

**SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN ACCRA  
(COMMERCIAL SEX WORKERS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSERS)**

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## **Abstract**

The activities of commercial sex workers and substance abusers are noted to be as a result of several factors which range from peer influence to the breakdown of the family system. The effects of these practices have a lasting and devastating effect on the lives of individuals who engage in them and society in general. The researcher set out to explore the social representations of commercial sex workers and substance abusers from the perspectives of officials at the assembly level as well as that of church leaders in Accra. Qualitative data was collected with the use of a semi-structured interview guide from 12 participants, 6 assembly officials and 6 church leaders. Data analysis was done using the thematic analysis approach. 4 themes and 10 sub-themes or codes emerged from the data set. They include the state of the marginalized groups today, perceptions of causative factors, role of local authorities and the role of religious groups. The study found that the marginalized groups have increased in numbers and also adopted new modus operandi. Another key finding of the study was that there was a perception of commercial sex workers and substance abusers as being a lost cause, that is incapable of rehabilitation. Finally, the study found that there was a need for the church to reorient itself on the missiological framework in order to effectively take its place in the tackling of social menaces and challenges such as that presented by the marginalized groups. The study presents useful and pertinent insights that will be of importance to various stakeholders in the drive to tackle the challenges of commercial sex work and substance abuse in the country, as well as a useful addition to the body of knowledge on the subject matter.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND OF STUDY

According to Williams et al. (2005), social exclusion refers to the situation in which some individuals are sidelined or not construed to be a part of society as a result of some societal rules. Societies, whether they are large or small, exist to play an important role as a shelter for all those who belong to it. It is therefore no wonder that human beings desire to belong to or to be a part of some specific communities. This need for belonging is so important that when the rules set by the society are such that a certain group of people are seen in the light of “otherness”, that is not being a part of the group, this group can be referred to as a marginalized group. In the area of administration or governance, Mill (2010) stresses that systems or policies are based on the acceptance of group laws, norms and values which are upheld by the majority of members of the society. This is particularly true for the African community as it remains largely collectivist (Bansah, 2015). The groups’ interests are placed above individual interests and this is how some minority groups, which do not fit into these interests or norms, come about (Williams et al., 2005).

Social exclusion therefore results in the marginalization of some people whose values or conduct does not reflect what the majority of people in the society consider to be appropriate. As already mentioned, society serves as a shelter for members. It also represents a form of safety net where the individual is given a voice to express his or her experiences, is accepted and receives solidarity.

As a result of the rules and values of the society, some groups such as commercial sex workers and substance abusers can be seen to belong to the set of marginalized groups in Ghana as their trade, practices and values are not in congruence with that of the majority of members in the society as well as societal laws and rules. Their activities, practices and trade are considered as vices and a threat to the survival of the society as a whole and must therefore be compelled to conform to the rules, values and norms of the majority of people in the society (Boateng, 2020). In order to glean insights into how members belonging to groups that can be considered as marginalized because they do not fit into societal and collective norms can be reformed and made to fit appropriately into the society, the perspectives of state and policy makers regarding them must be explored and understood. In addition to this, the perspectives of religious leaders must be gleaned in order to explore the morality perspective. This study will thus seek to explore the social representations of commercial sex workers and substance abusers from the perspectives of state leaders as well as religious leaders in Ghana.

Commercial sex workers, engaged in the exchange of sexual services for financial or other gain (Benoit, Jansson, Smith, & Flagg, 2018), has for a long time elicited varied emotions about its appropriateness in terms of its morality, legitimacy, as well as the direction that policies proposed to deal with it should be made to go. These varied emotions and points of view stem from very closely held sentiments with regards to the individuals engaged in the trade.

Another topical issue in terms of vices that affect people within the society is that of substance abuse. Drug use or the taking of medications is normal as a means to combat illnesses but then becomes an issue of abuse at the instance where dependence sets in. This abuse situation has the tendency to affect various facets of the person’s life, from the physiological, behavioral and cognitive processes influenced by the drug consumed. The term dependence on drugs is usually

linked to or has to do with the urge or need to take or use some more of a substance in order to achieve the effects of previous use (Narconon, 2016). Substance abuse or drug addiction is a situation when a person is addicted, he cannot control the situation of his drug use rather his nature of using drug gets control over him. In another terms, when a drug abuser loses the capability to make a rational choice about whether or not to use drugs or alcohol, he or she is addicted. Drug addiction is a condition whereby a person experiences an overpowering thirst to look for and use drugs or alcohol regardless of the negative physical and mental consequences. Typically, substance abuse is accompanied by physical and psychological dependence on the drug and the person suffers withdrawal symptoms when the frequency or the content of the use of drug is rapidly decreased or stopped (Narconon, 2016). Drug use is generally concerned with the use of drugs against certain illnesses. This may involve the drug being injected, inhaled, swallowed or taken via another means. However, substance abuse may be considered as using the drugs for the purpose other than their intended use so that the negative consequences occur. It has been noted that the drug abuse poses serious health risk to the abuser and may even have the likelihood of turning out to be fatal for the consumer. At the same time, the consequences leave impacts on the family members as well as the society or the community (Sussman & Ames, 2001).

Prostitution is frequently referred to as the world's oldest profession, and as has been stated, the practice has to do with the practice of engaging in sexual activity for payment. It has also been noted to be engaged in as a result of peer pressure, homelessness, drug use, and poverty, to name a few factors. Commercial sex work is known to be a practice that is a deviation from acceptable behavior in society. As a result of this, individuals who engage in the practice are considered to be a part of a particular group of people who have their own standards and beliefs, which in the estimation of society, are not in line with those of the greater society. This is so because their activities are considered as acts that break social norms.

Due to the nature of commercial sex work, that is, the secrecy in which it is practiced as well as the clientele who are mostly of questionable character, the individuals who are engaged in it are vulnerable to harassment from the police as well as from other prostitutes and other criminals (Weitzer, 2014). According to Main (2012), women who engage in "street-level" prostitution, one of the most prevalent types of sex work, frequently receive the lowest remuneration. Reid (2011) also discovered that women who worked as "street prostitutes" experienced greater abuse and violence than those who worked in other sex-related environments. Baker et al. (2010) reported from a study they conducted, that their female participants insisted that their decision to be involved in prostitution was as a personal choice despite the obvious prevalence of numerous risks that are connected with street-level prostitution. Additionally, the researchers found that the participants believed that prostitution tended to improve their capacity to adapt to other harsh or difficult life circumstances. Belcher and Herr (2005) expand on the results that prostituted women frequently had their eyes on transient benefits. Participants valued money and other more immediate pleasure factors highly overall. Commercial sex workers, even though engaged in an illegal act, have been noted to engage in their business in various cities and communities within the country.

Studies regarding the work of these workers, otherwise referred to as prostitutes, assert that their trade dates can be traced back several centuries to ancient societies and has also been recorded in human history (Gbagbo & Gbagbo, 2021). Several descriptions including "paid sex workers", "slay queens" among others have been attributed to this group of people, and this, according to

(Tawiah-Benjamin, 2019), is part of efforts aimed at ameliorating the stigma attached to the work these ladies are engaged in.

In recent times, the work of commercial sex workers has gained some recognition and has been legalized in some countries (McMilan et al., 2018). In spite of this, commercial sex workers continue to be a marginalized group of people whose lifestyle elicits mixed reactions from members of society. As a result of the fact that commercial sex work is illegal in Ghana, engagement in the business is usually clandestine and carried out in secret and obscure places. Research by Hounmenou (2016) however indicates that even though the practice is regarded as a crime in Ghana, it has been gaining grounds, with a lot more people venturing into it, including young girls below 18 years. It must also be added that reports have indicated that the practice has become so prevalent that commercial sex workers work in and around public universities in Ghana, with some students engaged in the practice as well (Gbagbo & Gbagbo, 2021).

Drug addiction refers to the inability of an individual to stop using drugs even under adverse conditions (John & Erickson, 2013). Doku et al., (2012) have asserted that over the years, the use of drugs has become a global health challenge. Narcotic drugs include cannabis, heroin, methadone among others (O'Brien et al., 2015). Substance abuse is still a serious problem that has an impact on many people worldwide. It causes tremendous loss of life and has impacts on society as a whole, which makes it difficult for populations to function well and to grow. For instance, the impact is exacerbated in underdeveloped nations by the miserable economic and living circumstances. Government spending on drug rehab is viewed as adding to the already-stressed budget's financial load. Additionally, substance abuse poses a risk to public safety since those who use drugs may have a distorted perception of reality and are more likely to engage in improper behaviors like armed robbery, traffic infractions, and domestic violence. These people might then pose a threat to their loved ones, the public, and the environment. The chance of contracting infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and C, and tuberculosis also rises as a result of substance usage (Asiamah et al, 2021). Substance abusers often use contaminated needles and are impaired when using drugs, which can result in poor judgment and the spread of the aforementioned illnesses. Furthermore, engaging in unprotected intercourse is more common when under the influence of illegal drugs. Drugs are viewed as troublesome depending on the civilization because what is deemed a drug in one community may be considered nourishment in another.

According to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNIDP, 2015), drugs are chemical substances that impair a person's ability to reason, causing them to act irrationally. The excessive use of drugs that are prohibited is referred to as illicit drug use. WHO (2014) states that when the term "substance or drug" is used, it refers to a chemical that alters a person's mood, perception, or cognitive behavior whether it is smoked, injected, consumed, drunk, or inhaled in powdered or vapour form. Substance abuse, substance dependence, illegal drug use, and abuse are further terms associated with substance or drug usage. There are other types of medications used besides psychotropic and mood-altering illicit narcotics. The word can refer to ingesting psychoactive or performance-enhancing drugs for non-therapeutic or non-medical purposes, as well as a vast array of other meanings. The entirety of these descriptions of illicit substances demonstrates poor judgment regarding their use.

Donkor (2015) cites a speech given by the acting executive secretary of NACOB regarding the prevalence of drug use and abuse in the nation. He pointed out that the prevalence of drugs

including cocaine, alcohol, cannabis, and heroin use has grown in the nation. The research also stated that data from the Psychiatric Hospital, Pantang in Accra indicates that from 2003 to 2010, the proportion of youth between the ages of 15 and 20 who use drugs increased. There were 145 instances in 2003 compared to 767 cases in 2010, a growth of 61% year on average. It was also mentioned that more girls were becoming "pushers" and engaging in prostitution as a result of their involvement in drug use.

Additionally, he stated that there has been an expansion in the geographic coverage of usage of all drug types in the nation, showing that only cannabis, alcohol, and nicotine previously had nationwide coverage of use. However, narcotics like cocaine, heroin, and different combinations of them, along with their products, that were formerly available to and utilized by residents of large towns like Kumasi, Accra, Takoradi, and Sekondi, now exist and are used throughout the nation.

These drugs have a significant effect on the health of the individuals who use them. These effects range from physical health challenges to a depreciation of their quality of life. The mental health of individuals who use these drugs is also affected. Studies carried out into the factors that lead to the use of these drugs include the fact that the individuals began as a way of experimentation with the drugs, peer influence, a lack of supervision from parents or care givers, issues with personality among others (Alhyas et al., 2015). While research has indicated that there are several health conditions associated with drug use, the menace continues to be a public health challenge with more youth engaged in it (Krupski et al., 2016).

In recent times, the prevalence of drug use has been severally reported to be on the ascendency. It is also linked to poor prognosis and difficult clinical treatment outcomes (Corradi-Webster & Gherardi-Donato, 2016). Agbemava (2019) reports that about 1.25 million Ghanaians are believed to have problems with drug use. These drugs include marijuana, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines, tramadol, codeine among others. In the Sunyani Municipal Hospital for example, annual reports in 2014 suggest that drug use in the municipality is on the rise, indicating that over 413 of the 1047 patients seen in the hospital had issues with substance use, with 138 having been either put on admission again or treated at least once due to the same condition caused out of drug use (Appiah, 2014).

The behaviors that the individuals who are involved in the use of narcotic drugs engage in mostly result in negative perceptions about them. When the narcotic drugs mentioned above are abused for a prolonged period of time, dependence results (Liu, Lien, & Fenske, 2010). Due to the constant urge to use the drugs, most substance abusers engage in socially unacceptable behaviors such as violence and theft in order to make money for the satiation of their urge. They are usually seen on the streets begging for money, sleeping under bridges among others. They mostly engage in several risky behaviors that result in medical emergencies as well (Konstantopoulos et al., 2015). Similar to the commercial sex workers, the disposition of substance abusers posits them as individuals who do not fit into the societal norms and are mostly viewed as marginalized.

The Christian church, as well as other religious bodies have been interested in the wellbeing of the people within whose communities they are. The need to help ensure the health and wellbeing of their members as well as the people in their communities and countries constitutes one of the central preoccupations of the church. Indeed, following the example of Christ, the church in Ghana, as well as elsewhere, has always been interested in the expression of *diakonia*, that is the



spirit of service. This represents the idea behind the humanitarian wing of the church, which is seen in the various social services they undertake (Bongmba, 2016). The church undertakes social services across all spheres of life, from the establishment of schools, hospitals, agricultural extension, skills training, poverty alleviation campaigns, civic education among others (Adu-Gyamfi, Kuusaana, Darkwa & Tomdi, 2020). All in all, the church in Ghana can be said to have spearheaded some significant developmental programs. These mission-oriented programs have helped the country in its bid to meet global aspirations with regards to the opportunities for access to education, healthcare among others, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Oliver et al., (2015) have asserted that a study of the operations of Christian faith-based organizations revealed that about 50% of the health services and infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa was provided by faith-based organizations. An umbrella organization for faith-based organizations in Zimbabwe, referred to as the Zimbabwe Association of Church Related Hospitals (ZACH) have also indicated that mission related health services and infrastructure account for 45% of the nation's healthcare system and has also been at the forefront of providing 68% of healthcare to the vulnerable, underserved and marginalized populations in rural communities (ZACH, 2020). Kalu (2008) also indicated that the churches in sub-Saharan Africa have provided employment opportunities for thousands of people through projects such as bakeries, laundry services, transportation, banking, electronics, construction among many others. Acheampong (2018) finally adds that the Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana have also aligned with the state in the provision of essential social amenities to the people of the country.

### **Statement of Problem**

Commercial sex workers and substance abusers have been considered, by reason of their disposition and their trade, vices they are engaged in among others, as belonging to a marginalized group of people. Their activities represent a societal challenge that, if not dealt with, has significant challenges for the entire society. Several studies have enumerated the significant physical and mental health challenges that come about as a result of drug use. It is important to indicate that the increase in the rate of drug use has also been linked to an increase in the rate of social vices and other challenges in the society. With regards to commercial sex work, there is a proliferation in their activities, moving from the bars and nightclubs to be seen practiced by young women in and around universities in the country. Gbagbo and Gbagbo (2021) have indicated that student sex workers have combined academic work and sex work with the aim of getting financial and material gains among others. Brothels have also been reported to be springing up at a fast rate. Hostel rooms have even been converted to brothels. These indices have an alarming significance due to the fact that the increase in these activities can also be linked to the rate of decline of the moral fiber of society as well as an increase in the risk of sexually transmitted diseases.

While a number of studies have been conducted to ascertain the rate at which commercial sex work and narcotic drug use are growing within the country, there is a paucity of research work with regards to the perspectives of key stakeholders such as the local government authorities as well as the religious leaders. These perspectives will be crucial in the gleaning of insight into the state of the challenge with regards to rehabilitating these marginalized groups as well as how their activities can be effectively brought to a minimum. The authorities vested with power in the country to ensure that the society is not destroyed by the activities of these groups of people are key stakeholders in the efforts to eradicate the activities and rehabilitate the individuals involved.

With regards to the protection of the moral fiber of society, religious leaders from the various religions are key stakeholders whose views and perspectives will provide a valuable resource and guide to the handling of the challenges outlined as a result of the behaviors.

### **Aims/Objectives of the study**

The study aims to

1. Explore the perceptions of participants on the current state of commercial sex work and substance abuse in Ghana.
2. Explore the perceptions of participants with regards to the causes of the current state of commercial sex work and substance abuse in Ghana.
3. Explore the perceptions of participants with regards to the role of the state in rehabilitating commercial sex workers and substance abusers in Ghana.
4. Explore the perceptions of participants with regards to the role of religious leaders in the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and substance abusers in Ghana.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the perceptions on the causes, potential consequences if unchecked, and current state of commercial sex work and substance abuse in Ghana?
2. What are the perceived roles of district/municipal authorities and religious leaders in the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and substance abusers?

### **Significance of the study**

The study will be key in providing vital information to key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection, Local Government Ministry, religious leaders, school authorities, parents among others as well as students as to the state of commercial sex work and substance abuse in Ghana. Such insight will also be instrumental in driving and mobilizing efforts at rehabilitating the individuals in these marginalized groups.

Another significance of this study is that the knowledge that will be gained from it as well as similar studies will influence the implementation of the laws regarding the activities indicated in the study using more efficient and effective ways of tackling them.

Finally, this study and its findings will add to the body of knowledge gathered by research on commercial sex work as well as substance abuse in the country which will serve as a valuable foundation upon which future research work will be done. Research work on individuals within these marginalized groups and those engaged in other social vices are an important resource for interventions which are part of efforts at tackling the vice effectively in the society.

### **Definition of terms**

**Prostitution/ Commercial sex work:** The performing, offering, or agreement to perform a sexual act for money, property, token, favour, article or anything of value by the prostitute through bargaining

**Drug use:** the use of and addiction to narcotic drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, etc.

## Delimitation of the study

The study will be limited to some selected municipalities in Accra. This is because while commercial sex work and substance abuse have gained roots in several parts of the country, the study will look at areas where they are prevalent. Accra, being the capital city of the country, will be ideal for this study as a result. In many suburbs of Accra, it is alleged that prostitutes operate during day and night and in small houses, hotels and guest houses.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of the Social Representations' Theory (Moscovici, 1961), as it provides key insights into the understanding of the concept of mental health conditions, in the case of this study, commercial sex work and substance abuse from the point of view of state and religious leaders. This review will be followed by findings of related literature, that will throw more light on the identified behaviors and some interventions set out to deal with them. It will then be complimented by the Theological and Missiological Framework in chapter 3 which will properly situate the study in the light of how the church, with its focus on the *missio Dei*, plays a vital role in society in the handling of social deviancy which results in the marginalization of some individuals.

#### **Social Representations Theory**

The Social Representations Theory is adopted by the researcher to help understand the perspectives of commercial sex work and narcotic drug use from the point of view of state and religious leaders. This theory was originally propounded by a researcher known as Serge Moscovici. According to this theory, our knowledge of the world is constructed socially or jointly by the members of a culture and reflects a community's understanding of a particular idea or phenomenon (Moscovici, 2007). It seeks to explain or outline how our opinions are formed, reflects our understanding of, and the meaning which the members of a society give to their social worlds. It also explains how individuals locate themselves within society through the construction of a shared body of rational thinking knowledge that provides a sense of connectedness and understanding (Moscovici, 2007). Social representations have to do with different types of collective cognitions, common sense or thought systems of societies or groups of people. This refers to how people make sense of their world as a society. The representations are always related to social, cultural and/or symbolic objects, they are representations of something. There are a plethora of definitions used by the advocates, and the proponent of the theory, Moscovici, himself gives a number of definitions:

*Social representations concern the contents of everyday thinking and the stock of ideas that give coherence to our religious beliefs, political ideas and the connections we create as spontaneously as we breathe. They make it possible for us to classify persons and objects, to compare and explain behaviours and to objectify them as part of our social setting. While representations are often to be located in the minds of men and women, they can just as often be found "in the world", and as such examined separately. (Moscovici 1988)*

*A social representation is a system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function: first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orientate themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual group history. (Moscovici 1973)*

[...] from the dynamic point of view social representations appear as a “network” of ideas, metaphors and images, more or less loosely tied together. (Moscovici 2000)

The social representations theory attempts to shed light on how collective cognitions are produced and transformed through communication with a focus on the socio-cognitive processes or mechanisms involved. On one hand, all the effect of the thinking patterns of people suggest that there has to be a mechanism or structure that oversees the common understanding of the things that occur every day around them, and this is what can be referred to as social representations. On the other hand, individuals and groups produces social representations through social interaction and communication.

### **Role of social representations**

According to Moscovici (1984) social representations play two key functions. They help us to familiarize ourselves with the objects, persons and events we come across on a daily basis by giving them a specific form, placing them in set categories by way of the way they are thought of, and then gradually establish them as distinct and shared cognitions. Social representations are also noted to be prescriptive in nature in the sense that the way people think about or understand events or phenomena that they come across has been predefined by the social structures and traditions of the society. Although we incorporate them into our individual minds, as individuals we rethink collective cognitions. It is important, however, to note that individuals and groups can rework and transform collective cognitions. The idea about a basic link between the collective and the individual, between the present and the past, and between the known and the unknown permeate the theory of social representations.

People's ways of thinking about commercial sex workers and drug users in a community are deduced from the information they are exposed to through regular contact with these people or information about these people, and this shapes attitudes toward the people in question.

Serge Moscovici established the *Basics of Social Representation Theory* (SRT) in 1961, based on Emile Durkheim's 1898 collective representations (Moscovici, 2007). This theory was first considered as being part of contemporary social psychology. The social representations (SRs) of a society or group of people are anchored in the society's history and culture, determining psychological awareness of the social world and providing a common-sense context for understanding experiences that show themselves in public discourses, according to Markova (2003). As a result, representations are understood as social inventions that are a part of social reality. This is the position of social representations as opposed to individual reproductions or renditions of participants' experiences. They can be understood as thoughts in movement, developing through communication.

The theory refers to a system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function. In order to understand the social representations theory, it is important to note that it seeks to postulate how individuals who belong to a certain community all settle on and have common representations of things that occur in their setting. These phenomena include events, concept among others, and it is this search that lies at the heart of the theory. It looks at people's individual and collective image of the world, their natural propensity to agree with some idea of the world that they have come up with within their spheres. Thus, the common perspectives of things created by people's

interaction in places where the members of a group, community or society converge such as cafes, offices, hospitals and laboratories can be presumed to build up their sense of reality.

This is to say that the commentary of people in a community with regards to information such as that which is reported in newspapers and on the television become a classic canvas upon which the social representation is drawn. This canvas is significant in the sense that it provides a basis for people collective and individual digestion of information as well as their behaviors and the actions they take in respect of the information received. According to the proponent of the social representations' paradigm, Moscovici (1984), social representations shape or define how a group of people think about or view a particular situation.

Further, he indicated that social representations are what brings us closest to the reality of things, and it is this reality that we make sense of, through thinking about and forming an understanding, the particular phenomenon. It has to do with the various things that we think about every day, which serve as the basis for the beliefs that we have in spheres and on topics such as religion, politics among others. All in all, the social representations have to do with the things and the factors that influence the thoughts of the people in a place, as fundamental as the exercise of breathing (Moscovici, 1988).

Moscovici thus postulated that the society in which a person belongs is not merely existing as a gathering of people. In actual fact however, the society is made up of the various belief systems that constituents are bound by, entailing structures such as regulations, missions, values, among others. It exists within people's beliefs about society, including rules, norms, ideologies and values that are reflected in it. The first function is to establish an order which will help individuals have an orientation of their material and social world and master it. So, in terms of people's understanding of commercial sex workers and drug users, it will be seen that these individuals will be seen or thought about in light of the socially unacceptable nature of the activities that they are engaged in. They will also be seen from the lenses of the fact that they represent a breakdown in the moral fiber of society because of the deviancy, secrecy and antisocial nature of their activities.

Secondly, the theory exists to enable communication to take place among the members of a community. This is done by providing them with a code for social exchange, that is a standard for naming and classifying events and phenomena around them (Moscovici, 2000). Thus, the theory seeks to provide insight into the way in which a society thinks with regard to a particular issue or condition. It also helps the members of a society to form attitudes towards a particular event, phenomenon or group of people.

For example, with regards to the groups of people this study focuses on, the social representations ascribed to them determines the attitudes of people towards them. Thus, a positive social representation will be linked to a positive attitude of people towards the subject matter. Similarly, a negative social representation can be linked to or will result in a negative social representation of the group of people or phenomenon in question. The nature of social representations of the participants in this study will thus be indicative of their attitudes towards them. This is determined by the structure of the social groups within which it develops.

The theory submits that representations are formed as a result of anchoring, objectification, personification and figuration of the phenomenon. Anchoring involves setting the idea or condition in a familiar context so that people can easily grasp it. The stage of objectification is where the idea of the condition is made more concrete to make it easier to grasp. Thirdly, the condition is associated with a particular group of people. The final stage is where images and metaphors are used to represent the concept. With regards to commercial sex work and narcotic drug use, the factors that can be seen to form the perceptions include non-conformity to societal rules and norms (Williams et al., 2005), the illegality of the behaviors (Mill, 2010) among others.

All the major religions whose population represents the majority of people in Ghana condemn the practice of commercial sex trade. The views of the various members of the society, having been formed from the anchoring, objectification, personification and figuration, can be seen as the representations of the members of the society with regards to the groups being studied.

## **Media Studies**

The idea of social representations is extremely pertinent to media studies due to the emphasis on representations of [new] societal phenomena and communication. The fundamental concepts of the theory—more specifically, the communicative mechanisms of anchoring and objectification—have been presented and somewhat elaborated in this article. It is important to highlight that a theory in this context is taken to mean "both an approach, a way of looking at social phenomena, and a system describing and explaining them" (Moscovici, 1988). Additionally, "relatively little guidance on the implications of the theory for the design of empirical research" (Bauer & Gaskell) can be found in the literature on social representations. In one study, Olausson (2010) exposed a hidden but developing European identity in the media coverage of climate change by focusing on antinomies, emotional anchoring, and objectification in a thorough analysis.

*"The theory of social representations focuses on how society thinks socially and culturally, how new social cognitions or representations of reality are advanced and existing ones changed via communication. The hypothesis helps to clear up the mystery surrounding the origins of representations. They are connected to both the previously existing bodies of social representations in social life, the media, and other areas of society on the one hand, and to the genuine changes in the material and symbolic world (technology advancements, scientific discoveries, courses of events, etc.) on the other"*

Numerous techniques, both quantitative and qualitative, have been employed in representations research. Instead of discussing specific method choices, the focus here has been on emphasizing the conceptual analytical level and connecting it to empirical application, in this case, through concrete examples from studies of the media and climate change. One benefit is unquestionably that the theory provides the opportunity to establish a close relationship between the theoretical and empirical levels. Another benefit is the comprehensiveness of the theory, which includes a number of different perspectives.

Of course, this theoretical method has flaws just like other theories do. For instance, Vorlklein and Howarth (2005) noted that the theory does not address issues of power relations: "We need

to analyze how representations may be infused with ideological power to justify the status quo and maintain systems of inequality and exclusion." A general statement about the influence of ideas is made by Moscovici, however: "It is a proven truth that an idea, no matter what form it assumes, has the power of making us come together, of making us modify our feelings and modes of behavior, and of exercising a constraint over us just as much as any external condition" (Moscovici 1993).

The power and ideology components, however, undoubtedly need to be expanded theoretically, for instance by fusing social representations theory with critical discourse theory. Another flaw identified with the theory is that it ignores the behaviors and actions that individuals or groups of individuals engage in while creating social representations. Whether or not this is a major constraint is up for debate, but a theory might logically fail to cover all possibilities. Additionally, Vorlklein and Howarth (2005) point out that while this criticism is founded on a perspective that views cognition and action as being in opposition to one another, social representations theorists do not share this viewpoint. Every social practice involves the manifestation of social representations, which are functional units made up of the social and the individual, the cognitive and the cultural, the mind and society.

Despite these drawbacks, the theory of social representations can be a useful tool for media studies. Studying how the public and the media frame "new" scientific, political, and social concerns helps us learn about significant changes in societal cognitive processes or communally created meaning. Along with deeply emotional and socio-cognitive processes, ongoing transformations also involve structural material processes. The goal of social representations, essentially, is to enable the members of a society familiarize themselves with a concept, phenomenon, event, a group or people or any other thing occurring within the environment.

### **Commercial sex work in Ghana**

The activities of commercial sex workers in Ghana have remained a complex and multifaceted issue influenced by historical, socio-economic, legal, health, and human rights factors. While some efforts have been made to deal with the challenge, it has been noted to have increased significantly, sparking the requirement of action that is swift and effective, in order to avoid the further depletion of the fabric of society as a result of the accompanying challenges of these activities. In order to understand the antecedents of the practice in Ghana, it is important to understand the fact that commercial sex work in Ghana has deep historical roots, often intertwined with traditional and cultural practices.

It is said that during the colonial era, the influx of foreign workers and soldiers led to the growth of sex work in urban centers and mining towns (Owusu, 2010). This situation was later succeeded by the attendant health and depletion of the social fabric. The post-independence era which witnessed economic and social changes as well as the availability of some work significantly caused the decrease in commercial sex work (Agyei, 2015). Studies into the subject matter suggest that one of the driving forces behind commercial sex work in Ghana is poverty and limited economic opportunities. Many women enter sex work as a means of survival due to lack of employment opportunities (Adjei & Ganle, 2019).

Furthermore, it is suggested that gender inequality and the limited access to education and vocational training further exacerbate the vulnerability of women to engage in sex work (Adu-



Nyako et al., 2021). Commercial sex work is illegal in Ghana, and it is considered a criminal offense. The criminalization of sex work has significant implications for the health and safety of sex workers, as it drives the trade underground and exposes them to violence, exploitation, and abuse (FHI 360, 2014). Policy responses have been complex, with debates on decriminalization and possible regulatory frameworks (Amo-Adjei et al., 2018).

Sex workers in Ghana face numerous health challenges, with a higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS (Ntuli et al., 2016). Access to healthcare services, particularly for sex workers, remains limited, partly due to stigma and discrimination (Bulley & Egyir, 2019). Moreover, sex workers are vulnerable to human rights violations, including physical and sexual violence, often perpetrated by clients or law enforcement officials (Larmarange et al., 2017). Stigma and discrimination against sex workers remain prevalent in Ghanaian society. Negative societal attitudes contribute to the marginalization of sex workers and hinder their access to support and protective services (Ganle et al., 2020).

As part of efforts to rehabilitate them, various non-governmental organizations and community-based initiatives have sought to empower and support sex workers in Ghana. These programs include vocational training, educational workshops, and healthcare outreach (Mensah et al., 2022). Although limited in scale, such initiatives have shown potential in improving the lives of sex workers.

## **Substance Abuse in Ghana**

Substance abuse is a significant public health concern in Ghana, with adverse impacts on individuals, families, and communities. The causative factors of substance abuse in Ghana are multifaceted, arising from a complex interplay of individual, social, economic, and environmental factors. Studies into the field suggest that the causes are diverse and interconnected, involving socio-economic challenges, peer influence, drug availability, mental health, family dynamics, and prevention gaps. Addressing substance abuse effectively requires a comprehensive approach that includes targeted prevention efforts, early intervention, accessible treatment services, and addressing underlying social determinants of substance abuse.

### **Causes of substance abuse**

Poverty is a significant driver of substance abuse in Ghana. Economic hardships can lead individuals to seek escape or relief through substance use (Kpobi et al., 2018). The lack of access to basic necessities and limited employment opportunities has been noted to push individuals towards drug use as a coping mechanism. The high rate of unemployment, especially among the youth, increases susceptibility to substance abuse (Asante et al., 2019). Without productive activities, some individuals may turn to drugs as a means of passing time or dealing with feelings of hopelessness.

Limited access to education, particularly for marginalized populations, may increase the risk of substance abuse (Okyerifo et al., 2017). Lack of education and awareness about the risks of drug use can lead to experimentation and eventual addiction. Social circles, particularly among the youth, heavily influence drug initiation and continued use (Abada et al., 2018). Pressure from friends and acquaintances who use drugs can lead individuals to engage in substance abuse to gain acceptance or fit in.

Media representations of drug use, along with certain cultural practices, may glamorize drug use and desensitize individuals to its risks (Okyerefo et al., 2017). It is believed that individuals, especially youth, have a tendency to model after behavior that is portrayed and subscribed to by others like them or within their demographics. These portrayals can influence attitudes towards drug use and shape perceptions of social acceptability. Ghana's geographical location makes it vulnerable to drug trafficking and transit (Amoako, 2016). The easy availability of drugs due to illicit drug trade networks creates a conducive environment for drug abuse. The widespread availability of prescription medications without strict control in some areas can lead to misuse and abuse (Anarfi et al., 2021). Some individuals may access and misuse medications with psychoactive properties.

### **Mental health and substance abuse**

Individuals with untreated or undiagnosed mental health conditions may turn to drugs as a form of self-medication (Asiamah et al., 2021). Anxiety, depression, and other psychiatric disorders may increase vulnerability to substance abuse. Exposure to trauma, such as violence, abuse, or loss, can trigger drug use as a coping mechanism (Amenyah et al., 2017). Drugs may temporarily alleviate emotional pain, leading to a cycle of dependency. Individuals with a family history of drug addiction have a higher genetic predisposition to develop substance use disorders (Doku et al., 2012). Familial modeling of drug use behaviors can also influence a person's attitudes towards drugs. Parental drug use and a lack of parental supervision can increase the risk of drug addiction in children and adolescents (Amenyah et al., 2017). Children growing up in environments where substance use is normalized are more likely to experiment with drugs. The absence of comprehensive drug education programs may contribute to a lack of awareness about the risks and consequences of drug use (Kpobi et al., 2018). Educational initiatives on substance abuse prevention are crucial for shaping attitudes and behaviors. The scarcity of accessible and affordable rehabilitation and treatment services for drug addiction may hinder individuals from seeking help (Asante et al., 2019). The lack of appropriate support systems can perpetuate drug dependency.

### **Perceptions of causal factors**

According to the literature, several factors are perceived to be the reasons why people choose to engage in commercial sex work. Owusu-Banahene (2010), in a study that explored prostitution in Ghana, looking at its religious and ethical implications, found that several prostitutes venture into the trade as a means to get financial, material and some other benefits. The study found that some factors such as the high rate of youth unemployment, limited job opportunities, greater rural urban migration and the rising cost of living. Prostitution was seen to be generally the result of the increase in poverty levels, a function of greed and finally lust. It was also noted that the practice thrived on the disintegration of the family system when parents neglected their duty of responsibility for their children, some of them resort to prostitution as they see it as a means of survival. These findings were similar to those found by Gbagbo and Gbagbo (2021) in their study that explored commercial sex work among university students using a case study of four public universities in Ghana.

With regards to how the activities of the individuals under study are viewed, some studies have shed light on perceptions placed on them. These representations of the commercial sex workers

contribute immensely to their marginalization or perception as not conforming and therefore not belonging to society. In the study by Owusu-Banahene, they were referred to by names such as *wareseefo* (destroyer of marriages) and *beguamman* (nation wreckers). This was due to the belief that their patronage by married men resulted in the disintegration of marital relationships as well as families. Like slaves, commercial sex workers were considered to be outsiders and therefore marginalized in society.

With regards to substance abuse, it represents a critical area of concern to the public and mental health of the society. Alhyas et al., (2015) in a study of health seeking behaviors among drug users in the Sunyani municipality of Ghana found that factors such as experimentation with drug out of curiosity, the influence of friends and family, lack of parental supervision, conduct and personality disorders among others could be implicated as reasons why the individuals would engage in the behavior. It was noted that for some substance abusers, the consumption of the narcotic drugs began as a way of experimentation with the behaviors of others close to them, and then they realize that they become hooked onto the substance. The curiosity with regards to what experiences or feelings will be had after the consumption of the substances was implicated to have led the substance abusers into the behavior, but then the continuous urge for some different and euphoric sensation resulted in the use of multiple substances, increasing dependence and subsequently addiction.

Several other reasons are given for drug use and a study by Mu and Schumann, (2018), found that some factors that are linked with drug use include sexual performance, improved functioning, anxiety, fatigue, coping with stressful life events, among others. Usually, more than one drug is involved with regards to drug abuse, and the individual also has various ways of administering the drug. This may be hazardous to their health (Lopez & Setel, 2015). These different means of administration include inhalation, oral, nasal ingestion or intravenous, intramuscular or subcutaneous injection (Enevoldson, 2004; Havinga, Van der Velden, De Gee, & Van der Poel, 2014). Data from studies done by the Mental Health Authority in the year 2016 showed that about 130,610 people above 12 years used illicit drugs.

In a study conducted by Sreeramareddy, Pradhan, and Sin (2014) on the prevalence, distribution and determinants of tobacco use in 30 Sub-Saharan African countries, it was found that the prevalence of tobacco use in some African countries varied from country to country. Another study carried out by Asante et al., (2014, p.4) to examine the relationship between substance use and risky sexual behaviours among homeless youth in Ghana indicated that the prevalence of marijuana use and alcohol use among them were 16.2% and 12% respectively.

### **Efforts at Rehabilitation**

In 2016, Yartey (2016) conducted a study into the outcomes of a project aimed at combatting the commercial and sexual exploitation of children in Ghana. The study spanned a period of 18 months. The researcher found that an increase in the awareness created on the dangers of commercial sex work, especially having to do with children, was a significantly important step to dealing with the menace. Again, providing some direct support in the form of educational and skills training materials or equipment in conjunction with the enrolling of these individuals in schools and other training institutions helped to reduce the vulnerabilities that led them to engage in the sex trade. Finally, it was seen that when their parents were supported financially, it would

go a long way in providing for the needs that drew the girls into the commercial sex trade. Participants in the study provided some recommendations that would help deal with the increasing involvement of girls in the sex trade. These included the continuous provision of support for the individuals, those they depend on, a sustained public awareness creation campaign, stricter implementation of the laws regarding the act among others.

Prostitution is not the only problem some countries in Asia and Europe are dealing with. According to a study conducted by Nicholas D. Kristoff and Sheryl Wudunn (2009), the issue of prostitution is closely linked with trafficking. Anecdotal evidence suggests that most women and girls go into prostitution mainly because of the financial benefits. This, according to Kristoff and Wudunn (2009) is unfortunately not the case all the time. In countries like India, China, Japan, USA, and Netherlands, women are forced into prostitution through trafficking and by the acts of evil men known as ‘pimps’ in the sex industry. These innocent and underage girls are mostly lured from very poor communities and families with the promise of getting them jobs or taking them into a land flowing with milk and honey. As far back as 2009, the U.S department estimated that between 500,000 to 700,000 people were being trafficked across international borders annually (Kristoff and Wudunn, 2009) where 80% out of the number above are women and girls and are mostly for sexual exploitation.

Some factors were identified by Kristoff and Wudunn (2009) as key reasons for trafficking, and to some extent, the promotion of prostitution. Globalization was identified as one of such reasons. Asians and Africans are those who fall prey to this, because of poverty and poverty related issues they are confronted with in their countries. Thus, a chance to leave their country to a country they consider as better than theirs is considered as a golden opportunity. HIV/AIDS was also considered to be one of the reasons contributing to trafficking. It was noted that customers/clients who frequent brothels and patronize these sex workers are scared of contracting the deadly disease (HIV/AIDS), thus, they request for younger girls who are perceived to be clean, pure and ‘disease free’.

Owners of these brothels and the handlers of these sex workers, in their quest to satisfy their clients and keep making money at the expense of others, go in for these innocent girls. Their target area for these girls are mostly Africa and Asia. Legalization of prostitution in countries like Germany and the Netherlands has given the pimps a lot of authority to carry out their activities. Health care service is however provided to the girls and women in the various brothels and in the sex industry, unlike countries where prostitution is illegal. The girls are left to their own fate in such countries. Countries where prostitution is legalized offer health care services to these women to ensure they are free from any sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS. Amsterdam Red Light District is more of a sex tourism center in the Netherlands. In the USA model for prostitution, the sex workers are seen as criminals, and are arrested when caught by the Police or military officials. This is same in Ghana, unlike the German model that legalizes and normalizes prostitution. Dr. Ingeborg Kraus (2019) describes the German model as “hell on earth” and blames the politicians for considering a topic like prostitution as an immaterial subject to be discussed. Sexual exploitation has therefore become one of the most lucrative criminal businesses in recent times, because of models like this. The German government’s reason for agreeing to such a model was for sexual liberation. Dr. Ingeborg Kraus (2019) however argued that prostitution has nothing to do with sexual liberation, which I also agree. In the words of Dr. Ingeborg Kraus (2019),

*“Germans with this law, became the pimp of the most vulnerable women in Europe. German politicians and the German state bear a historical responsibility in the development of a sex industry that creates thousands of victims of sexual violence daily, and makes enormous profit out of them. There is only one way out of this; we need the Nordic Model now!”*

The women’s coalition for the abolition of prostitution defines the Nordic model, also known as the Swedish model, as an approach or method that criminalizes the purchase of sex and pimping but decriminalizes prostituted individuals. One of their key arguments is that a legal prohibition changes the attitudes of people and helps to create a powerful social standard. According to coalition, such a law conveys a clear message that the human body and sexuality are not and cannot be classified as commercial goods.

In conclusion, the social representation of the behaviors or activities of commercial sex workers as well as substance abusers categorizes the individuals who partake in this trade as antisocial or contributing to the eroding of the moral fiber of society as well as peace and security. As a result, they are mostly not welcome in the society. Derogatory characterizations are cast on them as a result. There have been numerous actions by stakeholders such as the state, using the security services to clamp down on their activities and a number of awareness creation campaigns as well to this end. Due to reasons such as the increasing financial hardships, a breakdown in family systems, peer influence among others, the challenge has persisted.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THEOLOGICAL AND MISSIOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The Bible makes figurative references to prostitution in several Old Testament scriptures, and also highlights stories of women engaged in prostitution. There are stories of Jesus communicating with women regarded as prostitutes. Prostitution in the Old Testament is an activity that is strictly prohibited and condemned. When you consider the Ten Commandments God gave to His people through His servant Moses, the seventh commandment is a law against extra marital affairs, of which prostitution can be considered as having a link to that. Another scripture that speaks directly to prostitution and warns against such practices in the land is Leviticus 19:29.

Two Hebrew words are mostly used to denote prostitution; *zonah* (sexually inappropriate actions outside marriage) and *q'desah* (sexual activities as a function of proper fertility ceremonies, or religious beliefs). The Old Testament condemns both sacred and temple prostitution. As a matter of fact, any idea or activity that can be likened to prostitution is explicitly condemned (Singh, Jennifer 2018). King Solomon, son of David, the man who was gifted by God with a great measure of wisdom, warns against the many dangers of women involved in prostitution, and how they destroy the lives of young men who patronize their services. According to King Solomon, these women are able to turn the hearts of such men away from God. Even though some important people (Rahab, Tamar, Gomer the wife of Hosea) are linked to prostitution in the Bible, it is still seen as a condemnable practice throughout the entire Old Testament.

The New Testament was written in the Graeco-Roman culture, thus, the Greek word used for a prostitute is *pornea*. This word '*pornea*' is linked with all kinds of sexual immorality which includes sex with a slave, incest, having sexual relations with a prostitute, e.tc. In 1 Corinthians 6, the Apostle Paul urged believers not to have sexual relations with women in prostitution. His reason for this caution was that the body of the believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit, thus, it must not be desecrated. Although both the Old and New Testament condemn the act of prostitution, some specific women engaged in prostitution are spoken of in a positive manner.

When one considers the Gospel of St. John for example, there are stories of Jesus either interacting with a prostitute or intervening on one's behalf. The conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well is one that teaches a lot of social and biblical lessons. The Samaritan woman did not expect a Jew like Jesus to interact with her, but Jesus did, and she was also receptive towards Him. The outcome of that wonderful and inspired conversation was that this woman got many of the Samaritans to believe in Jesus and be transformed. Regardless of this Samaritan woman's past and current state, she was not condemned by Jesus, rather, she received from Jesus what the Bible calls 'the living water'. This living water transformed this woman into a new creation and a powerful evangelist. Jesus showed compassion and mercy to the woman who was caught in adultery and was almost stoned to death.

In Matthew 21 as well, Jesus talks about tax collectors and prostitutes entering into the Kingdom of God ahead of the righteous, because according to Him, they received and believed what was

presented to them by John. This seems to suggest that no matter who you are, once you receive and believe, salvation and redemption becomes yours. Jesus does not only love and care for the sheep in the pen (John 10:16), but He is also very concerned about those outside the sheepfold, and hopes to bring them all to Himself (the good shepherd ready and willing to give His life for His sheep).

The Christian church, at its core, represents a group of people who seek to link *orthodoxy*, *orthokardia* and *orthopraxis* (Isaak, 2019). Orthodoxy has to do with the teachings and doctrines of the Church as codified in the Holy Scriptures. The Bible contains the fundamental doctrines of Christianity and as a result, the various Christian denominations look to the Bible as a sole source for the gleanings of doctrine for their faith and lifestyle. The various denominations then have a set of doctrines or teachings based on their interpretation of the dictates of the Scriptures. Orthokardia, on the other hand, refers to the state in which an individual assumes an affinity for God and his/her neighbors.

In his paper *Missiological Framework in Africa*, Isaak (2019), explained that a core character or nature of Christians was the fact that they were to have a good heart, liking for God as well as empathy and sympathy for their neighbors, as this was how they portrayed their imitation of and modelling after Christ. Finally, Orthopraxis has to do with how the church extended its activities beyond its borders or traditional orientation of theology and spiritual things to the involvement in activities that are geared towards the improvement of the wellbeing of others in the society. This also includes an engagement in the affairs of the world with the goal of transforming society positively. Missiology, the study of Christian missions, has undergone significant transformation over the centuries.

This literature review aims to analyze the various missiological frameworks that have emerged and evolved since the 19th century to the present day. By examining a wide array of primary and secondary sources, this review seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the theoretical foundations, historical context, and contemporary perspectives within missiology. To understand the development of missiological frameworks, it is essential to trace the historical roots of Christian missions. Early missions were often characterized by a colonial mindset, which viewed non-Western cultures as inferior and in need of Western intervention. Missionary pioneers like William Carey and David Livingstone laid the groundwork for missiological reflection by focusing on cross-cultural communication and contextualization.

Additionally, the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 marked a significant turning point, leading to a greater emphasis on indigenous leadership and contextualized approaches. *Theoretical Foundations of Missiological Frameworks* delves into the theoretical foundations that underpin various missiological frameworks. It explores concepts such as the *missio Dei*, holistic mission, inculturation, and the role of the local church in mission. Furthermore, it discusses the theological shifts that have shaped missiology, such as the rise of liberation theology, missional ecclesiology, and postcolonial critiques of missionary practices. Contextualization is a critical aspect of missiological frameworks, focusing on adapting the Gospel message to specific cultural contexts without compromising its essence.

## **Summary Statement**

This section examines different approaches to contextualization, including insider movements, insider-outsider dynamics, and the challenges of syncretism and indigenization. Over the years, missiological frameworks have increasingly emphasized the integral relationship between mission and social justice. This section explores how issues such as poverty, human rights, environmental stewardship, and healthcare have become integral components of missional endeavors.

To summarize, this link, central to the Christian faith, spirituality and faith as inspired by the Scriptures and espoused by the Church must be expressed in activities and agenda that goes to the betterment of society. The combination of prayer and struggle for justice in society means that the individual understands that prayer holds the word of faith in the same way that the earth holds the seed until it sprouts (Isaak, 2019). It is in view of this, that this study will seek to understand the role of the church in the eradication of or amelioration of practices such as engagement in the commercial sex trade as well as substance abuse that has led to the alienation and marginalization of some members of the society.

As a partaker in the divine purpose of God, or the *missio-Dei*, the Church and Christians have the mandate to take part in efforts to bring liberation, freedom, justice, reconciliation and healing to the world. From the conception of *missio Dei* flows the framework of mission as transformation and transformational development. *Missio Dei* is a Christian theological Latin term for “mission of God” or “sending of God” (Shirmacher, 2008; Goheen, 2014). In simple terms, *missio Dei* is expressive of a theological understanding of mission as “God’s work in which the Church and the faithful participate” (Kemper, 2014). The term's coinage is traced back to the influence of Karl Barth, who is credited for having propelled this understanding of mission in a paper read in 1932 at Brandenburg Missionary Conference (Bosch 2011)

To quote Isaiah 61 and Luke 4 in the Bible, the mission of Christ was “to bring the good news to the oppressed...to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, and the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour”. Another important input of the church to the betterment of the society, is its understanding and spread of its faith. Sin is construed as anything done by a person against his neighbor, or any biblically and socially unacceptable behavior. This view as espoused by the church is critical as it helps to promote and advocate socially acceptable behavior. Since long ago, the church has been an active part of efforts at helping to see to issues regarding the health and well-being of individuals within their localities, regions and the nations at a whole. From the onset the various medical facilities and infrastructure have been supplemented by inputs from the church.

With an eye on the spirit of service (*diakonia*) and the passion and zeal that can be gleaned from the observation and modelling after the example of Jesus Christ, the church has gone through several efforts to undertake programs such as medical missions as part of vocation and mandate (Guder, 2004; Bongmba, 2016; Adu-Gyamfi, Kuusaana, Darkwa and Tomdi, 2020). In this regard, church-based health missions in Africa have made major advancements. They have made significant contributions in the creation of healthcare facilities, the development of biomedicine, the provision of critical health services to the poor and the needy, the advancement of medical education and training, and the involvement in public health campaigns (Good, 1991). The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the area of healthcare has been supported by health missions in the twenty-first



century (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2020). Christian faith-based organizations only provide around 50% of health care in sub-Saharan Africa (Olivier et al., 2015).

According to the Zimbabwe Association of Church Related Hospitals (ZACH), (2020:2), mission health facilities in Zimbabwe provide 45% to national health delivery and provide 68% of the healthcare for the underserved, vulnerable, and marginalized populations in rural regions. Although medical missions have historically and continue to contribute to development, there is very little empirical research and anecdotal evidence in the literature on missiological studies about how these institutions' practices and delivery models could promote holistic development. (Good, 1991; Wolford, 2010). However, according to Adu-Gyamfi et al. (2020), some of this beneficence is based on missionary theory of practice, and the success of these health missions in promoting total human flourishing is directly related to institutional strategies for cooperating with the communities they serve. The ideal way to disseminate this gospel message of God's healing in the world through words and deeds must be considered for each situation.

Best care practices for the whole person must still be used in health missions in economical and efficient methods, especially in low-income nations with little resources and high demand for healthcare services. Better medical mission strategies are needed in Africa and Zimbabwe, where the majority of the population suffers from extreme poverty and disease and where "religion constitutes an inextricable part of society" (Agbiji and Swart, 2015). As stated by Wolford (2010), one of the most important resources for the future of medical missions in their position as transformation agents is the dissemination of knowledge on what works best and what does not work in health missions.

In this sense, the mission is God's movement, within which He expresses his kingdom and the freeing realm of power therein (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004), according to Verkuyl in 1979. Another way to think of the mission is as *missio ecclesiae*, which is defined as "the mission of the church formed and informed by the *missio Dei* as it responds to a call from God to participate in God's mission" (Hancox, 2020). According to Newbigin (1995), the church acts as "an instrument, a sign, and a foretaste of God's kingdom" in this sense. The church's "committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation" is what is meant by the phrase "gospel mission." (Wright, 2006). According to this *missio Dei* viewpoint, God the Father sends God the Son to accomplish and complete the work of healing and reconciliation. God the Father and God the Son also send the Holy Spirit, who gathers, empowers, and sends the confessing community, or church, as God's missionary people, "to be Christ's witnesses" (Acts 1:8).

This conceptualization implies that the church has a missional responsibility to further the process of healing and reconciliation as part of its role as Christ's witness. An entity is "related to or characterised by mission or has qualities, attributes or dynamics of mission" (Wright, 2006) when the adjective "missional" is used to describe it. The justification for this idea that the church has a missionary mandate can be found in the nature of the mission itself. The phrase "missional" emphasizes, according to Guders (2007), a view of the church "as fundamentally and comprehensively defined by its calling and sending out, its purpose to serve God's healing purpose for all the world as God's witnessing people to all the world." Therefore, the term "missional" reflects a Christian viewpoint on reaching out to the world with the gospel message and the specific role that the church plays as a key participant in God's mission.

As a result, it is also true that the term "missional" used to describe the church refers to its nature, calling, and practice as a vital component of missio-Dei. This description, in the words of Guder (2015), is "basic theological claim, to articulate a widely held but also widely ignored consensus regarding the fundamental purpose of the Christian church in the public sphere." The portrayal makes the assumption that the church is one social institution operating within the framework of civil society and that it is tasked with resolving a variety of issues. Bosch (2011) affirms this description of the missional church as he declares his vision of the church: [...] a people who, in the face of the trials they face, keep their eyes steadfastly on the reign of God by praying for it to come, by being its disciples, by proclaiming its presence, by working for peace and justice in the midst of hatred and oppression, and by looking and working toward God's liberating future.

According to this portrayal, the church's influence and power are crucial to its efforts to free the oppressed and care for the needs of the underprivileged and the community. According to Van Gelder (2007), a missional church is "a community created by the spirit that is missionary by nature and being, called and sent to participate in God's mission in the world." This definition is consistent with this viewpoint. According to Robinson (2009), Christian organizations that only emphasize one factor—either the spiritual or the material—"will ultimately fail the people they serve." Similarly, Brueggemann (1984) proposes that church leaders could hasten a comprehensive transition in hopeless cultures by engaging in prophetic action and lobbying. Additionally, it might be claimed that a miscarriage in the integration of spiritual and material progress would pose theological and cultural difficulties because it would indicate that there is a division between the two. The well-being of humanity is equally threatened by spiritual and material poverty, and both issues need to be handled jointly.

With this background, the study will attempt to peruse the role the church has played in the past with regards to involvement in activities that improve the livelihood and wellbeing of people in the society, particularly Ghana. The Christian church, across the African continent, as well as other religious bodies have been involved the provision of social interventions for the people within their communities. This is because of the anthropological nature of the African society which is marked by collectivism. This value, referred to as "Ubuntu" (I am because we are) in southern Africa, also suggested that for the church to fully express its faith and be relevant in the society, it had to take a position which cared for and worked towards the cause of society. Indeed, following the example of Christ, the church in Ghana, as well as elsewhere, has always been interested in the expression of *diakonia*, that is the spirit of service. It is also a position summarized as "a person is a person through other persons". This represents the idea behind the humanitarian wing of the church, which is seen in the various social services they undertake (Bongmba, 2016). Findings from a plethora of studies have indicated that church undertakes social services across all spheres of life, from the establishment of schools, hospitals, agricultural extension, skills training, poverty alleviation campaigns, civic education among others (Adu-Gyamfi, Kuusaana, Darkwa & Tomdi, 2020). Like the church in other places, the church in Ghana can be said to have spearheaded some significant developmental programs.

These programs, designed from the mission-oriented perspective or wing of the church, have helped the country as it strives to meet global aspirations with regards to the opportunities for access to education, healthcare among others, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Oliver et al., (2015) have asserted that a study of the operations of Christian faith-based

organizations revealed that about 50% of the health services and infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa was provided by faith-based organizations. An umbrella organization for faith based organizations in Zimbabwe, referred to as the Zimbabwe Association of Church Related Hospitals (ZACH) have also indicated that mission related health services and infrastructure account for 45% of the nation's healthcare system and has also been at the forefront of providing 68% of healthcare to the vulnerable, underserved and marginalized populations in rural communities (ZACH, 2020). Kalu (2008) also indicated that the churches in sub-Saharan Africa have provided employment opportunities for thousands of people through projects such as bakeries, laundry services, transportation, banking, electronics, construction among many others.

Acheampong (2018) finally adds that the Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana have also aligned with the state in the provision of essential social amenities to the people of the country. These underpin the fundamental tenet of the missiological perspective that, in serving a person's neighbor, the Christian is not serving God; he or she is rather partnering with God in the execution of the missio-Dei.

Prior to now, the Pentecostal movement had been criticized and/or accused of being extra-terrestrial, concentrating more on individual salvation than on transforming the communities within their sphere of influence, particularly with the provision of social initiatives that will aid in the holistic transformation of their constituents' lives. In a 2004 essay, Allan Anderson brings up this crucial yet absent element of the global Pentecostal movement's mission strategy. Although the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement has been able to gain ground because to their zealous missionary work, Anderson contends that the movement has instead prioritized evangelism over the societal repercussions of a Pentecostal worldview. He asserts that loving one's neighbors is an essential component of the church's mission, in addition to evangelizing the world (Anderson, 2004). He goes on to draw attention to this seeming weakness among Pentecostals and motivates them to promote a more comprehensive theology of mission.

In addition to Anderson, several academics have condemned Pentecostals for the same justification. According to Douglas Petersen, one of these experts, Pentecostals "neglect the social responsibilities that should accompany this phenomenon" and "use their divine empowering and faith building message for self-serving purposes" (Petersen, 1996) Peterson criticizes Pentecostals in the Global North who place more emphasis on evangelism and conversion before to Christ's impending return than social concern programs because of their preoccupation on premillennial dispensationalism. The problem is comparable to that faced by Pentecostals in the Global South, whose missionary efforts formerly concentrated more on evangelism and church planting. However, during the past 20 years, Pentecostal/Charismatic churches have begun "rebranding themselves as social and political campaigners contributing to the betterment of their communities" (Burgess, 2012), while still placing a strong focus on evangelism.

Thus, by attending to their constituents' socioeconomic needs, Pentecostal/Charismatic churches are demonstrating sensitivity to local settings and the biblical command to love one's neighbor. From the perspective of developing nations, Barker (2007) argues that "Pentecostal churches have come to function as non-state sites addressing social needs that have gone unmet by the state due to a combination of factors." These causes may be weak leadership, ineffective management of state resources, and corruption, which accounts for the insufficient funding required to carry out developmental and life-changing programs, in the context of Ghana and many other African states. Ogbu Kalu, who wrote later in 2008 and recognized this new change among some African

Pentecostal Churches, says that some of these churches have a holistic goal, focusing on both the spiritual and material needs of their members. In addition, Kalu (2008) notes that Pentecostal movements have a tendency "for empathy and mission to the poor, marginalized and suffering, and that resources for theorizing such an orientation are available within Pentecostal spirituality." According to Anderson (2004), Pentecostalism is still a "powerful movement of the poor" in Africa and other parts of the Majority World and as such "is pregnant with potential for the transformation of society." Freeman (2012) acknowledges the current social sensitivity of the Pentecostal movement toward the plight of people in the introduction to a recent volume on Pentecostalism and Development.

The "holistic ontology" of Pentecostals, according to Freeman (2012), "recognizes the social and cultural reality which people live." She continues, "Pentecostal churches are often more successful in bringing about social and economic change than are secular development NGOs." A significant development that suggests a comprehensive understanding of mission among Pentecostals and contradicts a movement that is only known to be concerned with evangelism, prosperity teaching, spiritual matters, and church growth is the growing sensitivity to social issues among Pentecostal/Charismatics. These charitable undertakings support the notion of a paradigm shift in their mission and goals. The Pentecostal/Charismatic churches stand out from earlier generations due to their frequent use of the media, attraction to upwardly mobile youth, and insistence that one must be "born again" in order to experience the blessings, transformation, empowerment, success, and prosperity that go along with that experience—material salvation, which is primarily expressed and more visible in healing and deliverance (Asamoah). They have remained Ghana's fastest-growing branch of Christianity since their debut in the late 1970s. The study makes the case that Pentecostal/Charismatic churches offer crucial social services that support efforts made by governments to provide such services.

By meeting people's basic needs, the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches' supply of such services also aids in offering a solution to the challenges of the day. This further aided the populace in adjusting to the reality of day-to-day life that resulted from the lack of such social amenities as schools, clinics, and water. The discussion so far suggests that recent literature on Pentecostalism has started to acknowledge the role played by Pentecostal movements in the provision of social services, even though Pentecostal communities around the world are known for their active involvement in evangelism and personal transformation. While maintaining their focus on evangelism and healing, Pentecostals have added the obligation to provide their constituents' basic necessities to their prevailing theologies of health and wealth. This is consistent with how Miller and Yamamori (2007) define "Progressive Pentecostalism."

Despite their ongoing focus on "the apocalyptic return of Christ," according to Miller and Yamamori (2007), Pentecostals are also "addressing the social needs of people in their community. Pentecostals, according to Miller and Yamamori (2007), are "confronting the AIDS pandemic in Africa, they are educating impoverished children around the world, and they are establishing health clinics and launching programs for street children." The provision of such social services by the church continues to play a crucial role in the survival and management of the populace's everyday lives in developing nations where the government of the day is unable to provide some fundamental social services due to the country's economic circumstances and limitless resources. By offering these services, Pentecostalism can be said to be sensitive to the needs of society. For example, Kalu (2008) has argued that Pentecostal churches have been creating employment opportunities for thousands through industrial projects like bakeries, laundry services,

transportation, banking, electronics, construction, and many more in relation to the delivery of social services by Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in sub-Saharan Africa. According to him, "Pentecostals in countries such as Congo, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and others incorporated agencies that participated in the government's development projects and poverty alleviation interventions" (Kalu, 2008). He uses the True Redeemed Evangelical Mission in Lagos as an example, which established the African Mission Committee as a nongovernmental organization (NGO) in order to "assist the RCCG [Redeemed Christian Church of God] in fulfilling its vision for Africa in fulfillment of its end-time mission of saving souls, particularly the oppressed and underprivileged; to eradicate poverty by providing self-enrichment courses and community development programs; to educate on and reduce the spread of diseases; to eradicate hunger by providing food assistance. The mission provides free educational and vocational training in artisan professions like soap making, barbering, hairdressing, and hair weaving to the less fortunate, according to Kalu (2008). The Redeemed Aids Program Action Committee (RAPAC) concentrated exclusively on the HIV/AIDS problem.

Similar to this, Omenyo (2006) points out that the economic volatility during and after World War II led to an economic slump with a decline in the international price of cocoa when commenting on the context for the formation of Pentecostal/Charismatic churches' social ministry in Ghana. This had a negative impact on Ghana's economy and caused a 35% reduction in government spending on education. Additionally, it had a negative impact on the nation's social and infrastructure services, particularly on education and health. The situation wasn't any better in the 1970s, which also saw the beginning of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. According to Omenyo (2006), there was widespread corruption, high inflation, a decline in the price of cocoa on the global market, the collapse of the mining sector, and mass strikes. Due to these economic issues, Ghana agreed to the conditions set forth by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and underwent a number of Economic Recovery Programmes (ERP) from the 1980s to the 1990s, which resulted in some modest economic gains, including a 5% economic growth and a decrease in inflation from 122.85% in 1983 to about 12% in 1992. Despite these improvements, poverty persisted widely in Ghana, where 70% of the population made less than \$1 per day.

Furthermore, Omenyo (2006) makes the startling point that "access to basic services like health care, education, and drinkable water, particularly in the rural areas, is badly impacted by Ghana's 'inherited poverty' and poor economic performance. Additionally, it made it challenging for many Ghanaians to get medical care. Some Pentecostal/Charismatic churches started to recognize the need to make material contributions to lessen the sufferings placed on their members and society at large as a result of this economic mess. For instance, the Kenyan scholar Philomina Njeri Mwaura has argued that "modern charismatic churches and now new religious movements generally can be linked to current economic, theological, cultural, and political conditions" based on the historical context in which the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement emerged. Mwaura goes on to say that "economic deprivation occasioned by poverty, bad governance, and abuse of human rights in Africa of the 1980s led to people seeking solace and welfare in the churches for they provided material, spiritual, and social support." This is due to the perception that these movements were very practical in addressing the crippling problems of life, such as hunger and poverty. According to Gifford (1998), the economic situation in Africa since the 1980s can be connected to the growth of Pentecostal/Charismatic congregations.

The emergence of the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches coincided with Ghana's severe political and economic challenges. According to Omenyo, this had an impact on the setting for the formation of Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in Ghana offering social services. It is important to note, however, that although the need for social services was acknowledged and some initiatives were even started in the 1980s (such as the establishment of the Central Aid in 1988), it wasn't until the late 1990s and early 2000s that these initiatives really started to stand out and gain public attention. The recent involvement of Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in the delivery of social services and other significant socioeconomic efforts has been emphasized by Acheampong (2018). He has suggested that the Ghanaian Pentecostal/Charismatic movement has capitalized on and allied itself with the government's objective of socioeconomic growth as stated in the Ghana Shared Growth and growth Agenda.

Acheampong (2018) explains how the Pentecostal movement in Ghana has positioned itself within a larger political economy and three key areas, namely economic activity, social welfare programs, and economic advocacy. He does this by outlining the seven theme areas of the development agenda. The Pentecostal movement in Ghana has used these regions to channel out a variety of economic, social, and developmental programs that have helped the country advance and grow in different ways. Additionally, it has assisted in changing many residents' lives throughout the nation. Acheampong (2018) goes on to say that while it is sometimes necessary to acknowledge the financial motivations behind the creation of some welfare projects, it is also important to consider their economic impact because they can "free up some funds for the beneficiaries to invest in other productive ventures" that are "more geared towards attending to the needs of the beneficiaries" (Acheampong, 2018).

The fact that some Pentecostal/Charismatic churches have gone as far as to register their social service wings as foundations or organizations is a significant feature of this new trend. The International Central Gospel Church's (ICGC) "Central Aid" is one illustration. The following part will focus more on Central Aid's operations. According to Miller and Yamamori (2007), the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement has adopted several levels of social action. For instance, José Miguez Bonino claims that Pentecostals in Latin America have institutionalized their social conscience, including social, medical, and legal assistance organizations as well as educational institutions, as a result of their awareness of the movement's position on social responsibility (Bonino, 1997).

These activities and the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement's increasing social consciousness provide clarity that helps us better comprehend the new function of the Pentecostal movement in society. It demonstrates that Pentecostalism's influence on the world is felt not only through its evangelism, healing, and media use, but also through its social and welfare services. The communities and people whose lives these projects are situated in are being transformed thanks to these social and welfare services. Martin (2002) has highlighted one crucial role that the movement plays in his research of Pentecostalism in the United States. He calls the movement "...the mobilization of the culturally despised" (Martin, 2002) and claims that Pentecostalism has created a boulevard for the acknowledgment and integration of marginalized individuals.

## **The church in Ghana and the *Missio-Dei***

The evangelical upsurge, according to Martin, "created autonomous social space within which people may take part in the formation of a different kind of sub-society." In this sub-culture, those who are insignificant or unimportant in the larger society are addressed as people who can take initiative and matter (Martin, 1999). By offering jobs, making it possible for individuals to pay their bills, rescuing them from crippling debts, and fostering a higher quality of life, the Pentecostal Movement is improving people's quality of life. For example, the church in Ghana provided immense help to the state in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, evidenced by its financial donations to the cause, the provision of food for vulnerable members of society, volunteering church spaces and infrastructure to be converted into isolation centres for the care of those infected by the virus. The contribution of the church in this endeavor are numerous and significant. A few will be outlined below.

The International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) put in place the Central Aid, which is considered to be the second largest scholarship scheme, instituted to helping brilliant but needy students to complete their courses (Gifford, 2004). The initiative has also been extended into the undertaking of projects such as bore-holes, classroom blocks, hostel facilities as well as recreational facilities.

The Church of Pentecost, Ghana has also played a pivotal role in complimenting the efforts of government in the process of rehabilitating convicted persons. This has been done by the construction of a number of prison facilities where inmates would have access to educational services, skills training, and also be introduced to the word of God, with the aim of transforming them by the end of their prison sentences.

Healthcare missions have played a vital role in improving public health in Ghana. Christian missions in Ghana have actively engaged in combating social vices such as child labor, human trafficking, substance abuse, and gender-based violence. Effective mission work in Ghana often involves collaboration with local communities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Christian missions in Ghana have played a transformative role in addressing social vices and promoting holistic development. By drawing from missiological frameworks that prioritize context, collaboration, and social transformation, Christian missions have the potential to continue making positive contributions to Ghanaian society.

### **Summary of the Missiological framework**

The missiological framework for this study dovetails into the practical, social intervention praxis of the *missio Dei*. Simply, the missiological framework illustrates the mandate of the church, tapping its source from faith in God, to the world. With its commission to "occupy" till the Lord comes, the church has as its primary occupation the Great Commission, that is to spread the Gospel to all the earth. Over the years, the church, in its various denominations and branches, has continued to execute this mandate across the world, bring her knowledge of God in the Bible to others.

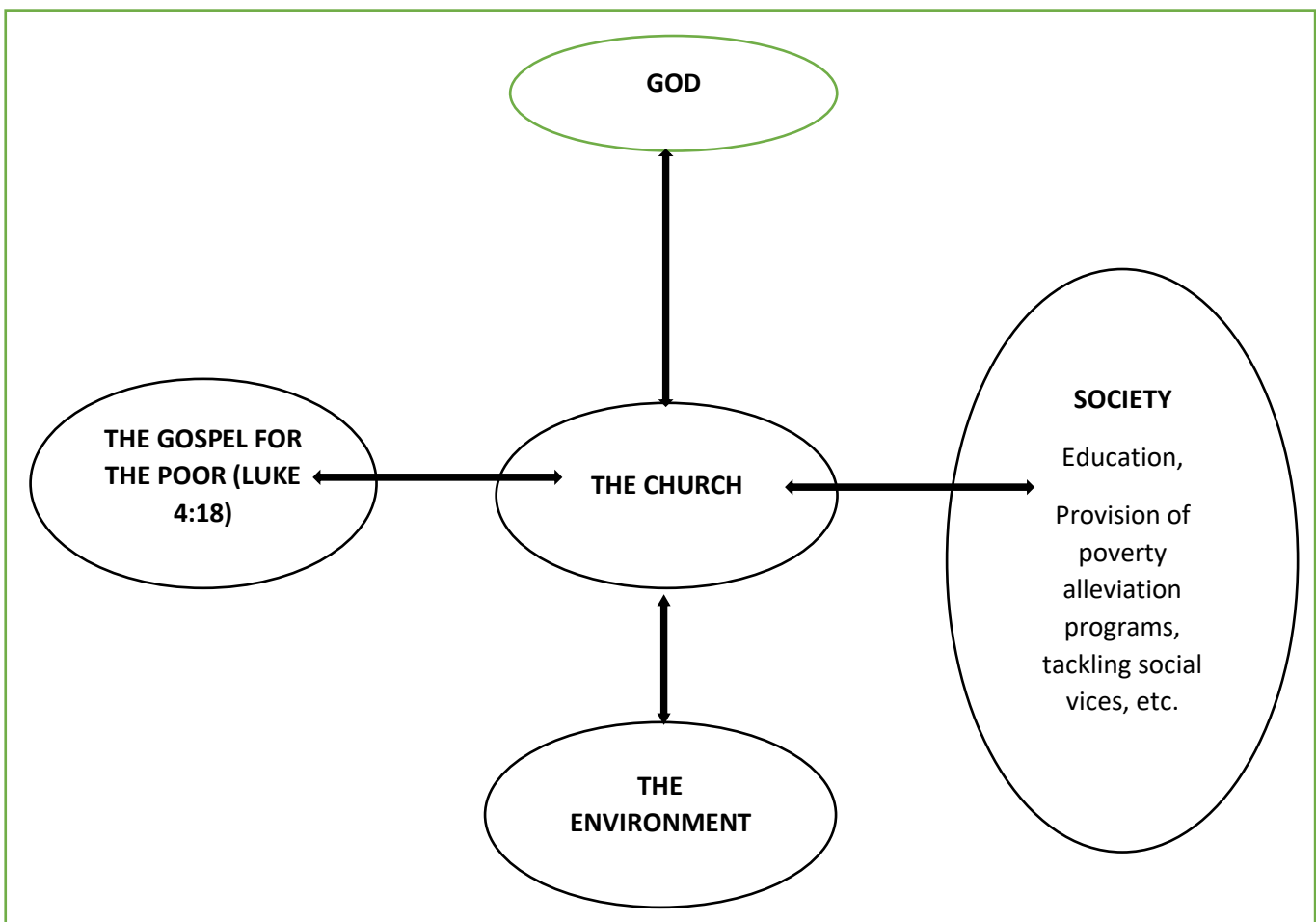
Another key part of the missiological duty is the fact that the church must influence the social system, that is the society's political, economic, academic, family life as well as the cause of the environment with Biblical principles and values (Myers, 2011). These values include issues relating to virtues like justice, kindness, peace, inclusiveness among others that go to further the betterment of all who live in the society. With regards to the marginalized groups of people who are the focus of this study, the framework incorporates the mandate of the church to work to

influence them with Biblical principles and values that will go towards their rehabilitation into society.

Christian missions have a longstanding history in Ghana, dating back to the early 19th century. The arrival of Christian missions in Ghana was marked by efforts from various denominations, including the Basel Mission, Methodist Missionary Society, and the Catholic Church. It is important to note that education has been a central focus of Christian missions in Ghana.

**Figure 1**

*The Missiological Framework*





## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter describes the research approach adopted for the study. A description of the research design, research setting, target population, sampling size and sampling strategy are outlined below. Materials used for data collection and the ethical issues relating to the study are also given. It presents an overview of the methods which were used in collecting and analyzing the data for the study.

#### **Study area**

The study was conducted in Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

#### **Research design**

According to Cresswell (2003), the preference of a primarily quantitative or qualitative (or mixed) approach to research is mostly dependent on what the researcher seeks to find and then the theoretical paradigm that can facilitate said search and findings. In order to meet the researcher's study objectives, it was deemed necessary to undertake a qualitative study that allows for the gleaning of insights of the participants. A qualitative research approach was thus adopted for the purposes of the study. This research design is relevant to the study because the study seeks to explore participants' knowledge and attitudes regarding the subject under study. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that qualitative research is appropriate for the study of an occurrence within the environment and can also be used to address questions as to how social experiences are created or given meaning. This is a result of the goal of gleaning the perceptions of participants on the condition being explored by the researcher.

#### **Participants**

Data was collected by the use of a semi-structured questionnaire developed in line with the objectives of the study. The study made use of 12 participants sampled through the purposive sampling technique online. Six (6) of these were church leaders and the remaining six (6) District Assembly Officers. Smith et al. (2009) stated that "samples are selected based on the fact that they offer a research project insight into a particular experience". In addition, Creswell (2012) indicated that for qualitative studies, a sample size of between two (2) and twenty-five (25) is considered satisfactory. Thus, the sample size of 12 was as a result satisfactory for the study. It is also safe to note that due to the sample size, the validity of the study may be limited.

The purposive sampling technique was used to recruit the participants for the study. Purposive sampling is appropriate because, it aids the researcher in the careful selection of participants according to the aims and rationale of the study (Schutt, 2006).

#### **Data collection materials**

The materials used in this study included a tape recorder, a semi structured interview guide, a diary and pen. The semi structured interview guide served as a guiding tool during the interview process and also had the flexibility to ask follow up questions. According to Willig (2008), the semi structured interview guide enables researchers to glean more insight from responses to research questions as well as creates the opportunity for the researcher to ask follow up questions that give more information to expatiate previous responses. The recording of the interview was

done so as to capture information from lengthy responses of the participants so as to avoid missing any salient points given. Characteristic of the research process, the body language, verbal and nonverbal cues are also noted and incorporated in the findings of the study as these helped to place the information gathered in proper context and makes for a better understanding of it.

### **Procedure**

Transcribed data from the study was analyzed using the thematic analysis technique (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis was chosen to be suitable because it gives researchers the opportunity to explore and describe the meaning of a particular phenomenon under study from the perspective of the participants (Green & Thorogood, 2014). Additionally, it helps to discover generalizations by identifying the core of the meaning and main statement from the participants under study (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). It is a flexible method because it is not attached to one theoretical perspective or epistemology. Therefore, utilizing the thematic analysis approach in the qualitative research study reiterates the fact that its main objective and essence are to explore the representations of the participants with regards to commercial sex workers and drug abusers.

### **Data Analysis**

The study identified recurrent themes within the responses by adopting Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stages of thematic analysis. In order to effectively go through the six stages of thematic analysis, the data from the study was read iteratively to obtain familiarity with the content.

Researchers can systematically organize and analyze large, complicated data sets using the qualitative research method known as thematic analysis. Finding themes that can include the narratives present in the account of data sets is the goal. It entails the meticulous reading and rereading of the recorded material to identify themes (King, 2004). The six-step procedure outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) can be used by a study to retain the necessary rigor in the analytic process. Each phase is covered below. But such analytical techniques do not follow a straight line; instead, they're an iterative, reflective process that includes bouncing back and forth constantly between different stages.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the familiarization process is the first step for thematic analysis. This is where the researcher would get immersed in the data through active or attentively listening to audiotaped interviews or reading and re-read data collected to obtain patterns and meaning. Thus, the researcher read the data iteratively in order to be familiar with the whole body of data. The type (and quantity) of themes that might be revealed through the data are determined during this step. The phase is essential because it directs any additional actions the researcher may need to take to properly analyze the data. In order to prevent the influence of the author's past knowledge and experience in the subject, a repeated thorough reading of the transcript was conducted. This allowed the transcripts to be read as "things in themselves" (Denscombe, 2007). All pertinent information should be underlined while reading the transcripts. The primary goal of analyzing the data in this manner was to thoroughly immerse oneself in it and gather early areas of interest (Chamberlain, 2015). This phase is essential because it gives the author good information on the depth and breadth of the topic.

After this initial familiarization, initial codes will be generated by highlighting texts and writing notes to identify patterns within the data. The researcher arranged the data in a systematic and meaningful way by coding the data into some small chunks of meaning. Under this step, the researcher has the right to either code from an inductive perspective or a theoretical perspective.

The former type of coding is where every line of the participants is coded by using line-by-line coding. The theoretical type of coding is where coding is done according to or with respect to the research questions. Here, the researcher codes part of the data that are interesting or important to the research question. In this study, the researcher coded the data gathered inductively.

The codes were arranged into potential themes and all relevant codes gathered. Braun and Clarke (2006) define a theme as a pattern that contains something interesting or important about the research questions. Thus, the significance of a theme defines it. The codes will then be analyzed to determine which code becomes the main theme that answers the research question. Predominately, all the themes are descriptive in order to determine the relevance of the patterns to the research questions. Some codes are associated with more than one theme while the majority of the codes are associated with just one theme. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this stage started with a lengthy list of the codes that were recognized throughout the data set.

Finding patterns and linkages inside and throughout the full data collection was the primary goal of this phase (Chamberlain, 2015). The codes needed to be analyzed with an eye toward how several codes may be put together to generate a unified subject (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In other words, rather than codes, the analysis at a higher level of themes was the main focus of this step. "A theme captures something important about the data in relation to a research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data," (Brown & Clarke, 2006). In order to create prospective themes in relation to the study questions, it was crucial to think of those codes as the building blocks and mix similar or multiple codes (Ansari, 2015).

Following the assertions of Braun and Clarke (2006), a list of the codes was created on a separate sheet of paper, and they were then arranged into theme-piles that examined the connection between the codes and the themes in order to streamline the process. It was also crucial to go back and read all the transcripts again because the study was exploratory before grouping the codes into themes. Thus, different codes were integrated into prospective themes by reading the transcripts again and collecting all the pertinent coded data extracts inside the identified themes. The next stage consists of reviews of themes, this is where the researcher reviewed, developed and modified all codes in order to ensure coherence in patterns formed. Additionally, the various themes would be reviewed to determine their relevance in relation to the codes and entire data. This is where you gather all the data that relate to each theme in order to determine whether it supports the theme or makes sense. Subsequently, the researcher examined whether the theme applies in the context of the data set. Essentially, it is at this point that all the themes are consciously merged or collated as it was aimed at the refinement of those initially grouped themes and presentation of those themes in a more systematic way.

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that themes must be checked for internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity. The next stage of Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis includes the definition and naming of themes. It's where the researcher would explain what each theme is about as the researcher directs each theme to the data gathered in order to identify the importance of what each theme is about. It is mostly viewed as the final refinement of the themes. The following questions are mostly asked during the definition and naming of themes. What message is the theme saying? How do subthemes connect and relate to the primary theme? What is the relationship between each theme? In conclusion, a summary report that captures all the findings of the study in accordance with the research questions will be put together.

**Ethical consideration**

Informed consent, which is an ethical consideration in research, requires that participants are fully informed about the procedures and risks involved in research and must give their consent to participate. Informed consent was employed in the study by explaining and giving participants detailed information about the purpose of the study. The researcher guaranteed the participant's confidentiality. Participants were assured that information will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study because the data collected would be under lock and key. The principle of anonymity, which essentially means that the participant's identity will not be revealed throughout the study even to the researcher, would be adhered to strictly. Here, the names of participants were kept out of the data as presented, thus guaranteeing privacy and anonymity.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

#### **Introduction**

The study set out to explore the social representations of marginalized groups, specifically commercial sex workers and substance abusers from the point of view of religious leaders as well as state authorities at the district and municipal level in the Greater Accra Region, the capital city of Ghana. This chapter will present in detail the methods that the researcher used to collect the data as well as analyze same for this study, and then go further to demonstrate the analysis conducted. It outlines the analysis of the data gathered from the transcripts of the interviews conducted in the data collection process as part of the study.

As part of the data collection process, the researcher collected data from the study participants with a use of a semi-structured questionnaire developed on the basis of the research questions. The researcher takes the data gathered through the various stages outlined for its analysis. The researcher took the data gathered through the various stages as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2012) for thematic analysis. As stated above, the thematic analysis option as one of the techniques or methods which can be used to make meaning of qualitative data was adopted for this study. It entails some six specific steps or processes and the researcher took the data gathered through these steps in order to glean the social representations of marginalized groups, specifically commercial sex workers and substance abusers from the perspectives of local authority officials and church leaders in Ghana. The steps were as follows;

To begin, the data gathered was transcribed verbatim. This was necessary as it made it possible for the researcher to put down all that was said by way of responses from the participants in answer to the research questions. The verbatim approach of transcription of audio records ensures that some very important nuances within the data set are not missed but rather captured and included in the process of making meaning out of the data collected. As indicated above in the data analysis section, the researcher iteratively perused the data. This was done by the researcher reading the text over and over again in order to glean important codes to form the basis for the analysis. The researcher then organized these codes into potential themes. Through further reading and perusal of the text, the researcher reviewed the themes generated. The themes that were settled on were then explained in line with the participant's responses. The research questions had to do with how the participants perceived the state of the individuals in the study's marginalized groups, that is commercial sex workers and substance abusers in Ghana now, their beliefs about the causes of same and then what roles they believe the state as well as religious leaders have to play in the rehabilitation of the people identified.

Congruent with the goals of thematic analysis as espoused by Braun and Clarke (2012), the researcher set out to know what concepts run across the data set and make sense of these concepts or themes from the perspective of the participants, in this officials of district and municipal assemblies as well as leaders of the Christian religion. Below, quotations from some participants are presented to illustrate and give examples of responses that cut across the data set and thus aided in the generation of codes for the analysis process. The quotations presented include the participant numbers, denoted by their respective numbers. The chapter concludes with a summary of the analysis of the various themes as they answer the research questions.

As indicated, the responses were elicited on the basis of the research objectives and the corresponding research questions designed to guide the study. These questions sought to elicit what the current state of commercial sex work and substance abuse is in Ghana, what the participants believe is the cause(s) of this state, what participants believe will happen if the state of commercial sex work and substance abuse goes unchecked in Ghana, what participants perceive is or are the roles of district and municipal authorities is regarding the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and narcotic drug abusers, and then what the participants perceive the role of religious leaders is regarding the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and substance abusers. The research was conducted with 12 participants, comprising of six (6) religious leaders and six (6) district and municipal authority staff. Their mean age was 44.83. There were six males and six females. The highest level of education was tertiary education.

The demographic characteristics of the participants are outlined as follows;

### Participant Characteristics

Characteristics	Number of Participants
<b>Age</b>	
Below 30	2
30-40	2
40-60	8
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	6
Female	6
<b>Level of education</b>	
JHS	-
Tertiary	11
<b>District/Municipal Assembly Official/ Religious Leader</b>	
District/Municipal Assembly Official	6
Religious Leader	6
<b>Years of Being in Occupation</b>	
Less than 5	3
More than 5	9

The findings of the study are discussed further in the analysis chapter below. After the iterative perusal of the data collected, four (4) themes and twelve (10) subthemes/codes emerged from the data set.

### Table of emergent themes and their corresponding codes

Theme	Corresponding code
Marginalized groups today	New modus operandi Increase in numbers Practice across ages Perception of being a lost cause
Perception of causative factors	Social factors

	regulatory factors
Role of local authorities	Provision of social support/net Enforcing laws
Role of religious groups	Reorientation on missio dei Concerted effort

**Marginalized groups today**

This theme was developed out of codes generated and reviewed from responses provided by the study participants to the researcher’s initial enquiry. With regards to the first question that sought to have an understanding of the current state or nature of commercial sex work and substance abuse in Ghana from the perspective of the participants, the researcher intended to glean the knowledge and understanding of the participants concerning the groups upon which the study was being done. The responses in the data set perused saw four (4) codes evident in the responses provided. These codes are new modus operandi, practice involving people from all age and gender groups, an increase in the numbers of people engaged in them and then finally the perception that individuals in these groups are usually difficult to change, in other words there is a permanence or no going back for them. These codes generated will be explored individually along with corresponding quotations or narratives from the data set in order to have a better understanding of the theme that emerged from them.

*New Modus Operandi*

The study participants opined from their responses that the various groups being studied by the researcher had over the years evolved into newer and more evasive practices, all in sync with the growing trend of information technology its attendant proliferation of social media platforms.

*Oh they are still doing it! (Exclamation). At night there are some parts of Accra, some major streets, that you will see them strolling up and down. And even now with all the phones and social media, even in the daytime they are doing it. They call it hookup these days. It’s so scary. The other day we were discussing it. Many people are into it, married people, students, many people are doing it (Participant 2, Church leader, 40yrs)*

*There is a new arrangement that they go by these days oh! They share pictures of themselves online and then arrange to meet men who are interested in sleeping with them. In this era of fast foods, that’s where we are. They are also doing their work fast fast online (laughs). You won’t see them walking at night so that you will disgrace them. (Participant 4, District Assembly Staff, 54yrs)*

The narratives above from the second and fourth participants indicates the fact that the activities of commercial sex workers have been influenced by the wide range of opportunities made available by the proliferation of information communication technology and with its accompanying boom in social media platforms. They assert, in their responses, that even though the commercial sex workers continue to engage in the traditional standing or strolling along some streets at night to solicit customers, they have also begun to engage in the activities via the internet, using various social media applications. The use of this means is according to

the participants in tandem with the pace at which the provision of other everyday services has been made easy and readily accessible with the use of the internet.

The participants shared similar sentiments with regards to the state of substance abuse in the country. Here, they indicated that there were a lot of young men and women involved with narcotic drugs of various kinds. The spate of drug use by the youth in Ghana has been topical among the issues that speak to the depletion of the moral fabric of society. While they suggest that it has become relatively easier for drug users to have access to the traditional narcotic drugs such as cocaine and marijuana, they add that some other addictive substances are being sniffed as well. The narratives below share in highlighting some of the examples of these substances. It is important to note that these substances are easier to have access to and also that the second narrative was from an interview conducted close to a bus stop where many young men dressed indecently and mostly dirty were hustling bus drivers for money.

*Nowadays, the guys have even been sniffing super glue, sanitizers and what have you. You will see them dazed as if they are in a trance. They still use the old drugs, that is cocaine, marijuana and the rest. But there are some other cheaper and easily accessible ones, and that is what is destroying the youth these days (Participant 1, District Assembly Staff, 42)*

*I am sure you saw some of the guys standing at the roadside loading the buses when you were coming. From their dressing and attitude, you can just identify them. There are always fights and stabbings there, and it's all because of the things they have been taking. Those cough mixtures, narcotic drugs and the rest. Even now they have added glue, and some drugs they mix with energy drinks. Even if they have to kill for it, they would (Participant 8, Church Leader, 39)*

#### *Practice across ages*

The second code generated from the data set with regards to the initial question on the state of the marginalized groups had to do with the fact that the participants were unanimous in their assertion of the activities of these people cut across several age ranges, from the very young to the elderly. They recounted incidents where young girls are seen in the streets late at night and also seen on the various social media platforms soliciting for customers. The responses the participants gave also included the fact that students, mostly from the universities, were also engaged in the activities. Once again, it was suggested that the use of drugs was pervasive among people, mostly males, of various age ranges and belonging to differing socioeconomic demographics.

*As you can see, there are some very young guys engaged in it as well. A young boy of about 15 years was found lying along the street a few weeks ago. It was surprising how he was able to be fast asleep with all the noise from the cars, music from the shops and everything else going on. Some people even thought that something had happened to him, only to break out laughing that he was "fine" possibly from something he had taken (Participant 7, Church Leader, 45)*

*My fear is even for the very young girls, some of who I doubt have even completed JHS. You will see them in very skimpy dresses going to town at night. Circle, around some embassies, Madina and some other places. They are going to work (laughs). (Participant 1, District Assembly Staff, 42)*



*We were even discussing it amongst ourselves a few days ago. Some of the young girls who go to the universities go and engage in those activities. Very young girls. I hear they have “mothers” who train them and pimp them to the men. So when they come home and we see them in church, we think that they are good, but then they do their own things in the school (Participant 11, Church Leader, 46)*

#### *Increase in numbers*

From the responses of the participants, there is an increase in the rate at which people indulge in activities of commercial sex workers as well as drug consumption. They indicated that there is also an increase in the number of people who are engaging in the commercial sex work. These commercial sex workers were also noted to have become more brazen in their activities and didn't mind being seen in the open. Once again the respondents were unanimous in the belief that the rate of the activities of these groups, that is commercial sex work as well as the use of narcotic drugs is on the ascendancy.

*And I can tell you that they have become much more on the streets at night. And with those doing it on the phone too, the slay queens offering their services online and going to people's houses, they have become many. I am sure that there are young ladies from other countries also part of them. Because nowadays you see them at various street corners. When you go to Circle at night, you can clearly distinguish them from everybody else. (Participant 11, Church Leader, 46)*

*Oh that one plenty, I am aware that the police have been arresting them from time to time. There was a raid some time ago and we saw many of the prostitutes in the news having been arrested. But still there are so many of them (Participant 1, District Assembly Staff, 42)*

*In the night when you have all gone to bed, there is another city that wakes up oh, and that is the thugs and prostitutes. They are many and organized in a way, because when one of them runs into trouble, you see all the others moving in to help. You will see them by the roadside and near the busy clubs, and if they think you are coming to them, they usually call out almost as if they were market women calling people to patronize their wares in a market (Participant 3, District Assembly Staff, 35).*

#### *Perception of being a lost cause*

Another significant code generated from the data set with regards to the perception of the participants of the individuals in the marginalized groups under study was the perception of being beyond rehabilitation or a lost cause. While some of the participants asserted that the individuals were engaged in the activities as a result of various reasons some outside their control and therefore could be rehabilitated, some other participants suggested that these individuals would always go back into their activities no matter what due to the height of depravity that can lead an individual to engage in the sex trade. This was believed to be the case as a result of the futility of several efforts at creating alternative means of livelihood for some young women engaged in the commercial sex trade.

*The assembly has done skills training quite a number of times. We have had some groups come and give lessons on how to engage in some handiwork or trade and all that. And in those times, we made the effort to bring some of them so that they can be trained. Even though they got the training, after a few weeks they began to complain. They want quick money, and before we knew it, they had gone back. So those people, I can tell you that they won't change. Hm (Sigh) (Participant 3, District Assembly Staff, 35)*

*There is this guy in my neighborhood. On days when he has not sniffed some of the thing (drug), you can meet him and have a very good conversation with him. And you can tell that he is very intelligent. But then he will go and take it and then everything goes bad. And because people know him, they give him money, which goes into the purchase of the drugs. So it's always like that for him, up and down (Participant 11, Church Leader, 46)*

*Some of them can stop oh, but it's all the pressure these days. Among their friends, they want to be seen in a certain way, like they always want to be seen as rich, with the new clothes, shoes and all that. That's what has led to all these hookup thing that they are doing today, they don't even listen to anyone. Because after all the education they are still doing it and messing up (Participant 6, District Assembly Staff, 40)*

*(Laughs) do you think they can stop? For someone to be there, and then decide that this is the job I will do, for me it's not easy like that oh. It means the person has tuned their mind to do prostitution. Look at all the dangers involved. Even if a person doing this can change, it will be very difficult (Participant 8, church Leader, 39)*

### **Perception of causative factors**

The next objective of the study was to explore, from the perspective of the study participants their perceptions as to the reasons why the individuals are engaged in the activities that place them among the marginalized groups. Here, the responses the participants provide are considered as pertaining to both commercial sex workers as well as substance abusers. The codes generated from the data set that helped to come up with this theme include a number of factors, categorized under social and regulatory factors.

#### *Social factors*

The participants indicated that the engagement of the individuals in the commercial sex trade as well as substance abuse is as a result of a number of social issues including a breakdown of the family system, financial constraints, unemployment, peer influence, the absence of a social net that would ensure rehabilitation of delinquent youth in time so as to avoid them from deteriorating further as well as lapses in the implementation of laws against the activities named.

*It is poverty. Some of these people come from very poor homes where there is no source of livelihood, and they have to resort to the commercial sex work to make a living. That's even what they do to take care of their families and all that. See oh, imagine that a girl has come to the university, and there's no money at home. She can easily be lured into it and because of the money she makes, become stuck in it (Participant 10, District Assembly Staff, 50)*

*Hm, from what I know, some of the girls don't even want to do it. But some mothers push them into it. When they start, they will be telling them, "can't you see this person? Their clothes and*

*all that?”, “Go and visit this person, can’t you see that he likes you?” and they take monies from their daughters when they come back. It usually comes about when the parents are divorced and there is no strong father figure in the house (**Participant 3, District Assembly Staff, 35**)*

*When you meet them and want to speak to them about the fact that what they are doing is wrong, they will point you to the rate of unemployment in Ghana now. There are no jobs. God help us. They also want to survive so when friends influence them negatively, they can end up doing that for a living. It is tough, and for such people, even if you talk to them, you need to find an alternative job for them else they will go back. It’s good you are studying this, we must all think about how to move them from this job to something else (**Participant 7, Church Leader, 45**)*

*There are so many drugs on our streets, that’s why many boys are addicted. I’m sure that they are easy to get. Look at the bus stops, all these rowdy boys, you can clearly see that they are high, else they won’t be doing that. Sadly, we don’t have any place where we can send them so that they will get help (**Participant 2, Church Leader, 40**)*

#### *Regulatory factors*

Another factor that was implicated in the proliferation of the activities of commercial sex workers as well as substance abuse as that of lapses in the implementation of regulations against these activities. The responses gleaned from the data set indicate specifically that even though the activities are against the laws, the perpetrators are not dealt with effectively enough for the deterring effect laws and their sanctions must attract.

*I think the issue is that the police don’t carry out their operations on them often enough. Like they go today and that’s all, for a long time. So they will always come back. And it’s the same thing for the boys in the ghettos. It’s like we forget about them for a long time and then once awhile, they do some operation there (**Participant 5, Church Leader, 52**)*

#### **Role of local authorities**

Another theme that emerged from the data set was the role of the local authorities with regards to the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and substance abusers in Ghana from the perspectives of the study participants. Here, the researcher sought to glean what the participants believed could be done to reverse the current trend or state of the activities of commercial sex workers as well as individuals who were addicted to narcotic drugs either from the angle of their respective backgrounds or from others. The two codes that came together to generate this theme included the provision of social support as well as the enforcement of the existing laws and regulations formulated against these practices. They are further understood using some quotations from the data set below.

#### *Provision of social support/net*

In order to rehabilitate commercial sex workers and individuals addicted to drugs, the participants suggested the making available of social support which will serve as a safety net for individuals who may be disadvantaged or vulnerable as a result of some societal challenges some of which were mentioned among the causes of the proliferation of the activities of these individuals in the marginalized groups. These challenges include that of unemployment,

poverty, the absence of strong family bonds, peer influence among others. The responses gleaned thus included the establishment of programs at the districts and municipal levels that would help reduce the poverty levels in the various communities in them.

*There are periodic programs organized by the Assembly to provide skills training to young men and women. At least you will come and learn something to make a living for yourself. There is also a business desk open to help people in the area with information as to how to grow their businesses (Participant 4, District Assembly Staff, 54)*

*Government must do something about it. Public education about the challenges and effects that these activities have on society must be done in all the communities, especially in the places where these things are prevalent. And the rate of unemployment too, it's too high. I believe that when the government is willing to do something to help these people, they can at least get some small jobs. Oh yes! The private sector too. But government must lead the way (Participant 8, Church Leader, 39)*

#### *Enforcing laws*

As part of the responses of the participants with regards to the role of the state in the rehabilitation of the individuals in the marginalized groups, was the fact that as the one wielding the powers to execute or implement laws of the country, the police and other security personnel must be tasked with the apprehension of the individuals involved. This according to the respondents, will serve a deterring function as well as help to reduce the numbers of these individuals.

*Like I said earlier, the police must be consistent in raiding their hideouts and arresting them. Not once awhile. At least it will scare them and check the rate at which they peddle the drugs. That will save the young men and women who get drawn into it. It's the same thing for the commercial sex workers, they keep coming because they don't see any effort of the part of authorities (Participant 5, Church Leader, 52)*

*These things are against the law, so we have to ensure that those who continue to engage in it are arrested. From what I have heard, there are people who recruit the girls and also operate their brothels. The law must deal with all these people, and then I am sure we can see some reduction in the rate at which they are increasing in our communities (Participant 4, District Assembly Staff, 54)*

#### **Role of religious groups**

A critical part of the objectives of the study had to do with the role of religious leaders, in this case church leaders, with regards to how the individuals involved in the activities of commercial sex as well as the consumption of narcotic drugs can be rehabilitated. From the perusal of the data set, codes such as the reorientation of believers (Christians) on the *missio dei* as well as a concerted effort between the church, civil society and the government.

#### *Reorientation on missio dei*

From the responses of the participants, mostly the church leaders, it was identified that the church has a critical role to play in the rehabilitation of the individuals being focused on by the researcher. They indicated that the provision of a moral and spiritual compass to the individuals, an act that has the capacity of true rehabilitation, was the duty of the church. Also

the participants suggested that this duty had been reneged for some time and that a reorientation of members of the church is essential if these individuals are to be effectively rehabilitated.

*This question about whether the church has a role to play or not is not an easy one. When we go out to evangelize to people, it is the message (gospel) that we give to them. But if you look at it clearly, our job is to change them into a way that is befitting for God and society. That is why I am saying it is not an easy question. We know it, but is that what we really do when we go out to preach? I think we have to sit and understand our mandate well (**Participant 8, Church Leader, 39**)*

*Yes, I strongly believe so! You see, people have a lot of respect for church leaders. You will advise them and say all that you will say, but they won't listen. However, the moment a man of God says it they will listen. That's how our society is. The church leaders must help us with the influence they have to try and change these people. The force is good but at times they need counselling, and the church can do that better (**Participant 4, District Assembly Staff, 54**)*

*There are good examples in the Bible. The prostitute who was saved because she helped the Lord's people and then the one who Jesus met at the well. Their lives were changed. That is how it has to be when we go out to preach to these people. The focus must be the fact that we want to change them (**Participant 2, Church Leader, 40**)*

*We have a big role to play. As a church we have focused on an agenda we call the "possessing the nations" agenda. This has to do with the church doing all that it can to influence the whole of society and the nations with Godly principles and values. So as an elder, my duty is to spread the good news, yes. But not only that. I have to help others to be transformed into that as well. We have done so much also as a church. The church of Pentecost has built several schools, hospitals, health posts, police stations, among others, and these places have created a large number of jobs. We also have large farms and other businesses which have employed many people. Recently, we have constructed a number of prison facilities as well in that regard (**Participant 12, Church Leader, 55**)*

#### *Concerted effort*

Finally, the participants indicated in their responses the need for a concerted and strategic approach to the rehabilitation of the commercial sex workers and substance abuse. Here they suggested that there was a need for government, civil society, the church and other religious groups to work together in a coordinated fashion to tackle the challenges posed by the activities of these groups under study. These efforts included the government through the police enforcing the laws and ensuring that commercial sex workers do not have a field day on city streets, the dens of drug peddlers are raided among others. Civil society groups as well as religious groups also have the duty to carry out the very essential public education, awareness creation, skills training and capacity building that will help place the rehabilitated individuals in some other jobs that will earn them livelihoods.

*From all we have said, I will say that we need to put all our efforts together. Government has to do its part, and the civil societies and religious groups also have to join hands to fight the problem. As church leaders, we have to work together with other stakeholders in this fight. Then we can work with everyone else to work out something (jobs) for the girls we talk to, so that they don't go back (**Participant 2, Church Leader, 40**)*

*These things have been going on for so long and there are so many people involved. We cannot do it alone and so I believe everyone has to come on board so that we strategize to deal with it. It is good that you are drawing our attention like this. You know sometimes there are so many things and one easily sees these things as normal. We have to invite other people, put our heads together and deal with it. Even if we can't remove all of them from the streets, we can reduce the numbers*  
**(Participant 3, District Assembly Staff, 35)**

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### Introduction

The study was conducted to explore the social representations of individuals in marginalized groups, particularly commercial sex workers and substance abusers from the perspective of people in government at the district and municipal assemblies as well as church leaders. This exploration was also done with the missiological framework as a guide with regards to what can be done to rehabilitate the individuals the study focused on. This chapter will discuss in some detail the findings as well as insights from literature from similar studies. It will then conclude with an elaboration of the implications of the findings, limitations and suggestions for future studies into the subject matter.

#### Discussion

From the thematic analysis of the data collected through the semi-structured interview designed by the researcher for the purposes of this study, four (4) themes generated from ten (10) codes emerged from the data set. These are marginalized groups today, perception of causative factors, role of local authority and role of religious groups (the church). These themes will be discussed in detail below in line with answering the research questions that guided the study.

#### Marginalized groups today

From the analysis of the data gathered, the activities of commercial sex workers in Accra are perceived to be on the rise, with an increasing number of people involved in these activities. The information provided by the participants with regards to individuals in the marginalized groups were deemed to be reliable as they demonstrated sufficient knowledge of the subject matter. From the responses of the participants, while it was not new to see commercial sex workers plying their business along some popular streets of Accra, there has been a significantly increased visibility of the commercial sex workers. While the participants were unable to tell the exact period within which this occurred, the activities of commercial sex workers were perceived to have increased tremendously, almost at par with the very rapid mushrooming of nightclubs, brothels, movie houses among others in the capital city. It was also found that the commercial sex workers have in recent times also adopted some new modus operandi, where they advertise their services through the various social media platforms and then arrange to meet their customers.

Various incidents were narrated by the respondents with regards to this, laying further credence to the assertion that the activity of commercial sex workers in Accra has increased significantly. This is because of the proliferation of both the traditional “street” activities as well as the more recent “virtual” activities of these individuals. During the study, there were occasions where some participants showed messages of these commercial sex workers soliciting for customers through their advertisements on social media. For a majority of participants, there was negative affection towards the commercial sex workers as well as substance abusers. This negative affection was seen to be a product of the deviation of the lifestyle of these individuals from the standards of morality of the church as well as the non-conformity to laws from the perspective of the authorities. While the church saw commercial sex work and drug abuse as immoral, the laws of the land also frown on the above-mentioned activities.

The responses from the participants agreed with data from other research on the activities of commercial sex workers that suggested that there were quite a number of university students involved in the activity (Gbagbo & Gbagbo, 2021). It was noted in the study mentioned by Gbagbo and Gbagbo (2021) that the student commercial sex workers have also adopted some unique operandi for the soliciting of their customers. They come into contact with clients through pimps who serve as the links, leave their contact information in various drinking spots, hotels and guest houses and even go to the extent of converting their hostels into brothels. These findings have also been corroborated by some journalistic reports in the electronic media. Research conducted by Hounmenou (2016) also stresses that the activities of commercial sex workers continue to be a serious social menace even though it is illegal in the country. Owusu-Ansah (2010), also explored prostitution in Ghana, its religious and ethical implications, looking at the cases of some selected places. The study found that prostitution persists even among religious people in Ghana.

A critical finding of the study was the fact that commercial sex work is pervasive across people of various ages, that is from young girls to elderly women. This situation poses considerable dangers to the future of the young ladies as well as the social fabric of society. It also translates into an impending health crisis that needs to be dealt with decisively sooner rather than later. This is because the health risks associated with the activities of commercial sex workers including the spread of sexually transmitted diseases are increased with the increasing rate of the activities of these individuals. While both commercial sex workers and substance abusers were focused on by the study, it must also be stated that the activities of these individuals were mostly considered by the participants as going hand in hand, where most commercial sex workers and their patrons were engaged in the use of drugs.

The perception of the individuals being a lost cause or unredeemable was also gleaned from the data set. This perception has to do with the fact that for some of the respondents, the individuals in the marginalized groups are engaged in activities that give the impression that nothing can be done to rehabilitate them. As one of the objectives of the study has to do with the rehabilitation of these individuals, this view of their situation presents an interesting paradigm as it will be undoubtedly fed into the nature and strength of efforts at rehabilitating them. This expression of disdain towards the individuals in the marginalized groups was gleaned to be as a result of instances where these individuals have fallen back into their old lifestyles after efforts at rehabilitating them. For substance abusers who relapse, the participants indicated that they are deemed by a section of society to be irrevocably hooked unto the addictive substance, a perception that further fed into or translated into stigma and prejudice against them.

### **Perception of causative factors**

Factors that have led to the proliferation of the activities of commercial sex workers and substance abusers as gleaned from the responses of the participants had to do with some social and regulatory factors. Gbagbo and Gbagbo (2021) found in their study on commercial sex work among university students that the individuals who ply this trade do so for financial, material and emotional gains among others. From their responses, the participants suggested that the desire to make money and have the opportunity to live opulent lifestyles are some of the reasons why some ladies would get involved in commercial sex work. They also pointed to peer pressure and the influence of friends or colleagues who are already into prostitution. Findings from similar studies have attributed the factors that have led to this situation to the desire for financial and non-financial rewards (Coy et al., 2011; Frey et al., 1981).



The influence of peers as well as the involvement of the individuals in commercial sex work due to the desire for sexual pleasure was also found in the results of some other studies (Adjei, 2006; Asiedu & Agyei-Mensah, 2008). On the other hand, it was striking that the participants did not mention the men who patronize the services of these commercial sex workers. From the review of the related papers as well as the analysis of the study, the patrons of commercial sex workers, others who set up the brothels where they operate among others were not discussed in detail. This could be said to be as a result of the patriarchal nature of society, where men are regarded more than women, a possible blind spot which needs to be perused in order to sufficiently understand and deal with the phenomenon.

On the other hand, the manner in which the implementation of the laws regarding the activities of commercial sex workers and drug abusers is carried out was also implicated as one of the reasons for their proliferation. Here, the participants indicated that the lack of consistency in activities such as the raiding of hideouts, the rounding up of commercial sex workers, the raiding of brothels and arresting patrons among others. As Gbagbo Gbagbo (2021) suggested, the activities of these individuals, even though illegal, have been pervasive and has seen a significant increase in the numbers. This is seen to be as a result of the fact that the activities of law enforcement agencies have not been deterring enough to make the engagement of people in the activities unattractive and a risky endeavor. The study of commercial sex work on the university campuses also found that those in authority such as lecturers have also been noted to patronize these services, a situation that renders any disciplinary or law enforcement ineffective and flawed.

### **Role of local authorities**

In line with the findings of similar studies, it was found that even though the activities of these individuals are illegal and therefore there is the need for the law to take its effect so that they can be rehabilitated appropriately, the social stigma often surpasses the enforcement of the laws (Laar & DeBruin, 2017; Uzokwe, 2008; Olugbile et al., 2008; Wylegly, 2019; Mengistu et al., 2013). Another theme that emerged from the data set was the role of the local authorities with regards to the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and substance abusers in Ghana from the perspectives of the study participants. In order to rehabilitate commercial sex workers and individuals addicted to drugs, the participants suggested the making available of social support which will serve as a safety net for individuals who may be disadvantaged or vulnerable as a result of some societal challenges some of which were mentioned among the causes of the proliferation of the activities of these individuals in the marginalized groups. These challenges include that of unemployment, poverty, the absence of strong family bonds, peer influence among others.

The responses gleaned thus included the establishment of programs at the districts and municipal levels that would help reduce the poverty levels in the various communities in them. As part of the responses of the participants with regards to the role of the state in the rehabilitation of the individuals in the marginalized groups, was the fact that as the one wielding the powers to execute or implement laws of the country, the police and other security personnel must be tasked with the apprehension of the individuals involved. As the laws stand, the commercial sex trade is criminal and as such the law enforcement agencies must look at the apprehension of both those who offer the services as well as the patrons or clients. This according to the respondents, will serve a deterring function as well as help to reduce the numbers of these individuals. State institutions play a crucial role in maintaining law, order, and the overall well-being of a society. One of their primary responsibilities is to curb social vices—negative behaviors and actions that can harm

individuals, communities, and the fabric of society. This essay delves into the multifaceted role of state institutions in curbing social vices, highlighting their legal, regulatory, educational, and enforcement functions, all of which contribute to creating a safer and more ethical environment for citizens.

State institutions, particularly legislative bodies, are at the forefront of curbing social vices through the creation and enforcement of laws and regulations. Laws are designed to establish a framework that defines acceptable behaviors, sets boundaries, and outlines consequences for engaging in social vices. By criminalizing activities such as theft, violence, drug trafficking, and corruption, legislatures send a clear message that these actions will not be tolerated, thereby curbing their prevalence. The enactment of laws and regulations serves as a deterrent to potential wrongdoers, as the fear of legal consequences can dissuade individuals from engaging in social vices. Furthermore, regulatory bodies oversee sectors prone to vices, such as financial institutions and healthcare, implementing guidelines that prevent abuse and malpractice. State institutions also play a significant role in curbing social vices through educational initiatives and public awareness campaigns.

Governments often collaborate with educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the media to disseminate information about the negative consequences of engaging in social vices. By raising awareness about the personal, social, and legal repercussions of such behaviors, state institutions empower individuals to make informed choices and avoid falling victim to or perpetuating social vices. For instance, campaigns against substance abuse, domestic violence, and human trafficking aim to inform citizens about the dangers associated with these vices. Through education, states can change societal attitudes and norms, reducing the acceptability of such behaviors and contributing to their decline. State institutions, particularly law enforcement agencies and the judiciary, play a pivotal role in enforcing laws and ensuring that individuals who engage in social vices are held accountable. Law enforcement agencies investigate crimes, apprehend suspects, and gather evidence to build cases against offenders. The judiciary then ensures that due process is followed, and individuals found guilty of social vices are appropriately sentenced.

Effective law enforcement and a fair judicial system are essential for curbing social vices. Swift and impartial justice sends a clear message that the state is committed to upholding the rule of law and protecting the well-being of its citizens. This deterrence factor discourages potential wrongdoers from engaging in social vices, knowing that they will face legal consequences if caught.

While punitive measures are important, state institutions also recognize the importance of rehabilitation and reintegration in curbing social vices. Many offenders may have underlying issues, such as addiction, mental health problems, or a lack of education and opportunities, that contribute to their engagement in vices. State institutions often offer rehabilitation programs aimed at addressing these root causes and helping individuals reintegrate into society as productive citizens. Rehabilitation programs for substance abusers, vocational training for ex-convicts, and counseling for domestic violence offenders are examples of state initiatives that aim to break the cycle of social vices. It goes without saying that due to the widespread and largescale nature of the commercial sex trade, the state would need to adopt an all-inclusive approach of bringing various stakeholders including the church, organizations interested in social and civic development among others to support and fund such rehabilitation drives.

By addressing the underlying factors that lead to these behaviors, state institutions contribute to reducing the overall prevalence of vices within society. In an interconnected world, state institutions also play a role in curbing transnational social vices, such as human trafficking, terrorism, and cybercrime. International collaboration between state institutions is crucial for effectively addressing these complex issues. Countries work together to share information, coordinate investigations, and develop strategies to combat these vices on a global scale. Through international organizations, treaties, and agreements, states establish frameworks for cooperation in curbing social vices that transcend borders. Such collaboration not only addresses the immediate threats posed by these vices but also prevents their spread and minimizes their impact on a broader scale.

State institutions play an integral role in curbing social vices by enacting and enforcing laws, raising awareness, ensuring accountability, providing rehabilitation, and collaborating on an international level. These institutions create a legal and regulatory framework that defines acceptable behavior and discourages negative actions. Through their efforts, state institutions contribute to the creation of safer, more ethical societies, where citizens are empowered to make positive choices and contribute to the well-being of their communities.

### **Role of religious groups**

The responses of the participants with regards to the ways by which the various individuals involved in the activities that has placed them in the marginalized groups had a component which was linked to religious leaders. In the study, the leaders of some churches were among the participants as well. Due to the fact that the study was conducted with the missiological framework as a guide, it is important to note that the suggestions included a reorientation of the *missio dei*. The participants suggested that there was the need for the church to realign its focus to providing rehabilitation for the individuals in these groups. Over the years, the church, in its various denominations and branches, has continued to execute this mandate across the world, bring her knowledge of God in the Bible to others. This assertion stems from the “unredeemable” representation of the marginalized group from the perspective of the participants, some of who were church leaders. As indicated by the data set, the individuals who belong to these groups have been noted to mostly stay away from others in society and this can be attributed to the fact that they consider themselves to be shunned and rejected by others in society. As Bruce Riley Ashford illustrates “In order to build a biblical-theological framework for understanding God’s mission, the church’s mission, and the church’s mission to the nations, one must first understand the unified biblical narrative, including its four major plot movements-creation, fall, redemption, and restoration” (Ashford, 2011).

In addition to the above, the researcher found that there is a need for a concerted effort on the part of all in society, that is those in government, the church, civil society organizations, individuals among others to put all hands-on deck to ensure the sustainable rehabilitation of the individuals involved. This concerted effort thus serves to deal with the problem of having a one-size-fits-all approach to rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and drug abusers. Findings from similar studies (Sinacore et al., 2015; Masvawure, 2010; Keane, 2002) indicate that there is a need to understand the peculiar situation of the various individuals engaged in these acts in order to help rehabilitate them effectively.

## IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study sheds light on the unique social representations that individuals who are in leadership both at the district and municipal assembly levels as well as the church, with regards to commercial sex workers and substance abusers. They present an important scaffold upon which one can understand how society views the individuals within these marginalized groups, this view being critical in efforts at rehabilitating them. Through the promotion of positive values, education and awareness efforts, fostering community cohesion, and providing support structures for accountability and redemption, churches contribute significantly to mitigating the prevalence of social vices in society. While the approach may vary across different religious denominations and cultural contexts, the overarching impact remains evident—religious institutions play a vital role in shaping ethical behavior, fostering empathy, and creating a sense of responsibility among their members, ultimately working to build healthier and more harmonious communities.

These findings are particularly of importance to the state as well as the church, while they also have the potential of aiding as an important source of information and reference for social workers, organizations interested in social interventions as well as researchers in the field. It is thus a guide for individuals and institutions seeking to partner the church and the state in addressing the issues involved as well as a guide for those seeking to mobilize the churches and the state in terms of advocacy to help the groups involved. For instance, employment avenues can be created for the individuals whose motivation for engaging in these acts is solely for financial gains, whereas civil society groups can come on board with education to help rescue individuals who have been coerced to engage in these acts by others as payment for some help. For drug abusers and commercial sex workers who might require some psychological or psychosocial help, the state as well as stakeholders from the various fields mentioned above can be brought on board to help. The church, due to its prominent role of fulfilling the mandate, that is the Great Commission, plays an overarching role of introducing godly principles and values to them.

The church is presented with a critical area in which its divine and earthly mandate converge. While it seeks to influence the whole of humanity particularly the societies within which it operates with godly and kingdom principles and values, the challenge of rehabilitating commercial sex workers and drug users have been, per the current study, a difficult hurdle to surmount. This difficulty can be gleaned from the current study to be as a result of a number of issues, including the perception that these individuals are beyond saving. The finding regarding the fact that some of the respondents perceived individuals who engage in commercial sex work and substance abuse as beyond redemption was quite shocking and thought provoking. This is because of the very high rate at which evangelistic crusades are organized by various church denominations across the country. These crusades targeted the unsaved, and as such it was surprising to learn that there was a perception of being beyond saving was present within the study participants. It was postulated that this perception is held as a result of the high-risk nature of the activities, the rate at which those who have been seen to have stopped engaging in the activities return to them among others. While the challenges identified are real, there is the need for the church universal to reorient itself with the *missio Dei* in order to assert its true position and effect with regards to the divine mandate. The winning of souls, as well as the influence of the whole of society with kingdom principles is the *raison d'être* of the church and as such a conscious and intentional effort must be put into work on it.

The findings of the study will inform efforts at rehabilitating the commercial sex workers and drug users in terms of tapping from them to offer and champion tailor made interventions which will

ensure the success of these efforts. The study highlights the various efforts put in place by the state and local authorities in the tackling of the activities of the marginalized groups in focus. From the responses of the participants, efforts that aimed at clamping down on these individuals have been few and far apart, and seemed to be unintentional as opposed to the regular and targeted approach which was preferred by the respondents for an effective handling of the situation. As an implication, the findings of the study point the authorities and the security services to the more effective way of tackling the activities of commercial sex workers as well as drug users taking into consideration the increase in the numbers of people engaged in the activities and the locations which, if when hit, can significantly reduce the numbers. The findings regarding the various new modus operandi of these individuals, particularly the commercial sex workers, also suggest that the law enforcement agencies have a duty to adopt alternative strategies that will effectively address the challenge.

Further, the insights realized from the study serve as a resource to social workers as well as organizations that seek to effect social change. This is due to the fact that the insights from the paper will guide the designing of effective interventions among other measures for the rehabilitation of the individuals involved. While there have been initiatives at rehabilitating the individuals, the study throws light on the need for society to change its orientation with regards to the view of “otherness”, or the marginalization of the individuals in these groups. This change in perception, thus has the potential of enhancing the feeling of belongingness that will help foster effective rehabilitation.

Finally, this study and its findings adds to the body of knowledge in the fields of psychology, social work, concerning the factors that result in individuals mostly youth in social issues such as commercial sex work and drug addiction, factors that frustrate the efforts at rehabilitating the individuals involved in it. Significantly, the study sheds light on the social representations of the authorities and the church with regards to these individuals. It provides future researchers rich material upon which further studies can be conducted.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study explored the social representations of religious and state authorities with regards to commercial sex workers and drug users in Accra. The study participants were officials of district and municipal assemblies as well as elders and leaders of churches in Accra, Ghana. Their views on the subject matter from their perspectives can be seen to represent the social representations of their society due to the fact that they shared insights and experiences that were pertinent to answering the research questions as well as shed light on important perspectives which helped shape the study. By way of dealing with commercial sex work and drug addiction as well, they could be seen as passionate about how the aforementioned can be dealt with as they were unanimous in identifying the significant deterioration of the moral fiber of society as well as accompanying public health challenges which threaten to emerge from these activities. It must be stated that their positions were not particularly sympathetic of the individuals who indulged in the commercial sex work as well as drug use.

One of the core responsibilities of religious institutions, particularly the Christian Church, has been to address and mitigate social vices that threaten the well-being of individuals and communities. The church serves as a moral compass, providing guidance and promoting positive values that counteract social vices. The teachings and scriptures of various religious traditions emphasize

virtues such as compassion, empathy, honesty, and self-discipline. These teachings instill a sense of personal responsibility and encourage individuals to make ethical choices, discouraging them from engaging in activities that contribute to social vices. Secondly, churches often serve as centers of education and awareness, addressing social vices through sermons, seminars, and workshops. These platforms offer opportunities to discuss the negative consequences of engaging in social vices, both on an individual level and for the broader community. By providing information and fostering discussions, the church equips its members with the knowledge needed to make informed decisions, thereby curbing the prevalence of social vices. For instance, churches might organize workshops on substance abuse, domestic violence, and other pertinent issues, offering resources and counseling services to individuals dealing with these challenges. By doing so, they contribute to reducing the incidence of such vices within their congregations.

Churches play a pivotal role in fostering a sense of community and belonging among their members. These tight-knit communities provide a support system for individuals facing various challenges, including the temptation of social vices. The strong bonds formed within these communities would ideally create an environment where individuals feel valued, understood, and supported, reducing their vulnerability to social vices as they are less likely to engage in harmful behavior when they have a network of caring individuals to rely on. In this study however, it was evident that the feeling of “otherness”, that is the feeling of not belonging or being marginalized due to the members’ evaluation of their activities. There is a need therefore for efforts to be made at paying attention to the reception of these individuals in the marginalized groups once they are being integrated into the church and by extension, society. Additionally, churches often engage in outreach programs that extend their support to the wider society. These programs might include offering assistance to the homeless, providing resources for low-income families, or running rehabilitation programs for individuals struggling with addiction. By addressing the root causes of social vices through these initiatives, churches contribute to curbing their prevalence at a systemic level. Churches emphasize the concepts of accountability and redemption, which can deter individuals from engaging in social vices and offer a path toward rehabilitation for those who have already succumbed to them.

Many religious traditions teach that individuals are accountable for their actions before a higher power and are encouraged to seek forgiveness for their wrongdoings. This belief in accountability can serve as a deterrent against engaging in social vices, as individuals may fear the spiritual consequences of their actions. Moreover, churches often provide spaces for individuals to seek redemption and rehabilitation. Many churches offer counseling, support groups, and mentorship programs aimed at helping individuals overcome addictions, mend broken relationships, and reintegrate into society as productive members. In Ghana, the church in recent times has been at the forefront of efforts at driving social change and working to rehabilitate individuals. An example of this the situation where the Church of Pentecost has set out to build 3 modern state of the art correctional centres to augment the existing prison facilities in the country, one of which has been completed and handed to government. These facilities include skills training and educational facilities where inmates have the opportunity to learn and acquire employable skills by the end of their time there. This emphasis on redemption provides hope and a second chance to those who have fallen victim to social vices.

In resolving the marginalized state in which these individuals find themselves, there needs to be some appreciation of the viewpoint of the individuals involved in order to effectively design rehabilitation strategies. Similar to findings of related studies, it was found that the aforementioned

groups have increased significantly, have adopted new ways of practicing or plying their trade and also that there was a perception that the various individuals in these groups were beyond saving.

The study also explored causative factors as well as the role of authorities and the role of the church. It was found that there is a need for a concerted effort as well as a reorientation of the church and believers with regards to the Great Commission, that is the *missio dei*, as this is instrumental in the church truly establishing its mandate to the world. The findings of this paper will be of immense importance to all stakeholders, that is those in authority, the church, civil society, family, and the general public with regards to the most effective ways by which commercial sex workers can be rehabilitated. For those in academia, it will serve as a significant resource with regards to gaining insight of the social representation of these groups of people. This will help influence future research into the area.

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Instructions for Submission of Documents to IRB

1. Complete the Application Form (Attachment 1).
2. Complete the Consent Form (Attachment 2).
3. Complete the Request for Exemption from Review Form (Attachment 3).
4. Complete Research Design and Methodology Document (Attachment 4).
5. Complete Research Questions Document, if applicable (Attachment 5).
6. Submit 5 attachments to Program Director/Dean of Doctoral Studies or [IRB@wciu.edu](mailto:IRB@wciu.edu)

IRB Application Form

Request for Consideration of Human Studies

(All items must be completed by Principal Investigator. If Not Applicable, explain why)

Principal Investigator's (PI) Name: Abdul Aziz Ibrahim

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Course Instructor or University Supervisor: Dr. Viv Grigg

Other Investigator(s) – please list (if applicable):

Non-WCIU persons involved: Rev. Helena Hooper (Good News Theological Seminary), Mr. Ebenezer Korli

Research Title: Social Representations of Marginalized Groups; A qualitative exploration of the perceptions of state and religious leaders concerning commercial sex workers and addicts

Level of Review (please highlight and underline 1): Full      Expedited      Exempt

Duration of Study: 4 months' subject to IRB approval

Request Start Date (must follow IRB approval): April, subject to IRB approval

Request End Date (must follow IRB approval): September subject to IRB approval

Location of Research (if international – kindly refer to and comply with guidelines via <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/international/compilation-human-research-standards/index.html>, an e-copy of this document is also available from WCIU's IRB):

External sponsor or funder (if applicable):

Purposes/Objectives of Research:

**The study aims to:**

1. Explore the perceptions of religious leaders and government officials on the current state of commercial sex work and narcotic drug addiction in Ghana and how they can help remedy the situation.
2. Explore the perceptions of participants with regards to the causes of the current state of commercial sex work and narcotic drug addiction in Ghana.
3. Explore the perceptions of participants with regards to the role of the state in rehabilitating commercial sex workers and narcotic drug addicts in Ghana.
4. Explore the perceptions of participants with regards to the role of religious leaders in the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and narcotic drug addicts in Ghana.

Is this study a part of a doctoral dissertation? Yes

**No**

If yes, please attach your proposal.

Overview of Research Design and Methodology (additional details to be filled out in Attachment 4):

Potential Risks for Human Participants: psychological risks, legal risks, information risks (loss of confidentiality, loss of privacy), social/economic risks

- ➔ For additional details on principles of professional responsibility and ethics, please refer to American Anthropological Association's (AAA) Statement on Ethics:  
<https://www.americananthro.org/LearnAndTeach/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=22869>

**How Risks will be minimized:**

- **Respect and Kindness:** Each interaction with our participants will be characterized by respect and kindness, emphasizing their dignity and individuality. We are committed to treating every participant fairly and justly.
- **Adherence to Ethical Standards:** We pledge strict adherence to the 7 Principles of Professional Responsibilities as outlined in the American Anthropological Association's Statement on Ethics. These principles provide a robust framework for ethical conduct in our research process.



- **Confidentiality:** All participant responses will be anonymized and stored securely to protect their privacy. Any identifying details will be removed from our study's outputs to ensure participant confidentiality.
- **Informed Consent:** Before participation, each participant will be thoroughly informed about the study's purpose, what it will entail, and their rights as a participant, including the right to withdraw at any point. Only after understanding and agreeing to these terms will they provide written consent.
- **Harm Prevention:** We will endeavor to minimize any potential psychological, social, or physical harm to our participants. If sensitive topics arise during our interactions, participants will be reminded of their right to refrain from answering or to stop the interview.

**By implementing these measures, we aim to ensure that this study aligns with the highest ethical standards in research conduct.**

#### **Anticipated benefits of study:**

- The study seeks to provide vital information to key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection, local Government Ministry, Religious Leaders, School Authorities, Parents and Students.
- The knowledge that will be gained from this study and other similar studies will influence the implementation of the laws regarding these marginalized population and effective ways of tackling them.
- This study and its findings will add to the body of knowledge gathered by research on the perception of religious leaders and government officials commercial sex work and substance abuse in the country. This will serve as a valuable foundation upon which future research works will be done.

#### **Plan to obtain Informed Consent:**

Yes, due to the nature of the research, a written consent will be shared and agreed on with participants before commencing the project.

Most of the meetings will be done in the open space with other team members and the participants.

We will be sensitive to cultural and tribal differences in our line of questioning.

No one will be forced to share or be part of the research work, all participation will be voluntary.

#### **Confidentiality of Data:**

I will achieve this by keeping research participants anonymous.

The information shared and data collected will be securely kept from the public.

Only authorized personnel/interested parties will have access to the data collected.

To be completed by IRB Reviewer:

Research: Social Representations of Marginalized Groups; A qualitative exploration of the perceptions of state and religious leaders concerning commercial sex workers and addicts

Date Submitted: 06/13/2023

IRB Checklist Completed:

Notification sent to PI:

IRB Reviewer: Yalin Xin

Date: 06/24/2023

**Consent Form for Participation in Research and  
The Subsequent Use of Data in a Research Project**

I consent to participating in the research project/study being conducted by Abdul Aziz Ibrahim focusing on Social Representations of Marginalized Groups; A qualitative exploration of the perceptions of state and religious leaders concerning commercial sex workers and addicts. In case of additional information or questions, I may contact the researcher(s) at: [abdulibraziz@gmail.com](mailto:abdulibraziz@gmail.com)/[aibrahim20@populi.wciu.edu](mailto:aibrahim20@populi.wciu.edu) .

I understand the purpose of this study is to provide vital information to key stakeholders such the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection, Local Government Ministry, religious leaders, school authorities, parents among others as well as students as to the state of commercial sex work and narcotic drug addiction in Ghana. Such insight will also be instrumental in driving and mobilizing efforts at rehabilitating the individuals in these marginalized groups.

I understand that I will participate in an interview and the interview will be audio recorded. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without penalty, and that I will be exposed to no risk. I further understand that my participation will last only 45 minutes and that I may refuse to answer some questions.

I understand that my identity will be kept confidential by the researcher. I further understand that the raw data will be shredded and deleted by the researcher, and the aggregate data will appear in the final copy of the study.

I understand that the results of this study may be presented at a professional conference, or otherwise reported to academic bodies, but that my identity will in no way be revealed in such a report.

For further information about the research project, the researcher, or my rights as a participant, I may contact Principal Investigator Abdul Aziz Ibrahim at E-mail: [abdulibraziz@gmail.com](mailto:abdulibraziz@gmail.com)/[aibrahim20@populi.wciu.edu](mailto:aibrahim20@populi.wciu.edu) or Telephone Number: +233 243 665

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Or I may contact the Institutional Review Board of William Carey International University at [IRB@wciu.edu](mailto:IRB@wciu.edu)

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Request for Exemption from Review

Please check the reason you believe this study is exempt from review.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ **Category 1 – Education research**

Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices that are not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn or assessment of educators

**Examples:**

- Evaluating the use of accepted or revised standardized tests
- Testing or comparing a curriculum or lesson

2.   **X**   **Category 2 – Surveys, interviews, educational tests, public observations**

Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior and:

- Recorded information cannot readily identify the subject (directly or indirectly/linked) **OR**
- Any disclosure of responses outside of the research would NOT reasonably place subject at risk (criminal, civil liability, financial, employability, educational advancement, reputation)

**Examples:**

- Surveying teachers, nurses, or doctors about a technique or an outcome
- Interviewing managers about a management style or best practice
- Conducting a focus group about an experience or an opinion of a community program

3. \_\_\_\_\_ **Category 3 – Benign Behavioral Interventions**

Research involving Benign Behavioral Interventions through verbal, written responses, (including data entry or audiovisual recording) from **adult** subjects who prospectively agrees and ONE of following met:

- Recorded information cannot readily identify the subject (directly or indirectly/linked) **OR**
- Any disclosure of responses outside of the research would NOT reasonably place subject at risk (criminal, civil liability, financial, employability, educational advancement, reputation)

**Example:**

- Solving puzzles under various noise conditions
- Playing an economic game
- Being exposed to stimuli such as color, light or sound (at safe levels)
- Performing cognitive tasks

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Category 4 – Secondary Research Uses of Identifiable Private Information or Identifiable Biospecimens

Secondary research with identifiable Information/specimens collected for some other initial activity, if **ONE of following**:

- Biospecimens or information is publically available
- Information recorded so subject cannot readily be identified (directly or indirectly/linked); investigator does not contact subjects and will not re-identify the subjects
- Collection and analysis involving Investigators Use of identifiable health information when use is regulated by HIPAA “health care operations” or “research” or “public health activities and purposes”
- Research information collected by or on behalf of federal government using government generated or collected information obtained for non-research activities

Example:

- Analyzing existing tissue samples or data set which are recorded by the investigator without identifiers

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Category 5 – **Federal research or demonstration projects**

Research and demonstration projects supported by a Federal Agency/Dept. AND designed to study, public benefit or service programs.

- Federal agencies must publish a list of projects covered by this exemption prior to research commencing

6. \_\_\_\_\_ Category 6 – Taste and food quality evaluation studies

Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies,

- if wholesome foods without additives are consumed **OR**
- if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

7. \_\_\_\_\_ Category 7 Use of anonymous experiments or/and behavioral tasks that are already published in the literature.

**Research that doesn't fit an Exempt Category**

What if a research activity does **not** fall into on of the exempt categories?

The research is probably not exempt and must be submitted for **Expedited / Full Board** review.

Research is not exempt if it:

- is greater than minimal risk \*
- \* minimal risk means the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the

research are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. or;

- involves administration or use of drugs or devices.

Research Design and Methodology

**1. Research Title: Social Representations of Marginalized Groups; A qualitative exploration of the perceptions of state and religious leaders concerning commercial sex workers and addicts**

**2. Investigator(s): Abdul Aziz Ibrahim**

**3. Research Description** - In this study I will address the following Research Question(s):

3. What are the perceptions on the causes, potential consequences if unchecked, and current state of commercial sex work and narcotic drug addiction in Ghana?
4. What are the perceived roles of district/municipal authorities and religious leaders in the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and narcotic drug addicts?

**4. Statement of Research Goals and Intended Outcomes**

Explore the perceptions of participants on the current state of commercial sex work and narcotic drug addiction in Ghana.

Explore the perceptions of participants with regards to the causes of the current state of commercial sex work and narcotic drug addiction in Ghana.

Explore the perceptions of participants with regards to the role of the state in rehabilitating commercial sex workers and narcotic drug addicts in Ghana.

Explore the perceptions of participants with regards to the role of religious leaders in the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and people experiencing drug addiction in Ghana.

Collect information that will help my foundation to design a program for sex workers and people suffering with drug addictions

**5. A timeline indicating key points in the Research**

May- Meeting with the Clergy

June- Meeting with government officials

July- Putting all the data collected together into one piece.

September- Presentations

## **6. Research Design and Methodology (PLEASE provide full details and if interviews are needed, please complete Attachment 5):**

A qualitative research approach will be adopted for the purposes of the study. This research design is relevant to the study because the study seeks to explore participants' knowledge and attitudes regarding the subject under study. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that qualitative research is appropriate for the study of an occurrence within the environment and can also be used to address questions as to how social experiences are created or given meaning. This is a result of the goal of gleaning the perceptions of participants on the condition being explored by the researcher (in this case, me.).

### Participants

Data will be collected by the use of a semi-structured questionnaire developed in line with the objectives of the study. The study will make use of 12 participants sampled through the purposive sampling technique online. Six (6) of these will be religious leaders and the remaining six (6) District Chief Executives. Smith et al. (2009) stated that "samples are selected based on the fact that they offer a research project insight into a particular experience". In addition, Creswell (2012) indicated that for qualitative studies, a sample size of between two (2) and twenty-five (25) is considered satisfactory. Thus the sample size of 12 will be satisfactory for the study.

The purposive sampling technique will be used to recruit the participants for the study. Purposive sampling is appropriate because, it aids the researcher in the careful selection of participants according to the aims and rationale of the study (Schutt, 2006).

### **Research Approach/Methods to Use**

#### Data collection materials and apparatus

Participants will be asked questions ranging from demographics to the research questions concerning it through a structured interview guide. This will be done using an audio recorder. Other materials to be used include a notebook and a pen to record important observations and insights.

#### Procedure

Transcribed data from the study will be analyzed using the thematic analysis technique (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis was chosen to be suitable because it gives researchers the opportunity to explore and describe the meaning of a particular phenomenon under study from the perspective of the participants (Green & Thorogood, 2014). Additionally, it helps to discover generalizations by identifying the core of the meaning and main statement from the participants



under study (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). It is a flexible method because it is not attached to one theoretical perspective or epistemology. Therefore, utilizing the thematic analysis approach in the qualitative research study reiterates the fact that its main objective and essence are to explore the representations of the participants with regards to commercial sex workers and drug addicts.

The study would identify recurrent themes within the responses by adopting Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stages of thematic analysis. In order to effectively go through the six stages of thematic analysis, the data from the study will be read iteratively to obtain familiarity with the content. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the familiarization process is the first step for thematic analysis. This is where the researcher would get immersed in the data through active or attentively listening to audiotaped interviews or reading and re-read data collected to obtain patterns and meaning. Thus, I (the researcher will) read the data iteratively in order to be familiar with the whole body of data.

After this initial familiarization, initial codes will be generated by highlighting texts and writing notes to identify patterns within the data. I (the researcher) will arrange the data in a systematic and meaningful way by coding the data into some small chunks of meaning. Under this step, the researcher has the right to either code from an inductive perspective or a theoretical perspective. The former type of coding is where every line of the participants is coded by using line-by-line coding. The theoretical type of coding is where coding is done according to or with respect to the research questions. Here, the researcher codes part of the data that are interesting or important to the research question. In this study, I (the researcher) will code the data gathered inductively.

Thirdly, the codes will be arranged into potential themes and all relevant codes gathered. Braun and Clarke (2006) define a theme as a pattern that contains something interesting or important about the research questions. Thus, the significance of a theme defines it. The codes will then be analyzed to determine which code becomes the main theme that answers the research question. Predominately, all the themes are descriptive in order to determine the relevance of the patterns to the research questions. Some codes are associated with more than one theme while the majority of the codes are associated with just one theme.

The next stage consists of reviews of themes, this is where the researcher would review, develop and modify all codes in order to ensure coherence in patterns formed. Additionally, the various themes would be reviewed to determine their relevance in relation to the codes and entire data. This is where you gather all the data that relate to each theme in order to determine whether it supports the theme or makes sense. Subsequently, the researcher will have to examine whether the theme applies in the context of the data set.

The next stage of Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis includes the definition and naming of themes. It's where the researcher would explain what each theme is about as the researcher directs each theme to the data gathered in order to identify the importance of what each theme is about. It is mostly viewed as the final refinement of the themes. The following questions are mostly asked during the definition and naming of themes. What message is the theme saying?

How do subthemes connect and relate to the primary theme? What is the relationship between each theme?

In conclusion, a summary report that captures all the findings of the study in accordance with the research questions will be put together.

### Ethical consideration

Informed consent, which is an ethical consideration in research, requires that participants are fully informed about the procedures and risks involved in research and must give their consent to participate. Informed consent would be employed in the study by explaining and giving participants detailed information about the purpose of the study. The researcher would guarantee the participant's confidentiality. Participants would be assured that information will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study because the data collected would be under lock and key. The principle of anonymity, which essentially means that the participant's identity will not be revealed throughout the study even to the researcher, would be adhered to strictly. Here, the names of participants would not be required or needed to be stated, thus guaranteeing privacy.

Research Interview Questions (if applicable)

Research Title: Social Representations of Marginalized Groups; A qualitative exploration of the perceptions of state and religious leaders concerning commercial sex workers and addicts

Research Question(s):

1. What are the perceptions on the causes, potential consequences if unchecked, and current state of commercial sex work and narcotic drug addiction in Ghana?
2. What are the perceived roles of district/municipal authorities and religious leaders in the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and narcotic drug addicts?

Interview Questions:

**To the Clergy**

- Please can you share the mission and vision statements of your church with me?
- How is the church going to achieve these?
- Please can you share some of the special programs you run in your church?
- Is there any program targeted at the marginalized (commercial sex workers'/substance abusers)? If yes, I would be grateful to learn about it. If no, I would like to know why.
- What are the possible fears or challenges as to why some churches are not involved with these people?
- What do you believe is the current state of commercial sex work and narcotic drug addiction in Ghana?
- What do you believe is the cause of this state?
- What do you believe will happen if the state of commercial sex work and narcotic drug addiction goes unchecked in Ghana?
- What do you perceive the role of district and municipal authorities is regarding the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and narcotic drug addicts?
- What do you perceive the role of religious leaders is regarding the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and narcotic drug addicts?

**To a Government Official**

- Every government have their own flagship programs, please can you share the flagship programs of your government and why those programs?
- How does the government intend to achieve all these programs in their tenure of office?
- What are some of the pro poor policies of your government, that is if there's any?

- Does the government have any special program targeted at the marginalized (commercial sex workers and substance abusers)? If yes, I will be glad to learn. If no, I would like to know why?
- Could you please provide more information about the national initiatives or proposed legislation currently under discussion in Parliament that aim to improve conditions for sex workers and individuals struggling with substance abuse?
- What do you believe is the current state of commercial sex work and narcotic drug addiction in Ghana?
- What do you believe is the cause of this state?
- What do you believe will happen if the state of commercial sex work and narcotic drug addiction goes unchecked in Ghana?
- What do you perceive the role of district and municipal authorities is regarding the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and narcotic drug addicts?
- What do you perceive the role of religious leaders is regarding the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and narcotic drug addicts?