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Graduate School of Development Studies

**POVERTY AND CHILD TRAFFICKING IN GHANA:
A STUDY OF THE FISHING SECTOR**

A Research Paper presented by:

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Abstract

The attempt to combat trade in humans, especially, children has for the past decades been facing a growing challenge regarding the discrepancy between the legal definition of “child trafficking”, practices of child placement and the social construction of “childhood”. To overcome this discrepancy, this study locates practices of child trafficking in the fishing sector of Ghana and explores the structural changes in resource management that may have led to an intensification of the use of child labour, including its worst form namely trafficked children. Field investigation covered fishing communities along the Volta Lake in the Volta Region, an area with a high incidence of child trafficking in the country. Data analysis shows that poverty combined with failure in structural reforms and resources management have been the main forces behind child trafficking in this sector. Out of poverty parents become comfortable with sending their children into bonded labour as the shortest means of solving their own economic and social hardships. Poverty as a result of pressure and competition for scarce resources at the fishing sector has also compelled the use of child labour in its worst form to cut down costs. The children, under such condition, are exposed to hazardous and exploitative working conditions and environments which are dangerous to their health and physical development. The socio-cultural practice of child placement for training and socialization in the country has also been identified as one of the facilitating factors behind the child trafficking incidence in the sector. Thus parents, intermediaries as well as employers take advantage of this practice and migrate children for the purpose of labour exploitation. The socio-cultural and economic contexts within which the child trafficking thrives at the sector therefore rendered any legal approach to combating it questionable since it does not adequately fall within the legal definition of ‘child trafficking’ in the real sense of the word.

In order to combat child trafficking in Ghana, especially at the fishing sector, there is the need to adopt poverty alleviation strategies, good resource management at the fishing sector, appropriate education and information for awareness and effective legal approach by taking into consideration the socio-economic implications of the sector. Besides, and

if progress is to be made to curtail the trafficking situation, there should be further anthropological research to help understand the socio-cultural and economic dynamics of the sector.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CRC:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CBFM:	Community Based Fisheries Management Programme
DANIDA:	Danish International Development Agency
DFID:	Department for International Development
EU:	European Union
FAO:	Food and Agricultural Organisation
GAWU:	Ghana Agricultural Workers Union
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
IMM:	Institute for Molecular Manufactory.
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
IOM:	International Labour Organisation
NGO:	Non-governmental Organisation
PNDC:	Provisional National Defence Council
UN:	United Nations
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund

Chapter one: Introduction

1.1 Background of the research

Worldwide child trafficking reflects the widespread poverty and erosion of moral norms in institutions in charge of the care for the young among sending communities and receiving communities. In the Sub-Saharan context, West Africa has been most affected by this problem and is facing key challenges in determining its causes and effects. Patterns of trafficking in this region indicate a symmetrical relationship between sending and receiving areas, or sending areas are also receiving. Symmetrical flows also turn some of the receiving areas into transit function zones (UNICEF, 2003:18). Currently, countering responses are primarily directed at setting up a legal framework to control and prosecute trafficking networks, to intercept trafficked children for return and re-integration.

The attempt to control illegal migration and the exploitation of children requires a consensus on a definition of “human trafficking” vis-à-vis practices of “child trafficking”. The United Nations’ Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially, in Women and Children, defines trafficking as:

“the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another” (UNICEF 2002:2).

Concerning children, the International Labour Office (Ibid) recognises child trafficking as the most harmful form of child labour and is increasing in order of magnitude. ILO convention No. 182 article 3 (a) calls for the urgent need to combat worst form of child labour states:

“...all forms of slavery for labour or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict” (UNICEF 2002:1).

This is through the reaffirmation of the article 35 of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which calls for the State Parties to:

“take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the scale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form” and article 32, which recognises the child’s right to be protected from economic exploitation” (Ibid)

The sub-paragraph (c) of the Palermo Protocol however classifies the case of child trafficking in a situation where the trafficked may occur with the consent of the children themselves or the parents. Specifically, the sub-paragraph states that:

“the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered ‘trafficking in persons’ even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in sub-paragraph (a) of this article” (UNICEF 2002:2/ 2003:3).

In a context where the international legal definition of the child as being under 18 years of age (UN Convention on the Right of the Child) meets a discrepancy with social practices by which childhood and adulthood are defined by other norms than age (such as social responsibility, ability to maintain a family), disputes over the meaning of child trafficking and the actors involved are inevitable. Consequently it is quite difficult to identify a transaction in child labour and differentiate it from genuine placement concerns of a highly deprived and vulnerable family (African Centre for Human Development 2000:4).

In Ghana, the problem of child trafficking – though pervasive - is not publicly acknowledged. Placing girls as domestic helpers and boys as additional farm labour is common. Menial domestic and farm works are regarded as being not hazardous to their health and education but rather contribute to their informal training activities (Tengey and Oguuah 2002: xiv). However, a consensus is emerging on the link between child trafficking and poverty, especially when viewed from the perspective of widening economic and social disparity.

Currently, one-third of all Ghanaians have been classified as “poor or hard-core poor” (Ghana National Development Report 1997:63). In general, poverty remains a rural phenomenon in Ghana with about 80% of those classified as poor (Ibid). The rural savannah has however been rated as the poorest zone while forest localities and the Greater Accra remain the least poor with quite significant reduction of poverty (J.K. Baffoe 2004:31 and Ghana Human Development Report 1997:66-68). Apart from the

geographical patterns that characterized the poverty variations, Tengey and Oguuah (2002:4-5) have also observed poverty disparities among households that engaged in different economic activities. According to their observation, while farmers who engage in export oriented crops and wage employees especially in the private sector enjoy a better standard of living, those farmers who find themselves in the food production sector experience incidence of poverty. The highest being the unemployed. Among poor communities, small-scale/artisanal fishers are known to be among the poorest (DIFID: 2004:2).

A recent report by Tengey and Oguuah (2002) commissioned by DANIDA on the trafficking situation in the country indicates that, of the 1,804 trafficked children (both girls and boys) about 66 percent or more are engaged in the fishing sector. Sixty-six percent of the boys are into fishing as fishing assistants while fifty-two percent of the girls are engaged in selling and smoking fish.¹ In addition to that, the International Organisation for Migration says it has so far rescued more than hundred children sold into bonded labour in one of the fishing communities called Yeji on the Northern shores of the Lake Volta.² The latest report by UN office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2nd May, 2005 edition) has increased the number to 1,203.³

1.2 Research problem:

The use of trafficked child labour by poor fishing communities may be regarded as a coping mechanism, but this mechanism also has effects on inter-generational transmission of poverty. Trafficked children used in child labour are denied of education and disposed of when they are no longer needed and will face social exclusion when they grow into adulthood. Child trafficking and poverty are mutually reinforcing. Thus, apart from viewing child trafficking as a crime against children, it is also necessary to consider such practices as a destructive force that contributes to the social vulnerability and instability of poor communities. This research therefore moves beyond the push factors in

¹ With regards to other sectors, 12%- boys and 28%- girls as house helps and 3% of both boys and girls as farm hands and the rest as porters (Tengey and Oguuah 2002).

² www.ghanaweb.com: General News of Tuesday, 15th February 2005

³ <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=36423>

decision-making at household and community levels and investigate the structural reasons behind a large involvement of children in the fishing sector to assess whether an increase in the use of child labour is connected with the specific characteristics of this sector (division of labour, skills required, production costs and benefits incurred to the producers).

Changing practices of fishing communities must be placed against 20 years of Structural Adjustment in Ghana. Although this programme has brought some gains to the few people who control the high ends of economic activity, informalisation of production and labour markets has also become widespread, affecting the majority of the people and leading to the erosion of formal and informal social protection. According to Ghana National Development Report (1997:10), full-time wage labour is becoming a less and less significant, whereas casual work expands everywhere under informal contractual arrangements and working conditions below the standards of the protected economy, especially in the agricultural and fishing sectors.

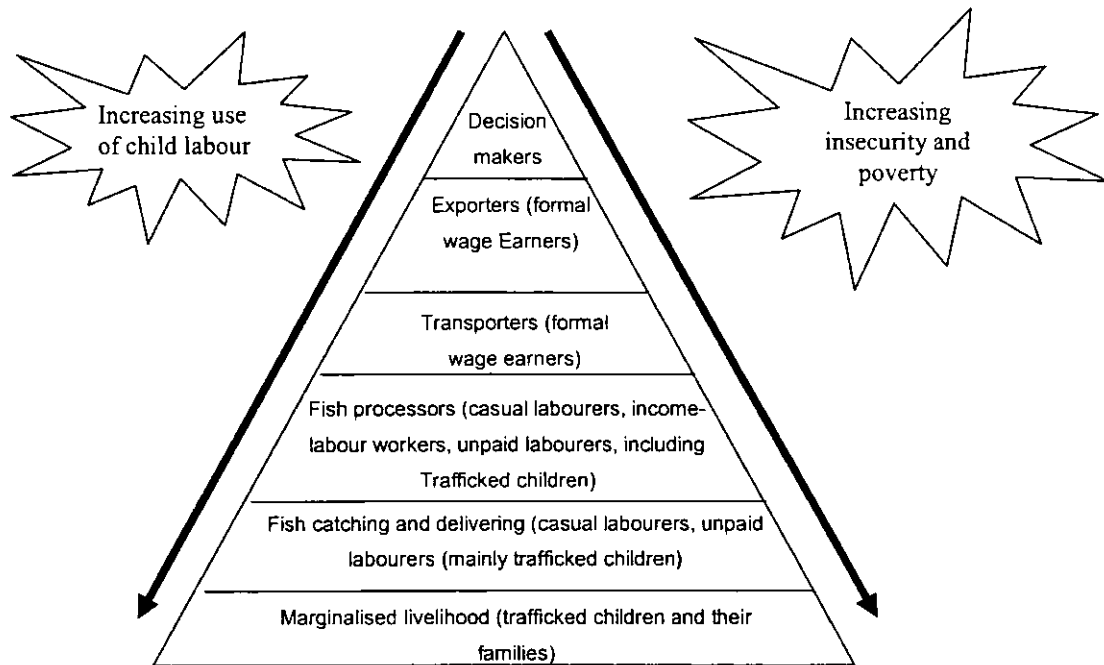
The fishery sector in Ghana is said to provide employment for both urban and rural people and, it is estimated that 10% of the Ghanaian population involved in fisheries activities (DFID 2004:2). While the men involve in the fishing activities, the women are engaged in the on-shore post-harvest activities that include the processing, storage and the selling of the fish (Ibid). However, albeit the fact that the sector contributes to the nutrition of the majority of people, and to the livelihood of many communities, especially the vulnerable ones, it has not received adequate policy attention in the reform process. As noted by DFID (2004: 2), although the Ghanaian Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) identifies the traditional fishers as extremely poor and vulnerable, no concrete steps are proposed to improve the sector, which creates full time and seasonal livelihood to the majority of the vulnerable who are already living on the poverty line.

From the perspective of poverty and competition for resources, John Kurien (2004:7-8) notes that open access sectors such as fishery have become attractive alternatives where labour mobility has not been prevented by factors such as social, cultural and skill. This

is particularly relevant when incomes in the other areas of the economy are lower as compared with fishery. Hence, despite the fact that post-harvest operators and fishers on the Volta Lake are facing difficulties, there is still labour mobility to the area (DFID 2004:3), especially from the coastal areas as a result of low production along the coast (Ibid). In addition, Overa (2001:30) observed that, the unfavourable economic hardships faced by the Ghanaian population in the 1980/90s has affected the coastal fishing community in many ways such as high costs of input in the fisheries namely petrol, motors and among others. These had affected not only the fishers but also the purchasing power of the majority of consumers and thence led to the decline of the Ghanaian fish market along the coast. Consequently, a large number of fishermen found it very difficult to cover costs involved in the fish harvesting with the income they make in selling the fish. This situation has culminated in resorting to less capital intensive method of fishing by the use of canoes (Ibid). And since fishing along the coast involves deep-sea fishing, the use of canoes become impossible. Therefore the main option for fishing communities along the coast is to migrate to the Volta Lake where the fishing method is less capital intensive.

A vicious cycles seems to have emerged by which the increased mobility of fishermen to the area has also increased their susceptibility to various problems, including low level of income when the fishery sector start to decline (DFID 2004:3). Pressures of competition forced producers to cut down production costs, and this has given rise to a diversification of labour markets and working conditions (as shown in figure 1 in the next page). Children are caught at the bottom of the hierarchy doing hazardous work without payment and often under severe discipline.

Figure: 1



It is therefore important to explore how resource management in the fishery may have been affected by privatization policy, and how the revival of old forms and the emergence of new forms of child labour may be connected with policy failure in restructuring the fishery sector. Furthermore, how the failure of control in child trafficking as a crime may be a combined effect of the failure of resource management and the failure to bridge the discrepancy between legal and social definitions of crime and of the child.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1.3.1 Objectives of the Research

Even though Ghana has been identified as one of the transit points and endemic areas of child trafficking (Human Rights Watch 2003; Truong and Angeles 2005), very little is known with regards to the nature and the condition of trafficked children to help policy makers and other stakeholders in addressing the phenomenon. Most of the reports and the examples on the situation are rather seen in the national dailies and also heard on the air describing the extent to which the phenomenon is taking root in the country. The need for

critical analyses of the nature and the extent of the child trafficking situation within the context of a given social and cultural framework is eminent. Without this analysis, policies and programmes to combat it cannot tackle the deeper roots of the problem. The main objective of this study therefore is to contribute to an understanding of the dynamics of child trafficking at the fishing sector along the Volta Lake in Ghana, how they affect the use of child labour in its worst form (trafficking) and how trafficked children experience the treatment of their masters and mistresses.

The specific objectives are:

- To analyse the pulling and pushing factors of child trafficking in the fishing sector of the Volta Lake of Ghana and, to establish whether there is a causal linkage between poverty, insecurity of livelihood among fishing communities and child trafficking.
- To provide information on the treatment of the trafficked children at the fishing sector by their masters and mistresses and how this is linked with the market dynamics.
- To document children's perspective on their experience of being trafficked, their notion of loyalty (to parents and employers), their voices and vision for the future.
- To contribute to practical ways of controlling and stopping child trafficking in Ghana, particularly in the fishing sector and, to contribute to theory building on the relationship between risky migration and poverty, deprivation, and the vulnerability of children and youth.

1.3.2 Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the socio-cultural and economic contexts within which child labour and trafficking thrive along the Volta Lake?
- What are the modes of operation of child labour and trafficking along the Volta Lake and how do modes of operation affect the conditions of children as workers?

- What is the level of knowledge and perceptions of the trafficked children and other respondents (traffickers and final beneficiaries) on the adverse effects of child labour and trafficking?

1.4 The Research Process

1.4.1 The Set up

The study is basically exploratory and qualitative. My interest in children's rights has stimulated my research interest in child trafficking. My desk review of policy debates on child trafficking revealed a clear discrepancy between the legal side and the social side of the phenomenon, leading to my choice of focus on the link between poverty/ livelihood insecurity, child placement as a cultural practice and its intersection with trafficking. The diversity of practices has led to the selection of the fishing sector as a field of inquiry to highlight its specific aspects and how these are related to practices of child trafficking. My review of secondary data on the poverty situation and the dynamics of the fishing sector brings out the significance of several structural factors which serve as guidelines for the collection of field data through the help of two research assistants between the 5th and 18th of August 2005. The choice of the research site – the Kpandu, and Kpandu-Torkor and Gyamani fishing communities along the Volta Lake in the Kpandu District of Volta Region – is based on the finding by Tengey and Oguuah (2002) who identified the area where trafficked children are concentrated. Key informants were randomly selected by the research assistants from the communities. A total number of 26 rescued trafficked children, 8 males and 18 females, 20 parents and 15 employers were interviewed and had shared their views.

1.4.2. Methods Used in Collecting Data:

Primary data: Semi-structured (interview) questionnaire and focus group discussion were used to gain a deeper understanding of the rescued trafficked children's perspective on their experience of being trafficked as well as the perceptions of their parents and employers on the negative effect of child labour and trafficking. Thus for the purpose of analysis of views and comparison, the questionnaire was divided into three categories;

one was administered to the trafficked victims and, the others to their parents as well as their employers.

Focus Group Discussion: Two focus group discussions were done including the rescued trafficked children and some employers of trafficked children from the community. During the focus group discussion with the children, questions were asked relating to the treatment meted out to them by their employers while they were with them and their general perspective concerning their plight. The employers also discuss their perceptions on their use of child labour with regards to socio-economic and cultural dynamics of the fishing sector. This helped to get a close-up picture of the trafficking situation in the sector. All the discussions were carried out in Ewe language and were electronically recorded by the research assistants.

1.5 Data Analysis

Two methods were used for the final report based on the information collected from the semi-structured questionnaire: quantitative and qualitative methods. The first one was used to analyse the functional structures of the different phenomena and the second one was used to make comparison between various variables and elements (Tengey and Oguah 2002:24).

1.6 Problems Encountered

It had been difficult to get enough parents and rescued children respondent because, while some of them were unwilling to allow their children (including themselves) to give audience to the research assistants, others too demanded a huge some of money before doing that. This has affected the original target number of 60 rescued children and 45 parents the researcher wanted to use for the study. Hence only 26 rescued children and 8 male and 12 female parents provided information for the purpose of the study.

1.7 Limitation of the Research

The limitation of the study is based on the fact that, the questionnaire was not administered by the author himself, thus the authenticity and the reliability of the

evidence in the study could be subjected to criticism. The author's inability to be part of the research team in addition to his inability to provide enough fund for the research have also affected the quantitative aspect of the qualitative data that would have enriched the study.

1.8 Organisation of the Paper

This research paper is organised into five chapters. Chapter two provides some of the controversies on the legal definition of trafficking/child trafficking and social practices as well as concept of livelihood to explain changes in the fishing sector, and how they are related to an intensification of the use of child labour. Chapter three highlights on how the specific dimensions of vulnerability in artisanal fishery as a livelihood system shaped its proclivity to the use of child labour in its worst form and, chapter four looks at the extent and nature of child trafficking at the fishing sector on the basis of empirical evidence. Chapter five recaps the main findings from the research with recommendations.

Chapter Two: Child Trafficking in Ghana: An Analytical Perspective

2.1 Introduction

The ongoing debate involving scholars from different disciplines, governments, non-governmental organizations and international organizations on the trade in children and young people in Sub-Saharan Africa have brought together different issues concerning poverty, migration and labour exploitation in a variety of contexts. Although there is agreement that, trafficking encompasses every activity in a process, from the stage of recruitment and transportation of the person to the final placement at work under exploitative conditions,⁴ there exist differences of opinion regarding: (1) the definition of the act of trafficking and, (2) the nature of crime committed by those involved in different activities during the process of trafficking and, (3) the means to respond to the problem. A resolution of some issues of contention is imperative in the search for appropriate means to protect the human rights of trafficked persons. An overview of the various definitions of the term 'human trafficking' and 'child trafficking' reveals that this tension revolves around the legal definitions and social practices concerning both notions: 'trafficking' and 'child'.

This chapter argues that a clear distinction between types of trafficking (in Sub-Saharan Africa) is necessary to locate and analyze direct and indirect abusive treatment. Direct abuse may occur at phases of the trafficking process whereas indirect abuse may occur under the conditions that foster the act of trafficking. Child trafficking as the worst form of child labour will be discussed in relation to poverty and vulnerable livelihood.

2.2 Trafficking/Child Trafficking: The tension between a legal definition and social practices.

There has been a whole range of definitions since the beginning of the century, describing the trade in children and young people, by various national and international bodies. However Anuska (1997:6)⁵ and, Anderson and Davison (2002:5-6) observed that each of the definitions developed by these bodies does not emphasise one but different

⁴ www.ghanaweb.com : Feature article of Friday, 28 May 2004)

⁵ In his study of trafficking of Cambodian women and children to Thailand.

aspect that reflects different interests and agenda. Anderson and Davidson (2002: 6), for instance identify three groups that are of particular significance on trafficking as:

- Governments- whose interest in trafficking is centred around its linkage with irregular immigration and transnational crime and therefore view it as a threat to national security;
- Feminist “abolitionist” NGOs- who are concerned about trafficking and put it on their political agenda because they believe it is a factor to the increasing global sexual exploitation;
- Migrant workers, labour organizations, child rights’ NGOs, sex workers’ rights activists, and other human rights agencies as well as NGOs- who view trafficking as a human rights abuse and abusive working condition for, especially, particular vulnerable groups.

In Ghana, trafficking is often associated with especially children being sold or lured into labour exploitation. United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. Article 3 (a) of the Protocol provides the concept of trafficking as:

“...the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation...forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery...” (UNICEF, 2002: 2; ActionAid 2001: 2; Anderson and Davison, 2002:9).

Although the above definition, seems to help in reducing the ambiguity and at the same time providing a wider base from which trafficking could be looked at, it has been subjected to many queries and criticism. Truong and Angeles (2003: 18) for instance show concern about its interpretation with regards to crime in the context of those who provide assistance to would-be migrants on humanitarian bases⁶. Moreover, trafficking in Africa especially, as argued by Truong and Angeles does not necessarily occur through networks of organized crimes and across national borders. Instead, it occurs through small, family-related networks and at times within national borders (Ibid). Thus

⁶ For further explanation, see Truong and Angeles (2003: 18).

apart from the fact that the various terms such as ‘trafficking’, ‘abduction’, ‘sale of children’ may mean different things to different people with regards to the context from which they are used, the definition adopted by the protocol cannot be said to adequately take care of ‘trafficking’ in the context of Ghana (Ibid).

Another problem posed by the protocol’s definition of trafficking according to Anderson and Davison (2002: 11) is its reference to concepts such as “exploitation”. Their argument is that the question about what exactly constitute an exploitative employment is very much disputed because there is variation between countries. Even in the same country, there is variation between economic sectors in term of what constitute socially and legally constructed acceptable employment practice. Given the absence of a universal yardstick in measuring what exactly constitute exploitation, there is a dearth global political consensus on minimum employment rights as well as cross-national and cross-sector norms concerning employment (Ibid). This makes the question of “exploitation” embedded in the UN protocol’s definition of trafficking still debatable.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for the purpose of its interest and agenda also developed a definition of trafficking. According to the definition provided by the IOM, trafficking occurs when:

“a migrant is illicitly engaged (recruited, kidnapped, sold etc.) and/or moved, either within or across international border; through intermediaries (traffickers), during any part of the process, obtain economic or other profit by means of deception, coercion and/or other forms of exploitation under conditions that violates the fundamental human rights of the migrants” (ActionAid, 2001:3).

However, Anderson and Davidson (2002:9) argued that “trafficking in person” is not used to describe as a single or unitary act that lead to a specific outcome, instead, it is used to cover a whole range of actions and outcomes. The fact that the process of trafficking entails several phases namely, recruitment, transportation and control in the place of destination, makes it a complex task to locate and define the linkage between migration and trafficking at the local, national and/or international level.

Furthermore, in situations where trafficking can effectively manipulate legal channels of migration and the consent of migrants to their advantage, a distinction between trafficking and other forms of population movement is often not possible. Finally, since trafficking is a dynamic process, not every phase involves the use of force. Just as there are some people who took their own initiative to migrate have ended up in slavery-like circumstances, so too there are those who are recruited and transported through deception and illicit means yet may end up in decent and well-paid job (Anuska 1997:4). That is although the three elements of trafficking⁷ are vital in defining it, in reality, all the three do not always come together in all circumstances.

2.2.1 Child trafficking defined

In order to distinguish between trafficking and child trafficking, the sub-paragraph (c) of the UN Protocol goes on further to clarify that, the consent of the victim of trafficking in persons for exploitation set forth in sub-paragraph (a) shall cease to be relevant where any of the means set forth in the sub-paragraph have been used. Thus:

“ the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered as ‘trafficking in person’ even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in the sub-paragraph (a) of this article” (UN Protocol in Actio-Aid, 2001: 2 and UNICEF, 2002: 2).

This section of the protocol tries to clarify what exactly constitutes ‘child trafficking’ in particular. However, in the context of West Africa and Ghanaian traditional practices in particular, a distinction between child trafficking, migration and placement of children is necessary. In the Ghanaian traditional society, it is a common practice where children are placed with family members living in cities to benefit from its existence of better opportunities such as education, acquisition of skill through vocational training. That is customarily and through family solidarity, family members living in towns and cities normally visit their villages to fetch children, albeit it is now used for the purpose of exploitation (ILO 2001:4-5). Thus in the case of child trafficking for specific purposes and more importantly for exploitation, the actual recruitment processes do not always differ significantly (Anuska 1997:8) from child placement in the Ghanaian society. Hence

⁷ The three elements of trafficking are: the process of recruitment, transportation and exploitation.

the term “child trafficking” here, from recruitment to the stage of exploitation can mean different things to different societies.

In order to address this, three criteria are identified to qualify trafficking in children and they are:

- the intervention of an intermediary;
- the realization of a transaction;
- the motive to exploit or exploitation. (Tengey and Oguah, 2002: 11; ILO, 2001:2).

Transaction here means:

“...any institution or practice under which young people below 18 years over by either or both parents, or by a guardian to a third person, whether for a fee or not, with the intention of exploiting the person or the work of the young”. This does not necessarily mean payment in exchanging for handing over the child. But the mere existence of economic motive —cheap labour for one party and a token sum or payment for period of time for other, being it parents or other intermediary] qualifies it as a transaction (Ibid).

The definition of “transaction” adopted above has specifically clarified the whole complexity and confusion surrounding the definition of child trafficking with regards to the Ghanaian cultural practices of child placement and the legal definition of child trafficking. In line with this broad definition of transaction, the concept of child trafficking covers a broad participation and promotion of trafficking in persons for the purpose of exploitation. The concept therefore is identified with or measured by many variables within the context of ‘abduction’, ‘placement’(as a result of sale), ‘bonded placement’, ‘temporary placement’, ‘placement as a service’ and ‘placement as embezzlement’ (ILO, 2001: 2) rather than by any single or some variables like abduction or placement as a result of sale.

By adopting a broad definition of trafficking, it will be possible to cover a large spectrum of practices and actors and the different forms of exploitation that may exist. Since child trafficking is often a concealed crime – also in Ghana (Tengey and Oguah, 2002: 18), it is important to select from a broad range of practices, those that bear more fundamental characteristics of the ‘Worst Form of Child Labour’ as defined by the ILO. This is very vital, especially in Ghana where it is always difficult to distinct between cultural

placements of children for socialization and education and children being placed for exploitation (Ibid). Finally, because the issues bordering on the legal definition of child trafficking and social practices have elements of age and labour, there is also the need to address the question as who a “child” is within the concept of child.

2.2.2 Definition of “child”

Definition of child also depends on how childhood is perceived as different cultures have different views about the state of a child (O’Neil and Willoughy 2000:6; Gittins 1998:21-22; Naidu and Kpapadia, 1985; Kabeer, et al, 2003). Scholars like O’Neil and Willoughy (2000); Hendrick (1997:34) and James Prout (1993) based on this argued that childhood is nothing but a social construct. Fronese (1993)⁸ for instance argues that:

“there is not one childhood, but many, formed at the intersection of different Cultural, social and economic systems, natural and man-made physical environments. Different positions in society produce different experiences”

What can be deduced from Fronese’ argument is that, childhood is a social and cultural concept by definition and, is based on an idea and a category which does not refer to an individual embodied child (Guttin 1998:22). “Child” therefore does not carry one meaning but number of meanings which are sometimes contradictory (Ibid).

The prevailed international definitions of “child” demonstrated in two major conventions, first one, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) declared in 1989. The article 1 of the convention says:

“...a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”.⁹

The second consists of the international labour standards adopted by ILO. The most current one adopted is the one in the Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child labour”, ILO Convention 182. The Article 2 of the Convention says:

“...the term child shall apply to all persons under the age of 18” (ILO 1999).

⁸ Cited in James and Prout (1997)

⁹ Children’s Rights Article 1. <http://www.unicef.org/crc/articles/al.htm>

The universal validity of theoretically defining, in law by setting ages of majority at a time they assume full adult responsibilities (O'Neil and Willoughy, 2000:7) as experienced in the conventions above has been questioned by some scholars. O'Neil and Willoughy, for instance observe that while the moving of an individual out of home to establish their household depicts their maturity and therefore expected to become autonomous, in some societies and cultural practices, individuals remain part of the household, controlled and as well subject to the authority of their parents economically and socially until their time of marriage regardless of their age.

Furthermore, Fyfe (1993) notes that chronological age is less important than local custom when it comes to regions or people, where the accurate date of birth does not have much weight on life or is not known at all. Besides, it should also be taken into consideration that, children's abilities and maturities vary so much that defining child's age by calendar age can mislead people (Ibid). In addition to that, in the conventions, children are defined by what they can do and cannot do. This aspect of the conventions are said to be "adult-centrism" because of their failure to assert children's political rights while trying to specify adults' obligation towards them (O'Neil and Willoughy, 2000: 7). This situation does not only make children to be regarded incompetent and incapable of acting in their own interests (Ibid) but also limit their rights and make them rather inferior and not worthy of the same respect as adults and this might be the cause of their exploitation. Thus although the above definitions in the conventions are widely accepted, individual societies and governments may have different definitions according to different ages or by using other criteria. This explains why some countries in ratifying the convention enter a reservation especially, where it contravenes their national legal or cultural norms (Bissell, 2003: 51).

In the Ghanaian society, although a child is legally defined as a person under the age of 18 (Ghana Statistical Service 2003:8), it does not necessarily determine how a child is regarded in the context of some social practices, instead, the ability of the child to live an independent life without depending on the parents is mostly considered (Mends 1994: 7).

It is within the above socio-cultural context of which a child and childhood is regarded that added to the contention of the legal definition of child exploitation and trafficking for policy attention become problematic. It is also argued that, there is a co-relation between child trafficking and child labour (Anderson and Davidson 2002:23). The next section explores this relationship and its implication on legal definition of child trafficking and social practices, especially, in Ghana.

2.2.3 Child labour and Child trafficking: the linkage

Child labour, just as child, has no universally accepted definition. This is because it is a complex phenomenon that is deeply rooted in the structures and traditions of cultural, social, political, and economic of societies (Admassie, 2000: 3). Child labour can range from any help provided by a child within a household or on the farm to wage work, training, or heavy physical work (Ibid: 6). Bourdillon (2000: 8) however argues that the main issue with regards to the definition of child labour is based on the fact that there is always a problem when it comes to differentiating between “child work” which is good and “child labour” which is bad. A child who helps with household chores, in a family business, or on family farm cannot be considered as child labour, especially in Africa where this forms part of the child’s socialization, development and training (Tengey and Oguuah, 2002: xiv). Bourdillon’s general argument is that, work cannot be termed as child labour when it does not detract other essential activities such as leisure, play and education of the child but when opposite is the case and at the same time impairs the health, and development of the child, then it can be considered as child labour.

It however becomes a common practice, for the purpose of identifying child labourers by treating all persons within the age group of 5-14 as children (C. Antonyraj 2004:97). But as indicated earlier, ILO Convention 138 and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defined “child” as a person under the age of 18. In this case, “child labour” can be regarded and for that matter defined as any type of work performed by children below the age of 18. ILO in another development treats the age limit set at 14 in developing nations and fixed the minimum age at 18 for hazardous or “worst” form of work (B. Grimsrud 2002:10).

In analysing the two major conventions—CRC Article 1 and ILO Convention 182 Article 2, as the result of the world wide concern with child labour, Anker and Melkas (1996) come out with their own definition of child labour. According to them, “child labour is essentially understood as encompassing monetary or unpaid activities which are mentally, physically, morally or socially hazardous for the child; work done by very young children that makes schooling impossible; and bonded labour”.

Admassie (2000:9)¹⁰ has classified working children into several categories— those who work on their own account, those who are paid on the basis of time and piece rate apprentice children, who work with their family without any direct remuneration. Another categories of child labour which have not been mentioned are those that by arrangement, children are forced to work for others to settle off debts of their parents or where children enter servitude as a result of prior financial transaction between their parents and a lender (Ibid). These are “worst forms of child labour” and as defined in the convention—convention No. 182 and was unanimously adopted in 1999, states that:

“...all forms of practices similar to slavery such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour including recruitment of children for use in armed conflicts; the use, procurement or offering of a child for prostitution, production of pornography or pornographic performance; the use, procurement or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs; work which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. The convention also requires States to take account of the special situation of girls and young children”.¹¹

The above definition clearly demonstrates that trafficking in children belong to the most intolerable forms of child labour. The conditions under which children are lured and trafficked plus the situations in which they end up are tantamount to force labour.

In the context of this research, the practice of ‘child trafficking’ as well as forced labour and slavery-like situations are not only within the meaning of the ILO’s Convention (No. 29) of force labour, but also in a situation where parents, intermediaries and employers

¹⁰ citing Mendelievich (1979)

¹¹ African Centre for Human Development (2000:2).

take advantage of the traditional practices of migration of children to extended families or non-family members for social upbringing and education and use it to exploit the child's labour. That is, any of these acts which might lead to child labour, namely, intervention of an intermediary; realization of a transaction and a motive to exploit or exploitation (Tengey and Oguah, 2002: 11; ILO, 2001:2). It is understood that these criteria qualify trafficking in children and should therefore be seen as not only intolerable but the worst form of child labour.

2.3 Poverty, livelihood systems and vulnerability

Although poverty is generally recognized as one of the causes of child trafficking, locating and defining it has been problematic¹². According to Gordon (2002) the definition of the term "poverty" is highly contested albeit it is a widely used and understood concept. His argument is that the term 'poverty' cannot be viewed from one meaning but from cluster of different overlapping meanings depending on what subject area or discourse it is being examined. Poverty to Rakodi (2002:4) can be understood as a state of affairs where individuals or households are poor as a result of insufficient goods and services to enable them achieve a minimal status of well-being. Defining a household as being poor in term of consumption has however been challenged on the ground that it may not necessarily capture all deprived households and individuals (Ibid). Hence Kabeer (1994: 137) for instance considers poverty generally in terms of deprivation of basic human needs. That is basic needs such as food, shelter, and good health is among others that reflect on people's well-being. Amartya Sen's definition of poverty¹³ popularly referred to as "capability approach" (CA) rejects the measuring of well-being in terms of monetary income and focuses it on indicators of the freedom to live a value life (Ruggeri Laderchi et al, 2003:252). Both monetary and capability approach to poverty have also been criticized for their inability to take into account the views of the

¹² Ruggeri Laderchi et al (2003) however indicate the importance of clear definition of the term "poverty" by arguing that its clarification and definition is very vital because different definitions imply the use of different indicators for measurement and this may result to identifying different individuals and groups as poor and require different policies in reducing poverty.

¹³ Poverty according to Sen is the failure to achieve certain minimal or basic capabilities, where "basic capabilities" are the ability to satisfy certain crucially important functionings up to certain minimally adequate levels" (citing Sen 1999 in Ruggeri Laderchi et al, 2003:253).

poor themselves, hence Chambers new approach of looking at poverty known as “participatory approach” (Ibid).¹⁴ This approach was embraced by the World Bank in its poverty assessments on the notion that, as Truong (2005:17), referring to Booth, puts it, “poverty assessment works better when it draws on the resources of a range of stakeholders”.

The World Development Report (World Bank 2000/1) identifies poverty as a multidimensional and complex phenomenon, and observes that the causes of poverty and its solution are not general but specific to individual countries. The multifaceted nature of poverty therefore calls for multivariate approaches in combating and understanding its dynamics (Christiaensen et al. 2002).¹⁵ Although the UN Summit on Social Development on the light of this highlights the need to reduce the world poor to 50% by 2015, the Sub-Saharan Africa is said to fall short from this prediction. Instead, the number of poor in the region is expected to increase from 300 million to 345 million in 1999 by 2015.¹⁶ In Ghana, the adoption of the IMF/World Bank supported Economic Recovery Programme in 1983 succeeded to some large extent, in reversing the economic decline experienced in the late 1970s and this had led to a sustained economic growth of an average of 4.6% per annum between 1996 and 2000 (Ghana Statistical Service 2003:xvi). However, Ghana’s per capita income currently is about US\$300, with about 40% of its population being below the upper poverty line (Ibid). Those that fall within the extreme poverty, defined as those who cannot afford to meet their minimum nutritional requirements even if their entire budget is devoted to food, are said to be very high in Ghana (Oduro and Aryee, 2003:23). The patterns of poverty demonstrates marked differences across regions and those classified as extremely poor form about 59% of the people living in the savannah zone as compare to 2% of those living in the capital, Accra (Ibid). It is also observed that households involved in food crop farming [and fishing] are classified as those who experience the highest incidence of poverty (Baffoe, 2004:38 and Oduro and Aryee, 2003:23).

¹⁴ See Ruggeri Laderchi et al, (2003:260) and Truong (2005:17), for further explanations on this approach.

¹⁵ Cited in Odebode (2004).

¹⁶ Citing UN Millennium Declaration, UN Resolutions 55/2 2000 in (Ibid).

Rather than restricting the discussion on poverty to its measure,¹⁷ research on trafficking needs a broad concept of poverty that covers deprivation of capabilities and opportunities. For example, the poor in the fishery sector in Ghana have described their conditions in relations to the rising costs of inputs to production, depression, indebtedness, lack of access to health care and education for their children, poor health and lack of alternative income generating or employment opportunities.¹⁸ As such, the concept of livelihood may be a more appropriate tool to analyze poverty from the perspective of the poor. The term “livelihood” can be interpreted in many possible ways but generally comprises the means and activities through which people make a living. Livelihood according to De Haan does not necessarily have to do with working—earning an income. It thus refers to the activities through which people acquire a means of living. This includes food, housing, and both monetary and non-monetary income (Kaag et al. 2003). What this implies is that livelihood does not refer only to income earning but encapsulates a wider range of activities such as dealing with risk, managing social networks and institutions within communities and the city and, negotiating social relationships within households (Beall and Kanji 1999: 1). Chambers also postulates that employment can be regarded as a component of livelihood. The diversity of livelihood as looked from many dimensions includes social and economic hence the need to approach it in a multifaceted way (Ellis 2000). According to Kaag et al (2003), livelihood is mostly used as sensitizing concepts pointing to an approach to poverty issues that focus on people-centred and non-sectoral that grounded on multifaceted reality of daily life.

Central to the livelihood approach is the different kinds of assets (capital) available to the poor and the extent to which it is accessible. That is accessibility to capital gives support to livelihood strategies that in turn produce livelihood outcomes—more income among others reduces vulnerability and improve food security (Ashley 1999). Livelihood strategies according to De Haan (2000:27) are many and comprise a large number of production and labour activities using a vital capital in various compositions. Individuals

¹⁷ Although such discussion will no doubt assist in visualizing the size of the various problems encountered -in addressing national poverty (IMM, 2004). But then, as to whether such measures are the realities of how the poor themselves see poverty is another question.

¹⁸ Citing Wad et al (2004) in IMM (2004).

decision on the choice of livelihood strategies is based on his/her access. Five types of assets/capital which are vital for people to achieve sustainable livelihood according to Chambers and Conway (1992), Chambers (1995) and Blaikie et al. (1994), are human, natural, physical, financial and social capital. These five types of capital according to De Haan (2000:15) experience a multitude of influences from the broader economic, social and political context within which people live. Thus, the ability of households to reduce or prevent vulnerability and to increase economic productivity depends basically on their initial assets and how they are able to transform these assets into income, food and other basic necessities through the intensification of existing, developing new or by diversifying their strategies (Rakoni 2002; Moser 1996, 1998). But then, it is also observed that institutions as well as processes have a tremendous impact on the access of the poor with regards to all types of assets and their effective value. They both consciously and unconsciously influence entitlements and constrain access as well. Besides the assets status of the people, the institutional context also serves as a factor on what livelihoods strategies that are available and attractive. This means that the mere existence of assets alone is not sufficient to promote livelihood but the key factor is their accessibility, which is determined by the entitlements that men and women are able to command (Meikle 2002:44). And this relates heavily to contextual factors—the institutional structures and processes which serve as a determinant to people’s social, economic and legal rights (Ibid). Other forces such as markets and legal restrictions also determine the extent to which one can convert his/her assets into another in order to manage his/her portfolio to withstand shocks and stresses and take advantage of opportunities (Rakoni, 2002; Scoones 1998; Carney 1998).

From perspective of livelihood, people operate in a context of vulnerability in the course of employing their access to certain capitals within the prevailing structures and processes to evolve their livelihood strategies. Thus poverty as Krantz (2001) argues is not necessarily the question of low income but includes the state of vulnerability and the feeling of powerlessness in general. It should however be noted that although the concept of vulnerability is most often used synonymously for poverty, the two are not the same. Vulnerability according to Moser (1996:2, 1998) refers to the insecurity of the well-being

of individuals, households or communities in the face of a changing environment with its concomitant increasing risk, uncertainty and declining self-respect.¹⁹ Vulnerability does not imply lack of want but powerlessness and exposure (Chambers 1995:20) against trends of globalization and shocks, social pressures, seasonality, government policies among others of which people have less or no control over.

In this research, it is postulated that artisanal/small-scale fishermen in particular are prone to these influences and even more in the face of poverty and non-powerless environment (FAO 2002).

2.4 Vulnerability and Mobility: Tracing the Roots of Child Trafficking Networks in Ghana.

Mobility is a vital aspect of people's livelihoods diversification with the aim to manage risk, hence poor households tend to migrate as a group or send households' members away as a response to the need to manage risk and reduce vulnerability (Waddington 2003:13). Thus poorer streams most often comprising the entire households [or just a member] migrates in response to factors such as inability to subsist as a result of deterioration of sustainability of the agro-resource base, or indebtedness, or lack of food security (Ibid). Studies have however emphasised that migration does not necessarily guarantee security and reduction of vulnerability, but opposite can also be the case. Migration can as well increase vulnerability, especially in a situation where the migration and its proceeds on which the households depend prove to be unreliable (Ibid: 15). This is in the contexts of the fishing sector where there are limited opportunities but socio-economics factors have led to an increasing flow of migrants to the sector for livelihood. Under such condition of vulnerability, as pointed out by Truong (2005), children are offered by their employers the worst living and working conditions.

Migration as an aspect of social differentiation has also been widely recognized. Mobile livelihood as a means of adjusting to adversity and vital means of acquiring assets to strengthen a household's socio-economic status encourages social differentiation (Laite

¹⁹ Cited in Rakoni (2002:14)

1983:20-31). One of its observable aspects according to Laite is its contribution to social division of labour, notably the age-sex division of work tasks. UNICEF (2003:7) for instance observes that children [especially female children] who are lured by promises of better education or job and smuggled across [and within] borders are often forced to endure prostitution, domestic servitude, hazardous force labour or involuntary marriage. In addition, differentiation can also occur through differential access to types of domestic migration (Waddington 2003:11). Mostly, in situations where the poor are forced into particular types of migration, that restrict their movements to only badly paid unskilled jobs, poor living conditions, or inadequate services, social differentiation may occur or increase between a poorer and a richer migrants (Ibid). Tengey and Oguuah (2001:81) also report that, in Ghana, because the society values the birth of a male more than female, more girls than boys are exposed to migration and for that matter trafficking.

Research has shown that the people of West Africa for that matter Ghana have a complex history of mobility for economics reasons (Black et al. 2004; ILO 2001; Overa 2001; Adepaju 2002). According to Black et al, human mobility in Ghana involves both intra and inter-mobility. It is reported that about 10% of Ghana's population is currently living abroad (Black et al. 2004:22) in search of greener pastures for the remittance of their families. The intra-borders mobility is primarily from north to south for economic purposes (Ibid), where large number of unemployed youth as a result of poverty moves to commercial towns and cities in search of jobs in the formal and informal sectors. It is reported that, of the internal mobility from north to south, in-migrants represents over 40% of the population in the Greater Accra, Volta and Western regions (Ghana statistical service 2003:46-47 and Black et al 2004:22). Forced migration as a result of conflict has also been observed, especially at the northern part of the country where ethnic conflict over land from 1994-95 forced about 100,000 to relocate in neighbouring Togo and other parts of the country (Black et al 2004: 24).

Overa (2001) also reports of human mobility along the coastal areas for relocation as a result of the decline in small-scale coastal fisheries caused by overfishing of foreign

industrial vessels coupled with inability of sustaining the use of canoes due to rising fuel prices and, among other factors.

Another pattern of human mobility which is commonly observed in Ghana is linked with socio-cultural practices where child mobility through child-attachment to well-to-do extended family members for apprenticeship and good up-bringing.²⁰ And because parents are accustomed to the placement of their children with other family members, the next of giving them away to unknown persons is not a big deal (Tengey and Oguuah 2001:81). That is, generally, the tradition of child mobility can be seen as an aspect which facilitates the work of intermediaries. Hence children are sometimes handed over (knowingly or unknowingly) to an intermediary by parents with the promise that they will be sent to school, provided with a profession or be taken care of within the household but end up in paid labour of which no money is given to either the child or the parents (Black et al. 2004:24). There are therefore great concern of child trafficking situations in the country where children are being 'sold' [or put in bonded labour] to fishermen by their parents or intermediaries along the Volta Lake.

2.5 Concluding remarks

The chapter offers an analytical perspective on child trafficking in Ghana. I explore the tension between the legal definitions of trafficking/child trafficking and the social definition of the child by contrasting the legal norms regulating practices defined as 'child trafficking' against the context of poverty, livelihood systems and vulnerability in the fishing sector and in Ghana in general. I show how poverty has exacerbated cultural practices of child placement, and measures to combat trafficking based uniquely on the UN norms can fall short of their objectives if factors related to poverty and vulnerability are not taken into account. A punitive approach to child trafficking would affect entire communities. As the trafficking phenomenon from both the supply and demand sides have been influenced by the cultural practices of the communities, it is important to pay attention to how resource management (or failure thereof) in a particular sector can turn harmless practices of child placement into harmful ones. Unequal power relations

²⁰ African Centre for Human Development (2000: 3)

affecting resource distribution at household levels may also contribute to different patterns of migration and vulnerability according to age and gender. The formation of child trafficking networks appears to be closely connected with social differentiation, vulnerability and migration as a risk management strategy among the poor.

Chapter Three: Children's Migration and Exploitation in the Fishing Sector in Ghana

3.1 Introduction

Children's mobility for work is common in the context of Ghana. In recent years the rising trend of this mobility has resulted in frequent incidence of trafficking, particularly recorded in the fishing sector (DFID 2004:3). A consistent finding of many studies of the fishery sector, especially the artisanal fishery is its association with a large engagement of unskilled labour and poverty (Haakonsen 1992; Hersoung 1992; FAO 2002). This is linked to the nature of the sector which is labour intensive providing those with little or no capital the scope to earn a living through the provision of various economic activities, especially, at the landing or fishing port such as boatbuilding, ice production, mending of nets, engine maintenance and among others (Le Sann 1998:35). Apart from that, it also provides post-harvest livelihood activities that are closely associated with fishing communities. Amongst others, these include processing in especially traditional ways (smoking or drying), selling, loading, unloading parking, transporting (IMM 2004:2)

In Ghana, the artisanal fishery sector widely uses child labour, often in its worst form. A recent report commissioned by DANIDA revealed that two-thirds of the trafficked children in Ghana are engaged in the fishing sector as fishing assistants and processors and selling of fish. This chapter explores the main structural causes behind the use of child labour in this sector and illustrates how practices of child labour become practices of child trafficking. The main aim is to highlight how the specific dimensions of vulnerability in artisanal fishery as a livelihood system shaped its proclivity to the use of child labour in its worst form.

3.2 The significance of the fishing sector in Ghana's economy

The fishing sector is one of the vital sources for employment, national food security and foreign exchange earnings in Ghana (FAO 2002). The sector generates both direct and indirect employment along the entire coastal zone of length about 528 km in Ghana as well as her traditional export earnings (Akpalu 2002:2). Apart from that, it also serves as

an important source in terms of local needs of protein, supplying 26.1 kg per capita consumption per year (FAO 2002). It is therefore estimated that about 1.5 million people derive their livelihood from the fishery sub-sector (Ibid). In terms of foreign exchange earnings, Ghana's export earnings from fish and fish products is recorded to increase from 21 to 78 US million dollars between 1990 and 2000, contributing 21% to the country's non-traditional export earning (Kurien 2004:96). In addition to being an important source of food and employment and a contribution to the general economic well-being throughout the country, the sector is also one of the main significant sources of income that has been channelled to the Ghana's annual debt service payments (Ibid:41). Against such a background, the intensification of the use of children as labourers, including trafficked, cannot be seen in isolation from the changing dynamics of the fishery sector, particularly artisanal practices.

3.3 The structure and development of artisanal marine resource in Ghana

The fishery sector in Ghana covers marine and inland activities. The marine fishery sector is composed of artisanal, inshore, industrial and tuna fleets (Akpalu 2002:2). Akpalu (2002:9-10) has given a historical perspective of how the sector was regulated at the local level after the government declaring particularly the artisanal resources in 1957 as open access and granted the use rights to all Ghanaian. According to him, the artisanal resource management before the 20th century was not an issue because the sector was with reasonable low population using simple technology with total catch below the maximum sustainable yield. And because artisanal marine fishermen are always located in communities, the founders of any of the communities who usually became the chief fisherman together with some elders and some other successful fishermen became responsible to all issues affecting the community. They resolved fishing related conflicts and also enforced various social norms relating to fishing and punished the violators. Thus before the 20th century, there was no or very little migration for fishing activities because fish resources were in abundance and within the limited jurisdiction of the various fishing communities. Any fisherman who migrated to any fishing community, as a norm, was supposed to report himself and his family to the chief fisherman and his elders who in turn introduced them formally to the entire fishing community for their

general welfare. Fishing communities through their leaders and initiatives were able to regulate all related issues concerning fishing to sustain their livelihood without any direction from the government or any higher authority outside their various communities.

Within the fishing sector, the artisanal fishery sector plays the most important role dominating in terms of vessels, fish landing and employment (Ibid:2). Out of the total number of 9,106 vessels in the sector in 1998, the sector alone had 8,895 and as such employed about 101,741 fishermen and 150,000 fish processors and traders (Ibid).

Hence with the decline in the price of other traditional export commodities such as cocoa and gold and its adverse effects on the country's foreign exchange earnings and employment, steps were taken by the government to improve the marine fishery sector to meet its growing demands from both domestic and export sector (Ibid). Policies such as the use of the right fishing resource was introduced by the government and enshrined in the fishing regulation (PNDC law 256 of 1991) to ensure sustainability (Ibid:3). Also introduced were improved fishing gears, such as the purse seine net, synthetic netting materials and, outboard motors as well as fish processing and storage facilities. The steps have significantly increased employment and means of livelihood at the sector (FOA 2002). Akpalu (2002:6) also noted that the marine fishery as at 1990 operates in about 189 fishing communities with 310 landing sites throughout the country; with the estimation of the sector landing about 250,000 metric tones annually of which 180,000 constitute small pelagic species. But after its highest landing in 1992 with 125,815 tons, there has since been a significant surge down in the sector (Ibid). An important question worth asking then is why the sudden decline despite all these efforts in improving the sector; what then might be the factors behind it? The next section explores these factors and the extent to which they have contributed to the decline of the sector.

3.4 The decline of the Artisanal Marine fishery in Ghana

As the country's population growth increased over the years at an approximate rate of about 3% annually, her economic performance has also started to decline from the early 1970s. By the dawn of 1980s, the economy was characterized by high rate of inflation of

about 123%, overvalued currency and deteriorating terms of trade among others (Akpalu 2002:10). These situations had led to higher rate of unemployment and compelled large number of people in the country to seek solace in the agricultural sector including the artisanal marine sector for an alternative livelihood (Ibid). Walker (2001) noted that this mobility of the large number of displaced labour to the artisanal marine sector coincided with its development with the introduction of outboard motors, new gears and improved processing techniques. But as always the case, population growth exerts unnecessary pressure and increases competition for resources and consequently produces growing number of people with group membership claims (McCulloch et al 198). In such situation as argues by Akpalu (2002), where the presence of many communities of artisanal fishers resorting to adopt profit maximizing fishing within the same common resource, there is no probability of any of them taking order from other communities. And since it will be unrewarding for any of the communities to comply with the role of use, harvest level will definitely reduce. The obvious end result will be overcapitalization and exploitation with its concomitant poverty in these fishing communities.

And as noted by FAO (2002), the term '*artisanal fishers*' "*is a wide variety of groups which can be distinguished by characteristics such as gear type of fisheries, professional category, sources of income, migratory status, gender, culture and nationality, among others*". Meaning that, artisanal fishers are not homogenous entity because: (1) different groups of artisanal fishers have different perceptions of access to resources and attitudes to fish management and interest in terms of participation or by opposing specific management method; (2) a particular approach to fisheries management measures may have different impact on the livelihood of each of the various groups and; (3) finally, there is also the likelihood that only the vocal or politically and economically influential which may constitute only a small number, will be actively involved in the administrations in formal fisheries management (Ibid).

In addition to that, it is further observed that different artisanal fishers are different in terms of fisheries and livelihood strategies—while some fish in their native lands, some migrate seasonally or settled permanently elsewhere. Asides, whereas some take fishing

as a main activity, others take it along side other economic activities and therefore do not even consider themselves as fishers (Ibid). Thus for artisanal fishers to protect their livelihoods in general and to be able to encounter vulnerability, they developed various strategies such as overfishing and permanent or seasonal migration to elsewhere with richer fishing to ensure their livelihood and year-round income (FAO 2002). As their livelihood strategies and their susceptibility to (and reactions to) vulnerability are different, so as their interest in, and perception of, fisheries and its management are also different (Ibid). That is while residents consider the sea/lake near their community as community property to which access is controlled, through various rules and regulations by the elders of the community, migrants perceived it as an open access and strategy to avoid those rules and regulations (Ibid). What further complicated the whole issue is the development of numerous fishing centres with too many fishing vessels (S. Mathew 2001:12). This makes it more difficult if not impossible even for the government to successfully regulate the marine artisanal fishing activities by introducing limited-entry regimes [or any other measures to regulate the sector] in, especially, small-scale fisheries without the active involvement of fishing gear groups and any other related fishing organizations (Ibid).

Effective management for sustainable livelihood in terms of income and employment for the prevention of vulnerability at the sector therefore requires the need to take into consideration all the categories of artisanal fishers. This FAO (2002) study argues that for fisheries management to be successful, its mechanisms need to be adapted to specific fishers with regards to their fishing strategies and livelihoods but if it is generally managed, they are less likely to participate in it effectively to achieve its desired result.

3.5 Co-Management of the Artisanal Marine Fishery in Ghana

As an answer to that, artisanal fishers were generally involved in the informal fisheries management measures that exist along side the formal measures initiated by the fisheries administration (FAO 2002). However there is a distinction between formal fisher involvement and informal fisher involvement. While the informal involvement included the formulation and implementation of local regulations made by community fisher

committees, under their own initiative, the formal fisher is done through consultation for the formulation of fisheries laws and regulations (Ibid). Furthermore, whereas the formal measures are based on policies of Governments, and geared towards long-term biological goals, the artisanal's concern is generally based on short-term social and economics goals (Ibid). Thus for artisanal fisheries management for effective livelihood according to FAO (2002), needs a strong leadership at the local level coupled with vested interest of fishers as well as the government in the management process.

By way of addressing these issues, a strong bond of partnership was instituted between the Fishery Department and Community Based Fisheries Management Programme (CBFM) under the auspices of the Sub-sector Capacity Building Project introduced in 1995 in a form of a joint venture between the government of Ghana and the World Bank was implemented (Akpalu 2002:12). With the aim of improving on the existing structures for a long term sustainability of the fisheries, committees were formed in each and every community with the responsibility of drafting bylaws that would govern fishing activities within the community for submission and approval by the District Assemblies (Ibid). Akpalu argued that, apart from the creation of partnership between the higher local authorities and fishing communities, the strategy also helped in instilling trust and a sense of responsibility in the communities.

3.6 Vulnerability, Migration and the use of Child labour and its worst form in the Artisanal Fishery in Ghana

However albeit the co-management strategy achieved remarkable result in regulating the use of required methods at the sector for its sustainability, the sector still could not recover from the set back of the liberalization policies such as the structural adjustment policies adopted in the 1980s and 1990s by the Government which failed to pay any significant attention in improving the techniques and equipments in the artisanal fishery (Walker 2001:166). Instead, subsidies on fuel were removed and the devaluation of currencies and other micro-economic measures have affected the prices of imported goods including fishing inputs by raising their prices beyond the purchasing powers of artisanal fishers; while consumers in the main market for fish also declined (Overa

2001:30). The liberalization policies have not only brought about high prices on imported goods but also competition between national products and international ones, and consequently led to the closure of numerous fishing firms for their failure to meet the EU quality standards (FAO 2002). The end result of this was loss of employment, income and for that matter means of livelihood by large number of people who were employed by these firms (Kurien 2004:96). With the already existing pressure on the sector due to the reduction in catch and decline in profitability and its subsequent increase in poverty among the artisanal fishery communities, an alternative strategy to increase catch so as to maximize profit by fishermen of the sector, particularly, along the coast have resorted to the use of mesh sizes between 10mm and 25mm which is very disastrous in artisanal fishery (Koranteng, 1997). Bodies such as the Ghana Navy, Department of fisheries, and the Judiciary who were charged to be responsible for the enforcement of the rules to curb this act also failed to live up the task (Akpalu 2002:10). This was as a result of inadequate fund provided by the government for effective monitoring and enforcement of these regulations (Ibid). The persistence use of the strategy further aggravated the overexploitation and overcapitalization of the sector with its eventual increasing rate of poverty and unemployment in the coastal fishing communities (Ibid).

A general trend observed by several is the tendency among fishing communities to find new locations to practice fishing. Overa (2001) in her study of Moree community²¹ illustrate how the majority of artisanal fishers along the coast had to relocate elsewhere as the coastal fishing has declined. Overa (2001:3) also notes how conflicts in neighbouring countries like Ivory Coast, Sierra Leon and Liberia have also brought back large number of Ghanaian migrant fishers along has imposed limits on the options available along the costs. Unable to find alternatives, many have found their way to the Lake Volta, causing overpopulation along the lake. Overpopulation and competition for limited resource has culminated into an increase in poverty and indebtness and competition for resource. Fish in the Volta Lake is also showing signs of decline as clearly evident from the falling catch per unit (Kurien 2004:96). But as compared to migrant fishers and their native counter-parts along the Lake who may have more important economic activities in the

²¹ A fishing community along the coast of Ghana,

face of the decline of resources, the migrant fishers who take to fishing as their main occupation become more vulnerable to the situation and need an alternative to sustain their livelihood. FAO (2002) also observed that, at every community or landing level, there exist various forms of fisheries organizations that hold the individuals who engage in particular types of fisheries together. These organizations according to FAO have both economic and social advantages and therefore become an important livelihood strategy for its members in the community. However, memberships of these groups, which are normally dominated by influential people in the community, are hardly accessible to vulnerable groups such as migrant fishers (Ibid). Hence an enhancement of competition for resources for most of these vulnerable groups has resulted in the negative use of livelihood strategy (as an alternative) through the formalization of child labour and its worst form, child trafficking along the Volta Lake.

Various studies therefore attribute the child trafficking situations in the West Africa and particularly in Ghana to poverty, persistent unemployment and its consequent demand for child labour (ILO 2001; Tengey and Oguuah 2002; DFID 2004) as strategy by producers to cut down cost of production. This is based on the fact that children are very discipline and always ready to work even under intolerable and exploitative conditions. DFID (2004:3) for instance argues that poverty as a result of decline in production of fishing accounts for child labour and its worst form, child trafficking along the Volta Lake. Anderson and Davidson (2002:23) in support of this argument suggest that exploitation of trafficked persons often take place within unregulated economic sectors where profit margins are very low. These go a long way to explain why large number of trafficked children in Ghana was located at the fishing sector, especially, along the Volta Lake (Tengey and Oguuah 2002).

Based on these challenges and findings, it is argued in this study that there is a causal linkage between migration, poverty, insecurity of livelihood among fishing communities and child trafficking in Ghana.

3.7 Concluding Remarks

The chapter explores the structural causes behind the use of child labour at the fishing sector and has observed that although the artisanal fishery is one of the important sources for employment, national food security and foreign exchange earnings in Ghana, the sector has suffered a serious set back with regards to management. This is as a result of the economic liberalisation policies introduced by the government in the 1980s. The policy has affected the means of livelihood of large number of people who eke their living from fishing and its related work along the coast. As an alternative, the majority of them found their way to the Volta Lake, leading to overexploitation and competition for scarce resource and poverty. This situation has generated the use of child labour and its worst form, trafficking as a coping strategy among the fishworkers along the lake.

Chapter Four: The Experience of Trafficking: Diversity and Commonality

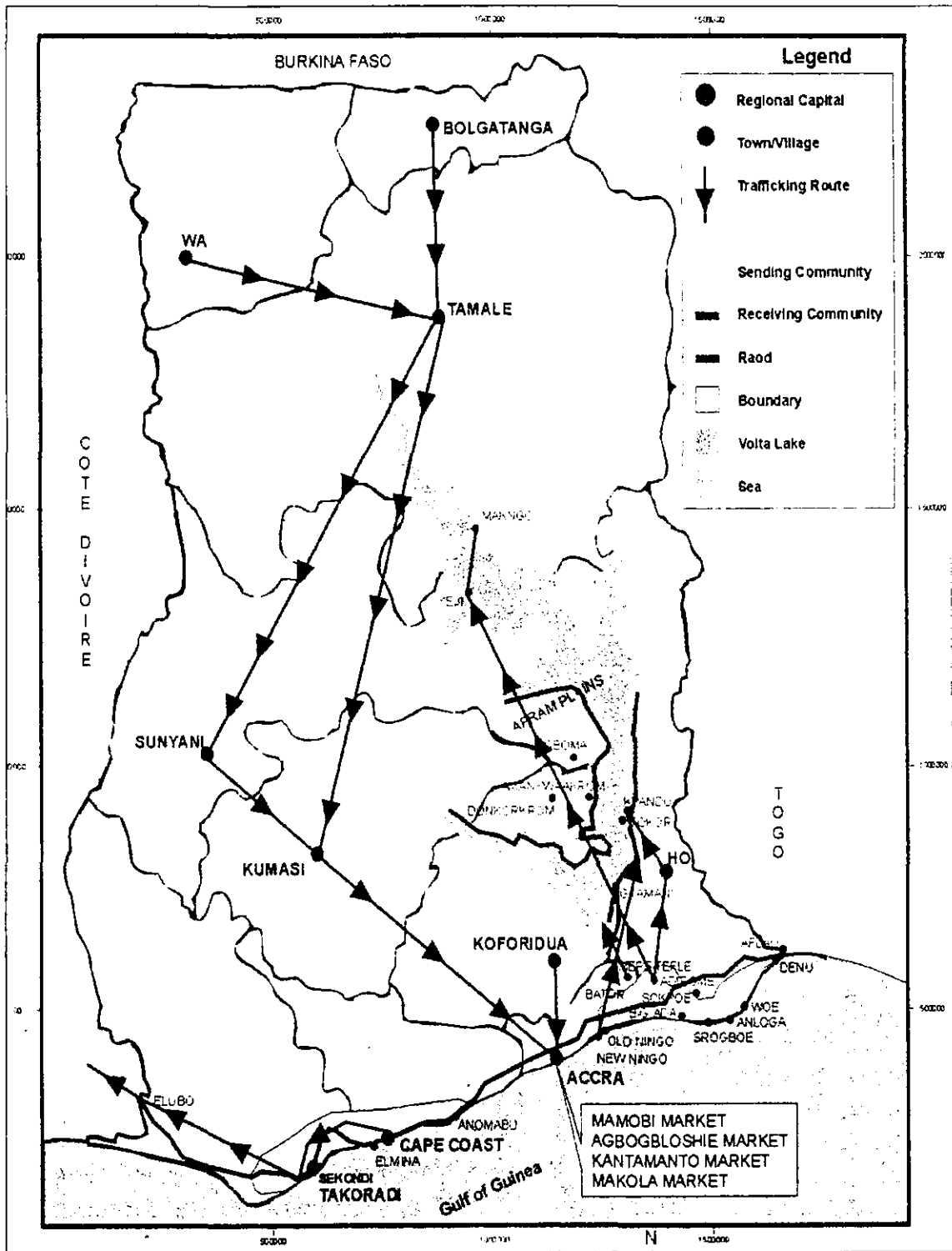
4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents empirical findings on the child trafficking situation with regards to the perceptions of respondents and the treatment of the trafficked victims through interview and focus group discussion to help in analysing the pulling and the pushing factors behind the phenomenon in the study area.

4. 2. Sample Size and Selection

The study was carried out in the Kpandu, Kudzra, and Kpandu-Torkor and Gyamani fishing communities along the Volta Lake in the Kpandu District of the Volta Region, Ghana. The target respondents were rescued ‘trafficked’ children, the parents and the employers of trafficked children. In all, 26 rescued trafficked children have been interviewed (with their age ranging between 9 and 17 years) and approximately one quarter of them participated in focus group discussion. Twenty parents and 15 employers were as well interviewed with 5 of the employers engaged in focus group discussion. Six of the parents and 7 of the children come from Kudzra and the rest of the parents and children come from Kpandu town.

Map of Ghana showing Internal Human Trafficking Routes, Destinations and Origins of Trafficking



Source: Tengey and Oguah (2002: 70).

4.3 Background of the Rescued Trafficked Victims interviewed.

Of the 26 children, eight of them were girls aged between 10 and 16 years and the boys, between 9 and 17 years. The majority of them are from large family sizes with average of 5 to 12 children but stayed with their employers who they generally referred to as “uncle” or “auntie”.

A large proportion of the rescued trafficked children are males while less than one-third are females (Table 1). This goes against the normal perception that there are more female victims among trafficked children. This may be attributed to the specific characteristics of the fishery sector where males are of relatively higher demand for use in fish harvesting.

Table 4.1: Sex Distribution of Children interviewed

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	18	69.2
Female	8	30.8
Total	26	100

Source: Field work 2005

In the following section, I henceforth describe the background experiences of the rescued trafficked children ranging from parental consent to be put into work under slavery-like condition and the kinds of treatment received during this period.

4.3.1 Rescued children's experiences during the forced Migration

For all the children concerned, a very high proportion (80%) was committed to “slavery”²² with the consent of their parents (Table 4.2). About one-third (1/3) of these children were accompanied by their parents to the place where they were put into a work under what ILO defines as slavery-like condition. Though almost two-thirds (2/3) got their migration arranged through intermediaries,²³ only one (1) of these children was recruited directly from the parents by the employer/end user (Table 4.2).

²² The word “slavery” is used here to refer to *kluvi* meaning a ‘bonded person’ in Ewe language.

²³ The children referred to these intermediaries as “Aunties” meaning it is mostly women who serve as intermediaries in the recruitment and transportation of the trafficked children to their various destinations.

Table 4.2: Percentage distribution of rescued “trafficked” children according to background experiences

Variables	Frequency	%
Parental consent to migrate		
Yes	21	79.8
Cannot explain	5	19.2
Recruitment to employer		
By parents	8	30.8
By ‘auntie’/intermediary	17	65.4
Employer/End user	1	3.8
Children’s willingness to migrate		
Migrated willingly	16	61.5
Did not migrate willingly	10	38.5
Mode of transportation to employer		
Boat	7	26.9
Boat and Lorry	14	53.9
Cannot remember	5	19.2
Motive for Migration		
Hope for schooling	8	30.8
Hope for fishing	7	26.9
No idea	5	19.2
Parents said nothing	6	23.1
Treatment of children by employers		
Well treated	7	26.9
Badly treated	19	73.1
Total	26	100.0

Source: Field work 2005

There seems to be high level of connivance between parents and intermediaries in putting the children into work. What was interesting is that 61.5% of these children were willing to migrate at that time (Table 4.2). It may mean children have come to accept migration as a way of solving economic problem or as part of their means of training, education and social upbringing. That is if such a large percent were willing to migrate even though they lack information over the terms and conditions of work involved in their migration between their parents and the intermediaries.

Furthermore, more than half of the children interviewed (53%) claimed they were transported to their various destinations by both lorry and boat. About 26% of them were transported by boat only and, 19.2% of them however could not remember the means by which they were transported to their destinations (Table 4.2). This may mean that they were transported or migrated at a very tender age, or kidnapped, hence unable to remember.

I can't remember...

"I cannot remember how exactly I got to my master. This is because, until I was brought back to this village to rejoin my true parents, I first thought my master was my father"

Interview of a 10 year old rescued boy

With regards to education as a motive of their migration, among the 26 children interviewed, 30.8% said their parents told them that they would be sent to school while staying with their employers. About 26.9% however said they were sent to be taught fishing. While 19.2% said they had no idea, 23.1% said their parents did not tell them anything, as to whether they would go to school or not (Table 4.2).

To be trained for fishing...

"My parents told me the man would train me on how to fish after which he would buy me a fishing boat. Because of this I was very happy to go since I was not even attending school as a result of their inability to pay my school fees."

Interview of 15 year old rescued boy

Also, the majority of the rescued children (73.1%) reported that they were treated badly by being exposed to excessive work as well as denial of enough food, leisure and education. Twenty-six point nine percent (26.9%) however said they were well treated by their employers (Table 4.2).

4.3.2 Working condition and treatment of the trafficked victims

Of the 26 children interviewed, 6 out of the 8 girls confirmed working with/for their mistresses in processing and selling fish. All the boys including two of the girls said they worked for their masters and the nature of work ranged from mending of nets, fetching

water from boats during fishing expedition and spreading of fishing nets as well as disentangling them when they got trapped under the water.

According to the majority (73.1%) of the children interviewed, apart from the beatings and other forms of punishments they received from their employers for failing to working hard enough, they were also not given enough food to eat and they did sometimes went to bed very hungry. The children also complained that, although the types of work they were doing were very difficult, they were always forced to work for very long hours without resting or leisure time with their colleagues. Apart from that, they used to go to bed late after mending nets and woke up very early the next morning for fishing. Twenty-six point nine percent (26.9%) of the children including two girls and five boys however said they were well treated by their employers.

He nearly killed me ...

“One day I was forced by my master three times to dive under the water to retrieve entangled nets. I nearly got drawn when my head hit a trunk under the water. But as soon as we returned home, my master asked me to help my friends to mend nets. I told him I was feeling headache but he would not listen and let alone provide me with medication.

In the cause of mending the nets, I fell asleep and could not continue with my friends. When he returned home, he asked me if I was able to assist my colleagues to mend the nets. I said no. I tried to explain but before I realized, he jumped on me and started pulling my ear amidst beating. He refused me food that evening and I went to bed on an empty stomach.

The next day, he had woke me up and asked me to join my colleagues for another fishing expedition. I woke up feeling very weak, dizzy and hungry because I did not eat the previous evening before went to bed. My master was such a wicked man; I wished I do not set my eyes on him again in my life. He nearly killed me that day.”

Interviewed of 15 year old rescued boy

On the question of their health, almost all of them said they did fall sick but majority said their employers never or rarely sent them to the hospital for treatment. About 42.7% said they had never been taken to the hospital and 27% said they had been taken to the

hospital 2 to 3 times. Fifteen point three percent (15.3%) however said their masters always took them to the hospital any time they fell sick.

I still missed him...

“I was going to school with my master’s children although I used to mend nets every evening and also used to accompany him to fishing on weekends and during school vacations... unlike my parents, my “uncle” used to buy me new dresses during Christmas and Easter and also took me to the doctor any time I fell sick. I still missed him...”

Interview of 14 year old rescued girl

4.3.3 Changes that the Trafficked Children wished while staying with their Employers

In order to find out from the trafficked victims their views on what changes they wished for while staying with their employers, 69.2% of them said they wished their employers allowed them to return home or to be going to school before assisting them in their work. Those would have preferred learning trade and another category who said they only wished their employers gave them enough time to study and played with their colleagues were 15.4% respectively (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Changes the Trafficked Children wished while with their Employers

Changes Wished	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Schooling or go back home	18	69.2
Learning Trade	4	15.4
Allowed enough time to play and study	4	15.4

Source: Field Work 2005

4.4 Background of the parents of the trafficked children interviewed

In general, 20 parents (8 males and 12 females) were interviewed with numbers of their children ranging between 7 to 12 and aged 3 and 17 years.

4.4.1. The Family Structure of Parents Interviewed

Ten of the rescued children were linked to some of these parents. Three of them male parents have two wives each (Table 4.4) with their children ranging from 7 to 11.

Among the female parents, three of them are still with their husbands each with children ranging from 5 to 11, and the remaining four females are single parents—divorcees (Table 4.4) with children ranging from 5 to 7.

The following characteristics were detected from the backgrounds of the 20 parents constituting both mothers and fathers.

- majority of them have large number of children;
- at least half of the females interviewed are single parents—divorcees;
- majority of the males have more than one wife each;
- they have no substantial means of livelihood—although some engage in selling of fish and farming, the proceeds from these occupations are not enough to take care of their family.

Table 4.4: Types of Marriage of the Parents of Rescued Children

Parents Marital Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Monogamous	3	30
Polygynous	3	30
Single Parents	4	40
TOTAL	10	100

Sources: Field Work 2005

On the question of their reasons of allowing their children to migrate and put into work, almost all the parents interviewed mentioned poverty as the main reason of sending their children away for work. Sixty-five percent (65%) of all the parents said they allowed their children to migrate as a result of their inability to cater for them. Thirty-five percent (35%) on the other hand said they allowed their children to migrate in order to be trained on how to fish for their future vocation.

...promised to send the children to school but...

"...life was very difficult for the entire family; hardly did we have three square meals a day. I did not have any one to turn to for help ever since my husband died. So when my friend, told me her customer was looking for two children to be assisting him in mending his fishing nets, I allowed her to take two of my children, a boy and a girl to him.

What convinced me to release them was that, my friends told me the man was ready to send them to school, pay their school fees, feed them and provide them with all that they need. Supposing you were in my shoes, will you refuse this offer? To me, it was like a manner from heaven. I swear everything, until they were brought back to me, I never knew they were rather engaged in fishing without going to school. Because my friend used to bring me fish and money of which she claimed were from the man, I thought my children were in good hands."

Interview of a 40 year old single mother with 7 children

4.4.2. Number of Visits Paid to Children

Asked how many times they used to visit their children, all the parents claimed they were allowed to visit their children but not often. Majority of them (65%) said they did visit but once a year and 25% said twice a year. Ten percent (10%) of them said they found it unnecessary to visit because they were promised by the masters of the children that they (the children) would be well catered for (Table 4.5). This explains the fact that majority of the parents were generally not aware of the living and the working conditions of the children who had been sent away (Tengey and Oguah 2002).

Table 4.5: Number of Parental Visits to the Trafficked Children

Ever Visited Child while with the Employer?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, once a year	13	65
Yes, twice a year	5	25
Not at all	2	10
TOTAL	20	100

Sources: Field World 2005

4.4.3 The knowledge of Parents Concerning the Types of Work the Children were doing

Of the 20 parents interviewed, 18 out of them (90%) were not sure of the **exact** types of work their children were doing, the rest (10%) however said all they knew was that, their children were supposed to assist their mistresses and masters in doing house chores. The implication here is that children working in such unregulated ways are vulnerable to abuse, maltreatment and inadequate compensation for labour offered.

An opportunity for her to learn trade...

"Our daughter was assisting a woman who is a fish trader. We decided to send her to the woman since she promised to be remitting me every month. After four years, the woman would buy her a sewing machine in addition to an amount of money to enable her to learn trade. To me, it was a good opportunity, thus I didn't see anything wrong with it. Beside the woman was nice and she promised to take care of her and treat her like her own child hence we did not bother to pay her visit."

Interview of 37 year old mother with five children

4.4.4. Mode of Remuneration of Parents by employers

Information gathered from the interviewed parents indicates that the remunerations received from the employers of the trafficked children are in cash and kind. Fifty percent (50%) of the parents said they received between hundred and fifty thousand to two hundred thousand cedis (equivalent of nine to fourteen euros, according the 2005 exchange rate) monthly from the masters and mistresses of their children. Three among them (15%) however said although the employers of their children promised to remunerate them monthly, they failed to fulfil their promises and never paid them anything until the children were returned to them during the rescuing exercise carried out in the fishing communities by The International Migration Organisation (IMO).

I couldn't cater for all the children alone...

"...you see I am a single mother, my husband divorced me together with all the six children and went for a new wife in the other village. So when she [apparently meaning an intermediary] suggested to me to send one of my children to be helping her uncle, I did not hesitate because, she said her uncle would remit me every month to enable me take care of his [the son's] siblings. Upon all the promises, she only came once to give me two thousand cedis and had never come again until the child was brought back to me. I did not know that she had just deceived me and sent my child into "slavery".

Interview of 37 year old divorcee

Four of the parents (20%) said the employers of their children were expected to provide them with half pieces of cloth each after every two months and at the end of the contract (of which they claimed was four years), the child was expected to be provided with sawing machine. Ten (50%) said they received cash, but six (30%) however did not expect anything from the masters of their children since (according to them), the children were supposed to learn fishing from their masters (Table 4.6). The essence of giving sewing machines or equipping the children with fishing skills is to empower them in a way to make them self-dependent economically at the end of their four year service period. The question then is: is slavery-like condition of work justifiable the means to this end, or should parents continue to have the number of children (family size) they cannot cater for and sacrificing them for pieces of cloth or sewing machine? The answer to these questions can be explained on the fact that parents are ignorant of the adverse effects of slavery-like condition of work on the children's health and development.

As an appreciation

"...we did not sell our son as people are thinking. I was looking for a loan to start business and the man assisted me. Thus as an appreciation for his kind gesture, myself and my husband decided to send one of our children to live with him...He was just sent there with the intention that while assisting the man, his education will also be catered for by him."

Interview of a couple—with 5 children

Table 4.6: Mode of Remuneration

Payments	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cash	10	50
Kind	4	20
Expect Nothing	6	30

Sources: Field Work 2005

4.5 Employers Background

Fifteen employers were interviewed²⁴ and of the 15, nine of them were immigrants from the coastal part of the Volta Region and the rest are natives of the study area which is further hinterland. The period of time they have engaged in fishing ranges between 3 to 33 years.

4.5.1 *The Employers/Fishermen's Response to the Current Fishing Situation*

In order to elicit their views on the current fishing situation along the Volta Lake and Ghana in general, the fishermen were asked as to whether they have observed some changes in the fishery sector and if yes, what they think were some of these changes. The information gathered from them suggest that, they could only make between 15 to 20 kilos and sometimes a bit more catch per day as compared to eight to twelve years ago, where they could harvest more than 50 to 80 kilos a day. Hence they all agreed that there are a lot of changes and blame them on: (1) unnecessary pressure on the lake as result of too many people fishing on the lake; (2) inability of the government to develop the fishing sector; (3) the use of chemicals and unapproved nets in fishing along the lake and; (4) high rate of unemployment in the country which to them has brought large number of people to the fishing profession.²⁵

4.5.2. *Response to the use of Child labour*

On the question of strategies to enhance their fishing activities, they all agreed to employ extra hands, especially children with their ages ranging from 4 to 18 years, to boost their

²⁴ Of them, five were engaged in a focus group discussion.

²⁵ This information was gathered from the five fishermen during the focus group discussion.

work and income. From their answers, they got the majority of the children through bonded placement for a token sum for specified duration as well as payment of money to the poor parents who hand over their children [to them] through intermediaries based on promises that they will be treated well. According to them their payments to the parents of the children ranges from cash to kind.

We help one another...

"My son I have been fishing for the last 20 years, starting from Dabala and was even in Ivory Coast for 3 years. It is the confusion over there that ended me up at Torkor, the present place you have met me now.

I never employed children when I was in those places, but the situation here leave us with no choice; look around, all those sitting there are fishers along this small lake. To be able to compete with them, you need more hands and don't forget there are families out there who can't even get a square of meal a day. How can I reject such a family that approaches me for a help by 'employing' any of his or her children. To me we help one another; the child worked for me and I in turn paid the parents for the work done by child."

Interview of 47 year old fisherman.

4.5.3. The Welfare of their Employees—the Trafficked Children under them

On the question of the general welfare of the children under them, they admitted that the children used to fall sick with fever and water borne diseases—bilharzias. Six (40%) of them claimed they used to send the children to the hospital any time they fell sick and others (60%) however said they rather provided them with medication themselves. On the contrary to what the children said concerning the number of hours and the number of time/s they worked and ate, at least all the employers said they did not let them (the children) go hungry or allow them to work all the time but used to give them enough time to rest. They also claimed they did not only give them enough food but also on time and good treatment any time they fell sick.²⁶

²⁶ Child abuse by itself is a shameful act, thus hardly do abusers disclose to the outside world, the bad treatments they do met out to the children under them. Hence their claim, to the researcher here cannot be taken for a pinch of salt.

I treated them well...

"I know that children are gift from God. Thus although I used to make sure they were not lazy and therefore edged them or at times forced them to work hard, I gave them enough food and any time they fell sick, I gave them medication and allow them to rest for sometime. I did not treat them like slaves as people have been saying but like my own children."

Interview of 47 year old fisherman

4.5.4 Acceptance of Alternative Rather than Engaging Children and Why?

All the fishermen agreed on an alternative such as financial assistance from the government, NGOs and the banks to enable them buy outboard motors and fishing gears to facilitate their work instead of using children in the fishing. Or help them to engage in an alternative means of livelihood since the fishing profession to them is less promising.

According to them, they prefer an alternative because they are aware of how dangerous the fishing work is to the health and physical development of the children. Besides, giving the children better education would help them as individuals and the nation as a whole in the near future than engaging them in a fishing of which to them has no better future.²⁷

²⁷ Derived from the focus group discussion with the five fishermen.

Alternative for child labour

“...yes, everybody including we the fishermen are aware of the fact that, children are our future leaders. We do know that among them we will have our ministers, teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers who will help in building this country to look like America one day. Though some of us taught at first we were helping these poor parents, through the engagement of their children for money, little did we know then that it was a great damage to the future of the children and the nation as a whole.

Thus an alternative for the provision of micro credit and soft loans will not just put a stop to the use of child labour at the fishery sector but will also enable us acquire modern gears and outboard motors to facilitate fishing. It will also enable some of us to go back to deep-sea fishing along the coast instead of concentrating on the lake fishing. Or look for something else to do than the fishing job which is not helping now.”

Chairman of Gyamani Fishers Association during Focus Group discussion with five fishermen including him.

4.6 Concluding Remarks

This chapter reveals the following key findings: First, three types of child placement prevail in the study area, including: (a) payment of sums of money to poor parents who hand over their children on the promise that they will be treated well, (b) bonded placement for a token sum for specified duration or for gift items and, (c) enrolment for a fee through an agent for domestic worker at the request of the children’s parents. Second, while poverty is the main reason why parents send their children away, employers also get involved in the use of child labour as a mean to cope with the competition for scarce resource. Third, motives behind child placement under risky conditions are very diverse, although children from large families especially with single parental care tend to be more at risk of being “placed” in the hands of traffickers. Some parents send their children into bonded labour to raise money to either, cater for the large family or for their own selfish use. Others view the migration of their children as an opportunity for them to gain economic independence for the future. There are also parents who were deceived by

intermediaries or employers who recruit the children under the name of traditional practices of child placement but place them to work under slavery-like conditions and as bonded labourers.

Fourth, irrespective of how children migrate, the living and working conditions under which they end up vary between bonded labour situation or slavery-like circumstances and good treatment. The abuse of children by employers appears to be related to the children's vulnerability derived from parental neglect. Parents hardly visit their children after letting them go. They have little or no knowledge of the hazardous tasks assigned to children and their impacts on the health and physical development of the children. Finally, the majority of the children's testified that they worked for long hours with no or little rest period and their lives with their employers were full of punishments in a form of beatings, insults and denial of food. And having realised the danger their working situation and environment posed to their health, development and future, some of them wished their employers would have allowed them to return to their parents or to go to school or learn trade.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

The links between poverty and child trafficking are complex and diverse. In the fishing sector in Ghana, the findings of this study suggest that poverty is the cardinal factor playing both pulling and the pushing roles in the 'trafficking' situation in the fishing sector of Ghana. Poverty can also exacerbate the erosion of moral norms of traditional forms of child placement and straightforward child neglect by parents. This neglect can play an important role in providing opportunities for abuse by employers and intermediaries. Taken together, the overall context, poverty and insecurity of livelihood resulting from economic pressure, competition for scarce resources and cost minimization practices have culminated into the use of child labour, especially male child labour, leading to its worst form. The findings in this study query the effectiveness of the legal approach to address child trafficking to combat trafficking. Although effective law concerning the protection of individual rights and its effective implementation with regards to trafficking can assist in preventing children from being trafficked at the fishing sector, the major questions one can ask at the moment are: How effective can this approach be? Is it enough to combat or prevent the child trafficking phenomenon, taking into consideration other socio-cultural and economic implications of the sector? In providing answer to these questions, I further argue that, any other approach that brings the interpretation of rights of which social, cultural and economic issues come out clearly can be more effective and useful in dealing with the trafficking situation than just the one based on individual rights. Thus the effective way to prevent and combat child trafficking at the fishing sector should be based on "bottom up" approach by taking into consideration the socio-cultural and economic dynamics of the sector. This is because, from analytical perspective, although outsiders perceive the practices of child mobility at the sector as "trafficking", the people within the community consider it as their normal traditional practice of child placement for training, education and socialisation. To address the child trafficking situation through legal approach therefore calls for a serious rethinking of redefining the phenomenon to adapt to a context and responsive to local perceptions.

The problems concerning the child trafficking situation, especially, at the fishing sector in Ghana, as we can observe, cut across all aspects of activities ranging from economic, social, cultural and legal. Its combat and prevention can only be successful if the various factors involved are well addressed at the same time. The approach to the child trafficking problem and its related issues in general and at the fishing sector in particular therefore calls for a broader understanding of the various factors involved. The study, based on this has come out with some recommendations for effective approach in addressing the child trafficking phenomenon at the sector.

Poverty alleviation measures: The economic dimension is only one aspect albeit very important. Abject poverty is often mentioned as the prime factor that compelled parents to allow their children to migrate either through recruiters or by the employers who promise them with financial relief or cater for the children by empowering them economically against the future. From the same point of view, the recruiters and the employers also gain through the exploitative use of the trafficked children. Strategies to alleviate poverty among the fishing communities through the introduction of alternative means of livelihood opportunities will therefore help in reducing child labour and trafficking at the sector. That is any effective and sustainable measures for combating the trafficking of children depend on the progress made in reducing poverty and brings about sustainable development at the fishing sector. Child labour and its worst form, trafficking thrives in an environment where family income is not enough to provide the basic necessities in sustaining the family. Any strategy in tackling the trafficking situation therefore should be combined with anti-poverty measures such as promotion of income generating schemes as well as direct cash transfer to the families [of trafficked victims], could be vital intervention mechanism (Admassie 2000). The current reintegration project by IOM through the provision of micro-credit assistance to both fishermen who released the children under them and the parents, who received the children (IOM 2004), should be seen as a step in the right direction.

Resource Management Measures: It is also important to realise that the artisanal fishery sector is a mixture of individual and community management that keeps on changing to

situations for people to make ends meet. The existence of poverty at the sector alone presupposes lack of adequate resource management. Thus policies concerning its management should take care of the social and economic dynamics through dialogues in poverty and how to resolve resources in the sector.

Education and Information: Education and information are strong determinants for effective decision-making. Lack of information and education on the negative implications of child trafficking and its related complications such as slavery-like practices partly explain the tolerant nature of child labour and trafficking at the fishing sector. Proper education and information will help people to make decisions with a better background knowledge of the various potential risks involved in trafficking of children for bonded labour and in slavery-like conditions. This can be done through community awareness creation by raising a campaign to show that every individual and the society as a whole have it as a moral obligation to recognize and protect the rights of children. Community leaders, youth organizations, religious leaders around and at the fishing sector through the help of various organizations working on the field of child trafficking should set up meetings to discuss the various dangers that are associated with trafficking and how to prevent it with special attention to the poor and vulnerable families and individuals within the community.

For effective Legal Approach: The socio-cultural aspect with regards to the migration of children per se is not the main problem, since child placement for general upbringing and socialisation is a normal traditional practice among the people of Ghana. The major problem lies on how the practice is being abused. For effective legal approach, all measures to prevent child trafficking to that effect should be developed in consultation with the various communities of the fishing sector. Policy, planning and action on child trafficking must involve participation of parents, fishermen and even the children. This will ensure action based on familiarity with the people's lives in the fishing sector and thus enhance the likelihood of its success. Participation of all the stakeholders in solving their own problems may also reduce the possibility of having unforeseen negative consequences. To put it simple and straight forward, any legal protection against the

trafficking of children for the purpose of labour exploitation at the fishing sector that is based on “top down” approach is bound to be less effective since it will end up holding the whole society responsible rather than the individual perpetrators. This therefore calls for further systematic anthropological research which will examine the cultural practices of the people and the dynamics behind the fishing sector vis-à-vis the issue of child trafficking within the sector.

Appendix

Semi-Structured (interview) Questionnaire

The questionnaire intends to gather information on the treatment of trafficked children by their masters and mistresses in the fishing sector as well as the level of knowledge and perceptions of the trafficked children and their respondents (parents and employers) on the adverse effects of child trafficking.

1. Identification of the predominant type(s) of child trafficking in the fishing sector.

Sources of information: *Fishermen Union*

Six types of child trafficking have been identified in West Africa namely:

- a) abduction of children,
- b) payment of sums of money to poor parents, who hand over their children on the promise that they will be treated well,
- c) bonded placement for a token sum for specified duration or for gift items, and
- d) enrolment for a fee by an agent for domestic worker at the request of the children's parents.

Questions

- a.) Which of these forms of child trafficking is predominant or can be found in the fishing sector?
- b.) Are there other forms (of child trafficking) than the above mentioned six?

2. Trafficking Experience and Migration

Source of information: *Trafficked Children*

NOTE: *To enable the children to feel free and reveal their names, age and experiences to you, get them together in a circle to discuss the whole issue with them and in the course of the discussion, pose the questions to them. You can also use drawing methods to help them bring to bare explicitly their experiences. Record all the discussions on tape recorder.*

Cluster of Questions:

Cluster One: Child identity

- a) How many brothers and sisters do you have?
- b) Who looks after you and why?
- c) Was the person with whom you were staying a relative—your “untie, uncle, brother or sister?
- d) Did you know him or her already before going?
- e) How did you decide to go?
- f) Did you go by lorry, boat or on foot?
- g) Did your parent (s) visit you when you were staying there?

Cluster Two: Working condition

- a) Did you stay with your boss/master?
- b) Were there other children living with also?
- c) What time did you get up and what time did you go to bed?
- d) Were you working all the time?
- e) What did you do?
- f) Was the work you were doing difficult?

Cluster Three: Well being

- a) How many times did you eat a day?
- b) Did your master/ mistress take you to the hospital when you were sick or got injured?
- c) Did you play with your friends?
- d) What do you wish for as a change in staying with others and your parents?

4. Parents’ (of the trafficked children) views on child trafficking

Questions

- a) Are you married?
- b) How many children do you have and what is their average age?
- c) What do you for a living?

- d) What was the main reason for letting your child/children stay with another person?
- e) Was the one with whom he/she was staying a relative?
- f) How often did you visit him/her?
- g) Did you have any idea of the type of work he/she was doing?
- h) How was he/she remunerated?
- i) If given the choice what would you prefer your child/children to be in the future?

3. History of employment—Mobility of Employers

Cluster of questions:

Cluster One: Mobility of Employers

- a) Since when have you engaged in fishing?
- b) How many kilos of fish you catch a day?
- c) Have you observed any change in the fishing sector as compare to eight to ten years a go?
- d) What is the change and what do you think is the course?

Cluster Two: Employment status

- a) Do you or have you ever employed extra hands (people) to boost your work?
- b) Through what means and what was/is their average age?
- c) Did they work all the time?
- d) How were they remunerated?
- e) Did their employment improve your income?
- f) Was there a time that they fell/fall sick or got injured in the course of their work?
- g) What was the nature of their illness/injuries?
- h) What treatment do/did you provide in assisting them to recover?
- i) When given an alternative means rather than engaging children in the fishing sector, will you accept it and why?

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