

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



**RETURN-MIGRATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A CASE OF
KASSENA NANKANA EAST MUNICIPALITY, GHANA**

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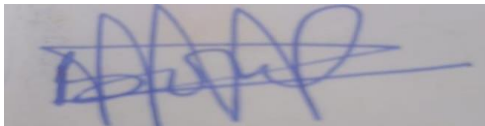
**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN MIGRATION STUDIES.**



OCTOBER, 2024

DECLARATION

I, Kwadwo Addae Kodom Clement, declare that this thesis, excluding quotations and references from other people's works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work. It has not been submitted, either in part or in whole, for another degree elsewhere.



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DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to the sovereign God who reigns in majesty forever and ever, to my parents, Mr. John Paul Kwadwo Kodom and Mrs. Mary Adwoa Akyaa Opoku Kodom, and to my children, Nana Kwame, Nana Kofi, and Nana Yaw, to my sisters Maame Adanse and Akua Agyeiwaa for their unwavering support throughout this academic journey.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I express my deepest thanks to God Almighty for His grace and mercies that have enabled me to complete this work. I extend my profound gratitude and appreciation to my supervisors, Professor Stephen Owusu Kwankye, Dr Terry Bright Kweku Ofofu and Dr. Obodai Torto. I am eternally grateful to them for their encouragement, motivation, corrections, and valuable suggestions, without which this work would not have been a success. I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to all the respondents of the study who took time out of their busy schedules to participate. To them, I say 'De N lei' or 'Mpursia' (Thank you). Furthermore, I appreciate the cooperation and assistance of the entire staff of the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS).

I am grateful to Dr Eric Gyampoh who made insightful comments and shared some useful materials with me, Dr Gyasi Agyemang made timely contributions to this study.



ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of return migration is gaining recognition within the field of migration studies. In Ghana, internal population movements have historically been significant. However, while international return migration and reintegration receive considerable attention, internal return migration is relatively understudied. Consequently, there is limited knowledge about how internal return migration affects critical issues such as community development and indigenous socio-cultural practices in the Ghanaian context. This research focuses on the internal return migrants of the Kassena Nankana East Municipality (KNEM) in Ghana to address this gap. The study explores the motivations for migration among these returnees, examines the process of return migration, and assesses the role of return migration in community development initiatives and indigenous socio-cultural practices within KNEM. Using a qualitative research methodology, interviews were conducted with 39 participants, including 35 internal return migrants and four key informants (opinion leaders) in KNEM. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were employed, and thematic analysis, assisted by NVIVO, was used to analyze the data.

The study highlights a variety of reasons for leaving KNEM, largely shaped by socio-demographic factors, with employment and economic motivations being the most common. Notably, the primary reason for return migration among most of KNEM's returnees was to retire or return home during old age. Other significant reasons included starting businesses after acquiring skills and capital, pursuing political ambitions, and fulfilling family and social responsibilities.

Return migrants faced a mix of challenges and opportunities while away from KNEM, both positive and negative. Key experiences shared by participants include learning to adapt to different social and cultural environments, enhancing work ethics and perseverance, learning

from social networks, achieving financial independence and discipline, and personal growth in terms of confidence and self-development.

The study also finds that many return migrants were well-prepared psychologically, financially, and technically before returning to KNEM. Upon their return, they contributed significantly to their communities, especially by generating employment, offering skills training, and providing financial support through their entrepreneurial activities and investments. In terms of their influence on local socio-cultural practices, return migrants had both positive and negative effects. On the positive side, they promoted progressive attitudes toward female education and child marriage, opposed female genital mutilation, and encouraged a scientific approach to health and disease. However, some exhibited disregard for social norms and values that clashed with KNEM's traditional customs. The findings also reveal that most return migrants experienced a smooth reintegration process, which was largely attributed to the social capital and contacts they maintained during their time away, as well as their financial and economic status. From the perspective of local leaders and residents, respecting traditional customs and values is considered a key factor in ensuring the successful reintegration of return migrants in KNEM.

Recommendations include further research on return migration within Ghanaian migration literature, greater government support—especially through institutions like MASLOC—to stimulate the local economy, and initiatives to educate on farming practices and create markets for agricultural products. Successful reintegration is seen as a joint effort between return migrants and KNEM residents, with community leaders and stakeholders playing an active role by providing opportunities for retraining and economic advancement.

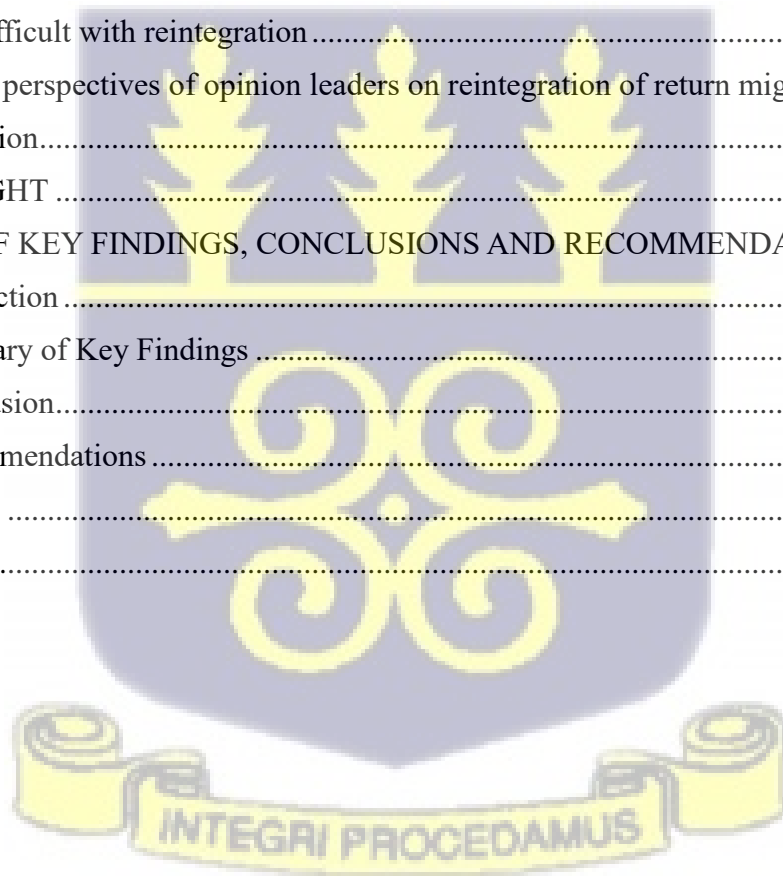
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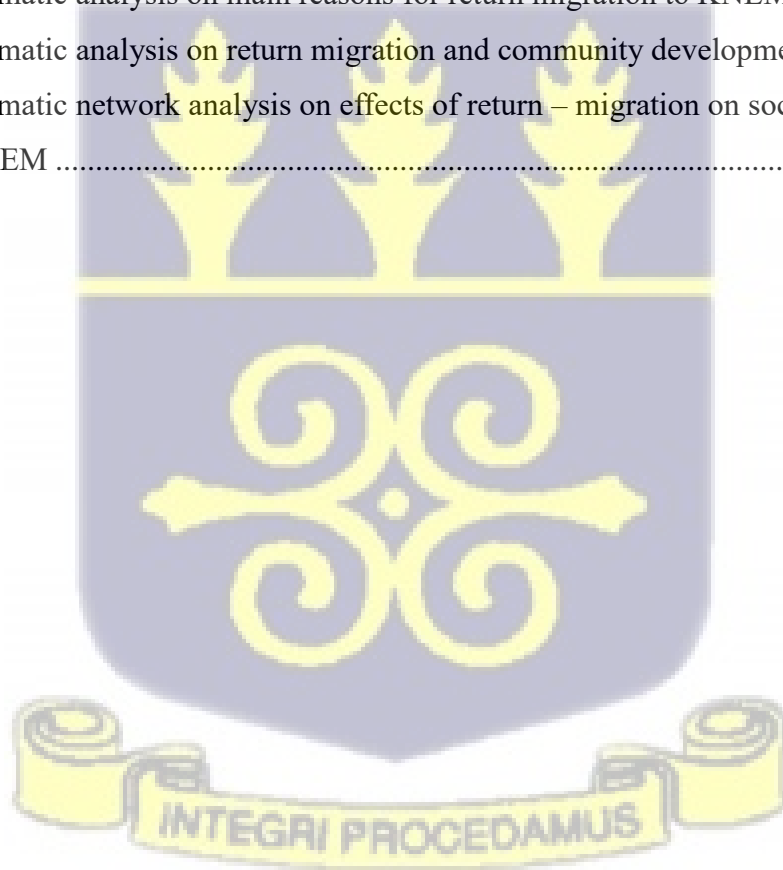


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ACRONYMS

KNEM	Kassena Nankana East Municipality
NVIVO	Non numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing
MASLOC	Microfinance and Small Loans Centre
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
IOM	International Organization for Migration
GCIM	Global Commission on International Migration
IMF	International Forum on Migration
GDP	Gross Domestic Profit
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
NELM	New Economics of Labor Migration
KIO	Key Informants One
KIOT	Key Informants Two
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
DYG	Develop Youth Ghana
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
GPS	Global Positioning System
JHS	Junior High School
SHS	Senior High School
GAR	Greater Accra Region
CARRI	Community and Regional Resilience Institute
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
UNITERM	The United Nation Terminology
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
KNWD	Kassena Nankana West District
KNMA	Kassena Nankana Municipal Assembly
LI	Legislative Instrument

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Migration is simply a global phenomenon with the potential to shape societies, economies, and cultures. This concept has gained significant traction among academics, considering the interest demonstrated in studies on return migration and community development. The key concept under discussion in this study is “Return migration” which is simply defined as the process of individuals returning to their home communities or countries of origin after a period of residing outside of their home region or country has emerged as a crucial dimension of contemporary migration patterns (OECD, 2024; Debnath, 2016). This phenomenon carries significant implications for community development, with potential benefits and challenges that warrant in-depth scholarly investigation.

For a better and holistic appreciation of return-migration and community development in the selected district in Ghana, it is proper to recognize the global perspective on this concept. There have been significant movement of people from diverse backgrounds, mainly driven by economic opportunities, socio-cultural factors, conflicts, and climate change, and these factors are either powered by push or pull factors (Alarcón, 2011; Schürmann, et al, 2022). This dynamic movement of individuals across borders has created a complex web of interactions that influence both migrants and their communities of origin. Conducting a study in this emerging pattern of migration and how it impacts on community development is of much significance in the migration literature.

Throughout history, migration has maintained an intricate and symbiotic relationship with economic and social development. Often seen as a consequence of developmental disparities, it simultaneously possesses the transformative power to shape the trajectory of development itself (Van & Davids, 2013). Evaluations of the impact of migration on development have

experienced fluctuation over time, with perceptions oscillating between regarding migration as a positive force and a hindrance to development (Vlase, 2013). These shifts in perspectives are closely linked to historical contexts and specific circumstances, leading to a diversity of migration and development policies (Von Reichert, Cromartie & Arthun, 2014).

In the 21st century, migrants now have unprecedented ease in returning to their homelands, remitting funds, and maintaining contact with their families, thanks to the transformative impact of technology. Recent technological advancements have provided individuals with extensive access to information through satellite television broadcasts, mobile phones, and the internet, broadening their awareness of the world and diverse opportunities (Pîrvu & Axinte, 2012). As a result, governments and policymakers have increasingly acknowledged the importance of international migration, implementing policies that address immigration, emigration, and return migration (Saar, 2018).

Within the realm of international migration, a distinctive category comprises migrants who ultimately decide to return to their home countries (Paparusso & Ambrosetti, 2017). The dynamics of return migration remain intricate, defying precise prediction due to the multitude of factors influencing this decision, often challenging to quantify.

In contrast to other forms of migration, return migration has recently gained heightened attention in migration studies (Weldemariam, et al., 2023; OECD, 2024; De Haas et al., 2015). Scholars began delving into this phenomenon only in the 1970s, and it continues to be a relatively obscure and underexplored area of study (Elizabeth, 2015, p. 1). Researchers have examined the motivations driving migrants to return home, encompassing both economic and non-economic factors. These factors may include severe illness, concerns about family cohesion, apprehension about marital dissolution, or the passing of a relative responsible for caring for young children (Carling et al., 2015, p. 19). Return migration decisions can fluctuate

as circumstances change, whether due to the fulfillment of economic objectives in one country or the failure to achieve desired goals (Samuel & George, 2002, p. 39).

Research indicates that while obtaining precise estimates can be challenging, the global number of internal migrants surpasses that of international migration (Yaqub, 2009; UNDP 2009; Bell and Muhidin, 2009). In the Ghanaian context, a greater proportion of all migration types within the country involve internal migration (IOM. 2019; Yahaya, 2021). However, some studies suggest that most migration research in Ghana, particularly concerning the reintegration of return migrants, predominantly are concentrated on international return migrants, predominantly those from Western nations (Ehwi, Maslova & Asante, 2021; Rahman & Salisu, 2021; Yendaw, 2013; Wong, 2014; Mensah, 2016).

Internal movement in Ghana has a longstanding history, with experts extensively studying the causes, patterns, and effects (Piracha & Vadean, 2010; De Vreyer et al., 2010; Awumbila, 2007; Hashim, 2007). These movements often center on locations such as Greater Accra, Ashanti, Western, and Western North regions, indicating a migratory pattern from less economically endowed to more economically attractive regions. Notably, the bulk of internal migration research in Ghana has tended to focus on rural-urban migration due to macroeconomic factors, including urban-biased policies, and social conditions in rural areas (Anarfi et al., 2018; Ewusi, 1986).

Concerning return migration, which involves repatriation, removal, deportation, assisted return, or individuals returning on their own initiative to their country or place of origin (Carling et al., 2015), limited attention has been given to the return migration experiences of internal migrants and their reintegration into their hometowns and rural areas in Ghana. While the reasons for internal out-migration are relatively well understood, the motivations behind returning to rural origins or hometowns, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), remain

poorly explored (Hirvonena and BieLillerb, 2015). Reintegration generally refers to the process by which returnee migrants reintegrate into society in their home country or community (Anarfi and Jagare, 2005). Comprehending the role played by internal return migrants in their communities is crucial, as emphasized by Deane et al. (2013), who argue that migration contributes to technological innovation and development in rural areas. This is facilitated through the introduction of new ideas and information, coupled with the investment of accumulated funds repatriated by returnee labour migrants.

The decision to return home is driven by a combination of professional and personal factors at both the origin and destination, as highlighted in the works of Yendaw (2013) and King (2000). Research on return migration identifies three primary ways in which return migrants contribute to rural development in their home countries. First, their financial resources, when wisely invested, can revitalize the adoption of new technologies (Piracha & Vadean, 2010; De Vreyer et al., 2010). Second, the knowledge, skills, and familiarity with new technologies acquired abroad can be applied upon return, fostering technological advancements (Mahuteau & Tani, 2011; Kuschminder & Butcher, 2012). Third, the increased social capital of return emigrants contributes to rural development by creating new networks, perspectives, norms, and values (Castaldo et al., 2012). Similar to international return migrants, internal return migrants, with their human capital, financial resources, and social standards, play a vital role in supporting their origin communities. They are more likely than non-migrants to engage in entrepreneurial activities, be self-employed, or contribute to the development of their communities (De Vreyer et al., 2010; Piracha and Vadean, 2009).

Migration has historically been associated with economic and social development, viewed as a consequence of developmental imbalances, yet also recognized as a potential catalyst for progress. The dynamic relationship between migration and development has been a subject of debate across different historical events and settings (Osman, 2020). Mensah's (2012) study on

the reintegration experiences of Ghanaian migrants returning from Libya provides insights into the impact of a sudden halt in remittances on family spending, especially on children's education, and sheds light on the coping strategies adopted by returnees in the absence of formal reintegration assistance.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2020 underscores the importance of understanding the dynamics of return migration and its implications for community development, a sentiment echoed by various scholars (Adams, 2016; Sherbinin, 2016; Haas, 2016; Niimi & Ozden, 2006). Given that the majority of Ghana's migration experience is internal, there is a need for a more in-depth examination of the phenomenon of return migration, particularly within the Ghanaian context. Hence, this study aims to investigate the link between internal migrants' return migration, community development, and reintegration experiences, utilizing return internal migrants in the Kassena Nankana East Municipality (KNEM) of Ghana's Upper East Region as a case study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Significant strides have been made in the scholarship on return migration in recent years, yet it remains relatively overlooked in much of the mainstream migration studies literature (King & Kuschminder, 2022). Bell et al. (2015), for instance, note that issues such as how internal return migration influences community development have received less attention compared with other areas of migration research, such as remittances from migrants and the nexus between rural and urban migration, among others.

Research suggests that among the different stages of the migration process, return is the one that is least well understood, noting that, like departure, return also entails a complex decision-making process involving a wide array of factors (LES MIGRATIONS, 2013; IOM, 2013). It

is also noted that the motives guiding return are highly context-dependent, complex, and multi-layered and therefore cannot be easily categorized (Bastia, 2011).

In the context of Ghana, a significant challenge in return migration research has been the disproportionate emphasis on international return migration, neglecting the exploration of issues associated with internal return migration within the country (Abdulai, 2016; Yendaw, Tanle, & Kumi-Kyereme, 2013; Caarls & Mazzucato, 2015; Mazzucato et al., 2015; Dito Mazzucato & Schans, 2017; IOM, 2015; Kyei, 2013; Mensah, 2012). So, in effect, little attention is paid to the processes and experiences of internal return migrants.

Furthermore, the impact of internal return migration on community development as understood in other parts of the world has not been brought into the Ghanaian context in order to provide a foundation for advanced comparative knowledge on the phenomenon and even place it in the context of Ghanaian migration research discourse.

More so, while the existing literature on migration has not explored much into the connection between internal return migration and community development in Ghana, there is still a noticeable research gap in understanding the role of cultural capital as a mediator in this nexus. Cultural capital, defined as the knowledge, skills, and cultural resources possessed by individuals or groups, can significantly impact the way internal return migrants contribute to community development. Questions regarding the preservation, transmission, and utilization of cultural capital in the context of internal return migration and its subsequent impact on community development remain largely unexplored. The gap here lies in the limited exploration of how the cultural capital acquired by internal return migrants during their migration experience influences their ability to contribute effectively to community development upon return, and thus, a comprehensive investigation into the mediating role of

cultural capital could provide valuable insights into the dynamics of internal return migration and its implications for community development.

Moreover, even with the noted research on internal migration in Ghana, much of the literature on the research on migration in Ghana focuses more on metropolitan destinations, urbanization challenges, and the effects of migration on migrants' wellbeing in these destination places when it comes to understanding internal migration (Anderson, 2001; Dugbazah, 2007). For instance, Kwankye et al. (2007) studied the independent north-south child migration in Ghana and the decision-making process involved; Hashim (2007) explored the interconnections between children's migration and children's access to formal and non-formal education in Ghana. Mensah-Bonsu (2003) also studied migration and environmental pressure in Northern Ghana. Sulemana (2003) focused on the patterns, determinants, and implications of north-south migration on both origin and destination areas.

What is left to be understood from the Ghanaian migration literature is the experiences and role internal return migrants play in rural community development in Ghana. Moreover, there exists a notable research gap in understanding the gender-specific dimensions of this impact. The experiences, roles, and challenges faced by returning men and women may vary significantly, and a deeper investigation into these gendered dynamics is essential. The research gap centres on the need for a nuanced examination of how internal return migration influences the socio-cultural fabric of the place of origin differently for men and women. This includes exploring questions related to changes in gender roles, power dynamics, social networks, and community relationships that may result from the return migration experience.

Also, most of the research on return migration and reintegration of returnees ignores the reality that most internal migrant movements in Ghana are transitory and typically result in return migration. As a result, there is a paucity of research on the theoretical and empirical basis for

understanding internal return migration and reintegration experiences. Meanwhile, a thorough knowledge of the dynamics of internal return migration, including returnees' reintegration processes, is a critical issue that demands empirical investigation.

In the case of the Kassena-Nankena Municipality, which is undergoing economic and social development in areas such as agriculture, trade, manufacturing, and services, little is known about the contribution of the many internal return migrants within these sectors as well as other areas of the Municipality's development.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study's overarching objective is to investigate the relationship between internal return migration and community development utilizing Kassena Nankana East Municipality as a case study. The specific objectives are as follows:

- i. To examine the main reasons for migration of the return migrants of Kassena Nankana East Municipality.
- ii. To examine the process of return migration (including the major reasons for returning, the pre-return migration process and reintegration experiences) of internal return migrants' resident in the Kassena Nankana East Municipality.
- iii. To examine the role of return migration towards the community development initiatives of the Kassena Nankana East Municipality.
- iv. To examine the effects of return migration on indigenous socio-cultural practices within the Kassena Nankana East Municipality.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What are the major reasons for migrating out of the Kassena Nankana Municipality?
- ii. What are the processes of return migration and reintegration of internal return migrants in the Kassena Nankana East Municipality?
- iii. What role do return migrants play in the development of Kassena Nankana East Municipality, and how would the experience of return migrants affect the indigenous sociocultural traditions in the Municipality?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The migration literature in Ghana has largely focused on rural-urban migration and north-south migration, as well as the consequences on the lives of migrants at their destinations (Wouterse, 2010; Kwankye, Anarfi, Tagoe & Castaldo, 2009), without much attention to the relevance of return migration in relation to reintegration and development. Understanding return migration is critical because a detailed knowledge of the dynamics of internal return migration, including returnees' reintegration processes, is relevant in understanding Ghana's overall migration picture as well as providing a basis for reference for policymakers and stakeholders in the management of return migration-related issues.

Also, places or communities of origin are thought to gain from migrant returns, although little proof is presented in most circumstances in terms of internal return movements. This study provides empirical research evidence for comprehending the benefits obtained by communities or otherwise from the standpoint of internal migration.

Furthermore, the activities of return migrants have a nexus with the country's socioeconomic structure, necessitating an empirical investigation to provide a foundation for appropriate state agencies to provide appropriate support for these internal returnees as part of the larger picture

of managing migrant reintegration in Ghana in general. This study will contribute to the scholarly discourse on internal migration in Ghana by supplementing the existing literature on the effects of migration on community development as well as serving as a basis for further future migration and social research investigations.

1.6 Scope of the Study

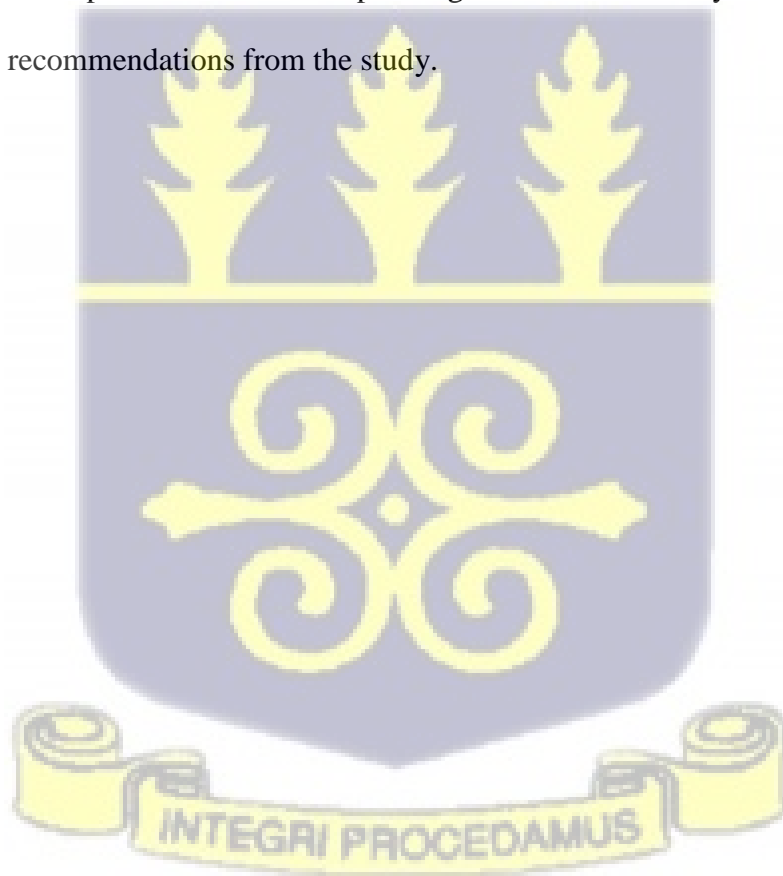
The geographical scope of the study is Kassena Nankana East Municipality. The Municipality as part of the northern part of Ghana is known to experience internal migration with more of its people known to travel to the southern parts of the nation in search of greener pastures for most parts of their lives (Yendaw et al., 2016). To be considered as a participant, only people who have spent at least five (5) years living outside the area and have returned to live permanently in the district were eligible for the research. This is informed by observation by researchers such as Oberai (1984) and King & Christou (2011) that justify the use of a minimum five-year stay abroad as a criterion for identifying return migrants with the explanation that this duration is generally sufficient for migrants to undergo meaningful transformation, experience significant integration abroad through the establishment of social, economic, and cultural ties in the host area, leading to measurable changes in skills, identity, and adaptation while also ensuring easy comparability with short-term movers or temporary visitors.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The study is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter of the study is the Introduction, which includes the background, a statement of the problem, research questions, rationale for the investigation, and the scope of the research. The second chapter reviews the migratory literature over the years, both globally and nationally. The main themes covered here are migration

theories, empirical data on internal migration in Ghana, reintegration, and community development.

The third chapter focuses on the techniques used to gather data for the analysis. It also describes the study location, how participants were identified, the researcher's role, and the constraints and obstacles found on the field. The fourth chapter deals with the socio-demographic profile of the returning migrants interviewed. Chapter Five presents the study findings on the reasons for the return migration and experiences of internal return migrants. Chapter Six presents the findings on the role of internal return migrants in community development in the KNEM. In Chapter Seven, the results of the relationship between return migration and indigenous socio-cultural practices are presented while Chapter Eight has the summary of the key findings, conclusion, and recommendations from the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa, have witnessed a growing interest in internal migration, making it a key policy issue for African policymakers, particularly in the context of the "African Growth Miracle" (McKay, 2013; Radelet, 2010; Young, 2012). Various studies have sought to illuminate this topic by examining the patterns of structural transformation in African economies and rural-to-urban migration across sub-Saharan Africa (Bryceson, Kay, & Mooij 2000; Dorosh & Thurlow 2014; McMillan & Harttgen 2014; McMillan, Rodrik & Verduzco-Gallo 2014; de Brauw, Mueller, & Lee, 2014; Potts, 2010). While physical mobility is often associated with the optimization of anticipated earnings, the majority of internal movements in sub-Saharan Africa still occur between rural-to-rural areas, despite the resurgence of interest in rural-to-urban migration (Castaldo, Deshingkar, & McKay, 2012; Lucas, 2007; Potts, 2013). This type of migration is often driven by marriage, efforts to diversify rural income, or a combination of both (Beegle & Poulin, 2013; Kudo, 2015).

While internal migration is well-documented, there is less understanding of the factors influencing people to return to their rural origins, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Existing literature often categorizes return migration along a success/failure dichotomy, as highlighted by Junge, Revilla Diez, and Schatzl (2013). Return migration is portrayed as a strategic outcome, determined at the household level and resulting from the accomplishment of specific goals or targets set at the initiation of migration (Stark and Bloom, 1985). This is seen as part of the household-level welfare maximization strategy if out-migration was undertaken with the aim of achieving certain savings targets (Cassarino, 2004, p. 255).

Empirical evidence, primarily derived from international migration literature, commonly depicts returnees as successful migrants who remit funds during their migration, return after reaching their savings goals, and act as significant change agents upon their return by bringing capital, new skills, and engaging in entrepreneurial activities (De Vreyer, Gubert, & Robilliard, 2010; Dustmann, 2003; Dustmann & Kirchkamp, 2002; Dustmann & Mestres, 2010; De'mu, 2010). The chapter discusses related literature on return migration. It includes conceptual review (return migration, factors for migrating, overview of return migration in Ghana, challenges, and community development), theoretical underpinnings, conceptual framework and empirical review on the subject.

2.2 Experiences of Migrants

The experiences of migrants are often intertwined with the motivations behind their departure from their home countries or places of origin. Migration is frequently driven by economic considerations, such as the pursuit of better career opportunities and improved living standards (McAreevey, & Argent, 2018). Migrants aspiring for economic advancement may embark on their journeys with feelings of hope, ambition, and a sense of adventure. Scholars argue that the decision to migrate, whether through legal or irregular channels, is typically a complex process influenced by economic, social, and political factors (e.g., De Haas, 2011; Koser & McAuliffe, 2013; McAuliffe, 2013). Other motivations for migration include family reunification and escaping conflict or persecution, with forced migrants often experiencing trauma, fear, and uncertainty as they flee perilous situations (UNHCR, 2019). Conversely, migrants reuniting with family may encounter both joy and challenges (Touzenis et al., 2015).

The migration process itself entails a range of experiences, encompassing the actual travel involving arduous routes (Kuschminder, De Bresser, & Siegel, 2015), risky border crossings,

and the potential for exploitation (McAuliffe, 2017). When examining pathways and determinants in unauthorized migration, it is crucial to consider factors influencing unauthorized migration as a whole. These factors include conditions in the country of origin, circumstances in the intended destination country, individual and social variables, and the impact of policy measures. Facilitating factors, as identified by McAuliffe (2013), also play a role in shaping the migration decisions of both regular and unauthorized migrants. These facilitating elements may involve geographic factors, ease of access to a particular destination, migration policies, such as regulations related to seeking asylum, and the presence of online communication technologies (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Additionally, migrants may encounter legal and administrative barriers, such as visa limits and immigration enforcement procedures, leading to stress and anxiety (Sanchez, 2017).

The type of migration, whether regular (legal) or irregular (unauthorized), significantly impacts migrants' experiences. Irregular migrants often face heightened vulnerabilities due to exploitation and limited access to essential services (Schapendonk, van Liempt, Schwarz, & Steel, 2020). The experiences of immigrants upon arrival in their destination countries vary widely depending on the policies and attitudes of the local populace. A welcoming environment can result in effective integration experiences, including access to healthcare, employment, and education (Van Liempt, & Sersli, 2013). Conversely, discrimination, xenophobia, and exclusionary policies can lead to social exclusion and marginalization (Deshingkar, 2019). Moreover, refugees and asylum seekers often have distinct experiences due to dealing with complex legal processes and asylum systems (Alencar, 2020).

Many migrants display impressive perseverance and adaptation in the face of hardship. They might establish new social networks, pick up new skills, and participate in cross-cultural interactions. These encounters may eventually result in personal development and a sense of belonging (van Liempt, 2018).

2.3 Return Migration

In many instances, return migration stems from a prolonged period of migration, setting it apart from seasonal, temporary, or circular migration characterized by regular movements between the origin and destination (Constant, Nottmeyer, & Zimmermann, 2013; Gmelch, 1980; Potts, 2010; Skeldon, 2012). Return migration, as commonly depicted in the literature, is often perceived as a permanent or semi-permanent return to the place of origin (King, 1986).

While international return migration has been extensively studied, with King (1978) offering a paradigm for analysis and Cassarino (2004) summarizing various concepts, our literature review narrows its focus to empirical data on internal return migration. Junge et al. (2013) provide a comprehensive literature analysis covering both domestic and international return migration, emphasizing the success-failure element.

Empirical studies on reverse rural-urban migration trends in Africa have predominantly focused on macro-level assessments. Numerous sub-Saharan African nations have exhibited a slowdown or stagnation in urban population growth, as evidenced by studies utilizing satellite imagery (e.g., Beauchemin, 2011; Potts, 2009, 2012). In Ghana, a nationwide household survey corroborates this trend, attributing high rates of urban-to-rural migration flow, at least partially, to return migration movements (Castaldo et al., 2012).

Thailand, Vietnam, and China have also undertaken additional empirical studies on domestic return migration, focusing on emerging nations. In the Nang Rong District of North-eastern Thailand, Piotrowski and Tong (2010) observed a return rate of 26% over six years. Junge et al. (2013) reported that 31% of Vietnamese migrants and 26% of Thai migrants returned to their home countries within three years, based on surveys in rural populations across three Thai provinces and three Vietnamese provinces. In China, cross-sectional return rates were estimated to range between 25 and 38%, reflecting potential circular migration due to

institutional barriers like the hukou system (Wang & Fan, 2006; Zhao, 2002). Chinese return migration to rural areas has been empirically studied using cross-sectional data collected through household interviews in origin communities (De'murger & Xu, 2011; Wang & Fan, 2006). Common research areas include self-reported reasons for return and how the economic activities or occupational choices of returnees differ from those of non-migrants.

According to De'murger and Xu (2011), return migrants are considered successful if their skills have improved to the extent that they can engage in entrepreneurial activities, become self-employed, or secure positions requiring high aptitude. Zhao (2002) introduces a less clearly defined success-failure dichotomy, highlighting the necessity of having a non-migrant spouse as a crucial aspect of the return choice. Family factors are also significant drivers of return in the study of Wang and Fan (2006), who emphasize negative reasons for selecting return migration over continuing migration, reinforcing the notion of returnees as potentially failed migrants.

In studies from Thailand and Vietnam, Piotrowski and Tong (2010) and Junge et al. (2013) utilized panel surveys from rural origin communities, tracking movers and potential migrants over three to six-year migration periods. While rich in tracing migration across time, these surveys, like the Chinese studies, rely on proxy respondents and do not monitor migrants throughout the entire migratory spell. Notably, non-economic predictors indicating an unsuccessful migration period were outweighed by the importance of having close family members in the origin community, as observed by Piotrowski and Tong (2010). These findings align with Zhao (2002) and Wang and Fan (2006), emphasizing the significance of family or the failure of migration in the decision to return.

Utilizing an extensive dataset, Junge et al. (2013) conducted a comparison between local return migrants, regional return migrants (those returning to their province but not to their community

of origin), continuing migrants, and non-migrants. Regional return migrants exhibited similar outcomes to ongoing migrants, with higher education levels and lower engagement in agricultural activities. In contrast, local return migrants resembled non-migrants more closely, often influenced by factors like strong family ties and lower educational attainment. The authors underscored the importance of distinguishing between migrants returning to their home villages and those returning to their broader 'home region,' as a significant portion of migration occurs within a region. Return migration in their research is defined as a move back to the place of origin, considering the substantial intra-regional migration observed in the data.

Return intentions are a crucial aspect in the extensive literature examining migrants' motivations to return. The New Economics of Labour Migration (Stark & Bloom, 1985) regards remittances as an integral element of household-level diversification strategy (Cassarino, 2004). Another theory posits that migrants strategically engage in remittance activities to "keep the hope of finally returning home with dignity" (Lucas & Stark, 1985), akin to buying "return insurance" to secure the right to return (De Brauw et al., 2013; Amuedo-Dorantes & Pozo, 2006; Rapoport & Docquier, 2006; Hoddinott, 1994). While many studies use indirect measures like migrant intentions or income uncertainty to infer future return migration (de Brauw et al., 2013; Dustmann & Mestres, 2010; Amuedo & Pozo, 2006), having actual data on individual return migrants allows capturing the "realized risk of return" (Ahlburg and Brown, 1998).

Approximately 25% of the 281 million individuals residing away from their countries of birth are expected to return to their places of origin after completing studies or working abroad. These returnees often bring back valuable assets such as savings, enhanced education, new social networks, job opportunities, and exposure to new skills (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2002). The savings brought back present opportunities for financing new businesses, enhancing

household consumption, providing protection against unexpected hardships, and investing in skills development (Azose and Raftery, 2019; Dustmann and Görlach, 2016). Moreover, the human capital and work experience gained abroad can elevate productivity and innovative abilities, potentially leading to higher wages. Return migrants also exhibit higher rates of entrepreneurship compared to those who never left their home countries (Bahar et al., 2019), contributing to local economic growth through direct investments, job creation, and increased economic vitality (Reinhold and Thom, 2013).

An outlier in this context is the study by Tong and Piotrowski (2010) on Thailand. Their panel data from origin surveys allows them to examine how remittances to the origin community impact actual return decisions. According to their research, remittances are used by migrants as a means to keep the option of returning open by maintaining their membership in the origin home. Although minor remittance amounts predict return, the authors suggest that their results indicate a signalling technique, where migrants secure continued membership in the origin family.

The above discourse shows that, the data on internal return migration is rather weak, especially in an African setting. The requirements of quality and amount of data for a detailed examination of return migration are substantial, and it is believed this may partially explain the scarcity of research in this area. Ideally, to describe return migrants, comparisons should be made both with the continuing migrants (the return migrants' former peers) and with the non-migrants in the home communities (their peers after return), and these comparisons should be made before, during, and after the migration spell.

Return migration to Ghana has increased recently, according to data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (IOM, 2020). For community development, this inflow of returnees poses both opportunities and difficulties. Remittances, which return migrants

frequently send home in the form of money, can make a considerable contribution to local economic growth. These funds might be used to improve local companies, healthcare, education, and infrastructure while also raising general living standards (World Bank, 2020).

Return migration is often influenced by push factors, significant determinants that shape migrants' decisions to return to their home countries. These factors encompass conditions or events in the destination country that compel migrants to reconsider their stay and contemplate a return to their original locations. Economic push factors, such as job losses or unfavorable local economic conditions (Bucheli and Fontenla, 2022), can exert a powerful influence. Migrants facing unemployment or reduced wages in the host country may find returning home a compelling option, particularly during economic downturns, as observed in the global financial crisis.

Beyond economic considerations, non-economic push factors encompass social and individualized elements, including experiences of prejudice, social marginalization, or a longing for connections to one's heritage and family (King and Skeldon, 2010). Discrimination or unfavorable living conditions in the new country may prompt migrants to contemplate a return. Personal factors, such as the desire to reunite with family, feelings of homesickness, or a sense of cultural belonging, can also significantly shape an individual's decision to return (Haug et al., 2018).

2.4 Reasons for Internal Return Migration

Return migration, whether from urban to rural, rural to urban, rural to rural, or urban to urban, is a critical component of internal migration. Also, whether planned or unplanned, return migration is influenced by several factors (Castelli, 2018; Gundel & Peters, 2008). For instance, according to Castelli (2018) the literature on internal return migration suggests that a variety of reasons, including social, political, economic, and cultural, may be at play in this

phenomenon. Meanwhile, there has been discussion on whether the aforementioned elements have a more significant role in the phenomenon of return migration. Other scholars, on the other hand, emphasize how important economic concerns are (Claver, 2013; Dziva & Kusena, 2013; Junge, Revilla & Schatzl, 2013).

On the other hand, none-economic considerations such as returning due to personal reasons such as the death of a family member, a divorce, bad health, homesickness, and the desire to raise children at home have all been seen to have a significant role in return migrations (Thanh, Lebailly, Dien, 2019; de Haas et al., 2015; Chobanyan, 2013; Koehler, Laczko, Aghazarm, & Schad, 2010). Further, other studies on second-generation have shown that return to be associated mostly with non-economic reasons such as lifestyle, family, and life stage and the maintenance of ethnic ties or kinship ties (King & Christou, 2014; King et al., 2011). The importance of personal and social issues in a return migration phenomenon is highlighted by these considerations. A person's desire to return to his or her hometown because of illness or homesickness shows how important his or her childhood home is to him or her. Cromartie von Reichert and Arthun (2015) found that family ties were the primary motivator for people to return to rural areas in the United States. Like inexpensive housing and support from loved ones back home, rural Scotland has been spared from returning migrants in a similar way (Crow, 2010). Returnees' desire to reunite with old acquaintances and experience the nostalgic ambience they may have missed during their absence from their home areas is a major factor in their decision to return. As Wang and Fan (2006) and Piotrowski and Tong (2010) found, close family members (husband, children or mother) in the origin community can help to orchestrate a return migration in rural Thailand.

One of the most common motivations for people to return home is to be with loved ones, to alleviate homesickness, or to achieve a higher social status (Thanh, Lebailly, Dien, 2019; Tenkorang, 2014; Yendaw et al., 2016). According to Adebo and Sekumade (2012), rural

return migration in Nigeria is a result of the intergenerational exchange, the development of extended family life, and a move closer to loved ones. In addition, Tenkorang (2014) found that internal migrants returning to the Wa Municipality in Ghana's Upper West Region was driven by personal and family factors. While Ainsaar (2004) attributed rural return migration in Estonia to family and housing availability, Hirvonen and Helene (2012) on the other hand, cited marital problems as well as the necessity to pursue an inheritance due to the death of a parent as contributing factors in rural Tanzanian communities.

Numerous studies demonstrate that conceptions of belonging and homeland attachment have a strong influence on the residency choices of second generations (Christou, 2006; King & Christou, 2014; Reynolds, 2008; Wessendorf, 2007). In the case of ethnic return migrants, the concept of 'home' is frequently ambiguous, as the migrants may experience significant uncertainty about their place of origin (King, Christou, & Ahrens, 2011), and thus seek a place that provides a strong sense of belonging and identification (King, Christou, & Ahrens, 2011; Wessendorf, 2007).

Return migration is induced by several connected causes, according to other studies. Tsuda (2009) conducted a major study to determine what prompted millions of diasporic migrants to return to Japan, their ancestral origin after decades later. He noted that while economic motivations are the primary cause for returning, ethnic ties and emotional factors also play a role in the decision.

Economic and other motivations can be weighted differently by ethnic group. On the other hand, research on Caribbean (Potter, 2005) and Indian (Jain, 2013) migrants indicated that they returned for economic reasons such as greater job possibilities. Economic and ethnic considerations have frequently been reported and underlined in the literature as significant grounds for a return. Nonetheless, the host destination's negative discourse, as shown in

mainstreamers' hostility toward immigrant groups, xenophobia, perceived discrimination, and racism, may influence immigrants' sense of belonging as well as their decision to return (Kunuroglu et al., 2015; Bolognani, 2007).

Negative social conditions in the context of immigration contribute to integration difficulties and a lack of sense of belonging to the nation of origin. It is well documented in the literature that when individuals are confronted with “racial, racist, and racist discourses and limited access to legal citizenship” (Silverstein, 2005, p. 365), it becomes difficult for them to identify as citizens of the host country, even if they have never lived anywhere else (Klç & Menjvar, 2013). Bolognani (2007) asserts that succeeding generations of Pakistanis view Pakistan as a means of evading stigma in the United Kingdom following 9/11. Noble (2005) asserts in a survey of migrant Australians that incidences of racism directed at Arabs and Muslims since 2001 have caused discomfort for migrants and their children, undermining their capacity to feel at home.

On the other hand, as the Rejection-Identification Model predicts (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999), and exclusionary, the discriminatory environment may reinforce attachment to the heritage country and in-group solidarity (Kibria, Bowman, & O'Leary, 2014; Portes, 1999), leaving immigrants with the sense that they will never truly belong to the country of immigration (Tsuda, 2009b). It has been reported in the literature that many migrants mythologize the city of their ancestral country through legends told to them by elder family members or through nostalgia and recollection (Datta, 2013). The term nostalgia, derived from the Greek words 'nostos' (return) and 'algos' (pain), is now frequently used to refer to the desire to return to a place known as home (Quayson & Daswani, 2013, p. 16), although it was first used by a medical doctor, Hofer (1934), to describe the pathological homesickness of Swiss soldiers serving outside their countries.

However, for succeeding generations, ethnic links are frequently formed through yearly summer vacations, pleasant anecdotes, and a favourable image of homecoming derived from parents' and grandparents' stories and experiences, which can result in a romanticized and idealized home country image (Cohen, 1997; Tsuda, 2003; Wessendorf, 2007). Reynolds (2008) discovered that second-generation ethnic Caribbeans in the United Kingdom, who were never fully integrated into British society, tended to reorient to their ancestral motherland, whose memory had been preserved for them by their parents' tales and frequent return visits.

2.5 Return migration and Legal Implications

They have been diverse discussions on the integration of returnees to their home countries or towns. These policies include but not limited to the following; job, skills recognitions, access to basic amenities and social services. Legal provisions that support returnees' access to education and training can enhance their contribution to community development (Haug et al., 2018). How return migrants can contribute to community development is heavily influenced by the laws and rules governing entrepreneurship and business development. Supportive policies that make it easier to start and maintain a business can entice expats to invest in local businesses, fostering employment creation and economic development (Dustmann et al., 2016). The ability of returnees to reclaim access to land or property they left behind when migrating can be impacted in some areas by laws governing property rights and land ownership. Both returnees and the community stand to gain from clear and equitable property rights laws, which can help reduce disputes and promote beneficial land use (Fokkema et al., 2016). Reintegration policies, which seek to encourage the return and successful reintegration of migrants into their home communities, are an important component of legal frameworks. These regulations may include actions like job placement, skill development, and financial assistance for returnees (Adepoju, 2000). Effective reintegration programs can increase return migrants' contributions

to local development. Returning migrants' rights and community development can be significantly impacted by property rights and land tenure regulations. For returnees to engage in housing or agricultural projects that can boost regional economic activity, they must have a secure land tenure (De Brauw et al., 2013). The welfare of returnees and their communities can be severely impacted by laws governing access to social services and healthcare. By fostering general health and wellbeing, adequate legislative protections that guarantee access to social and medical services can assist community development (Beine et al., 2011).

Legal safeguards against prejudice and exclusion are essential for preventing marginalization of returnees in their communities. Anti-discrimination legislation can enhance community development by creating social cohesiveness and fair chances for return migrants (Bansak et al., 2018). Researchers also take into account how international legal systems influence return migration policy. The management of return migration and its effects on communities can be influenced by international accords and conventions, such as those pertaining to the rights of refugees and migrants (Raghuram, 2013). The participation of expatriate communities in the development of their home nations can also be influenced by legal frameworks. To encourage diaspora involvement in investment, charity, and entrepreneurship, which can have a positive impact on community development, certain nations have passed laws and created institutions (Piper & Uhlin, 2018). To make sure that returning migrants are not treated unfairly, legal protections for returnees must include anti-discrimination and labour rights. Fair treatment can motivate returnees to make investments in their communities and support regional growth (Stark, 2015).

The regulation of migration in Ghana adheres to international agreements, including the UN Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families, regional agreements within ECOWAS, and domestic legislation. It is noteworthy that Ghana lacked a comprehensive National Migration Policy until the year 2016 (Adzei, & Sakyi, 2014).

The management strategy for migration, including return migration, is described in this policy. It underlines the significance of returnees' contributions to national development as well as the necessity of their sustained reintegration into their communities (Mensah, 2016). Immigration concerns in Ghana, including the entry and exit of Ghanaians and foreign nationals, are governed by the Immigration Act of 2000 (Act 573) and later revisions. Although the main focus of this legislation is immigration, by restricting people's freedom of movement, it also has an impact on return migration (Tanle, 2012).

The present legislative framework governing migration in Ghana encompasses several legal instruments. These include the 1992 Constitution, which upholds the principles of free movement as outlined in the ECOWAS Protocol and permits citizenship through birth and marriage. In 1996, an amendment to the Constitution introduced the concept of dual citizenship for Ghanaians. The Citizenship Act of 2000 and the Citizenship Regulations of 2001 (LI 1690) further delineate the requirements for acquiring citizenship through naturalization and registration.

The processes related to the entry, admission, residence, employment, and deportation of immigrants are governed by a series of laws, namely the Immigration Act of 2000 (Act 573), the Immigration Amendment Act of 2012 (Act 848), the Immigration Act of 2016 (Act 908), and the Immigration Regulations of 2001 (L.I 1691) (Setrana, & Tonah, 2018). These legal instruments provide comprehensive guidelines for the management of immigration and the prevention of migrant smuggling. Ghana has diverse laws and regulations concerning return migrations and how these returnees can contribute towards the development of their respective communities. Additionally, the Immigration Act of 2000 (Act 573) and its 2012 amendment (Act 848), along with the National Action Plan on migrant smuggling (2019-2023), specifically criminalize migrant smuggling. In areas of investment in aid of national development, the Ghana Investment Act, 2013 (Act 865) and the Ghana Freezone Act (ACT 504) serve as the

guiding policies for returnees to comfortably explore the numerous opportunities in the country and invest in the preferred area.

2.6 Return Migration in Ghana

Return migration whether international or internal has been part of the migration story of Ghana. Evidence of return migration dates all the way back to the 1980s in the literature on Ghanaian international migration. Since the early 1980s, when Ghanaians were expelled from Nigeria, a series of voluntary and involuntary Ghanaian return migrations have occurred. Throughout Liberia's fourteen-year civil war, Ghanaians were compelled to return to their home country, Ghana, to be cared for by family, in what Dekker (1995) referred to as a 'forced homecoming.

However, Ghanaians in the diaspora have not always felt compelled to return home. For example, whereas Ammassari (2004) examines homecoming via the lens of nation-building and entrepreneurship, Black et al. (2003) examine homecoming through the lens of small business growth in Ghana and the question of whether small business development offers a path out of poverty. Tiemoko (2004) likewise analyses home via the lens of the apparent social transformation it engenders. Since the seventeenth century, African Americans and individuals of African heritage from the Caribbean and South America have also moved to Africa and Ghana (Lake, 1995). In this vein, Bruner (1996) characterised black people from the diaspora's tourism pursuit of Ghana as a return to motherland Africa, especially to Ghana.

Lake (1995) and Bruner (1996) explored the process of identity development among diaspora Africans and Ghanaians returning to their ancestral homeland, Ghana. While Lake concentrates on people who have returned permanently from their time abroad, Bruner examines those who continue to live abroad but are on a tourism expedition to what they refer to as their ancestral

homeland. Thus, it shows that the reunification of Ghanaians living abroad has not been only a preoccupation of individual migrants. Clearly, these people contributed significantly to this endeavour.

However, since the early 1990s, Ghanaian administrations have pursued a variety of return migration strategies with the ultimate goal of luring talented Ghanaians outside. The Rawlings-led administration-initiated Emancipation Day celebrations in the 1990s. This action was taken as part of the government's commitment to assisting African Americans and persons of African heritage, particularly those from the Caribbean and South America, in returning to Africa and Ghana.

The Kufour Government convened a Homecoming Summit in 2001 to recruit and harness the talents and abilities of Ghanaians living abroad to aid the country's growth. Manuh and Asante (2005, p.298) stated the Summit's objectives as follows: 'to develop a process for the restoration of confidence between Ghanaians living abroad and those at home, to strengthen dialogue and explore opportunities for productive relations between Ghanaians living abroad and their country, and to identify means to tap into the acquired capacities of Ghanaians living abroad for the creation of the nation's wealth.'

Return migration has also allowed for the development of skills, experience, and knowledge. As a consequence, 'brain gain' and/or 'brain circulation' have occurred. Return migration, according to Sjenitzer and Tiemoko (2003), includes the transfer of skills and job development on the side of return migrants. According to Twum-Baah et al. (1995), some return migrants got higher-level formal education overseas, making a valuable contribution to the country's human capital building. Diko and Tipple (1992) also concentrate their efforts on Ghanaians' migration and long-distance home construction in London.

In terms of the nature of return, a significant proportion of nationals return voluntarily (on their own) (IOM, 2019). It is impossible to offer precise and thorough statistics. However, IOM aided 620 Ghanaians (564 men and 56 women) to involuntary return home in 2018 (IOM, 2019). This figure is notable because between 2012 and 2017, a total of 1,241 recipients – 634 (585 males and 49 women) in 2017 alone – were supported in returning. IOM aided 816 Ghanaians trapped in Libya between June 2017 and December 2018, 761 of them being confined in detention centres, to return home voluntarily. Among the key regions of origin of these returned migrants include the Brong Ahafo, Greater Accra, and Ashanti Regions (IOM, 2019). However, there are some who are also forced to return. Forced return is described as the administrative or judicial return of a person to his or her place of origin or transit or third nation (IOM, 2019).

2.7 Reintegration and its Challenges

Reintegration, according to the IOM (2015) is the process of re-association of a migrant with his or her country/community of origin or place of habitual residence after some time away from home. Thus, the process of reintegration enables the returnee to engage again in the social, cultural, economic, and political life of his or her nation or community of origin (IOM, 2015; Anarfi and Jagare, 2005). Taft (1979) also describes returnees' reintegration as the original learning of migrants to adjust to the settings upon return to their communities of upbringing. For Taft (1979), the phrase reintegration frequently refers to emotional stability and independence from internal conflicts and tensions that is liberation from psychoneuroses.

Returnees to their communities of origin confront a variety of reintegration challenges, which have been well documented in the literature. In research by Chirum (2011) and Gmelch (1980), it was determined that the need to create new relationships, a sluggish pace of life, absence of social services, and lack of work possibilities were the key deterrents to full integration for the majority of returns to Western Ireland. According to Eikaas (1979), the primary obstacles to

reintegration for returns to the Caribbean were fear of social humiliation by individuals who had not done well at their different destinations, lack of employment opportunities, altered personalities, and climate. Research by Levine (1982) also revealed that low quality of living, housing difficulties, a long wait for work, and family disputes (especially between husbands and wives) were the top re-integration challenges for most Southeast Asian returnees.

In a similar analysis, Marmora and Gurrieri (1994) suggests that individual qualities are among the primary factors connected to post-return resettlement issues for most returnees. For example, Preston (1994) observed that in Namibia, the inability of most returnees to speak fluent English was the greatest impediment to getting education and gaining work. Returning migrants often report emotions of disillusionment, loneliness, a sense of alienation and a sense of not belonging, according to several studies (Long & Oxfeld, 2004; Christou 2006). Cerase (1974) has also researched the reintegration experiences of Italian migrants from the US in the 1960s and 1970s and discovered that the longer the time spent abroad, the more difficult the reintegration into Italy and those who spent less than 10 years in the US have the fewer challenges. Cerase (1974) also discovered that people who retired back to Italy tended to form an isolated group since they were neither able nor willing to integrate themselves into the Italian community.

For the second time, according to McGrath (1991), return migrants are still seen as their group within migration studies. McGrath (1991) stated that most of the migrants returnees experienced a range of various readjustment challenges including the bad economic environment and lack of work possibilities; the unpleasant attitude of locals; and the inefficiency and slow speed of commercial activity. More than a quarter of returnees, according to McGrath (1991), wanted to re-emigrate because of the difficulties they encountered.

As Zachariah and Rajan (2011) point out, one of the biggest obstacles to successful reintegration for returnees is their financial predicament. The Financial status after return and debt difficulties and access to money are obviously of essential relevance for establishing up or remodelling a life back after a return. According to Rajan and Narayana (2010) in Kerala, unemployment is a major barrier to the re-adjustment of returnees, showing that the state was not ready to accommodate them when they first arrived.

Reintegrating involves adapting to new situations without losing one's identity. Because return migrants learn to live with their families and communities, reintegration is characterized as a process of giving and taking (Kyei, 2013). To return to the original community, Potter (2005) believes that reintegration is required since the social and economic milieu has altered since migrants departed. It is also important to consider the sociological differences between the two locations. According to N'Laoire (2007), these factors include the migrant's age before departure, the amount of time spent at the destination, and the kind of interaction with family and friends back home.

2.8 Community Development

Community development may refer to the process in which community people come together to take collective action and produce solutions to common issues (UNTERM, 2014). The concept has also been defined as a deliberate strategy or process for resolving social change issues, a procedure that enables communities to “confront and act on their shared ideals and challenges” collaboratively (Mohapatra & Ratha, 2011, p.16). Debnath (2016) defined community development as a deliberate and systematic effort to assist individuals in acquiring the attitudes, skills, and concepts necessary for their democratic participation in the effective solution of as many community improvement problems as possible in the order of their increasing levels of competence. According to Moreland and Lovett (1997), community

development is a process of education that includes individuals in experiences that teach them how to improve their capacity for self-directed action and destiny.

In the initial stages of development in the 1950s and 1960s, there was a strong emphasis on promoting community development (CD) in the developing world. This emphasis was driven by both governments and United Nations-affiliated institutions as part of broader state-building efforts and in pursuit of improving living standards. These initiatives were closely tied to the movements for independence and decolonization in Africa (Briggs et al., 1997).

During this era, governments and the UN established community development programs with the aim of mobilizing local communities. In the context of Anglophone Africa, Wharf (1999) highlights that community development in the first half of the twentieth century was influenced by the prevailing modernization development theory. The focus was on providing infrastructure as a means of modernizing what was often referred to as the less developed regions of the world.

A substantial body of evidence shows that migration has positive consequences for migrants, their communities of origin, and their host communities (Mohapatra & Ratha, 2011). The economic advantages to the nations of origin are mostly recognized through the influx of remittances, the assistance provided to their home countries by diaspora groups, and the physical return of the migrants to their countries of origin. Debnath (2016) notes that the literature on return migration is limited, with most research focusing on individual countries and regions.

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the potential positive connections between migration and development. This has resulted in an abundance of literature, articles, and global conferences dedicated to exploring this theme. At a local scale, especially in significant regions of South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, research conducted in villages has

underscored the significance of migration as one of the limited strategies available to impoverished communities. It has been shown that migration not only impacts livelihoods but also has a substantial influence on poverty levels (de Haan and Rogaly, 2002).

On the international stage, the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), a United Nations commission that issued a report in 2005, brought attention to the vital role that migration plays in mitigating poverty and addressing unemployment in countries of origin to help in the development of the returnee's community. The commission also highlighted how migration serves as a means of fostering the exchange of new ideas and enhancing mutual understanding between countries of origin and destination (GCIM, 2005: 23).

The available research studies the development consequences of return migration and categorizes returnees' contributions to their home countries into four main categories or channels. Firstly, they contribute new talents (human capital) gained in host nations through experience, training, or education. Second, they may return with financial resources in the form of international savings. This earned cash enables returnees to contribute to their native countries as businesses or investors. Thirdly, they contribute through the social capital (networks) they developed during their migratory experience. Finally, returnees can serve as agents of societal change. For example, they can benefit by questioning and altering established relationships within the founding communities (Debnath, 2016).

Additionally, migrants' personal and professional networks influence their subsequent pursuit of particular activities, such as international commerce, technology transfer, and capitalizing on overseas investment possibilities (Rauch & Trindade, 2002; Dumont & Spielvogel 2008). Transnational ties developed by returnees in both their host and home nations helped them to mobilize required resources, including access to foreign investors, technology transfer and utilization, access to international markets, and access to local human resource pools (Jonkers,

2008; Dumont & Spielvogel 2008). Klagge, Klein-Hitbass, and Fihel (2007) discover that information networks play a significant role in Poland's brain growth. Polish returnees act as "pipelines" to enterprises, institutions, and important actors overseas, hence boosting the opportunities for mutually advantageous external interactions in the receiving areas. Similarly, Chinchilla and Hamilton (1999) conclude in a research paper on Salvadoran and Guatemalan migrants in southern California that the transnational connections of Salvadoran and Guatemalan migrants have resulted in strengthened networks within their origin communities, which have transformed these communities. For example, in southern California, Salvadoran and Guatemalan hometown groups have developed strong networks that have enabled them to generate cash for development initiatives in their respective home countries. Zohry and Debnath (2010) discovered that Egyptians interested in returning home stressed the necessity of keeping strong ties (virtual and physical) between the origin and destination nations in a survey of members of the Egyptian diaspora living abroad.

In Ghana, despite more than five decades of development aid, strategies, and endeavors, it seems that the living conditions of the majority of the population have not significantly improved (De Haas, 2012). Over the past five decades, various attempts by the government, the IMF, and the World Bank to implement programs, policies, and strategies aimed at reversing the deteriorating living standards of the people and establishing a favourable environment for sustained economic growth and prosperity have yielded limited success. The expansion of Community Development (CD) in the 1950s played a pivotal role in driving the social and economic progress of the nation. Various stakeholders, including politicians, civil servants, and religious institutions, all worked tirelessly to establish an effective CD framework for the country. Additionally, traditional local leaders made significant contributions, leveraging their deep knowledge and skills in village development (Abloh and Ameyaw, 1997). Several development theories have influenced the practice of Community Development (CD)

over time. This chapter delves into the pertinent CD theories and concepts that have provided guidance for CD practices. Among these theories are the center-periphery theory, diffusion theory, growth pole theory, and decentralization theory. In addition to these theories, the study also explores key concepts such as CD itself, return migration, participation, empowerment, and mobilization. It examines how these concepts interrelate and inform one another in practical CD applications.

2.9 Return Migration and Community Development

The extant research evaluates the development consequences of return migration and categorises returnees' contributions to their home countries into four major categories or channels. In a study by Debnath (2016) the development significance of return migrants is categorized into four main categories, i.e., they contribute to human capital development by imparting the experiences, training, or education acquired in foreign lands; they may return with financial resources in the form of international savings. This earned cash enables returnees to contribute to their native homes as businesses or investors upon return. Thirdly, they contribute through the social capital (networks) they developed during their migratory experience. Finally, returnees can serve as agents of societal change. For example, they can benefit by questioning and altering established relationships within the founding communities (Debnath, 2016).

In the Ghanaian context, studies by Ammassari (2004) examined homecoming via the lens of nation-building and entrepreneurship. This means that when people return home it is an opportunity for entrepreneurship, some begin to implement ideas that they saw in their previous places of destination in their local communities. Black et al. (2003) also examined homecoming through the lens of small business growth in Ghana and the question of whether small business

development offers a path out of poverty. Black, et al. (2003) study suggested that return migrants brought in the capital that is invested into small businesses, hence growing the SME landscape. Meanwhile, Tiemoko (2004) also analyzed homecoming via the lens of the apparent social transformation it engenders. This means that people who returned to their origin communities are able to ensure social transformation.

Other studies have also suggested that return migration has contributed to the development of skills, experience, and knowledge. For instance, in the study by Sjenitzer and Tiemoko (2003), they found that some of the roles of return migrants in their communities include the transfer of skills and job development. Twum-Baah et al. (1995), also intimated that some return migrants have obtained higher-level of formal education overseas, and are able to contribute to societal development in Ghana via human capital building. Studies by Diko and Tipple (1992) intimated that return migrants contribute to the construction industry by building homes either for themselves or their families.

Returnees' human capital contribution, sometimes referred to as brain gain or skills circulation refers to migrants returning with new and increased skills, technologies, or standards gained during their migratory experience and training or study abroad. Unlike brain drain, which has a negative connotation in the migration literature, brain gain has a positive connotation due to its favourable effect on home nations (Bacchi, 2016).

Returning from abroad often enables returnees to use their gained talents to get more highly skilled employment (with a higher compensation) than they would have obtained had they not moved. Returnees are heavily represented in highly skilled jobs and undervalued in low-skilled crafts, according to research on return migration to Brazil, Chile, and Costa Rica (Dumont & Spielvogel 2008). Likewise, Hlasny and AlAzzawi (2018) observe that returns to West Africa outperformed the non-migrant population in-home labour markets.

Another research on return migrants to Uruguay found that 64% of returnees were working, compared to 43% of the nonmigrant populace (Meyer et al., 2007). As a consequence of the dotcom bubble in the United States, a huge number of Indian and Chinese-born software engineers went home, partially because their work visas could not be extended and partly because they saw greater changes in their home countries (Giordano & Terranova 2012). Due to the reduced transaction costs involved with digitization, these foreign-educated engineers were able to impart institutional and technological knowledge and skills to their native nations.

According to research on China by Vanhonacker, Zweig and Chung (2014), the number of return migrants has climbed at a pace of 13% each year since 1995. Additionally, the majority of these returnees are highly educated people with doctoral and master's degrees from the host nations (Vanhonacker et al., 2014). A 2002 study of Chinese returnees working in high-tech companies in six cities confirmed this trend, revealing that 48% of returnees brought new technology and upgraded skill sets with them (Zweig et al. 2004).

Several other nations, like Argentina, Ghana, Ireland, and Mexico, have profited from the repatriation of their migrants. Between 1993 and 2001, Ireland's GDP grew at an astounding pace of 8.4 percent (average for the period). Around the same period, Ireland saw a quarter-million-person influx, the majority of whom were Irish migrants coming home (Wells 2005).

According to labour force survey statistics, those that returned were generally highly trained and educated (Barrett & O'Connell 2000). Kapur & McHale reached similar findings in a 2005 research study. These authors assert that the Irish instance demonstrates how the return of competent employees who departed over the preceding decade resulted in the present- and future-generation brain growth. Argentina and Ghana have seen similar patterns. According to Jonkers (2008), between 2003 and 2005, over 300 Argentine scientists returned home and began working for government research institutes, assisting the country in reestablishing its

research base. In a similar vein, a Ghanaian study of 302 "elite" returnees—highly educated professionals from relatively privileged segments of Ghanaian society—and 302 "less skilled" returnees reveals that the majority of returnees, particularly those in the elite category, sought to implement changes in their workplaces, drawing on their innovative experiences abroad (Ammassari, 2004). Anarfi and Kwankye (2003) discover similar results in a background piece on Ghanaian migration experiences. Ghanaian migrants, especially those living abroad, remit money to their loved ones and communities back home. These financial resources are essential for enhancing recipient households' financial stability. Investments in local enterprises, housing, healthcare, and education are frequently made through remittances, which can support local economic growth (Asiedu, 2014). Returning immigrants frequently bring experiences, knowledge, and talents from overseas. Communities may undergo a transformation as a result of this human capital. The exchange of knowledge and skills can boost local productivity, improve healthcare, and spur innovation across a range of industries. These contributions improve the community's capacity as a whole (Awumbila et al., 2016). Returnees frequently start their own businesses when they get back home, which can promote economic expansion and employment creation. These people might create their own businesses, make investments in small businesses in their community, or work in agriculture. Such programs may enhance local residents' employment opportunities and aid in the growth of the community (Habtu et al., 2020). Additionally, return migration promotes intercultural dialogue. It can result in a more diversified and richer communal environment when immigrants return with experiences and opinions from other nations. For the tourism, cultural, and creative industries, this interchange can be especially beneficial (Raghuram, 2013). It is crucial to understand that return migration does not always have a beneficial impact. The process of reintegrating into their communities may be difficult for returning residents. If not properly managed, the rapid flood of returns may also put a strain on the community's infrastructure and resources. This

demonstrates how crucial well-thought-out policies and community involvement strategies are to maximizing the advantages of return migration while tackling its difficulties (IOM, 2018).

2.9.1 Financial Contribution through Innovation and Investment

Numerous studies conducted in developing nations reveal that a sizable proportion of returnees will establish enterprises or seek independent work upon their return (Dumont & Spielvogel 2008). This is especially true for migrants who go overseas with the expectation of amassing cash and for those who believe that starting their own firms is the best approach to overcome labour market (re)entry difficulties in their home countries. According to research, entrepreneurial initiatives by returnee migrants aided the economies of China, the Arab Republic of Egypt, India, Morocco, Turkey, and Tunisia significantly (Wahba, 2007; Dustmann & Kirchkamp 2002; Hamdouch & OuldAoudia 2007; Mesnard 2004; Jonkers 2008). Egypt is a case in point of this entrepreneurial tendency.

Remittances are sent to the respective communities to facility development from different perspectives. Remittances are essential for boosting local economies and funding programs for community development. According to Lucas and Stark (1985), these money can be used for a variety of things, including enhancing housing, funding education, and establishing or growing small enterprises. Many people who move back to their hometown invest in small enterprises and their own firms. This may result in the launch of fresh businesses, the growth of current ones, and the opening up of employment prospects for the neighborhood. At the local level, entrepreneurship encouraged by return migration can boost economic growth (Dustmann and Kirchkamp, 2002). Returnees frequently make investments in infrastructure and real estate developments in their home communities. The building or remodeling of residences, the development of commercial buildings, or the funding of public infrastructure like roads,

schools, and healthcare facilities are all examples of this. Such expenditures support local economic growth in addition to improving the physical environment (Awumbila et al., 2016). Farming and agricultural ventures are frequently funded by return migrants with agricultural backgrounds. They might bring cutting-edge farming methods, equipment, and practices brought back from abroad, which can boost agricultural output. In turn, this can increase food security, bring in money for nearby farmers, and encourage rural development.

Per Wahba (2004), the longer Egyptian migrants remain abroad, the more likely they are to establish their own enterprises upon their return. However, some researchers claim that even brief periods of migration contribute significantly to the resurgence of the entrepreneurial spirit among returnee Egyptians (McCormick & Wahba, 2004). According to Wahba's (2007) research on Egyptian returnees, the returnee population notably added to the local economy by creating small enterprises and accounting for 15% of job creation and investment. Returnees' financial money amassed overseas is critical in seeding these enterprises. Their savings level is strongly connected with their decision to pursue self-employment upon their return home (Ilahi, 1999). These are not specific to Egypt's observations. Research indicates that around 26% of Tunisian returnees establish their own enterprises, the bulk of which are supported entirely via their financial resources (savings acquired from overseas) (Mesnard, 2004).

Gouldborne (1999) draws a similar result when examining the situation of Caribbean returnees from the United Kingdom. He emphasises that returnees, notably in Jamaica and Barbados, have made major investments in their home economies. Gubert, De Vreyer, and Robilliard (2007) discover that returnees from OECD nations are more likely to establish their own businesses than people who never emigrated to West Africa. Likewise, Dustmann and Kirchkamp (2002) observed that more than half of Turkish returnees become businesses upon their return.

Ilahi (1999) observes, using cross-sectional data from Pakistan, that upon return, foreign funds became a significant predictor of occupational choice, as returnees with substantial assets selected self-employment (starting their own firms) while others chose wage employment. Murillo Castao (1988) reported comparable results for Colombian returnees. Murillo Castao (1988) discovers that after meeting their fundamental necessities, returnees utilised their foreign funds to create self-employment operations.

2.9.2 Social Capital Contribution

The term "transnational networks" refers to the socio-economic ties and interactions that migrants establish and maintain with their countries of origin and destination (Bilecen & Faist, 2015). Returnees frequently get involved in local politics and community concerns. They might work on development initiatives, take part in community-based groups, or even run for public office. A better representation of local interests and more effective community development initiatives may result from this improved civic engagement (De Haas, 2007). Migrants have the potential to create social capital in their host nations while still keeping it in their home countries. A strong social capital base is critical for reintegration into the nation of origin (Debnath, 2016). Additionally, migrants' personal and professional networks influence their subsequent pursuit of particular activities, such as international commerce, technology transfer, and capitalising on overseas investment possibilities (Rauch & Trindade, 2002; Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008). As discussed in a study by Scheffran, Marmer, & Sow, (2012), the social networks and clouts built by these returnees are used as social capital to contribute towards social resilience and innovation through transfer of knowledge. The host communities can leverage on these flexibility and creativity in response to climate change and sustainability practices (Dapilah, Nielsen, & Friis, 2020) hence opening new ways for societal development of these communities. Some expatriates decide to support local human capital growth and education initiatives. To increase access to education and skill training, they can create

scholarship programs, career centers, or educational organizations. These investments aid in the development of human capital and may improve community members' employment and income prospects (Stark, 2015). Transnational ties developed by returnees in both their host and home nations helped them to mobilise required resources, including access to foreign investors, technology transfer and utilisation, access to international markets, and access to local human resource pools (Jonkers, 2008; Dumont & Spielvogel 2008). China's narrative is similar in terms of returnees and their usage of social media both at home and abroad.

Klagge, Klein-Hitbass, and Fihel (2007) discover that information networks play a significant role in Poland's brain growth. Polish returnees act as "pipelines" to enterprises, institutions, and important actors overseas, hence boosting the opportunities for mutually advantageous external interactions in the receiving areas. Similarly, Chinchilla and Hamilton (1999) conclude in a research paper on Salvadoran and Guatemalan migrants in southern California that the transnational connections of Salvadoran and Guatemalan migrants have resulted in strengthened networks within their origin communities, which have transformed these communities. For example, in southern California, Salvadoran and Guatemalan hometown groups have developed strong networks that have enabled them to generate cash for development initiatives in their respective home countries. The development of trust and social cohesion within the community can be aided by return migration. Returnees frequently carry with them a sense of obligation and dedication to their hometown, which helps strengthen communal ties. According to Mandebvu and Hove (2021), effective collaboration and cooperation in community development programs depend on social cohesiveness and confidence.

Zohry and Debnath (2010) discovered that Egyptians interested in returning home stressed the necessity of keeping strong ties (virtual and physical) between the origin and destination nations in a survey of members of the Egyptian diaspora living abroad. According to existing

literature (Lowell & Gerova, 2004; Meyer and Brown 1999), over 60 electronic networks "connect diasporas worldwide, for the purpose of maintaining connections within what is frequently a dispersed community and sharing information about employment opportunities in the home country" (Dumont & Spielvogel 2008, p.201).

2.9.3 Returnees as Social Change Makers

Although the literature on returnees as agents of social change is limited, it has recently begun to get attention from researchers. Empirical research published in 2014 on Indian skilled diasporas and returnees studied the effect of skilled return migration on India's growth (Siddiqui & Tejada, 2014). Returnees' capacity to effect constructive societal change is contingent upon their social acceptance upon return. The research discovered that a critical element influencing returnees' involvement in development concerns is their identification with a marginalised group in their native country (India). The research defined disadvantaged identification as a person being a woman, a member of a religious minority group, or coming from a rural background, among other characteristics.

Returnees who identified as having these disadvantageous identities expressed a greater desire in contributing to reforms in their home countries' development. Siddiqui and Tejada (2014) ascribed this tendency to the massive disparity between the rights and facilities enjoyed by these groups in their host nations (Europe) and the absence of such rights and facilities in India during their formative years (Siddiqui and Tejada, 2014).

According to another research by Ellis, Conway and Bailey (1996), migratory experiences expose women and men to socioeconomic and cultural norms and practises in host countries, which may reconstruct or temper the patriarchal institutions and traditions in their home countries once these migrants return. Sakka, Dikaiou and Kiosseoglou (1999) compare Greek returnee homes to nonmigrant households and discover that men and women assume different

household responsibilities in migrant and nonmigrant households. Within returnee homes, men and wives were able to transcend their conventionally defined roles and embrace new ones acquired while overseas.

2.10 Return Migration and Indigenous Socio-cultural Practices

Cultural practices and values are the shared ideals of a group of people (Frese, 2015), whereas what is termed "culture" consists of a group of people's common set of fundamental assumptions, values, beliefs, rules, procedures, and behavioral conventions. They affect (but do not dictate) each member's behaviour and their interpretations of the "meaning" that other people give to their behaviour (Frese, 2015; Spencer-Oatey, 2008).

Researchers typically analyze returnees' involvement in religious or cultural activities, and to what degree they follow the norms and values of the society of the community of return. Whenever a migrant decides to return to their home country for whatever reason, the process of re-acculturation begins. Re-acculturation is the process of adapting to one's own culture after spending a long length of time in an old one. Migrants may have created new identities over the course of their journey (Kim, 2001; Sussman, 2000), making the process of re-acculturation more difficult than the initial acculturation process in the host nation.

Cultural integration has a negative link with return intentions: the more integrated migrants were, the less likely they were to declare a return intention, or they were unsure whether to remain or not. However, migrants living in a foreign country and returnees stream new ideas and narratives to their community members, which consequently shift the social norms and institutions in place at home (Tuccio, & Wahba, 2018). Indigenous migrants in their host communities have developed income-generating enterprises based on the commercialization of indigenous arts, crafts, dances, and medicines in order to maintain their access to the natural resources of their ancestral homeland. These donations have served to overcome the negligence

of local, state, and national authorities (Melo Farrera, 2002). In exchange, some indigenous groups have started to accommodate the specific conditions of their newcomers. In certain indigenous communities in Mexico, migrants may now designate another community member to fulfill their responsibilities while they are away (Rivera Salgado, 2004: 15). This permits indigenous migrants to reside and work in their host nations and yet keep their status as members of their indigenous group. The fact that certain indigenous peoples are making particular accommodations for migrants shows a shift in their attitudes on migration and the role that migrants play in traditional cultures. Return migrants might have encountered many cultures and viewpoints while living overseas. The community's cultural diversity may be enhanced by this exposure to people from various backgrounds. For community development, especially in fields like the arts, tourism, and cultural preservation, cultural diversity can foster tolerance, understanding, and innovation (Glick, 2017).

Migration exposes women and men to the socio-economic and cultural norms and practices of the host nations, which in turn may reconstruct or mitigate the patriarchal institutions and other traditions of the home countries once these migrants return there. Research by Sakka, Dikaiou, and Kiosseoglou (1999) comparing Greek returnees from Germany and non-migrants found that the roles men and women play in their families varied between the two groups. Couples who returned from overseas were able to break away from their customary roles and embrace new ones that they were exposed to during their time there.

For a long time, research on the rural-to-urban migration of peasants was used to ignore the substantial characteristics of the indigenous and non-indigenous populations. Now, campaigning for impoverished migrants in cities has included demands to respect the special circumstances of indigenous peoples.

Culturally relevant education, respect for organizational forms, and promotion of traditions are at the heart of their main demands. A historical example of extensive displacement by armed conflict is provided by the situation of Guatemala, where members of the indigenous communities were forcibly removed from their territory during the civil war in that nation (1960-1996). The inclusion of the 1995 Agreement on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Agreement for the Resettlement of Populations Uprooted by the Conflict, which recognized the rights of the Maya, Garifuna, and Xinca peoples by national authorities, was an important part of the Final Peace Agreements of 29 December 1996. After the signing of the peace settlement, IOM assisted in the execution of the peace agreements by enabling the return and reintegration of dislocated indigenous peoples into their villages. This is an example of the involvement that international organizations, governments and civil society may give to alleviate conflict-induced displacement of indigenous peoples that might prove permanent and disruptive for their traditions if left neglected.

Lulle (2017) examines the experience of teens who returned to Latvia and how their inability to speak the language significantly impacted their reintegration experience and well-being. This study shows how essential cultural practices are in everyday life for returnees. A study of four African immigrant groups (Ghana, Senegal, Egypt and Morocco) in Spain and Italy by De Haas and Fokkema (2011), which investigated the impacts of integration and transnational relationships on return migration intentions found that integration and transnational ties had a positive impact on return migration intentions.

According to the research, sociocultural integration has a detrimental influence on return migration intentions, whereas economic integration and transnational linkages have more equivocal and occasionally favourable effects. Those from Morocco were less likely than those from Ghana and Egypt to express a desire to return home. The chance of Senegalese migrants

remaining in the host country was much lower than that of the other three immigrant groups, and they were more likely to plan to return.

In spite of the growing interest in return migration, little is known about what influences migrants' intentions and choices to return. It is a commonly held belief that reintegration into home nations is less likely when cross-border and socio-cultural links deteriorate. Ellis, et al. (1996), expressed that migratory experiences expose women and men to socioeconomic and cultural norms and practices in host countries, which may reconstruct or temper the patriarchal institutions and traditions in their home countries once these migrants return.

Changing a culture which signifies a group of people's common set of fundamental assumptions, values, beliefs, rules, procedures, and behavioral conventions may be difficult. However, when returnees who have properly reintegrated into society can have a greater chance to cause changes in certain conventional practices in their place or country of origin. Researchers typically analyze returnees' involvement in religious or cultural activities, and to what degree they follow the norms and values of the society of the community of return. Whenever a migrant decides to return to their home country for whatever reason, the process of re-acculturation begins.

2.11 Theories of Migration and Return Migration

Several theoretical perspectives inform the return migration discourse. These theories have produced certain basic concepts and perspectives in migration studies. Internal migration and return migration have been studied from different perspectives, including the Push and Pull theory, Neo-classical Economics, New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM), Structuralism, Transnationalism, and Social Network Theories.

According to the NELM theory, deciding to migrate is primarily an economic choice made to increase the income and welfare of migrant households (De Haas, et al. 2015). As a result,

when migrants visit their hometowns, they frequently send remittances, which are substantial sums of money. By putting money into local economies, these remittances can serve as an impetus for community development (Farrell, Mahon & McDonagh, 2012). Remittances can be utilized to raise living standards, provide healthcare and education, and open up business opportunities in communities where migrants are sending money (Gashi, & Adnett, 2015). This inflow of funds has the potential to boost human capital development, spur economic growth, and lessen poverty.

Migration encourages the development of transnational networks, according to NELM theory. Returnees frequently keep close relationships to their home areas, and these networks can act as channels for information sharing, the diffusion of technology (Tezcan, 2018), and even financial investment in small enterprises. Return migrant workers with specific skills can help build specialized sectors and strengthen the capability of local workforces. The NELM theory places a strong emphasis on the development of human capital. While overseas, migrants frequently pick up new knowledge and experiences. These abilities can be used for community improvement after they return. For example, medical professionals who relocate for work can return with invaluable healthcare knowledge, enhancing the standard of healthcare services in their hometowns.

While the NELM theory emphasizes the advantages of return migration, it also recognizes potential drawbacks. The notion admits that not every returnee is equally qualified to aid in community improvement. Others may struggle to locate chances for acceptable employment, while some may experience issues with reintegration (Flahaux, 2017). In order to assist returnees in their efforts to actively contribute to community development, policy measures may be required. According to the NELM hypothesis, policies aiming to encourage return

migration and maximize its beneficial effects should concentrate on providing an enabling environment for returnees.

The push and pull migration theory is an essential paradigm for understanding why people migrate and why they return. The theory sheds insight on the causes and incentives that influence people's decisions to return to their home country. The push and pull migration theory allows for a more nuanced examination of these factors, recognizing that individuals' decisions to return are influenced by a combination of push and pull factors, while also emphasizing migrants' agency and decision-making power, as well as the complex interplay of individual choices and external circumstances.

Key push factors in return migration relate to events in the place of destination that may cause migrants to contemplate returning to their home country or place of origin. Economic downturns, unemployment, discrimination, restricted social integration, or changes in immigration regulations at destinations are examples of such reasons. The pull factors, on the other hand, are the conditions in the home nation or place of origin that would entice migrants to return. Improved economic prospects, social ties and family reunification, changes in personal circumstances, or a desire to contribute to the growth of their native nation are some of these motivations.

The unequal allocation of resources within societies is highlighted by structuralism. Resource allocation differences between urban and rural areas can have an impact on return migration. By resolving these inequities, returnees can help the community develop by bringing resources or talents back. Structure-based analysis can show how the allocation of resources affects the value of returnee contributions (Stark, 1991). Inequality and differences in development between regions or groups are also taken into account by structural theory. Reintegrating into communities with little access to basic amenities, education, and healthcare may be difficult

for returnees. The impact of these discrepancies on returnees' efforts to foster community development can be examined using structuralist methodologies. Policies aiming at fostering community development through return migration can be informed by a structuralist perspective. It highlights how crucial it is to deal with structural injustices and develop welcoming conditions for those who are returning. To eliminate inequities and promote sustainable development, policies may include expenditures in infrastructure, education, healthcare, and economic diversification (Adams & Page, 2005).

According to the Neoclassical Theory, migration is driven by pay disparities between origin and destination locations, with migrants moving from low-wage to high-wage places (Borjas, 1989). Thomas (2008) contends that migrants will only return home if they do not receive the promised advantage of greater earnings. However, the neo-classical economic theory's core premises look too restricted to address the difficulties involved in migration, return, and reintegration. Weaknesses in the theory include a focus on economic issues and a lack of consideration for socio-cultural elements.

On the other hand, unlike the Neo-Classical Theory, the New Economics of Labour Migration Theory (NELM) regards return migration as part of a pre-planned strategy for which that migrants' initial plans included returning home after acquiring adequate wealth (Meng & Zhang, 2013; King, 2013; Thomas, 2008). So, most migrants leave home to gain skills, funds, and other things that they can utilize when they return. Most migrants according this theory are believed to return home quickly after achieving their aims (Ammassari, 2004). The NELM theory is relevant to this study since there is evidence that some families in the Kassena Nankana East District of Ghana send family members to the south to remit in times of economic hardship (Tanle, 2003; Awumbila, 2007; Yeboah, 2008). Critics say the NELM theory restricts migration to the supply side and only fits poor rural areas, yet studies indicate that the poor do not migrate alone (Skeldon, 2008). Moreover, the theory assumes that relationships within poor

families are harmonious and does not consider the frictions and conflicts that might exist. Finally, the theory does not account for situations where the whole family decides to migrate (King, 2013).

For return migrants, the social, economic, and political situations back home are critical considerations in determining whether to return (Meng & Zhang, 2013). Instead of focusing on the migrating experience itself, structural theories of return migration emphasize returning migrants' contributions once they return home. According to structural theorists, return migrants may be unable to assimilate and may opt to leave again if the difference between their norms and values and those at home is too wide (Cassarino, 2004).

Another migration theory that helps explain return migration and other related issues such as re-integration is the transnational migration theory. The transnational migration theory deals with the process by which migrants, through their daily activities, forge and sustain multi-stranded social, economic, and political relations that link their societies of origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields that cross national borders (Basch et al. 1994; Glick Schiller et al. 1992). Same concept can be applied in the study of internal return migration where internal migrants during the course of the migration maintains relations between their places of destination and origins within same country. Return migration is sometimes an elusive concept that blurs into sustained transnational mobility and makes sense to see the two as distinct concepts, influencing each other (Carling & Erdal, 2014), and that returnees are increasingly characterized by transnational networks, reflecting new migration circumstances that are evolving at the beginning of the 21st century (Potter et al., 2005). From a reintegrating perspective, adjusting to new circumstances without losing one's sense of self is critical to both the return migrants and the place of origin. As such this theory enables a better understanding of the experiences of return migration, the role of social

networks maintained over the course of their journey away from as well as their re-integration experiences as returnees.

As a theory, transnationalism aims to better explain the strong social and economic ties between the nations of origin and the host countries where migrants have settled. Alejandro Portes claims that "frequent and sustained social encounters over time across national borders" are how transnational activities are carried out (Portes et al. 1999). It also shows how important these connections may be to migrants' identities. Contrary to structuralists and NELM proponents, return does not mean that a migratory cycle has come to an end. Transnationalism believes that migration is a tale that will continue. Social and economic interactions and exchanges facilitate the reintegration of migrants while transmitting knowledge, information, and membership to those who return. According to transnationalism, returning citizens prepare for reintegration at home through regular and periodic visits to their home countries. This is one of the key differences between transnationalism and structuralism. They have close ties to their homelands and frequently send money back there (Al-Ali & Koser 2002).

Empirical research in this area expands and helps to better grasp the important concepts and processes related to internal return migration. Critics argue that rather than focusing on the outcomes of identity creation, researchers should pay attention to the mechanisms involved in the process of identity formation (Somerville, 2008; Portes, 1999). However, a person's emotional connections and capacity to formulate and articulate those connections cannot be captured by static identification markers (Somerville, 2008; King & Christou, 2008).

Another theory related to return migration considered here is the Structural migration theory. According to Yendaw et al. (2017) and Diatta & Mbow (1999), structural theories on return migration generally emphasize the importance of the social, economic, and political conditions at the origin of migrants, not only as major factors in the decision to return, but also as

components influencing return migrants' ability to use the skills and resources that they have acquired at the destination.

While this theory is commonly employed to explain international migration, its tenets and principles can equally be applied to rural internal return migrations. The importance of this theory is because this study underlines the importance of contextual factors that encourage return migration (Castles & Miller, 2003; Cassarino & Morawska, 2012), which is a major problem discussed here. According to the theory, migrants return to their home countries for various reasons which are said to be largely contextual (Wang & Fan, 2006; Cassarino, 2004).

While the point is made that financial success or failure is not the only factor in determining a returnee's success or failure, other factors such as social, political, and cultural ones, in addition influence the motives for returnees to their place of origins. Rural return migration is strongly influenced by issues of power relations, traditional values, conventions, and norms, as well as other culturally restricting factors, in the regions of origin (Stark, 1980; Cassarino, 2004; Morawska, 2012). Return migrations are also thought to be influenced by origin societies' customs, traditions, and other social or political pressures (Cassarino, 2004). To this theory whether the returning immigrant was a successful returnee is secondary to other contextual factors (Wang & Fan, 2006), and that there is no evidence that suggest economic concerns play the sole role of migrants' decision to return to their home countries or places of origin.

On the other hand, the theory tends to focus too much on macro variables rather than micro-ones in the spectrum of factors that influence migration discourse. This is because the theory does not necessarily take into account individual-level factors, which might have a significant impact on return migrations. This research aims to close the theoretical hole by looking at the micro-level reasons driving return migrations in a global south context. Social network theory provides a thorough framework for comprehending how social networks affect returnee

reintegration decisions and return migration decisions. These networks are essential for gathering resources, involving the community, and sharing information, all of which support community development initiatives. By taking into account the importance of social links in return migration, policies and strategies can be developed to maximize the beneficial effects of returnees on their communities of origin.

The final framework for theorising return migration is the return preparedness and aspiration–ability framework (Carling and Schewel, 2018; Carling, 2002; Cassarino, 2004). The confluence of these approaches highlights the dynamism, fluidity, and unpredictability of return as a dynamic process rather than a single occurrence (King & Kuschminder, 2022). How prepared migrants are to return relies on their want to do so and their preparation to make the shift (Cassarino, 2004), with the important awareness that while some migrants may wish to return, the resources available to them may not allow them to do so. In terms of resource readiness, an important component of the model is the mobilization of resources for return, which includes both tangible (financial capital, a place to stay) and intangible (contacts, relationships, skills - in other words, human and social capital) resources (King & Kuschminder, 2022; Cassarino, 2004).

To a considerable extent, efficient resource mobilization for return increases the likelihood of a 'successful' return, one with the ability to contribute to the development of the nation and community of origin (King & Kuschminder, 2022). The concept of a "successful" return comprises more than just physical relocation; it also refers to a returnee's capacity to reintegrate into their communities, make use of newly acquired resources and abilities, and have a beneficial impact on the socioeconomic environment (Portes, 2009). This conversation goes into further detail about the role that resource mobilization plays in getting a good return and what that means for development (Skeldon, 2012). To promote the reintegration and

sustainable lifestyles of returnees, resource mobilization refers to the acquisition and allocation of resources, including financial, human, and social capital.

From the above discourse, the two main migration theories considered most appropriate for this study are the Push and Pull theory and the Structural migration theory and supported with the return preparedness and aspiration–ability framework. By consideration, the push and pull factors enables a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence return migration decisions while the structural theory is relevant because it assesses success or failure in connection with the reality of the original community of the returnee and not the externally imposed idea of success defined by the savings and material accumulation of the returnee (Stark & Levhari, 1982; Stark & Bloom, 1985; De Haans, 2008). The return preparedness and aspiration–ability framework helps to better explain the nature of readiness of return migrants for return and how this readiness of return imparts their reintegration and contribution towards their receiving communities of origin at KNEM.

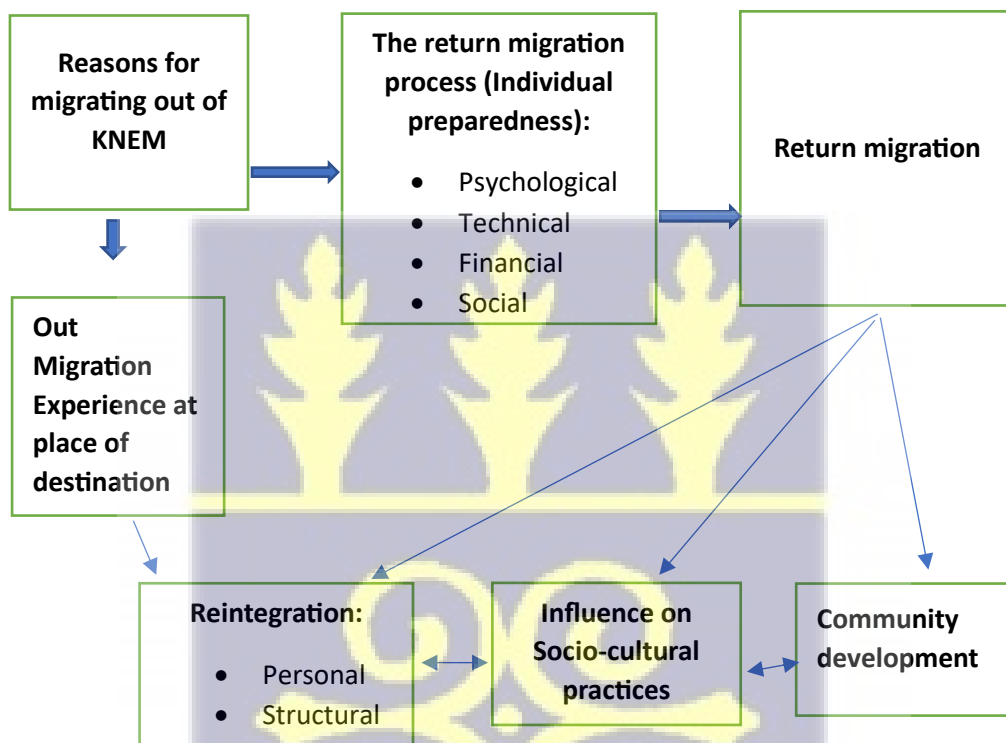
While establishing that theories applicable to international return migration can also be used to study internal return migration, the reviewed literature generally finds a paucity of knowledge on Ghanaian internal return migrants and their influence on the places of origin. This study would add to and improve understanding of internal return migration from a global south framework, while also seeking to fill gaps in the Ghanaian migration literature on the relationship between internal return migration, reintegration, and community development.

2.12 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework represents the researcher’s synthesis on how to explain a phenomenon under study as well as identifies the variables required in the research investigation (Regoniel, 2015). Based on the plethora of academic publications reviewed in the background and this

chapter of this thesis, a conceptual framework on the link between return migration and the reintegration of internally return migrants in the KNMA was presented. Understanding the main reasons why individuals migrate to other places, towns or countries helps in appreciating their return. Figure 2.2 presents the conceptual framework of the study.

Figure 2.2: A conceptual framework showing the link between return migration and re-integration of internal return migrants in the KNMA



Author's own construct, 2024

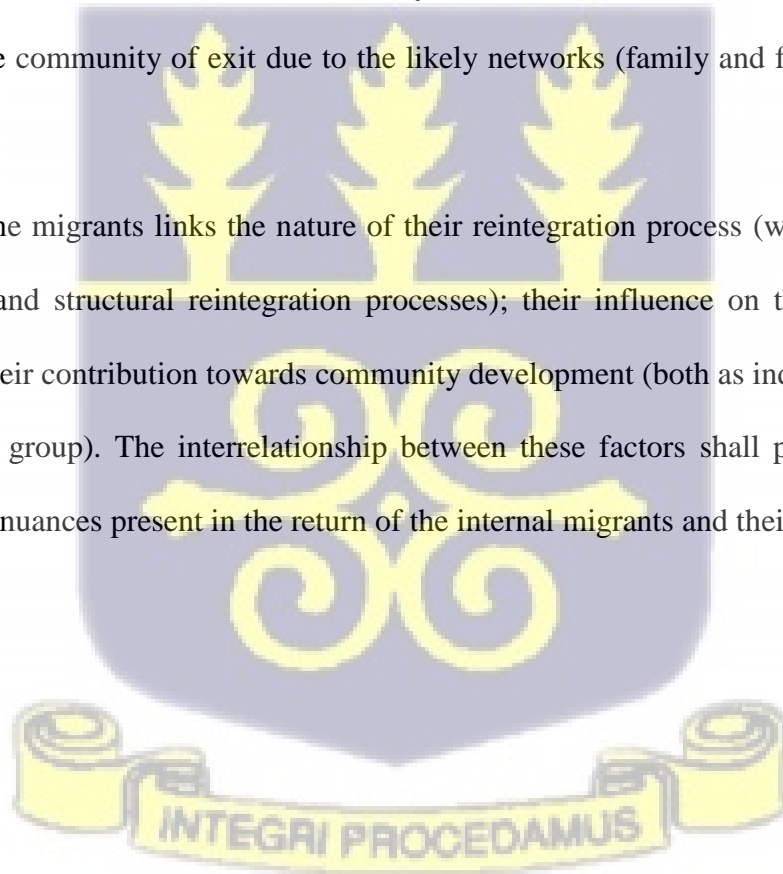
The conceptual framework outlines the processes of migration to start or begin with the reasons why an individual would want to travel or migrate to a different country or different part of Ghana. Essentially, discussing the migration phenomenon in the KNEM begins with identifying the reasons why people of the Municipality decide to migrate to other localities in Ghana.

The reason for migrating out of KNEM is linked to the lived experiences of the return migrants at their former places of destination as well as the individual preparations towards the actualization of their intended return migration decisions. These individual preparations include the psychological, technical, financial, and social preparedness of the individual return migrants. The decision to migrate, whether abroad or within the country, is influenced by a combination of push factors (e.g., economic hardships, conflict, lack of opportunities) and pull factors (e.g., economic prospects, family reunification, education). Return migration often involves a period of preparation and decision-making. This phase may include considerations such as securing travel documents, assessing economic prospects, and planning for reintegration. Migrants must reintegrate into their local communities after returning home. Finding accommodation, a job, and reestablishing social ties are just a few of the many aspects of this process. Returnees may carry cultural customs, values, and experiences back with them from their travels. These have the potential to affect regional cultures and behaviors and even encourage the adoption of novel practices. A significant result is the degree of community integration of returnees. It includes social and cultural integration (adjusting to local customs), as well as economic integration (creating a business or finding employment, for example). Returning immigrants may bring about modifications or innovations to the community's sociocultural norms. This may be changes in dietary habits, language usage, or cultural practices brought about by the returnees' international travels. Economic progress and community development go hand in hand. It takes into account elements like rising income levels, the creation of jobs, and better access to economic possibilities brought about by return migration. The goal of social development is to increase community members' wellbeing. Better access to social services, healthcare, and education may be among these benefits, which are frequently affected by the contributions and engagement of returnees. The literature suggests varied motives existing in different context for which both internal and international

migration occurs which are generally grouped into economic, social, environmental and political reasons (Kwankye and Anarfi, 2018). Internal migration in Ghana is said to be motivated by a range of individual, household, community and national factors (Anarfi et al., 2018; Abdulai, 1999) which consequently can influence their lived experiences at their new places of destination. Consequently, these lived and acquired experiences of the returnee migrants are their places of destination are anticipated to play a role in their reintegration process when back at KNEM.

Returning essentially does not come as an event. Imbedded in the return are the key reasons for returning among the migrants. Return migration involves one-way or the other preparations on the part of the individual returnee, their family and to some extent the receiving community of entry and the community of exit due to the likely networks (family and friends) to be left behind.

The return of the migrants links the nature of their reintegration process (which will look at their personal and structural reintegration processes); their influence on the socio-cultural practices and their contribution towards community development (both as individual migrants or as part of a group). The interrelationship between these factors shall put into the right perspective the nuances present in the return of the internal migrants and their communities of origin.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Philosophical Paradigm

A research paradigm is a collection of shared views and agreements among scientists about how problems should be understood and treated (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Kuhn, 1970). There are several approaches to a study, including viewpoints such as positivism, interpretivism, pragmatism, and subjectivism (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study is premised on the interpretivist perspective, considered as the most appropriate paradigm for the kind of analysis undertaken. The interpretative perspective stands in contrast to the positivist paradigm, which underlies much quantitative research. While positivism seeks causal explanations and generalizable laws through objective measurement, interpretivism seeks contextual understanding (contextualism) and insight into human meaning-making (Schwandt, 2000). The research contends that the social phenomena of migration, in terms of processes, experiences, and related development challenges, are not static or pre-determined, but rather that the interpretations and meanings that return migrants create of their whole movement journeys construct migration narratives.

Furthermore, using an interpretivism philosophical perspective aided in achieving the study's main goal, which was to investigate the relationship between internal return migration and community development using Kassena Nankana East Municipality and the lived experiences of internal return migrants. A major principle of interpretivist research, as stated by Robson (2011), is the collection and analysis of conflicting narratives of an event that has been lived, felt, and experienced.

3.2 Research Methods

A qualitative research approach or technique based on an interpretivist perspective was used for the study. Strauss and Corbin (1990) note that qualitative research is any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. The qualitative technique employs methods designed to enable participants (interviewees) to speak about a specific subject or range of issues under discussion (Seale, 2004) based on their experiences, perceptions, feelings, beliefs, and behaviours (Chinyamurindi, 2020; Teye, 2012; Bryman et al., 2018). According to Braun et al., (2021), the qualitative research approach is also popular since it is authentic, revealing, and based on real-world experiences of actual people.

Quantitative research has been the predominant method in Western culture for generating novel insights and knowledge. It is characterized by an emphasis on numerical and statistical approaches to research design, forming the foundation of this research methodology. Specifically, quantitative research relies on statistical data to draw interpretations from a study's findings. Some scholars argue that quantitative studies, often conducted in the form of surveys, build upon existing research theories (Leedy & Ornrod, 2001). This approach stands apart from the researcher's influence, aligning more with the empiricist paradigm (Creswell, 2003). The results derived from this approach are quantified objectively, enhancing the significance of the study by ensuring a high degree of data objectivity.

This quantitative approach encompasses primary categories: descriptive, experimental, content analysis, regression analysis, and longitudinal research. The descriptive facet of this approach involves the investigation of events in their natural and current states. Research employing the descriptive approach commonly utilizes correlation and exploration techniques.

Furthermore, the questions that probed the main reasons for returning home and how those ties with the reintegration of internal return migrants in the Kassena Nankana East Municipality, as well as the role these return migrants play in the development of Kassena Nankana, necessitated an in-depth exploration of facts through face-to-face interviews and sharing of perspectives from exercises such as focus group discussions, which are made possible through the use of qualitative data.

Three interviews were done throughout the study's pilot phases with return migrants in the Greater Accra Region who had returned after residing in the Central Region for five years to pilot the field work instruments. This aided in the development and finalisation of the questions (interview guide) as well as the testing of the recording equipment to be employed.

3.3 Research Design

According to Creswell (2009), research design entails a philosophical perspective and various techniques of inquiry or procedures, as well as particular methodologies employed in a study. One important consideration in selecting a particular research design is that it will improve the study's validity (Barclay & Stoltz, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, Yin, 2018). The phenomenological design was employed in this study. This design was particularly appropriate for this study because it focuses solely on describing and interpreting the lived experiences of people, such as return internal migrants, who were the subject of this study (Braun, et al., 2021; Barrow & Xu, 2021), independent of the researcher's or investigator's beliefs or preconceptions. The use of the technique also informed the nature of the questions posed, thus allowing research participants to express themselves more freely.

A semi-structured interview guide was utilized through a mixed qualitative data collecting technique of face-to-face individual in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as well as field observations, to generate the required data for the study. The study sampled the

perspectives of respondents on their reasons for migrating using interviews. The study further discussed the role of return migration on community development, effects of return migration on socio-cultural practices and the respective processes involved in return migration.

3.4 Study Area

The study took place in the Kassena Nankana East Municipality of the Upper East Region of Ghana. The Municipality was first established as a district in 1988 by Legislative Instrument (LI) 1855, and upgraded to a municipal status and renamed the Kassena Nankana East Municipal by LI 2106 in 2012 after it was split from the Kassena Nankana West District in 2008 (GSS, 2014).

The Municipality covers a total land area of 865 square kilometres and has its administrative and political headquarters in Navrongo. The Municipality is made up of 35 electoral areas. Electoral areas under a district/municipal or metropolitan assembly are the sub-divisions within each Municipality through which people are elected (popularly known as Assembly members) as representatives at the Municipal Assembly.

The Municipality borders Burkina Faso to the north and Bongo District and Bolgatanga Municipality to the east. The West Mamprusi Municipality is located to the south of the Municipality, while the Builsa South District, Kassena Nankana West District, and Builsa North District are located to the west (GSS, 2014). The district has comparable climatic characteristics to other districts in Ghana's northern regions.

The Kassena Nankana East Municipality's dry and wet seasons are predominantly affected by two (2) air masses: the North-East Trade winds and the South-Westerly. Because it originates in the Sahara Desert, the harmattan air mass (Northeast Trade Winds) is frequently dry and dusty. Precipitation is essentially non-existent at these periods due to the low relative humidity, which seldom surpasses 20 percent, and the low vapour pressure, which is less than 10

millibars. High daytime temperatures of 42°C (particularly in February and March) and low nighttime temperatures of 18°C are common (GSS, 2010).

According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, there were 99,895 people recorded in the Municipality, comprising of 48,658 (48.7%) males and 51,237 (51.3%) females, with at least 70 percent of the population of the Municipality living in rural areas (GSS, 2021).

Communities with a population of more than 1,000 persons and above include towns such as Abempengu, Akurugu Daboo, Biu, Bonia, Chaaba, Doba Kansa, Gomongo, Gongenia, Janania, Kologo Nayire, Korania, Manyoro, Manyoro Benyim, Manyoro Dambisa, Manyoro Gware, Naaga Choo, Natugnia, Nyangua, Nayagenia, Upper Gaane and Vunania (GSS, 2014).

Within the Municipality, migration is largely seasonal and follows the dry and wet seasons, notably among the indigenous Kasenas and Nankanas, where practically every household has one or more relatives residing outside the Municipality (GSS, 2014). Furthermore, the Municipality is home to a sizable number of internal migrants from other areas of the nation. The majority of these in-migrants work in the Municipality's formal and informal labour markets. The huge influx of residents in the Municipality has been attributed to the Tono Irrigation Dam, which supports economic activity linked with investment and accompanying agricultural job prospects (GSS, 2014). The Municipality boasts of a wide range of tourism sites, cultural events, and other tourist-friendly aspects that draw tourists in.

3.5 Study Population

The target population describes the collection of all units of analysis that a researcher wants to analyze for a certain study (Kilungu, 2015; Babbie, 2015). The target population consists of all return migrants residing in the Kassena Nankana East Municipality of Ghana who have stayed outside their home community for at least five years or more and have returned to the Municipality. The other inclusion criteria were that potential respondents were to be at least 18 years and above and should be currently fully resident in the Municipality for at least 12

months. Key considerations were also given to socio-demographic background factors such as age, marital status, gender, religion, education, occupation and place of residence within the Municipality in order to have a blend of perspectives from different backgrounds for the analysis.

Another group targeted were opinion leaders who are referred to as key informants in the study. Their perspectives were collected on the activities of return migrants in the communities where some of these migrants returned to in terms of the actions and activities of return migrants. These individuals (key informants) are not only knowledgeable about the study topic, but also about local conditions, community needs, and viewpoints (Bernard, 2017; Morris, 2009). Furthermore, qualitative research, according to Bernard (2017), allows for the exploration of perspectives from multiple stakeholders, particularly those involved in various facets of a phenomenon under study, in order to ascertain their understanding of the phenomenon and the contextual factors that influence it.

3.6 Sampling Technique and Sample size

In terms of the sampling techniques, the purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for the study. Purposeful sampling was used because it allowed for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). Another aspect to consider is that once the return migrants are living among the locals, they may be easily identified purposively by members of their local communities because these are indigenous people who know each other. As a result, a potential participant may be identified simply by citing their past location as part of their description while looking for them.

Incorporated into the purposive sampling technique was the snowball sampling technique in which one interviewee provides the researcher with the name of at least one additional possible subject (Atkinson and Flint, 2001; Cohen and Arieli, 2011; Babbie, 2012; Bhattacharjee, 2012).

This strategy was also feasible because the majority of the returnees were members of associations that also included other returnees.

When it comes to the selection of sample sizes for qualitative investigations, a number of suggestions are offered for the sample, which is a subset of the population chosen for the study. According to Sandelowski (1995), qualitative sample sizes must be large enough to allow for the development of a “new and completely thorough understanding” of the issue under study. According to Ritchie et al., (2003), individual interview studies should include no more than 50 interviews so that the researcher (s) can handle the complexity of the analytic processes. With data saturation in mind, the research performed more interviews until meaning saturation was reached (i.e. when no new extra information is forthcoming that is different from previous ones). At the point of saturation in the data collection process for the in-depth interview, 15 in-depth interviews had been conducted, comprising of nine males and six females. Based on the same criteria for selecting participants for the in-depth interviews, 20 participants were selected to be part of three different focus group discussion teams.

On the part of the key informants, four opinion leaders were purposively selected. They were made of two Municipal Assembly members, one village chief and one women’s leader who doubled as the Market Queen in one of the smaller towns. An Assembly member is a person who is elected by people to represent their electoral areas at the Municipal or District Assembly per the Local Government Act (Act 462) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. These key informants (opinion leaders) were selected as part of the study to solicit responses in the attempt to collaborate the facts presented by the selected response migrants in the KNEM. At the end of the data collection process, 39 participants were engaged as the sample size for the study made up of 35 internal return migrants and four key informants (opinion leaders).

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

The principal techniques used for the data collection for the study were face-to-face in-depth interviews and focus group discussions both through a semi-structured interview guide. Additionally, extra information was acquired through field observations. The use of telephone calls to start informal introduction and other issues concerning the study with the participants were very useful to the study.

3.7.1 The In-depth Interview Processes with return migrants

A semi-structured interview guide was used to obtain data from participants on socio-demographic parameters such as age, gender, level of education, former place of destination, number of years of living in the Municipality after return, current job, religion, and years spent outside before return into the community. The interview guide also included an overview of questions targeted at understanding and assessing participants' migratory trajectory and reintegration-related experiences of returning migrants, as well as their experiences outside their community and contribution to the community's growth.

Through contacts with some old schoolmates in Accra, the researcher gained access to two people who for the purposes of this study shall be called Yaw and Kojo as people who qualified as respondents. Yaw has been staying in Navrongo for the past two years after returning from Accra, where he stayed for more than 20 years working as an administrative staff at the University of Ghana, Legon. Kojo, on the other hand, has been residing in Gomongo for the last year after spending 15 years in Sunyani, the Brong regional capital.

On the phone, the purpose of the study and the ethical considerations guiding the entire research process were explained to these potential respondents, as well as the likelihood of them being a point of referral to get to other potential respondents in the study area. Voluntary participation, anonymity, informed consent, and other issues were explained to these potential

participants over the phone a week before moving from Accra to Navrongo in the first week of April, 2022 to commence the main data collection.

An informal communication with Yaw and Kojo on the phone facilitated the process of recruiting study participants. Yaw, for example, stated that he had already compiled a list of people he knew who had returned from Accra, Wa and Techiman and were now permanently residing in the Municipality.

Consequently, Yaw in Navrongo and Kojo in Gomongo were the first to be interviewed for the in-depth interview portion of the study. A formal request was made for these first two participants so propose other prospective returnees who could meet the stated requirements for admission as communicated to them for the snowballing process. Indeed, their agreement to play this role early in the data collection phase was a huge relief for the study, as gaining access to some of the participants would not have been possible given the sensitivity people attach to issues pertaining to their personal lives, particularly when it comes to migration and return (Villa and Raviglione, 2019; Virupaksha et al., 2014). All the participants in the study were reached through the snowballing referral process with considerations to gender, age, and location.

Before the interview began formally, a letter of invitation and consent form were read and discussed with the participants. Following this procedure, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions or voice concerns in order to ensure that they were ready and eager to participate in the research. With the participants' permission, all interviews were tape-recorded with notes taken as needed.

The interviews began in April 2022 and concluded in June 2022. After acquiring access to a suggested potential participant, he/she was called by phone to conduct an initial introduction and to clarify the important concerns, such as the rationale. This phone conversation also acted

as a mechanism for the participant to agree on a date and location for the interview. Key considerations were given to the issue of Covid-19 and the relevant practices that ensured the safety and protection of the participants. At all stages of the interview, social distance was maintained as well as the use of relevant safety materials such as the nose masks and hand sanitisers. While some of the participants opted to have the interview at their homes, others preferred their work places. Each interview session with a participant lasted an average of one hour.

Even though the Kassem language is the primary local language spoken in the Municipality, only two of the participants opted to have their interviews in the Kassem language. This was done with the assistance of a research assistant who was very conversant in the Kassem language, acting as an interpreter. Three people opted to be interviewed in English, eight people preferred to talk in Akan (Twi), and two persons preferred to be interviewed in Ga. As much as interviewing in English, Twi and Ga did not present a problem to the study, it was noticed that those who preferred to be interviewed in Twi and Ga did so to prove their skills and dexterity in the acquisition of the language of their former places of destination after their long stay in those places.

To protect their identity and confidentiality, the participants were informed that their real names would not be utilized in the report. They were also guaranteed of their right to withdraw from the interview and decline to answer any question they were not comfortable with throughout the course of the interview without penalty or punishment. In two of the interview meetings, the participants had to withdraw about half-way into the interview because they had to attend to emergency calls. A different date had to be rescheduled at their convenience while the portion of their recorded interview was saved and used for the purposes of a recap for them about a week later when they were fully available for the interview.

By the time the interviews reached saturation, 15 return migrants had been interviewed across the Municipality, with eight of them taking place in Navrongo, the Municipal capital. Two in Kulogo; one each in Nayakenia, Naaga Pingo (Peesi), Janania, Gomongo and Manyoro Benyim.

3.7.2 The In-depth Interview Processes with Key Informants in KNEM

The deliberate selection of opinion leaders (key informants) aimed to have community leaders with a minimum two-decade continuous residency in their respective communities within the KNEM as respondents. The knowledge of these opinion leaders serving as key informants were to serve as additional source of data and information in enriching the objectives under study. These individuals were sought for their ability to provide comprehensive accounts of developmental projects and further details about changes occurring within the community following the return migration. Incorporating them also guarantees a well-balanced representation of the phenomenon under study and serves as a means of fact-checking certain assertions and narratives put forth by the return migrants.

Initially, contact was established with Key Informant One (KIO), an Assembly member from an electoral area in the KNEM. Upon briefing KIO about the study's objectives and ethical considerations, they agreed to serve as a key informant. Similarly, another senior Assembly member, referred to as Key Informant Two (KIT), was brought into the study through the researcher's connections with some respondents. Key Informants Three (KITH) and Four (KIF), a village chief and a women's leader, were recruited with the assistance of certain respondents. Interviews with these key informants were conducted in late June 2022, following the completion of interviews with the return migrants.

The in-depth interviews were meticulously planned, involving the development of a comprehensive interview protocol outlining key topics and open-ended questions to encourage

participants to freely share their knowledge, experiences, and perspectives. Each interview process began with the establishment of a good rapport with the key informants, where the study's purpose, voluntary participation nature, and confidentiality measures were clearly explained. Informed consent was obtained, ensuring that participants fully grasped their rights and the implications of their involvement in the study.

Similar to the interview process with return migrants, the interviews with key informants were recorded to guarantee accurate representation of the information gathered.

3.7.3 Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussions (FGDs) were utilized to allow participants to share their own perspectives, expertise, and experiences about the issue in an informal setting, as well as to supplement the data gathered through in-depth interviews as recommended by Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004).

The study sampled for three groups labelled A, B, and C for the three independent focus group conversations conducted. To achieve gender balance, Group A included seven individuals who were only males, Group B had seven participants who were only females, and Group C had six participants made up of three males and three females respectively.

Aside the general required criteria for being selected as a participant for the study, potential members of the FGD were to be for participants who were not part or interviewed during the one-on-one in-depth interview phase. This was done to further ensure divergent views that would be created through interactions between participants (Baillie, 2019) and subsequently enrich the data.

All FGD participants were contacted and informed of the nature of the meeting and its goal, as well as the subjects to be covered, date, location, and probable time duration for the interview. This was done to avoid any surprises, such as people being taken off-guard by subjects being

discussed, as well as any complaints regarding time used. In all cases, the conversations were held in the local languages, with the research assistant serving as the primary moderator. All the focus group discussions took place on different dates and different locations as agreed with the participants at Navrongo the district capital for an average of about two and half hours per session. All the FGD sessions were scheduled on Sundays with the participants' consent. This was ideal since the Municipality is normally less active with economic activity on weekends, with the exception of funerals or other cultural celebrations on such days. Two of the focus group discussions involving groups A and B were held in the month of June, 2022, while the meeting of Group C took place in July, 2022.

The FGD meeting formally began with a welcome speech and an introduction of the research team; then to each participant including their names (optional); where they are presently residing in the Municipality and their previous migration destination.

To have a well-coordinated meeting and set the tone for the discussion, ground rules included lowering of ringtones or putting phones on silent; all participants reserving the right to abstain from discussing a specific topic; respecting others' opinions even if one disagreed; and protecting others' privacy by not discussing meeting details outside the meeting.

Participants were then led through the questions, with each having or being given the chance to voice their thoughts and experiences about each of the topics posed. Follow-up questions were asked when appropriate to go deeper into the conversation topic. While making the talks as flexible and lively as possible, measures were put in place to guarantee that conversations stayed primarily focused. All of the discussions and talks were tape recorded and important notes were duly taken in addition as back up. The research team took care of the participants' lunch and transportation costs at all times.

3.7.4 Observation

Observation is the systematic description of the events, behaviours, and artefacts of a social setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). This process was used throughout the research process and provided additional information to the in-depth interviews and FGDs. The observations included watching news on the district on channels such as the Youtube, listening to community radio stations based in the Municipality such as Nabiina Radio and attending public seminars on related subjects on return migration organised in the Municipality. Two of such events were organised by Develop Youth Ghana (DYG), a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that works in the areas of migration, adolescent and HIV/AIDS in the Upper East Region of Ghana for return migrants in the Municipality.

The permission of the Executives of the NGO to be present at the seminar was granted after a formal request was made to be present at their seminars. In such situations the researcher was introduced to the participants of the seminar and became an overt observer, which is a situation where the participants are aware of being observed, and the researcher is not, in any way, hiding the fact that he/she is observing them for research purposes (Wagner, Kawulich, & Garner, 2012). Another use of the observation approach was to confirm projects mentioned by return migrants. This added more flesh to the information generated from the return migrants”.

3.8 Data Processing and Analysis

All the interviews were transcribed into word format with the narratives of each participant identified and assigned in their pseudonyms in the transcript. Transcription of data refers to the translation or transformation of sound and images from recording to text (Duranti, 2007). For the interviews conducted in English, Twi and Ga Languages, translation was not a challenge as the researcher was very competent in the knowledge and use of these Languages. In the case of the Kassem Language, the research assistants to the study who were very competent took

turns to do the translation into English, after which validation from a third language specialist in the Kassem language at the Institute of Languages was sought for confirmation.

At the end of each day's interview, the entire recorded interviews were reviewed to ensure that all essential aspects of the research were covered and to become acquainted with the voices of the participants. NVIVO a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, was utilized in both the transcription and theme generation processes.

The key processes followed in evaluating and understanding the data were data coding/categorization, memoing and determining themes, clusters and patterns of the phenomena under enquiry. Further, these generated themes were analysed by placing them into organizing themes. Thereafter, organizing themes that followed similar patterns of narratives were then grouped into global themes in line with knowledge and comparisons gained from existing literature (Nkrumah, 2016). As noted by Wolcott (1994), data interpretation extends the analysis by raising questions, connecting findings to personal experiences, contextualizing the findings, and turning findings into theory.

The nature of how the themes related or networked in achieving the global theme is presented in Appendix A of this study.

3.9 Reflexivity

Reflexivity encompasses the ongoing, collaborative, and multifaceted practices through which researchers critically and consciously examine how their own subjectivity and context shape the research process (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023; Palaganas et al., 2017; Haynes, 2012). This involves reflecting on one's positionality, biases, assumptions, and other potential influences on data collection and interpretation. In the context of this study, my background as a migration studies student with prior reading and knowledge of internal migration in Ghana influenced the formulation of the research questions. During the interviews with return migrants, deliberate

efforts were made to create a comfortable environment that encouraged participants to express their thoughts freely, without being steered toward any particular line of reasoning.

Following data transcription, a member-checking exercise was conducted to ensure that the findings accurately reflected participants' experiences and narratives relevant to the study's objectives. This process involved five participants from the in-depth interviews, four from the focus group discussions (FGDs), and two key informants. Member checking was carried out through both face-to-face meetings and telephone conversations. In qualitative research, member checking refers to the process of sharing summaries or interpretations of findings with a subset of participants to verify whether the identified themes resonate with their experiences, allowing for corrections or additional insights where necessary (Birt et al., 2016; Soysal & Türkmen, 2024).

3.10 Limitations of the Study

Just as it is experienced in other remote areas in the country, most of the smaller towns/villages had mobile phone network challenges. Some of the participants indicated that at times they have to get to a particular spot or location before they can have strong signals for effective phone calls to be done. This hampered the smooth communication between the participants and the study such that at a point a number of initial appointments made had to be rescheduled because the participants could not be contacted for their final confirmation and availability the following day for the interview.

Another issue connected to transportation and travel concerns. Even though the snowball sampling technique was deemed the most appropriate method of recruiting the desired participants, getting to the participants after their identification proved difficult due to the distances that had to be covered and the cost of transportation prior to arriving at their location, particularly in the case of respondents in rural communities. Ultimately, these concerns

prolonged the entire data collection process which consequently affected other timelines for the study.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are important throughout the study process (Creswell, 2009; Tanko & Dandago, 2006). In the particular case of this study, ethical clearance and approval was granted by the University of Ghana's Research Ethics Committee for the Humanities. Furthermore, the supervisory team for the study also reviewed the data collection instruments to ensure their ethical appropriateness and acceptability.

Key ethical issues and standards that were maintained throughout the study included obtaining informed consent from participants, voluntary participation, avoiding harm to participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of information and participants, maintaining integrity and quality of the research by avoiding biases, and being truthful and impartial in reporting results. For example, none of the respondents was compelled or pressured in any way to participate in the study or answer a question they did not want to answer. To ensure anonymity, for example, all of the identities used in the study were pseudonyms rather than the individuals' true names. Furthermore, no component of the data gathered for this study was disclosed to any other person, entity, or third party for any purpose. The information gathered has been utilized solely for the objectives and goals of this study.



CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIO - DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND OUT MIGRATION EXPERIENCES OF INTERNAL RETURN MIGRANTS

4.1. Introduction

The chapter describes the socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants which are important elements that are used to differentiate data as well as understand trends and the needs of people. The main reasons for moving and living out of the Municipality as well as the positive and negative experiences in living outside the Municipality by the participants are also presented in this chapter.

4.2. Socio-demographic Characteristics

According to Birchall (2016), features such as a person's gender, age, religion, sexuality, health or disability among others are important factors that influence and shape the migration experience of people. Age is an important socio-demographic variable that affects migration choices. Young individuals, especially those in their late teens and early twenties, are more inclined to migrate in search of independence, adventure, and better educational and employment possibilities (Long, 2014). Older people, on the other hand, might move away for retirement, lifestyle adjustments, or family reunion (Hugo, 2018). Migration trends are significantly influenced by gender. Migration decisions have always been influenced by gender norms and expectations. In many countries, for instance, labour migration was predominately male; men left their homes to work in far-off places, whereas women frequently travelled for marriage or family reunification (Kofman, 2004). But as more women migrate on their own for job and education, gender dynamics in migration are changing (Pessar, 2005). Education levels significantly influence migration decisions. Highly educated people frequently relocate to take advantage of specialized schooling opportunities or to work in fields where their abilities are in demand. Conversely, those with lower educational levels might move in search of low-

skilled or labour-intensive work. The main factors influencing migration are socioeconomic status and income. Higher earners might have the means to relocate for work, retirement, or investment reasons, whilst individuals with lesser salaries might do so out of necessity.

Out of the 35 participants in the study, 19 were males while 16 were females. The age of the participants ranged between 39 years minimum and 67 years. Majority of the respondents (21 out of 35) belong to the Christian Religion while those who belong to Islam and Traditional religions were 8 and 6 respectively. The high number of Christians among the participants may generally reflect the greater number of Christians in Ghana in the Municipality (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).

The minimum number of years a participant stayed outside the Municipality was nine years while the maximum was about 32 years as at the time of the study. In terms of marital status, while 15 of the participants were married i.e., in union, 20 of them were not in union and they were made up of eight never married, 10 who were separated and two who were widowed. In terms of their current occupation status, the majority of the respondents were self-employed while a few were retirees. The level of education for the participants was generally diverse. Of the 35 participants, seven had attained a tertiary education status, eight of them each had Junior High School (JHS) and the Senior High Schools (SHS) education and 13 of them had attained primary school level.

For the region they returned from, majority of the 19 male participants in the study have returned from the southern part of Ghana with the exception of two who returned from the Bono and the Upper West regions which are located in the central and northern parts of Ghana respectively. More specifically 10 have returned from the Greater Accra Region (GAR), five from the Western Region, and one each from the Eastern, Bono and Upper West regions respectively. For the female respondents six had returned from the GAR, two each from the

Western, Eastern and Ashanti regions. The Ahafo and Bono regions had one returnee respondent each among the female participants. The greater number of the returnees from the South goes to confirm earlier reports both historical and in contemporary times on the nature of internal regional migration in Ghana which is seen dominated by the North to South movement of many of the people from the Northern parts of Ghana (see Tanle, 2010; Kwankye et al., 2007; Songsoore, 2003; Anarfi, et al., 2003; Mensah-Bonsu, 2003; Nabila, 1975). Socio-demographic characteristics are very important in determining migration patterns and choices. Individual ambitions, opportunities, and restraints interact with age, gender, education, marriage status, income, and other sociodemographic characteristics to affect migration outcomes. For policymakers, academics, and practitioners looking to address migration-related challenges and opportunities and design focused migration policies and initiatives, understanding these characteristics is essential. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 have information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants and the key informants respectively.

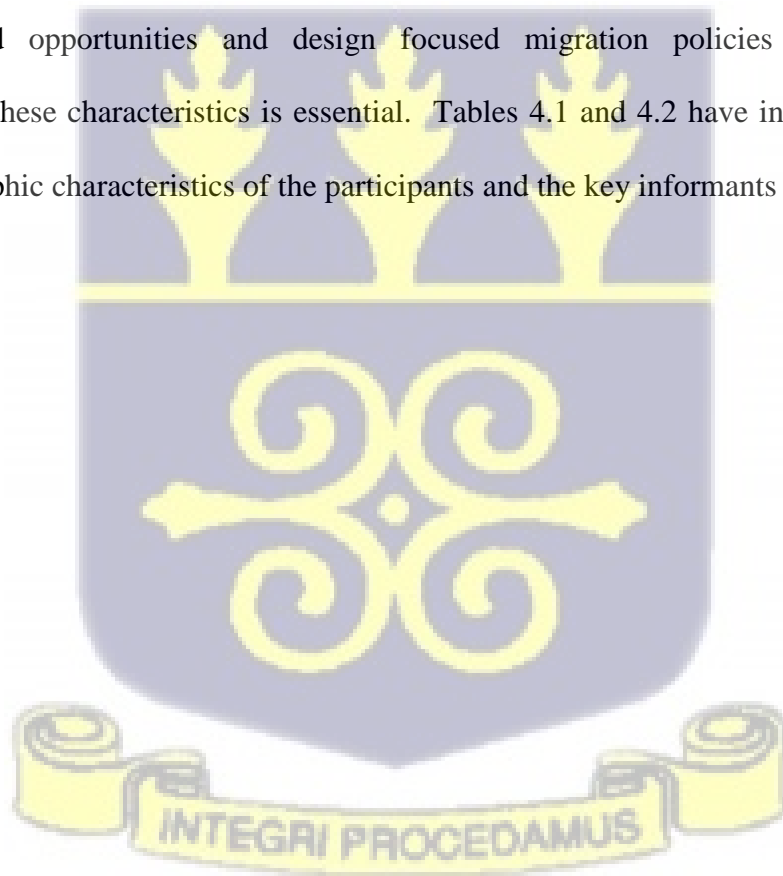


Table 4.1 Socio-demographic profile of In-depth interview Participants

Respondent Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Marital Status	Educational level	Religious Affiliation	Length of stay outside the KNEM	Former Region of Stay	Year of return	Current employment status
Kojo	M	62	Married	Tertiary	Christian	32 years	Accra	2016	Retired
Yaw	M	44	Single	SHS	Christian	10 years	Bono	2017	Self Employed
Ama	F	56	Separated	JHS	Traditionalist	32 years	Upper West	2014	Self-Employed
Jemila	F	47	Married	SHS	Muslim	18 years	Western	2019	Self Employed
Asiby	F	41	Single	JHS	Christian	20 years	Ashanti	2018	Self Employed
Adda	M	63	Separated	Primary	Christian	22 years	Western	2019	Retired
Kaweh	F	50	Married	Tertiary	Christian	25 years	Bono Region	2020	Employed
Awiah	F	63	Single	Tertiary	Christian	35 years	Accra	2018	Retired
Kada	F	59	Separated	Primary school	Christian	29 years	Eastern	2015	Self employed
Kaba	M	54	Married	Tertiary	Traditionalist	35 years	Accra	2017	Self employed
Konu	M	42	Separated	Primary school	Muslim	22 years	Western	2019	Self employed
Awuni	M	55	Married	Primary	Muslim	18 years	Upper west	2014	Self employed
Peter	M	50	Married	Tertiary	Christian	32 years	Accra	2017	Self employed
Dogo	M	43	Married	JHS	Muslim	18 years	Ashanti	2019	Self employed
Aweh	M	49	Single	JHS	Christian	20 years	Accra	2019	Self employed
Focus Group Discussions - GROUP A									
Atemdem	M	63	Married	Primary	Traditionalist	29 years	Accra	2020	Retired
Agintebe	M	54	Married	Primary	Christian	24 years	Accra	2018	Self employed
Akwoyire	M	66	Single	Tertiary	Muslim	35 years	Western	2013	Retired
Sonotu	M	67	Widower	Tertiary	Christian	28 years	Accra	2018	Retired
Achana	M	62	Married	JHS	Christian	41 years	Eastern	2020	Self employed

Abulu	M	42	Separated	SHS	Muslim	15 years	Accra	2019	Self employed
Ernest	M	40	Married	SHS	Christian	18 years	Western	2020	Self employed
Focus Group Discussions - GROUP B									
Kagaah	F	51	Separated	SHS	Christian	26 years	Western	2018	Self employed
Lucy	F	41	Single	JHS	Christian	21 years	Accra	2018	Self employed
Lardi	F	48	Single	Primary	Muslim	18 years	Accra	2016	Self employed
Kaani	F	50	Married	Tertiary	Christian	20 years	Eastern	2017	Self employed
Anaman	F	61	Married	SHS	Traditionalist	29 years	Accra	2018	Retired
Asapaka	F	62	Separated	Tertiary	Traditionalist	32 years	Ashanti	2019	Self employed
Joyce	F	64	Separated	Tertiary	Christian	20 years	Upper west	2019	Retired
Focus Group Discussions - GROUP C									
Aliba	M	55	Separated	Primary	Muslim	23 years	Western	2018	Self employed
Abari	M	57	Separated	JHS	Christian	34 years	Accra	2016	Self employed
Mamata	F	46	Separated	Primary school	Christian	30 years	Accra	2019	Self employed
Chiri	F	63	Widow	SHS	Traditionalist	21 years	Accra	2017	Self employed
Mercy	F	49	Married	Tertiary	Christian	18 years	Ashanti	2017	Employed
Kababu	M	66	Married	SHS	Christian	25 years	Ashanti	2016	Retired

Source: Field work 2022

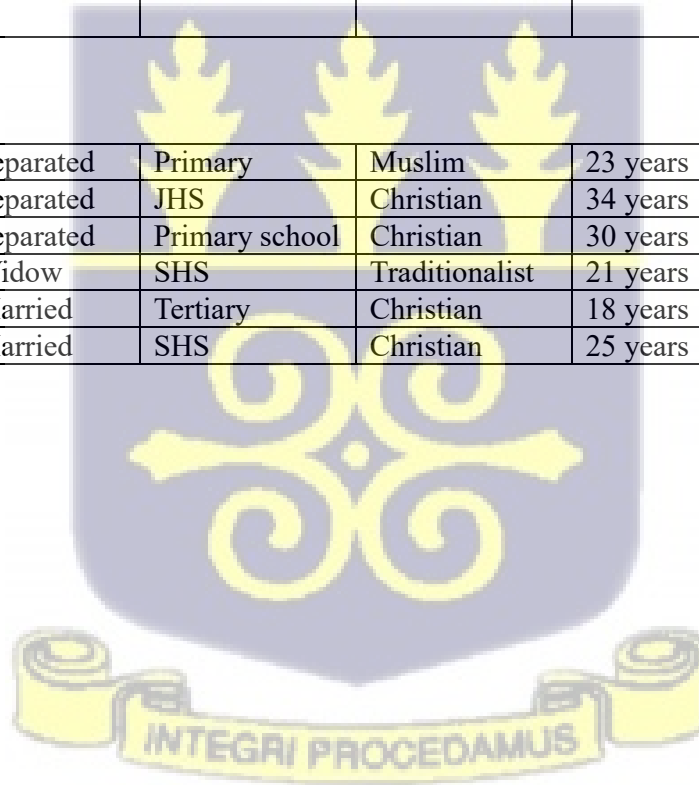


Table 4.2 Socio-demographic profile of key informants

Key informant (Pseudonyms)	Sex	Age	Designation	Educational level	Place of residence
1. KIO	M	62	Assembly man	Tertiary	Navrongo
2. KIT	M	59	Assembly man	Tertiary	Navrongo
3. KITH	M	70	Chief	SHS	Navrongo / Nayakenia
4. KIF	F	65	Market Queen	SHS	Navrongo / Kulogo

Source: Field work 2022

4.3 Reasons for Out-migrating from the Kassena-Nankana Municipality

Internal migration is a complex phenomenon influenced by a combination of economic, social, environmental, and policy-related factors (Kwankye and Anarfi, 2018; Johnson 1974; Harris & Todaro, 1970; Black, et al., 2011). Understanding these drivers is crucial for developing policies that address the needs of migrants and the regions they move to and from.

Figure 4.1 shows the synergy among the themes that were generated based on the reasons for leaving the KNEM.

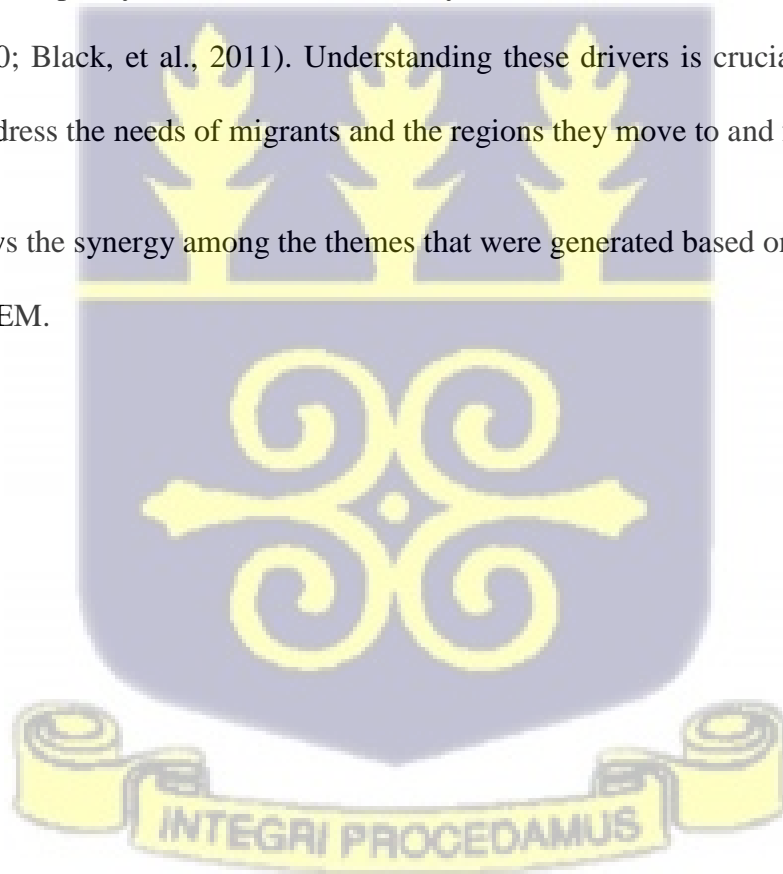
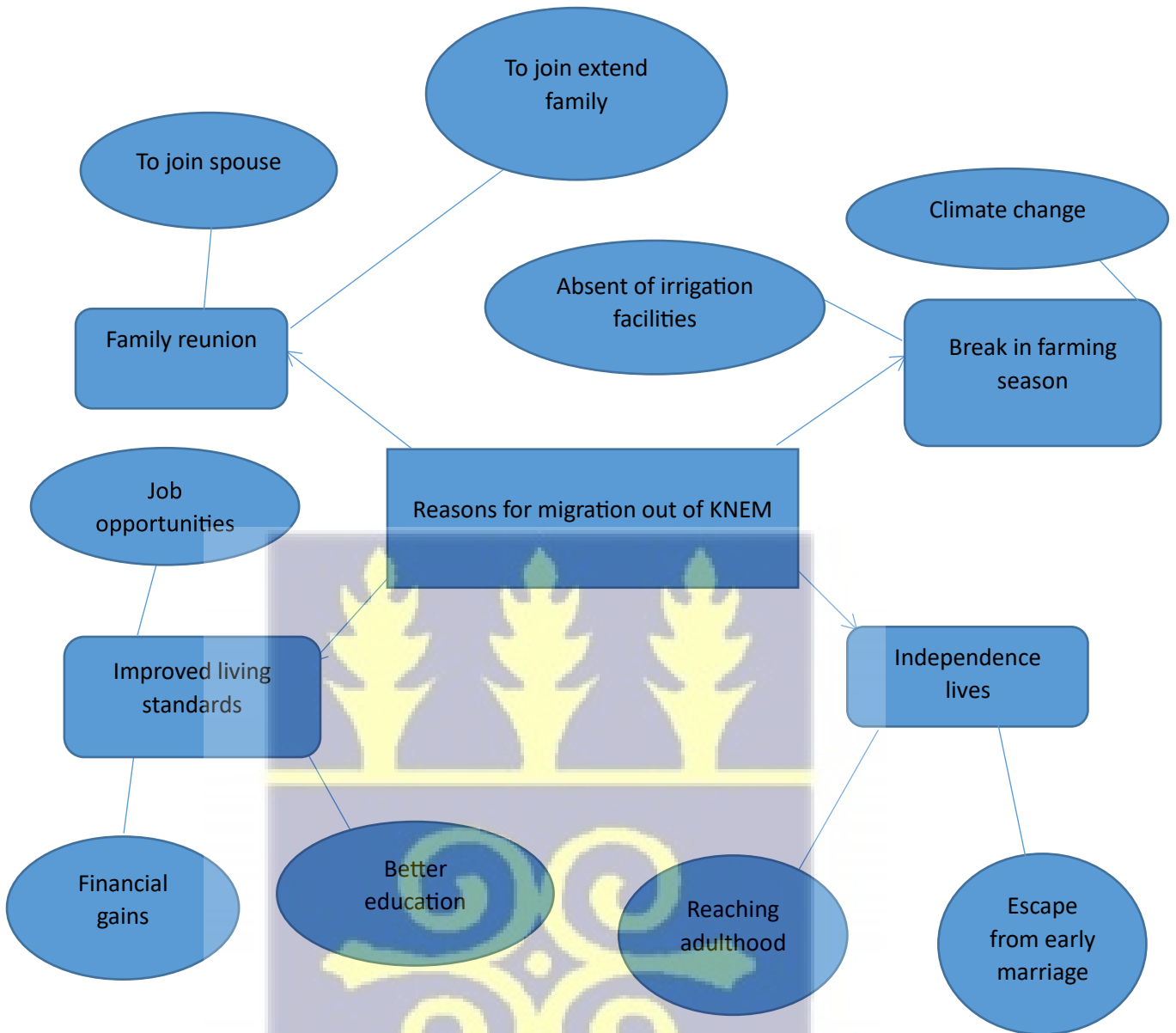


Figure 4.1 Thematic analysis on reasons for migration out of KNEM



Source: Author's own construction, 2024

4.3.1 To seek employment opportunities

From the in-depth interviews, the main reasons for leaving the Kassena Nankena East Municipality among internally return migrants were diverse and impacted by socio-demographic characteristics as well as push and pull factors that existed between their place of origin and planned destinations. Migrating for work and employment-related reasons were

among the most often mentioned, and this was true for both male and female returnees (at least 11 out of the 15 interviewed). The critical roles their social network support networks played in the migration and adaptation processes at their destinations were critical to their mobility. For instance, Adda, a male retiree who stayed outside the Municipality for 22 years before his return narrates that:

“I left purposely to look for work that would pay me more. I asked my brother who lives in Tarkwa to find me a job. God willing, he got me a job as a security man at a mining company in the Western Region” (Adda, Navrongo, May 2022).

Another added that:

“we heard stories from our brothers who were living in Accra long before we moved there that there were various job opportunities existing in the south which at least could ensure one gets money in one’s pocket, so comparing the small job opportunities here, I moved with some of my peers to look for jobs in Accra” (Peter, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Agintebe, 54 years self-employed returnee on his part indicated that:

“I left because I wanted to find a job You know in those days and even today business is always slow up here and farming too is more seasonal, so I went to the south where at least you are assured of all kinds of activities that can help you earn money if you are not lazy” (Agintebe, Naaga Pingo, May, 2022).

Asiby, a female returnee cites her reasons as:

“I left for Kumasi to find a job to do as Kayayee. After completing JHS (Junior Secondary School) life was hard for me and my parents. So, I left so that I can work

and bring something to support my mother and younger siblings. We are nine children in all and I am the eldest". (Asiby (Female), Navrongo, May 2022).

Kagaah on her part adds that:

"Things were slow here, so I travelled to find work so I can get some money as capital and buy things to start my own business here" (Kagaah (female) Navrongo, May 2022).

These narrations by the participants suggests that the main reason for migrating was to search for jobs that would give them incomes than what they were having at their origin if even they had any. This is an indication that job search has been a key reason why people migrate especially from the rural areas to urban cities. As indicated by Adda during the in-depth interview, people migrate to experience positive change in their economic conditions. A lot of the time the economic difficulties in the place of origin becomes the push factor as outlined in the conceptual framework. The difficulties with jobs in the KNEM (as a place of origin) is common among other rural communities which consequently influences internal migration.

The revelation by Asiby further affirms the point made earlier by other participants that, it is the livelihood challenges at the place of origin that served as push factors to move from their place of origin to seek for potential greener pastures in other parts of the country. This narration regarding the push factors was common among the participants. Lack of job opportunities at the places of origin in the rural areas makes it challenging for the migrants to remain there, hence, the movement to other places in search of jobs.

Furthermore, Kagaah (one of the respondents) statement about traveling in search of work and capital for starting a business aligns with the neoclassical migration theory's emphasis on economic motivations and rational decision-making. It also demonstrates how push and pull factors interact in shaping migration decisions, highlighting the role of economic opportunities as a key driver of migration.

These assertions by respondents are in line with the explanation of the push and pull and neo-classical theories that essentially discusses the movements of people in search of higher paying job opportunities.

4.3.2 Break in farming season (Climate change)

Another reason related to the the quest to seek employment, is the one that relates to climatic circumstances that induce seasonal movement among many farmers. This proved to be an initial reason of relocating out of KNM for some of the participants. This motive emphasizes internal migration as an adaptation technique for individuals as well as a method to lessen susceptibility to environmental outcomes (Scheffran et al., 2012). Climate change related issues have significant impacts on migration. It facilitates movement of farmers especially from one area to another (IPCC, 2014).

For instance, Atemdem, a participant who has returned after 29 years staying in Accra for example narrates his reason for moving out as:

“I went to work in the South because the planting season here was over. In fact, my plan was to return when the planting season starts but I got a job as a farm manager as well as offered arable land for farming in the Western Region” (Atemdem, Navrongo, June, 2022).

From the narration, the respondent moved out of his home region due to changes in climate conditions, which made working unfavourable. This confirmed the assertion by IPCC (2014), that climate conditions contribute significantly towards migration and hence return migration globally. This position also aligns with what exist in the extant literature on the influence of environmental changes on migration (see Warner, et al., 2010; King 2015; Black et al., 2011; IPCC, 2014). Many of these scholars equally discussed the impeccable role climate change plays in the movement of people for which the lived experiences of some of the return migrants from Navrongo did confirm in this study.

The statement by Atemdem (one of the respondents) also reflects the fluidity and adaptability of migration experiences because while the individual initially migrated for seasonal work, the emergence of new opportunities in the destination region led to a longer extended stay at the destination. These opportunities, if realized, can contribute to economic and agricultural development in the destination region while potentially benefiting the home region through the sending of internal financial remittances as well as skills and knowledge transfer upon return.

4.3.3 Family reunification (To join other family members)

The second most cited theme that came up as a reason among some of the respondents for migrating out of the KNEM related to joining other family members for family reunification after in the context of marriage. This reason was cited by only some of the female respondents.

Individuals who have had their partners move from their place of origin (KNEM), may have to also join them sooner or later, which is a key reason why people migrate. Their narratives highlight the relevance of marriage as a social factor in the migration decision-making process especially in the context of these female internal return migrants. For instance, Joyce, a returnee narrates her motive for moving as:

“I left here so I could join my husband. I was working here and he (husband) was in Wa. The plan was for him to take transfer and come to Navrongo once his parents and my parents were here but this didn’t work out so I had to join him there”
(Joyce, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Kaani, a 50-year-old married woman also gave her reason as:

“I left with my husband to the South after our marriage ceremony here (referring to Navrongo). Our men will not allow you to leave their side after paying your bride price (laughs)” (Kaani, Navrongo, May, 2022).

These add to the several reasons why individuals migrate from one place to the other internally within Ghana.

4.3.4 To live independent life

Another theme that emerged among the narratives for the reasoning for leaving was the quest among some of the respondents to live their lives independent of their parents and families as well as make meaning of their own lives, which served as a motivating factor for a few of the respondents to migrate out of KNEM. Being independent entails being able to make their own life decisions with little or no influence from their parents or guardians. Furthermore, they saw their freedom as a chance to win respect from their relatives because they would be living on their own wherever they found themselves. Ama, a 46-year-old female returnee for instance stated that said:

“I was about 22 years when I left here I went away from here because of the too much control my mother and grandmother were giving me, because, they were the ones buying everything in the house. So, I informed my elder sister about it and left to Wa to stay with my cousin who was teaching there” (Ama, female, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Another, Abari who returned after several years of staying in Accra stated added that:

“For me, among the other reasons for leaving here was the fact that, I wanted to move away from the family where I can take decisions on my life and take responsibility for myself for certain things. You know, it is not always that your family should decide a lot of the things you do” (Abari, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Largely, the above narratives fit into the findings of Kwankye et al., (2009) who posit that the quest to living independent lives and making one’s own income are one of the main reasons why young people decide to leave their villages in Ghana.

4.3.5 Escape from early marriage

While the element of marriage is found to be a key factor for which people marriage to join their families, the study also finds that to some of the participants' marriage the factor did serve as a reason for their "fleeing out" or moving out of the KNM, a situation that can be considered as socio-cultural reason for moving internally within the country.

Kaweh, a female return migrant for instance notes that arrangement was made by her family to give her out to marriage at the age of 13 years and that she had to flee by joining a bus to the Brong-Ahafo Region to stay with an aunty who was a teacher. At 13 years, she knew she was too young and not matured enough for marital life. Moreover, she had not even completed middle school (which is Junior High School by today's standard). So aside fleeing from the child marriage saga, she also migrated so she could stay with the relative and continue her education. Her target was at least to complete the Senior High School or learn some vocational training before agreeing to any marriage proposal from men. She says that:

"Hmmm I ran away, the pressure to marry at the early age and especially to the old man was too much for me. My father was not ready to listen to me to even let me finish JHS. I had to forcibly leave this town".

(Kaweh, Navrongo, May 2022).

4.4 Perspectives of key informants on the reasons for migration

On the other hand, responses from the key informants point to the fact that moving for economic and other job-related reasons, is the primary reason for which most of their people depart or move out of KNEM.

For instance, Key Informant 4 (KI 4) noted that:

“There are not enough job opportunities here for most of our young ones to make money every day here. Moreover, they hear of the stories of their friends who have travelled to the south and making money. Even sometimes, through the kind of money and things they send to their people back here, they show them that life can be better out there. So, most of them will leave to find jobs, so they can also make money” (KIF, (female) Navrongo, June, 2022).

On his part Key informant 3 (KI 3) indicated that:

“People can leave for any reason of their choice. Sometimes even small family disagreement can make somebody decide to leave. But what I can say for sure especially in the case of our young people moving to go and find job opportunities elsewhere” (KITH, (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

Key informant 2 on his part stated that:

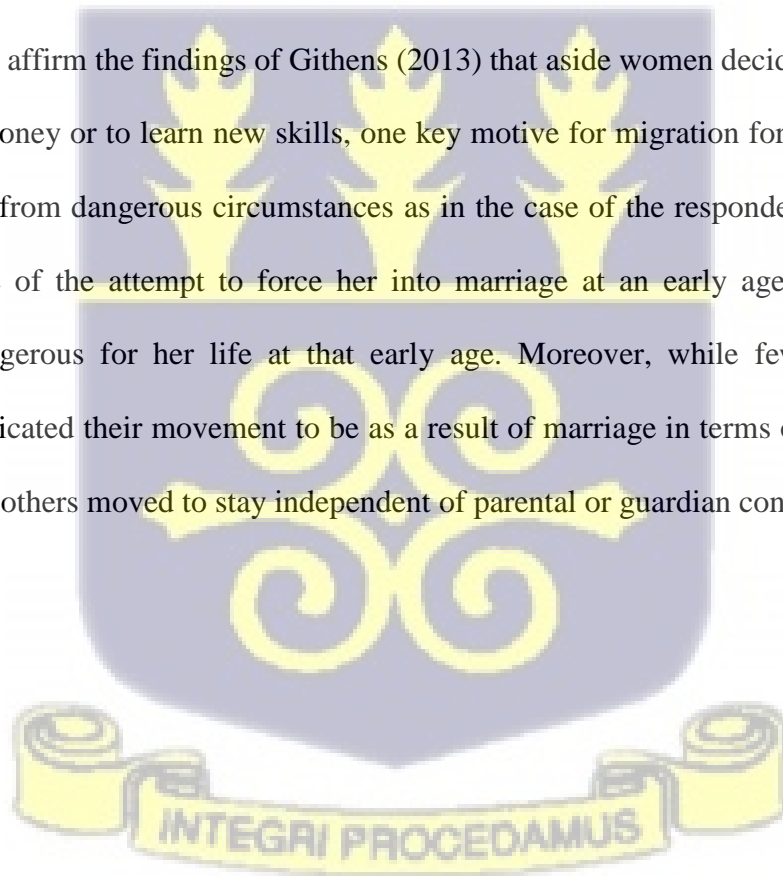
“Going to look for work is the main reasons why most of the people in this village travel to the south. I can say for 95% of all the people who move from here whether young or old, the main reason is to look for work which mostly are not available here” (KIT, (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

The overall position of the Key Informants collaborates the views of the return migrants that the main reason for migrating among the majority of the returnees are related to employment and other economic reasons. In KNEM employment issues serve as push factors according to these key informants.

Moreover, the overall finding from the various narratives point to the fact that internally, most of the internal return migrants relocated for a variety of reasons, including work, marriage, and

education, among others. Moving for work or employment related reasons was key among majority of the participants. This aligns with earlier studies such as that of Awumbila et al., (2016) and Awumbila, & Ardayfio-Schandorf (2008), which found that most Ghanaians who move from the north to the south do so for economic reasons such as looking for employment and, in most cases, end up working in occupations that are short-term, insecure, and low-paying. In a related study by Debnath (2016), many reasons including economic factors influencing individuals to migrate to their preferred destinations were cited. Abu, Codjoe, & Sward (2014), in their study cited economic and other factors as influencing agents for migration. These scholarly works confirm the assertions of respondents moving to other areas because of economic factors.

The results also affirm the findings of Githens (2013) that aside women deciding to migrate in order to earn money or to learn new skills, one key motive for migration for women has also been to escape from dangerous circumstances as in the case of the respondent (Kaweh) who moved because of the attempt to force her into marriage at an early age, a situation she considered dangerous for her life at that early age. Moreover, while few of the female participants indicated their movement to be as a result of marriage in terms of accompanying their husbands, others moved to stay independent of parental or guardian control.



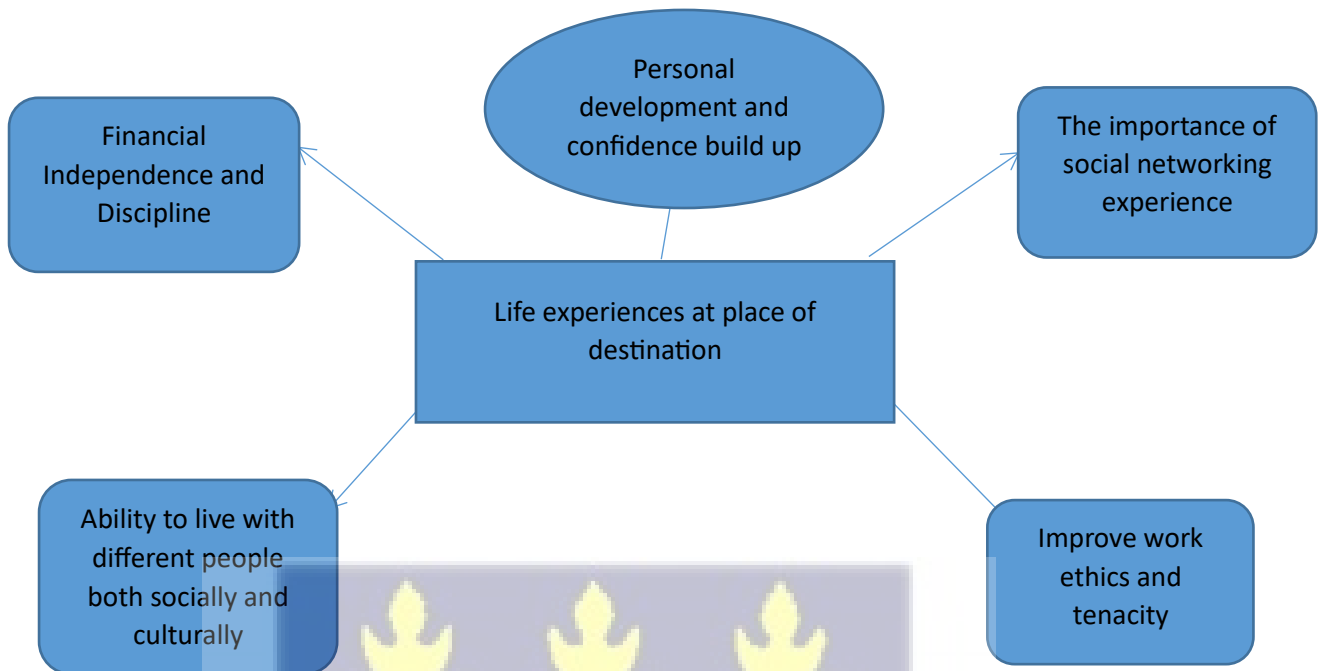
4.5 Life experiences at place of destination

The experiences of migrants frequently begin with their reasons for leaving their places of origin. Migration, as has earlier been demonstrated, is frequently influenced by economic concerns, such as the desire for better career prospects and higher living standards (McAreevey, & Argent, 2018). As they set out on their adventures, migrants could have hope, ambition, and a feeling of adventure.

The experiences of internal return migrants at their places of destination can largely shape their attitudes and way of thinking, which can influence the reason for their return as well as the nature of reintegration they may go through. Immigrants often undergo a range of experiences, both positive and negative, as they attempt to navigate the challenges and opportunities associated with relocation to new destinations (Hattar-Pollara & Meleis, 1995). According to studies, the longer duration of stay of migrants for instance at places of destination is associated with acquired socio-cultural behaviours that can influence their integration and life perspectives (Miglietta & Tartaglia, 2009; Martinovic, Van Tubergen, & Maas, 2009). This could also influence the reintegration process of migrants upon their eventual return to their place of origin.

Migrants who normally stay for shorter periods are classified as short-term migrants. Their first sociocultural conduct can be a reflection of a wish to hold on to their native cultures and traditions. This can entail fighting assimilation and socializing primarily within their ethnic communities. As they plan to return home soon, short-term migrants may also show more nostalgia for and attachment to their native cultures. This may have an impact on their social networking, language, and consumption patterns (Hoffman, 2018). Figure 4.2 shows the relationship among the themes generated under the life experiences at the former places of destination among the return migrants of KNEM.

Figure 4.2 Thematic analysis on life experiences at former places of destination



Source: Author's own construction, 2024

4.5.1 Ability to live with different people both socially and culturally

In this study, the out-migration life experiences of the internal return migrants are generated from their reasons for leaving or migrating out of the KNEM and then linked with their reintegration experiences. All the return migrants interviewed expressed both positive and negative life experiences from their former destinations.

One key theme that resonated among almost all the respondents was having the ability and learning to live with people from diverse backgrounds. This was critical to them as it has afforded them the right attitude for their ability to live everywhere which can even ensure their reintegration back home. For instance, asked about his key life experience during their stay away from the KNEM and how that has one way or the other influenced the return and settling in process, Yaw, a male returnee indicated that:

“One key thing I learnt in life over my many years out there (referring to staying at former place of destination) is cultivating the ability to stay or live with people from different socio-cultural backgrounds. This calls for patience, being open-minded and respecting others whose views and nature of doing things are different from mine. I think anybody who has my kind of experience should be able to stay here (Navrongo) upon their return or anywhere else” (Yaw, male, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Another returnee (Agintebe) also adds that:

“Well, to me I will say my experience of living with different kinds of people who were also migrants like me broaden my view of things especially from the perspectives of others. With all the language challenges, I learnt to be patient, respect the culture of other people and gradually things turned out to be okay” (Agintebe, Naaga Pingo, May, 2022).

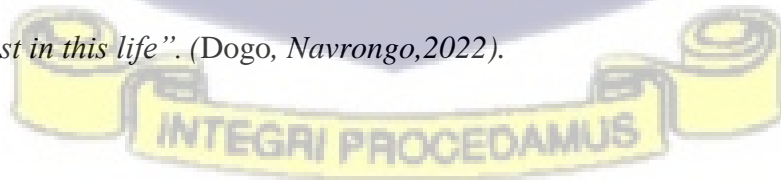
These revelations by these participants suggest that cultural tolerance is a key behaviour for an individual to be able to stay in harmony with people with different cultural backgrounds. Cultural tolerance makes it possible for an individual to adjust himself or herself to be able to stay peacefully with any group of people at any place. The ability of the individual to adjust to any situation especially at another person’s home place is a pre-condition for peaceful stay at that destination place. This means that for an individual to experience peaceful stay at the place of destination, individuals must humble themselves and respect the culture and practices at the host town or community. Most often, individuals go through bad experiences because such individuals fail to respect the culture and practices of the host town. Many people who have had bad experience from any place of destination during their migration process, have been due to many reasons largely influenced by the practices of the destination places.

The foregoing supports the study by Deshingkar (2019), who observed that many migrants display impressive perseverance and adaptation in the face of cultural diversity and social exclusions. Similar result has also indicated that migrants at the destination place might establish new social networks, pick up new skills, and participate in cross-cultural interactions. These encounters may eventually result in personal development and a sense of belonging (van Liempt, 2018).

4.5.2 Improve work ethics and tenacity

Another theme that came out from the lived experiences at the former places of destination centred around learning the attitude of hard work and perseverance. These two attitudes coupled with strong faith in religion, were cited among some of the respondents. For instance, Dogo (one respondent) who spent 18 years living in Accra narrates his experiences at the destination place as:

“To me life in Accra showed me that hard work, patience, discipline and the grace of God are the key things that will lead one to success in this life. For the many things, I have gone through, I know there is no short-cut to success because over the years, I have seen many including my friends and relatives going down the path of failure because they wanted to make it quick and live like big men when we were all in Accra. Some became armed robbers and died while others too were arrested and sent to Nsawam (Prison). So, I will always tell my children and the young ones that God’s time is the best in this life”. (Dogo, Navrongo,2022).



Another female returnee from Kumasi also added that:

“To me hard work, discipline and patience are some key values I learnt about life in Kumasi. When we were there (Kumasi), you see a lot of people doing different things but at the end of the day, once you work hard at least what you will eat every day will not elude you” (Mercy, Navrongo, June 2022).

4.5.3 The importance of social networking experience

The study finds among the respondents that life at their various destinations made them understand the importance of social networks and joining groups at their places of destination. These networks provide emotional support, information sharing, and a sense of belonging. Such networks to them also helped the return migrants navigate challenges, access resources, and maintain cultural connections.

For instance, Abari a self-employed returnee stated that:

“To me, my life experience is that I have come to terms with the fact that building good relationships, choosing right friends and belonging to associations that offer support to migrants are important things any traveller should endeavour to have. From the time I left here to my coming back home, support from friends and family has been key in my life” (Abari, Navrongo, May 2022).

Others too expressed their experience with social networking to have come through the disappointment they faced at their former places of destination. These perceived bad experiences of some of these return migrants, however bitter, have taught them certain lessons in going on with their lives as well as life upon their return.

One describes his as:

“Well for me, I have learnt not to trust people too much, not even your family members. Human beings can be diabolic and betray you at the very least when you need them most. I will give you just one example of what I mean; I trusted one respected family member of mine with an investment proposal he made to me for which I informed and encouraged my friends to get involved. It ended up that my family member “scammed” me and left for outside the country. When I complained to our group leaders in Accra, one of them told me bluntly there was nothing they could do because Accra stay by plan”. (Chire, Narongo, May, 2022).

Another adds that:

“I have learnt a lot of lessons living in Takoradi. Different people, different cultures, some even from Ivory Coast but one thing I have come to know is for one to be careful when dealing with people especially those one may call close friends and share your secrets with. I can tell you I came back divorced because of a close friend”. (Aliba, Navrongo, May, 2022).

4.5.4: Financial Independence and Discipline

For some migrants, the living conditions and pressures of life at their destinations, as well as their reasons for traveling, significantly influenced their key experiences. The environments and urban areas they encountered taught them the importance of saving money and being prudent and disciplined with their finances to support themselves and their families.

One individual recounts that:

“They say travel and see. It is true. For me living in Kumasi taught me the lesson of self-control and the practice of financial prudence through savings and investment. Before I left here as a young woman, I was living in a family house and did not care about a lot of things such as rent then. You might think it is easy but when you have competing interests as rent and other things you must develop a tough skin in saving towards projects like buying land or building a house. Because of my self-control in saving, I have been able to build two houses, one in Kumasi where two of my children are living with wives and the one, I live in here (Navrongo)”
(Kababu, Navrongo, May, 2022).

4.5.5 Personal development and confidence build up

Others too see their exposure to different ways of facing life and the ability to be bold and open up as key lessons for which they have come back with. One female returnee describes her key life experience as:

“Before I left here, I used to be shy and afraid to speak up even when somebody was doing something wrong to me. You know our tradition here makes women not to have so much voice like the men, but now I have learnt how to be bold and speak up in defending my right. The lady lawyer I worked for as a house help in Accra taught and helped develop that confidence in me”.

She adds that:

“So, me, when I see the women and girls here, I tell them to open up and speak about issues bothering them like domestic violence in their homes. There are laws in Ghana, and they will be protected by the law” (Anaman, Navrongo, May, 2022).

These results indicate that return migrants' out-migration experiences at their former destinations are multifaceted. While some return migrants report positive outcomes, such as social support networks, cultural exchange, knowledge advancement, and increased confidence, others experience negative aspects, including challenging encounters with people at their destinations. This variation suggests that migrants' experiences differ based on location, personal behavior, state policies, social networks, and cultural backgrounds. Many migrants display resilience, forming new social networks, acquiring new skills, and engaging in cross-cultural interactions.

For example, Massey (1990) and Portes and Rumbaut (2006) have highlighted that variations in socioeconomic status, gender, cultural backgrounds, and reasons for migration contribute to diverse experiences at their destinations. The recognition of positive experiences aligns with literature acknowledging the potential advantages of migration, including improved economic opportunities, social mobility, better education, knowledge advancement, healthcare, and enhanced quality of life, including increased self-confidence (Pessar, 2003; Dustmann & Weiss, 2007). Conversely, the acknowledgment of negative experiences aligns with studies highlighting the challenges and hardships faced by migrants, such as discrimination, social isolation, difficulties in assimilation, and economic struggles (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014; Zhou, 1997).

Overall, the study's finding that return migrants from KNEM experienced a mix of positive and negative aspects at different destinations aligns with and contributes to the broader literature on migrant experiences. It underscores the significance of contextual factors, including the socio-political environment, labour market conditions, and the attitudes of the receiving community, in shaping migrants' experiences (De Haas, 2012; Hatton & Williamson, 1998).

4.6 Conclusion

The current chapter examined the primary reasons for which return migrants left the KNEM District and their life experiences at various destinations. The study concludes that while there are various reasons for migration, the predominant motivation is related to employment and economic factors, a finding well-established in the migration literature. Migration, an essential component of many Ghanaian lives, has been a crucial part of family and household livelihood strategies in Ghana for decades (Awumbila & Ardayifo-Schandorf, 2008; Kwankye et al., 2007; Lentz, 2006). Individuals often move to areas or countries with stronger job markets, higher wages, or better career opportunities (Massey et al., 1993), a phenomenon known as labour migration (Raghuram, 2013). Conversely, economic hardship and poverty in their home country or region can compel people and families to seek better living conditions and financial security (Massey, 2019), especially in areas with limited access to essential needs like food, clean water, and education. Among married individuals, a key driver for return migration is family reunification, with the compelling need to be with a spouse or children serving as a powerful motivator (Hugo, 2003; Kritz et al., 1992; Mincer, 1978). Economic considerations, such as supporting or fortifying their household, also strongly influence their decision-making process (Hugo, 2003).

Regarding life experiences at their destinations, return migrants report a range of both positive and negative experiences as they navigate the challenges and opportunities of relocation. Key life experiences expressed by the participants include learning to live with different people socially and culturally, improving work ethics and tenacity, gaining lessons from social networking, achieving financial independence and discipline, and personal development and confidence building. These experiences significantly shape their attitudes and perspectives, influencing both their return and the nature of their reintegration (Miglietta & Tartaglia, 2009; Hattar-Pollara & Meleis, 1995).

CHAPTER FIVE

PREPARATION TOWARDS RETURN AND KEY REASONS FOR RETURN

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter examined the main reasons for return migrants leaving KNEM, as well as how return migrants see the essential takeaways from their life lessons and experiences while at their former places of destination. However, the reasons for migrating might have an impact on the type of preparation and attitude that a possible return migrant may adopt after deciding to return home.

Battistella's (2018) work on developing a conceptual and policy framework for return migration identifies four critical areas for individual readiness in the return migration process, which include the psychological preparedness, technical preparedness, financial preparedness, and social capital preparedness. The preparedness in the return migration process among the internal returnees to the KNEM are assessed based on these four main areas.

5.2 Psychological Preparedness

Among other factors, Hulewat (1996) notes migration to be a psychologically demanding process. The individual's psychological preparedness may refer to the personal processes and capacity, including concern, anticipation, arousal, feeling, intentions, decision-making and management of one's thoughts and actions (Reser & Morrissey, 2009). Potential returnee migrants' psychological readiness is likely to be higher especially in the case of long-term and permanent migration, when the choice to return consists of reintegration in a place or country of origin where the migrant has not resided for a long time (Battistella, 2018). The study finds that majority of the returnees (about 90%) were prepared mentally before their relocation back to KNEM.

For instance, a 67year old male retired returnee stated that:

“Yes, I gave a lot of thought about my coming back home. I knew the conditions here (Kulogo) won’t be the same as you will find in Accra, so I had to prepare my mind before coming. You have seen that things like network challenges and road transportation are a bit of problem here. So, knowing this, I prepared to come and see other positive things here to comfort myself (laughs).

“For instance, if you look at the noise level in Accra compared to here, you will know there's too much noise in Accra such that when sometimes you even want to think you'll realize people around are playing loud music, cars honking around making it impossible to take time out to think” (Sonotu, Kulogo, June, 2022).

Another male returnee, Ernest, who came back after 18 years in Takoradi in the Western Region to start his own construction business adds that:

“Charley (meaning my friend), I had to psyche myself very well before coming back here. Things in the north here are very different from what happens in the south. The natural environment and the business environment are all different. So, before deciding to finally come back home, I had to really consider the conditions and prepare myself and that of my family before coming home” (Ernest, Navrongo, June, 2022).

Ama on her part added that:

“I considered what I would be losing here and gaining at my former place and vice versa and psyched myself before deciding to come back”. (Ama, Navrongo, May 2022).

Other findings from the data show that some of the return migrants may not have been psychologically well prepared for their going back home especially those who were returning

as unsuccessful and under pressure from the life challenges and failures they faced at the place of destination. Konu for instance narrates that:

“I won’t say I was mentally prepared before coming back home, because I had nothing and didn’t know what I was going to do with my life here (Navrongo) and that bothered me a lot. My situation too in Accra was not getting better. I had no option but to find my way home. If for nothing at all I know if I should die, I should die in my hometown. But returning home with virtually nothing was mentally disturbing to me as I was thinking of what my friends and family here would say about me” (Konu, Navrongo, June, 2022).

Another returnee stated that:

“If I say I made up my mind to come and stay here permanently without the intention of going back to Accra, I would be lying. But you know one thing led to another and another, which required that I stay here permanently to continue life here. But to say whether I was prepared mentally to stay here forever and ever, I would say no” (Asapaka, Navrongo, May, 2022).

The above narratives provide the insight that while some few internal return migrants show unsatisfactory psychological preparedness before their return which can be due to their unsuccessfulness at their place of destination, majority of the participants are seen to be well prepared psychologically before their return knowing the conditions in the KNEM. It is also established that, giving key considerations to factors such as the economic, political, climatic and socio-cultural reasons existing between their former places of destinations and origin played a critical role in the overall building of their psychological considerations and preparedness for their return home.

5.2.1 Financial Preparedness

Financial preparedness of return migrants refers to their level of readiness to manage their finances before and after their return home from their place of destination. Being financially prepared is an important feature in the lives of return migrants, as it can serve as a buffer to the various possible challenges related to their finances when they return home, such as finding employment, starting a business, and managing their expenses. Battistella (2018) notes that financial preparedness requires early planning. To improve their financial preparedness, return migrants can take steps such as saving money while at the place of destination, educating themselves about financial management, seeking out financial advice and support from family and friends, as well as the building of network of contacts at their places of origin or home country to help them find employment or start a new business upon their return.

The study finds that apart from a few, almost all the participants saved money or had some financial planning for their return whether to retire, start their own business, or to take care of family and relatives back home among others.

For instance, Anaman, 61 years retired returnee who returned home after 29 years in Accra said that:

“I prepared financially before coming because my intention was to stay here forever. We built our house before coming and also did some savings through the buying of treasury bills then. We know the challenges here (KNEM) and staying or coming back here without any money savings would mean a difficult start of life here. In any case, I knew my pension money is also there to support me and my family here”
(Anaman, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Another returnee (Adda) who indicated to have returned financially prepared indicated that:

“I was financially prepared though I will say I am not that rich. But you know once you intend to return you must put your financial situation into consideration. Knowing the conditions here, I saved some money and investments that can last my household for some time, Moreover, I know my pension would be coming so.... I can say I was prepared financially before coming” (Adda, Navrongo, May 2022).

This narration by the respondent is a demonstration of the fact that the reason for migration, which has to do with finding job to earn income plays a key role during returning. Migrants would consider their financial soundness before returning to their place of origin. Migrants would not want to become a burden financially on anyone after they return home. Making investment is a way of ensuring that when they return home, they would not be a burden on anyone. Migrating to another land for so many years and returning home with no investment is considered challenging and frustrating as many town people could make mockery of such return migrants. These situations impressed upon the migrants to do their possible best to save money for their future to guarantee their return.

Kagaah, a 51-year-old self-employed female returnee, who has returned to start her own business adds that:

“I was financially prepared before coming home. You know when you travel with an aim you work towards that. My aim was to save some money and come and start my own business here. So, I saved money daily with some “susu” people in Kumasi, then at the end of the month they will give me all I have saved with them, then I will put some in the bank and send some to my mother here” (Kagaah, Navrongo, April, 2022).

Another adds that:

“You can’t come here to stay or do business if you don’t prepare yourself financially. You have to be on your own if things don’t go the way you expected, so financial planning was key to me” (Peter, Navrongo, May, 2022).

These kinds of responses were common among the respondents during the in-depth interviews, where it was made clear that most of the people engage in their migration decision purposely to change or enhance their financial fortunes. It is therefore not in doubt that financial preparedness is a key consideration for migrants making the decision to return home.

On the other hand, the few who were relatively not financially sound, acknowledged the importance of having adequate financial resources before returning but their circumstances at their former places of destination made things difficult for them in saving enough. This lack of money thus proved as a stumbling block for their successful acceptance back into their communities.

Konu, a returnee for instance stated that:

“I was not financially prepared before coming back. As I said earlier things were rough for me and you know when you stay away for a long time and come without money, it does not present a good picture of you and affects a lot of things for you here including even how the people see and accept you” (Konu, Navrongo, June, 2022).

This narration by the respondent suggests that as a return migrant you need to be financially prepared before returning to your place of origin just to avoid people forming negative perceptions about you and start giving you names. As expressed by the respondent, migrants who return to their place of origin without being financially prepared are usually disrespected and are perceived to be irresponsible.

5.2.2 Technical Preparedness

Technical skills are critical for return migrants to successfully reintegrate into their places of origin or home countries. In general, if the return is not for retirement purposes or incapability due to health or other issues that would prevent the returnee from engaging in economic activities, the returnee must obtain a source of income in the place of origin upon return (Battistella, 2018).

Studies suggest that migrants acquire not only financial capital, but also human capital at the places of destination and that upon return, these migrants can successfully transfer or leverage these new skills gained across the migratory circuit often to launch businesses and expand their opportunities in their home society or place of origin (Hagan & Wassink, 2016; Hagan et al. 2015; Reinhold & Thom, 2013). Battistella (2018) posits that it is not sufficient to be aware of one's capabilities and skills, but then what counts is whether those capabilities can be placed successfully for use in the place of origin.

The results from the data analysis show that many among the participants could be considered as being technically prepared before their return to the KNEM. These skills include the acquisition of skills in formal and informal training programmes.

Asked, what skills they came with, Asiby, a returnee noted that:

“I went through training with one NGO that teaches people how to produce things on their own such as ointment, liquid soap, bathing soap, and baked bread. In fact, we learnt a lot that time and I knew that whenever I return here, I can start something on my own” (Asiby, Navrongo, June, 2022).

On her part, Mamata 46-year-old female returnee said that:

“Aside working as a cook in a restaurant in Accra, I also learnt how to do hair pleating (like corn roll) and “rasta”. I also learnt how to make wig and other hair styles through a woman from our community who has a hair dressing saloon in Accra for free; even with the cooking I learnt how to prepare other foods from other places” (Mamata, Navrongo, June, 2022).

A self-employed mechanic, Abulu adds that:

“I trained as a mechanic, specializing in Toyota cars in Accra even though I can work on different cars. And that is the main skill sustaining me now because that is what I am using to survive here and teach others” (Abulu Navrongo, May, 2022).

To many of the retirees, they saw their technical preparedness as coming from the experiences they have garnered from their many years working with private and public agencies in the country. Teaching, communication, book-keeping, counselling and knowledge in the use of computer applications were among the key skills mentioned by the retirees.

For instance, one return retiree notes that:

“I retired as a teacher and as the head of the disciplinary and counselling unit of my last school. I still have with me these skills which I am using here especially with my knowledge in counselling to help my people” (Akwoyire, Navrongo, April, 2022).



Another said:

“I will say, my key skill that I came with is my knowledge in the use of computer and other internet applications which I used to set-up a small typing and printing shop in front of my house. We do photocopy as well. Even though I have some young guys working there, they know they can’t make any mistakes because I have knowledge in the applications”. (Sonotu, Kulogo, June, 2022).

Technical skills are becoming increasingly essential for securing sustainable employment. The above narratives show that being technically prepared with employable skills was crucial among the internal return migrants of KNEM as it helped them to reintegrate into the workforce of KNEM by improving their economic prospects. These skills have also served as a means of putting some returnees in a position where they can be of service to their people back home as in the case of the retirees with counselling skills.

5.2.3 Social Capital

The social capital of migrants plays an important role in the success of their return (Battistella, 2018). Social capital refers to the resources and networks that individuals can access through their social relationships, such as family, friends, and community organizations. As noted by Mazzucato (2008), social capital can be measured in terms of membership of associations, development of social networks and the maintenance of networks with friends and families back home. For return migrants, social capital can provide access to information, support, and opportunities that are essential for successful reintegration into their home or place of origin as well as decrease the risks and costs associated with migration (Crow, 2010; Massey & Espinosa, 1997).

The findings from the study show that the social capital of the return migrants played an important role in their return to KNEM. The response of Abulu, a self-employed mechanic affirms this:

“Aside helping me to pay for some of the modern tools I will need for setting up my business when I return, my elder brother through his contacts for instance helped in getting me a site, a good place for starting my mechanic shop even before moving permanently here. The assurance of getting this land eased a lot of the thinking I had to do with getting a land” (Abulu, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Another returnee who returned to take care of the relatives back home stated that:

“When I discussed my decision to return home to look after my mother and other relatives, my siblings and uncles in Accra supported me with their contributions in terms of money, clothes, food stuffs and a lot of things that would last a while” (Lucy, Navrongo, May 2022).

According to Chiri, a 63-year-old self-employed female returnee who has returned after 31 years living in Accra:

“My family and friends have been very instrumental in my migration life, both in terms of when I was leaving here and when I decided to return home permanently. Those times it was my friends who hosted and gave me a place to sleep when I left here to Accra for the first time. Through their help, I started some selling at circle (Accra) and went on to do other things. Before coming my family especially my younger brother who is a teacher here helped in monitoring the building of my house and store here. People like that make things easy for you” (Chiri, Navrongo, June, 2022).

Another noted that:

“You know I was away for quite a long time. I am relatively young compared to my uncles and elders here. When I returned, my family and friends have helped me to know and understand some of the traditional rites and the meaning and brain behind a lot of the customs and traditions we do here” (Achana Navrongo, June, 2022).

Achana adds that:

“You know there is a saying that when you don’t know and understand the tune from the drum of your own people, you will get missing in the midst of festivities ... so in many aspects they have been very helpful to me”.

On the other hand, a few of the participants mentioned that they did not receive the kind of support they expected from their families and friends in their previous places of destination during their preparation to return.

Atendem notes that:

“I won’t say I got any special support from my family and friends when I was preparing to return home. Even when I was in dire need of some small money for my healthcare, none, I mean nobody came out to help me. So, I don’t count them as part of my anything and I would say they were not part of my preparation” (Atendem Navrongo, May, 2022).



Another adds that:

“They (referring to family and friends) discriminate in choosing who to help and who not to help. They are only interested in listening to all your stories but without giving you any help. Some were even laughing at me, when I told them I was returning home. But whatever they did, did not stop me from my decision to return, it is my life, and I take full responsibility for my decisions” (Dogo, Navrongo, June, 2022).

The study has established that, for the internal return migrants of KNEM, social capital was incredibly valuable in helping some of them prepare for their return as well as the efforts made towards their reintegration into their home communities. For instance, through their social relations, the return migrants were able to get support with money as well as other materials that helped their preparation for return and their eventual return. Important issues such as access to information, resources, and opportunities that may not be available to them otherwise. On the other hand, those who did receive their expected support from their family and friends during their preparation do not see that as hampering their effort to return.

Their narratives also indicate cracks in the social relations among some of the participants and their family and friends which consequently show the nature of the probable help one is likely to have during times of need. It may also indicate the inability of the participants in question to build proper social network systems at their former places of destinations.

5.3 Reasons for Returning to the KNEM

The decision to return home permanently is complex and influenced by various push and pull factors, as well as intervening factors in some cases. The return migration phenomenon, often described as a permanent or semi-permanent return to the place of origin is said to be influenced by a mixture of professional and personal motivations at both place of origin and destination

(Yendaw, 2013; Piotrowski and Tong, 2010; King, 2000; King, 1986; Bovenkerk, 1974). The reasons behind migrants' return migration may be helpful in understanding the question of whether returnees can be considered as successful migrant returnees or failure migrant returnees (Bovenkerk, 1974).

Successful returnees are generally considered as those who have prospered at the destination and who choose to return to the origin while failure returnees, on the other hand, refer to those who have not achieved their goals during migration at the destination and are forced or voluntarily return to the place of origin (Wang and Fan, 2006; King, 1986; Lee, 1984).

This research aims to show that the primary reasons for return migration among KNEM internal migrants can vary based on individual circumstances. Key themes include returning for employment opportunities, political ambitions, social and cultural reasons such as being closer to family, reconnecting with loved ones, fulfilling socio-cultural and political obligations, and returning home after retirement.

Figure 5.1 shows the synergy among the themes that were generated based on the main reasons for return migration to KNEM.

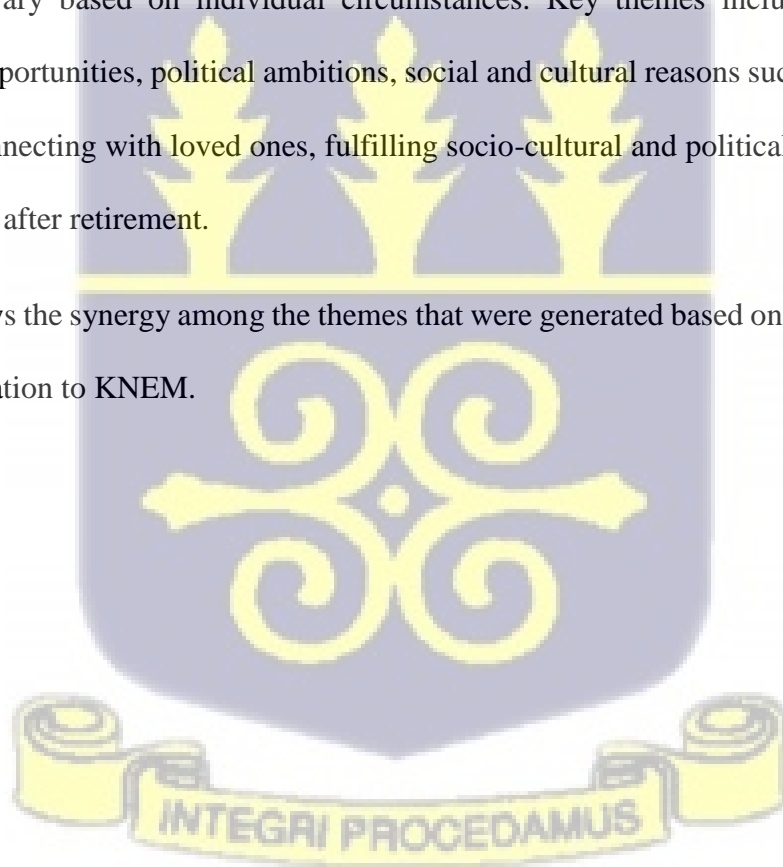
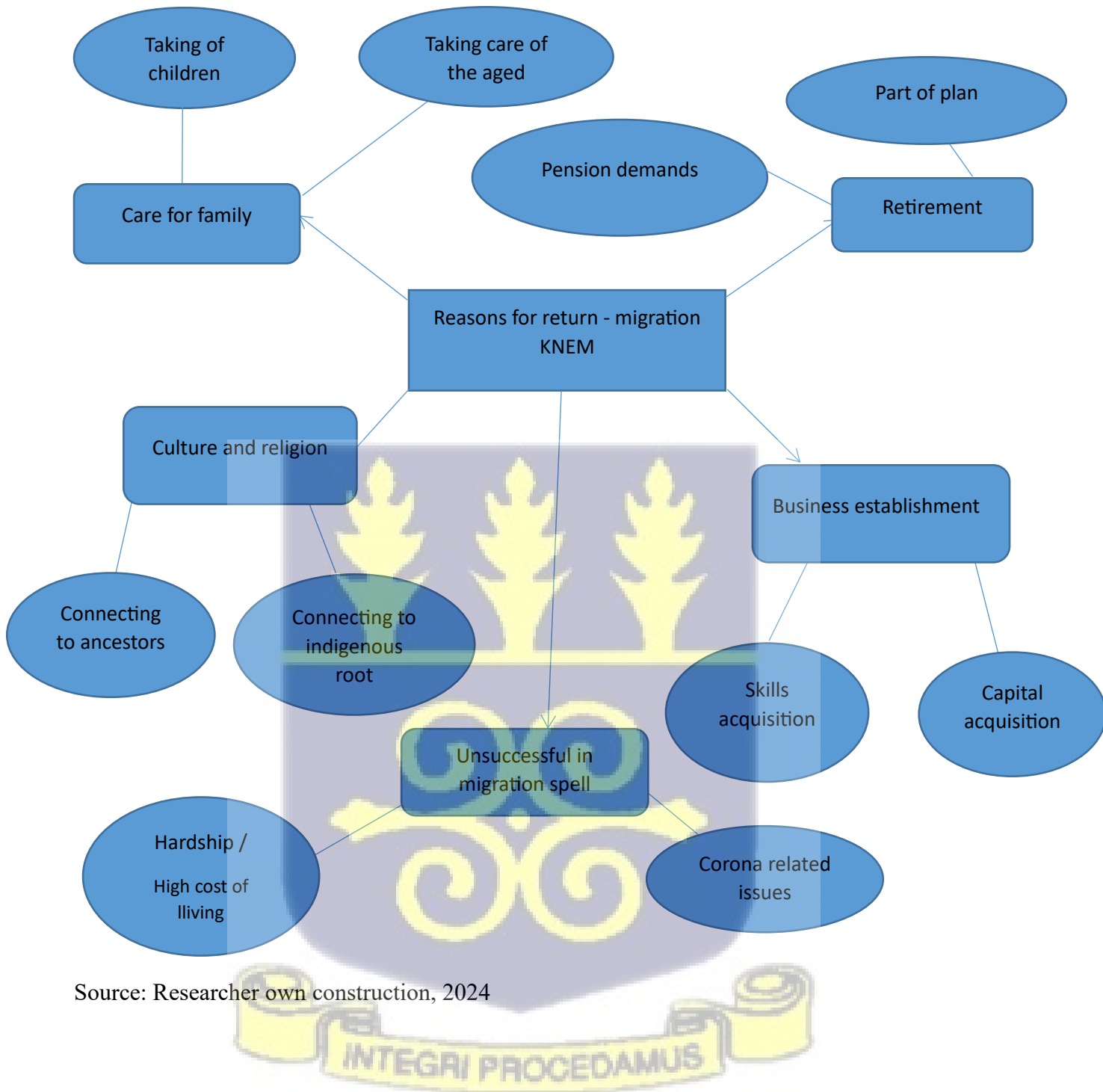


Figure 5.1: Thematic analysis on main reasons for return migration to KNEM



5.3.1 Attaining Retirement

The study finds that among the major themes for returning are those who profess to have returned home after reaching the retirement age of working. The narrative shows that these groups of people had actually planned their return to their origin and knew that ultimately, they

would return home. Anecdotally, most people return to their hometowns during or when nearing the age of retirement after staying away from their hometowns during their working lives.

One of the respondents reported that:

“You know home is home ... In fact, I always had the plan to return here (Navrongo) after my retirement. It is like a tradition in my family, all my elder brothers and other relatives returned home closely before or after their retirement” (Kababu, Navrongo, June, 2022).

Joyce on her part said that:

“I tied my return around my pension period. Returning home was only a matter of time for me. My mother was very old and there was no elderly female around to perform some traditions. There are other kids and younger relatives around and there is always the need to have elders in the family house” (Joyce, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Sonotu a male returnee stated that:

“Returning home was always part of my plans especially after retirement. I didn't see the need to be staying at a place like Takoradi where there's too much noise and traffic when you want to think and relax after 35 years of working for the country” (Sonotu, Kulogo, June, 2022).

5.3.2 Engage in economic activities or establish a Business

Another reason found among the respondents was the quest to start a new economic life back home within the KNEM after living outside the district for a long time. These include those who have accumulated capital and entrepreneurial skills to start their own businesses and take advantage of the economic atmosphere in KNEM.

Asiby, a 41-year-old female who is single and has spent 20 years living outside the KNEM notes that:

“I returned to start my business here. In Accra I learnt how to make things like liquid soap, grow mushrooms, make beads, ointment and even paints. Few people know how to make these things here, so the market was good for business.” (Asiby, Navrongo, June, 2022).

Kagaah, a 51-year-old self-employed female returnee on her part also asserts that:

“My leaving initially was to work in Kumasi and get some capital and come back. I returned about five years ago with some capital to start my small restaurant and mobile money business. It has not been easy, but it is going well.” (Kagaah, Navrongo, April, 2022).

On his part, Abulu, a self-employed 42-year-old man, who returned after 15 years staying outside his home community says:

“I came back to start my own mechanic and bicycle repairing shop. This is after I have worked for five years with my master after I completed my apprenticeship training” (Abulu, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Picture 1 is the mechanic workshop of one of the returnees.



Picture 1: Abulu's mechanic shop at Napolo



Source: Field work, 2024

Another who has returned to open a hardware shop indicated that:

“As I said earlier on, my main aim for leaving here initially to the Ashanti region was to raise capital to establish this business here. The initial plan was to have my wife manage it for the family while I continue working in the mines, but things changed upon my return” (Dogo, Male, Navrongo, May, 2022)

Picture 2 is the researcher standing in front of the hardware shop of Dogo (a returnee).

Picture 2: Hardware shop of a returnee



Source: Field work, 2024

Returning to engage in self-sustaining economic activities has been recognised as one of the key reasons for which some internal migrants return to their places of origin. The narratives do show that internal returnees who come back for the purposes of starting businesses or economic activities either have acquired capital or trained in some technical skills for which they can put to economic use. This result is in line with studies that indicated there is a higher propensity for returnee migrants to be self-employed (see Mahé, 2022; Claver, 2013; Dziva & Kusena, 2013; Junge, Revilla & Schatzl, 2013; De'murger & Xu, 2011; Xu, 2010).

This finding also fits into the New Economics of Labour Migration Model which presents return migration as the logical results for migrants when enough financial and human capital

capabilities have been achieved, thereby presenting a situation where there is little reason for migrants to stay in the host destination (Stark 1991).

5.3.3 Returning for family and social care roles

The study also reveals narratives indicating that a primary reason for some internal migrants returning to their places of origin is to provide care and support to family and relatives in KNEM. For instance, Lardi, a 48-year-old single mother, who has returned after 13 years living in Accra indicated that:

“For me I returned to take care of my sick mother and younger siblings. We were three sisters in Accra. We agreed that one of us should return to take care of things here. Our mother was old and not feeling well. But my younger brothers and sisters were disturbing her, so I decided to sacrifice my hustling in Accra and come back here”
(Lardi, Navrongo, June, 2022).

Largely, this finding aligns with other studies that found the presence of family members such as children and parents as key determinants for return migration (Tezcan, 2023; Mulder et al., 2020; Zorlu & Kooiman, 2019; Elijah, Tanle, & Kendie, 2017; Piotrowski and Tong, 2010; Wang and Fan, 2006; Zhao, 2002; von Reichert et al., 2014).

Returning home permanently to care for family or relatives was not the initial idea for some, even though the situation at home demanded their attention and return. When life at both ends is contrasted, their situations in their destinations do not function as a driving cause for their continued stay away from home. So, rationally, it can be deduced that the push and pull socioeconomic forces present between their previous locations of destination and origin, as well as the absence of intervening considerations such as seeking support from other relatives, contributed a big part of their choice to return home permanently.

One returnee (Agintebe) intimated that:

“I came back purposely to take care of family matters. Yes, my wife and children. My wife has been sick for a while after she was involved in an accident on a trip from here (Naaga Pingo) to Navrongo. Actually, my plan was not to stay for too long but one thing led to another and another”.

He continued that:

“Looking at the condition of my family (wife and children), I couldn’t take my wife and our six children to live with me in the single room I was occupying in Accra. Things were already difficult for me in Accra. I attempted to have some of my children staying with other relatives but none of them was willing to accept them because of their relationship with my wife. That choice did not happen. So, I had to reorient my mind, find something to do here and stay back here” (Agintebe, Naaga Pingo, May, 2022).

5.3.4 Cultural reasons (connecting to ancestors, connecting indigenous roots)

Returning to their indigenous surroundings fosters connection to their culture and ancestral lines. After spending the greater part of their lives away from their ancestral lands and traditions, most retirees prefer to live the latter part of their lives within the space of their ancestral lands and traditions, contribute to the land, die, and be buried on their home soil rather than somewhere else.

One returnee responded that:

“My umbilical cord was cut here and having been around a number of places working within the country, the best place for me to rest and prepare to meet and join my ancestors would be to come back to my home soil” (Anaman, Navrongo, May, 2022).

The above narratives align with some earlier work such as that of Cobb-Clark and Stillman (2013) who found that under reasonable conditions the incentives to return migration are greatest at retirement, implying that there is an association between the retirement status of people and return migration. Moreover, the quest to experience and re-establish contact with old customs and one's ethnic lines after retirement is consistent with the work of King and Christou (2014) who intimated that people migrate back home because of the need to maintain ethnic ties.

5.3.5 Comfort of living in hometown

Another narrative that came up was that some of the internal return migrants returned to avoid the pressures and challenges they faced at the places of destination. The thoughts of this literally reflect in the saying that “there is no place like home”. The perspective here is that the main motive for coming home was to live in their natural socio-cultural setting that presents some sense of place attachment which gives them relative comfort and reduces the probable life pressures returnee migrants may face in the places of destination. The importance of the home in the life of return migrants is emphasized in this study just as in other studies such as that of Vorkinn & Riese (2001) who posit generally that home may mean more than just a shelter space, but it brings with it safety, predictability, access to food and survival necessities, important social connections and familiar constructs, and a ‘mental comfort zone.

Kaani, a 42-year-old returnee stated that:

“Life was very hard for me in Accra. Things were difficult after I lost my job at my work place. At my age I was living and squatting with friends. Sometimes the insults and disrespect I take from their wives were unbearable. It was not easy my brother. It was depressing and I just had to come back home and think of something to do here”.

He adds that: *“Here (referring to Navrongo), I live in my own family house and there are old friends who we meet to have some good time.”* (Kaani, Navrongo, June, 2022).

Similarly, Dogo, a 43-year-old man who also returned after almost 18 years living in Accra points out that:

“The reason why I came back to KNEM was that, living in Accra became hard. Caring for my three children and my wife who were living away here, I realized that I needed to still come back and start building my life at home. The cost of rent and feeding was very high and dissipated my funds, so it became quite tough especially when I had to be ejected from where I was living because of road construction” (Dogo, Navrongo, June, 2022).

The above sentiments also may give an indication of some of the returnee migrants who may not have returned if things were naturally better for them at their places of destination.

5.3.6 Participation in local politics

Another perspective shared from one of the participants shows that the quest to actively participate at the local government level served as key motivating factor among other reasons for the return. Research does suggest that it is not only skills and financial capital that shape the motives of return and return experiences, but local power relations, traditions and values in home countries as well as having a strong bearing on the returnees’ capacity to invest, innovate and to appear as actors of change (Cassarino, 2004).

From Akwoyire, a 66-year-old returnee, after 35 years in the Western Region, several reasons explain his return but principal among them was his interest in local politics. He notes that:

“You see, I will say a number of things pushed me to come back home, but I will say my interest in local politics was the main factor for me coming back to settle. When I

was away, anytime I had the opportunity to come back here or call home for one thing or another, my old friends encouraged and called on me to come and contest political positions here... as Assembly man. In fact, upon several consultations I became interested. And you know that position is not one you can occupy and stay away from the community. So, I prepared for that and came back” (Akwoyire, Navrongo, April, 2022).

Picture 3 shows a returnee, who is a government appointee and his colleague assembly members at the Municipal Assembly.

Picture 3: A returnee and colleagues at the Municipal Assembly (KNMA).



Source: Fieldwork, 2024.

5.3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has accomplished two primary objectives. First, it elucidated the main reasons why internal return migrants relocated back to the KNEM and assessed the individual level of preparedness for their internal migration process. The chapter identified that common reasons for returning included economic opportunities such as starting new businesses, reuniting with family members, caring for the elderly or other relatives, retiring, and desiring a quieter, more

rural environment connected to their ancestral land. Additionally, a love for engaging in local and national politics was a significant motivator for some returnees.

The study also highlighted the importance of psychological, financial, technical, and social preparedness in the success of internal return migrants at KNEM. Psychological preparedness shapes mental readiness and purpose, aiding the transition into life at KNEM. Financial preparedness benefits both the returnees and their families by facilitating settlement and serving as a basis for capital accumulation in starting new businesses. Technical preparedness allows migrants to use their skills to restart life back home, while social preparedness enables them to utilize pre-existing and newly formed social networks. The majority of participants were found to be well-prepared in these areas, contributing to their successful reintegration into their home communities.



CHAPTER SIX

ROLE OF INTERNAL RETURN MIGRANTS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN KNEM

6.1 Introduction

Return migration may come with its own advantages and disadvantages and the capacity of the place of origin to effectively utilize the skills and investment of returnees, on the other hand, determines whether the place of origin benefits from return migrants (Azam & Gubert 2006). Like international return migration for instance, return migrants' economic input fosters significant advancement in all spheres of human endeavour. Each nation has seen some level of development in a variety of areas, including leadership styles, banking, telecommunications, human resources, and education (Dustmann & Weiss, 2007). According to Mohapatra and Ratha (2011), migrants play significant roles in their communities and the lives of others upon return. Typical among them is the inflow of remittances by migrants to their home communities that are used to undertake developmental projects either for themselves, their families, or the community in general. This chapter shares light on the role internal return migrants play in the development of the KNEM.

The thematic analysis based on the data gathered from the participants revealed a number of roles return migrants play when it comes to community development. The roles played by return migrants towards community development as identified from the thematic analysis include skills and knowledge sharing, financial contribution to community programmes, return migrants' community contribution through migrant network associations, stimulating domestic investment to boost economic activities and finally job creation.

Figure 6.1 shows the synergy among the themes that were generated based on return migration and community development at KNEM.

6.1.1 Transfer of knowledge and employable skills in KNEM

The study finds that many of the internal return migrants who returned with higher levels of education, skills and experience in specific fields have put their experience to bear and have in turn trained some of the people in their various communities in the district. Generally, they see this impartation as among the key ways of improving the lives of the people in their communities as job opportunities and other ways of living are improved within the KNEM.

For instance, when asked about her contribution to the community since returning, Mercy, a returnee who works as a teacher and entrepreneur, having acquired skills in footwear making in Kumasi and established her own business alongside her formal teaching position since her return, articulates her impact in terms of providing employment opportunities for local residents especially the youth in her community:

"Some of the ways I have contributed to my village as a returnee involve accepting the responsibility of training individuals interested in learning my business. I've also offered opportunities for some to work with me without charging fees. Following their training, some have established their own shops within the municipality and even beyond our area. I'm aware of individuals I trained who secured employment in cities like Accra and Takoradi with prominent footwear companies and shops." (Mercy, female, Navrongo, June 2022).

An exemplar of this scenario is Lucy, who has re-engaged with KNEM and is applying her acquired talents, specifically her hairdressing skills to the community's advantage. Lucy is actively involved in imparting these skills to local girls, delivering hands-on training that empowers them. Through this transfer of knowledge, the girls acquire practical skills that can be used for self-sustainability. By offering hairdressing training, particularly to young girls, Lucy is empowering the local youth, fostering greater independence and reducing reliance on

traditional, sometimes limited, local employment opportunities. This empowerment significantly contributes to the socioeconomic advancement of the community.

Lucy, indicated that:

“To help the community after my return, I am training some of the girls on the hair dressing skills I learnt in Accra. Now most of the girls can do their own hair weaving and hair dressing things. And this has helped to reduce unemployment mostly among the youth. Some have also travelled to places like Accra and Kumasi among other places. I know they can use the hair dressing skills to make a living for themselves and support their families” (Lucy, Navrongo, May 2022).

Picture 4 shows the hair dressing salon of one of the returnees where she is using her skills acquired to train other community members.

Picture 4: Hair dressing salon of a returnee



Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Another participant (Kaweh) a returnee who is returning after 25 years of living outside the KNEM on his part stated that:

“I returned as a fire service personnel, and personally, I have educated my people on how to use fire extinguishers, the appropriate ways of fixing cylinders, things that easily cause and start fires as well as how to put out fires. You know here is a dry place and such education is important for the local people. Also, in terms of employment I can say I have used my little influence and connection to get some of the young people who are qualified into the fire service and other public organizations”. (Kaweh, Navrongo, June, 2022).

6.1.2 Transfer of knowledge through counselling and advocacy

Another area of contribution that the returnees have engaged in more are in the areas of leading advocacy and counselling of many of the social issues within the KNEM. Awiah, a retiree educationist who has returned to the KNEM after about two decades of staying outside adds that:

“We don’t want our communities to be the same way we saw it some thirty, forty years back. And we feel as we have become exposed to knowledge, we need to impart that knowledge back to our people. So, I in conjunction with some other people who are also retirees, have been having counselling sessions with many different groups of people, including the elderly people, and the young people on things like healthy living, reproductive health, exercising among others” (Awiah, Pungu, June 2022).

Mamata, a returnee who spent a little more than three decades living in Accra, added that:

“For me I am part of an NGO here that engages in advocacy in the areas of reproductive health, women empowerment and skills training. I can say through our outreach and counselling programmes, some of our people here have got deeper knowledge and understanding of the responsible reproductive practices. They testify to me and my team all the time” (Mamata, Navrongo, June, 2022).

On the part of one of the respondents (Kojo), who has a degree in agricultural science because he is a former teacher, he uses his position to provide counselling services on a number of activities engaged in by the youth especially in the area of drugs and alcohol abuse as well as help them in making career choices especially in the areas of agriculture. He states that:

“I have helped in educating the people so that they can change their perceptions and behaviors on the consumption of drugs, alcohol and even some animals. Coming to medicine, they have traditional medicines that they have become sentimental with but most of those medicines are not measurable and not scientifically proven, and I believe that we should be able to educate the people to prefer more of orthodox drugs.

(Kojo, Male, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Kojo adds that:

“You know farming is the key occupation here. And most of our youth don’t have the right knowledge of most of the efficient farming practices, so I have taken the step of educating them on some of the best ways of building sustainable farming businesses being cultivating crops or rearing animals ... Meanwhile, I have assisted some of the farmers with farm implements like boots and spraying machines. Additionally, I have personally organized training sessions for farmers on how to use spraying machines and spraying guns. These training opportunities and support go a long way to enhance the productive capabilities of the farmers, as well as community members in general”

(Kojo, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Kaani, another retired returnee professional teacher also indicated that:

“I have started a nursery school in my village to augment the efforts of the government in the community. Because of my training as a professional teacher, I am of the view that quality education must begin at the base” (Kaani, female, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Kojo's account implies that certain returning migrants actively engage in educating the local community, aiming to reshape their perceptions and attitudes towards various activities. Kojo highlights specific areas of education, including the potential harm associated with drug and alcohol use, the risks of consuming unlicensed pharmaceutical products, the impact of consuming diverse animals, and proper agricultural practices.

The opinions conveyed by these respondents suggest that returnees bring valuable knowledge and experiences from their places of destination, making a positive contribution to the human capital development of the community. They play a crucial role in transferring employable skills, promoting capacity building, and sharing information within their local communities. Various initiatives, including counselling sessions, address a range of subjects such as physical exercise and reproductive health, essential for raising awareness and improving the overall well-being of community members. Educating young individuals about reproductive health, for example, can empower them to make informed decisions and mitigate the risks associated with their health.

The predominant viewpoint among the respondents is that returnees to KNEM have positively contributed to the human development of the community upon their return. As some respondents noted, providing training in areas such as "fitting or mechanics jobs" stands out as an effective means of ensuring individuals can achieve self-sufficiency. This finding aligns with existing studies that support the idea of return migrants contributing to the human capacity development of their places of origin upon returning home (Debnath, 2016; Black et al., 2003; Sjenitzer and Tiemoko, 2003).

6.1.3 Supporting the provision of social infrastructure

While many of the contributions of the return migrants have been towards developing the human capacity in terms of job training among others, another area of contribution from the

individual return migrants that came up from the study had to do with the contribution of some of the returnees towards the provision of social amenities and infrastructure in KNEM. This contribution is seen to be largely done by those who can be considered as relatively successful on their migratory journey and their return to the origin. This contribution largely aligns with the work of Ammassari and Black (2001) who found that, the influence of return migration on the development process of migrants' home countries or places of origin depends on what the returnee brings back in terms of financial, social and human capital.

Awiah, a retired senior civil servant on his part narrated that:

“On my retirement and send-off party, I did my widows might by donating ten packs of roofing sheets and some wooden tables and chairs to one of the primary schools here. The head teacher and the parents appreciated it a lot since most of the furniture were spoilt” (Awiah, Pungu, June, 2022).

Picture 5: An example of the contribution a returnee made towards the reroofing of a school building.



Source: Fieldwork, 2024

On his part Akwoyire, a self-employed man indicated that:

“Through my personal intervention and resources, I have been able to get the community a borehole for the provision of safe drinking water and a small public toilet for the school here” (Akwoyire (Male), Navrongo, April, 2022).

Picture 6 is a bore hole constructed by a returnee in a community.

Picture 6: A bore hole built by a returnee as contribution to his community.



Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Another return migrant expressed his contribution through the activities of a group he is a member, and said:

“In terms of education too, we have helped the community by building a community library and a community playing centre for the kids” (Yaw, Navrongo, June 2022).

6.1.4: Social contribution through labour services

Another theme that was mentioned by a few of the respondents related to the point that their contribution to the community is delivered through using their physical strength in rendering essential services to their communities. For instance, Konu, a 42-year-old returnee who considered his migration story as not a successful one before his return home mainly because he came back with virtually nothing, indicated the use of their strength during communal labour as his contribution to the development of their community.

Konu states that:

“Here, I contribute during communal labour activities and as part of the leaders of our community watch. We do communal activities such as helping to weed around the hospital and the schools. I have also led some of the young ones in the cleaning of the gutters and burning of the borla (refuse dump)” (Konu, Navrongo, June, 2022).

The returnee's involvement in communal labour projects serves as a specific illustration of how return migration might advance local development. Returnees play a crucial role in promoting good change and advancement within their home communities by actively participating in initiatives to enhance infrastructure, uphold environmental hygiene, empower young people, and establish social relationships.

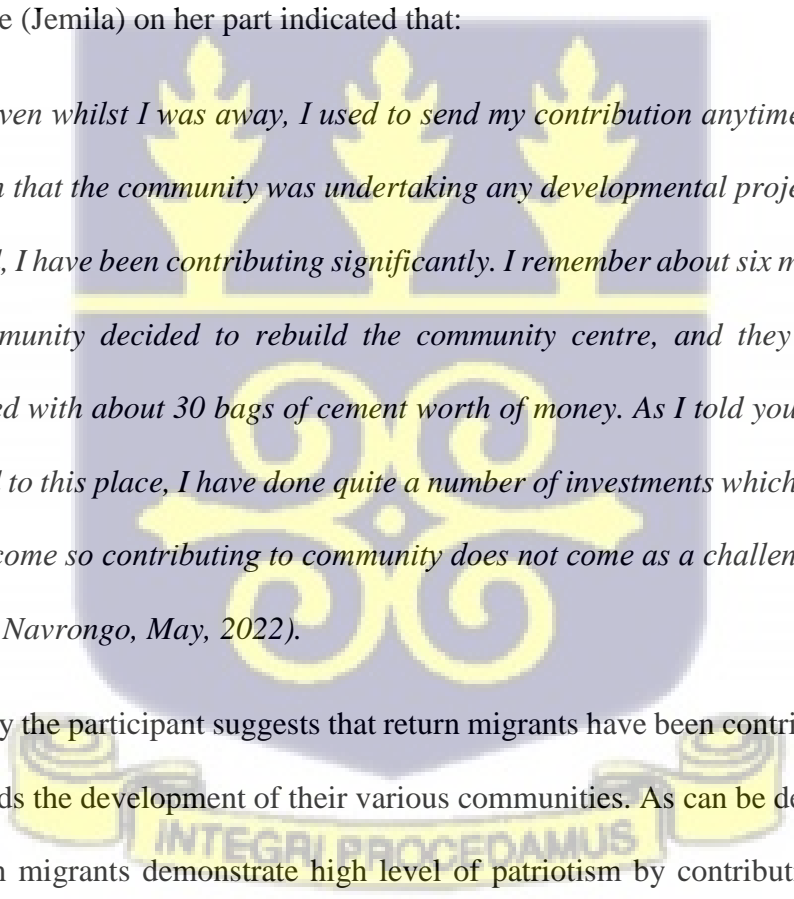
6.1.5 Financial Contribution and donations to Community Programmes

This section presents a key role played by return migrants towards the development of communities. Voluntary contributions are very key in helping communities to achieve basic developmental programmes. Like many others, return migrants desire to see their communities develop to the highest level to make them feel proud of their community. For this reason, return migrants contribute significantly towards the development of their community in many diverse ways. Anytime there is a call for financial contribution for developmental programmes in

communities, return migrants usually whole-heartedly contribute their quota towards such programmes. Calls by leaders of communities for community members to contribute towards community development are usually deemed appropriate by all, including return migrants.

The participants in the study revealed that as return migrants, they have contributed significantly in financial terms towards the development of their communities. It was revealed that anytime leaders of the communities reach out to them whether individually or through their associations, they do not hesitate to contribute to the communities. During the in-depth interviews, participants recounted the many times they have contributed money towards community projects.

Another returnee (Jemila) on her part indicated that:



“Well, even whilst I was away, I used to send my contribution anytime it comes to my attention that the community was undertaking any developmental project. Also, since I returned, I have been contributing significantly. I remember about six months ago when the community decided to rebuild the community centre, and they informed me I supported with about 30 bags of cement worth of money. As I told you earlier, when I returned to this place, I have done quite a number of investments which are earning me some income so contributing to community does not come as a challenge at all to me”
(Jemila, Navrongo, May, 2022).

This narration by the participant suggests that return migrants have been contributing financial resources towards the development of their various communities. As can be deduced from the narration, return migrants demonstrate high level of patriotism by contributing towards the development of their communities. Return migrants are usually considered as rich people and because they have travelled one way or the other, they might have come with money and hence would be able to contribute as and when they are called upon by their community leaders.

Another participant also shared a similar view by stating that:

“As for contribution I have done some so many times. I love my community so anytime they call on me to support financially towards any project I am happy to do so. You see, there are times when the community would like to undertake a basic project to the benefit of the whole community, but the project cannot be done by an individual so, they call on the community members including return migrants to support and with that I can tell you in authority that I have contributed money so many times. Unless I don't hear about it, if not I am always ready to support in whatever capacity I need to in order to contribute” (Abari, Navrongo, May, 2022).

This narration suggests that financial contributions have been made on many occasions to support developmental activities in their communities. This is evidence that return migrants play a significant role when it comes to the development of their communities, which is usually applauded by chiefs and opinion leaders in the communities.

The finding from this study corroborates those of the study by Awumbila et al., (2016), who indicated that returnees frequently make investments in infrastructure and real estate developments in their home communities. The building or remodelling of residences, the development of commercial buildings, or the funding of public infrastructure like roads, schools, and healthcare facilities are all examples of this. Such expenditures support local economic growth in addition to improving the physical environment. As similarly found by Per Wahba (2004), farming and agricultural ventures are frequently funded by return migrants with agricultural backgrounds. They might bring cutting-edge farming methods, equipment, and practices from abroad, which can boost agricultural output. In turn, this can increase food security, bring in money for nearby farmers, and encourage rural development.

6.1.6 Return migrants and Job creation

Another key theme that emerged from the analysis regarding the role of the return migrants in community development has to do with job creation. Job creation is a crucial factor for economic growth, poverty reduction and social development. It is especially important in developing communities where unemployment is high, and poverty is widespread causing people to migrate. According to the World Bank (2021), more than 200 million people worldwide are unemployed. This makes the role of the return migrants in creating jobs a crucial one.

During the in-depth interviews, it came out that some of the return migrants have been playing significant roles in the area of job creation through business establishment and infrastructure activities.

One of the return migrants who had set up a shea nut processing venture stated that:

“As you can see, this is my business. I started building this business when I was away because I knew I was not going to stay there forever. To be honest, this business has helped me and the people of my community. Through this business I have employed 27 people directly working in this business. You can just imagine what would have been the state of these people if not because of this business. I am even planning of setting up another business in the other community to help the youth” (Peter, Navrongo, May, 2022).



Another returnee (Kaba) who has invested in large scale rice and maize farming upon return, added that:

“Well, I will say I can count about sixteen people who I have employed permanently to work in my farms and warehouse. The environment is not easy but at least it helps put some money in the pockets of these people”
(Kaba, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Similarly, another returnee who also engages in farming and the running of a mobile money transfer business indicated that:

“I have employed about eight people in total upon my return, that is six on my farms and two people at my mobile money centre” (Joyce, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Another participant stated that:

“This very provision shop is mine and you see I have five people working with me. This is what I have been talking about concerning the role of return migrants like myself. If not because I travelled, I don’t think I would have gotten the money to establish this. This business is putting food on people’s tables because they have gained employment here ... Upon all this, if you don’t take care these same people you have employed turn around to steal from the store” (Jemila, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Another male returnee (Achana) who has established a construction firm stated that:

To me, I use my construction company to give the artisans here more jobs almost all the time. I have become like a foreman for many of my people I moved with when I was in Accra. I am in charge of most of their building projects. You know we need to encourage people to come back and build their homes as well as set up businesses in

their communities to help the youth especially so that they don't engage in social vices that will land them in trouble” (Achana (male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

6.1.7 Stimulating Domestic Investment

Closely tied to job creation is the returnees' role in stimulating domestic investment to boost economic activities. In-depth interviews revealed that some returnees, especially those with substantial financial resources, emphasized their significant contributions to human capital investments and business establishments. These efforts are seen as positively influencing and stimulating domestic investment in KNEM.

This is what Kaba, a return migrant had to say regarding their role in the area of stimulating domestic investment to boost economic activities:

“My point in this regard is that, as a return migrant, I brought certain experiences that I am using to help my people. I have also brought some form of investment through my partnership with some business partners in the United States. We have invested in large scale rice processing and a shea butter extraction processing here. To me this is a way of bringing foreign direct investment into my community to contribute to economic growth” (Kaba (male) Navrongo, May, 2022).

Another participant (Peter) also stated that:

“As return migrants we contribute a lot. I for instance have always supported whatever project the community undertakes. The support has been in so many ways. Look at this my hotel, I have employed people, I pay taxes and other levies to the Assembly and also facilitate activities for tourism. All these investments contribute to the development of the community” (Peter, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Joyce, a female return migrant, narraed her position as:

“Well, I have done quite a lot. Through this philanthropic activity, I have supported a lot of individuals which I will call human investment. You know when you invest in people, they will come back to be beneficial not just for this community but the country as a whole. When we talk of proper investment, these are examples of contributions some of us (return migrants) have made in the area of stimulating domestic investment to boost economic growth” (Joyce, Navrongo, May, 2022).

The participants' statements indicate that return migrants play a crucial role in attracting investment to their local communities, thereby contributing to economic growth. The impact of their efforts to stimulate domestic investment can be observed at both national and local levels, as they bring expertise and influence investment across various sectors. This suggests that return migrants invest extensively in their communities, fostering overall growth. Recognizing that government resources alone may not suffice for comprehensive investment, it becomes essential for collective efforts to drive community development, with return migrants actively contributing in diverse ways.

The findings on return migrants' contributions to boosting economic activities through domestic investment align with other literature (Azose and Raftery, 2019; Dustmann and Görlach, 2016). For instance, Azose and Raftery (2019) note that the savings return migrants bring back can finance new business ventures, enhance household consumption, provide a buffer against hardships, and invest in skill development. The human capital and work experience gained abroad enhance productivity and innovation, potentially leading to higher wages and increased economic activity. Return migrants also engage in entrepreneurship at higher rates than those who never left their home countries (Bahar et al., 2019). These activities

create positive ripple effects, benefiting both the returnees and the local economy through direct investments, job creation, and increased economic vitality.

6.1.8: Contributions through Migrant Networks and Associations

Another platform through which the return migrants expressed their contribution to their communities were through their membership of associations. Debnath (2016) notes that return migrants usually form networks or associations that enable them to deliberate on issues that affect their community and serve as a strong social capital base for reintegration into the place of origin. These associations become network platforms on which returnees are able to contribute to the social, economic and political discourse as well as the development of their places of origin.

In fact, some of the respondents explained that they belong to a network of indigenes of the KNEM area who share ideas on how to help the community whether by undertaking developmental projects or organizing training programmes in the community for members. Joining hands through the form of association was seen as a major means of ensuring that return migrants are able to contribute in terms of sharing opinions and also pooling resources together towards the developmental projects of KNEM.

For instance, Awuni, a return migrant said that:

“As returnees we have the role to share our lives experiences outside the community with the people here in terms of the best practices we learnt when we were away. We have also come together to support the Local Assembly and other groups to complete projects through our contributions. Sometimes, we have used our association here to advise our people that they can make progress with their lives here without relocating to any other place if they can work hard here” (Awuni, Navrongo, May 2022).

Lucy, a 41-year-old self-employed returnee on her part underscored the importance of the return migrant group as one that discusses matters that directly influence the development of the community. She said:

“There are some of the things that we have done which we first discuss as a group and do them together like the digging of the wells and boreholes, buying cement and other building materials for supporting the construction of the community centre and others. So, I think as a group our returnee group is doing well in ensuring our community becomes a better place for all of us” (Lucy, Navrongo, May 2022).

Asiby, a female returnee also intimated she contributes to the community’s development by personally paying her contributions for any project that the association has come up with while also personally getting scholarship packages for some of the brilliant but needy students in terms of school fees.

She said:

“We the returnees also bring experience and knowledge on board to help the community. Aside from my contribution to some people who I personally support with payment of school fees, I contributed to the association when we wanted to build the new library for the town” (Asiby, Navrongo, June, 2022).

Kojo, on his part pointed out that:

“I learnt alternative conflict resolution in Accra, so I use that knowledge and skills to help in the settling of issues among our people here. And I can say gradually that is driving peace among many of our people” (Kojo, Navrongo, May, 2022).

6.2. The perspectives of key informants on the contribution of return migrants

The research did not unquestionably accept everything that return migrants claimed regarding their contributions to KNEM upon their return as absolute truth. The perspectives of the key informants were sought to cross-examine and authenticate some of the details presented by the returnees. The narratives from the key informants regarding the return migrants, both individually and collectively, indicated that certain return migrants have been valuable assets to the communities upon their return, while others have not. The community attests to the assistance gained, acknowledging the positive impact brought about by the return of some of their fellow community members who had been away.

While acknowledging their contributions, one of the key informants noted that, most of these contributions that are made are done for political purposes in the attempt to win the populace on their side and their affiliated political parties during the local and national elections.

Key Informant One (KIO) noted that:

“I know all those who have returned home in my electoral area and I can say that some have helped the community while others too have not helped much”.

He added that:

“I can confirm one who paid for the drilling of a borehole within my electoral area for us. But later we realised that it was for a political purpose because he wanted to stand for elections as an Assembly woman or something, that was why she built the borehole which to me it is not fair, because if you want to help your people help without any conditions” (KIO, (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

Another, key informant (Chief A) stated that:

“The government and Local Assembly cannot do everything in this country and in this community as well, that is why the people are called upon to contribute when the need arises. We have a few of them (referring to return migrants) contributing to our schools around ... In terms of furniture, giving exercise books, roofing part of the school, among others. I won’t say the contribution is only peculiar to them, as when it comes to contribution those of us who have been living here all our lives also contribute our quota” (KITH -Chief (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

On her part Key informant 4 (KIF) who is a women’s’ leader indicated:

“You know all fingers are not the same. Therefore, not all of them (return migrants) may be able to help with money or something always. I think they are doing the small they can to help where their strength would allow them. For me personally, I know one who helped with the paying for the construction of borehole here”
(KIF – Womens’ leader (female) Navrongo, June, 2022).

On the other hand, Key informant 2 (KIT) who is an elected Assembly member considered what returnees do not to be anything extraordinary from what some of them as indigenes or non-migrants were doing in various communities within the KNEM.

“What they (referring to return migrants) return to do here is normal. A few of them will open businesses and accept to train people with some skills. Others too return and stay quietly. Any way many come when they are on pension”
(KIT, (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022)

6.2.1 Perspective of Key Informants on job creation of return migrants

On the contribution of return migrants in creating employment opportunities in the KNEM, Key Informant 3 responded as follows:

“Yes, some of them have employed some of our people in their businesses and that I can confirm. For instance, one of them (referring to a returnee) has a factory and we can see his bus taking his workers who are all people staying in our community and closer towns in the morning and bringing them back in the evening every day ... It is exciting to see them wear uniforms in the buses” (KI 3 (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

Key informant 4, who confirms the creating of employment opportunities through the personal experience of her relative in Navrongo added that:

“If some of the returnees say they have created job opportunities here, I will say it is true ... My cousin works for one of them on the rice farm. They normally go and work on their employer’s farm before going to work on their own farms in the morning... She says they are marked GHC45.00 (Forty-five Ghana Cedis) a day. Even though it is not much, they are able to get something at the end of every weekend to help their family out with basic things and upkeep” (KI 4 (female) Navrongo, June, 2022).

Key informant 3 on his part stated that:

“Well, with regard to employment, I can say some of those who came back have helped a few of the young men and women in this community. You know these small small businesses they open here and there employ our locals for them to get something (money) into their pockets... but some too take in more people in their business like those with bigger businesses” (KI 3 (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

The accounts provided by key informants validate the assertions made by certain return migrants regarding the establishment of businesses and the employment of local individuals in the KNEM. Furthermore, these narratives from respondents indicate a substantial role played by return migrants in job creation within the KNEM. Some of these return migrants, through their initiatives and resources, have facilitated employment opportunities for other community

members. It is evident that returnees leverage the expertise acquired from other parts of the country to influence the types of businesses they establish and the employment opportunities they generate.

These findings align with the research conducted by Ammassari (2004) and Black et al. (2003), affirming that returning individuals often seize the opportunity for entrepreneurship, implementing ideas observed in their previous destinations within their local communities. This supports the argument that certain return migrants contribute essential capital to invest in small businesses, thereby fostering the growth of the Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) landscape and creating avenues for job creation. Tiemoko (2004) also observed that return migrants induce noticeable social transformation, leading to job creation in their home communities. This suggests that individuals returning to their origin communities can bring about social changes that, in turn, lead to the creation of employment opportunities. Overall, the confirmation of return migrants' involvement in job creation resonates with existing literature emphasizing the role of returnees in local development and entrepreneurship, as noted by De Haas (2007).

Now despite acknowledging their contribution, the community may not necessarily discern a significant difference between what non-migrants of KNEM contribute and what return migrants do. Contributions from both groups may appear similar in terms of amounts directed towards specific projects. Moreover, the authenticity of the motive behind some social amenity projects initiated by return migrants is questioned by a portion of the community. Some view such initiatives as politically motivated, leading to mixed reactions and skepticism among community members regarding the true intent behind the interventions.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter examined the contributions of return migrants in KNEM, revealing their significant impact on their communities. Return migrants enhance their communities by transferring knowledge and skills, providing counselling and advocacy, supporting social infrastructure, participating in communal labour, making financial donations, and creating employment opportunities.

These findings align with broader research recognizing return migrants as catalysts for local economic development. Studies, such as those by Ammassari (2004) and Black et al. (2003), note that return migrants often reinvest capital into small businesses, fostering SME growth and job creation. Additionally, returnees contribute to their communities by transferring knowledge, skills, and expertise (De Haas, 2007; Debnath, 2016; Taylor, 1999), highlighting the comprehensive impact of return migration on local development.

The economic influence of return migration through entrepreneurial activities and financial investments is also supported by research from Dustmann & Weiss (2007) and De Haas (2012). Dumont & Spielvogel (2008) note that return migrants' networks often lead to engagement in international commerce and technology transfer.

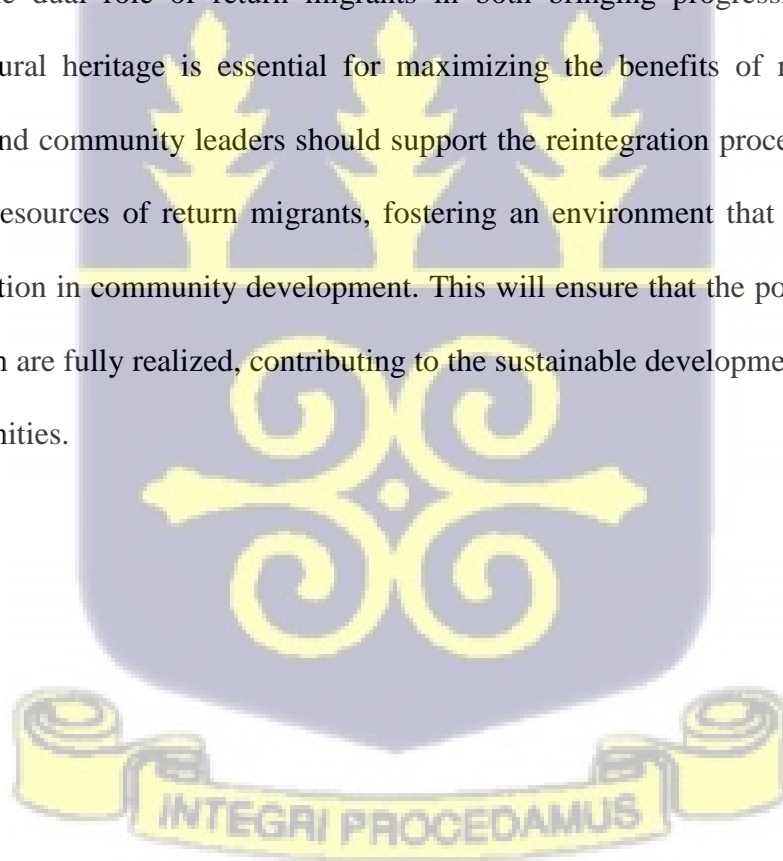
Additionally, contributions to social amenities depend on the financial capacities of individual return migrants. Those with limited financial means contribute through alternative methods, such as communal labour.

This study highlights the significant contributions of return migrants to their communities in KNEM. By transferring knowledge and skills, providing counselling and advocacy, supporting social infrastructure, engaging in labor, making financial donations, and creating employment, return migrants play a crucial role in local development.

The findings align with existing literature, illustrating the transformative potential of return migration. Studies show that returnees act as agents of change, bringing new ideas, skills, and resources to their home communities, thus bridging gaps in local development, enhancing community resilience, and promoting socio-economic growth.

The study concludes that return migrants are crucial for community development in KNEM. They contribute primarily through human capital mobility, transferring knowledge and skills, and making financial contributions through innovation and investment. The potential of return migrants to instigate positive societal change depends on their social acceptance within their communities (Siddiqui & Tejada, 2014).

Recognizing the dual role of return migrants in both bringing progressive changes and preserving cultural heritage is essential for maximizing the benefits of return migration. Policymakers and community leaders should support the reintegration process by leveraging the skills and resources of return migrants, fostering an environment that encourages their active participation in community development. This will ensure that the positive impacts of return migration are fully realized, contributing to the sustainable development of KNEM and similar communities.



CHAPTER SEVEN

THE EFFECTS OF RETURN MIGRATION ON INDIGENOUS SOCIO - CULTURAL PRACTICES AND REINTEGRATION

7.1 Introduction

Internal migration exposes return migrants to different cultures at their various places of destination that are certainly different from the community of origin and in the case of international migrants different from their country of origin. As a result, they tend to adopt some of these cultures and transfer some of these cultures (being it positive or negative aspects) back into their country or community of origin when they return.

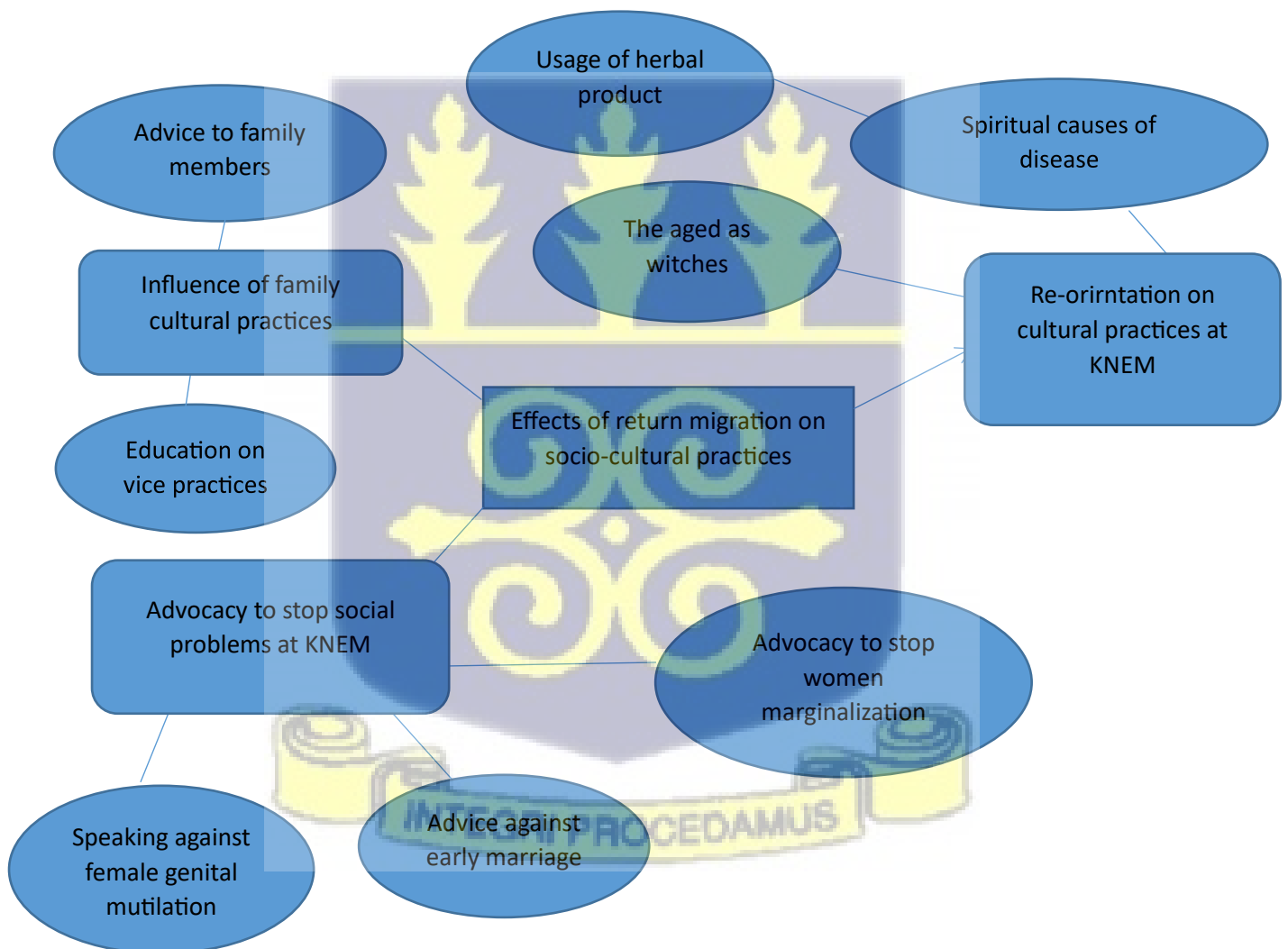
As a complicated and multidimensional issue, the relationship between return migration and socio-cultural practices has attracted a lot of scholarly attention in the field of migration studies. The process of returning to one's home country or region after living abroad, or return migration, necessitates a renegotiation of sociocultural norms and identities. This dynamic interaction between sociocultural practices and migrant experiences dramatically affects both the lives of returnees and the communities they reintegrate into.

Return migration frequently involves reestablishing ties with one's cultural roots and heritage because migrants not only send money home but also bring back new perspectives, ideals, and cultural influences they picked up while living abroad. The returnee's home environment may experience a number of sociocultural adjustments, changes, and even conflicts as a result. These modifications may appear in a variety of contexts, including linguistic usage, religious convictions, gender roles, and customs.

Furthermore, depending on how much exposure they have had to various cultural norms and practices abroad, returnees may play crucial roles in changing or maintaining local customs.

While some returnees actively participate in reviving or modifying ancient behaviours, others may propose innovations that pose a threat to the status quo. This interaction between return migration and socio-cultural norms highlights the importance of having a thorough awareness of the intricate processes at work. It raises important queries about belonging, identity, and the preservation or alteration of cultural heritage. Figure 7.1 shows the synergy among the themes that were generated based on effects of return – migration on socio-cultural practices in KNEM.

Figure 7.1: Thematic analysis on effects of return – migration on socio-cultural practices in KNEM



Source: Researcher own construction, 2024

7.2 Return Migrants' Influence on Indigenous Socio-cultural Practices

Migration exposes migrants to seeing the world in a different light than before Siddiqui & Tejada (2014) and consequently making return migrants to bring back modern ideas and practices, that contributes to the modernization of their home communities. The return of migrants often results in the introduction of new cultural elements to their places of origin, leading to cultural hybridity (Antwi-Boasiako, 2018; King and Skeldon, 2010; Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004; Vertovec, 2001). For instance, Vertovec (2001) notes that returnees may bring back diverse cultural practices and perspectives, influencing local traditions and norms. Taking it from a transnational perspective, Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) argue that return migrants engage in ongoing transnational practices, maintaining connections with both the origin and destination cultures. This continuous exchange influences socio-cultural practices at the place of origin. King and Skeldon (2010) emphasize the role of return migrants in introducing new technologies, lifestyles, and attitudes, leading to shifts in traditional norms.

7.2.1 Change of attitude towards female education and child marriage

For the return migrants of KNEM and their ability to influence socio-cultural practices, the results obtained suggest that a number of the respondents have contributed to the gradual changes in certain aspects of the socio-cultural practices in their respective homes and communities. One typical area of gradual change has to do with the tradition of child marriage (a situation where young girls are married off traditionally even before they reach adulthood) in the KNEM and other parts of the northern parts of Ghana. Responding to how their coming back has influenced the indigenous practices in their community, Theresa a returnee indicated that:

“I have been a key advocate of stopping early marriage for young girls in my village after my return. Traditionally, girls going into early marriage is something that is practised in many parts of the North here, for which our people don't see anything

wrong when a girl is given into marriage at an early age... but you know with many educated men and women returning into the KNEM to stay, we keep pushing parents, traditional and opinion leaders for girls to complete school or learn some employable skills for their lives and get matured in their bodies before going into marriage... gradually our efforts are yielding results with most parents encouraging their girls to stay and complete the senior high school” (Mercy, 49 years old, female, Navrongo, June 2022).

Similar to the above narrative, Asiby added that:

“We sometimes also organize programmes and send the female nurses, police officers, the fire service ladies, and the female teachers to encourage parents to allow their girls to stay in school and concentrate on their education, so they can be like these professional women when they grow up ... even though girls marrying early has not been abolished traditionally, the menace has reduced here in my opinion” (Asiby, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Joyce another returnee added that:

“One thing that we keep fighting and we see gradual changes is that people have stopped looking at their female children as second-class children compared to the male children. My brother (referring to the interviewer), indirectly, it is almost like a crime if you don’t have a male child here. But now if they look at what some of us have achieved in terms of education and properties upon our return, most of the people are revising their notes on the male dominance, thinking when it comes to children and actually moving away from sending their female children into early marriage” (Joyce, 64 years, Navrongo, May, 2022).

7.2.2 Change of attitude towards the act of female genital mutilation

Another socio-cultural practice that some return migrants of KNEM consider to have seen a change in attitude as a result of their influence relates to the traditional practice of the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or female circumcision which is a generic term for traditional practices involving the cutting of female genitalia leading to the partial or the total removal of the female genitalia or injury to the female genital organ for cultural or any other non-therapeutic reasons (El-Shawarby & Rymer, 2008; World Health Organization, 2020).

One returnee cites where she believes returnees have influenced this socio-cultural practice as:

“I started my NGO even before I returned permanently here and with the help of other people we are really pushing for the stoppage of this act. We go to the markets, the events and social centres, health centres, schools and even the radio stations. See, I can tell you for a fact that more people are showing change of mind and position on FGM in our communities. See, we have to speak about it. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a problem in our communities, and it has been with us since time immemorial. In fact, times have changed for this practice also to change. It will take a long time, but it (referring to FGM) must stop at a point in KNEM” (Jemila (female 47 years) Navrongo, May, 2022).

Peter, another returnee adds that:

“I think one thing that is paying off in our many advocacies is the change of mindset that many of our people are increasingly having towards female genital mutilation. Many now see the danger, health and psychological implications of the act towards the health and wellbeing of women. It is a tradition and abolishing it totally will not be easy as some people will still hold on to it. But the change we see in our people concerning this area of our tradition is encouraging” (Peter, Navrongo, May, 2022).

7.2.3: Re-orientation on spiritual matters at KNEM

Another traditional belief that the return migrants believe has been influenced through their activities relates with the spiritual attachments to diseases and the accusations of the aged as witches and wizards in their communities as the source of these diseases and other misfortunes. For instance, one of the respondents, Akwoyire, explained that:

“I cannot say witchcraft does not exist, but why should you accuse and beat an old woman of witchcraft just because she is seen talking to herself or suffering from some emotional trauma, which from what I have studied to know might be a medical condition that requires medical care? ... Changing the perception of the people about these traditional beliefs and ways of going about things is not easy, but as we continue to use science-based knowledge and our experience, most of the people are appreciating the things we say by choosing to seek medical care for the old people instead of just concluding for spiritual reasons” (Akwoyire, Navrongo, May, 2022)

Yaw on his part indicated that:

“Now most of our people know that not all diseases are caused by witchcraft or something ... and therefore is very wrong to unjustifiably attack especially our aged in our communities for some of these things. But you see as a returnee, who has seen the treatment of most diseases, I made my people aware that when you feel sick, you don't need to blame another person or witchcraft but instead go to the hospital or clinic because it could be treated in the hospital. The spiritual attachment to things here to me is more endemic traditionally. But most of our people now understand because they see things on TV and social media and because we also advise them to visit the hospital when sick and not always rely just on traditional herbs for self-medication which may have their own consequences” (Yaw, Navrongo, May, 2022).

7.2.4 Maintenance and Preservation of Culture

On the other hand, returnees do note that some traditional activities related to practices such as funerals, dances, food, festivals among other activities cannot be easily influenced or changed. In fact, all returnees want the maintenance of some of these traditional activities such as funerals, dances, food, and festivals because they serve as a good sign of their identity once it may not directly present any negative effects on them. For example, one indicated that:

“While we preach for other beliefs and notions to be stopped, there are others (referring to traditional practices) that we would want them to be maintained for our future generations to know that they are peculiar to us. For me the customs I love about my village are the dance and the festivals though I can’t dance. We the returnees can’t do anything about those aspects of our culture because it has stood the test of time and makes us unique ... It is actually nice” (Peter, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Another returnee, Kagaah, 38 years, a Christian, married and with three children also intimated that:

“I am enthused and appreciate the culture in my village, especially the dance, the food culture and how we dress especially during festivities. I am really good at dancing our indigenous dances too. I think no matter what you do there are some things you cannot change here. Any attempt you make on changing things like burial rites can bring consequences to you and your immediate family. So even though, you see a lot of things as primitive here there is nothing you can do about it” (Kagaah, Navrongo June 2022).

The study has established that some aspects of lifestyle and socio-cultural practices in KNEM have been influenced by the intervention of returnees. Notably, these include changes in attitudes towards female education and child marriage, a reduction in the practice of female genital mutilation, and a shift in mindset regarding the classification of certain diseases as

spiritual or divine. These changes, driven by the education and advocacy efforts of return migrants, are seen as positive and progressive for both human rights and community development in KNEM.

Additionally, the importance of cultural preservation in the context of return migration and community development is emphasized. The community's commitment to maintaining its cultural identity through traditional dances, festivals, recipes, and cooking methods strengthens social ties and fosters cultural exchange while respecting KNEM's history. This cultural preservation supports community development and aligns with studies suggesting that returnees navigate the complexities of assimilating into new social environments while maintaining their cultural distinctiveness (Glick Schiller & Fouron, 2001; Vertovec, 2007; Baldassar, 2008).

Vertovec (2007), for instance, indicates that return migrants can introduce significant changes in social aspects, such as lifestyle and communication, without fundamentally altering core cultural values. In the context of return migration, this suggests that visible changes may be more apparent in the social fabric than in foundational cultural aspects.

7.3 Perspectives of key informants on return migrants and socio-cultural practices

The perspectives of the opinion leaders (key informants) suggest that the activities of return migrants have had both positive and negative consequences on the socio-cultural practices in KNEM.

7.3.1 Perceived Positive changes - positive attitude towards education

The community leaders see these advocacies by the return migrants as a complement to what they the community leaders and other opinion leaders as well as agencies such as the local government authorities and the NGOs keep doing in terms of sensitizing their people on key

socio-cultural practices that could be amended for the progress of the people and their community.

Responding to what the influence of the return migrants has brought to KNEM, KITH serving as a key informant noted that:

“For a fact, I know some go to schools around to talk to the school children to take their education serious which is a good thing we all support. I can say their activities has seen a positive influence on the education of girls” (KITH, Navrongo, June, 2022).

Key informant two (KIT) (Male) on his part looked at the contribution from a positive perspective and indicated that:

“I can say some have contributed not only on advocacy and education but they have also given sponsorship to girls which have really pushed many parents to take the education of the female children serious. I can say that is good”.
(KIT, (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

On the part of key Informant one (KIO), he indicated that:

“Yes, for some social aspects of life here, such as attitude towards school, hygiene, taking care of the environment among others, they have contributed in changing the mindset of the people. There are a lot of things that our people now openly discuss publicly like FGM and other issues that border on our tradition”.
(KIO, (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

However, some of the key informants did not believe that the actions of the return migrants can significantly influence the socio-cultural values of KNEM.

“In any case, there are things we ourselves as a people are already sensitizing ourselves about to stop or if it is good to continue to do. I don’t think any of the return

migrants can say it is them who are showing us that this is good or bad. We read, listen to the radio and watch TV, so we know what is happening in the country and around the world. The part of our life that must change will come gradually as the whole community agrees and work towards it” (KIO, (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

Similarly, Key informant three (KITH) on his part, did not see how contributing to certain issues of concern within the community should be considered as an influence on socio-cultural practices of the people. He noted that:

“Personally, I don’t think I can point to any changes in our culture that have been influenced by our people who have returned home. For instance, there are issues that we are all concerned about such as girl child education. It is not that the parents do not want their children to go to school but the issue is the level of poverty on the parents which will make them send their children to stay with other people or allow them to travel to the south to work. So, if you come and help promote education, you have not changed anything”. (KITH -Chief (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

7.3.2: Percieved Negative Influence of Returnees

On the negative influence of the activities of some of the return migrants, KIT noted that:

“...It must be also said that some of the returnees have also been bad influence on some of our people here especially the young ones. They (referring to returnees) have brought bad things like bad dressing including some dressing almost naked, smoking and drinking of all sorts of products infused with marijuana ... yes, some even put the “weed” in toffees and a whole lot and disrespectful attitudes shown to elders here. When you complain they will tell you, you have not travelled before so you are not exposed” (KIT, (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

Key informant four (KIF) on her part indicated that:

“I can say they (returnees) have been influential in changing the mindset of our people on some aspects of our tradition. For instance, from my interactions with most of our people, I can say that their advocacy on the avoidance of child marriage and female genital mutilation has been seen to be increasingly shaping the way people think about the conduct of these whole traditional practice in our communities... I won't say the change is that drastic, they are trying but you see tradition is tradition and as human society, it may take some time for overall change ...” (KIF – Women's' leader (female) Navrongo, June, 2022).

She continues that:

“That is not to say our people who returned after many years from the south are doing only good things. Some have brought bad attitude like disrespect to our traditional authorities, bad dressing and a whole lot of bad things. We know some in Navrongo here who are introducing our girls to prostitution and even lesbianism” (KIF – Women's' leader (female) Navrongo, June, 2022).

From these perspectives of these key informants, it may seem difficult for any return migrant to claim to being able to have any great influence on the socio-cultural practices on the key traditions within the KNEM. This finding corresponds with research emphasizing the ability of communities to uphold their fundamental cultural identity even in the face of external influences. Communities demonstrate resilience by resisting significant cultural changes while adapting socially (Appadurai, 1996; Cuche, 1996).

On the other hand, the analysis points to the fact that, while there is an acknowledgement of the contribution of both return migrants and the receiving community on the role return migrants play in influencing life in the communities, these influences are more likely to be seen playing out on the social lives on the people rather than influencing the core of the culture of

the people which embodies their custom and value system. Migration exposes women and men to the socio-economic and cultural norms and practices of the host societies, which in turn may reconstruct or mitigate the patriarchal institutions and other traditions of the home communities once these migrants return there.

Moreover, the finding that certain return migrants are perceived as having a negative impact on people's lives and certain aspects of socio-cultural practices in KNEM aligns with existing research demonstrating how return migrants can exert negative influence on gender roles. This influence challenges established norms, contributing to alterations in socio-cultural practices related to gender dynamics, as well as conflicts and identity shifts within communities. Such dynamics may potentially result in the erosion of traditional socio-cultural practices (Garcia, 2014; Wang, 2017; Patel, 2018).

7.4 Reintegration

Migrants' reintegration involves the processes that ensure the returnee can participate again in the social, cultural, economic and political life of his or her country or community of origin (IOM, 2015; Anarfi & Jagare, 2005; Taft, 1979). Understanding returnees' reintegration is relevant in the face of changes that return migrants may likely face in the economy, society and the environment upon their return (Arowolo, 2000).

7.4.1 Experience of quick or easy reintegration

The results from the study show that, majority of the participants (at least 11 out of the 15 interviewed) indicated the experience of less difficulty in their reintegration (settling in) process in the KNEM. The discussions of their experiences involved climatic, economic and socio-cultural conditions. For instance, Ama who returned from Wa, expressed her reintegration experience as follows:

“My settling in here again was not that challenging. After all, my previous place (Wa) had similar climatic conditions and everyday life scenarios are similar just like what we are experiencing here. Moreover, I used to return home often so there are a lot of things I knew already before finally deciding to relocate here” (Ama, 46 years, Navrongo, May 2022).

To others, the presence of state and other private institutions in the Municipality played a role in ensuring their settling in was smooth back in KNEM. Joyce, a return retiree indicated that:

“The fact that things have changed a lot here and makes coming back to stay easier. There are institutions such as banks, the SSNIT office, and many more where one can transact one’s business. Even the Council (Municipal Assembly) is there to give any returnee information they may need here” (Joyce, 64 years, Navrongo, May, 2022).

Another returnee, Peter stated that:

“Getting back into life here was never that challenging. I used to come often home at least once a year and kept contacts with my family and friends here, so settling down was not that a difficult deal” (Peter, Navrongo, May, 2022).

7.4.2 Easy but gradual reintegration

Conversely, another prevalent theme involved individuals who perceived their resettlement as generally seamless but acknowledged encountering some challenges during the initial phases of their reintegration process. Akwoyire (a returnee) for instance who had political ambitions as part of his return indicated that:

“This is my home and settling in was not that difficult for me. I came back after my retirement to rest and help my community anyway I can. Things like settling into family life with extended family members and friends were cool. But in the areas of politically

inclusion, you know naturally, it will take a while for the people to understand you especially those who might feel threatened by your presence in terms of positions they occupy and things like that. But because I was in touch with my family and friends back here almost all the time when I was away, I knew what to expect when I decided to come back and stay permanent” (Akwoyire (Male), Navrongo, April, 2022).

Another self-employed return migrant who expressed the experience of gradual reintegration indicated that:

“Things were initially difficult here. Actually, when I left this place the town wasn’t as big as this. The town is getting bigger and more people have come in and more others are still coming in. So, things will continue to be new to newcomers. In my case, I had to rely on family and friends including church members, old school mates and some of my former association members in Accra for connections here and there. So gradually, things got in place one by one and this is where we are now” (Awuni, Navrongo, June, 2022).

It could be deduced that participants like Akwoyire would not have an issue reintegrating into life back hometown, but the desire to engage in local politics which may seem to be conquered by some “local political champions” and who see his permanent return home as a threat to their political advantage in KNEM is what caused challenges with aspect of their integration. While this situation ended up making his total reintegration to be one that can be considered as smooth but gradual, it does also raise the question of the relevance of assessing which aspects of returnees’ lives can be easily considered to well-integrated compared to other areas of their lives, before consequently achieving their overall reintegration success.

The sentiments expressed by Awuni (respondent) for instance are in line with earlier studies such as Anarfi & Jagare (2005) who noted that the reintegration process of returnees is facilitated by their linking up with friends as well as the membership of groups such as religious, hometown associations and old school unions among others. The findings also highlight the significance of translocality as a vital analytical lens for understanding the reintegration of internal return migrants into their communities of origin. Translocality emphasizes the fluid, multi-sited nature of migrants' lives, where experiences and resources accumulated elsewhere continue to shape their reintegration upon return (Brickell & Datta, 2011; Greiner, 2011). Rather than viewing return as a simple reversal of migration, this perspective underscores the ongoing spatial, social, and economic connections migrants sustain across multiple localities (Zoomers et al., 2016). In Ghana, returnees frequently maintain such linkages, using translocal networks to secure livelihoods, transfer skills, and sustain social belonging (Awumbila et al., 2017). These connections influence not only their personal adaptation but also broader community development outcomes.

7.4.3 Difficult with reintegration

For the few who identified some challenges to their reintegration, their sentiments related more with settling into the economic and social life back in KNEM. Their concerns were not the lack of employment on their part but the ability of their businesses to kick start and remain sustained in their new environment. Kagaah, a self-employed female returnee state that:

“Getting settled here was not that easy. You know the environment is different in terms of business operations here compared to places like Accra. Business was initially slow affecting the returns on my investment. My family really helped me in getting into the system in terms of their understanding and support in making sure I can relax and learn most of the things about life here again” (Kagaah, Navrongo, April, 2022).

Another participant (Konu) who came back virtually with nothing and experienced difficulty getting integrated notes his reintegration as:

“I will say settling in was not easy. I came back not feeling well and with virtually nothing. I had to depend on my family and friends for curing myself and feeding. After getting well, I was given a family land to farm on. So, I can say though my settling in was not that easy, my family and friends helped me greatly getting into the system again here” (Konu, Navrongo, June, 2022).

Konu's narrative suggests that a returnee's financial situation significantly influences the reintegration experience. Those who return with sufficient financial resources tend to be more independent and face fewer reintegration challenges compared to those who return impoverished and unprepared.

7.4.4 The perspectives of opinion leaders on reintegration of return migrants

Now from the perspective of the opinion leaders (Key informants) on the role of the community in the reintegration of the return migrants, the analysis from the study shows that the community itself does not see internal return migrants as different people or special people who may need some special treatment to settle in. For instance, Key informant 3 (Chief) noted that:

“For us here travelling is part of life. They were one of us, left and are back. They may see things have changed such as the expansion of the town but there is nothing new as life here has not changed much. They should just continue to observe our traditions and live their lives normal here” (KITH -Chief (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

He further said that:

“Where they (referring to return migrants) face challenges with their settling in is where when they return, they tend to look down on those who have not travelled or those they meet here and the kind of attitude to show to certain aspects of our culture and even elders of our community. So those who don’t show respect to others would likely face challenges when settling in”.

Key informant one (KIO) added that:

“I don’t think they should have problems living here because even when they were away, most of them were always in contact with home through phone calls and short returns for festivals, funerals and other programmes. This is their soil (Hometown), and they have always been part of us and they don’t need any special skills to stay here” (K IO, (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

On his part, Key informant two (KIT), also said that:

“To us, we know when they travel, they go with the knowledge of our tradition and get to know more about other traditions wherever they stay. We normally do not discriminate to say this one just came in or not. But the thing is, we also know that staying outside for a long time can make you forget some of the customs we have here. Even though they are not any hard thing to obey, we encourage them (return migrants) to meet the elders of their families or any of the opinion leaders to explain to them the relevance of such customs and how they are performed” (KIT, (Male) Navrongo, June, 2022).

The findings emphasize how crucial family, friends, and community support networks are in facilitating reintegration and assisting returning citizens in starting over in their old neighbourhoods. The returnees expressed that, prior to their return home, most of these return

migrants kept contacts with people within their communities while some occasionally returned home for programmes. So essentially, they have some level of knowledge of the economic and socio-cultural environments for which they were returning into.

Moreover, these thoughts, as articulated by the opinion leaders, highlight the reality that return migrants' reintegration is dependent on their ability to utilise the knowledge and social networks they have maintained with their home even while living in their former places of destination. Furthermore, return migration is considered as being rooted in the reciprocal respect that return migrants would exhibit to the locals they meet at home and the culture they come to meet, rather than on who brought in more money or not.

Furthermore, respect for the traditions and values of the returnee's hometown, which return migrants must preserve, is critical to the success of the reintegration process. Return migrants, according to Kuschminder (2017), are more likely to have stronger ideas about gender roles and identity, as well as becoming more aggressive and opinionated. For example, due to the patriarchal society in KNEM, where males are historically more empowered relative to females, any female return migrant who decides to defy the male authority back home is likely to face difficulties with their reintegration.

Overall, it can be ascertained from the findings that apart from two of the respondents interviewed who intimated that they had difficulties reintegrating into their communities, all the respondents agreed that their reintegration was less difficult, smooth and without many challenges. Moreover, the study does show that the financial status is an important influencer for the nature of reintegration experienced by the returnee migrants of KNEM.

While having enough financial resources has been seen to place some of the return migrants in a position to take advantage of economic opportunities in their place of origin, other factors such as access to necessary resources and services have positive influence on the psychosocial

well-being as part of their reintegration into KNEM. It must also be emphasized that showing respect to the leaders and the people (locals) they have come back to meet as well as respect to traditions and culture of the land are relevant factors that ensure acceptance of the return migrants by members of the receiving communities as well as ensuring the success of their reintegration back into the community of origin.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the impact of return migrants on indigenous socio-cultural practices and their experiences of reintegration upon returning to KNEM. The study's findings reveal that return migrants have significantly influenced indigenous practices, especially in terms of attitudes towards female education and child marriage, female genital mutilation, re-orientation on spiritual matters (e.g., causes of diseases), and the maintenance and preservation of culture. These changes align with existing literature on return migration, which often underscores the transformative potential of returnees in their home communities.

Return migrants have played a crucial role in changing attitudes towards female education and child marriage in KNEM. This mirrors findings from other contexts, where returnees advocate for more progressive views on gender equality and education. For example, King (2000) notes that returnees often bring back ideas about gender equality and the importance of education, which can challenge traditional norms and lead to increased educational opportunities for girls. Similarly, Ní Laoire (2008) found that returnees can influence local attitudes towards child marriage, promoting the delay of marriage and encouraging education instead.

The observed shift in attitudes towards female genital mutilation (FGM) in KNEM can be partly attributed to the advocacy and educational efforts of return migrants. This is consistent with studies such as Tiemoko (2004), which highlight the role of return migrants in combating

harmful traditional practices. Returnees, having been exposed to different cultural norms and legal frameworks abroad, often return with a heightened awareness of human rights and the health risks associated with FGM, leading to advocacy against such practices.

Additionally, the contribution of return migrants to the re-orientation on spiritual matters, particularly in understanding the causes of diseases, aligns with the work of Glick Schiller and Fouron (2001). These authors suggest that returnees can challenge traditional beliefs and practices by introducing new medical knowledge and perspectives. For example, Vertovec (2007) discusses how return migrants can bring back scientific understandings of health and disease, helping to shift local beliefs from spiritual to medical explanations.

Furthermore, while return migrants introduce new ideas and practices, they also play a crucial role in the preservation of cultural heritage. This dual role is well-documented in the literature. Baldassar (2008) highlights how return migrants often engage in activities that preserve cultural practices, such as traditional dances, festivals, and culinary methods, while also fostering social ties and cultural exchange. This preservation is essential for maintaining cultural identity and continuity within the community.

From the perspective of the key informants, the study underscores the dual role of return migrants in shaping socio-cultural practices in KNEM. While they introduce progressive changes in gender equality, health perspectives, and educational advocacy, they also encounter challenges such as resistance, cultural dilution, and economic disparities. These nuanced impacts align with existing literature, highlighting the complex and multifaceted nature of return migration's influence on home communities. Recognizing both the positive and negative aspects of return migration can assist policymakers and community leaders in better supporting

the reintegration process and maximizing the benefits of return migration for local development.

On the experience of reintegration into KNEM, the finding that the majority of internal return migrants to KNEM experience smooth reintegration due to the support they receive from family back home is consistent with existing literature on return migration and reintegration, which emphasizes the importance of social networks and familial support in facilitating this process. For instance, Gmelch (1980) highlights that return migrants who maintain strong family ties and social networks tend to reintegrate more easily upon their return. These connections provide emotional support, financial assistance, and social capital, all of which are crucial for navigating the challenges of reintegration. Similarly, Cassarino (2004) and King (2000) underscore the role of family and community support in smoothing the transition back into home society. Additionally, Black et al. (2004) point out that family support can mitigate the economic and social challenges faced by returnees, such as finding employment and re-establishing social status.

In conclusion, this study underscores the significant impact of return migrants on indigenous practices in KNEM. Return migrants have been key agents of change, fostering progressive attitudes towards female education and child marriage, advocating against female genital mutilation, and promoting a scientific understanding of health and disease. Simultaneously, they have played a vital role in preserving and maintaining cultural heritage, ensuring that traditional practices and social ties are upheld.

Also, the support from family and social networks plays a pivotal role in the reintegration of return migrants. This support not only eases the transition back home but also empowers returnees to positively impact their communities.

While the return of migrants can result in positive outcomes, such as the transfer of skills, knowledge, and capital, it is equally important to recognize the perceived negative impacts they may have on their communities. One major concern is the disruption of local social norms and values, as returnees often bring back attitudes and behaviors that clash with the traditional norms of their home communities. This sentiment, frequently expressed by community opinion leaders, is consistent with studies indicating that return migrants may introduce new ideas about gender roles, family structures, or work ethics, which can be perceived as challenging the existing social order (Cassarino, 2004; King, 2000).



CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

The study sought to provide answers questions relating to internal return-migration and community development. Comparatively, research on international return migration and reintegration receives more attention than internal return migration despite the greater number of internal migrants in the world (UNDP 2009; Bell and Muhidin, 2009). In the particular case of Ghana, about 98.7 percent of all reported cases of migration are internal within the country (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Generally, the literature on return migration suggests a paucity of research on the theoretical and empirical basis for understanding internal return migration and reintegration experiences (Dito Mazzucato & Schans, 2017; Abdulai, 2016; Caarls & Mazzucato, 2015).

With the use of qualitative research methodology, an attempt has been made in this study to contribute to the Ghanaian internal return migration discourse by investigating the relationship between internal return migration and community development using Kassenan Nankana East Municipality as a case study. Among other things, the main reasons for migration of the internal return migrants, the process of return migration, the experiences of internal return migrants' reintegration as well as their contribution and influence towards community development and indigenous socio-cultural practices respectively have been assessed.

The primary research inquiries that directed this investigation revolved around understanding the primary motives prompting the migration of returnees from the Kassenan Nankana East Municipality. Additionally, the study delved into the activation of return migration processes preceding their return and the subsequent influence of these processes on their reintegration into the KNEM. Lastly, the research explored the role played by return migrants in the

development of the KNEM and examined how their experiences have impacted the indigenous sociocultural traditions within the Municipality.

These research questions sought to guide the study to have a thorough understanding of the return migration process. A thorough knowledge of the dynamics of internal return migration, including returnees' reintegration processes, is critical not just for academic purposes only but also to serve and provide a basis for informing policy makers and stakeholders in the management of both the issues related to return migration and its associated complex reintegration concerns.

Regarding the study's data, participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Thirty-nine individuals, consisting of thirty-five return migrants and four opinion leaders serving as key informants in the KNEM, contributed to the data collection process. Employing an interview guide, the primary data collection methods involved face-to-face in-depth interviews for both return migrants and key informants, along with focus group discussions utilizing a semi-structured interview guide exclusively for return migrants.

Among the 35 return migrants, 15 underwent one-on-one (face-to-face) interviews, while the remaining participants engaged in focus group discussions organized into three distinct groups labeled A, B, and C. Group A comprised seven males, Group B included seven females, and Group C consisted of six participants, with an equal gender distribution of three males and three females. Utilizing NVIVO, the key data analysis processes encompassed coding/categorization, memoing, and the identification of themes, clusters, and patterns within the phenomena under investigation.

8.2 Summary of Key Findings

With respect to the socio-demographic background characteristics of the study participants, 22 were males and 16 were females. The youngest participant was 39 years while the oldest was 69 years. Majority were affiliated to the Christian Religion. The average number of years participants continuously stayed outside the KNEM was 16 years.

Among other things, the study finds with respect to Objective One, which was to examine the main reasons for moving out of the Kassena Nankana East Municipality, that the motives of leaving the KNEM were diverse and influenced by the socio-demographic characteristics of the migrants. The study establishes that while a few migrated for marital related reasons, the majority of the internal return migrants migrated out of the KNEM for economic related reasons such as the lack of employment opportunities at KNEM and the seeking of employment opportunities perceived to be existing in their preferred places of destinations. This finding largely aligns with earlier works that found employment as the key reason for internal migration in Ghana (Awumbila et al., 2016; Githens, 2013; Anarfi, Kwankye, Ababio & Tiemoko, 2003).

For the second objective, which was to examine the major reasons for returning and the pre-return migration process experiences among the internal return migrants resident in the KNEM, the study established that the decisions to return home were complex and could be influenced by a variety of factors. Essentially, returning home at the old age and for retirement purposes was seen as the major reason for returning among the return migrants of KNEM (Cobb-Clark and Stillman, 2013). This reason was also corroborated by the indigenes of KNEM through the observations made by the key informants. However, returning to establish and operate one's own business after accumulation of skills and capital as well as returning to take care of family members and family related issues were among the key reasons for return among the internal return of migrants at the KNEM. Aside these major cited reasons above, returning home for

political related reasons such as coming home to stand for elections for political positions as well as those who saw the home as the only safest option left after a long struggle with life at their various places of destination have been established as factors motivating the return home among the internal return migrants of KNEM.

Moreover, while the use and presence of social capital have been found to be important for all internal return migrants, majority of the participants could be considered as being well prepared psychologically, financially and technically before their return to KNEM.

For Objective Three, the findings indicate seemingly contradictory positions on the contribution of return migrants to their communities in the KNEM. For instance, at both the individual and group level, internal return migrants of the KNEM contribute to the development of their communities in terms of human capacity and the provision of social amenities and projects based on the knowledge, skills and financial resources at their disposal. Aside setting up businesses to provide employment, major human capacity initiatives have included the free training of people in skills such as hair dressing, mechanics, food processing, the award of scholarships to brilliant but needy students, creation of health awareness initiatives among others. The provision of social amenities has been seen to include the construction of wells and boreholes, the building and renovation of school blocks. However, from the perspective of some of the indigenes, some return migrants are more or less a liability to the community. Some have been accused of being a negative influence on the behaviour of others they returned to meet. Furthermore, majority of the local residents view the contributions of the return migrants as a supplement to the efforts they (the indigenous people in KNEM) have independently undertaken to enhance their lives and communities.

In terms of reintegration, the study establishes that, majority of the return migrants experience less difficulty with their reintegration back into the KNEM largely because of the constant

contact they kept with their home while in their various places of destination and knew what was in store for them should they decide to return permanently (translocality lives). Another contributing factor to the successful reintegration is the financial status of internal return migrants. Comparably, being more financially stable created the platform for the financially endowed to have a smooth reintegration into the home society, being it economic, social and political when compared to return migrants who are not financially endowed. Despite this, the study also discovers that, from the perspective of the locals, giving respect to locals and traditions met at the place of origin by return migrants upon return is what is considered key to helping the reintegration process of return migrants into the receiving communities.

Regarding their impact on indigenous socio-cultural practices, the study reveals that the influence of return migrants on these practices can be characterized as a mixture of positive and negative effects, depending on the perspectives of the return migrants and key informants, respectively. The research further establishes that while certain returning migrants have endeavoured to act as agents of social change by influencing specific aspects of social life in KNEM, such as promoting girl child education and reducing the prevalence of early marriage and female genital mutilation, among other initiatives, the fundamental traditional and cultural belief systems, encompassing rites related to funerals, festivals, marriage, dances, and other practices, are perceived as norms that remain resistant to change.

8.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that, just as there are different motives for leaving the KNEM among internal return migrants, leaving for work will continue to be one of the leading motivating factors for many KNEM people to relocate outside their communities. This situation is likely to continue if the existing disparity in terms of development between the south and the north is not bridged in terms of economic opportunities.

Another concluding point is that most of the people who migrate out of KNEM are mostly young, while return migration is mostly led by the elderly. The impact of an increasing number of young individuals migrating from their places of origin is intricate, encompassing economic, demographic, social, and cultural aspects. Policymakers and the government should carefully assess the consequences of youth migration, formulating policies that strike a balance between the advantages and challenges involved. This could entail initiatives to generate opportunities for young people in their home regions, tackle the underlying causes of migration, and support the seamless integration of returning migrants. However, while concluding that the contribution to development in KNEM by internal return migrants come through both individual resources and group mobilizations for targeted projects, the individual level of contribution of internal migrants towards KNEM differs according to the technical skills and financial abilities at the disposal of returnees.

The success of reintegration is seen to be both a shared responsibility between return migrants and that of natives met back home. Further, the success or failure of the reintegration experience for internal return migrants in KNEM is observed to be shaped by factors such as the psychological, financial, technical, and social network preparedness of the returnees both before and upon their return. Equally crucial in determining success is the demand for and acknowledgment of the adherence to customs, values, and the respect shown to the local populace from the perspective of the natives in their place of origin.

The study also concludes that even though the advocacy and other activities of return migrants geared towards removing aspects of the traditional beliefs and ways of doing things such as giving out female genital mutilation have seen some successes to some point, however other practices that are known to violate the right of people such as giving children out into marriage and the accusing and beating of old women as witches are seen to be practically impossible for the return migrants alone in their attempt to influence or cause any meaningful change in such

practices in KNEM. Essentially, any attempt to stop some of the old standing practices would need the complementing effort of state institutions and the enforcement of the right laws on such matters. Moreover, it is obvious many of the cultural practices such as festivals, funerals, dance, and food among others cannot be changed by return migrants.

8.4 Recommendations

The study recommends that indigenes of the KNEM communities who are currently living outside the Municipality should endeavour to be part of networks or associations. This network or association will enable them to liaise properly with other members of the community to determine the kind of interventions that the community needs while it would help members to plan properly and effectively in terms of mobilising donations and contributions to fund such projects.

Efforts should be made by the community and opinion leaders to encourage returnees who have enough financial resources to continue to support the underprivileged and vulnerable in the communities through activities such as the creation of jobs and other social amenities. The activities of such return migrants should openly be acknowledged and appreciated to serve as an example to others. Moreover, to support effective reintegration processes and capitalize on the potential advantages of return migration for socio-cultural enrichment and community development, scholars, policymakers, and practitioners in the field of migration must take these complex relationships into account.

Stakeholders and opinion leaders in KNEM should do more in ensuring the reintegration of return migrants into their communities. This can be accomplished by providing chances for retraining and teaching some of the essential values and practices that return migrants may have forgotten or taken for granted, as well as other economic prospects open to return

migrants. Moreover, creating such an atmosphere would also help the community to know what return migrants are capable of doing to help the development of their communities.

One of the reasons why people travel from the KNEM to other parts of the country is because of the lack of jobs and educational and apprenticeship training opportunities. The KNEM is an agrarian area which boasts of large tracts of land that can create job opportunities in agriculture for many of the youth. Programmes like education on the proper ways of doing farming and the provision of facilities like irrigations and dams should be provided by the government while also looking at the appropriate ways of ensuring ready markets for their products.

The government of Ghana through its agencies such as the Microfinance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC) and the Rural Enterprises Agency among others that are mandated to grant financial support to Ghanaians at the smallscale level should endeavour to resource the indigenes willing to start their own businesses in KNEM to reduce the number of people from KNEM who migrate just to work in other parts of the country just to raise the needed capital to start their own businesses in KNEM. So more generally, capital investments are needed from the government and local authorities to ensure conducive business atmosphere where indigenes and returnees can all create employment opportunities.

The study contributes to the literature by using the qualitative research methodology in an attempt to understand the phenomenon studied. Other research approaches such as quantitative designs, longitudinal studies, and mixed method study designs among others should be considered for further studies on the subject matter to broaden the current knowledge established within this study.

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Appendix A – Interview Guide



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

INTERVIEW GUIDE

RETURN-MIGRATION AND COMMUNITY

DEVELOPMENT: A CASE OF KASSENA NANKANA EAST MUNICIPALITY,

GHANA

INTRODUCTION

My name is Kwadwo Kodom Addae Clement, a PhD student at the Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana. The interview guide is designed to gain information about the return migration and community development using Kassena Nankana East Municipal Assembly, as a case study. All information provided will strictly be used for research purposes only. Your consent to participate in this study is voluntary and you are liberty to stop your involvement at any point in time.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES /THEMES AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Today, we will discuss the role of return migration on community development. I would like to know your observations, opinions, and experiences in relations to the subject. To provide answers to the research objectives, our discussion will be tailored around the following themes:

Theme 1: Social demographic Characteristics

Kindly tell me about yourself (Probe for Age, sex, level of education, marital status, religion, employment among others).

Theme2: Reasons for leaving Kassena-Nankena Municipality (Out-migration)

- What would you say are the main reasons for which you left this Municipality (Kassena Nankana East Municipality) (probe for push and pull factors)?
- Where was your destination?
- How long did you live there?

- What do you consider as the positive experiences of your life outside your community of origin?
- What do you consider as the negative experiences of your life outside your origin community of origin?
- Looking back, how did you feel during the years that you lived outside your origin community?

Theme 3: Main motivations for returning

- What would you say are some of the reasons for returning to Kassena Nankena Municipality? (Probe for main reason)
- How was your preparation towards your return?
- Where you psychologically prepared?
- Where you financially prepared?
- Where you technically prepared?
- Where you socially prepared?

Theme 4: The process of reintegration, and reintegration experiences of internal return migrants

- How long have you been staying here since your return?
- How do you describe your return process into this community?
- Did you feel unwelcomed after returning here?
- How do you consider your relationship with the people of your own community here?
- With regard to your return, has there been any change in the relationship with your close family?
- In which way would you say your family assisted you in getting reintegrated into this community?
- How have you benefited from your community since you returned?

Theme 5: The role of return migration in indigenous cultural practices within the Kassena - Nankana East Municipality.

- What do you miss most of the cultural practices of your former place of destination?
- What do you appreciate most about the cultural practices you found back in Kasesna Nankana East Municipality upon your return?
- What is the role of return migration on indigenous cultural practices within the Kassena Nankana East Municipality?

Theme 6: Role of return migrants in the social structure of the community.

- What contributions have you made to the social structural formations of the Municipality?
- Based on your experience, how do you think returnees could be of better help to the local community?

Theme 7: The role of reintegration in the development of Kassena Nankana.

- What help have you offered to your community upon your return to Kassena Nankana Municipality?
- What do you think is the potential role of return migrants in the development of their home societies and economies?



APPENDICES

B



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR THE HUMANITIES (ECH)

P. O. Box LG 74, Legon, Accra, Ghana

My Ref. No...ECH 332/ 21-22 ...

July 19, 2022.

Clement Kwadwo Addae Kodom
Centre for Migration Studies
University of Ghana
Legon

ETHICAL CLEARANCE
(ECH 332/ 21-22)

The protocol title below has been reviewed and approved by the ECH Committee.

TITLE OF PROTOCOL: THE NEXUS BETWEEN RETURN-MIGRATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A CASE OF KASSENA NANKANA MUNICIPALITY

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: CLEMENT KWADWO ADDAE KODOM

Please note that the final review report must be submitted to the Committee at the completion of the study. Your research records may be audited at any time during or after the implementation. Any modification of this research project must be submitted to ECH for review and approval prior to implementation.

Please report all serious adverse events related to this study to ECH within seven (7) days verbally and in writing within fourteen (14) days.

This certificate is valid till July 19, 2023. You are required to submit annual reports for continuing review.

Please accept my congratulations.

Yours Sincerely,

Professor C. Charles Mate-Kole
ECH Chair

Cc: Prof. Stephen O. Kwankye, Centre for Migration Studies, UG
Dr. Austin Ablo, Centre for Migration Studies, UG
Dr. Mariama Zaami, Centre for Migration Studies, UG

