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# The University of Reading

School of Agriculture, Policy and Development

Graduate Institute of International Development and Applied Economics

## **ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN GHANA: THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION**

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy

Alo Susana Aga

November, 2017

## **Declaration of Authorship**

I confirm that this is my own original work and the use of all materials from other sources properly and fully acknowledged.

No parts have been submitted previous for a degree at any other university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alo Susana Aga', enclosed within a large, irregular oval scribble.

Alo Susana Aga

November, 2017

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to God for the grace granted me to complete this work. My special dedication also goes to my dearest son (Late Mathias Bumoriwuni Tia) who inspired me to embark on this path.

## **Abstract**

Gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls is pervasive in sub-Saharan Africa, including Ghana, where one in three females has experienced violence of some kind. This gendered violence stems from multiple factors across the individual, relational, community and societal levels and are associated with many negative health consequences and developmental issues for women and girls. It is suggested that strategic development communication can serve as a tool to empower groups and individuals, and provide alternatives to cultural norms and practices that promulgate gender unequal power relationships. However, lack of gender perspectives poses challenges to the implementation of effective communication strategies and programme activities. This study examines the role of development communication in addressing GBV against women and girls in Northern Ghana through the operations of three case study non-governmental organisations, and a review of certain print and broadcast media and government activities. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods and a multiple case study approach to achieve its objectives. Data was gathered using focus group discussions, key informant interviews, communication mapping and diagramming techniques, questionnaires, direct observation and document review. The study found evidence of the usage of communication strategies including both media and social oriented methods and tools by the three NGOs in addressing GBV in northern Ghana. However, most communication activities ignored the important role of social change in facilitating community action against GBV. Raising awareness about GBV alone is not enough to tackle the root causes and gender unequal power relationships underpinning GBV against women and girls at multiple levels. Moreover, these communication interventions by NGOs were ad hoc, unsustainable and heavily reliant on the availability of funding thereby limiting a long-term approach and reducing the effectiveness of GBV interventions in Northern Ghana. Policies must be reviewed and implemented to address gender and communication in the fight against GBV and gender inequality in Ghana. Communication strategies must challenge the trend to trivialise gender reportage in the media; with a focus on influencing the general public towards non-acceptance of gender norms practices which perpetuate GBV against women, yet are firmly entrenched in cultural and religious dogmas. In summary, modes of communication and messages must be targeted to the appropriate audience, e.g. radio or community meetings for rural women who need to better understand their human rights, socio-economic empowerment and where to seek redress when abused.

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## **Glossary**

**ADVOCACY:** Is the process to inform and influence decision-makers and leadership to generate sustainable changes within political, social and economic structures to improve people's lives.

**AGENCY:** Refers to actions of individual or groups and their capabilities to influence events.

**BEHAVIOUR CHANGE COMMUNICATION (BCC):** Aims to promote positive behaviours at the same that provides a supportive environment to enable people to sustain those positive behaviours. it is associated to health campaigns such as HIV/AIDs and immunization.

**COMMUNICATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE (CFSC):** Is a process of dialogue through which people define their problems, and find solutions to improve their own lives.

**DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION:** Refers to the application of communication strategies and principles in the field of development to accelerate growth processes in developing countries.

**EMPOWERMENT:** Is the process by which individuals take direct control over their lives, and are able to be the agents of their own development (e.g. economic empowerment).

**GENDER:** Gender refers to the socially constructed relationship between women and men and the attributes, behaviour and activities to which each is expected to adhere. Gender differences are determined and reinforced by cultural, historical, ethnic, religious and economic factors. Gender roles differ over time and between cultures, but may be changed. Gender is often wrongly conflated with "sex", which refers to the biological differences between women and men.

**GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV):** Gender-based violence is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. GBV primarily affects women and girls, although boys and men and sexual and gender minorities also experience it.

**GENDER EQUITY:** Is fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men.

**GENDER EQUALITY:** Means equal treatment of women and men in laws and policies, equal access to resources and services within families, communities and society.

**INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV):** Intimate partner violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviours, including physical, sexual, and psychological attacks, as

well as economic coercion, that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners. It includes a range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used against adult or adolescent women by a current or former intimate partner, without her consent. Though women can be violent toward men in relationships, and violence exists in same-sex partnerships, the largest burden of intimate partner violence is inflicted by men against their female partners.

**PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION:** Engages bottom up (two-way) communication approaches to development that allow local people to identify and find solutions to their own problems.

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW):** Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life

**SEXUAL VIOLENCE:** Sexual violence is defined by WHO as any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, acts to traffic, or acts otherwise directed against a person's sexuality, using coercion, by any person, regardless of their relationship to the victim. The perpetrator of sexual violence may be a date, an acquaintance, a friend, a family member, a current or former intimate partner, or a complete stranger. Sexually violent men come from all backgrounds, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, religious and non-religious.

**SOCIAL MOBILIZATION:** Is an engagement process whereby to all social actors identify needs and concerns, as well as raise awareness and manage resources for sustainable achievements toward a development goal.

**SURVIVOR/VICTIM:** These terms refer to a person who has experienced any form of GBV. These terms are often used synonymously, but PSI uses the term "survivor" to emphasize that people who experience GBV are not just "passive" victims of these crimes, but are surviving them, actively trying to stop the violence in their lives, and seeking support.

**PERPETRATOR:** A perpetrator is a person, group, or institution that directly inflicts, supports and condones violence or other abuse against a person or a group of persons. Perpetrators are in a position of real or perceived power, decision-making and/or authority and can thus exert control over their victims.

**SEX-SELECTION:** The decision to keep a foetus until term or to abort it depending upon its sex. Most notably, in South Asia there has been a practice of engaging in sex-selective abortion -- i.e., aborting female foetuses. *Related term- postnatal sex selection*

**TRAFFICKING:** The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation (including, at a minimum, the exploitation of prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs).

**EARLY/CHILD MARRIAGE:** Marriage of children and adolescents below the age of 18.

**CONFLICT TACTIC SCALE (CTS):** A tool for measuring intimate partner violence, particularly used in the United States. The original CTS has several subscales that measure acts used in the course of conflict, including negotiation, verbal and physical aggression. The physical aggression subscale of the CTS measures the frequency and severity of specific acts of physical violence within the family, including husband-to-wife, wife-to-husband, and parent to child violence.

**FORCED MARRIAGE:** A marriage lacking the free and valid consent of at least one of the parties. In its most extreme form, forced marriage can involve threatening behaviour, abduction, imprisonment, physical violence rape and, in some cases, murder; an arranged marriage officiated *without* the consent of the interested parties.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:** Violence perpetrated by intimate partners and other family members, and manifested through: *physical abuse* (e.g. slapping, beating, arm twisting, stabbing, strangling, burning, choking, kicking, threats with an object or weapon, and murder); *sexual abuse* (e.g. coerced sex through threats, intimidation or physical force, forcing unwanted sexual acts or forcing sex with others); *psychological abuse* (e.g. threats of abandonment or abuse, confinement to the home, surveillance, threats to take away custody of the children, destruction of objects, isolation, verbal aggression and constant humiliation); and *economic abuse* (e.g. denial of funds, refusal to contribute financially, denial of food and basic needs, and controlling access to health care, employment, etc.)

**ECOLOGICAL MODEL:** A model to help understand the root causes and risk factors of violence that need to be identified and addressed by prevention strategies. The model identifies risk factors at four levels: individual, relationship, community and societal. The ecological model helps to clarify the causes of violence and their complex interactions. The model is multilevel, allowing for the interaction of factors both between the different levels as well as at the same level and suggests that to prevent violence it is necessary to develop interventions at the different levels.

**ECONOMIC VIOLENCE:** Causing/or attempting to cause an individual to become financially dependent on another person, by obstructing their access to or control over resources and/or independent economic activity, denial of food and basic needs, and controlling access to health care, employment, etc.

**ELDER ABUSE:** A single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person. It can take various forms such as physical, psychological or emotional, sexual and financial abuse. It can also be the result of intentional or unintentional neglect.

**FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM/C):** All procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

**MASCULINITIES:** The different notions of what it means to be a man, including ideals about men's characteristics, roles and identities, which are constructed based on cultural, social and biological factors and change over time.

**THE PRESS:** This was used to refer to the newspapers that were published in Ghana at that time. Some of these newspapers included: *The Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times* (*The Spectator*), etc.

**PRESS COVERAGE:** This referred to news reports in the newspapers, especially those in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Spectator* newspapers.

**NATURE OF COVERAGE:** This refers to the type of coverage the *Daily Graphic* and the *Spectator* gave to GBV issues. For example, the extent and prominence given to GBV against women and girls, frequency, sources of the stories and the authors/writers of the stories.

**OFFICIAL SOURCES:** This refers to government officials or state departments/agencies that provided information for the compilation of stories on GBV. These may include ministers of state, public officials such as DOVVSU, CHRAJ, Social Welfare personnel and other civil servants.

**UNOFFICIAL SOURCES:** This has to do with private individuals and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in whose names stories written on GBV were attributed to in the two newspapers.

**SOCIAL ISSUES:** This refers to an issue(s) that affects/influences individuals or groups within a given society.

## Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BCC	Behaviour Change Communication
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFSC	Communication For Social Change
CHRAJ	Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CLIP	Community Life Improvement Program
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence, Victim and Support Unit
DSC	Dalun Simli Centre
DVS	Domestic Violence Secretariat
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GAD	Gender And Development
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDCA	Ghana Developing Communities Association
GDHS	Ghana Demographic and Health Survey
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GM	Gender Mainstreaming
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
KIIs	Key Informants Interviews
MAP	Men as Partners
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
NCCE	National Council for Civic Education

NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
SFL	School for Life
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence Against Women
WAD	Women And Development
WHO	World Health Organisation
WID	Women In Development
WOM	Widows and Orphans Movement

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Introduction**

This chapter provides a background to the subject matter of this thesis, including a brief description of the research location, problem statement, research gaps, study goal and specific objectives and research questions. It also states the significance and focus of the study, an outline of the thesis chapters and a summary.

### **1.2 Backdrop to gender-based violence and development communication**

Over the last four or more decades, gender-based violence (GBV) against women<sup>1</sup> and girls<sup>2</sup> has become a global developmental issue. It has been conceptualised as a serious violation of human rights and poses a significant public health problem of worldwide concern. This is because it affects the socio-economic, politico-cultural, and psycho-physiological development of victims, especially, women and girls in developing countries including Ghana. Carpenter (2006) and Anderson, Cockcroft and Shea (2008), underscore the fact that GBV is considered one of the most crucial phenomena that militate against the holistic development of women and girls, though in some instances, men and boys are also affected (Adu-Gyamfi, 2014; Anderson, Cockcroft and Shea, 2008; Carpenter, 2006).

Because of its pervasive nature, the term “Gender-Based Violence” first entered international discourse when the Declaration on Violence against Women was adopted at the United Nations’ General Assembly meeting in 1993 (Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005:8; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007; Izumi, 2007). This declaration aimed to stop all forms of discriminations and abuses against women. As such, violence against women (VAW) was defined as: “Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (Linos, 2009:1549; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005). Similarly, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), acknowledged that “discrimination against women included gender-based violence, this is violence that is

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<sup>1</sup> Women refers to females whether married or unmarried who are 18 years and above.

<sup>2</sup> Girls refers to females below 18 years

directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately” (Cantalupo et al., 2006:534).

Ghana, like other Sub-Saharan African countries, is not exempted from the worldwide problem of GBV against women and girls. Several studies such as those of Owusu (2016), Adjah and Agbemafle (2016), Cofie (2015), Adu-Gyamfi (2014), Proulx (2011), Adinkrah (2008), Mba (2007), Manuh (2007), Cantalupo et al. (2006), Amoakohene (2004), Appiah and Cusack (1999), and Ampafo (1993) have documented high prevalence of gendered violence against women and girls. For instance, in 2010, the Domestic Violence, Victim and Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service recorded 109,784 cases of violence against women (Tenkorang, Owusu, Yeboah and Bannerman, 2013), and in 2014, recorded 17, 655 cases of violence (Bawa, 2015). Another study conducted by Adjah and Agbemafle (2016) found that in Ghana 33.6% of women experience domestic related violence perpetrated by husbands or partners.

Particularly, in Northern Ghana, violence directed at women and girls is common in many communities. Types of violence identified in northern Ghana include physical violence (e.g. assault of wives in form of slaps and kicking), denial of family maintenance, dissolution of marriages, unnecessary reprimanding of wives in public to show a husband’s superiority, denial of a widow’s rights to inheritance, forced marriage and rape (Dery and Diedong, 2014; ActionAid Ghana, 2007). For example, Issahaku’s (2012) report in the “Male partner Violence against Women in Northern Ghana: Its Dimensions and Health Policy Implications” found that 62% of women reported having experienced psychological violence, 29% experienced physical violence and 34% experienced sexual violence. In addition, Dery and Diedong’s (2014) qualitative study on domestic violence against women in the Upper West region of Ghana reported that all forms of violence were prevalent in the region.

Empirical evidence has shown that GBV against women and girls in the Northern parts of Ghana, like elsewhere, is linked to unequal gender power relationships. Where the powerful in society (men) deny the powerless (women) any right and power, because they are not in a position to challenge men as a result of cultural constructs of masculinity and femininity (Dery and Diedong, 2014; ActionAid Ghana, 2007; Strebel et al., 2006; Bott, Morrison, and Ellsberg, 2005). This assertion has also been acknowledged by other feminist scholars such as Thomas and Tiessen, (2010), Kim et al. (2009), Terry (2007), and Garcia-Moreno et al.

(2005). According to Jiwani (2010), Steans (2006) and Ardayfio-Schandorf (2005), the status of women is most often determined by the kind of girlhood they have had, the traditional values, and cultural norms and socialization processes; this appears to confer in them a low status, which invariably puts them at risk of all forms of GBV. The adverse impact of GBV against women and girls is huge: recognizably, GBV threatens the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, and is also associated with their poor health, HIV/AIDs and STDs and restricted livelihoods options and choices, lower human capital and lower productivity (Moosa, 2012; Thomas and Tiessen, 2010; Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005).

Given the multifaceted nature of GBV and their effects on women and girls, the challenge for both the global North and especially, the South has been on how to minimize or eradicate GBV and improve the quality of life for women and girls. For this reason, several scholars have suggested a diverse array of approaches for addressing GBV. For instance, the mandatory arrest and prosecution of perpetrators, provision of shelters and safe homes for victims, couple therapy, microfinance and development communication. This study focuses on development communication related strategies for the prevention of GBV against women and girls.

Development communication has been conceptualised as key in combating GBV. Communication plays a vital role in any human endeavour, and serves as a way of developing, organizing and disseminating knowledge to individuals, groups, societies and nations at large, to make informed decisions. Communication is a human activity that links people together and creates relationships. It is therefore at the heart of any political, social, economic, and psychological issues and activities. Cooper et al., (2010) argues that development communication is primarily the use of communication to promote social development. Morris (2000) notes that development programmes draw on two main models; the diffusion model and the participatory model. The diffusion model uses a top-down/ dominant approach to persuade individuals to change their behaviour by providing them with information. On the other hand, the bottom-up/ participatory approach entails working with community members to identify their needs and designs programmes that address locally identified priorities rather than imposing interventions. Communication is therefore conceived as a process of creating and stimulating understanding as the basis for development, and communication in any form should aim at facilitating change and raising

the quality of life of people (Waisbord, 2001; Melkote, 1991; Mefalopoulos, 2003, 2008). This study therefore explores how far the government and NGOs operating in Northern Ghana have used communication to address GBV against women and girls using a case study methodology. Hence, the study focus is not based on individuals' experiences of GBV, but their social and worldview of GBV and an exploration of the role of communication in fighting GBV against women and girls in Northern Ghana.

### **1.3 Study Setting**

Ghana is a Sub-Saharan African (SSA) country located within West Africa, with a land area of 238,535 km<sup>2</sup> (BBC News-Ghana, 2014; Issahaku, 2012; ActionAid Ghana, 2007; WaterAid, n.d). To the North, Ghana is bordered with Burkina Faso, to the East by Togo, to the South by the Gulf of Guinea and to the West by Cote d'Ivoire (GSS, GHS and ICF International., 2015:1; Issahaku, 2012; ActionAid Ghana, 2007). The country has a population of about 25 million people, and about 51% of this population are females; 11% of which are youth in the age range of 15-19 years (GSS, 2012). Literacy rates in Ghana stand at 80.2% for males and 68.5% for females. And about 54% of the male and 53.7% of the female population are economically active (GSS, 2012).

Administratively, Ghana is divided into 10 regions; Greater Accra, Central, Eastern, Western, Volta, Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, Northern, Upper East and Upper West (GSS, GHS and ICF International., 2015; Gocking, 2005) and 178 districts. It also has 275 constituencies, with 275 parliamentarians (240 males and 35 female) representing the people of Ghana in parliament. Importantly, Ghana is well known for its political stability and the practice of constitutional democracy since 1992 (African Union, n.d). The economy of Ghana is relatively stronger than other Sub-Saharan African countries and has a competitive business environment resulting to sustained reduction in poverty levels of its masses than many other countries in the sub-region. It is rich in natural resources and has strong agricultural potential which accounts for at least a quarter of its GDP and employs about 50% of the workforce (Index mundi, n.d). Women form the majority of farm labour and dominate in the informal sector: mostly the agro-based enterprises and petty trades<sup>3</sup> (Issahaku, 2012; Duncan and Brants, 2004; Chao, 1999).

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<sup>3</sup> Petty trades refer to the selling of household consumables including milk, soap, matches, toiletries and food stuff. Most women in northern Ghana are engaged in this type of trade, aside farming.

### *Profile of northern Ghana*

Northern Ghana comprises Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions (Awedoba, 2006; ActionAid Ghana, 2007), and has a land mass area covering a third of the entire country (Awedoba, 2006) where this study is situated. Northern Ghana falls within the savannah vegetation belt. Agriculture and Agro-based industries remain the main stay of the people despite the modest rainfall in many parts of the area. It allows for the cultivation of cereal crops and legumes (Issahaku, 2012; Awedoba, 2006). Consequently, environmental factors such as the Sahel climate, characterised by dry, hot and a single rainfall season, coupled with low education levels and the lack of alternative employment opportunities have culminated in abject poverty in the region (Awedoba, 2006). In addition, environmental factors and political happenings such as colonial legacies and the little attention to the region by post-independence government also contribute to a high level of poverty in the region.

It is important to note that within the cultural context of Northern Ghana, no matter the social or economic status of women, and irrespective of their activities outside of the home, women are still expected to perform their gender roles, including ensuring that food is ready for their spouses and children, having sex at a spouse's will, caring for the children, doing the laundry, cleaning the household premises and fetching water and wood fuel etc. Northern Ghana is hugely rural, patrilineal and most families are polygamous, characterised by male domination and unequal gender power relationships and inequalities. Specifically, the study was carried out in the Sagnarigu district of the Northern region, Nabdam district of the Upper East region and Nadowli/ Kaleo of the Upper West region through case studies of three NGOs. The first case study, Ghana Developing Communities Association, operates in the Sagnarigu district while Widows and Orphans Movement programmes extends to the Nabdam district. Finally, ProNet North is in Nadowli/ Kaleo district.

#### **1.4 Researcher's positionality**

This thesis was motivated by my strong identification with oppressed and marginalised groups, especially women and girls and a passion for equality and justice for all. I was born in the Northern region of Ghana to a family of six children (3 boys and 3 girls). Growing up, it was extremely rare to find women in any leadership role or having a voice in the home, workplace or society. It was not uncommon for women to be made to leave the house when critical family decisions were to be made. In fact, girls were (and to a large extent still seem

to be) under the authority of their fathers and male siblings (both younger and older). Once married, that authority is transferred to the husband, the husband's father as well as other male relatives in the husband's family and community. The woman never really has a major say in what happens in her life.

At a very young age then, what influenced my career and interest in general? I set out to defy societal thinking about sports as a preserve for men. For instance, I played football, and challenged my male counterparts at any time I felt they wanted to take advantage of me or other girls. During my schooling years, somehow, consciously or unconsciously, I fought for marginalized and voiceless students, regardless of the consequences.

Because of my passion for working with vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups, I trained as a professional teacher. During my teaching years, I fought against discrimination against girls in school, and advocated for equal opportunities for student leadership roles among others. In my quest to advance the course of women and girls and other vulnerable groups in society, I left teaching and entered development work where I felt I could make a more positive impact on society. In the development arena, I worked as a literacy and development coordinator, seeking to empower women and girls in 34 marginalized language groups mainly in Northern Ghana, through literacy and developmental activities aimed at gender equality. As I interacted with individuals, groups and stakeholders in local communities, I became more interested in the issues of gender dynamics and issues of power, control and dominance.

My background has resulted in a bias against men who see themselves as lords over women and who choose to abuse women at any opportunity. I believe that GBV is largely meted out by men on women and girls, and deprives women of the chance to achieve self-actualization and to make meaningful contributions to societal development. Scheurich (1994) comments that a person's historical position, race, gender, religion, class (which may or may not include changes over the course of a lifetime), etc, intermingle and persuade, limit and constrict production of knowledge, as 'who I am' determines, fundamentally, what I desire to study. In essence, since I cannot separate the 'researcher' (me), from the 'person me', my concern must be how to manage this bias. To do that, I decided to carry out this investigation of the problem, using robust methodological approaches, to discover real facts that would validate or offset this bias. Thus, in this study, I played the role of a facilitator, trainer,

resource person, colleague and researcher. Bearing in mind that this project needed to be driven by the research goals, in order to complete the fieldwork element of the PhD research. However, to ensure a participant-driven research, the study design of the project offered each participating organisation and community to see clearly how they were able to benefit from the research.

As a facilitator, I led each research session. Building relationships with respondents was an essential component of the research process. The relationship was built through my day-to-day interactions with respondents and their involvement in multiple group discussions and activity sessions, or by word of mouth with the case study organisations. The positive feedback with each organisation became obvious in some of the research sessions, particularly, in three research sessions; respondents came to the sessions expecting a particular group dynamic and experience. Within the facilitation context, my attitude of interacting with respondents drove this process, and influenced individual interviews with key informants, where the informants felt free to share their opinions and experiences both from professional and personal perspectives in ways that I had not expected.

Through the facilitation, I also became a trainer. I made each organisation participating in the research to understand that I ready to provide particular training if they requested for it. Two organisations made the request and I provided a morning-long workshop for each in Communication Strategies. Additionally, throughout the research process, the approach the researcher employed for group discussions and activities showed it was also a training process, as respondents felt that the group activity sessions were a source of learning for them. It was therefore not surprising when on many occasions the respondents requested to participate in many group activities!

In the research process, the researcher also served as a resource-person for the case study organisations. Some of the staff members during my interactions with men requested for information (e.g. where they could find development communication specialists to engage their services to design their communication materials on gender-based violence). I was also, because of my networks, able to recommend opportunities to each organisation depending on their interest. For instance, for the organisation asking for communication specialists, I advised them to contact ActionAid, Ghana who have the expertise. For all the case study organisations, it meant directing them to resource people or other development organisations for professional advice or services. It is interesting to note that each organisation in different

ways treated me as a colleague. This meant building healthy relationships with each organisation's staff members from both personally and professionally respectful and dynamic, where the researcher will be welcomed whenever I return for a visit. For two of the organisations, it meant treating me as their "own", they treated me warmly with a nurturing relationship where respondents expressed a sense of belonging.

However, I initially found myself in a position of tension. Knowing that organisations have had negative experience with researchers. They feel being exploited, and rarely experience any benefits from the research process or even seen the results of the research project. This concern was mentioned many times to me during my interaction with each of the organisations. To address this problem, I tried to maintain a clear communication with my staff contact within each organisation, and updated them with progress of the research, and ensuring that they felt they knew and could discuss the direction of the research process. The researcher also made sure that each case study organisation had access to the research results, through feedback meetings. Written report, followed by oral presentations meetings were seen as an important responsibility toward each organisation. This process offered all the three organisations the opportunity to discuss the research, ask questions and suggest areas for further research. This resulted in a vivid discussion and reflection, which has led to each organisation using the results of the data collection in different ways – to compare to other research they had done, to develop policy and to adapt their strategic plan. Each of the organisations saw the research results as tools for organisational reflection and development.

### **1.5 Problem statement**

Gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls is a global phenomenon, cutting across ethnicity, religion, and class, (Hattery, 2009; Mann & Takyi, 2009; Terry 2007; Krug et al., 2002). In fact, the pervasiveness of GBV raises concerns on the subject of human rights protection and its predicament that transcends racial, political, economic, social and religious ranks (Adu-Gymafi, 2014). In Sub-Saharan Africa, and in the specific case of Ghana, high prevalence of gender-based violence against women and girls is reported in the empirical literature (Manuh 2007; Mba 2007; Coker Appiah & Cusack, 1999; Brown, 2002; Ampofo 1993; CRESCENT, 2009). For instance, a nation-wide study in Ghana by Appiah and Cusack (1999) found that 33% of women have a history of physical abuse by partners and a similar proportion have experienced sexual abuse. Other studies by Cantalupo et al (2006) and Manuh (2007) suggest that one in three women have experienced some form of

physical violence in intimate relationships with men. Similarly, a demographic and health survey in 2008 indicated that 58% of ever-married women have been abused physically and 42.8% abused sexually by a current or former partner (Ghana Statistical Service 2009). Recent studies by Sedziafa, Tenkorang and Owusu (2016a, 2016b), Adjah and Agbemaflle (2016), Owusu (2014). Adu-Gyamfi (2014), Dery and Diedong (2014) and Parkes et al. (2013) have reported that GBV against women and girls persists in Ghanaian society.

It is well documented that this gendered violence against women and girls is often perpetrated by males in intimate relationships and in a position of power, such as husbands, boyfriends, fathers, uncles, fathers-in-law, and even sons (Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg 2005; Ellsberg and Heise 2005; Terry 2007; Bjastad 2008; Krishnan 2010; UNICEF, 2000; Iliyasu et al 2011). GBV affects women's health, hinders women's human dignity and in the medium and long term, turns out to be a most important negative aspect to economic growth (Adu-Gyamfi, 2014). This violence not only damages women's physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing since it causes harm and pain, but is also a means of exposure to further violence that breaks down women's confidence, self-worth and ability to defend themselves in society (Izumi 2007; Potter, 1999; UN, 1993; Appiah and Cusack, 1999). Violence and the threats of it, are recognized as the greatest barrier to ending the subordination of women and girls because it reinforces the way men and women construct their gender (Uthman, Lawoko and Moradi 2009). It robs women and girls of their fundamental human rights; right to health, education, employment, mobility, resources and is a serious threat to the social and economic development of families, communities and whole nations. It also endangers and limits women's and men's access to resources and active participation in livelihood activities and poverty reduction initiatives (Hayes 2007).

There is in depth documentation on the strategic role communication plays in development interventions in developing countries (Kumar 2011; Mefalopoulos 2008; Melkote and Steeves 2001; Waisbord 2001). Development communication can play the crucial role of advocating the active participation and empowerment of women and girls in the development discourse. Strategic communication interventions are capable of giving women and girls the platform to raise their voices to speak up for changes in policies, attitudes and social behaviours and norms that subordinate and impact negatively on their wellbeing. However, literature on development communication often focuses largely on the international and/ or national attention given to practical needs such as programmes on

nutrition, family planning, education, mass immunisation and HIV/AIDS initiatives (Washboard and Obregon 2012; Pedro 2013; Moser 2002; Wilkins 1999). Taking a gender and development perspective, strategic gender needs, such as gender equality, gender unequal power relationships, education, empowerment, legal rights, equal wages and GBV, (Moser 2002, 2012) have been ignored or discounted (Wilkins 2000, 1999, 1997; Cornwall 2003). Since the 1990s several studies by Adjah and Agbemafla (2016), Sedziafa, Tenkorang and Owusu (2016a), Sedziafa, Tenkorang and Owusu (2016b), Onyango et al. (2015), Issahaku (2012), Manuh (2007), Mba (2007), Amoakohene (2004), Coker Appiah & Cusack (1999), and Ofei-Aboagye (1994) have been conducted in Ghana. Yet, none explored the role of communication in GBV prevention intervention in Ghana, and particularly Northern Ghana.

It is against this backdrop that this research set out to examine and understand the dynamics of gendered violence against women and girls, and to explore the role of communication in addressing GBV in Northern Ghana.

## **1.6 Research Gaps**

Scholarly findings such as those revealed by Issahaku (2012), Dery and Diedong (2014), Manuh (2007), Mba (2007), Amoakohene (2004), Coker Appiah & Cusack (1999), Ofei-Aboagye (1994), Wilkins (2000, 1999, 1997), Cornwall (2003), Moser (2002), Washboard and Obregon (2012) Pedro (2013) Melkote and Steeves (2001) and Kumar (2012) have reported many gaps such as:

- Despite several and diverse interventions on GBV, GBV against women and girls remains persistent in the study area because of embedded gender unequal power relationships and inequality between women and men.
- Development communication approaches have not been adequately applied in GBV interventions by both government and NGOs in the fight against GBV
- Although several GBV interventions have aimed at empowering women and girls, issues of gender and power have been under theorized. As such, the main goal of the study is as follows:

## **1.7 Research Goal**

To explore the role of development communication in prevention and intervention of gender-based violence against women in Northern Ghana.

### **1.7.1 Objectives and questions**

In order to achieve the research goal, the following research objectives and specific questions were proposed:

1. Identify and describe the social dynamics of gender inequality in Northern Ghana
  - How do social roles, norms, and socialisation processes shape gender power relationships in Northern Ghana?
  - What are the manifestations and effects of gender power relations on females and males?
  - How do gender relationships of unequal power and inequalities or privileges affect females and males differently?
2. Describe the nature and scope of GBV against women
  - How is GBV against women perceived and constructed?
  - What are the forms and prevalence of GBV against women and girls?
  - What are the factors influencing GBV?
  - What are the consequences and impact of GBV on women and girls in the study area?
  - What constitutes women and girls' vulnerability to GBV and experience of discrimination in society?
3. Identify and describe the communication context of GBV
  - How do people in the study area access information and communication about GBV and from what sources?
  - How have the government and the NGOs in the three case study locations responded to GBV, have gender and communication strategies been considered?

- What are the communication needs and methods?
- What are the hierarchies of communication sources/ channels?

#### 4. Identify and describe the media context of GBV

- To what extent does media cover GBV cases?
- How does the mass media frame GBV related messages?
- What are the theoretical underpinnings and framing of GBV? How are they communicated?
- Are there policies guiding communication intervention on GBV? If yes, what are they?
- Is gender taken into account in GBV communication?

#### 5. Find out the implications of the gender dynamics of communication and GBV?

- What are the implications for practice?
- What are the implications for policy?
- What are the implications for theories of communication?

### **1.8 The significance of the study**

Gender-based inequality and unequal power relationship including GBV remains persistent in SSA with Ghana not being an exception to this phenomenon. Interventions to curb this menace from a gender and communication perspective have been very limited in Ghana. Thus, necessitating the exploration of this area of study that perceives addressing GBV through communication as essential in engaging people to identify and solve their own problems using indigenous knowledge sharing systems. This research is also driven by the researcher's aspiration to contribute to knowledge on alternative means of curbing GBV and emancipating women and girls to achieve gender parity in Northern Ghana. It is therefore the researcher's expectation that the findings of the study will add value to the existing knowledge base on gender and communication strategies for addressing violence against women and girls. It will also contribute to the promotion of women's participation and

contribute to development processes within the Ghanaian context. Above all, this study will inform GBV and gender equality development planners and policy makers on the importance of taking the gendered perspective into account, to engage stakeholders in their efforts to reduce inequality between women and men in Ghanaian society, and in Northern Ghana specifically.

### **1.9 Outline of the Thesis**

This thesis is organised into nine chapters. Chapter one presents a concise introduction to the problem of gender-based violence against women and girls and the location of the study. It outlines the main goal, specific objectives and research questions to be addressed, and finally the significance of the study.

In chapter two, the literature on the conceptual perspectives on GBV are reviewed; namely, family, masculinity and feminists' conceptualisation of GBV. Scholarly reviews were also presented on the topic; Development Communication and theories have also been reviewed, highlighting communication paradigms, gender and communication approaches and women in the development arena. Finally, the chapter presents an outline of the conceptual framework for the study.

Chapter three presents the methodological approach for the study, giving detailed information on rationale for using mixed methods for the research. It describes the sampling procedure, research methods and tools employed. Finally, the three case study NGOs are discussed in detail.

Chapter four discusses the first objective of the study, and discusses findings on gender roles, norms and socialisation processes, and factors shaping gender relationships of unequal power and inequalities between males and females. It also highlights how power privileges between the genders can impact on women's and men's livelihoods, options and choices.

Chapter five addresses the second objective by answering questions about perceptions and construction of GBV against women and girls in intimate relations and looks at the incidence of and factors fuelling GBV.

Chapter six focuses on the communication context of GBV. It discusses issues of access to information about GBV, sources and hierarchies of communication channels, and explores government and case study NGO responses to GBV and the communication strategies employed.

Chapter seven addresses mass media framing of GBV, and also explores communication theories and policies underpinning GBV interventions.

Chapter eight provides an in-depth discussion of key findings, and raises highlights emerging from the themes of each of the results chapters (Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7).

Finally, Chapter nine presents the implications of gender communication in theory, practice and policy for GBV interventions and recommendations, including the value this thesis adds to knowledge, and suggestions for further research.

### **1.10 Summary**

This introductory chapter gave a brief description of the thesis and the significance of the study. It also presented a profile of the study setting and location, problem statement, research goal, specific objectives and research questions. It concluded by outlining the structure of the thesis. The next chapter will review relevant literature for the research.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This research on gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls is fundamentally located within development communication thinking. This chapter reviews literature relevant to this study on Gender-Based Violence against women and girls and the role of communication in addressing it in Northern Ghana. The review focuses on the dynamic nature and scope of gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls, development communication and approaches to women's development. After the introduction, the chapter is divided into four main sections. Section (2.2) frames GBV by discussing its broader definitions to lay the foundation for examining the main conceptual perspectives and discourse on GBV in relation to feminism and masculinity. It also highlights emerging themes and models used to explain the inter-relationships between typology of violence. Section (2.3), explores development communication approaches, gender and gender approaches, within development discourse, and key themes. The following section (2.4) discusses gaps identified in the GBV and development communication literature to situate the ensuing study, and then the last section (2.5) outlines the conceptual framework for the research.

### **2.2 Overview of global and national prevalence of GBV against women and girls**

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against women and girls has become a global developmental, human rights and public health issue of worldwide concern (Ellsberg et al., 2015:1555; Terry, 2007: Xiii; Naved, Azim, Bhuiya and Persson, 2006; Jewkes, Levin and Penn-Kekana, 2002). It affects the socio-economic, politico-cultural, and psycho-physiological development of women and girls throughout the world, and crosses cultural and economic boundaries (Ellsberg et al., 20015; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg 2005; Terry 2007). Arguably, this gendered violence against women and girls stems from gender power inequalities and social norms and behaviours that take advantage of the distinction between female and male, and limits women's ability of negotiation in both private and public life (Terry, 2007; Carpenter 2006; Anderson, Cockcroft and Shea 2008).

Prevalence rates for GBV against women and girls are high in many countries across the globe. It occurs in almost all societies and at all stages of a woman's life – in the home,

public places or professional spaces (Terry, 2007; Humphreys, 2007; Paluck and Ball, 2010; Jiwani, Berman and Cameron, 2010). At all stages of their lifecycle, women and girls are likely to lose their lives due to violence more than their male counterparts (Reed et al., 2010). Such violations could occur before a girl is even born – for instance, selective abortion in northern India (Terry, 2007). These abuses also continue to affect women even in their old age, for instance, witchcraft accusation in some rural areas in India (Terry, 2007). Banishment of old women from homes or villages for the same reasons is also practised in some parts of Ghana (Mba, 2007). The threat of GBV is life-long for women and girls around the world, because at least one out of three women have been beaten, coerced into sex or abused in some way, usually by an intimate partner or family member or by an unknown person (Zain, 2010, Mba, 2007).

In fact, GBV against women and girls is not only an issue in the developing world, but also in the developed world. For instance, a study by Rees et al., (2011) found that in the United States of America 17% of women suffer rape or attempted rape abuses and one out of five women receive varying forms of abuses from their intimate partners thereby exposing victims to greater risk of mental disorders. Similar to this is a study by WHO on women's health and domestic violence in 10 countries of diverse cultural, geographical and urban/rural setting found that violence on women was widespread. For example, in Japan (13%), Peru (61%), and the other countries between (23% and 49%) of women were physically abused by their male partners, while sexual violence rates were: Japan (6%), Ethiopia (59%) and the rest of the countries between 10% and 50% (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005). Another 10-country study conducted by the World Health Organisation (2009) about all forms of GBV against women, found out that gender-based abuse prevalence rates in these countries ranged from 10 to 70 percent.

GBV against women is higher in Africa. For instance, in south Africa 50% of women reported having experienced domestic violence and rape (Walker 2005). In Uganda, 59% of women report of having been abused physical or sexually by a close partner (World Health Organisation, 2009). A related study in Sub-Saharan Africa, reported prevalence rates of GBV against women: in Zambia (33%), Ethiopia (47%), Kenya (43%), Zimbabwe (48%) and Sierra Leone (66%) with most of the violence experienced by women in intimate relationships (McCloskey, Williams and Larsen, 2005; Population Council 2008). Particularly in Ghana, recent studies including Adjah and Agbemafle (2016), Dery and

Diedong (2014), Asiedu (2014), Sedziafa and Tenkorang (2014), and Issahaku (2012), demonstrated a high incidence of GBV against women and girls. For example, 33% to 37% of Ghanaian women reported being abused physically, psychologically and sexually by male partners (Adjah and Agbemafle, 2016).

This introduction has recognized that GBV against women and girls is considered a human rights violation, a public health and a development issue, with high prevalence rates in developed and under-developed countries, including Ghana. In moving to discuss the next section of defining GBV against women and girls, it will be important to provide an understanding of the term “gender” and “sexual reproductive health” as they are directly associated with violence against women and have negative impacts their health status.

### **2.3 Defining Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**

Under this section, the author will define GBV against women and girls. The purpose is to emphasize the complex and multifaceted concept of GBV. The definition also highlights the fact that all violence targeted at females has a gender dimension (Krantz and Garcia-Moreno, 2005) on which this study is premised. An explanation of “gender” and “sexual reproductive health” will help to define links to gendered violence in the current study.

#### **2.3.1 Gender**

Gender is conceived as a complex, socio-cultural construct that defines what it means to be a female or male in a cultural setting (Russo and Pirlot, 2006:108). It is not static, but changes over time. Therefore, the term “gender” should not be misconstrued to mean “women” as many facets of society do today. Gender refers to how a person’s sex is culturally valued and interpreted into locally accepted ideas of what is to be female or male (MacPherson., et al., 2014:1). It is a means by which society differentiates between men and women through the allocation of roles and norms, activities and responsibilities, and negotiation of power relationships between men and women in the context of a society (MacPherso., et al., 2014; Wood 2012; Podems, 2010; O’ Sullivan et al, 2006; Bennett 2004; Gupta 2000; Oakley, 1982). Blanc (2001) recognises two main aspects of gender identified within a society: gender roles and gender power relations. These are defined by the different positions of men and women within a socio-cultural context. Gender power imbalance in gender relations tends to favour men over women, and directly translates into unequal power relationships (Wood, 2012; Kritcharoen, Suwan and Jirojwong, 2005; 2004). Inherently, and

in most societies, including northern Ghana, these gender social customs place men/boys at superior and privileged positions of power and control over important resources, relative to women/girls (MacPherson., et al., 2014; Gupta 2000), and are associated with GBV and gender inequalities. With this understanding of what gender is and is not and the role it plays in positioning men and women within social structures, the next section would provide explanations of the concept of sexual and reproductive health, as GBV against women has implications for women's sexual health and well-being.

### **2.3.2 Sexual and reproductive health (SRH)**

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) is an umbrella term covering different areas of human health. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2009, 2010, 2014, 2015), sexual reproductive health (SRH) infers that “people can have a responsible, satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so”. Thematic areas within sexual and reproductive health, include fertility, pregnancy, power within sexual relationships, access and reproductive health services, sexually transmitted infections and maternal health (WHO, 2009), HIV/AIDs (Channon, Falkingham and Mathews, 2010) also cover the physical, mental and social well-being in matters related to the reproductive system.

Arguably, GBV is directly and indirectly associated with women's and girl's sexual and reproductive health. It has been recognized that most females who live with violent male partners lack the agency to protect themselves against sexually related diseases or unwanted pregnancies (Krug et al, 2002). GBV can lead to STIs including HIV/AIDS and unplanned pregnancies through forced sexual intercourse, because in such violent circumstance men, by their culturally held beliefs, would not allow their female partner to use contraceptives, more especially condoms, for safe sex.

Essentially, sexual and reproductive initiatives involve men and women giving cognisance to the fact that the subject is a sensitive (e.g. issue of sexuality, gender discrimination, gender power relationships and bias), but the crucial issue for individuals, intimate partners and communities at large. SRH programmes also work to minimise or if possible eradicate sexual violence and coercion, sex-selective abortions and harmful cultural and traditional practices such as FGC and forced marriages. Palpably, HIV/AIDS is also considered a crucial facet of the SRH discourse (Channon, Falkingham and Mathews, 2010).

### **2.3.3 Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**

The term “Gender-Base Violence” is a multifaceted concept with no generally agreed definition because it is contested and continues to evolve (Carpenter 2005; Anderson, Cockcroft and Shea 2008; Paluck and Ball 2010:3; Parkes et al., 2013). Nonetheless, at the United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and following the new impetus on women’s issue, Gender-based violence against women was defined as “any act that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (Russo and Pirlott, 2006:181; United Nations, 1995). It is important to recognize that GBV takes place in the home as well as in schools, workplaces, and in the wider community. Although most violence is perpetrated by individuals or groups of individuals, the definition also encompasses violence perpetrated by the state, either through direct actions or through failure to protect its citizens from harm (Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2004;1). It also brings into perspective the dynamics of GBV that extends to child sexual abuse, coercive sex, rape, stalking and intimate partner violence (Russo and Pirlott, 2006:181). The use of “gender-based” also sought to point to the fact that women’s low status or subordinate position in the family hierarchy and in society at large, increases their risk of being abused, because of their gender and the roles they play (Russo and Pirlott, 2006; Morrison and Orlando 2005).

Similarly, the United Nations defined Gender-based violence against women as “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman, or violence that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty” (United Nations General Assembly 2006:15). Which is why Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott (2004) argues that violence against women is often referred to as “gender-based” because it is rooted in women’s lack of power in relationships and in society relative to men; they also explain that Intimate partner violence and sexual coercion are the most common forms of GBV including, but not limited to:

- (i) physical violence, such as slapping, kicking, hitting with a fist or other object, or use of weapons.
- (ii) emotional violence, such as systematic humiliation, controlling behaviours, degrading treatment and threats of harm.
- (iii) sexual violence, including forced sexual intercourse, coerced sex by intimidation or threats, or being forced to take part in sexual activities that are considered degrading or humiliating; and
- (iv) economic violence, such restricting access to financial or other resources with the purpose of controlling or subjugating a person (ibid).

Of note is the fact that both men and women can be victims as well as perpetrators of violence. However, the characteristics of violence most commonly committed against women differ in critical respects from violence commonly committed against men. This is because men are more likely to be killed or injured in wars or in youth and gang-related violence than women, and they are more likely to be physically assaulted or killed on the street by a stranger (Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2004:3). Men are more likely to be associated with perpetration of violence regardless of the sex of the victim (WHO, 2009; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2004). In contrast, Heise et al., (1999) argue that women are more likely to be physically beaten or killed by known people in the family or husbands and boyfriends. Females are likely to be sexually abused, coerced or exploited as a child, as an adolescence but more, as adults (Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2004, 2007).

Krantz and Garcia-Moreno (2005) add that violence can be put into three broad categories: those who commit violence; self-directed violence (e.g. suicide), interpersonal violence<sup>4</sup> and collective violence<sup>5</sup>. They assert that women and girls experience all these categories of violence in their lives and that such violence or the threats of it are meant to hurt or make women suffer physically, sexually or psychologically, just because they are females (Krantz and Garcia-Moreno 2005).

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<sup>4</sup> Interpersonal violence refers to violence directed at young girls, adolescents, and women of reproductive age, exercised by the husband/partner/former partner or other family members.

<sup>5</sup> Collective violence refers to social, political and economic abuse of women and girls.

Following these definitions of GBV against women and girls, the next section discusses theoretical perspectives of GBV. This discussion will elicit an understanding of the dynamics and multifaceted nature of GBV.

## **2.4 Feminists' perspectives of GBV**

Feminist scholarships conceptualize GBV against women as a serious public health issues and a violation of human rights that robs women and girls of quality and dignified life, and is an impairment to their development and well-being (Abramsky et al 2011; Thomas and Tiessen, 2010; Ellsberg, 2006; Ellsberg et al., 2008; Krantz and Garcia-Moreno, 2005; Rees et al., 2011; Merry, 2005, Pritchett, 2008; Zain, 2012; Vojdik, 2007).

Feminist perspectives recognize Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and sexual violence as a male-dominated phenomenon, and that no matter the type or form of abuse, women are disproportionately affected because of their gender roles in the family and society at large (Krantz and Garcia-Moreno, 2005; Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006). Garcia-Moreno et al cite the example of a review of over 50 population-based studies in 35 countries and found that 10% to 52% of women across the globe reported being physically assaulted by their intimate partners and 10% to 30% experienced sexual violations by their partners. Evidence suggests that IPV/DV is the most prevalent form of GBV perpetrated by a male partner on his female intimate partner, which often results in injury and or death. As a consequence, women are likely to experience poor health, including mental disorders, homicide, trauma, depression, stress and HIV/AIDS (Kim et al., 2007; Beattie et al., 2010; Liebling-Kalifani, 2011).

Gendered violence is therefore perceived as a grievous impediment to equality and equity between male and female (Bjastad, 2008). Thomas and Tiessen (2010)' study of Human Security, Gender-based violence and the spread of HIV/AIDs in 20 African countries, from a feminist perspective, found that violence and the threats of it endanger women's economic, social and political progress as well as interrupting food production, resulting in food scarcity and restriction in women's uptake of livelihoods ventures.

Feminist theorists have argued that GBV against women whether in the private and/or public arena, is the manifestation of unequal gendered power relationship between females and males embedded in the social hierarchy in which more power is allocated to men as compared to women (Kim et al., 2007, 2008, 2009; Chege, 2005; Pronyk et al 2006; Terry

2007; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg 2005; Ellsberg 2006). Inequitable power relationships have placed women and girls in a lower position in most societies (Russo and Pirlot, 2006; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2004). This lower position is characterized by low-income - poverty due to lack of access to livelihood resources such as land, assets, economic activities, lack of voice, continued deprivation of capabilities, choice and power disabilities paramount for women and girls' enjoyments of their full human rights (Zain, 2010; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg 2005). Within that context, women are unlikely to be able to fend for themselves and are even more likely to experience violence from men (Liebling-Kalifani, 2011; Kim et al., 2007). This may result in making transactional sex among many females an (apparent) option for basic survival needs - water, food and shelter. Such females become more vulnerable to sexual abuse and lack the agency to traverse safe sex with clients (Dunkle et al., 2004). As taking or accepting money or other material gifts from a man translate into sex on the man's own terms, which usually includes rape and sex without condoms, and translating into men's demonstration of gendered authority and dominance over women and girls (Dunkle et al., 2007; Dunkle et al., 2004).

Recognizably, the gender relationship of inequality is underrated because social norms and values systems often appear to accept unequal gender power, which places men superior position to women. This may result in women being more vulnerability to male violence and economic marginalization, just to maintain the status quo (Kelkar and Nathan, 2005). For example a study by Kelkar and Nathan (2005) in rural South Asian countries found that women had low access to livelihoods resources; asserts; health care; education; technologies and community decision making processes; and that the extreme forms of gender inequalities in the region have led to over 79 million women and girls losing their lives due to familial abuse, sex-selective abortions, traditional practices like dowry, property grabbing related murders, honour killings, and acid throwing. It is in this respect that feminists have argued that women and girls suffer a myriad of forms of physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, economical GBV in their life cycle, because of social differentiation between women and men (Terry, 2007, Krantz and Garcia-Moreno, 2005).

Similarly, advocates argue that all acts of violence are gender embedded, and learned through social practice (Wood, 2012; Jewkes and Morrell, 2010; Alden, 2010; Santana et al., 2006; Steans, 2006; Chege, 2005). This is so because societies across the globe are male-dominated (patriarchal), and "doing" gender is a demonstration of power that serves to

preserve stiff grouping of gender relations to perpetuate the socio-political and even economic control of men and to keep women subordinated to men using violence (Thomas and Tiessen 2010; Chege 2005; Bjastad 2008). Zain (2012), relate that this gender embeddedness and male dominance have privileged men to exercise power in intimate partnerships because of the social structures within which patriarchal ideals make men superior and feel responsible to control women's behaviours for compliance. The fact is that power is exercised alongside control is usually regarded as an apparatus and or a method through which male power is sustained. That is why feminist maintain that men's control of women depends on different methods like the use of threats (intimidations) and or real use of physical violence and coercion to achieve their goal (Thomas and Tiessen 2010). It also means that men use a wide range of techniques including physical force, restriction of movement, threats of infidelity, refusal to provide household needs or pay children's school fees among others to control their female partners (Adinkrah, 2008). Unfortunately, society tends to endorse gender power inequalities between men and women, especially where the laws and customs join hands to condone them (Dobash and Dobash 1979 cited in Michalski 2004; Shepherd 2008).

### ***Social institutions reinforce gender inequalities and GBV***

Furthering feminist perspectives on GBV against women and girls, studies and reviews of gender violence in schools in developing countries also noted that educational institutions were places where sexual abuse and gender inequalities prevailed (Leach and Humphrey 2007; Dunne, Humphrey and Leach 2006; Leach, Slade and Dunne 2012). These studies suggest that schools seem to sanction unequal gender relationships among boys and girls around and within the school environment making way for male teachers and male students alike to abuse female students and even sometimes female teachers. Thus, educational institutions are sites that reproduce, teach and preserve social positions and values concerning boy and girls. It is done through formal and informal ways which include assigning boys to do prestigious and public tasks such as ringing the bell for school meetings, serving as class prefects while girls are assigned tasks like cleaning of classrooms, offices and floors (Leach, Slade and Dunne, 2012; Dunne et al 2005, Leach and Humphrey 2007). This results in boys having a greater feeling of superiority over girls in both physical and verbal spaces in class, resulting in girls tolerating sexual harassment (Leach and Humphrey 2007; Dunne et al 2005). Also, girls are encouraged to opt for professions and jobs (house wife, nursing, teaching, secretary, cleaning, and office girl) that are feminine (low-risk)

related and inferior in status and invariably with low remuneration, which perpetuate their low status even when girls become women (Dunne, Humphrey and Leach 2006; Coker-Appiah 2004). It is therefore recognised that social practice in schools, function to maintain a gender rule which believe in the genuineness of male dominance, thereby promoting abusive manliness and submissive womanhood and at the same time disregarding other ways for ensuring equal power relationship between girls and boys and a non-violence environment (Leach, Slade and Dunne, 2012; Leach and Humphrey 2007; Dunne, Humphrey and Leach 2006; Leach, 2006; Dunne et al 2005).

Feminists have blamed the community, legal frameworks, religion, culture and the mass media for reinforcing gender inequalities and condoning male violent behaviour against women and girls (Leach and Humphrey 2007; Dunne, Humphrey and Leach 2006; Leach, Slade and Dunne 2012). It has been recognised for instance, that the legal systems in many countries around the world have often maintained that men's violence against women is private and a domestic issue and often not criminalise and press charges on male perpetrators (Vojdik 2007; Sundaram et al., 2004; Baden, 1994). This attitude in most legal systems has resulted in women's reluctance to report males who abuse them to the police or other legal houses, because they conceptualize legal systems as reflecting and strengthening women and girls' subordination, and a denial of the basic right to equality (Vojdik 2007).

Religion and culture reinforce social belief systems that objectify and see women as "others" and so must be subject to man's authority and chastisement. Religion is an authoritative agent of socialization, and so whatever the religious leaders –pastors, priest, imam, says is from the word of God, is considered as the truth.

The mass media is seen as propagating GBV against women by the way males are usually presented as superior, active, intelligent, and assertive as against women being sexualized objects, inactive, submissive and weak (Steans 2006).

### ***Interventions***

Some feminist scholars postulate that any prevention/intervention programs whether by state institutions and or by development agencies to address GBV against women and girls must endeavour to include economic empowerment in the form of skills acquisition or microfinance for women and girls (Kim et al., 2007, 2008, 2009; Beattie et al 2010; Pronyk et al., 2006, 2008; Dworkin and Blankenship, 2009). Moreover, several studies have

demonstrated that increasing women's economic status allows them to contribute to household expenditure and offer women the opportunity to be included in household decision-making processes and increase capacity to negotiate for safe sex and non-violence partnerships (Kim et al 2007, 2008, 2009; Beattie et al 2010). And that through economic enhancement, women are likely to develop self-confidence/esteem, assertiveness, navigating skills leading to a reduction in male violence against women especially in intimate partner relationships (Kim et al 2007, 2008, 2009). They, however, noted that a woman's economic empowerment may initially pose as a risk factor for male violence because of the perceived shift in power relationships. Examples of interventions include: group education in 18 countries and lasting 8 to 24 weeks, with common approaches including the Duluth model, a feminist approach that engages men in discussions around power and control; the couple therapy and school-based programs (Ellsberg et al., 2014).

## **2.5 Masculinities and GBV**

In this section, the review focuses on understanding the concept of masculinities as a social construct and its relationship to GBV against women. Additionally, it discusses the negative impacts of hegemonies masculinities on both men and women. The essence of the discussion is the help in the understanding of how these constructs exacerbate violence between women and men within the domain of gendered relationships.

### **2.5.1 Defining Masculinities**

Connected to feminist theoretical perspectives of Gender-Based Violence against women and girls, is the concept of masculinities (Care International, 2013). Both historical and cultural studies revealed that the theory of masculinity/masculinities is fluid and complex, depending on its location, may constantly be (re)shaped by new influences (Rves, 2010; Connell, 1989, 1995, 1997). Connell and Connell (2005) refer to masculinities as "the patterns of social practice associated with the position of men in any society's set of gender relations. The bodily difference is not a fixed determinant of gender patterns; it is, rather, a point of reference in gender practices". They note that there are multiple masculinities and hierarchies of masculinities, often defining a "hegemonic" pattern for a given society, thereby viewing masculinities as both collective as well as individual practices actively constructed in social life. Importantly, the new concept of masculinities differentiates the various forms of masculinity within any one society the ways of being a man that are

dominant and considered exemplary and how others are less than ideal (Eves (2010). Recognising that multiple masculinities co-exist within any given society, and are a reflection of the different factors and different groups and particular forms of masculinity culturally upheld over others at different times and places (Cleaver, 2002).

Hegemonic masculinity/masculinities which are referred to as “the pattern that exerts force on men to behave in culturally and socially sanctioned ways” (Connell, 2007; Morell, 1998; Connell, 1995; Cornwell and Lindisfarn, 1994). These socially constructed ways of being a man are dominant and recognized as ideal patterns of behaviour for men in most societies (Connell, 2007; Morell, 1998). Within the scope of hegemonic masculinities, the feminine roles for women as well as masculine roles for men are legitimized and enforced, thereby placing limits on what men and women can and cannot do (Eves, 2010). Masculine ideologies support male-dominated ideals of strength, courage, assertiveness, risk-taking adventures and sexual prowess while women are perceived as weak, harmless, submissive and helpless (Pulerwitz and Barker 2008; Adinkrah 2012; Cornwell, 1997). These characteristics stem from a combination of biological, cultural and social influences, and so help in the understanding of power in society (UNIFEM, n.d).

### **2.5.2 Hegemonic masculinities are associated with GBV**

It has been well documented that hegemonic masculinities are strongly linked to men’s violent use of power and a fundamental cause of violence in all societies around the world (Pulerwitz and Barker 2008; Adinkrah 2012; Adinkrah, 2001; UNIFEM, n.d), and masculine norms cherished and preserved by some men and women of this younger generation (Adinkrah 2012). Critically, the notion of masculinity ideals, makes many men feel they have the right to beat women as a way of discipline, when they are perceived as deviating from their assigned feminine gender roles (Boonzier, 2008; Strebel et al., 2006). For example, a study conducted by WHO in 10 countries found that violence was almost always committed by men and, more often than not, by men who held traditional views about masculinity (Peacock et al., 2009; Verma et al., 2006). This violence brings to the fore the behaviour of men that seeks to control and maintain superiority over women (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009).

### 2.5.3 Consequences

The male practice of hegemonic masculinities is found to have negative impacts on both men and women. The ideals of hegemonic manhood that is related to risk-taking behaviours such as men's excessive use of alcohol and drugs, multiple sex partners, aggressiveness, toughness among others are both a cause of male violence perpetration and victimization with serious negative outcomes. For example, males' deaths due to violence are twice that of women and more die due to road traffic injuries (WHO, 2002; Peacock et al., 2009). Additionally, men who adhere to rigid hegemonic masculine notions; ie, dominance and sexual conquest, view health-seeking behaviours as a sign of weakness, experience poor health outcomes (Peacock et al., 2009). For instance, WHO reports that life expectancy for men is lower than that of women across the globe (WHO, 2007) and that males of all ages represent 80% of homicide victims (WHO, 2002).

Related to this are men's feelings of entitlement to women's bodies as sex objects has led to their engagement with multiple sexual partners (Peacock et al., 2009; Verma et al., 2006) to show sexual prowess (Adinkrah, 2008). This has led to sexual and reproductive implications for women and girls such as unwanted pregnancies, multiple abortions, pelvic pains, and STIs (Anderson, Cockcroft, and Shea, 2008; Strebel et al., 2006; Harrison et al., 2006; Dunkle et al., 2004). This is because most men see their control over women sexuality as part of their perceived manhood effectiveness. For example, Santana et al (2006) a study in the USA found that men with traditional ideologies of masculinities were perpetrators of IPV, with one in every four women abused stemming from forbidding them from using contraceptives and condoms in sexual activities. This implied that women and girls within a hegemonic masculinity context usually lacked the agency to negotiate safe sex which invariably made them susceptible to STIs and HIV/AIDs Harrison et al., 2006; Dunkle et al., 2004).

Conversely, these dominant social rules make little or no room for dialogue for attitudinal change towards non-violence and gender equality in modern societies (Pulerwitz and Barker 2008; Harrison et al 2006). Which is why Sathiparsad (2008) contends that even though interventions to challenge women's subordination and aggression by men focuses on empowering women economically, it is essential that the role of men and masculinity in gendered power relations and violence is not undermined. Khumalo (2005), and Bujra and

Baylies 2000 in Sathiparsad (2008), and Hearn and Whitehead (2006) also note that male behaviour change is strategic and crucial for the prevention and reduction in levels of GBV across societies.

#### **2.5.4 GBV Interventions related to masculinities**

As noted, hegemonic masculinities are directly associated with GBV, which have negative impacts on both the males and females. Thus, a lot of preventive and intervention programs have been suggested and implemented to engage men and boys to construct alternative masculinities that promote non-violent behaviours and equal gender relationships (Jewkes, Flood and Lang, 2015; Jewkes and Morrell, 2010; Gupta et al., 2008; Pulerwitz et al., 2006). One of such programs is the Better Life Options for Boys program in 11 Indian state schools engaging over 8,000 boys with the aim of helping them change harmful gender norms away from attitudes and behaviours that inflict physical, emotional and sexual pain on women and girls resulting in health challenges (White, Greene and Murphy 2003). Secondly, the Sexto Sentido mass media campaign in Nicaragua and Brothers for Life campaign in South Africa, both focusing on changing societal notions surrounding masculinity and building gender-equitable attitudes, HIV communication and condom use, have been evaluated and proven to be effective and widely used (Jewkes and Morrell 2010). In Brazil, a program dubbed Program H has a group education intervention and social marketing campaign aimed at healthy sexual behaviours and reducing the prevalence of HIV through the revision of traditional norms and limiting violence. Assessments of this project suggest it is impacting positively on men's lives as gender negative attitudes are changing and self-reported STIs increasing, with young men questioning inequitable definitions of manhood and beginning to take up more gender equitable behaviours (Gupta et al., 2008; Pulerwitz et al., 2006; Jewkes and Morrell, 2010).

Another example is the Stepping Stone intervention program initiated by Alice Welbourn. It is gender transformative oriented intervention that engages participatory techniques and tactics for participants of the program to reflect on their behaviours and facilitates safe sex processes through capacity building for equal gender relationships. This intervention was first implemented in Uganda and proved successful. It is currently adopted in over 40 countries across continents. For instance, in South Africa, a randomized control trial

suggested that perpetration in IPV reduced and positive changes in men's sexual behaviours were realized (Jewkes et al., 2008; Jewkes and Morrell, 2010).

A final example is the Men as Partners (MAP) intervention program also in South Africa. The program targets men to minimize GBV and encourages a positive change in men's concepts of sexual and reproductive health, and so works in partnership with civil society organizations, state institutions and educational bodies for behaviour change attitudes in men and gender norms that promote inequalities between males and females. MAP is implemented in eight provinces of South Africa across urban, semi-urban and remote communities and uses workshops and community meetings to achieve program goals (Peacock and Levack 2004). However, it should be noted that not all intervention programs have been effective in addressing gender norms and other related issues among men. Some studies that have evaluated programs rolled out in some Sub-Saharan Africa found out that some of the programs had limitations and not successful due to the use of biological indicators (Jewkes and Morrell 2010).

### **2.5.5 Typology of violence**

This section draws from the feminist and masculinity thinking of GBV to make a pictorial representation of the linkages on forms GBV manifest, the root causes, consequences, types of interventions and issue raised from their theoretical viewpoints discussed in the previous sections.

**Table 2. 1: Perspectives and typology of Violence**

Category	Typology of violence-forms/types of violence	Roots causes	Who is affected	Consequences	Kinds of issues raised	Ways of addressing it
Feminists thinking	Sexual Economic Physical Psychological Emotional	Male dominance. Women being treated as ‘second sex’. Unequal gender relationships Gender norms and roles	Women and girls	Endangering women’s economic social and political progress. HIV/AIDS and STI’s. Low income for women. Lack of voice. Power disabilities. Food insecurity. Low self-confidence.	Men and Women have equal abilities (should be given equal rights and opportunities). Sexual oppression. Male dominance cause of violence. Human rights violations. GBV as a public health issue. Unequal gender power relations.	Political and legal solutions. Collective involvement of men in the fight for equality. Changes in policies (moving from training and curricula). Grassroots network. Support for victims. Changes in cultural norms. Laws that are discriminatory to women and girls
Masculinities	Sexual, Economic, Physical, Psychological, Emotional	Social ideals of manhood. Male dominance, Hegemonic masculinity. Patriarchal ideals Poverty	Women, children, men	Sexual oppression of women. HIV/AIDS and STDs. Weakened women agency to negotiate for safe sex. Unwanted pregnancies. Alcohol and substance abuse. Multiple abortions. Pelvic pains.	Societal notions of masculinity, women’s acceptance of violence against them, male-dominated ideals of strength, courage, assertiveness and risk-taking, societal construction of gender identities, patriarchy ideas	Male behaviour change, challenge the masculine ideologies that infringe on the rights of women and girls, training for boys to change harmful gender stereotypes, media campaign,

Based on the emerging themes emanating from the typology of violence, forms of violence have been identified and discussed in the next section.

## **2.6. Forms of GBV against women and girls**

In almost all societies of the world (developed or developing countries) regardless of class, race, ethnicity, nativity or social standing, women and girls are abused needlessly, in various ways and forms (Humphrey 2007; Jekayinfa 2005). Under this heading, the main forms of violence are discussed. Although the different forms of abuses women and girls experience may interact in one way or the other, they can be categorised under physical, sexual, psychological/emotional and economic violations against women.

### **2.6.1 Physical violence**

Physical violence is tangible force used by a perpetrator to control and intimidate in order to dominate the partner (Krantz and Garcia-Moreno 2005). Both feminist and family violence theorists argue that this form of violence is prevalent in intimate partner relationships or in domestic environment (Devries et al., 2013; García-Moreno et al., 2013 Hidalgo, 2011; Kelly and Johnson, 2008; Ehrensaft, 2008; Andersons et al., 2007; Kim et al 2007; Raj et al 2006; Garcia et al 2005; Dutton and Corvo, 2005; McCloskey, Williams and Larsen, 2005; Dunkle et al 2004). The individual abuses by beating, choking, hitting, pushing, pulling hair, throwing objects, slapping, shooting with a gun, honour killings, trafficking of women and girls, female genital mutilation, acid throwing, cutting with knife among others to hurt a partner and at the same time making sure that the partner does not leave the violent situation (Krantz and Garcia-Moreno 2005; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2004). For instance, a study in USA and Mexico has revealed that 40% to 52% of women have experienced at least one type of physical abuse in their life time (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005, Rohrbaugh 2006; Mazurana and Carlson 2006; Leach 2008; Reddy 2008; Abrahams, Jewkes and Mathews 2010; Hidalgo 2011). Similar high incidents of Physical violence have been reported in Sub-Saharan Africa including Ghana (Dery and Diedong, 2014; IDS, GSS and Associates, 2016; Gupta et al., 2013). For instance, Sedziafa and Tenkorang's (2016) qualitative study on Kinship and Intimate Partner Violence against married women in Ghana, reported that 59% of married women were survivors of physical violence.

### **2.6.2 Sexual violence**

Sexual violence is any sexual activity that uses force to cause physical or psychological pain and damage to another person (Reid-Gunningham 2008). This description of sexual violence corroborates the earlier allusion that there are interactions between and among the forms of GBV against women. It is argued that sexual violence is prevalent but often considered as private and normative, and is therefore under-reported by victims (West 2008; IDS, GSS and Associates, 2016). Violent acts under this form engage the use of force or coercion and often threatens to exercise, control and maintain power over the victim. Abuse includes, but is not limited to, rape by an intimate partner, family member(s) or stranger(s) and genitalia assaults. Bredjiing (2014) reports that in the US, 19.3% of women have experienced sexual violence. Similarly, sexual violence prevalence rates in Sub-Saharan Africa stands at 17.4% (Abrahams et al., 2014). In Ghana, a study on male partner violence against women found that 34% of women had experienced sexual violence (Issahaku, 2012) Evidence from several studies (Hidolgo 2011; Houston and McKirnan 2007; Siebert 2009; Guidance Note 2007; Reid-Cunningham 2008) suggest that individuals who experience such violence become more vulnerable to further gender-based abuses and their sexual health is compromised, especially with regards to reproductive, HIV/AIDS and other STDs. This is so because perpetrators of sexual crimes are more likely to have multiple sexual partners and would usually not accept safe sex rules due to their domineering character. Other serious forms of sexual abuse include transactional sex and forced prostitution, in which women and girls exchange sex for money, gifts or materials, forced pregnancy and sexual labour (Dunkle et al 2007; Mazurana and Carlson 2006; Dunkle, 2004).

### **2.6.3 Psychological/Emotional Violence**

The nature of this form of violence varies across countries, cultures and societies, as such, difficult to define in clear and certain terms (Mba, 2007). However, perpetrators of the crime use verbal, non-verbal and other techniques to cause distress in their victims. These acts of violations include preventing partners from seeing or visiting friends and family members; undermining, relegating and derogatory comments; unnecessary restrictions; threats; neglect; and other forms of controlling behaviours (Issahaku, 2012). Another serious form of psychological violence is the use of threats to cause panic in the partner to dominate her. The intimate partner threatens to beat and/or uses objects or weapons around him to hit the

ground or wall and even in some instances destroy or hurt the partner's belongings. Stalking is also a type of violence against women, in which an individual literally follows and observes a partner over a period without the partner knowing (Krantz and Garcia-Moreno, 2005; Hidalgo, 2011). Mba (2007) and Hidalgo (2011) further posit that as a way of abusing a female partner, the male partner occasionally uses electronic devices like mobile phones (most recently social media is used as a medium) to send messages to harass, humiliate or intimidate the female partner. As a form of abuse, this touches on the individual's feeling of self-worth (Mba, 2007; Hidalgo, 2011; Standen, 2011), perpetrators usually employ abusive skills to make their intimate partners feel susceptible and open to other risks. These acts are carried out by belittling, blackmailing, verbal insults, making a partner feel she is faulty, blaming, calling of names to make a partner feel bad and recoil, instilling a sense of defencelessness in the female partner (Hidalgo 2011; Standen 2011; Mba 2007; Issahaku, 2012).

#### **2.6.4 Economic violence**

According to Fawole (2008), economic violence is "when the abuser has complete control over the victim's money and other economic resources or activities". Intimate partner violence commonly includes economic abuse as one mechanism used by an abuser (Postmus et al., 2011). It involves male perpetrators having control over family finances, deciding without regard to women how the money is to be spent or saved, thus, forcing women to completely depend on them for money to meet personal needs (Fawole, 2008). Acts of economic violence may involve putting women on strict allowance or asking them to beg from relatives or friends (Fawole, 2008; UNIFEM, 1999). Also, victims are usually restricted from funds needed for household necessities such as food and clothing, taking women money, denying independent access to money, and exclusion from financial decision making and damaging of women's property (Fawole, 2008). Perpetrators of economic violence will normally refuse to contribute family expenditures and may even prevent women from pursuing higher education to obtain formal employment or lucrative businesses (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2000).

Another grave form of economic abuse that largely affects women especially, in Africa is property grabbing. The victims usually women (widows and divorcees) are physically dragged out of their matrimonial homes and the doors shut at them by family members in

collaboration with and/or consent of traditional leaders and community members (Izumi 2007; Terry 2007). Indeed, property grabbing is considered a pure violation of human rights and usually goes along with harassment and intimidation. It also goes with women and their children losing land, and other valuable resources and eventually robbing them of their livelihoods, and undoubtedly result in both psychological and emotional pains (Izumi 2007; Terry 2007). Having examined the forms of violence, which demonstrate that most women and girls experience and are at high risks of all these forms of GBV the following section examines factors that emerged from the literature associated with GBV against women and girls.

## **2.7. Factors contributing to GBV against women and girls**

In order to effectively address issues associated with GBV against women and girls, it is essential to have a good comprehension of the circumstances, and the factors that make violence happen to inform prevention strategies. Given the fact that there is no single factor causing GBV, this study discusses thematically some of the key factors associated with GBV to guide in the investigation of factors for abuse of women and girls in northern Ghana.

### **2.7.1 Education**

There is a complex relationship between the individual level of educations and GBV, especially IPV and sexual violence. Nevertheless, several studies show that lack or lower educational attainment is a key factor for both violence perpetration and experiencing IPV and sexual violence (e.g. WHO, 2014; Chan, 2009; Boyle et al., 2009; Tang and Lai, 2008). Examples abound that females with no or only primary level education were more prone to higher risk of violence relative to females with higher educational attainment (WHO, 2014, 2010; Chan, 2009; Boyle et al., 2009; Dalal, Rahman and Jansson, 2009; Tang and Lai, 2008; Ackerson et al., 2008). In the same vein, males with less education were found to be more likely to perpetrate GBV relative to those highly educated (Dalal, Rahman and Jansson, 2009; Tang and Lai, 2008; Ackerson et al., 2008). Similarly, a nation-wide study in Ghana found that females with no or primary education (16.9%) reported experiencing domestic violence (IDS. GSS and Associates, 2016). That is why it is argued that higher education may serve to protect females against GBV since higher education, or married couples with relatively equivalent education levels seem to reports lower levels of GBV (WHO, 2010, Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005). Meaning that lower

education is likely to reduce women's exposure and access to resources, increase their acceptance of violence and unequal power relationships resulting from gender roles and norms (WHO, 2014, 2010, 2009; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007; Russo and Pirlott, 2006; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005). However, this study would not conceive that the association between the level of educational attainment and GBV against women is the same regardless of other circumstances involved. Because other studies found that females with higher educations were at increased risks of IPV and sexual violence (IDS, GSS and Associates, 2016; Flake, 2005). Making it worthwhile to investigate the links.

### **2.7.2 Excessive alcohol use**

Alongside male dominance, is the issue of alcohol as a common acceptable social activity, and is associated with GBV perpetration and victimization (Cooper, Paluck and Fletcher, 2013). This debate of alcohol as a trigger for violence lends credence to studies in the United State of America and the United Kingdom that reported that 50% intimate partner sexual violence was perpetrated by persons drinking alcohol (Bowen, 2011; Abbey et al., 2004). Similarly, a study conducted by Dery and Diedong (2014) reported that women recognised alcohol as an important factor positively associated with domestic violence in Ghana. Cooper, Paluck and Fletcher (2013) observed that IPV is more likely to occur at a period when alcohol was excessively consumed. It is worth noting that alcohol use may interact with other societal and individual factors to produce GBV.

### **2.7.3 Poverty**

The links between poverty and GBV perpetration or victimization have been documented. Several scholars reported that women and girls with low incomes or living in poverty, were affected by GBV (Fawole, 2014; WHO, 2010; Heise and Garcia-Moreno, 2002). However, it is unclear why poverty increases women's vulnerability to violence: whether it is because of lack of income or because of other reasons associated with it such as hopelessness or overcrowding (Fawole, 2014; WHO, 2010). Krug et al (2002) assert that men living in poverty are likely to be stressed, frustrated and have a feeling of being inadequate as they feel that they fail to live up to their socio-culturally expected gender role of being breadwinners for their heterosexual partners and children. This perceived failure could lead to most men's perpetration of marital violence, while poverty makes it even more difficult for many women to leave violent and unsatisfactory intimate partner relationships (WHO,

2010; Krug et al., 2002) This is because women and girls are placed at the bottom of the social structures that limit their access to higher education and economic resources, thus, power disability to assert themselves (Fawole, 2014; Anderson, Cockcroft and Shea, 2008; Carpenter, 2006). In this way, poverty is an important risk factor for a variety of social conditions that might combine to increase women's risk to GBV (Fawole, 2014, WHO, 2010; Krug et al., 2002). In rural areas, such of northern Ghana, poor women and girls may be at risk of rape and sexual violence in course of daily performance their gender roles - working in the fields or going to fetch firewood (WHO, 2010). Previous studies have shown that in Ghana poverty was linked to women's violence and victimization and that 45% of women were economically abused by their male partners (IDS, GSS and Associates, 2016) Given the fact that northern Ghana is predominantly rural and poverty-stricken (Awedoba, 2006) this it would be of utmost importance to understand the role of poverty in predicting GBV in gender relationships.

#### **2.7.4 Acceptance of violence as normative**

The acceptance of violence by both men and women as a means of resolving marital or intimate partner conflicts is strongly related to high risk of violence victimization and perpetration (Boyle et al, 2009; Johnson and Das, 2009; Jewkes et al., 2006). Whiles men who believe that it is acceptable to physically assault female sexual partners are more likely to perpetrate IPV (Johnson and Das, 2009), women with such beliefs are linked to experiencing IPV (WHO, 2010; Boyle et al, 2009). This cultural acceptance of violence stems from the socially constructed gender norms, scripts and roles and dominant patriarchal values that support male superiority and female inferiority. Within this context, violence, especially GBV against women and girls is considered normative, and such beliefs transferred from generation to generation through rigid socialisation processes via media, schools, religious institutions and witnessing and experiencing violence throughout life – which can change over time (WHO, 2014, 2010; Woo, 2012; Dunne, Humphrey and Leach, 2006, Coker-Appiah, 2004).

#### **2.7.5 Multiple partner/ polygamy**

Studies on violence have shown that men with multiple partners and, or who have polygamous marriages, that there is a direct correlation with both perpetration and experience of GBV including sexual violence against women (WHO, 2010; Chan, 2009;

Vung and Krantz, 2009; Tang and Lai, 2008; Jewkes et al., 2006). On one hand, women perceived as being unfaithful and having multiple sexual partnerships by their husbands or partners is a cause for the perpetration of violence against women. On the other hand, men seek to have multiple sexual partners or even marry more than one wife as a source of manhood prowess, peer status and for self-esteem, relating to their female partners detachedly without any feeling of being bound to a relationship (Jewkes et al., 2006). Additionally, because of male dominance ideologies and the social structures that allocate more privileges and power to men in gender relationships, many men engage in risky sexual behaviours with multiple sexual partners by refusing to use condoms, which puts both them and their female partners at increased risk of STIs and HIV/AIDs (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005).

### **2.7.6 Gender power asymmetries**

From the different conceptual perspectives, gender-based violence against women stems from power disparities between women and men as individuals and as groups (Cooper et al., 2013; Kalichman et al., 2009; Terry, 2007, Krantz and Garcia-Moreno, 2005). This is because social structures often reflect unequal power in gender relationships that serve to maintain and legitimise male violence (Russo and Pirlott, 2006) and limit women's space in both private and public life (Anderson, Cockcroft and Shea, 2008; Carpenter, 2006). For instance, a relationship between husband and wife or female workers and male workers, may experience common structural and ideological characteristics that place women in positions of subordination relative to men (Russo and Pirlott, 2006). These inequalities reinforce a patriarchal society in which women's secondary status is considered normal, natural and expected; however, women who are perceived as powerful and competent, are blackmailed, stigmatised, given nicknames and disliked (Russo and Pirlott, 2006; Rudman and Glick, 1999, 2001). Violence is therefore a tactic for maintaining control over women and girls to keep them in a subordinate position and to ensure male dominance in the social hierarchy (Ellsberg and Heise, 2005). Although there is variability in power inequality in every human institution, in most societies, men, as a result of wielding more power enjoy social, political and economic power over women (Cooper et al., 2013). For this reason, most males make effort to safeguard their advantageous, unequal status and resources through violence.

Societies with wide resource gaps between women and men are likely to experience more GBV than societies with gender parity. (Cooper et al., 2013). Which is why It has been asserted that all GBV against females involve abuse of power, just that the type of power may vary (Russo and Pirlot, 2006). Researchers have used these power variations to examine how power or motivation to gain power is considered a predictor of GBV.

### **2.7.7 Gender norms and roles**

Power imbalance between women and men directly influences expectations of gendered behaviours, recognised as norms and roles, are linked to GBV against women and girls in many respects (WHO, 2014; Cooper, Paluck and Fletcher, 2013; George, 2006). Several theories including feminist theory, norm theory and power theory suggest that gender roles<sup>6</sup> and norms<sup>7</sup> create structures that grant males the right to control female behaviour and limit women's power in public and private places (Heise, 2011; Lenton, 1995:308-312). This is so because there are significant differences in what women and men can or cannot do in one culture as compared to another. Moreover, consistent across cultures is the distinction between women's and men's roles, access to productive resources and decision-making power (Strebel et al., 2006; Gupta, 2000:1) In fact, women as a group, due to the traditional gender roles underpinning their lives, lack political power, are less visible in public discourse, educational systems, technology, warfare or religious doctrine (Strebel et al., 2006). Whiles men are responsible for productive ventures mostly within the public sphere, women are expected to perform first and foremost reproductive duties coupled with minimal productive activities confined to the home (Gupta, 2000). This culturally held view and maintenance of patriarchal or male dominance norms reflect unequal power at the societal level, and likely to legitimise IPV and sexual violence perpetration by men (Fawole, 2014; Heise, 2011; WHO, 2010; Johnson, 2007). While active at the societal level, gender norms may also predict other forms of violence at the community, relationship and individual levels (Fawole, 2014; WHO 2010, Heise, 2011, Seguino, 2007; Heise, 1998).

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<sup>6</sup> Gender roles refer to the social and behavioural norms for how men and women are expected to act within a given society (WHO 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Gender norms specify acceptable behavioural boundaries for women and men consistent with gender division (Seguino, 2007:1)

### **2.7.8 Male dominance**

Recognizably, gender norms that demonstrate male dominance within a society is a risk factor for male violence perpetration (e.g. son bias, social acceptance of a male right to use violence as a way of correcting female behaviour, stigma for divorced women, social acceptance of wife beating and norms linking male-honour to female-purity as a manifestation of this male dominance (Heise, 2011:7). Northern Ghana is disproportionately affected by gendered violence against women and girls and gender inequality is reflected in culturally rigid, gender hierarchical structures and norms, that define gender relations and uphold male dominance (Baden, 1994). Therefore, to allocate more power to men over women, and to maintain this dominance over women, violence is used through the exercise of power.

This section of the study reviewed literature some of the main factors triggering GBV perpetration and victimization in a variety of settings. Factors such as educational disparity, excessive use of alcohol, poverty, cultural acceptance of violence, multiple sexual partner/polygamy, gender roles and norm and male dominance were recognised as a prevalent cause of GBV. The next section pays attention to the impacts of GBV.

### **2.8. GBV and its associated impacts on women and girls**

Feminist research and related literature on gender-based violence focuses on the consequences of violence on women and girls (Thomas and Tiessen, 2010; Shannon et al., 2009; Humphrey, 2007; Terry, 2007; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007; Russo and Pirlott, 2006; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005; Merry, 2005; Heise et al., 1994; UNICEF, 2000). These studies found similar accounts of GBV having injurious effects on the physical and mental health and well-being of women and girls across societies. It has been well documented that some of the serious consequences of GBV against women include mental disorder, homicide, suicide, maternal mortality, infant mortality, and HIV/AIDS deaths (WHO 2013; Gracia-Moreno et al., 2005; Heise, Ellsberg and Gottmoeller, 2002). While other physical and psychological injuries may lead to survivors of violence requiring long and complex treatment (Jonikaite, 2006). This violence also directly affects women's and girls' reproductive health in diverse ways encompassing unwanted pregnancies, complications from unsafe abortions, miscarriages, infertility, sexually transmitted infections, broken and severed limbs, internal and external bleeding or discharge, broken pelvis, chronic infections, chronic pains, and many forms of physical disabilities ((WHO

2013;). Related, women and girls who are abused may have to endure body pains, emotional trauma, and sometimes mental disorders (madness) and are forced to cope with worries, shame, hatred, resentment, loss of dignity, and depression and worse of all social stigma (Azuma, 2010; Whitaker et al., 2007; Silverman et al., 2007; Jonikaite, 2006; Gracia-Moreno et al., 2005; Johnson and Leone, 2005; Heise, Ellsberg and Gottmoeller, 2002).

Feminist lectures suggest violence, or the threat of it, whether in the home or other social institutions, places limits on women's and girls' space, agency and life choices, including their livelihoods (Abramsky et al., 2011; Rees et al., 2011; Thomas and Tiessen, 2010;). While GBV limits women's life options directly and destroys their wellness, it also denies them their self-worth (Rees et al., 2011; Thomas and Tiessen, 2010; Kalichman et al., 2009; Humphrey; Terry, 2007; Gracia-Moreno et al., 2005; Dunkle et al., 2004; Heise, Ellsberg and Gottmoeller, 2002). Moreover, GBV prevents women from fully contributing to their quota of national and local development, and is a serious hindrance to their participation in public spaces (Zain, 2012; Abramsky et al., 2011; Rees et al., 2011; Pritchett, 2008; Ellsberg et al., 2008; Bjastad, 2008; Humphrey, 2007; Ellsberg, 2006). Having discussed some of the consequence of GBV against women and girls which are too numerous to be fully digested in one study, the review has highlighted the grievous nature and negative effects of GBV women and girls which reveals there is a problem to address, in which communication can play a positive role.

### **2.8.1 Lack of women's and girls' voices**

Cornwall (2003)' seminal work titled "Whose voices? Whose Choices? Reflections on Gender and participatory" serves as a fertile ground to assess issues of women's voices in both private and public lives, how the lack of voice is related to GBV and gender inequality in society. It has been argued women are those likely to lose out and their interests marginalised or undermined in development processes (ibid: 1325). Thus, the study will assess how gender unequal power and inequality impacts on women agency and space in gendered relationships. The next section discusses theories would be applied in the study of violence.

## **2.9 Theories used to explain GBV**

Theorists of violence have relied on different theories to understand roots causes and consequences of gendered violence against women and girls from different theoretical perspectives. This section discusses some of the theories and/or models used for studying GBV.

### **2.9.1 Feminist theory**

The feminist theory for studying GBV including IPV against women focuses on the power of men located in their dominant position in the family and social hierarchy (Bodrad,1988). Bodrad (1988) argues that most men in society have more access to both symbolic and material resources (land, livestock, houses, vehicles) relative women, who, by virtue of their lower status are devalued and considered second class and inferior to men. Within this context violence against women is normative and less important because male power and control (dominance) influences all facets of life. Meaning that if male power and the maintenance of it in gender relationships is threatened, violence is inevitable because of social expectations of masculinity (Laisser et al., 2011:2; Jewkes, 2002). However, this theory will be limited if used in societies where women's social status is very high or very low, the level of violence may be low since it has no role in reinforcing male superiority and exercise of power. Moreover, where legal or cultural sanctions regarding violence are strong and functioning, intimate partner violence may decrease because of controlled violence within those societies (Laisser et al., 2011:2).

### **2.9.2 Gender socialization**

Although we are born male or female (sex), we however learn to perform in masculine or feminine ways. Thus, 'performing gender' depends on a society's values and belief systems and their preferred ways of organising their collective lives (Chege, 2005; Bjastad, 2008). Consequently, Wood (2012) explains that from infancy going, males and females alike are encouraged to learn how to express the gender prescribed to them by society. For instance, in many African countries females are socialised to be subservient to their male counterparts. This is reflected in the way most women and girls accept and do not respond to violence from their male partners is indicative of unequal power relationships that exist between women and men in Africa (Takyi and Lamptey, 2016; Tenkorang, et al., 2013; Amoakohene, 2004). Particularly, in Ghana females are socialised to believe that men are superior, and

accept violence should they transgress their socially prescribed gender roles (Tenkorang and Owusu, 2013; Takyi and Lamptey, 2016). Similarly, girls are socialised to opt for professions jobs like housewife, nursing, teaching, cleaning and secretaries perceived as feminine and related to lower status and invariable low remuneration (Dunne, Humphrey and Leach, 2006, Coker-Appiah, 2004). Whiles boys are socialised into prestigious and public tasks such as serving as class prefects and attending meetings (Dunne, Humphrey and Leach, 2006, Coker-Appiah, 2004). Feminist scholars have postulated that social institutions such as culture, religious, schools, family (parents, family members), and mass media are authoritative agents of gender socialization (Steans, 2006, Leach and Humphrey, 2007). However, the fact these social interpretations of gender are taught throughout the socialisation process does not mean that males and females are passive recipients of social and cultural constructions of gender ideologies.

### **2.9.3 Perceptions**

The concept of “perceptions” encompass people’s views and ideas of what constitutes gender-based violence, the causes and impact of the violence on victims/survivors. These are most often understood by exploring people’s attitudes and beliefs about gendered violence in general as well as their thoughts about victims and perpetrators (McMahon, 2011; Ilika, 2005). Individuals and or groups perceptions about perpetrators and victims of violence can reinforce stereotypes and myths surrounding GBV against women (Maurer and Robinson, 2008). Understanding the way in which perceptions of violence against women and girls have evolved in the study districts is important for a number of reasons. It acknowledges the positive changes that have occurred in shifting societal attitudes about gendered violence, while also offering a roadmap of future directions the field of communication needs to take in engaging communities to further develop their understanding of the issue.

### **2.9.4 Social learning theory**

The proponents of the social learning theory suggest that social behaviour is shaped by observational learning, modelling and imitation (Ormond, 1999; Mihalic and Elliot, 1997). Within this social context, most men exercise violent behaviours because of their experience of violence and maltreatment or of having witnessed their mothers and other female members in the family being abused (Deyessa et al., 1998; Dibaba, 1998).

### **2.9.5 Ecological model**

According to Heise (1998, 2011) and Krug et al (2002), the ecological theory provides a comprehensive means of understanding causal factors associated with GBV against women at different levels of the model (see fig 2.1). The most inner oval, which represents the individual level identifies biological features and other personal experiences related to societal expectations and performance of gender roles and norms that are likely to predict male violence toward females in many settings (Heise, 2011; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005; Ellsberg and Heise, 2005; Deyessa et al., 1998; Dibaba, 1998). Other factors at this level also relating to social learning perspectives include witnessing violence or being abused as a child or an adolescent (Laisser et al., 2011; Obeid, Chang and Ginges, 2010, use of alcohol and drugs (Laisser et al., 2011; Heise, 2011; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005; Ellsberg and Heise, 2005; Koenig et al., 2003; Heise, 1998), and being economically dependent (Antai and Antai, 2008; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005; Ellsberg and Heise, 2005). The second inner oval, epitomises relationship factors predicting violence. A situation under which violence may occur include male control over family resources, male dominance and controlling behaviours, unequal power relationship regarding decision making, economic dependence (Heise, 2011; Laisser et al., 2011; Krantz and Nguyen, 2009; WHO, 2009; Nguyen, Ostergren and Krantz, 2008; WHO, 2005; Krug et al., 2002; Heise, 1998). The third oval, which represents the community level extends to family, neighbours, workplaces and other social networks. Heise argues that factors triggering violence at this level include forced marriage, lack of social support and honour killings (Laisser et al., 2011; Laisser et al., 2009; Terry, 2007; Jewkes, 2002). The biggest oval representing the societal level, suggests that dominant societal norms, weak laws and unclear socio-economic policies are risk factors for GBV perpetration against women and girls (Laisser et al., 2011; Krantz and Nguyen, 2009; WHO, 2009; Jewkes, 2002). These factors at the various levels may act individually or interact to causes violence.

### **2.10 Theory and practice of gender in development communication**

This section discusses gender mainstreaming and gender approaches in development communication. Additionally, it assesses the link between GBV and development communication interventions.

### **2.10.1 Gender approaches in development communication**

Within the dominant paradigm, women were less visible in scientific activity—education, training, skills, leading to concepts that were pro-male in developing countries (Melkote and Steeves, 2001). Consequently, women were perceived as nurturers of nature, less rational and belonging to the private side of life whereas men were endowed to use objective reasoning (ibid). These biases and the relegation of women and nature to the background in the development process have serious consequences. For instance, in the 1960s, women were identified as aid consumers and discussed in terms of reproductive roles. This meant that development practitioners and planners overlooked women's productive work and assumed that men performed all the productive work. This approach exposed the male-dominated nature of modernisation and the extent to which women's productive roles were ignored especially in the agricultural sector. The trajectory of events in the development domain invoked Ester Boserup's scholarly work titled *Women's Role in Economic Development* 1970, which served as breaking ground for women's and or gender issues to feature in development discourse (Melkote and Steeves, 2001; Tinker, 1990; Rathgeber, 1990).

In the development arena, gender has been thought of in different ways, which explains why the term creates confusion and misunderstanding, resulting in many scholars being reluctant to discuss gender in development. In one way, gender is a sociological concept which changes over time and therefore has no fix definition. The term does not mean "women" and it does not exclude men, they are included. Gender communicates the social relations between men and women founded on socially and culturally learned values and norms associated with femininity and masculinity. It is recognised that these relationships vary constantly from one time and place to another. The principles, values, beliefs and attitudes change and develop progressively and are context specific (FAO-Dimitra, 2011; Wood 2012). Secondly, it is conceived as a development approach, namely the Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD) and Gender and Development (GAD). The confusion between the two, as with the terms 'sex' and 'gender', perseveres, but one is not to be replaced by the other, nor can they substitute each other. Thirdly, gender is an operational strategy which identifies that development initiative –policies, programmes, or activities operate within certain contexts that are not and never can be, gender-neutral and that if care is not taken, initiatives could open the gap within individuals and groups in the society. Lastly, gender is also conceptualised as an analytical tool. Gender analysis plays an important role in all sectors of development initiatives and should not be

confined to only the social arena. Gender analysis enables systematic exploration of the roles and responsibilities of men and women and the extent to which they have access to and control over resources, benefits and powers. This analysis exposes the disparities, gaps and imbalances and on their causes (FAO-Dimitra, 2011; Scott, 1986). Hence, gender and/or women within development have been approached in three main ways: Women in Development; Women and Development and Gender and Development.

### **2.10.2. Gender mainstreaming**

Gender mainstreaming is a contested concept (True and Mintrom, 2001) although recognised as an essential approach to the realisation of gender equality. Gender Mainstreaming is defined as:

“The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s and men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The goal is to achieve gender equality”

(UN 1997 in Moser and Moser 2010:12).

The definitions of gender mainstreaming include the institutionalisation of gender concerns within the organisation itself - in administrative, financial, staffing, and other organisational procedures, thus contributing to a long-term transformative process for the organisation in terms of attitudes, culture, goals, and procedures and also gender empowerment. Making women’s participation in decision-making processes, as well as having their voices heard and the power to put issues on the agenda (Moser and Moser, 2010).

Similarly, True and Mintrom (2001) describes gender mainstreaming as an attempt to examine and rejuvenate processes of policy formulation and implementation across all issue areas to tackle and rectify persistent and evolving inequalities between men and women. It is therefore noted that gender mainstreaming allows the state to enact and at the same time deliver gender-sensitive policies that transform gender relations through the acknowledgement of the differences between men and women. It bears in mind that the bases for policy injustice originating from existing structures that are not gender neutral. Gender mainstreaming advocates for equal opportunities for women and men that should not be reliant exclusively on equal opportunity earmarked policies, but on multi-stranded and

holistic approaches (Woodward 2003, 2001). Charlesworth (2005) adds that the reason for GM is that issues of gender be taken seriously in the central, mainstream “normal” into institutions/organisations.

### **2.10.3 Women in Development (WID)**

The WID approach was extended to developing countries in the 1980s (Melkote and Steeves, 2001). This approach sought to bring women’s roles to the fore, mainstream women into the economic development agenda and to ensure that women benefited from the modern science –access to quality education, training, employment, credit, capital and land (Melkote and Steeves 2001; Wilkin, 1999). The WID approach constructed was as actively contributing to society through their economic productive activities and procreation (Wilkin, 1999). Particularly, its focus was to further advocate for equality between the sexes (Kabeer, 1994). However, the call for equality was met with resistance from patriarchal oriented staff in development agencies (*ibid*). This resulted in a call for equality incorporated in the basic needs and poverty reduction frameworks, which gave attention to issues of equity between the sexes without downplaying the male-bias in the development arena. Whiles Moser and Moser observed that the equity based on sexes was chosen under the argument of economic efficiency conditions.

Noticeably, USAID and UNDP as international institutions responded to these calls by integrating WID activities into projects in areas of family planning, family health, children nutrition, and agriculture (Wilkins 1997, 1999; Melkote and Steeves, 2001). However, researchers focusing on communication- related issues, suggested that women’s poor conditions and marginalisation persisted because of development initiatives and neglect of women in program plans (Melkote and Steeves, 2001). For example, female peasant farmers produce about 80% of family food in many African countries; yet, extension workers neglected them and went after male farmers and/or rich women farmers.

The WID approach has been critiqued for giving in to the dominant model of modernisation and failing to closely examine structures that sanctioned male dominance in the development field. Another accusation from women’s movement in the south, who pointed out that, whereas women of the north moved for equality, southern women moved beyond equality between the sexes, and were interested in challenging the structural inequalities that

marginalised and deprived women's access to power and resources (Melkote and Steeves, 2001). As pointed out by Charlesworth, the WID model was also blamed for identifying women as a special group within the development discourse needing a space. Its strategies only encouraged the integration of women into the existing structures and failed to question male biases built into these structures.

#### **2.10.4 Women and Development**

The criticism of the WID saw the emergence of the women and development (WAD) approach which was associated with neo-Marxist feminist that became operational in the mid-1970s (Rathgeber, 1990). The WAD approach took a position that women have always been part of development activities and that they did not just appear from nowhere in the 1970s because of the insights and intervention strategies of some few researchers and agency workers (Rathgeber, 1990). The idea of integrating women into development was inextricably linked to the maintenance of the economic reliance of developing economies and more so African countries on the developed countries (Achola, 1977).

From this perspective, attention was given to the relationship between women and development processes, instead of just including women into development strategies. It argues that women have always actively participated in economic activities in their societies and the work they do both inside and outside the household was core in the maintenance of those societies. Any move for the integration of women, was meant to sustain existing international structures of inequality (Rathgeber, 1990). The approach acknowledges that some non-elite men of the south are also adversely affected by the social structures of the unequal power relationship within the international system, yet, failed to examine the social relations of gender within the classes. Theoretically WAD identifies and consciously stresses the impact of class, but in practical programming terms it tends, (as does WID), to treat all women as one category without taking into account class, race or ethnicity division, all of which may have implications and are likely to impact on women's actual social status (Rathgeber, 1990).

Although WAD considers women's position more critically than WID, it stops short of fully analysing the relationship between patriarchy, differing ways of performing activities, and women's low place and domination. This neo-Marxist feminist approach also assumes that once the international structures of inequality are dismantled women's position would

automatically improve. In the interim, the low representation of women in the economic, political and social structures can be addressed through carefully planned intervention schemes rather than exerting energies on shifts in the social relations of gender. The WAD approach is also full of tension because it downplays the thorough analysis and focus of the problems of women independent of men, since both women and men are perceived to be disadvantaged within oppressive global structures in terms of class and capital.

Accepting that this approach is limited in tackling the overriding influence of the notion of patriarchy, women's subordinate situation is conceptualised mainly by considering the structure of international and class inequalities. Like WID, WAD is critiqued for its focus on the productive sector to the detriment of the reproductive side of women's work and lives. Their strategies have highlighted income generation activities for women without considering the time burdens these IGAs places on women (Wilkins, 1997, 1999, 2000).

#### **2.10.5. Gender and Development**

It is recognised that the concept of GAD evolved from the above shortfalls of WID and WAD models although it did not replace them (Wilkins 1999, 2000). Wilkin noted that he shifts from "women" to "gender" in is recognition of gender as a socially constructed concept rather than "sex" as a biological condition (Parpart, 1995). Servaes and Lie (2015:128) adds that GAD is not on women, but on gender and thus on different roles, identities, discourses, responsibilities, and power positions between men and woman in a specific sociocultural, and that gender plays an important in any developmental agenda.

Inherently, the GAD model underscores the importance of power equality between genders in development (Steeves, 2008). Einsield notes that:

*"The question has essentially changed from 'where are the women and what are they doing?' to 'why are things as they are?'"*

(Einsield 2000:176).

This makes Charlesworth argue that the GAD approach is an advancement of WID because it focuses on the impact of relations between women and men on development policies and aims to transform the practice of development to ensure equality between women and men. Therefore, the approach challenges the underlying assumptions of the dominant social, economic, and political structures that condone and perpetuate women's subordinate status relative to men in society (Steeves, 2008; Wilkins, 1999, 2005). Melkote and Steeves postulate that the conceptual framework of GAD integrates important propositions such as:

Women are incorporated into the development process in very specific ways; a focus on women alone is inadequate in understanding the opportunities for women's agency or change; that women are not a homogenous category but are divided by class, colour and creed; that any analysis of social organisation and social process must consider the structure and dynamic of gender relations (Young 1993 cited in Melkote and Steeves, 2001:189).

Hence, the GAD framework encompasses both feminist and Marxian analysis, ideologies of male superiority as well as the control of essential resources by men that is at the centre of women's disadvantage and a cause for women's subordination (Melkote and Steeves 2001). Moreover, the approach focuses on power distribution in societies and its relationship to gender relations. It is noted that the objective of GAD in contesting society's social and economic structures and empowering women, presents a threat to many donor agencies that were disinterested in tackling social change. Nonetheless, CIDA and UNIFEM tried to integrate the interest of GAD into their programmes (1999).

Conversely, it has been argued that both WID and GAD approaches failed to yield the desired results, and Wilkins (1997) suggested that both approaches were directed to productive roles, as opposed to reproductive roles of women and have attracted limited funding, signalling an inability to engage these fundamental problems more aggressively, hence their failure. Thus, the focus has not been on tackling macro-level structural issues that militate against gender equality, but continue to target women as individuals to change their behaviour as reproducers. It is therefore not surprising that many projects today focus on women's productive role –health, family planning, and nutrition rather than their reproductive roles. Given these approaches to women's concerns in development, communication interventions were designed to promote social change (Wilkins, 1999, 1997). However, literature shows that development communication initiatives failed to achieve the desired outcome due to inappropriate theoretical methodologies, poor program design and implementation, resource deficiencies, ill political attention (Wilkins 1999, 1997; Hornik, 1988). Added to which, there was a disconnect between communication initiatives and audiences/beneficiaries needs, knowledge and concerns (Wilkins, 1997; Mody, 1991). However, diverse approaches to communication campaigns are put into categories: persuasion to alter audience behaviours and attitudes; provision of skills and/or information to beneficiaries; education for groups for change (Wilkins, 1996) and to adapt structural conditions (Wilkins, 1999). To this end, the current thinking is on international/global feminism. Steeves (1993) observed that this trend recognises the multi-dimensional nature

of women's experience and so seeks to encourage coalition-building based on a common context of struggle against oppression by gender, class, race, ethnicity and nation, including colonisation.

## **2.11 Development Communication approaches**

This section discusses the broad concept of development communication and its role in development theory and practice. Moreover, it assesses communication interventions relating to GBV against women and girls to situate this current study in exploring the role of communication in addressing GBV in northern Ghana.

### **2.11.1 Development communication**

Generally, development communication is conceptualised as the application of communication strategies and principles in the field of development to accelerate growth processes of developing countries (Mefalopulos, 2008; Inagaki, 2007; Waisbord, 2001; Melkote and Steeves 2001). Earlier development activities in development communication were influenced by the modernisation paradigm (Servaes, 2008:17, 1991; Mefalopulos 2008: 44; Singhal and Sthapitanonda 1996; Melkote and Steeves 2001; Melkote 1991; Kumar 2011). Modernisation theorists viewed development as a type of social change in which new ideas were to be transferred into a social system which would lead to higher productivity resulting in higher per capita incomes, better living conditions and improved social organisation (Singhal and Sthapitanonda 1996). For this reason, development projects and solutions were imposed on third world countries, thinking that economic and technological investments and transfers would achieve desired outcomes in third world economies (Waisbord 2001, Servaes and Malikhao 2004, Cardey 2010).

Based on the above view, communication was conceived as a linear process – one-way – mass media model, focussed on information and message transfer from one point to another or to many audiences in a top-down model, and its function was to persuade individuals to accept the central ideas and practices of modernisation through behaviour change (Mefalopulos 2008). However, Waisbord (2001) and Rogers (2003) note that such models are not participatory, and only view communication as a 'one-way' process in which senders transmit information to receivers, hoping that the receivers would embrace the information/knowledge and change their attitudes.

Modernisation theory was therefore criticized for pushing responsibility and blame on underdeveloped countries for their predicaments, arguing that, based on a structural analysis of the international capitalist system, development and underdevelopment was to be viewed as two faces of the same coin, but moulded by exclusive contextual historical, economic and political influences (Frank, 1969 in Mefalopulos 2008:47; Kumar 1981). Development practitioners such as Paulo Freire (1970) and Juan Diaz Bordenave (1977) therefore argued that development was not possible without respect for people and the cultural context within which they lived, and the power structures that defined their lives. Freire and Bordenave, therefore, articulated an approach to development as a process of empowerment and consciousness-raising in people at the grassroots in a bottom-up participatory manner (Cooper et al 2010; Tufte 1001). Jiggins and Rolling (1997) explain that because of these criticisms of the dominant/modernisation approach to development, an alternative approach to communication in development emerged, referred to as participatory communication.

Participatory communication is characterised by bottom-up approaches to development that allow people to identify and find solutions to their own problems (Waisbord 2001; Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada 1998, Kumar 1981; Morris 2000; Cooper et al 2013). Unlike the top-down approaches, it shifts from information transfer trying to change individual behaviours and attitudes, and rather stresses community ownership of development initiatives, and focuses on horizontal interaction (sharing) and exchange of ideas among people (Waisbord 2001; Singhal 2003; Cooper et al 2010) to take collective action for social change. The aim is, therefore, to facilitate and empower people in local communities to engage with various stakeholders in building a sound and improved policy environment (Pedro, 2013). This approach is about communicating *with* people and not *to* people, thus, embedded in dialogue between the agents of change and the community members (Mafalopulos, 2008; Pedro, 2013).

Thus, communication tools and methods like interpersonal communication, participatory theatre and media to extend dialogue have been employed in participatory communication approaches to reach and enhance people's understanding of messages and have increased indigenous and modern knowledge (Pedro, 2013:53).

However, participatory communication has also been criticized. Its accusers argue that participation is not practically feasible, as it is ambiguous and theoretical, with no guidelines for implementation in the field. The critics suggest that in situations such as a public health crisis, top-down solutions are considered the best and most cost-effective solution, rather than the long, messy processes envisaged in the participation approach (Waisbord 2001; Cardey 2010, 2005). It also argued that the idea of participation brought a foreign concept just as the modernisation approaches, which promoted actions and processes that did not emanate from within local communities, but were undertaken in the name of participation (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Cardey 2010). Additionally, participatory approaches did not give adequate attention to the issues of power relationships; for example, educated versus uneducated, powerful versus un-powerful members within communities. Participation could, therefore, privilege the educated and powerful to the neglect of others, thereby leading to conflict and confusion rather solving problems. Certain groups are also usually left out in participatory approaches, especially women (Waisbord 2001; Colle 2007, 2008). Critics maintained that people could be manipulated or coerced into participating or not participating since participation has not been the norm for people in the community (Waisbord 2001). As participatory approaches emphasise sharing, the process was likely to undermine the rights of participants to confidentiality issues, which may result in disagreement and conflict within groups, or risk to the safety of participants of any given project (Heeks 1999). Colle opined that at the social level, it is critical to recognise the socio-political context within which participatory initiatives are held. This is because, in an autocratic and societies under dictatorship for instance, participation processes could be dangerous for ordinary citizens, and could also be a political threat to the undemocratic governments, with participants fearing “witch hunting” for retaliation for their involvement.

The proponents of the participatory approaches to development did not glaze over these criticisms. They argued that while participation is a long process, with associated challenges, true and sustained development could not happen without the oppressed and affected voices being heard, making participation vital in communication and development (Bessette, 2004). Subsequently, with the rise of this alternative communication approaches, development communication has been split into two different branches: the old dominant top-down approach, which still operates in the arena of modernisation theories, and the alternative approach, working within the participatory communication thinking (Waisbord 2001). Presently, the two approaches are used in development planning and programming, with

efforts being made to integrated lessons from each approach into communication thinking and development interventions at both theoretical and practical levels (Cardey 2010; Waisbord 2001; Leeuwis 2008). The theoretical perspectives and assumptions in development theory and communication are summarised in Table 2.2. While gender in development approaches are summarized in Table 2.3.

**Table 2. 2: Theoretical perspectives and assumption of development communication**

	Development		Development Communication	
	Modernisation	Dependency	Dominant	Participatory
<b>Theoretical assumptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Western model imposed projects and solutions</li> <li>• See tradition and culture as barrier to modernisation in third world countries</li> <li>• Aid poor countries</li> <li>• Development based on economic growth model</li> <li>• Lack of new ideas and information</li> <li>• Capital Investment in economy and technology key to development</li> <li>• Belief in industrialisation</li> <li>• And corporate globalisation</li> </ul> <p>Stimulation of political reconstruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Originated from Latin American Informed by Marxist and critical theories</li> <li>• Under-development in third worlds due to external factors (social and economic)</li> <li>• Examination of social causes and marginalisation of third worlds</li> <li>• New world economic order</li> <li>• Non-aligned movement formed</li> <li>• Cooperation among member countries</li> <li>• Free market movements</li> <li>• Work against imperialism, colonialism and all forms of aggression</li> <li>• Disassociation with superpowers</li> <li>• Self-reliance</li> <li>• Redistribution of media resource</li> <li>• Conscientisation and individual skills building</li> <li>• No universal model for development</li> <li>• Social action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissemination of information</li> <li>• Persuasion to change individual behaviour</li> <li>• One-way, linear, top-down approaches</li> <li>• Mass media as a powerful tool</li> <li>• Beneficiaries are passive and seen as objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue and sharing of knowledge.</li> <li>• Two-way, horizontal, bottom-up</li> <li>• Process-oriented</li> <li>• Encourage all stakeholders' involvement</li> <li>• Sensitivity to culture diversity</li> <li>• Beneficiaries are active participants and seen as subjects</li> </ul>

<b>Theoretical Foundations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Macroeconomic model</li> <li>• Social evolutionary theory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Macroeconomic theory, but rejection of the relative economic advantage theory (Prebisch 1950; 1959; Singer and Ansari 1982)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mass media as a magic multiplier (Schramm 1964)</li> <li>• Bullet theory of communication (Lasswell 1948)</li> <li>• Two-step flow theory (Lazarsfeld et al 1948)</li> <li>• Diffusion of Innovations (Rogers 1962)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Luis Ramiro Beltran (1976)</li> <li>• Juan Diaz-Bordenave (1977)</li> <li>• Paulo Freire (1970)</li> </ul>
<b>Examples of approaches and programming</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social marketing (Paluck and Ball 2010; IMAGE)</li> <li>• Entertainment-Education (Pontos de Encuentro 2009; Soul city Institute 2007; UNFPA 2002)</li> <li>• Diffusion of innovations (Inagaki 2007)</li> <li>• Behaviour change communication (BCC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community mobilisation (Cooper et al 2010; UNFPA 2002)</li> <li>• Social mobilization (UNICEF, 2005)</li> </ul>

**Table 2. 3: Gender and theoretical assumptions of development communication**

Development Communication		
	Dominant paradigm	Participatory Communication
Theoretical Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissemination of information</li> <li>• Persuasion to change individual behaviour</li> <li>• One-way, linear, top-down approaches</li> <li>• Mass media as a powerful tool</li> <li>• Beneficiaries are passive and seen as objects</li> <li>• Trickle down effects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue and sharing of knowledge.</li> <li>• Two-way, horizontal, bottom-up</li> <li>• Process-oriented</li> <li>• Encourage all stakeholders' involvement</li> <li>• Sensitivity to culture diversity</li> <li>• Beneficiaries are active participants and seen as subjects</li> </ul>
WID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visibility of women's role in development</li> <li>• Equity between sexes</li> <li>• Economic efficiency (Moser 1989)</li> <li>• Integration of women into mainstream economic development</li> <li>• Ensure women benefit from modernisation and not just men</li> <li>• Equity with men</li> <li>• Targeted women as individuals</li> <li>• Emphasises on women's access to education, training, employment, and land</li> <li>• Integration of projects dealing with family planning, family health, child nutrition and agriculture by UNSAID AND UNDP (Wilkins 1997; Melkote and Steeves 2001)</li> </ul>	
WAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognised women participation in productive work (Oishi, 2002; Moyoyetta, 2004)</li> <li>• Be emancipated from poverty to contribute and benefit from developments efforts (Oishi, 2002)</li> <li>• Society should acknowledge women's power, knowledge and work (Moyoyetta, 2004)</li> <li>• Women and men as not benefitting from global economic structures</li> <li>• Women's key role in Agriculture production (Moyoyetta, 2004)</li> <li>• Sees women as a homogeneous group (Sorensen, 1998; Oishi, 2002; Moyoyetta, 2004; Connell et al., 1999; Barientos, Kabeer and Hossain, 2004)</li> <li>• It ignores the question of social relations between men and women and their impact in development</li> </ul>	
GAD		<p>Questions underlying inequalities and dominant structures that subordinate women relative to men</p> <p>Advocate for equal distribution of power in societies and its relationship to gender relations and the socio-economic</p>

		empowerment of women by CIDA and UNIFEM (Wilkins 1997) Projects on health, family planning and nutrition using behaviour change campaigns
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Following the discussion, it has been noted that multilateral approaches to communication in some domains such as HIV/AIDS (Cardey, 2001: 25) and GBV (USAID. 2010) appear to incorporate elements of both dominant and participatory approaches in their intervention programmes. Meaning that development communication in all its diversity is conceived to play a critical role in this goal of reducing GBV to the barest minimum, as it leads to positive behaviour and social changes for women to live healthy and fulfilled lives (Cooper et al 2010). This is because strategic communication empowers individuals, marginalised and oppressed groups, strengthens leadership and advocacy skills, and provides alternatives to norms and practices that promote gender unequal power relationships and sanction GBV (Cooper et al 2010; UNIFEM, 2003). Communication also forms a critical part of advocacy in addressing GBV and effect positive change in society on both the individual and collective level. Using communication strategically to end GBV empowers individuals and groups with the message that every single person has the power to make change happen (UNIFEM, 2003). UNIFEM explains that while social change is a long-term process, communication to educate and raise awareness on GBV constitutes the initial phase in modifying attitudes, behaviours and policies. Recognising that organisations, most especially NGOs around the world have used mass media campaigns and community-based education to change community norms and attitudes associated to GBV. The next section catalogues examples of communication interventions on GBV.

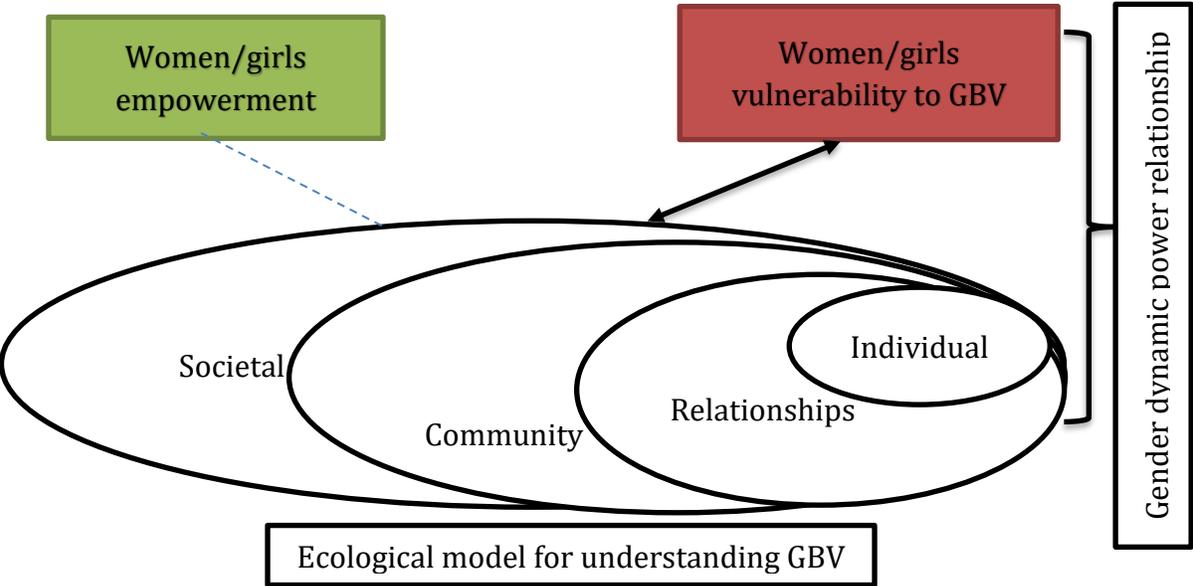
## **2.12. Integrated conceptual framework for studying GBV communication.**

In any research endeavour, a conceptual framework is critical for the logical organization of the relationships in the study (Baxton and Jack, 2008). Within this concept, the author extracted themes that emerged from the literature reviewed to construct a conceptual map (Fig. 2.1). Conceptualizing this study was therefore guided by concepts such as gender (MacPherso., et al., 2014; Wood 2012; Podems, 2010; O’ Sullivan et al, 2006; Bennett 2004; Gupta 2000; Lorber, 1994; West and Zimmerman, 1987; Oakley, 1982), power (Yukl, 1998; Wingood and DiClemente, 2002), empowerment (Kabeer, 1994), the ecological model (Heise, 1998, 2011;

Krug et al., 2002; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2004), communication strategies (Leeuwis, 2004, 2008; Cardey, 2010) and media framing (Sobel, 2015; Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000; Scheufele, 1999; Andsager and Powers, 1999; McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver, 1997; McCombs and Shaw, 1993; Melkote and Steeves 2001; Kellow and Steeves 1998). These concepts and their relationships in the integrated conceptual framework is discussed in two main parts - GBV context and the communication context.

The purpose of the first part of the framework - the GBV context, was used to address two key objectives of the study: Assess dynamics of power relationship between men and women and to examine the nature and scope of GBV against women and girls. Specifically, the gender-power relations aspect was used to explain how unequal power between women and men influence GBV at all the four levels of the ecological model and make them susceptible to further violence. The joined line linking the ecological model and the women and girls’ vulnerability is used in figure 2.1 below to show that there is a strong association between causal factors across the levels predicting women’s violence victimisation and likely susceptibility to further violence. While the dotted line illustrates a weak link for the empowerment of women and girls.

**Figure 2. 1: Gender-Based Violence context component**



### **2.12.1. Gender dynamic power relationship context**

Starting from the gender dynamic power relationship context is important because the centrality and influence of gender and power as social constructs in the relationships and communication processes between men and women are directly associated with gender inequality and gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls. The study has linked the concepts of gender and power to gender socialisation, gender relationships between women and men, and access to resources and decision making processes. The importance of creating that relationship emanates from empirical studies (e.g. Kabeer, 2002; Parveen, 2008) which have shown that there is a direct relationship between issues, such as gender socialization and roles, resource access and decision-making on one hand, and gender inequality, limited livelihoods options and gendered violence on the other hand.

While gender has been discussed in section (2.1), the concept of power is understood to characterize virtually all social relationships. Notably: dyadic relationship and between larger social units (Radtake and Stam, 1995). Thus, power is ultimately a moderating factor in this scheme of events. Power is conceived as the capacity or ability to influence others (Yukl, 1989; Wingood and DiClemente, 2000). Burns (1978) describes power as a function of the motives of both the power holder and the recipient. Power is thus expressed in an asymmetric manner in the relationship between two people. For instance, Emmet and Patkin (1995) posit that feminine perception of power emphasises it as capacity, energy and potential. In this vein, it is understood that women are active participants in their social world, striving to make meaning out of their subordination to the best of their ability, rather than as passive victims of their oppression. Consequently, including power in an analysis of gender positions, helps us to see clearly how gender is constructed through the practices of power (Radtake and Stam, 1995) at the individual, relationship, community and societal levels of the ecology (Heise, 1998) which will be discussed in the next section to help understand the dimension and multifaceted nature of GBV.

### **2.12.2. Gender-Based Violence**

The ecological model postulated by Heise (1998, 2011) and Krug et al (2002), provides a strong investigative tool for a comprehensive understanding of violence over other models. Empirical

literature (e.g. Heise, 1998, 2011; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005; Flake, 2005, Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott 2004; Ellsberg and Heise, 2005; Lachs and Pillemer, 2004) shows that the ecological model has been an effective tool in studying child abuse, IPV, sexual violence, VAW and GBV. Unlike other models, the ecological model helps in capturing the multiple causes of gendered violence by factors operating at different levels, whether at the same time or individually or interactively (Flake, 2005; Heise, 1998, 2011; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005). Another advantage is that it enables analysis of how the different factors interact within and across levels to trigger violence and lastly, the model assist in exposing the differences among violence victims (Flake, 2005). This means that the ecological model can efficiently assist in organising the numerous causes of gendered violence against women and girls in such a way that differences in violence victim's personal lives, families and communities are clearly defined (ibid). This study, therefore, employs the ecological model to study the forms, causes and consequences of GBV against women and girls and their vulnerability to further violence (GBV context of the conceptual map), at the individual, relationship, community and societal levels in figure 2.1(also see 2.4.4 for details of the ecological model).

### **2.12.3 Women and girls' empowerment**

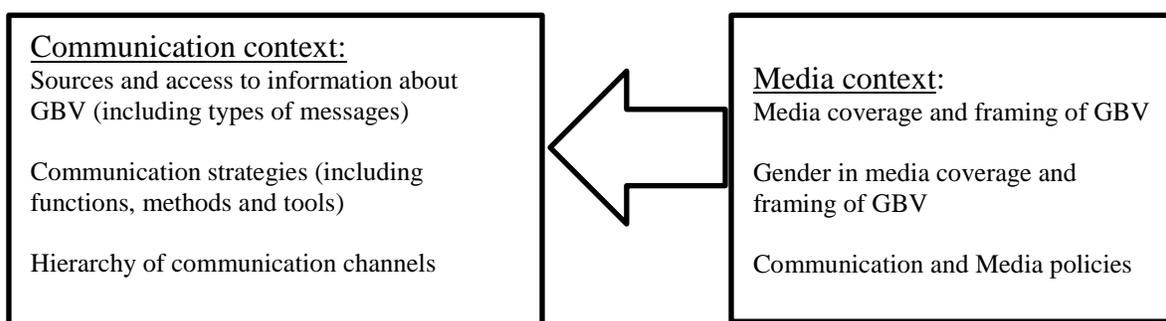
Feminist theorists argue that empowerment can imply challenging patriarchy, wherein women's empowerment is defined as "the process, and the outcome of the process, by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources, and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and the gender-based discrimination against women in all the institutions and structures of society" (Batliwala 1995). Others think of empowerment in terms of one's ability to make choices. For instance, Kabeer (2001:19) states that empowerment means "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them". Putting all these definitions together, empowerment encompasses forms of observable action- political decision making, meaning, motivation and purpose that individuals bring to their actions – their sense of agency and self-wealth (Kabeer, 2005).

However, the literature review suggests that there are few factors across the ecological model work to empower women. As such, the extent to which women and girls are empowered through the cast study NGOs intervention programmes will be examined within this empowerment context.

## The communication context of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

The second component of the framework addresses the last two objectives by exploring the context within which communication about GBV takes place. Notably, it investigates the information sources and access to information about GBV, communication strategies and mass media coverage and framing of GBV and communication media policies as detailed in figure 2.2.

**Figure 2. 2: Communication context component**



### 2.12.4. Communication context

Drawing from Leeuwis (2008, 2013) and Cardey (2010) concepts of communication strategies, the author has linked women and girls' vulnerability to GBV and empowerment to communicative interventions. The reason for this relationship in the framework emanated from literature (e.g. Jewkes, Flood and Lang, 2015; Ellsberg et al., 2014; Cooper, Paluck and Fletcher, 2013; Pedro, 2013; Media Monitoring in Africa n.d; Cooper et al, 2010; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007) which showed that communication strategies have been used to facilitate change in harmful social/gender norms, attitudes and behaviours towards GBV at the different levels of the ecological model. This process involves planning and organisation of grounded communicative interventions to develop and/or induce modified or new behaviours and attitudes which are supposed to assist people to resolve their own problems (Leeuwis 2008:27; Cardey 2010). Thus, Leeuwis (2008, 2013) makes mention of six main communication strategies. They are: advisory communication; supporting horizontal knowledge exchange; generation of policy and or technological innovations; conflict management; supporting organisation development and capacity building; and persuasive transfer of policy and or technological innovations Within

this concept, the communication activity is conceived as an intervention, using communication to facilitate cognitive changes. Cardey (2010) and (Leeuwis, 2008) explain that in the process change mediators seek to solve or improve the problem and that this involves other actors whose activities may interrelate, with each actor likely to have their own agenda. Meaning that communication processes are not neutral and that the problem, which communication processes are intended to solve are sources of rooted assumptions at multiple levels.

Relatedly, there are four roles communication plays in the implementation of a communication strategy; these include raising awareness and consciousness, exploration of views and issues, information provision, and training (Leeuwis and Aarts, 2011; Leeuwis 2008:209; Windahl, Signitzer & Olson 2008:79). These communication functions are relevant to communication strategies because every strategy employed in addressing GBV must seek to play a role. For instance, communication to raise awareness plays the role of helping people define a problem and in mobilising interest for action (Leeuwis and Aarts, 2011). In principle, communication is used to achieve a part of, or the overall communication strategy. These communication functions are, however, not bound to achieving one communication strategy. This means that communication functions can be applied to several communication strategies, but would depend on the specific objectives of the strategy at the time (Cardey 2010; Leeuwis 2008).

Additionally, communication strategies make use of communication methods and tools in program delivery. This is important because creating messages is directly linked to the choice of media and channels through which messages will be disseminated (UNIFEM, 2003:7). Particularly, as different forms of communication channels, such as radio, have their own culturally specific histories, such as radio in different African contexts. Communication scholars have acknowledged that radio has become a strong force in most African countries including Ghana. This is because of its association with traditional oral cultures existing in African cultures. In the specific case of Ghana, Aweboba (2006) explains that northern Ghana has diverse ethnic and language groups including major ones like Dagombas, Mamprusis, Komkombas, Gonjas, Frafra, Nabdit, Kussasi, Walas and Dagaatis. With the proliferation of community and local FM radio stations, many of these stations use local languages to discuss social issues in cognisance of the culture. Meaning that the cultural histories with which the

communication vehicle is linked, must be identified to enable a full understanding of the communication channel (Melkote and Steeves 2001; Kellow and Steeves 1998 cited in Cardey 2010). In this context, considering the sources of information targeted beneficiaries use most often and trust most, is crucial when assessing how an audience gets their news and seeks out reliable information (ibid) and the types of messages necessary. This interaction of assumptions, players, and communication processes make up the communication context (Leeuwis 2008; Cardey 2010:47). In Ghana, literature suggests some interventions have employed advocacy, awareness raising and community mobilization strategies to address GBV. Thus, the communication context comprising communication sources and access to information about GBV, communication strategies including functions, methods and tools, and hierarchies of communication channels is used to explore GBV communication in northern Ghana.

#### **2.12.5. Media context**

The media context includes mass media coverage and framing of GBV against and girls, gender in mass media and communication/media policies in relation to GBV. The essence of this media context is that media plays a critical role (as both a tool and medium) in development communication initiatives (Cooper et al., 2010; Kellow and Steeves, 1998), notwithstanding the challenges of its functions and practice in development. Media impacts on culture and serves as a powerful tool in shaping societal structures and operations (Lira and Tole, 2014; Sahu and Alam, 2013). It is recognised that mass media is a powerful means of conveying information to the public and has the advantage of reaching large audiences e.g. through radio, television and print materials (Awusabo-Asare, 2006). However, it is perceived that the dominant media forms have supported in constructing gender and reinforcing gendered norms. This is shown in the way mass media and advertising forms display stereotypes that are associated with representing male and female perceived qualities. These gender norms and roles shape the manner in which society interprets gender and aid in determining what is acceptable gender performance is.

Thus, media has hitherto been conceived as an arena that reinforces gender stereotypes and gender codes; it shapes the way in which society perceives and constructs gender (Jhally, 2009a; 2009b; Gill, 2007). However, Gill (2008, 2007) makes us understand that there is a shift in media - advertising representations of women in recent times, such that rather than being

presented in media as passive objects of the male gaze, women are now frequently depicted as active, assertive, independent and sexually powerful. In this light media channels are never neutral in terms of their roles and how they are read – culturally, how they operate or in terms of the historical context in which they are rooted.

The importance of context in relation to understanding the role and influence a communication initiative may have or not have at the local level has been recognised by Tufte 2006. This is where the local culture and development cross, and some scholars argue that media that doesn't take into account local context is unlikely to meet specific local needs, and may even provide irrelevant entertainment, while the local media seeks to address local issues in local languages and cultural context relating to local problems and challenges, with the goal of helping the community's holistic – social, cultural and economic development (Rogers, 2010; Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada, 1998). It is with this backdrop that Kellow and Steeves maintain that context is critical, as texts have little meaning apart from their cultural political and economic origins. Thus, contexts embody how cultures read a communication media, and what meaning they assign to the content they are presented with. For instance, how a person reads an image/picture is culturally specific.

It is noted that the different contexts and meanings in the media context are dynamic. So, media channels must be re-examined frequently as the context in which they are situated continues to change, and new technologies emerge, and relatively new meaning is created and re-created (Opubor 2000, 2006). As pointed out by Awusabo-Asare (2006), for instance, in discussing the role of media with specific reference to radio in Ghana with regards to contraceptives uptake, it was noted that radio, was historically important; most preferred bringing information about types and use of contraceptives to local and rural communities; and radio is frequently used as a means to educate the public about HIV/AIDs. Despite this positive role, radio in Africa has been linked to partisan political manipulation by authoritative and untrusted governments (Myers 2004, 2008).

Nonetheless, in relation to addressing GBV against women, mass media has the potential to influence positive change in individuals' attitudes and behaviours against GBV (Koga, 2011;

Jewkes and Morrell, 2010; WHO, 2009, Gupta et al., 2008; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005, Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2004, 2007) and social change (Cooper et al., 2010; Usdin, 2005). For instance, Sexto Sentido mass media campaign in Nicaragua and Brother for Life in South, both aimed to change societal notions surrounding masculinity and building gender equitable attitudes and in this case, HIV communication and condom use proved effective (Jewkes and Morrell, 2010). Other projects such as Na Wi Pot Project in Sierra Leone, Men as Partners in South Africa and Media Advocacy Against GBV in Ethiopia, used media like television, radio and Information, Education and communication (IEC) print material to combat GBV (Cooper et al., 2010).

Thus, key to this study is to understand how gendered violence against women and girls is presented in the media. This is because media texts are powerful in shaping people's perceptions and opinions on social issues in certain places and times – defining the significance or otherwise of events (McDonald and Charlesworth, 2012). Again, journalists who play the role of “gatekeeping” are powerful in promoting particular versions of social reality and have the capacity to marginalise and exclude others, especially women's issues (McDonald and Charlesworth, 2012; Macdonald, 2003; Fairclough, 1995). As a result, research has recognized the importance of the framing of GBV in media coverage. Media framing theorists propose that the media choose certain topics or themes and situate them within a context to bring out the important characteristics to enable audiences' interpretation of the news stories (Sobel, 2015; Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000; Scheufele, 1999; Andsager and Powers, 1999; McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver, 1997; McCombs and Shaw, 1993). Within this context, journalists strategically use frames as “short cuts” to catch their readers' attention to the issues raised in the news items. Media scholars have been critiqued for the predisposition of journalists' reporting of GBV, often focusing attention on individual incidents “events-based” - reporting on the who, when, where, what and how of the violence incident (Bullock and Cubert, 2002), to the neglect of the contextual “why” and education about its complex social nature (Morgan and Politoff, 2014; Taylor, 2009; Carlyle, Slater and Chakroff, 2008). Several previous studies on newspapers and other media coverage of GBV found that coverage was inadequate and mainly focused on “events-based” or “episodic” incidents of violence at the expense of GBV as a complex social problem (Sobel, 2015; Nzuma, 2015; Morgan and Politoff, 2014; Jacob, 2014;

Alat, 2006). Bullock and Cubert (2002) for instance, reported that much of newspaper coverage of domestic violence in Washington state, gave a distorted view of domestic violence and victims' experiences and framed it as "events-based" incidents, rather than portraying it as a larger social issue (2002:475). Thus, they argue that presenting GBV as an individual issue tends to result in the audience losing sight of the pervasiveness of GBV and as a social menace. On the contrary, Gillespie et al., (2013), reported that their study in North Carolina, found that media used multiple frames that placed domestic violence as a social problem rather than as an individual problem.

In Ghana, previous studies such as Ako and Akweongo (2009), Amoakohene (2004) reported that mass media has not placed importance on GBV in Ghana, more so, the print media does not adequately expose GBV as a crime at the national level (Ardayfio-Schadorf, 2005). Thus the author explored Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) generic frames as an aid to understanding how Ghana's two state-owned newspapers (the Daily Graphic and The Spectator) covered and framed GBV stories in the media. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) proposes five generic frames – morality, responsibility, consequence, conflict and human interest (see details of each frame in chapter 7.4).

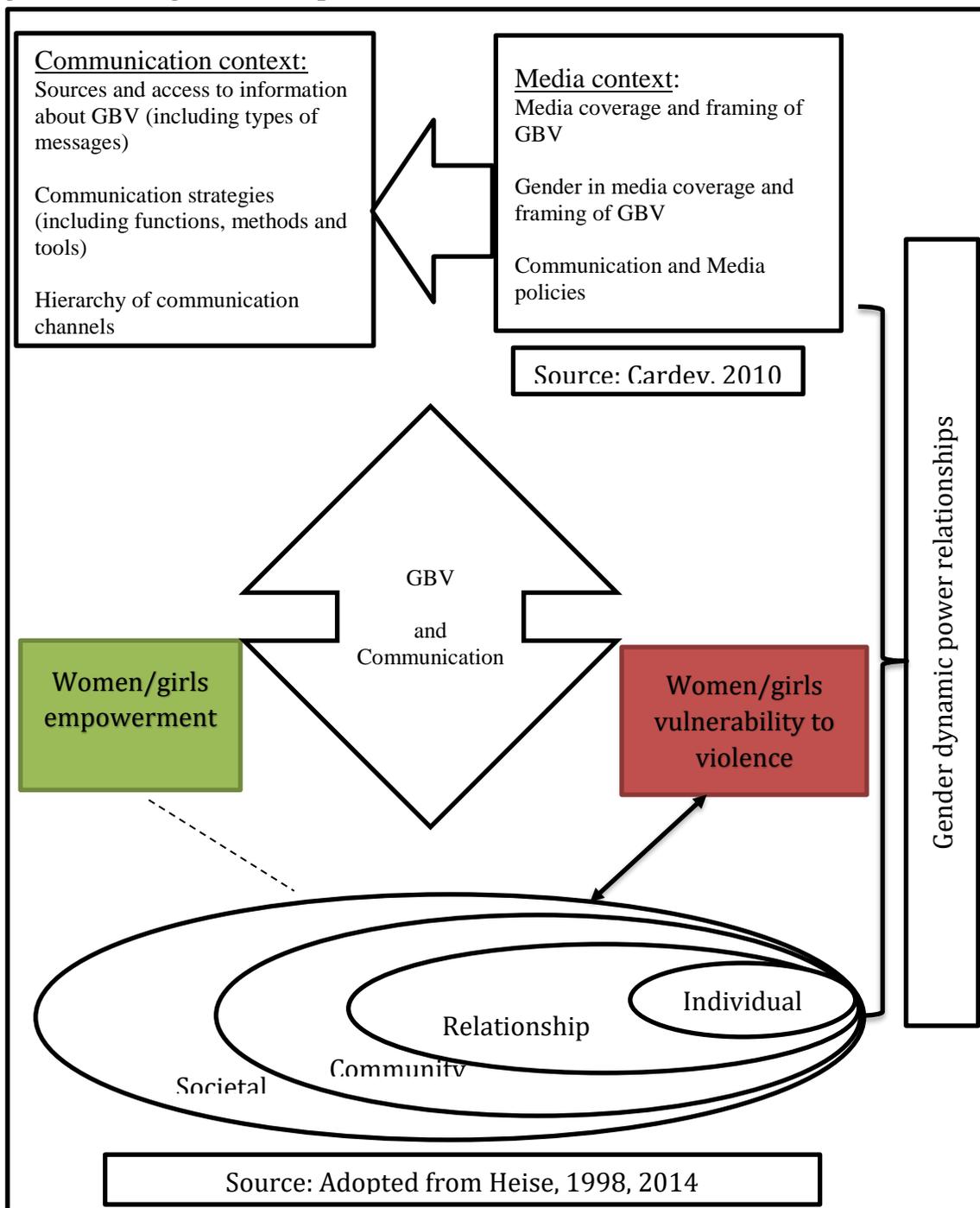
The way mass media operates has a direct link with communication and media policies in any given country. Communication and media policies are therefore conceived as basic theoretical frameworks that provide the foundation for the formulation of principles for measuring the performance of communication and media systems and designing policies that might improve such performance (McQuail 1992). Iosifidis (2011: 7) states that communication policy refers to "the regulation of different mass media – radio, television, the press, and telecommunication, which in the era of digital convergence, embraces new digital and online media, computers and the internet". As media meant to serve public interest is a normative value that offers the standard that most media policymakers are expected to adhere to in their decision-making process (Gadzekpo, 2007), the means by which policies are enacted and measured may vary across different national contexts, there are some main principles that strengthen effective media policies.

It is recognised that many communication/media policies can simultaneously impinge upon the speech rights of individuals or groups in the society (Kasoma, 2001). For example, the same policies to diversify media ownership under the pretence of promoting free speech can be viewed as impinging on the individual speech rights of those owners of media enterprises seeking to expand into other areas and reaching new markets (Napoli 2001). However, Ghana communication media has been recognised as operating the freest in Sub-Saharan Africa (Freedom House, 2009; Trust, 2005). The communication media policy promotes free speech, media pluralism and independence of the media (Gadzekpo, 1997, 2007). With the repealing of the criminal libel law in 2001, it has been possible for journalists to practice their profession in freedom. Ghana has a pluralistic media landscape with a plethora of newspapers – both private and public. It can boast 267 authorised radio stations, and 28 television stations (National Communications Authority, 2013). Ghana has been ranked “free”, with a press freedom score of 28, credited with deepening culture of free expressing, and with the emergence of ICT, internet has contributed to the vibrant media system (Sikanku, 2014; Freedom House, 2009). As Peacock and Barker (2015) argue, commitment by governments on policy issue regarding GBV interventions is crucial for the implementation of programs.

#### **2.12.6 GBV and communication**

The GBV and communication components formed the bases for an integrated conceptual framework for the exploration of GBV communication through case study of three NGOs in northern Ghana (See Figure 2.3).

**Figure 2. 3: Integrated conceptual framework for GBV communication**



As stipulated in CEDAW (1981), the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women state that every woman has the right to live a healthy life, devoid of violence and fear and protected from all forms of abuse and exploitation. The Convention outlines women's rights as basic human rights. Feminist and anti-violence scholars (e.g. Cooper et al., 2013; Anderson, Cockcroft and Shea, 2008; Humphrey, 2007; Terry, 2007; Krantz and Gracia-Moreno, 2005) assert that the root causes of GBV against women and girls at all levels of society must be challenged and dismissed. This is because cultures and societies are not static and positive interventions can create equal opportunities for women and girls' holistic development and well-being (Connell, 2005).

Fundamentally, strategic communication interventions aim to promote nonviolent behaviour, contest cultural belief systems that uphold and justify women's low status and subordination at all levels of the social hierarchy (Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007). They also contest the use of violence as a way of settling conflict, and encourage women and men alike to be supportive of their friends and family members who experience violence (Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007). They highlight that mass media efforts have included international campaigns such as the 16 Days of Activism against GBV campaign<sup>8</sup> and national campaigns such as the annual campaigns conducted by the Nicaraguan Network of Women against violence. All these campaigns are meant to create consciousness and enhance knowledge on GBV.

Moreover, some governments and NGOs have employed development communication strategies to address GBV and sexual and reproductive health problems. For example, a program dubbed Community Conversation, funded by UNDP, in Ethiopia under the Ethiopian Ministry of Health mobilises communities around HIV/AIDS, GBV and HTP (Feldman-Jacobs and Worley, 2008), and due to its effectiveness has been expanded to many other countries (Cooper et al, 2010). The program focuses on a process of participatory dialogue on the root causes powering the spread of HIV/AIDS and GBV, and how it breaks the silence surrounding sensitive issues and stimulates locally- grounded answers to problems (Hope, 2007). The community

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<sup>8</sup> Refers to an international campaign to challenge violence against women and girls. The campaign runs every year from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day.

Conversations encompass a series of facilitated discussion sessions that allow women and men from different backgrounds within a community to identify community concerns in relation to HIV/AIDS, GBV and HTP and generate community-led decision for action; acting, and reflection and review of actions taken and outcomes. UNDP observes that this Community Conversation approach assists in responding to an identified gap where:

“Local responses, often neglected in global and national HIV/AIDS plans, need to be based on the reality of existing social dynamics and concerns of local communities. They should be drawn from ‘spaces’ of trust, where listening takes place and mutual respect generated, and where interaction with a community stimulates changes from within” (UNDP, 2005).

With this approach, an enabling environment is created for local authorities to hear and learn from its community members about the challenges and ideas for action, trusting that leaders would articulate these in broader policies and programming at the national level, and help to incorporate NGOs and CBOs into recognising locally appropriate and realistic steps for action (UNDP, 2005; Cooper et al, 2013). See (2.4.4) for more examples of communication interventions. It is within this context that the study investigates how communication has been used to address GBV in northern Ghana.

## **2.13 Summary**

This chapter discussed the conceptual perspective underpinning this study. The author reviewed literature on the basic concepts of gender and sexual reproductive health in relation to GBV against women to situate the definition of GBV and the prevalence at both global and local levels. Literature was also reviewed on feminist and masculinity theorist perspective of GBV, bringing out the forms, causal factors and the negative impacts of violence on women and girls. Furthermore, given the factor that this study explores the communication approaches to GBV from a gender lens, the review covered theoretical perspectives of gender in development communication, to situate this study of communication GBV within the development communication thinking. The concepts were then pulled together to propose an integrated conceptual framework for communication GBV.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This research was conducted through a case study approach from both social constructivist and positivists epistemologies that necessitated the use of mixed methods. The data was gathered from six communities through 18 focus group discussions and group activities using tools such as communication mapping, spider diagramming and pairwise ranking. Key informant interviews with staff members of each case study organization, media and development practitioners, community and opinion leaders; document review and researcher field observation. This chapter, therefore, details the methodology for this research. Interview schedules and group activity schedules are included in the appendices.

Aside from the introduction, this chapter is organised and discussed in eleven subtitles. The theoretical standpoint for the research is outlined in section 3.2. While section 3.3 discusses the methodological approach and rationale. This is followed by a discussion of the case studies including their location, selection research participants and sampling process in section 3.4. Section 3.5 addresses the methods and instruments employed for the data collected for the study, and 3.6 highlights the processes involved in the data collection and fieldwork. This included the phase of data collection, instruments used and pre-testing. Section 3.7 presents how the analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data and validity and reliability of the study discussed in section 3.8 was managed. Section 3.9 highlights issues of research ethics and risk management in the research process, while section 3.10 presents the limitation of the study and finally closes on the chapter summary, presented in 3.11.

### **3.2 Epistemology (Constructivist and Positivist)**

According to Blaikie (1993) and Ritchie et al (2013) every epistemology is driven by the study of the nature of knowledge (ontology). As such Clotty (1998) explains that an epistemology “is a theory or science of the method or grounds of knowledge”. In other words, a choice of epistemology is a way of understanding and elucidating how we know what we know. It is in this light and given the nature of the topic under study, that the study took a social constructivist

epistemology standpoint (Crotty, 1998; Murphy, 1997; Ernest, 1998, Ritchie et al., 2013) and Positivist standpoint (Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Robson, 2002; Bryman, 2001) to understand the nature and root factors underpinning GBV and to explore the role of communication in addressing it. The social constructivist stance conceives that all knowledge is constructed because of the interactions between human beings, their perspectives and experiences of the world they live in (Crotty 1998; Ernest 1998; Owen, 1995).

From this perspective, the researcher sought to explore from research participants their constructions of GBV, concepts of power and communication within their subjective social contexts and realities through case study research focusing on three Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in northern Ghana. On the other hand, the positivist stance argues that social reality can be objectively defined and generalised as practised in the natural science (Bryman, 2001). Thus, the positivist stance views reality as neutral, objective and independent from the study and fundamentally employs the use of experiments and the collection of data, which can be processed and analysed quantitatively and verified. Hence, this stance was also used to establish the incidence and types and attitudes towards gender power relationship, inequalities and gender-based violence, sources of information, communication/media channels, preferences, trust and kinds of message on gender-based violence.

### **3.3 Methodological Approach and Rationale**

The researcher conducted this study using an exploratory comparatively rooted case study approach (Yin, 2003). This approach afforded a comprehensive investigation of specific problems – Gender-Based Violence communication within a real-world context in northern Ghana. Yin (2003) explains that the case study approach is suitable for empirically investigating modern social issues within their real-life context, more so when the boundaries between events and context are difficult to differentiate. Yin (2003:1) adds that “case study research is also appropriate when the “how” and/or “why” questions are being asked, when the researcher is not in control over the events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context”. The case study approach in research is a form of enquiry that gives attention to describing, understanding, predicting, and controlling the individual process, person, organisation, group, industry, culture or nationality (Woodside 2010:1).

The case study approach is appropriate for this research which seeks to understand the nature, construction and dynamics of the GBV phenomenon and to explore the role of communication in preventing GBV within the study area. The case study was considered a multi-case study because the NGOs as a unit of analysis has other stakeholders (beneficiaries, government agencies and community leaders) as sub-units which were studied, resulting it several units in one case study (Yin, 2003). As a consequence, the case studies were repeated with each of the case study NGOs and stakeholders in the study area, which made it a multiple case study design.

### **3.4 Case Studies**

#### **3.4.1 Location of case study NGOs**

All the case study non-governmental organizations were in northern Ghana, with offices situated in the regional capitals. Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA) is located in Tamale, the regional capital of Northern region; Widows and Orphans Movement (WOM) in Bolgatanga, the capital of Upper East region and ProNet North located in Wa, the Upper West region, making up Northern Ghana (see details for rationale in chapter 1).

#### **Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA)**

Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA), formerly known as Ghanaian Danish Communities Association started in 1980, is a legally registered non-governmental organization in Ghana, specifically located in Tamale. It is an umbrella organization that is formed by many organizations working in the northern region for the ultimate good of communities in different thematic areas like governance, gender and mobilization of the community. GDCA's main philosophy is that people are capable of leading the change that they desire for themselves and in this regard, they seek to empower people to work towards the change they want to see in their communities, by becoming more aware of the situations that need change within the community and addressing them. Some of the member organizations include Dalun Simli Centre (DSC), Simli Pong, Simli Radio, School for Life (SFL) and Community Life Improvement Program (CLIP). GDCA is involved in various community development activities. One such major activity is improving the capacity of CBOs and local NGOs through the CBO-LOM Unit which is charged with the function of holding public office holders accountable and leading in the development of their communities.

An important aspect of development at any level, whether national or local, is information and how this information is communicated to the people. In this regard, GDCA has in its fold, a community radio, Simli Radio, which is the first community radio in Northern Ghana located at the Dalun Simli Centre. Simli Radio transmits on the frequency of 95.3MHz FM; it broadcasts in the local language and is run by volunteers. Its major areas of focus are education and literacy, health and sanitation, democracy, culture, youth and women's development, peace-building and economic and social development. GDCA also works to strengthen the participation and representation of women at the local and national level of governance in the Northern Region of Ghana. They aim to increase civic awareness gaining support for women in politics, increasing women's representation in the local governance system in six districts, by 30% and aims to increase the number of women in government at a national level.

### **Widows and Orphans Movement (WOM)**

In 1993, the widows and Orphans Movement (WOM) was formed and legally registered as a Non-governmental organization. WOM's office is located in Bolgatanga in the Upper East Region of Ghana. As the only NGO that works to alleviate the plight of widows and their children, it aims to facilitate processes and programmes to empower widows and Orphans economically, socially and spiritually in the Upper East and beyond. In the Upper East Region of Ghana alone, the Widows and Orphans Movement (WOM) has over seven thousand widows comprising 85 independent groups. Membership is open to widows from all communities and religions. Women usually go through dehumanizing widowhood rites after the death of their husbands. These include the shaving of the widow's hair, bathing at the rubbish dump in public, confiscation of her late husband's assets, to mention but a few. WOM, therefore, works to stop these negative cultural practices through advocacy, economic empowerment of widows and education.

### **ProNet North**

ProNet North was registered in 1995 as a non-governmental organization, with the vision of working towards a society where social justice is at the heart of development. Working in the Upper West region including other communities of northern Ghana, ProNet North focuses on projects ranging from water; sanitation and hygiene services delivery; training and capacity

building; governance; child rights; sustainable livelihoods and microfinance for women's empowerment and advocacy.

### **3.4.2 Choice of case studies**

This study comprises three case studies, with each looking at women's empowerment/ gender equality programs as their main focus, and directly or indirectly combating gender-based violence against women and girls as part of their operations. It is important to note that each of these case study organizations was distinctive with regards to GBV approaches and implementation of activities. All three organizations were considered legal because they have formally registered as non-governmental organizations with the government of Ghana, having a clearly defined operational mandate. The cases were selected using purposive sampling (See section 3. Detail sampling process). The first case study NGO was used as a point of entry to the other two, as it was through the first case study NGO, and their working relationships, that the researcher was referred to the other two cases working (being in related fields). This connection laid the foundation for a robust representation of the diverse types of NGOs working to address GBV against women and girls in northern Ghana. The purpose of studying these three NGOs was to enable the triangulation of data, to ensure data reliability and validity.

### **3.4.3 Study settings**

The study was conducted in Ghana, and all the case study organisations were situated in northern Ghana. The Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA) is located in the Agricultural area in Tamale in the Sagnarigu district of Northern region. Widows and Orphans Movement (WOM) is located in Bolgatanga and operating in the Nabdam district of the Upper East region. And ProNet North is in Wa and operating in the Kaleo district of the Upper West region. The rationale for choosing these NGOs for the study is discussed in the introductory chapter 3.1.

#### ***Northern Ghana***

Northern Ghana in the context of this study comprises the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions. These three regions form the Savannah region of Ghana. According to the 2010 population and housing census, northern Ghana has an estimated combined population of 24.23 million (The Ghana Statistical Service, 2012:21). These regions are made up of several language

and ethnic groups – including major ones like Dagbombas, Gonjas, Mamprusis, Komkombas, and Bimobas in the northern region, Frafras, Kasenas, Bulsas and Kusasis in the Upper East region, and Walas, Dagatis and Sisaalas in the Upper West region. It is well documented that tribes/ ethnic groups in northern Ghana, although having certain socio-cultural institutions in common; have very diverse histories, customs and traditions (Langer, 2007). Also, most ethnic groups in northern Ghana operate patriarchal systems where male dominance in gender relationship is ensured by marriage customs (Adongo et al, 1997). Traditionally, men are perceived as head of households and breadwinners and boys as potential head of households, based on culturally-specific gender roles, authority structures and social responsibilities (Apusigah, 2009). Women and girls, in this context, are viewed as properties and hands in production (Adongo et al, 1997), and as such are socialized as wives and potential wives, and as subordinats to men. According to some of the cultures and traditions, women have no direct inheritance rights under the customary arrangements which limit the rights and capabilities of women in northern Ghana (Apusigah, 2009).

The Savannah region, and for that matter Northern Ghana has been identified as the poorest and most deprived in Ghana (Obure et al 2008; Ampiah and Adu-Yeboah, 2009; Schindler, 2010), with the comprising regions contributing 54.5% to the country's total poverty ratio as of 2005/2006 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2008). According to Awedoba (2006) and Tsikata and Seini, (2004), Northern Ghana falls within the savannah vegetation belt. Agriculture and agro-based industries still remain the mainstay of the people despite modest rainfall in many parts of the area. It allows for the cultivation of cereal crops and legumes. Consequently, environmental factors such as the Sahel climate, dry, hot and one rainfall season, coupled with low education levels and the lack of alternative employment opportunities have culminated in abject poverty in northern Ghana. However, despite these environmental factors, Obure et al (2008) and Tsikata and Seini, (2004) argue that the reasons for poverty in northern Ghana, are traceable to political happenings such as colonial legacies and little attention by post-independent governments in Ghana, to the northern parts of Ghana. All these factors have culminated in a North-South dichotomy in Ghana, in terms of development and the general quality of life (Schindler, 2010; Tsikata and Seini, 2004). It is the reciprocal effect of abject

poverty, low educational levels and gender inequalities that moved the researcher to locate the study in northern Ghana.

### 3.4.4 Research Participants

Research participants selected as the sample for this study were a total of 450 males and females, 430 of which finally took part in the research (Table 3.1). The participants were all drawn from six communities from the three districts of northern Ghana.

**Table 3. 1: Summary data instrument used and research respondents**

		No. of respondents		
		Male	Female	Total
	Questionnaires	59	117	176
	Focus group discussions (18 groups)	89	97	186
Key informants	Community opinion leaders	11	12	23
	Government officials	11	4	15
	NGO/Development activists	9	9	18
	Media practitioners	7	5	12
	Total	186	243	430

The research participants from each case organization included staff, government agencies staff, media and development practitioners, community opinion and religious leaders and community members (Table 3.1). The selection was carried out through the researcher’s contact with the officer-in-charge of “women or gender” program activities. The researcher was referred to the officer through the organization’s management, who also briefed the officer on the procedures. The officer, in turn, contacted other members of staff (3 or 4) depending on size and available staff who were ready to represent the organization in the key informant interviews. The staff from each of the organizations selected, satisfied the condition for participation because they were considered to have insights into the issues for discussion in relation to the research. As part of the process, and based on earlier contacts, the contact officers were provided with copies of the research activities in advance, and key informants and community members set the dates and times interviews and focus group discussion were to be held. The number of research

participants did not vary much across the case study organizations. The research participants are summarized in Table 3.2).

**Table 3. 2: Summary of research respondents by districts**

District	Community	Questionnaire			Focus Group			Key Informants								
								<i>Opinion leaders</i>		<i>Government</i>		<i>Media</i>		<i>NGO/Dev't experts</i>		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	T
Sagnarigu	GDCA staff													2	2	4
	Fuo	10	20	30	16	15	31	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	Sagnarigu	9	19	28	15	18	33	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	8
	Tamale (capital)									5	1	2	2	2	1	13
Nabdam	WOM staff														2	2
	Zanlerigu	10	20	20	15	16	31	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
	Sakote	10	19	39	14	15	29	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	Bolga (capital)									4	0	1	2	1	3	11
Nadowli/Kaleo	ProNet staff													2	2	4
	Zambogu	10	19	29	14	16	30	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Janguasi	10	20	30	15	17	32	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Wa (Capital)									2	0	3	0	2	2	9
National level									0	2	1	2	2	0	7	
	Total	59	117	176	89	97	186	11	12	11	3	7	5	9	8	71

Over all, GDCA had a total 147 people, comprising 4 staff, 4 opinion leaders, 6 government officers, 4 media practitioners, 7 development practitioners and 122 community members who participated in the data collection exercise; this involved group discussions and activities; key informants and a questionnaire survey (see appendix 3). WOM had 2 staff, 10 opinion leaders, 4 government officers, 3 development practitioners, 4 media practitioners and 119 community members making a total of 142 participants. Lastly, participants who took part in research under ProNet were a total of 141 including 4 staff, 5 opinion leaders, 4 government officers, 4 development practitioners, 3 media practitioners and 121 community members. In total, including all the three cases, 430 people participated in the research.

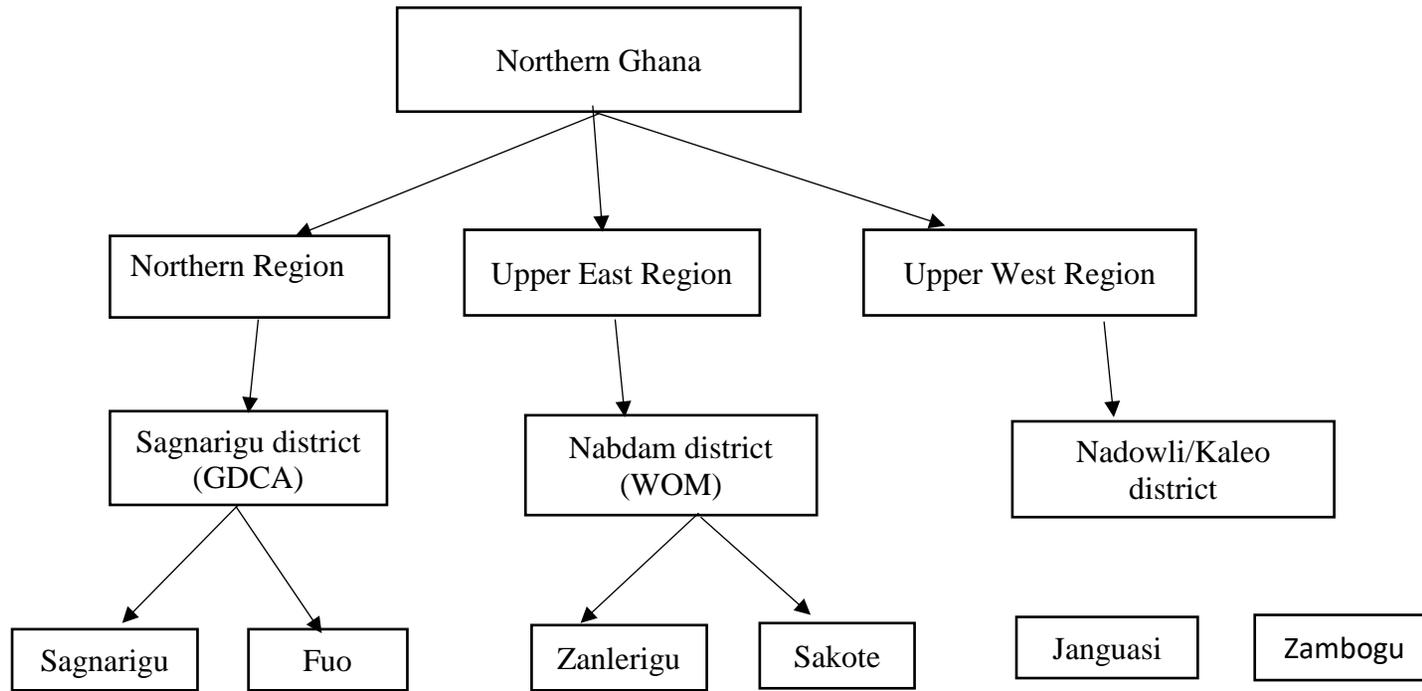
### **3.4.5 Sampling process**

Sampling is crucial in research because it provides detailed knowledge and accurate data due to the fact that sampling deals with a relatively small quantity of data. Against this backdrop, both probability and non-probability sampling procedures were employed for this study (Sarantakos, 1993).

Northern Ghana was selected purposively because of the perceived high incidence of poverty, gender-based inequalities and violence against women and girls. Another reason was that the researcher hails from the northern part of Ghana and has engaged in development work – specifically with women in the three regions for the past 15 years. This offered the researcher a fair understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics and issues of gender inequalities and unequal power relationship and poverty underlying women and men in the area. Three districts were sampled purposively in Northern Ghana. The districts were Sagnarigu district in the Northern region, Nabdram district in the Upper East region and Nadowli/Kaleo district in the Upper West region. These districts were selected based on the presence of NGOs who were also selected purposively for working on Gender Equality and other related empowerment interventions. These districts also have issues of gender inequalities and negative socio-cultural norms and practices that militate against women and girls’ development in northern Ghana. Purposive sampling assists us to select “representatives” of the population based on the judgement of the researcher (Singleton et al, 1993). In each of the districts, two communities were purposively selected because of the presence of the case study NGO in those communities. It is argued that

sampling across different geographical locations afforded the researcher the opportunity to compare the three districts and the activities of the case study NGOs to explore and also comprehend gender power relationship, gender inequalities, gender-based violence and communication media across the various locations (Yin, 2003; Stake, 1995).

**Figure 3. 1: Multi-stage sampling framework**



**The selection criteria of study NGOs and respondents were based on the following:**

- Must be an NGO operating in Northern Ghana
- Must have at least five years' experience of development work with women, especially in relation to GBV, Gender equality and women's empowerment
- NGOs were purposively selected to represent different types of NGOs present in Northern Ghana, such as Ghanaian National NGOs, Ghanaian regional NGOs, local Community Based Organisation, faith-based organisations.
- International NGOs served as Key Informants and gave Stakeholder Interviews

Other respondents were based on the following criteria:

- Female and male beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries and community leaders (chiefs, Magazias, religious and opinion leaders) within the study area.
- Government agencies within study area where the NGOs operate, once the NGOs are selected.
- Willingness to participate in the study
- Over the age of 18 and able to give informed consent to participate

### **3.5 Methods and data collection instruments**

This study used mixed methods – qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2003; Bryman, 2008; Sale, Lohfeld and Brazil, 2002) to explore the role of communication in addressing GBV in northern Ghana. The qualitative approach was used to unpack issues of gender power relationships, gender inequalities, the nature, causes and consequence of GBV, and communication/media processes and contexts. The reason is that there are certain sensitive issues which bordered on people's life experiences and worldviews that cannot be discussed appropriately, other than through a qualitative process (Byman, 2012; Yin, 2011). The quantitative process was used to collect data on the demographic characteristics of households, incidence, types of GBV and attitudes, communication/information access, preferences, trust and reliability of communication media channels. It is well documented that combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies in research, helps to produce more accurate results and limits the weakness of a single method (Morgan 2007; Brannen 2005). Sammons et al, (2005) have explained for instance, that mixed methods are the best approach to deal with complex social phenomenon. Gender inequalities, GBV and communication/media strategies and approaches are well situated in this context. Mixed methods when well applied also lead to outcomes that are practically relevant to policy (Burke et al, 2007). More importantly, the use of mixed methods in research enables the

researcher to triangulate information that is relevant to the research questions (Mayoux, 2006; Cresswell, 2009). That is why other authors, such as Amaratunga et al, (2002), posit that a mixed method approach allows the researcher to explore rich details and to provide fresh insights on the subjects being studied.

### **3.5.1 Qualitative methods and data collection tools**

#### ***Focus group discussions***

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were organised in all the research locations. The FGDs afforded the researcher the opportunity to capture first-hand information on the nature of gender inequalities and power relations between women and men in their normal social settings. These group discussions also helped in capturing of broad issues on GBV at various levels within the ecological spectrum and the underlying causes and consequence of the violence. Focus group discussion as a research tool empowers hitherto marginalised individuals and /or groups to share their views and experiences on issues of particular interest to them in an informal way (Wilkinson 2004). According to Hennink (2007), this process is a natural social interaction among participants, which encourages a wide range of responses and allows for a better understanding of their attitudes, behaviours, opinions and perceptions of research participants on issues. At the same time, discussions among participants offered the researcher the opportunity to hear issues, which may not have emerged from their individual interaction with the researcher alone. In the process of the discussions, participants who initially did not want to talk, were motivated to talk when they saw their colleagues sharing their views in a natural and relaxed atmosphere without any intimidation or fear. Morgan (1997) postulates that FGDs privilege the researcher to collect in-depth information and understanding in research which other conventional methods of data collection such as surveys are not privy to.

For each FGD, 8 to 12 people participated in the discussion. Three focus group discussions were held in each of the six research communities to elicit information on perception about gender inequalities and power relationship and gender-based violence and communication (see Appendix 2 for interview schedule). This moderate number of participants offered both the researcher and participants the opportunity to effectively engage with issues and topics discussed in a meaningful manner and allowed for easy moderation. It is imperative to note that the researcher was led by the contact person from each of the case study organization to

enter the communities. This was achieved using community entry protocols to contact the community leaders, including briefing them on the mission in the community. Permission was then sought and discussions held on the above-mentioned topics with both male and female genders in each community. Given the socio-cultural and power dynamics within the Ghanaian context, female only, male only and mixed group discussion were arranged in each of the study locations. The researcher facilitated the discussions and used research assistants as interpreters where necessary and the participants drove the process of discussions.

### ***Participation and participatory activities.***

Some participatory tools were used for the data collection during the FGDs. Communication mapping was used to collect data on the sources of communication and information on GBV within their immediate environment, within the district, region, Ghana and outside of Ghana.



Research participants drawing communication map and spider diagrams on sources of information on GBV.

Research participants drew spider diagrams of the five most important sources of information to them and discussed each source in terms of trust, reliability, preference and access.

### ***Key informant interviews***

According to Marshall (1996), key informants serve as expert sources of information that most members of any society/community do not have. Key informants as a result of their personal skills and position within the society are able to provide valuable information and deeper insights into happenings around them. Marshall notes that key informants, also referred to as “strategic informants”, are interested in the behaviour of those around them.

They also observe the development of their culture and often speculate or make inferences about them. Against this backdrop, key informants interviewed were staff of the three case study NGOs, NGOs/ development practitioners, government agency staff, media practitioners and community leaders. A semi-structured interview guide was used for the one-on-one interviews (see appendix 1). This method enabled the researcher to build a rich picture of gender dynamics, GBV and communication in the study area. All the discussions were tape recorded and transcribed with the permission of the informants, and notes were taken alongside, by both the researcher and assistants for analysis. The recorded versions were later transcribed verbatim and processed thematically.

### ***Document analysis***

Document analysis plays an important role in research because documents make up for records of activities that could not be observed directly by a researcher (Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995). As such, the researcher examined documents already produced by the case study NGOs and other institutions that were relevant and shed light on the nature and scope of GBV, communication strategies, communication/media policies, gender equality and women's empowerment approaches in Northern Ghana for possible answers to the questions which were asked in the investigation. Additionally, the researcher selected the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times (Spectator) newspapers for content analysis. The Daily Graphic ([graphic.com.gh](http://graphic.com.gh)) is a state-owned daily newspaper, which mirrors a news culture of covering state programmes and activities including social issues. The daily graphic is the oldest and the most widely circulated newspaper in Ghana (Quarshie et al., 2015; Gadzekpo, 2010). Equally, the Ghanaian Times (The Spectator) is also a state-owned newspaper specialized in business news as well as social and political issues (Quarshie et al., 2015).

The above mentioned newspapers were chosen for analysis for several reasons. The Daily Graphic and The Spectator have dedicated a page or two in their newspapers to report on gender/women related issues across Ghana. These papers are read by government officials and reflect government thinking about GBV; and represent what can be described as specialized newspapers read by educated workers in both urban and remote locations (Quarshie et al., 2015; Gadzekpo, 2010).

However, private newspapers were not considered because of their limited coverage and profit oriented approaches. All the articles on gender pages of the two newspapers between 1 January and 31 December 2014 were sampled for the content analysis of GBV coverage in Ghana. A total of 73 editions containing 139 articles were found (Table 7.1). The unit of analysis was the individual articles on GBV in the sampled newspapers. The analysis of documents and the two newspapers assisted the researcher to identify communication strategies used by the organisations to address GBV, media coverage and framing of GBV and communication/media policy environment in Ghana.

### ***Secondary sources***

The research made use of some secondary data sources in the study. These secondary sources covered research studies conducted by others in the past that were applicable to GBV communication and empowerment. Other secondary sources such as research reports, policy documents and grey materials from institutions such as the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service, Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) media houses, Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) and both national and international NGOs were appropriated in this study. Another important secondary source that was helpful, were online websites. For instance, some of the stories on gender power relationships, gender-based violence incidences, information about communication and media policies, and information about the case study NGOs were accessed on the Ghana website and content analysed.

### ***Observation***

Observation is one of the data collection tools that are crucial in social research endeavours. This tool allowed the researcher to get immersed in the study process to note/observe research participants' body language, gestures, interactions, attitudes and behaviours to ascertain to a large extent the full picture of the situation, more so when it borders on interviews (FGD and KII) as means of collecting data (Yeboah, 2008). An observation of respondents' appearances, sitting arrangements in mixed group discussions and power relations and how this affected the discussions, was made. Of particular interest was how key informants expressed their feelings (facial, emotional, gestures) about gender inequalities, GBV and communication issues between men and women in the northern Ghana and in Ghana as a whole. Field notes were also taken alongside. This observational data enhanced the quality of qualitative data collected for the study.

### 3.5.2 Quantitative methods and tools

#### *Questionnaire surveys*

According to Sarantakos (1998), the use of a questionnaire is useful because, it standardises data collection and ensures high confidentiality of respondents, thus eliciting truthful information from respondents. As such, questionnaires were designed and administered to 180 respondents in the study sites. Each community was stratified into North, South, East and West. In each stratum, a female respondent was randomly selected in every 5th household and a male respondent in every 10th household, and a questionnaire administered. In other words, a systematic random sampling technique was used to select 20 females and 10 male respondents in each of the six communities. This method of sampling reduces the bias associated with research since each participant stands an equal chance of being selected. A summary of survey questionnaire data collected from respondents is shown in Table 3.3.

**Table 3. 3: Summary of data collected**

Sections	Main information collected
Gender power relationships, inequalities and Gender-based violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power relationship between women and men, sources and how power is exercised.</li> <li>• Access to and control over livelihoods resources and household decision making</li> <li>• Attitudes and acceptance towards gender inequalities and effects on women and girls</li> <li>• Perception of gender-based violence</li> <li>• Types, incidence, causes and consequence of violence.</li> </ul>
Communicating GBV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General information sources access to information about GBV</li> <li>• Programs and activities relating to GBV</li> <li>• Communication strategies, methods and tools</li> <li>• Types of information about GBV needed and methods of dissemination</li> <li>• Hierarchies of communication and media channels</li> <li>• Communication and media policies</li> </ul>
Demographic characteristics of respondents	Information about participant's age, gender, residential settings, marital status, type of marriage, educational levels, family size and religious background.
Type of occupation and monthly incomes	Types of occupation incomes of participants. This was useful in establishing a relationship between gender and occupation and gender and incomes.

The crux of this quantitative data collection was to establish a relationship between specific variables of interest (e.g. age, livelihoods access, income, education, communication/media access, preferences, trust, gender, attitudes and controlling behaviours) to help address the questions in objectives 1 and 2. Exploratory factor analysis was used to generate a manageable set of variables and structural questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions. Data collected included the background of respondents' demographics such as age, sex, level of education, income level, type of occupation/trade and marital status. Data was gathered on respondents' access and control of livelihoods resources and source of communication on GBV. In order for the questionnaire administration to succeed, local enumerators from the communities were trained to work with the research assistants. The research assistants and enumerators helped the researcher in the administration of the questionnaires to respondents in their homes and places convenient. For instance, in some homes, the respondents asked that they move outside to sit under a tree or shed. Using this tactic increases the response rate of respondents (Bryman, 2008).

### **3.6 Data collection and fieldwork**

The fieldwork for data collection for this research lasted for eight months. A pilot study was carried out from May to June 2014. The main data collection was then organised in two stages with the first stage lasting from July to September and the second stage from October to December 2014. The fieldwork for the research is summarized in table 1. Also in this subtitle, pre-testing, instruments and methods used for the data collection and participatory group activities are discussed in detail in the following section.

#### **3.6.1 Phases of data collection**

The study involved two stages of field data collection. The first stage comprised the collection of qualitative data from the three case study NGOs, community and opinion leaders, community members, development and media practitioners, government agencies and other NGOs. The preliminary analysis was used to inform the second stage primary data collection process: a survey questionnaire for household data. This was crucial to satisfy the research questions.

**Table 3. 4: Summary of time schedules and phases of data collection**

Period of Activity	Activity	Location
<b>Preparation towards data collection</b>		
April – May 2014	Seeking research clearance, making contacts via emails and phone calls with organisations, community leaders and establishing good relationships with individuals in the study	Tamale, Bolga, Wa, Sagnarigu, Fuo, Zanlerigu, Sakote, Zambogu, Janguasi and Accra.
<b>Pilot study</b>		
May – June 2014	Pre-testing of FGDs and KII interview guides	Sagnarigu, Bolga and Wa
<b>First phase data collection</b>		
July 2014	Training of research assistants	Tamale
July – August 2014	Focus group discussions with 6 groups Key informant interviews with 4 of GDCA staff Key informant interviews with community and opinion leaders and media practitioners	Tamale, Fuo and Sagnarigu
August 2014	Focus groups discussions with 6 groups Key informant interviews with 2 ProNet staff Key informant interviews with community and opinion leaders and media practitioners	Wa, Zambogu and Janguasi
September 2014	Focus groups discussions with 6 groups Key informant interviews with 3 WOM staff Key informant interviews with community and opinion leaders and media practitioners	Bolga, Zanlerigu and Sakote
September 2014	Sought ethical clearance from the University of Reading for the second stage collection of quantitative data	Reading
September 2014 January 2015	Key informant interviews with government agencies staff (DOVVSU, CHRAJ, Gender Department, Social Welfare, NCCE, District Assemblies) Newspaper selection for content analysis	In all research locations and in Accra, the capital of Ghana
<b>Second phase data collection</b>		
October – December 2014	Administration of questionnaires to people in communities	Sagnarigu, Fuo, Zanlerigu, Sakote, Zambogu and Janguasi

### **3.6.2 Instruments used for data collection**

Sproull, (1988) explains that data collection instruments/tools are “any type of written or physical means used in measuring variables”. Thus, this research employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools. The blend of these two main methods in data gathering is recognised as “triangulation” (Sarantakos, 1993). Accordingly, the researcher triangulated the data for the purpose of complementarity (Pring, 2000) and achieved a high degree of validation of the research results (Sarantakos, 1993). The qualitative data was gathered by use of focus group discussions and key informant’s interviews, while the quantitative data was collected by using questionnaires. Sproull (1988) expounded that the selection of a particular data collection tool is dependent on the methodology chosen and the type of data to be collected in a particular study. Sproull outlines the factors that bring to bear on the choice of research instruments: an appropriate measurement of variables must be sufficiently valid and reliable, must yield the appropriate level of measurement for each variable, requires an appreciable amount of time, must be easy to acquire a response, must be easy to administer; should be easy to interpret and incur costs within researcher’s budget.

### **3.6.3 Pretesting**

It should be highlighted here that the data collection instruments - Focus groups discussion guides, key informant interview guide and questionnaires were pre-tested beforehand. This exercise was useful because it helped the research resolve technical problems relating to the instruments (Sarantakos, 1993). It is intimate that the pre-testing of research instruments also guides the researcher in gathering the right responses from the research participants by asking appropriate questions (Silverman, 2010). This exercise further offered the researcher the opportunity to assess and ensure that respondents understood questions clearly and could answer them correctly (Moser and Kalton, 1971). The pre-testing exercise which was carried out by the researcher alone, took place in Kalpohine in the Sagnarigu district, Nongodi in the Nabdum and Kaleo in the Kaleo districts. It should be noted that these communities were not part of the study communities but possess similar characteristics as the study communities. In the process of pre-testing in the communities, the respondents were encouraged to notice the pattern of questions and wording in order to identify any misunderstanding and/or inappropriateness of certain questions which required rewording or deletion. At the end of the pre-test issues identified and highlighted by pre-test

respondents were addressed and the questionnaire reshaped accordingly. In the process, the researcher also observed certain mistakes and inappropriateness. These irregularities were also revised to suit research objectives. For instance, where the word “gender” was used, they related it only to women, so this was replaced with “men and women” for easy understanding.

### **3.7 Management of data and analysis**

The different methods used for collecting and documenting data for this study has been previously discussed. This section discusses ways the researcher employed to organise and manage the data. It also describes the process of analysing the data.

#### **3.7.1 Data management**

Several publications, (such as Baxter and Jack, 2008; Yin, 2003; Stake, 1995) have explained that the careful handling of data is critical to any research endeavour. More so in a case study approach, where rigour is involved throughout the data collection process. Because of this assertion, the researcher ensured that the qualitative data gathered through focus group discussions and key informant interviews were appropriately recorded with two digital recorders and transcribed verbatim. This was done to avoid loss of data in case of failure by one recorder. The researcher and three research assistants noted down observations and informal discussions as notes throughout the data collection period. This was to triangulate the records. The researcher used a digital camera to take photos of participants in different data collection activities.

The data collected constituted demographic characteristics of research respondents, questionnaire responses on power relations, scope of GBV, sources and access to information about GBV, reports of interventions, communication policy documents, and audio records from key informant interviews and focus group discussions. All the forms of data were identified with gender of respondents, social position of key informants, study location, and interventions examined in the study.

### **3.7.2 Qualitative data analysis**

The research used an online software called Dedoose 8.0.31 to sort, organise and manage the data collected through the focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The study locations and categories of research respondents were the basis for sorting the data collected for the study. The researcher opened files relating to each type of data because each source was an independent entity managed in its own file to ensure independent analysis of views for each category of research respondents. The files for the data from each study location was placed in one folder bearing the name for the particular location and save in a word document. The online Dedoose software was used to create project units for each study location. The researcher then exported the data from the various files and folders into the Dedoose 8.0.31 software. All data relating to a specific study location was termed “project”. Thus, the name of the study location was assigned to a corresponding project. The projects were pools of data for each study location maintained with the Dedoose 8.0.31 software.

The next step engaged thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998) to describe and interpret the data collected for the study. The analysis involved developing code and themes (Roling and Engel, 1990). The process was necessary because of the nature of data generated from the focus groups discussions and the key informants’ interviews, which were in the form of narratives by the research respondents. This was followed by the creation of nodes inductively from the transcripts by reading texts for several time. The research focus informed the process for the development of the nodes and applied to all the data generated from research respondents of the different categories in all the study locations. The researcher applied nodes to each transcript in a project and then used the nodes to compare segments of data from different sources within a project and among the Dedoose 8.0.13 projects.

The content analysis of the newspaper involved the process of the researcher reading through each of the 139 articles contained in the two newspapers to identify which articles carried GBV stories. Based on the initial read through, codes were generated to assist in finding stories related to GBV. So, articles that contained words or themes such as domestic violence, forced marriage, abuse, FGM, victims of abuse, perpetrators, sexual abuse, physical abuse, violence, human right abuse, violation of human rights, gender-based violence, violence against women, property grabbing, and rape, defilement, child trafficking

and widowhood rites were considered as GBV related news stories. In the end, the daily newspaper out of the 99 news articles had only 25 news stories representing 25% related to GBV, while the spectator newspaper had 5 representing 13% GBV stories out of the 40 articles published between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 respectively.

The triangulation of the data was an iterative process. It involved classifying key themes from the main data sources and ensuring thematic consistency. In discussing findings data from focus group discussions were triangulated with that from Key Informant Interviews and basic quantitative data generated from the use of the questionnaire.

### **3.7.3 Quantitative data analysis**

The quantitative data were processed and analysed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The researcher, with the assistance of the thesis supervisor and colleagues, handled the data entry, cleaning and assessment as well as conducting the analysis. All missing values were left untouched throughout the processing of the data, and there was no rejection of any completed questionnaire during the analysis. The process of data analysis was completed in the following order: all the data variables were coded with measurements clearly defined as nominal, ordinal and scale; the data was then analysed in the form of descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages and means, and presented in the form of tables and charts; Cross-tabulations were run to show significant chi-square associations between independent and dependent variables and were used to determine communication sources, preferences and trust, predictors of gender-unequal power relationship and GBV. The questions with open-ended responses were tabulated and discussed. All these are captured and presented in detail in the ensuing result chapters.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability**

To ensure the reliability and validity of this research, triangulation was employed. Triangulation involves using more than one approach in investigating a research subject to increase confidence in the resulting findings (Bryman, 2008, 2012). Bryman explains that with the idea of triangulation highly linked with measurement practices within social and behavioural research, the underlying thinking is that since much of social research is based on one research method and very likely to suffer from the shortcomings linked with that method or the exclusive use of it, triangulation presents the possibility of greater confidence.

This is why several methods were employed to elicit data from case study NGOs and their stakeholders at multiple levels. To ensure proper application of this method, literature on similar studies that have used mixed methodologies was used as a guide to understand how variables are measured, the units and tools used for the measurements. This review informed the researcher on how to use relevant variables, measurements, data gathering instruments and procedures to ensure reliability and validity for the study. Separate meetings were held with the case study NGOs, and all focus group participants in the study area to give feedback on data collected. These feedback sessions helped to validate research participants' contributions and enhanced the reliability of the data.

### **3.9 Ethical issues**

Ethical consideration in social research is crucial because it borders on matters of principled sensitivity to the rights of others in the research exercise (Bulmer, 2008). For this reason, firstly, the researcher according to the research regulations of the University of Reading sought ethical clearance from the university's authorities before going to Ghana for the fieldwork. Secondly, the researcher made sure that people were asked about their perceptions and experiences of communication on GBV and not about their own experiences of GBV. The researcher, in consultation with the case study NGOs, selected the research participants so as to minimize exposing participants to any risk. It also ensured that all research participants' confidentiality and/or anonymity was protected by letting them know that they had the right, at any time in the process of the research, to withdraw their participation and information they had given. As such, data collected from participants was not coded using individual names. All research assistants and local enumerators were trained and signed a confidentiality policy. The participants, who were all adults over the age of 18 years, were asked to give verbal consent for participation (see Ethical clearance in Appendix 5).

#### **3.9.1 Risk management**

The conduct of a study on an emotionally sensitive issues such as gender-based violence communication, calls for prior reflection and preparation of strategies to be put in place to curb incidents of emotional outburst and ensure the security of research respondents. Within the scope of ethical principles, and also in order to avoid undermining data quality, the study proposed taken steps to do the following:

- Protect the emotional well-being of respondents (some participants could be victims)
- Protect the emotional well-being of the research team
- Protect the safety of interviewees and interviewers

Based on the above, it is recognised that the emotional well-being of participants was imperative and that in situations of emotional outbursts, if uncontrolled, these could have far-reaching ramifications on the integrity of the participants and the researchers. For instance, during the process of a focus group discussion in Zanlerigu, a young woman and her two children who were abandoned by her husband for 5 years without any tangible reason, burst out with a very loud cry and said “madam, please I want you to take me to Bolgatanga to ask for the wrong I and my children did and he drove us away. He cut my education short when I was in Technical school 2nd year and he impregnated me against my parents will... now my parents and my husband abandoned me....”. Because the research team were aware of such things cropping up, we quickly gave her emotional support to claim her down. Later she was directed to a counsellor in Bolgatanga for help.

The researcher organised training for the field workers to provide emotional support for team members because discussions might unearth undesirable images of violence that were forgotten by participants. The team was also sensitized on issues of GBV and trained to handle emotionally unstable participants during interviews and discussions. They were also taught the use of interview techniques and guides to elicit the desired information from the research participants without asking about personal experiences of GBV. Issues of gender power relationships and hierarchies during interviews were monitored to ensure a conducive atmosphere during mixed group discussion.

### **3.10 Research limitations**

Any worthwhile endeavour such as research of this nature has its own positives and negatives. However, on the whole, this research journey was to a large extent very smooth though it met a few challenges. One such challenge the researcher faced was the difficulty in meeting with the case study NGOs directors/managers/staff to discuss and schedule a date for the research activities in their offices and in the communities. Either they had travelled on other assignments, were on leave or elsewhere. These situations resulted in the researcher sometimes travelling two or three times to a district where the NGO is located before meetings were held. Related to this was also the issue of some of the government institutions

and other NGOs staff and specialists that were needed to provide key informant information. The “syndrome” of ‘go and come later’ was experienced in some of these institutions. This attitude in many cases delayed the interview schedule and in a few cases dates had to be rescheduled for interviews. However, the researcher was able to adopt a strategy to overcome these problems. Instead of travelling to the institution as scheduled, the researcher first made a call to the institution and to the particular person needed for the interview for confirmation before setting out.

Another challenge was that the majority of the research subjects were illiterate, and for this reason, the survey questionnaires had to be interpreted for the respondents before they could respond. The language barrier was also an issue the researcher had to deal with during the data collection period. As discussed in subtitle 3.4. Northern Ghana comprises several language groups and although the researcher hails from the area and can speak and understand a good number of the languages spoken, she is still limited. Hence, the researcher could not understand Dagaare a language spoken by the Nadowli-Kaleo district communities and Nabit language spoken by the Nabdam district communities. To forestall these challenges, the researcher recruited and trained assistants from the areas who could understand and speak their languages well and interpret during discussions and in the administration of the questionnaires. Similarly, questions that were to be answered using Likert scales posed a challenge because some of the participants could not see the difference between agree, strongly agree, disagree and strongly disagree. However, as a result of the training given to research assistants on how to deal with such problems using simple phrases and locally appropriate illustrations, this problem was surmounted.

Also, important was the timing of the data collection in the field. Some of the study activities coincided with the peak farming season and as most of the respondents were dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods, they were busy with farming activities. This made accessibility to some of the respondents difficult. This challenge was addressed in some communities by altering the original time scheduled and meetings held earlier in the morning – 6 am to 8 am. After which respondents could go to their farms if they wished. In other communities, it was the reverse, respondents went to their farms and came back late in the evening for research activities.

Last but not the least; the researcher was constrained by financial resources, as this research did not receive any funding grant. This limited the research coverage and representativeness and as a result the general nature of the findings. However, the researcher addressed this problem by adopting a mixed method approach and designed research around case studies. So, the results, even though not generalised, are valid and reliable and could be replicated elsewhere.

### **3.11 Chapter Summary**

The researcher conducted this study with three NGOs in three districts of Northern Ghana. The study employed a mixed method approach involving 176 households for the quantitative data; 18 FGDs and 68 KIIs for the qualitative data. A case study design was used in the context of social constructivist and positivist epistemologies. The data collection and fieldwork, sampling procedures and the methods and instruments used have been individually discussed in this chapter. Finally, the management of both quantitative and qualitative data and systematic analyses, validity and reliability, ethical issues and research risk management strategy for research on GBV and communication were also discussed in detail. It is therefore hoped that with this systematic methodological approach and procedures, the study can be replicated. The next chapter presents the first empirical findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: GENDER POWER RELATIONSHIPS AND INEQUALITY IN NORTHERN GHANA.**

### **4.1 Introduction**

As outlined in the conceptual framework for this study (section 2.10), this chapter is about gendered power relations between women and men in Ghana, specifically in Sagnarigu, Nabdam and Nadowli districts all of Northern Ghana where this study was located. This was considered important because the socio-cultural constructs and ideologies about gender and power are the moderating factors in the lives of women in relation to men. The chapter, therefore, provides vital context within which the issue of gender-based violence against women and girls in the study location will be examined later. The findings suggested gender relationships in the study location, like many other societies, are subjective and skewed to the advantage of men. This was found to result from the patriarchal and patrilineal systems inherent in the study area, where gender division of labour and unequal power distribution between genders seem to force women and girls into a lower status both in the private and public arenas. This consequently leaves women and girls with limited access to livelihood choice, lack of voice and space and agency thereby making most women in the study area over-dependent on their male counterparts for survival.

Section 4.2. discusses the social dynamics of gender relationships. It does so by generally examining the concepts of gender and power as not biologically given, but as socio-cultural ideologies that are rooted in a given society. Section 4.3. explores the nature of gender relationships. It details how socially ascribed gender roles and responsibilities for women and men define their identities, agency and status relative to each other in society. Additionally, it explains how socio-cultural differentiation of division of labour creates relationships of most males' domination over women and how the gender socialisation processes (re)enforce unequal power relationships between women and men in the study location. Gendered perceptions of women in relation to how men perceive women and how women construct themselves relative to men in their gendered relationships are examined in section 4.4. Similarly, section 4.5 deals with the manifestation and exercise of power and power differentials between women and men explains how this ultimately translates in unequal power and is a source of socio-political, economic and educational inequality in gendered relationships in the study area. The chapter then concludes with a summary of key

findings in section 4.6. The discussion in this chapter was based on the results drawn from eighteen focus group discussions, sixty-eight key informant interviews, responses from one hundred and seventy-six questionnaire interviews across six communities in three districts – Sagnarigu, Nabdum and Nadowli/Kaleo, all of Northern Ghana.

## **4.2 Social Dynamics of Gender Relationships**

This section attempts to provide an explanation of the concepts of gender and power to help understand the dynamic nature of gender relations of unequal power and inequality between women and men drawn mainly from literature. Early writers, such as Tiger & Fox (1974) had assumed that gender division is based on underlying innate biological differences in traits, characteristics and temperaments of males and females. However, recent literature (e.g. Russo and Pirlott, 2006; Martin, 2004; Risman, 2004; Burke and Stets, 2006; Gupta, 2000) have explained that gender is a social-cultural construct that differentiates women from men and prescribes the way in which women/girls and men/boys should behave and interact with each other, and are deeply rooted in society.

These culture-specific constructs of gender are associated with the significant differences in what women and men can do, or not do, as compared to one another. Significantly and consistent across cultures, there is always a distinction between women's and men's roles, access to important livelihoods and household resources and decision-making power, which have implications for both women and men in their gendered relationships (Gupta, 2000:1). Similarly, Hart (1996) refers to gender as a social construction created and maintained between men and women and not a fixed quality that one is born with. Additionally, the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' are seen not as belonging to either men or women respectively, but as formed in the relationships between them.

Gender is also most often misconstrued to mean women-related issues because its practical impact differs in culture, values, opinions and identity in different societies (Wood, 2012; Bennett, 2004; Gupta, 2000). Such misconceptions have made gender a complex concept to explain. Gender portrays the distinctive pattern of ideas, beliefs and norms that shape the way of life and relations of males and females as groups in a society (Wood, 2012; Russo and Pirlott, 2006). It takes into consideration the economic, political, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being a male or female. In other words, gender

defines the roles, behaviours, activities, attributes and responsibilities of males and females in any given society as culture perceives as appropriate for women and men, girls and boys to perform. These socio-cultural attributions are not constant, but rather dynamic and changeable over time, due to culture acculturation (Toomey et al., 2015) and assimilation (Maliapaard and Alba, 2016). Thus, gender is conceptualized as relational and perceived as both an analytical category and a social process (Shields, 2008). The relational aspect of gender is a social construct and often unequal and subject to change (Wood, 2012; FAO-Dimitra, 2011). Gender is constituted by rules, customs, norms and practices by which resources are allocated; tasks and responsibilities are assigned to males or females within the society and depend on how value is given and power mobilized.

According to an informant<sup>9</sup>

*“Over the years, our society has come to ascribe the roles of men and women. These are socially constructed roles and responsibilities, attributes, personality traits, attitudes, behaviour, values and relative power that influence society, and are considered appropriate and complimentary for men and women”*

This statement implies that gender is not just about women, rather, it is about the structural relationship between men and women as perceived by society; and the means by which society differentiates between men and women through the allocation of roles and norms. In other words, gender is not biologically given; neither does it refer to sex, but is means of understanding how society operates through the study of the negotiation of power relationships and influence between men and women in the context of a society (Bennett 2004; Wood 2012; O’ Sullivan et al, 2006; Oakley, 1982; Podems, 2010; Gupta, 2000). Over time, gender roles have changed, nevertheless, gender is used as a benchmark to determine access and power, and is the rubric under which inequality is justified and maintained (Caprioli, 2005). It is within this context that this study discusses gender relationships in the study area.

Power mobilization is an element of socially constructed value attached to a male or female. As society portrays, through history, power holders exert some form of authority, control, influence, and domination over subordinates, thereby influencing decisions in his or her favour, and even ensuring resistance to change from the support of other members of a society (Murthy, 1998; Kabeer, 1994a). From Kabeer (1994), power manifests itself through

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with a development practitioner, Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), Tamale, 2014.

three main processes: “power-to”, “power-over” and “power-within”. The exercise of this power is not limited to decision-making processes, but is also used to intimidate and prevent the marginalized from raising issues and practices which are hostile to their social, economic and political welfare; which directly or indirectly will affect the so-called power-holders from taking dominance. It is imperative to state that such exercise of power also exists within gender relations, where the relationship between male and female is signified by the subordination and domination of a gender.

In Northern Ghana as in many other societies, gender relations are subjective, based on ethnic origin, age, religion, marital status, traditions, ideologies, societal perceptions as well as socio-cultural and socio-economic conditions (Danso et al., 2004). By this, gender relations are taken to mean the way in which a culture or society defines rights, responsibilities and the identities of men and women in relation to one another. Thus, gender and power are social constructs, and analysing the relationship that exists between them will help explain socially constructed variables that help perpetuate gender inequalities within the Northern Ghana.

#### **4.3 Nature of Gender Relationships in Northern Ghana**

Having understood the dynamics of gender power relationships between women and men in general, this section specifically examines gendered relationships between women and men in the study area by using data gathered from focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). It has been argued that, historically, society has paved the way for certain kinds of relationships to exist between males and females, from childbirth through socialization (Thanem and Wallenberg, 2016; Wood, 2012; Chege, 2005; Bjastad, 2008 West and Zimmerman, 1987, 2009). Basically, the relationship that exists within the society among male and female is determined by the extent to which power and authority are exercised. Studies reviewed (e.g. Sen and Ostin, 2007; Gupta, 2000; Agarwal, 1997; Flax, 1987; Gerson and Peiss, 1985) give credence to the fact that relationships that exist between male and female are predominantly determined by the relationship of power.

The whole ideology of power influencing the kind of relationship between male and female becomes a complex social phenomenon because, irrespective of status, structure and recognition, there is some form of socially constructed supremacy and subordination. These

complex social relations impinge on the agency of women and men in multiple ways and are an embodiment of the material and ideological spheres. They are made manifest and revealed through the division of labour and the redistribution of resources between women and men. They also include the ideas and representations that ascribe different abilities, attitudes, desires, personality traits, behaviour patterns among others in people's daily lives. This holistic ideology of gender relations captures the multifaceted set of socially constructed relationships between men and women within the Ghanaian society and specifically that of the Northern part of Ghana. The finding from FGDs<sup>10</sup>, KIIs<sup>11</sup> and documents reviews indicated that gender relationships are skewed to the advantage of men. For clarity of analysis, key themes have been drawn and discussed in the following sub-sections.

#### **4.3.1 Roles and responsibilities**

Gupta (2000) notes that men are often seen as being responsible for the productive activities outside the home while women are expected to be responsible for childbearing and some productive activities within the private sphere. Table 4.1 shows results from FGDs<sup>12</sup> roles performed by males and female in the study location.

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<sup>10</sup> Discussion meetings with 6 males only groups, 6 females only groups and 6 females and male (mixed) groups across 6 communities in the Sagnarigu, Nabdram and Nadowli/Kaleo districts.

<sup>11</sup> Key informant interviews with 8 community leaders, 5 DOVVSU officers, 3 Welfare department officers, 2 NCCE officers, 4 gender department officers, 3 NGO development practitioners, 6 CHRAJ officers and 9 media practitioners.

<sup>12</sup> Group activity with 6 males only groups, 6 females only groups and 6 females and male (mixed) groups across 6 communities in the Sagnarigu, Nabdram and Nadowli/Kaleo districts.

**Table 4. 1: Gender roles and responsibilities played by men and women by districts**

Male roles and responsibilities	Districts		
	Sagnarigu	Nabdam	Nadowli/ Kaleo
Head of family (wives, children and family members)	X	X	X
Provide food and shelter for family (breadwinner).	X	X	X
Rearing of animals (cattle, sheep, goat, etc)	X	X	X
Constructions of house	X		X
Provision security, protection and health of family	X	X	
Decision making	X	X	X
Farming including weeding and ploughing	X	X	X
Performing of funerals of wife(s) parents and relatives	X		
Care of children in absence of wife			X
<b>Female roles and responsibilities</b>			
Cooking	X	X	X
Cleaning of house	X		
Witchcraft	X		
Sexual duty to husband	X		X
Child bearing (reproduction)	X	X	X
Washing bowls		X	X
Washing husband's and children's clothing	X	X	X
Fetching of fuelwood	X		
Bathing of children	X	X	X
Supporting husband to pay children's school fees	X		
Helping husband on the farm	X		
Fetching water for household use	X	X	X
Cultivation of vegetables for household use		X	
Rearing of small animals (poultry fowls, pigs, etc)			X
Preparing food and care of visitors	X		X
Maintenance of house		X	
Take care of men and children			X

Source: Fieldwork data collected from FGDs across the three districts, 2014.

Consistent with Gupta's study, findings from FGDs and KIIs across the districts reveal that the roles and responsibilities of men include but are not limited to being head of the family, breadwinners, providing shelter and farming while women are in charge of domestic chores, such as cooking, sweeping, gathering firewood and caring for children.

According to an informant<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Interview with DOVVSU officer, Bolga, 2014.

*“Gender role here for the man is to work and provide for housing, home upkeep – chop money, discipline at the family level, the man is to lead.  
(DOVVSU, KII, 2014).*

Another informant also said this about women<sup>14</sup>

*“Traditionally, the role of the women is in the kitchen and to keep the house in order and to keep associates to their husbands and extended family”*

Again, the data gathered from FGDs<sup>15</sup> and KIIs<sup>16</sup> in the study area indicated that all the study districts shared similar gender relationship attitudes, practices, roles and responsibilities. This is due to the practice of a patriarchal system, women and men have defined identities, agency and status, through the roles assigned to them by society. These patriarchal structures (formal and informal) and gender roles, were seen to force women and girls in most of the communities within the study area, to be socio-culturally and economically dependent on men and so become voiceless, which are reasons for their subordination and low status in society. This is confirmed by Bennett (2004), through his study titled; “three distinguished ways gender can be approached”. First, as a binary subject where male and female have different personalities. The male being the head or top of the family, whilst the female is at the bottom and not supposed to be seen or heard. The second shows the power difference between genders.

This is where the male takes and makes decisions, has the authority to request, makes demands, exerts pressure and controls resources within the family. The third is where social stratification separates the male from female by defining who needs to be seen and heard. As explained above, women within the study area should not be seen, or at least, not heard when decisions are being made, or during meetings. For instance, in the Nabdam and Nadowli/Kaleo districts, the FGDs female respondents reported that it was men who make decisions and inform women. They explained that culturally, the woman was seen as a stranger in her father’s home so would not be allowed to be present in critical family meetings where decisions are made, for fear that when she marries she might leak family

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with CHRAJ officer, Tamale, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Group activity with males only (6), Females only (6) and mixed (6) groups in 6 communities across the three districts, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> Interviews with 4 CHRAJ officers, 2 Social Welfare officers, 3 DOVVSU officers, 2 Gender officers, 7 development practitioners, 1 NCCE officer and 8 community leaders.

secrets. On the other hand, a woman in her matrimonial home is considered a stranger and not supposed to be part of family discussions for same reasons of fear and lack of trust. The female respondents reported that even in situations where a woman is found in the midst of men, you are to be silent and listen to proceedings but may not talk or argue your case or view.

Hence, both male and female respondents reported that those women who are brave or assertive enough to raise their voices in the midst of men in the family or community are often branded “suaya” meaning witches or given names such as “Poa doo”, “Poa dede” meaning women-man and straight strong women in the Mampruli language. Consequently, the socially prescribed roles and responsibilities assigned to women and men become a cause and consequence of gender unequal power relationship in the study area. This finding supports WHO (2014), Cooper, Paluck and Fletcher (2013), Heise (2011) George (2006), Strelbel et al (2006) and Lenton (1995) assertion that gender roles and norms create structures that grant a male the right to control female behaviour and limit women’s power in public and private places. This is so because there are significant differences in what women and men can or cannot do in one culture as compared to another.

#### **4.3.2 Dominance and subordination**

Abankwa and Abebe (2011) have indicated that married women in rural Ghana, especially the three Northern regions, are customarily required to give a helping hand to their husbands in farms, however, the yield belongs to the men who have control over the farm income. Furthermore, women are the primary source of agricultural labour throughout Africa (Brown and Kuenyehia, 2003). Domestic chores, which are deemed the main roles of women are not considered significant. Similarly, in South Africa, Morag (2012) observed that the male is the provider and holds the power while the women are more submissive nurturers.

Consistent with these previous studies, a key informant noted<sup>17</sup>

*“Gender relationships have historically been one of dominance by the male gender”*

Another informant opined that<sup>18</sup>

*“if you want to talk about gender relationships in the northern region is one [region] I can best describe as a master-servant relationship”*

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with development practitioner, ProNet North, Wa, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with government department staff, NCCE, Tamale, 2014.

By these assertions, male and female social relations are shown through the exercise of social power and control where each gender is supposed to operate within its socially constructed dominance of power. Women within the Northern part of Ghana are perceived as being vulnerable and marginalized because they lack recognition during decision making. Most men are seen to be the decision makers, the head of the family and with the power to preside over all activities within the society. It can be deduced from the quotes of the informants that due to the existence of a patriarchal system, where ownership and inheritance are attributed to the male side of a family, greatly influence women's subordination in decision making. In fact, in the Nabdram district, both the male and female FGDs<sup>19</sup> respondents reported that in their communities women cannot just get up to do anything without the consent of the husband or male in the family. They must seek permission before doing anything.

In particular, the male respondents<sup>20</sup> reported that a woman cannot just say this animal or asset is mine, as it is the man who brought the woman to the house and so must acknowledge the man in whatever she does. On the other hand, men do not need to inform women of what they do. The gender relations in the study area place women at the bottom of the workforce even though they perform more duties than their male counterparts. As is evident from the data gathered, men appropriate all the work done by women, this is also a form of patriarchal control (Delphy, 1984, Hartmann 1974; Meis 1986). This example of gender relationships place women at the bottom of a society, as patriarchy seeks to do, with men always in control and with no value is placed on the work women do. Additionally, the gender relations in the study area reinforce the subordination of women, which is the resulting factor of male dominance. As seen in the first quote, instead of women being treated as companions or partners in marriage, they are rather treated as servants to their husbands.

Moreover, this pattern of male domination is also reflected in the patrilineal system of inheritance practised in all Northern Ghana society. With this system, the male gender assumes a dominant position in the family or home and even in the public arena. During the data collection process, the researcher observed a boy say<sup>21</sup>:

*“...you people - the sisters- will get married and leave our home”*

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<sup>19</sup> Group Activity with FGDs group 7, 8, 9 10, 11 and 12 in the Sakote and Zanlerigu communities, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Group Activity with male only FGDs group 8, 10, and 12 in Sakote and Zanlerigu communities, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Researcher's personal observation in Sakote, 2014.

Probably inferring that his sisters are not entitled to any inheritance because he (a boy) will inherit his parents' house. This brings into perspective the operationalization of the patrilineal system in the North and how women are subdued to serve and are treated with no respect, even in their own family house by their brothers<sup>22 23</sup>. Under this system, the male agency is socialized and given the space to dominate in female/male relationships, inherit the parent's belongings, with the female denied such (Awumbila, 2003). Inheritance in Northern Ghana is generally patrilineal, whereby rights to property remain with male children who inherit from their fathers. Likewise, marital residence is patrilocal and therefore a woman embraces her husband's home as her new familial home (Awumbila, 2003;89) which also has implications for women.

#### **4.3.3 Gender Socialization Process**

As observed in literature, "socialisation is the process, through which the child becomes an individual respecting his or her environment's laws, norms and customs" (Vuorinen and Tuunala, 1997:45; Crespi, 2003:4). This socialisation is generally accepted as the process through which the culture, tradition, values, norms, roles, expectations and attitudes are passed on from generation to generation (Rossi, 2000: 1998; Beal, 1994). These social processes are greatly influenced by the differences that define men and women, consequently, the social interactions throughout people's lives; individuals learn what is expected, see what is expected, act and react in expected ways and thus simultaneously construct and maintain the gender order (Lorber, 1995). Giddens (1993: 165) asserts that gender socialisation is a more focused form of socialisation, it is how children of different sexes are socialised into their gender roles and taught how to be male or female (Carter, 2014; Morris, 1988:366).

Thus, women and men's society tend to exist in a different socio-cultural setting concerning the way in which they experience their situations in terms of roles and responsibilities; attitude and behaviour; function and power; education and wealth. The difference in socio-cultural setting, between male and female (man or woman), is caused by socialization thus "*the way we are, behave and think, are the final product of socialization*" (Crespi, 2004:1). The finding from FGDs and KIIs indicated it is through the environment (immediate surrounding) the females and males learn how to perform their sex roles. The respondent

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with WOM founder in Bolga

<sup>23</sup> Interview with a women's leader in Zanlerigu

explained that as children grow up in a particular society s/he begins to learn how to behave and perform duties that seem appropriate to the people and social institutions around them through observation and participation. This was emphasised by respondents<sup>24</sup> in the Nabdam district. They indicated that it is the environment that teaches women and men how to perform their respective roles. Specifically, they said<sup>25</sup>

*“You grow up with what the environment teaches you. If you come to my house or my mates see me washing the clothes of my wife and children, the environment will ultimately disapprove and shame me.” [Assimilation]*

The ultimate outcome is that the minority/few members go through some form of admonishment and systematic pressures in responses to overt behaviour and rather adopt, conform or adjust to the societal cherished values, customs and behaviour. It is the society and tradition that form their collective experience, which defines which roles, responsibilities, obligations or status prescribed respectively to female and the male. Society ensures that the process of learning the first culture is provided in order for members to form the right cultural perspectives, ideologies and roles. Also, communities within the study area want its members to form the right societal identity and cultural maturity so that it will reflect asymmetrically in the socially constructed gender division of labour. This perception was held by most of the FGDs respondents and was even stronger in the Nadowli/Kaleo district, where the respondents reported that there were no equal roles for male and female. A female respondent stated<sup>26</sup>

*“On how we learn our roles, as I am married, if I give birth to a boy, at 6 years, if I ask the boy to sweep, the father will insist that he is not a girl. So the father teaches the boy to take care of animals (productive) while woman teaches the girls to cook and sweep” (unproductive).*

From this quote, it is possible to deduce that adult members of the society work to ensure that boys and girls are socialized to form this socio-culturally ideal and to see unequal relations between males and females as the accepted norm.

As other studies suggest, this is reflective of unequal power relations that exists between women and men in Africa (Takyi and Lamptey, 2016; Tenkorang, et al., 2013; Amoakohene, 2004). Particularly, females in Ghana are socialized to believe that men are superior, and accept chastisement should they transgress their socially prescribed gender roles (Tenkorang

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<sup>24</sup> Group activity with FGDs group 7, 8, and 9 in Zanlerigu community, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with government department CHRAJ officer, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Group Activity with FGDs group 14, female participant in Zambogu community, 2014.

and Owusu, 2013; Takyi and Lamptey, 2016). Moreover, previous studies (Wood, 2012; Jewkes and Norrell, 2010; Steans 2006; Chege, 2005; Ampofo, 2001) posit that the division of gender roles and responsibilities are made clear to males and females from an early age and reinforced by verbal admonishments. The revelations from this study corresponds with the above writers' views, since the respondents corroborated that children, from an early age, are told their respective roles as males and females by their parents, including adult members in society

*“What women /girls or men/boys are supposed to do is learned from parents, and, tradition and customs have ascribed roles for children at birth<sup>27</sup> “*

This means that right from the onset of childhood and adolescents, prescribed roles and responsibilities are assigned to females: fetching of water, sweeping, washing and cooking; while males are assigned: farming, rearing of farm animals, and taking decisions. These prescribed roles further re-echo the gendered labour roles and responsibilities.

Feminist and other scholars suggest that gender socialization is made possible through the agencies and agents of socialization (Carter, 2014; Steans, 2006, Leach and Humphrey, 2007). As other societies and in the study area, these agencies are basically institutions such as the family, religion, school, media, peers and chieftaincy whilst the agents are the units such as parents, pastors, Imams, teachers, chiefs (Steans, 2006, Leach and Humphrey, 2007). These agencies and agents of socialization, prescribe the various gender roles and codes of conduct for both genders to perform. Put differently, the different sexes are socialized into their gender roles and taught what it means to be male or female (Morris, 1988; Condry & Condry, 1976; Macrac, Stangor and Hewstone, 1996; Giddens, 1993). These scholars argue that within this context, the socializing institutions that also serve as power structures, socialize to develop masculine ideals of aggression, intelligence, strength, dominance, assertiveness, power and productiveness. While females are socialized into feminine roles that relegate them to the private sphere and male control. The power structures are therefore there to ensure a male ordered environment, that produces unequal power relationships between women and men (Kim et al., 2007; Ellsberg, 2006; Chege, 2005).

The socialization processes were similar across the study districts in Ghana. Findings from the focus group discussions and with informants, indicated that gender roles and norms were

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<sup>27</sup> Group activity with FGDs mixed group 18 in Zambogu community, 2014.

learned from parents. This was captured in the following statements by some of the focus group respondents:

*“Boys start learning how to farm from fathers and girls learn how to cook and wash from mothers”<sup>28</sup>*

*“The boys learn how to rear from our fathers and the girls learn how to cook and wash from their mothers as we all grow”<sup>29</sup>*

Moreover, in Tamale an informant said<sup>30</sup>

*“Right from birth, families give roles to the boys and the girls. They learn from what they see and hear, and this forms the basis for the role differentiation”*

The study observed that the family, whether nuclear or extended, played a significant role in the process of socialization. They transfer, impact and inculcate the family and societal heritage, customs, traditions and roles onto their off-springs. This causes males and females within a family and society, to understand, appreciate and defend the traditions and heritage of the society. This collaborated with studies like (e.g. Rossetto and Tollison, 2017; Hamieh, Usta and Labanon, 2011; Bandura and Bussey, 2004; Harn, 2000) who reported that the family, including parents, are the firstly socialising agents who are involved in encouraging and modelling sex and gender-appropriate behaviours, cultural stereotypes, values and beliefs about self and society for their children. Communities within the study district are typically traditional where the identity of an individual, whether male or female is attributed to one’s family identity and reputation. Therefore, most families endeavour to socialize and consistently remind their members of who they are and what they need to perform (Rossetto and Tollison 2017; Eagly 1987).

*“Children observe from what parents do, following their sex role models<sup>31</sup>”*

These assertions from the focus group respondents, brought to the fore the critical influences family/parents exert in the gender socialization process within and outside the home, since they become the locus of gender socialization.

In addition to the family, the respondents made it known that religion also plays a vital role in the gender socialization.

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<sup>28</sup> Group activity in Zambogu, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Group activity in Sakote, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with development practitioner, GDCA, Tamale, 2014

<sup>31</sup> Group activity in Sagnarigu and Fou, 2014.

An informant said<sup>32</sup>

*“The roles assigned to men and women started with Adam and Eve in the Bible and it is nurtured in us and it is done unconsciously”*

Some of the male focus group respondents noted<sup>33</sup>

*“When a child is born, during naming ceremonies, the faith of the family will determine the kind of religious practice”*

Again,

*“The religion – Christianity, Islam and traditional religions say the man is the head of the family so is that alone that has given the man the superior power”<sup>34</sup>*

The above statements from both FGDs and KIIs respondents suggest that life must be meaningful to the child and members of the society. As a result, the faith or belief of the family/parent and the superstition of the society, become the faith of the child. Although faith and religion are personal, they connote some societal influence on the child’s adherence to religious beliefs (Klomegah, 2008; Connell, 2005; Ushe, 2015). However, Ushe (2015) in the study of “Eradicating Sexual Abuse and Gender Based Violence in Africa and America: Role of Religious Leaders” pointed out that religious leaders who are looked upon have always been a vital tool in eradicating sexual and gender-based violence. Since religion promotes gender equality and peaceful co-existence among members in the society, it will be unwise for anyone to ignore the influence of religious leaders as vital forces for eradicating sexual and Gender Based Violence in Africa and America. As Crespi (2003) argued, societal superstitious, beliefs and taboos provide social cohesion and collective gender identity. Through these societal traditional beliefs and superstitions and rites of passage, females are placed in a sacred environment full of fear whilst these same traditions and rituals lift and raise males above the morass of mere materialistic and carnal satisfaction, to a practical acknowledgement of transcendental absolute (Adinkrah, 2004).

The data from FGDs<sup>35</sup> and KIIs<sup>36</sup> suggests that the socialization process has an enormous impact on children and teenagers in the context of societal and cultural upbringing. The

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with a religious leader in Wa, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Group activity with group 1, 2, 4, 5, 16 15.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with community opinion leader, Bolga, 2014.

<sup>35</sup> Discussions with 6 females only, 6 males only and 6 males and females (mixed) focus groups in 6 communities across the 3 districts.

<sup>36</sup> Interviews with 7 community opinion leaders, 3 CHRAJ officers, 7 NGO staff, 3 DOVVSU officers, 2 Social Welfare officers and 2 Gender department officers.

family, religion, media, school, and peers collectively play important role in the way men and women are socialized within the study area. To reiterate, these agents and agencies of socialization maximize the role of education whether formal or informal, in passing cultural and family heritage and traditions to the younger ones. This ensures the social coherence, continuity and viability of the role and responsibilities society has placed on each gender. Furthermore, it creates the breeding ground for continuous gender inequality and prevalence of male dominance over the female, the consequence of which is the manhandling of most females by the male counterparts.

#### **4.4 Gendered Perceptions in Northern Ghana**

Perception is a psycho-cognitive process through which an individual observes processes, interprets and organizes experiences and events to produce a meaningful world. A person's consciousness or unconsciousness plays an important part in his/her acceptance or otherwise of an event which forms his/her perception process. As Pickens (2005) states, perception is subjective, and may not necessarily correspond to reality. Against this backdrop, the study investigated how men perceived women and how women perceived themselves in gender relationships in Northern Ghana.

##### **4.4.1 Men's Perceptions about Women**

Men's perceptions of women especially in their day to day interactions is a reflection of socialized gendered roles and ideologies enacted by the society (Russo and Pirlott, 2006). It must be noted that gender identities are formed through the socialisation process whereby an individual comes to acquire, value, and assume gender appropriate attitudes and behaviour patterns (Mitchell, Ybarra and Korchmaros, 2014; Chege, 2005). Recognizably, these values and behaviour patterns influence the ways in which men look at, think about and perceive women. In the three districts, respondents<sup>37</sup> in focused group discussions indicated that they perceive women to be inferior and subordinate as paraphrased below:

*“Basically, women are subordinates because, in whatever situation, the man is supposed to dominate in decision making”*

*“When it comes to decision making, what the man says is final. Even though women are more than 50% of the population, men always make the decisions even in matters concerning them to their advantage (Tamale, ActionAid, 2014).”*

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<sup>37</sup> Group activity with FGDs group 1, 4, 11 and 18 in 4 communities, 2014.

*“Women are voiceless, Women are considered as images and seen”*  
(Upper West, KII, 2014).

These statements confirm the perception men have of women. The respondents intimated that men view women as their property and as such occupying subordinate positions within the home and society. It can be deduced that whatever situation women find themselves, the man is supposed to be dominant in whatever decision making and even in pure family matters, women may be excused. It was revealed from the discussion, that there is that tendency to societal dichotomy where the men are the heads and the women the subordinates. To verify this perception, the researcher had a discussion with a key informant (female) in the Nabdam district and she said<sup>38</sup>:

*“Yes, they see the woman to be inferior. We are not their equal”*

Again, informants expressed their view by saying<sup>39</sup>:

*“Men see women as hands in marriage”*

*“They [women] are dowry to be paid for. They are bought into marriage; even in the event the married husband dies, she will extend it to the living brothers of the deceased husband. Because of the dowry, they don't go, they stay<sup>40</sup>”*

*“They are helpers – domestic helpers in cleaning, farming, cooking and washing”<sup>41</sup>*

*“Men see women as helpers in farming and reproduction... women are to do all the housework because we go to ask their hand for marriage<sup>42</sup>”*

It could be observed from these quotes above that women are still viewed as “chattels”: an item of property or commodity to be bought and a price to be paid for within the Northern part of Ghana. This is made possible through the payment of “dowry” which serves as a bride price, which imprisons the woman and seals the marriage between the woman’s family and that of the man, thereby making the woman the property of the man’s family. An item bought cannot be returned or changed: this is the ideology of men about women in terms of marriage. And even upon the death of the beloved husband, this dowry compels the widow

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with WOM fieldworker, Bolga, 2014.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with community chief, Janguasi, 2014

<sup>40</sup> Group activity in group 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 in Sakote and Zanlerigu, 2014.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with an opinion leader in Zanlerigu, 2014.

<sup>42</sup> Group activity with males only group 13, 14, and 15 in Zambogu, 2014.

to marry another male especially the brothers of the deceased husband<sup>43 44</sup>. This is consistent with Kaye (2004) and Bawa (2015) who explain that bride price, or dowry, reduces a woman to the status of an object of trade whenever the need arose, thereby making them vulnerable to the control of men. Considering all the evidence, the perception of men about women is as inferior, domestic helpers, marriage assets and second-class members of the society and this assumption widens the gender inequality gap among males and females in Northern Ghana.

#### 4.4.2 Women's Perception of themselves

From the angle of social relations and socialization processes (e.g. Brittan, 1989), there have been consistent and parallel societal roles, responsibilities and cultural ideologies for females and males, which have created an image of how women perceive themselves because of societal restriction and obligations assigned to them. As evidenced from the focused group discussions among women and men and key informants within the three districts, people indicated that women in the context of their social relationships viewed themselves as occupying the lowest position within the social hierarchy. This was evident from the statement by a female FGD respondent<sup>45</sup> in a mixed group discussion:

*“For a very great majority of us, man must be in the dominant position. Our place is to rally behind them as they take the head position”*

*“We accept that we are nothing. We believe we are whom our husband says we are. Also, we don't do anything on our own except orders from our husbands”<sup>46</sup>*

*“We are suppressed in the society”*

These statements reflect how women perceive themselves. Most women have accepted their subordinate status because of the socially constructed ideals which define men as the heads of the family. Most women in the study area have accepted this status quo because they need protection, acceptance and social respect from their spouse and the society. Alhassan's (2013) study of early marriage of young females in northern Ghana noted that many families in the region perceived marriage as a means of security and protection for women. The

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<sup>43</sup> Interview with WOM development practitioner, Bolga, 2014.

<sup>44</sup> Group activities with FGDs group 7, 10, 11 and 12 in Sakote and Zanlerigu- it should be noted families in the Upper East region, including the study communities, practice the dowry system of marriage and pay at least 4 cows to marry a woman (Bawa, 2012).

<sup>45</sup> Group activity with a mixed FGD group 3 respondent in Fou community, 2014.

<sup>46</sup> Group activity with females group 2 only respondent in Zambogu, 2014

respondents therefore explained that society attaches more importance to married, rather than unmarried women, because they see the married as responsible. However, information from some of the group activities and from most informants confirmed that because of the society's perceived importance of marriage, many men considered women as their property. For instance, some FGDs respondents highlighted<sup>47</sup>:

*“Due to marriage, women are generally seen and perceived as a property of the man and must humble herself to marry to gain respect*

*“A woman is someone who is always suffering”*

*“Women are seen to marry and serve”<sup>48</sup>*

*“Men marry us to help them in the farm work”<sup>49</sup>*

As a result, women tend to accept their subordinate and inferior status as a means of placing some importance and recognition on themselves and that of their family. For instance, in the Nadowli/Kaleo district, the females focus group respondents explained that many women were married not because they chose to, but as it avoids their father's or family name being stigmatised. They also explained that for women, if they left the marriage because of abuse or suffering, they were seen as proud or unfaithful and would find it difficult to remarry in the same community.

Furthermore, women were seen as overburdened, perhaps because of their triple gender role (Moser, 2002). There is considerable evidence within the districts attesting to Moser's (2002) claim. This was demonstrated in a mixed group who said<sup>50</sup>:

*“Cooking for the family, bathing the children and dressing children, bringing firewood from the farm, women after being tired at work will have to allow men for sex”<sup>51</sup>*

This suggests that women within the study area undertake multiple roles of reproduction, production and family management. Across the districts, most of the FGD respondents<sup>52</sup> during discussion explained that it was the responsibility of females to meet and satisfy the sexual needs of their spouses, irrespective of their daily chores. This aspect led to women

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<sup>47</sup> Group activity with FGDs group 4, 7, 10 and 13 in Sagnarigu, Zanlerigu and Janguasi communities, 2014.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with development practitioner, WOM, 2014.

<sup>49</sup> Group activity with FGDs group 16, female respondent in Zambogu, 2014

<sup>50</sup> Group activity with mixed group 3 in Fuo community, 2014.

<sup>51</sup> Group activity with female only group 2 in Janguasi, 2014.

<sup>52</sup> Group activity with FGDs group 3, 5, 7, 8, 10,13 17 and 18 in Fuo, Zanlerigu, Sakote, Zambogu and Janguasi, 2014

seeing themselves as subordinates because they (women) cannot marry more than one but the men can. The man goes to marry the woman; he pays the dowry and performs all the rites and then brings home the woman. In such a cultural marriage system, most women are stuck in marriage even if it was an abusive conjugal relationship (Bawa, 2015). In situations where such women are tired and want to quit marriage, family members would advise against it, those who are bold enough to divorce are stigmatized for being arrogant and disobedient (Tufour, Sato and Niehof, 2016). This is because divorce is not approved under customary law, nor in Ghanaian society in general. Both customary and ordinance marriages suggest and emphasize reconciliation through mediation by family leaders or community and religious leaders (Baden et al., 1994:57). However, while a husband can ask for a divorce on grounds of infidelity, desertion or witchcraft of the wife, the woman is not allowed to divorce a husband on the same grounds. In exceptional cases, such as when a husband is impotent or has deserted a wife, the wife can instigate a divorce (ibid). By implication and irrespective of the responsibilities and power relations exercised within a home, divorce within the Ghanaian cultural settings is seen as women's neglect of their gendered responsibilities. Therefore, divorce within such settings is not seen as an option for a female.

Through the discussions in focus groups and informant interviews, it was found that in production, women's roles make them dependent on men because they farm, weed, sow and harvest for the man while they have no land to farm, cannot sell any of the farm produce without the agreement of the man, while she concurrently performs her household chores. All these multiple roles place women under pressure and stress. Nonetheless, findings from FGDs and KIIs indicate that the circumstance of women and girls was changing as a result of increased female education and economic empowerment. As paraphrased from a mixed FGD discussion<sup>53</sup>:

*“Women have now taken the responsibility of the house; most women provide the food and everything because they are working and engaging in income generation activities”*

This means that women's roles are shifting from purely domestic roles to productive roles that means they are able to contribute to household upkeep. This study also observed that because of the contribution some women now make to the family, they were gradually also taking part in decision making at the household level. This finding corroborates research by

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<sup>53</sup> Group activity with FGD group 9,

George (2006) and Bawa (2015) who found that gender norms were changing and that women were increasingly engaging in economic ventures and taking part in decision making. Bawa (2015) study on Bride price in Ghana, reported that the socio-economic dynamics in recent times have made it difficult for most men to fully play their socially expected “head-of-household” and “breadwinner” roles without support from their wives. This means that women’s contributions to households and family in gradually being recognised.

The persistent pattern in the distribution of power are the immense inequalities between men and women. Women’s perception of themselves in their gendered relationships is not only a cause but also a consequence, instrument and embodiment of power-over relations (Kabeer, 1995). It is a key mechanism through which power does not only act as a constraint, but also constitutes an individual, and is perhaps the most persistent form of ‘invisible powerlessness’ among the females. This can be seen by identifying the problems in the ways in which societies define appropriate masculine and feminine behaviour (Connell, 1987, 2005). Within the context of the study area, what it means to be a woman is to be powerless; it is considered ‘feminine’ to be quiet, reserved, being helpful and servable. By contrast, it is considered manly to exercise power-over women, that is a distinction of power and powerlessness (Adinkrah, 2012; Pulerwitz and Barker, 2008).

As a result of these distinctions, women consequently lack power (Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009; Sathiparsad, 2008). It has been argued that development advocates and practitioners need to understand the role of men and hegemonic masculinity (see details in chapter 2. 5) in gendered power relationships in the planning and implementation of interventions (Sathiparsad, 2008). This is because unequal power relations between women and men significantly reduce women’s access and participation in decision-making (gender-politico inequality). Recognizing these dynamics, the next section discusses women’s voice in their gendered relationships with men. This is based on Russo and Pirlott (2006) and Rudman and Glick’s (1999, 2001) argument that there can be some modifications in the acceptable societal perceived roles, functions, attitudes and power related dominance in decision making in all societal issues and specifically in matters that concern women’s well-being.

#### 4.4.3 Women's Voice

Following the narratives of both males and females focus groups respondents on their perceptions of women (see 4.4.1 and 4.4.2), some reasons were assigned to most women's subordination. The responses from focus group discussions are paraphrased<sup>54</sup>:

*“Most of the women in our society are not well educated and some don't even do not the opportunity to be mother tongue literates. So this has made it difficult for most women in the communities to speak out”*

It was realized that the women within the study area were willing to acquire formal education and wished for their daughters to do same, instead of keeping them in the kitchen as perceived. They also recognized that education is the means to gainful employment and social recognition. This was made known through this quote:

*“We have realized that if you don't have the qualification, the private sector will always like to give those with education or qualification the priority and women fall out of this category”<sup>55</sup>*

Concurrently, as women within the study area are gaining a voice through non-governmental organizations' campaigns against gender inequality and the power within the women to fight such gender segregation, there has been some change in the roles and perceptions about women. An informant explained<sup>56</sup>:

*“The continuous sensitization we and other organizations are doing is bringing changes; men and women now see themselves as partners in development”*

It was gathered from both focus groups and informant interviews that things were changing for the betterment of women in general, because of the presence of some government and non-governmental interventions educating the public on the value of women and girls, and the contribution they can make to their families and communities if empowered and given the chance. For instance, in the Sagnarigu district, the focus discussion groups<sup>57</sup> reported the GDCA and other organization have used radio and workshops to sensitise the public and community and opinion leaders on gender issues. However, across the districts, there was the expression from respondents that such programs were very few and not consistent, and that there was a need for frequent sensitisation because women were still not given recognition.

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<sup>54</sup> Group activities with group 5, 7, 9, 17 in Sagnarigu, Zanlerigu and Janguasi communities, 2014.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with GDCA Gender officer, Tamale, 2014.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with WOM fieldworker, Bolga, 2014.

<sup>57</sup> Group activity with FGDs group 1,2,3, 4, 5, 6 comprising males only, female only and mixed focused discussion in Fuo and Sagnarigu communities, 2014.

#### **4.5 Manifestations of gender relationships of inequality**

As evidenced in women's perception of themselves (4.4.2) and women's voice (4.4.3), the hierarchical relations of power between women and men tend to disadvantage women. As shown in the previous sections, most women and girls are considered male property and are marginalized in decision-making.

In the districts, women are at the bottom of the workforce because of low education and illiteracy, which has reinforced their economic dependency and subordination to men. Moreover, most women and girls are treated as mere caregivers and farm hands for their husbands. Consequently, many women and girls have a stereotypical concept of themselves. They have a feeling of being lower or second-rate to men, are overburdened with domestic and productive responsibilities with less economic rewards and in most cases, trapped in abusive, intimate relationships with men.

Just as in many societies, including the districts under investigation, the findings are suggestive of political, educational and economic inequality between women and men, which tends to work to the advantage of men (Wood, 2012; Kim et al, 2007, 2008, 2009; Chege, 2005; Wingood and DiClemente, 2002). These gendered relationships of inequality have been blamed on social norms and value systems (World Bank, 2012; Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006; Krantz and Garcia-Moreno, 2005; Kelkar and Nathan, 2005). This is because social norms of gender prevent women and girls from participating in key domains of society that define and generate the rules and definition of what is normal; the notion of the normal has been monopolised by men (World Bank, 2012). In the next subsection, the discussion unpacks gender hierarchies which are often accepted as 'natural' (Knudson-Martin, 2013) but they are socially constructed relations, culturally biased, and are subject to change over time (Chege, 2005:117). Gendered power relations in the household and the society can be seen in a range of hierarchical gender relations in the household, gender socialisation and gender stereotype roles (Pearson, Whitehead, & Young, 1984).

##### **4.5.1 Gendered power and power differentials**

Fundamentally, power forms the bases of all human relationships between women and men (Wingood and DiClemente, 2002; Radtack and Stam, 1995). In gender relationships, power defines who has the ability to influence who in order to have the freedom to do what, while restricting the other from exercising it (Wingood and DiClemente, 2002). This power,

therefore, is not conceptualized as an individual property, but relational, belonging to a group or society, and its operationalization depends on the existence of the group as well (Baffour, 2012). Arguably, this power is unequally distributed and underpins gender relationships between women and men in almost all communities in Ghana (Takyi and Lamptey, 2016; Tenkorang, et al., 2013; Amoakohene, 2004). It must, however, be pointed out that gender unequal power relations co-exist with other power relations such as economic, political, social power - and it is the combination of these different axes of power that create the conditions of domination in gendered relationships (Foucault, 1980 as cited in Preece, 2001). In assessing issues of social power, findings from both FGDs and KIIs indicate that men wield more power relative to women in the study districts. Most of the respondents across the districts, reported that within their communities, that men were those with power and authority, both in the family and at the community levels. Specifically, some key informants said<sup>58 59</sup>:

*“I can say that men have more power. Even [when it] comes to the grassroots, who are the Tindanas (earth priest), the chiefs, and who are the political leaders and who are the religious leaders? It is the men!”*

*“You know, power is structurally based on our culture, women agree that the power is in the hands of the men”*

*“It is the men that have the power. Everyone around them seems to look up to them for direction”<sup>60</sup>*

Firstly, from the above quotes, it was observed that the respondents associated power with political and religious leadership. Secondly, power was explained as based on culture, which most women also allude to and lastly, all look to those with power “men” for direction. It has been documented that power issues influence how people validate each other’s worth, and interactions between women and men demonstrate one gender is valuable and may confirm identity (Knudson-Martin, 2013; Greenberg and Goldman, 2008). Thus, the subject of power and its application in gendered relations has been extensively discussed by women and men within the study area to define and delineate the basis of power positions and differentiation between them.

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<sup>58</sup> Interview with CHRAJ officer, Tamale, 2014.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with media practitioner, Saboba, 2014.

<sup>60</sup> Group activity with FGD females group 2 respondent in Fuo community, 2014.

Drawing on literature, the concept of power was understood as being a key factor shaping almost all social relationships including those between women and men (Radtake and Stam, 1995). Based on this concept, this study found it important to understand the sources from which women and men derived their power and how they both exercised this power. The analysed data on sources of power from focus group discussions and informant responses, suggested that sources of gender power are diverse. This was found to have stemmed from the prevalence of societal class created and accepted by gender groups causing men to gain social hierarchical control and dominance over women. The respondents conceived power to be embedded in social structures that are culturally based, and that tend to favour males (men and boys) over females (women and girls) in the allocation of positions of power and exercising power. Table 4.2 shows results from FGDs and KIIs on the sources of power for women and men, which further validates the manifestation of gendered unequal power relations within the study districts.

**Table 4. 2: Sources of Gender Power in districts (FGDs and KIIS)**

<b>Source of power for women</b>	<b>Source of power for men</b>
Physical appearance	Cultural norms and practices
Economically empowered women	Breadwinners
Cooking	Society
Sometimes woman's children	Having many wives
Going to market to purchase household food	Tradition – it is handed over
Care for home	Being leaders of households
Education	Gender roles and norms
From Mothers	Upbringing
	By virtue of being a man – having male organ
	Religion- man is the head of the family
	Marital customs- bride price, dowry, funeral Performance
	Education
	Ownership of properties
	Social structure
	Parents
	Woman coming to live in a man's house
	Traditions
	Patriarchy
	Men as custodians of land and other resources

**Source: Fieldwork, 2014)**

The results presented on (Table 4.1) indicate women's power is associated and embedded in their feminine ideologies that relegate women to the private domain. As has been recognised by gender and socialisation theorists (e.g. Heise, 2011; Lenton, 1995; Jiwani, 2010; Thomas and Tiessen, 2010; Steans, 2006), gender roles and norms create hierarchies that limit women's power to private space. It is imperative to state that physical appearance gave women much recognition and power within the home and among her female friends. Evidence gathered from male focus group discussions, suggested that women's beauty was a source of power because their husbands or boyfriends loved and feared they would lose them to other men.

*“Eeh a woman's beauty alone gives her power.... because maybe many men were chasing her and you are lucky to get her...so she will do what she wants<sup>61</sup>”*

For the respondents, a female's ability to speak or argue freely with an intimate partner was seen as power, especially if it was tolerated. This finding corroborates with Fiaveh (2015) whose study in urban Ghana found that beauty in terms of physical appearance (women's face, her hair, and her shape) of a woman mattered in power relationships.

In keeping with Dworkin and Blankenship (2009), Kim et al (2007,2008, 2009) and Pronyk et al (2006, 2008), findings from the both FGDs and KIIs demonstrated that economic empowerment was a source of power for women. The participants reported that within their communities, the few women who earn their own income and contributed in the family upkeep and the payment of children's school fees were respected by their spouses and family members. They also explained that such women always command respect in the community. That is why Kim et al (2007) argued that any intervention programs regarding women's issue should endeavour to include economic empowerment. Explaining that through economic empowerment, women will develop self-confidence, assertiveness and negotiating skills leading to a reduction in violence in intimate relations. However, this may be a danger to women as some spouses may feel threatened and disempowered. Unanimously, both female and male respondents in FGDs and KIIs across the three districts, reported that men had more power than women in their communities. As earlier noted, the gender role and responsibilities, gender stereotypes (see details in section 4.3) in which males and females are socialized into, have privileged men and placed them in a position of advantage relative

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<sup>61</sup> Group activity with FGDs group 12 in Sakote community, 2014

to women. In assessing where men derive their power in the study area, the results presented on (Table 4.2) demonstrate that men’s source of power are numerous in comparison with women. However, key among them were cultural norms and practices namely; polygamy; patriarchy, being a male, resource ownership and social structures (see details in chapter 5). Moreover, the sources of power for men and women inherently determine the extent to which power is exercised as will be discussed in next section. This is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. 3: Gender Power Differentiations in for women and men in the districts**

<b>Women’s ways of exercising power</b>	<b>Men’s ways of exercising power</b>
Cooking for the household	Violence – beating of wives and children
Taking care of child, husband and visitors	Divorce their wives
Refusal of sex	Dominating and controlling relationship
Shopping for household cooking ingredients	Making decisions and giving instructions”
Women influencing family decisions through men consulting women in private and women being able to offer advice, with suggestions being taken up	Deprivation of sex, money, land, freedom of movement of women/girls
	Determination of number of children a woman should have
	Use of contraceptives
	Controlling women’s incomes
	Abuse of girls
	Forcing sex
	Resource allocation to other members of the family – wives, girls, boys, elderly and determine how it should be used.
	Refusal to pay children school fees and household maintenance
	Patriarchy
	Men as custodians of land and other resources

Source: Fieldwork - FGDs (2014)

It was evident that women exercised power in their gender relationships, this power was invisible to the public because it is mostly channelled through others (the men) or never heard of. This was highlighted in a women's group discussion as one woman explained:

*“Women exercise their powers when men consult us in private and when we are able to advise them and our suggestions are taken-up, we end up influencing decisions”*

It was also evident that women's access to and control over resources were limited within the study area. As a participant expressed<sup>62</sup>

*“Because men have more access and control over resources than women, it gives men more privilege, women might have access and not control. it is the men who decide in many cases and in that case, they have more privileges. For instance, she can farm on the land, but cannot decide on selling off the land without consulting the man”*

Women's lack of power in a gendered relationship, has implications on their access and control over essential resources for their livelihood activities and holistic development (Ghana country gender profile, 2008). This trend remains a challenge to women in Northern Ghana leading to gendered domestic violence, economic inequalities and difficulties, financial burden on women, most women being victims of rape, high birth rate and an increase in illiteracy rates among women. As a result of these gender power dynamics and the extent to which resources are being controlled, the researcher sought to investigate the accessibility to household resources between women and men. Table 3 shows a cross-tabulation of results on gender access to household resources in the three districts.

Recognizably, the gendered roles and responsibilities, rights and privileges exercised in gender relationships are invested in parties in relation to the undercurrents and expressions of power in their relationships and by extension their marital and social relations<sup>63</sup>. This diminishes the self-esteem of most women, which prevents them from actualizing their potential, whether economic, educationally or politically.

#### **4.5.2 Systems of inheritance a source of inequality**

Northern Ghana predominantly operates by inheriting from the father/man's lineage, thus, the patriarchal social structures within which the traditions and cultures glorify and reinforce

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<sup>62</sup> Interview with GDCA development practitioner, Tamale, 2014.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with WOM development practitioner, Bolga, 2014.

male domination over women in all endeavours of life, both private and public (Sossou, 2006). In line with Sossou's (2006) assertion, the study gathered that the patriarchal system inherent in the study area supports a common perception that men are superior to women. The social power that helps to define the identity of women and men in society assumes women and men must confine themselves and act within the boundaries demarcated in the social structures for effectiveness. Thus, the power, identity and position of both women and men are associated with their adherence to the traditional ideals of feminine and masculine ideologies.

So, the question posted to both FGDs and KIIs participants was: "who has more social power in your community and in society at large, the men or women?"

In relation to which gender exercises leadership power and influence, the data collected from FGDs and KIIs participants reveal that women's power was in their cooking of food for their husbands and children.

*"Women's power is in the cooking of food, even that, it is not all the time we determine what to cook because the man may not eat if you don't cook the type of food he wants"*

*"It is the men; even in childbearing, it is the decision of a man. A man can decide that you are my wife; a woman can decide that she wants to give birth to three or four and the man can say no I need up to seven and she has no say than to succumb to that. You can see that the men are always enjoying because they take the major decisions"*

*"When you consider the family or household head it is the man, and he takes the decisions"*

(Sakote, KII, 2014).

*"You see women have certain social sections where they are dominant - taking care of the home"*

(Camfed, Ghana informant, 2014).

These decisions are understood as organized through practices of mutual societal understanding and obligation by household members towards their collective well-being (Cheal, 1989), as opposed to self-centeredness of one's well-being by individual household members. There is an inherent tension between joint and individual well-being that requires negotiation, as elaborated by household bargaining models "Bargaining' and Gender Relations: Within and beyond the Household" by Agarwal (1997). This model was illustrated within the household leadership/power dynamics where the woman takes charge

of the domestic responsibilities of the house while the man takes decisions relating to the survival and the well-being of his family. Within the study area the average number of children per woman is six (GSS, GHS and ICF International, 2015) and where a husband has at least two wives, he may have the perceived responsibility of providing for a family of fourteen. As some of the participants expressed:

*“Men take care of the animals and are breadwinners, the women takes charge of cooking, sweeping, fetching water etc<sup>64</sup>.”*

Household members have to strike a balance between cooperation and conflict with regard to intra-household resource allocation and distribution and sometimes household roles, particularly in a context of gender decision making in the house. While household members are keen to support their joint well-being, decisions relating to the upbringing of children are shared where the man directs the men and women in training the females on acceptable societal behaviours (Carr, 2008). However, as Jackson, (2007) cautioned; such dynamics should not automatically translate into women’s subordination. However, Awumbila (2003) study in northern Ghana reported that such power dynamics conversely has resulted and created male dominance and female subordination<sup>65 66</sup>.

#### **4.5.3 Political/ decision-making inequality**

Gender unequal power in political and or decision making can be conceived at both private – household and public – community or society levels. Feminist and power theories postulate that women as individuals and as a group due to the traditional gender roles underpinning their lives lack decision making power and are less visible in public discourse (Bawa, 2015; Heise, 2011; Strebel et al., 2006). Women’s ability to participate in household decision making processes is crucial in gender power relationships. Particularly, the ability of women to make decisions that shape their identity and status is an essential element of their empowerment and serves as an important contributor to their holistic development (GDHS, 2014).

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<sup>64</sup> Group activity with FGDs group 2, 6 and 15 in Sagnarigu, Sakote and Janguasi communities

<sup>65</sup> Interview with GDCA staff, 2014

<sup>66</sup> Interview with WOM staff, 2014

**Table 4. 4: Women’s decision making autonomy in the district.**

Questions	Category	District								
		Sagnarigu			Nabdham			Nadowli/ Kaleo		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
<b>Work to earn money</b>	Woman alone	15	7.5	10	50	7.5	22	15	22.5	20
	Husband/partner	25	15.0	18	45	27.5	33	75	32.5	47
	Jointly	60	77.5	72	5	17.5	13	10	45	33
	Woman and someone else	0	0	0	0	47.5	32	0	0	0
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square	.359 <sup>ns</sup>			.000			.005		
<b>Contra-ceptive use</b>	Woman	40	50	47	60	12.5	28	10.5	33.5	26
	Husband/partner	10	5	6	30	35	34	57.9	10.3	26
	Jointly	50	45	47	10	52.5	38	31.6	56.4	48
	Woman and someone else	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square test	.651			.000			.000		
<b>Children’s schooling</b>	Woman	5	2.5	3	10	7.5	8	0	15.4	10
	Husband/partner	45	45	45	50	32.5	38	60	25.6	37
	Jointly	50	50	50	35	60	52	40	59	53
	Woman and someone else	0	2.5	2	5	0	2	0	0	0
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square test	.861 <sup>ns</sup>			.189 <sup>ns</sup>			.017 <sup>ns</sup>		
<b>When children fall sick</b>	Woman	0	2.6	2	15	10	12	20	17.9	19
	Husband/partner	40	48.7	46	45	30	35	55	41	46
	Jointly	60	48.7	52	40	60	53	25	41	35
	Woman and someone else	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square test	.591			.343			.461		
<b>Have children</b>	Woman	25	28.2	27	10	10	10	0	20.5	14
	Husband/partner	10	28.2	22	55	32.5	40	60	15.4	30
	Jointly	60	43.6	49	35	57.5	50	40	64.1	56
	No decision	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square test	.194			.219			.001		

Questionnaire data: Sagnarigu N=59 (M=20, F=39), Nabdham N= 59 (M=20, F=49) and Nadowli/Kaleo N=60 (M=20, F=40)

N = Number

M = Male

F = Female

To assess women's decision-making autonomy across the three districts, this study used questionnaires to collect information on women's participation in five types of decisions: work to earn money; use of contraceptives; children's schooling; when children fall sick and whether to have more children (Table 4.4 above).

Previous studies (e.g. Bawa. 2012; Thomas and Tiessen, 2010; Zain, 2010; Kim et al, 2007) reported that most women and girls had limit decision making power both intimate and family relationships. This study found similar results, that most women in the study districts do not have decision-making powers relative to men across the three districts. The descriptive statistics (Table 4.3) across the three districts indicated that only 17% of women could solely make decisions on whether to work and earn money. According to districts, (10%), (20%) and (22%) of women in Sagnarigu, Nadowli/Kaleo and Nabdam districts respectively have the agency to decide to work to earn money. The majority of women must decide jointly with their partners before a decision can be arrived at. As high as (47%) of men solely decide that their spouses will participate in paid work in the Nadowli Kaleo district, followed by (33%) in Nabdam and 18% in Sagnarigu district. The issue of a woman and someone else deciding her involvement in paid work was not prevalent except in the Nabdam where 32% of respondents indicated that women and someone else could decide on their involvement in paid work.

In analyzing, women's participation in decision making regarding contraceptive use, findings reveal (47%) of women solely took decisions on the use of contraceptives, while (30%) made such decisions with their husbands/partners, and (47%) jointly made decisions on women's contraceptive use in the Sagnarigu district. In Nabdam, respondents indicated that women lacked decision making powers in their gendered relationships because a high percentage of men (34%) made important decisions on contraceptive use for their female partners, and (47%) of such decisions are jointly made with partners. In other words, just a small proportion of women actively participated in decisions regarding contraceptive use in the district. Nabdam scored the lowest (26%) in terms of women making decisions regarding contraceptives use.

With regards to who takes decision about children's schooling in the family across the study areas, it was found that decisions on children's education were either jointly made or solely made by men. However, as low as 3% of women in Sagnarigu district are likely to make sole

decision on children's schooling and 8% and 10% of women in the Nabdam and Nadowli/Kaleo districts respectively. On children's health, women made joint decisions with their spouses across the districts. However, respondents indicated that husbands were more likely to take independent decisions on children's health than women. For example, in Sagnarigu only 2% of women could solely decide to seek medical attention for their children when they fall sick (see Table 4.3). The lack of women's decision making autonomy is linked to the gender norms and responsibilities at home (Colfer et al., 2015). Many gender studies have documented women's decision power about earning money (ibid).

Comparatively, while gender was not an important factor in determining a woman's decision to work and earn money, use of contraceptive, children's schooling, when children fall sick and when to have more children in the Sagnarigu district of the Northern region, that was not the case in the Nabdam and Nadowli districts. In Nabdam and Nadowli districts, there was statistical significance between Gender and a woman's decision to work and earn money and use of contraceptives. The chi-square test revealed results which are less than 0.05 (see Table 4.3). Therefore this means that the relationships between gender and work to earn money and the use of contraceptives is significant. In other words, one's decision making power on work to earn money and use of contraceptives strongly depend on gender. Similarly, in the Nadowli/Kaleo district, gender was a determining factor in women's decision making autonomy regarding children's schooling and when to have more children. This was at a significance level of p-value being less than 0.05 (Table 4.4). One reason that could explain this difference between Sagnarigu district and the two other districts is the factor that the demographics of the respondents indicated that Sagnarigu district was urban while the two districts were predominately rural.

This finding on the women's limited participation in decision making is in tandem with (WHO, 2009, 2014; World Bank, 2012) argument that gender socialization and power dynamics have influenced the rate at which decisions are taken between the genders; in which many women have no say even with matters concerning their reproductive health, children's health care, education and so on...., within households. Women's limited participation in decision-making processes has concurrently widened women's marginalization, domestic violence, subordination and powerlessness, resulting in perpetual inequalities between women and men in the study area. However, other studies have reported that in modern societies that allowed females to receive higher education and to engage in the labour force, have the agency to make decisions on who to marry and their fertility

(OlaOlorun and Hindin, 2014). Nonetheless, inequitable decision making power between women and men is also reflected in the public sphere, where socially upheld gender roles adversely limit women's participation in leadership and in the uptake of productive roles within the public arena (Kim et al., 2009; Carpenter, 2006; Chege, 2005; Krantz and Garcia-Moreno, 2005). Against this postulation, during focus group discussions and key informant interviews the respondents, in talking about social power, related to the issues of women's absence in leadership positions in their communities.

It was recognized that the embodiment of culture and power resides with the traditional/community leaders. As literature suggests, gender inequality affects the politico-cultural development of women and girls throughout the world and crosses cultural and economic boundaries (Ellsberg et al., 2015; Terry, 2007; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005) The findings from both FGDs and KIIs indicated that the political and traditional leadership was mainly occupied by men, as evident in the assertion below:

*“If you go any further in the traditional setting, we have male domination in the traditional sector. For instance, we have many more chiefs than we have queen mothers”*

It is evident from the illustrations that women, as opposed to men, are perceived as the “have not” of power and only look up to men for leadership in all facets of their lives. It was also observed that even in situations where women were perceived to have power, it was related to their private spheres (see 4.5.1) and gender performance roles of nurture and nature<sup>67</sup>. For instance, key informant intimated<sup>68</sup>

*“You see women have certain social sections where they are dominant - taking care of the home and the men take charge of leadership duties”*

The information gathered from FGDs and KIIs respondents across board indicated that almost everywhere, chiefs and chiefdoms have become active agents in the quest of upholding the traditions and customs of their people while maintaining law and order. The exercise of such community power by chiefs and leaders of the communities within the study areas, constantly emphasize the repetition of traditional practices which creates the atmosphere for gender political inequality. Particularly in the Nabdam and Nadowli/Kaleo

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<sup>67</sup> Group activity with FGDs group 12

<sup>68</sup> Interview with CAMFED officer, Accra, 2014.

districts, the respondents<sup>69</sup> reported that there was nothing like women chiefs in all their communities who could have at least represented the interests of women in political decision-making processes. This finding is confirmed by Apusigah (2009) who reported that it was only some ethnic groups like the Gonja, Nawuri, and Nchumburu, who have leaders such as queen mothers, but even so, roles were limited to the mobilisation of women and not involvement in politics or resources allocation. Also, Nanumba and Mamprusi have a few female chiefs in specific communities who wield power similar to other male-dominated authorities all in the northern region, and that this was not the case for women in the Upper East and Upper West regions. It could be said that the gender gap created within the study area has some historical root “chieftaincy systems” which influence gender division of labour; the roles of women and men; and the evolution and persistence of gender norms within their territories.

#### **4.5.4 Economic inequality**

Literature shows that the gender relationship of inequality has been underrated because of social norms and values systems that adore gender and unequal power which treats men as superior to women (Dunkle et al., 2007; Kelkar and Nathan, 2005). This power inequality has resulted in women’s economic marginalisation and vulnerability to further subordination (Kelkar and Nathan, 2005). Kelkar and Nathan (2005), Kim et al., (2007, 2008, 2009), Dunkle et al., (2007, 2004) have suggested that women’s poor access to important livelihood resources, has often led to economic disparities between women and men in many settings. The evidence gathered through questionnaire responses, suggest similar findings. The researcher wanted to find out whether gender inequality and marginalization of women over access to household resources manifests itself in the control over household resources such as land, house, vehicles (taxi, coaches, donkey cart, motorbikes, bicycles and livestock (animals encompasses cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, fowls, etc), This was important to understand that women’s lack of access to and control over important resources places limits on their livelihoods choices and exacerbate gender inequality; and have implications for both women and men. The descriptive statistics are based on questionnaires responses and are presented in Table 4.5 and Table 4.6 and used for the discussion.

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<sup>69</sup> Group activities with FGDs group 7, 8, 9, 10 11 and 12 in Sakote and Zanlerigu communities in the Nabdram district and group 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 in Zambogu and Janguasi in the Nadowli/Kaleo district, 2014.

**Table 4. 5: Resource access and ownership for women in the districts**

		North			East			West		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
<b>Land</b>	Not own	50	66.7	61	50	50	50	78.9	94	88
	Own jointly	5	5.1	5.1	50	50	50	15.8	0	5.8
	Owens alone	45	28.2	33.9	0	0	0	5.3	6	5.8
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square test	.427			0.000			.003		
<b>House</b>	Not own	60	69.3	66.1	55.6	31.6	39	26.3	91.2	68
	Own jointly	5	5.1	5.1	44.4	18.4	27	57.9	0	21
	Owens alone	35	25.6	28.8	0	50	34	15.8	8.8	11
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square test	.751			.001			.000		
<b>Vehicle</b>	Not own	30	62.5	52	50	30	36.7	5.2	55	38
	Own jointly	15	2.5	7	50	12.5	25	31.6	38.1	36
	Owens alone	55	35	41	0	57.5	38	63.2	5.9	26
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square test	.028			.000			.000		
<b>Livestock</b>	Not own	35	60.5	52	50	17.5	29	5.3	29.4	21
	Own jointly	10	2.6	5	50	70	63	15.8	52.9	40
	Owens alone	55	36.8	43	0	12.5	8	78.9	17.6	39
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square test	.133			.016			.000		

Questionnaire data: Sagnarigu N=59 (M=20, F=39), Nabdang N= 59 (M=20, F=49) and Nadowli/Kaleo N=60 (M=20, F=40)

**Table 4. 6: Resource control by women in the districts**

Question Control over	Category	Region								
		North			East			West		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
<b>Land</b>	Yes	69.2	62.5	66	45	15	25	10	0	4
	No	23.1	37.5	31	55	82.5	73	90	55.9	68
	Don't know	2.7	0	3	0	2.5	2	0	44.1	28
	Total	100	100		100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square test	.415			.036			.001		
<b>House</b>	Yes	78	78.6	76	50	7.5	22	16.7	2.9	8
	No	18.2	14.3	16	50	89.5	76	83.3	55.9	65
	Don't know	9	7.1	8	0	3	2	0	41.2	27
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square test	.944			.001			.003		
<b>Vehicle</b>	Yes	85.7	94.7	91	50	61.1	59	36.8	0	13
	No	14.3	0	6	50	33.3	39	63.2	94.1	83
	Don't know	0	5.3	3	0	2.6	2	0	5.9	4
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square test	.172			.387			.001		
<b>Livestock</b>	Yes	92	79	85	50	21	31	55	9	26
	No	8	21	15	50	74	66	45	88	72
	Don't know	0	0	0	0	5	3	0	3	2
	Total	100	100		100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square test	.315			.057			.001		

Questionnaire data: Sagnarigu N=59 (M=20, F=39), Nabdam N= 59 (M=20, F=49) and Nadowli/Kaleo N=60 (M=20, F=40)

In agreement with the literature reviewed (e.g. Kim et al., 2007, 2008, 2009; Chege, 2005; Pronyk et al., 2006; Ellsberg, 2006), the lower position of most women is characterised by poverty due to lack of access to resources like land, assets and economic activities. Table 4.5 indicates that the overwhelming majority of women do not own land, with differences across the three districts. Moreover, both male and female respondents, (88%) in the Nadowli/Kaleo, reported that women do not own land, followed by Sagnarigu (66.7%) and Nabdam (50%). By implication, women are not able to take sole decisions on land-related issues, as shown in Table 4.5, especially in the Nabdam and Nadowli/Kaleo districts where 73% and 68% of male and female respondents respectively reported that women did not have control of land.

In the Sagnarigu district, results indicate that 28.8% of women own houses and 5.1% jointly own a house with their husbands. Findings reveal that 76% of women (Table 4.5) who owned houses in Sagnarigu district have control over their house and make decisions on the use and disposal of them (Table 4.6). In Nabdam district, more male and female respondents (34% and 27%) said women alone and jointly with their husbands own houses. However, no male

respondent reported women owning houses even though 50% of female respondents indicated that women owned houses. As to the control over the houses women own, findings reveal that majority of women (76%) did not have control over the houses they own, as opposed to women's control over their own houses in the Sagnarigu district. Comparative to Sagnarigu and Nabdam districts, women's ownership and control over houses in the Nadowli/Kaleo was much lower. Particularly, The Nadowli/Kaleo district relative to the other two districts, more respondents (68%) reported that women do not own houses.

Findings on vehicle ownership in the Sagnarigu district demonstrated that little over half of women did not own vehicles, whereas 41% owned vehicles and a negligible (7%) of women jointly owned vehicles with their spouses. Finding from this district also suggests that (91%) women who own vehicles are likely to exercise independent control over them (Table 4.5). Comparing the result with the Nabdam and Nadowli/Kaleo districts, fewer women; 38% and 26% respectively own vehicles and 25% and 36% are jointly owned. However, in terms of women's control over vehicles, 59% of respondents in Nabdam district reported that they are able to decide on what to do with their vehicles at any point in time. On the contrary, the majority of respondents (83%) in Nadowli/Kaleo district indicated that women did not have absolute control over vehicles they own.

The results on women's ownership of livestock in the Sagnarigu district indicated that 52% of women are unlikely to own livestock. Few women (5) in the district own livestock jointly with their husbands. In terms of control over livestock, the majority of women (85%) controlled their livestock. In other words, most women could make important decisions regarding their livestock (see Table 4.6). This finding can be attributed to the predominantly polygamous marriages in northern Ghana especially in the Sagnarigu district, where many women would not like to jointly own property with husbands for fear of them sharing their poverty with rivals or rival's children in case of divorce or death.

The results in the Nabdam district suggests few women own livestock independently and a higher percentage (68%) own livestock jointly with their spouses, with men by implication having control over the livestock (Table 4.6). This is because most cultures, especially those in the Upper East region practice the use of bride price (dowry) in marriage and consider their wives as husband's property (Bawa, 2015), so naturally a wife belongs to the husband. That is why Anderson (2007) argued that dowry serves to benefit men because payment for

a wife means possessing her and all that is supposed to be hers. As a result, a greater percentage (66%) of women lack the power to control or make independent decisions regarding their own livestock. Interestingly, in the Nadowli/Kaleo district, respondents had divergent views in relation to women's ownership of livestock --whereas male respondents (78.9%) reported that women owned livestock, only 17.6% of females reported women owned livestock. Even in relation to control over livestock owned by women, the result indicates the majority of women (72%) in the district did not have control over their livestock.

Overall, while there is statistical significance at less than  $p < 0.05$  relationship between gender and ownership and control over land, houses vehicles and livestock in the Nabdam and Nodowli/Kaleo districts, gender had no influence on any of these variables in the Sagnarigu district. Relatively, these two districts, being rural, could account for more male influence over women's ownership and control over land.

This was further substantiated by FGDs respondents in the Zanlerigu community and informants who reported that culturally, it is the men who own property, especially land and houses in their communities.

*“Men actually own the property because they married the women. And so women play a supplementary role<sup>70</sup>”*

*“Access to property. It is very difficult for women to acquire property in their own right, except in rare instances. She goes into agriculture. You have a farm somewhere and your husband comes in to harvest the produce and goes to sell and when the woman wants to talk they ask you when you were coming from your father's house what did you bring, you came empty-handed if you have gotten anything it's here. It translates into separation, you go out with nothing and it translates into poverty. When your husband dies when you are still alive unless your children are old enough. If they are children, you find it difficult to control his land and other properties. It impacts negatively on them<sup>71</sup>”*

The above statements add credence to the findings that women have limited access to, and control over, important resources within the Northern part of Ghana. This validates the findings from the qualitative data where women appear vulnerable and disadvantaged, and in subordinate positions and statuses.

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<sup>70</sup> Group activity with FGDs males group 7 and 9 in Zanlerigu, 2014.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with CHRAJ officer in Bolga, 2014

#### 4.5.5 Educational inequality

Although global inequalities in education between females and males have remarkably reduced (Breen et al., 2010), education still remains a male domain in SSA including Ghana (IDS, GSS and Associates, 2016; GDHS, 2014), although some significant gains have been made in Ghana.

Gender roles socialisation and social norm with reference to females suggest serious gaps in education (Fleischmann et al., 2014). The GDHS (2014) survey on educational attainment indicated that in the Northern region (65.8%), Upper East region (40%) and Upper West (48.7%), all of northern Ghana, women had no form of education. This striking figure tells a story about how rigid the gender socialisation of roles and obligations (see 4.3.1) limits female education in northern Ghana. Under this subsection, the aim was to solicit an understanding of how educational inequality in the study area related to other forms of gendered inequalities to undermine women and girls' livelihood choices.

The dynamics of unequal educational power was illustrated through these statements.

*“In terms of education, women are not well educated”<sup>72</sup>”*

*“Up North here, men have more power not because men are rich, but because they are educationally inclined”<sup>73</sup>”*

*“The boy must be educated, not the girl”<sup>74</sup>”*

*“Men are more privileged to education”<sup>75</sup>”*

Gender inequality in education is found to have negative effects on economic growth by reducing the average amount of human capital and the exclusion of talented girls' educational opportunities. For instance, in the Sagnarigu district, all the FGDs<sup>76</sup> respondents reported that boys and girls are made to go to school from the onset. However, at some point, while some of the girls are withdrawn from school and given to marriage – in fact, forced into marriage through family arrangements, the boys are given all the moral and economic support to continue with their educational pursuits. The respondents across the districts, therefore, indicated that the educational disparity in the study area has resulted in many

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<sup>72</sup> Group Activity with FGDs group 5, 6, 7,14 and 18 in Fuo, Zanlerigu and Zambogu communities, 2014.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Gender department officer, Tamale, 2014.

<sup>74</sup> Group activity with FGD group 1 and 2 in Sagnarigu, 2014.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with a religious leader, Tamale, 2014.

<sup>76</sup> Group activity with FGDs group 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in the Sagnarigu and Fuo communities. It should be noted that Sagnarigu is a community and at the Same time the name of the district capital.

young women and girls' having limited livelihood choices and options and little decision making autonomy in gendered relations. This is why it has been argued that educational inequality based on gender, downgrades the quality of human capital and slows down economic growth (Klasen, 1999). In "Gender and development challenges paper" by Elizabeth, Klasen, and Porter (2008), they accounted for the externalities generated by the education of women. These included reduced fertility, the regaining of self-esteem, empowerment of women, participation in political decisions and engaging in economic activities.

#### **4.6 Summary of Key Issues**

Patriarchal systems dominate in the private and public arena. Namely; the traditional/political, economic, religious, and educational spheres in the study area; this has an influence on gender relationships. These systems afford men power to dominate women as is characterized by the subordination of women in society. Again, the gender relations in the area render many women to be seen as mere farm hands, thereby allowing men to appropriate their hard work and relegating them to the bottom of the workforce. Additionally, unequal gender relations, coupled with patriarchy, hinders women's agency in decision-making processes. The socialization process that men and women go through, which defines roles and norms, reinforces unequal power relationships, even in the home, as parents and society ensure that these roles and norms are adhered to religiously.

The evidence gathered showed that the socialization of men and women into unequal power relations, have led to both genders' perception of women as inferior, subordinate, second class, powerless, voiceless, helpers and treated as property. Consequently, most women have accepted their subordinate position relative to men across the study area.

Social power helps define the identity of men and women and it ensures that they confine themselves and act within the stipulated social structure. Even though men and women must stay confined to social structures, these structures tend to favour men over women in the study area. The few sources of power for women are mainly in the private sector, whilst men exercise their powers both in the private and public spheres. The implication of the lack of power for women in gendered relationships limit their access to and control over essential resources for their empowerment.

The study findings reveal that the lack of access by women to important resources, such as land, houses, and livelihoods, results in them being powerless in decision-making processes. Also, their inability to participate in decision making affects them and their children in their homes. All these are detrimental to their development.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DYNAMICS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN GHANA

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the second objective of the study. It assesses the scope of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Northern Ghana. Specifically, this chapter explores how men and women perceive Gender-Based Violence; it describes both the forms and prevalence of Gender-Based Violence against women and girls within the study area. In addition, it provides empirical evidence on causal factors of GBV at the various levels of the ecosystem militating against the holistic development and well-being of women and girls (see chapter 2.10). Additionally, it examines the consequences of GBV against women and girls and then draws the link between GBV and women’s vulnerability to further violence in the study area. To provide in-depth explanations on the dimensions of GBV against women and girls in the study area, the ecological model for understanding GBV is explored. Discussions in the chapter are informed by the gender dynamic power relationships discussed in chapter four. This was necessary to provide insights into the GBV phenomena, to explore how communication strategies are used in addressing the problem. The discussion in this chapter draws on analysed data from questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informants Interviews (KIIs) summarised in (Table 5.1), field observations and document review.

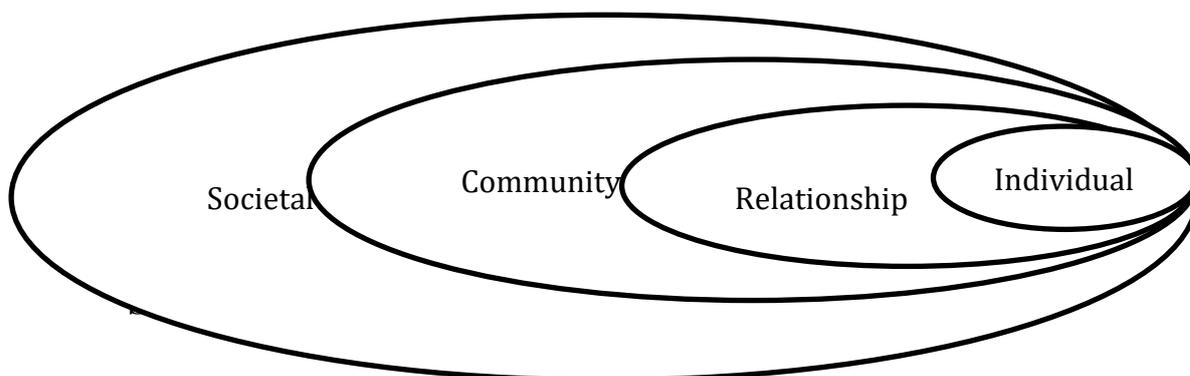
**Table 5. 1: Summary of data sources used for the study**

		No. of respondents		
		Male	Female	Total
	Questionnaires	59	117	176
	Focus group discussions (18 groups)	89	97	186
Key informants	Community opinion leaders	11	12	23
	Government officials	11	4	15
	NGO/Development activists	9	8	17
	Media practitioners	7	5	12
	Total	186	243	429

## 5.2. Scope of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Northern Ghana

In this section, the ecological model component (figure 5.1) of the conceptual map was used to provide in-depth explanations on the dimensions of GBV against women and girls in the study area.

**Figure 5. 1: The ecological model component of the conceptual framework**



According to the proponents Heise e.g. (2012, 1998), Fulu and Miedema (2015), Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott (2005, 2007) and Krug et al (2002), the ecological model can best be visualized as four concentric circles. The innermost circle represents the biological and personal history that affects an individual's behaviour in his/her relationships. The second circle represents the immediate context in which gender-based violence takes place within and outside the family. The third circle represents the formal and informal institutions, including the social structures, in which relationships are embedded: neighbourhood, workplace, social networks, and peer groups. The fourth, outermost circle is the socio-economic environment, including cultural norms. As the research findings suggest, there is no single cause or contributing factor to Gender Based Violence, rather, several factors interacting at each of the levels has a role to play in the perpetuation of GBV. The following section explores research participants' perspectives of GBV.

### 5.2.1 Understandings of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against women and girls, continues to be a serious developmental and public health problem for women and girls within developing countries (Ilika, Okonkwo & Adogu, 2002). As posited by Carpenter (2006) and Anderson, Cockcroft and Shea (2008), GBV is considered one of the most crucial phenomena that militates against women and girls' holistic development, though in some instances, men and boys are also

affected. Consistent with this observation, most of the respondents in the FGDs and KIIs highlighted GBV as a major problem for women in the study area. As one of the FGD respondents<sup>77</sup> commented:

*“Yes, there is. There is ...violence against women...it is real and it’s because of tensions and pressures of life”*

One KII Respondent<sup>78</sup> seems to agree with the FGD respondents and emphasised that GBV in the community takes different forms:

*“They come in different forms, it could be physical violence, psychological and emotional”*

The above testimonies exemplify the existence and occurrences of GBV against women and girls across the districts, as earlier research in Ghana also found (Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2005; ActionAid, Ghana, 2007; Bawa, 2014; Dery and Diedong, 2014).

In light of the fact that GBV was a reality most women and girls experienced in their daily lives, the research further sought to explore perceptions about gender-based violence from the perspective of KII and FGD respondents. This was necessary to understand the context within which violence occurred across the four levels of the ecological model (Figure 5.1). Table 5.2 shows the results on the perception of men and women on gender-based violence.

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<sup>77</sup> A female respondent statement during FGDs (mixed group) in the Fuo community, 2014.

<sup>78</sup> Key informant interview with a staff of Widows and Orphans Moment (WOM), an NGO in the Upper East Region and operating in the Nabdum district.

**Table 5. 2: Perceptions about gender-based violence in the districts**

Perception	Districts		
	Sagnarigu	Nabdham	Nadowli/ Kaleo
• Something not planned but caused by women			X
• Misunderstanding between men and women leading to men beating their wives	X	X	X
• Beating women who are disrespectful		X	
• Fighting/ beating of women and children, violence is a problem which is not good	X	X	X
• Lack of respect between men and women	X		
• Underrating women and girls	X		
• Disagreement between men and women	X		
• Causing harm or force on somebody because of their sex/gender	X	X	X
• Violence meted out to an individual based on society's predetermined norms concerning men and women behaviours	X		X
• Discrimination associated with one's sex of people in the society	X		X
• Doing something against the will of another person			X
• Inflicting pain on another person	X		X
• Disregard for women		X	
• Is something generational: that men are entitled to beat women the way they want	X	X	X
• Use of abusive language to make women feel they are worthless	X	X	
• Using unnecessary force or embarrassing another person		X	X
• Any acts of physically causing harm to a person because of their sex	X	X	X
• It is normal to beat women		X	
• Physical or even denial of what a person is due	X		
• Denial of education	X		
• Denying women to work and earn money	X		
• Denial of economic benefits to women and children	X		
• Violence as a result of women not liking rivals	X		
• Women's refusal of men's love and sex	X		
• Is the physical, economic, sexual and emotional abuse of a person	X		
• Anger causing men to beat women	X	X	X
• Violence as a result of women seeing themselves inferior or below men			X

Source: Fieldwork data from FGDs and KIIs responses, 2014.

The findings from FGDs<sup>79</sup> and KIIs<sup>80</sup> across the three districts indicated that GBV was perceived as misunderstandings, quarrels and conflicts between men and women that often led to spousal battery. Other FGDs and KIIs respondents also thought that GBV in northern Ghana was embedded in cultural and traditional ideologies. For instance, one FGDs respondent<sup>81</sup> noted that GBV was fuelled by traditional and cultural beliefs that emphasise men's 'power' over women leading to violent towards women:

*“It is something generational that men are entitled to beat women the way they want”*

It was found that most men in the study communities think that if something goes wrong between a man and a woman, the best way to settle such a misunderstanding or conflict is through violence. In some cases, it was revealed that most young women or girls were forced into marriages where sex becomes an ordeal for them and any refusal to gratify the desires of the man resulted in violence. Across the study districts, the respondents reported that GBV has serious traditional and cultural undertones and, largely normative in nature (Mba, 2007). It also means that men, by their socialized masculine ideologies, are perceived to have the right to exercise power (see chapter 4) on women through forced marriages, spousal battery, sexual harassment and any other means to maintain spousal control and conformity. Meanwhile, women by their socialized feminine ideals are expected to submit and accommodate men's violence for conformity, maintenance of intimate relationships and family dignity (Issahaku, 2012).

While there were similarities in perceptions about GBV against women and girls across the three districts, some difference emerged. Peculiar to the Sagnarigu district, GBV was perceived in many different ways. The respondents perceived GBV as men not having respect for women; underrating of women; disagreement between men and women; denial of women to work and earn money; denial of economic benefits to women and children; lack of education for women and girls; dislike for rivals and women's refusal to men's love and sex. From this long list it is possible to deduce that GBV is understood as psychological, economic, educational, sexual and physical. For example, one male respondent<sup>82</sup> in a mixed group discussion said:

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<sup>79</sup>Focus group discussion meetings with 18 groups on male only, female only and mixed (males and females) in 6 communities of the three districts in northern Ghana to elucidate perceptions about GBV.

<sup>80</sup> Key informant interviews with community leaders such as chiefs, magazias, religious leaders, GDCA staff, WOM staff, ProNet North staff.

<sup>81</sup> Group Activities with Sagnarigu female group,

<sup>82</sup> Group Activities with Zanlerigu mixed group male respondent, 2014

*“Aaah...why should I talk to a woman who just gets up to go somewhere without informing me ...is she for herself? I will not beat her but I know what to do.....”*

From the above statement, it was deduced that the respondents perceived GBV to have a psychological dimension, whereby some men would rather not talk to their spouse, refuse to eat their food or completely ignore them when they believe the woman does not respect them or are not performing their so-called socially prescribed female role. Similarly, the respondents thought GBV was informed by religious beliefs and practices. According to most of the informants and FGDs respondents, this was why polygamy was widespread and men tended to undermine women.

Furthermore, most of the respondents in the district recognized that GBV had socio-economic and sexual dimensions. Socio-economically, most women and girls are denied the right to access education, work to earn money, inherit or have control over valuable assets and other economic benefits (See details in chapter 4). This meant that most girls and women are economically dependent on their male partners/spouses which put them in a disadvantaged position and meant that they were less likely to have a voice in heterosexual relationships to be able to negotiate sexual relations. Several reasons could be assigned to perceptions about GBV against women and girls in the Sagnarigu district. One fact is that the district is located in Tamale, the capital of northern region and their perception about GBV could be influenced by respondents' exposure to NGOs and media educational programs on GBV. Another important factor is the “gender restrictiveness” which is still strong among ethnic groups in northern region. For instance, among the Dagombas, where this study took place, women and girls are somewhat restricted to lower educational level and from engaging in certain type of economic activities outside the home. These restrictions are likely to shape both men and women's perception about GBV in the study.

Thus, any government and or NGOs such as GDCA interventions to change negative perceptions about GBV should focus on girl child education to tertiary level in the Sagnarigu district and in the region at large. Also, educational campaigns aim at changing or modifying social norms that are normative of female subordination and disrespect.

Distinctive to Nabdam and Nadowli/Kaleo districts, GBV was perceived as woman's failure to submit to her spouse or breaking the gender roles expected of her. For example, one FDG

participant noted that GBV was mostly not planned, but as something caused by the insubordination of women:

*“Beating a woman who is disrespectful”*<sup>83</sup>

*“Something not planned but caused by women”*<sup>84</sup>

These perceptions of GBV in the districts placed the blame squarely on women who presumably are responsible for their own abuse. Walker (2016), García-Moreno et al (2015), Gracia (2014) and Brownmiller (2013) articulate that victim-blaming attitudes persist in many societies despite public awareness and education efforts. Walker gives an example of how residents of EU countries cited women’s provocative behaviour given as an explanation for violence against women at the hands of their intimate partners. The predominantly rural nature of these two districts might account for this perception, because such rural communities still uphold socio-cultural norms that blame men’s violent behaviour and attitudes on women.

However, the respondents<sup>85</sup> in Nabdam reported that any form of disrespect on the part of the man to women was perceived as GBV. It is important to note that such perception pertained only within communities in this district. More importantly, GBV against women was linked to power relationships where men are recognized as the dominant and supreme in the society to which he exercises authority in the form of claiming respect. These constructions of GBV against women and girls confirm the assertions of Heise, Ellsberg and Gotten (1999) that GBV constitutes different forms of harmful behaviour directed at women and girls. Furthermore, situating gender based violence into gender and development perspectives, the findings are in tandem with the perceptions about GBV centred on palpable harm caused to victims, especially women and girls in intimate partner relationships within the private domain (Dery, 2014; Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005; Bott, Morrison & Ellsberg, 2005; Dunkle et al., 2004).

It can be concluded from the findings above that gender based violence was perceived to be physically, psychologically, sexually and economically embedded. Importantly, the study found that GBV against women was associated with unequal power relationships between women and men. Men were recognized in society as the ‘have power’ and exercise their

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<sup>83</sup> Key informant interview with male opinion leader in Sakote, in the Nabdam district, 2014.

<sup>84</sup> Group discussions with Zambogu mixed group in the Nadowli/ Kaleo district, 2014.

<sup>85</sup> Focus group discussions with Zanlerigu and Sakote male only, female only and mixed (male and females)

authority (see 4.5) by abusing women (Dery and Diedong, 2014). This suggests most northern traditional customs or cultures perceive women as powerless and therefore have no right and/or power to challenge the authority of men in society, and that any deviant behaviour from the socially held norms about women is met with violence. The socio-cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity also played a key role in how GBV is perceived in Northern Ghana (Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2005).

Overall, the perceptions and constructions of gender based violence were centred on palpable harm caused to victims, especially women and girls in intimate partner relationships within the private domain (Dunkle et al., 2004; Krantz and Garcia-Moreno, 2005; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005; Dery and Diedong, 2014). The perception resulted in respondents across the study area saying that women's vulnerability to all these forms of abuses is due to the sex/gender roles and gender inequalities<sup>86 87 88</sup> (Strebel et al., 2006). This implies the government, GDCA, WOM, ProNet and other organisations fighting against GBV could endeavour to use communication/media campaigns and community-based intervention to change unequal gender roles and norms prevailing in the districts. Challenging unequal gender norms and reconstructing gender equitable norms between women and men is crucial in changing negative perceptions about GBV against women in the study location. GBV manifest in diverse forms and has damming consequences women and girls especially. The next section discusses the forms of violence prevalent in the districts under study.

### **5.2.2 Physical violence**

This subsection explores the scope of physical violence. As found in 5.2.1, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was perceived to have a physical dimension, in which the victims, predominantly women, are physically assaulted or battered in gendered relationships. Similarly, in (chapter 2.5.1), physical violence was recognised as being prevalent in many societies across the world (IDS, GSS and Associates, 2016; Garcia-Moreno et al., 2015), although prevalence rates varied across different settings (Adjah and Agbemaflé, 2016). Physical violence is described as the hard and painful actions and behaviours including but not limited to beating, slapping, punching, kicking, shoving, and using of weapons to harm

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<sup>86</sup> Focus group discussions with 2 communities of the Sagnarigu – Male only, female only and mixed.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with 2 WOM staff, Zanlerigu women' leader, CHRAJ staff.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Zambogu community leader, 2 ProNet staff, DOVVSU staff.

a person in order to dominate and maintain control in a relationship (Hocagil et al., 2016; Krantz and Carcia-Moreno, 2005). To ascertain the scope of this form of gendered violence against women and girls in the study districts, respondents were asked six sets of questions using a questionnaire. The variables presented to respondents are shown in Table 5.3 below and are triangulated with data from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs).

**Table 5. 3: Percentage distribution of prevalence of physical violence against women**

Question	Sagnarigu			Districts Nabdam			Nadowli/Kaleo			Overall physical violence by variables
Do husbands/partners ever	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Slap or throw things at their women that could hurt them?	Category									
Yes	95	74	81	15	18	17	65	58	60	53
No	5	26	19	85	82	83	35	42	40	47
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Chi-square	0.054			0.806			0.599			
Push or shove their women or pull their hair?	Category									
Yes	55	53	53	10	3	5	5	54	37	32
No	45	47	47	90	97	95	95	46	63	68
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Chi-square	0.855			0.216			0.000			
Hit their women with fists or something else that could hurt them?	Category									
Yes	55	30	38	65	3	24	35	31	32	31
No	45	70	62	35	97	76	65	69	68	69
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Chi-square	0.060			0.000			0.742			
Kick, drag or beat up their women?	Category									
Yes	80	60	67	0	3	2	50	18	29	32
No	20	40	23	100	97	98	50	82	71	68
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Chi-square	0.121			0.470			0.010			
Choke or burn their women with hot iron, burning wood or anything on purpose?	Category									
Yes	35	18	23	50	5	20	0	15	10	18
No	65	82	77	50	95	80	100	85	90	82
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Chi-square	0.131			0.000			0.064			
Threaten to use or actually used a gun, knife or other weapon against their women?	Category									
Yes	20	23	22	0	8	5	15	15	15	14
No	80	77	78	100	92	95	85	85	85	86
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Chi-square	0.825			0.209			0.969			
Overall physical violence	57	43	47	23	6	12	28	32	31	30

**Questionnaire data: Sagnarigu N=59 (M=20, F=39), Nabdam N= 59 (M=20, F=49) and Nadowli/Kaleo N=60 (M=20, F=40)**

N = Number of respondents,

M = Male

F = Female

**Table 5. 4: Forms of physical violence in the districts (FGDs and KIIs responses)**

Forms violence	Sagnarigu district	Nabdam district	Nadowli/Kaleo district
Types of violence prevalent			
Physical violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assault/ beating</li> <li>• Hitting</li> <li>• Slapping</li> <li>• Use of machetes, gun, canes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beating</li> <li>• Throwing of stones</li> <li>• Slapping</li> <li>• Hitting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beating</li> <li>• Knocking</li> <li>• Stoning</li> <li>• Use of stick or cane to whip women</li> </ul>

The findings from questionnaires respondents<sup>89</sup>, FGDs<sup>90</sup> and KIIs<sup>91</sup> indicated that physical violence was pervasive. In particular, responses showed a prevalence rate of 30% across the three study locations. In Ghanaian society, it has been recognised that the socio-cultural norms and customs permit men to physically chastise erring female intimate partners (Dery and Diedong, 2014; Issahaku, 2012). This chastisement is to bring a female partner under the control of the husband or male intimate partner, but in ways that will not cause serious injury or death to the victim (Issahaku, 2012). It was therefore not surprising that analysed data from both quantitative (53%) and qualitative (Table 5.4) indicated that men by way of physical assault characterised by slapping or throwing things at their women was the most common type of physical violence perpetrated against females. For instance, in a male-only focus group discussion this is what a respondent<sup>92</sup> said:

*“hahaha aah, madam, you know that a woman is like a child. When she goes wrong and you talk and she does not listen, the only way to get her comply is to give her some few slaps or whips”*

A female<sup>93</sup> indicated:

*“If you, a woman is not careful and your husband talks and you talk back, as for the slaps, you are likely to receive a good number of them. Slaps are “koko” for women in this community”*

<sup>89</sup> These were questionnaires administered to 59 males and 117 females across the three districts studied

<sup>90</sup> Discussions using a semi-structured question guide with 18 focused groups in the three districts

<sup>91</sup> Interviews with informants from GDCA, WOM and ProNet North staff (7 females and 2 males), community opinion leaders (12 females and 11 males) and government agencies, development and media practitioners (35 males and 17 females).

<sup>92</sup> Discussion with male only group respondent at Fuo community in Sagnarigu district, August 2014

<sup>93</sup> Discussion with mixed (females and males) group female response at Janguasi community in Nadowli/Kaleo district, September 2014.

The above statements reinforce the fact that physical assaults are common and normative. The issue of power was also raised in both statements. On the one hand, males reserve the exclusive right of exercise of power (characterised by assault or violence) to bring the woman under his submission. On the other hand, the females are situated in subordinate position ready to comply or endure punishment. Other common types of physical assaults on women reported included pushing, shoving, pulling of hair, kicking, dragging and battery. Other types of physical violence perpetrated (but of low prevalence) were choking, burning women with hot metal or objects, burning wood, gun or knife. The fatal nature of these types of assaults could account for the lower incidents. As pointed out by Issahaku (2012) and Dery and Diedong (2014), the northern societal acceptance of the use of physical assault to discipline women on the other hand, is less tolerant of perpetrators using weapons such as machetes, guns and hot iron to injure or kill their female partners<sup>94</sup>. This might be so because perpetrators who, through violence, leave their victims with visible injuries and marks, know they could be reported to the law enforcing agencies for their arrest and prosecution<sup>95 96</sup>. Nonetheless, as pointed out in the previous chapter (4.5), one of the ways some men exercise their authority and superiority is by violence. Kim et al. (2007, 2008, 2009); Ellsberg, (2006); Chege, (2005); Kelkar and Nathan, (2005) argue that the social norms and value systems seems to favour gender unequal power with its consequential disadvantages to women, thus exemplifying women's vulnerability to gendered violence. As noted in 3.5, northern Ghana is vast and has diverse histories, customs and traditions (Langer, 2007; Awedoba, 2006). Therefore, it was anticipated that findings on GBV from the three districts could present some nuances despite the huge similarities.

Comparatively, Sagnarigu district reported the highest (47%) incidence of all types of physical violence against women. The most pronounced types of violence identified by respondents included slapping and throwing things, kicking and dragging or beating up and threaten or actual use gun on females (Table 5.3). Strikingly, irrespective of gender an overwhelming majority respondents (81%) in the Sagnarigu district reported that men slap and/or throw things at women, and that this was a common sight in their communities (Table 5.3). This means that

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<sup>94</sup> Discussion with both male and female respondents across the district intimated using weapon to injure or kill women was unacceptable and related such acts to perpetrators who are drug addicts.

<sup>95</sup> Key informant interview with 5 DOVVSU officials revealed that women who are physically abused and left with burns, cuts all over their bodies by their partners are now reporting to them.

<sup>96</sup> DOVVSU document review 2013 shows women reporting violence

the respondents perceptive about the prevalence of physical violence in the district was not dependent on the person's gender/sex. The finding from the quantitative data is consistent with data from FGDs and KIIs that identified Slaps, kicking, assaults/beating and hitting as most common types of physical violence against women in the district. An important finding was the high prevalence of threat or use of offensive on females in the district. Twenty-two percent (22%) of male and female respondents reported the use weapons (guns, machetes) by men on their female partners. This was substantiated by FGDs<sup>97</sup> and KIIs<sup>98</sup> when respondents explained that some male perpetrators used weapons such as machetes, guns and big sticks to physically assault women. For instance, an informant<sup>99</sup> explained:

*“The woman had a six-month-old baby and the husband went out and came back drunk and took a cutlass and started cutting her on the head, neck, hand etc. and when I went to investigate even how to take her baby and breastfeed was a problem. Somebody has to help her pick the baby to breastfeed because the hands were caught, not cut off but they were deep cuts”*

The respondents expressed concern about the use of weapons by men, at the least provocation from their female counterparts. Some of the males in group discussions asked: why should we (men) use all sorts of weapons or materials that can injure our wives? Opinions on this rhetoric were divided. Some blamed this appalling attitude by men on women. For instance, it was noted that women needed to be circumspect during domestic quarrels and to leave the scene when tempers were very high or better still, keep quiet during heated arguments/confrontations. However, other views on the use of weapons were associated with men who are irresponsible and who were either drugs and or alcohol addicts. Surprisingly, in female group meetings<sup>100</sup>, some participants excused men for using weapons on women. For instance, a female respondent<sup>101</sup> in the discussion had this story to tell:

*“.....when I asked my friend what she did and the husband use a cutlass on her, she said she was surprised because this was the first time the husband has done this to her even though she has been beaten by the husband before, this was the first time he used a cutlass on her”*

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<sup>97</sup> Group discussions with 2 males only, 2 females only and 2 female and male groups in two communities in Sagnarigu district.

<sup>98</sup> Interviews with the three case study NGOs staff (7 females and 2 males), community leaders (12 females 11 males), government agencies such as Gender department, DOVVSU, Social Welfare, CHRAJ and development practitioners.

<sup>99</sup> Key informant interview with Gender Department male officer in Tamale, northern region (August, 2014)

<sup>100</sup> Group discussion with female only groups in Sagnarigu and Fuo on why men will use cutlass or other offensive weapons on their wife.

<sup>101</sup> Discussion with female only group at Sagnarigu community in Sagnarigu district (August, 2014)

The above explanation brings to the fore women's perceived feeling of male entitlement over the female body and the social-cultural norms that see violence against women as a normal occurrence between women and men in the confines of the home. Amoakohene's (2004) study on violence against women in Ghana, argued that most women justify why they fight with their spouses. However, this situation downplays their experiences of violence in the home.

Similarly, in the Nadowli/Kaleo district of the Upper West region, the overall incidence of physical violence (31%) was higher relative to the Nabdam district. The data revealed that the majority of men (60%) assaulted their female partners by slapping or throwing things that could hurt them. With particular reference to the use of other forms of physical violence by men such as pushing or shoving there was no significant difference in Sagnarigu and Nadowli/Kaleo districts ( $P=0.000$ ). The data showed that 54% of women and only 5% of men agreed that men push and/or shove women in their communities. Similarly, there was gender significance ( $P<0.010$ ) in relation to perceptions of female and male respondents' views on men kicking, dragging or beating up their women.

Overall, the research participants in Nadowli/Kaleo district reported a high prevalence of men slapping or throwing objects at women. In addition, other notable forms of physical violence like pushing, shoving or hitting the female victim with fists or objects and pulling the victim's hair was high as compared to the rest of the variables of physical violence. Conversely, the Nabdam district of the Upper East reported less occurrence (12%) of the use of physical violence across the six variables of physical abuse as opposed to Sagnarigu and Nadowli/Kaleo districts of Northern and Upper West regions respectively. These findings support the views expressed in the study of Tenkorang, Yeboah and Owusu (2013) that posited that women in the Northern and Upper West regions were more likely to experience higher violence than those in other regions of Ghana. Generally, the survey data showed a 17% incidence of men slapping and throwing harmful objects at their spouses. This finding was equally revealed in FGDs<sup>102</sup> and KIIs<sup>103</sup> discussions, the participants reported that in most of the communities, men commonly beat, slap and sometimes kick or drag their intimate female partners at the least

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<sup>102</sup> Focused discussions with 2 males only, 2 females and 2 mixed groups in Sakote and Zanlerigu communities in Nabdam district using semi-structures questions

<sup>103</sup> Interviews with community leaders, 3 WOM staff, 6 government agencies staff.

provocation or disagreement. For instance, a respondent<sup>104</sup> in narrating the ordeal some women endure from male perpetrators had this to say:

*“Some men don’t take women as anything, so in case of a misunderstanding, you can be beaten; even your husband can beat you”*

Another female<sup>105</sup> said:

*“Mothers have been given slaps by their husbands because of small disagreement.”*

The above statement resonates with some men’s use of physical assault as a means of settling conflicts. Due to the sensitive nature of gender-based violence within conjugal relationships and families (Kim et al., 2007; Raj et al., 2006; Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005; Dunkle et al., 2004), external intrusion in such matters are underplayed with the hope/belief situations will improve (Dutton and Corvo, 2006). It means that some men use physical violence to humiliate women. In contrast to the Nadowli/Kaleo district, a chi-square test showed a high statistical significance between female and male responses to men hitting women with something that could hurt them (P=0.000) and men choking or burning women with hot iron or burning wood on purpose (P=0.000). The majority of male participants (65%) and a few females (3%) participants reported that these types of assaults were pervasive. Notably, in the Nabdam district, the study found that the incidence of weapon use against women was, relatively, less prevalent as compared to the other two districts. We might infer that the use of offensive weapons on females is not a common practice in the Nabdam district. Peculiar to the findings on physical violence in the district, the FGDs<sup>106</sup> reported that regarding physical assault, some men even throw stones at their female partners especially when a conflict erupts.

As has been discussed in this subsection, physical violence was found to be prevalent across the three districts, with Sagnarigu reporting the highest incidence. The Sagnarigu district being urban (communities in the district capital and the regional capital) as compared to the other two districts, could account for the high prevalence of physical violence, because life in such communities is characterised by social pressure and stress due to socio-economic problems facing both men and women (Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007)<sup>107</sup>. Another reason for the

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<sup>104</sup> Discussion with mixed (females and males) group female response at Sakote in Nabdam district, September 2014.

<sup>105</sup> Response from a female participant in a mixed group focus discussion at Zanlerigu in Nabdam district, September, 2014.

<sup>106</sup> Discussions with six focus groups in Sakote and Zanlerigu communities.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with a gender department key informant in Tamale.

difference could be religious beliefs. The Northern region, including Sagnarigu district, are predominantly Muslim communities (Awedoba, 2006) and most of them adhere to the belief that women should be submissive in the home. Thus, violence in such communities is considered normal and concealed by both women and men for religious reasons.

Other types of physical assaults perpetrated against women and girls include pushing or shoving, kicking, dragging or beating, hitting with a fist or something that could hurt, choking or burning and lastly the use of weapons such as guns, machetes, big sticks and even stones.

Though the use of weapons was relatively high in the Sagnarigu district, the evidence gathered across the three districts, showed respondents condemned this type of violence and attributed it to irresponsible drug use of some men in society. Findings on the prevalence of physical violence perpetrated against women across the three districts of northern Ghana corroborates studies in other parts of Ghana and elsewhere. Many researchers, notably, Saffari et al., 2017; Adjah and Agvenafle, 2016; Dery and Diedong, 2014; Issahaku, 2012; ActionAid, Ghana, 2007 surmise that physical violence is of high prevalence in some communities and that its forms are many and varied as exemplified in the study variables. In summary, the findings do suggest physical violence is prevalent, and most women and girls in Northern Ghana are physically abused by their husbands or intimate partners.

### **5.2.3 Psychological violence**

Literature on violence maintains that psychological violence involves acts of humiliation, controlling behaviours, degrading treatment and threats to a person with the aim of maintaining control and dominance over that person (Population Council, 2008; World Bank, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c). Such violence touches on the individual's feeling of self-worth, and perpetrators usually employ abusive tactics to make their intimate partners feel bad and susceptible to other risks (Hildago, 2011; Standen, 2011), Mba, 2007; Bandura, 1997). Feminists and psychologists have identified psychological violence to be more damaging with long-lasting consequences for victims/survivors (Marshall, 1999; Bandura, 1997). The results from questionnaire responses based on seven variables are shown in Table 5.5 and for rigour, these are triangulated with FGDs, KIIs and documents review.

**Table 5. 5: Percentage distribution of prevalence of psychological violence against women**

Question	Category	Districts									Overall Psychological violence by variables
		Sagnarigu			Nabdam			Nadowli/Kaleo			
Do husbands/partners ever		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Insult or make their women feel bad about themselves	Yes	65	62	63	70	13	32	57	44	48	48
	No	35	38	37	30	87	68	43	56	52	52
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square	0.795			0.000			0.100			
Belittle or humiliate their women in front of other people	Yes	60	38	45	10	5	7	25	15	18	23
	No	40	62	55	90	95	93	75	85	82	77
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square	0.099			0.464			0.345			
Do things to scare or intimidate their women on purpose (look, yell or smash)	Yes	55	35	42	5	5	5	30	30	30	26
	No	45	65	58	95	95	95	70	70	70	74
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square	0.139			0.983			0.100			
Threaten to hurt their women or someone the woman cares about?	Yes	60	38	45	0	18	12	15	35	28	28
	No	40	62	55	100	82	88	85	65	72	72
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square	0.099			0.044			0.105			
Refuse to communicate with their women?	Yes	95	85	88	60	31	41	30	25	27	52
	No	5	15	12	40	69	59	70	75	73	48
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square	0.255			0.030			0.680			
Refuse to eat their women's food?	Yes	100	88	92	0	21	14	25	23	24	43
	No	0	12	8	100	79	86	75	77	76	57
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square	0.099			0.027			0.869			
Refuse to perform their women's relative's funeral?	Yes	32	53	46	0	8	5	0	15	10	20
	No	68	47	54	100	92	95	100	85	90	80
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Chi-square	0.132			0.203			0.068			
Overall psychological violence		67	57	60	21	14	16	26	27	26	34

**Questionnaire data: Sagnarigu N=59 (M=20, F=39), Nabdam N= 59 (M=20, F=49) and Nadowli/Kaleo N=60 (M=20, F=40)**

**Table 5. 6: Forms of psychological violence reported (KIIs and FGDs)**

Form of violence	Sagnarigu district	Nabdram district	Nadowli/Kaleo district
Types of violence prevalent			
Psychological violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refusing to communicate with wife</li> <li>• Witchcraft accusations</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Insulting</li> <li>• Disregard</li> <li>• Going after other women</li> <li>• Humiliating</li> <li>• Disrespectful</li> <li>• Not eating wife food</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insults</li> <li>• Torture</li> <li>• Control of resources by men</li> <li>• Men refusal to communicate with wife</li> <li>• Not eating</li> <li>• Neglect of children</li> <li>• Bring girlfriends to marital home</li> <li>• Lone decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct or indirect Insults</li> <li>• Refusal to eat wife’s food</li> <li>• Men refusing to communicate</li> <li>• Deception</li> <li>• Expression of bad</li> <li>• Accusations of infidelity</li> <li>• No attention given to children</li> </ul>

This study found from questionnaires<sup>108</sup> FGD<sup>109</sup> and KII<sup>110</sup> respondents that psychological violence occurred more frequently (Table 5.5 and 5.6) in comparison to physical violence across the three districts. As stated by Mba (2007), psychological violence is difficult to detect or diagnose because it does not leave physical injuries on victims/survivors. However, the research respondents’ responses to the seven measures of psychological violence in (Tables 5.5) indicated a 34% prevalence rate. Both male and female respondents reported that perpetrators commonly refuse to communicate (52%) with female partners. They employ this tactic to inflict emotional and mental pain on their victims to make them feel isolated and less recognized in order to control their behaviour, thoughts and beliefs in their gendered relationships (Hidalgo, 2011; Barnett, Miller-Perrin and Perrin 2005). Secondly, it was reported that most men in the study locations verbally assault (48%) their female partners to make them feel bad about themselves. The third tactic most perpetrators engage in is by refusing to eat food (43%) prepared by their spouse(s). Other types of emotional violence reported were the use of threats to hurt their woman or someone the woman cares about; intimation; humiliation and refusal to arrange the funeral of a female partner’s relative (Table 5.5).

<sup>108</sup> Questionnaire responses from 59 males and 117 females across the 3 districts of northern Ghana.  
<sup>109</sup> Discussions with 18 focus groups including females and males in six communities across the three districts.  
<sup>110</sup> Interviews with three case study NGOs staff, government agencies, community leaders and development practitioners.

This finding on the pervasiveness of psychological violence in Northern Ghana was substantiated by both FGDs and KIIs respondents (Table 5.6) and is consistent with similar studies (Dery and Diedong, 2014; Issahaku, 2012, Ghana Statistical Service, 2009) which found that psychological violence was more common than physical violence.

In focus group discussions and key informant interviews with the respondents, it was observed that because psychological violence was invisible and did not leave any physical marks on the victim, most men did not regard it as a form of violence. For instance, in a heterogeneous group discussion, female participants noted:

*“When the man refuses to talk to a woman over a very small problem, he does not even know that he is hurting the woman. He walks in and out on the woman, and will sometimes even add insults when she is with children or other family members around”*  
(FGD female participant)<sup>111</sup>

This statement implies that most men do not recognize that such behaviours and attitudes towards women are tantamount to violence because of the negative impact they leave on their victim. The participants also reported that because the laws of Ghana and DOVVSU now criminalize actions of perpetrators of violence against women, most of them employ a tactic of covert violence, such as threats, the refusal to eat a wife’s food, false accusations, blackmailing and other forms of psychological violence to torture the victims emotionally.

### **Sagnarigu district**

In comparing the results from the three districts, the results from questionnaires, FGDs<sup>112</sup> and KIIs<sup>113</sup> demonstrated that psychological violence was the most frequently occurring (60%) form of GBV against women and girls in the Sagnarigu district as with physical violence. In particular, both female and male respondents (92%) reported that men refusing to eat their wife’s food was common in most communities. Another frequent tactic reported was a husband’s refusal to communicate (88%) with his wife to make her feel isolated and less important. The respondents (63%) noted a husbands’ frequent use of insults to make their wives feel bad about themselves was the third common type of psychological perpetrated against females in the district. Other type of psychological violence reported were husbands/partners

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<sup>111</sup> Discussion with mixed focus group Zambogu community in Nadowli/Kaleo district, September 2014.

<sup>112</sup> Used semi-structured interviews to guide discussion with females and males in two communities in the Sagnarigu district

<sup>113</sup> Interview with community leaders, GDCA staff, development and media practitioners

intimidating their women on purpose; belittling and or humiliating their women in the presence of others; threatening or hurting someone their women care about and refusing to arrange the funeral of an in-law as custom demands.

### **Nabdham district**

Conversely, incidents of psychological violence against women and girls were much lower in the Nabdham district of the Upper East region (16%) in comparison to the Sagnarigu district in the northern region. Nonetheless, findings from research respondents<sup>114</sup> indicated that male partners refusing to communicate with their female partners was common (41%). Thirty-two percent of female and male respondents reported that men insult or make their women feel bad about themselves. Very few (5% to 14%) of female and male participants indicated that men do things to scare or intimidate their women on purpose; refusing to perform their women's relative's funeral; belittle or humiliate their women in front of other people; threaten to hurt their women or someone the woman cares about; refuse to eat their women's food.

Regarding all the measures of psychological violence against women, there was no gender significance in relation to the responses between women and men in the Sagnarigu district. However, in the Nabdham district, a chi-square test showed that there was gender significant difference at ( $p=0.000$ ) between male and female responses regarding husbands insulting or making their women feel bad about themselves. Seventy percent of males agreed that men insult or make their female partners feel bad whereas only 13% of female participants affirmed it. Similarly, there was a significant difference ( $p\leq 0.044$ ) between female and men respondents' views on male partners threatening to hurt their women or someone the woman cares about. While male respondents were unanimous in their view that men do not threaten to hurt someone their women care about, 18% of female respondents reported the contrary. On men refusing to communicate to their women, the gender significance was at ( $p\leq 0.030$ ) level. The majority of male (60%) respondents, were of the view that husbands refused to communicate with their women. Finally, female and male respondents' perspectives about husbands refusing to eat their women's food was gender significant ( $p\leq 0.027$ ). The female respondents (21%) agreed that husbands refuse to eat their women's food. However, a hundred percent of the male respondents disagreed with the statement.

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<sup>114</sup> Questionnaire responses from 20 males and 40 females, 6 focus group discussions and interviews with community leaders, WOM staff, government agencies and media practitioners in Nabdham district.

Although psychological violence was lower in the Nabdam district, the finding suggests that women and men view GBV, including psychological violence against women and girls, differently. In communities, most men, by their socialized ideologies, perceive insulting and refusing to eat food as socially accepted norms, which permits them to exercise control over women in a gendered relationship. Women on the other hand, through these social ideals, are likely to perceive such acts of violence as normal and a facet of their lives in conjugal relationships.

### **Nadowli/Kaleo district**

The findings from questionnaires, FGDs<sup>115</sup> and KIIs<sup>116</sup> on the occurrence of psychological violence, indicated a prevalence rate of 26% in the Nabdam district. The incidence of this form of violence against women and girls in the Nadowli/Kaleo district was lower relative to the findings in the Sagnarigu district of Northern region, but higher in comparison to the Nabdam district. Both male and female respondents (48%) were of the view that men ‘insult or make their women feel bad about themselves’, was most common in communities. The intimidation of women by their spouses was reported as the second most prevalent type of psychological violence. Other types with lower rates of prevalence were husbands threatening to hurt their women or someone the woman cares about; a husband refusing to communicate with their women; refusing to eat their women’s food; belittling or humiliating their women in front of other people and refusing to perform their women’s relative’s funeral, occur in the district. Similar to Sagnarigu district, there was no difference between the views of women and men regarding their responses in relation to the prevalence of psychological violence in the Nadowli/Kaleo district.

The study observed that most men used psychological violence directly or indirectly to punish women and girls for perceived misbehaviour and non-compliance to assert power and domination in gendered relations. Consequently, because psychological assault does not inflict physical wounds or marks on its victims who are mostly women and girls, men hardly conceive it as a serious form of violence despite its devastating effect on female partners (Mba, 2007).

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<sup>115</sup> Used semi-structured questions to guide discussion with six focus groups made of men and women in the Nadowli/Kaleo district.

<sup>116</sup> Interview with community leaders, ProNet North staff, government agencies and media staff.

Most of the female only groups in the study area in the discussion mentioned that psychological violence was the worse form of violence against women.

*“Hmmm, daily women receive insults from the men and is very painful”*  
(FGD female participant)<sup>117</sup>

This statement suggests that psychological violence is the form of violence that exposes women to mental torture with negative effects (Dery and Diedong, 2014). This finding on the higher prevalence of psychological violence over physical violence in the northern Ghana is in line with a study conducted by (Johnston and Naved, 2008) in Bangladesh that also found psychological abuse as the most common and more devastating form of GBV against women and girls (Mba, 2007). Contrary to these findings, a study by (Ellsberg et al., 2000; ActionAid, Ghana, 2007) in Nicaragua and Northern Ghana respectively suggested that physical violence was more pervasive as compared to psychological and sexual violence.

#### **5.2.4 Sexual violence**

Feminists conceptualise sexual violence against women and girls as emanating from men’s need to exercise control over women to maintain existing gender arrangements (Lee et al., 2007). Some feminist scholars, notably Walby and Allen (2004) and Dery and Diedong (2014) argued that in recent times, men in intimate relationships are the most common perpetrators of sexual violence.

This section used qualitative data through FGDs, KIIs and document reviews to understand the scope of sexual violence in the context of gendered power relationships in northern Ghana. The performance and adherence to socio-cultural gendered norms supporting sexual ideologies surrounding sexuality suggest that sex in intimate partner relationships, is regarded having automatic consent from women. Therefore, in the Northern Ghana context and cultures, which are largely patriarchal and heterosexual, this makes women and girls susceptible to sexual abuse. This is so because of the notion and importance attached to the family system where issues of marriage and sexual activities are perceived as secret and private, and will bring shame, name-calling and/or stigma to those (especially women and girls) who talk or report sexual abuse.

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<sup>117</sup> Focus discussion meeting with female only group at Fuo community in Sagnarigu district (August 2014)

Generally, this research found that sexual violence was a endemic in Northern Ghana. The FGDs and key informants reported that there were widespread issues and cases of rape, defilement, forced marriage, sexual harassment and teenage pregnancies across the three regions of Ghana. To highlight the prevalence of sexual violence a media practitioner reported:

*“I can’t be specific but it is across the region. Even two days ago, we carried a story on the gender page of Daily Graphic (page 11) and the Title was “Northern Region Record more cases of defilement and rape” (Media practitioner, 2014).*

Another informant explains:

*“Yes, it is there, it exists and we have come into contact with several of them such as rape, defilement, etc there are cases where close family members have been defiled; there is a case where a grandfather has defiled a granddaughter (incest), we have had teenage pregnancies - children being impregnated and they cannot go back to school” (Gender department staff, 2014)*

Apart from the above manifestations of sexual violence, marital violence was also identified to be occurring within intimate partner relationship as observed by (Walby and Allen, 2004). The discussants in a female only group in the Sagnarigu district explained that even between husbands and wives, women were forced to have sex when they were tired, sick, nursing babies or just did not feel like having it. They intimated that the punishment for refusal would be battering. This finding supported previous studies that reported that women who face sexual abuse were likely to experience other forms of violence because violence affirms authority and men use it to control and subordinate women (Thomas and Tiessen, 2010; Kim, 2011; Lee et al., 2007)

In addition, a CHRAJ officer<sup>118</sup> in explaining the seriousness of sexual abuse against women and girls in the north said:

*“When I went to Choggu I met some young girls and they were telling me that in their community, men gang rape women and girls. So, this is a form of violence and even those girls they gang rape are under-aged and that is defilement”*

*“When it comes to choice a man has the right to choose the woman he wants but the woman doesn’t have the right to choose the man she wants. They can just take a girl out of school and give to a man but it is not so with the boys. Girls can attain age 15 or whatever and they can take them and give to 65-year-old men as their husbands but that can never be done to boys”<sup>119</sup>*

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<sup>118</sup> Key informant interview with Inusah, a CHRAJ officer in Tamale, 2014.

<sup>119</sup> A female respondent in a mixed FGD meeting in the Sagnarigu community, 2014.

Consequently, the traditional system of dowry for wives coupled with masculinity ideals privileges men to exploit their female partners sexually. These ideologies in the north, particularly in the Upper East and Upper West regions make men feel entitled to female bodies as sex objects for men's satisfaction (Jiwani, 2010; Nukunya, 2003) Hence, the perception of sexual abuse is normative and justifiable in gendered intimate relationships. This finding supports similar studies (Dery, 2014; Issahaku, 2012; Proulx, 2012) conducted in Ghana that found that women and girls are forced to have non-consensual sex (rape, defilement) because such acts are condoned by the socio-cultural norms and practices that privilege and allocate more power to men in gendered relationships.

### **5.2.5 Economical/ Financial Violence**

Previous studies (Peprah and Koomson, 2014) argued that GBV against women in recent times is the result of difficult socio-economic conditions confronting families. This form of abuse is conceived as part of behaviours used by men in gender dynamic unequal power relationships to maintain power and control women (Postmus et al., 2011). This section employed FGDs, KIIs<sup>120</sup> and document reviews to assess the scope of economic abuse against women in the study area. It is important to note that the research respondents especially, the focus group discussants<sup>121</sup> described economic violence within their context as husband's or male partner's refusal to give "chop money" to their wives for household maintenance and/or maintenance of girlfriend(s). Some further explained that it involves men depriving their female partners of getting their own money (through employment or trade) and or trying to control their money. This assertion was made clear during one of the group discussions in the Sagnarigu district when one of the women stated:

*".....sometimes they do not just beat us, but rather, they stop giving you money"*

Some informants<sup>122</sup> backed this up:

*"We have economic deprivation where women are not given what is due them economically to make them live like human beings may be because she has insisted on her rights".*

*"Yes, it exists. Even denying the woman an opportunity to work and earn income for herself is an abuse of her right"*

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<sup>120</sup> Interview with community leaders, NGOs staff, government agencies, development and media practitioners

<sup>121</sup> Discussions with 6 males only, 6 females and 6 female and male groups in six communities across the three districts.

<sup>122</sup> Key informant interviews with Social Welfare female official and media practitioner in Nadowli/ Kaleo and Sagnarigu districts respectively, 2014.

The study revealed that some men subject their women to economic abuse by continuous refusal to give them money to prepare meals for the family, knowing very well that they do not have any other source of income to buy ingredients. The respondents reported that economic abuse is used by men to show their women where “power lies” recognising that women might not have any other option than to submit to their authority for survival in the relationship.

The respondents explained that another tactic most men use to maintain and control women in intimate relationships, is in preventing or denying women the opportunity to engage in productive work. Some even forbid their wives from working outside the marital home. In some situations, some men go to the extent of discouraging their educated female partners from pursuing well-paying careers and/or taking formal employment. A high proportion of the informants observed that men, for fear of men losing their grip on their women, adopt this behaviour as a controlling measure.

Another important area of economic abuse the respondents reported, was women’s inability to access land for agricultural activities of which over 60% of women are engaged in for their livelihoods. This abusive behaviour by men received prominence in the study area where a women’s group leader in an interview said that:

*“In fact, most women in our area (Upper East region) are denied access to land to cultivate even vegetables and other things to feed our children, let alone to farm in large quantities to sell and make money. Hmmm, to make it worse when you are a widow”*

They further reported that widows were often denied their inheritance in the event of the loss of a husband. Because the cultural norms do not allow for women who are perceived as strangers to the family to inherit assets, oblivious to the fact that she might have helped her deceased husband acquire those assets. As explained by an informant<sup>123</sup>:

*“It is happening so when we talk about an economic aspect of it, you realize that as CHRAJ, sometimes we receive cases about women denied a share of inheritance and their late husband’s estates. You know after the forty days of the husband’s death; she is sent back to her father’s home with her children and that’s all. You have laboured with your husband for years and when he dies you will not be given a share of your husband’s estate. When you go to the communities, even when they are sharing the inheritance, as for lands they won’t share for them. These are economic forms of violence and abuses women go through”.*

What also came up strongly was abusive men’s exploitation of women’s resources. They achieve this by stealing their female partners’ money and through other manipulative

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<sup>123</sup> Key informant interview with CHRAJ male official in Bolgatanga, 2014.

behaviours. For instance, some may shirk their financial obligations to the family. Women are then saddled with the payment of children's school fees and other household maintenance responsibilities. The respondents further explained that some of the abusive men, in their bid to subdue their partners, lure them to squander loans they have taken to start or expand their business. In some extreme cases, male partners confiscate such loans for their own use.

Some of the women only groups intimated that some "hard" husbands would shrewdly say to their women that they are only borrowing the money to pay back to them later. The participant reported that if, they (women) even dared to refuse, the abusive ones (men/husbands) will devise other means such as refusing to talk to them or refusal of meals prepared by spouse until they give in. In other words, women who assert themselves by taking control over income they have worked for, are perceived as deviating from socially accepted gender roles and norms assigned to them. Therefore, women are more likely to be "shamed" by family members and sometimes the society. This study gathered from FGDs, KIIs and documents that economic abuse has very serious implications for women's holistic development. They reported that this form of abuse makes women economically over-dependent on their husbands, leading to further domination by abusive men. They noted that women are compelled through economic and other forms of violations to stay with abusive intimate partners with attendant debilitating social and health implications.

*"Even when the man dies, their family comes for the property and the woman and children are left to suffer"<sup>124</sup>*

This finding on economic violence against women in Northern Ghana supports previous studies by Peprah and Koomson (2014), Postmus *et al* (2011) and Adams *et al* (2008). They surmised that women suffer economic violence in the hands of abusive male partners including, but not limited to, preventing women from acquiring and using their own resources.

Considering the findings on respondents' perceptions about GBV and the prevalence of all forms of violence discussed, consistent pattern of differences emerged. The perception about GBV and its prevalence against women and girls in Sagnarigu district appears to be distinct in terms of most variables under consideration. This seems to suggest the existence of factors peculiar to the district. In typical traditional Dagomba communities, women do not have a voice

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<sup>124</sup> Key informant interview with Ark Foundation female officer, 2014. Ark Foundation is a non-governmental organisation working on GBV and gender equality in Ghana.

in matters of societal importance even if these affect their welfare (Ivor and Wilks, 1973; Owusu-Ansah, 2013, Apusigah, 2009). Additionally, the fact Sagnarigu is Islamised might help to explain the acceptance of women's subservient role in at all levels of community life. This is because the misinterpretation of Islam beliefs and norms re-enforces male dominance and exercise of power over women. The misunderstanding of gender equality and resistance from men when women are getting socio-economically empowered may be a reason for the high presence of GBV against women, i.e empowered women seen as threat to men. Kim et al (2007, 2008, 2009) notes that a woman's economic empowerment may initially pose as a risk factor for male violence because of the perceived shift in power relationships. It is therefore suggested that GBV communication interventions should involve both men and women in the program activities. Secondly, the communication must be targeted at the underlying causes of GBV and gender inequality between women and men in the district.

The rural nature of the Nabdam and Nadowli/Kaleo districts could account for the relatively lower incidence of GBV against women. The socio-cultural acceptance of violence against women could mean that both men and women are likely not see male violence as a deviant behaviour. Hence, it is imperative for development agencies, especially WOM and ProNet to also focus on challenging negative cultural norms that normalise male violence against women. In addition, GBV programs should include economic empowerment – income generation activities, skills acquisition and microfinance for women. Increasing women's social and economic status allow them contribute to household expenditure and offer women the opportunity to be included in household decision-making processes and increased capacity to negotiate for safe sex and non-violence partnerships (Kim et al 2007, 2008, 2009; Beattie et al 2010). In this way, women are likely to develop self-confidence/esteem, assertiveness, navigating skills leading to a reduction in male violence against women.

### **5.3 Factors associated with GBV against women in northern Ghana**

In this section, the ecological model (Figure 5. 1) of the integrated conceptual framework postulated in chapter 2 was employed to examine the factors underlying GBV against women and girls in the research locations. According to this model, no single factor explains why some individuals perpetrate violence on others or reasons why violence is more prevalent in some communities than others (Montesanti, 2015; Krug et al., 2002; Heise, 1998, 1999, 2011). Thus, the proponents of the ecological model argue that violence is as a result of the complex interplay

of individual, relationships, community and societal factors (Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007; Krug et al., 2002; Heise, 1998, 1999). Unpacking these factors to understand how they relate to gendered violence is crucial for the exploration of the communication and media contexts of GBV as outlined in the integrated conceptual framework (2.9). Because this study advocates for a holistic approach to preventing GBV against women and girls from the individual, relationship, community and societal levels of which communication is paramount.

**Table 5. 7: Perceptions of factors causing GBV against women and girls (KIIs and FGDs)**

Causal factor for GBV	Sagnarigu District				Nabdam District				Nadowli/Kaleo District			
	IL	FL	CL	SL	IL	FL	CL	SL	IL	FL	CL	SL
Lack of patience or anger	x	x			x	x						
Infidelity and/or infertility of a woman		x				x						
Women encroaching into men's space		x	x	x		x	x	x				
Multiple sexual partners		x	x	x		x	x	x		x		
Resources distribution		x	x	x		x	x	x				
Lack of power for women	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Lack of response to education on GBV										x	x	x
Violence as an accepted way of disciplining women		x	x	x						x	x	x
Weak family ties	x	x	x	x								
Social behaviours and customs	x	x	x	x								
Lack of law enforcement and social sanctions		x	x	x						x	x	x
Lack of husband's support	x	x	x									
Refusal of sex		x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x
Lack of economic power	x	x	x	x								
Women with less educated or high social class children	x	x	x	x								
Stereotypes										x	x	x
Gossiping										x	x	x
Lack of empowerment	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Family pressure not to report violence		x	x	x								
Violence witnessed at home or family	x	x			x				x			
Improper dressing by women and girls	x	x									x	x
Dependence on men		x	x	x		x				x	x	x
Cultural and traditional perceptions			x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x

Socio-cultural settings that give more power to men (social norm, gender roles and norms)		x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x
<b>Table 5.7 cont'd</b>												
Polygamy		x				x				x		
Poor communication		x				x			x	x		
Lack of child and house maintenance		x										
Unequal power between women and men	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Lack of love for women/wives						x						
Women's failure or delay to perform household duties due to workload		x										
Lack of education/low education attainment	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Poverty	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Irresponsibility of man		x				x	x	x				
Women being too suspicious of their husbands						x						
Family, individual and peer influence		x	x	x						x	x	x
Disrespect for man's authority										x	x	x
Woman trying to show equality by talking back, being assertive, disobedience or proud		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		
Drunkenness and drugs abuse						x	x	x				
Dowry/ forced marriage		x				x	x					
Women seen as property/slaves to men		x	x	x			x	x	x	x		
Unemployment	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x

### 5.3.1 Individual level factors associated with Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Individual factors conceptualized to cause GBV refer to those features of an individual's developmental experiences or personality that shape his or her response to stressors from the immediate surroundings (Adjah and Agbemaflle, 2016; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007; Heise, 1998, 1999, 2011; Krug et al., 2002). These biological or personality factors are therefore likely to predict male violence or female victimization. Such factors include witnessing marital violence as a child; being abused personally as a child and the absence of a father (Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007; Heise, 1998, 1999, 2011). It should be noted that the factors identified may not be only exclusive to the individual level, but may also interact with other factors across the other three levels of the model to produce violence (ibid).

Following this postulation, data from FGDs<sup>125</sup>, KIIs<sup>126</sup> (Table 5.7), researcher's observations<sup>127</sup> and document review<sup>128</sup> revealed that witnessing violence in the home as a child was a key factor perpetuating violence in the districts. According to the respondents, a male child growing in a family where a father beats or shouts and insults a mother is likely to become violent in his heterosexual relationships in adult life.

*“You wake up and all over the house the man is beating and insulting the wife, the children are not even left alone...mmmm..the boys will also grow and continue to beat and mistreat their wives too”*

(Zambogu FGDs female participant, 2014).

This statement implied that violence is a learned behaviour and young boys and girls who grow up in violent homes are likely to be abusive or victims of abuse. During the interviews and discussions, the respondents further reported that it was not just boys learning from adults or parents in the home but the even girls who witnessed their mothers endure their husbands' beatings, insults and humiliations were prone to accept male violence in their gendered relationship in later life. However, exposure to family violence is not a precondition for future violence (Heise, 1998). A study by Caesar (1988) found 38% of wife batterers had neither been abused or witnessed physical violence in infancy.

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<sup>125</sup> Group- mixed, male only and female only focus discussions in Fuo and Sagnarigu (6) in the Sagnarigu district of Northern region, Zanlerigu and Sakote (6) in the Nabdram district of Upper East region and Janguasi and Zambogu (6) in the Nadowli/Kaleo district of Upper West region.

<sup>126</sup> This included community opinion leaders- chiefs, religious leaders, men and women association leaders, NGO staff, government department staff and media staff in the three districts.

<sup>127</sup> Researcher's personal observations on the field.

<sup>128</sup> This included reports and articles on GBV in Ghana.

However, the research respondents (FGDs and KIIs) identified other factors that they perceived accounted for an individual's perpetration of violence. These factors include the lack of empowerment, poverty, lack of education, unequal power between women and men and unemployment across the districts. Particularly, female respondents in all the focus group discussions<sup>129</sup> reported that most women and girls were victims/survivors of all forms of abuse because of their lack of education, gainful employment, lack of economic empowerment and poverty. The evidence gathered from the respondents indicated that many conflicts between husbands and wives stemmed from these socio-economic stressors. With specific reference to the Sagnarigu district, the findings from the FGDs and KIIs indicated that weak family ties and social norms and customs were serious factors associated to women and girls' violence victimization in the district. It was revealed during discussions that male partner who knew that his female partner did not have strong relatives or other social safety nets was likely to physically and or psychological abuse his female partner.

*“Eeeh madam, some of the men when they see that a woman has no helper, or her parents and brothers can't give any support, that woman is in trouble with her husband because every small thing she will be physically and verbally assaulted. Is it not true you the men is that not what you do to us?”*

(FGDs male and female group, 2014)

According to the respondents, females having family support was crucial in their gendered relationships. Conversely, in the Nabdum district, both female and male respondents reported that alcohol was a key predictor of male violence against a wife. They intimated that because of a lack of employment and its ramifications, most men had resorted to drinking alcohol, and some of the young men even added bad drugs<sup>130</sup> just to ward off their frustrations. Unfortunately, they ended up visiting their wives or girlfriends with violence. In the Nadowli/Kaleo districts, both female and male discussants<sup>131</sup> reported that women and girls who tried to show equality by being assertive and disobeying a male was a cause for violence. It was observed that gender norms were still commonplace such that women who moved beyond their expected feminine ideals were met with male resistance and violence. These findings support similar studies by Proulx (2011), Brown (2002), Coker,

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<sup>129</sup> Group discusses with 6 females only focus groups in the six communities, the women intimated that most women continue to live with abusive husbands because of poverty, lack of income generation activities and lack of education among others.

<sup>130</sup> Bad drugs include weed also known as Indian hemp in Ghana.

<sup>131</sup> Discussions with 2 males only, 2 females only and 2 female and male groups in Zambogu and Janguasi communities in the Nadowli/Kaleo district.

Appiah and Cusack (1999) conducted in Ghana that suggested GBV survivors are blamed for their victimization within the Ghanaian society.

### **5.3.2 Relationship/family level factors**

The relationship/family level of the ecological model examines the direct interactions between a person and others as well as the subjective meaning attributed to those relations. For the abusive man and his female partner, the family becomes an important site and context within which gendered violence takes place (Krug et al., 2002; Heise, 1998, 1999, 2011). At this microsystem level a variety of factors such as male dominance and control of family resources, alcohol intake and verbal conflict have been associated to increased risk of GBV against women and girls (Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007; Heise, 1998, 2022).

Thus, finding from FGDs<sup>132</sup> and KIIs<sup>133</sup> revealed that factors responsible for violence at the relationship level across the three districts were women refusing to give in to male partner's sexual demands and polygamy. They also reported that socio-cultural norms sanctioning male violence, poor communication, unequal power between women and men, lack of education, poverty and unemployment were the common causes for gender-based violence against women and girls across the districts (ActionAid, Ghana, 2007; Dery and Diedong, 2014).

This study also noted some similarities and the difference between the districts. With reference to the Sagnarigu district, findings from FGDs<sup>134</sup>, KIIs<sup>135</sup> and researcher's personal observation revealed many more factors responsible for violence against women. The respondents mentioned that the causes of violence against women and girls at the relationship level included; family pressure on women and girls not to report violence perpetrated by male intimate partners or acquaintances; women's failure to perform duties on time due to heavy workload; husband's neglect of household maintenance support;

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<sup>132</sup> Discussions with 6 males only, 6 females only and 6 female and male groups in six communities across the three districts on the cause of violence against women.

<sup>133</sup> Interview with key informants with government agencies, three case study NGOs staff, community leaders and other media and development practitioners.

<sup>134</sup> Discussions with 2 males only, 2 females only and 2 mixed (female and male) at group meetings about causes of violence against women and girls in the district.

<sup>135</sup> Interviews with key informants 4 GDCA staff, 1 DOVVSU officer, 1 NCCE officer, 1 Gender department officer, 2 Department of social welfare officers, 1 ActionAid, Tamale officer and 4 media practitioners.

improper dressing of young women and encroaching on men's space. Other factors that also run through from the individual to the relationship level were women and girls having weak family ties and women's lack of power.

In comparison to the Sagnarigu district, the findings from FGDs<sup>136</sup> and KIIs showed some peculiarity of factors such as men's lack of love for women, women being too suspicious of their husbands; infidelity on the part of women and alcohol use by men, as fuelling violence against women in Nabdam district. However, it was found that there were common factors relating to the two districts. Both districts reported that GBV against women and girls emanated from men's involvement in multiple sex partner relationships and polygamy; women's dependence on men; family resource distribution; lack of patience and anger, women's lack of power and forced or early marriages.

Conversely, in the Nadowli/Kaleo district, apart from the common factors across the districts, the research participants<sup>137</sup> reported that the lack of response to GBV education; gender stereotyping, gossips on the side of women and disrespect for men's authority were also some of the causes of GBV against women and girls. Similar factors of GBV shared with the Nabdam district was the issue of cultural and traditional norms responsible for violence between women and men. The Nadowli/Kaleo district also shared some commonality with the Sagnarigu district. Both reported women being seen as property owned by their husbands, violence being seen as a way of disciplining erring women, lack of law enforcement and social sanctioning of violence and peer influence as some of the reason for gendered violence against females.

### **5.3.3 Community level factors**

As indicated earlier, the community level, which forms the third cycle of the ecological model, examines both formal and informal structures that impinge on the immediate settings in which a person lives and is thereby likely to influence them, define or decide what goes on there (Heise, 1998, 2011). Thus, the community level factor influences are often the by-

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<sup>136</sup> Meeting with 2 females only, 2 males only and mixed (female and male) groups in Zanlerigu and Sakote communities of the Nabdam district for focused discussion on causes of GBV against women.

<sup>137</sup> Research participants are the 6 focused groups discussion with females and males in Zambogu and Janguasi communities of the Nadowli/Kaleo district, interviews with 2 ProNet North staff, 1 DOVVSU officer, 1 CHRAJ officer and 3 media practitioners in Wa of the Upper West region.

products of changes occurring in the larger social milieu. Heise (1998) therefore suggests that community factors include poverty, unemployment, low socioeconomic status, lack of institutional support- (religious, police, medical), isolation of the woman and the family and delinquent peer associations are linked to GBV against women and girls.

Across the three districts, findings from the FGDs and KIIs reported several reasons for female abuse. The reasons encompassed unemployment; lack of education or low educational attainment by women and girls; poverty; cultural and traditional perceptions about females; social norms and roles that perpetuate unequal power between women and men and women showing equality with men as being responsible for male violence against women in northern Ghana. This study observed similar reasons accounting for violence at the relationship level. Particularly in the Sagnarigu district, the FGDs and KIIs relayed reasons that were somewhat peculiar to the district. They identified lack of husbands' support for wives, weak family ties, lack of economic empowerment of women, less education of women family pressure on women and girls not to report violence perpetrated against them and over-dependence on men as some of the factors of GBV for women. Sagnarigu shared a few reasons for GBV with the Nabdram district. The two districts reported that women encroaching on men's space, resource distribution and women seen as men's property were among other factors accounting for women's experience of violence. However, factors peculiar to the Nabdram district hinged on lack of empowerment; irresponsibility on the part of men, and forced marriage as causes of violence.

On the contrary, the Nadowli/Kaleo and Nabdram districts did not share common reasons for violence except for those that were general to the three districts. This research found a few factors for violence that were unique to the Nadowli/Kaleo district. The community level factors identified in the district were lack of response to education on GBV; gender stereotyping; gossips; improper dressing of women and girls in public places and disrespect for men's authority as causes for violence against women. Similarly, the study observed there were some factors common to the Nadowli/Kaleo and Sagnarigu districts at the community level of the ecological model. Both FGDs and KIIs respondents in these two districts reported that factors such as community acceptance of violence as a way of disciplining erring women and girls; lack of law enforcement and social sanctioning of violence; family and peer influences contributed to GBV against women in their communities.

### 5.3.4 Societal level factors

According to the ecological model theorists (Heise, 1998, 1999, 2011; Krug et al., 2002), the societal level seeks to investigate the broad set of cultural values and beliefs systems that permeate and inform the other three layers of the social ecology. They argue that the societal level factors operate through their influence on factors and structures down in the system. At this level, most feminist discourse and theorizing on gender-based violence against women recognize patriarchy as one of the main factors fuelling GBV. Meaning that a nested ecological approach to understanding GBV acknowledges the centrality and importance of societal level factors like male dominance. In addition, it emphasizes the interrelationship of patriarchal beliefs and values and other factors elsewhere in the framework as accountable to GBV against women (Heise, 1998; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007, Krug *et al*, 2002). Against this backdrop, the study examines the societal level factors associated with the perpetration of violence against women, bearing in mind that the factors at this level interrelate with other factors across the ecological model.

The findings from FGDs and KIIs across the districts suggested that cultural and traditional perceptions about females; social norms and roles, lack of education for most women and girls; unemployment; poverty; unequal power between women and men; and women refusing men sex, were key predictors of male abuse of women and girls in their communities. Regarding the Sagnarigu district, it was found that weak family ties, lack of economic empowerment, women's low status of education, high social class children, family pressure on females not to report violence and over-dependence of women on men, were among factors causing GBV against women. The research, however, indicated that the Sagnarigu and Nabdham districts, apart from the common factors across the three districts, had common societal level factors associated with women violence victimization. Common factors were resource distribution; lack of empowerment for women; multiple sex partners and women's show of equality with men, were reasons given for GBV against women in the two districts.

Data showed factors at the societal level that were unique to the Nabdham districts. The FGDs and KIIS reported the irresponsibility of men, alcohol abuse and women being seen as the property of men, as predictors of GBV. One factor that was common to the Nabdham and Nadowli/Kaleo district, was the lack of empowerment for women. On the contrary, the

analysis of data in the Nadowli/Kaleo suggests that GBV against women and girls stems from gender stereotyping; gossips, lack of response to GBV education, improper dressing by women and disrespect for men's authority. The findings in this district on factors enabling violence against women at the societal level of the ecological model, share some commonality with the Sagnarigu district. The two districts identified society's acceptance of violence as a form of disciplining females; lack of law enforcement against perpetrators and family and peer influences as some of the reasons for male violence in the communities.

In this subsection, the researcher used the ecological model to identify causal factors across the individual, relationship, community and societal levels that are interrelated and interact to produce gender-based violence against women. The study observed that some of the factors associated with violence were mentioned in either one, two or three or across the different levels. At the individual level, this study found that factors such as unequal power between women and men; lack of education or low educational attainment for women; poverty and unemployment were key predictors of GBV. With reference to the relationship level, factors like women refusing males partners sex; polygamy; poor communication; lack of education; poverty; unemployment; unequal power between women and men; and women trying to be equal to men were the causes for male violence and women and girls.

The study further found that at the community level of the ecological framework, gender violence against women and girls in the districts were rooted in the socio-cultural norms and roles; unequal power between women and men; women refusing sex; lack of education; poverty; unemployment and women asserting for equality with men. Finally, factors identified for violence at the societal level of the framework were a cultural and traditional perceptions about females; unequal power between women and men; lack of education; poverty and unemployment for both women and men. Surprisingly, no focus group participants or informants across the study sites mentioned the media (television, radio, and video) as possible drivers of GBV. However, according to the ecological model, societal level factors include media, especially television, radio, and films that portray negative images of women as sex objects, weak, submissive, but portray men as brave, managers, powerful and daring.

#### **5.4 Consequences of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against women and girls**

In this section, the consequences of GBV are discussed within the ecological framework (Heise, 1998; Ellsberg et al., 2000). Gender based violence at any of the levels across the social ecology has serious repercussions within societies. These include health, human rights, developmental and human security implications, not only for the individual survivor, but also for families, communities and the general society at large (WHO, 2012; WHO, 2010; Thomas and Tiessen, 2010; Shannon et al., 2009; Humphrey, 2007; Silverman et al., 2006; Russo and Pirlott, 2006). These consequences of GBV on women and girls range from the immediate to long-term impacts (FAO Guidance Note, 2007). The aim is therefore to understand the impact of GBV on women and girls in relation to their general health and reproductive health and socio-economic development. The results obtained from key informants and focus group participants on the consequences of gender-based violence are shown in table 5.8.

**Table 5. 8: Perceptions on consequences of GBV (FGDs and KIIs)**

Consequences of GBV	Sagnarigu District				Nabdam District				Nadowli/Kaleo District			
	IL	RL	CL	SL	IL	RL	CL	SL	IL	RL	CL	SL
Women and girls relegated to the background	x		x	x								
Maiming of victims/Bruise/injuries	x	x							x	x		
Suicide or suicide attempts	x											
Limits educational attainment/ illiteracy	x	x	x	x	x				x			
Sickness/injury	x	x	x	x					x	x		
The individual coils back /withdrawal	x	x										
Depression	x	x							x			
Lack of development	x	x	x	x	x		x	x				
Lack of power	x	x	x	x								
Continuous violent attacks	x	x										
Timid and non-assertive	x	x			x							
Prostitution									x		x	x
Traumatized	x	x										
Madness	x	x							x	x		
Feeling of rejection	x	x							x	x		
Low self-esteem and confidence	x	x	x	x								
Lack of independence	x	x	x	x								
Death	x	x							x			
Lack of concentration	x	x										
No unity in the home		x								x		
Children likely to drop out of school		x	x	x						x		
Child delinquency/ become street children		x	x	x						x	x	x
Broken homes	x	x										
Retard family progress	x	x										
Loss of interest	x	x										
Limited livelihood option and choice	x	x	x	x								
Teenage pregnancy	x	x								x	x	x
Lack of power and decision making	x	x	x	x								
Dependence on males		x	x									
Divorce and or separation/ broken marriages	x	x								x	x	
Fear	x	x										
Disgrace	x	x										
Loss of dignity	x	x										
Poverty	x	x	x	x		x	x	x			x	x
Destroys families		x										
Abortions and miscarriages	x	x										
Stealing/ armed robbery							x	x			x	x
Lawlessness							x	x				

**Key: Individual level=IL, Relationship level=RL, Community level=CL, Societal level=SL**

Results from Table 5.8 shows that at each level of the ecological framework, there are health related effects, reproductive effects, economic effects and psychological effects on women and girls in the three districts. Results obtained from respondents from Sagnarigu district indicated that at the individual and relationship levels, the health related effects of gender-based violence include sickness, injuries, suicide and death. In addition, the reproductive effects included teenage pregnancy, abortion and miscarriage. Furthermore, poverty, lack of development, over-dependence of women on men and limited livelihood options are some of the economic effects. Psychologically speaking, the effects highlighted included a feeling of rejection, low self-esteem and dignity, a lack of concentration, as well as varied forms of mental illness, and disgrace. Other individual effects worth mentioning are the lack of educational opportunities leading to limited educational attainment, lack of independence and lack of power in decision-making. At the community and societal levels, health issues such as poor health status and injuries were noted as emanating from gender based violence. The psychological effects encompassed low self-esteem and lack of independence. Of the economic effects, poverty, lack of power in decision-making, limited livelihood options and child delinquency were noted.

Furthermore, results obtained from Nabdam district indicated that, at the individual level, the psychological effect manifested as timidity and non-assertiveness in females, while at the relationship level, poverty was indicated as the consequence of gender based violence. At the community and societal level, the result shows that there is a lack of development leading to stealing and armed robbery and lawlessness in the community. In addition, results obtained from key informants and focused group participants within Nadowli/Kaleo district, indicated that at the individual level, the health-related effects included death, maiming of victims and sickness whilst at the relationship level, teenage pregnancy was a notable reproductive health effect. Psychologically, respondents attested to having a feeling of rejection. Other ascertained effects included divorce, children dropping out of school and child delinquency. Moreover, at the community and societal levels, socio-economic effects of poverty were ascertained and these are stealing/armed robbery, prostitution and teenage pregnancy.

The findings on the consequences of gender-based violence within the study area demonstrated that along the ecological framework, women and girls are the victims of such acts. Similar findings from Cofie, (2015), Issahaku, (2012), and WHO, (2010) indicated that

the short-term effects of gender-based violence may manifest through sickness, bruises and school dropout while the long-term effects may be death, madness, divorce, societal delinquency, teenage pregnancy and contraction and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV. Again, WHO, (2009), Baccini et al., (2003) and Krug et al., (2002) attest to the findings obtained from the study area that gender-based violence has direct and indirect effects on the community and society. Such direct effects included prostitution, school dropout, and loss of women and girls' self-esteem and assertiveness to participate in socio-political activities, madness and death whilst the indirect effects were the destruction of families and continuous and violent attacks.

Although there is a dual discourse surrounding gender-based violence, and that both men and women claim victimhood (Archer, 2002; White et al., 2000), the findings of this study are in contradiction to those posited by Archer (2002) and White et al (2000). In northern Ghana, the impact of GBV is asymmetrical where most women and girls are the abused. Women may only resort to violence as a defensive tool rather than an offensive act, often following repeated assaultive attacks by their male partners (Dobash et al., 1992; Heise et al., 1994; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005).

Despite the plethora of international and national efforts, the issue of gender-based violence remains a significant social pandemic in the northern Ghana. This might be due to the patriarchal nature of the country (WHO, 2009). Women and girls are at the receiving end of the consequences of gender-based violence be it health, reproductive, economic, educational and psychological. Gender-based violence against women affects the productivity of women and overall socio-economic development. The participants recognized that affected women are unable to educate themselves to a higher level or engage themselves in viable economic ventures outside the home or community because some husbands will restrict them. One of the informants expressed that:

*“violence against women was likely to result in divorce, irresponsible upbringing of children, broken homes, armed robbery and streetism among children with negative consequences on the society”* (Nabdum, KII, 2014).

*“Economically it affects people, women, in particular, who could have contributed much if they were given the chance to continue their education and career, just like the men ok”* (Media staff, U/E, 2014)

The story in Box 2 summarizes how GBV against women affects their development and contributions to family, community and society as a whole.

Box 2.

GBV first and foremost retards development, look it might be the woman who is catering for the children and if she is banished from the community the children's education will be stopped like that and nobody is prepared to help them. It also tends to perpetuate violence and poverty. For example, when you look at the cases that come to the commission, most them are witchcraft cases involving women.

A woman, I remember that was case came to us in 2012, but finally, I got the woman back into the community in August this year, 2014. She was sent away from the community to Tamale here, leaving the husband and children in that community and then they had nobody to cook for them. The children's education even had to stop. That was the Tigu community on the Yendi road the woman was banished from, just because somebody claimed to have overheard this woman say that the way this man died, that is the way that other man will die. This accused lady said no, she did not mention that, but the community said the fact that someone overheard you, we will no longer stay with you. So she had to be sent away from the community. Our (CHRAJ) intervention reintegrated her, but that was after the children had already gone through a lot of hard time.

Then there was another one at Nyankpala where the Nyankpala chief banished that woman together with the entire family for the fact that a girl complained of stomach problems and that they believed that the accused woman gave her meat that she ate over a year earlier, and that it was now reacting, so the woman and her entire family (they were about 17 in the household) were all sent out of the Nyankpala community for about a year. Our intervention threatened to take the matter to court; the chief has now agreed for the woman and her family to come back to the community.

Women who could have worked productively to take care of their children in the family have not been able to as they have been abused physically and psychologically. This renders them ineffective members of their families and communities. Inherently, children who could have been educated to impact positively on society are likely to drop out of school because the mother is not there at home to help. These women who could have productively been working and contributing to society's economic growth are robbed of that opportunity. Not only are abused women's contributions to the family, community and society undermined by GBV, their participation in development activities are limited by abusive partners. The worst-case scenarios are situations where men threaten or assault their wives, should they be found in any project that empowers them. Participants reported that some

men in society are so controlling that they will do whatever it takes to prevent their female partners from being empowered socially and economically.

## **5.5 Emerging themes**

This section pulls together the findings on the nature and the scope of GBV against women and girls by discussing them thematically.

### *GBV perceived as marriage issue*

Firstly, the participants' construction of GBV was linked to both women and men in intimate relationships. Where there is misunderstanding or conflict between conjugal relationships, most men use any form of violence to resolve it. This perspective of GBV by the participants obscured the significance of GBV, by only limiting it to females and males in sexual relationships. Thus, it accounts for many people in Northern Ghana perceiving GBV against women and girls as a family and even a private matter between husband and wife(s) which should be kept secret until it dies out.

### *GBV perceived as gender and power issue*

This study further observed that GBV was perceived to have a gender dimension. The respondents linked violence to the sex/gender of the person and a power issue between women and men, where men wielding power use violence against women in order to maintain their dominance in both social and gendered relationships. On the other hand, the research respondents conceived women as lacking the power to assert themselves or challenge male violence because of socio-cultural role expectations for women towards men. Across the three districts however, both male and female participants felt that GBV against women and girls was a serious problem affecting women and girls, although some of them tried to blame women and girls for it.

### *Forms and incidents of GBV against women and girls*

This study found that gendered violence against women and girls was prevalent and manifested in various forms across the districts. Psychological violence was recognized as predominant, followed by physical violence. Sexual and economic violence were also reported to be pervasive across the three districts.

### *Violence as a means of correcting erring women and girls*

This study gathered information from focus group discussions and informants that shows that in Northern Ghana, violence is perceived as a way of chastising women, especially women who failed to subscribe to the feminine norms and roles enacted by her community and society. As such, most men (holding to masculine ideals), were at liberty to use any form of physical violence: slaps, pushes, kicks, hits and battery. For instance, it was observed during discussions and interviews that it was common for male perpetrators to slap and hit their female partners for failing to prepare meals at the right time for the family. Even when it was obvious that the woman was overburdened with other duties. As mentioned in the analysis, this single fact of failing to cook food on time could lead to the perpetrator using psychological violence by way of refusing to eat the food prepared by the wife and even refusing to communicate with his wife for days. On the grounds of women failing to cook food on time, perpetrators might follow up with economic abuse by denying them money for household maintenance.

Violence as a means of chastising women has serious implications for both males and females living within the socio-cultural context of Northern Ghana. The society expects men to correct or discipline their erring female partners. However, the cultural norms do not endorse men to use weapons such as machetes, guns, knives and even sticks on women who are considered weak. Therefore, the use of weapons to cause serious injury or death of female partners is unacceptable in society. This notwithstanding, there were reports of isolated female partner fatalities in some communities. Generally, slaps, kicks, shoving, hitting and dragging or choking, were the mechanisms used to discipline women and girls in Northern Ghana.

Likewise, most women and girls within the Northern Ghana culture, consider a husband's refusal to communicate to a wife or refusal to eat her meals as a sign of disgrace, shame and a possible object of ridicule by her rivals (especially in polygamous settings) and other members of the wider community. It is always likely the woman becomes the centre of gossip among rivals and community members. Culturally, social norms place demand on women to cook for their husbands as and when the need arises. A woman's preparation of food for her husband is linked to access to the marital bed or to sexual intimacy with him, especially in polygamous marriages where wives have access to the husband for sexual

activities in turns. Therefore, a husband's refusal to eat a wife's food automatically becomes a denial of sexual intimacy. Should the rejection of a wife's food persist, she becomes a mockery of a wife among her rivals and family members. Respondents observed in the study that a husband's frequent rejection of meals prepared by a wife eroded the dignity of women, as it implied failure in the performance of their socially prescribed roles and responsibility to feed men and implying further that such women were not properly socialized into their feminine roles for marriage. The refusal of meals by a husband has serious consequences for the stability of marriages. Some husbands' refusal to talk or eat a wife's meals were sometimes associated with suspicion of food being poisoned or witchcraft. Most women and girls accused of witchcraft are often banished from their marital homes and, in some extreme cases, beaten to death. In consonance with the ecological model, the study found that there were linkages between the individual relationship, the community and in societal influences on GBV against women and girls in Northern Ghana.

### *Polygamy*

The study identified polygamy as the major cause of GBV against women at all levels of the ecological model across all the districts. In Northern Ghana, society does not frown on polygamy because men are traditionally entitled to marry more than one wife. Within this cultural arrangement, women have no right to complain or resist a man marrying or dating other women. Failure to tolerate this is most likely to incur the wrath of her husband, and for that matter, the family and society. Put differently, cheating husbands are accepted and tolerated in society, but the other way around is unacceptable within the ambit of this culture. Respondents associated the inability of some husbands to fulfil their sexual obligation to their wives as a cause of violence. It was noted that failure to satisfy their wives sexual desires is frustrating and to cover this up, husbands resorted to unprovoked verbal and physical assault. The respondent observed that polygamous marriages were characterized by quarrels among wives competing for husbands' love and access to his wealth and other resources for themselves and for their children.

The respondents reported that this has often led to older wives leaving the marriage because of maltreatment (verbal, physical, emotional, or economic abuse) by some husbands. The acceptance of polygamy in the northern parts of Ghana compels women to submit themselves to their husbands, notwithstanding their husband's abusive behaviours, for fear of losing their husbands to other women, as unmarried or divorced women are stigmatized.

### *Gender inequality*

Another serious cause of GBV against women was gender inequality, also described by female participants as unequal power between women and men (see chapter 4). This factor is a predictor of violence against women in an intimate relationship within the ‘individual’, ‘relationship’, ‘community’ and ‘societal’ levels of the ecological model. The patriarchal ideologies embedded in the social structures operating in northern Ghana allocate more power to men relative to women. As the female respondents noted during focus group discussions, the society has sustained the belief that men are the heads of households and therefore superior to women. In this context, society also expects women to accept male dominance as a social reality that requires women to be submissive to their male counterparts.

The study also observed from focused discussions and key informants that gender inequality has contributed to women’s low position and status within the family and social hierarchy. As a result, in Northern Ghana, many women and girls do not have the opportunity to take part in decision-making processes, whether in the family or in social matters that affect them directly or indirectly. It is the decision(s) of husbands or males in the family or society that hold. The implication of this is that women who stand to argue or oppose the decision of their husbands or other males in the family or community setting are likely to provoke violence against themselves. Forms of violence can be physical (slaps, hits, shoves, kicks, chokes and use of weapons), psychological (name calling, witchcraft accusations, verbal insults, humiliation, husband refusal to communicate or eat food prepared by the said woman and threats), economic (refusal to give money for household consumables, cessation of IGAs and access to land for productive work) and sexual (forced sex). In northern Ghana, it is possible that women who argue and or have divergent views on husbands’ decisions are likely to encounter two or more forms of abuse simultaneously.

Gender disparity and patriarchy are not only causes of GBV against women, but also, limit women’s agency to leave abusive relationships. Power disparities further limit women and girls from accessing higher education, access to and control over resources for productive work (see chapter 4 for details on gender inequality). Inherently, most women and girls depend on males for survival even at the personal level. For married women, the lack of education leading to lack of gainful employment and limited livelihoods options, have

culminated in their over-dependence on husbands as both a cause and consequence of GBV against women and girls. On the other hand, men who are household heads and fail to provide for the maintenance of the family because of unemployment coupled with poverty and social pressures, then use violence to maintain control over their women.

*Women and girls' experience and vulnerability to gendered violence*

The findings from this study pointed to the fact that most women lack agency to manoeuvre their way through in gendered relationships in Northern Ghana. The risk factors that interact variously at the individual, relationship, community and societal levels of the ecological model to predict violence for women and girls perpetuates their further experiences and vulnerability to gendered violence both in private and public arenas. The study demonstrated that there is a strong link between factors predictive of violence and females' vulnerability. For instance, in the Upper East (Frafras, Nabdams, Kussis, Kasinas, and Talensi) and West regions (Dagaatis, Sisaalas) of Northern Ghana, men use dowry (bride price) in the form of livestock and other items to marry their wives. Therefore, within the cultural context women become the property of their husbands and families. As a result, a husband at the least conflict with the wife would say, "*Remember I bought you*". In such situations, women are obliged to live through any ordeal in conjugal relationships even if such relationships are abusive. Wives cannot take a decision to leave because her abandonment of such a relationship would have implications for her parents. In short, many women in such unpleasant circumstances are forced to remain in abusive marriages and become more susceptible to all forms of gendered violence in the name of dowry.

Similarly, issues of women and girls' low or non-existent educational attainment and unemployment, coupled with poverty have also contributed to their experiences and continuous vulnerability to GBV in Northern Ghana. Data from the study suggested that most of the abused women and girls were predominantly illiterate "*In fact, these class of women are the poor, uneducated*". The fact is that women and girls who fall into this category, tend to have limited livelihood choices and options. This dependence on men tends to widen already existing power disparity between women and men. Therefore, some men who feel entitled to the female body, exercise their power through violence to maintain the status quo. Meanwhile, women who are the recipients of abuse may continue in abusive intimate partner relationships because of socio-economic predicaments.

Additionally, socio-cultural norms, roles and beliefs still permeate the lives of most women and men in the study area. As earlier noted, social norms and roles enacted in communities of Northern Ghana place women on the lower scale of the social hierarchy. Because of this placement, women are not expected to take part in decision-making. Nevertheless, they are expected to be submissive to husbands, fathers and other male members of society. Just as these cultural norms, require males to be assertive, manly, sexually active and brave. Females on their part are encouraged to be good wives, passive, submissive to husbands' authority without questions. Both men's and women's adherence to these social norms and assignment of roles disproportionately affects women. In the first instance, social norms in Northern Ghana stigmatize unmarried young women. They are sometimes called prostitutes, and this has ramifications for the young women and their family. For the fear of stigmatization and social ridicule, some young girls have been forced to marry into polygamous homes and may have to endure quarrels and abuse from both husband and rivals to save the family name or her perceived social dignity.

Again, cultural norms have contributed to the negative traditional practices against women and girls, especially in the Upper East and West regions. Respondents noted that despite government and non-governmental organizations interventions and the criminalization of Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP) such as FGM, harmful widowhood rites, early and forced marriage and girl abduction were still practised in communities with strong cultural beliefs surrounding these traditional practices. The participants described these HTPs as the basic reasons for female susceptibility to violence. What also came up strongly in this study was that the socio-cultural context that contributes to the vulnerability women and girls denies them the moral right to fight back if they were physically abused. For example, among the Mamprusis and Dagombas in the northern region, socialization on gender roles and norms, forbids females from insulting, talking back and or raising a hand to a man, especially her husband. It is considered abominable in the cultural sense.

An informant said:

*“A man can beat up the wife but no matter how strong a woman is she cannot; the society forbids it for her to lift her hand against the husband. So because of that, women have suffered domestic violence perpetrated by their husbands in silence”*  
(Gender Department staff, N/R, 2014).

This why most women in abusive relationships will rather take precautions when they anticipate that violence is imminent. Some of the pacification strategies women employ are

simply to wait until the man calms down, prepare delicious meals to appease the partner, create jokes or quietly leave the house and come back later when husband's temper has calmed down. This was pointed out by one participant who commented, "*The women speak politely to avoid their husbands' wrath*" meaning that if women do not behave well, husbands' violence is justified. The result of this culturally, is that most women in a conjugal relationship were found to be adhering to their gender ascribed roles and responsibilities handed over to them: that they should exhibit qualities such as humility, respect, tolerant and be submissive to male control and dominance (Apusigah, 2009), irrespective of violent situations. To conclude, women are often powerless in the face of a male partner's violent behaviour, such that they lack the capacity to stop or report such acts.

## **5.6 Summary**

This chapter discussed the gender-based violence (GBV), and women and girl's experiences and vulnerability to violence contexts for this study. Firstly, it explored the perceptions about GBV against women and girls. Secondly, the study outlined the forms of violence: physical, psychological, sexual and economic and their prevalence rates across the three districts of northern Ghana. This was followed by an examination of the causes of GBV and how factors across the ecological model operate and result in women and girls being susceptible to further violence. Additionally, it outlined the consequential impact of GBV on women and girls, at family and community levels and then concluded with emerging themes from key findings in the chapter.

## CHAPTER SIX: COMMUNICATION CONTEXT OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the communication context of Gender-Based Violence in Ghana, which is Sagnarigu, Nabdam and Nadowli districts of Northern Ghana as outlined in the conceptual map<sup>138</sup> through case study approach. The purpose of this is to understand the hierarchy of sources from which people accessed information about GBV in rural contexts; including the communication strategies encompassing functions, methods, tools and communication hierarchies. The discussion focuses on both the government's response to GBV as well as programs and communication strategies of the three-case study NGOs - GDCA operating in the Sagnarigu district; WOM in the Nabdam district and ProNet North in the Nadowli/Kaleo district. The discussion draws upon findings from questionnaires, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions, Observation, secondary data and document review. The process of analysis adapts both SPSS – descriptive statistics and content analysis of documents review. Evidence gathered suggests that most people tend to have ready access to communication and information about GBV against women and girls in the study communities of Northern Ghana. Radio, a media oriented channel is the most common and accessible, important and trusted source of information, providing information and communication about GBV regardless of gender. The chief's palace is however, a very significant source of information for women as traditional authorities strongly uphold the rights of women in their areas of jurisdiction.

Generally, the study also found that most government agencies and the three case study NGOs had very limited specific GBV projects, and were not acquainted with written communication strategies and theories in the planning and implementation of GBV programs. However, it is imperative to note that, evaluating the effectiveness of GBV communication strategies was beyond the scope of this study.

Following the introduction, this remainder of the chapter is broken into six main sections in order to satisfy the questions under the objective. The first section identifies general sources of information in the study area in order to assess respondents' access to information about GBV. It provides answers to the types of messages received by program beneficiaries about

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<sup>138</sup> See chapter 2, section 2.10 (Figure 2.1).

GBV to understand how they relate to the communication strategies used in responses to GBV. The second section examines Ghana government's response to combating GBV against women and girls with particular interest in the GBV interventions in the study area. The section also reviews whether and why certain communication strategies that have been employed in communicating GBV to particular beneficiary groups. In section three, the focus shifts to the activities of the three case NGOs operating in northern Ghana to explore the extent to which their communicative strategies have used to combat GBV in the three northern regions.

## **6.2 General sources of information and access to information about GBV**

This section assesses general sources of information in the districts to establish both internal and external sources familiar to the populace. This is important to understand whether the communication strategies that have been used to deliver GBV messages were identical with those respondents say they accessed GBV information from. Particularly, it focuses on sources in relation to access to information and communication about GBV, and types of messages accessed. The essence is to explore how these sources can enhance GBV communication in Northern Ghana. The information used for this analysis is drawn from the question; in your community where do you get information/news from? The results on sources of information by study districts are presented in Table 6.1., and where possible was triangulated with FGDs and KIIs responses for the discussion in this section.

### **6.2.1 General sources of information**

It is suggested that friends, family, co-workers, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, market places, community meetings, churches, mosques and many other sources offer information that may help individuals or groups become informed on issues and feel empowered (Rains, 2007; Kivits, 2004; Dolan et al., 2004; Anderson, 2004; Brashers, Goldsmith and Hsieh, 2002; Johnson and Meischke, 1993; Napoli, 2001). Brashers et al (2002) and Johnson and Meischke (1993) explain that in an environment in which diversity of sources are available, information seeking is bound to occur. Thus, this study sought to ascertain sources from which people in the research locations access information. The results from questionnaire responses are presented in Table 6.1. and discussed by districts.

**Table 6. 1: Common sources of information in the districts (counts)**

Information sources	Sagnarigu			Nabdram			Nadowli/ Kaleo		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Radio	20	38	58	19	19	38	16	24	40
Community meetings	1	0	1	6	6	12	0	10	10
Chief's house	7	17	24	6	20	26	5	13	18
Drinking bars	-	-	-	1	0	1	-	-	-
Market	2	2	4	8	7	15	0	2	2
Friends	1	0	1	3	0	3	1	1	2
Television	16	31	47	7	3	10	7	2	9
Mobile phone	-	-	-	1	0	1	-	-	-
Information van				1	0	1	1	0	1
Hospital	1	0	1	0	1	1	-	-	-
School	-	-	-	1	0	1	2	0	2
Church/Mosque	3	13	17	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Source:** Field survey, 2014. N = 178 (M= 60 male, F= 118)  
N = Number of respondents, M = Males and F = Females

### **GDCA - Sagnarigu district**

The findings from questionnaires responses (Table 6.1), Key informant interviews<sup>139</sup> (KIIs) and focus group discussions<sup>140</sup> (FGDs) demonstrated that people in the Sagnarigu district generally access information from diverse sources such as radio, television, chief's house and churches/mosques. However, radio and television were the most common sources of information, with radio scoring the highest responses. See also Appendix 5 for details on FGDs communication mapping on information sources. The study observed that more women than men access information from the radio, television, chief's house and the mosque.

<sup>139</sup> Interview with 4 GDCA development practitioners, 1 NCCE officer, 1 Gender department officer, 1 Social Welfare officer, 2 religious and community leaders and 5 media practitioners in Sagnarigu district, 2014.

<sup>140</sup> Focus group activity (6) in Sagnarigu and Fuo communities, 2014.

### **WOM - Nabdam district**

The findings from FGDs<sup>141</sup>, KIIs<sup>142</sup> and questionnaires<sup>143</sup>, demonstrated similar results to that of the Sagnarigu district. People in Nabdam district obtain information/news from different sources. However, radio and chiefs' houses were the most common sources of information in the area (see Table 6.1). Additionally, sources such as the market place, community meetings and television also serve as important sources of information. The female respondents recognized chiefs' house as an important source of information.

### **ProNet North - Nadowli/Kaleo**

Findings from FGDs, KIIs and questionnaires indicate that the, radio was overwhelmingly the common source of information for both males and females in Nadowli/Kaleo district. While more males obtain information from television, female participants reported obtaining information from the chiefs' houses and community meetings (Table 6.1).

### **6.2.2 Access and information source about GBV**

This section assesses views of respondents as to whether people have access to information about GBV and from which source they access such information. The results from the questionnaire on sources about GBV across the three districts are presented in Table 6.2. Access to information about GBV and Communication map for local, district, regional and national/international sources of information on GBV.

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<sup>141</sup> Group activity (6) 2 only females, 2 males only and 2 mixed (females and males) focus groups discussions in Zanlerigu and Sakote, 2014;

<sup>142</sup> Key informant interviews with

<sup>143</sup> Questionnaires responses from 40 females and 20 males at Zanlerigu and Sakote communities in Nabdam district.

**Table 6. 2: Sources from which respondents access information about GBV**

Source of information about GBV	Sagnarigu			Nabdam			Nadowli/Kaleo		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Radio	22	22	44	11	9	20	14	22	36
Community members/Friends	1	0	1	-	-	-	2	26	28
Church/Mosque	8	8	16	-	-	-	1	0	1
Television	12	10	22	1	2	3	7	0	7
Chief house	6	6	12	1	3	4	0	1	1
Community meetings/ forum	0	6	6	0	2	2	1	5	6
Drinking bars	-	-	-	0	1	1	-	-	-
Health Centre	-	-	-	0	1	1	-	-	-
Women's association	-	-	-	0	2	2	-	-	-
Market	-	-	-	1	3	4	0	1	1
Workshops	-	-	-	1	0	1			
Newspaper	-	-	-	-	-		1	0	1
School	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0	1

Source: Field survey, 2014. N = 115 (M =45, F = 70)

### GDCA – Sagnarigu

Findings from the survey questionnaires indicate an overwhelming number of respondents (88%) reported that people have obtained information about GBV. This was a confirmation to what was reported by FGDs and KIIs respondents in the district. For instance, in many of the group meetings and informant interviews, they asserted that many people know or have heard about how some men beat their wives and children. GBV against women and girls is widespread in the Sagnarigu district (section 5.2), and many people are aware of it (Issahaku, 2012; Mba, 2008; Amoakohene, 2004). Both male and female respondent reported that radio is the most common source of information was also the source from which they access information about GBV. Importantly, more females than males acknowledged community meetings/fora as means of obtaining information about GBV. This was further substantiated in the questionnaire findings. Most of the respondents identified radio as the most common sources of information on GBV related issues in Table 6.2.

During the FGDs<sup>144</sup>, participants were asked to use communication mapping<sup>145</sup> to identify local, district, regional and national/international sources of information on GBV. Radio is again found to be the most common source of information about GBV related issues from the local, district and regional levels. Radio stations from which GBV related matters includes Diamond FM, Filla FM, Radio Justice, Zaa Radio, Bishara Radio, Mighty FM, GBC Radio Savannah, Radio Simli and North Star FM. The coverage of these radio stations covers most of the case study communities. Participants indicated that occasionally, they obtain information from external sources such as TV, Ghanaian, Nigerian and foreign films and national news.

### **WOM - Nabdam district**

Results on Table 6.2 indicate that 62% of people in Nabdam district obtain information on GBV related issues from diverse sources<sup>146</sup>. Radio was found to be the predominant sources of information on GBV related matters in the district (Table 6.2). In addition, female respondents expressed that they obtained information on GBV related matters from community meetings, women's associations and health centres.

Findings from FGDs with women only in Zanlerigu and Sakote communities indicate that women obtain information on GBV related matters from community and associations' meetings organized by their leaders, health workers, NGOs, and government agencies such as NCCE of DOVVSU.

### **ProNet North - Nadowli/Kaleo district**

Findings from Nadowli/Kaleo district reveal a high proportion (79%)<sup>147</sup> of people obtaining information on GBV and related matters in the district. Radio is the predominant source of information, community members/friends, television and public education are also common sources. From the responses, it is clear that more women than men obtain information about GBV from radio, followed by community members and/or friends and through public

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<sup>144</sup> Sagnarigu and Fuo communities' male only, female only and mixed focus groups discussions

<sup>145</sup> Group Activity on Communication sources mapping SAGNARIGU, September, 2014.

<sup>146</sup> Zanlerigu and Sakote male only, female only and mixed focus group 1, 2,3,4, 5 and 6 discussions and activities reported source such as Radio, chief house, market places, community meeting, friends and women's associations

<sup>147</sup> Questionnaire responses (20 males and 40 female) from Zambogu and Janguasi in the Nadowli/Kakeo district (see Appendix 6.5)

education in the area (see Table 6.2). In the FGDs and activities<sup>148</sup>, respondents were asked to do communication mapping showing local, district, regional and national/international sources of information on GBV and related matters. It confirmed further that radio is the dominant source of information on GBV and related issues. The respondents identified local radio channels such as radio Upper West and Radio Progress. Other sources mentioned in the local area included community members/friends, chiefs' houses, local markets, mosques, churches. Some respondents also indicated that they obtain such information during activities such as fetching firewood, funerals, weddings and child naming ceremony. At the district, regional and national/international levels, the participants identified radio, television and films/movies as their sources of information on GBV and related issues.

### 6.2.3 Types of messages heard about GBV in each of the three districts

This sub-section explores the types of message heard by the study communities the view questionnaire respondents. The results are presented in Table 6.3. Responses that had less than 2 as total count were not considered.

**Table 6. 3: Types of messages respondents heard about GBV in study districts**

Types of messages on GBV	Sagnarigu			Nabdram			Nadowli/Kaleo		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Report violence	3	10	13	3	0	3	-	-	-
Physical violence (beating, slapping, kicking)	9	26	35	4	3	7	2	1	3
Psychological violence	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sexual violence (rape, forced sex, harassment)	2	14	16	-	-	-	1	2	3
Respect for women	1	1	2	0	2	2	-	-	-
Support and encourage women	4	4	3	1	1	2	-	-	-
How to avoid violence	1	12	13	-	-	-	-	-	-
Education on human rights	1	2	3	1	2	3	-	-	-
Girl child education (vocational, send girl child to school)	2	3	5	3	2	5	-	-	-
Equal education for all	-	-	-	1	4	5	-	-	-
Right to womanhood	-	-	-	0	13	13	-	-	-
Stop GBV in the family	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	-
Violence against women and children	-	-	-	1	6	7	-	-	-
Boy go to school whiles girls are given to marriage	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	2
Roles and responsibilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	4	4
Child labour and trafficking	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	0	17
Female genital mutilation	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	0	7

#### Field survey, 2014

<sup>148</sup> Zambogu and Janguasi communities focus group activity 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 on sources of accessing GBV information.

### **GDCA - Sagnarigu district**

Findings from FGDs and survey questionnaires suggest people in the Sagnarigu district have heard messages/information on GBV and related issues. Messages and/or information heard about GBV included “report violence”; “physical violence”; “sexual violence”; “don’t beat or hurt your wives”; and “how to avoid violence”. Most importantly, the predominant messages about GBV were on physical and sexual violence (see chapter 5). Interestingly, women and men have different interests in the kind of information they hear and internalize about GBV. More women reported on matters that relates to their victimization, infringement of their rights and low social status. In other words, the female responses captured more on matters such as “boys and girls should do the same household chores”, “report violence”, “physical, psychological and sexual violence” and “education on human rights” as shown in Table 6.3.

The types of messages and/or information accessed about GBV (see Table 6.3) are mostly aimed at behaviour and attitudinal change. This included messages on physical violence such as; “stop beating women”, “don’t beat to hurt women” and “beating a partner may cause death” and “sexual violence”. Importantly, very few research respondents in the district reported on messages such as: where to find support for women or GBV victims, encouragement, human rights and girls education.

### **GDCA - Nabdham District**

Types of messages heard about GBV in the Nabdham district reveal that messages bordered on gender violence and equality issues. Specifically, both male and female questionnaire responses (Table 6.3) showed that common messages heard about GBV were “education on violence against women and children”, “stop violence”, “stop beating women” and “stop violence in the family” and information on “where GBV victims can seek support”. Other messages reported were “send the girl child to school”, “equal education for all” and “equal human rights”. Female respondents<sup>149</sup> reported that they have heard message on “right to womanhood”; “respect for women”, “beating women is degrading” and “equity and equality in sharing resources”. This finding agreed with what was found with the focus group discussants in the communities. The message on “Right to Motherhood” gained the highest

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<sup>149</sup> Zanlerigu and Sakote questionnaire female respondents and female only focus group discussions

attention from FGDs<sup>150</sup> and KIs<sup>151</sup> respondents, who explained that there are a series of radio programs that bring resource persons to some of the radio stations to discuss matters affecting women's reproductive wellbeing and violence against women. Some of the focus group respondents<sup>152</sup> explained

*Every week we hear from the radio stations about how women are to visit the clinic regularly when they are pregnant; they should eat good food containing protein and lots of vegetables; have enough rest; husbands should try to help in house chores and not beat their wives*

This kind of narration brings to the fore how this program on womanhood tries to educate women on their reproductive health, while chipping issues of gender violence. The participants argued that this program has been effective in teaching women and men simple topics on reproductive health and gender violence and has helped to reduce domestic conflicts. However, male participants did not report hearing messages about “right to womanhood”. Rather, they reported on hearing about causes of GBV. This finding suggests that males might only be interested in listening to messages that highlights female violence to justify their violence against women, and that violence is reciprocal and normal between intimate partners (Kelly and Johnson, 2008; Dutton and Corvo, 2006; Johnson, 2006; Dutton and Nicholls, 2005).

Findings in the Nabdam district, indicated that 62% of research participants have access to information on GBV and related issues. Radio is the most common and predominant source of information on GBV and related matters among communities in the case study districts. Women recognized community and women's association meetings as sources of accessing information about GBV in the communities. About messages heard on GBV and related issues, findings indicate that messages hinged on “education about GBV” and “equality issues”. These messages included “stop violence against women and children”, “stop beating and assaulting women” and “where victims/survivors can seek support”. Messages on equality and equality were; “send the girl child to school”, “equal education for all”, “beating women is degrading”, “equal control and sharing family resources” and “equal human rights for all”. Interestingly while female participants were interested in listening to messages that addresses their gendered relationships, rights and dignity, such as; “respect for women”,

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<sup>150</sup> Zanlerigu and Sakote communities group 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 focused discussions mentioned that they heard messages on right to womanhood

<sup>151</sup> Key informant interviews with 4 media practitioners and 3 WOM staff

<sup>152</sup> Group activity with FGDs group 7,9,11 and 12.

“beating women is degrading” and “equity in sharing resources” --- male participants were more interested in listening to messages on women’s violence against men such as; “causes of violence”.

### **ProNet North - Nadowli/Kaleo district**

Findings from FGDs<sup>153</sup>, KIIs<sup>154</sup>, and questionnaires<sup>155</sup>, reveal “child labour” to be the main message heard about GBV in the Nadowli/Kaleo district. Other key messages heard included female genital mutilation, child trafficking and bad maidservants, mainly reported by the male respondents. The female respondents on the other hand, although with very low responses mentioned they hear messages about “girls being given to marriage” while “boys go to school”, “effects of violence” and “measures women and men should take to stop violence against women”, “bad treatment of women” and “roles of men and women”. As earlier indicated in (section 6.2.2), respondents report that they hear these messages about GBV through diverse means like radio, television, community members/friends and community meetings among others. However, the dominant source of messages about GBV was through the radio.

Study findings reveal that the main source of communication and information on GBV and related matters was radio. The finding suggests that 79% of research respondents from the district obtain information on GBV and related matters within local communities and the district through the radio, community meetings and public educational fora. And while women are more likely to obtain information about GBV through radio, community meetings and public fora; men are more likely to obtain GBV information through television. Regarding the types of messages heard across the district, results indicate that women and men hear different types of messages. Whereas women heard messages on bad treatment of women by men; issues about gender roles and responsibilities; boys going to school while girls are given into marriages; sexual abuse and effects of violence, responses from males indicated message such as child labour and trafficking; female genital mutilation, men imprisoned for beating wives and gender equality. Imperatively, the overall findings on information sources and access to information about GBV across the three districts suggested some similarities and nuances discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

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<sup>153</sup> Zambogu and Janguasi male only, female only and mixed focus group discussion 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

<sup>154</sup> Key informant interview with 3 ProNet staff, 4 community female and male leaders

<sup>155</sup> Zambogu and Janguasi questionnaire responses (20 males and 40 females)

To summarize the section, radio was overwhelmingly the predominant source of obtaining all forms of information including information about GBV across the three districts. Comparatively, a higher proportion of the respondents in the Sagnarigu (88%) and Nadowli/Kaleo (78%) districts obtain information about GBV relative to the Nabdam (62%) district. In terms of gender, findings reveal that more females than males obtain information about GBV from other communication sources namely; chiefs' houses, market places, community meetings and/or friends and churches/mosques. Moreover, more women than men in the Sagnarigu and Nadowli/Kaleo districts have accessed information about GBV, with radio being the most common source of information.

Concerning the types of communication and information heard about GBV against women and girls, though there were nuances and messages unique to each district; one message was common "Physical violence" across the districts. All research respondents reported to have heard messages about stopping violence against women in their communities mainly through radio programs, community members and fora, religious worship places, chiefs' compounds and public campaigns. There were similar messages heard in both Sagnarigu and Nabdam districts. These included messages like "report violence", "education on respect for women"; "support and encourage women and girls", "girl child education/education for all" and "education on human rights of women". Notably, in the Nadowli/Kaleo district most of the messages the respondents heard about GBV are not heard in the other two districts except the message on stopping violence against women. In Nadowli/Kaleo district, responses were on messages that bordered on harmful traditional practices such as FGM, giving girls to marriage while boys go to school and measures to curb it the harmful practices. The reason for this uniqueness in messages about GBV in the district could be due to the high incidence of early child marriage, FGM, child defilement and trafficking in the Upper West region of Northern Ghana (Dery and Diedong, 2014; ActionAid, Ghana, 2007)<sup>156</sup>.

Following the establishment of information sources, and types of messages heard about GBV and related issues; the next section explores communication strategies used in communicating GBV.

### **6.3 Ghana government's response to GBV**

The section explores communication strategies used in response to GBV by government. Firstly, this study investigates the wider programming for government agencies concerned

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<sup>156</sup> Group discussion with 2 males only, 2 females only and 2 mixed (males and females).

with gender related issues and, the beneficiaries they are targeting with these programs. The conceptualization of communication strategies by Leeuwis (2008) and Cardey (2010) (see details in chapter 2.10) was used to understand the strategies each organization engages for addressing GBV against women and girls. These communication strategies were explored into detail, especially where formal communication strategy for communicating GBV was present. Essentially, Leeuwis (2008) and Cardey (2010) identify six communication strategies that intervention programming including gender based violence should bear in mind. These are, advisory communication, supporting horizontal knowledge exchange; generation of policy and technological innovations; conflict management; supporting organizational development and capacity building; and persuasive transfer of policy and/or technological innovations. Additionally, Leeuwis identifies four functions of communication namely: communication to raise awareness and consciousness; communication to explore views and issues; communication to inform and lastly communication to train. In a context (as was in the case of the research location) where there is a lack of sustainable and systematic communication intervention on GBV, adopting these communication strategies provides insights for actors to systematically plan, implement and monitor communication interventions aimed at addressing GBV against women and girls in a resource poor context. This observation lends credence to various studies across countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America which suggest that communication strategies are effective for addressing issues affecting women including gendered violence and HIV/AIDS vulnerability (Pulerwitz et al., 2010; Bank et al., 2008).

### **6.3.1 Government programmes**

It is suggested that many states recognize the importance of protecting violence victims from abuse and prosecuting perpetrators of the crime (UNICEF, 2000:10). Previous studies on GBV (Dery and Diedong, 2014; Cantalupo, Martin, Pak and Shin, 2006; Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2005; Amoakohene, 2004) have indicated that both past and present governments have responded variously to address GBV in the country since the recognition of its systematic nature and impact on women and girls in the late 1990s. Thus, this study aims to gauge out government programs or initiatives on combating GBV against women and girls in Ghana including the northern parts.

## **Ratification of international conventions and national laws**

From finding of key informant interviews<sup>157</sup> and document reviews<sup>158</sup>, the government has ratified both international conventions, treaties and laws and national laws prohibiting all forms of discriminations against women and girls including gendered violence against women and girls (Table 6.4).

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<sup>157</sup> Interviews with 4 staff of Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice in Bolga, Wa and Tamale, August to September, 2014. Interviews with 5 staff of Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service in Bolga, Wa and Tamale, August to September, 2014. Interviews with 3 staff of Department of Social Welfare in Bolga, Wa and Tamale, August to September, 2014. Interviews with 2 staff of Department of Gender in Tamale and Accra August and October, 2014. Interview with 1 staff of National Commission on Civic Education in Tamale, September 2014.

<sup>158</sup> Document reviews, The Role of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) in Promoting Public Service Accountability under Ghana's Fourth Republic. PILOT PROGRAM BASED BUDGET (PBB) FOR 2013-2015 COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE. Social Welfare and Community Development Training Manual, 2014. Violence against women in Ghana: a look at women's perceptions and review of policy and social responses, 2004. Service Users perceptions of Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit, Ghana Police Service, 2011.

**Table 6. 4: International/National conventions and laws adopted to fight GBV in Ghana**

Source (s)	Date	International conventions and law Ghana has ratified	Source (s)	Date	National laws on GBV enforced
Ampofo (2008:205)	1990	UN convention on the rights of the child (CRC)	Dery and Diedong (2014)	1992	The 1992 constitution of Ghana
		Universal declaration on human right	Adu-Gyamfi (2014)	1998	Children’s Act, 1998 (Act 554)
Ampofo (2008:405)	2000	International Covenant for Civic and Political Right	Adu-Gyamfi (2014)	2005	Human Trafficking Act, 2005 (Act 694)
Ampofo (2008:205)	2000	International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	Dery and Diedong (2014) Fundar (2015)	2007	Domestic violence Act, Act 732 of 2007
Ampofo (2008:205) Adu-Gyamfi (2014)		The Declaration Against all Forms of Violence Against Women (DEVAW)			
Ampofo (2008:205)	1986	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW)	Adu-Gyamfi (2014)		The Juvenile Justice Act
Adu-Gyamfi (2014)	2011	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	Adu-Gyamfi (2014)	1998	Criminal Code (Amended) Act, 1998 (Act 554)
Adu-Gyamfi (2014)	1961	Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention	Adu-Gyamfi (2014)	1960	The Criminal Offences Act (Act 29), 1960
Adu-Gyamfi (2014)		African Rights of the woman			
Ampofo (2008:205)		International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).			

The 1992 constitution of Ghana (Chapter 5) outlines the basic human rights and freedoms of Ghanaian citizens and particularly, the rights to be enjoyed by women. It stipulates that:

- women should not be discriminated against at any point or endeavour of life because of their gender;
- special care shall be accorded to mothers during a reasonable period before and after child-birth and during those periods, working mothers shall be accorded paid leave;
- facilities shall be provided for the care of children below school-going age to enable women, who have the traditional care for children, realize their full potential; and
- Women shall be guaranteed equal rights to training and promotion without any impediments from any person.

Notably, the 1992 constitution frowns on all forms of negative traditional practices that are injurious and dehumanizing to women and girls. This is clearly spelt out in article 26 (2) of the Constitution of Ghana, 1992.

*“All customary practices which dehumanize or are injurious to the physical and mental well-being of a person are prohibited.”*

Apart from the government ratifying international conventions and enacting national laws to protect women and girls as well as children against all forms of discriminations and violence, it has, and continues to initiate programs to curb GBV against women and girls. The government interventions are carried out through mandated centralized and decentralized departments.

These departments essentially are supposed to address issues of human rights, gender equality and the advancement of women, GBV and legal frameworks. Tables 6.5 gives a summary of government interventions through its departments.

**Table 6. 5: Government programmes to address GBV through its mandated department**

Name of department	Programme area	Approach/ strategy	Achievements/ challenges
Department of Gender established in 2013 to replace (NCWD); responsible for gender mobilization and welfare	Work to protect women and men rights and needs, concerns and advancement in Ghana. Improve the status of marginalized groups by ensuring gender equality and healthy relationships between men and women.	Social mobilization and organization of women into productive activities; capacity building; Income generation ventures; advocacy and lobbying.	Highly politicized by governments as it seeks to enhance participation of women in development. Still struggling to implement gender equality policies to reduce inequalities and gender-based discrimination women’s holistic development and wellbeing.
Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) a specialized department of the Ghana Police Service to replace (WUJU) in 2004, responsible for preventing crimes against all genders especially women and children	Mandate encompass protecting the rights of women, men and children, preventing crime, and investigating and prosecuting cases of gendered violence and violence against children. Law enforcement	Security and education through media, churches and durbars. All people especially women, youth and children; receiving complaints of violence against individuals and children; investigating and prosecution of cases; providing shelters for victims of abuse.	Has provided a significant entry point for women to access the justice system and seek; public visibility of violence against women; however, still under resourced to deal or investigate cases; it is unable to provide direct shelter and other related support for victims
Department of Social Welfare: government agency responsible for social welfare services	Welfare of DV victims and provision of refuge for victims from perpetrators.	Specific intervention in cases of violation of people’s right, violence, divorce and child maintenance. The department intervenes in three thematic program areas: community care; social protection including child rights and justice administration.	Has been effective in addressing child welfare and maintenance cases. Inadequate shelters across the country. Lack capacity to provide counselling and services to victims Lack funds/ resources to proactively carry out its mandate.

National Commission on Civic Education: responsible for promoting democracy	Mandate includes educating the people of Ghana concerning the civic rights and responsibilities; and encourage the public to defend the constitution at all times against all forms of abuse and violation;	Public education; Community sensitization; Use of media (e.g. television, radio, newspapers, posters, internet); Workshops and Women's empowerment	Lack basic infrastructure and resources to carry out programmes
Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP): government ministry created in 2013. Responsible for policy issues regarding gender equality and social protection of vulnerable groups.	Mandate includes ensuring gender equality, promote the welfare and protection of children, and to empower the vulnerable, excluded, the aged and persons with disabilities, for sustainable national development	Advocacy Social mobilization Behaviour change Resource mobilization Monitoring and evaluation	Manual for domestic violence service providers for enhanced service; Domestic Violence communication strategy. Sensitization on DV Act. Observes 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.
Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), established by Act 456 of 1993: responsible for checking and redressing incidents of maladministration and also to promote human rights	Education on fundamental human rights and to promote Good governance in Ghana. Implement programmes on human rights, administrative justice, judicial support for victims of GBV and combating corruption	use of mass media, publications, lectures and symposia, outreaches to rural Communities and schools.	Commission Successfully closed 11,465 human rights complaints. Reached out too many rural communities and schools to sensitize them on the Commission's Administrative justice mandate.

Sources: Amoakohene, 2004:2379-2380; CHRAJ Mandate, 2011; MoWCA DVS communication strategy, 2012

The analysed data from government department informants suggest that most agencies programmes are for advocacy on policy formulation and/or changes, education, awareness creation and sensitization on GBV (Table 6.5). The government also provides basic services, addresses human rights issues, gender equality, and empowerment of marginalized groups<sup>159</sup>. For instance, an informant reported<sup>160</sup>

*“Advocacy is central to overcome the barriers of tradition and social silence with regards to domestic violence”*

The informants<sup>161</sup> reported that since the insurgence of GBV in Ghana, the government has responded by enacting local laws in addition to the international conventions ratified. For instance, the DV Act was passed into law in 2007 to deal with case violence against women (VAW). The DOVVSU and Department for social welfare provides counselling services and even in extreme cases help to find shelter for GBV survivors. Furthermore, the government agencies have been at the centre stage to advocate and lobby traditional authorities for attitudinal change toward GBV against women and girls in communities. Advocacy and lobbying is often done through awareness creation, sensitization, and community mobilization programs. This finding is consistent with Amoakohene’s (2004) study of violence against women in Ghana, which documented that government deals with cases of violence mainly through legislation, education, awareness creation, counselling, and investigation and prosecution of offenders.

However, some of the informants from government agencies, NGOs and opinion leaders reported that although the government has consented to these conventions and national laws regarding GBV and claim to be working through its agencies to address it, in practice, it was paying lip services to addressing GBV against women. This is because the legal systems in the country have not been prompt in prosecuting perpetrators, and processes for women reporting and seeking redress or justice are cumbersome. They coupled with limited social services and shelters for GBV survivors and their children. This finding agrees with studies in Ghana (Cantalupo et al., 2006; Amoakohene, 2004) which report that government’s legal

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<sup>159</sup> Interview with CHRAJ and gender department officer observed government has enacted gender equality policies to bridge gender disparities in Ghana. CHRAJ has also been in the fore front to address GBV as a human rights violation and assisting victims to obtain redress. While the gender department has initiated IGA and processing equipment for women to empower them economically.

<sup>160</sup> Interviews with Domestic Violence Secretariat officer, Accra, 2014.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with DOVVSU and social welfare officers showed that government provides free counselling and medical services for GBV survivors, although they indicated that the process were cumbersome for survivors.

systems have failed to adequately prosecute perpetrators and protect GBV victims/survivors and lacked social services to assist victims.

### 6.3.2 Targets of government programming.

Finding from government agencies KIIs<sup>162</sup> and document review<sup>163</sup> indicated that each department has its targeted audience or beneficiaries, although target audience or beneficiaries were not attached to specific programs or activities as presented in Table 6.6.

**Table 6. 6: Government GBV programme areas and targeted audience/beneficiaries in Ghana**

Government department	Programme area	Target audience/beneficiaries
CHRAJ	Promotion and prevention: Human Rights, DV, Sexual harassment Early and forced marriage Abduction, Degrading punishment Parental neglect Denial and access to child Restriction on access to healthcare and education	Public, Schools Faith-based organizations Rural communities Civil society groups Victims of abuse
DOVVSU	Domestic violence	Youth, Women, Men Churches, Schools Perpetrators, DV victims
Gender department	GBV (Paag be sahaa) I6 days of activism against GBV	Women, Youth Violence victims Traditional authorities Priests and priestess
DVS		Women, Elderly, Men Violence victims
NCCE	Civic education GBV and development issues	Women, Men Communities, GBV victims
Social welfare	Domestic violence	Women, especially violence victims, Men, The destitute Parents, Chiefs, Traditional leaders and children

Source: Author's construct.

For instance, department of social welfare female staff<sup>164</sup> was asked who the department's target in their programming. She had this to say<sup>165</sup>:

*“We go to the communities and meet with the traditional leaders, we do focus groups like meeting men alone, women alone, chief alone etc. So, our target groups are both men and women”.*

<sup>162</sup> Interview with 2 gender department officers, 5 CHRAJ officers, 1 Domestic Violence secretariat officer, 3 DOVVSU officers, 1 NCCE officer, 2 social welfare officers

<sup>163</sup> The communication strategy for implementation of the National Policy and Plan of Action of the Domestic Violence Act 2007 (Act 732), CHRAJ Mandate, 2011

<sup>164</sup> Interview with Hawa, August 2014.

<sup>165</sup> Interview with Gender department officer, Tamale, 2014.

A male staff of DOVVSU<sup>166</sup> similarly explained:

*“The approach of DOVVSU basically targets the youth and of course the men and women too”.*

Similarly, a staff of the Domestic Violence Secretariat explained:

*“The primary audience of the MoGCSP are women, children, men, the physically challenged and the aged. Secondly, we target heads of families, NGOs, DOVVSU, community based groups, human rights activists and other development partners. Our tertiary ones include the president and his ministers; the judiciary and legislature and heads of sector agencies and NGOs. We reach them through workshops, meetings, media, and capacity building trainings, community mobilization for advocacy, and sensitization and awareness creation across the country”*

Overall, it came to the fore that GBV victims, the aged, perpetrators, men and women, children and youth, chiefs, heads of families, and all manner of people and institutions are targeted in government programmes addressing GBV.

### **6.3.3 Communication Strategies**

Following the analysis of government programs and activities reported by interviewees, document reviews and observation, the study was able to glean and identify which communication approaches/strategies and services government departments use in the delivery of program activities. This was done using Leeuwis (2008) and Cardey’s theory of communication strategies.

The study found that most of government departments explicitly or implicitly use most of the communication strategies theorized by Leeuwis (2008) and Cardey (2010) as presented in table 6.7. However, among the government’s agencies mandated to respond to GBV in the country, it is only the former Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs, now called Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (MoGCSP)’s Domestic Violence Secretariat that had documented its communication strategy for preventing GBV, including domestic violence.

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<sup>166</sup> Interview with Emmanuel, August, 2014.

**Table 6. 7: Government GBV programmes and communication strategy(s)**

Name of department	Programme area	Approach/ strategy
Department of Gender established in 2013 to replace (NCWD); responsible for gender mobilization and welfare	Work to protect women and men rights and needs, concerns and advancement in Ghana. Improve the status of marginalized groups by ensuring gender equality and healthy relationships between men and women.	Social mobilization and organization of women into productive activities; capacity building; Income generation ventures; advocacy and lobbying.
Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) a specialized department of the Ghana Police Service to replace (WUJU) in 2004, responsible for preventing crimes against all genders especially women and children	Mandate encompass protecting the rights of women, men and children, preventing crime, and investigating and prosecuting cases of gendered violence and violence against children. Law enforcement	Security and education through media, churches and durbars. All people especially women, youth and children; receiving complaints of violence against individuals and children; investigating and prosecution of cases; providing shelters for victims of abuse.
Department of Social Welfare: government agency responsible for social welfare services	Welfare of DV victims and provision of refuge for victims from perpetrators.	Specific intervention in cases of violation of people's right, violence, divorce and child maintenance. The department intervenes in three thematic programs areas: community care; social protection including child rights and justice administration.
National Commission on Civic Education: responsible for promoting democracy	Mandate includes educating the people of Ghana concerning the civic rights and responsibilities; and encourage the public to defend the constitution at all times against all forms of abuse and violation;	Public education; Community sensitization; Use of media (e.g. television, radio, newspapers, posters, internet); Workshops and Women's empowerment
Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP): government ministry created in 2013. Responsible for policy issues regarding gender equality and social protection of vulnerable groups.	Mandate includes ensuring gender equality, promote the welfare and protection of children, and to empower the vulnerable, excluded, the aged and persons with disabilities, for sustainable national development	Advocacy Social mobilization Behaviour change Resource mobilization Monitoring and evaluation
Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), established by Act 456 of 1993: responsible for checking and redressing incidents of maladministration and also to promote human rights	Education on fundamental human rights and to promote Good governance in Ghana. Implement programmes on human rights, administrative justice, judicial support for victims of GBV and combating corruption	use of mass media, publications, lectures and symposia, outreaches to rural Communities and schools.

Sources: Sources: Amoakohene, 2004:2379-2380; CHRAJ Mandate, 2011; MoWCA DVS communication strategy, 2012.

The review of the documents suggested that the most dominant communication strategy government – MoGCSP – uses is supporting organizational development and capacity building. The department engages this strategy through their institutional and partnerships capacity building activities. Using the strategy, they build DVS staff capacity to improve internal communication approach; improve staff inter-agency relations and advocacy; build capacity of other government agencies, civil society and private sector organizations involved in the response to GBV; provide training on how to handle communication with victims and perpetrators, further research and training. According to informants from the DVS, much the capacity building and training activities were done within the MoGCSP, but also involve the engagement of expert or specialist services when the need arises.

The second dominant communication strategy the MoGCSP and others such as the Department of Social Welfare and NCCE use is supporting horizontal sharing and exchange of knowledge. These agencies reportedly engage in sharing and exchange of information, bearing in mind that communicators and program participants are knowledgeable and can share experience to find solutions to their own problems. In this scenario, they often play the role of facilitating the process through workshops and community fora for individual members and groups to share information and exchange ideas, and to sensitize and create awareness on GBV.

The third dominant communication strategy MoGCSP engages is generating policy, innovations, and persuasive transfer of innovation. In order to fulfil their mandate, generating policy debates, policy changes and policy formation has been the core of the department's activities. Thus, it advocates and lobbies government machinery and stakeholders using communication tools such as fact sheets, short videos, workshops, seminars and one-on-one discussions with decision makers to guide participants to understand the issues at stake. It was equally recognized that with the persuasive transfer of innovation strategy, MoGCSP uses communication tools such as one-on-one discussions, posters, social networks questions and answers for domestic violence to transfer knowledge to promote positive behaviours and attitudes towards efforts to eliminate GBV.

The fourth dominant one the department uses is advisory communication through the provision of information. It does this by giving information, resource support and directions to individuals and/or groups who come to the department to seek help on GBV or related issues.

The data analysis from informant interviews<sup>167</sup>, document reviews and from researcher's own observation suggest that government departments use communication to play the following functions or roles.

*Raising awareness and consciousness:*

Some of the departments such as the Domestic Violence Secretariat (DVS), CHRAJ, DOVVSU and Social Welfare department engage formal structures such as parliament, Education service, Ministry of Health, MMDAs and community-based organizations for support and networking to support programme beneficiaries. Secondly, they have used traditional opinion leaders and community members, with the goal of facilitating attitudinal changes towards GBV, equality and respect for human rights and dignity of women. Thirdly, advocacy and training has been employed to ensure the voices of civil society groups and non-government organizations are brought in to address gender inequalities, empowerment of women, human right issues affecting women, children and marginalized groups.

*Communicating to explore views and issues:*

The departments use communication to play the function of advocacy for policy formulation and enactment of laws relating to gender equity and equality, empowerment of women and children, human rights violation and prosecution. Relatedly, communication has served the role of creating awareness and sensitizing people in communities on issues of human rights, civic responsibilities, negative cultural practices and other important topics through community mobilization and public education fora.

*Communicating to inform:*

Another communication role has been to provide information through government and community structures about where to report violence, human right violations, seek redress, find shelters, voting procedures, policies and policy implications for individual and communities. Additionally, the provision of social infrastructure and amenities: this is communicated through institutions and organizations responsible such as providing clinics, school buildings, police stations, books to schools, community centres etc. Finally, have used top/down persuasion - communicating to influence individual, groups and communities

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<sup>167</sup> Interview Hawa, August 2014; Interview Emmanuel August 2014; Interview Iddrisu August 2014; Interview Juliana October 2014; Interview Timbila August 2014; Interview Emmanuel August 2014; Interview Ibrahim August 2014. Interview Abena September 2014.

to change and take on new behaviours (e.g. respect for all, stop abusing women, including women in decision-making).

#### *Communicating to train:*

Communication was found to play a key role in providing training and capacity building of facilitators/committees/agents for public engagement on particular issues that are sensitive as a result of socio-cultural beliefs and value systems of the targeted people. For instance, DVS staff<sup>168</sup> reported that the secretariat engages traditional leaders and communities to adopt positive attitudes towards girl child education in the northern parts of Ghana. Similarly, it also uses communication for capacity building for organizational capacity – specialist training of staff in key areas of the organization e.g. gender specialist to understand gender mainstreaming and informing gender positive/sensitive/transformational policies and vocational and special skills training for women’s groups for economic empowerment of women.

As earlier discussed in the government’s programming and strategies, it is clear that the government departments apply all the four communication functions in their programming. However, it appears most government departments such as DOVVSU, Social Welfare and NCCE focus more on communicating to raise awareness and consciousness about GBV, and to inform and train. This is popular with government’s assumptions that people need information on policy direction and application, provision of important facilities, and basic skills to enhance their living standards, which is the fundamental mandate of Ghana government and its departments.

### **6.3.4 Communication Tools and Methods**

Findings from key informant interview<sup>169</sup> of government agencies and document review<sup>170</sup> suggest a good understanding of what comprises a communication tool or the way communication is used.

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<sup>168</sup> Informant interview with DVS staff, 2014.

<sup>169</sup> These are government department staff key informants from social welfare, gender department, CHRAJ, DOVVSU, and NCCE,

<sup>170</sup> The communication strategy for implementation of the National Policy and Plan of Action of the Domestic Violence Act 2007 (Act 732)

As stated by an informant<sup>171</sup>

*“... works through the community committees. We work with our stakeholders – Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Ghana Police Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit, Ghana Education Service, Local Government, district assemblies, civil society organizations, Christian Council, the Moslem Council, NGOs, etc. – at the national, district and community levels. These stakeholders use the local media in communicating on GBV. For instance, we have translated the Domestic Violence Act into six local languages – Hausa, Ewe, Ga, Nzema, Dagbani and Twi. Some of the community organizations use their own languages”*

The respondents and document reviews demonstrated that communication tools and/or methods encompass mass media tools such as radio, television, newspapers, posters, newsletters, videos and movies. Community-based related sources recognized were chiefs’ houses, churches, mosques, community fora, community health posts/clinics and workers, educational institutions, workshops, and trainings.

### **Tools and/or methods used in government programming**

During discussions with government agencies informants<sup>172</sup> and document reviews<sup>173</sup>, it was evident that using any communication tools or methods depends on the intervention goal and targeted audience in a particular program<sup>174</sup>.

*“Our society over here is in fact more of an illiterate society rather than a literate society. So, we use community durbars and during those community durbars, we also use drama and the drama is first of all to bring the people closer to listen and secondly we also use the drama to communicate the issues to the people and it has been very effective”*

This means that government departments use different communication tools and/or method in its GBV programming to achieve the intended intervention goal (MoGCSP Communication Strategy, 2014)<sup>175</sup> as outlined below:

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<sup>171</sup> Interview with DVS officer, 2014

<sup>172</sup> These are government department staff key informants from social welfare, gender department, CHRAJ, DOVVSU, and NCCE,

<sup>173</sup>The communication strategy for implementation of the National Policy and Plan of Action of the Domestic Violence Act 2007 (Act 732)

<sup>174</sup> MoGCSP Communication Strategy, 2014)

<sup>175</sup> Department of Gender key informant August 2014; Informant NCCE, August 2014; Informant CHRAJ, August 2014.

***Campaign symbol, communication workshops, communication skills and training, seminars, fact sheets, e-Newsletters, social networks.***

The informants<sup>176</sup> and document review<sup>177</sup> show that the above stated are primary communication tools and methods used by MoGCSP-DVS. In instance, MoGCSP-DVS uses communication tools such as Fact sheets, information kits and communication symbols<sup>178</sup> to engage with their tertiary audience - president, ministers and parliamentarians, judges, lawyers and head of sectors. According to the communication strategic document<sup>179</sup>, the secretariat engages them using methods like short documentaries, periodic updates, workshops, seminars and speaking appointment to advocate gender equitable laws, funding for GBV activities, policy changes on GBV and domestic violence, among others<sup>180</sup>. The key informants through the interviews explained that these tools were very important in the department's activities. This is because the fact sheets and short documentary served as a simple method of communicating on issues about GBV and also served as evidence. Additional, the communication skills and training tools and communication workshops and seminars were fundamentally targeted at key stakeholders - DVS staff and partners such as DOVVSU, CHRAJ, NCCE, and Department for social welfare and NGOs for capacity building to improve their communication approach and interagency relations and advocacy skill to address GBV and other gender related issues in the country.

***Support social mobilization (launch of campaign against GBV, community durbars, radio and TV programmes, public announcements, Drama, Posters, Flyers, peer education, song and jingles)***

The informants<sup>181</sup> and documents review indicated that the above were important tools and activities used in community mobilization.

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<sup>176</sup> Department of Gender staff key informants

<sup>177</sup> The communication strategy for implementation of the National Policy and Plan of Action of the Domestic Violence Act 2007 (Act 732)

<sup>178</sup> Communication symbol in this study refers to photos of violence scenes or battered women and girls, poor reproductive and health care facilities etc.

<sup>179</sup> The communication strategy for implementation of the National Policy and Plan of Action of the Domestic Violence Act 2007 (Act 732)

<sup>180</sup> Interview with Juliana, a DVS staff in Accra and Zakaria, a gender department staff in Tamale.

<sup>181</sup> Interviews with 2 Social welfare officers, 1 NCCE officer, 2 DOVVSU officer, 2 Gender department officers and 4 CHRAJ officers, 2014.

*“We also have radio discussions where we get some resource person to go to the radio stations to talk about issues on gender based violence. We had a program from 25<sup>th</sup> of November through to 10<sup>th</sup> of December where we had 16 days of activism against gender-based violence and this is a period used for that. And within this period, we organized activities in communities and on radio to talk about these issues so that a larger audience can hear us and even where people have the opportunity, they can call and contribute or ask questions. In certain cases, we even use the television, like we have a program called ‘Pag’be Sahaa’ with GTV where one woman from GTV comes here in the north to organized fora for us to interact with the women so that they make their inputs on some of these issues such as gender based violence and what women face and what is being done to combat the issues”.*

*“we do it in the form of durbars in the communities, or just organizing a community and talking to them on the fundamental human rights. We also have community clubs where we educate the members, then at the institutional base we have clubs at the various institutions from the Junior High School to the Seniors High School levels. We educate and train the clubs”*

These above statements from the key informants<sup>182</sup> resonates the fact that government is strong in using various communication tools/media such as radio and TV programmes to reach a large audience to mobilize to take collective action against GBV. As indicated by a CHRAJ member of staff, as part of its education and awareness creation on GBV as a human rights issue, early and forced marriages, have used radio, TV and community durbars to target the public, schools, rural communities and civil society groups. Thus, the informants and document review made it clear that community durbars and clubs were powerful means of sensitization and awareness creation on GBV and human rights. Relatedly, this study found that DOVVSU engages the use of posters, brochures, booklets, stickers and radio to educate, inform and sensitize targeted audience such as women, men, youth churches and schools on GBV and domestic violence. For instance, its program on causes and effects of DV, targets the youth in schools using posters, brochures, stickers and booklets aimed at positive behaviours and attitudinal changes among the school children to GBV.

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<sup>182</sup> Interviews with DVS and CHRAJ officers, 2014.

***Support for behaviour development and/or change (Small group communication, One-on-one discussion, songs, Interpersonal communication, Questions and answers for GBV, Guide for the abused and perpetrator, Peer education)***

According to key informants<sup>183</sup>, small group discussions, one-on-one discussions and interpersonal discussions formed an integral part of government's communication activities.

An informant intimated<sup>184</sup>

*“We also try to meet with women groups where we discuss with them. It is not always as if we go to pour or just push down information, we also allow them to give us what they think, and we need a feedback”*

The NCCE and the Department of social welfare have also used one-on-one and small group discussions to engage in interpersonal communication to understand GBV survivors' situation and get feedback. An informant intimated<sup>185</sup>

*“When abused cases are reported, we follow up to the village to speak with the victim privately, and when necessary we call in husband or other members of the family or community opinion leaders to discuss the way forward”.*

This was found to be important for displaced GBV survivors and sometimes their children and other family and community members using interpersonal communication methods to solicit views.

### **6.3.5 Summary**

The government of Ghana has ratified both international and national conventions, treaties and laws in response to the GBV menace. The 1992 constitution and the Domestic Violence Act, Act 732 of 2007 have been key in informing and guiding intervention programs in the country. Through its agencies and departments such as Domestic Violence Secretariat, DOVVSU, Department for social welfare, Gender Department, CHRAJ and NCCE. The government has made frantic efforts to address GBV against women by making attempts to address GBV as an issue of human rights, gender inequality and advancement of women, and the use of legal frameworks. Thus, programs include advocacy on policy formulation and or changes regarding GBV, education, awareness creations and sensitization on GBV. Basic service provision and empowerment of marginalized groups including women and

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<sup>183</sup> Informant interviews with Social welfare, NCCE, DOVVSU, Gender department and CHRAJ staff

<sup>184</sup> Interview with NCCE officer in Tamale, 2014.

<sup>185</sup> Interview with Social Welfare officer in Bolga, 2014.

girls, forms part of interventions. Program activities on GBV targets the public, women, men, youth, schools, faith-based organization, victims and survivors, perpetrators, communities, traditional authorities and community opinion leaders. For GBV policies and funding for GBV programs, the president, ministers, parliamentarians, lawyers and judges have been targeted. While empowerment programs targets women, young women, and GBV victims for IGAs and vocational training predominantly from Women in development (WID) approach.

Among the government agencies and departments interviewed for this study, it was only the Domestic Violence Secretariat under the auspices of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection had a communication strategy plan. In addition, none of the departments had GBV strategic plans and or specific GBV project ongoing at the time of this research in 2014. However, document such as reports, communication materials review and interviews with informants in the other agencies showed an understanding of communication strategies and application in their inconsistent GBV program activities. Predominantly, the function of communication in program activities was to raise awareness and consciousness, to inform and train the different targets audience and beneficiaries about GBV.

#### **6.4. NGOs communication strategies for addressing GBV**

This section discusses three NGOs – Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA) operating in northern region and covering the Sagnarigu district, Widows and Orphans Movement (WOM) operating in Upper East region and covering Nabdam district and ProNet North in the Upper West region and covering the Nadowli/Kaleo district all of northern Ghana. It explores their program activities and those related to GBV, the target audiences in the districts they are operating, communication strategies including functions employed in combating GBV.

##### **6.4.1 Programs and Activities**

##### **Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA) in the Sagnarigu district.**

Through discussions with GDCA staff<sup>186</sup>, review of reports<sup>187</sup> and other related documents<sup>188</sup>, this study found that GDCA focuses on seven program areas (Table 6.8).

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<sup>186</sup> Key informant Abdul-Rahaman, August 2014; Key informant Philip, August 2014; Key informant Rosemond, August 2014; key informant Mariam August 2014.

<sup>187</sup> GDCA Strategic Plan, 2008-2012; Annual Report, 2013; Annual Report, 2012.

<sup>188</sup> E4L Newsletter, 2014; YEFL Vol.3, 2011.

**Table 6. 8: GDCA programmes and activities in the Sagnarigu district**

Programme approach/strategy	Activities
1. Advocacy and Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy for implementation of policies</li> </ul>
2. Youth and community empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Preparing of Action plans</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provision of social amenities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Creation of youth centres and management committees</li> </ul>
4. Gender Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Engender administrative manual</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gender mainstreaming</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy and capacity building of females to take up leadership roles and decision making position</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Microcredit for women</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Help GBV victims to seek redress</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with families</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partner with CHRAJ, DOVVSU and other human rights groups to educate people to understand the consequences of GBV</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Connect GBV victims to appropriate authorities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Capacity building of staff and community committees to engage in sensitization and awareness creation on GBV</li> </ul>
5. Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Promotion of transparency</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Meetings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Local participation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Citizen engagement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful elections</li> </ul>
6. School for Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Training of trainers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Development of learning materials</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Publication of newsletters</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Advocating for mother tongue-based CBE</li> </ul>
7. Community life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Food security</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Water and sanitation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community radio</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Training</li> </ul>

Source: GDCA strategic plan 2008 – 2012, Annual reports, 2010, 2012, 2013

In relation to GBV programs, interviews with key informants from GDCA and documents including annual reports reveal that the organization prioritized in prevention of GBV against women and girls and a few intervention activities through it gender equality programs in northern region (Table 6.9).

**Table 6. 9: GDCA program activities on GBV**

Programme area: Gender Equity	
Prevention activities on GBV	Intervention activities on GBV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue with families</li> <li>• Partner with CHRAJ, DOVVSU and other human rights groups to educate people to understand the consequences of GBV</li> <li>• Capacity building of staff and community committees (peace clubs) to engage in sensitization and awareness creation on GBV</li> <li>• Advocacy and capacity building of females to take up leadership roles and decision making position</li> <li>• Gender mainstreaming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microcredit for women</li> <li>• Assisting GBV survivors to seek redress through collaboration with</li> </ul>

Source: ADCA annual report, 2010, 2011, 2012,

The prevalence of GBV in the districts caused GDCA to engage in programs that would minimize harm to victims. However, the NGO has focused on programs to seek to prevent GBV as captured by an informant.

*...for GDCA is that we don't want to see GBV. So we are always on the preventive aspect. Because of some of these reasons, we have peace clubs that we have set in our communities and we have trained them to fish out some of these violations or signs and when it happen in whichever way whether by men or women there are certain signs they will see and know that there is something oozing out and will result in violence so they quickly report to us and sometimes they mediate at the community level so we have some of them you know<sup>189</sup>*

The activities of the NGO seek to prevent GBV against women from happening in local communities through sensitization, awareness creation and empowering of women and girls through education, economic empowerment, leadership capacity building and training<sup>190</sup>. It was also observed that GDCA's interventions on GBV was recognized as an "added on" and occasional an activity in their gender equality program area.

<sup>189</sup> Interview with GDCA gender desk officer in Tamale, 2014.

<sup>190</sup> Interview with GDCA staff, Tamale, 2014.

*“GDCA initially did not have organized forms of working with GBV victims and perpetrators. What happened was for instance, we had issues of this exchange marriage which occurred in the eastern corridor which is part of the Komkomba area where exchange marriage is practiced. So we took it upon ourselves do some of these sensitizations you know and to report some of these issues to DOVVSU, CHRAJ, NCCE and others”*

*“...we tend to respond through directing victims to the knowledge of these law enforcement agencies so that they can take the matter up and find an amicable solution. So we have worked closely with CHRAJ, NCCE, and department of social welfare in these districts, and when we come across these issues, we let them know. Sometimes we make the police aware of some of the injustices and perpetrators of abuse against women”*

*“Yes, we work with people who are victims to give them opportunity for redress. Usually we dialogue with their families so when we come across a gender violence issue, we do not close our eyes on it*

From all the above statements from GDCA staff, it is worth noting that GDCA’s programs do not mainly focus on addressing GBV, though, GDCA has been working to prevent GBV in some of the communities. The NGO uses community anti-violence committees as well as collaborations with appropriate government and non-government machineries to support victims of GBV to find shelter and help bring perpetrators of the crime to book.

### **Widows and Orphans Movement (WOM) in the Nabdam district**

WOM runs four main programmes captured in their programming, summarized in table 6.10.

**Table 6. 10: WOM programmes and activities**

Programme area	Activities
VAW/DV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provision of shelter to abused widows and orphans</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Providing information to victims</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration with DOVVSU, CHRAJ, Social Welfare to create awareness</li> </ul>
Income generation activities (IGAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Vocational skills training</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Marketing of products</li> </ul>
Microcredit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Business capacity building</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Loans</li> </ul>
HIV/AIDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safety network and training</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Health care support</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Counselling, support and advocacy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Skills training or educational support to HIV/AIDS orphans</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Education of widows' groups on HIV/Aids, Personal Hygiene</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provision of basic support such as food, medical care and basic shelter to some of the children</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Providing basic support in the form of school uniform, school fees payment, scholastic material, food among others</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Home and school monitoring visits for counselling purposes</li> </ul>
Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community-based Human Rights Advocacy Clubs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Capacity building of Community Based Anti-Violence Team (COMBAT)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sensitization of traditional Leaders, Power holders, Duty Bearers and community members on the Human Rights instruments, their linkages to women's rights and need to reform negative cultural practices</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Equip communities with the necessary skills to monitor and advocate against Human Rights abuses</li> </ul>

Evidence shows that WOM's programmes follow this strategic plan and their activities have been consistent but only dormant when there is no funding to carry out activities in a

particular program area. This means that funding for GBV projects need to be taken seriously by both the government and international agencies to ensure the GBV and gender equality programmes are consistent.

### ProNet North

ProNet North programmes include the following programming and strategies summarized in table 6.11. The NGO focuses on education, and socio-economic and socio-political empowerment of its beneficiaries.

**Table 6. 11: ProNet North programmes and activities**

Programme area	Strategy/activities
Greater Opportunities for Rural Women (GROW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provision of business solutions to women</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Income generating activities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Production of soya beans for sale</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Link farmers to tractor services and farm inputs.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Link farmers to high price markets and processors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Train farmers on how to process soya into various nutritional uses</li> </ul>
Girls education fund (GEF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Access to secondary education and beyond</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Scholarships</li> </ul>
Ghana complementary basic education GCBE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Organizing 9-month mother tongue literacy and numeracy classes for out-of school children</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enrolling out-of-school children between the ages of 8-14 years back into the formal school system</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Capacity building of facilitators and community committee</li> </ul>
Tacking education needs inclusively (TENI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improving transition, completion and quality of basic education</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Engagement of multiple stakeholders and build on best practices to tackle underlying causes that prevent children completing and performing in school, including socio-cultural beliefs, poverty barriers, school environments and quality of teaching</li> </ul>

## 6.4.2 Targeted Beneficiaries in each of the three districts

### GDCA

GDCA's GBV activities target victims and perpetrators of GBV, community/traditional leaders, CBOs, religious leaders and groups, women's associations and groups, the youth, women and men, and boys and girls.

Primarily, GDCA gender equity program targets women and girls in local communities with the goal of empowering them educationally and socio-economically, which they believe would improve their social status and wellness and in the long term serves to protect women and girls from gender-related abuses. Secondly, CBOs, Community and religious leaders and groups are targeted for advocacy and sensitization activities on GBV for community action. For example, a staff<sup>191</sup> of a CBO in Sagnarigu reported that they receive training from GDCA at least twice a year through workshops. Finally, they target government agencies such as DOVVSU, CHRAJ, Department of Social Welfare and NCCE for collaboration for public education on GBV and to direct victims to them to seek for redress, shelter and other related support.

### WOM

Respondents in all the six group activities and WOM staff demonstrated that WOM programming have specific targeted audiences and/or beneficiaries. Although responses from group activities differed, this study identified some significant trends.

**Table 6. 12: WOM GBV programmes and target/beneficiaries**

<b>Programme area</b>	<b>Target/beneficiaries</b>
VAW/DV	Widows, orphans and HIV/AIDs patients,
Income generation activities (IGAs)	Widows and young girls
Microcredit	Widows and young girls
HIV/AIDs	Women HIV/AIDs patients and children
Education	Orphans
Human Rights	Community leaders, widows, orphans and women
VAW/DV	Widows, orphans and HIV/AIDs patients,

<sup>191</sup> Key informant interview with Gubikatimali (local CBO) staff.

WOM primarily targets widows and orphans. These women and children by virtue of losing a husband and a father, face a lot of human rights and gender-based violations in their daily lives. Thus, WOM's activities focus on human rights education and socio-economic empowerment activities. According to a respondent,

*“We target widows and orphan – ‘widows and orphans without tears and intimidation’. We work towards it so that the woman will not be weeping; the woman will not be intimidated. We are from this place and we know what the widows go through when they lose their husbands. So, we started educating them about human rights for them to know their rights”<sup>192</sup>*

Widows and orphans who are HIV positive are the second targets of WOM's activities, which is consistent with WOM's focus on advocacy and networking, and provision of services to widows and orphans living with HIV/AIDs in their catchment areas. Thirdly, WOM targets community leaders (chiefs, opinion leaders, spiritualists, and association and group leaders), aiming at advocacy and action against disadvantaged groups. It was recognized that other targets include government agencies, CBOs and activists working in human rights, GBV and marginalized groups and women's issues. Finally, WOM's programming also targets working with whole communities for general community awareness creation and sensitization. This finding collaborates responses in other activities, informants<sup>193</sup> and document review (WOM Annual Report, 2011; 2014).<sup>194</sup>

### **ProNet North**

Following FGDs<sup>195</sup>, KII<sup>196</sup> and report reviews<sup>197</sup>, ProNet primarily targets marginalized and impoverished communities in their programming for various interventions such are provision of potable water, agriculture and complementary basic education as indicated in Table 6.13.

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<sup>192</sup> Interview with WOM development practitioner, Bolga, 2014.

<sup>193</sup> Informant Betty is founder of WOM, August 2014; Informant Felicia, August 2014; Informant Fati August, 2014.

<sup>194</sup> Group activity 1,2,3,4,5,6 Sakote and Zanlerigu;

<sup>195</sup> Group Activity 1, 3, 4, 6 Zambogu and Janguasi September 2014.

<sup>196</sup> Informant Martin August, 2014; Informant Catherine August, 2014; Informant Josephine August, 2014.

<sup>197</sup> ProNet North 2012, 2013 Annual Reports

**Table 6. 13: Summary of ProNet North programme and target/beneficiaries**

<b>Programme area</b>	<b>Target/beneficiaries</b>
Greater Opportunities for Rural Women (GROW)	Women in rural communities
Girls education fund (GEF)	Poor and under privileged girls
Ghana complementary basic education GCBE	Out of school children

Next, women and girls are strategically targeted for education and empowerment to achieve gender equity and/or parity. Although ProNet does not necessarily mention GBV against women and girls, their activities focus on empowering them to improve their socio-economic status. This in the medium and long-term serves to protect women and girls from GBV and human rights violation, which is consistent with other group responses and ProNet North annual reports.

### **6.4.3 Communication strategies**

#### **GDCA communication strategies**

At the time of the fieldwork, GDCA did not have a written communication strategy for their programmes, including GBV. However, it was possible to deduce from the program activities, discussions and documents that GDCA uses some form of unwritten communication strategy(s) to guide their programmes activities (Table 6.14).

**Table 6. 14: GDCA activities and GBV communication strategies**

Activity	Strategy
Partner with CHRAJ, DOVVSU and other human rights groups to educate people to understand the consequences of GBV  Assisting GBV survivors to seek redress  Dialogue with families on early and forced marriage	Supporting horizontal knowledge exchange
Microcredit	persuasive transfer of policy and technological innovation
Assisting GBV survivors to seek redress  Fund raising  Advocate and network for duty bearers and traditional leaders to enact community based or local policies for action  Advocacy and capacity building of females to take up leadership roles and decision making position	Advisory communication
Training of peace clubs	Conflict management
Advocacy and capacity building of females to take up leadership roles and decision making position  Advocate and network for duty bearers and traditional leaders to enact community based or local policies for action	Generating policy and innovation
Capacity building of education staff and community committees to engage in sensitization and awareness creation on GBV  Education for girls and boys who could not have education at childhood stage	Capacity building

Thus, guided by Leeuwis (2008) and Cardey’s (2010) conceptualization of communication strategies, it was identified that the communication strategy mostly used by GDCA is supporting horizontal knowledge exchange. This implies that GDCA activities involve sharing information with GBV survivors and collaborators against the backdrop that they have knowledge and experiences. An informant<sup>198</sup> states

*“When it comes to education, we also work with the official system, like the CHRAJ, human rights groups, DOVSU etc. so that people will understand the consequences of gender based violence”*

<sup>198</sup> Key informant interview with Abdul-Rahaman, 2014.

Following from the above statement, GDCA plays a facilitating role by bringing people together to share information and experience to find solutions to problematic situations. It was also recognized that GDCA uses persuasive transfer of policy and technological innovation in their programming.

*“GDCA use community radio in educating the people a lot”.*

*“They educate us on the radio that we should report to the police or DOVVSU when our partner abuses us”*

Gathering from the informants’<sup>199</sup> statements above, GDCA uses communication tools such as mass media (radio, TV, newsletters) to try to persuade GBV perpetrators to adopt positive attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls through sensitization on the consequences of GBV. Through the same media, they also convince women and girls to report violence against them to appropriate agencies for redress and support and initiate microcredit to empower women.

Another communication strategy identified was generating policy and innovation. GDCA uses this strategy to advocate and network for duty bearers and traditional leaders to enact community based or local policies for action. In addition, GDCA employs advisory communication through the provision of information to individuals, groups and collaborators who contact them as a resource organization or seeking funds to carry out activities. It further uses conflict management as a strategy in their programming. This means that GDCA trains community members (peace clubs) to sensitize, create awareness and mediate in violence cases in the communities. Lastly, GDCA engages capacity-building strategy. This means that GDCA provide education for girls and boys who could not have education at childhood stage, train women and girls in leadership skills to participate in socio-political decision-making processes.

### ***Communication functions***

GDCA appears to apply all the four communication functions suggested by Leeuwis (2004), as reflected in the following activities;

#### ***Raising awareness and consciousness:***

- Organizing community sensitization programmes and dialogue with families

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<sup>199</sup> Key informant interviews with Mariam and Philip, 2014.

- Engaging formal structures (CHRAJ, DOVVSU, Social Welfare, NCCE) to educate communities on human rights issues, consequences of GBV, and women’s participation in politics and leadership positions through community fora and workshops.
- Awareness creation and sensitization workshops for young women in decision-making positions and leadership
- Advocacy and training for traditional and opinion leaders to serve as community “watch dogs” to take action against perpetrators of crimes and to harness community development programmes.

### **Communicating to explore views and issues**

- Advocacy for MMDAs to develop policies that encourage and mandate local communities to develop action plans and need for inclusion in overall programmes and budgets of the Assemblies.
- Advocacy and raising awareness through community mobilization and fora for communities to identify their developmental needs and means of solving them (e.g. water and sanitation, school buildings, clinic or maternity homes, toilets, etc).
- Microcredit for economic empowerment of women.

### **Communication to inform**

- Provide information to victims of GBV: the goal is to inform victims of where to seek support, redress, shelter, justice systems and medical advice through official systems such as CHRAJ, DOVVSU and Social Welfare.
- Information materials: Posters and newsletters to communities on GBV, sanitation and other related topics.
- Informing people to persuade them to change or adopt positive attitudes toward women and other disadvantaged groups and community development projects
- Persuading communities and ethnic groups to stop early marriage of girls, exchange marriage<sup>200</sup>, FGM and child labour through radio programmes and jingles, and community mobilization.

### **Communicating for training**

- Training and capacity building: workshops for capacity building and leadership skills for women and young ladies to participate and contest MMDA elections.

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<sup>200</sup> Exchange marriage is when one family gives their girl in marriage to a man (regardless age, income, health status) to another family. The receiving family also gives back a girl in marriage to that family in the same way.

- Education: Nine-month mother tongue literacy for girls and boys between ages 8 and 14 who did not get the chance to go to formal school: the goal is for them to bridge to formal education after completion of the mother tongue literacy.

### **WOM communication strategies**

Following the analysis of WOM’s annual reports, which are consistent with responses from group activities and informants as at the time of data collection in August 2014, evidence suggests WOM has no written down communication strategy or approach. Nonetheless, as articulated by Leeuwis (2008) and Cardey (2010) on communication strategies, this study systematically examined WOM’s programme activities and strategies and was able to tease out some form of communication strategies it engages implicitly (Table 6.15).

**Table 6. 15: WOM activities and GBV communication strategies**

Program activities	Strategy
Campaign against VAW/DV	Generation of policy and innovations Persuasive transfer of innovation Advisory communication Supporting horizontal knowledge exchange
Vocational skills training and income generation activities including mango plantation and basket exports	Generation of innovations Organisational capacity building activities
Training of staff, COMBAT members, Human Rights Advocacy Clubs and beneficiaries	Supporting organizational development Generation of innovations
Microcredit	Persuasive transfer of innovation
HIV/AIDs	Advisory communication
Education	Persuasive transfer of innovation
Human Rights	Horizontal knowledge exchange  Generation of policy and innovations

Source: WOM’s annual reports,

Predominantly, the communication strategies WOM uses are generation of policy and innovations and persuasive transfer of innovations. For generating policy, WOM focuses on advocacy and networking through collaboration and coalition with likeminded agencies to address policy issues in relation to women and children. WOM uses generation of innovations to support their targeted beneficiaries to learn specific skills or new ways of

doing things through their vocational skills training programs, while the persuasive transfer of innovation is engaged through the use of tools such as the mass media to disseminate information to targeted audience with the aim of convincing them to change their attitudes and behaviours towards GBV.

The next communication strategies that were identified to be used by WOM are supporting horizontal knowledge exchange and advisory communication. With the former, WOM involves in sharing of information with participants against the backdrop that they have knowledge and wide range of experience to share for learning and collective action. With the latter, WOM plays the role for providing information and directing victims or people to appropriate places to seek justice and also serve as resource to other groups or agencies needing their expertise.

Lastly, it was gathered that WOM uses supporting organizational development as a communication strategy through their organizational capacity building activities. WOM does this by initiating a mango plantation and basket exportation for the sustainability of the organization. It brings in experts to train staff and some selected beneficiaries on new innovative way of producing baskets and using Shea butter for pomades. This finding is consistent with WOM's 2013 and 2014 annual reports.

### **Communication functions**

The analysis from informant interviews, document reviews and observation suggest that WOM engages with the following communication functions:

#### **Communicating for Training**

WOM uses communication during the organization of training and capacity building for widows and orphans. WOM organizes vocational skill training workshops for widows and orphans in the areas basket weaving, dressmaking, hairdressing, cloth/smock weaving and local material pomade production among others with the aim of empowering beneficiaries economically and socially. WOM engages professional trainers during these workshop sessions.

WOM also uses communication as a tool to form and train community Based Anti-Violence Team (COMBAT) and Human Rights Advocacy Clubs to create awareness and sensitize traditional leaders, power holders, duty bearers and community members on the Human Rights instruments, their linkages to women's rights and need to reform negative cultural

practices. In the area of education, WOM has constructed sheds for educating orphans, provided school uniforms and in some cases provided scholarship programs. In addition, WOM has used communication as a tool to provide training on HIV/AIDS prevention, personal hygiene, marketing and bookkeeping for widows and orphans. This has resulted in the number of people who voluntarily request for HIV/AIDS testing as reported by respondents. Finally, communication has been as a tool to train widows and orphans with disabilities on microcredit management skills with the goal of making them economically independent and self-reliant.

### **Raising awareness and consciousness**

- Social networking and support: health care support and counselling to widows and orphans with HIV/AIDS
- Advocacy and support for widows and orphans with or affected by HIV/AIDS
- Sensitizing Mother to Mother support groups on Safe Motherhood, Food Taboos, Identification and Prevention of Anaemia and Malnutrition, and Food Demonstrations.
- Advocacy and lobbying of Chiefs in communities for open endorsement and support of women to contest for District Assembly and Unit Committee elections and overall participation in decision-making.
- COMBAT teams raising awareness and sensitizing community members on human right and violence issues
- Advocacy and sensitization of communities and stakeholders on negative and degrading cultural practices such as widowhood rights, FGM, early marriage of girls and modified ways of collecting dowry.
- Transforming gender roles and hegemony masculinity: raising awareness and sensitizing stakeholders and community members allows both boys and girls perform household chores and men to help wives.
- Structures for engaging and empowerment of widows and orphans: facilitating microcredits programs for economic empowerment of widows and their children, meetings for sharing information and experience.

These findings collaborate with WOM's overall aim of advocating and building capacity to empower and improve the lives of the beneficiaries of the program.

## **ProNet North programs**

### **Communication functions**

ProNet North engages the use of communication functions such as:

#### **Raising awareness and consciousness**

- Supporting and building community structures for advocacy for the retentions of children (girls) in school.
- Empowering communities to enhance sharing of experience at both national and international level community action, learning and promotion, and advocacy for change.

#### **Communicating for training**

- Training to build the capacity and skills of women to participate in decision-making in households, communities, electoral areas and beyond.
- Training of teachers to provide quality and equal teaching and learning environment in schools.
- Training and capacity building for community committees to manage and use water resources for improved livelihoods.
- Training “natural leaders” to support community level follow-up on community-led total sanitation activities.

#### **Communicating to explore views and issues**

- Engaging stakeholders to address underlying issues preventing children remaining and performing in school, such as socio-cultural beliefs, poverty barriers, school environments and quality of teaching
- Supporting community engagement with major stakeholders in education delivery in the districts.

#### **Communicating to inform**

- Information on business solutions to women in operational areas
- Communicating to women and farmers the value of cultivating Soya beans and the nutritional values.
- Structures for communicating information about safe solid and liquid waste disposal practices and hand washing
- Communicating to persuade rural communities to adopt soya inclusion in household meals and to wash hands before and after meals.

- Communicating to parents to adopt positive attitudes by sending their children, especially girl children to school and retaining them in school.
- Informing parents and girls about scholarships for girls to continue to senior high school.

ProNet has engaged with four of the five communication functions – awareness creation, training, exploration of views and issues and information provision. However, the latter is predominantly used in program activities. This supports the organization’s focus on information provision and capacity-building programs to afford beneficiaries make informed choices and access to basic services.

### Summary

This section has discussed each organization’s programs areas, activities relating to GBV, and target audience. Communication strategies and communication functions have been examined. Table 6.16 presents an overview of the communication strategies used, “x” shows that the communication strategy is used in the organization’s programming. However, most of the programmes are not directly related to GBV intervention, but, indirectly or directly promoted and addressed human right issues, development, gender inequalities and more so, women and girls’ empowerment.

**Table 6. 16: Summary of GBV communication strategies by each organization**

Strategy	GDCA	WOM	ProNet North
Supporting organization development and capacity building	X	X	
Supporting horizontal knowledge exchange	X	X	
Persuasive transfer of policy and/or technological innovations	X		X
Advisory communication	X		
Generation of policy and/or technological innovations			X
Communication as a service		X	
Conflict management	X		
Service provision		X	X

## **6.4.4 Communication Tools and Methods**

### **GDCA communication tools and methods**

As discussed earlier, GDCA had no written down communication strategy for their programmes, however, data gathered from both FGDs<sup>201</sup> and informants demonstrated their clear understanding of communication tools. For instance, respondents from the FGDs in the Sagnarigu and Fuo communities mentioned that communication tools cover media channels such as radio and television; community-related sources such as community meeting, church, mosque, market and chief house; interpersonal interactions such as women's association meeting; provision of support and service such as training of peace clubs and direction of GBV victim to appropriate places; empowerment of women such as microcredit and leadership skills. It was also recognized that teachers, religious leaders, traditional leaders and formidable group leaders also served as important source of information on GBV.

### **Communication tools used in GDCA programming**

GDCA engages diverse communication tools and methods in their programming as discussed in the following.

*Campaign symbol, communication workshops, communication skills and training, seminars, fact sheets, e-Newsletters, social networks.*

GDCA uses methods such as workshops and seminars as a means of training and building capacity of its beneficiaries and stakeholders. For instance, GDCA uses workshops as means of training community peace clubs to serve as community “watch dogs” to detect hints of violence, prevent it from occurring, mediate where it has already happened or report it to the appropriate agency to deal with it<sup>202</sup>. Secondly, GDCA organizes workshops and seminars for training and capacity building of women and girls to acquire leadership skills and self-confidence to participate in socio-political and decision making at the family level, district and regional levels in which GDCA serve as resource. Where appropriate, newsletters are used for communicating one-on-one counselling during training sessions on Career guidance and leadership for tertiary school girls. However, it was interesting to note that GDCA did not engage the use of communication tools such as campaign symbols and fact sheets.

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<sup>201</sup> Group Activity 1,2,3,4,5,6 Fuo and Sagnarigu-GDCA

<sup>202</sup> Key informant interviews with Mariam and Philip, GDCA, 2014.

***Communication tools and methods - launch of campaign against GBV, community durbars, radio and TV programmes, public announcements, Drama, Posters, Flyers, peer education, song and jingles to support social mobilization***

Key informant interviews<sup>203</sup> indicated that GDCA uses communication tools and methods such as radio, jingles, and community durbars for social mobilization activities. For instance, they have used jingles in radio programs to draw the public's attention on early, forced and exchanged marriages among Komkombas in northern region. Additionally, community durbars have been used to mobilize communities to advocate against early marriages and witchcraft accusation on women and girls. This means communities get the opportunity to interact and share knowledge and experience with each other and with program officers or other resource persons who serve as facilitators. GDCA have also launched such programs on GBV in partnerships with CBOs and DOVVSU, also using radio and targeting traditional chiefs, perpetrators, schools, youth, women, families and communities. Advocacy activities with community leaders was seen as important as this helped in mobilizing them to take measures in stopping certain negative practices and initiating local policies for action. GDCA informant reported:

*“GDCA has also sensitized the public on the dangers of perpetrators if you are involved in perpetrating violence what will happen to you and also the victims where you should report when abused<sup>204</sup>”*

Consequently, GDCA makes resources available for community engagement through community sensitization and awareness creation on GBV.

*“...then we also use the traditional - the chiefs we have a lot of meetings with them a lot of interactions with them”*

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<sup>203</sup> GDCA staff 2 males and 2 female key informant interviews

<sup>204</sup> Key informant interview with Mariam, a gender desk officer of GDCA, 2014.

***Support for behaviour development and/or change (Small group communication, One-on-one discussion, songs, Interpersonal communication, Questions and answers for GBV, Guide for the abused and perpetrator, Peer education)***

GDCA engages the media to carry out educational programmes on GBV. The media activities included bringing on board DOVVSU, CHRAJ, Social Welfare, and other stakeholders to local radio station to discuss issues about GBV, consequences for perpetrators and modification of harmful tradition practices.

*“On the part of media channels, we use the FM stations like – Zaa FM, Sumili FM, Justice FM etc and we use the TV but that one is not rampant”*

Given that GBV is a criminal offence, GDCA has supported victims to take legal action on perpetrators. In addition, behaviour change communication strategies have also been used to educate perpetrators about GBV, as well as to encourage traditional chiefs and opinion leaders, families and communities for attitudinal changes towards GBV.

**WOM**

WOM offers the widows the opportunity to build interpersonal relationships by meeting regularly to share information and experience. It does this through the use of communication tools or activities that are readily available to their target beneficiaries. For instance, respondents from the group activities have acknowledged that media-oriented tools/channels such as radio, videos and movies/films have served as important sources of information for them to access messages delivered by WOM. Communication tools such a community-based sources, including churches, district and municipal assembly meetings, palace meetings, community leaders’ workshops and seminars were dominant in WOM’s programming activities. In addition, WOM provides services such as counselling session for abused widows and orphans, mediating and directing victims to agencies dealing with GBV, microcredit, IGAs among others. Finally, WOM engages beneficiaries in empowerment activities such as training and capacity building in vocational skill, leadership skills and assertiveness and provide information to GBV victims and widow and orphans living with HIV/AIDs.

## ProNet North

The communication tools used in ProNet programming supports training and capacity building, social mobilization, advocacy and service provision. Interviews with staff of ProNet suggests that the NGO’s training and capacity building activities encompasses training of local community members in managing community resources for sustainable livelihoods activities, improving women and girls’ participation in socio-political activities and decision making processes through training. Social mobilization and advocacy was highlighted as pivotal in ProNet’s activities. These involved tools and methods such as workshops, seminars, and training of stakeholders for sensitization and awareness creation on need for the retention of girl children in schools and effects of child abduction, early and forced marriages. Lastly, it provides services in the form of sharing information on adoption of soya bean inclusion to household meals and to wash hand before and after meals targeting women and schoolchildren.

## Summary

Communication tools used by the three case study NGOs were discussed thematically. Table 6.17 below presents a summary of the communication tools used in each organization’s GBV related programming. The tools used are not present in any particular order of dominance.

**Table 6. 17: Communication tools used by each organization**

Communication tools and methods	GDCA	WOM	ProNet North
Campaign symbol, communication workshops, communication skills and training, seminars, fact sheets, e-Newsletters, social networks	X	X	X
Support social mobilization (launch of campaign against GBV, community durbars, radio and TV programmes, public announcements, Drama, Posters, Flyers, peer education, song and jingles)	X	X	
Support for behaviour development and/or change (Small group communication, One-on-one discussion, songs, Interpersonal communication, Questions and answers for GBV, Guide for the abused and perpetrator, Peer education)	X	X	X

Having explored the communication strategies and tools used by each organization to programing and activities, the next section reflects on the communication context of communicating GBV against women and girls.

## **6.5 Discussion**

This section reflects on findings of the communication context of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against women and girls. It details how the three case study non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in northern Ghana have engaged communication to address GBV against women and girls.

*Sources of information:* Studies have shown that identifying the sources of information of program target groups used most often and trusted the most is of importance in planning communication interventions (UNIFEM, 2003:7). This is because messages are intimately related to the choice of sources or channels of communication through which messages are disseminated (ibid). GBV communication studies have reported wide range of sources/channels of communication about GBV in different contexts (Cooper et al., 2013; Paluck et al., 2010; Cooper et al., 2010; Verma et al., 2006; Peacock and Levack, 2004). In consistent with these studies, findings across the three districts- Sagnarigu, Nabdram and Nadowli/Kaleo - suggest most people have access to information about GBV, and from diverse source.

However, radio was cited as being the most common source of communication and information and source of access to information about GBV regardless of the gender of respondents. Radio (see Tamale 6.1 and 6.2) remains the medium of choice in northern communities and Ghana at large because of its vast coverage of audience, low-cost and receiver acquisition (Mu-azu and Shivram, 2017:389; Chapman, 2003). The popularity of radio also stems from its extensive broadcast in local languages which tends to serve both educated and illiterates and remote communities by providing information, education and entertainment. This is suggestive that those interested in working to reduce or eliminate GBV could take advantage of radio as a channel for dissemination information about GBV. Communication designers or specialists need to bear in mind the local context for effectiveness (see UNIFEM, 2004).

In particular reference to the Sagnarigu district, Television and mosque were significant sources of information to people. This district relative to the Nabdram and Nadowli/Kaleo is urban because is located in Tamale, the capital of Northern Region. Thus, all the

communities within the Sagnarigu district have electricity, and many individuals or households might possess television sets or watch programs from community members. While the use of television as a good source of information, to address GBV in the local context may be problematic due to high cost and language (English), it will be advisable for GDCA to explore the mosque and role religious leaders can play in educating their members about GBV. As this study has found, Sagnarigu recorded the highest prevalence of GBV against women and girls (Table 5.4 and 5.5). As noted, the people in this district are predominantly Muslims and communicating GBV through the mosque is likely to be effective. For instance, GDCA can build the capacity of Imams and other Muslims leaders to play advocacy roles by challenging the misinterpretation of Muslims beliefs and norms about gender equality and the subservient position in the family hierarchy.

Conversely, in the Nabdam district the respondents regarded the market place as significant source of information. Most communities are rural and the market serves as a meeting place for people to hear and share information issues of interest. Owing to the fact that some respondents reported accessing information about GBV from the market place, it will good for WOM and government or NGOs to consider it. For instance, market place could be used to complement radio programs on right to womanhood, physical violence against women (Table 6.3) could be expanded. Community-based oriented channels of communication have been effective in address GBV because the offer face-to-face encounter with audience and provide opportunity for audience to ask questions and communicators to get immediate feedback (Cardey, 2010). Compared to Sagnarigu and the Nabdam districts, the Nadowli district very rural with a closely knit society. Community members, especially women rely on friends and neighbours for vital information. Information about GBV was observed to easily transmitted between families, through informal conversations. This study suggests that GBV interventions in the Nadowli/ Kaleo district and in other remote communities in northern Ghana could consciously build on the social structure and culture that exist in a particular society to disseminate information about GBV. For instance, family heads, women leaders and chiefs could be trained to champion campaigns against GBV.

Having noted the similarities and difference observed in the district, a gender dimension to some sources of information emerged. The study observed female respondents across the districts apart from the radio, relied on the chief's house as an important source of information. It highlights the importance of the involvement of chiefs and other community leaders in GBV communication and programs. Traditionally, chiefs and religious leaders

have served as reliable and main source of information for community members, especially in rural settings (Williams, 2010). Given that most women consider chief's house as reliable and preferable source of information, it is safe to say that the involvement of chiefs and community leaders is critical to the success in GBV responses and interventions as source of information in all the three districts. Programme organisers could also arrange to bring chiefs and other religious and community leaders who have been trained to community radio stations for discussion on GBV.

*Types of messages heard:* Messages developed in campaigns represents a direct, simple way of communicating the main points of the campaign objectives with the respective audiences and stakeholders (UNIFEM, 2003:7). In the specific case of GBV, messages could include gender inequality causes GBV against women; women's right are human rights; VAW affects everyone and impedes development and so on (UNIFEM, 2003:8). This study found that messages disseminated about GBV were location specific. The study observed messages reported were a reflection of respondents' perception of GBV issues that are of priority to each gender. For instance, in the Sagnarigu district the female respondents reported they heard messages such as report violence; physical (slaps, beating) and sexual violence (rape, harassment, forced sex) and how to avoid violence. While an insignificant male respondents acknowledged they have heard message like that. The reason for this variance is attributable to most women being victims/survivor of GBV, and likely the targeted groups by NGOs and government interventions. However, since most men are perceived as perpetrators of GBV, intervention programs should endeavour to involve men and boys. Programs could be targeted at men and boys to learn to construct alternative masculinities that promote non-violent behaviours and equitable gender roles and norms (See also: Jewkes, Flood and Lang, 2015; Jewkes and Morrell, 2010; Gupta et al., 2008; Pulerwitz et al., 2006).

In the Nadowli/Kaleo district, respondents report on the types of messages heard was very limited. They have heard messages about harmful traditional practices - FGM, tackling forced and early marriage for girls among others. These messages align with findings from earlier research by ActionAid, Ghana (2007) and Dery and Diedong (2014) who reported high incidence of traditional harmful practices such as FGM, early and forced marriages and girls trafficking in the Upper East region. By implication, ProNet and other NGO working in the district need to pay more attention to issue of FGM, early and forced marriage and girls trafficking communities. Interventions should engage community-based approaches

aimed to facilitate social change. In this way members of the communities would stand up against such negative practices.

*Communication strategies:* Communication strategies are essentially communication interventions aimed at solving problems (Leeuwis, 2004, 2008, 2013; Leeuwis and Aarts, 2011). Both international and national NGOs have applied development communication strategies in addressing GBV against women and girls in different context and setting (Cooper et al., 2010; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007). Many such programs have been evaluated for effectiveness (Cooper et al., 2010; Feldman-Jacobs and Worley, 2008). However, as far as the author knows there is paucity of academic documented communication intervention strategies in relation to GBV in Ghana. Thus, the aim of this research was to explore communication strategies used in addressing GBV. This study's findings on communicating GBV in Northern Ghana suggest that all the three case study NGOs – GDCA, WOM and ProNet North had no specific GBV campaign project(s) and also had no written communication strategies at the period of this research. Pillsbury and Mayer (2005) note that local NGOs have limited capacity to communicate effectively about GBV. Additionally, it was observed these NGOs had limited knowledge about development communication approaches and role in communicating GBV. However, this study observed two (GDCA and WOM) engaged communication strategies encompassing the use of at least two or more of the communication strategies identified by Leeuwis (2008), Leeuwis and Aarts (2011) and Cardey (2010) because they were engaged in some form of GBV activities in Northern Ghana.

**GDCA** – While GDCA engaged all the six communication strategies discussed in this study, it has predominantly used supporting horizontal knowledge exchange communication strategy which is premised on the fact that individuals have much expertise based on personal experience and or training, which could be relevant to others (Leeuwis, 2008; Leeuwis and Aarts, 2011). The strategy therefore seeks to bring people together to exchange and share knowledge with the focus being on “individual” change through active participation and generation public interest (ibid). The study found that GDCA has used this strategy to engage their partners such as CHRAJ, DOVVSU and CBOs in the Sagnarigu district where they operate for them to share their knowledge on GBV against women and girls. The function of communication in this process has been to explore views and issues

and raising awareness surrounding GBV and its preventions in communities through advocacy and training activities.

Communicating to educate and raise awareness for the prevention of violence is fundamental in the process of fighting GBV against women, because they have the potential to increase local communities and policymakers' understanding of women's basic human rights and to stimulate action (Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2004, 2007; UNIFEM, 2003). Awareness raising on GBV constitutes the initial phase in modifying attitudes, behaviours and policies, while behaviour and social change takes a long time (UNIFEM, 2003:2). Thus, GDCA have used communication methods and tools such as workshop, seminars, social networks, community durbars and radio for awareness and advocacy activities. For instance, GDCA facilitates the process by bringing partners like DOVVSU staff to radio stations in the district to talk to the public about GBV against women and girls and the legal implications for perpetrators.

**WOM** – the dominant communication strategies used by WOM was generation of policy and or technological innovations and persuasive transfer of policy and or technological innovations. For instance, WOM uses this strategy by focusing on the mobilisation of stakeholders –chiefs, opinion leaders and conjunction with government agencies such as DOVVSU and Social welfare official and CHRAJ to advocate for policies the enactment against bad widowhood rites, FGM and inheritance practices at the local level and for community leaders to lead the way. Again, they support beneficiaries to learn new ways of doing things through vocational skills training programmes. However, issues of tracking progress and process documentation were missing.

## **6.6 Desired channels and GBV messages**

This section discusses respondents' preferred sources of information for communicating GBV messages in the districts.

### **6.6.1 Pragmatic ways to communicate GBV messages**

Under this caption, the researcher examines the “best” way to disseminate GBV in each district as presented in Table 6.18.

**Table 6. 18: Perceptions on best ways to inform community members about GBV**

Best way to inform	Sagnarigu			Nabdam			Nadowli/Kaleo		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Chief house	-	-	-	0	5	5	-	-	-
Community meetings	1	3	4	4	8	12	1	3	4
Television	1	7	8	0	1	1	-	-	-
Radio Education	13	29	42	8	8	16	13	44	57
Women Associations	-	-	-	0	4	4	1	0	1
Church/mosque	1	5	6	0	2	2	1	0	1
Workshops	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	-
Schools	-	-	-	0	1	1	-	-	-
Educational programs	-	-	-	0	2	2	-	-	-
Health centres programmes	-	-	-	0	4	4	-	-	-
Community sensitization	-	-	-	2	1	3	-	-	-
Drama	-	-	-	1	0	1	-	-	-
Women's association	-	-	-	0	2	2	-	-	-
Girls clubs	-	-	-	0	2	2	1	0	1
Drama	1	4	5	-	-	-	0	2	2
Face-to-face	2	0	2	1	0	1	-	-	-

**GDCA – Sagnarigu**

Based on the above findings on messages respondents heard about GBV (6.3), this study explored respondents' perceptions about the “best” way to inform women and girls about GBV in the district. The findings suggest that women and girls prefer to be informed about GBV through radio and television educational programs. This result is based on an open-question posed to respondents. The responses on best way (s) to inform about GBV are summarized in Table 6.18.

The key informants and FGDs apart from recognizing local radio and television programs as the best way of informing women and girls about GBV, however, underscored the fact that drama/play in local languages, community fora, and church/mosque were crucial ways of informing women and girls about GBV. For instance, one key informant explained:

*“I know radio is common and is good when it comes to educating people on issues, but you know women are good when it comes to community gatherings. So if*

*interventions on GBV will take advantage to meet women at such meetings it will be effective way of.....”*

(KII Sagnarigu, August, 2014)

*“Hmmm madam, face to face talk with individuals would have been the way, but you know no organization can find all that money to let this happen. Empowering religious leaders to teach their members about GBV will go a long way to help solve the problem. Yeah! You know people respect such people and will listen to them”*

(KII Fuo, August, 2014)

On the use of dramas/plays as means of conveying GBV messages, a participant in one of the mixed group meeting in Sagnarigu articulated that:

*“Madam you see; drama/play is also very important. I remember we had a Parent-Teacher Association meeting and at the meeting a drama group was invited to act a play about violence against girls in schools. This was acted in Dagbani so we the illiterates could see and understand the messages conveyed.”*

(Sagnarigu FGD participant, August, 2014)

This statement captures some of the respondents’ interest in drama as a channel for educating people about GBV in the district. This means that GDCA could explore the use of drama for communicating GBV. However, this would come implications for time, costs and personnel.

### **WOM – Nabdam district**

In the Nabdam district, respondents indicated that the best way to inform women and girls who are survivors of GBV is through radio programs and community for a (see Table 6.18). In meetings and informant interviews, the respondents also highlight these two source as critical medium for informing women about GBV. One women in Zanlerigu female only group stated that:

*“Madam, because of the local FM stations in our district and the fact that most of we women now have radio sets or have them on our mobile phones, we choose to listen to programs that educate us on issues affecting us. Even when we are working we can open to the channel we want and be listening while busy doing our work or even selling in the market”*

(Zanlerigu FGD participant, 2016)

A female informant also intimated that:

*“You see women like attending community meetings and stuff. So community meetings are a good place to sensitize women on GBV issues and because it’s sort of face to face and they can be allowed to ask questions and get answers that would help them”*

(KII participant, Bolga, 2014)

From these statements, it is evident that radio and community fora are easily accessible and affordable to women and girls as they are comfortable with these means as means of accessing information about GBV that addresses their needs.

### **ProNet North – Nadowli/Kaleo district**

Radio was overwhelmingly the best medium for informing women and girls about GBV (see Table 6.18). As is the case in the other two districts, participants in this district reported that now-a-days, majority of women and girls can afford and have access to radios in their homes and can listen if programs are of importance to them. This was clearly captured in most group discussions and interviews. For instance, a female participant stated that:

*“Madam, these days no house is without a radio and the radio stations hold programs in “Dagaari” local language. So, if the radio is used to educate women on GBV it will be good idea”*

(Janguasi FGD participant, 2014)

A male informant at the regional capital, Wa also reported:

*“As we speak I can say the radio educational programs on GBV will reach the rural women which can transform their lives. Look, almost every rural house has a radio and more so the women have their own radios”*

(Radio Progress staff informant, 2014)

From the foregoing, it is evident that radio plays a key role through which women and girls, and by extension, all members of the community can be informed about GBV. It also highlights gender significance attached to radio, because more females than male respondents identified radio as the most important mean of disseminating about GBV in the Nadowli/Kaleo district.

## 6.6.2 Types of messages needed for GBV survivors

### GDCA - Sagnarigu

As to the kinds of information needed for women and girls who are victims of GBV, the results from FGDs and questionnaire demonstrated that victims needed information on how to avoid abuse, counselling and teaching on human right among others. Clearly the majority of responses demonstrated that how victims could avoid violence was the most fundamental information needed by victims of GBV. The kinds of information needed for abused persons are summarized in table 6.19 below.

**Table 6. 19: Perceptions about information needs for victims of GBV by districts**

Kinds of information needed	Sagnarigu			Nabdam			Nadowli		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Counselling/Advice	1	12	13	8	30	38	2	6	8
Financial support to victims				7	2	9	0	3	3
How to avoid violence	13	23	36	1	2	3	-	-	-
Teaching of human rights	0	14	14	2	1	3	2	0	2
Gender roles and responsibilities	-	-	-	1	0	1	0	8	8
Encouragement	-	-	-	2	1	3	-	-	-
Equal right	-	-	-	0	1	1	-	-	-
Equity in resource acquisition	-	-	-	0	1	1	-	-	-
Gender violence protection	-	-	-	0	4	4	-	-	-
Send girls child to school	-	-	-	0	3	3	-	-	-
Information on peace in the home	-	-	-	3	2	5	-	-	-
Mediation/law and fines	-	-	-	1	0	1	-	-	-
Information on where to seek for help	-	-	-	0	2	2	-	-	-
Good behaviours of women	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Where to report violence	3	3	6	-	-	-	5	3	8
Why GBV is wrong	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	2
Make GBV victim happy and don't isolate them	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	5	5

Questionnaire data: N=105 (M=35, F=70)

Relatedly, group discussants reported that educating women and girls on how to avoid violence from men and giving them advice on what to do was emphasized. A female participant in one of the group discussions illuminated:

“Hmmm the problem is that you are beaten and devastated, you just need someone to talk to you or to talk to. When you get this at least the pressure reduces because you speak out”

(Fuo FGD participant, 2014)

Even though participants were not asked to tell their own stories of abuse, it can be deduced from the above that this female participant might have ever been abused. So she emphasizes how victims would be in dire need of advice for support and direction. Clearly then, not only do women and girls need to be well informed about how to avoid violence and counselling services, but human rights education for women and girls will play a key role in emancipating them to assert their fundamental rights.

### **WOM - Nabdam district**

Women and girls who have been victims of GBV need counselling most. Table 6.19 shows respondents reported that counselling or advice is very key for the abused.

According to the questionnaire responses, it is clear that significant majority of females than males felt that counselling was a fundamental need for women survivors of GBV.

This was also emphasized during discussions with informants and groups across the district, as one female informant mentioned:

*“Advice for women and girls who have been abused is important, although other messages are also important to them. Advice will help comfort them, through advice they can be directed to appropriate places to seek for redress and even for the perpetrators to be brought to book”*

(Bolga KII informant, 2014)

Inevitably therefore, advice and/or counselling is perceived as a way of providing comfort and some kind of support to survivors of GBV. For instance, it also affords abusers the opportunity for support and direction on where to seek justice and other services such as shelters.

## **ProNet North – Nadowli/Kaleo district**

According to the research respondents, counselling and education on roles and responsibilities (Table 6.19) were found to be the most important information needed by abused women and girls in the Nadowli/Kaleo district.

It was interesting during group discussions when both male and female participants stressed and expressed their views that if men and women are taught to play their respective roles and responsibilities well, violence between intimate partners will be minimized.

*“The fighting in our homes is from either the wife not performing her duties well or the husband refusing to shoulder his responsibilities as the man in control of the house”*

(Zambogu FGDs participant, 2014)

From the above statement, it is evident that people in the Nadowli/Kaleo district still uphold their traditional gender roles and norms surrounding conjugal relationships. Both husbands and wives are expected to adhere to specific roles and responsibilities, and failure to perform results in the husband chastising the wife as the head of the family to ensure strict compliance. So, for the participants, women and girls need to be informed of their roles and responsibilities to avoid GBV.

### **6.6.3 General messages needed on GBV**

#### **GDCA – Sagnarigu district**

The finding on messages/information that should be disseminated about GBV were similar to kinds of messages needed by female survivors in the Sagnarigu district. It was clear that general messages about GBV to the public should include education on how to avoid GBV; messages on all forms of GBV and report violence.

The research respondents were asked in an open-ended question to mention what messages on GBV should be disseminated in the district. The questionnaire interviews responses of the research respondents are presented in table 6.20.

**Table 6. 20: Perceptions about types of GBV messages to be disseminated to all community members**

Messages to be disseminated	Sagnarigu			Nabdam			Nadowli/Kaleo		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Equal work for boys and girls	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Men should not beat their wives	7	13	20	2	0	2	0	2	2
How to avoid violence	4	4	8	14	0	14	1	0	1
Women should be involved in decision making	-	-	-	0	3	3	-	-	-
VAW and children and disability	-	-	-	0	1	1			
Education on all forms of violence	5	28	33	1	6	7	10	5	151
Equal education for boys and girls	-	-	-	1	3	4	-	-	-
Female genital cutting	-	-	-	0	1	1	-	-	-
Financial support	1	1	2	2	1	3	-	-	-
Human rights	1	12	14	2	5	7	-	-	-
Girls child education	0	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Report violence	3	11	14	1	0	1	8	0	8
Respect for both sex	1	1	2	2	0	2			
Treat women and men equally	-	-	-	2	0	2			

**Questionnaire data: N=105 (M=35, F=105)**

Equally, it is important to recognize that the messages that scored least responses were many and will require attention. For instance, female respondents mentioned messages such as the involvement of women in decision making; where to find financial support and human rights. During focus group discussion participants shed more light on the usefulness of such messages. In a mixed group meeting at Fuo, a male participant said:

*“Oooh messages about violence on women should make them have courage to talk and make it known to people that they should be treated well just as any other human being, then the respect will come!”*

(FGDs participants, August, 2014)

From the statement, one can understand that messages that borders on empowerment of women and girls to engage in decision making, equality and human rights issues are necessary to reduce GBV.

### **WOM – Nabdam district**

It was found that the basic message/information to be disseminated to the general public about GBV should be gender violence and its causes, education on gender relationships and FGM (see Table 6.20).

Messages such as how to avoid violence, teachings on human rights, equal education for all were recognized in discussions as important messages necessary for the general public. This finding on some of the important message to the public means that WOM and other government and non-government organisations working in the area of GBV and gender equality in the Nabdam district and in the Upper East region could ensure that their radio and community engagement programme activities include communicating such messages deemed important to beneficiaries.

### **ProNet North – Nadowli/Kaleo**

In the Nadowli/Kaleo district, responses from participants suggest that the essential message that should be disseminated about GBV is information about how to report violence to the police (see Table 6.20).

Male respondents had the view that if women are informed about how and where to report violence against them, men would stop abusing them because they (men) will have the fear that they will be arrested and prosecuted. A male participant in Zambogu male only group exclaimed

*“Hey if our women get messages on how and where to report violence then we men will be in trouble if we dare abuse them. Hahaha, we will be put in prison!”.*  
(Zambogu FGDs participant, 2014)

Although the statement sounded like a threat to men, the men still reckoned that messages like that will reduce the incidence of male abuse of women in the district. This is because at least some men know that women are well informed about what to do when abused, the assertive women are likely to report abusive husbands to the police to seek justice.

## 6.6.4 Targeting GBV messages

### GDCA – Sagnarigu district

From the findings of KIIs<sup>205</sup>, FGDs<sup>206</sup> and questionnaire<sup>207</sup>, an overwhelming majority of respondents identified men to be the most targeted audience of GBV messages (Table 6.21).

**Table 6. 21: Perceptions about target audience for GBV messages**

Audience for GBV messages	Frequency
Men	43
Women	29
Everybody	4
Children	2
Married Women	2
Boys	3
Girls	2
Young women	1

Source: Field Survey. N=59 (M=20, F=39)

In the interviews and discussions, the participants expressed their views that men should be targeted in messages for several reasons summarized below:

- Men are mostly the ones who perpetrate the violence on women and girls
- They need to know that times of beating women as a way of chastisement are gone
- The message will help the men who are the custodians of culture to change the social values and beliefs that make women suffer in the hands of men

This finding was intriguing to the extent that the majority of men in the group discussions concurred and contributed to the reasons above. A male respondent in a male only focus group meeting said:

*“Eeeeh madam, they should just talk to we the men, we are the` cause of all these problems. Why should we mistreat our own wives and daughters? Because men claim to be the “suppose” head of family so we do what we feel”*

(FGDs participant, Sagnarigu, 2016)

In another mixed group, another male spoke out:

*“Aa talk to us (men), we need education to stop this violence in the home. I believe we can change”.*

(FGDs participant, Fuo, 2016)

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<sup>205</sup> Key informant interview Abdul Rahman, Rose, Kasim, Mariam. August 2014. SAGNARIGU

<sup>206</sup> Focus group discussions with male only, female only and mixed August 2014 SAGNARIGU

<sup>207</sup> Questionnaire administered

Relatedly, a female participant explained:

*“Although it is good to focus messages on all of us, but the men you see they beat us. If they don’t change the problem will continue to be with us the sufferers”*  
(FGDs participant, 2014)

From the foregoing statements, men have been recognized as a critical audience in communicating about GBV, although women and other groups are to be communicated to. The general feeling was that if the men are well informed about GBV, then the problem would be solved.

### **WOM – Nabdam district**

This finding on who messages about GBV should target in the Nabdam district suggests women to be the most targeted (see Table 6.22).

**Table 6. 22: Perceptions about target audience for GBV messages**

<b>Responses on targeted audience for GBV messages</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
All community members	9
Men	11
Women	19
Youth and Children	23
People living with disabilities	5
Chiefs	8
Girls	2
Married couples	6

Source: Field Survey. N=59 (M=20, F=39)

Participants who recognized that women should be targeted to a large extent also argued that women are the most affected when it comes GBV, so campaign messages should focus on educating women to take action against it. The results in table 6.22 above indicates that women should be targeted for messages on GBV. Respondents recognized that messages should also target all members of the community – men, youth, children, girls and boys married couples and people with disabilities, to reduce the incidence of gendered violence against women and girls.

## ProNet North – Nadowli/Kaleo district

The finding from group discussions, interview and questionnaire in the Nadowli/Kaleo district intriguingly shows that the youth should be the main target for messages about GBV (see table 6.23).

**Table 6. 23: Perceptions about target audience for GBV messages**

Responses on targeted audience for GBV messages	Frequency
Women	4
Men	3
Everybody	3
Youth	43
Head of family	2
Chiefs	8
Traditionalist	2
Parents	3
Perpetrators	5
Health workers	1
Married couples	25
Assemble persons	3

The respondents reported in meetings and interviews that if the youth who form the critical mass of the people are well educated on the subject, then, the present and future generations will be devoid of gendered violence.

A male informant during an interview said:

*“Any campaign message for the public should focus on the youth. If they get transformed the society will be moving in the right direction towards a violence free society”*

(Wa KIIs participant, 2014)

The study also found married couples and chiefs as important targets in dissemination of messages about GBV.

## **6.7 Communication context versus communication activities in communities**

In comparing findings from the communication context and communication activities across the study areas, some consistencies and inconsistencies emerged. Finding from GDCA within the communication context demonstrated its uses of both media-centred channels like radio and social-oriented methods such as workshops and durbars to sensitise and create awareness on GBV and also to empower women through education and economic empowerment, leadership capacity building and training. This was consistent with what the respondents in the Sagnarigu district who are beneficiaries to GDCA programmes. However, there was a discrepancy on GDCA report on their activities on assisting survivors to seek redress through collaboration with CHRAJ and DOVVSU. Matching this with the messages heard and with the focus group discussions<sup>208</sup>, there is a “disconnect” because no mention was made of where to go and seek redress.

This raises a question the kinds of messages put out to audiences (UNIFEM, 2004). The messages they heard about GBV was coming from GDCA given the fact that other government agencies and other organisation might have as well be disseminating messages GBV. Another area of difference found was GDCA serving as a resource, such as providing counselling during training session on career guidance and leadership for tertiary school girls as no group reported such service. Thus, both questionnaire and focus group respondents expressed the need for messages on how to avoid violence, causes of GBV, counselling and teaching on human rights all of which were needed for GBV survivors and the public in general. Regarding who GBV messages should target, the respondent felt that married women should be the main targeted groups.

WOM’s program activities predominantly was in line with what was reported by the Nabdum district respondents in terms of the communication sources. What come out prominently from the respondents was on WOM’s awareness creation on VAW in relation to negative cultural practices and inheritance, issues of support and encouragement of widows and all women and right to motherhood. They also acknowledged the presence of COMBAT members in the communities who linked survivors to WOM. What also came up prominently on targeted audience which was missing in the communication context was about disable persons. The respondents recognised that disabled persons were a very key target audience in communicating GBV. However, during the discussions the staff and

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<sup>208</sup> Group Activity with FGDs groups1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in Fuo and Sagnarigu communities, 2004.

respondents alike expressed the great need for shelters for widows and women and their children who faced family abuses and rejection. The staff flagged problems of inadequate funding to roll out consistent GBV programmes.

As earlier noted, ProNet North, did not have direct activities on GBV as at the time of the data collection period. So, it was difficult to match the outcome of responses on communication sources about GBV and messages to program activities. However, there was demonstration that it focuses on education for girls, economic and socio-political empowerment of women and girls in the Nadowli/Kaleo district.

## **6.8 Hierarchy of channels of communication**

### **Sagnarigu district**

From FGDs activities,<sup>209</sup> questionnaire<sup>210</sup> and observation<sup>211</sup>, it was clear people in Sagnarigu have different preferences in relation to communication channels for disseminating messages about GBV. To explore these communication hierarchies of channels, participants in activities and discussions ranked and scored sources of communication to establish their preferences of channels for GBV communication (Figure 6.1).

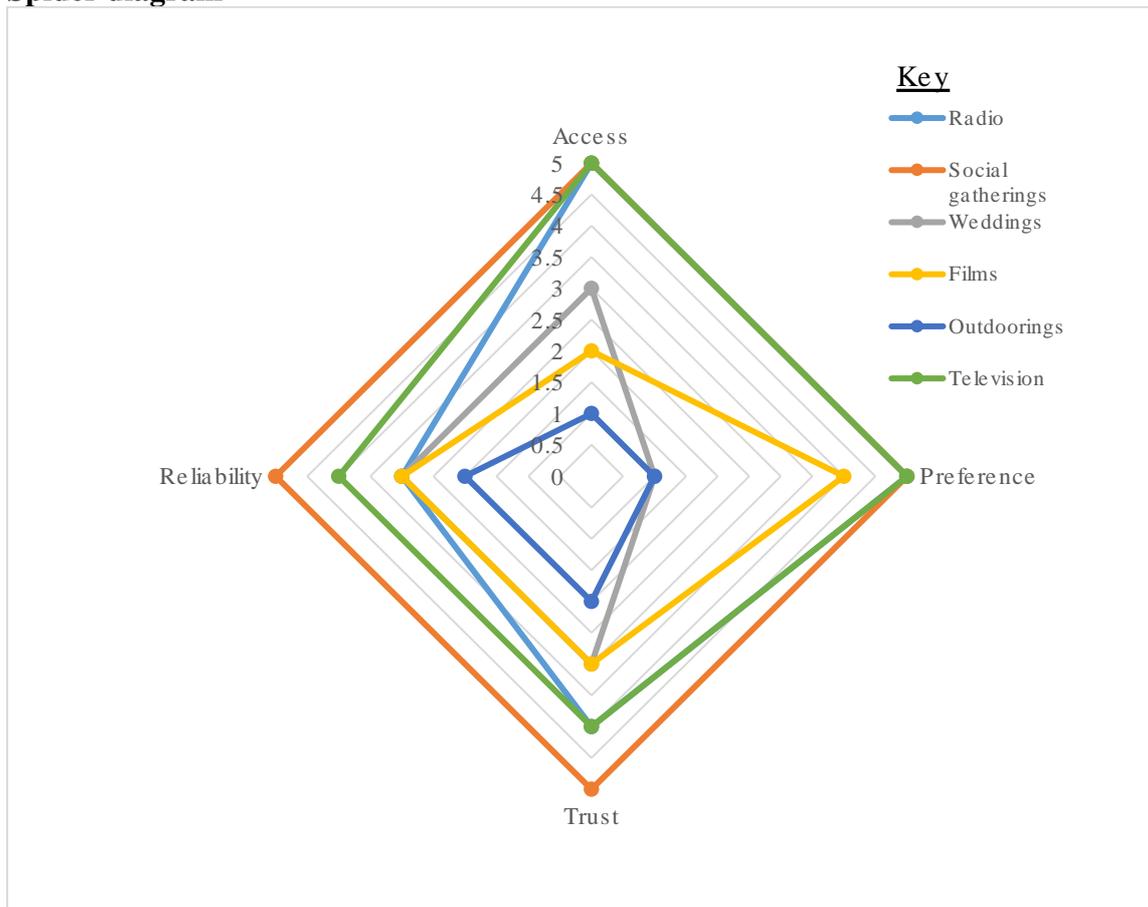
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<sup>209</sup> Group Activity 2 on Spider diagramming of communication hierarchies SAGNARIGU, September, 2016.

<sup>210</sup> Questionnaire administered to 20 males and 40 females SAGNARIGU, October, 2014.

<sup>211</sup> Research personal observation r

**Figure 6. 1: Information access, preference, trust and reliability in Sagnarigu FGDs - Spider diagram**



Putting together activities and considering measures of access, preference, trust and importance, the hierarchy of the channels clearly emerged. Six from the numerous sources of communication channels that disseminate messages about GBV were selected. The first two of the six sources selected for disseminating messages about GBV were media oriented such as radio and television. The respondents expressed trust in the media-related channels for messages on GBV. In term of access, preference, trust and importance, radio was chosen over television. Respondents explained messages on GBV are carried out in their local language through radio, whereas messages on television are mostly in English. They also explained that though television messages are mostly in English, they like it because they see the action of the people in it. This finding further confirms informants of GDCA that they use media to educate and create public awareness on GBV.

The next hierarchy was the chief's house and churches/mosques. Other sources that were not ranked but discussed during group meetings included wedding and outdoorings ceremonies, community members and friends, festivals, and during communal labour. These put together were categorized as socially-related sources of communicating GBV as they

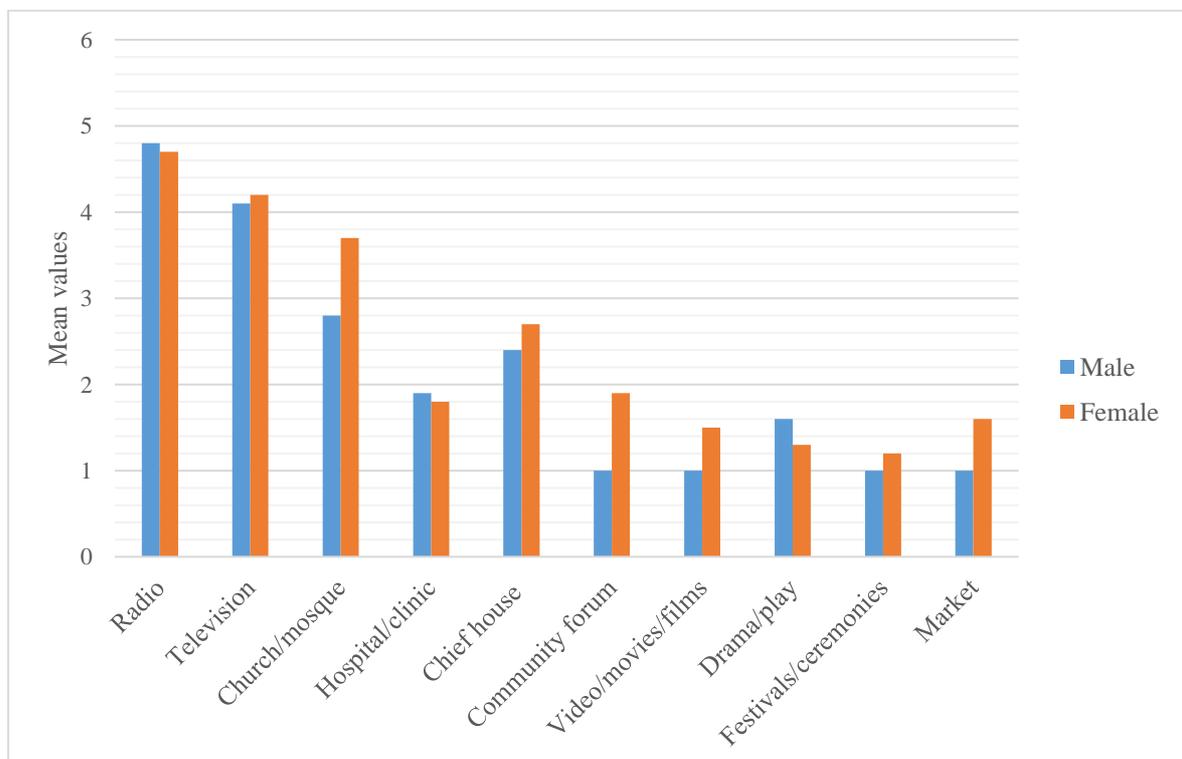
facilitate interpersonal interactions. However, respondents ranked these social sources lower in comparison to media channels. They intimated though that they also have trust in the chiefs and religious leaders when it comes to advice and marital disputes.

Unexpectedly, the hospital/clinic was ranked poorly as a source of communication on GBV. In finding out reasons for this low ranking, the respondents gave reason such as:

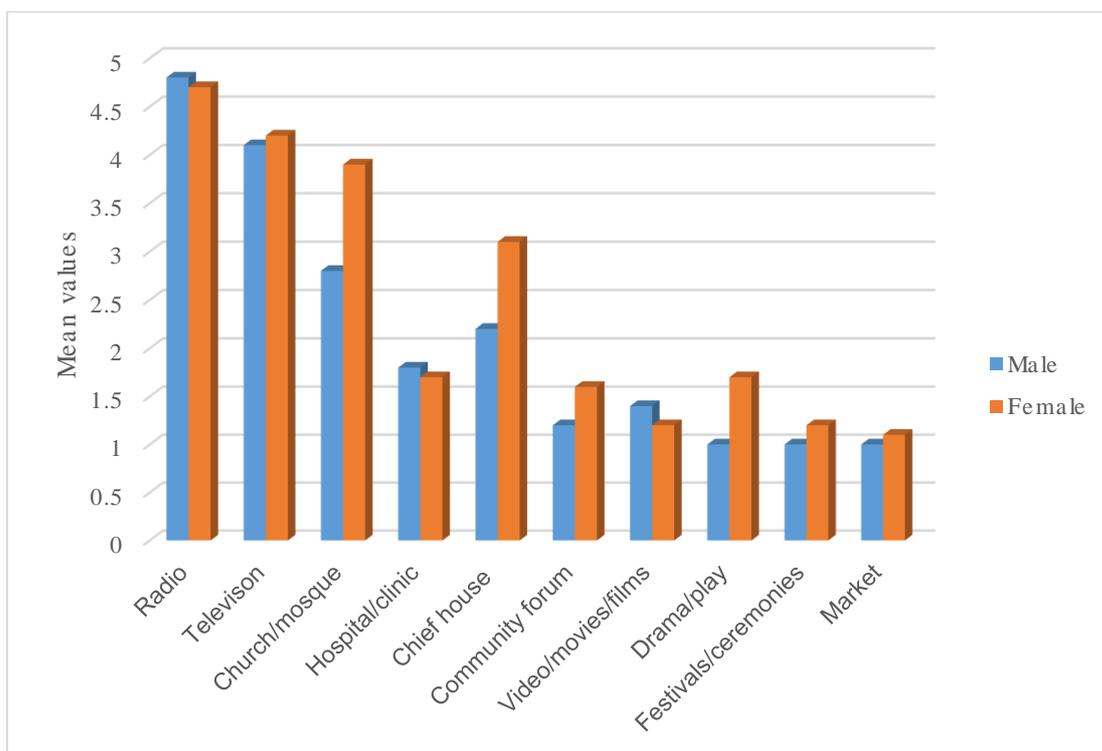
- We don't frequently go to the hospital/clinic
- Health workers are often busy to talk about GBV
- Doctors talk to you about your illness
- It is difficult to talk to someone you don't know

Drama/play was the least ranked in the group activities. The questionnaire results further established that radio and television respectively were the highest preferred channels for disseminating messages on GBV. Notably also, the church/mosque and chief's house received considerable responses as preferred channels, followed by the hospital. More females also preferred to get messages on GBV through community fora, market place and videos. The details are presented in figure 6.2 below.

**Figure 6. 2: Perceptions about preferred channels for disseminating messages on GBV in the Sagnarigu district**



**Figure 6. 3: Perceptions about trusted channels for disseminating messages on GBV in Sagnarigu district**

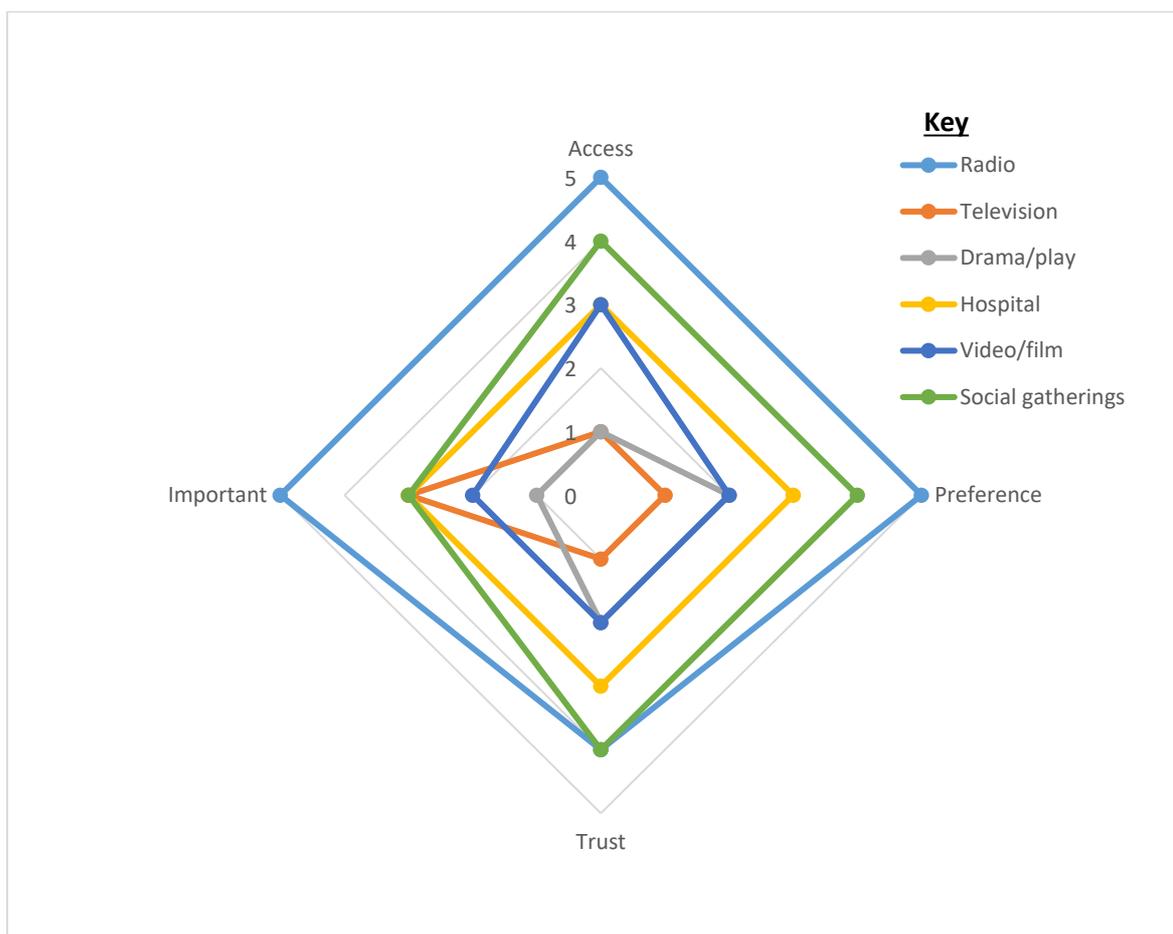


The respondents were asked to score from a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) which communication channels they trusted for disseminating messages about GBV (Figure 6.3). On trusted channels for messages on GBV, results confirmed the findings from the FGDs. It is clear that radio and television respectively scored highest in terms of trusted channels for disseminating messages on GBV in the district. The church/mosque, chief’s house, hospital/clinic and community fora got more responses from female respondents. This might indicate that women also have trust in these channels for the dissemination of messages.

### **Nabdam district**

Findings from group activities and questionnaires analysis in Nabdam district demonstrate clearly that radio, which is mass media-related, was recognized as the highest in the communication hierarchy.

**Figure 6. 4: Perception about information access, preference, trust and reliability in Nabdam district FGDs- Spider diagram**



Radio was ranked first in terms of access, preference, importance and trust. The second channel of communication hierarchy is social gatherings (chief’s house, church, mosque, community fora, market, festivals, wedding and outdoor ceremonies). Social gatherings which was ranked second is socially-oriented and recognized channel(s) that promote face to face interaction and provide immediate feedback on information delivered through such channels.

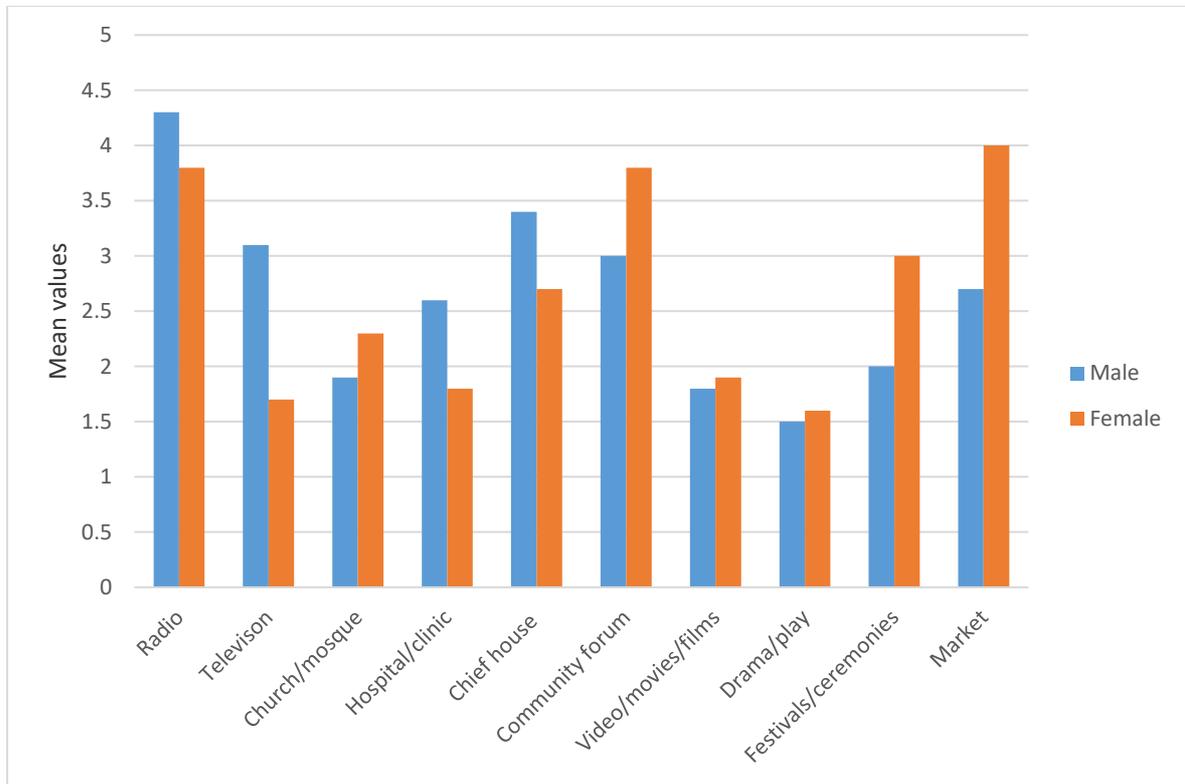
The hospital/clinic was identified as the third hierarchy of communication channels in the district and fairly accessible, preferred and trusted, but not very important. A focus group female participant during discussions in the Sakote community explained:

*“You see the hospital and clinic could have been good place for women to get information about violence, but how often do we visit the clinic and who has the time to sit us down to talk when we are in long queues waiting for one doctor to attend to our health problems”*

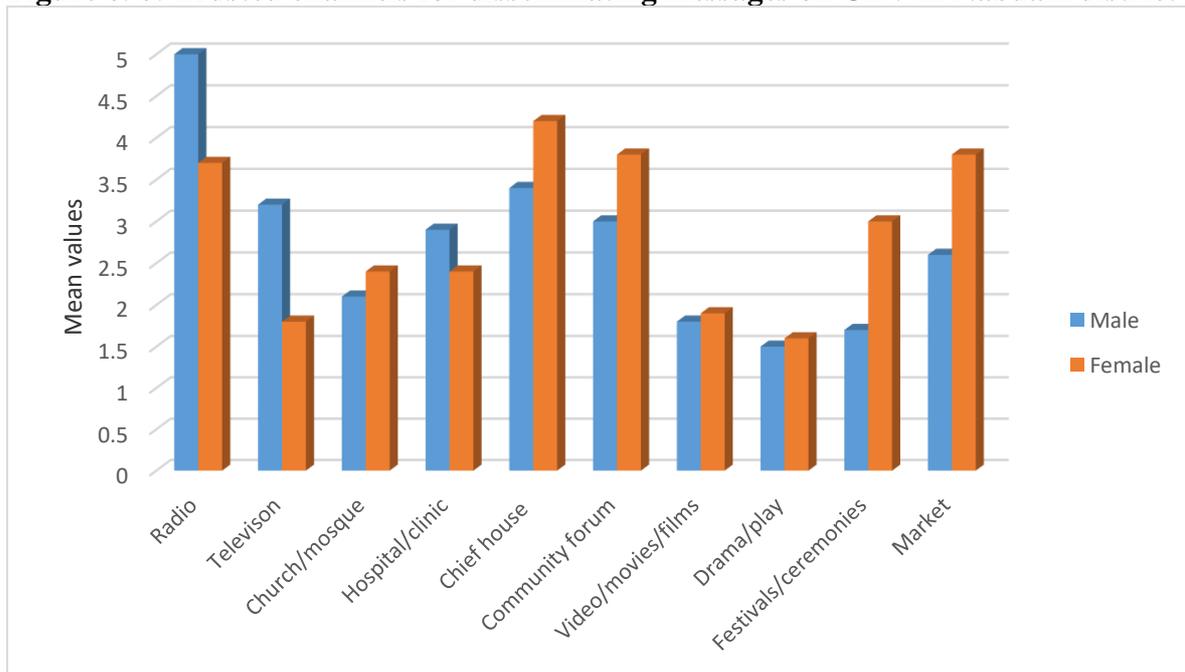
(Sakote FGD participant, 2014)

This explanation and many others brought to fore issues of inadequate staffing in health institutions in the northern parts of Ghana and hence their inability to provide expert education on GBV in the area.

**Figure 6. 5: Perceptions about preferred channels for disseminating messages on GBV in the Nabdam district**



**Figure 6. 6: Trusted channels for disseminating messages on GBV in Nabdam district**

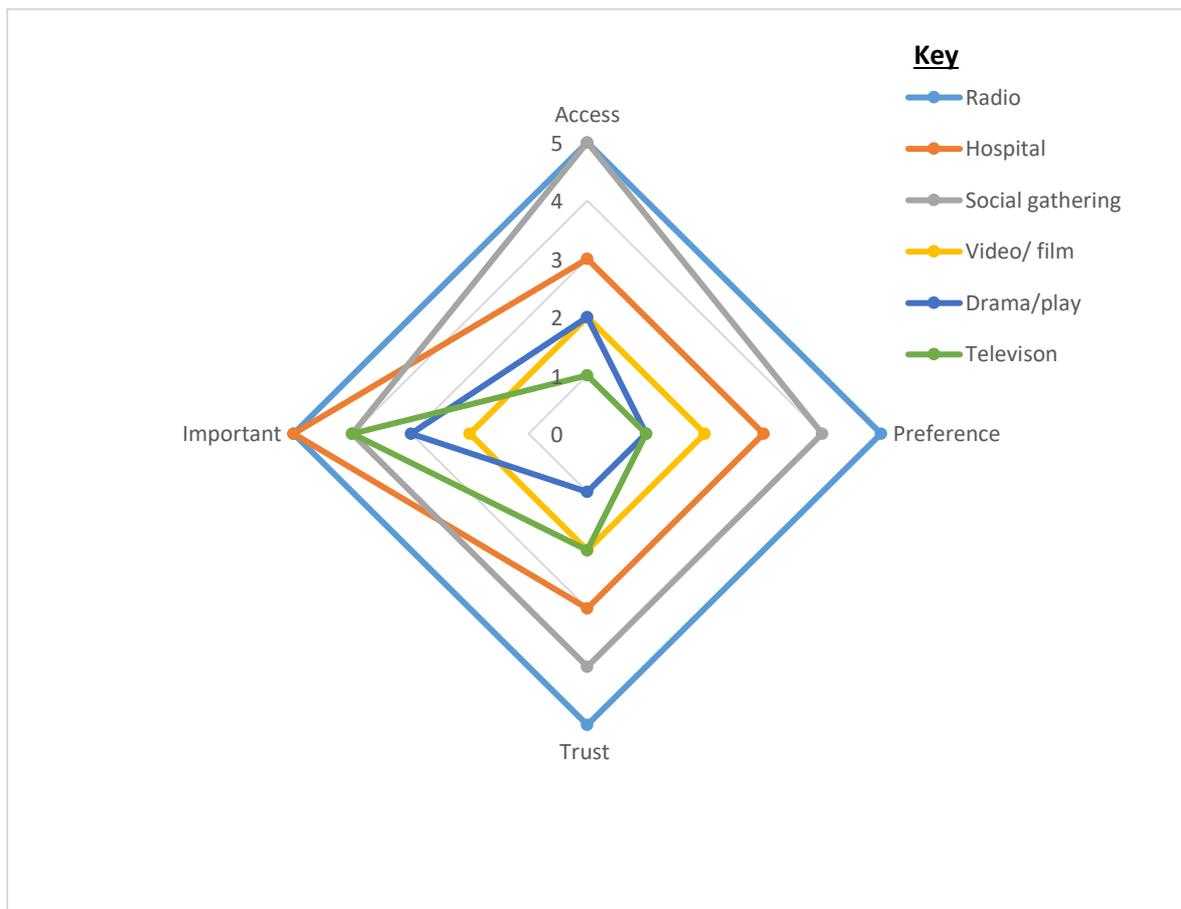


The questionnaire responses (Figure 6.6 and 6.7) on preference and trust of communication channels further confirmed radio as the highest in the communication hierarchy. It is important to note that the individual socially related channels such chief’s house, community fora and market were also still preferred and trusted, second in this ranking. However, hospital/clinic ranked better in both preferred and trusted channels by questionnaire respondents as opposed to group ranking, showing a little nuance.

### Nadowli/Kaleo district

From finding of group activities and questionnaire analysis, evidence suggests radio ranks the highest in the communication channels hierarchy in terms of access, preference, trust and importance in the Nadowli/Kaleo district (Figure 6.9). Social gatherings (chief’s house, market, weddings, festivals, church and mosque) formed the second layer of the hierarchy. While the third hierarchy was the hospital/ clinic.

**Figure 6. 7: Sources of information on access, preference, trust and reliability in Nadowli/Kaleo district FGDs-spider diagram**

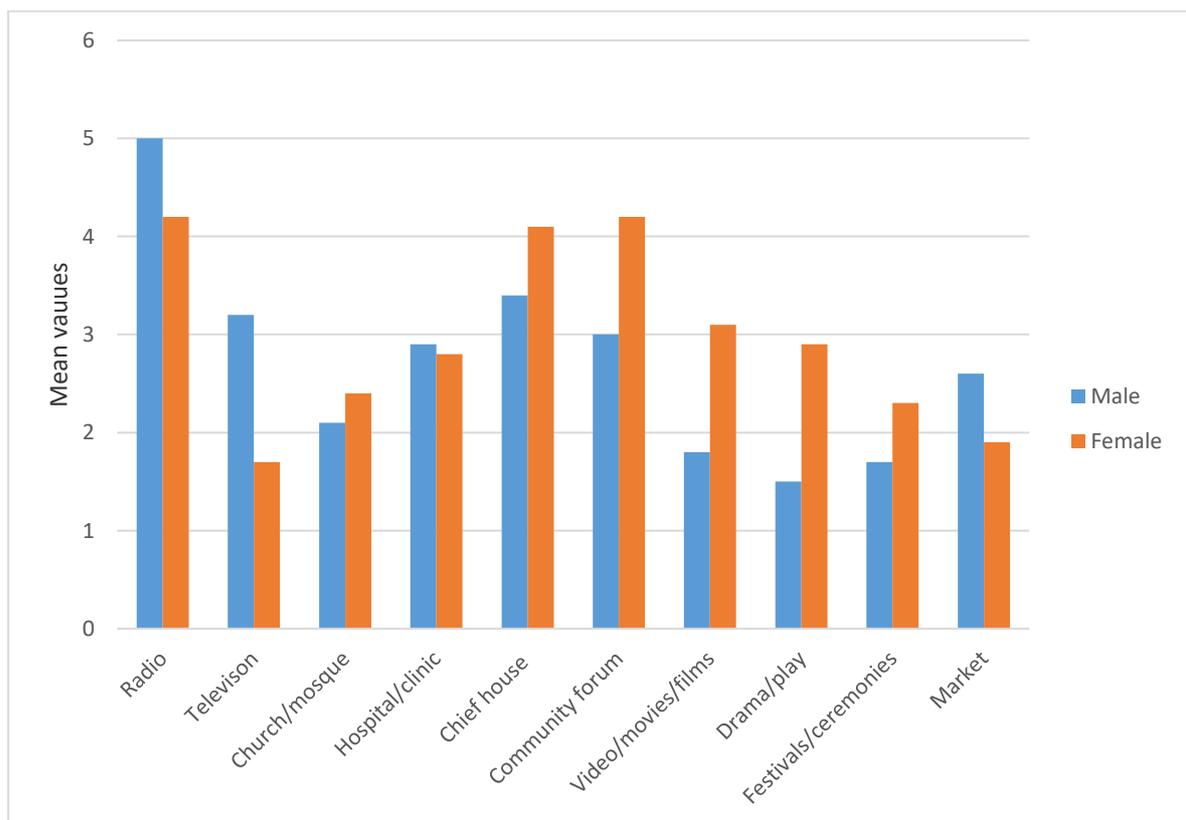


The finding indicated television and video/film which form an aspect of media-oriented channels were poorly ranked. The respondents reported that even though these channels are good, and would have been preferred over radio and other mediums. But, the rural populace has issues of affordability and electricity problems in the area. One female respondent<sup>212</sup> in a mixed group meeting had this to say:

*“We like television and video shows, but where is light [electricity] for us to watch all the interesting things on them? Unless we travel to the cities that is where to see and watch television and films. Once is the village, we can only listen to radio”.*

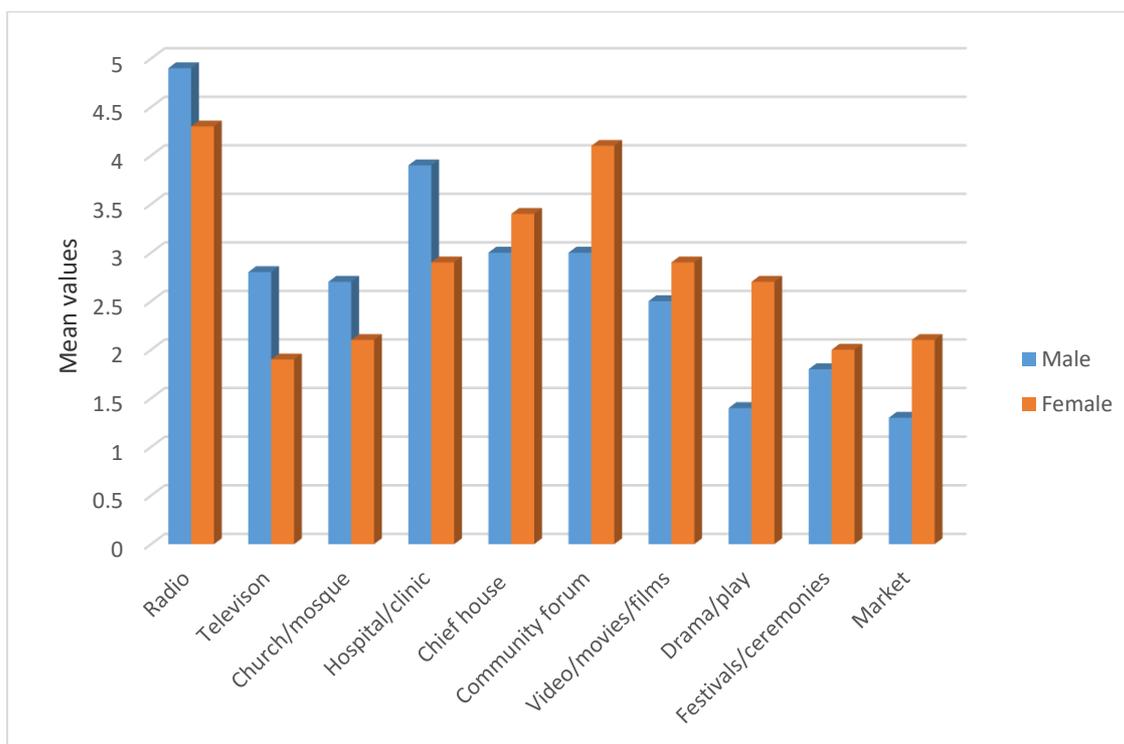
Implicitly then, television and video shows were poorly ranked not because they are not useful channels. Majority of rural people are confronted with poverty and deprived of basic amenities to improve their well-being.

**Figure 6. 8: Perceptions about preferred channels for disseminating messages on GBV in the Nadowli/Kaleo district**



<sup>212</sup> Group activity with Janguasi mixed group, female respondent, 2014.

**Figure 6. 9: Perception about trusted channels for disseminating messages on GBV in Nadowli/Kaleo district**



The figures above furthered the understanding that radio overwhelmingly is the most preferred and trusted channel. Individual socially related channels such as community fora, chief’s house and church/mosque were recognized as important. There is a little nuance in group ranking and questionnaire scoring with regards to hospital/clinic as a channel, receiving higher scoring in the questionnaire.

## 6.9 Chapter summary

This chapter addressed the third objective of the thesis, which was to explore the communication context of GBV. Firstly, the findings from research respondents established that there are diverse information sources, with radio recognized as the most common source from which people access information about GBV. Furthermore, the messages disseminated about GBV were not common across the districts, meaning messages heard were location-specific, purposely designed to address the specific GBV issues in each of the study districts. For instance, while information on physical violence was common across the three districts, information on FGM and child trafficking was emphasized in the Nadowli-Kaleo district owing to the rampant occurrences of these activities. However, the evidence gathered indicated women and girls who were victims/survivors needed information on counselling, and that key messages to the public about GBV should include: causes and effects of GBV

and how to avoid violence. It was also established that media-oriented channels, particularly, radio was ranked highest in the communication hierarchy, and deemed credible for disseminating information about GBV across the study areas.

The study noted a good understanding of communication and its role by government departments and the three NGOs under study in addressing GBV. The application of communication in program activities including GBV was obvious, but not intentional or well planned, as many government departments and all the case study NGOs did not have evidence of written communication strategies and/or strategic plans guiding their GBV programming. Generally, both government and NGO interventions were inconsistent and depended on the availability of funding from donor organizations. This lack of planning and ad hoc interventions significantly affected the sustainability of GBV responses in the case study areas. With regards to the communication strategies adopted by NGOs, it must be noted that targeting beneficiaries allows for a more effective communication of GBV messages. For instance, by clearly defining their target audiences as well as messages, the WOM was able to meet the specific needs of their audience by providing purposeful information on counselling for widows and orphans. Additionally, this allowed for WOM to identify and empower relevant stakeholders to advocate against harmful traditional practices such as widowhood rites and inheritance. On the other hand, GDCA targeted a wider audience that made it difficult to provide targeted communication to meet the specific needs of beneficiaries. It further observed the absence of communication experts or specialists in all the government agencies and case study NGOs studied.

Having discussed the communication context of GBV by bringing to the fore information/communication sources and how communication is used in addressing GBV and related programmes, it is essential to also look at the media context of GBV. Consequently, the next chapter brings into perspective the role of mass media in the coverage and framing of GBV.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: MEDIA CONTEXT OF GBV**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the mass media context within which GBV prevention and interventions take place in Ghana, and particularly in Northern Ghana. This chapter draws largely from media and framing theories (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000) with a communication and gender lens to unpack the media context of GBV. The chapter opens with an examination of mass media, especially print media coverage of GBV against women and girls in Ghana including the study location. To provide insights to the subject matter, analysis of two state-owned newspapers with wide coverage across the country as well as the views of key informants from the mass media industry were sought to understand media coverage of GBV. As earlier noted in 3.5.1, the daily graphic and spectator newspapers are used for this analysis because they are read by government officials and reflect government opinions on national issues including GBV. Additionally, they are read by the educated public in urban and rural areas. The chapter proceeds to explore what stories about GBV are heard and not heard, to highlight communication challenges in addressing GBV. The study further explores the theories and policies guiding GBV communication. Finally, the chapter highlights the major themes emerging from the findings and draws its conclusion. The next section discusses media coverage of GBV. A content analysis of Ghana's two (Daily graphic and the spectator) state-owned newspapers with nation-wide distribution suggests media coverage of GBV against women and girls was limited. More so, most of the GBV stories were gender-blind and predominantly presented in news story formant, which seemed to compromise the contextual nature of GBV.

### **7.2 The extent of print media coverage of GBV**

This section assesses the extent to which the print media (Newspaper) reports on issues relating to all forms of GBV in Ghana. The findings from a content analysis (Schreier, 2012; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004) of two state-owned newspapers and interviews with print media staff indicated that GBV against women and girls was not adequately covered.

**Table 7. 1: Percentage of articles covering GBV stories in the two newspapers**

Newspaper	Editions	No. Articles	No. of Articles containing GBV Stories	Percentage of articles containing GBV stories
Daily Orographic	51	99	25	25%
Spectator	22	40	5	13%
Total	73	139	30	21.5%

It was found that both newspapers coverage of GBV stories was 21.5% of the 139 news articles published in 2014. Comparatively, the daily graphic coverage of GBV was higher (25%) relative to the Spectator (13%).

This suggests that the Daily Graphic attached much more importance to covering GBV on their gender page of their newspaper than the Spectator. It should be noted that these two state-owned daily newspapers, boasting of widest reach and readership, were expected to lead in stimulating public discourse and debates on public issues (Ako and Akweongo, 2009; Amoakohene, 2004) of which GBV, more so, against women and girls is one. But, this is not the case in Ghana although there are appreciable media avenues for information dissemination and discussions of social problems (Gadzekpo, 2010). Gadzekpo notes that Ghanaian newspapers have not been adequately exploited and that most media houses are poorly staffed. The outcome of this is that generating investigative news reports and covering important and complex social matters such as GBV is hampered (Quarshie et al., 2015). Ardayfio-Schadorf's (2005) study of "Violence against Women: The Ghanaian case" noted that the non-coverage of violent acts in the print media does not adequately expose GBV as a crime at the national level. This assertion gives credence to the finding that the two state-owned newspapers coverage of GBV was very limited and likely not to generate the necessary public attention to this important social problem.

### **7.2.1 Newspaper coverage**

This section discusses the types of newspapers articles that covered GBV against women. It also highlights the authorship and their gender to understand the context in which coverage of GBV takes place. To achieve this, the researcher read each article that covered GBV taking cognizance of the features exhibited. For instance, what is the focus of the article, is

it speaking to a particular subject, is it someone expressing his/her opinion or commenting on an issue or is about facts or reporting on events.

Analysis of the two newspapers indicated GBV stories were covered in news articles, feature articles and commentary articles. Thus, it was found that 20 out of the 30 stories on GBV were in news article/story, 8 in feature story and 2 in commentary formats. This was based on the pre-analysis categorising the types of newspaper stories. For instance, all stories that indicated the nature of the event by providing information about who, where, when, what and how an event or incident happened were categorised under news stories also referred to as hard news. Stories that contained details and background information on a specific topic or subject related to GBV were put in the news features category, while articles that were considered expert pieces or expressed individual opinion on topical issues, road maps to proposed solutions giving details were placed under commentary articles.

News article/story refers to “a story/article that reports the event factually and objectively and is mainly event-oriented. An event is a discrete happening that is limited to time and space” (Tuchman, 1978). In consistent with this description of a “new story” by Tuchman (1987), the analysis of the newspapers indicated that print media coverage on issues of GBV were predominantly confined to news stories. The stories covered were contingent on reports from seminars, workshops, conferences, press releases, camps, annual general meetings and other fora and were one-off activities. For instance,

*“....at Ebo Farton-Odro, at the opening seminar on early and forced marriages in Accra on Monday. The two-day seminar organised by the Parliament of Ghana....”*  
(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, March 12, 2014)

*“....Speaking at the function, Mr Edward Ndzibah, .....said the celebration of the day was to bring to the fore issues concerning the abuse of the rights of children...”*  
(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, March 26, 2014)

*“....The Administrator of the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Headquarters, ASP (Mrs) Lydia Osei Agyapong, ....made a presentation on “Domestic Violence, the Role of DOVVSU” at a training workshop for journalists on GBV held in Accra”*

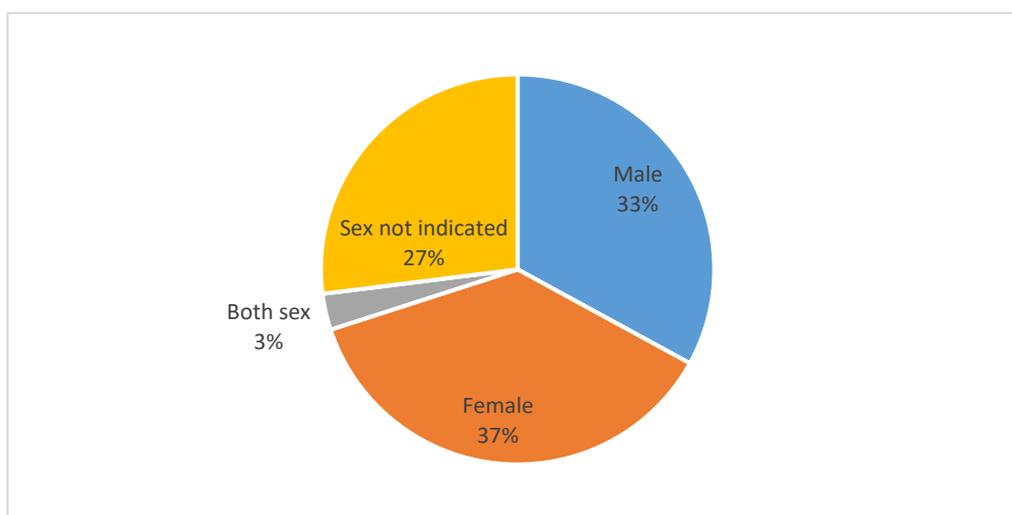
(The Spectator, Saturday, December 20, 2014)

This form of reportage was indicative of the significance associated with GBV in media. However, such news formats are problematic because they leave no space for comprehensive examination of contextual issues or debates about the underlying causes of and solutions to the problem of GBV (Kitzinger, 2004; Andsager and Powers, 1999). This media bias towards focusing on events at the expense of issue-based coverage implicitly presents GBV as a normal facet of life, with emphasis placed on intervention and ruling in individual accusation rather than the broader social solutions of GBV that disproportionately affects women and girls' wellbeing. Mogambi and Nyakeri (2015) and Anini (2014) argue that to make media reportage of GBV relevant to both policy makers and the general audience, such stories should be covered in opinion, feature and investigative articles. As such in-depth coverage will stimulate debates and discourse surrounding social and behavioural changes toward GBV. It would be important for the editorial teams to invite and encourage government, civil society groups, women's rights movements, NGOs, human rights and gender advocates to participate in authoring GBV articles. Stories or articles from such specialist individual and groups are more likely to move beyond "event-based" stories to contextual issues about GBV.

### 7.2.2 Gender of authors of stories published in the newspapers

Media has always been criticised for majority of news stories being written by men about men's issues and therefore have the potential not to frame women's issues from women's perspectives (Hartley, 2013; Andsager and Powers, 1999). This analysis of the two newspapers therefore sought to identify which gender authored the GBV stories to understand the linkage between the genders of authors and how stories were framed.

**Figure 7. 1: Percentage of sex of authors of newspapers stories on GBV**



The analysis of the two newspapers indicated that more females (37%) than males (33%) authored the GBV stories. The reason for this slight difference could be attributed to the general misconception that gender is basically about women (Wood, 2012). Global Media Monitoring Project (2010, 2015) notes the importance and implications of gender in media content. This is because women's presence as a gender category in news rooms impacts content (Global Media Monitoring Project, 2015). For example, a study in South Korea by Kim and Yoon (2009) found that female reporters generally employed a more positive tone, and adopted a more gender-sensitive perspective than their male counterparts in coverage of female cabinet ministers. This is suggestive that if more females were engaged in writing stories about GBV, the possibility of using positive tone and adopting gender-sensitive perspectives could have been higher. Which could have had the potential to raise gendered issues associated with violence against women (VAW) for public discourse in Ghana.

Worthy of note is the non-indication of the writer's sex in 12% of the articles. In fact, this was noted in the Daily Graphic, where a media outlet (GNA<sup>213</sup>) was mentioned as reporting the stories rather than indicating the person who wrote the story. It is suggested that all articles in newspapers should have the full name of the author to help identify the gender.

### **7.2.3 Authorship/writers of article/story**

This section examines the individuals who authored the GBV stories in the two newspapers. As a result, these were coded as internal staff and external writers – individuals outside the news media organisation. This knowledge was to help establish the kind of writers and which external writers were their partners in their bid in the stimulation of public discourse and debate surrounding GBV. The results in Table 7.2 illustrates the author/writer of the GBV story.

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<sup>213</sup> Ghana News Agency.

**Table 7. 2: Author of GBV stories in the two newspapers**

Writer	Name of newspaper					
	Daily Graphic		The Spectator			
	No. Authors	No Articles	No. Authors	No Articles	Total No. Authors	Total No. Articles
Internal staff	12 (70%)	17 (68%)	5 (71%)	4 (80%)	17 (68%)	21 (70%)
GNA	1	3 (12%)	0	0	1 (4%)	3 (10%)
International authors	2 (12)	2 (8%)	0	0	2 (8%)	2 (7%)
Human rights activist	1 (6%)	1 (4%)	0	0	1 (4%)	1(3%)
Gender experts	1 (6%)	1 (4%)	0	0	1 (4%)	1 (3%)
Others	-	-	2 (29%)	1 (20%)	2 (8%)	1 (3%)
No author	1 (6%)	1 (4%)	0	0	1 (4%)	1 (3%)
Total	17 (100%)	25 (100)	7 (100%)	5 (100%)	25 (100%)	30 (100)

The finding from the two newspapers and interviews with media practitioners<sup>214 215</sup>, demonstrated that 70% (21 stories) of all the GBV articles were written by staff of the two print media houses. This finding corroborates with Adofo's (2015) study that found that stories on cocaine crimes in Ghana were predominantly authored by staff of the newspapers studied. There was also indication of some public interest in writing on GBV-related issues as the finding suggested that both newspapers carried the views of external writers in championing the cause of gender violence in Ghana. For instance, writers included a Gender desk officer of the MoGCSP<sup>216</sup>, Director of Human Rights Advocacy, a lawyer, the British High Commissioner to Ghana and Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs. It was also observed that the Ghana News Agency (3%) made contribution on the subject of GBV. Nonetheless, given the enormity and serious negative impacts of GBV on women and girls, it is essential for newspaper houses to encourage more external writers to contribute professionally to the GBV debate in Ghana. For instance, gender specialist, human rights advocates, health experts and development practitioners should lead the way in writing about

<sup>214</sup> Interview with 2 Daily graphic staff

<sup>215</sup> Interview with the Spectator newspaper editor and officer in charge of gender

<sup>216</sup> Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection.

GBV and related gender equality issues. This is likely to stimulate more public interest and involvement in the discourse and debates around GBV in relation to context, policy issues, services and protection of women and girls in Ghana.

It is important to recognize that the extent of media reportage of an issue would influence attention and response that issue receives from the citizenry and policy makers. This means that the lack of coverage of GBV as a serious socio-gender problem has implications on how public opinion and policy decisions are shaped on the subject. The following section gives an account of the main contents/messages contained in the two newspapers.

### **7.3 Themes/Issues covered in GBV stories**

In this section, the analysis focuses on the key themes covered in GBV stories by Daily Graphic and the Spectator newspapers. The selection of the themes was done inductively, because no existing model was used in identifying the themes in the stories. Nonetheless, Tankard et al (2001) posit that journalists may select, emphasise, exclude and or elaborate on parts of a story or issue to suggest a specific theme or frame. This is suggestive that journalists may consider issues from diverse perspectives, and can select and elaborate one of the perspectives of a story to give it a specific theme. Thus, to find out the main themes carried in GBV stories in two newspapers was necessary to assist in the understanding of the key issues that caught the attention of the newspapers in coverage of GBV.

#### **7.3.1 Key themes in GBV stories**

Earlier, it was noted that GBV is conceptualized and approached in diverse ways because of its multifaceted nature. The way the media constructs issues about GBV as a social problem has implications on how society and policy makers will conceive it (Benjamin and LeGrand, 2012). From the analysis of the articles of the two newspapers, six themes emerged as presented in Table 7.3.

**Table 7. 3: Category of key GBV message (s) carried in the newspapers**

Key themes	Newspaper		Total
	Daily Graphic	The Spectator	
Discussion and/or legal analysis of GBV	26 (32%)	6 (60%)	32 (35%)
Violence and ordeal of victims	21 (26%)	2 (20%)	23 (25%)
Support or proposed intervention for victims	16 (20%)	-	16 (17%)
Negative cultural practices	13 (16%)	1 (10%)	14 (15%)
Report/arrest GBV cases	3 (3%)	1 (10%)	4 (4%)
Causes and consequences of GBV	3 (3%)	-	3 (3%)
Total	82 (100%)	10 (100%)	92 (100%)

For each category, the researcher read each newspaper containing a story about GBV. Any message in the newspaper that discussed issues relating to laws, human rights and legislation regarding GBV were categorized under Discussion and legal analysis of GBV. Secondly, all content that mentioned how women, girls or children suffer violence in the home, family or in public spaces were placed under Violence and ordeal of victims. Contents of stories that mentioned FGM, early and forced marriage, child defilement, widowhoods rites, Trokosi right, child abduction and so on were categorized under negative traditional practices. Any message on DOVVSU<sup>217</sup>, reports on domestic violence, expression of need to arrest perpetrator of GBV and awareness creation on how women should report violence perpetrated against them were placed in the category of Report / arrest GBV cases and finally, message that related to physical, emotional, sexual and mental impacts on victims and survivors of GBV were placed under the causes and consequences category. In following this analytical process, it was observed that some of the stories carried more than one key theme. Meaning some of the stories contained 2 or 3 themes (Table 7.3).

<sup>217</sup> Domestic Violence, Victim and Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service.

The analysis demonstrated that the distribution of key contents across the two newspapers had some diversity. Some themes like support or proposed intervention and causes and consequences of GBV were not given attention in the spectator newspaper reports of GBV.

### **Discussion and/or Legal analysis of GBV**

To identify which key messages were under the category of discussions and/or Legal analysis of GBV, the author read through each GBV storyline in the daily graphic and the spectator newspapers to find stories with content that discussed laws, human rights and legislation regarding GBV. Such stories were then content analysed. The essence of this was to have a better understanding of how print media shapes the perceptions of policy makers and the general public opinions on GBV as a legal issue and a violation of women's human rights.

The content analysis of the two newspapers revealed that GBV as a legal issue was prominent. Most messages (35%) highlighted the legal provisions or failure to such in addressing GBV (Table 7.3). This was exemplified in messages such as:

*“... recognizing the practice of FGM as a violation of women's human rights and form of child abuse, and in line with the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, February 12, 2014)

*“Human rights abuses on the rise in spite of numerous pieces of legislation to prohibit them”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, February 19, 2014)

*“Child protection day observed to bring to the fore issues concerning the abuse of rights of children”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, March 26, 2014)

*“The contradiction in age definition of a child makes it liberal for some cultural practices in some parts of the country to be promoted and permit marriages below the age of 18”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, December 24, 2014).

The above contents capture the practice of FGM, child and forced marriages as issues of violation of women and children (girls) basic human rights. It also draws the attention of policy makers to take action by enacting clear legislation on the definition of a child. However, it was noted that these stories discussing GBV as legal issues did not make reference to the why, how, and outcomes of GBV on women and girls. Giving such

information might have increased audiences understanding of the context of GBV (WHO, 2009). By implication, authors of GBV articles could endeavour to research into the root causes underpinning GBV and impact on victims/survivors within specific context. For instance, the Nadowli/Kaleo district reported high rates of FGM, early and forced marriages and girls trafficking. A detailed feature or commentary articles addressing why this types of violence happens and the impact on women and girls in the communities has the potential to inform government policy regarding such violence in the district.

### **Violence and effects on victims**

Using content analysis as a means of interpreting data in the two newspapers, all GBV articles were examined to find stories that spoke to violence and how victims were affected as a result. While the analysis of the two newspapers demonstrated that the daily graphic out of their 82 key messages on GBV, 26% covered messages on violence and explained how victims were affected. The spectator had 20% of 10 key messages reported on violence and the likely outcomes for victims (Table 7.3).

For instance, the key messages under this category contained in the Daily Graphic included:

*“Elimination of child marriage in Ghana”*

*“High number of women and girls in the country are continuously subjected to alarming forms of violence perpetrated by intimate relations”*

*“Suspected witches subjected to all forms of abuse and violations”*

*“Early marriage is not good because it denies girls of their social and economic empowerment”*

While the Spectator had only two messages reported as:

*“Adolescent girls risk cervical cancer if they are pushed into marrying older men”*

*“In Ghana, Violence within the home is most often considered a private matter and this has come as a result of certain social, cultural and legal systems permitted men’s abuse of women and children in family relationship”*

It can thus be deduced from the above that these messages sought to bring to the public’s attention that child/forced marriages were a form of violence that needed to be eliminated. The messages also brought forward the likely effects such as denial of socio-economic empowerment of girls and risk of cervical cancer, and further drew attention to violence considered as private matter because of the cultural and legal systems condoning male abuse of women and children in gendered relationships. More of such contents should be covered

in GBV articles. Because this helps the readers make sense of the extent and impact of the problem on victims and implications for policy.

### **Support and/or proposed interventions for victims**

The newspapers messages on support for victims in clitoral repair for FGM victims to recover their sexual pleasure through free surgery, and improvement of support to protect women and girls at risk and as well as enforcement of anti-FGM laws. It also had messages on economic and educational empowerment for women and girls; training to empower girls and need for pragmatic interventions on GBV against women and girls.

For instance, the Daily Graphic on Wednesday, February 12, 2014 had two stories relating to FGM, a type of GBV. The first story which covered four-fifth of the page's key message was:

*“.....free clitoral repair by Clitoral for FGM victims to restore their dignity as women and start to enjoying sexual pleasure...” and the second story which covered one-fifth page main message was “....introduction of more pragmatic interventions that will leverage positive social dynamics and bring about behavioural change to eradicate the practice in addition to legislation criminalising the practice of FGM”.*

Another article, on Wednesday, April 30, 2014 had the message:

*“Education of girls and empowerment of young women”.*

Comparatively, the Spectator stories did not cover such messages on support for victims, training and pragmatic interventions on any form of gendered violence.

### **Negative cultural practices**

Main messages that focused on negative cultural practices covered 15% of the total stories reported on GBV. The highlights of messages were:

*“Support government and NGOs initiatives to abolish negative cultural practices”*

*“Reform certain cultural practices prevalent in northern parts of Ghana”*

*“Girls faces challenges of early marriage leading to teenage pregnancies, negative cultural practices and peer pressure from bad friends”*

### **Report/arrest and health consequences**

Stories that focused on this category, ‘report/arrest and health consequences’, did not receive much attention from news reporters. In other words, very few stories had their main messages centred on issues of reporting and arrest (4%) of perpetrators and consequence (3%) of GBV. For reports and arrest of perpetrators highlighted the following messages:

*“Reports on domestic violence cases increased”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, February 5, 2014)

*“Reporting perpetrators of abuse will deter others”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, December 3, 2014)

Whereas the Spectator featured one main message as captured below:

*“...advised victims to cooperate with the police by reporting violence cases early in order to deal with them as early as possible”*

(The Spectator, Saturday, December 20, 2014)

On the other hand, the Daily Graphic newspaper had few messages on the consequences of GBV highlighted in their stories as presented below:

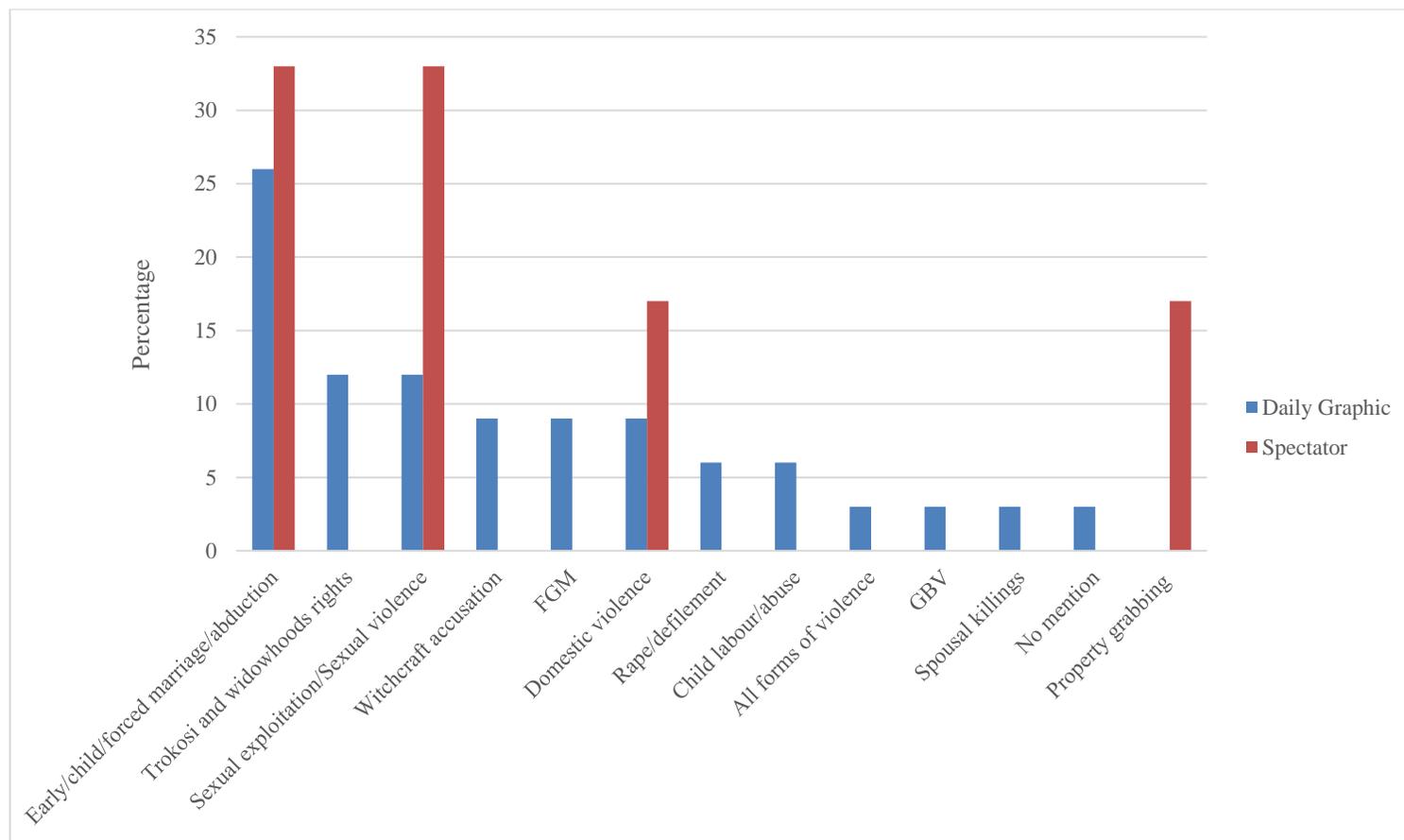
*“.....Early marriage denies girls of their economic and social empowerment which lead to the whole society being affected”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, March 5, 2014)

### **7.3.2 Types of gender-based violence (GBV) covered in the newspapers**

As mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis, GBV acts manifest in different ways and in different forms (WHO, 2014; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007; Krantz and Garcia-Moreno, 2005). Therefore, this study tried to identify the types of gendered violent acts reported by the Daily Graphic and the Spectator newspapers in the country

**Figure 7. 2: Types of GBV reported by Newspapers**



The types of GBV coded were Early/child and forced marriage, witchcraft, female genital mutilation (FGM), rape, sexual violence, widowhood rites and domestic violence. The analysis showed that in addition to those coded, commercial sexual exploitation, abduction, spousal killing and child abuse/labour were also a form of gendered violence (Figure 10). The results indicate that diverse types GBV were mentioned, with some stories mentioning more than one type. For example:

*“...investigate complaints from their daughter on sexual harassment .....Mr Afful described child labour...”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, March 26, 2014)

*“...Forced and early marriages which deprive adolescents..., as well as sexual and domestic abuse....”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, September 24, 2014)

As presented in Figure 7.2 above, 12 types of GBV were reported in the two newspapers. Early/child and forced marriages received the highest coverage by the two newspapers. This finding was found to be consistent with Ejigu’s (2008) study on “The Framing of Gender Violence by the Ethiopian Print Media” that reported FGM, abduction and early and forced marriages, as types of gender violence were also referred to as negative traditional practices. In addition, this analysis also indicated that Trokosi, widowhood rites and witchcraft accusations as types of GBV were reported on and discussed in association to negative cultural/traditional practices.

*“Female genital mutilation is a cultural practice in parts of Africa.... Believed to control women’s sexuality, make them modest and pure, and normally takes place at age five”.*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, February 12, 2014)

*“... Called for intensive educational campaigns to combat the practice of early and forced marriages...”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, March 5, 2014)

*“.....has called for the reformation of certain cultural and traditional practices which he described as unconstitutional”.*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, March 12, 2014)

These types of violence in comparison with the others received reasonable amount of coverage, more so, in the Daily Graphic. Several studies (e.g. Mba, 2007, Adinkrah, 2004, 2007, 2012) have suggested that early and forced marriages/abduction, trokosi/widowhood rites, witchcraft accusations and female genital mutilation which are considered as negative cultural/traditional practices were more complex and different by nature than the other types. The reasons proffered by these studies are that these practices are entrenched in the socio-cultural and traditional customs of some ethnic groups in Ghana, more particularly in Northern Ghana. Comparatively, the finding on the types of violence reported on in the print media had largely corroborated with research participants (FGDs and KIIs) understanding of GBV (see details types of GBV in chapter 5) and the types of messages they have heard about violence against women and girls across the districts (see details in Chapter 6.5). However, it should be noted that majority of the focus group discussants and some of the key informants were not literates in English, and so might have this understanding through other sources like radio rather than print media.

#### **7.4 Framing of GBV Stories**

This research recognized the importance of framing in media coverage of GBV. In this section, the study was therefore set out to investigate how the media frames GBV stories to audiences, again using the Daily Graphic and the Spectator newspaper stories as units of analysis. Theories on framing propose that the media choose certain topics or themes (main themes in stories have been discussed in 7.3.1), and situate them within a context to bring out the salient characteristics to enable audiences' interpretation of the news stories (Sobel, 2015; Scheufele, 1999; Andsager and Powers, 1999; McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver, 1997; McCombs and Shaw, 1993). Put differently, journalists strategically use frames as "short cuts" to catch their readers' attention to the issues raised in the news items. However, media and feminist scholars oftentimes critique the predisposition of journalists' reportage of GBV to focus attention on individual incidents (events-based) to the neglect of the contextual education about its complex social nature (Morgan and Politoff, 2014; Taylor, 2009; Carlyle, Slater and Chakroff, 2008). Thus, they argue that presenting GBV as an individual issue tends to make the audience lose sight of the pervasiveness of GBV and as a social menace. In examining how stories are framed, it is important to consider how the stories are placed in the newspapers because where a story is placed within a newspaper has implications for its significance and importance to the readership. The next subsection discusses the placement of GBV stories in the two newspapers.

#### **7.4.1 Placement of story**

It is important to recognize that the extent of coverage, sources and location of stories forms a vital part of media framing of issues or problems. The extent of media coverage of GBV has been addressed in Section 7.2. This subsection discusses placement of stories in the newspapers under study. The placement of a story and on which page— front, middle and back pages – is characteristic of the prominence attached to the story in newspapers. The editorial team, who play role of “gatekeeping”, makes decisions and sets the newspapers’ agenda (Sahu and Alam, 2013). An assessment of this was an essential aspect of this study to help ascertain the prominence the two state-owned newspapers gave to gender in relation to gender-based violence. As Dzeble (2006) cited in Dugle, (2013) explains, the front, middle, and the back page are the most prominent pages of newspapers stories. In fact, Galtung and Ruge (1965) assert that the front-page story is considered the most prominent as the first story catches the reader’s attention before other stories. Following this postulation, this study revealed that the gender pages where GBV stories were likely to be contained, were not given prominence (front, middle and back) in the two newspapers. The daily graphic, a 64-page newspaper had its gender page appearing on page 13, while the spectator with 32 to 40 pages had gender issues appearing on page 23 of the newspaper. The evidence gathered from these two national newspapers therefore showed that GBV against women and girls was not given prominence in their news coverage of GBV.

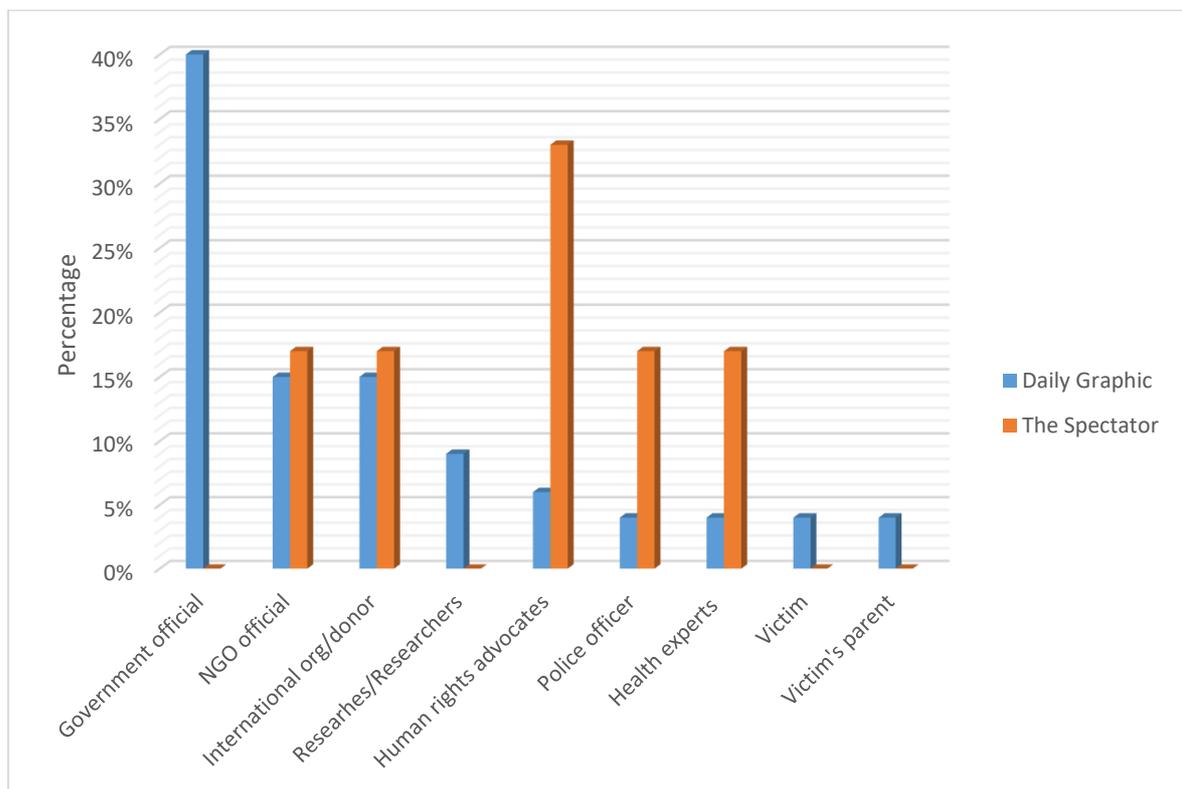
However, this finding is in sharp contrast to previous studies (Omego, 2014; Ejigu, 2008) who reported that newspapers gave prominence to GBV by deliberately placing stories of GBV on the front pages or as special issues to catch the readers’ attention towards the topic. Omego’s (2014) study on “Reporting Violence Against Women in Nigeria: A Content Analysis of Newswatch and Tell Newsmagazines (1995 – 2004) finds that although coverage on GBV was sparse and irregular, VAW were given prime positions in the newsmagazines as they were mostly given cover-page treatment or covered as special reports (2014:210). This is contrary to this study’s finding because both newspapers in Ghana neither placed gender and related GBV news on front, middle or back pages of their newspapers. However, worthy of note is the fact that this study only content analysed the gender pages of the daily graphic and the spectator newspaper and maybe an analysis of the whole newspapers could have presented a different result. Albeit, placing gender issues on the front or middle pages

would be critical for readers, especially government officials to easily location and read the stories GBV and gender issues.

### 7.4.2 Sources used in the stories

Sources employed in newspapers stories largely influences how a problematic issue is framed (Lee, 2014; Ejigu, 2008; Andsager and Powers, 1999). Thus, newspaper houses as part of their responsibilities appoint reporters to gather information to ensure news credibility. In collaboration with previous mass media studies (Lacy and Coulson, 2000), this present analysis of the newspapers demonstrated a predominant use of government officials as sources in the reportage of GBV.

**Figure 7. 3: Source quoted in the newspapers**



As showed in Figure 7.3, forty percent of the Daily Graphic sources used by reporters were traced to government officials such as speaker of parliament, members of parliament, Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection and other deputy ministers. While the Spectator quoted only one government official source in their very few stories on GBV over the period. The quotes by the Daily Graphic reporters were captured as:

*“The speaker of parliament, Mr. Edward Doe Adjoho, has called for intensive educational campaigns to combat the practice of early and forced marriages in the country. He said early and forced marriages were inimical to the development of children because...”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, March 5, 2014)

It must be recognized that this finding is congruent with many studies on news articles sources suggesting that news writers often fail or are constrained in the choice of sources, hence their over reliance on government and other official sources in their reportage to satisfy the strategic ritual balance (Andsager and Powers, 1999; Lacy and Coulson, 2000). For instance, the daily graphic quoted other official sources such as the director of Ghana Education Service and the principal of Tamale College of Education. However, this finding of government officials as primary sources used by newspapers reporters in Ghana is in variance with Nzuma (2015) study on “The Framing of violence against women (VAW) in Print Media: An analysis of two Namibian Newspaper (The Namibian and New Era) who reported that both the Namibian and New Era newspaper rather relied heavily on police for GBV information for their news stories. All the same, this report equally recognized government and legal professionals were also sources quoted and paraphrased in news stories.

Apart from government sources like the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection, Speaker of Parliament, members of parliament and education director, of which some of them could be termed specialists (e.g. the gender minister and education director) were commonly cited in the reported stories of GBV in daily graphic especially. The next quoted sources were NGO officers and international organization/ donors with nuances between Daily Graphic and the Spectator newspapers. The Daily Graphic stories quoted their source as NGO officers, with another 15% quoting international organizations and or donors. The study observed that reporters quoted these kinds of sources in relation to them being organizers of the workshops, seminars, symposia or camps on GBV prevention and intervention programs. These sources provided information on the evidence, prevalence and nature of particular types of GBV. Conversely, the spectator quoted two sources one each 17% (1 out of 6 sources).

Media studies suggest that reporters seldom turn to GBV victims/survivors or victim advocates who are most likely to give contextual information about GBV as sources of information for their reportage of GBV stories (Taylor, 2009; Alat, 2006; Meyers, 1997; Los

and Chamard, 1997). In consistent with this postulation, it was found out that victims/survivors, victims' family and victim's community members were marginally used as source of information in the coverage of GBV stories. Meaning that victims/survivors stories of their personal experience of violence is not given equal weight because they have no way of telling their stories and so more often than not blamed for their abuse in media reports (Alat, 2006). Morgan and Politoff (2012:8) note that the low percentage of GBV victims and advocates as source of information is problematic, because when one considers the level of expertise which these categories of people could offer when giving information on the issue in this area. This low percentage may be one of the reason why media coverage generally lacks contextual perspectives in their GBV reportage.

It has been documented that women's representation in the news has predominantly been in the area of their coverage and role as sources of information and their role as reporters (Kimani and Yeboah, 2011). An analysis of the two newspapers on the gender of people quoted in the GBV articles found that 54% of the people quoted in the stories by the two newspapers were females, while 31% were males and 15% cited as organisations. Also, as the study found in (7.2.2), more females were writers of the GBV stories in both newspapers. This finding of women serving as majority of writers and sources quoted in the articles suggest women's improved visibility in the print media in Ghana. This corroborates African Media Barometer, Ghana, (2011) study that recorded that there is a positive change with more women getting involved in media discourse of social issues p28. Similar reports indicate that the state broadcaster is also credited with increased and varied programming targeting women and children. A review of a report by the MoGCSP (2014) on the implementation of the African and Beijing Platform of Action and Review Report for Beijing +20 showed that women make up nearly 60% of practicing journalists in Ghana with over 70% of diploma holders in journalism being women. With state broadcasting agencies also having about two-thirds of editorial positions being held by women. This means that female journalists encouraged all the more to add their voice to the fight against GBV by sourcing information from GBV victims/survivors who are likely to share their experiences.

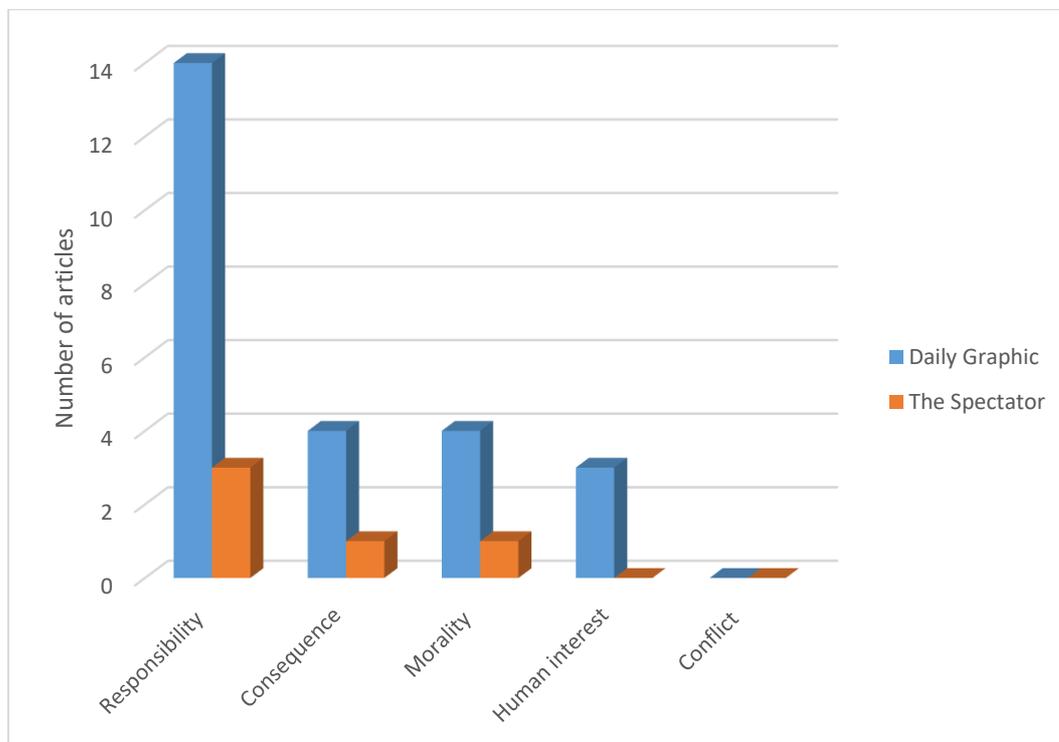
However, this finding contradicts Nzuma's (2015:59) study which reported that most people speaking to issues of GBV against women were men, which tends to render women invisible in the media, even on issues that directly concern them. This is consistent with literature examining women's inclusion in the news which demonstrated that women are a

marginalised group and have not received coverage commensurate to their population (Kimani and Yeboah, 2011; Shwartz, 2011; Yeboah 2010; Global Media Monitoring Project, 2010; Ross, 2007; Mensah, 2002). These studies have reported on men and women’s presence in the news across the world and observed that women as a group over the years have been significantly invisible in the news.

### 7.4.3 Frames used in story of GBV

This study analyses the Daily Graphic and the Spectator’s media coverage of GBV using the generic media frames suggested by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) in their study of 2,601 newspaper stories and 1, 522 television news stories. Their investigation revealed 5 prevalent news frames: Morality, Conflict, Responsibility, Human Interest and Consequence. The adoption of these 5 frames as the guide for analyses is based on the prevalence within which news stories fit into the frames, and have therefore become a major benchmark with which literature analyses media stories. It also helps measure the extent of an issue in representative sampling.

**Figure 7. 4: Types of frames used by the newspapers**



The analysis (Figure 7.4) of the two Ghanaian state-owned newspapers demonstrated the usage of many of the generic frames, especially the Daily Graphic newspaper. These frames used by the newspapers are discussed in the following.

### **Responsibility Frame**

According to the framing theorists (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000), the responsibility frame identifies and places the main responsibility for causing or solving the GBV problem on an individual, group or organization. This study found out that the responsibility frame was the most frequently used in GBV stories. The frame hardly blamed victims for causing the abuse, but placed blame on negative cultural practices and norms, poverty, and legal systems for pervasiveness of GBV, especially against women, while the responsibility of solving the problem is placed on government, legal systems, NGOs, international organization/donors, chiefs and opinion leaders, and society at large. Below are some examples of how the media framed the responsibility frame:

*“Women are partially harmed because the practice of early and forced marriages prevents them from fulfilling their socially expected roles”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, March 5, 2014. P.13)

*“Commercial sexual exploitation of children is high because of poverty”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, December 10, 2014, p.13)

The reason for the predominant use of the responsibility frame in stories could be attributed to Ghana government’s commitment and ratification of international conventions and treaties and national laws on the elimination of gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls (GSS, 2014; MoGCSP, 2014). For instance, government has enacted laws that promote the welfare and protection of women and families, one of which is the Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732).

Although most of the stories that used responsibility frame did not represent women and girls as causing their own abuses, a critical assessment of the way GBV was framed in the above suggested a stereotypical presentation of women. This frame constructed women and girls in the light of their traditional gender roles as depicted below.

*“He said early and forced marriages were inimical to the development of girls because they denied them the opportunity of being physically, psychologically, emotional and financially ready for the responsibilities of marriage and childbearing”.*

(Daily graphic, Wednesday, March 5, 2014)

Thus, there is the need to intensify educational campaigns to combat the practice to allow women the opportunity to prepare adequately for responsibilities of marriage and childbearing. It is important to note this kind of framing somehow reinforced gender stereotyping rather than challenging them. For instance, violence was explained in terms of the harm it causes by preventing women from performing their socially expected gender norms, but did not address how gender roles and stereotyping as underlying causes of GBV and gender inequality across the different levels of the ecological model (Heise, 1998, 2011; Krug et al., 2002).

### **Consequence frame**

The consequence frame was the second frequently used frame reporters engaged in their GBV reportage as presented in (Figure 7.4). Feminist research on GBV have often focused on its negative consequences on women and girls' reproductive health and general wellbeing (Ellsberg et al., 2015; Garcia-Moreno et al., 2015; Heise, 2012; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007). They therefore place emphasis on the biological consequence discourse of GBV relative to the social and symbolic effects. The study found that the consequence frame, although utilized minimally by the two newspapers under review, was used to stimulate readers of news articles to discuss the potential negative effects of GBV on women, communities and the country. From the analysis of this type of framing GBV stories, it was found that there were no positives or benefits to GBV. The GBV stories highlighted the negative effects of GBV against women and girls ranged from women being excluded from education, economic activities, full participation in decision-making processes in society, and contribution to national development, among others. Stories using this frame also mentioned how GBV jeopardizes the health, more so, reproductive health of female survivors. These examples epitomize the consequence frame:

*“Forced and early marriages should not be encouraged since they are a form of domestic violence which lead to an increase in maternal mortality, poverty and illiteracy”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, March 12, 2014, p.13)

*“Girls pushed into early marriage risk of getting cervical cancer”*

(The Spectator, Saturday, March 22, 2014, p.23)

An analysis of the above contents speaks to some of the effects of forced marriages such as risk of cervical cancer and increase in maternal mortality, poverty and illiteracy, but fails to

inform perpetrators and audiences alike on the consequence of such violence and how it impacts on gender relation at the social level of the ecological model (Krug et al, 2002). For example, the case study communication intervention could include messages that will inform both perpetrators and the public about the legal systems in place that would surely clamp down on perpetrators and prosecute them for such violence.

### **Morality frame**

The morality frame as indicated above in Figure 7.4, together with the consequence frame were the second most prominent frames used in newspapers publication of stories on GBV. The analysis demonstrated that the Daily Graphic utilized the morality frame in 4 out of 25 articles, while the Spectator utilized it in 1 out of 5 GBV articles published. Even though the morality frame was found to be the second common frame utilized in the newspapers publications, the use of it was very marginal in comparison to the responsibility frame. The quotes below are examples of morality framing in GBV stories.

*“The murder of women by male intimate partners as a result of socio-cultural norms which fuel one gender to feel superior over the other can be prevented if religious leaders who are respected in the Ghanaian society can contribute to addressing the issue”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, April 13, 2014:13)

*“Spouses must be educated on property rights because the tradition where women are driven out of their matrimonial homes after the death of their husbands still persist”*

(The spectator, Saturday, August 16, 2014:23)

It is important to note that all stories in which the morality frame was used, the stories condemned the violence and called on the either the government to enforce laws or NGOs, civil society organizations, religious and community leaders and chiefs to take action to curb the violence. For instance,

*“she called on all stakeholders to stop paying lip service to the empowerment of women and get down to work”.*

(The spectator, Saturday, August 16, 2014:23)

This finding of the morality frame being minimally used is consistent with previous studies (see Ejigu, 2008; Neuman et al cited in Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000) who reported that

the morality frame is not a popular frame employed in GBV publications. Ejigu (2008) further argued that the morality frame perhaps is believed to exist in the minds of the audience rather than in messages contained in news stories. However, a careful consideration of the first statement suggests the reporter made some excuses for male perpetrators because the reason for the murder of women is blamed on socio-cultural norms rather than framing the story in such a way that the perpetrator held accountable for is behaviour. Nonetheless evidence gathered from the analysis of the contents in the two newspaper suggests an inadequate usage of the morality frame although was found to be the second common frame used in framing GBV.

### **Human Interest frame**

In the utilization of this frame, journalists choose to present GBV issues in more personalized terms, either from the victim, victim's parents or relatives or community's perspective (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). In fact, this frame genetically comes from stories shared by survivors of any form of GBV. This study found that this frame was not frequently used in newspapers publications. The Daily Graphic carried this frame in 3 out of 25 articles, while the spectator had no publication using this type of frame. It is important to recognise that framing theorists (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000) explain that the human-interest frame is more likely to be used by the media to attract attention of audience than to contextualize issues GBV. This means that it has the tendency of dehumanising or treating the victim as static or adjectives. This was demonstrated in the following new stories.

*“Ama has been in prostitution for four years. She ran away from her mother after a short misunderstanding to engage in the business in Kumasi, and she has since been living in a brothel. Together with her other mates, they sleep with mem to make ends meet. Recounting how she got into prostitution, Ama amid tears wanted to do something better with her life and was therefore pleading with people present to help her and her other friends, she said owners of the brothel where they live sometimes took advantage of them”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, May 7, 2014, p.13)

*“Narrating her ordeal at the launch of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence in Accra on Thursday, a middle-aged woman with four children said she was abused sexually, verbally and physically persistently by her husband after she had gone through a caesarean section. According to her, efforts to report the husband to the police yielded no positive results as officials of the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Police Service (DOVVSU), did not give her case the needed attention”*

(Daily Graphic, Wednesday, November 26, 2014, p.13)

As can be seen in the above narrations in the two stories, the narratives used the victims' experience to attract attention of the audience. By doing so in the first narration, the source or reporter uses a judgment of value by choosing "prostitution" as the main element, implying that the audience already looks at the victim differently "prostitute". Which within the cultural context in Ghana, especially in the northern parts of Ghana dehumanises and stigmatises the victim. Additionally, the stories failed to set the tone for debate on why this violence occurred and the power dynamic inherent in the narrations. Firstly, the power dynamics between the male perpetrators and the victims and secondly, between the victim and the DOVVSU, a government machinery supposed to protect the vulnerable including survivors of GBV.

Feminist theorists have argued that GBV against women stems from unequal power relationships between women and men because of social structures that often reflect power disparities in gendered relationship that serve to maintain and legitimise male dominance and violence (Cooper et al., 2010; Kalichman et al., 2009; Terry, 2007; Russo and Pirlott, 2006). Several violence scholars have raised concerns about how legal systems like the police service and courts in many countries around the world have often trivialised violence against females and fail to criminalise and prosecute male perpetrators (Leach, Slade and Dunne, 2012; Leach and Humphrey, 2007; Vojdik, 2007; Dunne, Humphrey and Leach, 2006; Sundaram et al., 2004; Baden, 1994). In agreement with Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) that the human-interest frame has the potential to undermine contextual issues, this analysis can conclude that the newspapers framing did not include the cultural context within which the violence occurred to the human-interest framing of GBV against women and girls.

### **Conflict frame**

The analysis of the two newspapers indicated that the conflict frame was not employed by both newspapers in reporting GBV issues as shown in Figure 7.4. Although its proponents Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) suggests that in using this frame writers, highlight issues of GBV by placing emphasis on conflicting opinions, ideological underpinnings and/or groups who are in disagreement. In fact, within this frame the GBV debate centres on the power relationship and issues of control between men and women. The conflict frame would have been helpful if the two newspapers used it to frame GBV stories that will challenge the traditional interpretations of gender roles and norms women and men are expected to live up to. This is because socio-cultural prescribed gender roles and norms that influence and shape

gender behaviours and also produce power inequality are directly linked to GBV against women and girls in most societies (WHO, 2014; Cooper, Paluck and Fletcher, 2013; George, 2006) including northern Ghana. The absence of the conflict frame in the framing of GBV stories perhaps resonates with news writers' tendencies of reporting events-based stories (GBV as individual incidents) to the detriment of raising contextual issues to shape public opinion and attitudes of policymakers and members of society toward GBV and the need for its eradication.

## **7.5 Non- print messages on GBV**

This section discusses messages disseminated by the non-print media and how they are framed. The discourse relied heavily on radio messages due to radio being the main source of information for many women and rural folks because of its affordability, easy accessibility, widest reach and use of local languages in programme delivery. Television and videos/ movies only make little impact because of their extensive use of the national language (English) and less reach to rural areas due of affordability and electricity issues.

### **7.5.1 Radio**

As has been discussed in chapter 6, radio remains the medium of choice across Ghana and northern Ghana because of its vast coverage of audience, low-cost and receiver acquisition (Mu-azu and Shivram, 2017:389; Chapman, 2003). Mu-azu and Shivram (2017) argue that the popularity of radio stems from its extensive broadcast in local languages which tends to serve both educated and illiterates and remote local communities by providing information, education and entertainment. In corroboration with these previous studies, interviews with media staff<sup>218</sup>, especially in the three northern regions of Ghana, found that the radio uses main local languages to disseminate messages to audience. They reported that languages such as Dagbani, Gonja, Grunne, Kussal, Wala and Dagaari among several languages in the north have been used to communicate a wide range of messages relating to GBV under diverse themes like: Human Rights, Gender empowerment, Motherhood, Women and Children, Advocacy for girl-child education, Advocacy against negative cultural practices and violence against women to audiences. The informants indicated that most, if not all, of the messages are communicated in local languages by rural/community/local FM stations to

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<sup>218</sup> Interviews with Radio Savannah news presenters (2), Filla FM presenter (1), Radio Zaaki manager, Grunne radio presenter (1) GBC rural radio presenters (3), Upper West GBC staff, GBC News Caster and Radio Upper West news presenters

the public (see details of radio station by regions in chapter 6), and in isolated cases, targets various groups such as women and girls, men or the youth in the communities. Table 7.4 presents a list of GBV related messages disseminated to audience across the districts. It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive of the messages, but a summary of opened ended questionnaires.

**Table 7. 4: GBV related messages radio stations disseminate to audiences across northern Ghana**

<b>Types of radio messages disseminated</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Beating your wives is wrong
<input type="checkbox"/> Report violence to the police
<input type="checkbox"/> Stop beating women because they are not punching bags
<input type="checkbox"/> Beating women is an infringement of their human rights
<input type="checkbox"/> There should be mutual respect between women and men in the home
<input type="checkbox"/> Women teach both boys and girls how to do house chores
<input type="checkbox"/> Abusing women erodes their dignity and self-confidence to take initiatives
<input type="checkbox"/> Give both boys and girls equal opportunity to go to school
<input type="checkbox"/> Women should learn trade before getting into marriage
<input type="checkbox"/> Chiefs and community leaders should help stop FGM, widow rights
<input type="checkbox"/> Stigmatization and discrimination of victims of GBV
<input type="checkbox"/> Women having problems with deceased family on property
<input type="checkbox"/> Education on Interstate laws
<input type="checkbox"/> Educating men on the effects of beating their wives
<input type="checkbox"/> Victims sharing their experience of violence on air
<input type="checkbox"/> Myths about beating women and early marriages for girls
<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual and reproductive health
<input type="checkbox"/> Husbands helping wives in household chores
<input type="checkbox"/> Effects of dowry on women and girls

Worthy of note is the fact that these messages listed above also reflected in Communication Context of GBV (6.2). The focus group discussants<sup>219</sup> intimated that the main source of getting information about GBV was the radio, and mentioned that they heard of most of these messages listed via the radio.

The radio presenters who were interviewed, stated that as media practitioners their responsibility was to contribute to the reduction of GBV by way of educating the public on GBV and playing an advocacy role by calling on the government and non-government organizations and all other stakeholders to support by way of prevention and intervention programs.

*“As media, our mandate is to educate, entertain and inform. We therefore help get the message of GBV to all”*

(Upper East Media staff informant, 2014)

The study further found that a few of the local radio stations had initiated some specific educational programs on GBV by bringing in lawyers, specialists and health expert to speak on the issue of GBV. One of such radio stations is the Grunne radio in the Upper East region which has a programme dubbed “Motherhood” and another one dubbed “Livelihood”. These are carried in the quotes below:

*“This radio station has a program called ‘Motherhood’ that talks about mothers and children in general. We have other programs like ‘Livelihood’, how to empower both sexes. We advise women to try and get something doing before marriage, which will help minimise violence in the family”*

(Media practitioner, Bolga, 2014)

Relatedly, Filla FM in the northern regional capital explained that:

*“We give people the platform to share their stories of abuses”*

(Media practitioner, Tamale, 2014)

*“We do not have specific programmes on GBV, but have a programme on women and children issues and also give free air time for other organisations to talk about GBV and alert security agencies of any violence”*

(Media practitioner, Wa, 2014)

The informants reported that they use such programs to educate the public on GBV, and as a means of empowering women and arming them with adequate information to take action to stop violence against them. For instance, at the national level, it was found that the Ghana Broadcasting Cooperation (GBC) has a national programme dubbed “Se eye wo ba anka”

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<sup>219</sup> Focused discussions on types and sources of information with 6 females only groups, 6 males only groups and females and males (mixed) groups in six communities across the three districts

meaning ‘if it was your child what will you do’. This was basically to bring to the attention of stakeholders to some of the disadvantages people who are being abused or molested faced and to contribute to sustaining their education and other needs.

From the foregoing, non-print, radio messages on GBV emphasized prevention of GBV against women and girls, implications of GBV on women’s reproductive health and dignity, empowerment, human rights and girls’ education. However, the study found that radio messages on GBV were sparse and inconsistent.

### 7.5.2 Non-print framing of GBV messages

To understand how radio presenters framed GBV issues to their audience, the generic frame suggested by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) were again employed (see details in 7.4.3). The results and presented in Table 7.4 and discussed.

**Table 7. 5: Frequency of types frames used by radio news presenters**

Type of frame	Frequency	Frequency in Percentage
Responsibility	9	47%
Morality	4	21%
Consequence	3	16%
Conflict	2	11%
Human interest	1	5%
Total	19	100%

In discussions during interviews with the media practitioners<sup>220</sup>, the analysis demonstrated radio presenters framing of GBV messages fell largely under the responsibility frame (47%) and the second dominant used was the morality frame.

It was observed that responsibility frame was used to place emphasis firstly on government to enact or reform policies that will prosecute offenders and stop negative practices. NGOs and other capacity and empowering organizations covered in this type of framing are also given some responsibility to find solutions to GBV against women. For instance, a Savannah radio presenter in the Sagnarigu district, indicated that messages such as “beating women is an infringement of their basic human rights” have often been discussed in relation to holding

<sup>220</sup> Interview with GBC news presenter, Accra, 20014; GBC Radio Savannah (2), Fila FM (1) and Diamond FM (1) news presenters, Tamale, 2014; GBC Rural Radio staff (3) and Grunne Radio (1), Bolga, 2014.

the legal systems – police, courts and government in-charge and responsible to intervene by providing justice to survivors and prosecuting perpetrators accordingly.

This study gathered from the radio presenters that they relied on sources such as government institutions (like CHRAJ, DOVVSU, Social Welfare department and police) and NGOs to inform their messages. The media informants reported that apart from interviewing the above sources for information on GBV, they also employed their expertise by inviting them to the radio stations to educate the public on GBV. Moreover, the media practitioners reported a close collaboration with government agencies and NGOs in the education of audience on GBV against women and girls northern Ghana.

## **7.6 Issues relating to mass media content and framing of GBV**

This section is devoted to discussing the gaps identified in media framing of GBV in Ghana.

### **7.6.1. Newspapers headlines**

Newspaper headlines are the publicity of the news because they form the summary of the news reports (Bonyadi and Samuel, 2013; van Dijk, 1988). However, Lindemann (1990) argues that many newspaper reporters sometimes present headlines to reader with complex posers which neither summarise nor give details of the news story. The analysis of the Daily Graphic and the Spectator newspapers' coverage of GBV revealed that most of the headlines of stories were not sensational, and no GBV victims or perpetrators names were mentioned in stories headlines. Though Nzuma (2015) reports that frames and/or main content can be identified in headlines of news stories, this was not entirely the case with data gathered from the two newspapers reviewed. The study rather found that some of headlines did not correspond to the content of the news stories and were to some extent misleading. For example, in the Daily Graphic of September 2014, the headline in a very bold font read "*let's reduce maternal, new-born death – First Lady*". However, the main message was framed as forced and early marriage deprives adolescent girls from higher education.

Another example in the same Daily Graphic (February 10, 2014) with an article headlined "*Human rights centre relaunched*", but the framing of the story indicated women and girls suffering from various forms of violence perpetrated by men. Given these scenarios, the headlines could have been better constructed to reflect the main messages contained in the stories.

Relatedly, it was observed that most of the articles under this review contained either a picture, quick read/at a glance box, or number crunch box to draw newspapers readers' attention to certain key messages and/or facts in articles. Newman et al (1992) assert that the absence of pictures in newspaper stories may compromise their potential to attract the attention of the readership to salient stories. Pictures and quick reads, at a glance and number crunch boxes not only add colour and credibility to the news, but may also assist shift readers' thoughts towards what women and men do and should do in given society (Kimani and Yeboah, 2011:435).

In fact, the quick reads and/or at a glance were useful in identifying how messages were framed in a particular story. For example, the headline "Human rights centre re-launched" had a quick read box message with "Ghanaian women and girls are continuously subjected to alarming forms of violence, mostly perpetrated by intimate relations".

The pictures placed in the GBV stories by the two newspapers were pictures of individual government or NGOs officials (32%) who were likely to have sponsored the programs. Another 32% were pictures of such officers with participants, meaning that most of the pictures reporters placed in their stories did not reflect the contents of the stories. Sometimes using pictures that do not relate to the story is not a deliberate effort of the reporter but what is available to be used. For example, a newspaper reporter<sup>221</sup> intimated that attending a function where a minister is present and using it as part of the story because he spoke on a particular issue may not necessarily reflect the content, but could be used to enhance the credibility of the story. Also, most of the media practitioners noted that one must bear in mind who is the stakeholder of the newspaper/news agency, this may affect what images are used. Another point is, sometimes stories about gender issues can be quite sensitive so pictures of victims/participants being used would open them up to unwanted public attention or stigmatization. The next section focuses on what messages are heard or not heard about GBV in the mass media.

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<sup>221</sup> Interview with the Spectator newspaper writer in Accra, 2014.

### **7.6.2 Missing messages in the stories**

As noted by Campbell et al (2007), when dealing with how GBV is framed by the media it is essential to examine the context within which the violence takes place. Feminist and violence theorists (Leach, Slade and Dunne, 2012; Terry, 2007; Ellsberg, 2006; Kelkar and Nathan, 2005; Chege, 2005; Heise, 1998) have argued that causal factors of GBV are multifaceted and spans from the individual, relationship, community and the societal levels (Heise, 1998, WHO, 2002). So, to be able to tackle this complex issue of GBV, there is the need for a holistic approach. However, from the newspaper analysis and media informants' interviews, this study found out that the Ghanaian mass media does not focus or pay much attention to the contextual nature of GBV, especially gendered violence against women.

#### **Unheard messages**

Firstly, evidence from both newspapers and radio messages indicated very little reference was made to the causes of GBV. The results from the two newspapers indicated that 22 of the 30 newspapers covering GBV-related stories published made no mention of causal factors of GBV in their stories. The few that mentioned reasons for abuse of women highlighted issues of poverty and cultural practices. This means that the whole spectrum of causal factors across the ecological model fuelling GBV have been underrated by the media. In fact, no mention was made on issues of gender unequal power relationships, lack of access to important resource or women's subordinate status and how these fuel GBV against women. A closer view of the analysis also suggested 19 of the 30 stories did not give attention to the effects of GBV on women and girls. Thus, both causes and effects of violence were highly neglected in media reports about GBV against women. This scenario is also seen in the types of GBV messages communicated by non-print media, where messages hardly reflected contextual issue of GBV. Gillespie, Richards, Givens and Smith (2013) reported that this kind of minimization of context obscures audiences' identification of the problem of GBV. This finding that most of the Ghanaian media framing of messages did not cover causal factors responsible for fuelling of GBV agrees with (Maxwell, Huxford, Borum and Hornik, 2000), who also found that social factors perpetuating violence were largely ignored by media reports.

### **Voices of victims/perpetrators in messages**

Previous studies on mass media opine that media messages to create public awareness and alter attitudes towards gender norms that support GBV against women are effective when they engage those affected and local community members to in the development of content (WHO, 2009; Morgan, and Violeta, 2012). However, this study observed that 28 of the 30 stories about GBV coverage by the two newspapers stemmed from other people (government and NGO officers, human rights activist) either than the GBV survivors or perpetrators. This could be one of the reasons why media reports on GBV lacks contextual views about GBV. Because news presenters often don't take the pain or are constrained by logistical resources to get to move out to interview victims/perpetrators who are the primary stakeholders of the crimes, for first-hand information to inform the contextual views of the problem of GBV. By implication newspapers and radio news editors need to put policies/criteria in place that mandates newspaper author and radio news reporters to take into account the views of both victims and perpetrator in their stories. Their views and experience would enrich the content of stories and help in policy arrangement for them.

### **Expert voices in messages**

Previous studies e.g. Schwitzer, (2005) reported that journalists have relied mostly on expert sources to help them produced frames on social issues like GBV. However, the analysis of media messages about GBV, indicated that expert voices both as sources of expert information or speaking to the issues of causes and effects of GBV was inadequate. This was in specific reference to the content analysis of two Ghanaian newspapers with nationwide coverage which found that, 21 out of the 30 GBV articles published by both newspapers between January 1 and December 31, 2014, did not indicate any expert information in stories of GBV. For instance, health and development experts' views on causes and effects of GBV were not prominent in the stories. However, interviews with radio presenters reported that in some cases they invited the DOVVSU, NGOs, or health expert to their stations to educate audience on issues of GBV. This suggests that journalist do not take the pain to go the extra mile of engaging expert voices to speak to the issue of GBV. The implication for this is that due diligence is not done in the quest to dealing with the critical issue of GBV against women and girls in society. Making it possible for GBV against women to be trivialised by both policy makers and the general public.

### **Services for victims/survivors**

The evidence gathered from the analysis of the two newspapers and media practitioners indicated very limited stories contained messages that directed GBV victims to where they could access services. In fact, only 1 out of the 30 GBV stories discussed where survivors of FGM could go for free surgery for clitoral repair to restore their sexual pleasure (Daily graphic, Wednesday, February 12, 2014).

### **Media call for action on GBV**

This investigation of media messages and framing of GBV revealed that most messages (68%) to audience did not call for audience or society to take action against GBV. Rather, what was found especially from the newspapers were reports of workshops, seminars, camps, press conferences or symposiums to “showcase” government’s or NGOs’ interventions and achievement and/or plans for future program on GBV. A few stories (8% and 20% from Spectator and Daily graphic respectively) called on government and stakeholders such as parents, chiefs, community and traditional leaders respectively to take action against GBV. The analysis showed that none of the two newspapers publications on GBV called on the audiences or the larger society to take action against GBV. This indicates that the framing of messages involved largely government responses to GBV, including policies and laws (Carlyle, Slater and Chakroff, 2008) at the expense of public involvement in addressing the issue of GBV. Public or local communities’ involvement in the fight against GBV against women and girls is critical because mass media has a pedagogical and counselling character. As such audience usually listen, follow and tend to believe media.

### **7.6.3 Gender in the media**

A content analysis of the daily graphic and the spectator newspapers as well as interviews with media practitioners found that both news reporters and presenters overwhelmingly engage a gender-blind approach to their reportage on GBV stories. This implies that the Ghanaian media (print and non-print) failed to raise issues of gender which impact differently on women and men and consequently fuel violence against women in society (Sahu and Alam, 2013). The finding illustrated that 83% of newspapers stories on GBV communicated to the mass audience did not frame the messages with a gender perspective or gender sensitive language. A typical example of gender-blind language in news stories

from the Daily Graphic is the article ‘*Let’s intensify educational campaigns – To combat early, forced marriages*’ of Wednesday, March 5, 2014, p.13, stated:

*“...Call for intensive educational campaigns to combat the practice of early and forced marriages in the county...Such force and early marriages were inimical to the development of children because they denied them the opportunity of being physically, psychologically, emotionally and financially ready for the responsibility of marriage and childbearing”*

From the above framing of the problem and throughout the whole article, no mention is made as to which gender (boys or girls) are disproportionately affected by the practice. The emphasis is placed on children/ child. The media’s use of gender-blind language in GBV coverage obscures and presents GBV issues as though women and men are affected equally.

### **7.7. Challenges in addressing GBV from a gender and communication perspective.**

This section of the chapter highlights the present challenges associated with using gender and communication perspectives in addressing GBV against women and girls in northern Ghana. As this study is an exploratory one, the discussion on the problems and challenges currently recognized in using strategic communication in the prevention and/or intervention of GBV would not be exhaustive. It only seeks to bring to the fore key issues observed during the study.

#### **7.7.1 Gender perspectives in GBV**

Gender was recognized by most focus group discussants and key informants as an important issue in the fight against GBV. However, most<sup>222</sup> of case study and media informants talked about gender in terms of equal representation of women and men in meetings, committees, activities and programme interventions. Gender was also largely conceived as women’s affair, and a WID approach (see 2.7.1) employed by some government and case study NGOs initiatives to empower women and girls.

*“We in CHRAJ (government department) take women empowerment approach in addressing gender issues. It can be economical, can be social, and it can be even political. So we talk about women’s empowerment and we believe that if we do this, the other things will follow”*

(CHRAJ informant, 2014)

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<sup>222</sup> Most here means that interviews with GDCA staff, WOM staff and ProNet staff and Media staff such as Savannah radio, Filla FM. GBV 24, Grunne radio, Zaaki radio, GBC rural radio and GBC Upper West radio,

No reference was made to gender as an analytical and operational tool (Vojdik, 2007; Sundaram et al., 2004) in both the communication and media contexts of GBV. For instance, Miriam, a gender desk officer of GDCA (case study NGO) expressed concern that the issue of tackling the “power relations” between women and men has been a difficult one given the resources and time constraints within which they work in communities. She said:

*“Tackling gender unequal power relationships needs a lot of strategic planning with the use of good communication skills and methods by staff so that we don’t end up causing problem in the communities”.*

This was an expression to illustrate the fact that most of staff working in addressing GBV did not have the requisite expertise in gender to adequately approach gender related issues in their day to day work.

### **7.7.2 Issues with communication strategies**

Communication strategies were basically identified through government and case study NGOs’ documents reviewed. Only the Domestic Violence Secretariat of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection had a written communication strategy, which was in the process of implementation at the time of this report. Though as discussed in Section 6.3, there were examples of communication activities carried out by the studied organizations that suggested the use of communication strategies (unwritten), the majority of informants from both government agencies and case study NGOs working to prevent GBV saw their lack of written down communication strategic plans was a big hindrance to a cohesive execution of programme initiatives. Thus, most government departments and the case study staff felt there was the urgent need for well-planned communication strategies that will target specific audiences in a participatory manner in the prevention of GBV in northern Ghana (See analysis in chapter 6).

During reflection periods on the lack of communication strategies with informants in the various organizations, some reasons came up.

For instance, the founder of the Widows and Orphans Movement in the Upper East region (case study NGO) mentioned that:

- some organizations, such as hers, did not have communication specialists, hence no knowledge to draw communication strategies;
- rush in implementing programs because of last minute approval of funds and pressure to execute activities within a specified period;
- logistical constraints, and;
- Development communication as a new concept.

Regarding the lack of development communication specialists, Madam Betty said.

*“we don’t have somebody special to carry out the communication aspect of our work. All we know is pay for designers/artists to make posters and banners to do our campaigns and education on GBV”.*

This means that the way communication materials are used can have implications or negative impacts on audiences because people working to prevent GBV themselves are not well informed about communication strategies and use of appropriate communication materials.

### **7.7.3 Communication theories**

The application of communication theories was a daunting one according to the NGOs and government informants. Whereas some of them had no knowledge of what communication theories were and which guided their GBV interventions, others indicated they largely approach issues of GBV prevention from a behaviour change perspective. Government departments, media and case study NGOs predominantly use top-down approaches.

For instance, an informant said:

*“Mostly we look at behavioural change, because when you look at issues, socially it imputes on our values, and in order to change it, we need to be talking about how people should change their behaviours and attitudes. So behaviour change and other things are the main or key thing we normally do.”*

(CHRAJ officer, 2014)

They focus on changing individual attitudes and behaviours towards GBV, relative to participatory communication approaches that take into account the socio-cultural context within which communication takes place. Informants explained that the behaviour change theories have been so much entrenched in development interventions, and in particular, combating GBV, overshadowing other participatory approaches which could have been explored in addressing GBV.

#### **7.7.4 Government laws and/or policies on GBV**

As noted in Section 6.3, Ghana government's responses to GBV have been well documented. However, the laws and policies are not without serious challenges. The response(s) and approach to GBV has been "caught up" in a cultural/political discourse of government effectiveness in addressing GBV against women and girls (Baden et al, 1994; Amoakohene, 2004). Ghana Human Rights Report (2013) indicated that enforcement of policies and laws relating to GBV has generally been inadequate. This is because of the lack of specific laws or policies prohibiting certain types of GBV against women and girls. For instance, types of violence such as sexual harassment, spousal rape, spousal property, and forced marriage are not specifically addressed in the laws and policies (Ghana Human Rights Report, 2013, NETRIGHT, 2012).

Similarly, a social welfare officer<sup>223</sup>, expressed concerns about the lack of clear policies or laws on the medical treatment and shelters for GBV victims, especially in the north. This means that the government's policies outlined (see details in chapter 6.2) needs to be reviewed in a way that address clearly the issues raised above in the policies and laws to give those working to reduce GBV to be well guided. For instance, the Children's Act, 1998 stated in section 6.2.1 does not contain the official or legal definition of a "Child". This lack of a clear definition according to most of the respondents has led some sectors of society to take advantage of the ambiguity of the age of a child to promote harmful practices such as early/child marriage. This means that a clear definition and policy sanctions are key to the proper enforcement of laws, as the serve as guide for the prosecution of perpetrators.

Moreover, some key informants corroborate Ampofo's (1993 & 2008) that even with the numerous laws and policies (Domestic Violence Law 2007, 1992 Ghana Constitution, etc), both government officials and traditional authorities are reluctant in adopting new and pragmatic approaches in addressing GBV due to societal norms, sometimes even condoning GBV and encouraging its treatment as a private rather than public matter. This is because the Domestic Violence Law has taken a broader and culturally sensitive approach to GBV victims' access to justice. For example, that law allows for alternative mediation, despite resolution procedures and does not include reference to gender (IDS, GSS and Associates,

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<sup>223</sup> Interview with Hawa, a Social welfare officer in Tamale

2016). This weakness or lack of clarity in the law was recognized as a “loophole” (IDS, GSS and Associates, 2016)<sup>224</sup> that politicians and other powerful and influential individuals use to lobby and take abuse cases away from the police, with the pretence of mediating or solving the problem out of police or court<sup>225</sup>.

Another important challenge observed was the issue of national policy on a comprehensive communication approach to eradicating GBV in Ghana. This study found that the Domestic Violence Secretariat, a part of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection is mandated to ensure the effective implementation of a national policy and plan of action of the Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732) through a holistic communication approach. Yet, as of November, 2014, secretariat had an unpublished but printed (in 2012) national communication strategy, which was not distributed to NGOs working in GBV or other key stakeholders<sup>226 227</sup>. An informant from the secretariat, Juliana, confirmed that their communication strategy was only developed to train people who deal with victims of GBV. This shows that in practice, Ghana as a state has not yet developed a national communication policy to address GBV. It was therefore not surprising that there were very few communication campaigns about GBV.

#### **7.7.5 Synchronization of responses to GBV**

Ghana is still struggling with issues of clear GBV policies, and even synergy among organizations working to prevent GBV has been problematic. According to NETRIGHT (2012), there is no coordinated effort in combating GBV in Ghana. The lack of well-defined, systematic and in-depth prevention and/or intervention programs and activities continues to be a challenge, because programs are project specific, donor oriented and time bound, rendering both government and non-governmental organizations’ interventions inept, erratic and inadequate.

Government institutions are confused with issues of roles and responsibilities because of lack of clear definitions of their mandates. For instance, CHRAJ which is mandated by the

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<sup>224</sup> Interview with DVS officer, 4 CHRAJ officers, 3 DOVVSU officers and 2 NCCE officers.

<sup>225</sup> Interview with Department of Social Welfare officer, CHRAJ officers and DOVVSU officers.

<sup>226</sup> Interview with DVS officer and 2 Gender department officers

<sup>227</sup> The communication strategy for implementation of the National Policy and Plan of Action of the Domestic Violence Act 2007 (Act 732).

Ghanaian constitution to handle GBV issues, tends to redirect GBV victims to the police, who also redirect these victims to the DOVVSU office (NETRIGHT 2012). This was a hindrance to reporting abuses as victims of GBV tend to get confused and tired of these kinds of processes.

The case study NGOs noted that because of the lack of coordinated intervention on GBV, especially in northern Ghana, many of the NGOs were duplicating each other's efforts by starting prevention projects from the scratch, instead of liaising with other organizations which are already present in the area or communities to build on existing experience and expertise. The GDCA desk officer, Mariam notes that attitudes of organizations implementing projects in this manner has led to shallow project implementation and unhealthy competition among NGOs working in the north. She intimated that:

*“In the north here, every NGO wants to do the things in the same communities. When this NGO is at one corner of the community the other one is over there. They don't even care to interact to know what the other is doing. It's only when you ask the community members of the other NGO that you will know they are also into GBV prevention in the same community as you are doing. Some of them even get funds and do not know how to go about the implementation, and within a short period when the money is gone the project ends.”*

She explained that most of these 'dotted' projects in the communities with short timeframes and very limited funds were unlikely to generate the needed impact in the communities. Also, the majority of the government<sup>228</sup>, media and case study NGOs informants<sup>229</sup> identified the government's failure to lead in a national communication programming in specific response to GBV as a major bottleneck in coordinating the process in the country.

## **7.8 Emerging themes**

Since the 1990s government and non-governmental organizations including the media have played important roles and contributed immensely to the fight against GBV in Ghana. Both past and present governments have initiated and enacted policies that served as foundation for NGOs and other actors to respond to the GBV against women and girls menace. Although the government departments, most NGOs and other stakeholder did not approach the problem of GBV from a wholly gender and communication perspectives, some

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<sup>228</sup> Interview with 3 DOVVSU officers, 4 CHRAJ officer, 2 Gender department officers, 1 NCCE officer and 2 Department of Social Welfare officers.

<sup>229</sup> Interviews with 4 GDCA officers, 3 WOM officers and 2 ProNet North officers.

communication approaches and tools were used in GBV programmes and activities. However, overwhelmingly, interventions on GBV concentrated on women's empowerment (economic, vocational training, income generation activities, education). This is in tandem with feminist scholars such as Beattie et al (2010), Kim et al (2007, 2008, 2009), Dworkin and Blankenship (2009) and Pronyk et al (2006, 2008), who emphasised that governments and development agencies seeking to address GBV against women and girls must necessarily include economic empowerment in the form of skills acquisition and or microfinance in programs.

More importantly, the NGOs, human rights advocacy coalitions and civil society groups have contributed to the somewhat favourable policy environment for GBV prevention activities. Also, the mass media was found to have contributed largely to the public knowledge of GBV, and the initial pressure on government, politicians, religious leaders and opinion leaders to take serious action against GBV through media campaign messages, as the respondents reported.

Conversely, document review and informants<sup>230</sup> noted that the government's response to GBV was adversely affected by the lip services paid to GBV policies. Lack of resources and logistics for response to victims needs such as medicals, shelters, vehicles to travel to violence spots to investigate and/or arrest perpetrators. Political ideologies have also tended to trivialize GBV against women and girls, as some politicians themselves contravene laws by aiding the release of perpetrators and sometime even blaming women for the violence they suffered (Amoakohene, 2004; CHRAJ Mandate, 2011; MoWCA DVS communication strategy, 2012).

The research participants further reported the communication (lack of development communication experts, appropriate use of communication methods and tools) and issues of gender are not visible in their programs because of the lack of staff capacity. Many of the staff are not communication or gender specialists, and most NGOs and others do not understand the importance of such expertise in the effective delivery of GBV interventions. As such, most of the government departments and NGOs relied on the traditional behaviour

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<sup>230</sup> Interview with 3 DOVVSU officers, 4 CHRAJ officer, 2 Gender department officers, 1 NCCE officer and 2 Department of Social Welfare officers

change, characterized by top-bottom dissemination of information, thereby neglecting the socio-cultural context within which gendered violence takes place.

The mass media's framing of GBV messages suggested that their framing of messages was influenced greatly by the sponsors (government and NGOs) of the programs. The messages therefore reflected either government's or NGOs' GBV intervention programs and achievements, and in some circumstances, a government policy reform or clarity. The analysis showed that the media's framing of GBV did not address contextual issues of GBV. Intriguingly, the print media covered very few GBV stories from northern Ghana. The three case study organizations used communication tools as media channels to create GBV awareness and advocate for government attention to GBV. Advocacy and community mobilization activities with chiefs and community leaders and members was to abolish negative cultural practices that dehumanize women and girls.

## **7.9 Summary of key findings**

The aim of this chapter was to explore the media context of GBV communication. The analysis of media coverage and framing of GBV was necessary to have an in-depth understanding of how the media in Ghana contribute in communicating GBV and help to shape public opinion on the issue. It also sought to identify communication challenges in GBV interventions. A content analysis techniques and key informant interviews were used to assess the extent of media coverage GBV in two Ghanaian state-owned newspapers- The Daily Graphic and The Spectator. The key findings discussed in the chapter are catalogued in the following.

*Extent of newspaper coverage:* The evidence gathered suggested that GBV was inadequately covered by the two newspapers analysed. This is because only 21.5% of the 139 articles published between January 1 and December 31, 2014 by the two newspapers contained GBV stories. This limited coverage of GBV masks the importance of GBV as a social problem, with implications for how policy makers, stakeholders and audiences would give attention to it.

*Types of articles covering GBV stories:* The study found that GBV stories were covered in three different types of articles – news story, feature, and commentary. GBV stories were predominantly (66.6%) reported in news stories “hard news” format. This style focuses on presenting the facts or events highlighting – the where, when, who, what, why and how they

occurred or happened. The study observed that newspapers reporting GBV in this form of news style was problematic because it tends not to provide comprehensive examination of contextual issues or debates about the underlying causes of and solutions to the problem of GBV against women and girls.

*Gender and authorship of GBV stories:* The study found that more women (37%) authored the stories related to GBV in the two newspapers analysis. It also noted that most of the authors were internal staff (68%). Importantly, the analysis revealed the gender, human rights and development experts scarcely wrote articles on GBV in the newspapers.

*Key contents/messages on GBV:* The analysis of the contents in the two newspapers revealed six key themes. GBV as a legal issue was most prominent (35%) theme use in the newspapers stories to discuss the legal provisions or failure to such in addressing GBV as a basic human rights issue. However, stories discussing GBV as legal issues did not make reference to the whys, how, and outcomes of GBV on women and girls. The study further found early/child and forced marriages receiving the highest coverage among the 12 types of GBV discussed in the newspapers. In addition to early/child and forced marriages, this analysis revealed that Trokosi, FGM, widowhood rites and witchcraft accusations as types of GBV were reported on and discussed in association to negative cultural/traditional practices prevalent northern Ghana, with human rights implications. According to the research respondents, these practices were more complex and difficult to eradicate because the practices are entrenched in the socio-cultural and traditional customs of some ethnic groups in Northern Ghana.

*Placement of stories in the newspaper:* The evidence gathered from the two national newspapers revealed that GBV against women and girls was not given prominence in their coverage of GBV. This is because the stories were neither placed in front, middle nor the back of the two newspapers.

*Sources quoted in GBV stories:* Findings from the analysis of sources quoted by both news writers and presenters demonstrated that they relied on government officials for information. It noted that the people cited in the articles were predominantly (54%) females. This suggest an improvement of women involvement speaking to GBV in the country.

*Frames employed in GBV stories:* This study found out that the responsibility frame was the most frequently used in GBV stories. The frame hardly blamed victims for causing the abuse, but placed blame on negative cultural practices and norms, poverty, and legal systems for

pervasiveness of GBV, especially against women, while the responsibility of solving the problem is placed on government, legal systems, NGOs, international organization/donors, chiefs and opinion leaders, and society at large

*Media content and framing of GBV:* The analysis of the Daily Graphic and the Spectator newspapers' coverage of GBV revealed that most of the headlines in stories were not sensational. They hardly mentioned the names of GBV survivors/victims or perpetrators in headlines or in the contents of stories. It was also found that some of headlines did not correspond to the content of the news stories and were to some extent misleading. The study also found that most of the newspapers and radio contents on GBV was not contextually based. The evidence gathered suggested that GBV victims/survivors, perpetrators and other expert voices were missing as main sources of information in the newspapers. Relatedly, few experts –gender, health, development or human rights advocates authored the newspaper articles on GBV. Importantly, the analysis of the newspapers and radio contents demonstrated reporters hardly called on the populace to take action against GBV against women and girls, which seem to trivialise GBV as a social problem. The findings also illustrated that 83% of newspapers stories on GBV communicated to the mass audience did not frame the contents with a gender perspective or gender sensitive language, but rather adopted a gender-blind approach.

*Challenges in in addressing GBV from a gender and communication perspectives:* Evidence from the NGO staff and development practitioners demonstrated that gender was largely conceived as women's affair. The WID approach, dominated government and the three case study NGOs' GBV prevention and intervention initiatives for women and girls. The study observed that no reference was made to gender, an analytical and operational tool, to understand the power dynamic inherent in women and men's gendered relationships in both the communication and media contexts of GBV. Thus, it was found that most of the staff working in addressing GBV did not have the requisite expertise in gender to adequately approach gender related issues in their day to day work. It was further found that none of the case study organisation had or employed the expertise of development communication specialist in their planning and implementation of GBV programmes. Hence, they had no written communication strategies, and communicative activities hardly grounded in communication theories. Finally, they study observed from the both government departments and NGOs informants that initiatives to address GBV in northern Ghana and

for that matter whole country were ad hoc and not coordinated due to lip service paid to GBV by government and limited funding on the part of NGOs.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION ON FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The main aim of this study was to explore the role of communication in addressing gender-based violence against women and girls in northern Ghana. Previous studies that reported on the nature and prevalence of GBV and impact on women and girls, but have not in gender and development communication context motivated this current study. The study filled the knowledge gap observed from the literature (see Chapter 2). The study employed different research respondents and analysed relevant documents (details in Chapter 3) in order to answer the research questions to address research objectives outlined in Chapter 1.

This chapter discusses the key findings in chapters four, five, six and seven in relation to the main objectives and highlight implications for policy and practice. It also revisits the conceptual framework, and compares the findings to the ideas in the framework to see whether there is common ground. It reflects on the theoretical and policy implications for GBV communication. Additionally, discusses the contribution of the study to the wider theoretical debates regarding the role of development communication in gender-based violence interventions. Finally, it presents policy recommendations and areas for future research.

### **8.2 Social dynamics of gender-power relations and inequalities**

This study examined research respondents' perceptions about how gender roles and norms shape gender power relations, the manifestations and effects of gendered power relationships and how these inequalities privilege and affect women and men differently. This was important because the study used the concepts of gender and power to help in the understanding how they moderate and influence unequal power relationship between males and females and exacerbate GBV against women and girls.

MacPherson et al (2014), Wood (2012), Parveen (2008), Podems (2010), Kabeer (2002), Gupta (2000) and Lorber (1994) suggest an association between gender roles socialisation, resources access and control, and decision-making on the one hand, and gender unequal power and inequality, limited livelihoods options and gendered based violence on the other hand. This study found that several factors such as gender roles and socialisation; gender

division of labour; gender stereotyping; issues of domination and subordination; and access to and control over important resources coupled with the patriarchal system dominant in the study area - underpinning and (re)enforcing unequal power relationships between women and men in the research area. As explained by Russo and Pirlott (2006), Burke and Stets (2006) Martin (2004), Risman (2004) and Gupta (2000), gender within the socio-cultural context assigns different roles and responsibilities for women and men to perform. Such expectations and prescriptions were found to afford men power to dominate women across the three districts of northern Ghana. For instance, while most women's roles and responsibilities were found to be predominantly limited to domestic chores and as farm hands, with only a few engaged in economic activities; men's gendered roles were conceived as heads of family, breadwinners, providing shelter and food and farming for the family. This finding can be linked to the patriarchal system in which women and men define their identities, agency and status through roles assignment. This kind of gender relations render women as subservient, thereby allowing men to appropriate their hard work and relegating them to the bottom of the work force.

Secondly, the gendered socialization process men and women go through and the socially determined roles and norms (re)enforces unequal power relationships. In agreement with feminist scholars Carter (2014) Leach and Humphrey (2007) Steans (2006) and Crespi (2004), the evidence gathered from respondents demonstrated that the home, parents, religion and society were socialising agents that ensures gender roles and norms are adhered to. The study found that unequal power relations were embedded in socialization processes and partly shaped gendered and social relationships. In fact, within the context, men perceive women as inferior, subordinate, second class, helpers and treat them as property (Azuma, 2010; Raj et al., 2006). While women perceive themselves lower, powerless and voiceless, invariably accepting their subordinate position relative to men. Takyi and Lamptey (2016), Tenkorang et al (2013) GSS (2013), Tenkorang and Owusu (2013) and Amoakohene (2004) noted such trends in Africa where females are socialised to believe that men are superior, and reserve the authority to chastise women who transgress their socially expected roles.

The hierarchical relationships of power between women and men, as evidenced above, tend to disadvantage most women and girls (Jakobsen, 2014; Kim et al., 2008; Strebel et al., 2006; Hearn and Whitehead, 2006). Power helps define the identity of men and women and ensures that they confine themselves and act within the stipulated social structure (Wingood and DiClemente, 2002; Radtke and Stam, 1995). Even though, men and women must stay

confined to social structure it tends to favour men over women (Takyi and Lamptey, 2016; Tenkorang et al., 2013; Amoakohene, 2004). While the finding suggested women's source of power was dominantly associated with their gender roles within the private sphere, men's source of power, and its impacts, was in both the private and public sphere. Gender and feminist scholars, such as Heise (2011), Jiwani (2010), Thomas and Tiessen (2010) Steans (2006) and Lenton (1995), observed that women's power is contingent and entrenched in their feminine ideologies which confine women to the domestic arena.

The implication of the lack of power for women in gendered relationships as both a cause and consequence of gender disparity and inequality (PECD, 2014; Greig and Edstrom, 2012; Owusu, 2012), was seen to limit most women's access to, and control over, essential resources and empowerment. For instance, across the study locations, it was found that on average over 66% of women had no access to land, and that as low as 13% of women owned land, while less than 32% have control over land usage (see section 4.5.4, tables 4.4 and 4.5). Thus, indicating that most women and girls in the study area were negatively impacted by low education, low socio-political participation, lack of vibrant economic activities and minimum decision-making powers. All these issues have culminated into limited livelihoods choices for most women, hence their continued subordination and over-dependence on men. Heise and Elias (1995) note that empowering women will require a basic change in the dynamics of male and female gendered relationships through concerted effects to eliminate the inequalities that leave many women socio-economically dependent on men in most societies.

Thus, reducing women's vulnerability, in northern Ghana, will require government and NGOs working to change the socio-cultural beliefs surrounding gender roles and norms, gender stereotypes and the gender socialisation processes that perpetuate the belief that women are inferior and subordinate to men. For instance, GDCA, WOM and ProNet North who are already working in Sagnarigu, Nabdam and Nadowli/Kaleo districts respectively, should move beyond only the economic, educational and political empowerment of women. The focus should be about communicating *with* people and embedded in dialogue between the agents of change and the community members; using participatory communication approaches and communication tools and methods such as interpersonal communication, participatory theatre and local media to enhance people's understanding of messages about equitable gender role and enable local people to take collective action for social change.

Government should enact or improve specific policies on gender land access and ownership and enforce them so the women can exercise control and use of land.

### **8.3 Scope of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**

The second objective of the study was to assess the scope of GBV in northern Ghana. It addresses women and men perceptions, forms and prevalence, causes and consequences of GBV against women. As observed in Chapter 5 (section 5.2.1), Perceptions includes people's views and ideas of what constitutes gender-based violence, the causes and impact of the violence on victims/survivors. An understanding of research respondents' perception about GBV against women and girls was necessary for this study because perceptions of what constitutes GBV have evolved over the years even with the context of northern Ghana. This study acknowledges the positive changes that might have occurred in shifting societal attitudes about gendered violence. The prevalent perception about GBV was that it was misunderstandings, quarrels and conflicts between men and women that often led to spousal beating with harm caused to victims, especially women and girls in intimate partner relationships. This is because domestic conflicts are normative in most societies in northern Ghana. Besides, the results reveal that cultural and traditional ideologies that are embedded in the patriarchal systems are perceived to give men the right to exercise power (see chapter 4) on women through forced marriages, spousal battering, sexual harassment and any other means to maintain spousal control and conformity. Meanwhile, women by their socialized feminine ideals are expected to submit and accommodate men's violence for conformity, maintenance of intimate relationships and family dignity.

As discussed in Chapter 5 (section 5.2), the forms of GBV encompass physical, psychological, sexual and economic harm caused victims (Dery and Diedong, 2014; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2004, 2007; Krantz and Garcia-Moreno, 2005; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005; Dunkle et al., 2004). This study found that all these forms of violence were prevalent across the three districts studied. The evidence gathered from the respondents indicated psychological violence was dominant (34%) and followed by physical violence (30%) and, sexual and economic violence.

Psychological violence is use as a tool by perpetrators to control the behaviour, thoughts and beliefs of their victims in gendered relationship. Psychological violence diminishes women's

self-worth with mental health implications such as depression, trauma and madness. Because of its complex nature (Mba, 2002) it is important for those working to prevent GBV against women and girls to provide counselling services along other intervention activities for such victims/survivors.

Physical violence refers to any tangible force (slaps, kicks, choking, pushing, throwing of objects, cutting with knife etc.) used by perpetrators to inflict pain, control and intimidate a victim in order to dominate them (Krantz and Carcia-Moreno, 2005). Physical violence was the second common form of gender-based violence against females. Many women are slapped and/or have objects being thrown at them by perpetrators. In some case dangerous such as guns, machetes, knives, sticks are used to cause irreversible harm to victims as reported in the Sagnarigu. In the context of northern Ghana, the sociocultural norms and customs permit men to physically chastise females, more so, erring females in intimate partner relationships but in ways that would not cause serious injury or death to victims. This chastisement is intended to bring females under the control of men or husbands. Similar findings have been reported by (García-Moreno et al., 2013; Jewkes and Mathews 2010; Hidalgo 2011; Leach, 2008; Krantz and García-Moreno, 2005). This finding suggests that intervention in relation to GBV against women and girls endeavour to dismantle the social structures and systems that encourage physical violence as a means of resolving marital conflicts.

With particular reference to economic violence, this study observed that most women experienced several types of economic abuse; paramount amongst them was male intimate partners' refusal to provide money for household maintenance. In the Ghanaian context known as "chop money". Most use this tactic to make women subordinated and to ensure their continuous dependence on them as heads of the family. Other strategies used to re (enforce) male economic dominance and control include limiting women financial space or freedom by depriving them from engaging in productive income-generating activities and income earning jobs.

The key finding on the causes of GBV against women and girls included high incidence of poverty, polygamy, gender power inequality, socio-cultural norms sanctioning male violence and male sense of entitlement over females. Northern Ghana is predominantly rural and poverty-stricken (Awedoba, 2006), and women are the worse affected. This is because women who are mostly engaged in the Agricultural sector of the Ghanaian economy lack

ownership/access to and control over important resources such as land and livestock (see Tables 4.5 and 4.6). This couple with high illiteracy rates and limited economic activities among females has culminated in most women's abject poverty in the districts, which invariably leads to females' over-dependence on men for maintenance and acceptance of their violence acts.

Polygamy is recognised as causing GBV against women at all levels of the ecological model across all the districts. This is so because in northern Ghana, the society does not frown on polygamy because men are traditionally entitled to marry more than one wife. Within this cultural arrangement, women have no right to complain or resist a man marrying or dating other women. Moreover, a wife's failure to tolerate a rival is most likely to incur the wrath of her husband, and for that matter, the family and society. Within this context, a husband's failure to satisfy his wives sexual desires is frustrating and to cover this up, the husband may resort to unprovoked verbal and physical assault of a wife or wives. This is one reason why most polygamous marriages are characterized by quarrels among wives competing for husbands' love and access to his wealth and other resources. The implication for acceptance of polygamy in the northern parts of Ghana is that it compels women to submit themselves to their husbands, notwithstanding their husband's abusive behaviours, for fear of losing their husbands to other women, as unmarried or divorced women are stigmatized in most communities.

Another serious cause of GBV against women was gender inequality, also described by female participants as unequal power between women and men. This factor is a predictor of violence against women in an intimate relationship within the 'individual', 'relationship', 'community' and 'societal' levels of the ecological model. The study noted from the respondents that the patriarchal ideologies embedded in the social structures operating in northern Ghana allocate more power to men relative to women. This is sustained by the belief that men are the heads of households and therefore superior to women. So, the society expects women to accept male dominance as a social reality that requires women to be submissive to their male counterparts. Gender power inequality, socio-cultural norms sanctioning male violence and male sense of entitlement over females and link to GBV have been discussed in Chapter 4.

These key findings on research respondent perceptions, forms and causes of GBV against women and girls in the study districts are significant for both practitioners and policy makers to enhance their awareness of GBV in the northern regions. Additionally, NGOs operating within the sector would find this observation useful in developing their programs to address the different magnitudes of GBV. For instance, psychological and physical violence was observed to be extremely present in Sagnarigu district compared to the other areas. This is important for government, GDCA and other NGOs operating in this sector to tailor their programmes in ways that are geographically specific and responsive to the nature and magnitudes of GBV.

This finding reemphasises the concerns that both state and non-state actors' interventions on GBV against women and girls should not be treated as homogenous as has been observed in the study. The study highlights that GBV is context specific with varying magnitudes, suggesting GBV programmes should be responsive to the specific needs of the targeted beneficiaries.

#### **8.4 Communication context of GBV**

The third objective of the study was to assess the communication context of GBV. In particular, to examine how people access information and communication about GBV, how government and case study NGOs have used communication strategies to address GBV. This is because it has been argued that well designed communication interventions<sup>231</sup> using well thought out communication sources/channels have the potential to promote non-violence behaviours; and challenge the cultural beliefs and social structures that condone and justify women's subordination and low status at all level of society (Jewkes, Flood and Lang, 2015; Pedro, 2013; Cooper, Paluck and Fletcher, 2013; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2007). Communication strategies have been used in different setting to facilitate change in harmful gender norms and attitudes and behaviours towards GBV. This section catalogues the key findings and their implications for the government and the case study NGOs – GDCA, WOM and ProNet North operating in the Sagnarigu, Nabdam and Nadowli/Kaleo districts respectively.

The study found that communication and information sources were available to majority of the respondents and 76% of them reported having access to information about GBV related

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<sup>231</sup> Communication interventions also refers to communication strategies and are used interchangeably in this study.

issues. Regardless of gender of the respondents, radio was cited as the primary source of accessing information about GBV.

The power of radio as an important source of information and its associated to cultural context in most developing countries had been noted (UNIFEM, 2003). This study observed that radio was chosen as the most preferred channel for accessing information about GBV. The respondent explained that radio was easily accessible and affordable even by the poor in remote communities. More importantly, GBV programmes were often produced in local languages which allowed majority of local communities to understand the content being discussed. Relatedly, resource persons who lead in GBV discussions are regarded as knowledgeable, and respondents expressed confidence in the information delivered through the radio compared to other sources. The limitation with the radio however, relates to the availability of the targeted audience at the time that the GBV programme is being delivered. In such situation, it is proposed that audience research be conducted to inform the choice of time to air radio programmes to ensure maximum listenership.

An interesting observation was that there were significant differences in the choice of communication channels for men and women, suggesting a gender dimension to communication and information sources. For instance, in the Nadowli/Kaleo district, women accessed GBV related information through community members/friends and community meetings. This situation is largely attributable to the rural nature of the Nadowli/Kaleo district, characterised by a closely knit society. Vital information is easily transmitted between women groups and family members during informal conversations and communal activities. This implies in the Upper West region, ProNet North and other NGOs working on GBV and gender equality could easily build on the social structures that prevail in community settings to disseminate information. Women's movement/association leaders should be trained and used to engage women in community meeting and other gathering such as child naming ceremonies, cultural festivities and marriage ceremonies to discuss GBV issues. Equally, in the Sagnarigu district, it was noted that female respondents expressed interest in accessing information from religious centres –mosque (see 6.5). Worthy of note is the fact that socially oriented channels of communication (Chiefs house, churches and mosques) sources for communicating GBV. This because such channels are considered as avenues for interpersonal interactions and immediate feedback. Participatory communication which is focused on bottom up and horizontal approaches in development

are recognised for allowing local people to identify and find solution to the problems and also facilitate collective action for social change (Waisbord 2001; Singhal 2003; Cooper et al 2010; Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada 1998, Kumar 1981; Morris 2000; Cooper et al 2013).

It is therefore recommended to the case study NGOs that communication tools and method such as interpersonal communication (face-to-face), participatory theatre and media to communicate GBV messages, can enhance people's understanding about GBV. Making crucial for both government and NGOs to do audience analysis from gender perspective to ensure GBV messages are communicated through the right channel to the right audience (UNIFEM, 2003).

Moreover, with respect to communication strategies, responses from informants in government agencies and NGOs and document review indicated the government and case study NGOs had fair understanding of communication strategies and its role in addressing GBV. The application of communication in programme activities including GBV was obvious but not well planned. Leeuwis (2004,2008, 2013), Leeuwis and Aarts (2011) and Cardey (2010) have stressed the importance of well-planned communication strategies. Leeuwis (2008:27) explains:

*“communication strategies involve a systematic planning and organisation of grounded communicative interventions to develop and or induce modified or new behaviours and attitudes which are supposed to assist people to resolve their own problems”.*

Contrarily, it was found that the most government departments and all the case study NGOs could not provide evidence of communication strategies and or strategic plans to inform their programme activities. The study observed that only the Domestic Violence Secretariat under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social protection had a communication strategy which was yet to be implemented as 2014. This infers that the government of Ghana has not done much in capacitating most of its central and decentralised department to address the issue of GBV in systematic and pragmatically. This could explain why government's GBV initiative are ad hoc and porous. It would be important for government to ensure that those organisations and department mandated to work towards eliminating GBV have well documented communication strategies. The strategy should outline the goal and objectives of the intervention and programme activities, resource needed, communication channels,

type of messages, target audiences and measurable indicators among others, facilitate programme effectiveness.

Furthermore, this study found that among the three NGOs researched, only GDCA had a strategic plan, with no informed communication perspectives. However, guided by Leeuwis (2004, 2008) and Cardey (2010) conceptualisation of communication strategies in Chapter 2 (section 2.10.4), the study observed some government agencies such as CHRAJ and DVS and two of the three NGOs studied – GDCA and WOM programme activities relating to GBV engaged the communication strategies including communication function and tools.

GDCA dominantly engaged supporting horizontal knowledge exchange communication strategies using interpersonal communication methods such as workshops and seminars for stakeholders (DOVVSU, NCCE, Social welfare, Peace Clubs) to share experiences and build capacity for raising awareness and consciousness on GBV against women (see chapter 6.4.3). Informant interviews with GDCA also showed that have used community radio to reach large audience in the Sagnarigu district and beyond with anti-violence messages. Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott (2007) have noted that communication intervention to promote non-violent behaviours, and indicated how mass media efforts including those of “The 16 Days Activism against violence against women” and “Nicaraguan Network of Women against violence” annual campaigns have been used to raise awareness and increase knowledge about GBV against women. UNIFEM (2003) notes that it is important for communication strategies to have:

- Clear goal and objective
- Create a baseline from which to measure progress
- Use of indicator to track progress
- Determine which stakeholders who will help in the achievement of goals
- Process documentation
- Sustainability

However, as discussed (6.4), the study observed that GDCA had no specific project or project name(s) with clear messages on particular aspects or themes on GBV for consistency of the communication activities, as stipulated in a good communication strategy. This raises questions about what messages and discussions are held during workshops and seminars. What outcomes are expected and how can they be measured. Lack of communication

strategies in GBV initiatives is likely to undermine effectiveness of programme activities. Moreover, it would be difficult to measure the impact of the intervention on the audience.

With regards to WOM, it was observed that common communication strategy employed in its programme activities was generation of policy and or technological innovations. WOM uses this strategy for the mobilisation of stakeholders –chiefs, opinion leaders and in conjunction with government agencies such as DOVVSU and Social welfare official and CHRAJ to advocate for enactment of policies to address harmful traditional practices in the Upper East region including the Nabdam district. As well, the organisation supports beneficiaries to learn new ways of doing things through vocational skills training programmes. However, issues of tracking progress and process documentation were missing. It is suggested that WOM should devote time and resource to draw a comprehensive communication strategic plan that encompassed all the components mentioned above. In this way programme leaders would be able to evaluate progress of GBV activities and make amendment where necessary.

## **8.5 Media Context**

The section reflects on the most important findings in Chapter seven. It addressed the fourth objective by assessing the media context of gender based violence with reference to media coverage and framing of gender-based violence related issues. Finally, challenges confronting both government and NGOs in addressing GBV from a gender and communication perspective and implications are highlighted.

### *Media coverage of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)*

Findings on the extent of media (print) coverage of GBV stories were minimal. In relation to the print media, the analysis indicated that *The Daily Graphic*, between the periods January 1 to December 31, 2014, published 18% of GBV stories while *The Spectator* a scanty 4% of the total articles published on the gender page. The focus of the news articles was descriptive of events regarding gender based violence without necessarily giving space for a comprehensive examination of contextual issues underlining GBV against women and girls and solutions to the problems at stake. The study observes that the media limited coverage and lack of in-depth information about the context within which GBV happens trivialises GBV as an important social menace in Ghana. The print media have been

criticised for failing to adequately expose GBV against women as a crime, and to simulate public discourse on it (Ako and Akweongo, 2009; Ardayfio-Schadorf, 2005). This inadequate coverage of GBV stories is attributed media practitioners disinterest in researching issues about GBV. Another reason could be that GBV against female is not considered an important issue, especially in situations where news editors do not find GBV to be “news worthy”.

Nonetheless, it must be pointed out that mass media practitioners should develop interest and also research on issue underlying GBV to present GBV against women from gender-sensitive perspectives. In this way, media’s GBV stories and messages would be captured and framed in ways that do not reinforce harmful perceptions. In fact, contemporary media coverage of GBV should be based on clear definitions of GBV with a human right and gendered approaches; address not only the effects GBV, but also the underlying factors-gender inequality and discrimination as well as the socio-cultural norms and stereotypes that tolerate and condone GBV against women in society (Media Monitoring Project, 2015; Heisecke, 2014). Gillespie et al (2013) notes that covering GBV including domestic violence this way places it as an important social problem rather than an individual problem. Thus, capturing the contextual issues is significant in understanding the root causes of GBV in rural settings. This is because media (radio) has the potential to influence positive change in individual’ attitudes and behaviours against GBV (Koga, 2011; Jewkes and Morrell, 2010; WHO, 2009, Gupta et al., 2008; Bott, Morrison and Ellsberg, 2005, Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2004, 2007) and social change (Cooper et al., 2010; Usdin, 2005) in the long-term.

The study noted media predominantly covered and discussed GBV as a legal issue and how victims (women, girls and children) were suffering as a result. Issues of GBV are mainly captured as legal issues because violent acts only come to the fore when victims have reported to law enforcement agencies<sup>232</sup>. In many of these instances, the victims would have been harmed. It is not uncommon to find that violent cases prefer to be addressed by family members rather than through legal frameworks, thereby shielding perpetrators from facing prosecution<sup>233 234</sup>. The harmful effects of this practice is that perpetrators tend to batter

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<sup>232</sup> Key informant interview with DOVVSU and CHRAJ officer in Tamale, 2014

<sup>233</sup> Group discussion responses from Zambogu female only and mixed groups

<sup>234</sup> Group discussion responses from Sagnarigu and Fuo mixed, male only and female only groups.

female victims with impunity under the cover family members. Majority of people in rural communities such as those in this study districts as a result of the gender role socialisation perceived abuse of females as normative and private matter (Dery and Diedong, 2014; Issahaku, 2012; Azuma, 2010; Mba, 2007; ActionAid, Ghana, 2007).

Therefore, the media in Ghana, especially with the proliferation of community radio, can help address these negative perceptions through sustained awareness creation and sensitisation campaigns and programs. For instance, projects like Na Wi Pot in Sierra Leone and Men as Partners in South Africa have use media including radio, television and other communication method such as print material to combat GBV against women (Cooper et al., 2010). This type of projects replicated in northern Ghana taking into account the local context.

A content analysis of the two print media in Ghana also revealed that types of GBV stories frequently covered were early/child and enforced marriages; witchcraft accusations; female genital mutilation; rape; sexual violence; widowhood rights; and domestic violence; while less frequent ones were commercial sex exploitation, abduction and child labour. Early and enforced marriages, FGM, witchcraft accusation child abduction and trafficking is prevalent in the northern regions of Ghana (ActionAid, Ghana, 2007). This implies that at least the media have discussed some of the type of violence prevalent in the north. It is suggested that both the print and non-print media should increase their coverage and education prevailing types of GBV. These harmful traditional practices are associated with socio-cultural and religious beliefs and poverty in some communities. The media should therefore stimulate public debates that would hold perpetrators accountable for infringing women and girls' rights and dignity. Coverage of such socially entrenched negatives practices is vital as it allows for a wider debate on how to address GBV issues, particularly by policymakers.

#### *Framing of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) stories in the print media*

Media framing of GBV allows for journalists to situate stories within a context to bring out the important characteristics to enable audiences' interpretation of the story. This study found that not much prominence was given to GBV stories in the two newspapers (7.4.1). This is because all the GBV stories were neither on the front, middle or back pages. Placement of a story and on which page, whether front, middle and back pages, signifies the prominence attached to a story in newspapers (Sahu and Alam, 2013; Dzeble, 2006 cited in

Dugle 2013). Editorial team plays a gatekeeping role by setting the agenda of the newspaper by determining which stories receive prominence through placement decisions (Sahu and Alam, 2013). Based on this understanding, Ghanaian newspapers editors can determine the attention that GBV issues may attract from policymakers. In other words, it is possible to set policy debates and agendas depended on how stories of GBV are strategically framed and place in the newspapers pages.

The study further observe two state-owned papers relied mainly on government official sources for the reportage of gender based stories (Andsager and Powers, 1999; Lacy and Cloulson, 2000). This implies that important sources such as victims' family and relatives and experts were marginally quoted in gender based stories by both newspapers. Quoting mainly official sources tends to make GBV stories less contextual which may fail to attract attention to the problem. Writers and reporters alike need to cover GBV stories from the perspective of victims, their family member as well as experts in order to project the real story. Media messages to create public awareness to shift attitudes towards gender norms that are supportive of violence against women can be effective when they engage the affected and local community members in the development of content Morgan and Politoff, 2014; Violeta, 2012; WHO, 2009).

Important to this study was the fact that majority of people speaking to the issue of GBV were women (59%) in both newspapers. This is suggestive of gradual increased women's empowerment and participation in the public discourse about women's issues. In Ghana's situation, media freedom has improved significantly compared to the situation in other African countries (Kimani and Yeboah, 2011). To the extent that women are granted unrestricted access to media platforms suggest that there are opportunities to expose perpetrators, GBV issues can be discussed and addressed. Despite the fact that more female contributed to the contents of GBV stories, it was the observed that the Ghanaian media engaged a gender-blind approach to their reportage GBV issues. The two newspapers analysed indicated stories on GBV communicated to audience did not frame messages from gender perspectives or use gender sensitive language. This gender blind approach in GBV coverage is likely to obscure and present GBV issues as though women and men are affected equally. This infers that the media practitioners endeavour to understand the gender difference associated with violence to enable them report on GBV in way that the public would understand how gender impact violence.

### *GBV from a gender and communication perspective*

The study noted that both government and case study NGOs recognise the importance of gender in the fight against GBV against women and girls. However, its conceptualization was problematic. Interestingly, most staff of the NGOs spoke of gender in terms of equal presentation of women and men in meetings, committees, and programme intervention. Secondly, gender was largely conceived as a women affair and a WID approach employed by both government and NGO initiatives to empower women and girls there by obscuring gender as both an analytical and operational tool in the communication and media context of GBV against women (Vojdik, 2007. Sundaram et al, 2004).

### *Communication theories*

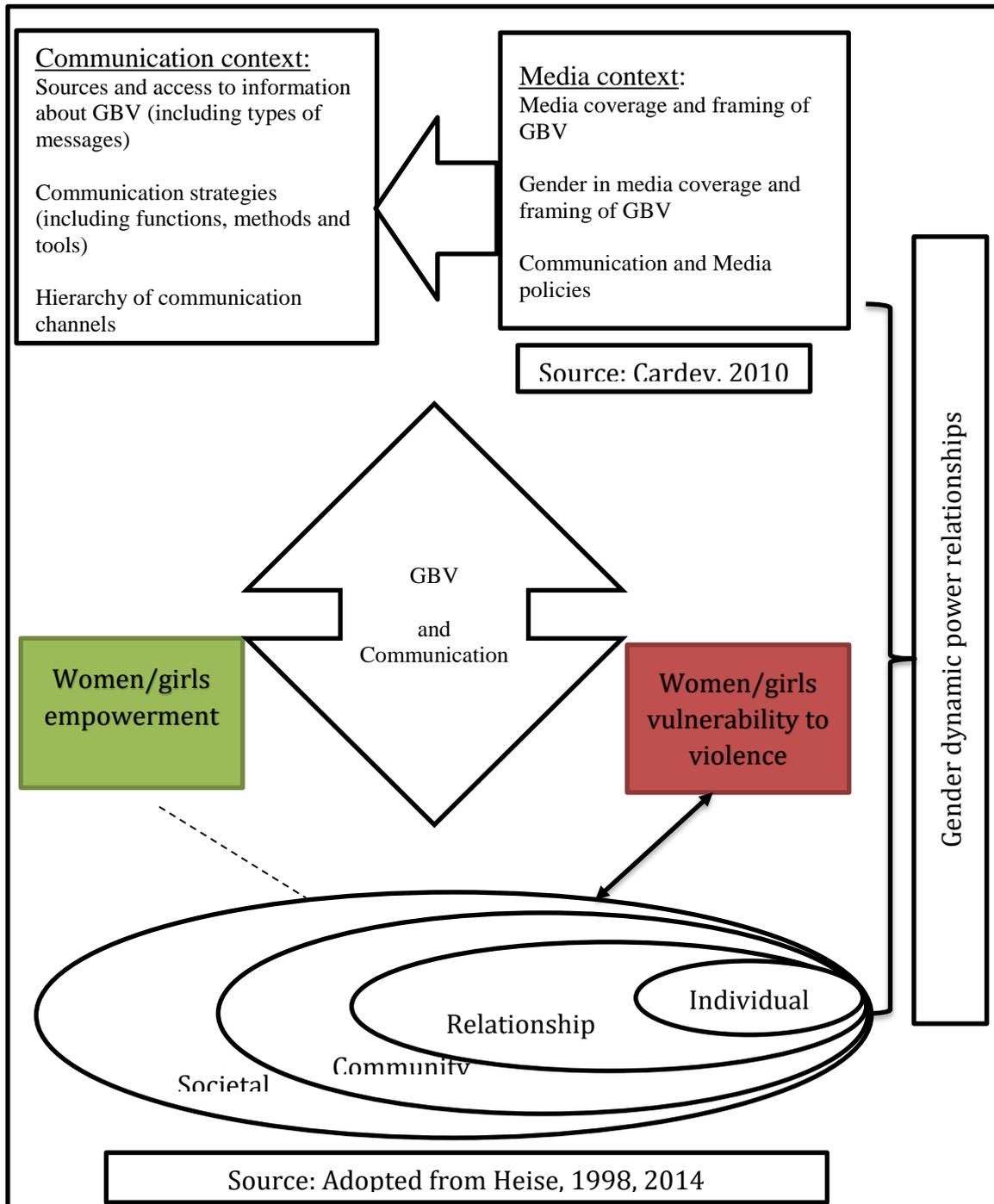
As discussed in literature in chapter 2 (Table 2.2), development communication theory and practice communication has been influence by two perspectives – dominant and participatory (Cooper et al., 2010; Mefalopulos, 2008; Inagaki, 2007; Waisbord, 2001; Melkote and Steeves 2001) The dominant – up/down approaches to communication are influence by communication theories such as Diffusion of Innovation and the Two-step flow focuses on BCC and social marketing strategies. Whilst participatory communication is characterised by bottom up approaches that allows to identify and find solutions to their own problems using communication for social change and social mobilisation strategies (Mefalopulos, 2008; Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada 1998, Kumar 1981; Morris 2000; Cooper et al 2013; Inagaki, 2007; Waisbord, 2001). The application of communication theories was a daunting one for both government agencies and NGOs. This study found that these organisations had very little knowledge of communication theories or which were suitable for GBV interventions. Nonetheless, some governmental organisations such as CHRAJ, Gender departments and Domestic Violence Secretariat reported that their interventions were informed by behavioural changes theories.

## **8. 6 Contribution of study to knowledge and implications**

This section briefly revisits the key findings from study, and discusses them in comparison to the conceptual framework. Findings emanating from this study underscores several implications for GBV and development communication theories: the role of gender power relationships in addressing gender based violence, the usefulness of the ecological model in understanding gender based violence against women, the vulnerability and empowerment

contexts, the communication strategies, role of the media and the link between gender based violence and development communication.

**Figure 2.3: Integrated conceptual framework for GBV communication**



### **8.6.1 Gender dynamic power relationship context**

This conceptualisation of the gender dynamic power relationship context (author's construct) in the conceptual framework (Figure 2.3) generated important knowledge for a model of understanding gender power dynamics between women and men in the study districts of northern Ghana. It presents an outline for examining the centrality and influence of gender and power as social constructs in dyadic relationships and their importance in communicating GBV. Moreover, the insight from gender dynamic power relationship part generated from this study, give insights that may enrich gender and power theories as well their role in the communication process. This part of the framework shows that in order to understand gender power and how it influences unequal power relationships between women and men, a focus on the development of gender equitable policies and systematic enforcement is important to bridge the power gap between women and men in the study districts.

This is because this study demonstrates that women lack access to and control over important economic resources such as land and livestock, which is both cause of and consequence for women powerlessness and subordination in gendered relationships. Importantly, gender perspectives, helps in the understanding that, culturally men are considered as power holders, and that the customs and traditions in the northern parts of Ghana continue to uphold and reinforce male dominance, which is associated to GBV. This implies that in the absence of a gender-power analysis, interventions on GBV may receive resistance from decisions makers who are often male figures in rural societies.

### **8.6.2 The Gender-based violence context**

The researcher used the ecological model component (see Figure 2.3) suggested by Heise (1998, 2014) provided the framework within which to understand the research respondents' perceptions about GBV, the forms, causes and its effects on women and girls. An assessment of employing this model showed that the model was relevant because it helped to achieve the second objective of study. The model enabled the researcher to consider gender based violence from multi-dimensional perspectives and to appreciate the fact that factors fuelling gender based violence were not isolated but interconnected (see Chapter 5). It can be surmised that the model serves as one of the most robust tools of understanding gender based violence. However, this study observed that neither the governmental organisations nor the case study NGOs showed knowledge of any theory or model for understanding the context

within which GBV occurs. In practical terms, GBV interventions were not guided by theoretically founded ideas, meaning that interventions were not likely to achieve the positive impacts. This study suggests that an understanding of the ecological model by both governmental and development practitioners could provide guidance in targeting preventive strategies, taking cognisance of the multiple constituents of its holistic approach. It can also be posited that the ecological model addresses the inherent weaknesses in the feminist and family violence theoretical conceptualisations of gender based violence.

To win the fight against gender based violence, it is recommended that preventive programmes should engage the use of the ecological model to inform policy and strategy. This is because the individual level of the model helps in the analyses of biological and personal history factors such as witnessing violence as a child, being abused as a child and absence or rejecting father are likely to affect an individual's behaviour in his/her relationships. The relationship level represents the immediate context in which GBV happens within the family that include factors such as gender norms sanctioning violence, male dominance and feeling of entitlement and control of family resources, alcohol use and marital conflict. At the community the model proposes that factor such as low socio-economic status, isolation of women and family and peer influences predict violence, whilst the societal level, unemployment, poverty and low educational and lack of economic empowerment may trigger violence against women and girls.

### **8.6.3 Vulnerability and empowerment context**

The women and girls' vulnerability to further violence and the women and girl's empowerment parts (Author's own conceptualisation) in the framework (Figure 2.3), gives insights to factors responsible for violence against women and girls across the four levels of the ecological model and their strong association to women's further vulnerability to GBV and experiences of it. This study demonstrates that at the individual level, factors such as power relations and patriarchal gender norms, alcohol or drug use and controlling by a male perpetrator is likely to make women more susceptible to violence. At the relationship level, factors such economic stress, male dominance in the family and large numbers of children to feed, exacerbates women's vulnerability. This situation traps women perpetually in abusive heterosexual relationships (Dunkle et al., 2004), so to speak. At the level of the community, this study found that factors such weak sanctions, poverty and restrictive social

norms that hinder women from public visibility accentuated women's susceptibility to gender-based violence. At the societal level, traditional gender norms that give men economic and decision-making power in the household, social norms that justify violence against women and the lack of enforcement of women's legal rights all to worsen their plight. Interventions on gender-based violence against women should not be limited to women but extend to understand and mitigate situations that predispose men to violent behaviours.

On the other hand, this study found that there was a weak link between women's empowerment and factors across the ecological model within the framework of Kabeer's (2001, 2005) theory of empowerment. For example, it was observed in the study that most women had little or no education. Over 66% of female did not have access to, and control over important resources, thus limiting their livelihood options despite the NGOs interventions in the study area. What this means to both government and case study NGOs is that, on the one hand, GBV communication should focus at limiting causal factors of GBV at all the four levels of the ecological model that are predictive of violence against women and girls. On the other hand, the communication should aim at enhancing and or increasing factors that strengthen females' capability and empowerment (see section 8.3).

#### **8.6.4 Communication context**

In this study, the communication strategies theorized by Leeuwis (2008) and Cardey (2010) component presented in the integrated conceptual framework (Figure 2.3) affords an understanding to the gender dimensions to information sources and choice for communication and information channels for communicating GBV. It examines types of messages already heard and information needs for targeted audience. For instance, this study found that messages heard about GBV were not common across the districts, meaning messages heard were location specific. Additionally, women and girls (especially GBV victims) in all the three districts studied needed information on counselling, and that messages to the public should include GBV, causes and effects; how to avoid abuses. Radio, a media-oriented channel is the preferred, reliable and trusted channel for dissemination such message in the districts.

The study also noted a good understanding of communication and its role by government departments and the three NGOs under study in addressing GBV. The application of communication in programme activities including GBV was obvious, but not intentional or

well planned, as many government departments and all the case study NGOs could not provide evidence of communication strategies and/or strategic plans guiding their programming. This implies that NGOs and governmental organisations need to develop comprehensive and explicit communication strategies to guide programme activities for preventing gender based violence (see section 8.4).

### **8.6.5 Media context**

The media context part of the framework (Figure 2.3) provides insights into media's framing and coverage of GBV, content analysing two-state owned Ghanaian newspapers. The analysis guided by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), helps to comprehend how such framing and coverage shapes government officials' perceptions about GBV and feed into the policy environment. However, the study observed the Ghanaian print media coverage of GBV stories was very limited and not given prominence in the newspapers. The stories also lacked insights into the contextual issues underlying GBV against women and girls (see section 7.4). It is recommendable for the media to show commitment in the fight against gender based violence by engaging all stakeholders in an in-depth and dispassionate reportage on GBV against women and girls that stimulate debate to influence and enhance government's policies for addressing GBV in the country. Furthermore, the media could adopt gender-sensitive approach their coverage of stories because gender impact differently on women and men which consequently fuel violence GBV against women and girls.

### **8.7 Implications for practice**

This study identified several implications for practice for both the case study NGOs operating in northern Ghana and governmental organisations working to eliminate GBV against women and girls. These have been discussed in (sections 8.2, 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5). Thus, this section highlights a few more of the study implications.

#### *Dynamism of response to gender based violence*

Government's response to gender-based violence and gender equality issues have been highly politicised, with government only seeking to enhance the participation of women in development. There are still lapses in the implementation of gender equality policies to reduce gender-based discrimination and women's holistic development and well-being.

Additionally, some government agencies and departments such as DOVVSU and Department of Social Welfare are unable to provide direct shelter and other related support for victims in the entire northern Ghana. The provision of counselling services to victims is inadequate due to lack of capacity. These agencies are also confronted with the challenge of both material (infrastructure) and financial resources to address gender-based violence against women and girls in most rural communities in northern Ghana.

Similarly, most NGO's lack the expertise in handling gender-based violence issues within communities in rural areas. Also, programme interventions were *ad hoc* because of the over-reliance on donor funding. Equally pertinent was the absence of a coherent programmatic blueprint to guide interventions.

### **8.7.1 Communication responses to gender based violence**

#### *Communication planning and capacity*

This study found that the absence of well thought out communication strategy plans by both government agencies and case study NGO's compromised the effectiveness of programme activities and the attainment of goals. The implication of this for practice is that there was no coherence in operational activities such as the use of appropriate communication tools and methods. It might be advisable for every programme intervention on GBV to be guided by a carefully crafted communication strategic plan. In terms of communication capacity both government and study NGO's did not have the requisite skills they needed to plan and implement communication interventions. The way forward in this regard to build the capacities of organisations in communication in order to improve effective and dynamic communication interventions in gender based violence against women and girls.

### **8.7.2 Context based communication interventions**

Findings from the study noted that messages on GBV were context and location specific. This highlights the importance of embedding communication interventions in the context in which GBV takes place. It is therefore important for GBV interventions to reflect local experiences: information needs, Counselling and service needs and communication hierarchies to be effective and to be able appropriately target audiences.

### **8.7.3 Suggestions for future research**

Given the fact that this study was an exploratory one, it was not able to cover all aspects of communicating GBV. As result, this study observed gaps that need to be addressed through further research.

- i. Research should be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of communication tools and methods used for communicating GBV in Ghana. This researcher could be sponsored by the Ghanaian government or NGO interesting on GBV and gender issues. This is important because this study found that communications methods and tools used in addressing gender based violence have not been evaluated in the specific case of Ghana.
- ii. There is the need for further research to unpack reasons for limited use of the gender and development (GAD) approach in programme interventions and the continuous usage of the WID approach which seemingly fails to address strategic gender and power issues between women and women. This could be led or facilitated by international NGOs such of DFID, UNIFEM, UNICEF or USAID.
- iii. Insight from research is needed in the evaluation of communication strategies in GBV interventions. This important because there is a dearth of knowledge in this area in Ghana. WOM, GDCA and ProNet North could lead in research.
- iv. Further research should be conducted for a better understanding of gender and its role in GBV communication and how it can be best integrated into communication theory and practice. WOM, GDCA, ProNet North and the Domestic Violence Secretariat could lead in research.

### **8.9 Summary**

This chapter reviewed the conceptual framework and the finding from the study. It highlighted the central themes and explored the implications of the findings for GBV and communication theories and practice. Moreover, it concluded by stating the contribution to wider discourses on communicating GBV and suggestions for future research on GBV from communication perspectives.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Semi-structured questions for key informants interview

Part 1: Social dynamics of gender unequal relationships and GBV

#### Gender relations

1. Can you tell me about gender relations in general and especially in northern Ghana? **Probes:** How are women perceived in society? How do women themselves perceive their role in society? How do men and women learn their gender? Do men and women benefit equally in these ascribed roles and norms in society?

#### Gender power relationship

2. Who has more social power? Men or women? Why? What gives women social power? Why? What gives men social power? Why? **Probes:** Where is this power derived from? How is it perceived and exercised by men and women? How does power privilege men and women differently? Do both women and men have equal access to decision making power? How do gender inequalities affect men and women's socio-cultural options? E.g. livelihoods choices and economics position.
3. Does age play any critical role in social power relationship in your community? Why? Does social status (class) play a role in social power relationship in your community? Why?
4. Does ethnicity influence social power relationship in your community? How and Why?
5. Is marital status of any relevance at all in social power relationship in your community? Why?

#### Gender-based violence in northern Ghana

6. Can you tell me about violence against women and girls here in northern Ghana?

**Probes:** In your opinion, what is violence? what is GBV? What do you think are some underlying causes of this violence? What are the types of violence prevalent in this area? Which factors encourage this violence at individual, family, community and societal levels?

7. In your professional opinion, would you say that GBV is socially a) condemned b) encouraged or c) others? In your opinion, what is the scope of GBV in your community? Do you think that there are any groups who are more vulnerable to GBV than others? How would you characterize them? What are some of the consequences of GBV for individuals? Families? For men? For women? Can you provide concrete examples that support this?

8. (Only for respondents from NGOs/organizations who work directly with perpetrators and victims of GBV) in your professional experience, what do you think are the characteristics of women who have experienced GBV? Are there any patterns in the people that you have seen reporting GBV? What are the social dynamics of the women and men reporting GBV? What are the characteristics of people who have committed GBV? Are there any patterns?

### **Combating GBV**

9. Are you aware of international conventions that prohibit this violence?

Probes: If so, which ones?

10. What can you tell me about enforcement of international conventions and national laws?

11. How does our government contribute to the fight against GBV?

Probes: Which Ghanaian laws prohibit GBV? How are these communicated? How does your NGO/department/community contribute to this effort? Which other departments contribute to the prevention of it?

Techniques/ Activity – Informal discussion

### **Part 2: Communication and media context of GBV**

12. Can you say something about the sources of information GBV?

Probes: How do people access information on GBV? How does the media frame GBV? Who are the target groups of the communication? Is the communication informed by any policy? If yes, what are these policies? Which media channels/sources are used in the communication process?

13. How are issues of gender taken into account in communication? a) Planning intervention on GBV b) approaches c) implementation?

### **Part 3. Communication strategies/approaches employed in addressing GBV**

14. What communication strategies are used for GBV interventions by your organization?

Probes: Can you mention some of the communication strategies/approaches? Are there theoretical underpinnings that inform these approaches? Is gender considered in the communication approaches? How? What gendered approaches?

15. Do gender power dynamics influence the communication process?

**Probes:** How does power influence communication between men and women in society? To what extent does power play a moderating role in the communication? And to whose benefit? How do men and women exercise power in the communication process? And how do these power positions affect the entire communication process?

Part 4: Implication of gendered communication practices on preventing GBV

16. Can you tell me about the gendered communication practice on GBV prevention?

**Probes:** Are there any implications for gendered communication practice in your intervention programmes? What are they? Are there policy implications for gendered communication practices?

The end of session! Thank you very much for your time.

## **Appendix 2: Focus Group Discussion guide**

### **Part A: Social dynamics gender unequal relationship and GBV**

#### **Gender relations and power**

1. What can you say about gender relationship (women and men relationship) in general and within your community?

Probes: How are women perceived in society? How do women themselves perceive their role in society? How do men and women learn their gender? Do men and women benefit equally in these ascribed roles and norms in society? Do you think performance of gender roles by men and women influence GBV in your society? How?

2. What do you think about equality between women and men in terms of control and access to
  - a) Decision making
  - b) Economic/livelihoods resources and activities
  - c) Education

If Yes, can you explain? If no, why?

3. Who has more social power? Men or women? Why? What gives women social power? Why? What gives men social power? Why?

#### **Gender-based violence**

4. How do you conceive violence and what can you say about GBV in general?
5. What are the forms/types of violence prevalent in your community and in northern Ghana?
6. What do you think are the factors causing GBV for women/men and making them vulnerable at the individual, family, relationship, community and societal levels?
7. Are there some factors that could serve to protect women/men from GBV? What are they?
8. Can you tell me something about both short and long term effects of GBV in victims?

### **Part 2: Communication and media context of GBV**

9. Where do you get information on GBV?
10. What can you say about the sources in terms of:

- a) Trust
- b) Reliability
- c) Preference
- d) Access

11. What can you say about the media's portrayal of women and men?

Probes: What specific roles ascribed to women and men in the media (radio, television, video, movies)? To what extent do these ascribe roles in GBV in your community? Do you see the media as encouraging or discouraging GBV? Why?

Thank you for your participation and time.

### Appendix 3: Field survey questionnaires on GBV against women and girls and Communication

Questionnaire

Number.....Date.....

Consent: Hello, My name is .....I am conducting a survey for my research project. The information collected will be used for the purpose of the study only. Your participation in this research is appreciated and is voluntary. Please, your responses will be strictly confidential and anonymous.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ABOUT RESPONDENT		
D1	Respondent's residential setting	Rural.....1 Urban.....2
D2	Age	20-29.....1 30-39.....2 40-49.....3 50-59.....4 60 and above.....5
D3	Marital status	CURRENTLY MARRIED.....1 CURRENTLY WITH A MAN...2 SEPERATED.....3 DIVORCED.....4 WIDOWER.....5 NEVER MARRIED.....6 OTHER.....7
D4	Type of marriage	MONOGAMOUS.....1 POLYGAMOUS.....2
D5	Number of biological children	No of Boys = No of girls = Total =
D6	Number of other children dependent on you	No of Boys = No of girls = Total =

D7	Religion	Christian.....1 Moslem.....2 Traditionalist.....3 No religion.....4 Other.....5																				
D8	Highest level of education	NONE.....1 ADULT LITERACY.....2 PRIMARY/JHS.....3 MIDDLE SCHOOL.....4 SECONDARY.....5 HIGHER THAN SECONDARY.....6																				
<b>SECTION B: LIVELIHOOD OF RESPONDENT</b>																						
D9	Occupation																					
D10	Estimated monthly income in Ghana cedis	50-99.....1 100-199.....2 200-299.....3 300-399.....4 400-499.....5 500 and above.....6																				
<b>SECTION C: SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF GENDER INEQUALITIES AND GBV</b>																						
The next questions are about things that happen to many women in different areas that husbands/partners in your community may have done or are doing to women.																						
G1	As parents, how differently do people treat boy children from girl children?																					
G2	Thinking about your community, would you say it is generally true that husbands/partners: a) Try to keep women from seeing friends? b) Try to restrict women from family of birth? c) Insist on knowing where their women are a? d) Ignore or treat their women indifferently?	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 60%;"></th> <th style="text-align: center;">YES</th> <th style="text-align: center;">NO</th> <th style="text-align: center;">DK</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Seeing friends</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Contact family</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Want to know</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ignore you</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		YES	NO	DK	Seeing friends	1	2	8	Contact family	1	2	8	Want to know	1	2	8	Ignore you	1	2	8
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Seeing friends	1	2	8																			
Contact family	1	2	8																			
Want to know	1	2	8																			
Ignore you	1	2	8																			

	<p>e) Get angry if their women speak with another man?</p> <p>f) Are often suspicious their women are unfaithful?</p> <p>g) Expect their women to ask their permission before seeking health care?</p>	<p>Get angry 1 2 8</p> <p>Suspicious 1 2 8</p> <p>Health care 1 2 8</p>
G3	<p>Thinking about your community, would you say it is generally true that wives/partners:</p> <p>a) Try to keep men from seeing friends?</p> <p>b) Try to restrict men from family of birth?</p> <p>c) Insist on knowing where their men are?</p> <p>d) Ignore or treat their men indifferently?</p> <p>e) Get angry if their men speak with another man?</p> <p>f) Are often suspicious their men are unfaithful?</p> <p>g) Expect their men to ask their permission before seeking health care?</p>	<p>YES NO DK</p> <p>Seeing friends 1 2 8</p> <p>Contact family 1 2 8</p> <p>Want to know 1 2 8</p> <p>Ignore you 1 2 8</p> <p>Get angry 1 2 8</p> <p>Suspicious 1 2 8</p> <p>Health care 1 2 8</p>

	Do husbands or partners ever:	A) (Tick as appropriate and continue to B)	B) Have you seen, or know this to have happened in the past 12 months? (If YES ask C only. If NO ask D only)	C) In the past 12 months happened once, a few times, or many times?
G4	a) Insult or make their women feel bad about themselves?	YES NO	YES NO 1 2	One Few Many 1 2 3
	b) Belittle or humiliate their women in front of other people?	1 2	1 2	1 2 3
	c) Do things to scare or intimidate their women on purpose (e.g. by the way the men look at the women, by yelling and smashing things)?	1 2	1 2	1 2 3
	d) Threaten to hurt their women or someone the woman cares about?		1 2	1 2 3
	e) Refuse to communicate with their women?	1 2	1 2	1 2 3
	f) Refuse to eat their women's food?	1 2		1 2 3
	g) Refuse to perform women's relative's funeral?	1 2	1 2	1 2 3
		1 2	1 2	

G5	<p>Do wives or partners ever...</p> <p>a) Insult or make their men feel bad about themselves?</p> <p>b) Belittle or humiliate their men in front of other people?</p> <p>c) Do things to scare or intimidate their men on purpose (e.g. by the way the women look at the men, by yelling and smashing things)?</p> <p>d) Threaten to hurt their men or someone the man cares about?</p> <p>e) Refuse to communicate with their men?</p> <p>f) Refuse to give their men food?</p> <p>g) Refuse to perform their men's relative's funeral?</p>	<p>A) (Tick as appropriate and continue to B)</p> <p>YES NO</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>2 1</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1 2</p>	<p>B) Have you seen happened in the past 12 months? (If YES ask C only. If NO ask D only)</p> <p>YES NO</p> <p>1 2</p>	<p>C) In the past 12 months happened once, a few times, or many times?</p> <p>One Few Many</p> <p>1 2 3</p>
G6	<p>Do husbands or partners ever....</p> <p>a) Slap or throw things at their women that could hurt them?</p> <p>b) Push or shove their women or pull their hair?</p> <p>c) Hit their women with fists or something else that could hurt them?</p> <p>d) Kick, drag or beat up their women?</p>	<p>A) (Tick as appropriate and continue to B)</p> <p>YES NO</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1 2</p>	<p>B) Have you seen, 12 months? (If YES ask C only. If NO ask D only)</p> <p>YES NO</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1 2</p>	<p>C) In the past 12 months happened once, a few times, or many times?</p> <p>One Few Many</p> <p>1 2 3</p>

	e) Choke or burn their women with hot iron, burning wood or anything on purpose? f) Threaten to use or actually used a gun, knife or other weapon against their women?	1 2  2 1	1 2	1 2 3
G7	Do wives or partners ever....  a) Slap or throw things at their men that could hurt them? b) Hit their men with fists or something else that could hurt them? c) Kick, drag or beat up their men? d) Choke or burn their men with hot iron, burning wood or anything on purpose? e) Threaten to use or actually used a gun, knife or other weapon against their men?	A) (Tick as appropriate and continue to B)  YES NO 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2	B) Have you seen happened in the past 12 months? (If YES ask C only. If NO ask D only)  YES NO 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2	C) In the past 12 months would you say have happened once, a few times, or many times?  One Few Many 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
G8	During the times the women were hit or beaten, did they ever fight back physically to defend themselves?  <b>Write down comments:</b>			YES NO 1 2
G9	Do women report their husband's/partner's violence to anybody?			YES NO 1 2
G10	If reported, who was the report to?			
G11	What was the response?			

G12	If not reported, what made women NOT report?		
G13	Are there women's association/organisations that help women in various ways within your community? (If NO, go to G19)	YES 1	NO 2
G14	Please mention these women's associations/organisations		
G15	Do women seek support from the women's associations when they have bad times with their husbands/partners?	YES 1	NO 2
G16	Why do they seek for support from these associations/organisations?  <b>Write down comments:</b>		
G17	What kind of support do they seek from the associations?  <b>List kinds of support:</b>		
G18	Do women seek help from other family/community members or friends during the times their husbands/partners are violent toward them?	YES 1	NO 2
G19	What kind of support do they seek from other family/community members?  <b>List kinds of support:</b>		
G20	Do women protect themselves whenever they perceive their husband/partner is likely to attack or start mistreating them?  <b>Write down comments:</b>	YES 1	NO 2
G21	What do women do to protect themselves whenever they perceive their husband/partner is likely to attack or start mistreating them?		

G22	On any occasion that a husband/partner abused a woman physically, psychologically or sexually or tried to control her behavior, do you think he was right/justified?	YES 1	NO 2
G23	Why?		
G24	Do men report their wives'/partner's violence to anybody? <b>Write down comments:</b>	YES 1	NO 2
G25	If reported, who do they report to?		
G26	What was the response?		
G27	If not reported, what make men NOT report?		
G28	Do men seek support from the any associations when they have bad times with their wives/partners?	YES 1	NO 2
G29	Why do they seek support? <b>Write down comments:</b>		
G30	What kind of support do they seek from the associations? <b>List kinds of support:</b>		

G31	Do men seek help from other family/community members or friends during the times their wives/partners are violent toward them?	YES 1	NO 2
G32	What kind of support do they seek from other family/community members? <b>List kinds of support:</b>		
G33	Do men protect themselves whenever they perceive their wife/partner is likely to attack or start mistreating them? <b>Write down comments:</b>	YES 1	NO 2
G34	What do men do to protect themselves whenever they perceive their wife/partner is likely to attack or start mistreating them? <b>Write down comments:</b>		
G35	On any occasion that a wife/partner abused a man physically, psychologically or sexually or tried to control her behavior, do you think she was right/justified?	YES 1	NO 2
G36	Why?		
G37	In your community how long do women know their husband/partner before their marriage/start living together?	MEET ON THE WEDDING DAY ....1 LESS THAN ONE MONTH ...2 1 MONTH TO LESS THAN 1 YEAR..3 1 YEAR OR MOR.....4 OTHER_____6 (SPECIFY)	
G38	In your community who chooses a woman's husband/partner?	WOMAN CHOOSES.....1 WOMAN AND HUSBAND/PARTNER CHOOSE EACH OTHER .....2 WOMAN WITH SOMEONE ELSE CHOOSE....3 WOMAN'S FAMILY CHOOSE.....4 HUSBAND/PARTNER OR HIS FAMILY CHOOSE THE WOMAN.....5 SOMEONE ELSE CHOOSES....6	
G39	When a husband/partner being chosen for a woman	YES	NO DK

	is she asked whether she wanted to marry/live with him or not?	1	2	8
G40	Who in the family usually has the final say on the following decisions on a women:  Whether work to earn money? Whether or not to use contraception? Any decisions about children's schooling What to do if a child falls sick? How children should be disciplined Whether to have another child?	THE WOMAN =1 HUSBAND/PARTNER =2 WOMAN & HUSBAND/PARTNER JOINTLY=3 THE WOMAN & SOMEONE ELSE JOINTLY =4 SOMEONE ELSE =5 DECISION NOT MADE /NOT APPLICABLE=6  WORK.....1 2 3 4 5 6 CONTRACEP.1 2 3 4 5 6 SCHOOLING...1 2 3 4 5 6 MEDICAL .....1 2 3 4 5 6 DISCIPLINE .....1 2 3 4 5 6 CHILD.....1 2 3 4 5 6		
G41	Do you and your husbands/partner talk about the following with each other often, sometimes, or never?  Things that happen at work/on the farm? Things that happen at home? What to spend money on? Things that happen in the community?	SOME- OFTEN	TIMES	NEVER
G42	How often do women meet or talk to a member of her birth family?	ONCE A WEEK OR MORE.....01 ONCE A MONTH OR MORE BUT LESSTHAN ONCE AWEEK.....02 LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH AND MORE THAN ONCE A YEAR.....03 ABOUT ONCE A YEAR OR LESS....04 NEVER .....05		
G43	It is common for women married/living with partner to visit their birth family member?	YES	NO	
		1	2	

G44	If a woman in your community needs help or has a problem, is it easy/common to get someone from her family who she can depend on to: a) Give shelter for a few nights if she needs it? b) Give financial support if she needs it?	YES NO DK		
		SHELTER .....1	2	8
G45	If a man in your community needs help or has a problem, is it easy to get someone from his family who she can depend on to: a) Give shelter for a few nights if he needs it? b) Give financial support if she needs it?	YES NO DK		
		SHELTER .....1	2	8
G46	In your household, who controls the money needed to buy the following things?  Vegetables or fruits? Clothes for herself? Any kind of medicine for herself? Toiletries for herself like (GIVE LOCAL EXAMPLES)?	DOES MAN WOMAN BOTH NOT BUY		
		Vegetables..1	2	3 4
G47	Please tell me if you alone, or jointly with your husband or someone else can own....	DOES NOT OWN OWNS JOINTLY OWNS ALONE		
		1 ∇	2 ∇	3⇒
G47	Land?	YES NO DK		
		1	2	3
G47	The house/dwelling a woman live in?	YES NO DK		
		1	2	3
G47	Any other house, apartment, or dwelling?	YES NO DK		
		1	2	3
G47	Vehicle (Car, motorbike, bicycle, cart, etc)?	YES NO DK		
		1	2	3
G47	Utensils (bowls, buckets, pans, etc)	YES NO DK		
		1	2	3
G47	Jewelry or gems?	YES NO DK		
		1	2	3
G47	Livestock such as (GIVE LOCAL EXAMPLES)?	YES NO DK		
		1	2	3

G48	In your community are women allowed to have any money of their own that they alone can decide how to use?	YES 1	NO 2
G49	Are women allowed to have a bank account or an account in any other savings institution in their own name or jointly with someone else?	YES, IN OWN NAME.....A YES, JOINT ACCOUNT.....B NO.....C (If NO, jump next question)	
G50	Is the woman alone allowed to operate the account, that is, sign checks or deposit and withdraw money?	YES 1	NO 2
G51	Do you know of any programs in this area that give loans to women so they can start or expand a business of their own?	YES 1	NO 2
G52	Have women in your community ever taken out or been given a loan either in cash or in kind to start or expand a business?	YES 1	NO 2
G53	<p>Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement:</p> <p>Only the men of the family should make the important decisions in the family.</p> <p>If the wife is working outside the home, then the husband should help her with household chores.</p> <p>A married woman should be allowed to work outside the home if she wants to.</p> <p>The wife has a right to express her opinion even if she disagrees with what her husband is saying.</p> <p>A wife should tolerate being beaten by her husband in order to keep the family together.</p> <p>It is better to send a son to school than it is to send a daughter.</p>	<p>Strongly Disagree</p> <p>Strongly agree    Don't know    Disagree</p> <p>Men ...1    2    3    4    5</p> <p>Help.. 1    2    3    4    5</p> <p>Work.. 1    2    3    4    5</p> <p>Opinion .1    2    3    4    5</p> <p>Beaten...1    2    3    4    5</p> <p>School.. 1    2    3    4    5</p>	
G54	<p>Are women usually permitted to go to the following places on their own, only if someone accompanies them, or not at all?</p> <p>To the local market to buy things?</p> <p>To a local health center or doctor?</p> <p>To the community center or other nearby meeting place?</p> <p>To homes of friends in the neighborhood?</p>	<p>NOT ALONE ALONE NEVER</p> <p>Market ..... 1    2    3</p> <p>Health centre..... 1    2    3</p> <p>Community centre...1    2    3</p> <p>Friends .....1    2    3</p>	

	To a nearby shrine/mosque/temple/church? Just outside the house or compound?	RELIGIOUS PLACE ..... 1    2    3 OUTSIDE THE HOME ...1    2    3
G55	Have you yourself ever taken out or been given a loan either in cash or in kind to start or expand a business?	YES    NO 1    2
G56	Did you ever work before you were first married/you first lived with a man? PROBE: Anything other than your usual housework?	YES    NO 1    2
G57	Did you usually do this work at home or away from home?	AT HOME .....1 AWAY.....2
G58	Were you paid or did you earn in cash or kind for this work or were you not paid at all?	CASH ONLY.....1 BOTH CASH AND KIND .....2 IN KIND ONLY.....3 NOT PAID.....4
G59	At that time who mainly decided how the money you earned would be used?	RESPONDENT ONLY.....1 PARENT(S) .....2 RESPONDENT WITH PARENT(S).....3 RESPONDENT WITH SOMEONE ELSE..4 SOMEONE ELSE.....5 OTHER _____6 (SPECIFY)
SECTION C: COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION ACCESS ON GBV?		
C1	In your community, where do you get information/news from?	
C2	Have you ever had information about GBV?	YES    NO 1    2
C3	If yes, by what means did you get information?	

C4	People (especially women and girls) in your community have enough information about GBV	Strongly Agree.....1 Agree .....2 No Idea.....3 Disagree .....4 Strongly disagree...5
C5	People in your community know when they are victims of GBV?	Strongly Agree..1 Agree.....2 No Idea.....3 Disagree....4 Strongly disagree..5
C6	Women and girls have enough information about shelters and how they can seek justice to protect themselves from GBV?	Strongly Agree...1 Agree.....2 No Idea.....3 Disagree.....4 Strongly disagree..5
C7	People understand the messages disseminated by the campaigns against GBV?	Strongly Agree.....1 Agree.....2 No Idea.....3 Disagree.....4 Strongly disagree..5
C8	What is the best way to inform women and girls about GBV against them? (LIST ALL MENTIONED)	
C9	What kind of information is needed for women and girls that are victims of GBV? (LIST ALL MENTIONED)	
C10	Can you mention the types of messages/information on GBV? (LIST ALL MENTIONED)	
C11	What messages on GBV should be disseminated? (LIST ALL MENTIONED)	

C12	What is your preferred means/channel for disseminating GBV messages?	<p>Scoring from a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.</p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>Radio</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Television</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Church/Mosque</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Hospital/clinic</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Chief's house</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Community Forum</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Video/movies/films</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Drama/play</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Festival/Ceremonies</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Market</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> </table>	Radio	1	2	3	4	5	Television	1	2	3	4	5	Church/Mosque	1	2	3	4	5	Hospital/clinic	1	2	3	4	5	Chief's house	1	2	3	4	5	Community Forum	1	2	3	4	5	Video/movies/films	1	2	3	4	5	Drama/play	1	2	3	4	5	Festival/Ceremonies	1	2	3	4	5	Market	1	2	3	4	5
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C13	Which of these are your trusted channels for disseminating information?	<p>Scoring from a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.</p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>Radio</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Television</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Church/Mosque</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Hospital/clinic</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Chief's house</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Community Forum</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Video/movies/films</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Drama/play</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Festival/Ceremonies</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Market</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> </table>	Radio	1	2	3	4	5	Television	1	2	3	4	5	Church/Mosque	1	2	3	4	5	Hospital/clinic	1	2	3	4	5	Chief's house	1	2	3	4	5	Community Forum	1	2	3	4	5	Video/movies/films	1	2	3	4	5	Drama/play	1	2	3	4	5	Festival/Ceremonies	1	2	3	4	5	Market	1	2	3	4	5
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Market	1	2	3	4	5																																																									
C14	Who in the community should the messages on GBV be targeted at? (LIST ALL MENTIONED)																																																													

## Appendix 4: Information on the study guiding consent to participate

### Additional information

School of Agriculture, Policy and Development  
Agriculture Building  
Earley Gate.  
Whiteknights Road  
Post Office Box 297  
Reading, RG6 6AR

CONSENT FORM (REFERENCE NUMBER:



Dear research participant(s),

You have been selected as a representative(s) of an NGO, organization, community or group with in-depth knowledge on gender-based violence and gender-based violence (GBV) related interventions within Ghana and your area. The purpose of this research project is to analyse the role of communication/media in addressing GBV against women and girls in northern Ghana. This study is in partial fulfilment for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree at the University of Reading, United Kingdom. Therefore, the information gathered through key informant/in-depth interviews and focus group discussions is solely for academic use and will be given the highest degree of confidentiality. With your permission, the data collected will be stored in soft copy for the study and discarded after five years. Parts of this research may be published in academic journals.

You are assured that your identity will not be revealed to anyone other than the researcher carrying out the study. As a participant, you are free to withdraw from the interview/discussion at any point in time, and will not have to give reasons for withdrawal. You can also withdraw your contribution at any stage of the research process if desired without any negative repercussions. If you wish to back out, please contact the researcher on [s.a.alo@pgr.reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.a.alo@pgr.reading.ac.uk)/ 0554039859, quoting the reference number on top of the consent form and indicating the information you want to remove. The reference number will only be used to identify your interview/discussion guide and will not reveal any other information about you.

If at any stage you need further information on this research project, you can contact me or my PhD supervisor, Dr. Sarah Cardey at the above address. You can also contact me on via email/phone mentioned above or Dr. Cardey on [s.p.cardey@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.p.cardey@reading.ac.uk) or by phone: +44 1183786594.

It is assumed that by answering the interview/discussion questions, you are agreeing that you understand the terms of participation and that you consent to these terms.

The application has been reviewed according to the procedures outlined by the university of Reading Research Ethics Committee and has been given approval for the conduction of this research.

## Appendix 5: Authority to do research in Northern Ghana

### School of Agriculture, Policy and Development - Ethical Clearance of Research Ethical Clearance Submission Form

You must not begin your research until you have obtained consent as evidenced by this form returned signed and dated.  
ALL QUESTIONS MUST BE COMPLETED.

Name: ALO SUSANA AGA

Status (tick): Staff member \_\_\_\_\_  
 Visitor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Higher degree student  \_\_\_\_\_  
 MSc student \_\_\_\_\_  
 Undergraduate student \_\_\_\_\_



Name of academic supervisor or principal investigator: DR. SARAH CARDEY

1. Title of project: ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN NORTHERN GHANA: THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION

2. Brief description of research to be undertaken:

The main aim of this study is to explore the role of communication in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls in northern Ghana. It examines the social dynamics of gender inequalities and power relationship between women and men in the context of GBV; the communication and media context of GBV; the communication approaches and programmes taken by case study NGOs and other governmental agencies in the prevention of GBV and the implications of gendered communication practices on addressing GBV in Northern Ghana. The study will employ both qualitative and quantitative techniques for the data collection. The primary data collection is organised in two stages. For the first stage, qualitative data was gathered in Ghana between July and October, 2014 using key informant/in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions instruments. The outcome of this first stage served to generate the questions for the quantitative data collection for which another ethical clearance is now sought. The crux of this quantitative data collection will be to establish relationship between specific variables of interest (e.g. age, livelihoods access, education, communication and media policies, gender) to help address some of the questions in objectives 1 and 2. Given the sensitive nature of GBV, the research will not focus on the individuals experiences of GBV and so will not in any way in the research process ask individual participants of their personal experiences of GBV, but their perceptions, constructions and world view on the nature and social dimension of GBV.

3. Period over which research is to be undertaken:

Start Date : June, 2014  
 Finish Date: September, 2016

4. Funding: Is the research partly or totally funded by an external organisation, funding body or other? Please give details. Note that ethical clearance for research council funded projects must be obtained from the University Research Ethics Committee - please note their deadlines.

Externally funded: \_\_\_\_\_ Funded by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 University funded: \_\_\_\_\_ Funded by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not funded:  \_\_\_\_\_

If a University research project supply RES project code \_\_\_\_\_

5. Nature and number of participants who are expected to take part in your survey/focus group. Please estimate if uncertain:

