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**COPING DAILY WITH PARENTAL MIGRATION: PERSPECTIVES OF CHILDREN
LEFT BEHIND IN THE BEREKUM MUNICIPALITY OF GHANA**

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DECLARATION

With the exception of references used in this work which have been acknowledged, I hereby declare that the views expressed here are the product of my own research.

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Owusu, Boabang

Trondheim, June 2011

DEDICATION

To my father Mr Asare Boabang and my mother Mrs Asuamah Boabang thank you for your unflinching care and support throughout these years. Also to my siblings Amma, Atta, Attaa and Yaw this work is for you.

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ABSTRACT

Migration has profound impact on the developmental process of any country. However, knowledge about and analysis of children's everyday life experiences and coping with parental migration when they are left behind have received less attention especially in Ghana. It is against this background that the study attempts to explore to understand the how these children cope with the absence of one or both parents, the care arrangements in their everyday life including barriers and the potential to satisfy their basic needs as well as protecting their rights. The social studies of childhood and structuration theory formed the theoretical framework that guided the study. This is because children live within the social structures and are affected by structural conditions as competent social actors with agency.

Data for this study was obtained from both published and unpublished sources and from fieldwork. The data from the fieldwork is based on qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews with 15 children (left behind) and 5 caregivers and 2 focus group discussions consisting of 8 informants each for boys and girls in the Berekum Municipality. A non-participant observation was done to compliment these methods. The study revealed that parents entrust children into the care of caregivers before migrating. Also remittances play important roles in the lives of children in catering for their basic needs. It further indicated that, some children receive remittances whereas; others do not receive remittances from their parents. Children do utilise their agency in many ways to cater for some of their basic needs by adopting/adapting a variety of coping strategies to cope with parental migration. Also children sometimes assume the role as parents to provide care to their siblings and caregivers. They also provide care to the family through duties and responsibility they perform in the family. The study illustrates the interdependencies that exist between parent children and caregivers by using the triangle of interdependencies.

It was also revealed that children suffer various forms of risks when they are left behind. Some of these include right deprivation (participation in decision making), health, feeding and shelter risks. Based on the findings the study concludes that some of the children live in good conditions and get their basic needs to life. However some of these children do not get support from their parents or sometime get inadequate support from parents forcing them out of school and engaging in other activities. It is therefore important that adequate care arrangements are put in place before parents embark on migration whilst considering the complex individual and social structures.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRWC.....	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children
FGDs.....	Focus Group Discussions
GDP.....	Gross Domestic Product
GPRS.....	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSS.....	Ghana Statistical Service
IDIs.....	In-depth Interviews
ILO.....	International Labour Organisation
LEAP.....	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
NGOs.....	Non Governmental Organisations
SAPs.....	Structural Adjustment Programmes
UNCRC.....	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF.....	United Nations Children Emergency Fund

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Migration as one of the three components of population change, has since time immemorial, been a cogent factor in explaining the population change in the world with the other two being birth and death (Anarfi & Kwankye, 2009). According to Mansell Prothero, migration has been a feature of Africa in the past and is one of its most important demographical features today (Anarfi, 1982; Abdulai, 1999). Arhin (1978) posits that international migration within Africa, and for that matter West-Africa, has been a dominant factor in the change in the sub region. In the world all over, several reports on migration have documented the number of people involved in this phenomenon. Migration therefore plays the role in the spatial redistribution of some of the world's population (ibid), and has become an integral part of the daily lives of human beings who from the benefit of hind sight move for various reasons. According to Bryant (2005), migration is part of human life and where people move to; depend on resource distribution and the opportunities that some areas in the world present than other areas. Also people move in response to the needs of such an individual (see also Anarfi, Kwankye, Ofosu-Mensah & Tiemoko, 2003).

People have been on the move since human life began. Individuals move as part of their lives and the lives of their families to learn skills, to gain new experiences, to find jobs, flee insecurity, disaster or famine. Migration is an economic social and political process that affects those who move and those who stay behind and places where they go (Reyes, 2007: 1).

International migration flows have increased substantially over the past decades and has become a matter of concern to receiving countries. Today, about 3% of the world's population resides in a country other than where they were born (Anarfi & Kwankye, 2009). When people move they tend to leave their family behind. Therefore the plight of children left behind due to the migration of one or both parents, becomes an issue of concern to both the migrated parents as well as the family left behind. According to Asis (2006) the increasing flow of migrants from Philippines to foreign shores has given great concern for the plight of children left behind.

Migration has also been a dominant feature in Ghana for quite some time now. The country is experiencing a high rate of emigration and much specifically the Berekum Municipality. The number of people involved is adults, many of whom are parents. Apart from those who are involved in legal migration, many people in the area, especially men, engage in illegal migration through the North African countries with the aim of going to Europe (Anarfi, 2003). This type of migration may have unpredictable and severe consequences for both the migrants leaving Ghana and the family members who stay at home. Sometimes the migrants involved face a lot of challenges in their efforts to earn a living. In addition, most of them do not reach their destination. In the year 2003, for instance, a tragic event happened when about 20 natives of the municipality died on the sea when crossing from Morocco to Spain (Boampong, 2007). These people were adults who had children. This is just one of the many cases that have happened to some migrants in the municipality.

With the increasing number of Ghanaian migrants leaving the country, a more pressing concern for the migrated parents is how to care for the family left behind, especially the children. Migrating in search of jobs and better income in other countries often results in the migrants being separated from their families for longer periods. Since there is a difficulty of reunifying with their families, migrants normally live in the host countries for some time before coming home to visit their families. Some of these migrants stay for years before they go home, whereas some of the migrants do not go home at all.

It is obvious that when parents migrate, especially when both the father and mother leave, it influences the children. However, in a situation when children are left behind, some are well catered for; at least when it comes to physiological needs, such as food and shelter. This happens mainly because some of the children receive economic support from their parents abroad; or more precisely, those who have been willing to cater for the children. In most cases receive money from the parents regularly, whereas others do not receive any form of support.

When parents migrate leaving their children behind, not all the children have success stories of having better life conditions. Whilst some cope well, others suffer severe risks. Some of these children find it difficult to pay their school fees and drop out of school; others suffer health risks, such as malnutrition. UNICEF (2008) argues that inadequate education and child labour are closely associated with parental migration. Children who are exposed to these risks

often become victims of the circumstances in which they find themselves because they are deprived basic material needs and social rights.

Migration of parents exists in both developed and developing countries. In Ghana, documented reasons given by people for the continued emigration to other countries are many. Key among them include; high rate of unemployment and economic decline, mainly due to the economic crises from the mid 1960s (Nuro, 1999, cited by Anarfi et al. 2003, p.8). The contribution of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) to the above mentioned problems is enormous (Abebe, 2007; Ennew, 2005). For instance the adoption of SAPs means a cut in the number of adults who are employed. This led to a dramatic fall of the household income, with little or no money to support children. These coupled with full cost recovery for health and educational sector deterioration in the welfare of children. According to Ansell (2005) children had less food to eat, dropped out of school and got less health care treatment. The programmes under SAPs also led to increasing levels of poverty in many homes forcing parent to migrate for better opportunities in other countries (ibid). When parents migrate, the family left behind are mostly left in the care of some caregivers who offer to care for them.

Even though remittances sent by migrated parents often secure the children better lives, remittances globally fell by 6.1% in 2009 (de la Garza, 2010). This was due to global economic crisis. The effect of this decline is probably serious for the various families which are dependent on the remittances. Most children left behind are affected by this crisis (ibid).

Children are sometimes left in the care of either the extended family relatives, single parent or in some cases, friends of the family. The extended family system in Africa has a lot of advantages in African culture in general and Ghanaian culture in particular. In the Ghanaian culture, people see the care of children as a common responsibility. The child is communally owned by the people in the society. Children are therefore to a certain extent usually cared for by people in the community. When children are left behind by their migrated parents, they still can rely on people in their neighbourhood and their extended family to cater for them.

There has been the promulgation of United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) to protect children. In Ghana, the Children's Act of the 1992 constitution has also been promulgated. Despite this show of concern to protect children, neither the UNCRC nor

ACRWC explicitly address this challenge of children left behind. Are parents and caregivers providing the needed care for children left behind? Whereas, recognising the right of parents to migrate, child advocates say the UNCRC seeks to protect the rights of all children to also grow up in a safe and good environment and for caregivers to provide care to them. This to some extent has brought tension between rights.

It is therefore important to ask about the daily life experiences of children left behind. Do children receive remittances? How do remittances contribute to the general well-being of children? How do children left behind cope with parental migration? Are there any formal care arrangements put in place for these children? How are these children involved in the family decision making process? Are these children facing any risks? I am concerned with these kinds of questions and will seek to address them in my study.

1.2 Problem statement

In Ghana, the large scale of international migration has recently raised concerns about its effects on the children left behind, such as schooling and health (Owusu, 2000). It has also been associated with a number of issues affecting their personal development (UNICEF, 2009). Migration has an impact on the economic as well as the social development of Ghana. However, little attention has been paid to how children left behind by the migrated parents cope with parental migration. The concern is whether caregivers are providing the needed care for children left behind. Children who have one or both parents migrating are perceived to bear the burden of the cost of migration. According to Ansell & Young, (2003) children have different levels of acceptance in a situation where a parent or both parent(s) migrate. In some situations younger children view migration as a form of ‘abandonment’ whereas for some adolescents, the acceptance could either be ‘receptive or resentful’ (ibid). However, when a parent migrates children employ their agency to a larger extent to cope by adopting different skills. It is therefore not clear on how children left behind in the study cope with parental migration.

The impact of migration on children must be seen in the broader context of poverty, conflict, and within the perspectives of vulnerability, resilience and children’s rights. However, when planning a study with children as informants, I have chosen to approach this phenomenon by asking manageable questions about risks, care and coping strategies. Examples of such questions are: Do children left behind get food and clothes? Do such children in the

municipality go to school? What do they do when they are hungry? How are children taken care of and by whom? How do they cope with everyday life? The uncertainty about how children left behind cope with parental migration needs to be unravelled to enhance our understanding on the socio-economic and cultural contexts in which these children live, their care arrangements, ability to get basic needs, their risks as well as their participation in the decision making process.

Evidence suggests that the Berekum Municipality is experiencing a high rate of migration. Thus the effects of parental migration on children left behind in the municipality are critical element and a determining factor in how well children with migrated parents can develop to their full potential. Do the parents of the children send them money at all? If they do what do they use the money for? Such questions are critical to their well-being and personal development which must be explored.

Even though there is plethora of literature on the effects of migration, knowledge on children left behind in Africa and how they experience and cope with everyday life is scarce. In recent years, however, studies conducted in developing countries have focused on macro demographic or economic aspects, or social change in migrants' communities (Bryant, 2005). Furthermore, policy makers have become increasingly aware of the potential role of migration on economic development. Less attention has been given to the innumerable psychosocial and cultural ramifications of contemporary population movement on children (de la Garza, 2010) on children who must deal with the absence of one parent or both parents. This study will add to the literature on children and migration.

1.3 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to understand how children left behind in the Berekum Municipality of Ghana cope with parental absence and the care arrangements in their everyday lives. This includes the barriers and potentials to satisfy their basic needs and protecting their rights as children.

Specifically the study will seek to:

- Identify some of the ways in which money is distributed from migrated parents and determine the uses of remittances.

- Assess the care and care arrangements for children and their participation in decision making.
- Examine the coping strategies adopted by children left behind.
- Explore the forms of risks children face in their everyday lives.

1.4 Research questions

I approached the aim and objectives by the following these research questions:

- How is money distributed from parents to children, what are the uses of the remittances and what are the care arrangements for children left behind?
- What are the coping strategies adopted by the children and what are some of the risks that children suffer?

1.5 Justification of the Study

Children and childhood has been changing over the past years. There is therefore the need for pragmatic and innovative ideas in finding solutions to issues which affect children in their everyday lives. Although the effects of migration pose a challenge to many countries, its consequences on children left behind are usually not properly recognised in the countries of origin. It is only recently that families affected by migration are asked by researchers on their perspectives on migration (de la Garza, 2010). However, children are not included in such research which further exacerbates the lack of research on children's perspective about parental migration. Therefore, little is known of their experiences. An ambition with this study is to offer a contribution to the available research and my hope is that this study will serve as an incitement to prompt further research in this area.

An important rationale for this study is the recognition of children as social actors and social studies of children and childhood (James & James, 2004; Qvortrup 2002). An argument in this theoretical approach is that in order to understanding children and childhood, researchers have to give them a voice in matters that affect them. In addition, Qvortrup (1994) argues that, the new sociology of childhood seeks to understand children's agency through their interpretation of and responses to their environment. Studies on children should be child centred on the lived experiences of the children in their own uniqueness. In emphasising this, Qvortrup (1994) argues that, to improve the life conditions of children, their own voices must be heard. This is due to the fact that research which does not recognise children's voices and

power in the research process treat them as objects of study rather than active subjects with agency in their own right. It is therefore important to ask children and to see childhood as a social category which is socially constructed.

Furthermore, Christensen (2004) argues that children's perspectives are useful in identifying the most important issues that affect their lives. Therefore, my hope is that authorities and institutions that are responsible for the welfare of children and children's affairs may benefit from this study. NGOs that work with children may also gain a better understanding of the everyday experiences of the children left behind, which may hopefully enhance their service delivery to such children.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in Ghana desires to promote the rights and welfare of children. This study is therefore in line with this goal. International humanitarian law has long recognized two groups of civilians- women and children- who deserve particular protection. These commitments included national initiatives and the participation of Ghana in international arenas such as UNICEF, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the African Union. Ratifying the 1989 UNCRC and ACRWC, and promulgating the Children Act are important milestones on the road to meeting the needs of Ghana's young population. In the instance of children's welfare issues and the evolving process of defining children's rights in both national and international contexts, Ghana's position has been significantly shaped by international norms and the Ministry has worked closely with international organizations, such as UNICEF, to see the realization of many child-centred projects. The outcome of my study could therefore form an important input in the preparation and planning of regional projects. Furthermore, the study could also form part of the process of assessing the suitability of policy meant to reduce problems faced by children left behind.

1.6 Outline of the thesis

The thesis is organised in seven chapters with sub-sections. Chapter one provides an introduction to the thesis, background of the study, statement of the research problem, aims and objectives of the study, the research question and the justification of the study.

Country profile of Ghana is presented in chapter two. It gives an overview of the migration situation in Ghana. Among other issues covered under this chapter include the geographical location and the description of Ghana, brief history of the country, the main economic

structure, and policies undertaken. The chapter also gives a description of the study area (Berekum Municipality). It gives the location, physical and socioeconomic characteristics, population and settlement structure and information on occupation distribution.

Chapter three focuses on key concepts and relevant theoretical perspectives which serve as a guide to the study. The main concepts include children and childhood which is related to the social studies of children and childhood, migration, children's rights, children left behind, care, coping strategies, and listening to children's experiences which all have been operationalised in the study. In addition, due to the fact that research should have theories which serve as a guide to the whole research process, some sections of this chapter has been devoted to review some theoretical underpinnings of the thesis which include; the social studies of children and childhood and structuration theory. The last part of the chapter focuses on reviewing relevant literature of the substantial part of the study. Chapter four presents the methodological framework of the study. It covers issues such as methods used in data collection and the analysis of the data. It discusses the methodological argument from the interpretivist perspective. The chapter also includes the descriptions of how to do research with children as informants.

Chapter five and six present the results of the study and analyses of the data. It presents analysis of remittances, coping strategies adopted by children, care and care arrangements for children, children participation in decision making, risks that children face and barriers to satisfy their basic needs.

Lastly, chapter seven provides a summary of the thesis and concluding remarks. It presents a summary of the research findings, their implications for future research; limitations for the study are also presented.

CHAPTER 2: STUDY CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the background information of the country profile and the context of the study. It presents the spatial, cultural and political dimensions of the study area. Furthermore, it also briefly describes the Republic of Ghana and provides an overview of the population characteristics, socio economic characteristics and the migration situation of the country. Some issues that pertain to the profile of the study area – Berekum Municipality – are presented.

2.2 Brief description of Ghana

Ghana is centrally located on the west coast of Africa, about 750km north of the equator on the Gulf of Guinea. It has a total land cover of 238,537 square kilometres (92,100 square miles) and shares boundaries on the east by the Republic of Togo, on the north by Burkina Fasso and on the west by Cote d'Ivoire and the Gulf of Guinea in the south. Geographically and administratively, it is divided into 10 regions, which are further divided into a total of 138 administrative districts, municipal and metropolitan assemblies. In line with the decentralization policy of government, district, municipal and metropolitan assemblies were established in 1988 and are charged with implementing national policies at local level, contextualized to suit local priorities and needs (GSS, 2005).

Ghana has a predominantly tropical climate, but temperatures and rainfall vary by distance from the coast and elevation. In the south east coast the climatic condition is comparatively dry and warm but it is hot and humid in the south western part while the northern part is hot and dry. There are two distinct rainy seasons in the country from April to July and the second season from September to November (GSS, 2004). The *harmattan*- a dry desert wind- blows from the northeast between December and March, lowering humidity and creating very warm temperatures. Ghana's topographical diversity is fundamental to the regional variation in the climatic conditions, settlement patterns, and natural vegetations.

2.2.1 Demographic characteristics

The population of Ghana is 24,223,431¹ in total with an average growth rate of 2.7% per annum with 44% being children under 15 years. Greater proportion of the population is concentrated in the southern part of the country with the highest density occurring in the urban and cocoa producing areas (GSS, 2000). Ghana has a young population consisting of large number of children and a small number of elderly persons. The proportion of Ghana's population aged less than 15 years is 41.3%, whereas the youth (15-24 years) constitute more than 18% of the population with 64 years and older proportion being 5.3%. The young age structure of Ghana implies high dependency ratio which put additional pressure on persons of the working age (15-64) (GSS, 2004).

In Ghana all persons, 18 years and less constitute the age category at which one can be described as a child. Those within the above age bracket constitute the larger proportion of the total population. The population of Ghana is youthful and it has a current total fertility rate of 4.0 and also an annual number of births of 757(GSS, 2009). The average household size has increased since 1970 from 4.7 to 5.1 in 2000 (GSS, 2003). This means that in some time in the future children will continue to constitute a sizeable proportion of the country's population. Out of the total population, the Brong- Ahafo region of Ghana has 1,824,827 with Berekum Municipality (the study area) having 93,234 and an annual growth rate of 3.3% (GSS, 2005).

2.3 Brief political history

Formerly called the Gold Coast is the first Sub-Saharan African (black African) country to gain independence. Ghana gained independence on 6th March, 1957 from British colonial rule and on 1st July 1960 the country became a republic in the Commonwealth of Nations. Ghana is a constitutional and democratic nation with multi-party democracy. In April 1992, a constitution allowing for multi-party democracy system, leading to a democratic rule was established. This constitution allows the people of the country to elect government by the ballot box every fourth year. The democratic rule also distributes power among the president, parliament and the Judiciary. Ghana is a member of both the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN).

¹ Provisional figure for the 2010 population census as put out by the Statistical Service in March, 2011.

2.4 Language, ethnicity and religion

There are diverse ethnic groups in Ghana; among the major ones are the Akans, Ga-Dangame, Ewes and Mole-Dagbani representing 49%, 8%, 13% and 17% respectively of the total population of Ghana. In addition to these, there are other smaller ethnic groups in the country. Each of these ethnic groups speaks different language therefore Ghana has got about 46 different languages (GSS, 2000). However, English language is the medium of instruction at schools. The citizens in the country exercise the right to freedom of worship which is enshrined in the 1992 constitution. Therefore, there are different religious groups in the country.

2.4.1 Economy

The areas of economic activity include; agriculture, mining, logging and retail trade. However, the economy relies heavily on agriculture and mineral export leading these are gold, cocoa, timber and until recently non-traditional commodities like pineapples and bananas.

As an agrarian economy, and agriculture represents 38% of GDP, and 63% of the total population is rural (GSS, 2003). Agriculture employs about 50% of the population and high proportion of the working population are also concentrated in the informal sector made up of the self employed persons in mainly the retail trade (GSS, 2005). The Ghanaian economy has been in some difficulties for about three decades and it is highly donor dependent from foreign donors.

The government economic priorities throughout the period have focused on four basic areas: macroeconomic stability, growth and employment, poverty alleviation, and human resource development. Strategies for realizing these goals have included: reform of the public sector, especially better revenue generation and expenditure management and divestiture, accelerated private sector development, improved access to basic education and health services, decentralization in delivery of essential services, and targeted poverty alleviation and social welfare programmes²(Manuh, 2006a), for the population. But such programmes often 'speak' in a very general terms and not specifically. Tourism is fast gaining prominence as a large foreign exchange earner. This includes mainly people visiting the various heritage sites like

² Welfare programmes of this nature in Ghana do not mention the needs of children left behind by migrated parents in the various communities.

the Cape Coast and Elmina castles. In addition, there has been an oil discovery in 2004, which exploration has started in 2011 in the western region of Ghana. It is likely that this will serve as a major foreign exchange earner for the country.

The Ghana's Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), was of two main forms, namely, GPRS I & II and GPRS (2002-2004). The GPRS I & II is another long term development policy that represents comprehensive policies to support growth, poverty reduction and human development (Manuh, 2006b). Its implementation was informed by the fact that Ghana's economy needed to be managed effectively to enable wealth creation for the benefit of all Ghanaians. It was mainly implemented at four levels: national, regional, district and NGOs levels. The main areas of concern of the GPRS were the areas of micro economic development (for accelerated growth); which include job creation and increase in production; provision of basic facilities/services and support for human development at the household level (GSS, 2005).

The GPRS (2002-2004) on the other had a special programmes for the vulnerable but because this category comprised of a wide range of people such as drug addicts, people living with HIV/AIDS, victims of abuse, unemployed, children in difficult circumstances as well as the physically challenged (Asante, 2010; GSS, 2005) no detailed specific plan of action was designed to cater for the special needs of children left behind by migrated parents. This therefore, calls for a special programme of action, specifically designed for such children which take care of their basic needs.

The main aim of economic development is to reduce the levels of poverty among the populace and improving their standard of living. In order to achieve this goal, the government developed long term policies like the VISION 2020, initiated in 1995. The VISION 2020 was to reduce poverty levels as well as to enhance household livelihoods by the year 2020. The VISION 2020 Policy (originally entitled: *National Development Policy Framework*) was a project with a 25 year perspective which is mainly directed to improving individual and social well-being. This policy was not pursued to the target year, partly because of some challenges, such as unrealistic implementation strategies as well as inadequate financing (Odotei, 2000). A number of projects were provided by the government to reduce the incident of poverty: Examples of these projects include the Cost Recovery Programme (CRP) and the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in 1980s. Also the Economic Recovery Programme;

European Union micro projects; Agricultural Sector Infrastructure Programme; Presidential Special Initiatives; Programme for Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment (PAMSCAD); Village Infrastructure Project (VIP); Social Investment Fund (SIF) and the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) (Manuh, 2006a; Sundong, 2005). Even though there have been some initiatives to take responsibilities for people in Ghana on the general level, some of these have failed and most especially those directed towards children.

2.4.2 Education

There is a legal framework for the full development of children, backed by the 1998 Children's Act. In fulfilment of the right to life, development and survival, and non discrimination against children, section 8 of the Children's Act of Ghana stipulates that all children are entitled to free compulsory basic education. Dubbed the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), it provides an avenue for the children to have educational rights and ways for the child to develop to full potential. The Act also includes regulations on formal education and apprenticeship in the informal sector. The 1992 Constitution, which is currently in use in the country, indicates that basic education should be free and compulsory to all children of school age.

The country is doing considerably well in the educational sector juxtaposing the limited resources of the country and the need to budget for other sectors of the economy. The quality of education is still low, according to standardized mathematics and English tests, especially for public schools. Health indicators have been particularly disappointing. Child malnutrition is higher today than it was a decade ago. Under-five infant mortality, which is a major indicator of development, is higher today than five years ago and maternal mortality has not declined (GSS, 2009).

2.5 Migration

In Ghana studies on migration show that there are rural-urban migration, urban-urban migration and rural-rural migration and a huge number of Ghanaians migrating to other countries- which has been noted as very pervasive in the country (GSS, 2005; Manuh, 2005). Ghana has, as already mentioned, a long history of migration. Migration was usually done by men who left their homes to seek for paid employment for limited period of time. Recently, however, women's migration from Ghana has been noted with special reference to cross

border migration (Hashim, 2005; Anarfi, 2003). Almost all ethnic groups in Ghana trace their history as having emigrated from a specific location to their present location. During the past international movement of Ghanaians normally involved smaller groups of people. People noted for migrating from the country during the old days were mainly fishermen from the various fishing communities in Ghana (Owusu, 2000).

According to the 1984 Census Report, the Brong-Ahafo region where the study area is located, recorded a loss of people to international migration as against the rest of the regions (Anarfi & Kwankye, 2009). The huge emigration of Ghanaians has persisted up until today (Van Hear 1998 cited by Anarfi et al. 2003, p.8).

2.5.1 Causes of migration in Ghana.

In Ghana, documented reasons given by people for the continued emigration to other countries are many. Key reasons are high rates of unemployment and economic decline mainly due to the economic crisis from the mid 1960s (Coe, 2008; Adeku, 1995). It got to a point that the economy of Ghana was growing at a negative rate. Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) was then introduced to solve the economic problems in the country. SAPs brought with it its consequences such redeployment and the withdrawal of subsidies on social services, such as education, health and transport (Abebe, 2007; Ansell, 2005; Ennew, 2005). Whereas these programmes were meant to improve the general life conditions of people the consequences were the opposite. The consequence of SAPs was poverty in families. This in effect forces some people to search for better opportunities in other countries.

Abebe's (2007) study of child's work in Ethiopia shows that the structuring of many global south countries by SAP has conditioned childhoods and further exacerbated the marginalization of children. SAP and its withdrawal of governments' social spending has resulted in privatisation of childhood and has produced pressure on many children, predominantly those from the poorest groups who mostly become contributors of their families' income and in the worst cases have to provide entirely for their own welfare (Ennew, 2005). The introduction of SAP and its effects lead to a high number of people migrating from Ghana to improve their lives.

2.6 Administrative legislations and programmes aimed at children.

Governments over the years have enacted and implemented legislations and programmes which have targeted at improving children's welfare, (even though these programmes and legislation do not make specific reference to children left behind). These legislations and programmes come after the country's ratification of the UNCRC and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRC). Some of these legislations include the following:

The Children's Act 1998 (Act 560) is an Act that reforms and consolidates the law relating to children. The Act sets the legal minimum age of marriage (which is 18) as well as minimum age for employment (which is 15 years old), although it allows children aged 13 to engage in light, non-hazardous work. The Act 560 in Ghana emphasises the child's right to life, development and survival (Article 6 of the UNCRC). It seeks to guard the child against all forms of discrimination.

Included in this Act is the principle of the 'best interest of the child' implying that any decision made concerning the children should be made in the best interest of the child. Implying that in all actions concerning the child, the 'best interest' should be held paramount. The principle of non discrimination with specific regard to its effects on children is protected under the Children's Act; the 'best interest' principle of the child is stated in the Children's Act. According to sub-section (2) of section 2 of the Children's Act, all courts are bound to take this principle of best interest as a guiding standard to their decisions regarding children. Also accompanying the children's Act is the Juvenile Justice Act 2003 (Act 653) which seeks to protect the right and welfare of juveniles and young offenders.

Furthermore, the government of Ghana in fulfilling of its obligation under the UNCRC in the area of children's rights to life and survival has developed a comprehensive early childhood care and development to give a good start for all children. The programme seeks to promote nutrition as well as reduce the infant and under five mortality rates, even though it still faces challenges like inadequate logistical support like infrastructural development. The Government of Ghana has established the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to have an oversight responsibility to the successful implementation is of programmes and legislations concerning children.

Also the human trafficking Act from December 2005 provides for the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of human trafficking. Children who are trafficked are looked after and

protected by the Act. There is an agreement between the government of Ghana and its neighbouring countries to prevent cross-border trafficking of children. Despite this trafficking law, it is important to state that child trafficking still exist in Ghana (GSS, 2009).

In addition capitation grant was introduced in some selected schools in 2005, but expanded to cover all basic schools in Ghana in 2006. This grant is paid by the government to cover tuition fees and other costs that were previously paid by parents. The aim was to increase school retention as well as enrolment rates, particularly for children from poor households (GSS, 2009; UNICEF, 2009). Another programme is the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) that also serves as a means to providing cash transfer to some households, including households with orphans and other vulnerable children. Managed by the Department of Social Welfare LEAP provides livelihood support for families (GSS, 2009).

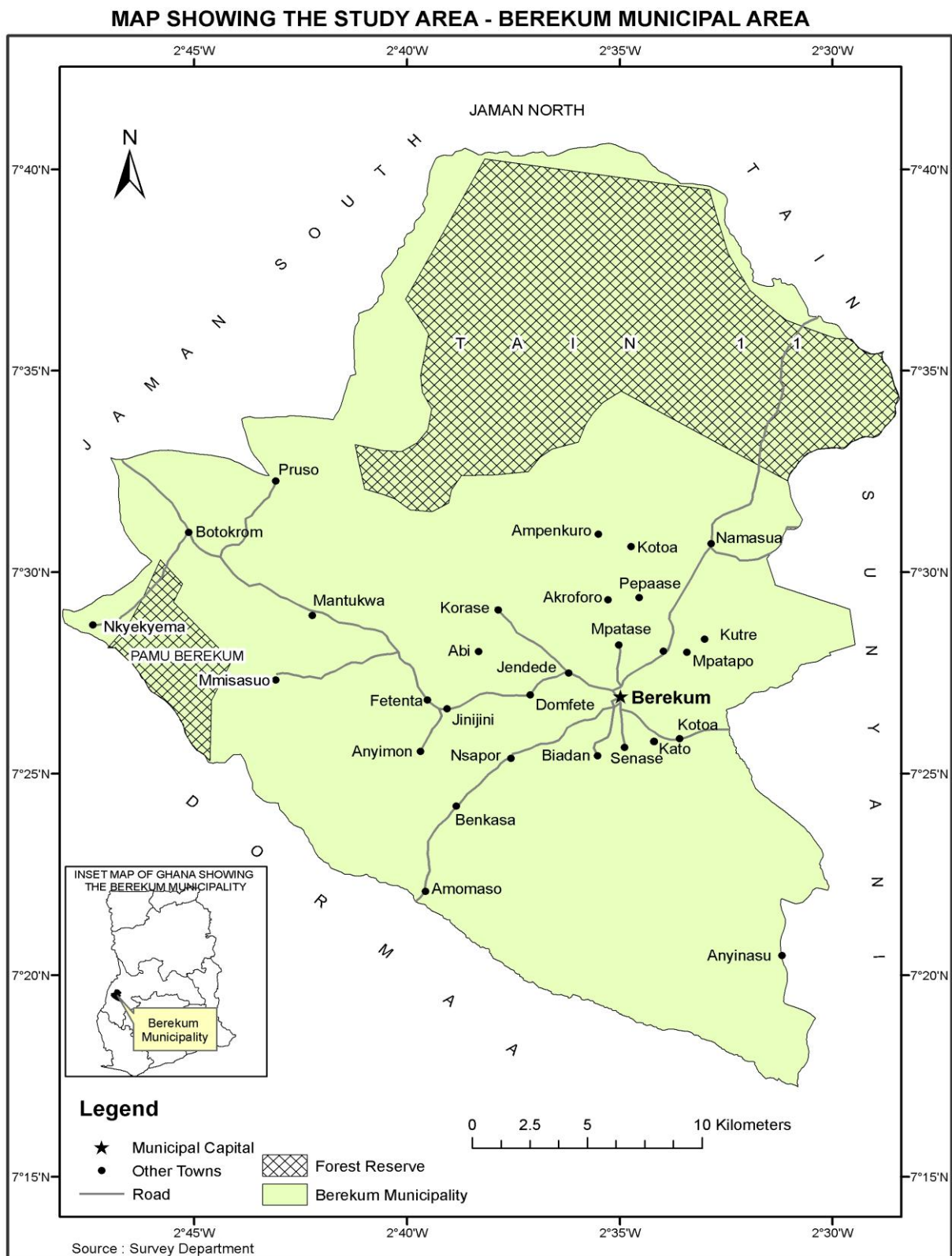
The School Feeding Programme, which was introduced in 2004 aims at increasing enrolment as well as retention rates by providing school children with a daily meal at school. Unlike the capitation grant, the school feeding programme is being carried out in only some few selected schools (UNICEF, 2009). The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) was introduced in 2003. This scheme is to provide a cost effective healthcare to all Ghanaians. This was also to improve maternal health in the country, make healthcare accessible and affordable to all which has effect on the children in general. It is also aimed at reducing the infant mortality figures in the country (GSS, 2009).

Even though Ghana has made significant progress in formulating programmes and policies to safeguard the population, there are some lapses in their implementation. In addition, some of these programmes do not specifically cater for all the groups of children especially, children left behind.

2.7 The study area

This section presents a description of the study area. It presents Berekum Municipality in perspective and sub topics which include location, size, population and housing. It also gives a brief history about the study area and socio-economic characteristics.

Figure 1 Map showing the study area.



Source; GSS (2008)

2.7.1 Location and size

The Berekum Municipality is located in the western part of the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. Berekum is one of the 138 districts created by the Ministry of Local Government in line with the decentralization policy of government, established in 1988. It has a total land area of 10625 square kilometres. It shares boundaries in the north-west and north-east with Wenchi and Jaman districts respectively. In the south-east, it shares boundary with the Sunyani municipality, Jaman south, Jaman north and the Tain districts. The Berekum Municipality is 32 km north-west of Sunyani, the regional capital, and 437 kilometres from Accra the national capital. The Municipality's close proximity to Cote d' Ivoire is another remarkable feature which promotes economic and commercial activities between the District and Cote d' Ivoire ³. This also in some instances prompts migration of the population to Cote d'Ivoire,

2.7.2 Population and housing

According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census, the municipality has a population of 93,235 with more females (51.4%) than males (48.6%). It has a dependency ratio of 1: 0.89 (GSS, 2000). Children form the bulk of household members (40.4%) as compared to (6.8%) in the age group 65 plus. Therefore the population can best be classified as youthful. The population pyramid for Berekum District for 2000 compared with the national pyramid for 2000 shows a slight deviation from the norm. It shows a decrease in age-sex cohorts between 20-29 age groups and thus follows the situation of developing country. This may be due to migration to Cote d' Ivoire, where most of people have their Cocoa farms and also Berekum natives travelling to other countries (ibid).

The inhabitants are mainly *Bono*⁴ with other tribes including non Ghanaians making up about 6% of the total population. The population density based on the land surface is 57 per km² in 2000 for Berekum Municipality as compared to 80 per km² for the nation. This implies that the capacity of the land to accommodate people in Berekum Municipality is high, land acquisition and ownership needed for development projects is quite encouraging. It must be noted however, that in considering the issue of population distribution in space, the

³ Berekum Municipality Profile; This is the profile for the municipality as presented by the Ministry of Local Government Administration.

⁴ Name given of the native people of the study area. It also means the main local language in the study area.

municipality has about 60% of its population in only four urban settlements – Berekum, Senase, Jinijini and Kato (GSS, 2002).

The municipality is now experiencing rapid urbanisation, which has give concern for housing. Most parts of the area are poorly planned, except some the few areas. Also social amenities in the areas are poorly distributed with some of areas totally lacking amenities, such as electricity, water, and waste disposal facilities.

2.7.3 Socio-economic characteristics

There is no specific per capita indicator for this municipality, but it can be estimated that about 64% of the population live below the poverty line, which means a living on less that US \$1 per day (Assenso-Okyere, Benneh & Tims, 1997). As already mentioned, the main primary occupation is farming with most of the population engaging in it and some few civil service jobs, which include three senior secondary schools and a College of Education. The municipality also has significantly proportions of its labour force involved in agriculture activities. There is also a growing service industry made of banks, restaurants, and hotels facilities, though a significant proportion of the working population is self-employed without employees mainly in subsistence agriculture.

Almost half (49.0%) of the households in the region perceived their economic situation in the 2008 to be worsened relative to the year 2002. Crops grown in the district include rice, maize, plantain, palm oil, coffee, cassava, yam and others agricultural commodities. The soil has also served as the platform on which all development activities take place. Decades of continuous cropping, incessant logging and widespread bushfires has led to deterioration in soil fertility leading to reduced average farmer productivity (GSS, 2000).

Small scale informal sector economic activities (owning small shops) dominate the economic activities of the municipality. This has, however, been attributed to the shrinking of the public sector's employment opportunities (ibid). The high occurrence of these economic activities may also in a way attribute to retrenchment in the staff of the formal sector employment as SAP conditionality to reduce public expenditure. These have brought limited employment, educational and other opportunities to Ghana in effect prompting migration to other countries.

As we have seen so far, a range of factors have contributed immensely to the high level of parental migration in search of greener pastures in other countries. When parents migrate, they rarely bring their along children. Living in the absence of one or both biological parent(s), children go through a lot of experiences to survive and adopt various coping strategies in the local municipality. It is therefore important to look at in the experiences and the coping strategies adopted by these children when the parents have left them behind.

In the next chapter, I will take a closer look at some of the concepts and theoretical perspectives guiding this study.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS, THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

Theories are important in every research study. In doing social research, one of the first steps is the theoretical domain used in the particular study (Bryman, 2004). This is because it serves as an interpretive guide to the phenomenon under study and also helps in the generation of ideas for a study. Nilsen (2005, p.119) argues that theories “help to lift the empirical experiences in serving the important task of providing insights and understanding”. It can therefore be said here that theories are used to think through a research phenomenon, to enhance understanding. In the social sciences, no single theory can be used to explain an entire phenomenon. Therefore researchers usually adopt one or more theories as well as concepts to guide their study.

This chapter presents key concepts and theories that are relevant to guide and properly focus the study. Based on the aim and objectives as well as the research question some concepts appear obvious to clarify such as children and childhood, migration, children’s rights, children left behind and care. The main theoretical perspectives that have been chosen to guide my ‘journey’ through this study are the social studies of children and childhood and structuration theory. Therefore, some essential dimensions of these perspectives will be presented.

3.2 Concepts

3.2.1 Children and childhood

The social constructionist approach has been used to understanding *children and childhood*. Therefore, ideas about childhood are seen as socially and culturally constructed (Woodhead & Montgomery, 2003). This means that how childhood is constructed is based on the ideas of a particular society and so are culturally determined (James et al. 1998). Woodhead and Montgomery (2003) have intimated that, social constructionists are of the view that knowledge and ideas about children and childhood are not static and universal but rather change from one society to the other and are influenced by the social, cultural and the historical context of the society with time (see also Ansell, 2005). These ideas to a large extent determine the treatment given to those in the category. In addition the culture of

societies varies across place and time. That is also the case for ideas and knowledge about children and childhood.

In cognisance of the above, societies determines who a child is, and this varies across various societies and cultures. What society expects that a child should do and who a child is are socially constructed ideas and knowledge based on who is involved in constructing these ideas at specific place and time. In Ghana the 1992 constitution sets the baseline age of defining a child as; any person 18 years or below and according to the UNCRC; a child is any person below the age of 18 years. This serves as a standard definition which is applied when dealing with children especially in the area of rights and care (Children's Act 1998). However, in some instances the child is taken as an adult. The 1992 Constitution, for instance, does not recognise persons less than 18 years to vote, but a young girl can get married at 16 years. 15 years has been fixed as the minimum age for employment for all persons. Whereas in some societies, for instance, the *Bono*- the study area- a person above 18years may still be regarded as a child if the person is not married or still eats from the same household as his/her parents.

Childhood as a social category is not universal but varies. The ideal childhood in the global north is a childhood viewed as a time for play, learning, and being free from adult responsibilities (Holloway &Valentine, 2000). In the global south such ideas about childhood are different. Childhood is to a larger degree characterised by work and responsibilities (ibid). There have been different conceptions of the nature of childhood at different periods in history. This was first brought into light by the French historian Ariès (1962), even though his assertion was not based upon a global context. Ariès argued that the notion of childhood did not exist in the west until the fifteenth century. Despite the huge criticisms of his work- for instance, that his views were based on the French society- it has contributed greatly to the acknowledgement of childhood as a socio-cultural phenomenon (Woodhead & Montgomery, 2003). It has been argued by James and James (2004, p.12-13), that '...the broad framework of Ariès' argument remains the foundation of childhood studies'.

The social studies of children and childhood see childhood as a social category or a social construct that children inhabit (Jenks, 1982). It is also seen as a permanent category (Qvortrup, 2002). It is a phase of life which is particularly cultural specific and changes over time and

place. Childhood as it has been argued is therefore a relative concept and changes according to historical time, geographical environment, local culture and socioeconomic conditions.

3.2.2 Migration

Migration is an ancient phenomenon, found in all societies across the globe (Asis, 2006). As a concept it has been defined as the movement of people from one geographical region to another within a specific period of time across space (Anarfi & Kwankye, 2009). Many authors have talked about the various types of migration (Anarfi et al. 2003; Owusu, 2000). These are firstly internal migration- movement within national borders, (rural-urban, rural-rural, urban-rural and urban-urban migration). Another type is the international migration- crossing of borders of one country to the other. There are other types of migration which include; student migration, marriage migration, and permanent/temporary labour migration. These types of population movements can occur either in the form of internal or international migration. In the research literature, migration in sub-Saharan Africa exhibit diverse forms but the main one that has emerged with the advent of technological advancement such as improvement in transportation and advancement in information dissemination is the issue of international migration (Anarfi, 2003).

Migration as featured in this study refers to international migration which parents in the study area engaged in. Migration in contemporary societies has become a survival strategy for many adults (parents) and families. This happens because households in most cases need additional employment to satisfy livelihood requirements. Technological advancement- improved transport networks and free flow of information- has aided migration globally, making it easier for people to move from one location to another and simply know where to go (ibid).

Furthermore, the role of networks and information on migration which are relevant to potential migrants are important in deciding their choice of destination (Asiedu, 2003). People who migrate come back to tell nice stories about the places that they migrated to. These stories motivate potential migrants to move because they too want to experience the nice things they are told. Stories of how well one get paid when one works abroad and how good the living conditions and the environment are, serve to motivate people to move from one country to another.

There is a relationship between migration and remittances. Remittances here refer to the money sent by migrants to cater for the family left behind. Remittances sent by migrants may contribute to satisfying the basic material needs of children (Bryant, 2005).

3.2.3 Children's rights

Rights are fundamental freedom without distinction of any kinds, such as social origin, protection from harm (Wilson, 2005). Since the development of the UNCRC in 1989, special rights have been given to children. *Children rights* have become important in child welfare circles and also for governments. The state as signatory to UNCRC is the 'primary guarantor' and is to ensure the rights and well-being of children in their state (Boyden & Hart, 2007). The convention seeks to provide a framework for supporting all children in both chronic and episodic conditions of stress (Boyden & Mann, 2005). Ghana ratified the UNCRC in February 1990. Subsequent to that, Ghana in 1998 enacted The Children's Act (Act 560) and Criminal Code (Amendment) Act (Act 554) to reform and consolidate laws relating to children. Consequently, a National Programme of Action (NPA) was drawn to address some shortfalls on children's rights as enshrined in the 1992 Constitution (GSS, 2002).

3.2.4 Children left behind

The concept of *children left behind* has been used differently by many scholars in diverse fields of study. However, the common theme that runs through all these definitions is its association with children who are purported to be facing some disadvantages as compared to their peers, such as AIDS orphans. These children are often deemed to rely on their individual capacities to cope (Ansell, 2005; Boyden & Mann, 2005), whereas in some studies, the term is also used extensively for children who live without one or both biological parents due to migration (Bryant, 2005; Reyes, 2007; Yeoh & Lam, 2006).

3.2.5 Care

Care as used in this study entails the provision of supportive services for people. It includes the provision for the basic needs to make life comfortable. Care for children to provide for their basic needs is needed for their self development (Bass, 2004). In times of parental migration child care is entrusted to the extended family relatives as well as friends with support sometimes from the migrated parents. Care can also be offered as a joint responsibility for children in the African culture, giving by the parents/caregivers together

with member in the society. In this study, I will focus more on physiological and material 'needs' than other 'needs' such as emotional and social 'needs' which are not part of the study.

3.2.6 Coping strategies

I used the concept *coping strategies* in my study to refer to the actions that children take to address their basic needs and sometimes that of their families to make life bearable (Ansell & Van Blerk, 2004). Children have agency and ability to take actions to suit themselves. They are able to adopt a wide range of strategies to enable them cope with the challenges of life. According to Boyden and Mann (2005) children are socially competent and are capable of thinking and solving problems that they face by identifying alternative creative solutions to their current circumstances.

Migration of one or both parent therefore, is a phenomenon which in some instances might compel children to adopt diverse strategies to cater for their basic needs. It is argued that children's agency enable them to adopt these strategies (Boyden & Mann 2005). The study seeks to explore some of the strategies children left behind adopt to cope with parental migration. However, it is important to note that, existing conditions in the structures where children live may limit or enhance their coping strategies they adopt (see structuration theory).

3.2.7 Listening to children

According to Kjørholt, Moss and Clark (2005), experiences and perspectives of human beings are mostly embedded in and expressed through social practices in which they engage in their daily lives. Experiences are always 'more immediate, more enigmatic, more complex, and more ambiguous than just a description can do (van Manen, 2001: xviii cited by Kjørholt, Moss & Clark, 2005, p.17). According to Lee (2001), the experiences of children may vary from and with ethnicity, culture, gender and social class. Furthermore what children say should be understood in relation to the location and context in which they live (Connolly & Ennew, 1996). It is therefore imperative to consider their agency in doing research with children. The agency of children can be recognised by listening to them in matters that affect their lives.

3.3 Overall theoretical perspectives

The study employs the “bottom up” approach to understand the study phenomenon. This is where in the words of Nilsen, we ‘make the effort to generate new theoretical concepts grounded in the empirical data’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1990 cited by Nilsen 2005, p.118). Since I am using children as my informants, it is important I let the categories develop from them.

3.3.1 Social studies of childhood

The various ways in which children and childhood have been viewed in academic research, for instance, within psychology and sociology, have been widely criticised over the last decades (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; Jenks, 1996; Qvortrup, 1994; James & Prout 1990). It must be noted that these disciplines to a large extent have in some way ignored the ‘agency’ of children which in this sense include the lived experiences of children in their everyday lives. The theoretical perspective supported by the social studies of childhood offers a theoretical framework that includes children’s agency as an issue when researching children and childhood. This relatively new paradigm has increasing concerns with children’s agency in the various social sciences and is broadening the ‘interest in children’s lives across wider range of disciplines than in the past’ (James et al. 1998 cited by Ansell, 2005, p.20). According to Jenks (1982) children were studied as learners, being initiated into the cultural and social worlds of adults. The voices of children were also missing in learning about children (Speier, 1976). This necessitated the emergence of the social studies of childhood or the sociology of childhood.

The relatively new paradigm and approach of studying children emphasized that children are active beings whose agency is important in the creation of their own life world (Qvortrup, 1994). Children are considered as competent human agents – social actors- who have freedom of choice and actions (Cohen, 1989; Giddens, 1984). Therefore, children should be studied in their own right, as full social actors rather than being viewed as adults in the making (James & Prout, 1997). This approach seeks to understand children’s agency through their interpretation of and responses to their environment (Qvortrup, 1994). Children sometimes exhibit their agency by adopting different coping strategies. This theoretical perspective therefore looks at how we theorise children in research and views children as active person with agency who should be studied from their own perspectives.

Some of the characteristics of the social studies of children and childhood, as indicated by James and Prout (1990) include; understanding childhood, which as indicated earlier are constructed based on ideas of a society. These ideas vary with time and space in different societies. According to Corsaro (2005) children have their own agency and continue to create their own culture different from adults. Children should be given a voice in issues which affect them because they have the ability and knowledge about such issues. In view of this, Qvortrup (2009) argues that children should be seen as active subjects and not as passive objects of the various structures and processes. Ethnography has been pointed out as a particularly useful methodology in the studies of children because it allows children's voices to be heard in research (James et al., 1998; Mayall, 2007).

Children should be studied from their present conditions and not as future conditions (Kjørholt 2005a). According to Frazer, Lewis, Ding, Kellet and Robinson (2004) children's agency can also be recognised by using them as collaborators in research, for instance using children as co researchers to conduct research on children. It is important to note that among other characteristics of the new social studies of childhood paradigm is that children are agents in family life and that childhood is a social structure category in succession of generations (Qvortrup, 1994).

In addition, this theory seeks to delve into the various present experiences of children in different context where they live (James et al. 1998). The theory brings into the fore the diversified nature and context of children's lives. Thus, it emphasise and focus on the idea that children are active social agents who can influence the structures around them, therefore their daily life experiences must therefore be studied from their perspective in the structural context (Corsaro, 2005; Qvortrup, 2002).

3.3.1.1 Using the theory to study children

Recently researchers have now begun to study children as active social subjects. This is mainly based on the view put forward by the social studies of childhood- that children are active social subjects worthy of studying in their own right as active agents and not only as incomplete beings learning to become adults as put forward by some of the developmental psychologist (Frazer, et al. 2004). Furthermore, based on the views of the theory four approaches have been identified as approaches to studying children and understanding

childhood (James et al. 1998). It is important to note that these approaches are not in isolation. They 'combine elements across boundaries in understanding children' (ibid, p.26).

These are; studying children as socially constructed. According to James et al., (1998, p.27) *'to describe childhood, or indeed any phenomenon, as socially constructed is to suspend a belief in or a willing reception of its taken-for-granted meaning'* [emphasis mine]. This means that, what childhood entails are constructed knowledge and ideas pertaining in societies and varies at place and time. Therefore, according to the social constructionists this type of knowledge cannot be depended on. This is because the knowledge is depended on many contexts including the social, political, historical and moral contexts of the place where the knowledge or ideas are formed (ibid). The child is neither biologically determined nor naturally occurs, but is determined by ideas and knowledge formed in the society.

Children can also be studied using the 'tribal' child approach. In this approach, children should not be seen as having misguided or irrational understanding of the rules of their social life (James et al., 1998). According to James and Prout (1990) this approach views children as neither passive recipients of the various cultures of adult nor 'human becomings' but rather 'human beings', who are active agents in their own right with culture (see also Ansell, 2005). Furthermore, James et al. (1998, p.29) argues that, the worlds of children 'are real locations as those of adults and demand that they are understood in those terms'. Research should therefore be done *with* children but not *on* children (Frazer et al. 2004). This is devoid from the concerns of adults. Children must be seen as autonomous beings in the societies where they live. Their worlds should be seen independent of adults', having its own rules, rituals, and folklore (James, et al., 1998). Under this approach, in understanding the experiences of children should be asked.

The minority group approach, studies children as a group who are subject to discrimination and are marginalised just like women and some ethnic minority. This approach seeks to challenge the existence of power relations between children and adults rather than confirm it (James et al. 1998). The term 'minority' is therefore more than a classification in demography which connotes not relative powerlessness in the structures where they live. This approach therefore advocate for children's interest and purposes and are seen as active subjects (ibid)

Lastly, the social structural child approach is of the view that children live within the social structures. Childhoods at various places are manifested through the various political, social and economic structures pertaining at the places where they live. According to James et al. (1998, p.32) the approach sees children as a ‘constant feature of all social worlds’. Therefore in researching children, it should not be done independent from the various contexts where children live. Thus within this approach the constancy of the child is important and acknowledged, children are seen as constituting the base components of societal structure (ibid) As researchers we need to investigate into children lives from their own perspective taking into consideration how the various social structures affect their lives (Ansell, 2005). These various approaches come together when researching into the everyday life experiences of children. Therefore in researching into the experiences of children left behind, I took into consideration the various approaches under this theory by asking children.

3.3.2 Structuration theory

Structuration theory was propounded by Anthony Giddens (1984) to look at the various interactions that exist between human agents and the social structures in which they live. The theory further posits that humans have agency, and are affected by the structural conditions in which they live and interact with. Therefore, the structuration theory is ‘*an approach to social theory concerned with the intersection between knowledgeable and capable social agents and the wider social systems and structures in which they are implicated*’ [emphasis mine] (Gregory, 1994, p.600). According to Peet (1998), the structuration theory deals with the interdependencies between rational and knowledgeable human agents, the wider social systems and their structures. The theory further states that a social relation is an active constituting process. Nonetheless, *social structures* are constituted by knowledgeable *human agents* who in turn are the medium for structurally constituting human actions (Peet, 1998).

Furthermore, the theory recognises the duality of structure and agency in shaping the individual practices and actions, as well as their life in general (Gatrell, 2002; Gregory, 1994). Thus, the theory combines the two principal ways of thinking as a mutually dependent duality. This is to say that the structuration theory acknowledges that structures shape individual practices and actions; however, such practices and actions can also create and recreate social structures (Giddens, 1984). To this the theory recognises that human beings have their own agency, they are therefore able to act and interpret on their own in the

structure, but their interpretation and transformation are in the other way constrained and enabled by the structures. Therefore, the human agents and structures are two dependent sets of phenomena that represent duality

In the view of Giddens, individuals are shaped by the structures existing at a particular place. However, they are also agents who direct their own lives through actions or agency (Giddens, 1984). The use of agency in the structuration theory means the capability or ability of doing things. This does not in any way mean the intentions individuals have in their minds to do things. Giddens explains that agency means the individual being able to do things (Giddens, 1984). Therefore individuals show complex skills to get on with everyday lives.

Human beings understand their actions; they therefore act on situations based on their understanding (Peet, 1998). What this means in effect is that, as human agents give enough reasons for the various actions that they take. Therefore, human beings have ‘the capacity to make a difference- transformative capacity’ (Giddens, 1984, p.4). Indeed the theory furthermore states that, as social actors, human beings are purposive and knowledgeable individuals who are aware of the conditions and consequences about things that they do in the society where they live. This means that human beings therefore act knowingly not unknowingly within the enabling or constraining structures of society. Human agents also act upon awareness, and there are different levels of awareness (Peet, 1998). However, it is also important to note that conditions which exist for human actions are to a large extent determined by the existing structures but these structures are formed as a result from human actions in the society.

In addition, human beings have agency, but agency and the power of an individual to act move together as postulated by the theorist. Therefore when an individual has power to act, he /she will act to produce results of an action. To add to this the structuration theory further explains power as a means of getting things done. Giddens explains further that, adversely, this transformative capacity of individuals is constrained by the availability of resources. Every human agency relies on power which results in getting things done. However, power is constrained by lack of resources. Beside this, children are the group least in possession of power in modern societies (James et al, 1998); this in a way constraints to them exhibiting their agency to a greater extent.

Structures as used in the theory refer to sets of rules (constraints) and resources (possibilities) that human agents draw on in the reproduction of social systems. This extends across space and time where individuals reconstitute in their everyday lives. Drawing from this, the structure in this sense forms the basis of human agent's knowledgeability which puts the individual into action (Giddens, 1984). The structure serves as both an enabling and a constraining mechanism. Therefore the structure is not outside or external to human actions; rather, it only exists in and through the agents' activities (ibid)

Constraints or rules were used by Giddens (1984) to denote the limit which the physical capacity of the actors, plus the relevant features of the physical and social environment place in the way of the feasible options available to the agent. In this regard typical examples of social constraints are social norms that guide, sanction or reward behaviour. Thus, structures do not only constrain actions, but also enable creativity for human action.

Resources constitute the physical environment and the social relationships between them. It may be of two kinds, namely: *authoritative resources*, which are derived from the coordination of activity of agents, and *allocative resources*, which result from the control of aspects of the material world (Gatrell, 2002; Giddens, 1984). These resources are important to this study because, children in some instances rely on their agency to get their basic needs, this constitute authoritative resources by the agents. However, migrated parents as well as caregivers control the allocative resources. Therefore to some to a larger extent, control aspects of the material world of children.

Institutions as noted by Giddens (1984) form part of the general social life of the human agent. Institutions denote the more enduring features of social life (Giddens, 1984). Institutions may also be used to refer to the regularised patterns of behaviour structured by rules that are drawn upon in society. They constitute rules which guide the behaviour of individuals. North (1993) argues that political institutions possess the authoritative resources and they are used to exert power and control over individuals. Additionally, economic institutions possess allocative resources which are used to increase the capability of individuals to control material goods.

Social systems in the stucturation theory according to Peet (1998) involve interactions and interdependencies which can be analyzed as recurrent social practices, as such human subjects' activities are crucial part. The theory further argues that human social activities are

recursive, that is, they are not brought into existence by social actors but rather, they are recreated by them through their activities, and agents reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible (Giddens, 1984).

Even though the structuration theory is a very significant social theory, used in understanding social phenomenon, it has received some criticisms. It has been criticised for collapsing structure and agency together in the concept of duality of structure. According to Stones, (2005) this makes it difficult to disentangle them from one another and understand the respective roles played by each of them over time and space in the production and reproduction of society. Furthermore, Thompson (1989) also criticises Giddens' explanation to prove that the social structure constitutes rules and resources and argues that Giddens has not provided adequate account that will make it 'useful and satisfactory to identify social structure with rules and resources' (Stones, 2005 p.47).

Furthermore, Giddens talks in general about the *structure* being both enabling and constraining mechanisms for the agents. Even though this may be true, it should, however, be noted that this is not the same for all humans. Some people have more choices than others based on age, class and gender. For instance, the enabling abilities of the structure to me are more to the advantage of adults than to children especially in the global south. This is because in all societies adults are in control of the structure and so be it in times of hardship or not, the available limited resources are channelled to programmes that tend to favour adults, which may have a trickledown effect on children- For instance the LEAP programme in Ghana (see chapter two). This is more feasible in global south countries where children are in many ways without power and the least recognised.

In spite of the criticisms levelled against the structuration theory, it is useful in understanding how the various structures in the society influence the decision making of individuals. It also enhances the understanding of conceptualising individuals as active agents. The theory can therefore be useful in understanding parental migration and the experiences of children.

3.3.2.1 Where is the link? Structuration theory and the study

One of the major theories employed in this study is the structuration theory. It is therefore important to apply this theory to the study. Children, who constitute the main informants for the study, live their everyday lives within the social structures; from the benefit of hind sight

are affected by the structural conditions. Childhood is therefore produced through institutions, ranging from global political-economic structures to families and communities' (Scheeper-Hughes & Sargent, 1998, cited by Ansell, 2005, p.22). This means that these structures influence the everyday lives of children. Therefore they also serve as both enabling as well as constraining mechanisms in the lives of children. Parental migration is therefore a structural condition which affects the lives of children.

Also *physical structures* which exist in countries to a larger extent, serve as an enabling and constraining mechanisms to parental migration. These structures include; good roads, nice buildings and good environment which exist in countries have been identified to be influencing parental migration from Ghana to other countries (Anarfi et al. 2003). More so, improvement in technology aiding improvement in transportation all serves as means to enable the people to migrate. Indeed various physical structures and the public spaces propel the agency of children into action. For instance the availability of markets and the closeness to it will determine the kind of coping strategy a child may adopt, when he/she is confronted with the situation.

In addition, structures as elucidated in the structuration theory include *economic structures*. This can be related to the availability of employment opportunities available especially for parents to migrate to other countries. Unemployment means no income for an individual, therefore in a situation where parents realise that there are employment opportunities in other countries they tend to migrate to such countries in many cases leaving their families behind (Bryant, 2005). This is done with the notion of securing jobs elsewhere so the family left behind can be remitted (Asis, 2006).

Also economic policies adopted by governments also form part of the economic structures which have an impact on both parental migration and the lives of children left behind. These policies in Ghana include SAP with its negative consequences on the parents and children. Also these policies have the consequences of triggering the agency of children left behind thereby, shaping their actions and practices. Thus the view that children are active agents and not passive recipients of the structural conditions (Qvortrup, 1994) is in line with what the structuration theory seeks to emphasise.

Furthermore *social structures* to a large extent also relate to the study. These mainly refer to them as institutions, the family and the social networks and also political structure that exist in the wider society. These structures can also be enabling as well as constraining. Parental migration does not occur in a 'vacuum' (Bryant, 2007). Most migrants depend on the social network formed with others for information about their country of destination and also point of contact when they move. Also included here is the societal prestige that people in Ghana attach to the returned migrants (Anarfi & Kwankye, 2009) who serve as catalysts to propel parental migration and the subsequent experiences of children of who are left behind.

Also the conditions which exist at the home (family) of a caregiver affect children because they live and interact with these conditions when they are left behind. Children form an important component of the structure in every society (Qvortrup, 1994). Therefore they are affected by the structural conditions. This means that they are affected by structural forces (as emphasised also by the structural child approach). This in effect propels the child into action, hence experiencing a unique type of childhood different from others. Therefore researching with children should not be done independent of the structural context which children exist.

Another component of the social structure which can be discussed here is the *political structures* as part of the broad social systems, which also influence parental migration and also affects the experiences of children. These forms of structures involve political decisions taken by governments. These policies affect the everyday lives of children in one way or other. For instance, child rights, education and migration policies.

The structuration theory is applied to this study because; theory serves as a way of conceptualizing the phenomenon under investigation. It offers an in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon (Thompson, 1989). According to Giddens (1984) social research is supposed to involve ethnographic moments. It therefore seeks to uncover the experiences of people from whom the research is about. Therefore, to uncover the life experiences of people from whom the research is about, I employed the theory to understand how children left behind cope with parental migration. He further posits that the structuration theory does not prohibit the use of any specific research technique. In line with this, the study uses qualitative research techniques to understand the live experiences of children left behind (ibid).

Bringing the two theoretical approaches together, *human agency* is therefore common with both the social studies of childhood as well as the structuration theory making the latter relevant to this study. Children are active beings who can influence their own lives in the society where they live (James & Prout, 1997). This means that they have agency within the structure in which they find themselves whilst agency can also recreate structure which constrains as well as enables a child's ability to do anything (Holt & Holloway, 2006).

According to Kjørholt (2004) it is important to recognise the agency of children in the social structure but this does not in any way mean rejecting the social structures in which children find themselves. This is because these social structures shape the lives of children. Therefore recognising the agency of children does not in any way mean 'autonomy' for children independent from the structural contexts where they find themselves (Kjørholt, 2005a). Also since structures affect the general lives of children, they need to be backed by power. This is given to children through their right to participation in events which affect their everyday activities (Alanen & Mayall, 2001). Children are therefore active competent beings who can make meaning and explore their environment (Clark, 2005). In addition, Lansdown (2001, p.1) believes that the implementation of participation rights '*involves a profound and radical consideration of the status of children in most societies*' and it '*requires us to begin to listen to what children say and to take them seriously*' [emphasis mine] (see also Ennew & Boyden 1997). Also, Christensen (2004) argues that giving children a 'voice' in research implies recognising their agency as well as empowering them as active subjects in their own right.

3.4 Brief literature review

3.4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to briefly review some research that have been conducted on children left behind by migrated parents mostly outside Ghana. These studies mainly focus on the everyday life experiences of children. Migration provides the conceptual structure with which parental movements occur. Early migration discussions were deeply rooted in the neo classical economic tradition (Anafi, et al., 2003). It is a model of migration decision making where an individual makes a rational choice to increase his welfare by moving to another place, normally where the individual expects to earn income (Mafukidze, 2006). It further elucidates on the fact that migration impacts positively on the stakeholders (migrants and

family) as the migrants themselves benefit to a large extent by getting employment and earn income. The family left behind also benefit through the remittances sent by migrants (Asis, 2006).

In the late 1970s, academic debates mainly criticised the neo-classical approach arguing that that migration decision making is not solely dependent on the rational choice made by the migrants. However, the decision to migrate is influenced by the structural, institutional and economic forces. Therefore, social, economic, political, environmental and historical context, within which migration decision takes place must be understood as structural challenges and institutionalised systems which force an individual to migrate.

A more recent view to this discussion on migration is the new economics labour of migration approach (Mafukidze, 2006). This view conceptualises that migration of household members occur when households wants to maximise expected income and minimise economic risks (ibid). This approach argues that parental migration takes place within a unique socio-cultural context. In Africa household size and gender relations cannot be ignored as influencing migration behaviour therefore explaining why males migrate more than females (UNICEF, 2010).

3.4.2 Migration and children

Children are seen to be the most affected by parental migration among the family left behind. According to Bryant (2005), studying children left behind in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, children who grow up amidst parental migration enjoy good life conditions. Parental migration has, according to Bryant, positive impact on children. He argues that migrated parents more often than not send remittances to their children to support them and cover basic expenses for them. Although the study only interviewed children aged 10-12 years and from a different structural context, his results can be applicable to children elsewhere in the world. In summary, the study indicated that parents, who migrate leaving their children at the place of origin, provide parental support from afar. Parental migration therefore may have positive effects on children as it improves survival rates for children owing principally to the support from the migrated parents as well as the extended family which provides care to the child.

In another study by Yeoh and Lam (2006), carried out in the Philippines, the research provides an analysis on the impact of migration on the socioeconomic status, livelihoods or health outcomes of the household and its members left behind. This study reveals that beyond the economic benefits and its associated improvements in the lives of the children left behind, parental migration involves physical dislocation and social disruption of personal as well as familial relationships which existed between children and their migrated parents. It has been established by some researches that children living with both parents have improved cognitive, health and educational outcomes (Amanto & Gilbreth, 1999). Therefore in the view of Yeoh and Lam (2006), the absence of one or both parents from the home increases the psychological insecurity of children as well as their health. They argued further that in times of parental migration, some parents who do not remit back home to support children makes them face the risks such as malnutrition and other risks in their effort to survive.

According to Silver (2006), in a study, where they looked at the effects of parental migration on the family member they leave at home in Mexico, it was found that the extended family provides care to the children left behind. However, in situations where the family finds it difficult to remit them providing care for these children sometimes becomes impossible. In deciding on which caregiver to cater for the children, parents decide alone factoring into it the ability of the caregiver to provide the needed care. Children are therefore only informed about such decisions after they are made. The study further indicates that in the event where the caregiver as well as the extended family fail to provide the needed care, parental migration tend to have negative consequences for the health, schooling and general well being of children. However, an important aspect to the provision of care for children is the ability of the migrant to remit the children. Van Doorn (2003); Kibbiki, Mazzucato and Appiah (2004) have therefore indicated that remittances have a crucial impact on the family left behind in their provision of their basic material needs.

More so, according to Ashiabi (2000) a study conducted on poverty in Ghana, indicates that household's purchasing power is an important determining factor of child malnutrition. He argues, not surprisingly that children from poor households become vulnerable and malnourished because such households cannot afford food items and therefore have to reduce their food consumption. It is further indicated that malnutrition is high among households with low incomes (ibid). To this Kautzky (2009) argues that in times of parental migration,

some families left behind suffer poverty, when the breadwinners in the families migrate and are sometimes not able to remit back home. When this happens, the source of support to cater for the family is ceased. In a situation like this children are the hardest hit (UNICEF, 2010).

In another study, Mafukidze (2006) establishes the relationships between parental migration, household poverty and child labour (work). The study indicates that most children living in sub-Saharan Africa with migrated parents are often exposed to exploitation by some caregivers. These children tend to engage in work to support themselves. He further contends that the income gotten from engaging in the work is used to cater for some of their basic needs and in some instances to support their caregivers too. Basu and Tzatmatos (2003, cited by Hope, 2005, p.55), have documented how child labour (work) interfere with schooling and for that matter the education of children.

A study by Parrenas (2002, cited by Yeoh & Lam, 2006, p.11) explains how migration affects the emotional well-being of children. According to the study, children who experience parental migration, become more lonely and reserved. The study indicates most children with both parents and those with their father migrating get most of their basic material needs than children with migrating fathers. Also children with migrated mothers tend to have difficulties academically and perform poorly in terms of physical and emotional health. This study further indicates that children with one or both parents migrating who deal with emotional loneliness through frequent communication with parents, to a larger extent has accounted for reduced levels of children's anxieties.

Referring to a study by Save the Children in Sri Lanka; *'Left Behind, Left Out: The Impact on Children and Families of Mothers Migrating for Work Abroad'* noted that children, though not the majority are prone to many risks after parental migration, especially mothers migrating. The study cited some of these risks which included, dropping out of school and having poor health. Also children aged 16-17 years indicated abuse from caregivers. For instance, denying children food as a form of punishment. In instances where children were found to be staying with aged caregivers, they were found to be lacking physiological and emotional needs. This is because lack of money to provide these needs. The Sri Lanka study concluded that the situation becomes worse for children with mental as well as other physical disabilities. These children are already in the marginalised position in the societies, The absence of one or both parents can further marginalise them, especially in developing

countries where there are myths surrounding the very existence of such children in many societies (Save the Children, 2006), such children with epilepsy being the children of river gods.

Also the education of children is affected by the migration of one or both parents a study in Bangladesh has shown. A previous study by Asfar (2003); Khun (2006) have indicated that a significant proportion of remittances sent by parents are invested into the education of children. Similar findings have been found by Hugo (2002) in the study of the impact of migration on Indonesian families left behind. He found that most children with migrated parents are put into private schools to receive the best of education as compared to children with non migrants. It is has been argued in the study that, during their elementary years, these children left behind receive better grades. But this is not always the case.

Battistella and Conaco (1998) reported that children of Filipino migrants performed badly academically as compared to children with non migrants. This is especially the case for children with migrated mothers. This observation is consistent with other findings such as that of the Save the Children in Sri Lanka (Save the Children, 2006). Even though mothers remit back home when they migrate, there is the absence of the motherly care and love for children that is said to be a risk factor. Also children miss the tender care of their fathers; however, the impact is not great like the mothers. For those with non working mothers abroad, these children tend to drop out of school to look for work to earn a living. Other children are made to overwork by their caregivers, sometimes leading to economic exploitation of children. It was further revealed that the school dropout rates among children in the rural areas are very high. This is because in most of these rural areas schools are less resourced, there were poor school buildings and lack of teachers. These factors therefore add to the parental migration to force children out of school. (Batbarr et al. 2005, cited by Yeoh & Lam, 2006, p.16).

In furtherance to this Jampaklay, (2006), in the article entitled '*Parental absence and children's school enrolment: evidence from a longitudinal study in Kanchanaburi, Thailand*' has also indicated that the absence of parents due to migration has negative impact on school enrolment of their children. He further argues that the absence of the mother in the house contribute greatly to the school drop out of their children than when their fathers are absent. This is because of the gender role of mothers in the home to provide the ultimate care for children even though the absence of their fathers also contributes to the school drop-out of

children. However, this study acknowledged that the remittances sent by migrants from their base abroad tend to raise the prospects of these children.

Also Koc and Oman (2004) have indicated that remittances contribute to the welfare status of children left behind in providing them with their basic needs. It was also observed that children with migrated parents in a suburb of Thailand exhibit extreme behaviour such as stealing under the care of their grandparents. They become aggressive as their grandparents neglect them when the grandparents are too old to cater for them properly. They pamper them without instilling discipline into them (ibid).

In conclusion, the review of different reports and studies in this section illustrates some of the everyday experiences of children left behind. While offering limited discussions on the findings on some few studies, these highlights the diverse impacts parental absence due to migration have on the well being of children left behind. This is presumably mainly because the structural conditions are very different and therefore make different presuppositions for children to act.

The next chapter discusses the various methods used in the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

According to Silverman (2005) methodology refers to the choices we make about cases to study, methods of data gathering, and forms of data analysis- in planning and executing a research study. It is a meta-perspective on methods, for instance by discussing methods theoretically. Methods on the other hand has been defined as, ‘a coherent set of rules and procedures which can be used to investigate a phenomena or situation within a framework dictated by epistemological and ontological ideas’ (Kitchin & Tate, 2000, p.6). It provides a fundamental basis to a research as to how the research is done. In doing a social enquiry it is required that a well-defined method is followed to achieve concrete results.

This chapter deals with the research design, data sources, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, methods of data collection, and analysis. This chapter also explains the pilot testing of the research data collection methods used in the research and concludes on the various ethical issues that were considered under this research study.

4.2 Theoretical perspective underpinning the research design

Every research design adopted by a researcher is backed by a philosophical background. According to Sarantakos (2005), social research is complex, diverse and pluralistic. This means that the ways in which a social research is conducted; its goals and basic assumptions differ significantly depending on the research design the researcher chooses. Therefore the structure, process and direction of the social research are influenced by diverse philosophical perspectives. The main philosophical paradigm that provides the basis of the methods adopted in this study is the interpretivist paradigm which underlies the use of qualitative methods (Sarantakos, 2005; Frazer et al., 2004).

4.2.1 Interpretivist perspective.

An interpretivist perspective is a systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through an observation of people in settings where they live to help us draw interpretations of how people create and maintain their social world (Silverman, 2011). It came out of the philosophy called phenomenology. In qualitative research, ‘*phenomenology* is a term that points to an interest in understanding social phenomena from the actors’ own perspective and describing the world as experienced by the subjects with the assumption that important reality is what people perceive

it to be' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.26). This study employed a qualitative approach, as it seeks subjective meanings of individuals and processes in specific contexts (Saks & Allsop, 2007).

Qualitative approaches used in research are descriptive in nature and involve the collection and analysis of data that gives meanings to peoples' everyday lives and experiences in the setting where they live (Frazer, et al., 2004). Proponents have argued that qualitative and contextual approaches in social research provide the opportunity for researchers to have access to valuable types of data which are richer in meaning and provide an in-depth understanding into the lives of people and their subjective experiences (Silverman, 2011).

In Childhood Studies, much emphasis is on the various means through which children can interpret their experiences. This, however, means 'that Childhood Studies have stressed the usefulness of qualitative research approaches' (Frazer et al, 2004, p.282). These approaches thus, emphasise gaining individual values and meanings on what is researched so as to produce understanding rather than generalised results of a study (Kitchin & Tate 2000). It therefore centres on understanding how people view their world through various techniques such as interviews, group discussions and observations- that allow individuals to explore their feelings as well as enabling the researcher to gain in-depth understanding at the same time (Limb & Dawyer, 2001). Also these methods are usually employed by researchers to study relatively much smaller number of sample as compared to other methods used in quantitative research.

4.2.2 Methodological justification of the study

Methods used in every research used are selected to achieve the research aim, objectives set by the researcher and to answer the research question asked in the study. More so, Ennew and Boyden (1997) argue that all good social research requires the use of more than one method. This is because two approaches complement each other and each observes different realities or different aspects of the same reality. In my study, a combination of focus group discussions, interviews, observation and documentary methods are employed (Frazer et al., 2004).

The approach is more flexible and reflexive so that the researcher is less likely to become stuck in particular sets of assumptions. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Alvesson & Sköldberg,

2000). The use of qualitative research techniques were chosen to enable the researcher uncover the various experiences that children left behind by migrated parents go through and how they relate with their caregivers in their various families.

Moreover, using interviews, focus group discussions and observation enable the researcher to understand the meanings that the population under study attach to their experiences, perceptions and interactions with the various structures of the society. Moreover, qualitative research is less interested in the ‘generalisability’ but deals with ‘specificity’ (Silverman, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This is because it deals with the subjective life experiences of individuals. Fine and Sandstrom (1988) have explored the worlds of children and have argued that adults can greatly benefit from studying their worlds through the use of qualitative research methods because through that an in-depth knowledge about the children can be gotten from their subjective experiences. Therefore, the methodology for this research study was informed by the view that children are competent social actors who have the right to be listened to and have a say in matters that affect their lives (Kjørholt, 2005b; James et al., 1998).

4.3 Sources of data

Information for the study consisted of data from different sources. I obtained data from the sampled population (*informants*). I obtained the data from children and some caregivers from the Berekum Municipality. I used in-depth interviews, focused group discussions and observation as the basis of methods for collecting the data for the study. I also obtained information from published and unpublished articles, journals, textbooks, official documents from the Municipal Assembly, government publications and other related literature.

4.4 Choice of informants and sampling technique

Since the purpose of the study was to describe and interpret themes in the informants’ lived world on the topic and not to study a representative sample of the population, a small but carefully chosen sample is important for the purpose of data collection.

In this research study the target population constituted children in the Berekum Municipality of Ghana who are have migrated parent(s) and below the age of 18. It also included some caregivers who have the responsibility to care for the children.

In cognisance of the limited time and resources at my disposal for the fieldwork, I chose a sample size of 20 respondents comprising of 15 children left behind and 5 caregivers for the in depth interviews (IDIs). In addition to this two focus group discussions (FGDs) comprising of 8 children each were organised for both boys and girls at different times. Thus, 14 children were purposively selected for the FGD in the study.

4.4.1 Sampling Technique

In choosing the sample, I used a non-probability sampling techniques (Sarantakos, 2005), to select the respondents for the study. This was employed to select informants for the student. In the field with the help of the various gatekeepers in the communities I purposively selected, a child with migrated parent(s) who was prepared to partake in the study. By *snowball sampling technique* (Babbie, 2005) the rest of the children were identified. In this sampling technique an informant migrated parent is interviewed and asked to suggest other children with migrated parents for interviewing. The same procedure was adopted to select the caregivers (ibid). This is because children left behind and caregivers in the various communities normally know one another due to the group migration pattern in the study area (Anarfi et al. 2003). One weakness of the snowball sampling technique was that it was difficult controlling the possible selection of individuals with similar socio-demographic characteristics. However, I ensured that respondents in the communities did not come from the same household to avoid selecting like-minded people for the study, which could undermine getting diverse views from respondents.

Before the interviews and the focus group discussions were organised, I went and visited children in their various homes to create the initial contact with them. The visit to these homes was also necessary to create the necessary trust. The visits were also done so that I could explain the purpose of my study very well to the children and the caregivers. At the same time I was doing non-participant observation.

4.5 Background characteristics of respondents sampled for the study

The experiences of people are influenced by some background characteristics such as age, sex, and educational level of children as well as that of certain influential people in their lives as emphasised by the structure and agency debate. Therefore children's daily life experiences are influenced by some background characteristics of their parent/caregivers. It is against this

background that this section attempts to give a concise description of the major background characteristics of the respondents sampled for the study that were considered during the study.

4.5.1 Age and sex of respondents

The age of children sampled for the study adopted the UNCRC definition for who a child is that is a person below the age of 18 years. In dealing with the caregivers, there was no age limit. The children who formed my total sample were aged between 7 to 15 years. They comprise boys and girls. Also the caregivers who were sampled for the study were aged 27 to 75 years. This comprises of males and females.

4.5.2 Educational level of respondents

The level of education of the children was not a major factor in determining the respondents in the sample selected for the study. The most important factor in determining my respondents was children with one or both parent migrating. Also for the caregivers the most important thing was that the person should be living and providing care to children with migrated parent(s). The sample therefore constituted both children in school and those who are out of school and also caregivers without paying attention to their educational background. As said earlier, this was mainly because there was a likelihood of some children having migrated parent(s) and are out of school. It is worth noting here that even though basic education in Ghana is free and compulsory yet some of the children were still not in school. The study therefore took into consideration all children both in and out of school, since they are likely to have different experiences having to deal with the absence of one or both parents through migration with educated and uneducated caregivers.

4.5.3 Respondents' caretaker/parent

Children in the study were found to be living with family members and other friends of parents such as one of their parents, siblings, grandparents and family friends. Each caregiver giving the background has different reasons for giving care to the children. As stated earlier the occupation and age among other variables of the caregivers affects the care giving to the children and children's experiences. This is because the information needed from them basically is based on common sense knowledge and not very informative.

4.6 Methods used in collecting data

The various methods of data collection used included the following:

- In-depth interviews (IDIs)
- Focus group discussion (FGDs)
- Observation

The next sub-sections discuss the various data collection methods, issues about validity and reliability, researchers' reflexivity, ethical considerations, pilot testing, data analysis and transcription and field experiences and challenges.

4.6.1 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews were used to understand the phenomenon from the respondents 'points of view'. An interview '*is an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest*' [emphasis mine] (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.2). It helps the researcher to obtain a thorough knowledge about the phenomenon under study. Kvale and Brinkmann go on further to state that interviewing children give a researcher the opportunity to say their experiences and give an understanding of their subjective world because it seeks systematic construction of knowledge. It also 'provides meaningful opportunity to study and theorize about the social world' (Silverman, 2011, p.131).

Children react to adults in different ways. It is therefore important for the researcher to be closely involved to the child in conducting IDIs to get in depth knowledge of the phenomenon from the perspective of the children (Fine & Sandstrom, 1988). Also Solberg (1996) argues that during interviews with children, the researcher should adopt 'ignorance' of age in order to get concrete data. She also continues to emphasise that the place where a research conduct an interview with child informants may influence the level of participation of the child in the conversation. Therefore, researchers interviewing children have to put this into consideration in order to produce good data which reflects the views from children as much as possible.

Qualitative interviews with children are described as an ideal method when it comes to the flexibility in seeking the information about children's experiences (Clark, 2005). Thus, interviews offer the room for the researcher to explore with the informants on varied issues pertaining to the situation of the children left behind by migrated parents.

Questions were based on the objectives of the study. In-depth interviews with respondents in the municipality were organised based on semi-structured interview guides (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). In structuring the topics for discussion, I had in mind how sensitive my topic was. I started with topics which were less sensitive. Therefore general issues were discussed followed by more personal issues. The participants were informed about the purpose of the interview. They were encouraged to express their views about their own specific everyday life experiences. I used two interview guides for the targeted informants (see Appendix). Thus, in-depth interviews were conducted with children and caregivers in the study area at various locations.

4.6.2 Focus group discussions

‘A focus group is a collection of a small number of people (usually between 4 and 12) that meet to discuss a topic of mutual interest, with the assistance from a facilitator or moderator’ (Gatrell & Elliott 2009, p.80). Such a discussion presents a means through which the participants share their experiences and thoughts about topics with the researcher and with each other (Crang & Cook, 2007). In the study, two focus group discussions were conducted (one for boys and one for girls). The main focus here was to encourage a variety of views on the research subject from respondents (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The participants were chosen, taking into consideration their age, so as to encourage ‘free and equal participation’ in the discussion and also to avoid feeling intimidated or uncomfortable because of the wider age gap, different gender or power relations or different experiences. For instance a child who is seven years might feel intimidated to discuss issues with a child who is about sixteen years because of the wider age difference.

A moderator’s guide (focus group discussion guide) was developed to cover the issues under study (see Appendix). Sarantakos (2005) argues that the group environment which exists at FGDs, allows divergent points of view to be presented. This approach has the potential of redressing some of the traditional researcher-research participant imbalances, as it enables the participants to exert some control over research agenda in which they are participating. This method provided an opportunity for the children to participate in the discussions. Before the FGDs, I agreed with informants as to where the discussion should take place and together with the children we agreed on a venue. However, I made sure this venue would prevent distraction to ensure the full participation of the children in the discussion.

Participants for the discussion were eight in number for each group with two field assistants in addition to the researcher, one managing the audio recording of the discussions with consent from the participants, one serving as a note taker and the researcher serving as a moderator for the discussions. The FGD was conducted to complement the responses of the main respondents in the questionnaires and it allowed flexibility in the questioning process. It also allowed the interviewer to clarify terms that were unclear, control the order in which questions were asked and to probe for additional information. The discussions were held in the afternoon on separate days for both sexes.

Both discussions started on a low key but as the discussions progressed into very interesting discussions, participants felt more comfortable and shared their opinions without much difficulty. With time and by inviting their contributions participants got more involved in the discussion. The group discussions allowed participants more possibility to frame their views and concerns in their own terms and helped bring up many new issues to the agenda. For instance it emerged that children assume the role as caregivers in some instances, when they are left behind. This approach has the potential of redressing some of the traditional researcher-research participant imbalances, as it enables the participants to exert some control over research agenda in which they are participating.

Some of the challenges faced here include the tendency of some children to dominate the discussion and repetition of the answers by the first speaker which I had to regulate. I intervened by giving opportunity to the seemingly shy children to participate in the discussion. I summarised in my field note book some of the issues raised during the discussion. After each of the discussion, I summarised some of the main issues discussed with the children, after which I ask them if anybody had anything to add. This was done to enable me get any addition thought any child might be having.

4.6.3 Observation

According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), *observation* entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviour, and artefacts in a social setting. It is a suitable method to understand interactions between people and structures in their natural contexts. It is common to classify observation by non-participant and participant observation. The former entails the researcher embedding into a research situation in an unobtrusive manner, which does not affect the interaction being observed. In the case of the latter, there is full-scale participation

of the researcher in the events of the research nexus (Gatrell & Elliott, 2009). Observation therefore moves alongside other participatory tools (Clark, 2005).

I employed non-participant throughout the period of my fieldwork. This was done through the visit to the homes of children. In this way I observed how children relate with their caregivers as well as other people and the activities they do in their various families. This gave me the opportunity to get an insight into some of the activities and the dynamics of the everyday life of the children. However, since this method cannot give me a total insight to the phenomenon, other methods were used to compliment it.

One dilemma to the quality of the observational data I collected has to do with my role as the observer. I admit that my perceptions may have influenced the interpretation of the observational data (Silverman, 2011). Thus I used critical reflexivity on myself and on my influences on the research data gathered to limit some of the biases and look for variety of interpretations.

4.7 Issues from the field

4.7.1 Piloting testing, ethics and impressions before going to the field

Before the start of my fieldwork, I did *pilot testing* with my interview and focus group discussion guides. This was done to avoid unforeseen problems that might crop out in course of the fieldwork. Baker (1994) argues that conducting a pilot testing have advantages in the fact that it might give advance warning about where the research method is lacking, where research protocols may not be followed, and the practicability of the data collection method. I carried out the pilot tests in some selected communities in the same study area in the Berekum Municipality for some children and caregivers. Based on these experiences, I made some changes to improve the guides, especially regarding the choice of words and sentences as some were difficult to understand as well as they sounded ambiguous.

Research ethics are guidelines to protect the respondents, the researcher as well as those whom the findings of the research will impact upon (Frazer et al. 2004). ‘Research ethics refers to a complex set of values; standards and institutional schemes that help constitute and regulate scientific activity’ (National Committee for Research Ethics in Social Sciences, Law and Humanities [NESH], 2006, p.5). Ethical issues take the centre in research involving children (Tingstad, 2003; Ennew & Boyden, 1997).

In dealing with ethical issues when researching children is therefore the recognition of the importance of power differences between adults and children. It also has to do with generational relationship that may interfere in the research process (Abebe, 2008; Christensen, 2004; Punch, 2001). In addition, Fraser et al. (2004), argue that ethical issues are considered in research for two main reasons; to protect the informants and to guide the researchers against abuses of their rights. These are important because they can lead to the rejection of the findings of a study. In doing this study, I took critical consideration to ethical issues at every stage of the research process to protect my research informants.

Before I conducted the interviews and the discussions, I sought permission from the various respondents who will be involved in the research. I was able to do this by sending an introductory letter from my university. This letter among other things stated my research topic, the purpose of the study, objectives for the study and introducing me as the researcher. The issue of informed consent was catered for in this study by making sure before administering any of the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

I briefed the respondents as to what my research was about to seek their informed consent. This took the form of informing my respondents about the overall purpose of the study. I also informed them about their right to answer or decline to answer a particular question they feel uncomfortable with while partaking in the study. Respondents were also informed about their right to voluntary participation and to opt-out from the research at any time if they do not want to continue with the study at anytime (Silverman, 2011; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Confidentiality is the respondents' right to privacy. Under this data from the participants will be used for the purpose of this study only, and will not be disclosed to any one for any other purpose (ibid).

More so, Frazer et al., (2004) argue that confidentiality and anonymity would prevent shame, stigma and increase disadvantage for the children involved in the research when the research report is published. I protected the respondents' right to privacy by guaranteeing their anonymity and confidentiality. I did this by assuring them that their names or anything that could lead to their identification would not be used when writing the thesis and that any information they gave will not be disclosed to any other person. Lastly, the respondents were informed that them being selected for the study was not because there was anything wrong with them or because they had done something wrong. I chose them simply because I wanted

to learn from them about their experiences, their basic needs and their coping strategies. All the respondents consented to participate before the research was carried out and all continued.

Furthermore, I had some assumptions before going to the field as a researcher. I had some preconceived ideas about children left behind in the Berekum Municipality. I was of the view that children left behind have good standard of living. I thought they have access to whatever they wanted in life because their parents usually send them money for their up keep and that children left behind are not burdens (Bryant, 2007). However, after my interaction with these children and their caregivers during my fieldwork, I realised that some of these children find it difficult to get basic necessities of life. Also for some of them, not all their wants are met promptly from their parents through their caregivers, as I had assumed before. These experiences contributed to correcting my pre-assumptions and develop my reflexivity in understanding the phenomenon.

4.7.2 Dealing with validity and reliability of data

Good research findings depend entirely on its validity and reliability. Researchers undertaking a study should always try their best to ensure validity and reliability of the collected data (Katchin & Tate 2000). According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p.327), validity is the ‘strength and soundness of a statement’ and it also means that a method can investigate what it is designed to investigate. Similarly, Tingstad (2007, p.140) argues that it is ‘the extent to which a method investigates what it intends to investigate’. It should however be noted that validity is not *only* about methods. Kvale, argues that the “the craftsmanship and the credibility of the researcher becomes essential” (Kvale, 1996 cited by Tingstad, 2007, p.140).

Moreover, the various data collection methods were designed to meet the needs of research objectives and questions for the study. In furtherance to this, I used more than one method in collecting my data. This was to prevent the total dependence only one method which has limitations. This also ensured that the data used in the study had higher degree of validity by employing multiple data collection methods to complement each other. In striving to achieve this, it was ensured that the informants understood the issues very well. For instance I took time to explain the research topic, my aim of conducting the study and the questions very thoroughly to my informants.

Kvale (1996) argues that research validity depends on its research questions, how they are imposed and that different questions are formulated for specific purposes. In the light of this argument, I made sure that questions were easy to understand and I asked them in a way that would enable clarification of answers when the need arises. Moreover, the data collection methods were designed to meet the needs of research objectives and questions for the study. Lastly the use of more than one method for the collection of my data to a higher degree prevented over reliance on one method that might have limitations. This also ensured that the data used in the study had higher degree of validity.

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) reliability refers to the ‘consistency and trustworthiness of a research account’. It is concerned with consistency of research findings as to whether a research finding is to be trusted (Tingstad, 2007). According to Dare and Cleland (1994) it can be related to the mode of data collection, characteristics of the interviewer and the place of the interview as well as other socio-demographic variables like age and educational level which may influence the research process.

4.7.3 Researcher’s position and reflexivity during fieldwork.

In social research, the researcher’s position in the social structure as a whole and the institutions he or she belongs to may influence the person’s understanding of the world. In the view of Alvesson and Sköldberg, a researcher’s position within various power structures privileges certain voices over others (Alvesson, & Sköldberg, 2000). Also Solberg (1996, p.58) argue that ‘the relationship between the researcher and the researched is seen to be influenced more by issues of power-powerlessness...’ Therefore, as researchers, there is a need to take cognisance of our positions relative to that of our research participants. This study was conducted in a culture I was familiar with. This gave me the advantage; I had a local knowledge of the people and their ways of life. However, this position did not give me the *insider* status, as I continued to be an *outsider*. *Critical reflexivity* involves the researcher constantly scrutinising his or her role as a researcher and of the data collection process to reflect on what has been his influence.

The key issue here is for me as a researcher to consider the ethical implications of my activities. During the fieldwork I had to constantly analyse my conduct as a researcher to see what was happening, what impacts my conduct had on ongoing social relationships, and how it was influencing the data. Even though I was a student, my position as a highly educated

researcher may have enacted power and knowledge, which could be potentially 'exploitative', especially in the case of my informants. Being a male researcher, I could have been seen by some of the children as one that could help them. However, these informants understood my explanations of being just a student with no funding and a person who wanted to learn from them.

4.7.4 Field experiences and challenges

Some challenges were experienced during the field work. The first of these challenges has got to do with balancing power relations between the children respondents and myself. This posed a challenge because just like many cultures, imbalance power relations also exist between adults and children in the study area. Children were a bit shy to talk to me during the initial contact with them. I assume that, this was mainly because of the age based respect children have for people who are older than them. In such situations, adults take up active roles whereas children are seen as being more passive. The imbalance power relations also brought about some shyness on the part of the child respondents which made them find it difficult to really express themselves on some issues. For instance during my initial contact with the informants, some of them told me they were shy to talk to me. Indeed these imbalanced power relations may have great influence on research (especially when children are informants). Children may be forced to give responses that will please the adult researcher which may not be their true perspectives. I dealt with this challenge through various means.

Firstly, I adopted Mandall's '*least adult role*' which involves the use of different techniques such as changing in appearance, speaking styles, dress codes as well as cracking jokes and also behaving like their peers or friends (Mandall, 1998). Therefore I visited these children in their various homes to familiarised myself with them. Sometimes I tend to engage them into a conversation on different issues just to create the necessary friendship with them before the interviews and the group discussions. In addition, Corsaro (1996) recommends that to reduce adult-child power differences, researchers should adopt the role of an 'incompetent adult' who does not know anything as well as does not mind being bossed around by children. I did this by behaving like a novice who does not know anything, when engaging children in a conversation. Therefore my role as a researcher was that of an incompetent adult, novice as well as a friend. These strategies however, did not compromise the quality of the data as most of them freely and trustily gave their perspectives on issues data that were sought from them.

Another challenge was the time allocated for the fieldwork. Before the fieldwork, getting permission from the gate keepers, opinion leaders and caregivers took more days than previously anticipated. The suspicion on the part of many parents had to be dealt with as they wanted to know exactly what the research entails and what I was going to use it for. Apart from this, I was expected (on more occasions than anticipated prior to the fieldwork) to prove the authenticity, the purpose and the duration of the research. In addition, I was expected to explain on more than anticipated occasions how ethical issues in the research were going to be addressed. Finally, I was given the permission in a form of written, signed and stamped note.

Also another challenge had to do with booking appointments with the caregivers and sometimes children for the in-depth interviews. As one can imagine with interview schedules, it was very difficult to arrange a meeting with the informants as a result of their tight schedules, especially the caregivers. Moreover, most of the interview sessions were often interrupted by phone calls and drop-in visitors, which sometimes made us, lose focus of the topic under discussion. Sometimes, we had to break and reschedule the interview for another day. Sometimes respondents failed to honour an appointment scheduled with them. In this way such an appointment had to be rescheduled. All these stretched the data collection period beyond the planned date at which the research had to end.

4.8 Data transcription and analysis

The data from the fieldwork provided rich stories about the everyday life experiences and views of children. Data from the interviews as well as the focus groups were transcribed into English by the researcher. This was important because, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), researchers who take time to do their own transcriptions might benefit from the research process. This is because they will learn more from the interview style and also are reminded of the social and emotional aspects surrounding the interview. Data analysis is meant to interpret the meaning and understanding from a set of data (Silverman, 2011). Data was analysed qualitatively to give a deeper understanding of the issues under consideration. In analysis however, to gain a holistic and comprehensive view of the data, all audio recordings of interviews and group discussions were listened to and transcribed into detail.

After this they were categorised and coded following the research objectives and questions and subjected to content analyses allowing concepts and themes to emerge from the data (McCracken, 1988). These categories needed to be developed through the organising and

analytical reading of the data. Patterns might form and similarities between informants might appear through this process. The data analysis process started in the field, by focusing and refocusing of research aims and questions, and through the methods used in collecting data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This was to ensure that important details were not forgotten from the fieldwork.

The subsequent chapters five and six present analysis and discuss the empirical material collected from the fieldwork undertaken for the purpose of this study. This is carried out according to the objectives and the research question of the study. The chapters are organised around patterns that emerged from the empirical material.

CHAPTER 5: MONEY MATTERS TO CHILDREN

5.1 Introduction

During the empirical data analysis, categories such as money, care and risks were identified as constituting the significant issues raised by children. However, this chapter focuses on money and gives some glimpses into children's awareness and their use of money sent from their parents. Children live within the structure and are affected by the structural conditions. In view of this, as human agents, they are knowledgeable of the structural implications as well as the prevailing conditions in the structure (Giddens, 1984). According to Qvortrup (1994) children's agency are understood through the interpretations of their environment. Therefore in order to understand the role money plays in the lives of these children, as part of my interest, I asked some questions on children and money.

In general, the various conversations, discussions with the children as well as my observations revealed that children who receive some form of support from their parents clearly have better life conditions than the others who do not receive any form of support from their parents. Even though some children said that the remittances they receive is inadequate for them. This is because they do not get most of their basic needs like dresses, school uniforms, books and school fees satisfied from the money they receive. The empirical data revealed children's awareness and uses of remittances in the family.

5.2 Children awareness and use of remittances

According to Chimhowu, Pisse and Plinder, (2004) labour migration has become a major source of support to the families in many developing countries. Remittances constitute the earnings made by migrant workers that are sent to their home country where they are working. The study revealed that most of the children use money in their daily lives. Most of the children receive remittances from their migrated parent(s) whereas a few others in the sample are completely dependent on themselves or in some instances random help from some distant family relatives.

The impact of remittances on local livelihoods and poverty is of great significance to people (children) who receive it (Kautzky, 2009). This is because it can be used to contribute to the household livelihoods strategies of families left behind. It allows them better access to basic needs in life and caring for children. At the family level, remittances are used to supplement

the budget of the households in developing countries. It also helps to invest in the human capital development of children by reducing their participation in labour and to encourage school attendance (UNICEF, 2007). Remittances therefore have an impact on the kind of life styles that families left behind engage in. In their study of the impact of remittances in rural 'Ashanti' in Ghana, Kibbiki et al. (2004) have documented that, remittance contributes greatly to the house income of families with migrants. They continued to argue that, such homes more often than not adopt more sophisticated life styles. Owusu (2000) in studying Ghanaian migrant in Benin has documented that remittances sent by these migrants are of great importance to the family left behind. It increases the purchasing power of the family to afford various goods and services for their well-being.

Therefore recognising the various roles remittances play I resorted to ask children some questions pertaining to this. During the study, respondents were asked as to whether they receive support from their migrated parents and if they do, what do they think the money is used for. The main reason for asking this question was to explore how children left behind depended on remittances when they are left behind. Most of the informants stated that they are aware of money sent to them by their migrated parents. Therefore they rely mainly on the money sent to them by their parents. Most of these informants stated the money sent to them is use for their upkeep.

On the issue of children receiving support from their parents abroad, a 7 year old female respondent replied that: *My father sends me money through my mother from abroad to support me. The money is given to her for safe keeping. The money is used for my upkeep and my siblings in the house where we live.....to pay school fees of a private school and dresses. The money is used to buy the things we need in the family. She uses the money on us because there is no support from anybody or anywhere else in the family* (Amina, 7 years)⁵.

In this assertion, Amina suggests that she is aware of money sent from her father to her. It shows how children depend on support from their parents abroad for their daily livelihood. In effect, what this child is saying is that the money from her parent enables her to get education together with her siblings. Also by getting the money, they are able to pay the relatively high school fees of a 'private school'. In Ghana the fees paid by children in the 'private schools'

⁵ Names of informants used in the study are not their real names because of ethical reasons.

(owned by individuals) are much expensive than those in the 'public schools' (owned by the state). This is because the government pays part of the tuition fees charged by the public sector. There is also a general perception that 'private schools, provide better quality education than the 'public' schools; hence, the high level of the fees charged there. This shows one example of the extent to which money sent by parents helps in the educational development of children.

Similarly, in another interview, one of the children narrated how he is aware of remittances sent to him by the parents. He demonstrated how useful the money is to him in his everyday life. He stated that: *My parents send me money....I am aware that my parents send money to support me in the family. When they call the house they speak to me and tell me about the money that they have sent to me through my uncle. The money is used to cater for my basic needs in the house like food, school fees and my daily pocket money.....but sometimes the money is inadequate to sufficiently support me* (Nkebi, 9 years).

Most children know the use of the remittances sent to them, as mainly for their upkeep like Nkebi. A significant aspect of this interview is how he pointed out that money sent to him is sometimes not sufficient. This illustrates how children that even though they are remitted there are some of their basic needs which remain unattended. This empirical data also goes to buttress that the money sent to children are sometimes inadequate. This shows the various variations in the money sent by parents. This may be because of the amount of work parents engage in at the base abroad. There are similarities in both narratives because they are all aware of money sent to them by their parents. They also believe that the remittances make significant contributions in supporting them in their everyday lives.

In the view of Koc and Oman (2004) money contributes to the welfare status of children left behind as well as other members of the family left behind. When there are no remittances from parents, families left behind go through some hardships making it difficult to provide some basic needs of children like paying school fees, buying food and clothing. In cognisance with this, children expressed how useful the money sent to them by their parents is to the household and their general being. To this some children who receive remittances further expressed their views on some of the things they think remittances are used for.

Just as many informants in the study, Kwasi, explained specifically what the remittances sent to him are used for: *My father sends me money so there is money for me.....we are not poor. Normally my grandmother uses the money to buy some of the things that we need. This money help me a lot to buy my basic needs, sometimes too she use the money to pay our school fees ,used for health treatment, buy school uniforms, books, buy clothes and food. My father has been away for long time....am use to this....so far as I get the money from him* (Kwasi, 10 years).

This statement illustrates that children with migrated parents just like Kwasi, who receive money from their parents do not see themselves as poor people; rather they see themselves as having money. This means that children who receive money from their parents are not affected by the multi-dimensions of poverty. According to Ashiabi (2000) poverty is generally lacking some basic needs in life. These include the ability to afford basic needs like food, dress and education. Mafukidze (2006) is of the view that children who suffer from poverty as result of parental migration finds difficult to get most of their basic needs. However, most of these result in various activities to survive. Therefore since the children do not lack any of these things, they consider not poor. The quotes also illustrates that some children are used to the situation of parental migration. This may be because of the remittances that they receive to satisfy their basic needs. The money sent to children is also used to support them in their physical health as the money can be used to seek good health care of the children. However, this also depends on the level of knowledge and the belief systems of the caregivers. Some caregivers were found to be having belief in the use of traditional medicine other than the conventional modern medicine (as seen in chapter six).

In addition, another girl also expressed how her parents send her money when she is in need of anything in the house. She proceeds further and mentions that: *My parents send me money to my uncle in the house so that he uses the money to buy some of my basic needs for me. The money is used to buy things like food, clothes, and school uniforms. My uncle uses the money sent to me very well. When he sees that I need something he buys it for me and tell me.* (Abena, 13 years).

Here Kwasi and Abena make reference that, the remittances from parents are mostly used to cater for their basic needs. This shows that, children of course need money in their daily lives for survival. As active social agents who live within the structure, they are affected by the

forces and conditions in the structure (Giddens, 1984). Children therefore interact daily with events in the structure and money is used to provide their basic needs. Besides being affected by existing structural conditions/implications like adults, children have knowledge about the structural implications on their lives. In the situation where children fail to get support they sometimes suffer effects of inadequacy of money.

In line with the above issues, Yeoh and Lam (2006) expressed that most migrated parents who find jobs, send a sizeable amount of their earnings to their families left behind. They continue to argue that, such money are generally sent to cater for the basic needs of their children and in some instances some members of the family left behind. They further intimated that, most of the time parents communicate with their children and tell them about the money they have sent. This to a large extent explains why most children are aware of the remittances sent to them, and its subsequent uses. This is also consistent with the observations made by Kabbki et al. (2004) in studying the impact of remittances in rural Ashanti- Ghana. They indicated that migrated parents are very much aware of the impact remittances make in the lives of their children left in Ghana. Therefore those who find jobs remit their children regularly to cater for their basic needs. Also when they remit they usually inform their children. From the empirical evidences stated above, the children were aware of remittances which are sent to them and some of its uses in the family.

On the other hand I had conversations with other children who mentioned that they are aware of remittances sent from migrated parents to their children but they do not receive any of such supports from their parents. Children narrated that they, have caregivers that they live with but most of the time they find it difficult to get money to cater for their basic needs. They told me that they are sometimes forced out of school due to lack of money. Some of these children like Nina a 7 year old girl who is aware of remittances but do not receive any. Nina spoke passionately on the issue. In an interview she expressed her opinion that: *I know some friends who told me that their parents send them money, but I do not receive any money from my parents.....sometimes they call once in a while* (Nina, 7 years). This shows how some children are aware of money sent by migrated parents. It also confirms that not all the children left behind receive support from their migrated parent. This situation may also arise because some of these children may not know that their caregivers receive money. This is because the

caregivers as well as migrated parents may not inform the child about the money parents have sent.

5.3 How are remittances sent to children and by whom?

In trying to find out who actually receive the money when children are remitted, children explained how their parents send them money through their caregivers. A 7 year old boy said that: *Yes my father sends me money in the house from abroad. The money is given to my caregiver. He calls every weekend to speak to me* (Kwame, 7 years). In another instance during one of the interviews an informant emphasised that: *My father is the one who has migrated. He sends me money all the time through my caregivers and he informs me about the money. But my caregiver keeps the money so that it is used when he buys me anything. When the money finishes, he calls my father to tell him* (Yaa, 13 years).

These narratives display how children are aware of the money sent to them through their caregivers. Also they explained how their fathers are mostly the ones who send them money. The empirical data indicated that this mainly happens in terms of individual parental migration. However, where both parents have migrated, they both send money to their children. When further quizzed on this most of the children mentioned their fathers as the main source of support when they are left behind. UNICEF (2010) posits that males migrate more than females; they therefore remit to their family more than the female migrants do in the case of individual parental migration. This may also be attributed to the fact that males (husbands) are the ones who are supposed to cater for the family in most Ghanaian societies with support from the females (wives) (Nukunya, 2003).

In one of the FGDs the following excerpts was expressed by one of the respondents: *Both of my parents are abroad, I stay with my auntie who is a friend to the family. I know my parents send me money from their base abroad. They are there together so I think they send me the money together. When they send the money my auntie always tell me about it. Sometimes too my parents call the house and when they speak to me they tell me about the money they have sent me. This support comes quite regularly from my parents. It provides a great support for me* (Mansah, 12 years).

This contribution displays quite an outspoken awareness of remittances sent to from parents to support the children through their caregivers. This support is from both parents who have

migrated and not necessarily fathers as Yaa and Kwame have indicated in their previous conversations. This is because both parents have migrated and not as in the case of individual migration the empirical data has shown. Also parents calling to tell children about the money they have sent shows how some migrated parents communicate with their children about the money they sent through their caregivers. This reinforces the assertion by Asis (2006), that migrated parent communicate with their children on the money they sent them to cater for them.

In seeking the views of children as to why they think the money from their parents abroad are mostly sent through their caregivers. In one of the FGDs one of the girl respondents replied: *My parents send me money from abroad. The money is all the time given to my caregiver.... I think the money is given to her because my parents feel I cannot put the money in a safe place. Also they want me to respect my caregiver so they give her the money so that she can use it to support me all the time...I am obedient so I obey what I am told* (Assan, 9 years).

This informant believes in the respect for her caregiver. She believes that when money is sent to her through the caregivers, it exhibit a form of respect and authority her caregiver has in the family. Also it goes to confirm how obedient that she is to the caregivers. In most communities in Ghana, children are expected or not allowed to keep money meant to support them when they are under the care of people. When the money is given to the caregivers, the person then will exert total control of the child and also to make the caregivers act as a parent who will exert some control over the child.

A caregiver during one of the IDIs stated that: *Yes...I receive remittances from the parents of the child that is living with me. The money is sent to me mainly in two ways. Sometimes they remit through the money transfer. At other times, the money is given to somebody who is coming to Ghana from their base abroad. But.....most of the time it is done through the money transfers process. The money is used to provide support to the child* (Akar, 37 years).

This extract from the interview with Akar illustrates how parents remit their children. The migrants therefore enjoy different means through which money is sent to back to their children left behind. The narrative points out that the money is not sent to the children directly but rather to the caregivers. The money is eventually used to support the child. However, the parent decides the means through which the money is sent to the caregivers. According to

Van Doorn (2003) money from migrated parents are sent to their families through both formal and informal means. The formal means he identified as mainly money through banks and other co-operate organisations. The informal means consists of sending money through a known person from their base abroad to the caregivers. According to the labour standards by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), all migrant workers have the right to send remittances back to their home countries no matter the means that the migrants choose for it. This means that the migrants (parents) have various options through which money can be sent to their children. The quotation above shows that parents utilises both the formal and the informal means to send money back home.

5.4 Using remittances for its intended purpose? Views of caregivers

Most of these caregivers expressed that the money sent to them are mainly used for the upkeep of the children staying with them in the family. In an interview with one of the caregivers he expressed that: *Money from the parent of the child is used to support the child left behind. When I receive the money I use it to buy the basic needs of the child in the home....the money is not used for any other purpose apart from this....that is what the money is meant for* (Amaama, 49 years). After the money is sent to the caregiver the money is used strictly for its intended purpose as indicated by this caregiver. This means that caregivers hold in paramount the purpose for which the money was sent to them. It may be that this caregiver might use part of the money sent to her for other purpose other than use it strictly on the child.

Therefore in seeking further if part of the money is used for other purposes apart from to cater for the basic needs of the child. A caregiver expressed that the remittances sent to them are sometimes used in running the businesses that they owe in the community. The study revealed that such caregivers most of the time use the proceeds from their business to cater for the children who are left in their care. A 55 year old female caregiver stated that: *I receive money meant for the child. The father send the money in bulk....may be ones every three months...What I do is that I use the money to run the small shop that I owe so that I use the proceeds to support the child. I do this because even though the money was not meant for that but it helps me to keep the money safe. In this way I always get money to support the child* (Mante, 55 years). To this caregiver, money sent from parents should be invested and proceeds used to support the child, without the parents knowing. I conclude that this practice might have some negative consequences on the children in the situation whereby the child

needs something and proceeds from the shop are not readily available. However, others were of the view that it is important to keep the money sent to the children at a safe place so that it becomes readily available when the need arises to use the money on the children.

5.5 Lack of remittances: no school?

As indicated earlier, the empirical data shows that some children do not receive any remittances from their parents. The children who do not receive any form of support from their parents were generally found to be those who do not hear from their parents. The study revealed that for such children getting some of their basic needs such as dresses and food among others becomes difficult. This is because as some of them told me; they simply do not have enough money to buy these things.

One of the respondents said that: *My parents migrated long ago, at that time I was not old like this. They do not send me any money. I do not get money for my basic needs like some of my friends that I know who have migrated parents. Sometimes it is really difficult for my auntie to get my basic needs like dresses and other things. My auntie told me that my parents promised her they will send money when they get jobs at their destination. But I still receive nothing so am out of school because there is no money to pay for it* (Kwabena, 12 years).

Like Kwabena, remittances play an important role in children's everyday life. The money is used to provide most of their basic needs and support. In this interview, Kwabena, talks about how he lives without parental support from his parents abroad. This has forced him to drop out from school since going to school comes at cost to the individual. One needs to buy books, school uniforms, pens and pencils. This shows how important remittances are to the everyday lives of children left behind. Children who do not receive remittances sometimes find it difficult to get their basic needs. As Koc and Oman (2004) intimated previously that money sent from parents contributes greatly to the welfare of children.

Another boy who was out of school expressed his opinion in one of the FGDs on how he fails to get money from his parents. He expressed that: *My parents do not send me money. I am aware of other children who receive support from their parents, but I do not get any support from my parents. My uncle was paying for my school fees and providing me with books and school uniforms but he cannot do that again because he is out of work. In the beginning, I was absenting myself from school, but now I have stopped going* (Kumi, 10 years).

In this reply the respondent expressed that the lack of remittances in the house has an effect on his school attendance. It can therefore be said that migration of parents influence the education of children. The views expressed above therefore shows the negative contribution parental migration has on children. According to Jampaklay (2006), parental migration has negative impacts on school enrolment for children who do not receive any support from their parents. Many children find it difficult to pay school fees and to get other school materials so they drop out of school. Also Bastistella and Conaco (1998) indicated how migration impacts negatively on the education of children left behind, as children who find it difficult to get the necessary materials drop out of school to take up work. However, Asfar (2003) and Kuhn (2006) observed positive relationships between parental migration and education of children.

Furthermore, some children stated that they work as a coping strategy. I will come back to this issue later in the chapter for further discussion. Though these income earning activities make life bearable for these children, there is the tendency of consequently affecting their education (school attendance and performance). According to Ashiabi (2000), children struggle between staying in school and working to support themselves. In this study it may be because they receive no remittances or inadequate support.

5.6 Respondents coping strategies

Coping strategies among children left behind can be studied within a specific socio-cultural and structural context. This is because these structures can create different conditions for children to act. Coping strategies are methods that children left behind in the study area adopt to make life bearable or pleasant for their day to day lives. Based on the notion that children are active actors, migration of parents one or both parents may lead to children 'taking active part and crafting responses to cope with parental migration' (Asis, 2006, p.47). Majority of these children adopt/adapt certain strategies to cope with parental absence from the home due to migration. This according to the structuration theory, referred to in chapter three, illustrates on the fact that human agents are not mere puppets but rather agents who direct their own lives through actions to survive in the conditions set by the structure (Giddens, 1984). Children are sometimes forced to rely on their own capacities as individuals to cope (Boyden and Mann, 2005), in this case when parents migrate. The empirical data from my study shows that some children are heavily dependent on themselves to survive. Therefore the coordination

of the activities to adopt different coping strategies in the view of Giddens (1984) forms the *authoritative resources* available to these agents.

This fact illustrates that children form part of the entire structure of their society and as social actors; they also adjust themselves to cope with the existing structural conditions. In a similar way, Holloway and Valentine (2000) argues strongly that the ability of children to change some conditions in which they find themselves to their advantage, shows that children are not only passive subjects in the social structure but may rather be active social subjects of the structure. Coping strategies here therefore refers to ways to which children exhibit and utilize their agency. This study therefore, sought to explore some of the strategies children adopt to make life bearable for them. Therefore in this section an attempt will be made to examine and understand the various coping strategies children left behind adopt to cope with parental migration.

5.6.1 Working to survive in everyday life

As already mentioned, some children also cited *working* as a form of coping strategy. Some children engage in income generating activities to earn money or work to get other support for their upkeep. Most of these children told me that they do not hear from their parents who have migrated, therefore they have to work to support themselves. Moreover some of the proceeds from their work are sometimes given to their caregivers. Many of these children were out of school. Some of them gave me different reasons why they went out to work. The main driving force was their inability to get enough support from their migrated parents to survive. Others told me that they did not get any support at all. The study revealed that some of them work for tips without specifically charging any amount of money for the work they do whereas others charged for the work that they did. Some of them cited the inability to pay their school fees and also to get some basic necessities for school as the main cause of their dropout from school. Therefore they have to work to satisfy some of their basic needs. In some cases these children use part of the money that they earn to support the family that they live with.

One of the respondents said that: *I normally come here to the market to do some work for money. Yeah, sometimes too, I work for tips to get what I want and give some to my grandmother in the house sometimes. I stay in the street for some support from friends like food, clothes and others* (Yaw, 11 years).

Similar findings were recorded during the FGDs where some of the children told me that they did not hear from their parents so they had to work to support themselves. Contrary to what other researchers have found (Batistela & Conaco, 1998), found among children left behind as children who have better life conditions and therefore do not work. This study is consistent with Kautzky's work (2009) in which data was collected in South Africa. According to him children who do not hear from their migrated parents most often depend on their personal abilities to survive, prompting the agency of such children to take up income generating activities.

To further assess the kind of work those who said they engage in to support themselves engage in, children were asked what kind of work they did when they went out. The children mentioned jobs such as cleaning shops, carrying of loads, working as a cobbler and selling.

In relation to this, one of the respondents remarked that: *There is no money home. Normally when I come here to work, may be sometimes in the early morning I sweep some shops in the area but in the afternoon I carry loads for people so that they give me money. I do carry load until the evening when I go back to the house* (Aminu, 12 years).

Again these excerpts bring out how some children work to cater for some of their basic needs. This description of children's everyday life on this basis shows how they cope with parental migration. It also indicates that children are active social subjects with agency (confer on chapter three). This means that they rely on their individual capacities to cope (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Holloway & Valentine 2000). Therefore the ability of these children to survive when exposed to adversities indicates their adaptation to such situations suggesting their resilience. These adverse circumstances if not well managed threatens the very lives of the children exposed to it. In most cases apart from some of the interventions developed to save children from adversity children themselves develop coping mechanisms to survive as already indicated in the statements by some of the children. As mentioned in chapter three, according to Qvortrup (1994), the new sociology of childhood seeks to understand children's agency through the views and responses to the environment. Also Giddens (1984), argue that all human beings are knowledgeable agents who know much about prevailing conditions in which they find themselves. Children are therefore aware of their conditions hence these coping strategies.

As stated earlier it was revealed from the study that some of these children who engage in these *income generating activities (work)* were mostly those who have migrated parents but receive no support from them; others too do not hear from their parents at all. However there were few others who do these activities to support their basic needs, as well as to cater for sometimes their caregivers. To the question as to what do to cope with life, when they do not get what they want, a 9 year old boy replied: *I normally come here in the market to do work for money or sometimes stay in the street I get support from friends in the area like...food yeah. I work for tips to get some of my basic needs* (Johny, 9 years).

The decisions made by children to engage in income earning activities shows children are rational beings and are able to take decisions to help them cope with parental absence migration. The global model of childhood has the view that: childhood as a phase of life should be free from work (Ansell, 2005). However, this is not the case for some children left behind. Mafukidze (2006) has established the relationships between parental migration, household poverty and child labour. She indicated that when parents migrate and do not remit their children causes them to be poor. Household poverty most of the time leads to child labour. My study, however, contradicts the conventional model set by the global model of childhood, seeing childhood as a period when children are not supposed to work. These forms of paid activities that some of these children engage in, in many instances tend to be a major source of coping mechanism to the conditions in which they find themselves (Abebe, 2007; Ansell & Van Blerk, 2004).

Furthermore, the various coping strategies adopted by these children tend to support Giddens' (1984) assertion in his structuration theory; that although children's lives are shaped by society and its prevailing conditions. Therefore as rational social actors with agency who can direct their own lives, they engage in these income generating activities to get their basic needs. It is important to state that rationalisation of action happens according to Giddens (1984) when agents get an understanding of their actions. The analysis shows that decisions to go and work are taken by children themselves even though in some instances parents /caregivers might have some influence on it. In view this; it confirms that children are competent beings with agency who are capable of making their own decisions when they are confronted with a situation.

5.6.1.1 Gendered nature of everyday work

The analysis of the empirical data, revealed that, gender as a social category is manifested in the everyday work children do to survive. Gender is a social construct which assign roles to males and females (Robson, 2003). This section presents the various everyday experiences of children with specific emphasis to the work children do to cope with parental migration. During the FGDs with children, some of them who expressed that they work to support themselves showed a wide range of variation in the work boys and girls engage in. For instance, whereas boys were found to be engaging in works that requires physical strength, girls were found to be involving themselves in what I describe here a 'light jobs' (work that involves less strength).

Some of the boys were found to be to be engaging in activities such as head portorage and working as cobblers in the market. In one of the FGDs a 12 year old boy stated that: *I go to the market to work as a cobbler but early in the morning, when I go to the market to carry loads from shops to other places for money. I also.....help shop keepers to bring their wares out of the shops. Then later in the evening too I do the same jobs before I go to the house. When I do these jobs I get money to support myself daily* (Kawa, 12 years).

As explained by Kawa, the above quote, it shows the work that he engages in order to cope with parental migration. Generally, these activities in the market involve the use of the physical strength of the person involved. This is especially true because sometimes the loads some of the children carry in the market are heavy. The engagement of the respondent in working as a cobbler also shows the multiplicity of tasks that children engage in to cope with parental migration. This means that children left behind employ their agency to work, in order to cope with parental migration.

Also a girl; Eve, 8 years accounted that: *I still go to school but the money my cousin gives me as pocket money is inadequate, so when I close from school, I go to a woman close to our neighbourhood to help her sell some items.....the woman sells ice water and kenkey. When I do this she gives me money. I use this money to support myself....I use to buy some of my basic needs like food, cloth, and school fees, and also to supplement my pocket money for school the next morning* (Eve, 8 years). This statement by this respondent shows that girls are involved in selling of various items as the work they do. Included in the in the act of selling is hawking

in the neighbourhood. This involves the use of relatively low levels of strength as compared to the portage some of the boys engage in.

Likewise the FGDs, the IDIs confirmed that everyday work children left behind do to support themselves in the family are also depended on gender. Girls mostly sell in the streets, Emlin, 10 years stated in one of the IDIs that: *I sell in the area because that is what most girls do in the area. I am suppose to reach home early enough to help in the household chores in the evening.....before darkness. Staying in the market like the boys do for longer hours exposes girls to abuses like rape...even girls who stay on the street do not stay in the market to do what the work the boys do* (Emelin, 10 years).

This respondent stated in her view why girls do not stay in the midst of the boys to do the work that they do. Girls are aware of the some of the risks that they will be exposed to when they engage in the work that boys do. This means some of these risks that children use might be detrimental to their health and survival. Also the societal expectation of what is proper for boys and girls explains the gendered nature of work. Some of the responsibilities of girls to help in the household chores, especially cooking in the evening, prevent them from engaging in some these work deemed to be for the boys, who in some instances stay deep into the night. This shows why children's work is divided along gender lines.

5.6.2 Borrowing and sharing: social networking of children

Additionally, other coping strategies adapted by these respondents to make life bearable for them also emerged from the FGDs and IDIs. Prominent among these are *borrowing and sharing* with children themselves, siblings as well as support from their teachers. The study shows that borrowing from friends is very popular among children. Many of the children in the study area cited borrowing as an important source of coping with everyday life.

In line with this practice of borrowing, a 15 year old girl replied during one of the IDIs that: *I have a lot of friends and teachers in school so when I need something like writing book, pens or pencil in school I borrow from them, sometimes they give it to me as a gift in the classroom. Also I share things like reading books and pens with those in my class if I do not have it myself. This helps me to learn. When I need a particular thing and I don't have it, I go to some friends who have that thing so that I borrow from them. I also at some point in time*

share mine with some other friends who also do not have.....that is if I have. I give it to them. Apart from this, I wait for other things to get it from my father. (Achiaa, 15 years).

In the quote above, Achiaa expressed how she uses borrowing and sharing as a coping strategy. These strategies are important in the everyday life of children. Children borrow and share things from personal to general items in the house. This shows the social network that children form in the society in which they live to support one another. Children borrow and share items such as food, clothes, books and pencils. Therefore, it can be seen clearly that the children receive additional help outside that of their parents/caretakers from their personal networks. Children receive such help from siblings, friends and teachers. In the view of Boyden and Mann (2005) these avenues of external support in turn serve as resources children as competent actors to rely on to make life bearable. In this case, these respondents' major resources are their friends and siblings.

Similarly, in looking further at the practice of borrowing and sharing, an 8 year old boy narrated that: *Sometimes when I need something I borrow from friends and siblings. I borrow things such as foot wears and clothing. Sometimes too I wait for my auntie to give it to me. Sometime ago I borrowed a dress from a friend because it looked nice. I borrow some of these things from friends who have them, because often when my sees that I need something she says there is no money. I wait and wait but do not get it. They often do not buy them for me she uses to say there is no money. I have no option than to see friends who have them and borrow basic needs such us dress, books and food (Abu, 8 years).*

These narratives are just a few of many similar views expressed by the respondents during the FGDs and IDIs on the issue of borrowing and sharing. A common observation that was made from the findings on FGDs and IDIs however, whereas most of the male participants borrow more of personal belongings such as clothing and foot wears, the female participants were found borrowing more of school related materials such books, pens and pencils from their friends than personal belongings, the empirical data revealed. This finding is consistent with what Bryant (2005) found in his study on children whose parents have migrated. He was of the conviction that boys borrow more personal belongings because they are able to make friends with each other more easily than girls. Also he argued further that girls tend to be more protective than boys, therefore explain why they do not share their personal items like clothing and footwear.

Another important observation from the various conversations with children, which can be delved into, is the *friendships* formed by these children. Some of the children had formed strong bonds with some of their peers thereby enabling them to share and borrow items with and from them. Friendship between peers often refers to mutual involvement in relationships and often reciprocal gesture between the friends (Asfar, 2003). Children here therefore trusted the friendship that they had formed and were able to borrow and share things in their lives. Borrowing and sharing things with friends show an understanding and loyalty children have for each other. This means that children have interdependent social relations with each other. Also some children stated that they sometimes borrow from their teachers. What this means is that these children have stronger bonds with their teachers; which can be described as friendship at the higher level than peer bonds. However, the analysis from the empirical data shows that the bond which exists in the former appears to be stronger than the later.

Most of the children stated that when they need something that is readily provided they wait patiently for it. Children stated that sometimes their parents/caregivers will tell them they will buy their needs, but if it is not readily provided they just wait for it. A very important issue that comes up in these instances as a very important coping strategy for children is *patience*. This means that children do not rush or force their caregivers to provide them with their basic needs at all cost. They wait hoping that that they will be provided with such 'needs'. Children therefore employ patience to cope as he/she waits for the basic need. This in a way probably takes away temporarily, the pressure that will be on the parent(s)/caregiver(s) to provide the basic needs of children. From the quote above, basic needs according children refer to the material needs.

Furthermore, the use of *family visits* as a coping strategy pops out from the empirical data from children left behind. This is where children take the decisions themselves to get support from their distant relatives. In this, children visit places where they have family relatives to spend vacations or purposely to ask for support. Most of the time, when children visit their relatives, they are provided with some of their basic needs and support. Children employ this coping strategy sometimes in addition to other coping mechanisms.

When children were describing the strategies adopted, a 7 year old girl narrated in one of the FGDs that: *It depends on many things sometimes I go to some of the extended family members to see if I can get help that I want. During vacations too I sometimes visit some family*

members at other places for holidays. When I go, I help them in the daily work in the house so that when school reopens and I have to return they will provide me with money and sometimes some of my basic needs such as dresses (Eden, 7 years).

In the study, it was not only the above respondent who expressed that she gets random help from distant relatives by visiting them as a coping mechanism. Other respondents expressed similar views during the study. A 10 year old boy also stated that: *I go on a visit to other family members in a nearby town to spend time there. My family members have their farms there....I help them with the work in the house. I get food to eat and they buy a lot of things for me. I use this money to buy things that I need in the house. This adds to what I get in the house I do this because my grandmother find it difficult to get my basic needs for me.....I therefore the imitative on my own to visit some few family people (Adu, 10 years).*

From the statements, it is evident that children left behind also employ visiting distant family members for support when they have the chance. Children who said that they use this as a coping strategy stated that they decide on their own to visit these relatives in order to get the needed support. This is in line with many studies which emphasise the importance of children employing distant family members as a coping strategy. Ansell and Van Blerk (2004) emphasised that children use family visits as a coping strategy to meet their basic needs. They indicated that the family is an important source of support for children. They seek help from family members to get their basic needs through family visits- they refer to this as migration to family members in their article. They continued that in this way, children are able to adapt to the situation in which they find themselves. My study shows that, in some cases children employ their capacities and use family visits to address the needs of other people especially the aged that they live with when they are left behind. It is also important to add that the study revealed that the decisions to use family visits as a coping strategy is taken by children themselves. This shows that humans in any situation have the power to act differently when confronted with a situation (Giddens, 1984). They are also agents (social actors) hence, not mere recipients of structural impositions.

To conclude on this chapter, children are active social agents whose lives are influenced by authoritative resources and allocative resources (Gatrell, 2002; Giddens, 1984). Children as human agents depend on the agency in myriads of coordinated activities to produce authoritative resources. This can however, be seen from for instance, various coping strategies

which children adopt to cope with parental migration. Also allocative resources, to Giddens (1984) are generated from the control of the material aspects of the agents' (children) life. These resources can therefore, emanate from migrated parents as well as caregivers who control some aspects of the material world of children.

In the next chapter I will present the empirical data on care issues on the experiences of children left behind.

CHAPTER 6: CHILDREN AND CARE

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the children and care when one or both parents migrate. It also presents children's duties and responsibilities to care, participation in family decision making as well as some of the risks that children suffer. Children left behind by migrated parent are dependent on care from caregivers in the societies where they live. The literature on care is quite varied, in the sense that it entrust the responsibility of care to different agents at different times. The care for children in Africa to a large extent is the responsibility of every adult. This is mainly due to the perception that the child is communally owned in most African societies. The family systems in this society have tried to provide the basic needs of children in such families for them to grow to their fullest potential (Verhoef, 2005; Bass, 2004).

According to Asis (2006) the quality of care that children enjoy to depends on if migrated parents have contact with the child and the caregivers. It also depends on the parents remit back home. The care children receive is also shaped by the willingness and the ability of the caregivers to give care (Yeoh & Lam, 2007). However, to Abebe and Aase (2007), contend that providing care for children who live in the absence of one or both parents is not only affected by the willingness to care, but also the interconnectedness of willingness of the extended family with economic capacity to care. That is whether family members collaborate.

6.2 Money and care for children: two sides of the same coin?

Money forms an important component of the care children receive when they are left behind. Many children expressed how they are cared for by their caregivers. The various forms of care expressed by children range from food, clothing, to personal care like housing and assistance in their academic work. Some of the respondents said that they feel they are being cared for by their caregivers because they get their basic needs from their caregivers. Even though some of the children who have both parents migrating were found to be living very well with the necessary care and support that they think they need in the house, some too were found to be relatively not having the needed care. Some of these children expressed how they do not get most of the basic needs such as dress, food and books. This is because they receive no money from their parents. According to Boyden (2006) the deprivation of children from getting their basic needs and demands due to structural conditions has a long term

consequences for children. She argues that such events can lead to negative physiological effects for the children. Therefore children who lack basic needs as a result of parental migration and the consequences it brings on children might make them develop future problems (Asis, 2006).

Some of the children interviewed who stay with one of their parents indicated that they receive the care that they need. These children spontaneously stated that, they receive the needed care from the parent that they stay with. They also get their basic needs being provided for through the monetary support from parents. Most of these children however stated that they think because they are staying with one of their parents especially children staying with their mothers. For example, a 7 year old girl informant said during one of the IDIs that; *I receive a lot of care. My father sends me money and also may be because I stay with my mother in the house. She loves me and provides for all my needs in the family where we live. I think because I live with my mother. I think that is why I get this care from her* (Amina 7 years).

Some informants confirmed that they relate very well with their caregivers. Whenever they have problems, they feel free to talk to their caregivers about themselves. Some of them said that when they go home with their assignments from school they receive support from their caregivers. Others, however, had mixed feelings about the kind of care they receive from caregivers. Some confirmed that the work schedule of their caregivers prevents them from receiving the needed care from them. Some stated that due to the work schedules and other commitments that their caregivers have in the house, they sometime find it difficult to interact with them. This illustrates, according to Giddens (1984) how the structural forces are constraining the lives of some of the children in the study.

6.3 Care within the cultural and social system

In sub-Saharan Africa children are sometimes sent to the extended family for care and fostering. In such arrangements these children tend to develop multiple attachments (Abebe, 2010). According to Ansell and Van Blerk (2004) the relationships between children and the extended family members including family friends, in some ways serve both as a response and adaptation to parental migration. Therefore in many societies, the absence of one or both parents places the responsibility on not only the caregivers but the entire extended family system to provide for the well-being of the child.

In the socio-cultural system, families pull resources together in diverse ways to provide the needed care for children (Abebe, 2010). In the socio-cultural context, the kinship systems which exist in extended families have emphasised on the social, economic as well as the religious obligation to protecting the family lineage. It also has an obligation towards the material and social needs of the people in the family especially children (ibid). Therefore the relationships between children and extended family serves as a response and an important way through which they adapt to parental migration (Ansell & Van Blerk, 2004).

In my study children mentioned the extended family members as an important source of mechanisms to cope with parental absence. I termed the support from the extended family members 'external source' of care. To this a 12 year old boy stated that: *In addition to the support from my parents, I live with my auntie who supports and cares for me. She providing for my basic needs. She helps in me in my assignments and chat with me a lot. My father's junior brother is a shopkeeper. Sometimes I go to him to ask for books and other things for school ahhhhh!!!! He owns a bookshop. I have some cousins who also give me dress sometimes when I ask them* (Kwabena, 12 years).

To this informant the extended family provides a very useful source of support for the children. The fact that the extended family plays a major role in supporting children in most Ghanaian cultures have long been established, and this finding corroborates that (Nukunya, 2003). It is also consistent with other studies elsewhere in the world. These studies suggest that there are varied forms of support from the extended family. Children get these supports when they ask for support from some of their family members (Silver, 2006). In the view of Boyden and Mann (2005), these external supports turn to serve as resources which make life bearable for children. Also to a larger extent the joint responsibility for the care of children by the family is explained by the cultural values and practices to child care. Responsibility is part of the social structure. This however, affects the experiences of children if not well exercised by the parent/caregivers. When there is money available to the family, care is provided to the child. Money plays significant role in giving care to children as indicated earlier in the chapter. Others were of the assertion that their caregivers do their best to care for them. Children feel they receive care from their caregivers as well as their family members when their parents migrate.

The study also revealed that children who have one parent migrating and leaving them behind with one of their parents were found to be among those children who stated that they receive much care. This was especially the case with the children who have their fathers migrating and leaving behind the mother and the child. It is widely believed that mothers in the Ghanaian society provide much care to their children than the fathers. This is mainly because of the domesticity of the roles assigned to women in the society. The fact that the belief system plays a major role in the Ghanaian society has long been established by Nukunya, (2003) in consonance with this finding. The study is also consistent with studies conducted elsewhere in the world (Kautzky, 2009; Asis, 1995) emphasising that mothers normally provide care for their children most of the time as the fathers migrate in the case of individual parental migration. They attributed this to the female roles played by women in in the socio-cultural context of these societies.

However, it was revealed from my study that that when fathers are left behind with their children, they take up a more care giving roles to cater for their children. These roles include taking on house hold chores to help their older children. This finding was also evident in the studies by Asfar, (2003); Hugo, (2002) and Save the Children (2006) even though the fathers indicated that these roles do not continue whenever their wives return temporary. As revealed from the above analysis, children experience care through a myriad of ways which ranges from getting clothes, to food. Although some other children rather provide care for their younger siblings as well as some aged persons in the families where they are left, and some indicated that they receive relatively less care.

However, underlying all these accounts is the issue of parental migration which to a large extent could be attributed to the inability of the structure to provide opportunities for them in the societies where these parents live (Anafi, et al. 2003). This makes them migrate to other places leaving their children behind. The structure here turns to impact on the lives of children (Giddens, 1984), because conditions in the structure serve as a catalyst for parental migration.

6.4 Care arrangements for children: A joint responsibility?

In the absence of one or both parents due to migration, an important aspect that exists is the place where the child is supposed to stay to receive care, and the kind of care arrangements that will be put in place for the child. These arrangements are agreed on and negotiated between parents is caregivers. Children were found to be staying with some members of the

extended family, family friends, siblings among others. Some of the caregivers said that there are no formal arrangements agreed between them and migrated parents to cater for their children.

To this a 37 year old caregivers stated during an interview: *The child is my brother's son, so when he was travelling he said I should care of the child for him. He only said I should train him to be good and send him to school. The mother has long travelled* (Akar, 37years).

The above statement shows how informal flexible arrangements may be between the caregivers and the migrated parents in the study area. When other caregivers were asked, they emphasised that migrated parents had asked them to cater for their children. In these arrangements, parents have agreed that they will provide their wards with their basic needs as well as financial support when they arrive at their destination. Care arrangement here is mainly the flexible traditional care arrangements for children (Abebe, 2010). In this type of arrangements the parents agree with caregivers to support their children with their basic material needs. According to Ansell and Young (2004) in this arrangement children develop attachments with other people. The empirical data shows a difference between the lives of children who do not get support from parents and those whose parent did not make any arrangements before leaving.

Discussions with the children therefore indicated that they did not know of any formal care arrangements between their parents and the caregivers. They further stated that their parents had not given them any indications that they had made any formal agreements with the caregivers. It was observed during the non participant observations that most migrated parents adopted the arrangement whereby all their children a put under the care of one caregiver. This is the situation, in cases where the migrated parents have more than one child. According to some of the caregivers putting children left behind under the care of one caregiver maintains the integrity of the family unit in the absence of the parents. In this way, caring and supervising children becomes relatively easy. Also migrated parents have it easy enough to monitor the daily lives of their children.

Some children during the study expressed that they have their siblings staying with their caregivers they are staying with. Even though there were left behind with their father. In this particular arrangement, female migrants who feel the father cannot care for the children alone,

sends the children to different caregivers. This assertion stems from the gendered dimension that males are not supposed to cater for children in most African families (Nukunya, 2003). Here females are mostly tasked with the responsibility of catering for the children in the family. It is important to note that, when these care arrangements between parents and caregivers fail, children tend to suffer some risks.

6.5 Children as caregivers

Many of the studies about care giving had focused on adults and their effort to provide care for children. However, the roles children play have been relegated to the background by many scholars. It is only recently that studies on this topic have recognized children as caregivers (Evans & Becker, 2007; Robson, 2004 cited by Abebe, 2010, p.8). In looking at care for children in the study, it was observed that children are not only cared for by adults, such as family members, and family friends. Children are also cared for by other children. This means that some of the children left behind assume the role as young carers (Abebe, 2010; Asis, 2006).

Children understand their position as caregivers to care for their younger siblings as well as the aged in the family left behind. In their studies of orphan care, Abebe and Aase (2007) documented how children not only receive care from the extended family but also care is given by these children to the extended family. Asis (2006) further observed this trend that children left behind by Philipino migrants provide care to their siblings that they live with. Children are constantly involved in giving care to their younger siblings during parental migration. This shows the agency of children as purposive social actors knowledgeable of their social environment (Giddens, 1984).

It was observed during the non-participant observation that some young carers bore many responsibilities in the families where they live (Becker, 2007) in catering for the people that they live with. Children who were found to be performing this role said to me that they do not hear from their parents or get support from family member and sometimes not even knowing any member of the extended family. Children whose parents have migrated leaving them behind in the care of nobody or older relatives have their elder siblings taking the position as parents to provide care. It was revealed from the study that children perform these roles very well just like the adult caregivers. It was observed that these young children are able to

manage the home where they live. For instance, preparing food for their younger siblings and washing their dress.

According to Abebe (2010), there are many reasons to which children become caregivers. He continues to argue that age, gender and level of education are very important factors. However, poverty and lack of support from parents as well as from the extended family as a social structure are also important factors. These factors to a large extent also affects why children left behind assume the role as carers during parental migration.

During an interview with one of the respondents, a 15 year old girl stated that: *I live here with my younger brother and my grandmother. I am the only one who cares for them. Our grandmother is too old to do this so I do it. We do not hear from our parents at all. Sometimes it even becomes difficult to get food for him (referring to her brother) but we are trying....We are both out of school but....I have to care for my brother because am older than him* (Achiaa, 15 years)

Similarly, a 14 year old boy also said that: *I live with my sister. She is two years older than me and she helps me to get some of my basic needs. Sometimes she sends food stuffs to the market and gets money to support me. I also go to the market to carry loads for money to get what I want in the house* (Tumi, 14 years).

These findings on the roles young carers perform as caregivers clearly shows how children are active subjects with agency in who can adopt different means to make life bearable. The observational data shows how children performed these roles in a well coordinated way. In consonance with the fore going, Save the Children's (2006) study in Sri Lanka on children left behind notes that children living with older people find it difficult to communicate with them. These old caregivers normally are too old to work for any income to cater for these children. Children then take up the role as caregivers assuming the roles as parents, where it was described that young carers provide food, clothes among others to the people they care for, however, caring for aged like grandparents were not mentioned. It can be inferred from the above analysis that the caring responsibilities children assume in the absence of one or both parents, due to migration as Yeoh and Lam (2006) argues shows how parental migration shows the significant contributions children left behind make to the family. This also goes to

confirm that children are active subjects with agency who have the power to take action (Giddens, 1984).

6.5.1 Duties and responsibilities of children

Children provide some care through various activities that they do to assist their caregivers in the family. According to Bourdillion (2006) by carrying out their duties and responsibilities in the house, children participate in providing care to the households in which they live. It is against this background that as part of this study, it sought to understand children's duties and responsibility to care. This is, however, different from children assuming full responsibility as young carers, acting as parents. Children perform duties to compliment the care provided to the family as a whole.

Many of the children interviewed during the IDIs and the FGDs stated that their duties and responsibilities in their household are mainly performing household chores including; sweeping, fetching water, washing dishes, cooking among other activities. Other children also stated that they run errands for people older than them in the family. Some of the children stated that by performing these duties and responsibilities in the family they feel integrated into the general family life in the house and providing care contributions. This is because they are allowed to be involved in these activities.

During one of the IDIs with the children a 9 year old girl stated that: *When I wake up in the morning my duty is to sweep the house before I bath for school. After school, I run errands for some people in the house. They mostly send me to buy some items for them. Sometimes too I help my auntie to prepare food for the family and send the garbage to the refuse collection point* (Assan, 9 years).

In a similar instance, a 13 year old boy expressed during one of the FGDs that: *My duties and responsibilities in the house are to sweep the room and run errands for my caregivers. Sometimes too I go to the farm to help with the farm work. I do not throw away garbage in the house because I think it is the work for women* (Yoni, 13 years).

According to Twum-Danso (2009), the duties and responsibilities performed by children in the house normally have gender connotations. The statements above therefore illustrate to a larger extent how gender is factored into the duties and responsibilities children perform in

the family. It was revealed in the study that whereas girls in the study participated more in performing household chores the boys indicated that they run errands more than involving themselves in the household chores. According to Nukunya (2003) the issue of gendered defined roles for boys and girls exist within families in almost all the Ghanaian cultures. The study revealed that gendered define roles for boys and girls, still exists in the study area (Berekum Municipality) and for that matter Ghana.

Duties and responsibilities that children have in various families are dependent on the occupation as well as the location of the caregivers in the structure. Generally conditions in the structure influences the occupation of the caregivers and this also in turn influences the duties and responsibilities that children assume in their effort to fit themselves into the families. A 10 year old boy in this interview extract said that: *I live with my grandmother; I help her in the market after school. In the evening I go round the village to drive our sheep back to the house* (Kwasi, 10 years). Children assume these roles to the expectation of their caregivers as means of fitting themselves into the various activities of the family and providing care for the family. It is also very important for the survival of the family which they are integrated into when they are left behind by their migrated parents.

When asked if they enjoy the various duties and responsibilities they perform in the house, most of the children stated that they feel it serves as a means for them to be recognized as part of the families. They also learn a lot from it, as it sharpens their skills. Some of the caregivers told me that the various duties and responsibilities performed by these children, is a way of developing their skills to, meet their expectations. In this regard, one of the girls, Abena accounted that: *When in the house, I sweep and help my mother to cook. In this way I feel part of the part of the family through my contribution. Auntie told me to learn cooking so that I can cook when I live alone* (Abena, 13 years). These duties and responsibilities are vital for the survival of families in which children live in. However, according to Twum-Danso (2009) caregivers/parent who take advantage of children contributions in the family may sometimes exploit the economic gains. Also some caregivers are likely to punish children who fail to perform their duties. This came out in analysing the risks that children suffer, where some caregivers sometimes deny children food because they fail to perform their duties in the house. I will return to this later on the chapter when looking at the risks children suffer.

Children left behind are therefore not only dependent on their parents and caregivers for care. They also provide care to others in the families where they live. Therefore the relationships between children and their caregivers can be seen as a form of interdependencies between parents, children and caregivers the empirical data has revealed. Therefore, building from Lee's (2001) concept of independency-dependency, I emphasised here that during parental migration, children do not only receive care but they also contribute to care giving.

6.6 Decision making process and children left behind

In establishing whether children left behind are involved in the decision making process in the family towards their care, some questions were asked. This was to find out whether children were involved in making decisions in the family which affect them directly or indirectly. Giddens (1984) elucidates on the fact that power in the structure is embedded in agency. Moreover, as a means of recognizing the agency of children in the structure as well as empowering them is involving children in deciding on things which concern them.

An area which influences children's experiences is the choice of caregivers for the children left behind at the time of parental migration. According to Yeoh and Lam (2006), the choice of a caregivers for children to a large extent influences their upbringing as well as their experiences. This is because of the different care giving styles often adopted. Therefore questions were asked as to whether children were involved in deciding whom should be their caregivers. Most children indicated that when their parents were leaving they were very young so they were not involved in these decisions. In the view of this 11 year old boy stated that: *When my parents were migrating I was very young so I was not consulted in deciding on which caregivers that I should stay with. My parents made the choice themselves* (Aga, 11years). Children stated that parents use age as measure of the extent to which they can participate in decision making in the family. Therefore they are not consulted to decide on which caregivers that they will live with as their parents migrate. After the decision has been made by their parents, they were sometimes told about it. It has been argued that relying on the age of children as possession or non possession of 'rights' to participate in decision making is subjective if not illogical (Alderson, 2000).

6.6.1 Participation in household decision making after parental migration

Decisions are taken by parents/caregivers concerning the welfare of children when they are left behind. To find out more about if children are consulted in decisions that affect them, questions were asked if they were involved in making decisions which affect them in their families. Most of the respondents stated that they were not involved in decisions that their caregivers take in the family. This means that caregivers inform children about decisions made, but not necessarily involving them in the decision making process which in way is an affront to the child's right to participation as enshrined in the UNCRC.

To this a 10 year old boy stated that: *Decisions in the house are taken by my caregiver. My auntie decides on what I want in the house and she will tell my parents about it so that they provide. Sometimes they tell my parents abroad before informing me. When I want something and I tell her she decides on what to do. My auntie says she wants to provide the best care for me that is why* (Zan, 10 years).

Few of the children mentioned that they were involved in issues such as decisions on education, clothing, household duties and responsibilities, time to watch television in the house among other things. However, most of the children indicated that their caregivers mostly decide on the above issues for them and informed them about it. A 13 year old girl expressed that: *My caregiver decides on my care issues in the home. In the house they decide on my bed time and decide when to buy me clothing* (Yaa, 13 years).

Therefore I can infer here that, even though deciding on behalf of children means not recognising their right to participation, some caregivers expressed that they do it because they care for the children. Therefore to them decisions made by adults on behalf of children left behind may be a way of showing how much care for the children. However, this has contested by some other authors (Franklin, 2001; Alderson, 2000). This is consistent with the findings made by Silver 2006 in studying children left behind expressed that most adults caregivers feel that to show their love, care and concern for children left behind, they make decisions on behalf of children. It was established that that children were not involved in the decision making. The study concluded that most of the decisions concerning children left behind are taken by adults and the children told about such decisions. This finding also corroborates the notion held by the care takers' thesis which supports the view that decisions should be taken for and on behalf of children because they know what is best for children (Franklin, 2001).

However it should be remembered that children are active social agents with power and agency (James et al. 1998) to make decisions.

The Ghana National Commission on Children which has been providing education and sensitization of parents as well as caregivers on the need to involve children in decision making process is also a major way of recognising their agency and power (Giddens, 1984). According to Giddens, power is an embodiment of agency (ibid). Therefore, the low levels of children's involvement in the decision making processes is an indication of the low levels of power and agency of children left behind in the structure. This observation can be attributed to the existing culture in the Ghanaian society which relegates children to the background during the decision making process concerning them. It is a long history embedded in belief systems of the society (Nukunya, 2003).

This shows that the conditions in the structure to a large extent have an effect on involving children in the family decision making process. The conditions that exist in the family affect the way a child will be involved in the decision making process. Also parental migration decision in structure is a factor. Once a parent decides to migrate and realises that they have limited options as to whom should cater for their children they fail to involve their children in the decision making process. Therefore this cannot be ruled out as a major force in the structure which influences children involvement in the decision making process. The saturation theory further emphasises that 'ability or power' (agency) is constrained by the lack of resources (Giddens, 1984). In this instance, resources from the control of the control exerted by parents in choosing a caregiver. According to Twum-Danso (2009) children have limited participation in decision making in the family because of the limited options to resources in the family.

6.7 Risks children suffer

Children's risks can be studied within the context of place. According to Macintyre (2004), place is socio-culturally constructed locations in space which have different context to which peoples' lives and experiences play out. The space is filled with actors acting out their lives with varying degrees of human movements including parental migration. Children in general face risks in their daily lives. Risks are part of life. Children risks can therefore be studied within the context of place. According to Macintyre (2004) place is a socio-culturally constructed location in space. The place is filled by actors, acting out their lives with varying

degree of human movement including parental migration. However, parental migration even though it seems to improve the lives and welfare of children in many ways, it also in many cases serves as a catalyst to make children suffer some risks (UNICEF, 2008).

According to Asis (2006), children left behind are sometimes exposed to many risks which are normally overlooked by scholars in studying the effects of migration (see also Reyes, 2007). More so, UNICEF (2008) further posits that, among the family members left behind by migrant parents, children suffer the most risks as it also exposes them to physical abuse due to improper treatment from caregivers, the personal life styles of the children through unmet basic needs especially, if migrants fail to remit home. In line with this an objective of the study sought to find out the various forms of risks that children left behind by migrated parents experience or suffer in the Berekum Municipality.

6.7.1 Health risks

In dealing with some of the risks children could face, they were asked: ‘if they do get treatment when they fall sick’. The analysis revealed that many of the children stated that they get treatment when they are sick. In contrast, some mentioned they do not receive treatment at all. When those children who receive treatment were asked the kind of treatment which they receive, children mentioned various sources. These include, buying over-the-counter medicine from drug stores⁶. Others too mentioned places like health posts, clinics, hospitals as well as the use herbal medicine and prayer camps for spiritual interventions when they are sick. For example it was confirmed during a conversation with one of the child respondents that his caregiver sought both herbal and hospital treatment for him, when he is sick. This is highlighted in the following interview with this 10 year old boy, confirmed that:

Researcher: Do you get treatment when you are sick?

Boy: When I am sick my grandmother sends me to the clinic..... Sometimes too she will tell me there is no money so she had to use herbs from the bush to treat me.

Researcher: Do you get healed by using these herbs

Boy: Sometimes the sickness worsens and I become very weak... and as a result we get different treatment to get sometimes from one of the clinic (Kwasi, 10 years).

⁶ These are shops in Ghana where they sell various kinds of medicines to cure sickness. These stores sell these medicines to people over-the-counter without any prescription form being presented.

The discussion above illustrates the health seeking behaviour of some caregivers for the children left behind by parents due to migration seek to solve their health problems. The use of traditional medicine is not only due to the lack of money to get a proper health facility for the treatment of their illness but also cultural values held by the people in the society. It was revealed that the use of herbal medicine was high among the treatment of children whenever they fall sick. These children were those mostly found to be staying with the grandparents. In the study area most of these old people had low levels of formal education, and had a strong belief in the use of the traditional medicine to treat ailments. Traditional medicine here is equivalent to herbal treatment in the traditional social system. One caregiver during one of the IDIs defended the traditional method of treating diseases. Gatrell and Elliot (2009) are of the conviction that beliefs systems play a major role in the health seeking behaviour in Africa. They have indicated that most people, especially in sub-Saharan Africa still hold on to these beliefs, which is further deepened through their association with traditional deities and cultural norms.

Some of the children were of the view that they get treatment from the drug store where their caregivers buy them medicine. During one of the IDIs a 12 year old boy stated that: *Whenever I fall sick, my auntie goes to the drug store to buy me medicine so that I can take it. Sometimes when I take it I feel well, at other time too I don't but it takes time* (Kwabena, 12 years). Similarly during an interview with one of the caregivers, she expressed that: *I usually get medicine for her at the drug store when she is sick ... the medicines are very good because she gets well when she takes the medicine I buy for her* (Amama, 49 years).

The above narratives point to the increasing level of self medication for children left behind when they are sick. This means that the medicines are bought by the caregivers from the stores. Even though the study area has a municipal hospital with modern facilities as well as a good number of health post and clinics manned by qualified practitioners, the study revealed that a good number of the caregivers use self medication for treatment of child sickness. This depends mostly on the diagnosis of the caregivers in determining the type of sickness that children are suffering which in part determines the kind of medicine given to the child. Caregivers buy the medication from over-the-counter in the drug store using their own prescriptions to determine the kind of medicine to give to the child. This is partly because the medicines that are sold to the buyer to a large extent depends on what the buyer asks for. The

practice of self medication has some effects on the health of children because sometimes the right dosage the child should take may not be known by the caregiver doing the prescription.

Additionally, this is in contrast to conventional ways of treating sickness, using western medicine. This is against the background that western medicine advocates for a medical professional to diagnose sickness and prescribe the right medicine. Some caregivers were of the opinion that they have problems in accessing the right health facilities in the area. They also mentioned that they find traditional medicine as well as buying medicine from over-the-counter in the drug store as less expensive to buy and use for the treatment of sickness affecting these children. In these cases the lack of money prevents them from seeking professional health care for the children they care for. Also some caregivers cited the lack of proximity to the health facility as the main reason for not sending the children to hospital. This can be attributed to the structural defects to provide adequate health facilities to the population (Giddens, 1984). In spite of the foregoing, some children indicated that they receive good professional health care from the hospital when they are sick. Yeoh and Lam (2007), have intimated that the persistent migration of parents impacts on children's health, even though some of them receive a good quality of health service when they are left behind.

6.7.2 Food and feeding risks

Food is an important source of energy for people especially children who need food with good nutritional quality for their growth and development. The unavailability of food to children to in most countries in the global south makes them susceptible to diseases and malnutrition (Ansell, 2005). Child malnutrition to a large extent affects the health of children. In order to ascertain whether children are getting the food that they require in the family; or face some feeding related risks when they are left behind some questions were asked to delve into this. Most of the children indicated that they are fed well. Some too further indicated that they eat thrice in the day and never go hungry. This means that caregivers provide them with food in the house.

To this a 7 year old boy expressed that: *I get food to eat I do not go hungry at all in the house. No, never! I cannot imagine myself going hungry and not getting any food in the house. I eat three times in the day and even sometimes even more. I am happy about that* (Kwame, 7 years).

Similarly, a 13 year old girl stated in one of the FGDs that: *I always get food to eat. There is food available in the house. My uncle will always asks me if I have eaten. He is very much concerned about my eating habits and I always get to eat in the house* (Faria, 13 years).

The results clearly point to the fact that most of the children left behind have food to eat in the families where they live. Some narrated how their caregivers are concerned with their eating habits. That is, monitoring them to eat regularly. These narratives show how some caregivers provide for the food needs of the children that they are living with. Children living under caregivers always have enough to eat in the house. However, some of the children responded that many times they do not get the required three square meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) whereas others too stated that the food they get to eat sometimes is not enough for them. This might have some health implications for children. Malnutrition and stunted growth are possible outcomes of this situation (Ansell, 2005; Ashiabi, 2000).

Furthermore, the study revealed that the lack of money readily available to some caregivers normally makes children skip some meals during the day. Poverty among some families is the main cause of malnutrition among children (Ashiabi, 2000). This is because food simply cannot be afforded by the family. To this, a 9 year old girl during one of the IDIs stated that: *Because grandmother says she cannot provide food in the house always. Grandmother sometimes does not cook at all in the house and sometimes I depend on some of the neighbours for food, friends also help me with food sometimes. When my parents were here I was getting food* (Shina, 9 years).

This indicates how parental migration sometimes hit on children to employ their agency to cope. Also, children getting food from people in the neighbourhood and friends might subject themselves to diseases in the community. This is because; the food might be infected or not well prepared. Furthermore, some children revealed stories on how some of their actions that they take in the family make their caregivers not give them food to eat. Not being allowed food and meals is used as a punishment and a system of discipline for children. This makes them go hungry sometimes. Also some children indicated that their contributions in the house are sometimes exploited to a large extent. Some caregivers use these children for economic gains to sell various items. These children said pose as a health risk to them, because sometimes failure to perform these tasks the child is denied food.

According to some of the children, some caregivers most a times do this as a form of punishment to the children. A 10 year old girl in recounted that: *One day we did sports activities in school, because of that I came home very late in the evening. When I came to the house my auntie said I went to friends to play and did not come home early. She did not give me food that evening and I slept on an empty stomach. Also sometimes when I fail to perform any of my duties in the family....I do not get food to eat. Just to punish me. Sometimes too after school I do not eat because there is no one in the house to provide me with food'* (Emelin, 10 years).

Similar, sentiments were expressed during one of the FGDs by a 10 year old boy, who stated that: *Some time ago I went out of the house when I returned I was told my mother who live in a nearby village visited in my absence. I decide to go to the place where she normally lodges when she is in town. When I went there I did not see her so I came back to our house. When my grandmother heard I went looking for my mother she was annoyed. She did not give me food that evening'* (Kwame, 10 years).

The various narratives above point out that some caregivers punish some of the children for wrong doing in the family by denying them food. Other children also expressed how they are denied food especially when they fail to run errands for the elderly in the family. In the society such children are seen as being disobedient and so the punishment of not being given food. Children also expressed how they are sometimes denied food if they fail to partake in the preparation of food or perform their tasks given them in the house. In furtherance to this in a study by Save the Children (2006) indicated that denying children food as a form of punishment has negative consequence on the health of children as some complained of stomach pains whenever this happened.

6.7.3 Personal 'needs' and issues on shelter risks

Luther (1999) argued integral in children's identity formation and the well-being in childhood are provision and support. It must be noted however that children are dependant beings, who depend on their caregivers as well as their parents for their basic needs. Even though they also provide care to other people. The financial status as well as the state of the caregivers as whether he/she is employed or unemployed and the ability of the migrated parents to remit back home serve as a means through which the basic needs of children left behind can be

provided. This determines the ability to provide for the children left behind. However, how children are able to acquire their needs is a determinant of their general well-being.

Some of the risks children left behind face are sometimes related to issues on shelter and basic needs (accommodation and physiological needs which in this context include dress and shoes). For instance, Battislla and Conoco (1998) have argued that children left behind face to some extent the risks of shelter related problems. Even though it is widely believed that children left behind live lives in better conditions which are even sometimes better than children who live with both parents (Asis, 1995). There are others who live in conditions which pose as a risk to their personal development.

To ascertain further information on this, I asked some questions to enquire about whether respondents have/get enough of their basic needs. Some of the children indicated that they do not get enough of the things that they need in the house. Children expressed how their caregivers decide on the things that they basically need in the house. In this instance things that children feel they need are not readily attended to. In the event when children feel they are not being provided with their basic needs, these children resort to borrowing from friends among other coping strategies.

Other children also indicated that their caregivers provide them with their basic needs but the most pressing ones are not provided since they are not most of the time involved in taking decisions as to what they need most. Some caregivers stated that they decide on the best interest of the child. However, what is in the best interest of the child has been to a large extent highly contested (Alderson, 2000) as indicated earlier on in this chapter. Caregivers as said earlier might feel that they are caring for the child in deciding for them.

In the view of Attree (2006) in a situation where by children do not get their needs adequately; it may pre-dispose to risks. This is because they most often feel left out among friends. This makes children employ their agency to cope. Bradley and Whiteside-Mansell (1997) alludes to the fact that children who do not get their adequate needs stand the risk of shelter and environmental related risks. The study further revealed most of the children left behind have good accommodation. Some were found to be living in houses built by their parents abroad having their own bed room. However, other children narrated how they share a single room with other people. A child who is living with her younger sibling and the

grandmother in a single room shared her sentiments that the room is for the grandmother. The grandmother who is to care for them cannot because of old age. Therefore the oldest child takes the responsibility to care for them. She expressed that: *I live in a small room with my younger brother and my grandmother. When it rains it becomes very difficult to sleep. The roof to the room leaks. We have no place to go because there is no money to get a different room. There is no support from my parents who are out of the country* (Achiasa, 15 years).

The opinion expressed by this child illustrates that not all children left behind live in proper accommodation (see Bryant 2005). These living conditions may have health consequences on the children in a long term perspective. This is due to overcrowding in some of the rooms.

6.8 Barriers to satisfy the basic needs of children

The child informants were unanimous about the insufficient amounts of money available for the family to cater for their basic needs. Most of the children cited a situation where they have to wait for their parents abroad to send them money to support them. This situation may have been influenced by the fact that sometimes money sent to the caregivers depends on consumption being justified by the caregivers and therefore unpredictable. Also as indicated it may be attributed to the fact that money from migrated parent does not come to the caregivers regularly. Therefore it becomes difficult for the caregivers/parent to get extra income readily available to satisfy the basic needs of the children.

To this a 9 year old boy expressed that: *When my mother sees that I need something. Most of the time she says I have to buy you this or that but there is no money now, and that my father do not send money frequently.....my mother is also not doing any work at the moment so there is no money to get me what I want in the family. There is no money in the house* (Nkebi, 9 years).

Also an 11 year old boy narrating to me on some of the barriers the he faces in getting his basic needs ha this to say: *Sometimes when I ask for anything, I am told that there is no money and that she will buy it for me when she gets money she will buy it for me. It takes longer before I can get it. I sometimes miss school trips and excursions and also do not get the dress that I want on time* (Yaw, 11 years).

These findings illustrates how the lack of predictability in money transfers to the family means that children often do not get the needed care. For instance when they are sick and they

have to get treatment but there is no money. In line with this Ridge (2007) contended that the lack of readily available money to cater for children in families results in children missing out going to seek health treatment and other things needed for school. They are also denied most of their basic needs in the family and sometimes do not get what they need in the family.

Again it was observed from the study that most these children are those whose parents do not send them any form of support from abroad. A 9 year old boy told how difficult it was for him to get things that he request for in the family including money to pay his school fees forcing him pull out of school. He indicated that it is difficult for the family financially to care for his wants because the caregiver said his parents do not send him any money. This in line with de la Garza's observation of studying children left behind by migrated parents. In his study he observed that children who are not able to support them financially over long period of time experience particularly negative outcomes (de la Garza, 2010).

The interviews with the caregivers of the children also confirmed these assertions made by the children. Some of the caregivers cited the lack of money for the family as the main reason why they sometimes must delay in providing the basic needs of the children. Some caregivers said that when a child makes a request, they have to call the parents abroad to tell them about it. This to some extent delays them in granting the children their request.

Furthermore, other informants cited other reasons which serve as a barrier in getting their basic needs in the family. Some of the children stated that sometimes their requests are delayed because of other siblings in the family may have also asked for something from the caregivers. Because of the age hierarchy the youngest among the siblings are always attended to first in the provision of needs. To this an 8 year old girl indicated that: *When I need something and my younger sibling also requests for his wants, he is given first, before me, because he is the little one in the house* (Kim, 8 years).

In Ghana, birth positions of children can play a very important role for the care and attention children receive in the family (Nukunya, 2003). My study revealed that, being the eldest child with younger siblings can sometimes be very challenging as they are expected to sacrifice for their younger siblings when they request for something from the family. This means that adults tend to prioritise the wants of relatively younger children in the family over elderly

children's request in cases where children have younger siblings to 'compete' with. Younger children in the family are always provided for first because of limited resources in the family.

From the foregoing discussions, the chapter has revealed some significant patterns such as, drawing on the relationship between money and the care of children by indicating that they are two sides of the same coin and are therefore interrelated. Also the care of children left behind as the empirical data reveals has a socio-cultural dimension, where in some instances some of the members of the extended family come in to lend support to care for the child. Another pattern worth mentioning here is the informal care arrangements which exist between the migrated parents and the caregivers.

The chapter also shows that sometimes children assume the role as caregivers who also provide care for some members of the family left behind. On the issue of the decision making process the study reveals that caregivers/parents make decisions for and on behalf of children, in a way to show how much they care for them. Therefore most children are told about decisions taken concerning them. The chapter concludes on some of the risks some children suffer when they are left behind such as, health risks and feeding and food risks.

The next chapter presents my concluding remarks for this study. It draws together the focus and findings of this study.

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents summary of the study, the main findings of the thesis and how they answer the research question and objectives set out. It describes the main conclusions from the study as well as some implications for policy practice for the welfare of children left behind in the Berekum Municipality of Ghana. Lastly, limitations of the study and some recommendations associated with the findings in the area of further research are outlined.

7.2 Summary of objectives, theoretical perspective and methodology

In summation, this study has been dealing with issues of documenting how children cope with parental migration when they are left behind. The aim of the study is to understand how children left behind in the Berekum Municipality of Ghana cope with parental absence and the care arrangements in the everyday lives including barriers and potential to satisfy their basic needs and protecting their rights. Furthermore, the study has been identifying the uses of remittances by children, identifying the care arrangements for children, their participation in the family decision making as well as examining their coping strategies and the risks they suffer.

The main theoretical framework/perspectives guiding the study is social studies of children and childhood and structuration theory. The new social studies of childhood places emphasis on children's agency and competence as well as studying children's present conditions rather than their future conditions. It therefore seeks to understand children's agency through their interpretation of and responses to their environment (Qvortrup, 1994). Therefore, issues on children and their agency are worthy of study in their own right and perspective devoid of adults perspectives (Prout & James, 1990). The theory elucidate on the fact children are social actors rather than mere subjects of social structure.

Giddens (1984, p.54) alludes that 'the structuration theory is an approach to social phenomenon concerned with the intersection between knowledgeable and capable human agents, the wider social systems and the structures in which they are implicated'. Therefore the structuration theory provides account of human agency which recognises that human beings are purposive actors who know what they are doing and are aware of the existing

conditions in the structures and adjust themselves through action/agency to cope with the conditions (ibid). The structuration theory, assisted in the study to make a more realistic understanding of how the structural conditions in the study area affect/shape the life of children and how as actors they use their agency to cope with the conditions in the structure.

Giddens in the structuration theory tried to develop the basis of understanding human society by way of theorising human agency. It further indicates the interplay between structural conditions and conscious human agents. This theory was used in the study to understand how structural conditions affect the everyday life experiences of children and how they as actors utilise their agency.

The study has been conducted qualitatively. Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. To grasp and understand the experiences of children, I used in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and non participant observations to obtain information from my respondents. In light of the research question and the objectives, the following findings and conclusions were made.

7.3 Money transfer to children and how the money is spent

In recognition of the situation the migrated parent leave their children with caregivers they use various ways to send money to their children. The study therefore found two main ways through which migrated parents in the study area send money to the children. The main ways through which parents send money to children are mainly the formal and informal means. The formal means entails doing money transfer from corporate organisation including bank transfers. The informal way is where the migrant transfer money to their children through people the migrant knows. In exploring this further, the study found that whatever means through which the money is transferred it gets to the caregivers. In the study it came to the fore that remittances are generally sent through the caregivers of the children. It was evident that male migrants remit more than their female counterparts. This is because children most often stated the fathers as the people who send money.

The study revealed that the remittances sent to them are mostly purposely sent to for the upkeep of the children and therefore used for that purpose. Money sent from parents to their children plays important roles in their lives of children. The remittances sent to the children are basically used to provide for their basic needs in the family. What this means to the

children is that the money sent to them is used to pay their school fees, buy dress for them and to buy food for them. In a situation where the money is not transferred to the , they usually face some challenges in their daily lives such as dropping out from school, and not getting their basic needs like dress and food.

Furthermore, the study revealed that some caregivers sometime use the remittances sent to the children through them to run their small scale businesses (mostly shops) and the proceeds used to cater for most of the basic needs of the children left behind. It also revealed that, children who receive remittances from their parents were found to be having relatively good life conditions than their counterparts in the study area who do not receive any support from their parents even though some of the children who receive support from their migrated parents are sometimes inadequate.

However, some children indicated that they do not receive any remittances from migrated parents. Children who receive remittances get most of their basic needs being provided for whereas those who do not receive remittances find it difficult to most of the time get basic needs especially if the migration involves both parents, the study revealed. These children drop out of school, fail to get the required three square meals and do not get the required clothing, school fees, and proper shelter.

7.4 Care and care arrangements for children

The quality of care that children receive is varied and it depends largely on if the child has contact with his/her migrated parents. Children were found to be staying with extended family, and friends of family. In a situation where these people provide care for the children it became imperative to question the care arrangements put in place for these children. It was revealed that there are no formal arrangements between the parents who migrate and the caregivers. The arrangements existing were mainly informal. It was revealed that the arrangements that exist were mainly verbal agreements. Care arrangements for children as the study reveals are mainly the flexible traditional care arrangements, which are perceived as an ideal means to cater for children.

In this parents agree with caregivers to cater for their children so that they will support them from their base abroad. Therefore do children feel abandoned? The findings of the study revealed that most children do not feel abandoned because they receive various forms of care

from their caregivers. Some of these include provision of basic needs such as food, clothing, and assisting children in the academic work in the house. The study shows that children receive care from their caregivers as well from their parents abroad. They also get from some members of their extended family. The few children who do not get any parental support feel abandoned because they do not receive any care. Also the findings of the study further shows that children who have the one of their parents migrating receive much care and support. This is especially true for children who have their fathers migrating leaving them in the leaving them in the care of their mothers.

The study also found that some children assume the role as caregivers. Children care for other younger siblings as well as some people in the extended family especially aged that children live with. In this situation they assume the role as 'parents'. This means that children do not only receive care but also give care to other people. It was further revealed that children who assume these roles were mainly children who have their parents migrating but they are not in contact with their children and as such do not receive any support from them as well as their caregivers.

Children also contribute to the care of the family that they live in when they are left behind by assuming certain duties and responsibilities in the family that they live in. These activities that they do as a way of lending support to their caregivers/parents (Bourdillon, 2006). These activities range from domestic chores to economic activities. By performing some of these activities especially the domestic chores, children feel integrated into the family which they live in whereas others consider it as a learning process to care. Some of these activities that children perform as the study reveals include; cooking, sweeping, and fetching water, running errands, washing of dishes and farm work among others. It is important to note that the study found that children found that performance of these activities as good. However, the study revealed that some of these activities have adverse effects on children such as their academic work as they feel tired and get little time for their home assignments.

The study also explored children's participation in family decision making. This was mainly looked at in deciding on which caregivers and also their participation in family decision making process when they are left behind. Children's participation in choosing which caregivers they will live with was explored by the study. Children indicated that they are not consulted in the choice of the caregivers. They are mostly informed about the decisions made

as to which caregivers they will live with especially where both parents are migrating. However, some indicated that they were old enough to be involved the decision.

Furthermore, the study revealed that children are not involved in the family's decision making process when they are left behind. Decisions are made on behalf of children. In the case caregivers/parents undermine the agency of children and they are told about it. They fail to recognise the fact that if given the needed support children can make the best decision for themselves. In a situation where children are not allowed to participate in the household decision making process suggests an imbalance power relations between adults and children in Ghana. There is an asymmetrical power relation where children become recipients of adult instruction and decisions and instruction. It is important to suggest here that children should be allowed to exercise their agency and allowed to participate in decision making process. This finding is however contrary to the protecting the child's right to participation in issues that affect them as expressed in the UNCRC.

7.5 Kinds of risks children face

The study found out that in instances care arrangements for children do not work, they tend to face some risks in their everyday lives. The study revealed many risks children face; these are put under broad sources which include; individual level risks and societal sources. The study shows that societal sources of risks involve the socio-cultural, economic, and physical structural factors that influence risk. The study revealed that children suffer in the area of health, feeding, issues on shelter, as well as their personal basic needs acquisition.

The study found that when children are sick, the choice of treatment source is determined by their caregivers. However the choice of treatment is normally not about the efficacy but affordability. The study revealed that in some instances it is determined by the beliefs of the caregivers/parent.

The study found that treatment for sickness is therefore based on the caregivers' diagnosis; they prescribe treatment for the children. This involves self medication such as buying over-the-counter medicine from drug stores, which the study revealed affect the children. This mainly based on the belief systems held by a particular caregivers. The study revealed that these sources of treatment have consequences on the immediate and long term well-being of children.

Moreover the study revealed that food and feeding related risks among some children left behind, it reveals that some children eat three times daily (breakfast, lunch, dinner) which is prescribed by many nutritionists while majority eat only once or twice daily. Additionally, on some occasions some of the children do not get enough to eat. In the event that children go hungry or do not get satisfied, it makes them rely on their friends for food and in some instances for money to buy food. Also some of the study found that some of the caregivers punish children by not given them food.

In dealing with shelter related risks, the study revealed that some of the children left behind suffer from overcrowding in their sleeping rooms especially children who share single room with their caregivers as well as other siblings. This inadequacy of basic needs as the study reveals is seen in the area of food, uniforms, books foot wears and other clothing. This however pushes these children to borrow adopt some other coping strategies.

7.6 Respondents' coping strategies

Children employ different mechanisms to cope with the absence of one or both parents through migration. The study found that children in the study area employ to make their life more bearable. The study revealed that children engage in one activity or the other to cope with the absence of one or more parents. Some strategies employed by children include; using family visits, patience, cleaning of shops, carrying of loads (porterage) as well as borrowing and sharing. The revealed that children use family visits to get most of their basic needs.

Also the study found that children use borrowing and sharing as a coping strategy basically involves borrowing and sharing of personal materials such as shoes, clothing and other things from friends. Children go to the extent of borrowing from their teachers in schools. This strategy study reveals is however more dominant among the boys than the girls and the boys borrow more personal items than girls. Although this act of borrowing makes life more bearable for these children, its health implications cannot be left unconcerned.

Some of the coping strategies adopted by children effects on them especially education. The study revealed that the in the event of parental migration, children do not get motivated them for more education. This especially the case if the children do not receive any support from their parents, since children struggle between staying in school and working to make ends meet.

Furthermore, the study also reveals that, children also work as means to cope with parental migration. Children therefore engage in activities such as carrying of loads, cleaning shops, employing family visits to ask for support. Moreover, the study revealed that the earnings gotten by children from engaging in some of these activities are used for various purposes such as supplementing their buying their basic needs. Some of the children also use part of their earnings for the upkeep of the some other people in the house. This indicates how children can utilise their agency in various dimensions. This means that children have agency, therefore to say that children left behind are vulnerable is too simplistic. It is therefore prudent to delve into their everyday lives.

Also I looked at the barriers to satisfying the basic needs of children, the study found that children the main barrier the children use in catering for the basic need is the availability of money. Also the situation where by parents/caregivers prioritize the basic needs of younger children also contributes as a barrier to satisfy the basic needs of children

7.7 The triangle of interdependencies: a conceptual contribution

In using the concepts of independency and dependency by Lee (2001) in this study, I propose a '*triangle of interdependencies*' as my conceptual contribution from the study. The triangle of interdependencies shows the various interdependent relationships which exist between parents, children and caregivers in the study area. According to Lee (2001) children have been dependent on the various understandings of adults for quite some time now. Children are reliant on adults who discharge their care giving responsibilities to them. This means that children look up to adult to provide them with their basic needs in their everyday lives. In cognisance of this, children therefore rely on their assistance, goodwill, and competence to discharge their care giving responsibilities to them (ibid).

Furthermore, the study revealed that children left behind are generally dependent on parents/caregivers for their basic material needs as well as care and support. This is evident from what Lee (2001) argues as the child dependency. Migrated parents in most instances provide care from their base abroad by remitting their children. The remittances are used to provide for their basic needs such as dress and food. Caregivers also provide care to the children left behind when the children are left in their care. Children are therefore dependent on these adults for their physiological needs as my study has shown. Indeed children's 'dependency and the consequent set of obligations of protection and care that adults have

towards them, in their various roles as caregivers...' has been established (ibid, p.23) for the development of children. However, this does not in any way mean undermining the agency of children. Migrated parents are also dependent on their children to be obedient.

In some instances the child as well as the adult both has some dependencies. This is because adults are not entirely independent. The study shows that, caregivers/parents sometimes depend on the child to perform some duties and responsibilities in the house as a way of contributing to the care of the families where they are left behind. In a more general way, adults in such families are dependent on the children to perform these duties and responsibilities (Nukunya, 2003). Also the study shows that some children sometimes assume the role of as caregivers (in this sense as parents/caregivers) to provide care to their younger siblings as well as some members of the family during the migration of one or both parents. Some of these children as the study revealed said they work to earn an income to get their basic needs and in some cases support the families where they live. These are some of the instances where by the adult become dependent on children.

Lee (2001) argues that, the situation where by the adult is dependent on the child is generally understood to may be due to some circumstances that the adult may find themselves, in the study old age and poverty were especially identified as some of the circumstances. This therefore goes to illustrate that the relationship between these three (3) actors exhibit a triangular shape with interdependencies.

The triangle of interdependencies (parent-children-caregivers relationships) based on my study relies on a vulnerable system in the social structure, which, money and care are important dimensions. As my study reveals, money and care are a coin with two sides and so moves together. Therefore they contribute to the smooth existence of the triangle of interdependencies, showing smooth relationships of interdependence among them This means that without these dimensions (care and money) the various dependencies which exist among parents, children and caregivers (which form the three corners of the triangle) will be disrupted. For instance with money without money, it will be difficult for parents as well as caregivers to provide the needed care for children's basic needs like food, shoes, school fees and dress. Also communication among the various actors plays an important role in the interdependencies. This is because the various relationships which exist in the triangle of

interdependencies are sustained through communication between the three actors. However, underlying these dimensions is the agency of both actors for a smooth relationship.

7.8 Conclusion

The study concludes based on the above findings that parental migration affects the everyday lives of children left behind. Children therefore go through a lot of experiences, whereas some have better life conditions by getting their basic needs, others too can hardly get their basic needs to life. These children in general therefore do not enjoy high quality of everyday life care and support. Some children are out of school for instance, due to parental migration even though the UNCRC entrusts parents and guardians to care.

Coping strategies are part of the overall livelihood strategy adopted by children left behind. In looking at the study, children sometime work and stop schooling while others to employ other strategies alongside schooling. This means that livelihood strategies in the family include efforts by children left behind. Children should therefore be seen as competent beings who are social actor. Furthermore, children left behind to a greater extent utilise their agency and are entrusted to the care of some caregivers. They use their agency to employ some coping mechanisms to make life more bearable. Some of these strategies adopted by some of these children are socially acknowledge by societies others are hidden. Some of these coping mechanisms that children adopt have an impact on their lives.

The study therefore has tried to document how children cope with parental migration in the Berekum Municipality. It therefore concludes that; some children left behind live in good conditions and get most of their basic needs whereas others struggle to make ends meet. Children who are left behind are adversely affected by parental migration may be due to inadequate proper care plans put in place for their children before parents migrate and also ability of the migrants to support the children. Therefore there is the need for the structure to provide the necessary interventions/efforts aimed at reducing the adverse effects of parental migration have on children left behind.

7.9 Limitations of the Study

- The main aim of the study is to uncover the lives and experiences of children with migrated parents. Ideally, in order to get a really true picture, a larger number of the

children in the study area should have been studied over a greater length of time. However due to limited time and resources the study was limited to only a small sample of children in the study area. These in a way also limit the conclusions of the study as it may not apply to all children left behind in the study area.

- Furthermore, it must be indicated that there were some problems with availability of some secondary data. For instance it was not possible to get considerable data on children left behind both at the Municipal and the National level. Due to scanty nature of studies conducted on children in the study area, the responsible departments lack wide-ranging data on children in much specific children left behind. The few available data/information were just shallow with others being summaries.
- Notwithstanding these limitations encountered it must however be stated that quality was not compromised. The target units of enquiry which consisted of children with migrated parents and their caregivers who are entrusted care for children left behind for their welfare and wellbeing proved to be reliable sources of data for this study.

7.10 Recommendations for future research and policy implications for practice

- The study has delved into understanding how children left behind cope with parental migration. Despite the knowledge generated by this study, time and resource constraints within which this study was carried out could not allow for thorough investigation of larger sample size (study population). Even though the interpretivist perspective (qualitative research) allows for smaller samples. On this basis, it is suggested that, a large sample size should be used should any researcher like to carry out similar study. Since that enhances the quality of the findings as well as the thesis in general. The sample size for future research can also include migrated parents to enhance understanding on the care plans and support for their children left behind. Additionally the time for the research to be extended to cover the sample size and finance should be provided.
- In addition, it would be worthwhile to replicate this research in the other regions in Ghana noted for adult migration in Ghana most especially the Ashanti region. The findings of this research will allow for a comparison of the understanding the how children cope with parental migration. This will bring out the differences and

similarities that exist in their care arrangements as well their coping strategies among other things. This can help in the planning of care and appropriate interventions for children left behind.

- Also my study has revealed that, children left behind adopt different coping strategies to make life bearable. Therefore a further more detailed study/research can be conducted in these areas of the various coping strategies and to ascertain their implications on these children's health status and educational performance. The finding of such study can further facilitate the care and support given to children left behind.
- In determining the impact of migration on children, another area that can be suggested for further research is to document the experiences of children who move with their parents during migration. In this case comparison can make to see the similarities and difference in the experiences of the children.
- Children contribute to the care and welfare of households when they are left behind. Therefore, it is important to for caregivers to recognize the agency of children. They should be seen as competent social actors who can be involved in the family's activities. Most especially involved them more in to decision making process in matters that concern them and not as passive recipients of conditions in the structure.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

NORWEGIAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NORWEGIAN CENTRE FOR CHILD RESEARCH

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND.

Question for the interview

What are the experiences and coping strategies adopted by children left behind?

Introduction

You have experienced something unique, your parents have migrated. In this research am going to make a report on experiences of children left behind and to inform policy intervention for such children. I am interested in knowing your experiences and thoughts about your parents migrating leaving you behind. I want to hear more about how you live without your parents and much interested in your thoughts and reflection of this issue. I am therefore also interested about in learning about your everyday life in this local community. I would be very excited to hear your stories.

It is important that you tell as much as possible your everyday life experiences. Please it is important to remember that, it is your right to decide on what you want to tell me. All the things you will say to me are equally important to me.

No one will be told about what you will tell me. There is no right or wrong answers and your our answers will not be associated with your name when I am writing my final report. In this case nobody will know what you told me specifically.

1. Social practices in everyday life

- Whom do you live with?
- Tell me about a normal day in your life?
- Tell me about you duties and responsibilities this home? Do you enjoy (like) or dislike it?
- What did you like best? Tell me! What did you dislike? Tell me!

2. Social relationships and Autonomy

- Do you get your basic needs?

- Tell me about how these are met?
- Who decide on what you want in the family? Why do you think this is so?
- What do you do if you do not get your basic needs?
- What does the migration of parent(s) mean to you?
- Do you feel you are being cared for?

3. Barriers children face

- Tell me how often do you get your basic need?
- Can you tell me why sometimes you do not get what your basic needs?
- What do you think prevents your caregiver from caring for you sometimes?
- Do you go to school? If NO why not? If Yes, Tell me about how you combine your responsibilities in the family and schooling?

4. Coping with everyday life

- Do your parents send you money? What do you use the money for?
- How do you feel if you fail to get what you want?
- Do you know any other relatives of your parents?
- Tell me about other relatives who support you in providing your basic need?

5. Risks Children Face

- How do you relate with your caregiver?
- Have you ever experienced the situation whereby you go hungry or do not get clothes or dress? Can you tell me more about this?
- Do you get treatment when you are sick?
- Do you know any children in similar situation? What do you think about them?
- Reflections and opinions about this about this interview?

APPENDIX II

NORWEGIAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NORWEGIAN CENTRE FOR CHILD RESEARCH

GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND.

Question for the interview

What are the experiences and coping strategies adopted by children left behind?

Introduction to the interview

I have met some of you individually to discuss your unique experiences. We have met here today to brainstorm about some of the things we discussed as individuals. You have all experienced something unique, your parents have migrated. In this research I am going to make a report on experiences of children left behind and to inform policy intervention for such children.

I am interested in delving a little bit more into your experiences and thoughts about your parents migrating leaving you behind. I want to hear more about how you live without your parents and much interested in your thoughts and reflection of this issue.

I am therefore also interested about in learning about your everyday life in this local community. I would be very excited to hear your stories. We will discuss this as a group.

It is important that you tell as much as possible your everyday life experiences. Please it is important to remember that, it is your right to decide on what you want to tell me. All the things you will say to me are equally important to me. Whatever we shall discuss here shall remain confidential, and name and information from any of you will be told to somebody outside this group.

Please there is no right or wrong answer and as much as possible we have to allow each other to speak. Your answers will not be associated with your name when I am writing my final report. In this case nobody will know what you told me specifically.

1. Social practices in everyday life

- Whom do you live with?

- Tell me about a normal day in your life?
- Do you enjoy (like) or dislike it? Tell me about this.

2. Social relationships and Autonomy

- Are your expectations in the family fulfilled? Do you get all the things your basic needs?
- Tell me about how these are met?
- Who decide on what you want in the family? Why do you think this is so?
- What do you do if you do not get what your basic need?
- What does the migration of parent(s) mean to you?
- Does your caregiver have children? How do you relate with them?
- Do you feel you are being cared for?
- Tell me how often do you get the things you want?
- Do you go to school? If NO why not? If Yes, Tell me about how you combine your responsibilities in the family and schooling?

3. Coping with everyday life

- Do your parents send you money? What do you use the money for?
- How do you feel if you fail to get what you want?
- Do you know any other relatives of your parents?
- Tell me about other relatives who support you in providing what your basic need?

4. Risks Children Face/ Barriers children face

- How do you relate with your caregiver?
- Have you ever experienced the situation whereby you go hungry or do not get clothes or dress? Can you tell me more about this?
- Do you get treatment when you are sick?
- Do you have siblings left behind? Are they staying with you or in a similar or different condition?
- Do you know any children in similar situation? What do you think about them?
- Reflections and opinions about this discussion?
- Can you tell me why sometimes you do not get what any of you basic need?
- What do you think prevents your caregiver from caring for you sometimes?

APPENDIX III

NORWEGIAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NORWEGIAN CENTRE FOR CHILD RESEARCH IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND.

Question for the interview

What care arrangements are in place to cater for children left behind?

Introduction

You have experienced something unique; you are caring for a child whose parents have migrated. In this research am going to make a report on experiences of children left behind and to inform policy intervention for such children.

I am interested in knowing the care arrangements for the children left behind and thoughts about parents migrating leaving their children behind. I want to hear more about how you live with the children and much interested in your thoughts and reflection of this issue.

I am therefore also interested about in learning about the everyday life of the children in the family. I would be very excited to hear your stories.

Please it is important to remember that, it is your right to decide on what you want to tell me. All the things you will say to me are equally important to me.

No one will be told about what you will tell me. There is no right or wrong answers and your answers will not be associated with your name when I am writing my final report. In this case nobody will know what you told me specifically.

1. Can you tell me your relationship with the child that you are living with?
2. Who left the child in your care? Was there any form of arrangements between you?
3. Tell me about how often you hear from the parents
4. Does the migrant parent send money? What is this money used for?
5. How do you get to know about the basic needs of the child(ren)?
6. Why do you think so?

7. Do you know any of the relatives of the child who provides the child with any support?
8. How do you provide for the basic needs of the child(ren)
9. What do you do if you cannot provide for the basic needs of the child(ren)?
10. What are some of the responsibilities that you assign to the child(ren)? Do you think they are able to perform them?
11. How can you describe the general contribution of the child to this household?
12. Do you have any children of your own? How do the child and your children co-exist?
13. What do you think about parents migrating leaving their children behind?
14. Reflections and opinions about this interview?