

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

**MARRIAGE AMONG THE MIGRANT KWAWU COMMUNITY IN  
THE CAPE COAST METROPOLITAN AREA**

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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

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CAPE COAST METROPOLITAN AREA

BY

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## **DECLARATION**

### **Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name: George Kwame Acheampong

### **Supervisors' Declaration**

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: ..... Date: .....

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Name: Professor Nancy Lundgren

## **ABSTRACT**

The Kwawus are from the Eastern Region of Ghana. They are traditionally known to be people with good business acumen which has also its historical basis. They are also known for protecting and maintaining their culture wherever they migrated to, and marriage and mate selection is one of them.

It is expected that as people migrate to urban centres most of their traditional lifestyles change as a result of their exposure to people from different cultural and ethnic background. However, it is perceived that the Kwawus continue to maintain their traditional style of marriage and mate selection. That Kwawus are perceived to be endogamous. In exploring the marriage patterns of the Kwawu (mate selection), current and related literature on marriage and migration were reviewed. In conducting the study, all the Kwawu migrants living in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area, who have attained 18 years and above were targeted.

Out of the 200 adults only 119 availed themselves for the study. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. The primary data was obtained through interviews and focus group discussion.

The study revealed that history, cultural beliefs, love, character, wealth, formal education and employment status were some of the major factors influencing the selection of mates among the Kwawus. In line with the findings, it was recommended that for family life in Ghana to be sustained, the cultural values and practices in marriage should not be overlooked. Mate selection should not be a matter of imposition but by personal choice or preference.

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## **DEDICATION**

To the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the late Dr. J. H. Addai-Sundiata, my late grandmother Nana Abena Bema of blessed memory who nurtured me from the very day I came into this world.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background to the study**

Sociologically, migration is caused by the push and pulls factors. The push factors are the dynamics of a country or a place of origin that force people to emigrate. These include wars, famine, political oppression or population pressures. The pull factors on the other hand are those features of destination points that attract immigrants. These include prosperous labour markets, better overall living conditions and lower population densities. However, migration movements add to ethnic and cultural diversity in many societies and help to shape demographic, economic and social dynamics (Giddens, Duneier and Appelbaum, 2005).

According to Skolnick and Skolnick (1999), many sociologist and cultural anthropologist perceive the individual as an actor playing a role written by culture and society. No individual therefore according to this view has wholly autonomous thoughts and impulses. One of the institutions that one has to create or belong is the institution of marriage.

Marriage being a universal mechanism through which families are raised and nurtured is never relegated or neglected by people during migration. Since culture is a way of life, people migrate with it, preserve it and project some of elements of their culture. One of the institutions maintained during migration is the family. The most important question posed then, is, is mate

selection, marital patterns and practices static or dynamic? Marriage can take place wherever there is human existence (rural or urban). However, due to cultural differences, ethnic preferences and sometimes cultural and family prescriptions, mate selection and marriage contracting differs from one society to another.

Malinowski (1960), for example who researched into mate selection of the Trobrianders, stated that they had a spontaneous desire to marry. This according to him meant that they married because they liked the idea of a life long bond to that particular person. He further argued that mate selection of the Trobrianders was based on customary pressure towards marrying. This, according to Malinowski was induced by an expression of public opinion that certain people are well suited to each other and therefore marry. Like the Trobrianders, the Kwawus of Ghana have carved a certain niche for themselves towards mate selection.

### **Statement of the problem**

Kwawu migrants are present in almost all urban centres in Ghana, exhibiting almost the same attitudes and behavioural patterns. The Kwawus who are bound by clans and totems lived as a rural community before getting into the urban areas. Some of them have however lived in urban communities before. They transfer and protect their primal way of life during migration. They build their houses closely together in specific areas. For example in Cape Coast, most of the Kwawus are found at Abura, in Kumasi at Asokwa, in Accra at Abeka, Kaneshie and Alajo. Some of them are also found in Agona Swedru and Hohoe in the Volta Region. Because of this family or ethnic close

knitting, marriages among the Kwawus are somehow restricted or influenced by the kinsmen and women.

Kwawus are said to be endogamous as opposed to being exogamous in the selection of mates. Consequently, some people are of the view that Kwawu males prefer marrying Kwawu women or are influenced by family relations to marry women who are natives of Kwawu. It is also perceived that Kwawus are wealth conscious. Therefore they encourage their women either to marry men from Kwawu or marry men from other areas who are wealthy and have enough to enjoy while alive and bequeath to their offspring at death (O. Ansong, personal communication, March 4, 2007).

The question that has been bothering many is whether there had been changes in the pattern of the marriages of Kwawus in the face of migration. Some people have alleged that Kwawus are so strongly bound by family ties that the family has the ultimate authority in the choice of a life partner for an adult who decides to marry. It is also perceived by the non-Kwawus that no matter the circumstance and no matter where the person lives, a male Kwawu who decides to marry a non-Kwawu female will always be pressurized by the family to take another wife who is a Kwawu. (O.D Adofo, personal communication, March 11,2007).

The question then is why have the Kwawus maintained their cultural norms, values and identities in the face of increasing urbanization, education and social change in general? According to Eshleman (1974), mate selection is not simply a matter of preference or choice. In spite of the increased freedom and opportunities that young people have to select their partners, there are many factors that are beyond the control of the individual.

## **Objectives of the study**

The broad objective of the study is to investigate marriage among migrant Kwawus in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area. The specific objectives are to:

- Find out the marital practices among Kwawu citizens living in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area.
- Determine the extent of influence of the family of orientation over the choice of life partners among Kwawu citizens in the Cape Coast Metropolitan area.
- Examine the level of intra-tribal marriage of the Kwawu citizens in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area.
- Examine the effect of formal education on mate selection.
- Examine the effect of wealth on mate selection.
- Examine the effect of employment status on mate selection.

## **Research questions**

The following research questions have guided the study:

- How are marriages contracted among the Kwawu migrants in Cape Coast?
- What influence the Kwawus in Cape Coast to marry only from their hometown?
- In what ways does the kinship system among the Kwawu influence their marriages?

- What cultural factors influence marriage among the Kwawu migrants in Cape Coast?
- What economic factors influence marriage among the Kwawu migrants in Cape Coast?
- What are the advantages of endogamy practised among the Kwawus?
- What is the attitude of Kwawus towards interethnic marriage?

### **Scope of study**

The purpose of the research is to explore, that is gain familiarity with the phenomenon being researched into. The research is descriptive in nature that was aiming at portraying accurately the characteristics of marriage among the Kwawu community in the Cape Coast Metropolitan area.

### **Significance of the study**

The study will throw light on the uniqueness of the Kwawus in relation to their mate selection and explain the factors that have sustained the marriages of Kwawus in Cape Coast Metropolitan Area. The study will be able to establish the extent to which important variables like education, employment, wealth, urbanization and generally social change across time and space has affected the process of mate selection among migrant Kwahus in particular and Kwahus in general.

Additionally it is the hope of the researcher that the findings of the study would add significantly to the body of knowledge on marriage and social change and also guide future research.



## **Outline of the study**

The study is made up of seven chapters. The first chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, purpose of the study and the significance of the study.

Chapter two deals with the literature review. Under that the following topics are considered. They are marriage, migration and marriage, benefits of marriage, family life and from traditional to modern family.

Chapter three discusses how the research was conducted. Issues discussed include: the study area, the population, sources of data, sample size, methods of data collection and data analysis, problems of the field and limitation of the study.

Chapter four covers the socio-demographic background of the respondents. Issues discussed include: sex and marriage, age of the respondents, place of origin of the respondents, religious background of the respondents, the type of marriage they prefer, clan of the respondents and that of their spouses, level of education of the respondents and the employment status of the respondents.

Chapter five discusses issues concerning mate selection among the Kwawus in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area. Some of factors that influence mate selection are also discussed. The chapter also examines the influence of the family of orientation over the choice of partner among the Kwawus in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area.

Chapter six examines and discusses three major themes. These are marriage and social change, urbanization and marriage and the general attitude of Kwawus towards marriage.

Finally, chapter seven discusses the summary of the major findings, draws the necessary conclusions and provides some recommendations.

### **Summary**

Marriage as a social institution is shaped by cultural norms and practice which tend to influence peoples attitude towards it. The Kwawus are not different in this respect. Yet it is believed that they have strong sentiment towards endogamy. The chapter dealt with the background to the study, statement of the problem, the objectives, research questions, the purpose and the significance of the study and the outline of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter reviews current and related literature on marriage and migration. Though the research is concentrating on marriage among the Kwawu Migrant Community in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area, it will source some information involving the marriage patterns of the Kwawus when they are in their hometown. This will help authenticate the objectives of the research findings.

#### **Marriage**

Marriage is the process through which domestic groups are formed, descent groups are interlinked and the reproduction of society, biological and social, is achieved (Keesing, 1958). However, marriage in many ethnic groups entails contracts or alliances between corporate descent groups and domestic groups, are often formed along lines of descent.

In presenting a comparative perspective on marriage, some anthropologists like Gough (1959) and Goodenough (1970), have sought to find common denominators of marriage in different societies so as to distinguish essential features from non essential ones and to distinguish marriage from other forms of liaison that may be socially recognized. Others such as Leach (1971), have stressed the diversity of marriage forms, the

various elements involved – sexual, economic, legal and political – and the futility of seeking a universal definition.

In Gough's (1959) view, marriage in all times and places has been a customary transaction that serves to establish the legitimacy of newborn children as acceptable members of society. Goodenough (1970), on his part, focuses on contractual rights over a woman's sexuality in trying to reach a universal definition. "Marriage is a transaction and resulting contract in which a person (male or female, corporate or individual in person or by proxy) establishes a continuing claim to the right sexual access to a woman - this right having priority over rights of sexual access others currently have or may subsequently acquire in relation to her (the woman) (except in similar transaction) until the contract resulting from the transaction is terminated and in which the woman involved is eligible to bear children"(Goodenough 1970: 12-13).

The presentations of Leach (1971) and Goodenough (1970) attest to the fact that marriage should not be seen as performing a single function. Marriage is crucial because it ties bundles of rights and relationships among couples. It regulates sexual relationship. It defines the social position of individuals and their membership in groups; it establishes legal rights and interests; it creates domestic economic units; it relates individuals to kin groups other than their own; it serves as an instrument of political relationships between individuals and groups.

To make marriage generally understandable, Kessing (1958), has made these proposals:

- Marriage is characteristically not a relationship between individuals but a contract between groups (often, between corporations). The relationship contractually established in the marriage may endure despite the death of one partner (or even both).
- Marriage entails a transfer or flows of rights. The exact set of rights passing from the wife's groups to the husband's (or vice versa) – work, services rights, rights over children, property and so on – varies widely. But if we ask, what rights are transferred and assumed that something tangible or intangible passes back in the other direction to balance the transaction, we are well on our way to understanding many, otherwise peculiar-looking marriage systems.
- Though marriage involves rights to priority of sexual access by the husband, it needs not be exercised directly or exclusively. (Hence, woman-woman marriages, wife lending, sanctioned love affairs, or alternative; partners' in 63 percent of Murdock's (1949) sample societies, for example sexual relations were permitted between a man and his wife's sisters).
- Marriage needs not be monogamous. More than one relationship of marriage could in many societies be contracted at once, and sometimes one contract can involve two or more wives or two or more husbands. (pp. 252-253).

Kessing concludes by stating that, “to understand marriage comparatively, there is the need for us to view it as a legal relationship: to sort out carefully who the parties are, what rights and what valuables are transferred, to whom these are distributed and assigned, and what interests of

individuals and groups are advanced by such contractual arrangements” (1958:158).

Other writers have also expressed their perception on marriage. According to Harris (1983), marriage is the institution through which provision is made for the performance of the tasks concerned with procreation, rearing and transmission of cultural practices and beliefs. It also involves reordering of relationships of its members by the genetic parents of the children. He further points out that such a definition has two elements. On the one hand, it points to a class of tasks; and on the other, it specifies that the type of arrangement of concern is one between kin groups or between persons linked through actual or potential genetic parenthood, as it is understood by the society concerned. However, he warns about the use of the term ‘institutional’ since he noted that one cannot speak of a role being institutionalized in relation to a group. The problem involved in the definition arises because the arrangement entered into is not recognized by some official body or by some group wider than that to which the spouse belongs whose members do not recognize the arrangement.

Olson and DeFrain (2000), also defined marriage as the emotional and legal commitment of two people to have emotional and physical intimacy, various tasks and economic resources. By this definition, Olson and DeFrain include same sex couples, except that there is no legal commitment.

Harold (1964), says that marriage is an institutionalized mating arrangement between human males and females. Thus, marriage is viewed as a pre-condition of family organization. Marriage being institutionalized is a

social institution that is strictly human and assumes some permanence and conformity to societal norms (Eshleman, 1974).

Burgess (1986), adheres to a similar view of marriage. He wrote that animal mates but man marries. The significance of this distinction in mating is biological, while marriage is social and cultural. Marriage implies a ceremony, a union with social sanction, recognition of allegiance to the community assumed by those entering this relationship (Eshleman, 1974).

William (1963), an anthropologist argues that marriage is a socially legitimate sexual union, begun with a public announcement, undertaken with some idea of performance and assumed with a more or less explicit contract, which spells out reciprocal obligation between spouses and their children.

Ira and Gary (1971), interested in providing a universal definition, said that marriage is a socially acceptable union of individuals in husband and wife roles with the key function of legitimation of parents.

There seems to be a concern that marriage involves several criteria that are found to exist cross-culturally and throughout time. The criteria have traditionally included:

- A heterosexual union, including at least one male and one female.
- The legitimization or granting of approval to the sexual relationship and bearing of children without any loss of standing in the community or society.
- A public matter rather than private personal one.
- A highly institutionalized and patterned mating arrangement.
- An assumption of mutual and reciprocal rights and obligation between spouses.

In summary, marriage can be said to be a state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by custom and law. Besides, it can also be said to be the state of being united to a person of the same sex in a relationship like that of traditional marriage. This latter point has become necessary due to the legalization of same-sex marriages in some countries. Some of the countries that have legalised same-sex marriages are Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Canada, South Africa, Norway, Sweden and Portugal.

### **Types of marriage**

According to Amoo Darku (2005), anthropologists have unearthed various types of marriage all over the world and have documented the following:

- Monogamy – one man married to one woman
- Polygyny – one man with two or more wives
- Sororal Polygyny – a man marrying sisters
- Polyandry – one woman married to two or more men
- Fraternal polyandry – a woman marrying brothers
- Polygamy – a woman married to two or more men, and a husband married to two or more women (p.14).

He went further to state that of all the types of marriages described above, monogamy and polygamy are the most popular and acceptable among Africans.



### **Methods of contracting marriages**

In Ghana in general the under-listed are some of the methods through which marriages are contracted.

- Betrothal – “Asewa” – giving a girl (whiles very young) into marriage to an elderly man.
- Indebtedness – Using a girl as a form of collateral.
- Arranged Marriage – Males being married for by their parents.
- Consenting/consensual marriage - common consent – a person or persons responsible enough to decide whom they want to marry.

### **Functions of marriage in Ghana**

Amoo Darku (2005: 4) has also suggested the following as some of the functions of marriage which cuts across all ethnic boundaries in Ghana.  
Marriage:

- provides a link between family and kin groups and as such contributes to the survival of mankind;
- constitutes a socially recognized union between a man and a woman that accords legitimate birth status to their children (otherwise children out of wedlock are considered as bastard or illegitimate);
- provides for the intense care of human infants and the prolonged care of children;
- provides for the exchange of products and services between men and women and, sometimes, between their extended families.

Amoo Darku (2005) concludes by stating that in Africa marriage is not among individuals but the entire families of the man and the woman.

### **Issues in marriage and family life**

Hess, Markson and Stein (1988) states that there are four basic factors that make families possible and necessary. These are: birth of infants, typically one at a time, at a much earlier stage of development than other animal young, so that, they require constant care for many years; secondly, gender based division of labour in which females engage in child care and the males in protection; thirdly, year round sexuality leading to continual social interaction between males and females; and fourthly, preference by females for the more co-operative males (Zihlman 1978, 1981).

Gough (1971), tests such qualities as language, foresight, self control and the ability to plan collectively and to learn new behaviours as the essential bases for choice and relationships. However, social life is impossible unless and until sexual devices are approved by cultural and social norms. It seems likely, therefore, that the first and perhaps most powerful set of norms created by human beings were those initiated and channelled through sexuality.

Functionalists' explanations in relation to marriage are captioned along three major areas. These are incest taboo, exchange factors and the principle of legitimacy. Functionalists believe that human beings have a reflective mind; they can control impulses including sexual desires and jealousies. Such controls are internalized through a set of rules formed by agreement among members of the group. Incest taboo, for example, is frowned upon by all

societies. Some of these prohibitions are sexual relations between parents and their children and between brothers and sisters.

To some social scientists, incest rules are the foundation of a group's survival. By forbidding sexual relations, in a given unit, the taboo forces sons and daughters to marry from outside their immediate family. Through the enforcement of incest taboo, the following are accrued: Alliances are made between one family and another; ties of kinship and obligation bring potential enemies together; the number of co-operative families in society increases. Marrying outside the family also reduces the likelihood of mental and physical birth defects by bringing a new gene pool into the breeding groups.

Levi-Strauss (1963), and Harris (1968) have also suggested that, the exchange of brides and grooms in the original social relationship serves as an example of exchanges that bind individuals and families together in enduring social system. They went further to state that if the leading males in various families agree to give up sexual rights for their sisters and daughters, all other types of exchange follow. Besides, they emphasized that underlying all social relations is the concept of reciprocity and that gift obligates the receiver to return something of equivalent value later.

Malinowski (1955) describes a third basis for marriage and family as the "principle of legitimacy", by which he meant that the functions of marriage is to identify one man being responsible for the protection of a woman and her children and for their placement in the social system. That is, because simple societies are organized according to kinship, the status of father typically determines the social position of children. This system of assigning status is known as ascription. Malinowski emphasized that the

“father” does not have to be the biological parent. What is important is a social father who assumes responsibility through marriage.

From the above discussions, it could be noted that functionalists see the important benefits for groups and for individuals through marriage. Thus groups are strengthened through marriages and individual needs are met.

To the conflict theorists, it is the kinship groups, the head of families and men in general rather than women who benefit most in marital relationships (Smart, 1984). To them incest taboos and the rules regulating mate selection are often used to acquire or accrue property within a given kinship line. For example, brother-sister marriages as in the ruling families of ancient Egypt, prevented the taken up of the family's estates. Even today, in many societies, the most desirable marriage choices are among cousins, and it is for the same reason. In other words, heads of families control groups' resources by controlling mate selection. Households' heads also control the behaviour of other family members through force. According to Gordon (1986), although it is condemned as immoral and forbidden by law, incest as a form of sexual abuse, committed primarily by older men or female children is not as rare as commonly thought in their society. In America, historical records and contemporary survey data indicate that incest episodes occur in the ranges between 1-10 percent within American families (Herman 1981, Gordon & O'keefe, 1984, Finkelhor & Kersti, 1985). Furthermore, contemporary studies indicate that sexual abuse appears to be a major cause of girls running away from home (Burgess, 1986).

## **Benefits of marriage**

According to Hess et al (1988), the functionalist perspective and the exchange model suggest that both partners benefit from the division of labour and the emphasis on affection in modern marriages. A husband reciprocates a wife's devotion to home making by providing her with economic capital (economic power), security, social status and the opportunity to bear legitimate offspring. In return for being cared for having children to carry on the family life, husbands are motivated to earn adequate incomes. This system also serves societal goals by producing willing workers and stable socialization environment for the young. From the conflict perspective, however, such basic harmony of interest cannot be assumed. Not only do family members have individual interest to protect, often at cross-purposes, but the family unites itself necessarily well suited to the modern industrial system. Within the family, conflicts must be handled without the help of other kin or the community at large. In many families therefore, the nuclear household is an emotional halt house with all emotions focused on its very few members.

Kessler and Essex (1982), have stated that in contrast to the married, un-married people tend to live longer, report higher levels of personal happiness and have better physical and mental health. There is however, some controversy among sociologists regarding the relative benefits of marriage for men and women. Some research shows that marriage is more important to the physical and mental well being of men (Bernard, 1982), while another data indicate one advantage for women in marriage at least when in mental distress (Thoits, 1986). It could be argued that as compared to their un-married

counterparts, married women are somewhat better in terms of security and affection than married men.

The women's rates of mental distress are higher. For many women, employment offers an alternative source of esteem. The mental and physical health is therefore superior to women who are exclusive homemakers. But for others, the combination of homemaking (Verbrugge & Madans, 1985) employment and child care is a source of role conflict and overload in the negative effects on their emotional well being.

### **Selection of marriage partners among Kwahu migrants**

According to Adams (1979), if romantic love is the only legitimate reason for choosing a marriage partner, then people must be free to make their own choices. Parents can no longer arrange marriages for their children, although they can influence such choices directly or indirectly. He goes on to argue that in a modern society, the choice rest with young people themselves and each generation of youth has elaborate set of norms and behaviours-dating rituals-to help them select a mate.

There is also the tendency to select a mate of the same race, religion, social class, ethnic group, educational level, and the same age group. This is called homogamy. People who are like oneself according to Hess et al (1988), are easy to be with for a number of reasons. This is because there is a foundation of shared values and attitudes as a result of similar socialization which reduces the likelihood of disagreement and misinterpretation; and secondly, people who agree with one another are very rewarding to be with because they reinforce one's own sense of rightness.

This notwithstanding, modern society provides wider opportunities for people meeting from different geographical areas and social backgrounds. For example, schools and colleges, universities, the armed forces and the police, at work places and through personal advertisement, people are attracted to one another and on that note make choices for marriage.

Heterogamous marriage is becoming common these days - Heterogamous in terms of race, religion, and ethnicity (Glenn, 1984). Heterogamy has its benefit in exposing marriage partners to other ways of thinking and doing, adding to an element of variety and challenge to the relationship.

It has generally been assumed that, homogamous marriages are somewhat more stable than heterogamous unions, and that cross-racial marriages are especially vulnerable, as are those that encompass wide differences in age, education and social class. Regarding age, for example, some researchers have found that age differences of five or more years are associated with a higher probability to divorce than among couples whose ages are often similar (Albrecht, Martin & Heaton 1985) and other researchers (Buckle, Gallup and Rodd, 1996) however claim that there are no significant differences in marriage-quality directly due to age dissimilarity between spouses. Because wide age differences are most characteristics of lower social status, it is economic stress rather than age heterogamy that accounts for differences in marital quality.

In general, as barriers of heterogamy get broken, people are able to adjust and adapt more easily than when such unions were real and enacted in defiance of strong parental and cultural pressures. Eshleman (1974) questions

the sources of the authority in marital decision and questions whether it is itself necessary. According to him there are at least three basic meanings of marriage all of which exist today. To some persons and groups, marriage is sacred, but it is in itself a sacrament, hence the source of authority in marital decisions stems from God. With others, marriage is a social contract and success is viewed in terms of conformity to social demands-there, authority becomes centered in human beings as represented by the kin groups, community, church as a social institution and society in general. To a third group, marriage is a highly personal, highly individualistic concern. Thus, the concern is not with God or with society but with 'me'. I choose to marry from the ethnic group, religion, society, class and educational level which suit my taste. Discussions on some theories of mate selection in the next paragraph will throw more light on why people select mates they would like to live with.

### **Theories of mate selection**

Theories of mate selection attempt to explain the process and dynamics of which mates are selected. According to Hughes and Surra (1997), although some theories have proven more valid than others, no one theory tells the whole story; but together they provide some explanation of what happens (Rice, 1956).

#### Homogamy versus complementary theory

Homogamy is the tendency of like to marry like. People of similar age, race, nationality, education, intelligence, health, structure, attitude and countless other traits tend to marry one another to a degree greater than would



be found by chance (Hughes and Surra 1997). Hughes and his colleagues further noted that although Homogamy seems to operate with respect to social characteristics, the evidence is less clear for psychological factors such as personality and temperament. Physical attractiveness also plays a part in mate selection. Another factor is one proposed by Winch (1971), namely, that people tend to select mates whose needs are not opposite, but complementary to their own. According to this theory, a nurturing person who likes to care for others would seek a nurturant mate who likes to be cared for. Winch continued to say that the individual selects from the eligibles, a person who gives the greatest promise of providing maximum needs gratification. This is a person whose needs are complementary to one's own.

#### Endogamy versus exogamy

Endogamy is a situation where one marries within one's social group. One selects a mate endogamously when the criteria for the selection are based on similar social characteristics (Durberman, 1974). Durberman continues to state that many of the norms of endogamy come from a feeling that is present in all groups – the sense of “we – ness”. “We” usually consider ourselves to be superior to “them” in certain areas so that a feeling of group belonging is generally accompanied by antipathy to those outside the group. It follows then, that “they” are not considered proper mates for our sons and daughters. Clearly there is an element of ethnocentrism at work in endogamous mate selection.

Amoo Darku – defines endogamy as a requirement for marriage within a defined category or range or group or community (“in-marriage”). All

societies are minimally endogamous in that they limit marriage to members of the same species; most of them limit marriage to members of the opposite sex.

Exogamy is a rule forbidding people from marrying within their group (kinsmen), usually clan or caste. For example in northern Ghana, Dagaons or Dagabas and Frafras are considered as a close or even as relations and therefore are not permitted to marry. Among the Akans in Ghana marriage is prohibited within clans. It is considered that they are related to one another and sometimes from one ancestry. These are the clans and totems of the Akans of which people of the same clan cannot marry one another. However, due to migration, education, religion, wealth, status and ignorance some people have been violating the norm.

The Table 1 shows the Akan clans and their totems in Ghana. Marriage is not permitted within members of the same clan irrespective of where one comes from.

Exogamy, the opposing or inverse term to endogamy, is forbidding people from marrying within their group, usually clan, lineage or caste. Usually the group is the nuclear family; one is prohibited from marrying the parents, siblings, aunts, uncles and, in some societies, cousins (Durberman, 1910: 85).

Ira and Gary, (1971) suggests that exogamy is most possible in growing cities where there is pluralistic, anonymous and mobile population. He predicts that endogamy will prove to be less of a criterion in mate selection. This is because education and occupation will eventually result in the blurring of class boundaries, less interest in religious and class boundaries and ethnic differences, hence reducing endogamous marriages. However,

some people are still endogamously inclined. It cannot be eradicated completely.

**Table 1: Clans and totems of Akans in Ghana**

Clans	Head of Clan	Totem
Oyoko and Adako	Asantehene	ɛkɔdeɛ (Eagle)
Bretuo	Mamponhene	ɛsebo (Leopard)
Agona	Tafohene	Ako (Parrot)
Asona	Offinsohene	Kwakwadabi(Crow)
Asene	Kumase Adontenehe	Apan (Bat)
Aduana	Essumengyahene	Okraman (Dog)
Ekuona	Adansihene	ɛkoɔ (Buffalo)
Asakyiri	Akrokyerehene	Opete (Vulture)

Source: Amoo Darku, (2005:2)

Bloom and Ottong (1987) contended against exogamous marriage using the African situation as an example. They write that in most of Africa, the states are pharisaic, that is they are composed of many different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. This notwithstanding, Africans feel strongly that they are members of a kinship group. Although these varied forms of solidarity are being modified by urban life and by education, marriages tend strongly to be endogamous. This is particularly true in those individuals and communities that are less rooted to the land, and where people are making their living in more urban and less traditional ways. Bloom and Ottong, however, say that exogamy depends largely on the opportunity it provides. It is more likely to occur in the town or in the city than in the village. This

opportunity, they noted, is more likely where the group identity is more weakly cemented.

#### Exchange theory

Exchange theory is based on the notion that we like those who reward us and dislike those who punish. According to Lawler and Yoon (1993), many of our acts derive from our confidence that from them will flow some benefits. For example, expression of love, gratitude, recognition, security and material reward. The relationship out of this interaction is reinforced by rewarding each other. In other words, people with similar social traits, attitudes and values reward each other (Vander Zanden, 1999). They further said, in selecting partners, we minimize the risk of rejection while maximizing the profit. Additionally, the parties in complementary relationship offer each other high rewards at low cost to themselves.

The sustainability and stability of marriages among the Kwawus have been influenced greatly by the Exchange Theory. Their marriages are driven by this theory. Whenever each partner is able to provide what is required of him/her there is absolute peace and tranquillity. However, should there be any sign of irresponsibility or cheating conflict emerges. The one who is able to provide substantial amount towards the keeping of the home becomes the head.

#### Psychodynamic theory

Psychodynamic theory emphasizes the influence of childhood experiences and family background on one's choice of mate. The Parent

Image Theory under the psychodynamic theory is based upon Freud's psychoanalytic concepts of the Oedipus complex and Electra complex and states that a man will likely marry someone resembling his mother and that a woman will likely marry someone resembling her father (Rice, 1956). Since most Kwawus do not want to be castigated and therefore give room for their parents to be insulted through their marital practices, they try as much as possible to project the positive images of their parents through their marriages.

On the other hand the Ideal Mate Theory states that people form a fantasy of what an ideal mate should be like based partly upon early childhood experience (Rice, 1956). It therefore suggests that the socialization process of an individual greatly affects his/her mate selection.

#### The assimilation perspective

The classic assimilation theory explains assimilation as the complete absorption of immigrants into a core society, which is a stage when they achieve demographic and socio-economic traits, equivalent to those of the natives. Intermarriage is regarded as a stage of assimilation during which the offspring will no longer carry a single ethnic identity, but rather promotes a breakdown of barriers between ethnic minorities and the natives (Muttarak, 2007).

The youth, most of whom were born and bred at Cape Coast are showing signs of assimilation into their marital practices. This has come about due to their intermingling with the people of Cape Coast and others through education, employment opportunities and their level of finances. They no longer carry a single ethnic identity.

## Traditional versus modern family

The differences between traditional and modern family forms have often been described in terms of losses of function for the extended kin group. Tasks once performed by extended kin are now performed by outside agencies. In the economic front, for example, the family is dependent on wages earned outside the home. The modern family is now primarily a consuming unit, highly dependent on the economic system beyond the home, over which the family members have little control. Currently, the composition and function of family are undergoing some modification, as a process of urbanization and historically associated social change strain its traditional structure of relationships (Gugler & Flanagan 1978: 118).

Furthermore, in the political perspective, the rise of the modern centralized state has reduced the need for protection, once provided by extended kin. Armies, police forces and the courts have replaced the institutions which hitherto controlled, provided peace and order among relatives. The public school has been created to educate people for work in an industrial economy. The traditional system of kin education has given way to the modern system of education. Religious needs are also increasingly being provided by specialists (Priests, Imams, Teachers) outside the family setting and family functions become narrower.

Consequently, as the extended family becomes less and less important as a source of goods and services, the young are freed from control of their elders. These notwithstanding, the challenges of modern life create a need for affection and emotional support that cannot easily be met by family members

with whom one has relationships which wielded much power. Increasingly, then, people take to their marriage partners for such personal rewards.

Hess, et al., (1988) have stated that expressive needs are best met by emotional intimacy with a few people. Hence, the importance of mate selection, not for the kinship-based needs of the past but for emotional compatibility. The Romantic Love Syndrome (Goode, 1959) has emerged as the new basis for choosing a husband or a wife. Although love has always been possible in traditional marriages, it has rarely been the sole reason for choosing a marriage partner. In the modern marriage, by contrast, love is the primary need, the only socially approved-basis for mate selection.

### **Marriage and social change in Ghana**

In a world of dynamism change is always inevitable. Change has always been part of society. It is also worth noting that institutions have always been changing their forms and functions (Moore 1963).

According to Nukunya (2003), the rules and practices of marriage have been affected by factors of social change and innovations of all kinds introduced. He said, in the pre-colonial era, age of marriage followed biological development and certain customary requirement. On the part of girls, apart from their physical maturity, the performance of puberty rites, where applicable, was the principal consideration. For boys whose qualification normally did not include puberty rites as such social maturity meant the attainment of certain position determined by society. Awedoba (2002) noted also that girls married earlier than boys and age difference between three and five years between husband and wife were considered the

norm though additional marriage enabled men to marry women many years their juniors.

Nukunya (2003), however, stated further that in contemporary Ghana as elsewhere in Africa, one of the most important factors causing delay in marriages of both male and female is education. Education is seen as one of the agents of the socialization of individual members of society to acquire the necessary skills required to function in the economy. As espoused by Agyeman (1986:12) “education may be defined as a social institution through which society influences its individuals by transmitting to them its culture, which is the totality of the society’s accumulated knowledge, arts, laws, morals and ways of behaviour, the acquisition of which brings the individuals to the perfection of their nature. The perfect state of man referred to is that state of man which is relative to the society of which the individual is a member”.

As compared to the pre-colonial era where girls were being married very early, a large number of them are now in school. As school attendance is normally incompatible with marriage, the result is a higher age of marriage for both sexes. In other words, the longer the time spent in school, the longer the delay and therefore the higher the age of marriage (Nukunya, 2003). He further observed that, the postponement of marriage is not limited to school goers. Apprenticeship for the purpose of learning trade like dressmaking, catering, hairdressing for girls and mason, tailoring, carpentry and mechanic for boys, has long become an essential feature of training youths, both literate and illiterate. And for both school leavers and illiterates alike the result is the same; the postponement of marriage.



Another trickling effect of contemporary social change which Nukunya emphasized is the diminishing role of parents in the selection of marital partners. “The school environment, migration and the general contemporary flexible atmosphere as well as increased mobility make it easier for boys and girls to associate more freely in an atmosphere that promotes conditions for mate selection by themselves.” Nukunya concluded that, “the more literate one becomes, that is the more school education one acquires, the smaller the chance of the parents interfering in one’s selection of a marriage partner.” He was, however, careful to say, the concluding statement should not be taken to mean parental involvement in mate selection has ceased even among the very well educated. “What is disappearing is the initiative on the part of parents to select spouses for their children and to insist that the latter accept the choice made for them” (Nukunya, 2003:153).

Though the factors of social change have had a great toll on mate selection in Ghana, the ethnic factor in marriage cannot be overlooked. This is going to be discussed in the next paragraph.

### **Ethnic factor in marriage**

Giddens defines ethnicity as “cultural practice and outlooks that distinguish a given community of people. Members of ethnic group see themselves as culturally distinct from other groupings in a society, and are seen by those others to be so”. He further stated that language, history or ancestry (real or imagined), religion and life styles of dress or advancement are seen as distinguishing characteristics of ethnic group (Giddens, 1989:243).

Shibutani (1996) also sees an ethnic group as a group of people who consider themselves and are so considered by others as belonging to a foreign culture and who actively participate in the activities of that culture. Cyprus on the other hand differentiates ethnicity from race. To him, “ethnicity refers to members in sub-group within an environment dominated by another culture while race refers to any group of people united or classified together on the basis of common history, nationality or geographical distribution” (Cyprus 1997:11).

Agyeman sustains the argument by defining ethnic group as “a group of people who consider themselves and are also considered by others to belong together, share the same culture, believe to share the same culture, believe to share the same ancestry – real or putatively and participate in the same group activities” (Agyeman, 2005: 5). The arguments put forward show clearly that race is a social construct which is less useful when studying inter-ethnic interactions. Again this is so because, contrary to earlier definition of race as solely in terms of physical characteristics such as skin color, texture, color of hair and other attributes, human population have migrated and intermingled mixing and blending their biological make up. This has resulted in the blurring of precise lines of racial demarcation making systematic classification of race complex.

Crane (1923) observed that, whenever a man chooses to marry a woman outside his place of origin, he incurs the displeasure of his parents. But when he chooses a person of his own tribe, the disappointment is not usually acute once she is hardworking, respectful, and sober and her family has no witchcraft, insanity and leprosy. Crane continued to say that the basis for the

ethnic factor in marriage may be the result of a strong sense of loyalty to parents or attachment to native town, and also differences in customs and language of the parties involved. She further stated that people marry from the same ethnic background to ensure effective and smooth reconciliation in time of conflicts. Crane also cited some ethnic prejudices toward an ethnic group as a factor. For example, some persons consider a Ga-Fante marriage preferable to Asante-Fante marriage. The reason being that, the Gas and Fantes have had a longer association with the Western World than the Asante, and for that reason are compatible to one another than the later tribe. She further stated that the instances of failure of such marriages account for the resistance to inter-ethnic marriage.

Awedoba (2002) also said ethnic consideration in marriage is reinforced when one ethnic group holds negative views about members of other ethnic groups. For example, one ethnic group may describe other groups as having or specializing in negative and undesirable traits such as inclination to steal, to practice witchcraft, to cheat, to be wicked and so on. They may use epithets such as “bush”, “uncivilized” to refer to them. Awedoba noted that most forms of stereotyping are fallacious because no ethnic group or region has the monopoly of virtue and vice. At best stereotyping merely serves as self-justification and self-righteousness. One of the key mechanisms that perpetuate the ethnic family in marriage is stereotyping.

Neuberg in his submission defined stereotypes as beliefs about the characteristics of members of a group (cited in Lord, 1997: 299). Stereotypical assumptions can occur in the thoughts of the individuals or in the “consensus” of an entire society. Franzoi on his part said when people associate extremely

negative traits with other social groupings, these negative labels can form the basis for later prejudicial feelings and discrimination. He defined prejudice as a negative attitude directed toward people simply because they are members of a specific ethnic group (Franzoi, 1996: 386). A person who is prejudiced toward some group tends to ignore the individual qualities of its members and prejudices them based on this negative evaluation. This means prejudice is an attitude which can be described as a predisposition to act in a negative manner toward specific groups.

Farber (1964) argued that ethnically, intermarrying people frequently select as spouses, those whose ethnic background is somewhat similar in cultural values to their own. He said, such marriages would meet with minimal parental opposition. This tendency suggests that ethnicity in marriage is ordinarily preferential rather than prescribed. Farber concluded that children of ethnic inter marriage inter-marry more often than children of parents who married within the ethnic group.

The way forward in overcoming stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination which form part of the elements informing the play of the ethnic card in marriage has met contrasting opinions or school of thought. While some believe that because prejudice and discrimination are based on stereotypical thinking, positive changes can occur if people make conscious effort to think rationally and deductively. The opposing side thinks such effort will be unsuccessful. Anthropologist Fox (1992) believes that stereotyped thinking is an adaptive mental strategy that has allowed humans to survive as species. Fox suggests that due to man's biological make up, we are locked in stereotyped thinking and there is no magic to help us escape this particular

cognitive domain. To him, sensitivity training, consciousness raising and even education cannot change stereotyping from our daily thought process. Contrary to Fox's argument, Devine (1989) thinks that people can circumvent stereotypical thinking if they make conscious efforts to use more rational, inductive strategies. This means that although individuals may have knowledge of a stereotype and may have relied upon it in the past to make social judgment; their current personal beliefs may no longer be in agreement with the stereotype. Hence instead of making judgment based on the stereotype, the person may now consciously decide to rely upon his or her own personal beliefs (Franzoi, 1996).

On the issue of whether interethnic marriage has the ability to neutralize ethnic differences and engender understanding, Awedoba said, inter-ethnic marriages, provided they are frequent in occurrence, provide opportunity for cross-cultural fertilization and socialization. With time they undermine ethnic boundaries both physical and mental in favour of supra-ethnic unity.

Sarpong (1974) argued that, once marriage unite families and not just spouses, in the case of inter-ethnic marriage, the two groups become unified regardless of their ethnic identities, and as a consequence of their interactions positive attitudes are formed. In other words, interethnic marriages become a tool for integrating different ethnic groups. He, however, indicated that cultural differences, difference in ethnic economic systems, language difference, geographical distance to mention but a few could hinder interethnic marriage.

## Summary

Although, different people have come up with different definitions on marriage, there seem to be a consensus that, marriage involves several criteria that are found to exist cross-culturally and throughout time. The criteria have traditionally included heterosexual union, legitimization of approval to the sexual relationship, a public matter rather than private, a highly institutionalized and patterned mating arrangement, an assumption of mutual and reciprocal rights and obligation between spouses and lastly, a binding relationship that assumes permanence.

It is evident that, in reality, one cannot marry just anyone in the society. The probabilities are narrowed by socio-economic class, race, religion, age, and many other factors. The underlying reason for this is that marriage implies that the spouses are social equals, so that status can cause discomfort to the bride, the groom and to the families. Hence, society puts pressure on people to choose a “proper mate” (Dubermin 1974).

Dubermin, (1974) summarizes the theories of mate selection-homogeneity versus heterogamy and endogamy versus exogamy by saying; it is probably true that most people are endogamous in relation to such factors as race, religion, ethnicity, age, education and class. From this pool of people who have attained the marital age probably, most of them select mates because some personality characteristics are similar and others are opposite.

The ethnic factor in marriage, according to Awedoba (2002), is reinforced when one ethnic group holds negative views about members of other ethnic groups. He, however, noted that most forms of stereotyping are fallacious because no ethnic group or region has the monopoly of virtue and

vice and at best stereotyping merely serves as self-justification and self-righteousness. The way in overcoming stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination which forms part of the element informing the play of the ethnic card in marriage has met contrasting opinions. While some suggest that people should make a conscious effort to think rationally and deductively to form positive changes in the attitudes, the opposing side thinks otherwise, since they believe stereotype thinking is an adaptive mental strategy that has allowed humans to survive as species.

Awedoba was, however, emphatic to say that interethnic marriages, provided they are frequent in occurrence, undermine ethnic boundaries, both physical and mental, in favour of supra-ethnic unity. Sarpong (1974) argues that interethnic marriages become a tool for integrating different groups since marriage unite families and not spouses.

On the issue of marriage and social change, Nukunya (2003) observed that the rules and practices of marriage have been affected and innovations of all kinds introduced. He cited education as an important factor causing delay in marriages. Again, the diminishing role of parents in the selection of marriage partner is another factor he noted.

In the literature review, various definitions have been given to marriage. Marriage patterns and practices, some theories of marriage have been discussed. In the researcher's opinion marriage is a universal phenomenon. Migration has had a great toll on marriage due to cross-cultural mechanisms. Though migrants try to maintain some of their cultural practices and patterns in marriage, with time some changes set in through some factors of social change.

Perceptions in marital practices and patterns do not hold much water unless scientific research or studies are conducted. Hence this study, to find out whether there have been changes in the marital patterns of Kwawus in the face of migration.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses how the research was conducted. Issues discussed include the study area, the population, sources of data, sample size, methods of data collection, data analysis, problems in the study field and limitations of the study.

#### **The study area**

Cape Coast is the Capital of the Central Region of Ghana. The Cape Coast Metropolitan Area is bounded on the South by the Gulf of Guinea, West by Komenda/Edina/Eguafo/Abirem District, East by the Abura/Asebu/Kwamankese District and finally on the North by Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. The Metropolitan Area covers a surface area of 122square kilometers. Cape Coast Metropolis is full of batholiths which are interspersed with valleys in the nature of landscape. Most of the streams are located in the valleys, the largest being Kakum.

Cape Coast Metropolis experiences high temperatures throughout the year. The annual rainfall of Cape Coast Metropolis is between 750mm and 100mm. The original dense vegetation of the area has been overtaken by secondary vegetation as a result of bush burning for charcoal production and other human construction activities.

The indigenous people of Cape Coast Metropolitan Area are mostly fishermen. The women are generally fishmongers. They are traditionally accustomed to their annual Fetu Afahye. This usually brings the citizens home and afar together. The establishment of the institutions of higher learning in the Metropolis makes Cape Coast a citadel of formal education in Ghana.

It is worth noting that the mode of migration of the Kwawus to the scarp, and their quest to maintain their identity even during migration has affected their settlement patterns in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area as it exists in Kwawu.

#### The Kwawu Setting

Historically, almost all the available sources of information on the people of Kwawu, both oral and written, point to the fact that the people of present day Kwawu state migrated from different places to the area (Darku 1970; Nkansah-Kyeremateng 1996 & Koranteng 1997).

However, what differ are the areas they migrated from and the dates of migration. The fact is that they were three different kingdoms that came together to form the present day state of Kwawu in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The three kingdoms were Kwaafu (Kowu), Bokuruwa (Akoawu) and Abene (Kodiabe).

According to Koranteng (1997) the earliest settlers of Kwawu were the “Kwaemfoo” with their capital at Nyameani and their ruler was Adamu Yenko. Nkansah Kyeremateng (1996), however states that the name Kwawu was derived from “Kowu”, that means place of death or death zone. Another account states that Kwawu is the corrupted form of “Akoa-awu”.

The two pioneer states of Kwawu were the Kwaemfoo (Kwafoo or Kowu) and Bokuruwa (Akoawu). It is therefore not surprising that the Dutch Map of 1629 mentioned two Kwawu (Quahoe) states with the following descriptions: “Quahoe – rascal people” and “Quahoe rich in gold”. Since the third group Abene (Kodiabɛ) did not appear on the Dutch Map, it could be inferred that they might have migrated into the area after 1700.

Kwawu is located in the Eastern Region of Ghana. It lies between longitudes 1° West and 0° 15’ East and between latitudes 6° 30’ and 7° 15’ North. It has a large area that geographically could be divided into northern Kwawu, beginning from the northern edge of the Kwawu plateau to the Afram plains, the central part consisting of the elevated Kwawu plateau and the southern Kwawu located at the foot of the plateau within the closed forest (Dickson, 1969).

Kwawu is bounded by the following Administrative Districts.

- Sekyere East to the North
- Asante Akyem North and Asante Akyem South to the West
- Afram Plains South to the East
- Birim North, East Akyem and Fanteakwa to the South (Nkansa-Kyeremanteng, 2000).

Under the 1988 Local Government Act (LI: 1428) Kwawu has now been divided into four political and administrative districts. These are:

- Kwawu North with Donkorkrom as Capital
- Kwawu South with Mpraeso as Capital
- Kwawu West with Nkwatia as Capital

- Kwawu East with Abetifi as Capital

The climatic conditions in relation to rainfall, humidity, temperature, sunshine and its effect on vegetation are very moderate. The rainfall pattern in the forest area is heavy. It, however, reduces as it gets to the Volta Region.

In relation to migration and trade, Nkansah Kyeremateng (2000), has stated that “wherever in Ghana, where any form of commercial activity can be undertaken, you are likely to find a Kwawu because of their commercial inclinations. They are the most scattered community in Ghana due to trade” (p. 6).

### **Study population, sample size and sampling procedures**

The population targeted for the study was Kwawu adult migrants living in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area. In view of the relatively small number – about 200 - of the adult population, all of them were targeted for the study. Unfortunately out of the total number, only one hundred and nineteen (119) availed themselves for the study. Some could not make time to be interviewed due to the nature of their work, while others declined to take part in the interview due to a number of reasons which perhaps included lack of interest to participate in the research process, personal reasons with others misconstruing the intension for the research. The sampling procedure was to capture the entire population of the Kwawu community in the Cape Coast Metropolis who had attained the ages of 18 and above. The ages of 18 and above was targeted because they had attained the legal marital age in Ghana. Out of the one hundred and nineteen respondents, sixty seven were males and fifty two were females.

### **Source of data**

The study used both primary and secondary sources of information. The primary sources included data collected from the field. The secondary source included scholarly books devoted to the topic; review research reports and journals, newspapers articles, unpublished materials and other population records related to the problem under study.

### **Method of data collection**

Data for the study was obtained through a general survey, individual in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGD's). These formed the primary data source for the study.

The focus group discussion involved members who were purposively selected based on the respondents knowledge about Kwawu and the years spent in Cape Coast. The first group was made up of nine people, comprising 4 males and 5 females, while the second group comprised of 5 males and 4 females. This gave fair representation to both males and females and the respondents the opportunity to express their personal and candid opinions on the issues. It also allowed the researcher to observe paralinguistic communications such as pitch and loudness of respondents' voice. In other words, the researcher will not only look for what the respondent says, but how they say it.

### **Administration of the questionnaires**

As a way of soliciting information from respondents, literate respondents were given self-administered questionnaire, while those who

could not read and write were interviewed using the questionnaire. There was therefore direct contact with the respondents and this gave the participants, the opportunity to tell us how they felt about the issues in the questions.

### **Structure of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire was divided into three main parts. Part one dealt with information on the background of the respondents, such as their gender, age, marital status, place of origin (home town), religious affiliation, type of marriage, clan and mate selection, clans of the spouses of the married, level of education and employment status.

Part two sought information on how they migrated to Cape Coast, what brought them there, how urbanization has affected or changed their world view socially, economically, culturally, religiously and politically.

Part three explored their family life and organization of their marriages. From the non-married respondents the questionnaire sought to find out whom they would like to marry and when. From the married respondents the questionnaire sought to find out whether their family influenced their marriage and what prompted them to marry a Kwawu or a non-Kwawu. Finally the effects of migration on their marriage patterns were explored. Two main types of questions were used: open-ended and closed-ended questions.

### **Individual in-depth interviews**

There was a face-to-face contact interview. The researcher and his assistants simply read a structural questionnaire to the respondents. Selected individuals such as chiefs and elders were interviewed at length. The

interviews for the chiefs and elders were towards eliciting information about marriage and family organization within the community, choice of marriage partners and the role of the family in the mate selection. Issues involving education, wealth, employment, inheritance, the advantages and disadvantages in endogamy and exogamy were also explored.

### **Focus group discussion**

As stated earlier, two focus group discussions were conducted for the study. The first group was made up of 4 males and 5 females (all married), while the second group had 5 males and 4 females (all singles). The members of the groups were purposively sampled, based on their knowledge on the research topic. This provided insightful information on the issues. Some of the issues discussed during the FGD includes, marriage in the community, mate selection and marriage rites and the role of kinsmen in marriage. Kwawus marrying Kwawus and Kwawus marrying non-Kwawus; the rate of sustainability and stability of marriages among Kwawus was also discussed.

The decision for the Focus Group Discussion was influenced by the nature of the topic. It provided room for open and frank discussion, debate and dialogue among the married men and women. The non-verbal reaction of the group was visibly expressed.

### **Problem of data collection**

Some of the problems encountered during the collection of the data included the inability of some of the assistants to translate the questionnaire into the local language of the respondents. The unwillingness of some

respondents to give consistent answers to some of the questions was also a problem. Some of the assistants' inability to state precisely what the respondents said, not meeting the respondents at the time agreed upon and the difficulty in locating them in some of their places of abode also posed a problem for the data collection.

### **Analysis of data**

The study had generated a lot of qualitative information and therefore descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentage were used. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (S.P.S.S. 18.0) was used to process the data into the needed descriptive statistics and frequencies to facilitate the analysis and the discussion of the data

### **Limitation of the study**

Due to time and financial constraints not all members of the Kwawu community in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area could be interviewed or reached. The respondents also tried not to give any response that would tarnish the reputation of their ethnic group.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, issues addressed involved the research design, data collection, the structure of the questionnaire, individual in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, data analysis, problems encountered during the collection of the data and the limitation of the study.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter dealt with the methodology through which the findings and the results for chapter four were obtained. The identity of the Kwawu has also been dealt with in the previous chapter. The socio-demographic background of the respondents will be discussed in this chapter. These include their sex, age, place of origin, clan of respondents, levels of education and the type of employment in which they operate.

It is worthy to note that the study aimed at the adult population of the Kwawu Community in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area, who have attained 18years and above and are qualified to marry legally in Ghana. One hundred and nineteen people could be covered.

The desire to marry is a normal phenomenon among various people and societies. This therefore prompts people aspiring to marry to consider the people they want to marry, why, where and when they want to marry and how they should marry.

There is therefore no society in the world which prevents its citizens from marrying. Once they permit their members to marry so as to keep their population in place, they also put certain cultural expectations in place so that members could fulfill their part of the marriage contract and keep it going.

Malinowski's (1960) argument that, there is a spontaneous desire for marriage by individuals at a certain point in time because people desire to marry so as to have a life long bound to a particular person is relevant in this context. The impression that mate selection is based on customary pressure towards people within the marital age is also very relevant in this regard. It is based on these expectations that the background of the respondents is very essential in a study such as this.

#### Sex of respondents

As stated above the total number of respondents covered in this study were 119. Of this number, 67 representing 56.3 percent were male and 52 representing 43.7 were female.

#### Age of respondents

Table 2 is the corresponding ages of the respondents. The Ages rank as follows: 20 – 29 years is made up of 38 people representing 32.2%, followed by ages 10 – 19 and 30 – 39 with 28 people each representing 23.7%, ages 40 – 49 follows with 16 people representing 13.6%, 50 – 59 with 5 people representing 4.2%, 60 – 69 with 2 people representing 1.3% and 70 – 79 and 80 – 89 above with 1 person each.

Cumulatively, ages 18-49 covers 92.5% of the respondents. The rest are 7.5%. This is a clear indication that the youth and middle age are the majority.

**Table 2: Age of respondents**

Ages	Frequency	Percent
0 – 9	0	0
10 – 19	28	23.5
20 – 29	38	32.0
30 – 39	28	23.5
40 – 49	16	13.5
50 – 59	5	4.2
60 – 69	2	1.7
70 – 79	1	0.8
80 – 89	1	0.8
90 – 99	0	0
Total	119	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

#### Marital status of respondents

Table 3 represents the marital status of the respondents. The table indicates that 51.3% of the respondents are in active marriage, 0.8% are separated, 2.5% divorced and 1.7% widow/widower. Together with the currently married we have 56.3% who are either married or have married before.

The single respondents represent 43.7%. Whereas some of the singles were contemplating marrying, others were in serious relationship. Most of the married respondents have their spouses coming from Kwawu (see chapter 5-

mate selection). The separated woman stated that her husband had gone for a serious girl friend (concubine) who is coincidentally a citizen of Cape Coast.

According to the widow, she was betrothed to her husband by her father. Her husband was a nephew to her father. She is now being cared for by her children who depend on the property bequeathed to her and the children by the late husband.

Since the general objective of the study is to investigate marriage among migrant Kwawus in the Cape Coast Metropolis, the number of the separated, divorced, and the widow/widower were added to those in active marriage since they had made choices and tasted marriage before. This will raise the number of the married to 67 in the subsequent statistics.

**Table 3: Marital status of respondents**

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Married	61	51.3
Single	52	43.7
Separated	1	0.8
Divorced	3	2.5
Widow/Widower	2	1.7
Total	119	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

#### Respondents place of origin

The corresponding data in Table 4 indicates that Obomeng citizens have the highest percentage among the Kwawus living in the Cape Coast

Metropolis. Their population is 30 representing 25.2%; this is followed by Mpraeso with 22 people representing 18.5%; Obo is third with 13 people representing 10.9%; Nkwatia citizens rate fourth, with 12 people representing 10.1% and Abetifi with 11 people representing 9.2%. Obomeng, Mpraeso, Obo, Nkwatia and Abetifi have a total population covering approximately 74%. All the other Kwawu towns put together cover just 26%.

**Table 4: Place of origin of respondents**

Towns	Frequency	Percent
Obomeng	30	25.2
Mpraeso	22	18.5
Obo	13	10.9
Nkwatia	2	4.2
Abetifi	11	9.2
Aduamoah	5	4.2
Asakraka	5	4.2
Pepease	4	3.2
Abene	3	2.5
Atibie	3	2.5
Bepong	2	1.7
Muramura	2	1.7
Nkawkaw	2	1.7
Tafo	2	1.7
Tweneduruasa	2	10.1
Donkorkrom	1	0.8
Total	119	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

## Religious affiliation of respondents

As stated by Professor Mbiti, “the African is notoriously religious.” They give prominence to religion in their lives. Table 5 reveals that Orthodox Christians represent 57.0% with 68 people, while 46 people representing 39.0% belong to the Charismatic/Pentecostal churches. Only 5 people representing 4.0% said that they are traditionalists in relation to their religious life. They are African Traditional religionists. It is interesting to note that none of the respondents is an Eastern Religion practitioner like Bahai, Harri Krishina. None of them is also a Moslem.

**Table 5: Respondents religious affiliation**

Religious denomination	Frequency	Percent
Orthodox	68	57.0
Charismatic/Pentecostal	46	39.0
African Traditionalist Religion	5	4.0
Total	119	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

The Orthodox Christian Churches include Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican and Presbyterian. The Charismatic/Pentecostal churches include: Church of Pentecost, Apostolic Church of Ghana, Christ Apostolic Church, Assemblies of God, International Central Gospel Church to mention but a few.

## Types of marriage of respondents

Kom (1999) states that, laws governing marriage distinguish between two acts. These are constitutive acts and declaratory acts. In Ghana no

marriage can be recognized without the constitutive acts. This is mainly the customary way in which marriage rites are performed. In Ghana the presentation and acceptance of the “head rum” Trinsa in Akan, Taha in Ewe and Yini in Ga prove that the marriage is valid. Among the Kwawus and the Akans of Ghana in general, it is the presentation and acceptance of the “head rum” Trinsa, by a woman’s family that constitutes a valid marriage. The declaratory rites are those performances which publicize already existing marriage in the courts of law or in the churches and in the mosques. No marriage is recognised among the Kwawus in particular and Ghanaians in general without performing the customary rites.

Though Christians dominate the respondents, most of them prefer the traditional customary marriage as illustrated in Table 6. Of all the respondents 64.0% favoured customary marriage; 27.0% opted for Christian wedding/blessing whilst 9.0% favoured marriage under ordinance.

**Table 6: Types of marriage of respondents**

Types of marriage	Frequency	Percent
Customary	43	64.0
Christian (Blessing/Wedding)	18	27.0
Ordinance (Law/Wedding)	6	9.0
Total	67	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

### **Clan and mate selection of respondents**

Amoo Darku (2005) has indicated that the Akans put high premium on their customs and traditions and also uphold them to the letter. Kwawus have consistently maintained the adage that people from the same clan have some sanguine (blood) relations and should therefore not be in marital relationship. This they have maintained wherever they may be.

The clans of the respondents are shown in Table 7. They are Aduana 25.0%, Asona 23.5%, Bretuo 18.5%, Agona 11.0%, Ekuona and Oyoko with 6.0% each, Asakyire and Asene with 5.0% respectively.

**Table 7: Clan of respondents**

Clans	Frequency	Percent
Aduana	30	25.0
Asona	28	23.5
Bretuo	22	18.5
Agona	13	11.0
Ekuona	7	6.0
Oyoko	7	6.0
Asene	6	5.0
Asakyire	6	5.0
Total	119	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

According to the respondents in the Focus Group Discussions, the Kwawus, historically migrated from Asante, Denkyira and Akyem to their present habitat on the Kwawu scarp of the Eastern Region of Ghana. They



stated further that they migrated along family and clan lines. It is the same pattern of migration that has influenced their clan and family habitation in the Cape Coast Metropolis. This communal living has also affected their pattern of mate selection in relation to their clans.

Their movement to the metropolis could be well understood by the definition given by Agyeman (1993:50-51) “migration is the geographical mobility of an individual or a group of individuals from one locality to the other with the aim of residing in a new location”. According to the Focus Group again, the essence of migration is to improve upon one’s livelihood. To make their intentions complete, they think of raising families through the culturally accepted mode of mate selection and marriage. This is where they raise their level of consciousness in order not to marry from the same clan, they emphasized.

#### **Clan of spouses of the married**

The consciousness of people in their choice of spouses did cut across the length and breathe of all the clans. It is inter rather than intra among spouses, due to their cultural beliefs of common blood relations among people belonging to the same clan.

Among the 67 married respondents as illustrated in Table 8, 22% had married into the Bretuo clan, 21% into the Asona clan; the Ekuona and Oyoko with 12% respectively, Asene and Aduana with 10%, Agona had 9% and the Asakyire had 3%.

**Table 8: Clan of spouses of the married**

Clans	Frequency	Percent
Bretuo	15	22.4
Asona	14	21.0
Ekuona	8	12.0
Oyoko	8	12.0
Agona	6	9.0
Aduana	7	10.4
Asene	7	10.4
Asakyire	2	3.0
Total	67	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

### **Level of education of respondents**

Most of the first migrants of Kwawu to the Cape Coast Metropolis had had some formal education according the Focus Group.

As shown in Table 9, only four (0.9%) have no formal education. Five percent have primary education; 26.0% have Junior High School/Middle School education; 19.0% have Senior High School education, whilst 49.1% have tertiary level education.

**Table 9: Level of education of respondents**

Education	Frequency	Percent
No Education	4	0.9
Primary	6	5.2
Middle/Junior High School	30	25.9
Senior High School	22	19.0
Tertiary	57	49.1
Total	119	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

### **Employment of respondents**

Table 10 is the employment profile of respondents. Six of the respondents (5%) are unemployed. Students numbered 46 (38.7%) out of which three are pensioners and another three are graduates. Forty three (36.1%) are people engaged in all forms of trading including merchandise, electrical appliances, car spare parts, cloth and clothen and petroleum products. Four (3.4%) are artisans; nineteen (16%) are civil and public servants. The public/civil servants are people who have attained higher academic laurels and occupy jobs of higher recognition in the metropolis. There is only one person who is a footballer.

**Table 10: Employment of respondents**

Employment	Frequency	Percent
Not Working	6	5.0
Trader (businessman)	43	36.1
Artisan	4	3.4
Civil public servant	19	16.0
Students	46	38.7
Others (footballer)	1	0.8
Total	119	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

### **Summary**

The chapter has covered the socio-demographic background of the respondents. Issues discussed include gender and marriage, places of origin of the respondents, religious affiliation of the respondents, the types of marriage they prefer, ages of the respondents, clan of the respondents, clan of spouses of the married, level of education and type of employment of the respondents.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MATE SELECTION AMONG THE KWAWU

#### **Introduction**

Mate selection in almost all cultures is not simply a matter of preference or choice despite various increases in freedom of opportunities, privileges and prestige through education and employment. Although modern societies engineer or allow young people to have the right to select anyone they please, yet there are many factors that are well beyond the control of individuals that severely limit the eligibility of persons from whom they can choose.

It would be recalled that in the literature review a number of researches suggested that all societies have systems of norms and sometimes specific rules about who qualifies to marry whom. However, as a result of migration, urbanization and social change some of these norms and values involving mate selection have been changed or modified. Others keep on passing through the process of modernization therefore making culture more dynamic among some societies.

However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where scientific and technological advancement are taking place in almost all societies, certain or some societies continue to practice arranged marriages, cross cousins marriages, force marriages and marriage by imposition.

Finally, in principle, in almost all societies individuals have or may have the right to choose partners for life. It is also factual to see that, in most cultures, family or parental approval or endorsement cannot be overlooked. These and other issues are going to be discussed in this chapter.

### **Ethnicity and mate selection**

One of the variables which determine whether couples will get married and stay together as husband and wife is ethnicity. Tables 11, 12 and 13 will be used to analyse the relationship between ethnicity and mate selection of the Kwawu. Secondly, the reasons for choosing from Kwawu would also be discussed.

Out of a total of 67 married respondents, 90.3% were married to Akans while 9.7% were married to non-Akans. Kwawus in Cape Coast Metropolis prefer marrying Akans and specifically Kwawus more than any other ethnic group.

**Table 11: Ethnic affiliation of respondents spouses**

Ethnic Affiliation of Spouses	Frequency	Percent
Akans	61	90.3
Non-Akans	6	9.7
Total	67	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

The data in Table 12 below reveal that 62.7% of the married respondents married people from Kwawu. The respondents married to non-Kwawu are 37.3%.

**Table 12: Place of origin of respondents spouses**

Place of origin	Frequency	Percent
Kwawu	42	62.7
Non Kwawu	25	37.3
Total	67	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

Linking Table 11 and 12 together it would be realised that only 6 people out of the 67 spouses were non – Akans. This presupposes that out of the 25 people in Table 11, 19 were Akans but not specifically from Kwawu. This is indicative of the assumption that Kwawus prefer getting married more to Kwawus and other Akans than non-Akans.

Through the Focus Group Discussion, it was revealed that factors that influence such marriages include cultural similarities, same language spoken, similar belief systems, mode of inheritance, nearness to places of origin, mode of acquisition of wealth and protection of personal property.

Other factors that cut across their responses in relation to ethnicity and mate selection was an in built prejudice and stereotyping against some specific non-Akan tribes in Ghana, and how they held their fellow Kwawus in high esteem.

### **Respondents criteria for mate selection**

The factors that led the Kwawus to the scarp have profound effects on the standard for mate selection as the following information illustrates.

According to some of the respondents, historically the migration of Kwawus to the scarp was necessitated by wars and the search for a safe place

to find peace, protection, security and comfort. They were from three major kingdoms: Asante, Akyem and Denkyira. After involving themselves in different battles with the three great Akan ethnic groups namely Asante, Akyem and Denkyira Kingdoms, they decided to flee to find a safe haven. They therefore formed a confederacy and decided to live together and do everything together as one people and use marriage as a means of procreation, survival, stability and unity among themselves.

According to Opayin Ansong an octogenarian, the Kwawu saw that it was through intra-marriages that their bond of friendship, and safety and survival could be guaranteed and maintained. They therefore decided to marry from different clans and finally from different towns in Kwawu. He further stated that daughters were given to their fathers nephews to marry (cross cousin marriage) so as to protect the property acquired by their fathers and uncles. This was to keep and protect the family property to be used by present and future generations.

Furthermore, Opayin Ansong emphasised that for peace, comfort, survival and security it is always better to marry from Kwawu. He gave two proverbs to substantiate the reason why Kwawus like marrying Kwawus:

“Sε wo kurom pete di wo nam a ebi ka.” This literary means” if the vulture from your hometown eats your flesh (carcass) at least there will be some left – over”. The vulture is a bird that hibernates at filthy places (specifically at incenary, devouring carcasses). To the Kwawus no matter how a Kwawus devours you in marriage through marital risks and challenges your bones will never be ruined. Your safety will be considered by a fellow Kwawu in marriage.



“Se efiefo nnyaa bi nniie, yenka se abantenesofo mmefa nkɔ di”. Literary put “unless the members of the household are satisfied, we do not ask the stranger to go and eat it”. To the Kwawus in mate selection, the citizenry should always be given the first option. Secondly, since they are matrilineal in succession, they would not like to dissipate their accrued wealth to foreigners hence, the practice of cross cousin marriages and endogamy.

Opayin Ansong opined that the Kwawus are not tribalistic. However, to them mate selection should be treated cautiously. The Kwawus think that it is always better to marry the devil you know than the angel you do not know.

Opayin Ansong further stated that love, beauty, good character, respect and being resourceful were also some of the imprints that influence mate selection.

The reasons given by the respondents confirm the reasons given by Opayin Ansong in relation to mate selection by the Kwawus. 51% the ethnic factor, 27% resourcefulness and 22% love and beauty as their reasons for mate selection, as illustrated in Table 13.

**Table 13: Respondents reasons in mate selection**

Reasons in mate selection	Frequency	Percent
Ethnic Factor	14	51.0
Resourcefulness	18	27.0
Love/Beauty	15	22.0
Total	67	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

The respondents stated that parental insistence and family intervention was also paramount in mate selection. Being responsible as a man in relation to domestic issues was also one of the qualities looked for in mate selection.

**Reasons for ethnic and other considerations in mate selection**

The reason given by the men for intra ethnic marriages were numerous. They considered primarily their old age. That is during their retirement or pension; they would like to move to Kwawu with their wives and children to care for them. They emphasised that if they marry non-Kwawu women, they would be neglected by their relations. Besides they would like to be buried at Kwawu (hardly are Kwawus buried outside their hometown). They therefore put up houses there so that they can stay there and rest there with their wives and children and grandchildren in their old age.

In Table 14, the responses from the respondents rated ethnic consideration very high with 63% followed by character and conduct with 25% and exogamous factors with 12%.

**Table 14: Reasons for ethnic and other considerations in mate selection**

Reasons for Ethnic Consideration	Frequency	Percent
Ethnic Factors	42	63.0
Character/Conduct	17	25.0
Exogamous Factors	8	12.0
Total	67	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

Some of the men however, stated further under confidentiality that sometimes they slip to take concubines, because some of their wives spend too much time on their businesses and do not attend to domestic issues promptly and properly. Other factors that entice and influence the men to non-Kwawu women include how some of the Kwawu women keep the home, their performance in sexual mating and sometimes how they dress up.

Some of the women, who marry their father's nephews (cross cousin marriage), stated that they sometimes find it very difficult to accept their husbands as their fathers after the demise of their biological fathers. They further pointed out that due to the matrilineal nature of inheritance of the Kwawus, nephews usually inherit their uncles. The status of most husbands therefore change after the death of their uncles. Most husbands become fathers to their wives when they inherit their uncles after their death. This therefore changes their status overnight and gives them much control over the women.

### **Role of family in marriage among Kwawus**

From the literature review it was realised that the family is the main agency of cultural transmission and basic unit of social organization (Assimeng 1981). Giddens, Dunier and Appelbaum (2005: 446) define a family as “a group of persons directly linked by kin connections, and the adult members of which assume responsibility for caring for children”. They further stated that there are two types of families, namely the nuclear family and the extended family. However, as far as an individual experience is concerned, families can be divided into family of procreation and the family of orientation

in the upbringing of a person. Families have an upper stake in the marriage affairs of their members and other aspects of their lives.

Marriage, being a socially acknowledged and approved sexual union between two adults (male and female), is of much importance to the families of Kwawus. This is because when two people marry, they become kin to one another. The marriage bond also connects together a wider range of kin people including parents, brothers, sisters and other blood relatives of the partners through marriage (Giddens et al 2005).

Since Kwawus consider marriage not as an individual but a collective responsibility, families keep a close eye on marriages from the selection process, to the consummation and the entire life of the marriage.

Table 15 shows that of the 67 married, 50 (74.4%) had the blessing of their families and 17 (25.6%) did not have that blessing.

**Table 15: Reaction of family toward choice of mates**

Family reaction	Frequency	Percent
Acceptance	50	74.4
Indifferent	17	25.6
Total	67	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

According to the respondents the family accepted their choices because they were part of the selection process. Secondly, they had similar cultural values and norms, system of inheritance and were from Kwawu.

Marriage is one of the mechanisms through which families assist adult personalities and are kept healthy. The family therefore shows much concern

when her members get into the age of mate selection so that they get the best out of it.

One woman stated that her family was really discouraged and opposed to her marriage to a non- Kwawu. However, when the family detected later that the man was very resourceful, able to take very good care of her, some of her relatives and also respected members of her family, the family gave their blessings to the marriage.

The focus group stated that families object to choices, when their members neglect them and show gross disrespect when selecting mates for marriage. A lady respondent buttressed the fact that she was ostracised by her family for defying their choice.

According to another female respondent who is married to an Akyem she met on the campus of the University of Cape Coast she has been totally neglected and rejected by her wards. Though they attend the same church, because the lady gave in to the young man, the parents, who brought her up in Cape Coast, absented themselves from the wedding ceremony which was held in Cape Coast.

As a confirmation to Cranes' (1923) observation in the literature review, a prominent Kwawu man said, to date, he has incurred the displeasure of his parents and most of his family members for not marrying a woman from Kwawu. The respondent's family's reaction was not devoid of the stereotyping and prejudice observed by Franzoi (1996). The respondent stated that, his parents had associated the women of Cape Coast with laziness and always wanted to enjoy the fortunes of others. This inbuilt prejudice and stereotyping incurred their displeasure.

### **Category of people Kwawus are encouraged to marry**

Among the married population of 67, 79.1% stated that they are encouraged to marry Akans. However, 20.9% stated that though they are encouraged to marry Akans, preferably Kwawus, they prefer marrying anybody that comes their way. Asked whom they would like to marry if there were no interference, 39.0% opted for Kwawus. The preference for to non-Kwawus was 31.0% and 30% opted for both.

Whereas the youth within the marriage bracket called for eliminating tribal considerations arguing that Ghanaians are one people with a common destiny, the aged insisted on the tribal consideration in marriage.

Interestingly, both the youth and the adults agreed that they will never encourage any of their children or ward to marry a person whose language they could not speak or understand.

### **Migration and marriage**

As people or families migrate, they pick up new attitudes and begin to approach things differently. However, they do not throw away totally their norms and values. There is always continuity and change in relation to their way of life. The transition generally alters relationships among nations, institutions and individuals (Grugler & Flanagan, 1978).

Goodenough (1970) conducted a survey on relation to family change in Africa and noted that children of migrants were becoming independent of their parents. He also observed a growing freedom of choice based on the new economic independence afforded by wage labour. The data from the field seem not to support this observation in relation to the Kwawu. Almost 91% of

parents stated that even while in Cape Coast they would like their children to marry Kwawus in Cape Coast and that their reasons are that:

- Family life in Ghana is now in danger; therefore they would not allow their children to marry anyhow and from anywhere. They therefore prefer a type of marriage where the couples have a lot of things in common.
- Since marriage is a sacred institution, they would like to avoid any form of disgrace which could cast a snare on the family. They therefore prefer people, whom they can counsel and prepare very well for marriage. For the sake of mode of acquisition of wealth, its protection and mode of inheritance as well as their mode of widowhood rite, they prefer their children to marry from Kwawu.
- The Kwawus understand themselves better when they marry each other than when they marry people from other areas. Therefore since they always look out for successful and prosperous marriages, they prefer their wards marrying fellow Kwawus.

Only 8.9% stated that they would give their children the right to marry non- Kwawu if they decided to do so. They gave the following reasons to support their claim.

- Their children can marry from anywhere they choose because they have their personal preferences and taste.
- Marriage should not be imposed on people, though they should be guided.
- Ghana is one nation, one people with a common destiny. There is therefore no need for people to discriminate in marriage.

- Marriage is all about responsibility and nothing else.

Flanagan (1977) cited in Gugler and Flanagan (1978), conducted a research in Tanzania which has some similarity to the Kwawu migrants in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area. Majority of the migrants were brought to the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area by members of their extended family.

Since almost every migrant has benefited from their extended families in terms of their accommodation, formal education, acquisition of jobs and other financial assistance, they preferred their wards marrying from within so that they can reciprocate what they have obtained from home. With the people coming to Kwawu they will all see the need to assist their relations at home and even bring some to the city.

### **The views of single Kwawus towards mate selection**

Most of the single respondents of Kwawus in the Cape Coast Metropolitan area are within the youth bracket (ages 18-33) (see Table 2). Most of them were born and bred in the Cape Coast Metropolis. They had their basic and some even had their tertiary education there. Others had their tertiary education outside the Cape Coast Metropolis. They usually go to Kwawu during Easter. Some of them also attend funerals with their parents and guardians or on their own volition. They are the cream of the people who have really experienced urban life. The issue is whether these singles also exhibit the same characteristics as their parents and guardians.

To find out this, the singles were asked whether they were in a relationship or not. If they were, then, with which people? Tables 16 and 17 provide us with some information that will help the discussion. The total of



single respondents in Table 13 was 52. Out of this, 88.5% stated that they were in a form of relationship, only 11.5% said they were not in a relationship as illustrated in Table 16. All of them however were interested in marrying in future.

**Table 16: Singles in relationship**

Singles in relationship	Frequency	Percent
Yes	46	88.5
No	6	11.5
Total	52	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

The 11.5% who were not in a relationship gave the following reasons for their abstinence:

- One said she did not want to break her virginity.
- Three stated that for religious reasons they thought it was not right and necessary to give room to any form of promiscuity
- Two of them said they were not ready for marriage and wanted to prepare adequately before getting into a relationship.

In an answer to a question as to whom they would like to marry, 79% opted for Kwawus and 21% opted for non-Kwawus as could be found in Table 17.

**Table 17: Singles marital preference**

Singles marital preference	Frequency	Percent
Kwawus	41	79.0
Non- Kwawus	11	21.0
Total	52	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

The 79% of the respondents gave the following characteristics or qualities for their choices: (i) character (ii) love (iii) beauty. Aside these, the respondents gave the following preferences:

- People with very good employment and good sources of income,
- Well educated people with initiative and drive, and
- People, who have a prosperous future and are Kwawus.

On their part, the 21% who opted for the non-Kwawus also said marriage should not be based on ethnicity. They went further to state that anyone who possesses the qualities to provide the better future one aspires to have in marriage and see to its fulfilment is eligible to be married to.

### **Rank order of factors affecting mate selection**

Table 18 shows the factors that affect mate selection in rank order. Character came first with 28.8%, followed by ethnicity with 23.1%, education came third with 17.3%, employment followed with 13.5%; religious affiliation came fifth with 9.6%; wealth came sixth with 3.8% and finally physical features with 1.9%.

**Table 18: Rank order of factors affecting mate selection**

Ranking factors	Frequency	Percent	Ranking
Character	15	28.8	1 <sup>st</sup>
Ethnicity	13	23.1	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Level of Education	9	17.3	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Employment	7	13.5	4 <sup>th</sup>
Religious Affiliation	5	9.6	5 <sup>th</sup>
Level of Wealth	2	3.8	6 <sup>th</sup>
Physical Features	1	1.9	7 <sup>th</sup>
Total	52	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

To a question as to whether Kwawus marry under pressure, 33% responded in the affirmative, while 67% responded in the negative. Those who gave their response in the affirmative provided the following reasons:

- Their parents insisted that they should marry only Kwawus supporting it with the historical records of their migration to the scarp.
- They have to marry Kwawus otherwise they would lose family ties.
- For the accrued wealth and property to be maintained at Kwawu for the children and family through inheritance, parents vehemently supported intra marriages.
- Parents advised their wards to marry only from Kwawu based on the proverb “wo kurom pete di wo nam a ebika” In other words, if the vulture from your hometown eats your flesh (carcase) there will be left-over.

- Ethnic marriages enhance solidarity among members. They want to have only their kind so as to live in unity up there and wherever they find themselves.

Those who stated that they were not under any obligation to marry only Kwawus argued as follows:

- Due to globalisation they can select a mate from any part of the world. To them the world is now a global village where each person needs the other irrespective of colour, race, creed or any other form of distinction.
- With their educational level which has given them very good employment they have every right to make their own choice to suit their taste and expectation
- Mate selection should be based on love and understanding. Under no circumstances should parents oblige their wards to marry specific people or personalities.

### **Family influence in mate selection of single respondents**

Both the extended and nuclear families have a very important role to play in the lives of their members. However, according to Giddens et al (2005: 452), certain changes occurring worldwide in the family are as follows:

- Clans and other kin groups are declining in their influence.
- There is a general trend towards the free choice of a spouse.
- The rights of women are becoming more widely recognised in respect to both the initiation of marriage and decision making with the family.

- Kin marriages are becoming less common.
- Higher levels of sexual freedom are developing in societies that were restrictive.
- There is a general trend toward the extension of children's rights which is affecting parental control and influence.

Despite the above observations, only about one third of the respondents in this study said their families did not have much influence on their mate selection. In all 67.3% of the respondents agreed that their families have influence on their mate selection.

The latter insist on/support intra-ethnic marriage because:

- Kwawus are the best marriageable people.
- Parents through their experience and understanding always insist on their choice for their wards.
- Should they break the status quo or be disobedient to their families, their families would disown them.
- They want to protect the image of the families contracting the marriages and maintain of the efficacy of their culture.

On the other hand those who support inter-ethnic marriage, argue that:

- They are not under any obligation to marry only Kwawus. They could have sexual relations outside their social group, therefore they could marry from anywhere (outside Kwawu) without any family interference.
- Education being an element of social change gives them the right to break new grounds to avoid family influence in mate selection.

### **Single respondents' preferences**

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the respondents said it was better for them to marry Kwawus so that the family could investigate the other partner very well for a better marriage. They prefer to marry Kwawus because issues such as challenges in marriage and misunderstandings could be discussed and settled amicably among spouses or mates. Finally, they said that for the sake of the mode of inheritance, as stated in PNDC Law 111, the maintenance of family property, wealth and the sustenance survival and preservation of the family lineage, they prefer marrying fellow Kwawus than any other person.

In another development, 17% wanted to marry other Akans, while 58% opted to marry from anywhere or any part of the country (Ghana) or of the world.

**Table 19: Singles respondents' preference in mate selection**

Singles in preference in mate selection	Frequency	Percent
Tribe (Kwawus)	13	25
Ethnic (Akan)	9	17
Anywhere	30	58
Total	52	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

Fifty-eight percent singles opted to marry from anywhere. This is a clear indication that whereas the married preferred endogamous type of marriage, most of singles preferred exogamy. The era when the family use to provide all the needs of its members are over. People have to acquire knowledge through education, acquire skills, seek for jobs and sell their talents

for money. This gives people some independence in their choices. Education makes them liberal in their thinking and affects their choices. This influences them to choose people whom they can spend their life with and not necessarily members from their ethnic group, they lamented.

As stated above, whereas the marriage preferred endogamous system of marriage, the single respondent prefers endogamy. Some of the factors which have influenced this decision are going to be examined and in the next chapter under the topic Marriage and Social Change.

### **Summary**

This chapter has discussed issues concerning mate selection among the Kwawus in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Some of the factors that influence mate selection were discussed. It was observed that, mate selection among Kwawus which is generally influenced by the family has a historical basis. The chapter has examined the extent of the influence of the family of orientation over the choice of life partners among Kwawu citizens in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **MARRIAGE AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

#### **Introduction**

In almost all societies, change is always assessed by relating the nature of the contemporary society to what transpired some years ago. These include alterations in the patterns of culture, structure and social behaviour overtime. The totality of significant changes in society therefore constitute what we call social change (Vander Zanden, 1990).

In another sense, social change concerns all the alterations in human societies. It is a neutral concept which can be positive or negative, forward or backward in movement, unidirectional or multidirectional in movement. Social change by itself is silent in nature whether the variations constitute progress or development, whether it is good or bad (Agyeman, 1992). Giddens, Dunier and Appelbaum (2005) have stated that the factors in social change may be summarized under three main headings: namely Economic, Political and Cultural.

In discussing the alterations in systems and institutions that affect one another and therefore shaped societies, Nukunya (2003) has stated that,

“society is made up of constituents’ parts and institution which work together in such a way to build the society into a system.

The constituent parts such as political, legal, economic and religious systems have their forms and functions. Any



significant alterations in others and eventually in the whole of society” (p 3).

The family and marriage being a social institution according to Addai-Sundiata (1995) has gone and is going through a lot of changes due to industrialization and urbanization because of the alterations in the institutions that form the social system. The family and marriage is thus one important institution that is no exception to such changes either triggered by changes within other components part of society or forces within it. Skolnick and Skolnick (1999) in their classic study, “Family in Transition”, clearly illustrated the dramatic changes in the family life over the centuries. In fact one of the salient characteristics of the family is its ability to adapt to changing times and new changes.

Marriage is a cherished practice among the Kwawus in Ghana. In the past, according to some of the elders of Kwawu, all Kwawus were encouraged by the group norms and values to marry only their kinsmen and women. “In fact it was a serious taboo for a Kwawu man or woman to marry outside their ethnic group”, according to Opanyin Ansong. It is believed that those who violated these endogamous principles suffered both physically and spiritually. Such persons are molested by their spouses emotionally and physically. Again, one of their laws was that those who married non-Kwawus have denied their kinsmen and lineage. Arranged marriages, betrothal and cross cousin marriage was therefore encouraged by parents and families.

However, evidence from the study indicates a great change from this position. For example, a spectacular result from the previous chapter indicates

that 75% of the singles opted to marry non-Kwawus as against the insistence of the married whose major preference was to marry only Kwawus.

The singles further stated that their attitude towards marrying non-Kwawus have been motivated by their experiences in the urban centre like Cape Coast. This experience have shown that, the success or failure of marriages have very little to do with the ethnic background of the couples. They hinted that it has much more to do with character of the couples. Therefore marrying a Kwawu is although preferred by their parents they are “looking at the bigger picture” that is beyond the ethnic profile of the partner.

Nukunya (2005) has emphasized that the major factors of social change in Ghana are colonialism, money using economy and formal classroom education. These factors influence people to move from the rural areas into the large towns/cities and employment centers. These factors also increase individual human power, decision making power, prestige and privileges. As a result individuality prevails in urban centres more than collectivity or communality.

Through formal education, acquisition of jobs and the challenges of the urban ways of life people have become more conscious of their preferences and insist on them. Though independent through personal achievements, most people are not completely alienated from their roots or their families. Though they are modernized through urbanization, some of their traditional practices are not completely eradicated. They continue to persist and influence their world view and life style.

From the above discussions, there is an indication that the people have had some exposure or experience which has influenced the changes in their

attitudes towards mate selection, which has therefore informed their decision. It is against this background that the findings of the respondents will be discussed under specific headings.

**Factors influencing mate selection**

Seven thematic factors that influence mate selection that are considered among the Kwawus are presented on the rankings as it appears in Table 20.

**Table 20: Factors influencing mate selection**

Factors Rankings	Frequency	Percent
Character of the person	23	34.3
Ethnic background	19	28.4
Educational background	11	16.4
Employment status	7	10.4
Religious Affiliation	4	6.0
Physical looks/attraction	2	3.0
Wealth of the person	1	1.5
Total	67	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

From Table 20, respondents generally gave the character of a person as the most prominent factor to be considered in mate selection. This is because 34.3% of the respondents said, character should be one of the most important factors an individual should look out for in a potential mate. This is followed by ethnicity representing 28.4%, educational background representing 16.4%

and the employment status of the person representing 10.4%. Other factors were religious affiliation representing 6.0%, physical looks or attraction representing 3.0% and the least was that of the wealth a person possesses representing 1.5%.

Hitherto ethnicity would have taken the first position, however, due to the changes that have taken place in relation to their experience in Cape Coast and other factors like education, wealth and employment much emphasis have been shifted to character in mate selection.

### **Effects of education, wealth and employment on mate selection**

In dealing with the specific issues such as formal education, wealth and employment status as agents of social change and their effects on mate selection some interesting results emerged. The responses from the respondents were as follows:

#### **Effects of education on mate selection**

On the influence of education in mate selection, 90% responded in the positive. Much emphasis was laid on the need for a certain level of formal education in the person one chooses to marry. The respondents preferred marrying people who can lead them to higher levels in their lives. They preferred people who would be able to help them unearth their talents and improve upon their lives through formal education. There is therefore the need “to select somebody who will or can help you to achieve the best for yourself and the children to be raised in marriage,” they emphasized.

The respondents associated good formal education with:

- Good family management
- The ability to give maximum support to their partners in their trading activities, through their knowledge in numeracy and reading.
- Encouraging and supporting their children to be well educated
- Sustainability, stability and survival of their marriage, since there is mutual understanding, respect and a common sense of purpose amongst them.
- Making people focus on what they do, what they want to achieve, and liberates them from superstition.

However, 10% of the respondents did not consider education as an attribute that influences mate selection. They were of the view that educated people were cheats and extremely legalistic. They, therefore, prefer marrying their fellow illiterates to literates. They further stated that, they do not want to be disturbed by educated people through the use of English language and some of their gestures. They also stated that the educated always considered the illiterates as not being very intelligent.

From the above discussions the effects of education on mate selection are as follows:

- Some of the respondents indicated that formal education liberate people from ignorance and changes their perception. Education thus prompts people to question the customs and traditions of society and entertain alternative ways in doing things.
- They also argued that formal education equips one with the requisite skills and knowledge that will make him/her functional in a globalized competitive world. They stressed that the type of job and earnings a

person will get depends largely on a person's formal educational level. They concluded that in a monetized economy or world one would definitely have to be engaged in a work that can generate more money to meet daily expenditures hence formal education should be seen as necessary in mate selection since it is the main tool to a good and high paying job.

### **Effects of wealth in mate selection**

To start with, 78% of the respondents stated that, the financial status of a person affects their choice in mate selection greatly. However, 22% said it was not necessary.

To some of the respondents, finance and wealth are the substances that control one's life. Their total life revolves around these two factors. In mate selection, these two factors cannot be overlooked. Previously, according to the focus group, wealth and the financial position of a person was not very necessary as it is today. Because the family support has reduced drastically in terms of economic values, couples tend to look for partners who can really help them financially.

A person's financial stand and wealth makes him/her self dependent, self sustaining and autonomous. Marrying a person who is financially sound can help the person take decisions on his/her own without any external interference. Family interference reduces. Wealth also commands a certain degree of respect for individuals. It determines the status of an individual. Mate selection is therefore not tied solely to family prescriptions and

decisions. An individual preference is also respected. This is one of the major changes.

On the issue of wealth again, 67% of the respondents said, it is a necessary factor that influences mate selection. To the Kwawus, wealth is measured in monetary terms. This can be calibrated in the form of possessions and occupations like trade – stores, buildings, farms, firms/industries and cars, to mention only a few. Should there be any problem or unfortunate situation, the wealth of a person can act as a form of security, they said.

Those who said money should not be the prime factor in marriage formed only 22% of the respondents as stated above. They stated that it should rather be built on love, understanding and good character. Traditionally, it is the responsibility of the man to provide for the woman and children they emphasized.

On the other hand, 33% of the respondents did not consider wealth as a very important factor in mate selection. They argued that it is the two mates who can and should create wealth. It should not be one person's responsibility. Most of the men thought that they should acquire wealth and out of that take care of their wives and children and their extended family. Some also argued that with very good formal education, love, understanding, good character and proper management, a person can raise and accumulate wealth. They made it emphatic that people should not consider the wealth before taking a mate/partner.

### **Employment status and mate selection**

Ninety-eight percent (98%) of the respondents which was made up of 66 people out of the 67 married couples, considered one's status and type of employment as a factor that affects mate selection. They also said that marriage is a phenomenon that demands greater responsibility. It is meant for diligent people. Occupational status therefore serves as a pivot in managing marital issues. The respondents emphasized that marrying a person without a job will put much pressure on the one with a source of employment. "Everyone under your roof will depend on you. Consequently, it is always better to know the profession of the suitor/or person before you finally give in. Such a person will be highly supportive in an urban setting, since food, utilities, transportation, accommodation, education and other social services need to be paid for", they said.

Only one person said employment should not influence the choice of marriage partner. His view was that, allowing your wife to work would expose her to sexual harassment and extra marital relations. It will also prove that the man is irresponsible. Thus, it is only a man who cannot take care of his wife and children who will consider a woman's job before marrying her, he stated.

### **Urbanization and marriage**

According to Burgess (1986) urbanization, greater mobilization, industrialization, increased socialization and the emancipation of women had transformed the family from an institution based on law and custom to one based on companionship and love. The transformation of the family has had



much effect on mate selection. This is what is going to be discussed under urbanization and marriage.

Information gathered from the field indicated that 97% of the respondents believe that urbanization has really changed their views or perception towards marriage. Some of the views expressed by respondents on the influence of urbanization on mate selection are presented below:

First of all, they stated that instead of the traditional way in which the man was supposed to provide for the home entirely (bread winner), in the urban areas both men and women contribute to the upkeep of the home. This is a change from the traditional requirement for a man to be the sole bread winner of the home.

Life in the city is extremely different from the rural area. It is more of individualism than communal or interdependent living. Individual rights and persistent expression of opinions is more prevalent, they emphasized.

According to the respondents, though there are a lot of eligible women/men to choose from, there is the need to be very cautious. This is because, it is always in the interest of a person eligible for marriage to consider the issue of inheritance (next of kin), somebody with whom one can speak a common language with a common cultural practice, a common sense of purpose and understanding and at least the preference of the family. Exogamy was in this case considered as more problematic than endogamy even in the urban setting, according to the respondents.

Some of the female respondents who are married to Kwawus complained that because of the occupational and domestic roles which take most of their time it denies them the chance/time to go out with their

husbands. As a result, some of the men find some girls friends that they usually go to functions with and other places like restaurants and some amusement centres for fun or entertainment. This situation always creates misunderstanding and rivalry since the women always feel cheated (their economic contribution to the home and pleasure being shared with a non-contributor) and therefore complain and insist that their husbands bring such attitudes to an end. However, most of the men arrogantly overlook the women's plight. Consequently, for the sake of their children, wealth acquired with the men, their system of inheritance and their security they keep quiet to protect their marriage or to let their marriage work.

Another reason in the change is that, since urban life requires a lot of financial commitment (cost of living being high) especially in areas of food, accommodation, transportation, utilities, education to mention but a few, the respondents saw the need to work very hard to be able to jointly fulfill their financial obligations to avoid pressure and disgrace. Without money therefore, some marriages in the urban areas are always in danger they emphasized. They also see it as a duty to keep some of the money for development at Kwawu. This is generally in the form of putting up buildings so that when they retire or go for funeral or Easter recess they can get a place to lay their heads. It is for this reason that Kwawus are not spending thrifts when they travel to work outside Kwawu or even in Kwawu.

However, 3% of the respondents maintained that through urbanization they have realized that marriage should not be based on ethnicity. People should therefore have the freedom to explore other ethnic groups on the basis of love, understanding and mutual respect. In mate selection and marriage

therefore, they agitated that Kwawus should accept people of other tribes and cultures so as to know more about them, appreciate and understand them.

### **Family influence on mate selection in urban areas**

Kwawus are people who respect and protect their culture. They cherish the extended family system. They also uphold the matrilineal system of inheritance. They therefore attach much prominence to the family and its functions.

It is not surprising that 78% of the respondents in the urban area stated that the family still had control or influence over them in terms of mate selection. However, 22% stated that they were independent of the control of the family on issues involving mate selection.

The following reasons were given by the 78% to support their point: The family had to conduct thorough investigation into the family background of the mate one wanted to select. The family had greater control because it is on the basis of their findings and approval that one will or not get or not to get a partner. The investigation of the family's background helps prevent the importation of contagious diseases and bad character. It also helps to avoid problems of inheritance and thus helps to maintain the family during the death of a spouse. It is therefore, imperative that marriage among the Kwawus should be approved by the family.

The respondents further stated that families of the would-be mates counsel their members towards successful marriage. Families also monitor the marriages of their wards in order to avoid any form of disgrace through the misbehaviour of any of their members.

Fifteen percent (15%) of the respondents, however, objected to the control of the family in mate selection and said that formal education has made people self sufficient and independent through the acquisition of employment (private or civil), financial sustenance and property acquisition. Since some families depend so much on such people for their upkeep, they do not have much control over them and their decision on whom to select for marriage. The resistance of the 15% against family intervention would have led to a curse. For people to have that level of confidence and boldness to reject family intervention in their mate selection is a clear evidence of a change in the cultural patterns and practices of mate selection among the Kwawus.

Another argument which they put up was that urban life is nuclear inclined. The extended family function therefore, does not operate much. Secondly, they insisted that people should be allowed to search for their lovers. They however emphasized that the assistance of their families to perform their traditional functions should be maintained. That is the performance of the customary rites during marriage.

### **Urbanization and marital stability**

It is generally perceived that urbanization has come with it some modern principles that promote individualism rather than communality. It has also made families more nuclear than the extended system. This in one way or the other has affected marital systems and their stability. This area of the research is to investigate whether urbanization has any effect on marital

stability on the marital life of the Kwawus in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area.

Among the 67 couples, 69% (i.e. 46 people), stated that marrying fellow Kwawus makes marriage more stable. Indeed 31% (making up 21 of respondents) stated that marrying non Kwawus was unstable.

According to the 46 respondents, marriage was more stable among their fellow Kwawus because of their mind set to protect their cultural values in relation to marriage. Secondly, to uphold the integrity of their families, the acquisition and protection of acquired property, accumulation of wealth and common mode of inheritance they tried as much as possible to stabilize their marriages. Besides, both the men and the women always want to avoid breaking up with their family ties through inconsistency in marriage and divorce, the respondents stated.

The stability of marriage among Kwawus, according to the respondents is also based on the avoidance of stigmatization and the creation of a bad image for one's family and oneself. Furthermore, as much as possible, according to the respondents, Kwawus practicing endogamy would like to avoid divorce for the sake of their children. Most of the women respondents stated that, it is only on few occasions that some of the men go out to have children outside their matrimonial homes because of some improvement in their monetary capabilities, improvement in their wealth acquisition and hence change in their status. However, the women for fear of public disgrace and ridicule, insinuations and castigations from fellow Kwawus and other relatives they always try not to compromise with any form of infidelity. They try as

much as possible to let their marriages work without any domestic interference.

The respondents also stated that endogamy promotes stability because the couples always have a common bond of aspiration, purpose and unity. It is also possible that each person plays his/her role very well based on mutual respect and understanding.

The 21 respondents who stated that marriage instability was persistent among non-Kwawus, made the following assertions to support their claims. To start with, they said that cultural differences, language difference, mode of acquisition and use of wealth, mode of inheritance and widowhood rites are some of the factors that militate against Kwawus who marry non-Kwawus. This has created the impression in most of them that some tribes are affluent, unfriendly, inconsistent and inhumane to human suffering in Ghana, in relation to marriage due to their traditions and customs.

Furthermore, the 21 respondents argued that the factors mentioned above always affect marriage and therefore breeds persistent misunderstanding, hatred, self seeking, personal aggrandizement, jealousies and quarrels which lead to divorce. Intrusion by in laws cannot be overlooked either, they stated.

### **Urban Kwawus' preference in mate selection**

To find out where urban Kwawus would like to select their mates from it was observed that 55.2% of the respondents preferred selecting mates from among urban Kwawus to rural Kwawus as against 13.4% who preferred rural Kwawus. The first group of respondents stated that urban Kwawus are more

refined in their thinking, highly analytical and could make free and right choices on their own. People in urban areas are well grounded in city life, they thought. To them it would be suicidal and heart breaking to select from the rural area, bring the person into the urban area for he/she to jilt you. Urban mates also understand and appreciate the urban life better. They are also well vexed or abreast with urban needs, they emphasised.

The 13.4% who prefer rural Kwawus argued that, people nurtured in the rural areas are well trained and more established in traditional values of Kwawu than those in the cities. According to the respondents, rural Kwawus have much respect for their culture and would always want to be faithful and loyal and uphold the letter and spirit of their cultural practices.

The 31.4% of the respondents who stated that they preferred selecting mates from among non-Kwawus emphasized that they wanted to be heterogamous because Ghana is a unitary state with one people and one common identity with a common sense of purpose. Therefore there should not be any form of discrimination in mate selection along ethnic groups. Love, character and mutual respect should take precedence over all other factors in mate selection, they stated. To the group, inter-ethnic marriage is more stable than intra-ethnic marriage. They were also of the view that one should go in for a person who can cater for him/her as a spouse. It was also necessary for people to explore and experience other forms or systems of marriage so that people can acknowledge, appreciate and understand other cultural practices. This they argued would help reduce ethnicity and tribalism and create a sense of respect for one another.

Finally, the Christians among them argued that marriage is God ordained and therefore people should not discriminate when making choices. They should allow God to direct them, through prayer and counseling.

### **Attitudes of the Kwawus towards marriage**

Ethnic groups are almost always identified with some peculiar characteristics and attitudes. This makes them unique and special in the eyes of society. Ethnic groups also cherish their identity and feel proud of it and always desire to maintain it. The Kwawus are of no exception in this respect.

The respondents provided the following as their general attitude. Whereas 54% stated that they were more selective in mate selection, 46% stated that they were free and flexible in selecting their mates. The selective group argued that they wanted to raise pure breed Kwawus as children. Secondly, they were very conscious of the background, character and conduct of an individual before presenting or receiving the bride price. They were also conscious of their survival as Kwawus through marriage and reproduction.

In another development, the respondents stated that since Kwawus do not entertain laziness, and are conscious of wealth accumulation and its proper upkeep and bequeathing, they always look out for a person's employment level to influence their acceptance of him/her as a mate.

Generally, the respondents brought to the fore that, Kwawus are focused on marital issues. They argued that since families are raised through marriage, they put much premium on it. They always try as much as possible to let their marriage work for the survival of the Kwawu community. They always work out for the success of their marriage because they always want to



keep their family track record intact and not tainted. They also try to avoid any attitude and behaviours that will bring their marriages into disrepute which would invariably cast a snare on their families' reputation. Hence, they are promoting and championing of endogamous marriage.

The respondents in the focus group also highlighted security and protection as very paramount in the marriage and mate selection among Kwawus. Their security in marriage was paramount because of the future of the wealth they help to accrue in their marriage life and also of the children they produce and raise.

Generally, to the Kwawus, marriage should fulfill some objectives. They therefore go in for people who possess those qualities which can help them achieve those objectives. This is always their focus and this affects and also influences their attitude towards marriage and mate selection, at all times.

Finally, to authenticate the general attitudinal patterns of the Kwawu towards mate selection, questions that were posed yielded the responses in Table 21. This was to confirm certain perceptions or otherwise, and also find out what happens in reality or what existed in practice.

Corresponding interpretation for Table 21

SA –Strongly Agree

SD – Strongly Disagree

A – Agree

D – Disagree

**Table 21: Kwawus attitude towards marriage**

Attitudes	Frequency		Total	Percent		Total
	SA/A	SD/D		SA/A	SD/D	
Kwawus prefer						
To marry only Kwawus	53	66	119	44.5	55.5	100%
Kwawus are still						
Endogamous	51	68	119	43.0	57.0	100%
Kwawus are despised						
When they marry						
Non-Kwawus	38	81	119	32.0	68.0	100%
Women of Kwawu						
Marry only wealthy						
Non-Kwawus	39	80	119	33.0	67.0	100%
Kwawus believe that						
Only people from						
Kwawus are						
best to marry	33	86	119	28.0	72.0	100%
Kwawus in migration						
Prefer marrying						
Kwawu in migration						
To those living at Kwawu						
on the scarp	62	57	119	52.0	48.0	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

From Table 21, it is only on marrying fellow migrants that the respondents confirmed as true and authentic. On all the others they either

strongly disagree or disagree to the question. They argued that it does not exist.

All the perceptions that people have adduced against Kwawus in relation to their attitude towards marital patterns and practices have been debunked by them through the responses provided in Table 21 with the exception of the final question.

- Whereas 44.5% (being 53 people) argued that Kwawus prefer to marry only Kwawus 55.5% representing 67 people disagreed.
- Whereas 52 people supported endogamous, 68 people disagreed.
- Whereas 38 people agreed that Kwawus are despised by their families when they marry non-Kwawus, 81 disagreed.
- Whereas 39 people agreed that women from Kwawu prefer marrying only wealthy non-Kwawus 80 disagreed.
- Whereas 33 people believe that Kwawus are only the best people to marry, 86 disagreed.
- In preference to choosing a mate or marry a fellow Kwawu migrants to those living on the Kwawu scarp, 62 people agreed to marry fellow migrants and 57 people preferred those on the scarp.

The results as summarized above indicate that there had been a relative significant shift or change in the attitudes and perception of Kwawus regarding the factors that influence their selection of a marital mate. In the past Kwawus were more endogamous as a result of past history and this manifested in itself in the way and manner they choose their marital-mates. They preferred Kwawus to non-Kwawu and members who married non-Kwawus

received reprisals from family members. Also those few who married non-Kwawus married wealthy outsiders.

However today things have considerably changed as the findings indicated that 67 and 68 respondents failed to support or agree to marrying a fellow Kwawus and the practice of endogamy respectively as opposed to 53 and 52 who favored marrying a fellow Kwawus and practicing endogamy respectively. Also the results indicates that Kwawus families are more warmer and less apprehensive towards their sons and daughters who opted to marry non-Kwawus in recent times as 81 respondents perceived so relative to the 38 respondents who thought otherwise. Once the issue of seeing fellow Kwawus to be the best suited marital- partner, the results indicated otherwise.

In sum, it can be said that factors such as education, employment, wealth, and urbanization have considerably influenced Kwawus choice of marital – partner in modern times as their attitudes and perceptions towards marriage outside appears favorable and positive.

### **Summary**

The marital patterns and practices of the recent generation of Kwawus have been altered due to changes in their social systems. There is a great difference between what was practice previously and now.

This chapter examined and discussed three major themes. They include Marriage and Social Change, Urbanization and Marriage and the General Attitudes of Kwawus towards Marriage.

These were discussed through a thorough examination on the effect of formal education, effect of wealth accrued, effect of employment status on mate selection among the Kwawus.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

Marriage is the bedrock of family life throughout the world. In Ghana, all the ethnic groups cherish marriage. Most ethnic groups would not like to be associated with any misdemeanor in relation to marital issues. Since the stabilization of the family is very necessary and important to most societies, some ethnic groups are extremely cautious when they are giving out their children or wards into marriage.

There is a perception that Kwawus are extremely endogamous whether they are in their place of origin (hometown) or they migrate to different places outside their hometown. It is for this reason that this study of marriage among Kwawus in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area was conducted. Interviews, questionnaires, focal group discussions were used to elicit information from the respondents. In all 119 people were interviewed out of which 67 were men and 52 women. Literature was reviewed to enhance and support the study.

The final chapter deals with the summary of the findings, the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## Summary

The major findings of the study are:

- The Kwawus are people who travel a lot and could be found in almost every region in Ghana. Though some of them are found in other occupations, trading is their major occupation. They are peace loving people, always trying to avoid any form of trouble, through their acts and deeds. Whenever they travel too they prefer communal living to individualistic habitation. They are always guided by their history, customs and tradition (culture).
- The respondents within the age's 18-49years formed 83.2% and those over 50years formed 16.8%. Majority of the people interviewed were young men and women. About 51.3% were married. Singles, widows, widowers, divorcees and those separated formed 48.72% of the respondents. Citizens from Mpraeso, Obomeng, Nkwatia and Abetifi formed 74%. The rest of the respondents (26%) come from other places in Kwawu. Orthodox Christians formed 57.0% as against 39.0% of the Charismatic/Pentecostal Christians. Only 4% were traditionalist.
- Ethnicity is one of the major variables that influence marriage among the Kwawus. The ethnic factor has a historical and cultural foundation that affects mate selection among the Kwawus. The family closely monitors the mate selection and marriage of their members in order to maintain the family and the couple's integrity. Though this is not peculiar to the Kwawus, it is strange in terms of how families impose their preferences on their members towards mate selection. Kwawus

try as much as possible to instill in their members how they should let their marriages work towards stability.

- Some of the factors that influence mate selection among Kwawus are formal education, wealth and employment status of people. It was deduced that the above factors increased an individual's human and economic capital, decision making power and increase in prestige and privileges.
- Though individuals become autonomous in life through formal education, wealth and their employment status, they are not totally liberated from family influence and traditional practices. Therefore, even in their new place of residence that is the Cape Coast Metropolis their mate selection is influenced by the family. However, some of the singles recognized the fact that although family members prefer that they marry from their own people, they seem more open in their preferences. They prefer to marry the one whom they love not because of a person's ethnic background. In this regard, the youth attitude towards marriage tilts towards the assimilation perspectives than the other theories/perspectives.
- Most Kwawus interviewed representing almost 60% prefer to marry educated and wealthy people as well as people with good source of employment, people of good character, and those who can love their fellow human beings. Besides, the results that came out of the Kwawus Attitude Towards Marriage indicated that there had been a relative significant shift or change in their attitudes or perception regarding the



ethnic factor which previously made them very selective in their mate selection.

## **Conclusions**

The major concern of the study has been to investigate the marriage patterns among migrant Kwawus in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area. Kwawu citizens who had attained the marital age but not yet married as well as those who are in marriage were interviewed to find out their marital preferences and practices. Some literature on definitions, theories of marriage and migration were reviewed for the study. Based on the findings of the study the following conclusion can be drawn.

The first conclusion is that, the marital practices among Kwawu citizens in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area are characterized by the following features.

- They generally prefer marrying their fellow Kwawus to other Akans and non-Akans. They dislike marrying people whose language they do not understand. The Endogamy and Homogamy theories which explains that people relies on similar social characteristic for mate selection supports the marriage practice of Kwawus who generally marry among themselves and do not like those who do not share a common linguistic representation with them as well as other social characteristic like race and attitude. However the theories are silent on the historical antecedent that inform people choice of in-group marriage preference. Also, the Homogamy theory does not extend to explain how factors outside ethnicity influence people marital partners

that is, love and character. is considered as factor in mate selection by Kwawu beyond ethnic inclinations.

- Though ethnicity plays a major role in the choice of mates among Kwawus (endogamy), love, the character and conduct of an individual, one's level of education and employment status are also giving careful consideration in the selection and acceptance of mates among Kwawus.
- The family of orientation has some influence over the choice of life partners among Kwawus citizens in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area. However, the acceptance of a mate by a partner is based on preference than prescription. This confirms Fabers (1964) assertion that Kwawus consider marriage as a corporate entity whose image should therefore not be toiled with or tainted. As much as possible they are very cautious in the selection of their mates for marriage.
- The Kwawus have their own internal mechanism which they always use to sustain and stabilize their marriages. They are consciously counseled never to bring their families into disrepute through marriage. The monthly attendance to Kwawu for funerals and Easter programmes are some of the periods when family members try to investigate the progress of the lives of their members in migration. In Cape Coast specifically, the heads of families, clans and the Kwawu community heads keep reminding their members of modesty and the importance of stabilized and organized family life.
- The level of intra-marriage of the Kwawus in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area is based on historical and cultural perceptions. The

two proverbs given by Opayin Asong in chapter five attests to this fact. Homogamy and endogamy theories as said earlier do not proved any historical for people choice of marriage within in-group or among people of similar characteristics marriage among Kwawu depicts the historical point of reference.

- Kwawus therefore are guarded by a strong sense of purpose and communal life during migration. They usually stay in one area where they can assist one another, guide one another and share things in common. Choice of partners is therefore mostly within the community.
- An individual's level of formal education, wealth and employment status affects and influences one's choice of marriage partner. The educated become more liberal in their choices.
- Most of the Kwawus in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area prefer selecting mates who are Kwawus in the Metropolis to those who live in their place of origin in the Eastern Region.
- Finally, the youth are drifting away from intra-marriages to intermarriages. This is due to their level of assimilation since most of them were born and bred in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Whereas the adults are more endogamous, the youth are exogamous

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of the major findings the following recommendations are made:

- The intervention and advocacy mechanisms that have been put in place by the Kwawu community leaders to stabilize marriage and guard their

members to make good choices should be emulated. Such control mechanisms help to prevent or avoid unnecessary separation, divorce and other marital problems. This is due to the insistence in the fairness of the Exchange Theory in marriage.

- Though Crane (1923) has emphasized that the encounter of the Fante and Gas with the Europeans makes them more compatible in marriage than Asantes and Fantes, there is the need to break some prejudice and stereotype in marriage within some ethnic groups in Ghana. The marriage patterns of Kwawus have been influenced by their history and cultural perception. The historical conditions that perpetuated endogamy is not prevalent today. It is therefore recommended that all manner of stereotyping, prejudice, marginalization, stigmatization of some tribes and ethnic groups should be eradicated to promote national unity, through intermarriages.
- The historical, cultural and social perception that influences choices in mate selection among ethnic groups should be told to the present generation at any given time. Families should rather guide, but not impose marriage partners on would be couples, since marriage is an individual responsibility.
- Social change through agents and mechanisms like education and employment has given people certain privileges and prestige. It has made people economically powerful and has also added value to their human capital. For example access to formal education has triggered a change in the attitudes of the youth from endogamous marriage in favour of exogamous marriage. It is recommended that this should not

give individuals the right to select mates haphazardly. Families should guide their members of their preferences in line with character, love, cultural similarities and the status of the person in terms of education, wealth and source of employment. However as much as possible they should avoid prescriptions.

- Marriage should not be limited to only people from only one ethnic group.
- Ethnicity is eating deep into the fabric of Ghana in all spheres of life. Intermarriage is one of the modules through which this can be reduced. The National Commission for Civil Education, Civil Societies, Non-governmental organizations, Churches and Traditional Authorities should help rekindle the spirit of nationalism to eliminate all manner of superstition, marginalization, stereotyping, prejudices, fears, doubts and mistrust among people who would like to marry outside their ethnic groupings. This will avoid any form of ethnic cleansing in Ghana in future.

### **Suggestions for future research**

- Further ethnographic studies has to be conducted using the assimilation perspective or theory of marriage in urban areas to find out why some ethnic groups still want to marry only people from their ethnic group.
- Further comparative studies should be conducted in other cities and urban centres in Ghana to establish whether the patterns of marriage identified with the Kwawus in Cape Coast metropolitan are the same or similar and can therefore be generalized.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### MARRIAGE AMONG MIGRANT KWAWU IN THE CAPE COAST METROPOLITAN AREA

#### Introduction

The questionnaires seek to find out the mate - selection and marriage patterns of the migrant Kwawus in the Cape Coast Metropolitan area. This is a research being conducted by a Master of Philosophy student of the Sociology Department of the University of Cape Coast.

Confidentiality and anonymity will be highly observed in your responses to the questionnaire and other in-depth discussions to the questions to facilitate the research exceptions. Thank you.

1. Sex:                                      Male 1                                      Female 2
2. Age of respondent: .....
3. Home town: .....
4. Marital Status: .....
5. Religious Affiliation of Respondents: .....
6. Which of the following types of marriage were you or are engaged in?
  - Customary                                      1
  - Christian (Weeding)                                      2
  - Islamic                                      3
  - Ordinance (Law)                                      4
  - Others (Specify)..... 5
- 7a. Which of the following clans do you belong?

Agona	1
Asona	2
Asene	3
Aduana	4
Asakyire	5
Bretuo	6
Ekuona	7
Oyoko	8
Others (Specify).....	9

7b. What is the clan of your spouse?

8. What is the highest education you have attained?

No Education	1
Primary/Basic	2
Middle/JSS/JHS	3
Secondary/SSS/'O'& 'A' Levels	4
Teacher Training	5
Tertiary (Polytechnic, University)	6
Others (Specify).....	7

9. Please state the exact level you attained (e.g. Form 4.JSS 2 etc.)

.....

10. What do you do for a living?

Unemployed	1
Farmer	2
Trader (Businessman)	3
Artisan	4

Civil/ Public 5

Student 6

Others (Specify)

**Marital practices: Mate selection**

11a. What is the ethnic affiliation of your spouse?

.....

11b. Where does he/she come from? Kwawu (1) Outside Kwawu (2)

12. Why did you marry such a person?

.....

13a. Did you consider the ethnic background of your spouse before you  
married him or her? Yes (1) No (2)

13b. Explain your answer in 13a .....

.....

14a. Were you influenced in any way by the family in the choice of your  
partner? Yes (1) No (2)

14b. Please explain your answer in 14a.....

.....

15. Which of the following types of marriage do the Kwawus encourage?

Endogamy (1) Exogamy (2)

16. What are the reasons for encouraging exogamy/endogamy? Explain

.....

.....



**Role of family in marriage**

17. How did your family react to the choice of a Kwawu/Non - Kwawu as a partner? Explain.....  
.....

18a. Do you think that families put pressure on members to marry people from particular ethnic groups?    Yes (1)    No (2)

18b. Explain 18a.  
.....  
.....

19. Which group of people (ethnic) do the Kwawu encourage their members to marry? .....  
.....

20a. Which ethnic group will the Kwawus decide not to marry?  
State.....  
.....

20b. Explain the reason behind his .....  
.....  
.....

20c. Would you allow your ward to marry a Kwawu or non Kwawu during migration?    Yes (1)    No (2)

Explain the reason behind this. ....  
.....

**Marriage and social change**

21. Which of the following attributes most influence the choice of your spouse?

- Educational background 1
- Wealth of the people 2
- Character of the person 3
- Physical looks/attraction 4
- Ethnic background 5
- Religious affiliation 6
- Employment status 7
- Others (Specify)..... 8

Please rank the following attributes in order of preference (Please use 1-8. with 1 being the most important attribute and 8 being the least attribute) in mate selection.

- Educational background
- Wealth of the people
- Character of the person
- Physical looks/attraction
- Ethnic background
- Religious affiliation
- Employment status
- Others (Specify) .....

23a. Do you think that your educational background had any effect on the choice of your spouse? Yes (1) No (2)

23b. Explain 23a.....  
.....

24a. Did you consider the financial status of the person before you married  
him/her?      Yes (1)      No (2)

24b. Explain 24a. ....  
.....

25a. Did you also consider the wealth which the person has accrued before  
you married him/her?    Yes (1)      No (2)

25b. Explain 25a.....  
.....

26a. Did you consider the occupational or employment status of the person  
before marrying him/her?

26b. Explain 26a.....  
.....

**Marriage and urban setting**

27a. Do you think that urbanization/migration has changed your views about  
marriage?      Yes (1)      No (2)

27b. Explain 27a.....  
.....

28a. Has the family any control on people's choice in the urban areas  
Yes (1)      No (2)

28b. Explain why? ....  
.....

29a. Has urban life made marriage stable or unstable?

Yes (1)

No (2)

29b. How? .....

.....

30a. Is marriage among Kwawus in urban areas more stable than non-

Kwawu's?

Yes (1)

No (2)

30b. Explain why? .....

.....

31a. Would you like to marry an urban Kwawu or rural Kwawu or an

outsider?.....

.....

31b. Explain why? .....

.....

**Single respondents**

32. Are you in a relationship?

Yes (1)

No (2)

33. Is the person a Kwawu or non Kwawu.

Yes (1)

No (2)

34. Why did you choose the person? .....

35. If you were to choose again would that person be a Kwawu or non-

Kwawu?

Yes (1)

No (2)

36. What would be your prime factor of choice for a relationship?

Level of Education

Type of Employment

Ethnic Background

Religious Affiliation

Level of Wealth

Character of the person

Physical features

Others (Specify).....

38a. Are you obliged to marry only a Kwawu? .....

38b. Explain. ....

.....

39a. Has your family any influence on your choice of mate?

Yes (1)

No (2)

39b. Why? .....

.....

40a. Who would you like to marry (tribe or ethnic group)? .....

.....

40b. Why? .....

.....

**Attitude towards marriage**

41. In your opinion what is the general attitude of Kwawus towards mate

selection in marriage? .....

.....

To what extent do you Agree or Disagree with the following statements or Use  
Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree or Disagree.

42. The Kwawus prefer to marry only people from Kwawu.....

43. Kwawus attitude towards endogamous marriage have not change in spite  
of education, urbanization and migration.....

44. The Kwawus who do not marry from Kwawu are despised by their family.

.....  
45. Kwawu women will only marry a non- Kwawu only if the person is  
wealthy.....

46. Kwawus believes that their men women are the best in Ghana.....  
.....

47. The present generation is more interested in marrying Kwawus in  
migration.....