

IMPACT OF STREET-HAWKING ON THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG GIRLS IN THE SOGAKOFE COMMUNITY, VOLTA REGION, GHANA

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Abstract: In developing countries, street hawking, or the direct sale of retail goods on congested city streets, is a widespread occurrence. The majority of African cities, towns, and district capitals are particularly hard hit. The goal of this study was to investigate how street hawking affects the education of young female hawkers in Ghana's Volta region. The study used a descriptive research approach and selective sampling to pick 60 respondents from a population of 17,335 adolescent schoolgirls hawking along the main roadway. Findings revealed that schoolgirls in the age groups 16-20 and 21-25 dominated the street hawking trade. The predisposing factors identified include the need to pay their school fees, provide for their basic needs, assist their parent in providing for the home, and parental irresponsibility. In addition, the study found that many female street hawkers are not able to attend school regularly as a result of their hawking activities on the street, which affects school attendance and culminates in poor academic performance. Most of them become school dropouts. The study recommended that the government continue to educate parents about the negative effects of involving their children in street hawking and the importance of education, as well as that the government creates more employment opportunities so that citizens can provide for their families needs, such as paying for their children's education. Furthermore, affirmative action should be taken against the practice in order to protect the future of these young girls.

Keywords: street-hawking, young-females, education, school-performance

Introduction

The problem of youngsters not being in school and roaming the streets in order to eke out a living is rising and has become a disturbing social issue globally (Le Roux, 1996; Le Roux & Smith, 1998). According to the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020), about one-fifth of African children aged 6 to 11 are not in school, and nearly 60% of youth aged 15 to 17 are not enrolled. The social isolation of street children is a global issue since they are disadvantaged members of society who labour, live, and survive on the streets (Crous & Bradshaw, 2017). According to UNICEF, 100 million children around the world are growing up on the streets. However, the severity of the problem varies across the globe (Adeyemi, 2012; Alaye, 2021). It is especially serious in developing countries, where the demands of these unhappy children's socioeconomic programmes and social infrastructure are severely limited (Hassen & Maus, 2018). As

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a result, a complex web of conditions dramatically increases the danger of street harassment of youngsters (Shah et al., 2005). This phenomenon has gained such notoriety that it has drawn the attention of not just national and international organizations, but also governments (Panter-Brick, 2002).

Street hawking, or the act of selling retail goods directly on crowded city streets, is a widespread problem in developing countries. The problem is particularly acute in most African cities, towns, and district capitals. Street hawking is mostly caused by rural-urban migration, unemployment, poverty, and an increasing number of school dropouts. The phenomenon provides a source of revenue and an opportunity to supplement household income. Rural poor kids who migrate to cities and other emerging towns in quest of non-existent jobs sometimes fail to find the desired jobs due to a lack of education and employable skills. These young people eventually become street hawkers, hawking a variety of wares on major metropolitan streets (Asiedu, et al 2008).

Various people in many regions of the world rely totally on or partially on street sales to make a living (Skinner, 2008 in Akuoko, 2013). Small-scale trading is an important component of Africa's informal economy, notably on the streets. People with low levels of education, particularly women, regularly use it (Mitullah, 2003 in Akuoko, 2013). Street vendors selling vegetables, furniture, clothing, and technology abound on Africa's urban streets (Skinner, 2008). Street trading is a feasible source of employment for low-income and disadvantaged urban people due to its higher accessibility to those with little education and financial resources (Mitullah, 2003). Urbanization and migration are two important factors affecting the expansion of street trade in Africa, as individuals migrate from rural to urban areas in search of jobs that do not exist.

Since Ghana's colonization and the subsequent expansion of cities like Accra, Cape Coast, and Kumasi, among others, many rural people, particularly young, have relocated from their rural communities and continue to do so today. There has been a considerable migration of people, notably young females, into Ghana's expanding cities and villages as a result of the work opportunities created.

It must be noted that these immigrants come from all across the nation and are primarily concentrated in the larger cities and villages. Young adolescent females between the ages of 8 and 19 are typically among those who move from their rural settlements to engage in economic activities in the big metropolis. These young women make a meager living by selling a variety of goods along main streets and other trunk roads. Young females peddling goods, including food, has become a typical occurrence along several major roadways, including the important Sogakofe main road.

Street hawking is the practice of selling items of any kind along a street. These hawkers sell whatever you can think of. Others on the streets, in addition to the hawkers, beg for handouts to help them survive. They move to cities and other large towns to work in such firms. This issue is not restricted to Ghana and appears to be widespread in several African countries. However, the leaders of these countries appear to be doing nothing concrete to address the issue. Vehicle parking lots are being converted into trade centers. The phenomenon is visible worldwide, from Algeria to Zimbabwe, Kenya to Senegal, and Togo to Nigeria. Children are left to wander the streets chasing vehicles to sell

their wares on a daily basis (www.modernghana.com). According to a countrywide survey conducted by The Ghana Statistical Service, the International Labor Organization, and IPEC, around 2.5 million children aged five to seven are involved in the economic activities of an estimated population of 6.4 million.

As a result, this study was carried out to answer the following research questions in the study area: what are the risk factors of street hawking among girls? How does it affect school attendance among girls hawking at Sogakofe? How does it influence educational levels among young girls hawking on the streets, and how does it affect their academic performance?

Literature Review

The Phenomenon of Street Hawking

The phenomenon of street hawking is a major human development issue that affects many societies across the world, particularly those in the Third World. A major cause of this phenomenon in Pakistan, for example, is a lack of access to basic education and dropping out of school as a result of poverty, as well as the harsh effect of the structural adjustment program that exists to alleviate poverty in that country while also bridging the existing gap in Pakistani access to infrastructural facilities through the unlimited provision of basic educational services for the less privileged in the country, as well as reducing the prevalence of poverty (Tufail, 2005; Ali et al., 2004). The topic of street children has gained global attention, with major implications for the survival and future of these children. The presence of street children in major cities around the world has progressed from a rare event to a concerning global issue (Rosa et al., 1992).

People do not always have the opportunity to visit market centers to shop in today's fast-paced world, so street-hawking provides a fast and affordable service because goods are offered at relatively lower costs, albeit the quality of such things cannot easily be confirmed. Furthermore, supporting these hawkers is simple and cost-effective because products are offered as single things rather than in bulk quantities, making them fairly reasonable, and there are no restrictions on hawkers' working hours, making them very accessible (Davis, 2008).

The problem is notably significant in most African cities, including Accra, Ghana's capital. Street hawking is mostly caused by rural-urban migration, unemployment, and an increasing number of school dropouts. It provides a source of revenue as well as an opportunity to supplement the family's income. However, street hawking exposes the individual to the risk of probable accidents, loss of life, abuse, reproductive health issues, easy prey to crime and prostitution, and a variety of other social problems. Furthermore, street hawkers stifle national progress because they cannot be taxed to generate revenue for the government, clog traffic, and raise travel time and fuel expenses, raising transportation costs and the average cost of doing business (Davis, 2008). Furthermore, hawkers operate in dangerous public locations where they must move between automobiles and motors to make a living while risking their lives and being at the whim of the weather, crime, and other circumstances. Working on the street by running after moving vehicles to offer products to passengers has its own set of issues, according to the International Labour Office (2002). In most cases, the

ambitions of these street hawkers are never realized but are forced to remain in the street trade for economic survival. Their job comprises chasing down moving autos to sell. Most street traders' earnings are pitiful, unable to fulfill their basic demands of shelter, food, and health care, among other things.

Predisposing Factors of Street Hawking

The phenomena of street hawking can be observed in most major urban areas, including Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, and Tamale. In addition to working along major roadways, some street hawkers assemble near handy market areas and churches, particularly on Sundays, to attract buyers (Duh, 2004 in Akuoko, 2013). According to Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah, the primary causes of street hawking in Ghana are rural-urban migration, unemployment, and a rising number of school dropouts (2008). Youth from impoverished rural areas of the country migrate to cities in quest of non-existent work and wind up as street hawkers selling items on main city streets (Asiedu and Agyei Mensah, 2008 in Akuoko, 2013). Unemployed Ghanaian youngsters sell fresh fruits, eggs, and milk to passers-by and travelers stuck in traffic jams, as well as electronics, cane work baskets, and toilet paper (Lanffanco, 1997). Kwankye et al. (2007) conducted a study that looked into the elements that contributed to street hawking as well as the traits that made them sensitive to sexual and reproductive health concerns. A variety of factors have been shown to influence people's decision to engage in street hawking. According to Kwakye et al. (2007), the fundamental reason for street economic activity is poverty.

Educational Levels of Street Hawkers

Women street merchants and hawkers, in general, have low levels of education, making it difficult for them to enter formal work settings (Cohen et al., 2000; Davis, 2008 in Akuoko 2013). Education can be defined as the act or process of cultivating and developing someone morally, physically, or psychologically, shaping and regulating the principles and characters in order to enable them to become fit for business through systematic instruction (Dybicz, 2005). Furthermore, Ebrahim (2004) defines education as "the sum of all the processes by which a child or adult develops abilities, attitudes, and other forms of behavior that are of positive value to the society in which he lives, that is to say, it is a process of pass on knowledge either to ensure social control or to safeguard the direction of society, or both".

Since the last two decades, the number of street children has gradually increased in Pakistan. According to one estimate, 1.4 million children in Pakistan live as 'Street Children,' largely in cities (Ali et al., 2004; Wikipedia, 2014). Although the above-indicated projections required to be fairly modest, Pakistan has suffered extraordinary levels of crisis ranging from natural calamities caused by drought to ethnoreligious warfare, attrition wars, and serious terrorism.

All of these reasons have contributed to a large increase in the number of street children in Pakistan, which is now estimated to be between 1.3 and 1.7 million (Wikipedia, 2014). Initially, foreigners created and ran the bulk of primary and secondary educational institutions, but few were government-owned. Education is critical for sustaining and developing young people. People can persist and

survive better as a result of education, gaining experience, skills, and the ability to fend for themselves while still serving their communities and nation. Education is also a tool for both stability and change: stability in the sense that good traditions are chronicled, taught, imbibed, and practiced, and change in the sense that it prepares individuals to tackle new problems. Along the same line, education is a tool for instilling moral ideals in citizens (Tufail, 2005).

Effects of Street Hawking on Girls' Education

Hawking is a marketing method in which multiple buyers and sellers offer incredibly little amounts for sale at the same time. Ode, Olukosi, and Isitor (2005) The researcher is concerned about this marketing strategy since he sees a lot of school-aged kids doing it. Street hawking, according to Nseabasi and Oluwabamide (2010), is a breach of the international convention on the rights of the child. It is immoral to include a child in money-making activities since such a child is denied fundamental education, which is a right for every child.

According to Fawole et al. (2003), a substantial segment of student hawkers consists of young girls who attend school during the day and only hawk after school and on weekends, mainly for their parents or guardians. In Nigeria, there has been an increase in the number of children trading or working in rural areas, which affects their acquisition of education. This can be attributed to a variety of factors, including the cost of schooling, the characteristics of the child, parents, households, and community, and the location and distance of formal education centers, according to Dustmann (2003). Traditional traditions like as polygamy and a desire for high family numbers exacerbate poverty and illiteracy. Child street dealing endangers society's survival; it distorts government plans about juvenile education. It also confuses the acquisition of appropriate vocational skills and education, harming the economic sector (Eswaren 2001). Again, Danesty and Okedirán (2002) observed that street hawking among young school students has other psychologically imposed problems, such as sex networking behavior and juvenile delinquent behavior, which takes up most of the students' school time and leads to poor academic performance and dropout syndrome.

Challenges Associated with Street Hawking

A lot of research and publications on the street hawking problem have been published, with the majority of them concentrating on the obstacles that the hawkers confront, such as road accidents, reproductive health issues, and run-ins with law enforcement organizations. A number of studies have also looked into the numerous obstacles that hawkers confront the relationship between hawking and poverty and other aspects of the hawking phenomenon.

Duh (2004) wrote an article in which he analyzed the effects of hawkers on society, particularly on the traffic problem. He highlighted his own encounters with street hawkers and the risks associated with their operations. He also presented examples of scenarios in which these hawkers faced the possibility of losing their life. While a number of studies have been conducted on the street hawking phenomenon in Ghana, there is little literature on the consequences of the street hawking phenomenon on the scholastic success of young girls. As a result, more work in this area is required. This will provide additional light on the problem and aid in its resolution.

Materials and Methods

Description of Study Community

South Tongu District was formed from the former Tongu District, which existed prior to 1988. Sogakofe served as the administrative center until Legislative Instrument LI 1466 further partitioned the Tongu District into North, South, and Central Tongu in 1989. Sogakofe is the capital of the South Tongu District (GSS Report, 2014).

The South Tongu District is located between the latitudes 6°10' and 5°45' North and the longitudes 30°30' and 0°45' East. It is located in the southern portion of the Lower Volta Basin, bordered to the north by the Central and North Tongu Districts, to the east by the Akatsi South District, to the west by the Greater Accra Region's Ada East District, and to the south by the Keta Municipality. The map of the South Tongu District is shown in Figure 1.1. The South Tongu District covers 643.57 square kilometers, accounting for 3.1 per cent of the Volta Region's total land area.

Because of its location within the Coastal Savannah Plain, the District is normally low-lying, but it gradually rises to a height of 75 meters above sea level. The Volta River passes through the District, and the Lower Volta Bridge provides a link between west and east via the Accra Aflao Road. The District contains a number of lovely islands, most notably Atadame, and a few additional islands located between Agorta and Agave-Afedume.

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the District's total population is 87,950, accounting for 4.1 per cent of the total population of the Volta region. Females make up 54.5 per cent of the population in the District. The District is mostly rural, with 87.1 per cent of the people living in rural regions. It has also been noticed that older adults of both sexes aged 60 and older are more likely to be located in rural than metropolitan regions. The District has a greater population density than the Region, at 136.7 people per square kilometer (103 persons per square kilometer).

Research Design

The study used non-experimental and descriptive methodologies. A non-experimental study design aims to answer research questions by observation and measurements in which the researcher does not actively modify anything. This design is appropriate because it does not entail any manipulation of the participants' situation, conditions, or experience. In this vein, research variables are observed and described in their natural occurrence and allowing for a range of issues to be measured. It also allows for the identification and co-movements of variables and more importantly, it is useful for determining the relationship of one variable to another and determining the frequency of co-occurrence in variables that occur naturally.

Study Sample and Selection techniques

The study targeted all school-going girls within the Sogakofe Township engaged in the street hawking business. In this case, all young school girls in the study area who are involved in the hawking of

goods along the busy Sogakofe Highway constituted the target population of the study. This is because they are directly involved in the street hawking business and thus either denied education or are not able to attend school regularly which the study seeks to study.

Data Collection Procedures

For the study, information was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. There was an initial familiarization visit to the study area to have a personal touch with the study population and their daily hawking activities and to interact with them informally. This help to establish some form of a personal relationship with the study population. To acquire primary data, instruments such as interviews and firsthand observations were employed. Because the majority of the respondents were not highly educated, the structured interview method was used to collect data for the study.

Data Analysis

The research gathered both qualitative and quantitative data for analysis. The qualitative data includes the researcher's personal observations in the field of the subject under inquiry. Questionnaires, on the other hand, were utilized to obtain quantitative data for the study. To examine quantitative data acquired via questionnaires, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed. In assessing the data acquired, descriptive analysis using bar charts, graphs, and other applicable data analysis approaches was performed.

Results and Discussions

Socio-Demographic Description of Respondents

Table 1 contains some selected socioeconomic demographics of respondents.

Table 1: Socioeconomic description of households

Variable	Category	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Age group	10 – 15	10	16.7
	16 – 20	26	43.3
	21 – 25	14	23.3
	26 – 30	10	16.7
Marital status of Respondents	Married	8	13.3
	Single	40	66.7
	Divorced	12	20.0
Educational levels respondents	Primary school	24	40.0
	Junior High	32	53.3
	Senior High	4	6.7

In terms of age group, respondents fell into four main age groups. The majority of respondents were in the age group 16-20 (43.3%), and 10 respondents representing 16.7% were in the age group 10-15. In addition, 23.3% of respondents were in the age group 21-25 whilst 16.7% also fell within the age group 26-30.

In relation to marital status, 13.3 (n=8) of respondents were married, the majority constituting 66.7 (n=40) were single whilst 20.0 (n=12) were divorced. Respondents were divided into educational categories based on their educational achievements. A higher proportion of respondents (32, 53.3%) had completed junior high school, whereas (24, 40.0%) had completed primary school and 4 (6.7%) had completed senior secondary school.

Formal education is an important mechanism for securing relevant employable skills and higher earnings in order to enhance one's living conditions. With low levels of formal education as exhibited in Table 4.1, these young girls are unable to secure better job opportunities in the district capital, Sogakofe, and therefore had to resort to street hawking as a survival mechanism.

Reasons for Hawking along the street

Since many of the female hawkers do not have sponsors to cater for their education and personal needs, most of them resorted to the street-hawking business as another means of generating the needed income to support their education and personal needs. The results of the study indicated that 30.0 per cent of respondents were involved in the hawking trade to raise money to pay their school fees and the majority, 56.7 per cent stated that they do so to provide for their basic needs. In addition, some 6.7 per cent are into that kind of work in order to assist their parents and guardians to provide for the needs of their families. More so, others, 6.7 per cent intimated that they are forced to sell on the street because they lack parental care.

Importantly, 96.7 per cent of respondents stated that their parents are aware that they sell along the street at the expense of their education but could not stop them. The main reason is that their parents cannot provide for their needs. It was only 3.3 per cent of respondents revealed that their parents were not aware that they sell on the street. To add to the above, as much as 96.7 per cent of respondents stated that selling on the streets a very dangerous and risky work. A number of reasons were given by respondents as to what makes street hawking a risky activity which also constitute their major problems

Major Problems Associated with Hawking

From the table, the major problem facing the hawkers is that they are often knocked down by moving vehicles as they run or chase them to sell their goods. This was mentioned by 26.7 per cent of respondents. Another problem is cars running over the legs of the hawkers (20.0%) and sometimes, chased by station task-force (20.0%) which makes it difficult to do their business. In addition, 10.0 per cent mentioned that they are sometimes virtually insulted by passengers and these passengers in some cases, take their monies away. Moreso, 6.7 per cent of respondents intimated that since their

work involves running after vehicles, they always feel very tired and exhausted from over work, which affects their health.

Schools Attendance among Respondents

Regular School Attendance among Respondents

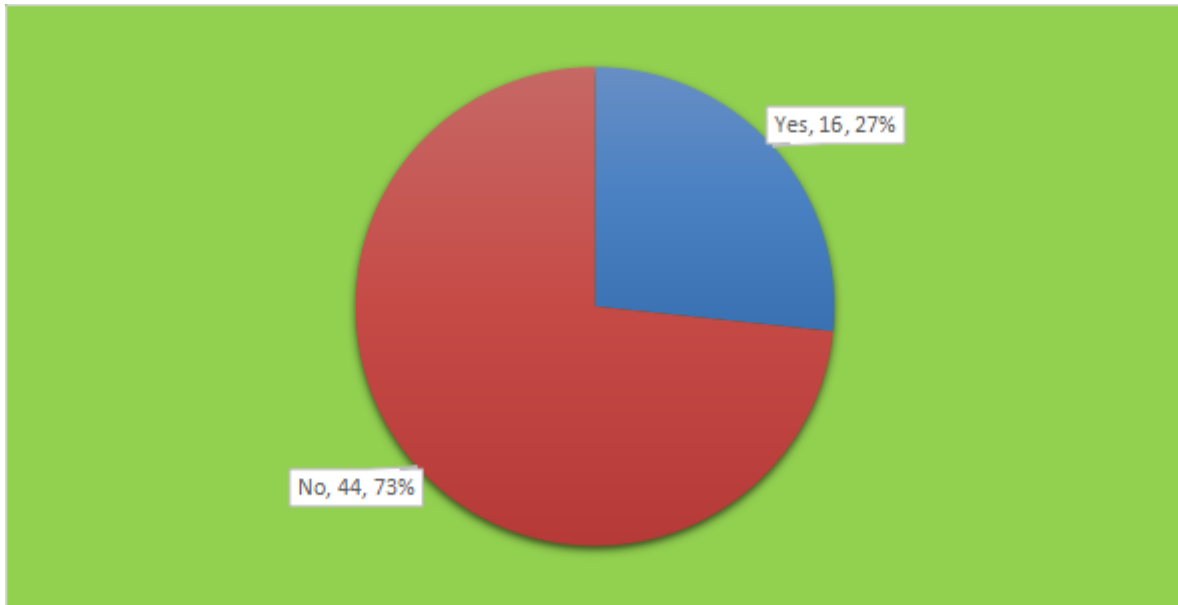


Figure 1: School attendance among respondents

The study has shown that respondents attend various schools dotted in and around Sogakofe ranging from primary to senior secondary schools. Some of these schools include Sogakofe Covenant Preparatory School, Akatsi L/A Primary School, Tefle D/A Junior High, Sogakofe RC Primary, Comboni Technical Secondary School among others. However, the study has shown very poor school attendance among respondents. From the study, only 26.7 per cent of respondents stated that they are able to attend school every day while the majority, 73.3 per cent stated that they are not able to do so.

From the study, respondents gave various reasons for their inability to be in school regularly. According to the study, 43.3 per cent of respondents mentioned financial problems are their reason. Also, 20.0 per cent intimated that due to the nature of their work, they become too tired to go to school sometimes whilst 10.0 per cent stated that as a result of their work and the hot sun under which they sell, they often fall sick and therefore their inability to be in school all the time.

Academic Performance of Respondents in School

The irregular school attendance among young school girls as a result of their concentration on money making has implications for their academic performance in school. When the question “In your view, are you doing well in school” was posed, only 24 respondents representing 40.0 per cent answered in the affirmative whilst the majority 60.0 per cent stated that they were not doing so well in school academically. Further, when respondents were asked to rate their performances in school from excellent to bad, the majority of the respondents noted that they perform very poorly academically in

school. And the reasons were not far-fetched. For example, when asked whether they are able to do their school homework, only 43.3 per cent answered in the affirmative with the remaining 66.7 per cent answering in the negative. This they attributed to the fact that they were often too tired after the day's activities to be able to do their homework. In addition, 23.3 per cent stated that they often sell deep into the night and therefore do not have enough time to do any schoolwork after that.

Difficult Subjects of Respondents

As a result of the irregular school attendance and lack of concentration on their academic work, respondents noted that they find certain subjects very difficult to handle in school. The top on the list as mentioned by respondents was Mathematics. As much as 56.7 per cent of respondents noted that they do badly in that subject. The second most difficult subject among respondents is Science as stated by 20.0 per cent of respondents whilst English Language followed with 13.3 per cent of respondents intimating that they do badly in it. Other difficult subjects mentioned included the Ewe Language (6.7%) and Pre-Tech (3.3%).

Average Performance in Mathematics, English Language, and Science

The researcher further probed to find out the performance of respondents in the three core subjects of Mathematics, English Language, and Science. In this direction, respondents gave varied responses. From informal discussions with respondents, many of them were not doing very well in Mathematics, English Language, and Science, which are very critical if they wanted to further their education. In this direction, respondents mentioned a number of factors militating against their performance in the three core subjects. From the study, 36.7 per cent noted that they do not simply have enough time for their studies as they are most of the time on the street selling. In addition, as much as 43.3 per cent of respondents intimated that they lacked the needed learning material such as textbooks to help them in their studies whilst 20.0 per cent pointed out that they have no one, in particular, to guide them in their studies, thus accounting for their poor performance in many schools subjects particularly Mathematics, Science and English Language.

Average Daily Earnings of Respondents

The study wanted to find out how lucrative the street hawking business is to respondents for them to abandon the classrooms. From the study, half of the respondents (30) constituting 50.0 per cent stated that on average, they earn between 5-10 Ghana cedis and 3.3 per cent mentioned that they are able to earn between 11-15 Ghana Cedis on average daily. More so, 26.7 per cent pointed out that they are able to make between 16-20 Ghana Cedis on average each day whilst 20.0 per cent revealed that they make as much as between 26-30 Ghana Cedis daily. Considering the current minimum wage in Ghana pegged at Gh.13.45, it means that the majority of these young street hawkers earn below the official minimum wage in their rather risky trade.

Safety and Security of Respondents

An important question for the study was whether the female hawkers feel safe sleeping at lorry stations and in kiosks, only 6.7 per cent pointed out that they do while 50.0 per cent said that they do not feel safe but have to manage the situation all the same. More importantly, as much as 80.0 per cent of respondents note that they are most of the time harassed by thieves and armed robbers who sometimes succeed in taking away their hard-earned money and possessions. In addition to the above problem, sexual harassment was quite widespread around the area where the hawkers ply their trade. Indeed, 80.0 per cent of those the researcher talked to maintained that they were often sexually harassed at one time or the other with only 20.0 per cent noting that they had not experienced any form of sexual harassment.

Future Aspirations of the Female Street Hawkers

According to the findings of a study on the effects of street hawking on the scholastic achievement of girls in Sogakofe, young girls have some social aspirations and want to achieve them. It is these dreams and the burning desire to achieve them that push some to migrate as far as from Togo to Sogakofe regardless of the implications. From the study, 36 respondents representing 60.0 per cent of the respondents noted that they decided to engage in the street hawking trade in order to raise enough money to support their education. About 14 respondents constituting 23.3 per cent of the respondents wanted to raise some money in order to acquire some possessions such as cooking utensils and other such personal effects before they are married and 10 respondents (16.7%) simply wanted to work in order to look after themselves. Indeed, the seriousness they attach to their work attests to this fact. It is therefore not surprising that to another question as to whether they wish to remain in the hawking business, 52 respondents (86.7%) answered in the negative with only 8 respondents (13.3%) undecided as to what really their future plans are.

In addition to the above, responses from some young female street hawkers who have dropped out of school suggested that they wish to go back to school in the near future someday once their desires are met. From the study, 46.7 per cent of respondents expressed the desire to be able to raise enough money soon to go back to school or support their education. Furthermore, 53.3 per cent stated that they plan to make enough money to enable them to learn a vocation such as hairdressing, and tailoring among others.

To add to the above, respondents who are still in school have different interests to pursue after completing their current levels of education. From the study, 13.3 per cent of respondents who are in primary school wish to continue to Junior High school while 20.0 per cent wish to continue to Senior High. Those already in Senior High (23.3%) want to continue to either the nursing or teacher training college with 26.7 per cent expressing the view that after their current level, they would like to learn a trade. However, about 16.7 per cent of the respondents were undecided, and do not know what they wish to do in the future

Addressing the Needs of Young Schoolgirls on the Street

Having acknowledged the fact that the street hawking business is affecting their education badly, the female hawkers under study pointed out that a number of interventions could be put in place to assist them in their education. From the study, 70.0 per cent of the respondent wanted the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other such interest groups, to provide them with some form of financial support to assist them in their education. In addition, 28.3 per cent suggested that free compulsory particularly for girls to enable them to go through school without having to work in order support their own education and 11.7 per cent believed that providing free educational materials such as books, school uniforms, school sandals among others would go a long way to motivate them to focus on their education.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the study, it could be concluded that many of the young girls engaging in street hawking in Sogakofe are students who are supposed to be in school learning. However, due to the inability of their parents to support them economically and take care of their education, the young girls have taken to the street to survive. As street hawkers, these girls are faced with very difficult social and economic conditions. They are often molested and sexually taken advantage of and they lack the basic things of life and thus live a life of misery. More importantly, the nature of what they do does not allow them to effectively concentrate on their studies in school. The result is that they perform poorly in school and risk becoming school dropouts with it attendant consequences for their future. Given the right opportunities and assistance, these young girls are willing to leave the difficult life on the street and concentrate on their studies in order to secure a better future not only for themselves but also for their offspring. This way, these girls will be better prepared to be in charge of their own future.

There is a need for the government to continue enlightening and educating parents about the consequences of involving their children in street hawking and the value of education. This becomes required so that parents look for other ways to support their children rather than encouraging them to sell on the street. There is a need for the government to generate more work opportunities so that residents can be employed and meet family necessities such as paying for their children's education. More so, the government should make education free at all levels so that the less privileged children would have the opportunity to be educated. Furthermore, the government should pass legislation prohibiting the involvement of schoolchildren in hawking and punish parents, guardians, and caregivers who do so. This means that the concept of free but obligatory education up to the elementary level must be enforced to ensure that all parents send their children to school. Those who did not comply should face suitable punishment. This is because the problem of young females peddling on the street is partially due to parental negligence.

Given that only a small percentage of hawkers get beyond the basic level of the educational ladder, more emphasis should be placed on incorporating skills training into the school curriculum. This would ensure that those who drop out of school along the way have some basic skills that will allow them to earn a decent living, reducing the number of people engaged in street hawking in Ghana. Since some of the young schoolgirls are interested in acquiring vocation such as sewing and

hairdressing, the relevant state institution and the Non-Governmental Organization should organize the girls and give them the necessary training in areas such as sewing batik tie and dye among others. At the end of the training, they should be provided with start-up capital and then monitored to ensure that they apply funds appropriately and manage their business efficiently. Additionally, there is the need to seriously give more priority to girl-child education, particularly in deprived rural communities. In this vein, the cost of basic education and progressively second-cycle education should be reduced drastically, particularly for girls. This will make it easier for parents to send their wards to school instead of aiding them to trade.

More importantly, there should be a vigorously coordinated campaign by all the Stakeholders to draw the attention of our rural youth to the importance of formal education and the need to focus on their education. These would not completely eliminate the phenomenon of street hawking, particularly among girls; however, they will ensure that the majority of youth, particularly young girls, stay off the streets and instead focus on their education to secure a secure future for themselves while also meaningfully contributing to national development.

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