Impact of Chieftaincy Conflict on the Economic Status of Women in Ghana

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Abstract: **Traditional leadership system among ethnic groups in Ghana is one of the revered customary legacies that survived and retained the essential elements of authority and respect among the people. Its role is to provide adjudication, social cohesion and economic promotion among the people. This study examined the economic impacts of the chieftaincy conflict on married women in Ghana. To achieve the aim of this study, a qualitative method was used. The study revealed that the conflict between the Andani and Abudu gates (royal clans) in Dagbon has devastating effects on the economic lives of the women in the community. Specifically, common business ties were broken which is major support for developing countries' economy. The study also found the emergence of new terms and patterns of economic behaviour and relationships in Northern Ghana, especially Dagbon.**

Keywords: **Empowerment, conflict, economic, chieftaincy, traditional, institutions, clan.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The institution of chieftaincy, as a traditional leadership system among ethnic groups in Ghana, is one of the revered customary legacies that survived colonial past and present independent political dispensation. It has survived and retained the essential elements of authority and respect among the people of Ghana all these years (Lentz, 1993; Brukum, 2004; Hagan, 2006). As custodians of both natural and human resources, chiefs provide traditional leadership, judicial adjudication, social cohesion and economic promotion to the people (Tonah, 2012; Awedoba & Odotei, 2006; Brukum, 2004). However, it is bedeviled with disputes which tend to retard developments and in many cases claim lives of women and children. The continuous deteriorating economic conditions in some African countries have been attributed to violent political, ethnic and chieftaincy conflicts, which have destabilized many peaceful countries (Jonsson, 2007; Park, 2010; Raleigh, & Kniveton, 2012; AM O'Hare, & Southall, 2007; Millenium Project, 2005; Ansorg, 2014; Gabiro, 2006). Studies showed that there are structural reasons to express discontent but it is the ability to mobilize resources that determines the extent of conflict (Hendrix, & Salehyan, 2012; Ansorg, 2014)

The West African sub-region has not been spared from this conflict (MacLean, 2004; Stewart & Fitzgerald, 2001; International Peace Academy, 2002; Asiedu, 2003; Abdullah, 2004). Studies identified lack of information to be one of the difficulty in enforcing inter-ethnic and clan cooperation especially in identifying problem about those who misbehaved (Fearon and Laitin, 1996; Gabiro, 2006). Countries like Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Mali and Cote d'Ivoire have faced and have been weakened by conflicts for the past three decades (Youngs, 2006; McGowan, 2006; Silberfein, & Conteh, 2006; Ogwang, 2011; Regan & Norton, 2003; Douma, 2003; McGarry, & O'leary, (Eds.). 2013; Abdullah, 2004; Richards, 2005). Within this troubled region, Ghana is considered the most cohesive and harmonious country with relative peace and stability (Sorli, 2002; Douma, 2003). However, in Ghana there are isolated, yet persistent and sometimes bloody outbreaks of inter-group, ethnic and chieftaincy conflicts that have proved difficult to alleviate and resistant to permanent reconciliation (Mahama, 2009; Jonsson, 2007; Tonah, 2011; Tsikata & Wayo, 2004; Akurang-Parry, 2003; Ahorsu & Gede, 2003; MacLean, 2004). The Dagbon chieftaincy conflict is a good example of the emotions that chieftaincy issues can inflame in Ghana.

This paper examined how the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict affects women's income-generating activities in Kanvilli. Traditionally, women occupied key positions alongside men in the production of goods and services. As such Ghanaian women played and continue to play leading roles in the development of the country. The rural women are engaged in non-commercial agricultural production while those along the coast engaged in fish processing as the main economic activity. The study describes in detail the impacts of this conflict on the economic activities of women in Kanvilli.

This conflict has received considerable attention in Ghana in recent years (Brukum, 2004; Awedoba & Odotei, 2006; Mahama, 2009; Tonah, 2011, 2012). However, insufficient attention has been given to its socio-economic effects on women at the micro level. The first section of the paper is the introduction and the next one focused on the study area, population and research methods. The third section concentrated on the causes and nature of conflict in Ghana. Then, fourth and fifth sections comprised the impact of conflict as well as the discussion and conclusion.

2. STUDY AREA AND POPULATION

The Tamale Metropolis is located at the centre of the Northern Region of Ghana. It lies between latitudes 9º 16' and 9º 34' North and longitudes 0º 36' and 0º 57' West. It is one of the 20 districts in the Northern Region and occupies approximately 750 km sq. which is 13% of the total area of the Northern Region. It shares common boundaries with Savelugu/Nanton District to the North, Tolon/Kumbungu District to the West, Central Gonja District to the South-West, East Gonja District to the South and Yendi District to the East. It is centrally located in the region and hence serves as a hub for all administrative and commercial activities in the region. Besides, the major government departments, ministries and NGO's have Tamale as their operational center. Tamale, the metropolitan and regional capital is also the political, economic and financial capital of the region. Some towns in the Metropolis include: Sakasaka, Worizehi, Zogbeli, Lamashegu, Kanvilli, Jisonayili, Kamina Barracks and Gumani. The study area 'Kanvilli' shares boundaries with some of the above mentioned communities. Kanvilli was chosen because it has the total outlook of Dagbon in terms of culture. It is also one of the locations of the chieftaincy conflict in Ghana and therefore, its population is more exposed to the effects of this phenomenon.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The qualitative method was used. Data and information for this paper was initially collected in 2010 as part of a study into the familial and economic impacts of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict on women in Kavilli, a suburb of Tamale. The unit of analysis of this study was married women in Kanvilli who are engaged in rice and groundnut processing as well as petty trading. Out of 60 women only 20 were suitable for this research. The author conducted interview with respondents and key informants mainly chiefs, educators and social workers in Tamale. This was complemented with secondary materials from journal articles, books and the internet.

4. CAUSES AND NATURE OF CHIEFTAINCY CONFLICT

Several studies have been conducted on conflict in African countries, including Ghana (Butler, & Gates, 2012; Shettima, & Tar, 2008; Brukum, 2004; Tonah, 2005; Awedoba & Odotei, 2006; Gabiro, 2006; Hagan, 2006; Tonah, 2012). Empirical study estimates 1.5 million Africans have either died directly from killing or conflict related famine accounting for the worst affected part of the world (Stewart & Fitzgerald, 2001). Studies indicate that the source of conflict in these countries include scarce resource and unemployment, thus women are in the majority (Shettima, & Tar, 2008; Hippolyt, 2003; Regan & Norton, 2003). There are millions of unemployed youth in Africa who are found more in the fringes of social systems and rural areas than the center (Amungwa, 2011; Hippolyt, 2003; Regan & Norton, 2003; Botchway, 2005). These youth are uncontrollable, aggressive and violent in most cases drawing them to join rebel groups or factions in conflict situations which lead to destabilization of families (Nafziger & Auvinen, 2003; Richards, 2003; Abdullah, 2004). The root causes of these conflict situations are also attributed to ethnical differences, poverty, group formation and dictatorship which have claimed millions of lives in the past years (Easterly & Levine, 1997; Elgis, 1996; Butler, & Gates, 2012; Schilling, et al. 2010; Nafzigern & Auvinen, 2003; Gabiro, 2006). Besides, traditional rule in Africa in general and Ghana in particular is the preserve of a small group of privileged people of a patrilineal (Northern Ghana) or matrilineal (Southern Ghana) descendants of the founding family of the community. These traditional communities are categorized into to a small group of royals constituting the ruling class and on the other hand are the majority referred to as the

commoners (Tonah, 2012). Since it is the desire of every royal to become chief and eventually rise to the kingship position, there is bound to be conflict which is sometimes due to the large numbers of contenders (Brukum, 2004; Tonah, 2005; Awedoba, 2006; Hagan, 2006; Abubakari, 2008; Mahama, 2009). The commoners have now joined the competition as they have considered themselves suitable candidates due to their high educational qualification and wealth (Hagan 2006; Tonah, 2012).

Furthermore, the proliferation of armed conflicts in Africa is perceived as rooted in the underlying features and differences among the heterogeneous communities and ethno-cultural groups arbitrarily bunched together to form sovereign states (Quinn, et al. 2013; McGowan, 2006; Sorli, 2002). The very nature of conflict in Africa, and Ghana in particular arises from cultural claim, demand for share of power, territorial autonomy, self-determination and mass response, if any to (ethos) nationalist appeal (Schilling, et al. 2010; Brukum, 2004; Hagan, 2006; Gabiro, 2006; Awedoba, 2006; Abubakari, 2008; Mahama, 2009; Peters, 2009).

Albert (2006) traces the history and politicization of issues in the Dagbon and Oyo Kingdoms in Ghana and Nigeria respectively. He mentioned that although the traditional rulers in Ghana and Nigeria have lost substantial power in rapid succession on account of the politicization and demystification of their offices, the institutions they represent have nevertheless demonstrated profound resilience and still remains relevant in governance today. The Oyo crises took place at the local levels but their escalations were configured at national level like the case in Dagbon. The conflict in Dagbon is similar in nature to that of Senegal and Nigeria (Abdullah, 2004; Albert, 2006).

In Ghana, studies have been conducted on the history, nature and attribute the causes of chieftaincy conflicts in the Dagbon Kingdom to enskinment process (Tamakloe, 1931;, Sibidow, 1969; Staniland, 1975; Mahama, 1986; Brukum, 2004; Tonah, 2005). Recent studies also made reference not only to enskinment process but also whether the chief designate has gone through the appropriate rituals (Hagan, 2006; Awedoba, 2006; Abubakari, 2008; Mahama, 2009; Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011; Anamzoya & Tonah, 2012; Tonah, 2012). This process must also be done by the appropriate traditional king makers because they determine the best qualified candidate to occupy a particular chiefdom. The validity of installation of a chief becomes an issue and may result to conflict if the contestants come from different gate (clan), or lineages (Awedoba, 2006; Abubakari, 2008; Mahama, 2009; Awedoba 2009; Anamzoya & Tonah, 2012; Tonah, 2012). Several studies highlighted the emerging identities and particular conflicts in Ghana. Tsikata & Wayo, 2004; Jönsson, 2007; Tonah, 2012. These deepen the discussion about communal conflicts and different elements of the identity, inequalities and conflict nexus. The inclusion drawn is that the cause of conflict in Ghana include; an intra-ethnic succession/chieftaincy dispute-Dagbon enskinment-, an inter-ethnic secession dispute-Konkomba conflicts-, a religious/political dispute-the Ga traditional area versus religious bodies- and an inter-ethnic boundary dispute-Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict (Tsikata & Wayo, 2004; Jönsson, 2007; Tonah, 2012).

Generally, chieftaincy disputes erupt when there are two or more rival claimants to a vacant skin, the symbols of kingship or chieftaincy in the Northern traditional states and stool in Southern Ghana respectively (Brukum, 2004; Mahama, 2009; Tonah, 2012). Such disputes turn to be violent when the rival claimants are from different gates (clans) since the entire members of the clans are involved (MacGaffey, 2006; Abubakari, 2008; Tonah, 2011). Like other parts of Africa, it is currently estimated that there are over 100 chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana centred on ethnicity, succession to traditional political office and the struggle over land (Peters, 2009; Tsikata and Wayo, 2004; McGarry, & O'leary, (Eds.). 2013; Tenkorang, 2007; Jönsson, 2007; Tonah, 2012). The current highest chieftaincy institution, the National House of Chiefs was created by the 1971 Chieftaincy Act and reaffirmed by the 1992 Constitution[1]. The 1992 Constitution insulate the institution from the state to ensure the political neutrality and survival and prestige of chieftaincy. However, the violent and protracted northern chieftaincy conflicts have been politicized by the ruling government and the main opposition either directly or indirectly by supporting the feuding factions (Lund, 2003; Jönsson, 2007; Tonah, 2012). The attempts at conflict resolution by traditional leaders, NGOs, civil society and governments have not been possible due to the perceived complicity of politicians (Linde & Naylor, 1999; Botchway, 2005; Jönsson, 2007; Bonger, 2009). In addition, the nature of conflict in Dagbon is attributable to the long period of colonial and post-colonial exploitation. Besides, neglect of the area as well as low education resulting to widespread poverty and dearth of socioeconomic infrastructure are other factors (Bening, 1990). Studies revealed that the Northern Region is very wide and sparsely populated with very few state institutions and public personnel like the security forces and inadequate police stations (Saaka, 2001; Botchway, 2005).

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[1]1992 constitution of the republic of Ghana article…..

Jönsson's (2007) investigates the importance of the historical construction of chieftaincy and the interaction of traditional institutions with the state. He further looks into the structure of the inter-ethnic conflicts of the Northern Region of Ghana between 1980 and 2002 that cost thousands of lives, particularly women and children. The paper observes that in Ghana, traditional leadership has become associated with a combined development and security discourse since most of the conflicts are connected with chiefs (Jönsson, 2007). Similarly, several studies indicate that inter-ethnic conflicts in the Northern Region involve two or more ethnic groups (Mamprusi and Kusasi conflict in Bawku) claiming a particular territory or authority to select a divisional or paramount chief of the traditional area (Brukum, 2001; Akurang-Parry, 2003; Lund, 2003; Tonah, 2005; Bombande, 2007; Jonsson, 2007 ; Tenkorang, 2007; Awedoba, 2009).

Several studies indicatethat incidents of conflict in Northern Ghana are political in nature, arising from elites who associate local issues with national politics. As such political change at the national level has ripple effects in local politics leading to violent confrontations (Linde and Naylor 1999; Lund, 2003; Hippolyt, 2003; Anamzoya, 2008; Bogner, 2009). They point out that these political alliance and disagreements are manifested in the polarization of the people resulting in the conflict in the area today. The conflict, as indicated, is experienced among indigenous ethnic groups which are recurrent, involving the same ethnic groups, clans or families in different ways (Linde & Naylor 1999; Lund, 2003; Hippolyt, 2003; Anamzoya, 2008; Bogner, 2009). Studies revealed that the likelihood of ethnic groups or clan engaging in conflict is high when they are excluded from access to power and economic resources by the structures and systems of chieftaincy institution (Hippolyt, 2003; Gabiro, 2006; Anamzoya, 2008; Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011). The presence of these factors coupled with high concentrations of unemployed youths, and limited access to complete, accurate and timely information from credible sources are important push factors for the eruption of conflict. Especially, when the presence of security forces, courts and police station in the area is very minimal (Saaka, 2001; Botchway, 2005; Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011). Apart from support for acquisition and maintenance of traditional leadership position, some chief are into politics because of their role as development agents (Awedoba, 2009). The role of chiefs is like a government appointee expected to lobby for development for the impoverished rural communities in his/her traditional area since most of the subject no longer wants to contribute towards development projects (Awedoba, 2006).

Joshua's (1998) deals with ethnic conflict as it relates to the distribution of resources in Ghana and indicates that the rivalry of ethnic groups is sparked by competition over scarce resources. He states that the determination of ethnic groups to secure their interest brings about economic upheavals in varying magnitude in the country. Studies revealed that ethnic conflict is evident when there is unequal national economic development and that the differences in which resources for development is allocated foster ethnic mobilization and makes society vulnerable to polarization along ethnic lines (Joshua, 1998; Gabiro, 2006; Jonsson, 2007; Bombande, 2007; Awedoba, 2009). According to Joshua (1998), this unhealthy competition and polarization leads to conflict in multiethnic developing communities that has negative economic repercussions on the vulnerable sections – women and children - of the society. For instance, studies on conflict point to economic issues like low per capita income (poverty) to explain the outbreak and duration of conflict in some communities (Colleir, et al., 2004; Murshed & Gate, 2005, World Bank, 2005; Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; Do & Iyer, 2007). The main motive for ethnic conflict in Ghana is to secure resources from the central administration for the community's development. The uneven development resource allocation therefore increases prevalence of conflict and in turn leads to poverty and vulnerability to economic hardships (Peters, 2009; Gati, 2008).

5. FINDINGS ON ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF CONFLICT ON WOMEN

The study explores women's economic experiences after the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. In-depth interviews were conducted with twenty married women who indicated high levels of business breakdown due to the conflict.

This section presents the themes that emerge from the informants' descriptions of the economic impacts of this conflict reveal ten categories. These include: discrimination, mistrust, suspicion, boycott, hoarding, low sales, loss of property, strained relationship, upsurge of middle men and displacement. These categories were later grouped into four broad categories in a way that each supports how conflict impact the informants as new forms of economic behaviour, shortage of supply, low sales and upsurge of middlemen as indicated below.

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5.1 New Forms of Economic Behaviour:

The impact of conflict as a result of difference in gates is not only peculiar to the social life of the informants but to their economic activities as well. Women usually conduct income generating activities of one kind or another during the lean season in Dagbon. The large majority of these are traditional and labour intensive activities with low capital input. The activities include household food processing, cotton spinning and cloth weaving, selling of charcoal, cola nut and water. They however, switch from one activity to another based on what is most likely to be profitable at a given time. However, there are marked disparities in women's access to economic resource that enable them to achieve their economic and social goals as a result of emerging new form of economic relationship after the recent conflict.

Some of the informants narrated the difficulty faced because of gate difference from their business partner. Sometimes they deliberately increase the price or hoard goods to ward off opponents so that they could give to their allies. They indicated that such behaviour leads to extortion because if one is bent on getting supply at all cost, she ends paying more than the normal price. They further stated that discrimination is the biggest challenge faced by almost all the informants in going about their business. Daabiya claimed that:

I need to buy rice, the various product of groundnut-oil, paste, jell and powder-, articles, confectionary from different people. The nature of discrimination and suspicion makes it difficult for me to get most of these items…in the right quantity

In another development, Jahima claimed that:

Boycott…before the conflict there was nothing like boycott, discrimination. Besides the youth were around to help their parents on the field which guaranteed good harvest…in fact it is difficult nowadays to get supply of groundnuts as I use to get before. The farmers and our agents use not to border about our identity for any transaction but now that is not the case. I can recollect one of the agents returned my money to me without buying even a bowl (gbarigbuni) of groundnut which was unusual but I later found her with one of my colleagues in the business. So…in fact there is too much mistrust and polarization.

Some of the informants however, told the researcher that distribution is a bit hard. For marketing however, there are fewer problems because they sell in bits to the consumers since they buy without any discrimination or questioning their background even though some have stopped patronizing. Neena indicated that she always cooperates with other colleagues because she understands the dynamics of the Dagbon chieftaincy issue but still it has created problems of suspicion and mistrust which are clear in their interactions and get-together in the markets. As they belong to different gates some have refused to do business with one another because of much suspicion and mistrust.

One of the informants indicated that the women engaged in processing and petty trading in Dagbon has also collapsed due to the curfew and state of emergency that was imposed on Dagbon in the heart of the conflict. For fear of harassment, petty traders open their stalls and kiosks late and close early to avoid brutality and harassment. Informants explained that departmental stores from which petty traders have their supply also leave the place early for the sake of their lives and properties.

Some of the informants also indicated that they take advantage of increasing their sales as some customers do discriminatory buying. Sales have doubled which they attribute to the shift in loyalty and as mistrust increases everybody is now looking for those that can be trusted. According to Salpawuni:

You know I sell ingredients, various types…as well, this is consumed directly, everybody wants to be sure the meal is wholesome, as such some turn to buy from me probably because we share the same ideology in terms of the Dagbon chieftaincy issue. Some come from far…yes far away by-pass colleagues; they could get same ingredients…I sell

Some of the informants also explained that there is cordial relationship between them and most customers as the majority in Kavilli are predominantly the gate they belong to. Salpawuni agreed with other informants engaged in petty trading that their suppliers sometimes showed some sort of preferential treatment which is later realized as nothing but their loyalty to the Dagbon chieftaincy divide. The informants also indicated that they engage the service of the village women as agents to buy materials after the market days when they are not around, which are without problems as they witnesses mistrust and betrayal. One of the groundnuts processors, Adakulo indicated that:

Before if an agent told you, supplier told you she has no goods it was a fact but it is a different…thing now. At first I didn't know so it causes some of us dearly as it came to a time and I didn't have anything 'simbenlili' to process for my customers…forcing me to spend part of my capital and cut down my customers.

She mentioned the trouble of getting means of transport as drivers are afraid of breaking curfew and the brutality from the patrol police and military. She stated that it is always difficult in getting market-truck *(daaloori)* to cut the goods she brings to Kanvilli and claimed that drivers who finally go to the village-market will then charge her double for the reason that in case there is any breaking of curfew, that amount can cover the fine. Some of the informants recollected that they no longer trust one another as some of their suppliers want to know their family background which is normally enquired indirectly before the conflict. The research reveals that the nature of distribution and marketing of rice became difficult as some traders could no longer go to certain villages they used to get their supply for fear of boycott**.** Daama indicated that:

The villagers, our agents begun to question the identity…ours…before they release the product for sale. Some of us also…my brother…took advantage to reveal the identity of colleagues to benefit, yes and take the goods that would have been sold to them, complete betrayal of trust.

She described the difficulty of distribution and marketing of her products as a result of mistrust and lack of confidence in one another as well as suspicion on the part of the customers. She said the problems faced as a result of being of different gates have been discrimination, boycott and isolation.

5.2 Shortage of Supply:

The women in the study were married women who earn their living from rice and groundnut processing to final products like *sim-moli, kulikuli-zim, lukui, simakpam*while the petty traders also use some of these products to sell in bits to the consumers. The women's level of economic contribution is measured according to the type of household activities, not the cash value of women's production. Some of the women – rice and groundnut processors - indicated that they normally attend weekly village markets like Tampion, Savelugu, Gushegu, Kpatinga, Karaga and Pishigu markets for their supply of materials. The majority of the rice processors indicated that they now go to the Upper East region as they could not get enough supplies. Dangana indicated that she had to resort to going to Navorongo for rice sometime already milled in order to meet the demands of her customers.

Some of the informants indicated that their business nearly collapsed due to shortage of rice. For instance, Budaali told the researcher that:

I am a groundnut processor; normally I go to the farm gates to buy groundnuts from the farmers, through agents…the women in the communities as my agents. I sometimes give money to these agents to buy…yes, even in my absence…

The study revealed that the majority of the informants attributed the shortage in supply of those commodities to discrimination apart from the alleged displacement of farmers after the conflict and subsequent running to the south of energetic youths who used to help on the farms.

In a similar case, Daama, a petty trader and many other informants who get their supplies from both rice and groundnut processors as well as from wholesale sellers in the Tamale market complained that the young girls from whom they used to get their supplies have run to the south for head-porting *(kaayaye)* cutting down supplies as a result.

Some of the informants also indicated that they are in bad business as they are not from their same gate as the business partners. Adakulo lamented that:

I think I suffered more than any other person if I may say…yes…I only had cordial relation with the few of my colleagues who happened to be…are from the same gate with me…but supply…can you imagine, we sometimes do not even greet…insults, criticism, gossip, gossip! All that you can think are provocative is what is in the market now…Ooi disheartening.

However, a few of the informants disclosed that they do business with colleagues from different gates but do not experience any strain with regard to getting supplies and distributing products even though there is a significant decline in the number of local customers. As indicated by one of the informants, she has a large customer base which extends beyond Dagbon to southern Ghana which makes her unsusceptible to her colleagues. Some of the informants explained

that they buy in large quantities because they supply to a large number of customers, as some of them come all the way from Kumasi and Cape Coast to buy both oil and granulated groundnut-cake (*Kulikulizim*). Adinpuya stated that:

I have a large market, yes customers, a lot of people to supply oil and the granulated groundnut-cake (Kulikulizim). I sometimes supply groundnut-paste and the groundnut-jell (sim-moli mini lukui) to petty traders, food vendors (rice and TZ) from home and those from the southern Ghana.

5.3 Low Sales:

The majority of the informants have complained about their sales decreasing which is attributable to the state of emergency and the curfew that is imposed on Dagbon as a result of the conflict. In relation to the above, they indicated that the curfew compels them to go to the market late and go home early leaving most of their customers unattended. Laamihi narrated that supplies could not be the same before and after the conflict and explained that:

Before I used not to go far to purchase but now I get my raw supply from Zabzugu, sometimes Bimbilla at a cost. My son, I use to buy…averagely…twenty bags of paddy rice every fortnight but see…today I can only afford five bags because my supply contract was not renewed when I could no longer meet their demand forcing me to resort to advancing credits to petty traders some of whom have defaulted in payment.

Some of the informants indicated that they have to resort to going to Navorongo to buy rice sometime already milled because the cost has increased astronomically, cutting down the number of customers. They also could not give credit to customers who are petty traders as they used to do. The research revealed that some of the petty traders were also compelled to cut down on the quantity which invariably affects their sales as well as their suppliers.

Budaali told the researcher that her business nearly collapsed because most of her customers have abandoned her resulting in low sales:

I use to supply groundnut products to some sisters from the south but they stopped coming when the state of emergency and curfew were imposed in Dagbon. They were my major customers…they used to buy in large quantity and always pay cash, now they go to Bimbila for the groundnut paste…and…

Zulya, a petty trader said it came to a point when she could not go to the Tamale market to buy her items for fear of the security men because they did not have respect even for the elderly. She said this leads to a shrink in her business because she did not have many items to meet the demands of her customers.

Dangana a rice processor told the researcher that at one point she could not get enough rice to process for her customers thus affecting her sales margin. She stated that some schools she used to supply lost confidence in doing business with her and that her contract is never renewed. She said that the supply and sales of rice before and after the conflict are not the same anymore.

5.4 Upsurge of Middlemen:

The research reveals that supply and distribution of groundnuts/rice before and after the conflict have been different since the upsurge of middlemen. It is also revealed that supply of materials has not been smooth since the emergence of middlemen in the supply chain. Bondito narrated that she has short supply of raw materials after the conflict which is unusual. This turn of events has compelled her to travel to many villages before she can get the required quantity to be able to supply to her customers. She stated that a lot of middle men have come in the supply chain making it more difficult.

We use to buy direct from the villages during markets days or we wait for them…our colleagues to supply us on their return from those markets but since after the conflict we witness the upsurge of middlemen in the trade…this kind of trade is new, just recent.

Bandoba claimed that the emergence of the middlemen has created competition for the raw materials in the market. She stated that the middlemen have made a mess of the business, for they hijack the supply and distribution of rice making it very difficult for them to get the quantity needed. She claimed that they only supply to those perceived to be sharing the same ideology with regard to the Dagbon chieftaincy divide.

In another development, Budaali stated that she experience shortage in supplies as very few traders have groundnuts and the few who have them are selling to middlemen and not their regular customers as they used to before the conflict. To get supplies she now treks far distances and many times before she could get enough supplies; this exposed her to the dangers on the road such as attacks of armed robbers.

The majority of the informants reported of strained friendship and relationship which they attribute to mistrust as a result of the conflict. Most of the informants who said this are from different gates of the Dagbon chieftaincy divide and blame their predicaments on that fact. The informants claimed that these strained relationships give the middlemen the advantage to create unpleasant situation like discriminatory trade in the market. Laamihi indicated that her interaction with colleagues has not been cordial:

Friendships…there are no more relationships, not even…we no longer trust one another which create acrimony, bitterness and resentment

Similarly, Adakulo stated the dangers and the extent the conflict have polarized Dagbon:

Before the conflict we…both…yes men and women in Dagbon use to have groups based on common business interest but the conflict, immediately after the conflict there was re-grouping, suddenly…you see people sit in groups of the same loyalty instead of business…even if it is business, abandoning old friends, making new ones…and everything is by gates as these days it is very easy to tell who is Andani or Abudu just ask are you NPP or NDC political parties or the mosque she prays Zaamigu or Ambariya or Bamba or Imam Rashid is enough.

Expressing similar feelings, Abiriwa shared her experience of strained relationships that she no longer has friends because of differences in gates as all of them are loyal to their families which compelled her to sometimes rely on the dubious middlemen. Gaaziya (56) explained that after the conflict some colleagues who kept company started distancing themselves. For Gaaziya such behaviour or attitude change ensued was not strange because that was not the first time for people in Dagbon to encourage family loyalty in the case of the chieftaincy issue as she has witnessed it before in 1969 though this time round it was more serious.

6. DISCUSSION

The problem of chieftaincy conflict as indicated in the study suggests far-reaching impacts on the economic lives of the people in Ghana in general and women in particular. The conflict leads to the breakdown of economic systems rendering productive women idle and redundant, a process that heightens their vulnerability. There is a complex relationship among the women with regard to their economic behaviour. It is closely linked to the conduct and motivations of the women as they must adapt to strenuous circumstance to survive. As such, they take on available opportunities like denunciation of former friends and neighbours, adopt new forms of livelihoods through social alliances that may allow economic survival (Wood, 2003; Kalyva, 2007; Kalyvas & Kocher, 2007; Kay, 2012). The modes of marketing and distribution become increasingly unstable because of competition between different resource users turning the situation to a struggle for integrity and survival of sympathizers and supporters of the gates (royal clans). Some however, suggest that economic motives of self-enrichment and economic opportunities as the reason as found in existing literature (Ballentine & Sherman, 2003; Ballentine & Nitzschke, 2004). Studies revealed that some groups manipulate conflict situation to their own advantage when resources are scarcer which affects the economic status of individuals and households through direct and indirect transformations (Azam, 2006; Weinstein 2007; Kalyvas, 2007; Collier, 2007). The Dagbon conflict for instance has destroyed the ways in which women earn to care for the family since the struggle to control the market involves contacts and influence. As such, economic activities were no longer viable as before the conflict in the face of insufficient supplies and low sales hence the change in economic behaviour. Such bahaviour is seen as systemic corruption, inequitable distribution of resources as well as systematic exclusion of some groups from the main stream of the conflict area (Steward 2003; Nafziger & Auvinen 2003; Esteban & Ray, 1994; Ostby, 2006). The study shows that middlemen as well as some women try to hoard goods, boycott their business partners causing strained relationship thus resulting in discriminatory trade, suspicion and economic isolation. For Humphreys & Weinstein, (2008) the support and cooperate with groups that cause suspicion and discrimination are not just for opportunistic reasons, but rather to guarantee survival and the fulfillment of basic economic needs after conflict. So the efforts to control resource flows through consumer boycott may deprive people their survival of important incomes thus putting further strains on already pressured livelihood (Binzel & Bruck, 2006; Bruck & Schindler, 2007; Amungwa, 2011). Barclay, D.W., & Smith, J. B.

(1997) asserts that lack of trust between business partners may be attributed to perceived difference in goals and approaches to the business always driven by difference in culture, strategy and systems in place within the group.

The barriers to women's economic advancement especially during and after conflict as indicated revealed widespread direct and indirect discrimination thus gender discrimination in which females have lower economic advancement (Martha Walls 2000; Doucet, & Denov, 2012; Hynes, 2004; Acemoglu, & Lyle, 2004; Sideris, 2003; Al-Ali, & Pratt, 2009). However, the economic discrimination witness in Dagbon after the conflict was among same gender thus discrimination among women in business which affects all irrespective of one's status whether single parent, divorce or married. The distribution and marketing systems and outlets of supplies were affected, thus women had few opportunities to earn a living. The conflict reduces the standard of living and resource availability in the area as a whole and destroys welfare and economic services in Ghana. It is stated that as a result of women's limited earning powers and of low level of child support, mothers and their children often experience a sharp decline in their standard of living and emotional problems due to poverty as a result of conflict (Krippner, & McIntyre, (Eds.) 2003; Cherlin, 1992; Binzel & Bruck, 2006; Bruck & Schindler, 2007). Women encounter these problems because of shortage of supplies as they could no longer meet the demands of their customers which in turn have adverse effect on their income. In corroboration, studies indicate that the incidence of suffering is attributed to exclusion from trade and the slowdown of growth in the staple crop (Aryeetey & Mckay, 2004; ODI & CEPA, 2005; Quaye, 2009). However, Acemoglu, & Lyle, (2004) attribute such to non pecuniary factors rather than market incentives.

The education of girls provides greater earning capacity which makes it possible to tap the potentials of women to support community building and serves as a strong predictor of economic growth in the country (Meyers, 2013; Standing, & Parker, 2011; Sutton, 1998; Kecmanovic, 2013; Ityavya, 2005; World Bank, 2011). However, due to cultural restraints and lack of education, women are unable to get meaningful employment and therefore are not in the position to provide for their families, this exacerbated by chieftaincy conflict which consequently affects their economic activities. Osmond (1987) states that in most societies the subordination of women is created in the economic structure as a by-product of the division of labour. Women are often unable to provide for themselves and their families in traditional societies in conflict situations (Bruck, 2006; Bruck & Schindler, 2007; Plümper, & Neumayer, 2006; Doucet, & Denov, 2012). This research discovers that in addition to food and shelter, women also need means to generate incomes. It is important to provide economic opportunities for women; equally imperative to undertake this with sensitivity to their current economic climate to avoid from exacerbating the situation. Cherlin (1992) indicates that many single parents with low incomes receive assistance from a network of kin but the resources are usually limited and that economic pressure on the mother means less time for child care and for her personal life. The women coming to terms with these inequalities enabled them to learn market concepts such as profit, loss, supply and demand to take transitional steps into the public sphere (Hindiyeh et al., 1994). During such periods, households use several mechanisms and communal support networks to cope with the situation (Achebe, 2010; Quaye; 2009; Usta, et al. 2008; Matud, 2004; Mattocks, et al. 2012; Tankink, & Richters, 2007). Most often, society fails to recognize the role of women in maintaining social and economic order during and after conflict, so the harm suffered by women through this must be adequately recognized.

The development literature provides a good understanding of the importance of both positive and negative effects of conflict on the lives of the poor, particularly women, in the community (Arshney, 2002; Durlauf, 2006). The research widely revealed negative impacts of conflict on women. However, there are some observable positive aspects that emerge as a result of the conflict. One such positive gain is the increased economic empowerment of women as they try various coping strategies to sustain their families during the difficult times of the conflict. The women cope by making adaptations to their existing roles, managing the little resources at their disposal by reducing the number of meals taken in a day and cooking cheaper food which, however, affects the nutritional needs of the family. In addition, gender partnership is promoted through changed roles within the family. Similarly, studies found that conflict encourages the consideration of new ideas and approaches where new forms of economic activities and new markets are established, thus facilitates innovation and change (Tekleab, et al. 2009; Chingono, 1996; Baron, 1991; Wolfers, & Zitzewitz 2009; Guidolin, & La Ferrara, 2010).

The disturbance of established norms also has unintended positive effects on the status and role of women and therefore their role development. Coleman, (1990) treats norms as rules that structure strategic behaviour, and that people comply with norms when it is in their self-interest. For instance, the economic responsibilities soar when women are obliged to take over the responsibility of supporting the family. This often requires learning new skills that help women to perform

jobs previously held by men or that prepare them for income-generating activities apart from their usual economic activities. According to Corsaro (1997), individuals are born into an ongoing society and are shaped by society. At the same time, the individuals shape society through their behaviours, attitudes and beliefs. The attitudes assist women to achieve greater economic independence and lead to long lasting changes in their lives. Empirical evidence on economic motivations has shown that material benefits accrued to satisfy the basic needs of those involved (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2008; Verwimp, 2005; Guidolin, & La Ferrara, 2010). Initiatives and programme interventions are built around these positive aspects by supporting initiatives that take advantage of the shifts in relationships because of women's positive gain in conflict situation. According to Midgley (1994), the main aim of social development initiatives are about promoting the social welfare of the society and that organized efforts are needed to bring about improvement in social welfare to enable individuals to influence their own future in the context of wider social and economic forces. Functional approaches to conflict demonstrated that far from being dysfunctional, violence often serve a range of social and economic functions for individuals (Berdal & Keen, 1997; Reno, 1998). These positive gains by women are sustained by supportive programmes that build their skills further, provide education and promote leadership skills so that the advancements of women will remain even after the chieftaincy conflict is finally over.

One of the serious impacts of the conflict on women is the closing down of private enterprises and NGOs because of the insecure nature of the place compelled some petty traders' business to crumble as they no longer get their supplies and access to credit facilities from those around them and this affects their livelihood. Based on this, symbolic interactionists argue that the behaviour of the individual and for that matter, society is extremely complex because it can be influenced by both existing events and events yet to occur that the individual believes might happen (Lamertz, et al 2003; Bengtson, et al. 2002; Denzin, 2008). Thus investors relocate their investments to other regions because of the insecurity in Dagbon which in turn increases the poverty level of women. Economically, the conflict has caused a drastic fall in trade and other economic activities making women the worse sufferers. The research shows that the chieftaincy conflicts impede developments such as provision of education and recreational facilities thus women's low income levels deny the children access to quality education. They also indicate that health facilities were negatively affected as in many cases workers refuse posting to and those already there run away due to the insecure nature of the place. Again, the provision of adequate utilities such as water, electricity and other development projects was inadequate in most parts because funds meant for development were channeled into conflict management and peace keeping in the area at the expense of development.

7. CONCLUSION

It should be noted that the economic development will remain obsolete if women are not supported by and linked to strategies and programmes which promote and support their economic empowerment. The economic environment of these women after the conflict was a place where the opportunities for income generation activities were few and social services almost nonexistent for the majority. This results in the limited ability of women to engage in investment to sustain their economic activities during and after conflict. Therefore, the emergence of new terms of economic behaviour as well as new pattern of economic relationship like the emerged middlemen, fall in trade, trade boycotts, economic isolation and low sales need to be reduced if not completely solved to pave the way for the development of women in Northern Ghana. If there is going to be any sustained economic development in the area, then women cannot be ignored and underestimated. There is the need to understand women, recognize and support them so that their full potential can be developed to the benefit of all. The study revealed that the women were well connected with common markets so this calls for markets in the area to be enhanced and cottage industries established. This will create employment as well as enhance relationship among women in the country. It is important to engage women in social and economic activities that will empower them. The study has identified the need for effective implementation, coordination and monitoring of developmental initiatives and programmes employed by the women. This requires capacity building to coordinate the development projects through community participation and mobilization of the available human and material resources. It also requires the involvement of all the stakeholders to create flexibility and transparency throughout the reconciliation and reconstruction processes after the conflict. This should be geared towards reducing significantly the adverse impacts on women's economic development. Therefore, a sincere reconciliation body is put in place since economic growth and development can only flourish in a peaceful and harmonious environment. To achieve this, the two main political traditions in Ghana ought to depoliticize the chieftaincy issues in Northern Ghana by not making any political capital out of it.

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