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**STUDIES ON CHUCHURU, A SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICE AND ITS
EFFECTS ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN NAVRONGO
TRADITIONAL AREA IN THE UPPER EAST REGION**

BY

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Technology of the requirements for the degree of**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work towards the MPhil and that, it contains no material previously published by another person for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

The chuchuru phenomenon is a cultural practice of the Kasena-Nankana people in the Navrongo traditional area of the Upper East Region. It is a practice where children born with congenital abnormalities are declared to be chuchuru and this leads to their execution since they are seen to be carriers of evil and misfortunes to their families and the community at large. An investigation by Anas Arimeyaw Anas led to the arrest of some of the concoction men, yet, very little has been done to expose the negative effects of the practice and to put an end to it.

The research methods used are qualitative approach and descriptive method. The research techniques employed are interviews, focus group discussion and observation; pictures were taken regarding the chuchuru practice. The scope of the study has been limited to seven communities in the Navrongo traditional area such as Namolo, Vunania, Biu, Kologo, Wuru, Pugu, and Naga.

The study also revealed the barbaric and cruel cultural practice which the accused children passed through. The interviewees were of the view that something needs to be done to abolish the practice among the people of the area to save the lives of the innocent children killed all the time. The community stands to benefit from this study due to the recommendations made to Community Based Organization, the Government Agencies such as the CHRAJ and the National Commission for Civic Education to extend their programs to cover the community so as to bring cultural sanity to the inhabitants.

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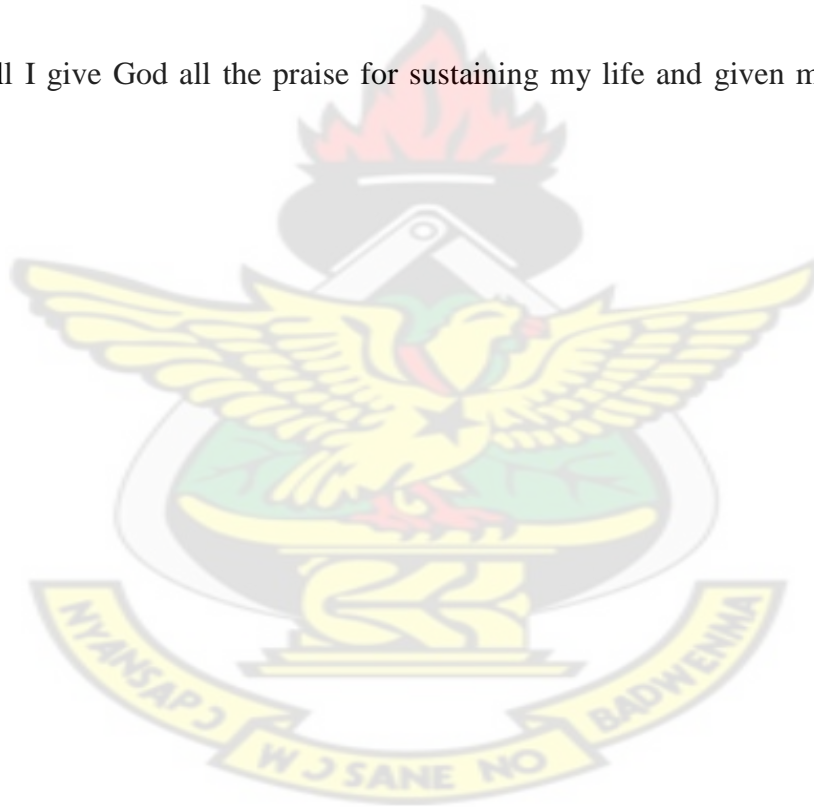
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Above all I give God all the praise for sustaining my life and given me the strength to carry on.



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my lovely children; Haniella Aniwe and Rhodinald Webavana for providing all the inspiration for my effort.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Life and the right to live is a divine gift of the almighty God, thus every child born has the right to grow and live, and no man has been given the right to take that life which was given to the individual by his creator. According to the constitution of the Republic of Ghana, article 13 clause 1, No person shall be deprived of his life intentionally except in the exercise of the execution of a sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence under the laws of Ghana of which he has been convicted.

In the Kassenas culture, the name chuchuru is believed to be the bush spirit born into a family to harm its parents, or possibly kill them. According to oral tradition, pregnant women who go to the bush for firewoods are usually advised to be wary of careless drinking of water, eating of fruits, and the breaking or cutting of branches of certain trees in order not to get possessed by the deities inhabiting the water bodies and trees. It is believed that the spirits take control of the unborn baby in the womb of the woman. Also, when the woman gives birth it causes the child to behave strangely.

The practice of Chuchuru among the Kassenas and Nankanas in the upper east region of Ghana continues to be a worrying trend which requires, education and attention of human rights. Children are stigmatized, discriminated and abandoned. These practices promote violence against children, thereby infringing fundamental rights of the child as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted by the General Assembly on 20

November 1989). These include, for example the inherent right to life (Article 6, Paragraph 1); protection against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the beliefs of the child's parents (Article 2, Paragraph 2); and such protection and care as necessary for his or her well-being (Article 3, Paragraph 2), etc.

In the upper east of Ghana, an age-old tradition, sometimes performed at night, other times in the early morning, stands stiffly in the way of a key Constitutional and internationally recognized human right. The right to life as enshrined in the 1992 Constitution and in the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights has been refused to thousands of infants even before any talent or potential in them could become evident and their bodies abused even in death as a final reminder to them of how cruel this world is. This may sound incredible in today's civilized world. Yet the number of infant murder hunters and their accomplices in the gruesome killing of innocent children keeps growing by the day. Some children in the upper east region of Ghana who are born with some kinds of physical abnormalities such as being born with teeth, born with facial hair, born without sex organs or other secondary sex characteristics, born with broken limbs, and having a variety of physical disabilities, excessive crying have their right to live taken away from them (Anas, 2013).

According to Daly & Wilson, (2001) cultural practices are the cultural performance or observances that are carried out within a given ethnic group. Cultural practices can vary from one place to another and thus express a lot of meaning and significance to those who practice them. Some of the cultural practices performed in Ghana include festivals, marriage, widowhood rites, scarification (tribal marks), pouring of libation, female genital mutilation, funerals, among others. They also explained socio-cultural practices as

all the distinctive spiritual material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group. The cultural practices usually manifest in our daily mode of life, fundamental human rights, values, traditions and the arts.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Every year an unknown number of children - most of them disabled in some way - are murdered in northern Ghana because of the belief that they are in some way possessed by evil spirits set on bringing ill fortune to those around them (Anas, 2013).

A lot of children are still accused of being possessed and causing harm and misfortunes to family members and neighbours in the community. The criterion or evidence used to label such children is Common physical characteristics such as being born with teeth, born with facial hair, born without sex organs or other secondary sex characteristics. Children born with broken limbs, and having a variety of physical disabilities, and excessive crying are classified as chuchuru. Allotey & Reidpath, (2001) asserts that it is believed that 15% deaths of babies less than 3 months age in Ghana is due to the practice of chuchuru.

An interview with a chuchuru kwanu from Buru states that the last time he picked a chuchuru from Kwarania was May, 2016. In light of this, the study is to examine the chuchuru, a socio-cultural practice in the Navrongo traditional area and its effects on social development.

1.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To describe what chuchuru practice is?
2. To examine the effects of the chuchuru cultural practice on the socio-cultural life of the people.
3. To sensitize the indigenes to the negative effects of the chuchuru practice.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is chuchuru cultural practice all about?
2. How does chuchuru cultural practice affect the socio-cultural lives of the people of Navrongo.
3. How best could the indigenes be sensitized to the negative effects of chuchuru practice.

1.5. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study would help us to know the extent to which the chuchuru practice affects the child, parents and the extended family members. This research work would also play a very significant role of providing information to scholars, students, policy makers, historians' human and child rights activists, as well as NGOs interested in women and child welfare. The findings contained in this study could be adopted and integrated in the implementation and enforcement of child rights policies of this nation, Ghana. This document would also contribute immensely to knowledge on prenatal care and child rights. The documentation of all will serve as a reference to students for further studies, it will be beneficial to the natives of Kassena-Nankana people on the negative effects of the chuchuru practice.

1.6. DELIMITATION

The main focus of the research has been limited to seven communities in the Navrongo traditional area such as Manyoro, Vunania, Biu, Kologo, Wuru, Pugu and Namolo. It will in this respect describe the cultural practices of chuchuru and its effects on social development. The study, however, would make brief mention of some few cultural practices of the people in the selected study area with much focus on the description of the cultural practice of Chuchuru, and its effects on social development.

1.7. ORGANISATION OF THESIS

The thesis is presented in five chapters. The first chapter embodies the main introduction of the research, which comprises statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the importance of the study delimitation, limitation, ethnographic account of the study area, facilities available, and definitions of terms and organization of the thesis. Chapter two on the other hand discusses the review of related literature. This is done to determine the academic vacuum that needs to be filled and also to guide the researcher to elicit new information in contributing to some socio-cultural practices and its effects on social development in the Navrongo traditional area in the upper east region of Ghana.

The third chapter also gives an account of how the entire research was conducted and also brings to light how the research problem was tackled. The fourth chapter is a presentation and discussion of findings. However, the fifth chapter recapitulates the salient points raised in the entire thesis and makes beneficial recommendations.

1.8. ETHNOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND OF NAVRONGO

Peter Wedjong (1994) an elder of Navrongo told the story of Navrongo begins with the travels of three brothers from Zecco: Butto (oldest), Zakato, and Sule (youngest). From the town of Zecco the three brothers set out to find better hunting. After travelling for a few days they came across a new small village called Telania (NW of present day Navrongo). The three brothers from Zecco were Nankani speakers while the Telania people were Kasem speakers. Today, both languages are used in the Navrongo area.

The Telania people originated from the village of Tielebe which is now in Burkina Faso, twenty miles to the North. The three brothers befriended the Telania people and stayed with them for some time. They exchanged their expertise with one another: Butto and his brothers taking farming techniques and the Telania people taking architecture.

One day Butto went out for hunting in a new area and found that the ground was soft. When he returned to his brothers, he said, "I've found a place where the ground is soft on the foot." The place then took on the name Na-Voro (Naga (foot) + Voro (soft)). The Navoro is still the name used by its inhabitants while Navrongo is used as an English translation. Butto went back to the area and settled about a 1/4 mile south of present day Notre Dame Secondary School. The remains of his house can still be seen today. The two brothers, Zakato and Sule, remained with the Telania people for some time.

During one of Butto's hunting trips he came across a grove of trees and rocks that reminded him of his ancestral shrine of Zecco. In African traditional religion a grove of trees can sometimes be an ancestral shrine. For Butto it seemed that his father's shrine

had followed him to Na-voro. He decided to move near to the shrine. This site is now home of present day Navrongo Chief's compound.

The land was well suited to farming and hunting and the people of Na-voro and the surrounding areas prospered and grew despite slave raiding expeditions. A particularly feared slave raider was Babatu Zato (1850) who devastated the area. All villages who wished to avoid Babatu's raids had to pay heavy tributes in cowries, cattle, and even horses.

In 1901 a British expedition camped ten miles south of Navrongo near a small village called Vanania. People in the surrounding villages thought that the expedition force was Babatu and his men. Babatu was considered a fair-skinned African and was described as a "Fela", Kasem for white-person. The Navrongo chief, Kwara, beat the gong-gong and told everyone that the "Fela" have camped on the Vanania hill called "Tinu". A small group of men attacked, but soon resigned after the people realized that their weapons were no match for the guns of the British. The British expeditionary force, then settled near the Kwara's house in Navrongo. The British forces offered Navrongo protection from slave raiders and Kwara accepted. Due to the British influence the role of the Chief took on more importance within the Navrongo community. But the "tegetu", the spiritual landlord, still today remains a powerful authority figure.

The population of the Kassena-Nankana district as at 1st July 1999 was 140,881, which is slightly less than 1% of Ghana's population and about 15% of the total population of the Upper East region. The population density is 84 persons per sq. km. The district is largely rural, with only 9.5% living in urban quarters. The population consists of two distinct

ethno-linguistic groups: the 49% of the Kassena's forms the district's population, while the Nankani constitute about 46%. The Builsa and migrants belonging to other ethnic groups make up the remaining 5%. The main languages spoken are Kassim and Nankam, with Buili being spoken by most of the minority tribe. (Nyarko, 2002).

Despite the linguistic distinction, the population is in respect, a homogenous group with a gradually becoming common culture (Binka et al 1994). The main religious faith is animism but Christianity is more prominent, especially among women (Debpuur et al, 2000). Presently, about a third of the people are Christian, 5% are Muslim and the rest profess the traditional religion. However, the dominant animist faith guides, daily life, economic decisions, health beliefs and practices. This reliance on traditional medicine hampers the utilization of health services.

The Kassena Nankana Municipal in North Eastern Ghana borders Burkina Faso and is sub Sahelian, that is, dry and hot except during the single annual rainy season from June to October. The KNM is explained by Mensch, et al (1998), as a semi-arid, sub-Saharan guinea savannah with one annual rainy season.

The primary occupation in the municipality is subsistence farming. Due to the dependence on a single growing season, food insecurity, periods of famine and seasonal malnutrition are a persistent threat. Childhood within the KNM is a precarious time, both in terms of encountering illness and in the presence of spiritual dangers (Adongo et al., 1997).

The people also engage themselves in diverse kinds of occupations, including traditional smock making, round-hut construction and thatch weaving, the sale of small scale

provisions, and the sale of meat (the famous dog and poke) with pito at every available space by the roadsides.

The inhabitants are mostly subsistent mixed farmers. Perennial crops grown include cereals, and legumes-guinea corn, millet, sweet potatoes and vegetables especially okra.

The legumes are white beans and Bambara beans and groundnuts.

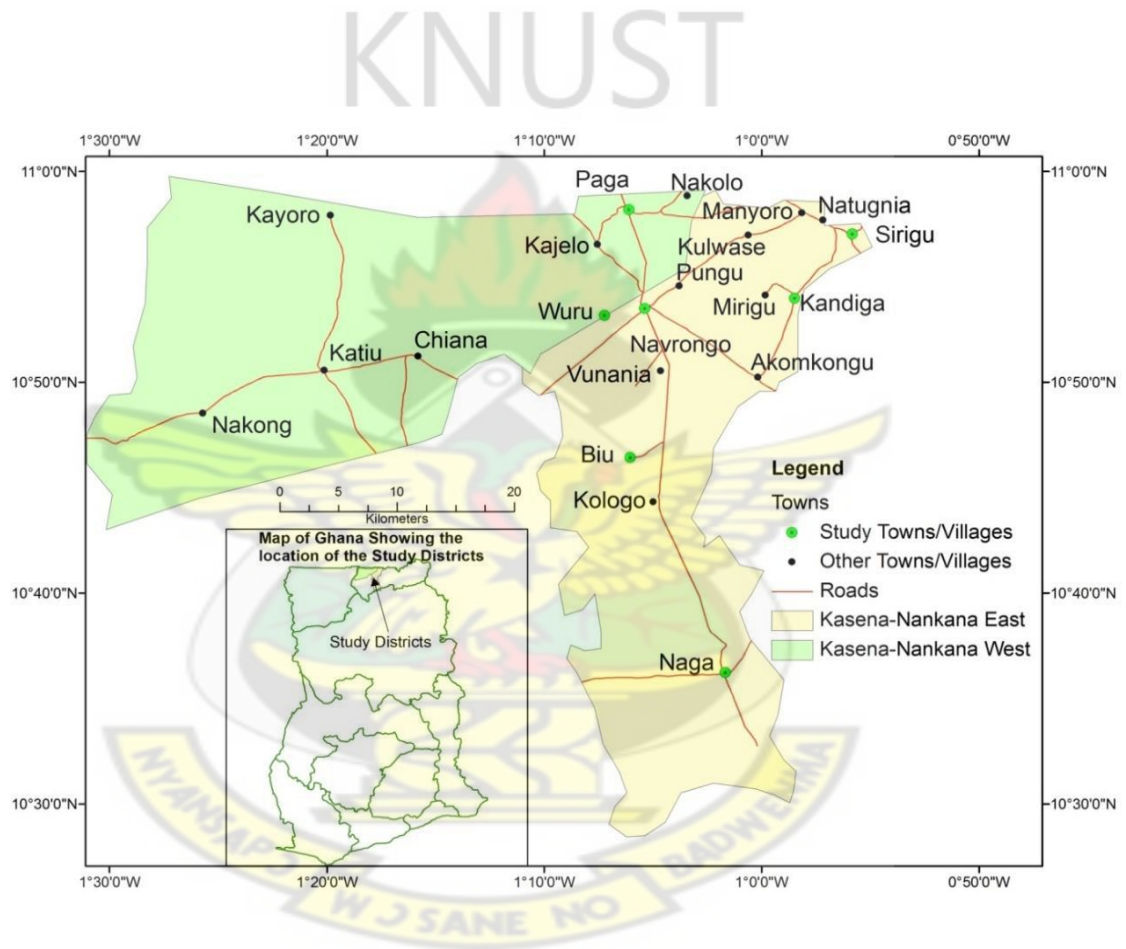


Figure 1: Map of Navrongo Traditional Area

The green and yellow shows the study area

Source: www.google.com.gh/maps/place/Kasena+Nankana.org. Accessed on 21st April 2017

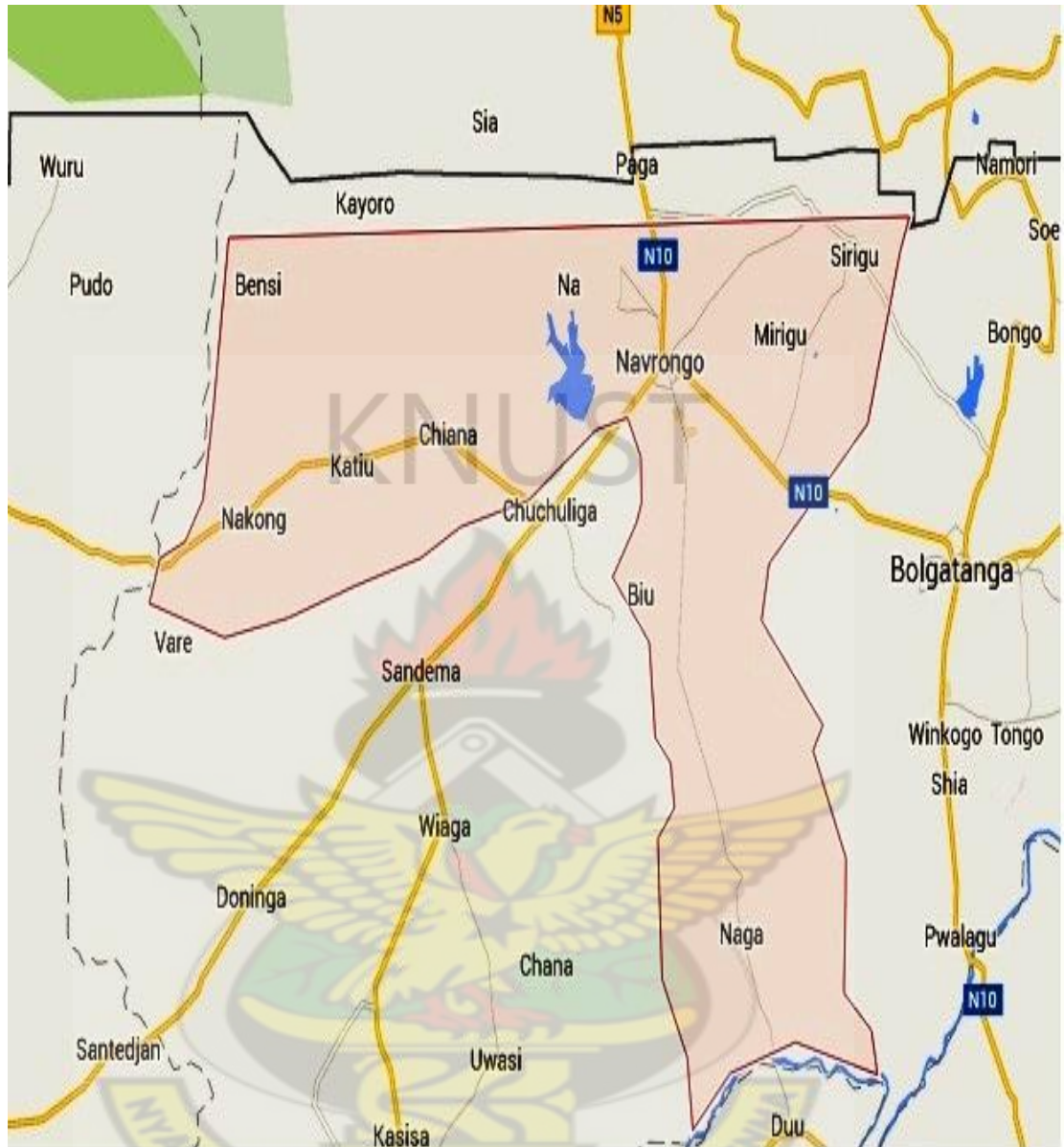


Figure 2:A Map showing the Kasena-Nankana Traditional Area

For administrative purposes, the area is currently divided into the Kasena-Nankana Municipal Assembly and the Kasena-Nankana West District Assembly.

www.google.com.gh/maps/place/Kasena+Nankana.org. Accessed on 28th January, 2017

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

KNM:	Kasena, Nankana Municipality.
UERHC:	Upper East Regional House of Chiefs
FGM:	Female genital mutilation
FGC:	Female genital cutting
CBOs:	Community based Organizations
NGOs:	Non-governmental Organizations



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0. OVERVIEW

This chapter reviews the conceptual literature on chuchuru practice and research literature on the social-cultural practice in particular. The chapter is divided into three parts, to enable a good piece of work. Part I appropriates some of the available theoretical theories on the chuchuru practices related to the study. Part II deals specifically with relevant empirical literature on the chuchuru practice, whereas part III is concerned with the conceptual framework of the study. The chapter presents an examination of a limited related literature on the chuchuru practice in the Navrongo traditional area of the upper east region. Not much research has been documented, particularly with regards to Cultural life and practices of the people of Navrongo. However, few authors have made mention of the spirit child phenomenon in some areas of the region in their attempts to tackle the issue relating to chuchuru practice.

Indeed, the limited research into the spirit child phenomenon has been more of an exercise in chasing elusive spirits embedded within community discourse, since few scholars have offered significant evidence that it actually occurs outside of discourse. Understandably, researchers have not had opportunities to carefully examine the demographic data, to attend to the social-cultural and ethnographic context, and to gather first-hand accounts necessary for accurate description and analysis of the phenomenon (Denham et al. 2010).

2.1. THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Kovacic (1997), theories could be defined as a form of social knowledge, ranging from the nonfactual to the empirically verifiable. He again indicated that theory building provides a basis for testing and verifying the nature of reality.

Before delving into the empirical review and discussions about the related literature on the chuchuru practice, it is important to situate the argument within a theoretical context.

Under the theoretical review, social practice theory and the cultural practice theory were looked at respectively.

2.2. SOCIAL PRACTICE THEORY

Dilation by Agunbiade. O. M. Obivan.M. O. & Sogbaike. G. B. (2013). Social practice theories are sociological frameworks useful in describing the constant web of interactions between social structures and the agency. It attempts to articulate the ways in which identity and individual agency rely on to produce cultural forms. A social Practice theory is a framework for social science researchers use to describe how individuals in different societies around the world shape and are shaped by the cultural atmosphere in which they live. Social practice theories provide an integrated approach to understanding consumer behaviour.

According to UNESCO, (2003) conversation on intangible heritage, social practices, rituals and festive events are habitual activities that structure the lives of communities and groups and that are shared by and relevant to many of their members. They are significant because they reaffirm the identity of those who practice them as a group or a society and, whether performed in public or private, are closely linked to important

events. Social, ritual and festive practices may help to mark the passing of the seasons, events in the agricultural calendar or the stages of a person's life. They are closely linked to a community's worldview and perception of its own history and memory. They vary from small gatherings to large-scale social celebrations and commemorations.

2.2. CULTURAL PRACTICE THEORY:

The popular notion is that people do not just suffer illness by chance; serious illness or mishap is believed to have its origin in a supernatural cause.

The belief and practice in Africa Traditional medicine have long been with them and have affected or influenced to a greater extent their attitudes and behaviours to themselves and others around them. Although development, civilization and education among other factors have helped to introduce change tremendously towards these beliefs and behaviour to orthodox medicine patronage (Katung, 2001).

The cultural practices of people not only affect their health, but also affect all aspects of life, including social relationships, contributing to societal functioning and disease condition. Lisa, (2009) explains that, people of diverse cultural backgrounds, often make different attributions of illness, health, disease, symptoms and treatment. Cultural differences in health attributions have major implications for medical professionals because over time, attributions play an essential role in the formation of beliefs concerning health and illness.

A man living in an interactive society is affected by what happens in his environment and how he reacts to it. All people, no matter their race, have their beliefs and practices concerning health and disease. Each society or community has its peculiar way of doing

things and these practices go a long way in influencing the people's perception, attitudes and behaviour in the management of diseases and health related problems that befall them (WHO, 2007).

2.3. SOCIAL PRACTICES IN NAVRONGO

Social practices involve consumption as performing the respective activities requires the usage of material artefacts as well as resources such as energy and water. Hence social practices such as showering (almost) every day or doing the laundry according to a specific standard of cleanliness (Shove 2004) have a large impact on a society's resource use. Understanding social practices better would hence enhance the possibilities to stimulate behavioural change towards reduced resource use.

The people of Navrongo engage themselves in diverse kinds of social practices such as festivals, child naming, death and funeral performances, traditional politics characterized by chiefs tindanas, petty trading, traditional textiles, weaving, pottery etc. Some of the practices are discussed below.

2.3. 1 MARRIAGE

According to Nyaaba (2009), marriage is an important social institution among the people of Navrongo. The marriage of a young man (nunuom in Kasem) to a young girl (katoguo in Kasem) is the duty of his family. The immediate role of the young man is to make his choice of a partner and then inform his parents. The family head makes enquiries to make sure that there are no clan relations between them. A special person is sent to play the role of a "betweenner" between the two families. In every marriage ceremony amongst the Kassenas there is a man called the Yiginu who is the best man

without the Yiginu the wedding is not valid, Social relations are expressed here, as this special person called 'yingnu' in Kasem or Pogochigera in Nankani is normally the son of a woman from the girl's clan who has married in the man's clan. This man approaches the family of the girl through a similar 'special person'. He presents tobacco to the latter to be delivered to the girl's family. If the gift is accepted, it means that it is agreed for courtship to start between the two. The courtship period may last between six months and one year or more. During this period, the "betweenener" continues to visit the girl's house with gifts of guinea fowls, tobacco and cola nuts. There is no limit as to the number of guinea fowls and quantity of tobacco or cola nuts to be presented to the girl's family. It all depends on the status of the man. One important aspect of the courtship period is the restrictions that bind the young man and the young girl. The two must not engage in any sexual relationship and the young man does not eat food from the girl's house nor pass a night there.

The parents' in-law does not receive any gifts from the man. Nyaaba, (2009) maintained that, on the day the girl will leave for her husband's house, her mother prepares for her a number of dishes including, cake {maasah}, and a variety of stew and soup and tuo zafi to eat. The girl also receives from her mother, cooking utensils, especially two calabashes and a mat take away with her to start life in her new home. The girl is then led away by the "betweenener", who on approaching the bridegroom's house announces the marriage. He shouts out the man's name at the top of his voice, while mentioning the name of the clan of the bride. Women of the bridegroom's clan rush out of their houses to meet the bride and continue the announcement with shrill cries to inform everybody. For three nights, the bride is flanked by young girls of the village while drumming and dancing

goes on. Local musicians come to sing the bride's praises on each night. After the third day, the bride can then join the bridegroom in his room for them to begin life as husband and wife (Nyaaba, 2009).

Nyaaba, (2009) highlighted that; the next important ceremony in connection with the marriage is its ratification. It involves a visit to the family of the bridegroom by the brothers of the bride to perform what the Kasena call gengna or anako gyei. This ceremony normally begins in the evening and lasts the whole night through to dawn. The bridegroom's family slaughters a goat, dog and a number of fowls for their in-laws, the marriage is then said to be complete.

2.4 2. LEGITIMIZING MARRIAGE (GWODNA)

According to Jonah (2016) this rite is performed after the woman has given birth to her first child. Her brothers and some women from her father's house will visit her husband's house. On arrival, the lady's brothers are offered tobacco, a roasted fowl and roasted ground nuts. The blood of a dog is collected and Jana kapwonnu (blood broth) is made from millet flour with it and given to the brothers to eat with the goat and a dog. Kasena hold the belief that life is in the blood, explaining why Jana kapwonnu is made to testify that a live dog is given, but not one bought in the open market. Some marriages, combine the kayeidiri and gwoɲna as one rite because of the resemblance. The difference is that a dog, a goat, two fowls are killed at gwoɲna whereas fowls and a dog are killed at kayeidiri for food preparation. The yinjino (between/mediator), who himself is from the man's village, but has maternal uncles from the woman's village has to be present in all rites and rituals pertaining to the marriage.

2.4. 3. ANIMAL GIVING/DOWRY PAYMENT

Jonah orates that Kasenas give seven sheep, a cow, a hen, a cock, a quantity of salt, tobacco, seven hoe blades and drinks as Kaane kwaga wonnu (appreciation gifts) for a woman. These gifts could be presented at once if the man is capable of doing so, or over time. Whenever a man is ready to give the animals required, he does so alongside the presentation of the usual gifts of kola nuts, tobacco, salt and alcoholic drinks. Care should be taken, so that with any marital transactions with a man's in-laws, the yinjino is not only present, but actively participates in the main aspects of marriage determined as crucial to Kasena marriages.

2.4.4. WIDOW REMARRIAGE

According to Jonah the Kasena culture is somewhat sympathetic to the plight of the widow. Though by cultural provision, a woman is not just married to her husband, but to the entire clan, she is given some elasticity to make a choice from among the junior brothers of her late husband the one she desires to take care of her and her children. This is only however possible, after the final funeral rites of her husband have been performed.

Some families are strict, however, that children born to a widow belong to the first husband, even after his demise. Navrose however notices that a widow may decide not to remarry by stating that she wants to 'be with the grave of her husband', in which case, the brothers of her husband and clansmen could sneak into her room for sexual satisfaction. Naomi Nawurise points out that to assist the widow make a good choice of the brothers of her dead husband, a woman usually seated with the widow to console her will present her with pito (millet drink) in a calabash to seek to know who among the junior brothers of her dead husband the widow wishes to remarry.

2.5. CULTURAL PRACTICES

Cultural practice generally refers to the manifestation of a culture, especially in regard to the traditional and customary practices of a particular ethnic or other cultural group. In the broadest sense, this term can apply to any person manifesting any aspect of any culture at any time. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2010).

2.6. THE SPIRIT CHILD PHENOMENON

Amenga-Etego, (2008) in her study “chinchirisi: the phenomenon of spirit children,” stated that, a chinchirigo is a mischievous wild spirit or creature. As a wild spirit, it is believed to live in the wild space. This includes the bush, groves, hills and riversides. It is neither evil nor good. Although similarities can be drawn from the Akan concept of the Motiah, the Nankani are not particularly interested in describing the features of a chinchirigo. Perhaps this has to do with the multifaceted ways in which the phenomenon is perceived and applied to real life situations.

She argued that, although perceived as non-human and mischievous, there are interactions between chinchirisi and humans. However, these relationships with humans vary, depending on the circumstances; hence, there are diverse forms of relationships between chinchirisi and human beings.

Amenga-Etego in her definition of the spirit child stated that the human Chinchirigo (the Spirit-Child) is the link between the mischievous wild spirit and the domestic human-child emanates from two premises. For the lack of adequate identifications, I will refer to these respective descriptions as the spiritual and biological premises. From the spiritual dimension, a child identified as a chinchirigo immediately falls into a special category of

life form that is not entirely human; hence, not carved out for the normal human domestic life system. In this regard, it is a misplaced spirit. It is a belief that if such a spirit should feel trapped in the wrong environment, it has the potential to cause havoc for those among whom it is found. The basis for this line of thought comes from, the belief that the ancestors are not responsible for bringing chinchirisi in their families.

It is argued that even though ancestors punish their descendants with some forms of misfortunes, these are disciplinary measures. In that respect, they do not invite other spiritual entities who possess the ability of obliterating their families.

As well stated by Idehen, (2007) it is essential to have an idea about the cultural practices of some communities because the practices a community adopts fulfil certain purposes for the culture bearers.

Spirit child in the olden days is believed to be a spirit that looks like a little human being in the bush. From the perspective of the Kasena-Nankana, spirit children are bush spirits born into a family in human form. Although they appear human, such children are not human beings and are not regarded as persons. The spirit child is not a child possessed by an offending spirit subject to exorcism; rather, their entire being is that of a spirit, and the only way to remove such a child from the family is through death (Awedoba, 2000).

Awedoba added that, similarly, before taking a human form, spirit children dwell within the bush actively searching for a possible way to enter a family. The spirit wants to enter the house to gain access to the “good things” a family provides, such as food and care. Once born, the spirit child will take over the house and destroy the family, breaking it

apart through conflict, sickness, and death, only returning to the bush when satisfied. Community members describe spirit children as impulsive, wise, crafty, and mischievous.

Awedoba further explained that, community members define the spirit child primarily upon its physical appearance, its behaviours, and the misfortunes it is perceived to cause. He said families are acutely aware of children that fall outside of the local understandings of normal development. The descriptions of spirit children position them outside such local notions of physical and behavioural normality. Before someone can be called a spirit child, the child must not be like a normal child. There must be something wrong with that child.

As stated by Denham. A. R. Adongo. P. B. Fregberg. N. & Hodgson. A. (2010). Common physical characteristics that are used to describe a child to be harbouring evil spirit may include: Hydrocephalus (large head), being born with teeth, facial hair, white hair on the head or other secondary sex characteristics. Such children are also identified as being born with misshapen or broken limbs, and may have a variety of physical disabilities. Thus, the child's behaviour is subject to proper scrutiny.

By Denham *et al* (2010) Excessive crying is the most commonly cited indication of such children. Families regard excessive crying as disruptive and indicating that the child wants to kill the parents and destroy the family.

Families interpret a child's failure to make eye contact as its fear of being looked at, as evidence that the child is hiding something. Other authors describe similar characteristics (Allotey & Reidpath, 2001, Awedoba, 2000; Howell, 1997).

The easiest way for a spirit to accomplish its goal of passing from the bush into domestic space is to enter a woman through taboo sexual activity. Intercourse outside of the home or in the bush can attract a spirit, sex outside of the house attract a spirit to enter the woman.

It is believed that if a spirit is passing by while you are having sex outside of the house (it can enter you) immediately when you finish, or just before you start. That is why it's advisable for men not to have intercourse with a woman outside the house.

The location and method used to urinate is also of concern. Women are discouraged from relieving themselves in prohibited places, such as where spirit children are buried, and in other locations identified as spiritually dangerous, liminal, or ambiguous. Community members also describe that eating while walking is a common way for a woman to attract a spirit child. There is the danger that the woman will drop the food, both men and woman explained. If so, a bush spirit may be watching her, and, thinking that the woman likes it (the spirit) and will follow her home and have intercourse with her (Daly & Wilson 1984).

In a related submission by Denham et al. (2010) there is broad consensus about a spirit child's intentions when it enters the family. Community members' discourse describes the spirit child as a "destroyer" that acts out its destructive tendencies by instigating conflict, causing misfortunes or sickness in the house, and killing family members. A spirit child may cause the mother and father to fall ill frequently, may cause infertility, or may not allow the mother to recover fully from childbirth.

2.7. EFFECTS OF CULTURAL PRACTICES

2.7.1. CHILD DEVELOPMENTS

According to a WHO (2007) report, child development is a dynamic process through which children progress from dependency on caregivers in all areas of functioning during infancy, towards growing independence later in their childhood (primary school age), adolescence and adulthood periods. It spans the prenatal period of eight years of age.

It is the most intensive period of brain development throughout the lifespan and therefore is the most critical stage of human development (World Bank report, 2009).

What happens before birth and in the first few years of life plays a vital role in health and social outcomes. While genetic factors play a role in shaping children's development, evidence indicates that the environment has a major influence during early childhood (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2012). Children can also suffer developmental delays caused by poor birth outcomes, malnutrition, chronic ill health and other organic problems, psychological or other environmental factors. While developmental delay may not be permanent, it can provide a basis for identifying children who may experience a disability (WHO, 2007; Durkin, 2002).

Child development is influenced by a wide range of biological and environmental factors, some of which protect and enhance their development while others compromise their developmental outcomes. Children who experience disability early in life can be disproportionately exposed to risk factors such as poverty, stigma and discrimination, poor caregiver interaction, violence, abuse and neglect and limited access to programs

and services, all of which can have a significant effect on their survival and development (Simeonsson, 2000; Skelton and Rosenbaum, 2010).

2.7.2 DRIVER OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

According to UNESCO (2012), culture drives sustainable development Throughout the past decade, statistics, indicators and data on the cultural sector, as well as operational activities have underscored that culture can be a powerful driver for development, with community-wide social, economic and environmental impacts. Of particular relevance is the cultural sector's contribution to the economy and poverty alleviation. Cultural heritage, cultural and creative industries, sustainable cultural tourism, and cultural infrastructure can serve as strategic tools for revenue generation, particularly in developing countries given their often-rich cultural heritage and substantial labour force.

2.7.3. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHILDREN

The first year of life is a particularly vulnerable period for children. They are not only at risk of infectious diseases and other health conditions, but also at risk of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. The United Nations Study on Violence Against Children highlights that in some OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, infants under one year of age are at around three times the risk of homicide than children aged one to four and at twice the risk of those aged five to fourteen (Pinheiro, 2006).

However, the true extent of violence during the early childhood period is unknown given that it mainly occurs in private settings such as homes and institutional environments, and that social and cultural norms may influence the hiding and/or condoning of certain

violent behaviours. Children with disabilities are more vulnerable to physical, sexual and psychological abuse and exploitation than non-disabled children. Social isolation, powerlessness and stigma faced by children with disabilities make them vulnerable to violence and exploitation in their own homes and in other environments such as care centres or institutions (UN, 2006). Research shows that children with disabilities are three to four times more likely to experience violence than their non-disabled peers.

Data for fifteen (15) countries showed that in seven (7) countries parents of children with disabilities were significantly more likely to report hitting them. Children with disabilities are at an increased risk of violence for a number of reasons, including cultural prejudices and the increased demands that disability may place on their families (UN, 2007; 2007). Children with disabilities are often perceived to be easy targets: powerlessness and social isolation may make it difficult for them to defend themselves and report abuse. Exposure to violence, neglect or abuse can lead to developmental delays and behaviour problems in childhood and later life (UN, 2010; NSC, 2010).

2.7.4. WITCH-HUNTING, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

A study by Nangpaak, (2007), the phenomenon of witchcraft has various dimensions, which relate to the response systems as identified in various societies. In the Northern part of Ghana, especially the East Mamprusi District, the response to witchcraft is very aggressive and sometimes claims a life. People who have found themselves in the “witches” camp were accused of bewitching others, because someone either died or was seriously sick. Such persons are usually women and the under privileged in society, for example, widows, illiterates, the physically handicapped and the barren. It is disheartening to note that while a surviving husband lives without any change in status

and social standing, a surviving wife is usually accused to have killed her husband. Elderly women are mostly targeted during witch-hunting. The reason being that, they are weak, defenceless and therefore easy targets.

According to Fwangyil et al (2011). The death of a loved one, especially a spouse, is one of the most devastating and stressful experiences in life. Widows at this time need all the emotional and physical support in order to be strong and endure the irreparable loss. But in some traditional African societies, the reverse is the case. The widow is made to go through certain traditional mourning rituals, which in most cases are injurious to her health. She is at times accused of killing her husband, and to prove her innocence, she is made to drink the water that has been used to wash her late husband's corpse and to take an oath. The belongings of the family are confiscated by members of the dead husband's extended family and the bereaved family is dispossessed of their inheritance. Family relations abandon the widow and the children for fear of relying on them for financial or material support. The widow is thus left to cater for the needs of the children alone.

2.8. CULTURAL PRACTICES AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Anthropologists and sociologists have provided numerous definitions of culture. According to one commonly acknowledged definition, culture can be seen as 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.' Another definition of culture is 'the totality of learned, socially transmitted customs, knowledge, material objects, and behaviour,' including 'the ideas, values, customs, and artefacts of groups of people. Customs are understood as a component of culture, referring to long-established practices that are followed by people belonging to a particular group, region or affiliation.

Culture and customs can change when significant external or internal factors affect cultural groups, as well as through interaction with other cultures. (Van der Borg, & Russo, 2005). Culture in its simplest form and for the purpose of this paper can be said to be the way of life of a person. Local culture is regarded today as an important tourism resource.

Hunter & Green, (1995) festivals are prominent “components” in the culture of many societies and are inevitable in the tourism literature since they form a part of the heritage of many nations. Today, as people wake up somewhere or go to bed elsewhere, within certain time frames of the year, in cities, towns and villages, people will be celebrating a festival or festivity of some kind.

2.8.1. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Kuuder, .C. J. Adongo. R. \$ Abanga. J. (2012), in their deliberations mentioned that, festivals draw people from all walks of life. This portrays the social factor that is very appreciated by many in Ghana. In many Ghanaian societies, an “invisible register” of attendance is marked by families and community members at such social gatherings. Promote social cohesion by binding families together in lifelong partnership. It is the foundation of social life in many communities and as the source of core communal and moral values. It builds bridges from one generation to another as values and traditions are passed on, instilling a sense of social identity to the members of each community and clan. Significant social events such as births, marriages, anniversaries and funerals are celebrated by families, which in addition strengthens family unity, such occasions provide opportunities to engage and interact with other members of community People from the locality who are domiciled in other parts of the country are obliged to attend

such occasions as shows of concern to family, clan and community while they in return will be willing to help in time of need or grieve. Hence, festival occasions are times, most people take some days off their busy work schedules to return to their roots to reunite with folks.

With reference to the re-unification with Crompton, (1979) and Kuuder, *et al* (2012), in their study pointed out that, festivals and their celebrations as cultural practices was considered a time for meeting and making new friends. They held the view that close to 88% of the respondents agreed that the festival was an occasion for general merry making and socialization in consonance with the deliberations of the social dimensions of festivals as posited by Opoku (1970) said: I believe festivals are important today, more than they were before.

People now take part in these festivals because they want to return to their place of birth and meet the old friends and relatives again and join them in merry making. At a time when the need for money is forcing Ghanaians to leave their towns and villages to look for work elsewhere, these festivals offer the best opportunity to go back to our heritage, renew old ties and draw inspirations for the future.

2.8.2. PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT

Religion is considered as not just only a spiritual gathering of people but more as a social one. For which stand to agree largely with the posturing of Soothill that, Pentecostals are seen as people who encourage empowerment and leadership of all people regardless of gender. They advocate for empowerment through education (Soothill, 2010).

Biri & Mutambwa (2013), put out an analysis of Ghanaian Charismatic churches and their role in social development and stated that, the analysis of Ghanaian charismatic churches resonates well with the situation in Zimbabwe.

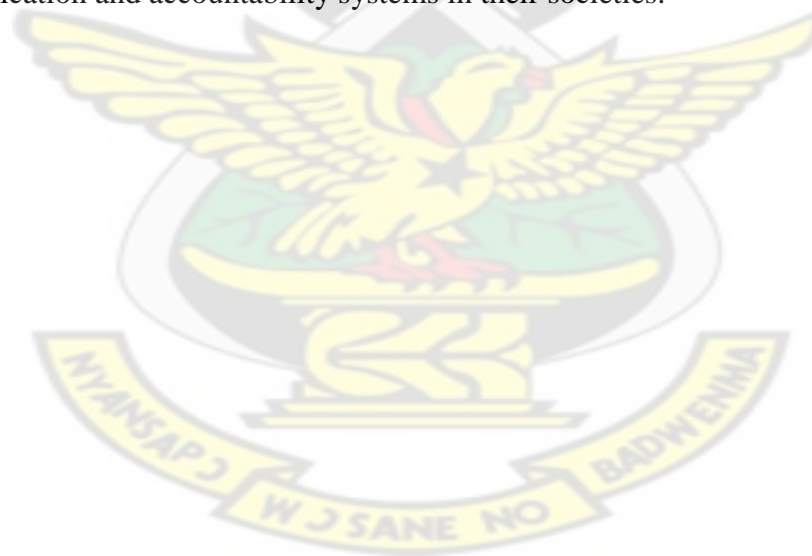
2.8.3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY

In a study by Van der Borg, & Russo, (2005), quoting the European Commission, 1998, established that; the importance of culture as an engine of urban development can be fully gauged by considering its role in regenerating cities. In the last few years, interest in the cultural industries as an economic force of its own has grown.

Festivals serve as forums for initiating community projects and again are the appropriate grounds for contributing seed money to these projects. Public education on health issues, sanitation, sustainable agricultural practices are better executed on no other grounds than festival occasions. In line with the above, kuuder, (2012) in writing about the developmental roles of festivals dwells on the use of human intelligence to take practical steps for improving 'adverse conditions' and survival. Hood says in Egypt when the Nile River begins to recede in volume, the people worked hard to preserve water for the season of drought. Commenting further, she said the people practiced irrigation farming by digging canals, dykes and wells using great water wheels to direct the flow of water to their farms to support all year round agriculture. The people of Egypt believed they could control nature through rituals, including the use of human intelligence to improve natural conditions. Festivals were therefore celebrated to mark their ability to use both rituals and their intelligence to control the forces of nature for their upkeep and well-being hence leading to sustainable development. She then drew the conclusion that many of the Egyptian festivals were centred on the Nile and the purpose was to control the level of the

river and bring prosperity to the land. This element of sustainable development and enhancing the quality of the human and natural environment is fostered by the celebration of festivals (Getz, 1991).

In Ghana and particularly in the northern communities, kuuder, (2012) noted that even though sufficient existing evidence indicates that there are adequate policies and programs that create the enabling environment to ensure that local people participate and articulate their views in the development discourse of their communities, the reality is that, these policies and programs are not responsive enough to the needs and demands of the people especially in poverty alleviation efforts. Yet some indigenous institutions such as traditional festivals are pertinent to ensuring effective community organization, communication and accountability systems in their societies.



CHUCHURU

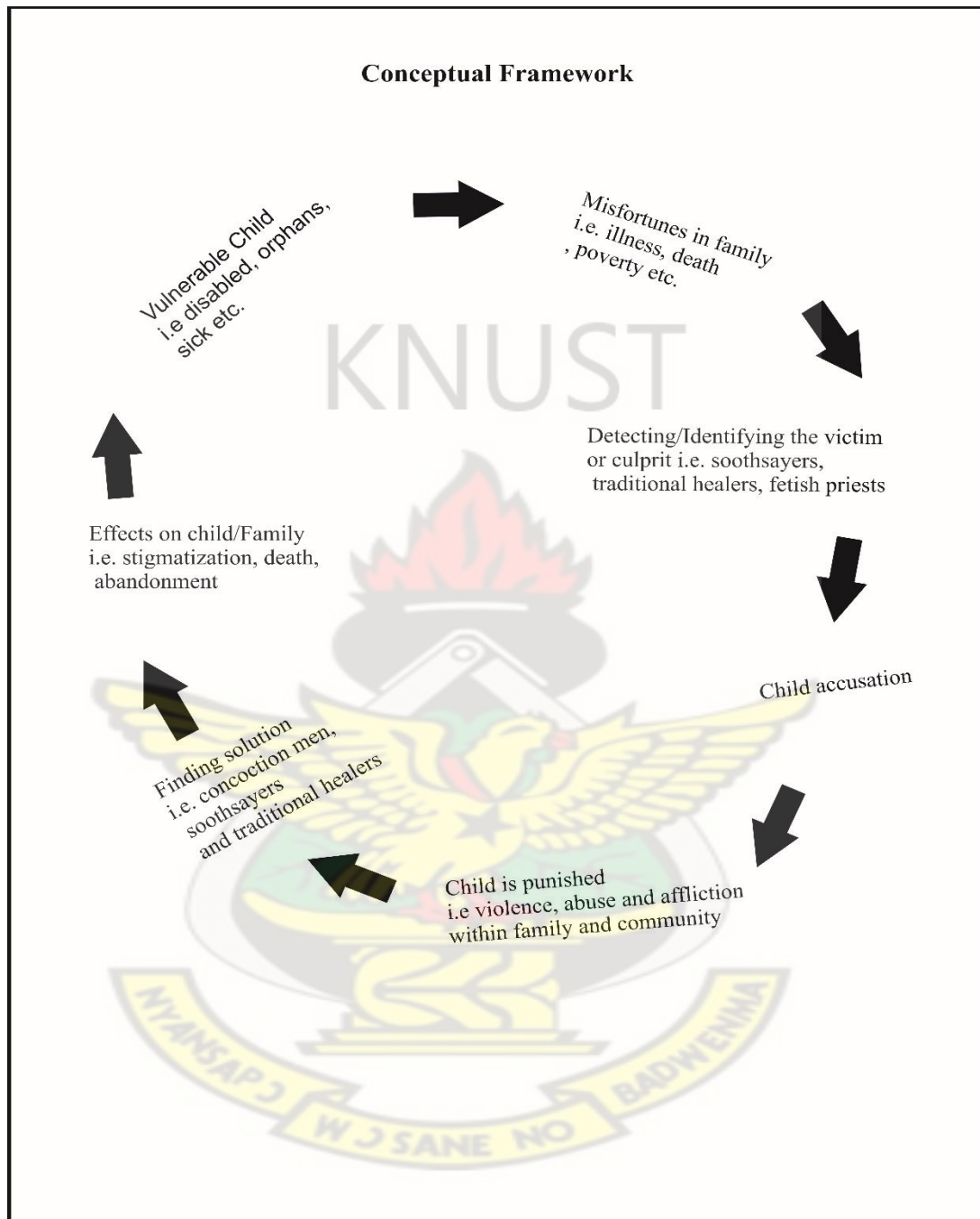


Figure 3: Conceptual framework

Source: Researcher constructs

In these communities where the practice of the chuchuru is common, the child who is born with physical disabilities and deformities is considered as a victim of the chuchuru accusation. Unfortunately, the community does not see the child as the real victim as from the viewpoint of the Western conception of human and child rights, it is not a view shared by local people who have labelled the child as guilty of the misfortunes in the family. According to local beliefs, the real victim is the person who suffered the consequences of the acts of the chuchuru. As soon as the child has been accused of being a chuchuru, it is no longer a child or human being, but a chuchuru.

The local people explain that the child changes form at night and turn into animals and other unidentifiable creatures to cause havoc to parents, family members and family properties. They were described by one soothsayer as a child not meant for this world" they are spirits who occasionally managed to come to this world to play for a short time and cause distress to the communities to which they belonged (Allotey, 1995).

The act of violence against accused chuchuru calls for a kind of reassertion of the norms of the social order. The act is interpreted as socially acceptable by the family and neighbourhood, since they see it as a fight to defend the lives and property from the chuchuru. In addition, it is a fight as they considered chuchuru as evil-doers who upset afflictions and evil not only on a personal level but also in the society at large.

This endemic violence is not only justified at the community level, where Anti-chuchuru violence, despite being unlawful, finds legitimacy in the communities as collective fight against the chuchuru.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0. OVERVIEW

This chapter is devoted to the methods used in collecting the necessary data in writing this thesis. It deals with the data collection instruments and the research design. It also delineates the population for the study and the sample that the study sought the information from.

The methodology of the study is based on a qualitative research approach. The study employed the descriptive research method in describing the various performances that are portrayed in the culture of the Navrongo traditional area. Interview, observation and focus group discussion were the instruments used in divulging information from the respondents. The data collected were analysed into patterns and themes, interpreted and conclusions drawn. The Literature was reviewed to ascertain that the study is not “reinventing the wheel” and also to buttress the study’s submissions.

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study principally focused on the description of *chuchuru* and its effect on the social development among the Kasenas and the Nankanas in the Navrongo traditional area in the upper east region of Ghana. In this vein, the research problem was best answered by a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is a systematic process of describing, analysing and interpreting insights discovered in everyday life (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This research design allowed the researcher to meet the purpose of the research.

3.2. METHODOLOGY

The various techniques employed in gathering the necessary data were interviewed, observation, focus group discussion and field notes of the various ways of identifying *chuchuru*. Interviews were conducted by using an interview guide to chiefs, affected parents and the *chuchuru kwana* (those who kill the children by administering the concoction) in the target communities. An observation was made on the practice of sending the *chuchuru* back to the bush (execution) and its cultural benefits to the people. The practice was carried out on a sacred mountain (*chuchurupiu*) in Manyoro community and other sacred grooves (*Kikantuoa*) in the other target communities. Women and men's groups were met separately for a focus group discussion on the *chuchuru* practice and a possible remedy since the practice has been with them for a long period of time. It resulted in the use of the descriptive method of research in writing this thesis. The relevant interview guide was used to divulge data pertinent to the study.

3.3. LIBRARY RESEARCH

The following libraries were helpful to the researcher, the university for development studies Navrongo, the University of Ghana, Legon, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology main and College of Art and Social Science Libraries, Kumasi, the library of the University of Education, Mampong, furthermore St. Monica's senior high school and St Monica's college of education all in Mampong were also indispensable to the research. Various books and articles on kasena - Nankani culture were read with focus and keen interest in the social-cultural practices. The journals consist of magazines, newspapers and newsletters.

In addition, unpublished theses from the undergraduate and graduate students were read from the various libraries mentioned earlier.

3.4. POPULATION FOR THE STUDY AND SAMPLING

The population for the study: The researcher first of all considered the factors and the elements involved in the setting. The term population refers to the complete set of individuals (subjects), objects or events having common observable characteristics in which the researcher is interested. According to Busha and Harter (1980:60), the concept of population is the basis for the narrative, analytic and interpretive research. According to Fox (1969:94) the population, the universe, the accepted sample and the data-producing sample are the stages or the elements in the sampling process.

3.5. RESEARCH POPULATION

Research population consists of all individuals or objects that have common characteristics on which the researcher collect data for a study. According to Explorable .com (2009), a research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query.

3.6. TARGET POPULATION

The target population for this study was Manyoro, Vunania, Biu, Kologo, Wuru, Pungu and Namolo in the Navrongo traditional area.

3.7. ACCESSIBLE POPULATION

The respondents were basically Kasem and Nakani people who are natives of Navrongo and are currently working and residing in the traditional area. Respondents were drawn from both the literate and non-literate population with diverse occupation and experience as shown in Table 3.1.

The criteria for the selection of the category of population are that Category A comprises the chiefs and queen mothers and elders in the Navrongo traditional area. They were all put into one category since they are known to be knowledgeable about the rich culture of the Kasenas.

Table 1: Categorization of Population and Number of Targeted Interviewees

CATEGORY	TARGET POPULATION	ACCESSIBLE POPULATION
A	Chiefs, queen mothers and elders	20
B	Chuchuru Kwana and fetish priests of various shrines	10
C	Parents and children	50
D	Pastors, senior citizens and NGOs	20
TOTAL		100

3.7.1. Sampling

It is the act of choosing a small group of people from a larger group to respond to questions (Arthur, 2009). Purpose sampling occurs when a researcher chooses a particular place of study because it is known to be the type that is wanted for the study. Purposive sampling techniques were used in this study to select all the target communities.

Purposive sampling was chosen because the study targeted a group of people who had the requisite information in the area of communication that was being researched. The purposive sampling method was used to identify/sample the victims and their parents, the chuchuru kwana, chiefs and elders and the communities in which chuchuru practice was prevalent. The targeted persons and groups were therefore better placed to provide useful information regarding the study.

3.8. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The research instruments used for this research were interviewed, focus group discussion and observation.

3.9. INTERVIEW

Research interview could be defined as a face-to-face meeting between the interviewer and interviewee, or an oral presentation of an opinion or attitude scale. The researcher noticed that during these research periods, the interviews were more rewarding than any of the survey instruments. This could be from the fact that the respondents were more willing to express themselves than to write as they get more opportunity to elaborate on their opinions when they talk.

This assertion by the researcher is also confirmed by Manford (1995:35) that interviews are suitable for some category of people, especially the semi-literate who prefer talking to writing. Interview with the medicine men lasted about 30-45 minutes. The arrangement was done at their convenience. The researcher sought their consent for the use of audio tape of the interview. The interview went on accordingly as stipulated in the guide, except on few occasions where I probed further for clarification and additional information.

3.10. OBSERVATION

Nisbet (1977:15) has emphasized that observation is not a ‘natural gift’ but a highly skilled activity for which an extensive background knowledge and understanding are required and also the capacity for original thinking and the ability to spot significant events. Without observatory participation, the researcher would not be able to ascertain the authenticity of the data gathered from the respondents and the interviewees. It furthermore gave the researcher the opportunity to gain affinity with the various cultural activities such as the funerals, marriage, traditional music and dance and the behaviour of accused surviving *chuchuru*. Most of the observations took place in Namolo, Yangua and pungu in the Narongo traditional area. A digital camera was used to take photographs to visually illustrate and throw more light on the text. In all these, not all the ceremonies were observed by the researcher since some of the rites were performed indoors. Because of the researcher’s frequent visits to the various communities, she gained rapport with the various officials.

3.11. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

The focus group discussion as a qualitative research technique was employed to elicit information regarding the *chuchuru* practice and its effects on social development. The group discussion was conducted with parents in the seven selected areas. Generally, the focus group guide was meant purposely to confirm, cross-validate the responses that were gathered in the interview guide. All necessary steps were taken to ensure that members who share similar characteristics were able to share their ideas freely (Krueger, 2010). Like the interview guide, questions were generally straight forward and open-ended. This session lasted between 50-60 minutes. The number of participants in the group

interviewed was ten. Each member of the group was asked the same question. In order to give everyone a chance to be heard, everyone answered the question before anyone else could add additional comments. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), a focus group discussion session concentrates on gathering opinions, beliefs and attitudes about issues of interest. Focus groups are group interviews that are structured to foster talk among the participants about a particular issue. They are particularly useful when the topic to explore is general, and the purpose is to stimulate talk from the group participants so that the researcher can learn from a wide range of views. Thus focus group discussion can provide insight into issues which cannot be covered in a survey.

3.12. TYPES OF DATA

There are basically two types of data: Quantitative data and Qualitative data. A data is quantitative if it is in numerical form and qualitative if it is not. The total number of any items, the weight and height of objects are quantitative in nature.

However, photographs, videos and sound recordings are examples of qualitative data. According to Trochim (2006) quantitative and qualitative data are intimately related to each other in that, all quantitative data are based upon qualitative judgment and all qualitative data can be described and manipulated numerically. Both data types were employed in this study. Primary and secondary data sources were used to carry out the research. Primary data is data collected directly by a researcher when conducting a research. Secondary data on the other hand has originally collected data a researcher gets from government ministries, departments, agencies and research institutions (Bishop, 2007). Such data are mostly analysed and they include census records, inflation figures, maps, documentaries, etc. Private institutions and non-governmental organizations

equally conduct research, publish their findings and sometimes make data available for future research. In this study, both primary and secondary data were used with much emphasis on primary data.

3.13. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The communities in the study area with chuchuru practice were first identified with the help of a lead person who is well known and based on one of the communities (Kologo). Focal persons to collect data on were identified with the assurance of protecting their privacy/identity and keeping any information they give confidential. Meetings with them were short in order to minimize the impact of inconvenience and logistics needed to collect data were procured.

Stakeholders were interviewed one-on-one using interview guide. With focus group discussion, selected individuals with a common interest were met in an open-ended conversation to share ideas (Plate 4.14). A digital camera was used to capture images and scenes that could be useful to the study. Some cultural practices relative to chuchuru that the researcher could not get involved were only observed.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0. OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the findings of the field study in the populations as already spelt out under the table of content, the areas that were investigated and presented in this study is the description of *chuchuru* practice, the process leading to the identification of a child as *chuchuru*, the process of killing the child, and the impact of the practice to social development just to mention a few.

4.1. OBJECTIVE ONE: To describe what *chuchuru* practice is?

Mr. Deenjei who is about 75 years old said his grandfather told him that the *chuchuru* practice came about when a hunter went hunting in the bush and chanced some human-like beings in the bush discussing how they would stop thieves from stealing from their farm (referring to fruit bearing plants in the bush). He stated that the hunter hid himself from being seen by these human-like beings to listen to the discussion. He said among the discussion was how they could use certain herbs as charms to stop anybody from stealing from their farm. That charm, he pointed out that they mentioned, would make anyone who stole from their farm go back home carrying the spirit of their nature and would give birth to a child who will look just like them to secure people from stealing from their farm.

According to Deenjei, one of these human-like beings asked their chief how they could bring back their spirit which had followed the thieves to their homes.

In answering the question, their chief pointed to a tree and said they could always use the herbs from it to get back their spirit from the homes of the thieves. Later, people who

actually went to the bush to gather or collect wild fruits had some of them returning home and in later life gave birth to children who did not look like normal human beings whom they named *Chuchuru* (something strange and abnormal). Deenjei said the hunter upon hearing and seeing the nature of the children that were born knew it was the spirit of these human-like beings he had seen and heard in the bush. He quickly went to the bush and brought home herbs from the tree that was talked about by the human-like beings, with which he used to send back these strange and abnormally born children. The people then named him *Chuchuru kwanu* (the taker of the *chuchuru*).

The *Chuchuru* in the olden days is believed to be a spirit that looks like a little human being in the bush. From the perspective of the *Kasena-Nankana*, *chuchuru* children are bush spirits born into a family in human form. Although they appear human, such children are not human beings and are not regarded as persons, he added.

He further maintained that, even today before taking a human form, the *chuchuru* dwells within the bush actively searching for a possible way to enter a family. The spirit wants to enter the house to gain access to the “good things” a family provides, such as food and care. Once born, the ‘*chuchuru*’ will take over the house and destroy the family, breaking it apart through conflict, sickness, and death, only returning to the bush when satisfied.

According to *Amenga-Etego* (2008), *chinchirigo* is a mischievous wild spirit or creature. As a wild spirit, it is believed to live in the wild space.

This includes the bush, groves, hills and riversides. It is neither evil nor good. Although similarities can be drawn from the Akan concept of the *Motiah*, the Nankani are not particularly interested in describing the features of a *chinchirigo*. Perhaps this has to do with the multifaceted ways in which the phenomenon is perceived and applied to real life

situations. This notwithstanding, there is a notion that a *chinchirigo* is a short looking human-like being with wide-spread toes, whose footsteps presents features of a person walking backwards. The belief in the manifestation of these sorts of spirits is prevalent in many African communities (Mbiti, 1990:77).

4.2. How chuchuru is born into homes

Deenjei on his part started by elucidating that there is a mountain in the community which is referred to as *chuchuru pio* (mountain of *chuchuru*). This mountain is the place where children who were declared as *chuchuru* were taken to and left to die by pressing it with huge rocks or buried either on the mountain or inside *kikantuoa* (shrub or grove) if it was killed by the *chuchuru kwanu*. He said because the *chuchuru* is taken and left in such places the spirits of these *chuchuru* which resides in the mountains and the shrubs hence women were forbidden to pass by it or to climb on top of it to fetch firewood.

Also, women were not to cut firewood from *kikantuoa* (shrubs). If they did, they will come back to the house carrying with them the *chuchuru* spirit, and when they become pregnant they will give birth to a *chuchuru*. This is because some of the *chuchuru* were buried in these shrubs and is believed their spirits lived there. Also, some people had a certain medicine or “juju” which had the *chuchuru* spirit behind it which they used to secure their farm from thieves, hence if any one, whether a man or a woman happens to steal from the farm would carry home the spirit of *chuchuru* and eventually give birth to a *chuchuru* he maintained.

He further pointed out that, some other ways the *chuchuru* could enter a house included the following such as: eating while walking in the bush, having sex in the bush, standing to urinate by women, and also easing one’s self in certain places not allowed as reported

by Daly and Wilson (1984), who stated that, the easiest way for a spirit to accomplish its goal of passing from the bush into domestic space is to enter a woman through sexual activity. Intercourse outside of the home or in the bush can attract a spirit. Sex outside of the house would attract a *chuchuru* spirit to enter the woman.

It is believed that if a spirit is passing by while you are having sex outside of the house (it can enter you) immediately when you finish, or just before you start. That is why it's advisable for men not to have intercourse with a woman outside the house. The location and method used to urinate is also of concern. Women are discouraged from relieving themselves in prohibited places, such as where spirit children are buried, and in other locations identified as spiritually dangerous, liminal, or ambiguous. Community members also describe that eating while walking is a common way for a woman to attract a spirit of *chuchuru*. There is the danger that the woman will drop the food, both men and woman explained. If so, a bush spirit may be watching her, and, thinking that the woman likes it. It will follow her home and have intercourse with her. Plates 4.1 and 4.2 are places where *chuchuru* are buried.



PLATE 1: Kikantua
(A shrub or grove was where sometimes the *chuchuru* is dumped or buried)

Source: Researcher's fieldwork



PLATE 2: Chuhuru Pio
(mountain of *chuchuru*, where the *chuchuru* is dumped and pressed with stones to die or is buried when killed by the *chuchuru kwanu*)

Source: Researcher's fieldwork

4.3. Identification of a child as a *chuchuru*

Nabiri Sedii is an unfortunate father who lost his son as a *chuchuru*. Finding out from him how his son was identified or declared to be a *chuchuru*, he responded by saying that he as the husband, it was his responsibility to consult a soothsayer as soon his wife became pregnant as custom demands. He mentioned that it was during that period of investigating about the pregnancy that the suspicion was established about the unborn baby not being a human being. So when the baby was eventually born, he discovered certain things about him which made him to further seek answers to questions he as the father could not answer about the boy, Some of which include the child's refusal to eat, sleep and crying at night. He stated that he sought the answers to these questions by consulting a soothsayer (see Plate 4.3) since he was the man and the head of the family. He maintained that it was during that time that it was confirmed to him that his son was not a human being but a bush thing. Nabari was then advised by the soothsayer to take steps immediately to get rid of the child before evil start visiting his home. That is to say the child was a *chuchuru* and not a human being.

In the Kasena-Nankana district, children who are described as spirit children are called *chuchuru* or *kinkiriko*. They were described by one soothsayer as a child not meant for this world". They were spirits who occasionally managed to come to this world to play for a short time and cause distress in the communities to which they belonged (Allotey, 1995). The *chinchirisi* phenomenon thus lies within a specific conceptual frame of thought which is embedded in their worldview. The belief that *Chinchirisi* are undomesticated spiritual entities who have crossed their boundaries is the first aspect of the phenomenon.

The second aspect then defines such an action as an anomaly which represents a socio-cultural danger to the family and the community (Amenga-Etego, 2008:19).



PLATE 3: A community soothsayer (*vooru*)

Source: Researcher's fieldwork

When the researcher enquired to know from this soothsayer how he was able to confirm that a particular child was not a human, but a *chuchuru*, he replied by saying the gods never lied.

In another incident, it was recounted to me by a pastor of the Fountain Gate Chapel in Navrongo, Rev. Eric Afrifa. He narrated how a new convert of the church, madam Atipoka akologo relayed to him about how she had a four year old son who could not talk and walk. Because of which the husband had consulted with a soothsayer who had declared her son to be *chuchuru* and was advised to dispose of the child. He said the

church tried to intervene, but they were told by the people that, it was an old tradition handed to them, hence, they the church had no locus in the matter.

In a related study of the spirit child, Denham *et al.* (2010) stated that, common physical characteristics community members identify as indicative of a spirit child include hydrocephalus, or being born with teeth, facial hair, or other secondary sex characteristics. A spirit child is also identified as being born with a mis-happenings or broken limbs, and may have a variety of physical disabilities. They added that, Community members define the spirit child primarily upon its physical appearance, its behaviours, and the misfortunes it is perceived to cause.

4.4. Disposal of chuchuru

The disposal of the *chuchuru* is mainly carried out by the *chuchuru kwanu* according to community members.

They mentioned that parents go to seek the services of the *chuchuru kwanu* after visiting the soothsayer to confirm their suspicion, after they had visited several of the soothsayers to establish some consistence. They maintained that after a soothsayer's verify that a child was indeed an evil child they could go ahead and kill such a child, claiming that the soothsayer is the only person with the authority and powers to declare a child as a *chuchuru*. Plate 4 shows a soothsayer demonstrating what goes into declaring a child as *chuchuru*.

Awedoba (2000) also noted that such neonates when detected were disposed of as soon as possible, often within 24 hours of birth, as it was in the best interest of the family.



PLATE 4: A father with a chuchuru

Source: Researcher's fieldwork

Mba Adabilsa Saah is a 64 year old man who is believed to have the medicine and work as the *chuchuru kwanu*. Adabilsa stated that he grew up to meet the medicine in the house which was used to assist parents who gave birth to *chuchuru* to get rid of them.

Dandaga Abasuei is another 57 year *chuchuru kwanu* who render services to parents who contacted him for assistance. When asked how he got the medicine to become the *chuchuru kwanu*, he answered that the medicine was passed to him from his father. He recounted how his father gave birth to ten children, but all of them died a few months after each of them were born. He said this got his father to want to find out what the problem was and if it was the hand work of his enemies, who were they? It was when he set out on the facts finding mission that it was revealed to him that it was the *chuchuru* spirit that had entered his house.

According to Dandaga, the pain of losing ten children compelled his father to get the medicine that could make him remove the *chuchuru* spirit in his house and so eventually got the medicine and also became a *chuchuru kwanu* for his community.

Both Adabilsa and Dandaga maintained that they don't wake up on their own volition to enter suspected houses with *chuchuru* to take them out. Both stated that the father of a *chuchuru* approached the *chuchuru kwanu* for assistance after he had visited the soothsayer and it is confirmed to him that the child is a *chuchuru*.

Dandaga pointed that after he had been contacted to take a *chuchuru*, he too will first visit and consult soothsayers to ascertain the strength of the *chuchuru* to inform him how to prepare himself otherwise you get there and be overpowered by the *chuchuru*. He stated that the *chuchuru* fights the *chuchuru kwanu* both physically and spiritually hence, the need to know him/her as your opponent.

After collecting the necessary evidence and confirmation that a child is indeed a *chuchuru*, the next step to take is the preparation of the poisonous concoction (*teeini*). It is the ritual and medicinal object used by *chuchuru kwanu* to send a *chuchuru* back to the bush. The term "*teeini*" signifies the black medicine used to kill the *chuchuru*, he added. He said the *teeni* is either put in food for the child to eat or in water for the child to drink and the work is done. He further explained that the concoction is prepared with herbs from seven different trees or plants and kept in a horn. It is only when, after eating or drinking the *teeni* and the child refuses to die that the child is killed physically in the *dinia* (Plates 4.5 and 4.6) where the child will be kept awaiting my arrival he added. The *dinia* and *diyuu* is simply a type of chamber and hall without windows. People don't sleep there, it is mostly used for ritual purposes, like funerals, widowhood rites etc.



PLATE 5: The *dinia* to the left and *diyuu* to the right

There is only one entrance to the twin rooms of *dinia* and *di-yuu*. A lower wall is built inside the *dinia* leading into the *di-yuu*.

Source: **Researcher's fieldwork**



PLATE 6: The dinia and the diyuu

There is only one entrance to the twin rooms of *dinia* and *di-yuu*.

Source: Courtesy JONAH KWOTUA Dated: (May, 2016)

He said before going, prior information is sent to the women in the house to remove the grinding stone (*namini*) from the quern (*nongo*) and to close the small window through the roof (*natooni*) before the child is sent in order not to indirectly put weapons directly into the hands of the *chuchuru* and also not to be able to escape through the *Natooni* (Plates 4.5 and 4.6).

He said the *chuchuru* upon realizing that its life was in danger, in self-defence could attack the *chuchuru* kwanu by using the grinding stone (*namini*) to throw back at the *chuchuru* kwanu or vanish through the *natooni*.



PLATE 7: Natooni

(Small window or outlet in the roof of the *dinia*) which they believe the chuchuru is able to escape through and must be closed

Source: **Researcher's fieldwork**

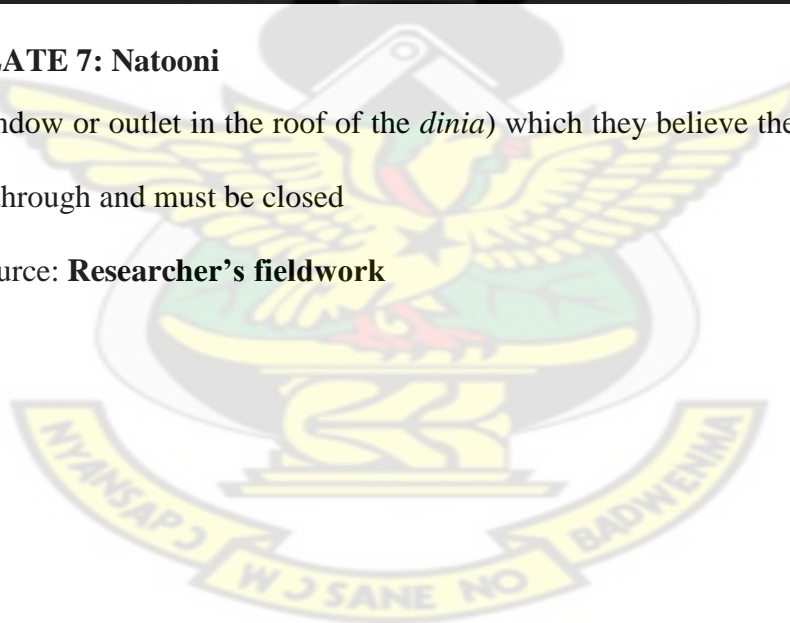




PLATE 8: Nongo inside dinia

(Stone used for grinding millet into flour as can be observed from the right). It is believed the *chuchuru* is able to throw the grinding stone at the *chuchuru kwanu* and should be removed before the child is sent there to be taken.

Source: **Researcher's fieldwork**

This is because the process takes place in the *dinia* where these things are. He said upon entering the room (*dinia*) he used the *teeini* or the concoctions which he had kept in the horn of a cow to hit the head of the *chuchuru* after which some of the concoction is forced in the nose and the mouth to weaken or kill the *chuchuru*.

According to *Amenga-Etego* (2008), once the presence of a *chinchirigo* is acknowledged in a family, he/she (it) is viewed as a temporary visitor. Consequently, the notion of seeing this child of (or sending this child home) is an ultimate conclusion.

The human *chinchirigo*, the disguised wild dwelling *chinchirigo* that has either missed its way (to the wild space) or has intentionally changed paths so as to cause trouble, can be appropriately led out of the human environment to facilitate its return home. The process, however, requires a re-transformation, the shedding-off of the current human form. To help with the transformation process, since he/she (it) is a child, the people go through a series of practices and this is carried out by the appropriate male ritual authorities.

Dandaga further added that once the *chuchuru* is taken (killed) the family does not mourn, or perform the funeral; this is because it is believed the *chuchuru* spirit will return to the house or family from which it was taken.

As shown in Plate 4.9, the *chuchuru* is then carried in a *sambora* (old local mat), to the *chuchuru pio* (*Chuchuru* Mountain) to be buried or to be pressed down with huge rocks while it is wrapped in the *saara* (mat) or may be buried in the *kikantuoa* (shrubs or groves). He stated that they carry along in a calabash a mixture of all types of grains. On their way back home, he said they will be casting the grains behind them while no one looks back. The reason he said is because the *chuchuru* does not die and will wake up to follow them back home. But upon seeing the grains will want to pick them first, but will not be able to do so within a reasonable time and thus get confused with the way back to the house.



PLATE 9: Saara

(Local mat) hangs to the right used to carry *chuchuru* for burial

Source: Picture taken in the field by JONAH KWOTUA Dated: (May, 2016)



PLATE 10: Chuchuru kwanu

Chuchuru kwanu responsible for disposing of *chuchuru*

Source: Researcher's fieldwork



PLATE 11: A soothsayer and a chuchuru kwanu at the same time

Source: Researcher's fieldwork



PLATE 12: Shows the researcher in the right with a chuchuru kwanu in the middle and to the left is a research assistant

Source: Researcher's fieldwork

4.5. OBJECTIVE TWO: To examine the effects of chuchuru cultural practice on the socio-cultural life of the people

The second objective of the study is to examine the effects of chuchuru cultural practice on the socio-cultural life of the people. The cultural practice of people does not only affect their health, but also affect all aspects of life, including social relationships, contributing to societal functioning and disease condition. Lisa (2009) explains that, people of diverse cultural backgrounds, often make different attributions of illness, health, disease, symptoms and treatment. Cultural differences in health attributions have major implications for medical professionals because over time, attributions play an essential role in the formation of beliefs concerning health and illness.

One of the most serious consequences of *chuchuru* accusations against children is violence. Whether it is psychological (humiliation, contempt, disdain, insolence,) or physical, violence against children violates children's fundamental rights as defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19 paragraph 1. This states that Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child. It was time to interact with parents who had indicated they lost their children to the practice, so they were put in groups to facilitate effective interaction. These occasions served as an opportunity for the groups to make contributions to the ongoing issue under discussion.

At each group level, a question was posed: Are there any cultural beliefs and practices that any of you think should be maintained, streamlined, developed or abolished? This provided one such huge avenue for a vibrant and elaborate deliberation. One of the first and serious issues discussed was the *chuchuru* practice. Others equally important to them which was made mention of include witchcraft, female genital mutilation (FGM), marriage and bride wealth, funeral and widowhood rites which were discussed within short periods of time. Members of the groups, both men and women expressed their misgivings and ill feeling about these cultural practices and how they are affecting them, especially the *chuchuru* practice, noting that these practices are injurious to health. As listened with surprise the level of anger with which majority of the people discussed the issues, one would ask why then do they still allow this practice to continue. Mbiti (1990)

reported that to be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involve participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community.

4.6. Death of an accused *chuchuru* child

As part of answering the second objective parents noted with deep regret and pain how the *chuchuru* practice has resulted in the death of their children whom they held the view that, they did not deserve to die. They maintained strongly the belief that most of these children may not necessarily be what they claimed they are. This got a passionate mother on her feet who related to me how her husband and relatives took her son away and never brought him back.

According to the woman, she had a five year old boy who could not walk and so was declared a *chuchuru*. She said her husband brought the *chuchuru kwanu* who attempted a first concoction assault on the boy but he did not die. She said they left and came back again another time. She noted that two weeks after the first attempt, the boy had held a wall and was attempting to make some few moves which to show a sign of hope. But this hope was short lived when they took the son away and never brought him back, which she knew they had gone to kill him. She maintained that anytime a first attempt proves unsuccessful, the second attempt is always by force death through any of the following processes; by drowning the child in a river or basin full of water in the house, other times by breaking the neck or hitting the head with an object to death, which violates children's fundamental rights as defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 6 paragraphs 1 states that Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life. Paragraph 2 of Article 6 states that Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

Also, Article 37 clause (a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age.

Mbiti (1990) on a related issue of twins observes that the people concerned experience them as a threat to their whole existence, as a sign that something wrong had happened to cause the births, and that something worse still would happen to the whole community if the 'evil' were not removed. So they killed the children for the sake of the larger community to cleanse, save and to protect the rest of the people.

4.7. Stigmatization and Discrimination

Stigmatization and discrimination affect parents and families of children accused and killed as *chuchuru*, most of which indicated that their social stigmatization is probably due to the fear they inspire within the society. For example, they are accepted with difficulty in their communities, especially relating to marriage and are considered undesirable and have to put up with this stigmatization and discrimination for the rest of their lives. They even alluded to the fact that when their children attend school, other students who are aware of such practices sometime refer to them as *chuchuru* especially if they find on them features they do not like. The child is stigmatized within his family, neighbourhood, village or community. All these are in violation of Article 2, paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which clearly states that “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.” Stigmatization and

discrimination lead to traumas, psychological and emotional suffering. They also make it more difficult any attempt to reintegrate the children in family and social life.

4.8. Neglect of the health needs of the chuchuru child

From the discussion, it has been clearly established that the health needs of the chuchuru child are never an issue for consideration once the soothsayer says the child is not a human being. The economic condition and state of the chuchuru parents coupled with poor infrastructural development, low level of education and poor access to health care especially makes the women more vulnerable when they are pregnant. In this case, the conception of *chuchuru* as a source of punishment and suffering to families can be explained from a socioeconomic perspective, where the notion of suffering is linked to the underlying problems of poverty and underdevelopment rather than the child who is also a victim of the unfortunate circumstance of the state of the family.

During this study, it became clear that due to the rate of poverty and level of illiteracy in these communities, parent turn to neglect the health needs of their children who are born with some abnormalities and would rather see them as *chuchuru* who have come to worsen their already bad condition, and so would do everything humanly possible to get rid of them, which is an infringement of Article 2, paragraph 1 and 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which clearly states that:

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

4.9. Positive effects of the chuchuru practice

The positive effects of the *chuchuru* practice as the researcher have encountered in the field can be discussed under the following:

A. Financial reward

What do you get in return for doing this work? The researcher posed the question to one of the soothsayers. Abayagiawe the soothsayer contrary to the meaning of his name which means 'I don't sell my god', told me in an answer to the question that "I feed my three wives and eleven children from the proceeds I make when people come for consultation". "I charge consultation fee or other times because of the rituals I had to perform, I demanded from the family a live fowl". One of the *chuchuru* kwana also said his job was more a warfare, and for successfully overpowering and killing a *chuchuru* he charges the family, even though he will not quote figures claiming it varies depending on the strength of the child to be killed. Whereas others simply maintained that when we are sure we have fought and conquered the spirit, we will then ask you for something in return." "Our work is not for free", they maintained. From this, it is very obvious that both the soothsayers and concoction men were into serious business which rewarded them financially.

B. Material gain

A deliberation with a *chuchuru* kwanu (medicine man) revealed that they killed victims ranging from infants, toddlers, teenagers and sometimes even full grown adults. He claimed that any time they killed the *chuchuru* the family members forbids anything belonging to the victim since that will still serve as a link between the family and the spirit of the *chuchuru* to make a possible return to the family. Then the *chuchuru* kwanu will inherit all the property of the *chuchuru* they have killed. When he asked what type of property of the *chuchuru* they could inherit, he said everything the *chuchuru* had while alive. He went further to cite an example of an adult *chuchuru* he killed who was married with children, and had lots of property ranging from personal effects to poultry and livestock which he inherited with the exception of the wife and children. When he was asked how the family survived, he said he did not know but they lived anyway.

4.10. OBJECTIVE THREE: To sensitise the indigenes to the negative effects of the *chuchuru* practice

The third objective of the study seeks to sensitize the indigenes to the negative effects of *chuchuru* practice. The so called *chuchurus* are said to typically be born with physical disabilities such as abnormal head size, abnormal facial features such as big eyes and closed or flat nose and growth problems among others and hence, are mostly identified as being the cause of misfortune to their families.

Sensitizing the people became very necessary due to the findings made by this study, which included the following; neglect of health needs of the child, child killing, child abandonment, stigmatizations and waste of family resource and property.

The sensitization was done in three phases as follows:

- a. The” *chuchuru kwana*”.
- b. A cross section of the women
- c. A cross section of the men

My experience in the community informed me of these divisions to avoid verbal and possible physical confrontations between the people especially between the women and the men since the men may consider certain statements by the women as an attack on them and the vice versa.

Many innocent lives are snuffed out soon after it begins because he or she was labelled a *chuchuru*, that is, the baby or youngster is possessed by an evil force or spirit.

The practice of killing youngsters just because they are born and have deformities, or some unfortunate things start occurring or happening in the lives of the parents and family means that the child is evil or *chuchuru*.

Paul Apowida, a UK soldier who himself is a survivor of such practice in his book “Spirit Boy” stated that “there's no such thing as a spirit boy”. (Plate 4. 13)

According to Paul Apowida Attempts were made to kill him as a baby because he was labelled a "spirit child". The conclusion was drawn because Apowida's parents and six other relatives died suddenly soon after his birth in Sirigu, "All they think is that when a child is born and has deformities, or things start happening, it means the child is evil," he told the BBC.



PLATE 13: Paul Apowida, Uk Soldier

Source: BBC Africa, By Alexis Akwagyiram, 26 November 2013

Using Paul Apowida, as a typical example, they were made to understand that after all it is not the case that when a child is born with disabilities or deformities makes that child a *chuchuru*. All these groups were sensitized to understand that children born with disabilities were not *chuchuru*. But there are so many things that accounts for a child born with one disability or the other for which reason the child must be taken to the hospital or clinic first. This recommendation was used to let the *chuchuru kwana* understand that there are no children living among us that were *chuchuruu*, but that those children are humans just like us who can grow no matter the disability or deformity to become useful to us their parents just like Paul Apowida.

Poor prenatal and antenatal care by pregnant women results in the birth of children with various disabilities. The engagement between the researcher and the women offered me the opportunity to draw their attention to the many lifestyle factors, by pregnant women that can lead to a child being born with varied disabilities, (Plate 4.14).

The factors identified include the following: poor eating habit, drinking alcohol, smoking and not having rest.



PLATE 14: Researcher sensitizing women and children

Source: Photograph by the Researcher from field

One day a chuchuru kwanu was nearly attacked by a chuchuru parent in my presence. The family members of the chuchuru child came to accuse him of killing their chuchuru child. He explained to me that sometimes he does not mastermind the killing of such children. Rather the parents of such children seek his help to kill so as to free them from any calamity.

When the researcher then met with the men, the above scenario was used to help them understand that submitting their babies to be killed in the name that they were *chuchuru* was not just wrong, but was in clear violation of the rights of these children to health and

life as was enshrined in the 1992 Constitution and in the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights.

The researcher further explained to them that the reasons such as the death of the mother at birth, death of either or both parents immediately after a child is born, loss of parents' economic livelihood, or persistent crop failure used as the basis to breed and feed the suspicion that a particular child is a *chuchuru* cannot hold. Explaining that the death of the mother at birth or soon after birth could be as a result of birth complications since the majority of the women gave birth at home by Traditional birth attendance and some of the time they gave birth by themselves, whereas these complications can only be detected by a Doctor or a midwife in the hospital. The death of the parents too could only be mere coincidence, accidental or a disaster that just hits the family at such time that the child was born.

In addition, the failure of crops can rather be traced to such factors as bad weather, bad farming practices, lack of education on the appropriate farming methods, fertility status of the land and the inability of farmers to purchase and use required input. It is therefore obvious that the livelihood of the family will be affected since the source of livelihood for the family is the crops and the livestock since most of these parents are farmers which are affected in a particular season by the factors mentioned above.

4.11. Possible Measures Needed to Reverse the Trend

It is highly suggested by the researcher that in dealing with the *chuchuru* practice, there is the need to put in place measures to arrest the various pillars or causes of the belief of the practice. These include superstitions, ignorance, fear, and sustainable source of livelihood such as improved farming methods to enhance their yield so as to reduce the level of

poverty among the people. There is equally the urgent need for more educational programs to sensitize the community folks on the Fundamental Human Rights, this can be done by the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) and other private human right activates and NGOs of like a mission. Equally important is an extensive education on the need for formal education, reliable and modern improved farming techniques and methods and the need to access medical services, particularly prenatal medical care for the women as well as educating the people to register and patronize the National Health Insurance Scheme to take away the burden and fear of the inability to pay medical bills.

When people are provided with the knowledge they are empowered in the direction of change which will go a long way to minimize the rate of fear associated with life in general. We have to see every child born as a human being just like us, love and keep them as a perfect gift from God, just as it is stated in the Bible; “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning”. (James 1:17).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. OVERVIEW

This chapter presents a summary, conclusion and recommendations to establish the findings of the study. The study has looked at the *chuchuru* practice and its effects on the victims and the society at large as well as sensitizing the people about the negative effects and a possible stop of the practice since no child is born or created as *chuchuru*. It further explains the findings in terms of the right to life and its abuse, pointing strongly on the abuse of the human rights of the victims of this practice.

5.1. SUMMARY

This study has established that the victims and their relatives live in rural Navrongo that are relatively smaller and poorer communities. Their economic activities have been farming and petty trading thus; they live from hand to mouth. Families that are diagnosed with a *chuchuru* suffer some stigma among other people, and are restricted from freely marrying or being married. The study has further revealed the health hazards that are associated with the drinking of the concoction since the concoction men openly confessed that it is the concoction the children drink that killed them.

This could also mean that if the concoction is potent enough to kill then it equally has the potential of posing serious health challenges to the children who happen to survive the attempt on their lives. There is no scientific means of determining if a child is a *chuchuru*, is the community soothsayer who is vested with such powers to make such determination and declaration that a child is born *chuchuru*.

However, because of the quest for the soothsayer to appear powerful in the eyes of the community, and the material reward will always declare the child to be a *chuchuru*.

The death of the parents, family misfortunes, and the failure of crops among others should not form the basis for an innocent child who happens to be born to coincide with such happening to be labelled a *chuchuru* and subsequently killed.

Killing of children is largely due to the violent manifestation of the belief in the *chuchuru* practice in these communities. The belief is the basis and the gateway of the continuity for the allegations, suspicious and counter accusation, to justify the killing of these innocent children in the communities where this practice exists. The non-availability and acts of formal legal systems and support in these rural communities, coupled with huge illiteracy makes life hopeless for children accused to be *chuchuru* since they do not have the chance to find legal mind to their defence.

5.2. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis discusses the *chuchuru*; a social-cultural practice in the Navrongo traditional area and its effects on social development in the Upper East Region. The belief in *chuchuru practice* and what characterizes it has various speculative implications not only for parents but also for government who are burdened with the difficult task of planning and implementing health intervention programs.

We could never be able to provide sensible answers to the overwhelming of questions that unavoidably arise from the *chuchuru* practice, but one thing stands clear: The belief in the practice has a deep effect on parents' responses to childhood diseases and their responses to modern preventive actions, as well as their behaviour. Some of the deaths that are associated with the practice could have been easily prevented if parents,

especially mothers were educated to engage in simple personal hygiene and take advantage of the advances in medical knowledge to reduce child anomalies. Therefore, government must consider various traditional beliefs that may negatively influence parents' attitude and perception toward modern developments in medical knowledge. The government would only be successful if ethnographic educations are encouraged and suitable crusade policies are planned to educate mothers and major members in households on the relationship between other forms of preventive measures.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are worth considering:

- i. The National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) should step up the level of education by involving both the junior and Senior High School Teachers and Students to help in sensitizing and educating their illiterate parents and relatives on the human rights and freedom of the individuals.
- ii. The NGO (Afrikids Ghana) in the upper east region and other related CBOs should collaborate with the Women and Children's Ministry to intensify the campaign against the *chuchuru* practice and its related effects.
- iii. The Police Administration should establish crises response units in most of these rural areas in the upper East Region where the practice is prevalent to quickly intervene anytime there is information of suspected attempts to attack a suspected child as a *chuchuru*.
- iv. The police again should arrest and investigate alleged cases and if found guilty, the perpetrator should be prosecuted to serve as a deterrent.

- v. Government should provide Agriculture extension services to the rural dwellers to educate them on improving farming practice to ensure food security.
- vi. The ministry of health should also intensify the education free antenatal care to the rural women, and the possible causes of some birth defects or deformities in babies.



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GLOSSARY

DEFINITION OF TERMS

- *Baŋa Wε:* Supreme Being
- *Bε:* Bangles
- *Chero:* A person who has ‘eyes to see’ what other people cannot see.
- *Chira:* Ancestors
- *Diga:* Room
- *Di-nia:* Premier room
- *Di-yuu:* Head room
- *Doŋa:* Shrine
- *Dra/dre:* Rooms attached to the *dinia* and *diyuu*, where the children live with their wives
- *Voro:* Diviner
- *Kasem:* The language spoken by the Kassenas under study
- *Nankam:* The language spoken by the Nankanas under study
- *Chuchuru :* It is a term referring to any child believed to be possessed.
- *Chuchuru kwenu:* The concoction man
- *Pe:* Chief
- *Navoro:* Traditional name of Navrongo.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

A. General information

Date of interview: 2nd September- 10th September, 2016.

Interview venue: communities

Time commenced: 3pm

Time ended: 4pm

A. Personal information interviewee

- a. Can you please give me your name and your age?
- b. Can you please give me your academic qualification?
- c. Could you please tell me your occupation?

Main issues

1. Can you please describe who a chuchuru is?
2. Can you please tell me how chuchuru is born into homes?
3. How do you identify a child as chuchuru?
4. Could you please tell me where your children are born? Home or hospital.
5. Do you go for antenatal and post natal care?
6. How do you disclose that your child is chuchuru?
7. Can you please tell me how a chuchuru is deposited?
8. Do you report as a parent?
9. Has there been any form of charge on you as a parent of such children?
- 10. What do you do when you give birth such children?**