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DISSERTATION

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The Interface of Poverty, Livelihoods, Coping/Survival Strategies
and Child Trafficking in Rural Coastal Fishing Communities of
Ghana

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Harrison Kwame Golo

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work.

Literature of other works cited has been duly acknowledged.

Signature of Candidate

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Fenech', written over two horizontal lines.

Date:

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Abstract

In recent years, human trafficking, especially trafficking in children has received much attention in terms of scientific research and policy among researchers and policy makers respectively in both national and international communities. It is a widely held view that poverty has been one of the major factors responsible for trafficking in many countries. Poverty has always been associated with access to assets and changes in livelihoods, together with livelihood strategies in many settings. Yet, in Ghana, the prevailing socio-economic situation in rural fishing communities where child trafficking continues to be pervasive remains poorly understood. This study sought to address this gap and focuses on small-scale fishing communities in the Ketu South District in the extreme Southeastern portions of Ghana where the phenomenon is reported to be very endemic. To be more explicit, this study explored the structural factors that cause poverty and vulnerability, and how strategies adopted by individuals or households to cope or survive arouse trafficking in children. An in-depth understanding of the above state of affairs is considered to prove invaluable in combating trafficking through appropriate intervention mechanism.

Combinations of livelihood, human rights and capability approaches as well as qualitative and quantitative methods were employed for the primary data collection and analysis. Specifically, household survey was used to collect information on the different livelihood assets of 238 households in the four communities under study. This was complemented with: 1.) in-depth interviews with key or expert informants; 2.) four focus group and open village square discussions in each of the communities and; 3.) one expert feedback workshop. The various factors influencing access to assets/capital and livelihood and outcomes as well as coping/survival strategies that exacerbate trafficking were documented through the triangulation of data generated.

This study argues that although declining catches have adversely affected the income level of many households in the study setting, child trafficking among them is associated with abject poverty, which is directly and indirectly caused by marginalization and deprivation of basic capabilities. This is due to internal and external influences in the form of neoclassical top-down policies and lack of accountability on the part of government institutions. Therefore, while the focus of this study is limited to the fishing communities in the Ketu South District, it is believed that the presented deliberative recommendations, empowerment through human rights, worked out for this specific context, do not only have broader relevance in the debate over the fight against poverty and its consequences, but are also fundamental for livelihood decisions and attitudes concerning coastal resource management.

Abstrakt

In den letzten Jahren hat das Thema Menschenhandel, insbesondere Kinderhandel, große Beachtung in der Wissenschaft und Politik unter WissenschaftlerInnen und EntscheidungsträgerInnen sowohl im nationalen als auch internationalen Kontext gefunden. Es herrscht Übereinstimmung dahingehend, dass Armut einer der wichtigsten Faktoren ist, die zu Menschenhandel führen. Armut wurde grundsätzlich immer mit dem Zugang zu Vermögen und Veränderungen in Bezug auf Existenzgrundlagen und Überlebensstrategien in unterschiedlichen Situationen in Verbindung gebracht. Dennoch wurde bis dato die sozio-ökonomische Situation in ländlichen Fischergemeinschaften in Ghana, wo Kinderhandel von großer Bedeutung ist, wenig beleuchtet. Mit der vorliegenden Studie soll diese Lücke gefüllt werden. Der Schwerpunkt liegt auf kleinen Fischergemeinden im Ketu South District im Südosten Ghanas, wo Menschenhandel ein lokales Problem darstellt. Genauer gesagt werden in dieser Arbeit die strukturellen Faktoren untersucht, die zu Armut und Verwundbarkeit führen, sowie die Strategien, die Individuen oder Haushalte einsetzen, um mit dem Kinderhandel umzugehen oder ihm entgegenzuwirken. Ein tiefgehendes Verständnis dieser Problematik ist unumgänglich, um Kinderhandel mit Hilfe entsprechender Interventionsmechanismen zu bekämpfen.

Für die Sammlung von Primärdaten und die Analyse wurden eine Kombination von Ansätzen zu livelihood, Menschenrechten und Fähigkeiten sowie qualitative und quantitative Methoden angewandt. Konkret wurden durch Haushaltsbefragungen in vier Gemeinden Informationen über unterschiedliche Aspekte der Lebensgrundlagen von 238 Haushalten gesammelt. Darüber hinaus wurden 1) Tiefeninterviews mit SchlüsselinformantInnen oder ExpertInnen, 2) vier Gruppendiskussionen bzw. Diskussionen am Dorfhauptplatz in jeder Gemeinschaft und 3) ein Feedback-Workshop mit Experten durchgeführt. Durch eine Datentriangulation wurden die unterschiedlichen Faktoren, die den Zugang

zu Gütern und Kapital, Lebensgrundlagen und Ergebnissen/Erträgen sowie Umgangs- und Überlebensstrategien, die zu Menschenhandel führen bzw. diesen verschärfen, dokumentiert.

In der vorliegenden Studie wird gezeigt, dass rückläufige Erträge aus dem Fischfang sich negativ auf das Einkommensniveau vieler Haushalte in der behandelten Region ausgewirkt haben. Für diese Haushalte ist Kinderhandel mit schwerer Armut verbunden, die direkt oder indirekt durch Marginalisierung und den Mangel an grundsätzlichen Fähigkeiten verursacht wird. Die Gründe dafür liegen in internen und externen Einflüssen von neoklassischen Top-Down-Politiken und einem Mangel an Verantwortung seitens der Regierungsstellen. Es ist daher anzunehmen, dass die Ergebnisse und die Empfehlungen dieser Studie – Stärkung von Autonomie und Eigenmacht (Empowerment) durch Menschenrechte – trotz ihrer regionalen Ausrichtung auf den Ketu South District auch darüber hinaus in einer breiteren Debatte zur Armutsbekämpfung Gültigkeit haben und fundamental für Entscheidungen und Einstellungen in Bezug auf Existenzgrundlagen im Kontext von Ressourcenmanagement in Küstengebieten sind.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Rationale

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of poverty and child trafficking on vulnerable fishing communities of Ghana. The main factors under consideration are poverty, vulnerability, livelihood and coping strategies. In particular, the study attempts to identify and understand the nature and the root causes of poverty and vulnerability as well as coping/survival strategies, and assess their implications for child trafficking within fishing communities in the Ketu South District of Ghana. The research also addresses knowledge gaps in this area of study and looks at how empowerment through a human rights approach may serve as a guideline for intervention programmes.

Before we proceed, it is important to note that the definition of the term poverty as used in this study is not limited to lack of income or resources, but is also based on what Nussbaum (2000) and Sen (1993; 1999) argue as deprivation of capabilities. In this way, its reference is associated with insufficient outcomes in relation to health, nutrition, literacy and social relations. Poverty also involves the problems of insecurity, low self-esteem, and powerlessness. The basic capabilities as put forward by Nussbaum and Sen are noted for “the enhancement of people’s ability and value to be agents of change by increasing their ability to question, challenge, propose, and ultimately usher in new ways of doing things” (Mwangi and Markelova, 2008: 25).

Another subject the thesis is focusing on is child trafficking. In Ghana, child trafficking is confirmed to be a widespread phenomenon. In particular, coastal fishing communities, which are the focus of this study, represent the largest community in the country where trafficking victims are found (Anarfi *et al*, 2003; Tengey and Oguah, 2002; Ghana Statistical Service, 2003; ILO/IPEC, 2004; UNICEF, 2002; IOM, 2004). However, while many studies linked trafficking in human beings and children in particular to poverty as one of the major factors of its ascendancy (Anderson and Davidson, 2002; Troung, 2005; Adepoju, 2005), there is limited research that fully investigated or clarified the factors influencing poverty in fishing communities of Ghana and how this relates to trafficking in children. It is certainly important to explore the linkages between poverty and child trafficking when implementing policies to eradicate it. It is even more crucial to understand its nature and structural causes, which serve as the major rationale behind the phenomenon.

The fisheries industry, as a common pool resource, represent one of the crucial sectors of the Ghanaian economy but faces immense problems as a result of weak regulatory and policy implementation systems. Consequently, fishing communities in the country continue to experience hardships and severe poverty in their daily lives. It is worthy to note that severe poverty is a human rights violation, and poverty in itself is a root cause of a number of human rights violations (Boesen and Martin, 2007: 9), including child trafficking. The study attempts to analyse the dynamics of poverty through the lens of justice. This is because of the fact that poverty can emanate from conditions that are imposed on people or communities as an active act of discrimination and marginalisation. One of the aims of this study is to identify the dynamics and the relationship between the study communities as right-holders and the state as duty-bearer in relation to policies towards the fisheries sector. An in-depth study into these factors is expected to prove invaluable in finding the major factors that influence

livelihood and livelihood strategies of small-scale fishing communities. Such a study can greatly enhance our understanding of the linkages between the nature of their deprivation and its implications for child trafficking.

Identification and understanding of these issues could provide insights into the exact intervention programmes that can be put in place to enhance the capabilities of individuals and households within the study communities. The aim is to discuss how to empower them to overcome their impoverished situation that compelled them to involve in the dehumanizing practices as child trafficking. Otherwise, the findings of this study will bring out the enabling conditions and the support the members in the study locations need to fight against poverty.

In the light of the above, this study tries to avoid the existing tendency in human trafficking research, where the focus has been on the nature, trends and the treatment of the trafficked victims. This helps to consider the main factors that cause poverty and vulnerability and how strategies adopted by individuals or households to cope or survive exacerbate the phenomenon. This study should, therefore, be seen in the light of the alarming nature of the phenomenon in fishing communities of Ghana, and the need for a new approach in combating it through social science research.

The context of governance is important for fisheries in Ghana. Governance, according to Kooiman & Bavinck is the “whole of public as well as private interactions taken to solve societal problems and create societal opportunities. It includes the formulation and application of principles guiding those interactions and care for institutions that enable them” (Kooiman & Bavinck, 2005 cited in Kraan, 2009: 4). Presenting the Ketu South District in Volta Region as a case study, this study intends to contribute to a new approach by: first, investigating

the ways in which individuals and households in fishing communities use assets available to them; second, exploring how the use of these assets is mediated by both formal and informal institutions and the vulnerability context in which members of the communities live. This study is also about the capabilities of the individuals and households within the study communities to make decisions on issues that affect their livelihood within the institutional context. Finally, it is about implications of livelihood/coping strategies of individuals and households within these communities.

Given the fact that poverty is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, it needs to be analysed and addressed by methods that can encompass this complexity (Foresti *et al*, 2007:2). Consequently, the three theoretical approaches or frameworks that serve as a basis for this study are Sustainable Livelihood approach, Human rights-based approach and Capability approach. They view poverty from a multidimensional perspective and provide a more complete form of its picture as deprivation of capabilities, and not only as lack of resources or income. Their choice is relevant to this study in the sense that they can help in the analysis of the structural causes of poverty within the study setting.

This study is mostly qualitative. However, multiple data-collecting strategies were employed concurrently “in order to achieve an understanding of a specific social reality” (ILO/UNICEF, 2000: 8). Interview results from different sources were triangulated for the manifestation of their validity and credibility.

1.2 Background to the study

Trafficking in human beings for forced labour and prostitution, especially trafficking in children is one of the fastest growing phenomena in the domain of international criminal activities, and a serious problem that affects virtually every country all over the globe (Miko, 2003). The U. S. Department of States estimates that about 800,000 to 900,000 men, women and children are trafficked across international borders every year (US Department, 2005). According to it, approximately 80 per cent of these trafficked victims are women and 50 per cent are minors, with the vast majority of them being girls under 18 years of age as compared to male minors that account for only two per cent. The United Nations on the other hand puts its estimation at about a total of 4 million people in general. Concerning children, UNICEF (2006) estimates that in the year 2000 alone 1,200,000 children were trafficked globally.

In the context of Africa, it is reported that about 200,000 to 250,000 women and children are trafficked annually for sex or labour exploitation in West and Central Africa (Dottridge, 2002). There is also ample evidence that in West Africa, trafficking of children within and between countries to work as domestic servants, or on commercial agricultural plantations, is becoming rampant (Veil, 1998). A study conducted for UNICEF further indicates that in West and Central Africa, most of the trafficked children are from Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Togo, and are sent to Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Congo and Cote d'Ivoire (Veil, 1998). Research also shows that Nigeria and Benin represent both sending and receiving countries of child workers (Dottridge, 2002). The pattern of the trafficking situation in the region indicates a symmetrical relationship between sending and receiving areas. Symmetrical flows also turn some of the receiving areas into transit function zones (UNICEF, 2003: 18). It is also reported elsewhere that Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal are the major sources, transit and destination countries for trafficked children and women (Adepoju, 2002).

Current efforts and challenges in combating child trafficking

During the last decades international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), International Labour Organisation (ILO) and International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), but also civil society organizations have shown growing concern and recognition of child trafficking in various ways. The *Convention for the Prohibition and Immediate Elimination of the Worst forms of Child Labour*, (ILO Convention No.182), for instance was unanimously adopted by ILO in June, 1999. The International Labour Organisation in this direction emphasizes the relationship between trafficking and forced bonded labour, and underlines the human rights goals of anti-trafficking measures (Kane, 2005: 34). As a further effort, the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) in its general principles and specific provisions of Article 32, also "recognises the child right to be protected from economic exploitation" (UNICEF, 2002:2). These are indications which demonstrate that greater efforts and resources are devoted to deal with the problem, and thus make it an increasingly important political priority for many governments and the international community at large.

The UNICEF (2002) argues that in West Africa, the recognition of child rights by state parties in their provision of legal approach to combat child trafficking is limited in scope by the fact that the terms "trafficking", "abduction", or "sale of children" have meant different things to different people. As an attempt to overcome the problem with its implications for policy responses, Article 3 (a) of the *Palermo Protocol* provides a clear definition of "trafficking", which serves as a useful guidance for law reform and criminalisation of the practice. Its subparagraph (c) goes further by classifying child trafficking as:

the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a 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 (UN Protocol, cited in UNICEF 2002:2).

The sub-paragraph thus defines the case of child trafficking in a situation where the trafficking may occur with the consent of the children themselves or the parents.

However, in the context of the West African and the 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 for children to be placed with family members living in cities in order that they benefit from the existence of better opportunities such as education and the acquisition of skills through vocational training. In the case of child trafficking for specific purposes and more importantly for exploitation, the actual recruitment processes do not always differ significantly from child placement in the West African society.

Another challenge is the international legal definition of who is a child. The UN *Convention on the Right of Children* says that a child is a person less than 18 years of age. This contradicts social practices by which childhood and adulthood are defined by norms other than age (such as social responsibility and ability to maintain a family). Therefore, disputes over the meaning of child trafficking and the actors involved are inevitable. Goździak *et al.* (2008), for example, points out that the concepts of "child" and "childhood" varies according to social, cultural, historical, religious and rational norms in addition to one's personal circumstances. Consequently, it is quite difficult to identify a transaction as trafficking of a child, and differentiate it from genuine placement, especially in highly deprived and vulnerable families (African Centre for Human Development, 2000: 3).

The two major conventions - the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) and the *ILO Convention on the Prohibition and Immediate Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour* - are based on the same the definitions of ‘child’. The first one, Article 1 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) 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” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands, 1993: 40). The second one Article 2 of *ILO Convention 182* says: “[...] the term child shall apply to all persons under the age of 18” (ILO, 2001a:3).

Defining in law the age of majority at the time they assume full adult responsibilities (O’Neil, 2000: 38), as experienced in the conventions above has been questioned by some scholars. Fyfe (1993), for example, 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. According to Fyfe, a child’s ability and maturity varies, and defining a child’s age by calendar age can mislead people. Within the Ghanaian society although a child is legally defined as a person under the age of 18 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2003), this does not necessarily determine how a child is regarded in the context of some social practices. In most cases, the Ghanaian society considers the ability of the child to live an independent life without depending on the parents (Mends, 1994: 45).

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. However, the complexity surrounding the trafficking issue regarding definition, methodology and even legal framework has bedevilled this approach. Kane (2005), for example, informs us on a number of schools of thought about how trafficking should be approached. While some

argue that trafficking is a human rights issue and, therefore, its combat be approached from that angle, others are of the view that it is a law enforcement problem, therefore, it can only be effectively addressed through legal provisions and effective policy (Kane, 2005: 38; UNESCO, 2010: 27). The uncertainties surrounding the approach of the phenomenon point to the fact that efforts tailored to combating it have been hindered by poor understanding of its nature and causes.

In Ghana, the Government has been part of the global effort in combating child labour and trafficking. Policy makers in the country increasingly demonstrated awareness that there is a connection between trafficking for child labour and poverty, and the problem of working children. To demonstrate its commitment, the country took important steps to be the first to ratify the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) adopted at the end of the World Summit for Children in November 1989; its implementation came into full force in September 1990. In order to achieve and sustain the goals of the convention, a programme of action dubbed *The Child Cannot Wait* was introduced in June, 1992, with the aim to provide a policy framework, strategies and programmes that would protect children and see to their survival and development in the country (Ghana Statistical Service, 2003). By doing so, the country has gone beyond legislation to establish institutions to facilitate the social, economic and cultural development as well as the realisation of child rights. These institutions include the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAG), the Department of Social Welfare, and Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

Ghana is also a signatory to the *Migrant Worker and Refugee Conventions* (Black *et al*, 2004). In 1998, the Parliament of Ghana approved a comprehensive Children Act (Act 560), which prohibits children under the age of 15 from working. Then in 2000, the country adopted the ILO *Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labour*. Recently, *Ghana's Vision 2020* adopted a more human-

centred approach to development by laying more emphasis on social welfare issues connected to trafficking and child labour, poverty and hunger. Moreover, Section 28 of Ghana's 1992 constitution states that, 'every child has the right to be protected from work that constitutes a threat to his health, education or development'. To deal with the human trafficking menace in the country, a Human Trafficking Act was passed in 2005 to criminalise the offence and mandates the establishment of the Human Trafficking Fund to support the promotion of efforts to combat it.

Nevertheless, child labour and trafficking is still rife in Ghana. The country is currently marked as the source, transit, and destination country for children trafficked for forced labour. Children are trafficked within the country as domestic servants, cocoa plantation labourers, street vendors and porters. They are also used for work in the fishing industry, and for sexual exploitation. Studies on the trafficking situation in the country, further reveal that a large number of trafficked children in the country can be located in the fishing sector, specifically along the Volta Lake where they are engaged in very dangerous and hazardous works (Anarfi *et al*, 2003; Tengey and Oguaah, 2002; Taylor, 2003; Ghana Statistical Service, 2003; ILO/IPEC, 2004; UNICEF 2002; Zdunnek *et al.*, 2008).

The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF, 2002) in its study of child trafficking in West Africa notes that the fishing sector in particular represents an important destination for cross-border migration involving children. It was confirmed by Tengey and Oguaah (2002) that of the 1,804 trafficked children located in Ghana, about 66 per cent or more were engaged in the fishing sector. Sixty-six per cent (66 %) of boys were engaged as fishing assistants, whilst 52 per cent of girls were involved in the selling and smoking of fish. Further studies indicate that the coastal fishing communities in the country represent the largest

community of origin of both internal and external trafficked children (Brown, 2005; Golo, 2005; IOM, 2004; Tengey and Oguah, 2002).

The International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2004), for its part, estimates that trafficked children working in fishing villages along the Volta Lake of Ghana can be found in their thousands. Recently, office of the *International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour* (IPEC) in collaboration with the IOM embarked on project to facilitate the returning of trafficked children from the various fishing communities around the Volta Lake to their parents. The project involved assistance through micro-credit to both fishermen who released the children and the parents, who received their children (IOM, 2004). Yet, an administrative census conducted in the Volta Basin confirmed that child trafficking is still highly prevalent within fishing communities in the Volta Region (Dzamboe, 2006).

Volta Care, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), working in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has recently rescued two hundred (200) children from child labour in the Ketu South District of the Volta Region (Adika, 2007). The children have already been handed over to their families, while more efforts are still being made by various NGO's, the government and other stakeholders to retrieve and reintegrate more of such children believed to be working under harsh conditions with their employers in fishing along the lake.

Poverty, vulnerability and child trafficking

A consensus is currently emerging on the link between child trafficking and poverty, especially when viewed from the perspective of widening economic and social disparity. Child mobility, including voluntary and involuntary movement in Ghana and other West African countries, is influenced by poverty

and depressed economies, coupled with socio-political crises (Adepoju, 2005; UNESCO, 2010). Scholars like Anderson and Davidson (2002), Troung and Angeles (2003) and Troung (2005) as well as international bodies like the UN (2008) reiterate that disempowerment, social exclusion and economic vulnerability, as a result of inappropriate policies, constitute the key factors responsible for the trafficking of women and children in West and Central Africa. Thus, endemic rural poverty often compelled poor families to sell their children to traffickers as a coping strategy with the hope to improve their circumstances (Dottridge, 2002: 28).

1.3 Ghana's economic situation: A brief overview

Ghana's economic situation in general has improved after a period of economic decline and structural adjustment in the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, since the beginning of the 1990s, the gross domestic product has grown by more than 4 per cent per year on average. However, according to the periodic Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS), in 1998/99 about 40 per cent of the population of Ghana lived below the national poverty line, which was then defined as per capita expenditure of less than 900,000 *old Ghana cedis*¹ on consumption per annum. An additional line indicating conditions of extreme poverty has been set at 700,000 *old Ghana cedis* per annum. Evidence from the last three rounds of various GLSS surveys conducted in 1991/92, 1998/99 and 2005/2006 indicate a continuous decline among the proportion of Ghanaians described as poor in the previous surveys (IMF, 2009). In its assessment, the GLSS took into account two nutrition-based poverty lines, namely in 2005/2006 the lower poverty line was defined as 2.884,700 old Ghana Cedi and the upper poverty line as 3.708,900 old Ghana Cedi per adult per year. Individuals considered as extremely poor are those whose expenditure falls under the lower line. Even if they were to allocate their entire budget to food, they would still not meet their minimum nutrition requirements (Ghana Statistical Service, 2007: 14). On the

¹ 10, 000 old cedis = 1 new Ghana cedi is equivalent to 50 (Euro) cents at the time of this study

other hand, persons whose expenditure is above the upper line are assumed to be able to purchase enough food to meet their nutrition requirements and other basic needs (Ghana Statistical Service, 2007).

According to IMF (2009) poverty and extreme poverty in the different Ghanaian regions declined more evenly between 1998/1999 and 2005/2006 than in the previous periods of 1991/1992 to 1998/1999. While the proportion of the population defined as poor fell from 52 per cent in 1991/92 to 39 and 28 per cent in 1998/1999 and 2005/2006 respectively, the incidence of extreme poverty during the same period declined from 36 per cent to 18 per cent. With the exception of Accra, the capital town of Ghana, all the localities and regions, in particular Upper East and West regions, where there is dry climate, limited water availability and poor vegetation and soil, experienced decline in poverty. Ghana Statistical Service (2007) argues that while the country seems to have experienced pro-poor growth in absolute terms, pro-poor growth in relative terms has not been experienced. This implies that there was growth but no decrease in inequality.

Apart from the spatial patterns that characterize poverty variations in Ghana, Tenengey and Oguah (2002) observed poverty disparities among households that engage in different economic activities. While farmers who engage in export-oriented crops and wage earning employees, especially in the private sector enjoy a better standard of living, others who find themselves in the food production sector experience higher incidence of poverty.

The link between poverty and small-scale fisheries has been highlighted in the literature, for instance, by Pauley (2006). Although studies have emphasised that fishermen are often not the poorest of the poor, fishing communities often reflect the general lack of development of the rural areas (Béné, 2004: 76). Indeed,

among poor communities in Ghana, small-scale/artisanal fishing communities are confirmed to be among the poorest (DfID, 2004: 34). A recent official figure on the state of the Ghanaian economy indicates that the growth in the fishing sector in Ghana experienced a sharp decline from a rate of 5 per cent in 2007 to 3.5 per cent in 2008 (ISSER, 2009: 118).

The United Nations (2008) posits that poor people are more vulnerable to trafficking by virtue of exerting little social power and having few income options. Consequently, Skeldon contends that “the elimination of trafficking is unlikely to be realistically achieved through legislation and declaration of intent, but by improvements in the socio-economic states of the population” (Skeldon, 2000:8). Yet, while several studies confirmed trafficking in children within fishing communities in Ghana, there has so far been either little or no research which allows for an in-depth understanding of the nature and root causes of poverty and the implications it has for appropriate intervention measures in these communities. The present study appropriately intends to fill this gap, considering the structural factors responsible for poverty and vulnerability, and their effect on child trafficking in the above mentioned communities of Ghana from a multidimensional perspective. This is because households may respond in various ways when faced with difficulties, depending on their capital and endowments. Another crucial aspect to household adaptation mechanisms is the role of the policy and institutional environment in which they live.

1.3 The research problem

Child trafficking is a basic human rights issue. In a broader context, it is strongly linked to child labour, illegal migration, or organised crime. In dealing with child trafficking, overlooking the underlying socio-economic factors behind it will impede a serious analysis of the whole phenomenon in order to combat it (UNICEF, 2002). Generally, three issues need a thorough academic

consideration when child trafficking in Ghana is put into perspective. First, the traditional Ghanaian society is by nature a pro-natalist one, and children are held in high esteem. Secondly, the culture of the Ghanaian societies have elements that allow child labour of any intensity so far as such activities are perceived to be part of the socialisation process of the child. Finally, the traditional practices of the society encourage child placement and child fostering for better upbringing and training. These issues pose further questions. The first question is: What are the structural factors behind the current developments where children are given out by parents and relatives to be trafficked within and across national borders or sold like commodities for labour and other forms of exploitation? Secondly, why is the phenomenon so pervasive in a particular sector of the country's economy – the fisheries sector?

Research on child labour and trafficking in sub-Saharan Africa, brings out various trends with one crosscutting feature, namely dynamic changes in the economic and production sectors and responses in relation to the changes in these sectors. To address the problem of child trafficking and to prevent trafficking, there is the need for a comprehensive and multi-layered approach that requires tailor-made studies of both the demand and the supply sides.

This study is oriented on decision-making at household and community levels to investigate the structural reasons behind the pervasive trafficking of children in fishing communities. It aims to assess whether an increase in trafficking is connected with the specific characteristics of the fisheries. Changing practices of fishing communities must be placed against the various economic and poverty reduction policies, including 20 years of a structural adjustment regime introduced in Ghana. These programmes have brought some gains to the few people who control the high ends of economic activity. However, privatization of production, closing down of enterprises and the dismissing of ten thousand state employees have also become widespread (Baffoe, 2004). This affected the

majority of the people, and leading to the erosion of formal and informal social protection (p. 23).

From the perspective of poverty, Kurien (2004) and Lenselink (2002) note that open access sectors such as fisheries have become attractive alternatives to many people because labour in this sector has not required special social and cultural factors and skills. Over the last thirty years, population density along coastlines around the world steadily increased. It is estimated that within the next three decades an additional one billion people will settle along the coast (Hinrichsen and Robey, 2000: 18). According to Berke *et al.* (2001: 20), the total number of fishing population, including coastal, marine and freshwater, is over 51 million in the world. Among this 99 per cent are small-scale fishers, and 95 per cent are from developing countries (p. 24).

In the current development discourse, artisanal fisheries have been recognised worldwide as contributing to poverty reduction at the local level, to rural development and food security as well as to economic growth on the national scale (Béné *et al.*, 2007: 24). This indicates that small-scale fisheries are critical for local food security and employment in many developing countries. But concern has been raised currently that it is endangered by over-exploitation of fishery resources as a result of rapid expansion of fishing capacity, industrial over-fishing technology and unsustainable natural fisheries policies (FAO, 1997 cited in Akinyoade 2007: 10).

Policy makers have so far acknowledged that designing programmes for fishing communities to achieve sustainable exploitation of fishery resources is very crucial. However, in developing countries the institutional and policy environments for managing natural resources are generally weak (UN, 2006). Ellison & Ellis (2001) observe that small-scale fisheries as a result of national

governments' pre-occupation with modernising the fisheries have long been ignored and the development of the semi-industrial sector neglected.

In Ghana, fishing is noted for its important role in employment and livelihood activities in the rural areas. The fisheries engage 10 per cent of the whole population as fishermen, fish traders and fishing boat builders (DfID, 2004: 4), and the fish itself contributes up to 63 per cent of the total animal protein intake (Worldfish, 2005: 5) in the country.² Despite these contributions, the fisheries always suffer from weak regulatory policies, which are inadequate for the implementation of the reform processes. Already, Ghana's first *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (GPRSP) identifies the traditional fishing communities in the country as poor and vulnerable (DfID, 2004: 3). Yet, till now, no concrete steps have been proposed to improve the sector which creates full time and seasonal livelihood for many of those living under the poverty line.

For some time now, fishing communities in the country have been lobbying the government to meet their special needs and rights to participate in decisions that affect their lives within the fisheries. Nonetheless, they continue to face great challenges to make their voice and opinions heard. Recently, the police and other law enforcement agencies prevented local fishermen associations, including fishmongers, all over the country from demonstrating against the former Ministry of Fisheries. The ministry had allegedly registered foreign vessels belonging to Chinese, Japanese and Korean enterprises, whose methods of fishing threaten the fishing activities of the local fishermen (Boatey and Robertson, 2008).

In light of the foregoing, it could be inferred that fishing communities are not only discriminated against, but also marginalised or even neglected, and as a

² The socio-economic contribution of the artisanal small-scale fisheries is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

consequence encounter barriers in their livelihood activities that hinder their attempt to overcome poverty.

With regards to child trafficking, there are several studies already cited, which indicate that poverty is the major factor behind the release of children by parents to be trafficked. Indeed, without a secured livelihood, poor households are likely to face severe hardships and adopt various coping strategies to survive. Certain factors influencing socio-economic conditions, which are very important in understanding poverty and child trafficking in typically coastal fishing communities of the Volta Region remain poorly understood. Specific research is needed in this area in order to enhance the weak body of data and information and to highlight the population's livelihoods and survival strategies. This would not only direct the formulation of proposals for their empowerment to fight against poverty, but would also enhance policy improvements and open up further discussions within the academic discourse for capacity-building.

1.4 Justification of the study

The government of Ghana in collaboration with the international community and NGOs consider child trafficking as detrimental to the socio-economic development of the country, and attach prime importance to its elimination. As mentioned earlier, there have been numerous efforts ranging from implementation of free compulsory basic education and other policies to facilitate the realization of the rights of the child. These activities are based on human rights related treaties the country has ratified or signed. With this, one would have thought that the initiatives by the government and other stakeholders would lead to the elimination of child trafficking in the country. But in certain parts of the country it is still pervasive. A study of sub-groups of the country's population where the phenomenon is quite severe should be seen as an effort to contribute to national intervention programmes. Analysis of new data from this

study could provide a better insight into structural factors that are precipitating child trafficking in different parts of the Ghanaian society and could back up the formulation of better strategies towards its abolition. In particular, it is assumed in this study that understanding of the child trafficking dynamics of fishing communities is essential to grasp the socio-economic rationale for livelihood decisions and attitudes concerning coastal resource management.

1.5 Objective of the study

The purpose of the study is to find out the root causes of poverty and vulnerability and their implications for child trafficking within coastal fishing communities of the Ketu South District. Child trafficking is increasingly becoming an element of the survival strategies of poor rural households in sub-Saharan Africa. However, politics and scientific research on the phenomenon have so far predominantly focused on the trends and patterns of trafficking as well as on the human rights abuses. Since livelihood and livelihood strategies play an important role in the well-being of households, it was necessary that a study be conducted into factors that influence their enhancement or impede their realisation among these fishing communities. Understanding these factors is essential in the formulation and implementation of policies and intervention programmes more responsive to the fishing populations' needs and well-being. It is important to note that the objective of this study relates to earlier experiences of the author. During the fieldwork for my Master of Arts (MA) thesis in 2005, I had ample opportunity for interactions and discussions with people of three fishing communities in the Volta Region.

Specific objectives of the study are:

1. to assess the impact of shocks, trends and seasonality on the livelihood strategies within fishing communities in the Ketu South District;

2. to ascertain how institutional environment and existing government policies constrain or enhance access to capital and livelihood strategies as well as livelihood outcomes of fishing communities;
3. to determine how livelihood strategies of poor fishing communities are influenced by access to capital;
4. to determine how coping/survival strategies adopted in fishing communities stimulate trafficking in children;
5. to explore the implication of the study results to identify the relevant mechanisms and intervention programmes in the context of empowerment through human rights.

1.6 Delimitation and limitation of the study

The intended focus of the study is to find out the socio-economic and political factors influencing poverty and vulnerability and their intersection with child trafficking in fishing communities of the Volta Region, Ghana. It must be pointed out that although some of the trafficked children might be traced to other communities in the country, fishing communities in the Ketu South District constitute the focus of the empirical analysis of this study. To cover all fishing communities in the country is beyond the capacity of this study, since such an attempt needs the kind of fieldwork time and logistics which definitely go beyond this study.

What made working in field rather difficult was that those living in poverty felt very uncomfortable to share their situation with me, an outsider, and they even tried not to see themselves as poor people. As a result, some were unwilling to provide in-depth and valid information on their situation. To counteract this problem, I engaged people within the study locations for the data collection, since they are more familiar with the households contacted and their financial situation. I also employed the method of participatory observation together with

interaction and conversation. By this I established close relationship and mutual trust with people and households and familiarised myself with their everyday life. The household case study approach was also adopted to ensure that the study grasp an in-depth insight into the factors affecting the study communities in general and individuals and households in particular.

1.7 Outline of the study

The study is divided into eight chapters. Chapter one concentrates on the background to the study, the statement of the study problem, research objectives, questions, delimitation and limitation as well as the justification of the study. Chapter two presents literature review and the theories on livelihood, human rights-based and capability approaches to provide insight into the ways fishing communities make a living within their broader institutional and environmental contexts. Central definitions of key concepts of poverty, empowerment, child trafficking and the analytical framework of the study are also presented in this chapter. Chapter three sets the scene of the study by presenting the socio-economic characteristics of the fisheries as well as the brief insight of the political economy of Ghana and narrowed it to the description of the coastal communities of Ketu South District on which this study is based. Chapter four presents the methodological framework adopted for the study. Other issues such as data collection procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations are also described in this chapter.

Chapters five and six present and discuss the empirical results from the field investigation. In Chapter five, the vulnerability and institutional contexts in which fishing communities in the Ketu South District exist is examined and discussed. The various types of assets to which individuals and households in these communities have access and their indicators is also explored and discussed in this chapter. In Chapter six, the various livelihood strategies adopted by the households in the Ketu South District fishing communities in the

pursuance of their livelihood outcomes are examined and discussed. The categories of livelihood strategies and the various survival strategies that exacerbate child trafficking discovered in the study locations during the fieldwork are also explored and discussed in the chapter. Chapter seven presents the summary of the study and findings, conclusion as well as recommendations regarding empowerment through human rights to enable the poor fishing communities to improve their life-worlds. Recommendations are also made on future research in order to enhance the present weak body of data on the causes of poverty and its impact on the security of children in fishing communities of Ghana in general.

CHAPTER TWO

General Conceptual and Theoretical Approach to the Study

2.1 Introduction

The definition of poverty or well-being was in the past limited to income or consumption expenditure. However, it is now established that poverty is a multi-dimensional and multi-faceted phenomenon (see for example, Headey and Wooden, 2004; Mitlin, 2003; Van Vuuren, 2003; Rakodi, 2002; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2001; World Bank, 2000; Chambers, 1995). According to OECD (2001), the relevant dimensions cover human capabilities, namely economic (income, livelihoods, work), human (health, education), political (empowerment, rights, voice), socio-cultural (status, dignity) and protective (insecurity, risk, vulnerability).

Thus, for a useful framework for understanding the diversity and complexity that characterise the nature of poverty and the livelihood strategies, and how intervention strategies can be effectively tailored to enhance it, Kaag *et al* (2003) call for a multi-faceted intervention approach to support the livelihood of the poor. A livelihood approach which looks beyond income and consumption is, therefore, valuable in the context of rural fishing communities, where livelihoods are not only multidimensional, but also complex. The approach is fundamentally concerned with household-based productive activities, together with risk management, voice and social protection (Conway *et al.*, 2002: 1). The Livelihood approach in this context can provide the opportunity for integrating a

rights perspective into mainstream analysis of poverty and the empowerment of the poor.

Three theoretical approaches or frameworks thus serve as a basis for the analysis of livelihood activities and their impacts in this study. They are Livelihood, Human Rights-based and Capability Approaches. These frameworks are very relevant inasmuch as they can help us to expand our understanding of poverty. Key concepts such as poverty, empowerment and child trafficking are also explored in this chapter. While the concept of poverty can serve as a basic conceptual architecture for a research like this, the concept of child trafficking is important to help us understand its operational meaning as used in this study. Furthermore, since the empowerment of poor fishing communities is one of the aims of this study, a good understanding of its meaning is imperative.

2.2 The concept of poverty

Although ‘poverty’ has been identified as one of the greatest ‘enemies’ of humankind since time immemorial, attempts to combat and prevent it in the past years have been facing growing challenges regarding its definition and content. Gordon (2002:12) posits that despite the fact that the term ‘poverty’ is a widely used concept, its definition is highly contested. What this implies is that the term, ‘poverty’, cannot be considered from a single viewpoint. The outcome is a cluster of different overlapping senses depending on the subject area or discourse within which it is being examined. The term means different things to different people. For example, while some people may define their state of poverty as lack of income resulting in their inability to acquire certain essential amenities or assets to lead a dignified life, others may link theirs to lack of basic services such as educational training for gainful employment. Consequently, locating or defining poverty for policy intervention has become problematic over the years. Therefore, the question as to what constitutes ‘poverty’ and who is

‘poor’, and according to whom they are poor is still an on-going debate involving scholars from different disciplines, governments, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations, as well as human rights activists.

The *Compact Oxford English Dictionary for Students* (2006: 797) defines ‘poverty’ as “the state of being extremely poor”, and defines the term ‘poor’ as “not having enough money to live at a comfortable or normal standard” (p.790). To Rakodi (2002), poverty is a state of affairs, where individuals or households are poor as a result of insufficient goods and services to enable them to achieve a minimal status of well-being. Defining a household as being poor in terms of consumption has, however, been challenged on the ground that it may not necessarily capture all deprived households and individuals (Rakodi, 2005). In this context, Kabeer (1994) relates poverty to the deprivation of basic human needs: that is, basic necessities such as food, shelter and good health.

The World Development Report (World Bank, 2000/1) holds this view, and identifies poverty as a multidimensional and complex phenomenon. As a result, it argues further that the causes of poverty and its solution are not general, but specific to individual countries. The report, however, limits the definition of poverty on income or consumption, by stating that a person is considered poor if his or her consumption level falls below the set poverty line, which is currently 1.25 and 2.50 US dollars per day. The World Bank’s definition of poverty, which is based on neoliberal monetary approach to poverty reduction, views poverty as a natural phenomenon, which is linked to the inherent low productivity of the poor. Using or measuring poverty on the basis of statistical or economic growth, by rejecting interventional policies aiming to deal directly with poverty fails to take into account other aspects of poverty such as social, cultural and political ones.

Poverty is not limited to deprivation of economic and material resources but also depicts a gross violation of human dignity. This falls in line with Amartya Sen's 'capability approach' by which he refers to poverty as the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely due to income (Sen, 2004; 1999). Sen's capability approach which is rooted in Social Welfare Theory thus rejects the measuring of well-being in terms of monetary income and focuses on indicators of the freedom to live a valued life (Sen, 1993). Both the monetary and capability approach to poverty have, however, been criticized based on their inability to take into account the views of the poor themselves, hence Chambers'(1995) approach of looking at poverty which is referred to as 'participatory approach'.

The participatory approach takes into account the views of the poor themselves, and as a consequence captures the complexities and underlying dynamics of poverty. The cardinal position of this approach is to help in determining the magnitude of poverty by allowing the poor themselves to decide what it means to be poor. The belief is that, through this approach, poverty can be captured in diverse ways for its effective improvement in content, and in the process of its reduction (Brock and McGee, 2002: 25). This approach was embraced by the World Bank in its poverty assessments on the basis that "poverty assessment works better when it draws on the resources of a range of stakeholders" (Both *et al.* 1998 quoted in Truong, 2005:17). However, the participatory approach has been regarded by scholars such as Cornwall as a "mere technical fix that leaves inequitable global and local relations of power, and with it the root causes of poverty, unchallenged" (Cornwall, 2000: 1). The argument here is that, such a situation is likely to render the poor voiceless and powerless within political and bureaucratic structures, resulting in less possibility of receiving their entitlement. In this way, poverty with regard to access and power could reduce the poor people's access to basic infrastructure and services.

The social exclusion approach, another perspective through which poverty is defined, appeared first in France. According to the European Foundation, social exclusion involves “the processes through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from participation in the society in which they live” (Allen and Thomas, 2003: 3). The approach thus emphasises on relations between individuals, and is used to explain the marginalisation of social groups, deprivation and poverty. From its perspective, poverty is a social construct which is based on sex, disability, ethnicity and religion, and has little to do with the fulfilment of the individual’s minimum needs. Thus, from the perspective of social exclusion approach, the inability of social groups to participate in society is regarded as both the effect and cause of poverty (Dini and Lippit, 2009: 9). In this way, social exclusion could lead to the disablement or disempowerment of individuals and groups. The Chronic Poverty Research Centre [CPRC] (2004) thus points out that exclusion from social, political and economic institutions is part of a vicious circle in which exclusion leads to lower capabilities, and reduces the prospects of people to escape poverty as a result of their inability to assert their rights. De Haan (2000) contends that the process of social inclusion and exclusion has become the main focus of development studies, and as such linked the notion of social exclusion to the concept of sustainable livelihood.

The UN defines absolute poverty as “[...] a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information[...] it depends not only on income but also on access to services” (Townsend and Gordon, 2002: 59). Thus, to Townsend and Gordon, overall poverty takes various forms such as:

[...]lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihood; hunger and malnutrition; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by lack

of participation in decision-making and in civil, social and cultural life. It occurs in all countries: as mass poverty in many developing countries, pockets of poverty amid wealth in developed countries, loss of livelihood as a result of disaster or conflict, the poverty of low-wage workers, and the utter distribution of people who fall outside family support systems, social institutions and safety nets (Townsend and Gordon, 2002: 59).

The definition of poverty in relation to material deprivation has been recognised by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNCESCR). The committee goes further by defining poverty within the context of the human rights approach as: “ a human condition characterised by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights” (UNCESCR para 8). Drawing on Sen and UNCESCR’s definitions, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in its *Principles and Guidelines for a Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies* made clearer the meaning of poverty from the human rights perspective as follows:

From a human rights perspective, poverty can be described as the denial of a people’s rights to a range of basic capabilities – such as the capability to be adequately nourished, to live in good health, and to take part in decision-making processes and in the social and cultural life of the community. In the language of rights, one may say that a person living in poverty is one for whom a number of human rights remain unfulfilled – such as the rights to food, health, political participation and so on.

From the foregoing definitions and approaches it is clear that poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon. This implies that, for individuals, groups and communities to overcome their impoverishment, they need real freedom or capability. Hence, the human rights and capability approaches to poverty are all

similar with regard to this point, and understand poverty as a symptom of deep-rooted inequalities and unequal power relations or a state of powerlessness.

It is worth mentioning at this point that, in the context of this study, the terms ‘poor and poverty’ are not limited to lack of resource or income only, but also reflect on what Nussbaum (2000) and Sen (1993; 1999) referred to as the deprivation of capabilities. Thus, the fundamental deprivation or denial of capabilities, lack of access to power, opportunity, choices, and influence are considered to be vital for a meaningful existence of individuals or groups which they have reason to value. They need these capabilities to take control over their social, economic and political development. Given that rights violations underpin poverty, interventions should focus on the empowerment of the poor or the marginalised to enable them to reclaim power and to challenge the dominant political authorities and the social system that perpetuate their impoverishment.

2.3 The concept of empowerment

The discourse of empowerment centres on a multilevel construction: namely psychological empowerment (people’s self-efficiency to take control over their lives), organisational empowerment (the ability of an agency to influence change), and community empowerment (the ability to change real conditions) (Zimmerman, 2000: 45). The term “empowerment”, therefore, does not refer to one particular activity, but to a range of activities, including individual self-assertion, collective resistance, protest and mobilisation that challenge power relations (Veneklasen *et al.*, 2004: 9). According to a study by the World Bank, the term refers to the process through which capacities of individuals or groups are increased to make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes which enable them to build individual and collective assets, and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organisational and institutional contexts which govern the use of these assets (Alsop *et al.*, 2006: 14). The term

also depicts an “expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives” (Naraya, 2002: viii). ‘Empowerment’ in this context demands the creation of an enabling environment for the poor to develop their full potential that can enable them to take action at the local level, claim their rights and improve their lives. As a consequence, empowerment together with another two terms, namely ‘poverty reduction’ and ‘participation’ have gained considerable attention in the mainstream development discourse in recent years.

The Declaration of the Right to Development, for instance, proclaims that “every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy development” (Article 1(1)). Thus, the key element of the human rights approach to development is the right to participate in decisions that affect people’s lives. This is because it has been observed and understood that disempowerment and exclusion are the major causes of poverty among communities and groups (Mitlin, 2003: 9). Hence Kabeer (2002:29) refers to empowerment as the expansion in peoples’ ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied. Accordingly, central to the definition of the term, ‘empowerment’ in this study is a participatory process that engages poor fishing communities in reflection, enquiry and action that can direct them to act as both individuals and as a community to claim their rights and entitlements to development, and to improve on their present status. It thus involves the encouragement of community members as well as their co-operation, local ownership and the possibility of sustainable development (Bartel *et al.*, 2002; Foster, 2001; Degraft Agyarko, 1998).

In its study of fishing communities in Bangladesh, the International Marine Management [IMM] (2003) identifies lack of awareness concerning services and lack of confidence in dealing with bureaucracies and officials as the major obstacles to poor fishing communities in taking advantage of services that are

available to them. Campbell *et al.* (2006: 280) contend that the poor are often the least to defend their livelihoods or establish tenure rights that are supported by the legal system. Campbell and his colleagues bring to the fore lack of awareness and unfamiliarity of the poor concerning their rights and the mechanisms through which they can assert them. Moreover, it has been observed that:

[...] deprived people tend to come to terms with their deprivation because of the sheer necessity of survival; and they may, as a result lack the courage to demand any radical change, and may even adjust their desires and expectations to what they unambitiously see as feasible (Sen 1990 quoted in Oosterlaken, 2005: 92-93).

Drawing on the above, the term empowerment in the context of this study also involves action through consciousness raising, capacity and solidarity building to equip individuals and households within fishing communities in the Ketu South District to take advantage of community resources and opportunities, and access services that exist for all to thrive. In addition, the process is expected to enlighten them in order to become aware of their own interests, including power dynamics that constraint them. This is to enable them to develop the capacity and the means to take greater control of their lives (Leach, 2003: 21). The empowerment process will thus help increase their power, gain freedom to make choices and changes about the way they want to be, and do things in their best interest, by accepting agency over their own lives. This will go a long way to reduce, and, if possible, remove both formal and informal barriers that transform power relations between them and government agencies, including other institutional actors.

Therefore, the principle and philosophy of empowerment has become an invaluable source of information, strength and ideas that the poor fishing communities can benefit from in claiming their rights and entitlement. They

could benefit from the result of the study by gaining skills and knowledge that can lead to the enhancement of their confidence and self-esteem. So they may challenge decision-making and participate in designing community-based plans which may enable them to access resources for a dignified and secured life.

2.4 Child trafficking defined

An increased focus on trafficking throughout the world and the attention to its severe abuse of human rights did not result in a clear definition of the subject. The *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* defines child trafficking as:

[...] the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

This section of the protocol tries to clarify what exactly constitutes ‘child trafficking’ in particular. It stresses the fact that trafficking of children for exploitation through whatever means shall be considered as a crime (UNICEF, 2005: 25). In order to achieve greater effectiveness, however, three criteria have been identified to qualify ‘child trafficking’. They are:

- the intervention of an intermediary;
- the realization of a transaction;
- the motive to exploit or exploitation. (ILO, 2001).

Transaction here means:

[...]any institution or practice under which young people below 18 years, are handed 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 person. 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 a period of time for other, being it parents or other intermediary qualified it as a transaction (ILO, 2001: 2).

The definition of ‘transaction’ adopted above attempts to clarify the complexity and confusion surrounding the definition of ‘child trafficking’ regarding the Ghanaian cultural practices of child placement, and the legal definition of child trafficking.

Because of its ambiguity, this study needs to define a clear concept and to distinguish between ‘trafficking’ and such term as ‘abduction’, ‘placement’(as a result of sale), ‘bonded placement’, ‘temporary placement’, ‘placement for a service’ and ‘placement as a result of embezzlement’. The description of the concept cannot be limited to any single variable such as sale. By adopting a broad definition of trafficking, it is possible to cover a large spectrum of practices and actors involved as well as the different forms that it entails. In the preceding sections, the key concepts of this study were defined and discussed. The next sections are devoted to the analytical frameworks.

2.5 Livelihood approach

Livelihood is the way people earn a living. It is not necessarily the same as being employed or having a regular occupation (De Haan & Quarles van Ufford, 2002). In other words, livelihood is not limited to work or earning an income, but includes all activities through which people acquire a means of living. A livelihood according to Ellis “comprises the assets (natural, physical, human,

financial and social capital), the activities and the access to these assets (mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by individuals or household” (Ellis, 2000: 10).

Livelihood, in a broader sense, comprises the capabilities, assets and social resources, as well as activities that are required for a living (Chambers and Conway, 1992; DfID, 1999). These activities lead to the provision of food, housing, and both monetary and non-monetary income (Kaag *et al.*, 2003: 2). Livelihood clearly goes beyond income, and comprises a wide range of activities, such as dealing with risk, managing social networks and institutions within communities and negotiating social relationships within households (Beall and Kanji, 1999: 1). This also includes the risk factors they must consider when managing their living as well as the institutional and policy context in the pursuit of a viable living (Ellis, 2003: 38). The livelihood concept seeks to bring together critical factors and activities which affect the vulnerability or strength of household strategies (Ellis, 2000: 31; Allison and Ellis, 2001: 378). The approach is perceived as an attempt to capture not just what people do in order to make a living, but also the resources that provide them with the capability to build a satisfactory living. Livelihood is deemed sustainable when it can cope with, and recover from, stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (DfID, 1999).

Livelihood goes beyond the conventional definitions and approaches to poverty reduction which has been found too narrow, as they only focus on manifestations of poverty, such as low-income, without considering other aspects like social exclusion, vulnerability, policy and institutional context under which people operate. The livelihood concept which came to the fore in the 1990s serves as a new approach to assist in understanding poverty and its reduction thereof. It has since become popular in the development thinking as a

way of conceptualizing the economic activities poor people undertake in their totalities.

The livelihood approach assumes that people pursue a range of multiple livelihoods that are drawn on a range of assets to pursue the various activities (Farrington *et al.*, 1999: 3). The accessibility to these assets gives support to livelihood strategies that, in turn, produce livelihood outcomes. The livelihood approach is a realistic recognition of the multiple activities in which households engage to ensure their survival and to improve their well-being (Rakodi, 2002: 9). The approach is vital for a study that addresses the relationship between the means and activities through which people make a living and the resources they have at their disposal. It is primarily used as a sensitising concept which points to a people-centred and non-sectoral approach to poverty, and is grounded in the multi-faceted reality of life (Kaag *et al.*, 2003).

The livelihood approach seeks to understand realistically people's strengths in terms of their assets and how they try to convert these assets into useful livelihood outcomes (Norton and Moser, 2001: 6). It was developed as a response to poverty research and focuses on 'what the poor have rather than what they do not have' (Moser, 1998: 1). The approach had its origin in "a literature concerned with the understanding of the differential capability of rural families to cope with crises and links to concepts such as vulnerability, sustainability, resilience, and sensitivity whereby the most robust livelihood system is one displaying high resilience and low sensitivity; while the most vulnerable displays low resilience and high sensitivity" (Allison & Ellis, 2001: 378).

Central to the livelihood approach are the different kinds of assets available to the poor and the extent to which they are accessible. The approach, in this

regard, begins by looking at different kinds of capital assets that are within the reach of the poor. From this perspective, the approach makes the connection between people and the overall enabling environment that influences the outcomes of livelihood strategies. According to De Haan (2000: 27), the poor undertake manifold activities which yield food, housing, and a monetary income. Thus, just like poverty, which is a very dynamic process in the context of its unpredictable constraints and opportunities, livelihoods are also becoming increasingly complex and multidimensional.

The approach suggests that a household's livelihood strategies and well-being are contingent on the basic material and social, tangible and intangible assets that are in their possession. Assets in this regard underpin livelihood strategies which, in turn, produce outcomes. Livelihood strategies and livelihood portfolio, according to Scoones (1998: 6-10), are synonymous, and are used to describe the ways in which people draw on and combine various assets at their disposal to pursue their livelihood. By this, it shows how both market and non-market factors in policies as well as legislations and culture contribute to opportunities and barriers in people's lives with regard to access to assets (see Caswell, 1997; Allison and Ellis, 2001). The approach, therefore, aims to reflect the complex range of assets and activities upon which they depend on for their livelihoods (Norton and Foster, 2001: 6).

The main strength of the livelihood approach is that it gives agency to local actors and highlights the multidimensionality of poverty (De Haan & Zoomers, 2005: 33). The intent of the livelihood approach, therefore, is to alter other approaches which perceive the poor as people who are only lacking money, food and access to assets. A wider approach also takes into consideration that people are victims of structural constraints and of people imbued with agency. As a consequence, it starts with an analysis of strengths and recognises each and everyone's inherent potential (agency) and links macro and micro levels. It does

this by emphasising the importance of macro-level policy and institutions to livelihood options of communities and individuals (Carney *et al.*, 1999). In this way, it analyses livelihood from the poor's perspective, since they often recognise and understand their situation and needs (Krantz, 2001: 4) better than outsiders. The approach in this direction facilitates the identification of priorities for action that are based on the views and interests of those concerned. It brings to the fore the inherent potential of people in terms of their skills, social networks, access to physical and financial resources, and ability to influence core institutions. The manifestations of the core livelihood approach, in practice, include empowering activities, among others, responsive and participatory planning and implementation (Carney, 2002. 23).

The central objective of the livelihood approach aims “to search for more effective methods to support people and communities in ways that are more meaningful to their daily lives and needs, as opposed to ready-made, interventionist instruments” (Appendini, 2001 cited in de Haans, 2005:3). Norton and Foster (2001: 37-39) and IMM (2003:207-110; See also Farrington *et al.*, 1999: 3-4) have provided, and explained, some of the core principles on which the livelihood approach is based as follows:

1. *Poverty-focused* – the approach targets the poor and starts with an analysis of people's livelihoods and a description of how the poor themselves see the quality of their lives in relation to their livelihood outcomes, and the perspectives from which they wish their lives to be changed.
2. *People-centred* – the approach is not focused on natural environment or resources as the only elements that contribute to their livelihood. Its main focus is on people and livelihoods at different levels.
3. *Holistic* – the approach allows the identification of resources, opportunities and constraints people face in pursuing and improving their

livelihood strategies. It recognises multiple influences on the people and seeks to understand the relationships between these influences and how they affect livelihood. Furthermore, it acknowledges the multiple livelihood strategies that people adopt to secure their multiple livelihood outcomes.

4. *Multi-level* – the approach creates an enabling environment through linkages for the poor to influence and to benefit from the policy processes that affect them. It works at this level with entities such as individuals, groups, communities, and various institutions and agencies concerned at both regional and national levels.
5. *Sustainable outcomes* – the approach recognises four elements of sustainability: environmental, economic, social and institutional.
6. *Dynamism* – the approach is by nature dynamic and adaptive and this makes it possible for it to respond to the complex and ever-changing nature of poverty and livelihoods. Put differently, it recognises that livelihoods are changing in response to external shocks and trends as well as how people themselves perceive these changes, and how they have adapted their livelihood strategies in response to them.
7. *Macro-micro links* – aspirations of the people, including their assets, are the main focus of the livelihood approach. Information based on this pillar is micro by nature, while the factors affecting livelihood are rather characteristically macro. The livelihood approach attempts to bridge this gap by emphasising the importance of macro level policy and institutions to the livelihood options of communities and individuals at the local level (and with this stimulates dialogue between the different levels of decision-making).
8. *Rights-based* – the livelihood approach recognises the fact that people have rights, and that these rights are not to be ignored in the development process. Therefore, it encourages the empowerment and participation of the poor in the decision-making process on issues pertaining to their

lives. It makes sure that both international and national rights are recognised and extended to everyone in society.

The livelihood approach attaches great importance to understanding the structures and processes that condition people's assets and their livelihood strategies (Carney, 1999). It recognises multiple influences on people and seeks to understand the relationship between these influences and how they affect livelihood (Scoones, 1998). In addition, it allows the analysis of key linkages and connections between the various elements and suggests multiple entry points for development interventions (Rakodi, 2001; Scoones, 1998). The approach provides a framework for addressing the whole range of policy issues relevant to the poor, including issues of access to finance, market and personal security, health and education (Carney 1998, 9 cited in Norton and Forster, 2001: 6).

The livelihood approach provides not only a very effective framework for understanding the complexity and diversity that characterize the nature of poverty and the livelihood strategies of the poor, but also directs how interventions can best be tailored to enhance livelihood (Kaag *et al.*, 2003). As a consequence, the approach gained wide acceptance as a valuable tool for understanding the factors that influence life among the rural poor (De Haans, 2006: 64). Experience from its early implementation attests to the fact that it helps to bring in different perspectives on poverty and integrates the contributions that different skills and sectors can make to reduce poverty in, for instance, designing projects and programmes, sector analysis and monitoring (Farrington *et al.*, 1999: 1). The approach has been employed by various bodies including governments and non-governmental organisations to evaluate and understand the complexity and embedded nature of people's lives and, how intervention programmes can be tailored to improve their lives.

As a response to the growing awareness of poverty in fishing communities and the lack of attention they receive, much research on the issue of poverty and small scale-artisanal fisheries has been conducted using the livelihood approach. Such studies analyse the extent to which the poor benefit from the current economic situation, and identify how the present development strategies impact on these poor communities. Allison and Ellis (2001), for example, employed the approach to small-scale fisheries research. They commented that the description of the development of the fisheries sector tends to limit its focus to what small-scale fishers lack, without paying attention to what they have (p. 387). Consequently, many modernisation programmes undermine the adaptive capability of small-scale fisheries due to lack of understanding of small-scale fishers' livelihood (Platteau, 1989). This has led to the failure of well-meaning intervention policies that will produce change, since the social, [economic] and political realities faced by the poor in the fishing industry are rarely understood and put into consideration (Lewins, 2004: 44).

Numerous studies have, therefore, suggested that in order to give the poor a chance to develop, crucial components such as social development through empowering people by transforming institutions must be considered (World Bank, 2005). This calls for a holistic approach that includes social, political, economic and cultural aspects that meet individual, household and community needs (DfID, 2006). Using the Sustainable Livelihood approach will allow us to capture the poverty dynamics and vulnerability to determine the causes and consequences of these dynamics. This is because the approach recognises the diversity and complexity of rural livelihoods and facilitates their description (Townsend, 1998: 25) necessary to address a holistic view of poverty (FAO, 2002: 12). It presents a framework that enhances the discussion of different perspectives on livelihood and how they interact.

2.6 Livelihood framework

The framework provides an integrated view of the environmental, social, economic and political factors that enhance livelihood options, or alternatively, create poverty. Consequently, it centres the discussion on “the actual strategies that people employ to attain and protect livelihoods rather than on national development strategies, which are far removed from people’s life experiences” (Sneddon, 2000: 535). The framework takes as a starting point an expanded definition of poverty that looks beyond the:

1. conventional poverty measures based on income, consumption, or nutrition to additional aspects of poverty and well-being, e.g., access to land, water, credit, or education, vulnerability to natural disasters, political rights, physical safety, and social relationships that provide economic security and social well-being;
2. “today’s poor” to who is vulnerable or likely to be “tomorrow’s poor;
3. aggregated household or head counts to the effects of social differentiation by class, ethnic group, gender, and other locally-specific social differences; and
4. external standards to self-perceptions by local communities on who is poor and what poverty means, taking into account what people themselves value (Narayan-Parker *et al.* 2000 cited in Adato and Meinzen-Dick, 2002: 6).

It defines the scope of, and provides the analytical basis for, livelihood analysis by identifying the salient factors affecting livelihood and the relationships between assets, structures and processes (Rakodi, 2001: 293). The framework as a result helps to organise the factors that constrain or enhance livelihood opportunities and show how they relate to one another. It asserts that the assets that poor people have and the desired livelihood strategies they intend to adopt

are influenced by the context in which they live. That is, their access to both assets and activities is enabled by the policy and institutional context and also affected by external factors, such as the vulnerability context within which they find themselves. The framework thus serves as an analytical structure that grasps the complexity of livelihood, understanding influences on poverty and identifying where interventions can best be made (Farrington *et al.*, 1999: 2-3). Hence, it starts with, and results in, the assets owned, controlled and claimed or in other means accessed by the household (Ellis, 2000:13). The livelihood framework:

views people as operating in the context of vulnerability. Within this context, they have access to certain assets or poverty reducing factors. These gain their meaning and value through the prevailing social, institutional and organisational environment. This environment also influences the livelihood objectives (DfID, 2001: section 1.1).

Krantz (2001) argues that poverty is not necessarily the question of low income, but includes the state of vulnerability and the general feeling of powerlessness. It should, however, be noted that, although the concept of vulnerability is most often used synonymously with poverty, the two are not the same. Vulnerability according to Moser (1996:2; 1998) refers to insecurity of individuals, households or communities in the face of a changing environment with its concomitant increasing risk, uncertainty and declining self-respect (see also Rakodi, 2002:14). Vulnerability, therefore, does not imply lack of want but powerlessness against and exposure (Chambers, 1995:20) to:

- trends of globalization, population pressure (eg. large family), resources, and economic indicators, such as prices, governance, or technology;
- shocks, such as social pressures, changes in human health, natural disasters, sudden economic changes, or conflicts and;

- seasonality in prices, employment opportunities, availability of resources, change in weather; and government policies over which people have little or no control (see also Adato and Meinzen-Dick, 2002: 6).

Hence, vulnerability is generally linked to access to, and control over, assets. Although vulnerability normally refers to threats that are outside people's control, Moser (1998: 3-5) contends that it involves the identification of the threat as well as the responsiveness, by exploiting all the opportunities that help to recover from or to resist the effect of the changing environment due to threat. This resistance, however, depends on the assets and the entitlement of individuals, households or communities, and the extent to which these assets and entitlements can be mobilized and managed in the face of hardships. Vulnerability in this case, can also be linked to ownership of assets because ownership of assets determines people's vulnerability. That is, those with fewer assets are prone to vulnerability or insecurity, whereas those with more assets are bound to be less vulnerable. Assets permit livelihood strategies to be constructed, which are composed of a portfolio of activities that generate outcomes in the fields of livelihood security and environmental sustainability (Allison & Ellis, 2001: 363).

The livelihood framework assumes that access to capital assets – natural, financial, human, and social capital – precedes the adoption of livelihood strategies, and suggests that institutions and social relations mediate both the adoption of livelihood strategies and access to capital assets (Scoones, 1998; Bebbington, 1999; Ellis, 2000). Douglas North (1990:3) defines institutions as “the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interactions”. Institutions in this context constitute political, social and economic organizations together with the rules and norms that interact to facilitate the conditions of human actions (World Bank

Development Report, 2003: 39). They are the social cement which link stakeholders to access different types of capital through the exercise of power (Davies, 1997: 24). Thus besides assets, the institutional context also serves as a factor upon which livelihoods strategies are based. This implies that the mere existence of assets alone is not sufficient to promote livelihood. This is because the institutions and processes impact greatly on the access of the poor to all types of assets and on the effective value of those assets. One could argue, therefore, that poverty is not only characterised by lack of assets and the inability to accumulate a portfolio thereof, but also by a lack of choice about alternative coping strategies.

Therefore, the way in which people combine and transform assets and how, through relationships with other actors, markets and society, they expand their asset base is a characteristic of livelihood inquiry (Bebbington, 1999: 2021). Understanding institutional processes and other factors allows the identification of constraints to, and opportunities for sustainable livelihood. Thus, given the fact that both formal and informal institutions influence access to livelihood resources, and by doing so affect the composition of portfolios of livelihood strategies, their understanding is vital for the intervention of sustainable development. Of course, fishermen do not depend only on money, boats and fish to support their livelihood. Rather, they also draw on “their family labour, physical strength, educational and professional skills, political influence, the social services provided by the state, infrastructure funded by taxpayers, and a host of other ‘assets’ that policy and management interventions potentially support, undermine and redistribute” (Allison & Horemans, 2006: 764).

One of the values of the Sustainable Livelihood framework to this study is that it recognizes people as actors with assets and capabilities who act in pursuit of their livelihood goals and how various assets of the livelihood platform are potentially important. This aspect of the framework is useful in identifying the

appropriate entry points for assisting poor fishing communities to create better livelihoods. The ability of households to reduce or prevent vulnerability and to increase economic productivity depends, in essence, on their initial assets, and how these assets through intensification or diversification of livelihood strategies are transformed into income, food and other basic necessities (Rakodi, 2002; Moser, 1998). For a better understanding of the livelihood strategies of the poor, the framework provides a guiding principle, which is very useful in the identification of various factors that influence their ability to adapt to changes in assets.

Moreover, the framework also draws attention to the main influences and processes, and emphasizes the multiple interactions between the various factors that affect livelihood. The livelihood framework, therefore, provides a way of understanding the variations in people's access to assets, and how these assets interact with policies, institutions and processes to shape the choice of livelihood strategies of individuals and households. Arguably, the framework provides a checklist for very vital issues to be considered. This includes the identification of obstacles, constraints and opportunities that influence livelihood strategies.

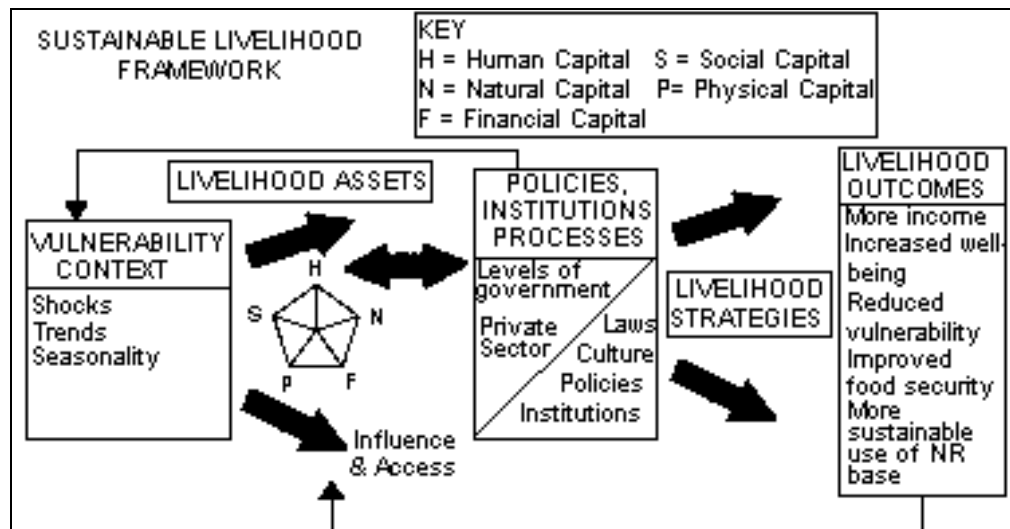


Figure 2.1: The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

Source: DfID, Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets

As mentioned earlier, poverty in itself is a state resulting from a combination of circumstances. Poverty has less to do with a shortage of assets than with access problems. Thus, deciding who is poor based on any single indicator must be misleading (FAO, 2006: 37). In other words, poverty cannot be captured fully by income and consumption-based survey. Neither can it be captured by a framework that analyses rural resource use without regard to access to resources. An entitlement analysis, according to Bebbington (1999: 2021), for example, suggests that rural people secure their livelihood from natural resources. Then again, we should not forget the fact that livelihood is “[...] a highly complex, all-encompassing concept, which is not restricted to the ecological or to the economic or productive aspects of life” (De Hann and Zoomers, 2003: 350). In his analysis of social capital, Bebbington contends that the distinction between access and assets almost breaks down because “access becomes perhaps the most critical resource of all if people are to build sustainable, poverty alleviating rural livelihoods” (Bebbington, 1999: 2022). Access to, and availability of, assets and livelihood strategies may also constitute an important determinant of poverty.

2.6.1 Assets

The livelihood approach posits that people need a range of livelihood resources otherwise known as assets or capital in order to achieve their livelihood objectives. Livelihood is thus a “stock of capital that can be utilised directly, or indirectly, to generate the means of survival of the household or to sustain its material well-being at differing levels above survival” (Ellis, 2000: 31). People, according to the approach, depend on the various types of capital or assets to which they have access. These assets are important in terms of their quantity and quality and the extent of their control as well as the security of their access. The most important factor to be considered is how these assets are to be accessed by the people within the prevailing context of processes and institutional structures that determine social, economic and legal rights (Ellis, 1998). The fact here is that these assets, according to de Haan (2000: 18), undergo multiple influences, referred to as ‘Transforming Structures and Processes’, from the broader economic, social and political context within which people live. This includes the institutions, policies and the regulations which influence the way people make use of their livelihood opportunities and the approaches they adopt (Blake, 2000: 36). They are “the basis of agents’ power to act and to reproduce, challenge or change the rules that govern the control, use and transformation of resources” (Giddens, 1979 cited in Bebbington, 1999: 20022).

The livelihood approach defines five types of assets which people can access and upon which they can build and draw. They are: natural, human, financial, physical, and social capital (Ellis, 2000: 32). Human capital includes the number of people in households, education, the health of people and their ability to work, their skills, knowledge, attitudes; leadership capacity and physical capability which are vital for the successful pursuit of different livelihood strategies. It is also a factor of the amount and quality of labour at a household level. This varies according to skill levels, household size, health status and leadership potential (DfID, 1999). People may fail to overcome economic

changes due to ill-health, lack of education or lack of skill. Human capital as a livelihood asset thus serves as a “building block or means of achieving livelihood outcomes” (DfID, 1999: 7). The use of other types of capital assets, therefore, depends on its availability. In fisheries, for example, the issues of where to fish, how to catch fish and how to process fish depend on the availability of human capital (Blake, 2000: 26).

Human capital and classic dimension of poverty are mutually reinforcing because the two are concerned with people’s ability to develop or achieve sustainable development. The provision of effective education provides an important long term option for improving household livelihoods. There is also a strong correlation between health and livelihood strategies in that physical and mental health is central to production and access to all the other assets. In poor fishing communities, in particular, much of the work done by the poor is physical. Since they need to be healthy to be able to do their work, good health determines their livelihood strategies and livelihood outcomes. In the same vein, livelihood strategies may affect health as expenditure, living in an unsafe environment and the lack of other services can also cause poor health.

Natural capital is the natural resource stocks and environmental services from which resource flows and services useful to livelihoods are derived (see Krantz, 2001; DfID, 1999). Examples of natural capital are biophysical elements such as water, air, soils, sunshine, woodlands and minerals. Natural capital is crucial for those whose livelihood depends on resource-based activities, such as fishing and farming. For the poor people in fishing communities, natural resources are particularly vital (IMM, 2003: 29). It is important to note, however, that the natural capital in the context of fishing communities not only includes fisheries resources, which are extracted by them, but also the forests from which fuel and building wood is gathered, the water used for drinking, washing and transport

(Blake, 2000: 21). This implies that they do not depend on fishing alone, but on a combination of natural resources for pursuing their livelihood.

Arguably, natural resources should be something with which these communities are endowed, and over which they can gain rights. However, their access may depend on their entitlements (De Haan, 2007: 66). This implies that, although people may be endowed with certain assets or rights over certain resources, they may still lack the entitlement to enable them to transform these resources into livelihood activities for their well-being. Access to these natural resources by individuals and households may require a special permit from the national or local government where financial assets may be used to gain access, through community membership or through the use of social capital/capabilities or family membership (Kraan, 2009: 64). For example, it is reported that lake fishing in Tanzania has generated an average of US\$100 million to the central government on an annual basis since the late 1990s, yet fishing communities around the lake are still deprived of a number of entitlements and capabilities that they need in order to reap the benefits of these resources (Onyango, 2005; 2009). In such circumstances, the poor financial situation of individuals and households can be defined as the absence of capacities that are important for their well-being. This absence may depend on their economic, social, political or environmental conditions.

Physical capital comprises tools and infrastructure used to pursue livelihoods. It is the basic infrastructure and producer of goods that are needed in supporting livelihoods. They include, houses/shelter, water and energy supply, sanitation, roads, transport, harbours, communication systems, schools and hospitals. Infrastructure, however, becomes an asset if, and only if, it can facilitate and improve the provision of services to enable people to meet their basic needs in order to be productive (DfID, 1999). For example, lack of good access to infrastructure such as fishing gear, boats and engines reduces the human capital

potential at the disposal of individuals and households in fishing communities. This will, in turn, affect their livelihood strategies, since they are the basic tools with which they carry out their catches and trades. Similarly, lack of services such as health and safe water supply has negative impact on people's health thereby decreasing their human capital and ability to function.

Financial capital refers to the financial resources that are available to people in form of cash, savings, credit facilities, remittances and inflows. Kleih *et al.* (2003: 38) contend that financial capital as a component of asset base also includes illiquid resources that can be converted quickly into cash and perceived as leaving a higher value or being less risky than cash. For example, gold or jewellery and livestock or other similar assets that can be sold in emergency situations such as illness and death. The versatility of financial capital is also seen in the fact that it can be used to acquire other types of capital such as natural ones like land, physical capital like fishing equipment, and human ones like education and vocational training (Kleih *et al.*, 2003: 39). Financial capital can as well improve one's social capital, since high socio-economic status is often associated with having power and being respected by other people or enabling people to join clubs and societies. One could, therefore, argue that the availability of financial capital is very important for the successful utilisation of other assets. However, it must also be pointed out that although financial capital appears to be versatile, it cannot alone solve all problems pertaining to poverty. This is because people may have enough financial capital but may not be able to put it into good use due to either lack of knowledge or constraints because of unfavourable transforming structures and processes from the broader economic, social and political context within which they live.

Social capital, from the perspective of sustainable livelihood framework is referred to as the social resource upon which people depend to pursue their livelihood strategies (Ellis, 2000: 8; Carney, 1998: 7). It includes a set of norms,

networks, connections and organisations by which people gain access to power and resources as well as through which decision-making and policy formulation occur. These social resources are determined by relationships and networks, which exist within nuclear and extended families, and in and among communities and groups. These groups are determined by attitudes, beliefs, identities and values as well as access to resources and opportunities. They become useful in various situations, since they can facilitate innovation and development of knowledge for sharing.

Therefore, communities which are endowed with a diverse stock of social networks and civic associations are in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability and take advantage of new opportunities in the pursuance of their livelihood strategies (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). This implies that social relations are influenced by the way in which people can access and make use of their assets. Generally, these relations are most often based on trust, reciprocity and exchange, and contribution to a sense of well-being and belongingness. This, in turn, forms the basis of informal safety nets which people use to pursue their livelihood strategies in times of problems and emergencies. The poor have, therefore, identified social capital as a valuable and critical resource that contributes especially to their well-being during times of crisis and socio-economic change (Moser, 1996; Massey, 1998).

Englebert (2001: 9), for example, points out that there is “good” and “bad” social capital. The good social capital, according to him enhances the creation of good institutions and economic growth; bad social capital does the opposite. In the context of fishing communities in Ghana the social networks that are associated with the child trafficking network may be classified as criminal associative networks. Such networks or groups could, therefore, be regarded as ‘bad social capital’. The ‘good social capital’, on the other hand, includes co-operative arrangements, traditional mechanisms, family relations and trader

groups that work for the betterment of both individuals and communities as a whole. Moreover, the poorest and most vulnerable households in some cases are forced to adopt strategies that enable them to survive but not to improve their welfare (Rakodi, 2002: 24).

2.6.2 Livelihood strategies

Depending on the assets available to them, the structures and the processes that impact on them, as well as the vulnerability context within which they operate, the poor choose livelihood strategies that provide them with livelihood outcomes. In other words, households construct an increasingly diverse portfolio of activities and assets to survive and to improve their standard of living (Ellis, 2000). Painter defines livelihood strategies as “how individuals, households or groups gain access to, use and exercise control over any number of resources that they identify as important for their well-being” (Painter, 1996: 79-80). In sub-Saharan Africa countries in particular, the current economic crises have compelled many households to resort to diversification of income sources and strategies to improve their standard of living.

Maxwell (1999) distinguishes between diversification of income-generating strategies and a variety of coping strategies, while Scoones (1998) identifies three types of strategies or portfolios in his review of conceptual issues of rural poverty. He explains that poor rural households adopt three major livelihood strategies, which he referred to as: i.) agricultural intensification and extensification, ii.) livelihood diversification, including paid labour, rural enterprises and, iii.) migration. Carney (1998), on the other hand, classifies livelihood strategies as: natural resource based, non-natural resource based, and migration, while Ellis (2000) in his framework, categorized them as: natural resource based activities or non-natural based activities, such as remittances and other transfers. His categorisation is based on the premise that, for the majority

of rural households in sub-Saharan Africa, farming alone does not provide a sufficient means of survival. Livelihood strategies, especially in the sub-Saharan African context thus consist of a range and combination of activities and choices that communities, households and individuals employ in pursuit of their income, security and well-being.

Nonetheless, Beall (2001: 79) asserts that the term strategy, in general, is not appropriate to describe the activities of the very poor, given that it risks overemphasizing the options available and negotiations possible. Kaag *et al.* (2003) argue on a similar note that a strategy has the connotation of rational and planned action and of people trying to reach predefined goals. As such, they contend that since individual and family goals will not remain the same, livelihood should be conceived as a moving target. Consequently, they suggest that ‘pathways’ should be used instead of strategies, since insecure conditions make it difficult for people to make advanced strategic decisions. While recognizing attempts by a number of scholars to redefine this concept, this study, however, embraces Rakodi’s assertion that the concept ‘strategy’ has the advantage of restoring agency to poor people, instead of regarding them as mere passive victims (Rakodi, 2001: 7). In the light of the above, this study uses this concept to describe the actions and decisions of individuals and households within fishing communities of the Ketu South District as people with capability and agency, whose decisions and actions concerning their lives are shaped by constraints.

Ellis (2000) emphasises that diversification is pervasive and enduring in the sense that the phenomenon occurs everywhere and seems to be transient. Studies have indeed shown that there is enormous diversity of livelihood strategies at every level in a geographical area and across sectors within a household (DfID, 1999). The vast majority of rural households in sub-Saharan Africa, according to Ellis (2000), are increasingly reliant on the construction of a diverse portfolio of

activities and income sources in order to survive and to improve their standard of living. He identified seasonality, risk, labour markets, credit substitution, and asset strategies, as well as investment to enhance future livelihood prospects, such as developing networks and education, as factors which induce voluntary motives for the adoption of diverse livelihoods.

However, livelihood activities are sometimes introduced as a coping strategy in times of crises, and a growing body of research in rural Africa document a wide range of livelihood strategies as a response to crises. In their studies of livelihood strategies in Africa during the early 1990s, Dietz *et al.* (1992), for example, found that households could be engaged in different household livelihood activities, as micro decision units and partly in inter-household networks of mutual assistance. The typology of livelihood strategies identified by them include: accumulation strategies (improving the means of production), betterment strategies (improving consumption situation), sustenance or adoptive strategies (social manoeuvring to preserve a consumption and/or wealth level), mechanisms to cope with seasonal stress; and survival strategies to cope with exceptional crises. This study thus embraces Tacoli's (2000) argument that diversification among low-income households is often a survival strategy for risk minimization and income stabilization.

2.6.3 Fishing communities' survival/coping/livelihood strategies

Numerous studies have testified to the fact that the livelihood strategies in fishing communities are diverse and complex, reflecting the variation in opportunities available to them (IMM 2003; Kleih *et al.*, 2003; Lensenlink, 2002). This body of scholarly documents revealed that poor fishing communities engage in various livelihood strategies as a way of managing risk. Among these are strategies:

1. to increase family size so as to ensure that children are engaged in productive work at a very tender age instead of schooling.
2. to increase resources by relying on more intensive technologies resulting in further degradation, greater competition and indebtedness (IMM 2003; Ulrich Kleih *et al.*, 2003).

A study by Lensenlink (2002) in Guinea, Mauritania, Ghana and Senegal also identified two groups of livelihood strategies, which he classified as: *general and fishing related strategies* adopted by fishing communities to counter the influence of vulnerability and to increase well-being. *The fishing related strategies*, according to him, include 1.) the use of flexible and diverse fishing practices to spread risk over various species and markets, 2.) seasonal or permanent migration to richer fishing areas to ensure year-round income and, 3.) the marketing of different type of products in addition to fish. *The general strategies*, on the other hand, take the form of multiple income earning activities, such as investment in social relations and groups for social security, saving and investing in assets such as land, housing and business to secure security and income in the future.

Ellis (2000) points out that the involuntary reason for diversification is associated with coping strategies. Indeed, the dynamics associated with the pursuit of specific types of strategy could be identified as characteristic of necessity or the motivational aspects of decision-making within the external context of constraints. IMM (2003), from this perspective, shows that decisions based on the diversification of livelihood strategies by the poor are not always choices made to improve their livelihood stability, but they are often coping or survival strategies developed to deal with the inadequacy of livelihood. Evidence from fishing communities concerning diverse livelihood strategies is often associated with the adaptation to changing circumstances. Reasons ranging from risk reduction, responding to seasonal change, declining options, dealing

with shocks and unfavourable government policies are some of the factors identified as the major reason why poor households and individuals within fishing communities diversify their livelihood strategies (IMM, 2003: 64). Thus, the concept of household strategies is frequently invoked in Third World research to describe what the poor do, as well as explaining why they do it (Wolf, 1992).

There is an on-going discussion about whether one should speak of coping strategies, adaptation strategies or survival strategies. To solve this problem, Devereaux (1993: 16), among others, provides the distinction between coping, survival, adaptive and accumulative strategies. According to Devereaux's explanation, adaptive strategies are referred to as strategies of consumption failure in response to opportunity. This may be done through the intensification of existing livelihood strategies or by diversification into new activities. Accumulative strategies are those which increase consumption outcomes and stocks of assets. Coping strategies are explained as those strategies that absorb the impact of an adverse shock by drawing down assets and reducing consumption. When there is no respite, coping may lead to survival strategies, which is purely an attempt to ward off destitution, and even death, due to drastic reduction of consumption. De Haan vividly explains the concept as follows:

Because of the contextual shocks and stress, livelihood strategies temporarily take the shape of safety mechanisms called 'coping strategies'. These are short-term responses to secure livelihood in periods of shocks and stress [...]. In the periods of economic stress people are inclined to [...] develop alternative sources of income [...]. Coping strategies are thus short-term or temporary responses to external shocks and stresses. However, because shocks and stresses appear more frequently, the temporary coping mechanisms develop into more permanent 'adaptive strategies', which is, in the long-term, considered to be a normal livelihood strategy (De Haan, 2000: 347).

Danies and Seddons (1991: 9) for their part assert that ‘survival’ or ‘coping’ strategies as a response to adversity and austerity are essentially ‘defensive’ strategies that provide little potential for changing the environment of households or individuals. This study proposes that positive strategy adaptation is associated with choices that lead to increased security and consumption outcomes, while the negative one (strategy adaptation), which may be born out of necessity, normally occurs when households are no longer able to cope or subsist (Davies and Hassain, 1997: 13). Along this line, Rakodi (2002: 24) posits that the poorest and most vulnerable households are, in some cases, forced to adopt strategies that enable them to survive but do not improve their welfare. In this context, handing over children to traffickers in exchange for money as a survival strategy to manage risk, instead of sending them to school, will not only have negative impact on the human capital base of the trafficked victims’ households, but will also lead to their social exclusion in the near future.

Ideally, any livelihood strategy evolved by any community or individuals should aim at achieving livelihood outcomes that reduce vulnerability, exposure and defencelessness against critical trends, shock, seasonality and unfavourable government policies. Thus, depending on the assets available to the poor, as well as the factors that influence access to these assets and use, they may be able to come out with a viable, sustainable livelihood strategy to manage risk and reduce vulnerability. But then, where such strategies tend to have the potential to perpetuate an inter-generational poverty instead of improving incomes or increasing well-being, such strategies need a thorough and critical investigation in order to find their counter measures.

Elsewhere, Béné *et al.* (2001: 13) contend that the failure of many fisheries’ programmes to enable fishers to improve livelihood are due to lack of understanding of the complex livelihood strategies and the relationship between economies, social aspects and institutions that characterise small-scale fishing

communities. Therefore, the understanding of their livelihood strategies is considered crucial. The analysis of the dynamics of the livelihood strategies which they pursue through the livelihood framework is supposed to provide insight into how they manage their lives, and how they cope or improve their well-being within their vulnerability and institutional contexts. This study attempts to contribute to the understanding of these relationships to facilitate an appropriate intervention mechanism.

2.7 Critique of the livelihood approach

One of the main criticisms raised against the livelihood approach is that it rather focuses on the micro level than dealing with macro policy. That is, despite the fact that political capital is implied in linking assets with policies, institutions and processes (FAO, 2002: 46), the approach does not adequately address issues concerning politics, power and authority (Moser and Norton 2001; Adato and Meinze-Dick 2001; Farington *et al.*, 1999). Murray in his review of the methods and concepts related to livelihood research points out that, one of the weaknesses of the sustainable livelihood approach is that unequal power and conflicts of interest are not sufficiently acknowledged, “either within local ‘communities’ themselves or between ‘communities’ and, example, regional elites and government agencies” (Murray, 2001: 7). Similarly, Moser and Norton (2001) also contend that the absence of issues regarding power and politics in the sustainable livelihood approach has resulted in its lack of rigorous social, economic and political analysis in relation to the way by which power relations can produce or reproduce deprivation.

It is indeed observed that, different types of power and empowerment influence participation and access to assets as well as rights (FAO, 2002: 45). Yet, many livelihood analyses ignore the role these two factors play in influencing the differential access to, and the ability to command resources. This unfortunate

situation, according to Kaag *et al.* (2003), has led to the creation of a positive image of poverty, in which the poor are doing well in spite of their poverty, and diminished the urge to address structural causes of poverty such as unequal power relations and unequal access to resources. Consequently, Norton and Foster (2001) argue that the failure of the livelihood frame to address power and politics dimension of poverty undermines its holistic analytical approach. They, therefore, suggest that the rights framework, which is “founded on a concern for maximising human agency and freedom [...] offers the potential for dealing with the major acknowledged gap in the Sustainable Livelihood analytical tools – namely issues of power and authority” (Norton and Foster, 2001: 16). Similarly, commenting on the integration of livelihoods and rights approaches in the analysis of the root causes of poverty, Conway and his colleagues contend that:

Rights analysis can provide insights into the distribution of power. By identifying groups lacking effective rights – and groups who may be denying rights to others – it can highlight the root causes of the generation of and perpetuation of poverty and vulnerability. As such rights approach provides one possible way of examining the operation of institutions and political processes (the inner workings of the PIP box in the SL framework) that influence the livelihoods of the poor [...] (Conway *et al.*, 2002:3).

Of course, linking macro to micro level processes is crucial in exploring how a particular group of people maintain their livelihood security. These include their capabilities and freedom to decide on or choose measures to take within the institutional context in which they exist. Therefore, the next sections, the human rights-based and capability approaches as other underlying approaches are discussed.

2.8 Rights-based approach

A rights-based approach is a framework that recognises the principles, norms, standards and goals of the international human rights system as an integral part of development processes and planning. It is based on treaties that obligate states to pursue human rights and to make sure that their citizens achieve the conditions necessary for a dignified life. The approach, therefore, recognises the root causes of poverty and vulnerability as injustice and the denial of rights through deliberate and constant acts of marginalisation and discriminatory policies, but not as lack of resources or result of natural phenomena. It thus views poverty, its causes and consequences within the purview of a multitude of civil, political, social, cultural as well as economic rights. The rights-based approach to poverty reduction, as a result, embraces the principle of universality, indivisibility and interdependency of all rights as its key element. The approach, as one of its main features, emphasises two groups of entities: ‘rights-holders’, including individuals, groups or communities who are entitled to rights from the ‘duty-bearers’, such as national governments and state and non-state institutions.

The rights-based approach towards development is opposed to other approaches such as the need-based approach. This is because while a need-based approach focuses on securing additional resources for delivery of services to marginalised groups, a rights-based approach calls for existing resources to be shared equally and assists the marginalised in asserting their rights to those resources, and in this way, makes the process political (see Jonsson, 2003).

The rights-based approach, as a concept, can be traced to 1981 when African heads of state and government, under article 22 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights embraced the collective right of all peoples to economic, social and cultural development, and as a result imposed it as a duty on all states to its use, and as a medium through which all bilateral and

multilateral measures should be secured (Nowak, 2003: 44). The above regional initiatives paved the way for the 1986 international United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development and its eventual consideration of the rights-based approach to development. This was solidified after the World Conference on Human rights in Vienna in 1993, where the indivisibility, interdependence and interrelations of all human rights were affirmed. These initiatives fulfil the principle of universal human rights and dignity. The United Nations defined the rights-based approach as:

a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promotion and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyse inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development (UN, 2006: 15).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in this regard provides a systematic and coherent framework through which practical action can be taken at all levels: national and international, to understand and to eradicate poverty.

The approach regards development as people-centred and thus sees human-beings as central agents who have the right to participate actively in development, rather than being passive beneficiaries. Its primary concern is building an inclusive society within the development framework that promotes the realisation of human rights for all. As a consequence, it focuses on inequality, discrimination and disadvantage, and puts power at the centre stage (Hughes *et al.*, 2003: 16). Furthermore, the approach also considers and understands traditional goals of development activities within the context of the adequate provision of amenities, such as health, educational services, food or shelter, as human rights. In this way, it seeks to harmonise the main elements of human

development theory with the normative framework of internationally recognised human rights.

Central to the approach is that a development process should be based on the notion that the human person has certain undeniable rights that are guaranteed in the international human rights laws and instruments (Pilpat, 2005: 45). As such, the state, including other potentially relevant actors, which is the primary duty-bearer, is obliged to respect, protect and fulfil these rights. The Declaration of Rights to Development Article 3(3) affirms that:

States should undertake, at the national level, all necessary measures for the realisation of the right to development and shall ensure, *inter alia*, equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair distribution of income. Effective measures should be undertaken to ensure that women have an active role in the development process. Appropriate economic and social reforms should be carried out with a view to eradicating all social injustice.

States thus have the responsibility to formulate adequate developmental policies aimed at offering possibilities for development and to take resolute and non-discriminatory steps in making sure that all human rights, including economic and political rights, are realised without distinction. The rights-based approach, in this regard, attempts to problematize policy imbalances that are harmful to the poorest, and also helps to protect people from unjust exercise of power and, at the same time, empower them to challenge the powers that perpetuate their impoverishment (Jonsson, 2003: 24). The approach sees the direct link between poverty and powerlessness or unequal power relations, and consequently puts emphasis on the empowerment of the poor so that they can develop a sense of entitlement, since people remain poor when they are powerless (Smith, 2005: 48).

The core of the rights-based approach, therefore, is dignity which is closely connected with the satisfaction of basic necessities of life. As stated in the Declaration of Human Rights, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” As such, the approach attaches much concern to the causes and eradication of poverty (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2001: 43). Thus, from the perspective of poverty, the rights based approach attempts to illuminate the structural inequities and inequalities that cause poverty. The approach demands explanations and accountability, and exposes the hidden structures and priorities that perpetuate violations of rights, and challenges the conditions that exacerbate and tolerate poverty (CESCR, 1998 cited in Uvin, 2004: 133). Consequently, the approach recognises that vast inequalities, can lead to the denial of access to resources to those who are economically excluded and also silence their voices. Given the fact that the amount of inequality depends largely on the context and the ability of participatory processes to accommodate different capabilities, it calls for equitable distribution (Schneider and Zuniga-Hamlin, 2005: 11) of resources through effective participation. As pointed out by John Samuel:

If human rights are to have real meaning, they must be linked to public participation. And participation must be preceded by empowerment of the people. A sense of empowerment requires a sense of dignity, self-worth and the ability to ask questions. The sense of empowerment along with a sense of entitlements and constitutional guarantees gives rise to a political consciousness based on rights. A process of political empowerment and a sense of rights empower citizens to participate in the public sphere (quoted from Chapman *et al*, 2005: 15).

The approach aims at enabling people to realise their rights to participate in development processes that affect their lives and have access to information. Put differently, the rights-based approach provides and encourages a systematic way

of dealing with development through the expansion of people's choices and opportunities, as well as freedoms.

At the centre stage of the approach, is the accountability of both state and non-state actors on issues that affect the lives of their citizens. Ferguson (1999:23) argues that to talk in terms of rights in itself is a "vehicle for increasing the accountability of government organisations to their citizens and consequently increasing the likelihood that policy measures will be implemented in practice". It is, therefore, not surprising when the *Human Development Report 2000* asserts that the major added value of a rights-based approach to development is accountability (UNDP Human Development Report, 2000). As such, the approach demands the state and those in authority to develop strategies that aim at responding to the needs and fulfilment of human rights.

At the heart of the rights-based approach is the flourishing of human beings. The approach in principle rejects a top-down approach as a legitimate policy for poverty eradication, and places human beings at the centre of development. Boesen and Martin (2007) contend that the approach identifies poverty as a product of marginalisation, discrimination and exploitation, and recognises that economic growth does not necessarily impact on the development of the poor. The rights-based approach focuses simultaneously on social-economic and civil-political rights, and, by this, contradicts development philosophy which views development within the context of positive macro-economic statistics and industrialisation and their benefits through which people can live and improve their lives. The approach emphasises that human beings are agents or central actors with the right to participate in processes of relevance for their development, and consequently deals with normative constraints on power relations to ensure human dignity and the elimination of repressive processes (Marks, 2003: 46).

Thus, in the context of poverty, the rights-based approach focuses on the identification of its root causes from a multidimensional perspective (including, civil, political, social, cultural and economic), empowering the rights-holders to claim their rights, and also enable the duty-bearers to respond to their obligation as its central dynamics (Boesen and Martin, 2007: 7). Häusermann (1998: 156) argues that what is distinctive about a human rights approach to development is that, it works by setting out a vision of what ought to be: that is it provides a normative framework through which poverty can be analysed and reduced. It gives priority to gross types of rights violations, and encourages the formulation of more comprehensive policies that respond to the structural causes of inequality and poverty.

2.9 Critique of rights-based approach

While the rights-based approach to poverty reduction has become widely accepted in development discourse and offers a useful frame for analysis of the root causes of poverty, it has been subjected to intense criticism by its opponents as follows: To begin with, the opponents of the rights-based approach argue from the cultural relativist point of view that human rights discourse is a relatively western ideology, and, as a consequence, fails to take into consideration the dynamics of different cultures. According to Pollis and Schwab (1979: 13), human rights are a Western construct which are irrelevant and, as such, limited in applicability in the context of Africa. To them, the individualist who insists on human rights is alien to African culture where the individual is conceived as part of the greater whole. The premise of their argument is that many cultures around the world give higher attention to collective duties and responsibilities than to individual or collective rights, which is very crucial for the implementation of the rights-based approach.

Foresti *et al.* (2007:5) also contend that the rights-based approach, in practice, tends to focus on the state and non-state authorities as duty-bearers, the primary agents responsible for the protection and promotion of rights, and at the same time emphasises the position of the individual citizens as rights-holders. Arguably, the identification of rights for sustainable human development as contended by Kapur and Davvury (2006: 8) needs to be extended to the understanding of the social and cultural norms that affect the realisation of the rights of particular groups or individuals. However, the possibility and visibility of measuring successful individual claims as well as the implementation of state obligations, in the application of the rights-based approach, has been limited only to the state and its agents as duty-bearers. The inherent nature of the approach has the tendency of giving little or no attention to other less visible mediating structures such as a range of customary and informal social structures that violate rights and perpetuate poverty (Batliwala, undated: 7) in its application. Consequently, Foresti *et al.* (2007: 4) posit that over reliance on the state as the primary duty-bearer with the obligation to fulfil human rights has the potential to underestimate the role of individuals and groups as agents of development.

It is thus presupposed that the rights-based approach to development vis-à-vis poverty reduction is yet to be fully developed on how and where the marginalised and oppressed groups and individuals experience the denial of their rights (Batliwala, undated: 8) in various societies around the world. This alludes to the fact that the approach relies heavily on citizen–state relationships with regard to accountability and better performance.

Based on the opponents' submissions concerning the applicability of the rights-based approach, one could argue that its employment in assessing the causes of poverty in developing countries such as those in sub-Saharan Africa may be unattainable. This is because the approach is framed from an overwhelmingly

European perspective as both the object and subject. Consequently, the approach is regarded as a goal and instrument of a modern-day civilising project in the non-western world (Mukau, 2002: 24). From this view, the approach lacks a genuine multicultural dimension to attract its universal applicability in measuring the performance of governments regarding the promotion and protection of their citizens' rights. Batliwala (undated: 8) posits hence that the large number of proposals and progress reports that are framed in the language of human rights, including terminologies, such as 'rights-holders' and duty-bearers', by the majority of non-governmental organisations are just a quest to attract funding from donors.

Another problem associated with the rights-based approach discourse to development is its strong emphasis on the empowerment of the vulnerable which is intrinsically linked to power relations. While the proponents of the rights-based approach consider the approach as a considerable opportunity to change the power relation between citizens and states to secure outcomes which are more developmental, it presents its own problem. Newell and Wheeler (2006) argue that, since efforts to claim entitlements by invoking rights are inherently political, this can have an adverse effect on the vulnerable groups through the state and its actors concerned. Burke (1987: 29) consequently, suggests that people should better be content with their class and condition of life rather than to rise against established authority in the name of human rights. In Burke's view, the idea that human rights confer a right on the individual or group to challenge authorised institutional structures as a means to remove constraints to development is not only a revolt but rather scandalous.

As observed earlier, the understanding of the rights-based approach to development leads to the creation of the assumption that national governments are the sole duty-bearers. Therefore, they are obligated to provide all rights to their citizens, regardless of their capacity to do so (Chapman *et al.*, 2005: 281).

However, it is argued that governments in developing countries cannot possibly provide all the basic rights, such as the right to education and health care to their citizens for their sustainable development. In such situations where governments may be compelled to prioritise the fulfilment of some of these rights at the expense of others, due to lack of finance, opposes the principle of the rights-based approach in itself.³ Farrington (2001) argues that finite financial resources demand the establishment of priorities, which in turn undermines the principle of indivisibility, and highlights the dilemma of dealing with competing rights. He, therefore, remains suspicious of what the rights-based approach would be able to accomplish. In the absence of adequate compliance with the principles upon which the rights-based approach is based, its standards may be considered as mere norm facades (Chapman *et al.*, 2005: 280).

The question therefore is how, and, through what means, governments and other stakeholders whose authority has been crippled by international policy (Chapman, 2005: 32) would be held responsible by their citizens for the failure to fulfil their obligations. This, and many other questions pertaining to the application of the rights-based approach to development, lead to the general conclusion by many of its opponents that the approach lacks a clear framework for priorities and trade-offs, as well as mechanisms for the prioritisation of action for sustainable development. Moser *et al.* (2001: 2) on this note argue that there is the possibility of limited effectiveness of the rights-based approach to poverty reduction within weak states, where there is little or less possible support from multinational institutions. A similar sentiment is echoed in the words of Chapman *et al.* (2005: 280) when they state that the State pretends to promote economic and social rights, while systematically undermining these rights. This situation, in their view, leads to a growing disillusionment and cynicism about the rights-based approach to development.

³ The Vienna declaration of 1993, states that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interrelated and interdependent.

Moreover, the rights-based approach, as one of its core principles, demands the empowerment of the vulnerable to claim their entitlement. However, Moser and Norton (2001: 4) postulate that apart from the fact that most poor people have little or no access to institutions that enforce their rights, the interface of different legal systems governing their access to entitlements, make the process to recognise and claim rights more complex. How then do we expect the poor and the vulnerable who are already plagued with many problems to go through such a complex situation in order to claim their rights? In the words of Bertrand Ramcharan, the former UN Acting High Commissioner for Human Rights, “human rights may seem distant ideals if your family is starving, if you cannot protect yourself or them from preventable illnesses or provide your children with basic education” (cited in Akintayo, 2007:22). Of course, while human rights have been persistently touted by certain scholars as a panacea for all socio-economic rights (Bedjaoui, 1991), the ordinary men and women, including children continue to languish in abject poverty, since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Chapman *et al.* (2005:280) are even more to-the-point by arguing that individuals and households who have inadequate access to resources and secured subsistence livelihood may have little or no interest in abstract rights which cannot be realised without a constant struggling.

Despite the above barrage of arguments and questions regarding the relevance of the rights-based approach to human development, many human rights advocates and development specialists continue to favour its application. They argue that, although there may be drawbacks to the approach, there is still a strong synergy between human rights and development. They claim that, international human rights standards and its principles belong to the only universally acceptable norm that exists. Moreover, since a vast majority of countries ratified or signed these international human rights instruments, human rights framework to development offers levers of influence that other development discourses lack. In the words of Hickey and Mitlin (2009), “no other public or official language is available

that provides the same range, power, and precision as the human rights framework [...]. In comparison, development can be morally appealing [...]" (Hickey and Mitlin, 2009:27). In this way, one could argue that the rights-based approach provides a useful template of issues by which government development policies may be assessed. This is to make sure that it is people-centred to aid the reduction and eradication of poverty beyond empty rhetoric goals (Li-ann Thio, 2009: 22). To that effect, Chapman *et al.* (2005: 282) argue that, insofar as human rights has been predicated towards, and founded on, the primordial conception of human dignity, it becomes relevant to development. To Moser *et al.* (2001: 9), therefore, human rights provide for equality and non-discrimination in the development context, in which intervention programmes can be designed to respond to the current growing national and global inequalities. They assert further that the approach has so far led to policies that enhance social justice which, in turn, reduces social risk and strengthens long-term livelihood security, as well as guarantees the realisation of economic and social rights. Moser and his colleagues argue that the approach provides a valuable strategic instrument dealing with power and development imbalances (Moser *et al.*, 2001: 9).

A vast majority of countries, including Ghana, already ratified and signed a number of international human rights instruments towards the protection and promotion of the rights of their citizen towards a secured and dignified life. Moreover, given the fact that state governments are obliged to work towards these internationally agreed principles set by the human rights regime, makes the approach a coherent and unified, as well as overarching framework through which development can be measured. The approach is not only concerned with the root causes of poverty and vulnerability, but also provides a direction for action to eliminate them. In doing so, it ensures a progressive improvement in the quality of life of the poor (Häusermann, 1998: 139). This justifies, among other reasons, the purpose of using the rights-based approach in this study to

provide an appropriate framework through which we can understand and discover the root causes of poverty and vulnerability for effective intervention.

Additionally, the approach can provide an opportunity for the communities under study to think and understand their experiences of want, exclusion, discrimination and deprivation as a denial of fundamental human rights through inappropriate or ineffective implementations of policies, but not as a result of natural phenomenon or their own failure. Their understanding of this will not only facilitate their empowerment to challenge and pressurise both state and non-state actors concerned for their livelihood, but it will also enable them to participate in it and analyse their situations, attribute responsibility, and work out the means to improve them. Through this measure, they will be able to claim their entitlements and rights by removing all constraints that prevent them from accessing their assets and enable them to improve their life quality and overcome social isolation. The rights-based approach, therefore, becomes an additional and important guideline for studying the root causes of poverty and vulnerability in this study. Below is an illustration of the rights-based approach.

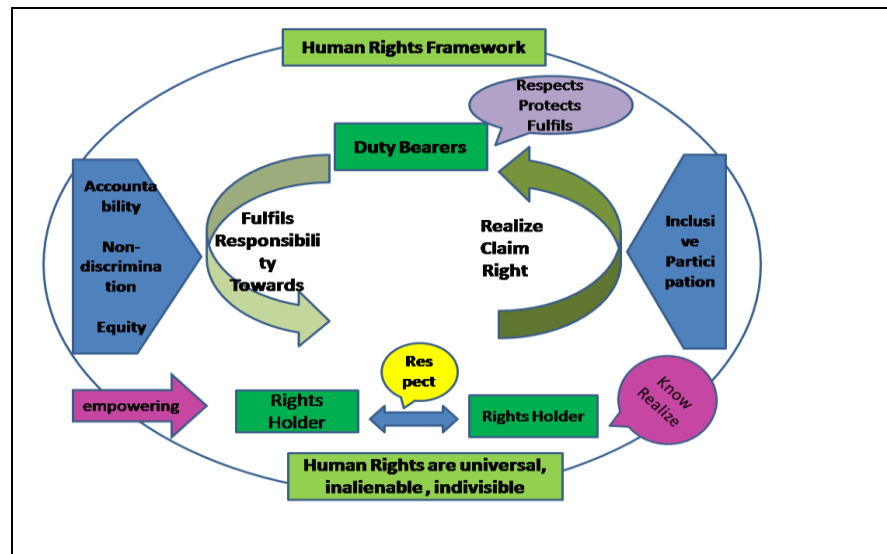


Figure 2.2: Framework for Human Rights-Based Approach

Source: Adopted from Ruedin Laurent (2007:8)

The conceptual overview as illustrated in figure 2 above depicts the theoretical ideas carried in the rights-based approach. The approach, which is based on the universality, inalienability and indivisibility of human rights, has equality, non-discrimination, empowerment, participation, accountability and equity as its core. All the issues raised above have the effect of sharpening the performance of both government and private institutions. The framework provides that, for the citizens of a state to have equal access to assets and information for sustainable development, it is the responsibility of the state (as the duty-bearer) to ensure that its citizens (rights-holders) realise and claim their rights and entitlement. This is supposed to be carried out through participation and communication of information to assist them to have a say and stake in policy-processes on issues that affect their lives. The framework also demands the empowerment of both duty-bearers and rights-holders and the creation of awareness. The overall idea is to ensure sustainable human development through redressing discriminatory practices and unjust distribution of power which

impede the capability of the poor and prevent them from accomplishing what they can and are able to do (see Sen, 1999).

Furthermore, from Nussbaum's perspective, rights are seen as 'combined capabilities' in that those things that are referred to as rights are only capacities to function (see Nussbaum, 2000: 99). This implies that rights do not necessarily guarantee that every individual has the right to live a dignified life by virtue of being human or a citizen of a particular state. It is good when those rights are translated into the provision of vital capabilities and assets by the state to ensure the dignity of every individual. Therefore, in the context of this study, while human rights approach combines the vision of what ought to be, by emphasizing on choices for poor people and solutions in terms of what steps to take in order to achieve human rights, the capability approach views the problems of poverty from the perspective of the poor (Häusermann, 1998: 122). This is because like capabilities, rights are claims to entitlement. Moreover, the poor may have one or more assets, but may lack the abilities/capabilities to use them in order to reduce vulnerability and poverty. Hence, this study argues that assets, capabilities and rights are very important in averting poverty.

2.10 Capability approach

The approach perceives life as something that is built upon the realization of capabilities and that every human being is able to develop these through freedom. It lays emphasis on the removal of obstacles in the lives of people so that they can have the freedom to live the kind of life that enables them to achieve what they find valuable. Thus, according to Sen:

The capability approach to a person's advantage is concerned with evaluating it in terms of his or her actual ability to achieve various valuable functionings as a part of living. The corresponding approach to social advantage – for aggregative appraisal as well as for the choice institutions and policy – takes the set of individual capabilities

as constituting an indispensable and central part of the relevant informational base of such evaluation (Sen, 1993: 30).

For an effective measurement of well-being, the capability approach introduces the concept of individual functionings that reflect the various actions a person may value doing or not doing (Sen, 1999: 75). Functionings are, the actual achievement of the individual, what he or she achieves through ‘doing or beings’ as a person in life (Sen, 1999: 73). They thus constitute what makes a life valuable and forms part of a person’s being (Alkire, 2005: 5). The doings and beings range from the most basic functionings such as adequate nourishment and good health to the more complex ones, including achieving self-respect and participation in social and political life. For people to achieve these functionings, they need to use a bundle of commodities (Sen, 1987a: 6), as well as assets that they are able to accumulate and put into use.

Capability according to Sen, refers to a combination of various functionings that a person can achieve and to the person’s freedom to promote or achieve these valuable functionings (Alkire, 2001: 5). For Sen, the notion of capability is closely linked to that of freedom which he refers to as “the real opportunity that we have to accomplish and what we value” (Sen, 1992: 31). A person’s capability set is the total set of functionings that are feasible, and within his or her reach (Sen, 1985a). The notion of capability can thus be related to the extent of the freedom that a person has in the pursuance of valuable activities (Drèze and Sen, 1989: 42). In this way, Sen perceives capabilities as options or choices that are open to people. It could, therefore, be argued that the overall quality of life of a person is determined by these opportunities and choices, and not merely by functionings. On the face of this, Sen argues that a person’s capability and functionings are inseparable because:

a functioning is an achievement, whereas a capability is to achieve. Functionings are, in a sense, more directly related to living conditions, since they are different aspects of living conditions. Capabilities, in contrast, are notions of freedom, in the positive sense: what real opportunities you have regarding the life you may lead (Sen, 1987:36).

Capability approach is not limited to the functioning levels of individuals, but also to their capabilities in terms of the space of freedom to achieve well-being. That is the capability approach does not limit itself to functionings that a person has achieved. Instead, it is more concerned with the real freedom of the person (Robeyns, 2003: 20). Functionings, in essence, are directly linked to living conditions, such as a healthy body, being safe, being educated, having a good job, being able to move and visit people (Deneulin and McGregor, 2009: 2). To develop capabilities, some functionings require financial resources and economic input, while others involve institutional settings and arrangements, social or cultural practices, as well as social structures and norms.

Sen distinguishes the opportunity aspect of freedom from the process aspect, which ‘is the freedom that is involved in the process itself’ (Sen, 2002: 10). Sen (1985b: 205), therefore, views people from two different perspectives namely, the ‘well-being aspect’ and the ‘agency aspect’. This differentiation is based on the fact that capabilities are possible functionings rather than actual powers possessed by the agent. Agency to Sen is the freedom to set, and pursue goals that one has interests and reason to value. It is thus “what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regarded as important” (Sen, 1985b:206).

To Nussbaum, the capability of a person to choose depends not simply on external features, but also on whether that person has the power of choice (Nussbaum, 1988: 153). In this manner, Crocker (1995) contends that, if

capabilities are powers, then they are also, in a sense, actualities that people can do. In Sen's view, agency encompasses effective power as well as direct control which are not limited to the individual, but include also what one can do as member of a group or community (Sen, 1985b: 206). On her analysis of power and agency, Kabeer (2003) posits that agency includes both positive and negative senses referred to as:

1. Power in "its positive sense – the 'power to' – "refers to people's ability to make and act on their own life-choices, even in the face of others' opposition."
2. Power in "its negative sense – the 'power over' – refers to the capacity of some actors to override the agency of others through, for example, the exercise of authority or the use of violence and other form of coercion" (Kabeer, 2003: 171-172).

From the above perspective one could argue that although poverty manifests itself as material deprivation, its causes can be traced to power relations that govern how valued resources are distributed in a society (p. 172).

Understanding the agency role is crucial in recognizing individuals or groups as people who can choose to act, or not to act, in a particular way. Sen (1999: 188) points out that concerning the well-being aspect of human development, the agency aspect has been recognized and begun to receive much attention. Thus, from the perspective of the capability approach to development activities, "the people have to be seen [...] as being actively involved – given the opportunity – in shaping their own destiny, and not just as passive recipients of the fruits of cunning development programmes" (Sen, 1999: 53). The belief is that when individual or social groups are recognized as agents, they can define their priorities as well as choose the best means to achieve them. Agency in this

regard could be interpreted as the ability to choose. As a consequence, development should rely on peoples' freedom to make decisions and advance key objectives (Alkire and Deneulin, 2009: 32), in order to widen the field of their choices.

The capability approach also posits that whereas well-being freedom is reflected by a person's set of capability, well-being achievements should be measured in functionings (Robeyns, 2003: 16). Robeyns, as a consequence, opines that an analysis with regard to capabilities has to take agency into account (p. 16-17). By adopting a capability approach, it is important to see individuals or groups of people as agents of change and development, not just as mere beneficiaries. As agents they participate in decision-making processes regarding their social, economic and political lives, as well as development.

Agency in relation to empowerment, in this regard, implies not just actively exercising choice, but doing this in ways that challenge power (p. 24). This is based on the premise that a person with no agency is taken to be someone who is coerced, oppressed or passive. Placing agency as an explicit component of a people's capability set, therefore, means that any development policy methods have to take the aspirations and needs of the people affected into account. Moreover, taking agency seriously implies taking note of the motivations and constraints under which people act. The terms on which people gain access to resources and their importance underpins the employment of the capability approach in this study.

According to McGregor and Kebede (2002), agency is founded on the ability to provide meaning to circumstances and contexts, as well as decisions. This study argues that individuals and households should have the full set of capacity to make choices about the things they do and to express their own ideas. As a

consequence, they can, and do have the power to change the very socio-economic structures and institutions through which they live and work. The agency exercised and its impact on deprived communities in this context becomes the important factor to direct their empowerment for the enhancement of their sustainable livelihood activities.

As a development paradigm, the capability approach is a departure from the traditional development discourse in that it does not only link human freedom and development to national economic growth. As pointed out by Deneulin and McGregor (2009: 3), “the key normative argument of the capability approach is that social arrangements should aim to expand people’s capabilities, that is, their freedom to undertake or achieve valuable doings and beings, and in doing so those arrangements should respect people’s agency”. In other words, the perspective of the approach differs from the traditional economic criterion based on utility or consumption measured by proxy for income – GDP per capita which fails to take into consideration the person’s capabilities as for instance, the physical condition of the individual. Instead, the approach focuses on social arrangements such as, policies, institutions and programmes which objectively seek to remove restrictions on human freedom and expand human capabilities to allow “what people are able to do and be” (Robeyns, 2005:94). This implies that development is about people and not just about per capita incomes and goods.

The capability approach has thus emerged as an alternative to standard economic framework for considering poverty, inequality and human development (Clark, 2005). As Sen (1985) opines, a truly developed society is one which enables human beings to live and act in certain valued directions. Nussbaum (1990: 214) posits that “one of the capabilities government must centrally promote is the capability of choosing: of doing (valuable) functions in accordance with one’s own practical reasoning. Both Sen and Nussbaum perceive development as the promotion and expansion of valuable capabilities and freedom for people to

realize more and better functionings to live the kind of life they value. Consequently, the approach has become a theory to explain individuals' well-being and to direct social arrangements and guidance for institutional and policy design.

The capability approach interprets the aim of development as the expansion of individual freedom and rights. In all, Sen seems to be more concerned with a person's interest, than his or her actions or behaviour. To Sen, "the good life" is partly a life of genuine choice and not one in which the person is forced into a particular life – however rich it might be in other respects" (Sen, 1996: 59). Hence, he argues that freedom should be both the ends and means of development. In this case, a development policy which might improve the livelihood of people in a particular community but comprises force in its implementation cannot be considered a success from the perspective of the capability approach, even if it turns out to improve people's livelihood opportunities.

In Crocker's view, Nussbaum stresses on actual functionings as a platform for free choice. She opines that valuable functionings and capabilities to function are interconnected and are distinguishable sources of value (Crocker, 1995). He consequently points out that capability-needs are important because of the value of the functionings in which they terminate. Moreover, since development means creating an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives (Deneulin and McGregor, 2009: 7), Sen puts more emphasis on 'freedom to achieve valuable ways of functioning (Sen, 1990: 52) than he does on the valuable functionings themselves. The capability approach, in this way, conceives human freedom and the ability to make decisions that affect one's life as central to human dignity.

The capability approach encompasses human well-being and development and consequently qualifies as a useful framework in evaluating policies as regards their impact on an individual's capabilities (Robeyns, 2005: 94). This is premised on the fact that the approach takes the human diversity into account by not only focusing on the plurality of functionings and capabilities as the evaluative space, but also by considering the personal and socio-environmental factors which convert commodities into functionings (Robeyns, 2005: 99). Consequently, Robeyns proposes that in evaluating capability, both non-material circumstances that shape people's opportunity sets, and the circumstances that influence the choices that people make from the capacity set should be given a central priority (p. 99). The capability approach from this perspective appears to be a model that can be used to analyze as well as decrease poverty by improving individuals and households' capabilities within the study setting.

The approach does not demand that people should actually use the capabilities they have; rather, its ultimate concern is the ability and the potential to develop their lives in the way that they wish. As Nussbaum emphatically puts it:

The central question asked by capabilities approach is not, 'How satisfied is Vasanti?' or even, 'How much in the way of resources is she able to command?' It is, instead, 'What is Vasanti actually able to do and to be (Nussbaum, 2000: 71).

The capability approach, in this regard, posits that giving people the ability to make decisions that affect their own lives can lead to higher economic growth and better conditions for the poor. In the words of Deneulin and McGregor:

There is little human progress if a country has grown wealthier but the majority of its population are unable to enjoy anything resembling a good life because of inequalities in access to the services that would provide them with adequate health care or education. It is possible for high economic growth rates to generate prosperity

and mask a dynamic of social change that produces greater poverty and distress (Deneulin and McGregor, 2009: 7).

In the light of this, Sen contends that poverty should be taken as the deprivation of basic capabilities, but not just as a mere lowness of incomes (Sen, 1999: 90). He, however, sent a word of caution that the ‘capability-poverty’ perspective does not deny the fact that low income can lead to poverty.

To Nussbaum, it is the task of political and social institutions to secure basic capabilities (Nussbaum, 2000: 87). She consequently emphasises that human dignity needs to be fulfilled and not be undermined by hunger, violence, or unequal treatment in the political realm (Nussbaum, 2006: 294). Nussbaum, by this, concurs with Sen that the capability perspective as a theory of social justice should focus on people’s capabilities and not functionings so that people are not compelled to act in particular ways, but are given ample opportunities to choose the types of functionings they consider as valuable.

The capability approach, in this regard, identifies a core idea of humans as dignified free beings who shape their life in co-operation and reciprocity with others (Gough, 2002). Sen (1999: 87) in agreement with this idea asserts that in a freedom oriented context, participatory freedoms should form a central part in policy analysis. He consequently puts emphasize on the employment of democratic prerogatives, such as political and civil rights as the crucial part of economic policy making processes. Therefore, this study argues that government and other stakeholders cannot achieve genuine sustainable development within fishing communities in Ghana without respecting the freedom of these communities. The communities must be allowed to decide what kind of development they wish and cherish. Consequently, the author of this study finds it more important to explore and analyse their livelihood activities on the basis

of the degree of their freedom, and how they choose to live within the perspectives of their capabilities.

Crocker (1995) observes that Nussbaum improves on Sen's version of human capabilities by making them personal traits as well as locating them within the context of other human features: the limits, vulnerabilities, and needs of lives. Nussbaum on this note agrees with Sen that capabilities are the most appropriate criterion to evaluate people's quality of life.

Concerning the linkages between rights-based approach and capability approach, Alexander asserts that despite divergent points of departure Nussbaum and Sen are consistent that:

[...]what underpins the capability approach is moral pluralism that values human rights for their intrinsic worth, their role in securing to people social, economic and political security and for their formative influence in evoking a sense of solidarity with victims of repressive governments and oppressive social practice[...] (Alexander, 2004: 18).

Nussbaum and Sen agree that conventional rights and liberties are crucial for the fulfilment of needs; hence capabilities are closely related to human rights as understood in the current international development discourse. Nussbaum (2000) in this light argues that it is impossible to construct an idea of capabilities without referring to conventional ideas about rights and liberty. For Nussbaum, therefore, both capability and human rights perform the same function, which is to "provide the philosophical underpinning for basic institutional principles" (Nussbaum, 1999:239; 1995:97).

From the above exposition we may argue that both the capability and the human rights-based approaches can complement each other in analysing poverty and livelihood activities. This is because considering rights as grounded in capabilities is likely to open up a fruitful new way to look at the questions regarding the nature and contents of rights in relation to development. Thus, the value added of the capability approach to human rights discourse is that even if individuals have rights, they can be prevented from accessing them. For example, individuals may have a nominal right of political participation but may be impeded to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Employing the capability approach will create a space for community rights. This is a complete shift from the classical liberal rights pertaining to people as individuals to people as members of a community.

Furthermore, Vizard (2006: 66) in her legal claim about poverty as an element of human rights argues that the capability approach provides a useful framework in which “the capability to achieve a standard of living adequate for survival and development-including adequate nutrition, safe water and sanitation, shelter and housing, access to basic health and social services and education – is characterised as a basic human right that governments and other actors have individual and collective obligations to defend and support”. She consequently contends further that international human rights law and the capability approach have complementary and reinforcing elements in that these elements provide the basis for a cross-disciplinary framework for analysing poverty as a human rights issue. The UN Independent Expert for Human Rights and Extreme Poverty argue along a similar line that, “from a human rights perspective, poverty can be described as the denial of a person’s right to a range of capabilities, and that poverty presents a state of affairs where violations of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights interact mutually and reinforce each other” (cited in Andreassen, 2007: 1).

The capability approach, in this context, can thus be seen as a bridge that links poverty with human rights. Thus, once this common foundation has been noticed in the analysis of poverty among a particular group of people, then their situation can be defined or established as a denial of human rights. This connectivity provides an insightful and invaluable background for the analysis of individuals and household's poverty.

2.11 Critique of the capability approach

Despite its potential and usefulness in assessing policies in terms of individual freedoms and well-being, the capability approach attracts criticism on a number of issues. To begin with, one of the major and well known criticisms of Sen's framework relates to the question of identification of valuable capabilities that public policies need to promote. Some commentators criticized Sen for his failure to supplement his framework with a coherent list of relevant capabilities that are needed to be taken into account (Nussbaum, 1988; Williams, 1987).

Consequently, Sudgen (1993) questions the feasibility of operating the approach, since it is deliberately and fundamentally incomplete. On this ground, Robeyns (2000) points out that although the approach is highly appreciated, it is still considered by some as an unworkable idea, while others saw it as being insufficiently specified. She argues that the capability approach is just a framework of 'thought' and cannot be taken as a fully specified theory that can answer all normative questions, unless it is supplemented with additional theories (see Robeyns, 2005). To Robeyns, therefore, poverty, inequality, well-being, development, marginalisation or oppression are not social phenomenon that the capability approach seeks to explain, but seeks to conceptualise in the light of individual freedom.

Robeyns' position and argument cannot, however, go without a comment and a few analyses. First, the *Oxford English Dictionary for Students*, defines 'theory/theories' as "a reasoned set of ideas that is intended to explain why something happens or exists" (p. 1074). The same dictionary defines 'idea' as "a thought or suggestion about a possible course of action" (p. 500). Given that theories are defined and recognised as set of 'ideas', and 'ideas', as 'thoughts', it could, therefore, be established that theories are a structured system of thoughts. Therefore, from the definitions of these two words – 'theory' and 'idea' as provided above, one could argue with some magnitude of certainty that the capability approach qualifies under the heading as 'theory'. Second, it is also worthy to point out that a single theory is not always enough for the analysis of inequality, well-being, development and marginalisation, which are normatively multi-dimensional. In this case, supplementing capability approach with other theories in analysing the above mentioned phenomena does not object to its use as a 'theory'.

Commenting on the issue of incompleteness of Sen's capability approach, Nussbaum argues that its inherent nature, as seen above, causes it to encounter the same deficiencies as the preference approach. She supports her argument with the reason that, "just as people can be taught not to want or miss the things their culture has taught them they should not or could not have, so too they can be taught not to value certain functionings as constituents of their good living" (Nussbaum, 1988: 175). Consequently, she contends that some contexts need to be given to the 'capabilities that what people have reason to choose and value', and with this equal freedom for all can be respected (Deneulin and McGregor, 2009: 16). Nussbaum based her argument on the fact that what people may consider valuable can be the product of structures of inequality and discrimination, given that not all human freedoms are equally valuable.

Sen explains that the selection and weighing of capabilities depend on personal judgments. Although he provides examples of intrinsically valuable capabilities such as, being able to “live long, escape avoidable morbidity, be well nourished, be able to read, write and communicate, take part in literary and scientific pursuit and so forth” (Sen, 1984:497). He declines to endorse a unique list of capabilities as ‘objectively correct’ due to practical and strategic reasons (Sen, 1993: 47). Rather, Sen emphasizes the role of agency, the process of choice, as well as the freedom of reason in selecting the relevant capabilities. He argues further that the selection should rather be left to the democratic processes and social choice procedure to define the distributive policies.

This study embraces this particular argument and position of Sen. This is because when capability approach is used for policy work, it is just ethically sound that the people who are affected by these very policies should be allowed to decide on what things count as their valuable capabilities in this policy question (Robyns, 2003: 42). In the words of Peter Fabien (2003: 42), taking people seriously as agents entails giving them a chance to be heard, and to be involved in collective evaluations and decisions. The people within fishing communities in Ghana, as previously stated, are not only beneficiaries of development but they are also agents of change, and should be able to elucidate the capabilities or assets through which they can develop their livelihood strategies.

The capability approach has also been judged by its critique to be too individualistic due to its failure to regard individuals as a component of their social environment. They argue that agents should not be reduced to individuals, but should rather be recognized as socially embedded and connected to others (Deneulin and Stewart, 2000). Robeyns (2003: 44) refutes this criticism and states that the argument put up suffers from an error of merging three different types of individualism which are ethical, methodological and ontological

individualism. Bhargava (1992) points out that all social phenomena are to be explained wholly in terms of individuals and their properties. Bhargava based his argument on the fact that in the ontological perspective, only individuals and properties exist, and as a consequence, all social entities can be identified by reducing them to individuals and their properties.

Robeyns (2003: 44), however, disagrees with Bahargava and contends that although ontological and ethical individualism are similar, the capability approach embraces ethical individualism only. In this way she argues that the capability approach accounts for social relations, constraints, opportunities of societal structures and institutions of individuals, and by this recognizes the social and environmental factors that influence their capability. In their explanation on this issue Dreze and Sen state that:

The word ‘social’ in the expression ‘social opportunity’ [...] is a useful reminder not to view individuals and their opportunities in isolated terms. The option that a person has depend greatly on relations with others and on what the state and other institutions do (Drèze and Sen, 2002: 6).

Linking the above exposition to a wide spread description of African traditional society we may find that the act of caring for one another through social capital, as a common practice, affects the position of many in the society. This means that people are interconnected in such a way that decisions of individuals are made in relation to others. Hence, actions, needs and desires of individuals can influence other people’s actions, freedom and well-being. Moreover, there is a growing body of evidence and argumentations, which point to the fact that individual freedoms can impact negatively on the well-being of all, either in the present or the future (see Deneulin and McGregor, 2009).

Many and more weaknesses and strengths are pointed out by various scholars concerning the applicability of the capability approach enunciated by Sen and Nussbaum, which this study cannot exhaust, since it is outside its scope. Nonetheless, what is of specific importance to the approach of this study is the fact that it allows for the analysis of what individuals are able to do and to be. This is due to its multi-dimensional characteristics. In particular, the approach contributes to this study by allowing well-being evaluation and assessment of freedom of individuals and households. This is because the approach, as argued by Sen, focuses on the substantive freedoms that people have, rather than on the particular outcomes with which they end up. For responsible adults, the concentration on freedom rather than achievement has some merit, and it can provide a general framework for analysing individual advantage and deprivation in a society (Sen, 2002: 83).

In sum, the capability approach serves as a potential analytical framework to complement human rights and livelihood system models. Given that they focus on valuable things that people can do and be, they make it possible to explore how individuals and groups employ their freedom and agency in the cause of their livelihood activities. This will enable us to understand the interactions between the smallest units, such as individuals and households, and the large-scale economic, social and political processes.

2.12 A modified livelihood framework

This section presents a livelihood framework which depicts the multidimensional characteristics of the livelihood and livelihood strategy situation. Rakodi (2002) posits that a framework is an over-simplification of a complex reality and should be treated merely as a guide or lens through which to view the world. Therefore, although the modified livelihood framework cannot claim to be all embracing, it attempts to represent the vulnerability context and

institutional environment within which individuals and households operate. It also includes how these contexts thereof shape access to assets, as well as how coping/survival strategies adopted exacerbate child trafficking (see figure 2.3).

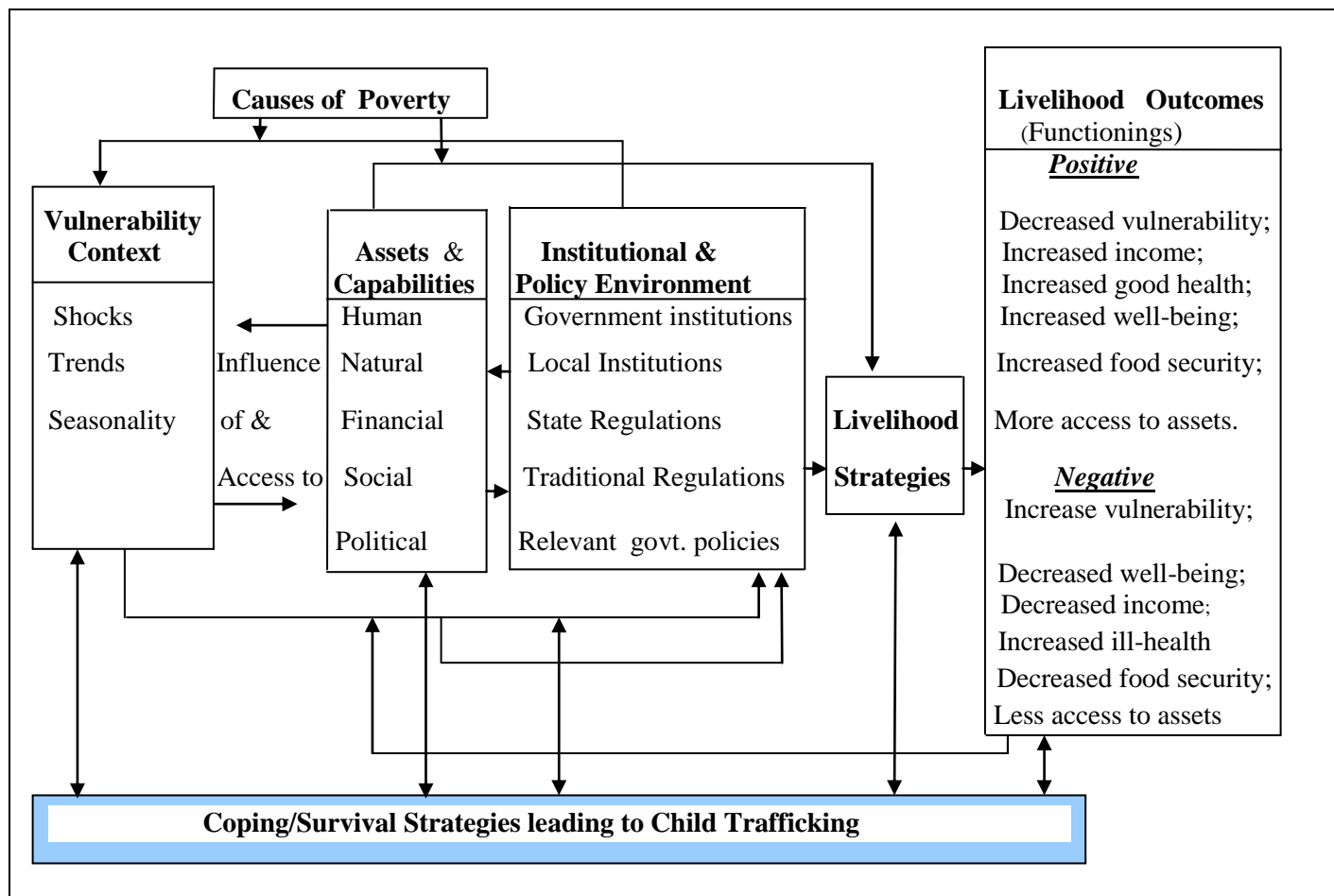


Figure 2: 3. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Ashley and Carney (1999) modified by the author

This study is particularly concerned with how institutional and vulnerability contexts as well as government policies influence access to assets, livelihood strategies and their implication for child trafficking as a survival strategy to cope with. Although the SLA framework provides a versatile approach to organise the main factors and influences people's livelihood, Krantz (2001) suggests that its modification is needed to suit different contexts. Hence, the modified framework builds on the integration of the rights-based and capability approaches to suit the context of this study. Moreover, from the perspectives of both sustainable livelihood and rights-based approaches, there is a conventional concentration upon a wider range of entitlements and a primary definition with regard to the role of the state in terms of respect, protection, promotion or fulfilling internationally defined rights (Conway *et al.*, 2002). The modified framework thus provides the opportunity for integrating rights and capability perspectives into a mainstream analysis of development and the empowerment of poor fishing communities.

The framework has seven boxes depicting different aspects of livelihood and placing them according to their interactions, with the position of the arrows in such a way to show the linkages between vulnerability context, institutional and policy environment, assets, livelihood strategies, inasmuch as these interactions impact on child trafficking. The framework provides an opportunity to analyse these linkages from a more comprehensive dimension. It recognises that people live in a vulnerability context, with shocks, trends and seasonality influencing their livelihood. These contexts threaten the wider capital assets base they draw on.

The SL framework is originally built on an asset portfolio of five different categories of assets (see Carney *et al.*, 1999; DFID/IDS, 2000; Allison and Ellis, 2001). However, Kleih *et al.* (2003) in their study in fishing communities in India observe that poor representation in power structure is one of the factors

that handicap the capabilities of the communities. Nonetheless, the vertical links between individuals and groups with varying levels of power and resources have been overlooked in the sustainable livelihood literature. This has drawn attention away from the potential of poorer people to claim support from the powerful (Shankland, 2000: 24).

Therefore, one type of assets, ‘political capital’, has been added to the SL Framework taking into consideration issues like political participation and the right to associate which are prerequisite for contesting claims for assets (Moser and Norton, 2001: 6) necessary for individuals and households to achieve their functionings. The ‘political capital’ in this context may be referred to as “power structures that underlie norms of collective action in natural resource use” (Baumann, 2000: 6). Moreover, power is a crucial concept in fisheries management.

The framework also acknowledges the fact that there are changes in the vulnerability context producing constraints. These limit access to assets that may compel individuals and households to create new livelihood strategies, strategies which can result in either positive or negative outcomes. These outcomes again may have an effect on the vulnerability status and the assets base of individuals and households. Positive outcomes may improve their asset base and vulnerability status, whereas the negative outcomes may produce the opposite.

The above presented sketch of the framework clearly shows the general theme of the study namely that the coping/survival strategies lead to trafficking of children. Coping/survival strategies are part of a livelihood ‘cycle’. Therefore, child trafficking as a coping or survival strategy will sometimes be explained as a livelihood strategy, sometimes as a result of vulnerability, and also as an outcome of constraints from the policy and institutional environment of the study location.

2.13 Research questions

Following the extensive discussion of the theoretical base of this study, the main research questions derived are: What are the root causes of poverty and vulnerability within fishing communities in the Ketu South District of Ghana? How do survival/coping strategies as a way of managing risk precipitate trafficking in children? And how can the communities be empowered through human rights to improve on their livelihoods for a secured and dignified life?

Specific questions:

1. In what ways do the vulnerability context such as shocks, trends, seasonality and the institutional setting impact on access to assets and livelihood strategies of fishing communities?
2. In what ways do access to capital impact on the livelihood strategies and outcomes of households in the fishing communities?
3. How do the livelihood or coping/survival strategies adopted in fishing communities stimulate trafficking in children?
4. In what way/s can poor fishing communities in the region be empowered to claim their rights and entitlements in order to improve their socio-economic needs?

CHAPTER THREE

The Setting

3.1 Introduction

Poverty is one of the major factors responsible for child trafficking in rural fishing communities in Ghana. Following the above designed approach, poverty has always been associated with access to assets and changes in livelihood. These processes do not happen in a vacuum. Social and economic factors and state national policies are major disincentives to maintaining secured livelihood. This chapter highlights some of these factors and policies, and how they affect livelihood strategies and outcomes in the study area. Amartya Sen and Nussbaum's capability approach as well as the human rights-based approach, the analytical frameworks of this study, encourage such an evaluation.

This chapter thus contains the following sections and sub-sections: the socio-economic importance of the fisheries sector in general and the artisanal small-scale fisheries sector in Ghana in particular; the characteristics of artisanal fishing communities; Ghana's fisheries policy and regulatory framework; Ghana's socio-economic situation and its influence on the artisanal fisheries sector. All these constitute the context in which individuals and households evolve their livelihood strategies in the pursuance of outcomes. The final section is specifically narrowed down on the study location that provides geographical location, brief historical, physical and demographic environments, socio-political and cultural background as well as economic activities.

3.2 Socio-economic importance of the fisheries sector

The Fisheries sector provides subsistence livelihood for many people worldwide when and where there are few alternatives (Allison and Ellis, 2001: 6). This is premised on the fact that it is an open access, therefore becomes a fall-back option especially for the rural poor when they lose their land or fail to access other activities for their livelihood (Townsend, 1998: 26). The fisheries as a result contribute significantly to livelihoods around the world (FAO/IFAD/WB, 2009: 15) by providing food security, income and employment through various activities in its three sub-sectors: harvesting, processing and marketing (ICSF, 2006: 11). In 2008, it was estimated that two hundred million people around the globe were directly or indirectly dependent on fisheries and aquaculture, out of which the majority are involved in small-scale fisheries (FAO/IFAD/WB, 2009: 21).

In Africa in particular the fisheries sector plays an important role by providing sources of employment to a large number of households. It was reported that about 6 to 9 million people in sub-Saharan Africa depend on the fisheries sector as a source of income (Béné and Heck, 2005: 2; Koranteng, 2010).

Apart from its contribution to employment, the fisheries also play an important role in the provision of nutrition and food in many households in Africa. A study by Béné and Heck (2005: 5) found that fish provides about 22 per cent of dietary protein intake in sub-Saharan Africa.

3.3 Fisheries sector: The Ghanaian context

Ghana was once considered as a viable fishing nation in West Africa, especially in the early 20th century, when Ghanaian fishing companies were fully established between countries, such as Senegal and Nigeria (Agbodeka, 1992: 43). Before then, Ghana's commercial fishing sector had already emerged with modified river boats to handle the surf and rough seas along the West African coasts (Atta-Mills *et al.*, 2004: 14). The development of these boats, according to Atta-

Mills and his colleagues, did not only provide easy access to coastal resources throughout Ghana, but resulted also in the establishment of inshore artisanal and commercial fishing sectors.

This development coincided with the time when the coastal population of West African countries developed a taste for a marine fish resource of protein, culminating in its excessive demand. With its associated trade and investment opportunities during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, led to the recruitment of domestic fishing crews from various fishing communities in the country. These Ghanaian fishing companies, who were also operating in distant or foreign waters needed crews for their sea-faring vessels (p. 14). However, after the independence of many West African countries, these fishing companies operating in the waters of foreign countries were expelled by their new governments and administrations, who perceived them as a threat to the countries' security (Agbodeka, 1992: 24).

The fisheries sector in Ghana is largely artisanal in character, and covers marine and inland activities. Inland fishing is mainly carried out on the Volta Lake. The marine fisheries sector (the focus of this study) is made up of artisanal, inshore, industrial and tuna fleets (Akpalu, 2002:2; see also Odotei, 1995: 3), and largely dominated by artisanal fishers (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 13). The marine landings are made in the Western, Central, Greater Accra and Volta Regions of the country (Directorate of Fisheries, 2003: 32).

Mensah and his colleagues assert that “the economy of the rural and coastal areas is heavily dependent on fishing, the more so because most of the trade and artisanal processing is carried out by people belonging to the fishing communities” (Mensah *et al.* 2006: 10). The sector generates both direct and indirect employment for a large number of rural people who work as crew members, fish processors, traders, fish distributors and porters along the entire coastal zone of about 550 kilometres, stretching from Aflao in the East to Half Assini in the Western part of Ghana (Bank of Ghana, 2008: 12).

The main fishing fleets of the marine sector belong to three different types: the canoe or artisanal sector dominant with more labour, vessels and fish, the semi-industrial and industrial (FAO, 2004: 42). The marine fisheries sector in the 1990s operated in about 189 fishing communities with 310 landing sites throughout the country, landing about 250,000 metric tons of fish annually out of which 180,000 tons constitute small pelagic species (Akpalu, 2002: 6-7). The sector is estimated to contribute 87 per cent of the total fish produced in Ghana (Koranteng, 2006: 12). It serves as one of the major components of the country's economy and fish is an important non-traditional export commodity. Between 1990 and 2000 for example, Ghana's export earnings from fish and fish products increased from 21 to 78 US million dollars, and by this contributed 21 per cent of the country's non-traditional export earnings (Kurien, 2004: 36). As its share of the country's GDP is concerned, fishery according to ISSER (2005: 36) contributed 15 per cent in 1998, but has since decreased to 4.3 per cent in 2004 as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Contribution of the fisheries sector to Ghana's GDP from 1998 to 2004

Year	Contribution (%)
1998	5.0
1999	4.9
2000	4.6
2001	4.5
2002	4.4
2003	4.4
2004	4.3

Source: ISSER (2005).

Apart from its contribution to the gross domestic product, the sector also serves as an important source in terms of local needs of protein, supplying about 26.1 kg per capita of consumption per

year (FAO, 2002: 26). It is, therefore, estimated that fish constitutes 60 per cent of animal protein found in the Ghanaian diet country-wide (DFID, 2004: 4; Worldfish Centre, 2005: 5). However, the recent study of Ghana's economy by ISSER (2008: 118) shows that the fishing subsector has currently experienced a sharp decline. This reduced the country's national fish production to an average of 420,000 tons, falling short of its total annual fish requirement, which stands at 880,000 tons (Kwadjosse, 2009: 16). Accordingly, in 2007 the government of Ghana was compelled to import fish up to 212,945.41 tons, valued at 262 million US dollars (Directorate of Fisheries, 2007 cited in Kwadjosse, 2009: 16).

3.4 Artisanal small-scale fisheries

Artisanal small-scale fisheries flourish in both developed and developing countries. A working group set up to investigate the factors affecting artisanal small-scale fisheries once made a comment regarding the definition of artisanal small-scale fisheries as follows:

Definitions are not universally applicable and that which may be called small-scale in one situation may be large-scale in another. It was felt that distinctions were not necessary for the purposes of discussion. With regard to any particular project, however, researchers may need to make precise definitions suitable to the situation (World Bank, 1991 cited in Kurien, 1998: 6).

Therefore, to gain a broader understanding of the sector in a particular country, it is necessary to focus on its observable characteristics (Kurien, 1998: 46). In this regard, a FAO report suggests a broader description of artisanal fisheries as:

Traditional fisheries involving fishing households (as opposed to commercial companies), using relatively small amount of capital and energy, relatively small fishing vessels (if any), making short fishing trips, close to shore, mainly for local consumption. In practice, definition varies between countries, e.g. from gleaning or a one-man canoe in poor developing countries, to more than 20m. trawlers, seiners, or long-liners in developed ones. Artisanal fisheries can be subsistence or

commercial fishers, providing for local consumption or export. Sometimes referred to as small-scale fisheries (FAO, 2005 cited in Schorr, 2005:48).

Despite the definitional problems, artisanal fisheries provide direct and indirect livelihood to tens of millions of people worldwide. The sector contributes 90 per cent of all fishing jobs across the globe, providing approximately a quarter of the world's fish catch (FAO, 1998: 24). In developing countries in particular, the sector constitutes one of the major components of rural livelihoods, providing employment for 25-27 million fishers, while additional 68-70 million people are engaged in post-harvesting (FAO, World Bank and WorldFish Centre, 2008: 12).

Although artisanal small-scale fisheries are found across both developed and developing countries, its contribution to food, security, nutrition and poverty alleviation in developing countries is more apparent (FAO, 2004: 8). Allison and Mvula (2002), for example, show that households who involve in fishing earn higher incomes than non-fishing households. Besides, the sector also serves as safety net for the poor urban communities, who might join fisheries as a response to declining opportunities elsewhere (WorldFish Centre, 2005: 8). Various studies, however, show that poor households and individuals in fishing communities have diverse income and employment activities, many of which are directly or indirectly linked to fisheries (Campbell & Townsley, 1995; Kleih *et al.*, 2003; IMM, 2003). The income derived from these activities obviously can provide access to other benefits, such as education, health services, food, clothing and investment in other assets that reduce vulnerability and poverty.

But it has also been observed that artisanal small-scale fishing communities in developing countries broadly reflect underdevelopment, poverty and vulnerability (Campbell and & Townsley, 1995; FAO, 2004; FAO, World Bank and WorldFish Centre, 2008). FAO (2004), for example, contends that small-scale fishing communities in coastal areas of developing countries belong to the most disadvantaged elements of rural society. Pomeroy *et al.* posit that the cause of their vulnerability is associated with “social and economic power imbalances, lack

of participation in decision-making, limited asset ownership, resource dependence, and laws and regulations that influence people's ability to use assets" (Pomeroy *et al.*, 2006: 788; see also Campbell and & Townsley, 1995). Other studies describe poverty in artisanal small-scale fishing communities in terms of lack of alternative income-generating activities, lack of clear policies, and lack of access to basic service provisions, such as education, health care and formal credit services as well as to population increase (IMM, 2003; Kleih *et al.*, 2003).

Meanwhile, there has also been a growing body of evidence in various countries, which identify overexploitation of fish stocks as well as habitat degradation as other factors responsible for poverty and vulnerability within artisanal coastal fishing communities. A survey by Tietze *et al.* (2000) in fishing communities in Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Senegal and Tanzania, for example, shows a serious decline in fish resources due to an increased number of fishers and fishing fleets. Numerous reports also highlight intensive harvesting by large and extensive European Union Fleets as for instance in Mauritania, contributing to a decline in catches (see Atta-Mills *et al.*, 2004). Salagrama (2006) confirms these findings and emphasises the fact that an increased level of poverty, food insecurity and vulnerability in Orissa fishing communities are due to a sharp decline in fish catches they experienced over the last decades.

3.5 The nature and characteristics of artisanal small-scale fisheries and their communities in Ghana

Ghana has a long history as artisanal fishing nation dating back as early as the eighteen and nineteen centuries, when Fante fishermen introduced ocean fishing along the coast of the country (Lawson and Kwei, 1974; see also Jorian, 1988; Atta-Mills *et al.*, 2004). Artisanal marine fishery still constitutes the largest and most important sub-sector in the marine fisheries in Ghana. The sector is allocated exclusive rights as a zone for fishing up to the 30 meter-depth-line from the coast, within which the semi-industrial sector is prohibited (Bortei-Doku Aryeetey, 2002; Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 5). Various ethnic groups and communities along the coast are the main actors in the artisanal fishery sector, and a majority of them engage in

artisanal fishing activities. The more prominent communities are the ethnic groups of Nzema, Ahanta, Fante, Awutu-Effutu, Ga, Dangbe and Ewe (see table 1).

Table 3.2: Ethnic Groups within the Coastal Zone of Ghana

Region	Coastal Ethnic Group	Coastline (km)	No. of fishermen
Western	Nzema	105	6,750
	Ahanta	80	10,990
Central	Fante	150	28,300
	Awutu-Effutu	25	6,450
Greater Accra	Ga	45	16,150
	Dangbe	70	13,370
Volta	Ewe	75	14,355

Source: Coastal Zone Profile cited in Mensah *et al.* (2006: 37).

In these communities, the village chiefs and chief fishermen together with some elders and other successful fishermen were and are traditionally in charge of all issues affecting the community. They resolved fishing related conflicts and enforced various social norms relating to fishing (Akpalu, 2002: 2). But during the last decades their power and influence became weaker.

The artisanal fisheries in Ghana can be classified into six groups in accordance with the type of gear/net specialization: Ali fishery, Poli/watsa fishery⁴, Purse and Drifting gill-net fishery⁵, Set net fishery, Hook and line fishery⁶ and Beach seine fishery⁷ (Mensah *et al.*, 2006; Bannerman *et al.*, 2001). According to Mensah *et al.* (2006: 37), each ethnic group or community has

⁴ This involves the use of large purse seine nets in surface inshore fishing.

⁵ This involves the use of fishing net with large mesh in surface inshore fishing.

⁶ An inshore and offshore fishing which involves the use of hooks and line.

⁷ A surface to bottom fishing with the use of mesh size net of about 50 – 60 mm.

specialized in a certain gear type. The Fanti, Effutu and Ga have specialized in purse and drifting gill-net fishing, the Anlo-Ewes and Dangbes in beach seine fishing. Fishing gear is owned by both men and women, except the beach seine which is owned mainly by men among the Anlo Ewes in the Volta Region (Directorate of Fisheries, 2003: 23).

Bannerman *et al.* (2001) note that, with the exception of the drift gill-net fishing, which often takes place in offshore waters, all fishing activities of canoe fleets are concentrated within the 30 metre-depth zones. Fishing activity of the artisanal fleet is linked to two seasonal upwellings that occur in the coastal waters annually; as such fish landings vary according to major and minor seasons. The major one usually occurs between late June and early October, while the minor one occurs in December, January or February and lasts for about four weeks (Bannerman *et al.*, 2001: 13).

In spite of its low technological level, the sector remains the backbone of domestic fish production in the country. It controls approximately 8,895 canoes (Bennet *et al.*, 2001: 12), and in 1997 employed about 101,741 fishermen and 150,000 fish processors and traders (Akpalu, 2002: 2). Within the sector, both pelagic and demersal species are landed. The main species are sardilla, anchovy, mackerel, sea bream, tuna, grouper, barracuda, burrito and bonga (Directorate of Fisheries, 2003: 34). Out of the overall total of marine annual fish catch by the main fleets (artisanal, semi-industrial and industrial), it was estimated that 70 to 80 per cent comes from artisanal fisheries (FAO, 1998; Akpalu, 2002; NCU/SFLP, 2000; Mensah *et al.*, 2006). Between 1988 and 1992 for example, artisanal fisheries contributed 260,000 out of the 327,000 tons of the total marine landing, (Akpalu, 2002: 2-3).

3.5.1 Contribution to rural livelihood

The role of artisanal fishery in generating rural livelihood is very significant. The livelihood of rural coastal communities in Ghana is heavily dependent on fishing in that most of the trade and processing is carried out by people belonging to these communities (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 10). Generally, the older women carry out the fish processing, assisted by younger women or hired

labour (p. 43). Fishing is an occupation that constitutes an integral part of life and identity of coastal fishing communities in Ghana (Akyeampong, 2007). Consequently, children at a very tender age are trained to acquire all the necessary knowledge, attitudes, skills as well as values that are associated with fishing and fish processing (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 43; Afenyedu, 2010). It is common to see boys between the ages of eight and 12 as fishing crew members (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 38).

3.5.2 Labour and family size

Artisanal fishing is generally labour intensive. Mensah and his colleagues point out that because of “the demand for labour and the interdependency of both sexes in harvesting and post-harvest operations, large households are of economic importance in fishing communities” (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 38). Bortei-Doku Aryeetey (2001) asserts that the survival of the fishing industry in Ghana has so far been dependent on the ready supply of loyal and committed labour from a kin-based pool of young men and women. It is thus reported that in fishing communities in Ghana, every member of a household performs fishing related work ranging from feeding fishers, fishing, carrying fish, mending nets, household chores, fish processing and guarding the home (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 38). Thus, in his study regarding the dynamics of reproductive behaviour in rural coastal fishing communities in southern Ghana, Akinyoade (2007) reports that labour contribution and support for parents in old age is the main reasons for having many children. This implies that large families are important for artisanal fishing communities, since they serve to guarantee the supply of labour force.⁸

Maintaining a large family, however, has implications for child trafficking in these communities, since poverty can be exacerbated by large household sizes, as this means more mouths to feed in the midst of very low income. This becomes more and more difficult because there is a general decline in the sector with regard to weight and catch-per-unit (Mensah *et al.*,

⁸ A survey conducted at a community level to understand fertility level in Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Senegal and Tanzania by Tietze *et al.* (200) also shows a higher fertility and mortality rate in fishing communities than other rural residents in these countries. They, however, observe further that, the younger generation’s attitude towards fertility and family is markedly different from those of the older one.

2006; ISSER, 2001; 2009; Atta-Mills *et al.*, 2004; Campbell and Townsley, 1995). Coupled with that is also the fact that fishermen in Ghana are characteristically poorly educated and at the same time landless with few alternatives of income generation (Atta-Mills *et al.*, 2004: 18). Thus, the sector's current inability to provide full-time and seasonal livelihood opportunities increases the risks for individuals and households already living on the margin of poverty. In such a situation, the temptation of releasing one or two of their children to traffickers in exchange for money or in a form of bonded placement for labour might become a survival strategy.

3.5.3 Migration

Research has shown that the people of West Africa have a complex history of mobility for economic reasons (Black *et al.*, 2004; ILO 2001; Overa, 2001; Adepaju, 2002). According to Black and his colleagues, human mobility in Ghana involves both intra and inter-mobility. In the context of the artisanal fishery communities, a number of studies have confirmed that migration is highly important (Bortei-Doku Aryeetey, 1991; Odotei, 1995; Anarfi *et al.*, 2003; Mensah *et al.*, 2006). It is one of the coping strategies to avoid poverty especially by artisanal Ghanaian fishermen during the lean season (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 44). A large number of artisanal fishermen migrate within or outside the country for fishing expeditions with their family, and hence Ghanaian fishermen can be found in the artisanal fishing sector in all neighbouring countries, such as Togo, Benin, Ivory Coast (Odotei, 1995; Anarfi *et al.*, 2003; Mensah *et al.*, 2006). Their internal migration also sees many of them moving from one fishing community to another (Mensah *et al.*, 2006; Kraan, 2009) in response to the decline in fish stock. Even children after acquisition of fishing related skills migrate on their own to other fishing communities within the country to engage in fishing or other fishing related work (Afenyedu, 2010).

Migration of fishermen also has implications for child trafficking, since it involves children or even the entire family. Afenyedu (2010) and Brydon (1985), for example, contend that the pervasive nature of the child trafficking phenomenon particularly within the Volta region of

Ghana is partially due to migration and child fostering. They argue that child fostering (a common practice in Ghana where poor parents hand over their children to be looked after by relatives and friends) and migration represent a disguised form of child trafficking. Hence, UNICEF contends that “there is a grey zone between trafficking and the widespread practice of children being sent to live with relatives in other countries” (UNICEF, 2002: 8). Moreover, it is observed that relatives or friends of the family with promises of better education or job lure children especially female children. They then smuggle these children across borders to engage in prostitution, domestic servitude, hazardous forced labour or involuntary marriage (UNICEF, 2003).

3.6 Fisheries policy and regulatory framework

In order to understand Ghana’s fisheries policy framework, it is important to take a closer look at the historical development of small-scale fisheries management in developing countries. McConney and Charles (2008) provide a brief historical review of the development of small-scale fisheries management in both developed and developing countries during the early part of the post-World War II. According to them, the fisheries management during the period aimed at enhancing economic development through technological change in order to increase harvest for commodity markets. As a consequence, the approach was characterized by rules on the sharing of resources, and in effect eroded fishing communities’ sense of communal ownership of the fisheries (McConney and Charles, 2008). Apart from that, it also failed to address issues concerning economic efficiency, equity and user conflicts (William, 1996: 18). In effect, there was an expansion of fishing activities with the opening up of several fishing grounds coupled with the development of new technologies and long-range fleets in the fisheries (Pomeroy, 2001). Hersoung (2004), for example, notes that the goals regarding the fisheries development then was generally ‘biological’, resulting in the neglect of its social goals.

Having noticed, however, that overcapitalization and poor management of the fish resource was leading to overexploitation, the focus was shifted from development-based management to scientific-based management with increased regulatory and conservation methods and policies

(Degnbol, 2004). This new approach culminated in multitudes of fisheries conservation projects in numerous countries, including the 'third world', to assist them in making a productive use of their marine resources (Pauly, 2006). According to McConney and Charles (2008), this dominant position of the conventional fisheries management ignited the erosion of opportunities for more people-centred approaches to managing small-scale fisheries. Pauly (2006) suggests that the fisheries management project by various developing countries during the period was dominantly staffed by biologists who neglected the traditional fishers.

Currently, both national and international legal instruments have recognized the socio-economic importance of traditional fishers and small-scale fisheries. For example, Article 6.18 of FAO's *Code of Conduct of Responsible Fisheries* adopted on 31st of October 1995 recognizes the important contribution of small-scale fisheries to employment, income and food security with the aim to:

protect the rights of fishers and fish workers, particularly those engage in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, to a secure and just livelihood, as well as preferential access, where appropriate, to traditional fishing grounds and resources in the waters under their national jurisdiction.

Moreover, section 17.74b of Agenda 21 of the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* of the United Nations emphasizes that states in the design of fishery development and management programmes should take into account traditional knowledge and the interest of local communities, small-scale artisanal fisheries and indigenous people. Accordingly, several countries, including Ghana adopted by law the creation of exclusive zones for artisanal fishing to protect artisanal small-scale fishers' livelihood and fishing activities from the industrial ones. The main objective is to encourage the full participation of users in the management of the fisheries as opposed to "mere consultation and top-down information provision to participatory decision-making and interactive management" (Pameroy, 2001: 111). The question, however, is how Ghana's fisheries regulation laws and policies reflect these principles and objectives. Providing an answer to this question demands an exploration of the country's fisheries policy and regulatory framework.

3.6.1 Ghana's fisheries policy framework

Given the importance of the fisheries in Ghana's socio-economic development, the governments of the country have initiated various intervention policies regulating the development of the sector. However, with the perception that the fisheries resource was infinite, the Nkrumah government of the early 1960s, like many other governments in developing countries, did very little or nothing to ensure its effective conservation. Instead, the main focus was geared towards the development of fishing crafts and their manning (Kwadjosee, 2009: 13). Evidences of such policies were the passing of the *Wholesale Fish Marketing Act* in 1963 before the fisheries regulation later in 1964, coupled with an irresponsible administration of the *Charter Party Scheme* through the then Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC) (Hernæs, 1991). These developments, according to Hernæs led to an uncontrolled expansion of the industrial fisheries sector in the country. This is an important point with regards to rural livelihood in the sense that expanding fishing landings and hence production had the possibility to increase the fishers income, but its adverse effect was also the case. The uncontrolled expansion has also the potential of diminishing the fisheries resources.

Thus, with rapid decline of the fisheries resources, it became imperative to draw up policies that reflect the sustainable and socio-economic needs of the sector, and of those who depend on it for livelihood. Attempts by subsequent governments to rectify the situation became apparent. These took the form of promulgation of laws and regulations directly dealing with the sector.⁹ The promulgation of the Provisional National Defence Council Law (PNDCL) 256, which came to repeal the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council Decree (AFRCD) 30, was regarded as the most important fisheries management regime. This is because it marked the beginning of the process of conservation to reduce fishing activities of industrial vessels by limiting their

⁹ In 1972, the government of the National Redemption Council (NRC) promulgated the Fisheries Decree, 1972 (NRCD. 87). This was followed by the Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations 1977 (L.I. 1106), passed by the same government to amend the Fisheries Regulations of 1964 (L.I. 364). The coming of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) government in 1979, led to the promulgation of the Fisheries Decree of 1979 (AFRCD. 30). In the same year, the Fisheries Regulations 1979 (L.I 1235) was promulgated. This was followed by the PNDC Fisheries Law of 1991 (PNDCL 256) (Atuguba and Atta-Kesson, undated: 3-4; see also Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 26).

entry into the marine artisanal fishery zone. “The main objective of the PNDC Law 256 was to manage and conserve the fishery resources by access through licensing, establishment of fishing zones and restrictions on fishing gear to be used within and without these zones and in the industry as a whole” (Kwadjosse, 2009: 22 emphasized). This resulted in the establishment of the Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) Division of the Directorate of Fisheries under the Fisheries Subsector Capacity Building Project (FSCBP) to enforce the fisheries laws. This Division collaborates with the Ghana Navy to conduct sea patrol with the aim to ward off industrial fishing vessels from the 30 metre-depth-line – the Inshore Exclusion Zone reserved strictly for artisanal fisheries (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 26).

The PNDC Law 256 was, however, amended in 1993 with the passing of the *Fisheries Commission Act*. This Act, which was within the framework of Ghana’s foreign policy and international commitment, was passed with two reasons in mind: 1.) to ensure sustainability of the fishery resources for effective rural poverty reduction and, 2.) to foster international co-operation and collaboration in fisheries for the benefit of the nation (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 26-27). However, in 2002, the Kufour government felt that further development of the fishing industry as well as the sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources could be boosted if all the foregoing fisheries laws are streamlined and consolidated. With this in mind, a further step was taken to enact the Fisheries Act, 2002 (Act 625). This Act, the current regulation governing the fisheries sector, sets out to integrate international fisheries agreements into the Ghanaian national legislation. It thus addresses issues relating to the management of the utilization of fisheries resources, quality standards, and the promotion of research and studies (Directorate of Fisheries, 2003: 17).

However, studies have shown that the implementation of these policies which favour poor rural communities depending on the artisanal fishery is starkly different from what has been written in the law. Mensah *et al.* (2006) note that with all the laws and regulations that have been promulgated over the years in Ghana, the status of fisheries management in the country still remain unsatisfactory. This was confirmed by the work of Bortei-Doku Aryee on West Africa

who concludes that, “on the whole post-independence fisheries policies have tended to favour industrial fisheries at the expense of the artisanal sector” (Bortei-Doku Aryee, 2002: 336).

Indeed, there have been increasing conflicts in the country between the foreign industrial fishing companies and local artisanal small-scale fishers. Akyeapong (2007) reports that several complaints have been made over the years by artisanal small-scale fishers to the authorities concerned on how fishing activities of industrial trawlers have been affecting their fishing and the sustainability of the industry. Lack of government’s concern for the artisanal small-scale fishers is likely to put them at disadvantage as compared to the industrial sector.

It is noteworthy to mention, however, that in order to encourage the participation of all resource users, government and other stakeholders in the management of the fisheries industry, the Government of Ghana adopts a co-management system to complement the aforementioned fisheries regulatory laws and policies.

3.6.2 Community-based fisheries management: A co-management practice in Ghana

The fisheries sector as a common pool resource is generally complex and dynamic with different actors; hence the FAO (2002) contends that the success of its management depends on mechanisms adapted to suit fishers fishing strategies and livelihoods. This position by the FAO is akin to what Hardin (1968) argues in his publication, *Tragedy of the Commons*, where he states that a common pool resource can be sustained only if all the users restrain themselves. In this context, participatory deliberation by all the categories of fishers and other stakeholders becomes a useful mechanism that is expected to create room for the aggregation of patterns of interaction relevant for the fisheries management.

The recognition of this viewpoint underpins the establishment of the ‘co-management’ regime in the fisheries management strategies in all the four coastal regions in the country. The co-management system, as defined by Pomeroy is:

a partnership arrangement in which government, the community of local resource users (fishers), external agents (non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions), and other fisheries and coastal resource stakeholders (boat owners, fish traders, money lenders, tourism establishments etc.) share the responsibility and authority for decision making over the management of a fishery (Pomeroy, 2001:113).

The approach thus intends, among other things, to replace the conventional centralized management systems, which failed to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries sector through the involvement of all fishers and other stakeholders in fisheries resource management. The purpose of the co-management approach as argued by Jentoft, (1989), Berkes *et al.* (1991) and Berkes (1994) is to use the capacities and interests of the local fishers and community, complemented by the activity of the state to provide enabling legislation, enforcement and other assistance. The philosophy behind the approach is thus based on the fact that “fishersfolk have an obvious incentive to conserve the resources upon which they depend and the knowledge and legitimacy to do so” (FAO, 2004:2). Needless to say, local artisanal small-scale fishermen perceive the depletion of the fisheries resources as a threat to their livelihood security, and also have the organizational capacity and political power to adequately defend their rights (FAO, 2004: 2).

On the basis of the above described discussion, a joint Ghana Government-World Bank project dubbed the ‘Fisheries Subsector Capacity Building Project (1996-2001)’ was initiated by the Government of Ghana in 1995. The project aimed at creating *inter alia* a system of community-based fisheries management based on the concept of the fishermen, council of elders, and other stakeholder groups, including fish processors, traders, immigrant groups and poorer members of fishing communities (FAO, 2002: 23). It was thus focused on capacity building for: 1.) formulation of policy and management plans as well as their implementation; 2.) monitoring,

control surveillance and enforcement and; 3.) promotion and development of inland fisheries (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 49; see also Government of Ghana, 1995). The project, which was centered on a 'co-management' system, aimed at facilitating the formation of 'Community-Based Fisheries Management Committees' (CBFMCs) in all the coastal villages in the country. Under the system, the CBFMCs were empowered to enact relevant bye-laws on issues relating to fisheries management, sanitation and maintenance of social order within the fishing community (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 49-50). As a consequence, they became responsible for all development programmes in their communities, except those which, by their nature, can only be implemented at the national level (Government of Ghana, 1995: 12).

Arguably, and in principle, the establishment of the CBFMCs can be seen as an attempt to create an important starting point in the processes of interaction of the government and the fishermen, including other stakeholders in the country. However, how genuine the co-management project is depends on its effective implementation and commitment by these stakeholders. Therefore, the question as to whether these policies and regulations are being adequately implemented by the Ghana Government and other stakeholders within the context of ensuring sustainable livelihood of communities who depend on the fisheries in the country partly makes this study necessary at this point in time.

3.7 Ghana: Some background information

Ghana is a developing nation with about 60 per cent of its population living in rural communities or villages. However, rural-urban migration in the country has been very high in recent times due to depressed rural conditions. Currently, the country's population is estimated at about 23.4 million (Ghana Statistical Service, 2009) with an annual growth rate of 2.6 per cent (Ahwoi, 2010: 2). Life expectancy is estimated at 56 years for men and 57 years for women, while adult literacy rate for age 15 and above is around 65 per cent (UNDP & NDPC, 2010: 4). Both under-five and infant mortality rates of the country decreased between 2003 and 2008. While under-five decreased from 111 to 80 per 1000 live births, infant mortality decreased from 64 to 50 per 1000 live births (MOH, 2008: 3). Nonetheless, UNDP & NDPC

(2010) assert that Ghana is not likely to achieve its target of reducing its child mortality rate by three quarters by 2015.¹⁰

Agriculture has been the backbone of the country's economy, contributing the largest share of 40 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 50 per cent of employment. For example, between 2004 and 2008, the sector recorded an annual growth rate of 6 per cent average per annum with cocoa contributing a major part (Ahwoi, 2010: 4). Despite its positive contribution in the last two decades, the sector's share in national output has declined from 44 per cent in 1990 to 35 per cent in 2007 (p. 5).

3.7.1 Socio-economic trend

In order to understand the poverty situation in the study locations and to situate the analysis within its proper perspective, it is important to trace the economic profile of Ghana. Ghana's economy, since independent in 1957, has witnessed drastic changes as a result of its complex political and economic past events. The country's economy is generally characterized by three distinct periods: pre-structural adjustment programme era, structural adjustment programme era, and post-structural adjustment programme era. At independence, Ghana was considered as a country with strong and stable economy as compared to its neighbouring West African countries (Baah, 2001: 2) due to its distinctive advantage in natural endowments, which formed a solid financial base for economic reform (Dzorgbo, 2001: 12). As the world's leading producer of cocoa, timber and gold, the country's per capita income between the period of 1957 and mid 1960s was around four hundred and ninety US dollars (\$490) (Meng, 2004: 8). Consequently, Ghana could then be compared to any middle-income country (Baah, 2001: 3).

However, after the economic success of the 1950s and the early 1960s, Ghana failed to capture successful long-term growth as provided for the first development decade. It experienced an unprecedented downturn and subsequently went into recession. The country's annual average

¹⁰ This and other goals of the globally accepted Millennium Development Goals will be almost impossible to achieve even if the situation in Ghana is comparatively better than in other African countries.

growth rate of GDP reduced to negative between 1967 and 1984, while its annual inflation remained high and increased steadily. Hence, during the period between 1970 and 1983, there was a significant decline of Ghana's economy, as exports fell by an annual average of 5.4 per cent, while the value of imports dropped by 8.0 per cent annually from 1973 to 1983.

Agriculture, which has been the engine of the country's economy, was not spared. Its annual growth rate fell from 9.7 per cent in 1984 to -2.0 per cent in 1990. Cocoa production, for example, recorded 557,000 metric tons between 1964 and 1965, and contributed to 40 per cent of government revenue in the 1950s and 1960s. It was drastically reduced to 100,000 tons by 1983-1984, thereby incurring a net deficit of the 1981/1982 national budget (Donkor, 1997: 22). Coupled with these were food shortages, massive unemployment, deterioration of pre-colonial infrastructure, including transportation and communication networks, weakening health and social welfare systems, and environmental degradation (Dzorgbo, 2001: 31).

The above changes did not occur in a vacuum. They had to be attributed to domestic as well as external factors and to a climatic change. Literature on Ghana's politico-economic situation during the pre-adjustment period, particularly the work of Leith and Söderling (2003); Meng (2004) and Killick (2010) suggest the aggressive and inefficient domestic policies pursued by Nkrumah's regime immediately after independence as one of the main factors that have set the stage for Ghana's failure to achieve sustained and rapid long term growth. Leith and Söderling (2003: 27) show that before Nkrumah and his CPP government assumed power, Ghana's foreign exchange reserves were around \$500 million, while the British colonial administration capped government expenditure at 10 per cent of the GDP. In effect, because of the high productivity of the cocoa industry, the country at its independence was without any external debt (p. 29-30).

However, the Nkrumah-led CPP government's desire to build a modern nation-state adopted and exaggerated bloated vision of development. The crucial feature was the industrialisation policy which hindered the assessment of the actual social and material needs of people (Osei,

1999; see also Killick, 2010). The costly and inefficient projects did not only exhaust Ghana's foreign reserves but also resulted in a significant external debt estimated at about \$790 million by the end of Nkrumah's reign (see Leith, 1974).¹¹ Meanwhile, cocoa, the largest and the most important export product and the single source of government revenue in 1957 was ignored in Nkrumah's policy formulation.¹² This development did not only hurt local farmers, but discouraged them also from producing more cocoa (Killick, 2010: 127; Meng, 2004:10). As the majority of Nkrumah's ambitious projects failed and resulted in huge debts, he resorted to tyrannical and oppressive tactics and eventually secured a one-party state (Meng, 2004). Meng opines that Nkrumah's overthrow on February 24 1966 by a military coup set off Ghana's two decades of constant switch of regime and economic decline and chaos. Leith and Söderling in their analysis of the general situation note that:

Repeatedly new governments would blame the sorry state of the country on their predecessors' incompetent administration. Never was there any recognition that a large part of the blame lay in the combination of limited capacity of the state and the growth retarding economic policies pursued. Having blamed their predecessors' problems on incompetent administration, successor governments failed repeatedly to limit the role of the state to those activities that could be efficiently administrative constraint, taking on commitments that could only be met if the administration of other activities lapsed (Leith and Söderling, 2003: 81).

As a consequence Ghana experienced frequent regime changes: from Nkrumah to the military, Busia, Acheampong, Akuffo, Rawlings, and Limann to Rawlings again. These political changes produced nothing but economic mismanagement and discontinuity of Ghana's institutional fabric, leading to unsustainable socio-economic policies and development.

¹¹ It is worthy to mention that not all of Nkrumah's projects were inappropriate. Some of his projects, such as the Volta River Dam which was built to provide a large volume of cheap electricity for his industrialization plan, as well as the harbour and port at Tema have, however, been beneficial to Ghana's socio-economic development till today.

¹² Three different reasons have been identified for this: First, it was believed that because the peasant farmers who formed the bulk of the cocoa production were not part of the urban-based statist constituency that had put, and kept Nkrumah in office (Meng, 2004). Second, Nkrumah's regime favoured more industrial development and hence wished to escape cocoa production in favour of modern sector activities (Leith and Söderling, 2003). Third, it is also reported that Nkrumah regarded the cocoa industry as a 'milk cow' that he could conveniently use against the most important opposition party whose leaders happened to be centred in the cocoa growing areas (Killick, 2010: 127).

Externally, it was the 1980s global economic recession which seriously damaged African and other third world countries that were particularly dependent on the export of raw-materials. This period was characterized by a sharp decline in prices for most commodities originating from third world countries and by a sharp rise in interest rates between 1973 and 1979. Ghana's main export commodities, particularly cocoa and timber as well as the mining sector were really hit hard. The poor export performance was intensified by adverse terms of trade, and eventually reduced the country's capacity to import consumer goods, industrial raw materials and spare parts (Assuming-Brempong, 2003: 5). The persistent shortages of essential commodities, coupled with high budget deficits and governments' excessive issuing of currency resulted in Ghana's high rate of inflation (p. 14). Thus, by the end of 1983, the country's inflation stood at 123 per cent while the GDP declined in real terms by a cumulative of 15.6 per cent between 1971-83 (Baah, 2001: 3).

The natural factor which finally triggered the country's socio-economic crisis during the period is vividly illustrated by Donkor (1997):

The worst drought this century in the country's history occurred in 1982-1983[,] leading to unprecedented food shortages. The same drought reduced the generation capacity of the Akosombo hydro-electric dam resulting in power rationing both to industries and domestic use. The water level had fallen below minimal levels requiring the closure of at least two potlines of the Volco smelter in Tema [...]. The effect of the loss of the generating capacity to a meagre 20-25% of installed capacity [...]. The drought [-] included horrific bushfires destroyed about one [-] third of all farms, both food and export crops [,] including cocoa. [...] The 1979-1980 oil price rise further debilitated the economy by increasing the amount of scarce foreign exchange devoted to oil imports [...] Credit facilities, traditionally extended by Nigeria to Ghana [,] was [*sic*] also withdrawn in 1982, exacerbating the balance [-] of [-] payments crisis confronting the country (Donkor, 1997, as quoted in Gavin, 2004: 59).

This unfortunate development, which was characterized by a decline in real wages and employment in both the formal and informal sectors (ILO, 1995: 25), rendered about two-thirds of the country's population extremely poor (Weissman, 1990: 21).

In desperation to revive the ailing economy, the Rawlings government in 1981 embarked on the Economic Reform Programme (ERP) by adopting the IMF supported Structural Adjustment Policies in April 1983. It finally started in 1986 and was continued under the democratically elected National Democratic Congress (NDC) government between 1992 and 2000. Structural adjustment was carried out in three phases: liberalization of interest rates and credit allocation (1987-1988); regulation and standardization of bank balance sheet (1989-1990); and structural change through divestiture and increased incentives for private capital investment (1992 onwards) (Leith and Söderling, 2003: 53). It was aimed mainly to remove government subsidy for prices in order to restore macro-economic balances through tight fiscal and monetary measures. It thus emphasized on the reconstruction of key institutions and policies that should give way to the advancement of economic efficiency and growth through a free market system.

With the aim to give a central role to the market, the control and participation of the government in both the industrial and agriculture production and in trade was eliminated (Ahwoi, 2010: 5). Consequently, the SAP period in the country was characterized by the removal of subsidies on social services, trade liberalization and deregulation. It resulted also in the devaluation of the local currency, the cedi, and reduced the budget deficit. The main objective was to increase production and to reduce inflation so as to restore and promote sustainable growth of the country's economy which should have a positive impact on poverty reduction (Sowa, 2002).

It has been, indeed, reported that Ghana's economic situation improved during the reform programme. From 5.6 per cent growth of GDP in the last year of Limann's administration, the rate grew to 13.6 per cent by 1986, allowing the PNDC government to expand its expenditure to over 13 per cent of GDP (see Leith and Söderling, 2003). Furthermore, while there was a

significant drop in annual inflation and increase in the country's GDP during the period, it also saw the expansion of the country's industrial capacity from 25 per cent of GDP before 1984 to 35-46 per cent in the 1990s (Konadu-Agyemang, 2002: 476). More significant was the balancing of the government budget within a short order, a key condition associated with the reform programme. Ghana was touted by the World Bank as its 'success story' regarding the implementation of the adjustment programme in sub-Saharan Africa. In effect the World Bank hailed the programme as the blueprint for solving sub-Saharan Africa's economic disaster (see Panford, 2001).

Despite the impressiveness of Ghana's macro-economic performance record, the standard of living in the country remained low at the beginning of the 21st century as compared to the early 1960s. The first phase of the reform programme which was, for instance, characterized by the cutting of social service expenditures by 15 per cent had led to massive deterioration in social services such as public education, health care, supply of electricity and water, and housing (Boafo-Arthur, 1999: 49). The cutting of subsidies for fuel made public transport more expensive and augmented the production costs for local industries. This led to the rise of poverty in both urban and rural areas (Panford, 2001: 54).

Having realized its social costs for the general populace, an attempt was made by the government in 1988 to put a 'human face'¹³ to the adjustment programme through an externally-funded programme called, "Programme of Actions to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment" (PAMSCAD). The aim was to protect the poor in the country from the severe consequences of the adjustment process. However, an assessment based on community level fieldwork indicates that 80 per cent of the funds allocated for the programme went to the non-

¹³ The 'Adjustment with a human face' was the original title of a 1987 UNICEF report which criticized the negative impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) on, especially health and education in developing countries. The general acceptance of the negative impacts of SAPs has led to the overhaul of the way it was implemented by the World Bank and IMF. It is worthy to note that Ghana was the first country to put a 'human face' to the structural adjustment which then became a model for World Bank-sponsored Social Funds (see Sowa, 2002).

poor leaving the vast majority (90 per cent) of the poor without any benefit (Sowa, 2002: 24). Sowa contends that the cost-saving and cost-recovery measures under the financial rationalization programme of the SAP hit especially the vulnerable groups, and as a result was met with fierce resistant and protests from the Ghanaian populace (Sowa, 2002).

Moreover, the excessive borrowing which characterized the development programmes over the SAPs period led to a considerable increase in Ghana's debt. Ghana's foreign debt increased from approximately one billion in 1983 to six billion US dollars in 2000, and was eventually categorized among the 41 highly indebted countries in the world. This unfortunate situation left the Kuffour government with no choice but to opt for Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) status in 2002 (Sowa, 2002), leading to the reduction of Ghana's debt from \$5 billion to \$2.4 billion (Meng, 2004:12).

The reform measures under the structural adjustment programme in Ghana affected all sectors of the economy and all social strata of the society in one way or the other. While gains were achieved in some areas, others were plunged further into doldrums. It is thus argued that where SAPs resulted in growth, the benefits only went to the middle and upper class (Sowa, 2002:17). In her critical assessment of the impact of the reform programme on women in Ghana, Ofei-Aboagye points out that:

[...] adjustment policies and development decisions are implemented in societies in which people are differentiated by economic circumstances, differential roles and access to and control of productive resources. These resources, material ones such as capital, labour, and technology as well as the political ones of information, skills, influence and experience affects the extent to which different people are able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by development initiatives including economic reform (Ofei-Aboagye, 2001: 93).

Konadu-Agyemang (1998: 481) reinforces this, explaining that the poor in rural areas as well as the poorest of the poor in the urban areas seem to have been significantly affected by the SAPs.

There are indications, therefore, that the SAPs have had and continue to have serious negative consequences particularly for the rural poor as they were ill-placed to withstand its consequences. Hence till today, Ghana is struggling with the dual effects of the economic adjustment measures and external shocks (Bennet *et al.*, 2001: 24). It is thus asserted that the adjustment programme was very insensitive to the suffering and hardship it bestowed on the poor and certain sectors of the community through its worsening income distribution (IDRC, 1992: 12). The next section examines how this assertion holds true for artisanal small-scale fisheries sector and its communities.

3.7.2 The economic reform and the artisanal small-scale fisheries sector

Before examining the impact of the economic reform programmes on the fisheries sector, it might be worthwhile to review, very briefly, the history of the Ghana governments' influence on the small-scale fisheries sector during the pre-structural adjustment period. According to Seini *et al.* (2004), the governments of Ghana since independence intervened in the agricultural sector in general and in the artisanal small-scale fisheries sector in particular by subsidizing inputs, credits and other incentives to encourage productivity. These interventions were mainly meant to improve local food production in order to feed the fast growing urban population as well as to curtail the increasing dependence on food imports to the country (Seini *et al.*, 2004). Based on that, the small-scale artisanal fisheries sector, which underpinned the supply of fish diet for the larger part of the country's population, received a number of boosts through government interventions. One such example was the introduction of outboard motors into the sector in 1959, leading to the motorization of about 87 per cent of the canoes in 1974 (Seini, 1980: 4).

Apart from that, the era was also characterized by the importation and distribution of many fishing inputs by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), financed by the government through grants and loans. To accelerate and sustain the implementation of the programme, the Fisheries Department, the line agency of MOFA, was charged to implement all government

policies relating to the fisheries (Seini *et al.*, 2004). In all, it can be said that the pre-adjustment era benefited artisanal canoe fishermen who took advantage of the government controlled market organizations and acquired outboard motors and nets at subsidized prices to modernize the fishing industry.

The motorization process expanded areas of artisanal fishing, and by this increased the access to more remote fishing zones (Akyeampong, 2007: 178). As a consequence, fishing boomed in the country in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The sector at the time provided support for up to 1.5 million people, which was about 10 per cent of the then total population of the country (p. 173). This was due to the increased fish landings which boosted livelihood in many coastal fishing communities (Seini *et al.*, 2004: 4).

Unfortunately, during Ghana's macro-economic policy reform process, the artisanal small-scale fishery in particular faced a number of constraints and neglect. Designed to get 'the prices right' in order to restore macro-economic balance, the reform process reduced state interventions through price control, ending its (the state's) monopoly over production and marketing of goods. Consequently, the artisanal small-scale fisheries and its poor communities had suffered a number of setbacks. Firstly, little regard was paid during the reform process to improve the techniques and equipment in the artisanal small-scale fisheries sector (Walker, 2001). Instead, subsidies on fishing inputs were reduced in response to the economic reform. One notable example was the removal of subsidies on premix fuel, marine gas oil and machinery.

Furthermore, the liberalization of the foreign exchange market with flexible exchange rate precipitated excessive demand for foreign exchange. This resulted in a significant depreciation of the domestic currency, the Cedi. These developments raised the prices of fishing inputs that were imported. Adutwum (2001) shows that the prices of imported goods, and particularly fishing inputs, such as nets, outboard motors and fuel during the reform period were extremely high, and beyond the purchasing powers of a large number of fishermen. Compounding the

whole situation was the attitude of private companies responsible for the supply of fishery inputs. A large number of private firms that were involved in the importation and distribution of fishing inputs in the country insisted on cash sales and institutional credit, which were normally outside the potentials of artisanal small-scale fishermen (Seini *et al.*, 2004).

Secondly, as one of the salient features of the adjustment requirement, a considerable number of employees in both government and private sectors were cut down to reduce government expenditure in order to improve public sector performance. A case in point was the State Fishing Corporation, the largest parastatal in the fishing industry of Ghana, which was broken down into sections and privatized to reduce the costs for the government (Seini *et al.*, 2004: 12). This led to redeployment and loss of income of a large number of people working in all segments of various state-owned companies. Therefore, unemployment increased during the reform period, as the absorptive capacity of the private sector was woefully inadequate (ILO, 1989).

In this dire situation, the majority of the jobless found their way into the artisanal fishery sector for alternative livelihood (Akyeampong, 2007; Mensah *et al.*, 2006) due to its open access and unregulated nature. And, as the DfID (2002) argues, poverty can force people to use resources unsustainably. Koranteng (1997), indeed, notes that the influx of migrants to the artisanal small-scale fisheries sector did not only aggravate the already existing pressure, but it also precipitated some of the fishermen to resort to the use of destructive fishing method, such as mesh sizes between 10mm and 25mm to augment their profit. Blake (2001) thus contends that the SAPs did not only impact negatively on the fishery sector but also on those who depend on its resources. Moreover, “the emphasis on the market as the important central focus of economic life has also meant a shift away from the Ghanaian fishing communities’ traditional building blocks of the community and family” (Bennet, 2002:242). These developments are more likely to increase poverty of communities which depend on fishery.

Last but not least, another disturbing feature brought by the adjustment programme was the trade liberalization policy. This policy adversely affected the artisanal fisheries sector as tariff barriers were phased out making imports cheaper. In effect, the SAPs period witnessed a significant influx of imported frozen meats, chicken and turkey parts in the Ghanaian market, which were comparatively cheaper in price than the local fish. Overå (2001) notes that it was the high price of fishing inputs, which increased the price of local fish and resulted in the decline of the main fish consumer market. In 1995 the average price of herring fish was higher than that of meat by as much as 69 per cent (Seini *et al.*, 2004). As a consequence, a large number of people turned to imported frozen meat and chicken intake for their consumption of protein rather than buying and eating fish, and this reduced many fishermen to the level of subsistence.

The above presented data clearly show that the economic growth created through SAPs in Ghana did not spread to the poorer population, albeit the country was touted for its implementation. Instead, the programme failed to reduce poverty which prevailed prior to its implementation. In the words of Dudley Seers, the question to ask about a country's development is:

What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have become less severe, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result "development," even if per capita income has soared (Seers, 1969: 3-4).

It is, therefore, sound to argue that the structural adjustment process in Ghana did not make significant progress in enhancing the livelihood of the poor. It rather sent more people out of job. Moreover, it denied access to assets to those who found their way to the artisanal fisheries for livelihood activities. Blake (2001) concludes hence that the introduction of SAPs has had adverse effects on the various sectors of the economy. That, in turn, trickled down to fishing communities in developing countries that embraced it.

Put differently, the structural adjustment policies in general tended to substantially affect the socio-economic settings of production in developing countries. And in the context of Ghana, since it was the international donors and policy advisers that had the greatest impact on how small scale fisheries were perceived and managed (Bennet, 2002), the SAP policies did not only neglect the artisanal fisheries sector, but also encouraged over- exploitation of its resources. This triggered the ongoing poverty spheres and coping/survival strategy relations, such as child trafficking within the communities under consideration in this study.

3.8 Ketu South District: The study location

Today 51 per cent of Ghana's population live in urban areas; but until recently rural communities dominated the society (Akinyinka, 2007: 65). Therefore in the development discussion, poverty is still linked to the rural context. The target group of this study are the rural communities. Community, as a concept, refers to a group of people who consciously share social and moral links such as kinship, occupation, place of residence, religion or values and norms (Renard, 1991). According to Wagner *et al.* (2000), the concept involves, firstly a 'who' and secondly a 'where'; the former referring to a group of people living in the same region and under the same government, whilst the later refers to the place or region where the specific group of people are residing. The 'who' in this study is represented by people dealing with fishery; the 'where' is the Ketu South District along the coast of the Volta Region, Ghana.

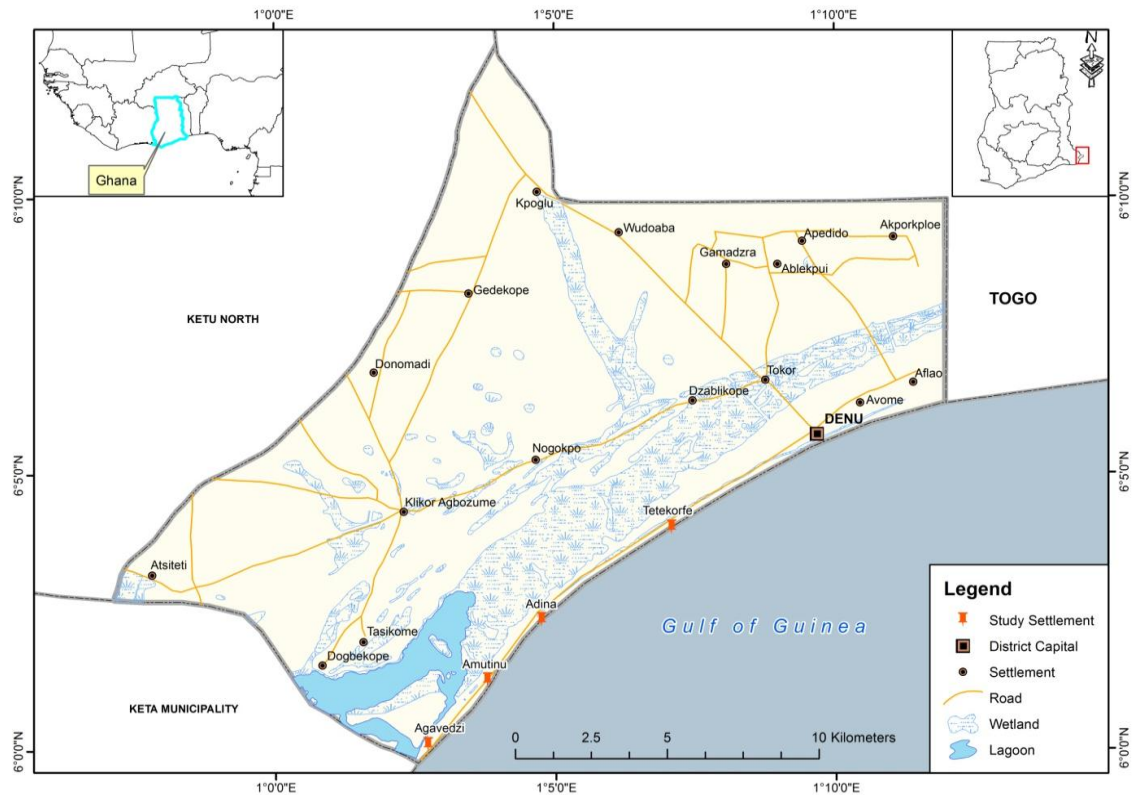


Figure 3.1: Map of Ketu South District showing the study settlements

Source: Author, digitalized by GIS Department, University of Cape Coast.

Thus, in all, data for this study come from field investigations in four communities living along the district's coastline: Agavedzi, Amutinu, Adina and Tetekorfe. Their choice for this study was purposive because: firstly, these fishing communities are representative of most of the communities in the District. Fishing is the largest employer and the main source of livelihood for the majority of the people in these communities. Moreover, they, according to the Ketu South District (2010), are among the most deprived and poorest and vulnerable in the district. Sea fishing among them is strictly traditional, and done on both individual and company basis (Ahiawodzi, 1997: 258).

Secondly, and more practically, in a research that considers the participation of local people, the possibility to communicate in their language is very important. As argued by Greenhalgh,

“language is the key to culture: without it one misses the entire nuance and much of the local meaning of everything that transpires in the field” (Greenhalgh, 1990, 92). In other words, the researcher should have high competence in the local language (Benards, 1994). As I am a native speaker of Ewe, the local language of the people, my choice of the study location for this study is very appropriate.

Just as socio-cultural heritage could have direct consequences, economic activities of a community bear a close relationship, and interact with its physical and socio-economic environment. This in turn influences economic development (Ahiawodzi, 1997: 250). Thus, in order to fully comprehend the poverty and livelihood related practices of the communities, this section focuses on the physical and demographic environments, the economic activities, historical, socio-cultural, and the political background of the Ketu South District.

3.8.1 Physical environment

The Ketu South District is situated at the south-eastern corner of Ghana, between Latitudes 6°00' N and 6°10'N, and Longitudes 1°00'E and 1°00'E (see figure 3.2). To the east of the District lies the Republic of Togo, to the west Keta District and to the north Ketu North District. Its southern part is situated half-way across a dry coastal plain, extending from Ghana into the Republic of Benin.

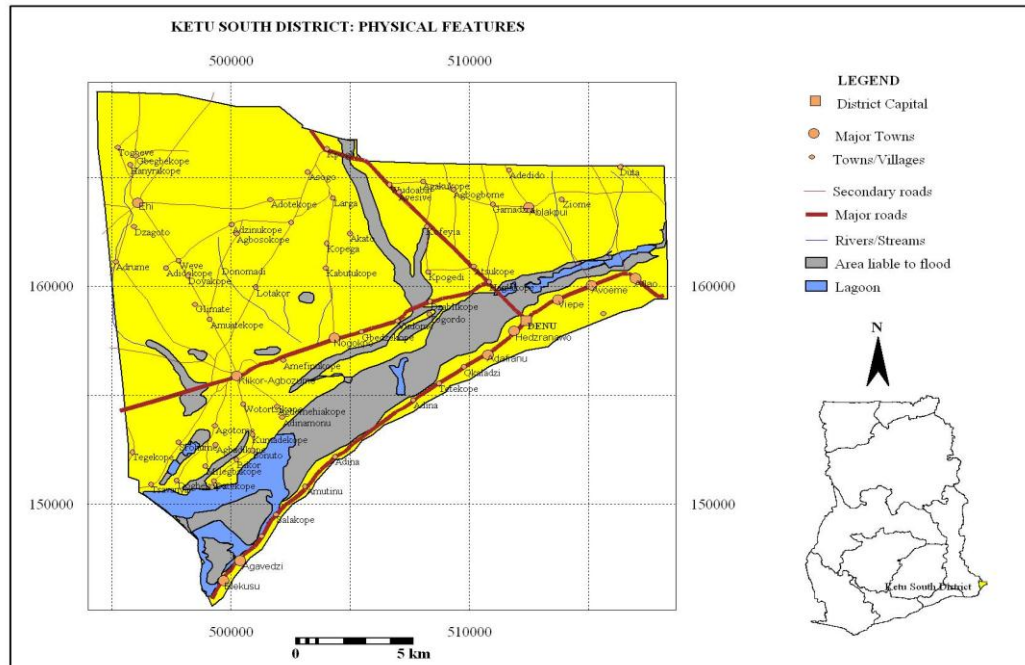


Figure 3.2: Ketu South District: Physical Features

Source: Ketu South District (2010: 2).

The strategic location of the District, along the main Ghana-Togo border, has a huge implication for security and welfare, since continuous cross-border trading activities are rampant and carried out on daily basis (Ketu South District 2010: 2).

The District covers a total land size of about 400 sq. km. with low altitude of less than 15 metres at the coast and 66 metres inland. One of the most single important features of the District is a 30 kilometre stretch of lagoon (see figures 3.2). These lagoons are interconnected by streams and small rivers, linking them with the River Volta. The District is thus sandwiched between the sea in the south and the lagoon in the north. Notwithstanding, the area contains many settlements of different sizes, “lying in the continuous stream like beads along a string” (Nukunya, 1997: 9). Thus, the daily activities of littoral dwellers are going on between the lagoons and the sea. The lagoon, however, often gets flooded especially during the rainy

season, destroying properties of these dwellers, and rendering most of them homeless (Ketu South District, 2010: 1).



Figure 3.3: Section of the Lagoon stretching from Aflao to Keta

Source: Ketu South District (2010: 1).

Besides the fishing business, people also deal with the harvesting of salt which is usually carried out in the lagoon during the dry period on small scale basis.



Figure 3.4: A woman engages in salt harvesting near the dried lagoon

Source: Author (Fieldwork, March, 2011).

With an annual rainfall of 850mm at the coast increasing to 1,000mm inland, rainfall along the coastal strip of the District is generally low and erratic during the minor season.

The vegetation of the Northern parts of the District is made up mainly of short grassland with small clumps of bush and trees. To the south are coastal scrub, grassland and mangrove forests in the marshlands. Along the seashore, the plant cover does not form a continuous carpet but is dotted with herbaceous, erect or creeping plants (Ketu South District, 2010: 4). Furthermore, the land bordering on the seashore is generally sandy with limited vegetation, indicating that population along the coast cannot depend much on farming but has to rely on sea and lagoon fishing (Nukunya, 1997: 11). Consequently, the district depends on food importation from the republic of Togo to supplement food supply from other parts of Ghana during the lean seasons (Ketu South District, 2010: 4). Coconut is the largest plantation crop grown in the district, especially along the sandy beach. Coconuts are exploited in various ways: from soap manufacturing from oil to preparing local meals.

3.8.2 Population and demographic environment

The population of Ketu South District, according to the 2000 census, was 155,781, with the female accounting for 82, 230 and male for 73,551. Of the total population, 47.5 per cent are children below 18 years and 3.1 per cent are adults above 75 years. Concerning sex composition, females account for 52.7 per cent of the total population; compared to the country as a whole, the deficit in males in the District is more pronounced in the population above 20 years and especially in the age group of forty to forty-nine. The decline in the male population could be due to frequent migration by fishers along the coastal communities within and outside Ghana for fishing. The census also estimates that 65.2 per cent of the District's total population live in rural areas, while 34.8 per cent of the population lives in urban areas. With an annual growth rate of 2.0 per cent, the population of the District is projected to increase to 206,118 by the year 2014 (Ketu South District, 2010) (see table 3.1 for full detail).

Table 3.3: Projected population of KETU South (2010-2014)

Year	Total	Male	Female
2000	155,781	73,551	82,230
2010	190,271	89,835	100,436
2011	194,115	91,650	102,465
2012	198,036	93,506	104,534
2013	202,037	95,391	106,646
2014	206,118	97,318	108,800

Source: Ketu South District (2010: 13)

Rural-urban migration has been very high in more recent times in the district due to unfavourable conditions. The survey among the four communities under study also reveals other kinds of mobility within the district. One aspect of this is migration, especially for fishing outside the country. The porous nature of the Ghana-Togo border has also led to an influx of immigrants mainly from neighbouring countries: Togo, Benin, Nigeria and Niger who engage in commercial activities in the district (Ketu South District, 2010: 14). The presence of these immigrants could account for the high population density experienced by Aflao, the entry point between Ghana and Togo, making it for the past 30 years the most densely populated town after Ho, the capital of the Volta Region (Ghana Statistics Service, 2002).

3.8.3 Economic activities

Depending on the soil and other physical characteristics of the district, different types of economic activities are pursued by different settlements or communities. Among the important economic sectors of the district are agriculture (including fishery), commerce, industry and tourism. The district is dominated by agrarian activities (Ketu South District, 2010: 21). The Ministry of Food and Agriculture divided the agricultural sector into three sub-sectors: crop, livestock and fisheries, and in the Ketu South District, the Fisheries sector is quite dominating.

Marine fishing which is one of the distinguished primary economic activities accounts for about 30 per cent of the agricultural activities in the district. There is intensive marine fishing between Aflao and Blekusu. The areas under this study also lay on this zone.¹⁴ It is largely artisanal, using dug-out canoes with outboard motors (see Afenyedu, 2010). The main fishing season is between June and September. Pelagic fish species ranging from Anchovy and Sardine are, however, caught throughout the year with the peak season from August to October (Canoe Frame Survey, 2004 cited in Ketu South District, 2010: 34). A recent survey shows that the District can boast of 204 canoes and 7,882 fishermen (Ketu South District, 2010: 34). Out of these 204 canoes, 155 are used for beach seine fishing and 49 for Watsa (cast net) (p. 35).

In the communities under study and also in other settlements along the coast in the district, almost everyone including children has fishing and fish processing skills. While men are engaged in fishing, women are mostly engaged in fish processing.

¹⁴ Lagoon fishing which is at subsistence level has not been mentioned in the statistics.



Figure 3.5: Children gathering fishing net after a fishing expedition with elders

Source: Author (Fieldwork, May, 2011)

3.8.4 Historical, socio-political and cultural background

The area which constitutes Ketu South District today used to be part of Keta (Anlo) District. A local Government re-organization split Anlo into three districts: Ketu South, Ketu North and Keta (Nukunya, 1997: 8). It was the Awomefia, the paramount chief of Anlo, who reigned over the three districts (p. 8). According to tradition, the Anlos were among those Ewes who migrated from Ketu in what is now the Peoples' Republic of Benin, and then to Notsie in the Republic of Togo before finally settling in the present place (see Amenumey, 1997; Akyeampong, 2001; Greene, 2002). Ewes account for 87.6 per cent of the district (Ketu South District, 2010). Other minor ethnic groups are the Akan and the Dangme (p. 45).

The administrative and political organization of the Ketu South District is characterized by chieftaincy. "The powers of the chiefs are effectively limited by the existence of the Council of Elders which has to be consulted on every important matter. A chief could, however, be de-stooled if he violates certain traditions" (Nukunya, 1997:17). My observations from the field in the in-depth study locations suggest that while this traditional political and administrative

system is still effective, new political actors and groups, such as local leaders of political parties and community-based organizations are springing up.

Apart from chieftaincy, the people of the district are organized on lineages and settlements. A lineage comprises extended families that trace their genealogy back to the same ancestors. The extended families have heads who are often the oldest male and ownership of property is passed on by patrilineal inheritances (Ketu South District, 2010). It has been observed that the nuclear family is, however, gaining more importance than the extended family.

According to the 2000 National census, the majority of Anlo-Ewe has embraced foreign religions, such as Christianity: Akatsi (41.9), Keta (34.3) Ketu (46.7) and Islam. However, many people are still glued to the traditional religion. As to its role among the Anlo-Ewes, it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between political power and religious or ritual power, as both are intimately interconnected. Religion permeates every aspect of their life and goes hand-in-hand with culture and practice (see Akyeampong, 2001; Greene, 2002). Hence there are shrines located in most parts of the District, especially in the rural areas (Ketu South District Profile, 2010: 19). Thus, in Anlo-Ewe worldview, the socio-economic and cultural environments in which they find themselves ‘constitute a powerful fluid’ (Akyeampong, 2001: 112). As pointed out by Akyeampong, the Anlo “perceived the space they lived in as ecological, social and cosmological, the environment was invested with ‘social meaning and rendered manipulable through religion and ritual” (p. 104). To the Anlos, the earth and the water bodies, including the sea and the lagoon have spirits of their own. This dominant belief system inherent in the Ketu South District and its surroundings has presently come under criticism as it prevents some of the inhabitants from accepting scientific explanations of issues such as climate change and its effect on their environs.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has broadly outlined the setting of this study by focusing on various issues namely international, national and local socio-economic and political settings that could bring out better

understanding of the current developments within fishing communities in Ghana. In particular, it brought out how national and international political economic systems have over the years influenced the fisheries sector in Ghana and its impact on life- worlds of various communities who depend on it for livelihood. The chapter also tried to provide a brief historical, physical, socio-political and cultural background as well as economic activities of the Ketu South District. The next chapter presents the methods adapted in this study, including the description of the study instruments and design. Also included in the chapter is my field experience, especially problems encountered.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Methodology and Strategies

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter situated the study site by describing the socio-economic importance of the fisheries sector as well as the general political economy of Ghana. The socio-economic aspects of the study locations, such as religious beliefs and economic activities were also explored. This chapter presents the methodology adapted in this study. It describes the design, various instruments used for the study and the methods of data collection and analysis.

4.2 The research design

Harding (1992) posits that members of marginalised group (s) must struggle to recount their own experiences in order to claim the possibility of agency. This study is not only meant to enable poor and marginalised fishing communities in the Ketu South District of the Volta Region to relate their poverty and vulnerability experiences, and make their voices heard, but also: 1.) to identify their resources and capabilities and mobilise them to gain control and agency over their own lives and; 2.) to act individually and collectively to improve their life-world through human rights empowerment.

According to Silverman, “research is one of the ways through which people find solution(s) to social problems; and methodology is the choice we make about the cases to study, and methods of data gathering, and other forms of data analysis, in planning and executing a research study” (Silverman, 2005: 99). This study is about obtaining a range of issues and factors that perpetuate poverty, vulnerability and the strategies adopted to cope or survive. The study is mostly qualitative. However,

quantitative and qualitative methods were used to generate primary data. Given the nature of the research questions and the purpose of this study, it is very clear that neither qualitative nor quantitative methods alone would adequately capture the multi-dimensional nature of the above mentioned issues and their dynamics in the research locations. In fact, relying on quantitative data alone may not only take the study communities out of context, but will also fail to provide accurate profiles of their [socio-economic realities] (Field and Thomas, 1993). Moreover, dealing with the interactions between coastal livelihood systems requires a holistic and multidisciplinary approach (FAO, 2006: 42).

Against this background, I decided to adopt multiple methods, by drawing on a wide range of instruments, namely surveys, interviews, workshops, open village square and focus group discussions, participant and non-participant observations as well as informal interactive discussions. These were the instruments I employed in eliciting data on livelihoods and livelihood strategies, assets and the vulnerability context of households in the study location. To analyse the data I used the sustainable livelihood, human rights and capability approach frameworks. Employing multiple methods for this study is premised on two factors: 1.) the quantitative method was expected to ensure high level of reliability of data and, 2.) the qualitative aspect was needed to facilitate more holistic in-depth understanding due to its more open-ended and exploratory nature (Sprankle and Moon, 1996), in that it helps to follow up unexpected questions and responses. This helps the researcher to share the views and understandings of other people and to explore the manner in which they give meaning to their life-worlds (Maya, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The application of a qualitative approach was thus to allow the participants to express their own views and to share their perceptions with the researcher, thereby providing him insight into their challenges, priorities, strengths and values through their involvement in the participatory sessions (Chambers, 2003). Another purpose was to enable them to gain awareness of their situation in order to transform their life-world through effective recommendations and empowerment.

The data collected by these multiple methods, sources and techniques were triangulated (cross-checked) for their truth, validity and contextual value (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Commenting on triangulation of data in research, Webb and his colleagues suggest that “once a proportion has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced” (Webb *et al.*, 1966:3). Consequently, I applied each of the methods independently in the data collection process.

4.3 Unit of analysis

One of the major problems in research, according to Yin (2003), is defining what the unit of analysis is – individuals, groups or communities. As the unit of analysis is related to the way the research questions are defined, I will shortly call in mind my two important questions, namely: 1.) in which ways do vulnerability context and government policies constrain or enhance livelihood strategies and outcomes of fishing communities in the Ketu South District, and 2.) how do their coping/survival strategies exacerbate child trafficking. Thus, answering these questions means gathering relevant data at the community level, household and individual levels; attention is paid to groups as well as institutions within and outside the selected study locations. Polkinghorne (1989: 43) asserts that the first requirement when selecting research participants is that the “subject has had the experience”. This implies that it will be impossible to separate the phenomenon from those who are experiencing it. Out of the sample population the key informants were those who were able to provide a rich, sensitive and full description and account of the livelihood phenomenon.

The units of analysis are households, individuals and groups within and outside four communities – Agavedzi, Amutinu, Adina and Tetekorfe.¹⁵ As already mentioned in Chapter 3, these communities are situated along the coast where fishing is the main livelihood activity of their inhabitants. These communities are the most deprived, poorest and vulnerable in the Ketu South District of the Volta Region, and employ

¹⁵ It should be noted that the choice of the four selected communities was not for the purpose of comparison. Rather, its main aim was to broaden the scope of the study locations.

various coping/survival strategies that are also linked to child trafficking. Gathering data at the community level would not, however, provide all data that I needed to deal with the research questions. Therefore, I had to gather data at the lower levels namely households, individuals and groups.

Household has been one of the most-used concepts in the study of social organisation at the micro level and thus became a basic unit of social analysis. Scholars usually consider it as a complex concept, since it is not a stable entity but varies in space and time (see Cobertt, 1988; Guyer, 1995; Beall *et al.*, 1999; Malleret-King, 2000). From the perspective of the livelihood framework, the typical unit is the extended household, which includes also members who are away from home but send remittances back to their home stead (Allison & Ellis, 2001). The Ghana Statistical Service (2005:44) considers a household to consist usually of a “person or group of persons who live together in the same house or compound, share the same house-keeping arrangements and are catered for as one unit”. For the purpose of this study, a household consists of all individuals, who at the time of the survey were living in the same house or compound as the household head but also the family members who were staying somewhere else but had an impact on the household activities (Owuor, 2006: 36).

The primary target for this study was the household as a whole because it is the livelihood and poverty situations of all members that were being investigated. However, the general assumption is that, it is the household head that sees to the day-to-day affairs of the household. By virtue of this he has the sole responsibility for the needs and the well-being of its members. Consequently, household heads were interviewed. It was their lives that were investigated and therefore they are regarded as the owners of this study. They generated data about their perceptions and opinions regarding their assets and rights to access them, and how all of the above mentioned factors influence their livelihood strategies. Moreover, they have a wealth of knowledge in terms of what affects the artisanal fisheries sector by far more than outsiders. Thus, through them, data can be gathered to enable us explore

their plights and aspirations as well as their views on what support they might need to improve their life-world.

Besides gathering data at the household and individual levels, I also interviewed experts within and outside the study communities. These were anticipated to have particular insights or opinions concerning the phenomenon under study (Mikkelsen, 1995). Part of these groups was opinion leaders and leaders of various fishing companies within the selected communities. These respondents were chosen on the basis that they would provide us with in-depth information on the concrete nature of the economic and social situation as well as government policies and their impact on the people living in the study locations. They could provide data in terms of how, and why, individuals and households make choices and take actions pertaining to their livelihood and coping/survival strategies.

To the second category of key informants (in this case key experts) belong officials of various government institutions who are responsible for providing services in the study area. This category of respondent was selected because they could provide data regarding government policies towards the fisheries management and the role of fishing communities in these policy processes. They also provided data regarding policies to support the well-being and rights of individuals and communities who depend on the fishery resources. This includes how these policies are translated into practice and the level of institutional supports for individuals and communities to increase their well-being in this policy context.

4.4 Sample size and sampling procedure

Sampling is the use of “definite procedures in the selection of a part for the express purpose of obtaining from its description or estimates certain properties and characteristics of the whole” (Kumekpor, 2002:132). It involves a careful examination and selection of the units of a phenomenon to study. There was no sampling framework on which to draw, so I sampled the households’ socio-economic characteristics to get a sufficiently large number to explore a diversity of cases. This way, I employed snow-ball sampling techniques in the selection of a

workable size of two hundred and thirty-eight (238) households in the study locations. Communities with many households had a larger sample size, and those with less size had smaller sample drawn from them (see figure 3.1).

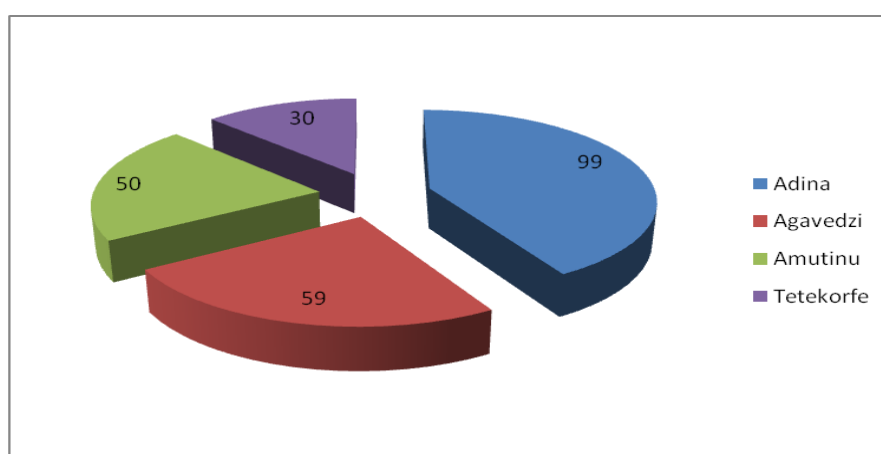


Figure 4.1 Distribution of households by study communities

Source: Fieldwork 2011

Kumekpor (2002) points out that in purposive sampling, judgement and knowledge of the characteristics of the subject being studied are important, especially where it is known that certain individual units through their characteristics will provide in-depth information on the subject under study. Therefore, the selection of the four communities, key informants and participants for the focus group sessions and case studies was purposively done as a result of their unique characteristics and qualities regarding the issues under investigation.

Concerning the key informants, I selected a sample size of six from each of the four communities: a chief, an assemblyman, a leader of a fishing company, a chief fisherman of a community, a fish processor and a teacher. Some of these key informants, especially teachers, also acted as local field assistants in the data collection. Their choice was based on their specific knowledge of the issue we are dealing with. Two households were selected from each community for an in-depth

case study. The eight cases comprised five male-headed households and four female-headed households. Their selection was based on the household survey results and their willingness to be interviewed and to accept repeated visits from me and my field assistants.

4.5 Documentary research

According to Smith *et al.* (1983), research should always focus on a comprehensive collection of documentary data, since they are helpful in situations where observation or questioning cannot be applied during the investigation of an event. On the basis of this, I started the first phase of the data collection by reviewing existing documents, such as government reports, media reports, published and unpublished studies from individuals and research institutions, academic thesis, and other information pertaining to rural livelihood and coping strategies. I also included documents on trafficking of children within and outside Ghana.

The existing documents firstly, enabled me to gain a clearer perspective and deeper understanding of the social and economic contexts relevant to this study. Secondly, they serve as guidance in examining the different aspects of the research problem. This includes the evaluation of the validity and appropriateness of methods and techniques employed. Thirdly, they contribute to the validation of data collected in this study, and by this provided the part of the basis on which I judged the present situation in the study locations. Finally, having secondary sources in hand at the time of the field studies helped me to focus better on the subject of my study, and by this prevented me from being carried away in all directions or in some directions more than others (FAO, 2006: 28).

4.6 Reconnaissance survey and access to study locations

Before starting the main field work, I paid a reconnaissance visit to the selected communities in order to familiarise myself with the inhabitants and I also gathered information regarding their present situation. I used this stay to introduce myself,

and to formally ask permission from the leaders from the study locations to deal with the issues likely to be addressed.

To get access to the communities, it became imperative for me to find a 'gatekeeper'. Campbell *et al.* define gatekeepers as "those who provide directly or indirectly access to key resources needed to do research, be those resources logistical, human, institutional, or informal" (Campbell *et al.*, 2006: 98; see also Reeves, 2010). A member of the Ghana Canoe Fishermen Council, who also happened to be the chairman of the Ketu South District outboard motor 'Pre-mix-fuel Committee', helped me to gain entry into the study communities.

After I had been introduced to the community chiefs and their elders, I was requested to explain the purpose of this study in terms of why I wanted to use their communities for the fieldwork, and how the study would benefit the community members. I responded by explaining the potential outcome and benefit of the study to them. Although the study was basically for academic purpose, it also aims to: 1.) empower the community members to use their skill and abilities; 2.) create awareness among them on how to reflect on the challenges that confront them in their daily lives and; 3.) inform them on how to demand their rights and entitlements regarding their livelihood to enable them to improve their life-world. They were very pleased with me for choosing their communities, and they were even more excited when they got to know that I came from their own region and therefore could speak their language fluently. They in return talked about the challenges the community members were facing in terms of low catch in fish, lack of access to assets and lack of alternative livelihood as well as some of the livelihood strategies they employ. Thus, to the chiefs and their elders, I was someone who had interest in their plight and wanted to contribute towards its mitigation.

According to the tradition in the area, I was requested to provide two bottles of schnapps (alcoholic beverage) and twenty New Ghana Cedis (which was approximately 10 Euros at the time of the research) to each community chief and his elders before permission was granted. After permission was finally given, I was

taken through all the four selected communities by a head teacher of a junior secondary school. He eventually became one of my key informants as well as a field assistant.

I used much of this initial period to procure important documents in terms of geographical information relating to the research area. I also built rapport and trust among community members, and tried to become comfortable with them. It is worth mentioning also that the success of the entire fieldwork was as a result of unflinching support and cooperation from the community chiefs. They announced my presence to the community members and asked them to cooperate with me as and when I approached them for information.

4.7 Training of field assistants

I engaged four field assistants to assist in the data collection. The training exercise was meant to familiarise them with, and build consensus on, the questions in relations to the objectives of this study. As a way of getting used to the questions, the field assistants engaged in role-plays during the training. The session was also used to translate the interview schedules from English into Ewe, the language used in the study locations.

4.8 Pre-testing of instruments

Pre-testing serves as a trial run that allows researchers to identify potential problems with the research instruments, and to train themselves in handling these instruments (Bryman, 2008). The instruments that I developed for this study were pilot tested in a fishing community which was not included in the main study, but had similar economic and social characteristics as the selected communities. I did the testing together with the four field assistants. We went through all the interview steps of the proposed data collection procedure with a smaller sample, and we analysed the results.

We also used the pilot study to test the accuracy and understanding of the translated interview questions (from English to Ewe) and to amend them. This enabled us to have a first-hand experience, to become aware of the problems likely to be encountered during the interviews and the administration of the questionnaire (Kumekpor, 2002: 64). We used the results of the pre-testing and its accompanying comments, lessons and observations to revise the instruments before administering them to the actual sample. Both the training session of the field assistants and the pre-testing of the research instruments took one and a half weeks.

4.9 The fieldwork

4.9.1 Household survey

The fieldwork took place between 1st March and 31st July, 2011. It started with the household survey in the four selected communities with the help of the four field assistants. Kumekpor (2002) refers to the household survey as a process whereby quantitative facts are collected about the existing social, economic, political and general living conditions of a place, a group or community. Scoones (1995) in his work on budget surveys and participatory assessment methods in Zimbabwe points out that surveys do appear to be more reliable in obtaining quantitative measures of private information on personal assets or consumptions than other methods.

Drawing on the above, the quantitative technique in the form of a survey was scheduled first to complement and also strengthen the qualitative interview. The general survey questionnaire, which we administered in one-on-one interviews with household heads or adult member of the household, was composed of both closed and open-ended questions (see appendix 1.2). The household survey questionnaire elicited information on the following:

- Socio-demographic characteristics, including sample distribution by age and sex, household size and composition;
- Socio-economic characteristics, such as education and employment status;

- The asset situations of households, including access to assets and level of human capacity and resources that can enable households and individuals to claim their rights;
- Variability of asset situation, and other factors that influence their livelihood strategies and outcomes.
- Also included were questions eliciting information on opinions, perceptions, vulnerability context, and choice of strategies adapted.

The goal of the survey was to gain insight into household dynamics and standards of living. During the administration, we took notes on key issues such as direct quotations, reactions, feelings and general behaviours. We also kept records on the location and date of the interview of the respondents as well as the name of the interviewer. The purpose was to earmark cases, which we further screened for in-depth case interviews. The administration of the survey questionnaire took almost two months.

4.9.2 In-depth interviews

The second stage of the data collection consisted of face to face interviews with key informants within and outside the study locations. My interview schedules were in the form of formal interviews, open interviews, standardised interviews and topical interviews (Kraan, 2009:49). Although I had specific objectives and interview guides, I still wanted to leave room for further exploration during the interview (True, 1989). The purpose was to gain new and previously unexpected information from the respondents. The approach thus allowed me and the respondents to move back and forth in time to reconstruct the past, interpret the present and to predict the future (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This way, the respondents had the opportunity to share their knowledge, experience and comments on the challenges they face in the study communities.

In the course of my field work, I conducted several in-depth interviews with the help of one of the field assistants who was well informed and trained for the main objectives of this part of the study. My main aim was to: 1.) gain deeper insight into

the households' livelihood/coping strategies, institutional and vulnerability contexts as well as their access to assets and livelihood outcomes; 2.) retrieve a range of information, such as information on fisheries management policies, and the level of participation of fishers in decision-making processes. To attain a convincing result, I framed the interviews from general to specific knowledge and issues.

The respondents were very patient and understanding throughout the interviews, and allowed us to ask follow-up questions for further clarification, while focusing on the questions that I formulated in the interview guide. With this, we had the opportunity to probe beneath the surface of information that otherwise might be accepted at face value. The open-ended framework of the interviews also enabled the respondents to provide answers in less prescriptive ways, and thus made them feel partly in control of the interview (Kadushie, 1990: 24). In fact, making them feel as experts and important assets in the interviews brought out a lot of cooperation and made them more disposed to talk on the various issues affecting their livelihood and its related developments.

Even though I explained to them that the study was mainly for academic purpose, many of them showed much personal interest in the subject and were willing to follow the whole interview schedule and the many questions involved.



Figure 4.2: The author (arrowed) and a field assistant interviewing some key informants

One interesting thing we also observed throughout the interviews and the interactive sessions with the respondents was that, the experiences they referred to sometimes went beyond the boundaries of their communities to embrace the general trend of affairs in other rural coastal communities in the country. This implies that although this study is limited to the coastal fishing communities in the Ketu South District of the Volta Region, its findings may not be different from the experiences of other rural coastal fishing communities in the country.

Almost all the interviews with key informants, including the household case studies were held in their homes and offices respectively. The interview times were made to last for not more than one and half hours.

4.9.3 Focus group discussions

Beck *et al* (1986) describe focus group discussions (FGDs) as an informal discussion among selected individuals about specific topics relevant to the situation at hand. FGDs are “either guided or unguided discussions addressing a particular topic of interest or relevance to the group and the researcher” (Berg, 1998: 100). Bryman thus contends that “the focus group discussion has become a popular method for researchers examining the ways in which people in conjunction with one another construe the general topics in which the researcher is interested” (Bryman, 2008:475).

To me, the FGD was very unique and important for the success of this study. This is because members of the households within the research locations are regarded as the only experts who may help us to gain deeper insight into the facts regarding how they survive under their respective poverty-stricken conditions. Consequently, I held one focus group discussion in each of the four communities during the third stage of data collection. The rationale for adopting FGDs as a method of enquiry in this study was that it is through group discussions that it is possible to elicit different views, perceptions, opinions and experiences from cross sections of the selected

communities. All the FGDs took the form of exchange of ideas with different sets of groups, which were identified to be concerned with, and knowledgeable about the issues under study. In each community, two groups with a maximum of eight (8) participants per group were organized. The group members were selected from different backgrounds in terms of sex, occupation and position but mainly from poor households in each of the communities. The individuals who constituted the groups were purposively selected based on the household survey.

As a researcher, and based on Bell's (2005) suggestion, I acted as a moderator rather than an interviewer during the discussions. Two of my field assistants took charge of the audio-recording and the documentation of all significant nonverbal cues and overall impressions during the discussions. All the discussions were held in the local language of the communities. My ability to speak the language of participants during the sessions put both of us (myself and the participants) in a better position to understand each other. I continuously encouraged them to take control and think about themselves and their communities by sharing knowledge that would enable them to improve their life-world.

Wilkinson (2006) states that focus group discussions can generate unexpected insights of the phenomenon under discussion. I adhered to Wilkison and always permitted the participants to move on with the discussion even if they departed from the interview guide for the session; by this we gained unexpected information and uncovered new experiences throughout the discussions. Further, I remained flexible and allowed the participants to ask questions when they felt like doing so and occasionally brought out some specific vital issues that were relevant and salient to the research questions, especially if they were not picked up by the participants. I also tried to refocus their attention any time the discussion went far off the issues under study. Throughout the discussions, I asked questions and probed certain vital issues raised by participants. The non-formal atmosphere of the entire session provided an opportunity for participants to speak freely and openly, regarding their personal opinions. They also exhibited a high level of ownership and discussed,

among other issues, the nature of their livelihood and appropriate strategies to cope with challenges implied by poverty and vulnerability.

The whole exercise was inspired by Alkire's (2007) analysis of FGDs in which she asserts that the dynamic and interactive nature of such sessions deepen the level of deliberative discussions, and help the participants to examine value issues more directly than by using other methods. Indeed, the interactive participatory and give-and-take nature of discussions that characterised the entire sessions did not only help me to gain insight into the participants' daily lives, but its constructive nature was also useful in their selecting dimensions of their capabilities or needs.

In sum, the FGD sessions provided me with additional information on the research questions at the group-level and served as a rich avenue for participants to share more light on information that were collected through other instruments. The general format of the whole session provided a unique opportunity to obtain a large amount of data from participants' perspective and in their own words.

4.9.4 Feedback workshop with key informants

Workshops are generally regarded as a popular way of implementing the participatory approach by emphasising the involvement of participants in determining and formulating the aims and outcomes of community development (Leach, 2003). The goal of the workshop with key sources of information in this study was to receive comments and feedbacks on preliminary research results to facilitate triangulation of collected data.

Initially, I thought of organising two workshops. However, lack of resources and time could not permit me to extend it to two. Moreover, some of the targeted participants, especially those from the academia and NGOs could not turn up as promised initially due to personal reasons. This reduced participants to only those within the studied communities; only two came from outside. Participants included two representatives from the Ketu South District Assembly, two fishing company

leaders (all men), two fish processors/traders (all women) and one opinion leader from each of the four selected communities. The workshop lasted almost four hours.

It served as a learning platform, by allowing the key informants to get familiar with the preliminary research results. Apart from that, it offered me the opportunity to explore some contradictions and uncertainties in some of the findings for clarification. The workshop also provided an avenue for participants to add more voice to the study findings and by this contributed to the credibility, reliability and validity of data collected.

4.9.5 Open village square discussion

The final stage of the data collection took the form of open village square discussion (OVSD). Kumekpor describes OVSD as a “face-to-face discussion and presentation of facts and counter views with community audiences through the local medium of traditional rulers and/or elders and those in authority” (Kumekpor, 2002:194). This stage of data collection, which was opened to the general community was organised in each of the communities selected for this study. Just like the workshop, the OVSD created an avenue where the preliminary findings of the research were presented to the community members for their reflection, questions, queries, feedbacks, and explanations as well as feelings and opinions. The strength of the OVSD was that it allowed general public discussions based on the preliminary findings and expression of views about what concerns the entire community (Kumekpor, 2002: 194). Thus by providing to the participants such an opportunity to share their knowledge and views on the preliminary findings, the power relations have been reversed by moving the study from simple extraction of information to empowering (Chambers, 1997) the community members.



Figure 4.2: The author (arrowed) with his field assistants during the OVSD session

The entire session took the form of participants' interaction, rather than interaction between field assistants (as facilitators), participants and me. That way, I continuously pleaded with them during the session to respect the views and suggestions of one another, by allowing others to speak without interruption.¹⁶ In this manner, I was able to gain insight into the community members' perceived challenges, strengths and possibilities to cope with their situation. Moreover, given that people experiencing poverty and social exclusion are often those who are most difficult to access during research (Capita Consulting, 2002), the session provided an opportunity for such people who might not have been captured in the previous data collection to add their voice, and also expand upon the preliminary findings. Therefore, the strength of this approach to the study was that it did not only facilitate further triangulation of the collected data, but also ensured that the views and experiences of the majority of community members were represented in the final report.

¹⁶ My observation throughout the fieldwork, especially during the participatory processes was that women participants always took the back seat and went silent allowing men to dominate discussions. I later found during my investigation that decision-making in the households and the communities in general is characterised by the dominance of men over women in the area. This evidence is supported by GoG (2003) that woman's decision-making choices at the community and household levels in Ghana, especially in rural areas, are constrained by cultural taboos and resistance from men.

4.9.5 Observation

Observation involves watching and recording of events within the context in which they occur (Kumekpor, 2002). It is thus a scientific method that enhances the understanding of the social world by observing, experiencing and talking to others in a research setting (Jupp, 2006).

I fulfilled the role of being a direct participant observer by spending considerable periods of time watching how community members interacted. I observed fishermen unload their entire daily catch, fish processing by women and children and other activities of daily life. I did this by focusing on the challenges they experienced. This enabled me to link what they said with what they do.

Kalof *et al.* (2008: 234) assert that it is necessary for a researcher to get access to a setting through participation rather than direct observation. They contend further that social behaviour in terms of acting and processes are better observed in natural settings, since the people being studied tend to let down their guard and show typical behaviours and discuss issues honestly. In applying this, I showed an interest in the daily activities of community members through interactions, I joined the fishing crews on four occasions for fishing, and I frequently participated in beach seine activities.¹⁷ It has been argued that building trust is an important task for field researchers and that the existence of trust automatically leads to credible data (Lincoln & Guba, 1983: 225). Thus, through my participation I had the opportunity to observe their activities and establish rapport and relationship of mutual trust. I often requested them to share their views and stories in relation to their life-world and coping/survival and livelihood strategies with me.

I also observed the general physical location of the communities, including facilities, resources and the personal living space of community members. The observation of

¹⁷ Beach seine is the popular fishing in all the study locations. It is normally done by crews of between 30 to 100 people, constituting what is normally referred to as a company by the people in study locations. Its activities involve going out to sea with canoe, casting and drawing the net. On the average, drawing takes between 5 to 8 hours (see also Kraan, 2009).

the environment contributed to my understanding of the way individuals and households cope with life.

4.10 Data recording

Most of the interviews, observations and the intervention sessions were recorded through field notes, audio-recording and photographing. Field notes were employed to keep records on the entire research process, including our personal experiences and the duration of various discussion sessions. The FGDs, Workshop, OVSD and the informal interactive sessions were all audio-recorded. I also photographed facilities, resources and the physical environment of the study locations. The recordings were transcribed and reflected on after field visits with my field assistants, especially in the evenings. This was done in order to revisit the process when needed. I decided to employ manual, visual and audio recordings to facilitate my easy re-call and accurate description of data.

4.11 Data analysis methods

Lincoln and Guba (1985) posit that the process of data analysis is essentially a synthetic one in which the constructions that emerge have been shaped by the researcher. Methods for the data analysis in this study reflect the types of data collected. In terms of qualitative data, I employed the basic guidelines for inductive thematic or content analysis in the interpretation of raw data. Thus, the data obtained through the various instruments were all analysed and interpreted through thematic or content analysis, which involved data reduction, transcription, data display, drawing and verifying by the use of comparison, codes, categorisation and memos.

In the data transcription, I entered all the responses to the open-ended questions into the Microsoft Word Processing Programme in the form of questions and answers. I followed this by noting down and also extracting all the responses and identified them in terms of topics, themes and sub-themes, categories, patterns, similarities, differences and distinguishing characteristics. The in-depth interviews, FGDs, workshops, OVSD, important observations and interactions were also transcribed

and classified according to various themes and topics and analysed through the same approach.

Thus, in order to understand the holistic perspective of the phenomenon under study, I advanced by comparing and contrasting data from respondents between transcripts, memos, notes and the research literature. I also moved from more specific themes to broader themes, topics and ideas within the sustainable livelihoods framework designed for this study. After this, I described findings by using descriptive language to provide a clear understanding, and also to bring out the frequency of similar statements in order to make a point for generalisations supported also by the quantitative data.

In addition, I used content analysis for written documents. The goal was to establish the relationship between these documents and the subjective experiences of respondents by looking for concords, connections and differences.

Furthermore, I employed Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) software in analysing the quantitative data from the household survey. This involved data cleansing, categorisation, coding and quantification of data, removal of inconsistencies, and finally feeding the data into the computer. In the next stage, I matched all the responses for the open-ended questions in order to check the frequency of particular responses and followed up by coding the responses. This set the stage for the use of frequencies, cross-tabulations and other simple statistics techniques. It is worth noting that the open-ended questions in the household survey were administered in Ewe, but all data were carefully translated into English for the analysis.

4.12 Background characteristics of household head respondents

Selected background characteristics of the sampled household heads, some of which do not need further explanation (Owuor, 2006: 73) are presented in Table 4.1. The

more relevant ones which could throw light on assets of respondents will be presented and discussed under various sub-titles in the next subsequent chapters.

Table 4.1: Percentage distribution of selected background characteristics of Household heads

Background	Operational definitions*	Per cent
Ages of household heads		
Less than 25 yrs.	Young	29.3
25 – 50 yrs.	Middle age	60.1
Above 50 yrs.	Old	10.6
<i>Total</i>		<i>100.0</i>
Ages of household members		
Less than 18 yrs.	Very young	37.3
18 – 30 yrs.	Young	30.1
30 – 49 yrs.	Middle	20.2
50 yrs. and above	Old	12.4
<i>Total</i>		<i>100.0</i>
Sex of household head		
Male	Male-headed household	85.8
Female	Female-headed household	14.2
<i>Total</i>		<i>100.0</i>
Household size		
4 – 8 members	Small	1.2
8 – 10 members	Medium	27.4
10 – 14 members	Large	30.3
16+ members	Very large	41.1
<i>Total</i>		<i>100.0</i>
Number of children per household		
2 – 4 children	Small	12.2
6 – 8 children	Medium	40.1
10+ children	Large	47.7
<i>Total</i>		<i>100.0</i>
Marital status of household head		
Married	Household with ‘married’ couple	90.1
Single	Single man or woman family head	9.9
<i>Total</i>		<i>100.0</i>

*These are the author’s own operational definitions.

Source: Fieldwork 2011.

In all, most of the household heads (90.1 per cent) were married¹⁸ and were within the active age group of 25-50 years. Some of the household heads were, however, either widowed or divorced. It is worth noting that all the respondents who reported being widowed (2 per cent female and 3 per cent male), especially women with many children are more likely to be vulnerable to the current shocks and trends within the fishery.

In line with the trend nationwide, most of the households in the study area fall within two age groups, less than 18 and 18 to 30 years. The percentage of the second group was 30.1 per cent. As typical for fishing communities, 47.7 per cent of household heads had more than 10 children and 41.1 per cent had a very large household size of more than 16 members. It is important to point out that although this situation could increase the household heads' dependency rate, implying "more mouth to feed", the opposite could also be the case, since fishing activities (as noted earlier) demand more productive hands for better income.

4.13 Ethical considerations

According to the Helsinki Declaration (1964), research should not be considered without the consent of the potential research participant, irrespective of the benefit to the wider society.¹⁹ In this direction, I consulted various opinion leaders within the study locations before starting the data collection. There I painstakingly explained its objectives, intention and, how the results would be disseminated. Thereafter, I sought the free consent of the potential individual and group research participants by providing them with sufficient information on the objectives of this study. This was to enable them to make decisions about their participation. I also asked them to withdraw at any time they felt like doing so during the interviews.

¹⁸ Further probe into marital issues indicate that most of the respondents, in the true sense of the word, did not marry through the prescribed legal or traditional means but were rather co-habiting - in a marital union.

¹⁹ see <http://www.cirp.org/library/ethics/helsinki/>

In addition, the respondents were assured of the confidentiality, anonymity and privacy of all the information provided.²⁰ Further, I always sought permission from participants and community leaders in the case of audio recording and photographing. All these measures were to ensure the non-violation of the participants' rights in the data collection process.

Finally, I ensured that appropriate methodology that suited this study was applied without falsifying any data and paid attention to the issue of plagiarism by making sure to acknowledge any literature used in the description and analysis of data.

4.14 Problems and limitations of the study

Every research has its peculiar problem(s). The data collection process of this study was not without a number of limitations, setbacks and difficulties. It is worth mentioning first of all, that some of the respondents whose children were not living within the household at the time of the survey were not ready to provide any detailed information on them. This is because of the current criminalisation and campaign against child trafficking in Ghana. Hence, it was initially not possible to ascertain the credibility of individuals' responses in terms of the whereabouts of their children and what they do. It was, however, possible to obtain some relevant information through other sources, such as the FGDs, workshops and OVSD and informal interactive sessions.

Secondly, the difficult conditions in which community members live have generated the misconception that discussions related to their situation should attract offering. Consequently, some of the respondents constantly asked for incentives or were expecting to be offered money or physical handouts, such as food or cloths. In fact, some of them even thought that I was relatively rich when they got to know that I was studying in Europe. Thus, my inability to give out money or distribute gifts of

²⁰ The Traditional chief of Adina and all the Chief Fishermen from the various study communities, however, permitted me to either identify their names or positions with all information that they provided. Thus, apart from the names of the above informants, other names used in this study are just pseudo names that do not reflect their original names.

any kind made many of the respondents to think that I was insensitive and mean. Initially, I tried to ignore their unreasonable expectations but I was compelled later to show reciprocity by occasionally providing them with a drink or giving out bread and biscuits to their children. However, I was very careful in doing this and tried as much as possible to prevent respondents from establishing a link between our discussions and the giving out of money and gifts (see also Kraan, 2009).

Those that I could not offer something kept on asking me about the main purpose of my study and how it would bring an end to their current miserable situation. A few of them, who were not satisfied with our explanations, initially did not allow us to interview them. One of them who refused to be interviewed had this to say:

My son, what I am thinking about now is how to get something for my family to feed on. Telling you how hungry and poor we are or what I have or not have will not bring food on our table now. Please, I am about to go out to look for money to feed my family. I will, however, sit down and provide answers to whatever questions you have for me on condition that you give us some money for food (Field note, 2011).

Moreover, as I was regarded an outsider by some of the respondents, they found it difficult or uncomfortable to give the true picture of their situations and experiences at the initial stage of the data collection process. These and other similar problems were, however, solved later through our extensive interaction with them, and the explanation of the essence of this study and its intended results.²¹

Thirdly, my attempts on several occasions to interview the Director of Fisheries at the Ministry of Food and Agriculture failed because each time I called, his secretary told me that he was too busy to give me audience or attending a meeting or travelling. I had a similar problem with some of the local NGO officials working in the field of child trafficking within fishing communities in the country. In fact, it

²¹ Most of these problems were solved together with my field assistants through a thorough deliberation during our evening meetings where we shared our problems, experiences and also discussed the research findings for the day. The meetings also enabled us to revise the research procedure for the next day.

came to a time where I began to suspect that some of the local NGO officials were either not ready to grant me audience or they wanted some form of reward before attending to me. Although it was impossible to elicit information from these officials the result of this study has not been flawed, since my interaction with the District Fisheries Director and the Department of Social Welfare at Ketu South District provided me with enough information.

Fourthly, a study like this generally requires spending an extensive period of time in the study location. This was, however, not possible for me due to time and visa constraints. This situation resulted in stress, fatigue and over spending, leading to sickness and total exhaustion of my budget during the data collection. I could also not meet my deadlines.

In addition to the above mentioned problems, there were also other more general ones. For example, the data collected was no doubt influenced by my own preconceptions, “for despite all efforts at objectivity, it is difficult to completely suppress the human mind’s extraordinary capacity to see and hear only what it expects to, resolutely suppressing the ‘noise’ of ordinary contradictory instances” (White, 1984: 18). Thus, despite my frantic attempts to come out with authentic reports on the respondents’ perceptions and experiences, my discussions and interpretations of data cannot be completely free from the influence of my personal perceptions.

Language is another avenue of misrepresentation. The survey questionnaire and semi-structured and structured interviews employed in eliciting information were phrased in English and translated into Ewe, and the responses were translated back into English for analysis. Therefore, there may be problems of discrepancies and misinterpretations due to the translation. Direct translation of some of the questions

and concepts were quite difficult; part of the responses equally created problems for translation into English.²²

Despite the above mentioned problems, the fieldwork had been a successful experience. I had the opportunity to elicit information on the wide range of issues bedevilling livelihood and insecurity of children in fishing communities of the Ketu South District of Ghana that reflects the voices, opinions and perceptions of the participants within and outside the study locations.

4.15 Conclusion

This chapter focused on a detailed description of the research process that was employed in this study. I described how and where the research took place and how it was set up. I also discussed and justified in detail my research methodology, including the design, sample frame, instruments and method of data collection and analysis. In addition, I described the manner in which I adhered to ethical principles, as well as the challenges I faced during the research and the ways I attempted to address such challenges. Furthermore, I presented some selected background characteristics of the sampled household heads in the survey. The next chapters present the findings, including their discussions and interpretations.

²² Direct translation of concepts like *vulnerability* and *livelihood* from English to Ewe was a bit problematic. For instance, we had to use a combination of words in Ewe (*dedienornor kple egakporuwo*) to help the respondents to capture its meaning of *livelihood*.

CHAPTER FIVE

Access to Assets, Institutional Setting and Vulnerability Context of Fisher Households

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters provided an overview of the various theories relevant to this study, including their shortfalls. It also provided the study setting and the methodologies that were employed in eliciting the necessary information needed to answer the research questions. Chapters Five and Six now present the research results from the four studied communities. Both chapters are divided into two broad sections. The first section presents the study results in terms of main themes and sub-themes that emerged without interpreting them. Subsequently, the results are discussed and related to the outcome of relevant literature.

The purpose of chapter five is to gain insight into the institutional and vulnerability contexts in which fisher households in the Ketu South District exist and the people's influence and access to the different types of assets described in chapter two. The chapter starts with 'influence of and access to assets', continues with 'vulnerability context', and ends with the 'institutional setting' of the fisher households.

5.2 Influence of and access to assets

The asset base by which households strive to secure a sustainable livelihood is human, social, natural, financial and political capital. According to Giddens (1979):

Assets are not simply resources that people use in building livelihoods: they are assets that give them capability to be and act. Assets should not be understood only as things

that allow survival, adaptation and poverty alleviation. They are also the basis of an agent's power to act and reproduce, challenge or change the rules that govern the control, use and transformation of resources (cited in Bebbington, 1999: 2022).

5.2.1 Human capital

Human capital represents resources such as skills, knowledge and ability to work as well as good health. It also refers to household size and composition that together influence and determines the amount and quality of work and income available. Investigation from the field revealed that although nuclear families constitute the core of most households, respondents also live with other relations, ranging from step-children, other spouses, their parents, siblings, friends to aunts and uncles. Over 55 per cent of the respondents leave a household with more than nine household members. Ninety per cent of them stated that all the household members from five years and above played a role in the upkeep of the household through income generation. Seventy-one per cent also acknowledged that most of their children had fishing and fishing related skills and were thus involved in fishing activities. These activities include drying, salting and smoking processes which were mainly done by girls helping their mothers, while the boys were engaged in fishing and mending of nets. Although the engagement of children in this manner had the tendency of exposing them to danger as well as depriving them of formal education, the unfortunate participants during the FGD and OVSD sessions justified their engagement through the argument that this was due to their (the participants') abject poverty and vulnerable situations. Some of the participants also claimed that the engagement of their children in fishing activities at such tender age would equip them (the children) with a wide range of fishing skills for their future livelihood security.

Table 5.1: Distribution of household heads by occupation and sex

Occupation	Male	Female	Total
Fishing	180	0	180
Net and boat owner	12	0	12
Processor/Trader	0	23	23
Dress-making	0	4	4
Welder	2	0	2
Driver	1	0	1
Teacher	1	0	1
Carpentry	4	0	4
Hairdresser	0	1	1
Mason	1	0	1
Farmer	2	0	2
Petty Trader	1	6	7
Others	0	0	0

Source: Fieldwork 2011

As expected, almost all the household heads engaged in fishing and fishing related activities as a means of generating income. Of the 204 male household heads, 94 per cent of them were fishermen by profession,²³ while 6 per cent were both net and boat owners. It was found that only 6 per cent of the total respondents were engaged in livelihood activities not related to the fisheries. These activities are farming,

²³ It should be pointed out, however, that all these people, in the real sense of the word, are fishing crews who do not possess their own net or outboard motors but work for others who possessed these facilities.

welding, carpentry, masonry and commercial driving (see Table 5.1). Similarly, of the 34 female household heads, 68 per cent were fish processors/traders; while a small percentage (3.2 per cent) were into petty trading, teaching, dress-making and hairdressing. As noted earlier, fish processing and trading such as smocking and salting constitute one of the common works among women within fishing communities in Ghana. However, many of the women explained during the FDGs that they were almost out of job due to a decline in fish catches in recent years.

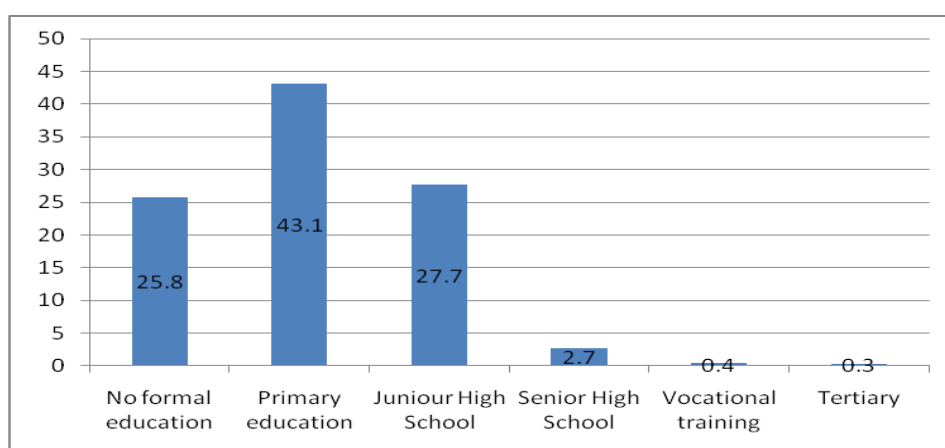


Figure 5.1: Educational attainments of household head respondents (%) (N=238)

Source: Fieldwork 2011

Formal education is regarded as the most essential ingredient for the enhancement of livelihood security. This implies that formal educational attainment influences or determines the amount and quality of work and income available to the household. However, research has proven that fishers, especially artisanal fishermen in Ghana generally have low formal educational attainment (Akyeampong, 2007; Mensah *et al.*, 2006). Indeed, figure 5.1 reveals that more than 99.3 per cent of the household heads have a very low or no formal education as against 0.35 per cent and 0.35²⁴ per cent who had vocational training and tertiary education respectively. Of those with vocational and tertiary educational attainment, one was a teacher and the other a dressmaker.

²⁴ Because the Microsoft Excel allows only one figure after a point, figure 5.1, in that case, is likely incorrect.

There is a close link between health and livelihood security. They influence each other in terms of peoples' ability to work and to earn sufficient income to get enough food and increase their general well-being. On the other hand, poor health as a result of inadequate food intake can impair people's capacity to work. When the household heads were asked about the health status of their household members, they all intimated that they frequently suffered from both short and long-term illnesses that prevented them from pursuing their livelihood. They explained that long-term illness of household member(s) did not only heavily burden the entire household, but also diminished their income and made others more susceptible to ill health because the household's food intake decreased as a result of money they spent in curing sick members.

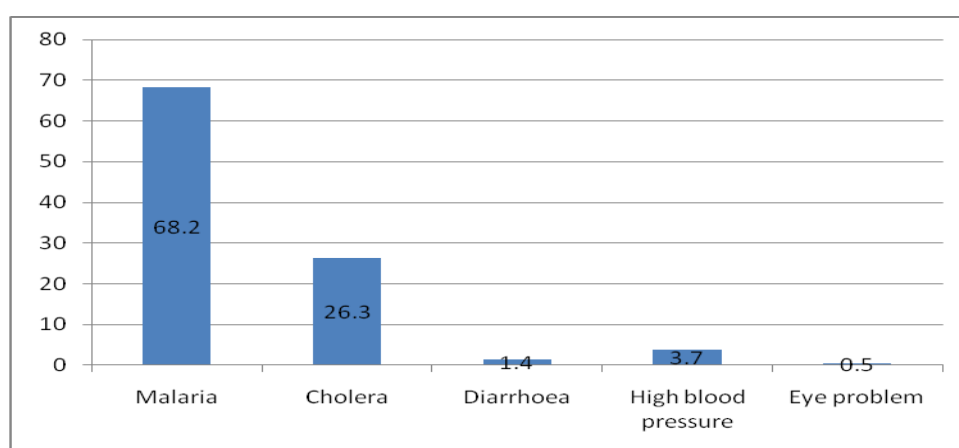


Figure 5.2: Common diseases (%)

Source: Field work 2011

As to the type of illness that household members frequently suffered from, it was mainly malaria, which the household heads (68 per cent) mentioned, while 26.3 per cent named cholera. A small number identified other types of illness like high blood pressure and eye problem (see figure 5.2). In addition, qualitative information revealed that continued child bearing and excessive work during pregnancy made some of the women victims of other diseases.

5.2.2 Physical capital

Physical capital is made up of productive and non-productive assets a household owns. They include basic infrastructure, such as shelter, sanitation facilities, potable water supply, and energy as well as equipment necessary for the enhancement of households' livelihood. Also included are public infrastructure, such as hospitals for health care and schools for children's education. In the case of fishing communities, production assets, like fishing nets, boats, engines and fish processing equipment protect household members against shocks by increasing their human capital base and ability to work.

With regards housing and tenure, only 75.9 per cent of household heads owned a house, while 24.1 per cent resided in compound houses, which were provided by their relatives. Most of these compounds were overcrowded with household members. The main building materials used for the houses were corrugated iron sheets, thatch, earth/mud, cement and coconut raffia mats, with kerosene lantern (75 per cent) as a source of lightening. In all, more than half of the houses (54.7 per cent) owned by the household heads were roofed with thatch. Forty-five point three per cent of them were roofed with corrugated iron sheets. Figure 5.3 presents the percentage distribution of toilet facilities the households use.

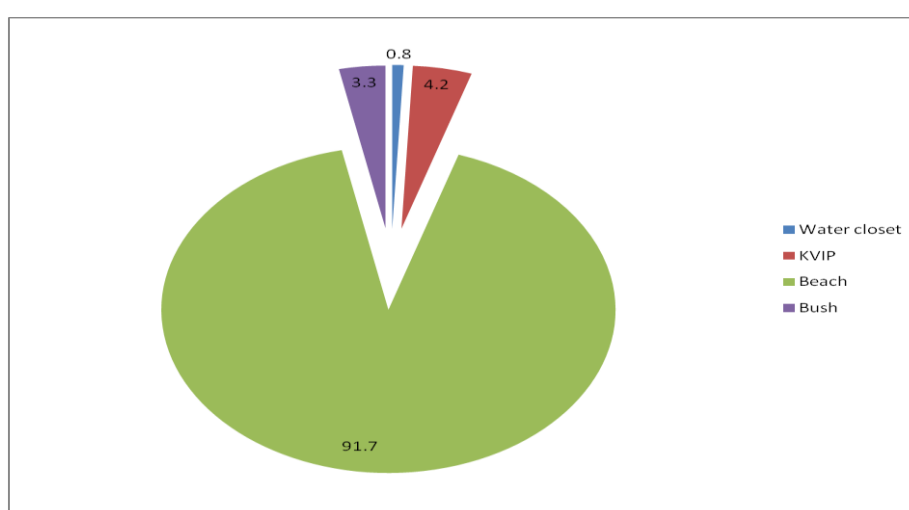


Figure 5.3: Main toilet facility of household (%)

Source: Fieldwork 2011

The majority of the households had to use the beach as toilet. At the disposition of 0.8 per cent is water closet, 4.2 per cent use KVIP²⁵ and 3.3 per cent go to the bush.

In terms of access to safe drinking water, the study results show that a majority of households (90 per cent) were drinking water from either unprotected wells or public boreholes. Just a handful (10 per cent) said that they had their own private well. They complained that the water from boreholes and the wells tasted rather salty hence those who could afford bought potable water from the District capital. The respondents further explained that they generally experienced severe water shortage during the dry season, and those who could not buy pipe born water depended on sea water for their bath.

Concerning health care, less than half of the sampled household heads (46.5 per cent) said that they had access to affordable health care. It is important to point out that they were those that registered with the National Health Insurance Scheme.²⁶ The main reason provided by those who could not register with the scheme, and thus did not get access (53.5 per cent) to health care, was lack of income. The registered respondents, however, complained that overcrowding and lack of health facilities in the District had hampered their easy and frequent accessibility. Hence almost all the sampled household heads (97.5 per cent) claimed that they depended to a large extent on drug stores and traditional medicine for their health care.

With regards to formal education, more than half of the household heads (52.6 per cent) reported that their children had access to primary education. The remaining

²⁵ Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit Latrine (KVIP) is one of the commonest pit latrines in both urban and local communities in Ghana

²⁶ The National Insurance Health Scheme was established under Act 650 of 2003 by the Government of Ghana to provide basic health care services to persons resident in the country. The contributions towards the scheme are payable annually by individuals who want to benefit. The payment is structured in line with the income of the beneficiaries. Accordingly, the very poor and poor are made to pay seven hundred and twenty New Ghana Cedis (GH¢.720), the middle income class – GH¢.1800 and the rich – GH¢. 4800. (Note: the exchange rate at the time of the research was 2 New Ghana Cedis to 1 Euro).

(47.4 per cent) indicated that none of their children was attending school due to financial difficulties. Most of the schools within the study communities lacked infrastructure and facilities like classrooms, furniture and places of convenience (toilets). At Adina, for example, the Head of the primary and junior secondary schools, Mr. Amevor, disclosed that there were only nine (9) classrooms for a population of eight hundred and seventy four (874) pupils at both primary and junior secondary level. According to him the pupils had to squeeze for space as their population size had outnumbered the places in the classrooms that were available. Further investigation in this study also reveals that most of the existing school buildings had cracks all over, making them susceptible to collapse (see figure 5.4).



Figure 5.4: One of the heavily cracked school blocks at Adina

Source: Fieldwork 2011

The household heads owned productive assets such as fishing equipment. Twelve per cent of the household heads owned both outboard motor, net and canoe. However, our research revealed further that about 77 per cent (N=804) of them owned other minor fishing equipment, such as lobster nets and surface gill nets that they used in catching fish and lobster in the lagoon at a subsistence level. Out of 238 household heads 20 also owned round-mud ovens (8.4 per cent) and 8 chorkor smokers²⁷ (3.3 per cent).

²⁷ These are traditional smoking kiln normally used in smoking fish. It is named after one of the popular fishing communities, Chorkor, in the capital city of Ghana, Accra.

Other physical capital owned by the household heads included goats (6.8 per cent), cattle (0.5 per cent), and poultry (13.8 per cent). Only one household head possessed a car, fifteen had bicycles, while almost one fifth acquired radios (19.9 per cent). Furthermore, 7.6 per cent of the households owned television sets, while just 1.2 per cent owned sawing machines and 3 per cent refrigerators.

5.2.3 Financial capital

Financial capital refers to income, savings, remittances and access to credit, which provide and maintain or strengthen livelihood options. All the respondents stated that they engaged in income generating activities although a majority of them found it very difficult or impossible to estimate their per capita income over the last 12 months in absolute terms.

Table 5.2: Percentage Distribution of level of household heads income by occupation

Type of Occupation	Income Level (%)			
	High (30+)	Moderate(20-30)	Low(10-20)	Very Low(0-10)
Fisher (N=180)	0.0	2.8	41.6	55.6
Net/boat owner (N=12)	16.7	66.6	16.7	0.0
Fish processor/Traders (N=23)	30.4	60.9	8.7	0.0
Petty trader (N=7)	28.8	57.1	14.3	0.0
Teacher (N=1)	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Seamstress (N=4)	0.0	75.0	25.0	0.0
Carpenter (N=4)	0.0	75.0	25.0	0.0
Farmer (N=2)	0.0	33.3	66.7	0.0
Hairdresser (N=1)	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Driver (N=1)	0.0	100	0.0	0.0

Source: Filed work 2011

In order to get an indication of the households' income dynamics, the household heads were asked to explain their trend of income in New Ghana Cedis (GH¢) within twelve months, using the range of less than 10 as very low, 10-20 low, 20-30 moderate and 30 and more as high²⁸ in table 5.2. Owners of net and boat, and fish processor/trader household heads were found to have relatively better incomes than others. Household heads whose sources of livelihood were outside the fishery also earned an income higher than the fishing population (see table 5.2).

The majority (89.1 per cent) of the sampled respondents indicated that their incomes decreased while their household expenditure increased over the last twelve months. All the fisher and fish processor/trader respondents we spoke to expressed concerns about high expenditure on the fuel they used for their outboard motors.

Only some of the sampled household heads had savings accounts. The majority (90.3 per cent) explained that they did not earn enough income to enable them to make any savings. With regard to credit, 93.7 per cent of the respondents stated that they had never accessed government credit facilities. During the FGD and the OVSD sessions most of the participants declared that they lacked the necessary equipment in terms of collateral to enable them to access loans from the banks. Even 52.2 per cent (N=15) of those who were able to obtain loans said that they did not find it useful due to the high interest rates, which were far beyond their capability.

Overå (2001) observes that in Ghanaian fishing communities, it is mostly women who provide interest free loans for the fishermen in order to ensure regular fish supply from them. At least 18 out of the fish processor household heads (all women) confirmed that they provided loans without interest to some of the fishermen. Information gathered from the FGDs, however, revealed that the women currently find it difficult to provide such loans on a regular basis as some of the fishermen

²⁸ As mentioned earlier approximately 2 New Ghana Cedis was equal to 1 Euro at the time of this research.

hardly get enough catch to repay their loans. Hence, almost half of the household heads (49.2 per cent) revealed that they were indebted.

The World Bank (2006) suggests that remittances play a major role in the reduction of depth and severe poverty in Ghana. However, only 7.5 per cent of household heads said they have received remittances in form of cash and food from relatives and friends, while the remaining majority (92.5 per cent) indicated that they had never had any of such support.

5.2.4 Social capital

Social capital refers to social networks and membership of social organizations which facilitates cooperation in terms of decision-making processes and mutual benefits among communities, families and groups. In all, 87 per cent of the sampled respondents stated that they and some of their elderly household members belonged to social groups apart from the extended family system, while the remaining (13 per cent) did not belong to any.

Table 5.3: Types of association, benefits derived and percentage of household head members. Percentage of valid multiple responses (N=207)

Type of Association	Main type of benefit	Members (%)
Fish processors/traders	Credit facilities	11.1
Fishing	Networking	87.0
Net/boat owners	Networking	5.8
Religious	Spiritual	96.6
Funeral	Economic	41.0
Professional	Lobbying	5.0

Source: Field work 2011

Asked how their household members' membership (table 5.3) helps their families and livelihood activities, the responses from the respondents were ambivalent. Members of the fish processing/trading association, for example, explained that the rotational *susu* scheme,²⁹ which was the premise of the formation of the association provided them with opportunities to access credit facilities that enhanced their productive capital base and supports the households' nutritional level. Household heads in fishing and net/boat owner associations, on the other hand, indicated that their involvement enabled them to create networks and trust one another and also to resolve conflicts among the members.

The extended family system is also a source of social capital. All the household heads said that they maintained their extended family membership as part of their social network. However, only 7.5 per cent of them indicated that their relatives contributed financially to their upkeep. Conversely, the large majority said their membership did not provide them with any substantial benefit. Most of the participants in the FGDs and OVSDs sessions attributed this to the fact that the extended family as a whole was in a difficult financial situation. They emphasized that support from members of the extended family, as practiced in the past, was currently almost non-existent due to difficult living conditions.

This study further reveals that, apart from those who belonged to special funeral groups (41.0 per cent), extended family members and friends normally offered donations during funerals to the bereaved families to cater for their funeral expenses. In a similar vein, all the religious association member respondents (N=200) intimated that they and their household members derived spiritual protection and non-financial support from their membership. In all, membership to groups in the community, to some extent, plays a vital role in form of networking and reciprocity

²⁹ 'Susu scheme' is a monthly financial contribution made by a group of people to capitalize one beneficiary at a time. It is done on rotational basis until every member of the group is capitalized. It is a common practice among fish trader and processors in fishing communities of Ghana (see Mensah *et al.*, 2006).

by providing both formal and informal safety nets, which some of the households use in pursuing their livelihood strategies.

5.2.5 Natural capital

Natural capital represents the environment in which people make a living and the quantity and quality of resources that are available to them as well as the level of access to, and control over, these resources. Natural capital in the context of this study includes water, aquatic resources, land and other natural resources not only those on which households' economic production depends, but also those by which resilience is provided in response to a shock. Fish in this case is the most important natural capital.

The sea and the lagoon were found to be the main natural resources, which serve as full and part time sources of livelihoods for almost all the household heads (90 per cent). Fishing is the most common among the households' livelihood activities. Apart from marine fishing, some of the respondents (45 per cent) intimated that they used the lagoon depression for fish harvesting and salt mining at a very subsistence level. Data regarding the type and quantity of fish species caught in the past twelve months indicated that anchovy (45.3 per cent) was the most common species; the fishers although caught other species like sardine/herrings (25.7 per cent), tuna (5.0 per cent) and other minor ones (24 per cent). During the FGD sessions, participants expressed their concern about the severe decreasing marine fish capture in the communities during the past ten years. They attributed this situation to a number of factors, including change of weather, activities of industrial fish trawlers and illegal fishing, such as light fishing. Participants also mentioned the ever increasing number of people who depend on the fishery resources for livelihood due to lack of alternative or additional sources of income.

In terms of land for cultivation, members of the four communities barely have communal land for cultivation because the four settlements are sandwiched between the sea and the lagoon. It is, therefore, not surprising that of the 238 sampled

household heads, only two indicated that they owned a small portion of land that they used for the cultivation of vegetables through irrigation. In general, the view is that almost all households in the communities under study depend on the sea and the lagoon as their sole natural capital from which they derive their livelihood.

5.2.6 Political capital

Political capital represents power structures that constitute the basis of norms of collective action in natural resource use (Baumann, 2000: 6). Political capital, as one of the key capital assets, acts as a ‘double-edged sword’ in a livelihood security of individuals and groups. This is because although people draw on it to build their livelihoods, it also serves as one of the key constraining factors of sustainable livelihood (p. 6) in terms of access to assets.

On the whole, 12 out of the 238 sampled household heads reported that they were official members of national political parties. When asked on how they use their position to promote the rights of community members, their responses point to the fact that they only fight for the benefit of members of their party. Further investigation during the fieldwork revealed that there was a strict power imbalance between the ordinary community members and elite groups. For example, information from the FGD and OVSD sessions showed that the key members of ruling parties remained the sole beneficiaries of assistance from the government to the community.

In addition, many participants during the FGD sessions expressed their concerns about how the chief fishermen and members of political parties normally allocated the larger portion of relief items and fishing equipment meant for flood disaster victims.³⁰ Their selfish behaviour was confirmed in my interview with the chief of Adina, Tɔgbui Gbenyo VII. He reiterated that:

³⁰ These are individuals and households whose properties were severely or completely damaged by the flood.

Party agents and fishermen in the community always take advantage of their position and the illiteracy of poor fishermen to sometimes divert aid meant for poor fisher flood victims and shared it among themselves, leaving the poor victims to their fate (Interview with Tɔgbui Gbenyo VII, 28th May 2011).

My informal interactions with some of the fishermen during the fieldwork further confirmed the fact that unequal power relations were some of the factors hampering the poor households from claiming their rights and entitlements as well as access to relevant assets for effective livelihood strategies.

5.4 Vulnerability context of the poor households

Households' access to assets and their usage are determined, to a large extent, by the external environment in which they operate or live. Three major types of external factors that frame people's vulnerability context from the perspective of SLF are trends, shocks and seasonality. Virtually all the three external factors have been experienced by all the respondents in the study communities, and resulted in the loss of their income and assets and a reduction in consumption.

5.4.1 Shocks

Shocks can take a variety of forms, and the two types of shocks identified within fishing communities in the Ketu South District can be categorized as external and internal. In order to obtain relevant answers, household heads were asked to describe the type of 'difficulties they experienced'³¹ over the last twelve months that hampered their well-being and activities to earn a living. The respondents mentioned flooding, sudden price fluctuations and government policies. Almost all the sampled household heads (94.7 per cent) identified flooding as the major problem they experienced. They intimated that unexpected floods had destroyed their houses, canoes and other household and personal properties that cost them much money to restore or replace.

³¹ We were compelled to use this expression because the exact meaning of the term was difficult to capture in the local language of the respondents by simply asking them what type of 'vulnerability' they experienced.

The respondents also lamented over sudden price fluctuations through inflation. They linked it to government policies. Virtually, all of them (99.5 per cent) made mention of increases in staple food prices and high cost of petroleum products. They also mentioned the high prices of fishing inputs, such as nets and outboard motors and their spare parts. The fish processors/traders noted during the FGDs that they sometimes lost substantial income through low sale of fish any time there was sudden price fluctuation.

The four most mentioned difficulties which can be termed as internal shocks were serious illness, motor accidents and accidents at sea as well as the destruction of fishing gears by industrial trawlers. Also reported was the accidental death of household heads or members. The sampled household heads who experienced internal shocks within the study period (78 per cent) stated that it led to a reduction in their income, decline in access to food and above all rendered them indebted. Sixty-two per cent of the household heads experienced ill-health of children, wives or husbands and other household members, while 3 per cent experienced accidents. They said the above cases had negatively affected their already precarious economic status, since much money and productive time were spent in solving health-related problems.

The female household heads who experienced the death of husbands or other household member (2 per cent) and ill-health of husbands (3 per cent) during a peak fishing season reported reductions in purchasing power and severe reduction in the household's nutritional level. Three per cent of male headed households who experienced death in the household also intimated that they spent substantial amounts of money and other resources on burial and funeral rites. A few of the respondents (5 per cent) experienced damages of fishing nets by industrial fishing trawlers. Furthermore, more than half of all the respondents (54.7 per cent) stated that the difficulties they encountered during the period under study affect their already precarious income status and made it difficult for them to recover. The

majority of the participants thus indicated during the FGD and OVSD sessions that various accidents contributed to their inability to secure adequate income and food.

5.4.2 Seasonality

From the perspective of SLF, periodic changes that occur throughout the year influence people's access to assets and livelihood outcomes. Indeed, seasonality plays a very important role in the lives of people in diverse ways. In an open-ended question household heads were asked whether they experienced any difficulties in terms of change of weather or government policies over the last twelve months. A highly significant number (92.7 per cent) reported difficulties such as low household food consumption during the lean fishing season, which is between June and September.

Prolonged high runoffs and floods during the rainy season are among the problems which fishing communities in the Ketu South District face. Indeed, almost all respondents during the interview, FGDs and OVSDs indicated that the rainy season hampered their works and income. The season, according to the respondents, generally rendered them susceptible to excessive flood and epidemics, such as cholera and malaria. Most of the respondents stated that the flood normally resulted in the loss of properties such as fishing gears, boats, houses, animals and other personal and household belongings. These occurrences, as they noted, did not only make them indebted, but also reduced the nutritional level of their households.

5.4.3 Trends

The great majority of the respondents (98.5 per cent) identified depletion of fish resources as a major problem that was and is affecting their livelihood strategies. An elderly chief fisherman lamented as follows:

[...] in the 1980s to early 1990s, we could catch all types of fish almost every day and throughout the year to the extent that we had to throw some back into the sea, but what do we experience these days? [...] people go to sea and come back with virtually nothing or

just a small catch, which is not even enough to pay for fuel and other costs. This happens not just a day, a week or a month but throughout the year, and things are becoming worst as days go by [...] (Interview 15th April, 2011).

Large household sizes and the growing dependence on fishing resources by the majority of community members have also contributed to their vulnerability and livelihood. Despite the decline in the fish resources, the survey data supported by the FGDs and workshops indicate that the practice of polygamous marriage and large household sizes, which are two correlated characteristics of fishing communities (see Chapter 3), is still widely present in Ketu South District. As a result, they do not care about their children, who therefore could be easily given away to human traffickers and those who engage in child labour.

5.5 Institutional context

Institutions in the context of fishery are sets of rules and regulatory arrangements affecting the fishery as well as the organizations that develop and implement those rules. Accordingly, institutions have been considered a key factor for sustainability in the fisheries management (Jentoft *et al.*, 2004). In Ghana, although the artisanal marine fish resources are legally an open access (*de jure*) to every Ghanaian, it is the state and provincial agencies that have prime responsibility for managing them. The key government bodies responsible for managing the fishery resource in Ghana are the Directorate of Fisheries under the Ministry of Agriculture and the various District Assemblies. At the local level, traditional bodies of each coastal community also have their own sets of rules and regulations concerning fishery. Therefore, the institutional environment in which individuals and households of poor fishing communities exist is dedicated to a number of formal and informal bodies that are responsible for management decisions regarding the fisheries. All these bodies influence the rights and entitlements of the poor fishers in terms of their livelihood strategies and access to assets.

5.5.1 Government institutions

In Ghana, the ministries and other administrative actors regarding the fisheries have been subjected to frequent changes, either merging or separating them (Linselink, 2004:25). Currently, the Department of Fisheries is merged into the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. In view of this, the fisheries administration under the decentralization process has become part of the agricultural unit during the decentralisation process and at the same time shifted its tasks from general authority in fisheries to technical assistance to the decentralized organisations (p.25). The purpose of the decentralization process, according to Linsenlink, was to encourage more flexibility in planning. It enables the staff at the lower level to better carry out cooperation with fisher communities (p. 25).

As far as fisheries management is concerned, it is structured in accordance with the general administrative system of Ghana. The country is divided into 10 regions which are sub-divided into 110 districts. Each district is presided over by an elected District Assembly under the Local Government Law of 1988 (PNDC Law 207), Chapter twenty of the 1992 Constitution and the Local Act of 1993 (Article 462) (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 47). The District Chief Executives, who are the main representatives of the Central Government, are responsible for policy development and planning to harness resources at the local level. The decentralization was thus to bring the government closer to the people as District Assembly members are more accountable to their communities (Bannet, 2002: 239).

Consequently, the Agricultural Offices were set up at the district level (Bannerman, 1998 cited in Kraan, 2009: 184) with the aim to make the Directorate of Fisheries through their staffs more closely linked to all coastal fishing communities. The District Assembly offers technical assistance to fishing communities through the decentralized departments (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 48). Various departments and their services rendered are presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Technical Departments of Local Government and Services Rendered

Departments	Services
Public service Unit, Ministry of Health	Child immunization, education on communicable diseases, improved sanitation and family planning
Ministry of Food and Agriculture	Agricultural extension, animal health, fisheries management
Ministry of Education	Literacy and numeracy and functional training in income generation
Department of Co-operatives	Formation of groups to access credit
Social Welfare and Community Department	Child custody, counselling and community responsibilities
National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO)	Organize the communities for disaster preparation
National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE)	Education on civic rights and responsibilities

Source: Mensah *et al.* (2006:48).

In line with this, the local administrative officials of the Directorate of Fisheries under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture are expected to carry out various activities with fisher communities. These activities involve settling of conflicts, educating fishermen on government policies and fisheries law, the collection of statistical data on types of fishing equipment used as well as quantity and quality of fish catch (p. 49). All these aim at offering opportunities for cooperation with the responsible stakeholders in pursuit of efficient and sustainable fisheries development at the local level.

For an effective implementation of the above objectives, Fisheries Officials at the local level are supposed to have expert knowledge in fisheries. The reality on the ground is different. The finding in this study reveals that some of these Fisheries Officers were just extension officers specialised in crop and stock farming and had no background in fisheries. This was confirmed in my interview with one of the Ketu District Fisheries officers, when I enquired from him about his specific role in the District. According to him:

[...] my area of expertise is crop production and animal husbandry; hence my focus is more on crop production and animal husbandry in the district than fisheries. I only compile data in terms of quantity of fish catch and the type of fishing equipment being used by the fishermen within fishing communities in the District and forward it to our research division for further action (Interview, 4th June, 2011).

It is thus not surprising that interviews with four local Chief Fishermen respondents revealed little or no attention from Fisheries Officers in terms of providing technical advice concerning fisheries management in their various communities. Further investigation in this study also reveals that the District Fisheries Officers pass on information concerning government decisions and policies through the Chief Fishermen without explaining their relevance to them. The Chief Fisherman of Tetekofe, for example, remarked.

You will never see them (the Fisheries Officers) here, unless there is a new decision taken from the government regarding the fisheries management. They make sure that we implement it without seeking our opinion or any explanation for us to understand why such policies are being formulated for us to observe [...] (Interview with Sampson, 20th June 2011).

Meanwhile it became clear that the decentralization process which was a way of encouraging the fishing communities' participation at the grassroots is bedevilled with financial constraints. In his words:

The decentralization process serves as a nice opportunity to involve the entire local communities, including the fisheries in the District, for us to be more familiar with their problems, but we are handicapped with insufficient financial resources (Interview with Godwin, 24th June, 2011).

Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 3 regarding the formation of Community-Base Fisheries Management Committees (CBFMC), data from the field indicates that the district has not benefited from the project (Interview with Kudzo, 24th June 2001). The reason may perhaps be that the implementation of the CBFMC practice was restricted to coastal fishing communities in the Central Region, and that little or no effort had been put into establishing it in other parts of the country (FAO, 2002). Fishers thus expressed strong opinions during the FGDs and OSVDs that the government's decentralization process in the fisheries management had not impacted in any obvious way on their livelihood strategies, especially in terms of access to assets.

Furthermore, a majority of the community members felt that the government representatives in the District do not accord them due respect because of their profession and low level of education. An elderly fisherman noted during the OVSD that:

We are very much aware that these government officials do no respect us, since we are illiterate poor fishermen [...] they think we do not know what is good or bad for us over here (OVSD, 20th July 2011).

They explained that the District Chief Executive, in particular, persistently refused to pay attention to their grievances. The majority of fishers intimated during the OVSD session that their political leaders only came to them during the campaigning period. They made various promises but always disappeared as soon as the elections were over without offering them any assistance thereafter.

5.5.2 Local institutions

In almost all marine artisanal fishing communities in Ghana, traditional forms of fisheries management and control are dominant. The traditional authorities, namely the village chief, the Chief Fisherman³² and the Chief Fishmonger,³³ including the council of elders, are responsible for the management of the fishery resources at the community level (Bennet, 2002: 240; Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 47). The entire community is responsible for the everyday management of fishing activities in agreement and collaboration with the Chief Fisherman (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 58). In all, the Chief Fisherman acts as the main link between the government and the fishermen. Accordingly, he has more power than the traditional chief in all communities where fishing is the main source of livelihood (Overå, 2001: 15). He negotiates with government organizations in terms of benefits, credits and inputs for fishermen (Overå, 2001: 16).

Unfortunately, information gathered from respondents suggests that the Chief Fishermen, especially the District Chief Fisherman tend to neglect the priorities and needs of the poor fishers who are the most affected victims of the declining fishery resources and are only interested in the welfare of their council of elders. One of the fishing crew respondents at Adina complained bitterly about the Chief Fishermen and their council of elders during one of the FGD sessions:

[...] most of our so called leaders, I mean the District Dortorwofia³⁴ and his elders are just too selfish and greedy. They don't even respect the chief of the village just because they see themselves as powerful and rich men. We don't know whether they represent us here [...] whatever decision they take with their elders over here is mainly for their own

³² In Ghanaian fishing communities, the post of a Chief Fisherman (locally known as *Dortorwofia*), which is either by experience and expertise or hereditary is accorded with an amount of power and prestige (Bennet, 2002:240; see also Odotei, undated). It is his responsibility, among others things, to advice the village chief on fisheries matters. Consequently, he chairs the fisheries committee, made up of his council of elders, in settling disputes, issues penalties and supervises the distribution of any communal inputs (p. 240.). However, more serious issues, other personalities, such as the Assemblyman of the community, the traditional head and the paramount chief as well as the law court are resorted to in that order (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 58).

³³ Like the Chief Fisherman, the Chief Fishmonger also holds a very important position in Ghanaian fishing communities. She settles disputes between fish traders and processors in terms of pricing and comportment at the beach (Lenselink, 2004: 34).

³⁴ See footnote number 32

benefit but not for poor people like us who depend on the fisheries for everything. They divert everything that the government sends to all of us into their personal account, and are always preventing people like us from gaining access to them [...]. This is one of our major problems over here, my bother (Field note, 2011).

Complaints and comments, such as those above were often heard from respondents, especially the crew members. Their main concerns, therefore, was that the Chief Fishermen were abusing their position and thus losing the trust of community members.

5.6 The State and traditional regulations governing the artisanal fishery resources

Marine fishing activity in Ghana is controlled by two sets of regulations. These are the open access system regulated by the state, and the village system of traditional use rights and common property resources (Bennet, 2002: 239). While the Government of Ghana through the Directorate of Fisheries, under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, has *de jure* mandates to set regulations concerning the fishery, each fishing community also has its own set of rules and regulations that guide fishing within its territory. The Chief Fisherman, the community chief and their council of elders are responsible for the enforcement of both types of regulation. Both the traditional and state regulatory systems contain the same objective: the sustainable use and conservation of fishery resources.

5.6.1 State regulations

State regulations include the ban on, or prohibition of, mesh-size fishing nets, the use of explosives, poison or any other noxious substance in fishing activities. The ban on light fishing, for example, was based on the fisheries Act (11) (1), which states that:

A person shall not within the fishery waters of this country (a) use any fishing method that aggravates fish by light attraction, including use of portable generator, switchboard,

bulbs beyond 500 watts or bulbs whose cumulative light intensity attracts fish, and long cable to facilitate light production or any other contrivance for the purpose of aggregating fish by light

The case of light fishing, which in particular generated displeasure and protest through demonstrations by fishermen throughout the country, had received extensive attention from the media during my fieldwork. Some of the aggrieved fishermen who took to the principal streets in their various communities and towns demanding the lifting of the ban claimed, among other things, that it had left them extremely poor, since it prevented them from abundant catch (*Ghanaian Chronicle*,14/2/2011, see also *The Daily Graphic*,15/6/2011). However, these demonstrations were met with counter-demonstrations from other fishermen, who were in favour of the ban stating among others that it was timely, and that light fishing was ruining the fishing business (*Daily Graphic*,15/6/2011).

In the locations of this study, all the respondents, including their Chief Fishermen were in favour of the government's decision to prohibit light fishing practice in the country. The District Chief Fisherman, Mr. Seth Abotsi, for example, noted that:

[...]apart from its depletion of the fish stock, light fishing practice also destroyed small fish species, which served as food for bigger fishes, and by this sent them into the deeper sea beyond our reach (Interview with Abotsi, 2nd July 2011).

Asked whether fishermen were sensitized on dangers associated with the practice before the ban was enforced, he responded in the affirmative. But he was very quick to state again that the sensitization was not enough to make the majority of fishermen in the country understand and comply with the ban. He explained that fishermen and their communities for many years had been suffering neglect and marginalization from government, but the government continuously failed to come to their aid despite the persistent appeals. Hence, according to him, a government policy that seemed to be inimical to the fishing business was always met with resistance by poor and aggrieved fishermen. He explained that fishermen in recent

years experienced loss as a result of dwindling catch and exorbitant prices of premix fuel³⁵ that they used for their outboard motors. Some of the fisher respondents thus specifically attributed their refusal to comply with the ban to high levels of poverty and decline in fish catch. A fisher at Amutinu, one of the villages, for example, remarked during one of the OVSD sessions that:

The low fish catch we are experiencing during recent years account for the reason why we adopt another strategy to increase our catch through every possible means in order to survive (OVSD, 20th July 2011).

With regards to the mesh-size, its ban by the government was premised on the fact that if it continued to be used, it could result in overexploitation of fish stocks because of the high possibility of catching juvenile species. A study by Nunoo *et al.* (2006), for example, suggests that more than ninety per cent of species caught by the mesh-size were juveniles of commercial value. However, almost all the respondents (in this study location) expressed concerns about the prohibition of the mesh-size net. They intimated that the ban served as a major constraint on their means to make a living. A participant at the FGD session, for example, noted that the official prohibition of the mesh-size affected them a lot because it prevented the exploitation of anchovy (*aborbi*), which was the common species in their fishing zone. One of the women interviewed at Amutimu reiterated that, since the ban was enforced, the feeding of their children became a big problem as anchovy was the only fish that they could preserve for their household consumptions over a long period (Interview with Amewoshie, 4th June 2011).

A retired Teacher at Adina who did not hide his anger and frustration at the prohibition of the mesh-size noted:

Government officials responsible for fishery regulations are very unfamiliar with livelihood situations in communities that depend on the fishery[...]they vehemently

³⁵ Premix fuel is a special fuel used for outboard engines. It was introduced in 1992 with 100 percent subsidy by the Government after persistent appeal from the Ghana Fisheries Association (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 75. It was, however, withdrawn and later reintroduced (Department of Fisheries, 2003: 61).

refused to involve community members in the processes and discussions of fishery policies before enforcing them (Interview with Kofiga, 28th June, 2011).

My informal interviews with some fishing crew and company leaders brought the same reaction to the fore. They expressed strong feelings that they were not adequately involved in decision-making processes on issues that affected their living. An aggrieved elderly fishing company leader at Agavedzi stated:

[...] if the government officials were to involve or even consult our community representatives while deliberating on the ban, they would have been told that the anchovy is the only specie we have here, in our community [...]. They only sit in their offices and impose laws on us without our involvement or finding out about our livelihood situations (Interview with Koshie, 6th June 2011).

Many respondents and participants further explained that the beach seine was their main method of fishing and that the small mesh-size was the only net that they could use to catch anchovy species, which served as their source of income and nutrition. They complained, therefore, that the ban on its use deprived them and their household members of their only source of living.³⁶

³⁶ It is important to note that despite the numerous complaints by the respondents regarding the ban, our observation in the field revealed that a lot of fishermen were still using it to catch the anchovy species.



Figure: 5.5 Anchovy species (*Abɔbi*)

Source: Fieldwork (2011)

5.6.2 Traditional regulations

Traditional regulation of the fishery in Ghana is based on various traditional religious beliefs, customs and taboos that are unique to each fishing community, especially those along the coast. As we saw in Chapter 3, the worldview of the Anlo-Ewes regarding the environment in which they find themselves has both social and religious meanings (Akyeampong, 2001: 19). Thus, to the inhabitants of Ketu South District fishing communities, the sea and the lagoon are protected by gods and goddesses. In view of this, the community chiefs and traditional religious leaders are charged with the responsibility to act as a link between the spiritual and secular worlds to ensure good fortune for the entire community. Therefore access to, and the use of, the fishery resources rest in the powers and competence of the traditional religious leaders and the chiefs together with their council of elders.

According the belief of many people, a good catch and the fortunes of the community were contingent on the harmonious relationship between community members and deities of both the sea and the lagoon. A traditional priest explained during an interview that there were customary laws and regulations that every community member was supposed to observe in order not only to avoid the wrath of

the gods, but also to maintain this harmonious relationship. He noted that failure of community members to observe traditional rules and regulations regarding fishing, and to disregard sea gods, were the reason for the decline in catches they had been experiencing in recent years. Some of the relevant traditional rules and regulations pertaining to fishing he mentioned were, 1.) prohibition of fishing on Wednesday regarded as a day of rest; 2.) prohibition for fishermen to go fishing without having a bath after they had slept with a woman; 3.) prohibition for women to go to the beach during their menstrual period. According to the traditional priest, the non-compliance of any of these regulations attracted punishments, such as confiscation of gear and heavy fines to appease the gods (Interview, 24th June, 2011).

Respondents were, however, ambivalent with regard to the observation and non-observation of these traditional regulations and how it allegedly contributed to the decline in catches. Some respondents, indeed, alluded to the fact that low catches were a result of non-compliance with the traditional regulations. The Chief Fisherman at Tetekofe, for example, apparently attributed the declining catches to the non-observance of traditional rules and regulations pertaining to fishing and stated:

Tradition is tradition; it is the gods that give life and wealth [...] we need to respect and honour them by going according to their wills and commands, but what do we see of late? The youth over here refused to take advice from our traditional priests concerning our rituals that grant us good catches[...]we are suffering because the gods are very angry[...]these days, even women who are [in their menstrual period] stand up and go to the beach for fish[...] ((Interview, 20th June 2011).

Others, who were mostly Christians, suggested that the non-adherence to the traditional rules and regulations was not responsible for the reduction in fish catches in the community. They explained that, if anything at all, most of the traditional regulations were rather reducing the income of some people. According to them, most of the traditional practices pertaining to the fisheries regulations marginalized and discriminated against particular groups of people, especially women. For

example, a fish processor/trader at Adina remarked during one of the FGD sessions: “I depend on processing and selling of fish for living, but I am always compelled to stay at home without going to buy fish any time I am menstruating” (FGD 30th June, 2011). The finding obviously suggests that some of the traditional fishery regulatory laws are disadvantageous to women because they deprived them of their rights and regular access to assets and entitlements.

5.7 Discussion³⁷

5.7.1 Human capital

According to the human capital theory, formal education and vocational training are highly instrumental in raising the productivity of workers by importing useful knowledge and skills, and this enhances their future income and their lifetime earnings (Becker, 1964; see also Schultz, 1971; Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1997). There exists a significant relationship between human capital and financial capital in that human capital development leads to improvement in capability for livelihood prospect and poverty reduction. The overall survey result revealed that the majority of the sampled household heads had no formal education or very low level of it. But still they do not recognize that there is a connection. A fishing crew, for example, remarked during the discussion of issues concerning educational status and work opportunities: “I can manage a living in the fishery after acquiring a basic fishing skill, why should I worry myself about schooling, which does not guarantee immediate employment?” (FGD, 2nd June 2011). The above remark does not only reveal a different approach to the development of human capital through education but also indicate lack of awareness of the importance of formal education. Studies like those by Jentoft *et al.* (2010), Akyeampong (2007); Mensah *et al.* (2006) support this finding. Jentoft *et al.* (2010) found out that low educational standard is among the key capability deprivations characterizing Lake Victoria fishing communities in Tanzania.

³⁷ Additional raw data is added in some cases to facilitate the discussion.

On the basis of the study's findings, one can argue that low level of education or none at all can limit the capabilities of many households in terms of income opportunities. However, table 5.2 shows that some of the household heads who had low or no formal education earn more income than those with higher education. This implies that higher education may not necessarily guarantee high income. Nonetheless, it must be pointed out that possessing skills which are only related and specific to one occupation like fishing can hamper occupational diversity (Townsend, 1998: 22) as a means of spreading safety nets against poverty.

In addition, it is also worthy to point out that low educational status may not only contribute to limited occupational diversity, but also to poor health, which may be due to lack of information or knowledge regarding health in terms of preventive measures and the use of required health facilities. Household members frequently suffer from illnesses, such as malaria and others. The respondents indicated that long-term sickness of a household member, especially the 'breadwinner' rendered the entire household bankrupt and susceptible to hunger and ill-health. Glewwe (1999), for example, argues that education can help in the reduction of poverty through better processing of health information and better use of health facilities. In this context, health constitutes one of the components of human capital between capability and poverty (Strauss and Thomas, 1998: 28). The findings in this study thus imply that government policies regarding the development of the fisheries should not only focus on resources, but also on education and skill development of the community members. Schultz (1975) notes that education enhancement of people can successfully deal with disequilibria in changing economic conditions.

Furthermore, as argued by Sen (1985a: 34), education helps in providing human capabilities, which is 'the essential and individual power to reflect, make choices, seek a voice in society and enjoy a better life'. In a similar vein, Bebbington (1999: 2035) asserts that with educational attainment, individuals can acquire the ability to read, write, and engage in debate as well as to negotiate. That is through education, individuals will be able to add their voice to other voices that can influence household, local and national discourses on development (p: 2035). According to

Sen (1997), these capabilities do not only enhance people's ability to be agents of change, but also to question, challenge and - if possible - propose or usher in alternative ways of doing things (cited in Bebbington, 1999: 2034). Thus, low educational attainment by the majority of the respondents in this study seems to contribute to their marginalization and deprivation.

Finally, the finding that almost all the household members of five years and above contribute to the income generating activities of their households is largely in line with what Overå (1998) found in Moree fishing communities in the Central Region of Ghana. Overå's study shows that fathers, brothers and sons are all likely to be fishermen, while mothers, sisters, and daughters trade in fish (see also Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 43). Under such conditions, it could be inferred that fishers do not perceive education as means of improving their livelihood capabilities (Jentoft *et al.*, 2010: 354). The use of children this way (by depriving them of educational opportunities) may prevent households from breaking their cycle of poverty. Given that human capital enables people to engage more fruitfully and meaningfully with the world (Sen, 1997: 43), and also helps them to produce more efficiently, there is the need for intensification of awareness creation on the prospect of education in the life of the individuals and the communities at large.

5.7.2 Physical capital

Households depend on a wide array of both productive and non-productive physical assets for their livelihood strategies. This study reveals that the nature, tenure and housing characteristics depend on the wealth and professional status of the respondents. Owners of boats and nets and fish processors/traders as well as the majority of other household heads who earn a living outside the fishery lived in houses built with cement blocks and corrugated iron sheets, while the majority of fishing crews lived in poor single room houses with mud floors built and thatched with coconut raffia mats. The finding also shows that almost all the households were overcrowded with a large number of people squeezing for space. One fishing crew household head at Tetekofe, for example, lamented:

We always have to let the children sleep before we [my wife and I] can also squeeze ourselves in a corner somewhere each night. Our situation is even worse during the rainy season, since we all sleep on the mud floor (Interview with Alifo, 23rd May 2011).

Another dimension of physical capital is public infrastructure and services such as electricity, potable water, sanitation, and education and health facilities. The study shows that a bigger part of the inhabitants of the studied communities lack most or all of these services and facilities. For example, a large number of household members have to use the beach as their toilets. The following was a response from a man we met at Agavedzi easing himself at the beach during the field visit; when we asked him why he did not use the public toilet his answer was:

This whole village with a population of about nine thousand, we have only one public toilet, which is even not good[...]since we cannot ease ourselves in our various rooms, the beach becomes the only place for almost all of us in the community (Field note, 2011).

Inadequate access to such facilities coupled with unhygienic and poor environment in terms of workplace and homes are the reasons for a wide spread of diseases and low income generation, because, as stated earlier, poor health can reduce working ability.

These findings confirm the study of the FAO (2005) that a large majority of fishers and fishworkers in the world are affected by poor provision of public infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, and water and sewerage facilities. Gordon *et al.* (2003) note that households lack functioning capabilities to move out of poverty when they suffer deprivations of such infrastructural facilities. Ellis (1999) argues that infrastructural facilities have a significant influence on poverty reduction through their contribution to national economics by increasing resources and outputs. Fay and Morrison (2007) reason along similar lines that inadequate infrastructure undermines growth and competitiveness and hampers the fight against poverty, exclusion, and inequality.

The results of my study have implication for decentralization and poverty reduction strategy policies. Policy makers in Ghana need to enhance the valuable capabilities and opportunities of rural communities by focusing on the expansion of their infrastructural facilities. Sen (1987b) argues that the goal of development (through the lens of poverty reduction) is the promotion and expansion of valuable capabilities. The inference of this, therefore, is that poverty reduction strategies dealing with fishing communities should not only be targeted towards raising their income, but beyond. As Sen emphasizes, “[...] when it comes to health, or education, or social equality, or self-respect, or harassment, income is miles off the target” (Sen, 1983: 756). This thus implies that the alleviation of poverty and the ability to improve the living conditions of rural small-scale fishing communities can only be possible through the provision and availability of, and access to, socio-economic infrastructure facilities and services (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 39-40). In this context, various dimensions of poverty relating to basic services such as health, sanitation and education as well as other facilities that enhance the well-being and capacity-building of the poor need to be given special attention in the poverty reduction policy processes.

The survey result also shows that most of household heads did not possess fishing nets and outboard motors, limiting their ability to generate income from fishing. Since productive assets can be very expensive, their disposition and price should be within the limit and purchasing powers of the poorest groups in the society. This needs to be given much more attention.

5.7.3 Financial capital

The overall data from the survey, interviews and FGDs showed that access to financial capital, such as credit and remittances in the study locations was very low. Out of 238 household heads interviewed in the survey, 93.7 per cent had never accessed credit from formal institutions such as banks. Banks and other credit agencies were, and are, not in a position to offer credit facilities to poor people in the

study communities without collateral. Moreover, the loans accessed from the banks by a few household heads could not yield any dividend due to the high rates of interest. Data from the study locations also revealed that women fish processors and traders who used to provide loans to fishermen could also not sustain the trend due to the decline in catches. These findings agree with results of the FAO that “lack of access to affordable credit and the inability to generate savings, are major constraints for many poor small fishers and fishworkers” (FAO, 2005:60; see also Jentoft, 2010).

There is a need for a conscious effort by the Government of Ghana to adopt a holistic policy approach towards rural poverty alleviation through the provision of essential capabilities and assets especially in rural fishing communities. Institutionalization of subsidized micro-credit facilities for rural fishing communities needs to be given attention to enhance their access to financial capital needed for their livelihood activities. Formation of strong associations or groups by individuals in the communities could also serve as collateral for banks to provide micro finance to these groups. Tietze and Villareal (2003), for example, found that such groups are often used to replace the traditional collateral requirements for loans (cited in Badjeck, 2008: 119).

5.7.4 Social capital

As stated previously, social capital constitutes networks in a form of relationship between individuals or associations through which members can derive claims to or rights of support. Individuals can use social relationships to increase their well-being (Rudd, 2001: 34). This study indicates that almost all the household heads and their household members were members of one or more associations. The highest percentage of respondents belongs to religious associations followed by groupings linked to fishing, support for funerals, fish processing and trading and other professional activities (see table 5.3).

According to Narayan, “social assets can be interpreted in terms of the rules, norms, obligations, reciprocity and trust embedded in social structures, and institutional arrangements, which enable its members to achieve their individual and community objectives” (Narayan, 1979: 50). The survey and FGDs data, indeed, show that fish processor/trader respondents belonged mostly to two or more associations from which they derived both financial and non-financial benefits. Their membership enabled them to increase their access to assets and livelihood strategies as well as to other benefits in the form of money, food, drinks and other items. Social capital in this case becomes a resource used to access other productive resources and livelihood strategies (Goran, 2000: 7). The survey and interview data have revealed that both the fishing crew and the owners of boats and nets used their networking to create trust and to solve conflicts among members, implying that social bonds and social norms are an important part of what sustainable livelihoods are based (Perry and Ward, 2001: 210). This is because it constitutes a form of behaviour that is expected from all members. The findings in this study appear to support the argument of Moser (1996) that social capital is a key asset for the poor.

There is also the finding that the minority of the household heads did not belong to any association; this is due to their inability to afford membership obligations, such as financial and non-financial contributions. Their non-membership correlates with what Kleih *et al.* (2003) found in Orissa fishing communities, namely that the better-off are socially organized whereas the poorer members are not. Cleaver (2005) also argues from a similar perspective that poor people’s agency and room of manoeuvre can be either critically restricted or enabled by their social relations (cited in Jentoft *et al.* 2010:359).

This study also revealed that only few households obtain both financial and non-financial support from their relatives and friends. Abayie (2005) found that the extended family that was once the backbone of the country’s society is now losing ground to the nuclear family system which seeks to promote the interest of only a limited number of people. Hanson (2005) argues along the same line that the

obligations required in maintaining active social ties and reciprocity have high costs that occasionally result in eroding social support.

5.7.5 Natural capital

Fishers access to natural capital was studied by collecting data on catch and land for cultivation. Ninety-four per cent of the sampled household heads and their members derived their livelihood from the sea and the lagoon. However, data from the survey, FGDs, interview and participant observation showed a drastic decline in all the species that the fishers caught in their fishing zones. The respondents mentioned over-population, activities of industrial trawlers and illegal methods of fishing as factors responsible for the decline in fish catch in their fishing zones. Over-exploitation of the fishery resource could be a cause and consequence of poverty of households who depend mainly on fishery as their sole livelihood. This result is in line with the work of authors like Overå (2001), Akpalu (2001), Kleih *et al.* (2003), Mensah *et al.* (2006), Salagrama (2006), ISSER (2001; 2009), Atta-Mills *et al.* (2004), Campbell and Townsley (1995) cited in Chapter 3. The findings in the present study have implications for fishery management. In his famous work, *The Tragedy of the Poor*, Hardin (1964) argues that common pool resources such as fishery could result in overexploitation if not properly managed.

In addition, the survey result shows that only 0.8 per cent of the sampled household respondents possessed land for subsistent farming. This finding suggests that farming as a full time occupation is very rare, and limited in all the study communities. This may be attributed to two factors: 1.) scarcity of dry land as fishing communities in the District are closely sandwiched between the sea and the lagoon; 2.) soil texture, which is generally sandy (as described in chapter 3), and thus less favourable for agricultural activities (Nukunya, 1997: 10-11). Therefore, the result that a large number of household heads depended only on fishing seems fishers in Ketu South District have less or no alternative source of income to fishing. Hence, moving out of it could be impossible for them despite its declining status.

Furthermore, the most of the household heads complained that they could not meet their requirements for basic household goods and foodstuff due to dwindling fish catch. This finding supports the work of Salagrama (2006)³⁸ which proves that the decline in fish catch may not only account for the low level of income, but also for malnutrition and under-feeding. Hamdock (1999) argues that poverty is not simply a matter of incomes which cannot meet basic subsistence needs, but it also results in malnutrition. The finding that the majority of respondents lacked alternative livelihood and continued to depend on the fishery resource despite its declining nature has implications for fishery management. Allison and Horemans argue that:

It is the policies and institutions that determine access to assets, set the vulnerability context and determines people's livelihood options, reactions and strategies in terms of their ability to make a living and willingness to invest in helping to conserve the natural resource base (Allison and Horemans (2006:764).

It is therefore suggested that there is the need for investment in livelihood activities in small-scale fishing communities in Ghana to broaden the fisher's entitlements and capabilities. The Ghana Government and other stakeholders therefore should make conscious policy efforts to promote growth in rural fishing communities by changing their prime concept. They see rural fishing activities simply as a way of life compared to the profitable industrial and commercial business. Such effort mean the establishment of landing sites and storage facilities as well as the easing of access to fishing inputs such as boats, outboard motors and credit facilities to enable the fishers to engage more in deep sea fishing than they are doing currently.

5.7.6 Political capital

This section aims to discuss the position of the poor fishers in terms of power balance in relation to other groups and how this impacts on their access to assets. The study result show that out of the 238 sampled household heads only 12 were members of political parties. The members explained that they negotiated with Government officials to get access to assets that could enhance their income

³⁸ Worked out in the Chapter 3

generating activities. This agrees with Baumann (2000:6) that there is a dynamic interrelation between political capital and other assets and that people's access to other assets depends on their political capital.

Furthermore, it was found that community members with political connections also mediate access to assets. The majority of respondents complained that they did not have people in high positions within the government who could represent their opinions on issues affecting their well-being. Further investigations revealed that key political affiliates in the communities used their position to deny the poorest and politically weakest access to rights and entitlements. Many participants in the FGDs, in particular, were more specific by stating that: "only party leaders and their families benefit from aid sent by government agencies to those who have been affected by flooding" (FGD, 4th June 2011). This implies that the powerful elites in fishing communities, by virtue of their political affiliations or high positions, have better access to assets than the poor and less powerful. This by inference indicates that political capital and power underscore inequality and deprivation of poor people's entitlements, and may thus account for their increasing level of poverty. Béné (2003) found that in small-scale fishing communities the patron-client relationship between the elite and fishers contribute to their (the fishers') exploitation. More so, the finding supports Baumann's (2000) argument that political capital can as well hinder access to assets by the poor. The FAO (2002) argues on a similar line that power and politics have often been responsible for the failure of development in small-scale fishing communities.

5.7.7 Vulnerability context

The analysis of the relation between poverty and vulnerability shows that frequent floods impact on properties such as houses, fishing gears and other personal and household belongings. Almost all of the respondents reported various damages and losses. Low catches, high prices and food items for the household as well as illness are, however, perceived as most severe in all the study locations. As evidenced in the study, vulnerability towards floods also led to an outbreak of diseases, which could be the result of poor sanitation. Together with the fact that frequency of

diseases per household is continuously high (see Figure 5.2) one can assume that the poorest households have become destitute when a household member becomes seriously ill.

Considering the size of the households in the study locations (see section 5.2.1), it can be assumed that there is a steady increase in the number of household members. This leads to ever-growing pressure on the already depleted fishery resources. Bokisi (2007), and Baulch and McCulloh (1998) argue that increasing household sizes induce the possibility of entry into poverty and reduce the chances of a rapid exit. Moreover, in many cases high prices of fishing inputs and food items compelled many households to reduce their food consumption as they lacked the purchasing power.

It is important to point out that the data presented in this study are consistent with other studies conducted in coastal fishing communities. Jentoft and his colleagues, for example, argue on the basis of their findings that small-scale fishers are not only poor, but they are also extremely vulnerable as a result of their locations and work (Jentoft *et al.*, 2010). Goodwin (1999) also points out that, fishing communities are particularly vulnerable due to the combination of natural and technological disasters, since fishing utilizes resources in a natural environment under little human control. It is thus argued in this study that constant state of deprivation through adverse shocks and trends experienced by households constitute one of the critical risks and barriers in their attempts to rise out of poverty.

5.7.8 Institutional context

Decentralization in Ghana has been associated with rural development. It is all about giving priority to rural development, which in the past had been based on ‘top-down approach. The decentralization process, in this context, underscores an interaction between the central and local government as well as between government and the grassroots to promote development at the rural level. To this end, the Government is supposed to relinquish control over the development process through institutional

arrangements at both the local and grassroots levels to facilitate greater participation, interaction and active involvement at various levels by all stakeholders with financial and technical support to achieve that goal. Therefore, the finding in this study that fishers were not involved or consulted during decision-making processes point to the fact that the decentralization efforts in terms of micro-macro interactions regarding rural development in Ghana seems inefficient.

The findings in the present study that the district lacks sufficient fisheries technical staff and financial support in its activities correlate with other studies in Ghana. Bannet (2002) found that sharp cuts in central government budgets have weakened ministerial representations at the district level as staff number and expertise has declined. Accordingly, Lenselink (2004) elaborates by emphasizing that fishery is typically an area that receives little attention in the decentralization process, as just a few local administrators are familiar with issues concerning the fisheries due to their lack of relevant background. Furthermore, in his study of small-scale fisheries management in West Africa, Bennet (2002) also found in Ghana that “agriculture trained officers do not understand the complexities of small-scale fisheries management” (Bennet, 2002:243).

In addition, this study established that fishermen and their council of elders who serve as middlemen between their various communities and the government failed to represent the interest of the fishers in negotiating with government organization’s terms of benefits, credits and inputs. This finding supports Kleih *et al.*’s (2003) observation that poor representation of coastal communities in the power structure account for their lack of capital.

Furthermore, data present in this study also shows that the enforcement of the mesh-size ban in the study locations resulted in lack of income and nutrition due to the type of fishing – beach seine – and the type of fish – anchovy–, many people in the area depend on it for survival. The outcome of the present study coincides with Murry’s (2003) assertion that most decision-makers lack expertise and thus have very little knowledge concerning the key implications of their decisions. The Article

6.13 of the FAO's Code of Conduct of Responsible Fisheries, against this background, stipulates that: "(States) [...] should ensure that fishers and fishfarmers are involved in the policy formulation and implementation process, also with a view to facilitating the implementation of the Code". More so, the FAO's Advisory Committee on Fishery Research (ACFR) Working Group on Small-Scale Fisheries proposed recently among others that:

[...]fishers, fish workers and other stakeholders who have the ability to participate in decision-making, are empowered to do so, and have increased capability and human capacity, thereby achieving dignity and respect; and poverty and food insecurity do not persist; and where the social economic and ecological systems are managed in an integrated and sustainable manner, thereby reducing conflict (FAO, 2005:20).

This implies that the formulations and implementations of the state's policies in sustaining the fishery resources should be based on the voices and opinions of those who depend on it for livelihood. The current latent decentralization marginalized fishing communities in the country in decision-making processes concerning the fisheries; this builds a constraint on the economic activities and well-being people draw from the fisheries sector. This again contradicts the FAO's Code of Conduct of Responsible Fisheries of which Ghana is a signatory. A major reform is necessary.

Within the debate about decentralization, it has been noted that policy environment, over centralization of government, lack of education, skill and inexperience as well as other social mal-factions are among the reasons why local communities have not played more effective roles in rural development (Chandrasekera, 2004: 4). To this end, concerted efforts are needed to encourage grassroots participation in decision-making processes. It will go a long way to achieve prosperity and poverty reduction within these communities.

The gender dimension of the institutional context was also explored. The qualitative data indicate that some of the traditional fisheries regulatory practices undermined the rights of women in terms of entitlements and access to assets. This concurs with

the FAO's (2009) assertion that rural women suffer systematic discrimination regarding access to resources needed for their socio-economic development. In the words of the FAO, "cultural bias and lack of political will have led to uneven adaptation and implementation of internationally agreed policies and conventions on gender equality" (FAO, 2009: 12). Indeed, the data in this study contravenes the International Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which Ghana signed and ratified. This finding implies that although appropriate laws exist in the country, they are ineffective or do not sufficiently protect women. There is the need for increased awareness and education on the rights of women and gender equity at both national and local levels in the country.

5.7.9 Summary and conclusion

This chapter explored the vulnerability and institutional contexts in which fishing communities in the Ketu District of the Volta Region exist as well as the access to assets they have. The findings indicate that almost every member contributes to income generating activities of the household. The study communities have also suffered severe restrictions to their quality of life due to limited access to such basic infrastructure and services as education, health, sanitation and safe water supply. Thus, apart from a severe decline in fish catches as a result of overexploitation, the biggest factors contributing to the predicaments of the households within the study communities was lack of vital assets, opportunities and capabilities. The respondents thus indicated that they experienced difficulties in diverse ways in obtaining assets that might support them to cope with the challenges brought by the decline in fish catches. One of the most critical dimensions of poverty among the respondents is illiteracy or low educational attainment and lack of land or fertile land for cultivation. This compelled the majority of them to depend solely on the fishery resources for livelihood.

The vulnerability context in which the households operate is characterized by changing Government policies resulting in increases in prices of staple food, petroleum products, and shocks like illness, accidents and occasional deaths of household members. Also included are frequent floods and activities of industrial

fishing trawlers at sea, resulting in the loss of assets. Large household sizes as characterized by most of the respondents and limited access to assets as an insurance against such difficult moments may as well contribute to their vulnerability and the risk of making them poorer.

Furthermore, the community members do not participate in decision-making and policy processes concerning the fishery management at the national level. The respondents thus expressed concerns that they were heavily marginalized in terms of decisions affecting their main source of well-being and access to vital assets needed for their means of earning income. Strikingly noted also was the fact that even the traditional rules and regulations of the fishery resource have a gender dimension and tend to marginalize women, denying them rights, entitlements and regular access to assets.

More generally, although declining catches in fish and the vulnerability context may be a contributing factor to the current poverty situation in the Ketu South District fishing communities, entitlement and capability failure was a major factor. Put differently, the overall picture is that poverty in these communities is not only characterized by declining catches, but also by limited access to health facilities, unhygienic sources of water and poor sanitation, inadequate school infrastructure, lack of electricity, malnutrition, illiteracy, low income and general insecurity. All of the above together have direct or indirect bearing on the persistent poverty and vulnerability of households in the communities. In this context, the findings in this chapter significantly corroborate Sen's argument that poverty emanates from deprivation of entitlements and capabilities, which constrain poor people's ability to improve their lives. This contradicts Hardin's perspective that poverty among small-scale fishers is mainly a result of overexploitation of resources (also refer to Jetoft *et al.*, 2010). But Sen's position is also supported by the FAO's report saying that:

Poverty in fishery dependent communities [...] is not solely related to the abundance of the catch, market opportunities or the state of the resource. It is also critically dependent

on how the benefits from the use of fishery and other resources are used and whether a range of basic services (e.g. in health and education) are provided (FAO, 2006: XIV).

In their vulnerability and poverty contexts, households may have to strive and negotiate livelihood within and beyond the fishery by adopting various strategies to enable them to cope or survive. Therefore, in the next chapter, I explore the livelihood options pursued by fisher households and their outcomes, and the type of strategies they adopt. The goal is to enable us to gain insight into how these strategies exacerbate child trafficking.

CHAPTER SIX

Livelihoods Options, Outcomes and Child Trafficking: The Linkages

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Five, the vulnerability and institutional contexts in which the poor fishing communities operate, and how these contexts influence their access to capitals were examined. The current chapter explores the livelihood strategies adopted by the fisher households of the study communities. In addition, it also examines the livelihood outcomes they aspire to, or fail to achieve within their capital, vulnerability and institutional contexts as well as the strategies that they employ to cope or survive. Given the links, exploring the patterns will result in a better understanding, and clear definition of specific challenges individuals and households in these communities face in terms of poverty, vulnerability and well-being. In turn, it will enable us to answer the question whether in reality strategies adopted by households in these communities to cope or survive involve child trafficking.

6.2 Livelihood strategies in Ketu South District fishing communities

Several studies have shown that households intensify strategies that enable them to generate income, using available resources as fully as possible (De Haan and Zoomers, 2003) to construct an increasing diverse portfolio of activities and assets to survive and to improve their standard of living (Ellis, 2000). Given the volatile circumstances of the fisher households in the Ketu South District, they evolve their livelihood strategies in order to cope or survive. The three categories of livelihood strategies identified as those employed by both the poor and the wealthy households in responding to their socio-economic situation in the study communities are intensification, diversification and migration (see figure 6.1).

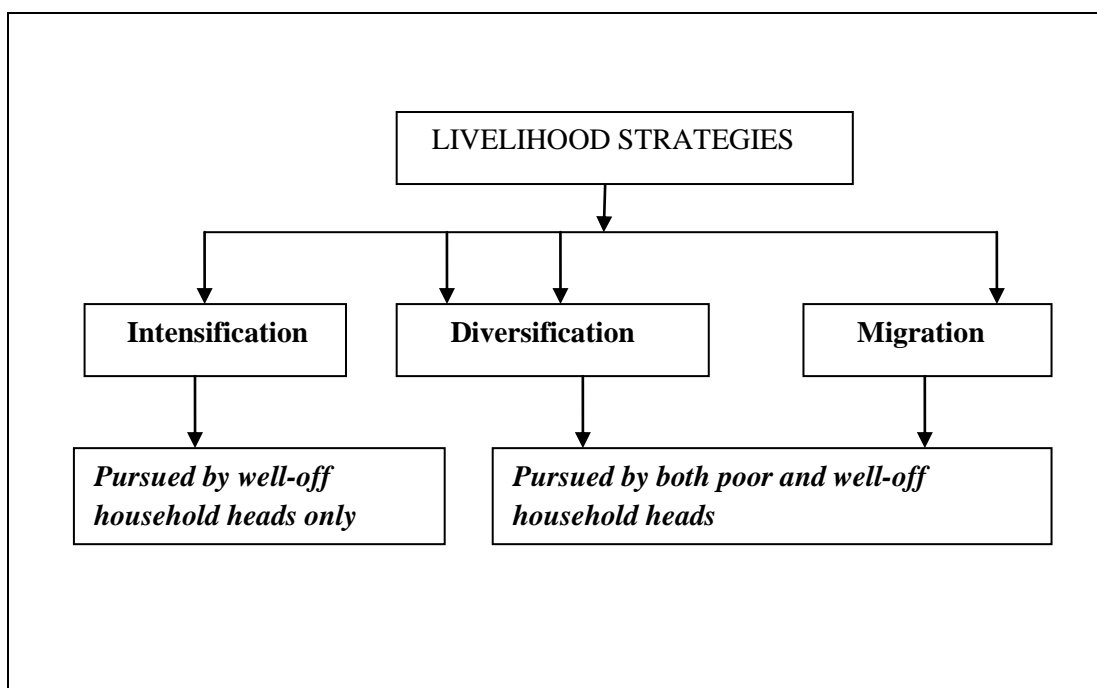


Figure 6.1: The categories of livelihood strategies pursued by the household respondents in the study communities

Source: Fieldwork 2011

6.2.1 Intensification

Intensification as a means adopted by households in pursuing their livelihood involves increased inputs of labour. It is thus characterized by a substantial increase in fishing inputs and the labour of fishing crew to increase catch and income. Although almost all the household heads (84 per cent, N= 12) who adopt this intensification portfolio live in polygamous unions with large family sizes, they have well established income-generating activities and fairly adequate access to financial and physical capital. It is not surprising then that they are able to provide the necessary basic needs of their households. They exert power and authority in the fishing business in the sense that all the fishing crew rely on them for the security of their livelihood.

The respondents who pursue intensification also invest in various types of fishing equipment, including fishing nets, outboard motors and fishing boats to facilitate their fishing activities. According to them, they hire fishing crews for about ten months or more on contract basis and remunerate them in the end. They explained that while the crews were at times rewarded with fish or cloths, they (the crew) were also obliged to take loans from them. This is done on condition that the crew continues working with them for another period of time.

Respondents, however, explained that in recent years they had not been able to increase income through intensified strategies due to rising prices of fishing inputs and low catches. The survey result indicates that almost all the net and boat owners (97.6 per cent, N= 12) followed this course of action in pursuing their livelihood. Intensification, however, is less dominant a strategy in the study locations accounting for only 5 per cent of the entire sampled household heads (N= 238).

6.2.2 Diversification

According to De Haan and Zoomers (2003), diversification does not imply having an occasional earning besides a main activity; instead, it means having multiple income sources. Authors like Ellis (2000) and Barret *et al.* (2001) suggest that diversification and building of diverse portfolio of livelihood options is the primary means through which many households reduce risk and cope with uncertainty. This implies that the more livelihood activities households engage in, the more resilient they become in that they have the possibility to alternate between these activities in times of need.

At the study locations, both poor and well-off households with various occupational backgrounds combine a range of activities to generate extra income. The portfolio of activities that have been identified as primary ones that the households undertake are petty trading, selling of cooked foods as fried fish and raw food-stuffs, selling of their labour and that of their children, hiring of labour, and livestock and poultry keeping.

In the category of well-to-do household heads almost 48.9 per cent (N=30) of those who earn their primary income from petty trading and fish processing/trading generate additional income from the sale of other items like clothing, cooking oil, alcoholic beverages and food stuffs. This category of respondents explained that they also derived both financial and non-financial capital from the membership of their association. According to them, this makes it easier to access other types of capital to support their household needs and also to invest in other income-generating activities. Many of the household heads who own nets and boats (68.4 per cent) also stated that they supported their wives financially to take up petty trading in order to generate additional income for their households. Poultry farming and the keeping of livestock, such as pigs and goats are also common among a few number of net and boat owners (15.3 per cent).

It is not only fish processors/traders and boat and net owners who are in this group. Other household heads like teachers and hairdressers also trade in items like exercise books, pencil, eraser and snacks, clothing and children's wears as well as hair products to generate extra income.

Many of the respondents (20 per cent) in this category are able to engage other people, especially children and women through paid labour in their extra income activities. This enables them to combine the activities described above, as recounted by a respondent during one of the FGD sessions: "Combining many works at a time can be very hectic and taxing, so we normally hire paid labour of, especially, young girls and boys or their parents from the community to assist us" (FGD, 29th June 2011). A net/boat owner, who also happened to own a fishing company, reported during the in-depth interview that he hired the labour of nine boys on daily basis to assist in mending his fishing nets. (Interview with Atisa, 21st June, 2011).

In general, the majority of household heads who fall under this group of livelihood diversifiers have large families. However, they have enough assets that enable them to provide for their needs and general well-being. Many of these household heads,

especially the fish processors/traders earn high and medium income from their activities and also belong to one or two associations. Almost all the respondents in group registered with the National Health Insurance Scheme to enable them and their household members to seek medical care in government hospitals. The majority of them are able to either send their children to school or sponsor them in learning trades.

They are also able to buy food in large quantities, especially during the periods when food stuffs are comparatively cheaper and keep them for the lean seasons. Thus, to this category of respondents, the need for extra livelihood activities was to generate additional and regular income for the promotion and protection of their well-being and that of their household members with good nutrition and proper health care (Interview with Joe at Adina, 30th May, 2011). Out of all the survey respondents, almost 20 per cent fall under this category of the ‘well-off’ household heads who undertake diversification to generate extra income.

In contrast, diverse portfolio of activities pursued by ‘poor’ household heads in the study area is limited to selling their labour and that of their spouse and children in diverse ways. This category of respondents is also characterised by large family sizes, polygamous homes, but they have very limited capital and no access to the activities of diversification described above, hence most of them are overwhelmingly heavily indebted. As expected, most of the household heads in this group indicated that they struggled to secure regular daily meals for their survival and that of their household members. According to many of them, the basic economic security which would have ensured access to health care, education and food for their children is lacking. Hence, their households often resort to traditional self-medication for their health care. They explained that inadequate food and lack of proper medication have, in turn, hampered their ability to work effectively to earn extra income. The case of Koku illustrates the life-worlds of poor household heads who follow diversification.

Kɔku is a 50 year old fishing crew with twelve children. He is in a polygamous marriage with two wives and has a low income. Kɔku explains that in order to ensure a year round income for food and general well-being of his household, he engages in extra income-generating activities by working hard in both sea and lagoon fishing and also assists traders at the Ghana-Togo boarder to enter Ghana or Togo with their wares.³⁹ Until 2009, Kɔku also used to earn extra income from sand winning at the beach but the District Assembly has currently put a stop to the practice in order to prevent excessive sea erosion in the area.

To supplement his income, his wives and children also sell their labour to fish processors and net owners. His children, especially the boys go to the beach everyday to assist the fishermen in folding or mending their nets for a fee or fish for the household, while his two wives combine working for fish processors with other works like carrying goods for traders at Denu market.⁴⁰ During the dry season, Kɔku and his wives also engage in salt harvesting from the dry lagoon. Despite the fact that Korku wants all his children to attend school, the harsh conditions he finds himself in left him with no other choice than to withdraw them. He explains that:

Since income from fishing alone cannot provide enough food and other household needs, we have decided to combine various activities to generate more money to add to the little that I get from fishing,[...]otherwise we cannot survive because things are hard these days. Any time one of us falls sick, requiring serious attention, I always find myself in an embarrassing situation going round begging people for money. I even had to withdraw my children from school this year to enable them work at the beach for some money for the household” (Interview with Kɔku, 6th May 2011).

Kɔku’s involvement in numerous activities to earn extra income turns to have a great toll on his health, and yet he cannot stop because that is the only way he can cater for

³⁹ Information from the field indicates that fishermen normally take traders through unapproved routes or the sea to cross the Ghana-Togo border illegally to avoid paying duties on wares at the border. This has become one of the activities through which some of the fishermen in the study locations generate extra income.

⁴⁰ Denu market is the biggest of all the markets in the Ketu South District. Traders from key commercial centres such as Accra, Aflao, Akatsi, Keta and Ho, and countries like Togo, Benin and Nigeria are also attracted to the market. A large number of people, including women and children from surrounding villages derived their source of livelihood from the market by working as head porters, carrying goods for traders to and from the various lorry stations around the market.

his family under those difficult conditions. In his words: “I feel very weak every day and cannot work for long hours any longer these days, but if I reduce it my children will starve to death”. Although Koku is in a difficult situation, he does not possess any properties that he can use as collateral to enable him to access loans from either individuals or institutions to invest in lucrative livelihood strategies.

The survey results indicate that 96.1 per cent (N=180) of poor fishing crew household heads are in this category. The main features of this category of household heads are that, despite their efforts to follow extra portfolio of activities to boost their income, they still remain generally poor, powerless and exposed to various types of risks and stress in their daily lives.

6.2.3 Migration

Migration as a livelihood strategy has long been a common and important phenomenon among rural artisanal fishermen in Ghana and West Africa in general (see Chapter 3). Migration in fishing communities in Ghana involves temporal or seasonal mobility within and outside the country in search of better fishing grounds to avert poverty or increase wealth. This particularly holds true for fishermen in the Ketu South District. Information gathered in this study suggests that fishermen in the District engage mostly in cross border migration to countries such as Togo, Gabon, Nigeria, Benin and Ivory Coast for fishing expedition on permanent or temporal basis (Interview with Chief Fisherman, 27th June, 2011).

The categories of household heads who pursue this strategy involve both the poor and wealthier ones, with small or large household sizes. When they were asked why they migrate, they provided as reasons, among others, raising money for fishing equipment, settlement of debts as well as provision of food and clothes for themselves and the members of their households. Although migration has been an important livelihood strategy, the crews reported that their decision to migrate depended on their access to a fishing company or the willingness of the company owner to employ them. According to them, the net and boat owners normally employ them because of their (the crew's) good health and ability to work for long

hours.⁴¹ The survey result indicates that 69.7 per cent of the sampled household heads in the study locations, in one way or the other, follow migration.

The situation of poor household heads who adopt migration as a livelihood strategy is seen in the following case:

Kobla is a 49 year old fishing crew with two wives and thirteen children ranging from 3 to 16 years of age. He lives in three thatch houses with a common compound. Kobla has never been to school, and has no other skills besides fishing. He has been working for the past 28 years as a fishing crew and migrated to different countries, namely Ivory Coast, Gabon, Togo, Benin and Liberia with different fishing companies. Kobla explains that migration for fishing helps him to save a small amount of money to settle his debts and such fishing expeditions help to save some money and to solve some of his financial problems, including providing for his family, especially when the season is good. He notes, however, that he sometimes returns home with nothing or only a small amount of money during bad seasons. In such situations, he borrows money from his employer who deducts it at source on subsequent trips.

When asked why he could not save enough to acquire his own fishing equipment or to invest in other income generating activities, he remarks that, fishing crews normally do not make enough money because of the way they are rewarded. According to him, at the end of their expedition, the catch is normally divided into five. Two fifths for the net owner, one fifth for the leaders and the remaining two fifths are divided among the crew. As a result, as he explains, the crew works for the net owners and just for their own survival but not to earn enough money.

You know what, after the catch is divided, the net owner, in turn, deducts the loans he lends to us before giving us whatever amount is left. And if you are not lucky to be left with any money after the deduction, it means you are going to contract another loan

⁴¹ The reason is that beach seine which is the commonly used fishing technique by people of the study communities is operated by quite a large group of men which is very costly. Hence owners of fishing companies always want to recoup these costs back by employing energetic and hardworking men who can work for long hours (Interview, Kobla at Agavedzi, May 12th 2011; see Kraan, 2009: 159).

and then keep working for him until you are able to settle your loan finally. So we just work for them in order to survive.

This situation, according to Kɔbla, prevents him from earning enough money to acquire productive assets like nets and boats or to invest in profitable livelihood activities that can earn him more income than in fishing. Moreover, he normally spends the little money that he is left with on food and other items for his large household and uses the remaining amount to settle his debts. Kɔbla explains further that in the past few years, the fishing business was a bit profitable as there was less competition at the sector and the prices of fishing inputs too were quite moderate. He thus attributes his current difficult situation not only to less catch but also to government policies, which according to him are responsible for the ever rising cost of fishing equipment and fuel.

In all, from the overall distribution of the survey results with respect to the identified categories of livelihood strategies in the study communities, almost all the sampled household heads (98.7 per cent) resort to diversification. Household heads that pursue migration constitute the second largest group (69.7 per cent). This is followed by those who pursue intensification (4.8 per cent).

6.3 Vulnerability and institutional contexts and their impacts

In the conventional and modified livelihood framework in Chapter 2, livelihood strategies and access to capital are, to a large extent, determined by the institutional and vulnerability environments in which they operate. When collecting data on the households' livelihood strategies, the impacts of their vulnerability and institutional contexts on the various types of capital on which these strategies are built upon were also explored. The next sections present these impacts.

6.3.1 Vulnerability context: impact on access to capital and livelihood Strategies

It is commonly agreed that household's vulnerability is to a large extent contingent on its level of access to capital and the type of activities it takes to ensure its livelihood. By implication, most of the households that experience various stresses

and shocks, whether internal or external, are likely to be constrained to deal with the situations because of their limited or no access to financial capital. As described in Chapter 5, the various shocks experienced by the households impacted negatively on their already precarious financial capital because of how time and resources had been devoted to re-establishment, funerals, and treatment and care for sick household members. The fact that precious time and scarce resources are devoted to these victims and activities, instead of being put to their intended use, implies that shocks have the tendency to increase households' risk of becoming poorer. Table 6.1 presents the level of vulnerability of the household heads by selected characteristics, namely livelihood status and level of access to assets.

Table 6.1: Occupation, Access to Capital and Vulnerability Context of Household Heads

Occupational Status	Access to Assets (%)			Vulnerability Context (%)		
	High	Medium	Low	Least	More	Most
Fishing crew (N=180)	0.0	2.0	98.0	1.4	38.2	60.4
Net/boat owner (N=12)	30.0	68.0	2.0	67.0	30.2	0.8
Processor/Trader (N=23)	30.4	68.4	1.2	78.2	20.3	1.5
Seamstress (N=4)	0.0	87.4	12.6	54.0	40.0	6.0
Driver (N=1)	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Teacher (N=1)	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Carpentry (N=4)	1.5	71.2	27.3	22.5	63.0	15.5
Hairdresser (N=1)	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Mason (N=1)	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Farmer (=2)	0.0	27.5	72.5	0.0	27.5	72.5
Petty Trader (N=7)	27.5	56.5	16.0	73.3	12.4	12.3

Sources: Fieldwork 2011

In the table, household heads that experienced both internal and external shocks are categorized as most vulnerable and those who had experienced one form of shock or the other are categorized as more vulnerable.

Comparatively, what one sees from this table is that household heads with low access to assets, which is somewhat related to their occupational status, are the most

vulnerable to shocks during the period under study. The other observation is that household heads with high or medium access to capital are less vulnerable and thus have significant ability to recover more quickly. In contrast, those with limited access to assets may find it more difficult to recover or to cope with similar situations that confront them. As a result, they become poorer. This has created a vicious circle in terms of the vulnerability context of the households and their access to assets in the study locations.

With regard to their livelihood strategies, the majority of respondents (87.4 per cent, N=238) indicated that the various activities they undertake to generate income have been severely impeded, in one way or the other, by various difficulties they encountered during the period under study. When they were probed further, they mentioned rising prices of petroleum products, food and other commodities as well as fishing inputs. Other frequently cited factors were illness, death of household members and the destruction of properties by flood and the rising of the sea level (as mentioned in Chapter 5). Although most of the respondents (92.7 per cent) reported that the above mentioned constraints hampered their various means of earning an income, a few of them (7.3 per cent) claimed they were quite resilient to their situation.

The following remark was taken from an interview with an elderly boat and net owner concerning the influence of the vulnerability context on livelihood strategies:

[...] there is nobody here in these communities, whether rich or poor, who can come out boldly that his or her means of generating income is free from frequent increases in prices of food, premix fuel, frequent outbreak of cholera and malaria, in addition to our large family sizes, and above all our 'main enemy', the excessive flood, which always destroys our properties and habitats [...] we are all affected in one way or the other [...] for me, nobody is less vulnerable here. That is why almost all the community members here are very poor [...] we only struggle to survive my son (Interview with Peter, 21st June 2011).

The above explanation further highlights the extent of the vulnerability context in which fishing communities in the Ketu South District influence their livelihood strategies.

6.3.2 Institutional context: Impact on access to capital and livelihood strategies

Political and social institutions play a vital role in poverty reduction and sustainable livelihood strategies of households in a variety of ways. The respondents' perspectives on the influence of institutions in determining access to capital, and return on livelihood strategies are highlighted in this section. An access to financial and physical capital appeared to matter for the respondents. They criticized the complex procedures of government financial institutions that prevent them from obtaining loans. According to them, they found it impossible to have access to credit facilities to boost their livelihood strategies.

They further reported that their inability to pay for health care has also impacted negatively on the various means of making a living. Majority of the respondents explained that lack of access to health care facilities, portable water and toilet facilities impeded their working abilities. According to them, the absence of such facilities undermined their health and ability to earn enough income in order to provide for themselves and the members of their households.

Unwillingness of the Government to subsidize fishing nets and outboard motors used by fishermen was another problem hampering the success and livelihood strategies of many fishermen in the study area. Under the decentralization process fishermen are supposed to have access to subsidize inputs, such as nets, premix fuel and outboard motors to alleviate their operational costs. However, the reality on the ground is different. The majority of the respondents (84.3 per cent) cited high prices of the above mentioned inputs as one of the major problems hampering their fishing activities. For example, a chief fisherman I interviewed at Tetekɔfe explained that even though the premix fuel was sold to the fishermen at subsidized prices, they hardly obtain it on regular basis. As a result, they sometimes spent weeks or even

months at home without fuel for their motors for fishing (Interview with Abota, 28 May 2011).

The decentralization process in the country is to promote greater participation in public decision-making, especially pertaining to issues affecting the livelihood of various communities in terms of access to capital and livelihood strategies for effective poverty reduction. However, (as stated in chapter 5) the respondents complained that they were always alienated from decision-making concerning fishery resource, which is their main source of livelihood. They were of the view that most Government policies regarding the artisanal fishery sector have hindered their activities. The government's prohibition of the use of mesh-size and the catching of anchovy species was the typical instance many of the respondents cited.

⁴²

Under marine fishing regulations, the Inshore Exclusion Zone is reserved strictly for artisanal fisheries to ward off industrial fishing vessels from the 30 metre-depth-line (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 26). However, the respondents expressed concerns about the failure of the Government to protect artisanal fishing activities by allowing foreign industrial trawlers to encroach on their fishing zones.⁴³ As remarked by one chief fisherman:

We do not even have access to the sea for fishing these days because the Government has allowed these Korean fishing Pair trawlers to fish in our territory and to destroy our fishing nets. The Government persistently refuses to protect our fishing activities from these foreign fishers (Interview with Abota, 28 May, 2011).

A member of the District Fishermen Association complained to me during an interview that every effort to have their concerns addressed by the Fisheries Department and Navy proved futile (Interview with Adika, 30 May 2011).

⁴² As mentioned earlier, the above complaints notwithstanding, our observation in the field revealed that many fishermen were still using the mesh-size net to catch the anchovy species in the area.

⁴³ Under marine fishing regulation, the Inshore Exclusion Zone is reserved strictly for artisanal fisheries to ward off industrial fishing vessels from the 30 metre-depth-line (Mensah *et al.*, 2006: 26).

The women respondents also expressed their concerns by reporting that even though they played a vital role in the fishery, some of the socio-cultural practices and norms prevented them from being involved in decision-making processes concerning the management of the fishery resources in their respective communities. Aside from that, most of them also lamented in the FGDs that the social norms or customary laws and practices such as inheritance rights discriminated against them, resulting in their inability to obtain adequate fund for their livelihood strategies.⁴⁴

6.4 Livelihood outcomes

Livelihood outcomes are the achievements of livelihood strategies. In the previous section, various livelihood strategies which the respondents, based on their capabilities and access to assets, pursued have been described. Drawing on the responses from the survey, interviews and FGDs, the livelihood outcomes that the households aim to achieve were identified and assessed. They are explored in subsequent sections with reference to the modified livelihood framework in Chapter 2.

6.4.1 Improvement in health and well-being

This refers to the households' ability to secure physical, mental and social well-being as well as a sense of control and access to services. It is worthy to note that good health and well-being of people is generally determined by the physical environment in which they live as well as by their access to both financial and physical capital. Data from this study suggest that good physical health is among the central objectives that household heads aim to achieve for themselves and their household members. As emphasized by one of the respondents as follows:

The reason why I keep myself busy every day is not because of material things only, but also to ensure the health of my children and my wives and, of course, myself. Good

⁴⁴ Most of the customary laws and practices in the study communities are inherently patrilineal. Thus despite the fact that the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) Law 111 of Ghana stipulates that women should inherit their deceased husband's or father's property, in reality females are barely allowed to have a share in their father's or late husband's properties in the Ketu South District.

health helps us to carry out our daily activities to generate enough income. That is why nobody feels secured and happy when a member of the household is ill (Interview with Peter, 21st June 2011).

Most of them reported, however, that their efforts to maintain good health have been constrained by many factors such as financial difficulties and high prices of food and medicines. Other problems are unhygienic sources of drinking water and poor sanitation. In addition to all that, they have less access to health care facilities. On the basis of the above factors, most of the respondents (87.5 per cent) indicated that they are not able to maintain or improve on the good health and well-being of their households.

6.4.2 Increased food security and access to resources

Increase in food security and access to more resources are intimately interconnected. In this context, the level of access to resources of a household is likely to determine its food security.⁴⁵ All the household heads noted that one of their priorities was to access more resources and also to increase food security in order to meet their households' nutritional and material requirements for a secured well-being. However, a large number of them indicated that they experienced constraints, such as lack of productive and financial capital to enhance their productivity. That is, although all the respondents engaged in various income-generating activities, some could not earn enough income to enable them to secure adequate food and more resources. Consequently, only a few household heads (19.3 per cent) indicated that they were able to achieve their livelihood objectives by securing sustainable, sufficient and adequate resources as well as food security to meet the basic needs of their families.

⁴⁵ That is, in a vicious circle, a household that is able to increase its food security is also likely to have access to more resources in the sense that, adequate food security may, in turn, increase productivity by strengthening the ability to access more resources.

6.4.3 Increase in income and decrease in vulnerability

Arguably the more income a household has at its disposal, the less vulnerable and more resilient it is likely to be. All the household heads engaged in various income-generating activities to increase their income with the aim to reduce vulnerability. However, most of them related that they faced challenges like poor access to assets, seasonal changes and other distressful situation induced by volatile price fluctuations for food and other basic needs. The above situations, according to them, have hampered their ability to raise their income in the various activities they engage in. Hence, most of them stated that they remained susceptible to numerous predicaments, such as shocks and stress in their daily lives. In the survey results, only a few household heads (19.3 per cent) were able to have a secured income, and were thus able to reduce their vulnerability.

6.5 Livelihood outcomes: ‘Positive’, ‘Mid’ or ‘Negative’

In the previous section it has been documented that the household heads within the communities under study belong to different categories in terms of achievements of their livelihood outcomes. Therefore, based on the modified livelihood framework, this section classifies them in relation to their achievements, namely ‘positive’, ‘mid’ and ‘negative’ outcomes. The household heads who are able to achieve their identified livelihood outcomes are classified as ‘positive outcome’. These are the individuals referred to as *Egatɔwo* or *Nunɔamesitɔwo* (literally meaning ‘rich people’ or ‘owners of property’) in the study locations. Those classified as ‘negative outcome’, on the other hand, are called *Ehiatɔwo* or *Wɔnamanɔasitɔwo* (literally meaning ‘the poor’ or ‘poor people’), while *Kutrikulawo* or *Agbagbadzelawo* (literally meaning ‘hardworking people’) is used to describe those who fall under ‘mid outcomes’.⁴⁶ The purpose of the classification in this section is to explore and identify the general characteristics of the household heads who fall under the respective categories of the above mentioned outcomes.

⁴⁶ These terms in Ewe are commonly used by the members of the communities to differentiate the status of individuals.

6.5.1 ‘Positive’ livelihood outcome

Household heads who are able to achieve their identified livelihood incomes have either physical assets (boats, nets, outboard motors and fishing companies) or engage in established income-generating activity/activities with regular income. Many of them live in decent and spacious houses with electricity, toilet and private sources of water. Although the majority of respondents in this category have large household sizes, they are able to ensure their well-being through the provision of sufficient and nutritious food and quality health care. As predicted, most of these respondents have the opportunity to accumulate savings and invest in the human development of their children by either sending them to school or engaging them in learning some trade. Their livelihood strategies are well diverse and spread across at least one or two activities through which they earn additional income. Moreover, many of them are able to intensify their livelihood strategies through cheap or paid labour and other services. Apart from that most of them are characterised by social support networks which they use to facilitate their access to both financial and non-financial capital.

In general, this category of respondents and their household members live quite a dignified life, and are accorded much respect in their various communities. Some of them, especially the net and boat owners, are very influential in terms of major decisions pertaining to their respective communities and have a number of both old and young people working for them for a fee. From the household survey results, only few of household heads (19.3 per cent) were able to achieve their livelihood outcomes. Significantly, 9.7 per cent of them were women, most of them fish processors/traders. Also striking is the fact that all these women were either divorced or separated but had children aged between four and twelve years, ranging from four and seven in number.

6.5.2 ‘Mid’ livelihood outcome

Household heads who are striving to achieve their livelihood outcomes (Mid livelihood outcome) have smaller families than both the rich and the poor. Many of

them are neither very poor in physical assets nor very low in terms of income. They are between the poorest and well-off household heads. This group has medium income from their activities. They are poor in terms of assets but they may succeed in achieving their identified outcomes. Most of them have access to financial capital, such as loans from individuals. These are often obtained from the boat and net owners as well as fish processors and traders.

The majority of the respondents in this group are between 20 and 25 years old with two or three children. They are able to work for long hours but rely mostly on owners of fishing gear for their main income-generation. Many of them practice diversification and migration portfolio as means of earning a living. They live in their own thatch and mud houses with no potable water and toilet but they manage to provide adequate food as well as health care for their households. This category of respondents has no money to save but they are able to meet their basic needs and that of their family. A few of them have access to social capital. Many of them actively participate in social activities as well as decisions pertaining to various issues in their respective communities although they are less influential than the community members belonging to the 'positive category'. About 2.2 per cent of the sampled household heads in the survey belonged to this group.

6.5.3 'Negative' livelihood outcome

Household heads who are unable to achieve adequate livelihood outcomes lack fishing equipment and other capital that they can use in fishing or other income-generating activities to ensure their well-being and that of their household members. As a result, they depend on boat and net owners as well as fish processors and traders in most of their income-generating activities. Most of these household heads depend heavily on fishing but also follow diversification and migration as means to earn extra income. Yet, the diversified activities that they follow are confined to selling their labour and that of their household members. As to the migration that they pursue, they are also subjected to the control and approval of the boat and net owners who employ them. Thus, even though they work hard, the decline in the

fishery resources and their limited option for livelihood diversification as well as limited or no access to productive assets prevent them from earning enough income.

Apart from that they are also indebted and have more dependant members in the households than there are 'breadwinners'. To the extreme, a significant number of them are unable or barely able to provide education for their children as well as food and cloth for themselves and their household members. Consequently, the whole family often has only one meal or sometimes pass a whole day without eating. Most often, their children have to beg for food from outside. As expected, their children take to working at very tender age in order to either fend for themselves or contribute to the households' income. They wear tattered cloths and live in overcrowded thatched houses with no access to social amenities like electricity, potable water and toilet. Many of their children are malnourished, often stunted, and unhealthy. They and their household members do not seek medical care at government or private hospitals but resort to self-medication. Self-medication may be useful but not all sicknesses can be treated without seeking proper treatment, and so these sicknesses are left untreated. Given the above challenges, they are often unable to maintain their good health and general well-being.



Figure 6. 2: Typical thatch houses in the study locations

Source: Fieldwork (2011).

Furthermore, many of them do not have access to social capital from which they can derive financial benefit, since they cannot meet the membership requirements. They find it impossible to access loans from banks or individuals. Most of them have a very low social status and can hardly participate in or influence decisions pertaining to socio-economic and political issues in their various communities. Also, in view of the fact that they are under-represented, many of them have become a prey to exploitation by the privileged in their communities. Approximately 80 per cent of the sampled household heads fell in the 'negative' livelihood outcome category. The case of Fofovi illustrates the situation of household heads in this group.

Fofovi, a 49 year old fishing crew, is the main breadwinner in his household. He is married with ten children and lives in the same house with his 85 year old mother and his late brother's son. Fishing has been his main regular source of income ever since he married. With time the household had to resort to odd jobs like working on market days as head porters⁴⁷ at the Denu market. His eldest child, who could help him out, is not working because of health problems. Initially, Fofovi resorted to migration as a way of improving his finances and catering for his household. However, he is no longer doing this because his employer has laid him off. Fofovi was sacked because he had been indebted to his employer over the past 5 years or so. He has not been able to solve this problem because of the low catch that characterizes the fishery in recent years. He bemoans that life has been difficult for him and his entire household, since he was laid off by his employer. According to Fofovi, he initially contemplated leaving the village to Benin or Gabon to look for a job as a fishing crew, but he had to rescind his decision due to his current state of health.

Fofovi's extended family members who should have been supportive also neglect him because he cannot afford membership obligations. According to him, his extended family normally pools its resources to help members during sickness, funerals and other social functions but he discontinued his membership because of financial difficulties. Moreover, he is also indebted to many foodstuff sellers and as a result they are no more willing to sell anything on credit to him. When asked how he ensures his household's welfare, Fofovi explains that he buys food from the little money he earns from selling his labour at the market and beach seine activities. He further stated that whenever there

⁴⁷ Porters are people who earn their living through the carrying of goods at market places.

is no food in the house, his children usually go out to fend for themselves, while the elders among them go to bed without food. Concerning his household's health care and clothing, this is what Fofovi had to say:

Since due to financial difficulties we cannot go to the hospital when we fall ill, I resort to treating my children, my wife and myself with herbal medications that my late father taught me. As for clothes [...] what you see us wearing now is all that we have. For me, what my family will eat is more important than what to wear [...] that is why we stopped attending social gatherings.

At the time of the interview, Fofovi told us that his former employer had been threatening to take him to court unless he was ready to settle his debt within three months. However, Fofovi recognizes that he has not got enough strength and energy, and as such wants to place two of his sons under bonded labour with his former employer in order to work and defray the debt on his behalf.⁴⁸

As a result of the above predicaments being encountered by most of the poor households in the study area, they adopt various survival strategies to cope with their situations. The next section is devoted to the discussion of how some of these strategies exacerbate child trafficking in the communities under study.

6.6 Coping/survival strategies: How do they encourage child trafficking?

Coping and survival strategies are mechanisms that the vulnerable groups employ to handle hazardous situations by mobilizing all available resources to survive (Blaikie *et al.* 1994) destitution and death (see also Devereaux, 1993). In a response to the severe threat of hunger and extreme vulnerability, poor households resort to all kinds of strategies to help them to cope with the situation. One of these strategies is child trafficking which will be considered in the following sections. The author argues that child trafficking as a coping/survival strategy employed by households in the study

⁴⁸ The issue of bonded labour will be addressed further in the next section.

communities interplay with the existing cultural practices, exacerbated by abject poverty and vulnerability.

6.6.1 Perceptions and causes of child trafficking

To get the general perceptions about the strategies that cause child trafficking in the study locations, respondents were asked whether they have heard of cases where parents/guardians exchange their children with money or allow them to live with, or work for, other people.⁴⁹ Almost 91.3 per cent said they have. When asked whether they have ever been involved in any of such practices, 20.7 per cent of them indicated that they give one or two of their children out either to live with, or work for, well-to-do people to earn money for the family back home. In addition, some 27.2 per cent reported that their children were staying with a relative or a friend outside the study area in the form of placement. None of the respondents indicated that they carried out transactions involving the sale of their children. The identified causes of child trafficking found through the analysis of the survey, FGD and interviews during the fieldwork are illustrated in table 6.2 showing their level of intensity.

⁴⁹ It is worthy to note that the concepts of child bonded labour, child servitude and child placement are not regarded as child trafficking in the minds of the people in the studied communities. To them, the definition of child trafficking is limited only to a situation where children are sold outright like commodities.

Table 6.2: The identified child trafficking related survival strategies and level of intensity

Coping/Survival Strategies	Local names *	Level of Intensity
Placing children with relatives or friends	<i>Amegbɔvi</i> ⁵⁰	Very high --- ---
Outright selling of children	<i>Kluvi</i> ⁵¹	--- --- Low
Placing of children under domestic servitude	<i>Subɔvi</i> ⁵²	Very high --- ---
Placing of children under bonded labour	<i>Awubamevi</i> ⁵³	Very high --- ---

* These are names used by the respondents to describe the victims of such strategies. The terms are not new but part of the language since generations.

Source: Fieldwork (2011).

As shown in the table, ‘child bonded labour’, ‘domestic servitude’ and ‘child placement’ with relatives or friends have been the very remarkable coping/survival strategies in the study locations.⁵⁴ Outright selling of children, according to the table, is however low as compared to placing strategies. The next sub-sections go deeper to elucidate some of the above identified strategies from the respondents’ perspective.

6.6.2 Child bonded labour

Child bonded labour, is a traditional practice whereby poor families, because of financial reasons, allow their children to work for the person to whom the family is indebted for a specific period of time (IOM, 2004; ILO/IPEC, 2004). During an

⁵⁰ Child servant

⁵¹ Child slave

⁵² Hired child servant

⁵³ Bondage child

⁵⁴ It is important to note that from the survey, interviews and the FGDs, some households adopt also other coping/survival strategies like salt harvesting, selling of their private property or labour for additional income, reducing household food consumption or number of meals per day, spending days without eating. However, it was beyond the scope of this study to adequately probe into the nature of these strategies. Strategies that encourage child trafficking are the ones which this study sought to further understand.

interview, a participant explained that, by this practice, the child victim is forced to stay and work for many years to defray the debt owed by the family (Interview with Akpi at Amutimu, 12th June, 2011). Participants during the FGD sessions remarked that the practice has been an indirect supporting system for poor parents or guardians who are faced with severe adversity to get some kind of ‘help’ from wealthier people in the community. According to them, the aim is to enable such people and their household members to survive or cope with their situations.

However, the institution of child bonded labour, which is part of the local support system, is now being abused by some individuals due to its intensification in the area. This was illustrated in remarks by a respondent that “child bonded labour has become a daily affair and money making venture by some agents who are taking due advantage of the vulnerability and the prevalence of poverty in our communities” (Interview with Klu at Adina, 12th June, 2011). According to the same informants, the so called ‘agents’ normally lure many unsuspecting poor parents/guardians with money and petty gifts and recruit their children to neighbouring countries to ‘sell’ them to other people who then exploit them.

They don’t take the children away for free. What they do is that, they convince their parents with an amount of money or gift before taking them away to be transferred to traders and fishermen who are in need of their services for a very huge sum of money. Their parents normally receive between 500 and 800 New Ghana Cedis⁵⁵ or more, depending on the number of years the child is to work for his/her master[...]I know some children who have been taken away for some time now but are yet to return [...] their parents are very worried (Klu, 12th June 2011).

When they were asked why parents still deliver their children into bonded labour despite its current abuse, respondents noted that the chronic financial difficulties many of them faced would not allow them to abandon the practice. Most of the respondents were also of the view that, since it is their social and moral responsibility to care for their children, delivering some of them into bonded labour to get money to look after their siblings would be better than allowing all of them to

⁵⁵ The exchange rate at the time of the research was 2 New Ghana Cedis to 1 Euro

suffer and die from starvation. For example, asked why he decided to place his child under bonded labour, Abadzi, a resident at Agavedzi, explained in a rather plain and frank language:

[...] it is my sole responsibility and as demanded by our society, as a father, to look after my children. I cannot continue to look on helplessly while they suffer. So I do not see anything wrong if I take money from a friend and ask one of my children to go and work for him in return. Is it not better than leaving all of them here to die of hunger? (Interview with Abadzi, 26th May 2011).

Many of the participants, however, acknowledged during the FGD sessions that placing their children under such a condition for money is not something that they are comfortable with. Most of them explained that difficult circumstances have left them with no choice than to sacrifice their children that way in order to survive.

Akoli, a boat and net owner who indicated that seven of such children have been working for him for the past five years (at the time of the fieldwork) gave a different perspective on the persistence of the practice. According to him, the general notion that bonded children are exploited unnecessarily by their masters is untrue. He explained that even though they enter into an agreement to remit the parents of the bonded children both in kind and cash, they also provide enough food and medical care for these children, a situation which was better when they were with their parents. Because of this, according to Akoli, most of the children who work for them often refuse to go back to their parents at the end of their contracts. Hence, many parents continue to approach them for help of that nature.

Look, my son, we do not abuse these children, we feed and provide them with better medical care than their parents would have provided them. You see, most of these children did not have food to eat when they were in their various homes. That is why many of them often refuse to go back at the end of their contracts. Because of this, their parents continue to knock at our doors almost everyday to bring more of them. You see, they are using one stone to kill two birds at a time. This is because after giving them

money, we continue to feed their children for free until the end of the contracts (Interview with Amewodela, 27th May, 2011).

Akorli's explanation is supported by Rose, a single parent at Adina, who expressed fears that the current effort by the Government to abolish the practice without any attempt to replace it with a secure income generating activity in the community would put many poor households in a more difficult situation (Interview with Rose, 27th May 2011). Like Rose, many other participants expressed their concerns in the FGDs about the current threat by the Government to arrest and prosecute those who get involved in the bonded labour practice. From their explanation, bonded child labour contributes to the welfare of many poor households in that many of them use the proceeds to supplement their meagre income and even to establish small-scale businesses. Therefore, as sadly expressed by one of the participants, "the elimination of the 'awuba' [child bonded labour] practice will complicate our situation as it has always been our last hope" (FGD, 23rd May 2011).

6.6.3 Placement and domestic servitude

Just like 'child bonded labour', placing girls as domestic helps and boys as farm or fishing labourers are also common practices in the study area in particular (see Table 6.3) and Ghana in general. Generally, these domestic and farm or fishing works are not regarded as being hazardous to their health and education, but rather contribute to their informal training (Tengey and Oguaah 2002: xiv). Thus, poor parents or guardians who face difficulties in taking care of their children normally give them out to well-to-do friends or relatives in towns or cities to serve as domestics. The respondents during the FGDs and individual interviews confirmed in their remarks that some poor parents/guardian often released their children to relatives or family friends, believing that they (the children) will be better off when they are taken away.

Data from this study, however, indicate that many of these parents out of ignorance and desperation often give away their children to people who use them in all sorts of

activities such as forced labour and prostitution to generate income for themselves.⁵⁶ One of such incidents was confirmed by a parent at Amutinu during the fieldwork.

[...] Selina convinced me that apart from sending us money to look after her siblings, she will also let her go to school over there. She even promised to sponsor her to learn trading after school. That was why I allowed her to take the innocent girl away. Until I was informed, I did not know that Selina's aim was to use my daughter to run a prostitute business in Cotonou (Interview with Joseph, 2nd June, 2011).

Joseph's case does not, however, imply that poor households in the study locations do not benefit from placement and domestic servitude strategies. For example, apart from Sarah's case which is used as a case study in the subsequent section, in an interview, a male household head reported that he was able to open a drinking bar and a local restaurant for his wife from the money he got through his son's placement (Interview with Agbota, 4th June 2011). There was another revealing interview with a successful fish processor/trader and single parent, Mercy. Mercy said she hired one of her daughters to a customs officer, who was then working at the Ghana-Togo border at Aflao, as a domestic servant. It was the only way she could raise some money to look after her children. According to Mercy: "the current fish processing business is an outcome of the monies that I received as a result of my daughter's servitude" (Interview with Mercy, 4th June 2011).

Data from the Department of Social Welfare in the District indicates that between 2005 and the time of the interview, the Department handled 65 child trafficking cases. Evidence from the Department further indicates that, out of the fear that these intercepted trafficked children would be re-trafficked, most of them were not reintegrated with their destitute parents.

These children [trafficked children] are from destitute homes, so for their parents to go to that extent of selling them to meet their survival needs is not something that will surprise you. This is why we don't even give most of them back to their parents [...] of course,

⁵⁶ Information from the Department of Social Welfare, Ketu South District

they will be re-trafficked if we do [give them back to their destitute parents] (Interview, Korsi, Ketu South District Social Welfare Department, 2nd July 2011).

Table 6.3 provides the number of child trafficking cases handled by the Department of Social Welfare within the period mentioned above.

Table 6.2: Child Trafficking Cases Handled by the Department of Social Welfare in the Ketu South District between 2005 and July 2011

Year	No. of Cases By Male	Age	No. of Cases By Female	Age	Destination of Victim	
					<i>Ghana</i>	<i>Togo</i>
2005	2	13 – 14	1	12	2	1
2006	--	--	3	9 – 11	1	2
2007	3	13 – 14	5	10 – 15	4	4
2008	13	3 – 14	12	3 – 15	17	8
2009	4	11 – 14	13	8 – 17	8	9
2010	2	11 – 14	6	8 – 13	5	3
2011	--	--	1	16	--	1
Total	24		41		37	28

Source: Department of Social Welfare, Ketu South District.

From the above table, it can be seen that out of the 65 cases within the period, 41 were females and 24 males, implying that females are more trafficked in the District than males. With regards to the final destinations of the trafficked children, those trafficked outside Ghana are less in number than those trafficked within, as shown in table 6.3.

For the purpose of clarity and simplification, the remaining section presents three case studies of child trafficking and placement⁵⁷ to illustrate: i.) the reasons behind their adaptation; ii.) their nature; and iii.) how they are able to change the life-world of the households who adopt them.

6.6.4 Coping/survival strategy based on “child bonded labour”: The case of Kofi

Interviewer: Tell me how you have been coping with life given the large number of children you say you have.

Kofi: Hmmm, my son, it has never been easy for me and my family, but you know what, ‘you don’t have to dose when you can sleep on the small mat you have’⁵⁸.

The general notion of the poor parents giving out their children to traffickers or placing them under bonded labour and domestic servitude has been well captured by Kofi in using this proverb. The proverb literally means that one cannot be dosing when one has a mat, even if it is small. That is, although the mat is a small one it is better to use it than to continue to dose. Here, the ‘small mat’ refers to the children who are not of age to work. And the ‘dosing’ refers to the struggle for survival. So to Kofi, despite the fact that his children are under age, they still have to be used to get some money or income to sustain the family, hence hiring their services to someone for a fee. Kofi is a 41 year old fishing crew who counts himself as one of the poorest of the poor at Amutinu. He had to survive by sending two of his children into bonded labour. His story follows.

I was the second child of my late father’s ten children. My father was once working with a fishing company at Tema but was redeployed in 1985. Because of harsh conditions at home, we left Tema for this place, where we started fishing with my father’s friends who owned nets and boats to earn a living instead of going to school. Initially, life was manageable, since I was able to earn enough income from fishing.

⁵⁷ These are the main identified cases that expatiate on how coping/survival strategies impact on child Tetekɔfe trafficking in the Ketu South District fishing communities.

⁵⁸ Translated from Ewe: ‘Abakpui menɔa amesi wo do akolɔe o’.

However, as soon as I got married, I lost my parents and was given the responsibility of looking after my six siblings. This is how my present predicament started. I became impoverished because of family commitments at home and was not able to make any savings or acquire any assets.

Even though my siblings are now on their own, I presently have twelve children and two wives but without any stable source of income. Life has become very difficult at home, ever since the fishing business has gone down. I was finding it impossible to provide food for my family. I could not cloth them well and even take them to the hospital any time they fall sick. Moreover, I was so much indebted to my friends that none of them was ready to help any longer. Although my wives worked as head porters on every market day at Denu to earn a little money to supplement what I was providing, our living condition was still getting from bad to worse. We sometimes spent days or a week, especially during the lean seasons without eating any proper food except coconut.

In 2010, one of my children and her mother fell seriously ill. I became so confused. I tried several traditional medicines but their conditions could not change for the better. It was then that I approached a friend in the next village for help. This friend of mine introduced me to a chief fisherman man whose name I cannot provide now. This man was ready to help me with Two thousand New Ghana Cedis (GH¢, 2,000) on condition that I allowed two of my sons to stay and work for him for two years. My wives were initially hesitant when I told them. But when I deceived them later that the man had promised to help them [their two sons] go to school during their stay, they gave their consent.

After receiving their mothers' consent, I called my two sons who were then twelve and fourteen years respectively. I told them that one of their uncles would be taking them to Benin. I took them to the man the following week and received the money as promised. Although our situation has not changed for the better at the moment, at least, I was able to provide treatment for their sister and mother from the money and used some to settle almost all my debts to avoid all the embarrassments I was subjected to by my creditors. My wives are now into petty trading from the rest of the money to provide food and cloth for the rest of the children.

We further discovered that, although Kofi claimed he has been receiving letters from the ‘custodian’ of his sons, he had never visited them ever since they were taken away. All the same, he considered the extension of their stay to enable him receive more financial assistance.

6.6.5 Coping/survival strategy based on “outright sale of children”: The case of Mark

Mark and his wife Cecelia were married for eighteen years with nine children: four boys (five to thirteen years of age) and five girls (two to fifteen years old). Fishing is Mark’s main source of income although he also engages in salt harvesting with his wife during the dry season. For the past six years, Mark’s life has been plagued with difficulties, including internal shocks: he lost his only brother that used to help him financially a year before his house was completely destroyed by a severe flood. When life was becoming unbearable for the household, Mark who said he was 50 years old at the time of this research apparently sold two of his sons to a fisherman in Gabon to enable to him provide for his household’s needs. The following is Mark’s story:

I have been a fishing crew for about 35 years now. I do not have any canoe, boat or net and have been surviving on others who have such fishing equipment ever since I started fishing. Initially the fishing business was very profitable as we could catch enough fish throughout the year. The owner of the fishing company I was working with was very supportive. He used to give me loans any time I approached him without asking for early payment. As a result, I was able to save and provide enough for the welfare of my children, including my extended family members. I had a two-bedroom house with enough space where I was keeping a small poultry to support the household. One of my brothers whom I supported in the training college was also remitting us regularly with money and food as soon as he started working.

However, my entire life, including that of my household members changed for the worse just one night in July 2005. I lost my house and other properties in a severe flood that affected the entire village. Meanwhile, my brother who would have been my only hope also died the previous year in a motor accident. Since then, I have never been able

to have sufficient money and food to feed my family. My children dropped out from school and started working to fend for themselves. My entire family was exposed to hunger and frequent sickness. All efforts to re-organize my life failed as the fish catch in our area also dwindled drastically.

As our living conditions in the house became unbearable, two of my elderly sons and I joined a fishing company in Gabon in 2009. Throughout our stay, my sons' hard work attracted the attention of other fishing companies over there. So when we were about to return to Ghana, the owner of a Gabonese fishing company expressed interest in them, and approached me to allow them to work with him. Since the man promised that they would be well rewarded at the end of every fishing season, I did not refuse. That is how I left my sons behind.

It is important to point out that Mark did not tell us during our discussions in a 'plain language' that he sold his sons. However, one of his wives who interrupted the interview at a point interjected, "tell them the truth, Wotodia Kobla and his friend who also work as a fishing crew in Gabon told me two months ago that the fishing company which you claim our sons are working with over there does not exist". Apart from that, having considered the age of his sons (seven and thirteen years respectively), and his responses to our follow-up questions, one can conclude that he did sell the boys in Gabon. For example, when we asked him whether he had visited or heard from his sons ever since he left them, Mark said no. Moreover, he was also not able to tell us the exact time the boys will return from Gabon when we enquired. All he could say was that they would come back one day. Our further probe into Mark's story also revealed that he collected an undisclosed amount of money⁵⁹ from the so called 'employer' of his sons at the time he (Mark) was returning to Ghana.

6.6.6 Coping/survival strategy based on "child domestic servitude": The case of Sarah

Sarah is a 47 year old widow. She was the second wife of her late husband and is a mother of eight children: five boys (three to nine years of age) and three girls (five to

⁵⁹ Mark declined to tell us the exact amount of money he collected.

eleven years old). Her husband spent all his life as a fishing crew but died in 2009 without any property except two thatch houses. Sarah used to earn a 'very low' income from the harvesting and sale of salt. She had no other possibility to earn an income. As a result, she could not provide sufficient medical care and nutritious food for herself and her children. Due to Sarah's persistent hardship, she gave one of her daughters to a trader (a woman) in Lome to serve as a domestic worker for five years. The woman rewards her back home with money, food and clothing. The following is what she had to say about her situation:

I am a mother of eight children and the second wife of my husband who passed away two years ago. He was a fishing crew working with one of his friends who owned a fishing company. Therefore, apart from this small house we are occupying now, he could not leave behind any other property for us to live on. Moreover, his brothers are also not in any sound position in terms of finance to support us. Meanwhile, two of my children, the second and the last born were always looking pale and weak. People always advised me to take them to the hospital but I could not do so because I did not register with the National Health Insurance Scheme. I had to keep on borrowing money and begging for alms every now and then from friends before I could buy medicine for them. It had been a hardship and struggle before I could provide them with one meal a day and dress to wear. In fact, there was a time when I could not go out to any social gathering and visit friends and relatives as I did not have any decent cloth to wear. I was like an outcast. Life had completely failed me, my brother.⁶⁰

Somewhere last year, around April, a friend informed me that her business partner in Lome was looking for a house-help to hire. Since life was becoming extremely difficult for me and my children, I had no choice but to release one of my daughters to her. Ever since she left, her madam has been sending us food and money on monthly basis, as we both agreed on, through my friend. She sent us Fifty New Ghana Cedis (GH¢ 50) the very week my daughter was sent to her, and I invested it in kerosene and coconut oil business. Even though I still remain poor, at least my children do not go to bed without food any more. Yes, I also registered all my children, including myself with the National Health Insurance Scheme just last month.

⁶⁰ We were compelled to break the interview with Sarah at this point for almost fifteen minutes because she burst into uncontrollable tears.

In answer to other questions we asked her, Sarah revealed that her daughter often complains to her through a friend about how the woman always subjects her to severe physical and verbal abuse at the least provocation. According to Sarah, some of her daughter's complaints also indicate that she always works for long hours, goes to bed very late and wakes up very early. As a result, and according to Sarah, her daughter always wanted to return to the village. However, Sarah's main concern is that her daughter's return to the village would shut their main source of livelihood down and this may send her household back to its former situation where they used to go to bed without food.

6.7 Key issues from the three cases

The voices of these three respondents capture the poor and vulnerable in the study locations in terms of their defencelessness and exposure to shocks or stress, and the strategies that they adopt to cope or survive. They also represent the voices of many others like them. Their narratives thus provide a broad idea about child trafficking and related strategies that are being employed by the poor and vulnerable in the fishing communities of the Ketu South District to survive. The poverty situation in such cases can be linked to an insecure livelihood, large family size, illness, the loss of family members and multiple deprivations. All the three cases thus confirm the fact that abject poverty and vulnerability are the major causes of child trafficking. The cases have a gender dimension. That is, while the female victim ended up in domestic servitude, their male counterparts found themselves in the fishing industry. Sarah's case also highlights the fact that trafficked victims are exposed to excessive exploitation and hardships.

In addition, the narratives from all the three cases demonstrate that, children become their poor parents' last source of livelihood. Whatever the outcome, it is worth noting that the strategies highlighted in all the cases have the objective to lessen the adverse impact of the households' deteriorating situation. It is needless to say that in the long run such strategies have damaging consequences. It is highly probable that after some time the gain from this transaction will be gone and the

household may fall back into abject poverty. In other words if there is no change in the conditions which generate poverty the giving away of children is likely to lead to the depletion of human capital, social damages and increased levels of poverty and vulnerability in these households.

6.8 Discussion

6.8.1 Occupational and livelihood strategies

As shown above, the livelihood options undertaken by the households in the fishing communities of Ketu South District to make a living fall under intensification, diversification and migration. However, the intensification option is limited to wealthy household heads and their members. The study has revealed that the household heads who pursue intensification in combination with other portfolio of activities are mostly boat and net owners (80 per cent, N=12). Generally, most of them have more access to both physical and financial capital and therefore are able to hire the labour of other people in their various income-generating activities. This finding suggests that households' decision to pursue or not to pursue the intensification option is, to some extent, contingent on availability of labour and financial capital (Scoones, 1998; Swift, 1989). Further, the livelihood option of intensification pursued by this category of respondents is limited to fishery.

The respondents in the diversification group are both the well-off and the poor with different occupational grounds. The poor respondents engage in other income generating activities to enable them save money to settle their debts and also to provide food for themselves and members of their household. On the other hand, the well-off respondents undertake such activities with the aim to improve their livelihoods and also to invest in production. This suggests that the diversification option pursued by the poor in the study locations is more or less a coping or survival strategy. In this I agree with Chambers' (1997: 162-187; see also Tacoli, 2000) argument that poor people normally have to diversify sources of livelihood in order to survive in a risk-prone and uncertain world. De Haan and Zommers (2003) also

observe from a similar viewpoint that diversification can be both a coping and an adaptive strategy or can be posed as the contrast between survival and choice.

In addition, the study has also revealed that factors, such as access to capital, determine the type of diversification activities that the households pursue. Household heads (especially the fish processors/traders) that earn more income as well as have access to other assets engage in diversification of activities and therefore attract more income to improve their prospects for development, whereas those with little or no access undertake activities that generate low or very low income.

Furthermore, the role of women in the livelihood activities was also explored. The survey result revealed that almost three quarters (74.6 per cent) of the male household heads reported that their wives are involved in income generating activities, such as petty trading, fish processing, salt harvesting and carrying of goods in the market for a fee. Moreover, the female household heads also engaged in other activities like the sale of food-stuffs and clothing in addition to their primary livelihood activities. This means that just like their male counterparts, women equally occupy an important position in terms of economic activities in fishing communities of Ketu South District. This is supported by other studies (Mensah *et al.*, 2006; Overå, 2001) cited in Chapter 2.

The outcome of the study has policy implications. Poverty reduction policies aimed at promoting women in fishing communities should not focus only on those who are in the fishery business but also on those who are involved in other income generating activities besides them.

Finally, migration has been identified as one of the important strategies pursued in the communities under study by both wealthy and poor household heads to contribute to their household's welfare or increase their financial and physical capital. The pattern of migration in the study location reflects a level of access to

assets and dependency. For example, the migration option for the fishing crew, in particular, is heavily dependent on the net and boat owners who employ them for their fishing companies.⁶¹ Therefore, it may not be possible for every crew in the study area to pursue migration on a regular basis. The finding in this study is supported by Campbell & Townsley (1995) who argue that migration is a response to declining catches and it is open only to a few fisher folks. Further, the finding that fishermen in the communities under study migrate to neighbouring countries for better fishing opportunities corroborates other studies like Bortei-Doku Aryeetey (1991), Odotei (1995), Anarfi *et al.* (2003) and Mensah *et al.* (2006) who found that most Ghanaian fishermen can be found in Togo, Benin, Ivory Coast, as well as Congo, Sierra Leon and Guinea.

On the whole, this study has revealed that the pursuance of various livelihood strategies does not necessarily guarantee the generation of sufficient income. The number and type of livelihood activities that households in the Ketu South District fishing communities engage in might not necessarily determine their level of income. Other factors such as ownership of production assets like fishing net and boats play a major role, and by this it seems that high-return livelihood activities are determined by capabilities and access to financial and physical capital.

The findings have policy implications. We need to assess how different rural-poverty-reduction-based policies in Ghana's legislation and programmes can best support livelihood strategies of rural fishing communities. In this context, greater consideration of the relationship between livelihood strategies and the provision of fishing inputs as well as credit facilities for rural fishing communities is necessary.

⁶¹ Beach seine, which is the main fishing method of the coastal fishing communities in the Volta Region, is normally operated by a large group of men. This makes it very costly, hence net and boat owners who migrate with this group of men need to earn these costs back (Chief fisherman, 20th June, 2001; see also Kraan, 2009: 159). This may explain why they are normally hesitant to employ men who are not healthy and hardworking during their migration to other places for fishing.

6.8.2 Vulnerability and institutional contexts: Impact on access to assets and livelihood strategies

In Ghana's poverty reduction approach, consideration is given to the national agenda for poverty reduction in the artisanal fisheries sector. In line with this, decentralization institutions are supported to play an important role in co-management and development in fishing communities (Kwadjosse, 2009: 43). This way, policies are to support stakeholder participation at community level with regards to fisheries management. The obvious reason is to reduce the risk of poverty among fishing communities by enhancing their access to assets necessary for their livelihood strategies and well-being.

Nonetheless, in the case of current development, there has been no discernible improvement. Indeed, as evident in this study, both vulnerability and institutional environments have negatively impacted on fishing communities' access to assets upon which their livelihood strategies are built. The finding in study that Government fails to protect the interest of artisanal fishing activities from industrial fishing trawlers is supported by other studies in Ghana. Akyeapong (2007) and Atubuga and Atta-Kesson (undated), show that artisanal fishermen in the country have made complaints over the years on how fishing activities of industrial trawlers have been affecting their livelihood. Yet, the evidence in the present study suggests that no concrete step has so far been taken to address the situation. This lackadaisical approach in addressing the issue by the government authorities concerned seem to partly contribute to the current plight of the fishermen in the Ketu South District fishing communities.

With regard to the vulnerability context, data in this study has shown that sickness, ever-increasing prices of foodstuff and fishing inputs as well as the fishery regulatory policies and high susceptibility to natural disasters like flood and rising sea level. These are the main factors that constitute serious handicaps for many households. Information in the study has further indicated that almost every household in the study locations had been affected by the above vulnerability contexts in one way or the other. This may be partly explained by the fact that gains

in line with the decentralization process are not felt among disadvantaged households in the Ketu South District fishing communities. Their continued exposure to negative effects may account for their difficulty or inability to ever come out of abject poverty.

The findings have policy implications. Holistic resilience-building to cope with such contexts is necessary. As argued by Jentoft *et al.* (2000), the problem of vulnerability and resilience goes far beyond fishery regulations and must encompass a more holistic approach to fishery communities. What this implies is that the protection of the fisheries cannot be adequately carried out without the participation of people who depend on it for a living. This underscores the need for a ‘bottom-up’ approach by taking steps to involve fishing community members in the fishery resource management. A better movement towards greater appreciation of fishing communities in managing the fishery resources will not only help to reduce their vulnerability through the building of a resilient livelihood platform, but will also increase their income. Such approach is also likely to reduce the susceptibility of the ecosystem.

6.8.3 Livelihood outcomes: The responses

Ghana has over the past years experienced deepening poverty with an intensification of vulnerability and exclusion of groups and some parts of the country (GoG, 2003: ii). According to McNamara (1981) a condition that is so limited by malnutrition and disease among others as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency can be described as absolute poverty. Chapter 5 reveals that, although a few of the sampled household heads in the study locations earn ‘high’ or ‘medium’ incomes, the vast majority of them fall in the category of “low or very low” income.

The findings in this study further show that most of the household heads who failed to achieve their livelihood outcomes are not only heavily indebted but also lack access to assets. Consequently, they could not pursue any profitable livelihood strategies to generate enough income to ensure good health and general well-being

for themselves and their household. Conversely, a few household heads (19.3 per cent) who were able to achieve their livelihood outcomes did so because they had access to more assets. With these findings, it is possible to infer that the type and number of assets that households are able to command determines the livelihood strategies that they pursue. This in turn determines their ability to achieve or fail to achieve their livelihood outcomes.

The finding has policy implications in that it identifies entry barriers to high-income livelihood strategies among rural artisanal fishing communities in Ghana. Furthermore, the finding that women household heads constitute 9.7 per cent of the above mentioned well-off household heads is in a way supported by Elaine Pearson that, “money in women’s hands will directly facilitate women into productive economic activity” (Pearson, 2007:207).

6.8.4 Coping/survival strategies and child trafficking: The link

The interrelatedness between poverty and child trafficking has been widely documented, with poverty being both a cause and the consequence of child trafficking in West Africa (see for example, Adepoju, 2002 and Troung, 2005). Findings from fishing communities in the Ketu South District reveal that some of the poor fisher households rely on trafficking of their children to cope with or survive livelihood changes. Excessive poverty and vulnerability have increased the disposition to accept child trafficking as a survival strategy, which implies that poverty intensified child trafficking in the communities under study. Furthermore, the evidence that the above described strategies are socio-cultural practices that culminate in the full blown child trafficking phenomenon further highlights that culture and availability of ‘resources’ (in this case children) may determine the methods that poor people employ to survive or cope with excessive adversity.

On the basis of the above findings, this study intends to argue that any legal measure against child trafficking that is based on “top down” approaches is bound to be ineffective. That is, a legal approach in curbing child trafficking in fishing communities requires an active consultation with the various community members. It has to take into consideration the nature of their poverty and how it interacts with

vulnerability contexts, capabilities as well as the socio-cultural environments. Certainly, legislations would help but it is equally important to address the main root causes of child trafficking through the development of policies that incorporate the nature and interactions of these factors.

As identified in this study, the final destinations of the trafficked victims are outside Ghana. This might allude to the introduction of the Human Trafficking Act of 2005.⁶² This law can be applied only to human traffickers as well as to the users of trafficked victims in Ghana but other actors outside cannot be incriminated. This highlights the fact that relying on national legal mechanism only is likely to send the whole practice further beyond the surveillance of the law enforcement agents.

Rethinking of intervention mechanisms to combat child trafficking, poverty and vulnerable settlements in Ghana is therefore necessary. There is the need for government and other stakeholders to improve the living conditions of fishing communities through poverty eradication measures such as the promotion and provision of income generating schemes as well as basic infrastructure that can enhance dignified living. Here, it is worth recalling Skeldon's argument in Chapter One that "the elimination of trafficking is unlikely to be realistically achieved through legislation and declaration of intent, but by improvements in the socio-economic states of the populations" (Skeldon, 2000:8).

6.9 Summary and conclusion

This chapter has explored the various livelihood strategies pursued by fisher households in the Ketu South District and the outcomes derived to ensure their households well-being with particular emphasis on the link between the various coping/survival strategies they adopt and child trafficking. The identified livelihood strategies and features of household head categories were highlighted and defined with corresponding case studies.

⁶² Under the Act a person who uses a trafficked person commits an offence and is liable to a term of a minimum of five years in prison.

The analysis indicates that households which have little or no access to capital are most likely to remain poor as a result of their inability to take the necessary steps that can enable them recover from their vulnerability. There seems also to be a correlation between the households' access to capital and the outcome of the livelihood strategies they pursue. That is, although both the poor and well-off households pursue diversification and migration strategies, household heads with more access to capital have an edge over those without or with less access in the pursuance of livelihood strategies, since they (the poor households) are forced to low-income activities. Besides lack of access to capital, factors such as institutional and vulnerability contexts of the respondents also hampered their livelihood strategies. They identified high prices of food and fishing inputs associated with government policies, sickness, flooding, and the death of household members as potential challenges that impinged their livelihood strategies.

In addition, the various livelihood outcomes that the household respondents aim to achieve were identified as 'reduced vulnerability', 'higher income', 'good health' and 'well-being', 'food security' as well as 'more access to assets'. They are in line with the elements of the modified livelihood framework in Chapter 2.

These elements were classified into three categories, namely 'positive outcome', 'mid outcome' and 'negative outcome' based on the answers provided by the respondents. The household heads who pursue all the three identified livelihood strategies and the female household heads who follow only diversification achieve their livelihood outcomes, and by this belong to the 'positive' category. They have enough access to capital as well as stable income generating activities. As such, they are able to ensure their well-being and that of members of their household through the provision of nutritious food and good health care, implying that they are least susceptible to vulnerability. The respondents in this particular group are able to invest in the development of their children through schooling or learning of some form of trade. They are also very influential in their various communities in terms of

decision-making. The best category of respondents in this group are mostly net and boat owners and fish processors/traders.

Furthermore, the household heads who strive to achieve their livelihood outcomes and thus fall under the 'mid outcomes' category are young persons with small size households. Many of them follow migration and diversification strategies but earn medium income with less access to assets. They are, however, in the process of achieving their identified livelihood outcomes. They always manage to provide adequate health care and food for themselves and their household members. Members of this group take part in decisions on issues pertaining to their various communities, albeit not very influential.

Those in the 'negative' outcomes group are those who fail to achieve their livelihood outcomes. These household heads are characterized by large household sizes, debts and less access to different types of capital, even though they engage in migration and diversification strategies. They have no established income-generating activities, work for long hours but earn insufficient income. The household heads in this group hardly have proper daily meals, health care and clothing for themselves and their household members. They usually resort to selling the labour of their children to generate income for the household instead of sending them to school. Against this background, they are less respected and do not take part in any decision-making processes in their communities. The survey indicates that approximately 80 per cent (N=238) of the sampled household heads failed to achieve their livelihood outcome. This highlights the endemic and abject nature of poverty and vulnerability in the Ketu South District fishing communities.

Abject poverty and desperation of the poor households to survive have compelled some of them to resort to strategies that reinforced pre-existing traditional practices that culminate in the intensification of the trafficking of their children. The three commonly identified coping/survival strategies that can be specifically classified under the definition of 'child trafficking' in Chapter 2 within the study communities are 'child bonded labour', 'child domestic servitude' and 'outright selling of

children'. The next chapter (the concluding chapter) is devoted to the summary of the key findings of the study and relevant recommendations towards the empowerment of the communities under study, through human rights, in their fight against poverty for dignified life.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations for Empowerment through Human Rights

7.1 Introduction

To clearly understand poverty and vulnerability in fishing communities in Ghana, we have to contextualise their living conditions. The relevant political and economic frame is determined by: the transition from the authoritarian system under Acheampong, Akuffo and Rawlings to democracy, economic reform through structural adjustment programmes and the economic effect of globalization. The military and the elected governments up to the 1980s were both not able and willing to bring an end to the economic mismanagement. The country's institutional system and government policies did not succeed in bringing development for all. Since 1983, the Rawlings government embraced the policy of market-oriented structural adjustment programme pursued by the Bretton Woods institutions. This globally applied blue print brought macro-economic benefits to countries in sub-Saharan Africa, but it negatively affected the poor in rural areas and the poorest of the poor in urban centres across the region. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 3, the adjustment programme penetrated deeply the various sectors of the Ghanaian economy and 'trickled down' to the artisanal fishing communities under investigation. In addition, the influence of globalization failed to benefit artisanal fishers very much. It exposed their fishing activities to foreign industrial fishing trawlers and made traditional fishing methods less competitive in the face of the declining fish stock. All of the above occurrences have induced major economic hardship in rural fishing communities. To ensure their well-being, members of these communities have resorted to different strategies based on their socio-economic circumstances to maintain their living standard or just to survive.

As previously mentioned, poverty has been widely acknowledged as a factor strongly associated with child trafficking in rural fishing communities in Ghana. Yet its causes and the strategies adopted at the household level to survive remain poorly understood. The main concern throughout in this study has been to unearth the structural factors responsible for poverty and the survival strategies that perpetuate child trafficking in the Ketu South District fishing communities. This study has thus added a different dimension to the child trafficking debate, given that previous investigations on it focused insufficiently on the root causes responsible for its prevalence. The present study also deals with the link between survival strategies and child trafficking.

The two broad questions of this study were namely: 1.) What are the root causes of poverty and vulnerability within fishing communities in the Ketu South District of Ghana? 2.) How do survival/coping strategies as a way of managing risk precipitate trafficking in children? The specific questions that emanated from the above questions include: a.) In what ways do the vulnerability context such as shocks, trends, seasonality and the institutional setting impact on access to assets and livelihood strategies of fishing communities? b.) In what ways do access to capital impact on the livelihood strategies and outcomes of households in the fishing communities? c.) How do the livelihood or coping/survival strategies adopted in fishing communities stimulate trafficking in children?

Poverty and livelihood are complex issues and need to be approached from a multidimensional and holistic perspective. Therefore, to address the above enlisted questions, the study combines the livelihood, human right-based and capability approaches to poverty and development. Such an approach allowed the incorporation of dimensions of rights, capability and entitlement, and with this contributes to the argument that livelihood is not only about access to capital, but it is also about exercise of agency. The livelihood framework that served as an analytical model for this study has been adopted to integrate the above mentioned perspectives. The aim was to capture the interrelation between micro and macro policies, and individual, household and community activities considering the

influence of, and access to, capital and livelihood strategies as well as outcomes. The study focused on rural coastal artisanal fishing communities in the Ketu South District. In all, a sample size of 238 households and key information providers who have knowledge of the issues under investigation were used to generate data. A variety of both qualitative and quantitative social science methods were employed in the data collection.

My intention in this chapter therefore is to provide the summary of the key findings in relation to the research questions formulated for the study. The chapter is divided into three main sections. In the first section, I present the salient findings. One of the main frames of this thesis is to generate a proposal that can lead to the empowerment of the poor communities under study through human rights in their fight against poverty. Consequently, the second section of the chapter is devoted to the recommendations towards such empowerment. This is followed by recommendations for further study in the third section.

7.2 Summary of key findings

7.2.1 Impacts of vulnerability and institutional contexts on access to assets and livelihood strategies.

Regardless of its socio-economic status, the livelihood strategy a household or an individual employs depends on access to assets. The study has shown that vulnerability and institutional contexts, such as loss of property through flooding, sudden price fluctuations, serious illness or death of household members, and government policies were the factors that constrain access to assets and livelihood strategies of households. Data analysis from the study reveals that households with low or no access to capital were barely able to deal with shocks, diseases and stress. That is in a vicious circle, households' inability to deal with vulnerability tend out to hamper their access to assets and strategies to enhance their resilience to vulnerability. But then this study found also that some households with high access to assets experience vulnerability (see 6.3.1). This means that the relationship

between households' or individual's access to capital and resilience to vulnerability is not simple or linear; it is rather complex.

Institutional context also plays a crucial role in terms of access to assets and livelihood strategies. Issues concerning institutions, livelihood and assets include policies and laws as well as general rules and norms that guide people's behaviour on what assets to access and how. The institutions that influence households' and individuals' access to assets and livelihood strategies have been broadly categorized in this study into formal (government) and informal (traditional) institutions (see section 5.5). Concerning their influences, the study has shown that lack of proper co-ordination between members of the studied communities and the government regarding the fishery management has adversely impacted on their access to assets and livelihood activities. Closely related to this are frequent government induced increases in prices of fishing inputs and staple food as well as the lack of credit and infrastructural support. High prices of fishing inputs and food do not only lead to high transaction costs and low incomes of fisherfolks, they also account for poor nutrition and poor health of the population. This hampered man power and income activities to acquire assets. In the context of informal institutions, women continue to suffer marginalisation and discrimination in the name of socio-cultural practices and norms in the study location. This practice is related to the fact that women still remain subordinate to men in accessing assets. An instance of this in this study is the denial of women the right to inherit their late husbands' and fathers' properties. Another instance is related to the prohibition of women to go to the beach for fish during their menstrual period. The study shows that socio-cultural conception of womanhood in the study setting has created a situation where women are denied their entitlements and rights to access assets for the enhancement of their livelihood strategies.

7.2.2 Influence of access to capital on livelihood strategies and outcomes

It is generally argued that implementing livelihood strategies is possible only if there is access to different types of capital. Capital has been defined as the stock of assets or capabilities that can be used to generate the means of survival or well-being of a

household. The livelihood approach was used to highlight all assets and capabilities, and the fundamental relationships that exist between them in terms of livelihood strategies and outcomes. In general, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis has revealed that households in the Ketu South District communities have low access to almost all types of capital identified in the framework to enhance their livelihood strategies and outcomes.

The study indicates that almost half of the sampled households have large numbers of children. Many of these children aged 5 years and above engage in both fishing and non-fishing related activities to contribute to the financial upkeep of the household. It must be pointed out that using children this way leads to a culture which encourages unethical practices of child labour and trafficking.

It is found that all the respondents engage in income-generating activities. Among those who earn 'high' and 'medium' incomes (see 5.2.3) were nets and outboard motors owners as well as fish processors/traders. The remaining, mostly fishing crew, earned a 'low' to 'very low' income. Apparently, this category of the respondents could not engage in any high income generating activity because they lacked capital. Lack of education may also hamper the potential of escaping poverty. The study has revealed that many household heads have very little or no formal education. However, contrary to the common assumption, it is rather the fish processors/traders and net and boat owners, that is people earning higher income, who have low or no educational attainment. This means that the development of human capital through formal education alone is not sufficient to enhance people's capacity to engage in high income generating activities.

This study has further established that the lack of access to social amenities like potable water and electricity as well as toilet facilities constrains individuals and households in evolving their livelihood strategies. With regards to health care, there are not sufficient facilities to meet the needs of the population, while lack of finance is the main factor responsible for the inability of many households to have access. They do not have the money to register with the National Health Insurance Scheme

which would guarantee them access to Government hospitals. Low income has again made it impossible for many poor households to meet basic needs like the provision of food and potable water. The main consequences are frequent illness and inability of members of these poor households to pursue income generating activities on a regular basis.

Livelihood strategies and outcomes are strongly linked to social capital. Access to social capital enhances access to both financial and non-financial capital of households in the study locations. Many family heads who fall within the 'high income' and 'medium income' groups have sufficient access to social capital, whereas those who fall under 'low income' groups have no or inadequate access to social capital. This development creates a vicious circle in the sense that just as access to financial capital is important for the households to improve their access to social capital, access to social capital is equally crucial in enhancing their access to financial capital. This study has found that many individuals could not have access to social capital as a result of their inability to fulfil financial membership obligations. This highlights the versatility of financial capital in the livelihood framework, since it can be used to acquire other types of capital.

Natural capital was also identified as a fundamental asset for fisher households in the Ketu South District. It became clear that the majority of the households in the study area depend on fishery and lack access to other natural resources such as land to enhance their livelihood outcome. With respect to political capital, it was found that individuals who are officially affiliated to political parties use their positions to accumulate assets at the expense of non-members, implying that a household's access to assets can either be enhanced or constrained by political capital.

The three main types of livelihood strategies adopted by households to earn an income are intensification, diversification and migration. The study describes a strong relationship between capital, livelihood strategies and livelihood outcomes. The pursuance of livelihood strategies was determined by the households' access to capital. Only households with nets and boats followed intensification strategies (see

Chapter 6). The livelihood outcomes that the household heads desired to achieve is related to their ability to: ‘decrease vulnerability’, ‘increase income’, ‘maintain good health and well-being’, ‘achieve food security’ as well as ‘have more access to assets’. However, only a few sampled households, owners of nets and boats as well as fish processors/traders, achieved their livelihood outcomes. The ability of households to achieve livelihood goals was contingent on their level of access to capital, which, in turn, determined the type of livelihood strategies they pursue to generate income. This finding underpins the assumption in the conventional livelihood approach that accessibility to capital determines the livelihood strategies of people.

This study found three categories of households in terms of achievement of livelihood outcomes, namely ‘positive’, ‘mid’ and ‘negative’. Income from fishery resources plays a crucial role in the households’ financial capital and also determines their vulnerability and access to other types of capital. It was found that households have to combine all types of capital to pursue their various livelihood strategies and to achieve outcomes. The interworking of people’s initial endowments and capabilities determine their livelihood strategies and outcomes. In the analysis of the study results it was found that households that earned less income also lacked collateral to access credit facilities. This shows that all types of capital and capabilities are interconnected and interdependent on the livelihood platform, implying that access to one type is not enough to pursue livelihood strategies that can lead to sufficient outcomes.

One of the arguments advanced in this study is that although declining catches have adversely affected the income levels of many households in the Ketu South District fishing communities, it would be too simplistic to draw an overall conclusion from this factor and link the current poverty of households in the area to declining fish stock. The main conclusion drawn in this study is that deprivation of their capabilities plays a major role.

7.2.3 Child trafficking as a survival strategy unveiled

As mentioned earlier, coping and survival strategies are measures that are employed by vulnerable groups in mobilizing all available resources to survive (Blaikie *et al.* 1994) destitution and death. One of the important findings in the Ketu South District context and the four fishing communities under study in particular, is that the strategies employed by many poor households to survive stimulate child trafficking. These strategies have been categorized into child placement, domestic servitude and child bonded labour. Abject poverty or destitution as a result of inadequate or lack of alternative source of income coupled with socio-cultural practices was found to be significantly responsible for the trafficking of children in these communities. It was found that child trafficking is neatly linked to manipulation by friends and relatives of the poor parents. They lure them with money and gifts and recruit their children for exploitation or re-selling to other people to generate income. Thus, in the absence of fall-back options for the poor parents who fail to access other activities for their livelihood, trafficking of their children is the sole survival strategy for themselves and their household members. Out of desperation to survive,⁶³ poor parents resort to either outright selling of their children or releasing them to traffickers in order to generate money to cover their basic needs. Moreover, many of the extended family support organizations fail to absorb poor members who could not fulfil its financial obligations (see section 6.4.3). In this context, the economic hardship has destroyed the social value to protect the family and its members, especially children, within the existing web of relations: kin, families and friends on which people could fall back for economic and social security. In other words, kin and familial social mechanism are no longer reliable in providing security in the present increasingly insecure socio-economic environment. This study found that although some of the parents are aware of the Government's efforts to incriminate and punish actors involved in the trafficking business, they continue to release their children to be trafficked. What this means

⁶³ It is important to point out that the interpretation of the provision made in the 2000 Protocol on trafficking in persons has been currently made clear in terms of household survival strategy by a number of human trafficking documents. For example, under the definition of trafficking in persons, the 2010 TIP report by the U.S. Department of State clarifies that: indicators of possible forced labour of a child include situations in which the child appears to be in the custody of a non-family member who financially benefits someone outside the child's family and does not offer the child the option of leaving (U.S. Trafficking in Persons Report, 2010)

therefore is that the current approach to combat the phenomenon will not achieve its desired result. It is therefore important for the Government to adopt alternative measures that tackle the root causes responsible for its prevalence. These factors can be shown through a multi-level rather than a micro-level analysis of livelihood trends of rural fishing communities and their responses to the changing conditions.

7.3 Implications and recommendations for empowerment through human rights

As noted in Chapter 1, severe poverty is a human rights violation, and poverty in itself is the root cause of a number of human rights violations (Boesen and Martin, 2007: 9), such as child trafficking. Indeed, “[...] the existence of widespread extreme poverty inhibits the full and effective enjoyment of human rights” and “extreme poverty and social exclusion constitute a violation of human dignity” (Vienna Declaration, 1993). Moreover, poverty can emanate from conditions that are imposed on people or communities as an active act of exclusion or marginalization.

As shown in this study, present government policies in relation to poverty reduction in the fisheries sector in Ghana have demonstrably marginalized artisanal small-scale fishing communities and their members. This is because these policies and their implementations reflect a failure to formally acknowledge the rights and agency of fishers and their communities concerning the management of the sector as well as essential basic social amenities. It is also clear that the current approach to the management of the sector has a devastating effect on the well-being and rights of individuals and, particularly, children within the fishing communities in the Ketu South District.

Despite the fact that the deprivation of statutory social services has driven many households in these communities into abject poverty, the Government of Ghana continues to ignore the consequences of their poverty and vulnerability and fails to

provide enough support to mitigate the situation.⁶⁴ This unfortunate situation is not only a threat to human rights of these communities but also an obstacle to the realization of human rights-based development. The findings in this study thus suggest the need for empowerment strategies, which can protect and promote the human rights and agency of members of fishing communities as well as their rights as human being with dignity. Being human means exercising agent power to participate in decisions affecting one's life and having access to resources to ensure one's well-being. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as an account of human development, for example, holds that:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness [...] lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Standards for realizing these rights are set in terms of adequacy. It is thus argued in this study that empowerment through human rights benefits not only grown up individuals and households, but also children and communities as a whole through collective action for development. This will enable them to gain access to and control over material, intellectual and human resources as well as gaining authority over their own affairs (Jaspri, 2008: 5).

On the basis of the above, the following recommendation is made in order to reduce barriers to poor fishing communities' physical and material well-being through human rights empowerment strategies. The goal is not only to help them to establish a life with dignity, but also to eliminate such dehumanizing strategies they adopt to survive as a result of the abject conditions of extreme poverty to which they are subjected.

⁶⁴ Under the principles of protection and provision, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) requires states to protect the right to life, survival and the development of children. It is also worthy to note that special provisions regarding economic, social and cultural rights are also mentioned along with the right to health, clean water, sanitation, education, food, the prohibition of child labour and abuse (UNESCO, 2011: 24).

7.3.1 Participation in decision-making

Although declining catches have contributed a lot to significant changes in households' quality of life over recent years, the main concern is about their inability to make their voices heard. This concern is reflected in the fact that they have not been involved in decisions and policies on issues affecting their livelihood. It is very crucial to involve members of fishing communities in the management of the fisheries sector for its sustainability and the improvement of its communities to enable people to make choices that can enhance their agency and well-being. Under the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights concerning the right to development, community members have a right to be consulted by the government concerning key decisions in management and policy processes that affect their lives. Thus, the obligation to respect and protect the right in question requires that the Government of Ghana ensures the participation of poor fishing communities through the implementation of measures that can enable them to access all their human rights, including having voice and stake on issues affecting them within the fisheries sector.

Community need to be assisted in this process to claim this right in order to enhance their fight against poverty. Leaders and groups of fishing communities need to interact and collaborate with a range of human rights-based civil society groups and organizations. These organizations can play a critical role in supporting (the poor communities') capabilities by translating and interpreting vital information that can link the state and its actors (World Bank, 2002). This would not only enhance their access to information about important policy and planning decisions, but would also enable them to express their views on issues affecting their lives.

Over the years, the United Nations human rights instruments have been developed on the basis of international non-governmental organization and civil society debate and agreement (DfID, 2000: 11). Indeed, studies show that “many of today’s social movements defending economic, social and cultural rights are arising as protest against government decisions that hurt the livelihoods of the poor people” (Human Development Report, 2000:78). In this context, leaders and various fishing

community groups can also collaborate with civil society organizations to push for the translation of international and constitutionally recognized right to development into effective policies and programmes which promote universal access to resources and participation in development.

This is, for example, demonstrated in the case of Social and Economic Rights Action Centre & the Centre for Economic and Rights v. Nigeria on the action of the state's destruction and threats to the livelihood resources of the Ogoni communities of Nigeria.⁶⁵ In this case, when it became obvious that the state's measures continued to impede these communities' access to such resources, two non-governmental organizations⁶⁶ lodged a complaint for redress on behalf of the Ogonis.⁶⁷ The above case permits deprived and marginalized fishing communities in Ghana to take a similar step through such civil society organizations to protect and enhance access to resources that are important for their livelihood and well-being. Thus, these communities and their leaders need to seek assistance from similar legal service organizations or human rights civil society organizations to claim their rights through the courts.⁶⁸ Gaining free legal representation from these organizations would provide the poor communities with the chance to question and challenge the established patterns of authority that deprived them of their livelihood or access to basic social services. This would provide them with an opportunity to demand and claim their rights and entitlements with respect to such services. The case of Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) v. Federal Republic of Nigeria, where the ECOWAS court dismissed the Government's contention and supported the justiciability of the right to education,⁶⁹ for example,

⁶⁵ African Commission on Human and People's Rights, October 27, 2001 Communication no. 155/96 (Cited in UNESCO, 2011: 59)

⁶⁶ Social and Economic Rights Action Centre (SERAC) and the Centre for Economic and Social Rights (CESR)

⁶⁷ UNESCO (2011: 59)

⁶⁸ It is important to point out that in order to translate human rights principles into concrete actions, the Right to Food Guidelines in 2004 complement the ICESR and constitute a practical instrument at the national level. And the most relevant recommendations in terms of access to natural resources are participation of all stakeholders in decision-making process together with preferential treatment for vulnerable sectors of the population (Ekwall and Cruz, 2011: 9).

⁶⁹ Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) vrs. Federal Republic of Nigeria and Universal Basic Education Commission, no. ECW/CCJ/APP/0808, 27 October 2009 (cited in UNESCO, 2011: 32). In this case, the court of West African States (ECOWAS) adjudicated a claim based on the right to education, even if such a right was non-justiciable in domestic constitutional law in Nigeria.

permits the communities to access the international court through NGOs to seek the enforcement of their economic, social and cultural rights.

Thus, for an effective support for participation in and influence of Government decisions and policies, this study recommends that artisanal fishing communities in Ghana form strong vibrant local and national groups in partnership with human rights-based civil society organizations. These organizations can provide avenues for such groups by building their capacities as an entry point to advocate for the rights of the entire communities. High quality legal advice and training should be made available to these groups in order to ensure that their substantive claims on issues, which undermine their human dignity and place further constraints on their already limited choices, are fully and fairly heard.

In addition, given that the main principle of participation is about people as both agency and the object of development, direct participation of these groups can facilitate the level of devolution of power and responsibility at the community level. This will, in turn, create enabling environments for all members of the community to participate in development through the institutionalization of local democracy. It will also enable them to realize their potentials as agents of change in their respective communities.

In summary, increased decision-making powers through human rights will strengthen individuals and households as well as give greater ability to them to influence matters that affect their lives in the community and the country at large.

7.3.2 The need for the building of organizational capacity in communities

For the poor fishing communities to achieve barrier-free participation, to influence decisions and be able to care for themselves, they need organizational capacity building. This is because lack of this capacity can restrict their scope or undermine efforts to enhance their agency and well-being. In the light of this, various groups

and organizations in these communities need to establish strategic alliances with NGOs working in the field of development and human rights for technical support and training. These organizations need to be trained with emphasis on community development-driven projects with a view to developing arrangements that reinforce influence on government decisions.

They also need to be trained in mobilizing social capital and networks by connecting themselves with other groups similar to them or attaining resources of civil society or the state (World Bank, 2002). This will help them to form large federations with regional or national impact through the connection. By creating big associations they may gain collective bargaining power as well as have influence on government decisions (p. 18). The training of community organizations should not only aim at influencing government decisions, but should also reflect the emphasis on the mobilization of resources and acquisition of technical knowledge that can effectively meet the survival needs of their respective communities.

Thus, to enhance their capability to act collectively, the training of these organizations should focus on self-confidence and self-determination that can help them to mobilize resources to improve access of health, education and security of assets in their respective communities. As the World Bank puts it: “poor people who are healthy, educated, and secure can contribute more effectively to collective action; and at the same time, collective action can improve poor people’s access to quality schools or health clinic” (World Bank, 2002: 12). This would reduce the levels of abject poverty faced by households in these communities, as well as the exposure to risks and stress.

7.3.3 Need for human rights education and awareness creation

The Right to participate and the Right to information are mutually reinforcing and interconnected. The Right to information implies the need to encourage open ideas and increase of information about the decisions that have been made at both national and local levels. This includes feedback on rules and rights to basic government

services. Essential information can enable members of poor fishing communities to influence national and local government policy and practice. However, their levels of poverty and illiteracy can hamper their access to the media and other sources of vital information. As such, more provision for their support through the institutionalization and freedom of the local press is needed to provide them with these kinds of information in their local languages. Studies show that with global support network, civil action groups in all parts of the world are presently using civil and political rights of participation, association, free speech and information to expand the political space and press for economic and social rights (Human development report, 2000: 75). For example, in India, a local action group has been involved in defending the tribal people through the use of the right of information to demand better budget allocations (p. 75).

Thus, under the principles of universality of human rights, leaders and various groups within the poor fishing communities can act in a similar manner through the support of civil society organizations working in the field of human rights. These organizations can initiate public information education programmes and raise awareness, which can help to exert pressure on the relevant Government institutions to act in accordance with international human rights principles and obligations. Empowerment of the poor communities through this process would enable them to raise their voice and be heard by decision-makers. It would also help them to know their rights and gain control over policies that marginalized them in their daily lives.

In addition, through these organizations, adequate awareness of, or education on, the rights of women can be gained. This is essential to assert their rights and counteract the negative stereotype norms and cultural practices that discriminate against them⁷⁰ in accessing assets for livelihood strategies and well-being. Such awareness is also needed to enhance advocacy for the need to respect and protect the rights of children in the context of socio-cultural practices and poverty that has exacerbated their trafficking in these communities. Effective human rights education and information

⁷⁰ The human rights framework acknowledges that some people suffer particular rights deficits through reference to specific forms of discrimination. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, for example, takes account of all forms of discrimination on the basis of gender.

will further help these poor community members to make decisions with better background knowledge of the potential risks involved in trafficking. Child rights awareness creation through campaign and advocacy, for example, would go a long way to demonstrate that every individual and the poor community as a whole have a moral obligation to recognize and protect the rights of children.

Furthermore, effective education on, and awareness of, human rights and entitlements of fishing communities as agents of development can help them to take control over their essential social services and infrastructure, such as schools, water and sanitation as well as health facilities. It will also enhance their self-confidence and power through which they can exert a voice in the distribution of economic resources and opportunities that they are entitled to. Through this, they would be able to resist corruption and challenge various authorities concerned in the distribution of resources.

7.3.4 Demand for accountability

The accountability of duty-bearers is one of the core mechanisms at the heart of a human rights-based approach to development in the sense that it protects and promotes the rights of poor citizens as right-holders to demand their entitlements and capabilities. The state's obligation to protect, respect and promote rights provides for a related demand from the poor communities to compel government actors to take all measures within their power to ensure their (rights) realization. Given that fishing communities and their members are poor and powerless in terms of capacity, they need to seek support and put in place measures that can enable them to make government actors accountable in their obligations. NGOs and other organizations working in the field of human rights can provide avenues to build their capacity and mobilize them to hold the government and its representatives to account for non-fulfilment and violations of their rights and denial of entitlements through the process of legal adjudication.

Kenneth George's case⁷¹ in South Africa where marginalized artisanal fishing communities held national authorities accountable through the court can, for example, establish a common ground for the basis (as a case law) for this mechanism. In this case, artisanal fishing communities in South Africa presented a class action to the High Court asking for the protection of their fishing rights as well as the protection of their right to food⁷² when their national authorities failed to provide them with adequate rights. Thus, along the same line, poor artisanal fishing communities in Ghana can seek remedies and redress through the court in terms of government decisions or policies that marginalized and violate their fundamental rights. Their ability to demand explanations and accountability from national authorities through this strategy would expose the hidden structures behind their human rights violations as well as the conditions that create and perpetuate their poverty.

It should, however, be noted that accountability is not limited exclusively to a matter of judicial enforcement, but through other mechanisms such as collective learning about strategies and policies (Koh, 1997; 1999 cited in Uvin, 2004: 134). To this effect, leaders of various groups within the poor communities need to work in partnership with rights-based NGOs in order to be sensitized through basic learning programme on various government policies, especially those that concern their livelihood and the provision of basic social services. Strengthening their knowledge on these issues would help them to become aware of their rights and develop effective measures to challenge and reclaim them any time they are being denied or violated. This study thus recommends that, the learning programme for the community members should not only reflect the process of making them to become aware of their basic rights, but also their entitlements as citizens with the aim to change their attitudes that are rooted in ignorance towards these rights and entitlements.

⁷¹ Kenneth George and Others vs. Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 05 02 2007 (cited in UNESCO, 2011: 59).

⁷² The parties to the ICESCR, of which Ghana is one, have accepted the realization of the right to food as a legal obligation of which state parties must respect, protect and fulfill. This implies that the Government of Ghana is legally obliged to avoid undertaking any measure that negatively affects the realization of this right.

7.4 Recommendation for future research

As the present study is restricted to four coastal artisanal fishing communities in only one particular district and region, further comparative studies would be needed to ascertain whether the findings in this study hold true for other artisanal coastal fishing communities in other regions of the country. Studies of this nature could enhance a strong and more valid establishment of generalizations on the situations within these communities in the entire country. In the same field of interest, a similar comparative study could be conducted between artisanal coastal fishing communities and their inland counterparts in the context of their portfolio of livelihood activities and survival strategies to cope with challenges.

On the subject of child trafficking, this study established that the socio-cultural context in which individuals and households live influences the type of strategies they adopt to cope with challenges. Further research could be conducted in order to explore the above contexts of fishing communities in other regions within the country. For example, it would be worthwhile to explore how socio-cultural practices of fishing communities in other regions of Ghana influence their survival strategies vis-à-vis child trafficking.

Finally, mixed methods and livelihood, capability and rights-based approaches based on a modified sustainable livelihood framework identify the causes and consequences of poverty and vulnerability in this study. A range of other studies could be conducted within other productive sectors or socio-economic and cultural settings, using the framework developed for this study, especially to explore similar situations for the development of concrete intervention.

7.5 Final conclusion

At present, the challenge of understanding the factors responsible for child trafficking is not only relevant to various national governments, but the international community, NGOs, international organizations as well as researchers. The above challenge precipitated this study as a way of contributing to knowledge base for

effective mechanism to counteract the phenomenon in West Africa in general and Ghana in particular. The present study thus explored the ways socio-economic and institutional factors affect poverty and vulnerability as well as child trafficking. Much emphasis has been laid, in this study, on households within poor fishing communities in the Ketu South District of Ghana.

Being a multi-causal problem, poverty and vulnerability cannot be analyzed from one perspective. Therefore, to facilitate their understanding in the communities under study, different approaches have been integrated. They include capability and human rights perspectives and livelihood analysis, using mainly qualitative methodology. In all, this study demonstrated that child trafficking is linked to abject poverty, which is directly and indirectly caused by marginalization and deprivation of basic capabilities due to internal and external influences in the form of neoclassical top-down policies and lack of accountability on the part of government institutions. This study thus underscores the fact that child trafficking is not only a violation of human rights; it is also a consequence of severe human rights violations, which results in abject poverty.

The recommendations presented above suggest rethinking of combating poverty and child trafficking within poor communities in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole through human rights empowerment framework. Addressing the problem within this framework through practical action will go a long way to counteract, or at least minimize, the phenomena in Ghana in particular and other developing countries in general.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.1: Introduction and Consent

My name is Harrison Kwame Golo, a PhD student, at the Universities of Vienna (Austria). I am currently conducting a research on the manner in which poverty, livelihoods and coping strategies exacerbate trafficking of children within fishing communities. The findings of the study will be used to empower fishing communities in the country through human rights in their fight against poverty.

I herewith kindly request your participation in an interview about these issues. Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part, you may have the right to stop at any time; in case you do not want to continue.

The interview will take about an hour. Parts of the interview will be audio-tape recorded to enable us review the topics and responses later so that we do not miss any details. Your participation is only possible if you are willing to have the interview recorded.

All information you provide in the study will be kept strictly confidential – we will not share information you provide in the interview with anyone. No information which could identify you or your household will ever be released.

I have read/the content of this letter has been read to me in a language that I understand and that I agree to participate voluntarily in the study and agree to have the interview recorded. (Please sign, write your initials or thumb print).

The information above was read to you, that you agree to participate in the study and that your consent is given voluntarily.

(Respondent – Signature/Initials/Right Thumb Print)

(Date)

(Signature of Interviewer)

(Date)

Interviewer Contacts				
	1st	2nd	3rd	Final
Interviewer Name				
Date	/ / 2011	/ / 2011	/ / 2011	/ / 2011
Time (start/end)	: / :	: / :	: / :	: / :
Result*				
Result Codes: 1 Complete 3 Postponed 5 Partially Complete 6 Other (specify) 2 Not Found 4 Refused 6 Incapacitated				

Language of Interviewer*		*Language Codes 1 English 2 Ewe 3 Other (specify)	
Native Language of Respondent*			
Translator Used? (Yes=1, No=2)			
EDITING / DATA ENTRY			
Field Supervisor		Survey Manager	
Date (dd- mm- yy)			
Status*			
Office Editor			
Date (dd-mm-yy)			
Status*			
Status Codes* 1 Complete 2 Additional Visits Required 3 Other (specify)			

Supervisors / Editor Comments

Appendix 1.2: Household Survey Questionnaire

Name of Community.....

Name of Respondent.....

Line No. (a)	Name of household members (b)	Relations to household head (c)	Sex (d)	Age (e)	Marital Status (f)	Educational level (g)	Profession (h)	Association/ Company/ Net owner. (i)	Other income Activities (j)	Rel. (k)
01										
02										
03										
04										
05										
06										
07										
08										
09										
10										

a) Household head = number one

b) Name of household member.

c) Relation to household head: **S** = spouse, **C** = child, **G** = grandchild, **Si** = sibling, **P** = parent, **O** = other kin, **N** = non- kin.

d) Sex: **M** = male, **F** = female.

e) Age: In completed years and add #, if he/she is not sure

f) Marital status: **S** = single, **D** = divorced/separated, **W** = widowed

g) Educational level: **I** = illiterate, **P** = Primary School, = **JSS** = Junior Secondary, **SSS** = Senior

Secondary School, **V** = Vocational Training, **U** = University, (if not completed, provide the number of years that were completed) eg. P4 (Primary school fourth year completed)

h) Main Profession: **NA** = not applicable, **F** = fishing, **N** = net owner, **P** = processor, **T** = trader, **O** = other (specify)

i) Fishing Group/company/net owner: if the household head is a Fisherman or Net owner under (h), provide the name of the fishing group or company in which he fishes and the name of the net owner of the group/company where he fishes.

- j) Other income deriving activities: apart from the profession which generates income
k) Religious affiliation: **C** = Christian, **M** = Moslem, **T** = Traditional, **N** = no religion, **O** = others (specify).

11. Do members of the household own any of the following?

Assets	Number of Items	Who owns	What purpose
Smoking oven			
Gas stove			
Refrigerator			
Canoe			
Outboard motor			
Fishing net			
Coconut tree			
Goat			
Cattle			
Poultry			
Sawing machine			
Car			
Bicycle			
Radio			
Television			

NB:

Who owns: Refer to the household list above

What purpose: **C** = Commercial; **D** = Domestic; **B** = Both commercial and domestic

Tenure Status, Housing Conditions and Amenities

1	What is the tenure status of the house?	Owner occupier Rented Provided by relative Inherited Common property	
2	Type of roofing material	Corrugated iron sheet Tiles Thatch	
3	Type of wall	Cement block Brick Mud Mud and cement	
4	Type of floor	Cement Earth Other (specify)	
5	Main source of water	Well/borehole Piped water River/dam Other (specify)	
6	Main human waste disposal (toilet facilities)	Water closet KVIP	

		Public latrine Beach Bush Other (specify)	
7	Main type of cooking fuel	Electricity Paraffin Gas Firewood Charcoal	
8	Type of lighting	Electricity Paraffin Other (specify)	

Topic: Livelihood Activities

1. How long have you been fishing? In completed years [] []

2. Why did you decide to take to fishing?
.....
.....

3. On what basis do you decide where and why you fish a particular species?
.....
.....

4. Are you and your household dependent on fishing as the only source of livelihood?

Yes [] No []

4b If yes, could you please explain?

.....
.....
.....

5. What are the main livelihood activities that sustain your household? Can you please name them according to their importance?

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

6. Do your household members play any special role in these activities?

Yes ☐ No ☐

6b. Can you please mention the specific role they play?

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....

7. During the non-fishing season, what types of work do you and your household members do for a living?

.....

Details of fish Catch

Period	Major species	Increased	Decreased	The same
Starting Year				
Peak Year				
Current Year				

Topic: Livelihood Strategies to Reduce Poverty

1. Do you consider fishing as a profitable activity? Yes ☐ No ☐

2. How would you rate the contribution of fishing cultivation to the household's needs and food security? Very high ☐, High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low ☐ Very Low ☐

3. What work do you and your household do apart from those connected with fishing?

.....

4. Is fishing your only livelihood activity? Yes [] No []

5. If no, why have you decided to diversify?
.....
.....

6. Could you please explain other source/s of income that sustains your household?

.....
.....
.....
.....

7. What has been your main source of livelihood during the past five fishing seasons?

.....
.....
.....
.....

8. What has been the trend of your income for the past 12 months? Has it increased or decreased as compared to now? Yes [] No [].

9. If decrease, which factors do you think are responsible for these trends? Please explain.

a).....
.....

b).....
.....

c).....
.....

10. Do you or have you ever employed extra hands (people) to boost your work?

Yes [] No []

a. If yes, through what means and what was/is their average age?

(In completed years) [] []

11. How are they or were they remunerated? Daily [] Weekly [] Monthly []
Yearly [] Periodically usually more than yearly []

Other

(specify).....

12. How has their employment impact on your income?
.....
.....

13. Have your children or any member of your household ever engaged in any work in order to earn some income for the upkeep of the household? Yes [] No []

14. If yes, what type of work?
.....
.....

15. Have you ever migrated to other places for fishing? Yes [] No []

16. If yes, why did you migrate?
.....
.....

17. How many people do you know migrated to other places? [] []

18. Where have they migrated to within Ghana?

Settlement.....District.....Region.....

If outside Ghana, which country?

.....

19. What does migration mean to the community?
.....
.....

20. What agency or organization outside the community has helped you and/ or your members in the last 5 years (government or NGOs)?

a).....

b).....

c).....

21. Explain type of help provided?
.....
.....
.....

a. Are they still active? Yes [] No []

b. If no longer helping, why?
.....
.....

.....
.....

21. Do the efforts of these agencies meet your expectations? Yes [] No []

a. If yes/no, why?
.....
.....

1. Considering your current situation, what kind of support do you think fishing communities need in order to improve their livelihood strategies?

.....
.....
.....

Topic: Social Capital

1. Do you have any fishing-related association in this community? Yes [] No []

2. Can you explain the socio-economic activities of this association?

.....
.....
.....

3. Does the association's membership include women? Yes [] No []

4. If no, why?
.....
.....
.....

5. If yes, explain the roles they play in these associations.....
.....
.....
.....

6. How many active members does your association have? [] []

7. When was it created or formed? (Year) [] [] [] []

8. What are its main goals/objectives/projects?
.....
.....
.....

9. What benefits do you and other members derived from the activities of the association?.....

.....
.....
.....

10. Do you and any of your household participate in any other social organization?
Yes [] No []

a. If yes, name them.....
.....
.....

11. In what ways do you and your household benefit from the activities of this organization?.....
.....
.....

12. In general how does this association influence your livelihood strategies?
.....
.....
.....

13. Do you normally receive help from any of your family members concerning your livelihood activities? Yes [] No []

a. If yes, what type of help?
.....
.....
.....

Topic: Financial Capital

1. Do you think earnings from fishing are sufficient to meet the need of you and your members' entire household? Yes [] No []

a. If yes, do you have enough surpluses to save? Yes [] No []

2. Are you aware of any government support through subsidies and soft loans in the fisheries? Yes [] No []

a. If yes, have you ever access one? Yes [] No []

b. If no, can you explain why?
.....
.....

3. Have you ever benefited from credit facility from any other source? Yes [] No []

a. If yes, name the source.....

b. If no, why so?
.....
.....

4. Do you and members of your household have access to any additional or external source of income? e.g, remittances? Yes ☐ No ☐

a. If yes, can you give me the source?
.....
.....

5. Can you explain how lack of access to finance assistance affects your fishing and other activities?

.....
.....
.....
.....

6. Which of the following categories does your fall within the past twelve months?

☐ Very Low (GH¢.10 or less) ☐ Low (GH¢.10-20) ☐ Moderate (GH¢.20-30)

☐ High (GH¢ 30 and more)

Topic: Physical Capital

1. Do you have your personal fishing gear and other tools are necessary for fishing? If no, on term do you rent it? Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Do you and your household have adequate access to health-care services, water and electricity? Yes ☐ No ☐

a. If you have, are they affordable? Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Is the health care service centers closer to you and your households? Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Do your children have access to school? Yes ☐ No ☐

a. If yes, is the school closer to them? Yes ☐ No ☐

5. Do you and your households have a piece of land within or outside the community? Yes ☐ No ☐

6. What kind of fish preservation method do you use?

a. Are they easily and adequately accessible to you? Yes ☐ No ☐

7. Do you have accessible market for the fishes catch? Yes ☐ No ☐

8. Are the roads that link you to other communities, towns and cities in good condition all the time? Yes ☐ No ☐

9. Do you always have transport to all these places? Yes ☐ No ☐

10. Do you have enough and frequent access to premix fuel? Yes ☐ No ☐

Topic: Human Capital

1. What is the size of your household? [] []

2. Does your son(s) also involve in fishing? Yes [] No []

a. Are they skilled in fishing? Yes [] No []

3. What does your daughter(s) do?
.....
.....

4. Do members of your household have any special skill apart from fishing?
Yes [] No []

a. If yes, can you please explain?
.....
.....

b. If no, why?
.....
.....

5. Details of children

Number	Sex	Age	Level of education	Occupation	Living in the household	Living outside the household *	Reason for not living in hh
Child 1							
Child 2							
Child 3							
Child 4							
Child 5							
Child 6							
Child 7							

(Add additional sheets if needed)

6. *Where and with whom is he or she living now?
.....
.....

Topic: Natural Capital

1. List the natural assets of the community and its surroundings?

- a).....
- b).....
- c).....
- d).....
- e).....
- f).....

2. How important are these natural assets to you and your household?

Very Important [] Important [] Less important []

3. What species of fish do you usually catch for the past five seasons?

.....

4. Can you give me the quantity? (In kg).....

5. Apart from fishing what other natural resources do you and your households depend on for a living?

- a).....
- b).....
- c).....

a. Are these resources available all the time? Yes [] No []

6. Do you have free access to them? Yes [] No []

a. If no, please explain why.....

.....

.....

Topic: Political Capital

1. Are you an active member of any political party? Yes [] No []

2. If yes, can you please explain how that has help you and your household in your livelihood activities?

.....

.....

3. Are you or any of your household a member of the local, regional or national fishing management community? Yes [] No []

4. If yes, how does this impact on your access to assets and livelihood strategies?

.....

.....

.....

 5. If no, do you think your non-membership has affected your access to assets and livelihood strategies? Can you please explain?

.....

Health Status of Household

1	Do you and your household suffer from any of these chronic illness	Diabetes T.B. Asthma	
2	Which sicknesses do you or other members of your household suffered from for the one month preceding this survey?	Malaria Cholera Diarrhoea Other (specify	
3	Has anyone died from illness in your household in the last month?		
4	If yes, when and due to what?		
5	Which of these facilities do you and your households use as source of treatment?	Hospital Clinic Pharmaceutical store Herbal treatment Prayer camp Other (specify)	
6	Why do you choose that?	Very affordable More effective Nearest to me Other (specify)	
7	Have you and your household heard of the	Yes	

	National Health Insurance Scheme?	No	
8	If yes, through what source?	Radio Television A friend Public address system Other (specify)	
9	Have you and your household registered?	Yes No	
10	If yes, why did you register?		
11	If no, why?		

Household Expenditure

Can you estimate the amount you and your household spend on the following in a month?

Item	Amount in New Ghana Cedi
Food	
Water	
Electricity	
Fuel	
Medication	

Appendix 2.1: In-depth Interview Guide for Government Officials

Topic: Influence of government policies in the fisheries and access to assets

As an officer of the government's arm in charge of the fisheries at the National/Regional/District level, I am aware that you have a lot of knowledge and experience

regarding the fisheries sector and local fishing communities that I would humbly request you to share with me. I am interested in local fishing communities' access to assets for their livelihood strategies. My first question is, what do you think are the main needs of fishing communities?

1. What do you consider to be the role of the government on this issue?
2. What are the objectives of the government's regulating activities?
3. Why do they have these objectives?
4. Are the objectives realized? Please explain.
5. Can you describe some of the measures government put in place to alleviate constraint/s face by fishing communities in accessing services necessary for their economic activities?
 - a. If no, why so?
 - b. If yes, what is the content of these measures?
6. In your opinion, how effective are these measures, in terms of practice or implementation?
7. Is there any mechanism put in place to ensure the enforcement of these measures?
 - a. If no, can you please explain?
 - b. If yes, can you please share with me any positive examples or best practices with regards to its implementation?
8. Can you describe the distribution of power between the national, regional and local levels regarding the fisheries' management?
9. How do fishing groups or communities express their views concerning the fisheries policy processes?
10. From your experience and opinion, do you think fishing communities have the ability and capacity to address issues concerning various issues affecting their lives?
 - a. If no why so?
 - b. If yes, how necessary is their participation?
11. Are there policies to facilitate access to information about potential and natural hazards to fishing communities?
12. Would you say individuals in the communities do regularly access such information?
 - a. If no, why?
 - b. If yes, in what ways?
13. How practicable are government policies in regulating services, such as health-care, water, fuel, sanitation, electricity, sewerage and waste disposal to meet the needs of fishing communities?
14. From your opinion, how do these measures ensure affordable access by the poor within these communities?
15. In general, would you say these services are reliably accessible and in adequate supply for individual, family and community use? Please explain.

Appendix 2.2: In-depth interview Guide for Key informants within the Study communities

Topic: Government Policies towards Sustainable Livelihood in the Fisheries

1. Can you please give me your name?
2. What is your position in the community?
3. How would you describe difficulties being faced by individuals and households in the community regarding their efforts to make a living?

4. Can you provide example of some of these difficulties?
5. As a fishing community, through what means do you get to know about government policies regarding the fisheries?
6. Could you please explain to me the involvement of community members in these policy processes?
7. If you are involved, at what level? National, regional, district or local level?
8. What are some of the government policy or policies that impact on you and other community member's access to assets and fishing activities? Please explain.
9. Can you describe how fishers in the community get assisted by the government in getting easy access to fishing inputs, such as net, outboard motor and premix fuel?
10. Can you describe how the provision of services, such as health-care, electricity, water and sanitation meets the needs of the community?
11. Can you please tell me some of the measures put in place to ensure affordable access to these services to every household within the community?
12. Is there any local law or institutions governing fishing in this community?
- a. If yes, how does this law impact on the community members' access to assets? Please explain.
13. What do you think should be done to make policies more suitable to the needs of fishing communities in general?

Topic: Local Perception of Vulnerability and Insecurity of Livelihood

1. Can you tell how prices of fishing inputs affect fishing activities in the community?
2. How would you describe the impact of government policies concerning the fisheries in the community?
3. What kind of fishing do you engage in?
4. Have you observed any change in the fishing activities for the past years?
- a. If yes, what do you think might be the cause?
5. How has this change affect life in the community? Could you please explain?
6. How often does the community experience natural disasters like floods and erosion?
7. How would you describe their effects on your income activities and general life?
8. How do households and individuals in the community cope with life when there is severe flood?
9. In what ways does government compensate households who suffer from floods and erosions in the community?
10. Could you please describe any particular disease that has plagued the community in the past 12 months?

Topic: Child Trafficking and Intervention Measures

1. Could you please explain to me why child trafficking is becoming prevalence in many fishing communities in Ghana?
2. What do you think are some of the factors responsible to its prevalence?
3. Do you experience any of such factors in this community?
4. If you do, how do they influence individuals and households involvement in child trafficking in the community?
5. Will you say it is only the poor or vulnerable households that are involved in child trafficking in the community? Could you please explain your answer?
6. How will you describe the pattern of child trafficking in the community?
7. Is there any intervention mechanism developed by the chiefs and elders of the community to curb the trafficking situation?
- a. If yes, how is it being enforced? b. If no, why?

8. What are some of the supports provided by the government or NGOs to fight child in the trafficking?
9. Is there anything else you would like to share with me concerning the trafficking situation in this study community?

Appendix 2.3: In-depth interview guide for officials of National Fisheries Association of Ghana

Topic: Government Policies towards Sustainable Livelihood in local fishing communities

I am aware that NAFAG is one of the organizations that represent the interests of the local fishers and their communities. I am interested in the area of influences of government policies in their access to assets and livelihood strategies, and I would be happy if you can share your knowledge and experiences with me. My first question, therefore is, what are the goals of NAFAG?

1. Who does this organization represent?
2. Please, at what level?
3. Could you please mention some of the services this organization offers to fishing communities in the country?
4. Does your association face any challenge or obstacles in the delivery of services?
5. If yes, can you tell me some of these challenges?
6. In what ways does NAFAG involve in decision-making on issues affecting the fishing communities in the country?
7. Can you explain to me some of key policy issues regarding fishing communities' access to assets regarding their income and well-being?
8. Can you describe how local fishing communities involve in policy planning and decision-making on issues affecting their lives?
9. If they do involve, how does this impact on their access to assets and income generating activities?
10. What do you think to be the main reason for the child trafficking?
11. In your view, what is the best strategy to limit or eliminate it?

Appendix 3: List of Interviewees (in-depth interviews and case studies)

Abadzi Kofi – Household head, Amutinu, 26th May 2011
 Abotsi – Ketu District Chief Fisherman, 2nd July 2011
 Abota – Head of fishing company Amutinu, 28th May 2011
 Adika Godknows – Member of Ketu District Fishermen Association, 30th May 2011
 Agbota – Household head, Adina, 4th June 2011
 Ahiakpo – Member of National Fisheries Association of Ghana, 12th June 2011
 Amediku Mark – Household head, Tetekorfe, 12th June 2011
 Amematsɔ Mercy – Household head, 4th June 2011
 Amesɔ Sampson – Fish fisherman, Tetekorfe, 20th June 2011
 Amevɔ, Samuel – Head teacher, Adina Senior and Junior Secondary School, June 30th 2011.
 Amewoshie, Fish processor/Trader, Agavedzi, 4th June 2011
 Anagla Joe – Member of counsel of elders, Adina, 30th May 2011
 Akpasu Dela – Fish fisherman at Amutimu, 15th April 2011
 Akpi Koblaga – A retired fishing crew, Amutinu, 12th June 2011
 Akorli – Net and boat owner, Agavedzi, 27th May 2011
 Atisa Afeli – Net and boat owner, Adina, 21st June 2011

Degbo Kɔbla – Fishing crew, Adina, 20th June 2011
 Dodzi Kodzo – Chief Fisherman, Agavedzi, 27th June 2011
 Dr. Ahetor W. Denis, Lecturer/Researcher, Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences,
 School of Biological Sciences, University of Cape Coast, 22nd July 2011
 Fofovi – fishing crew, Tetekorfe, 19th May 2011
 Husunu Sarah – Household head, Agavedzi, 2nd July 2011
 Kedzi Godwin – Ketu District Fisheries Officer, 4th June 2011
 Klu Etse – Assemblyman, 12th June 2011
 Kofi Etɔwu – Household head, Amutinu, 4th June 2011
 Kofiga Godfred – Retired Teacher, Adina, 28th June 2011
 Korshie – Elderly fisherman, Adina, 6th June 2011
 Kɔshie George – Ketu South District Social Welfare Department, 2nd July 2011
 Kɔku Deyi – Fishing crew, 6th May 2011
 Kudzo George – Ketu District Assembly, 24th June 2011
 Mornyekɔ Rose – fish processor/trader, Tetekorfe, 27th May 2011
 Numakpɔ Joseph – Household head, Amutinu, 2nd June 2011
 Sowubo Alifo – Household head and fishing crew, Tetekorfe, 23rd May 2011
 Tɔgbui Gbenyo VII, - Chief of Adina, 28th May 2011
 Xedzro Peter – net and boat owner, Agavedzi, 21st June 2011

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name Harrison Kwame Golo
Date of Birth December 14, 1973
Place of Birth Accra, GHANA
Contact Brigittenauer Lände 224-228//44/6836
1200, Vienna, AUSTRIA

Email harrison.kwame.golo@univie.ac.at

EDUCATION

2010 – 2013 PhD Research Fellow at the PhD InitiativKolleg/ Doctoral College, *Empowerment through Human Rights*, University of Vienna, Austria
PhD: *The Interface of Poverty, Livelihoods, Coping/Survival Strategies and Child Trafficking in Rural Coastal Fishing Communities of Ghana*.
2008 – 2010 Universities of Gothenburg (Sweden), Roehampton (UK), Tromsø (Norway) *Masters in Human Rights Practice (MSc/MA)*
2004 – 2005 International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague (Holland)
Masters in Development Studies (MA)
2003 International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague (Holland)
Postgraduate Diploma in Human Rights (PGDip)
1996 – 1999 University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast (Ghana) *Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Second Class (Upper Division) Religious Studies Major (BA)*.

LANGUAGES

English: fluent; Ewe (a Ghanaian language): fluent

WORK AND ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Feb. – June 2009 Intern at AbleChildAfrica, (An international NGO) London (UK)
January 2006 – present Principal Research Assistant, Institute for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast (Ghana).
January 2006 – present Research Coordinator, Youth Research Network of Ghana (YORG).
Sept. 2000 – Dec. 2005 Senior Research Assistant, Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Coast (Ghana).
Nov. 1999 – Aug. 2000 Teaching Assistant, Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Coast (Ghana).

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2005 – 2006 Co-investigator and Author, *Child Involvement in Labour: Poverty Reduction Approach via a Human Right Perspective*. [UNESCO Small Grant Research, 2005-2006].

- 2006 *Reflection on Migration and Child Trafficking: The role of Poverty Reduction Strategy*, Research paper presented at the expert meeting, “International Migration and National Development” Radboud University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands, 22nd – 25th August 2006

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS ATTENDED

- July 2010 Presenter at African Fishery Management Work: *Understanding poverty dynamics in fishing communities*’, Accra, Ghana
- 2006 Presenter at expert meeting, *International Migration and National Development*, Radboud University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands, 22nd – 25th August 2006.
- 2006 Participant at *Confronting the State, Engaging the State: Civil Society Building under Adverse Political Conditions*, The Hague, The Netherlands
- 2005 Participant at *Building peace in Africa: Human security and the Millennium Development Goals*, The Hague, The Netherlands