THE AFROCENTRIC STUDY OF GIRLS' NUBILITY RITES AMONG THE KROBOS AND HOW IT AFFECTS THEIR SCHOOLING IN THE MANYA KROBO PARAMOUNTCY OF GHANA: A CRITICAL REFLECTION

by

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Abstract

Cultural rites celebration in some rural African communities in recent times has been charged with being irrelevant to the African condition and incapable of preparing the young for what they are to practise when they become men and women. Researchers are questioning the techno-cultural gap that is haunting the education and training of the African youth**.** This study critically explores the cultural initiation process of girls' nubility rites among the Krobos and how it affects their schooling. It further investigates why the Krobo ethnic group of Ghana still hold onto this rite even in the changing times. Occasional references to other religious rites from different parts of Africa will be deliberate. This will be consistent with the intention to treat Krobo nubility rites against the background of culture in Africa as a more general context for the discussion of the relationships between culture and schooling.

The study employs an emerging approach known as the '*Africalogical critical ethnographic instrumental case study*' to uncover meaning of this rite from the perspective of the participant. This approach is intended to support and reinforce the growing interest in qualitative research in developing countries like Ghana and to take account of what some researchers have viewed as biases in earlier research projects. This approach called for active inquiry through structured and unstructured interviews, direct observation of cultural initiation rites for school age girls and their activities in the schools they attend. Data were compiled from more than one hundred hours of interviews, field notes/journals and observation at the school, shrine and other related events using a video recorder.

The strength of this thesis is the tendency to promote a fuller understanding of issues on culture and schooling in Ghana which can generate debate among academics and development partners, as well as the possibility of being an instrument for Ghanaian stakeholders, including colleague teachers to manage and assist children who have gone through this rite to integrate well in their schools.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Chapter Overview

Chapter one introduces the debate involved in and around the research project. It sets the argument in context about the dipo rites of the Krobo ethnic group and how it affects the schooling of girls in the Manya Krobo paramountcy of Ghana. It suggests patterns of connection between culture and schooling in Ghana. It problematises culture and schooling by pointing out some Eurocentric biases in earlier research and offer glimpses into them. The Afrocentric ideology is given acceptance in this chapter as a legitimate approach for repositioning African culture and education from the margins of Eurocentric evaluation. The aims of the study and the research questions guiding the project are presented. Next, a discussion of the significance of the study and the definition of key terms related to this study are explained. The goal is to give a contextualised insight into the project.

1.2 Problem Focus

> *Nowhere else in the Gold Coast did I find the people as much entangled in the superstition, sorcery, fetishism and sin as here in this particular place….This custom dipo otherwise known as girls' nubility rite or better said this vice, hold our*

> *Krobos back from the acceptance of the gospel, speaks for itself. Yet, even though this custom still so deeply enrooted, and the stronghold of the devil still stands as firm as the Krobo mountain itself, it will loosen itself, stagger, and has to fall, according to the promise of the Godly word* (Kolle, 1891 cited in Steegstra, 2004, p .3)

For many years, Eurocentric bias has blocked or distorted field research on Africans, their culture and education. The feeling that non-westerners are 'stuck in tradition' or 'primitive' has been established by past accounts of Christian missionaries and colonial agents who earlier visited Africa and this notion still influences western perception of the 'otherness' of Africa cultures and schooling (Steegstra, 2004). The *dipo* rite among the people of Krobo in the eastern region of Ghana is one religious cultural rite that has generated debate in recent times. A necessity for an inquiry into some of these early criticism and biases brings into view issues that are a potential cause of rift between culture and schooling - a pair of important areas of concern and scholarship in African studies. Also, examining the nature of the relationship between school and society where community culture functions is not a new subject. This relationship strongly resonates with and is evident in Thomas's (2000) discussion which shows that the subject has occupied the minds of educationists, sociologists, Africanists and many others

such as Thompson (1981), Dove (1998a), Nwomonoh (1998), Sefa Dei (2004) and Folson (2006) over the years.

Imasogie (1985) explains that those who did field research in the colonial days in Africa were mostly tourists and missionaries hired by African governments to advise them on 'native affairs'. Imasogie's view has found support in Asante (1990, p. 72) that 'most of the early European authors were missionaries seeking to understand primitive languages in other to bring us into a more perfect light of the European religion'. Their publications, according to Asante (1990, p. 72) cannot be accepted as genuine analysis of the writing system of Africa. Such scholars including 'Rider Haggard, Nicholas Monsarrat and Thomas Jefferson among others' (Asante, 1990, p. 119) treated African culture, schooling and education from the tourist and missionary point of view.

Another related case in point is the remarks by Bethwith and Fisher (1999, p. 11) creating the impression that most people in remote parts of Africa have not seen books before and that cultural traditions such as the *dipo* religious rites risk the danger of being lost as a result of external (western) forces. By extension, Bethwith and Fisher (1999) further explain their intention to create a book that would be a visual exploration of the meaning and power of traditional cultural rituals and ceremonies in parts of Africa before they disappear forever. The results of these impressions have been a checkerboard of success and failure following the absence of past and present field researchers to take into account the

overall picture and the many different social factors at play in Africa (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1997). These Eurocentric views about native cultures are now being questioned (Asante, 1990). Hence the recent upsurge of interest in possible alternative approaches to research on Africa and the endorsement of the Afrocentric framework as the legitimate approach for the relocation, reorientation and re-examination and analysis of African education and culture from the 'margins of European thoughts and attitudes' (Asante, 2009, p. 2).

This study is timely. It is intended to support and reinforce the growing interest in qualitative research in developing countries like Ghana. It will provide a guideline for the adoption of the 'Africalogical critical ethnographic instrumental case study' which emanates from the Afrocentric approach. The project offers a detailed rationale to justify the use of this approach.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

For an understanding of any aspect of the socio-cultural life of the Africans, it is essential that researchers have thorough grassroots knowledge of their systems of ideals and values (Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, 1987, p. 1). This view by Radcliffe-Brown and Forde (1987) finds substantiation in Sefa-Dei (2004, pp. 279-280) pointing out that the purpose of any research on religious culture and education in Ghana is not simply to know the nature and extent of the problem but to ensure that we hear the actual voices and concerns of the local people themselves and use them as a basis to implement a sustained educational plan for

educational change. While no one would deny that formal education is important in inculcating skills and attitudes needed for a social and economic transformation, it has become evident that this role, far from being as straightforward as many optimists had thought, is complicated by a number of factors, of which those generally understood in Africa to be 'cultural' are of great importance. This has been a major concern for parents, students, educationists and policy makers who have supported the inculcation of African traditional culture in the school curriculum in Ghana.

Underpinning this concern is the belief by a section of the Krobos that the *dipo* cultural rite celebrated among the Krobo ethnic group of Ghana is a hindrance to progress. The negative attitude toward the *dipo* cultural rites may have originated from the time of the first encounter between the Krobos, Western missionaries and British colonial agents, who perceived the rite as a major obstacle to civilisation, development and progress. It is important to note that arrival, establishment, spread and development of formal education in Africa and particularly Ghana, especially in the nineteenth century, revolved around Euro-American Christian missionaries (Nwomonoh, 1998). Thus, the emergence of early African educated elites is generally attributed to the arrival and work of the early missionaries in Africa. It is perhaps not difficult to understand why the Christian missionaries' account is paramount in any literature on the history and development of formal education in Ghana. In justifying the missionary centred account on African schooling and cultural history, Zeleza (2007) writes that oral

tradition, historical linguistics, written evidence from natural sciences joined written and archaeological sources prized by Eurocentric historiography as concrete and reliable sources of research and reconstruction of African scholarship.

The point is to understand how these early writings continue to engage and inform dialogue among well informed Africanists and educated Krobos and Ghanaians in general and their relationship with the *dipo* cultural rite. Why is there a divided opinion with the continuous annual celebration and participation of school going girls in the *dipo* cultural rite among indigenes of Manya Krobo paramountcy today? It is worthy of note that one of the post–colonial challenges facing the Krobos today is the attempt to cope with the complexities of modernity and tradition.

1.4 Aims of the Study

The study seeks to make relevant connection between patterns of African culture and schooling by unpacking narratives of the *dipo* cultural rite from the perspective of young women, their parents, teachers and community opinion leaders and establish how these relate to their schooling experiences. It principally addresses a central concern within the parameters of African schooling using culture as an instrument and relating it to girls' education and schooling in the Krobo paramountcy in the eastern region of Ghana.

1.5 Research Questions to be addressed in the Study

The aim of the project is to explore the connections between culture and schooling in Ghana at the present time. In order to ground this exploration in the experiences of school age children, their parents, teachers and members of the community, a particular area of Ghana and a particular cultural rite celebrated within the area were chosen as the empirical elements of the study. The *dipo* initiation rite practised in the Manya Krobo paramountcy offers an illuminative example of how culture and schooling inter-relate in complex ways.

In meeting the aims of this project, I used interviews, observation and field notes to explore the perception of the Krobos in relation to girls' initiation rites and how it affects their schooling. Using interview questions with school age celebrants, parents, teachers and community leaders, I have responded to the following general questions in order to explore the more abstract issues of culture and schooling:

- Are girls' initiation rites in the Manya Krobo paramountcy of Ghana of relevance today?
- How do girls' initiation rites among the Krobos affect the schooling of the child in the Manya Krobo paramountcy of Ghana?
- Why do adults and children engage in girls' initiation rites nowadays?
- Why do parents allow their children to go through these rites?

In posing these research questions, I was seeking to take account of the relevance of the rites from the perspectives of the celebrants, their parents and teachers and

of members of the community. I was interested in the reasons for continuing engagement in the rite and in what were the gains and losses of participation in the rite. It was my intention to discover how learning in formal schooling and learning from experience of the rite connected.

The questions generally draw from the works of Sefa Dei (2004), Steegstra (2004), Coe (2005) and others who have shown that ethnicity issues, cultural identity, gender and socio-economic status are significant in looking at the structures for teaching, learning and the administration of education in Ghana. To explore these issues, I conducted five and a half month fieldwork to unpack narratives of the *dipo* cultural rite from the perspective of young women and how these relate to their schooling experiences.

1.6 Significance of the Study

In addressing the above questions, our understanding of girls' initiation rites and how it affects schooling among the Krobos of Ghana is enhanced. Addressing these questions will equally provide an insight into the understanding of the Afrocentric framework and the questions this framework raises and answers in the quest to pointing out some biases in early research on Africans, their culture and schooling. Apart from the findings generating a debate thereby informing dialogues between development partners, the project is also intended to be an instrument for Ghanaian stakeholders, including colleague teachers to manage and assist children who have gone through this rite to integrate in their schools. The

information gathered from this study will also help us in developing schooling initiatives that are grounded in the cultural context of the indigenes of the traditional area where the research was conducted.

1.7 Motivation for the Study

The desire to embark on this project came as a result of many years of reflection on the attitude of Europeans to African traditional cultural values and its relationship with formal education. But it was my interest in wider cultural, educational and intellectual life of Ghanaians that motivated me to undertake this study. The increased interest in this area of study had two origins: one personal and the other associated with my profession as a religious education teacher. As I was looking for a way to merge my cultural orientation, my profession as a classroom teacher and my background as a theologian – having done all my early degrees in theology, I thought of investigating African religious rites and schooling in Ghana. Other academic influences were also important. For example, the difficulty I had in getting information on this subject (culture and schooling in Africa) for my undergraduate project years ago at the University of Cape Coast. It concerns great demand for literature of this kind at the education department of Cape Coast University, Ghana and the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana. The thesis will contribute to a more balanced appreciation of the role of African indigenous culture in the formal schooling and education of the adolescent girl in Ghana.

1.8 Originality and Creativity of the Study

As I thought that accountability of this study lies ahead within the public domain in terms of the overall quality of the project, I made several efforts to produce an original work that will offer insight into culture and schooling in Ghana and influence my professional practice as a teacher. I also thought that apart from being accountable to myself, I have a great responsibility to those who participated in the study, to my supervisor, my peer reviewers, my lecturers and to my examiners. The originality and creativity of this study is measured against the background of what Cryer (2000, p. 192) has expounded as the criteria for measuring an original study. They include:

- A new or improved research tool or technique
- A new theory of re-interpretation of an existing theory
- An in-depth study
- An exploration of a topic, area or field
- A critical analysis
- A portfolio of work based on research
- A fact or conclusion, or a collection of facts or conclusions

Salmon (1992, p. 9) adds that originality is the discovery of new fact or the integration of previously diverse ideas. The project chosen, even though is situated in the work of others, gives me the hope that I am producing and completing a study I can offer alone because more familiar scenes have been viewed from completely new angles. There emerges the development of new understanding in an old practice and area of study. The understanding that

fundamentally questions and challenges culturally acceptable way of doing things in the researched area demands high intellectual review rather than merely conforming to traditional societal dogmas of repeating the same thing annually. Lots of time, ups and downs, long dragging periods culminated the fulfilment which comes with being an authority in charge of an investigation into culture and schooling. This effort resonates with the view of Salmon (1992, p. 9) that the best thesis taxes unimaginably the researcher's personal time, his thought and imagination such that examiners are offered no alternative to conclude the study has come that far from a sustained dwelling within a new personal terrain that has entailed a prolonged and very difficult journey. I can at the end of this project boast of the fact that I am no longer an outsider looking into culture and schooling issues in Africa but an insider looking out of culture and schooling because unexpected discoveries which lay unforeseen at the beginning of the study came to my attention through the creation of meaning which in Salmon's (1992) view constituted real, creative and original research. Also see – appendix 'D' - for extended outcome.

1.9 Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the purposes of the study:

- *Africentricity/Afrocentricity.* Is an aspect of centrism, (the groundedness of observation and behaviour in one's own historical experiences, shapes of concept, paradigms, theories, and methods of Africalogy), which allows the student of human culture investigating African phenomena to view the

world from the stand point of the African (Asante, 1990), emphasis on shared African origins among all black people, taking a pride in those origins and an interest in African history and culture (Howe, 1998).

- *Africanists.* A person who specialises in and studies the culture, language and the affairs of African people.
- *Africalogy*. The Afrocentric study of phenomena, events, ideas and personalities related to Africa.
- *ASA,UK/USA*. African Studies Association-United Kingdom Branch, United States of American Branch.
- *Community Opinion Leader*. Traditional leaders in the community such as the queen mother, chief, linguist, traditional priest, assemblyman etc.
- *Culture.* A particular art, thought and custom of a society; it involves our way of government, our music, our way of dressing, our norms and our behaviour (Kwadwo, 2002), it entails shared perceptions, attitudes, and predispositions that allow people to organise experiences in certain ways (Asante, 1990).
- *Cross-culture*. The concept of being familiar with, and the necessity of appreciating different cultures in different societies.
- *Dipo.* Initiation rites for girls performed among the Dangme speaking groups in Ghana, in particular by the *Krobos* and the Shai.
- *Eurocentricity*. Considering Europe and Europeans as focal to the world culture, history, economics etc

- *Puberty/nubility rite*. A transitional ritual performed to usher a girl into adulthood.
- *Informal/traditional/non-literate education*. Education in Africa before the arrival of classroom education. This was by observation, participation and imitation to inculcate cultural norms and values in members of the society to make them useful.
- *Krobos*: The social or ethnic group under study. Also refer to notes on page 15.
- *Pan Africanism*. The belief that all people of African descent are Africans.
- *Paramountcy*. The headquarters of local authority or office of supreme ruler or a chief.
- *Shrine/Oracles*: Centres in the paramountcy where the *dipo* rites are held annually.
- *Trans-culture*. It is a form of culture created not from within it separate spheres but in the holistic forms of diverse cultures. It is based on the principle that a single culture, in and of itself, for maturity requires interaction and dialogue with other cultures (Milhouse, Asante and Nwosu, 2001).

1.10 Chapter Summary

Chapter one is the first among seven chapters of this thesis which is thematically arranged around African culture, schooling and methodological discussion. It coherently presents various arguments and justifies the need for the study. The

chapter reflects the statement by Gutto (2006, p. 308) that knowledge of and about African schooling system and Africans that most of us have been taught and learnt in various ways is constructed from the perspective of those who have made it their business, mission-driven by material interest to distort, blackmail and exploit Africa and Africans wherever they may be. The need for a paradigm change to reflect realities and changing times is felt by upcoming researchers from Africa. Chapter two examines the various concepts about culture and schooling in Ghana. The chapter concludes with a review of related literature.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Context

2.1 Chapter Overview

Chapter two introduces the research location, the researched people (Krobos) and their custom (dipo rite). The general concept of African religious rites in relation to the dipo cultural rites is presented. I have placed the discussion in the context of some broad theoretical issues regarding African schooling system to examine the ideological influences of everyday schooling practices in the Manya Krobo paramountcy. The objective is to understand school/community connectedness and how this implicates cultural renewal strategies being adopted by schools across Ghana today. A review of literature for this study under the headings of African culture and schooling in Ghana and their findings are equally outlined. These are meant to form the general background to the subsequent chapters.

2.2 The Krobo Ethnic Group

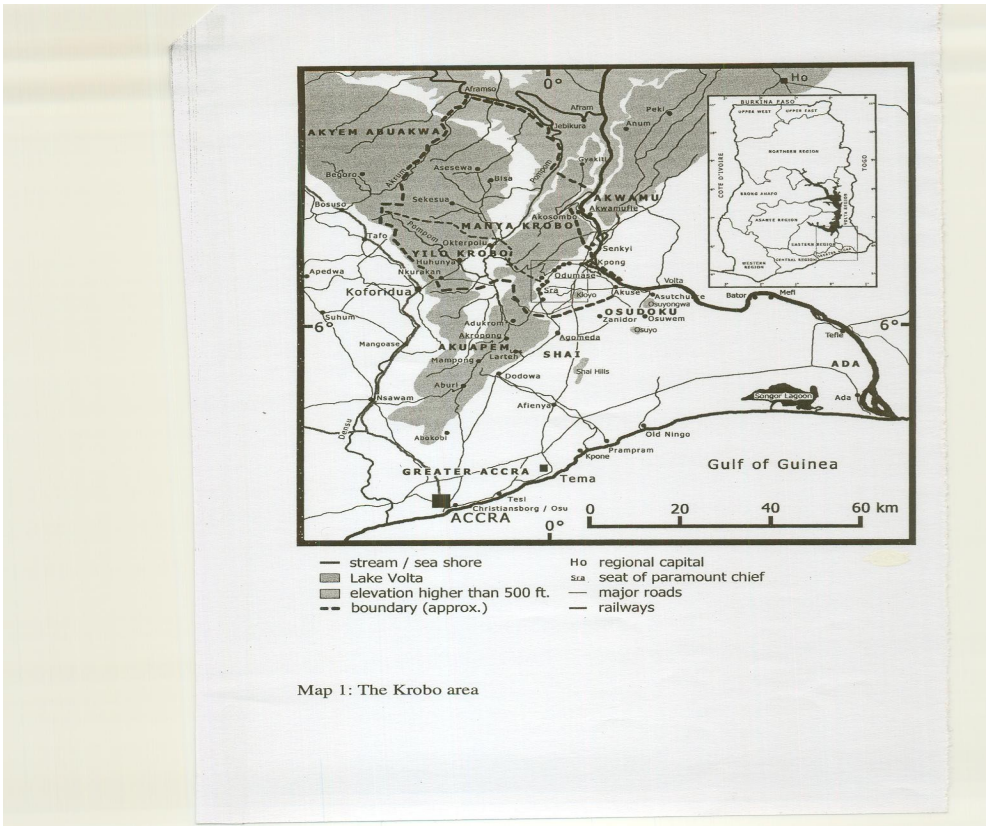
The Krobos are predominantly agricultural people found in south eastern part of the eastern region of Ghana. By far the majority of Krobos are farmers (Huber, 1993, p. 15). They seem to constitute the largest group among the patrilineal Dangme speaking people of today's eastern region of Ghana. Huber (1993, p. 15) confirms the Krobos are the most numerous people among the Adangme speaking tribes of south-eastern Ghana. Quite a sizeable number of the Krobos are petty

traders who trade in agricultural produce of all kinds. Their current settlement is as a result of politically motivated expulsion in 1892 by the British colonial administration and the Basel missionaries (Steegstra, 2004). Until then the Krobos proudly inhabited a very steep and isolated mountain lying between River Volta and the Akwapim-Akwamu highlands in Ghana. The mountain constituted their political and ritual centre. According to Huber (1993, p. 32) warfare and slave raiding in past centuries compelled the Krobos to inhabit the mountain protected by rocky shelters which they used in invading the Ashanti armies - their war rivals. Steegstra (2004) reports that the Basel missionaries who brought the gospel to the Krobos found it quite difficult to reach the locals on the mountain and equally felt the mountain was dispersed with shrines and oracles which was an obstacle to their evangelism hence their instigation of their expulsion by the British colonial administration. The current habitation is a walking distance from the mountain which still constitutes the pride and history of the Krobos.

The migration of the Krobos to their present area dates back between the 14th and the 17th centuries according to Wilson (1991, pp. 15-16). It constituted small groups of kingship ties led by their religious leaders and as part of larger Ga -Dangme groups including Shai, Osudoku, Ada, Pram-pram, Ningo and Poni (Odonkor, 1971, p. 5). There were other ethnic groups including people of the Akan ancestry who later joined the Krobos as refugees of war and were admitted as settlers at the western side of the mountain. They were later known as Krobos and fully absorbed into the Krobo community as they adhered to Krobo rules and

gave their children Krobo names. These set of rules included the use of the Dangme language, patrilineal inheritance, male circumcision and the *dipo* cultural rites for their young girls (Azu, 1927, p. 250). The history of the original Krobo society seems to be a composition of a mixture of various ethnic groups of Ghana with a sense of we-feeling. The Krobos used the Krobo mountain as their home and also united under a common societal rule.

Below is the Map of the Krobo area



Map 1: The Krobo area

2.3 The Dipo Religious Rites Explained

The *dipo* rite is an annual celebration which brings many migrated Krobos from cities, towns and villages in and around Ghana to their homeland for the ritual. It also attracts lots of foreigners including researchers to the Manya Krobo paramountcy during the initiation. The *dipo* rite seems to be the most attractive and most enduring girls' initiation rite in Ghana today. Huber (1993, p. 165) attests that 'no other ritual, in the life of a female Krobo, is of great importance than - or even equal to - the *dipo'*. The very same Krobo people, who attend school, church, and work in the office and have attended universities, also secretly visit shrines, and have *dipo* performed sometimes for their daughters (Steegstra, 2004, p. 4). One account from a teacher during the fieldwork indicated that during the exodus of the Krobos from parts of Nigeria precisely - a community called Ile-ife - to the mountains in Ghana, the elders became aware of the indiscriminate giving of birth by the adolescent and therefore met and instituted the *dipo* as a way of curbing promiscuity: that all pubertants should go through the *dipo* cultural rites before giving birth or face being excommunicated from the community. Another account could not recall how the *dipo* cultural rite came into being but indicated has been part of the Krobo custom before the eighteenth century (see appendix 'B').

Rituals such as traditional dancing, libation pouring, animal sacrifices, ritual taboos among others mark the *dipo* rite under the leadership of a female priest or expert old lady who shaves these girls and in their own words makes them sacred

for the transition. A number of shrines in the paramountcy are marked centres for the annual celebration which admits girls of various ages between two to eighteen (2-18) for the ritual. Parents and families are looking forward to this great day in the lives of their daughters as seen during my fieldwork. Families save for months to pay for the enrolment of their daughter.

Africanists ought to understand that the upsurge of Pentecostal churches and other Christian bodies in the Krobo paramountcy is contributing to the tension in the Krobo area as to the continuation of the rite. The church adherents are criticising the organisation of these rites as unbiblical and pagan. The local churches continuously discourage their members from enrolling in these rites. These were part of the observations I made during my fieldwork. Pertinent to this trend is the call by the government of Ghana to develop initiative for cultural renewal by advocating the protection of and the respect for cultural traditions such as the *dipo* (Steegstra, 2004). There is tension between Christian groups in the area and the locals which can be well tapped by listening to the actual voices of the Krobos themselves.

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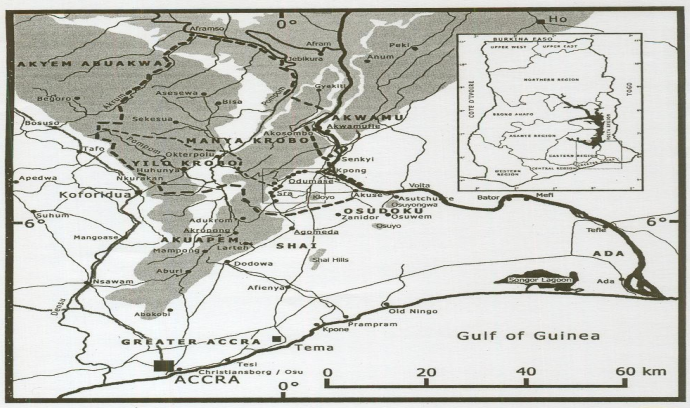


Map 1: The Krobo area

Krobos. Researchers need to understand the activities, interaction and the spread of Christian mission groups in the paramountcy and equally the role of the colonial rule in the education of the Krobos and assistance offered to the missionaries in their Christianisation process. We read from Steegstra (2004) that Odumase - the capital of the paramountcy - was a place where Christianity had been well established in the mid-19th century as well as represented by the Basel Missionaries and the United Free Church of Scotland which had a long standing impact on its population, as it brought education and other accompanied socio-economic changes. The BM as they are well known saw themselves as bringing civilisation to the people of Odumase hence saw education of the girl as crucial and as a replacement of paganism in the paramountcy. The development of women was equally seen by the missionaries as important to the success of Christianising African society as a whole. Steegsta (2004, p. 102) says women were regarded as the pivot in creating a family environment in which African Christianity and education could grow. In addition, they are naturally endowed with the ability to support their husbands and help in raising their children in discipline and the fear of God if well Christianised. However, this was rather seen among the Krobos as an eradication of the *dipo*. It is believed that the association of young girls with the fetish priest - the overseer of the shrines and oracles, and the exposure of the girls' nakedness as part of the celebration met the displeasure of the missionaries. The *dipo* was represented as negative and efforts were made to discourage its continuation.

Steegstra (2004) further reports that when efforts by the Basel Missionaries had failed in terms of offering education and Christianisation in replacement of the abolishment of the *dipo* rites, their successors the Presbyterian church and Pentecostals were dismayed to realise that their members had developed strategies to as she puts it 'combine the two' in practice. This was indirectly evident in some of the comments of teachers and parents interviewed in the paramountcy who are leaders in their various churches and would still allow their daughters to be initiated. The issue gained a renewed vigour in view of the rising popularity of Pentecostal and charismatic churches in the area. Steegstra (2004) has indicated that the Krobo case exposes the dilemmas of Christians who must allow their daughters to enrol on the *dipo* ritual, including ancestral worship and sacrifices which offend Christian principles and redefine their good standing as devoted and good Christians. It also depicts the rift to renegotiate the true meaning of the *dipo* and accommodate Christianity when traditional culture will not easily disappear.

In trying to understand the history of education in Ghana it is worthy to note that formal schooling in Anglophone Africa including Ghana started on the arrival of the nineteenth century Christian missionaries and the British colonial agents to the shores of Africa. These imperial powers dominated the political, Christian and commercial life of the African continent for well over three hundred years (Fafunwa, 1982). McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975) report that classroom education arrived in Ghana as a by-product of the sporadic attempts of the European missionaries and trading nations to convert Ghanaians - formally a

country called Gold Coast - to Christianity; thereafter, the missionaries may have been concerned with producing literate Africans who will fill vacancies in their service and also help them communicate with the indigenes. Schools were equally opened to bring education to the offspring of European missionaries and offspring born to them by African wives and traders. In fact, names of a number of schools in Ghana today testify the link between Christianity and education today. Ghanaians have schools like 'Presbyterian Boys Secondary School', 'Salvation Army Junior Secondary School', 'Methodist University' among others. Bacchus (1982, p. 2) explains that early missionaries to developing countries saw the need to 'educate' and 'civilise'- terminologies which they often used interchangeably. The 'civilisation' – using the term of Bacchus (1982, p. 2) - was done not only through missionary schools but through other community agencies such as the church and hospitals they established. Bacchus (1982, p. 2) said the idea was to do away with conflict between the knowledge system the missionaries brought with them and that of the local communities they inhabited with the aim of laying a sounder basis for integrating school and community learning. Looking back at the efforts made by these missionaries, Bacchus's (1982) sentiments are quite similar to what other scholars like Thompson (1981) have expressed that it would be more correct to see these efforts of the missionaries not so much as an attempt at integrating what was taught in school with community knowledge but more as an attempt at replacing local community knowledge, culture and the belief systems with 'superior system' which in equation was the same as 'cultural imperialism'. Governments of Africa including Ghana took over these schools,

some before and others after independence in March 1957. In Ghana, schools were taken over by the government and served as public schools. Over the years, Ghanaians have come to the realisation that the communities and the schools are agents which are capable of transforming the lives of those who practise in them. In this regard, Ghana over the past years has witnessed a series of committees set up by the governments to examine the schooling system and recommend reforms (Sefa-Dei, 2004). One major reason according to Folson, (2006, p. 135) was to find an acceptable fit between education and development by making the schooling system more relevant and to root them more firmly in the culture of the society thereby producing an African school that is capable of nurturing young Africans for their twenty-first century role without divorcing them from their culture.

Most of these school reforms agendas might have failed due to several factors. Recommendations made by these committees were seen by some as nothing more than an exercise on paper (Sefa-Dei, 2004, p. 33). Reasons stem from national political instability to bureaucratic bottlenecks and lack of political will on the part of government appointees (Sefa-Dei, 2004, p. 33). In Ghana today, while the government of the day is responsible for education for all, the reality is that the hope for achieving Universal Basic Education (UBE) for all, is for communities to be involved in the cost sharing and management of schooling and education. There are reports that some scholars interested in promoting education are

championing new analytical systems based on local concepts and their interrelationships (Sefa-Dei, 2004).

2.5 Conceptual Context of African Religious Rites

In most rural African communities of Ghana, the individual and his community, either in the form of the family unit or the clan, mark each stage of life with religious rite. Among these similar religious rites include naming ceremonies/rites, marriage rites, widowhood rites, funeral rites and rites of first intercourse and first birth among some ethnic groups in other parts of sub Saharan Africa (Lutkehaus and Roscoe, 1995, p. 66). The *dipo* rite is one ritual performed by the Krobos of Ghana that seemingly possesses all the composites of Africa traditional culture, such as traditional dances and songs, naming ceremony, libation pouring, ritual taboos, loincloths and naked breasts. For girls going through these rituals, the *dipo* ceremony like other similar Ghanaian ceremony such as the Akan puberty rites is a rite of passage that signifies a transition in life, a change in status and identity which provides a precondition for motherhood and marriage (Steegstra, 2004, p. 278).

Imasogie (1985) explains that each stage of life is important and meaningful to the African, carrying with it sacred responsibility for the role each stage confers on the individual. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the transition be properly effected before the visible and invisible communities of which the individual is an integral part. Each ethnic group differs in the elaboration with

each ritual process of 'separation, transition and reincorporation' Imasogie (1985, p. 52).The number of such rites, duration and intensity may differ.

Lutkehaus and Roscoe (1985) give a similar account of the replica of the *dipo* girl in the central Abelam village of Kalabu in Papua New Guinea – north of Australia - who menstruates for the first time. Lutkehaus and Roscoe indicate that girls who menstruate for the first time are sent by their mothers to *kalmbangga*, the edge of the community bush. The mother informs her husband and hurries off to her brother's hamlet to tell him about the girl's menses, and to discuss the preparation for a feast that must be held two days hence. The news of the girl who has attained womanhood then quickly spreads through the village. The implication of all this is that the girl stays out of school (if enrolled) for weeks to go through this ceremony. Lutkehaus and Roscoe (1985, p. 36) refer to the work of Forge who explains what happens to a young woman growing in the Eastern village of Abelam:

> *'an initiation ceremony at first menstruation involving seclusion, a series of exchanges, and display of wealth by the girl's father and exchange partner. The young woman is scarified at dawn by a senior woman who cut patterns on her breast, belly, and upper arm. On the ceremony ground, the woman then perform secret rite from which men are banned…. These rites continue for a whole day and*

end at nightfall with ritual cleansing of the ceremonial ground'.

In a similar account, Huber (1993, p. 188) writes in description of the initiation ritual performed on the *dipo* girls, that apart from the cuts and incisions left on the body of the girl there is no other test of endurance or surgical operation connected to the *dipo* rites as found in the incision ceremonies of some northern Ghana tribes. However, this has to be treated or left to heal however long it takes as part of the general initiation process.

The core of this ceremony is seen in the definition of culture of an identifiable group of people explained by Stephen (2000, p. 31) as:

- The knowledge and ideas that give meaning to the beliefs and actions of individuals and their societies
- The 'meaning making' set of tools used to describe and evaluate that action

This research explores the implications of these rituals against the background of culture in relation to the girl's schooling experiences in the Manya Krobo paramountcy of the eastern region of Ghana.

2.6 The Goals of Schooling

Even though people tend to alternate schooling and education, I am defining the two as separate entities in this study: while schooling takes place in a confined

room or building, education can take place anywhere including outside a study environment. Teachers and administrators are mostly responsible for the schooling of the child in a learning environment but education or educating the child is the responsibility of all parents, and by all indication, everything that has influence on what the child learn. By extension, Dodd and Konzal (2002, p. 101) explain that there is valid reason for thinking that education in a wider sense contrasts to a more limited concept of schooling: while children are not the only section in society who needs education, adults are equally enrolling in schools for education in view of the changing trend in society. According to Tyson (2003, p. 328), schooling has two primary goals: to teach and equip pupils with basic academic skills and knowledge and secondly, to transmit to pupils, particular cultural orientation, values and attitudes. The latter, even though has a more substantial history, is quite contentious and less widely recognised today. The contentious nature of this goal may be central to the problem caused by the disharmony between the home and the school culture (Tyson, 2003). Tyson (2003, p. 328) says this is due to the fact that the goal of 'cultural socialisation' is not brought to the attention of students and that students have little knowledge or understanding of how and why they may be falling short of the school's expectation.

These concerns raise other key questions. Is this the rationale for making cultural studies compulsory for basic school pupils and undergraduates of Ghanaian universities today? The question has greater implication for the upbringing of the

Ghanaian youth as I see it as a way of integrating into teaching an appreciation of the past, history and culture of Ghanaians. Scholars familiar with African schooling and education such as Nwomonoh (1998) and Sefa-Dei (2004), have acknowledged the significance of teaching of African studies as a method and a means in and out of Africa to create relevant knowledge if we are to make any headway in constructing identities outside the identity that has and continues to be constructed in Eurocentric ideologies and hegemonic knowledge.

Another concern is the question explicitly posed by Abdi (2006) that in as much as communities fall on our schools today to equip the youth with positive attitudes, values, skills, social understanding and practice of societies to which they grow, to socialise and enable them to be useful citizens to themselves, their family and the society, is there any difference between what the schools do and what has always been done by informal means? Perhaps a quick view of our understanding of informal education before the advent of formal education in Ghana will highlight our understanding of current educational trend. African indigenous education before the advent of formal education was moral oriented. It was intertwined with social life according to Nwomonoh (1998). What was taught was immensely related to social context in which people live. Bray, Clark and Stephens (1998, p. 27) cited the example of a course for growing up children in the countryside Tanzania called 'imitative play' where representations of scenes from adult life are dramatised by children with the due observation of the norms and ideals accompanying it. This is quite similar to the situation in Ghana at the

time as I witnessed some portions during my early schooling years. Kwadwo (2002, p. 5) reports that the traditional learning process in Ghana as at the time was coded under 'see me do it', 'help me do it' and 'do it your self': thus learning by imitation which eventually makes the individual honest, skilled, respectful, co-operative and a useful member to himself and society. Children took after the parent's profession such as farming, poultry making, trading, weaving and were also engaged in participatory education through ceremonies, rituals, imitation, recitation and demonstration (Fafunwa, 1982). Fafunwa (1982, p. 11) list seven cardinal goals of traditional African education:

- To develop the child's latent physical skills
- To develop character
- To inculcate respect for elders and those in position of authority
- To develop intellectual skills
- To acquire specific vocational training and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour
- To develop a sense of belonging and to encourage active participation in family and community affairs
- To understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large.

It is important to note that the schooling situation is quite different today as most of these cultural traditional values indicated are taught during the *dipo* religious rites by religious leaders and that these cultural values are giving way to new breeze of convention such as classroom instructions, reading and writing, games

such as football, volleyball, basketball among others as a result of the advent of literacy through formal schooling.

A number of African scholars have wondered why it was necessary to abandon so completely this indigenous educational tradition which accompany the *dipo* rites and similar religious ceremonies in Africa and adopt a westernised pattern of schooling which they feel is far less efficient to make the African child a useful member of the society. This view of why traditional education values that accompany religious rites such as the *dipo* rites is no longer being upheld is questioned by Milhouse (2001) in the quest to understanding why abandoned African values is being adopted by the educational system in some American states and is working for them. Milhouse (2001, p. 42) writes:

> '*The irony of this whole situation is that African traditional education incorporated features that many US educators are now seeking to incorporate into their teaching and learning process, that is, principles such as community, cooperation, unity, real learning(developing the whole person in mind, body and spirit)civic education and education that re-create the self by making learning recreational'*

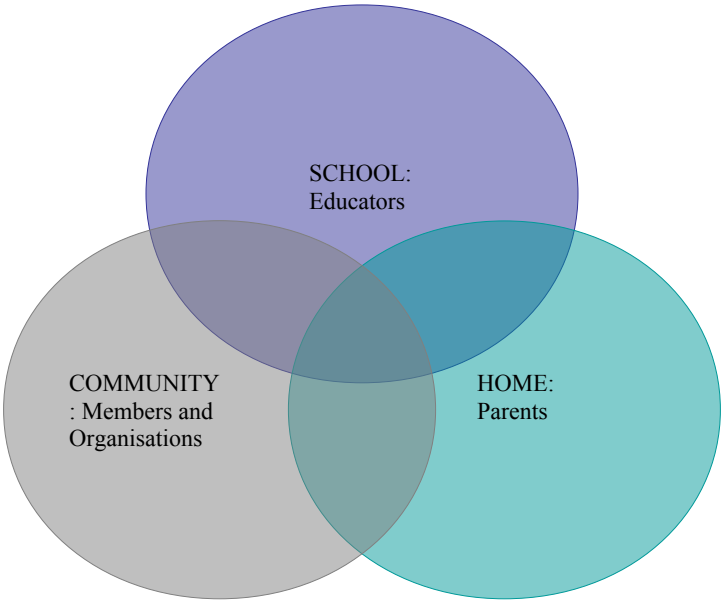
The question of whether traditional education is completely abandoned in our African communities poses a debate. For instance, Sefa Dei and Asgharzadeh (2006) affirm that despite the strong impact of the western form of education on Africans, the influence of the traditional form of education is still very predominant in many communities across Africa which has not been too severely exposed to European education and cultural influences. And even in instances where African traditional education was exposed, the approach adopted by the western academy was not distinct from what the traditional African adopted (Sefa-Dei and Asgharzadeh, 2006, pp. 57-58). At our recent African Studies Association (ASA, UK) conference held in Central Lancashire University from the 11-13 September, 2008, some presentations addressed similar issues that concerned the revisiting and re-integration of African traditional cultural values in the curriculum of basic schools. The sentiments of scholars including Sefa-Dei (2004) that teaching must integrate social values and the cultural resource base of the locals must be welcomed by all Africanists.

2.7 Exploring School and Community Relations

I have examined the relations between school and community as a pathway to foster the recognition and validation of the legitimacy of indigenous community knowledge, education and exchanges as a pedagogic and instructional tool in the process of delivering education in the Manya Krobo paramountcy of Ghana. I have also included this issue of community and schooling connectedness not only to point out some challenges of community cultural education through schooling

but to also highlight the necessity of developing strong school-community relations and to point out the possibilities and difficulties that can result from meaningful partnership between parents, teachers, community members at large and pupils in Africa.

Notions of school and community relations are found in almost every African educational setting (Gereluk, 2006) including Ghana. The book of Dodd and Konzal (2002) even though is of American origin is a guide in understanding how to integrate indigenous and local cultural knowledges in the curriculum as well as into the instructional and pedagogic practices of educators and learners. In establishing the framework for discussing school community connections, I identified three agencies who work hand-in-hand for the education and training of the school going child in Africa. The relationship among the three agencies (school, home and community) can well be understood with the circular sidebars below:



The works of school reformers, sociologists and educational researchers may have been the cause to change the ideology and age old concept that the home, school and community are separate entities even though they are strongly related. Dodd and Konzal (2002, p. 4) add that many other reasons have caused the masses to realise that parents, educators and community members all have important roles to play and must be more connected in their efforts to raise well educated and caring children. In fact, the issue of school and community relations seems to centre on

participation of stakeholders (parents, local business, families, churches and other social agencies) in the affairs of the school. Educational researcher Rigsby (1995) put that schools are wholly embedded in complex community structures that provide the local resources with which to support education and present the problems and issues with which the educational system must contend. The community forces that affect the schooling and educational system in a geographical area are expressed at many levels of institutional connectedness which can well be understood against the background of enhancing the capacity of the local people to sustain their lives.

Educationists may have to realise that the child's personal growth and social development are as important as his/her academic knowledge and that even though children are schooled each day for hours in their various schools, they are being educated all the time - in school, at home and in their respective communities. Educationists therefore may have to value the social responsibility of other social agencies in the academic and social wellbeing of the child. If African children and their parents need school environment that is caring and can deliver their expectations, then perhaps the proposal of Dodd and Konzal (2002, p. 288) in looking for school environment we can call a 'community home' is long overdue. Dodd and Kanzol (2002, p. 289) say the ideal of a 'community home' for all children begins with the understanding and recognition that all children deserve no less than what some children have now. A good and practical example is that when parents are considered to know their children better than any

other person the child relates to for his/her upbringing, teachers have good knowledge of teaching and learning, so as the employer knows the type of work that should be made readily available for pupils who completes school in various communities. Therefore, quality education that takes account of cultural values can best be achieved in Ghana when people bring together individual knowledge to create an outstanding pool of collective, holistic and inclusive knowledge. By extension, this collective, holistic and inclusive view of school improvement can be seen in a familiar story, 'The amputated veterans' told by Jimmy Durante:

> *'In the front row of a church sat two veterans, each of whom had lost an arm in a war. One had lost his right arm and the other has lost his left arm. Together, they were able to clap in a church during praise and worship which they did loudly and cheerfully in harmony'*

The action and results of the two veterans epitomises the fact that school improvement in ways that serve needs of all African children may be well achieved when people come together with their individual knowledge and cultural experiences to create a richer pool of shared knowledge.

2.8 Child Rights Issues in Ghana

Ghana is a party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 and a privy to key international Human Rights instruments including international Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment among others. The example set by Ghana in taking the lead in her ratification of the Convention in February 1990 was a pride that won the support of most Ghanaians and Africans. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees the African Child (a) rights of provision (adequate nutrition, healthcare, education, economic welfare), (b) rights of protection (protection from abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation), and (c) rights of participation (being part in decisions affecting the child). It is clear, therefore, that Ghana by being a party to the UN Convention is obliged to provide and protect these rights.

The question of whether much is being done in Ghana and as to whether Ghana's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Child has translated well into the quality of life of Ghanaian school children is what most Ghanaian academics such as Afua Twum-Danso, Robert Ame and Yaw Tsikatsa among others whom I met at the recent European Conference on African Studies (ECAS 3) in Leipzig – Germany, are tempted to ask today. The rationale for passing the Bill on Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUB) was for education to be made compulsory and absolutely free for all school going children in Ghana. However, the Bill which in terms of definition looks more straightforward is otherwise more

complicated than anticipated. For instance, Laird (2002) reports that daily reality of education and schooling in Ghana is strongly determined by economic circumstances and cultural norms, not the constitutional framework. Most teenage girls have to hawk after school hours in various ventures to support the income of the family in meeting their day to day expenditure - a very common practice in Ghana and extracted from one of the school girls interviewed:

> *'I support my mother to look after my brothers and sister by selling oranges in the evenings at the road side'.*

In the Krobo paramountcy where this research was conducted, girls after school and equally during vacations are forced by circumstances to hawk various food commodities at the road side in the nights to support the incomes of their family. Laird (2002, p. 897) refers to the differential school enrolment rates of boys and girls in secondary schools across the country which she pegs at 44% for boys and 33% for girls indicating the priority for boys by parents when confronted with limited resources. This she said is as a result of poor social amenities, high illiteracy rate and limited access to utilities, also combined with socio-economic disadvantages to create very powerful inequalities, which goes to reinforce gender roles.

It may be of interest to note that in spite of external pressures and internal transformations the Africannia Mission, a faith based organisation in Africa, does not agree to abolishing the cultural rites of their ancestors which has been passed onto generations (Eckardt, 2004, p. 8). It is one of the few missions in Africa which strictly hold onto tradition. Their view is that ritual servitude is a practice that trains young women to be role models for their family and the community. They equally hold the view that to serve at a shrine is an honour for both the child and the family (Eckardt, 2004, p. 8). The view of the mission purports the inculcation to African traditional values in the school going child. The mission thinks the role of the school in the community has not been affected in any way, even though the celebration of these rites has continued to this day in the Krobo Paramountcy. Considering that parents tend to require our schools today to pass onto young generations, the attitudes, values, skills, social understanding and practice of the societies to which they belong, to socialise them and to enable them fit usefully and harmoniously into their society, there is also the question as to whether the indigenous traditional rites cannot be built upon to provide a pattern of education which would serve modern purposes whilst retaining a good relationship with the traditional culture.

There are many characteristics of socialisation procedures in cultural rites celebrations in many rural African communities which closely resemble techniques of education which leading African educationists such as Nwomonoh (1998) and Sefa-Dei (2004) have for years been advocating as appropriate for

schooling in Africa. One common feature of the way in which children are brought up in traditional African society is the process of learning by doing, whereby through imitation, identification, practice and co-operation a child learns the principles of adulthood. Associated with this process is the modern principle that what a child learns in school should be related to his immediate environment and to his immediate needs at his particular stage of development in that environment. Essentially there is a body of knowledge and information which the child must learn traditionally and remember through an intellectual process - the legends, folk tales, lullaby, riddles and proverbs which orally communicated, encapsulated much of the inherited wisdom of the society. This is a corporate work of both the school and the community which is being advocated by the Africannia mission.

Arguably, while I do not deny the relevance of cultural values in the upbringing of the child, this should not be done at the expense of his/her formal education. Sefa-Dei (2004, p. 101) reiterates this by advocating for the engagement of family and community cultures in school. He further indicates that this by implication has impact on many aspects of education. Community participation is essential for ensuring that local cultures are reclaimed and used as knowledge resources in the process of education. Such views as indicated above is held by the Africannia Mission as the general perception of most rural Africans and is considered a reinforcement of archaic ideologies by some sections of Africans. Schools' distribution of student roles are reinforced by gender roles - girls are in charge of

sweeping the classrooms, while the boys water school gardens and run errands for teachers (Abdi and Cleghorn, 2005, p. 204).

2.9 African Religion/Culture

In most survey approaches to the study of African traditional cultural practices and beliefs around the globe, the way the African understands his world and his consequent responses in meeting the exigencies of life are being brought to question by those who have finally discovered their own footing (Asante, 1990). Imasogie (1985, p. 5) explains that those who did this field research in the early days were mostly European tourists and Christian missionaries hired by governments to advise them on native affairs. Not being educationist and native scholars, such people treated African culture and education from the tourist view points**.** The result has been a checkerboard of success and failure following the absence of past and present field researchers and academics to take into account the overall picture and the many different social factors in play in Africa continent (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1997, p. xii). Imasogie equally admonishes that any research into African culture and education conducted under any kind of presupposition is bound to yield a result that does not reflect the inner world of the practitioners. This creates a problem for the modern scholar, and he has to work through this bias to get to the real meaning of the culture (Imasogie, 1985, p. 5).

A greater number of books on the culture of Africa were produced by foreign researchers (Asante, 1990, p. 119) who viewed the religious practice from their own lenses and therefore do not reflect on the true cultural values of Africans. Imasogie (1985, p. 4) advocates 'such books are not worth more than the distorted sources on which they are based'. It is on the basis of these reflections that this project adopts a new methodology to point out some of these biases.

In response to these Eurocentric views, Broadfoot (1997, p. xii) has come to realise that upcoming individual researchers, government agencies, organisations are now ready to define problems and prescribe solutions based on their own priorities and cultural assumptions. This problem is not manifesting in African cultural studies alone but even in leadership and management in business and education worldwide which has largely been informed by western concepts and ideas. It is therefore appropriate and timely to introduce a critical perspective that challenges the dominance of western practice and policies in Africa. The postcolonial theory emerged as a framework to challenge the way Eurocentric colonial practices and policies shaped colonised societies. As a critical stance, it questions postcolonialism and explores the multiple and layered experiences of colonialisation and resistance to imposed theories worldwide. It is important to note that the theory is not narrowed to colonial interpretation but also the neo-colonialism which pertains to continued economic and social and cultural dependence on former European power and newer forms of imperialism.

2.10 Schooling and Culture in Ghana

Chapter four of *Schooling and Education in Africa* by Sefa Dei (2004) looks at the relationships of schooling with parents/guardians, local communities, cultures and languages and how these can enhance the learning experiences of the young and of students of all ages. According to Sefa Dei (2004, p. 101) 'engaging family and community cultures in schools has implications for many aspect of education'**.** Sefa Dei's expression gives a valuable clue to the relational perspective of the community, culture and schools and the implications to the education of the child.

Coe (2005, p. 8) has indicated that 'Ghana is an especially good place to study the politics of culture and schooling. It has long history of cultural programming, and as a result, it influenced other British-ruled African colonies and African countries'. This is relevant in situating and interrogating the impact of culture on schooling by early researchers. Very small research work has been conducted in the field of African culture and schooling. Binsbergen and Schoffeleers (1985, p. 36) have not hidden their feelings by indicating that students of African educational research are relatively few in number, and that they tend to work outside the mainstream of their disciplines - be these anthropology, sociology, history, political science, theology or education. They indicated that as scholars we have a vested interest in the persistence of our chosen subject.

In quite similar feeling as Coe (2005) on the uniqueness of Ghanaian culture, Sefa Dei (2005) wrote that cultural difference can be evoked to either affirm or deny the complexity and contentions of integrating different bodies in schooling. While some school teachers and students may not critically engage in discussions about social difference and asymmetrical power relations that structure the life of the learner; discussions on difference are relevant to understanding the everyday practices of schooling in Ghana. Sefa-Dei (2005, p. 268) said multicultural education may not also be spoken of directly in Ghana but the assumptions underlying this form of education (e.g. importance of culture, the link of identity, schooling and knowledge production) could be gleaned in local discussions, global and citizenship education. Sefa-Dei's view also comes in support of articulating the concerns of some educational researchers and practitioners about schooling of minority youth in pluralistic contexts.

Nwomonoh (1998, p. 170) discusses the positive effect of the Ghanaian educational reform as part of his general overview. He said one good thing about the education reforms in Ghana is the active participation of the communities in the provision of education. This cost effective approach has increased the level of commitment of the communities to the extent that they now exercise some control in the running of the schools in their locality. Nwomonoh's view comes is supported by an example cited by Sefa-Dei (2004, p. 102) to illustrate the point that 'having an elder participate at the school site by sharing the knowledge of her/his religious/spiritual faith or cultural traditions can make the curriculum more

inclusive by introducing other non-hegemonic, non-dominant, non-western ways/ideas to students'. This poses the question of whether community and parents integration in school are the reasons for the continuous practice of these cultural rites.

2.11 General Overview

In view of the foregoing review, what then to carry forward into the study of African religious/cultural rites and how it affects schooling in Ghana?

It can be pointed out from Lutkehaus and Roscoe (1995) that, in discussions of both male and female initiation and cultural rites in African and for that matter Ghana, analytic attention frequently focuses on the physical manipulation of the initiates' bodies - the performance of ordeal, scarification, circumcision, infibulations - and the emotional and symbolic significance of these often painful and traumatic acts. The usual explanation is that these acts test the initiates' preparation for adulthood. The scars, tattoos, and other forms of bodily 'mutilations' are permanent signs of the initiates' change of status and ability to endure the pain associated with acquiring them. These rituals are central to the research especially when discussing the conceptual context of these religious and cultural rites, their relevance today, how they affects the child's schooling and changes affecting these rites will be looked at.

Sefa-Dei (2004) looks at the relationship of schools with parents/guardians, local communities, culture and languages and how these can enhance the learning experience of the young and of students of all ages in chapter four of his book. He conducted an ethnographic study in two Ghanaian school sites and local communities between July and October 1999. Apart from his work informing my study especially the relationship between culture and schooling in Ghana, he is a good example to draw inspiration from in view of his wide publication on African studies.

Shockley's (2003) awareness about the fact of becoming familiar with black culture and custom before beginning a research endeavour on African studies has been most important. His claim comes to support Imagosie on the distorted sources of African studies by the early writers mostly foreigners who were hired by government to advise them on native affairs. Imasogie (1985, p. 5) advocates, many books on African religion and culture in the early days were written by tourists whose only reason for visiting Africa was to lend an air of authenticity to what they had thought about African religion and culture long before they set their feet on the African soil.

A word of caution is offered by Grogan and Simmons (2007, p. 47) in response to Eurocentric views that, the advent of the postcolonial theory is one intended solution that offers new epistemological and methodological approaches that questions and challenges the traditional English oriented dominant research. The

theory adopts qualitative tools and designs to bring reforms. Grogan and Simmon add that it is extremely important that the researcher does not take undue advantage of the research participants for his/or her own academic purposes.

2.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter has drawn on a number of writings and literature across different geographical areas and disciplines on culture and schooling in Africa to make a case for this research. Here we encountered the need to ensure that voices of Africans and their concerns are heard and used as a basis to implement a sustained educational plan for educational change in Ghana. We are also alerted to the importance of how Africans understand their world and the subsequent responses in meeting the exigencies of life and the need to see education as part of holistic, respectful communal view of belonging and learning. The chapter also recognises the contributions of other experienced and renowned researchers such as Sefa Dei (2004) and Nwomonoh (1998) and the need to draw on the experiences and efforts of their projects. We need to find the best fit among methods in other to address the research on culture and schooling in Ghana. The next chapter examines this.

Chapter 3

Methodological Concepts

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter is intended to provide the opportunity to understand the background of the Afrocentric ideology as the framework of this study. It also recognises and offers credence to the use of the Afrocentric framework by scholars in various ways and locations. It advances the thinking of two Afrocentric scholars by reviewing their work. The last sections of the chapter points out the increasingly diverse and the growing awareness of the need for cultural and contextual sensitivity when conducting empirical research and drawing conclusions from cross-cultural research so as to make fair judgements and limit biases.

3.2 Tenets of Afrocentric Ideology and the Questions it raises

The study of African people and their events from an Africa-centred prism is referred to as Afrocentricity (Oyebode, 1990, p. 233). The Afrocentric perspective posits that we cannot develop a good understanding of Africans, their culture and education without a proper understanding of African ideals and values that constitute the African environment. Afrocentricity can in a sense be used as a paradigm, a framework, an approach, a model or an ideology (Asante, 2009, p. 2). It recognises the deculturalisation of Africans and their education and upholds the view that Africans have been made to accept the 'conqueror code of conduct and modes of behaviour' (Asante, 2009, p. 2). The Afrocentrists seeks to pose three main questions according to Asante (2009, p. 4). These include:

- How do we see ourselves and how have others seen us?
- What can we do to regain our own accountability and to move beyond the intellectual and cultural plantation that constrains our economic, cultural, scientific and political development?
- What allied theories and methods may be used to rescue those African ideas and ideals that are marginalised by Europe and also in the African's mind as well?

Additionally, the theory is characterised by five major elements that seeks to project African reality from other unjustified interpretations. These elements as described by Asante (2009, p. 5) are:

- An intense interest in psychological location as determined by symbols, motifs, rituals and signs;
- A commitment to finding the subject-place of Africans in any social economic, political, cultural and religious phenomena with implications for questions of sex, gender and class;
- A defence of African cultural elements as historically valid in the context of art, music, education, science and literature;
- A celebration of centeredness and agency and a commitment to lexical refinement that eliminates pejoratives about Africans and other people;
- A powerful imperative from historical sources to revise the collective text of African people.

Among some of the contemporary scholars to this ideology include: Dove (1998b), Mazama (2003), Shockley (2003), Mkabela (2005), Gutto (2006),

Asante (2009) and many others who have found inspiration from the long standing concern of Karenga's (1980) Kawaida philosophy that cultural tension is a defining element of the 20th century African reality which is and can be measured in the same perspective as political crises in the continent of Africa**.** Research of any kind will only be useful for Africans if it is conducted in a way that integrate the ideals, values and subjective cultural realities of Africans (Asante, 1990, pp. 5-6). This does not suggest that only researchers of African origin can conduct valid research on Africa. It is not the cultural identity of the researcher that matters but rather the perspective from which that person examines data that is important (Asante, 1990). The ideology was partly developed in a way to overcome the ontological, epistemological and methodological supremacy in African related studies. Thus the struggle for liberation from whites' dominance can also be seen against the background that African people have history/herstory rich in the resistance to the European forms of oppression and that it is possible for people who look African to perpetuate Eurocentric ideals that are inconsistent with the well-being of African people (Dove, 1998b, p. 532). The Afrocentric theory challenges research on Africa in three broad ways: first, it questions the supremacy of Eurocentric ideas that has eaten into the fabrics of research on Africa; second, it criticises the indefensibility of racist theories that undermine multiculturalism and pluralism; third, it projects a humanistic and pluralistic stand by identifying Afrocentricity as a valid tool for researching on Africa. The Afrocentric ideology is concerned foremost about African ideals, values, and history that must take the centre of any analysis of text

or discourse on Africa (Schreiber, 2000). The European centred view is claimed to have caused a number of problems for the non-European people and reduced the quality of research result based on Africa (Schreiber, 2000, p. 652). In reaction, western educated scholars in West Africa and the African Diaspora began producing writings that lay emphasis on African civilisations and achievements. This new dimension labelled the 'vindicationist tradition' (Zeleza, 2007, p. 7) found a voice in Asante's (1990) *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge*. Afrocentrism attempts to remedy the fragmentary view of the world afforded by a restrictive approach to intellectual inquiry. Asante (1990) and other scholars such as Carruthers (1986), Diop (1990), Schreiber (2000) among others have questioned the validity of applying Eurocentric approach universally to groups and societies whose life styles and knowing do not originate from European paradigms. These are but a few of the Afrocentric scholars who have rejected European particularism as universal and point to the fact that this methodological elitism objectifies African (and other non-Europeans) and marginalises their discourse, cultural perspectives, social conditions and historical realities. Afrocentrism seems to present a more balanced perspective while challenging Eurocentric intellectual practices (Schreiber, 2000, p. 653). Afrocentric research is concerned with social and intellectual progress (Schreiber, 2000). Asante (1990) has called critics of Afrocentrism to account by arguing that the Afrocentric ideology is the right tool for correcting and reproducing all the central features of the outmoded Eurocentric scholarship on Africans. Toffler (1980, p. 119) contends that:

> *Old ways of thinking, old formulas, dogmas, ideologies, no matter how cherished or useful in the past, no longer fit the fact. The world that is fast emerging from the clash of new values and new technologies, new geopolitical relations, new life styles, new modes of communication, demands wholly new ideas and analogies, classification and concepts. We cannot cram the embryonic world of tomorrow into yesterday's conventional cubbyholes.*

3.3 The Approach as used by Other Researchers

While this research project provides information about *dipo* rites and schooling in Ghana, I found that some of the challenges to my ways of thinking came through interactions with a wide variety people and their writings. I observed that literature connects us with one another and that it makes us to bear witness to each others work. On this basis I found the works of Shockley (2003) and Mkabela (2005) illuminating with respect to their strength and direction and saw the need to advance their line of thinking, hence the review of their work.

Shockley (2003)

Shockley's (2003) work begins by examining some recent development that provides context for the debate about the culture of black children and schooling

in America using the Afrocentric approach. He points out the inadequate strategies put forward by both teachers and administrators to address the mismatch and the proper integration of black children in white community schools in Washington, DC. His thesis outlines its research agenda, sketches the magnitude of the problem and examines various issues in the imperatives of Afrocentric education and Pan Africanism. Shockley engages in a critical debate using a mainstream critical theory to examine African Americans, their valuable culture and education in 'a disenfranchised community' using Shockley's own words.

The main value of this study is that it is one of the most recent empirical overview of the Afrocentric approach to the understanding of Afro-American education in the USA. It uses the '*Africalogical critical ethnographic instrumental case study*' to explore the educational needs of Afro-Americans. It notes that 'Black children perform poorly on educational measures is less an indication of their intellectual ability, and more an indication of the inability of the American educational system to meet their needs' (Shockley, 2003, p. 28). Shockley understands the complexity of using the Afrocentric approach to the understanding of the educational needs of the Afro-American. He has adopted a research methodology which produces fresh insight into the imperatives of Afrocentric education. The thesis raises very interesting questions which certainly informs debates in academic circles around research techniques and approaches, data examination,

interpretation and analysis and the importance of Pan Africanism in teaching the African child that he has shared interests with the rest of the African world.

African researchers will appreciate Shockley's attempt to conceptualise his research by providing a brief historical overview of Afrocentric education in America and the importance of Pan Africanism: moulding the African child together with his or her community. Shockley says knowing your culture teaches you the values that are part of your tradition and that the African American child must be educated not schooled. Shockley draws on several theories to define the identity of African American. This ranges from theoretical discussion through to empirical stories from the grassroots level, with some leading Pan Africanist and Afro American school children and teachers.

An important part of the research was trust building between Shockley and the researched. The need for triangulation in research in order to come to a deeper understanding of the researched and their community is reflected in the project. Shockley (2003, p. 75) reports 'I was able to become an insider because I had a genuine interest and concern in the way African centred education works for Black children'. There was a dialogical experience with the researched, reducing the power distance between dominant researchers and the subordinate researched.

Mkabela (2005)

The article unravels the complexities facing researchers researching indigenous African culture using the Afrocentric method. The central theme of the article is

the call for cultural aspirations, understanding and the practices of African indigenous people to position researchers strategically to implement and organise the research process. This, Mkabela (2005, p. 178) said, is aimed at stimulating enlightened discussion about the definition, mechanisms, and the purpose of the Afrocentric method as an appropriate research method for indigenous African culture and how it can be used as a complement to qualitative research method.

Informed by her own life experience as a growing up girl in the countryside of South Africa, Mkabela narrates how she has received education in a country that in her opinion has marginalised African indigenous knowledge. As part of the transition to democratic rule, South Africa is engaged in the unfolding process of integrating African indigenous knowledge as a legitimate field of enquiry in all levels of learning across South Africa. Mkabela sees this transformation as welcoming and explores how the Afrocentic method can be used as an alternative to the study of African indigenous knowledge (AIK).

Another strand in the article is that the Afrocentric method shares the same features of the qualitative research method. This is reflected in the concept that both Afrocentric and qualitative method hold the assumption that people employ the interpretive schemes which must be well understood in relation to the local context.

The polemical nature of the Afrocentric method is also highlighted. Mkabela advocates that the proposal of the Afrocentric method in overcoming methodological elitism in African studies research is not meant to 'denigrate western methodology' (2005, p. 179), but to re-examine and support any thought that attributes undue superiority at the expense of African thought patterns. Mkabela's proposal is in support of Schreiber's (2000) view that the Afrocentric method is meant to illustrate and reinforce in a special way the inadequacy of other conventional approaches when applied to certain identifiable cultural groups, particularly traditionally oppressed group in and around the African continent. Mkabela's proposal is informed by the fact that the use of the Afrocentric method is determined by the pace and method, construction and validity of knowledge, and finally the processing and constructing of meaning. Mkabela (2005) said these emphases must be accounted for in the collection, examination, interpretation and analysis of any African centred data.

Mkabela intends to generate dialogue in the bid to look for a sound research methodology which can serve as a cure for the imposition of Eurocentric expression in African studies.

3.4 The way forward

Although these scholars have different geographical areas and emphases for their researches, they have utilised Afrocentric concepts in looking at Africans, their culture and education in diverse locations. All of them provide very interesting

viewpoints. A common thread seen in the discussion throughout the works of these scholars is the advancement of African cultural knowledge in relation to the understanding of African people and their education not only in Africa but anywhere else in the world. The good news is that more contemporary scholars are discovering the potentiality in Africa in terms of the richness of its archaeological record and the abundance of its oral history (Asante, 1990). I have found the arguments and proposals of Shockley (2003) and Mkabela (2005) convincing and compelling. Therefore, I have decided to advance the line of thinking, based upon my own studies of culture and schooling in Ghana by exploring girls' nubility rite and how it affects the schooling of the celebrants in Ghana.

The differing inputs of the above scholars provided a range of perspectives on how my own research could be both methodologically rigorous, culturally and educationally appropriate. I have had the opportunity through this research to highlight the projects of contemporary African scholars. This approach together with other recent innovations in methodology is now beginning to emerge and gain root, to be conceptualised and integrated into African education literature. Zeleza (2006, p. 203) declares that African and Africanist scholars have been preoccupied with the need to decolonise African studies by interrogating and incorporating the globalisation paradigm more intensely than what has been done so far. I am happy to be part of this development. The consequence will be as Schreiber (2000, p. 651) put 'to seek liberation for Africans on several different

levels; (1) historical, (2) social, and (3) epistemological and methodological' and to support and reinforce the growing interest in qualitative research in developing countries like Ghana given the importance of culture permeating all levels of society. The project provided an opportunity for me as a researcher to explore the interrelationships between the school and their micro and macro environments using the Afrocentric approach.

To carry this line of realisation further, I would want to remind myself - as well as the reader - how culture has shaped my learning experience as an African and a Ghanaian in particular. I know from my research, from my educational experience and from other researchers with whom I have discussed this issue, that the African learning environment currently reflects educational, social, cultural and economic inequalities existing all over the continent (Milhouse, 2001, p. 43). These inequalities that come in the various forms such as lack of adequate books, insufficient trained teachers and virtually no computers in most basic schools across the continent have the potency to dissuade teachers, policy makers and researchers from noting the relevance of culture to the educational training of the youth. We all face the challenge of untangling the strands of the inequalities through our research and bringing to the fore the relevance of culture in the child's education. This project carries this argument by addressing these complex issues within African culture, schooling and education, it also provide a reading of sensitisation on cross-cultural and trans-cultural research.

Having said all that, I would not want to claim unequivocally that the Afrocentric methodology I have chosen is the only best choice to conduct research on Africa culture and schooling or that one should be part of the Afrocentric ideology to be able to obtain in-depth data on Africa culture and schooling. I would rather want to indicate that I am under no illusions that my small initiative and contribution can alone effect significant change in this regard. What I have tried to show is that within my research, with my special background as an African teacher and in relation to this research, the *Africalogical critical ethnographic instrumental case study* has proved helpful in my collection, analysis, presentation and interpretation of data which granted voices to people whose voices are often taken for granted or (un)intentionally marginalised.

3.5 The need for cross-cultural awareness in conducting research

The decision to consider looking at cross-cultural and trans-cultural issues in research was at the preliminary stages of my programme. I had to read, search, explore and from time to time question more widely, literature I came into contact with that constantly urged me to refine my research ideas. This insight of constant questioning came from my background as an African born in Africa and researching on African education in a new geographical environment. Danzinga (2001, p. 199) indicates that a necessary goal is the identification and definition of the boundaries between those aspect of humanity that are culturally universal, and those that are elaborated only in particular cultural context for any discipline that seek to understand human nature. In a related development Dimmock (2002,

p. 28) posits that many policy makers, administrators and missionaries have struggled to change some customs and values of particular groups because they did not understand that they and the people they were trying to help were operating from different set of presuppositions. It is important to note that the increasing importance for the awareness of cross-cultural differences in interpreting and conducting research is gaining significance in recent times. Scholars such as Thomas (2000) and Dimmock (2002) are part of the sensitisation process. It is important to note that 'a state of community and harmony cannot be achieved in the world until we are all ready to accept different cultural forms, norms, and orientations' (Milhouse, Asante and Nwosu, 2001, p. ix). Dimmock (2002, p. 30) reminds us that the current global awareness of cross-cultural differences in interpreting and conducting research is as a result of the following factors:

- Narrow ethnocentricism of Anglo-American research
- International comparison of test results
- The work of international agencies
- Globalisation on policy and practice
- Increased mobility of ideas and people
- Internationalisation of schools, especially the private sector
- Internationalisation of higher education
- Multiculturalism within societies

I am inspired by Dimmock's (2002) critical position that cautions researchers, firstly, on the need to raise sensitivity on cross-cultural issues pertinent to

researchers wishing to conduct or conducting empirical or non-empirical research on cultures other than their own; secondly, academics aiming to conduct research in their own culture while adopting methods, theories and models drawn from elsewhere; and finally, the relevance of researchers drawing meaningful and unbiased comparisons between the education system of different societies. Dimmock (2002, p. 28) posits that 'for far too long, assumptions, policies and practices emanating from Western Europe and North America has been imposed on societies with very different cultures'. In many instances researchers fail to delimit the geo-cultural boundaries within which their approaches, theories, ideas, findings and conclusions apply, and question the sharp borrowing and adoption of these findings by policy makers. Dimmock adds that we need a proper understanding of one's indigenous culture, its values, beliefs, customs and ways of life to be able to make meaningful evaluation of cultural and educational research of an identifiable group and this is the duty of up and coming academics to bring that transformation into reality (Dimmock, 2002, pp. 29-30). Dimmock's ideology resonates with that of Asante (1990) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (2007) on issues of cultural validity which is a key to effective research as a means to map out the impact of cross-cultural, intercultural and comparative research, where the intention is to shape research so as to make it appropriate to the culture of the researched. Dimmock calls for the foundation concept of 'culture' to be clarified. Also, the realisation and proper understanding of the differences in meaning of events and its accompanied identifiable ideas, actions, behaviours and norms of people in a particular society. The last but not the least,

there is the urgent need to develop a more rigorous, systematic, befitting and more acceptable decentralised methodology for authentic comparison and assessment of cultural differences and their impact on educational and policy issues around the globe. The researcher wishing to be responsive to cross-cultural research can only proceed by addressing the seven important issues explained below (Dimmock, 2002, pp. 30-40):

Clarifying the concept of culture

Because various professionals including anthropologists, sociologists, modernists and culturalists among others tend to attribute different emphases and attributes to the term 'culture', it is important as researchers to gain the awareness and to appreciate the different interpretations and nuances of the term and to be mindful of the potential difficulties in using the term. While the anthropologists and culturalists approach the term from the focus on beliefs, values and customs of an identifiable group, the sociologist adopts a more institutionalised position viewing culture as a composition of values, institutional and structural arrangements, political and historical forces that make a society. The modernist on the other hand is constantly viewing the world as a changing environment where traditional values are constantly facing out. The modernist therefore sees culture as a mixture of old and new values that makes up a society. These differences in definitions makes it difficult to work with the concept of culture which is has too much influence to be ignored.

Examples of cultural context and differences of meaning

The problem is that often times educators in different cultures attributes different meanings and significance to the same core concepts and ideas. We ought to note that strategies for teaching in African schools should mean something different in English schools in consideration of available resources in each of these environments. As researchers we need to be aware of not only how globalisation spreads the same policy agenda across many societies and cultures, but how different cultures value the meanings and significance of these policies and practice.

Difficulties of access

Access to information for research purposes in different societies present different challenges not only for natives of the area but for even the experienced academic researcher. It appears that wide varieties of research paradigms and methodologies are more tolerated and practised in democratic, open and liberal societies than their close counterparts. Ghana is one country with quite an easy access to data for research if the researcher is able to convince the researched and pay for access.

Preference for different paradigms and methodologies

A collection of several culturally related factors should be considered in the early studies of the research before the researcher sets out into the field to conduct research. Cultural differences might account for the reason why certain research

paradigms or approaches are inappropriate in certain societies. Critical approaches in countries like Zimbabwe may attract political reproach and subsequent apprehension or attacks as compared to Ghana.

Overcoming cultural difference in conducting research as cross-cultural researcher

A key issue concerns the researchers' understanding of the culture being studied. This is not a major problem with similar cultural and educational systems. While one expects a native to possess a good understanding of the studied culture and its environment, the tendency of taking things for granted as an insider should be considered. Native scholars may be blind towards certain interesting characteristics and fail to give them due consideration and recognition. On the other hand the outsider researcher may equally lack intimate knowledge and appreciation of the local culture or may introduce a fresh perspective which may not highlight key aspects of a particular culture, but recognise salient differences between the studied culture and others. Both dimensions provide a careful consideration of the dynamics in overcoming the cultural difference as a cross-cultural researcher.

Research method issues posed by conducting cross-cultural interviewing

We ought to note that a number of research projects involving qualitative interviews for both researcher and the researched bring together an interaction across cultures. This has the tendency to be loaded with subjectivity, personal perception and experience if there is very little or no basis for shared assumption

or meaning then communication and dialogue will seriously be affected. A classical example is a British (Anglo - Saxon) researcher interviewing a Muslim school girl at the country-side Scotland on the effects of September 11 bombing on her education. One way of overcoming such difficulty in cross-cultural research is to increase the level of cultural sensitivity and awareness before undertaking such research.

Examples of contrasting cultures and the promotion of research in different countries

Conducting research in some cultures may be inhibited for political and social reasons. While some research has national backing others are localised. To cite an example is to note the Malaysian and the Chinese government sponsorship to their nationals conducting national oriented research that is aimed at informing educational policy and practice countrywide. Some regions in Ghana like the Asante region are more concerned with the sponsorship of locals to effect regional and transformation instead of national. One key reason for government sponsorship is the development of a globalised competitive world economy and accompanying knowledge based society.

The second face of awareness is the understanding that employing transcultural perspective can help us to understand that a single culture, in and of itself, for advancement requires interaction and dialogue with other cultures (Milhouse, Asante and Nwosu, 2001). This is the direction which relates well to other cross-cultural concepts such as intra and inter-culturalism and brings us to the realisation to learn the good qualities in the other diverse cultures knowing well that culture has the power to influence the creation of knowledge,

understanding and educational experiences of human behaviour. Milhouse, Asante and Nwosu, (2001, p. x) explicated this point clearly:

> *'This vision of transcultural globalism has heightened the sense of urgency many have about how best to adopt transculturally recognised principles and to be opened to ongoing change without destroying cultural experiences and traditions'*

This realisation is paving a way that is gradually building the confidence among cross-cultural workers and researchers to search for ways to look into the explanation of human behaviour within and across cultures (Thomas, 2000). As expounded by Makariev (2008, p. 405) in our bid to celebrate diversity, we do not need to be so mesmerised by different cultures; what is important is the appreciation of cultural difference even if we do not try to esteem the quality of cultures that differ.

3.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has given an account of the Afrocentric framework adopted for this study and how other scholars such as Mkabela and Shockley have used this framework in their studies. These writers including many others have seen the need for a paradigm change (Asante, 2009, p. 4). There are good reasons for

knowing as much as we can things about other people and their culture and how meaningful research can be done when we fairly understand people's culture. The next chapter will provide a holistic description of the qualitative research design adopted for this project and justify its validity, credibility and trustworthiness among others.

Chapter 4

Methodology and Research Design

4.1 Chapter Overview

Chapter four draws on the themes of earlier chapters to choose the appropriate design for this project. It starts by distinguishing between methodology and methods in research. The criteria for the selection of the chosen design for this project are outlined. It was designed in the light of the belief that Eurocentric bias has blocked and distorted field research on Africans, their culture and education, hence the need for correction. It equally capitalises on the growing interest of qualitative research on Africans to critique the biases created by previous approaches. The chapter also looks at the differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches to research and why the researcher adopted the qualitative approach. The chapter concludes with a general overview and explanation of the salient empirical features of the qualitative design.

4.2 Methodology and Methods Explained

In focusing on methodological explanation, the researcher is concerned with practical consequences of the choices researchers make about which methods to

employ in their study (Robinson, 1993, p. 13). In essence, the term 'method' can be understood to relate mainly to tools for data collection or analysis: techniques such as observation and interviews. Methodology has to do with the approach or paradigm that underpins the research **(**Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2006, p. 58). Charles (1995) says these general methodologies fall under two headings: qualitative research and quantitative research. While qualitative research explores traits of individuals through observation, description and recording, quantitative research makes use of measurement and statistics; however, it is important to note that both qualitative and quantitative approaches can be adopted in the same study. This is because some studies adopt mixed method approaches to capture the benefit of using a variety of research methods in a better understanding of the problem under study.

The option of choosing qualitative approach as against quantitative approach for this project highlights the importance of the choice of appropriate method to answer my research questions. The project has no association with the process of enumerative induction - thus, I do not intend to discover how many and what kinds of people and their population are patterned to exist in a sample population neither do I desire to infer a characteristic or a relationship between variables. However, I chose twenty informants ranging from ritual celebrants, their teachers, parents and community leaders among others to analyse their responses to questions to reflect the wider views of the Manya Krobo paramountcy in the eastern region of Ghana. Thus the project focuses on achieving the perception and

insight into the respondents' social world which taxes on me to be flexible and reflexive in my presentations (McCracken, 1988 cited in Brannen, 1992, p. 5) hence the use of qualitative approach.

4.3 Strategic Decision

While the researcher shares the view of Bulmer and Warwick (1993, p. 148) that the issue of the right methodology for the project should be confronted in the early stages of the project, the researcher is equally cautious of the fact that some opportunities are often lost by applying the wrong methodology in circumstances where other possibilities would have been perfectly viable. The decision to use the 'Africalogical critical ethnographic instrumental case study' was guided by Bulmer's (1993, 10-11) criteria model for choosing the appropriate method (s).

- Appropriateness to the research objectives: The appropriateness of the methodology to the objectives of the research was carefully considered. Questions, such as, will the methodology produce the kinds of data needed to answer the questions posed on the *dipo* rites and how it affects schooling in Manya Krobo paramountcy? Was the purpose of the research meant to develop a hypothesis or to provide an interpretive account of the *dipo* rites?
- Explanatory power: is the adopted methodology quite explanatory enough to myself and other researchers? Can it be justified?
- Administrative convenience: this involves the consideration of cost, speed and organisational complexity. Issues like reasonable cost, rapid speed and minimum organisational difficulties were considered in choosing this

approach to complete the whole research on *dipo* rites and schooling at a reasonable time.

Additionally, the following criteria by Brewerton and Millward (2001, p. 68) also influenced my choice of the 'Africological crititcal ethnographic instrumental case study':

- Feasibility considering time, resources and organisational constraints and requirements.
- Ethically sound.
- Agreed and accepted by my department.
- Used appropriately in the context of its original formulation and development.
- I felt comfortable with the Afrocentric theory and qualitative approach. Also being confident in their use and well rehearsed and understood their advantages and disadvantages before departing for my fieldwork.
- Trustworthiness.

Though culture and education research such as this had long been identified with intensive qualitative method, in fact, other quantitative approaches such as survey and experiments have been successfully used in village studies in the past and present (Bulmer & Warwick, 1993). While other designs such as phenomenology, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, hermeneutic inquiry, grounded theory, naturalist inquiry and ethnography lack a commonly agreed name, they share a number of similar features. All have the potency of adopting similar data collection methods and analysis procedures such as interview, observation,

immersion, coding, sorting the codes and making comparisons. Apart from the ethnography, the other approaches are more or less appropriate to the problem under research (culture and schooling). In total, I recognise the complementary nature of some of the approaches (qualitative and quantitative) rather than in competition. Criteria may be considered in terms of which the relative appropriateness of different methods may be evaluated (Bulmer & Warwick, 1993).

4.4 The Research Family

The research methodology used in this study is qualitative in nature and critical in their orientation to cultural and schooling inquiry in Africa. Therefore, I borrow to a large extent from what has been described as 'Africalogical critical ethnographic instrumental case study' as a strategy of inquiry to both guide and support my study. Because the study does not portray a world of variables and statistics, I chose the qualitative research design so I can focus on uncovering meaning of the rites from the perspective of the participants (Merriam & Associates, 2002). The study takes seriously the need to use qualitative methodologies to address schooling and cultural issues in Ghana as I sought for the understanding and interpretations of these issues.

4.5 The Africalogical Method

The 'Africalogical critical ethnographic instrumental case study' is a multi-dimensional ethnographic approach adopted by Shockley (2003). According to

Shockley, it was coined by Asante (1990), Quantz (1992) and Stake (2000). The method was derived from an Afrocentric perspective which calls for the integration of core African values as a guide to conceptualisation, methodology, acquisition, interpretation, analysis and examination of any data (Taylor and Nwosu, 2001, p. 303). It argues that to competently study and meaningfully analyse African discourse of any kind, researchers must not only be aware of, but must equally be guided by some understanding of African philosophical thought and the core value boundaries of African culture that emerge from that philosophy. The fact is that 'One cannot study Africans in the United States or Brazil or Jamaica without some appreciation for the historical and cultural significance of Africa as a source and origin' (Asante, 1990, p. 15). My own identity as an African, conducting African research in an African educational context, has added an important dimension to the ethnographic data**.** I have kept community voices dominant and my voice as an African is evident in areas where I have pointed out biased evaluation of African values and ideals by earlier European researchers. Essentially, my own identity, gave me the advantage over other non-African ethnographers to be able to easily examine etymological uses of words and terms in order to capture the source of an interviewee's perception. This allowed me to intersect ideas with actions and actions with ideas on the basis of what is pejorative and ineffective and what is creative and transformative at the cultural and schooling levels to extend our understanding of the *dipo* rites.

I knew from my background as an African that men and women have defined places in ritual and behavioural environments and that my research location: Manya Krobo paramountcy - would be of no exception. I was expectant of the limitations my male identity could cause as a researcher of girls initiation rites in Ghana. From time to time I equally thought about gaining confidence and cooperation, and developing and maintaining acceptable relationship. These requirements, I knew could cause confrontation, demand clarifications and invoke reflections that a researcher can neither fully anticipate nor prepare for in advance. Fortunately for me, my gatekeeper, who was an elderly woman and a graduate teacher heading the community school, was very instrumental and helpful in many regards. She spoke and sought permission for me which cleared the path for easy accessibility and acceptance as a male researcher. One other advantage was the familiarisation of the Krobo community to frequent male anthropologist to the area during the season of the *dipo* rites organised annually between March and June.

4.6 The Critical Ethnographic Method

Critical theory combines with ethnography and that gives us the critical ethnographic method. Critical research 'brings to the focus the possibilities of how culture can sustain irrationality, unfulfilling lifestyles, and social injustice, revealing the degree to which certain ways of life within a culture are strategically organised to preserve the interest of some members of society at the expense of others' (Merriam and Simpson,1995, p. 132, cited in Merriam and Associates,

2002). Critical theorists believe that their research has the potential of improving contemporary societal conditions (Merriam and Associate, 2002). It was chosen as the optimal method of inquiry for several reasons. Carspecken (1996, p. 3) offers a good summary when he argues the criticalist researcher finds contemporary society to be unfair, unequal and oppressive for many people and aims at changing it. Equally, critical researchers share a value orientation and concern over a number of epistemological issues which provide a precise understanding of what values are, what facts are, and how they are interconnected. The researcher hopes critical analysis of fieldwork data and other published work will initiate a discussion of power issues inherent in the dissemination of knowledge on Africans and their education in relation to defending the reality created by Eurocentrists. I have used critical ethnographic method in this research to complement Asante's position on the importance of employing Africalogy when studying events involving Black people because it is aligned with the requirement to consider their historical and cultural background as an important variable for analysis. Critical enquiry is aimed at informing educational judgements and decisions in the bid to improving educational action (Bassey, 1999, p. 39). Shockley, (2003, p. 49) reiterates that Afrocentric educationists and scholars with whom I associate myself as a researcher continue to advance emancipation of African education for Africans. I have used a critical theory framework to explore how cultural rites affect schooling of the girl child in the Krobo paramountcy of Ghana. Incorporating a critical interpretive lens in the study has equally enabled me to review other related literature**.** More importantly,

a critical inquiry approach is best suited for this study, for it is only through developing a clear understanding of people's perceptions about their culture that effective recommendations can be made as to how to integrate cultural rite celebrants into the main stream school in Africa so they do not miss out from their regular schoolmates**.**

Ethnographic approach is suitable for this project because of my desire to explore cultural rites celebration and how it affects the schooling of Krobo girls in the eastern region of Ghana. According to Powell (2006, p. 38), one of the most basic features of ethnographic research is the belief that in order to understand a culture, you must spend time participating in the day to day life of the cultural group under study. The nature of this research indicates that to be able to understand the culture of the Krobos, I needed to be an active participant observer in the cultural rites celebration of the Krobos. Creswell (1998) succinctly explains ethnography as:

> *A description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system. The researcher examines the group's observable and learned pattern of behaviour, customs and way of life……As a process, ethnography involves prolonged observation of the group, typically through participant observation in which the researcher is immersed in the day to day lives of the people or*

through one-on-one interview with members of the group. The researcher studies the meaning of the behaviour, language, and interactions of the culture-sharing group'. (p. 58)

For educational anthropologists, ethnography is a way of 'experiencing, enquiring, and examining' (Wolcott, 1999 cited in Spindler and Hammond, 2006, p. 329). Ethnography has most often been chosen by those having interest in studying marginalised groups of people over a period of time (Grogan and Simmons, 2007, p. 42). Walford (2001, pp. 7-11) advocates that, for a study to be called ethnography, it needs, at the very least, each of the following seven elements.

A study of culture

We can only understand the behaviour, values and meanings of any given individuals or group by taking account of some kind of cultural context. Ethnography balances attention of individual lives with wider social structures. This is because ethnographers stress the fact that people move within social world.

Multiple methods, diverse form of data

In view of the complex and the multifaceted nature of culture, researchers require openness in capturing the rudimentary understanding of culture. Walford

recommends a mixed method approach in gathering data and suggests that the fieldwork phase of ethnography is complete only when both the ethnographer and his or her informants have exhausted their ability to identify other kinds of informants and other sorts of questions of relevance to the research objectives.

Engagement

Ethnographers work on the premise that there is important knowledge which can be gained in no other way than just immersing oneself in the culture being studied. The principle of engagement by the researcher contains two elements: human connection with participant, and an investment of time.

Researcher as instrument

The ethnographer must try to articulate the assumptions and values implicit in the research, and what it means to acknowledge the research as part of, rather than outside, the research act. Walford, (2001, p. 9) indicates that whether the researcher's subjectivity is a weakness or strength is not the issue. It is simply seen as an inevitable feature of the research act.

Participant accounts have high status

Each person's account of the world is unique and ought to be recognised as such. The researcher offers an account which can be examined critically and systematically because the means by which information was generated are clearly

articulated. The researcher selects from what he has seen and heard and constructs the final account.

Cycle of hypothesis and theory building

In the ethnographic enquiry, developing a theory is often not so much an event as a process. There is always constant commitment by the ethnographer to modify hypothesis and theories in the light of further data. There is a running interaction between formulating and testing. That is to say, there is a constant change of existing hypothesis which may prove inadequate as new data emerges. The ethnographer's sense of what needs to be looked at and reported on may change, and explanations of what is going on may be supplanted by ones which seem to fit better.

Intention and outcome

The ultimate goal of the ethnographer is the hope to construct a coherent story from his data by blending of empirical experience, systematic activity and appropriate theory that takes the reader into a deeper and richer appreciation of the people who have been studied. The ethnographer aims at exploring the perception of people being studied and how he finds meaning in activities embedded in the cultural life of people being studied.

Even though the above elements of ethnography are not meant to provide an exhaustive definition of ethnography, they give an indication of the more specific

focus of ethnography and guided me in the selection of this approach for my study. The Africalogical and critical ethnographic approach will serve as a research tool to enable a particular cultural rites and how it affects schooling in Ghana so I can provide a rich description of the issues.

4.7 A Bounded System: The Case Study

Case studies provide researchers with an understanding of complex social phenomena by pursuing scholarly research questions in most research communities (Stake, 2005, p. 443). They are equally valuable tool for understanding human behaviour in depth (Stake, 1995). Case studies are 'bounded systems' when they demarcate certain elements as 'insiders' and others as 'outsider' in a given case and are also bounded by time and place (Shockley, 2003, p. 61). The bounded system allows any number of qualitative approaches to be combined with the case (Merriam and Associates, 2002). The cultural rites issues and schooling in African studies are seen as 'inside the case' and all other study or discipline outside culture and schooling in Africa are labelled as 'outside the case'. Stake (1995, pp. 3-4) identifies three types of case study, they are:

- Intrinsic
- Instrumental
- Collective

An intrinsic case study is explained in terms of the researcher seeking a better understanding of a particular case. The case is being studied because it is of interest in itself and not because it is in anyway representative. The case is of

primary interest and this drives the study rather than a desire to generate a theory. An instrumental case study is when a case is being studied to provide insight and to facilitate our understanding of something else. The case itself is of secondary interest. It is still looked at in depth to assist the researcher to pursue the external interest. The collective case study is an extension of the instrumental case study. It examines several cases and is meant to understand a larger collection of cases. This is an instrumental case study because the purpose of the study is meant to offer stakeholders an understanding of a selection of cultural rites issues and how they affects schooling in Africa and for that matter Ghana.

The use of the 'Africalogical critical ethnographic instrumental case study' as the overall strategy of inquiry framed the sampling and data collection of this study.

4.8 What the Research did not cover under Ethnography and Case Study

While a case study exhibits the following features: (a) selection of single case (or a small number of selected cases) of a situation, individual or group of interest or concern; (b) study of a case in its context; (c) selection of information via a range of data collection techniques including observation, interview and documentary analysis, ethnography is characterised by (a) a selection of a group, organisation or community of interest or concern; (b) immersion of the researcher in that setting; and (c) use of participant observation (Robson, 2002). Even though both case study and ethnography have distinct features they are noted for employing similar data collection methods such as interviews, participants' observation, questionnaires and documentary analysis. According to Robson (2002, p. 190)

while ethnography is a distinct approach, it can be linked with a case study or a case study can be approached ethnographically. Robson (2002, p. 164) classifies both case study and ethnography under flexible design which can be used in diverse ways by virtue of their classification.

It is worth noting that while this project exhibits features of ethnography and a case study; it does not exhaust their extensive features. In measuring the project against Walford's (2001) ethnographic attributes, I noted the following shortcomings:

Limited Fieldwork Duration

Time taken to collect data was relatively limited. In considering the five and half month duration spent for my fieldwork, I felt more time spent on the field could have given me the opportunity to develop an intimate understanding of the Krobos, their social and cultural worlds and how they perceive it themselves in many different phases. Robson (2002, p. 174) says extensive time in the field 'permits the development of a trusting relationship between the researcher and respondents where the latter are less likely to give biased information'. I am compelled to use the term 'mini ethnography' as described by Robson, (2002, p. 187) for my work.

The Krobo Language

In view of the limited time spent, effective understanding and articulation of the local language; Ga Adangme and many other dialects in the paramountcy was not optimised. Because my informant was equally my interpreter, limited effort was made to learn the Adangme or the Ga-Adangme: traditional languages of the people of Krobo.

Extensive Activities

I was also limited in participating in wide range of daily activities of the Krobos and their normal daily routines outside the school community and their cultural arenas. Because the school and the *dipo* rites was my focus of exploration and in view of my limited time, most of my time was spent in the school community and the shrines where these rites were performed.

Again, the setting of this project as a case study with its limitations is worth highlighting. I knew my research may be one among many projects that comes under the description by Robson (2002, p. 181) that ' there may be difficulties in defining and delimiting exactly what one means by the 'case' when the focus moves away from the individual person' .While the project is characterised by the study of the *dipo* cultural life of the Krobos and their schooling using multiple sources of evidence for information via a range of data collection techniques including participant observation, interview and documentary search, I have not presented the cases of individuals nor done a detailed and collective institutional case study of the *dipo* rites and schooling. I have been 'flexible' (Robson, 2002,

p. 164) in using the *dipo* cultural rites as a 'case' and as an 'instrument' (Stake, 2000, p. 437) in exploring the secondary issue of schooling of girls in the Manya Krobo paramountcy. In the instrumental case study as adopted, the case of *dipo* cultural rites is not the focus of the research; instead the case of *dipo* cultural rites plays a secondary role and advances our understanding of something else: schooling in the Manya Krobo paramountcy of Ghana (Stake, 2000, p. 437).

4.9 Data Collection Activities

The data collection process incorporated the following three distinct phases described bellow: (1) five and a half months of participant observation in the community and the school, (2) taking field notes (3) a visit to the community and school and in-depth formal and informal interviews with *dipo* cultural celebrants, parents, teachers and community opinion leaders from the wider Krobo community, their schools and cultural centres. Data collection took place between April and September 2008 in the Manya Krobo paramountcy in the eastern region of Ghana. The African Studies Association, UK conference (ASAUK) and other related conferences and meetings attended by the researcher were vital in understanding efforts being made by African scholars in publishing more literature on the culture of Africans and their education for the building of the new Africa in pursuit of African Renaissance.

4.10 Participant Observation

One of the techniques that I used to elicit the insider's perception of reality is participant observation. I held the belief that the knowledge of the cultural and educational world of the Krobos can best be gained by observing real life settings. This is participating in the cultural and educational lives of the Krobos. I posed questions and observed about eight different *dipo* ceremonies to be able to understand the perception of the Krobos in relation to the relevance of the *dipo* rites to the people of Krobo. I also felt that my participation would enable me to establish how the initiation rites affects the schooling of the girl child in the Manya Krobo paramountcy of Ghana and also ask questions as to why parents allow their children to go through these rites.

In most ethnographic projects, 'Ideally, the ethnographer lives and works in the community for six months to a year or more learning the language and seeing patterns of behaviour over time'(Fetterman, 1989, p. 45). Not quite sure of the attitude of the community towards me and the fact that some past ethnographic researchers have had very bad experiences with their immersion into communities for their research, an intermediary or a gatekeeper as used by Merriam and Associates, (2003) was appointed to introduce me to the community. I wrote a note of permission to the District Education Service, the directorate that governs local schools, to enable me to visit the local school to do my observation. Although being black did provide certain advantages in the field, Fetterman, (1989, p. 44) says 'ethnographers thus benefit from a halo effect if they are introduced by the right person'. Participant observation helped me have a feel of

the cultural celebration and also helped me to ask questions about certain symbolic things I did not understand; a dialogical, interactive situation was created between informant and the researcher. This was partly because my cultural and educational experiences were in some way quite similar to those of the students at the schools I visited. The similarities were shown in areas like my countryside life of following my parents to the farm on weekends, hewing firewood when necessary and studying with candle lights in times when the national electricity supply goes off. The advice by Wolcott (1995, p. 88) on the constant review of what the ethnographer is looking for and whether or not he is seeing it or is likely to see it guided me while on the field.

4.11 Field Notes/ Researcher's Journal

In order to further enhance data collection, I kept a researcher's diary with wide margins on both sides. This was used to record all that I did, saw, heard and experienced on the field. The margins enabled me to record and highlight particular observations which interested me most. I also made analytic notes in these margins which I later referred to, for further investigation later during my data analysis. As I began to take a sharper focus in my observations - in the way that an ethnographic approach allows the researcher to do - I devised various ways of showing how something I had noted on a particular day related to another which had happened earlier, or was something I needed to look out for in the future. This diary record provided me with a record of my feelings, attitudes, conversations and all other encounters during the time of my data collection. I

knew, in terms of the hallmarks of a good research project and in view of reflexivity, there was the need to clarify my personal value system and acknowledge areas where subjectivity is displayed in my interpretation and analysis of data which I did. Thomas (2009, p. 76) clearly explains this '….to recognise your position - your social background, likes and dislikes, preferences and predilections …. and how this position sometimes called personality is likely to be affecting your interpretation'. I recorded how I perceived the participant observation exercise. Of course some portions of these notes were subjective in my view but were of value during the analysis and write-up. I revisited situations comparing video recording with the detailed field notes.

4.12 In-depth Interviews

I augmented the observation with an in-depth interview of participants. This was meant to help me understand the different ways that participants understand their cultural practices in relation to their schooling experiences as they unpack their narratives. I quite agree with Fetterman, (1989, p. 47) that interview is the most prominent data gathering technique because it offered me the opportunity to follow up responses and to modify my areas of exploration in ways that other techniques like the postal questionnaires were limited (Robson, 2002, pp. 272-273). Interviews explain and put into a larger context what the ethnographer sees and experiences (Fetterman, 1989). Mixtures of formally structured and informal interviews were used to solicit information. Both interview types were assessed to know the advantages and disadvantages in data collection and analysis before

using them. The informal interview was ideal for the detailed exploration of each of the domains of this research study. In my experience, utilising informal interviews allowed for a general exploration of my operational variables (culture and schooling) while at the same time capturing the nuances and perspectives that respondents had regarding the variables themselves. In the course of the formal interview process of my research participants which included six pupils, six parents, six teachers and two community leaders, informal questions emerged. These informal questions apart from my twenty chosen informants were from time to time also posed to stand-bys in most cases to clarify information and satisfy my curiosity. These were captured systematically in my field notes and discussed on a weekly basis. If new conceptual and theoretical relevant questions emerged from my research informants, these were incorporated into the new interviews. I had already learnt that informal interviews are most commonly used in ethnographic work like this hence their use. Essentially, informal interview allowed me to ask questions during rituals and activities for the purpose of checking meaning and providing fuller understanding of the *dipo* cultural rites and schooling experiences of the celebrants. Informal interviews mostly generated conversation among my informants in my quest to explore some of the ritual performances and schooling experiences. While structured interviews have explicit agenda, informal interviews have a specific but implicit research agenda (Fetterman, 1989, p. 48). I also considered what type of interview was practical and capable of netting the most useful information to answer my chosen research questions on the relevance of the *dipo* and its effects on schooling.

Hearing the voices of young women, their teachers and parents including community opinion leaders in their own language on issues relating to the cultural and schooling narratives was central to this research study though I also needed a fitting methodology to capture this. The interview was developed using terms and concepts relevant to the interviewees' life and experience in view of the fact that most of my informants had no higher education beyond senior secondary schools. The interviews were captured in the preferred language of the research participants (97 % English and 3% Local language). The local language was interpreted by my gatekeeper. All the interviews were audio taped with the kind permission of participants and took place in locations agreed between myself and participant. Each participant was interviewed once and lasted from 30 minutes to one hour. The transcription of the interviews was done on my return to Strathclyde University after the five and half month fieldwork.

4.13 *Video Recording*

The use of video in recording all my data was a novel experience for me as a researcher in the paramountcy. The video allowed me to record conducts, pronouncements and interactions in everyday settings and subject them to repeated scrutiny during and after the recordings. Permission to take photographs and to film was done with parental assent of all under eighteen and informed consent of my participants. I had constantly thought about the morality and the ethical implications of using the video. Where I felt informants were too young to be filmed, in particular, the under eighteens, I sought written permission from their guardians before taking

photographs or filming. From time to time I reflected on the responsibility to ensure that I do not abuse the trust by acting deceitfully or giving explanations that may damage the interest of my participant. I never forced any of my participants into accepting to be photographed or filmed. Where participants objected using the photographs beyond my research dates and preparation of my thesis, I took notes of this in my field notes. All photographs were taken with the permission of my informants. I have endeavoured to keep video materials under lock and key and these will be disposed of a year after my research is completed.

The films were very helpful during my analysis most especially. Various photos allowed me to track the emergence of different body signs and scenes and recover ways in which informants and the general public orient and handle different questions posed to them. At the write up stage, I felt like making a chapter of my project a scene of an album containing various kinds of scenes, some very fascinating which was filmed during the fieldwork. One major reason for using the video was to save me time in writing all the information informants gave me as a researcher and the likelihood of losing very important information without being fast enough to write them down. The video recording attracted these schools girls who were ready and willing to be filmed and to have the films sent abroad. In fact, the use of the video made the whole data collection procedure very easy and straight forward. The video also gave a strong evidence and justified my months of stay in the Manya Krobo paramountcy and validate my data to be trustworthy. I learnt from the advice of Heath and Hindmarsh (2002, p. 107) that it is of necessity to understand the sort of activities in which the community engage themselves, the events in which they deal and the sort of mechanisms they rely upon to organise themselves. This advice was understood in the context of getting a firm idea of the African values, norms

and ideals as postulated by Asante (1990) before any meaningful research and data can be collected in Afrocentric perspective. My participation in the school and community events was on the basis of becoming familiar with the perception of the participants and the ways in which various systems operate in the community of Manya Krobo.

> '*In many settings therefore it is critical that video recording is coupled with extensive fieldwork in which the researcher becomes increasingly familiar with the environment unavailable through recordings alone'* (Heath & Hindmarsh, 2002, p. 107)

4.14 My Role as an African Teacher in this Research

Throughout the research I felt the need to clarify the connecting links between my profession as a teacher and a researcher and to constantly reflect on how my identity and background will impact on the research process. Such feelings fed my motivation for undertaking ethnographic research in the context in which I worked. I obtained an understanding of how fieldwork can expose the social, cultural and educational world of a social group as an African teacher and an ethnographic researcher as I read Hobbs and Wright (2006). As a teacher I came to the realisation at some point in the teaching profession that school and community relations centred knowledge can well be generated by those who are in the classroom regularly with children and who try to continually improve the teaching that occurs there. My concern as I set off for the fieldwork was to clarify my personal value system and acknowledge areas in which I know are subjective

as a teacher researcher. The main aim is to gather the right data that will produce a text that was explicitly grounded in a sound Afrocentric theoretical framework, and which also offered practical strategies and approaches to colleague teachers to enhance their confidence for proper integration of ex-cultural celebrants in their schools. This concern, to me, together with the ability to 'put aside personal feelings and preconception' (Robson, 2002, p. 172) is more a function of how reflexive one is rather than how objective I would be in complementing the use of the Afrocentric framework. In Burgess (2006), I identified strongly the possible areas of potential role conflict as a teacher and a researcher and the usefulness of educational ethnography on how cultural forms are exhibited in diverse ways in individual behaviour patterns to achieve what Rizvi (2008, p. 104) calls the 'cultural consciousness'.

I was very circumspect about my observation role in the school. I was very mindful of the advice by Hitchcock and Hughes (1989, p. 89) that teacher researchers should develop an appreciation of skill, steps, stages and task involve in the conduct of ethnographic research and equally cautious of the potential conflicting role this could cause in the quest for reflexivity in research of this kind which Thomas (2009, p. 20) claims is the hall mark of a good research project.

At certain points I tried to offer help in ways I felt could add something to life in the school. At a week long athletics competition held in the school compound, I offered myself to be a 'catcher': a term used for teachers who identify positions of

runners and athletes at the end of each race. The experience was great. In most cases, I tried to avoid holding discussions with teachers and officials regarding the best way of doing things but I did get into periodic professional discussions and made my contribution as a teacher and a foreign researcher. This was as a result of avoiding the tendency of compromising my role as a researcher.

4.15 Recruitments

The study focused on the exploration of narratives of the *dipo* cultural rite from the perspective of young women and how these relate to their schooling experiences. I recruited 20 participants into the project: Six (6) ex ritual celebrants back at school with their studies, Six (6) teachers who are currently teaching the ex ritual celebrants, Six (6) parents of ex ritual celebrants and Two (2) community opinion leaders. These study participants were recruited through the assistance of my gatekeeper to grant me interviews. To qualify for the study participants, recruits had to be resident of the research geographical area and within the target age for in-depth interviews (8-18 years of age) for the ex ritual celebrants and no identifiable age limit for parents, teachers and community leaders. Participation was voluntary in all interviewing and filming. Parental authorisation was required of all ex-ritual celebrants and pupils under eighteen years of age. Special measures were put in place to ensure that those responsible for the care of these vulnerable were fully informed and gave permission on their behalf. A comprehensive consent form which outlined the following elements as expounded by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996, p. 84) was signed by all informants:

- A clear and detailed explanation of the procedure to be followed and their purpose.
- A description of the attendant discomforts and risks reasonably to be expected.
- A disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures that might be advantageous to the participants.
- An offer to answer any inquiries concerning the procedures.
- An instruction that the person is free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the project without prejudice or harm to the participant.

4.16 Sample Characteristics

All teachers who granted interview were fully qualified teachers engaged by the government of Ghana and community to teach various subjects in the community basic school. My gatekeeper was the wife of the district chief executive and graduate teacher who was herself a parent and the acting head teacher of the school. Because she knew the essence of dissertation as part of graduate training, it took me few seconds to recruit her into the study. She told me her participation was a learning experience for her. The Krobo girls interviewed all shared basic common characteristics. Apart from the fact that they were all full time basic school girls, they were also regular at school. Parents of children interviewed were peasant farmers and petty traders who are themselves residents of the Krobo area. All parents had at least Junior Secondary School (JSS) education and could

express themselves in basic understandable English. They were involved in petty trade ranging from selling coconuts, oranges, fried fish and kenkey - a typical Ghanaian delicacy. One of the two opinion leaders was an ex-teacher and very informative in the study. He was rich in information about the *dipo* rite and cultural issues and education in general. The other community leader was an old queen mother of the paramountcy still in active service as practising leader. All participants were Ghanaians and residents of the Manya Krobo paramountcy in the eastern region of Ghana.

4.17 Data Analysis: An Africalogical Approach

In analysing data, we sort, summarise, translate, and organise. It involves a deeper exploration to see what is there that might not be obvious, standing back to see what patterns emerged, thinking and theorising to draw conclusion that can be generalised in some way or the other (O'Reilly, 2005, p. 184). One quite appealing definition of analysis is 'The researcher's equivalent of alchemy - the elusive process by which you hope you can turn your raw data into nugget of pure gold….' (Watling, 2002, p. 262). Ultimately, my goal was to produce a coherent, focused analysis of the *dipo* culture and schooling aspect of the social life of the Krobo social group of Ghana that have been observed and recorded, an analysis that is comprehensible to my audience and other readers who are not directly acquainted with this social world. In the analysis, I focused on field notes and data from participant's observation of the school and community. It is important to note that even though I video-recorded some observations of the initiation rites;

the thesis mainly focused on reporting interview data. I recognised the importance of 'voice' in Africalogical research of this kind to offer detailed insight into specific situations, including revealing a nuanced interpretation of what the initiation ceremony is all about. I also noticed that apart from voices conveying participant perceptions, experiences and feelings, they also allowed readers to bring their own interpretations to the data collected. Furthermore, video-recorded observations of the initiation rites kept reflecting in the interview data hence the need to concentrate on reporting only the interview data to avoid repetitions. I did a systematic identification of terms, symbols and patterns that informants used in reference to their cultural and schooling experiences. In this type of analysis 'the researcher takes a voluminous amount of information and reduces it to certain patterns, categories, or themes and then interpret the information by using some schema' or feature that is of interest to the research (Creswell, 1994, p. 154).

I did the coding and memo writing manually. I noted segments of interest such as the relevance of the *dipo* cultural rites, how the *dipo* rites affects schooling and the connection between culture and schooling within my data, marked them with chosen code words and analysed them before their inclusion in the final report.

4.18 Transcribing

I transcribed all the twenty interviews on my own before the analyses. I quite agree to the position of Heath and Hindmarsh (2002, p. 110) that transcription provides a vehicle for a clarification of the geography of informants' action and a

careful scrutiny of information including the relationship between co-occurring statements and pronouncements and bodily conduct. The whole transcription exercise was very laborious and time consuming. At a point I felt like giving the whole transcription exercise to a transcriptionist or using softwares like DragonDictate, VoiceType and Kurzweil (Fielding, 2002) to assist me technologically but I could not afford the cost. I also discovered the real value of using a good quality video recorder for the interviews while on the field. During the transcription exercise, I heeded the advice of Bazeley (2007, p. 45) to be true to the conversation when transcribing. Equally, a number of suggestions and guidelines were also helpful:

- Avoid correcting incomplete sentences and poor grammar: it is quite valuable to capture the form and style of participant's expression.
- Give a proper note to events which create interruptions to the flow of the interview such as telephone of battery run down. Also note others things that happened and may have influence on the interpretation of the text such as a knock on your door.
- Note that there are cases of digressions in interviews and conversations. The decision to consider its inclusion is on the basis of whether it is of any relevance to the project.
- At some points during the listening, taking notes or the transcribing process note interesting exchanges or high emotions and make a clear note of that in the transcription. This is meant to facilitate linking

directly from your document to the external file with the tape extract should you wish to refer to that on a future date.

4.19 Coding

Ethnographic coding is the first step in taking an analytic stance towards the data collected (Charmaz, 2005, p. 517). I defined and categorised data manually which helped me sort through the large amount of observation and interview notes. Because the study is intended to understand *dipo* cultural rites and how it affects schooling in Ghana, coding of data was guided by the following clusters: (1) understanding the nature of *dipo* cultural rites in the Manya Krobo paramountcy of Ghana; (2) schooling in Ghana; (3) how *dipo* rites affects schooling in Ghana; (4) other emerging issues on the patterns of community culture and schooling in Ghana; (5) Eurocentric bias on previous research. The above analytical foci which drew from the research questions to generate answers for this project served as the general structure for a codebook of meanings, which was developed prior to data collection and was used to catalogue the data in semantic open codes. The primary level of coding by topics was done as soon as the interviews were transcribed. A second level of coding of the different meanings within each research question was done subsequently. The codes were linked together to create a network to develop patterns and models with the data. Interpretations and explanations emerged from the data. Uniqueness of the African people and for that matter Ghanaians was also considered in the analysis the data. The advice by Asante, (1990) as cited in Shockley (2003, p. 77), is insightful. It explains that the

Africalogical researcher should use the history of Africans as the fundamental integrator of the data. Shockley further indicates Asante's important analytical tools to be considered when analysing African centred data. (1) It should provide logical explanations of African peoples' experiences from the origin of civilization to the present, (2) it should develop holistic approach to the role of Africa in world culture, and (3) it should explain the behaviour of African people by interpretations and analysis derived from an Afrocentric perspective.

4.20 Memo Writing

I wrote summaries of ideas about codes and their relationships. The memo writing was intended to explore the relationship between coded notes and to provide a more sustained examination of my chosen themes or issue by linking together a variety of discrete observations. Silverman (2006, p. 117) defines memo as 'written records of analysis'. In fact the central task was to develop theoretical connection between words and statements by informants including field notes excerpts. According to Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, (1995), one major issue is the researcher deciding which theme to make the primary focus, which to include as sub theme and which to exclude entirely.

4.21 Trustworthiness

Shockley, (2003, p. 79) has indicated that 'qualitative research is trustworthy when it is dependable, credible and confirmable'. This view is strongly supported by other writers like Busher (2002) and Suter (2002). For instance Busher (2002)

indicates that works with interpretive, critical and feminist paradigms such as this need very little space to establish trustworthiness if it is to be believed to be pursuing the truth. The debate that knowledge gained in an investigation of this sort 'faces hazardous passage from the writer to the reader. The writer needs ways of safe guarding the trip' (Stake, 2000, p. 443) was noted to guide this study. The study employed various strategies to ensure its trustworthiness while being sentient of the general limitations. I got the feeling that the generalisability of the findings of this project is dependent on the fact that the research was ethically carried out and that trying to answer questions from inappropriate data or choosing the wrong tool for that analysis will lead to misleading findings, undermining the generalisability of the project to reflect the African context. Triangulation as explained by Carspecken (1996, p. 88) was used. I used a combination of various data collections method to confirm emerging findings as a way of triangulation. This means that I was able to check against what I observed on the field as a participant, read in documents and what was recorded during interview. I equally used member checks as explained by Carspecken, (1996, p. 89) to validate my study. I sent back the data collected, analysed, interpreted and concluded to the teachers, pupils, parents and community leaders to judge the authenticity of the account. Other strategies used to check the trustworthiness of this project are:

- Prolonged engagement with sources of data
- Persistent observation of emerging issues from the findings

- Emerging stories have been systematically tested against analytical statements
- Thorough engagements of other doctoral students in a discussion of my findings while others try to throw a challenge. A good anticipation of criticisms emanated from this engagement and peer review
- Sufficiently detailed account of the project to give readers proper understanding and confidence
- Clarity of purpose of the project is well indicated at all levels
- Bringing my studies and examination in methods of enquiry module to bear on the project - good methodological awareness
- Worked very hard to bring the project to the present status - taken me several hours to write memos and had the willingness to incorporate the advice of peer reviewers to work and to rework the project until it got right.

A further body of knowledge connects trustworthiness to the overall quality of a qualitative project. In looking for way to establish the connection and the differences in the two (trustworthiness and quality), I run into the definition of quality and criteria of measurement as explicated by Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 302), that in looking for quality, we are looking for what makes the reader or listener stand up and exclaim 'Wow', 'I am touched' and now I can understand the Afrocentric ideology and the connection with African culture and schooling. Quality qualitative research should reflect something substantial, give insight and

show sensitivity and not a reflection of any ordinary news that could equally be read in the news paper; it should stimulate discussion and further research in the area (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). I measured the quality of this project against the ten (10) criteria expounded by Corbin and Strauss, (2008, p. 305) for judging the quality of a qualitative research.

Fit

Do findings fit or resonate with the experience of African intellectuals: my audience or professionals for whom the research is intended and the informants who sacrificed their time to provide data for the research? Can we see the *dipo* celebrants, their parents and teachers in the story even if not in every details of the project? Do they react both emotionally and professionally to the findings?

Applicability or Usefulness of findings

Do findings offer meaningful, new explanation or insight to the entire project and body of knowledge on the *dipo* culture and schooling in the Manya Krobo paramountcy? Can findings be used to develop Afrocentric policy, change practice of schooling of girls in the Krobo paramountcy of Ghana and meaningfully contribute to the professional base of the teaching in Ghana?

Concepts

Were findings organised around concepts and themes that highlighted an understanding of issues on traditional religious culture such as the *dipo* and how

schooling is affected in Ghana and for that matter Africa with the view that concepts are necessary for developing common understanding and to generate debate among professionals and advocacy groups interested in the African education? How findings are presented is not important but what is important is the need to load findings with substance such that there is variation and density in the project.

Contextualisation of Concepts

Without context, the reader will lose track of the understanding of why events of the *dipo* cultural rites occurred, why certain meanings are ascribed to narrations and events. In order for the reader not to feel something essential is missing, the researcher must present the historical underpinnings of the events of schooling and *dipo* cultural rites and explicate as part of the overall structure of the project.

Logic

Does the project exhibit a logical flow of ideas about the *dipo* cultural rites and schooling in Ghana? Do the findings make any sense to African intellectuals? Or are there missing links that leave the reader confused and uncertain about the findings of the project? Are methodological decisions and criteria made clear so that the reader can judge their credibility and appropriateness for the entire project especially the gathering of data, examination, interpretation and analysis?

Depth

Was the work presented with the conception that the depth of substance makes the difference between shallow reports, uninteresting findings and findings that have the potential to make a difference in Afrocentric policy and practice? This is in view of the fact that it is the descriptive details that add up to the richness and variation of the project and lift the findings out of the ordinary and Eurocentric realm.

Variation

The general life and culture of the people of Krobo is complex and that the research must be able to capture this complexity and explicate them for the understanding of the ordinary reader interested in African culture and education. A demonstration of this complexity is found in all aspect of human life and that the research should indicate this and build the variation into the findings.

Creativity

Are the presentations of findings done in a creative and innovative manner? Does the research exhibit new ideas, bring forth a new understanding of the same old topic of *dipo* cultural rites of the Krobos or is a repetition of the same old things that readers are familiar with? There must be procedures put in place to consistently, creatively and flexibly create a new dimension of the old topic under discussion and not a repetition of a dogmatic fashion.

Sensitivity

Was there any demonstration of sensitivity to the research participants including the cultural initiates, parents, teachers and community leaders and to the data collection and analysis procedures? Did data collected answer the research questions outlined in the project? The assurance is that no preconceived ideas were brought to bear on the findings of the project but questions driving the data collection were arrived at through data analysis.

Evidence of memo

Is there evidence or discussion of memos in the final report? Since the investigator can't possibly remember all the insights, questions and thought that go on during the analysis, memos become necessary of all the procedures used. They should grow in depth and degree of abstraction as the research develops.

4.22 Ethical Dimension

Qualitative research often raises ethical issues which need to be addressed and ethnography such as this is certainly no exception**.** To a very large extent, the validity and reliability of the project depend upon the ethics of the researcher (Merriam and Associates, 2002) 'ethics begin with the conception of the research project and ends with how we represent and share with others what we have learnt' (Merriam and Associates, 2002, p. 313). On this note, I knew that the responsibility lies on me as the primary investigator of the study for the ethical standards to which the study adheres. I spent time learning the social and cultural conventions and boundaries between what was acceptable and what was not in

researching while thinking about the implications they make as part of the ethical practice and how the choices made will impact on the ways in I engage with other participants. I came to realise that there was the need to show respect to these conventions and exhibit a great sense of humility as an effective researcher. The ethics committee of the Department of Education and Professional Studies, Strathclyde University provided ethical approval for conducting this research. This is not only a doctoral dissertation requirement, but equally to weigh the potential benefits of the research with possible risks to the participants. In addition, I made the following efforts to guard against ethical irresponsiveness to the project.

Choosing valid research design

As part of ethical responsiveness, the project needed to be designed to create trustworthy (valid) outcomes. Greenwood and Levin (2005, p. 54) advocate that trustworthiness is measured by the willingness of local stakeholders to act on the result thereby risking their welfare on the validity of their ideas and the degree to which the outcome meet their expectations. The research design was chosen in consideration of several factors including cost, time and data access which among others would generate the right data to answer the research questions and avoid any potential harm to all involved. How well and clearly I would be able to explain the chosen methodology to my readers was equally part of the consideration.

Obtained informed consent

A consent form was signed by all participant of the research. The consent which was in the form of writing provided enough details about the type of research in broad terms, the aims, methods and anticipated outcomes. Parental authorisation was equally sought from participants under 18 years old. There was a general debriefing session in the school visited in which participants were made aware of the nature of the enquiry and the need to voluntarily offer themselves for the research. This gave them the opportunity to decide about whether or not they wanted to participate.

Avoid deception

There was an open demonstration of honesty with respect to investigation. I knew that deception entails a transgression of a core ethical principle and made attempts to avoid it. Code of conduct was at the highest level to build trust of the participants. I defined my role as a researcher from Strathclyde University who had travelled to conduct research for my project. My student identification card was very helpful in this regard as an evidence of my enrolment at the university. My gatekeeper was very helpful in her role because she was a graduate of a teacher training college and was fully aware of dissertation writing as part of graduate study.

Minimising intrusion/privacy

Efforts were made to safeguard and protect the privacy of informants. Where appointments were made to interview parents in their homes, suited times and places were selected. Consents were sought before visitations. Very sensitive topics related to the study were approached with greater caution. I always made sure I was clear and explicit and informed consent were sought form those who are to be observed or scrutinised in private context. In the classroom, I always sought permission from pupils and their teachers before viewing their class work and comparing them with regular school attendees to see how far they are catching up with class work.

Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity

In accordance with confidentiality and anonymity, the advice by Bell, (2005) was adopted. Because this study employs member checks to validate the findings by way of taking findings back to people from whom they were derived and asking if they were plausible, anonymity in the context of this study meant no one else apart from the researcher is able to identify the interviewees and match their responses. I made conscious attempt to collect data that was only needed for the project. Those very sensitive data has been stored under lock and key and equally protected in confidence, especially issues regarding illegal and highly personalised behaviour recorded while on the field collecting data. Data was kept

for a maximum of one year after my studies after which it will be destroyed. This is just meant for future comparison and checking and no other purpose.

Minimise risk of harm

The research did not intend to allow participants to suffer any physical or psychological harm as a consequence for their involvement in the project whether immediate or long term. I have taken the pain to safeguard all those who helped in the investigation. I rather intend to offer positive suggestions and recommendations to those that matter in the educational lives of the school children in the geographical area where the research was conducted by promoting participants voice.

Demonstrate respect

Information was gathered with a deal of respect and humility. Removal of shoes before entering royal palace is a sign of respect for the chiefs and elders of the community. Also, one needs to remove his/her hat and cap when meeting and talking to the elderly are signs of respect in most communities such as the Manya Krobo community.

Avoid coercion or manipulation

Information for the project given by informants was made to be given voluntarily. There was not coercion so ever. I made participants aware on the consent form of the refusal to participate in the research without any harm. Those who could not

read were explained the implications of their participations and the need to participate from their free will.

Reciprocate

I sent thank you letters to each participant of the project as way of showing appreciation for their kind gesture. I also promised the librarian of the paramountcy library to place a copy of the thesis in the library. This was upon a passionate request made by the chief linguist of the paramountcy during the interview.

Positive fraternity with the researched (Krobos)

While some components of the *dipo* culture attracted my personal reflection, I did not intend to clash with the general values and ideals of the Krobos. An important question for me was how do I conduct trustworthy research without a compromise with myself and informants beliefs? This was a guide during my fieldwork and analysis which helped me gained intellectual insights.

Avoided participating in dubious bargain

I made sure I did not take undue advantage of the rural folks especially the school girl, the Krobo teacher, the poor and the disadvantaged. While I sought their informed consents, I was careful not be a victim of a dubious bargain. Silverman (2006) explain how some colleagues in the United States gave some few dollars

to the homeless to be granted an interview for their research. He wondered whether this was ethical.

4.23 Fieldwork and Constraints

I lived in Manya Krobo Odumase, a farming community in the eastern region of Ghana for a period close to six months from April – September 2008 for the ethnographic study. Living and participating in the settings in which the daily lives of the young and old were principally conducted - The Presbyterian Junior Secondary School, the neighbourhood communities and the homes of the participants - was fun. Young adolescent girls in the paramountcy were instrumental in providing relevant information on the *dipo* cultural rites for this project. I also made a few friends with the elderly who equally fed me with a host of information. The district chief executive's wife who was the gatekeeper for the fieldwork was herself a graduate teacher and an acting head teacher of the Manya Krobo Odumase Presbyterian Junior Secondary School was very instrumental to the data collection. While observation and everyday conversation informed my growing sense of gender issues in the Manya Krobo Odumase community and environs, it was the discussions held with African studies students at the graduate school of the Institute of African Studies, Ghana, that heightened my understanding of fieldwork as a research practice of engaging with others on their own turf, exotic or otherwise, in order to describe their cultural practices, understandings and beliefs. I used all my personal and academic networks and

experience to generate contacts, people who would support me while on the field and to know the ins and outs of fieldwork so as not to repeat mistakes made earlier by other ethnographers or participant observers.

It cannot be denied that research proximity and distance come with a package of strengths and difficulties. Before, I set off to the field for my data I was well aware of a number of constraints that were likely to hinder the projects from achieving the best result. Adequate funding and my strong desire to meet deadline allowed me only a limited amount of time on the field. The suggestion by Fetterman, (1989) that classical ethnography such as this requires from six months to two years or more on the field is well noted. Much as I wanted to stay that length of time, I was worried about adequate time to analyse and report the findings of the fieldwork all within a limited time of eight months.

4.24 Chapter Summary

In summary to this more directly methodologically driven chapter, we are presented with two strongly interlinked key themes or points: first, data collection methods which adopted interviews, participants observation and field notes to generate information for this project; second, the ethical dimension which assesses the potential benefits of the research with possible risks to the participants. Issues of Krobo girls and their schooling are framed within a methodological approach which embraces Africalogical ideals in which the *dipo*

cultural rites is centrally located. In chapter five, I will report the findings and analysed data gathered for the project.

Chapter 5

Findings and Analysis of Data

5.1 Chapter Overview

I have presented the findings and analysed the data collected for the project in this chapter. The detailed narrative accounts of teachers, ex-celebrants/pubertants, parents and community opinion leaders are presented and analysed as they spoke about their perception of the dipo rites and how it affects schooling of the child in the Krobo paramountcy. The analysis offers an anthropological understanding of the cultural and schooling experiences of the Krobos. Data reveals the nature of the dipo rites and changes that has come to bear on it. The chapter also demonstrate differences in hopes, aspirations and values of informants.

Structure

I observed and listened to the informants to know their experiences and their perceptions about the *dipo* rites. This was to help establish the practical account of the *dipo* cultural rites from the perspective of the Krobos whom I interviewed. In the interviews, these individuals discussed various events and rituals packaged in the *dipo* ceremony including reasons for engagement and changes that have

been brought to bear on the *dipo* cultural rites. Their voices became the power of knowledge with which I evaluated and assessed how *dipo* rites may have affected schooling in the Manya Krobo paramountcy. In all, their narrative brings to light some aspects of the religious and cultural life of the Krobos.

The general information collected from informants were classified under the following domains to cater for the aims of this project. These included: (a) The Odumase community, environs and the school visited, (b) relevance, current celebration, history, changes brought to bear and reasons for engagement in the *dipo* cultural rites, (c) how *dipo* rites affect schooling. It is important to acknowledge that all names used are pseudonyms.

5.2 The Odumase community, environs and the school visited

Krobos can boast of a large number of schools in the paramountcy which is possibly linked to Christian activities which was very predominant in early days of foreign missionary activities and church implantations. The school visited for my project is cited at the outskirt of the Odumase community. It is among a cluster of basic schools strategically built near a Presbyterian church and a mission house which houses the vicar of the church. The school is owned by the church and jointly run by the church and the community. I was not surprised on my first visit to realise that first periods of every Wednesday of the week is used for worship where the vicar of the church or a delegate from the Presbyterian community comes to share the word of God with the children. This is the normal

routine in most mission schools around the country. I saw myself fortunate to be invited by my gatekeeper who was herself the acting head teacher of the school to sit in and worship with the pupils. I was fortunate because it was an opportunity for me as a Christian to fellowship and to have my morning devotion singing Presbyterian hymns which is not quite different from the normal Methodist hymns I am used to. It was quite a joyous occasion to start my day and to be introduced to the school community as a researcher who is around to spend some months in the school.

My trip from Accra to Odumase in a commercial vehicle commonly known in Ghana as 'trotro' took me barely an hour to the centre of Odumase. On my arrival at Odumase town centre, I luckily approached a school girl who was walking to the school. She was quite delighted to talk to me and walk in my company to the schools. She whet my appetite with her conversation which was centred on the migration of her mum to Odumase for marital reasons and how she was faring in her new school. Her English was clear and understandable. It is important to note that the official language in Ghana is English and it is also the language of school instruction. Only people who have attended school can speak and understand it.

I did not struggle to realise the school is poorly equipped and lacks books and other learning materials. As I was waiting for the head teacher and teachers to arrive in the school that early morning, I was seated under a tall and airy tree under it was arranged furniture and a chalkboard for teaching and learning. The

buildings were quite dilapidated and old. I was tempted to conclude that no refurbishment had taken place since the missionaries who established the school left years ago even though I never asked. The church was magnificently built with hedges planted and trimmed neatly around, making the whole environment catchy. I did not find one computer in the whole cluster schools even though the government of Ghana is urging all basic schools and trying to introduce IT into the curriculum of the school. Most of the textbooks used by pupils for their studies are worn out and insufficient for the number of pupils averagely forty-five and over in a class. On several occasions during lessons, pupils had to be paired up or put into groups to share textbooks together. School uniforms, supplementary textbooks and exercise books for lessons and writing materials had to be bought by parents for their children to use in schools. My observation in the school and the community of Odumase indicate that many Krobos had to deal with socio-economic problems which have eaten well into the fabrics of the school and the community.

I was particularly attracted to a nation-wide free pilot feeding programme initiated by the government of Ghana not quite long ago before I visited Ghana for specially selected school across the country which fortunately my researched school was involved. The feeding programme according to my gatekeeper and to my own realisation was a boost to school enrolment in the cluster. Pupils are always looking forward for their sumptuous lunch in their schools. Some school children will time and arrive at the school just for their lunch and sneak back

home. It was a very catchy sight to witness when the school van arrived at about mid-day with the food to feed the school. The Krobo Odumase community and environs are scattered with bore-holes which provide a source of drinking water for the community. These according to one interviewee are a gesture by philanthropic organisations known in Ghana as non-governmental organisations (NGO's). There are streams and pools of water at various points of Odumase also serving as source of water for mainly washing and bathing. These streams and pools also serve as recreational centres for the youths in Odumase. On weekends, people converge and exchange pleasantries while others bath, play and wash at the banks of these waters. A place to see a typical African life - road side hawking, carrying water, farming, funeral ceremonies on a weekend and cutting firewood for cooking among others is Krobo Odumase - a vibrant town packed with loads of activities especially on a weekend.

5.3 Relevance of the dipo rites

5.3.1 *Current celebration of the rites*

All the six pupils interviewed gave me similar descriptive accounts of the *dipo* cultural rites.

For instance, pupil 'A' gave a detailed account of the day of celebration:

> *On the Friday morning my parents sent me to the dipo woman, the fetish priest. She was grinding something on a stone and gave me*

some to drink. It is called ma which I drank it and then something was tied on my neck. My cloth was tied around my waist exposing my breast and stomach. My mother paid my admission fees and sent me to the shrine on that day. I was shaved and covered with a traditional cloth which my mother bought for me. I was one of about forty girls who were initiated at that shrine. We were taught how to prepare a local dish and given some to eat. We were also sent to the river side and bathed. We also sat on the dipo stone. Back at home the following day, I was dressed in beads and paraded through the town, shaking hands. I got a lot of gifts from friends and family. My mother told me I don't have to go through the dipo again for the rest of my life. I felt okay after the initiation.

By extension, pupil 'A' added information on records of daily events during the ceremonial period:

Each day marked different activities. First day, we were taught some daily routines as growing girls and then the second day we visited the sacred stone at the outskirt of the town which we sat on with the pouring of libation. We came home afterwards. The next day we were decorated and outdoored. We were also made to thank the dipo fetish priest. The next day, we went round the town thanking the

public and registering our participation of the rites. Some gave as presents.

Pupil 'B' described her experience:

On Friday, my mother took me to the place of dipo where I was undressed and something tied around my waist. My face was painted with a substance black like the chacoal. Saturday they took us to the river side to be bathed. On Sunday they did the stoning ceremony where we were supported to sit on a stone three times after which we are carried to the house. We were decorated on Monday and taught some traditional dances and how to cook some traditional meals. I was fortunate I wasn't tatooed but had a blood bath. We were about two hundred girls who were all initiated.

Pupil 'B's experience highlights details about the purification process. Initiates are bathed in the river as a sign of washing away their dirty past and ushering them into a new path of life. The number of initiates involved in the initiation process as noted in her description speaks volumes about how Krobos value their culture and are daring to enrol in these rites.

Pupil ‘C’ said:

> *Sir, I was dressed in traditional cloth and beads and herbs tied around my waist and neck. We were told not to buy food or eat outside during the ceremony.We were shaved to the skin both our hair and pubic place. We stayed with the fetish the whole day being taught different things in the traditional way. We went home and came back to the shrine the following morning. We were fed the traditonal food in the morning and sent to the river side carrying calabash on our heads containing leaves and water. The priestess tied big red calico around each others waist. We didn’t wear any underwear. We walked home after series of rituals at the river side. At home a goat was slaughted and we were washed with the blood. We wore a special hat to visit the sacred stool the next day with a leaf placed on our tongue. We are not supposed to look back when visiting the stool. The occasion ended going through the whole town thanking the community and receiving gifts. We were dressed in expensive clothes.*

For pupil ‘C’, they were instructed as group not to look back when visiting the sacred stool. Her account exemplifies the dos and don’ts placed on the whole ceremonial process, which is very similar to the account of pupil ‘F’. Pupil ‘F’

and her group were told not to announce what they did and saw at the shrine to any outsider.

Pupil 'D', 'E' and 'F' had very similar experiences of the *dipo* ritual package including being shaved all their pubic hairs around the body as part of the purification ritual. For instance, pupil 'D' said:

> *My pants and dress were removed when my mum sent me to the shrine for the initiation on that day. I was ten years in primary class four then, but had hairs around my pubic that was shaved. I was dressed in traditional cloths and sent home. I returned in the evening to the shrine to be taught how to dance. The next morning we went to the river side to bath. On our return to the shrine we were taught how to cook traditional meals. We ate goat meat and maize. We were taught some traditional dances on the last day. At some point they put leaf in mouth which they said we shouldn't talk. We went to town to thank the community and to collect gifts on the last day. I was very happy.*

Pupil 'D' described how her pants and dress were removed as part of the ceremonial process, possibly as part of the custom and for easy shaving of pubic hairs around ampits and other parts of the body. Similar account was read from the experience of Pupil 'E' below.

Pupil ‘E’ remarked:

> *They (fetish priestess and assistant) shaved all my hair around my body that day and dressed me in traditional dress. I was sent to the river side to be bathed by the priestess. The next day they killed a goat and bathed us with the blood. They also sent us to the stool room and taught us how to keep ourselves clean and cook traditional meals. We were also taught a lot of things some of which I can’t remember. I remember very well the traditional dance which we danced in the market place on the last day. I got lots of gifts.*

Pupil ‘E’ talked about the slaughtering of goat, bathing them with blood of the slaughtered goat and the cooking of a traditional meal with the meat. We read from pupil ‘C’ a similar account of the slaughtering and bathing with animal blood. These narratives are indication that there is uniformity in rituals organised across the Krobo paramountcy.

Pupil ‘F’ indicated:

> *I did the dipo when I was fourteen years in form one. On Friday morning, my mum sent me to the shrine where the ceremony was*

being organised. I was dressed in red calico and traditional beads. We were sent to the river side and bathed. I had been shaved earlier on and taught how to grind the millet. We were about forty girls and we were all taught how to grind the millet and cook it. They cut the back of our wrist and waist with blade and washed us. We were told not to tell anybody what we have seen and gone through at the shrine.We were washed at the river side and sat on a big stone three times and returned to the shrine to be taught a lot of different things. Also taught how to dance and keep our bodies neat. We danced on the last day and had a lot of gifts.

Pupil 'F' spoke of the scarification marks made by the traditional priest on her wrist and waist. These scarification marks are what opinion leader 'A' referred to in his account as the certification of the *dipo* girl.

In general, we read from these celebrants, accounts of similar experiences ranging from shaving of pubic hairs, enrolment in traditional shrines, teaching of traditional dances and songs, cooking traditional dishes, out-dooring, libation pouring, and ritual performances. Interestingly, a varying degree of all these cultural practices represent important rituals in *dipo* initiation rites in the Krobo paramountcy.

5.3.2 *History of the rites*

One aspect of this account which was missing from the pupils' commentary was the historical exploration of the *dipo* rites. Thankfully, community opinion leader 'A' fills that gap.

Community opinion leader 'A' gave me an insightful history on how and why the *dipo* was established:

> *The dipo has been on the Kroboland, years before we came down in 1892 that was established about 3 to 4 hundred years ago or probably was established 4 to 5 hundred years ago. It a long time but where it began I do not really know, nobody can actually tell. Whether we brought it through migration or we arrived here before they began it, I don't really know. But it is established purposefully for the up coming girl to grow up and feel matured before marriage….. Cultural certificate were awarded you after going through the dipo. The certificate was the marking of the wrist, around the waist and many parts of the body…. So the whole purpose of the dipo was to prepare the young girl for life.*

The key point emerging from the community leader's remarks is when and why the *dipo* was instituted in the Manya Krobo paramountcy. I took his remarks to mean *dipo* rites provided a statement about Krobo history, custom, belief and

identity, and that *dipo* is one culture that cannot be thrown away by the Krobos hence its resilience.

The repercussions of what happens to an adult Krobo woman who refuses to participate in the *dipo* rites at a young age, in my view can also be found in the story of the queen mother and a parent who traced a personal story to support her reason for engagement (see appendix 'B', opinion leader 'B'). The daughter's decision to contest for the Member of Parliament in the constituency was thwarted after all her education abroad because inter-city migration issue forced the parent to relocate and that as a result could not be initiated. Quite sympathetically, this experience is very typical of other many experiences of young women in the paramountcy as other similar experiences were shared with me by other Krobo citizens (also see, Steegstra, 2004, p. 297-298).

The perception of most Krobos, and clearly evident in the findings presented seem to resonate with the idea expressed by Kim (2001, p. 5) that the *dipo* rites makes some claim on the person and is associated with a set of ideas and practices. Perhaps, that claim might be the scarification that accompanies the rite (see appendix 'B', opinion leader 'A').

These scarification marks on a typical Krobo girl as confirmed by a leader in the community and an informant of the research, identify the initiate to the culture and equally confirms her certification. It also characterises ways of being, that the

Krobo girl is patterned according to the means and practices of the Krobo community and the realisation that such communities are maintained by these ways of being in the world. I asked myself the question whether effective community schools, help transmit cultural values of communities where schools are established. As I reflected on this issue, I pondered about the criticisms by some development workers and scholars that African school system has failed to achieve many of the goals set for them such as relating teaching or making teaching practical to the cultural environment in which they are situated (Thompson, 1981, p. 307). They claim that the whole educational system is divorced from the life and culture of the local people and consequently unsuitable for preparing the child for the life in his or her own community. Thompson (1981, p. 34) is worried about how to bring reformation to the African schooling system and make it relevant by way of rooting them more grounded into the culture of the community thereby making the schools as he put 'capable of preparing young people for their modernisation role without divorcing them from their culture'.

5.3.3 *Changes in the dipo rites today*

There was consistency among parents, a community leader and a teacher on what they considered to be changes that has been brought to bear on the *dipo* cultural rites. This was specifically noted on the reduced number of days of the *dipo* rites. But some parents were also very clear in articulating how very young girls are being initiated for fear of being ostracised by their colleagues in the school. For instance while Parent 'A' said '*days of the rites are now limited*'.

Parent 'C' equally confirmed '*days of the rites are limited*'.

Similarly, parent 'D' indicated '*yes hostel days are shortened*'.

Parents 'F' and 'E' articulated their feeling about young girls who have not menstruated and are being initiated. For example while parent 'F' said '*yes, primary school girls are now being initiated which use not to be part of the dipo'*. You needed to have your first menses to be initiated'. Parent 'E' indicated '*yes, young girls of two are now being initiated*'.

In the speech of teacher 'A', we read:

> *The initiation used to be three months or more where series of learning is experienced by the child. The limited time today offer no learning experiences and therefore feel it must be stopped.*

Opinion leader 'A' added his view on the changes in the *dipo* rites:

> *Today things are slightly different. My mother was twenty before she went for the hostel training. Girls as young as fifteen and ten are going out with boys. Christianity has started frowning on these things that we cherished in the past….. I think it is a God given culture and I'm proud to be a Krobo.*

Because of the changing time, there might need a few modifications but as for the rite itself we still need it.

Changes on the *dipo* rites were generally acknowledged by informants. What seems to be the other emerging problem apart from the reduced number of days and the enrolment of tender aged girls is the negative influence of Christianity which sees *dipo* cultural practice as pagan as admitted by the community leader. The negative impact is therefore seen in the area of the church discouraging its members from getting initiated into the *dipo* culture.

5.3.4 *Reasons for engagement in dipo rites*

The reasons from what mothers and for that matter parents engaged their children in the *dipo* rites mostly centred on tradition and the need to keep it alive for the younger generation and posterity. This reason for keeping tradition alive by enrolling their daughters on the *dipo* rites was both personal and traditional. Parent 'A' observed:

A requirement of the traditional area. All girls should be initiated and if I have gone through, why not enrol my girl to get a similar experience.

The reasoning in parent 'A's observation is that traditional values and norms must not be thrown away and that it must be handed over to young generation.

Parent 'B' said:

> *Because it a tradition handed down by our ancestors for the proper grooming of young girls of krobo land for fulfilment in life. So we need it. You cannot be a Krobo woman without the initiation.*

Parent 'B's expression comes in support of parent 'A's observation of the *dipo* being a traditional asset which should be passed on to younger generation and by extension indicates that the *dipo* rites is the gateway to womanhood in the Krobo paramountcy.

Parent 'C' indicated:

> *A Tradition which must be continued by us and they also continue when they grow and pass it onto their children. I do not want my children to be ostracised by their mates in school, they have to be part of the school they attend.*

On the other hand, parent 'C' fears her child may face isolation in her school and that enrolling her in the *dipo* will be the cure to facing isolation at school.

Parent 'D' also said:

> *I went through the initiation and would want my girls to go through. It is very prestigious to the family to initiate their young girls. It brings honour to us. I want my children to be part of the school they attend.*

Parent 'D' points to the honour the *dipo* rites bring to the girl and the extended family. In most cases, these gifts received at the end of the rites are enough to starts young girls off as their business capital and some as witnesses to their young generation of having gone through the rites.

Parent 'E' said in support that:

> *The whole family have done it and therefore felt she should also do it and become part of the community and school she attend.*

Knowledge of family history allowed parent 'E' to appreciate the cultural past of members of her family and draw on its implications to enrol the young ones in the family.

Parent 'F' added:

> *So she can pass it own to her children and feel part of her school as almost all her mates have done it.*

What is significant in Parent 'F's statement is the acknowledgement that all schoolmates of her child have gone through the *dipo* rites. This, I guess is the recognition of the insight into the working partnership between school and the community as parents are aware of the cultural life of child's schoolmates.

The main reasons for engagement seem to show that most women would want to pass the tradition onto their young girls and to make their daughters recognised as full Krobo women. There are also indications to perceive women, mostly mothers, as disseminators of either aspects of or all of community cultural values and ideals including the *dipo* rites.

There were certainly cost implications for the enrolment of girls into the *dipo* initiation rites by all parents. Parents out of their meagre earnings from their petty trading business would still go all out to enrol their daughters according to

findings. In trying to find how much cost was involved in the enrolment of their daughters', parent 'A' and 'D' said: '*120 Ghana Cedi (GHC)'*

Parent B remarked: '*150 Ghana Cedi (GHC)'*

Parent 'C' said: '*110 Ghana Cedi (GHC')*

Parent 'E' indicated:

> *One month sales at the road side. That is about 130 Ghana Cedis (GHC)*

However, parent 'F' was not sure about the cost involved as it was paid by the dad of the initiate. Parent 'F' indicated: '*not sure. Her dad paid all'*

5.3.5 *Parental views*

The responses from interviewed parents as to whether the *dipo* cultural rites should be continued or discontinued attracted diverse responses. But the general indication was that most of the interviewed parents were in support of the initiation and would want the rites to continue in the Manya Krobo paramountcy. Apart from parent 'D' whose Christian affiliation would not permit her to enrol the child and was still in consideration, all other parents interviewed were in support of the initiation rites. For instance parent 'D' said '*I am now a Christian and still considering it'*

Parent 'A' agreed to the continuation of the *dipo* indicating '*yes, due to morals it inculcates in the children of Krobo'*.

Parent ‘B’ said ‘*Yes*’.

Parent ‘C’ responded ‘*yes, we all did it*’.

Parent ‘E’ indicated ‘*yes, because it is a tradition that involves all the community members and demonstrates our culture*’.

Parent ‘F’ said ‘*yes, if you don’t do it you miss out, it’s our culture*’.

Issues relating to the acquisition of traditional values and the need to perpetuate it by passing them to the younger generation emerged in the interview with parents. Various reactions were provoked. For example, Parent ‘A’ remarked:

> *A requirement of the traditional area. All girls should be initiated and if I have gone through, why not enrol my girl to get a similar experience.*

The remarks by Parent ‘A’ echoed in the observations of all parents interviewed. Parents portrayed their choices to enrol their daughters as necessity in the Krobo community and they tended to operate within predefined community traditional values, morals and demands. There was the sense that these mothers saw themselves as providing some sort of interface between themselves, their children, the extended family and the community they live. Because daughters were still

young and under their care, this involved parents making decisions for them. The study seemed to reveal that parents are at the forefront of decision making as far as their enrolment of their children in the initiation rites are concerned.

Parents seemed to make the *dipo* rites compulsory for their daughters to enrol. We see this compulsion in the observation of some of the parents. This compulsion in no doubt serves to check all kinds of resistance to forms of personal choices opened to the initiates. It implies that parents are themselves cultural players who are there to keep the *dipo* cultural rites alive and intact and act as barriers to change. Example, parent 'C' said:

> *A Tradition which must be continued by us and they also continue when they grow and pass it onto their children. I do not want my children to be ostracised by their mates in school, they have to be part of the school they attend.*

Similar observation seemed to emerge from the conclusions of Huber (1993, pp. 165-180) that in most African traditional communities, an informal network of community leaders and parents as part of their community roles are to keep watch over community culture and to carry and reinforce its values. It is essential to note that resilient cultures such as the *dipo* rites do not develop overnight; they evolve over years and parents as cultural players have played valuable roles in offering

themselves as instruments to maintaining the *dipo* cultural tradition in the Manya Krobo paramountcy. The claim that community provides a social good for society to place certain obligations and duties on individuals in contributing to society is seen on the role of Krobo parents to their Krobo community.

But a more substantial problem is associated with failing to be initiated in the annual *dipo* rites. For parent 'C' and 'D', their reasons for enrolling their daughters to be initiated is for them to feel welcomed and be part of their local schools they attend. Should these be labelled as serious and non-ignorable threats to schooling and education in the Manya Krobo paramountcy? Of course, making schools more effective requires good and harmonious interaction between pupils, teachers and administration. But why should some pupils feel more welcomed than others. In trying to understand this, we see a number of indicators. The *dipo* rites initiation itself is central in forming individual and collective identities in the schools pupils attend, while also developing a sense of community belonging, pride and purpose for the learner in their local schools. Similarly, there is little doubt that religious and cultural values are integrated in the organisational life of the local school. Parents would therefore want their daughters to feel welcomed and equally benefit from the organisational life of the school.

I contend parents 'D's feeling (see appendix 'B', parents 'D') to reconsider her decision to enrol her daughter by virtue of her Christian background is an attempt to meet the demands of the Christian values as against traditional cultural norms.

Steegstra (2004, p. 235) poses the question from the early Basel missionaries -who were instrumental in Christianising the Krobos - to provoke interesting thoughts 'do people really experience a split consciousness or inner self when they observe Christian and non - Christian rites'. Inhibiting certain cultural practices such as the *dipo* rites is not to be taken lightly (see appendix 'B'). The priority of knowing the right from the good and the Christian conception of a true Krobo Christian, however, provide a way in which to limit certain traditional practices such as the *dipo* within the Krobo community. Steegstra (2004, p. 238) discovered that most Krobos consider the *dipo* rites as a gate to becoming a true member of the Krobo society, so as to emphasise the 'relational self' and become a clean and acceptable person according to traditional standards, before one can make more individual choices of deciding to become a full Christian church member.

5.4 How dipo rites affect schooling?

The objective of the study was to find out how the celebration of the *dipo* rites directly or indirectly affects schooling of the *dipo* adolescent girl. In all, I saw the reflection of how *dipo* affects schooling in varied ways, mostly expressed in the comments by teachers who are directly involved in the teaching of these girls.

5.4.1 *Teacher views*

Teacher 'B' remarked:

Oh yes, morally they have been introduced to something at too tender an age which they shouldn't have done. This means they now have the ticket to marry. This I think is wrong.

Teachers 'B's view comes in support of what teachers 'A' and 'C' said to add to how *dipo* affects the schooling of the children they teach. In teacher 'B's view, *dipo* is wrong as it has immoral implications for the initiates. Teacher 'B' thinks *dipo* gives young girls the ticket to talk about marital issues even at that tender age when these children are still in school.

Teachers 'A' and 'B' admitted that absences from school as a result of the *dipo* directly affects the continuous assessment scheme which constitutes 30% of their internal assessment towards their Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) which the final examination at the junior school. For instance, Teacher A said '*I do not see why the child should not lose from her regular absence from school*'.

Teacher 'C' remarked:

Yes, I do not want others to look mean on children who have not done it in my class but when she misses internal exams I give her zero

For Teacher 'C', while he endorses school girls enrolling in the *dipo* religious rites so as to benefit from school socialisation process among girls of the same cultural experience, pupils absences from school for the *dipo* religious rites attracts zero marks in all internal examinations conducted.

Teacher 'E' rationalised his preference by drawing on the good and bad sides of the *dipo* cultural rites in relation to girls education. While being proud of the culture which has been kept over the years till today and registered the pride of the people of Krobo, he articulated strong disaproval about how some school girls are abusing it. Teacher 'E' remarked:

> *It portrays the rich culture of the Krobos. If our parents have thrown the culture away we wouldn't have seen the culture today. But I don't support the culture today because children are abusing it. They go into sex after the initiation. Even the boys are happy that their girls have done the rites because they can engage them in sex and marriage.*

How dipo affects schooling as expressed by the teachers takes the form of moral decadence, absenteesm from school, sexual promiscuity, socialisation problems and early marriage by initiates. Teachers were generally not happy with these

issues which affects the classroom learning and the general education of school girls in the Krobo paramountcy.

The theme 'moral values' elicited strong responses from some of the teachers. Based on the interviews, it can be said that some teachers even though proud to be Krobos and have pride in the *dipo* cultural rites; they seemed to disapprove the continuation of the rites in view of changing trends. We sense this disapproval in the statements of teachers 'B' and 'E'. While teacher 'B' said:

> *Oh yes, morally they have been introduced to something at too tender an age which they shouldn't have done. This means they now have the ticket to marry. This I think is wrong.*

Responses from teachers show that some teachers are aware of the problem of moral vices particularly sexual and relationships that comes as the negative side of the *dipo* rites. Quite often promiscuous behaviour is linked to the organisation of the *dipo* rites. Steegstra (2004, p. 6) attests that not only the teachers but other Krobos including Christians see the *dipo* rites as a catalyst of teenage pregnancies, prostitutions, HIV infestation and other immoral behaviour. There is no doubt that when these girls are pregnant in the course of schooling they have to drop out of school to make living and support their babies. In addition to all these, we are aware of the fear that has engulfed parents in the Krobo paramountcy as a

result of their young girls getting pregnant before the initiation rites. Teacher 'B' points it out:

> *People are hurrying their children into adulthood for fear of pregnancy before the initiation.*

The *dipo* cultural rites seem to carry religious and symbolic aspects of a community life. Evidence of merry making, dancing, singing and libation pouring is read in the reports of some of the informants. For teacher 'A' , the *dipo* rites is more or less a community fund raising event which has outlived it usefulness of ushering girls into adulthood. He indicated:

> *Based on the developments, I think it must be stopped. It is now a fund raising event and therefore has outlived it usefulness.*

Because it is an occasion for bringing all Krobos home and in view of the fact that it is organised annually between March and June (Steegstra 2004, p. 4) which is Christian Easter time, most families travel home to see loved ones. It is arguably an occasion for sorting family issues and merry making. The value of the *dipo* rites to the Krobos is registered in the difficulty for most Christian groups who do not share faith in the rites to go under cover to initiate their girls. I asked myself

why gospel missionaries in and around the area who preach against these practices would want to go under the cover of darkness to initiate their daughters. Teacher 'E' reveals it all.

> *.....also, be aware some members of the Christian community who are against their daughter's enrolment sneak to the nearby communities to enrol their daughters because they didn't want their pastors to see. This is the problem we have in the paramountcy today.*

In relation to how the *dipo* rites affect class assessment, some teacher interviewees expressed the need to take internal assessments in the child's education more seriously. This class assessment is understood against the background of the child missing out with his absences from school for the celebration of the *dipo* rite. Teacher 'C' claimed that:

> *Yes, I do not want others to look mean on children who have not done it in my class but when she misses internal exams I give her zero.*

Teacher 'D' makes his observation:

It affects their learning as they miss classes. They also talk about adult issues which I think is too early an age to discuss.

Teacher 'D' spoke about girls of school going age talking about adult issues after the initiation which he thinks is too early an age to discuss that. He also recognises how *dipo* affects learning when children miss classes to enrol on the initiation rites.

But we need to be concerned as teachers in looking at ways to integrate these initiates into the schools they attend on their return from the initiation. I believe a strategic approach will achieve result when teachers come together through an increased influence and support from the authorities to tackle the issue. Teacher 'D' links the loss of classroom hours of learning to adult issues which according to him are too deep and loaded for girls of that tender age. Teacher 'D's' observation while in support of Teacher 'C's' learning difficulties for the initiates also points out clearly the need to recognise the weaknesses and vices that accompany the *dipo* rites today and not to put sensitivity and cultural pride above all twist of issues that affect the child's learning.

Teacher 'C' is not in favour of some rituals which are packaged in the *dipo* ceremony even though he advocates for the continuation of the rites. He labels some of the rituals as unhygienic. He indicated that:

I feel some of the things should be discontinued but the culture should stay. Especially, tying intestines around the neck of celebrants for hygienic reasons

Quite evidently his position as a Christian in the paramountcy might arguably have contributed to setting boundaries as to which portions of the *dipo* ritual package to continue and which portions to discontinue in the paramountcy. He was quick to add that:

Yes, my church doesn't permit it but people sneak to partake in nearby communities around Manya Krobo.

On a hopeful note, cultural relevance to the day to day learning of the child was upheld by some of the teachers. For example teacher 'E' observed:

'They come with lots of knowledge about culture when they are initiated. They get lots of gifts after the celebration. So they are happy to enrol'.

Teacher 'E's observation emphasises the contributions local knowledge make to contemporary schooling and teaching in Africa. Sefa Dei (2004, p. 201) attests

that in the absence of textbooks and other curricular learning materials, teachers depend on the surrounding natural environment as a cultural resource for teaching and learning. This means that a sound knowledge of ones' culture and their values is a good base for classroom learning.

5.4.2 *Pupil views*

Also, all six pupils interviewed discussed changes they saw in themselves after their enrolment on the *dipo* rites. These changes were generally issues of peer group formations that were formed during the *dipo* rites and transported into the school community and most probably continue through adult life. For instance pupil 'F' pointed out that '*All our hair was trimmed down to the skin and scarification marks left on our skin. In school we were easily identified with our hair and we became friends to share our experiences'*.

Pupil 'E' said '*Dedu' became my friend at school after the dipo because she was in my initiation group*'.

Pupils 'E's statement corroborated with pupil 'B' '*I knew 'Akole' in school but became friends after the initiation*'.

Pupils 'A' remarked '*Nana' is now my bosom friend after the rites*'

A striking finding of the changes pupils see in themselves after the enrolment into the *dipo* rites is mainly on the friendships they form from the initiation groups and bring into the school community. There is the issue of physical changes and the scarification marks left on them as signs of initiation. These attributes form the centre of attraction and bonding in their schools they attend.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has recorded and analysed reports from participants of the study. I have not spoken for the Krobos. Rather, within an overall perspective on *dipo* cultural rites and schooling in the Manya Krobo paramountcy, my analysis tried to direct a much-needed attention to how informants perceive the *dipo* rites. Interestingly, each informant, particularly teachers, was seen as a category of actor having different contextual perception and position. The next chapter uses this report to explicate culture and schooling in a wider context.

Chapter 6

Discussion – Culture and Schooling

6.1 Chapter Summary

This chapter advances on chapter five. It addresses culture and schooling in broader context using dipo rites as the empirical study. The discussion draws on interviews with informants. Responses from teachers, parents, pupils and community leaders have provided basis for the reflection. It is intended to contribute to understanding of one example of community culture and schooling in Manya Krobo paramountcy in particular and Ghanaian education in general. The final section of this chapter justifies evidence of Eurocentric views on previous research on culture and schooling in Africa.

6.2 Patterns of connection between culture and schooling

6.2.1 *School and community-cultural relations*

Various reasons were inferred from the expressions by informants to establish the patterns of connection between community culture and schooling in the Manya Krobo paramountcy. The relationship between culture and schooling is meant to highlight the understanding of the areas of collaboration and conflict and for assessing the link between *dipo* rites as a community culture and schooling in the Manya Krobo paramountcy. In conflict terms, Huber (1993, p. 127) says the young who are involved in formal schooling are becoming increasingly disrespectful to adults in their local communities. Huber (1993, p. 127) accounted for his early days in Africa when young ones in school were bowing down or even squatting before adults when transmitting greetings or messages. A critical reflection of school community connectedness quickly establishes the extent to which we can see the community where the school functions as a master system encompassing many social and cultural forms. But the tendency for mutual interdependence between the school, the community and its culture may lead us to establish the question as to whether any principles explain their relationship. Perhaps, one of these principles is what is highlighted in opinion leader 'A's remark below.

For me opinion leader 'A's remark was seen in the light of the fact that the school should not be seen as a foreign body within the community it operates but rather as part of it, organising itself for the development of the local community.

> *Culture identifies any group, so if the classroom takes over what we use to practice there is nothing left for us. You might argue that Christianity is culture too. Is the church the only place that God listens? If at home we teach these young ones to be respectable to the elderly, learn to cook so that they grow well. Thus it not tally with Gods own command?*

Another emphasis by opinion leader 'A' was the feeling of endorsement of what the community culture does in place of schooling and education when there are no formal community education structures.

> *In the early years we had not known western education, so it was the community leaders who taught us the existence of God, how to preserve our bodies from sin and undesirables. The girls were given a type of hostel training, where they were housed for over a year and schooled in home keeping, baby care and care for the husband, responsibility of the woman in the home. They were also taught poetry, singing and dancing and since*

we were agricultural people, they were also taught farming. These were the purpose of the hostel.

While each one of these bodies – school, community and culture occupies its own physical setting, Arensberg and Kimball (1965, p. 3) have indicated that institutional arrangements provide the framework within which these bodies relate to each other in transitory and in permanent cooperative bodies and by extension, these bodies, when taken as a whole, connect the school, the community and culture making up the network referred to as a 'society'.

6.2.2 *Transmitting cultural values*

It is essential that we understand and recognise society or community as a major variable in transmitting cultural values. Arguably, the family, school, community and church play greater role in transmitting portions of community cultural heritage and values to their members than many other agencies. The categories of this cultural heritage may include skills as expounded by opinion leader 'A' such as cooking, poetry recital, singing and dancing, and also caring for babies and husbands.

In addition, Opinion leader 'A' confirmed the school has incorporated most community cultural values:

Education as I said has taken over a lot of the basic skill training, what was being taught at the hostel has been taken over by the schools like the life skill, home economics.

In Teachers 'C' and 'E's remarks, we sense the feeling that community cultures such as the *dipo* rites are an inclusive element in the indigenous life and schooling of all Krobo girls: Teacher 'C' indicated:

Well, I am a parent, and my first daughter I did the dipo for her but the subsequent ones am still thinking about it. The main problem is that I still live in a family house and there is always pressure from the elderly to put your children into the dipo. I will not do it if I were to be living in my own home. In the family home children who have not done the dipo are rejected and think they are impure.

Teacher 'E' said:

My daughter was regarded as impure and therefore isolated from peer group activities in the same household so I was compelled by circumstances of her

> *isolation to borrow money and get her into the initiation the following year. Also, be aware some members of the Christian community who* are *against their daughter's enrolment sneak to the nearby communities to enrol their daughters because they didn't want their pastors to see.*

Teacher 'E's remarks is distinct against the background that Christians in the Krobo paramountcy are preaching one thing and practising another thing, possibly in view of the negative consequences *dipo* brings to their daughter in school and community they attend and live respectively. The central and perhaps most crucial thing is for all members of community irrespective of religious affiliation to feel safe and live in harmony by adhering to community cultural values, norms, beliefs and customs noting that manoeuvring brings nothing but cultural isolation.

6.2.3 *Cultural experiences of school girls*

In most African traditional communities and as exemplified by the *dipo* cultural rites, the child's initiation clears hurdles by accepting and recognising her as a full woman. But for several reasons, some parents may still want to hide their daughters and deny them from being initiated. This has far reaching future repercussions for the child. Community opinion leader 'B' told me a personal story to reinforce the fact that both school and community are working together over time rather than for one time or temporal experience to ensure that

community cultures such as the *dipo* culture is seen as collective and shared experience of all Krobo indigenes:

> *My daughter who was born and grew up in the Krobo community did not go through the dipo rite because of my role as a leader in the Pentecostal church. Years after completing her education in Canada, she returned home and contested for a seat as a member of parliament in the Manya Krobo constituency. Her application did not win the support of community elder and citizens of the constituency because she failed to go through the rite. In the end we had to quickly see to the organisation of this rite before she could apply the next four years to contest as a parliamentarian in the Krobo Constituency.*

All the girls were escorted to the initiation grounds by either their mother or grandmother as seen from personal stories of the celebrants (see appendix B, pupils A, B, C, D, E & F). This is an indication that Krobo women are at the forefront of the whole initiation process and also making good investment of their time and resources in this communal activity. Steegstra (2004, p. 11) has indicated that the whole *dipo* rites occasion should be considered as an important

community event or stage in the larger social processes and cycles, fundamental to the life of both individual and his whole cultural community.

Stripped to its essence, the goal of the *dipo* rites and the rituals involved in the whole ceremonial process are explicated by pupils interviewed. For example, Dede Korle, also pupil 'C', talks about the reasons for her enrolment and draws on its implication for a growing up girl in the Manya Krobo paramountcy. Dede Korle indicated:

> *My grandmum told me you cannot marry when you have not gone through the dipo. I will be sacked from the community when I become pregnant without having gone through the rites. I have heard girls have been sacked from the community because they were pregnant before the initiation.*

To her, the grandmother's advice is considered much more than merely the celebration of a girl's first menstruation known as puberty rites which is the corresponding rites of the neighbouring Akans and the Guans of Ghana (Huber, 1993, p. 188). According to Dede Korle's Granny, she cannot marry before the initiation and equally risks being expelled from the paramountcy when conception happens before the initiation. This advice by Dede Korle's granny finds substantiation in Huber (1993, p. 189) that the ceremony offers the girls the

closeness, dedication, protection and blessing from the deities during her pre-nuptial period and endorses her as full Krobo woman ready for marriage.

From within the desire to understand the whole *dipo* package and its relevance, the voices of these initiates and the utterances made to them by their grannies and mothers are worth analysing. We sense the continuing celebration of the *dipo* rites as a pride to the families to have their daughters initiated. This pride is registered at every stage of the ceremony including preparation, performances and presentation of gifts that together reminds the family of their own communal tribal tradition. Jennifer Korle's, also pupil 'D's remark explicates it all:

> *All my sisters have done apart from me. I was happy to do it too….all my friends have done the dipo….they now call me Krobo woman.*

Again, embedded in many of the statements from initiates are the links about the *dipo* rites, experiences and cultural values they transmit. It is important that we acknowledge the relevance of the educational and cultural experiences that accompany the *dipo* rite itself. Pupils' comments on the benefits acquired indicated that there are good cultural values to be learnt from the rituals packaged in the *dipo*. We find support for cultural value transmission in teachers' reports. Pupil 'A' said '*we were taught how to prepare a local dish and given some to eat*'. Pupil 'D' said '*we were taught some traditional dances on the last day'*. Skills such as sharing, dancing, managements and many others are inculcated in

the initiates through various activities during the rites (see appendix 'B', pupil 'D'). While these cultural values are good for a growing up girl in the Krobo paramountcy, Steegstra (2004, p. 222) thinks Krobo society sees these values as preconditions for a successful marriage and high quality adult life.

Even though the aforementioned skills including other values such as respect, morals, loyalty among others are integrated in the school curriculum today the traditional cultural practice and training arguably comes as a supplement package. If the need arises for integration of these values into the school curriculum, Sefa-Dei (2004, p. 263) suggests with caution, the need '…to recognise that different knowledges can co-exist and that different knowlegdes can complement each other yet be in conflict at the same time'. These conflicts according to Sefa-Dei (2004, p. 246) can be avoided with a good understanding that the past/ traditional and modern are not as he says 'frozen in time and space'. The need for working towards a synthesis of knowledge may be paramount in considering that the past continues to influence the present and the past-continuity of traditional values and norms shape the present.

But from whatever perspective pupils speak about the ceremonial process and relevance of the *dipo* cultural rites, their observation, remarks and conclusions, we need to be very circumspect on issues that emerged. We need to be mindful of the fact that 'learning proceeds from knowing the self, history and culture' (Sefa-Dei, 2004, p. 117) and that local learning is vital for the learning process to be

effective (Sefa-Dei, 2004). On the basis of this and knowing well that community values affects our actions, words, decisions and the general learning process in addition to the sentiments expressed by Shinn (1972, p. 41) that 'no custom is odd to the people who practice it', a search for integration and a more inclusive body of knowledge in school will have to integrate and tap the diverse local cultural resource knowledge of the Krobo people for classroom instruction and pedagogy of the girl child (Sefa-Dei, 2004).

I had insight into how *dipo* initiates valued peer group associations while on observation in the school. Interestingly this reflected in the remarks of some of the interviewees. For instance pupil 'B' indicated how Akwele became her friend after the initiation (see appendix 'B'). Within the school compound and especially during interval and break times, students, mostly initiates, oriented to themselves. They saw each other as colleagues with sufficient skills and experience with which to engage each other. These were friendship formed during *dipo* rites and transferred to the school community and most often after school life. In the classroom initiates preferred to sit and talk with peer members and to discuss issues of common concern. I saw social exchange at work in these groups (see appendix 'B', pupil 'F'). New returnees are easily identified by their hair cut which was quite unusual for adolescent girls to trim their hairs to the skin. I was constantly on the look out for these signs and watched their socialisation process in the school.

6.3 Some Eurocentric Bias

Biases in the findings saw to explore Eurocentric sentiments that have crept into African knowledge, culture and education. The general feeling as explicated in the quote below by one informant was that past research mostly conducted by Euro-Americans viewed African education with Eurocentric eyes and equally failed to de-limit geo-cultural boundaries hence their ideas and findings can not be applied to solving the problems of Africans (Dimmock, 2002, p. 29). The quotation was seen in the light of the fact that the informant is an old teacher and a leader who understands the indigenous culture, its values, beliefs and norms and how it relates to general African education. Opinion leader 'A' remarked at the introductory stage of the interview that:

> *I hope you are not one of those researchers whose works are crept with a lot of biases about the culture of the Manya Krobos. I am not very happy with the books on the market these days. I will recommend to you the book by Hugo Huber (1993) on the 'the Krobos: Traditional, social and religious life of a West African people which in my opinion, give a true ethnographic account of the Krobos.*

Many valuable lessons were learnt during the interview period. For example, one of the interviewees' welcome remarks came as a caution to me and those who are

constantly looking for ways to write ill about the Krobo culture. As a former high school teacher, a traditionalist and like many other scholars today, the community leader was very critical about what Zeleza, (2007, p. 6) refers to as 'Eurocentric tradition' which is increasingly attracting a vindicationist approach in today's research. The interviewee was happy to recommend Huber (1993) as he sees vindicatory. Zeleza (2007) recalls the period from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries when the new Eurocentric historiographical traditions emerged. Zeleza (2007) explains that many of the early European writers who were visitors to the coast of Africa even though did not set off to produce historical works as such; their works were later used to produce historical sources. European travel literature which grew in the late eighteenth century and through out the nineteenth century incorporated loads of biased historical accounts. For example, many of the Portuguese writings were based on unreliable sources, or were interpreted out of context because renaissance historiography put greater emphasis on telling a story well in a most attractive way or being critical in ones approach to sources of information. We cannot deny the fact that 'Africa was increasingly portrayed as primitive' (Zeleza, 2007, p. 7). Past research has equally revealed how America might be misinformed about African civilisation and achievements. This has been exhibited in published international media report over the years. Milhouse, Asante and Nwosu, (2001, p. 34) trace this problem to the colonial era when the United States declared what is referred to as a 'hands off' and 'isolationist' policy towards Africa in view of factors that included human rights abuses in parts of

Africa. Terms like poverty, disease, flawed development and social disorder were used to and are being used to describe Africa.

6.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has used an empirical account of the *dipo* religious culture and schooling in Krobo paramountcy to discuss the patterns of connection between culture and schooling in Ghana in particular and Africa. The Eurocentric element in previous research on African culture and education was highlighted. True to pointing out these biases in past publication on African religious culture and education, there is the feeling that any discussion of the subject of African culture and schooling must begin with an understanding of the context in which they were framed, and this in my view and as indicated by Sefa-Dei (2004, p. 105) can be wholly achieved by listening to the actual voices of Africans themselves. It is my hope that the discussion will contribute to an appreciation of the complexity and dynamics of culture and schooling as an important part of African studies.

Chapter 7

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter offers some concluding remarks and makes some recommendations. It summarises the whole project by highlighting the main issues raised and discussed. It also steps back from the analyses to reflect on how they have contributed to answering the research questions, and equally reviews the implications of my findings in terms of future research and practice that have consequences for the schooling experiences of the initiates and their educational community in the Manya Krobo paramountcy in particular and Ghana in general.

7.2 Emerging issues

The desire to embark on this project came as a result of many years of reflection on the attitude of Europeans to African traditional cultural values and its relationship with formal education. But it was my interest in wider cultural, educational and intellectual life of Ghanaians that motivated me to undertake a study of the *dipo* rites and how it affects schooling in the Manya Krobo paramountcy of Ghana.

Asante's (1990) design was used to help in discovering and illustrating how African centred explanations help to enhance our understanding of African cultural and schooling issues. The design is also meant to as Taylor and Nwosu (2001, p. 309) put 'enable future researchers explore the cultural warrants embodied in the persuasive discourse patterns of Africans'.

In this study, I addressed some questions on culture and schooling in the Manya Krobo paramountcy in Ghana. These are virtually untapped questions in the historical and educational pursuit of the Krobos which are very significant in the understanding of the schooling and cultural experiences of the adolescent girl in the paramountcy. I relied heavily methodologically on Asante (1990) and theoretically on the works of Huber (1993), Sefa Dei (2004), Steegstra (2004), Coe (2005) and others who have shown that questions of ethnicity, culture, gender, socio-economic status among others are significant in looking at the structures for teaching, learning and the administration of education in Ghana. I used Asante's (1990) Afrocentric design to help in the discovery and illustration

of how African centred explanation help to enhance our understanding of African cultural and schooling issues in the Manya Krobo paramountcy in eastern region of Ghana and how this understanding will assist future researchers to explore the 'rich stew of ideas' (Howe, 1998, p. 63) in African education. The general essence of the argument is that the female adolescent Krobo girl is moulded in the image of older generation by transmitting cultural heritage (*dipo* rites) and by reinforcing traditional behaviour which as a consequence orient the child towards the standard of community membership without due consideration of her educational outcome.

I have organised the project into seven distinct chapters, which shed light on different themes, aspects, methodological design and Eurocentric difficulties including girls' experiences of culture and schooling in the Manya Krobo paramountcy in particular and in Ghana in general with emphasis on the *dipo* cultural rite. I have approached culture and schooling in Ghana with great excitement and apprehension indicating the complexity of their relationship. I also emphasised how the qualitative design 'Africalogical critical ethnographic instrumental case study' which was adopted from Shockley (2003) and coined by Asante (1990), Quantz (1992) and Stake (2000) has sought liberation for African studies and Africans on several different levels including historical, social, epistemological and methodological. It takes seriously the strong need to use qualitative methodologies to address issues of culture and schooling in Africa. The 'Africalogical critical ethnographic instrumental case study' design puts

African ideals, norms and values at the centre of African studies inquiry by recognising its uniqueness, and challenges Eurocentric theories that have taken precedence over African history. I identified a particular statement in past African history that is a cause for concern in terms of its biased and unjustified historical interpretations. I have added a voice to the scholars and academics who stand in for the advancement of African knowledge by rejecting the idea that Africans are primitive, uncivilised and ignorant.

The project is an object lesson for the struggle to place culture and schooling in the Manya Krobo paramountcy of Ghana and Africa in general in a relational perspective by recognising the importance of culture to schooling and vice-versa. We need to learn lessons from Sefa-Dei's (2006) assertion that culture and schooling can co-exist and complement each other yet be in conflict at the same time. According to Sefa-Dei, definitions of boundaries are not fixed, but imagined and must be earnestly contested for. Teachers and educational leaders must respect these culture and the accompanying experiences children bring from these cultures in the community into the school and capitalise on that to promote formal learning. Thompson (1981, p. 271) succinctly argues that, we should use the local environment as a laboratory to effectualise formal learning in the communities in which the schools are situated. This is the idea of 'cultural bridge building' that runs through the project of Thomas (2000). There is no doubt in my mind that bridges needs to be built between culture, the school and the community in which the two elements function.

The project will help teachers improve their practice by bringing to bear this information to use as a practical source that will assist them to understand better the cultural and educational experiences of the *dipo* girl and to help her to integrate well in the school community on her return to school. While my focus was specifically directed to teachers who are in direct control of these young girls, it is hoped that policy makers will also benefit from information in the project as well as those possibly non-governmental organisations in and out of Africa directly or indirectly engaged in work in overseas educational development projects. Together with other contemporary African scholars who are advancing in scholarship in African system of thought rooted in African studies, this will have implications for African studies across the world.

Parts of the project strongly argue for sensitisation of cross-cultural and trans-cultural research in view of the new global ideological and intellectual currents and the need to reject the notion of intellectual monopoly: that there is only one way of conducting research and acquiring knowledge. There are few cross-cultural studies directly based on typical African education. We however, have many cross-cultural and trans-cultural studies in the field of African American studies as referred to earlier, because of the slave trade issue in past American history from which it is quite possible to ascertain some informative and interesting cross-cultural applications for African cultural experiences and its relationship to schooling in Africa. We need to admit without question that cross-

cultural research potentially exposes the researcher to different kinds of culture and that future policy should guard against the idea of implementing policies in other geographical environments without due consideration of cultural difference. I vouched for these cultural differences from my experience as a foreign student in a foreign university and as a researcher who carries my culture round with me.

The study talks about school community connectedness that in my view must be negotiated among the parties involved in the schooling and education of the child so as to bring positive change in the care and training of the school child. Thus the contributions and the potential impacts of these social agencies in the community of the child must be duly recognised and harnessed to the advantage of all the parties involved in the child's education. In support of the relevance of this connectedness, I strongly attach myself to the views of Kirst and Kelly (1995) that this invitation for participation is an attempt to address the problems of the child in a coherent, comprehensive, and intensive manner so that the child can focus on obtaining a good education and enjoy a successful adult life.

To summarise the major findings, the adolescent initiates, transfer peer group attachments into the school community from friendships formed during the *dipo* rites. More of their socialisation process takes place in school where peer groups have a key role in this process. Teachers are also significant partners in the socialisation process and ought to be used to support the integration process of the adolescent girl and to equally support her learning experience. Parents are seen as

effective cultural players in the Manya Krobo paramountcy whom as part of their function, is to keep watch over culture, to carry and to reinforce it values in their local community. They are equally so poised to enrol their female daughters in the *dipo* rites with less consideration of future financial commitment to the child's classroom education. They are ready to spend all earnings from their petty trade and subsistence farming on these annually organised rites as against the formal education of the child. How engulfed Manya Krobos are in relation to the *dipo* rite is clearly seen in the fact that Christian adherents who even preach and discourage fellow community members from enrolling in the annual *dipo* rites in themselves hide and enrol their daughters in nearby Krobo communities. This is a clear evidence of what culture means to the general Krobo community. Krobos who have migrated to urban centres in search of greener pastures or by virtue of their jobs or relatives visit home annually to enrol their daughters in the *dipo* rite.

Last but not the least, a lot of changes are being brought to bear on the *dipo* rites. The rites which used to be organised for months are now being reduced to weeks and in some communities, in days. It is now a group activity organised annually in various Krobo communities in various shrines and oracles in the Krobo paramountcy. It is quite contentious to indicate that the *dipo* rite is becoming less and less attractive as chiefs and traditional leaders are putting all the strategies in place to perpetuate the rite. Linked closely in support of this contention is the point that '….. it would be a mistake to join the chorus of those who claim that the traditional practice of the *dipo* is on the wane (Steegstra, 2004, p. 4).

Educational lessons which used to be taught during the rites are now being taken over by the schools. But one wonders if the schools are giving the exact tuitions that the community leaders would want to give the initiates.

One approach to addressing this failure in African education research on schooling and culture is the need to bring more African scholars into the discussion to reflect on the complementary form of schooling and culture, structured within the twenty-first century learning system to the extent that mobility between the two (culture and schooling) would be possible. Importantly, this means that whilst a diversity of provision should be created, bridges should be built between them over which individuals will pass.

Ghana needs culture-sensitive teachers trained and instructed in the values of local cultures to handle these children in their schools with their learning and integration process. While we welcome efforts being made by the government and bodies to enunciate traditional cultures, part of the teacher training process should equip teachers to better understand their culture and other cultures; they should also take it upon themselves to improve their knowledge so as to make the teaching and learning not only effective but relevant to the children and the community they function. If teachers are posted to places with cultures different from that of their birth places, as part of their continuous professional development, unfamiliar cultures should be properly introduced to them to help with their integration.

We all have a role to play in the process of cultural reforms of the Krobo community. Aspects of the *dipo* rites like the blood bath where animals are slaughtered and their blood used in bathing the initiates as part of their purification process in my view is something that needs an urgent review. What is clear to me is that in being informed by the wisdom in using the animal for a meal to celebrate the occasion of the young Krobo girl who has kept herself pure over the years and the honour she brings to the family for that sanctity, I do not see a sense in exposing the adolescent breast publicly in today's Ghana (see appendix, parent 'D')**.** The effectiveness of such reforms depends on several mediating factors including community education which I think will come in a gradual process. I do not deny the fact that reforms are coming to bear on the *dipo* rite but still have a long way to go.

7.3 Future Research and Implications

This study is raising interesting and disturbing issues about the cultural and schooling experiences of the Krobo locals. We need more work to look into cultural and schooling issues in other parts of Ghana and in Africa as a whole. What other factors apart from the initiation rites bring girls together in the school? How are peer group formed as a result of initiation rites? What ethical issues militate against research in cultural studies? Some of these questions could guide the direction of future research in the Manya Krobo paramountcy. What we need is an open mind, unbiased listening ears and a more creative approach to look into

the life stories of the informants. If I did the project again, I would pursue the life story approach which emerged in the interviews with ex-celebrants, parents and teachers in the schools and community more diligently and confidently. As I was striving to capture the perception of informants, people told stories of their past which was not relevant for this project. While this was not the instrument adopted, perhaps this would have led to different forms of writing and reporting in the final thesis; it has certainly led me to this valid alternative approach which was not considered prior to the fieldwork and equally to a strong commitment to avoid unquestioning acceptance to traditional and conventional academic forms of writing in my future writing and to seek to identify hierarchical distinction between researcher and researched in my future academic research.

The need for a deeper understanding of the relationship between culture and schooling in the Manya Krobo paramountcy requires new methodology that will combine life graphs and person-centred ethnography to explore in details, history, aspirations, concerns and needs of the people. This, I concluded on the premise that socialisation is a life long process and as Shinn (1972, p. 332) rightly puts, learning in a way requires an examination of the students' past, especially his or her reinforcement history in family and classroom experiences. While the life graph is meant to trace the educational and cultural experiences of the individual by capturing happenings at each stage of the informant's life, the person-centred ethnography focuses on the individual and how his psychology and subjective experience both shape, and is shaped by, social and cultural process (Hollan,

2001). Together, this is bound to heighten our understanding of the history, aspiration, concerns and needs of the Krobos which is vital to addressing cultural and schooling issues and equally formulating policy for gender and educational reforms.

7.4 Limitations, Relevance and Contribution

This is a relevant study because it represents an attempt to give listening ears and present the voices of young girls who have over the years been engaged in customs like the *dipo* rites, and suggest how pragmatic efforts can be made by their teachers and school authorities to integrate them well in their school when they return to school after their participation so they do not miss out among their colleagues. It points out those components of the *dipo* rites which the author feels are outmoded and needs review. I share the sentiment of Steegstra (2004) that a historical overview would avoid the pitfall of approaching the notion of culture as fixed and bounded. At the same time, it is evident that teachers who are the instructors of these young girls should be made aware of changing trend and the sensitivity of cultural issues in the community they function so they do not instigate unnecessary tension. In many ways, this study echoes the findings and preoccupations evident in Stephen's (2000) article. I see the article as part of the arduous task of addressing the issue of access and gender in schooling within a cultural framework. Together, we offer clues that indicate that much more needs to be done in framing both problems and solutions within a structured and holistic

framework that takes account of the domains of the community, family and the school including their values, norms, ideals and morals.

Some portions of this study perhaps may not as well satisfy all African educationists, who may ague that bonding from friendships of adolescents girls as discussed under cultural impact of peer grouping do happen at that stage for various reasons not only for cultural ties but for many other different reason.

APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule for Ritual Celebrants

1.Describe your experience?

2.How important was it to go through this rite?

3.Were you given the option not to take part?

4.Has anything about you changed after going through the rites?

5.Do you attend school and where?

6.How long have you stayed home to go through this rite?

7.Are your teachers aware of your participation in this rite?

8.What are the benefit of going through this rite?

Interview Schedule for Parents

1.Why do you allow your daughter to go through this rite?

2. How much cost is involved in the organisation of this rite?

3.Do you think the celebration of the rite should continue in view of changing times?

4. Did you give your daughter the option not to take part?

5. What don't you like about this rite?

6. What health implications are there for her?

7. Has the rite changed in any way in comparison to the past?

Interview Schedule for Teachers

1. Are you in support of the the celebration of puberty rite nowadays?

2. Do you allow your students to withdraw from school to go through this rite?

3. What differences have you seen?

4. Do celebrants return to school after going though this rite?

5. How do celebrants cope when they return to school after the rite?

6. What is your impression about the celebration of the rite in today's ghana?

Interview Schedule for Community Opinion Leaders

1. What is your view about the celebration of this rite?

2. Is it important for parents to allow their children to go through this rite?

3. Has the rite changed in anyway?

4. Do you care about the impact of the rite on the schooling of the child?

5. What can be done to reduce the adverse impact of the rite on the child's education?

6. Is this rite now outdated?

7. What is the primary benefit of going through this rite?

8. By stopping this rite, would Ghana's international and social reputation be damaged or enhanced?

APPENDIX B

- ***Interview of opinion leader A (Chief linguist)***

Q: What is your view about the celebration of this rite?

A: My personal view is, the rite, you see, that initiates growing up girls and make them civic and acceptable in the Krobo community. The reason it makes them acceptable is behind the purpose of it. First, human nature is sometimes depraved a little. The young boys have no patience to wait and grow and the young girls also rush into immoral depravity and this thing was established years ago.

Q: About how many years?

A: The *dipo* has been on the Kroboland, years before we came down in 1892 that was established about 3 to 4 hundred years ago or probably was established 4 to 5 hundred years ago. It a long time but where it began I do not really know, nobody can actually tell. Whether we brought it through migration or we arrived here

before they began it, i don't really know. But it is established purposefully for the up coming girl to grow up and feel matured before marriage. In the early years we had not known western education, so it was the community leader who taught us the existence of God, how to preserve our bodies from sin and undesirables. The girls were giving a type of hostel training, where they were housed for over a year and schooled in home keeping, baby care, care for the husband, responsibilities of the woman in the home. They were also taught poetry (singing and dancing) and since we were agricultural people, they were also taught farming. These were the purpose of the hostel .Today things are slightly different. My mother was twenty before she went for the hostel training. Girls as young as fifteen and ten are going out with boys. Christianity has started frowning on these things that we cherished in the past. But there is one question that I had always asked the Christians, don't children of Christian parentage go astray before they finish school. Cultural certificate were awarded you after going through the *dipo*. The certificate was the marking of the wrist, around the waist and many parts of the body. If you met any lady in London or Paris or Germany and in attempting to shake hands you saw marks on the body don't bother to ask where she came from. She is definitely a Krobo. So the whole purpose of the *dipo* was to prepare the young girl for life. If you should ask me what is my view? I think it is a God given culture and I'm proud to be a Krobo. Because of the changing time, there might need a few modifications but as for the rite itself we still need it.

Q: All my questions seem answered in the introduction but by stopping this rite, would Ghana's international and social reputation be damaged or enhanced?

A: Why stop it at all? I won't cherish the stopping it. Education as I said has taken over a lot of the basic skill training, what was being taught at the hostel has been taken over by the schools like the life skill, home economics.

Q: Do you think education has really taken over because the traditional home training seems to be different.

A: Culture identifies any group, so if the classroom takes over what we use to practice there is nothing left for us. You might ague that Christianity is culture too. Is the church the only place that God listens? If at home we teach these young ones to be respectable to the elder, learn to cook so that they grow well. Thus is not tally with Gods own command? So I think, if the *dipo* is taken away or attempted to stop, they would be tempering too much with culture.

Q: Do you care about the impact on the child today?

A: You have come back from the University of Strathclyde wanting to know about the culture of the people. The western world has their own culture to which they have not thrown away. They also have their past which they have not thrown away. I think we need to blend the two.

Q: What can be done to reduce the adverse impact of the *dipo* on the child's education if there is any?

A: I am glad you added if there is any. If children are taught the need to brush their teeth in the morning, whether they use brush and paste or use chewing stick they are doing the same thing. So culture is equally important as western education is important. They eventually do the same thing.

Q: Thanks, Okyeame for your time. I do not know if there is something you want to add. I would rather want you to mention your name and your position in the paramountcy.

A: My name is Boo-Atey A and because I'm the Okyeame, they call me Okyeame Boo-Atey A. Okyeame means linguist.

- ***Interview of opinion leader B (Queen mother)***

Q: What is your view about the celebration of this rite?

A: Mark, I will tell you a story to answer the questions you have for me today. My daughter who was born and grew up in the Krobo community did not go through the *dipo* rite because of my role as a leader in the Pentecostal church. Years after completing her education in Canada, she returned home and contested for a seat as a member of parliament in the Manya Krobo constituency. Her application did not win the support of community elders and citizens of the constituency because she failed to go though the rites. In the end we had to quickly see to the organisation of this rite before she could apply the next four years to contest. Hopes this answer all the questions you have for me about the *dipo* rite this morning.

A: Indeed, it answers all. Thanks for letting me know the importance of this rite to the people of krobo, but probably my last question.

Q: Do you care about the impact on the child today?

A: What impact? It is very good for them, I mean the *dipo*.

Q: Has the rite changed in anyway?

A: Some shrines organise theirs during school vacations which I think does not make any difference.

Thanks

- ***Teacher A***

Q: What is your name?

A: Mensah Henry Amo A.

Q: Are you in support of the *dipo* celebration?

A: I should be in support but the way its being organised today puts me off and therefore do not support it.

Q: Why?

A: The actual impact is not being felt today. It used to recognise girls in maturity but today it's all ages including a year old.

Q: Why so early?

A: I actually don't know and I think it is not right and not in conformity with the purpose of the rite.

Q: Would you allow your kids to leave school and go through the rites?

A: Why not, if done in the right way. The initiation used to be three months or more where series of learning is experienced by the child. The limited time today offer no learning experiences and therefore feel it must be stopped.

Q: Do you think the educational experiences of the initiation are being given by the school?

A: Yes, schools are meant for book knowledge and culture for traditional knowledge. But I do not see why the child should not lose from her regular absence from school if he or she stays without permission.

Q: Do you have sisters who have gone through the rite?

A: Yes, even my mother.

Q: Any changes you saw in them?

A: No indication and have not seen them in any promiscuous act.

Q: What your general impression about the rites?

A: Based on the developments, I think it must be stopped. It is now a fund raising event and therefore has outlived it usefulness.

- ***Teacher B***

Q: What is your name?

A: Samuel Akwetey B.

Q: How long have you been teaching in the school?

A: Nine years.

Q: Are you a native?

A: Yes.

Q: Are you in support of the *dipo* rites?

A: I use to support but not now

Q: Why

A: It has outlived it usefulness. You see it started as a rite ushering young women into adulthood but people as young as one year are now being enrolled.

Q: Why

A: People are hurrying their children into adulthood for fear of pregnancy before the initiation.

Q: Do you allow your pupils to leave school for the initiation?

A: No, I will not allow but children will deliberately leave school for the initiation. Be aware that the school is a community school.

Q: Do you observe and changes as a teacher in your pupil when they return after the initiation?

A: Oh yes, morally they have been introduced to something at too tender an age which they shouldn't have done. This means they now have the ticket to marry. This I thing is wrong.

Q: Do they come back after the initiation?

A: Some do and some don't.

Q: How do celebrants cope when they return to school after the rites?

A: They have to work hard to catch up with lessons and the weaker ones are not able to cope.

Q: Your general impression about the rites?

A: I think it should be stopped. My children don't do it.

- ***Teacher C***

Q: Whats your name?

A: Samuel Tetteh C.

Q: For how long have you taught in the school?

A: Less than a year because I just returned from further studies.

Q: Are you a native of this community?

A: Yes

Q: What is your impression about the *dipo* rites?

A: Well, I'm a parent, and my first daughter I did the *dipo* for her but the subsequent ones I'm still thinking about it. The main problem is that I still live in a family house and there is always pressure from the elderly to put your children into the *dipo*. I will not do it if I were to be living in my own home. In the family home children who have not done the *dipo* are rejected and think they are impure.

Q: Would you allow your pupil to leave school and part take in the *dipo* rites?

A: Yes, I do not want others to look mean on children who have not done it in my class but when she misses internal exams I give her zero.

Q: Shaving, please, do they use the same blade to shave all the girls?

A: Formerly, they were using knife but due to education you go to the shrine with your own blade for shaving and scarification.

Q: Do you have the experience where children leave school for the *dipo* and never return to school?

A: I have heard it but not seen it.

Q: What is your impression about the rite in Ghana today?

A: You see children of today feel shy exposing their breast today and therefore do not feel fine going through it

Q: Should it be continued or discontinued

A: I feel some of the things should be discontinued but the culture should stay. Especially tying intestines around the neck of celebrants for hygienic reasons

Q: Do you go to church?

A: Yes, my church doesn't permit it but people sneak to partake in nearby communities around Manya Krobo

Very grateful

- ***Teacher D***

Q: What is your name?

A: Samuel Tei D.

Q: Are you in support of the the celebration of puberty rite nowadays?

A: Somehow

Q: Please, explain?

A: It our culture which should not be thrown out into the bin.To some extent children will want to stay till initiated before they start their sexual life

Q: Do you allow your students to withdraw from school to go through this rite?

A: They will not seek permission to stay out of school. I will allow with the consent of parents.

Q: What differences have you seen?

A: It affect their learning as they miss classes. They also talk about adult issues which I think is too early an age to discuss.

Q: Do celebrants return to school after going though this rite?

A: They do return

Q: How do celebrants cope when they return to school after the rite?

A: I give them zero for assessment when they are absent from school without permission. It's a big problem. Most of them copy notes from friends.

Q: What is your impression about the celebration of the rite in today's ghana?

A: When things are done in the right way, why not. My children don't do it. I have stopped them.

- ***Teacher E***

Q:What is your name

A: Kwame Oduro E.

Q:Are you in support of the the celebration of puberty rite nowadays?

A: Not at all. But I had to fund my last daughter's initiation because my daughter was regarded as impure and therefore isolated from peer group activities in the same household so I was compelled by circumstances of her isolation to borrow money and get her into the initiation the following year. Also, be aware some members of the Christian community who are against their daughter's enrolment sneak to the nearby communities to enrol their daughters because they didn't want their pastors to see. This is the problem we have in the paramountcy today.

Q: Do you allow your students to withdraw from school to go through this rite?

A: Mark, they will not ask you for permission.

Q: What differences have you seen?

A: They come with a lot of knowledge about the culture when they are initiated. They get a lots of gift after the celebration. So they are happy to enrol

Q: Do celebrants return to school after going though this rite?

A: Yes, those from good home

Q: How do celebrants cope when they return to school after the rite?

A: It is their own business. They have to find out what they have lost from their absence and make attempts to catch up

Q: What is your impression about the celebration of the rite in today's ghana

A: It potrays the rich culture of the Krobos. If our parents have thrown the culture away we wouldn't have seen the culture today. But I don't support the culture today because children are abusing it. They go into sex after the initiation. Even the boys are happy that their girls have done the rites because they can engaged them in sex and marriage.

- ***Teacher F***

Q: What is your name?

A: Hmm! I'm George Tuwor F.

Q: Are you in support of the the celebration of puberty rite nowadays?

A: In a way, yes.

Q: Do you allow your students to withdraw from school to go through this rite?

A: Yes, if am in authority I will allow them

Q: What differences have you seen?

A: They learn about different things during initiation Examples include caring for husband, cooking, self hygiene etc

Q: Do celebrants return to school after going though this rite?

A: They come back.

Q: How do celebrants cope when they return to school after the rite?

A: They fall on their colleagues to copy notes.

Q: What is your impression about the celebration of the rite in today's Ghana?

A: It is our frame of reference and should be continued but must be done properly. Thanks

- ***Pupil A***

Q: What did you say is your name?

A: I'm Tetteh NinaVida Abedeku A, in form three.

Q: Have you gone through the *dipo* rite?

A: Yes, sir.

Q: Please, describe your experience?

A: On the Friday morning my parents sent me to the *dipo* woman, the fetish priest. She was grinding something on a stone and gave me some to drink. It is called *ma* which I drank it and then something was tied on my neck. My cloth was tied around my waist exposing my breast and stomach. My mother paid my admission fees and sent me to the shrine on that day. I was shaved and covered with a traditional cloth which my mother bought for me. I was one of about forty girls who were initiated at that shrine. We were taught how to prepare a local dish and given some to eat. We were also sent to the river side and bathed. We also sat on the *dipo* stone. Back at home the following day, I was dressed in beads and paraded through the town, shaking hands. I got a lot of gifts from friends and

family. My mother told me I don't have to go through the *dipo* again for the rest of my life. I felt okay after the initiation,

Q: How many people were involved in the ceremony?

A: About forty girls.

Q: Are they all school girls?

A: No, some of them were not school girls.

Q: Were you happy to have gone through the rites?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: Why?

A: I didn't want to be sacked from the town and any bad things to happen to me.

Q: How long were you away from school?

A: One week during school vacation.

Q: What were the things taught you during the week?

A: Each day marked different activities, first day we were taught some daily routines as growing girls and then the second day we visited the sacred stone at the outskirt of the town which we sat on with the pouring of libation. We came home afterwards. The next day we were decorated and outdoored. We were also made to thank the *dipo* fetish priest. The next day, we went round the town thanking the public and registering our participation of the rites. Some gave as presents.

Q: Did you tell your teachers before going away?

A: No, because it was vacation.

Q: Has anything about you changed after going through the rites?

A: My hair was down, I had new ear ring and made new friends - Naa is now my bosom friend after the rites. But what touches me most is that my mother couldn't afford to pay for my early morning class. She said she had no money.

Q: Would you want your kids to go through the same rite?

A: My pastor says it is not good, so I have to think about it.

Q: Is it for girls alone?

A: Boys can only do it with their twin counterparts who are girls.

Thanks, Nina

- ***Pupil B***

Q: What is your name and Class?

A: Tetteh Noami B, in form one.

Q: Describe your experience?

A: On Friday my mother took me to the place of *dipo* where I was undressed and something tied around my waist. My face was painted with a substance black like the chacoal. Saturday they took us to the river side to be bathed. On Sunday they we did the stoning ceremony where we were supported to sit on a stone three times after which we are carried to the house. We were decorated on monday and taught some traditional dances and how to cook some traditional meals. I was fortunate I wasn't tatooed but had a blood bath. We were about two hundred girls who were all initiated.

Q: How important was it to go through this rite?

A: All my classmates have done, so I wanted to do it as well. My friends will not play with me if am not initiated.

Q: Were you given the option not to take part?

A: No, my mum said I needed to do it.

Q: Has anything about you changed after going through the rites?

A: Yes, you cannot take a boyfriend when you have not done the rites. My mum said am free to take one. Also I knew Akwele in school but became friends after the initiation.

Q: Do you attend school and where?

A: Yes, in this school.

Q: How long have you stayed home to go through this rite?

A: Two weeks

Q: Are your teachers aware of your participation in this rite?

A: No, I didn't tell them.

Q: What are the benefit of going through this rite?

A: My mum calls me a krobo woman which she use not to.

Thanks

- ***Pupil C***

Q: What is your name and class?

A: Dede Korle C., I'm in form one

Q: Describe your experience?

A: Sir, I was dressed in traditional cloth and beads and herbs tied around by waist and neck. We were told not to buy food or eat outside during the ceremony.We were shaves to the skin both our hair and pubic place. We stayed with the fetish the whole day being taught different things in the traditional way. We went home and came back to the shrine the following morning. We were fed the traditonal food in the morning and sent to the river side carrying calabash on our heads containing leaves and water. The priestess tied big red calico around each others waist. We didn't wear any underwear. We walked home after series of rituals at the river side. At home a goat was slaughted and we were washed with the blood. We wore a special hat to visit the sacred stool the next day with a leaf placed on our tongue. We were not supposed to look back when visiting the stool. The occasion ended going through the whole town thanking the community and receiving gifts. We were dressed in expensive clothes.

Q: How important was it to go through this rite?

A: My grandmum told me I can marry when I finish school and I want to be part of my friends in school.

Q: Were you given the option not to take part?

A: Yes, but I decided to take part

Q: Has anything about you changed after going through the rites?

A: Yes, I have made few friends.

Q: Do you attend school and where?

A: Yes, I was in primary four when I did it- the primary school down the road.

Q: How long have you stayed home to go through this rite?

A: Two months but the rites was for five days

Q: Are your teachers aware of your participation in this rite?

A: No, I did not tell them.

Q: What are the benefit of going through this rite?

A: My grandmum told me you cannot marry when you have not gone through the dipo. I will be sacked from the community when I become pregnant without having gone through the rites. I have heared girls have been sacked from the community because they were pregnant before the initiation.

Thanks

- ***Pupil D***

Q: What is your name and class?

A: Jennifer Korle D., I'm seventeen years and in form two.

Q: Describe your experience?

A: My pants and dress were removed when my mum sent me to the shrine for the initiation on that day. I was ten years in primary class four then but had hairs around my pubic that was shaved. I was dressed in traditional cloths and sent home. I returned in the evening to the shrine to be taught how to dance. The next morning we went to the rive side to bath. On our return to the shrine we were taught how to cook traditional meals. We ate goat meat and maize. We were taught some traditional dances on the last day. At some point they put leaf in month which they said we shouldn't talk. We went to town to thank the community and to collect gifts on the last day. I was very happy.

Q: How important was it to go through this rite?

A: All my sisters have done apart from me. I was happy to do it too.

Q: Were you given the option not to take part?

A: No, my mum told me it was compulsory.

Q: Has anything about you changed after going through the rites?

A: Yes, all my friends have done the dipo. They now call me krobo woman

Q: Do you attend school and where?

A: Yes, Junior High School.

Q: How long have you stayed home to go through this rite?

A: Two weeks

Q: Are your teachers aware of your participation in this rite?

A: Yes, they told me to go

Q: What are the benefit of going through this rite?

A: I see some changes. I now wear gold ear ring but my friends wear the ordinary one. I also got some friends.

Thanks

- ***Pupil E***

Q: What is your name and class?

A: Tetteh Naah E in form three.

Q: Describe your experience?

A: They (fetish priestess and assistant) shaved all my hair around my body that day and dressed me in traditional dress. I was sent o the river side to be bathed by

the priestess. The next day they kill a goat and bathed us with the blood. They also sent us to the stool room and taught us how to keep ourselves clean and cook traditional meals. We were also taught a lot of things some of which I can't remember. I remember very well the traditional dance which we danced in the market place on the last day. I got lots of gifts.

Q: How important was it to go through this rite?

A: My mum told me I can't make babies without being initiated and I also want to look like my friends in school.

Q: Were you given the option not to take part?

A: No

Q: Has anything about you changed after going through the rites?

A: Got new friends and I can now marry. Dedu became my friend at school after the *dipo* because she was in my group and because am now an adult I can now travel to the city of Accra to hawk without supervision for money during vacation because my parent couldn't pay for my fees last term. Because am an adult I support my mother to look after my brothers and sister by selling oranges in the evenings at the road side.

Q: Do you attend school and where?

A: Yes, Junior High School down the street

Q: How long have you stayed home to go through this rite?

A: Seven days

Q: Are your teachers aware of your participation in this rite?

A: Yes, I told them.

Q: What are the benefit of going through this rite?

A: I am now a full krobo woman and I can marry.

Thanks, Naah.

- ***Pupil F***

Q: What is your name and class?

A: Kwamu Monica F, in form one

Q: Describe your experience?

A: I did the dipo when I was fourteen years in form one. On Friday morning, my mum sent me to the shrine where the ceremony was being organised. I was dresses in red calico and traditional beads. We were sent to the river side and bathed. I had been shaved earliear on and taught how to grind the millet. We are about fourty girls and we were all taught how to grind the millet and cook it. They cut the back of our wrist and waist with blade and wash us. We were told not to tell anybody what we have seen and gone through at the shrine.We were washed at the river side and sat on a big stone three times and returned to the shrine to be taught a lot of different things. Also taught how to dance and keep our bodies neat. We danced on the last day and had a lot of gifts.

Q: How important was it to go through this rite?

A: My mum and sisters all have done it.

Q: Were you given the option not to take part?

A: No, my mum took me to the shrine on that day.

Q: Has anything about you changed after going through the rites?

A: I looked different from all my friends.

Q: Do you attend school and where?

A: Yes, Junior High School

Q: How long have you stayed home to go through this rite?

A: Three weeks

Q: Are your teachers aware of your participation in this rite?

A: Yes, my mother sought permission for me.

Q: What are the benefit of going through this rite?

A: If I get pregnant now, I wouldn't be sacked from the community because I have done the rites. Also, all our hair was trimmed down to the skin and scarification marks left on our skin. In school we were easily identified with our hair and we became friends to share our experiences.

Thanks.

- ***Parent A***

Q: Why do you allow your daughter to go through this rite?

A: A requirement of the traditional area. All girls should be initiated and if I have gone through, why not enrol my girl to get a similar experience.

Q: How much cost is involved in the organisation of this rite?

A: 120 Ghana Cedi (GHC).

Q: Do you think the celebration of the rite should continue in view of changing times?

A: Yes, due to morals it inculcates in the children of Krobo

Q: Did you give your daughter the option not to take part?

A: No, it's a must, which she must go through.

Q: What don't you like about this rite?

A: Everything is good for the upbringing of the child

Q: What health implications are there for her?

A: Non identified

Q: Has the rite changed in any way in comparison to the past?

A: Yes, days for the rites are now limited**.**

Thanks

- ***Parent B***

Q: Why do you allow your daughter to go through this rite?

A: Beause it a tradition handed down by our ancestors for the proper grooming of young girls of krobo land for fulfilment life so we need it, you cannot be a Krobo woman without the initiation.

Q: How much cost is involved in the organisation of this rite?

A: 150 Ghana Cedi (GHC)

Q: Do you think the celebration of the rite should continue in view of changing times?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you give your daughter the option not to take part?

A: No.

Q: What don't you like about this rite?

A: Exposure of certain of the body.

Q: What health implications are there for her?

A: Non known.

Q: Has the rite changed in any way in comparison to the past?

A: Yes, since culture is dynamic, the rites has changed to suite the dynamic nature of todays world.

Thanks

- ***Parent C***

Q:Why do you allow your daughter to go through this rite?

A: A Tradition which must be continued by us and they also continue when they grow and pass it onto their children. I do not want my children to be ostracised by their mates in school, they have to be part of the school they attend.

Q: How much cost is involved in the organisation of this rite?

A: About 110 Ghana Cedi (GHC).

Q: Do you think the celebration of the rite should continue in view of changing times?

A: Yes, we all did it

Q: Did you give your daughter the option not to take part?

A: No, she had no option

Q: What don't you like about this rite?

A: All is fine. I like every aspect as it is part of our culture.

Q: What health implications are there for her?

A: Non

Q: Has the rite changed in any way in comparison to the past?

A: Yes, a lot. Example is the number of days are limited as compared the the past. The youths are now initiated in heavy groups at the same time during easter holidays

Thanks

- ***Parent D***

Q:Why do you allow your daughter to go through this rite?

A: I went through the initiation and would want my girls to go through. It is very prestigious to the family to initiate their young girls. It brings honour to us. I want my children to be part of the school they attend.

Q: How much cost is involved in the organisation of this rite?

A: 120 Ghana Cedis (GHC)

Q: Do you think the celebration of the rite should continue in view of changing times?

A: I am now christian and still considering it

Q: Did you give your daughter the option not to take part?

A: Yes, we discussed it at length. We all agreed on the need for her to be initiated.

Q: What don't you like about this rite?

A: Some rituals involved

Q: What health implications are there for her?

A:There are some herbal concoctions they drink which I think should be cancelled. The mashed yam is eaten after parading openly through the town.

Q: Has the rite changed in any way in comparison to the past?

A: Yes, days are now limited

Thanks

- ***Parent E***

Q:Why do you allow your daughter to go through this rite?

A: The whole family have done it and therefore felt she should also do it and become part of the community and school she attend.

Q: How much cost is involved in the organisation of this rite?

A: One month sales at the road side. That is about 130 Ghana Cedis (GHC)

Q: Do you think the celebration of the rite should continue in view of changing times?

A: Yes, because it is a tradition that involves all the community members and demonstrates our culture.

Q: Did you give your daughter the option not to take part?

A: No, we have to decide for her.

Q: What don't you like about this rite?

A: All is ok. It is a tradition we have kept over the years.

Q: What health implications are there for her?

A: I don't think there is any

Q: Has the rite changed in any way in comparison to the past?

A: Yes, young girls of two years are now being initiated.

Thanks

- ***Parent F***

Q:Why do you allow your daughter to go through this rite?

A: So she can pass it on to her children and feel part of her school as almost all her mates have done it.

Q: How much cost is involved in the organisation of this rite?

A: Not sure. Her dady paid all

Q: Do you think the celebration of the rite should continue in view of changing times?

A: Yes. If you don't do it you miss out. It's our culture.

Q: Did you give your daughter the option not to take part?

A: No

Q: What don't you like about this rite?

A: Sitting on the big stone and doing the initiation at school sessions.

Q: What health implications are there for her?

A: Non noticed

Q: Has the rite changed in any way in comparison to the past?

A: Yes, primary school girls are now being initiated which use not to be part of the dipo. You need to have had your first menses to be initiated.

Thanks.

APPENDIX C

Course Programme and Data Collection Schedule

Events	Location	Date	Time
Literature and Scholarship Assessment	Strathclyde University	26/01/07	_
Professional Dimension Assessment	Strathclyde University	18/05/07	_
Methods of Enquiry Assessment	Strathclyde University	27/04/07	_
Synoptic Paper Assessment	Strathclyde University	23/06/07	_
Thesis Assessment	Strathclyde University	27/04/09	_
Conference	Glasgow University	05/03/08	9am-5pm
Culture Observation	Odumase, Ghana	01/05/08	10am- 2pm
Culture Observation	Odumase, Ghana	02/05/08	10am-2pm
Culture Observation	Odumase, Ghana	03/05/08	10am-2pm
Culture Observation	Odumase, Ghana	05/05/08	11am-2pm

Culture Observation	Odumase, Ghana	06/05/08	11am-2pm
Culture Observation	Salvation School	09/05/08	10am-2pm
Culture Observation	Salvation School	10/05/08	10am-2pm
Classroom Observation	Salvation School	12/06/08	10am-2pm
Classroom Observation	Odumase, Ghana	13/06/08	9am-1pm
Classroom Observation	Odumase, Ghana	16/06/08	9am-1pm
Classroom Observation	Odumase, Ghana	17/06/08	9am-1pm
Classroom Observation	Odumase, Ghana	18/06/08	9am-1pm
Classroom Observation	Odumase, Ghana	23/06/08	9am-1pm
Classroom Observation	Odumase, Ghana	24/06/08	9am-1pm
Interviewing Informants	Odumase, Ghana	07/07/08	10am-1pm
Interviewing Informants	Odumase, Ghana	08/07/08	10am-1pm
Interviewing Informants	Odumase, Ghana	10/07/08	10am-1pm
Interviewing Informants	Odumase, Ghana	11/07/08	10am-1pm
Interviewing Informants	Odumase, Ghana	12/07/08	10am-1pm
Interviewing Informants	Odumase, Ghana	14/07/08	10am-1pm
Shrine Visit	Odumase, Ghana	26/07/08	10am-2pm
School Visit	Salvation School	22/08/08	10am-1pm
School Visit	Salvation School	25/08/08	10am-1pm
Meeting, Senior Research Assistant	Legon, Ghana	03/ 09/08	10am-1pm
Meeting, African Studies Lecturer	Legon, Ghana	04/09/08	10am-1pm
Culture Exhibition	Legon, Ghana	05/09/08	9am-1pm
School Staff Meeting	Salvation Army	07/09/08	9am-1pm
School Staff Meeting	Odumase JSS	09/09/08	9am-1pm
Conference	UCLAN	11, 12, 13/09/08	9am-2pm
Conference	Leipzig University	4, 5, 6, 7/06/09	9am-9pm

APPENDIX D

Other Reflections

I learnt many valuable lessons during fieldwork which were not directly related to my research question. The first prescriptive measure that I would want to suggest is the fact that African academics have to be concerned and possibly welcome the changing perception of African studies in recent times. Postgraduate students of African education, especially those who intend to pursue future academic careers, should be an essential consideration of university departments and the wider academic community. We have to be mindful of the fact that the perception of African education by current and potential postgraduate students will enormously influence their professional aspirations and their academic ambitions. Many African students with great research skills may be discouraged from pursuing

postgraduate studies if they see poor future prospects in terms of low salary and working with very aged academics who are imbued with old fashioned way of organising conferences and conducting research. The refusal of these fresh bloods to take up lecturing and research posts in African universities will not only affect staffing and near-to-nil publications but also negative possible long term consequences for validity of African education. We ought to realise that although postgraduates are not yet active staff members of academic community, they will come to fill its ranks as time goes on, carrying early perceptions and impressions with them.

Also, there is a strong case for encouraging more postgraduates and academics to accept developments in the experiential and intellectual traditions of all cultures and to take up challenge of conducting cross-cultural and trans- cultural research. There is also an urgent need for academic community to consider, review and respond to perception of postgraduate students, both to correct misperception, near-to-nil research and publications on cross-cultural and trans-cultural research and to respond to justified concerns. I feel a constructive dialogue between academics and the successors is therefore of essential concern to maintaining the long term integrity of cross-cultural research.

Theoretical and methodological strengths and difficulties

There were quite a number of theoretical and methodological difficulties underlying this research. In the first place, I had a lot of things in common with

the researched community as an African and as a teacher researcher in the school similar to where I taught for five years as a religious education instructor which gave me an advantage over other researchers. The Manya Krobo Odumase Township and environs are not new to foreigners and Ghanaian nationals. Apart from the *dipo* rite which attracts a number of foreign and local anthropologists, researchers and tourists to the town annually, mainly around Easter and particularly between March and June, a number of other social functions and amenities make the town unique in the paramountcy hence the popularity of the place. Due to my unique identity as a Ghanaian researcher and having travelled from a foreign university, I had an unimaginable cooperation from the locals. I felt that I was not only researching and speaking to my fellow countrymen and women during this research, but also to teachers who share the same professional background with me. Sometimes they are tempted to enquire about life in Europe and how I felt to enrol on a doctoral programme in a foreign land. The boundary between commitments and exchanging pleasantries was constantly shifting. I was so deeply focused on the research and it achievable objectives that I continually had to keep shifting boundaries between being an insider and an outsider. From time to time, I mentally tested the validity and reliability of my data collection instruments and felt satisfied about the choice made.

Secondly, my close association with teenage girls was something I constantly reflected to foresee the consequences and to think about how viable it was to be filming young teenagers publicly. I wondered whether it was ethically right to

subject young school girls to series of interviews outside the school community most often at the glaring view of passer-bys and sometimes without the presence of parents even though I had already sought permission. These were constant reflections which had the power to sway the research focus on the field. I knew for certain that ethnography is fraught with methodological, epistemological and ethical danger but also seem to me as one of the most satisfying ways of conducting empirical research such as this (Porter, 1994). Some passersby would want to know what was actually going on between the researchers as a posed camera man filming young female Krobo teenager. In situations like that I pondered about whether to cut the flow of the filming and explain to them and continue thereafter or to ignore them all together. I also reflected on what constituted African courtesy between the young and the elderly knowing very well that the *dipo* rite is communal affair and that filming cannot be done indoors. These were sentiments that engulfed me as a researcher and a fieldworker in the Manya Krobo community. The other issue was the attraction caused by filming youngsters who would want to be seen in the film even though I had not invited them for interviews. I couldn't stop filming to drive them away before continuing. Sometimes I had to delete some events after filming uninvited guests who came around to satisfy their curiosity.

Thirdly, the choice of the Africalogical approach for conducting this research has a philosophical root with specific assumptions about African scholarship in general, just like any other qualitative paradigm. That assumption is an attempt to

avoid conducting European studies of Africa (Asante, 1990). The Africalogical method defies western history to‘re-valorise’ the African place in the examination and interpretation of any data on Africans and the continent (Asante, 1990, p. 6). I have the insight that emanates from having been born an African in Africa studying in Europe. My own identity, gave me the advantage over other non-African ethnographers to be able to easily examine etymological uses of words and terms in order to capture the source of an interviewee’s perception. Asante reminds us that Afrocentric project like this will consider material and cognitive systems, video recorded conversations and unobtrusive acquisition process based on African traditional culture, norms and values, e.g., the dressing code of the *dipo* girl. These are intended to advance our understanding of informants’ perceptions and to make the result of the project more meaningful.

The project took three important factors into account: commitment, time and funds. I was so committed to achieving the objectives of my fieldwork and that kept me in focus throughout my stay in the community. The factor of time was quite important, not only because of meeting deadlines, but also due to the fact that each interview should provide enough time to capture all the salient points I needed to answer my research questions. This is one main reason why I gave much preference to in-depth interviews. My considerable length of time in the community also gave me the advantage of checking interviewees’ accounts against other people’s accounts and evidence. This in a way added up to the authenticity of the data and the accumulation of knowledge about the

paramountcy. I had strongly budgeted for my fieldwork in terms of funds. My funder was quite insistent on meeting deadlines and working within the constraints of the tight budget. This is one issue that gave me a constant reflection to work my timing out in relation to my return flight to the United Kingdom, visa issues as a foreign student, date for submission and budget constraints. Yet what felt right proved to be right in different ways at the end of the trajectories. I realised the immense value of in-depth interviews, observations, conferences, workshops and seminars during the analysis and the write-up of the project. The in-depth interviews enabled me to discover different layers within the narratives and to give the silence and the marginalised the chance to express their feelings.

One of the difficulties I had was commuting on foot daily from one hamlet to the other trying to gather information for the project. The shrines which are the venue for the organisation of the *dipo* rites are unfairly distributed across the farming villages in the paramountcy. These are very small habitable farming communities popularly known as hamlets: which are linked together with foot paths. These small communities are not vehicles routable and therefore one has to reach them on foot. Sometimes walking through the scorching sun to reach these villages and most scaringly meeting and bypassing farmers and hunters on these foot paths with their sharpened machetes and guns made me rethink whether the ethnography was the right choice.

The good news is that the project is completed and I found the reading, writing and talking about issues and ideas in the project utterly compelling, and I still do. I am a much better writer and speaker now than I was at the start of the EdD programme three years ago. At least I can boast of being reflective and thoughtful about issues in my professional practice and future approaches to professional challenges. In essence, I see myself generally in the account and feeling of Ruth (EdD student) as expounded in Lee (2009):

- The two years initial taught programme has been a voyage of discovery where I have learnt a lot about myself and others.
- I can confirm the EdD programme has succeeded in providing me with the research and writing skills to continue with research and carve out a niche for myself.
- I have learnt about research paradigms and how to relate these to my specific research questions.
- I have learnt how I learn, what subject interest me and I have learnt about my writing style.
- I am much more measured about my responses to issues, questions and discussions. I think am more able to see others point of view.
- I am more interested in how people act and socialise.
- I have developed my critical thinking skills, and feel better equipped to read and listen to work of others and question their approach.

- I have benefited from working in inter-professional groups at this level as I have been much more able to see the perspectives of works from other disciplines and how they work.
- I have explored the reasons for my career pathway, networked and so feel more secure about where I am and where I intend to go in my career.
- It's a journey of self development which has enhanced my general outlook and teaching skills.

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