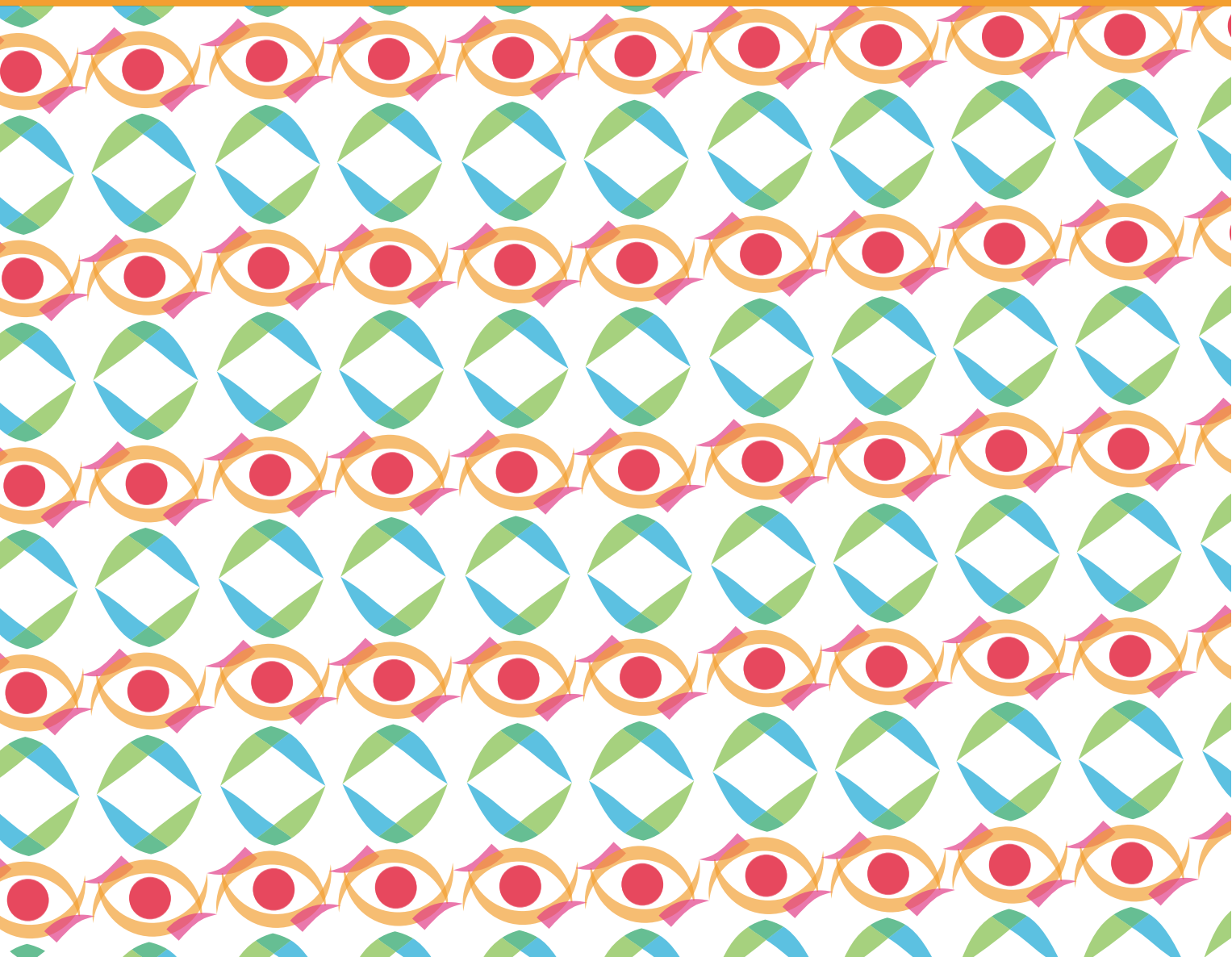




# The Kids Voice

& Young Journalist Adventure



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## Human Rights

*In this edition we tried to focus on human rights: their promotion, protection and cases of abuse. Throughout the articles, writers describe how affect the abuse of human rights to women and the promotion of special one: access to education.*

*The magazine is the product of PAAJAF's Youth Journalism project. The Youth Journalism (YJ) is a program aimed to create young media outlets where there will be a more diverse range of young people who benefit from global news and may advance a career in journalism. As the purpose of this magazine is help and encourage young people to engage in journalism, we include in this number a special section: What do believe children and youth about human rights? In this section you will find articles written by PAAJAF's Children's Networkers. The articles reflect their thoughts about human rights.*

*We also include a brief of Ghana history and the economic and political situation of that country where PAAJAF does so much to help.*

*I hope you enjoy this edition as we enjoy writing it. We really appreciate your desire to collaborate with the youth in Ghana*



**Thank you.**  
Anabella Corridoni  
Youth Magazine Coordinator





# WHAT WE DO?

Providing Adolescents and Adults with Jobs for Advancement in the Future (PAAJAF) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that focuses on providing: Basic facilities (Food, shelter, clothing), Information (Healthcare, Community building, Job training) and Education for underprivileged children, youth and women. It is a registered NGO with a Certificate of Recognition from the Department of Social Welfare in Ghana – Certificate Number D.S.W./4003 and Register General G21, 781 have affiliation with United Way Ghana, GlobalGiving, Global Health Council and Gift In Kind International

Base on our vision and mission, we have the following current programs gear towards meeting our goals: **Sponsor a child, Education, Teen Centre, Adult Education, Children's Networking, Youth Journalism, Health and Wellness Education, and Exchange Program.**

For the year 2011, we are delighted to inform you that we will be carrying on PAAJAF projects and are depending 100% on your donations both cash, in-kind and partnership. PAAJAF urgently requires an office space to coordinate a team of local and international volunteers and to manage programs of the foundation; an amount of \$13,500 is needed. Having an office will enable PAAJAF to: enlist local volunteers in a professional setting, meet with and support program participants, have contact with a variety of stakeholders engaged in PAAJAF work, use ICT and other equipment for global networking, and maintain an effective filing and storage system also to work on this magazine to provide you more stuff.

To see more about the contents of our programs please visit. [www.paajaf.org](http://www.paajaf.org)

## SPONSOR A CHILD PROGRAM

their basic needs – though inadequate. Therefore, use donations to support such needy families for the sake of the sponsored child.

### WHAT IS SPONSORSHIP?

Sponsorship is a very personal way to share your blessings with an impoverished child. Through regular contributions, you'll help improve a needy child's life with basic necessities, such as health care, education assistance, durable clothing and shoes, improved living conditions and more. Additionally, you being a burden sharer, your help will give a needy child an emotional and mental comfort because he or she has known that someone cares for him or her elsewhere.

### I'M READY TO SPONSOR A CHILD TODAY. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Please, drop us email today, fill the form, write the name of the child you want to sponsor. An amount of \$1 per a day or \$30 per a month can bring life and hope to a needy child.

### WHAT BENEFITS GO TO A SPONSORED CHILD?

Your sponsorship helps us provide a needy child with life's basic needs - education, health care, and nutritious food. PAAJAF steps further to do the following deductions from any fiscal contributions - 3% to General Fund for administration purposes and 2% for Educational infrastructure.

### AM I THE ONLY SPONSOR FOR A NEEDY CHILD?

Most one-on-one sponsorship programs provide "supplementary care" for children living in poverty. However, the children being sponsored already have homes and families that are providing

### IF ONE IS COMMITTED TO A PARTICULAR LEVEL OF SPONSORSHIP, CAN HE/SHE GIVE MORE SOME MONTHS?

Yes, the additional money will be designated for the foundation's general fund. (Unless you specify to a particular project). The support we receive through the child sponsorship program is typically insufficient to cover the complete monthly support of a child. We also use those funds to cover operational expenses.

### HOW LONG WOULD A SPONSORSHIP LAST?

Normally, sponsored children are coming from a very poor family, and would otherwise not be able to attend school without a package. Sponsored children generally continue school till higher secondary. After that, they have a solid basic education, and can work to earn money for self. Some are very bright and can continue up to the University. If a needy child cannot continue his or her study, PAAJAF would inform the sponsoring parent(s) about it.

### HOW ARE CHILDREN CHOSEN FOR SPONSORSHIP?

Members in the community help identify the most vulnerable children in the area. Then, PAAJAF takes up fact finding research to ascertain the truth or otherwise of the claim. It is only when a child's level of need is considered to be critical then he or she is recommended for sponsorship. Even here, the



the consent of the families is requested for approval before PAAJAF can take it up.

#### AS A CHILD SPONSOR, WHAT WILL I RECEIVE FROM PAAJAF?

When one becomes a child sponsor, one will receive a Welcome Package from PAAJAF - letter of introduction from the sponsored child by PAAJAF. Each year, a sponsor shall receive a report detailing the progress of the sponsored child and the community project in general. This report also includes an updated photograph of the sponsored child.

#### CAN I VISIT MY SPONSORED CHILD?

A visit to your sponsored child and their community is a rewarding way to see the benefits of your contributions. You must contact PAAJAF at least three months before your intended departure date and before you make any travel arrangements.

#### SHOULD I WRITE TO MY SPONSORED CHILD?

PAAJAF strongly encourages you to write to your sponsored child. Children love to hear from their sponsors and often treasure the letters and photos that are sent. Please note that while your letters may reach your sponsored child within a few weeks, the response time can be quite long (up to six months, in some cases). When writing to your sponsored child, use the PAAJAF's address.

#### **All correspondence must include:**

*PAAJAF's postal address (exactly as it appears).*

*Your sponsored child's name*

*Please do not write your address inside the letter.*

#### CAN I SEND GIFTS TO MY SPONSORED CHILD?

You are welcome to send simple gifts with your letters and cards. Please send only flat items such as photos, bookmarks, stamps or stickers in an envelope not bigger than "6x9". (Please do not send parcels or cash.)

#### WHAT IF I CANNOT MAKE MY CHILD SPONSORSHIP PAYMENTS?

Should you be unable to make regular child sponsorship payments, please contact PAAJAF as soon as possible to explore the range of options available.

#### WHAT IF I NEED TO DISCONTINUE MY SPONSORSHIP?

If we realize that your circumstances may change and that you may no longer be able to sponsor your child. Simple inform PAAJAF about your situation need to discontinue.

To see who need your sponsorship visit our website [www.paajaf.org](http://www.paajaf.org)

## Prevailing Political and Economic scenario in Ghana; A perspective.

### Introduction

Ghana became the first country in Africa south of the Sahara to gain independence from colonial rule. The situation in Ghana acts as an inspiration to many nationalist movements all over the continent. The economy seems to be good and promising as Ghana is rich with gemstones, forests and crops. Ghana is the leading cocoa exporter in the world and produces one tenth of the world's gold. About one fourth of the population is literate which proves that a good chunk of the populace is educated. Modern Ghana in West Africa, takes its name from the ancient kingdom of Ghana, which was approximately 500 miles north of present-day Accra. Ancient Ghana controlled the gold trade mining areas to the south and the Saharan trade routes to the north.

The history of Ghana is full of tragedy and pathos, the post independence history, a charismatic leader Kwame Nkrumah fed the populace an unbelievable fantasy, and Ghana is still bearing the repercussions. Nkrumah is increasingly popular, but now faces the huge challenges of uniting a country of people that has a cluster of people who do not much in common. On the contrary, some groups still carry hostility towards each other from centuries of wars and the scars of slave trade. Political parties, which are regional or tribal oriented, are prohibited to enforce a feeling of national unity.

Kwame Nkrumah, first prime minister, and then president of the modern Ghanaian state, as an anti-colonial leader, sought a united Africa that would not drift into neo-colonialism. He was the first African head of state to promote Pan-Africanism, an idea he came into contact with during his studies at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania (United States), at the time when Marcus Garvey was becoming famous for his "Back to Africa Movement." He merged the teachings of Garvey and the African-American scholar W. E. B. Du Bois into the formation of the modern day Ghana. Ghana's principles of freedom and justice, equity and free education for all, irrespective of ethnic background, religion or creed, borrow from Nkrumah's implementation of Pan-Africanism. Europeans brought several changes to trading patterns and the economic focus shifted from the kingdom of Ghana to the West African coastline. Gradually slaves began to replace gold. Despite the devastations of slave trade, which left many regions depopulated, the shape of modern Ghana was taking place. At the end of the 17th century, there were a small number of small states on the Gold Coast.

### Present Economical Status of Ghana- A Perspective

Ghana is rich in natural resources and agriculture accounts for almost one-third of GDP and employs more than half of the workforce, mainly small landholders. The services sector accounts for 40% of GDP. Gold and cocoa production and individual remittances are major sources of foreign exchange. Oil production at Ghana's offshore Jubilee field began in mid-December 2010, and is expected to boost the economic growth of the country. Estimated oil reserves have jumped to almost 700 million barrels. Ghana signed a Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact in 2006, which aims to assist in transforming Ghana's agricultural sector. Ghana opted for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) program in 2002, and is benefiting from the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative that became effective in 2006.

In 2009, Ghana signed a three-year Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility with the IMF to improve macroeconomic stability, private sector competitiveness, human resource development, and good governance and civic responsibility. Sound macro-economic management along with high prices for gold and cocoa helped sustain GDP growth in 2008-10. In early 2010, President John Atta Mills targeted recovery from high inflation and current account and budget deficits as his priorities.

### Present Economic Status of Ghana-

The sources reveal the following data that gives a sneak peak in the economy of Ghana in spite of the upheavals. The data available is as follows-

- People in Agriculture: 29.9%
- People in industry: 18.6%
- People in services: 51.4% (2010 est.)
- Population below poverty line 28.5% (2007 est.)
- Labor force -10.56 million (2010 est.)
- Labor force - by occupation--- Agriculture (56%) , Industry (15%) , Services (29%)
- Unemployment rate- 11% (2000 est.)
- Agriculture – products are Cocoa, rice, cassava (tapioca), peanuts, corn, shea nuts, bananas; timber
- Industries like Mining, lumbering, light manufacturing, aluminum smelting, food processing, cement, small commercial ship building



- Industrial production growth rate is 5% (2010 est.)
- Electricity – production- 8.167 billion kWh (2008 est.)
- Electricity – consumption- 6.06 billion kWh (2008 est.)
- Electricity – exports-538 million kWh (2008 est.)
- Electricity – imports-263 million kWh (2008 est.)
- Oil – production-8,880 bbl/day (2010 est.)
- Oil – consumption-60,000 bbl/day (2010 est.)
- Oil – exports-5,752 bbl/day (2009 est.)
- Oil – imports-68,830 bbl/day (2009 est.)
- Oil - proved reserves-660 million bbl (1 January 2011 est.)
- Exports -\$7.892 billion (2010 est.)
- \$5.84 billion (2009 est.)
- Export commodities are gold, cocoa, timber, tuna, bauxite, aluminum, manganese ore, diamonds, horticulture
- Export partners are Netherlands 11.7%, UK 7%, France 5.7%, US 5.6%, Ukraine 5%, Belgium 4.6% (2010)
- Imports -\$10.95 billion (2010 est.)
- \$8.046 billion (2009 est.)
- Import commodities are capital equipment, petroleum, foodstuffs
- Import partners are China 16.6%, Nigeria 12.7%, US 8.4%, Cote d'Ivoire 6.2%, UK 4.5%, France 4.2% (2010)
- Reserves of foreign exchange and gold-- \$4.7 billion (31 Dec. 2010 est.) \$3.165 billion (31 December 2009 est.)

\*(Source: CIA World Fact book is accurate as of July 12, 2011)

Ghana's economy at the start of 2009 was beset by severe macro-economic imbalances due to the combined effects of soaring energy and food prices in 2007-08, and the excess expenses during the election year. As the global credit crises deepened and the outlook for 2009 turned bleak, the key challenge facing the new administration was how to deal with the severe macroeconomic difficulties of 2009 within the context of global financial turmoil.

The global downturn affected the Ghanaian economy adversely, depressing the provisional growth rate of real GDP to 4.7%, down from an impressive 7.3% in 2008. Concerns have been expressed about the odds that this sobering growth will translate into an increase in the rate of poverty and compromise the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Ghana. The rate of growth of real GDP is projected to recover to the pre-crisis level of about 8.3% in 2011 with oil production and exports contributing significantly.

The slow economic performance in 2009 was shaped by two events that are self-inflicted macroeconomic instability resulting from the excessive fiscal slippages in 2008 and the global economic recession. Another reason for sluggish growth in 2009 was the stabilization effects of the new Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) arrangement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The World Bank and later the IMF offered to assist the incoming government with an extraordinary facility to deal with the financial difficulties, an offer which the government could not resist in the face of the huge resource gap in government finances and weaknesses in the balance of payments.

In May 2009, the new government submitted its economic programmes designed to deal with the severe macroeconomic imbalances to the World Bank and IMF. In June 2009, the World Bank approved 535 million US dollars (USD), out of which USD 300 million was for budgetary support. In July 2009, the IMF also

approved a loan of USD 602 million as balance of payment support. An additional USD 425 million was approved under the extended Special Drawing Rights (SDR) to shore up Ghana's international reserves. The loan, provided under PRGF, is described as one of the largest IMF financing packages for an African country during the global financial crisis. Characteristic of IMF stabilization facilities, the Ghanaian government was rushed to resort to austerity measures and spending cuts aimed at bringing the overall fiscal deficit down from 14.5% of GDP in 2008 to 9.4% of GDP by the end of 2009.

Official figures indicate that growth in output in 2009 was led by agriculture, which accounts for over a third of GDP and employs more than half of the labour force. The sector grew by 6.2%, a significant jump from being the worst sector in terms of contribution to growth in 2008. The high growth was led by growth in the crops and livestock sub-sector but with gains in all the sub-sectors. The impressive performance was mainly driven by the expansion in areas of cultivation and a good rainfall pattern in farming areas. The remarkable performance of the cocoa sector was due to the favorable world market price, combined with good agronomic practices such as disease and pest control, fertilizer use and good husbandry. The producer price of cocoa increased significantly in the 2008/09 cocoa season. The price incentive is expected to lead to significant output expansion in 2010-11 and at the same time reduce the incentive to smuggle cocoa across the Ghanaian border to Côte d'Ivoire.

## Structural Issues

The objective of the government to make the private sector the engine of growth remained on course in 2009. To enhance Ghana's competitiveness in global and regional markets, the government continued to implement policy reforms to lower trade barriers and the cost of doing business, and to promote greater efficiency among local entrepreneurs. According to the World Bank's Doing Business report, Ghana's rank declined 5 positions: from 87 in 2008 to 92 out of 183 in 2009. The high cost of borrowing and high inflation is among the major challenges faced by people who want to start a business in Ghana. In 2009, the Ministry of Trade and Industry instituted measures aimed at assisting micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) to overcome the challenges of starting a business, managing a business and dealing with the legal and regulatory issues pertaining to the business environment in Ghana. The ministry also instituted the MSME project through the Business Development services fund to provide credit assistance to small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The ministry also supported various Business Advisory Centres (BACs) through capacity building.

In the communication sector, the government pursued the goal of facilitating the development of reliable, cost-effective and world-class communications infrastructure and services, driven by appropriate technological innovations and access for all citizens, to enhance the promotion of economic competitiveness in a knowledge-based environment. To ensure universal access to telecommunications infrastructure, the government embarked on the Community Information Centres (CICs) project, in which 120 CICs were under construction nationwide. The education and health component of the Pan-African e-Network project was completed in 2009. The government's commitment to enhancing telecommunications in the country was obvious with its resolve in

monitoring the enlarged Ghana Telecom (GT) and Zane Communications in which the state has shares, to ensure efficiency in service delivery.

Ghana's equity market, though not all that integrated with the global stock market, experienced a slump beginning in the fourth quarter of 2008 and continuing through the second quarter of 2009. The situation was not much different from the downward trend observed in most global capital markets, because of low market activity characterised by low demand and ample supply for listed securities, creating downward pressure on share prices. The turmoil in the stock exchange market is partly responsible for the significant negative effects on the financial sector's balance sheet and on aggregate demand. It has a tendency to increase non-performing loans in the banking sector with negative consequences for financial stability in the country.

## Political Overview and Conclusion-

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Ghana enjoys one of the more robust democracies in Sub Saharan Africa. With the 2012 presidential and general elections approaching, the fate of president John Evans Atta mills and his administration will hinge on public perceptions on his ability to deliver on his electoral promises.

Saddled with starting projects promised in the national democratic congress (NDC) manifesto, the government also has the challenge of mapping and off-loading public servants onto the new Single Spine SALARY structure (SSSS) and improving the economic indicators.

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## Widespread harmful traditional practices and its effects on women.

By Mahua Maharana<sup>1</sup>

Harmful practices often are carried out in the name of 'traditions'. Mostly these are directed against women and tantamount to atrocity and Human Rights violation. These practices cause suffering, humiliation and marginalization of innumerable women worldwide and Ghana is no exception. These practices reinforce the fact that when it comes to women, society controls everything that they do. Women are denied the right to take decisions, even on issues that affect them directly.

Way back in 1979 United Nations General Assembly had adopted the resolution 34/180 that 'States Parties shall take all appropriate measures ... to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.' However, these practices continue to go on in the name of 'cultural patterns'.

Every social grouping in the world has specific traditional cultural practices and beliefs, some of which are beneficial to all members, while others are harmful to a specific group, such as women. Despite their harmful nature and their violation of international human rights laws, such practices persist because they are not questioned and take on an aura of morality in the eyes of those practicing them. The international community has become aware of the need to achieve equality between the sexes and of the fact that an equitable society cannot be attained if fundamental human rights of half of human society, i.e. women, continue to be denied and violated. But these issues have not received consistent broader consideration, and action to bring about any substantial change has been slow or superficial.



<sup>1</sup>Mahua attained her Masters in Modern History and Diploma in Social Service and Community Service. She worked as an insurance professional for 22 years and is a Life Associate of the Insurance Institute of India. Mahua now enjoys her retired life doing what she always wanted to, like embroidery, tending her potted plants, attending concerts, translating, writing and reading and is involved with voluntary activities. She is 53 and lives in Bhubaneswar, India with her husband, daughter and dog.

## Various harmful traditional practices and their effects on women and girl child

### A. Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM), or female circumcision as it is sometimes erroneously referred to, involves surgical removal of parts or all of the most sensitive female genital organs. It is an age-old practice which is perpetuated in many communities around the world simply because it is customary. It is believed that, by mutilating the female's genital organs, her sexuality will be controlled; but above all it is to ensure a woman's virginity before marriage and chastity thereafter. In fact, FGM imposes on women and the girl child innumerable health and psychological problems. The origin of FGM has not yet been established, but records show that the practice predates Christianity and Islam in practicing communities of today. The age at which mutilation is carried out varies from area to area. Since FGM is performed on infants as well as adults, it can not be seen as marking the rites of passage into adulthood, or as ensuring virginity. There are variations in this practice but are performed in one way or the other (e.g. Sunna, excision or clitoridectomy, infibulation, etc) throughout Africa, Asia, the Middle East, the Arabian Peninsula, Australia and Latin America.

In most rural settings throughout Africa, the operation is accompanied with celebrations and often takes place away from the community at a special hidden place. The operation is carried out by women (excisors) who have acquired their "skills" from their mothers or other female relatives; they are often also the community's traditional birth attendants. The conditions under which these operations take place are often unhygienic and the instruments used are crude and unsterilized, thus increasing the risk of blood-transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

FGM is known to be practised in at least 25 countries in Africa. Infibulation is practised in Djibouti, Egypt, some parts of Ethiopia, Mali, Somalia and the northern part of the Sudan. Excision and circumcision occur in parts of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, the northern part of Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda and parts of the United Republic of Tanzania. Outside Africa, a certain form of female genital mutilation exists in Indonesia, Malaysia and Yemen. Recent information has revealed that the practice also exists in some European countries and Australia among immigrant communities.

FGM is a custom or tradition synthesized over time from various values, especially religious and cultural values. The reasons for maintaining the practice include religion, custom, decreasing the sexual desire of women, hygiene, aesthetics, facility of sexual relations, fertility, etc. In general, it can be said that those who preserve the practice are largely women who live in traditional societies in rural areas. Most of these women follow tradition passively. In the countries where the practice exists, most women believe that, as good Muslims, for example, they have to undergo the operation. In order to be clean and proper, fit for marriage, female circumcision is a precondition.

### *Implications – psychological and health*

The effects of female genital mutilation have short-term and long-term implications.

- Haemorrhage, infection and acute pain are the immediate consequences. In rural areas where untrained traditional birth attendants perform the operations, complications resulting from deep cuts and infected instruments can cause the death of the child.
- The girl child or the women experience appalling trauma which affects them throughout their lives  
Keloid formation, infertility as a result of infection, obstructed labour and psychological complications are identified as later effects.
- Haematocolpos, or the inability to pass menstrual blood (because the remaining opening is often too small), can lead to infection of other organs and also infertility.
- Obstetric complications are the most frequent health problem, resulting from vicious scars in the clitoral zone after excision.

### B. Son preference and its implications for the status of the girl child

One of the principal forms of discrimination and one which has far-reaching implications for women is the preference accorded to the boy child over the girl child. This practice denies the girl child good health, education, recreation, economic opportunity and the right to choose her partner, violating her basic rights. Son preference refers to a whole range of values and attitudes which are manifested in many different practices, the common feature of which is a preference for the male child, often with concomitant daughter neglect. Although neglect is the rule, in extreme cases son preference may lead to selective abortion or female infanticide. Son preference is universal and not unique to developing countries or rural areas. It is a practice enshrined in the value systems of most societies. The areas most affected by the problem seem to be South Asia, the Middle East and parts of Africa.

### *Implications – psychological, health, socioeconomic*

- The psychological effect of son preference on women and the girl child is the internalization of the low value accorded them by society. Abundant evidence of abnormal sex ratios in infant and young child mortality rates, in nutritional status indicators and population figures show that discriminatory practices are widespread and have serious repercussions.
- Geographically, there is often a close correspondence between the areas of strong son preference and of health disadvantage for females.
- For every growing girl who dies, there are many whose health and potential for growth and development are permanently impaired. Countless reports the world over have demonstrated that, in societies where son preference is practised, the health of the female child is adversely affected.
- The introduction and expansion of scientific methods of sex detection have led to a revival of female foeticide and infanticide.
- Access to education by itself is not enough to eliminate values held by society, for such values are in most countries transmitted into educational curricula and textbooks. Women are thus still depicted as passive and domestically oriented, while men are



depicted as dominant and as breadwinners

■ Although in many countries school drop-out rates are steadily falling, they continue to be higher among girls than among boys. The reasons for the high drop-out rate among girls are poverty, early marriage, helping parents with housework and agricultural work, the distance of schools from homes, the high costs of schooling, parents' illiteracy and indifference, and the lack of a positive educational climate.

■ From an early age, girls from rural and poor urban homes are burdened with domestic tasks and child care, which leaves them no time to play.

■ The status of girls is linked to that of women and their exploitation. A woman's work never ends, especially in rural areas and in poor urban households.

■ Despite lot of sincere attempts by the states, evidence indicates, that as girls grow older they face discriminatory treatment in gaining access to economic opportunities. Major inequalities persist in employment, access to credit, inheritance rights, marriage laws and other socio-economic dispensations. Compared with men, women have fewer opportunities for paid employment and less access to skill training that would make such employment possible. Women are usually restricted to low-paid and casual jobs, or to informal activities. Landlessness has increased among women, and the number of women cultivators has declined in some regions, partly due to increased mechanization of agriculture. An increasing number of women in most developing countries are occupied in the informal, invisible sectors where national social and labour legislation on maternity benefits, equal wages and crèche facilities does not apply.

## C. Female infanticide/foeticide

Sex bias or son preference places the female child in a disadvantageous position from birth. In some communities, however, particularly in Asia, the practice of infanticide ensures that some female children have no life at all, violating the basic right to life. Modern techniques such as amniocentesis and ultrasound tests have given women greater power to detect the sex of their babies in time to abort. Illegal abortion, particularly of female foetuses, either self-inflicted or performed by unskilled birth attendants, under poor sanitary conditions has led to increased maternal mortality, particularly in South and South-East Asia.

## D. Early marriage and dowry

Early marriage is another serious problem which some girls, as opposed to boys, must face. The practice of giving away girls for marriage at the age of 11, 12 or 13, after which they must start producing children, is prevalent among certain ethnic groups in Asia and Africa. The principal reasons for this practice are the girls' virginity and the bride-price. Young girls are less likely to have had sexual contact and thus are believed to be virgins upon marriage; this condition raises the family status as well as the dowry to be paid by the husband. In some cases, virginity is verified by female relatives before the marriage.

### *Implications*

■ Child marriage robs a girl of her childhood-time necessary to develop physically, emotionally and psychologically.

■ Early marriage inflicts great emotional stress as the young woman is removed from her parents' home to that of her husband and in-laws. Her husband, who will invariably be many years her senior, will have little in common with a young teenager.

■ Girls from communities where early marriages occur are also victims of son preferential treatment and will probably be malnourished, and consequently have stunted physical growth. Neglect of and discrimination against daughters, particularly in societies with strong son preference, also contribute to early marriage of girls.

■ Health complications that result from early marriage include the risk of operative delivery, low weight and malnutrition resulting from frequent pregnancies and lactation in the period of life when the young mothers are themselves still growing.

## E. Early pregnancy and practices related to child delivery

In many parts of the developing world, especially in rural areas, girls marry shortly after puberty and are expected to start having children immediately. Although many countries have raised the legal age for marriage, this has had little impact on traditional societies where marriage and child-bearing confer "status" on a woman. Those who start having children early generally have more children, at shorter intervals, than those who embark on parenthood later. Fertility rates have been falling over the past decade, but they remain very high in Africa, parts of Latin America and Asia. Once again, the link between delayed child-bearing and education is crucial. Early pregnancy can have harmful consequences for both young mothers and their babies. The risk to the young mother's own health is also greater. Poor health is common among indigent pregnant and lactating women

Generally throughout the developing world, the average food intake of pregnant and lactating mothers is far below that of the average male. Cultural practices, including nutritional taboos, ensure that pregnant women are deprived of essential nutriment, and as a result they tend to suffer from iron and protein deficiencies. This is generally the case in most developing countries, but especially throughout Africa. Although poor distribution of resources-whether due to harsh geographical or climatic conditions in a region, or to poverty resulting from a lack of purchasing power-contributes greatly to the severe imbalance of diets throughout Africa, taboos placed on food for religious or cultural reasons are an unnecessary practice which exacerbates the situation. The reasons for such taboos are many, but all are steeped in superstition. Permanent taboos are also placed on female members of most communities throughout Africa. From infancy, the female child is given a low-nutrition diet. She is weaned at a much earlier age than the male infant, and throughout her life she will be deprived of high-protein food such as animal meat, eggs, fish and milk. As a result, the intake of nutriment by the female population is lower than that of the male population.

Temporary taboos which are applicable only at certain times in the life of an individual also affect women disproportionately. Most communities throughout Africa have food taboos specially for pregnant women. Often these taboos exclude the consumption of nutriment essential for the expectant mother and foetus. These nutritional taboos are unnecessary impositions made on

women, who are already malnourished. It is perhaps not surprising that maternal and infant mortality rates are so high and life expectancy low in the countries concerned. But nutritional taboos also have far-reaching implications for women in the field of work, where their levels of productivity can be affected. Lack of basic knowledge of human bodily functions can lead to illogical conclusions when illness sets in, or especially when a mother or her infant dies. Surrounded by myths and superstition, what may be a simple mishap can be explained in much more sinister terms as the product of evil spirits or bad omens.

The use of herbal mixtures and magic is common during delivery throughout Africa. The chemical components of some of these mixtures are beneficial, but others are quite lethal, especially when taken in large dosage.

In the case of obstructed labour, the abdomen is at times massaged or pressed to force the baby out. Some Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) perform surgical operations to extract the foetus, using a knife or razor-blade to cut the labia minora and vaginal opening. A similar operation, known as the "Gishiri cut", is performed in some parts of Africa, and the likely complications are known to be haemorrhaging and infection.

Among the most bizarre treatments for obstructed labour are the psychological ones. In many societies, difficulty in labour or delay in delivery is believed to be punishment for marital infidelity. The woman is pressured to confess her misdeed so that labour may continue without complications. This practice is prevalent in several African countries. In addition to the psychological trauma suffered by the woman, the practice further delays her being taken to hospital.

Treatment of obstructed labour by ineffective and harmful traditional methods can also cause uterine rupture. Even when obstructed labour does not result in maternal death, it leads to prolonged or even permanent ill health in the majority of cases. For example, such traumatic labour often results in vesicovaginal fistula or rectovaginal fistula conditions that have far reaching physical as well as social consequences. In two African countries, a practice known as "Zur Zur" is performed on women between the 34th and 35th weeks of their first pregnancy. A deep cut is made in the anterior wall of the vagina, sometimes on the posterior wall. The wound is allowed to bleed, and then the woman rests for a while before being sent home to nurse her wound. The purpose of this operation is to prepare the woman for an easy delivery. However, the consequences can be death through excessive bleeding, shock, infection of the birth canal, and vesicovaginal or vaginal fistula.

Various forms of contraception and methods of tightening the vagina are practised throughout the world. Many involve inserting herbal mixtures and foreign objects—for example, aluminium hydroxide, cloth, stone, soap and lime—into the vagina. Many of these inserts have an irritating or erosive effect on the vaginal mucosa, which is a natural defence against infections and disease, such as HIV.

## F. Violence against women

Violence against women and girl children is a global phenomenon which cuts across geographical, cultural and political boundaries

and varies only in its manifestations and severity. Gender violence has existed from time immemorial and continues up to the present day. It takes covert and overt forms, including physical and mental abuse. Violence against women, including female genital mutilation, wife burning, dowry-related violence, rape, incest, wife battering, female foeticide and female infanticide, trafficking and prostitution, is a human rights violation and not only a moral issue. It has serious negative implications for the economic and social development of women and society and is an expression of the societal gender subordination of women. Most of the practices reviewed so far constitute acts of violence against women or the girl child by the family and the community, and are often condoned by the State.

### *The situation in Ghana*

By the Constitution of Ghana (1992) women in Ghana are recognized under law as having equal rights with men in all spheres of life. Ghana, as a member of the United Nations, African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, is also a signatory to a number of international and regional Human Rights instruments, which reinforce the human rights of women. Ghana has signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) since 1980, an indication of the government's commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of women. The law also affords women and men equal access to education, employment and health and equal opportunity to participate in political and social activities of the country. In spite of these constitutional and legal guarantees, the reality on the ground does not quite measure up to the rights provided under the laws.

■ In the Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions of the country, where belief in witchcraft remained strong, rural women and men suspected of witchcraft were banished by their families or traditional village authorities to "witch camps." Such camps were separate from the "prayer camps" to which persons with mental illness were sometimes sent by their families. Most accused witches were older women, often widows, whom fellow villagers identified as the cause of illness, crop failure, or financial misfortune.

■ Women also were subjected to traditional male dominance. Traditional practices and social norms often denied women their statutory entitlements to inheritance and property, a legally registered marriage with the associated legal rights, and the maintenance and custody of children<sup>2</sup>. There were female entrepreneurs, but poor access to credit remained a serious barrier for women who wanted to start or expand a business.

■ Women's rights groups were active in educational campaigns and in programs to provide vocational training, legal aid, and other support to women. The government was involved in educational programs, and many officials were advocates of women's rights.

■ The law prohibits FGM, but it remained a serious problem in the Upper West Region of the country, and to a lesser extent in Upper East and Northern regions. A girl was typically excised between 4 and 14 years of age. According to a 2008 study conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service with support from the UN Children's Fund, approximately 49 percent of girls and women between 15 and 49 years old in Upper West Region—where the practice was most common—had experienced some form of FGM, 20 percent in Upper East Region, and 5 percent in Northern Region. Intervention programs were somewhat successful in reducing the prevalence of FGM, particularly in the northern regions. Officials at all levels, including traditional chiefs, continued to speak out against the practice, and

and local NGOs continued educational campaigns to encourage abandonment of FGM and to train practitioners in new skills so they could seek alternate sources of income. In a 2009 survey of girls and women between 15 and 49 years old in Upper West Region, 85 percent stated that the practice should be discontinued, 10 percent were unsure, and only 5 percent supported its continuation. Lower prevalence of FGM among women in Upper East Region was highly correlated with increased education. There were no prosecutions of practitioners during the year.

- Forced child marriage, which was illegal, remained a problem with no improvement.<sup>3</sup>

- Although the Constitution prohibits slavery, it exists on a limited scale. Trokosi, a traditional practice found among the Ewe ethnic group and in part of the Volta Region, is an especially severe abuse and a flagrant violation of children's and women's rights. It is a system in which a young girl, usually under the age of 10, is made a slave to a fetish shrine for offenses allegedly committed by a member of the girl's family. The girl becomes the property of the fetish priest, must work on the priest's farm, and perform other labors for him. Because they are the sexual property of the priests, most Trokosi slaves have children by them. Even if released, generally without skills or hope of marriage, a Trokosi woman has continued obligations to the shrine for the duration of her life. In 1998 Parliament passed legislation that banned the practice of Trokosi in comprehensive legislation to protect women and children's rights. Human rights activists believe that the goal of eradicating the Trokosi practice is achievable with the new law<sup>4</sup> and have had some success in approaching village authorities and fetish priests at large. The question is, why girls and not boys. This is clearly because among communities who believe in this practice, girls are less valued than boys and therefore are expendable.

- Again, sometimes the policies in place with regard to education are not supportive of girls continuing to stay in school. Previously, when a girl got pregnant, that was the end of her education. She was dismissed whilst the boy who impregnated her was allowed to carry on with his education without any sanctions whatsoever.

- The majority of women do not have higher education or marketable skills, they are unable to obtain good jobs in the formal sector. They are employed mainly in the informal sectors and do not earn enough in these jobs to allow them to be economically independent. They therefore find themselves most of the time in a situation of economic dependency on the man. This dependency reinforces their low status in the society and therefore makes them susceptible to control by the men, violence and other forms of maltreatment and discrimination.

- Women's low status is often supported by societal structures such as religion, marriage and cultural norms. In most of the cultural traditions, women are often considered as inferior to men and because of that women are prevented or prohibited from undertaking some activities. In some places, women are not allowed to speak at public functions where there are men. If they do not speak, their needs and concerns are not heard. Consequently, they do not participate in decisions that affect them.<sup>5</sup>

- Some traditional practices are stricter in case of a woman than of a man. For instance, a man or woman whose wife or husband dies is expected to go through certain rites. In practice, whilst widows normally perform these rites over days and months, widowers, when they perform the rites at all, do so over a relatively short period. Some of the rites are very harsh and sometimes could lead to serious health hazards on the widow. Pepper thrown into eyes of the widow could lead to blindness. A rope tied around the neck of the widow whilst she is paraded

around the village, sometimes with no clothes on, is an affront to the dignity of the widow.

- In some parts of the country, old women become the object of scorn and hatred and are blamed for every misfortune that befalls the community. Such women are usually accused for the untimely death of younger persons, even when it can be proved that the death was as a result of an epidemic, such as measles, cholera etc. which has befallen on the community. These old women, who are branded as witches, are often exiled from their homes and banished to live in secluded communities with no possibility of supporting themselves because of their old age. It is very sad that these women who have spent the productive part of their lives as mothers, wives and useful members of the community, suddenly become outcasts because they have attained a certain age.

In the last census of 2000, the population of Ghana stood at 18,412,247 with women forming 51 per cent of the total population of Ghana. Women in Ghana, like their sisters in other African countries, have multifaceted roles both at home and at work. In spite of the important role played by the women of Ghana in the socio-economic sector, their contributions to the economy and social life have largely been ignored. Under Ghana's constitution, both women and men have equal status under the law. Despite these constitutional and legal guarantees, women still play subservient roles to men. Under the customary systems, women are expected to give precedence to men in all things, with the men taking all decision affecting the family. This position of being the subservient partner has created a situation where Ghanaian women are equated to children. In addition, women are often considered to be the property of their fathers and husbands. This control by men over women has meant that many women have accepted the situation allows men to "punish" them for alleged disobedience.

### *Profile of Physical Violence against women in Ghana:*

Violence is a threat to all women. For too long it has been kept silent. Many believe that violence at home is a "family affair" and should be dealt with inside the home. Violence is a threat not only to women, but affects society as a whole.

- 1 in 3 women were experiencing physical violence (beating, slapping or other physical punishment) at the hands of current or previous partners at the time of the study

- 33% had experienced physical violence in intimate relationships

### *Profile of Traditional Practices as Violence in Ghana*

These practices as we have seen earlier in the article cause physical, emotional and sexual damage to women. Traditional Violence includes the following:

- Female genital mutilation

- Tribal markings

- Food taboo's that dictate women should not eat certain foods at specific times or at all

- Cultural attitudes that indicate an inferior status for women and children punitive elements of widowhood rights such as food rationing, cold water bathing and lengthy abstentions from sex

- Bride price/dowry which encourage men to see women as property

- Forced marriage or child marriage in which the girls consent is not given for the marriage

- Adultery rites that publicly shame women for committing adultery but do not touch the man
- Trokosi, the forced enslavement of young female virgins

### *Actions that can be undertaken by the States and International /National Agencies*

A number of countries throughout the world have either taken or supported action to prevent traditional practices affecting the health of women and children, in particular FGM. Bangladesh, Sudan, Sweden are some of the countries which have passed specific laws against female circumcision. Lack of information from most countries of Africa and Asia makes it difficult to ascertain what recent action has been taken at national and grass-roots levels.

Some prominent non-governmental organizations have been working against such harmful traditions, like,

- Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children work to reduce the morbidity and mortality rates for women and children through the eradication of harmful traditional practices; to promote traditional practices which are beneficial to the health of women and children; to play an advocacy role by promoting the importance of action against harmful traditional practices at the international, regional and national levels; and to raise funds for and support local activities of national committees and other partners.
- FORWARD International (Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development) has been operational since 1983 and its aim is to promote good health among African women and children internationally. Its main focus is information provision, advocacy, training of service providers, counselling and networking with other groups internationally.
- Babiker Badri Scientific Association for Women's Studies, established in the Sudan in 1979 by a group of volunteer women in order to enhance research and education on women's issues. It runs an income-generating project for mothers in which education on FGM is gradually introduced.
- Sudan National Committee on Traditional Practices: The main objective of this national women's organization is to educate and raise awareness of harmful traditional practices at all levels of society. The Committee's main target groups are individuals who play influential roles in communities where FGM prevails, e.g. policy makers, service providers, and religious and community leaders.
- Women for the Abolition of Sexual Mutilation (CAMS) CAMS (Commission Internationale pour l'Abolition des Mutilations Sexuelles) was established in France in 1980. It has a focus on research and awareness raising.
- Rädda Barnen/Rädda Barnen is the Swedish Save the Children organization. It has worked tirelessly with numerous women's groups in Africa and throughout Europe, providing vital financial support and advice.

## **How the Governments can act**

### *Harmful Traditional Practices*

- A clear expression of political will and an undertaking leading to legislations to put an end to harmful traditional practices affecting the health of women and girl children, like female genital

mutilation, etc. are required on the part of the Governments of countries concerned.

- International instruments, including those relating to the protection of women and children, should be ratified and effectively implemented.
- Governmental bodies should be created to implement the official policy adopted.
- National committees should be established to combat traditional practices affecting the health of young girls and women.
- A survey and review of school curricula and textbooks should be undertaken with a view to eliminating prejudices against women.
- Courses on the ill effects of female genital mutilation and other traditional practices should be included in training programmes for medical and paramedical personnel. Instruction on the harmful effects of such practices should be included in health and sex education programmes.
- Topics relating to traditional practices affecting the health of women and children should be introduced into functional literacy campaigns.
- Audiovisual programmes (sketches, plays, etc.) should be prepared and articles published in the press on traditional practices adversely affecting the health of young girls and children, particularly female genital mutilation.
- Cooperation with religious institutions and their leaders and with traditional authorities is required in order to eliminate traditional practices such as female genital mutilation which are harmful to the health of women and children.
- All persons able to contribute directly or indirectly to the elimination of such practices should be mobilized.

### *Son preference*

- Wide-ranging motivational campaigns should be launched to educate parents to value the worth of a girl child, so as to eliminate such biases. Parents should be motivated to ensure the education of their daughters.
- It is necessary to emphasize that the mother is not responsible for selection. Governments must, therefore, actively attempt to change the misconceptions regarding the responsibilities of the mother in determining the sex of the child.
- Non-discriminatory legislation on succession and inheritance should be introduced.
- In the light of the dominant role religion plays in shaping the image of women in each society, efforts should be made to remove misconceptions in religious teachings which reinforce the unequal status of women.
- Governments should mobilize all educational institutions and the media to change negative attitudes and values towards the female gender and project a positive image of women in general, and the girl child in particular. Stereotyping of gender and any other form of gender bias in text books should be immediately stopped.
- Immediate measures should be taken by Governments to introduce and implement compulsory primary education and free secondary education and to increase the access of girls to technical education. Affirmative action in this field should be adopted in favour of the promotion of girls' education to achieve gender equity.
- Considering the importance of promoting self-esteem as a prerequisite for the higher status of women in the family and the community, Governments should take effective measures to ensure that women have access to and have control over economic resources, including land, credit, employment and other institutional facilities.



- Measures must be taken to promote health consciousness among women, with emphasis on their own basic health needs and nutrition.
- As son preference is often associated with future security, Governments should take measures to introduce a social security system.
- Public opinion makers, national institutions, religious leaders, political parties, trade unions, legislators, educators, medical practitioners and all other organizations should be actively involved in combating all forms of discrimination against women and girls.

### *Early marriage and child delivery practices*

- Governments are urged to adopt legislative measures fixing a minimum age for marriage for boys and girls.
- Such legislative measures should be reinforced with necessary mechanisms for their implementation.
- Registration of births and deaths, marriages and divorces should be made compulsory.
- Health issues relating to sex and family-life education should be included in school curricula to promote responsible and harmonious parenthood and to create awareness among young people about the harmful effects of early marriage, as well as the need for education about sexually transmitted diseases, especially AIDS.
- The media should be mobilized to raise public awareness on the consequences of child marriage and other such practices and the need to combat them.
- Governments should adopt and work towards "safe motherhood" initiatives.
- Governments should promote scientific and modern methods of male contraception, as well as female contraception. Contraception should be encouraged as a means of promoting the health of women and children rather than as a means of achieving demographic goals.
- To discourage the early marriage of girls, Governments should make provision to increase vocational training, retraining and apprenticeship programmes for young women to empower them economically. A certain percentage of the places in existing training institutions should be reserved for women and girls.
- Governments should recognize and promote the reproductive rights of women, including their right to decide on the number and spacing of their children.
- Governments should eliminate, through educational and legislative measures and the creation of monitoring mechanisms, all forms of harmful traditional childbirth practices. Governments should expand and improve health services and introduce training programmes for traditional birth attendants to upgrade their positive traditional skills, as well as to give them new skills on a priority basis.
- Research and documentation are essential to assess the harmful effects of certain traditional birth related practices and to identify and continue some positive traditions like breast-feeding.

### *Violence against women and girl children*

- Governments should openly condemn all forms of violence against women and children, in particular girls, and commit themselves to confronting and eliminating such violence.
- To stop all forms of violence against women, all available media should be mobilized to cultivate a social attitude and climate against such totally unacceptable human behaviour.

■ Governments should enact and regularly review legislation for effectively combating all forms of violence, including rape, against women and children. Governments should set up monitoring mechanisms to control depiction of any form of violence against women in the media.

■ Violence being a form of social aberration, Governments should advocate the cultivation of a social attitude so that victims of violence do not suffer any continuing disability, feelings of guilt, or low self-esteem.

■ Severe penalties for acts of rape and trafficking should be introduced and specialized courts should be established to process such cases speedily and to create a climate of deterrence.

■ Female infanticide and female foeticide should be openly condemned by all Governments as a flagrant violation of the basic right to life of the girl child.

■ Traditional practices of dowry and bride-price should be condemned by Governments and made illegal.

■ More and more women should be inducted in law enforcement machinery as police officers, judiciary, medical personnel and counsellors.

■ Gender-sensitization training should be organized for all law enforcement personnel and such training should be incorporated in all induction and refresher courses in police training institutions.

■ Mechanisms for networking and exchanges of information on violence should be established and strengthened. Governments should provide shelters, counselling and rehabilitation centres for victims of all forms of violence. They should also provide free legal assistance to victims.

■ Community-based vigilance should be promoted regarding gender violence, including domestic violence.

## Conclusions

Most women in developing countries are unaware of their basic human rights. It is this state of ignorance which ensures their acceptance-and, consequently, the perpetuation of harmful traditional practices affecting their well-being and that of their children. Even when women acquire a degree of economic and political awareness, they often feel powerless to bring about the change necessary to eliminate gender inequality. Empowering women is vital to any process of change and to the elimination of these harmful traditional practices.

Since the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993, it is hoped that all States will recognize and accept the universality and indivisibility of the human rights of women. It is also expected that there will be more ratifications of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. However, much remains to be done in the field of equality, taking into account the absence, in many countries, of real constitutional guarantees of fundamental human rights for all. The persistence of negative customary norms that conflict with and undermine implementation of both national legislation and international human rights standards must be addressed. But much remains to be done and it is only through concerted efforts of National and International forum that harmful practices against women will be eliminated.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154349.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.afrol.com>

<sup>5</sup> [www.wildaf-ao.org](http://www.wildaf-ao.org)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.gendercentreghana.org>



## Reaching the Unreached Bridging the Academic gaps

By Aditi Panda<sup>1</sup>

### List of abbreviations;

**FCUBE:** Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education

**GET:** The Ghana Education Trust Fund

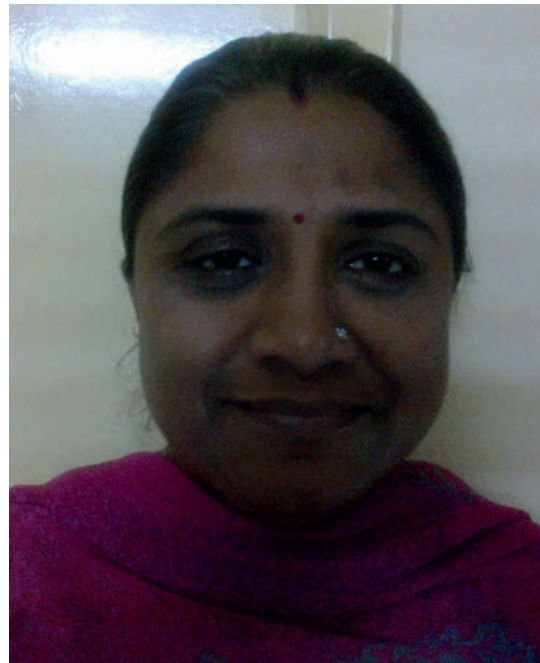
**QUIPS:** Quality Improvement in Primary Schools

**DTST :** District Teacher Support Team

**DSTS :** District Support Team System

**PMT :** Performance Monitoring Test

**SPAM:** School Performance Appraisal Meeting



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\*Source-UNICEF, GRPS, Google Chrome

## Introduction

Ghana has since independence made significant strides in its education system. The education landscape in Ghana today is the result of major policy initiatives in education adopted by past governments as well as the present one. Ghana has made good progress towards increasing access to education and narrowing gender gaps. In 2005, the Ministry of Education abolished school fees nationwide in basic education and introduced a capitation grant for all basic schools after a successful pilot in 2004. Grass root reality is completely different from what it is portrayed as the right kind of data does not reach the right kind of research.

More than 100 million children do not have access to school out of which majority are girls. Of the children who enroll in primary school, over 150 million drop out as the academic fees and other levies are still charged for access to education in most of the countries and that such charges have impact on excluding girls as they get mainly targeted in the financial crunch. 77 million children worldwide are not able to go to school due to lack of funds. The marginalized and the socially disadvantaged segments of the population like poor inhabitants of cities, AIDS orphans and the physically challenged have difficulty to obtain access to education. The consequence of this lack of access to education results in 15 % of those adolescents between 15 and 24 in third world countries are illiterate.

Making the difference in the lives of marginalized is possible only if the genre next is empowered with education which has to ensure inclusion of equal opportunities for education of girls. There are millions of children whose labour can be considered forced, not only because they are too young to choose to work, but also because they are, in fact, actively coerced into working due to lack of proper education and professional training. These include child bonded laborers, children whose labor is pledged by parents as payment or collateral on a debt, as well as children who are kidnapped or otherwise lured away from their families and imprisoned in sweatshops or brothels.

In addition, millions of children around the world work unseen in domestic service given or sold at a very early age to another family. The adolescent girls are the worst affected and easily get victimized in such circumstances and are forced to accept the situation as they have left with no alternative.

## Important Barriers against Girl Education:

Location often contributes to a child's lack of attendance and access to education. The topography of the area where the children reside makes it more difficult for children to get to school. The severe weather conditions also makes school attendance erratic and force children to remain at home. Gender also contributes to a child's lack of access and attendance to education and trail behind. It is generally believed that girls are often discouraged from attending primary schooling, especially in less developed countries for religious and cultural reasons. The Situation in Ghana is not exceptional and girls always have to face the brunt of circumstances and share the family burden.

- Poverty is the root cause which affects the education of the children, especially girls who are forced to discontinue their primary education.
- The geographical constraints which influence the transportation facilities pose many hurdles to enable the children to attend school on a regular basis.
- The extra burden on the tender shoulders of the growing children to share the family responsibilities of either household chores and also assist in upbringing the siblings.
- Negligence has its consequences on children which can be devastating but leaves no visible marks but disrupts the academic life of the children without realizing it.
- Repeated migration in search of livelihood opportunities also creates hindrance in the path to good continuous primary education.
- The background and values of the family also creates an impact on the education of the girls as the preconceived notions of the society object to girls studying.
- The son preference which is prominent in the society gives an edge to the boy's education and the girls have to accept the situation mutely.
- The need to earn for fulfilling the family needs also disrupts the education of children.
- The dropout rate of girls from school is still higher than that of boys.
- Illiteracy rate is not only higher among females in Ghana than males; the rate of change is very low and slow.

The society and the Government have to join hands and work together for the up-liftment of the existing status of the girl child education, not only in Ghana but at a global level.

## Government Intervention to improve the status of Girl child Literacy in Ghana:-

Ghana has since independence made significant strides in its education system. The education landscape in Ghana today is the result of major policy initiatives in education adopted by past governments as well as the present one. Some of the laws, policy documents and reports, which have helped in meeting the educational needs and aspirations of the people are:

- The Education Act of 1961
- The Dzobo Report of 1973 (Recommended the JSS Concept)
- The New Structure and Content of Education 1974
- The Education Commission Report on Basic and Secondary Education 1987/88.
- The Education Reform Programme 1987/88
- The University Relationalization Committee Report 1988
- The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme, 1996. (1992 Constitution)
- The FCUBE Policy Document and Programme of Operations, 1996
- The Ghana Education Trust Fund - GET Fund Act 2000. (Act 581)

The above Government initiatives have not only helped in structurally transforming the education system but also improved the access, quality teaching and learning, infrastructure delivery as well as management efficiency.

The Education Reform Programme introduced in 1987/88 and the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) 1996 programme, have contributed immensely to the structure of Basic



Education that now consists of 2 years of Kindergarten, 6 years Primary Education followed by 3 years Junior Secondary.

Quality Improvement in Primary Schools (QUIPS), supported by USAID among other things helps to produce competent teachers, train education managers and planners and promote a supportive learning environment. A Mid-Term Assessment of The QUIPS Programme indicates that the programme is creating a positive impacting teaching and learning outcomes in primary schools. Currently QUIPS is being implemented in 429 schools throughout the country.

District Teacher Support Team (DTST) and its complete Team (DSTS) provide an anchor for improving the quality of teaching and learning at the district level. It provides support to schools in the area of good practices in literacy, numeracy and problem solving.

Performance Monitoring Test (PMT)/ School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM) were introduced in 1998, have proved to be effective tools in monitoring, teaching and learning outcomes in Basic Schools. The PMT is a test in English and Mathematics administered to 25%-50% of pupils in Public Schools. The results are discussed at School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM) where parents have the opportunity to analyse the performance of their children and map out strategies for improving their performance and school achieving set targets and the dropout rate decreases and encourage education of the girl child.

## Significant Achievements in the field of education for the Girl Child:-

The implementation of these interventions over the years by the Ministry and the development partners has helped to expand access, improve quality teaching and learning, improve the supply of logistics and curricula development as well as acted as a motivation to teachers. At the moment, in the public sector there are 12,225 Primary Schools and 6,418 Junior Secondary Schools with the total enrollment figures of 2,216,792 and 767,303 respectively. In the private education sector, the number of pupils in private basic schools is 550,423.

The number of public senior secondary schools stands at 474 with a total enrolment of 232,095. To help lay a solid foundation for science education, 110 Science Resource Centers have been established through out the country to enable secondary schools with well equipped science laboratory to have access to science practical. The supply of text books in senior secondary schools has also improved considerably, as part of the Ministry's plan to ensure that students have adequate text books for their studies. Another segment of secondary education is Technical/Vocational Education. It is provided in Secondary/Technical Schools, Technical Institutes, Vocational Schools /Training Centers and other post-basic education training institutions. Basically, the purpose of technical and vocational education is to equip young men and women with the technical and professional skills needed for the rapid socio-economic development of the country.

## Conclusion:-

The disparity between male and female education in Ghana was again reflected in the 1984 national census. Although the ratio of male to female registration in elementary schools was fifty-five to

forty-five, the percentage of girls at the secondary school level dropped considerably, and only about 17 percent of them were registered in the nation's universities in 1984

Ghana is seeing women have rising to positions of professional importance. Early 1990s data showed that about 19 percent of the instructional staff at the nation's three universities in 1990 was female. Of the teaching staff in specialized and diploma-granting institutions, 20 percent was female; elsewhere, corresponding figures were 21 percent at the secondary school level; 23 percent at the middle school level, and as high as 42 percent at the primary school level. Women also dominated many important professions in Ghana. When women were employed in the same line of work as men, they were paid equal wages, and they were granted maternity leave with pay. Education plays a pivotal role to enhance the standard of life and better prospects for the whole family

The socio economic prosperity of a country depends on the equal education status without any gender disparity. Education at a primary level acts as a step stone to develop a country.



# Human Right Articles

By PAAJAF children



*Author: Mercy Sam  
Age: 14years  
PAAJAF Children Networker  
Gbawe Methods J.H.S 2B*

I am Mercy Sam. A girl of fourteen (14) years of age, I am a member of PAAJAF Foundation's Children Network Group. I am writing on an article which is titled Human Right.

Human Right is the freedom and advantage that every individual is allowed to have under a constitution or that every member of a county is allowed to have. Some types of human right rights are political and civil rights.

In Ghana, we have lots of these and they all have roles in ensuring individual's rights and freedoms are not trampling upon.

**Civil Rights:** this right gives every individual the freedom to move from one place to another and join any association his or her choice and expresses his or her view or opinion on any issue without causing any damage to any other person's right or liberty. Secondly is about Political Rights. Political Right: is a type of right that every individual has to take part in every political activity in the country. For instance, every individual has the right to stand for an election and vote for others in an election. This right however has qualification condition that one must be satisfy. The fundamental human rights include free movement, and freedom to speech.

**Freedom of Speech:** this talk about the right in which every individual can say whatever they want provided it's not rude, shocking or obscene, lack of respect for people or persuade or make other people believe and to oppose other people's government. These are called the freedom of the press.

**Freedom of movement:** this briefly talks about the free movement of everyone in one's country. No one can put destructions on anyone's movement expect there is a state of serious or dangerous situation or emergency.

Their importances are:

1. Standard of living – this is learning without any destruction of level will help each person or group to acquire knowledge to better standard of living
2. Liberty – allowing individual to join one's choice, encouraging the natural law of moral rights of the things God created.

Some acts that take peoples human rights – unlawfully arresting people and sending them to prison without giving them the chance to be heard in an open court and refusal to allow the citizen to vote during election to elect their own government and many more.



Author: Jennifer Quansah  
PAAJAF Children Networker  
Gbawe Methods J.H.S 2B

I am a member of the PAAJAF Children Network. I am writing an article on human right. I am writing to have this opportunity to inform the general public about human right. Someone may ask what human right is. It is the freedom and advantage that every individual should be allowing to enjoyed under the constitution. Every individual of a country should know his or her right so that nobody will abuse it. There are five types of right and they are:

Legal right,  
Political right,  
Economic right,  
Social right,  
And natural right.

Political right- this is the tight to participate in every political activity in the country. It means that a person in a country can take part in any political party

Economic Right – it refers to how an individual have the right to own property. It means a person can have his or her own house, car, company etc. There are some basic right; e.g. the right to life, right to freedom of slavery and servitude, right to work, right to fair hearing, freedom from discrimination, freedom of association and right to education.

1. Right to Life: this means that every Ghanaian member has the right to live and cannot be killed unless a court sentenced someone to death due to offence the person committed to the law process

2. Right to Work: it this means that every Ghanaian member must have the right to work and receive equal pay for equal work done.

3. Right to Fair hearing: every citizen has to be heard in court of law. Even if he or she is convicted of a criminal offence, this is because a person is not guilty until charge by a competent law court.

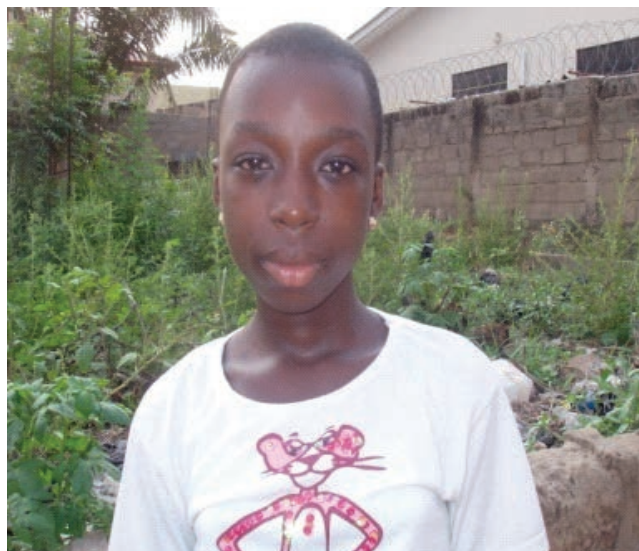
4. Right to Education: this means every Ghanaian member has the right to be educated.

All this are the right of a member of a country. There is something called human right abuse. It refers to how people's right is taken from them. They are not allowed to enjoy their own right. Thus women and children are mostly the once who's right are abuse because some of them are not educated and don't have the strength to fight.

Moreover, there are some institutions and their functions to help maintain the right of people. Examples are:

- NCC: they are responsible for educating the public on their right and freedom under the constitution
- The DOVVSU: They prosecute cases of rape, defilement, incest, indecent assault, threats and causing harm to individual.

There are so many of the institution. Victims should report to the institutions above to put a stop to human right abuse. My wish to all Ghanaians is that, they should help to bring peace in the country by helping victims to keep the right to others.



ACROPOLIS Schools  
J.H.S 1  
Age: 11 years

I am Abigail Nyani. I am 11years old. I am a member of the PAAJAF Children's Network and student of ACROPOLIS Schools at Gbawe. I am writing on the topic Human Rights.

I am writing to tell the general public of human rights in Ghana. To begin with, rights are the freedoms and advantages that everyone should be allowed to have under the constitution. Examples of human rights are right to life, right to freedom, right to work, right to education, and right for protection, right to own property, right to personal liberty etc.

Secondly, rights are grouped into five. They are legal, economic, political, social and natural rights. Legal rights are rights to be protected under the law. Economic rights are rights to own property, right to work and get fair wages or good salaries. Political rights are rights to vote and to be voted for. Social rights for decent or good accommodation, education, health care, good drinking water, freedom of religion, freedom of movement and natural rights are rights to life and freedom of speech.

Lastly, human rights in Ghana cannot be controlled by anybody. Human right is owned by everybody. If one is abused he/she can report to the authorities nearby.  
Thank you





Article by Ebenezer Tetteh-Narh  
Gbowe Methodist School  
J.H.S 2B  
Age: 13 years

I am Ebenezer Tetteh-Narh, a 13 year old boy and member of the PAAJAF's Children's Network. Permit me a space to draw the public attention on a very important topic which is "Human Rights". Before I proceed, I would like to utilise this stupendous opportunity to explain what is meant by Human Rights.

Human Rights are liberties and privileges (benefits) an individual is entitled to under the constitution to enjoy within the state. For example, the right to education, every citizen of a country is entitled to certain liberties and privileges that he/she can enjoy. These rights have been classified into six categories which are known as the types and they have been stated and elucidated below:

- Legal Right which is the first the type of right has to be the protection of individuals under the law. Rights for fair hearing, fair trial, and legal aids are also included.
- The second is known as Political Rights and also involves the right to vote for associations, freedom of assembly and the right to contest for any position in an election.

- Thirdly is the Economic right which is the right to own property, right to work and get fair wages or good salaries etc.
- Social rights which has to do with the right for decent or good accommodation, education, health good drinking water, freedom of religion, freedom of movements etc.
- Last but not the least is Natural rights which also involve the right to life and freedom of speech. Individuals are all entitled to the above mentioned types. However some of these rights are being abused and therefore citizens are not able to enjoy them. The infringement or violation of the rights and freedoms of the individual is referred to as "Human Right Abuse". Human Right Abuse has really made people like women, children foreigners' etc. suffer and they are still suffering a lot. They are suffering because they are not educated, they are poor, they lack political representation and also because they become afraid if they are threatened.

These can however be prevented, they can be prevented due to education, courts existence of the police, provision of socio-economic facilities etc.

With Education (i.e: when the individuals are educated) they are provided with knowledge and attitudes for preventing slavery, child abuse, and all forms of discrimination and violence against women, children, and minority groups.

The court also provides justice and compensations for those whose rights are being abused.

The police also make sure that there is an effective enforcement of laws and how to maintain order to enhance happiness in the societies.

Provision of social –economic facilities, the last but not the least must be provided equitable without bias to facilitate the enjoyment of our social and economic rights. These social-economic includes schools, hospitals, pipe-borne water, employment opportunities etc.

With all these points stated, I am ninety-nine percent sure that there will be free enjoyments of the right of people and this will promote peace, stability and harmony in the society.

Article by Patience Bonney  
Gbowe Methodist School  
J.H.S 2B  
Age: 15 years



My name is Patience Bonney. I am a member of PAAJAF Children's Network. I am writing an article on the topic "Human Rights". Human Rights are the claims of individuals and citizens backed or supported by law. E.g: the right to vote. Some of the examples of Human Rights are:

- The right to life
- Right to own property
- Right to education and information
- Right to be treated with dignity (respect) as a human being



- The right to protection from torture and degrading treatment
- Equality before the law
- The right to work
- Women, children and disabled right

I want to use this opportunity to explain to the few points I have mentioned above:

My first point I would like to explain this right to life: this means no one can take the life of another person a person shall be killed intentionally except by the due process of the law.

My second point I would like to explain this right to own property: this means every person has the right to own property either alone or together with others and that no one can take it away or use it without the permission of the owner.

My third point I would like to explain this right to education and information; every Ghanaian has the right to equal education facilities and opportunities.

My fourth point I would like to explain this right to be treated with dignity (respect) as a human being; this means no one can force another person to labour (work) without pay.

The Universal Human Rights declares that every individual must be treated with dignity and the same to other people. Some of the act that deprive people of their Human Rights and Liberties are :

- Depriving children of school education
  - Unlawfully arresting people and sending them to prison without giving them the chance to be heard in an open Court.
  - Refusal to allow the citizens to vote in an election to elect their own government.
- The functions of Human Right Institutions are:
- The NCCE is responsible for educating the public on their right and freedoms under the constitution.

It is also responsible for educating the public on the responsibilities of Citizen towards the country.  
The Domestic Violence and Victims Unit (DOVVU) formally WAJU, their functions are :

- To prosecute cases to rape, defilement, incest, incest, indecent assault, threats and causing harm to individuals
- They prosecute cases which have to do with domestic violence.

CHRAJ some of the functions are:

- They educate Ghanaian on human rights and freedom.
- They are to investigate complaints of discrimination, unfair treatment and other abuses of human right and freedoms of any person made against public officers like Civil Servant and Others I wish that the rights I have mentioned above will be considered, I also hope that no one will deprive each other his or her rights.



Article by Essel Emmanuel  
Gbawe Methodist School  
J.H.S 2B

My name is Essel Emmanuel. I am a member of the PAAJAF Children's Network. I am writing an article on "Human Right" First of all, I would like to explain the term Human Right. Human Rights are the freedoms and advantages that everyone should be allowed to have under the constitution.

these Human Rights are grouped into five: these are Legal Rights; these include the right to be protected under the law. Political Rights; include the right to vote and to be voted for, freedom of assembly and many more.

Economic Rights: these include the right to own property, right to work and get fair wages or good salaries.

Social Rights: These include the right for decent or good accommodation, education, health care, good drinking water and many more.

Natural Right: these include the right to life and freedom of speech

Secondly, I would like to explain some examples under the rights. The right to life, under the Natural Right; everybody in his/her country or community has the right to life, no one shall be killed intentionally except it is authorized by a court through the due process of law.

The right to education under the Social Rights: Every person shall have the right to equal educational opportunities, facilities and advantages.

Right to own Property under the Economic Right: Every person has the right to own property, either alone or together with others.

Thirdly, I would like to talk about some Basic Right:

- Right to freedom of slavery and servitude ; no person shall be made slave
- Equality before the law: all persons shall be equal before the law.

• Freedom from discrimination: no person be treated differently just because of being a man or a woman. No person shall be treated solely because of belonging to a certain church or worshipping God differently. Nobody shall be treated differently because of coming from a different ethnic group or from different area of Ghana. No person shall be treated differently

because that person is rich or poor or because that person is foreigner.

We shall all be treated equally before the law and in the considering the above explanations and reasons, I wish my Country and Community will see the need of Human Right.

