

Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) and Child Rights Promotion

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Abstract

The study was conducted in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro in Accra, Ghana. It assessed the effectiveness of DOVVSU in the promotion and protection of the rights of children. This purely descriptive study adopted the quantitative and qualitative paradigms using the mixed-methods sequential explanatory design. Two hundred and twenty (220) respondents comprising 121 JHS pupils, 22 teachers, 55 parents and 22 DOVVSU officials were sampled through simple random, proportionate quota, and purposive sampling techniques for the study. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha = 0.75), and a semi-structured interview guide. The quantitative data were analysed descriptively and presented in tables as well as figures as frequencies and percentages. The qualitative data were transcribed and presented in themes as narratives, verbatim or direct quotations. The study revealed the most prevalent forms of child rights abuses in the area to include physical and sexual abuse, child labour, child abandonment, and child non-maintenance. The DOVVSU rarely organized child rights promotion activities in the area, and very little was accomplished through advocacy, and education programmes. DOVVSU was less effective, and coverage of their programmes was relatively low. Inadequate funds and logistics hindered the effective organization of child rights promotion and protection activities by the DOVVSU. It was recommended that the DOVVSU should be well resourced with funds and logistics. The DOVVSU in partnership with the sub-metropolitan assembly, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, Department of Social Welfare, the Federation of Women Lawyers, faith-based organisations, non-governmental organizations, civil society organisations, as well as media institutions should carry out frequent advocacy and education programmes to prevent child rights violations. They should arrest and prosecute perpetrators of child rights violations.

Keywords: Child rights, Maltreatment, Victims, Violence, Domestic, Promotion, Support

1. Introduction and Background

The desire of many children in the world today is to grow up and become healthy adults. However, this is impeded by maltreatment. Child maltreatment or abuse is a social problem, which cuts across every society in the world, in both developed and developing countries. According to [13], patriarchal societies historically perpetuated a power imbalance and have systematically supported children's rights abuse. [13] cited in [1] observed that the psycho historical study of childhood and society has shown that the history of humanity is founded upon the abuse of children, as most historical families once practiced infanticide, erotic beating and incest and most states sacrificed and mutilated their children to relieve the guilt of adults. According to [18], human rights were until recently seen as relevant only to the adult world, and whenever references to child-parents relation is made, they are made in terms of respect for parents and/or guardian, rather than in relation to parental obligation towards the child. This shows that the problem of child abuse/maltreatment has been with society for a long time, but it is not until recent times that it has been considered seriously. [8] shared in the view that child abuse is not a new social phenomenon; it has occurred throughout human history but it has been recognized as a problem in recent years. According to [27] sexual abuse, which is defined as sexual exploitation of children by adults' acts ranging from inappropriate fondling to rape, has been with us for centuries. [27] found that sexual abuse, for example, has featured in centuries through incest, child prostitution, and in recent time rape. Physical abuse usually includes scalding, beatings with an object, severe physical punishment, slapping, punching, obligations such as failure to meet the educational, supervisory, shelter and safety, medical, physical, emotional needs of the child, as well as physical abandonment [38]. Children are the most valuable treasures who deserve protection from all. Yet, children's right to protection is often not upheld.

Even though child maltreatment has been with us for centuries, it is only in recent times that much attention has been paid to it. A host of international instruments, conventions, treaties and protocols have, therefore, been and are still being adopted in a bid to protect the rights of children. Chief among these international instruments is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which was adopted in 1989 and ratified by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Somalia and the United States of America. This notwithstanding, [28] observed that there are various limitations to the enjoyment of children's rights in many societies, with the situations of many children being critical in some countries and likely to worsen in the coming decades if proper measures are not taken.

Violation of the rights of children is evident and has reached an alarming rate. The United Nations

Children's Fund [35] observes that violence against women and children continues to be a global epidemic that kills, tortures physically, psychologically, sexually and economically. The United Nations Secretary-General's Report on Violence against Children in the year 2006 conservatively estimates that 133- 275 million children worldwide are exposed to violence in the home with estimated number of 34.9-38.2 million in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to the [37], as many as 40 million children under 15 years old experience some form of violence each year; more than 90% of girls experience some form of sexual abuse, and many of these girls live in Africa. Girls throughout Africa experience physical, psychological and sexual violence in many forms and in various settings: in conflict and crisis situations where they work or are trafficked to work; and even in the very places where they should feel safest – at school, in their homes and communities (African Child Policy Forum Report, 2006). A research conducted in Zimbabwe indicated that 47% of girls reported violence against girls (sexual intimidation and physical assault by older boys [35]).

Violence that takes place in the family could be in the form of domestic violence or several mutilations and that of the society could be rape, attacks or several harassments. According to [11], children experience very high levels of physical abuse in the parenting many of them receive. Most of these children are denied formal education and even the right to function as independent entities [25]. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) reported that occurrences of children's rights abuses have reached epidemic proportion with parents being the primary abusers, with nine out of ten abusers being the children's biological parents [36] cited in [1]). Although physical injuries may or may not be immediately visible, abuse and neglect can have consequences for children, families and society that last a lifetime, if not generations [36].

Ghana was the first country to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in February 1990. It has also ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) as well as other international and regional conventions and protocol meant to promote the rights and welfare of the child. As part of its commitment, the State has accordingly put in place various institutions including the Domestic Violence and Victims' Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service, the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) among others charged with the responsibilities to promote and protect the rights of the citizenry, including children through education, sensitization, and awareness creation. Despite the existence of these human rights institutions coupled with their well-tailored programs, there are still increasing reports of child rights violations in Ghana. According to [39] these institutions have not been effective in doing their work, hence the increase in the incidence of child rights violations in Ghana.

There has been some research on service user's perception of DOVVSU [30] as well as general operations of DOVVSU [2]. However, there seem to be no study to assess the effectiveness DOVVSU in the promotion and protection of children's rights. This is the gap this study intended to fill by looking at the child rights promotion programmes of DOVVSU, how these programmes are carried out and the challenges faced by DOVVSU in carrying out these child rights promotion programmes.

The problem that necessitated this study was that although the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service has been in existence since 1998 to promote and protect the rights and welfare of children and women, available statistics show that many children continue to have their rights violated with majority of them not even aware of these violations, and children in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro are no exception.

For instance, a study of the 2009 - 2012 Annual Reports of DOVVSU reveals consistent increase in child victim offences, as child non-maintenance increased from 443 in 2010 to 3,165 in 2011 with defilement rising from 109 in 2010 to 671 in 2011. Perhaps most disturbing aspect of the whole phenomenon is that some of these children have taken these abuses as normal, since they do not have any idea about their rights. A study by [34] reveals that children perceive beatings as a reflection of their parents' love for them, which in turn give them the authority to punish their younger siblings. As a result, many children ignorantly continue to suffer neglect, denial of means of survival, forced to work under hazardous conditions, not to talk about the physical and psychological abuses.

This brings to the fore the question of awareness of the children's rights and how they expect DOVVSU to promote and protect those rights. It is based on this that the study was carried out to ascertain the effectiveness of the DOVVSU in carrying out its mandates to promote and protect the rights and welfare of children in Ghana as a whole and the Ayawaso East Sub-Metropolis in particular.

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of DOVVSU in the promotion and protection of the rights of children in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro, Accra. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to: 1). determine the prevalence of child rights violations in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro in Accra. 2). ascertain how DOVVSU carries out its child rights promotion and protection programmes, 3). examine the challenges facing DOVVSU in promoting and protecting child rights in the Sub-Metropolis.

2. Literature and Theoretical Perspective of the Study

The theoretical framework upon which this study is anchored is the Basic Logic Model as propounded by the W.K Kellogg Foundation in 2001. It is shown diagrammatically below:

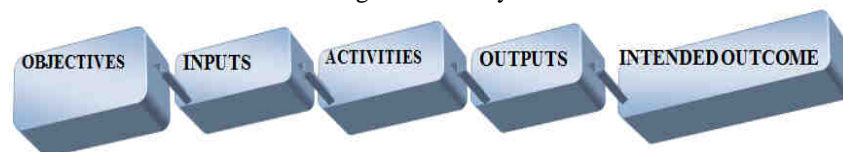


Figure 1. Basic logic model to determine the effectiveness of an intervention.

The [26] described the logic model as a systematic and visual way to present and share understanding of the relationship among the resources which are needed to operate planned programme or activities, and the expected changes or results hoped to be achieved. The most basic logic model is a picture of how a programme is believed would work. It uses words and/or pictures to describe the sequence of activities thought to bring about change.

It is assumed that the effectiveness of every intervention denotes its impact, the extent to which its objectives are achieved and the level to which its targeted problems are solved. According to [16], effectiveness is the extent to which objectives are met, that is, doing the right things. In social research, effectiveness refers to the extent to which an activity fulfills its intended purpose or function [19]. [19] further sees effectiveness as “a measure of the match between stated goals and their achievement” [19:104]. In struggling to ascertain the effectiveness of an intervention, there are pertinent and precise questions that need to be answered. These questions include whether the programme or intervention being implemented is in line with the way it was anticipated? To what extent are the people (beneficiaries) satisfied with the delivery of the programme or the intervention service? Is the programme or intervention getting to the people it is intended to assist in a certain way? What factors hamper the advancement of the intervention and how would they be addressed? The implication of the logic model, therefore, is to provide a framework for assessing inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes of the child rights promotion activities, as social intervention, by the DOVVSU of the Ghana Police Service.

Undoubtedly, for every intervention to function effectively, it must have objectives. The objectives would determine the kind of inputs needed for the intervention, and when the needed inputs are available, proper daily activities could then be performed. This would invariably produce the expected outputs which would lead to the attainment of the intended outcome. Evaluation or assessment of this social intervention would, therefore, lay bare whether it is on course and has resulted in the improvement of the situation upon which it was established to address or otherwise.

DOVVSU is a unit established within the Ghana Police Service to among other things handle cases involving child abuse. Among the objectives of DOVVSU are to educate children, women and other vulnerable persons through sensitization and outreach programmes on their rights in order to reduce the fear of reporting cases of abuse, and to enable children be heard on issues concerning their welfare [21]; educate the public in general about the fact that all acts of violence are crimes and to bring perpetrators of these crimes to book. One of the major functions of DOVVSU is to promote and protect the rights of children through sensitization of children and other vulnerable persons on their human right, and also enable children to be heard on issues concerning their welfare [21]. In order to carry out this function effectively and in conformity with the aspirations and standards as set out in some human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), it is incumbent to fashion out the necessary objectives which will direct the inputs within the unit. The inputs required, in the case of DOVVSU will include but not limited to material, financial (money) and human resources (men/labour). The availability of these resources coupled with their effective and efficient use will invariably improve the activities of the unit. If activities such as the apprehension and prosecution of offenders of child rights abuse, sensitization and awareness creation programmes as well as the monitoring of the condition and situation of abused children are effectively carried out, the anticipated and planned outcome which in this case is the promotion and the protection of the rights of the child will be realized. Certainly, setting the right objectives and providing the needed inputs are the pre-requisite for the successful realization of the intended outcome of any given intervention or programme.

2.1. Trend of Child Rights Abuse Cases Reported to DOVVSU

Out of the 2578 cases that were received in year 2010, 1687 male suspects and 137 female suspects were arrested. Two hundred and seventy-eight (278) cases were sent to court out of which 27 convictions were obtained. Three (3) cases were acquitted and discharged and 236 cases are awaiting trial. Six hundred and fourteen (614) cases were closed. Six hundred and fifty-two (652) cases are still under investigations. The volume of cases in terms of regional distribution is consistent with the rural-urban migration phenomenon and the attendant vices such as the creation of the urban poor. As a result, Greater Accra Region recorded the highest

cases followed by Ashanti Region, Central Region and Tema with Upper West Region recording the least [21].

In 2011, DOVVSU recorded a 17.90% percentage decrease of domestic violence cases within the third quarter of the year. Out of the 10,099 cases that were received, five thousand, three hundred and sixty-one (5,361) male suspects and six hundred and twelve (612) female suspects were arrested as at the third quarter of the year 2011. Seven hundred and sixty (760) cases were sent to court out of which (94) convictions were obtained. Twenty-eight (28) cases were acquitted and discharged, while six hundred and thirty-eight (638) cases are awaiting trial. One thousand, five hundred and ninety-three (593) cases were closed for want of prosecution. It is pertinent to note that as much as six thousand, seven hundred and forty-six (6,746) cases are still under investigations due to inadequate investigators, victim inability to afford medical bills, etc. Greater Accra Region recorded the highest number of cases followed by Ashanti Region, Central Region and Tema with Upper West Region recording the least cases.

People normally do not report some of these incidences. The data revealed that child abandonment, child abuse, child labour, child trafficking and child stealing were the most under reported cases of child abuse. The under reporting of the cases is probably due to unwillingness of victims and their families to report such cases. According to [4], Sexual Violence Against Children (SVAC) remains under reported due to perceived stigma, shame and secrecy associated to it as well as the perceived negative repercussions it has on the family and individual. Also, victims of child trafficking and their families often believe they are economically better off in the crime situation than the circumstance under which they were at home. According to [29], child abuse and child neglect in Ghana are due to multiplicity of factors.

2.2. The Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit and Child Rights Promotion

The Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) formerly known as the Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) was established as a special Unit under the Ghana Police Service in October 1998 in response to increasing domestic violence and abuse against women and children. Its creation was part of the government's fulfillment of international obligations, with the police administration also realizing the need for a specialized unit to handle cases of abuse against women and children, following the improper handling of such cases at the "Traditional Police" station. The unit was renamed Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) in 2005 with the ultimate aim of making it open and accessible to all victims of domestic violence irrespective of sex or gender. The establishment of the unit was backed by a host of international and local legal frameworks and policies geared towards creating an environment that provides judicious and equitable response to victims of abuse (DOVVSU Report, 2011). Some of these international framework and policies include the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on The Rights of the Child (UNCRC), The Beijing platform of action, and the Millennium Development Goals among others.

The mandate of DOVVSU is to protect the rights and promote the welfare of children and women by preventing and prosecuting crimes committed against them in both the domestic and community setting. "This function is carried out through sensitization" [21, 69]. DOVVSU has a mandate to organize outreach and awareness programmes to educate the general public, especially children, women and the vulnerable in the communities on their rights, and how to prevent such crimes against women and children through public seminars [20]. This approach is proactive and falls under the Preventive Model of Community Policing [20].

The functions of DOVVSU include among other things investigating all offences related to vulnerable groups; handling cases involving gender-based violence including Domestic Violence and child abuse; handling Juvenile offences and child delinquency; and prosecuting all offences related to the above where necessary [15]. DOVVSU also provides to the public support services including free service to members of the public, advice on crime and its prevention in schools, churches, markets and referring victims for medical services and/or counseling and other support services in the community[15].

It has among its objectives to educate the general public about the fact that all acts of violence are crime, irrespective of the victim(s) involved; educating women, children and other vulnerable persons of their rights in order to reduce the fear in reporting cases of abuse; enabling children to be heard on issues concerning their welfare; and partnering with other agencies to meet the needs of survivors of abuse through building of Support Networks for effective protection systems [15].

The unit works in close collaboration with other institutions that share in its goals. According to the [15], the unit collaborates with organizations such as the International Federation of International Women Lawyers (FIDA)-Ghana, Legal Aid Board, Civil Society Organizations, NGO's such as the Ark Foundation, Women Initiative for Self-Empowerment (WISE), Plan Ghana as well as Governmental Agencies like Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), Department of Women (DOW), Department of Children (DOC), Domestic Violence Secretariat, the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Department of Social Welfare (DSW). It also collaborates with United Nations agencies like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Development Assistance Programme (UNDAF).

2.3. The Effectiveness of DOVVSU in the Promotion of Child Rights

The Police Service as a whole and DOVVSU in particular has been working hard to reduce the trend in criminal cases. In the year 2010, DOVVSU's effort of proactive policing yielded positive result as there was a decrease in the number of crimes reported to the unit. DOVVSU recorded 33.64% percentage decrease of the total number of cases recorded within the third quarters of the years, 2009 and 2010 (3885- 2578) [15]. The Unit assigned the percentage decrease to awareness creation which has enlightened the public to refrain from acts or omissions that constituted domestic violence.

DOVVSU has become one of the most dependable data source on gender, domestic violence and children's rights (Police Annual Report, 2009). Its resource base has increased steadily since inception. Presently DOVVSU has its offices span all over the country. The unit as at December, 2013 has one hundred and seven (107) offices and desks nationwide with staff strength of six hundred and seven (607), an indication of significant increase of 6.7% over the 2012 staff strength of 569 (DOVVSU [15]. In 2013 DOVVSU recruited internally fifty eight (58) persons with psychology and social work background to augment its staff strength.

In terms of human resource development, personnel of the Unit participated in about ninety three (93) workshops and seminars on issues pertaining to investigations, child protection, human trafficking especially of children, child labour and Domestic Violence organised by the Police Administration, Government Agencies, NGOs and Civil Society Organisations in the year 2010 [21]. Sixty (60) Personnel of the unit nationwide were given 3-day detective training by the the Police Administration in the same year while a 3-day capacity enhancing training workshop was organized for 40 newly posted personnel drawn nationwide with sponsorship from UNFPA.

With regards to infrastructural and material resource development, Maa Sherawali, an Indian Ladies Charitable Organisation in 2010 put up a four office room modern office edifice for Nungua DOVVSU. This led to the upgrading of the Nungua DOVVSU from desk to offices and now headed by Senior Police Officer. A Crisis Response Centre (CRC) project initiated in the year 2010 has been completed and commissioned.

As part of its advocacy strategy, the DOVVSU procured thirty (30) megaphones for its regional and divisional offices. This is to enhance outreach sensitisation programmes. The unit has under taken several nationwide outreach sensitisation programmes with sponsorship from the Police administration and development partners especially, Action Aid, UNFPA and UNICEF. The unit received two thousand (2000) copies of Domestic Violence Act and Children's Act from UNICEF as well as one thousand (1000) copies of pocket size and abridged version of Domestic Violence Act of 2007 (Act 732) from WILDAF for distribution to various offices and desks nationwide. These were successfully distributed to the populace.

In 2011, DOVVSU organised a series of advocacy programmes [22]. The DOVVSU national secretariat in collaboration with UNFPA organized outreach programs on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) at three refugee camps in the Central, Western and Brong-Ahafo Regions. In the same year, the DOVVSU national secretariat with sponsorship from the Police administration undertook nationwide outreach sensitisation programmes at six (6) market places, five (5) schools and, six (6) churches. DOVVSU in 2012 embarked on several outreach programmes in Schools, Churches and Market places on gender-based violence, domestic violence and child abuse [23]. In all, over 200 advocacy programmes were organized nationwide as a crime prevention measure towards a proactive policing method. In 2013, the unit continued with its outreach programmes on gender-based violence, domestic violence and child abuse in schools, churches, and market places. As a result, between 5th January and 11th March, 2013, the DOVVSU national secretariat organised outreach programmes in six (6) basic schools on the role of DOVVSU in child protection and two market sensitization in Nima and Mamobi in Accra. In all four hundred (400) advocacy programmes were organized in schools, market places, community and churches in 2013 as a crime prevention measure towards a proactive policing method. As part of the proactive policing method, the unit has adopted a vibrant strategy of educating the public on child abuse. In this regard, the various regional offices make use of the local FM stations and this helped in the dissemination of the contents of the Domestic Violence Act, 2007 and other related laws. A study by [30] on service user's perception of DOVVSU concluded that DOVVSU provides a significant entry point for women and children to access the justice system.

DOVVSU has every cause to tout itself with these achievements. However, comparatively, these achievements are infinitesimal vis-à-vis the general expectations. Being in existence for more than one and half decade, it is the expectation of citizens, especially children that DOVVSU would be at the forefront championing the course of child rights promotion which has eluded them for centuries. As is the case now, it is obvious that the fight against child rights abuse is a journey that has not ended yet, a lot needs to be done by DOVVSU to ensure the sanctity of children's rights.

2.4. Challenges Affecting Activities of DOVVSU in the Promotion of Children's Right

The Ghana Police Service like many other public institutions is bedeviled with constraints which incapacitate the performance of its duties in relation to crime detection and prevention. Police presence ought to be felt in every

corner of the country because more presence of the police deters criminals from operating. There is therefore the need to identify the challenges facing the police in relation to crime prevention and detection [12].

The daunting challenges facing the Ghana police service and by extension DOVVSU, impact negatively on the smooth implementation of the Unit's mandate which include the promotion and protection of children's rights. This section looked at availability of resources (human, financial and material), accessibility and affordability of the Unit's services.

2.5. Availability of Resources for DOVVSU

Insufficient funding from the central government through the police administration is a major problem confronting the police service and by extension DOVVSU. In spite of the Unit's arduous task, it has since its establishment been relying gravely on donors and corporate bodies for funding to carry out its programmes including education on child rights promotion and protection [22]. This unhealthy and unfortunate situation thwarts the efforts of the Unit. The funds provided as monthly subvention to take care of personnel and outreach programmes nationwide for the general public as well as accountable impress for the regional coordinators to facilitate the day-to-day running of the regional offices and to take care of medical bills, clothing, and baby food and pampers of highly traumatised but financially distressed victims of domestic violence is inadequate [15].

Another problem contributing negatively to the performance of the Unit is the calibre and adequacy of the staff. Not only does the unit lack qualified and competent personnel but also its staff strength generally is inadequate [15]. According to the same report, some branches are manned by an average of 3 personnel instead of an ideal average of 6 personnel. The poor conditions of service, not different from those that pertained in the civil service prevent the unit from attracting competent personnel and professionals such as clinical psychologist. This has resulted in the fact that for the past years the unit could boast of only two clinical psychologists.

The material resources the Unit lacks include decent office accommodation, furniture, computers and means of transport to embark on outreach and educational programme [22]. Not only does lack of office accommodation hamper the expansion of DOVVSU offices in the regions, but personnel of the unit are crowded in one office, leaving no room for the social work and counseling personnel attached to the unit to handle non-maintenance cases and counseling session [15]. Also, lack of state owned temporary shelter to house survivors that have been retrieved from scenes or situations of crime hampers the unit's determination to remain proactive especially in handling cases such as child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children and child marriage. With respect to other logistics, available records indicate that only twelve (12) serviceable vehicles are available for use by the over 107 branches of the unit. Even with this, four of the vehicles are at the national secretariat [15].

2.6. Accessibility and Affordability of DOVVSU's Activities

Budgetary constraint has been identified as a major problem confronting DOVVSU. As a result the unit has not been able to open offices in all the police districts. The [22] acknowledged that opening more offices will ease the tension on the main branches or offices and also ease the burden on clients in terms of travelling cost. Further to this, the unit is not equipped with transport facilities to enable personnel extend their campaign activities to hard-to-reach areas.

3. Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature. It employed the mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design. Mixed methods research approach is defined as an approach in which the inquirer or researcher collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in a single study or a program of study [9]. The sequential explanatory design is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. In this design, a researcher first collects and analyses the quantitative (numeric) data. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and their subsequent analysis provided a general understanding of the research problem. The qualitative data and their analysis refined and explained those statistical results by exploring participants' views in more depth [10].

Its advantages include straightforwardness and opportunities for the exploration of the quantitative results in more detail. This design can be especially useful when unexpected results arise from a quantitative study [31]. The limitations of this design are lengthy time and feasibility of resources to collect and analyse both types of data. It is not easy to implement.

The target population for the study is about 2,200 made up of Junior High School pupils from schools within the Ayawaso East Sub metro, which benefitted from DOVVSU's child rights promotion and protection programmes, parents/guardians of these school children, teachers in the schools where DOVVSU carried out its child rights promotion and protection programmes and DOVVSU officials who took part in the child rights promotion and protection programmes in the various schools. The accessible population was, however, made up

of 481 Junior High School pupils, 451 parents, 30 teachers and 30 DOVVSU officials all totaling 992.

The sample size for the study is 220 representing 10% of the target population. According to [17], a sample is a portion or subset of a larger group called a population. For this study, the simple random sampling technique, purposive sampling technique and the proportional (proportionate) quota sampling technique were used. Three junior high schools were randomly selected from the seven junior high schools which benefitted from DOVVSU's child rights promotion and protection programmes in the Ayawaso East Sub Metro between the years 2012-2014. The three schools included Kanda Estates Cluster of School, Nima Cluster of Schools and St. Kizito Roman Catholic Junior High.

A simple random sampling technique was used to sample 121 JHS pupils representing 55% of the sample size, 55 parents representing 25% of the sample size and 22 teachers representing 10% of the sample size. Twenty two (22) DOVVSU officials were however purposively sampled as study participants for the study and this also represented 10% of the sample size. Simple random sampling is a sampling technique where all elements in a research population have an equal chance of being selected. In other words, each member in the population has a known and equal probability of inclusion in the sample [6]. It is regarded as the ideal technique for selecting a representative sample and limits the influence of the researcher in ways that could introduce bias [14]. Purposive sampling on the other hand is used when one selects respondents with a specific purpose in mind [32], and in this case, the purpose was to find out how DOVVSU carried out the various child rights promotion and protection programmes. The proportional (proportionate) quota sampling technique was further used to select study participants from each accessible group by gender.

Two instruments were used for data collection. These were structured questionnaire, and semi-structured interview guide. In addition, a collection of written materials was considered, that is, documentary review. These documents were sourced from the DOVVSU office and the internet. Some other documents that were relevant sources of information included but not limited to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Annual Reports of the Ghana Police Service, the Children's Act and periodic reports of DOVVSU on child's rights situation in the country. This was done to ensure triangulation of data collated as noted by [33] and cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data [5]. Triangulation was used. Employing two or more methods help researchers to offset the limitations associated with one method [10]; [33] and to determine the accuracy of information gathered [7].

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument, the instruments were designed to reflect on the research questions. The items were first given to the supervisor to read through. Again, the instruments were shown to colleague DOVVSU personnel, and lecturers who are experts in the areas of human rights and social sciences. The supervisor and the experts made very useful suggestions to ensure their content and face validity. Construct validity was ensured by critically developing it within established theoretical framework.

Further, the instrument was pilot-tested on three (3) JHS students, 3 JHS teachers, 3 parents, 3 DOVVSU officials and 3 members of the community who did not form part of the actual sample for the study. In the following week, the test-retest technique was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The same 12 people were asked to answer the same questions. The two results were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis using Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) version 20.0. A reliability coefficient (r) of 0.75 was obtained which indicated that the instrument was reliable for use in the actual study.

In the questionnaire data analysis, responses made by the respondents to each set of items were sorted out. The quantitative data were analysed descriptively using frequency counts and percentages. The qualitative (interview) data were analyzed through thematic analysis. Specifically, the identifiable themes that emerged from the interview responses were classified under each research question. The preparation of the interview data for presentation began with the organization and transcription of the audio tape recordings. This was done by playing and listening to each recorded tape of each interviewee repeatedly and carefully writing them in the words of each of the interviewees. The major themes and analysis of the contents were summarized. Again, direct quotations were used to support or clarify the qualitative data when necessary. Alpha-numeric codes were assigned to the interview transcripts so as to attribute statements to the students, teachers, parents and the DOVVSU personnel. The interview transcripts for the student participants were assigned codes PST 1-2; PTT 1-2 for teacher participant; PPT 1-2 for parent participant; and PDO 1-2 for DOVVSU personnel participant. The interpretation of the qualitative data made it possible to make appropriate inferences.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The Prevalence of Child Rights Abuses or Violations in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro

To a large extent, violation of the right of child in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro is wide spread in Ayawaso East Sub-Metro as some very poor families have difficulty in providing the basic needs of their children and thus leave them to fend for themselves. Participant PPT-1 had this to say about the situation:

[...] look at the number of children in our streets who are found selling different wares in traffic instead of

being in the classrooms. Look at the risks associated with selling in the traffic. It is very sad and pathetic. Hmmm! To say that children in the community are exposed to risk is an understatement. They have actually suffered from these exposures. A few weeks ago, a “kenkey” seller abandoned her child and was selling her “kenkey”. This child, who was about 3 years old, walked away from the woman to the main road. The child was nearly walked over by a moving truck. It is very pathetic to say the least. In fact, my brother, some of the children over here are not catered for at all by their parents.

Kaa’s report was confirmed by PDO 1 who complained that children in the community were not safe and secured as their exposure to danger and harm has been on the increase in recent years. According to her, most of them (children) were exposed to harm as some parents did not even care to know the whereabouts of their children. She pointed out some parents always shirk their responsibilities and leave the care of their children to housemaids and caregivers or leave them to their faith as they attend to their business.

Exploring whether respondents perceive or think that most children in the community are well-catered for and protected by their parents during the survey, forty-eight (40%) pupils, 3 (14%) teachers, 29 (53%) parents, and 12 (55%) DOVVSU personnel answered in the affirmative. However, 33 (27%) pupils, 19 (86%) teachers, 15 (27%) parents and 9 (41%) DOVVSU personnel answered in the negative by indicating no. Further to that, 40 (33%) pupils, 11 (20%) parents and 1 (5%) DOVVSU personnel were uncertain (see table 1).

Table 1. Perception that children are well-catered and protected by their parents, teachers and community members.

Response	Pupils		Teachers		Parent		DOVVSU Personnel	
	Freq.	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq.	%
Yes	48	40	3	14	29	53	12	55
No	33	27	19	86	15	27	9	41
I don’t know	40	33	0	0	11	20	1	5
Total	121	100	22	100	55	100	22	100

Source: Fieldwork data (2016).

4.2. Child Security in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro

In responding to the interview question as whether children safe, secured and protected from violations and abuses in the community were ambivalent, some of the child respondents were of the view that they were so safe, secured and protected by my parents and teachers. A few of them, on the other hand, reported that they felt insecure and unprotected in school due to the bad experiences they had with their teachers. A large majority of them, however, explained during the interview that because their teachers were mindful of the fact that they (teachers) owe it a duty to protect them, they (teachers) always ensured that seniors did not abuse them. In similar vein, the children also felt that their parents ensured that their rights were not violated in the community. The following is a remark by participant PST 1: *I always report to my mother or teacher any threat or attempt of violence on my rights and since they know how these kinds of abuses will affect me they are always there to protect me.*

In response to whether respondents perceived children to be well-secured and safe in the hands of their parents, teachers and community members in the questionnaire, 57 (41%) pupils, 3 (14%) teachers, 28 (51%) parents and 10 (45%) DOVVSU personnel opined that children are well-secured and safe in the hands of their parents, teachers and community members.

Table 2. Perception that children are well-secured and safe in the hands of their parents, teachers and community members.

Response	Pupils		Teachers		Parent		DOVVSU Personnel	
	Freq.	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq.	%
Yes	57	41	3	14	28	51	10	45
No	39	32	19	86	10	18	11	50
I don’t know	25	21	0	0	17	31	1	5
Total	121	100	22	100	55	100	22	100

Source: Fieldwork data (2016).

Nevertheless, 39 (32%) pupils, 19 (86%) teachers, 10 (18%) parents and 11 (50%) DOVVSU personnel held opposing views. Twenty-five (21%) pupils, 17 (31%) parents and 1 (5%) DOVVSU personnel were doubtful.

As to whether children in Ayawaso East Sub-Metro are really exposed to abuses by their parents, teachers and community members, the majority of the pupils (61 or 50%), 20 (91%) teachers, 30 (55%) parents and 18 (82%) DOVVSU personnel perceived that children in the community are exposed to abuses by their parents, teachers and community members. Conversely, 21 (17%) pupils, 5 (9%) parents, and 4 (18%) DOVVSU

personnel held divergent opinions. Thirty-nine (32%) pupils, 2 (9%) teachers, and 20 (36%) parents indicated that they did not know.

Table 3. Perception that children in the community are exposed to abuses by their parents, teachers and community members.

Response	Pupils		Teachers		Parent		DOVVSU Personnel	
	Freq.	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq.	%
Yes	61	50	20	91	30	55	18	82
No	21	17	0	0	5	9	4	18
I don't know	39	32	2	9	20	36	0	0
Total	121	100	22	100	55	100	22	100

Source: Fieldwork data (2016).

There was a mixed reaction and opinions on whether children in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro in Accra were predisposed to violations or abuses. Most of the respondents (pupils - 50%; parents – 55%; DOVVSU personnel – 82%; and teachers – 91%) perceived that children in the community were exposed to abuses by their parents, teachers and community members. Notwithstanding, 41% of pupils, 51% of parents and 45% of the DOVVSU personnel held the view that children are well-secured and safe in the hands of their parents, teachers and community members. Also, 40% of the pupils, 53% of the parents and 55% of the teachers admitted that children in the community were well-catered for and protected by their parents, teachers, and other community members at home, school or in the community. Eighty-six percent (86%) of the teachers held divergent views to these claims. The types of child rights abuses experienced or witnessed by respondents are indicated in Table 4.

Table 4. Types of child rights abuses experienced or witnessed by respondents (n = 220).

Form of violence/abuse	Pupils		Teachers		Parents		DOVVSU Personnel		Yes (Mean %)
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Sexual violence/abuse	85(70)	36(30)	20(91)	2(9)	40(73)	15(27)	18(82)	4(18)	79
Economic violence/child labour	63(52)	58(48)	20(91)	2(9)	38(69)	17(31)	19(86)	3(14)	75
Emotional abuse	60(50)	61(50)	20(91)	2(9)	41(75)	14(15)	18(82)	4(18)	75
Physical abuse	90(74)	31(26)	20(91)	2(9)	51(93)	4(7)	21(95)	1(5)	88
Child marriage	39(32)	82(68)	6(27)	16(73)	6(11)	49(89)	4(18)	18(82)	22
Child non-maintenance	73(60)	48(40)	20(91)	2(9)	9(16)	46(84)	18(82)	4(18)	62
Denial or deprivation of food/shelter	79(65)	42(35)	15(68)	7(32)	13(24)	42(76)	17(77)	5(23)	59
Child abandonment/neglect	94(78)	27(22)	19(86)	3(14)	36(35)	19(65)	14(64)	8(36)	66
Expulsion from school	79(65)	42(35)	16(73)	6(27)	38(69)	17(31)	19(86)	3(14)	73
Child trafficking	39(32)	82(68)	20(91)	2(9)	4(7)	51(93)	5(23)	17(77)	38
Puberty rites	18(15)	103(85)	6(27)	16(73)	2(4)	53(96)	3(14)	19(86)	15
"Trokosi"	27(22)	94(78)	6(27)	16(73)	3(5)	52(95)	2(9)	20(91)	16
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	18(15)	103(85)	3(14)	19(86)	2(4)	53(96)	2(9)	20(91)	11
Teasing & stigmatization	70(58)	51(42)	20(91)	2(9)	38(69)	17(31)	16(73)	6(27)	73
Labelling of child as witch	76(63)	45(37)	4(18)	18(82)	3(5)	52(95)	3(14)	19(86)	25
Other abuses	10(8)	111(92)	5(23)	17(77)	1(2)	54(98)	2(9)	20(91)	11

Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentages

Source: Fieldwork data (2016).

For comparison and ranking purposes, the percentage distributions for 'yes' responses were computed as aggregate (composite) data as mean percentage for each type of child rights abuses. Table 4 indicates that the most prevalent violent treatments or abuses experienced or witnessed by school children in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro in Accra were (in rank order): physical abuse (88%, 1st), sexual violence or abuse (79%, 2nd), economic violence or child labour (75%, 3rd), and emotional or psychological abuse (75%, 3rd).

This was followed by expulsion from school (73%, 5th), teasing and stigmatization (73%, 5th). Child abandonment or neglect followed with (66%, 7th), child non-maintenance (62%, 8th), and denial or deprivation of food and shelter (59%, 9th). The most hidden, least reported, but prevalent forms of child abuses included: child trafficking (38%, 10th), child labeling as witch (25%, 11th), child marriage (22%, 12th), "trokosi" or shrine slaves (16%, 13th), puberty rites (15%, 14th), FGM (11%, 15th), and other forms of abuses such as public shaming or verbal degradation (11%, 15th).

It could be concluded from the results in Table 4 that the top 8 prevalent forms of child rights abuses in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro in Accra were physical abuse, sexual abuse, child labour, emotional/psychological abuse, expulsion from school, teasing and stigmatization, child neglect or abandonment, and child non-maintenance.

In the same vein, Table 5 revealed that main perpetrators of child rights abuses in the East Ayawaso Sub-Metro were parents (1st) and teachers (2nd). Other perpetrators include chiefs and elders (3rd), religious leaders (4th), and opinion leaders (5th).

Table 5. *The perpetrators of child rights abuses in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro in Accra.*

Perpetrator	Pupils		Teachers		Parent		DOVVSU Personnel		Rank
	Freq.	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq.	%	
Parents	61	50	14	64	31	56	12	55	1 st
Teachers	45	37	8	36	19	35	6	27	2 nd
Chiefs/elders	3	3	0	0	2	4	2	9	3 rd
Religious leaders	7	6	0	0	3	5	2	9	4 th
Opinion leaders	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	5 th
Total	121	100	22	100	55	100	22	100	

Source: Fieldwork data (2016).

During the interview, various types of child rights violation cases which are common in the community, and the main perpetrators of those violations were explored. The respondents reported that children suffered a plethora or multiplicity of abuses from parents, teachers and significant others. PPT1, for example, reported that:

“Most of the abuses which are sexual offences include defilement, rape, indecent assault, abduction, and others such as lack of parental care or neglect, non-maintenance, and a host of them. Physical abuses are the most common, specifically assault. The least reported cases include rape and defilement. Most of the perpetrators are males, who are mostly relatives. Parents are also part. Yea, I have seen child neglect, child labour, basically those are the very common ones”.

Other respondents mentioned among others, parental neglect, child labour, physical and verbal abuse, child labour, child trafficking, and child stealing, corporal punishment and other inhuman treatments. According to DOVVSU personnel, in exception of defilement, the perpetrators of these abuses are mostly the children’s own parents and close relatives. They explained that lack of parental care is among the main factors exposing children in the area to such abuses. The above report was reiterated in an interview with a fourteen and half year old JHS girl. She indicated that:

“Rape, verbal abuses such as insulting, stigmatization or teasing of our friends, beating and caning by teachers are the most. I have heard of rape and defilement, female genital mutilation, but I have not seen it or ever experienced it. Usually those who commit these things against the children are those who are very close to them (PST-2).”

Other forms of abuses that were mentioned by the child respondents include caning by teachers, discipline by senior school colleagues, teasing just to state a few are common in schools in the area. They also reported that in the community, parents deny their children food and beat or hit them with objects for minor offences.

It could be concluded from the results in Table 5 that the top 8 prevalent forms of child rights abuses in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro in Accra were physical abuse, sexual abuse, child labour, emotional/psychological abuse, expulsion from school, teasing and stigmatization, child neglect or abandonment, and child non-maintenance. In the same vein, Table 5 revealed that main perpetrators of child rights abuses in the East Ayawaso Sub-Metro were parents (1st) and teachers (2nd). Other perpetrators include chiefs and elders (3rd), religious leaders (4th), and opinion leaders (5th). These revelations were confirmed by both DOVVSU personnel and the child respondents together with their parents during the interview.

4.3. Child Rights Promotion Programmes by DOVVSU

The data presented and analyzed under this theme, seek to answer research question 2 which states “*How does DOVVSU carry out its child rights promotion and protection programmes?*” To measure this objective, response to items (questions) 31 - 41 in the questionnaire, and interview questions 5, 6, 7 and 9 were analyzed.

Table 6. *Information on the existence of DOVVSU in the Ayawaso East Sub Metro in Accra.*

Response	Pupils		Teachers		Parent		DOVVSUPersonnel	
	Freq.	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq.	%
Yes	18	15	6	27	4	7	0	0
No	57	47	12	55	30	55	22	100
Idon’tknow	46	38	4	18	21	38	0	0
Total	121	100	22	100	55	100	22	100

Source: Fieldwork data (2016).

A few (18 or 15%) pupils, 6 (27%) teachers, and 4 (7%) parents affirmed that DOVVSU existed in the community. The majority of the pupils (57 or 47%), teachers (12 or 55%), parents (30 or 55%), and 22 (100%) DOVVSU personnel gave a negative response. Forty-nine (38%) pupils, 4 (18%) teachers, and 21 (36%) parents were not aware of the existence of DOVVSU in the East Ayawaso community.

In an interview with the a few respondents on the existence of DOVVSU office in the community and how they carry out their child rights promotion and protection programmes in the community, a few of the

respondents indicated that they witnessed arrest of individuals who abused or maltreated children by DOVVSU officials and also their campaigns against the violation of the rights of children. Majority of parent respondents, however, stated that they did not know the exact location of the DOVVSU office in the community. The following are what two of the respondents, for example, stated:

I do not know where their office is situated in the community although somehow they come to the community to carry out their activities. Sir, basically they come to educate, and carry out awareness campaigns on violation of children's rights. I have also witnessed arrest made by DOVVSU officials in the neighbourhood (PPT-1).

I am not sure if DOVVSU exists in my community. However, DOVVSU partners with other institutions to carry out child rights promotion and protection programmes, that is to the best of my knowledge. Their inability to do this is always attributed to lack of fund, logistics and other resources. What I have witnessed was collaboration with NGO by the Department of Social Welfare and DOVVSU. What we (social welfare personnel) did was we went to the communities to talk about child protection, and in that case the police officer talks about DOVVSU and arrest, the processes and procedures of DOVVSU. Social welfare also talks about what they do such as child maintenance and other issues. These activities are financed or facilitated by NGOs, and they also use the radio. They also talk to the community, and this is mostly supported by NGOs (PPT-2).

Data from both the survey (as shown in Table 6) and the interview is strong enough evidence to indicate that very little is known about the existence and activities of DOVVSU in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro in Accra. It further suggests that the presence of DOVVSU in the community is relatively new or not in existence at all.

Table 7. *Child rights promotion and protection activities or programmes carried out by DOVVSU in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro in Accra.*

Form of violence/abuse	Pupils 38(31)	Teachers 5(23)	Parents 12(22)	DOVVSU Personnel 6(27)	Rank 2 nd
Community surveillance to track abusive perpetrators					
Case search & establishing gender specific data on violence against children	18(15)	4 (18)	8(14)	2(9)	4 th
Establishing a reporting & protecting mechanisms for complainants of violence against children	6(5)	0(0)	0(0)	1(5)	6 th
Advocacy, education & awareness campaign on violence against children	19(16)	4(18)	11(20)	4(18)	3 rd
Arrest and prosecution of perpetrators	20(17)	6(27)	21(38)	8(36)	1 st
Counseling & support services to re-integrate and rehabilitate victims of abuse`	14(11)	3(14)	2(4)	1(5)	5 th
Referral of victims/perpetrators of abuse for counseling pre hospital care, emergency services & treatment	6(5)	0(0)	1(2)	0(0)	7 th

Source: Fieldwork data (2016).

Table 7 gives information on the child rights promotion and protection activities or programmes which were carried out by DOVVSU in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro in Accra. The arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators was the dominant activity carried out by the DOVVSU (1st). This was followed by community surveillance to track abusive perpetrators (2nd); advocacy, education and awareness campaign on violence against children (3rd); case search and establishing gender specific data on violence against children (4th). Other activities by the DOVVSU included counseling and support services to re-integrate and rehabilitate victims of abuse (5th); establishing a reporting and protecting mechanisms for complainants of violence against children (6th) and referral of victims and perpetrators of abuse for counseling, pre hospital care, emergency services and treatment (7th).

4.4. Challenges Facing DOVVSU in the Promotion and Protection of Child Rights in the Sub-Metro

The study also explored the challenges facing DOVVSU in the promotion and protection of child rights in the sub metropolis. Table 8 gives information on the resource capacity of DOVVSU for carrying out child rights promotion and protection activities in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro. The major resource constraint of DOVVSU was inadequate or limited funds for activities (1st). This was followed by inadequate logistics and other resource materials (2nd). The least constraints were inadequate personnel, and transport facilities (4th). The findings of this survey established that inadequate or limited funds and logistics were the main constraints of DOVVSU.

Table 8. Resource capacity of DOVVSU for child rights promotion and protection activities in the Ayawaso East Sub Metro, Accra.

Resources		Responses						Rank
		VAF	AF	AVF	IF	VIF	NA	
Personnel	Pup	0(0)	0(0)	29(24)	60(50)	32(26)	0(0)	4 th
	Trs	0(0)	0(0)	9(41)	13(59)	0(0)	0(0)	
	Par	0(0)	0(0)	11(20)	30(55)	14(25)	0(0)	
	DP	0(0)	0(0)	10(45)	11(50)	1(5)	0(0)	
Logistics	Pup	0(0)	0(0)	46(38)	51(42)	24(20)	0(0)	2 nd
	Trs	0(0)	0(0)	7(32)	15(68)	0(0)	0(0)	
	Par	0(0)	0(0)	9(16)	35(64)	11(20)	0(0)	
	DP	0(0)	0(0)	8(36)	12(55)	2(9)	0(0)	
Material resources	Pup	0(0)	0(0)	46(38)	51(42)	24(20)	0(0)	2 nd
	Trs	0(0)	0(0)	7(32)	15(68)	0(0)	0(0)	
	Par	0(0)	0(0)	9(16)	35(64)	11(20)	0(0)	
	DP	0(0)	0(0)	8(36)	12(55)	2(9)	0(0)	
Transport	Pup	0(0)	0(0)	29(24)	60(50)	32(26)	0(0)	4 th
	Trs	0(0)	0(0)	9(41)	13(59)	0(0)	0(0)	
	Par	0(0)	0(0)	11(20)	30(55)	14(25)	0(0)	
	DP	0(0)	0(0)	10(45)	11(50)	1(5)	0(0)	
Funds/money	Pup	0(0)	0(0)	27(22)	70(58)	24(20)	0(0)	1 st
	Trs	0(0)	0(0)	6(27)	16(73)	0(0)	0(0)	
	Par	0(0)	0(0)	11(20)	30(55)	14(25)	0(0)	
	DP	0(0)	0(0)	9(41)	11(50)	2(9)	0(0)	

Key: VAF = Very Adequate & Functional; AF = Adequate & Functional; AVF = Average & Functional; IF = Inadequate but Functional; VIF = Very Inadequate but Functional; NA= Not Available. Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentages.

Source: Fieldwork data (2015)

The above challenges were confirmed by the respondents when they were asked during the interview to state the resource capacity of DOVVSU and how the availability or non-availability of the resources affects its activities and programmes. They lamented that the non-availability or inadequacy of resources at DOVVSU makes it very difficult if not impossible for personnel to travel to hinterlands to educate the vulnerable including children. The responses indicate that even though the DOVVSU personnel feel the need to open more branches, lack of resources such as office accommodation, furniture, computers, vehicles and several other material resources has hindered their efforts to that direction. Consequently, as one of them explained, *DOVVSU has failed itself as it is unable to carry out effective community policing and especially outreach programmes. This has made the dissemination of information on children's rights problematic (PDO 2).*

The findings of both the survey and interview established that inadequate or limited funds and other logistics were the main constraints of DOVVSU. The inadequacy of funds and logistics are the main limiting factors to the effective organization of child rights promotion and protection activities by DOVVSU in the Ayawaso East sub metro, Accra. These findings echo and lend weight to findings from other studies such as the [22] & [24] which also identified insufficient funding from the central government through the police administration; lack of and/or inadequate material resources, including decent office accommodation, furniture, computers and means of transport; inadequate and lack of qualified and competent personnel as major problems confronting the police service, and by extension the DOVVSU.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study explored the effectiveness of DOVVSU in the promotion and protection of the rights of children in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro in Accra. The study revealed that child rights abuses are prevalent in the study area, even though statutory and customary laws prohibit these violations. These abuses undermine a number of rights such as the right to education, the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, including sexual abuse, the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, the right to educational and vocational information and guidance, and the right to protection against all forms of abuse.

Additionally, the study acknowledged that DOVVSU is confronted with the challenge of resources in carrying out its activities, including child rights promotion programmes in the Ayawaso East Sub-Metro in Accra. Some of these constraints have undermined the DOVVSU officers' desire to achieve its mandated function. It is the conclusion from this study, therefore, that although the government of Ghana has taken several initiatives since 1992 to increase the protection for children in response to concern about cases of abuse against them, lack of resource has hindered the service delivery of DOVVSU, one of the institutions mandated to protect

and promote the rights of the child in the country.

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

- i. For the DOVVSU to discharge its child rights responsibility effectively, it needs to first and foremost be properly resourced. Resourcing not only in terms of money but also logistic and personnel with up-to-date skill and knowledge on the job.
- ii. The DOVVSU of the Ghana Police Service in partnership with the East Ayawaso Sub-Metro Assembly, Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), as well as media institutions should carry out and/or intensify public education to sensitize people in the community on child rights prevention, promotion, and protection. It must collaborate with other institutions which are into child rights promotion as well, and they should embark on advocacy, education and awareness programmes targeted at parents especially to prevent child rights violations.
- iii. The Ghana Police Service, especially the DOVVSU unit of the East Ayawaso sub metro Police Command should sensitize or educate the public/communities on child rights violation and protection issues as well as the consequences of child rights violations. They should partner with the Sub-Metro assembly (MDAs), Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Social Welfare Department, traditional authorities, media institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as PLAN Ghana, Care International, Challenging Heights and Action Aid International, FIDA and other agencies to campaign against child rights violations.
- iv. The DOVVSU of the Ghana Police Service should liaise with the East Ayawaso Sub-Metro Assembly, CHRAJ, Social Welfare Department, FIDA, Action Aid International, PLAN Ghana and World Vision International, other NGOs and enforce legislations on child rights abuse.
- v. The DOVVSU of the Ghana Police Service, CHRAJ, and Social Welfare Department in collaboration with school authorities in the East Ayawaso sub metro should track child rights violations. They should identify and track abusive parents/guardians and other perpetrators.
- vi. The Ghana Police Service Administration should introduce human rights studies into the curricular of police training institutions. It should periodically organize workshops/seminars on human rights abuse and protection to its personnel. Also, it should sponsor personnel of the DOVVSU unit to pursue further studies in human rights including children's rights. This will ensure that personnel skills are up-to-date.

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