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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### TRADITION OR TRAUMA? UNCOVERING SOCIOCULTURAL DRIVERS OF CHILD ABUSE IN NANUMBA NORTH

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#### Abstract

Child abuse remains a pervasive challenge in many parts of Ghana, including the Nanumba North Municipality, where sociocultural dynamics significantly influence its prevalence. This study examines the sociocultural factors contributing to child abuse within this municipality. Data for this study were gathered using a qualitative research approach through interviews, and focus group discussions. The findings revealed that deeply ingrained cultural practices such as child fostering, early marriage, and child sexual violations, among other abusive practices, were prevalent in the municipality. The study concludes that there is an urgent need for culturally sensitive interventions that address the root causes of abuse while promoting positive parenting and chieftaincy practices, and community education. The paper also provides practical recommendations for stakeholders aimed at mitigating the impact of harmful sociocultural practices on children in the municipality and the country as a whole.

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#### Introduction:-

The rights of children have become one of the world's most important issues over time. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, every child is entitled to specialized care and assistance, and the family, as the primary social institution of society and the natural setting for everyone's development and wellbeing, particularly that of children, should enjoy a high degree of security and support in order to effectively carry out its obligations within the community (United Nation, 1989).

The United Nations likewise added that the child ought to experience childhood in a family, with an environment of acceptance, joy, and love to allow for the full and peaceful evolution of his or her individuality. Many governments and world organizations have put in significant efforts to attain the full acknowledgement of the children's rights (Unicef, 2020). There are many conventions and laws that the fundamental human rights that children all around the world are entitled. By establishing minimal requirements, the countries that sign the agreements must follow to uphold children's rights and give them access to medical, educational, legal, and social care in their nations. These

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conventions protect children's rights (Collins, 2017). According to the UNCRC (1990), the Sustainable Development Goals express a bold, ambitious, and unambiguous demand to stop violence against children. The right to be free from violence is also recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

#### **Global perspective of culture and Child Abuse:**

Globally, child neglect in its highest has been recorded in Africa, with girls constituting 41.8% and boys at 39.1% who are reportedly being neglected by their caregivers and more than 80% of children aged 1 to 14 years in the Africa region receive violent discipline at least once every month (Badoe, 2017). In many nations in the Sub of the Sahara, there are reported significant prevalence of sexual assault against children, many of whom are those living with disabilities. For instance, under the age of 18 in Nigeria recorded 66% girls and 58% boys were abused domestically, with the number of episodes per child varying from 2 in Senegal to 4 in Cameroon (Wessells, 2021).

This suggests that in West and Central Africa, bullying affects more than half of all children of school-going age of between 13 and 15 years. Also, a study conducted in 2015 indicated that the lifetime rates of physical abuse among South African 15–17-year-olds were 34%, mental abuse recorded 16%, and sexual abuse 20%. (Burton et al., 2015). Approximately 1 in 5 females had gone through physical abuse when growing up, with almost 1 in 20 having experienced very severe forms of abuse that required medical attention in Swaziland (Meinck et al., 2017).

#### **Cultural Practices and Child Abuse:**

Culture is a general public's normal asset of beliefs and ways of behaving, and its ideas of how individuals ought to act. Thoughts and ideas regarding demonstrations of oversight or commission could comprise abuse and neglect (Shneiderman, 2020). All in all, culture characterizes the generally accepted principles of raising a child and childcare. Various societies and cultures have distinct guidelines as to the guidelines of parenting practices are acceptable. According to some studies, views on child upbringing in most nations and cultures could diverge to the point that it would be exceedingly challenging to agree on what constitutes abuse or neglect (Messmer, 2023). In any case, cultural differences in the definition of abuse tend to highlight particular aspects of the parenting style, which indicates that there is a global assertion that the abuse of a child should not be tolerated and that sexual abuse and unusually strict disciplinary measures fit under this category (Saleem et al., 2017).

#### **African Culture and Child Abuse:**

The pervasiveness of child abuse in several African nations, including South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria, is seen as a major obstacle in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in these nations. According to Badoe (2017), the abuse of children in the African region is mostly factored by the culture and tradition of the people, with statistics indicating about 62% of reported abuses being socially and culturally determined. The case is the same in Ghana, where a large number of children endure various forms of abuse each year. Unfortunately, the sociocultural factors of child abuse have not been statistically represented because of the low rate of abuse reports.

According to the 2014 UNICEF Child Protection baseline report, girls and boys in Ghana continue to experience various forms of physical, emotional, and verbal abuse. When asked about their experiences with respect to physical punishment, children reported cases of abuse physically "all the time" or "sometimes," at home, only some 34% reported physical abuse from a teacher in the previous month (UNICEF, 2020). Child abuse has been estimated to cost Ghana more than \$200 million annually, thus, about one percent (1%) of the country's GDP (Richter et al., 2017).

Some of the social issues include the acceptance and promotion of violence as a management tool for children's behavior in homes, schools, among others, including the lack of prompt specialized case management for child protection for the reported cases, and social constraints like the makeup and organization of Ghanaian societies. Authoritarian parenting styles, social conditioning based on shame, collectivist home economies, living with extended family, and a fear of expressing one's feelings and inner ideas (Jewkes et al., 2015).

Culturally in the Ghanaian context, several activities that form the basis for child abuse have been practiced over the years, where existing literature has not really done much justice in covering them. Children, for instance, are treated and disciplined by parents, especially dads, with great discretion because they are seen as property and owned by them, but in many cases are most often physically abused all in the name of being disciplined (Akwaboah, 2021). Such a cultural view has eventually been incorporated into the way people live their lives in Ghanaian societies.

According to ancient law, the male was the head of the home and had the power to punish and defend those who were dependent on him, such as his wife and children.

Several other variables, which cannot be disregarded, also contribute to child maltreatment in Ghana's Northern area. Muller, Tranchant, and Oosterhoff (2016) claim that due to cultural, religious, traditional, and economic norms, certain types of child abuse, notably physical abuse, have long been accepted. For instance, severe physical punishment is frequently meted out to children in households and schools to deter bad behavior (Müller et al., 2016). Owing to poverty, it is also typical to see a lot of children engaged in risky domestic activity considered a form of work and child labor (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).

In matters about child protection, it is found that, in 2014 alone it is found that 59.4% of primary school children in the North had the lowest percentage of children who attended school. Furthermore, girls between the ages of 15 and 24 years, making up 44.3% of the general population, have the lowest rate of female literacy nationwide compared to the national average of 61.4%. It had Ghana's highest infant mortality rate in 2014, at 124 probable deaths per 1,000 live births, which was twice as high as Greater Accra's rate (Livingstone & Bulger, 2014). Of these, 13% of children in the Northern Area reportedly experiencing physical abuse, thus, according to reported cases of child abuse in many schools.

Comparing the North to other regions, punishments given to children in schools are harsh. These include; kneeling in the sun as one of the many forms of school punishments, coupled with beatings and canings. Also, 16.7% of adults have reported on a child being abused verbally by the teachers, and 21.4% of children themselves have reported being abused by the teachers (MoGCSP, 2015). MoGCSP, 2015, also stated that in the Northern Region, migration for labour is very common among boys and girls.

After junior high school, it has been observed that most girls relocate to Southern Ghana, including Kumasi and Accra, where they work as head porters popularly known as "Kayayo". This is mostly because their parents struggle to meet their requirements and work to pay for their secondary education. However, because of the nature of their profession and the fact that they are migrants, they are at risk of becoming pregnant or returning home with Sexual Transmitted Infections. If families are not able to provide adequate food for their wards during the dry season, which lasts from July to September, children are more likely to move.

The forestry and agricultural sectors are those where child labor is most common in the Northern Region. When they are working in the bush, children are at risk of being bitten by scorpions and snakes and frequently get hurt by machetes that are not handled properly. Girls fetch and collect water and firewood, while boys tend to look after cattle to graze (Lambon-Quayefio, 2021). They also play a significant part in these activities. In more populated areas, children also wash dishes in Eateries or Restaurants, sell water by the roadside, and perform any other manual labor they can find (Badoe, 2017). The GLSS 6 indicates that the region's average child starts working at the age of 9. According to Toufique (2022), between the ages of 5 and 17, 31.2% of children in the region participate in some type of economic activity, 22.8% of them work as youngsters, and 11.9% of them do dangerous jobs.

### **The Ghanaian Culture:**

Bimbilla, a town in the Nanumba North municipality in Ghana's northern region, has been identified as a locality where child abuse is common, similar to many other places in the country. People in the Bimbilla community, especially the majority, continue to believe that sending children to school, particularly girls, is a waste and non-profitable because children are more of an economic tool (Abudu, 2017). Instead of focusing on the well-being of the children, the community places a higher value on what is considered valuable, such as polygamous marriages where a man can marry to several women as wives, children, livestock, and food. Musah (2013) found that children were shopping with their parents when school was not in session.

This was partly due to the low educational and financial status of parents. In addition, boys are expelled from school and sent to the farm to care for livestock. In addition, the majority of families send their daughters to cities so they can live with more affluent households, where they work as housekeepers for a living wage, food, and shelter. These might have contributed to the municipality's high rate of abuse (Aziz, 2018). These instances mentioned above indicate that a large number of children endure child abuse each year in the Nanumba North municipality owing to several factors. Unfortunately, the sociocultural factors and determinants of child abuse have not been statistically represented due to the low rate of abuse reported cases, as well as very few studies being done regarding the

phenomenon of child abuse in the municipality. This and many other factors have gone a long way which positively affecting the development of children in Bimbilla. Based on the foregoing, this study's primary focus is on the sociocultural determinants that promote child abuse in the Nanumba North municipality.

**Conceptual Framework of the Study:**

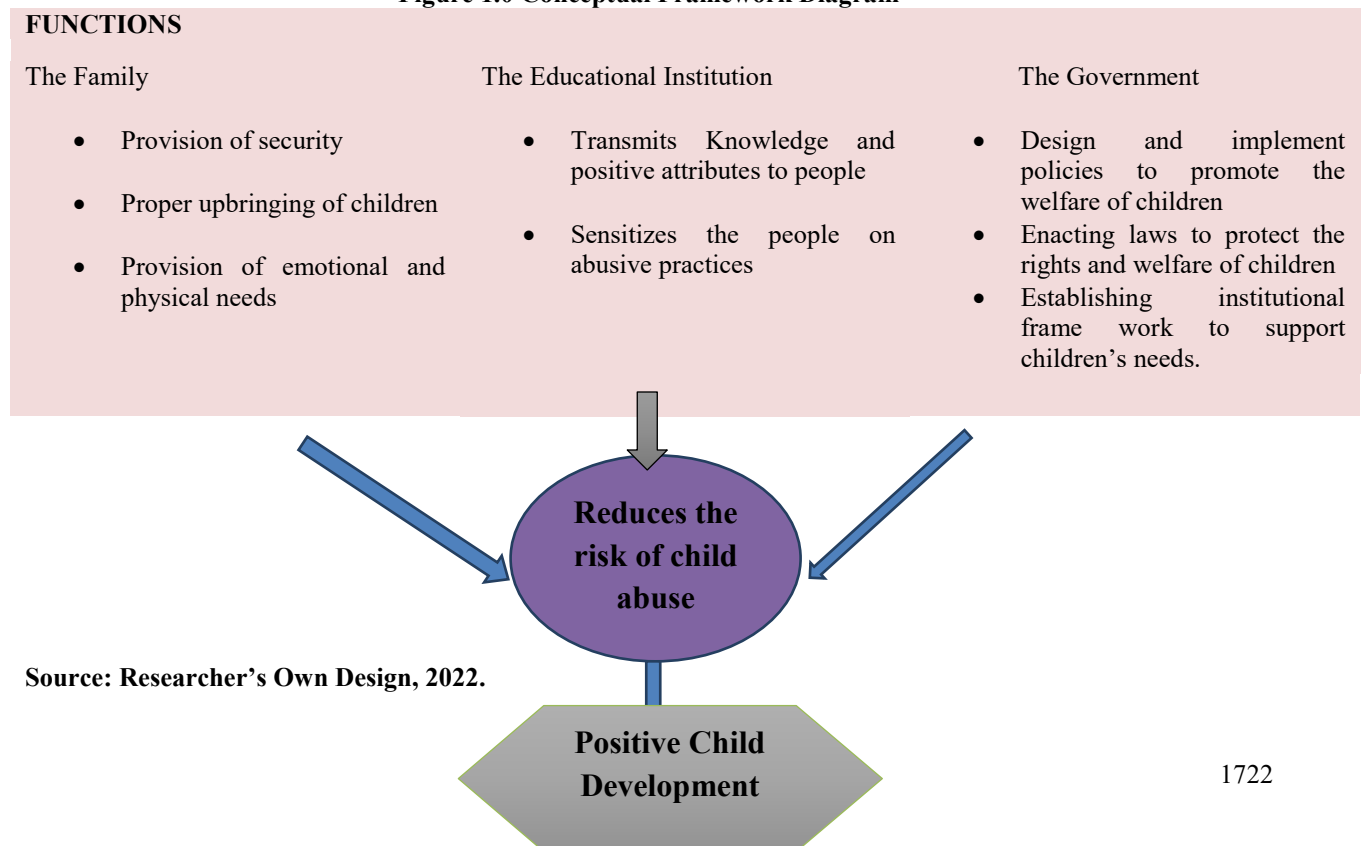
The purpose of this study's conceptual framework is to present a clear picture of how interactions between social institutions and sub-systems, as outlined in the theoretical framework, affect whether or not child abuse occurs. The conceptual framework also demonstrates how outside forces may affect how the social system functions.

The family as an institution is intended to care for its members' children and shield them from any harm or danger. It is much simpler and easier for children to completely develop and fit into society when the family can provide for both their physical and emotional needs. However, kids who don't have their physical and emotional needs met by their families are more likely to experience maltreatment, delinquency, and inappropriate development processes. Additionally, if external problems like parental irresponsibility, unemployment, financial hardship, and poverty are not adequately managed by the government, the family will not be able to function as it should (Bennette et al., 2020). The inability of the family to properly develop and mature as a result of external reasons leads to the children seeking out alternative means to meet their requirements, and in many cases, they are subjected to the street lifestyle, hard labor, and various unfit and bad behaviors.

The educational institution plays the role of inculcating into the people knowledge, skills and positive attributes to effectively develop themselves and their families. Parents and guardians who go through formal education tend to know, if not all, but a bit of what is entailed in abusing a child, which makes them less likely to engage in such activities. Parents, guardians and people of the society in general who do not in way know about some sociocultural practices being abusive to children may be sensitized through public education on such practices, how abusive they are, their adverse effects and the punishments that go with the practices when caught as an abuser.

The government must promote and protect the well-being of its people. The government is expected to support concerns relating to child abuse, child care, and protection through policies, legislation, and efficient legal systems. The nation must have strategies in place to help safeguard and advance the welfare of children when they are at risk of abuse, such as identifying and prosecuting perpetrators. When this is in place, abuse of children won't take place as it currently does, and it will be monitored and dealt with. However, if the state does not operate effectively, often as a result of insufficient money and policy implementation, children are more likely to be mistreated and abused in any kind.

**Figure 1.0 Conceptual Framework Diagram**



Source: Researcher's Own Design, 2022.

## Methodology:-

### Study Area:

The research was conducted in the Nanumba North municipality of the Northern region of Ghana. The Statistical Service of Ghana (2013) states that, Northern region occupied an area of about 70,384 square kilometres, which was the biggest region in the country in relation to land mass until December 2018, when the Savannah Region and North East Region were created and carved out of the region. The region shares boundaries with the Savannah Region, the North East Region regions, the Oti region and the Ghana-Togo border. The majority of the area is flat, except for the western corridor and the northeastern corner with the Gambaga escarpment.

One of Northern Ghana's fourteen (14) districts, the Nanumba North municipality was established in 2004 under LI 1754 after the former Nanumba District was divided between North and South. The land area for the district is 2260.8 sq/km. The Eastern Northern Region is where the municipality is located. The municipality shares borders with Yendi Municipal to the north and East Gonja Municipal to the west. Zabzugu, Kpandai, and the Nanumba South Districts are its neighbors to the east, south, and southeast, respectively. Bimbilla is the seat of the municipal government. Below is a map of the Nanumba North Municipality.



### Study Design:

In the effort to resolve the issue at hand, a case study research strategy was employed. The fundamental aspect of this research design is that case studies are integrated, which allow for the systematic representation of unique entities in a context that enables researchers to create fresh understandings of issues (Creswell & Creswell, 2009). The use of research design makes it easier for researchers to acquire vital data for studies as quickly as feasible (Maxwell, 2013).

### Study Approach:

The qualitative research strategy was chosen as the methodology for this investigation. The term "research approach" describes the strategies and tactics used in research that range from general hypotheses to specific techniques for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data. According to Tracy (2024), it outlines the broad strategy the researcher will use to tackle the study question. Thus, it concerns the researcher's choice of methodology for their research, such as a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed approach.

**Study Sample and Sampling Procedure:**

The total sample size of this study is 150, drawn from 120 households in the municipality, 10 teachers from five basic schools, 10 abused victims, 2 respondents from the Municipal Area Council, and 10 officials from child protection institutions (Social Welfare Department in the municipality, Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU), Police Service) as key informants. The sample was obtained when the data was collected to a point of saturation. Purposive sampling and the snowball sampling technique were employed in the study. Respondents such as the officials from the child protection institutions were purposively sampled because of the role they play in child protection, which makes them adequately informed about issues of child abuse. Also, respondents such as the teachers and child abuse victims were sampled as a result of information that linked them to child abuse.

**Data Collection Instrument and Procedure:**

The instruments for data collection used in this study included: in-depth interviews, key informants' interviews and focus group discussions. With the in-depth interviews, the researcher carefully crafted the semi-structured interview guide, which consisted of two sections. The first section sought to solicit information on the sociodemographic background of the respondents, while the second section questioned respondents on the sociocultural factors that are likely to promote child abuse in the municipality.

The focus group discussion (FGD) was done on two occasions, which include; meeting with 11 selected men from households at Masaka electoral area, and 12 selected women at the Kunkuna electoral area. The men were met separately from the women to make the responses, especially from the women, void of external interferences. The separation was necessary in the sense that, women are not supposed to express themselves freely in the presence of their male counterparts, especially with issues where there are diverging views in Nanumba traditional system. The reason for this practice is that, women are seen as inferior to men and therefore should not speak against or argue with men. A woman seen arguing or counteracting a man's view is seen as disrespectful or sometimes classified as "a witch". Both meetings were generally done in a time period of 30 minutes with the help of the assemblyman in organizing and choosing locations for both meetings. The data from the meetings were gathered through a combination of audio recording and note-taking.

**Data Analysis:**

Qualitative data gathered through the research's interview process were analyzed in themes. The interviews were conducted in English, and an audio transcription of the conversations was transcribed verbatim or word-for-word. Data were coded after examination, and relevant codes were arranged and categorized into themes (Rivas, 2012). To make sure no theme was missed, the recordings were carefully reviewed. Sub-themes were further divided into the main topics, and content analysis was used to examine the data from a variety of perspectives to comprehend and evaluate it

**Findings and Discussions:-**

The findings of the study are presented in the following themes. Notable activities that impede the rights of children, and the sociocultural activities that abuse children in the municipality.

**Theme 1: Activities that Impede Children's Rights:****Child Marriage:**

Child marriage has been observed as one of the many issues discovered from respondents. It shows the high level of its prevalence within the households and the communities at large.

"... Well, I used to take care of my dead sister's daughter, who was given out for marriage at the age of 16 years. The reason she was given out for marriage was because the girl got pregnant, and we had to let the one responsible for the pregnancy marry her traditionally. She was in school but also engaged in selling fruits like mangoes and oranges in the market, usually after school and during weekends. It was through the market activities she met her husband..." (Mahama, Male, 51 years).

From the above response, it shows that the adopted girl is usually engaged in market activities within periods she could use for other school activities, such as homework or extra studies. This is in line with the study of Martey et al. (2022), who found that children as young as five years old typically participate in economic activities such as marketing and agricultural processes in the majority of African settings, where these economic activities are the

traditional method of earning money and providing food for the family. Even though getting them involved can help them become more resourceful people as they get older, it becomes abuse when it comes at the expense of their education.

**Another respondent added that;**

“... My eldest daughter, who is 17 years has been married for almost a year now. The decision for the marriage was my sister's idea, and I also consented. I confided in my sister how my daughter was not really doing well in school, and she told me that I should get her married so that she can start a family sooner. The girl did not want to get married initially because she kept saying she wanted to go to school, but I could not keep wasting money on her school when she was not really doing well. At the end, she agreed because as I am the father, my word is final...” (Salifu, Male, 41 years).

The above response indicates that the decision of a girl to get married may be a result of poor academic performance. This is in correspondence to the finding of Birchall (2018), who noted that A growing body of research suggests that girls who get pregnant or marry young may already be doing poorly in school, may have started school later, or may have faced obstacles to their academic success, all of which increase the likelihood of an early marriage or pregnancy.

**Child Sexual Violations:**

Children globally are prone to being abused sexually all although issues of that nature are not broadly reported. It is in this light that the respondents were asked to give information on the situation of child sexual abuse in their households, therefore the community in general.

“...My daughter of 13 years was lured and nearly violated by a neighbor, but was stopped by the shouting of the girl. People who came around wanted to beat him up, but fortunately for him, he was a bit elderly, so some of the other elderly persons available tried and stopped it...” (Abukari, Male, 36 years).

**Another respondent had this to say;**

“... Once there was an incident of that sort when one of the people who rented my house got caught raping a girl of 12 years. Per the narration of the girl, she was actually sent by the man to buy him bread, and when she came back with the bread, he lured her into his room and forced himself on her. People started to hear the shouting and crying of the girl and then rushed in to find the man raping her. After he was caught, he was then taken to the police station and jailed...” (Mahama, Male, 51 years).

The responses above clearly suggest that children most at the times get lured into being violated by people outside their households and perpetrators are handed over to the chief or police to be dealt with. This is in line with the findings of Crowell et al. (2022). They indicate that child sexual offenders mostly use the luring communication theory (LCT), which involves several ways by which the offenders entice their victims into sexual relationships.

**The Practice of Female Genital Mutilation:**

Female Genital Mutilation is one of the outmoded practices in Ghana that many scholars, agencies, and organizations have individually and collectively tried to eradicate because of its associated risks and disadvantages. Notwithstanding, certain ethnic groups in the country still practice it most at time secretly. It is therefore on this notion that participants in the study were asked to provide information on the situation of FGM as a child abuse act.

“... Female genital mutilation is not practiced in my household. The reason being that, growing up, my family realized it does more harm than good to the girl, so we stopped doing it close to 20 years now. Not that I am aware of, but there are rumors of the Kulkulsi and Konkombas still practicing it. Mostly secretly, I think...” (Yahaya, Male, 39 years).

It can clearly be seen from the responses that some people in the municipality, most especially the Nanumba ethnic group, frown on the practice of FGM with reasons of it having great negative effects on its victims. This confirms the findings of Sarayloo et al. (2019), which indicated that the practice of FGM has long-term effects like infections as persistent genital, reproductive, and urinary tract infections and pain, like painful urination, painful sexual activity, and menstrual problems

**Another respondent added that;**

“... I am a Konkomba by tribe, and my two daughters have been circumcised and the reason being that they will be prevented from engaging in premarital sexual activities. So far from the experience I have had since growing up and the observations I have made myself towards the practice, I have not seen or realized any side effects of the practice...” (Linankpel, Male, 46 years).

The above responses indicate that Female Genital Mutilation is fairly and most at times secretly practiced by some ethnic groups in the municipality. From the data, the tribes that still engage in FGM are the Konkombas and the Kulkulsis, which was evident from the responses given above. This is in line with the findings of Alhassan & Anyinzaam-Adolipore (2021) who stated that, in terms of ethnicity, the tribes that practice FGM when compared with the Akan tribe are Guan, Gruma, Mole-Dagbani, Konkombas, Grus, Mand, and other tribes predominantly from the northern part of Ghana.

**Theme 2: Sociocultural Activities that promote Child Abuse Children:**

With regards to this aspect of the data collection, the respondents were asked to give information on some other sociocultural activities in the traditional area that, to their knowledge, impedes on the rights of children in the municipality. These are excerpts from respondents;

“... A chief choosing a girl as a wife without following the proper procedure. With this, the chief, upon seeing the girl and liking her, will make his first wife go and apprehend the girl to the chief’s palace, and then later an information will be sent to the girl’s house that the girl has been taken by the chief. This is called ‘Na pagagbaabu’ in the local terms...” (Damba, Male, 58 years).

“... Child betrothal, which is termed locally as ‘Nyugugmabu’. This happens after the birth of a child, a man would come give a present of money for the child and it will be stated that when the child grows, she would be given to the man to marry or his son. This makes the child not have the freedom to make certain life choices when growing up till marriage...” (Lansah, Male, 55 years).

“... Infanticide, which is killing a child out of the child's deformity termed locally as ‘Bia sheebu’. There are two ways this is done. Either some herbs will be given to the parents, then they will use them to bathe the child regularly, which would cause the child to die slowly but not at once. Another way is by giving the child to the person assigned to do those services, then he kills the child at a location no one knows. Examples of reasons for this act include spiritual reasons, a child unable to grow well for years, a child unable to walk for years, a child unable to talk and a child always getting sick...” (Mahama, Male, 51 years).

“... Gifting a child to family members to take care of, which is termed locally as ‘Bia Tohagibu’. This happens when a child after birth, if given to an aunt or an uncle to take care of him or her. Many instances show that as a result of the child not being directly related to the guardian contributes to the child not getting proper treatments, hence child abuse...” (Adam, Male, 62 years).

“... Giving custody of one’s child to another, which is termed locally as ‘TalimaPabu’. This means someone, after being indebted to another without being able to pay, would give out custody of his or her child to the creditor to work for a period of time to get the debt paid off...” (Baba, Male, 47 years).

“... Gifting children to the chief for marriage to show allegiance. With this, the parent of the child would directly give information to be passed onto the chief as to his intention of marrying off his daughter to him. Usually when the child is not of age but then has been successfully married, the chief would give her some time to grow up before having a sexual relationship with the girl...” (Lung Naa, Male, 68 years).

It is clear from the above responses that, there exist several other sociocultural child abuse practices in the municipality which add to the widely known practices such Child betrothal, gifting a girl-child to a chief for marriage, giving a child to a family member to raise as his or her own, a chief himself picking a girl as his wife without going through due process or seeking the girl’s consent, giving custody of one’s child to another to work and pay for the parent’s or guardian’s debt, and infanticides.

Also, the respondents from the focus group discussion reaffirmed and stood by the notion that, all although some of these practices, such as infanticides, and a chief himself picking a girl as his wife without going through due process

or seeking the girl's consent, are outmoded, they are still being practiced secretly. However, the rest of the aforementioned sociocultural child abuse practices are still largely engaged in by the people in the municipality.

### **Conclusion:-**

In the Nanumba North Municipality, the presence of child rights issues has been overlooked to a greater extent. This study, therefore, highlights the complex interplay of sociocultural determinants of child abuse in the municipality. Traditional beliefs, economic hardships, and inadequate awareness of children's rights collectively contribute to an environment where abuse is often normalized or overlooked. The study gives a clear-cut indication of children's rights being perpetuated without any proper accountability.

The findings of the study underscore the urgent need for culturally sensitive interventions that address the root causes of abuse while promoting positive parenting and chieftaincy practices and community education. Strengthening child protection systems, engaging traditional leaders, and empowering families economically and socially are essential steps toward creating a safer and more nurturing environment for children in the municipality. Addressing these sociocultural dynamics is not only a moral imperative but a strategic approach to safeguarding the future of the youngsters in the municipality.

### **Recommendations:-**

#### **The study recommends that;**

- Government and other stakeholders, such as the Child Protection Agencies and Organizations among others, should intensify implementation processes of the child protection policies by including content regarding issues of the sociocultural practices and factors that contribute to child abuse in their sensitization programs and activities.
- Child rights protection agencies should initiate sustained community sensitization programs aimed at reshaping harmful traditional beliefs and practices that normalize child abuse. These campaigns should use local languages and involve traditional leaders, religious leaders, and opinion influencers.
- The government should empower and expand the capacity of community watchdog committees and child protection networks to identify, report, and prevent abuse. These groups should be well-resourced and linked to formal social welfare and law enforcement bodies.

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