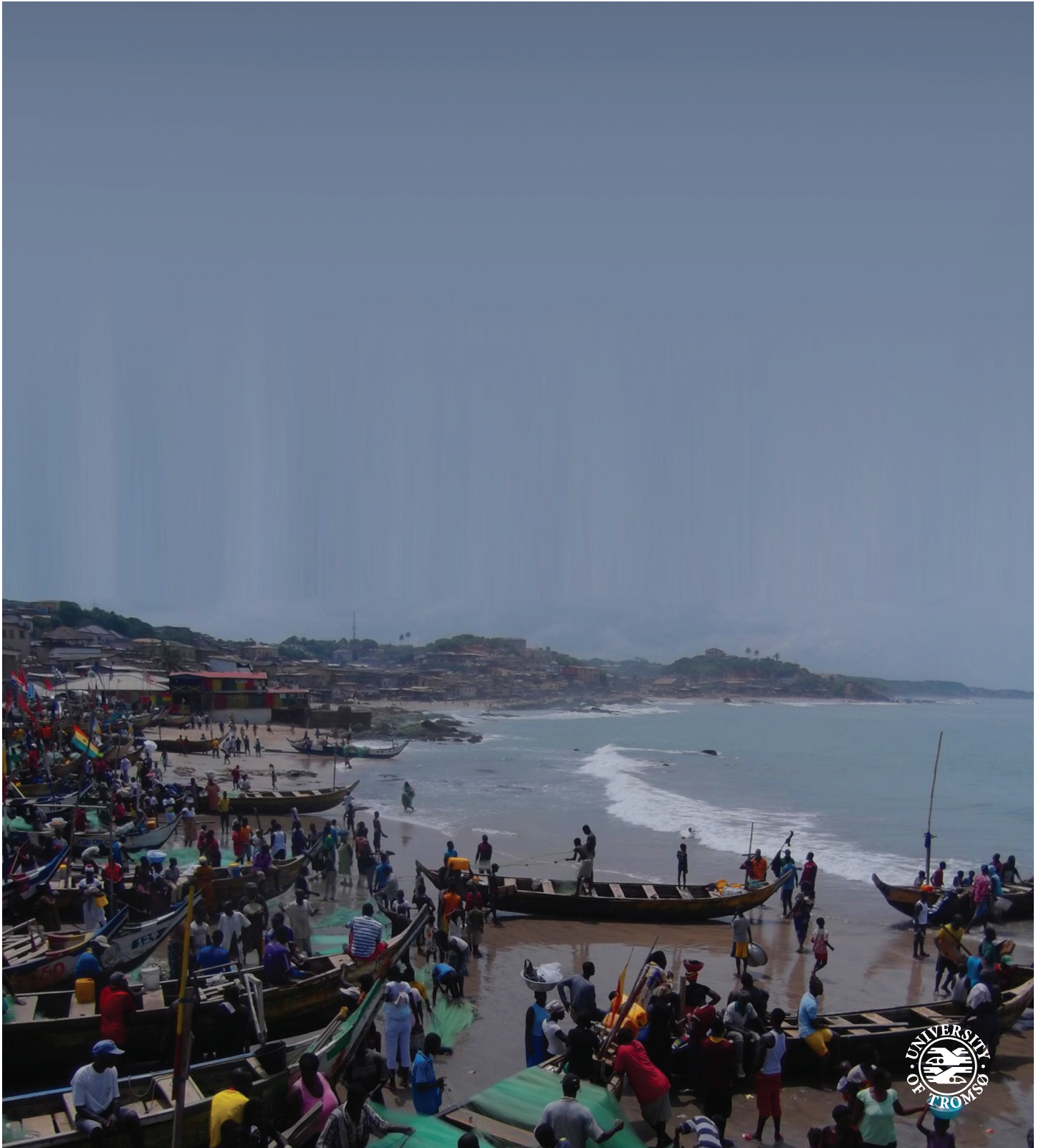


Education and HIV/AIDS

A case study of educational practices of the indigenous Fante's
in the Cape Coast Municipality of Ghana

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Thesis submitted for the Degree of
Master of Philosophy in Indigenous Studies
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By

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Abstract

This study addresses how Ghanaian educational systems educate the people of Cape Coast about the causes and prevention of the HIV/AIDS epidemic

HIV/AIDS has been identified as one of the main challenges facing the educational sector in Ghana that deals with children from pre-school, basic, secondary and tertiary institution. Everyone in these categories, all children and students are at risk. Traditionally, puberty rites were used as a societal demand for adolescents to know their sexual life. The Ghana government has not included HIV/AIDS in the curriculum as a holistic subject where students can be tested about their knowledge. The government is double-minded recognizing traditional ideas and modern ideas. That is because there are many rites of passage embedded in Ghanaian cultural systems which make it difficult for the government to adopt one form of rite to be taught in schools. This creates a difficult situation

The study reveals that the Fante puberty rites could be adopted on the Alert School Model to help prevent HIV/AIDS. It was realized that teachers in Cape Coast municipality are doing their best to teach HIV/AIDS education in schools despite the challenges they faced from the Ghana Education Service. The role of Fanti home based educational practices strongly influenced by traditional beliefs and practices will be compared and contrasted to modern public school based education and teaching young people about HIV/AIDS prevention.

The method that was used in data collection at Cape Coast was interviews, observation and conversation which covered a sample of twenty one informants. Seven of the informants interview were used in the study. I supported primary data with secondary data from the Ghana HIV Sentinel Surveillance report, the impact evaluation of the alert school model and the HIV Alert School Model

The findings in the study were analyzed qualitatively. A detailed description of puberty rites and the alert school model were discussed. Based on the findings in the study at Cape Coast, suggested recommendation and conclusion were drawn.

Dedication

I dedicate this study to my mother's Adelaide Asiedu and Hannah Marfo, thank you very much for your care, love and encouragement.

My fathers, uncles and the extended family, I appreciate your responsiveness

Acknowledgement

I would take this opportunity to thank all the people who helped me in the success of the study. I express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Rachel Issah Djesa, who has been a pillar, sister and a mother to me for her indispensable contribution.

Thanks to Prof. Olsen Torjer Andreas for your guidance, contribution, care and believing in me to express my views in methodology class. I am grateful to Norwegian government for granting me financial assistant through the quota scholarship scheme.

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Due to limited space in this study, I cannot mentioned everyone who contributed immensely to this study but would say that God bless you all abundantly.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABC- Abstinence, Be faithful to a partner and the use of Condom

AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

ANC - Antenatal Care

ASM- Alert School Model

DHS – Demographic and Health Survey

GES- Ghana Education Service

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency virus

HSS – HIV Sentinel Survey

JHS- Junior Secondary School

JSS- Junior High School

MTCT- Mother- to –child transmission

UNAID- United State Agency for International Development

UNICEF- United Nation International Children’s Education Fund

SITO- Studentsamskipnaden I Tromso

STDS-Sexually transmitted disease

WCIP-World Council of Indigenous people

WHO- World Health Organization

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Chapter one

1.1 Introduction

I lived in Cape Coast for five years. The city is where I had my junior and secondary boarding school education before proceeding to the University of Ghana. I decided to carry out my research in the Cape Coast municipality because of the sentinel surveillance report published online in 2012 which placed the city as the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence area in Ghana. The utter shock I had after reading the report sets a path for me to investigate why the region had such high levels of HIV/AIDS infection.

Ghanaian society at large has had its own traditional cultural beliefs that educates and informed society of sexual orientation and practices. This familiar form of education revolves around puberty rites for adolescent girls and boys. Boys of adolescent age were educated by their fathers and uncles at homes, while girls were secluded from the community for a couple of months by their mothers and other female elders. The primary theme of these rites was to teach the youth about promiscuity, and how to be a responsible adult in the society. In female initiation ceremonies, sexual attractiveness and the health of initiates are key themes (Lutkehaus 1995: 20). These practices for both sexes serve as a transition from childhood to adulthood. I will discuss HIV/AIDS referring to such traditional institutions and western school education. Therefore the study of the understanding of HIV/AIDS education, in a Ghanaian culture, specifically the culture of the Fanti people is complicated.

1.2 Problem statement and research questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the Fante educational practices are contributing to the prevention of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast with a comparison to western school education in the Cape Coast. I addressed in this study the question of why HIV/AIDS is not a holistic subject on the curriculum where students can be tested on their knowledge at the end of their studies. I will in this respect compare and contrast the western system of school education and Fante traditional education by focusing on puberty rites in preventing HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. In this way, I will be able to identify different strategies which the

western-oriented school system and Fante traditional education use. This could possibly explain how these two educational systems can help complement each other in addressing HIV/AIDS. I hope that this study will assist in policy formation. Many studies have been done about HIV/AIDS but little attention has been paid to the traditional aspects of education that has helped indigenous people deal with sexually transmitted diseases long before the advent of HIV/AIDS. This is a worthwhile line of inquiry if it will assist in the understanding of HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Cape Coast municipality. These are the questions I want to address in this study.

How does the western system of school and the Fante traditional education contribute to the prevention of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast Municipality? Why is HIV/AIDS education not a holistic subject on the curriculum where students can be tested on their knowledge about the disease?

1.3 Previous research to the study

There are scholarly works that have been carried out in the field of HIV/AIDS in Ghana. The references included in this piece are just a selection of ideas related to my study. Sackey (2001), *Cultural responses to the management of HIV/AIDS: The repackaging of puberty rites* discusses the role of puberty rites and how they can be used as an important tool against adolescent HIV/AIDS. In traditional society, adolescents who had not yet gone through the rites were not permitted to become sexually active. Sackey asserts that the introduction of HIV/AIDS education into the school at nurseries primary, secondary and tertiary institution is important. She proposes a restructuring of the school curriculum to include the teaching and performance of puberty rites at all levels-primary, secondary and tertiary. She recommends a focus on attitudinal changes towards the disease, emphasizing abstinence and formation of youth clubs: youth participation in fighting the disease since they are the most sexually active group and highly vulnerable. Sackey states that among the Krobo people found in the eastern region of Ghana and Akan a girl found to be pregnant or no longer being a virgin before puberty rites are performed is ostracized from the society. In Ashanti, another Akan group in Ghana a person becomes a “kyiribra” which literally means a girl who did not go through puberty rite ceremony and must undergo a “kyiribra” ceremony of purification and pacification together with his male “culprit” as Sarpong calls him, after which both are ostracized from society. Kyiribra which is considered a “moral depravity” (Sarpong 1977:51)

has both religious and social repercussion in the sense it infringes the spiritual injunction of chastity until puberty rites have been performed as well as defiles the whole community. It is therefore necessary to offer sacrifices of appeasement and purification to avert any danger on the pregnant girl and her unborn child as well as defiles the whole community.

Sackey's work has helped me to assess concepts and theories needed to reflect on my data collected from field work. These included the role of socialization, and modernity. Sackey's work has also inspired me to learn about the Krobo and Akan customs and traditions in Ghana that need to be restored in order to prevent the rising numbers of people infected with HIV/AIDS. Sackey's work was done in Accra, a neighboring municipality of Cape Coast. By focusing on how Fante puberty rites could help in combating HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast, the project seeks to study ways customs and traditions could help in preventing sexually transmitted diseases. In this way, I hope to use Sackey's ideas in contributing to the already existing traditions in the Fante society in preventing HIV/AIDS.

Daniel Mawuli Tsikata was a Master of Philosophy Degree student who completed his degree at the University of Oslo in 2007. In his thesis: *Understanding HIV/AIDS Education in a Ghanaian culture*, Tsikata (2007) examines modern education or schooling and traditional African education in his discussion of HIV/AIDS in Ghana. He emphasizes how both institutions are packaged to educate the lives of children. He examines the features of traditional and modern education relating them to the education of adolescent children with visual impairment and the recognition given to them in the process of education, specifically on HIV/AIDS. His work was at Akropong located in the eastern region of Ghana which is an entirely different from my area of study. His work though covering different aspect of Ghanaian traditions and customs, has helped me to understand how it is important to teach sex education in schools and at homes in preventing HIV/AIDS. My research is relevant to Tsakata's work as both studies concentrate on Ghanaian traditional education versus western school systems and teaching strategies that are needed to combat HIV/AIDS.

1.4 Theoretical approaches in the study

Many theoretical perspectives and concepts will be used to explain the educational practices of the indigenous Fantes in the Cape Coast Municipality of Ghana. These include

socialization, articulation of tradition, and modernity. These theories and concepts provide insights that can be used in order to view data in a particular way. These theories structured the research findings and gave me a perspective on the situation of Fantes living in the Cape Coast. I noticed that articulation of tradition and modernity is difficult to define and interpret in a manner that will be appropriately acceptable to all societies.

1.4.1 Socialization on sex education in schools and Ghanaian homes

The term “socialization” refers to processes whereby naïve individuals are taught the skills behavior patterns, values and motivations needed for competent functioning in the culture in which the child is growing up (Maccoby 2008:13). Paramount among these are the social skills, social understandings and emotional maturity needed for interaction with other individuals to fit in with the functioning of social dyads and larger groups. A dominant point of view in the mid-20th century (Joan E & Hastings 2008) was that socialization is a process of instilling in a child a set of desired behavioral habits.

Ghanaian traditional homes as well as western schools in Ghana play very important role in educating the individual and provide two levels of socialization. In view of these two structures I have used socialization to reflect on how the elderly helped in nurturing the child to be responsible in the future. In the field, I experienced how teachers teach sex education to create awareness in class room while in puberty rites I was told by informants the role society played in educating adolescent girls and boys. One becomes a responsible adult in Ghanaian communities by having Ghanaian traditional home education, or learning from the western school education or having both system of education. In Ghanaian traditional home settings, children are taught to respect the elderly; elders are seen as important in societies. In the social organization of Ghanaian societies, elderly people are seen as those who have knowledge and experienced in the daily routines in life. These elders importance in society have been existed since time immemorial, how to greet others in public and learn sexual behaviors deemed appropriate in the community. Some of these sexual behaviors include:

1. To avoid having sex with people in both extended and the family of orientation. This is considered as incest and could bring curses from the deities that protect the communities.
2. Abstain from sex until marriage.

To address the issue of HIV/AIDS, parents, family and the entire society has to help each other by educating the child on his sexual rights. In that way the whole society come together to perform rites of passage such as puberty rites to initiate youth girls and boys into adulthood. Teachers are located in what is now school to instill moral discipline in individuals in order to minimize disturbances in the society. I connect socialization to my study because of the role western school education and Fante educational practices have contributed in preventing of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast.

1.4.2 Articulation of tradition in puberty rites

Articulation theory shows the importance of the rites among the Fante people and is why I am using this theory in my work. Articulation offers a non-reductive way to think about cultural transformation and the apparent coming and going of “traditional” forms. All-or-nothing, fatal-impact notions of change tend to assume that cultures are living bodies with organic structures. For example, indigenous languages, traditional religions, or kinship arrangements may appear to be critical organs (Clifford 2001: 478) which if lost, transformed, or combined in novel structures should logically imply the organism’s death. In articulation theory, the whole question of authenticity is secondary, and the process of social and cultural persistence is political. It is assumed that cultural forms will always be made, unmade and remade. Communities can and must reconfigure themselves drawing selectively on remembered pasts (Clifford 2001). The people of Cape Coast municipality perform puberty rites for girls. During the ceremony, the head of the extended family pours libation, and traditional songs are sung by women. Traditions are displayed and the whole community participants in this enactment of tradition.

1.4.3 Modernity - western school system

Gyekye (1997: 235) defines modernity as the ideas, principles and ideals covering a whole range of human activities that have underpinned western life and thought since seventeen century”. He adds that modernity is essentially linked to western cultures; it was and is culturally dependent. It is essentially the intellectual basis of life in the western world which is marked by scientific, technological and industrial revolution between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Giddens states, “modernity is a post – traditional order but not one in which the sureties of tradition and habit have been replaced by the certitude of rational knowledge” (Giddens 1991: 2-3).

The third structure that informs my discussion is modernity. This theory when used in tandem/together with the articulation of tradition theory/socialization will now be elaborated.

European colonizers in the 19th century introduced western schools in Cape Coast. For the most part these schools were organized by British missionaries and had a strong Christian bias. The language of instruction was English and the consequence of this was that Fantes and Ghanaian in general now speak and write in English.

Another consequence of this education was the specific orientation to western moral codes and conduct. This has real implications for the society since the Fantes were encouraged to turn away from articulation of their customs and traditions.

Today the modern institutions differ from all preceding forms of social order in respect of their dynamism, the degree to which they undercut traditional habits and customs, and their global impact. However these are not only extensional transformations: modernity radically alters the nature of day-to-day social life and affects the most personal aspects of our experience.

1.5 General knowledge of HIV/AIDS

The rate of HIV infection and death due to AIDS first increased rapidly during the 1980s in the United States and in Western Europe (Singhal & Rogers 2003:41). Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) occurs when an HIV-positive individual has such lowered immune levels that he/she falls prey to a variety of opportunistic infections (Elwood 1999). No one knows exactly where the Human Immunodeficiency virus originated, or the conditions that led to its spread among humans in the early 1980s. It may have existed in a latent form for very many years. Probably it lived in an animal host. The current strains of the virus are very fragile organisms, unable to survive for more than a few seconds under room temperature when not inside the human body (Singhal & Rogers 2003). This fragility means that the virus cannot spread by means of a handshake, kiss, or a sneeze, nor by means of a mosquito bite. Sharing of food, drinking glasses or clothes will not transmit the virus. The

main means of transmission worldwide is human sexual intercourse in which bodily fluids like semen or blood are exchanged. This is the reason why the sexually active age group from 15 to 45 is most at risk. Also important in HIV transmission is the sharing of unclean needles, such as between injection drug users, and in rare instances, the virus is transmitted by means of accidental needle-sticks. Occasionally a medical doctor, nurse, or dentist has been infected in this way. Infected blood can transmit the virus through transfusions, although many countries have made great progress in keeping their blood supply free of HIV (Singhal & Rogers 2003:47). Mother – to - child transmission (also called MTCT or “vertical transmission”) is common today, resulting in millions of pediatric AIDS cases. The chances of a baby born to an HIV+ mother being infected are about 40 percent. Because mother-to-child HIV transmission can be so easily prevented (or at least minimized) by an anti-retroviral drug costing a few cents, infected infants are an especially painful problem for the world (Singhal & Rogers 2003:48).

1.6 Perception about origin of HIV/AIDS in Ghana

1.6.1 HIV/AIDS is foreign and female

The first people to have contracted AIDS in Ghana were a foreign couple; they traveled to Ghana in search of herbal treatment in 1986 (Sackey 2001). For this reason, people initially gave the disease a foreign tag; it was remote, unreal and ‘UnGhanaian’. Some people thought HIV/AIDS was an advanced form of gonorrhoea that Ghanaian prostitutes from Ivory Coast might have brought into the country. Hence the reference to AIDS as “Cote d’Ivoire” *babaso*, that is Ivory Coast gonorrhoea. Shortly after that the first Ghanaian victim was identified (Sackey 2001:65) as a young woman and consequently the disease came to be identified as a women’s disease. Indeed to crystallize this conception, AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) was jokingly referred to as “Akosua is dying slowly”; Akosua being a female name in Ghana. Initially, the question that came to mind was why Akosua and not Akwasi or Asare or any Ghanaian male name? According to a Ministry of Health report (HIV Ministry of Health/AIDS 1999: 36) women are two to four times more vulnerable to HIV infection than men because of their anatomy, among other things. Similarly, women are more vulnerable

to other sexually transmitted diseases, the presence of which enhances the risk of HIV infection. Also when it comes to gender issues, women are stigmatized as the source by this naming practice.

1.7 Structure of thesis

I have arranged this study as follows:

Chapter one attempts to present an introduction, perception about origin of HIV/AIDS in Ghana, research questions, previous research, and theories/concepts. **Chapter two** presents methodology which entails interviews, observation, conversation, transcription, ethics and reflexivity. **Chapter three** focuses on descriptive history of the Fante and Cape Coast, characteristics that make Fante an indigenous group in Ghana, Ghanaian western school and Fante traditional home school. **Chapter four** contains a detailed description of puberty rites and Alert School Model. **Chapter five** provides the presentation and analysis of data from informants. **Chapter six** will focus on the research discussions of the data findings, conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter two

2.0 Introduction

The chapter discusses how data was collected in the field. The methods that were employed in the field to collect data were interviews, observation and conversation. The reason why I chose these methods was that HIV/AIDS is a sensitive topic to deliberate. It appears that the interviews and conversation enabled informants to speak and expressed their views on the pandemic freely. I considered ethics and reflexivity in this chapter and thoroughly explained my experiences/roles in the field as a researcher. I started by explaining how primary and secondary data was collected in the field.

2.1 Fieldwork challenges and methodological consideration

The data for this project is obtained from primary and secondary sources. “Conducting interviews” and “asking questions” (Walliman 2011:92) are some of the methods used to collect primary data. I relied on primary data because it gave firsthand information from my informants. The primary data used were collected during the month of June/July 2013 through interviews.

The fieldwork started in the municipality of Cape Coast. The municipality embodies a number of towns and villages. I stationed myself at Cape Coast City but travelled daily to Amamoma, Pedu and Abora. These are suburb towns where I had an opportunity to interview Queen mothers and elderly woman in the area who know much about customs and traditions of the people. The people in Cape Coast are Fantes. The language spoken by the people is also Fante. Because of my education in the Cape Coast city I speak fluent Fante. I identified myself in Fante as well as my tribal affiliation, Ashanti, part of the Akan group in Ghana. In communication, we understand each other but take a longer time to learn and speak each other’s dialect. We have similar traditions and customs but different approaches to these traditions.

Ghanaian hospitality is always to be welcomed by offering water to strangers who visit. I qualified as a stranger in this sense as someone who lives outside the locality that he/she visits. Refusal to drink water presented is considered as a sign of disrespect. This was significant when I wanted to interview the chief of Cape Coast; I purchased Schnapps' as custom and traditions demand that libation to be poured coupled with fruitful conversation.

It is a custom in the Fante societies that chiefs do not speak directly to the people. The chief's message to his people is full of wisdom and proverbs rather the "Okyeame" who is the linguist in the palace responsible to interpret and communicate the chief message to his people or person in clear simple terms to the understanding of the people. The "Okyeame" is a mediator between the chief and his people. The "Okyeame" in the Fante language accompanied the chief everywhere that is due for the chief to interact with people or a person.

The "Okyeame" lived at the chief palace. "Okyeame" as he is affectionately called, linguist in the English language, is mostly seen accompanying the chief to places as he held the chief staff sword in their hands which symbolizes the chief clan totem and history. The chief staff sword is curved from wood with either an object or animal such as lioness curved on the top of the staff sword to presents the powerful nature of the chief clan and the history in the Fante society. I had a different experience during field work. When I was scheduled to meet the chief for an interview I wore a special locally bead bracelet which identified me from a royal Ashanti home. The chief noticing the beads thought that I needed knowledge to serve my people. The chief realized that I could become a chief in the future. Therefore transmitting knowledge to me as a young person is useful for the next generation to benefit that I will transmit such knowledge to my children. The wearing of the bead bracelet broke protocol barriers even though booking an appointment in the initial stage to have an interview with the chief through the palace secretariat was complicated. The chief treated me with respect as the "Okyeame" was isolated from my interaction. As a would - be - chief in the future I was treated well by the chief. This is my reflection when writing this study. The chief spoke to me directly during interview after which the "Okyeame" was called by the chief to take a picture of myself and the chief.

The bottle of Schnapps was opened by the linguist and given to the chief for libation. The chief started pouring the Schnapps on the ground outside the Heritage House while reciting words of prayer on my behalf, the communities and my meeting with him. This way of pouring libation in Cape Coast is the same as my tribe "Ashanti" another pool of Akan group

in Ghana. The chief libated until the bottle of the Schnapps finished. I was surprise how the chief prayed for me and my family. The chief appreciated that I knew the customs and tradition of the people. My knowing this custom and tradition made the chief treated me as his son. I have kept in contact with the chief since I returned from Cape Coast to Tromso. This gesture allowed the chief to narrate how sex education is taught at home through puberty rites. He suggested that I take a second look at the ages of those infected with HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. He affirmed that the older peoples who are in their fifties and passed through puberty rites are not infected with the disease because having multiple partners had been punishable by the society.

Secondary data collection was used in the field. The advantage of using sets of secondary data is that it has been produced by teams of expert researchers, often with large budgets and expensive resources way beyond the means of a single student, so it cuts out the need for time consuming fieldwork(Walliman 2011: 69) . The 2011 *HIV Sentinel Surveillance (HSS) report conducted in Ghana* placed Cape Coast as highly infected region. Much of the data about the HIV/AIDS situation that was used in this study is based on the 2011 surveillance report. To supplement my primary data, secondary data collection started in Accra where I visited important international organizations such as United State Agency for International Development (UNAID), United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), and the Ghana Ministry of Women and Social Protection.

These international organizations are located in Ghana to help in the developmental projects in the country. These projects that are carried out by the organization entails the government of Ghana officials either appointed from the presidency or parliament but excludes traditional leaders and indigenous people in Ghana. Traditional leader such as chief, clan leaders, queen mothers are not consulted before some of these projects are executed. I find such projects problematic. I will discuss how the HIV/AIDS alert school model was supported financially by UNICEF but rather excluded traditional leaders in this important HIV/AIDS intervention program in chapter four of the study.

The introductory letter from my supervisor in Tromso was very helpful with UNAID, UNICEF, and WHO. They provided me with books and publications on HIV/AIDS that targeted Ghana but also the disease in other part of the world. The contact I made with the Ghana Ministry of Women and Social Protection was problematic. Although I introduced

myself and provided the introductory letter, the person in charge seemed reluctant to assist me and I came away empty handed.

I used interviews, participant observation, and conversation to collect my primary data in the field and as this contact with the chief indicates, being sensitive to traditional protocols resulted in useful insights from this elder.

2.1.1 Interviews

The main method of collecting data for my fieldwork in Cape Coast was interviews. Before leaving Tromso for Ghana, I had already developed a structured interview for my informants. This type of interview, according to Chilisa is that “they are time saving and reduce interviewer effect; analysis of the data is easier” (2012:205).

These questions and answering form of interview helped in the field efficiently as informants listened attentively to the questions and asked for clarification of some questions which were not clear to them. I also used unstructured interviews to allow flexibility and to follow interests and “thoughts of informants” (Chilisa 2012:205). I tried to explore how the Fante’s customs and traditions have contributed to the prevention of HIV/AIDS by interviewing a Chief, Queen mother, and an elderly woman. This interview goes beyond conversation as it allowed the informant to reveal information using non-verbal sign of communication, but with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge of the traditional leaders and the elderly in Cape Coast. The interviews were transcribed to help in the analytical chapter of the study.

Transcribing interviews from oral to a written mode structures the interview conversation in a form amenable to closer analysis and is in itself an initial analytical process (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). Transcribing from audio recording to text involves a series of technical and interpretational issues-in particular concerning verbatim oral versus written style- for which there are not many standard rules, but rather a series of choices to be made. There is one basic rule in transcription- state explicitly in the report how the transcriptions were made (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009:180). I conducted interviews in the language informants were comfortable with speaking. Most of the informants spoke the Fante language with quite a few numbers speaking English. Key informants such as the Chief, Queen Mother and elderly woman spoke the Fante language. Staff of the Ghana Education Service and teachers as well as the Ministry in charge of the school health program spoke English, sometimes mixing English with Fante

language. I transcribed verbatim from Fante to English. This generated longer sentences which made me compressed these sentences to briefer meaning by using commas, full stops and exclamation signs to make sense in English. Noises, gestures and impromptu interruption were also transcribed. I transcribed the exact conversation with my English speaking informants. The rationale for this was to avoid adulteration of some words. I had to listen to the audio recording several times over and over before transcribing. The data from the field becomes descriptive therefore after transcription; I decided to make categories in the text and turn these into themes to assist in analysis.

2.1.2 Conversation

I met with people from different backgrounds during fieldwork and gained knowledge by engaging myself in informal conversation. Gall *et al* (1996:309) states that conversation relies entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in a natural interaction, typically one that occurs as part of ongoing fieldwork. Intersecting interviews and observation, I engaged elderly women and men in conversation on HIV/AIDS prevention. I also talked to parents, tourist and religious leaders. The conversation gave me an insight into Cape Coast City and clarified my observations.

Before booking an appointment to interview the paramount chief of Cape Coast, I had developed structured interview questions for the Chief. The Paramount Chief is the head of all the chiefs in the municipality. A day before the interview I had an informal conversation with an old man who suggested that I should do away with my questions but only ask general/follow up questions on HIV/AIDS prevention through puberty rites. The reason is that traditionally a child does not teach the elderly what to do but always submits himself/herself to learn from them. I listened to the advice given to me by the old man. I did not use structured interview questions and the interview was fruitful. Conversations that were unstructured were helpful in collecting data amongst the chief, and other informants.

2.1.3 Participant observation

The participant observer comes to a social situation with two purposes: to engage in activities appropriate to the situation, and to observe the activities, people and physical aspects of the situation (Spradley 1980:54). Participant observation is said to make no firm assumptions

about what is important. Instead, it encourages researchers to immerse themselves in the day-to-day activities of the people whom they are attempting to understand (May 2011:163). If the passive participant occupies any role in the social situation, it will only be that of “bystander,” “spectator,” or “loiterer.” My research was limited in terms of time and space. Passive participant observer is when a researcher goes in to observe a particular situation/ group for an hour and then leaves. Therefore I used passive participant observation to gather data in the field. I observed the daily routines of the people; fishermen mend their fishing nets along the streets, people hawk on the streets, and selling sachet of water, and sun glasses on the beaches. The city itself was a fascinating array of colonial architecture. I look at the general condition of the Cape Coast city and some of its surrounding villages like Pedu, Abora, Amamoma and Apewosika. Passive observation allowed me to understand the Fante’s present situation and the colonial contact with Europeans. I saw numerous colonial building built by these European colonizers in Cape Coast and now occupied by their African descendant due to bi - racial marriages. The information I gathered from the observation has helped me to give a detailed description of the Fante’s supporting the already written data by other researchers. Through passive participation I was fortunate to observe and record what my informants would not say in their interviews.

2.2 Fieldwork challenges and ethical consideration

Just as I am positioned in between Ashanti customs and traditions as well as Western European education, I found myself in between Ashanti (my tribe) and the Fante customs. I was born in the Eastern Region of Ghana but belong to the Ashanti matrilineal family. I had lived at Cape Coast as a student and speak Fante fluently, that is, the language of the researched. Being an Ashanti conducting research in the Cape Coast municipality makes me neither a complete insider but an outsider. As a researcher who share similar tradition with the Fante’s of the Cape Coast I found myself caught up in the atmosphere of Ashanti and Fante custom on many occasion. As an outsider I have learn’t a lot about the Fante history and their understanding of customs. I learnt about how libation is poured by invoking the sea deities, the ways fishermen battled with the sea with their wooden boats to sail for fishing and fishmongers’ tirelessness smoking fish to sell to the general public. I continuously benefit from the goodwill of the Fante people in the Cape Coast municipality that I encounter. I also address challenges of cross cultural communication and understanding; and ethical issues concerning children

Chilisa refers to ethics as “regulations of conduct of a given profession or group” (2012:86). As a student in the Indigenous Master’s Programme and trained at the University of Tromsø, Norway, I conducted my research based on the ethical prescription of the University of Tromsø. Respectful representation requires the researcher to ‘consider how you represent yourself, your research and the people, events, phenomena you are researching’ (Absolon and Willett, 2004: 15). Respect is not just about saying ‘please’ or ‘thank you’. It’s about listening intently to others’ idea and not insisting that your ideas prevail (Steinhauer 2002: 73). It is about displaying characteristics of humility, generosity, and patience with the process and accepting decisions of the indigenous people in regard to the treatment of any knowledge shared. This is because not all knowledge shared is meant for a general audience.

Ethical issues in research include codes of conduct that are concerned with protecting the object/subject of research from physical, mental or psychological harm. Here the assumption is that the researched might disclose information that might expose them to psychological and physical harm. Thus the researcher must ensure anonymity of the researched and the confidentiality of the responses (Chilisa 2012: 86). In regard to Chilisa’s statement, I explained the purpose of the interview to the informants at the start of each interview. I provided my student identity card and in some cases, showed the introductory letter from my supervisor before the start of interview. I realized that the informants did not question the introductory letter from my supervisor in the field. This show how some of these informants prefer western school to indigenous education. This introductory letter from my supervisor allowed some informants to welcome my presence as a researcher. This was not a good situation for me as a researcher since the introductory letter I suppose does not leave some of the informants’ choice/confidence in constructively criticizing the research. The sensitive nature of my research and explaining the rationale behind it ethically established a relationship between me and the informants. Therefore I was careful with the kind of questions I ask the informants in order not to jeopardize the relationship I was hoping to establish. For example, my interview with teachers in both junior and senior secondary schools demanded a letter from my supervisor before interview could be granted. This is important because at the end of the research I will disseminate the finding to the people of Cape Coast who gave me the chance to learn from them.

There are diverse ways of disseminating knowledge and of ensuring that research reaches the people who have helped make it. Two important ways not always addressed by scientific

research are to do with ‘reporting back’ (Tuhiwai 1999:15) to the people and ‘sharing knowledge’ (Tuhiwai 1999:15). Both ways assume a principle of reciprocity and feedback. The emphasis above, tells us that scholars have a role of sending back the knowledge gained from the communities that were the focus of the research. This brings a relationship between the already researched and the future research. It creates confidence in indigenous communities for future research. After the final outcome of my thesis, I will send a copy to the Ghana Education Service and to the Cape Coast community library. I made this known to my informants and correspondents during data gathering processes.

Kvale emphasizes the important of taking ethical questions into consideration from the very start of an investigation through to the final report (1996:110). Ethical practice applies at all times and not just in extreme cases of resistant groups or causing physical harm to people (Bryman 2001: 475-86 quoted in Payne & Payne). Ethics is concerned with the attempt to formulate codes and principles of moral behaviour (May 2011:61). This implies that data has been collected ethically wrong in the past.

In the field, I had the opportunity to interview two informants: A nurse who was a mother of four children, and a public worker who was a father of three daughters. In separate interviews, the two informants directed me to visit the ‘London Bridge area’ where sex workers/prostitutes are located. These informants assumed that due to the activities of these sex workers most of the people in Cape Coast contract HIV/AIDS from that area. Some of these sex workers/prostitutes are Fantes although the focus of my study was not to specifically target my educational practices research on them but to explore the importance of using puberty rite to fight HIV/AIDS amongst the Fante’s compared with the Western School System. The interviews of these two informants prompted me to visit the London Bridge area to see for myself if there was an element of truth in the information given about certain behaviors and actions.

In Cape Coast people do not pay money to talk to sex workers/prostitutes at drinking bars where they are located; instead they socialize. Drinking bars in Cape Coast vary in size. I visited a bigger drinking bar. With my background in the theatre arts, I was attentive to the set. The bar was built with baboon sticks roofed on with iron sheets. The baboon sticks were painted with blend of colors. Spaces are left in between these baboon sticks to allow air

passing through the bar. The bar entrance was covered with threaded chain of wooden beads hanging horizontally to generate sounds when coming in contact with a person or an object. The chairs and tables in the bar were locally made of raffia palm tree to suit the salty humid condition in Cape Coast. There were different colors of bulbs which generated different lightning system in the bar. Beautifully designed, one will see bar tenders serving local people and foreigners alike with alcoholic and soft drinks. I came across people sitting in the bar discussing personal and business matters. Dishes of food were also served in the bar. Kenkey (corn dough cooked wrapped with dry plantain leaves) served with tilapia and hot pepper is the favorite of the people. These drinking bars are where some of these sex workers operate. As soon as one enters the sex workers/prostitutes come and sit uninvited and engage in conversation. This was to become a lesson in my own bias: I am a man, and a practicing Christian. My background in theatre arts should have made me sensitive to the roles Ghanaian society scripts for various “actors” or individuals on the stage that is the Cape Coast. This viewpoint would later get me into difficulties as a student researcher.

These sex workers do not live in the drinking bars. They have their own individual houses outside these bars. These sex workers/prostitutes are women. Men patronized the work of these women. The sex workers/prostitutes are not owned by anybody. They are mandated to put up a good behavior in the bars in order not to push customers who genuinely come eat and drink without necessarily engaged in the sex workers away by the bar owners. The bars are owned by private individuals in Cape Coast. Some of these sex workers have their own individual “body guards” who they have hired to protect them from difficult clients. Foreigners and local people patronized the activities of these sex workers.

I went to a bar to have a drink to experience this situation and to witness for myself risky behavior enabling one to contract HIV/AIDS. I was approached by one of these sex workers. I talked to her. I asked her about the kinds of people who patronized her work. She reciprocated with an answer by saying men. I left because I was afraid to continue the conversation. Further, not only had I compromised my ethical status in the field but I also risked my own safety. As a researcher in the field, I could have revealed my identity to the sex worker as a researcher. My inability to show my identity as a researcher becomes unethical. It is common practice that these women have “body guards” who can demand financial retribution or physical harm. In all respects I was compromising my position as a passive participant observer. This is perhaps the most painful and important lesson that I learned from this encounter. My conversation could not have been condoned because informed consent had not

been obtained beforehand. This was not possible because it would clearly disrupt the behaviour under study, (Payne & Payne 2004:69). It should have been obtained at the end of the field work. Following this ethical protocol would have solved the dilemma I encountered in the field.

The concern is about *what information should be available to whom* (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 72). Should, for example, interviews with children be available to their parents and teachers? The research questions I wanted to address in this project does not involve the voices of children. When writing the progress report, I stated that a thirteen year old approached me for money in the field and I documented the conversation by coding it as: interviewer/interviewee. I didn't know coding as interviewee/interviewer purportedly supposes that the person involved is an informant at the time of writing. I thought you could state that to represent different forms of conversation. This was a conversation that ensued between us which I should have paraphrased into a text. I decided to bring this issue up to highlight a problem that under aged girls are also vulnerable to the HIV/AIDS.

2.2.1 Ethical challenges in Cross cultural communication

Spending a year at the UiT the Arctic University of Norway before going to fieldwork in Cape Coast has given me the opportunity to compare the concept of “respect” in the UiT the Arctic University of Norway and my Ashanti home community. Born into matrilineal inheritance and nurtured in the extended family of elders I was taught to behave in a manner that will suit the community customs and norms. Today I found myself in Norway where what I learned from Ashanti community as respect is not considered in Norway.

I noticed that students at lecture halls could bring food, eat and listen to the lecturer teaching. I had a shock when I encountered these attitudes from students. The shock became problematic to me as I was expecting the lecturer to tell students to stop eating and paid attention in class. The lecturer did not utter a word while the students kept eating their food. In Ashanti home when a child is eating and is been intersected with a conversation or a short chat by an elderly person, that child is supposed to stop eating until the conversation is over. Failure to do so is considered as disrespect to the elder. It is a norm that elderly people should be given attention from a child since their words carry wisdom. In Norway this is not a

common practice. The lecturer should have been considered by students as an elderly who has knowledge to share. I find that problematic in the UiT the Arctic University of Norway.

When I returned from Ghana to Tromsø, I wrote a report to the Department of Sami studies and the report was rejected. A major reason was that I did not respect a sex worker by not revealing my identity as a researcher in the field. It appears that respect at the UiT the Arctic University of Norway was to identify myself even though I needed no contribution from the sex worker. Some informants such as a nurse and a father accused these sex workers of spreading HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. These informants directed me to the place where they operate. I spoke to one of them. In the progress report I did not get the chance to explain in detail what led me into contact with these sex worker due to lots of things we needed to detail for the Department of Sami studies. This led to the rejection of my progress report.

I pondered why my interaction with the sex worker should be problematic. I was in a dilemma, reacted, cried and gained composure from the shock of hearing that my progress report has been rejected. My supervisor motivated me throughout the situation. I asked myself these questions; what is respect in the UiT the Arctic University of Norway (Department of Sami Studies) which my progress report was based for the rejection? Why the mentioning of a sex worker does triggers attention? I began to learn that the concept of “respect” could be interpreted differently in different situation.

In Cape Coast where I had my research, respect is relationship created amongst community members in peaceful coexistence. Therefore by talking to a sex worker without harm or conflict in the field was not disrespectful. The sex workers are Fantes who participate in funerals, festival, naming ceremonies and communal labour. I talked to the sex worker in the field to confirm what some informants said about them, referring to the sex worker as those harboring HIV/AIDS in the municipality. I did not even have the chance to talk at length with the sex worker since I was afraid of their environment.

Mentioning this in my progress report led to its rejection. Did I disrespect the sex worker by engaging her in a minute conversation? No. I could have been called by the Department of Sami studies to explain myself. As of now, I cannot define the concept of “respect” as what I was taught in Ashanti home is entirely different in Norway.

Due to time and limited space in the study the central idea I learned from this experience is that respect could be interpreted differently in various communities. I was taught not to look

into the eyes of an elderly person when talking in order words avoid eye to eye contact, bend my knee when greeting, removed a cap on my head when greeting, do not interrupt a conversation of an elderly people and many more in Ashanti community. Adhering to these practices in Ashanti home is considered as being respectful but this is not always the case in Norway.

In the nutshell, my experience in the Department of Sami Studies has taught me a different lesson. A lesson that would help me adapt in difficult situation/ setting in academia.

2.3 Fante's perception on prostitution

These sex workers come from the neighboring villages and towns in the Cape Coast municipality to operate in the bars with an agreement with the bar owners. The Fante society abhors prostitution as I discovered when using my Fante school friend. Therefore if one is seen practicing prostitution, it affects his/her entire family of orientation and extended family. It brings shame to the family. Sometimes a sex worker family is discriminated upon when it comes to marriage. This happens at a time a man finds a woman to marry who comes from the sex worker's family. Such relationships becomes difficult as the man's family will protest by generalizing that women from the family of sex workers are prostitutes and cannot be wives as they may move from a man to another.

2.4 Reflexivity – lessons from fieldwork

Reflexivity is an immense area of comment and interest'(Denzin and Lincoln 1998: 394), but it receives little direct attention in many methods textbooks. Reflexivity is the practice of researchers being self-aware of their own beliefs, value and attitudes and their personal effects on the setting they have studied. It also involves being self – critical about research methods and how they have been applied, so that the evaluation and understanding of their research findings, both by themselves and their audience, may be facilitated and enhanced (Payne & Payne 2004: 191). As an Ashanti sharing similar customs and traditions with the Fante's my research was both easy and uneasy. During fieldwork, my informants spoke the Fante language. Though I could speak the Fante language and understood, there were phrases which sounded different from my local Ashanti language called (Ashanti Twi). Because I needed

information from my informants, I had to allow them to talk without intersecting the conversation. Traditionally in both clans, it is considered as a sign of disrespectful to interrupt the conversation of an elderly person. Therefore I had to allow my informants to talk without asking for the meaning of those phrases used in the interview process. This has affected my data as I may misquote the exact meaning of what they wanted to convey. I asked my indigenous Fante colleagues who were former school mates from secondary school to help me understand my informants' language. In doing so, my Fante informants indicated attitudes they held about sex workers that were hostile. Some informants referred to the sex worker as "tutufo" in Fante language which mean prostitutes in English language. This attitude of these informants was disrespectful to the sex workers. Using terms such as promiscuous made my role as a researcher challenging.

Additionally, the sharing of similar customs and traditions also affected my observation as a researcher. I had wanted some of my informants to show a sign of commitment towards our first encounter by welcoming me with water which has been a common traditional practice amongst the Fante's and Ashanti's. That was not the case in my situation; I quickly assumed that my informants were not hospitable. This changed my perception about the Fante's. I was not sure if the information given by some of these informants were true or false during my transcription of data. Some of these informants interviewed during field work were busy with their daily work and other businesses. On my arrival in their respective homes, a seat was offered instead of water. Giving water to strangers symbolizes friendship. It is an act of acceptance into a home. This attitude pulled by these informants made me felt unwelcome. Going about their daily activities made these informants forget to give me water while granting me an interview. The city of Cape Coast and its people have experienced student researchers from the tertiary institutions in Ghana and abroad. Therefore my research was not new to these informants. I explained the purpose of my research to these informants who told me to start the interview. These informants do petty trading by selling in small kiosks.

The role of the researcher as a person, of the researcher's integrity meaning honesty, is critical to the quality of the scientific knowledge and the soundness of ethical (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 74) decisions in qualitative inquiry. Morally responsible research behaviour is more than abstract ethical knowledge and cognitive choices; it involves the moral integrity of the researcher, his or her sensitivity and commitment to moral issues and action. In interviewing, the importance of the researcher's integrity is magnified because the interviewer him/herself is the main instrument for obtaining knowledge. Being familiar with value issues, ethical

guidelines and ethical theories may help the researcher to make choices that weigh ethical versus scientific concern in a study. In the end, however, the integrity of the researcher- his or her knowledge, experience, honesty and fairness- is the decisive factor.

Before starting my research at Cape Coast, I talked to friends in Ghana who gave me insights about the disease in the area. The friends are those school mates I completed senior secondary school and university together with. Different views were given from these individuals concerning the situation. And in one instance, relying on my friend school network was problematic. I was fascinated to hear from this friend that some fishermen in the area had not seen condoms before but had heard advertisement on condoms on radio and television. This prompted me to request condoms from SITO (Studentsamskipnaden I tromso) for the people in question. I distributed these condoms to some fisher folks. This made the people interested in where I had acquired the condoms. Answering some of their questions created friendship and a willingness to be interviewed. After distributing these condoms I realized that the fishermen had seen condoms several times. Some elderly fishermen refused to take these condoms because that categorized them as promiscuous to their wives and that they have been faithful. In an attempting to give condoms to an elderly fisherman, he drew my attention to the fact that in an Akan customs and tradition, a child does not teach an elderly what to do when it comes to sexuality. Then he refused to take the condoms. This became an insult to the elderly fishermen and the rest of the elderly who collected the condoms. I felt guilty releasing what I have done.

When I confronted my friend with the experience he returned with an answer by saying that he needed condoms from Europe. I did not think about his actions upon my arrival in Ghana when he took many condoms from me. I thought I was helping the people to fight HIV/AIDS with these condoms but in Africa there was nothing like condoms until the advent of AIDS. The condom distribution pulled and pushed people away from me without my even thinking about the consequence to my research. I have learnt that it was unethical for me to put my own people in that situation. Bennell *et al* (2001) and by Chilisa (2001) all measure change in sexual behaviour by the number of condoms that are used. Government, parastatal and private institutions deposit condoms in strategic places at the workplace. Sexually active primary and secondary school students are encouraged to obtain condoms from the hospitals and clinics while in tertiary institution condom bins are located in numerous central points. Thus condom sale becomes tied up with HIV/AIDS research and education and a country's effort to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS is measured by condoms per capita (UNAIDS/WHO, 2000 in Chilisa

2005). It is a “sad” story of the price that the Third world has to pay as knowledge become more and more an important profit-making mechanism in the global capitalist economy, for as it clearly shows, the First World must devalue knowledge from the peripheral ‘other’ to expand its markets. Furthermore, some billboards are written from a colonizing perspective that equates the ‘other’ (Chilisa 2005: 673) with lack of intelligence. Take for example, the billboards that read: *‘don’t Be Stupid, Condomise’*; *‘Are you careless, ignorant and stupid?’* The messages are offensive, degrading and written from the perspective of a superior observer who casts the recipients of the message as ignorant. The billboards also seem to suggest that condoms are the major solution to the spread of HIV/AIDS. By my actions I was also mirroring the message of these billboards.

I had stepped outside the impartial role of a researcher and was now patronizing my informants. Such hegemonizing content does not leave space for the marginalized majority people to name other multiple solutions from their own perspective. Responsibility for the dignity, respect and welfare of responsible both mentally and physically, is central to research ethics. Respecting the rights of individuals and cultural groups; researching in an equitable fashion; and ensuring that no harm will come to participants are prerequisites for any research study (O’Leary 2004:52).

2.5 Summary of the chapter

Even though the government of Ghana has not singled one ethnic group in Ghana as indigenous people according to the 1992 constitution, the methodological approach in the study could be used on other indigenous peoples. Interview as a method of collecting data in the field was helpful in examining the causes and prevention of HIV/AIDS. During interviews informants spoke beyond the questions asked in the field. Issues on sex education became clearer when I employed conversation as a method. I discussed ethics and reflexivity based on the experience in the field. I explained how I was fooled by a friend to send condoms for informants. In the city of Cape Coast I played a role as a researcher, student and a learner. These roles in the field made me realize that some of my actions were disrespectful to the Fante people who gave me the chance to study them.

Chapter three

Background knowledge of the study

3.0 Introduction

This chapter addresses the background knowledge and some concepts described in the working title. It discusses why the research was carried out in the Cape Coast municipality by looking at the overview of the Sentinel Surveillance report, Cape Coast, and the historical perspective of the Fante people.

I will focus on puberty rite as a preventive tool the Cape Coast municipality can adopt to help curb the HIV/AIDS. This rite is diminishing from the Fante customs and traditions due to Western education and staunch Christianity. The rite was prescribed as a result of social transformation particularly with the advent of Christianity and western education. For example in Cape Coast municipality the rite was called “wo baa w’ako mfikyir” literally translated as women menstruation. The Fante’s believed that the first menstruation of a girl is very important. This is because the girl has moved from childhood to adulthood where certain traditional knowledge such as ways of rearing a child, housewifery, hygiene, and many more has to be taught in puberty initiation. Failure to go through puberty rites in Cape Coast municipality in the past have severe consequences which created awareness of abstinence from sex hence preventing venereal diseases including STDs and HIV/AIDS.

In this thesis, I will reflect on puberty rite, an alternative way of solving the HIV/AIDS as it was used in the past to deter the society from pre-marital sex. Puberty rite served as “Tsitsi wo bi ka” meaning the past has something to tell. Of late, there has been a concerted public outcry by religious groups, chiefs, and public officials and individual for the restoration of puberty rites (Sackey 2001: 63) arguing that puberty rite abolition has created a vacuum in the moral lives of the youth as manifested in sexual laxity and associated problems of teenage pregnancy and spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS. For example the late Former Ghana’s Vice- President Aliu Mahama is quoted to have said that “We need to weed a path for our old moral virtues of responsible sexual behaviour to stem the tide of HIV/AIDS which is threatening to undermine the growth of this nation by attacking especially

its youth who are the nation's most productive resource" (Daily Graphic News Paper, August, 2001: 17) This assertion goes well with the Akan concept of "sankofa". Etymologically, 'sankofa' is a mythical Akan bird and it is often represented as dipping its beak in the oil gland above its waist to oil its feathers. The concept thus seeks mutuality and synergy between "traditional values and the contemporary global cultural milieu by affirming the co-existence of past and the future in the present" (National Commission on culture 2004:23 quoted by Darko & Eshun 2013).

Put differently, 'Sankofa' is about taking from the past what is good and using them to serve the present and the future. Tagoe-Darko et al points out that 'Sankofa' is not one of atavistic and wholesale retrieval of 'things' in the past to guide the present and future, but really to contest these 'pasts' and how they can be useful for the present (2013: 109).

By writing this chapter I faced a challenge of getting information on the history of the Fantes and the city of Cape Coast. Sources of information tell a different story about the Fantes and how Cape Coast was founded. This is due to lack of written documents on the history of the Fantes and Cape Coast as a whole. I had to rely on the internet, my own witness account in the area and a book I purchased at the Cape Coast Castle during fieldwork. This posed a problem for me as I struggled to write the history of Cape Coast and the Fantes irrespectively.

3.1 Sentinel surveillance report and why the research was done in Cape Coast

The HIV Sentinel Survey (HSS) is a cross sectional survey targeting women attending antenatal clinics in selected ANC sites in Ghana. The annual HIV sentinel surveillance system was initiated based on the premise that prevalence of HIV among pregnant women is a good proxy indicator of the spread of the infection among the populace. In the last seven years, the HSS data have also been the primary data source for the National HIV and AIDS estimates in Ghana. The HSS Report thus represents prevalence among pregnant women while the National HIV Prevalence Estimates in Ghana. The HSS Report thus represents prevalence among pregnant women while the National HIV Prevalence Estimates which is derived from HSS data calibrated with DHS+ data indicates the national prevalence rate for Ghana.

Forty sentinel sites have been established in all the ten regions with each region having at least three sites. There are twenty three urban sites and seventeen by 2005. The increase ensures a balanced representation of rural/urban areas in the determination of the HIV prevalence in Ghana. The number of sites has remained the same since 2005.

The general objective of the 2011 HIV Sentinel Survey was to provide HIV prevalence data for monitoring of the epidemic and planning and evaluation of HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment and care activities.

The Median HIV prevalence for 2011 is 2.1% (C.11.48-2.72). HIV prevalence in 2011 ranged from 0.0% in Adibo (rural) to 9.6 % Cape Coast. Cape Coast therefore took the place of agomenya which has since the inception of the HSS (with the exception of the year 2005) been the site with the highest prevalence. In this survey, the cape coast site recorded a 7.4 absolute point increase in prevalence to top the list despite an increase in the Agomenya site.

The highest prevalence was recorded within the age group 30-34 years (2.9%), and the least (1.5%) within the 20-24 year age group. Prevalence among young person's 15-24 years which is used as a proxy for new infections was 1.7%, an increase from last year's 1.5%.

Age group prevalence in the urban areas was higher than in rural areas for all groups. The 40-44 age groups recorded the highest urban prevalence of 3.7% and the age group 20-24years recorded the lowest prevalence of 1.9%. In the rural sites, age groups 25-29 and 45-49 recorded the highest prevalence of 2.6% whilst the age group 15-19 recorded the lowest (0.6%). Prevalence for the age group 15-24, a proxy for new infections was 0.9% and 2.3 in rural and urban sites respectively. These alarming statistics serve as a background to my investigation in Cape Coast Municipality.

3.2 Cape Coast municipality

Cape Coast is a municipality which is managed by the local assembly and is the central regional capital of Ghana. There are towns and villages that form the Cape Coast municipality.

“Oguaa” is the native name for Cape Coast. According to Erskine (1994:1) it is therefore not easy to trace the authentic history of the beginning of Cape Coast because of the lack of written documents and the absence of a single convincing traditional account. There has been

speculation as to its founding and the derivation of Oguaa the native name. Two schools of thought hold an opposing view. A market (Gua) which sprang up in the early years of the history of the town at or near the site of the present day Anafo market grew into the town Oguaa. Moreover, Erskine asserts that the other school of thought believed the town was called Oguaa not because it was a market but that it was named after a hunter from Efutu called Oguaa who founded the town.

Agyei- Mensah (2006:708) wrote that the name Cape Coast comes from the Portuguese Cabo Corso (short cape). Cape coast was a fetu fishing village established before the Portuguese intrusion into the Gold Coast in the 15th century (Arhin 1995 as quoted by Agyei-Mensah). Cape coast later grew up around Cape Coast Castle, built by the Swedish in 1665 and taken over by the British in 1663. Cape Coast Castle was one of the many castles built along the coast of Ghana to protect the European gold and ivory trade, and from the mid-seventeenth century the Atlantic slave trade. Thus, Cape Coast became an important seaport and was the British commercial and administrative capital of the Gold Coast until 1877, when Accra became the capital. It was therefore not surprising that the town became the first site for the spread of modern knowledge and the spread of an ideology of modernization. Modernization is best appreciated by mention of the growth of education, health, Christianity and the print media.

There are many chiefs and queen mothers in the municipality but the chief of Cape Coast is the paramount leader of the traditional area. A paramount leader is the one who is the head of all the traditional chiefs in the municipality. Having a strong political institution, Cape Coast celebrates the Oguaa fetu afahye which is literally translated as Cape Coast Annual Festival. Oguaa Fetu Afahye festival is held to purify the state and the people of the Municipality. The festival is named after Oguaa which is the English name for Cape Coast. The festival has been in existence for centuries and tells the history of the people of Cape Coast about their history from its origin as the Efutu Kingdom in the interior part of the central region to their present destination. It is celebrated by the people of Cape Coast in July/August (Ghana Tourist Board 2003:10) where locals and foreigners abroad travel to witness this memorable occasion. This historical traditional held by Fantes for centuries before the arrival of the Europeans has bonded the people of Cape Coast. This Fante tradition brings people from the diaspora to witness the account of European slavery, castles and slave fortresses in the Municipality. The Fantes believed in continuity that is why they celebrate Oguaa Fetu Afahye for others to know about their customs and traditions, history, values and norms.

There are unforgettable experiences in the festival such as regalia display, parading of chiefs and queen mothers as well as Fante people dressed in their favorite traditional cloth called “kente” adorned with diamond and gold accessories. There is also a host of “Asafo” groups wailing and singing war songs, indigenous Fante dances and songs, group of masqueraders called Fancy dress. Asafo groups or warriors group were formed in the past to protect the state of Cape Coast from other ethnic group and still exist today. During the festival these groups show their artilleries, musketries to signify that they have grown from strength to strength from generation to generation. Masqueraders known as Fancy dress perform choreographies to excite the people accompanied the historical enactment by a brass band. The chief and queen mothers gather at Victoria Park where they deliver their good will messages and the future plans of the municipality to the people.

The Fantes of Cape Coast and Fantes in the 21st century have many different occupations. Public and private sectors, as market women, petty traders, artisanal fishermen and fish mongering are the various occupations of the Fantes in the municipality. Today, the people in the suburb towns and villages are agriculturalist. The majority of the people in Cape Coast practice fishing and fish mongering. Cape Coast, Ghana, fishing is the mainstay of the people. Fishing not only provides the main source of protein in the diet but also provides a large percentage of jobs. Fishing is the second largest occupation in Cape Coast (Gray 1996:7) after government jobs. In addition to supporting the fishermen, fishing also yield an income for fishmongers and even unemployed men who may be paid to carry the nets for the fishermen.

Cape Coast is a city where brisk businesses go on. Kotokroba market at Cape Coast is where one will see fishmongers, women and men selling items ranging from food stuffs to clothing. As a typical Ghanaian city, one will come across heavy vehicular traffic, people selling fish and kenkey and lots of petty traders can be seen on the streets of Cape Coast. It has become a metropolitan city where one will see lots of tourist from abroad and different ethnic groups in Ghana settling at Cape Coast. The fascinating architectural colonial building can be seen in every corner of the town with their small windows. Most of the Fantes in Cape Coast have colonial European family names as their surnames due to interracial marriages that occurred between the Fante women and European men during colonization. The generation of light skinned Fantes is another marker of colonial contact.

3.3 The historical perspective of the Fante People

In order to bring current HIV/AIDS educational practices into a useful perspective for the reader, it is necessary to know about the complex history of the Fantes.

The Fante people live around Cape Coast and Elmina. They are members of the Akan tribe. The Fante language is part of the Kwa group that numbers about 1,170,000. Inheritance and succession to public office are determined mostly by matrilineal descent.

According to oral tradition, the Fante arrived in their present habitat from the north by the 17th century. They served as middlemen in the commerce between the interior and British and Dutch traders on the coast. In the early 18th century, the Fantes formed a confederation, primarily as a means of protection against Ashanti incursions from the interior. Several Fante-Ashanti wars followed. The Fante were aided by the British, who, however, destroyed the strong Fante confederation established between 1868 and 1872, believing it a threat to their hegemony on the coast. In 1874 a joint Fante-British army defeated the Ashanti, and in the same year the Fante became part of the British Gold Coast colony (www.spyghana.com).

The Fante people claim to have separated from the Ashanti, another Akan people, around 1250 AD. This act became the origin of their name, ‘Fa-atsew’ meaning the half that left. The Fante left their Ashanti brethren at Krako, present day Techiman in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana, and became their own distinct Akan group. The Fante people were led by three great warriors known as Obunumankoma, Odapagyan and Oson (the whale, eagle and elephant respectively). According to tradition, Obunumankoma and Odapagyan died on this exodus and were embalmed and carried the rest of the way (www.spyghana.com).

Oson led the people to what would become known as Mankessim in 1252. Legend has it that the Fante chief fetish priest, Komfo Amona planted a spear in the ground on arrival at the settlement. The spear is called the Akyin-Enyim, meaning in front of god. The place became the meeting ground for Fante elders and the head fetish priest when discussing important matter for the kingdom and even for all Fante people. The first Omanhene (king) of Mankessim was installed here, and later kingmakers would go to the site for consultation. According to the Fante, the spear cannot be removed by mortal hands (www.spyghana.com).

The Fante first arrived at their initial settlement called Adoakyir which was named by its existing inhabitants, which the Fante called “Etsi-fue-yifoa” meaning people with bushy hair.

The Fante conquered the people and renamed the settlement Oman-Kesemu meaning big town. The name exists today as Mankessim. The Fante settled on the land as their first independent kingdom and buried Obunumakankoma and Odapagyan in a sacred grove called Nana-nom-pow. Komfo Amona also planted the limb of a tree he had brought from the Akan homeland in Krako to see if a place was good for settlement. The day after the priest put the limb in the group, the people found the plant budding. The tree was named Ebisa-dua or consulting tree and is one of the most important shrines in Mankessim today (www.spyghana.com).

The Fante quickly organized themselves into military groups or companies called Asafo to fend off non-Akan groups in the vicinity as well as separate Akan groups, most notably the Ashanti in later centuries. Tradition states that the Fante sub-groups Ekumfi, Abora, Enyan, Nkusukum and Kurensir were the first to settle at Mankessim. They were later joined by the Gomoa, Ajumako, Akatakyi and Elmina (www.spyghana.com).

In the early 19th century, the Ashanti's began expanding their control over Ghana which led to the exodus of many people to the coast. Fante communities outside of Mankessim became constant targets of the Ashanti's and decided to unite on occasion to fight off the Ashanti's. They had plenty reason to do so. In 1806, the first Ashanti-fante war resulted in a humiliating defeat for the Fante. In 1811, the Fante again went to war with the Ashanti losing again in open battle, but forcing a withdrawal by using guerrilla tactics. In 1844, the Fante put themselves under British protection, but were guaranteed self-governing. The British and Dutch on the coast did to recognize Fante sovereignty, however (www.spyghana.com).

3.4 Fante as an Akan group

I will provide a brief description of Akan society and its social organization. The Akan occupy central and southern Ghana and consist of culture clusters including the Asante, Fante, Bono, Akyem, Akuapem, Kwawu, Akwamu, Asen, Denkyira, Twifo and Wasa. Kinship structure among the Akan is matrilineal. This means that an individual, from birth to death, remains a component of her/his matrilineage, which consists of a woman, her brothers and sisters, as well as her sisters' sons and daughters. The line of descent for any given matrilineage is traced through the female member of the group and living adults of the group

form the core of blood or consanguineal (Adjaye & Aborampah 2004:27) relatives around whom lineage decision –making occurs.

Family for the Akan means the extended family, which is formed by linking one lineage to another in networks of alliance and cooperation through marriage. While the matrilineage is based solely on descent, the extended family is based on descent and marriage. Thus, both units could be viewed as the organizing principles for family stability and solidarity. Another point worth noting is that Akan matrilineage involves not only the living but also the dead and those yet to be born. Adjaye & Aborampah (2004) assert that in the past, the deceased were remembered through periodic rituals. Ancestors were regarded as the main means of social order and social control.

Ancestors served to give assurance about lineage desires, including peace, good health, long life, fertility and lineage solidarity. Thus ancestral wisdom served to promote group cohesion and group belonging. Older living members, being closest to the ancestors, were the repositories of ancestral wisdom. Elders, then, served as critical link between the dead and younger members for the transmission of cultural values.

3.5 Fantes as an indigenous group in Ghana

Ascribing Fantes in general as an indigenous group by the use of definitions from authors such as Kymlicka and organization is difficult since the 1992 Ghanaian constitution does not singled out one ethnic group as indigenous. Anaya (2004) states that a study by the United Nations contains the following definition of indigenous as

“Indigenous Communities, Peoples and Nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories or parts of them. They form at present non- dominant sectors in society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems” (2004:10).

Working with this definition I will analyse and interpret the criteria used by the United Nation to define the Fantes as an indigenous group. From the historical perspective the Ashanti incursion on the Fante land was obvious. History do not count for Ashanti invasion on the Fante territories the expansion of the Ashanti kingdom made the Fantes seek help from the British hence risking the Fante's to colonization. The Fante's were afraid of being captured by the Ashanti's. Fantes served as middlemen for the British and Dutch. The Fantes were educated in Western European School system in order to communicate with these colonial masters. This changed their way of lives and thinking from their traditional settings.

On the territorial consent, the Fantes occupied the coastal belt of Ghana spread with Castles/Forts built by the Europeans to cater for their goods and ammunitions. These castles were turned into slave dungeons later. If the Fantes people knew that from the beginning, would they have allowed the establishment of the numerous Castles/Forts on the coast? Agyei-Mensah (2006:708) wrote that Cape Coast the Fante's regional capital today, became the first site for the spread of modern knowledge and the spread of an ideology of modernization in Ghana. This show the extent of the so- called civilization the Fante's went through in the past and present. The Fantes are distinct from other Akan group in Ghana. They are the only Akan group in Ghana which has fishing as the major occupation. Their language is different from other Akan groups. The Fante groups have their own customs and traditions. The transmitting of the Fante language written and study at school on the fante territories, the festivals celebrated today such as Okyir, Oguaa fetu Afahye thus Cape Coast Annual festival etc. tells the history of the Fante's respectively from where each group originated from to their present destination. The youth celebrates these festivals together with their adult counterparts in the society to learn history and traditions from these enactments. These historical festivities have been preserved from centuries to the present. Moreover, this shows how the Fantes want their heritage to thrive for their future generation. The different approaches to marriage systems, beliefs, traditions and a strong chieftaincy system in place which seeks to address ligation issues in the communities, and disputes characterizes the Fante's as indigenous. In the nutshell, the Fante's served as middle men for the European traders and were educated in colonial missionary school where language of instruction was English. Fantes because of their destabilization from Ashanti group through warfare subjected them to colonization loosing group identity. This history has negative impact today. The Fantes have lost or have been removed from some of their customs and traditions. Today most of them rely on western educational practices for survival portraying the group as indigenous.

Another working definition I used in this discussion is that of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) which was established in 1975 and has consultative status with the United Nations. This definition offers another examination of the contemporary political/legal status of indigenous peoples:

“Indigenous people shall be peoples living in countries which have populations composed of different ethnic or racial groups who are descendants of the earliest populations which survive in the area, and who do not, as a group, control the national government of the countries in which they live” (Corntassel 2003:90).

This definition offers several different perspectives from the United Nations definition .The Fantes lived side by side with other indigenous groups in Ghana. Although the Fante’s lost the battle against the Ashanti’s, they inhabited their geographical settings. Today, most of the Fantes work in both private and public sectors but do not control the national government hence epitomizes the Fante people as indigenous.

3.6 Western system of school education in Ghana

From the 1960s to the late 1980s, mass education in Ghana provided 6 years of primary school followed by 4 years of middle school leaving certificate. Secondary entry depended on passing a common entrance examination after primary 6, middle 2 or middle 4. For the best students, 5 years of secondary school led to O levels (ordinary level) and (for a few) a 2 year sixth form on the British pattern.

In 1986, under the influence of the (Peil 1995:290) structural adjustment program, a new system was launched. A 3 year junior secondary school (JSS) was substituted for middle school and the first 3 years of selective secondary, in the hope of providing more equal opportunities for those who in recent years have had little access to secondary schools (Cobbe1991:105 as quoted by Peil).

As of now, Ghana has 6 years primary, 3 years junior high school (JHS), 3 years senior secondary school and a 4 years university education. The name (JSS) thus junior secondary school has been modified as junior high school (JHS). The school system in Ghana resonates

in every corner of the country where Fantes and Cape Coast are inclusive. Sackey states that the school cultural curriculum makes a sparse mention of puberty rites (2001:65).

Formal education happens in institutional settings like schools, colleges, vocational and technical institutes, and universities. In most pre-tertiary institutions (pre-college/university) both trained and untrained teachers are employed to follow specific curriculum and instructional guidelines developed by accredited bodies (e.g. state government and non-governmental organizations). Most schools are government –run but in Ghana there are an increasing emergence of private schools set up by individuals and other non-governmental organizations. The question of resources for educational delivery is not always easy to address as many times students have limited access educational materials in both government incomplete and private educational institutions.

Formal education in Ghana has witnessed a series of policy reforms since the post – independence era. The problem though is that while a number of these policy reforms are well intentioned the political will and resource commitment to see educational initiatives that have either been lacking or these policy reforms have been subjected to a sort of ‘political footballing’(Die 2011:25). Several methods of discipline/punishment are used in schools when students misbehave ranging from corporal punishment, suspensions and expulsions and hard labor. Most school ensures that students are supported emotionally, psychologically by engaging local communities, families, and elders through mediation processes. In other cases, counselors and social workers may be employed in wealthy schools to attend to the social needs of learners. English is the main language used in classrooms although in recent years there has been a conscious attempt to teach local vernacular and “indigenous languages” (Die 2011).

Parents are heavily involved in the activities of schools through school councils, parent – teacher associations and other presentation of school governing bodies. Among the extra-curricular activities available in schools are sports and recreational activities, non-academic competitions. Most schools are located within the vicinity of local communities but it possible for students to be attending schools not located in their neighborhoods of birth either as boarding or day students. Class sizes do vary and are normally high, and in the pre-tertiary institutions a teacher is expected to be responsible for the good of students in a given class. Most classes are mixed with students of genders, different ethnicities, age, religious and class backgrounds. But there are gender segregated school as well as schools (especially private

schools) known to cater to wealthy families. Theoretically, all students have access to higher education but in reality the rising cost of education and the existence and mushrooming of well-financed and resourced private schools end up creating class, gender, ethnic differences in school population at the tertiary levels.

3.7 The Fante home school

When a child is born in the Fante society, the extended family and the family of orientation bestow traditions and customs on the child. Traditionally, a child is believed to have come to stay when it survives more than 7 days after birth. Thus the naming ceremony in the Fante communities takes place on the eighth day. Tagoe-Darko et al (2013) states that it is on this day and days after this that there is even more enthusiastic effort by the mother and the society in ensuring the survival of the child. During this naming ceremony amongst the Fantes, the society and the family gather at the family house of the child to perform ritual. The head of family called “abusuapayin” take the child on his arms, dips his finger in a local wine and drops a sip of the wine in the mouth of the child. He recites words saying ‘when you see wine say wine’ and ‘water say water’. Here, water is also used separately from the wine respectively. After, libation is poured to God and ancestors for blessing and good health. This ritual helps the child in the Fante society to identify good from evil when growing up. The child traditional education starts from this day.

3.8 The role of Fante adults in the society

Among the Akan’s of Ghana, where the Fantes form a pivotal part, the concept of elder embodies competence, which is traditionally endowed in age and seniority; the older generation is viewed as the custodian of tradition. Hence, responsibility for the transmission of values necessary to sustain Akan societies devolves on them. For these reasons, the younger generation (Adjaye & Aborampah 2004:28) is expected to show veneration and deference toward the elder. The Fante traditional adult education is basically non-formal and informal and has no institution with formalized organization structures and facilities such as schools in the western sense. However, it should be noted that traces of formality can be

spotted in certain vocations such as fishing, medicine, goldsmithing and blacksmithing, where direct instruction in the form of lectures to explain certain concepts and theories are employed (Fordjor et al 2003:192).

Fantes as an Akan group of Ghana makes sure that adults in the community teach the child norms of the society. For example, children are taught how to refrain from adult conversation if he/she is not invited, how to receive something from an elderly by not using the left hand even though the person might be a leftie, removing a head cap when greeting an elderly, saying please all the time when speaking to an elderly, avoiding straight eye to eye contact with an elderly person in conversation, giving your seat to an elderly in buses, leaving the midst of your parents and adults when they received visitors in the living room, not to insult adults and many more lessons are taught by adults in the family and the society.

The above illustrated examples are what I termed as the fante/Akan traditional education. Failure to adhere to these norms in the society by a child is considered disrespectful hence subjecting one's parent to improper parenting. Most of the education takes place in the home, with parents and other family members as trainers. Good manners, conventions, customs, moral codes and social laws are inculcated by relatives, by more distant members of the family, or by neighbours, indicating that responsibility for adult education is shared by the entire social group or community (Fordjor et al 2003:195). Adjaye & Aborampah (2004), states that adults teach the younger generation through direct instruction and indirectly through advice, proverbs and maxims and by example. The younger generation learns from the former through imitation, observation, socialization and enculturation; transmission occurs largely through social orientation.

Informal education as linked to traditional/cultural education starts in the early years of an individual's life and is approached through a culturalized medium of instruction, such as story sharing, songs, proverbs, apprenticeship, arts and crafts, as well as vocational/traders knowledge. Informal education is also conducted within communities, homes and families using intergenerational knowledge as a context passed to youth from elders and adults, as well as through experienced artisans and cultural custodians. Through the processes of socialization the young are taught by the extended family unit and the community at large. Parents, guardians, adults and elders are expected to lead by example, teaching societies morals and cultural etiquette, the essence of respect for oneself, peers and group, the communal sense of individual character building, and social responsibility and peaceful co-

existence with nature/mother earth. The medium of instruction is through the local vernacular. Education is seen as a lifelong process which takes place beyond the four walled classroom. Communities would make a distinction between wisdom and knowledge acquisition by insisting that an educated person is one who understands herself/himself (as a whole person-mentally, spiritually, culturally, emotionally, physically and materially) and is continually guided by the mutual obligations to, and interdependence with the wider community (Shizha 2005 as quoted by Die 2011). ‘Going to school’ does not necessarily mean one is educated and the distinction between “schooling” and “education” would be made clear to the learner who forgets her/his culture, traditions, customs and social expectations after acquiring mere ‘bookish knowledge’(Die 2011:25).

In effect, informal forms of education emphasize such teachings as traditions of mutuality, group solidarity, collective responsibility, the connections of the individual to the group, respect to the aged/elderly, spiritual and aesthetics. These teachings are steeped in the sophisticated Ghanaian and African systems of thought and practice found in indigenous folklore, music, child rearing practices, religion language, family structures, as well as the much noted traditional African generosity, hospitality and respect for humanity. And, of course embedded in these teaching are also tensions and contestations about power, injustice, coercion and oppression (Die 1993 in Die 2011).

3.9 How puberty rites could help prevent HIV/AIDS.

In all societies the different stages of an individual’s path through life that is birth, puberty; marriage and death are accompanied by ceremonies that are known as rites of passage (Van Gennep 1960 as quoted by Sackey). Among many Africans, puberty rites were performed for boys and girls between the ages of 12-16 primarily to initiate adolescents into responsible adulthood. It was a period that also marked the beginning of formal education in traditional African societies and in some societies tests of endurance such as male circumcision, female genital mutilation, incision or scarification or fighting a wild animal were carried out. It was expected that at the end of the puberty rites the initiated young person would be able to handle every obligation, duty or assignment that may later come their way. The rites endured, among other values, sexual abstinence until marriage. Although sexual activity was not allowed prior

to the performance of the rites, the completion of the rites also did not give the young initiates unrestricted passport to sexual activity. Chastity was to be preserved until one is given up into marriage since it was a practice that virginity test be established on the first day of the consummation of marriage (Sackey 1991 and 1993).

While in some societies puberty ceremonies are performed for boys and girls, in other societies they are performed only for girls. In northern Ghana, the rites are performed for both girls and boys, while in the south only girls undergo elaborate rites (Sarpong 1977). The simplicity or near-absence of puberty rites for boys in Ashanti as compared with that for girls perhaps indicates the strong emphasis on matrilineal where the survival of the society is dependent on its female members. Sarpong's theory then would presuppose that the patrilineal Krobo, whose survival, in contrast to the Asante and Akan generally, depend on its male members, would have more sophisticated rites for boys than girls. Ironically, among the male members would have more sophisticated rites that are even more complex than those of the matrilineal people? Although no specific reason has been given for this, it could be referred from Schroeder and Danquah (2000:6) that even parents who object to their girls undergoing the rites "will not let their sons marry a girl who has not undergone the Dipo rites since it is believed that uninitiated girls are unclean and do bring a bad omen to the family".

In Ghana, two puberty ceremonies for girls that have withstood the test of time are bragoro among the Asante and Dipo among the Krobo. Asante's are found in the Ashanti region and the Krobo's in the eastern region which forms part of southern Ghana. While the bragoro is performed for individual girls for six days, the dipo is for a whole age – set group and it is more elaborate. Formerly, the dipo ceremony lasted three years but the duration of the rites has been drastically reduced to 11-12 days or barely one week because of Christianity, Western education and social change.

Among the Asante the initiation takes place within the precincts of the home where the girl is confined for six days, while that of the Krobo involves the actual separation of the girls to a camp outside the home. It is during the confinement or liminality that transition from childhood to adulthood is said to take place through specific teachings, instructions and rituals. The teaching includes moral values cherished by the society, for example, respect, obedience, self-control, communication and hygienic skills, training in the economic activities of the area, housewifery, first aids in traditional medicine to be used as home remedies, nursing, nurturing and above all the ABC of sexual relations. In southern Ghana, with the

exception of incision the rites are devoid of any “blood operations” (Sackey 2002:69) such as female genital mutilation which have implication for HIV infection. Apart from the formal education imparted to the candidates, the girls are also given ample time for recreation and games as a means to reducing psychological tension of transition. According to Sackey in both dipo and bragoro the girls are made to feel important in the society. Sackey notes that the bragoro candidate is referred to as queen and the puberty songs are mostly in praise of the initiand (Sarpong 1977:23, Sackey 1991). Both bragoro and dipo candidates are carried shoulder high at a certain point during the rites.

In these two societies the rites culminates with recourse to the spiritual world through libation and among the Krobo the peak of the celebration are the introduction of the candidates to the Nana Kloweki Shrine to be adorned with heavy accumulation of beads, and the climbing of the sacred stone. It is believed that a girl who has lost her virginity would not be able to climb the rock for the fear of death. While dipo girls are shaved, purified and decorated with heavy precious beads and paraded through the street bare breasted, bragoro girl is also shaved, purified and decorated but she rather sits in state and receive visitors and presents. Summing up the significance of the rites, Nana Frimpong Ware III (1990:7) wrote “a critical examination of the rites reveal that traditional society abhors pre-marital sexual relations among a particular age group. One would need special training and ethics to enter into that realm. Failure to do so, one is regarded as a social outcast” (Sackey 2002:69).

3.10 Summary of the chapter

Fantes have been able to retain their history by celebrating “Oguaa fetu afahye” festival. This historical event has distinctly differentiated Fante from other indigenous group in Ghana. In the festivity history is tell about where the Fantes people of Cape Coast originated from to their present destination and their contact with Europeans. Cape Coast has endured slavery on the West Coast of Africa. This terrible experience by the Fante people has strengthened the Fante people to stay together as one people. Fante as an Akan group in Ghana has built upon their knowledge on fishing as a livelihood to survive. Fishing has brought employment to the people of Cape Coast.

Sentinel surveillance report is discussed and the epidemic continues to spread. HIV/AIDS is not only a problem in Cape Coast but has been a national issue in Ghana and worthy of study. By focusing on one small area I hope to make an impact for the good people of Cape Coast.

Chapter four

Detailed description of puberty rites and alert school model in Cape Coast municipality

4.0 Introduction

The chapter gives two distinctly different detailed descriptions of data collected about Fante puberty rites in suburb village of Cape Coast called Amamoma and Cape Coast City. It also discusses the Alert School Model. The Fante puberty rites seek to teach adolescent girls who have gotten their first menstrual period of abstinence from sex until marriage. This involves ritual performances, teaching of hygiene practices, the teaching of societal norms and rearing of children at home. This marked girls' transition from childhood to adulthood. The Fante puberty rites were used to prevent sexually transmitted disease including HIV/AIDS in the societies because girls who have not gone through this ritual processes were not allow being sexually active. The Fante puberty rites used the home/community to educate initiates. The home /communities served as s system of school for the Fantes. Elderly women, queen mothers, chiefs, fathers, mothers and every member of the Fante society participate in the puberty rites ritual. Fante puberty has helped the societies to avoid sexually transmitted disease and could be used on the Alert School Model to curb HIV/AIDS in schools. This display of ritual performances is fading in the Fante societies because of former western school system. The western school system has destroyed Fante puberty rites hence exposing the Fantes in contracting HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. The Fante puberty rites could be used by the Ghana Education Service in the curriculum to prevent AIDS in the Cape Coast municipality.

A relatively recent effort by the Ghana Government has been the development of the HIV Alert Model (ASM) with support from UNICEF. The implementation of the Alert School Model began in 2006 and has now been implemented in seven of the ten educational region of Ghana. The Alert School Model is unique in its design and implementation as the interventions take place within existing classroom settings, used existing teaching staffs, peers and the community, delivered mainstream to all pupils without base and end-line periods and

with all the interveners function simultaneously as a system. I will explain the alert school model in detailed as this chapter unfolds.

The Fante puberty rites and the alert school model treats about prevention of sexually transmitted disease including HIV/AIDS in the Cape Coast municipality. These two systems of education sought to inform and educate young people of abstinence from sex hence creating awareness of prevention in the society. By juxtaposing the Fante puberty rites and the Alert School Model, I will say that these system of education deals with young people and the communities where it is being implemented.

The rationale behind Fante puberty rites was to introduce young girls and boys to indigenous ways of educating the youth and the community. By this I mean the stages this ritual performance goes through sought to educate the entire community about their ways of life. The Fante puberty rites are not a day performance but rather a gradual form of teaching and educating the youth about indigenous ways. Whereas the alert school model used the classroom with trained teachers to educate young people from primary to junior high school in Cape Coast. The differences between the fante puberty rites and the school alert model is that fante puberty rites uses oral tradition and historical existence to educate while the alert school model uses written literature funded and supported by government of Ghana and UNICEF. I have described the two systems of education with challenges on the Alert School Model. I begin the chapter by describing puberty rites in Ghana.

4.1 Puberty rites in Ghana

In traditional Ghanaian society, there was more emphasis on the period of adolescence for girls than for boys. Puberty rites for boys were brief or absent in some part of the country, especially southern regions. Circumcision for boys is now almost universal and is usually performed during infancy. In the past, some ethnic groups circumcised boys at puberty to usher them into manhood and make them responsible citizens or eligible to go to war (Teyagaga 1985). The ultimate goal of the puberty rites for females was to supervise girls' entry into sexuality, marriage and motherhood. Some of the names for these rites- tugbeworwor (celebration of beauty) of the Dodome Ewe in the Volta region of Ghana (Hevi-Yiboe 2003), bragoro (celebration of womanhood) of the Ashanti's in Ghana (Sarpong 1977) - suggest the purpose of the rites, especially for women. In northern Ghana, the rites are

performed for both girls and boys, while in the south only girls undergo elaborate rites (Sarpong 1977). The simplicity or near absence of puberty rites for boys in Ashanti as compared with that for girls is probably a reflection of the non-jural aspects of ties (Sarpong 1977:7-11), and perhaps the strong emphasis on matrilineage where the survival of the whole society is dependent on its female members.

All the puberty rites, particularly the *dipo* (girls' initiation rite of the Krobo's in the Eastern region of Ghana had social and religious aspects). The puberty rites and girls' initiation rites like *dipo* have three stages namely: separation, transition and reincorporation. The period of adolescence and transition from childhood to adulthood was generally short, especially when marriage soon followed the performance of the puberty rites. Generally, the puberty rites were performed for girls aged between 12-16 years (Sackey 2001) in most Akan and Ewe cultures. The separation and transition customs lasted up to three years in Krobo in the past and the candidates were aged between 14 and 21 years (Teyegaga 1985) more often than not, marriage follows soon after the puberty rites are performed; and the birth of a child may happen within the first year of marriage (Sarpong 1977; Steegstra 2005). Formally, a girl who was already pregnant or who had had sex was not allowed to be initiated and in some communities was banished (Sarpong 1977). Traditionally, however, Ghanaian society frowns upon dating and sexual experimentation among young children. It is not acceptable to discuss sex and sexuality in public. Sex education was given to adolescents at puberty as part of puberty rites. As Sarpong (1977:69) notes parents do not normally discuss sexual matters with their children.

Traditionally, a boy or girl is supposed to be completely ignorant of sexual matters until he or she is physiologically and socially (that is by reason of performance of her initiation rites) mature. Some tribes test virginity and in the past this formed part of the ritual of wedding night of a newly married girl, and a failure to produce the evidence, a blood stained white cloth, was a humiliating disaster which could lead to the breaking of the marriage contract. Juvenile immorality was severely punished, sometimes even by death or perpetual banishment.

This means that in traditional Ghanaian society leading a life devoid of sexual relationship is paramount until one is mature psychologically and physically. The society acknowledges a child who has abstained from sex until his / her marriage. Such a child is given gifts by both

young and old because my fieldwork suggests that the society values abstinence in both young men and women before marriage to prevent any form of sexually transmitted disease.

4.2 Fante puberty rites performance in Amamoma, a suburb village of Cape Coast.

Interviews with several informants confirm the importance of puberty rites and their role in the Fante communities in the Cape Coast municipalities. My fieldwork data notes that this educational practice of the Fante has helped Fante communities to avoid sexually transmitted diseases in the municipalities. This indigenous knowledge is vanishing from the Fante communities which could be used in the curriculum by the Ghana Education Service to combat the HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. The demise of this indigenous knowledge is caused by the western system of school.

The Fante puberty rite was narrated by an **informant I** who comes from the royal family of “Amamoma” a suburb village of Cape Coast. She knows the customs and traditions of her people. She was born and lived at “Amamoma” her entire life. She was in her sixties, and a mother with lot of grandchildren. She lived with her children and grandchildren in a big compound house. When I got to her house, it was one of her grand-daughters who showed me the grandmother’s room. Compound houses are those houses built with bricks, cement blocks, mud or clay soil shaped in a rectangular form with numerous rooms. A traditional compound house may not have a porch in front of the rooms. The informant house has twelve rooms with the floor of the house well cemented. We sat in front of her room during the interview. I was given a long wooden bench to sit. She sat on a wooden stool with a coal-pot loaded with fire and charcoal. She was preparing “kookoo” (maize porridge) for her grandchild. She stirred the porridge with a wooden ladle while narrating the history of puberty rites of the people of Amamoma. The interview was conducted in the morning. As a rural dweller she sells food items in front of her house. She represented the leaders in her communities and this made her potentially a good source for my research.

This narrative is reconstructed from the interview recorded on tape. I sought permission from the informant to record the conversation. The descriptive narrative of the Fante puberty rites were given by the informant in Fante Language. I transcribed this conversation from Fante to English. She narrates that in the Fante society sex education is taught at home through puberty rite. When a girl menstruates for the first time, she will have to tell her mother. The mother will go and buy items such as sponge, powder, body lotion and “anowata” which in Fante language mean deodorant. The mother will officially tell the whole community that her daughter has menstruated. This information quickly circulated around the community as it was organized some years past. After the announcement, a special stool called “asesegua” is given to the girl to sit on. The elderly women in her family prepared “eto” or mashed yam mixed with red oil palm for her to eat. Palm oil is generated from palm tree. After this ritual, the elderly women send the girl to a secluded area to bath her.

This is the time the girl is educated on the ideal of womanhood and about societal values expected of her as a woman. She is told about domestic tasks such as keeping the house clean, how to cater for her husband and children in the future. Matters pertaining to sexuality are discussed over several hours. She is taught how to bath when she is menstruating for example. Significantly, the girl is reminded of the need to stay a virgin until she is married. Virginity is a prime factor in Fante puberty rites.

On their returned from this secluded area, “tacum” powder is used to decorate and adorn the body of the girl with special flowers called “aborofo ntukumba” but the “tacum” powder is washed in the evening to make way for a body lotion (shea butter). “Tacum” powder is made up of clay soil treated with herbs and baked with fire wood. This ritual continues for seven days where the girl continues to be educated about the ideal of womanhood. Sugarcane is distributed to all the people in the community during the ceremony. During these 7 days ceremony all the people in the village come eat in the girl’s house. It becomes the responsibility of her parents to serve food to all those gathered at the ceremony. Children and adolescents in the village are mandated by their parents to participant in the feast throughout the initiation. The mother of the girl is mostly helped by relatives to prepare food for the community. When the 7 days ceremony is passed, the initiate wears “kaba and slit” for a month. “kaba and slit” is a locally made Ghanaian garment that is styled from the upper to the lower torso . The wearing of this garment signified that the initiate has finished the puberty rite and therefore any man wishing to have her as a wife could proudly go to her parents and asked her hand in marriage. I was told that in the years past, girls menstruate when their age

gone passed seventeen years old. The girl is then cautioned to stay away from men and any sexual relationships that will bring shame to the family.

This ceremony is repeated in a different way during her marriage ceremony. The girl is beautifully dressed and wears “tekuwa” a head dress decorated with golden bells, gold, diamond, golden rings and diamond necklaces. She then goes to individual houses in the community to greet the people, to show the community that she is married and receive marriage blessing to ward off men with hidden agenda. She goes to the neighboring villages such as “Apewosika” to repeat the same process. This is done for 7 days, where, she finally moves to her husband’s house. This also serves a secondary but important function to ward off men who might have hidden agenda.

The test of virginity is shown with her first sexual encounter of the husband. When it proves that the girl is a virgin, the bed sheet that they slept on must be soiled with blood. This is sent to the girls’ family house accompanied with local gin called “Apeteshie”. The local gin is used to pour libation to the god’s and ancestors for fruitful marriage and more children in their marriage life. The girl been a virgin brings cleanliness and honour into the man’s life. But if it is proven otherwise the man may report the situation to the girl’s family while others will not say anything but continue with the marriage. This informant suggests that boys faced banishment from their communities of impregnating young girls who have not gone through puberty rites. I would give another description of puberty rites in the Cape Coast City below.

4.3 Puberty rite performance in the Cape Coast City

This **informant II** is one of the respected chiefs in Cape Coast. He is well educated and was born in Cape Coast. He has lived in Cape Coast and abroad for some years. He is well vested in traditional knowledge. Some of the chiefs I wanted to interview directed me to him. He knows custom and tradition. The interview was conducted in the Heritage House of Cape Coast. At the time of fieldwork in Cape Coast, there was an ongoing renovation construction in the chief’s palace. The chief and his elders had moved to the Heritage House which was twenty meter walk from the main palace. Heritage House is also where tourists visit to purchase and read books on the history, tourist sites and slavery in Cape Coast. Heritage House is built in a storey building with the chief, sub chiefs and his elders stationed on the second floor of the house. In the hall of the house, I was welcomed by the chief, who spoke

Fante language throughout the interview. He is a member of the Oversight Committee on Health and a board member of the Metropolitan Health Service in Cape Coast. He has joined panel/forum to discuss counseling and guidance in combating HIV/AIDS in the Cape Coast municipality. He represents the leaders of Cape Coast City. He is my principal source on traditional knowledge of my research.

This puberty rite narrative was given distinctly different from the previous source. The detailed description of Fante puberty rites below is a ritual performed in the Cape Coast City. This narrative was given to me by the chief whose background information has already been given as informant II. This interview was conducted in Fante and transcribed in English.

The chief states that sex education is taught at home through puberty rites. It is called “obaa w’ako mfikyiri” which is literally translated as women menstruation. This also means a stage when a man having unprotected sex with a girl could result in pregnancy. Therefore when a girl menstruates for the first time, there are customs and traditions performed for her because menstruation is important in the life of a girl. First of all, it is the elderly women or the mother who detect whether a girl/daughter has menstruated. When it happens, a white calico cloth is worn around the waist of the girl with red piece of cloth serving the purpose of absorbing the blood. The initiate wears these different clothes until the blood stops flowing in the evening when the cloth is changed for her. When the blood ceased flowing, the women start introducing her to the community. This was called in Fante as “ odze no abo oman adzi” literally means “parading her through town”. It was done late in the night as she wears a clean red cloth. This was done in the night so that the people of the city will not participate in this ritual process. During this parading process, an elderly woman carries a coal pot with fire leading the entourage who are all women. The significance of the parade is to ward off evil spirit from the girl’s life. The parade starts from the initiate’s house through the town. The women wailed by saying:

“Won hyia wo”. “Won hyia wo”. This means that nobody should meet them.

After the midnight parade, the girl is sent to the sea side where she was given a thorough bath in the sea with sea water. This was done solely by women. Before the initiation starts the parents of the girl had bought powder, soap, deodorant and any other things that would be

needed for the ceremony. It is emphasized that only these items mentioned are sent to the sea side for the ritual. When the bathing is done the initiate is allowed to wear a white gown.

Music and dance are performed on the sea side until dawn. The women played and sing songs to celebrate the occasion. The music and dance continued in the morning where the girl is given “asesegua” to sit in the yard of her house. In Ghanaian context, most traditional houses are compound houses which have space to accommodate many people at the same time. The whole community trooped into the house to see her. An elderly person in the girls’ extended family with a linguist takes a local drink and poured libation to the gods asking for long life and blessing for the initiate. Libation is an act of sacrifice. In the Fante society, water or alcoholic local / foreign beverages are used to pour libation. An elderly or a linguist is the one who poured the libation. He poured a high proof local alcohol/water in a glass and recites some words of prayer. He recites a prayer while little or an amount of the high proof alcohol/water is poured on the ground. In the end of the libation he/she drink the rest of the high proof/water in the glass.

The libation goes like this:

The God who created heaven and earth

The ancestors, rivers, the sea spirit, spirit that we cannot see come and receive your drink.

We thank you for creating this day in the life of our daughter.

Let this occasion be a memorable one.

We asked of your blessing.

After this short prayer, the elderly and the linguist turned around to the girl and advised her that;

Now that you have menstruated, you are now a fully grown woman.

You will have to think and behaved like a woman.

A man could ask your hand in marriage.

Therefore you will have to lead a good life.

You must not have sexual relationship with men until you get married.

Shortly after this, a mashed yam mixed with red oil molded in an oval shape with egg placed on top of the mashed yam would be held in the palm of an old lady who comes from her family. This old lady must be someone who has led a good life with many children. Some of her name will be given to the girl in this ritual. For example if the initiate is called “Akua”

while elderly woman is called Gyesiwa. The two names joined together to be called “Akua Gyesiwaa” in the ritual process. The old lady would say:

“Akua Gyesiwaa” takes this mashed yam with red oil and eats. You are a woman, and it is time for you to be married. (The initiate takes the mashed yam mixed with red oil and egg from the old lady using her mouth to touch the yam but do not eat. This process is repeated where the girl finally takes the mashed yam together with the egg and eats on the third count). A plain mashed yam with egg is also used to repeat this ritual.

The reason for this ritual is that there are different kinds of world we lived in that are both evil and good. Therefore after this ritual the girl should be able to identify evil from good. The rest of the mashed yam used for the ritual is combined and put in a grounding bowl called “asanka” where children and kinsmen are invited to partake in the feast. They eat together with the initiate.

The girl is dressed in silky beautiful materials with her bag and beautiful shoes. She wears “tekua” a scarf which is decorated with beautiful gold and diamond accessories and goes to town with a maid servant. This maid must be her own younger sister in the family who has been selected for the occasion. She is followed in town by people who drum and sing songs as:

“Ayefro w’anim dokon tu”. *“Ayefro w’anim dokon tu”*. The literal meaning in English is “the bride path is full of fermented kenkey”.

The whole community starts to shower gifts on her. Some of these gifts are money, pieces of cloth, dress, scarf, gold, diamond and cooking utensils. She keeps the gifts while the valuable gifts are given to the maid to keep in her bag.

Lastly, a girl who does not performed this rite and gets pregnant breaks the norms of the society. This becomes a punishable situation. The girl’s family will have problems as well as the boy who impregnated her. In the olden days, both were banished from the town or disbanded from the community. They would be force to live in the forest where they would not have an encounter with humans. Now, due to the awareness of human rights, this practice is not easily done. Initiated girls were also taught to respect every member in the society and outside the communities. When it comes to societal norms, the Fante society expects initiated girls to participate in communal labour, festivals, naming ceremonies, and funeral. These girls were also taught to bring disputes that may ensue between themselves and members of the

society to the notice of the elders in their communities. These traditional rites can I suggest have positive health consequences. The Fante puberty rites bring knowledge of Fante history, feeling of belonging and could promote and strengthen a young person's identity. It also promotes a sense of control over their bodies and their sexuality.

At this juncture, I will introduce you to lesson I learn't from my grandmother initiation rite.

4.4 Lesson learn't from my late grandmother initiation knowledge

My late grandmother is an Ashanti, another pool of Akan group in Ghana. She told me and my cousins about women menstruation. This conversation ensued one evening when my two female cousins who are "Ama" and "Obroni" and getting close to their own puberty bothered her to say "Something" on what she vividly recall from her initiation ceremony. These cousins were 12 and 13 years respectively and I was 10 years old. This was what I learn't from her. My late grandmother told us that in their time of rearing children when a woman menstruates, she was not allowed to cook for her husband.

My late grandmother states that when a woman stayed together with her husband and menstruates, she gathered already fetched firewood developed a heath made up of three big stones or clay soil and cooked for her and her children outside the husband house until the blood ceased before she comes back to the husband house to cook for him. The woman sleeps in a different room in the husband compound house. She states that women menstruate for 7 days. My late grandmother explained that at the time when the woman is menstruating she was considered as "unclean" both physically and spiritually for her husband. Therefore, the woman should not come in contact with the husband to spoil the spiritual upliftment of her husband. This is because the husband is considered the soul/bread winner for the family and if she comes in contact with the husband may bring bad luck which would affect the husband ability to provide for his family. It appears that men were treated as the sole provider for the family meanwhile women work hard to support their husbands. That has been societal norm she reiterated.

My late grandmother told us that she learn't this knowledge during her puberty initiation. She used the knowledge gained throughout her married life. She lived happily with her husband until they passed away. I am not arguing that in this day of modernization, when a woman menstruates in her husband house, she should not cook for her husband nor lived outside the

husband home. Rather we should consider the indigenous knowledge puberty rites bring to young girls in various communities to sustain their lives. I trust that puberty rites would not be the only way Fante's/ Ashanti's used as a rites of passage to teach sexuality but to sustain marriages and procreation on the various communities in Ghana. The sharing of this information by my late grandmother as a male has assisted me in formulating a good self-image about my own sexuality and respect for women.

The narrative from my late grandmother tells how their society was organized in the past. There was a relationship between individual and the community. The community cares by teaching my late grandmother how to live in the society and the community expected her to adhere to the knowledge. This relationship created by the community creates a sense of belonging.

I will now introduce you to the HIV Alert School Model in Cape Coast.

4.5 The HIV Alert School Model

The HIV Alert School Model has been developed to harmonise all HIV and AIDS interventions in basic schools. It is aimed at achieving and sustaining positive behaviour development and change to reduce the spread of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus among school children. The model is designed to address the challenges of school based reproductive health education activities, including HIV and AIDS. At the onset of the epidemic in Ghana, school based HIV prevention activities were mostly led by Non- governmental organization and also influenced by donor preferences (GES 2009). By 2004, it had become evident that many of these activities were limited in coverage, fragmented, incoherent and saddled with poor coordination which made it difficult to measure the impact of the interventions.

It was against this background that the Ghana Education Service (GES), with support from UNICEF initiated the HIV Alert School Model. The model was developed as the outcome of a research study on HIV and AIDS in one district in Upper East Region of Ghana. Subsequently, a pilot one-year HIV prevention education project was initiated in the district. Based on the success of the initial intervention, the Alert Model was developed and implemented for another one year throughout schools in the Upper East Region. In 2006, it was launched in Bolgatanga Upper East Regional Capital of Ghana for national

implementation. The HIV Alert Model is currently being implemented in seven out of the ten regions in Ghana.

Basic schools in Cape Coast the central regional capital of Ghana have implemented the HIV Alert Model by the Ghana Education Service. The writing of curriculum for the HIV Alert School Model is done by the Ghana Education Service. The Alert school model is integrated in different subjects taught at the basic school level. During fieldwork I noted that traditional leaders in Cape Coast were not consulted before devising the program rather the Alert School Model target parents of whose children are in government basic schools to be part of the program. How? Parents/guardians attending school meeting for their wards are introduced to the program by school authorities. They are enlightened on the causes and prevention of HIV/AIDS which they intend to teach their children when they go home my interview with teachers revealed. Moreover traditional Fante values are not included in the program. Religious and traditional leader's interest of combating HIV/AIDS was not represented in the program. I found this program very problematic, if the government of Ghana wants to eradicate HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. Even though, the Alert School Model has enlightened students to avoid sexual relationship hence preventing HIV/AIDS in the Cape Coast municipality, abstinence is not paid of the program.

According to UNICEF GHANA 2010 report on the *impact evaluation of the HIV Alert School Model*, a study that was undertaken with funds provided by Government of Ireland through Irish Aid which forms part of a four year programme of cooperation between UNICEF, Ghana and Irish Aid (2006-2010) states that with regards to the impact of the Alert school Model on abstinence self –efficacy, that is ability to say ‘no’ to sex it revealed that the Alert School Model and age significantly interacted to influence abstinence self –efficacy. The interaction suggested that the Alert School Model had more impact on the 10-12 and the 16-18 years old children's ability to say ‘no’ to sex than those of the 13-15 and 19 and above years old children. For the 10-12 years old children, their ability to say ‘no’ to sex improved as they went up the intervention phases of the Alert School Model, whereas for the 16-18 years old children this ability deteriorated as they went up the intervention phases. However, the Alert School Model appeared not to have had much influence on the 19 years old and above pupils. This means that the program has not achieved much to enable children to abstain from sex especially with those children of the ages 13-15 who are considered to be sexually active. My

interview with some teachers revealed that most children from the ages of 12-16 years old in the basic schools have boyfriends and girlfriends and are sexually active even though they are being educated on HIV/AIDS in school. This becomes disastrous as some girls become pregnant and had to drop out of school where they are then left with no vocational skills or resources.

From my observation during data collection, I noted that HIV Alert School Model face challenges. I will argue that the Alert School Model in Cape Coast municipality should integrated traditional models of Fante puberty rites that teach abstinence. These rites are reinforced and monitored by the society could build on a young person's sense of identity and feelings of belonging. The community in other words cares. This support might assist vulnerable youths gain control of their sexuality practices. This was confirmed by several interviewed informants. Religious, opinion leaders and communities' interest must be incorporated in the programme to prevent HIV/AIDS in the Cape Coast municipality. In so doing, these leaders would monitor the program by putting pressure on the government and the donor agency to keep funding and updating teaching materials to avert HIV/AIDS in the municipality.

Finding solution to combat HIV/AIDS by blending the Fante puberty rites and the Alert School Model is what are currently important not the challenges facing these two systems of education. Fante puberty rites performed in different communities in the Cape Coast municipality could be used by the Ghana Education Service on the Alert School Model in preventing HIV/AIDS. This will bring new contribution to the program.

4.6 Relationship between Fante puberty rites and the alert school model in Cape Coast

The Fante puberty rites may seemed primitive to an outsider/foreigner but the theme of this ritual was to inform, communicate and educate young people, especially girl's transition from childhood to adulthood. In another words, it supervise girl's transition from childhood to womanhood. Matrilineal inheritance practiced by the Fante societies where a child born in marriage inherits the mother's lineage such as maternal uncles allow Fante to respect girls and women. Girls/women carry the extended family with their children. This matrilineal

inheritance gives women/girls their right in the lineage of the Fante society. This appears why the Fante society pays particular attention to girls rather than boys. This is not to say that boys are not important or do not play roles in the society/ initiation rites in Cape Coast. It was confirmed by **informant II** in an interview that fathers/uncles/boys in the initiate families contribute to the initiation ceremony by carrying food items on their heads such as yam, cocoyam, ripe plantains and plantains from farm to the houses of initiates in raffia cane woven baskets. Fathers and uncles take the opportunity to educate boys on the importance of the ritual and the consequences involved in impregnating an uninitiated girl in the olden days. Boys are educated thoroughly in the ritual ceremony. These boys gain awareness of their sexuality during this ritual performance even though their fathers and uncles educate these boys on sex when they reach puberty on a daily basis. It was confirmed in an interview with an old woman who was in her eighties at Pedu in Cape Coast that some mothers educate their sons on sexuality during the initiation rites. This shows the important role mothers play in the Fante communities.

The Alert School Model has helped the people of Cape Coast to prevent HIV/AIDS. The program embraces school children and the community. When I say community I mean parents whose children are in government basic schools. These government basic schools are those schools in Ghana that are financed by the government and located in urban/rural areas throughout the country. The government basic school starts from grade one to six and three years junior high secondary. All Ghanaian children are expected to stay in school until the age of fifteen. The free compulsory basic education in Ghana and Cape Coast has made it possible for every child to enroll in a basic school in Cape Coast. The Alert School Model targeting parents of children in the basic schools in Cape Coast has contributed to the prevention of HIV/AIDS through parent teacher association. Parents are aided by teachers who used their knowledge acquired from the program to teach parents on preventive methods such as avoiding children in sharing same toothbrush, ear rings, blades, and sharp materials. The Alert School Program helped prevent HIV/AIDS using the classroom setting but also targets a section of the community. I will say a section of the community because the Alert School Model does not extend to private basic schools owned by individual and recognized by the Ghana education service at Cape Coast while Fante puberty rites embrace the entire community in Cape Coast. The aim of these systems of education in this study has helped to prevent HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast.

There are mutual roles these educational systems that are Fante puberty rites and the Alert School Model Program play in Cape Coast. These educational systems concentrate on the community and abstention to prevent HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast municipality. I will introduce you to these roles.

4.6.1 Community roles and rules of abstinence

The previous puberty rites narrative on 4.2 and 4.3 observed that community participation in the ritual reinforces a sense of community, identification and belonging. The Alert School Model acknowledges the communities in Cape Coast municipality by targeting parents/guardians at parent teacher association. Parents and the communities are introduced to HIV/AIDS prevention methods through the Alert School Model by teachers as most informants who were parents confirmed during data collection. The reason was to inform and educate parents in order to teach their children at home after school. The sense of community that is fostered by Fante traditional puberty rites practices can be extended to the community of the school.

The facilitators in these systems of education in Cape Coast care about the people. In other words the community cares. The Fante puberty rites and Alert School Model teaches self-respect in that when children are educated on their sexuality they become faithful to themselves and their community hence encouraging safe sex practices that may help prevent the pandemic.

The central idea of the Fante puberty rites and Alert School Model is abstinence. Children in Cape Coast municipality are taught by parents, community leaders and members of the community to abstain from sex after puberty rites initiation. In this study I have observed from the narrative of Fante puberty rites and literature on the Alert School Model that both focus on abstention. The two systems are after a strategy for people that may slow down HIV/AIDS rates in Cape Coast.

4.7 Summary of the chapter

I have discuss in this chapter the fante puberty rites and alert school model in Cape Coast by deliberating on ways these educational systems could help in preventing HIV/AIDS in the

municipality. The two different narratives of puberty rites were gathered during data collection in Cape Coast. These informants who gave these narratives believed that the history of their people is important because when children know their history of where they come from / background they tread cautiously when making decisions that is decisions that may affect them and the entire community. It was evident from the study that puberty rites could be adopted on the Alert School Model by the Ghana education service to prevent HIV/AIDS.

I discuss the Alert School Model program used in teaching young children at the basic schools. This program has enlightened children in Cape Coast to abstain from sex. Although the program faces challenges, it has gain positive impact on children and the communities. Most children are aware of their sexuality through the help of this program in Cape Coast

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Chapter five

Data presentation and analysis

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the Fante educational practices have contributing to the prevention of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast with a comparison to western school education in the Cape Coast. A qualitative research design was chosen and the research questions guiding the study were

How does western system of school and the Fante traditional education contribute to the prevention of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast Municipality?

Why is HIV/AIDS education not a holistic subject on the curriculum where students can be tested on their knowledge about the disease?

The perspectives from home and the community, including, chief, queen mother, parents and the perspectives of the formal western system of school, that is, Ghana education service, head teacher and teachers will be presented in these categories.

By presenting the data thematically in this study, I hoped that new ideas may emerge of the western system of school and the Fante traditional education in preventing of HIV/AIDS. It is my fervent desire that this study will assist the people of Cape Coast municipality in their efforts to prevent HIV/AIDS.

I have numbered my informants by using roman numerical in reporting my findings. Representativity of my informants will also be given to serve as a note on protection, anonymity and background of informants'. This section presents the findings. My informants' voice played an important role in this study, since the purpose of the study is to allow informants voice to be heard. I tried to provide an insight of those who contributed immensely to my fieldwork interviews in the Cape Coast municipality. Views of my informants will be presented according to differences and similarities of their opinions concerning the issues this study sought to address. I will analyse and interpret an inquiry into my informants and their understanding of ways HIV/AIDS can be prevented in the Cape Coast municipality.

5.1 Beliefs and attitudes

5.1.2 Causes of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast

Before I answer the research questions in this analytical section, I will look at the causes of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. My informants were asked questions on the causes of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. I have analyzed their answers and given a summary of whom they are in the society and who they represent in the municipality. The reason is that I cannot discuss the educational practices of the indigenous Fante's in Cape Coast effort of preventing HIV/AIDS without the causes of the disease in the municipality.

5.1.3 Representativity of informants

During fieldwork data collection I interviewed a Reverend Minister who was a Dean of the Christ the King Church in Cape Coast and a teacher in the Pedu Municipal Authority Day Junior High School respectively. My choice of selecting these informants is based on their contribution in combating HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. Many of my informants during fieldwork requested me to interview these informants. I interviewed these informants by recording the conversation on tape and transcribed the conversation in my field note book. I will start with their background information.

Informant IV was the Dean of the Christ the King Church in Cape Coast. He was transferred from another municipality to Cape Coast two years ago. As a Dean of the church, he has continuously worked with non-governmental organization/Ghana Aids Commission to speak/teach the youth in his church the causes and prevention of HIV/AIDS. He was 54 years old, a father with two daughters and a boy. The interview was conducted in one of the vestries at the church auditorium. The interview was held in the afternoon, and an unstructured interview method was employed. I was directed to the Dean by one of my informants whose son fellowship in the church. This informant who directed me to the Dean told me that, the Dean was doing a good work in the municipality by inviting people infected with AIDS to share their experiences with the youth in his church. I was happy to meet him and acquired knowledge from him during the interview. He represents religious leaders in Cape Coast.

Informant V is a teacher who teaches at Pedu Municipal Authority Junior Day Secondary for a long time. She is in charge of the teaching of integrated science which encompasses

reproduction. She represents the teachers in Cape Coast. The interview was conducted in the afternoon. The interview was held in her office at the Pedu Municipal Authority Junior Day Secondary School. She was 51 years of age, a mother with two boys and a girl.

These informants presented different/similar views on the causes of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast municipality. **Informant IV** mentioned that

“Cape Coast is a tourist centre, people travelled all over the world to visit the castles and forts in Cape Coast. Foreigners come and lured these young ones in activities resulting to unprotected sexual relation enabling one to get the disease if one is infected. Sometimes we hear stories of children luring into a hotel by foreigners who have unprotected sex with these young ones”.

Informant IV relate the causes of HIV/AIDS to influx of holiday foreigners who have no proper health records checked upon their arrival in Cape Coast give rise to the increase of HIV/AIDS in the area. I will interpret the informant statement as lack of information on sex education in the municipality. Perhaps if these young ones had been taught by their parents and community sex education, they would be able to know the behavior of these foreigners and refrained from sexual relationships. On the other hand, parents might have done their best on teaching these young one to refrain from having sex with these foreigners but the love for money may pushed these young ones to have unprotected sex with the foreigners hence exposing them of contracting HIV/AIDS. The power relation that lies between these foreigners and indigenous Fante youth is seen in the informant conversation. Because these foreigners have money, he/she used money to convince the Fante indigenous youth and have unprotected sex resulting to HIV/AIDS if per-chance the foreigner is infected. Hotel management in Cape Coast municipality refused to report sexual encounter between these foreigners and the young ones in the municipality to the law enforcement agencies. Rather, spread news of abusers from person to another.

Informant IV also states that another cause of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast is that

“Cape Coast is a fishing community, some fishermen travel outside to the nearby country like Cote d’ivoire for fishing. HIV/AIDS are picked from this country. Immediately they come back from their fishing expedition, some of these fishermen who wouldn’t know whether sexual

encounter with women in the neighboring country might have ended them to acquire the disease will start having unprotected sex infecting people”.

Unavailability of fish in the sea found along the coastal belt of Cape Coast allowed the fishermen to travel to the neighboring country to fish, hence risking their lives in acquiring HIV/AIDS. When the fishermen get to Cote d’Ivoire, they have sex using condoms or without condoms. Since the use of condom/without condom does not guarantee one’s safety of contracting the HIV/AIDS virus, some of these fishermen get infected unknowingly. It is of common knowledge from this informant that some women faced difficulties in making a living. Therefore when a fisherman returned from fishing in another country, it is assumed that he has gotten money from abroad. It appears that some women succumbed themselves to having unprotected sex causing HIV/AIDS, if the fishermen have been infected from their previous sexual encounter in another country. Women become vulnerable to HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast because of the role men/women played in the society.

Informant V attributed the cause of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast to the attitude of the fishermen. She asserts that

“Sex is the major cause of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. The girls in Cape Coast have no control. They give birth anyhow. Most of these girls go the sea shores to work and fend for themselves resulting to teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. So if the fishermen give those fish to these girls then they had to have sex with these girls. That is what is happening in Cape Coast”.

The girls in Cape Coast worked to make a living by selling and buying. Girls/women sell cooked food, sachet water, soft drinks, and fried/dry fish on the sea shore of Cape Coast where these fishermen are found. This mutual understanding between women, girls and the fishermen of relating to another in Cape Coast unfortunately result to unprotected sex enabling one to get HIV/AIDS, if a partner is infected. The superiority of fishermen is identified by this informant assertion as the fishermen use their occupation to lure women into unprotected sex. Limited resources and absence of vocational skills amongst the girls in Cape Coast drive these girls into sexual relationship. It is clear from the informant that, these girls want to work and by so doing, they had to depend on the fishermen who exchanges fish for sex. This allowed girls and fishermen to become vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

5.2 Puberty rites and the prevention of HIV/AIDS

During data collection in Cape Coast two of my key informants who represents traditional leaders in the municipality were asked if Fante puberty rites could help solve the HIV/AIDS in the municipality. These informants stated that the passage of this rite could contribute immensely to the prevention of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. These informants suggested that the Fante puberty rites should be incorporated in the Alert School Model to enlightening children to know the indigenous ways of preventing sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS in the community. In that children and adolescent would be careful with their sexuality if they know their historical tradition of sexuality and its consequences.

Informant I agreed that puberty rites if taught in school could help solved the HIV/AIDS in the community. The Puberty rites performed by the Fantes in Cape Coast was educational practices the municipality has used to teach girls of their sexuality, hygiene, respect, societal norms and how to live peacefully with one another.

I will explain these factors mentioned to be taught in puberty rites of the Fantes in Cape Coast. Sexuality the informant means that initiated girls were taught to remain virgins and abstain from sex until the final day of marriage arrives. When girls retained their virginity until marriage in the Fante society is considered as blessing. The emphasis on blessing is that children born by virgin wives hardly get sick. In other words children born by virgins are healthy according to informants. According to **informant I** virgin wives symbolize good mothers. How? Virgin wives are considered as an example for the daughters and sons in leading life devoid of having sex in early stages of life. That is virgin wives give advice on abstinence to their children. Hygiene – elderly women and mothers in the Fante community teach initiated girls how to bath during the time of menstruation according to the informant. They are shown how to keep themselves clean and also taught how to wear “ammodzin” in Fante language which means sanitary pad in English language. “Ammodzin” is a special red cloth with a thick texture used by Fante women during menstruation to soak up the blood. It is locally made of cotton wool. “Ammodzin” was used in the olden days. At this day of modernization, “ammodzin” is outdated it used by Fante women/girls but has been replaced by disposal menstrual pad. This indigenous knowledge taught in Fante puberty rites in Cape Coast municipality was agreed by the informant from Amamoma royal family whose background information has been given in chapter four that puberty rites could help prevent HIV/AIDS. She asserts that

“There is a game called “akorodu” in Fante while in Ashanti language is called “Egyina”. In performing these games songs are sung to tease uninitiated girls. The lyric of the songs are powerful to ridicule families. This brings awareness to the girls in the community hence preventing the youth indulging in sexual act. A child born by an uninitiated girl is called “abaasa” meaning an abominable child. I think that puberty rites should be taught in schools so that children will know the customs and traditions of their people which could help solve AIDS”.

The Fante communities participate in recreational activities such as drumming, singing and dancing. These recreational activities are part of their ways of life. A recreational activity such as “akorodu” was used for creating awareness of sexuality in the Fante communities and also entertained the people. It is clear from the informant that some Fante society dislikes the idea of young people having sexual contact. The informant believed that the teaching of puberty rites to the youth by teachers in schools and community members who know the passage of rites may help solve the disease. The informant noted that when puberty rites are taught in school and at home some of the youth will avoid the name tag such as “abaasa” (abominable child) and abstain from sex but more importantly avoiding multiple sexual partners.

5.2.1 Puberty rites as a societal pressure

Traditional leaders want to be consulted by the Government of Ghana represented by the Ghana Education Service in the restructuring of the curriculum to teach puberty rites. This informant wants the Ghana Education Service to integrate puberty rites in the Alert School Model program in basic schools to help combat HIV/AIDS. The informant made mentioned of counseling which is both embedded in Fante puberty rites and the Alert School Model. The “counseling” the informant referring to could be explained when initiates of the Fante puberty rites were advised to remain virgins and avoid any form of sexual contact with men during the ritual. The Alert School Model sought to educate pupils on HIV/AIDS hence introducing counseling to students by their teachers. The statements of the leader below show that the youth are vulnerable to the disease because they do not know this passage of rites and its consequences which have kept the older generation from sexual transmitted diseases. This could be interpreted that Fante puberty rites should be adopted on the school curriculum to prevent HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast.

The informant states

If the country wants to wipe out the Hiv/aids we have to use counseling. What we have to do is that the chiefs who know customs and traditions should call on Educational Authorities to order by incorporating puberty rites in the curriculum. This is because when puberty rites were performed, there were no Hiv/Aids the only disease was malaria. Puberty rites can solve Hiv/aids neatly. If it is crafted well and taught in school to portray that the inability of a girl to pass through puberty rites will bring the entire family problems such as paying money to the community would have solved the disease. The society is very dynamic. This is the beginning of things to change. A puberty rite stops the youth from pre-marital sex. Because if you have sex before initiation the penalties you pay may deter the youth from having sex. It will scare people or you dare not. Puberty rite is a happy moment but its significant is that at that stage the initiate stay away from sex until the final day of marriage arrives. In most cases those infected with Aids are the younger ones as compare to those who are in their fifties who hardly get the disease.

Thus this informant suggests that it is societal pressure that can reinforce the communities will. Bringing shame to the family has implications and can even inhibit dangerous sexual practices.

5.3 How has the Alert School Program helped in preventing HIV/AIDS in the society?

In answering this question I interviewed the director in charge of the Alert School Model and the School Health Program. Her office is based in Accra the capital city of Ghana. She is in charge of HIV/AIDS program in government basic schools and supervision in the seven regions of Ghana where the program was launched. She is assisted by coordinators in these regions. I have given her background and who she represents in this study.

5.3.1 Representativity of Informant III

The interview was granted by the Director in Charge of the School Health Program and the Alert School Model. She is a teacher by profession and a mother. She was assisted by an

Officer in her office who contributed immensely to the interview. Throughout the interview, both the Officer and the Director worked together in answering my questions. The main reason for choosing to interview the director is that the Ghana Education Service has different branches that sees to the various administrative works in the country and that her office was in charge of the teaching Reproductive Health Education in schools. Her office represents the presidency and the Ghana Education Service. The interview was granted in the morning. In answering the question above, the director asserts that:

In the year 2010 there was a research report by the University of Winneba, Ghana. A major finding was that the Alert School Program has contributed to the increased in knowledge of children. Apart from that if one read the 2012 sentinel survey of HIV indicated that because the Alert is linked with the community pillar has decreased the infected rate and even for the fact that the mother to child transmission has gone down. Ghana is leading in the sub-Saharan Africa as a country with low infected rate. Alert School Program started from primary to junior high school.

To some extent most children especially those in the government primary and junior high school have an idea of the HIV/AIDS transmission. During my visit to Ghana, I struck a conversation with my sister who told me that my nephew/nieces tell her about AIDS. These are children who attended government basic school. They are the ages of eight, eight, eleven and twelve. Their attitudes seem to represent most children in government basic schools today.

On the contrary, the director answered the question based on reports and surveys conducted. She was not able to cite examples from her experiences with the program. This I find the Alert School Model problematic. She defended that the Alert School Model is linked with communities which has decreased mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS. This could be true in a sense but it appears that traditional leaders were not consulted when the Alert School Model was launched in Cape Coast. In Ghana the recent rendition of private own individual schools performing well in basic education certificate examination than government schools has led most parents sending their children to private school than government schools. This appears that most parents would not have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the Alert School Model.

5.4 HIV/AIDS Education

5.4.1 Curriculum

Most Ghanaian parents and guardians whose children are in government schools have argued that HIV/AIDS education should be a subject on its own in the curriculum where students could be tested on their knowledge. They believed that HIV/AIDS education integrated in other subjects taught at the basic school level does not allow students to learn about the causes and prevention of HIV/AIDS. In field data collection at Cape Coast most parents stated that HIV/AIDS should be given a priority as a single subject integrating Fante puberty rites to combat HIV/AIDS. In view of this argument I asked the director why the Alert School Model is not treated as a single subject integrated with Fante puberty rites on the curriculum where pupils could pay rapt attention to the causes and prevention of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. The director who is **informant III** states that

“We have curriculum balancing and curriculum alignment. These are the two factors that detect which subject should be in the curriculum. The curriculum alignment determines the subject which meets national interest while curriculum balancing are subjects which should be given more time. So the curriculum is already overloaded. When we talk about curriculum alignment we would not say HIV is more important than malaria.

This means that HIV/AIDS education will be competing with other diseases that have national interest. Apart from this the nation has its own philosophy of education, and the philosophy of education is achieved through the combination of subjects that meet national interest. Thus it appears that HIV competing with these subjects will not be a priority subject.

The curriculum balancing is where equal opportunity is given to subject areas. What Ghana Education Service has done is to integrate HIV/AIDS education with other subjects like science and social studies. Because with solving HIV problems, one will not want to look at the scientific factors alone, the social and physical factors need to be considered. It needs to integrate in various subjects”.

The explanation given by the Director suggests that HIV/AIDS education would not be treated as a single subject on the curriculum. HIV/AIDS education was not in the curriculum seemed that teachers of the subject would not give the desired attention in teaching at the Government Basic Schools in Cape Coast. Moreover, the teaching of HIV/AIDS has been left at the attention of these teachers in Cape Coast. These teachers in Cape Coast might decide to teach HIV/AIDS education or not since there were no laws and policies that binds or forced them to treat the subject thoroughly. Still there are examples of teachers who are playing a vital part in preventing the disease in the municipality. These teachers are some of my informants.

5.4.2 Teachers participation in HIV/AIDS prevention

Some teachers in the Government Basic School at Cape Coast are making efforts to teach HIV/AIDS education. Hence, enlightening children to prevent HIV/AIDS despite the challenges they faced in teaching the subject. In my field data collection at Cape Coast some of the teachers I had conversation with told me that they lack books and training from the Ghana Education Service on HIV/AIDS education to teach the subject. Some of these teachers research on HIV/AIDS use the internet outside their working hours to update their knowledge in order to teach the subject. They do not get any financial compensation for these extra efforts.

Other teachers I encountered in the field also said that they teach HIV/AIDS education in their various subjects to combat the disease in Cape Coast. This gave me the opportunity to sit in one of the class and observed how sex education is taught in class. I sat in one of the science class where the topic of discussion was reproduction. I introduced myself and gave a brief summary of my working title. After, which the teacher starts teaching about reproduction. The **informant VII** is a teacher in Cape Coast.

This school was a single male college and was an Alert School Model. A basic high boarding school located at Cape Coast, the school has all the modern facilities such as a well-furnished dining hall, beautiful dormitories named after European missionaries who helped in establishing the school, dispensaries, assembly hall and spacious class rooms. In the beginning of the class seemed quite as students paid rapt attention to their teacher but an excitement generated when the teacher asked students to draw and name parts of male and female reproductive system. Some of the students were able to draw the male reproductive

system but were not able to name the parts; others drew the male reproductive system with no scrotum attached whilst majority of the students were not able to draw the female reproductive system. This created an excitement in the class. Most of the students were stuck in thinking as they had no idea of what to do. I was expecting the teacher to take his time and teach the students but as the teacher waited for about ten minutes, we moved on to another topic called osmosis and diffusion. My confusion was why the teacher assumed that the students knew their sexuality. When I interviewed this teacher before the class started, I was told that HIV/AIDS education has been immersed in class subjects where every teacher is supposed to teach but that was not in my case of observation.

5.4.3 Representativity of informant VI

This informant is a teacher and a mother who was selected by her school authorities to attend a seminar on HIV/AIDS education at Cape Coast. This seminar was organized by the Ghana Education Service during the introduction of the Alert School Model in Cape Coast. In fact she is in charge of HIV/AIDS Club in her school. As a teacher who has attended the Alert School Model seminar made her a good source of my study. She represents teachers in Cape Coast. Interview was conducted in the afternoon during her break hours of teaching at the staff lounge of her school.

This informant lamented,

“I teach the symptoms, effect, and causes of HIV/AIDS to these children. I discuss HIV/AIDS with these children and make them role play so that the understanding will be real. I have to do a lot of research outside the classroom for the children”.

In contrast to **informant VII** this informant has moved from an abstract way of teaching about HIV/AIDS in classroom to real life experiences by using drama. Drama portrays life experiences in the society. When these children dramatized what is written in books on HIV/AIDS. The understanding of the disease become real and would easily broaden the knowledge of these children to avoid contact which could bring about HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast hence preventing the disease. The informant has adopted practical lesson of teaching in preventing HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast.

5.5 Summary of the chapter

The study reveals the causes of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast based on what informant lamented in interviews during data collection. It gave an insight of how Fante puberty rites and the Alert School Model could complement each other in preventing HIV/AIDS at Cape Coast. I analyzed and interpreted informant interviews on how HIV/AIDS is being prevented in Cape Coast to answer the research questions.

The study has also admitted on the ground reality of teaching to rising awareness of HIV/AIDS. I discuss that government basic schools used the Alert School Model in teaching HIV/AIDS while the private owned individual schools have no access to the Alert School Model. The study explains that teacher's engagement in class teaching HIV/AIDS prevention and the ability to integrate new methods into old curriculum is essential. I acknowledge the lack of support from government to implement Alert School Model for instance no textbook, and no additional pay/salary in the study.

These research questions will be elaborated in the next chapter of this study.

Chapter six

6.0 Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the research findings, revisited research questions, suggested recommendation and recap conclusion in the study.

In this study, the focus has been traditional Fante practices and the Alert School Model. The study explore Fante puberty rites as an educational practices that were used in the community to warn children and adolescent from sex hence preventing sexually transmitted diseases in the Cape Coast municipality. I gave a detailed description of Fante puberty rites in two clearly locations, which were Amamoma a suburb village of Cape Coast and Cape Coast city. The Fante communities had celebrated these rites before the arrival of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. Discussed in this study again is the Alert School Model launched by the Ghana Education Service and supported by UNICEF. This program aims at teaching children in Government Basic Schools in Cape Coast how to prevent HIV/AIDS. Theories such as socialization, articulation of tradition and modernity were used in the study. These theories reflect the roles communities and individuals play in contributing to prevent HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast municipality.

The first research question in this study is *“How does western system of school and the Fante traditional education contribute to the prevention of HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast Municipality?”*

Government and private owned schools in Cape Coast have contributed to the prevention of HIV/AIDS. The Alert School Model has sought to teach HIV/AIDS education in government basic schools by teachers who have been trained on the program. These teachers in government schools at Cape Coast have organized special clubs in their individual schools to teach HIV/AIDS. Apart from relating their knowledge on HIV/AIDS education in different subjects, these clubs are where teachers treat HIV/AIDS education thoroughly. Children are made to feel comfortable and asked questions on sex. Teachers tried to educate these children on sex. During data collection some teachers confirmed that they teach sex education in their individual subjects. Unfortunately, the Alert School Model does not extend to the private owned schools in Cape Coast. But teachers in private and government schools are mandated by the Ghana Education Service to relate and teach HIV/AIDS in individual subjects taught by teachers in Cape Coast, a head teacher confirmed in an interview during data collection.

This clause stipulated by the Ghana Education Service has helped to enlighten children on their sexuality in Cape Coast. I noticed that the last topic for the Class Five Science textbook was about HIV/AIDS. Since it is mandatory for private and government basic schools to use the same textbook in teaching children, this would contribute to the knowledge of these children. This science textbook is up to date but teachers use internet sources to upgrade their knowledge on the disease.

The Fante educational practices revolve around puberty rites in Cape Coast. Sex education is taught at home during puberty rites. Puberty rites give opportunity to parents, community leaders, fathers, uncles, and the entire community to educate the youth on sex education. What I observed in Cape Coast during data collection was that children were not supposed to indulge in sex. The Fante society disapproves of children getting involved in sex. Therefore a child who already knows about sex before initiation is considered as “abofra bone” in Fante language which literal meaning is “bad child” in English language. This ritual practices have warned children to abstain from sex because of the consequences attached to the ritual in the Fante society. This ritual prevents children from indulging in sex hence preventing HIV/AIDS in the municipality. As the youth are educated by the community on their sexuality during this initiation ceremony, it also deters them from having sex. This was because a child found pregnant before the initiation rites was disbanded from the society in the olden days. Responsibility was shared between individual and the community. Puberty rites became a social contract in the olden days. This appears that the Fante society do not encourage sex amongst children. Today in Cape Coast I observed that children who are sexually active are target of gossip by community members. The concerned community members inform the parents of such children behavior. These children are talked to by their parents to desist from sex and if it continued parents in the community may prevent their children to make friends with those children who had already indulged in sex. The community shuns deviant children. Sometimes parents of these children who are seen as irresponsible as a parent confirmed in interview during data collection. Most parents revealed that even though puberty rites were gradually dying in Cape Coast because of Christian religious denominations such as Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican and many other churches, they continued to teach their children on sex education daily at home to help solve HIV/AIDS. Fante parents revealed that constant education and discussion of sex at home has helped prevent HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast municipality.

In recent days at Cape Coast puberty rites are considered to be outmoded by some members in the community because of “Christian faith and civilization”. Some traditional leaders I encountered in the field have devised ways of performing the ritual to their grandchildren by preserving their customs and traditions. I was told in an interview by **informant II** that traditional leaders such as chiefs and heads of clan in Cape Coast are now modifying traditional puberty rites. So they wait to be invited by the girl’s family and then come to perform the rites. This is a new way of performing the rites in an urban environment. These puberty rites do not involved the community but rather clan members in the extended family of the initiate are allowed to participate, if he/she wishes to be part of the ritual. These traditional leaders in the clan sit with the child who has menstruated for the first time and educate her thoroughly on sex education and consequences of rampant HIV/AIDS in the municipality. These elders and her mother counsel the girl to abstain from sex. The girl is motivated by mother and traditional leaders to pay attention to her studies at school. After this tutorial of abstention, a boy in the family is sent to fetch sea water for the girl to bathe. The girl is given instruction by the mother before she moved to the bathroom alone to bath. Mashed yam and oil are prepared for her to eat. On Sunday the girl is aided by her mother and goes to church.

Though the ritual does not involved the whole community now it appears that these traditional leaders in Cape Coast want to preserve their tradition and customs on sex education. These leaders are also preserving their heritage, that is, what made Fantes as an indigenous group in Ghana. This sense of involvement demonstrated by some leaders in Cape Coast means that the society cares. These actions by traditional leaders in Cape Coast could go a long way to prevent HIV/AIDS in the communities through puberty rites.

The second objective of the study was “*Why is HIV/AIDS education not a holistic subject on the curriculum where students can be tested on their knowledge about the disease?*”

In Ghana and Cape Coast as a whole, HIV/AIDS education is not a single subject on the curriculum in basic and secondary schools. I used the term holistic to mean that HIV/AIDS education is not treated as a singular course on the curriculum. Parents/guardians and my observation during data collection observed that children do not pay attention to subjects that are not examinable in Cape Coast. Most children in Cape Coast prefer to join science and mathematics club rather than HIV/AIDS clubs in government schools. This is because children would upgrade their knowledge on examinable subjects to HIV/AIDS education

which is not graded in schools. An attempt by parents to communicate this observation to educational authorities in Cape Coast has proved futile. It is evident from my previous analysis on HIV/AIDS education on curriculum that politicians and Ghana Education Service at Cape Coast are not ready to treat HIV/AIDS education as an examinable subject. As of now, HIV/AIDS education continues to be integrated to other subjects in the curriculum at Cape Coast.

6.1 Recommendation

HIV/AIDS is a social menace which has no cure but can be avoided if prevention methods are followed by Fantes in the Cape Coast municipality. This thesis argues that traditional practices such as puberty rites are educative and could help solve HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. Below are some recommendation made based on the research findings in Cape Coast municipality. I will suggest these interventions.

Groups could be formed by the people in the communities which may comprise of elderly women/men who could teach and educate the young generation on the Fante puberty rites. This can be done once in a month to help children learn about the history, community, puberty rites and custom/tradition of the people of Cape Coast. Support groups that reinforce the shared values of a community and care about the welfare of the people.

The curriculum in schools should be adjusted to teach puberty rites in Cape Coast. Puberty rites could be adopted on the Alert School Model to teach basic, secondary and tertiary institutions. This will help the youth to know that the Fante communities cherish abstinence. These youths will also learn that Fante's do not encouraged child sex that was why puberty rites were performed in the societies. The values these children would derive from learning and studying the Fante puberty rites will prompt some of these children to know that the society cares for their health.

Cape Coast would be an AIDS free municipality if HIV/AIDS education is treated as a single subject on the curriculum by the Ghana Education Service. The Ghana government should modify the curriculum to teach HIV/AIDS education. The fact that up until date the world has no vaccine for the disease and HIV/AIDS continued to wipe the people of Cape Coast, there

should be a concerted effort by Ghana government to tackle the disease by teaching the causes and prevention in schools at Cape Coast. Children should be taught on HIV/AIDS thoroughly, examined and awarded deserve pupils who excel in the subject with prizes at Cape Coast. This would encourage other children to learn on HIV/AIDS subjects in schools at Cape Coast municipality. I observed in class at a Day Junior Secondary school at Cape Coast that many of the children have knowledge about HIV/AIDS but do not know the serious impact on HIV/AIDS. I will recommend that HIV/AIDS education on the curriculum should be supported with pictures and films. It was confirmed by informants that children in Cape Coast prefer “seeing to believe” than abstract learning. When HIV/AIDS education is supported with pictures/films, it would dawn on children to be careful with the kind of lifestyle he/she would lead in Cape Coast municipality.

The Alert School Model should be extended from government basic schools to private schools by the government of Ghana in Cape Coast municipality. This would create equity of knowledge sharing amongst children on HIV/AIDS education.

The Ghana education service should motivate teachers to teach HIV/AIDS education in their subjects and Alert School Model on HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast. The municipal assemblies, traditional leaders and the communities at Cape Coast should give incentives to teachers. These incentives will boost the morale of these teachers to teach HIV/AIDS education. The incentives could be financial assistants or home appliances such as television and audio system to deserve teachers. Most teachers complained during data collection at Cape Coast that they do not get incentives either from the communities or government by going extra mile to teach HIV/AIDS Education at Cape Coast. These teachers effort are discouraged and the lack of motivation prevents most teachers to relate HIV/AIDS education in their respective subjects.

Traditional authority, churches and NGO (non-governmental organization) should come together. There are not much economic activities in Cape Coast. People are not gainfully employed and unemployment is high in Cape Coast. The Municipal Assembly and traditional leaders I am referring to chiefs should be able to support needy but brilliant children in schools at Cape Coast. When people are well educated with employment the issue of HIV/AIDS could be minimized. There should be vocational schools which will equip these youth with skills. Technical and sowing centers should be created to equip these girls and boys with skills in ICT (Information communication technology).

There is a possibility for budding and future researchers to conduct fieldwork in Cape Coast. Researchers should find informants who represent the voice of the people in Cape Coast. Qualitative research should be employed by researchers to collect detailed description of narratives and stories in the field. Fante puberty rites narrative in Cape Coast municipality could be essentially useful for future studies in combating HIV/AIDS in the indigenous studies. Moreover, the study of dying tradition of the Fante puberty rites in the Cape Coast municipality is important within indigenous studies.

The study has reveals that Fante puberty rites in Cape Coast municipality would help prevent HIV/AIDS if the initiation rites could be integrated on the Alert School Model. Most of the informants during data collection lamented that even though puberty rites ritual has died in the municipality, the ministry of education must help to revamp the teaching of children in Cape Coast about the puberty rites in the curriculum. Puberty rites ritual does not involved the using of sharp objects to cut initiates body rather it showcase the educational practices of the Fantes and celebration of womanhood. The awareness creation of sexuality generated by puberty rites stipulate young men /women to abstain from sex hence preventing sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Puberty rites bring the tradition of the people. I used the concept of “tradition” in the study to refer the belief and practices that is accepted in the Fante’s society at Cape Coast municipality.

Besides, the Alert School Model has helped teachers to enlighten children on HIV/AIDS prevention in Cape Coast. The government of Ghana has not included HIV/AIDS education as a subject that can be treated on its own in the curriculum at Cape Coast municipality. This action taken by the government of Ghana is problematic in solving HIV/AIDS at Cape Coast. Teachers in the municipality have created clubs in schools to teach HIV/AIDS prevention in the basic schools.

Furthermore, the Fante puberty rites and the alert school model could work hand in hand to help solve HIV/AIDS in Cape Coast.

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1. In the context of school community pillar participation, the alert school model has linkages with the Community through the Parent Teacher Association and school management committees This has been designed to strengthen the link between the school based HIV and AIDS activities and related activities for out of school children. Parents will use the information from the school management committee and parent teacher association meeting for themselves and to reinforce education of their children at home. Teachers and parents will use parent teacher association manual to educate members at their meetings on adolescent and reproductive health issues.
 2. Kenkey is fermented boiled corn dough eaten with hot pepper, fish and meat.