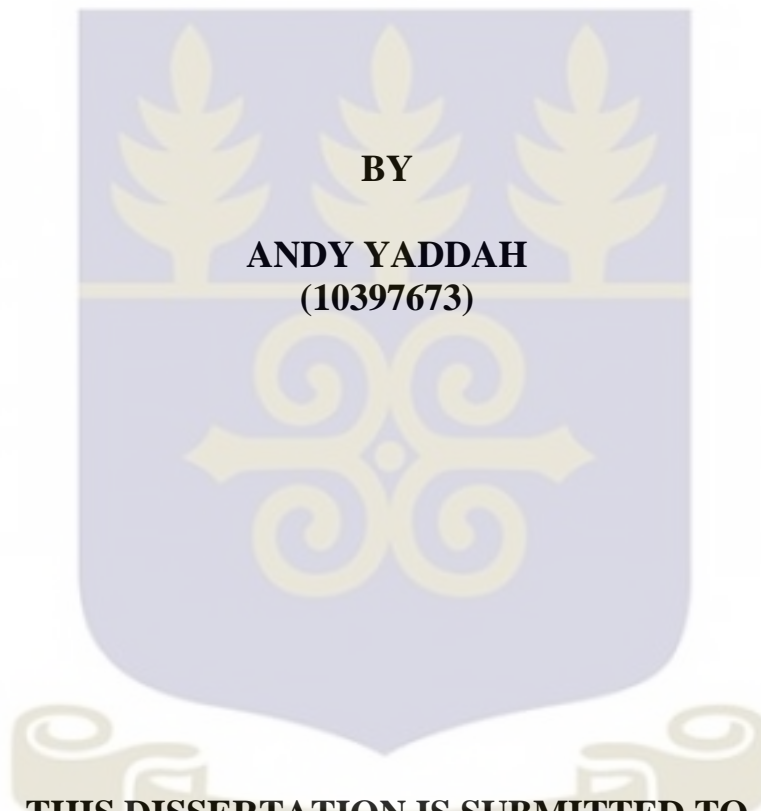


**PROVIDING BIRTH REGISTRATION FOR ALL IN GHANA:  
AN ASSESSMENT OF TARGET 16.9 OF SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16**



**BY**

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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO  
THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF  
MA INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DEGREE**

**DECLARATION**

I, Andy Yaddah, do hereby declare that this work is a result of my personal effort, under the supervision of Prof. Samuel Nii Ardey Codjoe. No part of this study has been presented elsewhere in part or in whole for any other purpose. I further declare that all sources of information have been duly acknowledged and referenced.

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**(SUPERVISOR)**

**DATE.....**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to the Almighty God for His Grace and Mercies upon my life, and to my family, for their endless love and support.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I, first of all, want to thank God Almighty for His Grace, Guidance and Protection in my life, particularly throughout my pursuit for this degree.

It was an honour to have Prof. Samuel Nii Ardey Codjoe as my supervisor. I am extremely grateful for his advice and above all his guidance that has facilitated the successful completion of this dissertation. I am truly grateful.

Lastly, I want to thank my family for the support, my friends for their encouragement and the entire LECIAD Class of 2018/2019 for the memories.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	-	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BDR	-	Births and Deaths Registry
CIDR	-	Central Identities Data Repository
GDHS	-	Ghana Demographic and Health Survey
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	-	Information and Communications Technology
ID4D	-	Identification for Development
MDGs	-	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	-	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NCCE	-	National Commission for Civic Education
NIA	-	National Identification Authority
SDGs	-	Sustainable Development Goals
TBA	-	Traditional Birth Attendant
UDHR	-	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UIDAI	-	Unique Identification Authority of India
UN	-	United Nations
UNCRC	-	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	-	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	-	World Health Organization

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## ABSTRACT

In an effort to ensure universal access to basic human rights, essential social facilities such as healthcare, education, justice systems and financial institutions, and the planning of an overall development agenda, there is the need to provide official documentation of legal identity for all persons. Identity registration through birth registration and certification is regarded as the first document that serves as a form of legal identity for individuals at birth. As states in the international system make conscious efforts towards attaining the 17 Sustainable Development Goals before 2030, the 16<sup>th</sup> SDG which calls for Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions through Target 16.9, aims at tackling issues concerned with the provision of legal identity for all. This includes birth registration by identifying the proportion of children under the age of 5 years whose births have been registered with civil authority. In Ghana, it is estimated that about 15% of the population remains without a legal identity and hence, their inability to enjoy their rights and benefit from social structures. This study employs the use of the 2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey to determine the influence of some selected socio-economic and demographic variables such as the level of education of the mother, type of place of residence, wealth index, age and sex of the child on birth registration status within the country. Through univariate analysis, frequencies and percentages were used to describe the characteristics of the respondents. Cross tabulations and chi-square tests were conducted at the bivariate level of analysis to determine the relationships between selected socio-economic and demographic variables and birth registration status. The binary logistic regression model was employed at the multivariate level to examine how socio-economic and demographic variables correlated with birth registration status. Results show that birth registration was dependent on factors like the mother's education, wealth index, the type of place of residence and mother's religion.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0. Introduction

Since its founding in the late 1940s, the United Nations (UN) and its technical organizations have actively led the global development agenda. Until the 1990s, the strategy was divided and disjointed initiated at multiple World Summits and Conferences by its specific organizations or funds to tackle three aspects of financial, social and environmental development. The MDGs and the Millennium Declaration saw the convergence of the development agenda of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); World Health Organization (WHO); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and other development agencies (ibid). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which were recently implemented reflect further consolidation of the development agenda. Equity, human rights and non-discrimination are also strengthened by the SDGs<sup>1</sup>. A series of global consultations were conducted online and offline to create a new, people-centred development agenda. Civil society organisations, citizens, researchers, scholars, and private industries from around the globe were all actively involved in the process. The SDGs comprise of 17 goals and 169 targets. The 17 goals are; *“No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health and Well-being; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Clean Water and Sanitation; Affordable and Clean Energy; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure; Reduce Inequality; Sustainable Cities and Communities; Responsible Consumption and Production; Climate Action; Life Under Water; Life on Land; Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions; and Partnership for the Goals.”*

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<sup>1</sup> UN General assembly. 69<sup>th</sup> Session. Agenda Item 13(a) [Last accessed on 2015 Nov 09]. Available at [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E) . [Ref list]

The concept for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) arose during the process leading up to the Rio20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The Rio20 Conference in 2012 agreed in its result document *The Future We Want* to negotiate and build consensus on the SDGs, unlike many others (UN General Assembly 2012). Negotiations to form the SDGs took place mainly through the United Nations (UN) Open Working Group with simultaneous, but not always synchronized, discussions regarding funding and the broader post-2015 development agenda. Furthermore, consultation with a broad range of actors took place at the UN, at the regional and national level, as well as through a web-based platform that reached a wider audience. These debates have resulted in a set of 17 SDGs with 169 targets (Stevens & Kanie, 2016).

In Africa, the implementation by the General Assembly of the United Nations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 has re-focused worldwide attention on the core of the sustainable development discourse. Meanwhile, in order to attain sustainable development, African countries prioritize structural transformation in their domestic and continental development programmes (Armah, & Baerk, 2015). The achievement of the SDGs cannot be done without financial outlays. Africa needs a double-digit growth rate of 16.6% per year between 2015 and 2030 to achieve some of the goals by 2030, which corresponds to an investment-to-GDP ratio and a financing gap to GDP ratio of 87.5 and 65.6 per cent per annum, respectively. However, estimates of the growth rates needed differ extensively across sub-regions and individual countries' levels of development (Kedir et al, 2017).

The prioritization of the goals is very important, more especially the goals must dovetail into the development capabilities and agenda of states. Ghana, a member of the United Nations, and whose president co-incidentally is a co-chair to the SDGs has reaffirmed his commitment to see through the implementation of the goals.

The commitment to building strong democratic structures of state has been a directive principle guiding the practice of the theory of political governance in the fourth republic. Institutions of states have been retooled to perform their duties creditably.

The provision of peace, justice and strong institutions form an integral part of sustainable development. SDG 16 seeks to encourage peaceful, inclusive societies, provide access to justice, as well as to shape effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. The 9th target of SDG 16 (Target 16.9) demands for the provision of legal identity for all, including birth registration by the year 2030 (Whaites, 2016). The indicator of this target is defined by the proportion of children under 5 years whose births have been registered with a civil authority (ibid). According to the World Bank's Identification for Development (ID4D) 2018 Global Dataset, Ghanaians constitute about 4.5 million out of about 1 billion people who lack legal identity worldwide (World Bank, 2018). That is, about 15% of Ghana's population remains unregistered or lack any form of legal identity. About 3.9 million of these people are between the ages of 0 and 18 years and 0.6 million above 18 years (ibid). The 2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey estimates that about 7 in 10 children under 5 years have their births registered even though there exist administrative policies and legislation that specify birth registration procedures in Ghana. Unfortunately, birth registration centres nationwide, specifically in rural areas, lack adequate equipment as a result of inadequate financial resources (World Bank, 2014). According to Amo-Adjei and Annim (2015), socio-economic and demographic factors such as distance to centres, type of place of residence, level of education, wealth, political and cultural conditions either enhance or constrain access to birth or identity registration in Ghana.

## **1.1. Statement of Research Problem**

Persons without a legal identity, particularly birth registration, do not gain access to fundamental rights, justice and social services. It is in this regard that Target 16.9 demands for the provision of effective civil registration and vital statistics systems that provide a legal form of identity particularly birth registration for all. Examining Agenda 2030 establishes the fact that most goals and targets require a form of identification to enable access to services. Target 16.9 can, therefore, be said to be an enabler to the attainment of other SDGs such as; SDG 4 – Quality Education, SDG 5 – Gender Equality and SDG 10 – Reduction of Inequality (Janowski, 2016). Identification is an important canon of citizenship. The basic proof of citizenship the world over are documentation or certification of birth. These documents give access to and maximize an individual's rights and privileges to vital services like employment, political participation, and subvention in education et al. Socio-economic and demographic factors like access to registration centres, level of parental education, household income underlie registration processes in Ghana. Indeed, more than ten per cent (10%) of Ghana's population is without birth certification (Amo-Adjei & Annim, 2015).

## **1.2. Research Questions**

In meeting the goal of SDG 16, Target 16.9, this dissertation examines the following questions:

- What is the proportion of children with birth registration in Ghana?
- What are the socio-economic and demographic factors affecting birth registration in Ghana?
- What measures have been put in place to provide birth registration for children under the age of 5 years?
- What are the challenges faced by actors in the provision of birth registration in Ghana?

### **1.3. Research Objectives**

- To determine the proportion of children with birth registration in Ghana
- To identify the socio-economic and demographic factors affecting birth registration in Ghana
- To assess the measures put in place to provide birth registration for children under 5 years of age
- To find solutions or recommendations to the challenges faced by actors in the provision of birth registration in Ghana

### **1.4. Scope of the Study**

This work examines SDG 16 as an important development goal of states in the international system. The SDG 16 which translates into Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions is a development concern in many African states. The focus of this work, Target 16.9 of SDG 16 emphasizes the provision of compulsory birth certification in Ghana as a human rights consideration. The scope of the study explores the processes of acquiring legal birth registration in Ghana for children under five years. The work encompasses discussions on SDG 16, Target 16.9 and the Ghana Births and Deaths Registry. Part of the scope is primary data sourced from the 2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS).

## **1.5. The Rationale of the Study**

This study makes a significant input towards policy guidelines on legal birth identification and certification processes in Ghana. The study highlights the flaws, appreciates the inroads made by governments in birth registration in Ghana. Also, this study makes a modest contribution to the policy and literary discourse on SDG 16, Target 16.9.

## **1.6. Theoretical & Conceptual Framework**

Human right is the analytical framework that underpins this study. Human rights date back into history. The earliest record of human right is credited to Cyrus the Great, who liberated all slaves and further urged people to select their own religion. This became known as the ‘Cyrus Cylinder’, the first human rights declaration in history that contained his statements (Kuhrt, 2007).

Nonetheless, for many decades in European thought, the concept of human rights has existed under several names, at least since King John of England (Pocock, 1987). Following the King's violation of a number of ancient legislation and customs governing England, his subjects compelled him to sign the Magna Carta, or Great Charter, which lists a number of what later came to be regarded as human rights (McIlwain, 1914). These included the church's right to be free from regulatory intervention, the right of all free people to own and inherit property and to be free from excessive taxes (ibid.). It established the right of widows who owned property to choose not to remarry and established principles of due process and equality before the law. It also contained clauses prohibiting corruption and official misconduct (ibid).

Over the course of history, the most significant developments in human rights have been: the Magna Carta of 1215, which provided people new rights and made the king subject to the law; the Petition of Right of 1618, which spelt out the rights of the people; the United States

Declaration of Independence in 1776 which asserted the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen 1798—which stated that all citizens are equal under the law in France; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948—the first document that cited the 30 rights to which everyone is entitled (Hazeltine, 1917; Kaminski 1992; Spickard, 2017).

The concept of human rights lends credence to philosophers like J. S. Mill and Thomas Paine. Henry David Thoreau is credited with the first use of the concept ‘human rights’ when he wrote his seminal work ‘civil disobedience’ (Thoreau, 1849). However, other scholars such as Immanuel Kant, Hugo Grotius and John Locke have written copiously on subjects on or related to human rights.

Nickel (2010) describes human rights as standards that help safeguard individuals from severe political, legal and social abuse worldwide. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) serves as a fundamental document that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly after the 2nd World War for the provision of human rights worldwide (UDHR, 1948)<sup>2</sup>. It serves as the main foundation of contemporary human rights. Nickel (2010) further argues that for all individuals and countries, the UDHR serves as a common standard of achievement. It points out basic human rights to be protected universally. Human rights have been classified into civil and political rights (Articles 3 – 21 of UDHR), and economic, social and cultural rights (Articles 22 – 28 of UDHR)<sup>3</sup>. Human rights are grounded on the principle of respect for the individual (Petersmann, 2003). Their basic premise is that each individual is

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<sup>2</sup> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217 A) as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and it has been translated into over 500 languages.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid articles 3-28

a moral and rational being that deserves dignity treatment (Habermas, 2018). Another assumption of human right is its universality. Irrespective of geography, region or culture, human rights must be commonly applied and enjoyed. Also, there is that assumption of rationality as encapsulated by John Rawls, where human right imposes some universal commitment on people (Harsanyi, 1975).

Criticisms have been levelled against the concept of human rights by Charles Blattberg, Alain Pellet and Karl Marx. Blattberg argues that human rights are abstract and discourages individuals from upholding the principles to be affirmed by rights (Blattberg, 2009). Pellet also disapproves of "human right" as contradicting the principle of sovereignty and claiming a unique position in international law (Pellet, 2000). Karl Max, a virulent critique of human rights exclaims that "*none of the so-called rights of man goes beyond egoistic man, man as he is in civil society, namely an individual withdrawn behind his private interests and whims and separated from the community*"<sup>4</sup>. The concern of Marx, commonly expressed in contemporary political philosophy, is that appeal to human rights presupposes a particular and controversial political ideology — the ideology of possessive individualism (Mendus, 1995). Where human rights are asserted, they are affirmed as individuals' claims against state authority or against other persons (ibid.). But assuming that rights against the state are necessary is assuming that there must always be antagonism between the interests of the state and the interests of people, and this is a rejection of the kind of ideal culture envisaged by socialists and communitarians alike (ibid.).

Irrespective of these inadequacies by these critics, the concept of Human Rights is most appropriate for this study because the provision of legal identity particularly birth registration

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<sup>4</sup> K. Marx, On the Jewish Question as printed in Waldron, Nonsense upon Stilts, p. 147.

to individuals provides a form of official identification that enables them access to services as well as enjoy their rights.

The conceptual framework for this work is presented in Fig 1.0 and is based on the review of empirical data on the topic.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), one may define a child as "*a human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier*" (UNICEF, 1989). The Ghana Demographic and Health Survey indicates socio-economic and demographic factors that influence the likelihood of birth registration in the country. Fig 1.0 establishes the effect of independent variables like level of education of the mother, the type of place of residence, region, religion, wealth index, marital status, sex of the child, birth order of the child as well as the age of the child on dependent variable of being registered or unregistered at birth.

The mother's level of education is also expected to have a direct association with birth registration outcomes as shown in Figure 1.0. It is expected that children born to mothers who possess higher education are more likely to register their children as compared to children born to mothers who possess little or no education. It is established that mothers who are well educated are more enlightened and aware of the significance and benefits associated with birth registration than mothers who have little or no education.

The type of place of residence is captured under Figure 1.0 as having a direct influence on birth registration outcomes of a child. It is expected that children who were born in urban areas are likely to be registered as compared to children born in rural areas. This is largely due to the fact that urban areas are more developed and possess well-established institutions that have adequate equipment and facilities that facilitate birth registration.

Region of residence is also expected to influence birth registration outcomes directly as established in Figure 1.0. A higher proportion of respondents in regions that are more developed such as Greater Accra and Ashanti are expected to register their births as compared to respondents in less developed regions such as Upper East and Upper West. This is because of the fact that the more developed regions possess better facilities and institutions than the less developed regions.

Figure 1.0 also details how religion may also influence birth registration outcomes in Ghana. Christian and Muslim mothers are expected to register their wards at birth as compared to mothers who are traditionalist/spiritualists and mothers who belong to other religions.

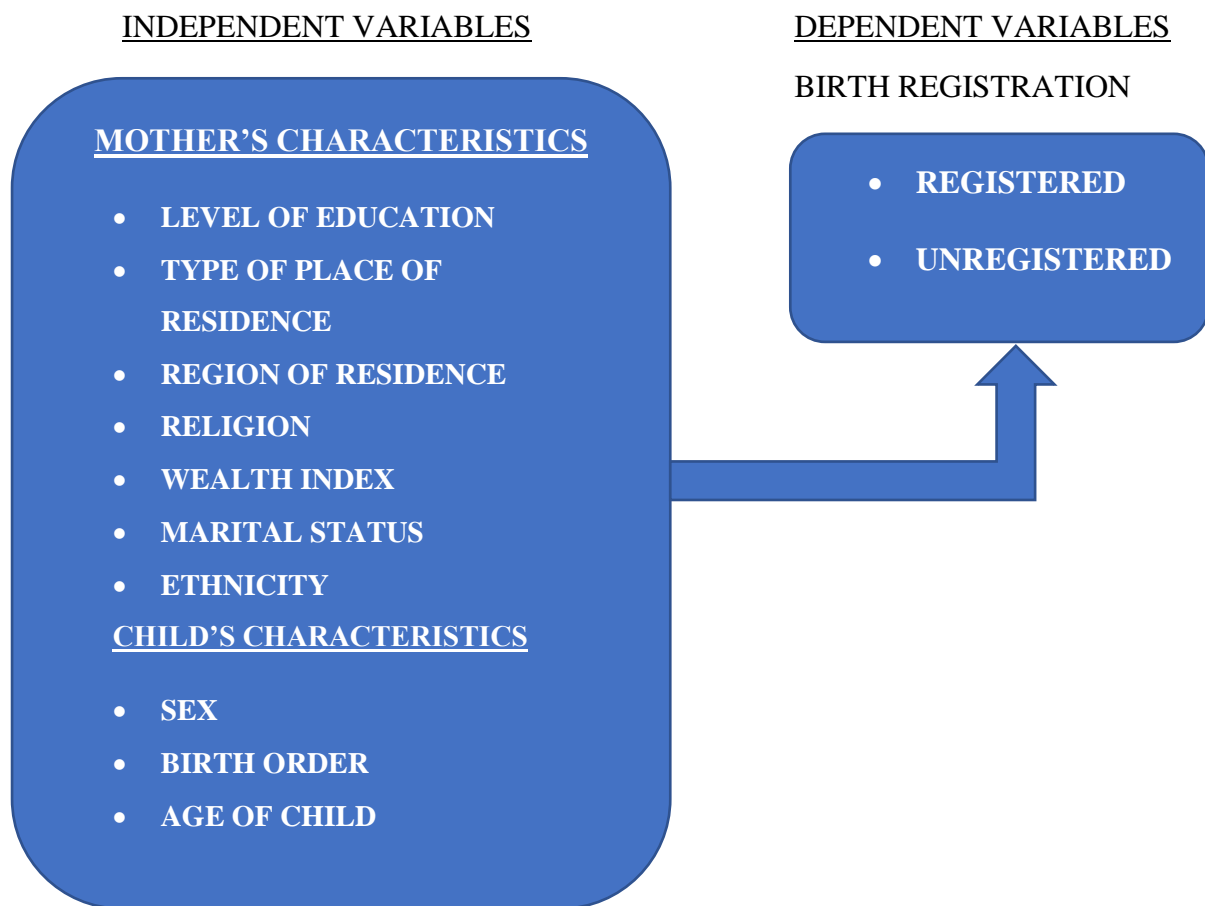
Figure 1.0 also establishes that fact that the wealth index of a mother's household has a direct influence on birth registration outcomes. It is projected that mothers of richer households are likely to register their births more as compared to mothers of a poorer household. This is because of the additional income enjoyed as a result of being rich. Mothers from poorer households are expected to have difficulty registering their children due to the cost involved. Even though birth registration within the first year is absolutely free of charge, other costs like transportation may hinder mothers of poorer households from registering their births.

Figure 1.0 further establishes a direct relationship between marital status and birth registration outcomes. Mothers who are married are expected to have registered their births due to responsibilities associated with their status as compared to mothers who are either separated, divorced, widowed or never in a relationship.

Also, Figure 1.0 establishes that ethnicity of a mother and the birth order are variables that can impact birth registration outcomes directly in Ghana.

The sex of the child is also expected to exhibit a direct influence on birth registration outcomes due to the patriarchal landscape of the Ghanaian society. It is projected that male children would be more registered than female children.

With regards to the age of the child, the conceptual framework in Figure 1.0 establishes that age has a direct relationship with birth registration outcomes. It is expected that children aged less than 5years would have acquired birth registration due to the fact that births are to be registered as soon as a child is delivered. The conceptual framework for this study is provided in Fig 1.0 below;



**Figure 1.0: Conceptual Framework**

**Source: Author's Construct**

## 1.7. Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework, the following hypotheses have been identified for testing;

- Children of higher educated mothers are more likely to be registered at birth compared to children of less-educated mothers
- Children born in urban areas are more likely to be registered at birth compared to children born in rural areas
- Male children are more likely to be registered at birth compared to female children

## 1.8. Literature Review

This section presents a review of relevant empirical data on the subject birth registration.

### 1.8.1. Key Concerns Surrounding Birth Registration

Amo-Adjei and Annim (2015) in *Socioeconomic Determinants of Birth Registration in Ghana* espoused that individuals who do not have adequate citizenship right through birth registration and issuance of a birth certificate are limited from fully accessing their legal, social, civic and political rights. For instance, these individuals may not be able to vote or be voted for, have access to education, healthcare, social security and entitlements to property among others. They tend to be unable to enjoy their full fundamental human rights in the absence of proof of identity, as they do not legally exist. In countries like Tanzania, Togo and Malaysia, birth registration certificates constitute the required documents for admission into schools. In addition, the writers stated that legal identity or identity registration serves as a key apparatus that is employed in the provision of public services towards inclusive development hence the

concepts of human rights and development are not mutually exclusive (Amo-Adjei and Annim 2015).

Amo-Adjei and Annim further discussed some socioeconomic factors that influence birth or identity registration and observed the likelihoods of acquiring a legal status of an identity of a child born in Ghana between 2001 and 2006 through discrete choice modelling using the 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). It was discovered that birth registration was seen as a privilege to children who were born to educated parents, lived in urban areas and are wealthy. In this respect, programmes and policies formulated to increase birth registration must be broad-based and targeted towards the less privileged in society (ibid).

The authors believe that although birth registration ensures social inclusion and the entitlement to political and economic rights, it can be exploited for unprincipled reasons. Civil registration was utilised for political scrutiny and persecution during apartheid South Africa; to track and persecute Jews by the Nazi regime and to limit civil freedom in Soviet Russia, the Rwandan genocide and communist China. In the case of the Rwandan genocide, identification made it easy to classify Tutsis and this played a dreadful role in the erupted ethnic tension in the country. However, identity or birth registration should not be denied to individuals based on these unscrupulous activities. The institutions and individuals employed to register births and entrusted with such information must be obligated to uphold specified ethics. Although this work proves significant to the study, the use of the 2006 MICS makes it limited to periods prior to the formulation of Sustainable Development Goals. It does not provide relevant information concerned with the post-2015 period after the SDGs were set (ibid).

### **1.8.2. Birth Registration – Lessons from Kenya and India**

In *Legal Identity in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Lessons from Kibera, Kenya*, Oppenheim and Powell (2015) observed the need for documentary proof of one's

identity in order for him or her to claim benefits that are associated with the possession of a legal form of identity, which is usually labelled as a right. They noted that, birth registration may not fully address inequities in accessing legal documentation or improve quality of life in situations where it is not directly linked to citizenship and the under-5 target does not address the many other individuals older than that age whose births were never registered, and who thus face continuing difficulties with establishing their identity. They further propounded the need for additional and country-specific indicators which are vital, in addition to a global birth registration indicator in order to fully evaluate and assess progress made in the provision of legal identity (Oppenheim and Powell, 2015).

Oppenheim and Powell identified potential risks in the push for the global attainment of legal identity. In an effort to prove the compliance with SDG Target 16.9, national governments may implement formal and restrictive systems through the meting out of legal identity to individuals. This could either make it laborious for certain groups of people to exercise their right to legal documentation or enable some states to restrict or limit the status of some groups or individuals. Further, there is a concern that formalized identity registration could empower states to make basic services available to only citizens or holders of particular forms of documentation. This could severely affect vulnerable groups of people such as refugees and those whose births were not registered (ibid).

The writers focused on the Nubian community in Nairobi, Kenya who have been subjected to discriminatory practices during the application process of national ID cards and passports. Oppenheim and Powell affirm the significance of universal access to legal documentation for development and suggest that measuring birth registration alone will be insufficient for monitoring progress on Target 16.9 (Oppenheim and Powell, 2015).

With evidence from Kenya, the writers made four core arguments as follows:

- For people whose legal status lawfully entitles them to social services and political rights, documentation of that legal status matters for development. Holding particular forms of legal documentation (birth certificates and national identity cards) is associated with better outcomes across a range of development goals such as access to education, healthcare, employment and economic wellbeing, justice and political engagement.
- There may be no reason to assume a link between birth registration or birth certification on their own, and core development outcomes. A birth certificate is not always the core document necessary to establish citizenship, claim rights, and access various services. In Kenya, a national identity card issued at age 18, rather than a birth certificate, is the necessary document to access a number of services and exercise rights. In addition, a birth registration measure will exclude children and adults who are past the point for birth registration but may still lack legal identity and/or legal documentation.
- Even when groups hold legal documentation at relatively equal rates, this can still mask serious inequities in gaining access to that documentation. Some groups face discriminatory treatment in the documentation process. Such patterns of discrimination may have real impacts on individuals' lives and aspirations, even if they do not result in differential rates of documentation across identity groups. A single indicator such as rates of birth registration may not capture important forms of discriminatory treatment, particularly those that emerge in the process of attaining documentation.
- The need for additional and regionally or country-specific measures of access to documentation required to precisely determine if legal identity is universal (ibid).

Oppenheim and Powell's work proves significant to this study due to the fact that it made an analysis of Kenya, which according to the World Bank 2018 Identification for Development

Dataset is a lower-middle-income country, similar to Ghana. It serves as a guideline that Ghana can follow. Unfortunately, the need for country-specific pointers poses inadequacy if lessons are to be derived from this work. Both countries being lower-middle-income countries is not sufficient ground for the thorough adoption of this work (ibid).

Duodu (2018) in his work *Implementation of a National Identification System in Ghana: Lessons from the Indian Aadhaar System*, carried out a comparative analysis on the implementation of a national identification system in Ghana and India centred around the theory of organizing vision which helps explain governments decision in the adoption of information technology innovations like a biometric system of identification. According to Duodu, the absence of a central database is the primary challenge faced in the implementation of national identification projects in Ghana. Furthermore, there is a need for strong legislative instruments that are critical in order to protect not only citizens' identity but also the national identification database (ibid).

The author drew attention to the different financial capability of each state as developed countries tend to more sophisticated identification systems compared to developing countries. Additionally, the technology and utility attached to the identification systems mainly depend on the prevailing situation in a country. An example is the United States where the issue of national identification became a major concern after the 11<sup>th</sup> September, terrorist attack. It was believed that the terrorists used false identities to easily obtain driver's licenses and Social Security Numbers from Virginia. For this reason, Duodu believes, developed counties pursue legal identification for developmental and security purposes whereas those on the periphery employ identification solely for the former (Duodu, 2018).

In addition, Duodu proposed practices from the Indian Identification system that may be relevant for adoption by Ghana in its quest of national identification projects. These include;

outsourcing projects to the private sector in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness as well as to ensure the financial viability of the national identification project. India has a pluralist identification ecosystem which includes birth certificate, the Electoral Photo Identity Card, the Overseas Passport and the Overseas Citizen of India document among others. In 2009, the National Identification Authority of India Bill established the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) which stated among other parameters that children under 5 years must be registered at birth with their information linked to their father's or mother's demographic data. The Births and Deaths Commission is tasked with this responsibility (ibid).

Moreover, the UIDAI is mandated to ensure the birth registration data in the Central Identities Data Repository (CIDR) is confidential and not accessible unless for national security reasons or authorized consent. The UIDAI is forbidden to track the activities of registered individuals and information such as a person's tribe, race, religion, language, health and income are not recorded. This is to avoid the historical occurrences of identification being used to discriminate, harm or even kill certain groups of people as was done during the Second World War where holders of identification cards with the yellow star of David badge and "J-Stamp" were taken to concentration camps in Nazi Germany (Duodu, 2018).

Duodu recommends that birth registration should be a topmost priority after which national identification cards will be issued at birth. National identification cards would tend to be the main requirement for the acquisition of national documents such as passports and drivers' license. These national IDs would also serve as the legitimate document required to access numerous government facilities such as social security entitlement and education (ibid). Duodu's work is significant to this study because of the similarity of pluralist identity in India and Ghana. Hence it gives a detailed analysis of India's identification ecosystem serves as a model Ghana could follow (ibid).

### **1.8.3. Birth Registration as an Enabler to the Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals**

Dahan and Gelb (2015) in their work *The Role of Identification in the Post-2015 Development Agenda* placed emphasis on identity and identification as a significant instrument for the efficacy of many other Sustainable Development Goal targets. They propounded for robust identification which is essential to achieving a number of SDG targets such as; Target 1.3 – implement appropriate social protection systems, Target 1.4 – Ensure that the poor and vulnerable have control over land and other forms of property including financial assets, Target 5(a) – Give poor women equal access to economic resources, Target 5(b) – Enhance the use of technology in particular information and communications technology (ICT) to promote women’s empowerment, and Target 16.5 – Reduce corruption, just to name a few. Identity as a Sustainable Development Goal would, therefore, urge countries to ensure modest or free access to identity credentials. Dahan and Gelb further stated that the effort to tabulate birth registration and enhance identification is also due to the pursuit for improving data on births, deaths and the causes of death - particularly focusing on maternal and child health (Dahan and Gelb, 2015).

According to the writers, legal identity in accordance with the rights that come with it tends to be government priority around the world due to the fact that political will is essential and the SDGs serve as a useful reference point for accountability. The development would require a supportive legal framework, strong leadership and the deployment of human and financial resources as well as reforms, foreign assistance and technology that are significant in reaching substantial outcomes. The writers added that harmonisation at the national, regional and global levels would guarantee inclusive oversight and concerted global action. The widely diffused assistance from development partners and donors could be focused more tactically on

developing essential systems for registration and certifying that these extend into effective and inclusive systems that facilitate development (ibid).

The authors stated that donors and other development partners have contributed to various identification initiatives geared towards social protection, refugees, financial inclusion among others. For instance, the World Bank has used about 5 billion US dollars to support 120 identification-related projects in 70 countries over the last decade. However, although some of these projects are still ongoing, the investment directly towards birth registration and identification systems has been less than 5%. Much focus has been on developmental programs such as civil service reforms and social safety nets and their registries. A major part of the finances has also been utilised to equip the government and create a conducive environment for reforms. Nonetheless, on hopeful grounds, the World Bank has deployed the Identification for Development (ID4D) programme to focus on the Target 16.9 of SDG 16 by strategizing means to accelerate the achievement of global identity in a more unified multi-sector way. The work is important to the study since it stresses the importance of identification as a pillar to developmental growth in every state (ibid).

#### **1.8.4. Birth Certification as an End to Birth Registration**

In the article, *Registered or unregistered? Levels and differentials in registration and certification of births in Ghana*, Dake and Fuseini (2018) cite that the birth registration process is incomplete devoid of the issuance of a birth certificate. A child who is registered but without a birth certificate could still be denied identity rights and legal protection. A birth certificate is a legal proof of the age of a child to potentially shield against child marriage, child labour, child trafficking, conscription into the armed forces and sexual exploitation. Furthermore, children can be protected from being prosecuted as an adult by the judicial system with proof of a birth certificate. It could also enable safe migration and trace separated and unaccompanied

children in case of conflict or displacement. Hence, the provision of a certificate after birth registration is of utmost importance (Dake and Fuseini, 2018).

The authors through a 2014 research found out that birth registration outcomes are not dependant on the sex of a child as there was not any notable relationship between the sex of children and birth registration outcomes in Ghana. According to Dake and Fuseini, this finding countered earlier studies that birth registration is determined by the sex of a child in Ghana, South Africa and India (ibid). The number of registered births with certificates among children who were less than 1 increased from 39% to 67% among those aged 4 years. Birth registration and certification was possibly done late rather than early because birth certificates become useful in acquiring a passport or enrolling a child in school. In order to achieve the SDG Target 16.9, there is the need to facilitate birth registration and certification right after birth. The literature is relevant to the study because it draws attention to the importance of certification and how it can serve as legal protection from child exploitation (ibid).

### **1.8.5. The Role of Government and Non-Governmental Actors in Birth Registration**

Peters and Mawson's (2015) work, *Governance and Policy Coordination. The Case of Birth Registration in Ghana* drew attention to strengthening government's coordination in order to translate birth registration policy into practice. According to them, "coordination requires cooperation and collaboration among actors and some agreement upon a common goal". Non-governmental actors must be included in coordination activities because they play a significant role in civil birth registration. Due to weak institutions in the public sectors, there is much reliance on non-governmental actors to deliver services in birth registration through formal contracting or just filling a vacuum.

The authors outlined the legal and institutional foundations of civil registration in Ghana and noted that birth registration is a decentralized function at the district and local levels whilst filling in and printing of birth certificates is stationed in Accra. The Birth and Death Registry (BDR) officers are central in the registration process. However, they did not initiate any interaction with other relevant actors such as community health nurses, teachers and even religious leaders until they are sought out. Registration volunteers rather played a key role in connecting parenting to the registry officers. The authors believed there was a total lack of coordination from the higher management to the lower level which brings about passiveness in the BDR registration office. There was a need for periodic checks and written reports by the officers to facilitate birth registration and record all new registrations to keep the system up to date (Peters and Mawson, 2015).

## **1.9. Research Methodology**

The mixed approach which is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods is employed in this study. The mixed-method involves collecting, analysing and integrating quantitative and qualitative research. This approach is adopted in research when an integration provides a better understanding of the research problem than either of each alone (Mertens, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

## **1.10. Sources of Data**

In line with the methodology, data would be collected qualitatively and quantitative data will be sourced from the 2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey. This dataset represents the psychographic and demographic statistics of Ghanaians.

Qualitative data would be collected at two levels. First primary data would be collected through semi-structured interviews. The instrument used is an interview guide containing open-ended questions. Sampling type used is purposive sampling. The purposive sampling is a non-probability technique which is efficient when one needs to study a certain cultural domain with knowledgeable experts within. Purposive sampling may also be used with both qualitative and quantitative research techniques (Tongco, 2007). The inherent bias of the method contributes to its efficiency, and the method stays robust even when tested against random probability sampling (ibid). Persons interviewed are officials of the Ghana Births and Deaths Registry and three mothers. These mothers were chosen based on three dominant factors that influence birth registration outcomes in Ghana according to empirical data. Thus, the level of mother's education, accessibility to birth registration facilities as a result of the type of place of residence or region of residence and wealth index. Secondary data will be derived from books, journal articles, articles, reports.

### **1.11. Method of Data Analysis**

2014 Demographic and Health Survey was employed in the data analysis of this study.

Bivariate analysis, which is the concurrent analysis of two variables was employed. It explores the relationship between two variables, whether there exists an association and the strength of this association, or whether there are differences between two variables and the significance of these differences.

Multivariate analysis, a technique used for the analysis of datasets that contain more than one variable was also employed. These techniques are especially valuable when working with correlated variables.

The bivariate analysis interrogates the reasons the respondents gave for not participating in birth registration, and multivariate explores the relationship between the proportion of children registered based on social and economic variables.

Using chi-square and basic descriptive statistics, responses were tested to ascertain whether there was any variation between birth registration outcomes and its correlates. In providing a response to examine the variables, which are associated with registering a child at birth, we adopted the logistic regression technique. Because our dependent variable is a binary factor, it informed our choice of the logistical regression techniques.

Voice data gathered from respondents would be transcribed into which information relevant to the study would be analysed. Secondary data would be desk-reviewed. Data from the 2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey would be analysed via computer software SPSS.

## **1.12. The Organisation of the Study**

Chapter One - This chapter deals with the Introduction, Statement of the Problem, Research Questions, Research Objectives and the Hypotheses. In addition, the Scope, Rationale and Research Methodology are dealt with. The Theoretical Framework, Literature Review as well as Sources of Data, and the Organization of the Study are also presented.

Chapter Two – This chapter provides details about the MDGs, SDGs, and the importance of SDG goals to Africa’s sustainable development.

Chapter Three – This chapter discusses the birth registration processes and certification in Ghana. It discusses the legal issues inherent in the process vis-à-vis the attainment of the SDG 16, Target 16. 9.

Chapter Four – This chapter presents a Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16, TARGET 16.9 AND BIRTH REGISTRATION IN GHANA

#### 2.0. Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth study of the Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals as well as their significance. It is also concerned with issues pertaining to Birth Registration in Ghana in relation to the attainment of Target 16.9 of SDG 16.

#### 2.1. The Millennium Development Goals

At its Millennium Summit in 2000, during a significant epoch in global attempts to combat extreme poverty, 147 heads of states assembled and embraced the Millennium Development Goals to tackle extreme poverty in its many aspects – hunger , disease, lack of adequate shelter, exclusion and income poverty - while encouraging gender equality, environmental sustainability, and education, with quantitative targets to be accomplished by the year 2015 (Sachs and McArthur, 2005).

Antecedent to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Millennium Development Goals marked a watershed moment in the evolution of global blueprint as a solution to global development happenings. At the time of its institutionalization, the Millennium Development Goals marked a notable and effective process of global mobilization to attain a set of social priorities internationally (Sachs, 2012). The MDGs at the time recognised some shared global exigencies that were inimical to the development progress of states. In that regard, the goals

translated to extensive public concern about hunger, environmental degradation, poverty, unmet schooling, gender inequality, and disease. Created under the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the MDGs were a plethora of aspirations championed by the United Nations into eight easily comprehensible goals that would capably contend the challenges confronting global development issues. Added to these goals were the establishment performance evaluation mechanisms and reporting structures that defined the goals from 2000 – 2015.

In no particular order, the eight Millennium Development Goals were: *“to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; to achieve universal primary education; to promote gender equality and empower women; to reduce child mortality; to improve maternal health; to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; to ensure environmental sustainability; and to develop a global partnership for development”* (WHO, 2019).

The real intent behind the drafting of the MDGs was to bring to par the development gap among the developing and developed world. As such, many developing states made significant contributions to the progress of the MDGs, the progress report varies across many states due to variation in the implementation structures in those states (Sachs, 2012). In regions like China and many South-East Asian states, startling economic development and the developmental state produced remarkable results in poverty eradication. Indeed, nowhere has it ever been seen that a large population would be uplifted out poverty in a few decades. The structural variations and universality of attainment figures ignored history and development experience in regions like Africa (Easterly, 2009). Writers like Ake (2001) often grudgingly disagree with global development blueprints that ascribe universal metric and same evaluation and performance tests to poorer regions, often citing the different development and economic trajectory of African states that limit their agency in the implementation of these goals.

The attainment of the MDGs, which was to reduce world poverty by half was unsuccessful. Some scholars attribute the failure of the objectives of the MDG to a period when the world witnessed an economic crisis in its severe form, constraining global leaders and philanthropists in insolvency - constraining their ability to make available resources to fund programmes (United Nations, Department of Public Information, 2009).

It may be inappropriate to describe the MDGs as a failure. Although it fell short of its target of reducing poverty, it set the foundation to introduce the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **2.2. Sustainable Development Goals**

The Sustainable Development Goals is the sequel to the Millennium Development Goals. The SDGs were designed to address the flaws of the MDGs that rendered the latter incapacitated to tackle head-on the issues of poverty. The SDGs formed part of the UN-post 2015 agenda which mandates the UN to apply technical, innovative and scientific expertise from academia, the private sector, and the civil society in support of sustainable development to solve problems at the local, national, and global levels (UN General Assembly, 2015). From nineteen focus areas, the SDGs deconstructed into 17 goals and 169 targets (UNGA, 2015).

The SDGs which are quite ambitious and expands the scope of the MDGs from just poverty eradication to include issue-areas of economic inequality, sustainable consumption, climate change, peace and justice, innovation, among other priorities (UNDP, 2019). The goals are interconnected and mutually inclusive of one another, and as such the policy guide to achieving the goals needs a consortium of governments, private sector participation, civil societies and international development agencies (UNDP, 2019).

The 17 goals of the SDGs are No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health and Well-being; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Clean Water and Sanitation; Affordable and Clean Energy; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure; Reducing Inequality; Sustainable Cities and Communities; Responsible Consumption and Production; Climate Action; Life Below Water; Life on Land; Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions; Partnerships for the Goals (United Nations, 2019).

The drafters of the SDGs indicate the indivisibility of the goals, but there is a dearth of understanding of how the goals are interconnected. The implementation of the goals in developing countries is extremely problematic (Nilsson et al, 2016). The political set-up creates ministries, department and agencies that perform distinct functions, hardly overlaps and harmonised (Nilsson et al, 2016). Through network analysis techniques, Le Blanc (2015) explains the relationship between the goals. The goals of the SDGs are somewhat integrated as compared to the MDGs, which facilitates policy integration among various areas. Nonetheless, the interconnections of the goals are discussed in social, economic, biophysical dimensions are not explicitly reflected in the SDGs. Beyond the added visibility that the SDGs provide to links among thematic areas, attempts at targeted policy harmonisation will have to be based on studies of the biophysical, social and economic systems at appropriate scales (Le Blanc, 2015).

### **2.3. SDG Goal 16**

The Sustainable Development Goal 16 speaks to peace, justice and strong institutions. The strength, independence and autonomy of strong institutions ensures the building of consensus on what these shared goals are and how to measure progress towards meeting them (Costanza et al, 2014). Access to the institutions and agencies that promote democracy and good governance have long been recognised as the cornerstones to ensuring democratic

participation, and inclusiveness. The availability of these institutions offers the platform for citizens to enjoy their fundamental human rights which promotes overall development.

The importance of adequate democratic inclusivity has been highlighted as a central canon in this particular goal (Logan, 2017). This is because global reports, especially from developing countries, cite several barriers to the enjoyment of legal and socio-political rights. Issues of legal representation, legal documentation, and logistical support to courts, legal education, political education and costs of engaging legal matters are all barriers that obstruct these rights that ought to be enjoyed by citizens (Logan 2017). Many concerns of selective justice by the judiciary in many African states, especially Ghana, and the canker of corruption within the judiciary have waned the confidence of many Ghanaians.

One of the dramatic shortcomings of the SDG 16 calls for precise actions to safeguard women's equal involvement in peace processes and governance institutions. Even though it has been addressed in goal five – Gender Equality - none of the targets under the goal 16 translate to women's participation (Goetz & Jenkins, 2016). As argued by the author, gender-specific targets were not included, notwithstanding substantial advocacy by civil society actors and the United Nations, the political tensions surrounding Goal 16 prior to its adoption, the compression necessitated by the integration of what had originally been two separate goals (on peace and governance, respectively), and the 2030 Agenda's tendency to focus on ends rather than means (Goetz & Jenkins, 2016).

Mention must also be made, that strength of this goal is not legally binding. Probably the reason why governments are not compelled to implement the goals is that the goals are mostly separate from the international legal system (Kim, 2016). The goals are not legally binding because the General Assembly that created the resolutions does not have the legal wherewithal to transfer enforcement capacity from the United Nations to the states (Biermann et al, 2017).

New approaches have been prescribed by Biermann et al (2017) to ensure inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of the goals through the strengthening of global governance arrangements, effective policy implementation and integration, adapting global desires to national circumstances and priorities, and improving the adaptability of governance mechanisms.

### **2.3.1. Target 16.9**

Out of the ten targets for SDG 16, this dissertation focuses on Target 16.9. Target 16.9 speaks to the provision of legal identity for all including birth registration. This particular target demands an open government partnership commitment that can ensure its implementation. Sadly, this particular target does not have any checklist to track its effective implementation (Bhargava & Little, 2015). The provision of legal identity is a social conundrum for many developing states largely because of infrastructural and logistical limitations. As such, many developing states like Ghana must lend itself to open partnership commitments in order to draw useful lessons so as to design, implement and monitor action plans for providing legal identity and birth certification to citizens (Bhargava & Little, 2015).

The process would translate into properly developed progressions for rating ambitiousness of commitments, participatory national action planning, eligibility criteria, monitoring and evaluation to engender the mutual understanding and cooperation between government and citizens (Bhargava & Little, 2015). The implementation of this target would require a greater agency from government, defined by political economy considerations to legalize the identity of citizens in their countries. It is in fulfilment of human right duties, as well as governments own responsibilities because at the heart of every national plan lies statistical consideration of citizens (Whaites, 2016; Schroeder et al 2019).

## 2.4. Birth Registration and the Provision of Legal Identity

The genesis of interaction between a citizen and the state is being registered by the mandated authorities and identification as part of the state, conferring on them all rights and privileges that the state offers (Amo-Adjei & Annim, 2015). Scholars such as Dow (1998) further indicate the emphasis of birth registration by defining it as the first ticket to citizenship without which a person does not legally exist and enables privileges and freedoms to be refused by a state. In what may come to many governments as a primary responsibility, many governments abandon this responsibility. Civil registration is also the fundamental instrument through which an effective government counts its nationals and plans for schools, hospitals and other facilities they need (Dow, 1998). Yet as basic as this duty may be presented, numerous states do not record births due to ill-functioning systems. About 40 million children — one-third of all births — go unregistered worldwide each year (Dow, 1998).

Plan International Ghana articulated its position on legal identification in the following declaration at the African Child Forum in 2005:

*“A birth certificate is the first official acknowledgement of a child’s existence by the State and is essential if they are to access other rights. Where births remain unregistered, there is an implication that children are not recognised as persons before the law ... access to fundamental rights and freedoms may be compromised ...existence has never been recorded, there is no guarantee that their disappearance will be either ...as they will not be included in statistical information about children, their situation cannot be monitored”<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup> Plan International. The African Child Policy Forum. Plan International, 2005. Page 2

## **2.5. Birth Registration in Ghana**

Birth registration began in 1912 in Ghana. The registration scheme has undergone a sequence of transformations, just as a number of amendments were made to the law creating it. All this was intended to improve the final delivery system (Ministry of Local Government, 2019).

The law that established birth registration emerged as the Cemeteries' Ordinance of 1888. It was reviewed in 1989, as its first amendment. It became the Births and Deaths and Burials Ordinance in 1912, which was modified again in 1926. Finally, this was substituted by the 1965 Registration of Births and Deaths Act (Act 301), which is the current law. (Ministry of Local Government, 2019).

Accordingly, by Act 301 of 1965, the Births and Deaths Registry was established within the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to manage and develop the system of registration of births and deaths in Ghana. Its core mandate is to provide precise and reliable data on all births and deaths that occur in Ghana through their registration and certification for the socio-economic growth of the nation (Ministry of Local Government, 2019).

## **2.6. The Ghana Birth and Death Registry**

In Ghana, the agency in charge of civil registration is the Births and Deaths Registry. It was established within the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development by Act 301 of 1965 to fulfil a constitutionally mandated obligation to provide Ghanaians with birth certification and legal identity (Ankrah, 2002). The Birth and Deaths Registry operates a highly centralised and bureaucratic structure. It is headquartered in Accra, with regional offices across the regional capitals. In deepening decentralization, district offices have been created to bring closer the process to the people. It must, however, be mentioned that not all district offices have registration centres (Ankrah, 2002).

The district centres usually are directly engaged in the registration of the births to be sent to the national office for data compilation, usually on a monthly basis. It is in the policy framework of the registry to keep data at all three levels – district, regional and national for data protection, cross-checking and verification (Ankrah, 2002).

Per the provisions of the law establishing the Births and Deaths Registration, Act 301 of 1965, the characteristics and requirements of the law mandates families to notify the Birth and Death Registry for registration. It goes to buttress the point that the demographic and psychographic disposition of parents and the importance they attach to birth registration underpins the registration of births or otherwise (Williams et al 2018).

The Birth and Death Registry is guided by the vision to provide universal attainment of births and deaths in Ghana and with a primary responsibility of providing precise, reliable and timely information of all births and deaths that occur within the country for the socio-economic development (Births and Deaths Registry, 2019).

The primary roles of the Birth and Death Registry are the;

- Legalization of registered births and deaths
- Storage and management of births and deaths records/registers
- Issuance of certified copies of entries in the registers of births and deaths upon request.
- Effecting corrections and insertions in the registers of births and deaths upon request
- Preparation of documents for exportation of remains of deceased persons
- Processing of documents for the exhumation and reburial of remains of persons already buried.
- Verification and authentication of births and deaths certificates for institutions, especially the foreign missions in Ghana.

The performance of these functions is the sacred constitutional duties as provided in Article Six of the 1992 constitution which explains the procedures through which one can acquire a national legal identity. Opinions on this subject are sharply divided into many fronts and have created divergent and differing ideological orientation on the subjects (Ayisi, 2017). Article Six of the 1992 constitution explains without ambiguity who qualifies to be called as a citizen of Ghana.

While the constitution outlines the various processes as to how citizenship can be acquired; birth, registration and naturalization, founding, and through marriage, the enforcement procedures have been weak. In Ghana, birth registration is obligatory under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act (1965). Ghana has 16 administrative regions, new additions were made through the legislative instrument that created six new regions - Oti, Western North, Savanna, Bono East, North-East, and Ahafo regions. It totals Ghana's 254 administrative districts. In each of these districts, at least one of them must have a birth and death registration office.

However, registration has been hampered by the lack of registration offices in rural regions and a shortage of registration employees.

## **2.7. Birth Registration and Certification Procedures in Ghana**

The procedure for registering births in Ghana is less cumbersome. Childbirth is a very significant occurrence that requires certification; however, this is not always the case as an estimated 3 out of 10 births go unregistered every year (Dake & Fuseini, 2018). Giving legal identity to the child protects him or her against abuse, human right infractions and violence. Therefore, it is essential to register all births, followed by legal certification (Dake & Fuseini, 2018).

According to Ankrah (2002), these procedures follow the registration of births in Ghana:

1. Each child's birth must be recorded in the district where the birth took place
2. There is no de jure or de facto discrimination in the registration process between mothers and fathers. The name of the father is entered even though the parents are not married.
3. It is the duty of one parent (father or mother) to report the birth of a child for registration.

In the absence of the parents, one of the following persons is allowed by law to report the birth for registration:

- (a) The owner of the birthplace of the child*
- (b) an individual present at birth.*
- (c) A person having charge of the child to furnish the prescribed particulars for registration.*

4. Evidence of birth, such as a clinical weighing card, will be needed by the informant.
5. A Registration Assistant provides the informant with a questionnaire (Birth Report Form A). The gathered data is registered in the birth register. After birth registration, a birth certificate is given.
6. The birth should be registered, free of charge, within 21 days of occurrence. Registration outside this period attracts a prescribed fee. The Registry has submitted a proposal to the relevant authority seeking to extend the free period of birth registration, to within 12 months of occurrence, to serve as an added incentive for the public.
7. The birth registration legislation provides for late birth registration. However, it stipulates that birth shall not be recorded after 12 months from the date of birth except with the written power of the Birth and Death Registrar and upon payment of the prescribed fee.
8. Whenever the need arises, the parent or child may apply for a certified copy of the entry in the Birth Register.

9. Registration based on a hospital is not feasible, nor is it feasible to register by mail. In most situations, children born in health centres are enrolled at immunization centres with the assistance of health staff.

It is important to mention that the importance of birth registration and certification has been demonstrated by the Births and Deaths Registry to register all births under one year for free. This emphasizes the commitment of the agency in achieving the birth registration target under the SDG 16. In recent times, the Government of Ghana has instituted a biometric procedure for all without birth certification to do so without visiting neither the district, regional or national centres. Alternatively, one can apply for and receive a birth certificate by making an online application, and receive birth certificates in fifteen working days. The requirements in filling the form comprise personal information, contact information and family information. For verification purposes to prevent impersonation, one may have to provide a piece of baptismal information, an old birth certificate, and notification of birth card. These documents must be scanned and uploaded as part of the online process. Moreover, it takes only fifty Ghana Cedis to make the online application for a biometric birth certificate.

As part of the registration procedure, Pais (2009) recommends that certification records should include, physician, midwife, birth attendant or other witnesses are generally included, together with the place of birth, date and the name and signature of the registrar. Additional information may include the age of the mother and the height, weight and gestational age of the child.

## **2.8. Challenges to Birth Registration and Certification in Ghana**

The challenges that confront birth registration in Ghana are diverse. There are economic, socio-cultural, legal, logistical, internal conflicts, income levels, educational status and geographic factors.

The economic challenges that impede birth registration and certification in Ghana are at two levels - national and individual. Ghana operates a tight budget and makes it difficult for governments to divert their meagre resources to revamp its ailing birth registration system (Pais, 2009). The establishment of the registration system requires proper functioning, well-equipped offices, well-staffed with required skills with matching remuneration to motivate staff to give off their best. At the individual level, indulging in registration, especially ones that come with some amount of financial commitment put an extra strain on the individual's budget. Many make reference to the dire economic situation in the country - low-income levels, which translates into low savings (Nketia-Amponsah et al 2012). Data from the 2006 MICS indicated that the most prevalent reasons for not registering a baby were high registration costs (31.9%), distance to registration centres (21%) and lack of knowledge that children should be registered (20%). Birth registration campaign activity in Ghana has focused on such factors (Fagemas & Odame, 2013).

Socio-cultural barriers denote language limitations and long-held attitudes by a large section of Ghanaians who have refrained from registration of births in Ghana. Largely because many births, especially those in the remote parts of the country and the hinterlands are handled by traditional birth attendants (TBAs). Usually, traditional birth attendants rely on their knowledge of birth issues, which may be inadequate in an era of modern practices (Ledan, 1985; Jokhio et al, 2005). The World Health Organisation recommends hands-on-practical and theoretical training for TBAs to understand and encourage registration of births in Ghana (Velimirovic &

Velimirovic, 1975). It is reported that childbirth under the supervision of traditional birth attendants increases the maternal mortality rate (Paul and Rumsey, 2002). Childbirth is affected considerably by the cultural perceptions, views, expectations, concerns of women (Wilkinson & Callister, 2010). A thematic study conducted by Wilkinson & Callister (2010) connected multiple perspectives which centred on motherhood, using biomedicine, accessing health care, ethnomedicine, and spiritual cures; viewing childbirth as a dangerous passage; experiencing the pain of childbirth; and fearing the influence of witchcraft on birth outcomes built a psychological blockade in the minds of child-mother to further expose the child to the outside community by engaging in birth registration exercises.

The mechanism for registration birth in Ghana suffers greatly due to the rising population and increase in childbirth. It is becoming burdensome to accommodate the big data of all registrants across the three levels of administrative set-up in Ghana. The innovation to manage the data and even move the registration closer to the people has not been effective. Integrating birth registration units within health centres presents an innovative strategy to promote and improve birth registration. It is not only innovative, but it is a novel approach of also integrating the cost of a separate registration into health facility user-fees for the postpartum-mother (Fagemas & Odame, 2013).

The geographic locations of many Ghanaians are detached from major towns and cities. As such accessibility to registration centres become problematic. It dovetails into the general apathy of some Ghanaians to spring up excuse of non-accessibility to evade birth registration. The policy plan that has been devised to address this challenge is to dispatch mobile registration officers to access these remote parts and enrol citizens onto the birth register (Fagemas & Odame, 2013). Records show that the introduction of mobile registration officers increased registration figures between 2003 and 2004 significantly. Community population registers, which are considered

key to increasing registration coverage and reducing hidden registration costs in the long term, have been piloted within this period in 21 remote communities in four regions (Fagemas & Odame, 2013). Afele (2011) also reports of a similar strategy used in Northern Ghana by deploying mobile volunteers to register births in that part of Ghana. The volunteers were given mobile phones to alert their district supervisors of a birth or death of a child aged less than five. Under the supervision of an administrative officer, volunteers with a laptop gather relevant data from the registrants. By means of electronic data transfer, storage and management for vital statistics reporting, errors and delays that are inevitable in paper-based systems are reduced, for onward transmission to the district offices (Afele, 2011).

One cannot discount the importance of civic education in national exercises like birth registration. It is agreed that the level of literacy in Ghana is low, which affects the orientation of many families in Ghana especially the registration of births. Many families are ignorant about the positive effects of registering births. This goes to reaffirm the importance of civic campaigns by the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) to whip up enthusiasm and educate families on the essence of registering births in Ghana. Mawson (2015) indicates that the Ghana Education Service is an ally in identifying children for birth registration in Ghana. One cannot discount the importance of civic education in national exercises like birth registration. It is agreed that the level of literacy in Ghana is low, which affects the orientation of many families in Ghana especially the registration of births. Many families are ignorant about the positive effects of registering births. This goes to reaffirm the importance of civic campaigns by the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) to whip up enthusiasm and educate families on the essence of registering births in Ghana. Mawson (2015) indicates that the Ghana Education Service is an ally in identifying children for birth registration in Ghana. The partnership between civil society groups and religious bodies could also augment the work of

state actors. The education goes beyond just families to include all levels of society, including the community and relevant stakeholders.

## **2.9. Conclusion**

The importance of birth registration has been emphasized in this chapter. Apart from proving the child legal identification, it also forms part of the rights of the child to access some basic social amenities and privileges. Legal identification also serves as the rampart on which economic rights like employment, commercial enterprises can be enjoyed by citizens. Though registration system in Ghana is fraught with some challenges that inhibit smooth registration of births, it has undergone some innovations, especially digitalization to accelerate the pace at which birth certificates are issued, as well as reducing the errors that punctuated the manual system. Importance must be attached and awareness raised to buttress the role of birth registration as a fundamental child right.

This chapter has discussed the basis for birth registration in Ghana, explored the causes, and argued some demographic factors that can ensure or hinder the achieving Target 16.9 of SDG 16. This chapter provided an insight into the next chapter, which makes use of data from the 2014 Demographic and Health Survey to investigate the factors that characterize birth registration in Ghana.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### CORRELATES OF BIRTH REGISTRATION IN GHANA

#### 3.0. Introduction

This chapter discusses the correlates of birth registration in Ghana based on selected demographic and socio-economic variables. The variables used are the wealth index, level of education of the mother, the type of place of residence, region of residence, ethnicity, marital status, religion of the mother, sex of the child, birth order of the child, and age of the child in determining their influence on birth registration in Ghana.

#### **Characteristics of the Sampled Population by Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics**

##### 3.1. Univariate Analysis

The characteristics of the sampled population are shown in Table 3.1.

From the table, it is observed that the highest proportion of mothers (42.5%) had attained secondary education. The second-largest proportion (33.3%) had no education and the lowest proportion of mothers, constituting 3.2% of the population, had higher education. Mothers who had primary education constituted 20.9% of the population.

Table 3.1 shows that 60.0% of respondents live in rural areas and 40.0% live in urban areas.

Furthermore, the highest proportion of respondents live in the Northern region of Ghana (16.3%), while the Volta region had the least proportion of respondents (7.6%). Others include; Brong Ahafo region (11.5%), Western region (10.4%), Central region (10.1%), Ashanti region

(9.9%), Upper East (9.6%), Greater Accra region (7.8%), Eastern (8.7%) and Upper West (8.3%)

With reference to the religion of mothers, the highest proportion (70.6%) were Christians and the least proportion were traditionalists or spiritualists (3.7%). Muslim mothers constituted 21.5% while mothers with no religion constituted 4.1% of the respondents.

Furthermore, 33.2% of the population are in the poorest category and the least proportion (12.5%) are in the richest category. Others include; the poorer category (20.8%), the middle (18.9%) and the richer category (14.6%).

With reference to the mother's marital status, 66.3% of mothers were married while 1.3% of mothers were divorced. In addition, 19.7% of mothers were living with their partner while 3.3% of mothers do not live with their partner any longer or separated. 7.7% and 1.7% of mothers were never in a union or widowed respectively.

Referring to the ethnicity of respondents, 37.6% were Akan while 1.3% were from the Mande ethnic group. The other ethnic groups include Mole-Dagbani (26.9%), Ewes (11.0%), Gurma (10.0%), Grusi (5.0%), Ga Dangme (4.0%) and Guan (2.6%). Mothers who belonged to other ethnic groups constituted 1.6% of the respondents.

In addition, 51.2% of the population of children were males and 48.4% were females. With regards to birth order, 17.4% were first-borns, 20.3% were second-born, 16.7% were third-born, 14.6% were fourth-born, 12.1% were fifth-born, 9.2% were sixth-born, 4.3% were seventh-born, 2.6% were eighth-born, 1.7% were ninth-born, 0.8% were tenth-born, 0.3% were eleventh-born, 0.1% were twelfth-born and 0.1% were thirteenth-born.

Finally, 33.8% of the children were less than a year old, 27.6% were a year old, 19.0% were 2 years old, 12.0% were 3 years old and 7.7% were 4 years old.

**Table 3. 1: Percentage Distribution of Population by Selected Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Level of Education of Mother</b>		
No Education	1054	33.3
Primary	661	20.9
Secondary	1344	42.5
Higher	102	3.2
<b>Type of Place of Residence</b>		
Urban	1264	40.0
Rural	1897	60.0
<b>Region of Residence</b>		
Western	328	10.4
Central	320	10.1
Greater Accra	245	7.8
Volta	239	7.6
Eastern	274	8.7
Ashanti	312	9.9
Brong Ahafo	364	11.5
Northern	514	16.3
Upper East	302	9.6
Upper West	263	8.3
<b>Religion of Mother</b>		
Christians	2233	70.6
Islam	681	21.5
Traditional/Spiritualist	117	3.7
No Religion	130	4.1
<b>Wealth Index</b>		
Poorest	1051	33.2
Poorer	656	20.8
Middle	598	18.9
Richer	461	14.6
Richest	395	12.5
<b>Marital Status of Mother</b>		
Never in Union	242	7.7
Married	2095	66.3
Living with Partner	624	19.7
Widowed	55	1.7
Divorced	40	1.3
No Longer Living Together	105	3.3
<b>Ethnicity of Mother</b>		
Akan	1188	37.6
Ga/Dangme	127	4.0
Ewe	348	11.0
Guan	83	2.6
Mole-Dagbani	849	26.9

Grusi	158	5.0
Gurma	317	10.0
Mande	40	1.3
Other	51	1.6
<b>Sex of Child</b>		
Male	1620	51.2
Female	1541	48.8
<b>Birth Order of Child</b>		
1	551	17.4
2	641	20.3
3	528	16.7
4	461	14.6
5	381	12.1
6	290	9.2
7	136	4.3
8	81	2.6
9	55	1.7
10	25	0.8
11	8	0.3
12	2	0.1
13	2	0.1
<b>Age of Child</b>		
0	1067	33.8
1	873	27.6
2	600	19.0
3	378	12.0
4	243	7.7

Source: GDHS 2014

## **3.2 Bivariate Analysis**

### **Association Between Socio-Economic and Demographic Variables and Birth Registration Outcomes in Ghana**

#### **3.2.1. Level of Education of the Mother**

Table 3.2 indicates that birth registration status of a child increases with the educational level of the mother. Thus, the higher the educational level of the mother, the higher the number of children with birth registration. While 61.7% of mothers with no education have registered their children, 78.4% of mothers with higher education have registered their children. The level of education of a mother can, however, be identified as a factor that enables them to understand and appreciate the relevance and benefits derived from the birth registration of a child. In other words, more educated mothers tend to register their children as compared to uneducated mothers because they are aware that their children may be restricted to enjoy their rights in the absence of a legal proof of identity. Educated mothers, therefore, ensure that their children are registered at birth to safeguard their rights, as well as enable them to benefit from social services like education and healthcare. The relationship that exists between the level of education of a mother and birth registration according to the Chi-square test is statistically significant. Therefore, there is a significant association between a mother's level of education and birth registration.

**Table 3. 2: Percentage Distribution of Birth Registration Status by Mother's Level of Education**

Variable	Birth Registration Status				Total	
	Registered		Not Registered			
Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Education	650	61.7	404	38.3	1054	100.0
Primary	405	61.3	256	38.7	661	100.0
Secondary	987	73.4	357	26.6	1344	100.0
Higher	80	78.4	22	21.6	102	100.0

Chi-Square Value: 54.662<sup>a</sup> Asymptotic Significance: 0.000 Source: GDHS 2014

### 3.2.2. Type of Place of Residence

Table 3.3 indicates that the majority of birth registrations occurred in urban areas as compared to rural areas. While 79.0% of respondents from urban areas registered their births, only 59.3% of those from rural areas registered their births. It can, therefore, be established that a child born in an urban area is more likely to be registered than a child born in a rural area. Urban areas in Ghana are characterised by adequate infrastructure and social amenities that increase the ease of access to important institutions like birth registration offices and centres as compared to rural areas. In rural areas, residents usually have to travel a long distance in order to access birth registration centres. In most instances, birth registration centres in rural areas are not well equipped as compared to urban areas. These pose as barriers or challenges to birth registration outcomes in rural areas. The relationship that exists between the type of place of residence and birth registration according to the Chi-square test is statistically significant.

There is, therefore, a significant association between the type of place of residence and birth registration.

**Table 3. 3: Percentage Distribution of Birth Registration Status by Type of Place of Residence**

Variable	Birth Registration Status				Total	
	Registered		Not Registered			
Type of Place of Residence	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Urban	998	79.0	266	21.0	1264	100.0
Rural	1124	59.3	773	40.7	1897	100.0

Chi-Square value:133.474<sup>a</sup> Asymptotic Significance:0.000 Source: GDHS 2014

### 3.2.3. Region of Residence

Table 3.4 indicates that the highest proportion of children registered is to mothers in the Greater Accra region (80.0%) and the least proportion is to mothers in the Volta region (50.2%). Accordingly, a mother’s region of residence tends to have an impact on whether or not she registers her child at birth. It is typical of a mother who resides in the Greater Accra region to register her child due to the fact that Greater Accra is the nation’s capital and thus, tends to have more infrastructure, less proximity and well-equipped birth registration centres as compared to birth registration centres in other regions of the country. It can also be deduced that birth registration proportions would be greater in regions that are more developed as compared to less developed ones. The relationship that exists between region and birth

registration according to the Chi-square test is statistically significant. There is, therefore, a significant association between the region of residence and birth registration.

**Table 3. 4: Percentage Distribution of Birth Registration Status by Region of Residence**

Variable	Birth Registration Status				Total	
	Registered		Not Registered		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Region	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Western	187	57.0	141	43.0	328	100.0
Central	236	73.8	84	26.3	320	100.0
Greater Accra	196	80.0	49	20.0	245	100.0
Volta	120	50.2	119	49.8	239	100.0
Eastern	171	62.4	103	37.6	274	100.0
Ashanti	248	79.5	64	20.5	312	100.0
Brong Ahafo	213	58.5	151	41.5	364	100.0
Northern	334	65.0	180	35.0	514	100.0
Upper East	223	73.8	79	26.2	302	100.0
Upper West	194	73.8	69	26.2	263	100.0

Chi-Square Value: 120.061<sup>a</sup> Asymptotic Significance: 0.000 Source: GDHS 2014

### 3.2.4. Religion of Mother

Table 3.5 shows that children born to Muslim mothers (83.8%) tend to have birth registration as compared to children born to mothers of other religions. This can be linked to the strict custom of child naming after 7 days of birth in Islam, as well as the little amount of money

required in the process. On the other hand, Christians often organise naming ceremonies that tend to be costly. As a result, financial constraints that may lead to delays child naming may arise, and consequently leading to delays in birth registration. Furthermore, traditionalists (35.0%) are identified to have the least proportion of child birth registration. This may be due to superstitious beliefs where families wait for a particular person to conduct child naming. This goes a long way to have an impact on birth registration outcomes in the country. The relationship that exists between a mother’s religion and birth registration according to the Chi-square test is statistically significant. There is, therefore, a significant relationship between the religion of the mother and birth registration.

**Table 3. 5: Percentage Distribution of Birth Registration Status by Mother’s Religion**

Variable	Birth Registration Status				Total	
	Registered		Not Registered		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christians	1439	64.4	794	35.6	2233	100.0
Muslims	571	83.8	110	16.2	681	100.0
Traditionalist	41	35.0	76	65.0	117	100.0
No Religion	71	54.6	59	45.4	130	100.0

Chi-Square Value: 170.800<sup>a</sup> Asymptotic Significance: 0.000 Source: GDHS 2014

### 3.2.5. Wealth Index

Table 3.6 shows that birth registration status of a child increases with wealth index of the household of the mother. Thus, the richer the household of the mother, the higher the number of children with birth registration. While 85.5% of mothers who belonged to the richest category have registered their children, 58.6% of mothers who belonged to the poorest category

registered their children. Mothers from rich household easily access birth registration particularly in instances where late registrations attract penalties. Mothers from poorer households are on the other hand are faced with financial constraints that hinder them from registering their children. These mothers channel their resources into basic survival needs like food, clothing and shelter and do not realise the significance of birth registration until the need arises. The relationship that exists between wealth index and birth registration according to the Chi-square test is statistically significant. There is, therefore, a significant relationship between wealth index of a mother and birth registration.

**Table 3. 6: Percentage Distribution of Birth Registration Status by Wealth Index**

Variable	Birth Registration Status				Total	
	Registered		Not Registered		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Wealth Index	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poorest	616	58.6	435	41.4	1051	100.0
Poorer	392	59.8	264	40.2	656	100.0
Middle	413	69.1	185	30.9	598	100.0
Richer	362	78.5	99	21.5	461	100.0
Richest	339	85.8	56	14.2	395	100.0

Chi-Square Value: 141.426<sup>a</sup> Asymptotic Significance: 0.000 Source: GDHS 2014

### 3.2.6. Marital Status of the Mother

Table 3.7 shows that the birth registration status of a child increases when mothers are married. Thus, a child is more likely to possess birth registration when their mothers are married. While 72.4% of married mothers have registered their children, 47.5% of the mothers who were

divorced registered their children. Here, it is believed that married mothers tend to be more responsible for their children as compared to mothers who are either widowed, separated or no longer living together with their partner. Married mothers make sure that their wards possess a legal identity through birth registration so as to enable them to enjoy their rights. The relationship that exists between the current marital status and birth registration according to the Chi-square test is statistically significant. There is, therefore, a significant association between the marital status of a mother and birth registration.

**Table 3. 7: Percentage Distribution of Birth Registration Status by Mother's Marital Status**

Variable	Birth Registration Status				Total	
	Registered		Not Registered		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never in Union	146	60.3	96	39.7	242	100.0
Married	1516	72.4	579	27.6	2095	100.0
Living with Partner	342	54.8	282	45.2	624	100.0
Widowed	33	60.0	22	40.0	55	100.0
Divorced	19	47.5	21	52.5	40	100.0
No Longer Living Together/Separated	66	62.9	39	37.1	105	100.0

Chi-Square value: 83.129<sup>a</sup>    Asymptotic Significance: 0.000    Source: GDHS 2014

### 3.2.7. Ethnicity of the Mother

Table 3.8 indicates that the Mole-Dagbani (78.6%) had the highest proportion of births registered while the Gurma (39.1%) had the least proportion. It may be noted here that, mothers from the Gurma ethnic group identify themselves to be more Burkinabe than Ghanaian and thus, they do not see the significance of registering their children at birth in the country. Mande (72.5%), Grusi (69.6%), Akan (69.4%) and Ga/Dangme (65.4%) are ethnic groups worth notable in relation to birth registration outcome in Ghana. According to the Chi-square, there is a significant association between the ethnicity of the mother and the birth registration status of a child.

*Table 3. 8: Percentage Distribution of Birth Registration Status by Mother's Ethnicity*

Variable	Birth Registration Status				Total	
	Registered		Not Registered			
Ethnicity	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Akan	824	69.4	364	30.6	1188	100.0
Ga/Dangme	83	65.4	44	34.6	127	100.0
Ewe	205	58.9	143	41.1	348	100.0
Guan	50	60.2	33	39.8	83	100.0
Mole-Dagbani	667	78.6	182	21.4	849	100.0
Grusi	110	69.6	48	30.4	158	100.0
Gurma	124	39.1	193	60.9	317	100.0
Mande	29	72.5	11	27.5	40	100.0
Other	30	58.8	21	41.2	51	100.0

Chi-Square Value: 180.901<sup>a</sup> Asymptotic Significance: 0.000

Source: GDHS 2014

### 3.2.8. Sex of Child

Table 3.9 indicates that while 66.3% of male children are registered, 68.0% of female children have birth registration. Although Ghana is dominated by patrilineal ties, increase in maternal and girl-child education may be reasons for these outcomes. Increasing awareness about gender equality which forms a part of the SDGs may also be identified as a factor leading to improvements in birth registration outcomes of female children. According to the Chi-square, birth registration has no significant association with the sex of the child.

*Table 3. 9: Percentage Distribution of Birth Registration Status by Sex of Child*

Variable	Birth Registration Status				Total	
	Registered		Not Registered			
Sex of Child	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	1074	66.3	546	33.7	1620	100.0
Female	1048	68.0	493	32.0	1541	100.0

Chi-Square Value: 1.048<sup>a</sup>      Asymptotic Significance: 0.306      Source: GDHS 2014

### 3.2.9. Birth Order of Child

Birth registration figures in Table 3.10 indicate that the birth order of a child has little impact on the outcome of birth registration in Ghana. Children tend to be registered no matter the order in which they were given birth to even though the Chi-square test establishes a significant association between the birth order of a child and birth registration outcome.

**Table 3. 10: Percentage Distribution of Birth Registration Status by Birth Order of a Child**

Variable	Birth Registration Status				Total	
	Registered		Not Registered			
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	371	67.3	180	32.7	551	100.0
2	438	68.3	203	31.7	641	100.0
3	355	67.2	173	32.8	528	100.0
4	329	71.4	132	28.6	461	100.0
5	248	65.1	133	34.9	381	100.0
6	185	63.8	105	36.2	290	100.0
7	95	69.9	41	30.1	136	100.0
8	45	55.6	36	44.4	81	100.0
9	39	70.9	16	29.1	55	100.0
10	13	52.0	12	48.0	25	100.0
11	2	25.0	6	75.0	8	100.0
12	0	0.0	2	100.0	2	100.0
13	2	100.0	0	0.0	2	100.0

Chi-Square Value: 26.186<sup>a</sup> Asymptotic Significance: 0.010 Source: GDHS 2014

### 3.2.10. Age of Child

With 2-year and 4-year olds constituting the highest proportion (72.8%) of children whose births have been registered, children who are less than a year old (58.4%) tend to be the least registered. Table 3.11 indicates that the chances of a child being registered increases as he or she grows. In other words, birth registration increases as children grow and require a birth certificate to either be enrolled at school or access healthcare. Mothers of newly born children fail to register their children at birth as there is no pressing need for a birth certificate. Some

mothers therefore only register their children when the need arises. Accordingly, the Chi-square test, there exists a significant association between the age of a child and birth registration outcomes.

**Table 3. 11: Percentage Distribution of Birth Registration Status by the Age of a Child**

Variable	Birth Registration Status				Total	
	Registered		Not Registered		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age of Child	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	623	58.4	444	41.6	1067	100.0
1	627	71.8	246	28.2	873	100.0
2	437	72.8	163	27.2	600	100.0
3	258	68.3	120	31.7	378	100.0
4	177	72.8	66	27.2	243	100.0

Chi-Square Value: 58.314<sup>a</sup> Asymptotic Significance: 0.000 Source: GDHS 2014

### **3.3. Socio-Economic and Demographic Correlates of Birth Registration in Ghana**

Table 3.12 shows that the educational level of the mother, marital status, region of residence, wealth index, religion, and age of the child were predictors of birth registration status of children in Ghana.

Mothers with secondary education are 1.6 times as likely as mothers with no education to register their children. This may be as a result of the fact that a higher educational background

affords a mother the opportunity to access information, comprehend and appreciate the benefits associated with the birth registration of a child.

Mothers who reside in the Northern region of Ghana are 3.8 times as likely as mothers who reside in the Western region to register their children at birth. This may be as a result of the education and sensitisation ongoing in more remote areas as compared to less remote areas. In addition, mothers in the Central (2.1), Ashanti (2.2), Greater Accra (1.9), Eastern (1.5), Upper East (2.6) and Upper West (2.2) regions are more likely to register their births.

Muslim mothers are 2.4 times as likely as Christian mothers to register their children. This may be because of strict customs regarding the Islamic religion as compared to Christianity.

Mothers who are from the richest households are 3.9 times as likely as mothers from the poorest households to register their children. Followed by mothers from richer (2.4) and middle (1.9) households with reference to wealth index. This is because mothers in richer households tend to have disposable income for other needs outside basic needs. With this disposable income, mothers in richer households are able to pay for birth registration when a fee is charged. On the other hand, mothers in poorer households do not have sufficient income. They tend to spend more on the provision of basic needs and therefore cannot make payments for things that may be classified as an extra cost.

Mothers who are married are 1.5 times as likely as mothers who were never in a union to register their births. It is perceived that mothers who are married tend to be more responsible for their wards than mothers who are not in a union. Married mothers, therefore, ensure that their children possess relevant documents that would facilitate their access to certain social services like education and healthcare, and enjoy their rights.

Mothers of 2-year and 4-year olds are 2.0 times as likely as mothers of new-borns to register their children. Followed by mothers of one-year-olds (1.9) and mothers of three-year-olds (1.5).

This is due to the increasing need for legal proof of identity in an effort to provide the child with education and healthcare, amongst other social services.

**Table 3.12: Results of the Binary Logistic Regression Showing the Relationship Between Socio-Economic and Demographic Variables and Birth Registration**

	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
			Lower	Upper
<b>Level of Education</b>				
No Education (RF)	-	1.000	-	-
Primary	.263	1.148	.902	1.461
Secondary	.000	1.613	1.273	2.045
Higher	.868	.952	.529	1.711
<b>Type of Place of Residence</b>				
Urban (RF)	-	1.000	-	-
Rural	.153	.836	.655	1.069
<b>Region</b>				
Western (RF)	-	1.000	-	-
Central	.000	2.146	1.496	3.078
Greater Accra	.005	1.917	1.214	3.029
Volta	.635	1.122	.698	1.803
Eastern	.028	1.532	1.048	2.241
Ashanti	.000	2.203	1.501	3.231
Brong Ahafo	.467	1.137	.804	1.609
Northern	.000	3.881	2.424	6.216
Upper East	.000	2.629	1.643	4.205
Upper West	.001	2.213	1.372	3.568
<b>Religion</b>				
Christians (RF)	-	1.000	-	-
Muslims	.000	2.486	1.877	3.292
Traditionalist	.009	.554	.357	.861
No Religion	.234	1.270	.857	1.882
<b>Wealth Index</b>				
Poorest (RF)	.-	1.000	-	-
Poorer	.056	1.296	.993	1.692
Middle	.000	1.936	1.414	2.653
Richer	.000	2.425	1.635	3.597
Richest	.000	3.920	2.389	6.432
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Never in Union (RF)	-	1.000	-	-
Married	.016	1.538	1.083	2.184
Living with Partner	.992	1.002	.701	1.433
Widowed	.872	1.058	.535	2.090
Divorced	.193	.606	.285	1.288
No longer living	.644	1.133	.666	1.929
<b>Ethnicity</b>				

Akan (RF)	-	1.000	-	-
Ga/Dangme	.085	.665	.418	1.059
Ewe	.423	.858	.590	1.248
Guan	.019	.524	.306	.899
Mole-Dagbani	.174	1.273	.899	1.804
Grusi	.446	.834	.522	1.332
Gurma	.000	.311	.204	.476
Mande	.278	.637	.281	1.440
Other	.015	.411	.201	.842
<b>Sex of Child</b>				
Male (RF)	-	1.000	-	-
Female	.125	1.139	.964	1.346
<b>Birth Order</b>				
1 (RF)	-	1.000	-	-
2	.732	1.051	.790	1.400
3	.846	.970	.715	1.317
4	.139	1.278	.923	1.769
5	.551	1.110	.788	1.563
6	.527	.889	.619	1.279
7	.158	1.408	.875	2.264
8	.810	1.070	.616	1.858
9	.121	1.727	.865	3.449
10	.638	.812	.341	1.935
11	.175	.296	.051	1.718
12	.999	.000	.000	.
13	.999	2212475031.796	.000	.
<b>Age of Child</b>				
0 (RF)	-	1.000	-	-
1	.000	1.993	1.610	2.468
2	.000	2.078	1.628	2.652
3	.003	1.531	1.159	2.022
4	.000	2.046	1.458	2.871
Constant	.000	.282		

Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0.242$  RF: Reference Category

### 3.4. Factors that Inhibit Birth Registration in Ghana

The challenges to birth registration in Ghana are not far-fetched from earlier findings. Issues raised have extended from three dominant factors thus the lack of education or knowledge about birth registration, accessibility to birth registration centres and financial constraints.

In Ghana, awareness of social issues like birth registration tends to be influenced by the educational level or background of the mother. A mother's level of education makes her susceptible to certain vital information that could be easily taken for granted. In an interview with Mama Patience Asamoah, a primary school leaver and mother of a three-year-old girl, she stated that "I did not register Amanda immediately after birth because I did not know the importance of registering her until she needed identification to be enrolled in school". On the other hand, Auntie Cecelia Mensah, who had received higher education and mother of a four-year-old girl, registered her daughter right after she was born. Auntie Cecelia further pointed out that she had prior knowledge about birth registration and personally enquired about it before delivering her baby. It can, however, be observed that some mothers regardless of their general knowledge about birth registration fail to probe further to understand its relevance.

According to Mr. Daniel Elorm Agblenuasa, a Senior Registration Officer at the Ghana Births and Deaths Registry Statistics Unit, birth registration can be classified as early registration (0 to 12 months of birth) and late registration (after 12 months of birth). He further stated that "early birth registration is totally free of charge while late birth registration attracts a penalty of about 30 Ghana Cedis." Some mothers, however, complained about the cost incurred when registering their wards after the free 12-month duration. According to Amo Adjei and Annim in *Socio-economic determinants of Birth Registration in Ghana*, birth registration should be acknowledged as a right, and eliminating penalties connected with late registration may aid in improving birth registration outcomes. In an interview with Agnes Owusu who failed to register her child early, she stated that she was deterred by the cost involved in an attempt to access the late birth registration. It can, however, be deduced that the financial constraints of mothers have an immense impact on birth registration outcomes in Ghana.

Furthermore, access to birth registration centres and staffing in the country, particularly in rural areas, is inadequate. According to Mr. Elorm;

*“there should be the provision of office spaces. At least every district should have about 10 registration outlets so that people who feel reluctant in rural areas to walk a long distance for birth registration and a certificate would find enough motivation to go and register. That would aid accessibility. There should be enough logistics at these centres. Once there are more logistics like vehicles that we can use... you know, there are some hard to reach areas, so once there are more logistics and equipment for us to do the registration, you will see that we can reach the unreachable. Therefore, there would be wider coverage. There would have to be staffing. Our staff level is very low. It is recommended that there should be 1 registration officer to at least 1000 in a community. But here lies the case that staffing at the whole Birth and Death Registry is less than 1000. So staffing is another major concern which needs to be addressed.”*

Focusing on extending access to birth registration officials and centres would, therefore, go a long way in facilitating birth registration outcomes in the country.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.0. Introduction

This chapter concludes the study. It details a summary of the major findings as gathered from existing materials and primary knowledge gathered from field research. Based on that, conclusions are drawn and relevant recommendations made.

#### 4.1. Summary of Findings

The SDGs which translate into seventeen global development goals have been embraced by every country within the ambit of the United Nations. The United Nations have advised countries on how best they should implement these goals. Ghana is on a steady approach towards attaining Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions which is the 16<sup>th</sup> SDG adopted by United Nations member states. Ghana is usually characterised by relative peace since there have not been any major incidents of chaos in the country. Even though there may have been incidents of conflict in certain areas, they cannot be compared to the extent this country has enjoyed relative peace<sup>6</sup>

The focus of this study, which is to assess the extent of implementation of the SDG 16, an assessment of Target 16.9 has been carried out using the 2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey.

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<sup>6</sup> Interview Daniel Elorm Agblenuasa

The study adopted the Concept of Human Rights as the analytical framework through which the study was conducted. The relationship between the Concept of Human Rights and Target 16.9 indicates that birth registration is a fundamental human right and must be accorded, respected and observed by governments worldwide. Birth registration has also been reemphasized by international development agencies like UNICEF and Plan International as an inalienable, indivisible that confers onto the individual the privilege to access some economic, political and social goods from the state.

The data employed in this study, 2014 Demographic and Health Survey, made use of socio-economic and demographic variables to assess the proportions of birth registration in Ghana. The variables are level of education of the mother, type of place of residence, region of residence, religion of the mother, wealth index, and marital status of the mother, ethnicity of the mother, sex of the child, the birth order of the child and the age of the child.

At the univariate level, frequencies were employed in examining the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the population of respondents. It was found that the majority of mothers has achieved only secondary education (42.5%) while mothers who had achieved higher education constituted the least proportion of the population (3.2%). Furthermore, a greater proportion of these mothers (60.0%) were from rural areas particularly the northern regions of the country. Christians constituted a majority of the population (70.6%) while the other religions constituted only 29.4% of respondents. It was observed that a greater portion of the population was poor while only a few who belonged to the richer categories with regards to wealth index. 66.3% of the population was observed to be married. The Akan ethnic group was identified to be most dominant with about 37.6% of respondents while the Mande ethnic

group was the least dominant with only 1.3% of the total population of respondents. Furthermore, it was observed that male children dominated the population with about 51.2% of the population. A greater portion of children, who constituted 33.8% observed in the analysis were males and the second-born children were dominant with about 20.3%.

At the bivariate and multivariate levels, cross-tabulation and binary logical regression methods were used to examine the data respectively. Cross tabulations were employed to determine the relationship between the socio-economic and demographic variables and birth registration in Ghana. Chi-square tests were used to determine the statistical significance at an alpha level of 0.05 (95% confidence level). All results apart from the sex of the child, the birth order of the child and the age of the child were statistically significant. The binary logistic regression was employed to forecast the correlation between birth registration and independent socio-economic and demographic variables.

The major findings per the variables used indicated that for the level of education, the higher the educational status of the mother, the higher the probability of birth registration of the child.

Another major finding is that birth registration is economically determined. The wealth status of the parents determines the correlation between the rates of registration. The relatively economical parents do not register births in Ghana because of constraints on family income.

Couples that are together per the data gathered have shown to register births in Ghana largely due to the division of responsibilities where one parent or both parents identify birth registration as a priority. Parents who are either divorced, widowed, detached or single influences by other issues that preoccupy their minds than birth registration.

Via a trend analysis of our data, most of the registered births have been recorded in the urban areas where there is access to health facilities. On the other hand, in rural areas, where access

to health facilities are very poor, birth registration tends to be on the minimal. There are more births registered from the urban than the rural<sup>7</sup>.

Parents who belong to the Christian religious sect are likely to register their birth than traditional worshippers. For traditional worshippers, they have their own calendar and certain superstitious beliefs interfere with their responsibility to register births.

It was also observed that the problems of birth registration raised extended from three dominant factors; the lack of education or knowledge about birth registration, accessibility to birth registration centres and financial constraints according to mothers interviewed.

## **4.2. Conclusions**

This study identifies the level of education of a mother, type of place of residence, region of residence, marital status, wealth index, religion, ethnicity, and the age of a child as socio-economic and demographic factors that affect birth registration in Ghana. Efforts made towards the provision of birth registration to children under the age of 5 years include free birth registration from 0 to 12 months old. Based on the conceptual framework, hypotheses that; children born to mothers with higher education are more likely to register their birth compared to children of less-educated mother and children born in urban areas are more likely to be registered at birth compared to children born in rural areas are accepted. On the other hand, we reject that hypothesis that male children are more likely to be registered at birth compared to female children as the study has proven otherwise.

Finally, this study shows that Ghana is on course to achieve the 90% international rate by the United Nations. Currently, the birth registration rate in Ghana is 70.1%, but with a projection

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Daniel Elorm Agblenuasa

of 80% by the end of 2019. This shows a high implementation capability of Target 16.9 of SDG 16 in Ghana.

### **4.3. Recommendations**

The following recommendations are proposed:

- Access to birth registration centres and offices must be well-structured to deliver on their mandate as proximity and accessibility proved a hindrance to birth registration outcomes. Following the introduction of the automated registration system, more resources should be made available at these centres to facilitate the process of birth registration. This would help achieve coverage and completeness.
- Education, particularly maternal education is also vital. Awareness about birth registration should be amplified and intensified until every individual is captured and enlightened about the significance and benefits associated with birth registration. There is a need for the government to champion the sensitization of the public to the need for birth registration in all parts of the country.
- As financial constraints have been identified as a barrier to birth registration outcomes in the country, it may be recommended that penalties or costs associated with late child birth registration be waved off or removed entirely. Minimization of the financial burden associated with birth registration, which should be observed as a right, would go a long way to improve on birth registration outcomes around the country. Registration fees may also be charged on a sliding scale where no fee will be charged for mothers below an income floor.

- Policies and programmes that underpin birth registration should be broad-based, targeting the less privileged in our society – people in rural areas, uneducated mothers, people from a poor household, among several others.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE

This interview is aimed at obtaining relevant data on “Providing Birth Registration for All in Ghana: An Assessment of Target 16.9 of Sustainable Development Goal 16”. It is strictly for academic purposes in fulfilment of a Master of Arts Degree in International Affairs at the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy. You are assured of the confidentiality of any information that you may provide.

Name.....

Institution .....

Position .....

#### GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Can we say Ghana has Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions?
2. How effective is Birth Registration in Ghana?
3. What factors affect Birth Registration in Ghana?
  - Socio-Cultural
  - Economic
  - Level of Education
  - Income Level
  - Sex of Child
  - Place of Residence

- Religion
  - Ethnicity
4. Is there enough political commitment on the part of the government to address these issues that hamper Birth Registration?
  5. Are there logistical constraints that hamper Birth Registration efforts in Ghana?
  6. In my research, I understand that there are birth registration offices at the regional, district and national levels, are there policy harmonization amongst the various levels?
  7. Is Birth Registration a priority for previous and current government? And how resourceful is the Ghana Birth and Death Registry?
  8. How can these challenges be addressed?

#### Final Comments

#### FOR MOTHERS;

- ✓ What is your level of education?
- ✓ Where is your residence located?
- ✓ What is your occupation?
- ✓ How many children do you have?
- ✓ What do you know about birth registration?
- ✓ Did you register your child at birth?
- ✓ How much did you pay to register your child at birth?
- ✓ How close was the birth registration centre to you?
- ✓ How would you describe the birth registration process in Ghana?
- ✓ Was there a birth certificate issued after birth registration?
- ✓ Did you encounter any challenges in registering your child?
- ✓ Final Comments