooking and selling on the streets to help their mothers while the boys fetched water and pounded fufu.*" Why that arrangement? I inquired further. He replied categorically that boys' duties are different from that of girls. Closed domestic works are the responsibilities of girls. From the findings I realized that in recent times the situation seems changing. Factors such as position of a child, age, number of children in the home and their composition (Abebe, 2007; Punch, 2001), family status, parents' profession are now becoming the most deciding factors than gender.

57

Dan is a 14-year old boy and the first born of five children. He has three sisters and another boy. He recounts his responsibilities to me in an interview: *I fetch water, I sell pepper on the streets, I also send prepared food to my father in his house.* Why not any of your sisters sending the food? I inquired. *They are young,* he replied. As mentioned under family structure in the study community, many married men either stay in their family houses or hired apartments different from where their wives live. The wives prepared food mainly supper in their house and send it to the husbands by themselves or any grown up girl child. Thus taking prepared food to a father's house is, traditionally, regarded as responsibility of girls. But there are exceptions. Dan, a boy whose sisters are young has to perform a chore which should have been done by a girl. We see here that the age and birth order of children are more influencing factors than gender. Matt is a 14-year old girl. They are seven children in the home. Five of them are girls and two are boys. She stated: *Girls must cook and boys fetch water………but where there are no girls boys must cook. In my case because the girls we are many my brothers do not go to kitchen and cook,* she declared. Here it is the composition of the children that is exempting boys from certain duties. In an opposite case I talked to a 48 year old woman, who has five children all boys, about boys and girls roles. She replied: *You know all my children are boys. When Adams my first born was 14 years he could cook and do anything. He is not here with me now but those who are with now also wash cooking utensils, sweep and help me in cooking*. Traditionally, in the community these chores are duties for girls. But because there is no girl among them they perform chores which either wise girls would have performed. In this case also the children's composition is determining who performs what.

The number of children in the home also influences children's work greatly. Jackie is 13 years and only child staying with her grandmother. One day on my usual observational rounds I got to her house. The grandmother has not returned from farm. It was about 2.45pm after school. I sat on an old wooden chair at a corner in the house and watched as she goes about her duties. She took off her school uniforms, picked a bucket and fetched water (two rounds). She then goes to the store room and bring out cassava and plantain. She peels them, cut the tubers into pieces and put them in a saucepan and place the content on fire. In between she has to stop and go to the local market to buy fish for the soup……..Not while the grandmother returned from farm. The boiled cassava and plantain were ready for pounding and she does it. In this child's case because she is the only child she does all chores including those supposedly for boys (pounding).

5.6 Intergenerational relationships (mutual support) in the home

In every society there are younger groups and older groups. Any of these different groups of the population is a generation and part of a larger macro-structure of society. This implies that the different generational groups are influenced differently in society. (Qvortrup, 2000). From my study it clearly came out that many children have made and continue to make significant contributions towards improvement of their households by undertaking a number of household chores. My discussion with some parents and children during fieldwork shows that in most cases parents rely on their children for their useful services towards families' economies. Many children also revealed that they look up to their parents for their needs. This demonstrates that in households old and young members depend on each other for support. This is important because children doing one task or another gives parents some time off to engage in other income generating ventures. Almost all of my adult interviewees in responding to a question of importance of children's contribution to them said what children do give them some breathing space.

What children do is important because the children help us the parents to get some relief (49-year old mother and grandmother). *Children's roles are important because they don't leave everything on the parents. So it helps to reduce the parents' tiredness a bit* (44-year old father)

According to the findings there is mutual support in many households as older members and young ones work alongside. Many children appear happy when this happens. When I asked Jackie a 13-year old girl to tell me one day in which she was happy and what made her happy said: *It was on 10ᵗʰ July this year* (referring to 2010)*, my aunt came from where she is staying to visit us, so my workload reduced because she pounded the fufu and cleaned the place while I fetched water.*

Other children understand this mutual support in the context of old age of parents or guardians.

I: Why don't you attend school only but take part in household work?

R: My grandmother is a little bit old and also it is not every day that our parents can go about their usual duties. (Field notes)

Other children relate the need for mutual support to single parenthood or guardianship: *Some children live with their mothers or grandmothers alone, so all household work cannot be left*

on them (12- year old girl). The implication of the above discussion is that both old and young members in families need the services and support of each other for the wellbeing of the entire family. It means that both adults and children are in some ways dependent. This confirms Lee's argument (2001) explained in the theory chapter that children as well as adults are dependents. Lee criticizes the assumption that children are dependents but adults are autonomous. Both children and adults must be seen as co-workers each contributing their part in families and societies.

5.7 Reasons behind children's participation in unpaid household work

Here I look at factors or reasons that have and continue to justify why children, at least in my study community, should participate in household work. My informants, particularly adults, gave various reasons why children have no option than to participate in the family work. From the data I have categorized the reasons given into themes such as cultural, religious, economic, education and so on. However, all these factors or reasons are closely interrelated.

5.7.1 Cultural reasons

Culture is said to be a way of life of a group of people. A Norwegian anthropologist Marianne Gullestad defines culture as the meaning dimension of social life (Gullestad, 1992). That is the way they dress, eat and the type of food, act and interact with one another. It is the belief that children and young people in a society must know and internalize the culture of that society. One cultural reason cited is the long traditional belief that cooking is culturally an expected role of women. By this girls must be closer to their mothers at kitchen to learn how to prepare food and soup. *In our society women cook for men to eat* (52-year old man). I asked my adult informants why children should take part in household work. *I see the participation of in household work as part of our culture. Thus something we came to meet so the children must also know* (44-year old man). In responding to a question of who should perform most domestic work, a 48-year old mother said: *Girls must do most of the domestic work because they are going to serve in a marriage and not the man who is going to serve the woman. So the girls must do so that when they are to do it in a marriage it will not be difficult for them.* Children especially girls appeared to have imbibed this cultural teaching so much so that they prefer cooking to the other chores. *In our society cooking has been given to girls. It is a chore for girls. It is expected that every girl should be able to cook. As for a boy even if*

60

he does not know how to cook it doesn't matter, a 15- year old girl stated. They feel proud when their parents and friends acknowledge that they are good cooks. For fear of disgrace in marriage parents particularly mothers do everything possible to ensure that their daughters internalize this cultural role. The 48-year old mother mentioned above in responding to my question of whether children should get involve in house work voluntary or not said: *They must be forced to do it*: ….. *Also for the girls in future if she goes into marriage and does not know how to cook or do house cleaning chores, they will say her mother did not train her well…..*

It is a norm and practice in the area that men are to do difficult work and also provide for their wives and children. Culturally, boys are to be hardworking and resilient. So in childhood days boys are to be close to their fathers and learn tasks such as weeding, farming. I argue here that children's work need to be situated in a cultural context from which it takes place in order to make meaning of it and also understand why children do what they do.

5.7.2 Religious reasons

In Ghanaian society and for that matter the study community, religion occupies a high place in people's lives. Particularly among Christians the largest religious group in the community, religious teachings, beliefs and activities are revered and held in high esteem. It is the belief among Christians that if parents shirk their responsibility by not teaching their children the way they should go, they (parents) stand accountable before God. Children are taught to render valuable services to their parents and adults because by this they stand to gain blessings from God and also have long life on earth. To disobey one's parents is regarded as a sin. Many parents thus believe that not inculcating their religious faith and practices into their children is a failure on their part. As a result parents instruct their children to participate in household work based on religious belief. I asked one adult why children should work. He responded: *Let us go into bible a bit; it says that teach the child the way s/he should go so that when she grows up she will not depart from it.*

One popular religious teaching (text) that the majority of Christians use to justify why children must work to help the family is that 'a hand that does not work must not eat'. This is taught in churches by religious leaders to their members both children and adults. It was therefore not surprising that some of my informants both children and adults quoted this to support the reason why children should work. *Children must work. The reason why I am*

saying this is that even bible says a hand that does not work must not eat….. (A 52 year old father) A case I witnessed and what some children told me suggest that some parents indeed put this into practice either as in fulfilling this teaching or as a punishment to a child who refuses to perform a chore. In such cases a child who refuses to perform a task is either made to go hungry or the parent will keep the food for a long time before the child gets it to eat. Religious teachings have put children in a position that they themselves see it that refusing to do what parents ask them to do is an affront, not a sign of respect and a challenge to the authority of parents and bring curses on them. For this reason children don't say no but are compelled to do what adults ask of them even when a tasks is above a particular child's ability.

5.7.3 Economic reasons

It has been argued that poverty is the main cause of children's paid and unpaid work. Economic hardship conditions have created poverty among many families especially those in rural areas. The poverty situation is based on the extent to which the families are able to provide their children with facilities like food, clothing, school materials and appropriate shelter. All of my adult informants talked about the hard living condition they are facing and so need the support of their children. Some of the children I interviewed also share similar reason as they stated poverty as one main reason why it has become necessary for children to take active part in household work. The poverty of many parents has come about because they have little education. By this they cannot get any job (public or private) that require certificate even when vacancies in job places exist. Indeed, none of my adult informants was doing clerical job or monthly income job. Due to this they resort to farming and petty trading as a means of getting money to survive. Poverty in rural families has implication for children's lives as they have to join their parents in both reproductive and economic activities to sustain the whole family of which children are part. Most of my informants said the family income is not enough hence children's role in raising income is needed. Boat (13) told me: *Poverty abounds at this area. The mother will try to get money but to no avail so the children must help…………. If we don't, the money in the family may not be enough for the child to get some*. The majority of parents in the district are farmers (District Administration Report, 2010) who produce mainly for local consumption. Some of the food stuffs like cassava, plantain, cocoyam, which parents bring from farm, are meant to bring small amount of money to the family. That part is marketed by children in the community. This finding is similar to

what Abebe (2007) found in his study in Gedeo district in Ethiopia. The difference is that in his study boys were mainly involved in marketing the products but in my case girls are mainly the people who sell farm products on trays in their communities. Thus children's involvement in household works is necessary due to poverty and unreliable sources of income of many parents. Also even where families have relatively stable sources of income, the dwindling of family income due to increases in prices of essential commodities and services like food, electricity, school costs requires children's contribution. So many couples who even do paid jobs such as teachers and civil servants add petty trading to their job. They prepare and sell things like ice water, fry foods and toffees. And almost in all cases it is children who market these products after school and on holidays.

5.8 What benefits do children get from taking part in household work?

Both children and adults I interviewed indicated that children stand to gain a lot if they actively participate in household work. Some parents argued that if they had not participated in household work they would not have been where they are now. One particular benefit that the responses from the informants indicate is that household work prepares children for a responsible parenthood. In an interview with a woman who is a mother and grandmother, I asked her to tell me what the chores she performed as a child meant to her? She explains: *It meant to me that I would use it in my life in future.* One child also said: *What I like about household work is that it is preparing me for the future. Something like cooking I am learning how to prepare food so that in future when I marry I will be able to do it without difficulty* (A 13-year-girl). This underlines the point that children are both beings and becomings, not only beings or becomings as stated at page 35 in the theory chapter. A 52-year old father mixing the English language with *Twi,* the local language, explains: *They* (children) *get to know their 'left and right'* which means the children will know the right decision to take and what to do in particular contexts in their lives. Knowledge and skill acquisition is a vital benefit adults expect their children to gain in the course of taking part in house work. There are certain skills that are not necessarily taught by schools. For instance, when Boat a 13-year old girl was telling me about her duties at home mentioned among other duties that, *every Sunday I scrub the bathroom and tidy up my mother's room.* Thus issues like personal hygiene are learnt through household work. Knowledge and skills about how to prepare many traditional foods are best learnt at home. What school does is to give general methods of cooking. Purdy states that, 'Schooling reinforces the useful learning impacted by parents at home and may, for some

children, be the only useful form of learning' (Purdy, 1992 quoted from Nieuwenhuys 1996:244). By accompanying parents to farm children learn some farming skills and practices which some of them may use in future. A 14-year old boy, an informant said, …….. *if I help my parents on the farm I will be helping myself. Let me say if I am not able to take school to higher level I can join my mother in farming*. Gaining of skills through involvement in household work featured prominently in the responses of the informants. For example, a 10-year-old boy who helps run his grandmother's drinking bar and a 11-year-old girl who usually sells on the streets all indicated that what they are doing will help them gain some trading skills and also be able to calculate currency. Thus from children's own perspectives household works are of enormous importance to them. This confirms a finding by Meyir (2010) in Northern Ghana.

Findings from the girls' focus group discussion suggest that sympathetic nurturing attitude is a benefit children, especially girls, acquire through their involvement in household work. The girls in the group argued that reproductive chores such as taking care of younger siblings, old and sick relatives help them develop kindly attitude towards such persons. The point was that they frequently perform such chores. The girls accused boys of not been patient with little children, sick or old relatives like grandmothers. So to them girls should perform those chores because they will become mothers in later years. Another benefit that the responses of my informants suggest is that, household work of children has the potential of breeding better relations between parents and their children. When children do what parents instruct them to do they are loved by the parents and by that get their request being done by the parents. John a 15-year-old boy mentioned among other importance of household work that: *It brings cordial relationship between us (children) and our fathers.* Closely related to this point is that children's unpaid household work has the benefit of integrating children into the family and society. Among the importance of children's work outlined by the 52-year-old parent mentioned above is that: *The chores children perform make them realize that they are part of the family or society*. Thus through children's household work they get integrated into their families and the society at large. By implication children who get to know how well to perform a particular task are able to negotiate their positions in families and the society.

Responses from both children and adults interviewed show that children's unpaid household work has the advantage of instilling a sense of responsibility in children. Morrow (2008) states some dictionary meanings of 'being responsible' as being competent, accountable, capable reliable and trustworthy. Through participation in household work many children

become capable and reliable and are able to perform most tasks very well. Parents thus rely on them for important contributions. However, parents' reliance on children in most cases is based on 'trust' (Morrow, 2008). For example, many parents trust that when they leave their younger children in the care of their older children, the latter will be able to take care of the former. This became evident in my observation like the story of a nine year old girl described earlier who is able to take care of her younger sister and niece when the parents are away. Children's sense of responsibility and autonomy are thus increased. This is because in most instances children take initiatives and perform many tasks on their own independent of adult guidance and supervision. Form this I argue that through children's participation in unpaid household work they become duty conscious.

An important point to note is that children's work benefits not only them but the household as well. Children taking up domestic chores allow parents to do other jobs to generate income. For example, in the study area many people walk long distances to farm or to trade; and since there are almost no institution that admits children less one or one and a half years it becomes very difficult for parents to take their younger children to farm or trading activities. So if older children take care of younger ones for parents to go and work, one can argue that indirectly such chores are providing income for the family. Again, children who sell in the streets of the community do not keep the monies they get themselves. Such monies go to the parents for the upkeep of the family. Also, particularly, in the evening when parents are not yet back from their adventures their older daughters prepare food. So instead of parents coming home late to prepare food, food will be ready by the time they return.

5.9 Unpaid household work and schooling

There are different opinions about the relationship between work and schooling. While some argue that school is compatible with work others argue that school is not compatible with work (Bourdillon, 2006). The idea that school and work are incompatible has led to the creation of certain legislations and conventions. A good example is the ILO's Convention No. 182 on the minimum age of employment. Because of the belief of incompatibility this convention links the age to the completion of compulsory schooling – in the case of Ghana compulsory schooling is up to Junior High School level. The problem is that the debates about the compatibility or incompatibility of the two (school and work) have largely been

concentrated on paid or wage employment to the neglect of unpaid household work of children within their own families. Many scholars, bodies and researchers agree that work that interferes with a child's social development and schooling is child labour and harmful. How then do we regard unpaid household work that also interferes with a child's social development and schooling?

There appears to be a general agreement that there is nothing wrong with children working within their own households. For example, an ILO report in 1993 reads "We have no problem with the little girl who helps her mother with the housework or cooking, or the boy or girl who does unpaid work in a small family business…." (Cited in Nieuwenhuys 1996:239) The assumption is that unpaid household work has no effects on children's schooling. Findings from my study show that, indeed, in some instances household works have no identifiable effects on children's schooling. All the children in the study both attend school and do some amounts of work at home. They do domestic work, help parents in economic activities like trading, help on the farm and in running family shops. Matt a 14-year-old girl who has six other siblings in responding to a question of the influence of household work on her schooling stated: *It is not a problem for me because the children we are many so everyone participate for us to finish early*. Even one girl said she has some time for leisure. *I do the household work early and do my school assignment at my leisure time*. When do you have your leisure time? *I have my leisure time from about 6pm*. The above findings suggest that school and work can be combined in some situations.

However, in most instances the data show that unpaid household work of children have some adverse effects on their education. My observation and interviews with the children show that most children, particularly girls, between the ages of 10-15 whose parents or guardians are engaged in professions like trading, farming etc do more house work. The reason is that such parents leave home early in the morning to attend to their businesses and also come home late in the evening. Why parents this tactic? One may say it is a coping strategy in order to cope with the seemingly economic hardships. Children in such homes therefore have to perform all the domestic chores before they go to school and also after school have to continue working until parents return to join in. What this means is that this situation places much domestic burden on the shoulders of these children which can affect their performance in school. It must, however, be noted that the situation is linked to the differences in the socio-economic status of families. The situation seems to be more pronounced in the families in rural areas who are peasant farmers. These families are seen as the poorest because they have low

education and so members experience unemployment even if job vacancies exist. Ironically, such families appear to have relatively more children in households and this also compounds the problem. Below are some responses from the children to the question: In which ways do your involvement in household work influence your schooling? *At times I come to school late because of sweeping, fetching of water…….., so at times the teachers beat me*. (A 13-year- old girl) Another example, ……. *As I am doing the housework I should have been doing my school assignment too. But by the time I finish the housework time is far spent …….. So I don't usually get enough time to do me school assignments* (A 12-year-old girl). This is what a15-year-old boy also said: *At times when the work is too much for me, I become tired and cannot study*. In all these cases the children said they spend more time on household work. In other children's stories by the time they come to school in the morning classes have already begun. From above, I argue that children's engagement in unpaid household work cannot be said to be either compatible or non-compatible with their schooling. Whether or not household work will have negative effects on a child's education may depend on a number of factors such as the number of children in the home, number of hours spend on household chores, when a chore is performed, family status, or income or profession and so on. Also, much time spent on household works can affect the wellbeing of children because it can influence their education, health and development just like works considered child labour can do.

5.10 Strategies children employ to organize their household work

The many chores most children have to perform in their families have made them to adopt different strategies to deal with the workload. This they do mainly because they have to also attend school. I discuss below what my informants told me when I asked them how they combine attending school and doing household work. Some of the children said waking up early in the morning to attend to some chores is one of their strategies. *I wake up early to do some work before I go to school and after school I come ad continue working* (11 year old girl). Around what time do you normally wake up? *About 5am,* she replied. Waking up early in the morning appears to be a strategy that have been employed by children in the community for a long time as some parents also told me they used this tactics when they were children. *When I woke up early in the morning I did some of the responsibilities before*

school. I fetched water, I cleaned the animals' pen then I bath and go to school. After school I go and look for food for the animals from the nearby bush, a 44 year old parent stated.

Other children said they perform some of the chores the previous nights. *I wash the cooking utensils the previous night so when I wake up I sweep and fetch water to bath and come to school*, a 14 year girl said. One boy also said: *I can fetch water in the evening, wake up early in the morning to sweep and come to school early to supervise the children (juniors) to clean the school compound. After school I continue the house work*. (A 13 year old primary six boy who is prefect at that level)

Doing more than one chore concurrently is another tactics employd by some children. This strategy is typically employed by girls who may have a lot of chores to perform such as putting food on fire, grinding ingredients and fetching water. My house to house visits revealed that some girls practise this perfectly. For example, I observed the 13year old Jackie described somewhere earlier in one occasion: she first put the ingredients on fire, while she was peeling cassava and plantain. When she puts the cassava and plantain on fire, she leaves it to go and buy fish and tomatoes for her soup. When she returned and the food was still on fire she started grinding the boiled ingredients in a bowl………….. In another girl's case she had put the food on fire while she was fetching water. She fetched three rounds. By the time she finished fetching the water, the food was well boiled to be removed from fire.

Other children told me that sometimes they persuade with their friends who have less work to do to help them in performing their chores. My further discussion with the children indicates that some of them copy some of the strategies from their parents because they have seen them doing so but most of them said they use their own initiatives in doing this because they want to complete tasks on time. Also, through interaction with their friends they learn from each other how they go about their chores. In my opinion this in part explains why it is not good to use what Speier (1976) calls 'adult ideological viewpoint' in studying childhood since such perspective produces children's actions as inadequate and defective. Like Speier argues, some questions we need to ask are, how do children organize their own activities? And how do they interact with adults and other children daily? (cf James, Jenks & Prout 1998).

5.11 How is everyday life structured for children?

Based on research in Germany, Helga Zeiher argues that the adult population appears to be suffering from what she calls 'lack of time and time pressure' (Zeiher, 2007). This is also the case in Ghana. Many parents switch in between more than one economic activity just to put food on the family table. This means delegation of some duties to children. Children's everyday life experiences are then filled with activities prescribed by adults. This happens both at home and in school. For example, the following life form interview indicates a day's work experience for a 12 year old girl. She describes to me what she did a day before 22 June, 2010 when we had the interaction: *When I got up at about 5.30am I swept the house with my cousin Justice. At 7am I light the fire and put water on it for bathing. After bathing I cooked food for our breakfast. At 8am I swept in school with friends and we also fetched water to water the flowers. After school about 2.30pm I and my cousin Justice went to cut firewood from a bush near our house. From 4pm I joined my mother in preparing evening meal until about 5.30 pm when I sent maize to corm mill for grinding. At 6.30pm I washed the dishes and took my bath at 7pm. From 7.30-8.30pm I studied with my cousin Justice and after that I slept*. The experience of this girl indicates a typical day for a girl in the community.

It is the adult group that decides which use of children's time is more appropriate and profitable for children themselves and the family. Children experience some form of strict time control at school and home. For example, in the home children in the study told me some of them have fixed time to sleep and to wake up. For most of them their waking up time is 5 o'clock in the morning. From morning till evening the children are expected to perform specific tasks related to the time of the day. In the morning before the children go to school, depending on each child's case, they perform chores such as fetching water, sweeping the house, washing of cooking utensils and accompanying parents to farm early morning to bring food stuffs home.

In school before children go to classroom to start lesson they, particularly, the 'juniors' are to clean the school compound, their own classrooms, head teachers' offices, urinals and water flowers in some cases. They have fixed break times (10.00-10.15 and 12.00-12.30) after each they are to go back to classrooms and learn. After school children continue their house work. Some continue to fetch more water, others go and cut firewood from bush, others go and sell in the streets and in nearby communities. At about 4pm girls from say 12-15 years in particular start preparing meals either alone or with their mothers. Boys are usually involved

in running different errands. On the average the children spend 5 hours daily on household chores. However, the findings show that girls spend more hours than boys.

After super that normally takes place between 6pm-8pm depending on a household, children are expected to be at home and continue with house work if any. Many of the children have fixed time they are to sleep as said already. Children whose parents do not own television and so have to go to friends' house to watch TV have allotted time to return home. Though some children do go out in the evening, girls from about 14 or 15 years are not normally allowed to go out after 9pm. If they wish to go they are to obtain permission from parents by telling them where or which friend's house they are going, the purpose of going and the expected time to return home. Thus many parents closely control the movement of their adolescent daughters. This they attribute, in part, to the high rate of teenage pregnancy in the area and their goal of wanting the best for the children in terms of education and 'good' future. The discussion of findings above suggests that, like the adults, the children also seem to be suffering from lack of time. This is because the children do not have control over their own time. I then argue that one big challenge children face in relation to their house work is lack of time and not having control over their own time. An important question to be addressed is to find out how adults' lack of time is impacting on children's wellbeing and education. This is because how adults and the society as a whole manage their 'Time Crisis' (Zeiher, 2007) will have positive or negative influence on children.

5.12 Children's play time
Article 31 of the UNCRC states "State parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and arts" (cf also article 12 of ACRWC).

I needed to ask myself whether children have time for leisure and play and if they do have how much time they have. In school it appears children do not have much problem as far as time for playing is concerned after all they have break times as stated above. In the schools during break times I observed that children engaged in physical activities like playing football, running around the field and tug of war. Girls exclusively usually play a popular game called *ampe*. In some instances boys and girls mixed to play volley. But how does children's playing time looks like aside school hours or days? The findings of this study contradicts that of Ekuman (2010) who found out that children in Accra, capital of Ghana, had

total control over their leisure activities. At home most children's playing time seems to have been stolen by their active participation in household chores. They do not have spare time to themselves where they can rest or play. They either have little or no time to play apart from school hours. When I asked a question, when children here normally engage in play activities, they indicated that usually in the evening when they have finished performing what they are supposed to do. But what happens if a child always finishes his/her work late? What this means is that those children who have a lot of chores to perform will not have time to play. I asked a 13 year old boy in an interview when does he play. He frantically said: *I do not have time to play*.

The new social studies of childhood view children as not passive people but active subjects capable of constructing their own social lives (James and Prout, 1990). My study reveals that the children put their agency at work in many ways. When children are constrained by structures in society they in most instances find ways of responding to those constraints. In their responses to the question of when they get time to play, many of the children told me that apart from the evening where even some may not get the time, they manage to create playing time for themselves. Similar to what Punch in her study in 2003 in Bolivia found, some of the children said they play on their way to and from their tasks. *At times we play on the way to fetch water, or at the pipe site if it is not your turn to fetch you can play with a friend. Also on the way to meet our parents from farm if you are going with a friend you can play* (Jackie a 13year old girl). I observed that young boys especially 8-11 years when they are sent to go and buy an item play on the way to and back home. At times because the sent child has delayed, the angry parent will meet the child on the way, scorn at or even beat him. If the child has not bought the item yet the mother will take the money away from the child in an angry mood to go and buy the item herself.

Other children also play in between performing their tasks. One girl in an interview explained, *we play when we are free……..but some children perform some of their duties, they go out to play small and come back to continue*. During my fieldwork I could observe that the switching between play and work was done mostly by boys since them but not girls normally can go out after school to play. Most boys right after school would fetch water, they will go out to play and come back to pound 'fufu' when it is time.

Other children will also wait and play when the parents are not around. *We play in school and immediately after school about 2.30pm when most parents are not at home* (15 year boy). A

11year year old girl also stated: *We play when we have a holiday and our mothers leave us at home to go to farm*. Young girls between the ages of 4-8 enjoy playing *nkuro* (miniature form of food preparation). In this game the girls use empty tins and cans to practise cooking just as it is done by mothers and older sisters. This game is usually played at corners of homes or at the back. I argue in line with Punch (2003) that children's work is one main constraint on their childhood culture However, children can contest adults' authority and construct their own child cultures in the home. The above discussion demonstrates that children are not mere "cultural dupes" (Holt, 2004) receiving instructions from parents. They can at times resist and respond to the opportunities and constraints placed on them by adults in different ways (Holt, 2004). Children are therefore not passive and victims of circumstances at all times, they are also active beings who are able to initiate and satisfy their needs at particular times

5.13 Children's unpaid household work across generation: continuity and change

In the study area children's contribution to families' economies have long been in existence. In every generation children's roles are deemed vital for family livelihood. Due to this children have always been contributing in households. But how is children's involvement in household works being shaped? The findings suggest that many aspects and practices of children's household works have changed while others remained the same. For example, chores such as fetching of water and pounding of *fufu* continue to be mainly performed by boys while chores like cooking, sweeping, house cleaning duties and care work are largely considered as girls' chores. The findings show changes in the number of hours spend on household chores from older generation to today's children. For example, during the middle and grandparents time children spent more time on household work and less on schooling. But on the average today's children spend relatively more time on school than on household work. A 65 year old grandmother told me: ………*at that time there was no pipe borne water or bole holes in many villages so we have to walk to long distances to fetch water, also we accompanied our parents to farm most often than today, girls also spent more time at kitchen…..* Though many children at that time had the opportunity to go to school few could go beyond basic level to secondary school.

Educational background of my adult informants shows that none of them went to secondary school after primary level. However, it was believed that whatever children were doing were forms of education and that knowledge was seen to be embedded in and as part and parcel of

everyday life experiences. But many of today's children complete basic school and proceed to secondary school. This change I attribute to a change in the awareness level of parents about the importance of education. The reason why, though there have been some changes in the dynamics of children's work, household chores continue to exist for children and especially on gender grounds is to maintain culture, tradition and societal order. In line with Abebe's argument (2007), apart from its economic role, children's work continues to exist as continuity of societal system. Household work was and or is considered to prepare children for parenthood; for girls equipping them for marriage. With the introduction of formal education and schooling, knowledge, skills and importance of household work appear to be occupying a second position since many now believe that it is only formal education that can prepare children for a meaningful adult life. Thus in one instance what children do at home, how they do it and when they do it seem changing maybe due to modern schooling and modification of some cultural practices. In another instance many aspects of what children do and how they do it continue to remain the same to ensure continuity of certain skills impacted by adults. Thus one can conclude that children's work is both changing and maintaining some form of continuity.

5.14 Fostering and children's household work: children who stay away from their parents

For the purpose of this study I have explained fostering as a practice where a child lives away from his or her own biological parents. The focus here is not institutional fosterage but children living with relatives or other people other than their own parents. This type of fostering is common in Ghana and among the studied people. In my study community many children though in the same community live with people who are not their own biological parents. Children are fostered for several reasons such as economic, social, cultural and death of a parent. On humanitarian grounds a child may be sent to stay with and help a grandparent, sick or old relative. As a practice people particularly women who do not have children of their own but have shown good character such as benevolence and being sociable in the community get couples naming their children after them. In such situations these children are at times allowed to go and stay with such persons because they are regarded and called grandparents to such children. It must be noted that these fostering practices are gendered because girls are usually the victims. In one way fostering becomes a coping strategy for poor families. Fostering creates a good social relationships between the two families involve.

Fostering thus provides a means by which poor families can secure support for their children (Bass, 2004) and themselves. Through fostering relationships, foster families which are comparatively richer at times give support in areas such as food, money and used clothing to families that foster their children.

An important question of concern is what is the relationship between fostering and the workload fostered children take on in their fostered homes? The influence of fostering on children's household work is diverse. From the interviews and focus group discussion I gathered that in some situations children who stay with people other than their own parents work more than the biological children of the fostered parents who find themselves in the same house and may be of the same age as the foster children. For example, in a focus group discussion a 14 year old girl state: *….. For example, me I stay with somebody……* (She mentions the name) *she has money. I really work but as for her daughter she does not make her work….* In an interview with a 12 year old girl whose mother is dead and so has to live with the grandmother and her mother's younger sister tells her story in the home: *At time in the evening my mother* (referring to her mother's younger sister) *gives me work to do, she does not give me time to study. By the time I finish working and want to study I will be feeling sleepy so I go to sleep.* I followed up; why you alone have to work a lot because you have told me you are four girls in the house? *This is because those whose mothers are not dead the mothers do not usually give them work to do. They will give it to you whose mother is dead.* She replied. Thus in some cases fostered children are likely to be exploited. They are children separated from their own parents, who spend considerable years staying with other people. They work for long hours.

However, my interaction with two other fostered children seem to suggest that some fostered children appeared satisfied and are relatively happier in their fostered homes than maybe they would have been in their own homes. For instance, in the case of the 14 year girl above, though this girl work a lot she sleeps in her own room something which is not common in the community for children to have their own individual rooms. All her clothes and school needs are provided for by the foster mother. Her mother lives with her four other siblings in a single old room at one end of the town. In another informal discussion with another foster child who lives with a couple both teachers told me she is somehow happy in the foster home because when she was with her parents she was not in school because they could not afford the school cost but now she is in school and she eats well. She again indicated: *Though I work I don't work too much.* One can thus argue that there is no direct relationship between fostering and

children's household workload and welfare. The impact of fostering on children's life may depend on factors such as income, status, profession and educational level of the foster family and their social attitude. However, I could observe from the discussion that though they may have their needs being provided and be relatively happier, they appear worried about the missing of natural bond between children and their biological parents.

5.15 Children's work and poverty

It has been argued by some scholars and studies that poverty is one of the main factors, if not the absolute one, that influences children's work especially in the global south (Abebe, 2009; Bourdilion, 2006). "Children's work contribution to the family economy can be perceived as an indicator of poverty, if not its cause" (Nieuwenhuys, 1996:240). Children's work contribution to family economy can either be paid or unpaid work. This appears to be true in my study area. Almost all the adults I talked to on why their children's household contribution is indispensable said they are in economic hardship situation so the children must help in whatever way possible. The income they are earning is not enough so there should be a reciprocal element in the family. The children have to help parents for the parents also to get money to care for them. It was therefore not surprising to see many children joining the parents in farming, domestic, trading and other businesses. They attributed the poverty situation to the socio-economic condition in the country: *The Cost of living in the country is hard and money is difficult to come by, so children must help* (44 year old parent). Poverty has been caused by factors like poor educational background and lack of employment among many parents leading to decline in family incomes. As discussed under political economy perspective in the theory chapter, the adoption of some policies by the country in the past had some impacts on children. The cutting down of spending on social services like food, health and education increased the cost of living. Almost all adult people in the entire study community are farmers and with the removal of agricultural subsidies and prices of crops fluctuating cost of living has become unbearable for many families. In general, children in poorer countries work greater than their counterparts in the richer countries (Bourdilon, 2006). Even in the same society children of the poorest families work more than those of the richest. For example, the Ghana Child Labour Survey in 2003 found that "Children from the poorest households are more likely to be engaged in the labour force than children from households with higher per capita expenditure" (GSS, 2003 cited in De Lange 2009:9)

However, there are other factors that push children to work other than poverty. Work is considered as a form of training (Abebe, 2007) because children learn important skills through their work as explained in the theory chapter under socio-cultural perspective on children's work. Also, factors such as unstable family income, lost of family/household head (Bourdilon, 2006) and at the households' levels availability of resources like land (Bhalotra, 2003 in Bourdilon, 2006) push children to work. De Lange (2009) referred to the work of Bhalotra and Heady (2000) in Ghana which show that when farmland increases, children's labour participation increases including work in the family. This is because with availability of lands parents will engage in various farming activities and therefore will demand children's support. She goes further to argue out a case where more family asserts means demand for more of children's labour. She quoted the work of Zdunnek et al (forthcoming) in northern Ghana which saw that it is not the poorest boys who are engaged in work like herding cattle; because mainly it is the rich families who own many cattle and in most cases prefer to use their own sons for the herding.

Another important factor that needs consideration when talking about children's work and poverty is cultural values and societal beliefs about work be it paid or unpaid. My informants in both interviews and group discussion stress that even when parents are rich it is important for their children to work since the children will use the skills they gain from what they do for their future life when the parents may not be around. The new sociology of childhood removes the child from the natural realm and puts him in a cultural context. Childhood is not a natural concept and cannot be understood as such; it must rather be understood as a social construct (Jenks, 1996). This truly means that children's work is inextricably connected to the societal and cultural practices in which children find themselves. Culturally, children's work is seen as something that prepares them for future adult life and also makes them responsible (Abebe, 2009; Boudilon, 2006). The correlation, therefore, between children's household work and family poverty in the global south, particularly, Africa is complex and not always positive (De Lange, 2009).

5.16 Gender dimensions of children's household work
 Household division of labour is very complex and can sometimes be blurred (Abebe, 2007). Older boys in my study are more autonomous in taking their own decisions than the younger ones and girls in relation to household work. Here I examine the gender dimensions of

children's work with respect to three main themes indicated already – domestic, trading and agricultural works. Where there are no girls boys perform all domestic chores and vice versa. The findings from the study suggest that in the study area girls are more likely to be involved in unpaid household work than boys. A research in Ghana indicates that all different household chores are predominantly done by girls (ILO 2004 cited in Lange 2009). On the average girls spend more time on domestic chores than boys. For instance in the community, girls take active part in activities such as cooking, cleaning, washing of dishes and clothes, selling in the streets and in the local market, bathing and dressing of younger siblings. The implication is that domestic work will have different impacts on girls' and boys' lives. For instance, the long hours girls spend on domestic chores means that domestic work affects girls' education more than that of boys in areas such as school enrollment and attendance and completion rate as indicated in chapter two. But the effects of girls' education cannot be attributed solely to house work but also to such factors as financial, preference for boys' education, cultural practices and attitude of parents – fathers especially as one child has indicated already.

Children's unpaid agricultural work appears to be genderless as both boys and girls follow parents to farm where they perform different farming tasks based on age and ability but not on gender. However, available data in Ghana show that boys are more involved in agricultural work than girls. A study conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service shows that about 69% and 44% of boys and girls respectively were engage in agricultural work (GSS 2003). Children's agricultural work mainly involves sowing, fetching of water for spraying crops, watering vegetables, gathering cocoa pods, and helping in harvesting among others. Mostly, boys are involved in weeding, harvesting of cocoa and vegetables than girls. Almost all of these works done by children are carried out on family farms and not for paid. For instance a study in Ghana by the General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU) indicates that 24% of the 328 children interviewed said they have never work on cocoa farms for money (GAWU-2006). In families where livestock is reared boys mostly take care of the animals. They clean where the animals sleep and also search food for them or take them out for grazing. It is mainly done by boys between the ages of 9-14 years. This chore seems to be for boys from generation to generation. A 44 year old parent (man) in an interview tells his some his child day's responsibilities: *I used to wash my father's eating table, cleaning the animals' room, searching for food to feed the animals, fetching water……..* Both boys and girls combine agricultural work with domestic chores but this is heavily done by girls since they help in

cooking, washing of clothes and dishes, house cleaning and caring chores. The information above showed that in Ghana boys working in agricultural activities outnumber girls contrary to the findings in India and Senegal where more girls were seen to be involved in agricultural work than boys (ILO 1996). This picture also shows social and cultural context under which children's work takes place.

In trading activities both girls and boys are involved but it is mainly done by the former than the latter. I observed in fieldwork that young girls from about seven years to adolescent age say 16 were all involved in trading varieties of goods including farm produce. In the case of boys it was for younger ones from about 8-12 years. It is occasional that one can see a boy of say 15 years selling in the streets of the community. I argue that why this appears to be so is that, when children are growing up they normally take on the tasks that are typically for the adults of their gender (De Lange 2009). It was not much surprising then to see many girls involve in trading activities than boys because in Ghana, hence the study area, women are mostly involved in trading work mainly petty trading.

It is important to note that in the community a strict gender division of children's household work is fluid. At younger ages say from 6-10, boys and girls seem not to border who performs what. There appears to be no boys' or girls' tasks at this age. As children get older, gender specific tasks begin to set in and household responsibility increases more for girls than boys as boys by social practice stop performing certain tasks. For example, boys from say 14 years upwards are usually not send to the local market to shop for the family. This task is seen as not appropriate for boys from that age onwards. This implies that, comparatively boys get more time to spend on their leisure and play activities. Also, normally, girls are the ones who switch between adults and child roles. I observed during fieldwork that girls from about 13 years and above at times replace their mothers in domestic work when the mother is away. The older girl in such situation assumes the position of the mother. She will be sending and allocating tasks to younger siblings (both boys and girls). Her authority will at times come to an end by the return of the mother. At times, too, even if the mother is around the older girl will continue to enjoy this superior adult position until a particular chore being done, say cooking, is completed.

In my opinion I stand to agree with the view that if we use gender as a tool to understand children's unpaid household work, it will be beneficial. The reason is that as has been argued out by some researchers; girls are vulnerable in different ways; they also face different

problems and may have different coping strategies (Haspels and Suriyasarn, 2003 from De Lange 2009:2)

5.17 Children's unpaid household work versus children's rights

In this section I will examine the ways or how children's household work interferes with the enjoyment of their rights. I explain that rights are provisions that human beings enjoy not because they are privilege but because they deserved them. Children are to enjoy certain rights not of anything but because they are human beings. These include right to be protected from exploitation-articles 32 and 15 of UNCRC and ACRWC respectively, right to education (28) of UNCRC, and according to articles 31 and 12 of UNCRC and ACRWC children have the right to rest leisure and play. However, in my study district many children's active involvement in household work prevents them from enjoying fully these rights and many others enshrined in official documents. During fieldwork I observed that children in my study area were always engaged with household works. This, according to what some of the children I interviewed told me, in some ways interferes with their education as some of them go to school late and others hardly get time to do their take home assignment from school. Other children also indicated that apart from not getting time for their school work they also do not have time to play and for their leisure activities.

In line with Bourdillon's argument (2006), both the UNCRC and ACRWC talk of children's right to be protected from economic exploitation but fail to explain what exploitation actually means. In most cases exploitation is related to 'harmful' work or in cases where children enter paid jobs. The 1998 Children's Act of Ghana (section 87), the UNCRC and ACRWC all seem to agree that work is exploitative of a child if it interferes with the child's education, health and development. But the question is if an unpaid household work also deprives the child of his education, rest or play in some ways, does that work in this regard becomes exploitative labour? Ghana's Children's Act (section 88) prohibits child work at night. It states: *No person shall engage a child in night work*. It goes further to explain that night work constitutes works done between the hours of 8 o'clock in the evening and 6 o'clock in the morning. Section (90) of the same Act pegs minimum age to be engage in 'light work' including selling at 13 years. Yet in my study I observed many children working until about 10.30pm. For example, carrying goods of parents to road side for onward transportation to cities' market or selling mothers commodities like bread for them. Also, children as young as from six to nine years

are all involve in trading activities. Does this also relate to exploitation? And does it interfere with children's right to rest and proper development? I will like to agree with what Mr. Francesco d'Ovido, chief technical advisor at the ILO office (Accra) said during the launch of Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS) in Accra on 27th August, 2010, that "Household work like child labour is a major developmental and human rights issue since it deprives children the opportunity to quality education needed to grow into responsible adults."

Article 12 of UNCRC guarantees children the right to express their opinion in matters affecting their lives and those opinions must be taken onto consideration. Household work directly affects children's lives but their views are hardly sought. Parents particularly mothers are the ones who decide tasks to be perform by children, when and how the tasks should be done. Children are not to express counter opinion as that is seen as disrespect to ones parents and a child who does it is branded as stubborn. I have discussed in chapter six that children's perspectives suggest that they want parents for that matter adults to seek their views and more importantly take those views into account in matters concerning allocation and execution of household works: one girl I interviewed states: *children must work but not to do work above our strength. For example, a child may be very young but will be asked to pound fufu. He cannot but will be forced to do it. Some children also spend more hours on tasks they perform.* Another boy (15) writes: *I would have wish parents to allow children to use our will to help them or work.* The above findings suggest that at times children are forced to do things against their will which violates their rights to express their opinion on matters affecting their lives.

From my observation and discussion with parents I could observe that why children's rights are not been observed by parents is due to factors such as poverty, low level of education among parents, cultural belief and so on. Because of poverty young children who are not supposed to work or sell are asked to do so, children carry heavy loads from farm or work with parents late at night when they are to study or sleep. Thus Poverty affects human rights and children in poor families like adults who are poor have their human rights violated. But an important issue to be addressed is how to deal with the increasing demand from parents for the support/labour of their children and the rights of the children to education, play, leisure and so on. From my informal discussion with parents I attribute their non-acknowledgement of children's rights partly to the low level of education among adults in the community. Among the parents I interviewed only one (semi literate) had hear something about children's rights. This parent in an interview revealed this by saying: …….. *Parents, who do not know*

the importance of education, most at times let their children do 'unnecessary' works that affect their education. For example, going to farm after school is past but……… In a focus group discussion when I asked if there is relationship between parental educational background and the workload children take on in homes one pare one child intimated: *Yes, in families where parents have got higher education, as for them they know the rights of the children and what abuse them. So if a child overworks he can be asked to stop and rest. But in families of low education if the child is to do a particular chore but says it is not right for her to do that chore because the mother has not been to school she will say the child must do it at all cost*. But some children disagree. One of them said: *some parents do not have sympathy. So they may be educated but when the child is tired when working they will not say to him to stop and rest especially when the child is not their own child. For example, my father has been to school……… but he does not look after me; he will say it is not profitable to look after a girl in school*.

Culture must also be considered when talking about children's work and their rights. In my study all the adults I talked to and children themselves believe that what children do is in their own interest. When I asked why children should work, one child replied: *Children must work because it helps you (child) yourself*. How? *It helps you to know how to do certain tasks so that in future you can do it………..* Two parents also recount: 1. *Children should work. If the child doesn't work it will not help him or her. This is because s/he can travel or go and stay with someone. So if the child doesn't do any work now how can s/he cope at the new situation?* Second parent: *In my opinion if the child does not work he would not know how to do anything. That makes him lazy in the society; so if he is not able to go to school to a higher level he becomes a burden in the society because he does not like work*. These examples reveal why it has been argued by some scholars, for example, Kjørholt (2008) that it is difficult to measure what is in the best interest of the child. For this reason I argue that what is in the best interest of a child should be assessed in a particular context/culture or situation. The reason is that as Kjørholt further argues, *The degree to which children's rights, as stated in the Convention, will be guaranteed is dependent on how these are emphasized in different contexts and the extent to which they are consistent or come into conflict with other political interests and aims in any society* (2008:15). Thus, factors that appears to infringe on children's rights are several and complex. In my opinion, I argue out that children's heavily involvement in all household works irrespective of its consequences on their lives could affect their quality of life and education. This is because in many cases children's engagement in

household chores does not go with a corresponding enjoyment of their rights to basic necessities like food, material items, rest, and play.

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION – PART TWO

6.0 Introduction

In this chapter I will look at children's perspectives vis-à-vis that of parents (adults) in relation to children's unpaid household work. This is mainly linked to the main objective and research question of the study. Their perspectives mainly lay emphasis on issues such as: how children's household work should be done or organized; with whom children desire to work and why; and where and when children work. The analysis will also cover the informants' perspectives on children's position in the family and society and their contribution to families. This will be related to the first research question. Children's views on their position in families and society and who a child is will also be presented here. It is important to acknowledge that children's perspectives have limitations because there may be experiences and perspectives of informants a research cannot have access to.

6.1 Who is a child?

The study was conducted in a relatively rural area in Ghana. As already stated the main focus of the study is about children's participation in the unpaid household works in their own families and the society at large. It was therefore necessary to understand the meaning the people attach to the concept of 'child'. The reason is that the explanation by adults and children themselves about who a child is will give understanding on how children are positioned in families and in the community.

The UNCRC, ACRWC and the 1998 Children's Act of Ghana all define a child as a person below eighteen years. But how do the people in this community define the term? I intended to find out if the understanding of my informants about the term is in line with the definition given by these official documents. So when I posed the question, who is a child? I got different definitions from both adults and children. All the adults and some children interviewed used the criteria of dependency and control to define who a child is and not biological age. They argue that a child is somebody still under the control or depend on the parents for his/her needs. A fifteen year old John had this to say: *A child is somebody who is under the control of the parents and also gets what she needs from the parents.* A 52 year old parent share similar view. He said: *A child is someone who does not have control ever himself but he is under the control of the father and mother.* Another example from a different parent:

A child is somebody who is under training. From infancy you will look after him until he become independent of the parents. The question is when and how does a person become independent of the parents? Does it based on age or on cultural rites like marriage? Other interviewees say children are children because they have their roles and adults have theirs. How then do we regard children who take on roles traditionally considered as adults' roles such as caring for younger children and cooking for husband/fathers or the entire family?

Other children use the idea of size and respect to define who a child is. This is from a 10 year old girl: *Somebody like me is a child.* When I asked further she said; *because I'm young.* And Grace, a 11 year old girl stated: *A child is a young person who is to respect adults.* The above definitions by adults and children partly explains why in that community adults always exercise power over children and why children are positioned as minors and powerless group in families. The reason is that children are to submit themselves to adults' instructions without questioning as this is seen as a challenge to adults' power. If a child does not obey the instructions of parents he stands the risk of losing material and other supports from the later. For instance, a parent can refuse his child food and also materials like clothes, shoes and books if he sees the child as 'stubborn' and not obeying instructions or fail to perform a task. The children seem to have this in mind because when I asked why children must work to support their parents, this what one informant said: *Children should work…….because if you work to help your mother if you need something she will give it to you.* This quote presupposes that when children do not do what parents want to do they hardly receive love and material support from them. In opinion therefore I will describe children's obedience and what they do for their parents as form of contractual agreement between the two which each party must fulfill his part.

Some of my child informants used the concept of age to define who a child is. To them persons from 0-15 years are children. *For me children are those from 0-15 years* (13 year boy). I could deduce that this definition by the children is based on their experience that in Ghana the completion age of basic school is 15 years. From this age some children, mostly girls, become pregnant, give birth and start their family. Becoming a mother to them means one is an adult irrespective of the age. Most of the boys from that age also move to the cities to work for money to look after themselves and in some instances the parents as well. Also the majority of children in Ghana while in basic school stays with their parents and commute from home to school; so here they are under the direct control or parents. But when they go to secondary school from basic level most children have some level of independence at least

when schools are not vacated. This is because most of them move away to boarding houses or hired rooms and apartments at places where their schools are located. From the above discussion I agree with Stainton (2003) that who children are in part depends on how they appear, act or what they do in families and societies. The findings have so far also shown that the understanding of the concept of a child as has been theorized is socially constructed and so differs from one society or culture to the other. It also shows how even in the same relatively homogeneous society the understanding differs from person to person. I argue that the differences in opinions should not be a problem but how the different understandings are translated into the treatment of children should be the issue of concern.

6.2 Children's perspectives on their position in families and the society

How children are positioned in a family or society will determine to a larger extent the treatment that family or society will give to its children. In this community, children seem to feel that they occupy comparatively less important places and that they are mistreated by the adult group in many ways. For example, below are some of the concerns and perspectives of the children when I asked a question, what is not good about being a child at this place? The youngest child of the informants (8year old girl) stated: *If you are a child people can insult you and they don't respect you. For instance, someone can say you are not wise at all.* A second example from a 14 year old boy: *What is not good to be a child here is that when people have gathered and are watching TV as a child if you go there they will send you away. Also, when adults are talking and you say some they will shout at you.* A 15 year old girl shares her view: *in some cases if you are a child and come in the family to be shared you don't get some. Also if you are a child when the community meets you are not supposed to go there, again if you are a child you do not vote.........* other children say because children are to be under the control of parents the later exert harsh and strict discipline on the former. Any adult have control over you and you are sent a lot. For example, a 12 year old girl said: *If you are a child you are beaten for little offence.* From the responses of the children it clearly shows that they are not being treated the way they wish to e treated. We therefore need to look at how children are positioned in families and society and how the children want to position themselves or wish to be positioned in families and the community. This will help to understand how children counter balance how they are defined.

6.3 Viewing children's household work: Parents (adults) and children's perspectives

In this section I will examine the similarities and differences in the opinions of children and adults regarding children's unpaid household work. It is interesting to point out the children have similar views on some issues like the adults; in most instances they hold different opinions on some subjects.

6.3.1 Children's perspectives

As stated in chapter one the main research question of the study is about children's perspectives relating to the work they do in their own families. I used some methods to get to know what children think or the feelings they may have about their unpaid household work. Parents' perspectives are also incorporated as well. Children's perspectives were in some cases similar and in some different from that of adults. At this section I focus on issues such as what children do, how they do it, when children work and with whom children work or wish to work. I had discussion with the children on whether they are to take on household duties and if they are to do that how it should be done. Their responses indicate that: one, they should have the freedom to decide and take on household work from their own wish and not to be forced. A 15 year old John speaks: *I would have wished that parents allow us the children to work or help them from our wish*. Children are not all that free to decide for themselves in relation household work. Their parents decide for them and in most cases they are compelled to work. What this means is that most children may take on tasks that are above their ability. This became evident in their responses. One particular response that run through almost in each child's perspective is that, yes, children must work in their families but not to take on tasks that are above their capabilities but those that are according to their strength and age. The findings suggest that children's views are not sought in allocating house chores to them, even though they want their opinions to be considered.

Children were divided on the question of whether or not they should be paid for their involvement in household work. While some argue that they should be paid others argue strongly that they must not be paid. For those who argue for payment, their reason was that children get tired from performing the various chores. For those who said no, their reasons were that: if a child is paid it means charging one's own parents for rendering an expected service which to them is not good. Also the parents brought them into this world (gave birth to them) and provide for them. Other children had different view from the two above. To

them children should not be paid when they perform domestic chores like cooking, fetching water or pounding of food but when for example they help in trading or on the farm and there is a profit children should be given something to motivate them.

Traditionally, a person with whom a child works is considered as important because the child is to learn some basic skills and training from that person. Children's views show that most of them wish to work with their parent of same gender. All the girls, except one, indicated that they either work or desire to with their mothers or grandmothers. Their reasons were that one, they are closer to their mothers; two women are in most times at home and they can also teach them some skills and knowledge they need to acquire. The boys were not specific. Some wish to work with their mothers and others fathers. *I like to work with or help my mother because she looks after me*. (14 year boy). But a 15 year old boy has a different opinion. *I work with my father……because I am a boy, I am under him and girls are also under women*. On what children do, their responses indicate that their work range from domestic works like cooking, house cleaning, minding younger children to productive works like trading to agriculture work such as weeding, sowing and harvesting. Their responses suggest that some of the chores should be gendered. It was interesting to find that both boys and girls seem to agree that agriculture work should be for boys while girls do the domestic chores particularly cooking and house cleaning. Their reason was that agriculture (farming) work is difficult and needs strength and boys comparatively are stronger than girls.

Children's unpaid work contributes substantially to families' economies and also forms a significant part of households' survival strategy. However, children's responses seem to suggest that they were worried that some parents do not see what they do as important. Some children said they do not receive praises and recognition for their work.

The sentiments were expressed when I asked the question: how do you think parents consider the role children play in the family? *Some parents take what children do as important but others don't take so. Some parents think all that children do is fetching of water. Because it is not children who struggle to provide food………..for the family* (12year old girl). Another girl (14) explains: *Some parents take it as something useful others don't*. Why do you say so? *A certain woman one day came to the stand pipe where we were fetching water and shout on her son you only fetch water*. Other children express the worry that despite they work to support parents when they request something for their education parents do not easily give to

them and on time. …… *when we do something to help the parents, if we need something for schooling they should also give it to us* (15 year old girl).

The statement by this 15 year old girl illustrates that what children do in households has a reciprocal meaning.

I observed that the children used the term 'work' frequently in talking about what they do in their families. However, when I asked them to explain what is meant by work and give examples, they gave interesting and different views of what they think work is. Surprisingly, like most of the adults while some children mentioned domestic work as examples of work, many of the children did not cite domestic work they do as examples of work. Here are some perspectives from children. *Work is something we do to get money. For example, trading, fetching water to sell not to your own house because you are also going to use or drink it*. (13 year old girl) Another example: *Work is something we use our mind, body and hands together to do. Examples, farming, weeding, teaching, carpentry………….* In an interview with a 15 year old boy he categorically argued out that because children don't get paid from doing house chores he cannot describe that as work. *Work is something if you do it will give you money. Something like teaching, football, athletics………* So chores like fetching water, washing cooking utensils, sweeping and cooking in the house, are they work? *"Mmmm………. I will say no because over here I have not seen anywhere when you wash cooking utensils and you get something*. As pointed out in the theory chapter, the views from both divides of the children support the argument of Ennew et al (2005) that the meaning of the term 'work' is complex; that it is often equated to paid employment and so domestic and unpaid agricultural work of children are ignored or undervalue. The undervaluation of children's domestic work in part explains why Levison argues that unpaid work done by children is hardly counted in the national statistics (GDP) (Levison, 2000).

6.3.2 Parents' perspectives

As said earlier the parents' perspectives were at certain points different from that of the children. The children wish to have the freedom to decide on how their household work should be done. They want to work from their own voluntary. However, all the parents I interviewed disagreed. They argue that children's participation in household work should not be optional or negotiable; it is something children must do at all cost. When I asked them whether children involvement in household work should be voluntary or not a 52 year parent

responded: *No! No! No! It is something they must do. It should not come from them willingly.* A 48 year old mother mixing the local language with English categorically said even at sometimes the children must be forced to work: *It is something the children must do, because there are some children if you don't force them they will not do. Also, for the girls in future if they go into marriage and she does not know how to do any work, they will say her mother did not train her well…….. That is why we force them that…………*

On the issue of whether children should be paid or not if they take part in household work, none of the parents I interviewed agree on that. *No! They should not be paid*. I asked why? *The reason is that as I worked without pay, so my children should do. I served my father without any pay so my children must also serve me without any pay*. The argument was that children are doing what they are supposed to do. So when they take part in household work they are only fulfilling societal expectations. The above perspective and others suggest that the idea that children serve as old age security to parents (Zelizer, 1985) still preoccupies the minds of parents. Like the children some parents said though children must not be paid, they can be motivated by various means. *There is no payment. However, in occasions like Christmas because the child has been helping you, you can buy cloth for her/him or when you get something nice you can give some to the child*. (A parent)

As discussed in the theory chapter, work is a concept that has got several meanings and explanations. Usually work is associated with an activity that goes with payment or brings in money. In my study when I asked parents to explain to me their understanding of the meaning of work and give examples. Some of them used the term money in defining what they understand as work. *Work is something you are doing to get something (money) to help yourself in life. Something like farming, trading, carpentry or white collar job* (44 year old parent). In their examples, only two parents cited some domestic chores as work. Others used the adjective 'difficult' to explain what they see as work. In one of my informal discussion with a mother of six kids, when I praised her nine year old daughter for good work by being able to take care of her two younger siblings in the absence of the mother, the mother questioned: *Is taking care of your younger sister a work?* I asked why is it not a work? *It is not difficult*. She reiterated. I argue that this in one way explains why children are not accorded the respect they deserve and are also placed in a less important positions in families because most parents do not see what children do at home as work. Even when they accompany parents to farm it is parents, who work, what children do is considered as giving a helping hand.

The parents indicated the need to train their children from an early age. The children are to acquire some cultural knowledge about how to act and perform certain duties. Parents work or wish to work with their respective younger gender. Fathers work with their sons and mothers usually work with their daughters. Traditionally, boys are to get closer to their fathers and girls to their mothers so that they can learn culturally gendered expected roles. However, factors such as birth order, divorce and so on are influencing this norm. A 52 year old father who has two children, a girl and a boy said he works with his daughter because she is older than the boy. Because of divorce and the fact that women are in most of the times at home have made many children both boys and girls to work and take instructions and training from their mothers more often than fathers. One can see in the community that children (both sexes) are most times in their life closely tied to their mothers. Thus girls and young boys often spend more time being cared for by mothers than fathers (Stainton, 2003).

Both adults and children share a similar perspective that where there is/are a girl(s) boys should not go to kitchen to cook, sweep, wash bathrooms. Such chores must be the responsibility for girls. Both parents and children of both sexes believe that even where there is no girl boys should do those chores up to certain age. From adolescence say 14 years and above if there is no girl the mother should take on those tasks or where possible a maid (girl) must be acquired by the family.

6.4 Children's unpaid household work as families' survival strategy
The unpaid work children do in their families has a significant importance for the families' livelihood survival. This is especially true for poor families and some families headed by women. The informants' perspectives on children's household work indicate that it is in one way serves as a tactics by which the families cope with their livelihood. Because many parents, particularly, women in the study district are not in paid employment, they rely heavily on their children to assist in household duties in order for them (parents) to engage in farming, trading or other income generating activities. Children are engaged to do what parents, women especially, would have done. This allows women to work to generate income which in some cases serves as the only source of income to the family or to supplement what the husband brings. According to a cultural norm in the study district, it is a sole duty of husbands to provide housekeeping money and so women and children depend on men for their daily bread. However, with the current economic condition in the country this norm

appears changing. Many women, though not in paid jobs, with the help of their children struggle to bring home money to help sustain family economy. Even in some cases where there are husbands but have no or unsecured jobs women's roles become crucial as they bring in more income than such husbands.

Even though in Ghana the minimum age that a child can engage in 'light work' is 13 years, parents use their children from an early age of say six to clean the house, carry loads, sell on the streets, take care of family shop and so on. All these activities are seen as 'light work'. With the support of children women trade in commodities such as bread, fried peanuts, vegetables, fruits and cooked food. It is common to see young children in the area carrying on their heads trays with items like tomatoes, pepper, and fish, fruits of all kinds and so on as they roam and shout to mention the name of a particular good being carried to attract buyers. When asked the link between the situation in the country and children's household work, one parent said: *Because of the hard economic situation in the country some parents ask their children, at times even the younger ones to go and sell in the streets. This is not good but it is from that they may get their daily bread*.

As stated, because children are introduced to trading profession at early stage in life, some are able to set up their own small businesses to raise little income. But in contrast to Bass findings (2004) in her study of Hausa children in Nigeria where children who own business keep the profits themselves, the children in my study give the money they get to their parents for keeping separately or as part of parents' income. In times of need many parents may fall on such incomes provided by children. From 12 years most girls can make toffees from local materials, fry peanuts on their own for sale. With small initial capital provided by a parent, uncle or any member of the family, they go to a wholesaler of bread and buy some of the bread for sale. The wholesaler will give them some extra loafs as their profits when bought. They in turn sell the bread in slices to the local consumers. This type of business is very common in the community for women and adolescent girls. An example of a now 14 year old girl further illustrates the point. She started learning how to prepare *dokono* (a locally made food from fermented maize dough) at an early age. By 12 she could do it for sale on her own. When it is ready for sale she put the food in a big plastic container, carries on the head and move from house to house since she already has customers. This she does in partnership with the mother. One can thus argue that children's household work complements the efforts of parents in sustaining households' economies.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING DISCUSSIONS

7.0 Introduction

In this chapter I will in a summary form reiterate some of the main ideas gathered from the study. This study aimed at examining children's work within their own families. The study also looked from children's perspectives, the place of children in family relations and the society. Recommendations for policy and future research will also be given.

7.1 Summary

From the findings the study draws on the following main conclusions based on children's perspectives of their everyday life. The points have been discussed further below.

- Children make significant contribution towards their families' economies
- Poverty is the main factor that draws children into household work
- Children prefer both attending school and doing household work
- Fostered children take on more work load in households
- According to children's account of how and when many of them perform their household chores the study draws on a point that there are blurred boundaries between harmful work and children's unpaid household work
- My observation of how children went about their duties and from children's own perspectives I argue that household chores can be exploitative such as paid work
- From children's responses in interviews and my own observation, combining household work and school is a challenge for children. This is mainly due to limited time many children have at their disposal to do their school work. Household work is thus in some ways interferes with children's schooling.
- Children's responses (both boys and girls) and their frequent reference to their mothers instead of both parents indicate that they attach more importance to their mothers compare to their fathers
- Children's household contributions serve as survival strategy for many families

7.2 Concluding discussions

Children's contribution in the form of unpaid household work in their own families is of significant importance to families' livelihood. Children contribute in diverse ways to support their families. For instance, many children, especially girls, from about seven years trade in the streets and open spaces in the community. These children do not keep the money they earn as said earlier but give to their parents which is used to support family budget and also support the children's schooling. The children, particularly grown up boys, in my study told me they help their parents to cultivate and plant crops on family land. Some of the products from the farms are sold to raise income to support the families. In the domestic arena the children said they prepare meals, clean compound, fetch water, running errands etc. Even in cases where mothers are not around adolescent girls take up mothers' position to prepare meals for their fathers and the entire family. One important thing that the study found is that most of the children interviewed appreciate their responsibilities. They indicated to me that such responsibilities are preparing them for responsible future life.

There are several reasons why children in the study area continue to be involved fully in household works, but poverty was seen to be the major factor. This supports Ekuman's Mphil study in Accra. What makes rural poverty worse is lack of jobs, lack of social amenities, illiteracy single parenthood. Many families in rural Ghana experience food shortages and declining family incomes. Many parents in rural areas, therefore, engage in several menial jobs just to provide food for the family. They have no alternative than to demand the labour of children. I put this question to both children and adults in my study: What factors do you think bring children into household work? In responding almost all of them mentioned poverty as their first point. But children who experience the effects of poverty most are those families where there is a high level of illiteracy, unemployment, where there is a lone parent due to death or other related problems. Many of such children are more likely to be candidates of domestic work due to the impact of poverty (ILO, 2004 cited in Tedam, 2005) Poverty is more pronounced in families with many children and strong linkage with extended family members. The size of some families is small- father, mother and one to three children. So I must stress that all the families are not equally poor. Some rural families are doing well. They are able to send their children to expensive and 'good' schools in the cities as the rich families do. This example explains why poverty is best explained in context.

One major finding that came out of the study was that children prefer both taking part in household work and attending school. They gave different reasons why they prefer doing both

and emphasized that both are needed for their future life, when I asked them whether they prefer attending school only, or not attending school or do both. Out of the 14 children interviewed 13 said they prefer doing both. *I will do both*. Why? *If I help my family for example in farming, cooking or trading, suppose I am not able to take school to a higher level, I can get something else to do* (15 year old girl) Another girl 13 said, *I will do both because both are important so if you don't do both you will lose one. For example if I go to school only I may not know how to do domestic work in future, something like cooking……..* Only one boy (14) though acknowledged importance of household work, said if he has his own way he will prefer going to school only and not taking part in household work. Because according to him the school will help him to become who he wants to be in future. One would have expected that the children would prefer to be schooling only, they wish to participate in household work because of the perceived importance they will get. This supports Bourdillon' argument (2006) that, children's experiences should be taken seriously, particularly when they appreciate their work and find something positive in it.

As I pointed out in the analysis chapter foster children take up more workload in households. The study found out that a major factor that cause fostering is a death of a mother or both parents. Such children live major part of their childhood live with step mothers, old grandmothers, aunts or even a non-family member. The following interview session with a 12 year old girl who had unconsciously told me about the death of her mother. This girl lives with her aunt who has three daughters, so they are four girls in the house.

I (interviewer): Tell me what you like or dislike about your work in the home.

R (respondent): *I work a lot, so what l like is that someone should help me so that all of us do the work.*

I: but you told me that you are four girls in the house why you alone work a lot?

R: *mmmm' it is due to many reasons*. Can you tell me some? *Yes, for example, when we are to do something they will say I am the youngest so I should do it; also, those whose mothers are not dead the mothers do not usually give them enough work to do. They will give it to you whose mother is dead.*

Findings from the study indicate that there are blurred boundaries between harmful work and children's contribution or work in households. I argue that there is a thin line between works tagged as harmful for children, regarded as child labour which is to be abolished and unpaid

household work which is regarded as child work and beneficial to children. Some types of work that children are involved in are not so clear cut. In many cases the line between 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' (MMYE, 2008) work for children is difficult to draw. For example, in the study community certain types of agricultural work such as weeding, harvesting ripped overhead cocoa pods that the children told me they do on parents farms are not different from that which some children are employed to do for pay outside their families which are considered child labour. According to most of the children I interviewed some chores they do at home are above their ability and that they also work for long hours. For example, I asked Matt a 14 year old girl the number of minutes/hours she spends on her household work daily. She answered: '*Mmmm' from morning to evening I spend about 7 hours*. This point raises the issue as to whether children's household work should receive both material and financial rewards or not. During my two months stay in the community I found that, on week endings, holidays and in some cases after school children either on their own or with parents go to farm to work. Whether or not particular forms of work can be called 'child labour' depends on the child's age, the type and hours of work perform, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursue by individual countries *ibid*

From the data collected household chores benefit children but can be harmful and exploitative to them. By exploitation I refer to the heavy work burden on some children, odd time many children work and more hours many children spend on household chores. For example, some of the children in an interview told me they spend more hours on household work. Some also said they have little or no time to play. One boy (13) replied in a low voice; *I don't have time to play* when I inquired from him the time he plays. For example, caring for younger siblings or trading for parents is not bad in itself. But if children spend more time on caring work at home or trading activities at the expense of their education, that work does not benefit children but rather harm them. A point to support this is the experience of a 9 year old girl that I have discussed in page 65. She told her caring chore: *I look after my younger sister and my senior sister's daughter (both about 3 years) when my mother and sister go to farm or market. I cook for them, bath and dress them and play with them. On some days my mother asked me to stop going to school to take care of them* (field notes). In this light a household chore is not different from a waged work. So I question whether or not children's household work should be remunerated? The benefits or harmfulness of work to a child can occur at home or outside home. This will depend on factors such as when and how the work takes place, who supervises the child and the equipments he works with.

The responses from my informants indicate that like paid work, there are some subtle ways in which household works interferes with children's education. When I asked children the ways in which their involvement in household work affect their education, many of them share their experiences. *At times I come to school late when classes have started. So sometimes the teachers beat me*. (13 year old girl) Another example: *Sometimes when the housework is too much for me I become tired and cannot study* (15year old boy). Most of the children I interviewed said they have to do some chores before they go to school. After school they continue working. These children have little or no time to read their books, notes from school and also do their assignments. Children have no option than to combine school and household work. There appears to be contradiction in the ACRWC which guarantees children the rights to education (article 11) and at the same time gives them responsibilities to work for their families (article 31). There is also conflicting interest of parents as they want their children to attain success in education and at the same time the children are to work for them. This situation of children combining household work and school makes children to suffer from 'time pressure' (Zeiher, 2007). Through my interactions with the children during fieldwork, I could see this as one big challenge that the children face.

Children's responses in interview show that they attach more importance to their mothers compared to fathers. This I argue base on children's preference in using the word 'mother' instead of parents. They indicated how their mothers struggle to care for them. All the girls in the study except one and some boys indicated their preference to work for or with their mothers. Factors that might have accounted for this include some fathers' refusal to care for their children, and the fact that on the average children spend much of their time with their mothers. The family system at the study area which I have discussed at the beginning of the analysis chapter perhaps is also a factor. The family is such that children belong to their mothers' families. When there is a divorce children stay with mothers. If the mother dies even while the father is still alive children more often than not stay with maternal grandmother or any of the mother's relative.

Children's household work is not only a means of training and socialising children but also survival strategy for many poor families. For example, older children take care of their younger siblings allowing their parents some time off to engage in other activities. Almost all the parents I interviewed indicated that an important aspect of children's household work is that it reduces the workload on them (parents). Thus children's contributions complement that of adults in sustaining household economies confirming Lee's argument (2001) that children

as well as adults are dependents not only autonomy. I argue here that with regards to household work adults and children are co-participants and as such each party needs the support or help of the other.

7.3 Recommendations for policy and research

Since poverty was seen as the main factor that brings children into household work any regulation or policy to deal with children's work and to make their life better should aim at reducing poverty among rural families. Though the government of Ghana has introduced poverty alleviation programme where it gives small loans to poor families to work with, the amount is too small and the procedure and criteria to access the loan is cumbersome. The many unskilled rural folks can be trained to acquire skills that will make them employable or to engage in small scale businesses. The unequal provision of developmental projects and social amenities between urban and rural areas should also be addressed. Factors such as broken homes, death of parent(s), high birth rate and gender inequalities also bring children into household work. Measures to address children's work must address these issues as well.

The study has revealed that household work can be exploitative and harmful to children. It can also interfere with children's education and social life. How children should engage in household work needs to be put on political agenda to discuss what can be done about children's participation in household work to improve their wellbeing. It must, however, be noted that this is not a simple task but a challenging one. From cultural and ACRWC's perspective the child has obligations to his/her family, elders and society at large but also has rights to education, play and rest. There is therefore the need for politicians, media, NGOs and community leaders to discuss how to fulfill children's rights to education, rest and play alongside their responsibilities towards their families and society. However, if laws are made to regulate household work local realities and families conditions should be taken into account. For instance one reason why some provisions in the Ghana's Children's Act Legislation (1998) seem not to be working is its failure to take local realities into account. For example, section 88 of the Act which prohibits children's engagement in work between the hours of 8 o'clock in the evening and 6 o'clock in the morning appears only to be on paper because its applicability will be different in say urban and rural areas, rich and poor families.

Knowledge about children's' rights will help in will help in their fulfillment. Most parents, particularly, rural illiterates are not aware of children's rights. Among the adults I interviewed only one has heard about the existence of UNCRC and ACRWC but does not even know the provisions therein. O all the children I interacted with only one 13 year old girl used the term 'right' in group discussion. If parents are aware of children's rights they will know what abuse children in households. If children are also aware of their rights they may be able to demand them. In this regard public education on children's rights by the state, appropriate organizations is a good thing to do. This will help minimize its violation.

One conclusion this study draws on is that household work may be exploitative and hazardous. Most of the children interviewed indicated that they work for long hours, work while they are hungry, tired and also do some works at night and dawn. Hazardous or non-hazardous and exploitative works need to be debated at national level by policy makers. It will be proper for any definition of hazardous and exploitative works to include: (1) working for long hours (2) working at night even in the child's own family and (3) performing a chore while hungry or tired. This is because now the government, NGOs and other organizations are rolling out programmes to help children perceived to be engaged in 'child labour' while little or nothing is being said about children who work within their own families. If this is not checked the situation of many children who work under poor working conditions within households will be neglected.

In the theory chapter, I have discussed interdependent relationships in households. Data from the study show that children's unpaid work benefits their families and reinforces interdependent household relations (Punch, 2001). Many poor families use children house work as survival strategy. In this light when studying household works it will be necessary for the researcher to take a perspective that sees children and adults as co-workers each contributing towards households' livelihoods.

This study has not been able to explore all aspects of children's household work. There are many dynamics of children's' work that be explored further. One, based on the experiences of fostered children in this study which has been touched briefly, I recommend that more research on experiences of fostered children's daily life in households is necessary. Such a move will help to document the effects of work on fostered children, their life chances and let the voices of these children heard.

Another area that can be explored further is children's place in families and their access to resources. If this is done researchers will be in a position to understand how many Ghanaian children live their childhood life and be able to their welfare.

In Ghana there appears to be little or no research on parents and adults' attitudes and awareness of children's rights but researching on children and children's rights is growing. There is the need for some form of a shift in focus to adults as well. This is because their attitudes and actions in households and society contribute in various ways to violate children's rights and the privileges they are to enjoy. So understanding parental attitude to and awareness of children's rights and how they contribute to the everyday violation of children's rights will be necessary.

Among the *asantes* children play a significant role in family work and are capable in carrying out household chores. Notwithstanding, parents must not leave completely their expected roles to their children especially daughters as that affects many aspects of children's life. What I will suggest is that parents should work together with their children. This is because the findings from the study suggest that such a method makes children happy, helps them to develop love for parents and also strengthens the bond between the two parties and that when children are overloaded with household chores they do not feel happy at home and their childhood is lost. So children should have chores that are according to their ability and age.

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Appendix 1

List of tables

Table1 Trends of infant and under five mortality rates in Ghana between 1888 and 2008

Table 2 Household size and housing trends in Sekyere South District

Table 3 Trends in enrolment for 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2009/10 for the district

Appendix 2

Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)

Norwegian Centre for Child Research (NOSEB)

Interview guide for children

I must thank you for willingly accepting to be part in this interview. First, I am assuring you that your anonymity will be fully protected and also no part of this interview will be produced or kept as records with your names. I am a student in Norway doing my masters in Mphil in Childhood Studies. There is a debate about children's work. I am interested in finding your perspectives about it. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you also have the right to withdraw from the project anytime you wish

Children's family relationships

1. Where do you live?
2. How many children are in your family?
3. How many are boys and how many are girls?
4. Tell me about the children's birth order.
5. What is your position in the birth order and your age?
6. Which of your parents/relatives do you stay with?
7. Who is the head of your family?

Individual children's everyday life's experiences

1. When I was a child in this area I took part in many household activities. What is the situation now to you? Tell me about some of the responsibilities of children here.
2. Do you willingly participate in the household work or it is something your parents expect you to do?
3. Whom do you normally work with or prefer to work with? Which time of the day do you usually work? How many minutes/hours do you spend on your work?

4. Do you go to school?

4. How do you combine school and household work?

5. In which ways do your involvements in household work affect your schooling?

6. Do you prefer going to school only? Stay at home and help your family? or do both?

7. What do you learn from taking part in the household work?

8. What do you like or don't like about your work in the family?

9. Tell me about one day in which you were very happy or sad in the family and what made you happy/sad.

Children in the study area

1. Do you think other children have the same experiences like you?

 2.Tell me something about children in general at this place

3. You have mentioned some roles you perform in your family, what other types of household work do boys and girls at different ages participate in?

4. Can you describe the conditions under which children work?

5. From our discussion how will you describe who a child is?

6. What is good and bad about being a child at this place?

7. What make children at this place happy?

8. When and how do children at this place engage in play activities?

Children's perspectives about children's work in the family

1. There is lot of debate about whether children should work or not. What is your opinion on this?

2. What is your understanding of what work is? Can you mention some examples?

3. In Norway when children take part in household work they are paid. What do you think about this? If children take part in the household work, should they be paid or given any reward for their services?

4. Which factors/situations do you think bring children into household work?

5. What is your opinion about household division of work for boys and girls of different ages?

6. Who (boys & girls) should do most domestic chores, agric work, and why do you think so?

7. How do situation in the country influence children's involvement in the unpaid family work?

8. How will you describe the roles children play in the family livelihood?

9. How do you think parents take the role children play in the family?

10. How do you want parents to take the part children play in family livelihood?

APPENDIX 3

Interview guide for parents

Family background information
1. Give me detail information about your family:
a. Number of children you have
b. How many are boys and how many are girls?
c. Do you live with your husband/wife?
d. who is the head of the family?

Individual parents life experiences
1. Tell me about what you did when you were a child. What did it mean to you? Did you like it?
2. Tell me about your responsibilities
3. How were the activities you engaged in, in the household organized for boys and girls at different ages? Why that arrangement?
4. Who did much of domestic the work – boys or girls?
5. Did you attend school?
6. How did you combine school and household work? Which of the two did you spend much of your day on?
7. How will you compare your childhood to childhood today? How was it to be a child at that time at this place? What about today?

Parents everyday interactions with children

1. Tell me the different types of household activities do boys and girls at different ages take part?
2. Which of the children, boys/girls, do you usually work with? Why?
3. Should children get involve in household work voluntarily or it is something that they must do?

Parents' perspectives about children's work in the family

1**.** There is a lot of debate about whether children should work or not. What is your opinion on this?
I am in Norway doing my studies an over there when children take part in household activities they are paid or rewarded. What do you think about this?
2**.** If children take part in the household work, should they be paid?
3**.** What is the meaning of work? Give examples?
4. What do children learn from taken part in the household work?
5**.** Which factors/situations make children take active part in housework nowadays?

6. Are there/should there be age specific tasks in the family?

7. Is there/should there be gender specific roles in the household?

8. Who should perform most domestic labour (boys/girls? Why?

9. How will you describe the roles children play in the family livelihood?

10. Do you think there is a link between the situation in the country and children's work?

11. From our discussion, who is a child?