



Gender Studies & Human Rights Documentation Centre

The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on SRHR Beneficiaries in Ghana – Students' Beneficiaries

Research Report
September 2020

George Asare, Richard Osei Bofah & Dorcas Adewale



GABS Research Consult Limited

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
List of Figures	vi
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	vii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Objectives.....	1
2. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH.....	3
2.1 Research Design.....	3
2.2 Sampling and fieldwork.....	3
3. FINDINGS	5
3.1 Demographics of Respondents.....	5
3.2 Household Characteristics	7
3.3 Knowledge on COVID-19 and How to Stay Safe	11
3.4.1 Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on General Livelihoods.....	13
3.4.2 Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on children’s education (learning).....	27
3.4.3 Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on young people’s rights in the home	36
4. RECOMMENDATIONS	45
Appendix A1: Survey Instruments.....	48

List of Tables

Table 2.2.1:	List of sampled beneficiary communities and interviews conducted	4
Table 3.1.1:	Distribution of ethnic group of respondents by district (%)	6
Table 3.1.2:	Current grade of the respondents by district (%)	7
Table 3.2.3:	Distribution of household characteristics, by district (%).....	9
Table 3.2.4:	Availability of rooms in the household by district.....	10
Table 3.2.5:	Type of toilet facility used by respondents' household by district (%)	11
Table 3.3.1:	COVID-19 detection by early symptoms	12
Table 3.3.2:	Measures that could be taken to stay safe from the COVID-19 disease by district (percent of cases).....	12
Table 3.4.1.1	Food security in respondents' household in the last 6 months by district (%)	15
Table 3.4.1.2:	Non-food items received in COVID-19 pandemic period, by district (percent of cases)	17
Table 3.4.1.3:	Items households provided to keep safe from contracting the COVID-19 disease, by district (percent of cases).....	18
Table 3.4.1.4:	Perception of current poverty status by district (%)	21
Table 3.4.1.6:	Whether COVID-19 pandemic has brought severe hardship to respondents' households, by districts (%)	24
Table 3.4.1.7:	How respondents' households dealt with the hardship within the period by districts (percent of cases).....	25
Table 3.4.1.8:	Whether COVID-19 pandemic has brought hardships to other households, by districts (%)	26
Table 3.4.1.9:	How other households dealt with the hardship within the period by district (percent of cases)	27
Table 3.4.2.1:	Activities performed in the COVID-19 lockdown period	28
Table 3.4.2.2:	Access to assets in good working condition owned by households of students by district (percent of cases)	30
Table 3.4.2.3:	Providers of internet on smart-phones and amount spent on internet data for leaning by district (%)	31
Table 3.4.2.4:	Ways to keep up with academic work in the next school session by district (percent of cases)	33
Table 3.4.2.5:	Effects of COVID-19 pandemic on emotional / psychological well- being by district.....	34
Table 3.4.2.6:	Awareness, availability and membership of "Gender Club" by district.....	34

Table 3.4.2.7:	Frequency of participation in club activities and leadership positions held by district (%).....	35
Table 3.4.2.8:	Frequency at which club members contacted each other in the lockdown period by district (%).....	35
Figure 3.4.2.4:	Distribution of students who “worked for others for pay/food” due to COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown by district (%).....	36
Table 3.4.3.1:	Proportion of students abused in the home by district (%)	37
Table 3.4.3.2:	Kind of violence towards students abused in the home by district (%)	39
Table 3.4.3.3	Levels of sexual abuse towards adolescent students in COVID-19 pandemic period by district (%).....	40
Table 3.4.3.4	Levels of sexual abuse towards other adolescents in COVID-19 pandemic period by district (%).....	42
Table 3.4.3.5	Levels of severe verbal abuse in COVID-19 pandemic period by district (%)	43
Table 3.4.3.6:	Levels of parents’ / guardians’ responsiveness to students’ needs in COVID-19 pandemic period by district (%)	44

List of Figures

Figure 3.1.1:	Distribution of age of respondents by gender (%).....	5
Figure 3.1.2:	Distribution of religious affiliation of respondents by district (%)	6
Figure 3.3.1:	Interacting with COVID-19 recovered patients.....	13
Figure 3.4.1.1:	Food / financial assistance in COVID-19 pandemic period by district (%)	16
Figure 3.4.1.2:	Current financial position of respondents' household compared to the period just before the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana by district (%)	19
Figure 3.4.1.3:	Proportion of respondents that attribute their current financial situation to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, by district (%)	20
Figure 3.4.1.4:	Household member stopped usual livelihood activity in the last 6 months by district (%)	22
Figure 3.4.1.5:	New jobs secured in the last 6 months by district (%)	23
Figure 3.4.2.1:	Distribution of students by their main source of online learning resources	29
Figure 3.4.2.2:	Students' access to smartphones and learning by district (%).....	30
Figure 3.4.2.3:	Effects of lockdown from COVID-19 pandemic on students' learning behaviour	32
Figure 3.4.3.1:	Kind of violence towards students abused in the home by district (%)	38
Figure 3.4.3.2:	Trends of abuse in COVID-19 pandemic period by district (%).....	40

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall objective was to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on SRHR beneficiaries in Ghana, particularly on the economic impact among households of these students as well as educational impact of students in upper primary and junior high school, abuse towards young girls and boys, and on their academic performance.

Four districts were included in the survey: Ada, Wenchi, Nkoranza North and Kintampo North. In terms of personal characteristics, a slightly higher proportion of the students were between 12 – 14 years, belonged to the Akan and Ga Dangme ethnic groups and Christian religion; Kintampo North was predominated by Konkomba and Mole-Dagbani. Most respondents have completed primary school.

Regarding their household characteristics, most students live in separate house and the apartments were owned by their households. Pipe-borne water followed by sachet or bottled water is reported to be the main source of water for drinking. Charcoal and firewood remain the main fuel for cooking with gas accounting for just about 8 percent. KVIP is reported be the most toilet facility used by households (40.6%). Open defecation accounted for over 41 percent with Kintampo North reporting the highest situation of 80 percent whilst majority of the households shared their toilet facility.

The survey reveals diverse findings in relation to the COVID-19 disease. There is common knowledge of the disease among respondents with coughing been cited as the most known symptom. However, 1 in every 11 cases was attributed to not having knowledge of the symptoms with Kintampo North reporting the highest of 35 percent of cases. The frequent washing of hands and wearing of nose mask were cited as the most adopted safety measures.

Only 0.6 percent of the students said they knew someone who has contracted the COVID-19 disease with one patient in the community. The survey reveals the disruptive impacts of the disease on household livelihoods. About half of the respondents said their households had to skip or cut the size of their meals in the last 6 months. Lack of money was cited as the primary cause. Currently, around 7 in every 10 respondents confirmed that their households are still experiencing the hardship and this is worst for those in Ada.

Some students and their households received assistance from government and non-governmental organizations.

Most households of the student provided nose masks, hand sanitizers and soap or detergent to keep safe from the virus.

Two-thirds of the students said their households are currently financially worse off than before the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost half of the students had someone in their household who had to stop their usual livelihood activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic and this is highest for those in Nkoranza North and Kintampo North but

least for Ada. Despite this, over one-third of total cases have done nothing to address their current hardship, particularly in Ada (49.6%) and Kintampo North (42.9%).

Further, the findings reveal varied impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on children's education. Over half of students learnt on their own, 7.5 percent attended special classes by personally meeting a teacher and just about 3 percent attended classes online while about one-third helped their parents at the workplace. Higher proportion of students in Wenchi were found to be committed to their academic work than the other three districts. About a quarter of the students did not have access to virtual learning resources: radio, television and smartphones. Only 1 out of 12 students had access to smartphones of which most of them (64.5%) learnt with it. The cost of internet on smartphones are primarily financed by parents. Notwithstanding, the lockdown from the pandemic has adversely affected the learning behaviour of majority (89.7%) of the students with some indicating they find it difficult to learn at home. Most of them believe they could improve on their academics by learning on their own with the textbooks they have.

Most (62.5%) of the respondents have Gender Clubs in their schools with two-thirds of them (68%) of them being members.

Again, the findings reveal that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused increases in abuse for 1 in every 10 students though over half (54.2%) of the students have been abused before. About 3 percent of the students have experienced sexual abuse before with about half of them reporting an increase in the pandemic period. It was found that majority of sexual abuses (72.7%) were never reported to recognized or government institutions. Physical abuse accounted for 52.9% of all abuses recorded.

These findings provide a number of implications for government actions and policies, as well as some actions to be taken by households, District Assemblies and other relevant institutions. Overcoming the socio-economic impact of the current pandemic and future shocks will require joint collaboration of all stakeholders.

Stakeholders such as the Gender Centre should increase their awareness programmes focusing on empowering children to report abuses whilst law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders enforce child right's laws. Also, awareness creation on refraining from abusing children sexually should be intensified. The media and other stakeholders should increase the awareness of the COVID-19 disease on its symptoms and how to stay safe from contracting it.

Additionally, we recommend that the government should re-open schools whilst ensuring COVID-19 safety protocols are strictly followed. A shift system can be introduced where there are capacity constraints. Students should also be tested and put in appropriate classes based on their performance. We further recommend that the government should provide educational resources to make e-learning accessible to all.

1. INTRODUCTION

In August 2020, GABS Research Consult Limited was commissioned by the Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre to undertake a study on the *Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Sexual and Reproductive Health Right (SRHR) Beneficiaries in four districts in Ghana.*

1.1 Background

The World Health Organisation declared the global outbreak of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) a public health emergency and international concern in January 2020 and a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Governments across the world instituted measures to prevent the spread of the virus and to contain it. The Ghana Government was of no exception as it instituted a mandatory quarantine policy of 14 days for all international travelers entering Ghana and further closed its borders on the 22nd of March, 2020 after it recorded its first two cases of the disease on March 12. Ghana's educational system was not left unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic as the government was forced to shut down all schools on the 16th of March, 2020 amidst fears of spreading the virus. More stringent measures including a total lockdown of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area and the Greater Kumasi Metropolitan Area starting on April 1, 2020 for two weeks were imposed. This situation made some schools take to the path of virtual learning and started instructing students on social media platforms. Consequently, these restrictions on movement of persons and partial closure of some forms of businesses in these areas had implications on the general economic and socio-cultural environment in the country since these two places are the hub of Ghana's economy. Businesses in SRHR beneficiary communities, as well as in other local communities were equally affected due to the COVID-19 restrictions. It was important to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown on the general well-being of students in beneficiary communities.

1.2 Objectives

The overall objective of the study is to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on SRHR beneficiaries in Ghana.

Four specific objectives were generated from this:

1. To assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on general economic impact of students;
2. To investigate whether the pandemic has increased violence meted out to children in the home;
3. To investigate whether the pandemic has increased sexual abuse towards students; and

4. To assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the learning behaviour of students.

2. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

This section presents an overview of the study design and sampling technique.

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods approach. The primary respondent was students in beneficiary communities. Other categories of respondents were also interviewed to triangulate the findings of the study and these include (i) parents; (ii) officials of Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service (DOVVSU) in the districts; (iii) Queen Mothers; (iv) Assemblymen; (v) Head Teachers; (vi) Social Welfare officials; and (vii) officials of the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). The students were surveyed using a structured quantitative questionnaire. Additionally, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with some of the students in the beneficiary communities as well as in-depth interviews (IDIs) with stakeholders of students' welfare. The study instruments are presented in appendix A1.

2.2 Sampling and fieldwork

Simple random sampling was used to select 4 communities each in Ada and Wenchi while 2 communities were sampled from Nkoranza North and Kintampo North. The GSHRDC regards Nkoranza North and Kintampo North as one district in their operations since they fewer beneficiary communities compared to the other two districts. Table 2.2.1 presents the list of communities and the samples included in the study. **Students in upper primary (i.e. Primary 4 to Primary 6) and Junior High School** from beneficiary communities in the project districts constituted the population for the students' survey. A systematic random sampling approach was employed to select the individual students to respond to the questionnaire. Not more than one student from the same household was interviewed which ensured non-duplication of household level responses. The survey interviewed a total of 360 students from 12 communities in 4 districts. Exactly 30 respondents, comprising 15 girls and 15 boys, were interviewed in each community. Four FGDs with students, one in each district, were conducted. Four other FGDs with women's group and two with men's group were also held to help unravel the potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, 12 IDIs were conducted to augment the information the students volunteered, especially on the violence and child abuse.

The fieldwork took place from August 31 to September 12, 2020. Data for the quantitative study was captured using computer-assisted personal interviewing system of CSPro. All in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were recorded using digital audio recorders, excepted one respondent from Kintampo North who, though consented to be interviewed but declined to put it on record.

Table 2.2.1: List of sampled beneficiary communities and students interviewed

No.	District	Communities	Girls	Boys	FGD	IDI
1	Ada		60	60	3	5
11		Ada Foah	15	15		
12		Ocanseykope	15	15		
13		Luhuese	15	15		
14		Anyarkpo	15	15		
2	Wenchi		60	60	3	3
21		Koase	15	15		
22		Ntoase	15	15		
23		Boadan	15	15		
24		Subinso No. 2	15	15		
3	Nkoranza North		30	30	2	2
31		Dromankese	15	15		
32		Dromankuma	15	15		
4	Kintampo North		30	30	2	2
41		Gurumpe	15	15		
42		Kadelso	15	15		
	Total		180	180	10	12

3. FINDINGS

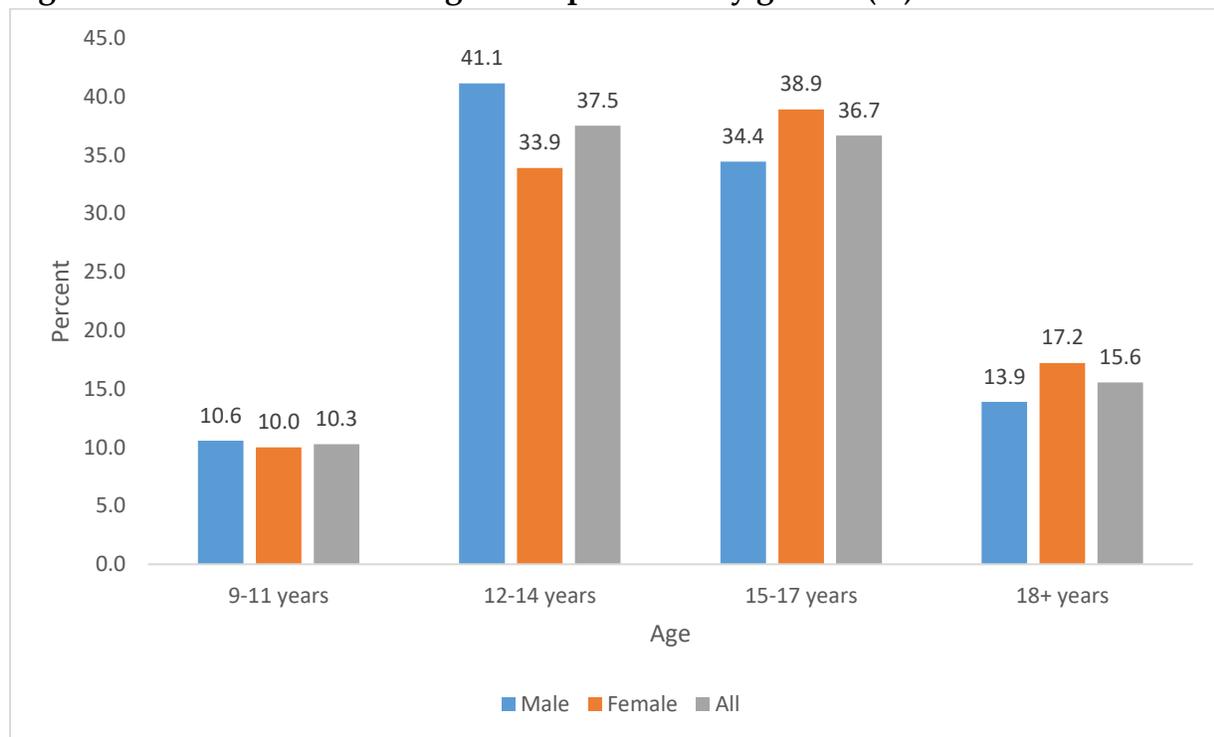
This section discusses the findings from the survey of the Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on SRHR beneficiaries in Ghana.

3.1 Demographics of Respondents

Sex and Age

Equal proportions of males and females across all the four districts were sampled. A greater proportion of the respondents were aged between 12-14 years (37.5%), followed by those aged 15-17 years (36.7%). The least group was those who were aged between 9-11 years (10.3%). The distribution of age differ by gender. For example, while 38.9 percent of the females were in the 15 - 17 years age group, only 34.4% of males were found in this group (see Figure 3.1.1).

Figure 3.1.1: Distribution of age of respondents by gender (%)



A higher proportion of respondents were Akan (31.4%) followed by Ga-Dangme (29.7%) and Mole-Dagbani (8.9%). Respondents from other ethnic groups such as Sissala, Waala, Hausa and Frafra among others were also included in the sample. The Ga Dangme ethnic group were predominant in the Ada district whilst Akan dominated in the Wenchi and Nkoranza North districts. Ethnic groups recorded in Kintampo North differed a bit from those mainly recorded in the other three districts, thus

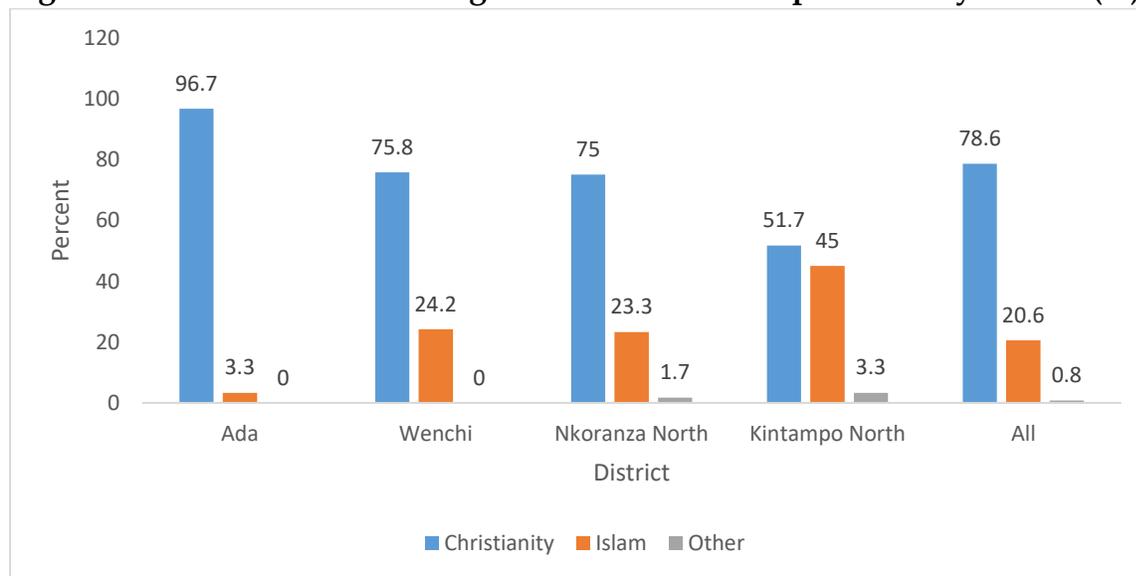
Konkomba (38.3%) and Mole-Dagbani (36.7%) were mostly found with some few Ewe (11.7%) and Dagarti (5%) (see Table 3.1.1).

Table 3.1.1: Distribution of ethnic group of respondents by district (%)

Ethnic group	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Akan(Fante, Nzema, Ashanti, Bono)	2.5	65	53.3	0	31.4
Ewe	5.8	0.8	0	11.7	4.2
Ga Dangme	89.2	0	0	0	29.7
Mole-Dagbani	0	8.3	0	36.7	8.9
Other	2.5	16.7	30	8.3	12.8
Konkomba	0	0.8	8.3	38.3	8.1
Dagarti	0	8.3	8.3	5	5
N	120	120	60	60	360

Majority of the respondents were Christians (78.6%), followed by Muslims (20.6%) as shown in Figure 3.1.2. The proportion of Muslims in Ada (3.3%) increased to 23.3% in Nkoranza North, and further to 45 percent in Kintampo North.

Figure 3.1.2: Distribution of religious affiliation of respondents by district (%)



A greater proportion of the students who responded to the survey were in JHS 3 (21.4%), followed by those in JHS 1 (18.1%) whilst the least segment of students were pooled from Primary 5 (11.9%). Table 3.1.2 presents the summary of the current grade of the students.

Table 3.1.2: Current grade of the respondents by district (%)

Current grade	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Primary 4	25	24.2	1.7	5	17.5
Primary 5	18.3	13.3	0	8.3	11.9
Primary 6	17.5	19.2	3.3	5	13.6
JHS 1	14.2	22.5	16.7	18.3	18.1
JHS 2	16.7	11.7	30	18.3	17.5
JHS 3	8.3	9.2	48.3	45	21.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100
N	120	120	60	60	360

3.2 Household Characteristics

Type of dwelling

Slightly above half (51.4%) of the sampled respondents resided in separate houses followed by those in also dwelled in compound houses (41.1%). Majority of the households in Kintampo North and Nkoranza North reside in separate houses while about half of those in Ada and Wenchi reside in compound houses (see Table 3.2.3).

Holding/tenancy arrangement

Most households (60%) of the students owned their own dwelling places while close to one-fifth (18.6%) rented their dwelling place. However, holding of dwelling place in Wenchi differed from the general trend observed in the other three districts (see Table 3.2.3).

Lighting in the home

Electricity from the national grid is the main source of light for majority of the respondents (81.4%). Over 92 percent of the households in Wenchi depended on electricity from the national grid for lighting compared to 58.3 percent in Nkoranza North. On the other hand, three out of every 10 households depended on flashlights and rechargeable lights for lighting in Nkoranza North compared to a little less than 1 household for every 10 households in Wenchi.

Main source of drinking water in the household

Pipe-borne (38.1%), boreholes (23.1%) and sachet / bottled water were the main sources of drinking recorded in the survey. All the students in Nkoranza North sourced drinking water from borehole whereas none of the households interviewed in the Ada district drank from boreholes.

Main source of water for general purpose

A higher proportion of the respondents (42.2%) used pipe borne water for general purposes with about two-thirds (67.5%) of those in Wenchi using pipe-borne water for general purposes whilst all the households in Nkoranza North used boreholes for general purposes.

Fuel for cooking

Charcoal (46.7%) and firewood (45.8%) are the main sources of fuel used by the various households interviewed. The use of gas (7.5%) was less popular amongst the households as shown in figure Table 3.2.3. A higher percentage of households in the Wenchi (50.8%), Kintampo North (78.3%) and Nkoranza North (71.7%) districts relied on firewood for fuel but it was least used in the Ada district (11.7%). The use of charcoal (69.2%) was rather prevalent amongst the households in the Ada district.

Table 3.2.3: Distribution of household characteristics, by district (%)

Variable	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
<i>Type of dwelling</i>					
Separate house	41.7	35.8	73.3	80	51.4
Compound house	53.3	47.5	25	20	41.1
Other	5	16.7	1.7	0	7.5
<i>Holding/ tenancy arrangement</i>					
Owning	62.5	38.3	76.7	81.7	60
Renting	15	27.5	20	6.7	18.6
Rent-free	22.5	33.3	3.3	11.7	21.1
Squatting	0	0.8	0	0	0.3
<i>Main source of lighting</i>					
Electricity (national grid)	86.7	92.5	58.3	71.7	81.4
Electricity (solar power / generator)	0	0	11.7	5	2.8
Kerosene lamp	0.8	0	0	0	0.3
Flashlight / rechargeable batteries	12.5	7.5	30	23.3	15.6
<i>Source of drinking water</i>					
Pipe-borne	35.8	60	0	36.7	38.1
Borehole	0	2.5	100	33.3	23.1
Well	18.3	3.3	0	28.3	11.9
River / stream / spring	0.8	14.2	0	1.7	5.3
Sachet / bottled water	45	20	0	0	21.7
<i>Source of water for general purpose</i>					
Pipe-borne	43.3	67.5	0.0	31.7	42.2
Borehole	0.0	4.2	100.0	35.0	23.9
Well	52.5	7.5	0.0	30.0	25.0
River / stream / spring	4.2	20.8	0.0	1.7	8.6
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.3
<i>Fuel for cooking</i>					
Firewood	11.7	50.8	71.7	78.3	45.8
Charcoal	69.2	45.8	28.3	21.7	46.7
Gas	19.2	3.3	0	0	7.5
N	120	120	60	60	360

Number of rooms household occupy

Table 3.2.4 shows that the average number of rooms the households' occupied as well as average number of rooms used for sleeping was 3. The highest average number of rooms occupied by the households (4) was recorded in Wenchi whilst households in Kintampo North and Nkoranza North had two rooms, on the average. Most households of the students had, on the average, 3 people who sleep in a room except in Wenchi where fewer people (2) shared a room.

Table 3.2.4: Availability of rooms in the household by district

District	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
<i>Rooms household occupy</i>					
Ada	120	3	1.6	1	9
Wenchi	120	4	2.8	1	10
Nkoranza North	60	2	1.5	1	8
Kintampo North	60	2	1.1	1	7
All	360	3	2.1	1	10
<i>Rooms for sleeping</i>					
Ada	120	2	1.1	1	6
Wenchi	120	4	2.6	1	10
Nkoranza North	60	2	1.3	1	8
Kintampo North	60	2	0.7	1	4
All	360	3	1.8	1	10
<i>Number of people per sleeping room</i>					
Ada	120	3	1.4	0.8	8
Wenchi	120	2	1.5	0.3	7
Nkoranza North	60	3	1.7	0.4	8
Kintampo North	60	3	1.2	1.0	7
All	360	3	1.5	0.3	8

Availability of toilet facility

With respect to toilet facilities, slightly greater percentage of the respondents had no toilet facility (41.7%) at their disposal. About 40 percent indicated they used KVIPs. Majority of the respondents (80%) in the Kintampo North and 51.7 percent of households of students in Ada indicated they had no toilet facilities hence resorted to bushes, beaches and fields. Majority of the respondents (82.4%) revealed that their households shared their toilet facility with other households in the community.

Table 3.2.5: Type of toilet facility used by respondents' household by district (%)

Variable	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
<i>Toilet facility</i>					
W.C	11.7	20.8	8.3	1.7	12.5
KVIP	33.3	54.2	51.7	16.7	40.6
Pit latrine	3.3	8.3	6.7	1.7	5.3
No facility (bush / beach / field)	51.7	16.7	33.3	80	41.7
N	120	120	60	60	360
<i>Use of shared toilet facility</i>					
Toilet is shared with other households	79.3	83	85	83.3	82.4
N	46	83	34	10	173

3.3 Knowledge on COVID-19 and How to Stay Safe

Early symptoms

All the students interviewed have heard of the COVID-19 pandemic except one respondent from Ada.

A greater proportion (77.2%) of persons in all the districts cited coughing as one of the early symptoms of the COVID-19 disease as shown in Table 3.3.1. Majority of the students in Ada aware of some of the early symptoms of the disease such as sneezing (96.6), coughing (93.3%) and high body temperature (89.1%). Most students were not aware of high body temperature as an early symptom of the disease in Wenchi (44.2%), Nkoranza North (35%) and Kintampo North (20%) as well as sore-throat which was indicated by less than 8 percent of all the students.

"...It makes me cough, sneeze, difficulty in breathing" R2, Ada, Student

Table 3.3.1: COVID-19 detection by early symptoms

Symptoms	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Coughing	93.3	80.8	61.7	53.3	77.2
Sneezing	96.6	60.8	33.3	36.7	64.1
High body temperature	89.1	44.2	35.0	20.0	53.5
Sore-throat	15.1	4.2	3.3	1.7	7.2
Other	5.0	45.0	38.3	18.3	26.2
No idea	2.5	0.0	13.3	35.0	8.9
Total valid cases (%)	301.7	235.0	185.0	165.0	237.1
Total valid cases (N)	119	120	60	60	359

Safety measures

In table 3.3.2, majority of the students recorded frequent washing of hands with soap under running water (86.4%), use of nose mask in public places (84.1%) and use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer (76.9%) among the sure ways against contracting the COVID-19 disease. Students in Ada (92.4%) and Wenchi (90%) have a higher stake in this claim. Abstaining from touching of mouth, eyes and nose as a safety measure against contracting the disease was not considered by any of the students in Ada and Kintampo North; very few students in the other two districts recorded this.

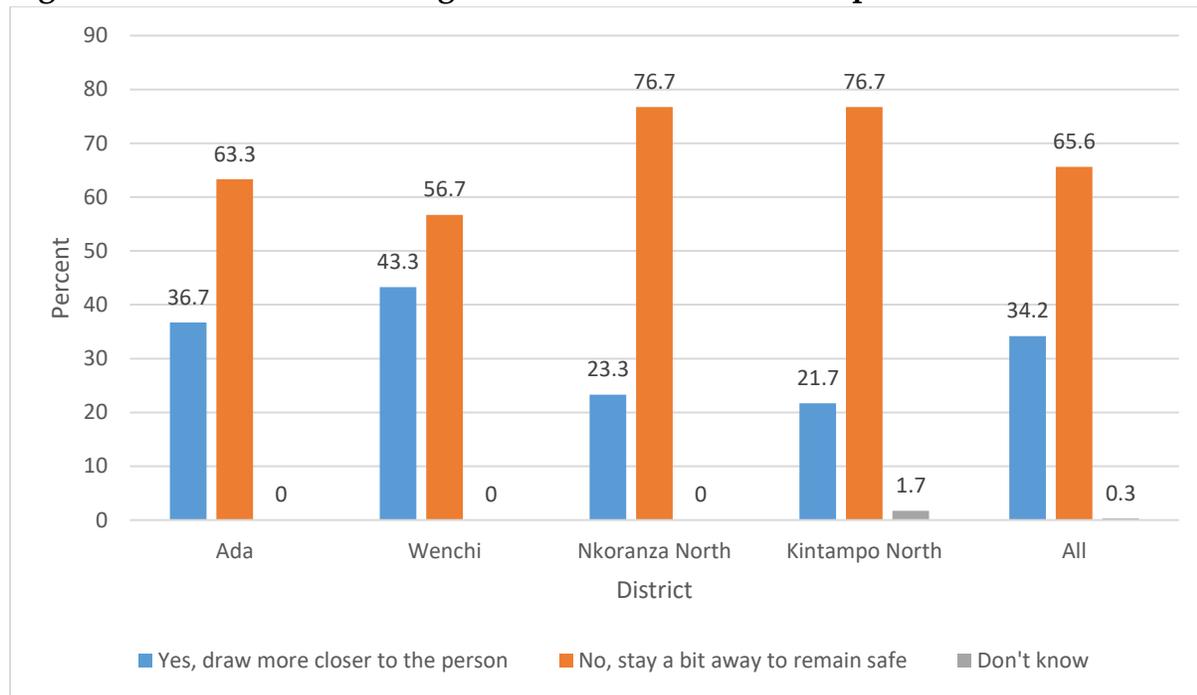
Table 3.3.2: Measures that could be taken to stay safe from the COVID-19 disease by district (percent of cases)

Safety measures	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Staying at home	32.8	10.8	6.7	0.0	15.6
Frequent washing of hands with soap under running water	92.4	90.0	78.3	75.0	86.4
Use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer	95.8	70.0	68.3	61.7	76.9
Use of nose mask when going out	91.6	78.3	86.7	78.3	84.1
Practicing social distancing	26.9	28.3	41.7	28.3	30.1
Avoid shaking of hands	2.5	13.3	6.7	11.7	8.4
Avoid touching of mouth, eyes and nose	0.0	5.0	3.3	0.0	2.2
Other	0.0	9.2	16.7	11.7	7.8
Total valid cases	342.0	305.0	308.3	266.7	311.4
Total valid cases (N)	119	120	60	60	359

Very few students, just two in Wenchi (1.7%) know someone who contracted the COVID-19 disease.

Most respondents (65.6%) would stay a bit away from someone who has recovered from the COVID-19 disease and would not interact with the person the usual way he/she used to do (see Figure 3.3.2).

Figure 3.3.1: Interacting with COVID-19 recovered patients



3.4.1 Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on General Livelihoods

Coping strategies

The COVID-19 disease has had diverse impacts on household livelihoods. About 10 percent and 38.3 percent of respondents respectively said their households had to cut the size of their meals throughout and sometimes in the last 6 months prior to the survey (Table 3.4.1.1). A quarter of households of students in NKoranza North cut their meals throughout the last 6 months whilst over 60 percent of households of the students interviewed in Ada revealed cutting the size of their means sometimes in the last 6 months. Majority of households in Wenchi (78.3%) reported the highest situation of households who never cut the size of their meals within the same period.

“...We are still eating jollof but it’s not plenty...” R4, Ada

“...R1:My mum use to support us with our feeding and provision of our needs when she was able to trade with her customers at the market but now things are not easy on her side to help

with the feeding problems we are facing and even provide us with our needs...” R1, Kintampo North

Majority of the households who disclosed they reduced their meal size in the last 6 months attributed it to the lack of money to buy enough food especially in Ada and Wenchi where all the respondents reported. Also 22 percent and 18.3 percent of households in Nkoranza North and Kintampo North respectively reported cutting the size of their food due to shortage of food items in the market.

“...It has affected me in the sense that now we are at home, we are experiencing a shortage in food items reduced the quantity of food we consume and now if you want to buy onions, it is expensive, GHC 10.00 for a small quantity of onions and everything is in shortage...” R3, Ada

“...My mum was selling tubers of yam which was making her get a lot of money to feed home but due to the lockdown her business is not booming anymore making it difficult to get enough food at home...” R2, Nkoranza North

Over one-third (34.3) of the households sampled sometimes skipped meals with an additional 6.7 percent who revealed they missed their meals throughout the last half year due to insufficient food but none of the households in Kintampo North reported having missed meals throughout the period. At least 41 percent of respondents in the other three districts apart from Wenchi (13.3%) occasionally skipped meals in the last 6 months prior to the survey.

Majority (95.2%) of the households of the respondents who indicated they ever skipped meals in the last six months did so because they lacked money to purchase enough food. This was the only cause for skipping meals in Ada though minimal levels of differences existed among households in the other three districts as some reported shortage of food items in the market.

There is still a continuous impact of the COVID-19 disease on households' livelihoods (Table 3.4.1.1). Quite a good number of the respondents (68.2%), who indicated they either reduced (48.3%) or ever skipped their meals (40.8%) in the last half year, still brought to bear that they were still experiencing the situation as depicted in Table 3.4.1.1. About 80 percent of the households in the Ada which had this challenge were still experiencing it as the time of the survey compared to about 60 percent of those households in the other three districts.

“...Due to the lockdown, our market women aren't able to go to the market to sell their farm produce, hence making foodstuffs expensive at the marketplace...” R2, Nkoranza north

“... if the mother went to work and she didn't get the money on that day, you would have to go begging for money before you get something to eat if you were hungry ...” R4, Ada

Table 3.4.1.1 Food security in respondents' household in the last 6 months by district (%)

Variable	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
<i>Cut size of meals</i>					
Yes, throughout the period	4.2	10	25	6.7	10
Yes, sometimes	60.8	11.7	43.3	41.7	38.3
Never	35	78.3	31.7	51.7	51.7
N	120	120	60	60	360
<i>Primary cause of cutting meal size</i>					
We did not have money to buy enough food	100	100	78	86.2	92.5
Shortage of food item in the market	0	0	22	13.8	7.5
N	78	26	41	29	174
<i>Ever skipped meals</i>					
Yes, throughout the period	9.2	6.7	8.3	0	6.7
Yes, sometimes	45	13.3	41.7	46.7	34.2
Never	45.8	80	50	53.3	59.2
N	120	120	60	60	360
<i>Primary cause of meal</i>					
We did not have money to buy enough food	100	91.7	86.7	96.4	95.2
Shortage of food item in the market	0	8.3	13.3	3.6	4.8
N	65	24	30	28	147
<i>Still experience the situations</i>					
Yes	79.5	57.1	64.3	54.8	68.2
No	20.5	42.9	35.7	45.2	31.8
N	78	28	42	31	179

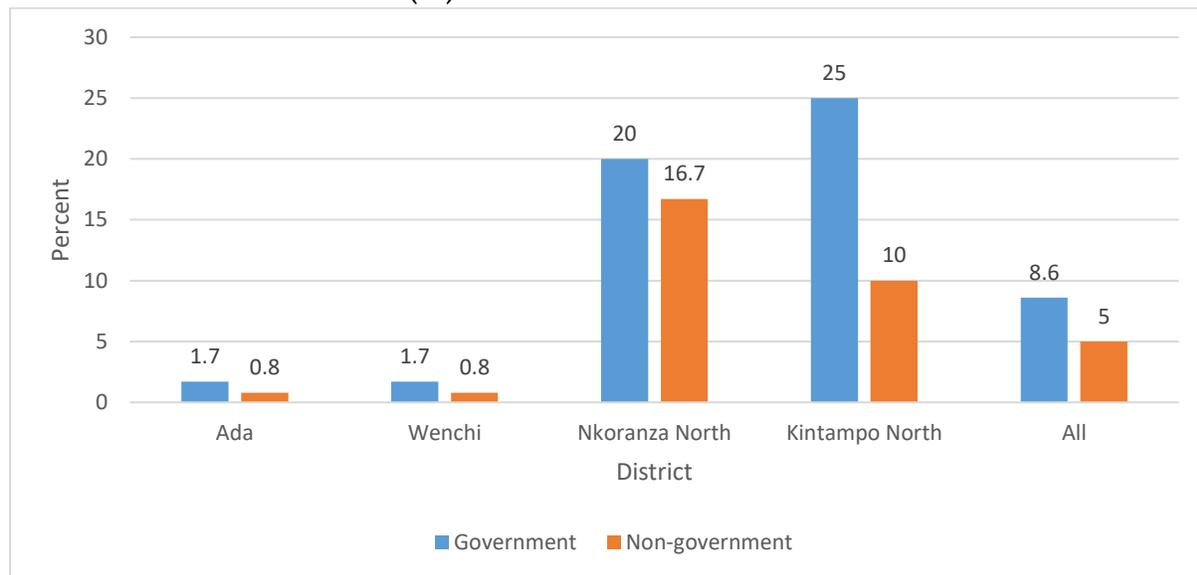
Food, financial and non-food assistance

Majority of the households indicated they did not receive food and other financial assistance from the government during the COVID-19 period. In the Kintampo North district, half of 50 percent of the households received assistance from the government. Only 1.7 percent of the interviewed households in Ada district affirmed the government assisted them as visualized in figure 6.

Food and / or financial assistance received from both the government and non-governmental institutions and individuals in the COVID-19 pandemic period was

virtually non-existent in Ada and Wenchi. However, the situation was quite different in Nkoranza North and Kintampo North as at least 20 percent and 10 percent of households these two districts received food / financial support in the period (see Figure 3.4.1.1).

Figure 3.4.1.1: Food / financial assistance in COVID-19 pandemic period by district (%)



Households also received non-food assistance from government and non-governmental organizations (Table 3.4.1.2). The receipt of nose mask (15.3% and 9.7%) from government and non-governmental organizations ranked 1st on top of others. Distribution of nose mask and hand sanitizer by government institutions was quite popular among households in Kintampo North and Nkoranza North unlike Ada where none of the students reported having received any of these items from the government. Similarly, distribution of non-food items in the COVID-19 pandemic period by non-governmental institutions was very low, especially in Wenchi, Kintampo North and Ada. Students didn't mention receiving PPEs, possibly because those who received the PPEs (Form 3 students) were not included in the discussion because they were in school preparing for their BECE exams.

"... Government provided PPE's for the schools within the community when the final year students were allowed to reopen school on 29th June, 2020 and also provision of food was made by the government as well..." Head Teacher, Nkoranza North

Table 3.4.1.2: Non-food items received in COVID-19 pandemic period, by district (percent of cases)

Non-food items	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
<i>Government institution</i>					
Nose mask	0.0	8.3	31.7	43.3	15.3
Sanitizer	0.0	5.8	16.7	38.3	11.1
Tissue / toilet paper	0.0	0.0	3.3	3.3	1.1
Soap / detergent	0.0	0.0	1.7	3.3	0.8
Other	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.3
No, never	100.0	90.0	68.3	56.7	84.2
Total valid cases (%)	100.0	105.0	121.7	145.0	112.8
Total valid cases (N)	120	120	60	60	360
<i>Non-governmental institutions/ individuals</i>					
Nose mask	7.5	5.0	25.0	8.3	9.7
Sanitizer	2.5	2.5	6.7	1.7	3.1
Tissue / toilet paper	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Soap / detergent	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.7	0.6
Other	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8
No, never	89.2	94.2	73.3	91.7	88.6
Total valid cases (%)	102.5	101.7	106.7	103.3	103.1
Total valid cases (N)	120	120	60	60	360

Households own provision

Individuals and households provided for themselves a number of items to keep safe. In this regard, households of most students provided for themselves nose masks (85.8%), hand sanitizers (68.1%) and soap or detergent (37.2%) to keep safe from contracting the COVID-19 disease (Table 3.4.1.3). The households of these students put in place safety mechanisms to cope with the pandemic. There was no significant difference among the districts. Those who did not provide these items to keep safe from the virus were highest in Kintampo North (18.3%) followed by Nkoranza North (6.7%) with Wenchi (2.5%) recording the least (see Table 3.4.1.3). Students did not explicitly speak about their households' provision of these items. However, they spoke about how these items were being sold in the community, which implies that community members bought them to stay safe.

Table 3.4.1.3: Items households provided to keep safe from contracting the COVID-19 disease, by district (percent of cases)

Non-food items	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza	Kintampo	All
			North	North	
Nose mask	94.2	82.5	85.0	76.7	85.8
Sanitizer	75.0	69.2	65.0	55.0	68.1
Soap / detergent	15.8	47.5	58.3	38.3	37.2
Tissue / toilet paper	3.3	4.2	16.7	6.7	6.4
Veronica bucket	5.8	3.3	15.0	1.7	5.8
Hand gloves	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.3
Other	0.0	24.2	13.3	1.7	10.6
Nothing	4.2	2.5	6.7	18.3	6.4
Total valid cases (%)	198.3	234.2	260.0	198.3	220.6
Total valid cases (N)	120	120	60	60	360

Before COVID-19 and current financial status

Two-thirds of students were of the view that their households are financially worse off compared to the period just before the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana with 16.7 percent indicating being better off now (Figure 3.4.1.2). Ada is characterized with higher fraction (94.2%) of respondents whose households are currently worse off followed by those in Nkoranza North (65%) and Kintampo North (56.7%). A relatively higher percentage of students in Kintampo North (33.3%) indicated their households' financial situation being about the same level compared with the other three districts.

Some of the students in a focus group discussion confirmed that:

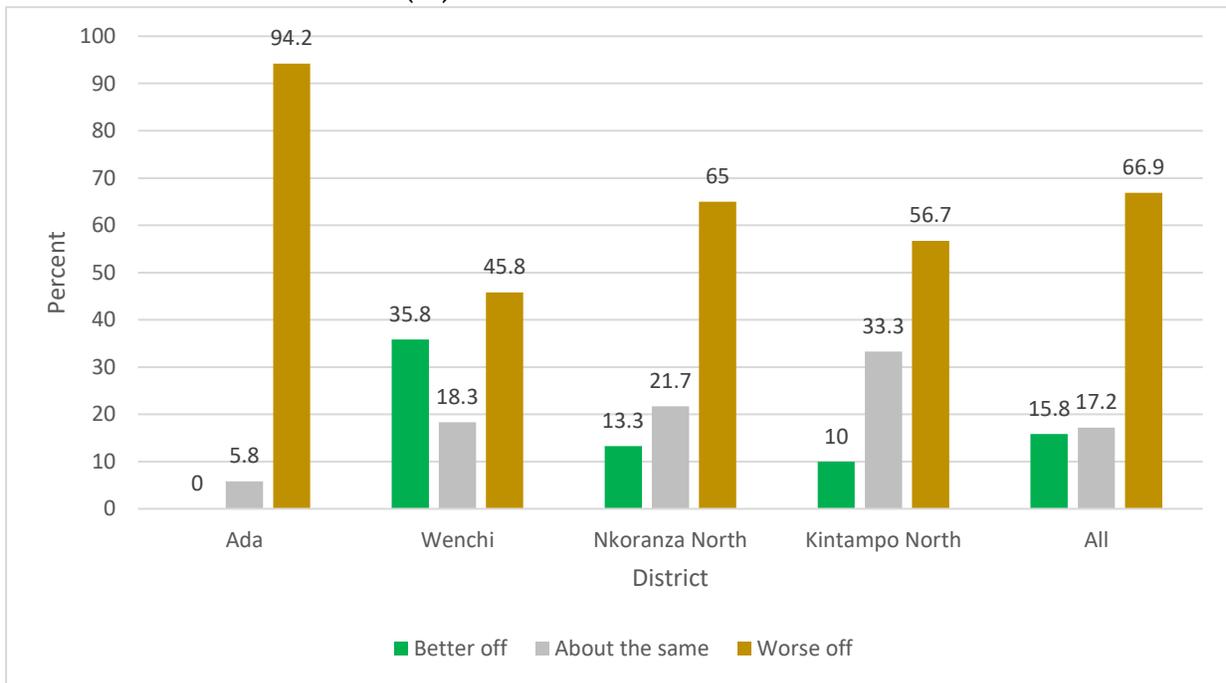
"...My mum was selling nose-mask just to get money to feed the household..." R2, Nkoranza

"...My father is a driver and my mother is a seamstress. They were rich but now they are not rich anymore. Because of the corona virus he can't take 5 passengers as it used to be, its 3 now..." R3, Ada.

"...When the government made this rule known to us, there was not enough food at home to feed the family..." R1, Nkoranza

"...Due to the COVID-19 and its lockdown, businesses were not profitable, hence bringing hardships in the community..." R1, Wenchi

Figure 3.4.1.2: Current financial position of respondents' household compared to the period just before the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana by district (%)



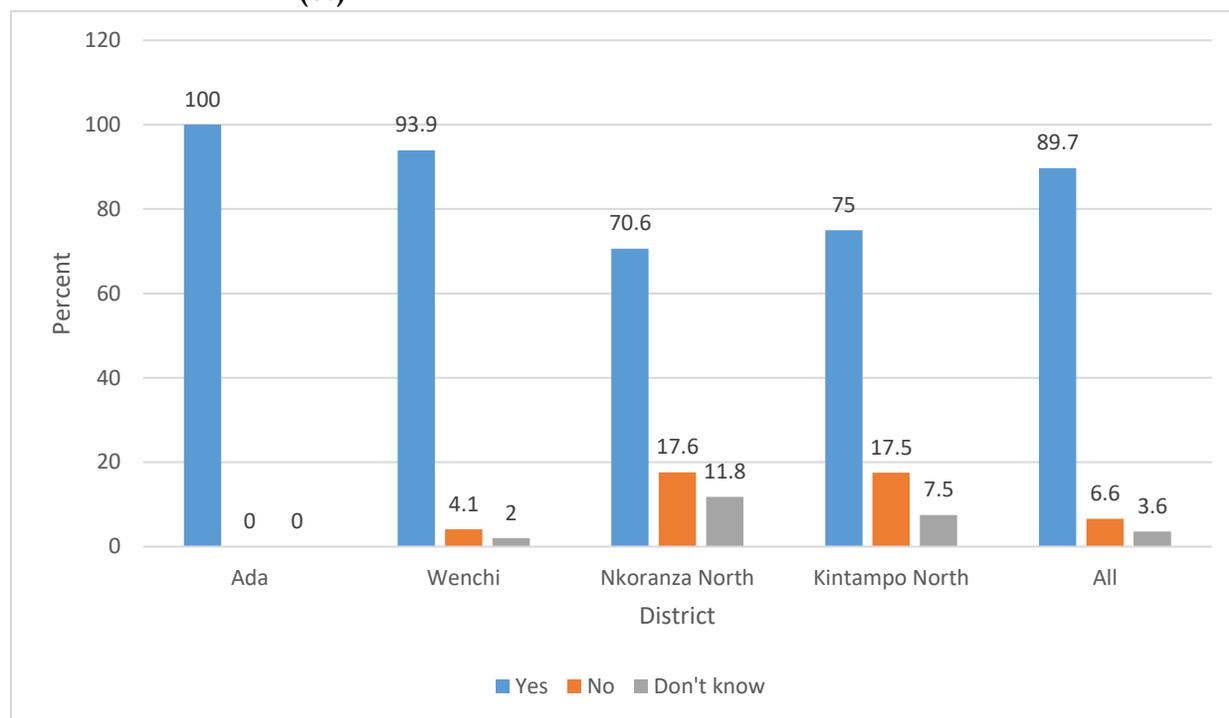
Majority (89.7%) of the respondents attributed the current financial stance of their households to the outbreak of the COVID-19 disease (Figure 3.4.1.3). All the respondents in Ada who indicated their current households' financial situation was worse off attributed it to the outbreak of COVID-19 followed by 93.9 percent in Wenchi and about three-quarters in Kintampo North and Nkoranza North. This was supported by the Head Teacher

"...Due to the covid-19 and its lockdown, the cashew business and farming were no longer profitable to our parents for them to get money to take good care of us..." R1, Wenchi

"... because of the corona virus now some of our parents have lost their work. We are now working for a woman before we get money..." R7, Ada

"...the lockdown of the market centres made it difficult for the people to sell their goods in order to use the income to buy the things they need for the family..." Headteacher, Nkoranza North

Figure 3.4.1.3: Proportion of respondents that attribute their current financial situation to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, by district (%)



Over half (53.1%) of the respondents were of the view that their households are currently neither poor nor wealthy among most households in their communities while those who reported being poor and very poor were 29.2 percent and 6.4 percent respectively (Table 3.4.1.4).

A greater fraction (20%) of those in Kintampo North indicated being very poor followed by Nkoranza North (13.3%) compared with Wenchi (1.7%) and Ada (0.8%). There is a higher proportion of respondents in Ada who consider their households to be relatively poor followed by those in Wenchi, Kintampo North and Nkoranza North.

Table 3.4.1.4: Perception of current poverty status by district (%)

Current status of household	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Very poor	0.8	1.7	13.3	20	6.4
Poor	32.5	28.3	28.3	25	29.2
Average (Neither poor nor wealthy)	63.3	51.7	43.3	45	53.1
Above average	2.5	18.3	6.7	8.3	9.4
Wealthy	0.8	0	8.3	1.7	1.9
N	120	120	60	60	360

Impact of COVID-19 on jobs

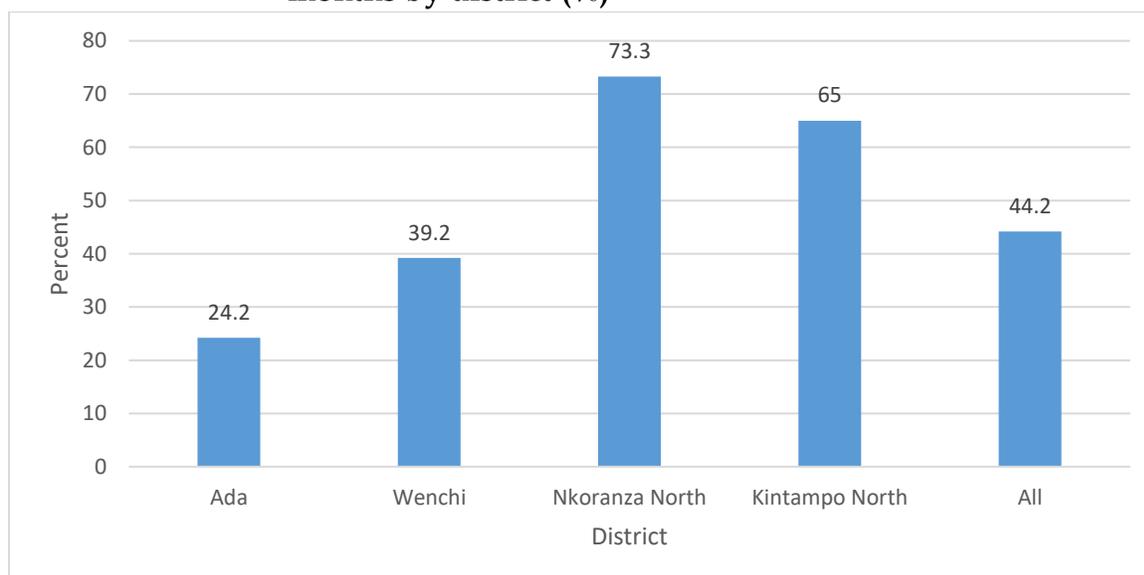
The students were asked to indicate if there were any job losses in their households in the past six months and whether any of these job losses related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The results, presented in Figure 3.4.1.4, showed that the pandemic has caused job losses in almost half (44.2%) of the households of the students. Most job losses were recorded in Nkoranza North (73.3%) and Kintampo North (65%) whereas just about a quarter (24.2%) of households in Ada reported such COVID-19 related job losses. In general, almost all job losses (96.2%), according to the students, were directly linked to the pandemic. The impact of COVID-19 on jobs seems to have affected students directly too; students who used to work have also experienced job losses.

“... First my mother used to sell but now when the corona virus came my mother has stopped because of the corona virus...” R2, Ada

“...My mum was trading to support our needs at home but due to the lockdown and its hardships, she hasn't been able to trade again...” R2, Kintampo North

“...Those who wash the cars, the cars are not coming more like how they used to come at first, the fewer cars has reduced their income...” R5, Ada

Figure 3.4.1.4: Household member stopped usual livelihood activity in the last 6 months by district (%)



Most respondents attributed the reason other household members stopped their livelihood activities to government measures or restrictions (Table 4.4.1.6). This is true for all districts apart from those in Ada who attributed their main reasons to lack of demand for their goods and services (72.4%). The extent that businesses had collapsed was highest in Kintampo North (38.5%) and least in Wenchi (8.5%).

“... My father used to be a farmer who sells yam on commercial quantities at Sunyani but due to the lockdown, he is not able to trade with his customers anymore and also the ones he gets to purchase the little he has over here are not of good price....” R4, Kintampo North

Table 3.4.1.5: Reasons for stopping usual livelihood activity, by districts (%)

Reasons for stopping activity	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Laid off	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Government ordered such activities to be stopped as a COVID-19 safety measure	34.5	57.5	79.6	69.2	62.3
There was no body to sell (primary consumer was not available)	72.4	23.4	2.3	2.6	21.4
Collapse of business (capital has eroded)	13.8	8.5	15.9	38.5	18.9
Other	3.5	12.8	15.9	20.5	13.8
Total valid cases (%)	127.6	102.1	113.6	130.8	117.0
Total valid cases (N)	29	47	44	39	159

Though COVID-19 pandemic has adversely impacted on livelihoods, it has however generated some economic opportunities for a section of the population. The survey revealed that about 5.3 percent of all respondents indicated a household member had started a new job or livelihood activity within the last 6 months (Figure 3.4.1.5). By district, households of students that members have started a new job or activity was however relatively higher for those in Ada and Wenchi (6.7% each) compared to 1.7 percent in Kintampo North. All the new jobs / activities secured were attributed to the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

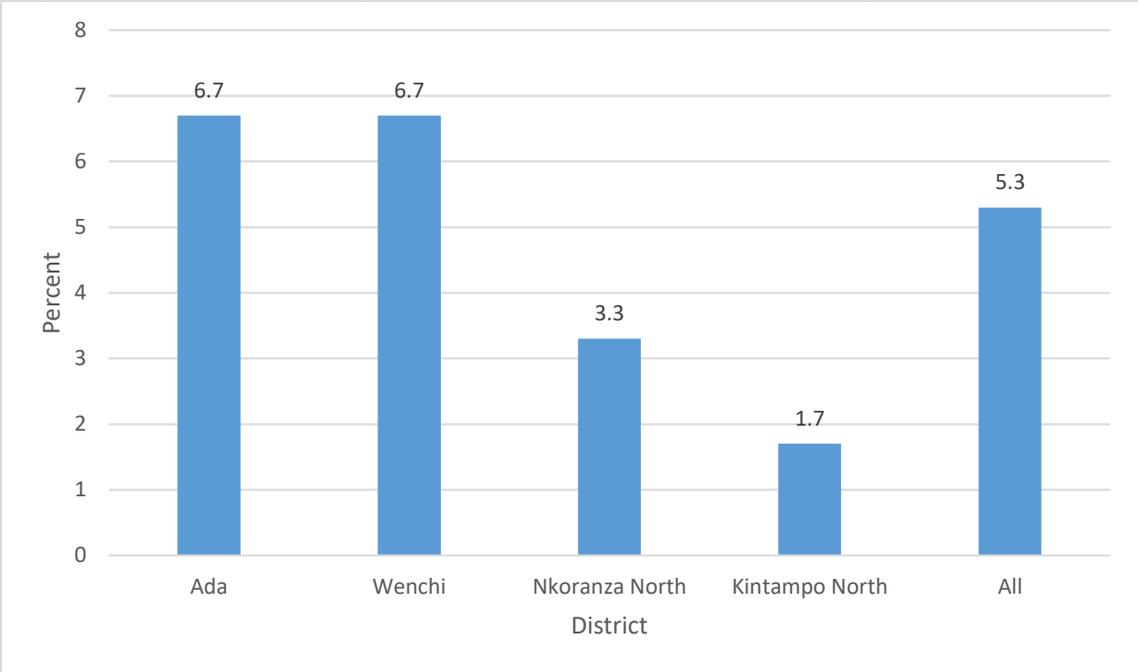
“... My mum wasn’t able to trade in the yam business from other villages again so she is now selling charcoal at a retail price to satisfy her customers to overcome hardships...” R1, Nkoranza North

“... First my mom used to sell “Indomie” but now she has stopped; I have taken over and started selling it ...” R2, Ada

“... My mum was selling nose-mask...” R2, Wenchi

“... One of my teachers is now riding motorcycle with passengers because the system is hard though I had never seen him riding previously ...” R4, Ada

Figure 3.4.1.5: New jobs secured in the last 6 months by district (%)



Hardship from COVID-19

Majority of the students interviewed agree or strongly agree that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought severe hardship to their households with just 8.9 percent indicating that they disagree or strongly disagree (Table 3.4.1.6). Majority of students in Ada (95%) and Wenchi (81.7%) agree or strongly agree of the hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic compared to 61.7 percent in Kintampo North. Those who responded a neutral effect of the pandemic is relatively higher for Nkoranza North (25%) followed by Kintampo North (20%) with Ada (2.5%) being the least.

"...Now, some of my friends win sand before they get money to eat..." R3, Ada

"...There hasn't been a situation like that in this pandemic era because there is no job for you to even do to get that cash or in-kind payments..." R1, Kintampo North

"...Getting foodstuffs to buy at the market sometimes is a problem. So this brought hardship in the community..." R1, Nkoranza North

Table 3.4.1.6: Whether COVID-19 pandemic has brought severe hardship to respondents' households, by districts (%)

Responses	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Strongly agree	25	15	46.7	40	27.8
Agree	70	66.7	16.7	21.7	51.9
Neutral	2.5	9.2	25	20	11.4
Disagree	2.5	8.3	11.7	10	7.2
Strongly disagree	0	0.8	0	8.3	1.7
N	120	120	60	60	360

Coping strategies

As a coping strategy, significant proportions of households had to reduce the number of times they eat per day (30.5%) as well as reduce the quantity of food served per person (28.7%) and switching to cheaper product (22%). The strategy of reducing the number of times eaten per day was highest in Ada (41%) and lowest in Kintampo North (14.3%) whereas households that reduced the quantity of food served per person was highest in Kintampo North (44.9%) and lowest in Nkoranza North (20.8%).

"...Since the coming of corona virus, we are not getting enough and proper food to eat..." R3, Ada

Table 3.4.1.7: How respondents' households dealt with the hardship within the period by districts (percent of cases)

Kinds of Coping strategies	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Household members have started a new livelihood activity	9.4	4.6	5.7	2.0	6.1
Have reduced the number of times we eat in the home	41.0	28.4	26.4	14.3	30.5
Have reduced the quantity of food served per person	32.5	21.1	20.8	44.9	28.7
Have switch to cheaper products	41.0	9.2	17.0	10.2	22.0
We go round asking neighbours for food and financial assistance	0.0	0.0	5.7	2.0	1.2
Taken a loan to support home consumption	0.9	3.7	7.6	0.0	2.7
Some household members have moved to stay elsewhere / with others	0.9	1.8	3.8	4.1	2.1
Managed with the available resources	1.7	29.4	9.4	0.0	11.9
Nothing	49.6	16.5	30.2	42.9	34.5
Total valid cases (%)	176.9	114.7	126.4	120.4	139.6
Total valid cases (N)	58	66	33	28	185

Almost all the respondents in Ada admitted the COVID-19 pandemic has brought hardships on other households in their communities compared to about two-thirds of respondents in Nkoranza North (63.3%) and about half in Kintampo North (53.4%) which had this view (see Table 3.4.1.8).

"...Now my dad is a tailor and at first a lot of people brought things to him to sew nicely, now most people do not bring clothes for him to make anymore because there is no money and they are not coming like they previously used to..." R6, Ada

"...There has been hardships during this lockdown..." R1, Kintampo North

Table 3.4.1.8: Whether COVID-19 pandemic has brought hardships to other households, by districts (%)

Response	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Strongly agree	23.3	19.2	38.3	31.7	25.8
Agree	75	65	25	21.7	54.4
Neutral	0.8	11.7	28.3	30	13.9
Disagree	0.8	4.2	8.3	10	4.7
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	6.7	1.1
N	120	120	60	60	360

Presented in Table 3.4.1.9 is a detailed list of coping strategies adopted by other non-respondent households against the hardships brought upon by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the students, the kinds and levels of coping strategies employed by the other households did not differ much from what households of the students adopted. Common ways of coping with the hardships necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic in other households include reducing the number of times of eating (23%), reducing the quantity of food served per person (21.8%), switching to cheaper products (19.5%) and household members starting new livelihood activities (14.8%). On the other hand, over half of the students could not tell what households did to cope with the hardships of the pandemic in Ada, Nkoranza North and Kintampo North.

Table 3.4.1.9: How other households dealt with the hardship within the period by district (percent of cases)

Kinds of Coping strategies	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Household members started a new livelihood activity	31.9	7.8	1.8	4.0	14.8
Have reduced the number of times they eat in the home	41.2	16.5	9.1	10.0	23.0
Have reduced the quantity of food served per person	30.3	21.7	16.4	8.0	21.8
Have switch to cheaper products	29.4	23.5	5.5	2.0	19.5
They go round asking neighbours for food and financial assistance	7.6	1.7	7.3	2.0	4.7
Taken a loan to support home consumption	4.2	2.6	7.3	0.0	3.5
Some household members have moved to stay elsewhere / with others	18.5	4.4	10.9	4.0	10.3
Intensified farming	0.0	25.2	0.0	2.0	8.9
Nothing	52.1	20.0	69.1	80.0	48.1
Total valid cases (%)	215.1	123.5	127.3	112.0	154.6
Total valid cases (N)	119	115	55	50	184

3.4.2 Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on children's education (learning)

This section looks at the commitment of students towards learning in the COVID-19 pandemic era by assessing their learning resources and how they can keep up with academic work in the next school session, especially for those who are still at home. Table 3.4.2.1 shows what students usually do in the lockdown period. The general results showed that slightly half of students remained at home and learnt on their own whereas 7.5 percent attend special classes by personally meeting a teacher with just about 3 percent who attend classes online. Apart from learning on their own at home, none of the students in Kintampo North attended special classes online or personally met a teacher to study. Most of them rather helped their parents at the workplace (56.7%) or remained idle at home (30%).

Table 3.4.2.1: Activities performed in the COVID-19 lockdown period

Activities			Nkoranza	Kintampo	All
	Ada	Wenchi	North	North	
Attend special classes online	0.8	8.3	1.7	0.0	3.3
Attend special classes by physically meeting a teacher	4.2	17.5	1.7	0.0	7.5
Stay at home and learn on my own	43.3	69.2	45.0	31.7	50.3
Help parents at the workplace	23.3	25.8	48.3	56.7	33.9
Work for others for pay / food	8.3	3.3	13.3	8.3	7.5
Nothing, just idle	32.5	19.2	30.0	30.0	27.2
Total valid cases (%)	112.5	143.3	140.0	126.7	129.7
Total valid cases (N)	120	120	60	60	360

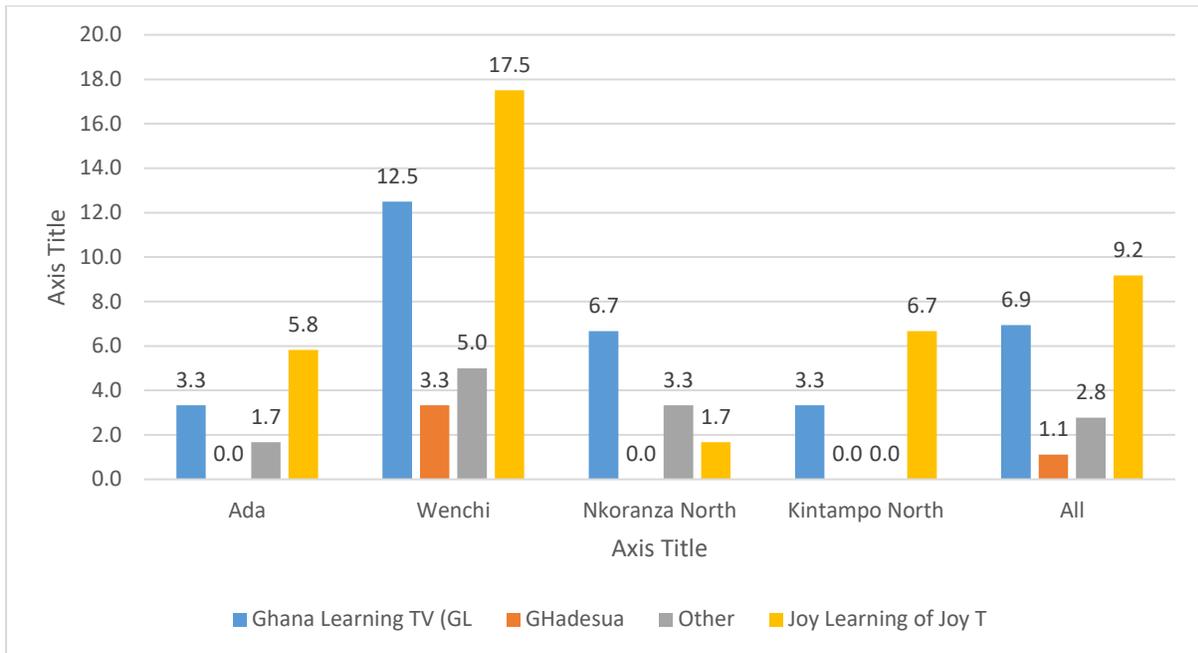
The Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Education and other private stakeholders of education have rolled out several virtual learning programmes for students with television, radio and other dedicated online platforms as the main medium of instruction. The study looked at students' access to these virtual learning resources as well as by checking on the availability of radio, television and smartphones in good working conditions in the homes.

Majority (78.1%) of students had no online learning resource in the lockdown period. Joy Learning of Joy TV (9.2) and Ghana Learning TV (GL TV) of GBC (6.9%) was the most patronized online learning resources that the students who had access to online learning resource used. Only students in Wenchi patronized GHadesua and their use of other online learning resources was quite prominent (see Figure 3.4.2.1).

"...We are just sitting down. We are just available, without having much to do...." R5, Ada

"...Due to the close down of schools and this covid-19, we had difficulty in studying at home. We hardly remember what we have studied so far..." R2, Nkoranza North

Figure 3.4.2.1: Distribution of students by their main source of online learning resources



From Table 3.4.2.2, over half of households of the students owned television (51.1) and radio (50.3%) which was in good working condition. Further analysis of the data showed that 40.4 percent of households that owned radio set also owned television (29.2 percent for the entire sample). Significantly higher proportions of households of students in Ada (40%) and Wenchi (39.2%) owned smart-phones compared to about a quarter of those in Nkoranza North and Kintampo North. About a quarter of the households in Ada (27.5%) and Kintampo (26.7%) have none of these assets which was slightly higher than what was recorded in Wenchi (16.7%). The level of access to radio, television and smartphones in Wenchi could have positively influenced the relatively high rate of adoption of online learning resources.

"... Some use their father's laptop or tablet to learn..." R6, Ada

"... Some use the radio, television..." Ada, R4

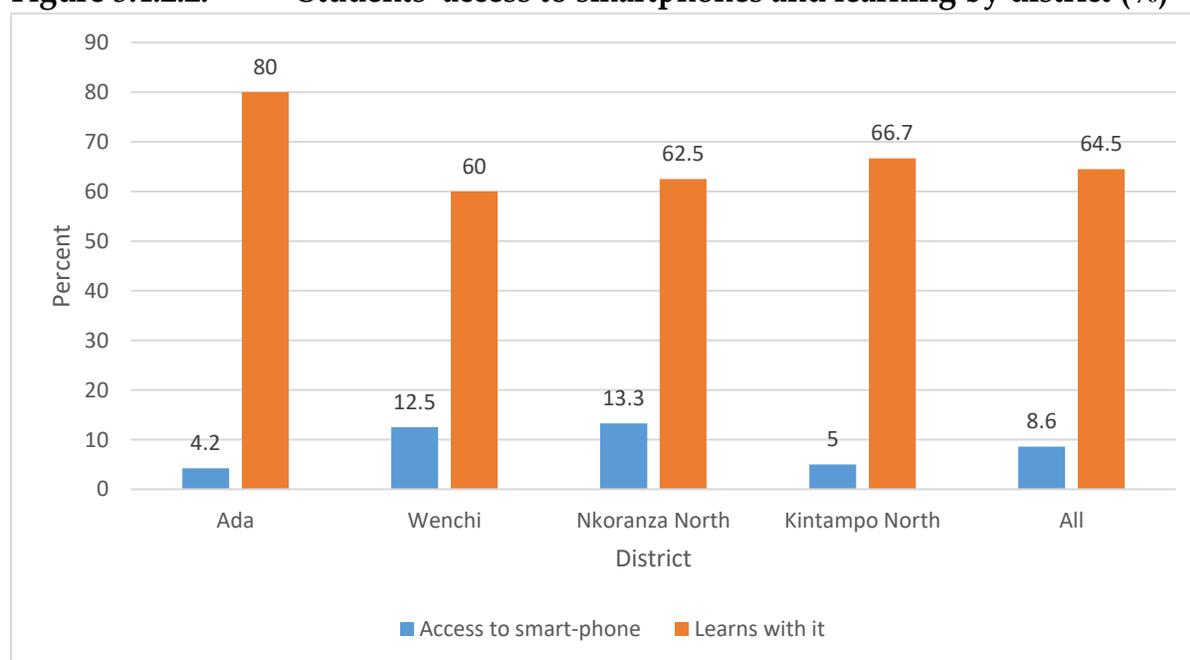
"...Yes, because as I said earlier on the students who have access to android phones they were having some contacts with the teachers, especially the third years..." Head Teacher, Ada

Table 3.4.2.2: Access to assets in good working condition owned by households of students by district (percent of cases)

Assets			Nkoranza	Kintampo	All
	Ada	Wenchi	North	North	
Radio	45.8	53.3	51.7	51.7	50.3
Television	46.7	64.2	35.0	50.0	51.1
Smart-phones	40.0	39.2	26.7	21.7	34.4
None of them	27.5	16.7	23.3	26.7	23.1
Total valid cases	160.0	173.3	136.7	150.0	158.9

Very few students (8.6%) in the districts have access to personal smartphones but of the few who have access, a greater proportion of them (64.5%) learn with them. (Figure 3.4.2.2). However, we found that the rate of learning with smart-phones and access to smart-phones differed among the districts as majority of the few students in Ada (80%) who have access to smart-phones learn with it. Meanwhile access levels in Ada stood at 4.2 percent compared to about 60 percent of those in Wenchi and Nkoranza North who learn with it while access levels stood around 13 percent for these two districts.

Figure 3.4.2.2: Students' access to smartphones and learning by district (%)



The parents of almost half (45.2%) of students who had access to smart-phones financed the internet data on the phones whilst about one-fifth of all students with access to smartphones bore the cost of the internet access themselves. Students who used smart-phones in Kintampo North solely financed the internet data they used.

The results of the survey (Table 3.4.2.3) show that, students who spent above GH¢20 (39%) on internet data in the past month constitute a greater proportion (39%) of the respondents while about 1 out of 10 students each spent GH¢ 6 – 10 and GH¢ 11 – 15 on internet data with a double of that proportion spending less than GH¢6. It was also observed that significantly higher proportions of students in Ada and Wenchi (75% each) spent a minimum of GH¢16 on internet data for learning unlike those in Kintampo North who spent a maximum of GH¢10.

Table 3.4.2.3: Providers of internet on smart-phones and amount spent on internet data for leaning by district (%)

Provider	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
<i>Provider of internet</i>					
Parents	20	60	50	0	45.2
Older siblings	20	0	25	0	9.7
Other relatives	0	13.3	12.5	0	9.7
Child's own money from other activities	40	6.7	0	100	19.4
Free access to internet	0	6.7	0	0	3.2
No internet on the smart-phones	20	13.3	12.5	0	12.9
N	5	15	8	3	31
<i>Amount spent</i>					
GH¢ 1 – 5	25	0	42.9	66.7	23.1
GH¢ 6 – 10	0	8.3	14.3	33.3	11.5
GH¢ 11 – 15	0	16.7	14.3	0	11.5
GH¢ 16 – 20	25	25	0	0	15.4
Above GH¢ 20	50	50	28.6	0	38.5
N	4	12	7	3	26

A little over half (53.6%) of students had their learning habits moderately worsened by the lockdown from the COVID-19 pandemic with about 36 percent indicating greatly worsened. In total, lockdown from the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected the learning habits 9 out of every 10 students interviewed (see Figure 3.4.2.3).

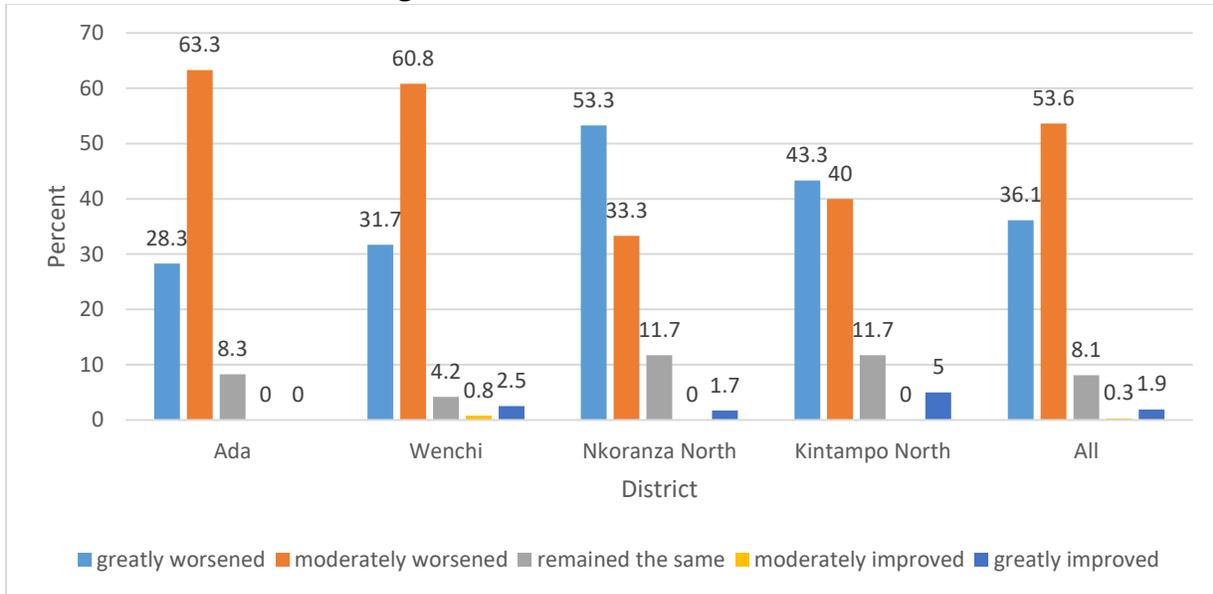
“...We don’t normally speak English like how we speak it at school, always we are speaking the Ghanaian languages at home that’s why...” R7, Ada

“...Difficulty in studying my books because I thought schools were never going to be re-open and even if they do, I don’t think our parents can provide us with our needs for school...” R1, Kintampo North

“...We can’t study like the way we used to do before the lockdown, hence low academic performance...” R1, Nkoranza North

“...Because we are not going to school, we always want to play and don't see the need to study our books...” R5, Ada

Figure 3.4.2.3: Effects of lockdown from COVID-19 pandemic on students' learning behaviour



Learning on their own using existing textbooks (68.6%), acquiring new textbooks and learning on their own (35%) and attending special classes by physically meeting a teacher (19.2%) were the main strategies the students suggested could be used to keep up with academic work in the next school session. Attending more virtual classes was not very popular among the students as very few students (3.3%) cited attending more virtual classes on the internet (see Table 3.4.2.4). Despite this, some students spoke about their reservations with regards to attending special classes by physically meeting a teacher.

“...I: Some use the radio, television, etc. What is the one they use most in this community?”

All: Extra classes... The one that the teacher will come to your home...” All, Ada

“... Bad behaviors of certain teachers prevented our parents from allowing us to seek for their assistance in their various homes...” R1, Nkoranza

Some students also spoke about the challenges they had with the virtual lessons being carried out on T.V. some spoke about their inability to ask questions to the television teacher when they lack an understanding on what is being taught. Another is the temptation to watch a T.V show on another channel when lesson is in session on T.V.

“...Because the television we can change it and watch another thing. Some of us we don't have television, some of us, if they are teaching, we cannot understand...” All, Ada

“...: Some of us don't understand what they teach.

I: You don't understand what they are teaching on the television?

R2: Yes...” R2, Ada

Table 3.4.2.4: Ways to keep up with academic work in the next school session by district (percent of cases)

Activities			Nkoranza	Kintampo	All
	Ada	Wenchi	North	North	
Attend more virtual classes on TV	4.2	14.2	1.7	6.7	7.5
Attend more virtual classes on the internet	2.5	5.8	3.3	0.0	3.3
Acquire textbooks and learn on my own	50.0	30.8	28.3	20.0	35.0
Learn on my own using existing textbooks	72.5	59.2	70.0	78.3	68.6
Attend special classes by physically meeting a teacher	5.0	32.5	16.7	25.0	19.4
Nothing	0.8	6.7	15.0	13.3	7.2
Total valid cases (%)	135.0	149.2	135.0	143.3	141.1
Total valid cases (N)	120	120	60	60	360

Table 3.4.2.5 shows the extent to which students have been affected by emotional / psychological stress from prolonged staying at home due to the lockdown from the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings show that emotional/psychological stress from the lockdown and the COVID-19 pandemic has increased for almost half (47.8%) of the students. High emotional / psychological stress was observed among students in Nkoranza North (78.3%) and Kintampo North (73.3%) compared to about 20 percent of students in Wenchi.

“...R5: Me, if they say we should go to school, me I will not go again

I: Why?

R5: Because the house is sweet...” R5, Ada

“...Our minds were taken off going back to school again due to the increase in infected person {cases}....” R3, Wenchi

Table 3.4.2.5: Effects of COVID-19 pandemic on emotional / psychological well-being by district

Stress has ...	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Greatly reduced	15.8	5	3.3	5	8.3
Moderately reduced	15	41.7	8.3	1.7	20.6
Remained the same	22.5	32.5	10	20	23.3
Moderately increased	45	15.8	38.3	23.3	30.6
Greatly increased	1.7	5	40	50	17.2
N	120	120	60	60	360

Students' awareness and participation in the activities of "Gender Club" was also assessed in this survey. Majority of the students have heard of the "Gender Club" as at the time of this survey. In general, majority of students who have heard of the Club (87.9%) have Gender Clubs in their schools. As presented in Table 3.4.2.6, all respondents in Kintampo North who have heard of the Club have Gender Club in their schools, followed by students in Nkoranza (97.7%). Additionally, about two-thirds of respondents with Gender Clubs in their schools were members of the Club with membership being highest in Nkoranza North (90.7%) and low in Ada (55.7%) and Wenchi (58.5%).

Table 3.4.2.6: Awareness, availability and membership of "Gender Club" by district

	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Heard of Gender Club	79.2	55.8	73.3	83.3	71.1
Gender Club in school	83.2	79.1	97.7	100	87.9
Member of Gender Club	55.7	58.5	90.7	78	68

Generally, majority of the club members were quite committed as a greater proportion of students who were club members (60.1%) participate in activities of the club quite often while about 30 percent participate in their activities fairly often. At least, one out of every 9 club members (11.8%) who was interviewed held a leadership position in the club (see Table 3.4.2.7). All students holding leadership positions in the club were peer educators.

Table 3.4.2.7: Frequency of participation in club activities and leadership positions held by district (%)

Variables	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
<i>Frequency of participation in club activities</i>					
Very often	50	54.8	66.7	69.2	60.1
Often	31.8	38.7	28.2	20.5	29.4
Rarely	18.2	6.5	5.1	10.3	10.5
<i>Respondent holds leadership position</i>					
Yes	6.8	6.5	15.4	17.9	11.8
No	93.2	93.5	84.6	82.1	88.2

When asked to mention some of the club activities they like most, talk / discussions on abstaining from sex, teenage pregnancy, sexual rights, sexually transmitted disease, personal hygiene, gender stereotype, understanding yourself as an adolescent, drug abuse and physical abuse were the main ones the students listed.

Some club members were not happy about how other members did not take the activities of the club serious. Aside this, most respondents who were club members like almost everything the Gender Club does.

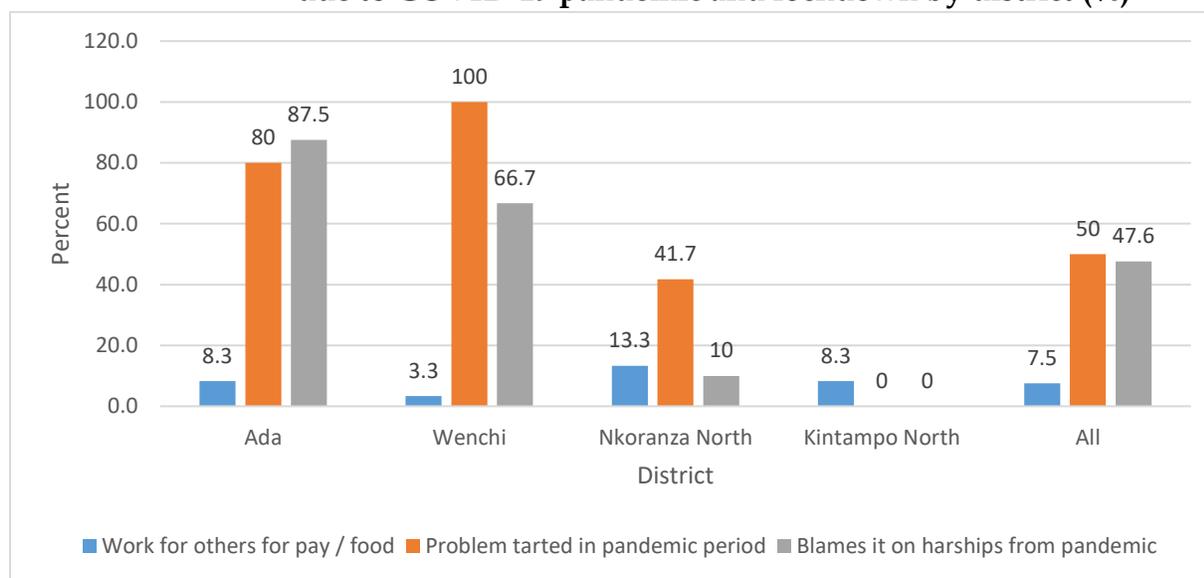
There wasn't much contact among club members in the communities, especially for communities in Kintampo North where over 92 percent of the club members never talked to each other in the lockdown period. The situation was quite different in Ada as it could be seen close to two-thirds (61.4%) of club members contacted each other, at least, once in every week (see table 3.4.2.8).

Table 3.4.2.8: Frequency at which club members contacted each other in the lockdown period by district (%).

Frequency	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
At least, once every week	61.4	3.2	12.8	2.6	22.2
Once every two weeks	6.8	6.5	0	0	3.3
Once in a month	4.5	3.2	7.7	2.6	4.6
Just once/twice since school closed	2.3	22.6	10.3	2.6	8.5
Never talked to any club member	25	64.5	69.2	92.3	61.4

Half of the students who worked “for others for pay/food” during the lockdown were led into it due to the pandemic. All those in Kintampo North who worked for others for pay / food were doing this before the pandemic whilst all those from Wenchi started during the pandemic period. Almost half (47.6%) of students who started working for others for pay / food in the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown period attributed it to the hardship tolled on households (see Figure 3.4.2.4). Those who failed to ascribe the reasons to the pandemic could not clearly point out why they find themselves in that situation. This is possibly because they have failed to holistically analyze their situation.

Figure 3.4.2.4: Distribution of students who “worked for others for pay/food” due to COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown by district (%)



3.4.3 Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on young people’s rights in the home

Regarding abuse to children, in Table 3.4.3.1, a greater percentage, 40.3 percent, of the sampled students mentioned that their parents/guardians have been violent to them when they (the children) refused or delayed to perform a duty at home. This abuse mostly occurred in Ada (60.8%) and Nkoranza North (60%), followed by Kintampo North (45%) and was quite minimal in Wenchi (7.5%). Another pronounced abuse found was when they go out without seeking permission, as indicated by 34.2 percent of the students interviewed, while a lower percentage of the students said they were abused when they insulted people (15.3%), exchanged words with caregivers (14.4%), and engage in a fight (14.2%). Children in Ada received several forms of abuse than their counterparts in the other three districts.

“...Our mothers always want us to go and sell things but people will not buy. They always ask you to go and come back the next day for the money after buying on credit and they will rain insults on you when you go back for the payment. ...” R4, Ada

“...Parents are always fighting with us when our needs are being asked, hence bitterness at home...” R5, Kintampo North

Table 3.4.3.1: Proportion of students abused in the home by district (%)

Variable	Ada		Wenchi		Nkoranza North		Kintampo North		All	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Go out without taking permission	59	49.2	21	17.5	31	51.7	12	20	123	34.2
Beat younger siblings (fight with others)	23	19.2	5	4.2	16	26.7	7	11.7	51	14.2
Argue with parents / caregiver	35	29.2	0	0	16	26.7	1	1.7	52	14.4
Insult others	35	29.2	3	2.5	16	26.7	1	1.7	55	15.3
Refuse / delay in performing duties at home	73	60.8	9	7.5	36	60	27	45	145	40.3
<i>Abuse (any one above)</i>	91	75.8	31	25.8	43	71.7	30	50	195	54.2

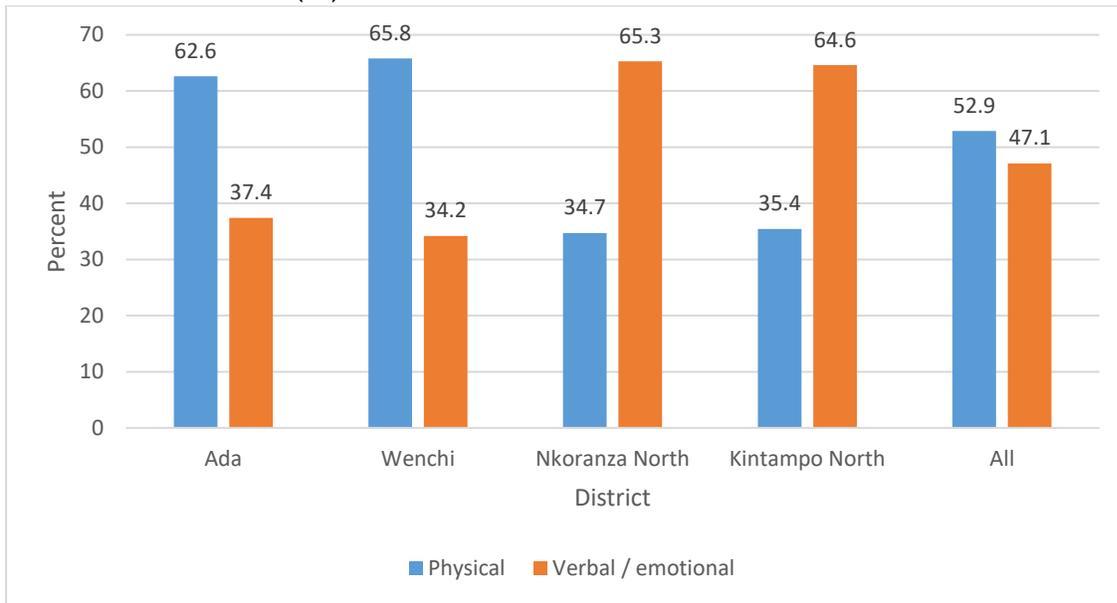
It was observed that physical violence in the home against students marginally dominated verbal / emotional violence by 5.8 percentage points meanwhile significant differences existed among the districts in that whereas physical violence was quite popular in Ada (62.6%) and Wenchi (65.8%), verbal / emotional violence dominated the kinds of violence towards students in Nkoranza North (65.3%) and Kintampo North (64.6%).

“... I want to talk about the emotional violence. The words from my [parents] towards me in this lockdown sometimes make me feel hurt and I don't know how to deal with it...” R1, Kintampo North

“...Even sometimes, if you are in the house, you would be beaten when they send you and you don't respond to it promptly ...” R2, Ada

“... The violence is high. Parents abuse children verbally when they refuse to run errands for them due to the hardships...” R1, Nkoranza North

Figure 3.4.3.1: Kind of violence towards students abused in the home by district (%)



In both the two pronounced types of abuse which occurred when students did not perform duties at home or going out without permission, shows that physical abuse was the highest form of abuse in both 'refuse to perform duty at home' abuse (59.6%) and 'without permission to go out' abuse (57.6%) than verbal or emotional (insults/curses/anger) abuse in 'without permission to go out' abuse (42.4%, 50 children) and in 'not performing duties at home' abuse (40.4%). Table 3.4.3.2 shows that greater percentage of these children were physically abused in Wenchi (76.2%) and Ada (65.5%) for going out without permission. Similarly, under 'refuse to perform duties at home' abuse, a greater percentage of the students in Ada (75%) and Wenchi (66.7%) reported physical abuse than those in Kintampo North (44.4%), and Nkoranza North (36.4%).

Table 3.4.3.2: Kind of violence towards students abused in the home by district (%)

Variables	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
<i>Go out without taking permission</i>					
Physical	65.5	76.2	37	33.3	57.6
Verbal / emotional	34.5	23.8	63	66.7	42.4
<i>Beat younger siblings (fight with others)</i>					
Physical	65.2	40	0	14.3	37.5
Verbal / emotional	34.8	60	100	85.7	62.5
<i>Argue with parents / caregiver</i>					
Physical	45.5	-	58.3	0	47.8
Verbal / emotional	54.5	-	41.7	100	52.2
<i>Insult others</i>					
Physical	45.5	33.3	38.5	0	42
Verbal / emotional	54.5	66.7	61.5	100	58
<i>Refuse / delay in performing duties at home</i>					
Physical	75	66.7	36.4	44.4	59.6
Verbal / emotional	25	33.3	63.6	55.6	40.4

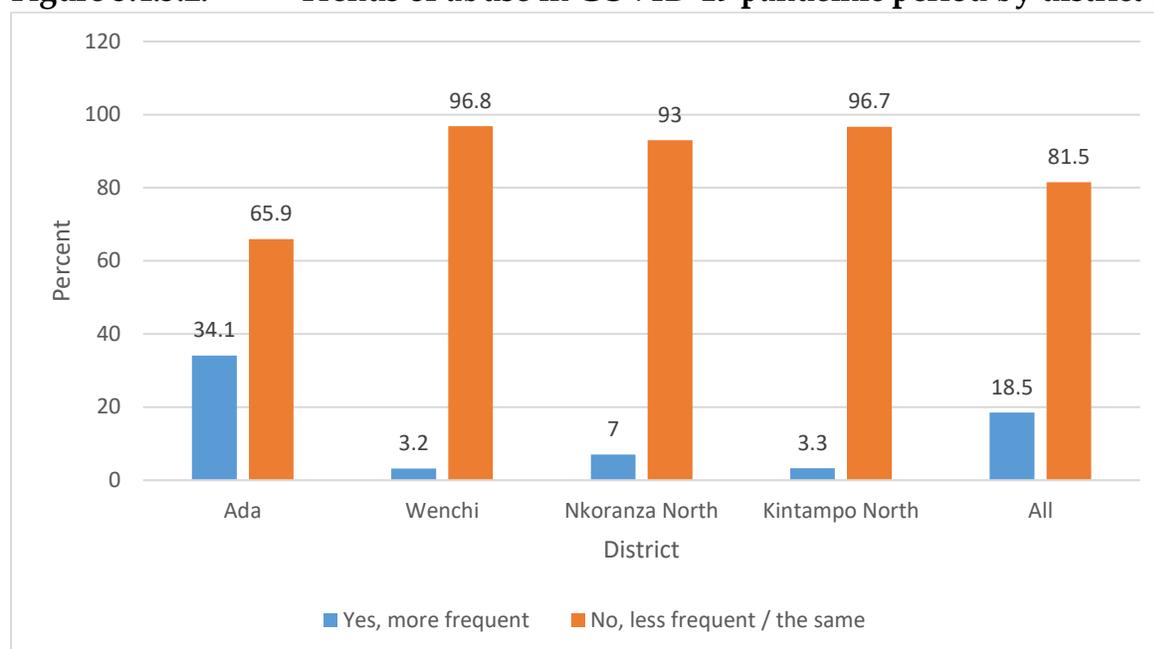
Less than 3 percent of the students who were abused reported any of such incidence. Majority of students who never reported when they were abused indicated they did not consider the abuse meted out to them to be serious enough to report. None of the students in Wenchi made a complaint about abuses towards them and very low levels of reporting abuse to older persons / higher authorities were recorded in the other districts.

The DOVVSU officer explained that abuses such as physical abuse was seen as normal, hence the low reportage of these cases.

“... Physical violence against children has been normal since they mostly don’t report such cases to the police/DOVVSU because this a Muslim [dominated] community. We sometimes hear of this in the community and visit those families...” DOVVSU, Kintampo North

Abuse towards adolescent children has increased for, at least, 18 percent of the students who were abused (that is 10 percent for all the students interviewed). It was observed that the level of increase in abuse towards adolescent children in Ada (34.1%) significantly differed from what was recorded in the other three districts (see Figure 3.4.3.2).

Figure 3.4.3.2: Trends of abuse in COVID-19 pandemic period by district (%)



Sexual abuse among adolescent students

On sexual abuse, about 3.1 percent of the students indicated they have experienced some form of sexual abuse since the COVID-19 pandemic's lockdown began. Majority of them (96.9%), however had never experienced any form of sexual abuse in their lifetime with none of the students from Wenchi reporting a sexual abuse.

Table 3.4.3.3 Levels of sexual abuse towards adolescent students in COVID-19 pandemic period by district (%)

Response	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Remained the same	0.8	0	1.7	5	1.4
Moderately increased	2.5	0	3.3	0	1.4
Greatly increased	0	0	1.7	0	0.3
Never experienced any sexual abuse in my life	96.7	100	93.3	95	96.9
N	120	120	60	60	360

A close family relative in Nkoranza North sexually abused one of the students, whilst 27.3 percent of the students were abused by their boyfriends / girlfriends. Almost two-thirds (63.6%) of those who reported abuse were abused by their neighbours. Majority (72.7%) of those who were sexually harassed never reported any of such abuses to any law enforcement / child-right protection institution. They went further to give reasons why they did not report the abuse which include – handled it by themselves since they knew the perpetrators, afraid of being attacked by the perpetrators, felt nothing would be done about it (time wasting), while others deemed it not serious enough.

“...One of my friends now go out and sleep overnight. Her mother asks her to account for the money she receives. Sometimes, she returns after three days. I don’t understand why she has being doing that but anytime I try to ask her, she will rather insult me and divert my attention from it. She has only started doing this in the COVID-19 times...” R4, Ada

“...It still high. During this lockdown, a woman travelled and left her two daughters in the hands of their elder brother but unfortunately, the brother raped all his two sisters before his mum return ...” R2, Nkoranza North

“...We have recorded indecent assault, sexual harassment, defilement and even rape within this period...” DOVVSU, Kintampo North

The students were also asked whether they were aware of sexual abuse towards other adolescent students in their communities, especially over the past 6 months. The results showed that about one out of every five students reported sexual abuse to other adolescent students have increase in the period under consideration though 73.1 percent indicated they never heard of any sexual abuse towards other adolescent. The report of sexual abuses towards other adolescents was highest in Ada (45.9%) but sharply reduces to 8 percent in Kintampo North and Nkoranza North and further to 4 percent in Wenchi (see Table 3.4.3.4). Sexual abuses towards other adolescent students were usually perpetrated by close family relatives, boyfriends, and ordinary neighbours as reported by the students but about two-thirds of them had no idea who the perpetrators were.

“... Because they are selling some of them visit boys’ room and now they are pregnant; this troubles me a lot...” R5, Ada

“...There are some men in the community who are just defiling the children in the community since they are no longer going to school...” Queen Mother, Wenchi

“...hmm, this has increased since the children are in the house now. The boys take advantage of them since the girls go to them for money all the time...” Queen Mother, Nkoranza North

Table 3.4.3.4 Levels of sexual abuse towards other adolescents in COVID-19 pandemic period by district (%)

Response	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Greatly reduced	0	0.8	6.7	1.7	1.7
Moderately reduced	0	3.3	3.3	5	2.5
Remained the same	0	0.8	6.7	11.7	3.3
Moderately increased	34.2	3.3	3.3	1.7	13.3
Greatly increased	11.7	0.8	5	6.7	6.1
Never heard of any sexual abuse towards other adolescents in my life	54.2	90.8	75	73.3	73.1

A higher proportion of the students (41.2%) revealed these cases of sexual abuse were never reported whilst 6.2 percent and 5.2 percent of the students indicated the cases were reported to older persons in the household / community, and the police respectively. Some of the students had no information on whether the sexual abuse cases were reported or not. It is important to indicate that the students in a particular community might be pointing to the same case of sexual abuse and higher frequencies may not necessarily mean an absolute rise in cases.

“...I know someone who went to report to DOVVSU. But because the dad didn’t want to be disgraced and she also felt shy of being pregnant, she travelled and had the pregnancy aborted...” R7, Ada

“...We report to the queen mother. Because it is a taboo in this community and she knows the kind of sacrifices to do to prevent any bad effects to be on this community as a whole when this happens...” R1, Nkoranza North

“...She went to report to the police before she came back home to report to her parents...” R1, Ada

Severe verbal abuse among adolescent students

Regarding severe verbal abuse to children during the COVID-19 lockdown period, the results in Figure 5 show greater percentage, 67.2 percent of the sampled children said they have never experienced any form of severe verbal abuse. Severe verbal abuse

towards students in recent times have increased for about 7.8 percent of them with the highest occurrence being recorded in Ada (16.7%), and lowest in Wenchi (2.5%) while none of those in Kintampo North reported any increase of severe verbal abuse towards them (see Table 3.4.3.5). As reported, most of the students were verbally abused by their parents/guardians while the rest were either abused by a sibling, uncle/aunt, grandparent, or neighbour. These voices were, however, mainly on a reduction in violence.

“...Parents used to beat the wards if they had not performed well [passed their exams] at school but now because there is no school [or test] this kind of punishment has stopped...” R6, Ada

“...Teachers were abusing us physically when there was no pandemic but all has been ceased due to the pandemic...” R2, Nkoranza North

Table 3.4.3.5 Levels of severe verbal abuse in COVID-19 pandemic period by district (%)

Response	Ada	Wenchi	Nkoranza North	Kintampo North	All
Greatly reduced	2.5	1.7	6.7	18.3	5.6
Moderately reduced	6.7	0.8	0	1.7	2.8
Remained the same	24.2	3.3	23.3	21.7	16.7
Moderately increased	14.2	2.5	5	0	6.4
Greatly increased	2.5	0	3.3	0	1.4
Never experienced any severe verbal abuse	50	91.7	61.7	58.3	67.2

The study sought to learn if there have been variations in the levels at which parents responded to the needs of adolescent students and whether it has any direct correlation with the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown. The results indicate that one out of every four students experienced a reduced form of response to their needs by their parents / guardians while 17.7 percent rather received an increased attention. Parental neglect was in the rise since the lockdown began in Ada (39.2%) and Wenchi (28.3) compared to seemingly low levels in Nkoranza North (10%) and Kintampo North (5%). On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has not have any impact on the extent to which parents respond to the needs of their wards. The students attributed the decline in their parents’ response to their needs to their current poor financial position which has been brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to note that, one Primary 5 student from Ada pointed out she has been neglected by her parents because she is pregnant.

“...Due to this pandemic, when I need something from my mum, she doesn't give it to me all because she wants us to use that very thing the next day but I will also go for it and use it and she will later hoot at me, hence emotional abuse and this can make me go out for those needs...”

R2, Nkoranza

“...It is high. Especially emotional abuse due to parents not being able to provide us with our needs when they are being asked...” R5, Wenchi

Table 3.4.3.6: Levels of parents' / guardians' responsiveness to students' needs in COVID-19 pandemic period by district (%)

Response			Nkoranza	Kintampo	All
	Ada	Wenchi	North	North	
Greatly reduced	0	5.8	3.3	0	2.5
Moderately reduced	39.2	22.5	6.7	5	22.5
Remained the same	55	64.2	51.7	53.3	57.2
Moderately increased	4.2	1.7	8.3	6.7	4.4
Greatly increased	1.7	5.8	30	35	13.3

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings have a number of policy implications for government, as well as varied actions to be taken by varied stakeholders including the Gender Centre, particularly education, sexual rights and protecting children against violence.

Awareness creation/ educational campaign

1. Sexual abuse among these adolescents in the project sites during the COVID-19 pandemic, as observed, is on the increase. Some parents, instead of protecting these young ones, are rather urging them to go into it as a respondent clearly pointed out in one of the focus group discussions. State authorities and other child right activists such as the Gender Centre should quickly intervene to save the future of these children. There should be more sensitization on the need to refrain from this inhumane act and also to encourage all, especially these children who are the victims, to report to the appropriate state institutions for the necessary actions to be taken.

2. There is the need for national, district and community level campaign to address the occurrences of violence against children. Relevant institutions should collaborate with the media to educate the public on the adverse impact of these incidences. Religious leaders should be much involved in the process by educating their members on the need to raise children in a peaceful home.

Law enforcement

3. Child abuse is a violation of children's right. Hence, the government in collaboration with key stakeholders such the DOVVSU, CHRAJ, Social Welfare, the Gender Centre, etc. should enforce existing laws on child right and protection. Culprits of child abuse should be punished by the law to deter others from committing such crime.

Reporting child abuse

4. Abuse against children in the homes is generally high and have risen in the COVID-19 pandemic era. The effects of violence against children, especially psychological trauma, is dangerous. However, reporting such abuses is almost non-existent since less than 3 percent of those who were abused reported. Children should be encouraged to report abuses to the appropriate state institutions for their own safety. Civil society organisations such as the Gender Centre should intensify their awareness programmes which empower children to report abuses to the appropriate authorities. Friends and neighbours should support children to make formal complaints when they are abused.

COVID-19 awareness

5. It was expected that all the students would have a fair idea on the common symptoms of the COVID-19 disease as well as ways to stay safe from contracting it. Some of the students sampled did not have any knowledge on the symptoms of the disease. We recommend that the government and other stakeholders should increase sensitization on the symptoms of the disease, how to stay safe from contracting it, and where to report suspected cases, especially among students.

Support for children

6. The current poor financial / economic conditions of some parents have made these students vulnerable; falling prey to bad boys who abuse them sexually. We recommend that parents should support their wards with the basic things that they need so that they will not turn to others for such assistance who may end up abusing them sexually.

7. Government should continue its current support for schools including the provision of personal protective equipment (PPEs), as well as the provision of free electricity and water to households to lessen the burden on households. NGOs and religious bodies should also be involved in providing varied supports including textbooks, food and non-food items to vulnerable students and their households. If possible, the government textbooks being used while in school should be given to the students as they stay at home, to make learning easier.

8. There was food distribution in Accra during the lockdown but people in the other regions where there was no lockdown did not receive this benefit from the government. However, the negative economic impact of the lockdown trickles down to even places where there was no lockdown. Additionally, the closure of schools has rendered some households of the students jobless and they needed support to make ends meet. We recommend that the government should deploy other support programmes for the population who are outside the lockdown region in future lockdowns.

E-learning programmes

9. Government should continue to promote virtual learning even after re-opening the schools. It should bear much of the cost in providing laptops and internet data for students and teachers. Parents should be encouraged to provide television sets and possibly smartphones and internet for their wards to study. Parents-Teachers' associations should play critical role in this direction. Telecommunication operators should make certain educational sites free to visit to lessen the burden on parents.

10. Some students had difficulties learning at home on their own. Probably they did not have a conducive environment or learning resources available. Parents should be made to understand that aside providing the learning materials like television and laptops, students must also be given a conducive environment to study. Study time must be awarded to the student, especially on the use of television, to prevent a conflict between a student using the television to study and another person wanting to use it to watch other programmes. This hinders the child's opportunity to benefit from the learning program on the television. Local teachers should follow up on assignments provided on the online learning, to provide further explanation that may arise from such studies.

Re-open schools

11. However, the study revealed that not all students had access to the government's online learning resources (i.e. Ghana Learning TV) and only a few of those who had access to the resource and smart phones for virtual learning actually used to learn. Coupled with the fact that some students had difficulties learning at home on their own we recommend that the government should re-open schools whilst taking strategies that can ensure COVID-19 safety protocols. For example, in schools where there capacity constraint, the government can introduce a "Shift system" where students are divided into groups and each group attends class at different hours during the day.

Appendix A1: Survey Instruments

Questionnaire	File
1. Students' quantitative questionnaire	 SRHR beneficiaries survey_Student que:
2. FGD guide for students	 SRHR beneficiaries survey_FGD guide_!
3. IDI guide for stakeholders	 SRHR beneficiaries survey_IDI guide.do