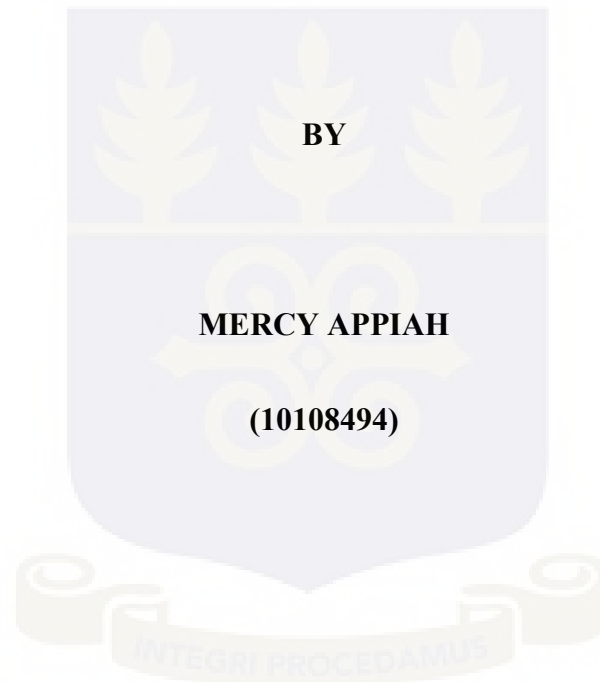


UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

**CHILDREN'S AWARENESS OF THEIR RIGHTS IN GHANA: THE CASE OF
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ABURI AND POKROM**



BY

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MPhil
SOCIAL WORK DEGREE.**

JULY, 2018

DECLARATION

I, Mercy Appiah, do hereby declare that this thesis submitted is my own research work conducted under the supervision of Dr. Alice Boateng and Dr. Abigail A. Mills, both at the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana, Legon, and that this thesis, has not been submitted either in part or whole for the award of any degree elsewhere. All other sources of information used have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

With the promulgation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989, children are now recognised as active actors and subjects of human rights. The UNCRC mandates all Signatory States to educate their citizenry, including children about children's rights. Ghana is on record for being the first country to ratify the UNCRC and has since harmonised its national laws with the UNCRC. Yet, little is known about the extent to which children in Ghana know about their rights. To ensure effective implementation, respect, and full realisation for children's rights in Ghana, it is imperative that children who are rights-holders have adequate knowledge about their rights.

Employing a qualitative research design, the study explored the knowledge that students in Aburi (a peri-urban community) and Pokrom (a rural community) have about their rights. Using a thematic approach in analysing the data gathered, the findings of this study showed that participants had knowledge about their rights, as majority of them were able to define rights and cited examples of the various categories of rights. The students defined children's rights as being privileges, freedoms, or entitlements that are conferred on children, and cited examples such as, the right to education, the right to life and the right to medical care. The findings further indicated that the students had more knowledge about their rights to provision and participation than their rights to protection. Additionally, the study revealed that although the students had knowledge about their rights, they had insufficient knowledge about the legal instruments that protect children's rights, such as, the UNCRC and the Children's Act of Ghana. The study recommends among other things that the Ghana Education Service (GES) should expand the educational curriculum to cover the teaching of legal instruments that protect the rights of children, such as the UNCRC.

DEDICATION

Dedicated with much love to my kids, Petra Naa Atswei Dzormo Akuetteh and Alfred Nii Adjei Dromo Akuetteh.

Your presence and smiles exude new strength to keep me going when I feel like giving up. You are my inspiration.

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Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly more than all we ask or imagine, ... to Him be glory forever and ever, Amen!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACRWC-----	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
BECE-----	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CHRAJ-----	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
D/A-----	District Assembly
DOVVSU-----	Domestic Violence and Victims' Support Unit
GES-----	Ghana Education Service
GTV-----	Ghana Television (National Television Station)
GSS-----	Ghana Statistical Service
IDIs-----	In -Depth Interviews
IFSW-----	International Federation of Social Workers
JHS-----	Junior High School
NCCE-----	National Commission on Civic Education
NGOs-----	Non-Governmental Organizations
PTA-----	Parents-Teacher-Association
PC-----	Personal Computer
PAS-----	Public Address System
RME-----	Religious and Moral Education
TV-----	Television
UNCRC-----	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

International discourse on human rights intensified after the second world war in 1948 when the nations of the world ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNHR) (Steiner, 2000). The Declaration was to ensure that all human beings, regardless of their age, sex, tribe, country of origin or socio-economic status are entitled to respect and enjoy human rights, simply on the basis of the fact that they are born human (Kiprotich & Ong'ondo, 2013). This general agreement that all human beings are entitled to some basic rights marked the beginning of international and universal recognition of human rights. Rights are basic standards or entitlements without which people cannot live with dignity. Thus, rights are deemed to be inherent, universal and inalienable. In simple terms, rights are said to be God-given (Ame, 2012).

One important group of right-holders is children. The concept of children's rights was developed to protect children from abuse and neglect, to ensure the general welfare of all children, and to encourage children to participate in decisions that impact their lives (Manful & Manful, 2014), due to the peculiar nature of children as a social group. Children's rights, according to Sathiyraj & Jayaraman (2013), are fundamental freedoms and inherent entitlements, which should be accorded to all human beings below the age of eighteen (18) years.

One important human rights instrument specifically for children is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which was promulgated in 1989 (Apt et al,

2012; Hutchison, 2013). The UNCRC was derived from the primary assumption that children are a peculiar social group with a common and a universal set of entitlements and guarantees for children three basic rights. These are; the right to provision, that is, right to adequate nutrition, health care, education and economic welfare, the rights to protection, which means children are to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, violence, and exploitation, and finally, the right to participation, that is the need for children to be involved in decision-making especially in matters that concern them. These are referred to as the 3Ps of the UNCRC and by ratifying it, State Parties have the obligation to provide and protect these rights (Howe & Covell, 2010; Ame, 2011; Ame, 2012).

Ghana is reputed for being the first country to ratify the UNCRC in 1990 (Agbenyega, 2012; Twum-Danso, 2012; Hutchison, 2013) without any reservations. Kaime (2009) contends that the fact that Ghana was the first country to have ratified the UNCRC is a telling evidence of the country's commitment for the cause of the rights and welfare of children in Ghana. This commitment was further exhibited through the constitutional provision made in Chapter 5 of the 1992 Constitution and the Children's Act 1998 (Act 560), coupled with several other policies and legislations such as the Juvenile Justice Act 2003 (Act 653) and the Human Trafficking Act 2005 (Act 694). Besides, Ghana is also a signatory to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Thus, Hutchison (2013), asserts that constitutionally, there are no barriers against children realising their rights in Ghana.

In spite of these policies and laws, the reality of lives of many children in Ghana remains in stark contrast with children's rights provisions (Twum-Danso, 2012), including that of the UNCRC and the Children's Act of Ghana. For example, many children are denied access to

education, deprived of their rights to be heard, and are subjected to various forms of physical, mental and sexual abuse (Twum-Danso, 2008; Mhaka-Mutepfa et al, 2014).

By ratifying the UNCRC, all signatory states are to take steps to ensure that all their citizens, including children, have awareness about children's rights. Article 42 of the UNCRC enjoins States Parties to inform and educate their citizens, including children who are the bearers of the UNCRC on the principles and rights enshrined in the convention. It stipulates; *States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike (UNCRC, Article 42).*

Although several studies have been conducted on children's rights in Ghana, the extent to which Ghana has fulfilled its obligations under Article 42, particularly for children, remains largely unexplored. The extent to which children in Ghana, especially, those in predominantly peri-urban and rural areas have been informed about their rights is unknown. Literature analysis indicates that studies that have been conducted on awareness on children's rights were mainly carried out in urban cities, leaving a gap in the peri-urban and rural areas. This study, therefore, explored children's awareness of their rights with a focus on children in peri-urban and rural areas, specifically, Aburi and Pokrom, all in the Akuapem South District of Ghana. The study further identified ways by which stakeholders could enhance children's awareness of their rights in Aburi and Pokrom, from the perspectives of students in public Junior High Schools (JHSs).

1.1 Problem Statement

This study investigated whether children dwelling in peri-urban and rural areas have awareness about their rights. A review of literature indicates that even though studies have been conducted on children's rights in Ghana (Twum-Danso, 2008; Kwarteng, 2012; Hutchison, 2013; Manful

& Manful, 2014), these studies focused on children dwelling in urban Ghana and also laid less emphasis on awareness of children's rights from the perspectives of children themselves. As such, as to whether children dwelling in peri-urban and rural areas are aware of their rights or not, is unknown.

Mention is made of human rights in relation to adults (Wall, 2008), and therefore, although children constitute a significant proportion of the world's population, their experiences of, and perspectives about human rights have not been comprehensively explored. Even though children are the ones who need maximum care and protection as a result of their vulnerability and peculiar nature as a social group, paradoxically, it is children who are more likely to be marginalised and unheard.

The adoption of the UNCRC by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989, created hope and expectation for a significant improvement and change in the lives of children worldwide (Twum-Danso, 2008). However, children's rights are still being violated across countries, including Ghana. For instance, a study conducted by UNICEF in 2014 revealed that six (6) out of ten (10) children in the world experience physical violence in the home, two-hundred and fifteen (215) million children under seventeen (17) years are engaged in child labour whilst 22% to 50% of children worldwide have been victims of child trafficking.

Many children in Ghana are also confronted with innumerable challenges as many of them are denied access to education, deprived of their rights to be heard the right to be equipped with skills, the right live successful lives, and to make social contributions (Mhaka-Mutepfa et al, 2014). For example, according to the 2010 population and housing census, about six-hundred and twenty-three thousand, five-hundred (623,500) children of school going age were not enrolled in school and 25% of children with physical disabilities were also not attending school

(World Vision, 2017). Twum-Danso (2008), also asserts that many children are subjected to various forms of physical, mental, and sexual abuse, including defilement, abandonment, abduction, commercial exploitation and servitude. Article 3 of the UNCRC, states that children who are capable of making their opinions known should be consulted when decisions about their welfare are being taken. However, many children are not involved when decisions that impact their lives are being made but are subjected to the effects of these decisions. This because children are not regarded as competent and matured enough to make these kinds of decisions (Mhaka-Mutepfa et al, 2014). Consequently, many children are deprived of their childhood and denied the opportunity to realise their full potentials (Apt et al; Mhaka-Mutepfa et al, 2014).

While inadequate financial and human resources have been identified as impediments to the effective implementation and realisation of children's rights in Ghana, lack of awareness, according to Twum-Danso (2012), remains a critical factor that tends to hinder the implementation of legal frameworks on children's rights and the eventual realisation of children's rights in Ghana. Therefore, for a successful realisation and implementation of children's rights in Ghana, it is essential to explore if children, who are right-holders, are aware of their rights. As rightly stated by Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013), without awareness about children's rights by children themselves, the realisation and implementation of children's rights may be impossible. It is in line with this, that this study sought to explore children's awareness of their rights, with a focus on Junior High school (JHS) students in Aburi and Pokrom, a peri-urban and a rural community respectively, in the Akuapem South District of Ghana.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To explore the knowledge that children in Aburi and Pokrom have about their rights.
2. To identify factors that hinder the realization of children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom.
3. To find out how children in Aburi and Pokrom could benefit from knowing about their rights.
4. To explore ways by which stakeholders could enhance knowledge about children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What do children in Aburi and Pokrom know about their rights?
2. What factors hinder the realization of children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom?
3. How could children in Aburi and Pokrom benefit from knowing about their rights?
4. In what ways can stakeholders enhance knowledge about children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study will be significant in terms of policy, research and social work practice.

- **Policy:** The findings of the study will provide relevant information to policymakers and all who have interest in matters that concern children such as, the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, the Department of Social Welfare, UNICEF, and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), in the design and implementation of policies that will help enhance awareness about children's rights and the need to respect the rights of children in Ghana.

- **Research:** This study adds to the existing body of knowledge and literature on children's rights in Ghana. Although there is existing literature on children's rights, this study fills gaps identified in the literature. The findings of the study will also serve as a reference point for other researchers in the field of children's rights.
- **Social Work Practice:** Social Work profession is firmly rooted in the principle of human rights and social justice (IFSW, 2012). In view of this, Social Workers can use the findings of the study to develop advocacy tools, which could be used to lobby for policies that will help promote the rights of children in Ghana and enhance awareness about children's rights among the general citizenry, including children themselves.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. **Awareness:** Implies children knowing that they have rights and that it is important to have those rights (Kamau, 2013).
2. **Children:** All persons under eighteen years (UNCRC, Article 1; The Children's Act 1998 Part 1, Sub-Section 1).
3. **Peri-urban:** An urban fringe and a geographic edge of a city (Kimengzi et al, 2017), example, Aburi.
4. **Rural area:** An area or community with low population density, where the inhabitants usually engage in farming as the main economic activity, example, Pokrom.
5. **Rights:** In line with this study, rights will mean all those entitlements enshrined in the UNCRC and other child rights instruments and grouped under the 3Ps (Ame, 2011).
6. **Students:** Refer to children between the ages of 12-17 years in Junior High School.
7. **Realization:** For the purpose of this study, realization will mean enjoyment of children's rights.

1.6 Overview of the Study

The study is structured into five chapters. Chapter One forms the introduction of the study. It consists of the background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and explanation of key terms. The literature review, gaps identified in the literature, as well as the theoretical framework of the study are presented in chapter two. The research methodology forms the chapter three. It consists of the research design employed, the study area, the target population, study population, sampling technique used, sample size, data collection, data handling and analysis, ethical considerations, dissemination of findings and limitations of the study. The findings and the discussions of the findings are presented in chapter four. Chapter Five comprises of the summary, conclusions, recommendations, and implications of the findings for social work practice.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

The adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989 has heightened interest in the study of children's rights and subsequently, scholarly works on children's rights abound from the international, regional, and national levels. This section reviewed existing literature on children's rights. The literature review sheds light on how previous studies on children's rights have been undertaken and the outcome of those studies. The review of literature also helped to identify the most significant points of convergence and divergence in earlier works (Charmaz, 2006) on children's rights and this current study, and gaps in the literature. The literature review is organised into three parts. The first part looks at the concept of socialisation and children's rights in Ghana. Part two explores the various international and national instruments on children's rights, whilst part three addresses the various themes of the study, which are; children's knowledge about their rights, factors hindering the realisation of children's rights, benefits children could derive from being knowing about their rights, and ways to enhance children's rights awareness.

2.1 The Concept of Socialization and Children's Rights in Ghana

In its broad sense, the term socialization has been defined as the way in which individuals are assisted in becoming members of one or more social groups (Grusec & Hastings, 2015). Eleanor (1992), also defined the term as the processes whereby individuals are taught the skills, behaviour patterns, values, and motivations needed for competent functioning in the culture in which the child is growing up. Both definitions connote ways of adapting to the ways of life

of a social group of people, and that individuals of all ages go through this process once they find themselves in a new social group.

Socialisation is an ongoing process that occurs throughout the lifespan, and an individual can be socialised into more than one social group at a time. Institutions that govern human interactions are essential components of the cultural makeup of all human societies, and it is upon such institutions that the foundation and survival of the society rest (Boakye-Boaten, 2010), thus, the necessity of cultural practices to be replicated from one generation to another. Culture is a process that is learned and transmitted from one generation to another. Therefore, a society exists when its cultural strategies are transferred unto the younger generations (Boakye-Boaten, 2010). During the process of socialisation, individuals acquire social skills, social understandings, and gain emotional maturity necessary for effective functioning, and interaction with other members of society; it involves the transmission of culture from one generation to another (Eleanor, 1992).

The word 'child', is mostly used in two ways. One meaning is in relation to chronological age, and the other meaning relates to status. When it is used in relation to age, there is a specific age limit beyond which a person is no longer referred to as a 'child', and when it refers to status, then the age does not matter as the child of a particular person holds that status throughout the person's life, with accompanying rights and duties (Mensah-Bonsu & Dowuona-Hamond, 1995). Children are regarded as vulnerable beings who need protection, nurturing, and at the same time a social construction, which prescribes certain social functions and relationships. Children are, therefore trained to perpetuate the existence of their family and cultural legacies (Boakye-Boaten, 2010). Implicitly or explicitly, the maximal intellectual, emotional, and social

development of children are promoted in any human society in the social and physical through the process of socialisation.

Eleanor (1992) asserts that in acquiring norms of social behaviour, institutions or agents such as the family, peer groups, schools, and religious institutions are predominant in socialising children and others. The family is seen as the primary actor of socialisation, and it is during childhood that enduring social skills, personality attributes, and social orientations and values are laid down (Maccoby, 1992). It is during the socialisation process that affective aspects of social relationships existing between parents and children i.e. love, hate, fear, and empathy hold a central place (Eleanor, 1992), leaving enduring imprints on the child.

The Ghanaian child is a member of both the nuclear family (consisting of a father, mother and other children) and the extended family or customary family (Mensa-Bonsu & Dowuona-Hammond, 1995) and are embodiment of signifying cultural identity, social order, and morality, which together form the basis of the social fabric of all societies (Boakye-Boaten, 2010). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the whole society to ensure children are protected and properly socialised, because they are believed to be reincarnated people who had lived and died in previous generations in traditional African religion and society (Boakye-Boaten, 2010). Child-upbringing practices through the lineage systems, either matrilineage or the patrilineage, are also important in the socialisation process, as they determine which household a child will spend the greater part of his childhood and how inheritance is arranged. Consequently, children upbringing becomes the responsibility of not only the family but all well-meaning members of the society (Boakye-Boaten, 2010).

According to Kwarteng (2012), children in Ghana, through the process of socialisation, have internalised three cultural values which are respect, reciprocity, and responsibility (3Rs). These

values, according to Kwarteng (2012), underlie adult-child relationships and a sense of responsibility and create interdependencies within the family.

Children in Ghana have been socialised to combine work, play and school, and are able to integrate these three activities in their childhood (Kwarteng, 2012). Mensah-Bonsu & Dowuona-Hamond (1995), also confirm the culture of reciprocity when they made a claim that in Ghana, children are obliged to render services to their parents which is an obligation reciprocated by parents by care and maintenance. Twum-Danso (2012), also stated that the cultural value of reciprocity forms an essential part of the socialisation process in Ghana and thus, children grow up being very much aware that the care that their parents provide for them is based on the belief of pay-off. According to Twum-Danso (2009), in Kwarteng (2012), children in Ghana are expected to respect, obey and take in advice from their parents. Thus, according to Kwarteng (2012), children who fail to submit to parental control and adult authority are considered disrespectful and disobedient and often seen as deviants in society. In this case, children who are assertive and try to make their voices heard may be punished by their parents. In view of this, children in Ghana, although valued, are to be seen and not to be heard. Therefore, children find it difficult to demand their rights in Ghana, for the fear of being labelled as disrespectful or insolent.

2.2 International and National Legal Instruments on Children's Rights

2.2.1 International Legal Instruments

Prior to the enactment of the UNCRC, there were international legal provisions such as the Geneva Declaration 1924, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child 1959, that sought to protect the rights and welfare of children. Also, the adoption of the UNCRC has inspired other laws and policies which are geared towards the protection and promotion of children's rights at the

International levels. It is therefore prudent to give a brief account of some of these legal instruments on children's rights. The documents to be considered include the Geneva Declaration 1924, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child 1959, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights 1981, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (UNCRC), and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child 1990.

2.2 1.1 The Geneva Declaration 1924

The Geneva Declaration, also known as the Declaration of the Rights of the Child 1924, was the first children's rights instrument (Ame, 2012; Hutchison, 2013). It established the claim that mankind owes to the child the best it has to give. The main concern of the Geneva declaration was on the protection and provision for children, and as such, stressed on the material needs of children. The declaration states that the child must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually. It stipulates that the child that is hungry must be fed, the child that is sick must be nursed, the child that is backward must be helped, the delinquent child must be reclaimed, and the orphaned must be sheltered and succoured. The declaration further stressed that the child must be the first to receive relief in times of distress and that the child must be protected against every form of exploitation. Also, it asserts that the child must be brought up in consciousness that its talents must be devoted to the service of its fellow men (Geneva Declaration, 1924). According to Bueren (1998), the Geneva Declaration was the first to establish the concept of rights for children and also set the pace for subsequent works on children's rights. However, the Declaration has been criticised for failing to recognise children as rights-holders and for placing the duties of enforcing these rights on men and women of all states.

2.2.1.2 Declaration of the Rights of the Child 1959

The Declaration of the Rights of the child 1959 did not only build on the Geneva principle that *mankind owes to the child the best it has to give*, but further introduced the principles of *special protection (principle 2)* and *the best interest of the child (Principle 7)*. The Declaration stipulates that the child is entitled to a name and nationality (Principle 3), adequate nutrition, housing, medical services, education, play, and recreation (Principle 4). It also paid attention to the special needs of physically and mentally disabled children and to children without a family (Principle 5).

This declaration is more comprehensive than its ‘predecessor’, the Geneva Declaration 1924. For example, the 1959 Declaration moved beyond the language of provision to the language of rights (Twum-Danso, 2008). Also, it placed a specific duty upon voluntary organizations (NGOs) and local authorities to strive for the observance of these rights. More importantly, it acknowledged children as rights-holders and placed obligations on governments to implement the declaration through legislative instruments (Ame, 2012). The Declaration of 1959 contributed greatly to the protection of children’s rights and laid the foundation for the drafting and adoption of the UNCRC in 1989 (Bueren, 1998).

2.2.1.3 The African Charter on Human and People’s Rights 1981

The African Charter on Human and People’s Rights 1981, also known as the Banjul Charter was adopted on June 27, 1981, and entered into force in October 1986. The Africa Charter consists of sixty-two (62) articles. It guarantees the rights of all peoples in Africa, with a particular focus on women and children (Article 18). The African Commission on Human and People’s Rights, which was established in 1987, has the oversight responsibility for ensuring

the interpretation of the Charter. Since its inception some thirty years ago, the Banjul Charter has become the basis for all citizens of Africa to claim rights at the international level.

2.2.1.4 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), was adopted and opened for ratification by the United Nations General Assembly on 20th November 1989 and entered into force on 2nd September, 1990 (Howe & Covell, 2010; Hutchison, 2013; UNICEF, 2014). The UNCRC was adopted to enshrine the conviction that children everywhere deserve to live in dignity and be treated according to their best interest. The UNCRC is firmly grounded in the principle of universal human rights and heralded as the most ratified human rights treaty and the most successful document of the United Nations, enjoying almost a universal endorsement with the exception of the United States, Somalia and South Sudan (Howe & Covell, 2010; Ayete-Nyampong, 2012; Hutchison, 2013). According to Howe & Covell (2010), such universal agreement is important as it reflects a global consensus of what childhood should be and a commitment by signatory states to make policies, laws, and practices that are consistent with the provisions of the UNCRC. The UNCRC outlines the rights that should be accorded to all children to enable them to develop and reach their full potentials. Unlike other human rights treaties, the UNCRC recognises the child as a rights-holder and clearly spells out the responsibilities of parents, caregivers, and the state, who are duty-bearers of the UNCRC.

The UNCRC is underpinned by four core principles, which guide its interpretation and implementation (Howe & Covell, 2010; Ame, 2012). These are the right of all children to enjoy all the rights of the Convention without discrimination of any kind (Article 2), respect for the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in all decisions affecting the child (Article 3), the right to survival and development (Article 6), and the right of the child to express his/her

views and feelings on all matters affecting him/her (Article 12). The UNCRC specifically guarantees for children three basic rights; the right to provision, that is, right to adequate nutrition, health care, education and economic welfare, the rights to protection, which means children are to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, violence, and exploitation, and finally, the right to participation, that is the need for children to be involved in decision-making, especially, in matters that concern them. These are referred to as the 3Ps of the UNCRC and by ratifying it, State Parties have the obligation to provide and protect these rights (Howe & Covell, 2010; Ame, 2011; Ame, 2012; Apt et al., 2012).

2.2.1.5 The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) 1990

The near universal endorsement of the UNCRC could not prevent African governments from adopting specific children's rights document for the continent. This is because many African countries felt that the UNCRC did not adequately address the concerns of the African child (Adu-Gyamfi & Keating, 2013). Among the concerns raised were: the disadvantages facing the African girl child, the African conception of a community's responsibilities and duties, the situation of African children under apartheid (Kaime, 2009), and the under-representation of the African continent in the drafting of the UNCRC (Adu-Gyamfi & Keating, 2013).

Thus, these dissatisfactions led the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now African Union (AU) to adopt the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare on the Child (ACRWC) in July 1990 and came into force in November, 1999 to protect the specific realities of the African child (Adu-Gyamfi & Keating, 2013; Hutchison, 2013). The ACRWC is divided into two main parts. Part One which has thirty-one (31) articles, deals with the rights, freedoms, and duties of the child, whilst part two spells out the obligations of states to adopt laws to enforce the provisions in the ACRWC. Unlike the UNCRC which is silent about the duties and responsibilities of the

child, the ACRWC clearly outlines the duties and responsibilities of the African child. Children in Africa have responsibilities towards their families and societies, to respect their parents, superiors and elders and to preserve and strengthen the African values (Article 31). The ACRWC has been described by Bueren (1998), as the most progressive treaty on children's rights and a powerful tool for the enhancement of the lives of African children. The ACRWC has, however, been criticised being for being restrictive to a child's freedom of association.

2.2.2 National Legal Instruments

Successive governments in Ghana, before and after independence have taken proactive steps to enact laws and policies that seek to protect the fundamental human rights of children in Ghana. Few of these legal instruments explored, included the Criminal Code 1960 (Act 29), the Constitution of Ghana 1992, the Children's Act 1998 (Act 560), the Juvenile Justice Act 2003 (Act 653), and the Human Trafficking Act 2005 (Act 694).

2.2.2.1 The Criminal Code of 1960 (Act 29)

The Criminal Code 1960, is the twenty-ninth Act of Parliament of the Republic of Ghana, which received presidential assent on 12th January, 1961. The main objective of the Criminal Code was to consolidate and amend the laws relating to criminal offences (Criminal Code, 1960 (Act 29), 1960) and also provided for juveniles or young offenders to be dealt with differently from adults. The Criminal Code consists of five parts. Part one of the Criminal Code deals with general provisions of the Act, whilst Part two talks about offences against the person. Part three of the Criminal Code is about offences against the rights of property. Offences against public order, health and morality are captured in Part four of the Criminal Code, while Part five deals with consequential, that is repeals, commencement and operation of the Code. The Criminal Code, for example, criminalises the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Ghana.

Section 69A of Part I, Chapter three stipulates: *whoever excises, infibulates or otherwise mutilates the whole or any part of the labia minora, labia majora and the clitoris of another commits an offence and shall be guilty of a second-degree felony and liable to conviction to imprisonment of not less than three years.* This means that any person who mutilates the clitoris of another, for cultural, religious or whatever reason is guilty of an offense. Unfortunately, because FGM is shrouded in secrecy, it is difficult to identify the perpetrators to face the full rigours of the law.

2.2.2.2 The Constitution of Ghana 1992

The constitution of Ghana is the supreme law of the Republic of Ghana. It was adopted on 28th April, 1992 through a national referendum (Boafo-Arthur, 2007). The constitution does not only define the political principles and structures for government but most importantly, it spells out the fundamental human rights and freedoms for all citizens, including children. Chapter 5 of the Constitution which is titled *Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms* provides for rights, such as, the right to life, right to personal liberty, protection from slavery and forced labour, economic rights and cultural rights. Article 28 of Chapter 5 of the constitution guarantees for specific rights of children, such as, the right to parental care, protection from inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It also provides for all children the right to education and medical treatment, irrespective of social, economic, and religious beliefs of the parents or guardians.

2.2.2.3 The Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560)

The ratification of the UNCRC requires signatory states to take steps to align their national laws with the provisions of the UNCRC. As a result, the government of Ghana being the first to ratify the UNCRC, began the process to review its legislations and policies. This process led to the

passage of the Children's Act, 1998 (Act, 560), and the Act entered into force in 1999 (Twum-Danso, 2012). The Children's Act brought together all laws relating to children into a single child-focused legislation to make it easy to access, promote and to enforce, and also incorporated the UNCRC into the national laws of Ghana (Twum-Danso, 2012). The Children's Act has one hundred and twenty-six (126) sections in Six (6) parts. The Act rests upon four key principles, which are: the best interest of the child (Article 2), non-discrimination (Article 3), right to life survival and development (Article 5), and the right to participate in decisions that concern them (Article 11), and defines a child as a person below eighteen years (Article 1).

The striking resemblance of the Act and the UNCRC has attracted some criticisms. It is therefore not surprising that the Act is often described in Ghana as a domestication of the UNCRC (Twum-Danso, 2012). For example, the Act has been criticised for criminalising the non-participation of children in decision-making and overlooking the repercussions of implementing some of its provisions within the Ghanaian social and cultural context. In spite of these criticisms, it is worthy to note, that the Act also, takes into account the local context within which it operates. For example, it stipulates the establishment of a family tribunal with a panel, made up of respected and trusted community members to consider and deliberate on all cases involving children. Additionally, the Act distinguishes between work that constitutes child labour and light work. This distinction is based on the fact that, culturally, children in Ghana are socialised to work early to support their parents and families. The Act also defines institutions and individuals as well as the mechanisms for implementing its provisions for the betterment of the status of children in Ghana.

2.2.2.4 The Juvenile Justice Act 2003 (Act 653)

The Juvenile Justice Act 2003 (Act 653) received presidential assent on October 28, 2003. The main purpose of the Act was to provide a juvenile justice system that protects the rights of children who come into conflict with the law. It seeks to protect the rights of juveniles, to ensure an appropriate and individual response to juvenile offenders, provide for young offenders and for connected purposes. The Act consists of three parts. Part one deals with definitions and meaning of juvenile and detailed procedure for dealing with a child who is in conflict with the law and treatment for juvenile offenders (Sampong, n.d).

Part one, section one of the Act defines a juvenile as any person below eighteen years who is in conflict with the law. The Act also highlights that the best interest of a juvenile shall be paramount in any matter that concerns the juvenile. Part two of the Act focuses on the court systems. Cases involving juveniles are to be dealt with speedily and expeditiously. Also, the Act effects changes in punishment to reflect the new thinking that children do not have to be in an institution to learn a trade and that detention of children for the corrective institution should be the last resort (Sampong, n.d).

2.2.2.5 Human Trafficking Act, 2005 (Act 694)

The Human Trafficking Act 2005 (Act, 694) was passed on 5th December, 2005 with the aim of addressing human trafficking activities within, to, from and through Ghana. The Human Trafficking Act was guided by the UN Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially, women and children (Palermo Protocol) (Sertich & Heemskerk, 2011). The Act has three main components, which are Prevention of Human Trafficking, Protection of Trafficked Persons and Prosecution of those who engage in Human Trafficking activities. According to Sertich & Heemskerk (2011), the Act has been successful in the implementation

of its prevention strategies but slow in prosecution of both domestic and international human trafficking cases. Additionally, the Act has not been able to achieve its purpose of providing adequate protective measures for trafficking survivors.

2.3 Children's Awareness of their Rights

Scholarly works on knowledge about children's rights exist in Ghana, and other countries as well. Scholars such as Twum-Danso (2008), Kamau (2013) and Ferdinandsson & Sperl (2014) believe that many children have enough knowledge about their rights. Other scholars, such as Kwarteng (2012), Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013) on the other hand, are of the view that many children do not have adequate knowledge about their rights. A quantitative study carried out by Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013), to assess the level of awareness about children's rights among children in the Eldoret Municipality, Kenya revealed that many children in Kenya were not aware of their rights. Overall, the study indicated that children in Kenya had limited awareness of their rights and that most children were aware of some rights more than others. This means that children may be aware of some of their rights but not all of them. For instance, the study revealed that children were aware of their rights to freedom of thought and opinion, followed by the rights to protection from sexual exploitation, which the authors attributed to the fact that these rights attract the highest awareness because, they are the rights of children that are mostly violated. The findings also indicated that most children were aware of their rights to association and the rights to basic needs such as clothing, food, and shelter. Thus, it could be concluded that children in Eldoret Municipality in Kenya, to some extent, are aware of their rights to participation, protection, and provision, except that the level of the awareness needs to be enhanced.

Similarly, the findings of a qualitative study by Kwarteng (2012) on the duties and responsibilities of children in Kumasi Metropolis of the Republic of Ghana, were also in tandem with the findings of Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013). Kwarteng (2012), found that children in Kumasi had less knowledge of their rights and attributed it to the fact that children's rights are something that is usually not talked about in the Ghanaian setting, partly because children are considered incompetent and incapable to claim rights. The findings of Kwarteng also supported the claim by Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013), that children are more aware of some of their rights and prioritise some more than others. Though children were aware of their participating rights, they did not consider it a priority. However, many children see the need to have access to basic rights and necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, protection, and education as their biggest priority (Kwarteng, 2012). Children in Kumasi may not prioritise their rights to participation because children in Ghana are generally socialised to be seen and not to be heard. Again, it is worthwhile to note, that the rights that Kenyan children were aware of, were the very rights that were mostly violated (Kiprotich & Ong'ondo, 2013), which could mean that perhaps, education on children's rights did not empower the children to be assertive enough to speak out when their rights are being violated. It is, therefore imperative to consistently educate children on their rights to be able to stand up when their rights are being abused and where to seek redress should their rights be violated.

A study by Twum-Danso (2008), which was titled; *Searching for a Middle Ground in Children's Rights: implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Ghana*, revealed that majority of children in Ghana had heard about children's rights and were aware of their rights. The study asserts that children in Ghana have heard about children's rights and were aware of those rights because it forms part of the school curriculum. This can be partly attributed

to the fact that it is part of the Social Studies curriculum that is taught in Upper Primary and Junior Secondary School levels (Twum-Danso, 2008). This finding contradicts the findings of Kwarteng (2012) and Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013). Again, the study findings of the study showed that children's rights are hardly discussed in the Ghanaian setting. This finding agrees with the findings of Kwarteng (2012). Twum-Danso (2008), also stated that children's knowledge of their rights did not translate into knowledge of the UNCRC or the Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560). The study further asserted that it may be due to the fact that awareness-raising initiatives and discussions on children's rights in the media focus on rights to which children are entitled for their welfare and protection without necessarily situating the discussions within the context of the national or international legal frameworks (Twum-Danso, 2008). This presupposes that the media highlights and focuses on some aspects of children's rights (rights to basic needs and rights from sexual exploitation) making them aware of these rights while neglecting other rights (Twum-Danso, 2008; Kiprotich & Ong'ondo, 2013). In addition, children's rights education and discussions are not situated within any international or national legal frameworks. This means that children could be aware of their rights and could not be aware of the legal frameworks that guarantee those rights.

A study by Ferdinandsson & Sperl (2014), to investigate Sixth and Ninth Grade pupils' knowledge about the Convention on the Rights of the Child, showed that pupils within Jonkoping in Sweden had a good knowledge about children's rights. The results showed that 82% of the pupils examined had heard about children's rights and were aware of their rights. However, in agreement with Twum-Danso (2008), the study revealed that children's awareness of their rights did not translate into awareness of the UNCRC. The number of pupils who have heard about the UNCRC was significantly lower (55%), compared with pupils who were aware

of their rights (82%). On the other hand, while Twum- Danso (2008) believes that this was attributable to partial and selective discussions on children's rights in the media, Ferdinandsson & Sperl (2014) attributed this to the fact that children learn about their rights in school through human rights and citizenship education, but not within the context of the UNCRC. The reason could be that pupils have been taught about values and equal rights through human rights and citizenship education without specifically being educated on the UNCRC (Ferdinandsson & Sperl, 2014).

Also, in a quantitative study by Kamau (2013) on child's rights awareness and students' performance in Kenya, the results indicated that majority (95.4%) of the students were aware of their rights. The students indicated that they exercise their rights to quality education, rights to participation, rights to freedom of expression among others. Contrary to the findings of Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013), more students in Nairobi Province in Kenya were aware of their rights than children in Eldoret Municipality. Besides the difference in the location which may account for this, Kamau (2013) conducted the study among senior secondary students while Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013) did their study with children in primary school and so, it is not surprising that they arrived at different outcomes.

2.4 Factors Hindering the Realisation of Children's Rights

Scholarly works on children's rights point to the fact that there are several factors that inhibit the progress of children's rights promotion. Apt et al. (2012), in their work *Confronting the Challenges: Optimizing Child Rights in Ghana* identified poverty as the fundamental factor that tends to hinder the development and promotion of human rights of children in Ghana. Poverty is the root cause of child neglect because many children are forced to become their own agents of care and sustenance (Apt et al, 2012). The authors also highlighted the vicious cycle of

poverty and unemployment in deprived areas as compelling many children to live under risky and harmful circumstances. In addition to poverty, Apt et al., (2012), further identified some traditional practices such as child betrothals, Female Genital Mutilations (FGM), the trokosi system together with other traditional practices that do not abode well for the healthy development of children to be inimical to the progress of child rights advancement in Ghana. Child labour and population growth were as well mentioned to be factors that militate against the full realisation of children's rights in Ghana.

Children's vulnerability and their inability to seek redress when their rights are violated also account for the continuous infringements of their human rights. Children remain vulnerable to abuse and cannot fight for their protection, let alone know ways of seeking redress and detecting when their rights are to be violated (Kiprotich & Ong'Ondo, 2013). The findings of the study further indicated that without awareness about children's rights by children themselves, it may be impossible to implement and achieve full realisation of children's rights. Lack of awareness about children's rights by both adults and children, including policymakers, is a critical factor that impedes the promotion of children's rights in Ghana. Lack of awareness, according to Twum-Danso (2012), is also linked to other factors such as lack of political will, which in turn reinforces lack of resources for the effective implementation of children's rights in Ghana. Lack of laws and legislations, availing educational and teaching environment and low levels of families' awareness of child rights are major obstructions in observing child rights (Al Akroush & Al Zyoud, 2010).

2.5 Benefits Children Derive from being Aware of their Rights

The benefits that children can derive when they are made aware of their rights cannot be overemphasized. Once children are taught about their rights, they understand that rights are

primary and inalienable and that they all have a responsibility to respect those rights (Howe & Covell, 2010; Kiprotich & Ong'ondo, 2013; Ferdinandsson & Sperl, 2014). This suggests that awareness of rights improves children's relations with their peers and adults alike, a habit that will continue even when they become adults. Again, children who understand their rights and the nature of rights are those who do not only understand responsibility, but also behave in more socially responsible ways and take social action (Howe & Covell, 2010). Thus, awareness of rights helps children to behave in socially appropriate ways.

Another benefit of children being aware of their rights is being cooperative, inclusive, sensitive to the needs of other children, and also helping in their moral development (Kiprotich & Ong'ondo, 2013; Howe and Covell, 2010). Children who have knowledge of their rights also helps them to perform better academically (Asiimwe, 2011) and be disciplined (Kamau, 2013). Also, children who are aware of their rights try to make their voices heard and to have more influence in school, home, and other places, making them assertive. A child who knows that she/he among other things, has the right to express his/her opinion freely and that adults should or would take his opinion into account finds it easier to do so and ability to protect, improve their quality of lives and also to stand up for their rights even when others deny them (Ferdinandsson & Sperl, 2014).

2.6 Ways to Enhance Knowledge about Children's Rights

Adopting new ways and strategies to enhance child's rights awareness among children is important in ensuring effective realisation and implementation of children's rights. Ferdinandsson & Sperl (2014) suggest that majority of children want to receive lectures on their rights, while other children want to do exercises and perform games on their rights in order to learn about them. Other means are watching movies on child's rights, theatre and having

quizzes on children's rights and on the UNCRC. They concluded that exercises would be the best and fun way to learn about children's rights and the UNCRC (Ferdinandsson & Sperl, 2014).

Kamanyi (2012), in a study on children's rights awareness among teachers and students in Nairobi, found out that organising regular fora for dialogue on children's rights in all learning institutions will aid to enhance children's knowledge on their rights. Holding talks with students on their rights, attending workshops and seminars, and publication of these rights in school magazines are possible avenues of enhancing child rights awareness in school (Kiprotich & Ong'ondo, 2013; Kamanyi, 2012). Establishment of peer counsellors and students' council to advocate for children's rights, as well as drama and debate clubs that stage plays and hold debates on issues touching on child rights can make students aware of their rights (Kamau, 2013). The study further asserts that encouraging talk shows in the radio and television channels on issues concerning child rights and the responsibilities attached to these rights will enhance children's knowledge on their rights. Likewise, religious groups can be used to disseminate information on children's rights (Kamau, 2013; Kiprotich & Ong'ondo, 2013).

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The study was underpinned by the Interest theory also known as the Welfare theory of children's rights, which was propounded by Bentham in 1987.

The main argument of the theory is that the principal function of rights is to promote essential interests of the rights-holder. Thus, the main concern of the Interest theory is to identify the social prerequisites or conditions needed for human beings to lead a minimally good life. The theory further argues that the universality of human rights is grounded in what is considered as basic, indispensable attributes of human well-being, which are deemed necessary for all,

including children. According to the Interest theory, rights are supposed to protect the basic human interest.

The theory posits that each individual right-holder has a basic duty to respect the rights of every other individual and that the protection of one's own fundamental interest requires others willingness to recognise and respect these interests which in turn requires a reciprocal recognition and respect of the fundamental interest of others. Thus, children's rights are justifiable because they secure the necessary conditions for the well-being of all children. Federle (1994), also asserts that the interest theory of rights defines the rights of children because of their incapacities. She argues that children have rights because they are vulnerable and therefore needs protection. According to Wall (2010), the interest theory is more open to children's rights because it is easier to picture children as possessing basic human needs. The Interest theory views rights as a means to development of the interest of the rights- holder (Wall, 2010). According to him, rights are basically what it takes to grow up to become a healthy and useful adult. Therefore, the Interest theory serves as grounds for children to claim their rights. The theory further asserts that there are fundamental interests or basic forms of human good that provide the basis for human rights, which includes, life and its capacity to develop, the acquisition of knowledge as an end in itself, play as the capacity for recreation, sociability, friendship, capacity for intelligence, reasonable thought processes, religion or the capacity for spiritual experience.

The Interest theory of rights relates well with the UNCRC and is, thus applicable to this study as it helps explain the basic or minimum conditions which should be accorded all children around the globe in order to develop their full potentials. Also, the theory provides helpful explanations as to what rights can be attributed to: for example, the rights to life, survival and

development, rights to protection and the rights to participation. These rights are to protect the fundamental interests of children. However, the theory has been criticised on the grounds that the lack of universality in relation to the conditions needed for minimally good life makes it impractical for children everywhere to claim the same rights due to cultural and societal differences. Whilst acknowledging the diversities that exist across cultures and societies, it is important to also note that the universality of children's rights is to provide for the basic or the minimum rights that should be accorded to all children regardless of the space they find themselves. In addition, the universal rights of children could be adapted and legitimised or contextualised within various cultures and localities. Therefore, the Interest theory of rights remains relevant to this study, in spite of the criticisms against it.

2.8 Gaps Identified in Literature

The review of the literature revealed that there are gaps in relation to studies that have been conducted about awareness on children's rights among children across countries, both developed and developing, particularly in Ghana. One of the gaps found in literature was that most of the studies that have been conducted on awareness on children's rights were mainly carried out in urban cities. This study helps to fill this gap by focusing on children dwelling in peri-urban and rural areas, specifically, Aburi and Pokrom, all in the Akuapem South District. Again, most of the studies employed quantitative research design. This study employed qualitative research design to capture the personal narratives of the participants to give a better understanding of children's awareness of their rights. Further, from the reviewed literature, it was identified that much attention has not been paid to children in JHS with regards to studies on children's rights and that was the reason why this study focused on children in JHSs in public schools, with a particular attention on students in Aburi and Pokrom.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter elaborates on the research design employed for this study, the pilot study, the study area, the target and study population, sampling technique used, sample size, data collection procedure, data handling and analysis, ethical considerations, dissemination of findings and limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

The qualitative research design was used for this study. This is because the approach afforded the researcher the opportunity to obtain in-depth data from participants through their personal narratives, and statements (Gray, 2009) about the knowledge they have about their rights. The qualitative research design also allowed the researcher to engage in in-depth interviews with the study participants in their natural environments. This made it more convenient for participants to provide rich data for the study. Specifically, the study adopted a qualitative exploratory design to enable the researcher to discover knowledge that participants have about children's rights through their own views and opinions.

3.2 Pilot Study

The Researcher conducted a pilot study with five participants, made up of two teachers and three students at the Aburi Anglican JHS. The purpose of the pilot study was to find out if the research instruments could elicit the needed responses to answer the research questions. Participants and the school used for the pilot study were not included in the actual study. The Pilot study also helped the researcher to gain an insight into the study and also aided in the

design of the final interview guide for the study. It also gave the researcher a fair idea of some of the challenges that may be faced and enabled the researcher to adopt appropriate measures to mitigate those challenges during the actual study. For instance, it helped the researcher to know the appropriate time to schedule interviews with participants in the selected schools.

The findings of the pilot study showed that the children had knowledge about children's rights as they were able to explain what children's rights meant and also gave examples of some of the rights they have as children. The findings revealed that the students learn about their rights from the school, media outlets and through personal readings. The students indicated that they mainly learn about their duties and responsibilities in the home, from their parents or guardians. The pilot study further indicated that factors such as financial constraints, ignorance about children's rights and religious and cultural beliefs of parents could inhibit the realisation of children's rights. Again, the pilot study showed that children who know about their rights are more responsible. They educate their friends about children's rights and speak against abuses or infringements on their rights. Some of the ways that were proposed by participants to enhance awareness of children's rights included public education through radio and television, the use of social media and formation of clubs in schools to educate children on their rights.

3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted in two public Junior High Schools (JHSs), in Aburi and Pokrom, a peri-urban and a rural community respectively. Aburi is the administrative capital for the Akuapem South District Assembly and it is about twenty-five (25) minutes' drive from Madina, Accra. Aburi has a relatively low population of eighteen thousand, seven-hundred and one (18,701) as at 2013 (GSS, 2014). The Demonstration Junior High School (Demos JHS) was selected from among the four public JHSs in Aburi because it is arguably the best public JHS, in terms

of academic performance and discipline in Aburi and thus, it remains the most preferred JHS for both parents and students. For example, per the school's records, eighty (80) candidates were presented for the 2017 Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and the school had 98% pass. The school currently has a total population of two-hundred and forty-eight (248) students.

Pokrom is a rural community located on the Aburi-Nsawam road and is about nine kilometres (9kms) from Aburi. The inhabitants are mainly farmers who engage in food and cash crop production. The population is made up of mainly Akuapems, but intermingled with natives from other tribes in Ghana. According to one of the elders in the community, Pokrom has a low population of about three-thousand, two-hundred (3,200) with children constituting the majority of the population. The Pokrom-Nsaba D/A JHS is the only public JHS in the community, which provides basic education to the children of Pokrom and its environs. As at December 2017, the school had a total enrolment of one-hundred and fifty-seven (157) students, comprising of ninety-three (93) males and sixty-four (64) females.

3.4 Target/Study Population

The target population for the study included all JHS students, teachers, opinion leaders and National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) officials working to promote children's rights in Akuapem South District. The study focused on students in JHS 3 who were twelve (12) to seventeen (17) years of age in Aburi and Pokrom, teachers who teach courses such as Social Studies and Religious and Moral Education that cover children's rights issues, Assemblymen and officials from the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) in Akuapem South. This population was selected for the study because they are key stakeholders

of children's rights and also possess the knowledge that enabled them to provide answers to the research questions.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting participants for the study. This is because the researcher had criteria for inclusion (Creswell, 2009). The inclusion criteria were students aged twelve to seventeen (12-17) years, in JHS 3, fluent in either Twi or English language and attend school at Demonstration JHS in Aburi or Pokrom-Nsaba D/A JHS in Pokrom. Children aged twelve to seventeen (12-17) were chosen for the study because literature has indicated that children from twelve years and above can express themselves better. They are able to form their own opinions and are less likely to be influenced by adults (Kiprotich & Ong'ondo, 2013). The inclusion criteria for key informants were teachers who teach Social Studies and RME in the selected schools, an Assemblyman, and a Civic Educator stationed at Aburi.

3.6 Sample Size

Onwuegbuzie & Collins (2007) cautioned that sample size used in qualitative research should not be too small to make it difficult to achieve data saturation and should not be too large either to make it difficult to undertake a deep, case-oriented analysis. Being mindful of this, the researcher used a sample size of twenty-three (23) participants, which was determined by data saturation. The study participants comprised of eighteen (18) students, made up of ten (10) students from Pokrom D/A JHS and eight (8) from Demonstration JHS in Aburi. Students recruited from Aburi Demonstration JHS were only eight (8) because those were students who had their consent forms signed by their parents or legal guardians, thereby giving them the permission to take part in the study. In addition to the eighteen (18) children, five (5) key

informants: three (3) teachers who teach Social Studies and Religious and Moral Education (RME), one Assemblyman and a Civic Educator were also interviewed.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Informational meetings were held with the authorities of the selected schools and the participants to explain the purpose of the study and the data collection procedure.

Participants were also informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they have the right to opt out of the study at any point in time. Again, participants were assured that the information they provide would be used strictly for the purpose of the study and that their real identities would be concealed by using pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. Permission was then sought from the school, parents or legal guardians of the students by signing a written informed consent to engage the children in one- on- one interviews. Assents were also sought from all the students who participated in the study.

The study utilised primary data that was collected through in-depth interviews (IDIs) with the students as well as interviews with key informants. Notes were also taken from the field. The interviews were audio-recorded with the use of a digital audio recorder. The interviews were conducted through the use of interview guides.

Separate interview guides were designed for the students and key informants. The interview guides were designed in English, but participants were allowed to express themselves in either English or Twi (the local language). Interviews with the teachers and the Civic Educator were all conducted in English. Open-ended questions were used to solicit data from participants. The interviews for students and teachers were conducted in the selected schools, while the

interviews for the Assemblyman and the Civic Educator were conducted in the home and office respectively. Each interview section lasted for an average of forty (40) minutes.

3.8 Data Handling and Analysis:

The audio-recorded interviews were uploaded and kept on a Personal Computer (PC) of the researcher and protected with a password, with a backup on an external drive. The data was analysed using Creswell (2009), six steps of thematic data analysis, which involves transcribing the data, familiarising with data through reading and re-reading, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes and analysing themes. The researcher translated the interviews in Twi (local language) to English while transcribing the data from audio to text. While translating the data from Twi to English, it was a bit difficult to translate some words and expressions verbatim to English and thus, the researcher used words that were closest in meaning. The transcribed data was handled carefully to prevent access by any unauthorised persons. The researcher read over the transcribed data thoroughly to familiarise herself with the data whilst jotting down interesting points. A data management software, NVivo Pro 11, was then used to manage, code the data from interviews, and to generate themes and quotes. All participants were anonymised by using pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher conducted an ethically sound study by demonstrating respect to all the participants, including children and adults alike. Assent was sought from the children whilst informed consent was sought from key informants (Pillay, 2014). The purpose of the study was thoroughly explained to the participants before the data was collected. Consent was also sought from the parents and school authorities before engaging the students in one-on-one interviews. Participation was strictly voluntary. The researcher did not coerce or put any form of pressure

on participants to be part of the study. Participants were made aware that they were free to exit from the study if they so wished at any point in time. Confidentiality was strictly adhered to by ensuring that all participants were anonymised with the use of pseudonyms. The researcher, being mindful of the fact that plagiarism or academic dishonesty is a serious offense in academia, acknowledged all sources of information.

3.10 Ensuring Rigor/Trustworthiness

Ensuring trustworthiness is very important in a qualitative research. Hence, the researcher employed peer debriefing and member checking to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of data collected (Mayan et al., 2002) and the results of the study. Peer debriefing, according to (Rolfe, 2016), is the process that allows a panel of experts or colleagues in the field to reanalyse the data and the processes used. Thus, the researcher's supervisors questioned the processes and the findings of the study to ensure its trustworthiness. Additionally, two colleagues were asked to question the processes involved in undertaking the research, as well as the findings. Member checking, also known as Participant Validation is the process whereby data or results are returned to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences (Bert, et al, 2016). Accordingly, the researcher took samples of the transcribed data to selected participants to verify if the data correspond with the responses they intended to communicate to the researcher to help ensure the credibility of the data.

3.11 Dissemination of Findings

The aim of the researcher is to work closely with supervisors to get the findings published as an academic article in journals to enable people across the globe to have access to the findings of the study. The researcher will also do presentations at conferences anytime such opportunities are available. Again, copies of the report will be given to the schools where

participants were recruited, the District Educational Directorate, UNICEF, the Gender, Children and Social Protection Ministry, and the Department of Children to aid in the design and implementation of child rights policies.

3.12 Limitations of the Study

The use of a qualitative research design did not allow the researcher to collect data from a large number of students from the two communities to express their knowledge about children's rights. Also, the use of purposive sampling, limits the study, as participants may not be a true representation of the population under study. This is because members of the population did not have equal chance of being selected to participate in the study. This means that the findings of the study could not be generalised to the entire population. However, the researcher ensured that data saturation was attained to ensure that the findings are generalised to the study population. In addition, interview guides for students were designed in English, whilst the interviews were conducted in Twi (local language). This posed a challenge to the researcher because it was difficult to translate some keywords and expression from English to Twi and vice versa. The researcher thus, selected words which are closer in meaning.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. Data from in-depth interviews with students and key informants from the two study sites were analysed. The findings are presented under four major themes; children's knowledge about children's rights, factors that tend to hinder the realisation of children's rights, benefits children may derive from knowing their rights and ways to enhance Knowledge about children's rights.

4.1 Demographic Data of Study Participants

Table 1: Demographic Information of Students.

Age	12-13yrs- 1 14-15yrs- 11 16- 17yrs- 6
Sex	Males- 11 Females- 7
Educational Level	JHS 3- 18
Religious Affiliation	Christianity-18
School/Community	Demons JHS(Aburi)- 8 D/A JHS (Pokrom)- 10

N= 18

Table 2: Demographic Information of Key Informants.

Age	26-39yrs-4 46-59yrs-1
Sex	Males-4 Female-1
Profession	Social/RME Teachers-3 Civic Educator-1 Assemblyman-1
Educational Attainment	Tertiary-4 Middle School-1
Marital Status	Married-3 Single-2
Religious Affiliation	Christianity-4 Traditionalist-1
Community	Aburi-2 Pokrom-3

N=5

Overall, twenty-three (23) participants were interviewed for the study. Eighteen (18) were students from Aburi Demonstration JHS and Pokrom D/A JHS and five (5) key informants. These key informants comprised of three (3) teachers who teach subjects that cover children's rights, an Assemblyman, and one (1) Civic Educator from NCCE, stationed at Aburi. The demographic characteristics of the participants comprised of their age, sex, religious affiliation, educational level and marital status (in the case of key informants). The average age of the students who participated in the study was fifteen (15) years, whilst the average age for the key informants was thirty-one (31) years. In all, there were fifteen (15) males and eight (8) females.

4.2 Knowledge Children have about their Rights

The first objective of the study was to explore the knowledge that students in selected schools in Aburi and Pokrom have about children's rights. Three main themes emerged namely: understanding of children's rights, sources of knowledge about children's rights, and places to

report abuses or infringements of children's rights. Sub-themes were generated in relation to the main themes where necessary.

4.2.1 Understanding of Children's Rights

This theme highlights knowledge participants expressed about children's rights. The sub-themes identified were: (definition of rights, categories of rights, relevant rights, rights enjoyed, rights not enjoyed, knowledge of legal instruments, and the importance of children's rights).

Majority of participants from the selected schools shared their ideas and understanding of children's rights. They demonstrated that they had an idea of what children's rights are and what they constitute. Most of the participants defined children's rights as privileges, freedoms, or entitlements they must enjoy, and were also able to cite examples of their rights, as indicated in the comments below:

Children's rights are the privileges which a child below the age of eighteen years enjoys to his or her advantage. For example, children have the right to speak (Asempa, Male 16yrs, Aburi).

I will say children's rights are the freedoms and privileges an individual, that is, all children have to enjoy. The rights have been provided for under the law, and all children must enjoy (Nhyira, Male 17yrs, Pokrom).

Key informants supported the students' definition of rights as being privileges or freedoms that children enjoy. For instance:

Children's rights are the fundamental privileges or freedoms that children are entitled to enjoy (Obaapa, Key Informant, Aburi).

Although the majority of the participants had a good understanding of children's rights and could define it, there were few others who had limited understanding. They believed that

children's rights are the freedom to do 'things' without any form of control from anyone. This is highlighted in some of the responses provided by study participants such as:

I know children's rights are the 'things' we can do without anyone forcing us (Ohene, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

I will say that children's rights are the freedoms children have to do 'things' without any restriction from anyone (Nyamekye, Female 16yrs, Pokrom).

There were also some students who confused their duties and responsibilities, as their rights. This could be attributed to the fact that in the Ghanaian setting, children are socialised early to know about their duties and responsibilities. Children are socialised to render services, to show respect, and obedience to adults and these acts are reciprocated by the provision of care and maintenance from parents/adults to children. Thus, some participants indicated that their rights include running errands for their parents, respecting elders, and fetching water. It must be noted that participants who stated their duties and responsibilities as their rights were mainly from Pokrom, the rural community, and were all female participants. Below are their comments:

As a child, it's my right to fetch water every morning, take care of my younger siblings and send them to school, and I also have the right to study when I come to school (Aseda, Female 15yrs, Pokrom).

When I come to school and the school compound is untidy I have to take a broom and sweep for the place to be clean. If you are a senior, you have to supervise the juniors to work on the compound. In the classroom too, you have to pay attention when the teacher is in class. You have to do your assignments and present them also (Nyamedea, Female 14yrs, Pokrom).

Most of the students interviewed in Aburi and Pokrom were knowledgeable of their specific rights and could cite examples. They had very good knowledge of their rights to provision, as most of them stated that they have rights, such as the right to education, the right to food, the

right to shelter, the right to clothing, the right to good medical care, among others. In their own words:

I have the right to education, the right to shelter, I have the right to parental care and right to medical care (Awuraa, Female 15yrs, Aburi).

I have the right to education, right to good health, I have the right to food, right to life, right to shelter, freedom of movement, among others (Nyameakwan, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

In addition, children in the two communities had knowledge about their right to participation. They indicated that they have the right to express their opinion on issues, especially, with regards to decisions that concern them. They further stated that they have the right to ask questions, the right to join associations and practice any religion of their choice.

I have the right to be heard; as children, we need to be given the opportunity to express ourselves. If we do something wrong, we must be given the chance to explain ourselves before we are punished. ... There is also the right of association. Some parents do not want their children to mingle with children from other faith. This does not encourage religious tolerance, because we as children are denied the opportunity to learn and associate with people of other religions (Asempa, Male 16yrs, Aburi).

I have the right to express myself, I have the right to ask questions and give my opinion on issues, I also have the right to religion (Nkunim, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

Only two of the participants from Aburi, the peri-urban community were able to state that they had the right to be protected from harm and economic exploitation:

I also have the right to be protected from economic exploitation (Nyameasem, Male 16yrs, Aburi).

I also have the right to be protected from harm. My parents have to protect me so that no one can abuse me in any way (Awuraa, Female 15yrs, Aburi).

The responses provided by the participants in the preceding comments indicate that participants from the selected schools were knowledgeable about their basic rights pertaining to their rights to provision and participation, but had limited knowledge about their rights to protection.

The students further stated that it was very important for children to have specific rights, since it would protect them from abuse and also help them to grow and achieve their full potential.

This is highlighted in the responses below:

Oh yes, it very important that as children we have our rights, otherwise the older generation will cheat and abuse us. So, children's rights will protect us from abuses (Nyameasem, Male16yrs, Aburi).

It is good for children to have rights so they can confidently talk and share their opinions with adults without entertaining any form of fear. If they have any issues they can confide in other people, so they could get the necessary help and advice (Nadom, Female15yrs, Pokrom).

Key informants corroborated:

... I will say yes; children need to have rights to protect them. You see, children are very vulnerable so if they do not have specific rights people will take advantage and abuse them (Daahene, Civic Educator).

Children need certain things to help them develop in the natural way, in the same manner that plants need sunlight, rain, etcetera to grow. I see children's rights as the necessary factors or the conditions that will help children to grow (Ofie, Male, Assemblyman).

The preceding comments by both the children and key informants are an indication of the need for children to possess and enjoy their rights as it protects their interests. Again, the children being able to state the importance of children's rights gives a good impression that they have been informed and so they are knowledgeable about their rights.

While acknowledging that all their rights are very much important and as such, they have to enjoy all of their rights, analysis of responses from the study participants from the two communities revealed that they prioritised some of their rights over others. Majority of the students stated that their right to education was their topmost priority, because it can propel them to secure a better future. Others also indicated that their right to healthcare and the right to food were very important to them. The following are some of the comments:

My right to education is very dear to me, because nowadays everything boils down to education. So, if I don't go to school, it might be difficult for me to secure a job in future. It is very important that I go to school to help me secure a good job in future (Ohene, Male 15 yrs., Pokrom).

As for me, two of the rights are very important to me. The right to go to school and the right to quality healthcare. I want to grow and become an influential person in Ghana. So, I don't joke with my education (Maame, Female 14yrs, Aburi).

... For me, my right to proper medical care is very dear to me. I have an eye problem, but my parents keep saying they do not have money to send me to the hospital. I sometimes find it difficult to read, and my eyes keep paining me. So if they get money to send me to the hospital, I will be very happy (Obrempong, male 16yrs, Pokrom).

Participants also highlighted that they enjoy almost all their rights, at least the basic ones they know. They stated that they enjoy their right to education, right to shelter, right to medical care, right to food, clothing, to mention a few. Some of the comments from participants are indicated below:

I enjoy my rights. I enjoy my rights to education because my parents always ensure that my fees are paid, I have books, they buy me food, school uniform, to mention just a few. My parents have even bought me a PC, and have downloaded Dictionary and Mavis Beacon on it, just to aid my studies. When I'm sick, my parents send me to the hospital, they pay the bills and buy me the prescribed medications (Paapa, Male, Aburi).

I enjoy all my rights. I enjoy my right to education, the right to good medical care, right to food etc. Anytime I'm hungry in the house, my parents provide me with food, additionally, they pay for my fees, if I need anything concerning my education, as soon as I inform them, they will get it for me, when I'm sick, my parents will send me to the hospital (Nyameakwan, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

This was also confirmed by the key informants. For example, one teacher made the following comment:

Yes, for my school, I can confidently say that they're enjoying their rights, because they have the right to school, they come to school, parents are trying to pay for fees, and provide their basic needs (Obaapa, Key Informant, Aburi).

Although children enjoy most of their rights, they revealed through their responses that there were some of the rights that they were not enjoying fully, especially, with regard to their right to be heard. Others also mentioned that they did not enjoy their right to medical care. It must be emphasized that this was peculiar to children in Pokrom, the rural community. Below are some of the responses from participants:

In the home, I don't really enjoy my right to speech. My parents hardly involve me in discussions so I don't really like conversing with adults, unless my opinion is sought, and such chances seldom come. Even when decisions being made concern me, my views are rarely sought (Nhyira, Male 17yrs, Pokrom).

I don't enjoy my right to medical care. I have an eye problem, but my parents keep telling me they don't have money to send me to the hospital (Obrempong, male 15yrs, Pokrom).

Children in remote areas like this, expressing themselves in terms of rights, no. Because per the culture over here, in a remote area, they might think you're a disobedient child, at school too, they fear to come up to speak, ... so you see them coiling in their shells without talking (Sir 'T', Male, Key informant, Pokrom).

Responses from participants revealed that students from both communities, Aburi and Pokrom had insufficient knowledge about the legal instruments that guarantee and ensure that children's rights are protected. Although some of the participants have heard about the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, they did not know the details, such as, the date it was adopted, let alone its content. The participants rarely know about the Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989. Some of the comments are highlighted below:

Oh, yes. I have heard of it before. We were taught when we were in form two, but I can't recollect what we were taught exactly about the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, as for the UNCRC, we haven't been taught at all in school, the same applies to the Children's Act. (Nyamedea, Female 14yrs, Pokrom).

Hmm, as for the UNCRC, I have not heard of it before but with regards to the Children's Act I heard of it in primary school and have forgotten what we were taught about it (Ohene, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

The key informants (teachers) indicated that although they make reference to such legal instruments, especially, with regards to the 1992 constitution, they do not teach the children about these instruments, because it does not form part of the GES syllabus.

The Civic Educator also indicated that their main focus was on the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

We didn't actually go into details, I only made mention of the 1992 Constitution because, in the syllabus, those things were not incorporated, just rights and responsibilities (Obaapa, Key Informant, Aburi).

You see, the mandate of NCCE is to educate the citizens about the 1992 constitution of Ghana and to educate Ghanaians on their civic rights and responsibilities. So our main Manual or I will say, our Bible is the constitution. We may take one or two things from the UNCRC or the Children's Act, but those are not our focus (Daahene, Civic Educator).

4.2.2 Sources of Knowledge about Children's Rights

Participants of the study indicated the various sources that they learn or gather information regarding their rights. The findings of the study showed that participants learned about their rights from the school, home, the media, religious organizations, and NGOs.

The school serves as a major source of information on children's rights. This is because children's rights are embedded in the Social Studies and Religious and Moral Education (RME) syllabus and curriculum. Almost all of the participants responded that they had received information about their rights from the school.:

I also learned about my rights in school. In fact, I learned most of my rights in school, we were taught children have the right to education, right to life, right to speak, and others (Nadom, Female 15yrs, Pokrom).

I heard about children's rights during social studies and RME classes. I learned children have the right to go to school and also children have the right to make mistakes (Maame, Female 14yrs, Aburi).

... There are also topics in Social Studies and RME that cover children's rights, so they also learn from the school (Obaapa, Key Informant, Aburi).

Participants also indicated that through discussions at home, some parents and guardians educate them on their right. The following are some of the responses provided by the participants:

I also heard about children's rights in the home. My parents were discussing it in the home; they said that children have the right to make mistakes; so parents shouldn't be too strict on their children and also parents must send their children to school (Ahuofe, female 15yrs, Aburi).

People normally talk about children's rights. I have heard some parents talk about it with their children, even my mother spoke about children's rights to me. I was having a

discussion with my mother and she said that children have the right to talk and express their opinions (Nadom, female 15yrs, Pokrom).

In the home I heard two adults having a debate about children's rights. I overheard them argue that now even when your own child disobeys you and you want to punish or even beat the child, they say there is something called children's rights, so you can't even beat your own child (Nhyira, Male, 17yrs, Pokrom).

Although some parents engage their children in discussions concerning their rights, responses from students who participated in the study indicated that the home or their parents laid more emphasis on their duties and responsibilities than their rights. Some of the reasons the students assigned to this, include the fact that majority of parents have low levels of education and as such may be ignorant about issues of children's rights. Some also stated that parents focused more on economic activities and barely make time to discuss children's rights with their children at home. Other students also believed that their parents teach them more about their duties and responsibilities, because their parents are preparing them for marriage. Below are some of the comments provided the by participants:

My parents only taught me about my duties and responsibilities and not my rights. It could be that my parents do not know about children's rights, because their levels of education are low. I also think that my parents taught me about my duties and responsibilities over my rights, so I could help them in the home (Paapa, Male 17yrs, Aburi).

As for me, I learned about my duties and responsibilities from the home and school, but comparing my duties with my rights, I will say I learned more of my duties from the home and more of my rights from school (Nyameakwan, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

Analysis of responses from study participants also showed that most of the students gather information about their rights through the media, especially the electronic media, which

comprise of television and radio stations. Most of these media houses do hold discussions about children's rights and also report cases of abuse against children. Participants indicated that they get informed about their rights through such discussions on TV and radio stations. Comments from participants are highlighted below:

Hmm, in the media. I heard it on GTV, there was an advert on children's rights on GTV Live and GTV Govern. In the advert, they were saying that all children below the age of eighteen years in Ghana, have the right to education, they have to pass through all the basic levels of education and they have right to shelter (Asempa, Male 16yrs, Aburi.)

A child was sexually abused so the issue was being discussed on Peace FM in which the panellists stressed on the fact that adults must desist from violating the rights of children. The same issue was discussed on TV stations. So I also got to hear about children's rights from those media houses (Nyameakwan, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

I usually hear some of the media houses, like the television and radio stations, talk about children's rights, so I also learned something about children's rights from there (Nyamedea, Female 14yrs, Pokrom).

This is also supported by a comment made by a key informant below:

...Through the media, either the radio or the TV (Obaapa, Female key informant, Aburi).

Also, responses from participants showed that some of them learn about their rights from religious organizations, like the churches.

The study revealed that churches, specifically, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) and the Methodist Church of Ghana, educate children about their rights through preaching and children's service activities. These were mainly reported by female participants from Pokrom, a rural community. Some of these responses from participants are indicated below:

I also learned about children's rights at church, Presbyterian church to be specific. The pastor was preaching and said something about children's rights along the line. He said parents have to respects the right of the children and children also have a duty to obey their parents (Nyamekye, female 16yrs, Pokrom).

... Eii, I have remembered, I also heard about children's rights at church (Aseda, female 15yrs, Pokrom).

A key informant also had this to say in support:

They also learn from the churches they go. Because they go for church service, they take them through the moral aspects... so through that they learn about their rights from the church (Sir 'T', Key Informant, Pokrom).

Analysis of responses from study participants also showed that some students learn about their rights from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and NGOs such as, Compassion International. Some students also stated that they read policy documents from CHRAJ and other organizations. Below are some of their comments:

I also learned something about children's rights from Compassion, an NGO (Nhyira, male 17yrs, Pokrom).

My father works at CHRAJ, so when he brings home the CHRAJ Mandate, I sometimes read so I learn some things about children's rights from it (Adom, male 13yrs, Aburi).

A key informant also said this to confirm:

The children who are aware of their rights, some are with Christian groups who have exposed them to constant teachings on their rights and other Christian values (Ofie, Assemblyman, Pokrom).

4.2.3 Places to Report Abuse of Children's Rights

The study participants also demonstrated knowledge of places they could report abuses or infringements of their rights and seek redress when their rights are abused. According to them,

where to report the abuse is dependent on the severity of the abuse and the place that the abuse was committed. Participants indicated that if the abuse occurs in the home or the community, they will report to their parents or guardians, or an elderly person within the community who has integrity and understands children's rights. If the abuse happens in school, it will be reported to the head teacher or a teacher they could confide in. Participants also indicated that they could report abuse of their rights to the police, the Department of Social Welfare and Domestic Violence and Victims' Support Unit (DOVVSU). Below are some of the comments made by the participants:

I will either report the person to the police, depending on the offense or I will report to an elderly person that I trust in the community to resolve the issue so that it does not repeat itself. I can also report the person to my parents or to an authority in the community (Daakyehene, male 17yrs, Pokrom).

If my rights are abused, I will report the person to agencies that are responsible for protecting children's rights like DOVVSU and Social Welfare. Even the police station too is there, I can go and report the person there, I can also report the person to my mother, or a teacher (Nyameasem Male 16yrs, Aburi).

Key informants also made the comments below, which support what the students said:

... Apart from the police, I also told them they should look out for somebody they can confide in and report the cases to them. Also, I tell them they can also report to their church leaders, the department of Social Welfare or DOVVSU (Sir 'T' Key informant, Pokrom).

4.3 Factors that Hinder the Realisation of Children's Rights

The second objective of the study was to identify various factors that tend to hinder children in Aburi and Pokrom from realising or enjoying their rights. Three themes emerged from the analysis: Socio-cultural, economic and religious factors.

4.3.1 Socio-cultural Factors

It emerged from the data that several social and cultural factors inhibit the realisation of children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom. These factors include: lack of knowledge/ignorance, irresponsible parenting, family disruption, (resulting from parental death, divorce/separation, illness or incapacitation and kinship or informal fosterage) delinquent behaviors, and age of the child

Most of the participants, both the children and key informants, identified lack of knowledge or ignorance about children's rights as a major impediment to the enforcement and/or realisation of children's rights. Below are some comments by participants:

Another thing too is that, some of our parents ... know nothing about children's rights, so when they are even paying your fees they think they are wasting their money on you, ... And if you as a child, you don't also know about your rights, you may not be able to enjoy your rights as well (Obrempong, Male15yrs, Pokrom).

For some parents it is sheer ignorance. They have the means to send their children to school, but they will rather spend the money on unnecessary things, they will use the money to booze, buy funeral clothes, and womanize rather than sending their children to school (Nyameasem, Male16yrs, Aburi).

One factor will be, not knowing about children's rights. It could be on the part of the children or parents and adults in general. Some parents, I don't know whether it's ignorance or what, they are just not interested in the education of their children (Daahene, a Civic Educator, Aburi).

Again, the findings showed that irresponsible parenting on the part of some parents, towards their children, prevents the children from enjoying their rights. Irresponsible acts such as lack of interest in the welfare of children, hamper children from enjoying their rights. Likewise, bad

parenting practices, such as parents having carnal knowledge of their own children (incest) are also detrimental to the realisation of children's rights:

To be honest, there is a serious issue of child neglect in this community, some parents do not provide basic needs for their children and so many of the children, especially, the boys do 'okada' business (commercial use of motorbike) and some also go for 'job' (working on pineapple farms for money) to take care of themselves, so many children don't focus on their education because of 'job'. (Nhyira, Male 17yrs, Pokrom).

Some parents honestly don't show any concern for the welfare of their children. They don't care if their children go to school or not (Sikapa, Male 14yrs, Aburi).

I remember we had an issue here, I think two or three years ago, a child was from a broken home, her own father was abusing her sexually...It was later through tip-offs and investigations that teachers got to know that the father was abusing the child sexually, any time the girl wants money, it's on condition that the father will have sex with her before he gives the girl money (Obaapa, Female key informant, Aburi).

The findings of the study also indicated that disruptions in the family as a result of parental death, divorce or separation, illness or incapacitation and informal/kinship fosterage, inhibit the realisation of children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom.

Participants indicated that parental death is one of factors that hamper children in the two communities from enjoying their rights, in the sense that it prevents children from having stable homes. Participants reported that if a child loses a parent or both parents they find themselves living with relatives or complete strangers who may maltreat or refuse to send the child to school and thereby, deny the children their rights. Below are some of the comments from participants:

Some children are orphans, they have lost both parents and may be living with other people, so such children are likely to face various forms of abuse especially, sexual

abuse if the child is a girl and happens to be cared for by a man. ...Also, the child may be over burdened with domestic chores which may affect the child's education (Adom, Male 13yrs, Aburi).

Hmm, some children too their parents are dead, so they are living with relatives or foster parents. The person may treat the child badly. They may deny the child the right to education or even if they send the child to school the child may find it difficult to get time to study. During the time that the child has to learn, the child will be running errands here and there (Nyamedea, Female 15yrs, Pokrom).

A key informant also commented:

You see, right now I'm doing my best to take care of my children, but it can happen that all of a sudden, I'm off, dead and gone. Things may come to a halt; their education may suffer (Ofie, Assemblyman, Pokrom).

The findings further revealed that divorce or separation was one of the factors that hinder children in Aburi and Pokrom from enjoying their rights. Participants reported that divorce or separation of parents is not healthy for the realisation of their rights. Children sometimes do not have a stable home, as they live with either mother or father at different periods of time:

When there is divorce or separation too, the rights of children suffer. If you need something and you tell your mother, she will say go to your father, if you go to your father, he will also say I don't have money, go to your mother, so the child may become a street child and this will deny the child the right to education, shelter and others (Asempa, Male 16yrs, Aburi).

My father and mother are separated, my mother is living on her own and my father too same. Today when I was coming to school, my mother asked me to go to my father for money, but my father's wife said that my father was not there, meanwhile my father was there. You see, those kinds of things also infringe on the rights of children (Obrempong, Male, 15yrs, Pokrom).

... Also, for some children, their parents are separated so the parents are not able to team up to support the child. So the child can have plans and aspirations of going to school to become a medical doctor but may not get the needed support from the parents (Nyamedea, Female 14yrs, Pokrom).

The study also found that sickness/incapacitation on the part of a parents or guardians could deprive the child from enjoying his/her rights. A participant indicated that money that would have been used to care for the child would be channeled to buying medications. For Example:

If parents are also struck down by sickness, they will use all the money they have on medications, and due to that, they will not be able to send the child to school (Paapa, Male 17yrs, Aburi).

This statement was corroborated by a key informant:

Also, if a parent suffers from long-term sickness, the children may not be able to enjoy their rights, especially; their rights to education may be denied them totally (Ofie, Assemblyman, Pokrom).

The findings also showed that informal or kinship fosterage could prevent children from enjoying their rights. Participants stated that although the motive of sending children to live with relatives or informal foster parents may be to educate these children, some are never sent to school, and those who are fortunate to be sent to school may not perform well academically, because they are often overburdened with domestic chores. This was reported by female participants from Pokrom:

Also, if children are living with relatives or foster parents, it could lead to denial of some of their rights if not all. Some children living with foster parents do not go to school, those who attend school have to combine with tedious domestic work, which makes it difficult for them to excel academically. Such children may play truancy and may eventually drop out of school, denying them of their right to education (Aseda, Female, 15yrs, Pokrom).

In this community most of the children are not living with their parents, so the time that the child is supposed to report in school, they will be selling for their guardians before the child will be given money for school. Others will not even give the child any money to come to school (Nyamedea, Female 14yrs, Pokrom).

The findings of the study showed that children considered delinquent behaviors, on the part of some children, such as stubbornness, disobedience, disrespectfulness, truancy and engaging in early sex which may result in teenage pregnancy, as some of the factors that inhibit the realisation of children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom. Participants revealed that because some children disobey their parents and others in the home and community, they have been left alone to fend for themselves. Some have also been sacked from the home. Below are responses from the study participants:

Hmm, some children are also very stubborn and disrespectful. There are some children, if you see them insulting their parents you will marvel. So such children, their parents do not show any concern about their education and general welfare. They have been left on their own; there are some children who have been sacked from home due to their stubbornness (Paapa, Male 17yrs, Aburi).

Some children too are very stubborn; they are disobedient, disrespectful and truants so their parents don't really like them. Such children are likely to be beaten and neglected if they don't change their ways (Adom, Male 13yrs, Aburi).

A key informant also made the comment below to confirm what has been said:

... If your parents are not taking care of you, if they are not sending you to school, you as a child, you must sit down and reflect if you're also meeting your responsibilities in the home. Maybe, you're being disrespectful and stubborn in the house, you have to juxtapose that one also (Daahene, Civic Educator, Aburi).

Participants' responses also showed that teenage pregnancy deprives children the opportunity of enjoying their rights. The findings revealed that when, children, mostly, girls become

pregnant they are unable to continue with their education, thereby dropping out of school. This eventually leads to denial of their rights to education. Below are comments from participants:

If you engage in early sex, and you get yourself pregnant, that one too can prevent you from enjoying some of your rights. If you are pregnant, you may not be able complete your education. You become a school dropout (Maame, Female 14yrs, Aburi).

Teenage pregnancy is very prevalent in this community. The girls, they rush a lot, so by fifteen, sixteen years they are pregnant ... and so they discontinue their schooling because of the pregnancy (Nkunim, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

The study also showed that cultural beliefs of parents or guardians can hinder children from enjoying their rights. According to participants, children may be denied access to education or quality health care as a result of the cultural beliefs of their parents. The participants indicated that some cultural practices like early marriage can hinder the realisation of children's rights. For example:

If children are forced to marry early, let's say at age fifteen, it can deprive children from enjoying some of their rights; they will not be able to go to school, which will amount to violation of their right to education (Ahuofe, Female 15yrs, Aburi).

Age was also identified as one of the factors that prevent children from enjoying their rights. Participants stated that because of their age, their right to expression, especially, is often denied, because they are perceived to be mentally not matured to enjoy such rights. Below are some of the comments:

Some parents think that children are too young to enjoy certain rights, especially, with regards to our rights to express our opinions. They think we are not mentally mature to enjoy some of these rights (Adom, Male 13yrs, Aburi).

Some adults use their age to violate the rights of children. Some adults, when they even step on the toes of a child, they feel too big to say sorry to the child, which is very bad. If a child offends an adult, the child is punished, but if an adult offends a child, he/she goes scot-free (Ofie, Assemblyman, Pokrom).

4.3.2 Economic Factors

The study also uncovered that there are economic factors that hamper the full realisation of children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom. Analysis of responses from participants were grouped under two main sub-themes-financial constraints/poverty and unemployment. These factors according to participants also contribute in preventing children from fully realising their rights.

One major factor that was found to militate against the realisation of children's rights within the two communities was poverty. Majority of the participants stated that lack of money or inadequacy of it can hinder children from fully realising/enjoying their rights, in the sense that without money, parents will find difficult, if not impossible, to enrol their children in school, feed them, provide for their healthcare and meet other needs of children. Below are comments from participants:

... If your parents also do not have money to send you to school, that one too you cannot enjoy your right to education and the other rights like good health care and adequate nutrition. If your parents don't have money how can they feed you three times in a day, buy you fruits and other things? (Maame, Female 14yrs, Aburi).

Poverty. If my parents do not have money they cannot send me to a well-resourced hospital, where I can be provided with quality healthcare... But if they have money they can give me proper medical care, so for me, I think poverty is of the factors that prevent children from enjoying their rights (Obrempong, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

And when mom and dad don't have money, sometimes eating even becomes a problem. And if there's no money definitely the children's education will suffer, provision of

certain things; school uniforms, payment of school fees will become a problem, access to quality healthcare will surely be a problem. So poverty also plays a role (Daahene, Male, Civic Educator, Aburi).

The study also found that if parents are not gainfully employed, it will be difficult for them to provide adequate food and other basic needs for their children, and this will hinder children from enjoying their rights. Below are some of the comments from participants:

It could be that both parents may not be working or their work don't fetch them enough money. Because of this, the parents will face financial constraints and may find it difficult to send their children to school, feed and even buy nice things for the children (Asempa, Male 16yrs, Aburi).

Ok, as for me, I live with both parents, but imagine they are both not working, they will find it difficult to be able to take care of me. I may have to fend for myself. I will not be able to attend school as expected. Some parents are really poor and are suffering because they are not working (Nyamedea, Female 14yrs, Pokrom).

A key informant from Pokrom said this to buttress the findings above:

Also, if I'm not working, or I do not have a stable source of income, it will be difficult to get money to meet the needs of my children, so this also can be one of the issues (Ofie, Assemblyman, Pokrom).

4.3.3 Religious Factors

Two key informants indicated that the religious beliefs of parents or guardians could also inhibit the realisation of children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom. They indicated that where the religious beliefs of parents do not allow them to accept blood transfusion or eat certain kinds of meat, it could deprive children from enjoying their rights.

Religious beliefs also limit the children from enjoying their rights. Some parents, because of their religious beliefs, may not send their children to the hospital or may

refuse to take blood transfusion and as a result, the child may lose his/her life (Daahene, Male, Civic Educator).

The religious beliefs of parents can also inhibit children from enjoying their rights. There are some religions that are against blood transfusion, eating certain kinds of food, meat, and a whole lot. Such religious fanaticism can also deny children from enjoying their rights, for example, a parent can refuse to give blood transfusion to the child, and the child may die, denying the child the right to life (Sir 'P', Key Informant, Pokrom)

4.4 Benefits Children Derive from Knowing their Rights

The third objective of the study was to explore benefits children could derive if they become aware of their rights. Responses from most of the participants enforced the need to promote awareness of the rights of children, since they believed that knowledge about children's rights are instrumental in nurturing children. The study showed that if children are knowledgeable about their rights, they reap at least six major benefits, which are: respectful of other people's rights, self-confidence, develop a sense of responsibility, focus on their education, able to report or speak against infringements on their right, and they are able to educate others about children's rights.

Analysis of data collected from interviewees indicated that if children are educated to know about their rights, one of the benefits they reap is being respectful of other people's rights. They indicated that for their rights to be respected, they also have a duty as right-holders to respect the rights of other individuals. Below are some comments:

Knowing your rights will make you respect the rights of others. You cannot expect people to respect your rights, while you disrespect theirs, it should be reciprocal, you respect people's rights and they respect yours (Sikapa, Male 14yrs, Aburi).

It can also help me to respect the rights of others, because if I want people to respect my rights, those people also have rights, so if I respect their rights, they will also respect mine (Obrempong, Male 15yrs, Pokrom)

The findings of the study also showed that if children know about their rights, it helps them to build their self-confidence and are able to express their opinions without any fear. Some responses from participants are highlighted below:

I for example, whatever I decide to do, I do it with confidence, because I know that I am doing the right thing. I know my rights; I know what is expected of me. I feel free if I want to express my opinion, whether my mother will take it or not, that doesn't bother me, what I know is that I have spoken my mind (Asempa, Male 16yrs, Aburi).

Also, if you know rights, you become confident in whatever you do. In school for example, sometimes when the teacher asks a question, although people may want to answer they will not, because they think they will be laughed at, but if you know your rights, you will be confident and answer, knowing that when you make a mistake, the teacher will correct you (Nyamedea, Female 14yrs Pokrom).

When children know their rights, it boosts their confidence. Like I told you earlier, because I made the boy aware of his right to education, he had the confidence and the courage to inform me that the father has shirked his responsibilities and wants to demand for his rights (Daahene, Civic Educator, Aburi).

Children in the two communities learn to be responsible persons and behave in socially acceptable ways. This is because they have been made aware of their rights and responsibilities, and so they are aware of what is expected of them as children. They indicated that each of their rights, come with an associated responsibility. For instance, the right to education comes with a responsibility to study. The following are some of their comments:

Also, I have learned that our rights go with responsibilities, all the rights we are to enjoy come with their associated responsibilities. So knowing that I have a right to education,

means that I have a responsibility to study. At first, I used all my time to play, but now I know when to play and when to study (Awuraa, Female 15yrs, Aburi).

Knowing that you have rights, for example, the right to education makes you also focus on the responsibilities that go with such a right. So as children who have right to education, we don't have to make mobile phones, WhatsApp, boyfriend, girlfriend and other 'irrelevant' things our priorities for now... We need to focus on our books (Nadom, Female 15yrs, Pokrom).

You see, one thing I always tell children is that rights go hand in hand with responsibilities. So when children know about their rights they also become aware of what their parents expect from them... So I will add that if children know about their rights they become responsible as well (Daahene, Civic Educator, Aburi).

Analysis of responses from the study participants also showed that when children know about their rights it can help them focus and pay much attention to their education, because they become aware of the fact that their right to education comes with a responsibility. The students know that they have to concentrate on their schooling, study hard and pass their examinations, thus, enhancing their academic performance. Excerpts from their responses are highlighted below:

Your right to education for example, goes with a responsibility to learn, so you pass your exams. This means you have to study hard so you don't waste the money your parents have invested in your education. So if we take our studies seriously, it will better our academic performance (Nadom, Female 15yrs, Pokrom).

If children know about their rights they will take their education for example, very serious. ... At first when I did not know about my rights I was using all my time to play but now that I know about my rights, I know when to play and when to study and this has greatly improved my academic performance (Ahuofe, Female 15yrs, Aburi).

Yeah, it will help them; it will help them improve upon their academics. As a child when you know your rights, so you must stay in school and study hard...so knowing about

their rights will also help them improve upon their academic performance (Sir 'T', key informant, Pokrom).

Further, the findings of the study showed that one benefit of being aware of their rights, was that it empowers them to demand for their rights when being denied. It also helps them to stand up for such rights when they are being abused. They stated that they know the various agencies where they can report abuse of their rights and seek redress.

They also indicated that when they have to personally stand up and speak against infringements on their rights, they have been empowered to do so. Narrations from participants are highlighted below:

...Also if you know about your rights, it will be difficult for people to infringe on your rights because you will resist any form of attempt by anyone to violate your rights. And should the person violate my rights regardless, I will quickly report the person to the appropriate quarters, such as the police (Nyameakwan, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

If children know about their rights, they can defend themselves and also demand for their rights. ...If someone should rape or do something bad to me, I will report the person to the police, because our social studies madam has taught us that we can report such abuses to the police (Maame, Female 14yrs, Aburi).

The findings also indicated that children who know about their rights could share their knowledge with peers and family members who did not have such knowledge, thereby becoming educators of children's rights. They revealed that once they know about their rights, they would be empowered to teach their family members and friends who did not know about children's rights. Here are some of their comments:

If I know rights I can teach others who don't know, especially, my friends who don't know about their rights. I can teach my parents also to know about children's rights (Sikapa, Male 14yrs, Aburi).

Besides, if I have friends who do not know about their rights, I will teach them small, small so they will also know about their rights. So that will be an advantage to my friends (Nkunim, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

4.5 Ways to Enhance Knowledge about Children's Rights

The fourth and final objective of the study was to identify ways in which stakeholders can enhance knowledge about children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom. Responses from participants were categorised into two main themes; public outreach programs and school-based programs.

4.5.1 Public outreach programs.

Participants indicated that there is the need for both children and the entire members of the communities to be well informed about children's rights, in order to promote the development and realisation of the rights of all children. They also suggested various channels to be used to educate and sensitise people about children's rights. Responses from the participants have been grouped into sub-themes which comprise of traditional media, social media, community information centers, religious organisations and peer education.

This sub-theme captures the responses of study participants on the need to utilise traditional media outlets such as, the television (TV) stations, radio stations and the newspapers to educate and inform children and the general public, including parents and teachers, about children's rights. The participants, from their responses, indicated that these media outlets can have programs about children's rights, child abuse and also carry out advertisements about children's rights. They further suggested that such programs could be hosted by children themselves or adults who have expertise in children's rights. They further suggested that education could be done in the local languages to enable those who do not understand English language to also learn about children's rights. Below are examples of responses from participants

The radio and television stations can also be used to educate children about their rights. children who have knowledge about children's rights can host a program on TV and radio stations to educate people, including children to know about children's rights (Maame, Female 14yrs, Aburi).

Some of the ways we can use to help children to know about their rights is to have programs through media houses like radio, Television and the Print media as well. On radio and television for example, the programs can be broadcast on Saturdays in the mornings, let say from 8am to 10am. This will help knowledge on children's rights spread faster to far and near (Nyameakwan, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

Also, participants indicated that stakeholders should seize the opportunity offered by the numerous social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, among others to educate and inform children and the general population about children's rights. Some participants suggested that stakeholders could create a page on Facebook and post messages and videos about children's rights. Also, they indicated that messages could be sent to individuals through WhatsApp. Comments from some of the participants are highlighted below:

Social media too can be used to boost children's knowledge about their rights. Somebody can write about children's rights and post to friends on Facebook and WhatsApp to read and they in turn can forward it to other people to also read and know about children's rights. Organizations that work on children's rights could also create a page on social media platforms like Facebook to educate people about children's rights (Nyameasem, Male 16yrs, Aburi).

In the same manner that we were able to use social media to spread the inhuman treatment of Major Adams at Dankyira Oboase, we can have videos on children's rights and post on social media, like Facebook and WhatsApp for people to read and learn about children's rights (Nhyira, Male 17yrs, Pokrom).

We can also post messages about children's rights on Facebook for children to read and learn about their rights; not only children, adults can also read about children's rights from Facebook (Maame, Female, 14yrs, Aburi).

Responses from participants also revealed that stakeholders can use community information centers to educate community members about the rights of children and the need for all, both children and adults to respect those rights.

Participants indicated that the use of the community information centres will be more effective, since programmes are mostly carried out through the use of the local language of the particular community. Below are comments from some participants:

The information centre in this community can be utilized to educate children on their rights. The eldest in this community who know about children's rights can go to the information centre to talk about children's rights so that both children and adult will learn. They can do that especially at dawn or in the evenings. When they use the Twi (a local language) it will help because like I said earlier most of our parents did not go to school, (Nyamedea, Female 14yrs, Pokrom).

And yes, we have an information center also here in Aburi, they can have a programme in Twi about children's rights. It will help not only the children to learn about their rights, but the general public will have the opportunity to do so (Nyameasem, Male 16yrs, Aburi).

A key informant made this comment to corroborate that of the students:

In this community we have three PA systems, one for the community and two private ones, if we advertise community programs at the community information center they don't charge, so we can have programs and discussions on children's rights at least 20 minutes per day, with time, people will get to know about children's rights, including the children themselves (Ofie, parent, Pokrom).

The study also revealed that religious organisations, especially, the churches, could be used to effectively inform and educate people, both young and old, about children's rights. Participants called on religious leaders, that is, pastors, Sunday school teachers, group leaders, Imams, among others to use the pulpit to educate their congregations about children's rights. Here are some responses from the study participants;

The Pastors, Elders, the Apostles, and youth leaders in our churches can dedicate a day to do teachings on children's rights in their various churches to help both children and adults know about children's rights, and the need to respect those rights (Nadom, Female 15yrs, Pokrom).

The pastors and imams in our churches and mosques, can teach children and adult members of their congregations about children's rights. They can have specific days to do teachings on children's rights. The various fellowships within the congregation can also teach their members about children's rights (Asempa, Male 16yrs, Aburi).

Some female participants from the peri-urban community (Aburi) indicated that peer education could also be used to educate children and adults who are not aware of children's rights. They indicated that children who know about their rights should endeavor to educate their friends who are not aware of their rights due to one reason or the other. Below are their comments:

We can teach our friends who do not know about children's rights, especially those in our neighborhoods, who are not in school. As we play with them, we can use that time to share our knowledge of children's rights with them (Maame, Female 14yrs, Aburi).

If you are a child and you know about your rights, meanwhile, your friend doesn't know about children's rights, you can initiate a discussion on children's rights with your friend and help him/her to also to know about children's rights (Ahuofe, Female 15yrs, Aburi).

Those of us who know about children's rights are duty bound to teach our peers and parents who do not know about children's rights in the home (Awuraa, Female 15yrs, Aburi).

4.5.2 School-based Programs

Responses from students showed that the school was their main source of knowledge about children's rights. Thus, they indicated that certain measures and programs should be put in place within the school environment to better enhance children's knowledge about their rights. The following sub-themes emerged: expansion of the educational curriculum, formation of clubs, use of games, sports and drama, use of posters and flyers, and P.T.A. meetings.

Participants highlighted that the learning and teaching of children's rights are embedded in Social Studies and RME subjects, and so much time is not allotted to the teaching and learning of children's rights in school. Therefore, participants suggested that the Ghana Education Service (GES) should have a second look at the educational curriculum and introduce children rights as a subject on its own and also make teaching and learning materials on children's rights available in the various schools. In the participants own words:

I also think that children's rights should be a subject on its own so that much time could be devoted to teach children to know about their rights. What we have in the syllabus now is very scanty, not very detailed. It should be expanded so children could learn more about their rights. ... There should also be books on children's right. (Nkunim, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

I also think there should be a period on our timetable to teach children's rights as a subject on its own (Nyameasem, Male 16yrs, Aburi).

Two key informants also commented as follows:

That's incorporating children's rights into the school syllabus of basic and secondary education. I know they have introduced citizenship education, but I think it should be

made a subject on its own, and the teachers should be given the needed training (Daahene, Male, Civic Educator, Aburi).

Children's rights should be expanded in the school curriculum; they can even make it a subject on its own; by the time the children get to Senior High School, they should know everything about their rights (Ofie, Assemblyman, Pokrom).

The study also found out that formation of clubs in schools can help enhance children's awareness about their rights. Participants stated that during such club meetings, people with expertise in the area of children's rights could be invited to educate and inform children about their rights. Below are some of the comments:

There was one lady in this community, she used to come to the school to educate us about our rights but she has stopped coming, I don't know why. So if we have clubs in schools and such people come to teach us about our rights it will help us to know more about our rights (Obrempong, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

Yes, if we have child rights' clubs and we come for meetings we can be educated to know about our rights (Paapa, Male 17yrs, Aburi).

The study revealed that games, sports and drama could be used to enhance students' knowledge of their rights. They indicated that during sporting activities, students could be educated to know about their rights. Also, plays or drama about children's rights could be staged in the schools to enhance children's knowledge about their rights. Comments from some participants are highlighted below:

If there are sport activities for schools, the organisers can have a session where they can give a talk on children's rights, so that all the students, teachers, and spectators from the community will get the chance to learn something about children's rights (Asempa, Male 16yrs, Aburi).

We can also use plays or drama to help children to learn more about their rights. I remember when I was in class six, we had a play about two families. One family decided to invest in the education of their child whilst the other family took education for granted. At the end of the day, a child who was not educated became wayward whilst the other excelled in life. ... So, we can use such plays and drama to make sure children and parents know about children's rights (Nkunim, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

We can also educate children on their rights through plays or drama. Some of the students don't respect so the teachers don't like them. In school like this, we can have a play to teach children about their rights and the need to respect adults (Nyamedea, Female 14yrs, Pokrom).

Responses from some of the participants highlighted that mounting posters that carry messages about children's rights at vantage points in schools, and even in the communities, and sharing flyers can help enhance knowledge about their rights. Below are the comments from study participants:

There could also be posters on children's rights which could be posted at vantage points in the community and schools for people to read and learn about children's rights. There used to be posters like, 'wash your hands before you eat' in this community. I think similar things can be developed for children's rights. I think this will help children and everybody to learn about children's rights (Nhyira, Male 17yrs, Pokrom).

We can also have flyers and posters on children's rights and responsibilities. The flyers could be given to people. The posters can also be posted at vantage points in schools and communities. This way, children and others can have the opportunity to read and learn about children's rights at any given time (Ohene, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

There can be posters on children's rights that should be posted at schools, billboards could be mounted in the community center and other places that people can see and read. This will help children and even adults to know about children's rights (Nyameasem, Male, Aburi).

Participants indicated that parents are key stakeholders as far as children's rights are concerned. Thus, the students suggested that the school should take advantage of PTA meetings to educate their parents about children's rights and children's rights abuses. Comments are highlighted below:

The teachers can talk a little about children's rights during PTA meetings, the teachers should educate our parents about children's rights, child abuses, their responsibilities as parents, among others (Nyameasem, Male 16yrs, Aburi).

Also, during PTA meetings, the teachers can use the opportunity to enlighten our parents on children's rights, because both the children, adults, including our parents must know about children's rights (Asempa, Male 16yrs, Aburi).

When our parents also come for PTA meetings, the teachers should seize the opportunity to educate our parents about children's rights (Ohene, Male 15yrs, Pokrom).

4.6. Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the findings of the study. It commences by examining the implications of the demographic characteristics of the study participants on the outcome of the study. It also discusses the findings of the study under the four major objectives, which are: knowledge about children's rights, factors inhibiting realisation of children's rights, benefits children could derive from knowing about their rights, and ways to enhance awareness about children's rights. The themes are discussed in the light of the literature that was reviewed, the theory underpinning the study, as well as the concept of socialisation.

The age of the students who participated in the study ranges from thirteen (13) years to seventeen (17) years, which is consistent with the definition a child, according to the UNCRC Part I, article 1, the Children's Act of Ghana 1998 (Act 560), Part I, article 1 and the 1992

Constitution of Ghana, Chapter 5, Section 28, Article 5. This implies that students selected for the study met the inclusion criteria for the study.

Findings of this study showed that not only have children in Aburi and Pokrom heard about children's rights, they were also knowledgeable about their rights. Majority of them could define children's rights and cited examples of rights they are entitled to as children. Most of the students were able to define rights as being privileges, freedoms or entitlements and cited examples of all the three categories of rights which are; right to provision, right to participation, and right to protection. For instance, the children cited examples of rights, such as the right to life, right to be heard and right to be protected from harm. Children having knowledge about their rights could be attributed to the fact that children's rights form part of the school curriculum at the Junior Secondary level of education in Ghana. Children's rights are embedded in Social Studies, as well as Religious and Moral Education (RME) syllabus, and as such, children get the opportunity to learn about their rights in school. Therefore, it is not surprising that almost all the students who participated in the study indicated that they learned about their rights from school, making the school the main source of knowledge about children's rights for children in Aburi and Pokrom.

The findings that children in Aburi and Pokrom know about their rights confirm the findings of Twum-Danso (2008), Kamau (2013), and Ferdinandsson & Sperl (2014), that many children in Accra, Ghana, Nairobi province, Kenya, and Sweden respectively were aware of their rights. The findings also agree with the findings of Twum-Danso (2008), which asserted that many children were aware of their rights, because rights form part of the syllabus and curriculum from the upper primary and JHS levels of education in Ghana. The findings are also consistent with the Interest theory of children's rights which highlights examples of rights children should

enjoy. The Interest theory of children's rights, justifies the need for children to possess specific rights, on the basis that, rights exist to secure the basic interests of the individual rights-holder. The theory further asserts that, the universality of children's rights, is grounded in what is considered as basic or minimal conditions that should be accorded to all children, regardless of which geographical space they find themselves. The theory also highlights rights that children should enjoy. This includes, the right to life, survival and development, the right to protection, and the right to participation.

On the other hand, the findings that majority of children in Aburi and Pokrom know about their rights, contradict the findings of Kwarteng (2012) and Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013), that many children in Kumasi and Eldoret Municipality, Kenya respectively, had less knowledge of their rights. The studies by Kwarteng (2012) and Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013) were conducted in urban areas and so the general expectation is that children in urban areas would have more knowledge about their rights than those in rural areas. However, it must be noted that these studies were undertaken six (6) years and seven (7) years ago respectively and during these periods a lot might have happened to improve the teaching and learning of children's rights in schools, including children in rural communities.

Although the children had knowledge about all the categories of their rights, they exhibited more knowledge about their rights to provision and participation than their rights to protection. Whilst the majority of the children from both communities were able to give examples of their rights to provision and participation, few students from Aburi, the peri-urban community, were able to cite examples of their rights to protection. This could be attributed to the fact that teachings and discussions about children's rights in Ghana, usually, focus on the provision of basic needs, such as, education, food, shelter and healthcare for children. The findings support

that of (Kiprotich & Ong'ondo's 2013), which found that children know more about some of their rights than others. However, in contrast to the findings of Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013), which found that children in Kenya were more aware of their rights to protection from sexual exploitation and their rights to freedom of thought and opinion, children in Aburi and Pokrom, were more knowledgeable about their rights to provision, such as right to education and right to healthcare, adequate nutrition and their right to participation.

This study also revealed that apart from the school, children learn about their rights through other mediums, such as the home, media, and through religious organisations and NGOs. For example, through discussions with parents, siblings, friends, and others, children in Aburi and Pokrom get to learn about their rights. However, the study found that although children learn about their rights from the home, emphasis is placed on teaching children to know more about their duties and responsibilities, and this is because in the Ghanaian society, children are socialised early to know about their duties and responsibilities, and are taught to render services for their parents and guardians, who in turn reciprocate these service by providing care and maintenance. Thus, children who perform their duties and responsibilities, such as running errands, are more likely to enjoy their rights than those who shirk their duties and responsibilities. Additionally, this study showed that the students learn about their rights through both the electronic and print media, their churches and even from NGOs that work in these communities. It is worthy to note that, the same ways or agents that are used to teach children to acquire knowledge about the various aspects of their social and cultural lives, (agents of socialisation) were the same ways that children acquire knowledge about their rights. This means that teaching children to know about their rights can be done concurrently while teaching them about societal norms and values. The findings fit into the concept of socialisation,

which underscores the school, home, media, and religious bodies, as effective agents through which children are taught about the skills, norms, and values for proper functioning in a given society. The findings of this study which shows that children learn about their rights in the home contradict the findings of Kwarteng (2012), that children rights are something that is not talked about in the Ghanaian setting.

Findings of the study have also revealed that although children were aware of their rights, they have insufficient knowledge about the legal instruments that guarantee these rights, such as, the UNCRC and the Children's Act of Ghana. The only instrument that children in Aburi and Pokrom seem to have an idea of was the 1992 Ghanaian Constitution. The teaching and learning of children's rights are carried out in schools without situating these within the context of legal frameworks that protect the rights of children in Ghana, because the legal instruments do not form part of the educational curriculum. The only instrument that teachers do make reference to is the 1992 constitution of Ghana. The findings confirm those of Twum-Danso (2008), and Ferdinandsson & Sperl (2014), that children knowing about their rights do not necessarily translate into knowing about the legal instruments that protect the rights of children, such as, the UNCRC and the Children's Act 1998.

The findings of the study also showed that children in the two communities value or prioritise their rights, such as the right to education, right to life, right to food and right to medical care, over their rights to participation and protection. For instance, the children believed that if they are able to exercise their right to education, they have a higher chance of securing good jobs in the future. The students also believed they could become influential people in society and offer financial support to the needy in the society. The findings support those of Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013), and Kwarteng (2012), that children prioritise some of their rights more than

others. Again, the study revealed that it was important for children to have rights as it protects them from abuse, secures the collective interest of all children, and enables them to develop their full potentials. The findings agree with the Interest theory of rights which posits that rights are supposed to protect the basic human interest and secure the conditions necessary for the wellbeing of the right-holder.

In addition to the above, the study has found that the students do not only know about their rights but are also aware of institutions such as DOVVSU, the police, and other places that they could report abuse and seek redress should anybody infringe on their rights. The findings show that where to report the abuse or infringement on their rights is dependent on the type or severity of abuse, and the place of the abuse. Unfortunately, although children know about the various institutions to report and seek redress when their rights are abused, it may be difficult for children in Ghana to report their parents or any adult to these institutions when their rights are infringed upon, and this can be attributed to our cultural value of respect and obedience to adult authority. Thus, although children know about the means to report and seek redress when their rights are abused, they are unable to do so due to the underlying social and cultural connotations.

The findings that children know about institutions and other places to report abuse and seek redress when their rights are infringed upon contradict with the findings of Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013), which found that children do not know ways of seeking redress. Again, it was found out that children in the two communities enjoy some of their rights more than others. For instance, most of the participants reported that they enjoy their rights to education, healthcare, food, shelter among others. However, they indicated that they do not fully enjoy their rights to expression, both in the home and at school. Although children in Ghana are valued for various socio-economic reasons, children in Ghana are socialised not to engage in adult

conversations, unless consulted on the particular issue being discussed. Again, children are not to talk back to adults, and so children who may want to stand up for their rights and try to be assertive are usually considered disrespectful and reprimanded. Consequently, many children coil into their shells to avoid being considered disobedient or ill-mannered and more importantly, to avoid being punished.

The study identified several factors that hinder children from realising their rights, which were socio-cultural, economic and religious in nature. The findings of the study indicated that lack of knowledge or ignorance about children's rights on the part of both adults and children could inhibit children in Aburi and Pokrom from realising their rights. For a successful implementation and realisation of children's rights, it is important that both children and adults, (parents, teachers, government officials and all stakeholders) have knowledge about children's rights. However, participants indicated that there may be scores of children and adults who are not knowledgeable about children's rights, which they attributed to low levels of literacy. As a result of lack of knowledge or ignorance about children rights, some parents may become irresponsible, showing no concern for the welfare of their children, including their education and provision of other basic needs. Also, if children themselves are not aware that they have rights, then it will be difficult for the implementation of children's rights because these children will not be able to demand their rights when being denied.

The above findings confirm the findings of Twum-Danso (2012), that lack of awareness about children's rights is a critical factor that impedes the implementation and realisation of children's rights in Ghana as it is linked to other factors such as lack of human and financial resources. The findings also fit with the findings of Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013), which asserted that without awareness about children's rights by children themselves, the realisation of children's

rights may be impossible. Again, the findings are consistent with the findings of Al Akroush & Al Zyoud (2010), which found that low levels of families' awareness of child rights were major obstructions in observing child rights.

Disruption of the family, resulting from parental death, divorce or separation, kinship or informal fosterage and illness or incapacitation was also discovered to be a major factor that could inhibit children from the selected communities from enjoying their rights. The UNCRC and the Children's Act of Ghana, guarantee for children the right to grow up with their parents and places an obligation on parents to ensure that they educate their children and provide for their basic needs and protection. However, family disruption denies many children this basic form of right. In a typical Ghanaian society, when there is divorce or separation, usually, the mother gets custody of the child, while the father is expected to provide financial assistance. The findings of this study shows that when there is divorce or separation, either of the parents is likely to shirk their responsibilities. Thus, parents are unable to team up to provide the needed support for the child to be able to realise his or her full potential. Additionally, due to family disruptions resulting from any of the factors stated above, children may be socialised early to work in order to support the family income by either engaging in hawking or serving as domestic servants. This situation could have negative implications on their education, health and general welfare. This is because children who are overwhelmed with domestic chores are likely to perform poorly in school, play truancy, and more likely to drop out of school.

The findings are consistent with the findings of Apt et al. (2012), that divorce and death of parents or widowhood account for the slow rate of development of children's rights in Ghana.

The findings further revealed that delinquent behaviours such as disrespectfulness, truancy, disobedience, early sex, among others, on the part of children, hinder the realisation of

children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom. As stated earlier, Ghanaian children have been socialised to be respectful, obedient and submit to adult authority, and so children who try to be assertive are often regarded as disrespectful, and are likely to be denied of their rights. Again, through socialization, children in Ghana are very much aware that the care and maintenance that their parents provide them have to be reciprocated by rendering services such fetching water, sweeping, and running errand, thus, children who fail to fulfil their responsibilities are more likely to have their rights denied them.

Poverty or financial constraints was also found to be a major factor that inhibits the realisation of children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom. Poverty is said to be the major cause of child neglect and children in Aburi and Pokrom are not immune from the negative repercussions of poverty. Due to poverty, many parents may be unable to provide quality education, healthcare, and other basic needs for their children. Regrettably, as a result of poverty, many children, especially those in the rural community, Pokrom are forced to engage in 'job', a form of child labour, where children work in pineapple plantations, and 'okada', commercial usage of motorbikes in order to fend for themselves. As a result of this, many children are unable to focus on their education, as it may lead to truancy, lateness to school, poor academic performance, and school dropout. This eventually deprives them of their rights to education, compromise on their health, and general well-being. Additionally, many parents may be unable to send their children to school, and provide basic necessities like food, medical care and clothing for their children, as a result of poverty. The findings are consistent with the findings of Apt et al, (2012), that poverty or poor family background is a major factor that inhibit the realisation of children's rights in Ghana.

Unemployment was also discovered as one of the factors that hamper the realisation of children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom. The negative implications of unemployment on the realisation of children's rights cannot be underestimated. Where parents and caregivers are unemployed, they face financial difficulties and thus, may be unable to provide education, food, shelter, healthcare, among others, thereby, denying children from enjoying these rights. The findings are consistent with the findings of Apt et al (2012), that unemployment hampers the development of children's rights in Ghana. The findings of this study further showed that one of the factors that hamper children in Aburi and Pokrom from realising their rights is their age, which makes them vulnerable and dependent on their parents and adults. Children in Aburi and Pokrom, due to their age are often excluded from decision- making and face various forms of abuses. Additionally, children are considered mentally immature to enjoy certain rights, such as the rights to expression, and so children are usually not consulted, even when decisions being made would have impact on their lives.

The findings from the study show that when children are informed and educated about their rights they derive enormous benefits from it. This means that much efforts should be devoted to educate and inform children about their rights. The study has found that children knowing their rights helps them to be respectful of other people's rights. When children know about their rights, they also become mindful of the need to respect the rights of other individuals bearing in mind that for their rights to be respected, it is their basic duty as right-holders to also respect the rights of other individuals. Furthermore, the findings indicate that children knowing about their rights makes them responsible. This is because students are taught about the various responsibilities that are associated with their rights. For example, children in Aburi and Pokrom know that, having the right to education comes with the responsibility to study. Again, students

who participated in the study, are aware of what their parents expect of them as children. They know they have to run errands for their parents, fetch water, sweep, among other things for their parents to also provide them with education, food, shelter among others.

The findings are in line with the findings of Howe & Covell (2010), Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013) and Ferdinandsson & Sperl (2014), that children knowing about their rights makes them understand responsibility, become respectful and behave in socially appropriate ways. The findings also confirm the Interest theory, which posits that each individual right-holder has a basic duty to respect the rights of every other individual, and that the protection of one's own fundamental interest requires others willingness to recognise and respect these interests which in turn requires a reciprocal recognition and respect of fundamental interests of others. In addition, the findings fit into the findings of Mensah-Bonsu & Dowuona-Hamond (1995), and Twum-Danso (2012), that through socialisation, children in Ghana have internalised three main cultural values which are respect, responsibility and reciprocity.

The findings further showed that when children know about their rights, they also become aware of what constitutes an abuse of their rights, and so they are able to speak against infringements on their rights, and where necessary, report to the appropriate authorities for redress. Although, children may not report to formal institutions like the police and the Department of Social Welfare for various socio-cultural reasons, they are able to report to their parents, teachers and community leaders. The findings fit with the findings of Ferdinandsson & Sperl (2014), that children who know about their rights are able to stand up for their rights even when others deny them those rights. Also, children in Aburi and Pokrom who know about their rights develop self-confidence. The findings of this study revealed that knowing about children's rights helps to boost self-confidence of children in Aburi and Pokrom. This is

because they are able to express their views and opinions on issues that impact their lives without entertaining any form of fear.

The study also identified a number of ways that could be used to enhance awareness about children's rights in the selected communities. One of the ways that was discovered was the use of traditional media outlets like the radio, television and the print media. These outlets could be used to organise programs about children's rights, children's rights abuse, and other issues concerning children's rights, to enhance knowledge about children's rights. The findings corroborate the findings of Kamau (2013) which found that encouraging talk shows on radio and television channels on issues concerning children's rights and their responsibilities will enhance knowledge on children's rights.

The study further established that religious organisations, as such as churches were effective channels through which knowledge about children's rights could be enhanced. The findings are consistent with the findings of Kamau (2013), and Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013), whose findings also indicated that religious groups can be used to disseminate information about children's rights. The study also discovered that students want to be allotted enough time on the school time table for the teaching of children's rights and thus, calling for children's rights to be a stand-alone subject. The findings fit into the findings of Ferdinandsson & Sperl (2014), which also found that majority of children want to receive lectures on their rights. The study also discovered that social media platforms like Facebook could be used to enhance knowledge about children's rights. Participants indicated the need for stakeholders to embrace the opportunity offered by the numerous social media platforms to enhance awareness about children's rights.

The study also revealed that Community Information Centres were effective means of enhancing knowledge about children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom. Community information centres are community-based platforms that are used to circulate information. These information centres usually pick news feeds from main radio stations from the urban areas such as Accra, the capital city of Ghana, and disseminate to the community members. They also have educative programs that are broadcast in the local languages. The use of local languages by the community information centres make it effective channel of disseminating information about children's rights, as it will enable both the educated and uneducated to learn about children's rights in these communities.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations as well as implications of the findings for social work practice.

5.1 Summary of findings

The first objective of the study was to explore knowledge students in JHS from Aburi and Pokrom have about their rights. The study found that majority of students in Aburi and Pokrom have knowledge about their rights, especially with regards to their basic rights such as, the right to education, food, medical care, shelter and their rights to participation. However, most of the students exhibited limited knowledge regarding their rights to protection. Again, the study showed that students from the selected communities have limited knowledge about the legal frameworks that guarantee the rights of children, such as, the UNCRC and the Children's Act of Ghana. Moreover, the study revealed that some students from Pokrom, a rural community, have limited understanding of children's rights, as they misconstrued rights as the freedom to do 'things' without restrictions from anyone. In addition, some female students from the rural community confused their duties and responsibilities as their rights. It was also found that students prioritised some rights over others, and also enjoy some rights more than others. For instance, some children stated that their rights to education was important to them. The students had also been informed about various institutions such as the police station, where they can report abuses of their rights and also seek redress when their rights are infringed upon. The major sources of information for students about their rights are the school, the home and the

media. It is worthy to note, that the home lays more emphasis in teaching children about their duties and responsibilities than rights.

The second objective was to identify factors that hinder the realisation of children's rights in the two communities. The findings of the study showed that numerous social, economic and religious factors interact to hinder the rights of children in the selected communities. Lack of knowledge about children's rights by parents and children, family disruption (resulting from factors such as, parental death and divorce), delinquent behaviours, poverty, unemployment, and religious beliefs were found to be some factors that hinder the realisation of children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom.

The third objective, which explored the benefits students could derive from knowing about their rights, found that children's knowledge of their rights, helps them to be respectful of other people's rights, enhances their self-confidence, makes them develop a sense of responsibility, they focus on their education, they are able to report and speak against infringements on their rights, and also helps them to educate others about children's rights.

The final objective of this study was to explore ways by which stakeholders can enhance children's rights awareness in the two communities. The study found that radio and television stations could be used. The study further identified social media, Community information centres, games, sports and drama, the formation of clubs in schools, posters, and flyers, as some of the effective channels that could be used to enhance knowledge about children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom.

5.2 Conclusion

The study found that agencies such as, the NCCE, schools, and NGOs such as, Compassion International, are making tremendous efforts to educate children on their rights. As a result, students in the two study areas are aware of their rights, especially, their basic rights and their rights to participation. Majority of the students in the selected schools, can define rights and give examples of the rights children are entitled to enjoy. This is because the students have been educated about their rights in school. Also, they learn about their rights from other sources such as, the home, media, and NGOs. Although students from both communities know about their rights, the study concludes that students in the peri-urban community (Aburi) have more knowledge about their rights than students in the rural community (Pokrom). Again, the study concludes that even though the students have knowledge about their rights, they have insufficient knowledge about the legal instruments that protect children's right, such as the UNCRC and the children's Act of Ghana.

As indicated by the findings of the study, there are numerous factors, which are, socio-cultural, economic and religious in nature that interact to inhibit the realisation of children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom. Some of the factors that were identified include, lack of awareness or ignorance about children's rights on the part of both adults and children, family disruption as a result of parental death or divorce, poverty, unemployment, religious beliefs of parents or guardians, among others. The study further concludes that it is useful for children to know about their rights, because they could derive several benefits when they are well informed about their rights. Some of the benefits they could reap from knowing about their rights are: being respectful of other people's rights, self-confidence, develop a sense of responsibility, among others. Finally, the study concludes that there are several ways that stakeholders could utilised

to enhance knowledge about children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom. These include, the use of media outlets such as, radio and television, newspapers, social media, the formation of clubs in school among others as a means of enhancing knowledge about children's rights

5.3 Recommendations

Stakeholders, that is, the government, teachers, parents, and NGOs are making frantic efforts to impart children with knowledge about their rights, which will eventually lead to the realisation and development of children's rights. However, a lot more need to be done to enhance the knowledge that students have about their rights and to ensure respect and realisation of children's rights in Aburi and Pokrom. The following recommendations are proposed for consideration by stakeholders.

The study identified that Ghana Education Service (GES), has not incorporated the teaching of the legal instruments such as the UNCRC and the Children's Act of Ghana in the educational curriculum. The study therefore, recommends that GES expand the syllabus to cover the various legal instruments that protect the rights of children, including, the UNCRC, the Children's Act of Ghana, the Human Trafficking Act, the Juvenile Justice Act, among others. The study further recommends to the GES to recruit school social workers to help in the development of teaching and learning materials for the schools in Aburi and Pokrom as well as liaise with the schools, parents and the community to ensure that children's rights awareness is enhanced in these communities.

Also, the study did not seek for the perspectives of chiefs, queen mothers, and parents who are also key stakeholders and agents of socialisation. The study, therefore recommends that future research seek for the views of these stakeholders and also, adopt a different genre of qualitative research design, which may lead to the formulation of a theory.

5.4 Implications for Social Work

Social work as a profession is grounded in the principles of human rights and thus, the findings of the study have implications for social work practice. The study, therefore recommends the following for social work practice.

Social workers as advocates should advocate and lobby for the enforcement and effective implementation of the various laws and other child-related policies on children's rights in Ghana, such as the children's Act of Ghana, the Juvenile Justice Act, and many others to ensure that the rights of children are protected and respected. Additionally, Social workers should advocate for the provision and adequate supply of teaching and learning materials on children's rights to the various schools to ensure effective teaching and learning of children's rights in schools, which will in turn enhance knowledge about children's rights. Social workers can also liaise with GES to help in the design of teaching and learning materials on children's rights.

Social workers could embark on public education to enlighten community members, including children about children's rights and the need to respect the rights of children. This could be done by organizing community durbars, as well as utilising various media platforms like community information centres, radio, television and even through the newspapers. Social workers could also go to the various schools to organise workshops, educate both teachers and students about children's rights and particularly encourage the teachers to respect the rights of students. Also, Social workers, particularly, those in academia, should also intensify research in the field of children's rights and use their findings to help strengthen policy design and implementation so as to enhance awareness and respect for the rights of children, not just in Aburi and Pokrom, but Ghana in general.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Demographic Information of Students

Introduction:

I am Mercy Appiah, an MPhil student at the University of Ghana, Department of Social Work.

I am undertaking a study titled; *Children's Awareness of their Rights in Ghana: The Case of Junior High School Students in Aburi and Pokrom.*

The objective of the study is to explore children's awareness of their rights as provided for by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international and national instruments that seek to protect the rights of children. Based on the findings of the study, appropriate recommendations will be made to help provide information that will help policymakers and other stakeholders develop policies and strategies that will enhance awareness creation on children's rights within the district. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and used only for the purpose of this research.

Kindly answer the following questions.

Demographic Information

1. What is your sex? A. Male----- B. Female-----
2. What is your age? -----
3. Where do you attend school? -----
4. Which level are you? -----
5. Name the town or the locality you stay. -----
6. For how long have you stayed in this town or locality? -----
7. What is your religion? A. Christian B. Moslem C. Traditional D. Other (please specify) -----

Appendix II: Demographic Information of Key Informants

Introduction:

I am Mercy Appiah, an M.Phil. student at the University of Ghana, Department of Social Work.

I am undertaking a study titled; *Children's Awareness of their Rights in Ghana: The Case of Junior High School Students in Aburi and Pokrom.*

The objective of the study is to explore children's awareness of their rights as provided for by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international and national instruments that seek to protect the rights of children. Based on the findings of the study, appropriate recommendations will be made to help provide information that will help policymakers and other stakeholders develop policies and strategies that will enhance awareness creation on children's rights within the district. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and you only for the purpose of this research.

Kindly answer the following questions.

Demographic Information

8. What is your sex? A. Male----- B. Female-----
9. What is your age? -----
10. Which community do you work? -----
11. Where do you stay? -----
12. Your profession? -----
13. Numbers of years worked? -----

14. What is your highest educational attainment?

A. None B. primary C. Secondary D. Tertiary E. Others (please specify).

7. If a teacher, what subject do you teach? -----

8. What is your religion? A. Christian B. Moslem C. Traditional D. Other (please specify) --

Appendix III: Interview Guide for Students

Objective 1: Knowledge About Children's Rights

1. Can you please tell me what you know about children's rights?
2. Kindly describe how you first heard about children's rights.
3. When we talk about children's rights, how do you understand it?
4. What are some of your rights as a child?
5. Where and how did you learn about children's rights?
6. Tell me about laws and policies you know provide for the rights of children at the international and local levels.
7. What do you know about the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC)?
8. What have you heard about the children's Act of Ghana 1998 (Act 560)?
9. What do you understand by children's rights to provision? Kindly mention some of these rights.
10. How is your right to provision respected in the home?
11. How is your right to provision respected at school?
12. How do you understand children's rights to protection? Can you explain how your right to protection is being catered for?
13. What does right to participation mean to you?
14. How do you exercise your rights to participation respected in the;
 - i. home
 - ii. school
15. Which one word in your dialect can be used to explain rights?

16. What do you consider to be your duties and responsibilities as a child?
17. Where did you learn about your duties and responsibilities?
18. Would you say you have adequate information about your rights? Please explain
19. Which of your rights do you consider most important and why?
20. Which of your rights do you consider the least important?
21. Where do you get information about children's rights?
22. What other information do you have about children' rights?

Objective 2: Factors that Hinder Children's Rights

1. What factors do you think can prevent children from enjoying their rights?
2. Do you think adults respect the rights of children? Why?
3. Why do you think some children may not be aware of their rights?
4. Why do you think people abuse the rights of children?
5. What are some of the common forms of abuse that children experience in the home and school?
6. How can lack of awareness hinder children from enjoying their rights?
7. Will you seek redress if your rights are violated?
8. Where and how will you seek redress?
9. Do you think poverty can hinder children's rights promotion? Please explain why.
10. Do you agree that traditional practices like early marriage, denies children of their rights? Please why.
11. What other factors do you think can hinder children's rights and why?

Objective 3: Benefits Children Derive from Knowing about their Rights

1. What benefits do you think you can get from knowing about your rights?
2. Do you think being aware of your rights can make you responsible person? Why?
3. Why do you think you can be assertive and stand for your rights if you are aware of your rights?
4. How will knowledge of your rights influence your attitude towards other people's rights?
5. Would being aware of your rights help to enhance your academic performance? How?
Please explain
6. How will others benefit if you are aware of your rights?
7. Do you agree to the claim that being aware of your rights will make you disrespectful?
Why?
8. What else would you want to add to what we have discussed?

Objective 4: Ways to Enhance Awareness about Children’s Rights

1. How do you think education on children’s rights should be carried out?
2. How will your suggestion help to increase children’s awareness of their rights in this community?
3. Why do you think translating the UNCRC and the children’s Act of Ghana into local languages can help in raising awareness on children’s rights?
4. How can religious organizations help to raise awareness on child rights?
5. In what ways do you think attending conferences, workshops and seminars on children’s rights can enhance awareness on children’s rights?
6. How can the establishment of child rights clubs in schools help to promote awareness on children’s rights?
7. How can games and drama be used to promote awareness on children’s rights?
8. What other means in your opinion can help create awareness on child rights?

Thank you very much for you time!

Appendix IV: Interview Guide for Key Informants

1. In your opinion, do children in Aburi/Pokrom know about their rights? Please explain?
2. Why do you think children should have rights?
3. What ways do children learn about their rights in this community?
4. What benefits do you think children can derive if they know about their rights?
5. Do you think children are fully enjoying their rights? Kindly tell me why?
6. Which of their rights do you think they are enjoying and why?
7. Which of their rights are they not enjoying and why do you think so?
8. Which of their rights do you think they are aware of the most and why?
9. Which rights of children are mostly respected and why?
10. Which rights of children are normally abused? Kindly explain why?
11. What are the factors that you think can hinder children in your community from enjoying their rights?
12. Have you taught your students about the UNCRC and the children's Act of Ghana?
13. What do you consider as some of the factors that hinder children from fully enjoying their rights?
14. What do you teach your students to do when they think their rights are violated?
15. What in your opinion can be done by stakeholders (teachers, parents, government, etc.) to enhance children's awareness of their rights?
16. Apart from teaching children's rights in the classroom, what other ways do you think can be used to enhance awareness about children's rights?

Thank you very much for your time!

Appendix V: Assent Form for Students

General Information

My Name is Mercy Appiah, an MPhil student at the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana, Legon. As part of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree (MPhil) in Social Work, I am conducting a study titled *Children's Awareness of their Rights in Ghana: The Case of Junior High School Students in Aburi and Pokrom*. The aim of the study is to explore children's knowledge of their rights in order to make recommendations that will aid policymakers and all stakeholders to develop programs that will enhance children's awareness of their rights.

Data collection Procedure

As a participant for this study, you will be required to provide information about yourself and answer questions about your knowledge on children's rights, factors that you think militate against children's rights, the benefits of children's rights and ways you think could help to improve children awareness of their rights. You will provide this information through a one-on-one interview with the researcher which, with your approval, will be audio-recorded. The interview session will last between 45 minutes to one hour at a place that is both appropriate and convenient for both you and the researcher.

Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation

All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and used for the purpose of this study only. The data collected will be kept on the researcher's personal computer and protected with a password. Additionally, participants' real names will not be used in the final research reporting.

Please note that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to decide whether you want to take part in the study after reading through the information provided. You are also free to opt out of the study even after you have started.

For further information about this study, kindly contact the researcher on;

Telephone number: 0248294991

Email: mecatteh@gamil.com/mappiah023@st.ug.edu.gh

Assent

I have thoroughly read and understood the information provided about the study and I agree to participate.

Signature-----Date-----

Witness

Signature-----Date-----

Researcher

Signature-----Date-----

Appendix VI: Consent Form for Key Informants

General Information

My Name is Mercy Appiah, an MPhil student at the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana, Legon. As part of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree (MPhil) in Social Work, I am conducting a study titled *Children's Awareness of their Rights in Ghana: The Case of Junior High School Students in Aburi and Pokrom*. The aim of the study is to explore children's knowledge of their rights in order to make recommendations that will aid policymakers and all stakeholders to develop programs that will enhance children's awareness of their rights.

Data collection Procedure

As a participant for this study, you will be required to provide information about yourself and answer questions about your knowledge on children's rights, factors that you think militate against children's rights, the benefits of children's rights and ways you think could help to improve children awareness of their rights. You will provide this information through a one-on-one interview with the researcher which, with your approval, will be audio-recorded. The interview session will last between 45 minutes to one hour at a place that is both appropriate and convenient for both you and the researcher.

Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation

All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and used for the purpose of this study only. The data collected will be kept on the researcher's personal computer and protected with a password. Additionally, participants' real names will not be used in the final research reporting.

Please note that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to decide whether you want to take part in the study after reading through the information provided. You are also free to opt out of the study even after you have started.

For further information about this study, kindly contact the researcher on;

Telephone number: 0248294991

Email: mecatteh@gamil.com/mappiah023@st.ug.edu.gh

Consent

I have thoroughly read and understood the information provided about the study and I agree to participate.

Signature----- Date-----

Witness

Signature----- Date-----

Researcher----- Date-----

Appendix VII: Consent Form for School Authorities and Parents

General Information

My Name is Mercy Appiah, an MPhil student at the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana, Legon. As part of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree (MPhil) in Social Work, I am conducting a study titled *Children's Awareness of their Rights in Ghana: The Case of Junior High School Students in Aburi and Pokrom*. The aim of the study is to explore children's knowledge of their rights in order to make recommendations that will aid policymakers and all stakeholders to develop programs that will enhance children's awareness of their rights.

Data collection Procedure

Participants will be required to provide information about themselves and answer questions to assess their knowledge about children's rights, factors that students think militate against children's rights, the benefits of children knowing about children's rights and ways they think could help to improve children awareness of their rights. The children will provide this information through a one- on -one interview with the researcher which, with your approval, will be audio-recorded. The interview session will last between 45 minutes to one hour at a place that is both appropriate and convenient for both you and the researcher.

Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation

All information provided will be kept strictly confidential and used for the purpose of this study only. The data collected will be kept on the researcher's personal computer and protected with a password. Additionally, participants' real names will not be used in the final research reporting.

Please note that students' participation in this study is entirely voluntary. They are free to decide whether they want to take part in the study after reading through the information provided about the study, are also free to opt out of the study even after you have started.

For further information about this study, kindly contact the researcher on;

Telephone number: 0248294991

Email: mecatteh@gamil.com / mappiah023@st.ug.edu.gh

Consent

I have thoroughly read and understood the information provided about the study and I agree to allow my students/ ward to participate.

Signature----- Date-----

Witness

Signature----- Date-----

Researcher----- Date-----