

## **Background to the Study**

Agriculture is the backbone of the country and cocoa continues to play a very important role in the development of the country. According to the Rebased 2013-2018 Annual Gross Domestic Product report, key findings for the year 2018 indicated that, agricultural sector expanded by 4.8 percent in 2018 as compared to the previous growth rate of 6.1 percent in 2017. Its share of GDP declined from 21.1 percent in 2017 to 19.7 percent in 2018. About 800,000 small holder cocoa farmers dwelling in Ghana's rural area depend on the commodity for their livelihoods (Baah and Garforth, 2008). It generates about 2 billion dollars foreign exchange for the country and it has been the major contributor of government's revenue and Gross Domestic Products (GDP). According to an ICI report in 2011, it clarifies that the major tasks in cocoa work take place between July and December and this is when there is more demand for labour. Its derivatives include chocolate bars, beverages, cocoa powder, soap, cocoa liquors among others. Ghana ranks second contributing about 40% to the world cocoa production and supply and expanded to a maximum of 1,024,600 tonnes in the year 2010/2011. According to the second quarter GDP figures released by the Ghana Statistical Service, cocoa contribution to Ghana's GDP grew by 15.6% and the sector's contribution to GDP growth from 64 million cedis in the second quarter of 2016 to 74 million cedis in the same period. Cocoa has both nutritional and health benefits to consumers as well as economic benefits. In Ghana, cocoa cultivation is seen as a family business which every member of the family takes part including children. Children in cocoa households are found on the cocoa farms with their parents or guardians and are assigned to specific tasks to perform. Some of the activities children performed on the farms include weeding, harvesting and gathering of pods, carrying of cocoa beans to the drying mat, etc. These activities performed by children are usually seen as part of the socialization processes that enhances the ability of the child to take up cocoa farming when their parents are aged and no more.

In the year 2001, production of cocoa in the West African sub-region became a matter of concern that International chocolate industries and consumers subjected it to investigation. An international media report revealed that children were exploited to work on cocoa farms at the expense of their education. To this end, on 19th September 2001, a protocol dubbed the Harkin Engel Protocol was signed. The agreement was to ensure that cocoa production processes were free from child labour and that children should be allowed to enjoy the full benefit of education. Failure to do so will lead to the boycott at the international market. As a response to this threat, in 2006, the government established the National Programme for the Elimination of Worst Forms of child Labour in Cocoa (NPCLC) under the Auspices of the then Ministry of Manpower Youth and Employment to have oversight responsibility to address the problem. Other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MMDAs) such as Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFEP), the Global Issues Group, ILO, International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA, 2002), the ILO, UNICEF, World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) and other non-governmental organizations joined in the effort to fight child labour in cocoa.

In the year 2010, "the declaration of joint Action to support the implementation of the Harkin – Engel protocol. The declaration, accompanied by a framework Action to support the implementation of the Harkin-Engel protocol states that, "by 2020, the worst forms of child labour as defined by ILO Convention 182 in the cocoa sectors and Ghana will be reduced by 70 percent in aggregate through a joint efforts by key stake holders to provide and support remediation services for children removed from the worst forms of child labour, including

education and vocational training, protective measures to address issues of occupational safety and health related to cocoa production, livelihood services for the households of children in cocoa growing communities; the establishment and Implementation of credible and transparent sector wide monitoring systems across cocoa growing regions in the two countries and the promotion of respect for core labor standards”. Declaration of Joint Action (2010).

As part of interventions to deal with the problem, there have been attempts address the issue from the national to community levels. Interventions in the form of sensitization and awareness raising programs, community action plans to dealing with child labour, capacity building programs, child identification and supports, establishment of Child Labour Monitoring Systems, livelihood enhancement programs, and development of a Hazardous Child Labour Activity Framework (HAF) which specifies permissible and non-permissible activities for children on cocoa farms among others.

Innovations such as the Cocoa certification systems by the Fair Trade, UTZ, and Rainforest Alliance have all been instituted to ensure sustainable cocoa farming free from child labour. Aponoapono in the Suhum-Kraboah-Coaltar district (the study area) is one of the cocoa producing districts that continue to benefit from the above mentioned interventions. It is therefore important to assess the current situation of child labour in the area. The research therefore seeks to assess the effects and impacts of the various interventions that has been implemented in the community.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Concerns raised about child labour in Ghana’s cocoa sector continue to be a topical issue to be addressed due to the consequences it has on the general development of the child and the country as a whole. A baseline survey report in some cocoa growing districts (ILO/IPEC baseline report 2012) have indicated that, about 50 percent of children in the Suhum-Kraboah coaltar district participate or work on cocoa farms. Notably among them are carrying of heavy loads, using long and sharp cutlasses for weeding, and the use of knapsack sprayers (3.9%). It further indicates that, children are exposed to all kinds of hazards resulting from the demands of the economic activities. For instance 42% of children are exposed to the hazards of breaking cocoa pods with breaking knives, application of agro-chemicals (3.7%). A quarter of them are faced with hazard of harvesting cocoa pods with harvesting hook in cocoa farms. Between 11-15 percent are exposed to the hazard of working in the vicinity of farm during pesticide application and clearing of forest and felling of trees in both cocoa work and all activities.

Child labour and child trafficking were the major concerns in the year 2018 that attempt to improve conditions for children were failing due to poverty, absence of schools, increasing world cocoa demands, more intensive farming of cocoa and continued exploitation of child labour. Although the 1992 constitution as well as the Children’s Act (Act 560), 1998 prohibits child labour, the problem still persists.

## **Research Objectives**

### **General Objective**

The overall objective of the study is to assess the current situation of child labour in Ghana’s cocoa sector following the interventions put in place by government and other non-governmental organizations.

### **Specific Objectives are;**

1. To establish the level of awareness of cocoa farmers
2. To examine the attitudes and cultural influence on child labour
3. To identify some interventions that deal with the menace
4. To identify some challenges that farmers face in the course of implementing remediation activities

### **Research Instruments**

Primary data was collected from respondents using an interview and Focus Group Discussions. The self-administered interview guide was the best option for achieving a high response rate. The questionnaires consisted of both close-ended and open-ended questions. In addition, the study adopted the semi-structured method of interviews where the researcher had some set of pre-defined question but the interviewees were also allowed the freedom to provide answers to other range of issues which came up during the actual interview process. According to Kumar (1999), this is the best way to go when investigating multifaceted and sensitive areas, as the interviewer can repeat a question, ask a follow-up question (s) or even change the structure of the questions entirely.

### **Adult Questionnaire**

This questionnaire was administered to cocoa farmers who were members of the farmer group and were either an owner of a cocoa farm or a care taker.

### **Child questionnaire**

This questionnaire was designed for children aged 5-17 years who lived in cocoa households. It was to solicit information from children as far as child labour in the cocoa communities were concerned.

### **Key Informants Questionnaire**

This questionnaire targeted the executives of the farmer group namely the Manager, President, Secretary, treasurer, organizer, Unit Committee members, traditional leaders, teachers etc.

### **Focus Group Discussions**

Focus Group Discussions were conducted for ten adult groups in selected hamlets. FGD comprised of all male groups, all female groups and both males and females. Members of the FGDs comprised of the chief cocoa farmers, opinion leaders, assembly persons, teachers, unit Committee members and Community Child Protection Committee (CCPCs) members. Children's FGD were concerned with interactions with children who lived in cocoa households and the discussions were child centered. It involved their knowledge about child labour and the activities they were engaged in on cocoa farms.

### **Data Analysis**

The data gathered from the respondents were analyzed manually and electronically. The manual analysis was done by way of editing of the raw answers, coding and given numerical figures for easy inputting into the computer. Hence, the electronic analysis was done using the SPSS. This was used to generate frequencies, percentages, and graphs. All research questions were analyzed using frequency tables, and graphs. Discussions were then made on the results obtained from the analysis.

## **Summary of Findings**

From the survey, awareness level of farmers about child labour is very high. Their knowledge has been enhanced on how to live with their children without exposing them to hazardous activities both domestically and in the cocoa fields. Majority of respondents are able to define and explain concepts such as who is a child, child labour, and also distinguish between child labour and child work. Generally, the survey clearly depicts that, majority of respondents i.e. about 90% are familiar with some legal frameworks that protect children such as the Children's Act (Act 560), ILO Convention 182 and 138 and the Hazardous Child Labour Activity Framework (2008) developed for the cocoa sector. Key informants such as teachers, traditional leaders, CCPC members, assembly men and Union executives are all deeply aware of the legal frameworks. Children's knowledge on child rights have been enhanced through child labour programmes. 80% of children have knowledge about child rights issues. Because a lot of farmers are aware of child labour issues, school attendance have increased, incidence of child labour have reduced. Majority of farmers are of the view that child labour situation is very low. The survey revealed that, it is not possible to exclude children from cocoa production. Few respondents (6.7% of males, 18% of females strongly agree that cocoa production is possible without children. On the other hand, majority of respondents (70% of males, and 38% of females strongly disagree that cocoa production can be possible without children. This was based on the fact that the child learns practically on the farm therefore, it will not be possible to exclude them. As parents age and grow old there is the need for their children to take over from them and children are excluded they may not be able to handle inherited cocoa farms.

The survey revealed that, there has been many interventions that have gone on in the communities. Some of them include sensitization and awareness creation, drilling of boreholes, credit facilities for farmers, building of school toilet facilities for the schools, provision of school and learning materials for identified children among others. The Fair Trade organization has also taken farmers through good farming practices and also issued certificates for the farmer union. From the survey, majority of farmers (80% of men and 78% of women) were of the view that, there have been positive changes in the community as far as remediation activities are concerned. Whilst some farmers have experienced improvement in the lives of their children, others have had a change in perceptions about children. Whilst some of them have gained knowledge about child protection laws, others have also say that there is improvement in school attendance.

## **Conclusion**

Government and other stakeholders continue to pursue the fight against child labour in the cocoa sector in order to protect its ethical image at the international market. Child labour is very complex and not easy to deal with. It needs all hands on deck approach whereby all stakeholders such as international chocolate industries, and non-governmental organizations to join forces and resource to safe guard and protect children in the cocoa sector. Even though awareness level is high, interventions are taking place, the incidence of child labour in the area is very low, and there are pockets of issues that need to be addressed. The government should involve itself in the fight against child labour for a brighter future. Although government has ratified a lot of conventions and has also put in place policies that will help fight against child labour, enforcement continue to be a problem in the country. For a total elimination of child labor, there is the need to strengthen enforcement of the law to serve as a deterrent to fall victim to the law.