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The logo for the International Institute of Social Studies, featuring the word "Erasmus" in a stylized, cursive script.

**Impact of Communal Conflict on School life of young adult
males and females / Youth, Family and School Authorities
in Bimbila, Northern Ghana.**

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Mohammed Kamal Jibril

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Members of the Examining Committee:

Dubravka Zarkov

Freek Schiphorst

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Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the International Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

Inquiries:

International Institute of Social Studies
P.O. Box 29776
2502 LT The Hague
The Netherlands

t: +31 70 426 0460
e: info@iss.nl
w: www.iss.nl
fb: <http://www.facebook.com/iss.nl>
twitter: [@issnl](https://twitter.com/issnl)

Location:

Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX The Hague
The Netherlands

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List of Acronyms

UNO	United Nations
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education

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Abstract

Given the importance of education for the empowerment of girls and young women, this research focused on consequences of conflict-based school interruptions on the schooling of young men and women, their families and school authorities, with the hope that this knowledge will be useful for formulation of policies and the promotion of practices that could ameliorated the consequences, if not prevent them. The research was conducted in Bimbilla in the Northern Region of Ghana, and the conflict in question is the chieftaincy conflict that has been present since the late 1990s.

Research work entails a lot of fields. The starting fields in this research were conflict and education, and they were related to empowerment. Intersectional analysis was employed and was used to analyze how gender, chieftaincy factions, and socio-economic backgrounds were implicated in the effects of conflict on students' schooling and future lives. Focus group discussions, interviews and observations were used to solicit information from participants.

The research shows that all participants perceived education as crucial in aiding the future of young generations and especially of empowerment of women. Disruption of schooling by communal conflicts was seen as bringing risk of disempowerment to girls and women in – Bimbilla, and as a threat to future job opportunities and life options of the students.

It was noted that socio-economic backgrounds, gender and factional affiliations of students really had a lot to do with effects of the conflict on students' school life. Differences in gender did not serve as an obstacle to the young adults going back to school after disruptions, since girls' education was very cherished due to the assistance girls offer to their families. Rather, it was the types of experiences that young female students had compared to young male students. Besides, it was socio-economic background and ability to pay fees that impacted return of students to school after conflict-induced closures. When farmers' crops and traders' goods were destroyed by violence, and no income follows, some students could not afford fees any longer.

It was also clear that factional belonging affects relationships among teachers, among students and between teachers and students. The school has a strict policy of not discussing

factions on school premises in order to prevent conflict in school, but mistrust exists among students and by teachers because of their differences in factions they belong to.

Finally, the conflict and ensuing curfew inflicts both material and emotional toll on the students, parents and teachers alike, disrupts community's economic, social and cultural activities, and causes injury, death and destruction of property. Parents, teachers and students alike are concerned with these fees and would rather live in peace. There may be rests a hope that they might work together to achieve peaceful outcomes.

Relevance to Development Studies

Education is seen as one of the cornerstones of development as well as empowerment, and women's and girl's empowerment has been among the most important goals of many national and supra-national institutions. Thus, interruption of children's and youth's education, and especially that of girls and young women, may have very specific gendered consequences on their future lives. Article (29) subsection (d) of the UN convention on the rights of children stipulates that "the education of the child shall be directed to: the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin" (Cohen 1989:1468). This underscores the need for schooling in peaceful environments devoid of communal conflicts and other forms of violence, with the ultimate aim of unity in diversity. The case of school life of young adults/youth in Bimbila, town in the Northern part of Ghana is different, due to chieftaincy conflict which sometimes lead to the closure of local schools for days, weeks and months. This research focused on consequences of conflict on schooling of young adult males and females/youth, because of the importance of education for development

Keywords

Impact, Communal Conflict, School life, Young adult Males, Females, Family, School Authorities, Northern Ghana.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Statement of the research problem

This research is focused on the examination of the relationship between violent conflict and education. Specifically, I looked at the consequences of a the chieftaincy conflict in Bimbilla—a town in Northern Ghana— on the education of college youth. With education being considered as one of the pillars of development, and education of girls receiving specific attention, I analysed the effects of the violence on students' education, and how students, teachers, and parents perceive these effects.

1.2 Contextual background

There are differences in viewing inter- or intra-communal conflicts and armed forms of conflicts. The latter is narrowed to a portion of a country, while the former escalates to almost every part of a jurisdiction (Adonteng-Kissi et al. 2017). Inter- and intra-communal conflicts are frequent in Ghana. Many communal conflicts are fought based on different claims ranging from land issues, chieftaincy and resources allocation (Adonteng-Kissi 2015). These forms of communal conflicts have negative effects on the development of Ghana such as political, economic and social aspects of life.

Ghana experienced especially, a lot of chieftaincy disputes within the last two decades which led to deaths, injury and destruction of properties worth billions of Ghana Cedis in the country in different kingdoms (Brukum 2005, Azuimah 2011). Azuimah (2011) lists 23 violent conflicts within northern Ghana, many among them chieftaincy conflicts (Amidu 2010). Many kingdoms within the northern territory used not to have written rules governing succession of chiefs before colonialism. These ideas were based on oral traditions preserved in the minds of drummers and were always referred to during festivals and durbar of chiefs (Brukum 2005). Due to the absence of written rules, the British colonial regime introduced written constitutions to these areas for traditional governance and issues relating to successions, after the conferences which were held in 1930 – 1933 (Brukum 2005:29). Those rules have aided the succession until today and have administered jurisdictions in the region. The rationale behind the conferences, were to help the northern Ghana kingdoms in the day to day administration of their territories and to make them peaceful for smooth administration of the British colonial government. Among these rules was also a rule that, all the various kingdoms had to have lists of qualified candidates-locally known

as ‘gates’ – royal lineages from which chiefs emerge. These were documented for future generations. The rules were enforced by the colonial administration. In modern times, Ministry of Culture and Chieftaincy affairs and local government are in charge of enforcing some of these rules (Valsecchi 2008). However, the chieftaincy institution within the northern territories still has lots of problems pertaining to installations of chiefs.

Chiefs enjoy several privileges such as political influence, the control over natural resources —lands, water bodies, minerals and even trees of economic importance, and other forms of benefits within their jurisdiction. On political grounds, chiefs receive homage from settlers on their lands and from their subordinates. They also receive special forms of gifts from politicians, visitors, philanthropic organizations and investors who want to invest in their communities. From the communities too, they enjoy prestige from their subjects. Due to these attached privileges to chieftaincy titles, they are keenly contested by aspirants in Ghana. These contests do not involve only contestants, but also their families, clans, lineages and friends (Arhin 1985, Awedoba 2010, Odotei and Awedoba 2006, Tonah 2012, Tonah 2011). This explains why chieftaincy titles in Ghana and specifically within northern territories are bedevilled with conflicts.

This research is focused on the town of Bimbilla, in Northern Ghana, where some of those problems persist. The town is populated by the Nanumbas. It is the centre of the Nanumba north district and at the same time a seat of the chief of the Nanumbas and over-lord of the Nanumba Kingdom. In the Nanum Kingdom, there are chiefs responsible for the installation of the chief of Bimbilla – the Bimbilla Naa. This group of chiefs are referred to as the selectors of a new chief of Nanum and they are nine in number. They regulate activities ranging from funeral ceremony of a deceased chief, to the selection procedure and ‘enskinment’ process of the new chief. The ‘enskinment’ is the term used in northern Ghana to specify a traditional process of making the newly selected chief to sit on the throne covered by the skins of animals, confirming him (and sometimes, rarely, her) as a chief. The skins are usually skins of lions, tigers, leopards, cows and among other animals. These skins symbolize the power and influence the chief has over his subjects.

The new chief is usually selected only after the old one has died. Each of the nine selectors has a special role in the process, but two of them, Jou Naa and Kpatihi have crucial roles in the enskinment of new chief. The selection of a new chief always has to be unanimously agreed by all nine selectors. Once this is agreed, the Juo Naa sits in the room of the first wife of the deceased chief on a special day, when the moon is high in the skies. In the course of the night the other selectors enter the room with the newly selected candi-

date held firmly. The other selectors are responsible for guarding the chief's palace to prevent people from coming closer for security reasons. After the chief is presented to the *Jou Naa*, he is expected to take a special herbal bath to fortify him. He is then led through streets that are deserted with a donkey as part of tradition, to a house where he is confined for a week. At the end of the week the gate of the house is open, he comes out surrounded by his council of elders, and he is then considered a confirmed chief and can sit on the throne covered by animal skins (Skalník 1996:115-116, Anamzoya and Tonah 2012:94-95). The 'gate' here has both literal and metaphoric meaning. 'Royal gate' metaphorically means a royal clan, but in Ghana instead of using the term 'clan' the term 'gate' is used. At the same time, the 'gate' also has literal and symbolic meaning of a door – its opening allows transition from a point of enclosure, as a gate that opens when a chief emerges from it. It could also close when a chief is dead until a candidate from that same clan is enskinned to open it up again.

Chieftaincy in Bimbilla rotates between two royal gates which are *Bangyili* (House of bangle) and *Gbugumayili* (House of Lions). Succession to the throne is on rotational basis among the gates (Anamzoya and Tonah 2012). But the succession has been marred by conflicts. In 1999, a struggle between two families over the Bimbilla chieftaincy erupted in the violent conflict. Two factions claimed to have the right to occupy the throne (Anamzoya and Tonah 2012, Ghana Web. 2018, Boateng 2016) and both factions had supporters who fought for them, tracing their lineages to these factions through ancestry (Ghana Web. 2018). There have also been individuals who are not related to the factions yet support them based on various economic and political interests.

In 2002 the disputes broke out following the death of the former chief from the *Bangyili* gate. A new chief was enskinned from the *Gbugumayili* gate (Brukum 2005), but a different contender from the same gate protested, and this led to a division among the selectors. A faction of three selectors enskinned one chief, and another faction of six enskinned another chief (Anamzoya and Tonah 2012, Skalník 1996). The case was sent for mediation and arbitration through eminent chiefs in the northern regional house of chiefs (Anamzoya and Tonah 2012). The government of Ghana, religious organizations, the various paramount chiefs in the region, the northern regional security council and the non-governmental organizations have all intervened to bring solutions to the issue but the conflict has kept recurring (Anamzoya and Tonah 2012). The issue has been politicized which made it very complex and sensitive to deal with by government – because of the division of

civil (state-based) and traditional (chieftaincy-based) governing structures – and this has worsened the situation.

Northern region of Ghana compared with the Southern part has low indicators in terms of educational, economic, infrastructural and other forms of development. This stems from the colonial era, since the region was viewed by the British colonizers as a labour supply zone, used to boost the economy of the British administration in the south (Tonah 2012). Differences between North and South, in terms of geographical locations of the regions and natural resources with possibilities for economic development in agriculture, industry or tourism for example, led to differences in all spheres of development in the country (Brukum 2005). These differences led to the introduction of the free compulsory universal basic education (FCUBE) and Northern Scholarship Fund to support citizens from the northern part of Ghana in accessing education (Kadingdi 2006). Many students and pupils benefited from this fund and it is still in existence with the objective of increasing school enrolment, investing in human resource of the country and keeping students and pupils in school. The compulsory nature of education and the scholarship fund were especially important for the girls coming from the poorer households, who otherwise would have been left at home. For those pupils, especially girls, interruption of schooling and barriers to complete education have very real-life consequences in terms of future job opportunities and earning possibilities. The violent chieftaincy conflicts in northern Ghana do precisely this: they interrupt the education and produce a number of consequences on pupils, schools and communities.

The chieftaincy conflict in Bimbilla has many consequences on education of young adults and their families and school authorities in terms of direct violence, consequences on their livelihoods and on their long-term dreams and aspirations. Jones and Naylor (2014) note that armed conflicts have direct effects on education— from poor performance of children, injuries and deaths of pupils, parents and teachers, to the destruction of school infrastructure which leads to financial loss in repairs at the aftermath of conflicts. The issue in Bimbilla is not different, because when the chieftaincy conflicts turn violent, the schools' buildings are destroyed by bullets, and school children withdrawn from schools or displaced, people sustain injuries of various sorts or lose their children or parents through the violence. The worse aspect of the conflict is that young adults are killed and others sustain injuries leading to amputations. Violence renders these children psychologically traumatized and some lose their identities in life. Violence is also gender-specific, as girls can be subjected to different forms of violence than boys during the conflict, and can suffered dif-

ferent consequences of school closure. For example, Sommers (2006) notes that the dreams of youth can be jeopardized by violent conflicts. In Bimbilla boys have been known to be forced to join insurgencies, while girls were sometimes raped. This had an impact on their return to schools once the schools were opened again. There were situations in which children and youth do not go back to school and their futures are thus jeopardized. Children in general, and girl-child and young women in particular are often positioned within society on low levels of social hierarchy and are seen as having no agency and decision making power (Kabeer 1999). Kabeer insists that agency is central to empowerment, together with (material and symbolic) resources and achievements. Education is one of those important material and symbolic resources that could help young generation's, and specifically girls' and young women's empowerment. Thus, school disruption in Bimbilla can be seen as directly impacting girls' and young women's empowerment.

The consequences of chieftaincy conflict in Bimbilla is not only limited to young male and female adults but affects also their families and extends to teachers and school authorities. Then it leads to closure of schools, which affects the livelihoods of teachers and school authorities. Worse, some of the school authorities, and educated people in general, are directly and deliberately targeted during conflicts. For example, Isokpan and Durojaye (2016) assert that school authorities in North-Eastern part of Nigeria were deliberate targets of Boko Haram militants and that many teachers and pupils sustained injuries and others were shot. Sometimes when teachers sustain injuries they vacate their posts and newly trained teachers refuse postings to the town (Isokpan and Durojaye 2016, Nkengbeza 2016). This has been a case in Bimbilla, and has resulted in understaffing of schools in the town, thereby affecting the quality of education since small number of teachers had to teach many subjects and handle large classes. As noted earlier, in 1999, a struggle between two families over the chieftaincy erupted in Bimbilla, and turned into violent conflict. Since then, there were frequent eruptions of violence that led to destruction and casualties in the town. Due to the violence, local and national investors ran away from the town, followed by experts from various professions, and especially teaching and nursing. Many other experts and professionals demanded to be transferred to other towns and regions. Businesses came to a halt since people's lives have been at risk and as such, they could not travel and trade freely with other neighbouring villages and towns (UKESSAYS. 2018, Anamzoya and Tonah 2012). The conflicts-led to the inflictions of injuries, death, and the destructions of public as well as private properties. Systems meant for livelihood support, such as busi-

nesses and farms, were lost. Relations that existed peaceful among people are ruined. This instigated suspicion, fear and mistrust among people and within neighbourhoods.

On the aspect of development, monies meant for developing the district are channelled into peacekeeping operations – that is, funding security and police - and into caring for military personnel. These monies could have been used to embark on development projects in the district. Then non-governmental organizations, which were always in Bimbilla, folded up their activities because of the conflict. This increased unemployment in the town affecting adults and young adults especially (Ministry of the Interior - Republic of Ghana. 2018).

The conflict led to imposition of curfew in the town by the government in 2014 (Kemini 2014). The government kept on renewing the curfew ever since. In order to find amicable and a lasting peace to the Bimbilla township, the Supreme Court was urged to pass its verdict on the issue. On the 23rd of May 2018, just a few months before my field research, the court declared one of the contenders - Naa Dasana Andani Yakubu II - as the legitimate ruler of Bimbila township. However, in order to avoid a much-feared outbreak of violence the curfew was again extended (Allotey and Alabira. 2018, Fugu. 2018). It was in place – from 6am to 6pm - when I was in the town conducting my research, and it is still going on. Unfortunately, the curfew also affects economic activities and jobs of professionals such as teachers and nurses who find it difficult to execute their duties in the evenings. Teachers who used to teach students in the College of Education – the site of my research - in the evening can no longer do so and nurses who used to have their shifts in the evening find it difficult going to work unless with military escort. Farmers have had to adjust their visits to the fields (which used to start in very early mornings) and traders have had to adjust their movements of goods, and as such their productivity is lowered. Violation of the curfew hours is a serious offence and attracts not just fines but also police brutalities. Security personnel are always on the streets patrolling and any offender is beaten up heavily and arraigned before a court of law (Yumzaa. 2018, Ministry of the Interior - Republic of Ghana. 2018).

Due to the conflict as well as the curfew, social and cultural activities in the town are also highly affected. Social aspects of life such as communication among people, holding ceremonies and gatherings, and familial and other relationships suffer from restriction of people's movements.

When I visited the town in July and August 2018, it was this stifling atmosphere that confronted me, as well as some hope that the warring parties would accept the last court verdict and that things would get better.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

The main question of this research is:

What are the consequences of communal conflict on schooling of male and female young adults, their families and school authorities in Bimbilla, Northern Ghana and how gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic background of young adults and families are implicated in these consequences?

Sub-questions

1. What relevance is given to education by students, their parents and teachers; and especially how they see relevance of the education of girls?
2. What is the relevance of gender, factional divisions and socio-economic background in the ways young college students, their parents and teachers are affected by the conflict?
3. Are there, and if so what are specific differences in effects of the conflict on young men and women from different factional and class backgrounds?
4. What are the specific material and symbolic aspects of the conflict-based school interruptions in terms of (dis)empowerment of young Female college students?

Given differences in class, gender and chieftaincy affiliations with 'gates' of young adult male and female college students, the interruption of their schooling will presumably have different consequences for themselves as well as for their different families. My objective is to find out what these consequences and differences are, and how are they perceived by the students, parents and teachers, and in so doing to contribute to the existing literature on modalities of violent conflict and education in general, and in Ghana specifically.

Given the reliance of education for empowerment of girls and young women, it is especially important to analyze consequences of conflict-based school interruptions for them. This knowledge may be useful for creating policies and practices that could ameliorate the consequences, if not prevent them.

1.4 Methodology and Methods of research

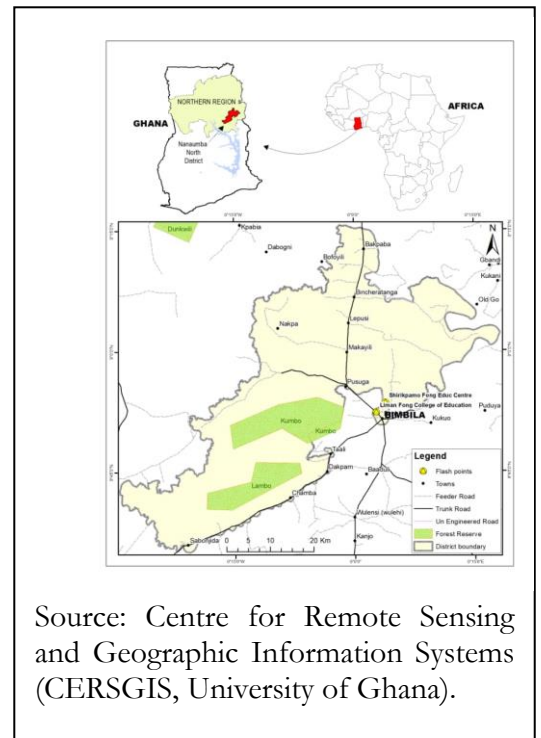
1.4.1 Research site

The research is conducted in the Bimbilla college of education located in the Eastern part of the town. It is the second landmark after a petrol – filling station, when entering the town from the north, approaching from Yendi, where I was stationed. Bimbilla is the Nanumba north district capital and is 71.2km south from Yendi. The College compound is a large, walled area, with the rationale of providing security and preventing people from encroaching on the land of the school. Classrooms and dormitories, as well as other College buildings are, inter-laced with parks and green areas. Classroom buildings are closer to the administrative building, with zinc summer hats, where students sit for group discussions and for leisure. The compound¹ is full of trees ranging from mango to shea nut trees and other flowering trees, given the school a conducive atmosphere and esthetic sense of beauty (See Figure 1).

Courses taught in the school are geared towards educating future teachers of basic schools. The population of the first and second-year classes was 887, with 665 boys and 222 girls. Among these students were both those who come from Bimbilla town, and those who were from different towns and lived in the dormitories within the walled compound. The former is referred to – in local school parlance – as natives, and the students from outside the town were called non – native students.

The teachers are also both from the town and those who come from other places, often near-by towns. Those teachers who come from outside town live within the quarters of the school, in dormitories and flats provided for teachers. The interviewed parents were

¹ The compound can be seen on Google Maps by simply typing on 'Bimbilla Ghana, College of education. A number of photos of the compound show the buildings and the groves, as well as students. Also, on <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Bimbico/photos/?ref=page>



Source: Centre for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems (CERSGIS, University of Ghana).

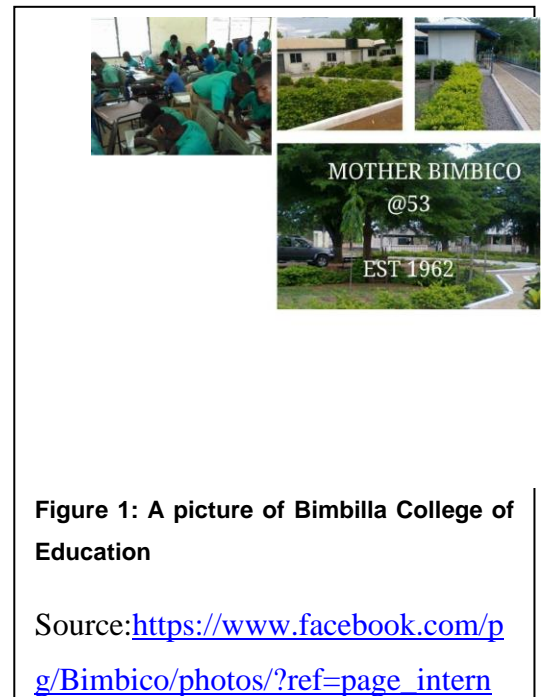


Figure 1: A picture of Bimbilla College of Education

Source: https://www.facebook.com/pg/Bimbico/photos/?ref=page_intern

only those who live in the town, and among them were farmers and traders. The farmers usually go to the farm in the morning after the end of the curfew (at 6am) and come home before the evening curfew hours which start at (6pm). Their farms are located in the outskirts of the Bimbila community or in neighbouring villages. The traders trade with different towns and also return before the curfew hours.

1. 4.2 Methodology and Methods

The researcher employed qualitative methods of generation/collection of data for answering research questions, with in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations as main research tools. An in-depth information was needed to understand the consequences of the conflict, hence the choice of qualitative method for this research (Creswell et al. 2003, Hennink et al. 2010).

Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used in selecting participants and interviewees. Purposive sampling was used in selecting participants for the focus group discussions since the researcher used his judgement in selecting participants from their various levels- first-year students start at level 100 and second years are in level 200 and third years are in level 300. Hennink et al. (2010) and O'leary (2004) had the opinion that on certain instances researchers might use their own judgements in selecting their participants during collection of data. Then interviewees were selected based on snowball sampling technique. Some of the students referred the researcher to their parents for interviews. This explains the assertion of O'leary (2004) that in snowball sampling interviewees could be selected based on referrals in other for data collection.

In other to understand the relevance of gender, chieftaincy affiliations and socio-economic background in the way young adults, families and teachers experience and deal with the consequences of the conflict on youth's schooling, interviews with adults and young adults and focus group discussions with young adult students were used to solicit information. In relation to gender, separate focus groups were organized for young adult males and females and similar questions were posed to them with the aim of understanding how both sexes experience and perceive the consequences of the conflict on their education.

Then, general information regarding the socio-economic background and factional belonging of young adult students was gotten from the Vice Principal, before meeting with the students. He asserted that the school was composed of students from different back-

grounds, but majority were those from Bimbila town. These students were from different factional lines and socioeconomic backgrounds. He said majority of them were from farming, trading and few from elite backgrounds.

The researcher started the interviews by first approaching some of the teachers – in local parlance called ‘masters’. He interviewed five teachers starting with the Vice Principal of the School and some other teachers who were around. However, as it was a week for students’ end of semester examination, getting some of the masters was not easy. The researcher had to wait until some of them finish with their invigilation. The atmosphere of the interviews was mainly conducive since the teachers were mainly open to questioning. Some did not open up initially, since the researcher was a foreign student and coming from a different kingdom, and the research visit coincided with a corruption scandal exposed in the local media which attracted a lot of attention from journalists and others. An investigative journalist – who come from Bimbilla - came out with corruption scandal in the Ghana Football Association. Thus, my presence in the town was initially associated with this scandal and people were not very trusty when I approached them. However, the earlier direct and indirect communication with the school has helped to clear the air. The fact that I could show my introductory letter from ISS stating the purpose of my presence, and my ability in speaking the Dagbani language helped open the interview scene. I was also careful on sensitive areas, avoiding too many direct questions in relation to differences in the factional lines, and soliciting this information by referring to general ‘relationships’ between teachers and students, and among students during the conflict.

The students were organized into three focus discussion groups – one group of 8 young girls; a mixed-sex group of 14 students; and another group made up of 8 native students which was mixed sex in nature and 2 students were interviewed based on their knowledge on the topic. The rationale of the female group was to talk about consequences of the conflict on their school life and how important education was to them. The mixed sex group was meant to find out the perspective of both young adult males and females on the same topic. The native group was not planned originally, but was organized based on the researcher’s insights into research-relevant relationships in the school. While talking with students I realized that in the two focus groups the native students were largely quiet. Only two of them were contributing to the discussion, and their views were quite different from others’. The information I was getting from these group discussions left some of my questions unaddressed. Then I thought it wise to organize one group with ‘native’ students only, to give them privacy in discussing their own views among themselves and not neces-

sary to the hearing of everybody. This was especially pertinent to the question of how the conflict affected relationships between teachers and students. It turned out that – then within the ‘native’ group – students were much more critical, especially of the teacher-student relationships – than when among the ‘non-native’. The discussions also led to students finding out and seeking for clarifications and justifications from each other on how each of them experienced the consequences and the manner in which they dealt with them, hence deeper understanding and rich data was achieved through the use of this technique. This was in line with O’leary (2004) and Hennink et al. (2010), who had the view that effective focus group discussions normally lead to participants seeking for clarifications from each other and helps in obtaining quality information from participants. Different set of questions were posed to parents to find out how they experienced the conflict and perceived the consequences on their children’s schooling. The researcher created a friendly atmosphere that enabled participants and interviewees in contributing effectively to the discussions which was in line with the arguments of Creswell and Clark (2007) and Hennink et al. (2010), who noted that there should be a cordial relationship between researchers and their participants and interviewees during data collection to aid smooth divulging of information.

The question on symbolic and material aspects of the consequences of conflict were asked through individual interviews with five (5) teachers and five (5) parents. They were asked how they experienced and dealt with the school closures, and how violent conflict affected the short and long-term plans for their children/students, as well as their own livelihoods. The researcher interviewed three parents in their homes and later interviewed two on the phone. The time of the data collection was in the farming season so some of the parents went to their farms early in the morning and came back to the house in the evening. Some of them were traders who were busy during the daytime and only free at night. Unfortunately, in the evening I could not get in touch with them face to face, since the curfew was from 6pm to 6am, thus just about allowing them time to come back home before the curfew starts. Therefore, I used phone interviews in the evenings after 6pm with the two parents.

During the focus group discussions, a schoolmate of mine who studied at the local University, acted as my research assistant and took detailed notes of the discussions. Then on the part of the interviews with the teachers, I interviewed them personally and used recordings to enable me collect the information they were providing. The aim of interviewing them personally was to give them privacy and confidentiality to enable them to feel free to

divulge information at their comfort. Then the sensitive aspect of the topic was another reason. Allowing a third party during the interviewing process would have prevented interviewees from divulging enough information. The same method was adopted when I was interviewing parents, though I was linked up to them by their children, yet the children were not around when I was interviewing them. In the Ghanaian culture and Africa in general children are not allowed to be around when strangers are in the house discussing issues with parents. Though the assembly member in charge of community development helped in introducing me to the parents, it was meant to affirm the community's awareness of my research and made them to understand that it was meant for academic purpose. Also, since there was still curfew not all tensions were subsided so the intervention of the assembly member was a must and since I was now at the community level too. However, permission was sought before the recording and the rationale for the recording was also communicated as well. This helped in discarding the sensitivity, dilemma and moral aspect of the research in relation to the questions that were posed to parents (Campbell and Groundwater-Smith 2007, Halse and Honey 2005). This reposed confidence in parents and they felt free to comply with the researcher. And the introductory letter that the researcher received from his supervisor alongside his own ethical notes he prepared, helped him much since they were given to parents and other participants to read and understand before the commencement of the research.

The findings were first analyzed thematically by focusing on the single group of interviewees i.e. teachers, parents, native students, non-native students, young women. Then a comparison across the groups of participants was done within each thematic section. The themes allowed me to directly link empirical material with the research questions. This correlates with the argument of O'Leary (2004) and Hennink et al. (2010) who are of the view that findings from qualitative research are gotten from interviewees, participants, texts, observations and other sources and are always analyzed in relation to secondary data – i.e. literature that shapes theoretical approach to the research problem, as well as research questions - for effective and efficient judgements. Thus, I was able to analyze the findings in relation to the theoretical discussions about conflict and education which helped in answering the questions of this research.

1.4.3 Target Population

While I interviewed teachers and parents, students from the Bimbila College of Education were the main target population of this study. The age group of these students ranges from

18-32 years, the youngest was 18 years old and the oldest was 32 years. Students within this level of education in Ghana are qualified to vote under the 1992 constitution of Ghana and could contribute meaningful to decision-making process in the country and within their respective communities (Quashigah 1992). They were chosen as a target population because they were already young adults, capable of providing meaningful contributions towards the research, and especially since they were future professional teachers; thus their views on the consequences of the conflict on themselves and their education is deemed specific. This group could be viewed within the “waithood” category group, which is seen as a process of making experiments, based on acts of improvising and enormous in aspects of being creative and taking to different forms of modalities for their survival and coping with obstacles in living as young adults (Honwana 2014:1). This group of young adults are viewed as not being children and not being full adults based on responsibilities ascribed to adulthood. The opinions and conditions of this young men and women, in waithood should be taken into consideration to foster development and to devise mechanisms and policies, geared towards including them in various spheres of development. Marginalizing and excluding their opinions in development agenda will lead to hostilities and retarded forms of development in the African Continent (Finn and Oldfield 2015).

Ben White (2009) viewed the definition of youth from the social perspective and not necessarily as a biological construct linked to age. His perspective to the definition of youth is relational taking into account setting and space, as well as the responsibilities that the youth is taking up – such as earning an income, heading a household est. Nevertheless, many authors do not look at the social context but rather focuses on age range and this varies among countries and organizations. Thus defining youth/young adults is context, country and author specific (Sommers 2006a, Sommers 2007). In my research, all the interviewed students are therefore considered as youth viewing arguments from Howana (2014) and Fin and Oldfield (2015), although their ages vary considerably (18-32).

Many children and youth in northern Ghana and Bimbilla fend for themselves, due to the death of their parents in the conflict. Both young men and young women migrate to the southern part of the country or engage in jobs to pay for their school fees and to cater for themselves. The girls and young women are sometimes impregnated leading to an end in their educational life. Many students who are in school also work alongside schooling in order to earn some income for the family, which affects their academic performance.

Working with young adults has spared me some ethical questions of working with children, but nevertheless, has posed other ethical issues. The mode of research carried out

pertaining to young adults/youth should take cognizance of the setting and context in particular. “Adult spaces dominate in society; thus it is difficult to find young adult spaces in which to conduct research” (Punch 2002:328). Therefore, it was imperative for me to have knowledge about power relations with regards to conducting research with young adults. Thus I have conducted focus group discussions with them without presence of the teachers and other school authorities. After understanding power dynamics among students I have also (as noted earlier) designed a separate group of ‘native’ students. Students were promised that their discussions will remain private, and they felt free to express their minds without fear or favour since the research was geared towards them and for their future. ‘Private’ does not mean here keeping the research in the library without sharing it, but rather it means not disclosing students’ individual positions and discussions to teachers, parents and members of the town. This allows me to protect individual student’s identity and still feel free to disclose their opinion about their situation, because this opinion is important and is based on their own life experience. Students agreed for the information to be used for academic purposes like for publications and for government and NGOs to use it for policy formulations among other things. My intentions with, and the purpose of the research was communicated to them before the commencement of the research and they agreed. I also formulated questions by investing in clarity of language to avoid ambiguity and enable young adults to participate actively in the discussions (Punch 2002).

1.5 Justification of the Study

Education is seen as one of the cornerstones of development as well as empowerment, and women’s and girl’s empowerment has been among the most important goals of many national and supra-national institutions. Thus, interruption of children’s and youth’s education, and especially that of girls and young women, may have very specific gendered consequences on their future lives. Article (29) subsection (d) of the UN convention on the rights of children stipulates that “the education of the child shall be directed to: the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin” (Cohen 1989:1468). This underscores the need for schooling in peaceful environments devoid of communal conflicts and other forms of violence, with the ultimate aim of unity in diversity. The case of school life of young adults/youth in Bimbila, town in the Northern part of Ghana is different, due to chieftaincy conflict which sometimes lead to the closure of local schools for days, weeks and

months. This research focused on consequences of conflict on schooling of young adult males and females/youth. Because of the importance of education for development. I investigated how young adults/youth, their families and teachers /school authorities deal with interruption of school life and what those interruptions mean for schools, families and children. In particular, because of the specific relevance of education for empowerment of girls and young women, I researched whether the conflicts have different (material and symbolic) impacts on young adult men and women.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Research

Voice recordings was used in collecting data, from interviewees and participants and notes were also written by a research assistant in focus group discussions. A lot of data was collected, but not all was transcribed since some of the information was not geared towards the topic. The local dialect of the area which is Dagbani was used in interviewing two parents who did not understand English. The interviewees clearly noted and were guaranteed that information was confidential and should not be traced back to the individual person. All precautions were done to protect informants' identities.

Some of the contextual situation as well as my own personal characteristics – and how they were perceived by the potential interviewees - may have influenced the collection of data. Initially it was not easy getting teachers and students to participate in the research since it was time for the end of semester exams. Teachers asked me to wait for them to finish their invigilation before attending. Then the students were busy studying and I had to find out from them if they were comfortable to discuss with me. Though they were informed in advance some of them responded positively while others asked for postponement. The young adult females were first ready to talk, so I had my first focus group discussions with them. Afterwards when I compensated them with drinks some of the male students mobilized and asked if am ready they could discuss with me too. Since I wrote to the school seeking for permission to collect data, they had a meeting and briefed the staff regarding how to help me, and informed the students as well.

I am a northerner but from a different kingdom and coming to collect data as a student from the western world. These, initially, were the reasons they were not opening up. I was both too familiar with, and too foreign to the town. I made them understand that I am a researcher, a learner who is trying to learn about their conflict for academic purposes. Then I gave them the copies of my introductory letter from my supervisor that states that I am a student researcher and that there are stringent ethical issues in relation to participating

in the interview and the focus group discussions. This helped a lot and they started opening up.

On the part of the students and parents I did the same thing. However, the parents and students were sceptical following the investigations into the corruption scandals within the Ghana Football Association (GFA) by Anas Aremeyaw Anas, which coincided with my fieldwork (Anas 2018). The president of the GFA was caught by candid camera by the journalist collecting money from foreigners in the name of awarding them with contracts. Because the investigation of this issue was done by journalists in going around the town, questioning and recording answers, which was similar to my approach of collecting the data this initially raised fears in my participants. I availed my documents to the students before the commencement of the focus group discussions. I invited the vice principal of the College who introduced me to the students and told them I am a student researcher. So they should feel free to discuss with me pertaining to my research. He told them that though they were cautioned not to talk about the conflict by the administration of the school, since the time the conflicts started erupting, they should feel free to discuss with me. The caution was geared towards both students and teachers to prevent the conflict within the school level, since discussing such issues among teachers or between teachers and students could lead to arguments and the same from the perspectives of students. This was meant to halt spillover of the conflict from town to the school level. Some of the students were feeling reluctant in divulging information since I was a foreign student from the western world. I told them to feel free to discuss with me in their own local dialect and this helped the power dynamics between us and they open up. This was also experienced during the interviewing process with some of the teachers. I used the same method in convincing some of the teachers in opening up.

On the part of the parents I explained who I was and how I came to learn about the conflict and needed their support. Some of them were illiterate but those who were educated, I gave them the introductory letter and the ethics of participation to read before commencing the interview. Then I spoke in the local dialect with the illiterate parents telling them whom I was.

Next to those ethical and academic challenges, another challenge was the weather and infrastructure, or more precisely, the distances and the quality of the road. I travel every day by motorbike for 2-3 hours to Bimbila from Yendi returning to Yendi late in the evening. Then I did not stay in Bimbila because there was a potential for violence, since tensions were still looming over the town. Rainy season has made roads terrible muddy and slippery.

One day on my way to the field I nearly fell but for being an experienced rider I was able to manage my way out of the muddy and slippery portions of the road.

1.7.: Ethical and Political Choices and Personal Involvement

Before going to the field I requested for an introductory letter from my supervisor and attached it to a formal letter, I wrote to the school's principal requesting permission to collect data on their campus. I used these letters also for any other persons, who were to be contacted to solicit information for the purpose of this research. These letters served as proves to show that I was only out to learn about the consequences of the conflict and not on any other purposes.

I also took care to dress within the culture of the area and thus not stick out as a foreigner. This enabled my participants and interviewees to feel free in the discussions and interviews. They were friendly towards me as one of their own, especially since I understood Dagbani, which is the native language of the area. Hence, they divulged information within their own comfort leading to valuable information for the research. I made it known to participants that I was learning about the conflict and its consequences on school life and am not there for any other purposes. As such I had no opinions regarding which faction is right or wrong. This prevented participants from pulling my tongue since I was dealing with a sensitive issue.

Besides, I took extra caution during the collection of the data that guided me in not harming my participants and interviewees, that is causing physical, psychological or emotional damage to my participants and interviewees (O'leary 2004, Hennink et al. 2010). Although some of the information was traumatic – as students spoke about their fears – but I showed understanding to their feelings and they did not hesitate to tell me about them. Participants were given the leeway whenever they didn't feel like participating in the research. Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents was upheld in making them feel safe and secured without any forms of doubts during and after participation (O'leary 2004, Creswell 2013). I explicitly told participants the rationale for the research and the aim of conducting it. I promised participants and interviewees that the information provided shall never ever be used for dubious means but will be used for academic purposes, as well as important guideline for non-governmental organizations and the government for policy formulations. In collection of data from the field it is appropriate to seek permission through formal means. The school authorities were notified through formal ways – writing

a letter to them and seeking for their approval before the conduct of the research (Creswell and Clark 2007, Creswell and Creswell 2017).

I compensated my interviewees and participants after the interviews and the focus group discussions with drinks and snacks. I also availed the transcriptions of our discussions and interviews to them, for the purposes of confirmation before using the information for the analysis. Then I wrote a thank-you note to students through WhatsApp and a formal thank-you letter to the school.

The research focus was chosen because of my empathy towards young adult students and youth in educational life in a conflict-prone area, witnessing my own friends during my primary school days who suffered in education because of the guinea fowl war in northern Ghana in 1994. This research will hopefully help philanthropic organizations, NGOs and the government in devising mechanisms of curtailing violent conflicts in northern Ghana and protecting young adults' rights to uninterrupted education. Therefore, families and young adult students will have a brighter future of developing their educational potentials.

1.8.: Structure of the paper

Quite apart from this introductory chapter, this study composes of five other chapters. In the preceding chapter, I discussed theoretical issues relevant for this research. I started looking at the fields of education and conflict and they were addressed by viewing education as a form of empowerment. Then intersectional analysis was employed, which helped in understanding how gender, chieftaincy factions and socio-economic background were implicated in the effects of conflict on school closures. Chapter three, focused on the importance of education in life with emphasizes on education of young women and girls. The fourth chapter, dwells on how the violent conflicts affected the education of students – that is in terms of material and emotional effects and on students return to school. The fifth chapter, elaborated on the nature and manner in which the conflict-affected relationships between students and teachers and among the students and among teachers. Then in the penultimate part, I summarized my discussions and conclusions were drawn.

Chapter 2 Theoretical perspective relevant for this research

2.1 Introduction

Research work normally entails a lot of fields. The starting fields in this research are conflict and education, and they were addressed from the perspectives of addressing education within the field of empowerment I utilized intersectional analysis, by looking at how gender and chieftaincy factions and socio-economic background were implicated in effects of conflict on school closures.

Factional belonging is a powerful tool employed by people during conflicts (Wright and MartÃ- I Puig 2012, Ifedi and Anyu 2011), as it galvanizes support for protest against injustice, such as for example land-grabbing, social and political exclusion and marginalization (Krieger and Meierrieks 2016). But it can also foster essentialized identities and animosities. In Bimbila, the conflict is based on chieftaincy among the people who belong to the same ethnic group, but to different tribal and family factions. Thus, there are intra-ethnic divisions. In addition, each of the factions in the conflict are affiliated to the major political parties in the country.

Scholarships on gender and conflict shows importance of the ideas about femininity and masculinity for the experiences of young women and men, girls and boys. They all can be victims during conflicts and as such warrant humanitarian assistance and interventions to alleviate their plight (Montero 1999, SÃ,rensen 2011). It is not uncommon to see students- girls, boys and young adults being displaced during conflicts and others being killed (SÃ,rensen 2011, Coulter 2008). In addition, both sexes take part in violent conflicts and thus can also be seen as both perpetrators and victims (Zarkov 2006). The issue in northern Ghana regarding chieftaincy conflicts is similar as both women and men take part in the conflict even though men are more often the perpetrators of violence and participate in it more than the women. This is also true for youth, as both young men and women and young children have participated in a number of African conflicts, all be it in different roles, for example, girls and young women forced to become 'bush wives' of military men (Mazurana et al. 2002, Sommers 2006)

All of those issues may impact education during violent conflicts. Whiles conflict and education are often seen as two separate fields, there are authors who have argued based on the relationship between the two. This relationship is crucial for my research and within

this relationship different authors have brought up different issues, such as enrolment, performance, school dropouts, factional belongings and economy, kidnappings etc. I bring, next to these a question how is the relationship between conflict and education affected by gender, factional affiliations and socio-economic background of young male and female students, and finally, how disruption of education impact young women's life prospects, keeping in mind that education is one of the cornerstones of women's and girls' empowerment.

2.1 Conflict and Education

Novelli and Cardozo (2008) viewed the dynamics of conflicts from the perspective of educational institutions, which are influenced by western powers. Thus, they posit that educational institutions could be both the "victims and perpetrators" of violent conflicts through influences from external forces (Novelli and Cardozo 2008:78). In a similar aspect they noted that education could be good in itself and could contribute to the process of development and conflict management. Nevertheless, education could bring about conflict through disciplines taught in schools and their negative repercussions in societies. Thus education is viewed as two faceted (Bush and Saltarelli 2000), capable of influencing conflict and being influenced by it.

Gallagher (2004) looked at how education is framed within societies. He made an argument that modernity has not been able to solve issues of factional differences, which led to conflicts and divisive nature of societies (Gallagher 2004). The nexus between conflict and education is acknowledge by various authors. Conflicts have tremendous consequences on enrolment levels of both boys and girls. The impact of the conflicts extends from schools and education to communities and to individual households. This could be equated to other areas which experience series of violent conflicts and which affects most of their educational systems. This is because sometimes, the budgets which are meant to develop educational sectors are channelled into military expenditure or for peacekeeping operations. This leads to closure of schools and change in school curriculums and subsequently drop-out rates (Shemyakina 2011).

Lynn Davis (2003) also noted that there is a relation between conflict and education especially, when conflict is influenced by the state through the educational system. She alluded to the "Marxist curriculum" to clarify her stand and believed that institutions of learning are avenues of perpetuating conflicts, which could be based on ethnic, gender and on class lines (Davies 2003:118). However, she posits that conflict should rather serve as a

ground during which students should mobilize their communities in order to foster peaceful and cordial relationships. This was stressed through her concept of “complex adaptive schools” (Davies 2003:118). Davis argued that following the aftermath of conflicts there is always room for peaceful negotiations to bring lasting peace. She observed that it is an opportunity for students to use the education they acquired to initiate peaceful co-existence in their own communities. The conflict in Bimbila is protracted and the society still cannot be mobilized through young adult men and women for peaceful co-existence, although this may be possible in future. The young adults/youth in Bimbila are affiliated with the various warring factions and are socialized into such factions. This is because some of them from infancy are always told the faction they belong and reasons why the other faction is not good. Hence, the town is divided according to supporters of the various factions. This created division within the society which makes the conflict very protracted.

2.2 Education, Girls’ Empowerment and Intersectionality

Despite the fact that there has been some achievement in the schooling of boys and girls, there is disparity in enrolment as a result of violent conflicts, in some countries. Boys are more enrolled in some countries while girls’ enrolment in other countries are higher than boys (Rezaee et al. 2012, La-helma 2014:171).

In Bimbila boys and young men are more enrolled than girls and young women (Ghana. Statistical Service 2013). Hence girls are always encouraged to attend school with much care and attention from families and philanthropic organizations, such as CAMFED. These organizations helped in enrolling girls from different backgrounds in the town. It was observed in the UK and India that gender, ethnicity and social background of students, such as for example single household, are determinants of their school performance (Gillborn 1997, Kamat 2014). Those social relations are also important in this research. In order to grasp their relevance, I will use intersectional perspective, analysing how factional affiliation and socio-economic background may be linked to the ways young male and female college students experience the conflict in Bimbila, and how conflict affects their schooling. Intersectionality is important because it allows us to analyse several aspects of people’s lives at the same time, and to understand how they are related to each other (Crenshaw 1989). While I start from gender – i.e. looking at young adult females and males and ideas about femininity and masculinity – it is important to understand how their belonging to different factions of conflict affects their schooling, and how important is their family’s economic background in that context. Besides, intersectionality has been employed in this research

with the notion of a critical reflection on gender, factions and socio-economic background of young adult males and females/youth in Bimbila and how these belief systems based on these different power relations create discrimination, exclusions and marginalization of young college students in Bimbila (Cleaver 2002, Ferruh Y. 2015).

Looking at young female students is important from the perspective of girls' and women's empowerment, and the ways they could utilize education as both symbolic and material resource (Kabeer 1999) to better their life options. Education is very relevant in empowering women and girls, not only because it can support them in acquiring jobs and income, thus economic power. Research in Sub-Saharan Africa and other parts of the world also shows that the higher education woman has, the later she marries and the less children she has, and that often reduces maternal mortality rates and improves women's health (Pradhan 2015, Duah and Adisah-Atta 2017, Larsson and Stanfors 2014). Women with education also encourage their children to have education. Thus, education is a very important aspects of individual woman's empowerment. For that reason, it is important to see what happens to young women's schooling during and after the conflict, and whether they continue with educations after the disruption.

Beyond individual empowerment education changes position of women within society, with women's struggles for their rights and gender equality, thus there is more justice in society (P. Brown et al. 2013, B. Brown and Lauder 2007, Hurd and Johnson 1967, Adams and Bell 2016). Finally, women's education leads to improvement in many spheres of life within a nation and the world at large (A. Banigo T. et al. 2017). "The girl-child and women education contributes positively in national development and achieving national transformation. The deprivation of quality formal education to women in a society could result to an irreparable and un-countable loss in most sectors of the economy" (A. Banigo T. et al. 2017:24). Thus, education of women and girls has varied forms of benefits to individual women, their communities, larger societies, nations and the whole world in general.

Chapter 3 Education and empowerment

This chapter focuses on the importance of education in life, with much attention on the education of girls and young women, as expressed by the college students, their parents and their teachers. There were many answers to my question about relevance of education, and many of the answers cut across all the groups. The importance of education in development was mentioned by all participants. They argued that knowledge and skills gained from education are applied to help in bringing about development in their communities, societies, country and the world at large. Education was therefore seen as a catalyst for development to triumph in our various societies. This confirmed Banigo et al. (2017) assertion that education leads to development in several aspects of life. Some of the teachers and students said:

Our communities normally develop because of education and imparting the knowledge and skills acquired on the young ones within the community IwT2² (7th July, 2018)

As you see our town needs development. Now the only way towns develop is through education. After coming out of school and being employed one could help his siblings through paying fees and other forms of support IwS1³ (8th July, 2018).

Teachers, parents and students all mentioned acquisition of jobs which results in better livelihood as one of the importance of education. Education from their perspective helps in equipping students with jobs after successful completion of their courses at the tertiary level. Through this students would be able to earn salaries, which would help in improving their lives. Since these salaries are used in planning their lives and in changing their status within their societies. This confirmed assertions made by scholars who argued on education leading to economic improvements and in social mobility (P. Brown et al. 2013, B. Brown and Lauder 2007, Banigo et al. 2017). A teacher in answering the question said:

In terms of finance [students] will be employed by the government as professional teachers and will be earning salary at the end of every month. Some of them after a successful completion of the course they do set up their own business. This could help in developing their various communities which are all contributions as a result of education IwT3⁴ (7th July 2018).

² Interview with teacher 2

³ Interview with first student

⁴ Interview with teacher 3

Many answers related education to socialization, implying that education helps in passing or inculcating moral values, which are cherished by the society and shunning from values which are detrimental to the growth of societies. This finding contradicts the assertion made by Cleaver (2002) and Ferruh Y. (2015), that power dynamics in gender, factional lines and socio-economic background of students could lead to exclusions, marginalization and discriminations within societies. One parent said: “Education helps in the socialization process of children, since they are taught in our societies values that are expected of them. It helps in inculcating values of discipline upon these young adults” IwP3⁵ (28th July, 2018).

Among the answers one important idea was about visions in life: through education people are able to accomplish their long and short-term goals in life. This is possible through their advancement in the educational ladder and being able to achieve their visions through set objectives. There is a correlation in this finding to Sommers (2006), who had the view that the dreams and aspirations of the youth could easily be jeopardized through violent conflicts. Thus, conflicts would prevent this youth from achieving their visions in education. A male parent had the notion that: “Education helps these young adults to realize their dreams in live” IwP2⁶ (13th August, 2018).

Parents believed that education helps in the reduction of poverty, since it aids in youth finding good jobs and in the passage of policies and programs in a nation. It influences the development of families, especially the education of females. One of the parents acknowledged how the education of his daughter has been very vital towards uplifting the economic status of his family. This is in line with Kabeer (1999) assertion on the economic aspect of empowerment of women through education. She noted that education would not only help women to have control over resources to the development of their lives, but women would be in the position of curbing poverty in their respective families, through knowledge they have acquired and in relation to economic management. In the words of the parents:

Education is good within a family it helps in reducing poverty. As I was talking about the monies that my daughter gives me and her mother, from her allowance she takes at the college. I use such monies in investing to meet our daily needs IwP2 (13th August 2018).

⁵ Interview with parent 3

⁶ Interview with parent 2

I am praying for my children to succeed and salvage the whole family from poverty IwP47 (5th August, 2018)

One daughter sees the relevance of education in the same way: Education is important because it helps in curbing poverty FgD38 (7th July, 2018)

Parents also note that families are recognized through achievements in educational laurels by some family members. This leads to prestige by some members of families in relation to member's achievements. A parent mentioned:

Education serves as prestige to the family, an educated person means a lot. As I am not educated any time officials come into the house I normally call my daughter to hear and interpret their visit to me IwP1⁹ (10th August, 2018)

The purpose of education in serving as a form of investment into the future was given as an answer by both parents and students. Education is viewed as an investment on the part of parents and students. Parents invest into their children and at successful completion and earning jobs, students help in taking care of their parents. On the perspective of students it was not different since they utilize the expenditure of parents as a form of investments, when they start working they have to take care of their parents by supporting them in all aspects. This could be seen as dividends on the part of parents. Thus, this buttress the argument of Brown and Lauder (2007), who noted that education contributes to economic growth of people. One of the participants said: "It is really important, it serves as source of income and as a form of investment" IwP2 (13th August, 2018)

Teachers add another dimension of the relevance of education: its importance in equipping young people with leadership role. As young adults in the college of education students are equipped with skills of leadership and how to behave as leaders. Some of them might be head teachers and headmasters or headmistresses after completion of the course within their communities. Mobility aspect of education has been emphasized, leading to change in positions this finding confirmed the findings of Brown et al. (2013) and Brown and Lauder (2007). In the words of the teachers:

Both males and females, it prepares them towards leadership roles within our societies IwT2 (8th July, 2018)

Our students stand to be good role models since they are going out to be teachers. It equips them with leadership roles since they will be serving as teachers and could find themselves in being head teachers and among other positions IwT3 (10th July, 2018).

⁷ Interview with parent 4

⁸ Focus group discussion, student number 3

⁹ Interview with parent 1

Students gave more varied answers when they were reflecting on importance of education to the wellbeing of young adult females. One of the most often repeated answers they gave was that education empowers women and girls, gives them recognition and a sense of purpose and determination. They had the view that as young educated female students, education accords them social recognition which aids them in influencing decisions in their respective communities and societies. Education is seen as having power to change people's life circumstances, to lead them into better future. There was a tremendous trust among students in the power of education to make life better. This was particularly clear during the focus group discussion with young female students. The trust in the positive transformative power of education has given some of the students' enormous sense of dedication and perseverance. Students discussed how teenage pregnancy often leads young women to abandon school. But one of the female students strongly disagreed, citing her own circumstances. She argued how her own determination and trust in the benefits of education helped her stay at school even after giving birth:

Determination is the key when talking about education. I gave birth very early, my daughter is schooling and I am here too. I was determined, that is how I have been able to make it up to this place. I did not discourage myself despite the fact that I gave birth early. And here I am, this was where I wanted to be and here I am. That does not mean that if you give birth early you are going to be useless in life or those who do not give birth early are better. It is all about determination, if you are determined and you want to get to the sky you will get there. That is how it is, determination is vital towards success FgD3 (7th July, 2018).

This, to an extent, buttresses Kabeer (1999) assertion that empowerment could be viewed from three dimensions: resources, agency and achievements. Dedication and perseverance can certainly be seen as both symbolic resources as well as elements of young women's agency. Social recognition can be seen as achievement of empowerment through education. One of the young women in a focus group discussion stated:

A woman is much recognized if she is educated. There is one woman in my village her opinion is always sought for in any decisions. To me I think women should be empowered in order for them to go higher and to help in community development. Empowering women will help them take various positions in live FgD5¹⁰ (7th July, 2018).

The importance of education is not only limited to empowerment, determination and recognition but also, acquisition of jobs which results in better livelihoods, was mentioned as one of the importance. Students viewed education from the perspective of equipping them with jobs after a successful completion of their courses. The earnings from their professions would uplift their social status within their societies. This confirmed Brown

¹⁰ Focus group discussion, student number 5

(2013) findings which posits that “the complementary demands of efficiency and justice result in more meritocratic societies, characterized by high rates of social mobility” (Brown 2013:637). The success of these young female adults centres much on their abilities and not necessarily gender, race or origins. This is realized through education which equips students with jobs, and intend help them to realize their dreams and social positions in life. Similarly, Brown (2007) had the view that education should provide individuals with what he termed “power tools” for them to make meaningful contributions within the public and private spheres of life. This he noted, will help people to use their faculties to understand and interpret life for the wellbeing of everybody (Brown 2007:18). Therefore, one argues from the perspective of economy whiles the other argues from the social point of view directed at change within the status quo. This also buttresses the assertion of Banigo et. al. (2017), which revealed that depriving women education would affect all levels of a nation’s economy. One of the participants, a male teacher said: “Education helps woman economically, many of them through education they normally established their own businesses. This helps their families and the nation as well” IwT4¹¹ (7th July, 2018).

A distinct finding from the students was that education liberates women and help them to fight injustices metered out on them by inimical societal norms, which impedes development. Though there were similar answers given by teachers, parents and students about the relevance of education, only students brought up the issue of elimination of negative cultural practices. One of the male students in the mixed-sex focus group stressed this when he said:

“Education has helped in reducing negative cultural practices towards women. For example, in the olden day’s young girls (virgins) were send to shrines to pay for atrocities committed by their family members. Such practices are now seen as crime and have been stopped based on passage of legislation on them” FgD9¹² (7th July, 2018)

Hence, education aids women to fight against negative cultural practices, experienced from patriarchal norms that breed subordination and inequality within the society. For instance, the students mentioned female genital mutilation, the trokosi system¹³, widowhood rites just to mention a few. This confirmed the findings of Lahelma (2014), who posits that there should be awareness in the aspect of gender in relation to negative cultural practices, which brings about inequalities. In a similar perspective the findings

¹¹ Interview with teacher number 4

¹² Focus group discussion student 9

¹³ It is a traditional form of practice where girls mostly virgins are send to shrines to atone for sins committed by family members.

buttressed the assertion made by Adam et al. (2016) that there is the need for education targeted at social justice for people to realize their rights and prevention of violations. Therefore, the relevance of education is not only limited to economic aspect of life but extends to civility.

All the groups affirmed that education helps women in proper upbringing of their children. When a woman is educated she knows the right time to start going for antenatal care and post – antenatal as well. As soon as the children are grown up through her knowledge in such area as a result of the education, she models them better compared to an illiterate woman. One of the young adult males asserted that:

Education helps women in bringing up their children. So if those who are responsible for nursing children are educated, they will be able to socialize their children very well. Women will stand the chance to fight for their rights and where to seek redress. For instance, educated women can report domestic violence to DOVSU (Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit) and issues relating to the welfare of their children IwS2¹⁴ (9th July, 2018).

Another unique answer to the question was education aids in empowering women and making them to be self-independent in life. Education liberates both men and women and makes them capable of challenging and utilizing their mindset and to make decisions for their own well-being in life. It would aid women in making decisions regarding their lives without any forms of dominations and manipulations. This stresses on the agency aspect of education as a form of empowerment leading to liberation. Hence confirming the findings of Kabeer (1999) and Adams et al. (2016). A participant in female students focus group said:

Also it helps in reducing dependency ration of women on men. Since most educated women are self-independent and do not depend on their husbands as compared to the illiterate who are not having jobs and are in matrimonial homes FgD9 (7th July, 2018).

¹⁴ Interview with student 2.

Chapter 4 Education and Conflict

4.1 Material Effects

Almost all participants of this research have experienced some of the chieftaincy conflicts effects in Bimbilla and some of the violence, and have had a lot to say about how have the conflicts and the violence impacted their education.

Participants spoke of loss of contact hours as a result of closure of schools, which could last for days, weeks and months. Due to this closure, students are no longer in classrooms courses can no longer be organized or evaluated. This is a huge loss in learning and in skill, as some of the lost academic material cannot be added later into the curriculum. Isokpan and Durojaye (2016) and Nkengbeza (2016) stated that during violent conflicts schools are often closed down and teachers and students are seen as targets and are easily killed while some sustain injuries of various sorts. Worse, the disrupted academic calendar may lead to poor performances of students. Shemyakina (2011) and Jones and Naylor (2014) find that conflict leads to closure of schools, change in curriculum of schools and dropout rates and leads to poor academic performance due to loss of contact hours but they do not mention/change in the curriculum of the school or dropout rates.

In Bimbilla the frequent eruptions of the conflict and its havoc, made many teachers to run away and many went on transfers to other. This resulted in teachers from other areas refusing postings to Bimbilla area. Teachers under training in the College, do not like accepting postings for their teaching practice in the town. Most teachers went on transfers while some were killed through stray bullets. This points to the findings of Isokpan and Durojaye (2016) and Nkengbeza (2016), who noted that conflicts lead to teachers and students being killed. Teachers being killed, running away from their postings and going on transfers and not ready to accept postings, was often mentioned by parents: “Many experts and nurses fled the town due to its turbulent nature. This led to teachers refusing postings to schools in Bimbilla and others going on transfer” IwP3 (28th July, 2018). “Some teachers were killed innocently” IwP5¹⁵ (6th August, 2018).

Participants were of the view that not only were students and teachers seen as victims of circumstances but broader circle of relatives as well. Due to the extended family nature

¹⁵ Interview with parent 5.

of kinship in Ghana, as in many other African countries, many of the students – and thus their education and school fees- were taken care by relatives. When relatives and guardians of students were killed in the conflict it prevented them from paying their school fees which impeded their school attendance and educational attainments. Isokpan and Durojaye (2016), Nkengbeza (2016) and Shemyakina (2011) have written about students in conflict and closure of schools and change in the curriculum of schools as effects of conflicts on education. However, none of them touched on death of relatives leading to defaults in the payments of school fees and subsequently, jeopardizing their future education. The findings from the field clearly showed that the conflict led to death of relatives hampering the success of students in climbing the educational ladder. These findings rather buttressed that of Sommers (2006), who asserted that the dreams and aspirations of the youth could be in jeopardy through violent conflicts. A female parent during the interview process said: “Some guardians of children were killed making payment of school fees difficult for our children” IwP4 (4th August, 2018).

The issue around fees was also relevant especially, when the properties of some parents were destroyed. Some of the students whose parents were farmers or traders, faced the situation of their parents not being able to pay their school fees, due to conflict-related destruction of crops or traded goods, thus depriving the family of the cash that would be earned by the sales of the goods. The crops of one student’s father’s farm were totally destroyed by enemy faction. That affected him in paying his fees, since parents were virtually left with nothing. In this sense identities were created, leading to categorization of people as ‘we’ against ‘them’. Hence producing differences through linguistic variables leading to issues of animosities among factions and each side viewing the other as a threat to their existence (Hall 1997, Krieger and Meierrieks 2016). Gallagher (2004) argument about modernity’s failure in eradicating issues of factionalism is real. Though we are now in a modern era yet issues of factions perceived even within the same ethnic group is rife in modern times, especially in Bimbilla. Thus Gallagher findings has been confirmed in this research. The male student buttressed on this when he said:

It affected me a lot. When it happened the last time, my father could not go to the farm. They destroyed our farm produce and cleared the farm using cutlasses. So I was not able to pay my school fees since we were targets and had nothing left FgD12¹⁶ (7th July, 2018).

¹⁶ Focus group discussion student 12

In addition, the curfew prevents final year students and students who are staying in town from accessing learning facilities and even seeing their supervisors in the evening. Then, teachers who used to teach in the evening can no longer do so because of the curfew which starts from 6:00am to 6:00pm. The curfew in effect has tremendous effects on teaching and learning in the town and even on business activities. This goes to confirm the assertion made by Adonteng-Kissi et al. (2017), that curfew imposition in conflict-prone areas affects teaching and learning. Novelli and Cardozo (2008) assertion that educational institutions are capable of influencing conflicts and conflicts can influence the activities of educational institutions, is affirmed in the findings. The curfew which is a byproduct of the conflict affects teaching and learning. In a similar manner Bush and Saltarelli (2000) share the same view, when they noted that education and conflict are in a nexus. A male teacher in the school said: “Curfew imposition impedes teaching, research students and other students who stay in town find it difficult seeing their supervisors and learning on campus” IwT2 (8th July, 2018).

4.2.: Emotional Effects

The focus groups gave lots of answers pertaining to how they experienced the consequences of the conflict emotionally. Varied responses were given in relation to how the conflict affected them. A consistent answer mentioned among all the groups was fear. The conflict induces threat of danger in their minds, which hunts their conscience perpetually on campus. Due to this they always wallow in fear, even when tensions are calm. Then, their studies are affected and even in their bid to exploring the town. Some of them because of the conflict they walk with fear, especially whenever they are in Bimbila township. Isokpan and Durojaye (2016) and Nkengbeza (2016) finding that violent conflicts lead to traumatic experiences on students and teachers, since some of them are killed and others sustain injuries. This they noted leads to psychological trauma and producing long-lasting impressions on the minds The females in the mixed-sex group expressed minds in the words:

Anytime I happened to hear that the issue erupts and sounds of gunshots here and there, I am always terrified to the core. Though they said we were safe and those of us on campus, there was nothing but our conscience was full of fear. That semester was not good for me and even now if I am going to town I walk with fear FgD5¹⁷ (7th July, 2018).

¹⁷ Focus group discussion student 5

I can remember last time it happened and some of our seniors were in class to start their exams, when they heard gunshots some of them were not able to write and others were even shivering FgD1¹⁸ (7th July, 2018).

Not only from the perspective of fear but the students were of the notion that they were harassed and brutalized by security personnel, especially during curfew hours. This was much emphasized, by all the groups when they alluded to a scenario of their senior who was terribly beaten by security personnel and as a result he lost one of his eyes. They also reiterated that security personnel go to an extent of befriending the female students and girls at the second cycle level. Montero (1999) and Zarkov (2006) assertion, that both men and women could be victims of circumstances during violent conflicts is crystal clear in this finding. A male and a female in the mixed sex group asserted on this in their words:

Then security personnel at times harass and befriend young girls IwS1(8th July, 2018).

Those in the out-program they cannot come out if it is time for the curfew, to a point that policemen beat one of our seniors and now the boy cannot see because they beat him and it affected the eye. Though they send him to the hospital but later it was confirmed that the eye got blind as a result of the beating FgD6¹⁹ (7th July, 2018).

Thus, the student has not only been affected emotionally by the conflict but has also been rendered incapacitated for life. This would affect him in his execution of professional duties.

Another dimension of the emotional effects of the conflict on the students is low concentration in learning and during examinations. This happens whenever there is rumours of eruptions. Students were not able to write their examinations with full concentrations, since they started writing and the conflict erupted coupled with gunshots from town and nearby communities. The students were of the view that their seniors were not able to write the examination with concentration, due to divided attention. It stemmed from students thinking of relatives especially parents, their security and alongside their examination. Thus, Sommers (2006) findings that violent conflicts lead to a bleak future for the youth correlates with this finding. Since some of the students could have been referred, failed or withdrawn because of poor performance, this has a link to Shemyakina (2011) and Jones and Naylor (2014) assertion that violent conflicts lead to poor performance and high dropout rates. The female students in the female group said:

Most of our seniors were writing, but their concentration was not on the exams but on their relatives in town and their security FgD3 (7th July, 2018).

¹⁸ Focus group discussion student 1

¹⁹ Focus group discussion student 6

We those who were writing in the morning finished at 11:00am and our seniors were to start at 2:00pm, but the shooting started at 12:00pm. Some of them happen to be at a community closer to the school, which is noted as the danger zone during eruption of the conflict. They were not able to write the paper with full concentration FgD4²⁰ (7th July, 2018).

Next to the divided mindset of students during learning and examination, their freedom of movement is curtailed. This stems from fear of being hit by stray bullets leading to death. The conflict serves as a barrier in restricting students movements from dormitories to classrooms. This to an extent cripples the learning atmosphere of students making it highly uncondusive for learning process. One of the males in the mixed group expressed his thoughts as in: “Sometimes we don’t learn at all any day you hear that conflict will arise. We are always told to go to our dormitories for the fear of being hit by stray bullets” FgD6 (7th July, 2018).

Physiologically, the young women experienced premature mensuration, due to trauma and sudden eruption of the conflict coupled with gunshots and burning of houses. This is a worrying situation and could lead to health problems for these young women in their educational life which has been engulfed with communal conflicts. This makes many of them develop fear even whenever they are in town. This confirmed the assertion of Shemyakina (2011) that conflict results in fear and traumatic conditions in the minds of both students and teachers. The issue of eruptions lingers in their minds. One of the females in the female group said: “We normally find it difficult leaving our dormitories whenever the conflict erupts, some of us could easily soil our dresses as you know” FgD2²¹ (7th July, 2018).

4.3 Return to School after Conflict

The rationale of this section was purposively to find out the consequences of the conflict on return patterns of students to school, whenever eruptions are over. As such a similar question was posed to all the categories of respondents.

The perspective of students was that the conflict did not affect their return patterns. It did not prevent them from going back to school, because the school is a tertiary institution. They rather alluded to finance which normally prevents them from returning to school. The view of the students was: “The conflict does not prevent us from coming back to

²⁰ Focus group discussion student 4

²¹ Focus group discussion student 2

school. We are in a tertiary institution it does not stop us from coming back to school” FgD14²² (7th July, 2018).

The ‘students’ view that the conflict does not prevent them from coming back to school was stressed. However, there was ambiguity in their positions, since one of them emphatically asserted that his father’s farm was destroyed by opposite faction and another student narrated how the death of his guardian, affected the payment of his school fees and led to his late return to school. Therefore, the conflict influences on the return pattern of students. The view that the conflict did not affect return patterns of students was not only underscored by students but by teachers as well. They asserted that the issue of finance is a major problem that determines the return patterns of students. The school being a tertiary institution²³, students return in their numbers. However, they had the notion that it affected the return patterns of students at the basic level and their enrolment levels. A lot of parents withdraw their children from the basic level to towns that are more peaceful. This they believe affected the return pattern of pupils at the basic level and affects enrolments levels. A male teacher stressed on this when he said:

The return pattern is not always due to the conflict; it is not for fear or whether there is still conflict or there is no conflict but their fees determine their return pattern since it is a tertiary institution. The clause is that if a student does not pay his/her fees then such student might not be registered to write his/her exams. Even up till now some of the students have not paid their fees. So it is not because of the conflict that normally make some of them stay in the house but default in payments of their school fees. As for the conflict they are used to it whenever it starts they go home and whenever there is peace they come back to start with their academic work. We have never had situations where students don’t come back to school because of the conflict. But at the secondary and basic level some parents normally migrate with their children because of security reasons and some normally remove their children to places like Yendi, Tamale and among other towns for schooling IwT1 (7th July, 2018)

Though the teacher is actually telling how the conflict is affecting return patterns of pupils and students to school – but he does not recognize that, a student's father’s farm was destroyed and some of the students lost their relatives and guardians through the conflict. This prevented them from paying their fees and their return to school. The teacher did not recognize that this is related to the conflict. Also, his assertion that the students are ‘used to the conflict’ is contradictory to students’ perspective. The students had the view that even whenever they hear a rumour about the eruption of the conflict they lose concen-

²²Focus group discussion student number 14

²³ In tertiary institutions like colleges of education in Ghana students receive monthly allowances and pay high sums of fees and as such a student might not abandon his/her schooling because of conflict.

tration in studies because of fear and that normally restricts their movements as well. Hence, the teacher's position on the issue is highly ambiguous given the fact that, the conflict affects the payment of fees which affects return patterns of students.

The parents had the view that their children normally go back to school. They stressed on the importance of education in life and as such could not prevent their children from going back to school because of conflict. They made reference to sensitizations from NGOs and the media on the need of sending their children to school, especially the girl-child. Some of them even underscored the importance of educating their girls.

All of them as I said earlier do go back to school. In the past we used not to value the education of girls but now they are even helping us a lot. One of my girls is in her final year at the college. She helps me with her allowance she collects from the school, which I normally use in buying fertilizer for my crops. She now takes care of her mother in terms of her clothes and even some of her own siblings. Especially whenever I don't have money she helps. So in this community the conflict does not lead to we removing our children from school ...There are no instances in this community, where girls are not allowed to go back to school because of the conflict. Now radio stations and NGOs are sensitizing us on the need for sending our girls to school IwP1 (10th August, 2018).

The parents have proved their position towards the return pattern of their children to school, through the above assertions. Nevertheless, they have overlooked the situations of young males and females in the society who lost their parents, guardians and other relatives through the conflict, as noted from the experiences of the students. This group of young adults in schools do find it difficult in paying their school fees, due to death of their relatives. Then, destruction of valuable properties caused by the conflict, prevents some parents in fulfilling the educational needs of their children. This put some students in vulnerable financial situations, thereby preventing them from returning to school. Thus, it could be seen that the students, parents and teachers have overlooked the influence of the conflict which affects the payment of school fees. The conflict affects return patterns indirectly through the payment of school fees which prevents many of the students from returning to school early. Hence, students, parents and teachers' positions were highly ambiguous in nature.

Chapter 5 Conflict Education and Relationships

One of the questions of the focus group discussions was about whether, and how, has the conflict-affected relationships between students and teachers, and among the students and among teachers. That question was asked to the teachers and students alike bringing some interesting results.

All the teachers interviewed asserted that they had cordial relationships with each other during eruptions of the conflict and whenever tensions were calmed. Though they acknowledged the differences in their affiliations to the various factions, yet they did not allow that to reflect in their professional work. Thus, the power dynamics relating to factional aspect of the conflict has no ground from teacher's perspective. However, teachers stressed on the role of the administration in admonishing them not to be discussing issues relating to the conflict on campus. They contend that discussing issues relating to the conflict on campus could easily lead to spillover of the conflict from town to the school level. The teachers were of the view that:

We don't have problems with each other though we belong to different factional lines. During such times nobody will even know that we belong to different factions. We have been warned on campus not to talk about it. This is because we are in an academic institution and as such issues of that nature should not be discussed. Should we be allowed to discuss such issues on campus there will be a spillover of the conflict from town to campus. That will defeat the purpose of this institution IwT3 (7th July, 2018).

Among teachers and students, teachers noted that their relationship with each other was friendly and cordial in nature. They reiterated that since they were training professional teachers, their relationship with the students must be cordial to enable students handle the pupils they would be teaching at the basic schools. However, they said there were instances when students believed that teachers try to scrutinize their research papers or their examination papers on the basis of differences in affiliations to the factions or on issues of love. In the words of a teacher:

The relation is peaceful and calm as expected but there are times during supervision of students who normally write their research work before completion. In trying to scrutinize these research papers thoroughly students normally think because master X is from faction B and he/she is from faction A that is why the said master is trying to unduly punish him/her or with regard to the ladies some of them normally could think that because master

A happens to propose to me and I have not given in that is why he is treating me that way. IwT1²⁴ (7th July, 2018)

It could be deduced that, though teachers said there is a cordial relationship among themselves and with students however teachers showed students think that conflict affect teachers' professional work and that the factional lines interrupts in the execution of their professional duties. Though teachers had this notion that students especially the native students think it affects their professional duties. Contrary, the non-native students were of the view that the conflict did not affect teachers in their execution of duties and the native students on the other hand were of the notion that the conflict affects the professional work of teachers. These were ambiguous positions taken by these three categories. Though teachers noted that students believed the conflict affects their professional duties, the non-native students disagreed, while the natives share in this view. Hence, their positions were highly contradictory.

Unlike with teachers, who had a very positive picture of the relationship between themselves and students, and denied any influence of the factional divisions in the town, the question about relationships has caused some discomfort among the students. This discomfort forced me to rethink some of my research methods. One thing that became very clear was that in the focus group discussions, this question created a lot of silence among some students, while the others have praised teachers for being impartial in treating students well regardless of the factions. Once I recognized that the silent students were those from the town of Bimbilla, while the outspoken were those from the neighbouring towns and villages, I created a separate focus group only with students from Bimbilla. This had been very useful because the students opened up and presented a picture which was not as rosy as the previous discussion suggested. Non- native students in the mixed sex group observed that the conflict did not affect their relationships with their colleagues on campus. Though they admitted that during eruptions they always behave carefully towards their colleagues who were natives and sometimes affected. Though they were of the view that their colleagues from town belong to different gates so during eruptions, those from Bimbilla town and from different gates did not mingle with each other. One of the females in the group was of the notion that:

In terms of relationships in class, some of our mates are from Bimbila. During such times is not easy talking to some of them, since some of their relatives are always killed. Also, they don't mingle with each other during those times especially those from different gates. We

²⁴ Interview with teacher number 1

normally form some study groups in class. Sometimes because of the conflict our colleagues, who are staying in town could not attend due to the curfew which starts at 6:00pm FgD3 (7th July, 2018).

They emphasized on having good relationships with their teachers devoid of antagonisms. Non-native students in the mixed sex group were of the view that teachers discharge their duties irrespective of their affiliations. As such, their relationships with teachers is very cordial in nature without any animosities. A female participant said:

I think the teachers have been doing their academic work and they don't do it based on factional lines. Even though they are fighting and some of the masters are from the various factions, but they have never sabotage students based on factional lines. They teach as expected of them and they help us in terms of our needs. Among masters there is no rivalry even though it might be internally but not open FgD5 (7th July, 2018).

It could be realized that the non-native students' view in terms of their relationship with their colleagues on campus was cordial. Though they said that the native students from different factions do not interact with each other, during eruptions of the conflict. These students in the non-native group said they had good rapport with their teachers and asserted that teachers do not sabotage students based on issues relating to the conflict. Hence, they have cordial relationships with their teachers. Contrary to the views expressed in the non-native group, the native group noted that the relationships among students especially, native students are not always cordial during eruptions of the conflict. They do not interact with each other and there is no trust during eruptions of the conflict among native students who belong to different gates. Their relationships with other students is that of avoidance which is line with the assertion made by Cleaver (2002) and Ferruh (2015) that power dynamics based on gender, socio-economic background and different identities lead to issues of marginalization, exclusions and discrimination during factional conflicts. One of the males in the group expressed his thoughts:

You know the conflict is based on factional lines (sides) and we know each other's clans. So like if it starts we students from different factions do not normally mingle with each other and we don't trust each other at that time. We are always apart because we fear each other and we don't trust each other at that time. Unless when the conflict is over. There is no communication among us. This is because we don't normally know the mood of each other. As such we stay apart devoid of interactions FgD14 (7th July, 2018).

The relationship between teachers and students was viewed differently in this group than in the non-native group. In the native group, they said during eruptions of the conflict they do not go to teachers who happened to be from different factions. Hence, their relationships with teachers from different factions is not friendly. They were of the notion that, though teachers would not admit the fact publicly, it is covert and that there is animosity

among, especially teachers from different factions. Students expressed their views in the words:

When it happens, I don't always like going to masters because they know the faction I belong FgD12 (7th July, 2018).

Sometime maybe a master might have been an appropriate person for you to complain but due to them belonging to different factions you do not do it. If one should lodge his complain to a person from a different faction the way they will handle it would not be the best way. So conflict actually affects our relationship even with the teachers. During eruption of the conflict though they might be talking to each other, but they will still have animosity among themselves IwS1 (8th July, 2018).

Therefore, students from opposite factions do not relate with teachers from different faction no matter the problem or need they might have. They do see each other as enemies and do not trust each other, emphasizing issues of animosities and identities typical of factional forms of conflict (Krieger and Meierrieks, 2016).

Chapter 6 Conclusion

In the first chapter, the statement of the problem and the background to the study were presented. I engaged with related literature which aided in formulating the research questions. I posed questions concerning what relevance is given to education by students, their parents, and teachers; and especially how they see the relevance of the education of girls. What is the relevance of gender, factional divisions and socio-economic background in the ways young college students, their parents and teachers are affected by the conflict? Are there, and if so what are specific differences in the effects of conflict on young men and women from different factional and class backgrounds? What are the specific material and symbolic aspects of the conflict – based school interruptions in terms of (dis)empowerment of young female college students? Then the methods and techniques employed in the collection of the data were thoroughly discussed.

In the third chapter, the researcher engaged the fields of education and conflict and analyzed them from the perspectives of education as a means of empowerment. Then intersectionality was employed in analyzing how gender, factional belonging and class are implicated in the consequences of conflict on closure of schools. This helped in the analysis of the data and gave the research a focus and direction in relation to interpretation of findings.

The third chapter elaborates on how the fields of education and empowerment were used with the rationale of finding out opinions of the participants about crucial aspects of education in life and with specific attention to the education of young women and girls. Varied findings were arrived at but the most important finding was all participants believed that education helps in the empowerment of women and is a crucial tool for personal, family and national development.

In the fourth chapter, the researcher analyzed the experiences of the students in the times of conflicts. It was found out that the conflict has tremendous effects on students ranging from material, emotional forms to the return patterns of students to school after clashes and loss of contact hours during clashes. Young men and women become victims of circumstances during eruptions such as the destruction of properties, the imposition of curfew which affect teaching and learning. Emotionally, it cause fear and panic among students. Students reported of being harassed and brutalized by security personnel, low concentration during learning and limitation on student's movements. However, students,

parents and teacher's positions on return patterns to school were ambiguous. All the three categories (students, parents and teachers) overlooked how the conflict affected the return patterns indirectly through its consequences on the cost of education. Parents viewed education as vital in life because they had been sensitized on the importance of education by NGOs and the media. Hence, they normally encourage their children (both boys and girls) to go back to school.

The fifth chapter presents findings on how the conflict affected the relationships among teachers, between teachers and students and among students. Teachers were of the notion that they had cordial relationships among each other and with students devoid of animosities, despite their differences in factional lines. Students in the mixed group also had the same view that teachers do not have problems with each other because of the conflict. The students also indicated that they have cordial relationships with each other. However, they had the idea that native students from different gates do not communicate with each other during eruptions of the conflict. The views of the focus group for the native students differ entirely. They showed that teachers who belong to the different factions have animosities among each other and their behaviour within the public domain is deceptive. Among themselves, they said they do not communicate with each other during such periods and there is no trust amongst them. They also did not trust teachers from different factions.

Overall, it must be noted that gender, factional affiliations and socio-economic backgrounds of students really had a lot of effects on their school life. Gender differences did not serve as a barrier to young men and women returning to school after disruptions as girls' education is very much valued because of the help for family girls can offer. Young men and women experience the effects of the conflict somewhat differently. While the young women experience harassment, some of the young men are brutalized by security personnel.

The symbolic aspect of the value of schooling was seen in relation to empowerment. Education was viewed as crucial for the development of women and their empowerment. Thus, disruption of schooling by communal conflicts risk leading to the disempowerment of girls and women in our societies.

In terms of future research, a vital area could be a comparative study of impacts of communal conflicts on school life of young adults in Bimbila in the Northern region and Bawku in the Upper East region of Ghana. This would help in understanding the differences in experience of the consequences of these communal conflicts on school life of

young adults from different contexts in two different regions. Through this vital information could be gotten to help in the implementation and policy formulations to help in ameliorating incidences of communal conflicts within these two regions. Mixed methods could be employed to help in understanding the issue from diverse ends and could aid in finding amicable solutions to this canker.

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List of Appendixes

Appendix 1: Discussion guide for focus groups discussions with students

O	PRIMARY QUESTIONS	FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS
1.	What relevance is given to education by students, their families and teachers and especially to the education of girls?	a) What is the educational and occupational backgrounds of your parents?
		b) What are some of the importance of education to women?
2.	What is the relevance of gender, factional divisions and socio-economic background in the ways young college students, teachers their families and school are affected by the conflict?	a) Could you please share your experiences based on how you were affected by the conflict?
3.	Are there, and if so what are specific differences in the effects of conflict on young men and women from different factional and class backgrounds?	a) Did the conflict affect relationships between you and your classmates, or you and the teachers?
4.	What are the specific material and symbolic aspects of the conflict-based school interruptions in terms of (dis)empowerment of young female college students?	a) How important is education for you as young adult males and young adult females?

Appendix 2: Interview guide for school authorities and parents

No	PRIMARY QUESTIONS	FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS
1.	What relevance is given to education by students, their families and teachers and especially to the education of girls?	a) What is the importance of education to your female students?
2.	What is the relevance of gender, factional divisions and socio-economic background in the ways young college students, teachers their families and school are affected by the conflict?	b) What is the relationship among staff members during outbreaks of the conflict and whenever the atmosphere is calm? c) How has factional conflict affected the education of your students?
		d) What is the relationship between staff and students and between staff and parents?
3.	Are there, and if so what are specific differences in the effects of conflict on young men and women from different factional and class backgrounds?	e) What is the difference in return patterns of young adult male students and young adult female students? f) Do you think there are different effects for young adult males and young adult females?
4.	What are the specific material and symbolic aspects of the conflict-based school interruptions in terms of (dis)empowerment of young female college students?	g) What do you think is the importance of education for your students, school and community?

Interview guide for parents

No .	PRIMARY QUESTIONS	FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS
1.	What relevance is given to education by students, their families and teachers and especially to the education of girls?	a) What work do you do to support the education of your children? b) What are the importance of education to your female children?
2.	What is the relevance of gender, factional divisions and socio-economic background in the ways young college students, teachers their families and school are affected by the conflict?	a) How was the family affected during the closure of schools and when school was in session?
3.	Are there, and if so what are specific differences in the effects of conflict on young men and women from different factional and class backgrounds?	b) How has factional conflict affected the education of your children? c) Do both young adult males and young adult females in the family return to school after the conflict?
4.	What are the specific material and symbolic aspects of the conflict-based school interruptions in terms of (dis)empowerment of young female college students?	a) What are the importance of education to the family, children and the community?