

Interview conducted by Ellen Mma Atanga (E) with (R), 28 years old, at Maamobi, an inner suburb of Accra, on Sunday 29 May 2005, starting at 3 pm.

Interview conducted by Ellen Mma Atanga (E), assisted by Arwen Kimmell. The original plan was to interview R's mother-in-law, but she could not be there and R agreed to be interviewed instead.

The interview was conducted in an inner room, which was quieter than at R's shop area outside but nevertheless there was a fair amount of traffic through the room and radios are audible. The area is crowded, and the house has several interconnecting rooms.

Translation by E.M. Atanga, slightly edited by MEKD.

E As we have come this afternoon, we want to discuss with Frafra women to know how they are faring by leaving our homeland to come and live here. If you compare life being in Accra to being at our home, how are things? Or were you born here – and everything – we will talk about it this afternoon. So, don't hide anything. Everything that you know.

R (laughs) I am fine.

E Ah, do you have a husband?

R Yes.

E What is the name of your husband?

R Atule

E Atule?

R Yes.

E How many children do you have?

R Three, two girls, one boy.

E So, do you work?

R Yes. I sell items in the night.

E What about him?

R He, this is his work (pointing to a sound system in the room)

E Is he doing ..this thing..?

R Spinners [ie. DJ]

E Film?

R No, spinners, it is spinners.

E Ah, spinners. As you are here, how is it here? What is staying here in Accra like?

R OK. It is difficult but it is better than our hometown. The way it is when you are at our land, it is different here, if you do something small here you will earn some money but at home if you have nothing doing before you can do something, sometimes it is difficult to get money. That you should do something to sell is quite hard. But here when day breads and you do something maybe they will be a little for you to get something small.

E Have you stayed here for long? Is this where you were born?

R Ah well, I was born at home before I came here.

E Ah, which part of our homeland?

R I am from Kalebio.

E Ah Kalebio.

R Yes

E Where is Kalebio located in Bolga?

R Abingya, where Abingya used to be the MP.
E Where, is it around Sumburengo area?
R From Estates, you will leave Estates then go through the transport yard, go out of Estates and you will be going in that direction.
E So did you marry before coming here or you saw him... (tape not clear)
R OK, I came before getting married to him.
E So, you will tell us something small about living here. Are you living with your husband's people or you are...
R Yes, I am with them. I live with my husband's people.
E Are there no problems?
R No, there are no problems.
E Have you ever seen a place without problems?
R OK there are problems but it is (not) how it would have been.
E That's it, feel free to tell us what kind of problems. We would like to know about all that. Have you ever fought?
R Ah, OK, as for fighting, no matter what you will fight. There is a little fighting but it is not that much yet.
E Do you know it is difficult to live with your husband's people for instance. Do not feel shy that maybe am... with your husband's relation and tell. She is not going to know about this discussion.
R Yes
E Yes, OK, as you are here what kind of fight ever occurred?
R It is always only arguments.
E What usually brings about the arguments?
R Like maybe you say, or maybe a child comes from school to ask for school fees. Something, and you are to speak to him about money. He would say unless you contribute something small so that he would also add to it. If not, he alone what can he do? You see? That is what usually brings about the arguments.
E What about the people you are living with, haven't you ever quarreled with a neighbor.
R No.
E Ai, it is not that maybe you like fighting but sometimes that person fought with you. And we want to know whether something of the sort has ever happened and how did you resolve it? Was it outsiders who came to settle the case or you did it yourselves.
R It is we ourselves who settle it. As we are sitting right now, someone can say when you were not around that person said this about you.
E It is gossiping.
R (laughs)
E For instance, have they talked about you and you heard it, and what brought about the matter that it became a fight that it resulted in asking about it. And who did you call?
R Ah, okay, we did not call anybody. It was just among ourselves.
E Where was it? Was it in this very house?
R Yes, in this house, but as for outside, no.
E And what was said during the discussion?
R Like.. (laughs)
E You do not remember?
R Yes. It is a long time. As I am here, I do not usually ... OK...

E You don't usually take it to heart.

R Yes, I don't usually take it to heart. Immediately I ask about it, it is finished.

E But ah, don't you know that sometimes your husband refusing to give you money or not buying you a cloth and you want to complain can result in a fight.

R No, as I am here I sometimes can stay here for some time and then go home. He sometimes buys a cloth to send to me. Sometimes when I come here and they bring cloths for sale, I tell him oh, if you have money won't you buy the cloth for me? If only he has it, he will buy for me. And if he hasn't got, he will say he hasn't got.

E So, ever since you married your husband's mother has never been angry that why have they bought a cloth for you but didn't buy for her?

R No. She might have spoken about it without my hearing it but she has never said it in my presence.

E Eh, as you are here, have you seen that our women are also very many at this place. How do you consider their way of life here?

R OK. Their way of living here. You will see that as for some unless washing bowls, carrying load. Maybe if your husband is somehow better then you say ok, let him get something for you to be selling like I am selling here. If you go to town you see many of them. Those who carry load, wash bowls only that that you [sic] would do as jobs when you come here. Have you seen how it is?

E So as they are here have you ever seen someone involved in a fight or who did something that resulted in a problem and a fight?

R Like, is it concerning women?

E Yes, women or maybe a woman with her husband, something like that.

R No, I haven't seen.

E Haven't you ever seen?

R No.

E Have you not seen men who beat their wives?

R (laughs) OK, man, you know as for me I do not roam. You see, when it is daybreak as I am here, I am just there if you were to say maybe men or something of the sort, then I will say oh, as for that one many more [I know].

E So then tell me about any man who ever did something that resulted in fighting that the case went to court.

R As I am here, my own husband. It was about his friend, the young man used to be his friend and they were living nicely. Then first of all that his what? That he brought his thing, his sheep to us to keep in this house and they lived together with the goats and they were fine. One day they [husband and friend] went out to roam, to the Zuarungu, Frafra what... Dagati that usually have a thing, doing ball, they went there and they fought and returned at night. The following day immediately the young man, came, I saw the two of them standing. But when he came he did not say he fought with the young man. The following day the young man came, I saw him bring a certain man here and said he was looking for Atule. I said oh, he has gone out. That it is this man who is looking for him. I said, where is that man from. That, they quarreled yesterday so he brought the CID to arrest him.

E Ei.

R I said ah, is that so. OK I said, I came to call him. Immediately I came to call him out, told him that they were looking for him at the Nima police station. And he said okay. He should

go and that he was coming. Gave the time, about 9. At 9 he went and they talked about the case. Then the young man said yes, he gave his money to me to keep.

E Umm.

R Yes. That my husband collected the money and did not want to give [him] the money.

E It is no longer that he fought with your husband but it is now with you.

R Yes it is now me. That was the time I gave birth to this my child. It is now going to 3 years, in this month. Yes. It was 5th May that he became 3 years. It was a month after I delivered that they started. He went to tell his mother that he had his money with me and I did not want to give it to him and gave it to my husband and when he wanted to talk about the money it became a fight. That was where his sister said that, so when did he give me the money. That it was about 2 years. It was there that my husband's sister told him if I was your bank, that you should take your money to give me? OK, but even after he gave me the money he turned around to use the money to buy a tape from us oh.. My husband was selling a tape and he took the money to buy it and even paid for it, leaving fifty thousand he was to pay. And claimed that his money was with me. It was then that his elder brother living at Haatso [near Legon] said that, was he alone when he was giving me the money, did my husband know? That no. So why was he giving me the money without letting my husband know about it? And he was silent. That was why the man said that, he could say that he [young man] loves me that was why he gave me the money not letting my husband know. That yes, unless Atule paid him the money he gave me, 1.5 [million old cedis].

E Ee.

R (laughs) I said, me 1.5 what should I do with 1.5? It was that that resulted in the case that dragged on so that OK, that unless they lock him [husband] up before he paid the money.

E They did not send him to court and decided to lock him up?

R Yes. When he went they allowed him to come home. The next day he decided to go back. When they went back...

E Not even court?

R They do not go to court.

E Mm.

R Yes, immediately they went back they sent him to "counter back" [police cell]. Ei it was a problem.. that eh.. they way they fought there he lost his money 450,000..

E Oh!

R So, the 450,000, the police said unless he paid the money. But he said they fought, he did not say I collected his money so he should have brought that one but he said they fought and that because of that they had to go to the police station to solve the problem.

E It now turns out to be money.

R And now it is a money matter. OK as for the 450, my husband will pay but the remaining money, I have nothing to do with it because he did not bring that case to report, the case he reported was different from what he came to say. So every day the young man will come here, that his money, his money, his money.

E So as it happened was your husband still at the counter back?, or they released him?

R No, oh we brought him out. Immediately they said that he should come home, that his friend came to collect money to go and pay the 450. Being the money that got lost thus before they bailed him. You see it? And even he and the young man are on good terms again, following each other.

E You see? They are like small children.

R Eh, they are still friends, his sister said she did not want to see them moving together again because the way he is he wants to lead him into trouble. So he should not follow him again but still they are together. That is how my husband is. He can, if you fight he immediately is free [friendly] with you. A few days later if you talk to him he will talk to you to.

E If it is so, then he did not take...

R Yes.

E The case, it was not prolonged.

R it did not last. I went to pay the money and the police asked us to come back home to settle the case and that it is a fight that has come between them. It was then that they brought the case home and they settled it.

E You said there is no problem but that problem that you had is your problem. That is why the guy included your name in the case.

We thank you. What is today?

R Today is the 20th.

E What month?

R Beginning of the rain month [May]

E The year?

R 2005.

E But today is a Sunday.