



DALARNA UNIVERSITY
Centre for African Studies (DUCAS)
Falun, Sweden

Poverty as an Abuse of Human Rights in Ghana:

A grass roots perspective on poverty and Human Rights.

**A Thesis
Presented to
The Academic Faculty**

**By
COLLINS ARMAH**

**In partial Fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in African Studies**

Supervisor: Prof. Tekeste Negash

June 2009

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my mum, Madam Akuah Nketiah who passed away on 22nd August 2009. You will forever be remembered for the love and care you gave me as a mum.

Acknowledgement

First of all, I thank God for guiding me through this work.

My next thanks go to Professor Tekeste Negash, who supervised this work. Professor, I appreciate your objective criticisms and corrections which brought this work to light.

Again, I wish to show my indebtedness and appreciation to Livinus Torty for his objective comments and suggestions on this paper during and even after the defence.

I also thank Desmond D. Swende for taken time to read through my work and offer suggestions to shape up this paper.

Special thanks go to Maa Abena for her moral support and never ending encouragement.

I also appreciate the efforts of Susana Ahiney Amarfio, Francisca Mensah and Christiana Anokye for their support and helping in editing this work.

Also not forgetting the people of Bia District in the Western Region of Ghana particularly Paa Kwasi and Kwame Adu for helping me through my interviews. I thank all my informants for given me the opportunity to interview them.

I am indeed grateful to Dalarna Centre for African Studies, the Nordic African Institute and my lecturers for the support (particularly learning materials) I have received to pursue a postgraduate degree and complete this research. I am particularly grateful to Catharina Enhörning, Chritina Romli and Lars Berge; and all my course mates especially Ola-Dipo, Marsha Baard and Emile Kelly for their diverse supports in the course of this programme.

Finally, to the entire Armah family, I will forever be grateful for your enduring love and support throughout my academic life.

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Acronyms

ACMF	Africa Capital Markets Forum
BPPP	Bia Peoples' Position on Poverty
CDD	Ghana Centre for Democratic Governance
CEPS	Customs Excise Preventive Service
COCOBOD	Ghana Cocoa Board
CODEO	Coalition of Domestic Election Observers
CHRAJ	Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice
DCE	District Chief Executive
GACC	Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition
GHC	Ghana Cedi Currency
GNA	Ghana News Agency
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HPI	Human Poverty Index
KBK	Kwamebikrom, town in Bia District
NAI	Nordic African Institute
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PC	Cocoa Purchasing Clerks
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
IDA	International Development Agency
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ISSER	Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SFO	Serious Fraud Office
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United State Dollar Currency
WHO	World Health Organisation

Abstract

The study aimed at getting a grass root opinion on poverty and why Ghana is still poor after 50 years of independence in spite of her richness in natural resources, second largest producer of cocoa in the world and appreciable stable political environment. The opinions of the ordinary people in the Bia district and their observed living conditions was analysed in line with theoretical basis of the study and previous studies to justify the stance that poverty should be considered as an abuse of human rights. It was concluded based on position of informants and previous data available that though many factors have been raised by previous scholars as the cause of poverty, the actions and inactions of both internal and external power-holders is the main source of poverty in Ghana. It was proposed that for poverty to be reduced in a sustainable way there should be strong civil society groups and active citizens through civic education to hold power-holders accountable. Until the actions and inactions of power-holders which have subjected many Ghanaians into intergenerational poverty are seen as human rights abuse, the rights of many Ghanaians would be constantly abused. This will eventually defeat the promotion of human rights culture in Ghana.

Chapter One

1.0 Introductions

*Wherever we lift one soul from a life of poverty, we are defending human rights. And whenever we fail in this mission, we are failing human rights (Former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan)*¹

Human rights are entitlements due to every man because they are humans². In other words human rights are a combination of individual and collective values and standards that may be viewed as a respond to humans. They are common for the achievement for all people and all nations. Because of their importance to humans, the World in 1948 established a central document for the course of human rights called the universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to Eleanor Roosevelt (one of the main drafters), the declaration is the “International Magna Charta for all men everywhere”.³ For instance, Articles 25 and 28 of the UDHR emphasise that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care; and everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realised⁴.

However, poverty has prevented many Ghanaians if not all from achieving their basic fundamental human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration in order for them to live dignified life.⁵ Indeed, no social phenomenon is as comprehensive in its assault on human rights as poverty. Poverty erodes or nullifies economic and social rights such as the right to health, adequate housing, food and safe water, and the right to education. The same is true of civil and political rights, such as the right to a fair trial, political participation and security of the person⁶. According to the recent World Development Report, ‘attacking poverty’, the number of poor (those living less than \$1 a day in Sub- Sahara Africa increased from an

¹ This quotation can be read from the UNHCHR website: <http://www.unhchr.ch/development/poverty-01.html>

² Read the 1996 encyclopaedia of human rights. Second Edition, by Edward Lawson and L.S Wiseberg. The introductory essay can be read from the Human Rights Text Compendium, Dalarna University Falun-Sweden. See also Stanford Encyclopaedia of philosophy about the definition of human rights at : <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rights-human/>

³ Renteln 1990; Taylor & Francis 1996 in Dalarna Human rights Text Compendium 2007. See also <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rights-human/>; <http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.htm>

⁴ See various Articles in the UDHR at: <http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.htm> .

⁵ See Afrifa 2004.

⁶ <http://www.unhchr.ch/development/poverty-01.html>

already high 217 million (in 1987) to 291 million (in 1998) leaving almost half of the residents of the continent poor.⁷

Economic deprivation – lack of income – is a standard feature of most definitions of poverty. But this in itself does not take account of the myriad of social, cultural and political aspects of the phenomenon. Poverty is not only deprivation of economic or material resources but a violation of human dignity too⁸. As a poor woman in Moldova voiced it out, “Poverty is pain; it feels like a disease. It attacks a person not only materially but also morally. It eats away one’s dignity and drives one into total despair”.⁹ Also a Muslim scholar in Northern Ghana is of the view that “...poverty is something bad, it is ‘man-made’. Poverty hurts because it brings misery and discomfort to man...We wish that poverty would be eradicated from society. I personally I am convinced that without poverty there will be peace and tranquillity in society”.¹⁰

Well endowed with natural resources such as gold, timber, diamonds, bauxite, manganese and the second largest producer of cocoa couple with appreciable political stability, the people of Ghana should have been in position to meet their basic needs to live dignified life¹¹. However, in spite of the aforementioned advantages, many Ghanaians cannot afford to live at all or have appreciable standard of living. Despite the claims by World Bank, IMF and government authorities on higher economic growth and tremendous reduction in the number of Ghanaians living below the poverty line, recent participatory studies to ascertain the reality of poverty in the country (especially rural areas) have revealed that millions of people are indeed living in abject poverty.

What is preventing Ghana to maximise its potentials for the benefit of its people? Who is behind the denial of basic rights of many Ghanaians as a result of severe poverty? If indeed, poverty is robbing ordinary Ghanaians from enjoying their fundamental human rights, then how can poverty be reduced at least to a minimal level if not eradicate completely to ensure that the poor Ghanaians get fair share of the benefit of the country’s resources to live a dignified life? For the purpose of getting a grass root perspective or local opinions on some of

⁷ World Bank Report 2000

⁸ See <http://www.unhchr.ch/development/poverty-02.html>)

⁹ ”From *Voices of the Poor*, a World Bank report [published in 2000] as cited in Green & Allen 2008, p.3

¹⁰ Weiss 2007, p. 72

¹¹ Facts and figures about Ghana including various natural resources the country is endowed can obtain from the following sites: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html> & <http://www.indexmundi.com/ghana/> . Here demographic figures, the state of the economy and issues about Ghana can be accessed.

these questions, a district – Bia District in the Western Region of Ghana which is considered to be the largest producer of Ghana’s cocoa and endowed with large quantity of timber and bio forest reserve but lacked many infrastructure and social amenities¹² was selected as a study setting.

Basically, this paper is divided into three parts. Part one (chapter one to) covered the theoretical aspect of the thesis by dealing with the definitions and concept of poverty, poverty and human rights, an overview of the Ghanaian economy, the extent of poverty in Ghana and review of literatures in line with some possible causes of poverty in Ghana. Part two (chapter 3 & 4) dealt with the methodology, my fieldwork at Bia District as area of study and analysis and discussion of my findings. The last part – part three (chapter 5 and 6) contains how to fight poverty and conclusion of the study.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

- To find out the position of the people of Bia District in Ghana on poverty. The idea is to bring out a grass root perspective on poverty in Ghana.
- To come out with some possible causes of poverty in Ghana
- To offer way(s) that could lead to a decline in poverty in Ghana.
- This study also aims to contribute to human rights position that poverty is not only lack of income but a violation of one’s human rights to life in dignity. Hence its eradication should be seen as defending human rights in a sustained larger perspective.

1.2 Research Questions

- Why in spite of quite stable democracy and endowed with resources, Ghana is still poor after over 50 years independence? Why some parts of the country still lack basic infrastructures like good road network, healthcare centres and electricity?
- How do Bia people perceive poverty?
- What or who is responsible for low level of development - denying some Ghanaians their rights to life in dignity?

¹² See Ghana Districts at: http://www.ghanadistricts.com/home/?_id=49&sa=4642

1.3 The concept and Definition of Poverty

Scholars and institutions have over the years conceptualised poverty in different perspectives in their quest to define, measure and devising ways of fighting against poverty. According to Scott, Perhaps poverty itself need not always be measured: it needs to be prevented and abolished. But when people want to know what is being done about poverty and how effectively, knowledge about it and especially measurement to monitor change becomes necessary. He further emphasised that because change is normally slow to come about, monitoring will have to be fairly precise to distinguish the real from the chance element in measurement and to identify not only the people involved but also the nature of their poverty.¹³ Townsend (1970) argues that poverty must be seen as a relative deprivation of resources.

The Institute for Statistics Social and Economic Research (ISSER) at University of Ghana Legon has defined poverty as the lack of basic human necessities, a condition arising largely from total absence, scarcity or underdevelopment of requisite resources or attitudes towards the utilization of resources.¹⁴ Poverty has got different dimensions and it is important to look at some of the concepts and definition for a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

1.4 Income Poverty

Poverty has traditionally been viewed as lack of income or having insufficient income to meet our needs. According to Nnadozie (2003) income poverty is the lack of minimum financial resources to satisfy basic needs.¹⁵ In this regard, income level or consumption cut-off has been used as the basis for measuring how poor people are. In other words, using the concept of income poverty, being poor is determined by using poverty line where a certain standardised cut-off income or consumption figure is set and people who fall below it are referred to as being poor. For instance, the World Bank technically describes extreme poverty as a person who lives under one dollar (\$1) a day and a poor person the one living below two dollars (\$2) a day. The 1 dollar or 2 dollars Purchasing Power Parity dollars has used by the

¹³ Scott 1981, p.1

¹⁴ Addo, Brown & Boateng 1981. For their work on poverty and inequality in Ghana: Some research issues including local opinions and perception of their social meaning and the solution envisaged visit: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0004/000477/047708EB.pdf>

¹⁵ Nnadozie 2003, p.42

World Bank in determining who can be said to be poor by international standard. Besides, the international poverty lines of living below, 1 US dollars and 2 US dollars to determine people who are extremely poor and poor respectively, each country can set up a national poverty line based on what it is considered appropriate.¹⁶

Besides the traditional income definition and how to measure poverty, there has been a call for a more complex and broader definition of poverty. According to critics, viewing poverty as lack of income is just a tip of an iceberg. The income approach to poverty cannot determine the true state of people's level of poverty as it claimed by the World Bank poverty lines or income cut-off since different countries have specific problems taking into consideration the location, the backgrounds of people and other cultural specificities. For instance, someone might earn above two dollars a day somewhere in Ghana but the person could be said to be poor due to inability to have access to some basic facilities, like good road, lack of electricity or lack of freedom to participate in decision making that affect his or her life.

1.5 Human poverty

Human Poverty is another form within which poverty can be defined and measured. Human poverty involves the absence or denial of choices and opportunities to live a tolerable life.¹⁷ In 1997, the United Nations Development Programs (UNDP) proposed in their Human Development Report¹⁸ the concept of Human Poverty Index (HPI) as an approach to expand the meaning and understanding of poverty. The concept here is that human poverty is a development paradigm that is about much more than the rise or fall of national incomes. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. Development is about enlarging choices and therefore, if people are poor then it means that opportunities most basic to humans are denied. As emphasised by the founder of Human Development Report, Mahmud Ul Haq:

The basic purpose of development is to enlarge people's choices. In principle, these choices can be changes over time. People often value achievements that do not show up at all, or not immediately, in income or growth figures: greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more livelihoods,

¹⁶UNDP 1997 as cited in Speth 1998, p.280

¹⁷Nnadozie 2003, p.41

¹⁸ See details of the 1997 Human Development Report at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1997/>

security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political and cultural freedoms and sense of participation in community activities. The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives.¹⁹

The HPI comprises a composite index, different features of deprivation in order to determine an aggregate judgement on the extent of poverty in a community. In other words, rather than measure poverty by income, the HPI uses indicators of the most basic dimensions of deprivation: a short life, lack of basic education and lack of access to public and private resources. The HPI concentrates on deprivation in the three essential elements of human life already reflected in the Human Development Indices (HDI): longevity, knowledge and standard of living²⁰. There are three main measures of deprivation to arrive at the HPI:

The first deprivation relates to survival – the deprivation of life which is measured by the percentage of people expected to die before the age of forty (40). Thus, the likeliness of death at a relatively early age and is represented by the probability of not surviving to ages 40 and 60 respectively for the HPI-1 and HPI-2. The second dimension of deprivation relates to knowledge. The deprivation of knowledge is measured by the percentage of adults who are illiterate: being excluded from the world of reading and communicating. The third aspect of deprivation relates to standard of living (the overall economic provisioning in particular). This is measured as a composite of three variables, the percentage of people without access to health services, the percentage of people without access to safe water and the percentage of malnourished children under five and it is mainly used to assess developing countries (technically refer to as HPI-1). The developed countries or the OECD (technically refer to as HPI-2) standard of living as a third dimension of deprivation is measured by the percentage of population below the income poverty line (50% of the median household disposable income).²¹ In addition to the above three indicators of human poverty, the Human

¹⁹ (see <http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev/>).

²⁰ The HPI is derived separately for developing countries (HPI-1) and a group of select high-income OECD countries (HPI-2) to better reflect socio-economic differences and also the widely different measures of deprivation in the two groups. See (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/hpi/>) for more information on Human Poverty Index as an approach by Human Development Report to assessing individuals and communities levels of poverty. With the Human Development perspective of poverty, poverty incidence in Ghana will be judged based on the levels of deprivations: people's chance of surviving to the age of 40; percentage of adults who are illiterates; standard of living and social exclusion such long unemployment, gender discrimination and neglect of minority groups to fully participate in social, economic and political decisions that affect their lives.

²¹ The Human Poverty Index was sourced from the Human Development Report website: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/hpi/>. See also the work by James Gustave Speth 1998, p.280-281

Development Report by UNDP later on introduced *social exclusion*²² as a fourth dimension of human poverty. It is represented by long term unemployment and it includes both HPI-1 and HPI-2.²³

The use of HPI to assess poverty has more advantage over the income definition of poverty. As put forward by Speth, “the components of the HPI are easy to measure in most countries, and are comparable across societies and across time. The HPI also measures deprivation in a manner in which most people, wherever they live and their social preferences, can relate. People place a high value on living beyond early middle age, they benefit from literacy, they prefer to have access to health services, clean water and prefer to provide their children with good nutritious diets”.²⁴

In spite of moving beyond the idea of seeing poverty as lack of income and capturing other important indicators of human development or quality life, the human poverty index is not at least free from criticisms. As Nnadozie emphasised, although it is much richer to measure development than an economic growth statistics, the Human Development Index (HDI) [out of which Human Poverty Index (HPI) was developed] still fails to capture the complexity of the development process. It omits the important question of human rights and the issue of sustainability.²⁵ In recent times, there has been an expansion of the HPI by adding a fourth aspect of deprivation which relate to social exclusion but this refinement has not fully capture certain dimensions of human poverty. As commented by Speth:

In the 1998 Human Development, the index is refined to capture the depth of human poverty in industrialised countries. But even a refined HPI does not capture the full extent of human poverty. Critical dimension of poverty excluded from the HPI are lack of political freedom, inability to participate in

²² Amartya Sen’s Capability Model of defining poverty has extended the social exclusion theory as a fourth dimension of poverty to include not only denial of employment but freedom to make choices and fully participate in economic, social and political decisions that affect people’s life. Sen’s Capability model captured all the dimensions put forward by the Human Development Report and emphasised on freedom as basic necessity to development and for that matter being poor denies one from freedom or basic capabilities that could make a person to freely live a dignified life as humans without any stumbling blocks.

²³ See http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_20072008_Tech_Note_1.pdf for the calculation of Human Poverty Index (HPI) by the 2007/2008 Human Development Report. See also <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/hpi/> for information about the fourth dimension of deprivation as a way of measuring and defining human poverty.

²⁴ Speth 1998, p.281

²⁵ Nnadozie 2003, p.127

decision making and community life, lack of personal security and threats to environmental sustainability.²⁶

He however, he maintained that “the HPI has provided us with an interesting insight on human poverty which income measures has failed to capture; and that it leads to an inescapable policy conclusion: successful poverty eradication strategies must rely not only on growth and macroeconomic stability, but must take into account the political aspect of poverty eradication”²⁷

The human development approach to the assessment of poverty has given a broader understanding of poverty. It has led to deeper emerging definitions and a detailed sense of direction to approaching poverty. For instance, according to scholars like Jeffery Sachs, a better definition of poverty is the inability to meet basic needs, such as adequate nutrition, access to safe water, access to basic education, having a livelihood that can generate an income to meet these basic needs, and access to primary health services. By either definition about 1 billion people live in extreme poverty. This number, determined mainly by household survey, is a pretty rough estimate. It's an area where a major effort could and should be made, but of course this is not the only area where we under invest in the poor. When the world is capable of leaving millions of people to die for lack of access to the most basic things, it's also capable of not making the effort to measure [their numbers], as well.²⁸

The work by Amartya Sen (1999) has elaborated well on human development perspective on poverty. According to Sen, there are good reasons for seeing poverty as a deprivation of basic capabilities, rather than merely as low income. Thus poverty is not a matter of having too little money; rather it is about living a life devoid of economic, social, and political choice. Deprivation of elementary capabilities can be reflected in premature mortality, significant undernourishment (especially of children), and persistent morbidity, widespread illiteracy and other failures.²⁹ In other words, Sen emphasised on elementary freedoms in his view on poverty. Therefore his ideas on poverty can be summed up as the absence of or inadequate of realisation of certain basic freedoms to avoid hunger, disease, illiteracy and so on. For instance, a persons' freedom to live a healthy life is contingent both

²⁶ Speth in this page is drawing our attention that HPI is not 100 percent accurate in measuring poverty when it comes to making comparison in all countries especially comparing the indicators of human development of developing countries to that of developed countries. For that matter not all variables which enhance human development are sufficiently measured in large number of countries. He however, maintained, which I agree that “the HPI has provided us with an interesting insight on human poverty which income measures has failed to capture; and that it leads to an inescapable policy conclusion: successful poverty era

²⁷ See the later part of page 281 to the beginning of page 282 of Speth (1998).

²⁸ (See <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/298/16/1849>).

²⁹ Sen 1999, p.20

on the requirement that no one obstructs her legitimate pursuit of good health, and also a society's success in creating an enabling environment. Thus, capability approach to poverty holds that poverty is as a result of capability failure and brings out the idea that poverty impedes people's fundamental right to development³⁰.

1.6 Poverty and human rights

On May 2001, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNCESCR) adopted a statement on poverty which recognised that poverty constitute a denial of human rights. The UNCESCR has defined poverty as a human condition characterised by the deprivation of resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights³¹. There is every reason for poverty to be considered as a denial and an abuse of human rights. As Speth stated, "the right to be free of the crushing burden of poverty must be counted among the most fundamental of deeds in all realms existence of poor people, and extends beyond lack of income. Perhaps the most basic human right challenged by poverty is the right to life".³² According to Milne, "unlike natural rights which turn to be active and often present the individual as everything and the state as nothing; and holders might choose to exercise, human rights has extended this to a broader concept of incorporating such 'passive' entitlement as those to food, shelter, medical attention and education to some extent redress at least in principle regardless of the right bearers choice".³³

Relating the various normative documents of human rights to the living conditions of millions of people in certain parts of the world, particularly Sub-Sahara Africa, it is justifiable to say that poverty is not just lack of income but a denial of one's fundamental right to life. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by United Nations, make poverty a denial of a life in dignity. For instance, article 25 of the implies that poverty is an abuse of

³⁰ See Sen (1999). *Development as Freedom*, pages 3-20.

See also UNESCO Poverty Project. On "Ethical and Human Rights Dimensions of Poverty: Towards a New Paradigm in the fight against poverty", Philosophy Seminar-All souls College-Oxford (UK). March, 2003 by Simon Caney. Also the work by Nick Vink and Norma Tregurtha in African Economic Development by Emmanuel Nnadozie 2003, p.121 threw light on Sen's concept of poverty – capability model.

³¹See E/C. 12/2001/10 for the rights based definition of poverty. This definition called for poverty to be seen as an issue of human rights and that being poor means one's basic fundamental rights to live dignified life is denied. I believe the human rights perspective on poverty is a holistic one which take into consideration both lack of income to meet basic needs and a denial or lack of access to basic developmental needs such as health services, clean drinking water, good roads and other capabilities such freedom to make choices and taking part in decision making that affect one's life.

³²Speth 1998, p.277/282

³³ Milne in Outhwaite and Bottomore 1993/94, p.562-564

human rights: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services..."³⁴. Added to the above, the right to live dignified life was reaffirmed in subsequent instruments of international law including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women; the Convention on the Right of the Child³⁵.

The 1993 world conference in Vienna on Human Rights also stressed the link between the rights and development. Nevertheless, in as much as people live in poverty, the realisation of the goals set in the aforementioned documents could be said to be in jeopardy if not hypocritical discourses. The rights to life and physical integrity as article 3 and 6 of the UDHR and the International Covenant on Civil and political right is threatened by poverty. For instance, each day and night millions of people are dying from hunger and poverty related diseases. According to World Bank Report (2004) nearly half of all human beings especially those living in Africa live under severe poverty, with many of them not able to satisfy their basic fundamental human rights such as access to safe water and food, clothing, shelter in order to have a dignified life or even to live at all. The same report revealed that two out of five children in the developing World are stunted, one in three is underweight and one in ten is wasted. Some 250 million of children between five (5) and fourteen (14) do wage work outside their households-often under harsh or cruel conditions as soldiers, prostitutions or domestic servants in agricultural construction, textile or carpet due to poverty.³⁶ Stiglitz (2002) also pointed out the following:

In 2002, there were 57 million human deaths. The main causes highly correlated with poverty: Diarrhoea (1,798) and malnutrition (485), perinatal (2,462) and maternal conditions (510), Childhood diseases (1,124-mainly measles), tuberculosis (1,566), malaria (1272), meningitis (173), hepatitis (157), tropical disease (129), respiratory infections (3,963-mainly pneumonia), HIV/AIDs (2,777) and sexual transmitted diseases (180)³⁷.

Moreover, the UNDP annual report (2006) reported that, more than 800 million people suffer from hunger and malnutrition, 1.1 billion people do not have access to clean

³⁴ For details on article 25 of UDHR and other related articles, visit the website:
<http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.ht>

³⁵ See the following websites for details on the stated international instruments on human rights respectively:

³⁶ World Bank Report 2004, p. 253

³⁷ This information was gathered from foot note 1 of Pogge 2005, p.1. See also WHO 2004, annex table2). Cf. also FAO 1999 and UNICEF 2002. It is important to point out that most of the poverty related deaths cited are found in Africa. See <http://www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Facts.asp>

drinking water and, every hour, and 1,200 children die from preventable diseases. Despite a growing world economy and significant advances in medicine and technology, many people in developing countries are not reaping the potential benefits of globalization³⁸.

It is obvious that poverty affects every aspect of one's life be it economic, social, political, cultural and civil. For instance, people living in poverty are often not recognised before the law and face the constraints in registering their children. This in turn affect their legal identity thereby making it difficult to enrol in school, to obtain employment; to exercise political rights; to marry; to prove nationality; to travel freely outside national borders and any other activity that require the proof of legal identity. In 2003, the United Nations Children's and Educational Fund (UNICEF) estimated that around 48 million children of total birth worldwide were unregistered due to poverty (see UNICEF 2003 estimate). This means that huge number of children was denied their basic fundamental right to birth registration and at the risk of being denied other subsequent rights later in life.

Furthermore, deprivation of knowledge as a dimension of human poverty means, many illiterate people are restricted in their access to knowledge, to information and to public platforms to take part in decisions that affect their lives. One's right to education as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 26; and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, articles 13 and 14 to enlightened people and bring a positive change in their lives is often hindered by poverty. Poor families usually find it difficult to take care of their children's education in spite of the campaign to send their children to school. The promulgation of *Education for All* declared in Jomtien – Thailand is a good idea. However, this idea is at risk of not being successful looking at the level of poverty in many parts of the world. It is when the issue of poverty is consciously taken into account in the bid of this laudable policy that Education for All, will mean for all.

Besides the above, people living in poverty are particularly vulnerable to violations of their rights, but they often cannot avail themselves of the most effective tool to defend themselves against these abuses at the court protection. They are hindered from access to justice by financial constraints, illiteracy, lack of education and information, lack of self

³⁸ The 2006 UNDP Annual Report can be accessed at: http://www.undp.org/publications/annualreport2006/equitable_growth.shtml. In the same report, former President of South Africa (Nelson Mandela) was quoted as "Massive poverty and obscene inequality are such terrible scourges of our times... that they have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils."

confidence, the complexity of procedures, mistrust and fear stemming from their experience of the justice system and the slow pace of justice³⁹.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international documents regarding human rights have some challenges when it comes to their implementation due to differences in individual nation states, access to basic needs for surviving like food, water, healthcare, education and freedom to partake in decision making that affect one's life are contingent to human development. It is in this regard that the work by Atuguba and Ahadzie (2005) emphasised on the incorporation of human rights strategy in the fight against poverty in Ghana.

³⁹ The Magistrate of Debiso court confirmed this when I had interaction with him with regards to how people at the area have used the court to seek justice. He commented: *many people are afraid to come to the courts even if they have been offended. They think it involves a lot of money to seek justice. In some instances people come to the court and even the money to register their case is a problem. In fact my main aim before I leave this place is to educate the people not be afraid to bring their cases to the court. It is about money and lack of education....preventing a lot of the people here to seek justice.*

Chapter Two

2.0 State of Research

In this section I will look at some of the previous studies in connection with this study. Related studies will be reviewed by discussing them base on themes: some possible causes of poverty in Ghana, how rich is Ghana and the extent of poverty in Ghana. Moreover, before I bring the findings of my fieldwork, I will review some related studies by concentrating on injustices in the cocoa industry especially the rural cocoa farming communities.

2.1 An overview of Ghana's Economy: How rich and poor is Ghana?

This section will look at the main source of Ghana's income and their impact on the economy over the years.

2.1.1 *Cocoa and mineral resource: Drivers of Ghana's economy*

There is no doubt Ghana's economy has depended on cocoa and mineral resources particularly Gold. Since 1893 Ghana has depended on cocoa for the hard cash it needs to develop her economy. The export of cocoa from Ghana began in 1891, the official exported in 1893 (two bags exported). Ghana once provided almost half of world output. Between 1910 and 1980 Ghana was the world's largest exporter⁴⁰.

At the time of independence, Ghana was the leading cocoa exporter of the world until it dropped to second largest producer till date behind La Cote D'voire. In the 1950s, Ghana exported an average of 370,000 tons annually, accounting for as much as 50% of the GDP.⁴¹ Cocoa production for 1997/1998-crop year was 409,000 metric tonnes, which exceeded the projected output of 350,000 metric tonnes. Total export receipts (f.o.b.) in 1998 increased by 16.9 per cent to \$1,830.4 million compared with a projection of \$1,625.2 million, and an outturn of \$1,489.9 million for 1997 (1999 Budget Report)⁴². The 2001 Budget statement reported that the value of cocoa exports is expected to increase by 11.9 percent to US\$488.6

⁴⁰See <http://www.ghanadistricts.com/home/>

⁴¹See the work of Meng at: <http://www.joycemeng.com/writings/ghana.pdf>

⁴²For more details visit: <http://www.ghanareview.com/budget.html>

million, on account of projected higher prices⁴³. Receipts from timber products are to increase by 4.6 percent to US\$ 183.3 million. Besides, total receipts of from other exports, including non-traditional exports, for the year 2001 is expected to be US\$665.7 million, an increase of US\$39.3 over the 200 provisional out-turn; though gold exports were projected to decrease by US\$57.9 million to US\$644.1 million due to a projected fall in world market price⁴⁴.

According to official reports cocoa production over the past years has seen significant increases from 389,772 metric tonnes in 2000/01 to a record level of 740,458 metric tonnes in 2005/06⁴⁵. This has brought huge sum of money into the country. It is confirmed that the value of processed cocoa-based exports in Ghana has gone up from US\$83.6 million in 2004 to US\$152.9 million in 2006.⁴⁶

2.1.2 Gold and other minerals

Another importance source of Ghana's revenue is through mineral resources like gold, bauxite, diamond and manganese.⁴⁷ Total mine output for all major minerals mined increased several folds over the years. For instance, annual gold production increased from 282,299 ounces in 1984 to 2,143,000 ounces in 2005, manganese from 267,996 tons to 1,719,589 tons, bauxite from 44,169 tons to 606,700 tons and diamond from 341,978 carats to 1,065,923 carats, during the same period. Total annual mineral exports rose from US\$115.3 million in 1984 to US\$995.2 million in 2005. The sector now accounts for more than 30 per cent of gross foreign exchange earnings. Gold is the most important subsector, accounting for over 90 per cent of the total value of mineral exports, and recording as much as 95 per cent in 1994 and 1995, largely due to increased gold prices. The table (1) below indicate amount of major mineral production in Ghana from 1990 – 2007.

⁴³The figures of exports receipts from cocoa in 1999 and 2001 shows that the quantity of cocoa exports has fluctuating. This could be the fact that world price for cocoa has not been stable which also affects local market – discouraging farmers to produce less. Ghana government should device mean sto curb this problem.

⁴⁴ For details about 2001 Budget, visit: <http://www.ghanareview.com/Budget2001.htm>

⁴⁵ See: <http://www.africanewssearch.com/olink.php?ARG1=http://db.ghanaian-chronicle.com/thestory.asp?id=7995> ; see also: <http://www.copal-cpa.org/members.php#ghana>

⁴⁶ CEPS 2006 in Breinsinger 2008, p. 14

⁴⁷ The current massive oil discovery in the country will add to revenue generation through natural resources.

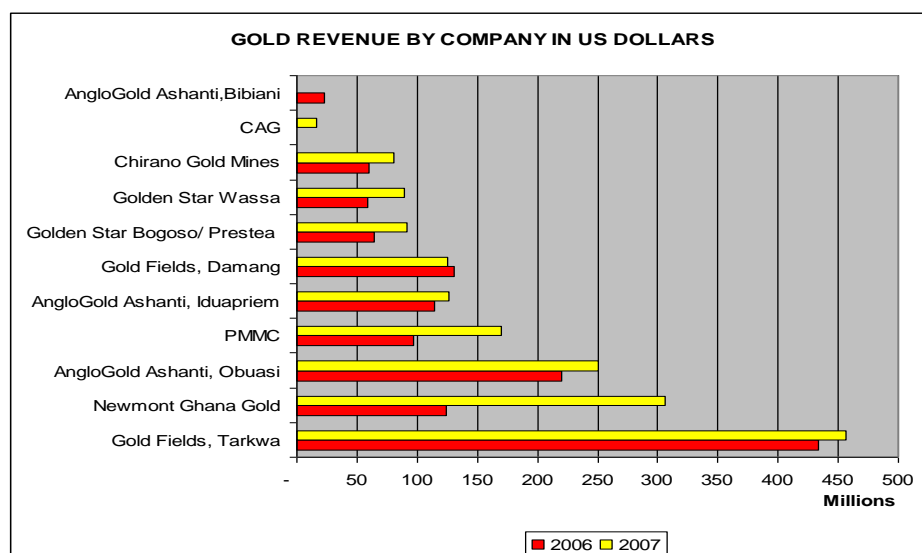
PRODUCTION OF MAJOR MINERALS AND ALUMINIUM FROM 1990-2007

Year	Gold		Diamond	Bauxite	Manganese	Salt SnaCl)	Aluminium	Aluminium Import
	OZ	MT**	Cts	MT	MT		MT	Mt
1990	541.147 246.869	1 6,83	636.503	368.659		-	172.255	3 14.277
1991	847.559 311.824	2 6,36	687.736	324.313		-	173.430	3 40.430
1992	1.004.625 276.019	3 1,25	656.421	399.155		-	179.022	3 30.024
1993	1.261.890 295.296	3 9,25	590.842	364.641		-	174.082	3 67.622
1994	1.438.483 238.544	4 4,74	746.797	451.802		-	139.051	2 74.872
1995	1.715.867 187.548	5 3,37	631.708	530.389		-	134.514	2 57.194
1996	1.583.830 266.765	4 9,26	714.738	383.370		-	135.725	2 53.851
1997	1.752.452 332.703	5 4,51	829.524	536.723		-	149.995	3 00.995
1998	2.371.108 384.463	7 3,75	822.563	341.120		-	55.446	9 4.958
1999	2.608.102	8 1,12	681.576	355.263	638.937	-	10.768	2 08.907
2000	2.457.152 895.749	7 6,43	878.011	503.825		-	52.363	2 55.864
2001	2.381.345 1.076.666	7 4,07	1.090.072	678.449		-	161.670	3 15.683
2002	2.236.833 1.135.828	6 9,57	963.493	683.654			131.858	2 63.928
2003	2.274.627 1.509.432	7 0,75	904.089	494.716			1 5.909	1 9.005
2004	2.031.971 1.597.085	6 3,20	905.344	498.060			-	-
2005	2.138.944 1.065.923 1.719.589	6 6,53		606.700			-	-
2006	2.337.784 1.699.546	7 2,72	972.991	841.775		123.162	-	-
2007	2.547.730 809	8 1,92	839.235	1.033.368	1.305.	124.072		

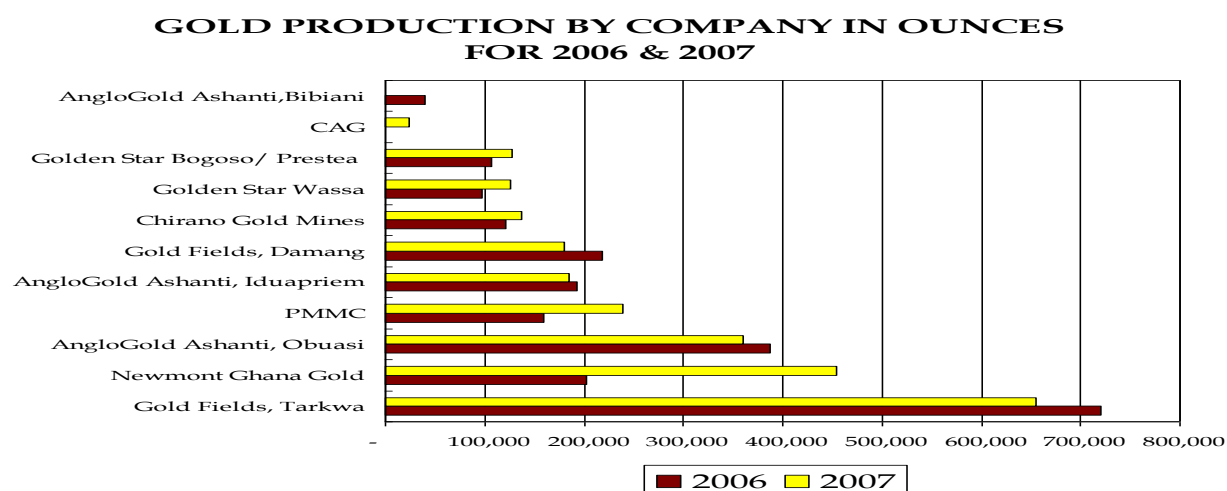
Oz - Ounces, MT- Metric Tonnes, Cts - Carats and **1 MT = 32149.17,Oz

Sourec: Finance, Research and Marketing Unit of Minerals Commission. See: <http://www.ghanareview.com/budget.html>

To add to the above, the country's Budget statement (1999), reported that earnings from gold exports amounted to \$687.8 million. This amount was 18.8 per cent higher than in the previous year, and 6.4 per cent higher than the projected level of \$646.7 million on account of a higher export volume⁴⁸. Revenue from major minerals production in the country have well been represented in the charts below:



Source from Ghana Chamber of Mines: <http://www.ghanachamberofmines.org>



Sources from Ghana Chamber of mines: <http://www.ghanachamberofmines.org/>

Since the 16th century, the country has been one of the world's leading exporters of gold. Ghana has been a producer of gold for over 500 years and at the moment prides itself as one of the largest and richest reserves of gold in the world. Ghana is at the moment Africa's second biggest gold miner behind South Africa. Source from Ghana Chamber of mines revealed that in 2008, there was a production of 2.6 million ounces of precious metal when

⁴⁸ See: <http://www.ghanareview.com/budget.html>

total mining revenues were US \$ 2.2 billion⁴⁹. Ghana mined 1/10th of the world's gold at the time of independence. Since ancient times – 16th Century till date (5000 years), the gold trade has been a major source of stable revenue to Ghana. Ghana is also endowed with rich deposits of aluminium, bauxites, diamonds, and manganese.⁵⁰ Through these natural assets, Ghana was considered a middle-income and the per capital income in the mid 1960s was US\$490 matched that of Mexico, Malaysia and South Korea.⁵¹

2.2 Current state of the economy on paper

According to Ghana Banking Survey (2007), year-on-year inflation generally trended downward over the five-year period, beginning at 15.2 percent in 2002 to end at 10.96 percent in 2006 – 2 percent off the single-digit target. The study reported of macro-credit stability. Overall fiscal deficit declined from 11.2 percent (2002) to 4.9 percent (2006); while domestic debt-to-GDP ratio was also reduced from 29 percent (2002) to 10.1 percent (2006). Moreover, the survey report on monetary sector stated that the Bank of Ghana (BOG) sought to create a monetary environment that is favourable for business expansion: the BOG Prime Rate reduction from 24.5 percent (2002) to 12.5 percent (2006); and abolished the 15 percent secondary reserve requirements in August 2006 enhanced business activities (Ghana Banking Survey 2007). Furthermore, IMF and World Bank data have reported that economic growth has averaged 4.5 percent from 1983 through 2000 but accelerated to 5.8/6 percent in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 which shows significant higher than averages in the past decades. The World Bank report (2006), reported that the number of Ghanaians living below the poverty line has dropped from more than half of the population in 1990 to about 37 percent in 2006 and it is currently standing at 28 percent⁵².

One cannot deny the fact that there has been some significant economic improvement in the economic growth and development; and some reduction in poverty, in particular income poverty in Ghana. For instance, Leith and Soderling (2003) have noted that in an attempt to reverse the absolute economic decline in Ghana, the economic recovery programme in the 1980s contributed to significant improvements in Ghanaian living standards. This to some extent contributed to a reduction of absolute poverty, through both

⁴⁹ For much data on Ghana's mineral production visit: <http://www.ghanachamberofmines.org/>

⁵⁰ see Leith 2003, p. 11; and Meng 2004, p.4

⁵¹ Dzorgbo 2001, p. 2 in Meng 2004, p. 4

⁵² World Bank Reports (2006 & 2007). See also www.indexmundi.com

private incomes and public social expenditure.⁵³ According to Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS) data, there have been a significant reduction in poverty from 52 percent to 40 in 1991/92 and 1998/1999 or from 37 percent to 27 percent using the a lower poverty line defining extreme poverty⁵⁴.

Nevertheless, Leith and Soderling also pointed out that since the days of Nkrumah, there has been excess demand and that no Ghanaian has been able to count on stable macroeconomic environment beyond the immediate horizon.⁵⁵ From 1960-1964 the country experienced a relatively high level of growth due the rapid industrialisation linked to import substitution policies by the country's first president. However, available data shows that the country's economic performance was very poor during the early 1980s and started showing significant improvement from the period 1992 onwards. As Ayemadu observed:

Real GDP stagnated and per capita incomes declined at the average annual rate of about 3 percent. Inflation average over 50 percent and reached triple digits some years by 1981, cocoa's output was less than at independence in 1957 and only 45 percent of the 1965 peak. The other major export commodities-gold, diamonds, and timber – had all suffered significant reductions [while] agriculture stagnated throughout the 1970s [despite] population growth at annual rate of about 2.5 percent.⁵⁶

Thus, despite some improvement in the economic situation at least under the spectacle of IMF and World bank as 'success story', Ghana has simultaneously confronted the challenge of increasing dependence on foreign aid, and exponential external debt, high rates of unemployment and poverty, and deindustrialisation resultant from the protective measures.⁵⁷

In spite of the initial advantages in the early 60s and the huge revenue from natural resources, Ghana has failed to capture successful long-term growth to practically transform the living standards of many Ghanaians. This has made scholars to consider Ghana's development as 'mirage' than 'miracle'. From the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s, Ghana faced dramatic economic decline with negative growth rates, hyperinflation, food shortages,

⁵³ see Leith and Soderling 2003, p. 68

⁵⁴ Ghana Statistical Service, 2000 in Leith and Soderling 2003, p. 68. It is important to note that the decline in poverty from the 1990s reported by Ghana Statistical Service is based on household expenditure and much of related to a reduction in income poverty rather human poverty such as improvement in health and education. Even with the significant reduction in income poverty, it was not sustainable and that the significant gains in the economic recovery programme did not lead to improvement of the lives of the poorest among the poor .See Aryeetey and Mackay 2004; and Leith & Soderling 2003.

⁵⁵ Leith and Soderling 2003, p. 78

⁵⁶ See IDA Report, 2004

⁵⁷ Dzorgbo 2001, p. 5 as cited in Meng 2004

massive unemployment, deterioration of pre-colonial infrastructure such as transportation and communication networks, weakening health and social welfare systems, and environmental degradation.⁵⁸ In the late 1980s, farmers experienced a dramatic decline in their standard of living as agricultural budgets dropped from 10 percent in 1983 to 4.2 percent in 1986.⁵⁹ By the year 2000, foreign debt totalled at 160 percent of the GDP.⁶⁰

After 50 years of independence, Ghana is still one of the poor countries in the world. In fact, the country opted for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) program in 2002. The external debt of the country as at 2005 was \$6.9 billion and 3.546 billion in 2006 until the country's debt was forgiven after the G8 meeting in Gleneagles. The country is still classified as low-middle income country and it is striving to attain middle-income country by the 2015 which is just at the corner.⁶¹

2.3 The Extent of poverty in Ghana

The economic growth has averaged 4.5 percent from 1983 through 2000 but accelerated to 5.8/6 percent in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 which shows significant higher than averages in the past decades. The World Bank report (2006), reported that the number of Ghanaians living below the poverty line has dropped from more than half of the population in 1990 to about 37 percent in 2006 and it is currently standing at 28 percent⁶². However, it has been noted that in spite of significant reduction in the level of poverty statistically, this has not reflected in the improvement of lives of many Ghanaians, especially the poorest of the poor.⁶³ Practically, most Ghanaians still live below one dollar a day. Though the cities of Accra and Kumasi have poverty headcounts of less than 10 percent, nine districts out of the 138 in the country have poverty headcounts above 80 percent. There is still high level of unemployment, the doctors per people is 0.15 per 100.⁶⁴

In 2002, a survey conducted by the Afrobarometer (round 2, 2002) revealed that most Ghanaian have negative perception of the overall state of the economy and of their own standard of living. For instance 59 percent think the national economy was or is in bad state and 40 percent felt Ghanaians are worse off than citizens of neighbouring countries. It also

⁵⁸Dzorgbo 2001, p. 3

⁵⁹ The Library of Congress Country Index, as cited in Meng 2004, p.11

⁶⁰ Leith 2003 in Meng 2004, p.9

⁶¹ See African Development Bank Report, 2006

⁶² World Bank Reports (2006 & 2007). See also www.indexmundi.com

⁶³ Aryeetey and McKay 2004

⁶⁴ According to IDA report : <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IDA/Resources/IDA-Ghana.pdf>

reported that Two-thirds of Ghanaians face permanent economic uncertainty with 66 percent of respondents reported they do not rely on regular wage or salary for their livelihood and 54 percent said they live from hand to mouth, and that only 18 percent are able to save regularly.⁶⁵

There are indicators that poverty in certain geographical areas especially in rural Ghana and quite significant of urban areas is still high when poverty is assessed by not only concentrating on lack of income but denial from or access to basic capabilities to enhance development. Some recent participatory studies and a poverty survey on rural communities by the Centre for Rural Research and Poverty Reduction, a locally-based NGO that facilitates rural development through research contract and advocacy have all confirmed high incidence of poverty particularly human poverty in rural and some urban communities in Ashanti, Central, Northern and Western Regions of Ghana.⁶⁶

According to UNDP Ghana Report (2007), many Ghanaians lack access to basic social amenities like good drinking water, good road, hospitals, electricity, housing and quality education to live dignified life due exclusion. For instance, National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) report (2005) indicated that many Ghanaians (37.5 percent of respondents) take more than one hour to reach main market centres and the proportion of households that take more than one hour to get to main market is higher in the rural areas (35.2 percent) as against 31.3 percent in urban areas.⁶⁷ Also, in rural communities, many children carry furniture (table and chairs) to school and this excluded the extreme poor from accessing and adequate level of education. Over 80 percent of domestic electricity supply is consumed in the cities and urban towns as opposed to rural communities and that many forest fringe communities have been depending on fuel-wood abundant in the forest as source of energy (Energy Commission, 2002 as cited in Ghana UNDP report 2007)⁶⁸

The Human Development Index (HDI) value (2006) for Ghana is 0.533. The HDI which looks at poverty beyond GDP of a country to a broader definition of wellbeing rank Ghana 142nd out 179 countries. Thus, Ghana's HDI value (2006) stands at 0.533; life

⁶⁵ Gyimah-Boadi & Mensah 2003. P.7-9. The full report of the Afrobarometer Survey, Paper No.28 can be read from the website: <http://www.afrobarometer.org/papers/AfropaperNo28.pdf>

⁶⁶ Beckford 2007; Weiss 2007; Mensah-Abrampa 2004 cited in UNDP Ghana Report 2007; and Daily Graphic Report, October 30th 2007

⁶⁷ See Ghana UNDP Report 2007, p.85

⁶⁸ The continual use of trees for burning char-coal and other energy purposes means the issue of climate change is at stake and its impact will affect the already poor people in the country.

expectancy at birth is 59.4 and rank at 139 out of 179 countries; adult literacy rate 64 percent and rank at 120; combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross ratio 52.9 and rank at 150 out of 179 (UNDP country fact sheet 2008). Furthermore, the human poverty in Ghana focussing on most deprived in multiple dimensions of poverty has the Human Poverty Index (HPI-1) value as 28.0 percent which ranks Ghana 86th among 135 developing countries. The probability of people not surviving past age 40 is 23.8 (2005); adult illiteracy rate is 35.8 percent, people without access to an improved water source is 20 percent (2006) and rank 72 out 135 developing countries and children underweight (ages 0-5) is 18 percent and rank 78th among the 135 countries (UNDP 2008 Report)⁶⁹. Added to these Ghana Health Service has reported that Institutional Maternal Deaths is 995 (2007); Under Five (U-5) Mortality stood at 111/1000 (2003); Infant Mortality rate 71/1000 live births (2003); Institutional Infant Death increased from 4618 in 2005 to 5,811 during the year under review and doctor and nurse to population ratios are 1:13,683 and 1:1,451 (2007) respectively.⁷⁰

Recent reports have revealed that preventable diseases such malaria and cholera are still claiming lot of lives in the country⁷¹. For instance, On August 19th this year (2008), the Head of the Information Research and Advocacy Division (IRAID) of the Department of Children (Sylvester Kyei-Gyamfi) said child survival in Ghana remains a challenge. He said 80,000 children in Ghana die before they are five years old every year⁷².

To add to the above, many Ghanaians still live in poor environmental conditions serving as a threat to their lives in spite of a significant economic growth. A recent Joint Monitoring Platform of the WHO and UNICEF West Africa 2006 report, ranked Ghana 48th out of 52 and 14th out of 15 countries in Africa and West Africa respectively. “This means that only 10 percent of Ghanaians have access to an improved latrine for defecation, 51 percent use shared latrines, which are not generally accepted as improved facilities due to the health hazards they posed”, the summary said.⁷³

The aforementioned developments did not just happen. There should be reason (s) for these negative developments with regards to human face of poverty in the country. The next

⁶⁹ See the UNDP country fact sheet at:

http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/2008/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_GHA.html

⁷⁰ For more on data concerning health indicators in Ghana see: www.ghanahealthservice.org

⁷¹ These economic indicators were stated in the International Development Association (IDA) Report. See: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IDA/Resources/IDA-Ghana.pdf>

⁷² Ghana News Agency, 19th August 2008. For details of this report see:

<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=148671>

⁷³ See Ghana News Agency, 16th August, 2008

section will look at some theoretical basis by reviewing some past studies by focusing on some possible causes of poverty and further look at who is behind those possible causes.

2.4 Why Ghana is poor: some possible causes

Scholars over the years have identified many factors that have affected economic growth and development in many Sub-Saharan African countries including Ghana making their people impoverished. Factors such as slave trade, colonialism, unfair trade, bad educational system and other external and internal factors have been raised.⁷⁴ Among several factors raised by different scholars with regards to problems hindering Ghana's development, I see the following factors as crucial.

2.4.1 Bad Educational System

One of the crucial contributors to the economic development of a country is human capital and education play important role in the development of human capital. Education also leads to a variety of indirect benefits, such as better attitudes toward work, greater ability to learn new skills, and other necessary skills to bring about change in society. Education, in all countries, is crucial for coping with integration in a global world and the transformation of the nature of work – requiring more flexibility, mobility, teamwork, and use of new technologies. A lifelong learning system is required to develop the necessary competence for development. Experience and research have shown that the preparation for future roles – family-life, citizenship, the world of work, as well as future education and training is through good general comprehensive education, including universal values and basic learning skills⁷⁵. The attainment of basic literacy and numeracy skills has been identified repeatedly as the most significant factor in reducing poverty and increasing participation by individuals in the economic, political and cultural life of their societies (OECD/DAC [1996] as cited in Sida 2001:3)⁷⁶. Investment in education and research together with social safety net can lead to a more productive and competitive economy, with more security and higher living standards for all (Stiglitz 2006/2007)⁷⁷.

⁷⁴ See Nnadozie 2003 and Ayittey 2002

⁷⁵ Sida 2001, p. 12. The Swedish International Development Agency's (SIDA) policy for Development Cooperation in the Educational Sector (2001).

⁷⁶ OECD/DAC [1996] Shaping the 21st Century: The contribution of Development cooperation.

⁷⁷ See Stiglitz's comments at www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2006/07. See also Nnadozie (2003:224) where the importance of education in national development has been emphasised.

However, Ghana has not been doing much to improve the quality of education and increase the educational attainment among the population after independence for education to play its vital role in development of the country. Ghana's educational system has undergone a lot of crisis after Nkrumah's regime (1966) usually with lack of funds being cited. Much has not been done to expand and improve the existing structures of schools to enhance quality teaching. In Ghana, most of the so called better or elite schools are all concentrated in the urban areas leaving most the rural areas with no schools and where there are, they lack learning facilities which has prevented qualified teachers to accept postings to these areas thereby affecting quality of education in most rural areas⁷⁸. According to Vanderpuye-Orgle (2004), improving access to and quality of education and health services in Ghana is imperative towards sustained economic growth and poverty reduction.⁷⁹

Available data show that there has been an increase in the enrolment rates in both primary and secondary school in the 1990s as compared to the 1980s, there is still gender and more particularly regional imbalances in education⁸⁰. The Ghana Statistical Service has reported, the net primary school enrolment increased from 74 percent in 1991/92 to 83 percent in the 1998/99; and secondary school enrolment has risen from 38 percent to 41 percent in the 1991/92-99 period with sharper urban-rural disparity than for primary schooling although the gap between boys and girls has diminished (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000 as cited in Leith and Soderling). In spite of the improvement in the enrolment rate, concerns have been raised about the quality of education⁸¹. According to the UNDP, only small fraction of primary school pupils met certain criteria regarding literacy and numerical skills as measured by tests carried out annually since 1993. Although there has been a moderately improving trend, the rural areas have scored worse than the urban areas. Added to the above, the Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire Survey from 1997 in Ghana indicates

⁷⁸ My recent fieldwork at Bia District confirmed that most schools in the rural areas lack teaching and learning facilities. I asked a student about state of their facilities and she commented: *we don't have library but our teachers do teach well..., our facilities are not good at all... we don't have library, laboratories, the student population is more than our dormitories. And the few rooms are not well furnished as well. We don't even have computers then come to talk of internet network. I have seen computer before [when I travelled to the city] but I don't know how to use it (a form 2 year business-accounting student at the Bia Secondary Technical).*

⁷⁹ Vanderpuye-Orgle 2004, p.23

⁸⁰ Until recently girls were not given enough opportunity to have education in Ghana. Parents do attached importance to their boys education than their daughters. In fact girls were supposed to help their mothers in the house by taking care of their younger siblings and doing other household duties. This led to a large number of women not being educated to empower them to take part in decision making and contribute to the development of themselves and society at large.

⁸¹ See UNDP Ghana Human Development Report (1997) and also Foster and Zormelo (2002) for more the quality of Ghana's education.

that lack of teachers and books are still the most important reasons for dissatisfaction with primary education, in particular among poor.⁸²

Another problem with Ghana's education system is that postcolonial curriculum continues to be patterned after that of Europe. The school curricula never adapt to the local needs. The secondary school system was changed under the PNDC government by Jerry Rawlings (1981-1991), introduced a new system to the inherited colonial secondary school to structure called 3-3 structure. That is three years secondary education. However, there has not been much in the university education and even the change in the secondary school seems to be under experiment and its sustainability is still shaking since the new government recently expressed concern to change both the Junior and Secondary School systems⁸³. Secondary Schools in Ghana have not been able to adapt to deal with present crisis (of national development in rapidly globalizing World) as well as the exponential growth of science and technology⁸⁴.

Moreover, most universities in Ghana have been concentrating unevenly on social sciences and humanities; with less emphasis on science and technology education and this has led to inadequate supply of human resource to have the technical know-how to contribute to national development. As Leith and Söderling noted "education has not significantly contributed to income growth among the poor during the 1990s".⁸⁵ The failure of the state to put in place better education system has denied many Ghanaians what Adler inter alia calls 'goods of the mind'⁸⁶.

⁸²See Leith and Soderling 2003, p.70

⁸³ Changing the Senior secondary school to four years instead of 3 years and introduction of new subjects into both the Junior and Senior Secondary (or Junior High and Senior High School as proposed) all make one to bold talk of a stable second cycle educational system in Ghana.

⁸⁴ The PNDC government by Jerry Rawlings established new secondary schools (both Junior and Senior Secondary Schools). One of the aims was to enhance technical and vocational skills among boys and girls so that those who could not gain admission to University or do not want to continue to any tertiary education would have attained some skills as trades persons. However, lack of financial resources and other factors like corruption, absence of qualified teachers, and lack of electricity in many rural communities for the operation of machines affected this policy.

⁸⁵ See Leith and Soderling 2003, p.70

⁸⁶Writing on *The Great Conversation Revisited*, in the **Guide to the Great Books of the Western World**, Adler differentiated between the 'goods of the body' and the 'goods of the mind'. To Adler, the goods of the body are food and drink, sleep, clothing, and shelter; the 'goods of the mind' are information, knowledge, understanding and wisdom. Lack of sufficient quantity of goods of the body is a life threatening deprivation because they are indispensable for sustaining life. To possess them is not necessary, but a source of pleasure and enjoyment. On the other hand goods of the mind enable us not only to live but to live well and at a higher level, in addition to providing pleasure and enjoyment (see Nnadozie 2003:226).

2.4.2 Ethnic Diversity

Ethnic Diversity is one of the factors that have contributed to slow economic growth and economic development in the Ghana. Ghana has diverse ethnic groups with the major ones such the Akans, the Ewes, Ga-Adangbwe, Dagombas, Moshie to mention a few⁸⁷. The different ethnic groups with each speaking different languages with different culture do not enhance cooperation among policy makers. It has led to conflicts in some parts of the country and its implications do not encourage development. Though Ghana has not been experiencing civil war like many other African countries, significant numbers of localised wars have impeded economic development rendering many people poor. For instance the Kokomba-Nanumba war occurred in the Northern Ghana, 1995 resulted in more than thousand (1000) dead and one hundred and fifty thousand (150 000) people displaced⁸⁸. This brought a lot of pressure in the capital city and other big cities leading to overcrowding, ‘streetism’, and many slum areas created in the capital. Typical example is an area found in Accra called ‘*Sodom and Gomorra*’⁸⁹ where living standard is poorly poor. No water no, no toilet facilities, no street roads basically lack of basic amenities and the people living there are mainly the victims of the tribal war who fled from the Northern part of Ghana to Accra.

Another ethnic conflict in Ghana is the Dagbon conflict, which is still unresolved. The conflict, which erupted in 2002 in northern Yendi, resulted in the murder (beheaded) of the paramount chief of Dagbon ethnic group and forty of his followers. Again in January 2006, a new chieftaincy feud erupted among the Nanumba in the town of Bimbila – Northern Ghana. Supporters of two-rival candidates for vacant chieftaincy clashed with machetes and small arms, injuring several and forcing the government to send troops by using the resources to enforce dusk to dawn curfew⁹⁰. This has slowdown development in the area because of lack of peace and security. It prevented both the internal and external investors to invest in the region, which in turn affected the country’s development as whole. Another implication is that it drains the country’s limited resources as the government is forced to spend huge sum

⁸⁷ For more about ethnic groups in Ghana see <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/tribes/> and also www.indexmundi.com

⁸⁸ For more on Kokomba and Nanumba traditions a long standing conflict that existed until the 1996 Peace Accord between the two ethnic groups brought the conflict to an end, though the place is still venerable conflicts, (see Wien 2008).

⁸⁹ A suburb in Accra made up of slums with a lot of social vices like prostitution, pick-pocketing and hardship living earned the area the name because it seen having the characteristics of the Biblical description of Sodom and Gomorra.

⁹⁰ See Joy News report, January 2007 at www.myjoyonline.com

of money to maintain peace and security thereby preventing other developmental projects to take place.

Added to the above, ethnic diversity does not make people to vote on policies but rather vote on ethnic lines and kin group⁹¹. For instance, majority of Ewes usually vote for the NDC party because the party founder, Jerry Rawlings is Ewe. The Majority of the Ashantes if not all will never vote for the NDC but rather vote for NPP because they view NDC as Ewe oriented party and see the NPP as more of Ashantes or ‘Akanised’. Throughout elections conducted in Ghana since 1992, the Ashantes vote massively for the NPP party and the Ewes did the same for the NDC⁹². To borrow the phrase from Nnadozie (2003) ethnic diversity often leads to ‘*pork barrel politics*’ and that has been the case in Ghana.⁹³

In fact there have been empirical studies on the effects of ethnic diversity on economic development of a nation. In Ghana, Garg and Collier (1999) analysed the effect of ethnic diversity in the Ghanaian labour market and found out that ethnic diversity had consequences that must have been highly problematic. According to them, “controlling for other characteristics, workers from whichever ethnic group was locally the largest were commanding a substantial wage premium. This was explained in terms of the power of kin group patronage in promotion, with larger groups having disproportionate power”.⁹⁴ Esterly and Levine (1997) have also concluded that ethnic diversity makes political cooperation more difficult. Thus at various sizes of organisation, cooperation more difficult – damaging public sector.⁹⁵ Horowitz has also stated in Nnadozie (2003) that ethnic diversity is often accompanied by hostility to other groups. Moreover, Emminghaus et al. conclude that “the formation of development of civil identities has led to primordial violence in today’s world.”⁹⁶

In spite of the above views that ethnic diversity serves as incitement to victimisation and civil war; and consequently affect economic development, there have been counter studies by political scientists and economists that ethnic diversities do not necessarily lead to

⁹¹ Looking at the implications of ethnic diversity, Paul Collier emphasised that in Africa, party identification is normally ethnic except where such identification is deliberately suppressed as cited in Nnadozie 2003, p.158-159.

⁹² See Ghana Electoral Commission at: www.ec.org.gh

⁹³ p.159

⁹⁴ See Nnadozie 2003, p.53-54

⁹⁵ Nnadozie 2003, p.153-154

⁹⁶ p.154

large scale conflicts⁹⁷. It is undeniable fact that diversity in culture and ethnicity could also lead to positive economic development through proper management of diverse ideas from diverse people – unity in diversity. Nevertheless, where ethnic diversity is not properly managed, as it is in some parts of Ghana, it leads to victimisation and oppression of minority groups. In other words, it might not necessary lead to conflicts but entrenched inequalities in society leading to unfair distribution of the country's economic growth. The inequality in the distribution of resources as a result of ethnic dominance and fragmentations deprived minorities their rights to fair share of natural cake; and in an attempt to come out from this oppression spark up conflicts with their negative implications on the country's development as whole. Government of Ghana should engage in virulent nationalism to build a national identity based on unity in diversity⁹⁸. This will make Ghanaians to see themselves as one people without discriminating against each other. In this regard people will see themselves as Ghanaians and not Akans, Moshie, Ewes, Gans, Moshie and so on.

2.4.3 Political Instability

Political unrest that occurred during the period 1966 to 1981 slowed the economic development in Ghana. Ghana in 1966 experienced her first coup due growing inequality and marginalization of ethnic minorities. The first coup was led by General Ankrah in 1966 to overthrow Nkrumah's CPP regime. This marked the beginning of subsequent coups in 1972 by Acheampong, 1979 and 1981 by Rawlings. Rawlings regime held on to power until 1992 when ban on political elections was lifted and since then Ghana has been enjoying democratic system of government coupled with political stability.⁹⁹

The continuous political unrest which the country encountered from 1966 to 1981 negatively, affected the economic growth in the country. First, it affected the interactions among individuals and organisations in a negative way. Thus it caused an increase in the

⁹⁷ See the same pages of Nnadozie 2003, p.153-159 where arguments of implications [negatives] of ethnic diversity on economic development were made.

⁹⁸ There should be more education to encourage intermarriages among ethnic groups. This will eventually break ethnic barriers and its associated problems since couples with different ethnic backgrounds will bring forth to children who belong to both groups. With this, people will be cautious of any ethnic oriented decisions they take because any problem as a result will affect not only one group but also all of them. More importantly, there is the need to promote intercultural education in our education system. Intercultural is form of education which respects, celebrates and recognises the normality of diversity in all areas of human life. It is education, which promotes equality and human rights, challenges unfair discrimination, and promotes the values upon which equality is built. This will encourage us to reflect on our differences and engage in dialogue to resolve problems confronting us. For more on intercultural education see: www.ncca.ie/uploadfiles/publications/intercultural.pdf

⁹⁹ See Oquaye 1985/2004

transaction cost thereby affecting economic growth directly by reducing the productivity of existing resources. Secondly, it created uncertainty in the country, thereby affecting growth indirectly through decreased accumulation of resources and slow technical progress. Moreover, it led to corruption, proliferation of rules and regulations, confusion, misallocation of public resources and bureaucratic inefficiency. These were the order of the day in Ghana during the 1980s.¹⁰⁰ Again, political instability also led to a decline in investment in physical and human capital, and research development.

The political instability in Ghana from 1966-1981 led to inability of the country to develop and implement necessary policy changes. For instance, the frequent changes in government in Ghana brought about lack of continuity in educational policies, and the steep decline in the economy during the period from 1973 to 1982. The percentage of GDP allocated to education had dropped from 6.4 percent to 1.0 percent in 1983.¹⁰¹ In other words, it reversed many democratic gains thereby making it difficult to implement and sustain viable and effective economic policies for growth and development. As Leith and Soderling contended, “more generally, once the administratively simple reforms were completed the mid ‘80s, state capacity did not grow as fast as available finance. State capacity, in turn depends on effective institutions which cannot be re-built overnight; and Ghana’s progress continues to be held back by the institutional constraints”.¹⁰²

2.4.4 Land Tenure System

Land tenure system¹⁰³ is one of the issues that have led to slow economic growth and development in Ghana. It hinders the ability of potential investors, organisations and individuals alike to acquire land on reasonable terms, at the right time and in the right location. It does not enhance agricultural development and at the same time affects housing policies in the country. Communal land tenure system that is commonly practised in Ghana has contributed to lack of agricultural development in Ghana, which in turns leads to slow economic growth and development. It prevents farmers from having unfettered access to communal land. Many communities restrict prospective farmers to get access to land and cultivate in large quantities. As Abusa put it commented:

¹⁰⁰ See Leith and Soderling 2003 and Oquaye 1985/2004

¹⁰¹ See Avotri, Owusu-Darko, Eghan and Ocansey 1999; and Leith and Soderling 2003

¹⁰² Leith and Soderling 2003, p.71

¹⁰³ For much on Land Tenure System, see Nnadozie 2003, p.354-360

It is extremely difficult if not impossible for low salaried workers who constitute majority of the population to make outright purchase of houses in Ghana. Hence prospective home owners prefer to acquire their piece of land and undertake to develop such land incrementally or in piecemeal fashion, (some kind of informal development process); however smooth access to land devoid of bureaucratic procedures and litigations is almost inevitable in the developing World.¹⁰⁴

Moreover, because many farmers for instance do not own land in Ghana, they are reluctant to improve farmland, which in turn affects productivity. Lack of security of tenure also makes it difficult for farmers to secure loans to expand their farms. For instance, most cocoa farmers in Ghana find it difficult to secure loan because they cannot use land or farms as collateral¹⁰⁵. Usually the lands farmers are farming on belong to the chief or a family and cultivate the land on the basis of what is locally referred to as ‘abusa’. That is the land owners, mostly male heads of family and traditional rulers give the land to the farmer and whatever comes out from the farm (produce), at the end of the season they divide it into three, the farmer takes one and two belongs to the owner of the land.

In fact, communal ownership also lacks flexibility and this makes land seen by innovative farmers as immobile commodity and non-marketable to strangers. Brue raised eight issues¹⁰⁶ related to land tenure system in Africa and these are common issues found in Ghana.¹⁰⁷ Land tenure rights are not working well in Ghana. It is difficult to determine who owns land due to communal land tenure system and this has resulted in many conflicts, litigations, deaths (resulting from land guards’ activities) and these do not encourage prospective investors to acquire land for developmental projects and farming. More to the point the land tenure system discriminated against women when it comes to ownership of land since usually the head of lands under this system is the male head of the family and passes on to other young males generationally. According to UNDP Report, discrimination on the basis of sex may deny women access to land, even in matrilineal societies it is male

¹⁰⁴ See Abusa 2004.

¹⁰⁵ Cocoa farmer asserted during my fieldwork at Bia District, “we don’t get anything from the farming...all the cocoa has got burnt but there is no money to buy fertilisers, no support from anywhere; we have been buying chemicals and fertilisers ourselves and now we don’t have money” (Farmer [woman] at Kwamebikrom).

¹⁰⁶ Among the eight issues raised by Brue are land use and conservation; security of tenure and farm management; exclusivity of tenure and farm management; efficiency in resource allocation; land – secured credit; fragmentation and subdivisions of holdings; person per land ratio, population mobility, and citizenship; Gender and land tenure.

¹⁰⁷ Nnadozie 2003, p.354-357.

family-head that control lands.¹⁰⁸ A study by Christopher Udry (Udry, 1996) has also demonstrated that the unequal distribution of inputs across women and men's plots in Burkina Faso did not maximised yields. Another classical study by Blackden and Bhanu (1999) *Gender, Growth and Poverty Reduction*¹⁰⁹, emphasised that targeting productive resources such as access to land to women will promote significant poverty reduction with growth for sub-Saharan Africa because African women do so much agriculture. In Ghana women contribute to about 60 percent towards agriculture productivity. Equal distribution of lands will boost women contribution to agriculture and this will not only help them to come out of poverty as a group but also contribute to the total alleviation of poverty in Ghana as a whole.

There is no doubt that land tenure system (communal land tenure system) has contributed to slow economic growth and development in many African countries. As Gyasi commented:

Constraints on development have been associated with lack of clarity about the land allocating authorities and about boundaries; disputes, trespassing; inequitable tenancies; capital exploitation; lack of security for peasants; especially tenants as well as strangers or alien farmers; inability to use the community owned land as collateral for bank loan; and customary system of inheritance, which in certain cases exclude females, and entails subdivisions among succeeding generations with consequential fragmentation of holdings

¹¹⁰

Land tenure system constraints the adoption of new agricultural technology – making Ghana to meet agricultural products for consumption and exports to boost the economy. Ghana has not done much to resolve the problems associated land tenure system. It is undeniable fact that efficient land tenure system is good for development. Therefore, land tenure system in Ghana needs to go under changes to ensure economic growth and improvement in the lives of the people.

¹⁰⁸ Ghana UNDP Report 2007, p.81.

¹⁰⁹ As cited in O'Laughlin 1999, p.23

¹¹⁰ See Nnadozie 2003, p.358

2.4.5 Unfair trade

Unfavourable terms of trade and injustice in global politics have impeded Ghana's economic growth and development for better life. The United States and Europe have been heavily subsidizing their own farming sectors and setting agricultural trade barriers, making it very difficult for developing nations like Ghana to get their share of the export market. For instance, most local rice and poultry industries, the textile industries are collapsing because they cannot compete with their foreign counterparts¹¹¹. In most developed countries the farmers are given subsidies and therefore they are able to produce more leading to low prices for their products hence making it difficult for the local farmers to compete. In his speech, '*cutting Agricultural Subsidies*' (globalenvision.org/library/6/309), former World Bank chief economist Nick Stern stated in 2002 the rich countries spent \$300 billion on export subsidies for agricultural products alone, roughly six times their total development aid. He disclosed that cows receive annual subsidies of about \$2,700 each year in Japan and \$900 in Europe – far above the annual income of most human beings¹¹²

In addition to the above, usually foreign companies dump their products in Ghanaian markets without any restrictions. However, it is very difficult for Ghana to send finished products to developed countries if they realised it is going to affect the market for the same goods produced locally even though they have the same quality and sometimes Ghana's products are of high quality. According to former World Bank chief economist (Nick Stern), "escalating tariffs-duties that are lowest on unprocessed raw materials and rise sharply with each step of processing and value added - for undermining manufacturing and employment in poor countries, thus helping to confine Ghana and Cote D'Ivoire to the export of unprocessed cocoa beans, Uganda and Kenya to the export of raw coffee beans, and Mali and Burkina Faso to the export of raw cotton"¹¹³

Moreover, the international price for Ghana's cocoa and Gold has not been stable. Prices for Ghanaian products and that of other African countries are determined by the buyers

¹¹¹ In the year 2005, the Juapong Textile industry (one of the biggest local textile companies in Ghana) laid all the workers and shut the company down because it could not compete with foreign companies due to subsidies from their government making them produce at cheaper rate and they dump them in Ghanaian markets. Ghanaian showed patronage to these products since they were even cheaper than the locally made products since Ghana government have not been able to subsidise local industries just as the advanced western countries like United States and European countries do.

¹¹² Pogge 2005, p.25. As in the foot notes 4 of Tomas Pogge's essay: 'Recognised and violated by international law: The human rights of the global poor' p.25).

¹¹³ Pogge 2005, p.25.

(Developed countries) mostly the West. They decide when to buy, at what price they should buy and how even payment are made. In fact, Sidwell (2008) has argued that the current global fair trade is in itself not fair. As he puts it: “Fair Trade is unfair: it seeks to reduce voluntary exchange to a government controlled privilege and to refuse agrarian societies the opportunity to become rich.”¹¹⁴ The West can help Ghana trade its way out of poverty by cutting or eliminating tariffs and quotas on Ghanaian goods and give fair price for her cocoa. Nick Stern estimated that full elimination of agricultural protection and production subsidies in the rich countries would raise agricultural and food exports from low and middle-income countries by 24% and total annual rural income in these countries by about \$60 billion [about three quarters of the global poor live in such rural areas].¹¹⁵ It is some of these injustices that have made, Sachs to comment as:

as global world, we should ensure that the international rules of the game in economic management do not adversely or inadversely set snares along the lower rungs of the ladder in the form of inadequate development assistance, protectionist trade barriers destabilising global financial practices, poorly designed intellectual rules for intellectual property, and that prevent the lower income world from climbing up the rungs of development.¹¹⁶

2.4.6 Culture of corruption

Ghana is not poor but some people are holding the money and not circulating it. The big men, those in big positions are holding the money and prevent us to get our share. It is the leaders who are making people poor. They are corrupt and selfish¹¹⁷. In 1997, UNDP research concluded that corruption has a pervasive and troubling impact on the poor, since it distorts public choices in favour of the wealthy and powerful, and reduces the state’s ability to provide a social safety net. Such corruption would interfere with the right to development, which is an inalienable right enjoyed by all people including the poor¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁴ Sidwell 2008, p.29.

¹¹⁵ Pogge 2005, p.25.

¹¹⁶ Sachs 2005, p.24.

¹¹⁷ That was a response that was given by a receptionist (National Service Personnel) at the Bia District Assembly when I asked her why Ghana is poor. Yes, I agreed with the young receptionist that Ghana itself is not poor but those that power has been entrusted to steer the affairs of the country from communities up to the national level have used their power to rather prevent many ordinary people to get their fair share of the national cake due to their actions or inactions; such using resource meant for development projects for their personal enrichment.

¹¹⁸ See: http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/docs05/Thusitha_final.pdf

A major problem affecting Ghana's economic growth and economic development can be said to be corruption¹¹⁹ which all boils down to lack of respect for human dignity. Throughout Ghana Political history, anytime there is military takeover in the country the reason used by the military usurpers is that the then administration was corrupt; and one of the main reasons for change of power from one democratic governance to another during democratic dispensation.¹²⁰ Corruption encompasses all forms of irregular, unethical, immoral and or illegal practices and transactions by people in official duties.¹²¹ Corruption has defied years of economic and political reforms and has continued to grow and undermine efforts to improve the living standards of Ghanaians and to foster democratic government.¹²²

Available empirical evidences show that corruption is very pervasive in the Ghanaian society. For instance, the Transparency International Ghana, commented in its 2004 reported that, "the culture of graft and corruption has over time become deep seated in Ghana"¹²³ throughout all society both with the public and private sectors" (TI report, 2004). Moreover, a survey conducted by Ghana Integrative Initiative and the Centre for Democracy and Development revealed that corruption has become rampant in Ghanaian society. For instance the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) government and corruption survey (2000) found that approximately 75 percent of households see corruption as serious problem in Ghana, with majority (66 percent) paying 10 percent of their incomes (the 1-5 million Ghanaian Cedis income bracket) in bribes to public officials. Also, 44 percent of firms admit to making unofficial payments to public officials, with 27 percent frequently or always making such payments.

The study further revealed that unofficial payments constitute a regular feature of transactions between business firms and public services agencies; 56 percent of firms reported that service is frequently delivered once they make an unofficial payment. It was highlighted that 46 percent of unofficial payments to public officials are initiated by firms and 31 percent are solicited by public officials themselves; 50 percent of firms know in

¹¹⁹The misuse of public power, office or authority for private benefit-through bribery extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, speed money or embezzlement. See UNDP policy paper, July, 1998.

¹²⁰ See Oquaye 1985/2004 Soderling 2003

¹²¹ Kan'the Gitu, 1999 as cited in Mensah, Aboagye, Addo and Buatsi 2003, p.1

¹²² CDD Ghana, 200 as cited in Mensah and others 2003, p.1.

¹²³ It is common in Ghana to see parents bribing headmasters and headmistresses of the 'elite schools' to get academic placements for their wards preventing brilliant but needy students to gain admissions. All these lead to square pegs in round holes – causing inefficiency of labour and low productivity. It does not make the country to efficiently utilise its skilled labour resources since mostly unqualified people pay their way through leading to under-utilisation of national skilled or qualified people.

advance how much unofficial payment is required of them. The customs excise and preventive Service (CEPS) emerges as the most bribed public agency according to firms in the service, manufacturing, wholesale, and retail sectors. The Ministry of Roads and Transport is the most bribed agency, according to the construction industry. The regular police, internal Revenue Service, and the judiciary are also believed to receive unofficial payments from all sectors business surveyed¹²⁴. Again, the 2002, Afrobarometer survey found that the Ghana Police Service is the most corrupt institution in Ghana¹²⁵.

Before I end this section, it is important to mention that factors like slavery and colonialism did had negative impact on Ghana's development before and even after independence. It is arguably true that Ghana after 50 years of independence should stop complaining about colonialism and slavery. It is also important to note that colonialism and slavery contributed to slow economic growth and development in many African countries like Ghana. It depopulated the country's population resulting to lack of able-body people to perform agricultural activities and other sectors of development.¹²⁶ In fact it led to the brain washed of many Ghanaians that nothing about black man is correct. Psychologically, it led to lack of confidence in many Africans. Till date many Ghanaians show high patronage for western goods compared with that of made-in-Ghana goods due to the fact that colonialists imprinted in their mind that everything about black man is not good. However, it is time Ghanaians deal with internal problems to prove to the world that Ghana is capable of managing her own affairs when given the chance. Currently, the threat of unfair trade, corruption, bad educational system, irregularities in land tenure system and ethnic conflicts should be of much concern than colonialism and slavery. In fact, the professor of history, Tekeste Negash has commented that both Africans and Western Europeans and American contributed and benefitted from the practices of slavery and colonialism¹²⁷

2.5 Who is responsible for the cause (s) of poverty in Ghana?

Several factors have been raised by scholars in connection with why Ghana has not developed up to expectation hence rendering many Ghanaians living in poverty. Some of these factors have been reviewed. It could be seen that most of these factors are man-made

¹²⁴ The study by CDD survey (2000 as cited in Mensah, Aboagye, Addo and Buatsi 2003, p. 23) which revealed veritable *culture of corruption* can also be accessed at the website:

<http://www.cipe.org/regional/africa/pdf/ACMF%20book.pdf>

¹²⁵ For details of the 2002 Afrobarometer survey see: <http://www.afrobarometer.org/papers/AfropaperNo28.pdf>

¹²⁶ See Nnadozie 2003.

¹²⁷ Lectures on Slave Trade and Colonialism, Dalarna University Centre for African Studies, Falun, Sweden.

problems. Ghana is blessed with abundant mineral resources with its soil supporting one of the most demanded cash crops (cocoa) in the world and have not experienced much more severe natural disasters as some parts of the world have had. In this regard, it will be certainly unfair to attribute the poor living conditions of many Ghanaians to natural order. So if Ghana's problems of underdevelopment are man-made then who is (are) responsible?

Two main theories have been very popular among many Ghanaians when it comes to who is to be held responsible for their sufferings. First, there are those who blame the individuals themselves for being poor and the second are those who attribute the problem to systemic failure¹²⁸. Thus, the individual blame or "culture of poverty" hypothesis and systemic-blame (internal and external) hypothesis have been used to explain the origins of poverty that have kept some people or families in perpetual poverty (Afrifa 2004).

The various studies reviewed so far can be categorised into these two hypotheses (particularly the systemic-blame hypothesis) with regards to why many Ghanaians are poor. These hypotheses or theories ran through the views of the residents of Bia District in my fieldwork for this study¹²⁹. In the study by his study by Holger Weiss on Muslim discourse on poverty and marginalisation in Ghana, these same hypotheses ran through the position of Muslims in the Northern Region of Ghana on poverty and distress.¹³⁰ What is important is that the systemic-blame (made up of internal and external factors) has been more empirically proven to be the generator of poverty in Ghana. As Afrifa (2004) commented:

Although poverty may have both individual and systemic origins, the latter (both internal and external) is preponderantly responsible for the continuing poverty of the poor, in many developing countries. Unless there is good internal governance and a serious international effort at changing the world economic order and sharing the potential equitably, poor countries and their impoverished people will continue to wallow in poverty.¹³¹

This study shares this light and hold the thesis that the underlying causes of poverty in Ghana is due to internal and external power-holders. By power-holders I do not mean only political leaders. It also includes any individual whom economic, political and traditional powers have been given, to run the affairs of the country but use their powers to abuse the

¹²⁸ This position of explaining the causes of poverty in Ghana have been well articulated in studies by Afrifa (2004); Ayittey 2002; Weiss 2007; Beckford 2007; and Nkrumah 1965.

¹²⁹ The position of Bia People is well presented in chapter 5.

¹³⁰ Weiss 2007

¹³¹ p.93

system for their personal gains which in turn impede development. This also include external power-holders (those in advanced country) who use their political and economic powers to manipulate international trade systems; and also connive with international financial institutions and multinational corporations to subject already impoverished countries to harsh loan conditionalities and killing-me-softly foreign policies to benefit their countries at the expense of developing countries.

More importantly, this thesis holds that most of the causes of poverty are all connected with the issue of human rights. The ground on human rights not to suffer poverty or right to avoid poverty has been well grounded by Caney (2003). According to Caney, the duties to ensure that persons enjoy the human rights not to suffer poverty can be based on four accounts: the Nationalist, Institutional, Interactional and Hybrid or General Version Accounts.¹³² The Nationalist Account maintains that person human right not to suffer poverty is met falls on his fellow-nationals. The Institutional Account holds that members of an ‘institutional scheme’ have a responsibility for the justice of this scheme and hence that the duty to ensure that person’s human right not to suffer poverty is met falls on the other members of his or her ‘institutional scheme’. With the Interactional Account, a person’s human right not to suffer poverty is met falls on all other persons who can help (whether or not they are co-nationals and whether or not they belong to common ‘institutional scheme’). Finally, the hybrid account as the name stands is a combination of the strengths of the national, institutional and interactional accounts to ensure that person’s right not to suffer poverty is met. Drawing from Caney’s assertion, it is the duty of both internal and external power holders not to subject ordinary Ghanaians to abject poverty.

Having looked at the literature on Ghana’s economy and especially the level of poverty, some possible causes and theoretical bases on poverty and human rights in general, the next chapter will deal with a case study which was purposely conducted in the Bia District. This was done to know the position of Bia people on poverty and its impact on their development and total well-being as humans. It is however important to let readers know about the process (methodology) of the field work.

¹³²Caney 2003, p. 4-5 and 17

Chapter Three

3.0 Methodology: Research Process

This study is based on both primary and secondary sources. A participatory action research was conducted in a selected District in the Ghana (Bia District in the Western Region of Ghana). The Bia District has been tagged as one of the poorest Districts in Ghana but produces the bulk of Ghana's Cocoa and timber. I decided to conduct a study in this District to seek the views of the people about why the place lacked many basic amenities that make life worth living in spite of all the resources the area gives to the country. The people interviewed include power hold holders¹³³ (politicians) and traditional leaders, officials of cocoa firms, security agents (the police, immigration and customs officials), and civil servants like teachers, internal revenue officials; and students, farmers, traders, tradesmen and women and cocoa labourers. In all, 75 people participated in the study.¹³⁴ Being a qualitative study, a theoretical form of sampling¹³⁵ was used to get interviewees responses to my questions. Some of the interviews were held in group and others particularly those with government officials were held one-on-one

Participants were interviewed either in groups or on one-on-one where Semi-structured interview guide was used during interviews.¹³⁶ Questions were asked in connection with their living conditions – their ability to make three square meals, access to hospital and

¹³³The use of power-holder is not only about political leaders or government official (Executive, Legislative and Judiciary) but anybody whom power has been entrusted in any sector of the country including Managing Directors of both private and government organisations including traditional leaders and religious leaders.

¹³⁴ Details of number of people interviewed were: 6 government officials (including Magistrate, Member of Parliament, Assembly Men, District coordinator and district planning officer), 3 Bank officials, 3 religious leaders, 6 security officers, 6 cocoa firm officials, 3 traditional rulers, 20 farmers, 4 trades persons, 3 traders, 4 drivers, 8 cocoa labourers ('loading boys'), 6 students and 3 medical officials.

Some of the interviews were held in groups and others on one-on-one.

¹³⁵This strategy was advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his or her data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. The process of Data collection is *controlled* by emerging theory, whether substantive or formal (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p.45 as cited in Bryman 2004, p.304-305). Thus, one continues to sample interviewees until the categories achieve theoretical saturation and conduct further selection of interviewees on the basis of emerging theoretical focus. It is a 'defining property of grounded theory' and it is concerned with the refinement of ideas, rather than boosting sample size. It also focuses not only on people but events and scenes are also considered. See Bryman 2004, p.3304-305 & 2004, p.334-335)

¹³⁶ In semi structured interview, the researcher has a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered (interview guide) but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply. Questions that are not included in the interview guided may be asked by the interviewer in the process based on what interviewees had said and its importance to the aim of the research. See Bryman 2004, p.320-321; and Gillham (2000).

ability to pay for health care services, school fees, good drinking water, roads and other basic necessities of life. The questions were centred on issues about the level of poverty; what or who they think is making them poor. I also asked them about what they think can be done to reduce the level of poverty to bring about improvement in their living conditions.

Materials used in gathering their views included, note books, pens, digital camera, voice recording machines. Responses from the interviewees were recorded and transcribed. I sometimes took notes whilst the respondents told their own stories or give answers to my questions. Usually as they spoke, it led to other important questions to be asked. Some of them gave detailed accounts of what they have been going through and they displayed how disgruntled they were as they spoke to me. If I realised there was a particular issue which were raised frequently in the process of interviewing, I did my best to ask many people I can to establish how pervasive those issues were.

To serve as evidence, the nature of the roads, shelter, market centres and other scenes were captured on camera. Also photographs were taken with each individual or groups I interviewed with their consent sought first. My research assistant (Kwame Adu) a native of Debiso-Essam (the District capital) helped in this direction. Most of these photographs could be found at the appendix.

The areas of operation included Debiso, Essam, Asuopiri, Kwamebikrom(KBK), Kwadwo Aba, Osei Kojokrom, Yawmatwa, Kaase, Kumkumso, Aduafua and Akaatiso. (See the map of the Bia District). Individuals were approached in their houses, offices, warehouses, in the public places like market centres, farms, and commercial vehicles to seek their views¹³⁷.

I reached most of these areas with my research assistant by a hired taxi and sometimes commercial vehicles (popularly known as passenger cars). In some of the places, it took two days to finish my interviews. This was due to the fact the sometimes I had to do follow up to complete issues I was interested in. In other instances, there were no 'buses' running to return to my place of abode (Debiso). The collection of data lasted for four weeks.

¹³⁷Photographs were taking at the end of interview by seeking the permission of my respondents and made them aware they will be used for the purpose of this study. See the appendices for some images I captured in the course of my field work.

The field work was purposely conducted to find out who is internally abusing the rights of the people and for that matter the reality of human poverty in the area. Thus, it was conducted to get a data in addition to support the scanty secondary data with regards to poor economic conditions in some parts of the country. In that direction, it gave a concrete picture of what is happening at the grass roots level when it comes to measuring the living conditions of Ghanaians rather than solely depending on governmental and international quantitative figures.

During the analysis, I decided on a tape-based analysis where comments directly related to the topic at hand or the themes involved together with notes made during interviews were used. The analysis of transcribed raw data or comments from informants during interviews was based on both ‘question’ and ‘theme’ ways of analysis.¹³⁸ I analysed question by question by looking for themes within questions and across questions and themes that cut across questions. In other words, questions, themes and subthemes that were developed before and during interviews were presented and qualitatively analysed.

Both primary and secondary data were discussed to come out with a conclusion.

¹³⁸ See Krueger 1998, p. 45

Chapter Four

4.0 The Bia District and why it was chosen for my field work

The brief history of Bia District, why it was selected as my area of study and data analysis will be discussed here.

4.1 Brief description of the geo-political history of Bia District

The Bia District was carved out of the Juaboso Bia District in 2004 by Legislative Instrument (LI) 1762 and officially / formally inaugurated in August, 2004. The District is richly endowed with human and numerous natural resources particularly natural tourist attraction sites ranging from a large number of labour, rich soil, good climatic condition, and tropical rainforest with variety of timber species, cash, food crops and livestock. The district, which is one of the now seventeen districts in the Western Region, is located between latitude 6°6N and 7°0N and longitude 2°40W and 3°15W. The district shares boundaries with the Dormaa District to the North, Asunafo North District to the East, La Cote d'Ivoire to the West and Juaboso District to the South.

The district capital, Essam–Debiso is located 420 km to the North –West of Sekondi–Takoradi (the Regional capital) and 250 km to Kumasi, the nearest commercial centre. The District has a total land area of 2,185.3 square kilometres, thus making it the seventh largest district in the western Region of Ghana. The 2000 Population and Housing Census indicate that the district has a population of 153,925 and is made up of 79,271 males and 74,654 females. The population growth rate of the district is 3.5% as compared to the regional and national figures of 3.2% and 2.7% respectively. With growth rate held constant, the population of the district has increased to 195,836 in 2007.

The soil in the district is mainly of the ferric acrisols and dyscric fluvisols type. The ferric acrisols type of soil covers about 98% of the entire soil in the district which supports the cultivation of a wide variety of crops including cocoa, coffee, oil palm, plantain, and cassava. The district is the largest producer of cocoa in Ghana. It also has large tract of forest

with different timber species. Added to the above it can boast of a big National Park – The Bia National Park for tourist attraction.¹³⁹

4.2 Why Bia District was chosen

The Bia District was chosen because it's regarded as one of the poorest districts in Ghana despite being the largest producer of Ghana's cocoa. According to the International Cocoa Organisation (ICCO) the country's commercial crop in 2005/2006 reached a record high of 646,000 tonnes¹⁴⁰. The largest amount of this figure comes from the Western Region of Ghana, particular the Bia District or the Sefwi area. This has been confirmed by study conducted by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in Ghana¹⁴¹. Vigneri (2007) has reported that regionally, there was a strong indication that the increase in [cocoa] production was concentrated in the Northern Western Region (the Sefwi area).¹⁴² This is where Bia District is located.

However, in spite of the potentials of the district, it is counted as one of the poorest districts in Ghana. As stated in the District socio-economic data, the full benefit of the resource potentials to the development of the district is yet to be realized as the District lacks the basic socio-economic facilities like good roads, national telecommunication, good second cycle schools and tertiary institutions to train the manpower, good health facilities, good drinking water, high technology, agro- processing industries, poorly developed tourist attraction sites and the remoteness of the district. The district has poor educational record with the highest illiteracy rate of 58.7 percent in Western Region. Moreover, 60 percent of the localities are situated more than 30kilometres from a hospital contrary to the official norm that no citizen should be 8 kilometres away from the nearest health facility¹⁴³. In fact, as I travelled through the various communities to seek the views of the people about their living conditions, revealed the untold stories of the people of Bia District. Poor nutrition, lack of

¹³⁹ This part was written based on information gathered from socio-economic data given to me by the District Panning Officer during my field work. Contact the Bia District Assembly, Private Mail Bag, and Sefwi Essam-Debiso.

¹⁴⁰ See the 2005/2006 annual report by the ICCO at: http://www.icco.org/pdf/An_report/anrep0506english.pdf

¹⁴¹ For details of this study visit: <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/odi-publications/project-briefings/4-drivers-cocoa-production-growth-ghana.pdf>

¹⁴² Vigneri 2007, p.4

¹⁴³ Some of these figures even represent when the district was joint- Juabeso/Bia with Juabeso being District capital which deprived most of the areas of now Bia District. For instance, there is no qualified medical doctor in the district. There was only one qualified medical doctor when it was a joint district (Juabeso-Bia) for the entire population of 250, 000 but with Bia separated from Juabeso, the doctor's operation only covers Juabeso. For more on demographic figures on the Bia District see also: <http://www.modernghana.com/GhanaHome/regions/western.asp>

proper sanitation facilities, very poor rural housing conditions that lack anti malaria bed nets are clear manifestations of faces of poverty in spite of the Districts' contribution to the national cake.

In addition to the above, there have been reports of injustices in the cocoa growing areas in Ghana which have deprived many cocoa farmers in their fair share. For instance, a study by Beckford (2007) revealed how ordinary farmers including children in Sefwi Wiaso in the Western region of Ghana work under harsh conditions but cannot meet basic amenities in life due to injustices in the cocoa industry which end up depriving many cocoa farmers deserving price for their produce. The study revealed that many of the cocoa farming communities lack basic infrastructural facilities¹⁴⁴. In their study on Cocoa production in Trinidad, Brazil and Ghana, Leiter and Harding (2004) concluded that the decline in Ghana's cocoa production is because it has been ran on poor incentives for its small holders [rural farmers].¹⁴⁵

In his documentary on the father of Ghana's cocoa, John Tanner reported that cocoa exports have been used to finance luxury imports for the wealthy in Ghana and cocoa taxes paid for much of the civil service. The pay-roll of the official Company in charge of Ghana's cocoa industry (COCOBOD) grew from 22,000 cedi in 1964 to over 100,000 cedi in 1985, all on the back of cocoa farmers¹⁴⁶. However, cocoa farmers have been receiving little money from their labour to the extent that by the early 1980s villagers were being paid so little that they left the beans on the ground to rot. Some of these injustices made John Tanner to describe the Ghanaian cocoa farmers as "the goose that laid the eggs but the goose was never fed"¹⁴⁷. In related studies, reports have been made of injustices in Ghana cocoa economy like price policies designed only to extract surplus from the sector for the benefit of urban bureaucracy and non-agricultural sectors. These practices and other detrimental policies like overvalued exchange rate made tens of thousands of tons of Ghana's cocoa smuggled to neighbouring Ivory Coast in 70s.¹⁴⁸ Roe and Schneider (1992) also reported that the COCOBOD employed approximately 100,000 people or about 10 times the number

¹⁴⁴ See Beckford, R. (2008). "The great African Scandal". From website: <http://www.africanloft.com/robert-beckfords-documentary-the-great-african-scandal/>

¹⁴⁵ Leiter and Harding 2004, p.126

¹⁴⁶ The figures given are based on old Ghana cedi. That's 22,000 and 100, 000 will now be quoted as 2.20GHC (1.53 USD) and 10.00GHC (6.98 USD) based on the current status of the studies after the redenomination in 2007.

¹⁴⁷ Tanner, J.(2006). "Father of Ghana's cocoa". From: <http://www.ghanadistricts.com/home/>

¹⁴⁸ Jacobeit1991 in Leiter and Harding 2004, p.124.

employed when cocoa production was at its peak. Around 25,000 of these were estimated to be non-existent or ‘ghost’ workers.¹⁴⁹

According to Ghana UNDP Report (2007), socio- economic exclusion has led to a situation where producers [farmers] laboured in vain for the urban traders to prosper. In the major cocoa growing areas like Enchi, Juabeso-Bia and Sefwi Wiawso districts of Western Region, farmers are sometimes cut-off by floods and unmotorable roads for several days from market centres (UNDP Ghana Report 2007). For instance, citing a study by Mensah-Abrampa (2004) in the Western Region of Ghana, reported that the average price difference between the farm-gate and the local centre at Daboase (15km away) was 20 percent while the difference within the city market (Takoradi), just 25km away was 80 percent.¹⁵⁰ As noted by a rural farmer in Sefwi Akontombra in the Western Region:

I produce cassava and plantain as my families’ main source of food and income. The nearest market centre from here is at Akontombra Nkwanta which is about 15 from here but the road is so bad during the rainy season such that only big trucks could come here and do that once a week on a market day. When we harvest our cassava and plantain we cannot really have any means of getting it to the market apart from waiting for the weekly truck or by covering the 15km distance on foot carrying nearly 20kg weight. The most selected alternative has been selling the produce to middlemen who manage to bring trucks to the farm gate. The “cost” of this is that we are offered incredibly low prices such that it becomes worthless selling the cassava and plantain. We cannot therefore produce more than what the family consumes since cannot store and getting to market centres is too tedious.¹⁵¹

This comment by a farmer show poor road network has served as an obstacle to their development in freedom.

More importantly, I wanted to know at the local level, why the place is the poorest among the poor in spite of the cocoa and the timber the area gives to the country; and how the people perceive poverty¹⁵². Added to this, though the area is regarded as one of the poorest district, much work has not been done by scholars in the field of poverty and development as

¹⁴⁹ Roe and Schneider 1992 in Leiter and Harding 2004, p.124.

¹⁵⁰ UNDP Country Report 2007, p.85.

¹⁵¹ UNDP Ghana Report 2007, p.85

¹⁵² This I believe helped me to have a grass roots perspective or local opinion on poverty and its impact on human rights.

a whole. It has painted the impression that it is only the Northern Regions and Central Regions of Ghana which harbours high level of poverty¹⁵³.

4.3 Bia peoples' position on poverty

Many Ghanaians have been registering their positions on poverty and injustices in many ways. A study by Weiss (2007) documented the positions of Muslims in Northern Ghana on poverty and distress. More over the work by Beckford (2007) revealed how some Ghanaians registered their distress on poverty as a result of injustices by power holders. The work by Afrifa (2004) also presented how some Ghanaians scholars and traditional rulers have used proverbs to explain poverty to show its threats and assaults on humans.

To support the secondary sources of poverty situation on Ghana, I decided to seek the views of the people of Bia District which is considered to be one of the poorest Districts in Ghana in spite of its contribution to revenue generation for the country.

As a resident accounted:

We can't pay school fees, buy clothes for our children, no electricity, good drinking water, communication centres. The leaders are really cheating us. They don't use the country's money for what is supposed to be used for. We need light, water....there's no money in the system. In fact it's a problem. We're really poor. We are poor to the extent that we find it difficult to feel as humans and sometimes we ask ourselves whether we are part of Ghana which our leaders and their members claim things are going on well...Those who think they are ok then they don't know what they're talking about. A bag of rice now is costing GHC 56 (\$US 49), no electricity and kerosene now cost GHC6 (\$US 5.2) a gallon. We are suffering! The leaders are sitting on our rights ['fahodie' as it is called in Akan languages of Ghana] (Kwame, cocoa farmer and his wife)¹⁵⁴.

In my interview with a Junior High School, teacher I tried to make a statement that Ghana's economy has been growing according to World Bank and government statistics, these were the comments:

My brother, poverty is very high in Ghana particularly in this area. If a journey of an hour takes you four hours due to bad road, if people sleep on bear floors with leaking roofs and get soaked whenever it rains, if people die every day from curable illness due to lack of facilities, you call it a doing well economy? It's 'the big men' who are enjoying because they get whatever they want to live good life. Teachers and many

¹⁵³ For more on regional poverty indicators see Ghana Statistical Service website or Ghana Living Standard Survey Standard (Round 5) at: http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/glss5_report.pdf

¹⁵⁴ BPPP May 2008, Interview 6

ordinary people here, we're suffering. It is better they take our lives may be it will be better after deaths...After all I see poverty as sickness; it makes you feel like not part of humans. In fact you have no value if you're poor since no one respects you in the society and your views are not considered in family discussions. You're like salt which has lost its taste – useless! (Kofi B, JHS teacher at Debiso)¹⁵⁵.

Besides some meanings attributed to poverty, they also seem to have fair knowledge of the source (s) of their predicaments. The view of a cocoa farmer at Kwamebikrom speaks a lot:

..we the people in the Bia here, the people in charge of the country and even some foreign firms don't respect us at all... As you may be aware, cocoa, timber and everything come from the Western Region but they way the timber for instance is been logged by government, we don't see anything. We'll be here and a firm from Europe say Britain will come and tell us all the timber is under its concession and that the government has given them the right to log all the timber based on their documents. The painful thing is that when they come, they don't event meet the community, they just start logging and when you ask them they tell you the concession is their concession. They go beyond cutting trees in our cocoa farms without any compensation in spite of the damage they cause to your farm...and they always say they've paid to the big men" (Cocoa farmer, Kwabena Koo)¹⁵⁶.

On the issue of health care, Mr. Kwabena Koo gave his view as:

Most people attribute deaths of their relatives to witches but I do not agree with them 100 percent. I think most of the cases are because of poverty because even doctors have made us to know that if you cut yourself in the farm, you should visit the hospital for treatment but the only health centre is private and expensive. Because people do not have enough money, they usually dress wounds with 'acheampong' [a popular leaf]. In the end they get tetanus and finally die. Just recently a nice lady died....it was pathetic. She went to the clinic and was charged an amount but her money was not enough. She was asked to go home to get the required amount which there was no way she was going to get because I know her background. She just collapsed and died on her way back home! This is the problem we are having here... people die anyhow! There are no special doctors, no money so when people are sick they don't feel like going to the clinic but resort to self treatment, if it works fine, if it doesn't then it's up to you and your God. The Health Insurance brought by the government is good but we cannot afford the premium (GHC80) and even in our village here the authorities collect 150 [GHC] for no reason. Also because the leaders like the DCE and the Assemblymen do not educate people about it they have it in mind that it is not even good to join. In fact as for the health insurance, the government have done well in that direction but many can't afford.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ BPPP May 2008, Interview 3

¹⁵⁶ BPPP May 2008, Interview 4

¹⁵⁷ BPPP May 2008, Interview 4

Some few individuals also believe that income wise most of the people are poor due to mismanagement; overspending on funeral rites; laziness and indiscriminate marriages put many into economic hardships¹⁵⁸. As put forward by a bank official at Sefwi Kaase:

*Farmers should have been rich but they are poor in this part of our world. I believe the adjustment of scales by Purchasing firms usually do not make farmers get the actual value of the cocoa produced. Other part of their problem is over indulgence in cultural issues like funeral celebrations and many marry too many wives so their responsibilities become large (Official at Kaaseman Rural Banks).*¹⁵⁹

On the issue of laziness rendering many poor, some of the people particularly the youth on the other hand commented that there are no factories in the area to engage them working. Thus, many of the youths are not working due to lack of agro-based factories to guarantee them jobs. As a mason emphasised, *apart from the cocoa farming, there is no factory in the area where we can work and even the farming, there are no lands any more* (C.K Gyamfi, mason)¹⁶⁰

To most of the Bia people poverty is also about lack of good roads to get access to market centres within the district and to major business cities like Kumasi, Berekum and Takoradi to go about their trading activities. In fact deplorable state of their roads was seen as a major concern. As a resident of Debiso voiced out:

*Ei! Masa, as for our roads, the whole world! As for me I think this place is not part of Ghana. When I'm counting districts in Ghana, I don't count this place. I feel it's not part of Ghana. Very bad, our roads are bad. They are beyond repairs! (Georgino, Electrician at Debiso)*¹⁶¹.

To add to the above, one of the things I noticed was that most of the commercial vehicles overload. I considered it as an act of lawlessness but later on I got to know that the poor state of the roads in area compelled drivers to overload and charge beyond legal fare. As a driver explained:

¹⁵⁸ To some extent I agree that behaviour of some individuals put them in financial difficulties. Nevertheless, I believe there are much more substantive issues which needed to be addressed before individuals can be blamed for such culture of living. What is the state doing in terms of educating its citizen with regards to some bad cultural attitudes? Is there a system to help ordinary people to get their fair share from development? More on this position will be discussed in the analysis to show why it is unfair to blame the poor whilst the needed structures have not been provided them by the state to plan their lives.

¹⁵⁹ BPPP June 2008, Interview 28

¹⁶⁰ BPPP May 2008, Interview 14

¹⁶¹ BPPP May 2008, Interview 18

The road is not good so our cars easily get faults and the 'spare parts' are expensive. If you don't overload you will always run at loss because each trip you will have to send your car for repairs and the 'fitter' [mechanics] will tell you he paid a lot to get the spare parts to from Kumasi due to the bad nature of the road. Our roads are not helping us. They are very bad. You have seen it yourself. From Debiso to Akaatiso, Yawmatwa, Kaase, Adabokrom, Asawinso everywhere in the Bia are very bad. It makes everything expensive. Sometimes traders here even beg us to take them to market places. They know the condition and they understand (Alhaji Sule, Driver at Akaatiso)¹⁶².

On my way to Kaase, I shared the front seat with a police officer and I thought from the beginning that the officer will take action but nothing. When we got to Yawmatwa (another town along Debiso Kaase road) to make a transit, I decided to interview the police officer to know his view about the overloading and below was his view:

Masa, we know most of the drivers here overload but we can't arrest them. These drivers are doing their best to get us to places. The roads are horrible as you can see. We cannot do anything because drivers need to eat, traders need to make their trips, and in fact all of us have to travel and there are no other means so we just let go of them to get things running (Police officer)¹⁶³

Also a health official at Essam commented on how the bad nature of the road networks does affect the residents in the area:

As I'm speaking right now, we don't have even one Kilometre tired road in the district. Some of the areas are very hard to rich. Due to bad nature of the road people die on their way when they are referred to other District hospitals like St. Jones at Sefwi Asafo, Dormaa, Berekum and Regional hospitals in places like Kumasi and Takoradi. I was posted from Takoradi to this place and my brother, sometimes I feel for the people in this area. There is huge gap between the development in Takoradi and this place. The people here are really suffering! (Health Official, Essam)¹⁶⁴.

Another concern raised was corruption in the cocoa industry. Besides unfair price most farmers think they received from cocoa, they also talked about malpractices in the industry. A driver of cocoa purchasing firm comment thus:

...the price they give to cocoa farmers is not good at all looking at the economy. The firms also cheat the farmers a lot! Some of the companies always deduct 2 kilograms money out of 75 cedi for a bag of cocoa so in the end the PC (Purchasing Clerk) do not get the actual money for each bag of cocoa so they also adjust their scales in

¹⁶² BPPP May 2008, Interview 22

¹⁶³ BPPP June 2008, Interview 26

¹⁶⁴ BPPP May 2008, Interview 11

order to get some kilos out of every bag thy buy from farmers. In the end the farmers loose (Kofi, Driver)¹⁶⁵.

The issue of adjustment seem to be normal practice that goes on without any check to the extent there is what is popular known as **‘bush weight and Accra’**. The concept of bush weight vs. Accra weight was well captured in my earlier group interview by Mr. Akwasi at Debiso as:

*...what happens is, the District Managers (MDs) of various cocoa firms always deduct some amount of money from the actual amount per a bag of cocoa they give to their Purchasing Clerks (PCs). The amount of one bag of cocoa is 75 GH Cedis. The MDs will deduct 2.5 GH Cedis (an amount for 2 kilos of cocoa) so instead of 75 GH Cedis for a bag, the PC will left with 65 GH Cedis at their disposal to get the cocoa from the farmers. Since the PCs wants to stay in job, they cheat the farmers by adjusting their weighing scales to about 2 extra kilos. So there is what is called **‘Bush weight’ and ‘Accra weight’**. With the bush weight, the scale is adjusted so the farmers have to put more cocoa in order to reach 65 kilos as the standard kilos per bag. After buying it from the farmers from the bush [farm], we give it Accra weight. The Accra weight is where non-adjusted scale required by law to weigh the cocoa at our depots before they are sent to Accra. Because of the adjustment of the scale if the farmer has harvested about 30 bags of cocoa it will be reduced to about 24 bags. The remaining six bags will end up in the pockets of the MDs and other ‘big men’. In fact I feel that the farmers are being cheated but that’s the only thing [adjustment of scales] we can do to stay in the job” (PC and a Businessman)¹⁶⁶.*

The low level of education was raised and they attributed it to lack of facilities which discourage qualified teachers to come to the area which has led to high level of illiteracy denying many of the citizens the capabilities to develop themselves. The only district Senior High School in the District (Bia Secondary School at Debiso) lack teaching facilities such as computers, laboratories, accommodation for both teachers and students coupled with inability of parents to take care of their wards in school due to high level of unemployment. As a student voiced out: *Our facilities are not good at all.... We don't have library, no laboratories, I've seen computer before but I've not use it before. I don't know how to operate it. (Year Two High School Business [Accounting] student at Bia Secondary Technical)¹⁶⁷*

In all, most of the people I interviewed testified that there is high level of poverty in the area particularly in terms of infrastructures or social amenities like road networks, communication system, electricity, poorly resourced schools and health centres. They raised the issue of lack of money in the system after the cocoa season. However, lack of

¹⁶⁵BPPP May 2008, Interview 8

¹⁶⁶BPPP May 2008, Interview 2

¹⁶⁷BPPP May 2008, Interview 21

infrastructures particularly better road network was their main problem since it [poor road network] ran through most of the peoples' position on poverty. To most of them poverty is also about poor road network. In that regard, they believe they are poor because they do not have good roads to send their produce to market centres; and transact other business activities.

Most of them based on recurring view blamed the central government officials, officials of the cocoa industry and the local opinion leaders for the lack of development in the area which has in turn rendered many living in poor conditions. As a National Service Personnel at Bia District Assembly put it:

The government get billions from gold, cocoa, timber, bauxite, diamond, manganese including loans from abroad and taxes from us and foreign companies but we don't see anything. They keep saying there is no money. As for the money, it is there but the 'big men' are not circulating it. They are selfish and corrupt! The root of our problems is our leaders (Receptionist, Bia Assembly, Essam)¹⁶⁸

To add to the above, the view a district officer at Essam summed it all as:

Lack of political will to develop the area has made this place poor. In fact we were neglected from the beginning. Up to date there's no single asphalted road, no sufficient potable drinking, electricity, no district hospitals and we all know investment can go to places where there is infrastructure. The problem in this place all boils down to the neglect of the area by the central government; not only the current government but all the past governments. The colonial masters didn't do enough.... and the World Bank loans come with high interest to be paid, but I believe we should deal with our problems by ourselves (District Planning Officer).¹⁶⁹

4.4 Analysis and Discussion of findings

Based on the views of the Bia people on poverty, my analysis will be on three main themes:

- (a) The paradox of Bia District: A resource curse?
- (b) Seasonal poverty: individual or systemic failure?
- (c) Poverty as an abuse of human rights

¹⁶⁸BPPP May 2008, Interview 7

¹⁶⁹BPPP May 2008, Interview 5

4.4.1 The paradox of Bia District: A resource curse?

The revelations by the Bia People themselves point to the fact that the place is poorly developed and it has impacted negatively on their lives. The situation in Bia District makes me wonder why many places endowed with resources in Ghana are poorly developed. It reconfirms Nkrumah's assertion that "Africa is a paradox which illustrates and highlights neo-colonialism. Her earth is rich, yet the products that come from above and below her soil continue to enrich, not Africans predominantly, but groups and individuals¹⁷⁰ who operate to Africa's impoverishment".¹⁷¹

In Ghana today, areas which are endowed with resources are the most deprived areas as my study in Bia District of Ghana in addition to studies like that of Beckford (2007) and many others have confirmed. The Bia District produces the bulk of Ghana's cocoa and timber but the place is one of the poorest Districts among the poor Districts in Ghana. The place lacks good roads, good drinking water, health centres, communication network, proper housing and other basic amenities to make life worth living as their voices have revealed and presented above. In fact there is no single kilometre good road within Bia District, meanwhile cities like Accra Kumasi, Tamale, Takoradi and others have the roads connecting them from Accra goods roads. Though not all areas in Accra, Kumasi and many cities have good roads, there is a great disparity in the infrastructural development in rural towns like those in Bia District by comparative analysis. Besides, the road network, other social amenities are nothing to write home about. As a custom official at Kunkumso commented:

On developmental level, this place is beyond the word poverty! The place is really poor though there is a lot of cocoa activities and revenue generation going on here. The cocoa business sometimes makes people feel that it is only the Northern Region that is poor. A lot of money is made from this place through cocoa, timber, and even the Customs and Immigration check points collect revenue through tax for the country but the area lacks infrastructural facilities. The roads are very bad, no communication network, inadequate electricity connection, lack of hospitals and qualified doctors. As I am speaking, we use 'bobo' [locally made kerosene lamp/lantern] as source of light at our check point here. I think government has to do a lot in this area (CEPS official, Kumkumso)¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ I think these individuals should not be seen as only Westerners but should be extended and in fact concentrate on our own people ranging from politicians, civil servants, traditional rulers and any individual who the ordinary Ghanaians have given them economic, political and tradition powers to steer the affairs of the country for better living for everyone.

¹⁷¹ See Nkrumah 1965, p.1

¹⁷² BPPP May 2008, Interview 2

Contrary to its immense contribution towards the country's GDP growth for the development of other areas in the country, paradoxically, Bia district is one of the poorest areas in Ghana¹⁷³. My findings from the Bia District just as what was found by Beckford (2007) in the Northern Region, Obuasi in Ashante Region and Wiaso in Western Region seem to confirm Michael Ross and the likes theory of resource curse. But is Bia District poor because it is blessed with a lot of timber, endowed with the only biosphere reserve in Ghana; and produces the bulk of Ghana's cocoa which has been a major driver of the country's economy? Should the people of Obuasi (where bulk of Ghana's gold is mined) for instance be subjected to constant pollution of their source of drinking water by the activities of mining companies and their total neglect of the development of the place because it is endowed with a lot of gold?

I do not agree with Ross on this basis; but I agreed with Dr. Cyril Obi (a renowned Nigerian researcher at the Nordic African Institute in Sweden), who challenged the resource curse hypothesis during his lecture on Conflicts in Africa¹⁷⁴. To Obi, if oil leads to conflicts which in turn lead to poverty, how come Norway, US, Canada and other places in the developed world endowed with natural resources like oil are not engulfed with conflicts but rather peaceful and developed? It is erroneous for one to attribute poverty in Ghana to that of resource curse. From the findings of my field work at Bia District and studies reviewed on other places in Ghana, poverty in resources endowed areas is largely as a result of how the system has been running by power-holders. The apathetic attitudes of power-holders to recognise that every part of the country is supposed to have fair development irrespective of their geographical position have rendered the Bia District among others poor in development. The attitude of power-holders and lack of strong institutions or system to ensure fairness in the system have denied many Ghanaians their basic fundamental rights to worthy living in spite of their contributions to the development within and outside Ghana.

¹⁷³ Besides, the revenue from cocoa and timber, a lot of food crops comes from the place. It have international border (Ghana-La Cote D'Voire) at Osei kojokrom which generate revenue through excise duties and immigration matters. It is also important to know that Bia District is part of Western Region and Western Region is endowed with almost all the countries resources. Cocoa and timber from the Bia area, gold at Bibiani, Tarkwa and Pristea; Bauxite at Awaso; Big International borders for revenue collection and Elebo and Osei kojokrom; and now the large quantity of oil found at Cape Three points. With all these found the Western Region, places in the Region deserve fair share in the country's economic growth and development. Above all the Bia District is part of Ghana and people being Ghanaians deserve to feel the wind of development blowing in some parts of the country.

¹⁷⁴ Obi's lecture form part of a course of this Master programme— *Dynamics of African Societies*

I support the position of the District planning officer that governments of Ghana, past and present, neglected the area so far as development is concerned; as well as unfair foreign policies by the powers of developed countries and international financial institutions¹⁷⁵. In fact, after going through the various budgets statements from 1992 to 2008, I noticed tha Bia District have been unfairly represented in terms of plans to develop the Juabeso/Bia and Bia Districts or Northern parts of Western Region. The findings also confirm Ghana UNDP Report (2007) that socio-economic exclusion has made many Ghanaians especially those in the rural areas to live in abject poverty.

4.4.2 Seasonal Poverty: Systemic failure or individual failure?

A view expressed by the residents of Bia District about poverty [income poverty] was the phenomenon of seasonal poverty. Besides lack of social amenities in the area were the complaints of lack of money in the system. Most of the people emphasised that everything in the area depends on cocoa season. As the Member of Parliament (MP) in the area commented:

*There is high level of poverty in the system. Many people cannot take care of their children. Some people some time come to me to help them pay their wards school fees. This shouldn't have been my duty as an MP but sometimes I have to do it for the sake of the children's future. Always there is the issue of no money syndrome after cocoa season. Poverty here is seasonal. When the cocoa season is over then everything become standstill. Government is not doing well in the area. There is lack of infrastructure and illiteracy rate is very high; litigation among chiefs and some cocoa farmers, and money management by farmers is poor. The individuals here are part of the problem (MP, Bia Constituency).*¹⁷⁶

Thus, in spite of the cheatings and unfair prices for their cocoa, during cocoa seasons farmers, traders and others in different economic activities in their own rights do find some happiness in their lives due to money in the system. This usually boosts their purchasing power during the harvesting period. However, many emphasised that this 'economic boom' cease at the end of the harvesting seasons¹⁷⁷ making it difficult for them to make ends means till the next harvesting season. As the hardship becomes so hard to cope, many resort to loans from money lenders with 100% interest. Consequently, it negatively affects their income in the next season since most of them will be engulfed with debts. In other words, most of the

¹⁷⁵ See BPPP May 2008, Interview 5

¹⁷⁶ BPPP May 2008, Interview 15

¹⁷⁷The main crop harvest in Ghana starts September – October and can extend to January – March popularly know is light crop season.

farmers are always pre-owed before the main harvesting period. In fact many farmers end up losing their farms since they are usually used as collateral security. As a farmer put it in one of my group interviews:

I don't think this place is part of Ghana, we are really suffering. We are always going in for loan with 100% interest because we need to survive and take care of our children. As I speak to you, because of school fees of about GHC 600, I have used my whole cocoa farm as a guarantee until I pay the loan and the interest otherwise the creditor will take my cocoa farm. He will only give it back when he is satisfied with the money he will be making from every harvest season (Akosua Benyiwah, Cocoa farmer)¹⁷⁸

Whilst farmers and many other people blamed the central government, the local political authorities and authorities of the cocoa marketing companies for failing to have some safety net like some soft loans or some sort of micro-financing scheme to equitably give them relief during the lean season, some individuals (especially some opinion leaders) blamed the farmers for mismanagement. Some of these individuals argue that many of the farmers misuse their money. Marrying many wives, overspending on funeral rites and unnecessary litigations were some of the issues raised against the farmers. Moreover, there is the belief among some people I interviewed that many Ghanaians are lazy that is why they are poor. The belief that the poor remain poor because they are lazy, troublesome and do not care about what happens to public facilities confirms what Ana Teresa Ortiz and Laura Briggs pointed out about “the culture of poverty” theories led by Oscar Lewis and other social scientists in the 1950s up to the 1980s.¹⁷⁹

In as much as I agree, to some extent, some level of mismanagement among the farmers and laziness among some individuals, I believe, that the impact of systemic failure overrides the deeds of the poor themselves considering the fact that they are in the first place lacking other basic necessities or effective system to give them the freedom to plan and develop themselves. To further my argument, studies through behavioural economics have shown why the poor are always entangling with the vicious cycle of borrowing. Mistakes matter more for the poor given that insufficient planning can spiral further and faster, leading to even worse outcomes like compromising education or nutrition.¹⁸⁰ In short, being poor is not simply about having too little income; it is a state of having insecure income. Moreover, when an individual has to think about how her income could suddenly vary day to day, month

¹⁷⁸ BPPP May 2008, Interview 3

¹⁷⁹ Ortiz & Briggs 2003, p.40.

¹⁸⁰ See Bertrand, Mullainathan and Shafir 2004 in Mullainathan and Krishnan 2008

to month, or season to season, it is easy to see how she would have much less room for error when thinking about her financial needs or possible shocks in the future.¹⁸¹ In other words the poor mostly borrow to service debt but not plan for their life this make their income insecure especially in times of unforeseen contingencies. When an individual has to constantly rely on borrowing due to insecure source of income, he or she will have less time to plan on how to spend the money or think of investment because they are already engulfed with debts to defray. Faced with the challenges to settle debt and unavoidable call to meet their basic needs for survival give less room for the poor to avoid errors that could affect their lives in future.

I believe the issue of poverty in Bia district and many other areas in Ghana is due to systemic failure. Unfair distribution of wealth by power holders always put the poor at vulnerable positions to be hugely affected by human fallibilities. Seeing poverty as the cause of the individual for acting irresponsibly, suggest that big players in society are demanding duties from the ordinary people whilst their rights are not tied to duties. As Sen emphasised “responsibility requires freedom”. The substantive freedoms that we respectively enjoy to exercise our responsibilities are extremely contingent on personal, social, and environmental. Without substantive freedom and capability to do something, a person cannot be responsible for doing it. Actually, having the freedom and capability to do something does impose on the person the duty to consider whether to do it or not, and this does involve individual responsibility.¹⁸²

The ordinary farmers without substantial income from their produce due to unfair system, no good drinking water, constant inhaling of dust and inability to transport their produce to market centres due to poor roads, lack of means for medical treatment, lack of proper education – deprived them not only in terms of well-being but also in terms of the ability to lead responsible lives. I agree with Sen that “the arbitrarily narrow view of individual responsibility – with the individual standing on an imaginary island unhelped and unhindered by others – has to be broadened not only by acknowledging the role of the state, but also recognising the function of political and organisations, community-based arrangements, non governmental agencies, the media and other means of public understanding and communication, and the institutions that allow the function of markets and

¹⁸¹ Mullainathan and Karlan 2006 in Mullainathan and Krishnan 2008

¹⁸² Sen 1999, p.283-285

contractual relations”.¹⁸³ I also concur with the assertion by Afrifa that “poverty may have both individual and systemic origins, but explaining poverty largely within a person – blame framework, can be dangerous. It protects the established order against criticism, thereby increasing the difficulty encountered in trying in to change the dominant, but corrupt economic, social and political institutions”.¹⁸⁴

4.4.3 Seeing poverty as an abuse of human rights

There are various reasons for poverty to be considered as an abuse of human rights. According to Speth (1998) “the right to be free of the crushing burden of poverty must be counted among the most fundamental of deeds in all realms existence of poor people, and extends beyond lack of income. Perhaps the most basic human right challenged by poverty is the right to life”.¹⁸⁵ Also former President of South Africa (Nelson Mandela) was also quoted as: “Massive poverty and obscene inequality are such terrible scourges of our times... that they have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils.”¹⁸⁶

I have earlier on articulated the position of UDHR particularly article 25, and other international documents on rights to development like the 1993 Conference in Vienna and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The impact of poverty on one’s life violates the positions of these international documents and peoples’ right to development and life in dignity. Furthermore, it defeats even the position of the Ghanaian constitution on people’s freedom to development; equal opportunity and justice.¹⁸⁷

Besides the theoretical argument that I have earlier on put forward based on some normative documents and some reviewed literatures, there are practical grounds or empirical evidence to further strengthen this argument. Some of the views articulated by my respondents in Bia District call for poverty to be seen as an abuse of one’s fundamental rights to life. In other words, many of the views presented were indirectly linked with issues of human rights abuse. For instance, the psychological implications of poverty on their lives were well presented by a cocoa farmer as:

¹⁸³ Sen 199, p.284

¹⁸⁴ Afrifa 2004, p.97

¹⁸⁵ Speth 1998, p.277/282

¹⁸⁶ http://www.undp.org/publications/annualreport2006/equitable_growth.shtml.

¹⁸⁷ See the preamble of The 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

There are no better stores so the only option is for us to go to the cities for shopping especially during Christmas. But we're sometimes afraid to go to the cities because of the manner they treat us when we go there. Our roads are dusty, so when you get the city they know where you're coming from because all your body from head to toe will be embroidered with this reddish dust. They laugh at you...you become a target to these bag snatchers and pick-pockets. People you could give birth to talk to you any how; you're given all sort of names and you become subject of ridicule and mockery. All these stigma affect our confidence and our behaviours whenever we get to the cities. This has resulted in snatching our bags and monies when we go to the cities for shopping during cocoa seasons...We've been quite for too long, one day we will explode! (Kofi Adu, Cocoa farmer at Osei kojokrom)¹⁸⁸.

It could be seen from the above that disparities in development have created social stratification with those living in areas lacking infrastructures like good roads and electricity have been subjected to various forms of abuses – directly or indirectly ranging from snatching of bags, insults, ridicules, discrimination which in turn put fear in them and eventually affect their level of confidence to integrate in society.

Indeed being poor or lack of or absence of basic necessities in life has huge negative implications on ones right to live in dignity. As pointed out earlier, Article 25 of the UDHR call for the right to standard of living adequate for health and well-being of people and their families which includes food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstance beyond their control. As a teacher at Debiso commented:

...poverty is very high in Ghana particularly this area. If a journey of an hour takes you four hours due to bad road, if people sleep on bear floors with leaking roofs houses and get soaked whenever it rains, if people die every day from curable illness due to lack of facilities, you call it a doing well a doing well economy? It's 'the big men' who are enjoying because they get whatever they want to live good life. Teachers and many ordinary people here, we're suffering. It is better they take our lives may be it will be better after death...After all I see poverty as sickness; it makes you feel like not part of humans...

The views of Bia people on poverty and for that matter their standard of living is at variance with the position of normative documents of human rights particularly Article 25 of the UDHR. It is rather consistent with the position by Afrifa (2004) regarding implications of poverty on Ghanaian families. As he put it:

¹⁸⁸ BPPP June 2008, Interview 31

*Clearly the psychological consequences of being poor cannot be under estimated in our society. The poor are rejected. They are looked down upon as lazy, and dirty. The poor are not wanted by the rich as neighbours, friends and colleagues. Being poor is degrading as well as uncomfortable. Being poor engenders feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, thereby leading to apathy or anger. In fact, one of the most important sources of anger is that poor families see affluence all about them but no matter how hard they try, they are unable to share in it. They mostly not get fair trial in the judicial system even when they have justifiable case...*¹⁸⁹

I agree with Afrifa (2004) that source of the poor's anger is when they see affluence around but no matter how hard they try they cannot share in it. Ghana has been one of leading producer of gold since the 16th century and sources from Ghana Chamber of Mines has shown huge sum of income from gold and other minerals¹⁹⁰. For instance the Chamber revealed that in 2008, there was a production of 2.6 million ounces of precious metal when total mining revenues were 2.2 billion cedi. However, much of these funds have not benefited the ordinary Ghanaians and paradoxically the mining communities. The study by Beckford (2007) revealed the deplorable condition of Obuasi Township in spite of records of being one of the biggest centres of gold production in Africa. Moreover, the country has also been receiving huge sum of income from cocoa production being one of the leading producer of cocoa in the world. For instance, the country's Budget statement (1999), reported that earnings from gold exports amounted to \$687.8 million. This amount was 18.8 per cent higher than in the previous year, and 6.4 per cent higher than the projected level of \$646.7 million on account of a higher export volume. Nevertheless, after going through the budget statements revealed that the cocoa production communities like the Juabeso and the Bia Districts were under represented. This also confirms Beckford's study on poor conditions of cocoa communities in Western Region.

One cannot run away from the fact that being poor has serious consequences on one's life. It takes away people's status as humans in society and invariably violates one's right to live dignified life. It sounds right when one of my informants commented that *...It is better they take our lives may be it will be better after deaths... After all I see poverty as sickness; it makes you feel like not part of humans. In fact you have no value if you're poor since no one respects you in the society and your views are not considered in family discussions. You're*

¹⁸⁹ Afrifa 2004, p.96

¹⁹⁰ See <http://www.ghanachamberofmines.org/> and also <http://www.ghana-mining.org>

*like salt which has lost its taste – useless!*¹⁹¹ This statement is in line with the proverbs, wits and epigrams about poverty by Agyewodin Adu Gyamfi Ampem (1998) that “poverty can be equated with insanity; poverty’s sibling is belittlement; poverty is a disgrace; the poor has no friend; the corpse of the poor man is buried by the roadside; necessity compels a monkey to eat hot pepper”.¹⁹² Adu Gyamfi Ampem’s statements on poverty in simple terms tell us that poverty can make people feel insane, rejected, belittled, disgraced, and make unpleasant choices in life.

I acknowledge the fact that the argument that for poverty to be seen as an abuse of human rights is not an easy task. For instance, one would argue that for poverty to be considered as an abuse of human rights calls for legal basis to substantiate that. Nevertheless, I think people suffering poverty should not be compelled to provide legal basis for being poor before action is taken to alleviate their suffering. The right of the poor to life in dignity which has been robbed by their impoverished conditions is in itself an abuse. In other words, the essence here is not to delve into legal justification of seeing poverty as an abuse of human rights. Though I have raised some international documents like the UDHR which called for dignified standard of living for all people and even the Ghanaian constitution, the argument is to also look at the practicalities or the ‘commonsensical’ view point of poverty’s impact on one’s life based on the views of the poor and their observed living conditions. Thus, besides legal basis or international instruments which call for states not to subject their people to perpetual poverty, conditions of the poor call for poverty to be seen as human rights abused. Hence the poor should be accorded the right to life in dignity because they are humans.

It is ‘commonsensical’ to know that lack of good roads prevent ordinary farmers to get their goods to market centre and other hindrances and consequences as gathered from my respondents in Bia District. Therefore, inability for a farmer to send his or her produce to market centres due to bad road network – resulting to post harvest lost after hard labour should be seen as an abuse. Poor road network leading to death of people on their way to hospitals should be seen as a denial of right to live. It is also true that poverty hinders people development since the poor is mostly prevented from acquiring knowledge in school, eat good food, get access to better healthcare, and inability to seek legal redress [even when they are sure of not guilty].

¹⁹¹ See: BPPP May 2008, Interview 3

¹⁹² See Afrifa 2004, p.95

To avoid constant abuse of the rights of the poor in Ghana, there is the need for comprehensive infrastructure development particularly in rural areas to give way to other job opportunities and improvement in social services to enhance human development. This call for places like the Bia district to be well represented in subsequent budget statements and ensure implementation of stated policies. More importantly, human rights lawyers should help poor people to seek redress in court when their rights are violated since most cannot afford to do so. In that way people's rights will be defended in a holistic manner than in isolated cases or due to their status in society. There is no doubt that such holistic human rights protection demand one to take into consideration the laws of the land – the constitution. Nonetheless, should the state of the constitution pose problem? What are constitutional lawyers and the state legislators doing to shape up the constitution for a comprehensive protection of the rights of all Ghanaians irrespective of their status? As the discussed so far, poverty subject people to conditions which impede their right to dignity. It is therefore prudence for to fight against poverty to prevent people's human rights trampled upon as a result of being poor. My next section will deal with how poverty could be reduced.

Chapter Five

5.0 How can poverty be reduced in Ghana?

First of all, there is the need for poverty to be understood as an issue of human rights and not just lack of income or resources. By realising that poverty serves as a threat to human rights and for that matter an assault on human dignity, gives deeper understanding of the meaning of poverty; and how to measure it and an approach for its eradication. In other words, recognition of poverty as violation of human rights to dignified life will call for strengthening of state institutions to deal with those that violate these rights. The discussion so far has demonstrated that the actions and inactions of power-holders have rendered many Ghanaians poor. It is undeniable fact that Ghana government since independence has been striving to reducing poverty in the country and make life comfortable for its people. However, many of the poverty reduction strategies have not been working due to weak state institutions¹⁹³. Injustices in the system have made huge sums of money from cocoa, timber, minerals like gold, taxes and other sources meant for increase economic opportunities of the poor not producing the desired results.

My findings from the Bia District call for good road network, better healthcare centres with qualified doctors; good schools - with qualified teachers and adequate learning facilities; potable drinking water; evenly connected with electricity and fair price for the farmers cocoa beans. In fact, good road network within Bia District and connecting to the big cities; and injustices [adjustment of cocoa weighing scales] and unfair price for their cocoa was seen as the biggest obstacles subjecting many into poverty. In other words, the aforementioned are some of the pressing issues which invariably prevent them to have the freedom to develop. Hence, to fight poverty in the area, these needed to be tackled in short term. Infrastructure and social amenities should be evenly provided across the country.¹⁹⁴

To add to the above, to ensure sustainable reduction of poverty in the long run, there should be a working system coupled with active citizens in order to make sure resources

¹⁹³ State institutions like the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and Serious Fraud Office (SFO) are some of the state institutions to deal with injustices, corruption which impede the fight against poverty; and other human rights abused cases. These institutions ought to be strengthened and work independently without any interference by incumbent governments to perform their duties as required by the constitution of Ghana.

¹⁹⁴ More has to be done to improve the decentralisation system to speed up developmental projects in rural districts.

allocated for development projects are used for their purposes rather than ending up in individuals pockets. A working system calls for effective state and active citizens. With effective state or a workable system, economic growth will be achieved but it is also important to know that for growth to be reflected in the well-being of the people there should be active citizens otherwise there will be injustices or inequalities in the distribution of resources or economic growth achieved¹⁹⁵. The media, national commission for civic education and already existed civil society groups such the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) and the likes should collaborate and intensify their activities across the country for the citizenry to be actively involved in issues of national concern. Active citizens or strong civil society will hold central government accountable and make sure the country's wealth is evenly distributed. I would emphasise here that the given out of money (acquired locally or through international loans) for developmental projects are necessary but not enough¹⁹⁶.

To be clear to the point, for the right based approach to poverty reduction to be effective and sustained, there must be strong civil society groups. In this regard, the international community has a role to play in reducing poverty in Ghana by ensuring fairness in international trade system. Even though I have tried in this essay not to shift much blame on external forces so far as the cause of poverty in Ghana is concerned, it is inevitable fact that the international community plays role hence their involvement to reduce poverty is important. The international community has a moral duty to help in the fight against poverty by making sure that trade policies are favourable to developing countries like Ghana¹⁹⁷.

During my field work at Bia District in Ghana, I felt the agency in the people to develop themselves but they lacked the basic capabilities to maximise their quest for development. This agency is all over the country as I witnessed in Accra, Kumasi, and Takoradi to Debiso-Essam and its environs. Even though I have lived both in rural and urban in Ghana, and seen and personally felt some of these struggles before, my fieldwork in the Bia District of Ghana made me conscious of how many Ghanaians are struggling or have

¹⁹⁵ See (Green2007) on how effective actions of state and active citizens can lead to reduction in poverty. Some information at this section of the essay was sources from Green's work.

¹⁹⁶ There is the need for policies gear towards the reduction of poverty to be woven in human rights (See Fields 2001) holistic approach on human rights and economic development.

¹⁹⁷ Fair trade will help Ghana make high income from its exported products for job creation and developmental projects rather than constant showering of aids which most often end up in the pockets of few national power-holders and international consultants.

been struggling for survive. The eagerness to do something for themselves even in the absence of the necessary facilities was vividly displayed as I observed and interacted with the people along road sides; in their houses; at their offices; at the market places, in commercial vehicles; football pitches and in their farms. The willingness to contribute to the development of the nation and their well being is there. But lack of basic capabilities has made many ordinary Ghanaians under productive leading to intergenerational poverty among many. They have been incapacitated and rendered voiceless due to lack of what Adler inter alia calls ‘goods of the body’ and ‘goods of the mind’.¹⁹⁸

From the foregoing, I proposed the promotion of civic education by Ghana government and anti poverty organisations to make the citizenry active to get involved in the fight against poverty. The National Commission for Civic Education ought to be resourced to strengthen their education not only in the areas of civic responsibilities by the citizenry during electioneering years but also constant awareness of their rights to basic capabilities and genuinely demand them from power-holders.

In addition to the above, there is the need for civil society groups to intensify their fight against injustices which has rendered many Ghanaians poor. Campaigners for equality and justice should not only concentrate their activities in regional capitals but decentralise their activities and intensify their campaign in the area of civic education to reach the rural communities. Their activities should be networked from the grass roots up to the national level to make citizens active in their local areas so far as dealing with issues affecting them are concerned. This will make the ordinary citizen active to monitor the activities of power-holders and report irregularities in the system to the appropriate institutions for interventions. Civil society groups should not only make reports but follow up reports to ensure that justifiable cases sent to appropriate quarters are dealt with.

Strong civil society groups free from structural hierarchies in politics at large coupled with active citizens will ensure that the basic right to life in dignity is fought for. It is easy for state institutions to be subjected to pressures from power-holders or follow the unjust national and international institutional orders; but with strong civil society groups, there is the likelihood that the influence of power-holders will be controlled. A strong civil society will not only call for political leaders and other power-holders to strengthen state institutions to ensure fairness and justice in the distributions of resources and development. It will also

¹⁹⁸Nnadozie 2003, p.226

make sure such state institutions are themselves checked while they perform their duties as demanded.¹⁹⁹ This will eventually ensure that the basic right to dignity in life is not abused due to poverty arising from the actions and inactions of power-holders.

¹⁹⁹ Ghanaian leaders or any power holder in Ghana must uphold the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibility especially that of article 11 which states that *...all property and wealth must be used responsibly in accordance with justice and for the advancement of human race. Economic and political power must not be handled as an instrument of domination, but in the service of economic justice and of the social order.* See www.interactioncouncil.org/udhr/udhr.htm

Chapter Six

6.0 Conclusion

The discussion based on both primary and secondary sources so far point to the fact that many Ghanaians are living in abject poverty. This confirms Ghana UNDP report (2007) that many Ghanaians live in deplorable conditions in certain parts of the country – particularly in the rural areas. The position of Bia people on poverty is consistent with the 2002 Afrobarometer survey which reported that many Ghanaians had negative perception about the economy.

The study has revealed that though Ghana has a quite stable democracy, it still harbours significant number of people living in abject poverty. There is reason to believe that in spite of significant economic growth leading to ‘reduction’ in number of people living in poverty according to World Bank report (2006) and government data (Ghana Banking Survey 2007), in practical terms many people are living in poverty.

The position of Bia People on poverty show that many Ghanaian are living in impoverished conditions. This study has revealed that poverty is a complex phenomenon with serious implications on the lives of many Ghanaians. It goes beyond mere lack of income and material things. It involves human development issues including human rights. There is poverty of basic infrastructures like good roads, electricity, better housing, portable drinking water and communication system as found in the Bia district. These, particularly poor roads so far as the Bia people are concerned, have restricted many Ghanaians to have the freedom to develop themselves. I can argue based on their opinions that lack of these facilities has prevented qualified teachers and medical doctors to go to rural communities in Ghana when posted. We all know the implications of these. It has resulted in poor school performance among students, improper medical care in the area as reported by Leith and Soderling (2003) and UNDP Ghana report (2007). These have in turn deprived them from their right to quality education and better health care as enshrined in the constitution of Ghana and UN Universal Declaration of Rights.

Ghana’s poverty is not due to lack of resources (material and human) as a nation but rather due to inappropriate use of the abundant resources by the country’s power holders; and manipulation of international trade systems and other foreign policies by power-holders of

advanced countries to benefit their economies. Ghana's slow economic growth and development after independence could be attributed to bad educational system, political instability, corruption, ethnic conflicts, land tenure system and unfair trade based. It is undeniable fact that these factors have had bad impact on Ghana's economy. However, I would argue here that these factors are not natural but manmade and also connected to human rights. It is international power holders who have created injustices in international trade systems that have prevented Ghana from getting her share from trading with the developed world.

On the other hand, one cannot run from the fact that internal power holders [Ghanaian power-holders] have not managed the affairs of the country to the benefit of ordinary men and women. The opulent lifestyle of some political authorities and their members (both past and present governments) couple with their continuous use of old fashion of Western models of development without any domestic ideas to solve domestic problems, have made many Ghanaians expressed their concerns. The attitudes of some Ghanaian political power-holders have made the ordinary Ghanaians sometimes asked whether colonial rule was in fact better than the rule by their own Ghanaian brothers and sisters.

Available studies show that the Ghanaian power-holders have not lived up to expectation after independence to curtail some of the obstacles to economic growth and development. It was not an error when the residents of Bia District attributed their deplorable conditions to the central government and the political representatives of their area during my field work as already discussed. Thus, to the Bia people, they are poor because of neglect by power holders to develop the area. The observed living conditions of the Bia people and dearth of infrastructures with the district exhibit inequalities in development after 50 years of independence. Injustices in the system have created inequalities in the distribution of resources for the benefit of all people in the country irrespective of their geographical locations.

The poverty situation in Ghana should be not limited to lack of income and infrastructures but an issue of human rights. The way and manner some areas in Ghana have been neglected so far as development is concerned as my fieldwork revealed shows lack of respect towards many ordinary Ghanaians to live dignified life. Lack of respect for human dignity by Ghanaian power-holders should be seen as a crucial factor for the suffering of many ordinary Ghanaians. Power-holders having respect for one's right to quality life will

make sure there are necessary measures to ensure fairness and justice in the country. In other words, such leaders will make sure there is minimal level of corruption to ensure that funds meant for developmental projects do not end up in people's pocket. In short, power-holders who care for the rights of their people will always take into consideration the fundamental principle for every human being to live a life of dignity by providing the basic necessities in life. In fact, such leaders will not only focus on the people of the current generation but generations yet unborn in any action they take. Conscious efforts by power-holders to promote justice and fairness and not do anything that undermines one's right to basic capabilities is a mark of respect for all human beings to live a life of dignity.

Power-holders misappropriating funds for national developments should be seen as criminal offence and abuse of the rights of ordinary Ghanaians who cannot afford three-square-meals. Rural folks who are demeaned due to lack of social amenities and infrastructures should be seen as discrimination and socio-economic exclusion. The death of the poor people as a result of inability to pay for medical treatment; and many other ordeals many Ghanaians go through as a result of lack or absence of basic capabilities should be seen as a defeat to human rights promotion by the Ghanaian state and the international community. Injustices in the cocoa industry by both internal and external players which robbed the poor farmers from getting enough income to support their family should not only be seen as corruption. It should also be seen as abuse of the rights of ordinary farmers to get a fair deal from their produce for them to be capable of making life choices of their own at the right time to fulfil their aspirations of living a dignified life.

The lacks of access to knowledge, good road, required food, communication, water, electricity, healthcare and freedom to participate in decision making; cheating of cocoa farmers by some workers of cocoa purchasing firms and unfair price for farmers cocoa from the international market are all hallmark of disrespect and abuse of the fundamental rights to dignified life as humans. Consequently, poverty alleviation should be seen by the State and the international community as defending human rights or respecting people's right to life in dignity. Until the actions and inactions of power-holders which have subjected many Ghanaians into intergenerational poverty is seen as human rights abuse, the rights of many Ghanaians would be constantly abused and in effect defeat the promotion of human rights culture in the country.

In this study, I have demonstrated that the Ghana's economic problem is due to internal and external factors. I would emphasise here that though both internal and external power-holders are said to have rendered many Ghanaians poor, internal power holders such as political leaders of the country are considered by the many poor Ghanaians as the main source of their problems.

I have also argued why poverty should be seen as abuse of human rights based on the opinions of the ordinary people in the Bia district and their observed living conditions. As I discussed, besides international documents like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that called to have rights to basic needs; and even the Ghanaian Constitution that call for freedom, justice, equal opportunity and non-discrimination against any Ghanaian, the conditions of the poor as a result of poverty should be seen as an abuse of human rights because they are humans. Some of the comments by the Bia people on poverty should tell us how poverty has prevented many to live dignified in life in Ghana.

There have been suggestions of comprehensive infrastructure development, fair representation of poor areas in budget statements coupled with their implementation, holistic defence of people's rights by legal practitioners, and intensification of civic education and the activities of civil society groups to help reduced poverty to avoid people's rights to live dignified life impeded.

This study took place in a particular district out of 170 districts in Ghana. Hence the views expressed by participants are limited to how they see the level of poverty or economic situations in their communities and for that matter in the country. In spite of its limitation in terms of number of district(s) covered, participants' position on poverty is consistent with other previous studies. The study has shown the dynamics of poverty in Ghana. It has brought to light one of the less studied districts in Ghana. Consequently, its implications on poverty and human rights policies cannot be underestimated. This study could serve as a platform for more grassroots based studies to be conducted on other districts to know the reality of poverty in the country and how to fight against it to enhance a holistic human rights promotion.

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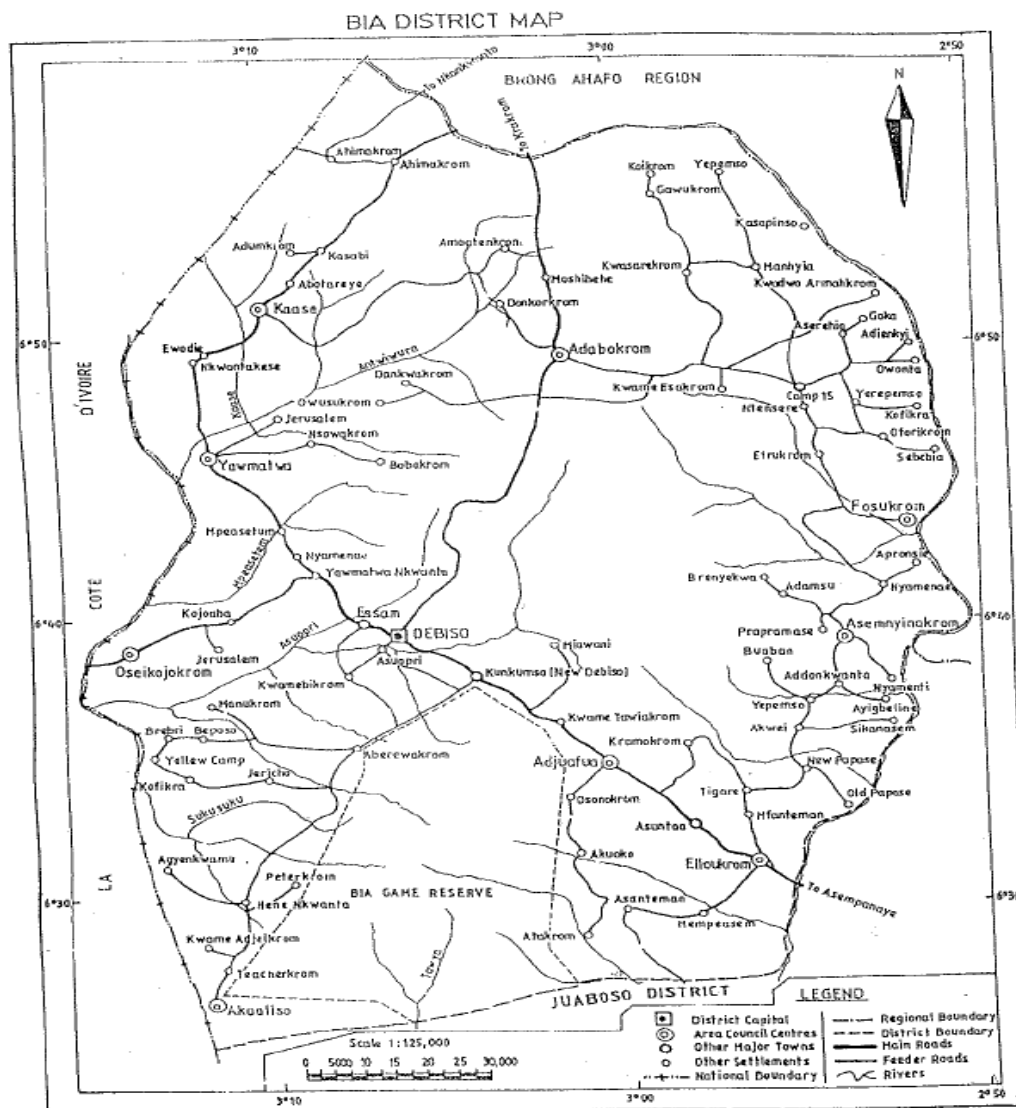
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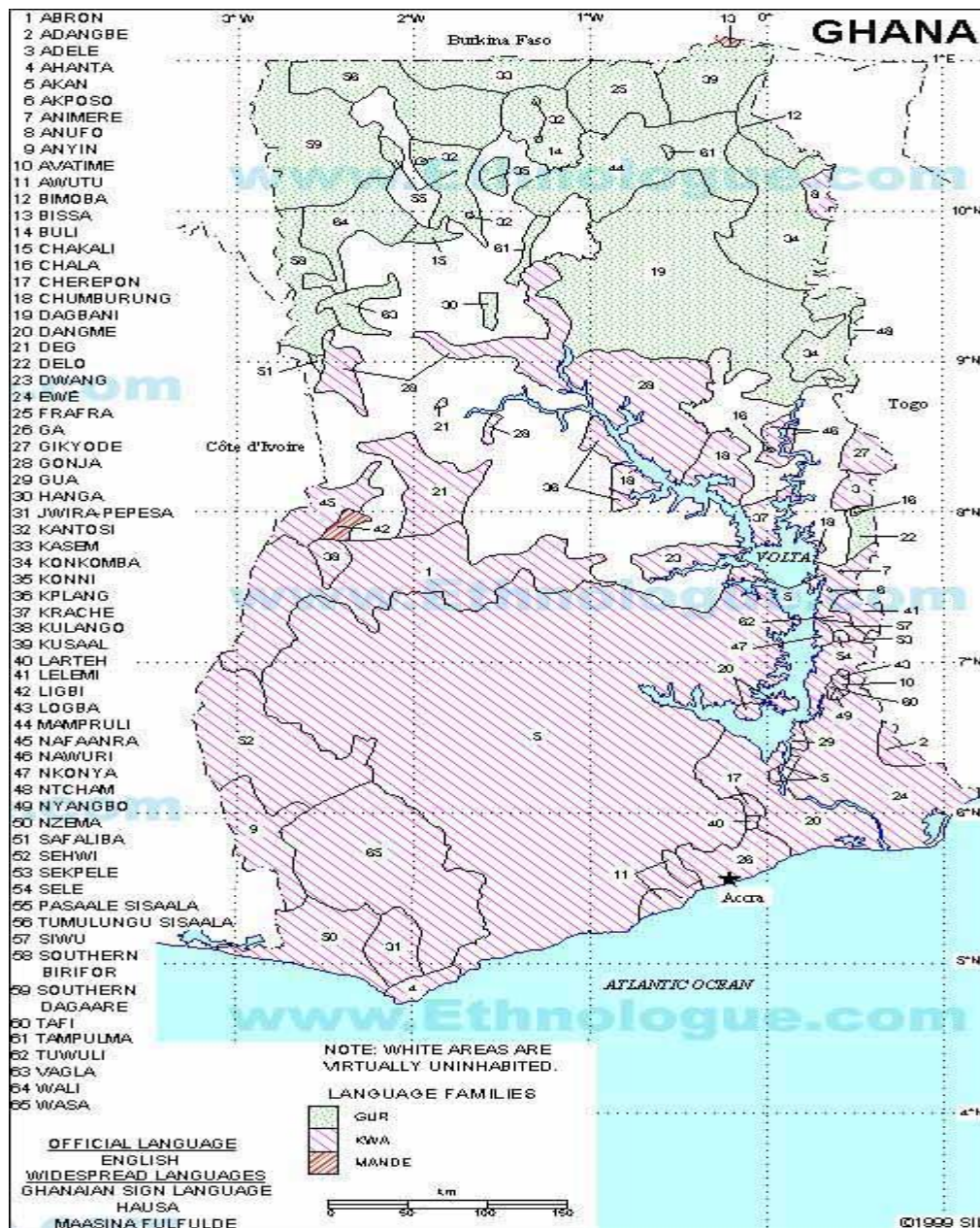
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Appendix A : A map showing the area and the various towns and villages within the Bia District





MAP.

Bia District is found in area marked '52'. The indigenous people in the area are Sefwi. (Appendix B).

Source: www.ethnologue.com

Some images (Appendix c): It covers images captured during my field work in Bia District, Ghana.



Some loading boys loading 'articulator' track at Debiso. Photo captured on May 2008 by researcher and research assistant with their consent sought.



Inside the big depot at Debiso
(captured on May 2008)



This is how the roads in the

Bia District particularly during runny season look like.



Market centre at Kaase. This is how most of the market centres

look like within the Bia District.



This bore-hole water

pipe (the only portable source of water at Kwamebikrom [KBK]), I was told had not been running for several months.



Photograph after group interview with some residents at KBK in the Bia District of Ghana. They were made aware photographs some of the photographs taken before, during and after interviews will be featured in this study. These participants granted me their permission to use any of the photographs taken with them.