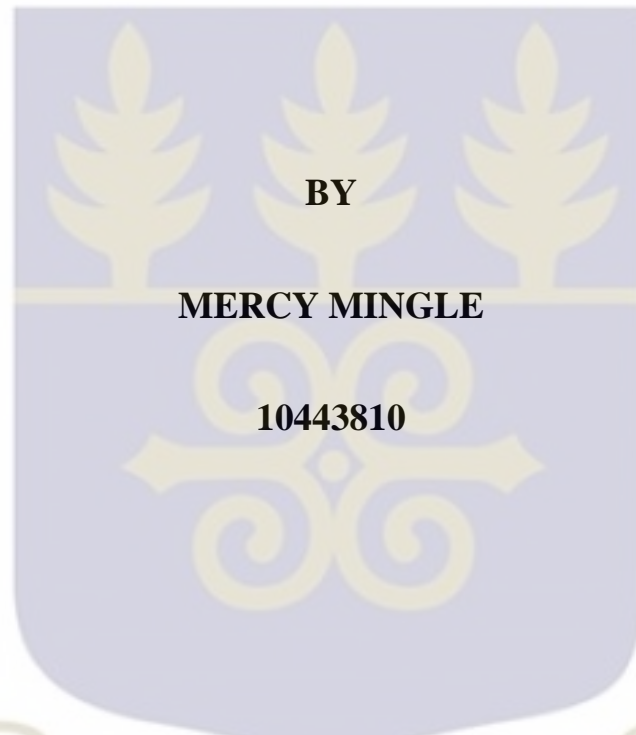


**FEMALE TRADITIONAL RULERSHIP IN A PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY:  
A CASE STUDY OF NANA KOFI ABUNA V OF ESSIPON TRADITIONAL  
AREA**



**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,  
LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR  
THE AWARD OF M.PHIL. DEGREE IN AFRICAN STUDIES.**

**JULY, 2015**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that apart from works cited, which have all been duly referenced, this thesis is my original work produced from research undertaken under supervision, and has not been presented anywhere else either in part or in full for the award of any degree.

.....  
MERCY MINGLE

**Student**

.....  
Date

.....  
PROF. IRENE ODOTEI

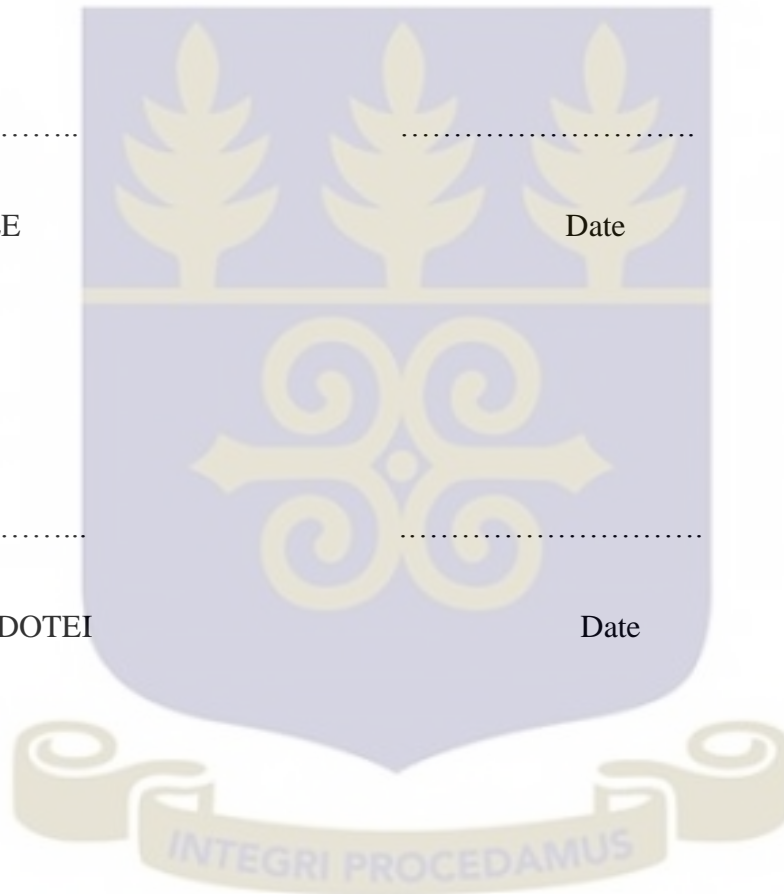
**Supervisor**

.....  
Date

.....  
DR. DEBORAH ATOBRAH

**Supervisor**

.....  
Date



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All thanks and glory to the Almighty God, for it is He who gives wisdom; and from Him comes knowledge and understanding.

To my supervisors, Professor Irene Odotei, Dr. Samuel Nteusus, Dr Ebo Quansah and Dr. Deborah Atobrah, I am grateful for the corrections and suggestions, to Dr Edem Adotey, I will forever be thankful for your immense help in meeting submission deadline; and to Dr Edward Nanbigne, God bless you for everything.

Nii Kwartelai, Barbara Cobbinah, Stephen Anti, Akolgo Ayine, Patience Gyamenah, and Jean Paul Agidi, you have been genuine friends and I really appreciate your friendship and concern. To my dearest Samuel Yeboah Ababio, Lydia Amoah of CEGENSA, Richard Awubomu of IAS, Promise Eweh and the entire M.A/MPhil class of 2014/2015, I say thank you for the various ways you assisted in the execution of this project.

I am truly indebted to Nana Kofi Abuna V and the entire people of Essipon for their hospitality and readiness to speak to me which saw to the success of this project.

Finally, I owe my mother, Lydia Banafoe, and siblings, David Mingle, George Mingle, Jonathan Mingle, Naa Aku Mingle, Grace Mingle and Margaret Mingle, a debt of gratitude for being there for me emotionally and financially.

## DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my mother Lydia Banafoe, thank you for the gift of education; and to my late father Mr. J. A Mingle, I know you are proud of me wherever you are.



## ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of female chiefs although not new, is somewhat difficult to conceptualize in this predominantly patriarchal part of the world where traditions and taboos restrict women from such positions. This dissertation discusses female chieftaincy based on a case study of Nana Kofi Abuna V, of Essipon traditional area in the Western region of Ghana, looking at how her sex affects her roles and responsibilities as the ultimate ruler of the traditional area. The data used for the study were sourced through interactions with 27 respondents from the traditional area. The thematic analysis format was used to analyze the data. The study showed that the female chieftaincy phenomenon is quite complex than male rule, as female chiefs have to keep alternating between roles which require different behaviors. There is therefore always the need to de-gender and re-gender. The findings suggest that some female chiefs struggle to fit into the chieftaincy institution in some traditions, and this can be resolved if permanent cultural modifications are made to accommodate the rule of female chiefs.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION .....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
DEDICATION .....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	v
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY .....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM .....	6
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	6
1.4 OBJECTIVES .....	7
1.5 METHODOLOGY .....	8
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY .....	9
1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS .....	9
1.8 BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF NANA KOFI ABUNA .....	10
1.9 DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA: ESSIPON TRADITIONAL AREA .....	11
1.10 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK .....	12
1.11 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY .....	14
CHAPTER TWO .....	15

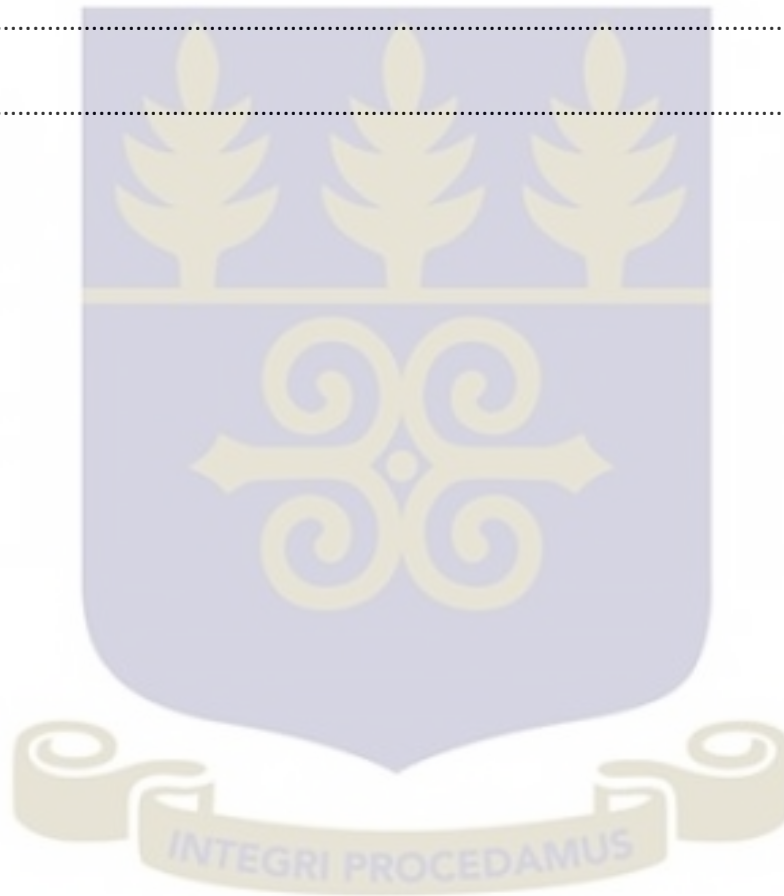
2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW .....	15
2.1 TRADITIONAL RULERSHIP AND THE CHIEFTAINCY INSTITUTION .....	15
2.1.1 A General Overview of Female Traditional Rulers .....	15
2.2 THE INSTITUTION OF CHIEFTAINCY.....	20
2.2.1 The colonial influence.....	20
2.2.2 Chieftaincy in contemporary Ghana .....	22
2.2.3 Who is a Chief?.....	23
2.2.4 Women in the Houses of Chiefs .....	27
2.3 PATRIARCHY .....	28
2.4 MASCULINITIES AND FEMININITIES .....	32
2.4.1 Masculinity and Male Dominance .....	32
2.4.2 Femininity and Female Subordination.....	36
2.5 MATRIARCHY.....	41
2.6 GENDER.....	42
CHAPTER THREE .....	46
3.0 METHODOLOGY .....	46
3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN .....	46
3.2 DATA COLLECTION .....	47
3.3 DATA SOURCES .....	47
3.3.1 Primary Sources .....	47

3.3.1.1 Interviews.....	47
3.3.1.2 Focus Group Discussions.....	48
3.3.1.3 Observation.....	49
3.3.2 Secondary Sources.....	49
3.4 SAMPLING METHOD.....	50
3.4.1 Sample Size.....	51
3.5 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION.....	51
3.5.1 Data Collection Instruments.....	53
3.5.2 Pre-testing the instruments.....	53
3.6 ETHICS OF THE RESEARCH.....	54
3.7 DATA ANALYSIS.....	55
3.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	55
CHAPTER FOUR.....	57
4.0 THE LIFE OF NANA KOFI ABUNA AS A FEMALE CHIEF.....	57
4.1 BACKGROUND OF NANA KOFI ABUNA’S ASCENSION TO CHIEFTAINCY.....	57
4.1.1 The History of Essipon (How Essipon Came Into Being).....	57
4.1.2 Mode of succession and the Kingmakers in Essipon Chieftaincy.....	58
4.1.3 Destooling a chief in Essipon.....	59
4.1.4 The past and present roles of women in chieftaincy.....	60
4.1.5 Nana Kofi Abuna’s Ascension.....	61

4.1.6 Nana Kofi Abuna V's Enstoolment .....	62
4.2 DE-GENDERING AND RE-GENDERING .....	63
4.2.1 Stool Name.....	63
4.2.3 Royal symbols.....	64
4.2.4 Female Husband of Stool Wives?.....	65
4.2.5 Religion.....	65
4.2.6 Nana Kofi Abuna's personality.....	67
4.2.7 Gender stereotypes.....	67
4.3 CHIEFLY EXPECTATIONS .....	69
4.3.1 Nana Abuna as an agent of development.....	69
4.3.2 Resource Management.....	71
4.3.3 Accountability.....	72
4.3.4 Education .....	72
4.3.5 Infrastructural development .....	73
4.3.6 Health and Sanitation.....	74
4.3.7 Women in Essipon .....	75
4.3.8 Nana Abuna and the youth in Essipon.....	75
4.3.9 Cases brought to Nana Abuna's court.....	76
4.3.10 Nana Abuna's court cases .....	77
4.4 CULTURAL LIMITATIONS .....	78

4.4.1 Traditional Taboos .....	78
4.4.2 Traditional rites and rituals .....	80
4.4.3 Traditional bodies .....	82
4.4.4 The female chief's court .....	82
4.5 ATTITUDES AND REACTIONS OF PEOPLE CONCERNING NANA ABUNA'S POSITION FROM NANA'S PERSPECTIVE .....	83
4.5.1 Male chiefs.....	83
4.5.2 Queenmothers .....	85
4.5.3 Elders and Kingmakers in Essipon .....	87
4.5.4 The youth of Essipon .....	89
4.5.5 Nana Kofi Abuna V .....	91
4.6 FAMILIAL ROLES .....	92
4.6.1 Marriage.....	92
4.6.2 Motherhood.....	94
4.6.3 Chores .....	96
4.6.4 Extended family .....	97
4.7 THE CHALLENGES NANA FACES AS A FEMALE CHIEF .....	97
4.8 OTHER LEADERSHIP ROLES AND APPOINTMENTS .....	99
4.9 Awards and Workshop Certificates.....	100
CHAPTER FIVE .....	102
5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .....	102

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	102
5.2 Conclusion.....	105
5.3 Recommendation.....	106
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	107
APPENDIX 1.....	115
APPENDIX 2.....	117
APPENDIX 3.....	123



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

In this chapter, a general idea of the study will be given, including the problem statement, the objectives of this study, research questions, and an outline of the categorization of the chapters. It will also discuss the theoretical framework and give a brief description of the study area, as well as a biographical sketch of Nana Kofi Abuna V of Essipon.

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Ghana, chieftaincy is one of the few traditional institutions that still exist regardless of the influx of western cultures and its resultant neglect and discard of some Ghanaian traditions. Chieftaincy in Ghana is known to be a male dominated sphere. However, there have been some females in this domain. These women hold chieftaincy positions not as queenmothers but as female chiefs (Odotei, 2006) and often even have queenmothers as well.

In recent times, some level of attention has been given to women in politics and traditional governments, such as the queenmothers. Nevertheless these female chiefs have not received the necessary attention in academic works with respect to the impact they have, and the role they play in the development of their chiefdoms. Odotei and Awedoba (2006) believe that women's responsibility and roles as leaders have undergone changes to meet challenges of the new world, and this has therefore intensified their advocacy for gender equity. These female chiefs then expect to have equal power and recognition as their male counterparts. This is not always the case, as it has taken many years of work for representatives of women traditional leaders, both

queenmothers and the female chiefs to be given seats into bodies such as the Regional House of Chiefs, and the National House of Chiefs.

In the case of these female chiefs is also the issue of their sex as against the gender expectations of their societies. For most people, a woman's place is in the home, playing the reproductive role of childbearing and nurturing (Ortner, 1974). For others, tradition just does not often allow women to take complete charge of running affairs in a community, but to take up supplementary roles intended to complement the work of male leaders (Oduyoye, 2000). Again, some of these women chiefs occupy stools originally meant for males and therefore face certain challenges and limitations in administering their rightful duties. These challenges often come up as a result of the general attitude towards a woman being the supreme leader in the community (Bell, 2010; Düsing, 2002; Odotei, 2006). Whilst it is seen as prestigious for a woman to venture into a male dominated area, it is also more challenging as according to Agadjanian (2002), women who break into typically male spheres are usually relegated to the margins. Women being viewed better off domesticated encourage the belief that women are incapable of handling the herculean tasks of chiefs; which include the political, economic, and religious functions they are expected to perform.

However, there are always exceptions to the rule. There are some women who have taken up such male positions and made a great difference in their communities and a name for female chiefs in the history of Ghana. In Dagbon in the northern part of Ghana, there are three chieftaincy positions for the daughters of the Yaa Na. The Nanumba also have three female chieftaincies, whilst the Mamprugu have two (Odotei, 2006). Among the Akan, there are Queen Dokua (1817-1835) of Akyem and Abrafi Kɔtɔ of Techiman, who both ruled as kings in the absence of male heirs (Brobbe, 2008; Wilks, 1975). The more contemporary female chiefs

include, Nana Baah Okoampa IV (1966-1999) of Atwia in the Ekumfi traditional area, Central region (Sutherland-Addy, 2006); Nana Hima Dekyi XIII (1964-2002), who was the Omanhene of Upper Dixcove, Ahanta West district in the Central region, is said to have been the only female paramount chief (Brobbeey, 2008); and Nana Kofi Abuna V of Essipon.

Imam (1998), cited in Zeleza (1999), maintains that in pre-colonial Africa, the lives of notable, exceptional, heroic women were celebrated equally as the men. Zeleza (1999) and Singer (2012) however believe that despite the proliferation of the literature on women, in most institutions of higher learning in Africa, women's history is still marginal and lacks respectability. To authors such as Ifi Amadiume (1998) in 'Male Daughters Female Husbands' and Stephan Miescher (2007) in 'Becoming an Opanyin: Elders, Gender and Masculinities in Twentieth Century', it was colonialism that introduced gender barriers and resulted in the marginalization of the role of women in traditional governments to the background. According to Miescher (2007), the Native Authority Ordinances of the colonial era failed to recognize female elders and their courts. Nevertheless, there have been great women leaders in the history of Africa who have achieved high heights in originally male positions. We can first make mention of Queen Hatshepsut (1490-1468 BC), who is one of the about five female Pharaohs in ancient Egypt. Queen Amina of the Hausa is also a very popular female ruler of the sixteenth century. Others include Nzinga of Angola (1581-1663), Dona Beatrice of Congo (1682-1706), Mmanthatsi of the Soto (1781-1835) and Muganzirwazu of Buganda (Odotei, 2006). "The Luena queen, Nyakarolo of Angola, was famed for her warrior instincts and for instituting a system of female chiefdoms in all of the countries she conquered" (Achebe, 2003). In Ghana, the brave Nana Yaa Asantewaa, the Akan warrior queen who led an army of thousands of Ashanti men to war against the British during the colonial era cannot be left out.

But in analyzing the roles these dynamic women played, it so happens that most of them had to transform into a different gender and take up a ‘masculine nature’. Nwando Achebe’s work on the female king, Ahebe Ugbabe of the Enugu-Ezike, Northern Igboland, tells of a woman who challenged the “traditional” notions of masculinity and manhood in colonial Enugu Ezike and “became a man”. King Ahebe is said to have undergone a series of gender transformations in her ultimate quest to attain manhood. She became the first female headman, a warrant chief, then a king. Her title was bestowed on her therefore not because of her relationship with a man, but in her own right as a “female man”. She dressed in male garments, married many wives and even took away other men’s wives. She was only forced to retransform into a woman when her creation and outdoor of a masquerade, in an attempt to realize full manhood was stopped by male elders, by confiscating the masquerade. Achebe concluded that although King Ahebe was able to transform herself into a multiplicity of female masculinities, there was a limit to the extent to which female gendered transformations could materialize in Enugu Ezike. (Achebe, 2003)

Agnes Aidoo’s (1985) work on the history of Akan women also draws attention to a female chief in the nineteenth century who ruled Dwaben from 1841-1850. Nana Ama Dwaben Serwaa ruled as chief because there were no male heirs in the royal lineage. She rebuilt her capital after she led her people back from exile with the help of Afrakuma Panin, her 28 year old daughter who later succeeded her as chief. “She officiated at the religious Adaye and Odwira festivals, presided over her court and guided her councilors in government” (Aidoo, 1985). She was said to have also taken the customary oath of allegiance in the Asantehene’s presence. Aidoo however is of the view that Nana Ama Serwaa was a successful chief partly because she was menopausal. Women suffered certain ‘ritual disabilities’; the most serious was and still is menstruation. Brempong

(2006) states that, “menstruation taboo is one of the most common taboos on chieftaincy in Africa”.

Ortner (1974) claims women are seen as ‘messy’ because of menstruation, which is as a result of the biological nature of the woman’s body. Women become pollutants when menstruating; they are seen as unclean and can neutralize very powerful charms. In many African societies, menstruating women have many taboos that include staying away from men sexually and socially and not taking part in rituals and sacrifices to certain deities. In Akan communities it prevents even the queen mother from making contact with the chief as it will contaminate him. The question then is what if she is the chief?

Again, women are viewed as feeble, nurturing and motherly because they are biologically weaker than men and built up specifically for procreation which is believed to limit the abilities of women (Ortner, 1974). Therefore a woman’s place is in the home. Does this notion affect the attitude of the people around these female chiefs? Does it also affect her attitude towards the people around her?

Oduyoye (2000) in discussing the representations of women in folktales highlights mythical stories of female leaders of certain communities who could not be satisfied with anything and kept on demanding unthinkable acts from their people. They became ‘wicked’ rulers who at the end of each story were tricked and defeated. And that was how power was handed to men. These ‘wicked female rulers’ then become a contradiction to the nurturing, motherly nature women are believed to have. Are these mythic leaders exaggerated examples of women trying to exercise power over a male population?

From these works considered, women leaders are faced with challenges that often come up as a result of their sex, and the gender constructions of the society they come from.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

A lot of research work has been done on female traditional leaders such as Nana Yaa Asantewaa Ilof Ejisu, but most of the studies dwell on queenmothers and their roles in traditional politics and community development in Ghana and Africa. In many traditional societies, the king, a male ruler, is the overlord and wields final political power. The queenmothers merely function to complement the role of the king. While a lot of studies have been done on queenmothers and their roles in traditional governance, the phenomenon of female chiefs is not new, but in Ghana and some parts of Africa, female chieftaincy is a very rare occurrence and has thus received insufficient documentation. Again, as female chiefs in a predominantly patriarchal part of the world, where people are socialized to maintain gender roles and uphold male leadership, there is also then the difficulty in conceptualizing the idea of a woman, a female who is often expected to be a subordinate, being a full time chief and the head of both men and women, therefore bringing up the challenge of acceptance. There is also the misconception that the chieftaincy institution remains the same whether a man or woman rules, this is however not entirely true. There are clear dynamics when it comes to female chieftaincy.

## 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do women become chiefs in their own rights? (By institution, serendipity, or in the absence of a man)
- To what extent does the female chief's sex affect her status and functions; and should there be de-gendering and/or re-gendering?

- Does gender play out or interfere, in the administering of the female traditional ruler's duties?
- To what extent does the female chief wield power?
- What is the future of the female chieftaincy institution?

## 1.4 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to interrogate the life of Nana Kofi Abuna as a female traditional chief with respect to relevant gender issues; but specifically,

- To examine the background and circumstances under which Nana Kofi Abuna became the chief of Essipon traditional area.
- To examine the extent of de-gendering and re-gendering associated with her life as a chief.
- To analyze the perceptions, attitudes and reactions of elders, kingmakers and her subjects in the light of traditional gender norms, beliefs and expectations.
- To examine the relevant cultural limitations on her jurisdiction as a result of being a female chief.
- To examine her familial roles and the gender division of work in her home in view of her position as the ultimate ruler of Essipon.

## 1.5 METHODOLOGY

This study employed qualitative research methods. The main instruments used for the collection of primary data included interviews, focus group discussions and observation. Secondary data was sourced from journals, articles and books with relevant information to the study.

The primary data collection began with in depth interviews, done with Nana Kofi Abuna at her residence in Essipon, Sekondi-Takoradi, about her life as a chief, a woman and a mother. The interview dwelt on themes of gender; that is, her perceptions on gender, the roles and status of men and women, and its effects on her, it furthermore dealt with some of the things she does to conform with and/or deviate from gender norms, and how she perceives peoples' reactions to her. Some council of elders and kingmakers were also interviewed, also in Essipon, Sekondi-Takoradi, on the bases of Nana Kofi Abuna's de-gendering in contrast to traditional gender norms of Essipon and her prowess or weaknesses as an Essipon chief as a result of her sex.

Selected people from her community were put in groups for focus group discussions. This included 2 groups, a male group and a female group, of 6 elderly people each, who were steeped in the culture of Essipon. The discussions of these 2 groups helped in analyzing and evaluating Nana Kofi Abuna in comparison with her predecessor, by providing historical facts and incidents associated with sex, gender, patriarchy and chieftaincy.

Again, 2 groups, a male and a female group of 6 young people each, below the age of 30, who reside in the community, were chosen to discuss their perceptions about Nana Kofi Abuna as a female chief and her style of rule. There was also a fifth mixed group of members selected from the four previous groups. These 5 groups are meant to give a fair representation of the intergenerational and gender perspectives of the issues being looked at. The idea of the all-male

and all-female groups was intended to facilitate trust and free speaking as members of such focus groups are often times more comfortable in the company of people of the same sex. All focus group discussions for this study were held in Essipon, Sekondi-Takoradi.

The observation was of Nana Kofi Abuna carrying out her chiefly duties and functions, and of her relationship with the people (both male and female) she works with in her court or palace, visitors, peers and other chiefs as well.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

This study will first of all add on to knowledge since little research has been done in the field of female chiefs. This study will again highlight the level of empowerment women in such positions have, and draw attention to their impact and input to national development.

## **1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS**

\*GENDER: Socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women (Oyewumi, 1997). Simply put, being feminine or masculine.

\*SEX: the biological facts of the male and female bodies (Oyewumi, 1997)

\*DEGENERATING: the transformation from one gender to another. (Oyewumi, 1997)

\*REGENDERING: the reinforcement of the original gender after de-gendering has occurred. (Oyewumi, 1997)

## 1.8 BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF NANA KOFI ABUNA

Nana Kofi Abuna V was born in Takoradi on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 1959, to Sophia Gordon of Essipon and Bensford Wood of Elmina, both of blessed memory. She was originally named Maame Ama Azaa Nyinpanyin, but was known in school as Emma Theodora Wood. Her mother was a business woman and a farmer, whilst her father worked at the then G.N.T.C. in Accra. Nana Kofi Abuna, although the fourth born of ten children is the first girl of the family, of which seven out of the ten children are still alive (3 males and 4 females). Nana was sent to live with her paternal grandmother in Elmina, where she spent most of her childhood and teenage years. She was therefore brought up by her grandmother.

Nana started her education at the Elmina Methodist Elementary Junior High School, and earned her Form 4-Leaving-Certificate in 1975. She then went on to Ashley's Secretarial College in Kaneshie, Accra where she got her Diploma in Shorthand, Commerce, English, Office practice and Typing. After being trained as a professional secretary, she obviously began her working career as a secretary.

Nana Kofi Abuna's first job was at Seco Publishing as a sales girl, and then moved to Glamour as a sales girl as well. Nana finally ended up at a non-governmental organization known as the Ghana Evangelical Society at Laterbiokorshie, where she worked as a secretary till she had to move back to Essipon after her mother died in 1996.

Nana Kofi Abuna V was handed the mantle of chieftaincy, and enstooled on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 1998 regardless of the fact that she has three living brothers. She is now in her 16<sup>th</sup> year of being a chief. Taking that into consideration, I dare say Nana is one of the longest serving female chiefs in contemporary times.

Nana Kofi Abuna is currently not married but is a mother of three children, two girls and a boy. Nana Kofi Abuna however has twelve adopted children in addition to her biological children, of which some are children of Nana's uncle in Ivory Coast. Nana Abuna lives in Essipon; but then she travels frequently to seminars and workshops in and out of the country.

Nana Kofi Abuna's life as a female chief will be further discussed in subsequent chapters.

### **1.9 DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA: ESSIPON TRADITIONAL AREA**

Essipon is a town located in the Sekondi Tarkoradi Metropolis, formerly known as the Shama Ahanta East Metropolis, in the Western region Of Ghana. Essipon is one of the 25 towns found in the Sekondi Tarkoradi Metropolis which is the capital district of the region. The town is bordered by Intwaban, Sofokrom, and Ngyesia towns.

The Essipon traditional area owns one of the divisional chieftaincy stools that fall under the Sekondi paramountcy. Typical of most Akan groups, the people of Essipon trace their lineage and descent through the matrilineal line, and thus succession and inheritance are also based on maternal bonds.

In terms of education, the Essipon community has three basic and junior high schools, two of which are privately owned and one public school. There is also a nursery and kindergarten school. The Sekondi College however is the only senior high school in Essipon.

The most common economic activity in Essipon is quarrying, from which the stones are used for the Sea Defense Projects in the Western region. Other significant economic activities include fishing, trading and farming, yam being the major crop grown. The community however does not

have a market, it is however surrounded by towns like Sekondi and Shama, who have very large markets and have very popular market days.

The people of Essipon, like most Akan groups in the Western region, celebrate the annual Kundum festival. It is a week-long celebration in the first week of August. But in addition, there are sacred days and other festival days on the traditional calendar that are observed with the performance of special rites and rituals.

The Essipon people are largely Christians, and as a result, there are about 15 churches in the Essipon town alone. There is also one mosque that serves the Muslims in the community. Though the people still hold on to certain traditional beliefs, the Traditionalists have the lowest number of followers as at now, according to the Essipon Okyeame.

### **1.10 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

The institution of chieftaincy cannot be holistically understood without giving recourse to the female chief. It is in this light that this thesis seeks to further draw attention to this not so popular phenomenon, based on a case study of Nana Kofi Abuna, critically looking at the attitudes, reactions, behaviors and expectations, in view of her sex and gender in contradiction of her being a chief.

Human beings do not act or behave randomly; people often behave in certain ways to suit particular situations. Different social situations necessitate particular ways of proper behavior. What people expect as 'proper' behavior however differs from each group of people. Expectations become apparent when a closer look at the roles people take up in social groups is taken. With each social role one assumes, there must be a change in behavior to fit the

expectations both the person and others have of that particular role. The expected behaviors, which may be termed as norms, are the recognized standards of behavior of most social groups. Social groups range from work groups, friendships, nations and communities. Notwithstanding certain gender norms and stereotypes of society, most people tend to conform to the guiding principles provided by the roles they perform. Eagly (1987), thus believes that social roles guide our behaviors more than the sex we inhabit.

The Social Role Theory then seems to be a good working theory that can agreeably fit into, and describe the life of a female chief on a male stool, and the subsequent expectations and behaviors of others. This theory concentrates on interactions between and among individuals, groups and societies as an outcome of the social systems in which people live.

The Social Role Theory is the principle that, men and women behave differently in social situations and take different roles due to the expectations that society puts on them (Eagly, 1987). The theory is said to have developed in the 1980s as a gender related theory, on which “Eagly has devoted considerable time” (Dulin, 2007).

Eagly et al (1995), in an extensive meta-analysis on gender and the effectiveness of leaders, provided evidence that showed that leadership roles are often defined in masculine terms, which brands men as more effective than women. Women were only more effective when the roles were defined in less masculine terms, such as the ability to get along with other people. Social Role Theory also proposes that women in leadership roles are judged more harshly even when they are effective leaders, and are usually evaluated more negatively than men in the same roles, therefore putting them in a predicament; that is, to be firm and behave as expected of any holder of the position, or to add a feminine touch to the position.

## 1.11 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The organization of this work will be categorized into five chapters.

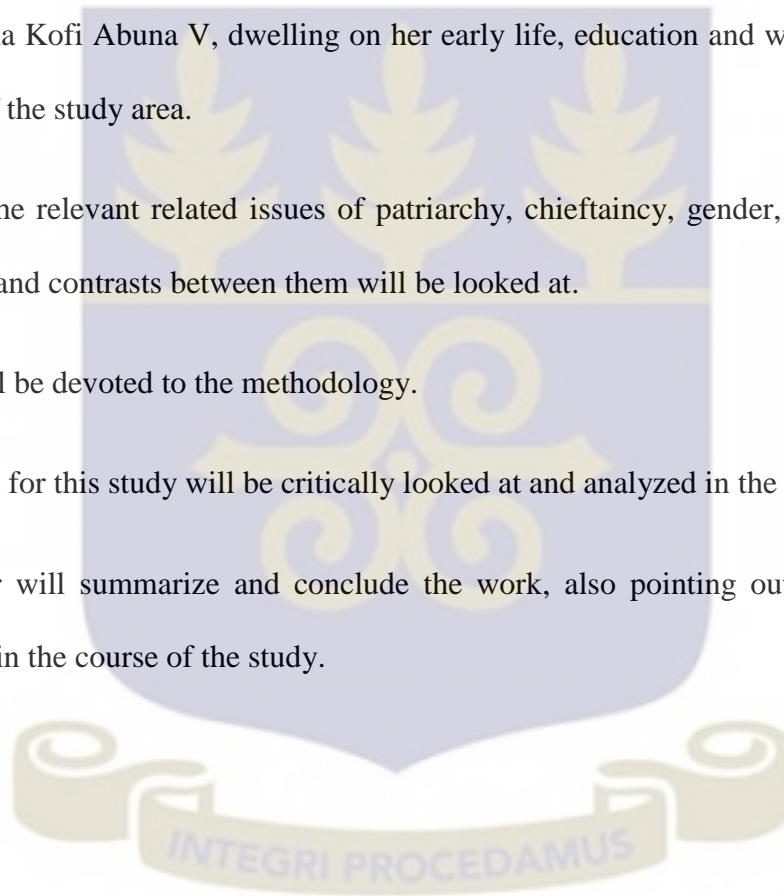
The first chapter will comprise the introduction, which will give an overview of the institution of chieftaincy, the statement of problem, objectives of the study, research questions and the significance of the study. This chapter will also include the methodology, a biographical sketch of the life of Nana Kofi Abuna V, dwelling on her early life, education and working career, and the description of the study area.

In chapter two, the relevant related issues of patriarchy, chieftaincy, gender, female leadership and the relations and contrasts between them will be looked at.

Chapter three will be devoted to the methodology.

All data collected for this study will be critically looked at and analyzed in the fourth chapter.

The fifth chapter will summarize and conclude the work, also pointing out the findings and challenges faced in the course of the study.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Based on the research topic, it is important to take a look at the institution of chieftaincy, the influences that have shaped this institution, and how it has evolved over the years. This chapter will also look at patriarchy and its link to the gendered differences and inequality that exists in traditional leadership.

#### **2.1 TRADITIONAL RULERSHIP AND THE CHIEFTAINCY INSTITUTION**

##### **2.1.1 A General Overview of Female Traditional Rulers**

In the historical past, chieftaincy or the type of leadership that made monarchs ultimate rulers was very common in Europe and some parts of Asia (Dankwa III, 2004). Some of these monarchs had no colonial interference, which made them absolute rulers and therefore had limitless power over life and property. Nations such as Spain, England, Portugal, France and Germany, were once ruled by European monarchs (Dankwa III, 2004).

These monarchs were said to have assistants who only aided them in their rule. In the era of these monarchs, only a few people took decisions for the rest of the people. It so therefore happened that at a point in history, there was a general rebellion against these monarchs in many parts of the world. The people wanted to take part or have representatives in the making of decisions that affected them. Many monarchs were removed and replaced by the republican systems of governments. In places where the monarchical government still exists, there is often only one king or chief (Dankwa III, 2004).

Amongst the many monarchs that ruled, very little is known or documented about the existence of female monarchs. Nonetheless, in Asian history, during the Qing dynasty of the Chinese empire, Empress Dowager Cixi was said to have practically ruled the empire, although it was her 8 year old son who was on the throne as the official emperor (Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding, 2001). In Europe, one can make mention of Queen Victoria, under whose reign “the woman’s-place-is-in-the-home ideology hardened into its most recent highly rigid form” (Van Allen, 1972). The longest reigning female monarch is the current queen of England, Queen Elizabeth II.

Political systems prior to colonization often offered women opportunities to exert power within their communities (Fallon, 2008). Women from varying ethnic groups across Sub Saharan Africa were known to occupy a variety of leadership roles in their societies (Achebe, 2003). The due recognition given to women’s power and authority was eroded by colonialism and its western standards of male superiority (Odotei, 2006).

In many parts of Africa, there was a dual gender ruling system which allowed the existence of both a male and female leader ruling side by side. Fallon (2008) refers to Lebeuf’s (1963) work which talks about the Swazi kingdom, governed by a king who ruled alongside his mother. They ruled separately and had separate courts and officials. Among the Luanda, the leader also rules together with a woman who is usually his sister (Achebe, 2003). In Ivory Coast, the Beng also have a male and a female chief in each village. Amongst the Mossi people, the eldest daughter of a dead Mossi king is said to dress in the king’s attire and hold royal power until the next ruler is installed (Achebe, 2003).

Aside this system, there were exemplary women who became kings and rulers. The Luena queen, Nyakarolo of Angola was very famous for her warrior instincts and for the institution of a system of female chieftaincy in all of the countries she conquered (Achebe, 2003). In the 17th century, Queen Abudok, who is believed to have been the only female ‘reth’ (king) of the Shilluk people, is said to have influenced her successor Tugo in creating the system of ‘divine kingship’, where kings are killed when they grow weak, get sick or have served for a fixed number of years. Also, this system gave the royal wives of the king the power to execute him themselves or call for his execution (Evans-Pritchard, 1965; Feely-Harnik, 1985; Graeber, 2011).

In ancient Egypt, Pharaohs were often men. The evidence for the few women Pharaohs believed to have existed is vague at best. These supposed female Pharaohs included Nitocris (6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), Sobeknefru (12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), Hatshepsut (18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), Twosret (19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty) and Cleopatra, (Ptolemaic Dynasty) who was a Greek, but ruled Egypt (Thompson, 2010). Though records and evidence of the rulership of the majority of these women are very murky, they were all queens of Egypt who might have ruled as regents. Hatshepsut nevertheless is the most important, most successful and the longest reigning female Pharaoh in Egyptian history. Queen Hatshepsut is reported to have ruled Egypt as a man. Queen Hatshepsut is said to have dressed like a male pharaoh, and even wore a beard so as to look like a complete pharaoh. Many of the paintings and statues of her portrayed her in the full pharaoh appearance and regalia.

In Ghana, many groups have used the dual gender system of ruling as well. Many Akan groups have used, and continue to use this type of ruling system. The ‘Ohene’ (chief) rules alongside the ‘*Ohemaa*’ (queen), who is usually the chief’s mother, aunt, sister, niece or granddaughter; and they have separate courts and councils. The queen plays a very vital role in the choosing and installing of a chief in communities that practice the matrilineal inheritance system. And in most

Akan communities, it is only the queen who has the power to admonish the chief in public (Aidoo, 1985). It is also true that some Akan queens are always the last to arrive at ritual gatherings and intentionally delay for a while. This however does not change the fact that the chief is the ultimate ruler, because the queen being a subsidiary comes to pay homage to the chief as soon as she arrives just as every other subordinate. There have nonetheless been instances where women have had to take up the position of the chief, especially when there were no male heirs or there were crises. The famous warrior queen Nana Yaa Asantewaa of Ejisu led an army of Asante men to what is known in history as the YaaAsantewaa war. The Ga-Dangme people also believe a certain Queen Dode Akaibi ruled the Ga kingdom sometime in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Dwaben Serwaa of Dwaben ruled as a female chief and was succeeded by her daughter Afrakomapanin, somewhere in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There was also Queen Dokua of Akyem (1817-1835) and Abrefi Kotɔ of Techiman in the BrongAhafo region who also ruled in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Odotei, 2006).

In some areas on the other hand, certain chieftaincies are reserved exclusively for women. The *Dindani –Tamboku* and *Samni* skins of the Mamprugu are strictly occupied by women. Amongst the people of Dagbon in the northern part of Ghana, 3 chieftaincy positions are reserved for the daughters of the paramount chief of Dagbon, known as the Ya Na. The chieftaincies are *Kukulogu*, *Kpatuya* and *Gundogu*. The *Gundogu* skin is said to be the highest in rank, and one can only be a *Gundogu* Na by rising through the ranks; first by occupying the *Kukulogu* skin, then the *Kpatuya* skin, and finally the *Gundogu* skin. Still in the north, the Nanumba people also have 3 chieftaincies with the title '*pona*', which means 'female chief'; they are the *Kpandiglipona*, *Kpalgapona* and the *Bimbilapona*. (Odotei, 2006)

Another very interesting variation is the kind of chieftaincies that alternate between men and women. A typical example is the Dagbon situation, where both men and women who are grandchildren of the Ya Na, can occupy the *Yimahego*, *Shilling Fiya* and *Sasagele* skins. These skins however are said to have been strictly female skins in the past. But according to Odotei (2006), the alternation came about as a means of pacifying men who could not access chieftaincy positions elsewhere.

Although there have been a number of female chiefs recorded in history, in my opinion, the phenomenon has not been treated as that which may last, or of significance enough to inform researchers and authors in the field of chieftaincy in making efforts to do something as simple as including feminine pronouns, to show the possibility of a chief being a female as well. One is therefore likely to see in many write ups on chieftaincy, ‘a chief and ‘his’ elders’, ‘a chief swears ‘his’ sacred oath in the presence of the entire community during ‘his’ installation’, ‘a chief can also be destooled if ‘he’ breaches or violates the social contract’; a typical example is Oseadeeyo Addo Dankwa III’s “The Institution of Chieftaincy: The Future” (2004). The impression then is that a chief is or must always be a man, due to the rarity of the joint usage of ‘he’ and ‘she’ when there is the need to use a pronoun.

Again, the fact that in almost all recorded documents and incidents of the female traditional ruler phenomenon, it has been stressed that most of these female rulers or chiefs only became chiefs in the absence of men; that is, they became chiefs only because there was no man to take charge, these female rulers are therefore often times not regarded as ‘full deserving’ chiefs but as ‘acting chiefs’, ‘step ins’, ‘rare alternatives’, for whom the traditional definitions and usage of the word ‘chief’ must not be altered. This should not always be the case, because there are

female chiefs like Nana Kofi Abuna who became chiefs in their own rights, and not as regents, regardless of the availability of male heirs.

## **2.2 THE INSTITUTION OF CHIEFTAINCY**

### **2.2.1 The colonial influence**

In Africa, people came together to form groups for the main reasons of security and warding off attacks from enemies. There was then the need of a leader to keep the sanctity and peace of the group (Dankwa III, 2004). The institution of chieftaincy for that reason was established.

Despite colonialism and all the influences and changes the chieftaincy institution has undergone, it is still a very important institution in Africa (Geschiere, 1993; Bob-Milliar 2009). Colonization limited the power of some chiefs. However, other chiefs enjoyed strong ethnic loyalty and the colonialists in Africa thought it wise to rule indirectly through such chiefs.

The indirect rule fortified the rule and power of some chiefs, and weakened that of others, but ended up sidelining the women by lowering their authority and excluding them from colonial politics (Busia, 1968; Odotei and Awedoba, 2006; Adjaye and Misawa, 2006; Keulder, 2010). The colonial governments did not even recognize the roles played by female traditional rulers, nor regarded their power and authority. This gradually led to their functional duties being curtailed, causing their positions in the traditional rulership setup to become merely ceremonial (Stoeltje, 2003).

Traditional leaders who opposed the colonialists and rejected indirect rule were forcefully dethroned or exiled. Nana Prempeh I and Nana YaaAsantewaa, both from the then Asante kingdom, are typical examples of the traditional leaders who were exiled. They were specifically

taken to the Seychelles Island (McCaskie, 2007). The stools and skins that became vacant because its occupants had been removed or exiled were mostly handed to non-eligible royals, who were ready to become auxiliaries to the colonialists. This often times erupted into conflicts between such royals and the subjects of those stools or skins (Aryee, 2007; McCaskie, 2000; Ray, 2003). During the colonial era, the chiefs acted under the Native Authorities Act and were therefore allowed to control all local matters including treasuries, land, jails and more. The chiefs had the power to fine or arrest subjects who broke any law, since they administered their own courts. But all that demonstration of power was under the supervision of the colonialists (Ray, 2003). Chiefs nevertheless had elders who acted as representatives of the people, and therefore had the power and the right to keep the chief in check. Therefore though in African history there was a rebellion as well, the rebellion was against the colonialist. So “when finally the colonialists were sacked, the chiefs were left unscathed. In post- independence Ghana, the scepter and crown remained intact” (Dankwa III, 2004).

Colonialism came with the introduction of new religious beliefs and thus facilitated the spread of religions like Christianity and Islam. Also the use of modern communication systems, formal education and migration interfered greatly with the cultural patterns of many communities. All these influences affected the chieftaincy institution and contributed to its evolution. Westernization weakened or destroyed women’s traditional autonomy and power without providing modern forms of autonomy or power in exchange (Van Allen, 1972).

After colonialism ended, many other attempts were also made by both democratic and undemocratic governments to do away with traditional leadership, but it still remains a well recognised institution in Africa (Geschiere, 1993; Bob Millar, 2003). The former leader of the South African Transkei people, Matanzima Kaiser, and Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah are known

leaders who have made such attempts (Adjaye and Misawa, 2006; Chisinga, 2006; Rathbone, 2000; Williams, 2010). It has nonetheless been often argued that Nkrumah's attempt was aimed at controlling the chieftaincy institution rather than eradicating it completely. It must be noted that Kwame Nkrumah was only able to limit the power of the chiefs by taking their local government council seats from them using his Local Government Act. But Kwame Nkrumah is also credited with the creation of the Regional House of Chiefs, from which many other institutions such as the National House of Chiefs and others have been birthed (Rathbone, 2000).

The chieftaincy institution in Ghana is now seen as a developmental partner by the state, governmental and non-governmental organizations (Gocking, 2005). Traditional leaders therefore now act as liaisons between the people and the state. They work together with the state to make decisions on behalf of their communities. (Ray, 2003)

### **2.2.2 Chieftaincy in contemporary Ghana**

Regardless of colonialism and its features that have significantly influenced chieftaincy, chiefs in Ghana are still very powerful and command a lot of respect from their subjects. These chiefs still enjoy local loyalty and have the ability to organize their people for activities that will benefit the whole community such as clean up exercises and communal labor for development projects and so on.

Chiefs have now become 'development ambassadors'. The main expectation of many community members from their chiefs is to undertake developmental projects that will benefit everyone. Otumfour Nana Osei Tutu's (the *Asantehene*) Education Fund, from which many young and brilliant but needy students of the Ashanti region have benefited from, and the Sanitation project of Oseadeeyo Amoatia Oforipanyin (the *Okyehene*), which seeks to promote

cleanliness in the quest to curb diseases caused by environmental factors, are a few of the very popular developmental projects undertaken by some contemporary chiefs of our time.

The expectation of development and the reliance on tradition authorities to provide such developments has resulted in the emergence of a phenomenon termed ‘development chiefs’. These chiefs occupy ‘*nkɔsoɔ*’ (development) stools and are not necessarily royals, but usually foreigners and indigenous non-royals who have or are capable of contributing to the community’s development.

Akrong (2006) also makes mention of a contemporary form of chieftaincy which he refers to as ‘absentee chiefs’. The ‘absentee chief’ describes chiefs who are selected based on their educational level and professional qualification but do not reside in the community. Such chiefs are expected to combine their professional careers with the chieftaincy position. It must be noted however that these chiefs are often royals.

### **2.2.3 Who is a Chief?**

In Ghana, chieftaincy is believed to be the most visible and prominent form of political leadership amongst the many ethnic groups found in the country (Akrong, 2006). The chieftaincy institution as well as the definition of who a chief is has gone through many phases in the places where it still exists. For many groups, the chief personifies their beliefs, fears, hopes and aspirations; and functions as a religious, administrative, legislative, cultural, military and judicial head (Abotchie, 2006; Wilks, 1975).

According to Dankwa III (2004), the paramount chief of Akuapem traditional area, a chief in the pre-colonial era was one who “in accordance with custom had been nominated, elected, enstooled or enskinned as a chief or, as the case may be, appointed and installed as such”. This

then meant that one could never become a chief if the customs and tradition of the community did not deem the person fit for the position. Chieftaincy therefore was very, if not solely, dependent on a community's custom: and the installation or removal of a chief from office could be done by members of that community only.

Lord Chalmers, who was a Chief Magistrate and a Judicial assessor of the Gold Coast, in 1872 described the chieftaincy institution in this manner, "Every village has its headman who exercises a sort of patriarchal rule over his few inhabitants; he again as well as his villagers, is subject to some chief, who has control over three, four, five or, more villages and this chief is again subject to the chief or king of a large district".

There however was a change when the colonial administration interfered with the institution of chieftaincy during the colonial era. A chief in the colonial era then became; "somebody who in accordance with custom, had been nominated, elected and installed as a chief or as the case may be, appointed and installed as such and who, for the time being was recognized by the government"(Dankwa III, 2004).

During this era, being recognized by the government was a very important clause. The sole right of community members to make and unmake a chief shifted to become a right of the government; since chiefs who although have been rejected by their community members could still rule if their recognition by the government had not been withdrawn. This interference by the government continued even after independence. After independence, there was just a slight change to who a chief was. The new definition however still kept the clause of being recognized by the government. The definition at that point in time became;

“A chief is an individual who in accordance with customary laws, has been nominated, elected, enstooled or enskinned and installed as such or as the case maybe, appointed and whose name for the time being, appears as a Chief in the register of chiefs. Provided that no person shall be deemed to be a chief for the purposes of the exercise by him of any function under this Act or under any other enactments, unless he has been recognized as such by the minister, by notice published in the local government Bulletin” (Dankwa III,2004).

Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1970), also defined a chief as “the administrative and judicial head of a given territorial division, vested often with final economic and legal control over land within his boundaries, everyone living within this boundary is his subject”. They believed a chief to be the executive head, legislator, supreme judge, the commander in chief of the army, and the chief priest.

Critically looking at these two definitions of a chief, and that of Lord Chalmers’ in comparison, the definite and continuous usage of the pronoun ‘he’, makes it noticeable that chieftaincy is a male affair. These definitions completely ruled out the possibility of a woman being a full time chief with all the authority and powers therein.

In 1971, a new Chieftaincy Act in Ghana was introduced. This Act changed the non-existence of the mention of a female presence in the chieftaincy institution and removed the government recognition clause as well. Ghana’s Chieftaincy Act 1971, Act 370 stated that;

“A chief means a person who has been validly nominated , elected, enstooled or enskinned and installed as a Chief or queenmother in accordance with requisite applicable customary law and usage, or as the case may be appointed and installed as such and whose name appears for the time being as a Chief in the register of chiefs”.

The 1979 constitution also made some changes to who a chief was and included the possibility of a woman ruling; although even that assertion was not so clear. It nonetheless incorporated the

existence of female leadership in the Ghanaian chieftaincy institution which had been previously left out in the many definitions that came before that time. The definition became;

“A chief is a person who hailing from the appropriate lineage or family and who has been validly nominated, elected, enstooled or enskinned and installed as a chief or as a queenmother, as the case may be appointed and installed as such in accordance with the requisite applicable customary law and usage” (Dankwa III, 2004).

Although these definitions make mention of the existence of women in traditional rulership, the definitions imply that the queenmother role is the equivalent of a chief, which is definitely not so. In most cases, communities have both a chief and a queenmother. The queenmothers represent the voice of the women in the communities they lead (Astanga, 2011, Fayorsey & Amolo, 2003; Obeng & Stoeltje, 2002; Struensee, 2004). Although there have been many instances where women have taken up the ultimate position of a chief, usually they still had queenmothers and were expected to behave and rule like men. Undoubtedly the office of queenmother cannot be done without or the position filled by a man. One may thus argue that the queenmother position is more fundamental than that of the chief since it allows less flexibility. It is quite obvious majority of female chiefs are only selected when there is no male heir available, or they rule only as regents till the next heir is ready to ascend the throne. However if there is a lack of a female heir to any queenmother position, a man cannot take up the position. It would be a very extraordinary happening to see a man take up the queenmother position and conduct himself like a woman. The patriarchal nature of our society will frown on such a transformation, because whilst it is prestigious for a woman to occupy a male position and be elevated to a higher status, it is rather emasculating for a man to occupy a position known to be for females. It is more like a fall from grace, a reduction in status and supremacy.

#### 2.2.4 Women in the Houses of Chiefs

In Ghana, the Houses of Chiefs were created to integrate the institution of chieftaincy or traditional authority into democratic governance. The houses include, The National House of Chiefs which consists of five representatives from every region who are often paramount chiefs, the Regional Houses of Chiefs for all the ten regions of Ghana, and the Traditional Councils present in all traditional areas, and usually presided over by a paramount chief (Akropong, 2006). Access and acceptance into these Houses of Chiefs however has not been the same for male and female traditional leaders. Although according to the revised Chieftaincy Act (2008), the Houses abide by laws sourced from customary practices and laws, patriarchy and its resultant gender inequality also exists in such Houses, meaning there is also male domination and female relegation in such institutions. The knowledge of customs like that of the Akans, allowing for women to take up male stools who are thus recognised as full time chiefs, in addition to the fact that many authors project the belief that the female stool (the queenmother position) is equal to or is the counterpart of the male stool, contradict the long struggle to get women into the Houses of Chiefs. Women representatives have been denied access into these houses. It is quite recently that Queenmothers were allowed into the Traditional Councils, but just as gendered power relations operate, the women's authority are limited, and they are not allowed to vote on matters but are rather more of observers (Struensee, 2004, 2005).

The Regional and National Houses of Chiefs have declined the idea of allowing women representatives on many occasions with the claim that the institution does not operate to serve 'factional interests' (Odotei, 2006; Struensee, 2004). Nonetheless, one may be tempted to believe their refusal is based on the gendered spaces males and females are expected to occupy in society. Therefore if queenmothers who usually know their place in society are being refused to

have representatives, it is not surprising to know that female chiefs have not even been considered, as this phenomenon is treated as though it does not exist. Because whilst the queenmothers feel a female chief is a chief and therefore does not belong to a gathering of females, the chiefs who are males also see the female chief as the ‘odd one out’, the ‘abnormality’ and thus does not belong to a male gathering because the female chief is a woman.

If the Houses were created to deliberate on and amend traditional practices that may be harmful to humanity or is against the laws of Ghana, the implication of not having female representatives then is that, such customs or issues that affect women, and all other feminine interests would not be accurately looked at or sufficiently dealt with.

### **2.3 PATRIARCHY**

Patriarchy as is used now, originally described the power of the man as the head of the household, who controls all affairs of the home, including women, junior males, children, servants and slaves, based on notions of superiority and inferiority, and is legitimized by differences in gender (Asiyanbola, 2005; Bhasin, 2006); or simply put, the rulership of the male head of a social unit (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). Although the patriarchal system as is understood now already existed, the upsurge of feminism during the 1960’s was what saw to the transformation of the word from its original meaning to refer to a system of male authority which oppresses women through its social, political and economic institutions (Asiyanbola, 2005).

There have been various theories and arguments from that of the radical feminists, to the Marxist feminists and ‘the Dual systems’, as to how the patriarchal system originated and functions (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004; Walby, 1990), but none has been accepted universally as authors have continued to criticize many such theories and develop their own concepts. Nonetheless, it is

generally accepted that patriarchy is manmade, and was created by historical processes. Patriarchy is a social construction, not a biological construction; it is embedded in the culture of people. Many cultures create a huge gap between men and women, and patriarchy leads to gender inequality and the subordination of women (Kambarami, 2006). The subordination and domination may take different forms in different settings but the fact still remains that men are in control. Pilcher & Whelehan (2004) explains patriarchy as the social system of masculine domination over women.

Sultana (2010) describes patriarchy as the “manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family, and the extension of male dominance over women in the society in general”.

Patriarchy again is said to be the social system which allows men to appropriate all social roles and keep women in subordinate positions (Charvet, 1982 in Kambarami, 2006; Sultana, 2010). It is a social system that differentiates people based on sex, which encourages the freedom of men to occupy advantageous positions whilst placing severe constrictions on the roles and activities of females.

Aina (1998) in Asiyanbola (2005) also defines patriarchy simply as a systematic organization of male supremacy and female subordination. Kambarami (2006) believes that the patriarchal nature of most societies is what has molded and maintained gender equality, and endorsed male domination and female subordination. To preserve male supremacy, the patriarchal system created masculine and feminine characteristics and encouraged men and women to think, act and desire things differently through socialization. Men therefore are expected to be the heads of households, to be competitive, brave, strong, dominating and so on, whilst women should be

housekeepers, caring, obedient, loving, submissive, nurturing etc. (Kambarami, 2006; Oduyoye, 2000; Sultana, 2010). According to Kambarami (2006), these cultural teachings which emphasize the belief that learning to cook and clean, and even in some traditions, be a good farmer or be very industrious in trade, are all for the benefit of one's future husband, tends to foster a 'dependence syndrome'. That is why most African women believe so much that they need men to survive, when it is men who often need women in the form of a mother or wife or sister to cook for them and clean up after them.

Customs, traditions and social roles which are prescriptive of what men and women are to do reinforce the patriarchal nature of society, and all agents of socialization like the family, educational institutions, religion, and others become main agents of the patriarchal system (Kambarami, 2006; Sultana, 2010).

Walby (1990) proposes that there are 2 types of patriarchy, the private patriarchy and the public patriarchy. The private patriarchy is the manipulation of women's labour usually by an individual patriarch in the household, while the public patriarchy takes a more collective form in public places such as employment and the state using segregation and subordination. She further adds on that the state condones to patriarchy by being more concerned with patriarchal interests in its policies.

Patriarchy is universal, and that is why it has survived for so long. The ideology is so powerful that "men are usually able to secure the apparent consent of the very women they oppress" (Ortner, 1974). That is, women take part in their own subordination. Most women accept 'their place' as subordinates in many aspects of life, and expect other women to do same by finding

ways of keeping their fellow women in check, or better still ostracizing them when they try to go against the system.

There are societies that are matrilineal, and where women are accorded veneration and respect. But then again there are no societies which violate the universality of patriarchy defined roles (Gneezy, Leonard & List, 2008). Patriarchal societies are male dominated, male identified and male centered, and thus encourages male control. So men hold power in all the key bodies of society, and women are most often deprived of access to such power. Even when women are able to find their way into such positions that are usually reserved for men, they are often faced with so much judgment and peoples' expectation for her to measure up to a man in the same position. The patriarchal system is characterized by power, dominance, hierarchy and competition. Hierarchical structures are found in all aspects of life, especially in traditional rulership. Everyone knows his or her rank and the kind of power that accompanies the rank in the hierarchy and therefore knows their place and role in the community. These hierarchical structures make obvious the fact that not all men are equal, or are all women too. It shows that even amongst men, there are men considered more masculine than others, men who are viewed as the epitome of maleness or masculinity. The same applies to women. The characteristics of the patriarchal system thus tend to show that there are not just one kind of masculinity or femininity, but that there are different kinds of masculinities and femininities. Masculinity and femininity are not biological categories but also a social construct subject to change, revision and multiple representations (Asiyanbola, 2005).

## 2.4 MASCULINITIES AND FEMININITIES

### 2.4.1 Masculinity and Male Dominance

According to Brittan (1989:3), masculinity is the essence of the ideology termed ‘masculinism’. Masculinism is said to naturalize and justify male domination. This ideology mirrors the patriarchal ideology, in the sense that they both accept the sexual division of labor, and approve the political and dominant role of men in public and private spheres, without taking into consideration the differences between men and women. Masculinity being the essence of the masculinism ideology, then means that masculinity can be analyzed by the characteristics of the male sex.

Lupton (2000) regards masculinity as a role which is socially performed, enacted, and reproduced through discourse. Connell (cited in Miescher, 2005) explains masculinity as “a configuration of practice within a system of gender relations”.

Bhasin (2004) in Adomako-Ampofo & Boateng (2007) also defines masculinity as the way men should behave, be treated, dress, appear, what they should succeed at, and what attitudes and qualities they should have.

Masculinity may also mean “the set of social practices and cultural representations associated with being a man”, it is a form of power relation both among men themselves and between men and women (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004).

Masculinity can also be explained as a collective gender identity and a natural attribute, socially constructed and fluid, hence taking different forms at different times and contexts, and influenced by factors like age, ethnicity, religion, social class and others (Adomako-Ampofo & Boateng, 2007).

As expressed earlier, there is more than one type of masculinity. ‘Masculinities’ thus reflect the diverse and complex contexts in which masculinity is performed (Adomako-Ampofo et al, 2009); it recognizes that the cultural representations of who is a man vary both historically and culturally in different societies and even groupings of men (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004).

According to Connell, (1995, 2000 as cited in Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004) in the western world, “masculinities occupy a higher ranking than femininity in the gender hierarchy”; and amongst the many types of masculinities that are structured by hierarchy and power, the ‘hegemonic’ masculinity is dominant. This is because the hegemonic masculinity dwells on ‘patriarchal claims’ (Miescher, 2005). He further goes on to say that it is not easy to figure out a dominant masculinity in most African societies since Africa has had many external influences, which complicates gender relations and norms. This is not to say there are no hegemonic masculinities in Africa; there are. These hegemonic masculinities are “symbolically displayed as an exemplar of manhood, around which power coalesces not just over women, but in relation to other men” as well (Adomako-Ampofo et al, 2009). Subordinate forms carry less privilege though there are resistances and challenges to the hegemonic masculinity. Hegemony and the notions of superiority consequently cause those in power to find ways of reinforcing their superior nature as a way of affirming their privilege and dominance over others.

It is generally believed that male domination is usually over women and children. Nonetheless, a man whose behavior does not conform to what the society expects as an appropriate masculinity, also experience the domination of those who fall under the hegemonic kind of masculinity. In Akan societies, such men are referred to as ‘*bemaa-basia*’ or ‘*Kojobesia*’ which means ‘man-woman’ (Adomako-Ampofo, 2007, Dankwa, 2012) because they tend to exhibit behaviors that are more female inclined.

In Dankwa's (2012) opinion, locally, masculinity needs to be understood as a social and cultural expression of maleness that is not necessarily tied to the male body. Traditional notions of manhood and masculinity are constructed, negotiated and thus can be challenged. "Masculinity often emerges as a metaphor for patronage and elderhood" (Dankwa 2012).

Here in Ghana, Akan societies have had a history of contested masculinity and femininity. Before colonialism, a man was one who was fearless, ready to defend his own and aggressive. Thus "owning a gun was the indicator of adult status" (Miescher, 2005). To emphasize such notions of masculinity and male dominance, folktales, proverbs and other oral literary forms were, and are still used. Proverbs such as, "*etuo to a esi barima bo*", translated as "if a gun goes off, it is the man who receives them on his chest"; "*deε barima pe na ɔnya*", translated as "what a man wants is what he gets" and "*se ɔbaa tɔ tuo a etwere barima danmu*", translated as "when a woman buys a gun, it will lean in a man's room", all buttress the idea of a man being in charge in all aspects of life (Oduyoye, 2000).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although most Akan communities practice the matrilineal form of inheritance and association, these Akan societies were hierarchical and dominated by patriarchy and gerontocracy. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, three notions of masculinity existed in most Akan societies. The 'adult masculinity' was attained by getting married. The 'senior masculinity' was reflected in the figure of an '*opanyin*' (elder), and the '*obrempong*' or 'big man', which was attained by one's wealth and generosity (Miescher, 2005, 2007). Becoming an 'adult man' was required before one could attain senior masculinity. The senior masculinity did not depend so much on age, but on reputation, comportment and other qualities. The status of 'big man; however rested on one's conspicuous display of wealth, generosity and the readiness to share

that wealth (Miescher, 2005; 2007). It is important to note that fatherhood was important in becoming an ‘adult man’ as well as an elder.

Fatherhood is a very significant characteristic of masculinity. Fatherhood gives control and authority to a man, and it is the “symbolic significance of a competent, heterosexual performative phallus”, hence the manifestation of a real man (Adomako-Ampofo et al, 2009). Fatherhood in that sense shows a link between masculinity and sexuality. Therefore in patriarchal societies, it is normal to see that male sexual needs are recognised but not those of women. Instead, male domination also covers female sexuality, allowing men to control women’s sexual behaviors and needs. Women are expected to be faithful or a virgin, but the sexual access to a plurality of women is a male right; and even in some cases a display of masculinity (Adomako-Ampofo et al, 2009; Aidoo, 1985).

In traditional politics, the patriarchal nature of Akan societies ensures that the highest position of the traditional hierarchy is occupied by men. Hence, though several Akan societies practice the matrilineal system of inheritance and succession, and therefore cherish female children since they expand the lineage, many royal families still feel pressured to have male heirs who will most probably ascend the throne so as not to lose the stool to another family. This is because chieftaincy is often alternated between families. This need for male children in such families makes visible the patriarchal nature of Akan societies since an all-female generation becomes disadvantaged. It is however important to also note that an all-male generation ends a lineage.

Again, it is true that it is a queenmother who chooses a chief, but it is a chief who also chooses a queenmother when the stool is vacant and does not even need to consult anyone on his choice. And though a queenmother may have certain liberties, her own court and so on, it is still the

chief, who ever so often is a man, who has the final say when it comes to traditional matters of the society. This then means that the queen is not the chief's equal as some authors make it seem.

In the courts of traditional rulers, majority of the elders are men, yet again putting men at the helm of affairs in such societies, since advice on decisions are often sought from them. This implies that there is bound to be a preference towards decisions that favor men the more, further continuing the patriarchal progression. To add on, male elders are allowed to speak freely and publicly, but this is not always the same with female elders in a male chief's court.

#### **2.4.2 Femininity and Female Subordination**

Patriarchy, being a system that is more concerned with male needs, leads to gender inequality and subordination of women. Radical feminists argue that culture imprisons women leading to their subordination because of the patriarchal nature of society (Kambarami, 2006). Norms that describe women as inferior to men, impose controls on them and are present everywhere.

Subordination may be said to be the situation in which women are forced to stay under the control of men (Sultana, 2010). Hornby (2003, in Sultana, 2010) defines subordination as "having less power or authority than someone else in a group or an organization".

Women are defined as dependent and subordinate to men, and are therefore socialized to acquire qualities such as submission, gentleness and striving to please men always. These qualities fit them into a relationship of dependence on men (McDowell & Pringle, 1992). Through these socialization processes which usually start from the family and then into other segments of society like politics, religion, education and economy, patriarchy is bred and imbibed in young women which encourages them to accept their place as subordinates.

Women are scientifically seen as a deviation from the original type and also divergent from a norm of behavior in the moral sense. These notions both depict ‘a fall from grace’ (Oyewumi, 1997); a perfect example is the creation story in the Holy Bible. The supposed creation of Eve (the first woman) from a rib of Adam (the first man created), after God had created every other thing in the world and realized Adam was still lonely, implies that Eve was just an afterthought, not originally part of the creation plan. It also suggests that Eve was created as just a companion or a sort of plaything created purposefully for Adam’s entertainment or an afterthought, not originally part of God’s creation plan. (The Holy Bible, New International Version, Genesis 1: 26-31, 2: 7: 25). This insinuation results in women being viewed as second class inhabitants of the world. As a consequence, in some churches, women occupy subordinate positions as well as in the family. Though some churches now allow female pastors or priests, others are still considering the possibility. The Church of Pentecost Ghana, which Nana attends, till date has no female pastors. The highest rank a woman can attain in the church’s politics is to become a deaconess. And so regardless of Nana’s status as Essiponhene, in church, she is as ordinary as any another woman, and is thus expected to be restrained and modest in her dealings with church related matters. Nonetheless, it is safe to say that, in our part of the world, most religious entities give some amount of respect to the culture of the people, therefore Nana may be allowed to do as is expected of her when cultural demands beckon. Much detail has been discussed on Pg.65. The Bible entreats women to be submissive in marriage since the man should be the ‘head’ of the family. Women who defy male authority are negatively described as against the ‘ideal woman’ or morally loose. Nana has no husband and fortunately does not have to deal with the complexities that would have arisen if she was married.

The behaviors of women that society considers as feminine are not particularly related to their biological nature. So called feminine norms and roles are prescribed by society. A woman's life is male centered and community oriented, and she achieves nothing if she fails in this respect (Emecheta, 1979). At almost every point in time, a woman is under the control of someone, a father, brother, husband, boss, a male religious leader and etc.

Popular notions of womanhood highlight the role of motherhood (Adomako-Ampofo, 2009). Hence women are socialized to believe that being "a source of nourishment and procreation is the essence of their being" (Oduyoye, 2000), and that it is motherhood that endows a woman with status and responsibility (Oduyoye, 2000; Oyewumi, 1997).

Women in African societies are thought to have low status (Wood, 1990). This was not always the case. Authors such as Asakitikpi (2010), Fallon (2008), Miescher (2005, 2007), Oyewumi (1997) and others maintain that women had some form of power before the onset of colonialism. Colonialism authorized men to be in control through education which gave them power, whilst women were excluded from everything, including traditional politics. Colonialists believed that politics was a man's concern and domain (Van Allen, 1972). This caused "women to be seen as weak and dependent, consequently leading to male dominance and female subordination" (Asakitikpi, 2010).

In Akan communities during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, although it was men who went to war, the women were not completely left out of warfare. The women provided fighting men with food, and they performed a special spiritual warfare ritual which involved prayer, partial nudity, inversion of gender roles, and the abuse of male cowards (Aidoo, 1985; Miescher, 2005). During such times, women made sure men acted as men, and became more powerful than the male cowards who

were viewed as worse than women. Though there were brave, strong women who could fight alongside the men, menstrual blood was believed to neutralize spiritual powers and weaken men, hence women being restricted from war. It was only in exceptional cases that post-menopausal women could occupy male stools and serve as military leaders because they had become ‘ritual men’ (Miescher, 2005). The ability of such women to attain positions reserved originally for men shows a kind of femininity termed “female masculinity”.

Again, each community had (and still has) a female stool (queenmother) which represented female traditional authority and each lineage had a female elder (obaapanyin) (Miescher, 2005, 2007). Nonetheless, women could only become chief in Akan societies if there were no male heirs in the royal lineage, it still holds in many Akan communities. This meant that, a woman was and still is merely the second choice, the alternative or substitute, which is opted for because that is what is available; and that is even in very rare cases. A woman who becomes a chief is not regarded as a woman anymore, but usually seen and treated as a man, because her status is raised and transformed into a man. Women therefore do not have the same status as men in Akan traditional politics. The queenmother’s position is never equivalent to the chief’s position; the male stool wields more power, and is obviously greater than the female stool. In the hierarchical structure of Akan traditional authority, the chief’s position is the highest in rank and is reserved for men. The queenmother (a position reserved for women) is also a subordinate of the chief, and can only take charge of the society’s affairs when there is no chief.

Although both men and women were allowed to become elders in Akan communities, they were expected to conduct themselves differently. Whilst a male elder is permitted to express himself openly, a female elder is expected to be more subtle about how she puts across her opinions and ideas. A female elder must influence issues from the background. Miescher (2007) goes on to

say that, historically, it is only in moments of crises when the female elder is consulted as the 'abrewa' (the wise old lady) that she supersedes the male elder.

Aidoo (1985), in her article 'Women in the History of Ghana' argues that it was "ritual disqualification or disabilities" rather than "physical inferiority" that prevented Asante women from participating in public activities and joining the army; menstruation being the major disabling feature. A menstruating woman was and still is a huge contamination as far as Akan rites and rituals are concerned. Amongst other groups in Africa like the Bunyoro of Uganda, a menstruating woman is rather seen as powerful and with the ability to protect a king. Therefore menstruating virgins sleep at the feet of the chief at all times (Beattie, 1959). Aidoo's claim is problematic in the sense that, menstruation is a biological or natural feature of all women which is physically experienced.

Patriarchy creates obstacles that are sometimes not so obvious yet very operative, for women in many aspects of life to keep them in subordinate positions. In traditional politics except in dire cases, women could not take up the highest position of traditional authority, which was the position of the chief, nor join the army because of so called "ritual disabilities or disqualifications"; of course there were some rare exceptions which were often as a result of the inavailability of men. Even in the modern world where women advance by their merit, these obstacles often prevent women from getting to the peak of whatever endeavor it may be. Whatever fancy term might be given to these limitations, it does not change the fact that the patriarchal nature of society that gives outright priority to men, tend to confine women to certain places and encourage norms that define women as inferior, therefore imposing controls on them.

“A masculine sense of self configured by a female body”, is the description Dankwa (2012) gives to a kind of femininity where a woman behaves in a more masculine manner. Such women are often referred to as ‘*obaa barima*’ (woman-man) or “*bemaa-kokonin*” which means ‘woman cock’ (Adomako-Ampofo, 2001, as cited in Adomako-Ampofo & Boateng, 2007). These women exhibit behaviors such as aggressiveness, strength and bravery, which are perceived as masculine, and are sometimes even physically built like a man.

Men speak of women as helpless and powerless, thus their subordinate position, yet in stories and private conversations, they describe women as “formidable figures who are responsible for the basic dilemmas of their existence” (Wood, 1990, Pg. 7). Though women may have some amount of power in traditional politics and may even be allowed to assume the highest position of a chief, the fact still remains that the patriarchal nature of our societies encourages gender inequality, and thus sees to a gendered difference of how a male chief and female chief will exercise authority and be treated.

## **2.5 MATRIARCHY**

Men never ruled completely alone anywhere. Amadiume (1998) argues that the “claim of patriarchy remains valid only if what women do in society and culture is denied and they are treated as invisible”. This argument however sprung out of her disapproval of the definition of matriarchy as the complete rule of women in a society. According to her, patriarchy and matriarchy are parts of an ideology; whilst the patriarchal system is oppressive to women, matriarchy emphasizes on motherliness and love.

Unlike patriarchy, matriarchy is not dominating. It is a social system that concentrates on the power of women as mothers and matrilineal leaders (Meyerowitz, 1986).

## 2.6 GENDER

In feminists discourse, sex was defined as the biological facts of male and female whilst gender was the social consequences that flowed from the biological facts. Gender then is a social construction (Oyewumi, 1997). Pilcher & Whelehan (2004) claim that differentiating between sex and gender was necessary to argue that biological differences had been exaggerated to maintain a patriarchal system of power.

Gender is a cultural mode of distinguishing between male and female entities (Hagan, 2006). Gender may also refer to recommended behaviors passed on through socialization for men or women and may often differ in different communities.

Gender is a social category imposed on bodies. It is an understanding about what it means to be male and female, and the relationship between men and women and their relative positions in society (Lindsay, 2005).

Connell (1995, 2000, as cited in Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004) also explains gender as “the end product of ongoing interpretations of and definitions placed upon the reproductive and sexual capacities of the human body”.

Gender does not center on women alone but rather on the inequalities between male and female, their relationship, and conceptions of femininity and masculinity. The gender differences however often show a weaker position for women in social, political and other spheres of life. And this may explain why most gender discourses focus on the women.

Every known society distinguishes between women and men, and manhood and womanhood are cultural facts. Though biological features are important in the distinction between men and women, that alone is not enough in the social differentiation between males and females (Hagan, 2006). Gender norms, roles, behaviors and attitudes influenced by cultural variations of different societies become a significant way of differentiating men and women.

The cross cultural use of data by feminist writers undermines the notion that different cultures may construct social categories differently (Oyewumi, 1997). Prior to colonialism, gender was not an 'organizing principle' in some African communities such as among the Yoruba people of Nigeria (Oyewumi, 1997). Biological sex did not always match up with the ideological gender, and women could take up roles typically classified as masculine, and thus be transformed into a man in terms of power and authority over others. In matrilineal Akan societies, men and women's gender positions change in the course of their lives. Old age also distorted the lines of gender politics in pre-colonial Africa. Post-menopausal women could occupy high offices since they had become 'ritual men' (Miescher, 2007). Women in some parts of Nigeria were also not prohibited to take up titles and chieftaincies.

Colonialism brought with it unbending gender ideologies which aided and supported the exclusion of women from the power hierarchy (Amadiume, 1998). This inflexible system meant that roles became strictly masculinized or feminized. Gender then became a social characteristic that determines access to resources (Robertson, 1984 as cited in Miescher, 2007). This inaccessibility of resources led to the easy marginalization of women which was fortified by formal education and Christianity.

After colonialism ended, western norms and values that had been instilled in people influenced the preexisting gender relations and distorted the fluidity of the gender relations by selling the patriarchal ‘male bread winner’ notion (Adomako-Ampofo & Boateng, 2007) which is still the accepted norm.

Gender cannot be separated from social behaviors and power relations (Apusigah, 2008). When a woman becomes chief, she assumes the authority of the stool and is expected to act in accordance to her position. It is therefore commonplace to see women in positions of power present themselves as ‘manly’ or ‘manlike’, exhibiting behaviors and attitudes that are classified as masculine. The wearing of male clothes becomes a major way of being recognized with the male symbols of power. Therefore female chiefs on male stools tend to identify themselves as males by dressing in male clothes for ceremonial purposes.

Gender roles determine how males and females should think, speak, dress and interact within the social context. These roles differ widely between cultures, classes, ages, and even during different periods in history and time. The roles tend to demarcate responsibilities between men and women in social relation and economic activities. And the public image of being male or female can be presented to others by adhering to these culture-specific and socially appropriate roles for individuals of a specific sex.

The chieftaincy position is a social role that usually defies the gender one inhabits. Therefore whether man or woman, once you take up that position, society expects you to act in accordance to how a chief must act in that particular community. Be it a non-masculine man, a very soft and feminine man, a very masculine man, once installed as a chief, there is a transformation and an expected ‘hegemonic male’ type of chiefly behavior in line with the role taken up.

Nonetheless, though gender transformations are inevitable especially for women who occupy male stools, and gender can be flexible and fluid enough to allow women to become men, most societies monitor, limit and often even control the extent to which such gendered transformations can take place (Amadiume, 1987).

This study hence seeks to ascertain the gendered differences of cultural elements that will characterize a woman's rule as a chief in a matrilineal Akan society, and how far such gender reversals are allowed to go.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

This study made use of many procedures in the procurement of the relevant data required for such a study. There is therefore the necessity to discuss these procedures and the reasons for using those particular procedures for this study. In this chapter, the research methodology used for this study will therefore be looked at.

#### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The qualitative research method was employed for this study. Qualitative research study involves the use and collection of a variety of empirical materials such as case studies, personal experiences, life stories, interviews, artifacts, photographs, cultural texts and productions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Macgilchrist & Hout, 2011; Khan, 2011; Nyame-Asiamah & Patel, 2009; Slater 2000; Thorne, 2000). Group discussions, observations, interviews, oral histories, storytelling, are all techniques used in the collection of data in qualitative research studies (Cohen & Court, 2003; Kumekpor, 2002).

The use of some of these ethnographic methods such as interviews provided the avenue for the researcher to get vital information from the case study subject Nana Kofi Abuna, and key respondents who are well informed about issues of chieftaincy in Essipon and the life of Nana Kofi Abuna V.

## **3.2 DATA COLLECTION**

In the collection of data for this study, the researcher made use of both the primary and secondary data collection methods. The primary sources included Nana Kofi Abuna, the council of elders, some family members, as well as some residents of Essipon. The secondary sources consisted of written related literature on the study.

### **3.3 DATA SOURCES**

This study engaged the use of both the primary and secondary sources of data.

#### **3.3.1 Primary Sources**

Using interviews, focus group discussions and observation, the researcher was able to obtain primary information from respondents.

##### **3.3.1.1 Interviews**

To get the best out of interviews, by allowing respondents the space and time to express themselves well enough to get the needed information, the interviewer must make use of semi structured or unstructured interviews (Greenhalg, Russell & Swinglehurst, 2005).

For this study, an in depth one-on one interview was conducted with Nana Kofi Abuna to elicit information from her on her personal life and experiences as a female chief. Nana Kofi Abuna's son was also interviewed as the son of Nana Kofi Abuna, and as a resident of Essipon. Again, the

chief linguist who works closely with Nana Kofi Abuna, and must be at all gatherings related to Nana Kofi Abuna's chieftaincy was also interviewed.

There was the need for the researcher to travel a number of times to the community where the case study is based and rules as the chief. Therefore, trips were made to Essipon to interview respondents from whom historical and oral data required for this study could be sourced. These trips paved way for the researcher to create rapport with the respondents, thereby making it possible for easier and free interactions.

After collecting these multiple stories, the researcher must then review and analyze them under common themes to suit his or her work (Berg, 2004; Kumekpor, 2002). This is because there is often no sequential presentation of facts during interviews.

A major limitation of the oral sources is that respondents were not too comfortable at first to give away the desired information to the researcher as they felt the researcher was foreign, since chieftaincy issues generally are often shrouded in secrecy. This problem was however managed by explaining the purpose of the study and making the respondents aware that there were no other ulterior motives to this research. Respondents then opened up more. However, this shortcoming could have been dealt with better if the researcher lived at, or came from the area.

### **3.3.1.2 Focus Group Discussions**

A key informant was used in the selection process of people for the focus group discussions. For all the groups, the key informant first pointed out the most popular person in that range who without any restrictions, was ready to be part of the discussion, and who likewise helped in selecting the other members, who were expected to also be ready to discuss issues at liberty, to form each group.

The researcher, after gathering group members and explaining to them the purpose of the study, acted as the facilitator for the discussions of all the groups. The researcher therefore acted as the leader of the discussions by introducing the topics and themes through questions asked. Nonetheless, the researcher did not interfere much with the discussions.

Each group was timed to discuss for an hour and fifteen minutes. Respondents were made aware the discussions would be recorded, and so the discussions were also recorded with a tape recorder. The discussions were done in the Twi and Fante languages to allow all respondents to freely contribute to the discussions. It is worth noting that some respondents who were very expressive in the all-male and all female groups became quite calmer, and gave straight forward answers when they put in the mixed group.

### **3.3.1.3 Observation**

The researcher also made use of the observation method. The observation was of Nana Kofi Abuna's interaction with people who came to her house, where she settles issues. Through this observation, the researcher was able to obtain information outside what respondents said about the topic of research.

### **3.3.2 Secondary Sources**

Written sources that were relevant and related to the topic were reviewed for this study. As it stands, the gender complexities associated with female traditional rulership in patriarchal societies has not been sufficiently researched into, more especially female chieftaincy. Nonetheless, written literature from books, articles and journals published and on the internet, linked to the topic was reviewed.

### 3.4 SAMPLING METHOD

For this study, the purposive sampling technique was employed. In choosing the case study for this research, the researcher used the critical case sampling method, a type of purposive sampling that is very useful in research where a single case can be decisive in explaining the phenomenon of interest or help in making logical generalizations; because a case study provides insight into an issue, by trying to understand the context of study and the possibility of generalization though not necessarily focused on the individual itself (White, Drew & Hay, 2009).

Taking into consideration the fact that the female chieftaincy phenomenon is not so common, the choice of Nana Kofi Abuna as the case study for this research was influenced first by the fact that Nana is not an acting chief or regent, but the actual chief of Essipon. Again, Nana Kofi Abuna is the longest serving female chief in a patriarchal society, and wields a considerable amount of power and authority.

In selecting respondents for this study, the homogenous sampling method was used. This sampling technique is also a type of the purposive sampling method which aims to achieve a homogenous sample. That is, samples that share similar characteristics or traits. Members of the focus groups therefore shared similar characteristics such as, an all-male group, an all-female group, an older generation, young person's group and a group of the elders. All respondents that were interviewed for this study also had close relationships with Nana Kofi Abuna.

### **3.4.1 Sample Size**

The purposive sampling method was used in the selection of respondents. An overall number of 27 respondents were chosen for this study, taking into consideration their ages and statuses. This number include Nana Kofi Abuna herself, Nana's son, Ebo Wood, and Nana's linguist, Okyeame Kwamena Biney, who were all interviewed one-on-one on issues pertaining to Nana Kofi Abuna's life, family, governance and cultural expectations, limitations and challenges.

Again, 5 focus groups consisting of 6 people each make up the rest of the overall number. This consists of 2 all-male groups and 2 all-female groups, allowing an equal number of female and male respondents; 12 males and 12 females. And the fifth focus group was a mixed group which was made up of 8 people; 2 people each from the other groups were chosen to form this group.

### **3.5 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

For this study, the researcher used in depth interviews, focus groups and observation, in getting the necessary and needed information on the female traditional rulership or the female chieftaincy phenomenon.

Prior to conducting the in depth interviews, the researcher arranged meetings with the key respondents and interacted with them so as to create a rapport first before proceeding onto anything else. This was done to encourage respondents to feel comfortable with the researcher. After which specific dates, venues and times were scheduled based on when the respondents were available and ready to be interviewed. The interviews were mostly conducted using the English language, although the Twi and Fante languages were also used regularly to explain and express certain things that could best be described and understood using a local language.

The in depth interviews allowed for the researcher to probe further into issues being talked over, and to seek clarity when not clear or sure of an answer or response given. Using the in depth interviews, the researcher was at liberty to structure and ask questions in the sequence she considered appropriate. Again, in using in depth interviews, the researcher was permitted to ask follow up questions, and interviewees also allowed the researcher to ask questions that were not originally a part of the interview guide. Follow-up interviews were also conducted to discuss further pertinent issues that were imprecise. All interviews were recorded with a tape recorder and later transcribed into written texts for better analysis.

The focus group discussions made room for the researcher to obtain unexpected information and to see different perspectives of certain matters which might not have been considered relevant for this study. A major disadvantage of using focus group discussions was that, there was limited time to encourage further probing into certain responses. This was because the discussions involved quite a number of people who all had to be given the opportunity to express themselves and agree or disagree just so as to get the needed information.

The researcher also used the observation method, where the researcher observed Nana Kofi Abuna in her house, which also doubles as her court. The observation was of Nana Kofi Abuna and her how she related to the people who came to her court and the people who worked in her court as well. This provided the researcher the chance to witness personally how Nana treated people and how she was treated by people, and to get the actual information on the behaviors, reactions and attitudes towards Nana Kofi Abuna in addition to what had been obtained from respondents.

### **3.5.1 Data Collection Instruments**

Data collection cannot be done without using instruments that suit the kind of data collection method a researcher opts to employ. For this study, the researcher made use of an interview guide as an instrument for sourcing information. The interview guide contained a set of questions about the topic of study which is ordered chronologically, in 6 sections, with each category dealing with a different theme. The themes included Nana Kofi Abuna's childhood, education and working career, Nana's family life, chieftaincy, cultural limitations, expectations and religion.

As an instrument, the interview guide allowed the researcher to be consistent in the questions to ask to get the necessary information from respondents. Nonetheless, it also gave the researcher the opportunity to include questions that were not originally a part of the guide, since certain information the respondents give can prompt further enquiring.

The researcher also used a voice recorder to record all interview sessions and focus group discussions, to complement note taking in an attempt not to leave out any information given. After which the data was transcribed into written texts to assist the researcher in analysis. A field note book, pens and pencils were also used in keeping records of the data obtained from respondents, especially during the observation on Nana Kofi Abuna's court.

### **3.5.2 Pre-testing the instruments**

Before the interview guide was finally administered, it was first pre-tested using some selected community members of Essipon to ascertain the suitability of the questions, and how the respondents understood the questions. The responses received, caused the researcher to see the

need to revise some sections of the interview guide for better understanding and clearness, and to also prevent asking sensitive questions which might be culturally prohibited; this therefore led to the modification and restating of some questions. For instance questions concerning how she dealt with rituals on days she was menstruating, and how she handled herself on days she was menstruating and had to sit in state or perform public duties, had to be completely taken out since such details were too personal and culturally inappropriate to divulge. Again, the focus group discussion question number fifteen had to be modified by the addition of adjectives to make it easier for respondents to answer the question after it was realized respondents were not so sure of the kind of answer expected (Pg.125). The researcher also included relevant questions which had been left out previously. It was thus the revised interview guide that was administered on the field. Similarly, the voice recorder that was to be used on the field was also pre-tested to authenticate its durability and dependability before it was finally used for this study.

### **3.6 ETHICS OF THE RESEARCH**

In conduction research of this nature, a researcher must pay attention to, and abide by the correct principles and ethics of research. A research that is based on chieftaincy, culture, and gender, requires much caution and considerations.

The issue of informed consent is a very vital ethical requirement in research. Therefore respondents were briefed about the nature of the study, the purpose, and the possible outcomes and benefits of the study. All respondents were duly informed that their permission was needed before any documentation, with a voice or video recorder, note book or camera, could be done. Respondents also had the choice to interrupt, stop or prevent any documentation process, if they wanted any particular information to be off the record. The consent of the respondents was also

always sought to include their names, or they were guaranteed of anonymity if any respondent felt the information being given could land them in some form of trouble.

Participation in the study was voluntary. The research subjects were thus free to opt out of the study if they wanted to, at any point in time. The researcher respected the dignity of all the respondents at all times.

Generally, in dealing with traditional authority figure heads like a chief, a researcher would be expected to perform certain customary requirements, like presenting a drink, preferably a bottle of ‘Schnapps’, even before being granted an audience. Nevertheless, Nana Kofi Abuna being a very religious and modern chief did not require of the researcher the performance of any such customs.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

Since this study made use of the qualitative research method, the researcher used the Thematic Analysis format to analyze the data collected, in attempting to prove the theory used. The data therefore collected was categorized into themes which had sub sections that identified and discussed various issues pertaining to the themes. These themes are important to the description of the phenomenon of a female chief, and helped answer the research questions of this study.

### **3.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

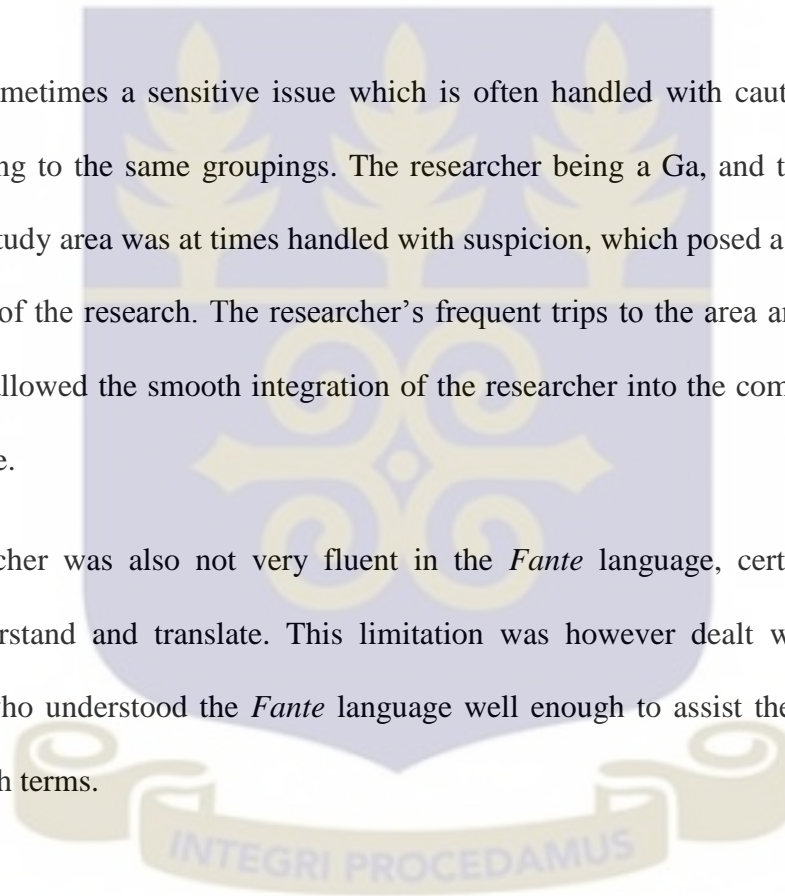
Considering this kind of research, the researcher felt it would have been necessary to interview at least another female chief, and also the paramount chief of the Sekondi traditional area, to source

information that could be very significant to this study. However, inaccessibility to these people and the duration of the study prevented this from happening.

The chieftaincy institution is traditionally shrouded in secrecy. As a result, details of certain information that would have been very significant to this study, especially on rites and rituals were not given to the researcher, because respondents did not either know, or were not at liberty to explain.

Chieftaincy is sometimes a sensitive issue which is often handled with caution even amongst people who belong to the same groupings. The researcher being a Ga, and therefore seen as a foreigner to the study area was at times handled with suspicion, which posed a threat to the study at the beginning of the research. The researcher's frequent trips to the area and the interactions with the people allowed the smooth integration of the researcher into the community to win the trust of the people.

Since the researcher was also not very fluent in the *Fante* language, certain terms became difficult to understand and translate. This limitation was however dealt with by consulting learned people who understood the *Fante* language well enough to assist the researcher in the translation of such terms.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 THE LIFE OF NANA KOFI ABUNA AS A FEMALE CHIEF

In this chapter, the main findings of relevant aspects of Nana Kofi Abuna's rule as a chief in Essipon will be looked at. This will consist of how Nana became a chief, the expectations of people, attitudes and reactions, and how gender roles and stereotypes influence or affect her rule.

### 4.1 BACKGROUND OF NANA KOFI ABUNA'S ASCENSION TO CHIEFTAINCY

#### 4.1.1 The History of Essipon (How Essipon Came Into Being)

According to Nana Kofi Abuna, the people of Essipon are originally from Techiman in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. Oral history has it that, the Esipong settlement was started by a man called Opanyin Nyuanyua who migrated with 5 other people; Araba Duku, Opanyin Sekum (Araba Duku's husband), Kofi Abuna (Araba Duku's son) and Esi their servant, from Techiman to the present day Essipon.

It is said that, the land then was a virgin land with thick forests surrounding it; therefore the main occupations at that time were farming and hunting.

Opanyin Sekum was a smart hunter who was sure to bring game home every time he went hunting. And Esi the servant was the one who always smoked the game he brought home. The smoke that emanated from the game Esi smoked everyday drew the attention of people to the place; most of who would comment "*Esi wo wusiu repun*", which when translated means "Esi, your smoke is rising".

This became a common saying and eventually became the name of the settlement. Contact with foreigners who could not speak the *Fante* language brought about many versions of the original name till the name finally became what it is known as today. Essipon is therefore a corrupted version of “*Esi wo wusiu repun*”.

#### **4.1.2 Mode of succession and the Kingmakers in Essipon Chieftaincy**

The people of Essipon like many other Akan groups practice the matrilineal form of inheritance and succession. Thus, one can only ascend the throne through the female line, that is one can only become chief or queen mother if he/she is from a royal lineage on his/her mother’s side.

Like every Akan community, there are clans, and the royal family belongs to one of these clans. In Essipon, the royal family belongs to the ‘*Aboradze*’ clan whose totem is the deer. The royal family name is ‘*Abrehyiamu Ebradze*’; ‘*Abrehyiamu*’ meaning ‘suffered to unite’. The story behind the name being that, whilst the first settlers of Essipon were migrating from Techiman, a group was left behind to bury one of them who had died while the rest continued the journey till they reached Essipon. So the two groups after being separated at that point suffered before they were reunited again.

The mode of succession is such that, the major positions of chief and queenmother is alternated between sisters of the royal lineage. This means that a chief will be chosen from one sister’s descendants while a queenmother is chosen from a different sister’s descendants. Hence it is common place to notice that the queenmother is always an aunt, niece or cousin (although many Akans still refer to female cousins as sisters, especially if it is the mothers that are related) of the chief.

In the making of a chief, Essipon custom deviates considerably from the common Akan tradition that allows the queen mother to be the ultimate decider of who becomes a chief. In Essipon, it is the 'Abusuapanyin', the head of the royal family, who chooses who becomes chief. In Nana's case, it may seem the previous Essipon chief named his heir by choosing her as regent. On the contrary, her selection as regent was not an autocratic decision, but all the royals who could ascend the throne, including her brothers were considered. She was only opted for because the men rejected the offer.

The king makers in Esipong nonetheless include the 'Abusuapanyin' (head of the royal family), queen mother and the '*Oman mpanyinfo*', that is, the elders, who are usually the leaders of the families. These people come together to deliberate, debate and finally agree on who the next chief shall be when the throne becomes vacant.

The hierarchical structure of the Esipong kingship follows this order: the chief is the highest in rank, followed by the queen mother, then the 'Abusuapanyin', the '*Oman mpanyinfo*' (elders of the town) and then the '*Oman Kyeame*' (the senior linguist).

#### **4.1.3 Destooling a chief in Essipon**

Unlike some Akan communities amongst who a queenmother can request for the destoolment of a chief and it may be considered, in almost all Akan communities in the Western region, but Essipon to be precise, it must take a collective agreement of all the kingmakers including the queenmother, the *Abusuapanyin* and elders to destool a chief.

#### 4.1.4 The past and present roles of women in chieftaincy

Like any other Akan community, women have always been involved in Essipon chieftaincy. Women in the past were either queenmothers or *mmaapanyin* (female elders), and were called in to help judge cases or decide who the next chief will be.

Nana Abuna however is of the view that Akan chieftaincy originally belongs to women. According to Nana, it is women who give birth to sons and place them on the stools. Nana further said that it was women who saved a lot of stools in the past from foreigners who sought to take the stools away. Nana said the women wrapped the stools in cloth and tied it on their buttocks as '*atofo*' (an old method of making a woman's buttocks look bigger by folding cloth and tying it to the buttocks), smuggled them past the foreigners, and kept the stools hidden till it was safe to bring them out. So if not for women, a lot of stools/ chieftaincies would not exist now.

The position of queenmother was and still is strictly reserved for women; but, the position of queenmother was the highest position of power women could occupy. In Essipon tradition too, the queenmother does not wield as much power as the queenmothers of other Akan groups such as the Ashantis; in the sense that they do not have the final say when it comes to who the next chief would be or the uninstalling of a chief.

Nana Abuna's enstoolment as the first female chief in the history of Essipon has brought a huge change to women and traditional leadership and has also redefined the roles and positions women are allowed to play or hold in the traditional politics of Essipon.

#### **4.1.5 Nana Kofi Abuna's Ascension**

Nana Kofi Abuna V was preceded by Nana Kofi Abuna IV, who was popularly known as Nana Gordon, and was Nana Abuna's uncle, that is, her mother's brother. He was enstooled in 1952 and reigned till he felt he was too old and unable to continue ruling in 1993, after he had been on the stool for 41 years. As custom permits a chief to delegate power when need be, Nana Kofi Abuna was therefore "placed on her uncle's laps" which meant she sat in his stead, and Nana Abuna therefore became a regent chief.

Nana Abuna's predecessor died 5 years after Nana Kofi Abuna was "placed on his laps". Although Nana Kofi Abuna has living brothers, 2 of them even older than her, and according to the Essipon tradition only male heirs ascended the throne, Nana Kofi Abuna in an interview at her house said, her first brother gave the excuse that he was a busy man since he is a doctor, and her second brother just rejected the position. However, Nana Kofi Abuna stressed as well that it was because her brothers were afraid. According to her, the fear stemmed from the fact that 11 of their mother's brothers had "been killed because of a 55 year old litigation" as at that time. Nana Abuna added on that currently, there's only one uncle left; who is 70 years old and has been living in Ivory Coast for many years, afraid to come home because of the same fear of being killed. However, because she was already a Christian by then, she was not afraid and therefore accepted the position after consulting her pastors and counselors, and praying seriously about it.

Nana Abuna was not just selected and installed. There was another contender for the stool. But that person was disqualified from becoming a chief because he was not genuinely a royal, though he was related to the royal family somehow. The kingmakers disqualified him to avert any future claims to the stool by his children, which might start another family litigation.

#### **4.1.6 Nana Kofi Abuna V's Enstoolment**

The chieftaincy institution in most communities requires the confinement of a chief in waiting for a period of time. During which he or she is schooled on the detailed history of the people, rites and rituals and their performances, the dos and don'ts and everything needed to be a successful chief. For a female chief, her case was not entirely different.

Before Nana Kofi Abuna V was enstooled as chief of Essipon, Nana was confined for seven days in the palace, where everything about the chieftaincy position had to be learnt. According to Nana, she was taught how to dress, that is, to put on a cloth like a male, how to talk and address people as a chief, the special greetings of an Essipon chief, sacred days and the rites performed on such days and so on.

However, from the information gathered from the elders and Nana, one can deduce that there was a slight bias as to what she was taught in confinement. Because Nana was still a menstruating woman as at when she was to be enstooled, Nana was not taught the detailed performance of certain rites and rituals because she was ritually unfit and could not partake in their performance whether she was the chief or not.

During Nana Abuna's enstoolment, unlike a male chief's enstoolment where the chief is placed shortly on the stool twice before finally being allowed to sit fully on the stool, Nana Kofi Abuna on the other hand was suspended on the stool three times and was not allowed to sit on the stool then. It is nonetheless believed that in the spiritual realm, Nana had been made to sit on the stool permanently till death.

## 4.2 DE-GENDERING AND RE-GENDERING

### 4.2.1 Stool Name

After the seven-day confinement, Nana was outdoored with a new identity and a new name. Most Akan chieftaincies often have more than one stool name, but in Essipon, there is only one stool name for the position, which is ‘Nana Kofi Abuna’, and every chief who ascends the throne must bear that name. Consequently, Nana being the fifth chief of Essipon, she automatically became Nana Kofi Abuna V and was gazetted and registered as such.

Akan names are often gender specific and immediately give up one’s sex; and as said earlier, Akan chieftaincy comes with specific stool names for chiefs, which are often male names. One will be quick to assume the bearer of the name Nana Kofi Abuna is a man, since it is a very typical male name; Kofi, being the Akan male name for someone born on Friday.

Once a chief is enstooled, his or her real name practically disappears. So for female chiefs such as Nana Abuna, her stool name has erased her female identity in addition to her having to behave like a man.

### 4.2.2 Regalia

During socialization, the appropriate way of dressing for men and women is often emphasized. There are defined male clothes and female clothes and even accessories, hair styles and haircuts, and people are expected to dress to suit the gender they inhabit. However, the reality of gender transformations sometimes gives way for cross dressing. In the literature review, it was established that women traditional leaders who occupy preferably male positions often tend to dress as men to reinforce their elevation into a male status by virtue of their position. Being dressed in clothes, accessories and so on, which is viewed as appropriate for only a particular sex

then becomes one of the very obvious signs of a gender transformation. For chiefs like Nana Abuna, it is a requirement to be portrayed as a man.

The Essipon stool is a male stool and before Nana Kofi Abuna's installation, it was always occupied by males. As a female chief on a male stool, though she is expected to dress as a male whilst performing chiefly duties, her female body requires that there must be some form of modification. So despite the fact that she puts on cloth like a man, she does not just wear the traditional '*djokoto*' shorts the men usually wear, but instead ties an under cloth like the women do when they put on cloth in addition to her '*Chawchaw*' (traditional male slippers). Nana Abuna may also sometimes be seen in a male smock at functions she is invited to or TV interviews. It is also quite noticeable that Nana does not wear earrings and always has a low cut hair.

When performing personal or casual duties however, Nana Abuna dresses normally as a woman in either kaba and slit or a dress. But Nana Abuna made it very clear that she is a woman and therefore in her own words said;

“I'm a woman, so as for my face, hair and fingers, I normally do it in a woman's style”.

#### **4.2.3 Royal symbols**

Every chief has a symbol of authority that shows his or her position in society and the power that position wields. As an Essipon chief, Nana Abuna was handed the symbol of authority which is a staff bearing the royal clan totem which is a deer.

According to Nana, the regalia she uses as chief were not handed down to her by previous chiefs in addition to the stool. But most regalia including headpieces, caps, the replica red and black war smock used by Nana Yaa Asantewaa, and traditional slippers, are all made in the Ashanti

region of Ghana where there are special shops that most royalty like Nana Abuna get their regalia from.

#### **4.2.4 Female Husband of Stool Wives?**

Nana Abuna believes that the inability of male chiefs to cook and do chores for themselves and the sexual insatiability of men is what made them want to acquire stool wives. As a female chief on a male stool, one may then expect that she has stool wives and thus is a female husband, but on the contrary, Nana Abuna's Christian beliefs makes her not interested in this aspect of the position.

Nana Abuna laughed at the thought of having stool wives when asked about it and replied, "Like I'll have a stool husband". Nana went on to say that since she is a woman, it would rather be appropriate to have a stool husband than stool wives, and asked of what she is going to do with wives or even how she was going to perform 'bedroom duties'. Concerning this issue, Nana Abuna finally said that, "Because I'm a Christian, I'm not interested. From day one I told them".

It is obvious Nana has personal reservations about a woman marrying a fellow woman all in the name of chieftaincy and tradition, but believes in each person having one partner as the Christians encourage. Nana Abuna therefore did not even use 'stool husbands' which would have meant more than one man, but rather used 'stool husband' when she was joking about having a stool partner.

#### **4.2.5 Religion**

The proliferation of Pentecostalism especially in the 1980's saw the emergence of a new set of chiefs, patterned in the authority of Jesus Christ and not ancestors (Tweneboah, 2012). Nana

Kofi Abuna can be said to be one of such chiefs. Nana is a staunch Christian, and a member of the Pentecostal Church of Ghana. Nana occasionally even quotes the Bible to buttress her points in conversations.

At church, though Nana Abuna is still recognised as the chief of Essipon, Nana is a deaconess, and deaconesses sit at a different place away from the deacons. So despite Nana's gender transformation into a man because of the chieftaincy position, in church Nana's role as a deaconess requires she sits with the deaconesses. Again, per the church's rules, as a deaconess, Nana has to cover her hair in the presence of God and thus ties a headscarf to church. Deaconess Nana Kofi Abuna V, in church, takes up a complicated self, exhibiting a multiplicity of gender identities.

Nana Abuna's unwavering Christian values have enabled her to convert many people in Essipon, especially the people associated to the stool into Christianity since she was installed. Amongst the respondents, when asked to describe Nana, 'God-fearing' was always one of the first descriptions given to her. Okyeame Kwamena Biney (Nana Abuna's linguist) added that, "When Nana was enstooled, the community members were mostly idol worshippers. But now because of Nana, there are about 15 churches in this small Essipon town,"

Nana Abuna is currently the president of the Christian Kings and Queens Association of Ghana, and was the only woman part of a seven-member committee that organized the 'Mission to the Palace' outreach for kings and queenmothers of Ghana at the Pentecost Convention Centre at Gomoa Fete in the Central region of Ghana.

Nana's quest to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ has led to Nana becoming a partner with Christ Embassy to buy from them 500 copies of Rhapsodies of Realities (a daily devotional book) and

distribute it to people around. Nana Abuna is also a partner of their Healing School and Inner City, which aims at catering for needy children.

#### **4.2.6 Nana Kofi Abuna's personality**

Though Nana Kofi Abuna is very pretty and has very visible womanly features especially when dressed as a woman, in male clothes and her very low cut hair, Nana Abuna's towering and stout physique gives her a male personality and look that is sure to confuse many people till she speaks.

Nana Kofi Abuna has a feminine voice that usually gives her up as a woman. Nonetheless, Nana Abuna's firmness and confidence in her speech exudes a masculine sense of self. Although still in touch with her feminine side, Nana Abuna is also very masculine as well; it is obvious Nana Abuna's many years as a chief on a male stool has transformed her immensely. Okyeame Kwamena Biney, who is Nana's linguist mentioned in a discussion that;

“Nana has actually become a man. She does her things as a man”.

From this statement, Okyeame meant that Nana Kofi Abuna has been quite influenced by her position, and as such leans more towards masculine traits, attitudes, way of dressing, and doing things.

#### **4.2.7 Gender stereotypes**

Women's gender roles and leadership roles are usually not consistent in the qualities that they lay emphasis on (Bilimoria & Piderit, 2007). When respondents were asked to describe Nana Kofi Abuna, it was evident that Nana Abuna embodies traits of both male and female stereotypes of behaviour. Whilst Nana is described as compassionate, motherly, caring, patient, generous,

humble, friendly and enduring, all female stereotypical traits, Nana is at the same time described as very brave, confident, forceful, straightforward and very firm, which are all regarded as male character traits.

Nana Abuna's son commented on Nana's enduring nature when he said;

“Nana solves all of her problems with prayer. Things that even we men might give up on, she endures and strives to get solutions”.

He however also added that;

“Nana is very firm and will always insist on her stances, and that is sometimes one of the problems the other chiefs have with her. Because she is a woman they expect her to be soft and compromising. But she is a chief”.

Whilst most of Nana Abuna's 'feminine traits' are lauded by many, especially her church or religious acquaintances, some women and men she has helped in one way or another and some of the youth of Essipon, Nana Abuna's 'masculine traits' do not receive the same encouragement. Although the elders and kingmakers seemed to be in favour of those male traits because they are expected of a chief, whether male or female, Nana has been branded negatively of being 'too difficult', 'uncompromising' 'too knowing' and even 'disrespectful' as a result of her exhibition of such traits by some royals who are prevented from selling unauthorized stool lands, business owners who try to exploit the Essipon people and even some male chiefs in neighbouring towns. This may be as a result of the fact that the norms associated with male and female gender roles allow people to tolerate and even sometimes expect harsh and controlling behaviors from men but sanction women for such behavior (Bilimoria & Piderit, 2007). This

account also buttresses Eagly's (1987) assertion that female leaders are judged more harshly than their male counterparts even when the women are affective leaders.

### **4.3 CHIEFLY EXPECTATIONS**

#### **4.3.1 Nana Abuna as an agent of development**

In modern times, chiefs have become ambassadors of development, and most rural communities still rely on traditional authorities for development. In discussing the expectations of a chief in Essipon, most respondents were quick to name development as the most important. One male respondent said;

“Chieftaincy is not like before. Those times, the people rather brought food and gifts to the chief and were ever ready to even do chores for the stool. But now though people still accept there is a chief, everyone minds his or her business, trying to find their daily bread”.

Ebo Wood, who is Nana Abuna's first son, in an interview maintained that chiefs these days must be entrepreneurs, and also went on to add that;

“Chiefs must now have their own source of income to be able to undertake developmental projects on their own for the people aside money from the sale of lands; because most organisations these days expect the community to co-fund projects and not just provide labour “.

In this regard, Nana Abuna is an entrepreneur who has been able to finance personal projects for her people. Though Nana is a secretary by profession, she does not practice anymore because according to her, the chieftaincy position prohibits working under anyone and being ordered around.

Nana Kofi Abuna is a business woman who has a Coca-Cola distributing company called Katedge Wood Industries, which is the major distributor of Coca-Cola products in the Shama area of the Western region of Ghana. Nana also owns a sachet water producing company, with the brand name 'Smooth'. In addition, Nana possesses Cassava farms from where her 'gari' processing team gets their raw material. The gari is distributed to Sekondi College in Essipon and Holy Child Senior High School in the Central region.

Nana Abuna also runs a food joint in front of her house, where Ga kenkey is sold. Correspondingly, Nana is a caterer, and so she bakes and cooks, of course with some of her employees especially for family issues such as funerals and marriages. According to Nana, she was well trained as a woman by her grandmother and is therefore a great cook.

Again, Nana Abuna has lands that she leases to companies who work with heavy duty equipment and machines to keep those machines on those lands. Nana also has buildings in Essipon that she rents to some residents of Essipon.

Some indigenes and residents of Essipon earn their livelihood through these businesses. Nana has employed 3 women who prepare and sell the kenkey, 4 men who run the sachet water business, 2 men and a woman who manage the farms, 4 men who do the distribution of the Coca-Cola products, and a boy who acts as the domestic help in Nana's house.

Aside creating a source of employment for people, it is through these businesses that Nana Abuna singlehandedly built a 3 classroom block for a nursery and kindergarten 1 and 2 for the community which is named after Nana herself. Nana also provides school uniforms, bags, and so on to needy basic school students, and has even purchased a sewing machine and other sewing kits for a seamstress who mends the torn uniforms of Essipon children for free.

### 4.3.2 Resource Management

Before the advent of colonialism, in many African societies, chiefs were the sole custodians of land and its resources such as water, minerals, forests and agricultural produce. The exploitation of land then, came with strict rules and severe punishments for offenders (Busia, 1954 as cited in Alhassan, 2006). Colonialism came with the curtailing of the political powers of chiefs in directing economic development including the management of natural resources and land (Alhassan, 2006).

In Essipon, stones may be said to be the only natural resource available in addition to the sea. The stones quarried in Essipon are mainly used for the Sea Defense projects and Harbour expansion all in the Western region. The quarries are privately owned, and according to Nana, they do not pay gratuities to the community but claims they pay directly to the government. This has resulted in Nana preventing some of the quarries from operating, and taking some to court.

When it comes to stool and family lands, Nana Abuna does not believe in selling land, but leasing it for a period of time, and therefore maintaining them for generations to come. Nana Abuna does not do the leasing of land alone, but does it in consultation with the elders and Abusuapanyin.

According to Nana Abuna and the elders of Essipon, the constitution of Ghana requires that money sourced from stool land sales must be divided into 3 equal parts; one part for community development, the second part for the family, and the third part for the stool. The family's share is supposedly used to solve family issues. The portion for the stool is used to maintain the stool and to pay lawyers handling the various court cases concerning the community.

The part for community development is what finances Nana Kofi Abuna's Education fund, established in 2003, which was originally meant for basic schools, but after free basic education came, it was transferred to the Senior High School (SHS) students. And since 2006, the fund has enrolled over 30 students into various senior high schools. It is also from the community's portion that the money for a partnership deal with USAID to co-fund the building of a 3 classroom block for classes 4, 5 and 6 of the Essipon L/A primary school was got from. The community is said to have provided GH¢6500 whilst USAID gave GH¢6000 for that project. In addition, the community has also purchased chairs and tents to be used for funerals and other occasions.

#### **4.3.3 Accountability**

Nana does not lease stool lands without the knowledge of the elders and the Abusuapanyin and often discusses with them how the monies are to be used, and therefore hardly has disagreements with them over land sale issues.

Nana believes that because she holds the land in trust for the people, there is the need for transparency. Nana Abuna therefore regularly organizes open forums in the community to discuss in details how the money meant for community development is used.

#### **4.3.4 Education**

Education is a priority for Nana Abuna, and so puts a lot of effort into promoting education in Essipon. Nana believes that education is something no one can take from you once you acquire it, and for the girl-child, it becomes a major source of empowerment that can bridge the gender inequality gap.

Nana's first step in the promotion of education was the creation of an Education fund for her people. This fund finances the enrolment of needy students into the senior high schools till they complete school.

When Nana was enstooled, the only school in Essipon was seriously dilapidated and did not have a junior high school (JHS). Hence after completing class 6, students had to continue their education at schools in neighbouring towns. Nana Abuna in the quest to save the situation spearheaded the partnership deal to co-fund a new 3-classroom block for the only public school in Essipon, the Essipon L/A primary school.

According to the elders, these efforts was what informed the Ghana Education Service to come to the aid of the school and also built another 3-classroom block for JHS 1, 2 and 3, to start a junior high school to further encourage those who could not travel to the neighbouring towns, like the disabled, to also have access to JHS education..

Again, in an attempt to keep children in school, Nana provides uniforms, bags and even shoes sometimes, for children whose parents cannot afford them. Nana even mentioned that she has gone to the extent of even providing toothbrushes for some of the children because the teachers complained of unbearable mouth odour.

#### **4.3.5 Infrastructural development**

Nana Abuna's 16 year rule as chief of Essipon has seen quite a rise in infrastructure in the community. The most prominent being the multi-sport complex known as the Essipon stadium or the Sekondi Takoradi stadium, built in 2008. According to Nana Abuna the stadium occupies 96.07 acres of Essipon land, and was built by the government for the 2008 Cup of Nations tournament, but the community till now has not received any compensation or benefit which is

usually given when the government uses a community's land. And Nana Abuna has since been following up on the authorities in charge of such benefits till now. Nonetheless, the stadium is used often for inter-schools sports programs.

Essipon can also boast of a 20-seater water-closet public toilet, which was also built in 2008 by Goldfields Ghana, a refuse container, and a Water Storage tank that serves the community during water crisis.

The Regimanuel Grey estate developing company also has a 14-acre estate in Essipon, although the company was given 42 acres of land in 1993 in Essipon.

There used to be a juvenile delinquent home which is not in use anymore and the buildings are not in a good shape, but currently being used by the Department of Social Welfare. The site has however been proposed for the building of a district hospital.

#### **4.3.6 Health and Sanitation**

Currently, there is just one private clinic in Essipon, known as 'Madamfo Clinic', built on a land Nana gave specially for that purpose. To uphold a clean environment, Nana has made it compulsory for all residents of Essipon to attend a communal labour that is organized once every month, which Nana herself takes active part; failure to attend attracts a fine.

The community also has a refuse container that is emptied every 2 weeks. The garbage is sometimes burnt when the container gets too full before the time for emptying. Nana has also made a strict rule against defecating on the beach which can lead to the arrest of offenders.

#### **4.3.7 Women in Essipon**

Being a woman herself, Nana knows the plight of women and is therefore very concerned about their affairs. As a result, Nana Abuna has a credit scheme partnership with the Western Rural Bank which allows women to access loans for their trading activities.

Nana is described by a lot of the women in Essipon as very kind and generous. When it comes to helping people, Nana Abuna pays a lot more attention to mothers and the needs of women. Women form the majority of people who go to Nana for help; from Essipon and other communities. These women usually come for financial assistance for their children's education.

#### **4.3.8 Nana Abuna and the youth in Essipon**

Nana Abuna's greatest achievement for the youth in Essipon is the education she has given to many. The Education fund has put many youth in Essipon through school, both male and female. In addition, when attending certain workshops, or in situations where she cannot go, Nana selects some intelligent members of the youth from a youth club known as Essiponman Youth Club, to go with her or attend in her place, so they can teach their fellow youth what they learn from there.

Nana Abuna has also formed a male football club which recently won an inter-towns football competition among football clubs from 15 towns. According to Nana, she sees this as an extra curricula activity to keep the youth healthy and vibrant; and also an avenue through which she can encourage the youth to learn.

#### **4.3.9 Cases brought to Nana Abuna's court**

Though the community has a nicely built palace, which is said to have been renovated by Nana Abuna some years back, because Nana does not live there, cases are brought to Nana Abuna's private residence in Essipon. This is so because Nana Abuna's house is larger in size than the palace, and can house a larger number of people at a time for case settlement than the palace, again, the palace is viewed as sacred and some of the cases are not fit to be dealt with there. However, there are also special cases that are sent to the palace.

Marriage issues top the kind of cases brought to Nana's court, followed by quarrels. Another quite popular case type is parental neglect. Such cases sometimes require the presence of Social Welfare representatives in resolving them. Nana made it clear that as for rape cases they must definitely go to the police. Other cases include disagreements over the burial of a dead person in Essipon and refusal to attend the monthly communal labour. Some of these cases, in most Akan societies are usually dealt with by the queenmother, but in Nana Abuna's case, her sex seem to have influenced the kind of cases people take to her court.

Nana Abuna is trained as a paralegal in Alternate Dispute Resolution, and has a certificate to show for it. But Nana does not sit on cases alone. In addition to the elders, Nana has also formed a 4-member all male group who help in settling cases whether she is present or not. These men were chosen because they are always available when needed. Nana does not charge money because she feels her people do not have money. But some people come to show appreciation later for settling their cases amicably by presenting bottles or crates of drinks and other gifts.

The role of the chief as a judge is based on the parental duty of ensuring peace and harmony in the family. The chief is thus expected to be compassionate and fair to everyone (Akrong, 2006).

Nana Abuna narrated a case of a young girl who insulted an old woman, and when the case was brought to her, the young girl was still proving stubborn and being rude. So the old woman threatened never to forgive the girl. Then Nana Abuna said that;

“But me being a mother, I begged the old woman with my stool to let it go and not say anything that will endanger the young girl’s life in future, because I know what such declarations might cause in the girl’s life”.

The old woman agreed to let it go, and Nana called in the girl’s mother and family together with the girl to apologise to the old woman.

There are times too that Nana has to send her linguist with a letter to a law court to withdraw certain cases from the law court to be settled in her court if the parties involved come to her with that request. For such cases, Nana has to send back the results of proceedings back to the law court.

Cases are even sometimes brought by people from other communities. But Nana said she is very careful about such cases, and often interrogates them thoroughly as to why they did not settle the cases in their communities before handling such cases.

A case that Nana’s court is unable to settle usually ends up in a law court, and such cases sometimes require her presence in the law court. So Nana therefore makes sure she records all proceedings of the cases brought to her court by writing.

#### **4.3.10 Nana Abuna’s court cases**

Nana Abuna has many pending court cases on behalf of the Essipon community. They include a court case against the GDC quarry in Essipon. According to Nana, she has already ceased 2

quarries from operating and has sent the GDC quarry to court because when they blast the rocks, they destroy peoples' homes and there is dust all over which is harmful to residents of the community. In addition to that, they do not pay any benefits to the town. The quarries claim the stones belong to the government and so they pay gratuities to the government instead.

In discussing land invasion cases, Nana was quite upset when she said;

“As a chief, you just do not sit down for someone to take away your lands. Everyone knows where his boundaries are. Because I am a woman they think I will take it lightly”.

Nana at present has land invasion cases in courts against families from Ntwaaban, a town under the Shama traditional area, Nyasia and Sofokrom, all being neighbouring towns of Essipon.

## **4.4 CULTURAL LIMITATIONS**

### **4.4.1 Traditional Taboos**

Menstruation is a biological phenomenon which has been tabooed since time immemorial. It is one of the most common taboos on chieftaincy in Africa, and it is somewhat universal as well (Brempong, 2006). Maame Araba Addy, an Essipon resident, was of the view that historically, women were originally the traditional rulers, but it was the menstrual limitation in the performance of certain chiefly duties that caused women to be stripped of that power.

As at the time of Nana Abuna's enstoolment, she was still a menstruating woman and therefore was suspended on the stool three times, but was not allowed to sit on the stool even during the enstoolment rites. Nana is now post-menopausal and can freely sit on the stool. Nana also made mention of the fact that, during a male chief's enstoolment, it is also a taboo for his penis or

testicles to touch the stool; hence they are tied in a particular manner to prevent them from touching the stool.

Brempong (2006) goes on to add that “regardless of a menstruating woman’s religious affiliation, she would never think of entering a shrine or ancestral stool room”. The same can be said about Nana. According to Nana, during the time she was still a menstruating woman, she did not even try or think of partaking in rites associated with the stool; it was the elders who took care of it. But Nana Abuna can now partake fully in any rite associated with her position.

Most Akan communities have sacred days on which specific observations or rituals must be performed by chiefs and other royals. The meaning and character of each day in the traditional calendar is very important for every Akan chief because it helps in appropriately fixing days for festivals and other ritual events, and also protects them from breaking important taboos which might hinder their spiritual and social progress (Brempong, 2006). In the traditional calendar of the Sekondi paramountcy, under which Essipon falls, the following sacred days exist;

- *Adae Benada*
- *Adae Kwesida*
- *Edim Fida*
- *Adae Yawda*
- *Adae Memenda*

There are also festival days which include;

1. *Igyapa* festival
2. *Assafua* festival
3. *Ketei*

4. *Abisa Kyen*
5. *Bombae*
6. *Ekyen Paitoo*
7. *Saman Kwanmu*
8. *Yam*
9. *Kundum Apatwa*
10. *Kundum Closing*
11. *Edim Kese*
12. *Kyen Dadzie*

Some of these festivals usually go on for a week. According to Nana and the elders, each of these days and occasions come with the performance of rituals, however because the paramount chief of Sekondi has not been replaced after his demise, since Essipon is under the Sekondi paramountcy, such rituals have been halted and rarely done quietly.

Also in Essipon, it is a taboo to go to the farm on Thursday because it is the earth goddess' sacred day. It is also prohibited to go to sea on Tuesdays; especially the fishermen must not go fishing. But Nana added that because of her Christian beliefs, most taboos are not enforced anymore because she does not believe in them.

#### **4.4.2 Traditional rites and rituals**

The institution of chieftaincy is sacred. This then requires that certain rituals and rites are performed to keep the institution revered (Dankwa III, 2004). The rites and rituals however differ among communities, but in all communities, there are rituals reserved to be done only by chiefs. Women are similarly banned from partaking in the performance of some rituals when it comes to

chieftaincy (Brempong, 2006). Libation pouring in Essipon is done by the elders of the chief, usually the Abusuapanyin, but not the chief.

When fresh yam is ready to be harvested, which marks the beginning of the Kundum festival, celebrated in the first week of August; yams are mashed and divided into two parts in the royal palace. One part is mixed with palm oil while the other part is left white, boiled eggs are placed on both portions. All royals and members of the traditional council must be present. Libation is poured and both the parts are sprinkled to signify the abundance of food. Nana is always present for this rite, but Nana normally delegates one of the elders to do the sprinkling. Although Nana does not believe in many of such rites, according to her, “such a rite is not demonic or a kind of idol worshiping but it is tradition”.

Stool cleansing rituals exist in almost all Akan communities. According to Nana Abuna, when it comes to rituals concerning stool cleansing, “Essipon chieftaincy is not as complicated as that of the Ashantis”. In the first place, stool cleansing is not done in Essipon as regularly as it is done in other Akan communities; Nana’s 16-year rule has seen her participate in the stool cleansing twice. This is because she was a menstruating woman for the majority of the 16-year rule and could not be part of such rites; and as stated earlier the vacancy of the paramount stool of Sekondi has halted many of such rites.

During stool cleansing in Essipon, both Nana Abuna and the elders emphasized that only animal blood is used, and every animal used is slaughtered in Nana’s court. The blood is then poured on the ground and Nana Abuna must walk over the blood without stepping inside it, and/or touch the blood with her big toe. Both Nana and the elders insisted that blood is not poured on the stool, but the stool is washed and covered in white cloth and sent back to where it is kept.

Regarding rites performed during sacred days, Nana Abuna admitted that she was not taught whilst in confinement; and the death of the paramount chief of Sekondi has also prevented the observation of such days and she therefore does not know what rites are performed on such days because there has not been an opportunity to perform them.

#### **4.4.3 Traditional bodies**

Nana Kofi Abuna is a divisional chief, and so can only be part of a traditional council. Being a divisional chief under the Sekondi paramouncy, Nana is part of the Sekondi Traditional council. Nana Kofi Abuna is the only female traditional ruler among 24 males in the Sekondi Traditional Council. Nana is also part of a 7-member Standing-Committee for the Sekondi Traditional Council, which oversees affairs of the paramouncy in the absence of the paramount chief.

Again, Nana Abuna is a member of the National Council of Women Traditional Leaders and plays an active role in the council's programs and workshops. Nana also mentioned that with the help of Professor Irene Odotei (Chieftaincy expert and lecturer at Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana), they are trying to mobilise all female chiefs and write a petition to the Regional and National Houses of Chiefs to see how best these houses can incorporate the female chiefs into their affairs.

#### **4.4.4 The female chief's court**

In Akan chieftaincy, since provision is made for one member from both sexes to rule side by side, and they both have separate courts, it is usually members of the same sex that dwell in the courts of a chief who is often times a man, and a queenmother who is a woman. And members of

the two courts only rarely mingle for very important reasons or special occasions in the traditional calendar.

Nana Abuna's case being rather peculiar, that is, she being a woman but occupying a male stool and having to operate in a male court, demands that despite her sex, the court is filled with men. Therefore Nana Abuna is almost completely surrounded by men in her dealings as a chief. Nana has a 7-member council of elders with a male majority of five men. Members of the council are said to have been chosen by virtue of their position in the community. Again Nana Abuna's linguist and the Abusuapanyin are all men. In addition to that, even when Nana sits in state, it is the Okyeame, the elders, and the heads of the 11 main families in Essipon who are all men too that sit round her. Also, she is the only female in a 25-member Traditional Council of the Sekondi traditional area.

Nana Kofi Abuna knows well that tradition cannot be changed for her in that sense. In an attempt to at least have some women around her, one Leticia Comfort Ali, an indigene of Essipon now, though her descent can be traced to settlers from the north that have been in Essipon for many years, has become Nana Abuna's personal aide who sees to all Nana's needs. But she serves more as Nana Abuna's personal female linguist.

## **4.5 ATTITUDES AND REACTIONS OF PEOPLE CONCERNING NANA ABUNA'S POSITION FROM NANA'S PERSPECTIVE**

### **4.5.1 Male chiefs**

"It is not easy when you are a woman yet you have been given a male position, but the men are afraid of me". This was the first statement Nana Abuna made when the issue of her relationship with other male chiefs was brought up. According to Nana, she used to be shy at first and could

not even talk in their midst but she has studied them to know how they are and can now freely mingle with them.

Fayorsey (2006) maintains that the subordinate view of women does not change even within the institution of chieftaincy. The male chiefs usually form a conclave of male autocracy which subjugates their female counterparts. Nana Abuna has had a fair share of this quest to subjugate women traditional leaders. According to Nana, a lot of the male chiefs make her see through their actions that she is not wanted nor welcome into the male sphere of chieftaincy but she does not really care because none of them can take the Essipon stool from her.

Ebo Wood (Nana's son) accepts as true the fact that some of the male chiefs do not treat Nana fairly. He went on to say that;

“Men's egos push them to say all sorts of things about Nana because she is dwelling in what most people consider as a male space”

He further went on to add that because the female chieftaincy phenomenon is not common, and Nana Abuna is fairly educated in addition, most organisations that come to the Western region prefer dealing with Nana Abuna. This makes a lot of Nana's male counterparts quite upset and unhappy. “Because of this Nana has a lot of enemies”, he concluded.

*Okyeame* Kwamena Biney (Nana's linguist) is also of the view that because Nana Kofi Abuna V has become popular and is always chairing functions, dealing with foreigners, being invited abroad, becoming brand ambassadors and so on, some of the male chiefs, especially those in the same paramouncy have become envious of her popularity. And it is this envy that makes them treat Nana Abuna with scorn. This stigma and lack of acceptance of female often tend to lead some people to engage in discriminatory behaviour (Paludi & Coates, 2011).

Yet Nana also said that most male chiefs from other parts of the country marvel when they meet her and get to know she is a chief not a queenmother because most people still believe she is a queenmother instead. Nana made reference to a time when a male chief from the Volta region was so shocked that she was a chief on a male stool and frankly told her that his people will never give a male stool to a woman.

Nevertheless, Nana acknowledged that she is only able to rub shoulders with the men because she is always learning and upgrading herself through the numerous workshops she often attends because they give her so much knowledge, experience and exposure. And this most often intimidates a lot of her male counterparts.

#### **4.5.2 Queenmothers**

Currently, Nana Kofi Abuna does not have a queenmother, since the queenmother of Essipon, Nana Nsew II, died on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2010, and she is yet to be replaced. According to Nana Abuna, whilst she was alive, they both got along quite well; that is why there is no haste in replacing her since Nana Abuna wants a new queenmother who will be ready to work hard for the benefit of Essipon.

Nana Abuna's exclamation "Eeeiii", when she was asked about how other queenmothers react around her and their perception about the female chieftaincy phenomenon, said a lot even before Nana answered the question and said;

"Ohhh they are not friendly at all; they don't welcome it. They don't like the idea that I am always mingling with the men".

Nana Abuna went on to say she did not formerly believe in the notion that women are our own enemies; but this chieftaincy position has made her realize otherwise. Nana recounted a time some years back when she wanted to create a platform for women traditional leaders to have a voice in the political administration of the Western region. Nana believes that the Western region has all the natural resources you can think of but their roads are in bad shape and their children are suffering. So as women who brought forth those children, they must do something to change the situation. And that was why she wanted to create the platform for the women traditional leaders in that region to be able to dialogue with the government and non-governmental organisations to help in curbing those issues; but according to Nana;

“The queenmothers started playing hierarchical politics; claiming I am from the paramountcy, I am the head of this, I am this, and I am that. But most of these people don’t have the necessary skills of fluency in the English language, or the ability to speak publicly, to even lead this project”.

So Nana just abandoned that project because the women could not even put up a united front and the gossiping was too much. Nana added that women must change. Nana also mentioned that 2 years back, the queenmothers almost put her in trouble so now when they call on her to attend their programs, she will only go as a facilitator or guest but not as one of them. When they try to invite Nana Abuna as one of them, Nana said in her own words that;

“I tell them I am a chief and my queenmother is dead. So when I get a replacement, I will send her to them”.

Nana Abuna also complained that whilst she uses her skills as a secretary to take notes in addition to the handouts given during workshops, some of the queenmothers who attend these workshops, instead of learning something;

“They just come to drink beer, chase after men, eat and have fun. Then later they will tell me things like, we don’t want any chief in our midst and I speak English too much. Because they feel that if you are a chief, you are there to rule over them”.

Judging from these statements, one can recognize the fact that whilst the patriarchal ideology is so entrenched in our various ways of life, and usually women actually give men their consent to be dominated and ruled, women do not just accept domination from everyone. Women see as right, and feel more comfortable when being ruled or dominated by men than their fellow women, and therefore often rebel in such situations. Women would rather see men at the highest positions of power in society, than women. And they are often quick to judge harshly or mistreat their fellow women who are able to rise to such ranks.

#### **4.5.3 Elders and Kingmakers in Essipon**

The elders in defining who a chief is agreed that a chief is ‘someone who has good character, and has been installed to take charge of a community’s resources, and see to the development of the community. But the person must be a royal and has the means to advance the community’.

Nana Kofi Abuna V’s enstoolment as a chief was a collective effort and decision of all the kingmakers of Essipon, who saw traits of a chief in Nana and believed in her capability to rule. According to one elder, the kingmakers saw in Nana Abuna, bravery, humility, confidence and a personality that fitted the position. Nana Abuna’s ability to have resolved a family litigation that

had been going on for 55 years, which started even before she was born also made Nana Abuna worthy of the stool.

It is safe to say that this group of people do not have any inhibitions against Nana Abuna occupying a male position. This group contradicts the general notion of men often mistreating women in authority because of the lack of acceptance and or male ego. On the contrary; they respect Nana Abuna because they themselves chose her. Most of them even brought up the issue of Nana Abuna being more open to advice than her male predecessors. According to them, before Nana takes any decision concerning the community, she discusses it with them the elders. But Nana Abuna's predecessors only informed the elders and the people of the decisions they have already taken. To them this shows respect, and makes them see their use as elders; because what is the essence of being an elder if you cannot advice the chief or help in decision making.

They also mentioned that Nana Abuna's femininity makes her more compassionate to the needs of the people. They maintained that women are naturally more compassionate than men, and that since men do not give birth or handle children, they do not really feel the pain and sufferings of the people, yet Nana Abuna is very fair and firm when it comes to her chiefly duties.

Regarding the performance of rites and rituals, and the cultural limitations that might stand in Nana Abuna's way, they were quick to point out that Nana Abuna in the first place does all the rites and rituals expected of her as a chief, though the paramount chief's death has halted a lot of such rites. But as a female chief, Nana Abuna can always assign people to perform rites and rituals on her behalf if she cannot do it herself; and that it is traditionally allowed. All Nana needs to do is to just give the instruction.

They also believe that because of Nana Abuna's motherliness, she always puts the community first and not monetary gain when it comes to developmental projects. Okyeame Kwamena Biney was of the view that;

“All men love money and would usually ask for money before releasing land for governmental projects like the stadium in Essipon, even I would have taken money first”

But for Nana Abuna, once the proposed project will benefit and expose the community, she will see to its implementation even before discussing monetary benefits.

Nonetheless, one could sense a suppressed dislike for this attitude because certain monetary benefits that could profit the entire community have still not been received after Nana Abuna allowed the implementation of such projects, like the building of the Essipon Stadium in 2008.

In discussing if there will ever be a female chief, they concluded that it can only occur again if there is no male heir; and that woman must exhibit special traits worthy of the position.

#### **4.5.4 The youth of Essipon**

The youth described a chief as ‘the custodian of the land, appointed by the royal family, but acts as the representative of the people to oversee everything related to the community’. Kwesi Taylor, a youth of Essipon, is of the view that there are more advantages as against disadvantages when a woman is chief. According to him;

“When men get power and money, they start to think of having more children, getting more wives and things that will distract him; and as a result he loses focus on the core activities of his position. Because some of the things Nana Abuna does, if it was a man, he would not even have the time”.

For Kwesi, women are more focused and always want to make an impact when given positions of power; they therefore know how to get things done.

To the youth, Nana Abuna is their mother. Nana is their strict mother who always wants to see them in school or doing something useful with their lives. So even when they are misbehaving and they are hinted Nana is coming around, they must quickly start acting right. This is because despite Nana Abuna's motherliness, she is very stern when it comes to the youth doing the right thing. Yet Nana Abuna is also fun loving and is always there to support their activities.

Mena Asiamah, also a youth of Essipon believes that women have a way of dealing with people. Nana Abuna considers issues as a woman and a mother, and deals with them as such. She added that;

“There are issues we take to Nana Abuna's court that Nana tolerates because she understands us as a mother and a woman. But if it was a man, we would not even dare”.

Cases of boyfriend and girlfriend misunderstandings are regularly taken to Nana's court and she handles it just as she handles the important cases. Yet some of the youth were a little concerned about some people abusing Nana's compassion and tolerance; seeing it as a woman's weakness. For instance, a young lady kept coming to see Nana about her child's school fees, which she often took money for. But it turned out she was not paying the fees but spending the money on trivial things to the detriment of her child's education. And though the youth would not mind having another female chief, they are not so confident the kingmakers would appoint one again.

#### 4.5.5 Nana Kofi Abuna V

In Nana Abuna's opinion, the rigid gender spaces have been breached. That olden day attitude of a man being the one to work for the family, and the women being home keepers and making babies are no more. Now women even do things better and can better handle positions of power.

In light of Nana Abuna's chieftaincy position in Essipon, Nana mentioned that some people try to make things difficult for her, but her years of experience as a chief has taught her better. She said;

“People see me as a hard woman. But I know I am not. I am just disciplined. So what the men are doing, I'm not even looking at them”

According to her, people do not like the truth. And because she always tries to do what is right, people have branded her as a difficult person, and even say she is over doing things in her position. But Nana believes that those who say such things just feel intimidated by her, and her success as a female chief.

Nana Abuna added that people still think I am a queenmother, but after being shown her elders and linguist (that is if they are around), or being corrected;

“People look at me and they marvel, because they have not seen some before”.

The reactions of people to her position when they first meet her are always that of awe and disbelief. And for Nana Abuna, this motivates her to portray the female chieftaincy nicely for people to like the idea and give a thought to encouraging it in their various communities. According to Nana Abuna, because of how she has handled herself as a female chief, most

people she comes into contact with are beginning to be more receptive to the idea of a woman being a chief.

Nana Abuna believes that she has done more for the Essipon community than all her predecessors did, and is therefore very confident that, the kingmakers will not hesitate to install a woman as a chief if there comes such a time.

## **4.6 FAMILIAL ROLES**

### **4.6.1 Marriage**

Nana Kofi Abuna as a woman has never been legally married. According to Nana Abuna, she got pregnant by her first boyfriend immediately after secretarial school, but the man left the country to Liberia, and was never there during and after the pregnancy and birth of her first son, Ebo Wood. Till now Nana does not know the whereabouts of the man.

It took Nana Abuna 8 years before she was able to have a relationship with another man. The man used to work at the then Ghana Airways but is now in London. Again, Nana Abuna got pregnant with her second child, Jane. Nana Abuna never lived with Jane's father either. But according to Nana Abuna, he is back in her life after many years pleading for a second chance.

Nana Abuna's second child was 10 years old before another man came into her life, and had her third child, Esther, with him. This man was living with Nana Abuna as a couple when she was enstooled as the chief of Essipon. But problems started springing up after Nana's installation. It turned out the man did not like Nana Abuna's new position because it demanded so much mingling with other men. As Nana Abuna put it;

“The man became very jealous. He even made comments about me being the only lady amongst 24 men in the traditional council, and always surrounded by men in everything I do. It got so bad that he even threatened to kill me. One day he just took his things and left. Esther was just 2 years old”.

Nana Abuna went on further to explain that the man could not even stand her talking to other men, because he was very scared of losing her to another man. And though she tried to please him in all aspects as a man, his insecurity was the cause of all the problems they had.

Nana Abuna also mentioned that, in a discussion with a queenmother about men and marriage, the queenmother was of the view that most royal women never get the opportunity to marry or always end up as divorcees. But more often than not, have children with different fathers, and that it is a ‘royal problem’ for most Akan women. Nana however disagrees with her, because Nana Abuna believes that it is youthful inexperience and petty mistakes that prevents marriages from working but it is never a royal problem.

For most Akan groups, the matrilineal kind of inheritance which lays emphasis on ‘who one’s mother is’ regardless of the father, and the encouragement for females in such lineages to populate the families, create the avenue for the women to want to have babies but not necessarily want to settle down. And because traditionally the children belong to the woman and her family, should issues crop up in marriage, the women are not scared to leave because they will take their children along with them. In such Akan groups, one can say that there is no bastard.

Whilst male chiefs have the privilege of having women ready to do anything just to be the chief’s wife, for Nana Abuna, the demands of chieftaincy have cost her the only man in her life who actually ever lived with her as a couple, and her only chance of being married at that time. It

could truly have been as a result of jealousy, but we cannot overlook the fact that it could have also been as a result of the man feeling his ego has been trampled upon by Nana Abuna's position. Now Nana feels she has experienced enough, and is too busy to stress herself with any relationship.

#### **4.6.2 Motherhood**

When Nana Kofi Abuna was enstooled as a chief, she was a single mother of 3 children, a son and 2 daughters. Ebo who is the eldest was 19, Jane was 11, and the youngest, Esther, was just 3 months old. Nana Abuna describes it as one of her toughest times of her reign as the Essipon chief.

So to ease the stress on her regarding the demands of her position, Nana Abuna had to take her youngest daughter to the boarding school when she turned 6 years, and kept her there for a few years. Nana however made sure to visit her every week. The oldest son and the first daughter at that time could take care of themselves and were in the university and senior high school respectively. Amongst Nana Abuna's children, Esther was the one who had to endure the brunt of their mother's position, because it prevented her from enjoying her childhood with her mother because of the chieftaincy duties Nana had to perform.

The other children nonetheless experienced the changes that occurred after Nana Abuna's installation more, because they had known Nana and experienced her motherliness before the chieftaincy position was given to her; and at the beginning felt quite overwhelmed by the absence of the mother they knew. Ebo described this realization as;

“After she was made a chief, she was more for everyone than for us. Because she had become a public figure, she went external”.

As a mother, Nana Abuna stated that since she was not so lucky with education, she wants the best of education for her children, and to instill in them the traditions and history of their people.

Ebo buttressed this point in a separate discussion when he said;

“Education has always been her priority. She gave us everything we needed. So me for instance, I have completed University of Cape Coast with a Business Communication degree, and she has even been pestering me to do my Master’s degree”.

He went on to say that his younger sister Jane is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Image Academy, studying to become a beautician. The youngest girl is a senior high school student at the Sekondi College. Nana Abuna sees education as the only true legacy she as a parent can leave for her children. Therefore, although only 2 of her adopted children live with her, she has taken it upon herself to foot all the bills of all her adopted children when it comes to education.

According to Nana Abuna, her children think of her as a ‘hard mother’ but that is only because when they were young she did not spare them when they went wrong, but caned them to instill discipline; just as the Bible advises, ‘spare the rod and spoil the child’. She however added that she knows they know she loves them so much, and has tried her best as a mother to provide all their needs and set good examples for them to learn from. Ebo agrees that her mother is the best mother they could ever ask for; she has been both their mother and father for all these years, and has always been there for them. At home she is ‘mummy’ to them, but once outside, she becomes ‘Nana Kofi Abuna V, and they therefore address her as such.

Nana Abuna also believes that her children see everything she does, and are often with her in the execution of her chiefly duties. Thus, she expects that they learn and copy from her. According to Nana, though her first two children have absolutely refused to become a chief, Esther, her

youngest daughter is enthused about being a female and holding such a position; and wants to become a chief like her one day.

#### **4.6.3 Chores**

According to Nana Abuna, she stayed with her paternal grandmother most of her young life, and as she puts it; “Grandma sharpened me well. She taught me everything I know”. Nana believes that though she did not really enjoy parental love during her childhood, her siblings who stayed with her mum were wrongly over pampered, but her grandmothers training and discipline has been an advantage to her, especially concerning the position she holds now.

In discussing the performance of feminine chores, Nana Abuna confidently said that there is no feminine chore she does not know how to do, and she is very good at them; she can cook, clean, sweep, wash clothes and dishes, take care of children, manage the home, and so on.

Nana Abuna even mentioned that during the time she was living with Esther’s father as a couple, she did everything for the man by herself when it came to wifely duties. But Nana also stated that;

“It is this position that disturbs me a little. Because although I can get up and do the chores on my own, people feel uncomfortable seeing me do them. So when I try to even sweep, they quickly rush to prevent me from doing so.”

Nana again added that;

“Despite the position given to me, I am a woman, and I have to train my children, especially the girls. No tradition prevents me from going to the kitchen or doing other chores”.

Nana further explained that whether she is a chief or not, she is first and foremost a woman and a mother; it is her duty to bring up her children to become good adults. This fear of failing as a mother can be linked to the fact that in our part of the world, when daughters especially get married and they cannot perform their duties as wives, it is the mother's name the family-in-laws will mention as having not done her job well as a mother; the blame is always on the mother no matter who she is or what position she holds in society. So Nana made sure she herself taught her children all the household tasks they needed to learn and made them perform them regularly.

#### **4.6.4 Extended family**

In Nana Abuna's extended family, though she is not the oldest, her position as the chief has elevated her to the level where even her older siblings can only refer to her as 'Nana' no matter the place or audience.

Also, despite the fact that the family has an Abusuapanyin, who is the head, when the family gathers, by virtue of Nana Abuna's role as chief of Essipon, Nana automatically becomes the overall head of the family, and must be addressed as such before one can freely make suggestions concerning the topic of discussion.

### **4.7 THE CHALLENGES NANA FACES AS A FEMALE CHIEF**

As at now, the main challenge Nana Abuna faces as the chief of Essipon is the invasion of Essipon lands by neighbouring towns, and the illegal sale of some family lands without her permission, which has resulted in Nana having numerous cases in the law courts. These cases often require Nana Abuna's presence in court each time there is a hearing. This then means that Nana has to forego the performance of any chiefly duty or the attendance of any program

scheduled on those days, no matter how important they may be. Nana Abuna has to also pay the lawyers handling the cases. This puts a strain on the finances of the community, as well as that of Nana Abuna's personal reserves since each time she attends hearings of the cases, she spends money on transportation. Nana Abuna's chief linguist is certain the land issues are as a result of people thinking she is a woman and can therefore be pushed around.

Nana Abuna also made mention of the difficulty in sometimes convincing the people against certain cultural practices and beliefs that undermine the development of the community. Despite the conversion to Christianity, the people of Essipon still hold onto certain superstitious beliefs that prevents the execution of projects that will benefit everyone, and encourage that the progress of the community. Nana narrated an example of when she wanted to build the nursery and kindergarten for the community. According to Nana, when she discussed the proposed site of the project with her elders, some of them tried talking her out of it because there was a big tree on that land, which they believed was a god, to which everyone from the town had been dedicated; and felling the tree would therefore mean disaster for the whole town. Nana had to convince them that as Christians they should not be afraid of such things because the tree has no power, and felling it would be for the benefit of the community as a whole. Yet some fetish people came to threaten that if she goes ahead with the felling of the tree she will die in 3 days. Nana laughed over the fact that it has been years since she built her school on that land but she is very alive and healthy. Nana complained that such beliefs and practices cause the community to be at a standstill instead of progressing.

Another challenge Nana Abuna complained about is the internal pressures caused by family members. Nana Abuna explained that;

“When some family members who like causing trouble hear that another family member came to me and received something, they also come to me expecting an equal share of whatever the other family member got. So if it does not happen that way, then it creates divisions and struggles”.

Nana further said that as a chief, you must be fair, and must be able to keep your family together. But some family members who are never content with anything, but are always comparing themselves to others and trying to find faults, cause such occurrences just to create a bad image for her as a chief.

According to Nana Abuna, as a female chief, she knows that her position challenges the notion of male superiority, and such a thing is definitely bound to cause certain frictions between her and men in particular; but in her case, with female traditional leaders as well. Nana lamented that whilst she expected her fellow women to embrace the idea of female chieftaincy and support her, they rather treat her like an outcast. And the men who also feel intimidated by her position, or other male chiefs who have inhibitions to the idea of a woman being a chief also treat her with disrespect. As a result, she has become more of the abnormality or the odd one out in both groups, and thus does not really fit anywhere. But Nana reassures herself that whether people like it or not, she is a woman and she is a chief; no one can change that.

#### **4.8 OTHER LEADERSHIP ROLES AND APPOINTMENTS**

Nana Abuna’s position as a female chief, and her influence and participation in both communal and national issues has led to her appointment as a member of many governing boards in different institutions. They include;

1. Sekondi College, Western region

2. Deabene Secondary Technical School, Western region
3. Western Region Educational Trust Fund
4. Western Region Advisory Committee on Gender Issues
5. Standing Committee for the Sekondi Traditional Council, Western region.

Below are some leadership roles Nana Abuna plays in addition to her chieftaincy position.

1. President – Christian Kings and Queens Association of Ghana
2. Member – Kofi Annan Peace Council
3. Activist – Girl Child Education
4. Spokesperson – RunForACureAfricaGh (a breast cancer awareness group)
5. Partner – Christ Embassy Inner City, Healing School, and Rhapsodies of Realities

#### **4.9 Awards and Workshop Certificates**

1. Excellent Leadership Award – by. UNHCR, for providing a refugee park in Essipon where refugees camp temporarily before social workers disperse them to other camps.
2. The Refugee Agency – by. UNHCR, appreciation of invaluable service to the refugee cause.
3. Excellence Award, 2009 Community Mobilization by Ghana Initiative for Peace, Health and Development Africa – by. Pathfinders Nigeria International.
4. Certificate of Appreciation – by. GBC (Sekondi) 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Awards, for the development of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation in the Western region.
5. Citation – by. Western Regional Coordinating Council, for settling a 55year old litigation
6. Certificate of Appreciation – Christian Kings and Queens Association

7. Citation for Excellence in Effective Leadership – by. The Revelator
8. Citation – Bompeh Senior High and Technical School Silver Jubilee Awards, for championing the cause of women and the girl child in the areas of education and welfare as traditional ruler of Essipon
9. Certificate of Recommendation – Christ Embassy Ghana Awards 2011
10. Certificate of Honour – The Methodist Church Ghana, Freeman Society, Kwesimintsim
11. Recognition Award for support and assistance – Ahantaman Girls Senior High School  
65<sup>th</sup> Speech and Prize giving day

**Workshop certificates**

1. Paralegal Training Workshop for Female Traditional Leaders
2. Capacity Building Workshop for Female Traditional Leaders
3. Western Region Representative for the drafting of Article 71(Monument)



## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter is the final chapter, and will thus summarize the main findings of this study, make recommendations for further studies, and conclude the study.

#### 5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From this study, our first major finding is the point that female chieftaincy is not an institution that is originally part of most traditions, but often a desperate option to a lack. In Akan communities particularly, because there is already a supreme position for woman, that is the ‘ohemaa’, a female can only become a chief when there is no man in line, or ready to take the position. Nana Abuna’s case is no different. There was no man ready to take the position when the need came; that is why she became regent in the first place, and subsequently became the chief.

This study has also thrown light on the fact that the female chieftaincy phenomenon is not just about the ‘wow factor’ but that it is even quite complex than the very common male rule, in the sense that these women chiefs often have to keep transforming from one gender into another just to suit the particular role they may be playing at a particular time; sometimes even having to exhibit more than one gender trait at a time. There is therefore always the need for de-gendering and/or re-gendering of a female chief in her daily normal life.

Chieftaincy as one would expect is dominated by men and therefore has systems that naturally ease the rule of men as chiefs; and though some of these systems may be adjusted to

accommodate the few women who ever get to occupy the position of the chief; from this study of Nana Kofi Abuna V, it is obvious that there are limits that such adjustments cannot go beyond. Regarding rites and rituals pertaining to chieftaincy, the cultural limitation of women due to menstruation automatically prohibits the female chief from partaking regardless of her menstruating at the time of the rites or not, unless she has become a ritual man; that is, she has become post-menopausal. Again, for females chiefs like Nana Abuna who are occupying male stools, there is no way she can perform chiefly duties in feminine clothes. Such traditions show that a female chief's sex can greatly affect her status and functions especially when she is still a menstrous woman. Even when she has become a ritual man, there are limits of how far tradition can be bent for a female chief.

Nana Abuna's life highlights the need for female chiefs to exhibit traits and behaviours categorized as masculine in addition to the feminine characteristics they were socialized to uphold. The complication here then is whilst the female chief is expected to act in accordance to her position as chief, which requires traits such as firmness, bravery and courage, like Nana Abuna, the exhibition of such traits tend to be negatively judged sometimes, as being too hard or difficult. And to exhibit more of the feminine traits will also be seen as a form of weakness, for a chief must not be feminine or too soft, whether man or woman. The female chief must then find a fine balance between the display of these two groups of traits so as not to be branded as the tyrant female chief or the weakling chief. Because people who maintain traditional stereotypes about how women should behave tend to judge women leaders more harshly.

In our part of the world, traditional leadership is a man's domain; women are expected to take subordinate positions even when they venture into leadership. From this study, we can deduce that people who have inhibitions towards women being the ultimate ruler or leader react

negatively to the phenomenon of female chieftaincy. In Nana Abuna's case, we come across some male chiefs and queenmothers who make obvious their distaste of a woman being a chief through their actions and comments. For such people a woman must know her place in society. However, in Essipon, Nana Kofi Abuna V is the chief and supreme ruler and wields absolute power over the affairs of Essipon.

Nana Abuna's life as a female chief also proves Eagly's (Dulin, 2007) assertion that social roles guide our behaviours more than the gender we inhabit. As a female chief, Nana Abuna has to keep alternating between roles which require different types of behaviour. As chief of Essipon, Nana Abuna acts and behaves like a man, dresses like a man, and is referred to by a male name and must rule justly and firmly, but with the people's welfare and development as a priority. As a single mother, she is 'mummy' to her children, and has to play both the father and mother roles, train, educate and cater for her children with love and compassion. As a deaconess in church, Nana sits with the other deaconesses because she is a woman, ties a headscarf, and dresses like a woman, though she is still referred to as Deaconess Nana Kofi Abuna.

The female chieftaincy institution may be said not to be a permanent institution in the traditions of most groups in Ghana, especially the Akans. Therefore, it is difficult to predict a definite future for the institution. But as far as there will be instances where there are no males to occupy chieftaincy positions, there will always be the option of a female chief. It can however be envisaged that with time, modernity and the expected dimming of certain traditions could make the female chieftaincy less complex.

## 5.2 Conclusion

Nana Kofi Abuna's position challenges the notion of male superiority and shows how the traditional notions of manhood, womanhood, femininity and masculinity can be negotiated as well. It also however shows that though society allows gender transformations and makes room for such special cases, there is an extent, a limit to which tradition can be bent for such gender reversals.

Nana Kofi Abuna's 16 year rule has been characterized by challenges that often stem from her sex. Yet it has also been characterized by a lot of exposure and media appearances. And Nana Abuna has become the ambassador of many awareness programs and campaigns on issues concerning women.

In traditional rulership, Nana Kofi Abuna often finds herself in situations where she has to rub shoulders with male traditional leaders. Nonetheless, from all the discussions and interviews related to this study, it is quite obvious that Nana Abuna is very industrious, and against all odds has been able to rule as a firm and popular, yet generous chief for 16 years, through whom the Essipon community has experienced a noticeable level of development and exposure. Nana is always attending one workshop or seminar.

As the longest ruling female chief alive amongst the Akan groups, Nana Abuna is a role model. She inspires a lot of women and her position challenges them to excel in their various endeavors regardless of whose domain it might be, whether male or female.

### 5.3 Recommendation

Nana Kofi Abuna V has made quite an impact in the chieftaincy institution of Ghana, as a brave female chief of contemporary times, who despite the challenges of old and modern traditions has been able to make a difference in traditional rulership. I therefore recommend that a biography of Nana Kofi Abuna V, addressing further issues on gender, development, and traditional governance be done to document her life and activities in the annals of the country's great female traditional rulers.

Society seems not to know how to handle the female chieftaincy phenomenon, because for Nana Kofi Abuna V, one of the main challenges of being a female chief is the feeling of not belonging anywhere; because she can never become a man, and some of the male chiefs even look down on her, neither can she be with the queenmothers, for the reason that she is a chief not a queenmother. I recommend that the Ministry of Chieftaincy make clear where female chiefs belong, whether in The House of Chiefs or Queenmothers. Although as genuine and rightful chiefs, I will suggest they are put into the House of Chiefs.

Again, since chiefs can make decrees to alter certain traditions, female chiefs, when given the opportunity should put in place permanent measures in the chieftaincy institution of their respective areas to better accommodate this phenomenon of female chieftaincy for the benefit of others to come.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- (SACU), S. f.-C. (2001). The Life of Empress Cixi. In *China in Focus* (p. 10).
- Abotchie , C. (2006). Has the Position of the Chief Become Anachronistic in Contemporary Ghanaian Politics? In I. K. Odotei, & A. K. Awedoba, *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (pp. 169-182). Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers.
- Abotchie, C., & et al. (2006). Perceptions on Chieftaincy. In I. K. Odotei, & A. K. Awedoba, *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (pp. 103-144). Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers.
- Achebe, N. (2003). And She Became A Man: King Ahebe Ugbabe in the History of the Enugu-Ezike, Northern Igboland, 1880-1948. In L. Lindsay, S. Miescher, & (Eds), *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (pp. 52-68). Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Adjaye, J. K., & Misawa, B. (2006). Chieftaincy at the Confluence of Tradition and Modernity: Transforming African Rulership in Ghana and Nigeria. *International Third World Studies Journal and Review* 17, 1-10.
- Adomako Ampofo, A., & Boateng, J. (2007). Multiple Meaning of Manhood among Boys in Ghana. In K. S. al, *From Boys to Men* (pp. 51-74). Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Adomako Ampofo, A., Okyerefo, M. P., & Perverah, M. (2009). Phallic Competence: Fatherhood and the Making of Men in Ghana. *Culture, Societies and Masculinities* 1(1), 59-78.
- Agadjanian, V. (2002). Men doing 'Women's Work': Masculinity and Gender Relations among Street Vendors in Maputo, Mozambique. *The Journal of Men's Studies* Vol.1013: 329 (14).
- Aidoo, A. A. (1985). Women in the History and Culture of Ghana. *Research Review, NS 1:1*, 14-51.
- Akrong, A. (2006). Religion and Traditional Leadership. In I. K. Odotei, A. K. Awedoba, & (Eds), *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (pp. 193-212). Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers.
- Alhassan, O. (2006). Traditional Authorities and Sustainable Development: Chiefs and Resource Management in Ghana. In I. K. Odotei, A. K. Awedoba, & (Eds), *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (pp. 527-546). Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers.
- Amadiume, I. (1998). *Male Daughters Female Husbands*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

- Apusigah, A. (2008). Is Gender yet another Colonial Project. *Quest (XX)*, 23-44.
- Aryee, J. R. (2007). *Traditional Leadership and Local Governance in Africa: The Ghanaian Experience*. Retrieved December 14, 2014, from [ddp.org.za/programe-events](http://ddp.org.za/programe-events)
- Asakitikpi, A. O. (2010). Media, Sports and Male Dominance: Analysis of Sport Presentations in a Nigerian Newspaper. In J. Shehu, *Gender, Sport and Development in Africa*. Codesria.
- Asiyanbola, A. R. (2005). Patriarchy, Male Dominance, the role and women empowerment in Nigeria. *International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP/UIESP) XXV International Population Conference Tours, France, 18-23, 2005*, (pp. 1-21).
- Astanga, F. A. (2011). *Northern Traditional Councils - Role of Queenmothers*. Retrieved December 14, 2014, from [www.modernghana.com](http://www.modernghana.com): [www.modernghana.com/northern-traditional-councils-role-of-queenmothers](http://www.modernghana.com/northern-traditional-councils-role-of-queenmothers)
- Baker, H. (2006). New Things After Independence: Gender and Traditional Authorities in Post Colonial Namibia. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 32(1), 29-48.
- Beattie, J. H. (April 1959). Rituals of Nyoro Kingship. *Africa Journal of the International African Institute Vol 29 No 2*, 134-145.
- Bell, C. L. (2010). South Africa's Female Tribal Chiefs Often Rule in Fear. *Time World Article*.
- Berg, B. (2004). *Qualitative Research Methods for Social Science*. Boston: Pearson Education Inc.
- Berry, S. (2001). *Chiefs know their Boundaries: Essays on Property, Power and the Past in Asante 1896-1996*. Portsmouth Oxford, Cape Town: Hienemann.
- Bhasin, K. (2006). *What is Patriarchy*. New Delhi: Women Unlimited.
- Bilimoria, D., & Piderit, S. K. (2007). *Handbook on Women in Business Management*. <https://books.google.com.gh>.
- Boaten, A. (1991, September 27th-28th). Women in Traditional Administration in Akan Traditional System. *2nd Kyeremanteng Memorial Lectures*.
- Bob-Milliar, G. (2009). Chieftaincy, Diaspora and Development: The Institution of Nkosuohene in Ghana. *African Affairs* 108 (133), 541-558.
- Brempong, A. (2006). Chieftaincy and Traditional Taboos: An Empirical Approach. In I. K. Odotei, & A. K. Awedoba, *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (pp. 213-230). Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers.

- Brempong, N. A. (2006). Chieftaincy, an Overview. In I. K. Odotei, A. K. Awedoba, & (Eds), *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (pp. 27-41). Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers.
- Brempong, O. (2006). Chieftaincy and Traditional Taboos: An Empirical Approach. In I. K. Odotei, A. K. Awedoba, & (Eds), *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (pp. 213-230). Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers.
- Brittan , A. (1989). *Masculinity and Power*. Oxford: Oxford Blackwell.
- Brobbey, J. S. (2008). *The Law of Chieftaincy in Ghana* . Accra: Advanced Legal Publications.
- Busia, K. A. (1968). *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti: A Study of the Influence of Contemporary Social Changes on Ashanti Political Institutions*. Oxford: Cass & Co Ltd.
- Castro, M. (1999). *Ohemaa's Role in Ashanti: My Experience and Views on Community*. Retrieved from African Diaspora: [http:// digitalcollections.sit.edu/africandiaspora](http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/africandiaspora) isp, Paper 6 pp 1-28
- Chisanga, B. (2006). The Interface between Tradition and Modernity: The Struggle for Political Space at the Local Level in Malawi. *Civilisations* 55 (1&2), 225-274.
- Cohen, A., & Court, D. (2003). Ethnographic and Casestudy: A comparative Analysis. *Academic Exchange Quaterly* 7(3), 283-287.
- Cohen, R. (1977). Oedipus Rex and Regina: The Queenmother in Africa. *Journal of the International African Institute* 47 (1), 14-30.
- Dankwa III, O. (2004). *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The Future*. Accra, Ghana: Konrad Adenauer Foundation.
- Dankwa, S. O. (2012). The One Who First Says I Love You: Same-Sex Love and Female Masculinity in Post Colonial Ghana. *Ghana Studies Vol 14*, 223-264.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). The Discipline and Practise of Quantitative Research. In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 1-20 pdf). [www.sagepub.com](http://www.sagepub.com).
- Dulin, A. M. (2007). A Lesson on Social Theory: An Example of Human Behavior in the Social Environment Theory. *Advances in Social Work Vol. 8 No.1*, 104-112.
- Düsing, S. (2002). *Traditional Leadership and Democratisation in Southern Africa: A Comparative Study of Botswana, Namibia and South Africa*. <https://books.google.com.gh>.
- Eagly, A. (1987). *Sex differences in social behavior: A social-role interpretation*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Eagly, A., Karau, S., & Makhijani, M. (1995). Gender and the effectiveness of leaders: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(1), 125-145.
- Emecheta, B. (1979). *The Joys of Motherhood*. Nigeria: Allison & Busby.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1965). *Theories of Primitive Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fallon, K. (2008). *Democracy and the Rise of the Women's Movements in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Farrar, T. (1997). The Queenmother: Matriarchy and the Question of Female Political Authority in PreColonial West African Monarchy. *Journal of Black Studies* 27 (5), 579-597.
- Fayorsey, C. (2006). Gender, Culture and Governance: Ghanaian Queenmothers as Leaders in Development. In I. K. Odotei, A. K. Awedoba, & (Eds), *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (pp. 651-662). Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers.
- Fayorsey, C. K., & Amolo, R. K. (2003). *Empowering Queenmothers and Magajias in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS*. Washington: Centre for Development and Population Activities: CEDPA/USAID.
- Feely-Harnik, G. (1985). Issues in Divine Kingship. *Annual Review of Anthropology Vol 14*, 273-313.
- Fortes, M., & Evans-Pritchard, E. (1970). *African Political Systems*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Geschiere, P. (1993). Chiefs and Colonial Rule in Cameroon: Inventing Chieftaincy, French and British Style. *Africa Journal of the International African Institute* 63(2), 151-175.
- Gneezy, U., Leonard, K. L., & List, J. A. (2008). Gender Differences in Competition: Evidence from Matrilineal and a Patriarchal Society. *Econometrica Vol 77, No 5 (September, 2009)*, 1637-1664.
- Gocking, R. (2005). *The History of Ghana*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Graeber, D. (2011). The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk on violence, utopia, and the human condition, or, elements for an archealogy of sovereignty. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 1 (1), 1-62.
- Greenhalgh, T., & Russel, S. (2005). Developing Research and Practice: Narrative Methods in Quality Improvement Research. *Qual Saf Health Care (14)* ([www.gshc.com](http://www.gshc.com)), 443-449.
- Hagan, G. P. (2006). Gender: Evolving Roles and Perceptions. *Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences Proceedings 2004* (pp. 47-62). Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences (GAAS).

- Hoare, J. (2009). Breaking the barriers: Sierra Leonean Women on the March. In J. Hoare, & F. Gell, *Women's Leadership and Participation: Case studies on learning for action* (pp. 51-60). Oxford: Oxfam.
- Ibrahim, J. (2005). The First Lady Syndrome and the Marginalisation of Women from Power. *Feminist Africa* (4), 48-69.
- Kambarami, M. (2006). Feminity, Sexuality and Culture: Patriarchy and Female Subordination in Zimbabwe. *Understanding Human Sexuality Seminar Series*.
- Keulder, C. (2010). Traditional Leaders. In C. Keulder, *State, Society and Democracy: A Reader in Namibian Politics* (pp. 150-170). Windhoek: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.
- Khan, A. (n.d.). *Qualitative Social Research Methodologies*. Retrieved February 5th, 2015, from [www.drtoconnor.com/3760/3760lect06.html](http://www.drtoconnor.com/3760/3760lect06.html)
- Koelble, T. A., & Lipuma, E. (2011). Traditional Leaders and the Culture of Governance in South Africa. <http://www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com> *Governance* 24(1), 5-29.
- Kumekpor, T. K. (2002). *Research Methods and Techniques of Social Science*. Accra: Sonlife Press and Services.
- Lindsay, L. A. (2005). Shunting between Masculine Ideals: Nigerian Railway in the Colonial era. In C. Andrea, *Readings in Gender in Africa* (pp. 141-147). London: James Currey.
- Lupton, B. (2000). Maintaining Masculinity: Men who do women's work. *British Journal of Management Vol 11*, 33-48.
- Lutz, G., & Linder, W. (2004). *Traditional Structures in Local Governance for Local Development (pdf)*. Retrieved from Institute of Political Science, Switzerland University of Berne: <http://www.info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/153053/Pakistan>
- Magilchrist, F., & Hout, T. V. (2011). *Ethnographic Discourse Analysis and Social Science*. Retrieved February 4, 2015, from <http://www.qualitative-research.net>
- Manuh, T. (2006). Gender and Contemporary Challenges. *Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences Proceedings 2004* (pp. 109-138). Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences.
- McCaskie, T. C. (2000). *Asante Identities: History and Modernity in an African Village 1850-1950*. London: International African Institute.
- McDowell, L., & Pringle, R. (1992). *Defining Women: Social Institutions and Gender Divisions*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Mclead, S. A. (2008). Retrieved December 17th, 2014, from [http://www.simplypsychology.org/social roles](http://www.simplypsychology.org/social%20roles)

- Meyerowitz, E. L. (1986). *And Yet Women Once Ruled Supreme*. Pamplet Press.
- Miescher, S. (2007). Becoming an Opanyin; Elders, Gender, and Masculinities in Twentieth-Century. In M. Cole, T. Manuh, S. Miescher, & (Eds), *Africa After Gender* (pp. 253-269). USA: Indian University Press.
- Miescher, S. F. (2005). *Making Men in Ghana*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Nyame-Asiamah, F., & Patel, N. (2009). *Research Methods and Methodologies for Studying Organisational Learning*. Retrieved February 4th, 2015, from [www.iseing.org/emics/.../Proceedings/Presenting%20Papers](http://www.iseing.org/emics/.../Proceedings/Presenting%20Papers)
- Obeng, S., & Stoeltje, B. J. (2002). Women's Voices in Africa Today. *Akan Juridicial Discourse*, 21-41.
- Odotei, I. K. (2006). Women in Male Corridors of Power. In I. K. Odotei, A. K. Awedoba, & (Eds), *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (pp. 81-100). Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers.
- Odotei, I. K., Awedoba, A. K., & (Eds). (2006). *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers.
- Oduyoye, M. (2000). *Daughters of Anowa*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- Ortner, S. (1974). Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture? *Rosaldo and Lamphere (Eds) Making Gender*, 21-42; 173-180.
- Oyewumi, O. (1997). The Invention of Women: Making An African Sense of Western Gender Discourse. *University of Minnesota*, 1--35.
- Paludi, M. A., & Coates, B. E. (2011). *Women as Transformational Leaders: From Grassroots to Global Interests Volume 1*. <http://books.google.com.gh>.
- Pilcher, J., & Whelehan, I. (2004). *Fifty Key Concepts in Gender Studies*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Rathbone, R. (2000). *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana 1951-1960*. Oxford: Ohio University Press .
- Rattray, R. S. (1923). *Ashanti*. Oxford: Claredon Press.
- Ray, D. I. (2003). Ghana: Traditional Leadership and Rural Local Governance. In D. I. Ray, & P. S. Reddy, *Grassroots: Chiefs in Africa and the Afro-Caribbean Governance* (pp. 83-121). Alberta: University of Calgary Press.

- Singer, A. J. (2012). *Teaching Global History: A Social Studies Approach*.  
<https://books.google.com.gh>.
- Slater, R. (2000). Using Life Histories to Explore Change: Women's Urban Struggles in CapeTown, South Africa. *Gender and Development* 8(2), 38-46.
- Stoeltje, B. J. (1997). Asante Queenmothers: A Study in Female Authority. *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*, 41-71.
- Stoeltje, B. J. (2003). Asante Queen Mothers: Pre-Colonial Authority in Post Colonial Society . *Research Review NS* 19.2, 1-19.
- Struensee, V. (2004). The Struggle of Queenmothers for Equality in Ghana: Exclusion of Queenmothers has a detrimental effect on Women's Rights in Ghana. *Social Science Research Network (SSRN)*.
- Struensee, V. (2005). *Traditional Governance*. Retrieved February 4th, 2015, from Department of Economic and Social Affairs: [www.esaconf.un.org/WB](http://www.esaconf.un.org/WB)
- Sultana, A. (July 2010-June 2011). Patriarchy and Women's Subordination: A Theoretical Analysis. *The Arts Faculty Journal*, 1-18.
- Sutherland-Addy, E. (2006). Projecting Royalty: The Evocative Power of The Poet at Court. In I. K. Odotei, A. K. Awedoba, & (Eds), *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (pp. 247-262). Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers.
- (n.d.). The Chieftaincy Act of Ghana 2008. In *The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana* .
- Thompson, J. C. (2010, July). Retrieved January 28, 2015, from Women In The Ancient World: [www.womenintheancientworld.com](http://www.womenintheancientworld.com)
- Thorne, S. (2000). Data Analysis in Qualitative Research. *Evidence -Based Nursing* 3 (3), 68-71.
- Tweneboah, S. (2012). The Sacred Nature of the Akan Chief and its Implications for Tradition, Modernity and Religious Human Rights in Ghana. *Thesis submitted to the Florida International University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts in Religious Studies*.
- Van Allen, J. (1972). Sitting on a Man: Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of the Igbo Women. *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, VI, ii, 165-181.
- Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- White, J., & Drew, H. (2009). *Ethnography Versus Case Study: Positioning Research and Researchers*. Retrieved February 4th, 2015, from [www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/.../Ethnography-versus-case-study](http://www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/.../Ethnography-versus-case-study)

Wilks, I. (1975). *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Williams, J. M. (2010). Review of Chieftaincy, the State, and Democracy: Political Legitimacy in Post Apartheid South Africa. [www.theafricanfile.com](http://www.theafricanfile.com).

Wood, J. (1990). *When Men were Women: Manhood and Gabra Nomads of East Africa*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.

Zezeza, T. (1999). Gender Biases in African Historography. In Imam, M. (Eds), *Engendering African Social Sciences* (pp. 80-115). Senegal: Codeseria.



**APPENDIX 1**  
**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR NANA KOFI ABUNA V**

PRELIMINARY MEETING

1. When were you born?
2. Where were you born?
3. Who are your parents?
4. What name did your parents give you at birth?
5. Do you have siblings?
6. How many males and how many females?
7. What is your position of birth (as in number)?
8. What were your parents' occupations?
9. Which of your parents' relation with a royal family is the reason why you are a chief?
10. Where did you grow up? And with who?
11. Tell me about your educational background
12. So after school how has your working career been like?
13. Are you married? If yes, to who?
14. Do you have children?
15. How many? What are their sexes?
16. After whose reign did you ascend the throne?
17. How long did your predecessor reign?
18. Which day specifically were you enstooled?
19. What stool name were you given?
20. In the history of Essipon, are you the first female chief?

21. Who are the kingmakers in Essipon traditional area?
22. Who can become a chief in Essipon? And how?
23. What is the hierarchical structure of your kingship system?
24. How many are men, and how many are women?
25. Why the name Essipon? Does it mean or represent something?
26. How did the settlement come about?



## **APPENDIX 2**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR NANA KOFI ABUNA V**

#### **EDUCATION AND WORKING LIFE**

1. Did you participate in any students' politics whilst in school?
2. Were you ever a leader of any students' body or club in school?
3. Did you ever win or receive an honors or scholarship of any kind whilst in school?
4. Did you take up any leadership role in any group or association in any of your workplaces?
5. Who was the biggest influence in your career?
6. Aside earning money, how else has your career created value in your life?
7. Do you have any regrets regarding your career path?
8. Are you still in the same career?
9. How are you able to blend your career with traditional leadership?
10. What challenges does this bring your way?
11. Do you belong to any professional body?
12. What are they?
13. Do you hold any position in that body?
14. In your adult life, have you received any honors, or recognized for any achievements?

#### **FAMILY**

15. Were you ever married?
16. If yes, to who? And for how long?
17. When and where did u get married?
18. Were you still married when you were enstooled?

19. Were you still able to perform your wifely duties (such as cooking, cleaning...) regardless of your position?
20. Were you/ are you, restricted to do 'feminine' chores because you are a chief?
21. Did your chieftaincy position affect your marriage in anyway? If yes, how?
22. Was the chieftaincy position one of the reasons for your breakup?
23. How old are your children?
24. What is your goal as a parent?
25. In what way have you influenced your children the most?
26. How do you describe yourself as a mother?
27. How would your children describe you as a mother?
28. How has your position affected your parenting/mothering?
29. Do your children refer to you as 'mummy' or 'nana' in the presence of your elders and subjects?
30. In what ways did your parents influence you the most?
31. Do you wish you had been raised differently? If yes, how different?
32. What role do you play in your family?
33. Who are the closest to you in the family?
34. Who do you admire the most in your family and why?
35. In what ways has your position affected your relations with the rest of the family?
36. How do they refer to you now?
37. Do you have attendants?
38. Usually, palace attendants are males in most Akan communities, is it the same in Essipon?

39. Is it a requirement for you to have male attendants although you are a woman?

40. Are you comfortable with male attendants?

41. Do you have any female attendants?

#### CHIEFTAINCY

42. Which paramountcy do you fall under?

43. What is the name of your predecessor?

44. What other festivals or sacred days do you observe?

45. Are you carried in a palanquin during processions?

46. Did you ever think you would be Nana Esipong one day?

47. How long were you confined?

48. What were you taught during your confinement?

49. Was there any opposition to your nomination and enstoolment as a result of your sex?

50. Were there other viable candidates for the position?

51. How do you dress on a normal day when you have no chiefly duties?

52. Must you be dressed as a chief each time you step out?

53. Do you dress fully as a 'male chief' or you modify it to suit your female body?

54. When you sit in state, are you wholly adorned with every regalia necessary for an Essipon chief to sit in state?

55. Do you have every symbol of authority?

56. Are there 'stool wives' for the Essipon stool?

57. Is every chief required to take a stool wife /wives?

58. Do you have stool wives?

59. What happens to the 'husband duties' you are expected to perform?

60. Are their children yours according to culture?

#### CULTURAL LIMITATIONS

61. What are your thoughts about prescribed gender roles and statuses?

62. How do these prescriptions affect you?

63. How do you think people perceive you?

64. What are the common reactions of people when you are introduced as a 'chief'?

65. What is your opinion of such reactions from people?

66. Do male chiefs treat you differently, or react to your presence as an intrusion into male domain?

67. What about the queenmothers? Are they more receiving, or are they unwelcoming?

68. What traditional rites are expected to be solely performed by the chief?

69. What traditional rituals are performed for/ by the chief of Essipon?

70. What are the major taboos associated with the Essipon stool?

71. Does the menstrual taboo also apply in this traditional area?

72. What then happens to the rites and rituals you are expected to perform as a chief when 'it is that time of the month'?

73. Are people allowed to stand in for you?

74. If yes, which person or people?

75. Are you a member of the National House of 'Chiefs' or 'Queenmothers'?

76. As a female chief, do you believe you have to work extra hard to be able to rub shoulders with your male counter parts?

77. Do people bring cases to the palace for judgment? What kind of cases?

78. Are you allowed to preside over such cases brought to the palace?

79. Does your ruling hold as the final verdict?

80. Who has/ which people have the power to uninstall you from the position?

81. Who/ which people have the power to counter, or stand against your 'final say' as chief?

## EXPECTATIONS

82. Is there any natural resource found in Essipon lands?

83. Who manages the sales of stool lands?

84. Where does the money from such sales go?

85. What is the money used for?

86. Are you or the person in the charge, accountable to anyone or any group of people?

87. In our first conversation, you mentioned having many court cases, are these cases associated to land sales?

88. Again, you mentioned a long term litigation you helped to end; can you please tell me more about how and why it started?

89. How did it end?

90. During your 16year reign, what infrastructural development can you boast of?

91. What have you done so far to develop your town and people socio-economically?

92. In the case of education, what input have you made to improve it?

93. How about sanitation?

94. What measures have you put in place to advance health in Essipon?

95. As a female chief, what have you done in the aspect of youth and women empowerment?

## RELIGION

96. What place does religion have in your life?

97. Which religion are you associated to?

98. Do you sit among the men or the women?

99. What are the traditional religious duties of Nana Essipon?

100. Do you do these duties yourself putting aside your religious beliefs and practices for that moment?

101. Or do you just perform them not really believing in their authenticity or power, or do people do it on your behalf?



### APPENDIX 3

#### FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the gender roles and status of men in Esipong?
2. What are the gender roles and status of women in Esipong?
3. Has these roles and statuses changed over the years?
4. Who is a chief?
5. Who can become a chief?
6. What was the role of women in chieftaincy in past?
7. What has changed in the roles women play in chieftaincy now?
8. Has a woman ever been appointed chief in the history of Esipong?
9. What is your view on a woman becoming chief?
10. Describe the predecessor of Nana Kofi Abuna
11. In your opinion what was/were his greatest achievement/s?
12. Why was Nana Kofi Abuna chosen?
13. How would you describe Nana Kofi Abuna?
14. How does Nana Kofi Abuna relate to people?
15. Describe Nana Kofi Abuna's nature. Is she
  - a) Friendly
  - b) Care-giving
  - c) Motherly
  - d) Stern
  - e) Brave
  - f) Firm

g) Confident

h) Assertive

16. Does she treat women differently, and men differently?

17. How do people relate to Nana Kofi Abuna?

18. What are the expectations of the Esipong people for a chief? Does Nana meet those expectations?

19. Has the chieftaincy completely changed her gender (behaviors and attitudes) regardless of where or who she is with?

20. \*Does Nana act like a woman? Is Nana like other women?

21. What are some of the cultural limitations of Nana as a chief in view of her sex?

22. How does she deal with these limitations?

23. What are the main challenges Nana faces a female chief?

24. In your opinion, do you think things would have been easier for her if she was a man?

25. Does she command as much respect as her predecessor did?

26. Does Nana's position challenge the notion of male superiority?

27. Do you believe some men are either intimidated and or disgusted by Nana's position?

28. Is Nana more biased to the needs of women than men because she is a woman?

29. Do you think Nana Kofi Abuna favors a particular group of people?

30. What will you say are the major achievements of Nana Kofi Abuna?

31. After Nana Kofi Abuna's reign, do you think a woman may be elected again as chief even when there are male heirs as was the case of Nana?

