

**An Assessment of the Effects of the Church's Empowerment of Female Head Porters:
Insight from Suhudoo Baptist Church, Aboabo, Kumasi – Ghana**

Paul Nti Ababio

VID Specialized University
Oslo

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Abstract

The debate on the contribution of diaconal practices among churches in the empowerment discourse remains unresolved in the conventional literature. This study seeks to address the question “What characterizes the empowerment of young female head porters by the Suhudoo Baptist Church in Aboabo, Kumasi, Ghana?”. Using the case of the aforementioned church, the study sought to explore whether or not diaconal practices contribute to the empowerment of the vulnerable in society. And if it does, the form it takes and how the empowerment is achieved. Empowerment and gender perspectives, the see-reflect-act as a diaconal model renewed diaconal action, and inclusiveness as diaconal perspectives was used to explore how the church brings about liberation to the poor and marginalized, protect and speak against injustices in the society, and defend the voice of the voiceless and the disempowered. The study used interview guides and observational skills, narratives from eight head porters were gathered for the study. An intersectionality approach was adopted for the analysis and discussion of the findings. The findings of the study point to the fact that not much has been done by the government of Ghana in protecting or empowering the head porters. The study revealed that diaconal practices of the church have lessened the financial burden of the head porters. Besides, the church through its interaction among members created a friendly environment that enables the head porters to socialize with other members of the church. This creates inclusive, just, equal, and mutual societies. Also, the diaconal practices have contributed to the empowerment of the head porters.

Keywords; Diaconia, empowerment, gender, head porters, Ghana, the church.

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Dedication

This thesis is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved wife, Louisa, and my three children, Meres George, and Parkins.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
AABF	All African Baptist Fellowship
ABBEX	Association of Baptist Business Executives
AGBO	Association of Ghanaian Baptist Overseas
BSU	Baptist Student Unions
BWA	Baptist World Alliance
CCG	Christian Council of Ghana
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women
GHACOE	Ghana Congress on Evangelism
GHC	Ghana Cedis
GEC	Ghana Evangelism Committee
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus.
IMB	International Mission Board
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MCK	Methodist Church of Kenya
MGDs	Millennium Development Goals
SHOP	Student Holiday Outreach Program
UN	United Nation
USD	United Stated Dollars
WEP	Women's Empowerment Program
WMU	Women's Missionary Union
WCC	World Council of Churches
USA	United State of America
NSD	Norwegian Senter for Forskningsdata

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Overview of the study

Women in the African continent, and perhaps all over the world are the custodians of culture and nurturers of families (Ochieng, 2019). Many females may gain from having the possibility of transformation of their life situation, reconciliation, and empowerment (Ganle, Afriyie, and Yao, 2015). In light of this perspective, diaconia can be an important approach to women empowerment. First of all, as revealed in Jesus Christ, diaconia can be seen as care and accompaniment of another (LWF, 2009, 44). To transform the lives of the people in the world (Lundgren et al., 2019) is one of the utmost important roles that the church must play in its ministry (Davies, George, and Rupp, 2017). People in need especially children are very dear to God and therefore must be given the required support to enable them to reach their God-given potential, so they can be responsible and acceptable in society and become the sort of leaders that the society dreams of (Newman, 2019). Most young people unfortunately do not have this privilege because of poverty and socioeconomic factors that affect them (Dolean, Melby-Lervåg, Tincas, Damsa, and Lervåg, 2019). As such many of them leave their parents and families in search of greener pastures, making them live in the streets, indulging in violence, prostitution, drug abuse, being raped and defiled, and even sometimes killed (Kwon and Cabrera, 2019). Most children have become victims of circumstances because they were at the wrong place at the wrong time (Pollak and Wolfe, 2020).

It is suspected that most children are accused of a crime they knew nothing about (Heberle & S.Carter, 2020), all because they sleep at spaces where felons often take advantage of them and trap them into robbery, raping, and prostitution to mention a few (Mhongera & Lombard, 2020). These are the sort of situations that most female head porters find themselves (Cudjoe & Alhassan, 2016). Female head porters are not living life as ordinary Ghanaian young girls (Nyarko & Tahiru, 2018). Female head porters are having a hard-knock life in the street under the scorching sun each day (Balfour, Callands, Okech, & Kombian, 2020). Female head porters are treading on a craggy road, and the road is so tough, this is how I will describe their situation (Adomako & Baffour, 2019). The predicaments of young female head porters indicate that they need restoration into normal life, based on research findings that the study recommended for agencies that work for women empowerment. Economic self-sufficiency is necessary, though it is not a sufficient

condition for the empowerment of women (Varghese, 2011). Bearing this in mind, I intend to research into what the Suhodoo Baptist Church is doing to support young female head porters in Aboabo, and to understand how best this can be done, and to improve upon it to serve as a body of knowledge for churches who want to do better service to humanity. This will reflect the actual meaning of diaconia, service for each other in mutuality, including empowerment, and advocacy for work, humble service, for people in need, the act of mercy, and charity performed by ‘good Christian people’ (Dietrich 2014).

1.1 Inspiration

I have taught at the Junior high school level in Ghana for eight years and has also been a youth leader in my local church. As an artist and a creative person, I trained most of the students and church members as well as other youths who were mostly head porters in the community to develop skills in making designs mostly in plain “African wears” and other artifacts which helped them a lot financially as they created and sold artworks. Being a teacher, I was exposed to the fact that there were more girls and young women on the streets who were not coming to the classroom to get educated. These girls lived in harsh and hazardous conditions which include, poor housing, health care delivery, nutrition, water, and sanitation and are even sometimes raped because they sleep in the open (Font & Maguire-Jackb, 2020).

In my interaction with most of these young female head porters both as a teacher and as a youth president, I realized that young female head porters have exceptional potential and can make a difference in the world around them if they are empowered to be subjects of their own lives. Engaging in topics such as core aspects of Diaconia theories and practice to name a few, empowerment, autonomy, and power have inspired me to help head porters in society. My local church, the Signs of Hope Baptist Church has consistently been organizing programs and giving out food and clothing to these head porters. The women empowerment project Ghana, October 2017 organized by the African Faith and Justice Network also occasionally pay solidarity and visit head porters, offer some donations and also promise to advocate to end kayeyie (Network, 2017) but I think these young ladies deserve to be helped better to gain control of various aspects of their lives and to participate well in the community with dignity. This is a concern that I have and want

to research to see how best churches can help empower head porters as a diaconal task (Tettey & Nel, 2020) and how a church can assist in advocating for these girls. But what inspired me the most is found in one particular church, which is the Suhudoo Baptist and the work they were doing in helping these vulnerable young girls by providing some solutions to their problems and trying any means possible to have these girls develop some skills that would enable them to work, to earn good money so that they can become independent and live a good life.

1.2 Research question

What characterizes the empowerment of young female head porters by the Suhudoo Baptist Church in Aboabo, the Ashanti Region of Ghana?

1.3 Definition of terms and concepts

Head porters/Kayayoo according to Opare (2003), female head porters are high school young girls or young ladies who connect solely in the carrying of baggage on their head for an expense. Such business engaged by ladies is called in the local parlance as Kayayie. It is called 'Kaya' in another language (Hausa) implies baggage, affliction, or drives, and 'yoo' also refers to a lady in another language (Ga) which is spoken among people in the capital city of Ghana. Therefore, a Kayayoo is referred to as a young lady or a high school young lady who conveys for a payment. The plural type of 'yoo' is 'yee', subsequently, kayayee is ladies' head porters.

Empowerment according to Rappapolt (1985), signifies "a feeling of authority over one's life in character, reason, and stimulation, and it communicates at the level of emotions, at the level of thoughts concerning self-esteem, and at the level of being able to make a variance in the world surroundings, we all have it as a potential. Empowerment is at the center of the concept and practice of diaconia is "a theological conception of creation that each individual is made in the image of God, with bounds and capacities, self-governing of their plain social condition (LWF 2009, 45). Moreover, empowerment can similarly be considered as a multi-dimensional social technique that motivates individuals to oversee different parts of their lives and contribute in the community with self-confidence (Holmberg et al., 2018), and it is a method that encourages command in individuals for use in their lives (Firzli, 2018), their communities and their culture, by interim on issues they describe as significant (Dietrich 2014, 21)

The church is a local congregation of a Christian denomination (Jenkins, 2011). Christian Church indicates to the congregation indiscernible involving all Christians (Adhinarta, 2012). The Christian church does not indicate a specific denomination but rather a group of believers, both characterized in different ways (Robert, 2000). Church or ekklesia is a word found in the Old Testament derived from the first word 'qahal' (Hebrew), which signifies a collection of individuals', or explained in the LAI Bible as 'congregation' (Widianto & Permana, 2019).

1.4 Review of literature

There has been a greater amount of scholarly literature on the problem of head porters and because the issue of head pottering is one that mostly affects young ladies typically in Africa and Asia. Most of the literature on head porters mostly guises at the subject from a social perspective (Yuliana, 2020), but not from a religious perspective, but of late, several kinds of literature have been directing attention on young female head porters and the church. Head porters are now getting some attention from religious bodies because they are very vulnerable and can be seen in the cities and big towns in most African and Asian countries. A review of literature on the issue of the church (religion) and head porters in connection with this research revealed a few applicable materials. In the book, “The Church and its evangelizing Ministry in the World”, Addai-Mensah Peter (n.d:23, 35)¹ elucidates that the church’s mission is not only found in the proclamation of the gospel but embraces all activities that liberate the human person from his or her slavery of all kinds into God’s Kingdom (Addai-Mensah & Opoku, 2011).

The author then in his interpretation advocates that, the ministry is for service, which I term as diaconia, to serve humanity, which should also include young female head porters suffering on the streets and not having any good place to lay their heads. I strongly believe that the writer’s stance in his book responds to the plight of the poor in society and this I think will go a long way to help me in this write-up. In the book “Stewardship: Essays on Ethics of Stewardship”, Asante Emmanuel, (1999:56-57,118, 180) shares thoughts on the factors accountable for the high levels

¹ <http://ir.knust.edu.gh/bitstream/123456789/6086/1/CHAPLAIN%27S%20DESK%20I.pdf>

of poverty in Africa and draws the world's attention to the new paradigm that would ensure economic justice. Asante further reckons that urban and rural poverty is a tenacious reality in sub-Saharan Africa, and research on more than 110 developing countries shows that "while urban poverty is a growing occurrence, the rural poor account for more than 80 percent of the total number of poor people in those countries. In Asante's assertion, I reason with him that, disadvantaged people like young female head porters who in all probability don't have the opportunities, albeit it wasn't their fault and have ended up in poverty must be helped. I believe the author's submission in his book will assist me a lot in this dissertation because most head porters are on the streets not because of their own will but due to a lot of reasons.

Additionally, Rabiatu (2007, p.3-20), address poverty amid the Muslim community as one of the whys and wherefores contributing to street children in the country. Rabiatu poses the questions, how can poverty be reduced and how do we get the resources available to confront it? She thus advises that, to address poverty at the societal level, some factors ought to be taken into consideration, be it ideological or political, of power consideration, or as a result of civil unrest or attitude. Rabiatu goes on to say that when it comes to the causes of poverty, the response would differ. She recounts that humans are multi-dimensional and have basic needs, for example, spiritual, emotional, and physical which must be met and satisfied. According to her, these needs are interwoven as the satisfaction of a spiritual need can help improve one's physical life or needs. Rabiatu's opinion talks more about the Muslim community, but it has some connection with the plight of young female head porters since amongst the main issues contributing to the head pottering menace is unemployment and poverty.

Finally, Anju et al (2002), in their background paper, outlines some most important ways to analyze and measure women's empowerment. In their paper, they assess major theoretical, methodological, and empirical literature on empowerment from the arena of anthropology, economics, sociology, and demography as they try to summarize what most of the hidden truth about what leads to women's empowerment and its consequence for reducing poverty. They defined empowerment as the increase in the ability of people to make decisions and choices in a situation where these privileges were denied and then identified several components as critical in enhancing

empowerment in their studies. These components are attractive and would be employed in this write-up as it contains numerous components that have been considered as other scholars. Kinoti (2019) concluded that although the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK) in the Wesleyan spirit has done exemplary well in the ordination of women and giving them the equal opportunity as their male counterparts in both education and employment, ordained women remained un-empowered to ascend to top-level leadership. Compared to other mainstream churches, MCK is on the top by the virtue that it has women bishops although a very insignificant percentage. Further, MCK has not recognized special professional growth needs of the ordained women based on their gender and dictates of patriarchal culture.

The Church has failed to conceptualize empowerment as tooling designed to specifically improve the lives of head porters. It has not embraced social justice leadership which is inclusive and transformational. The study observes the trend of the recurrence of the challenges enumerated. I had carried out a similar study in 2004 that enumerated nearly the same challenges. The question of what the transformative action the church has undertaken to address those challenges remains unanswered. The study concludes that ordained women lack mentors and coaches to help them to learn the ropes. From the analysis of the respondents' self-analysis, it was concluded that women do not pursue their aspirations aggressively and a sizeable number, 48%, suffered a lack of a clear vision for themselves intertwined with lack of /or a poor sense of self-worth and confidence. Ironically, the largest majority expect to be given positions without positioning themselves.

Yuliana (2020, p.14-15) found that the context of the empowerment of this program is the female household heads, such as widows, head porters, and homemakers who have been left by their husbands for years without news and are still productive. The stages in the implementation of women's economic empowerment are carried out from the upstream to downstream sectors. The Assessment Phase is the stage of identifying the problems felt by the targets of the empowerment program while identifying the resources owned by the targets. Realization of assistance, the realization of this assistance is carried out by KRTP through the guidance and monitoring of the head of the pokmas, the village assistant, and the village secretariat. Monitoring implementation, PFK Intertwine program implementation interventions involve (a) Provincial management

organizations, (b) District management organizations, (c) Village Government, and (d) Community Groups (pokmas). Achievement of economic empowerment carried out through poverty feminization prevention programs, in general, gives a positive value for the overall life of the target KRTP.

Woman's supposed advantages associated with family life may offensively influence her empowerment outcomes (Varghese 2011). The authors found from the women empowerment list that the ladies in Oman are engaged yet her attention towards home life distress her empowerment in any case ladies would have been increasingly empowered. Social control plays a significant part in producing/supporting variations among people. Her enabling conciliation needs to go up against the male-controlled social strength, 'which accepts a theory's role in producing and supporting sex variations. Moreover, the four theories I confirmed have a positive huge connection between subordinate variable and free factors however the fifth one isn't indicating any implication. The women's recognitions which moreover we have taken show that the women in Oman have a more than normal point of comprehension about their lawful and political rights. This means women are a lot mindful of the factors which can lead them towards empowerment. It is prompted that future researchers who are extreme on women's strengthening in Oman can focus more on factors that positively affect women empowerment.

The government and non-government organizations can deal with improving the women's features and aptitudes. Participation in seminars, presentations, and comfort for taking well-paid employment would help or support the role of women in decision making. Based on research results, I accompanied certain proposals for the organizations working for women empowerment. Monetary independence is vital, however, it's anything but an adequate condition for the empowerment of women. Public strategies are critical to strengthening the lawful foundations that assure corresponding rights and chances to women. The ongoing method structure of universal agencies, for example, the World Bank that highlights institutional reforms together with human enhancement is a positive advance toward this path (World Bank 2001). The strategic approach of one size fits for everything is furthermore not suitable with regards to unrelated socioeconomic conditions rampant in various pieces of the world.

Malhotra, Schuler, and Boender (2002, p.34-35) reviewed an existing theoretical and empirical literature and found an initial move toward knowing the most encouraging methodological methods to deal with estimating and studying women's empowerment. Their study shows that although extra emphases of this procedure are vital to building up a methodology that is practical for the World Bank and other multilateral associations, the current writing gives significant direction and course in pushing this responsibility ahead. While unquestionably, women's empowerment is a compound concept that presents numerous difficulties in conceptualization and dimension, these difficulties are likely no more prominent than is the situation for other complex improvement concepts, for example, hardship decrease or social insertion. As has been the situation with these different concepts, continued endeavors at analysis and refinement are essential for pushing the agenda ahead.

Malhotra, et al (2002) revealed various significant qualities in the current work on women's empowerment that gives the establishment to additionally advance on assessment. The most significant of these is the way that notwithstanding the disorder in the manner of speaking and wording, there is a more important agreement in the hypothetical writing on what empowerment means and how it ought to be conceptualized, and even operationalized than we had expected. We find that there is a large concern to "process" and "agency" as being basic to women's empowerment, and in separating it from related terms, for example, sexual orientation equality. Furthermore, extensive preparation has just been done in creating systems that decide the components of empowerment, its logical nature, and the different levels at which it could be predictable. Although no recent framework stands apart above others as the one to be received, taken in general, the current framework gives the basic raw materials to build up a usable guide for estimating women's empowerment.

Nygaard (2017, p.185) found that in light of the intellectual act of diaconia from the edges, Nygaard distinguished between two rationales: the rationale of a word and the rationale of activity. Be that as it may, the observational discoveries of deacons' work extend these rationales, and the rationale

of connection is presented. Nygaard proposes an extended meaning of diaconia. Diaconia and deacons can't be decreased to activities. Curiously, in the record broke down in Nygaard's research, individuals' enduring was not put at the focal point of the congregation's consideration. The ecclesiological results of moving the margins to the focal point of the congregation imply setting up a congregation that associates with a complex reality. A portion of the expert results of this incorporate underlining between proficient joint effort, expanding the attention to various sorts of rationales, and utilizing the scientific unit of collaborations rather than the fruitless equal frameworks of the rationale of the word and the rationale of activity.

Based on the research already done, this study seeks to add to the literature on diaconia practice of the church to the poor and weak women who have no room to sleep. Vulnerable young and old women who carry loads to be paid before they can eat. Vulnerable women are always abused because they have nobody to speak for them and do not know how and where to seek for justice. This study adds to the literature on the role of the church in women empowerment.

1.5 Scope and limitations of the research study

This thesis seeks to assess the role of the Suhoodoo Baptist Church Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana in the provision of support to young female head porters within the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly. Aboabo is an area within Kumasi where lots of female head porters are found and it is where the Suhoodoo Baptist Church which houses and provides support to young female head porters is located. More churches could have been studied but I realized that none of the Churches in Kumasi had a special place that provided support and accommodation for head porters except for the Suhoodoo Baptist Church. I observed that the support of the other churches in Kumasi to young female head porters was only freebies in the form of food and clothing which did not go any way to empower them, hence I focused on this church. I side and reason with (Dietrich 2014, 17) that '... diaconal service should focus on reducing dependencies, supporting independence, and activating the person's resources to cope on their own in the long round'. This is exactly how I see the support the Suhoodoo Baptist church is giving to these young girls. Additionally, this research did not ask questions on how the support of the church has built the spiritual and faith perspective of the head porters. However, spiritual perspectives emerged in the material (see 6.10). This gave me some answers to issues of faith and spirituality.

1.6 Thesis Outline

Chapter two will make available background information on the Ghanaian context pertinent for the study, a general overview of the Ghana Baptist Convention, and in particular the Suhudoo Baptist Church, Aboabo, Kumasi- Ghana. The next **chapter (3)** looks at the theoretical framework, I will explore more on the theories I will be working with within the research which consists of gender, empowerment, well as theories on diaconia and the church in chapter three. This paper lingers on to give a more comprehensive dialogue of the **fourth chapter**. Additionally, the research design, sampling of participants, data collection, and analysis will follow suit as I deliberate on them in this chapter. The next chapter analyzes the respondent's view, the background of respondents, problems encountered by respondents, and afterward, talk about the outcome of the church's programs on the empowerment of the Female Head Porters in **chapter five**. **Chapter six** brings onboard features of the fourth and fifth chapter using a dialogue which will try to find and interpret how they interconnect. I will conclude this master's dissertation in **chapter seven** by bringing out the most important reflections through likely recommendations in addition to proposals for continuing research.

Chapter 2: Background and context

2.0 Chapter introduction

The focus of this chapter is to establish the research into context using giving a brief introduction of the history of Ghana, an overview of the plight of female head porters, as well as a brief history of the Ghana Baptist Convention and in particular, the Suhodoo Baptist Church. Quite important and interestingly, what the Suhodoo Baptist Church calls what they do would not be left out in this chapter.

2.1 A brief history of Ghana



Figure 1: Image of Female Ghanaians

Source: An image from Ghana taken from <https://www.thoughtco.com/brief-history-of-ghana-3996070>.

As one of the leading countries in West Africa, Ghana is positioned on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea (Rucker, 2015). The country Ghana has been one of the first black African countries south of the Sahara to achieve independence from colonial rule (Lipp, Huq, and Colwell, 2002). Ghana has many natural resources such as gold, bauxite, cocoa, timber, and diamond (Kilford, 2010). Aside from the fact that Ghana is known for its lush forest, assorted wildlife, and miles of sandy beaches along an attractive coast (Berselaar, 2012), Ghana is also celebrated for its rich history dating from 10,000 BCE with a storehouse of a rich cultural heritage (language, family system, clothing (figure 1), food, music, etc.) (McLean, 2001). Ghana had its name from the great medieval trading empire that was located northwest of modern-day state until its demise in the 13th century (Koinzer, Nikolai, and Waldow, 2017). In the 15th century, Ghana's direct sea trade with other European countries to name a few Portuguese, Dutch, and Britain had much impact on its area's inhabitants (Danver, 2013).

Ghana has most of its gold coast constructed by Europeans to protect their trade interest. Ghana through its Pan Africanist African leader, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah gained its independence from its colonial masters on 6th March 1957 (Jr., 2010). Accra is Ghana’s administrative capital which serves today as the commercial trading hub for the country (Mba, 2010). Located in the south central part of Ghana (figure 2), Kumasi popularly known as the “Garden City of West Africa” is the second prominent commercial city (Sultan et al., 2020). Kumasi is also the seat of the king of the Asante people, the vestige of an empire that existed in the 18th and 19th Centuries (Guerini, 2006). Aboabo in Kumasi is where the Suhudoo Baptist Church which is a focus in this paper that supports female head porters is located. Sited on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea in western Africa, Ghana shares border to the north with Burkina Faso and to the east with Togo, to the south by the Atlantic Ocean and the west with Cote D’Ivoire.



Figure 2: Map of Ghana

Source: A map of Ghana retrieved from <http://www.ghanareview.com/ghanamap.html>

2.2 A brief history of the Ghana Baptist convention

The soonest Baptist work in Ghana was by Mark C. Hayford, a Ghanaian, who got his call and appointment to the service in Nigeria. By 1926 Hayford had planted around forty-five holy places, yet after his passing in 1935 these houses of worship started to kick the bucket. The current Ghana Baptist Convention's initial beginnings were related to the Nigerian Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention of the USA. Nigerian Baptist brethren came to Ghana (in the past known as Gold Coast) to exchange the early piece of the 1900s. These Yoruba Baptist dealers later gathered themselves to shape Baptist temples in Ghana (Sanah, 2014). In 1947 the Yoruba Baptist Association, which these Yoruba places of worship in Ghana shaped in 1935, made an intrigue to both the Nigerian Baptist Convention and the Nigerian Baptist Mission (NOTE: the crucial comprised of Southern Baptist Convention teachers working in Nigeria) to send a few evangelists to begin Baptist houses of worship among the Ghanaians.

The Yoruba Baptist houses of worship were avoiding pulling in Ghanaians because the Yoruba language was utilized in the entirety of the church's administrations. Because of the solicitation of the Yoruba Baptist Association, the Nigerian Baptist Mission in 1947 sent the Reverend and Mrs. H R. Littleton to Ghana to begin Baptist places of worship among the indigenous individuals. Their actions brought about the foundation of the main indigenous Baptist church in 1952 at Boamang in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. In 1947 the Yoruba Baptist Association changed its name to Gold Coast Baptist Conference to empower the rising Ghanaian Baptist holy places to be a piece of the gathering (Osei-Wusu 2019). At the point when Ghana picked up her freedom from Britain in 1957, the gathering was renamed Ghana Baptist Conference. From its start as the Yoruba Association, this gathering was under the Nigerian Baptist Convention. In 1963, the Nigerian Baptist Convention conceded the gathering independence. The gathering was renamed Ghana Baptist Convention in January 1964. The demonstration works in association with the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention, USA.

The Ghana Baptist Convention is presently looking for organizations with other Baptist bodies or houses of worship to do the vision(s) God has given to her in Ghana and the past. Presently the

Ghana Baptist Convention has roughly 1,000 temples with all-out participation of more than 65,000.

2.3 A brief history of the Suhudoo Baptist church

From a field note I gathered from the head pastor of the church, he narrates that, the Suhudoo Baptist Church also known as the Dagomba/Mamprusi Baptist congregation is a church that has its very beginning allied with the Ash-Town Baptist Church in Kumasi together with two deacons from the United States of America namely; Mike and Wanda Walker who were missionaries from the Southern Baptist Convention in the USA (Nettles, 2013). These two missionaries arrived in the Nalerigu Baptist Medical Center in the Northern region of Ghana 1980 and later moved to Kumasi, in the Ashanti Region of Ghana where the Suhudoo Baptist church is currently located, in 1997 (Menikoff, 2014). The missionaries have been in Kumasi for several months and realized there were many groups of Northerners in Kumasi than they had ever imagined, as such, they began to share their experiences with the then senior pastor of the Ash- Town Baptist Church, Rev. Owusu Ansah of the need and a likelihood of reaching out the Northerners in Kumasi.

People from the Northern region of Ghana speak a dialect different from that of individuals in the Southern part of Ghana. This made it difficult for many Northerners to integrate into society and churches when they come to the South. As a result, should a Northerner visit a church in the Southern part of Ghana, he or she would not be able to comprehend whatever was transpiring in the church. This is what inspired the Walkers to establish a church for Northerners who had migrated at that time to the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Consequent to listening to Mike and Wanda, Rev. Owusu Ansah expressed that he also had a similar vision and that, he would organize a third service each Sunday for Northerners living in Kumasi. Stemming out from this vision, the church began outreach to some young northern girls who worked around the Kumasi Central Market. Since there was a language and cultural barrier in reaching out to these young Northern girls, Rev. Owusu Ansah suggested to Mike and Wanda the necessity to fetch for pastors from the north and they agreed.

The Ash Town Baptist Church together with the missionaries then prayed to seek out for God's guidance to start a Northern Church in Kumasi, they started inviting pastors from the north

occasionally to help evangelize these girls. Wanda because she was fluent in Mamprusi which is one of the languages spoken in the North, and with the assistance of Abel Adambila their house help, they shared the gospel to the northerners. Progressively, week after week, men and women from the north living in Kumasi, started to assemble on Sundays to worship together with them. Within that period, Pastor Isaiah Barnabas Napari who had come from the Northern region to pursue a diploma in Theology at the Ghana Baptist Seminary in the Ashanti region (figure 2) was asked to lead the northern group during his school days. Officially, the Dagomba/Mamprusi Baptist congregation which is currently the Suhudoo Baptist Church was born on 17th October 1997 with eight members together with five Northerners, as well as Pastor Barnabas Isaiah, Mike and his wife Wanda. The church finally relocated to its current location as its premises in April 2007. The Suhudoo Baptist Church assumes a school to cater forwards of the head porters (Kayayie) at the church premises. Besides, the Suhudoo Baptist Church started a trade school to train ladies to attain skills in sewing, head dressing, soap making, and several others. The trade school began with four ladies and at present has a total number of twelve ladies.



Figure 3: Suhudoo Baptist Church Logo

Source: A picture of the church's logo taken at the church premises in February 2020.

At the moment, the Church has a membership of approximately sixty-five including children. Although the church is under the Ghana Baptist Convention which logo is seen in the logo of the church (see fig.3), it is also a mother church to a Dagomba/Mamprusi Baptist congregation at

Agbobloshie a suburb in Accra the capital town of Ghana. Besides, they have also planted a new church at Mankranso, a town in the Ashanti Region of Ghana in October 2016.

2.4 The plight of young female head porters

As already mentioned, this write up about the plight of the female head is also inspired by a document offered to me by the head pastor of the church in focus titled; “The urban poor in Ghana our pilgrimage”. As a summary of the document, together with narrations from some of my respondents, the following is what I gathered. In the parks, marketplaces, lorry stations, in the outskirts of the major cities in Ghana, one can hear people scream “kaya-yoo or “paa-o-paa” resounding, as young women and girls come running with heavy loads on top of their heads. Young women and girls are paid a pittance as they are hired by people to carry goods from one place to another. From time to time, as little as one Ghana Cedi (less than 1 USD) is paid to them for their toil. These girls transport people’s heavy foodstuffs, and other goods with a large head pan on top of their heads. Most of these women have their babies with them wrapped at their backs as they carry their loads on their heads. These women could be seen as harboring heavy physical burdens, with the heaviest of it all being the burden of feeling lost. Coming from the Northern part of Ghana to the large cities for a variety of reasons, these women are all Northerners mostly Frafras, Dagombas, Gonjas, Wallis, and Tampulmas coming from families where African Traditional region (ancestor worship) and Islam is experienced.

With some running away from poverty and problems in their household, many come to the Southern parts and big cities of Ghana to work to earn money. Aside from this also owed to the fact that there are unequal development and opportunities to generate an income which tend to be bigger in the south and the cities than in the rural North. This provokes young girls to migrate. Not many of these young ladies are Christians, and even so, since the language used by the city churches and the way of worship are a bit different from what young female head porters are used to at home villages, even the few who are Christians find it uncomfortable fellowshipping with churches in the city. From my observation on the field as a researcher, Northerners who live in the big cities in Ghana and most especially Kumasi in the Ashanti region, are suffering, spiritually, emotionally, and physically. Young women sometimes must give favors instead of room rent or are tempted to

enter into prostitution to support themselves as narrated by some of my respondents. Aside from this many head porters even in the night have to result in prostitution as seen in the studies.

As some of my respondents narrated, this situation sometimes results in most of these young girls returning to their home villages with pregnancies and HIV/AIDS. As narrated by respondents of the study, many uneducated people in Ghana's urban centers are living in deplorable situations. Respondent "A," told me, about 35 young girls, and women after work lived and slept in a twelve-foot square room in an uncompleted story dwelling. Just as Jayakumar quoted by (Myers 2011) puts it, "*the poor often live environmentally vulnerable locations, making their homes outside factories, along with sea coast, on streets and other vulnerable locations*". This is evident in a narration from respondent "A" as she added that, young female head porters paid 2 Ghana Cedis each day for rooms they rent in the urban cities which are even without light, toilet facilities, or running water. Most head porters interviewed added that they crouched in one of the unfurnished rooms when they wanted to have their bath. And other times they are bitten by mosquitoes and raped because they live in an unfurnished building. They are lost in the urban cities with no one to help or share their problems with. This is the plight of a young female head.



Figure 4: Female head porters

Source: Picture of young female head porters taken from

<https://face2faceafrica.com/article/kayayei-byday-sex-workers-by-night-the-disturbing-story-of-ghanas-female-head-porters1>

2.5 The role of the Suhudoo Baptist church

When young female head porters migrate from the Northern part of Ghana to the Southern part, they turn out to be the most vulnerable in the society as compared to their male counterparts, since they are exposed to so many challenges that make them very vulnerable. From a field note² in an interview I had with the head pastor, he narrated that the church sees the need to provide the young

² The field note of the pastor is only used to provide context information to thesis. The material analyzed are the interviews with head porters (Please see sec. 4.3)

female head porter with a safe place to live, and feels that many could be reached with the gospel by providing their social needs. According to the head pastor, the church accepts all young women regardless of their religious background. The pastor narrates that, it is the prayer of the church that many will know Christ through their outreach to these young female head porters. As Walker, Mike and Wanda (2004, 31) quotes “Hughes” in his book, “The God of the Poor”:

As I expose myself to the pain of the poor, the weight of their suffering threatens to crush me. I know that I can neither carry such a weight of pain nor do anything to lighten the burden in my strength, I am so grateful that you are a king who has already taken all this pain to the cross and carried it away for me. Not that you are indifferent to it now. You still feel it. As the incarnate Son of God, you still look out on the multitudes of this world who are harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. In your compassion you reach out to them in mercy, to do it, Lord, may I always be available do your work with you. (Hughes 1998, 313).

The above quote, which is a prayer, according to Walker, reflects the cry of the hearts of the church as they sincerely search for God’s will to keep the plight of Ghana’s urban poor in their eyes (Walker, Mike and Wanda 2004). In the words of the head pastor, God must give the church a vision of outreach to these young female head porters, by first focusing on discipleship within the church and secondly building a hostel where these girls can live safely. To the pastor, the head porters are marginalized in society, most of them have lost hope in this world, and this challenges towards giving these girls hope in the world. As stated in the LWF document, diaconia in context, marginalization is a multi-dimensional experience that takes away people’s esteem, and besides makes people hopeless. However, diaconia is challenged by this hopelessness, and in its action, it seeks to support the spiral of hope ...As diaconia takes initiatives of accompaniment when people move from one step to another, envisioning transformation, reconciliation, and empowerment (LWF 2009). Therefore, from the head pastor of the church, they call the service the church renders to the young female head porter, “Hope for the Hopeless”.

2.6 The United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women

UN Women is the UN element committed to gender consistency and the empowerment of women. Gender imbalance is unavoidable, with women lacking access to good work and confronting sex wage holes. All around the globe women and young girls are routinely denied access to training

and healthcare; they are underrepresented in financial and political dynamics and experience the ill effects of violence and isolation (Nations, 2010). Over numerous decades, the UN has gained noteworthy ground in pushing sexual orientation uniformity, including through milestone understandings, for example, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Western Union, 2016). Although numerous transient women are profoundly talented and knowledgeable, they face difficulties in getting to remote work markets (Mónika, 2016).

Work limitations for vagrants combined with the de-skilling predominant in gendered work markets and inevitable generalizations related to transient women in nations of goal can adversely affect their activity possibilities (Maelan, 2016). Numerous vagrant women partake in low-talented and unbalanced employments portrayed by low wages, helpless working conditions, embarrassing work and social securities, and introduction to physical and sexual ruthlessness. Women transient specialists are frequently packed in casual, low paid, and unregulated work. The primary segments wherein women transient laborers are utilized are administrations and retail (18.8 percent), basic occupations (17.3 percent), create and related exchanges (15.2 percent), exports (13.9 percent), and agents (12.3 percent) (UN Women. 2016). Of the assessed 11.5 million universal vagrant household laborers (in 2013), around 73.4 percent were women (ILO, 2015).

2.7 Women empowerment in Ghana

The significant goals of the Women's Empowerment Program (WEP) in Ghana incorporate inspiring a situation that enables women to take up vital situations in the public eye and decision-making bodies just as engaging them as backers for human rights and sex-based and development issues inside their networks. The Ghana Congress on Evangelism (GHACOE) is a Christian religious non-legislative women's service set up in 1977. The Ministry has some expertise in evangelism, building stable families and homes, and advancing individual satisfaction through Jesus Christ. GHACOE's systems incorporate creativity preparing, salary wage, limit building (counting capacities advancement and credit support), marriage analysis, business, and home administration preparing, just as Christian instructing. GHACOE's center system of women's empowerment is to give Biblical instructing, down to earth preparing, and money related help to

women and girls from every social foundation to act naturally dependent even though its vital spotlight is on poor rustic and urban women. This methodology has educated the organization regarding a few financial, social, and religious projects all through the nation required by breaking down monetary and social conditions for some individuals throughout the years, particularly women and girls. GHACOE takes note that women's empowerment doesn't just rely upon the arrangement of work or jobs, yet vitally on work that enables women to challenge mentalities and frameworks that oppress them, break hindrances, accomplish acknowledgment, upgrade their haggling force and exercise their privileges in and outside the home (Anyidoho and Manuh, 2010).

Chapter 3: Theories

3.0 Chapter introduction

This chapter of my thesis pays attention to the theoretical framework and perspectives that would be useful for discussing the research question: What characterizes the empowerment of young female head porters by the Suhudoo Baptist Church in Aboabo, the Ashanti Region of Ghana? References will be made to a few scholars who have made immense contributions to diverse perspectives. I will also delve into the scenery by clarifying some set of understandings that are present in the works concerning the diaconia. The theories and perspectives would be used to demonstrate a structure for the discussion of my key findings.

3.1 The see-reflect-act as a diaconal model

On how to better reflect well on diaconia, the LWF (2009) document elaborates on the see-reflect-act as an important diaconal model that links theory to practice which the Church can use to bring about liberation to the poor and marginalized. The see-reflect-act model can help the church to know the underlying issues that the poor or vulnerable are confronted with, understand the sources of the problems, reflect theologically on the issues, and act to bring about liberation and empowerment. The see-reflect-act as a diaconal module heartens the church, diaconal professionals, the vulnerable or needy as well as all involved in diaconia to vigorously participate in a group decision making process. It also empowers and supports the basic values of diaconal work that can be suitable in many contexts, for example in Ghana and situations like that of the vulnerable head porters to bring about transformation. According to the (LWF 2009) in the “See” dimension of this diaconal concept, the church must-see, for example, those who are being marginalized and then try to know why they are being marginalized.

Seeing the plight of the marginalized in this way would help the church as a diaconal actor to experience the reality of individuals and communities, just as Jesus shared his life with the poor and the outcast. We need to make our assumptions explicit and to ask God’s help to see the poor and the circumstances of the poor more truly (Myres 2011). The church must, therefore, allow God to help them discern well to understand the real issues challenging the poor. In doing this, I think that the church must follow all the deeds of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and must not only

preach the word but put all its efforts to get to the field of the situation and try to relate well to the situation to interact or work effectively with the vulnerable. There is therefore a need to inquire and to have healthy communication, to know the real issues that the vulnerable are confronted with. This is the understanding of Nygaard (2017) creates more trustworthy interactions with the margins than “creating of Word” as mediated by preaching, Nygaard goes further to make it known that, logic in interaction is concerned only with people who suffer in society but not only also in services and sacraments.

Secondly, to “Reflect” is to analyze the situation and to make a knowledgeable judgment about the situation as we bring our values, our beliefs, and what our faith pronounces about the situation to analyze the situation and to help change people’s lives. Such discernment will help the church to lift its prophetic voice in denouncing injustices and sin, and to announce the good news of God’s care for the poor and suffering in words and action (LWF 2009, 60). The church must know the fact that the poor are poor largely because they live in networks that do not work for their wellbeing and that, they are poor because they are oppressed by social systems that keep them poor for the benefit of the non-poor. As well as knowing that the poor need justice and help in finding their voice and place in the economic and political system (Myres 2011) will help us to be able to reflect well so as do a better service to the poor.

Finally, to “act” is to plan and carry out actions intended at transforming the social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice. In acting to help the marginalized, I stand with the understanding of Nygaard (2017) as she argues that, we should not just act like as it is understood in the Church of Norway’s definition of Diaconia which is “...the gospel in action ...”. Nygaard further argues that there should be an increased awareness using different logics of analysis to help find a remedy to help the people at the margins. Nygaard further advocates that the church should place the vulnerable at the center of attention and interact well with the people at the margins. Nygaard therefore proposes, there should be an alternative to the similar unsuccessful system of the logic of word and the logic of action. The see-reflect-act as a diaconal method is a good alternative and will, therefore, be used to recognize the strengths and the limitations of the diaconal action of the Suhudoo Baptist church.

3.2 Renewed diaconal action

In the book, *Liberation Diaconia*, Nordstokke (2011, 46) points out that, in the light of the new understanding of diaconia, there is the need to elaborate on a theology of diaconia that can provide a meaningful and sustainable theoretical framework. Nordstokke then highlights some items that he thinks should have its place in the new model of diaconia for our time. These items according to Nordstokke are a new role as agents, a new authority, a new language, a new logic, and new methods. Since diaconia is both a dynamic and a contextual phenomenon (Korslien 2014), these characteristics of a new way of practicing diaconia, will be used to assess the support which the Suhudoo Baptist Church is rendering to the young female head porters. The first item or characteristic is that of a “new role as agent”, Nordstokke and Collins quoted by Korslien (2014, 204) profess that the role of the professionals in the field of diaconal has changed from a role of a professional employee, where others are often reduced to being clients, to a role of a facilitator, animator, and enabler. The intention here is to give others, especially those on the periphery, a status as subjects and agents who also operate within God's project with humankind.

This means that in this new role the diaconal professional must work together with those at the periphery to find a solution to their problems. Secondly, Nordstokke further espouses that, the innovative role as an agent is closely connected to a new authority, which is defined as a transformation from a diaconal work which just only provides service to people in need to a diaconal work that will advocate, protect and speak against injustices in the society. Also, in the third item which is a new language, Nordstokke, and Collins champion that, there should be a new inclusive means of dialogue where the voice of the voiceless and the disempowered is defended. Similarly, in the fourth characteristic, which is new logic, they espouse that, diaconal work should embark on the risk of giving praxis a significance over theory. As stated by Korslien (2014, 205) the new logic implies praxis as a starting point for a critical reflection and for developing knowledge based on experience. Notwithstanding, in the last item which is a new method, Nordstokke, and Collins quoted by Korslien (2014, 205) highlight that diaconal work or practice must have a distinct mandate to recognize mechanisms of inclusions to be able to figure out feasible professional practices to discover better methods that would demonstrate its new role, new authority, a new language, and new logic.

3.3 Inclusiveness as a diaconal perspective

In diaconal work, inclusiveness is one of the basic values. According to the LWF document (2009, 30) inclusiveness is a vital key to test whether the identity given by God's grace is expressed in the life of the church. The document further espouses that, just as Jesus exercised in his Messianic authority, as powerful to include the sick and the excluded in society and even more in the communion of his reign, to empower them to participate in his mission to the world, the church in its diaconal mandate is called to do same, and in doing same, the LWF admonishes the church not express its power over, as often seen in the world where the powerful use their authority to exclude people, to keep people down, and to silence them. This, therefore, means that the church has a diaconal mandate to empower, to protect, uplift, speak for, and to include the needy. According to Nordstokke (2011), the contextual importance in diaconal and prophetic manifestation in which prophetic diaconia means to defend justice and diaconal praxis should by its very nature include the task of unmarking injustices and promoting justice.

Likewise, Nordstokke underscores that diaconal practice ought to be the sign and instrument for inclusion (Nordstokke 2011, 52). Meaning diaconal work should be one that does not hinder those at the margins in the society in any way but should be one that paves way for them as we bring them closer to our service. The plan for diaconia all prioritizes inclusive community as an arena for activities and the church has a particular responsibility to include those in need of support if they are to be able to participate in an equal manner in the community of the local congregation (Kirke 2015, 39). As written in (Galatians 3:28), "*there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*". Deducing from the scripture above, it could be seen that, God sees every human being equally in his sight, as made in His image and as such, no human being should be excluded in the society. Every human being regardless of his status must be treated with dignity, accorded the necessary respect, and be included by the church as their diaconal mandate.

3.4 Diaconia as interaction

I agree with Nygaard's (2017) argument for the expansion of the Church of Norway's definition of diaconia, as she advocates that "*diaconal work should not be limited to the logic of action*". She

further underscores; it should be characterized by a relational action that syndicates actions and language in interaction with people. Nygaard hence advances the course that reducing diaconal work to “action” only contributes to under-communication of the deacon’s professional language and that, “*the ecclesiological implication of moving the margins to the center of the church means establishing a church that interacts with the complex reality*”. This means that the church should not only proclaim the word of God or only act to dash out freebies the people of the margins but rather get to the people of the margins, interact well with them to know their needs, preach the gospel to them, and together with the plan, analyze, and experiment together to find ways to address their problems or issues. Nygaard again suggests that emphasis should be placed on inter-professional collaboration that increases the awareness of different types of logic and using the analytical unit of interactions instead of the unsuccessful parallel systems of the logic of word and the logic of action (Nygaard 2017).

This is because, the story of Jesus Christ is only worth telling but also above all being lived through the compassion, resilience, and justice that positions it at the margins of society (Deifelt 2019). This is because a church that exists for the sake of the world may be identified by how it interacts with the margins and by the way it embodies the gestalt of the Gospel that unifies the Gospel as a word and the Gospel as a sign (Nygaard 2017). This, therefore, implies that; much emphasis must be placed on our interaction with the margins with regards to undertaking diaconal work as our God called a mandate. And in doing this, as Korslien puts it, the dialectic interaction between what we see and how we reflect is of great importance and helps to develop an interdisciplinary Knowledge (Korslien 2014). These perspectives on diaconia and empowerment together with other relevant theories would be those that I will be using to discuss my research question to ascertain if the support of the Suhudoo Baptist church is helping to empower the vulnerable young female head porter through interaction.

3.5 Diaconia of the church

Diaconia as a concept has its roots in the church’s faith and identity, and diaconia has advanced numerous branches of knowledge. Diaconal achieves this by bringing on board theological and secular language, reflecting on what is to be the church, and hitherto also what it means to be in

the world (Nordstokke 2011, 15). Diaconia according to the church of Norway's plan is "the caring ministry of the church. It is the gospel in action and expressed through loving your neighbor, creating inclusive communities, caring for creation, and struggling for justice". The WCC (2012, 305) defines diaconia as the "responsible service by deeds and by words performed by Christians in response to the needs of people". Quite similarly, Bucer quoted in (LWF 2009), the document describes the church as a congregation of persons assembled in Christ's word and Spirit to be one body, put together of various members, each with an office and work dedicated to bettering the whole body and all its members. From all the two definitions, I can say that the ultimate focus is on improving the lives of the least advantaged or the marginalized. According to Nordstokke (2011), diaconal praxis must take place in real life, and it is about being sensitive to human reality and to what threatens human life and dignity. Nordstokke adds that diaconal praxis is about responding to suffering, the needy, and injustice in the world. It will thus be of immense interest to this research to understand how the Suhudoo Baptist Church empowers young female head porters as their diaconal mandate.

3.6 Empowerment

Empowerment is about individuals, both women and men assuming concern for their lives: setting their plans, picking up skills, building fearlessness, tackling issues, and creating confidence (Zachariassen, 2012). Zachariassen contends that nobody can permit another, however, that establishments can just encourage and strengthen forms that sustain self-empowerment of people or congregations. It is a multidimensional concept basing on both at individual and gathering level. Empowerment is characterized as a procedure that recognizes which elements lead to sabotaging circumstances and afterward continues to evacuate them with the expected to improve workers' self-adequacy (Goedhart, Oostveen, and Vermeulen, 2017). Parpart et al. (2003) argue that empowerment goes beyond custody of power but being able to exercise it without any hindrance. They further note that empowerment should involve the inner power and politicized power which results from the ability to work with others and that leads to change. Economic development is a direct outcome of the ability to choose. This is an assertion of the classical development perspective.

Empowerment as a method of expanding individual, relational, or political force so people can make a move to improve their living conditions. Since the UN Decade for ladies (1975-85) global methodologies show, for example, the 'Show on the Elimination of all types of against women's (CEDAW) and the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) have made a solid order to guarantee that sex balance and women's empowerment is a basic part of improvement and vote based system. The introduction from the Universal Declaration of Rights (1948) pronounces that democracy depends on the "completely communicated will of the individuals to decide their own political, monetary, social and social frameworks, and their full interest in all parts of their lives." Therefore, if women can't communicate, are poor, and can't take part entirely, it implies women's capacity to shape their own lives, and that of society is constrained. Empowerment is the way to significant turn of events. Empowerment can be seen in an unforeseen way. To observe how Nkhoma Synod Church and the EEW project are enabling women in Kalolo territory, Rowland's definition will be consumed.

3.7 Empowerment from a theological (diaconal) perspective

Scripturally, empowerment refers to the scriptural comprehension of creation. Each individual is made in the picture of God, with capacities and abilities, autonomous of their evident social circumstance (LWF) 2009, p.45). Hence, all individuals are God's picture, regardless of whether male or female (Genesis 1-2). Human Rights oath that all individuals from the human family have a natural dignity that can't be isolated from mankind. Women's incorporation in chapel and society is established in this religious philosophy of creation and the holy observances, for example, the Holy Communion. The two people are immersed in the assortment of Christ and welcome to share the Holy Communion. God offers blessings to the two sexual orientations by the Holy Spirit for administration in chapel and society. God enables individuals to act on the planet and makes them liable for the creation. Empowerment alludes to making individuals mindful of their undeniable and acquired, capacities and gifts that are given to them to be communicated in conventional life and the congregation. Such empowerment plans to manufacture mindfulness and human limits with the goal that they can be operators of change.

Empowerment ought to be conceived as a primary concern that change and empowerment are not progressive procedures in that the one causes the other, yet rather are interrelated procedures (LWF 2009, p.9). As per ecumenical Diakonia, diaconal work infers to encounter procedures of the move of intensity on different levels, extremely and between individuals. The essential model for the exchange of intensity is God who enables the individuals. Force is given to empower activity. At the point when God named Moses to address Pharaoh in Egypt and draw out the subjugated Israelites, Moses haggled with God (Exodus 3-4). Moses contended that he was clumsy and powerless to achieve the errand since he was not clear and delayed of discourse. God at that point vowed to support Moses and Aaron to talk and to enable them for the undertaking (Exodus 4:15). At the point when Jesus named the pupils to make supporters, all things considered, it was trailed by a guarantee of Jesus' essence (Matthew 28:20). Jesus assured that they would get power by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). At the point when the day of Pentecost came, God intervened in the life of the pupils and inserted in them the Spirit. The messengers were empowered to communicate in various dialects and were enabled to lecture the gospel to all countries (Acts 2).

Empowerment is a move of passion from the awesome to mankind. This is to empower the individuals to guarantee freedom, incorporation, space, and voice in opposition to rejection, detention, and quietness. In this manner, empowerment assumes to share power. From a women's activist point of view, force is tied in with sharing yet moreover about controlling. Since power enters life in different manners, there is a need to take gender empowerment from a women's activist viewpoint. She says that empowerment is a transformative capability of strength inside, established in oneself understanding that can move ladies at the grassroots level to distinguish and challenge sexual orientation differences in the home and community. She emphasizes that, from a women's activist point of view, emphasis ought to be on the incorporation and shared aggregate grassroots' interest and on the ability to team up with others as a way to control assets, to decide plans and to decide.

3.8 Diaconia and empowerment

The act of empowering individuals following imbalances of power has gained the attention of agents of diaconia (Nordstokke, 2012). Theodor Fliedner was a leading figure in the movement of

Diaconia in the 19th Century. The practice among the Mennonite church during his visit to Amsterdam caught his attention. In Amsterdam, the Mennonite church practically provided for the needs of the needy (new convicts, aged, children, and other vulnerable individuals) in the church. This act according to Fliedner was worth emulating by other churches and individuals who wish to help a neighbor (Latvus, 2017). As a religious idea, empowerment refers to the scriptural comprehension of creation that each person is made in the picture of God, with limits and capacities, free of their clear social circumstance (LWF 2009, 45). Inferring from the above statement, I can say that, everyone regardless of his or her social status, has the potential to succeed and to overcome all the barriers in life, to be wealthy, to have a good education, and own a decent job, a house and live a good and profitable life provided that they are empowered and knowing that they are created in the image a likeness of God.

Diaconia, therefore, helps to empower people, and besides, view the human dignity and capacity of the people as very vital. In this understanding, Dietrich (2014, 23) champions that empowerment theories are highly relevant for the concept of diaconia because they bring together the basic understanding of everyone's dignity, and the emphasis on diaconia acts as means of assisting the other to help herself without patronizing her. Empowerment means given strength and Confidence to (Mungure 2016, p.47). Empowerment stands for processes that endow the individual with resources, material as well as symbolic, and strengthen internal sources of power at various levels (Diego and Salazar, 2019). This understanding of empowerment as a process that can allow persons to be a master over their own lives so that they will be better able to take care of their financial, intellectual, and physical resources is a valuable perspective that is useful in interpreting my findings in a diaconal perspective. If persons can manage their resources, it will help to change their plight for the better.

Empowerment must enable people to be able to help themselves so that they have control over their own lives. Just like Rowlands (2008) puts it, an understanding of empowerment will require changing negative social construction. According to Nissen (2012, 27) empowerment points to positive change that results in a change of life and situation, and adds that empowerment adopts two actors namely; one who has the resources or capacity that the other doesn't have; one is

perceived to have power over the other; thus the need to empower - meaning sharing power. When power is not shared for example through education which can transform and reconcile the poor to have wholeness and healing, Ravi Jayakaran cited by Myers (Myres 2011, 15) asserts that the poor will be disempowered as a result of the non-poor “playing God” in the lives of the poor. Nissen (2012) further demonstrates the ambiguity inherent in empowerment as a concept and explains that the one offering care should do it in a manner that would enable and empower those in need.

This care we give to those in need according to Nissen sometimes tends to threaten the autonomy of the other person, and that the church or diaconal professionals have a duty to escape from being paternalistic in the help they offer. Nissen then gives in understandings of empowerment and power as well as offers examples of how it is used in practical work. He additionally analyzes the relationship between diaconia and empowerment from a theological point of view. I think Nissen’s understanding of empowerment points to valuable perspectives that will be useful in interpreting the results of the study. People, most especially the poor or marginalized in society can be empowered in so many forms. Education for example is one of the means of empowering people. Illiteracy leads to poverty which disempowers people because they will lack knowledge, skills, and many opportunities in life that can give them the power to influence their own life. The poor need to be given education in the form of training to make them acquire skills. From a Christian perspective, Jayakumar Christian, quoted by (Myres 2011) describes poverty as a system of disempowerment that creates an oppressive relationship and whose fundamental causes are spiritual.

3.9 Empowerment and gender

Empowerment according to Neil et al., (2014), Women’s empowerment has to do with a social and individual change in which they can make decisions and take control of their lives. The authors further indicate that the empowerment of women can be achieved through the creation of an enabling environment, deliberate policy measures to include women in all aspects of developments. Economic development plays a central role in increasing the number of women who can occupy social positions. Classical theory indicates that any rise in economic development comes with both occupational and educational resources. Access to these opportunities and resources enhances the

development of women professionally and paving ways for women in other positions. The Human Development theory emphasizes the translation of economic development into human development that liberates people of all status and manifests in the expression of oneself in terms of autonomy and choice (Welzel 2003; Inglehart and Welzel 2005).

This emancipation is based on nature and believes; religions differ in prospect for the emancipation of women. For instance, compared with other religious legacies, scholarship identifies that a Protestant religious tradition advances women's status in society. Their traditions are hospitable to the values of democracy. These values include respect for others, mutuality, and mass sovereignty. The above narrative confirms the findings of Edgardh & Lundström (2017) that countries advanced in terms of development recognizes the rights of women and gender equality in totality. Similarly, women can work of God effectively especially when they are free from patriarchal facets of their backgrounds (Edgardh & Lundström, 2017). However, these is attained in a proper sense when one is self-sustained (Inglehart and Norris 2003; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). For instance, A study conducted Madagascar however reveals that the expectations of gender traditionally increases even when women are economically free (Skjortnes & Zachariassen, 2010). To them, decisions regarding women's education and other economic ventures are informed to a larger extent by the extended family. This sometimes delays or in some instances hinders the empowerment of women in society. The authors explained that society tries to keep women to some roles thereby ridiculing households that try to promote gender equality.

As espoused by Dietrich (2016, p. 22), applying a gender perspective on diaconia includes finding ways of transforming human life, leading to the empowerment and reconciliation of all human beings, following God's intention for the whole of creation. Applying a gender perspective to this work will thus help me to understand whether or not the support of the Suhudoo Baptist church as a diaconal agent led to transformed and empowered the vulnerable female head porter. A gender approach perspective to diaconia is therefore appropriate to apply to this project in other to "analyze in the context, the hidden revealed patterns of gender injustice, applying profound Christian anthropology that emphasizes the dignity and value of all human beings to address the situation and try to find new better ways of living together in our world" (Dietrich, 2016). I seek to

understand whether or not the support of the church to the young female head porter creates an awareness of gender justice, and to see if the vulnerable head porter is valued in the society, as well to assess whether the support has helped the young female to do something for themselves so that they do not depend on anybody for help, just as Dietrich (2014, 16) puts it, diaconal service should focus on reducing dependencies, supporting independence, and activating the other person's resources to cope on their own in the long round.

Secondly, since in the Ghanaian context, young female head porters are neglected, left in the margins of society, and have nobody to their defense, I would want to explore and to use gender theories as a methodological tool to facilitate public policies that advocate citizenship rights, and transform unjust structures thus promoting fundamental inclusiveness for all human beings (Dietrich, 2014). This is because the church has the responsibility of bringing people together, regardless of their societal status, situation, and even gender as one family to empower to establish their spaces to develop socially, economically, and even spiritually. This is in support of Dietrich (2016, p. 20) as she explores that, creating a sustainable inclusive communities is a part of the diaconal call of the church. However, Nygaard (2017) argues that interaction with the margins can inspire another notion of the gestalt of the gospel, she then advocates and throws more light and that, the Christian faith is all about following Jesus, living out the values of the kingdom of God and generating inclusive community to transformed about the love of God and others. Just as Nygaard explains gestalt of faith as in a verb, following Jesus and being transformed by love.

3.10 Women empowerment

Women's empowerment is a new paradigm of development that emphasizes the characteristics of people-centered, participatory improving, and sustainable (centered, active participation) (Yuliana, 2020). This concept was developed by many experts and practitioners to look for an effort called "alternative development" which calls for "inclusive democracy", inclusive economic growth, gender equality, and intergenerational equality (proper economic growth, gender equality, and intergenerational equality) (Kartasasmita, 1996). When compared with men, women are more exposed to networks of power that trap them in a standard image that worries them (Dzuhayatin, 1996). The concept of empowerment as a paradigm has also been reviewed by Moser (1993).

Empowerment strategies are not intended to create women who are superior to men. Although this empowerment approach realizes the importance of increasing women's power, this approach seeks to identify power not only in terms of one's domination of the other but rather within the framework of women's capacity to increase independence and internal strength (Yuliana, 2020).

Chapter four: Methodology

4.0 Chapter introduction

A synopsis of the procedures undertaken in conducting the study is what this chapter seeks to bring forth. In more detail, in this chapter, the inquirer outlines the research design, study population, sampling technique, sample size, sources of data, method of data collection, data handling, and analysis as well as ethical considerations. Notwithstanding, to provide insights into the process of the study, other limitations will also be discussed.

4.1 Research design

Research design as stated by Kothari (2004) is a theoretical structure within which a study is conducted. A research design shows how a problem under investigation can be solved (Lewis, Colombo, Lawrence, and Chandler, 2019). A qualitative research design was used in conducting this study. The qualitative approach to research is relevant to this project as I explore the social phenomena of the susceptible young female head porters. This is consistent with Creswell (2014), qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the individual or groups ascribed to a social human problem (Creswell 2014, 4).

4.1.1 Transformative approach

The current investigation was roused by the transformative perspective to concentrate on the necessities of gatherings and people in our general public that might be underestimated or disappointed (Creswell 2014, 10), and how they are enabled. The transformative approach aims at changing the lives of participants and discourses about specific problems that speak to important social issues like empowerment, oppression, and suppression as it proposes ways to change what presently exists in the interest of the vulnerable. It is therefore against this background that open-ended question interviews were used to solicit rich comprehensive information and experiences from the participants in a way that did not further make them vulnerable but with the intent on to get a better understanding of the plight of the young female head porter as well as what the church is doing to support them.

4.2 Sampling

After due consideration of the research question that was derived from the research topic, it was thought best to interview head porters who were living and getting the support from the church to get an impartial assessment of the situation. Purposeful sampling was used, and this is in agreement with Patton (2002) that the essence of purposeful sampling is to select information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Palinkas, Arnold-Clark, Smith, Duan, Fuentes and Schneiderman 2013; Patton, 2002). I interviewed 8 participants who were head porters and were receiving support from this particular church, and this helped me to get the required information needed for an in-depth analysis related to the phenomenon being studied (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005). Babbie and Mouton (2001) in their assertion that purposeful sampling involves selecting a sample from a population with a specific set of characteristics for the research also echoes and supports my choice of using purposeful sampling.

Due protocols necessary were followed in the recruitment of the participants by educating participants on the purpose of the study and the purpose of the recruitment. A detailed consent form (see appendix B) was provided to each person signifying what the project involved and how their participation would be treated, in addition to pointing out to their freedom to pull out from the process at any point in time. The purposeful sampling technique was used to select all young female head porters who are facing challenges as described in the study. All the young female head porters selected and interviewed were members of the Suhodoo Baptist Church. I had the opportunity to talk to the head pastor of the church as well as the leaders of the church who directed me to the abode of the female head porters.

4.2.1 Participants

In all, eight participants took part in this project, and they were all female head porters that the church was giving support to. The enquirer was directed to the site where the participants were located by the head pastor at the church which was catering and giving support to them. The enquirer then purposefully selected some of the head porters to interview to ensure that the units of analysis possessed the needed knowledge and experience in keeping with the research question, as opposed to random sampling (Creswell and Creswell 2018). All participants consented to devote

time for the interview although time was a challenge for them due to their job. They went to work very early in the morning and came back from work very tired around 7 pm. During the interview, participants were feeling shy to disclose their experiences to me by responding slowly, looking elsewhere when responding, and covering their faces with their hands. Although they did not want to share their experience initially, they finally opened up to respond to the questions posed by the interview guide. I did not understand some of the dialects of the respondents because he is from the Southern part of Ghana with almost all the participants coming from the Northern part of Ghana. Therefore, he went to the site with someone who understood and could speak the language of the participant to administer the interviews well to solicit rich information.

4.3 Data collection methods

Data were collected within one week. A letter of permission was sent to the head pastor of Suhoodoo Baptist Church to permit me to use the place for the research site. Participants were briefed about the study before the week of data collection. Aside from interviews which were the primary source of data collection, there was the retrieval of documents that was carefully accessed for the purpose of the study by me. I retrieved the information that was relevant to the study. For example, the head pastor of the Suhoodoo Baptist Church provided appropriate documents and literature that would be advantageous to the research (Walker, Mike and Wanda, 2014).

4.3.1 Interviews

I used interviews to solicit data from respondents. Interview as espoused by (Bryman, 2012), is a conversation between two or more persons with the intent to gather information or unearth data and is believed to be one of the most extensively used in qualitative data collection. Interview guides developed for this project were in line with the research objectives, with the anticipation to identify opinions and ideas from respondents. Participants were selected and were acquainted with the interview guides (see appendix i). The inquirer took the time to let participants ask questions on what the project was about before the start of the interviews. This was to help the inquirer establish a relationship of trust with participants. Participants were informed about the purpose of the interview, their part in the conversation, as well as what the recording instruments would be used for (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). Permission was formally sought from participants before

using the recording instrument and they consented to it. Observed nonverbal signals from respondents were also recorded using field notepad. Each interview lasted between 30 to 85 minutes. All eight interviews were administered face-to-face. The face-to-face interview was very interactive, engaging, and lively as the interviewer had the advantage to look into the eyes of the interviewees, to identify their facial expressions and body responses in the course of the interview.

To gain enhanced comprehension and interaction, an open-ended interview was used. Open-ended questions also gave the interviewer the chance to pose a follow-up question which was deemed necessary for explanation. The follow-up questions that were posed to interviewees now and then remained needed for additional responses that were given (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). Interviewees were given adequate time to tell their understandings without disruptions. I also made a cognizant effort not to control or dominate the conversation by any exercise of power but then gave interviewees the chance to express themselves without restrictions, just as delineated by (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). The enquirer was mindful of possible power asymmetry. Participants were given the break to share their stories since it was expressed that they do not get many such opportunities. This kind of interview, as pronounced by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) is a narrative interview because it gave participants the chance to voice out their stories. The interview guide was grouped into three sections. Section one comprises of the demographic characteristics of participants.

Participants were asked to tell about themselves including their age, place of origin, and work experience. I further inquired about the reasons why they opt for a job as a head porter and asked if they had a choice. Section 2 consists of six items concerning the problems encountered by head porters. Four items were included in section 3 concerning the effects of the church's program on the empowerment of the female head porters. Also, five indicators (economic, socio-cultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, and political) were used also in terms of the level at which the church empowerment has supported the head porters. Four items were used under economic; four-item were used under socio-cultural, six items under familial/interpersonal, three items under legal, four items under political, and three items under psychological. I interviewed the church premise for the participants to feel comfortable. I started interviewing participants with a small talk by

introducing himself (Gray, 2017). After that, I further had chats with participants about where I come from, his experience and knowledge about the work of the head porters about their work. They also talked about their experience which made me establish confidence and respect.

I channeled the conversation into the purpose of the study. I disclosed the confidentiality of the study to the participants. I recorded all responses from the participants and transcribed them, this helped me to ensure that there is no delay in the process and that the interview is done within the time set by me. During the interview, I established eye contact as much as possible, to listen and express interest in what they were saying, while at the same time remaining neutral. I kept the interview process focused on the purpose of the study. I asked the interview questions in a friendly manner and without haste. I waited for participants to answer a question at a time and gave them more time for them to feel comfortable. I tried to encourage the participants to give details and expand on their answers.

In qualitative research, documents are very highly regarded and as asserted by (Creswell 2014, 192). One advantage of a document in a qualitative study, and as a data collection type, is that it informs the reader about the situation and saves time and expense of transcribing. As it could be seen in the context chapter from pages 15 to 20 of this thesis sections 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5, documents about the urban poor in Ghana written by Walker, Mike and Wanda (2014) who were missionaries from the Southern Baptist Convention, USA was a useful in the description of the context in this research in that, it offered the concise history of the Suhudoo Baptist Church in Ghana since its foundation in 1997 by two missionaries together with five pastors from the Northern part of Ghana.

4.4 Validity and reliability

A good study cannot do away with validity and reliability. Validity applies to whether or not the research is reliable and accurate, while reliability speaks to the consistency of the presented data under other researches of analogous nature. Since the inquirer's quest was transparent about the objective of the study, the respondents on the other hand were also candid and quite open in their responses. As revealed from information gathered from a variety of respondents, there was validity and accuracy of the responses from the informants. This clearly showed that large, the research

questions were self-explanatory and that participants undoubtedly understood them. A tape recorder was used to save details of the interview, and this process of crosschecking and using the recorder according to Creswell and Creswell (2018), helps to ensure that collected data is reliable. This is because transcribing recorded data is believed to be a unique means to test reliability.

4.5 Data analysis and interpretation

In the words of Mouton (2001, 108), data analysis is the process of breaking down data collected into themes, patterns, and trends that are manageable and that will assist to guide me to identify relationships between concepts and theories, therefore applying theories to data to bring new insights. Hence, after the collection of data, qualitative data analysis was employed, and this was done through the classification of information pertinent to the research and objective. Conceptions and thoughts were coded and allotted to themes perceptible. Thereafter, the inquirer substantiated the analyzed data to assess if the objectives of the study were accomplished or not.

4.5.1 Coding/thematic strategy

Initially, the inquirer started by coding in his attempt to interpret the portions of the data collected. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), coding is the process of placing data into organized segments that seem related and assigning labels or themes. Transcription was cautiously done to precision. The raw data was coded to get meaningful information that was dealt with thematically (Creswell and Creswell 2018). Data was coded into what characterizes the empowerment of young female head porters, problems encountered by head porters, and effects of the churches' programs on the empowerment of the female head porters (Economic, Socio-Cultural, Familial/Interpersonal, Legal, Political, and Psychological). Furthermore, during the interpretation, the data that was coded, findings were summarized specifying, differences, similarities, trends, as well as innovative and surprising findings which were afterward discussed concerning the proposed theories in the study.

4.6 Ethical considerations

For the benefit of both the participants and me, ethical issues were observed (Gajjar, 2013). In the course of the interview, I enlightened the interviewees about what the research would be about and

afterward sought their consent to participate. Participants were also informed that information that would be collected would be used for only academic purposes. The protection of privacy of participants was of key concern, as such numerous steps were taken before, during, and after the study. Borrowing from the understanding of Bryman (2012, 137-138), I tried to anonymize the participants involved and was keen on this as it is usually an important prerequisite in research work. Considering this, initially, questions were crafted in order not to gather or disclose needless personal information. Furthermore, approval was also sought from the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) under the regulations of the (VID) University. Acceptance from the NSD was granted for the project to commence on the 11th of November 2019. The required consent form was set and adjudicated to all respondents demonstrating their choice to take part in the research. As a prerequisite, all stored data will be destroyed after the research is complete, and in keeping with the understanding of Creswell (2018) extra care was engaged during the analysis and presentation of findings to avoid divulging any data that would put the informants at risk.

4.7 Challenges during data collection

Numerous possible factors may affect the procedure of conducting research and this is very important to reflect upon. As a youth leader in a Baptist Church and a son of a Baptist minister, I had certain prejudices, but I tried to remain as simple as a mere church member as possible. Initially, I had the intention of assessing two other Baptist Churches which were doing something in support of the young female head porter. But when I got to the field in Ghana around February this year 2020, I realized that what the first two churches, I intended to assess, were doing for the young female porters were only the giving of freebies in the form of clothes and foodstuffs occasionally. Upon hearing from a Baptist minister about the special care and attention the Suhudoo Baptist church was doing for the head porters, I was enthused and therefore inspired to know the nitty-gritty of what the support was about.

The head pastor of the Suhudoo Baptist church was therefore contacted and informed about the study. There were several logistical challenges like delays in trying to initiate contact via telephone as well as making times and dates for the interviews, but they did not in any way affect substantially the quality of the data. For example, on the first day of the interview, I went to the field and upon

waiting for respondents for several hours for the start of the interview, he was told by respondents that, they were very tired and as such the interview had to be postponed. Head porters because of the nature of their work woke up early morning around five o'clock to go to work, they come home around seven pm, and they had to wash down, get something to eat before we could start our interview. Hence the inquirer had to start his interview with head porters around eight pm late in the evening. Thus, the inquirer had to do only two interviews each day he went to the location for the interview. This is because after two interviews, it will be too late into the night, and other respondents to be interviewed may be feeling sleepy and exhausted.

Amidst mosquito bites at the location of the interview, there were times when the interviews were disturbed because of other interferences on the part of the respondents who needed to attend to other matters, which sometimes resulted in a loss of momentum of the interview. The location of the interview upon consensus with the respondents, therefore, had to be changed to avoid disturbances and mosquito bites. On the second day of the interview, for instance, the interview was delayed for a considerable time because participants came from work very tired. The inquirer went to the location of the interview with someone who could speak and understand the spoken language of the respondents. This is because the inquirer was from the Southern part of Ghana while the head porters were from the Northern part of Ghana. Only a few of the respondents could speak and understand the language of the enquirer. Hence, most of the interviews which were done in the spoken language (local dialect) of the respondents were translated for the interpretation of the data.

4.8 Presentation of the informants

In this section, I provide an overview of the demographic characteristics of the informants. This section discusses the socio-demographic profile of the head porters from Suhudoo Baptist church, Aboabo, Kumasi- Ghana. The response of the respondents was characterized as participant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

4.8.1 Age of respondents and place of origin

Three out of the eight head porters were in the age range of 16 -18years (figure 5). The remaining five fell between 20 and 24 years (figure 5). This suggests that young individuals are mostly involved in the head porting job. Three out of eight head porters interviewed were mothers. One of the mothers was 17years, the remaining two were 20 and 24 years old. Head porting in Ghana is mainly an activity engaged by females. Below is a figure depicting the ages of the participants.

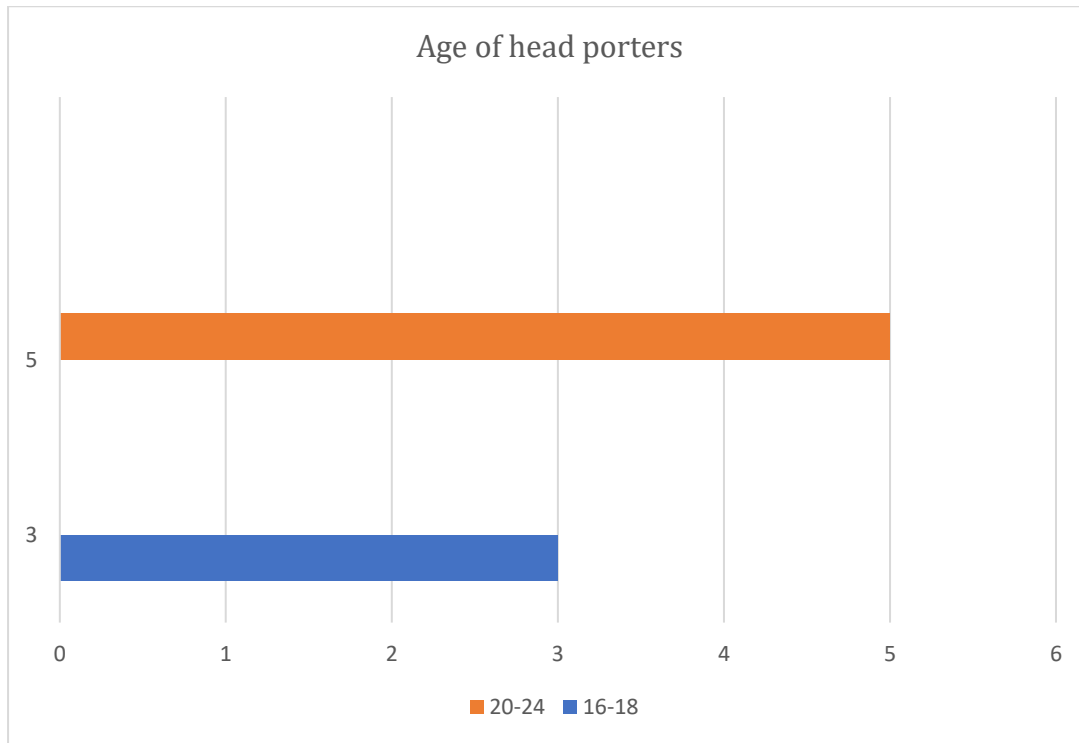


Figure 5: Age of Head Porters

All the eight head porters' hail from the Northern region of Ghana. These places include Daboya, Yendi, and Savelugu. According to the head porters, farming is the predominant economic activity in the home villages of the head porters.

Chapter 5: Analysis of head porters' interviews on the output of the church's support on their lives

5.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter focuses on the responses of the head porters to provide answers to the research questions posed in chapter one. The responses were grouped into themes for easy identification with quotations to back the claims made by the head porters. The responses have been further illustrated on the charts to present the visual impression of the data gathered.

5.1 Educational attainment

Five of the head porters interviewed attained Junior High school education but could not further to the second cycle (figure 6). Financial constraint was the reason assigned to their inability to further their education. This led them to indulge in the head porting job. Two of the head porters ended their education at the Primary level while the remaining person did not attain any formal education.

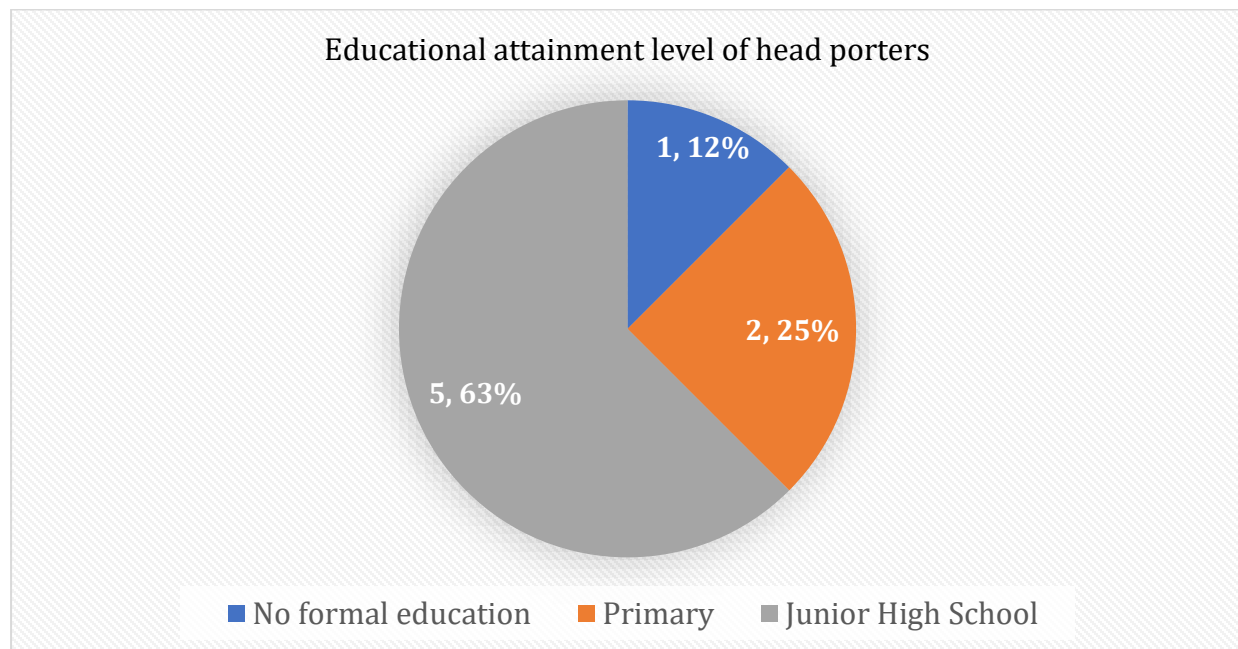


Figure 6: Educational Attainment Level of head porters

The educational level of head porters is very low since they have not gained higher education.

5.2 Motivation and reasons why young females venture into head porting activity

All the head porters noted that they have come to the city to seek greener pastures in an attempt to diversify their economic activities. Another reason assigned for venturing into the head porting activity was the lack of requisite skills for formal jobs in the city. For instance, head porter 3 indicated that,

According to the head porters, they can diversify into the sale of banana, shop attendants among others when they become familiar with the environment. However, according to all the head porters, head porting is the first point of call when they arrive in the city. This is in line with the inadequate skills deficiency that many of the head porters are challenged with.

5.3 Problems encountered by head porters

The results seek to provide an understanding of the weight of the challenges by providing narrations of the head porters. Under this theme as categorized in the questionnaire, six items were used for this purpose. Head porters got themselves in the head porting business *“they see this as a steppingstone”* [Participant 1 and 4]. Head porters know about the value placed on head porting business as some of them said *“It is not a good job, people in this business have no future”* [Participant 2 and 6]. Other head porters said the head porting business is *“Very tedious and hectic, but this is the only means or source of survival for now”* [Participant 3]. With the stress and difficulty, they go through they are taxed as participant 8 said *“even though we don’t earn much, with less pay that we receive, we pay more tax”*. Some of the head porters in a similar response also underrated the job that *“It is not something that human beings should be doing”* [Participant 2, 5 and 8]. For the treatment, they receive at the workplace *“Customers make meager payments and treat us poorly”* [Participant 4]. The conditions that they go through at their workplace are not good such that *“Sometimes, I walk all day in the scorching sun without finding any job to engage me”* [Participant 1]. Many of the head porters *“work under harsh conditions by staying in the sun to wait for customers, walk in the sun all day with sometimes no load to carry, get a meager income at the close of the day”* [Participant 8]. *Because of their vulnerability in the society, sometimes people do not pay them after carrying their loads and are been maltreated.*

The narration also stresses on the fact that head porters are not treated well based on the circumstances in which they find themselves. People take advantage of them because they know head porters are vulnerable and have no other course of action to explore. Some participants gave an example that *“they bargain for GHc5 for a load but after carrying it to their destinations, they are paid GHC3. But of late the church sometime intervenes for us some instances”* [Participant 6]. The nature of their job (see fig.4 Pg.19) makes them experience *“chest, head and neck pains after carrying heavy loads”* [Participant 6]. When asked if they enjoy their work as a head porter, some of them said *“No at all, just that when they came to Kumasi, they had no job to do and no place to stay”* [Participant 1]. Other participants said *“No, there is nothing good about this job to enjoy but I have no choice, so I have to enjoy it as it is”* [Participant 2 and 5]. Some also said, *“they don’t like it at all and that they are not happy with this job, but it is better than stealing”* [Participant 4 and 6].

Generally, the major challenges confronted by the head porters in Kumasi are meager income, maltreatment from customers, and unfavorable tax arrangements. Attendant problems include health risk as heavy weighted loads are carried by head porters under the scorching sun. 100% of the head porters interviewed are not comfortable with the job but have no choice except to go back to their home villages. Another challenge was the unpredictable nature of the job. In this regard, there were days when head porters had no work to do yet they had to pay taxes. Most of the head porters narrated a similar response of which I have referred all that were responded similarly by the participants. For instance, response 1 was similarly responded by participants 1 and 2, response 2 was similarly responded by participants 3, 4, and 7, etc. As participants 1 and 2 said, *“We are sometimes raped and intimidated by others this gives us fears when we are going to work”*. Participant 4 said *“they are always having pains all over their body, and are sometimes stigmatized because people don’t respect them at all”*. Participants 2, 3, 5, 8, and 7 said *“the loads they carry are too heavy; every evening they must take paracetamol because of head and neck pains I experience”*. Participant 8 and 7 also said, *“they are even fortunate that the church has given them a place to stay after work, either than that, they would have been raped by now just like what bad people have been doing to their colleagues who live and sleep in front of people’s shops in the streets in the night”*.

5.3.1 Reflections on the main issues encountered by head porters

Here, I summarized additional responses into four main categories of challenges that emerged. One is the health-associated problems, two is the fluctuation in the demand of head porters, three is the maltreatment of head porters, and the last one is the unfavorable tax arrangements. The challenges are illustrated in figure 7 below;

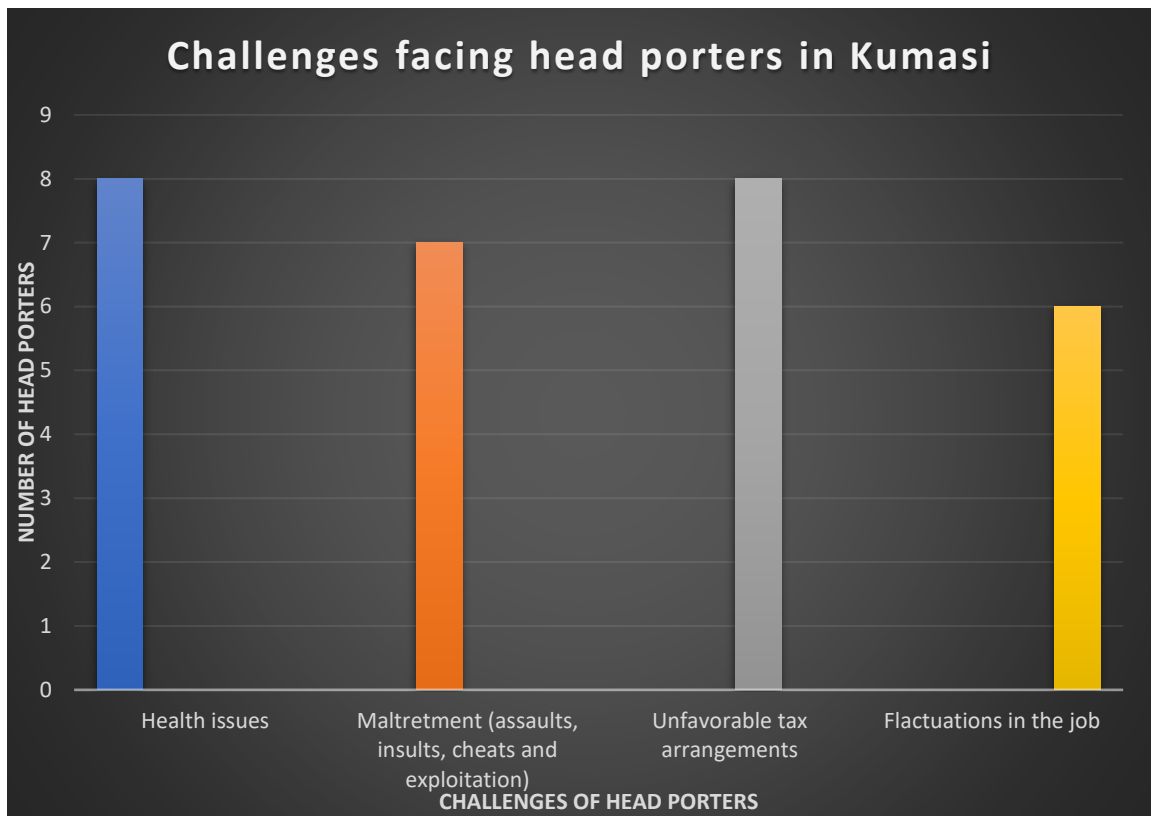


Figure 7: Challenges faced by head porters

Figure 7 above gives a result of the categorized challenges faced by head porters. The numbers on the extreme left on the vertical axis represent the number of head porters while the challenges faced by the head porters are represented beneath the horizontal line at the bottom of the figure. From figure 7 above, it indicates that health issues and unfavorable tax arrangements ranked the highest challenges faced by head porters. Maltreatment (assaults, insults, cheats, and exploitation) was the

third-highest challenge faced by head porters. Lastly, fluctuations in the job were the lowest challenge faced by head porters.

5.3.2 Health associated problems

Head porters interviewed during the study revealed that they are exposed to physical stress. This is mostly manifested in the forms neck waist and sometimes the entire body pains. The aftermaths of this are fractures and sprains. During the day, head porters either carry heavy loads under the scorching sun or sit under the scorching sun (that is if they have no job to do). Head porters eat even in this kind of environment. The health implication for direct exposure to extreme weather conditions is enormous. Most of the head porters narrated a similar response of which I have to reference all that were responded similarly by the participants. For instance, response 1 was similarly responded by participants 2, 3, 5, 8, and 7, response 2 was similarly responded by participants 8 and 7, etc. Carrying loads to the residence of people exposes head porters to rapists as was revealed during the interviews. *“The loads we carry are too heavy; every evening I must take paracetamol because of head and neck pains I experience”* [Participant 2, 3, 5, 8 and 7].

I am even fortunate that the church has given me a place to stay after work, either than that, I would have been raped by now just like what bad people have been doing to my other colleagues who live and sleep in front of people’s shops in the streets in the night [Participant 8 and 7].

5.3.3 Fluctuation in the demand of head porters’ service/Maltreatment of head porters

Head porters interviewed during the study revealed that there are fluctuations in the demand for head porters’ service. Another challenge was the unpredictable nature of the job. In this regard, there were days when head porters had no work to do yet they had to pay taxes. As many participants said, “every day there is a demand for head porters’ service, there are some days that they get more customers” [Participant 6 and 7]. The number of customers ahead potter gets a day determines her daily income. On average, GHC20 is made a day. Out of this, she feeds herself and her child that is if she is a mother. Head porters interviewed during the study complained about maltreatments they face in the form of insults, exploitation, assaults, and cheating. These were other challenges faced by the head porters. Head porter 3 narrated;

They bargain for GHC5 for a load but after carrying it to their destinations, some customers do not pay the bargain price but rather reduce the amount to GHC3. Moreover, there have been instances where my other colleagues are being raped during the night. As for insults, it is an experience every head porter goes through all the time.

In sum, head porters are not respected by their customers and in many cases, they are treated as low class humans.

5.3.4 Unfavorable tax arrangements

Head porters interviewed during the study complained bitterly about how they are taxed by the Metropolitan Assembly. The issue of tax is worsened by the fact that head porting fluctuates. A head porter cannot tell whether she will get customers to carry their goods or not. This makes generating income unpredictable. *“We are supposed to pay taxes daily, yet sometimes we find it difficult making ends meet”* [Participant 1]. It was obvious from the remarks of the head porters that, they are not comfortable with the job but have no choice except to go back to their home villages. Interestingly, none of these porters were willing to return to their communities. A reason assigned to their unwillingness to go back home, all participants responded in the same content as summarized below, *“We came here to make money, going back home now without any tangible results will make us laughing stocks in the sights of our relatives”* [Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8].

5.4 Effects of the church’s programs on the empowerment of female head porters

This section seeks to provide the effects of the diaconal act of the church on the empowerment of the head porters. Under this theme as categorized in the questionnaire, four items were used for this purpose with additional items under six indicators (economic, socio-cultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological). Among the many support offered to the head porters by the church are free accommodation, and water, and toilet facility, education on basic human rights, financial support, and advocating for the head porters. Participants were asked their thought about their experience with the church. Some of the head porters said, *“they have gain experience from church programs, especially the educative session helps them to have insights into so many things that they did not know”* [Participant 1]. All the head porters at the church premise said *“their experience with the church is very helpful in that, whenever they*

encounter a problem, it is the church that comes to their rescue” [Participant 2]. Some of the participant's experiences have developed to a point that *“the church gives head porters money and other items, when they are getting married and when they lose a relative, the church comes to support them”* [Participant 3]. Most of the head porters get assistance from the church that makes them have experience with the others said

I have no real experience with the church because I came recently, and the church has given me a place to sleep. Not only that, but the church has also given me access to a toilet facility and a preschool for my child. The church has also promised to give me vocational training as my colleagues are enjoying. There are about five of my colleagues who are currently learning dress and hair making. I may get the opportunity to learn a skill in the next batch of head porters who will be assisted by the church [Participant 6].

Head porters were asked their thought about the assistance they get from the church. Some of the head porters’ children get free education as one narrated that *“the church is giving my child-free education”* [Participant 2]. Other participants said

The church has secured a place for head porters to live, they also provide skills for some of the head porters. I am now learning how to sew on weekends. The church organizes programs to teach us on our rights and where to seek assistance when our rights are violated [Participant 4].

The above narration indicates that, the church in its diaconal practices identified the core needs of the head porters. Shelter is a basic need thus for one to be empowered, he/she ought to have a decent place to call a home. The provision of the church will go a long way to address the risk of being exposed to external weather conditions which other head porters face across the country.

The church has given us free accommodation and also comes to the rescue of head porters when we are in need. I have safe drinking water for free, toilet and bathroom facilities also for free, very soon, I will start to learn some vocational skills because I have been selected as part of the next batch for the training. I sometimes get support from the church and other church members in cash and in-kind. There have been many programs that the church organizes for us that help us to know so many things that we did not know before, for

example, the church teaches us about our rights, advises us to save, and a lot about family planning [Participant 6].

Shelter, portable water and good sanitary facilities are needed to enhance health which will in help in productivity. The support of the church basically responds to the basic needs of human. Meeting one's basic needs is essential in enhancing confidence in an individual.

The church gives head porters spiritual assistance. That is, the church prays for us every day, sometimes they give us foodstuffs and clothing. Parties are at times organized for head porters, most especially during Christmas; the church advice head porters to save; we have free drinking water; the last time that I was sick and was admitted at the hospital, the church paid all my hospital bills, to be frank with you, the church is my father my mother and my everything, I see the presence of God in this church. [Participant 8].

Spiritual assistance in the form of prayers and preaching, interaction in the form of preaching and sharing the word of God among the members of the church gives moral support to members. This moral support is necessary to give hope to the members.

5.4.1 The important parts of the head porters' daily life

Here participants were asked the important thing in their life. Some of the head porters said “*nothing but want to be allowed to learn a new skill, as there is nothing important to be ahead porter*” [Participant 2]. Interestingly, other head porters narrated that “*Going to work without a confrontation with the city guard, KMA tax collectors, and having loads to carry with good money as pay*’ [Participant 3] is the important part of the daily life of head porters. Surprisingly, others said, “*there is no important thing they see in the head porter business and if it is this job that they will do until their old age, then they have no future*” [Participant 4]. One head porter said

What is important for me as a head porter now is to at least have a load to carry when I go to work so I can get money to come and take good care of my child and save so I can buy a sewing machine when I am done with the training. [Participant 6]

The above narratives indicate that head pottering is involving (see fig.4) and even pays less yet one has to do it since they have no option.

5.4.2 The head porters' wishes from the church

Here participants were asked what they want the church to do for them. The assistance provided by the church to head porters has benefited them a lot as some narrated that “*we are satisfied with the assistance from the church so far, just that there is more for them to do*” [Participant 1]. Other head porters need help beyond what the church is providing them “*Like help from the church to start a business or help them develop some skills to sew or do hairdressing*” [Participant 3]. Others asked for more opportunity beyond what the church is providing them, as others said: “*they will need more entrepreneurship training like hairdressing, I should be happy if the Church could give us the skills to make liquid soap, send some of us who are very young to go to school*”. [Participant 5]. Others also said, “*the church should provide some basic equipment needed for the training so that after completion, we will have the equipment to work with*” [Participant 6]. In terms of language, other participants said

We want the church to teach us Twi since it is the medium of communication here in the Ashanti region so that after developing the skills in sewing. I will be able to have my machine which I can use to start my own business and they will not find it difficult in speaking Twi [Participant 7]

The support of the church has imbibed in the head porters' a sense of confidence. For some time now the grievances of the head porters have been given some amount of attention. According to the head porters, the rate at which head porters have been maltreated is currently reducing.

5.4.3 The support of the church on the economic life of head porters

In this study, I sought to understand whether the support of the church empowers the head porters economically. It emerged from the research that, the church organized a skills training for the head porters. Interviews with all the head porters revealed that their interest was to learn a trade. This informed the decision of the church to organize skills training in the area of tailoring. Three out of the eight head porters interviewed had the privilege of learning dressmaking in 2019. The beneficiaries of the project were selected randomly by the leaders of the church. A beneficiary of the project had this to say,

I took advantage of the dressmaking project organized by the church. Currently, as I speak, I make some money through that skill and that complements my job as a head porter. In terms

of assets such as land, house among others, I do not have that but am saving towards that [Participant 1].

Now I am economically better than before, all because of the support of the church, formally I was paying for sleeping in front of a shop in the open, now I have a more convenient place to stay and sleep for free. I used to pay to visit the private toilets which weren't all that hygienic but now with the courtesy of the church, I have a modern toilet facility that I use for free. There are a lot of things that the church is doing for me that has enabled me to save a bit to cater to my child and I also send some money back home for my family [Participant 2].

The above narrative gives a clear indication that the support of the church is making a positive impact on the lives of the head porters.

5.4.3.1 Ownership of economic assets and access to credit

Head porters were asked about the employment opportunity that they are in. Some of them had engaged in other business but some have no other job than the head porting business as one narrated that *“there is no other employment apart from the head porters’ job, but with time as the church has promised, we will have a good job to do”* [Participant 3]. Those that have engaged themselves in other businesses said *“they have engaged themselves in sewing and very soon they will know how to sew which will give them a better employment opportunity”* [Participant 4]. Some head porters were eager to start their own business from sewing and start to earn and acquire assets to their name as one narrated that *“she don’t own any economic asset but believe that with time, she can rent a room for herself or own a house by God’s grace”* [Participant 6]. Some head porters gave a testimony that *“the support of the church has at least enabled them to buy personal needs like new clothes, utensils but I don’t owe any other things aside from these “.* [Participant 7]

I want to better learn to tailor so I can sew for people to get money to establish my tailor shop and that I can have money to acquire some personal properties, and the church is helping me in that regard [Participant 5]

Owning a basic skill is will help you locate your barring in all areas as you can tap into those skills to make a living. This thus suggest the essence of the above narration.

5.4.3.2 Involvement and/or representation in local trade associations

Here participants were asked about their representation in local trade associations. Almost all the head porters have joined the association as they said that “*We have a local head porters association in this house. I am an active member*” [Participant 2]. The other head porter said, “*she has no involvement in association here at the church house*” [Participant 3]. Some head porters make contributions to the association they join as one said “*I am a member of the young lady’s association in my home village. We pay dues and I can do that from the money I raise here*” [Participant 4]. This gives an indication that a little support to the head porters can reflect in all aspects of their daily lives.

The study revealed that five of the beneficiaries of the church’s support have quit the head porting. These individuals have sought employment in other areas, such as selling of cooked eggs, banana, and shop attendants. Access to credit is currently one of the major issues the head porters face. Access to credit in the financial institutions is based on the collateral of which the head porters lack. With the financial support and the accommodation rendered by the church, the study revealed that the financial burden of the head porters has been reduced. Monies that should have been spent on accommodation and water is put to other uses. This reflects in the ability of the head porters to send remittances to home villages.

My financial contributions in the village have made me relevant in the youth group and the head porters association here. I can pay my dues regularly and that has enabled me to contribute to decision making. My mom and siblings call me often now to seek my opinion any time a decision is to be made in the house [Participant 4]

The above narrative gives a clear indication that the support of the church is making a positive impact on the lives of the head porters.

5.4.4 Socio-cultural dimension of empowerment

In this study, I sought to understand the socio-cultural dimension of the head porters. Access to social spaces, access to transportation, participation in social networks, and commitment to educating children (including daughters) were the main variables considered under the socio-cultural dimension of empowerment. Social spaces include town squares or parks, pubs, websites,

or shopping malls. The support of the church has lessened the financial burden on the head porters. All participants agreed to have increased their savings following the free shelter, water, and electricity provided by the church. This increased the economic access of the head porters to access the social facilities and spaces. In Ghana, access to transportation is mostly based on the ability to pay for them. The choice of means of transportation is determined by your financial capability. As presented earlier, the ability to save by the head porters have aided in them to use any mode of transportation, mostly commercial buses (trotro, as called in the local parlance). In terms of the participation in social networks, the church has created an interacting environment where the head porters and other church members can network among themselves.

In the various villages and towns of the head porters, four of the head porters interviewed revealed to have been currently involved in the youth group activities. They happened to contributed dues towards the development of the youth groups. These actions have made them relevant in their communities. Four out eight head porters interviewed were mothers. While the remaining four have not had babies. When asked whether the support of the church has boosted their commitment to educating children or not, the four mothers responded positively. Three of the mothers whose children are of school-going age responded to have sent their kids to school when their living conditions improved a bit better. This is attributed to the free accommodation, water, and electricity provided by the church. Some of the selected comments are transcribed below;

5.4.4.1 Entry to social spaces and transportation

Here participants were asked about their access to social spaces. Before coming to the church or getting help from the church, head porters were stigmatized at some places and even some are prevented from entering some places. After the assistance they get from the church through education, they now know how and what to do, in other for people to accept them anywhere they want to be. As one narrated that *“I find it difficult to get access to those places, we don’t have access to these facilities”* [Participant 6]. Other head porter said

We have access to all those places, other head porters who do not dress well and look dirty are those who are rejected. I can go to any place I like provided I have the means to be there,

the church through some of its programs has taught us to always bath and look good so we can be bold to go anywhere we want to [Participant 5].

Those that were not allowed to take some transport said that *“I have access to all types of transportation provided we have money to afford”* [Participant 7].

5.4.4.2 Participation in social networks/commitment to educating children

Here participants were asked about their use of social media. Some of the head porters said that *“they are active in social events that are organized at the church and don’t have a mobile phone that supports social network, but I listen to radio and television”* [Participant 8]. Other head porter said that

No, my phone does not support social networks and that she doesn’t use android, which can now be used to talk to her family and friends back home because she is now able to buy credit from the help of the church. I am also able to visit all my friends anywhere in the Ashanti Region [Participant 2].

Some of the participants socialize themselves with the association they are in and this happens when they meet. As one narrated that

No, the only people I socialize with are people from the Tamale group of head porters who live in Adum as well as the head porters I live with here in the church, I am also able to talk to some prominent people in the church when I need help [Participant 1].

When head porters were asked about their commitment to educating their children. The head porters were eager to put their wards to school so that they will not suffer as their mother is facing now as one narrated that *“I have no child, but I am going to make sure my child or children receive the best of education because I was not educated, see what I am going through”* [Participant 3]. Other head porter said *“the support from the church allows me to educate my child for free, I am saving toward getting my child another school to continue after completing here”* [Participant 4]. The above narrative gives a clear indication that the support of the church is making a positive impact on the lives of the head porters. From the narration, the support gives the head porters the opportunity to save and also to socialize with other people in the community.

5.4.5 The Church's support on the family and interpersonal life of head porters

Participation in domestic decision-making, ability to make childbearing decisions, control over spouse selection and marriage timing, as well as freedom from domestic violence, were some factors considered under family or interpersonal dimension of empowerment. In this section, the focus was to understand the outcome of the support of the church in the personal and family lives of the head porters. It emerged that, married head porters as a result of the improvement in their financial status have been given the chance by their spouses to contribute to decision making at their family levels. The ability to contribute to decision making at the family level is manifested in the forms of deciding what food to eat when to give birth among others. The monies that otherwise would have been spent on accommodation, electricity and water bills can now be saved and used for other things at the household level. This is due to the free accommodation provided to the head porters by the church as one narrated that *"I send my savings to my family at my home village. As a result, my family gets me involved in most of the decisions they take"*. [Participant 5]

5.4.5.1 Participation in domestic decision-making

When participants were asked about their participation in domestic decision-making. Some of the head porters narrated that *"I am active in most of the decisions that my family back home make, this is all because I can send them something small every month"* [Participant 6]. Other head porter said, *"yes, I can now determine what dress to wear and eat, this has been influenced by my ability to raise some money for my savings, and would not have been able to this if the church did not come to my aid"* [Participant 7]. All the head porters at the church participate in decision making as one narrated that *"I participate in the domestic decision here in the church"*. [Participant 8]. Other head porters make decisions in their family as well as one narrated that

I participate in decision making. I call my husband and he also call me for discussions about whatever will help to improve our lives and that of our family and this is all because of the support of the church for helping me save. I wouldn't have been able to save and spend some money on my family if I was paying for rent, water, and electricity bills. [Participant 1]

Interview with the head porter 6 gave reasons why she is now part of decision making in the family at her village, she said that:

My financial contributions in the village have made me relevant in the youth group here and the head porters association here. I can pay my dues regularly and that has enabled me to contribute to decision making. My mom and siblings call me often now to seek my opinion any time a decision is to be made in the house [Participant 6].

The narrative confirms the fact that monies that otherwise would have been spent on accommodation, electricity and water bills can now be saved and used for other things at the household level. This is due to the free accommodation provided to the head porters by the church.

5.4.5.2 Ability to make a childbearing decision/use of contraception and access to abortion

Participants were asked about their ability to make childbearing decisions. Some of the head porters can make decisions when it comes to childbearing but some cannot as one narrated that *“I cannot make that decision, the childbearing decision is solely for a man to decide, but I trust that my future husband will respect my views”* [Participant 3]. Others said that

I can make childbearing decisions. That is why I have still not given birth; I have a boyfriend when I will decide with my husband about when to have children as well as the number of children to have when I marry. The church organized a program to teach us about all these things. [Participant 2]

When head porters were asked if they use contraceptives. Some of the head porters use but others do not use as they narrated that

Formally, I thought the use of contraceptives was a sin, but the program organized by the church has enlightened us on the importance and usage of contraceptives, I am going to make use of the knowledge about contraception when I marry [Participant 5].

Yes, I sometimes use contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancies when I travel to see my husband. The church through a resource person at the ministry of health comes to educate us on reproductive sexual health, hence my knowledge of the use of contraception. [Participant 6]

The narrative confirms the fact that monies that otherwise would have been spent on accommodation, electricity and water bills can now be saved and used for other things at the household level. This is due to the free accommodation provided to the head porters by the church.

When head porters were asked if they access abortion. None of the head porters practice abortion as narrated by some that *“the church does not support abortion and I do not support it either, if I*

get pregnant, regardless of my situation, I will not abort it” [Participant 7]. *“I am a Christian, and I do not support abortion”* [Participant 8]. The Ghanaian culture frown against abortion in marriage. This singular fact and stigmatization following an abortion in marriage make married women shy away from it. Young girls who abort pregnancies also faces stigmatization.

5.4.5.3 Control over spouse selection, marriage timing and freedom from domestic violence

When head porters were asked about their control over spouse selection and marriage timing. From the tribe that the head porters come from, young ladies do not have the choice to choose a man. Unless no man has come for their hand from her parents, other than that they are forced to marry a man who will come for their hand in marriage as the head porters narrated that *“I have decided to have developed a better skill in sewing before I marry”* [Participant 1]. Other head porters said

I have to decide if I like or do not like a man who proposes to me, I have been advised by the church that we should make a prudent decision when it comes to choosing our lifetime partners, someone we think we can live peacefully with until death do us apart, back home in the north marriage is forced on us the women, but we have been taught by the church that this is a bad practice, we should marry only those we think we love and want to marry. [Participant 3]

When head porters were asked about their freedom from domestic violence. They have not experienced violence since they got experience with the church as some narrated that *“they have not experienced domestic violence so far, and that the church is very safe to live, even when they go out to work and their right is violated, the church comes to their defense”* [Participant 4]. Others said, *“we are no more exposed to the public, so we are free from rape and assaults, thanks to the church”* [Participant 6]. One head porter shared a testimony that

I don't have issues of domestic violence at all, before I came to stay here in this church house, I was facing some violations in the night, but since I came here, I have not had such experience, this place is secured and free from band people, and I think I am going to experience a violence-free environment like what I am experiencing in this church house when I marry and stay with my husband and children. [Participant 5]

I noticed that social support among the head porters was great. They support one another if they needed little amount of money that they cannot ask of the church authority.

5.4.6 Legal

In the legal dimension of empowerment, the basic aim was to identify how the support of the church has empowered the head porters in matters that have a legal basis. The results show that five out of the eight participants covered in the study had some basic knowledge of their legal rights. These rights include rights to vote, rights to own property, freedom of speech, among others. The church as part of its support to the head porters, educate them during church meetings on the basic rights they are entitled to and how such rights can be trampled upon. Also, the head porters noted to have been enlightened by the church as to how to seek redress any time their rights are violated. The church further advocates for the head porters. It is important to note that, the constitution of Ghana allows for the enjoyment of these rights. However, three of the head porters have been educated on these rights by the church. Two of the participants had this to say,

I didn't know what legal rights are, I didn't even have money to pay the police, but the church through its programs has taught us about our rights. The church has taught me to know that, for instance, if someone gets me pregnant and I give birth, it is the responsibility of the man to take care of me and my child. If not, I can take the man to the Women and Juvenile Support Unit for the issue to be redressed. The church has also educated us to know if someone abuses our rights. It is expensive and bureaucratic to seek redress at the court, but the church has promised to help us in such cases [Participant 1 and 8].

Table 1: head porters' response on their knowledge and use of legal systems following the church's support

Variables under the legal system	Yes	No
Knowledge of legal rights e.g. rights to vote, rights to own property, freedom of speech, among others	8	0
Domestic support for exercising rights	8	0
Use of judicial system to redress rights violations	0	8

Source: (Interviews with the head porters in Kumasi, February 2020)

It emerged from the interviews that, the church provided accommodation for the head porters. The church as part of its services created an environment for all head porters to exercise their basic human rights. All the head porters interviewed had not resorted to the court for a redress of their issues. All participants had some rights that they are entitled to. The education offered by the Church has enlightened three of the head porters on their fundamental legal rights that have been enshrined in the 1992 constitution of Ghana. Seeking redress of legal violations with the Ghana police service and in the court of law appears to be expensive and bureaucratic. A head porter narrated;

We have been educated by the church on how to handle any violations of our rights. These include reporting to the police and seeking justice at the court of law. I believe the decisions of the police and the court of law are sometimes influenced by money. The church is my biggest support. This is manifested in negotiating with shop owners with whom we work and redress our daily challenges especially when we have been maltreated [Participant 3].

The support of the church has imbibed in the head porters a sense of confidence. This is seen in the form of enlightening the head porters of their rights. The study revealed that, with an increased awareness of their rights (right own property, freedom of movement, right to vote, freedom of expression, legal rights, and other basic human rights), head porters freely report to the church authority or head porter's association leadership. For some time now the grievances of the head porters have been given attention. According to the head porters, the rate at which head porters have been maltreated is currently reducing. *"The advocacy for the head porters by the church authority and the head porters' association is making a change yet the maltreatment is still the highest challenge we face"* [Participant 8].

5.4.7 Political dimension of empowerment

Ghana's female population consists of about 51.2%. This means women represent more than half of the entire population. Sustainable development discourse will be incomplete if the decisions of females are not considered in decision making. This makes the participation of women in the system of governance a necessity. Unfortunately, not a very significant representation of women

is seen at the forefront of politics in Ghana³. Currently, only 12.75% of Ghana’s Parliament are women. In assessing the effects of the church’s support on the political empowerment of the female head porters, variables such as mobilizations in the local political campaigns, support for specific candidates, exercising the right to vote and representation in local bodies of government were considered. The results showed that 50% of the respondents were actively involved in local political campaigns. 3 out of the 8 respondents reported supporting a particular candidate. In terms of exercising voting rights, 5 out the 8 respondents had participated in an election. None of the participants have ever contested an election.

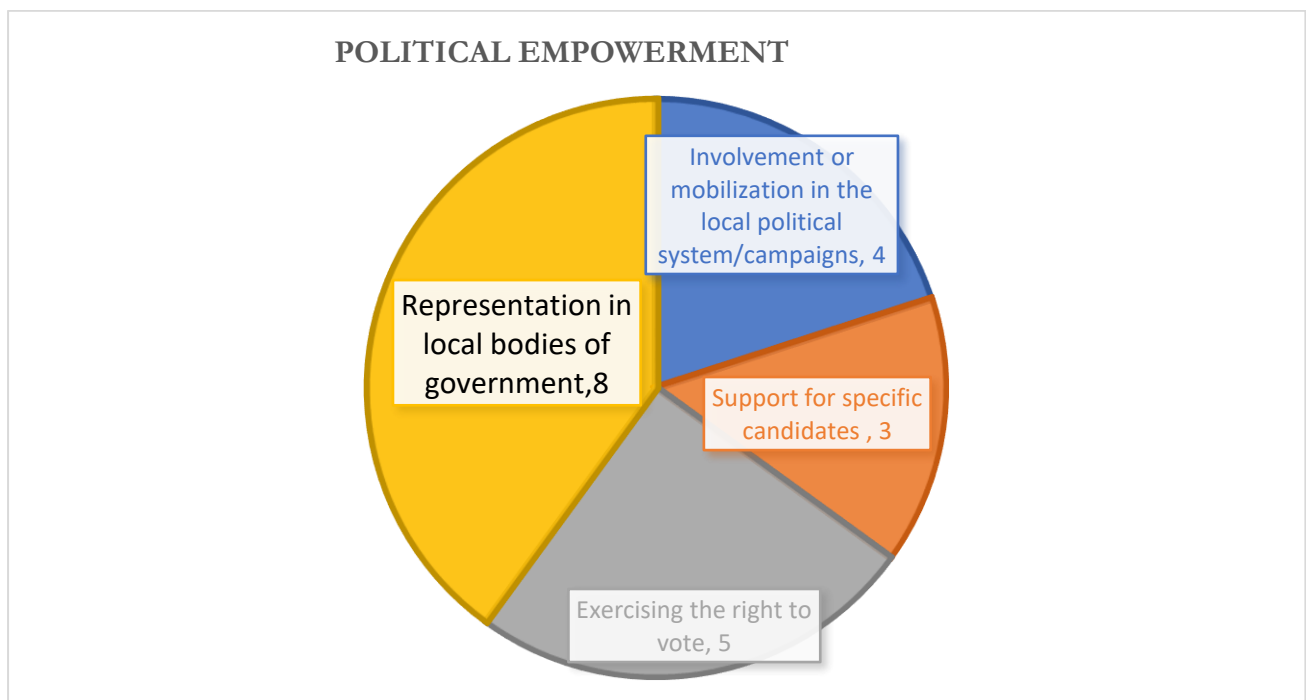


Figure 8: Political Empowerment

About the political empowerment, the government of Ghana has enshrined in the 1992 constitution. The support of the church has not empowered the participants politically. Religion according to the head porters played a key role in empowering them. Couples who joined the church were believed

³ <https://www.gh.undp.org/content/ghana/en/home/ourperspective/ourperspectivearticles/2017/01/23/women-s-political-participation-a-catalyst-for-gender-equality-and-women-empowerment-in-ghana.html>

to be more accommodating to the partners than ever before. This is manifested in reduced domestic violence and abuse and allowing females to participate in decision making.

5.4.8 Psychological dimension of empowerment

Suhudoo Baptist Church educates head porters, lives with them, and supports them as family. The study revealed that help from the church has help head porters to be psychologically free.

5.5 Key findings

The key findings of the study are being outlined here based on the empirical material relevant to the research question posed in chapter one. All the respondents were from the northern part of Ghana. 16 to 24 was the age range of the head porters. However, head porters encounter the following challenges in their day to day activities: health-associated problems, unfavorable tax arrangements, maltreatment of head porters, and fluctuations in the demand for the services of head porters resulting in low income were the challenges head porters reported during the survey. The head porters reported that the church has provided free accommodation, electricity, and water bill which hitherto would have cost them much money. The church has also been reported to have enlightened head porters on their various rights (rights to vote, own property, seek redress from the court and police service, etc.). The church supports the head porters when facing infringement of their rights by taking perpetrators to the police station. According to the informants, the church provided a spirit of hospitality, sharing, inclusiveness, and interactive nature in their support that brings important differences to the lives of the head porters.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.0 Chapter introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings with theories used in the empirical material (The see-reflect-act as a diaconal model, renewed diaconal action, sharing as a diaconal perspective, and Diaconia as interaction). As a guide, the main theories were used in this discussion in addressing the research question; *what characterizes the empowerment of young female head porters by the Suhudoo Baptist Church in Aboabo, Kumasi, Ghana?* I reflected on Gender and empowerment. I also deliberated on the theory of empowerment and diaconia to assess the support of the church. There was a discussion on the kind of improvements that female head porters experience in the church, as well as how life would have been for the head porters without the church. Another perspective that would help improve the work of the church or even more will also be reflected.

6.1 Understanding the nature of head porting in Ghana

The study revealed that head porting in Ghana is mainly an activity engaged by females. Few of the participants were below 18 years and the majority of them were adults. This, therefore, implies that; young persons are mostly involved in the head porting job. The tedious nature of the job was the main reason assigned to the predominant involvement of young females. A finding which corroborates conclusions made by Feigben (2010) and Baah-Ennumh, Amponsah and Owusu (2012) that child labor is and will continue to persist if no drastic measures are taken in Ghana. I discovered that the head porters hailed from the northern regions of Ghana. A pattern that followed the North-South movement. The North-South migration in Ghana is an old phenomenon that mostly features the youth. In the view of Kwankye et al. (2007), Awumbila (2007), and Baah-Ennumh et al. (2012), this trend of migration is attributed to the difference in the North-South development.

The motive has always been to seek greener pastures, running away from early marriages and other family pressures (Kwankye et al. 2007). These head porters come to the city to seek greener pastures in an attempt to diversify their economic activities. The study is in line with the findings of earlier studies which showed that head porters are unskilled and mostly uneducated young

women from very poor homes in Northern Ghana (Global sister' report 2017; Shamsu-Deen, 2013; Opare, 2003). Head porters are mostly females who are unable to further their education beyond junior high levels due to financial challenges. To Baah-Ennumh et al. (2012) and Anzagra and Yeboah (2012), female head porters begin their business at a very young age, that under normal circumstances they should have been in school. Head porting is a tedious job, this will have a negative health risk on the young individuals involved. Unfortunately, females with low levels of education in the northern region are engaged in small scale farming which is not lucrative. These render them poor, hence involvement in jobs like head porting even if they are fully aware of the risk. Two of the head porters narrated a similar response of which I have referenced it. For instance, as indicated by head porters that,

Many of us have had just basic education which in Ghana renders you unqualified to seek any formal job. Besides, the language here is also a major barrier that does not permit us to get employed even as salespersons upon our arrival [Participant 2 and 7].

Head porting is considered as tedious work. As such, head porters are exposed to physical stress (Baah-Ennumh et al. 2012; Anzagra and Yeboah 2012; Shamsu-Deen 2013). To this, the head porter 8 had this to say; *“The loads we carry are too heavy; every evening, I take in pain killers to re-gain energy for the next morning”* [Participant 8]. This is mostly manifested in the forms neck, waist, and sometimes the entire body pains. The pain results in fractures and sprains. During the day, head porters either carry heavy loads under the scorching sun or sit under the scorching sun (that is if they have no job to do). Head porters eat even in this kind of environment. The health implication for direct exposure to extreme weather conditions is enormous. Carrying loads to the residence of people exposes head porters to rapists as was revealed during the interviews. Head porters are abused in various forms.

The abuse and maltreatments of head porters are manifested in the forms of insults, exploitations, assaults, and cheating which agrees with previous studies (Baah-Ennumh et al. 2012; Shamsu-Deen 2013). Another challenge was the unpredictable nature of the job. In this regard, there were days when head porters had no work to do yet they had to pay taxes. The number of customers ahead potter gets a day determines her daily income. On average, GHC20 is made a day. Out of this, she will feed herself and her child that is if she is a mother. I found that social support among the head

porters was great. They support one another if they needed little amount of money that they cannot ask of the church authority. This coping strategy was also seen in the work of Baah-Ennumh et al. (2012). It was obvious from the remarks of the head porters that, they are not comfortable with the job but have no choice except to go back to their home villages. Interestingly, none of these porters were willing to return to their communities unlike was seen in a previous study (Yeboah, 2008). A reason assigned to their unwillingness to go back home was summarized into the comment below;

“We came here to make money, going back home now without any tangible results will make us laughing stocks in the sights of our relatives” [All Participants]

6.2 Diaconia and empowerment

The study found that the diaconal response of the church demonstrated all the elements expressed in diaconia. The church saw that they were accountable to God as a responsibility to help these vulnerable head porters, knowing that diaconia is performed by Christians. The church also focused on the need of the people as prescribed in WCC (2002). Diaconia is understood as the caring ministry of the church, looking out for and facilitating the needs of those left behind; the vulnerable and marginalized (Arlene, 2019). This has been reaffirmed by the WCC (2012) that, diaconal service must promote processes enabling individuals to be capable of changing their situation and of promoting the principles of an inclusive economy, in the form of cooperatives and associations. To this, the head pastor of the church indicated that,

We are trying as a church to create an environment for the head porters to be able to meet their needs and to also feel a sense of belonging here in the city. Our approach is to enable them to leverage the opportunities that the church will avail to them to change their current situations.

In essence, diaconia is supposed to advance the power concept. In this case, giving to the needy should be geared towards making the receiver autonomous both practically and in terms of theory (Sharp et al. 2003). As seen in this study, in the church’s diaconal ministry, I realized that the church empowered the head porters in the form of skills training, built their self-esteem, provide free accommodation, free water, and free electricity as well as provide education on their rights. The practices of the Suhoodo Church in Kumasi, Ghana thus seem to affirm the diaconia practices.

6.2.1 The church in interaction

The practice in this study affirms the definition of Nygaard, (2017) that, diaconia is the caring ministry of the Church. It is the Gospel in interactions, and it is expressed through loving your neighbor, creating inclusive communities, caring for creation, and struggling for justice. Rodriguez Nygaard, (2017) noted that both the word of God and the actions of the church towards its needy members cannot be separated unlike previous studies (World Council of Churches 2012; Nordstokke, 2012; Latvus, 2017; Arlene, 2019). The poor are poor largely because they live in networks of relationships that do not work for their well-being (Myers 2011). The study found that the church saw the young female head porters as made in the image of God, their poverty as a result of lack of skills and opportunity and that they needed a “leg up” (Myers 2011). For instance, a conversation with the head pastor of the church revealed that the head porters are just like all other human beings. They are even hard-working than many who are privileged. Given this, any little effort to improve upon their living standards will mean a lot not only to them but to the globe as a whole.

The church after realizing the needs or networks of relationships that were not working for the good of the head porters in the church decided to provide them with accommodation, financial aid, water, and even advocate for them. The motive is to give the less privileged the opportunity to enjoy and also empower them to own decisions that affect them. The essence of creating an inclusive community was manifested in the provision of accommodation which happens to be on the premises of the church. In this act of the church, the head porters who would have not been able to afford monthly or annual accommodation rents are carried along to live like any other person in the city. The advocacy for the head porters represents the fight against injustice. This is in line with the fact that all humans are created in the likeness of God and should be giving the opportunity to fully harness their God-given potentials devoid of their status in the society (LWF, 2009). The study revealed that the care shown to the needy by the church in this study is expressed through the word of God as it provides the basic needs of the poor. Such actions are done to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor and to create a conducive environment for all. Just as emphasized by the LWF (2009, 46), the task of a bridge-builder is integral to the very nature of the church.

6.2.2 The church's sharing nature

The study revealed that sharing which is a profound diaconal dimension was present in the diaconal act of the church in this study. The sharing spirit of the church could be seen in how they gave out the little they had to the vulnerable head porters. These include; giving a portion of the mission house, a chapel, toilet facility that belonged to the church to the head porters. The head porters were also financially supported by the pastor and some well to do members of the church during times of need. Occasionally, food items were distributed to the head porters to cushion their hardships. All these acts reflect the caring nature and practice of the church. As stated by the LWF (2009, 33), the spirit of sharing constitutes new relations that more easily permit forgiveness and new beginnings.

6.3 The role and impact of the Suhudoo Baptist church in the view of diaconia

In response to the mission of diaconia, the Suhudoo Baptist Church in Aboabo, Kumasi, Ghana goes beyond preaching and teaching the gospel but practices good works in the form of financial relief, free accommodation, skills training (fashion designing), free water and electricity and advocacy for the head porters. The WCC (2005) noted that the church can be viewed as a body of people established and assigned by the almighty God based on the Holy Scriptures who worship and are committed to doing good works through the Holy Spirit. As noted by Nordstokke (2019), the church is supposed to stand for the vulnerable and the marginalized irrespective of their gender and social status. The church is supposed to advocate for these groups of people to ensure that, their rights are not trampled upon and their dignities are restored. These should include even those outside of their faith. In tangent with the diaconal mission of the church, I discussed how the church understudy is responding to the mission of the diaconia and its impact.

6.3.1 How was life? How is life now and how would life have been without the church?

Cheston and Kuhn (2002) argue that enhancing access to financial and other materials necessary for production to females will help level the field and promote equality. With the financial support and the accommodation rendered by the church, the study revealed that the financial burden of the head porters has to be reduced. In this study, head porters had a decent place to lay their heads, good drinking water, and a toilet facility which were all by the courtesy of the church. The support

from the church explains the variation of the findings from the findings of a study conducted eight years ago. In that study, Baah-Ennumh et al. (2012) found that head porters in the Kumasi Metropolis were living in harsh and hazardous conditions which include poor housing (sleeping on the streets and in uncompleted or abandoned houses), health care delivery, nutrition, and water and sanitation. This diaconal act of the church affirms Nordstokkes' (2012) assertion that healing does not only mean intervening to overcome an illness, but also rejecting stigmatization and mechanisms of social exclusion, and thus empowering the persons for a dignified life.

Financial education as well as education on the rights of the head porters were some key areas focused by the church authority. In the study, an endogenous empowerment strategy: a case study of Nigerian women, Hung, Yoong and Brown (2012) noted that raising financial awareness and educating females is one of the main ways of empowering females. They further argued that empowering females through education in whatever form will give females a good standing to compete with their male counterparts since the financial burden of females will be reduced. Interviews with the head porters confirm the arguments advanced by Cheston and Kuhn (2002) that money that should have been spent on accommodation and water is put to other uses. This reflects in the ability of the head porters to send remittances to home villages. The above narrative gives a clear indication that the support of the church is making a positive impact on the lives of the head porters now which otherwise would have not been conducive. The improvement of the economic health status of women is an essential end in itself (United Nations Population Fund, 1994). In this study, I sought to understand whether the support of the church empowers the head porters economically.

According to Garba, P. K. (1999), attempts to empower females should begin with efforts to understand and allow them to determine their needs and how they want to be empowered. Interviews with all the head porters revealed that their interest was to learn a trade. This informed the decision of the church to organize skills training in the area of tailoring. Three out of the eight head porters interviewed had the privilege of learning dressmaking in 2019. The beneficiaries of the project were selected randomly by the leaders of the church. An interview with head porter one (1) said that:

I took advantage of the dressmaking project organized by the church. Currently, as I speak, I make some money through that skill and that complements my job as a head porter. In terms of assets such as land, house among others, I do not have that but am saving towards acquiring it. [Participant 1]

The study revealed that five of the beneficiaries of the church's support have quit the head porting. These individuals have sought employment in other areas, such as selling of cooked eggs, banana, learning trade (dressmaking) and shop attendants. These findings corroborate the findings of earlier studies which showed that access to education and skills training will open up other job opportunities for the females (Ojobo, 2008; Hung et al. 2012; Foluke, 2013). As espoused by Nordstokke (2012, 193), diaconal action can never be silent; bold words are an integral part of empowering diaconia; they denounce and announce, if necessary also by spoken words as Francis of Assisi once phrased it. The actions of the church in advocating and fighting for the vulnerable young porter is also in line with the understanding of Dietrich (2016, 16) as she explores that, the diaconia of the church encompasses the call to serve the poor and oppressed, to address injustice and to fight for the value of dignity of all human beings regardless of their sex.

6.4 Gender and empowerment

Gender is a social concept that outlines how men and women ought to conduct themselves in a given society. This gender construct has not favored females. Based on nature and believes, religions differ in prospects for the emancipation of women. For instance, compared with other religious legacies, scholarship identifies that a Protestant religious tradition advances women's status in society. Their traditions are hospitable to the values of democracy. These values include respect for others, mutuality, and mass sovereignty. However, these values can be attained in a proper sense when one is self-sustained (Inglehart and Norris 2003; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). The Suhudoo Baptist Church in Aboabo, Ghana, in its quest to empower female head porters provides them with the support that will build the self-esteem and confidence of the head porters. This is in support of Dietrich (2016) as she explores that, creating a sustainable inclusive community is a part of the diaconal call of the church. Theologically, God himself is at the center stage of the empowerment of human beings regardless of gender differences as he gifts them to work for his mission.

Economic development is a direct outcome of the ability to choose and democracy. This is an assertion of the classical development perspective (Lipset 1959; Bell 1999). In line with gender, this perspective assumes that economic development plays a central role in increasing the number of women who can occupy social power positions. Classical Scholars indicate any rise in economic development comes with both occupational and educational resources. Access to these opportunities and resources enhances the development of women professionally and paving ways for women in other positions. The study found that the financial burdens of the head porters upon the support of the church in diverse ways have been lessened. Monies that should have been used to buy water, use of toilet facilities are now saved. Economically, the ability to save will access facilities. In Ghana, access to transportation is mostly based on the ability to pay for them. The choice of means of transportation is determined by your financial capability. As presented earlier, the ability to save by the head porters have aided in them to use any mode of transportation, mostly commercial buses (trotro, as called in the local parlance).

In terms of participation in social networks, the church has created an interacting environment where the head porters and other church members can network among themselves. In the various villages and towns of the head porters, four of the head porters interviewed revealed to have been currently involved in the youth group activities. They happened to contributed dues towards the development of the youth groups. These actions have made them relevant in their communities. In South Africa, High-Pippert and Comer (1998) found that allowing women to participate in government boosted their interest, competence, and efficacy in political issues. In Rwanda, female representatives in politics have not only giving them political gains but also increased the capacity to speak and be heard in public forums and increased access to education (Burnet, 2011).

6.5 Nexus between the head porters' challenges and the church's approaches

As discussed earlier, head porters are challenged financially, they are physically abused and maltreated, the nature of their jobs expose them to health risk, and many more. The diaconal practice by the church to me is the best approach in dealing with the challenges of the head porters. Head porters are hardworking people. All they need is an enabling environment for them to operate

irrespective of how little that opportunity will be. In the case of this study, accommodation, learning of a trade, and a sense of love and acceptance where all the head porters needed to operate of which the church provided. It thus seems to appear that; the church knew what the head porters needed and responded exactly to that.

6.6 Reflections on diaconia in the church on the empowerment of head porters

Inequalities exist in countries. This calls for the need to identify individuals and groups left behind. Females are vulnerable and marginalized. The sustainable development goals, therefore, recognize the need to empower females. From the perspective of diaconal, championing the course of justice for the margins by the church is in the right direction to meeting the agenda for sustainable development⁴. The church as part of its support to the head porters, educate them during church meetings on the basic rights they are entitled to⁵ and how such rights can be trampled upon. Also, the head porters noted to have been enlightened by the church as to how to seek redress any time their rights are violated. The church further advocates for the head porters. This confirms an earlier study conducted in Egypt on what empowers Egyptian women: resources versus social constrains by Nazier and Ramadan (2018) found that awareness of legal rights empowers women by enhancing their political representation as well as safeguarding the basic rights one is entitled to.

Parpart et al. (2003) argue that empowerment goes beyond custody of power but being able to exercise it without any hindrance. They further note that empowerment should involve the inner power and politicized power which results from the ability to work with others and that leads to change. To this, the act of the church is geared towards enabling the head porters the opportunity to work and save their little income to improve their living conditions. The Human Development Perspective emphasizes the translation of economic development into human development that liberates people of all status and manifested in the expression of oneself in terms of autonomy and

⁴ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/erev.12336>

⁵ These rights include, rights to vote, rights to own property, freedom of speech, among others.

choice (Welzel 2003; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). These emancipative values increase the empowerment of women in society (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Ghana's population consists of about 51.2%. This means women represent more than half of the entire population. Sustainable development discourse will be incomplete if the decisions of females are not considered in decision making. This makes the participation of women in the system of governance a necessity. Unfortunately, not a very significant representation of women is seen at the forefront of politics in Ghana⁶. Currently, only 12.75% of Ghana's Parliament are women. About the political empowerment, the government of Ghana has enshrined in the 1992 constitution. The support of the church has not had to empower the participants politically.

6.7 Implication of results on the research question

What characterizes the empowerment of young female head porters by the Suhudoo Baptist Church in Aboabo, the Ashanti Region of Ghana?

The study revealed that Suhudoo Baptist Church in Aboabo, the Ashanti Region of Ghana empowers head porters through assistance in terms of six indicators. Namely, economic, socio-cultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological. Suhudoo Baptist Church assists head porters by providing free accommodation, water, and toilet facility, education on basic human rights, financial support, and advocating for the head porters. Economically, the church organizes a skill training (tailoring) to head porters to acquire skills and make money together with their head porting business. The study revealed that the economic status of head porters is better than before. Improvement in their economic status has earned them to save money at the bank, pay their dues at the various trade associations they belong, and earn a spot in their family when it comes to decision making. Some have quit the head porting business and have used their saved money to engage in the selling of cooked eggs, banana, and shop attendants.

In terms of socio-cultural aspects, they can now go to places that they were prevented from (town squares, pubs, websites, and shopping malls) and access all types of transportation in the country because of their outfit. The study revealed that the church has created an interacting environment

⁶ <https://www.gh.undp.org/content/ghana/en/home/ourperspective/ourperspectivearticles/2017/01/23/women-s-political-participation-a-catalyst-for-gender-equality-and-women-empowerment-in-ghana.html>

where the head porters and other church members can network among themselves. The church has provided education to their wards and now they don't have school fees to pay. In terms of familial/interpersonal aspects, head porters make decisions in their family in terms of childbearing, food, etc. The accommodation and other services the church provides has free them from all domestic violence such as rape, assault, and violation of their right. Legally, the church has educated the head porters on their rights. In that, if they are abused, they can take it court. The church also supports the head porters financially when it is expensive and bureaucratic to seek redress at the court. In political and psychological aspects, the study revealed that head porters have been able to be actively involved in local political campaigns and are psychologically free from stress.

6.8 Implication of the results on the theory

With See-reflect-act as a diaconal model, the study revealed that Suhudoo Baptist Church has brought liberation to the head porters. Education, skills, accommodation, etc. that the church provides to head porters have liberated them from financial burden, domestic violence, and social discrimination. The church has helped the head porters through education, know the underlying issues that the head porters are confronted with, understand the root causes of the problems they are facing, reflected theologically on the issues, and have brought liberation and empowerment. The issues and problems confronting head porters are rape, abuse of rights, and financial burden.

For renewed diaconal action, the study revealed that Suhudoo Baptist Church used diverse methods, logics, works together with the head porters to solve their problems. Through education, the church has help head porters to know their legal rights and what to do when they encounter abuse of right. Head porters can now protect and speak against injustices at their workplace, marriage, and their environment. The study also revealed that the church is the voice for them when they are in trouble and also defend them when they are in need. Also, with inclusiveness as a diaconal perspective, the study found that head porters are discriminated at particular places such as malls, seminars, conferences, some transport services, some eating places, playing grounds, etc. due to the way they dress. The nature of their work does not make them dress neatly. This as a result causes discrimination when they go to such places. In some places, they avoid head porters

from entering. Due to their financial hardship, they have been neglected by their family and society.

Some of them are denied renting houses as they are not able to afford charges, so they wish to rent a single room to be used by five or more of them. This, as a result, end them sleeping outside which expose them to domestic violence like rape and human right abuse. Through the programs of Suhudoo Baptist Church, all the head porters at the church have been given free accommodation, food, toilet facility, skills (tailoring), educate them on their right, educate them on savings, educate them on how to dress to be accepted by the society, school to their children, etc. Suhudoo Baptist Church protects, uplift, and speaks for head porters. The diaconal mandate of Suhudoo Baptist Church has empowered head porters to speak for themselves and also speak for their fellow head porters who are in need. The church has to favor head porters and change their life financially, socially, religiously, and economically. The study revealed that the church means a lot to the head porters because they are always there when the need arises. This has renewed their faith in Christ and is living a holistic life. Additionally, the study also revealed that the church includes head porters in whatever it does, the church has rooms for head porters to sleep, and plans the programs of the church the with the head porters. Head porters are part and parcel of the programs organized by the church with some of the head porters sometimes leading church services. This shows the interactive and inclusive nature of the church, and this act of the church to the researcher, is how the real caring ministry of the church should be.

6.9 Hospitality of Suhudoo Baptist church

One discovery that was revealed by me was hospitality. From the study, participants (head porters) come from the northern part of Ghana. Because of extreme poverty in the northern part of Ghana, young and old men and women move from there in search of a greener pasture at the southern sector in Ghana. Most of the head porters settle in Kumasi without having a place to sleep or bath, food and cloth to change in the next day, and money for their upkeep. The disheartening part of it is the breastfeeding mothers among them. The majority of them are illiterate, due to this, breastfeeding mothers, young and old women among them engage in head porting business to earn a living. During the night, they sleep at the Kumasi market and in front of shops at Adum. During

the night, the Kumasi market and Adum is the filthiest place in Kumasi. Everywhere across the street, there is extremely filthy. Waste management companies always clear the place early in the morning. Head porters have no other option than to sleep in the filth which makes them prone to all kinds of sickness and human rights abuse especially, rape. The situation of head porters in Kumasi has reached the ears of Suhudoo Baptist Church.

Suhudoo Baptist Church has been hospitable to head porters by providing them home, making space and time for them, and changing their lives through education and skills (Proverbs 19:17)⁷. Suhudoo Baptist Church provides education to the children of head porters. Since head porters were not able to feed themselves, they did not bother themselves to send their wards to school where they will be requesting for money to go to school. Notwithstanding, Suhudoo Baptist Church educate head porters on their human right and how to live a better life apart from the head porting business. With this, the church provides tailoring as an apprenticeship to head porters. All those that have graduated have been able to secure their tailoring shops. Others have engaged in a lucrative job due to the support they get from the church.

6.10 Spirituality and faith on the perspective of head porters

Based on the responses of head porters on how the church has helped them, how the church has changed their lives and the lives of their families as well as how the church reached out to them, has made them develop a faith and religious perspective for their own personal selves of what the church means for them. The holistic perspective that the church has taken on them in terms of not given them just free stuffs but looking out for them, providing housing, shelter and giving them skills. The support of the church appears to have positively changed their thoughts and feelings towards the church, because they are still with the church, as most of them are still interacting and engaging with the church. Head porters now seems to have now put their faith and trust in the church to help them in this stage and season of their lives. Faith is really believing, and the head porters believe that the church can help them, and they know the church is helping them because

⁷ (Philippians 4:13) - I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (KJV)

they have experienced it and so in terms of religious perspective, head porters probably look at religion in terms of that part of life that helps to enhance and empower them.

To many of the head porters, *“the church is everything to them”*. That is, without the church their lives would not have been better. Moreover, many of the head porters said that *“through the hospitality from Suhudoo Baptist Church to head porters, it has built their faith in God”*. To some of the head porters, *“they have not experienced such hospitality that the church provides to them”*. According to most of the head porters, *“they see it as spiritual in the sense that, it is God who has visited them”*. To some of the head porters *“God does not do anything without working through man”*⁸. As narrated by some of the head porters *“, they thank God for his kindness, justice, peace, and love towards them”*.

6.11 Conclusion

In summary, I highlighted the nature of head porting in Ghana. The demanding nature of head porting puts head porters at health risk. As part of the diaconia practice, the church has taken it upon itself to help empower head porters. The help is manifested in the provision of accommodation, financial help, and educating and advocating for the head porters. The practices of the church have increased the saving habits of the head porters. A friendly environment has also been created. This affirms the dignity and creates just equal and mutual societies. The diaconal act of the church was also discussed in line with the theory of gender and empowerment. The study found that the diaconal practices support the realization of the empowerment of females. Additionally, the chapter also looked at the impact of the diaconal acts of the church on the lives of the head porters.

⁸ (Philippians 4:13) - I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me. (KJV)

Chapter 7: Summary and recommendations

7.0 Chapter introduction

The research sought to answer the question, what characterizes the empowerment of young female head porters by the Suhudoo Baptist Church in Aboabo, Kumasi, Ghana? Using interview guides as the research instrument and applying observational skills, responses from eight head porters were solicited. Fortunately, the head porters resided in the premises of the Suhudoo Baptist Church in Aboabo, Kumasi, Ghana. Several findings that are worth discussing are presented below.

7.1 Findings

The intersectionality approach was adopted in discussing and analyzing the findings. The discussion was done within the context of the theories (See-reflect-act as a diaconal model, renewed diaconal action, diaconal sharing, and hospitality, as well as inclusiveness as a diaconal perspective) highlighted in chapter three. To begin with, the head porters revealed that, the church offered them an accommodation of which they did not need to pay, electricity and water bills were also free of charge, financial assistance was also given as at when the need arose, the head porters were also enlightened in the light of their legal, political and fundamental rights and skills training programs. Through education, the church has helped head porters to know their legal rights and what to do when they encounter abuse of rights. Education, skills, accommodation, etc. that the church provides to head porters have liberated them from financial burden, domestic violence, and social discrimination. It is worth noting that the experiences of the head porters interviewed appeared to differ from what is portrayed by scholarship.

The study contributes to empirical studies on diaconia with different participants and at a different research site. The variation in the experiences was attributed to the diaconal practices offered by the church in question. The study found that, even though the support of the church was not enough, it has a great impact on the lives of the head porters. Secondly, the head porters narrated to me some challenges they suffered. These include; neck waist and sometimes the entire body pains, abuse and maltreatments, and meager income. Thirdly, the poor economic conditions of women with low educational qualifications and the inadequate job opportunities in the northern part of Ghana propel young females to get into the head porting business despite the tedious nature of the

job. The norms of the culture in the northern region⁹ coupled with low education among head porters have made abuse of their rights and disempowerment common at the workplaces of the head porters. Furthermore, none of these porters were willing to return to their communities with the reason that going home without anything meaningful to write home about will be a disgrace to them and their immediate families. The study also reveals that the laws of Ghana do not favor the poor.

Apart from the church and some organizations that seek the interest of the head porters, there are no strict government policies that are fighting for the poor head porters. The study further confirms the existing literature that diaconal practices can empower the vulnerable in society. This is manifested in the ability to save and seek redress of issues among the head porters. The diaconal mandate of Suhudoo Baptist Church has empowered head porters to speak for themselves as well as speak for their fellow head porters who are in need. Through education, the church has help head porters to know their legal rights and what to do when they encounter abuse of right. In terms of theory, the results of the study support existing literature on See-reflect-act as a diaconal model that links theory to practice which Suhudoo Baptist Church used to liberate and empower head porters. Suhudoo Baptist Church knew the underlying issues that head porters are confronted with, understood the root causes of their problems, reflected theologically on the issues, and acted on it. The study also supports renewed diaconal action as the church worked hand in hand with the head porters.

The study revealed that Suhudoo Baptist Church provides education on legal right to head porters which must help them to be able to speak against injustice at their workplace. This made it possible for the church to identify the root cause of their problems and a solution to curb it. The results of the study support inclusiveness as a diaconal perspective as Suhudoo Baptist Church gives support to the poor and vulnerable head porters by protecting and speaking for them when the need be. The support the church gives to head porters has earned them a spot to participate in an equal manner

⁹ Early and force marriage, lack of access to land

in the community of the local congregation. This as a result has renewed their faith in Christ and is living a holistic life.

7.2 Recommendations

Considering the findings above, the following recommendations will be useful going forward;

1. Feedback from the head porters interviewed showed that conscious efforts should be made to understand their way of life, their challenges, and what interventions will best meet their needs before administering any interventions. This can be done through meetings and interviews.
2. Interventions geared towards the improvements of the head porters should be in the form of income generation. For instance, efforts to help head porters and their associations should be focused on building their capacities through skills training. This intervention should be informed by data.
3. Enhanced communication and voluntary mobile counseling of head porters should be instituted by the leaders of the religious bodies and the government of Ghana. This will further enlighten head porters on how to manage abuse in all forms at their workplaces. The counseling is also necessary to help build the confidence of the head porters.
4. Interventions to assist head porters in the future should also target their male partners as they were reported to be doing minor works such as carrying of refuse from house to house.
5. The ministry of gender, children and social protection should encourage the collaboration of religious bodies, non-governmental, and other civic organizations to come to the aid of the head porters. The ministry should also advocate for a special provision within the free senior high and basic education policies to enroll all head porters who intend to go back to school.
6. All church denominations such as Catholic, Protestant, and the Eastern/Oriental Orthodox Church should also take the diaconal mandate and together provide help to the poor and vulnerable in our society.
7. Church bodies and others like the Suhudoo Baptist Church should be recognized and acknowledged by the government for their efforts to encourage others.

8. Individuals and philanthropists should support the church to be able to meet the needs of the head porters who are weak, poor, and vulnerable in society.
9. Companies should take it as part of their social responsibility in the form of giving back to society through organizing free parties, games, and seminars to head porters once in a month.
10. The government of Ghana should provide free TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) programs at the tertiary institutions and structure the program where the poor and vulnerable in the society will feel comfortable when attending.

This study sought to understand what characterizes empowerment of head porters by the Suhudoo Baptist Church, however, the quest for empowerment embodies a lot of effort. Further research will be needed to explore and examine the regulations and bodies that exist to protect the interest of the head porters. A further investigation into the health needs of the head porters will be essential given their income level and the nature of their work.

7.3 Suggestions for further studies

The diaconal mandate of the church is very important as it addresses the true life that Jesus Christ wishes for the church to give to society. Further studies can be done on the same topic using different populations like the male partners of head porters who carry refuse from house to house, street vendors, and the homeless children who sleep in front of people's houses and shops.

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Appendix i: Interview Guide

Topic: An assessment of the effects of the church's empowerment of female head porters: insights from Suhudoo Baptist church, Aboabo, Kumasi- Ghana.

Research Question: *What characterizes the empowerment of young female head porters by the Suhudoo Baptist Church in Aboabo, the Ashanti Region of Ghana?*

Semi-Structured Interview questions

1. *Can you tell a bit about yourself (i.e. your background)?*
 - a. *Your age?*
 - b. *How long you have worked as a head porter?*
 - c. *Place of origin*
 - d. *Why did you venture into this job?*
 - e. *Do you have a choice?*

Problems Encountered by Head Porters

- f. *What do you think about your work as a head porter?*
2. *Can you tell a bit about your experience as a head porter?*
3. *What are some of the challenges you face?*
4. *What problems do you face in your work?*
5. *Do you enjoy your work as a head porter?*
6. *What is the most difficult part of being a head porter?*
7. *When do you get up in the morning and what do you do?*

Effects of the Church's' Programs on the Empowerment of the Female Head Porters

8. Have you had some experiences with the church?' Can you tell me about your experiences with the church?
9. What sort of assistance do you get from the Church?
10. What would you want the church to do for you?

Empowerment has been defined as the increase in the ability of people to make decisions and choices in situations where these privileges were otherwise denied (Kabeer 2001; Anju et al. 2002). They identified several components as critical in enhancing empowerment in their studies. These components have been employed in this study. These components are attractive because it contains numerous components that have been considered as other scholars.

How has the support from the church empowered you in terms of the following?

11. Economic

1. Access to employment opportunities (please indicate the type of employment)
2. Ownership of economic assets (e.g. land, housing)
3. Access to credit
4. Involvement and/or representation in local trade associations

12. Socio-Cultural

1. Access to social spaces (town squares or parks are public places; others such as pubs, websites, or shopping malls are privately owned and regulated)
2. Access to transportation
3. Participation in social network
4. Commitment to educating children (including daughters)

13. Familial/ Interpersonal

1. Participation in domestic decision-making
2. Ability to make childbearing decision
3. Use of contraception
4. Access abortion
5. Control over spouse selection and marriage timing
6. Freedom from domestic violence

14. Legal

1. Knowledge of legal rights
2. Domestic support for exercising rights
3. Use of judicial system to redress rights violations

15. Political

1. Involvement or mobilization in the local political system/campaigns
2. Support for specific candidates or legislation
3. Exercising the right to vote
4. Representation in local bodies of government

16. Psychological

1. Self-efficacy

2. Systemic acceptance of women's entitlement and inclusion

17. Do you want to say something about what I have not asked

Appendix ii: Information letter and consent form

Are you interested in taking part in the research project?

An assessment of the effects of the church's empowerment of female head porters: Insights from the Suhodoo Baptist Church, Aboabo, Kumasi-Ghana

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to conduct interviews of some carefully chosen individuals. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

In compliance with my partial fulfilment of my master's degree program in Diakonia and Christian Social practice, it is a prerequisite for me, Paul Nti Ababio, to put in writing a dissertation paper on the aforesaid topic. This project seeks to find out more about the experiences of the young female head porters in Aboabo, the Ashanti Region of Ghana and how the church named above is involved in helping them to improve their plight as their diaconal riposte. The major question for my dissertation is: What characterizes the empowerment of young female head porters by the Suhodoo Baptist Church in Aboabo, the Ashanti region of Ghana? It is my fervent passion that through this project, most head porters in Aboabo would leave the streets, their capacities would be built, and they would be empowered by the church as a Christian social practice. I also hope other churches in Ghana would be made aware to help these ladies through this project.

Who is responsible for the research project?

The institution responsible for the project is VID Specialized University.

Why are you being asked to participate?

Because female head porters are dominant in the Ashanti Region of Ghana and Asokwa where the afore mentioned churches are located. 8 female head porters whose ages range between 18 and 24 will be invited to take part in this research.

What does participation involve for you?

Interviews which would last for at most 45 minutes would be used to solicit information from female head porters in Aboabo who will be willing to share the challenges they face, they would also be asked to tell about the involvement of the churches in helping to improve their plight so far. Information provided by participants would be recorded digitally and note taken down on paper. Information about my participants would also be collected from other quantitative research done about female head porters.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

I the researcher, will be the only one with access to your personal information and will process your data by way of substituting your contact number, names and address with relevant encryption which shall be kept privately locked away from stored data on my computer. Your age, challenges you face in your work and daily life are some of the information I will make public.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end by 11th August 2020, after this date, personal data and digital recordings gathered from participants would be destroyed.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with VID Specialized University, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

VID Specialized University via Prof. Marianne Rodriguez on +4741679245 or her email address:

<mailto:marianne.rodriquez.nygaard.no> .You could also contact me via my mobile number on:

+4741294749 or on my email: “mailto: psiteesone@gmail.com”

NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader
(Researcher/supervisor)

Student (if applicable)

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project, “An assessment of the effects of the church’s empowerment of female head porters: Insights from the Suhodoo Baptist Church, Aboabo, Kumasi-Ghana”, and have been given the chance to ask questions. I give consent to participate in an interview and for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. 11th August 2020.

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix iii: NSD Recommendations and Guidelines

NSD Project Number: 110758

Approval date: November 11, 2019