

# Investigation into Succession Plan in the Chieftaincy Institution of the Savannah Region of Ghana: A Case Study of Kingship (Overlord) of the Gonja Kingdom

Abutu Kapor<sup>1\*</sup>, Gabriel Gbiel Benarkuu<sup>2</sup>, N.S. Shanthi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Registrar Savannah Regional House of Chiefs Ghana, Texila American University

<sup>2</sup>College for Community and Organisational Development Sunyani, Ghana

<sup>3</sup>KSR College of engineering and Texila American University

## Abstract

*Kingship, a social phenomenon across the globe has been recognized and established in many countries. Kingship is believed to be the genesis of evolution of social leadership in the community, family, clan, and or tribe. In many jurisdictions, it is a preserve for the royal family who hailing from patrification or matrification. In the case of the Gonja Kingdom, the King (Yagbonwura) as he is called succeed the Kingship through patrilineal lines. Unlike the Ashantis in Ghana, succeed the Kingship through the matrilineal lines. In the United Kingdom (UK), Charles III is the King of Great Britain. In Africa, we have Mswati III the Ngwenyama King of Eswatini formally known as Swaziland. This paper focus to ascertain whether or not the Kingship succession of Gonja is conflict free or otherwise. The methodology of the research, applied both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Observation, interviews, focus group discussions were employed in data collection. The research reveals that, Kingship in the Gonja Kingdom is conflict free in Ghana. It is highly revered, upheld and considered one of the sacred institutions. Every King automatically has followers and subjects who serve the Kingship within a defined jurisdiction.*

**Keywords:** Customs and Traditions, Chieftaincy Succession, Gonja Kingdom, Kingship and Chieftaincy.

## Introduction

Gonja, according to Goody comprise of three estates- the royals or people of royal descent (Ngbanya), the Moslem estate and the commoners (Nyamase) [1].

Though these internal distinctions exist and count for somethings, they are not very apparent to the outsider. Centuries of intermarriage mediate the distinctions together with a cognatic mode of reckoning descent, which permits the individual wide latitude in the tracing of his ties through patrification and or matrification to royals, Moslems and commoners. This go hand in hand with a system of kinship fosterage. History has it that Sumaila

Ndewura Jakpa (SNJ) is the founder of the Gonja Kingdom.

Gonjas are believed to come from the land of Mande a community in the Mali empire. SNJ entered the area through western Gonja in a community called Sakpa in the Bole district.

According to [2] suggested that the Mande intervention may not have begun with Jakpa, although the latter brought it to its climax. Dickson in his scholarly work named Nabaga as the first leader or King of the Gonjas and that he is the initiator of the conquers expedition.

This ethnic group called Gonja belong to the KWA or GUAN group and they form majority of the Guan extraction in modern day Ghana according to [20].

In today's country Ghana, Gonjas at the end of the conquers founded a Kingdom called the Gonja Kingdom. The Kingdom formed the Savannah region of Ghana today. The Gonja Kingdom has the largest land under its jurisdiction. The land covers about 15% of Ghana's landmass.

The Gonja Dynasty or monarch operates a centralized system of traditional political governance where the Yagbonwura (King) the allodial title holder of all Gonja lands is the head and under his auspices are traditional policies on culture, customs, traditions, values, norms and matters affecting chieftaincy are discussed for an enhanced future.

### **Research Hypothesis**

1. Kingship succession of the Gonjas per tradition breeds conflict in Ghana (Ho)
2. Kingship succession of the Gonjas per tradition don not breed conflict in Ghana (Hi)

### **Research Objectives**

1. To understand the general perspective of Kingship in the Savannah region of Ghana.
2. To examine the level of conflicts that arise during the selection of a King in Gonja Kingdom of the Savannah region of Ghana.
3. To investigate whether the Kingship succession plan has been documented.
4. To ascertain the number of Kings that ascended to the Kingship so far

### **Problem Statement**

Chieftaincy forms part of the social life of the World's community in general. In Europe, Asia, America, (North America, South America and Antarctica), Africa and Oceania/Australia have glimpse of chieftaincy. In Africa, chieftaincy predates colonialism and seen as part and parcel of the folks of the continent and a rousing proponent of social life development.

In Ghana, the institution of chieftaincy is revered and dignified and a core factor of the peace component of the country's development. As a result of the strategic nature

and position of chieftaincy, the 1992 Republican constitution of Ghana article 270 guarantee's chieftaincy and its traditional councils. Again, enhancing the chieftaincy institution, saw the inception of the Chieftaincy Act, 2008 Act, 759 as a working document for matters affecting chieftaincy in Ghana. This recognition emanates from the role chieftaincy played during three phases of Ghana's political history thus pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras [3].

In the context of Ghana, article 277 of the 1992 Republican constitution defines a chief to mean a person, who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage, who has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as a chief or queen mother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage" [4].

Whereas the chieftaincy institution has successfully been handled in some states, it has been subjected to some punitive and upsetting conditions in other states [5].

In the United Kingdom (UK), for example, the monarch still plays a significant role in national affairs, though his role is symbolic and ceremonial in character. In Africa, the constitution of Uganda abolished kingship and kingdoms in 1966 [5].

Of late in Ghana, and according to [19] the National Security Minister, Hon. Albert Kan-Dapaah published on modern Ghana news portal on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2024 said "chieftaincy disputes in particular remain a thorny internal security threat that must be permanently dealt with, adding that it is interesting to note that chieftaincy disputes are a significant portion of the daily situational reports received at the Ministry of National Security"

In the light of these and many more has been the government of Ghana's worry as well as the folks of Ghana, the commoners, royals and even the chieftaincy institution itself. This is so because, in the arena of chieftaincy succession conflicts and or encounters, many lives are lost, huge financial investment of government to

forestall the peace and security of the area, collapse of businesses, human resettlement issues, thwart the progress of education, exposure of the vulnerable (women and children) to environmental dangers etc.

It is therefore against this background that this investigation is bent to focus on the Kingship succession plan of the Gonja people in the Savannah region to unearth its strengths, weaknesses and potentials to provide the best succession plan for the entire Kingdom to avoid chieftaincy conflicts in the Kingdom.

## Methodology

Methodology is the study of research methods. It can also refer to the methods themselves or to the philosophical discussion of associated background assumptions. Methodology concerns a detailed description and analysis of the processes. It includes evaluative aspects by comparing different methods. For example, how to conceptualise the studied phenomena and what constitutes evidence for or against them.

Methodology offers the theoretical underpinning for understanding which method, set of methods, or best practices can be applied to a specific case, for example, to calculate a specific result Iriny & Rose, [6].

Qualitative and Quantitative techniques of data collection were employed in gathering data on the topic under study.

As viewed by [7] quantitative research approach that it emphasizes objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by manipulating, pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques.

## Data Collection

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring data on target variables of interest in an established system, which then enables one to answer relevant questions and evaluate outcomes. This research focused on

data collection tools such as Snowball, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Participant Observation to gather data for analysis.

Below are some data collection tools used:

**Snowball:** According to [8], Snowball or chain sampling or chain referral sampling is a nonprobability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances for interview. Thus the sample group is said to grow like a rolling snowball. As the sample builds up, enough data are gathered to be useful for the research. To avoid wide biases in applying Snowball, respondent-driven sampling technique has been merged with Snowball to allow the research to make asymptotically unbiased estimates under certain conditions and to enhance estimates of social network.

**Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** A focus group discussion involves gathering people from similar backgrounds or experiences together to discuss a specific topic of interest. It is a form of qualitative research where questions are asked about their perceptions, attitude, beliefs, opinions, or ideas. In FGD, participants are free to talk with other group members. Unlike other research methods, it encourages discussions with other participants. It generally involves group interviewing in which a small group of usually 8-12 people. FGD is led by a moderator (interviewer) in a loosely structured discussion of various topics of interest. According to [9] the technique was developed after World War II to evaluate audience responses to radio programs.

**Key Informant Interviews (KII):** It is a qualitative in-depth interview between the range of 15-35 people selected for their first-hand knowledge of a specific perspective of a particular topic of interest. The interview is structured regarding the list of issues or questions to be discussed. It is a form of conversation among acquaintances allowing free flow of ideas and information on a particular matter of interest.

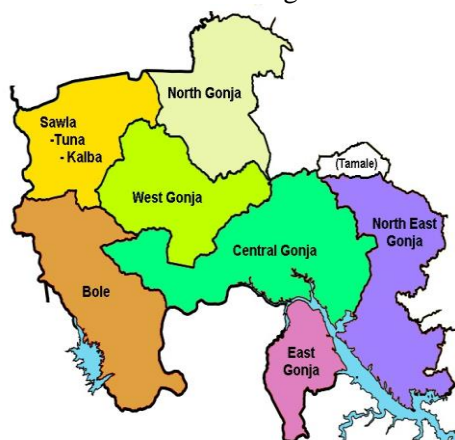
According to [10] KII are framed questions to spontaneously probe for information and notes taking which are elaborated on later.

**Participant Observation:** is a research method where the researcher immerses him/herself in a particular social setting or group, observing the behaviours, interactions, and practices of the participants. This can be a valuable method for any research project that seeks to understand the experiences of individuals or groups in a particular social context. In a participant observation, the researcher is called a participant-observer, meaning that he/she participate in the group's activities while also observing the group's behaviour and interactions for quality information gathering.

## Study Area

The Savannah region is located in the northern belt of Ghana. Its capital is Damongo. The region has a land size of 35,862 square kilometers making it the largest region in

Ghana with total population of 653,266 people according to [18]. The region has seven (7) districts which include; Bole, West Gonja Municipal, Central Gonja, North Gonja, Sawla-Tuna-Kalba, North East Gonja and East Gonja Municipal. With respect to the chieftaincy institution, the Savannah region currently has 22 paramountcies across the length and breadth of the region. The region has the black and white Volta rivers transcending across with arable lands quality in cereal, tuber, vegetable agriculture. The young region is a repository of natural endowments such as gold, clinker, salt, hydro-carbons etc. The core delicacy of the people of the region is Tuo-Zafi (T.Z) usually prepared with maize and cassava floor mixed. Damba is the major festival of the people of the region which is celebrated annually by the chiefs and people of the infant region. The Savannah region shares boundary with the Northern and the Upper West regions to the north. To the South is Bono and Bono East regions and to the east is Oti region of Ghana.



**Figure 1.** A Map Showing the Districts of the Savannah Region of Ghana

Source: Ghana districts.com

## Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Sample size is the measure of the number of individual samples or observations used in a statistical setting. It can also be called sample statistics. Sample size is a critical determiner of a project, as it affects the accuracy and reliability of the results of the research. In short, the sample size is the number of people to be surveyed.

Using sample size calculator in determining

the sample size with a population size of 80 people, at confidence level of 95% with a margin of error of 5% with population proportion of 50%.

The sample size (n) therefore is 67 people.

## Sampling Technique

Online survey or Google form survey and stratified sampling techniques were used to

gather data from respondents in conducting the survey.

The sampling technique is the method employed while choosing a sample from a population. For example, you could select every 3<sup>rd</sup> person, everyone in a particular age group, and so on. The study was carefully considered and put to perspective before choosing the appropriate sampling technique. The sampling technique has a significant effect on the results. For example, some sampling techniques might be intentionally biased. So, selecting a suitable sampling technique is essential to draw accurate conclusions from the data.

### **Chieftaincy Institution in Ghana**

The chieftaincy institution in Ghana is a system that structures and regulates the activities of local chiefdoms in the Ghanaian society and state. It is an institution that has been recognized by the 1992 Republican constitution of Ghana. Article 270 (1) of the 1992 constitution of Ghana states that the institution of chieftaincy together with its traditional councils as established by customary law and usage, is hereby guaranteed” [4].

To strengthen chieftaincy in Ghana, the noble institution is further regulated by the chieftaincy Act, 2008 Act 759. The act regulates how matters affecting chieftaincy are resolved and defines the roadmap for the National, regional and traditional councils are ran.

In the view of [11], most chiefs in various communities have become agents of development and thus, they are essential to contemporary local governance. It is perhaps in this vein, that the institution has been significantly recognized legally in Ghana, making it a formidable foundation for her proper functioning in the society.

As a result of the effective structure of chieftaincy in the 1950s press home for four ministerial posts from the colonial masters. To solve the matter, at that time the Governor-

Arden-Clarke agreed to give two ministerial posts to the chiefs.

### **Who is a Chief in Ghana?**

According to [17] section 57 sub-section (1) defines a chief as a person who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as a chief or queen mother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage.

In the postulation of [12] defines a chief to mean the leader of a tribe or clan in a town or village (sometimes towns or villages) and who is in charge of and answerable to the people in the town or village.

In the Gonja Kingdom, a chief is a royal hailing from the lineage of the royal family of Gonja (Kagbanye) ancestry stalk who has been nominated and enskinned according to customs and traditions of Gonja. In Gonja, we have skins for paternal and maternal lineages. In the Bole division, chief of Seripe (Seripewura) is the head of the maternal lineage of chieftaincy inheritance. In the case of Damongo, Zonzuwura represent same and this development transcends across Gonja. Those who inherit paternally rise through the ranks and files of the chieftaincy structure to the paramountcy status and in the case of the Yagbon skin, paramount chiefs of the seven divisions of Gonja are eligible to the Yagbon skin. Though two of the divisions (Kung/Kong & Kandia) are in abeyance for now.

*A chief is a person of a royal ancestry of the same family stalk who is validly selected or nominated to rule over a defined jurisdiction per the relevant customs and traditions.*

### **Categories of Chiefs in Ghana**

According to [17] section 58 states that the following are the categories of chiefs:

1. The Asantehene and paramount chiefs
2. Divisional chiefs
3. Sub-divisional chiefs
4. Adikrofo and

5. Other chiefs recognize by the National House

### **Brief History of Gonjas in the Savannah Region**

History has it that, Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa son of Lata Dii Ngoro Jakpa originally has been the founder of the Gonja Kingdom. Ndewura Jakpa founded the Gonja Kingdom through conquerors. His tactics and antics were more of a diplomatic approach except extreme resistance of the native force then Ndewura Jakpa will fight an open battle with such native group. It is believed that the Gonjas are an embodiment of the Kwa group or Guan group.

According to [2] suggested that the Mande intervention may not have begun with Jakpa, although the latter brought it to its climax. In his work, he named Nabaga as the grandfather of Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa (SNJ) and the initiator of the process. Nabaga was believed to be the first leader or King of the Gonjas on the conquers expedition according to Kitab Ghunja compiled in about 1751. Nabaga came by that office as a result of a punitive expedition he undertook for the chief of Mande-Kabba.

SNJ entered present day Gonja Kingdom from western Gonja Bole through Sakpa with his fighting army. It is common knowledge that during SNJ's conquerors, he planted in every division that he conquered one of his seven sons as chief of the area or division. According to oral history and practice of the Gonjas, the seven sons include; the Wasipewura, Kpembewura, Bolewura, Kongwura, Kandawura, Tuluwewura and the Kusawguwura in a hierarchical order.

According to history, Gonjas in general hailed from Mande in the Mali empire and are therefore part of the Madingo or Madinka group. The founder of the Gonja Kingdom Ndewura Jakpa ruled from 1675 to 1697. Ndewura Jakpa used the spear throughout his conquerors expedition. The spear has remained the emblem or symbol of authority of the Gonjas and their symbol of identity.

Per custom and tradition of Gonja, every Yagbonwura (King) is revered and called father or grandfather by the sons of Jakpa. It is so because, Yagbonwura inherited the founder of the Gonja Kingdom and therefore strategically positioned as Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa. During Jakpa's conquerors expedition, he fought into the Wala nation where he took parts of the lands for Kong and Kandia by defeating them, the Dagomba nation where he claimed the Wasipe and Kusawgu lands.

The 5<sup>th</sup> son of Ndewura Jakpa and his elder brother Tuluwewura Abbas fought the Dagombas in the area and claimed the Kusawgu lands for the Kusawguwura. Per custom and tradition of Gonja, Kusawguwura is the 7<sup>th</sup> son and last born of the founder of the Gonja Kingdom.

In modern governance system, the Gonja Kingdom form the Savannah region of Ghana with vast lands. Indeed, the Savannah region in the history of Ghana geographically holds about 15% of Ghana's total land mass and therefore the biggest region in Ghana.

### **Kingship**

Chambers 21<sup>st</sup> dictionary 1996 edition Pg748 defines a King as;

1. a male ruler of a nation especially, a hereditary monarch
2. a ruler or a chief

According to [14] viewed a King as; a male sovereign prince who is the official ruler of an independent state; a monarch. In the New Penguin English dictionary, 2000 edition, at Pg 770, a King is defined as: a male monarch of a state, country etc., especially one who inherits his position and rules for life.

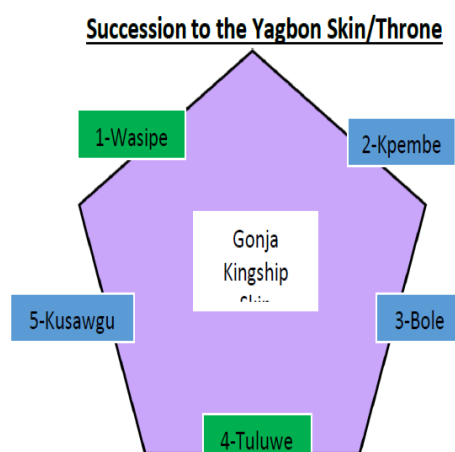
According to [12] in his book titled "The Law of Chieftaincy in Ghana" there is no reference to a King, Kingdom or Empire in the 1992 constitution, Act 370, Act 759, or any other statute published after the 1992 constitution. Conscious efforts have therefore been made in this book to leave out reference to any King, Kingdom or Empire. Justice Brobbey

further elaborated that in the history of Ghana, there were Kingdoms with rulers who were Kings who owed no allegiance to anyone. These Kings have paramount chiefs who swore the oath of allegiance to them and had the authority to establish paramount chiefs in their traditional areas as well. In the present day Ghana some chiefs continue to wield these powers. In contemporary Ghana, those who readily come to mind when Kings are mentioned are the Overlord of Gonjas (Yagbonwura), the Overlord of Dagombas (Ya-Naa), of the Mamprusis (Nayiri), of the Ashantis the (Asantehene) and the Nanumbas (Bimbila Naa).

## The Yagbon Skin (Kingship)

The Yagbon skin is the ultimate chieftaincy title among the people of Gonja in the Savannah region. The occupant of the Yagbon skin is the Yagbonwura representing the monarch (Ngbanya) dynasty of the Gonja Kingdom. It is believed that the Yagbonwura is the representative of the founder of the Gonja Kingdom Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa who embarked on his conquerors through Sakpa in the Bole district of western Gonja.

Originally, the chieftaincy succession to the Yagbon skin has seven heir apparents – the Wasipewura, Kpembewura, Bolewura, Kongwura, Kandiwura, Tuluwewura and the Kusawguwura. These seven heir apparents ascend to the Yagbon throne in rotational turns.



**Figure 2.** Showing Succession of the Yagbon Skin

Source: Field survey, 2024

Currently, Kong and Kandia who are legitimate heir apparents to the Yagbon skin, are in abeyance [13]. For the meantime, the remaining five heir apparents ascend to the Yagbon skin in rotation and according to seniority of skin. Among the five are Wasipewura, Kpembewura, Bolewura, Tuluwewura and Kusawguwura. Since 1975, the Bolewura ascension to the Yagbon Skin pre-dates the Kpembewura. However, in the succession, Kpembewura is second on the list of chiefs eligible to the Yagbon skin (Wul-Puti)

Nyange in the Sawla Tuna Kalba district is the traditional capital of the Yagbon skin until 1942 when Yagbonwura Awushi of Wasipe moved the capital from Nyange to Damongo the administrative capital of the Savannah region. Nyange is still upheld in the customs and traditions of Gonja during the enskinment and demise of a Yagbonwura.

The Yagbonwura is the King and Overlord of the People of Gonja Kingdom. He serves as a major link between the dead and the living and the epitome of the customs and traditions of

the people of the Gonja Kingdom. The Yagbonwura is revered.

As mentioned earlier, the succession to the Yagbon skin originally were seven gates or divisions. In further concurrence of the issue under discussion, [16] answers that the Gonja chieftaincy declaration succession to the Yagbon skin is rotational among the five gates or divisions. Today, and in practice, the divisions eligible to the Yagbon skins (Wul-Puti) are five divisions or gates. These gates include; Wasipe, Kpembe, Bole Tuluwe and Kusawgu. Reasons for the expel of Kandia and Kong are still researchable.

### Kingmakers of the Yagbon Skin

According to the 1930 constitution of Gonja, the Kingmakers of the Yagbon skin are seven (7) namely, the Sonyorwura, Damongowura, Debrewura, Chorowura, Mankpanwura, Kulaw-wura and the chief linguist (Nsuawura) of Yagbon. Upon a vacancy, the Kingmakers led by Sonyorwura per custom and tradition

convene a meeting after the 7<sup>th</sup> day funeral rites of the demised Yagbonwura and nominate a candidate for the Yagbon skin in accordance with the laid down structure of the Gonja state.

In 1698 – 1709 the Yagbon skin experienced a rebellion in the Kingdom. Between 1891-1896 there was an interregnum to the Yagbon skin thus the era of the Samori war. In 1909 – 1912 observed another interregnum of the monarch skin of Gonja.

According to [15] states that since 1912 to date, the chieftaincy succession to the Kingship (Yagbon skin) has since existed without any oppression and resistance from within or external.

*In simple terms, Kingmakers of the Yagbon skin is a body of paramount chiefs who according to customs and traditions of Gonja are eligible to nominate or select the succeeding King in accordance to the laid down customs and traditions of Gonja.*

### List of Kings in the Gonja Kingdom

**Table 1.** Showing List of Yagbonwuras and Leaders of Gonja Kingdom Since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century

S/N	NAME OF KING/LEADER	DIVISION	REIGN (PERIOD)	LEADER	YAGBONWURA	REMARKS
1	Naba/Nabaga/Lamba		1546-1576	Leader		Died
2	Wam		1576-1595	Leader		Died
3	Charimanwura		1595-1615	Leader		Died
5	Amoah Alhaji Imoro Seidu		1615-1634	Leader		Died
6	Lanta Dii Ngoro Jakpa		1634-1675	Leader		Died as Emeritus King (Bure in 1681)
7	Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa		1675-1697	Leader		Died as founder
5	Limu		1697-1697	Leader		Died
	Bur Lanyo	Sonyor	1697-1697		Yagbonwura	Died
8	Sulemana Jakpa		1697-1709	Leader		Died
9	Abbass	Tuluwe	25 <sup>th</sup> May 1709		Yagbonwura	100 days Interregnum
10	Mahama Labayiru	Kpembe			Yagbonwura	1709-1712



11	Kankanga	Kandia			Yagbonwura	1712.....?
12	Sarfu	Bole			Yagbonwura	.....?.....?
13	Kali	Tuluwe			Yagbonwura	.....? 1858
14	Nyantachi	Kong/Kung			Yagbonwura	1858-1873
15	Jau	Tuluwe	-		Yagbonwura	-
16	Pirku (Mahama)	Kusawgu	-		Yagbonwura	-
17	Wari	Kong/Kung			Yagbonwura	-
18	Adama	Kong/Kung	-		Yagbonwura	-
19	Kurban Seidu Dushi	Bole	....? 1890/1		Yagbonwura	Died
						Samori invasion (1891-1896)
20	Pontonprong Abudu	Bole	1896-1907		Yagbonwura	Died
21	Lanyor	Bole	1907-1909		Yagbonwura	Maternally from Bole & Paternally from Kong.
						Interregnum (1909-1912)
22	Dagbonga Mahama	Bole	1912-1937		Yagbonwura	Founder of modern Gonja
23	Iddi Banbanga	Tuluwe	1937-1942		Yagbonwura	Died
24	Soale Lanyo	Kusawgu	1942-1942		Yagbonwura	Died
25	Ewurbunyanso Ewuntoma Mahama	Wasipe	1942-1975		Yagbonwura	capital from Nyange to Damongo
26	Kurabaso Abutu Mahama	Bole	1975-1982		Yagbonwura	Son of Dagbonga
27	Joseph Adam Braimah Timu	Kpembe	1983- 26 <sup>th</sup> Jan. 1987		Yagbonwura	Wrote Gonja history
28	Kanyiti	Tuluwe	1987-1990		Yagbonwura	Died
29	Bi-Awurbi	Kusawgu	1990-1992		Yagbonwura	Died
30	Ale-Adengi Tikpiri	Wasipe	1992-1993		Yagbonwura	Died
31	Sarfo Amantana Borenyinche	Bole	7 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 1993-1999		Yagbonwura	Died
32	Bawa Abudu Doshie	Kpembe	2000-2010		Yagbonwura	Died
33	Prof. Tuntumba Bore Essa I	Kusawgu	March, 2010- 5 <sup>th</sup> Feb. 2023		Yagbonwura	Petitioned for Savannah region.

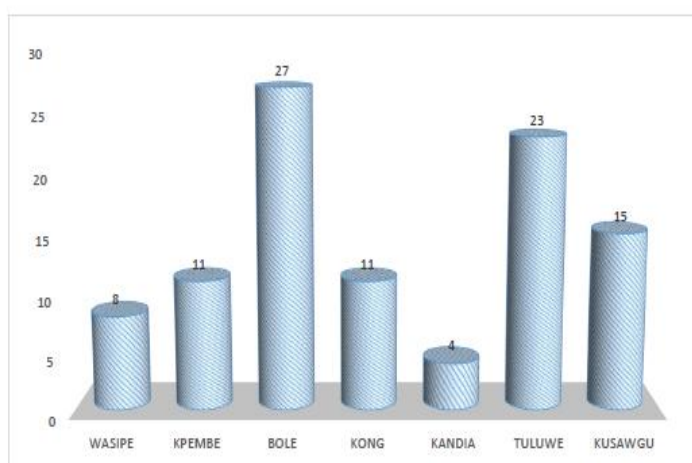
34	Bii-Kunuto Jewu Soale I	Tuluwe	20 <sup>th</sup> March, 2023 to date		Yagbonwura	Reigning
----	----------------------------	--------	---	--	------------	----------

**Source:** African occasional papers No.6 and field survey 2024

**Table 2.** The Number of Yagbonwuras from the Seven Divisions of Gonja Since 18<sup>th</sup> Century

Serial Numbers	Division from	No. of Kings (Yagbonwuras)	Percentage (%)
1	Wasipe	2	8
2	Kpembe	3	11
3	Bole	7	27
4	Kong (Kung)	3	11
5	Kandia	1	4
6	Tuluwe	6	23
7	Kusawgu	4	15
TOTAL		26	99

**Source:** Field Survey, 2024



**Figure 3.** Bar Graph Showing Number of Yagbonwuras from Each of the Seven Divisions of Gonja

**Source:** Field Survey, 2024

**Table 3.** 2022 Chieftaincy Cases Before the Houses of Chiefs in Ghana

S/N	Region/House	Total Cases	Percentage (%)
1	National House	139	28
2	Ahafo	2	0.4
3	Ashanti	32	6
4	Bono	33	7
5	Bono East	32	6
6	Central	51	10
7	Eastern	16	3
8	Northern	2	0.4
9	Greater Accra	38	7
10	North East	2	0.4
11	Oti	13	3

12	Upper East	9	2
13	Volta	33	7
14	Upper West	14	3
15	Western	52	11
16	Western North	23	5
17	Savannah	2	0.4
Total		493	99.6

Source: Field survey, 2024

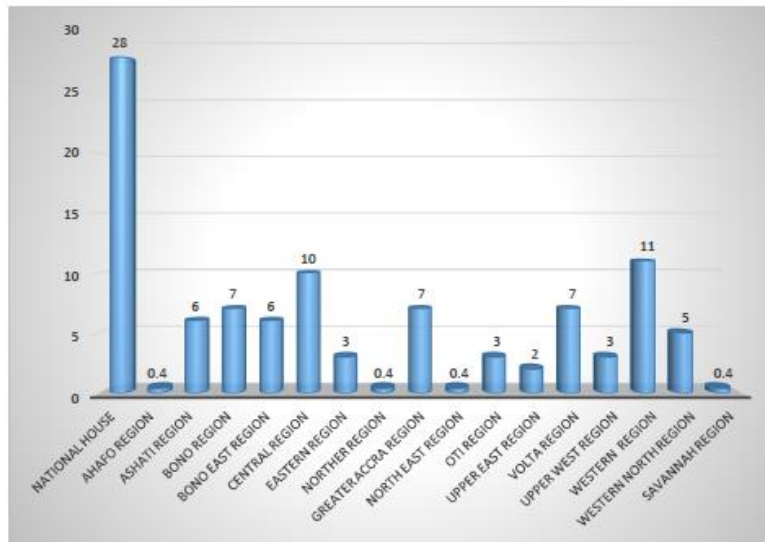


Figure 4. Bar Graph Showing Cases of the Houses of Chiefs in 2022

Source: Field Survey, 2024

## Data Analysis and Results

### Data Analysis

Data analysis is the act of using statistical tools to organize, represent, describe, evaluate, and interpret data. In this research, excel was used to analyse data for interpretation.

### Results

Respondents viewed a king as a male ruler of the Gonja family ancestry stalk who inherits the skins of the kingship from the paternal lineage of royal inheritance. It also reveals that since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, twenty-six (26) Kings (Yagbonwuras) so far ascended to the Kingship in the Gonja Kingdom. Objective four (4) was resolved by knowing the number of kings so far.

In the course of selecting a King for the Kingdom, two interregnums were recorded since the 15<sup>th</sup> century of which one was as a

result of the kingship. This addresses objective two (2) of the research. In summary, the Gonja Kingship undergo a peaceful succession process since the establishment of the

Kingdom. The results confirm the alternative hypothesis as true postulation

Clearly, the Gonja Kingship succession plan was documented in the 1930 constitution of Gonja titled “Areas of Research into Gonja Traditional Area (Ngbanye Kingdom)”. The findings answer objective three (3).

From time immemorial, Gonja Kings are chosen from the five divisions of Gonja though the divisions eligible to the skin (Wul-Puti) are seven. In practice, the Kingship is the highest throne in the Gonja chieftaincy hierarchy. The Gonja people practice centralized system of Kingship where the reporting system is bottom-up approach of chieftaincy leadership. The Kingship has kingmakers headed by the

Sonyorwura (paramount chief of Sonyor) who chose among the sons of the Yagbonwura in the succession to the Kingship. To be a King in the Gonja Kingdom, one must inherit patrilineally as a Gonja royal from either of the recognized divisions eligible to the Kingship. The King (Yagbonwura) has paramount chiefs serving under the King's authority. The Gonjas are believed to be coming from the Mali empire of the Madingo or Madinka group. In general, objective one (1) was addressed to a far extend.

## Discussion

A meeting of stakeholders was organised for presentation of results to key stakeholders in the region to validate the research findings.

During the discussion, it was recommended that if the succession plan of Gonja kingship could be replicated and used at the paramouncy and divisional levels, will go a long way to solve chieftaincy succession conflicts in the region.

Participants argued that there is the need to define clearly the traditional roles in the chieftaincy structure of Gonja to enhance working effectiveness and to avoid unnecessary role competitions.

## Conclusion

The research employed the finest techniques and methods in collecting data for quality

results. The validity of the work was improved as a result of proof reading of work. The efforts of respondents to the research work was inspiring that nudged stakeholders to provide the best of information to enhance the work. It was observed that the monarch dynasty of the Gonjas (Yagbonwura) was revered, respected and dignified by the followers as their God on earth apart from the omnipotent. In Gonja Kingdom, kingship is not by elections rather by inheritance and lineage. It considered one of the best chieftaincy succession process that follow tradition and customs in a peaceful manner.

## Conflict of Interest

Conducting the research, the research has no any conflict of interest in the course of the study about any occurrences. Professionally, there is no any conflict of interest during the study

## Acknowledgement

In carrying out this research, I truly recognize my colleague staff for their sincere assistance to this research. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to respondents for their time and share of knowledge and wisdom. Appreciation to my local guide and external guide for their mammoth direction and supervision made the research an exceptional academic work.

## References

- [1] Goody, J., Ford, D. and Kabbery, P. M. (1967). *West African Kingdoms in the Nineteenth Century*. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. London Press. DOI; <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429491641>
- [2] Dickson, K. B., (1969). *A Historical Geography of Ghana*. Cambridge University Press, 1969.Pp.xiv+379, bibl., maps.Vol.41, Issue 1, Pp.78. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/1159698>
- [3] Mensah, I. O., (2014), *Politics, Chieftaincy and Customary Law in Ghana's Fourth Republic: The Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol.6., no.7,
- [4] 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. Assembly Press, Accra

<https://constitutionnet.org/sites/default/files/Ghana%20Constitution.pdf> Pg.132

- [5] Acquah, G. K., (2006). The Judicial role of the chief in Democratic Governance. In I. K Odotei & A. K. Awedoba (Eds), *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development* (pp.65-79). Sub-Saharan Publishers. ISBN 978 – 9988 – 550 – 74 – 2. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.22.770>
- [6] Irny, S. I. and Rose, A. A. (2005). *Designing a Strategic Information Systems Planning Methodology*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/200808582>

- [7] Babbie, E. and Mouton, J. (2010). *The Practice of Social Research*. 10th Edition, Republic of South Africa, Oxford University Press Southern Africa, Cape Town.
- [8] Goodman, L. A. (1961). Snowball Sampling *Annals of Mathematical Statistics*. <https://doi.org/10.1214/aoms/1177705148> Pg.32(1), 148. 170.
- [9] Stewart, D. W., & Shamdasani, P. N., (1990). *Theory and Practice; Applied Social Research Methods Series*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- [10] US Agency for International Development. *Performance Monitoring & Evaluation TIPS: Conducting Key Informant Interviews*. Washington, DC. 1996. Number 2.
- [11] Awedoba, A. K., (2009). *An Ethnographic Study of Northern Ghana Conflicts Towards a Sustainable Peace Initiatives Ghana: Sub-Saharan Publishers*.
- [12] Brobbey, S. A., (2008). *The Law of Chieftaincy in Ghana. Incorporating Customary Arbitration, Contempt of Court, Judicial Review*. Advance Legal Publications.
- [13] Johnstone, A. C., and Blair, A. H., (1932), *Enquiry into the Constitution and Organization of the Gbanye Kingdom*, Accra: Government Press.
- [14] *Dictionaries since 1874*. Collins English Dictionary. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition.
- [15] <http://www.graphic.com.gh> Gonja skin succession offers lessons.
- [16] Gonja Chieftaincy Declaration Instrument of Parliament. 2010
- [17] Act of the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana. Chieftaincy Act 2008, Act 759
- [18] Ghana 2021 Population and Housing Census General Report. Volume 3C
- [19] <https://www.modernghana.com> chieftaincy disputes remain a thorny internal security threat.
- [20] <https://molenationalpark.org> History of the Gonjas.