

THE INFLUENCE OF THE POOR IN PRO-POOR ACTIVITIES: A CASE STUDY OF
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES IN
NORTHERN GHANA

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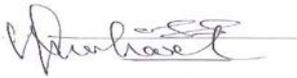
JUNE 2014

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents and my family for their love, inspiration and support.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I, Michael Wombeogo hereby declare that this thesis entitled “The participation of the poor in pro-poor activities: A case study of community participation in development intervention programmes in northern Ghana”, I am the original author and that all sources of references that I used or quoted have been indicated and duly acknowledged by means of complete references.



SIGNATURE
(M WOMBEOGO)

25th June 2014

DATE

ABBREVIATIONS

ABCD	–	Asset-based community development
ACDEP	–	Association of Church Development Project
AFRC	–	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
BMZ	–	German Ministry for Development
CHPS	–	Community health-based programme and services
CDD	–	Centre for Democratic Development
CDD	–	Community-driven development
CIA	–	Criminal Investigation Association
CO ₂	–	Carbon dioxide
CRS	–	Catholic Relief Services
DA	–	District Assembly
DACF	–	District Assembly Common Fund
DASF	–	Development Alternatives Services Foundation
DRA	–	Demand responsive approach
EFA	–	Education for all
ERPs	–	Economic recovery programmes
ESP	–	Education strategic programme
FASDEP	–	Food and Agriculture Sector Development Programme
FAWE	–	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FCUBE	–	Free compulsory universal basic education
GDI	–	Gross domestic index
GDP	–	Gross domestic product
GER	–	Gross enrolment rate
GES	–	Ghana education service
GHS	–	Ghana Health Service
GLSS 5	–	Ghana living and statistical service 5
GNI	–	Gross National Income
GoG	–	Government of Ghana
GPRS 1	–	Ghana Poverty reduction strategy 1
GPRS 11	–	Ghana poverty reduction strategy 2
GSS	–	Ghana Statistical Service
HDI	–	Human development index

HIPC	–	Highly indebted poor countries
HIV/AIDS	–	Human immune virus / Acquired immune-deficiency syndrome
IDA	–	integrated development approach
IFAD	–	International Food and Agricultural Development
IMF	–	International Monetary Fund
IRD	–	Integrated rural development
ISSER	–	Integrated scientific, social and educational research
JHS	–	Junior High School
JSS	–	Junior Secondary School
LEAP	–	Livelihood empowerment and agricultural programme
MCA	–	Millennium challenge authority
MCC	–	Millennium challenge centre
MDA	–	Millennium development authority
MDBS	–	Multi-donor budget support
MDG 1	–	Millennium development goal 1
MDGs	–	Millennium development goals
MOEYS	–	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
MOFA	–	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
NDC	–	National Democratic Congress
NGO	–	Non-governmental organisation
NGOs	–	Non-governmental organisations
NHIS	–	National Health Insurance Scheme
NIRP	–	National Institutional Renewal Programme
NNED	–	Northern Network for Education Development
NPP	–	New Patriotic Party
NR	–	Northern region
NRC	–	National Revolutionary Council
NYeP	–	National Youth Employment Programme
ODI	–	Overseas Development Initiative
OECD	–	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OVC	–	Organisation of Voluntary Cooperation
Oxfam GB	–	Oxfam Great Britain
PAR	–	Poverty action research
PLA	–	Participatory Learning in Action

PLHIV	–	People living with HIV
PM&E	–	Participatory monitoring and evaluation
PNDC	–	Provisional National Defence Council
PPA	–	Participatory poverty assessment
PPP	–	Public purchasing power
PRSP	–	Poverty reduction strategy paper
PRA	–	Participatory rural appraisal
REFLECT	–	Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
RRA	–	Rapid rural appraisal
SADA	–	Savannah Accelerated Development Authority
SAPs	–	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SEND	–	Social Education for National Development
SNV	–	Netherlands Development Cooperation
SPSS	–	Statistical package for social sciences
UER	–	Upper East region
UNCTAD	–	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	–	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	–	United Nations Education and Scientific Organisation
UNICEF	–	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	–	United States Agency for International Development
USD	–	United States Dollar
UWR	–	Upper West region
VALCO	–	Volta Aluminium Company
VAT	–	Value added tax
WFP	–	World Food Programme

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ABSTRACT

The aim is to explore how community participation can situate beneficiaries to discover and commit to what they need for the future in northern Ghana. The methodology used was observational, descriptive, qualitative and quantitative, cross-sectional and longitudinal survey. A convenient sampling method was used for the community and district selection process. Respondents were randomly selected to ensure equal opportunity for all those available at the time of the interview. Eight communities were used from the three regions of northern Ghana in which community-based pro-poor interventions by interventionists have either completed or are still in process. The participatory, reflective and participatory rural appraisal, techniques were used in the data gathering. The results show that 57% males and 43% females participated in the study. The study shows that 95.2% respondents from Northern region, 93.3%, from Upper West region and 88.7% from Upper East region participated more in NGO than government led activities. There were five main findings of the research. First, 61% of respondents give high priority to farm credit, boreholes/wells and dams. Respondents claim to gain maximum benefit from these interventions more. Second, 92.4% of respondents from the eight communities participate more in activities organised by NGOs for personal gain and motivation. Third, 53% of all target respondents participated actively at the implementation stage of the participation process. Fourth, there is low investment in the area of school, road and dam projects in the study communities. Only two of the eight communities benefited from a school or road project, and three out of eight communities benefited from dam projects. Fifth, 57% males against 43% females participate in pro-poor intervention activities in the eight communities. As a contribution to knowledge, the thesis shows community members in northern Ghana participate in activities when there is immediate motivation (either in cash or kind) or when projects border more on their main occupational areas. The thesis recommends that Government facilitates community members to demand the right to take active part in the participatory process in all pro-poor interventions in their communities.

Key words: *participation, pro-poor, community, intervention, programmes, development*

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Participation may imply “to have a share in” or “to take part in,” thereby emphasizing the rights of individuals and the choices that they make in order to participate. Thus participation is a means by which community members willingly engage in learning to increase their competence and widen their benefits margins through the interventions that development actors make in their communities. It is a vehicle for making decisions that affect the lives of citizens and an avenue for transferring political power from those who wield it to the masses at the grassroots. Participation in development interventions is an invitation to those living in difficult circumstances to participate in planning, analysing and implementing development intervention processes towards a mitigation of their livelihood situations. A case study on community participation in pro-poor development intervention was conducted in eight communities, namely, *Nandom, Jirapa, Namoaligo, Kotintabig, Chiana, Jawani, Nalerigu and Mankarigu*, of the three northern regions of Ghana, notably, the Upper East, Upper West and Northern regions. The study particularly targets the community members (who are regarded in this context as the rural poor) and rural poverty intervention issues and activities. Sample case studies are presented at 1.2.2 below.

A descriptive form of participation in programmes would imply the involvement of a greater number of persons in situations or development actions that enhance their well-being, for example, their income, security, prestige or self-esteem. In the context of development, community participation refers to an active process where community beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of development projects in their favour, rather than being merely recipients of a share of project benefits (Kur, DePorres, and Westrup, 2008, Paul, in Bamberger, 1986).

Community participation in pro-poor programmes has been the focus of much debate globally. Kur, DePorres, and Westrup, (2008); Sankaran, Hase, Dick, and Davies, (2007); Taylor and Pettit, (2007) and Oakley (1994), for example, have argued that community participation can enhance the efficiency of development by lowering project costs, reducing time and saving other resources, while also ensuring that the project responds to authentic needs. Participation allows people to influence the definition of programme objectives, increases their commitment to those objectives and consequently increases project effectiveness. Participation also increases self-reliance of grassroots participants by giving them opportunities to move from being dependent to being interdependent and develops communication skills

that foster dialogue and reciprocal relationships (Maiter, Simich, Jacobson, and Wise, 2008). In other words, grassroots members begin to engage issues and processes that have direct bearing on their livelihood and poverty reduction together with benevolent implementers or interveners in poverty reduction activities. The coverage and scope of development projects can be enhanced by mobilizing the resources of local participants, and its sustainability may be increased by the local community's heightened interest in and capacity for, supporting ongoing activity. In many circumstances, local participation can improve the quality, effectiveness and sustainability of projects, strengthens the commitment and the sense of ownership on the part of local stakeholders.

The joint or collaborative involvement of beneficiaries in groups is a hallmark of community participation. In the context of a development project, beneficiaries, as individuals, can participate in many ways. Community participation can be said to occur only when people act in concert to advise, decide or act on issues (Korten, 1980), which can best be solved through such joint action (for instance, where externalities are present or organized groups are essential for commitment creation, learning, confidence building, cost sharing, among others). Hence the use of the qualifying term "community". Community participation refers to a process and not a product in the sense of sharing project benefits. For example, acquisition of economic assets through a project (for example, land, house, schools, clinics, roads, among others) augments the power and freedom of poor people. It is possible, however, that some people might benefit from a project, but as the World Bank (1987:2) notes, these beneficiaries could find it difficult to sustain the benefits as they never went through the process of cooperative action, learning and building up their capacity alongside the project chain.

The issue of peoples' involvement in pro-poor interventions in their communities has been a global concern for development practitioners for some time now. It is seen as a necessary tool for successful rural development (Chambers, 2004:29; Fals Borda, 2001:32). However, more than 50 years of trying to implement the participatory concept shows that rural people in Ghana, for instance have yet to become involved in development decision making processes. This concern seems to be possible even without a common consensus of what community participation stands for. This and interrelated concepts and opinions on community participation in pro-poor projects is the focus of this research. The thesis topic starts by introducing the broad lines of the debate on participation in general, before focussing more on rural community participation in development programmes and an analysis of poverty.

The succeeding paragraphs state the research problem, the research questions and the research objectives.

1.2 The research problem

1.2.1 Introduction to the research problem

This section focuses on the background to the research problem, delving into the extent of how the poor participate in pro-poor development programmes; how development practitioners (practitioners as referred to in this context, means those who are directly involved in assisting the community with various interventions geared towards poverty alleviation) maximise community potential in relation to their active participation in poverty reduction programmes carried out or are being carried out in their communities; and the impact of such development programmes on the people's livelihoods.

1.2.2 Background to the research problem

The World Bank (2010:42) observes that increased participation in community development interventions can lead to formulation and investment in pro-poor policies, greater social consensus, and support for difficult policy reforms. According to its observation, experiences with participatory engagement at the community level have shown positive links between participation, sound macroeconomic policies, and more effective government and non-government pro-poor interventions.

Efforts to reduce rural poverty in the past tended to focus on increasing the income and food security of rural poor people in Ghana. Increasingly, there has been a greater emphasis on the human and social factors that cause poverty. Governments in Ghana since the 1990s (Aryeetey, 2006) have implemented various policies and programmes all geared towards the reduction of poverty and improving the livelihoods of the citizenry. Guiding the implementation of these policies and programmes are some key policy documents namely: The Vision 2020, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy one (GPRS I) and the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy two (GPRS II). Unlike the GPRS I issued in 2003 which focused on the pro-poor objective of the MDGs, the GPRS II's central focus is geared towards an accelerated growth of the economy (ClayDord Consult, 2006), so that Ghana can achieve middle income status within a measurable plan period of 2015. This shift in focus was based on the fact that Ghana appears to be on course to meet the MDGs target and for that matter acceleration of economic growth will permit the country to implement them even more vigorously (World Bank Group, 2010:48).

Though the effects of poverty and underdevelopment of the people of northern Ghana has been widely recognised and efforts are being made by both government of Ghana and non-government agencies working in Ghana to mitigate poverty, the levels of participation of the beneficiaries of these interventions have been the problem which this thesis seeks to investigate or explore. The research problem originates from empirical evidence through my direct working relations with some of the rural

communities of northern Ghana. During the study it was observed (by the researcher) that developmental activities that have been planned and are implemented already or are ongoing in most of the rural communities in northern Ghana by government and non-government organisations had limited community participation, for example, in decision making, priority setting and budgeting. Ensuring local citizens' participation in the development planning process is one of the key dimensions of community pro-poor intervention initiatives. Women and poor people's sufficient participation is required in the identification and prioritisation of development schemes towards poverty reduction and enhancement of societal life. Below are some case studies within the study communities that throw light on the problem this research seeks to explore.

Case study 1

A case in point is an area council project at Namoaligo-Tindongo in the Talensi district of the Upper East region of Ghana, which has been left unattended to by both the government and the community members. The building has become a hide-out for criminals and animals. The community members argued upon my interrogation that citing of the building was improper and "the people" (that is the implementers), refused their advice. That apart, they (the communities involved) were not consulted before the building was constructed and not educated on the usage of it. Thus the intention behind the building, which was to offer the rural people a convenient avenue to be part of making and unmaking decisions, had been forfeited.

Case study 2

A similar incident occurred in 2003 in Jawani - Kambago community in the northern region of Ghana. This was a school building. The community members wanted a cement concrete building, but the NGO used gravel to build the school. The school collapsed during the rainy season. The people of Kambago were very unhappy with the NGO and called the school the NGO's school that collapsed.

Case study 3

In 2007, the Member of Parliament for Jirapa initiated a small scale irrigation dam project. The intention of the project was to offer the youth and opportunity to remain in Agriculture all year round. In northern Ghana, the rainy season is short, from June to October (five months) and the dry season seems much longer, from November through to May (seven months). Effective agriculture activities take place between June and October. The rest of the period, the youth either idle about or migrate to the southern parts of Ghana to engage in menial jobs. Good as the intention of the Member of Parliament seemed at the time, the youth still migrated to the southern parts of Ghana during the dry season leaving the

irrigation dam behind. During the study, the reasons gathered by the researcher were that the community wanted the dam sited at a different place where in their opinion had enough arable land for dry season farming than where the Member of Parliament sited the dam project. All appeals from some community members not to site the project at where it was fell on deaf ears. Consequently, the project placement at that place provoked a natural reaction from the people as they refused to utilise the dam to meet the original intentions of the dam which was for small scale irrigation farming during the dry season.

The reasons or intentions behind the limitations in community participation are the concern of this study. The study therefore seeks to explore the limitations in community participation and how pro-poor interventions can situate community members to “discover and commit themselves to what they need and want for the future” (Van Dyk, 2005:176).

1.2.2.1 Problem statement

In view of the descriptive analysis above, this study focuses on the following problem: The gap between participation of community members and implementers in local-level pro-poor interventions in already implemented or ongoing projects at the community level in northern Ghana. Poor involvement in development interventions at the grassroots level by the community members themselves in mitigating rural poverty tends to have a negative impact on the care and utilisation of development interventions. It appears that programmes, which do not actually meet the immediate needs of community members, come to an end with the departure of the implementers from the community after each visit. The reason might be that community members do not feel the impact of such programmes in terms of alleviating poverty but perceive them as belonging to the agents or organisations that established them. Therefore this thesis seeks find out how the community members (beneficiaries) of project interventions situate themselves at an opportune place (through their active or non-involvement) that makes them the ultimate owners and sustainers of all development activities that have taken place in their communities.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 Primary research objective

The main objective of the thesis is to explore how community participation in pro-poor interventions can situate beneficiaries to discover and commit themselves to what they need and want for the future in northern Ghana.

1.3.2 Secondary research objectives

The following secondary objectives address the research problem and the primary research objective.

1. To describe and analyse current community participatory practices in pro-poor programmes and reasons for those practices in northern Ghana.
2. To explore opportunities available to community actors in pro-poor interventions, with emphasis on northern Ghana.
3. To explore the levels of understanding and the values attached to set goals of development practitioners in poverty reduction work in eight selected communities in northern Ghana.

1.3.3 The research questions

The Primary research question is: how does community participation in pro-poor interventions situate beneficiaries to discover and commit themselves to what they need and want for the future in northern Ghana?

The secondary research questions are:

1. Is community participation practically explored in pro-poor programmes as the main objective of development practitioners?
2. Does community participation in existing development programmes offer any opportunity to development actors¹ to identify local knowledge and talents?
3. Does participation reflect the power of the local people as Mosse (2006:16) opines?
4. In which way do community members understand the values and expectations set by development practitioners in relation to poverty reduction within their communities?
5. Finally, what levels of participation do local communities and development actors expect of each other in order to play a collective role towards the achievement of development goals that will directly benefit the recipients?

1.4 Rationale for and significance of the study

This thesis seeks to point out that development actors have a brokering role at the community level through capacity building in the process of cooperative action, learning and community leadership and

¹ Development actors- refers to both non-governmental and governmental development agents who assist either directly or indirectly with development activities aimed at reducing poverty in rural communities.

mobilisation dynamics along the project chain. In addition, the study looks at how the development actors help the community members to navigate their way through, not only as participants, but as possible investors, who intend to reap profits from their efforts by their active participation in initiated interventions.

Significantly, the thesis looks at two sharp words common in the development discourse that is community involvement and community participation. These words though similar in usage, tend to have differences in spectrum in terms of their active implementation process. At one end of the spectrum, community involvement does not necessarily confer a decision-making capacity on the community members, but gives them the opportunity to have access to information concerning impending or progressing initiatives within their own communities. At the other end of the spectrum, community participation enables community views to be sought and community representatives to be included in decision-making processes. Community involvement is seen as the foundation for participation in institutional decision making (Chambers, 2004). This is done in a two-way communication process between the project interventionists and the community members in order to build trust among the stakeholders, assess the situation, explore options and seek a broad consensus leading to sustainable change. In other words, a communication that is based on the people's planned transformation from a state of poverty to one dynamic socio-economic growth that makes for greater equality and the larger unfolding of individual potentials where benefactors (development interventionists) and community members benefiting from the interventions, enjoy a common platform to share experiences and views.

Besides, in the context of a pro-poor strategy, the thesis seeks to point out clearly that community development as a process, activates, encourages and supports groups of people experiencing poverty to join together in activities that promote their common interest. It also supports and improves their communities and enables them to influence or have a say in policies that affect their wellbeing directly.

Thus, having espoused the significance of the study, the proceeding point summarises the methods of the research design and study.

1.5 Summary of research design and methodologies

The research design of the thesis uses a combined or mixed approach, in the form of observation and descriptive, qualitative and quantitative, cross-sectional and longitudinal survey (as the research data was collected over a number of years). The thesis describes four approaches to or strategies of research,

namely, induction, evaluation research, case study and qualitative research. The methods used in data collection and / analysis is a convenient sampling method used in the community and district selection process and a random sampling approach used for the selection of respondents in order to provide equal opportunity for similar communities and all persons across genders to be included (see details in chapter four of this thesis for an in-depth presentation and analysis of the research design and methods).

The proceeding section details the structure of the thesis giving brief descriptions of each chapter.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Chapter one; in this chapter, poverty in Ghana in general is discussed and how it affects people in northern Ghana in particular; the rural poor in Ghana and why rural people are poor in Ghana; and the pro-poor activities that are implemented in poor communities to augment their livelihoods. These are followed by the pattern of the research (Methodology, sampling and sampling techniques, among others) and background of the research communities.

Chapter two; this chapter provides the theoretical framework and describes participation in donor-driven poverty alleviation programmes and community participation in pro-poor development intervention activities. The topic introduces the debate on participation in general, rural community participation in development programmes in particular and then analysis on the importance of participation in pro-poor interventions among the rural poor in northern Ghana. Further to this discussion, is how the interplay between development implementers and community beneficiaries can bring out successful programme initiation and sustainability in rural target communities.

Chapter three provides a situational analysis of the studied communities. The chapter provides general poverty characteristics of Ghana and an in-depth analysis of the poverty situation in each region of northern Ghana. For a start, the chapter looks at the economic trends in Ghana and how that translates into poverty distribution and its impacts on the people of Ghana in general and northern Ghana in particular.

Chapter four is where the research methods and related approaches employed to conduct the research for the compilation of this thesis are presented. It gives a descriptive insight into the key methods and research designs used in data gathering, analysis and conclusions of the thesis.

Chapter five presents the findings of the research with vivid pointers on the critical issues as presented on tables, the outcomes and discussions on the findings.

Chapter six discusses the findings of the research under three main sub-headings, namely 6.1 which deals with how community participation is viewed by development actors; 6.2 deals with the role of community participation in identifying local knowledge, talents and the values and expectations of development practitioners towards pro-poor programmes; and 6.3 discusses gender, power, educational level and contribution of community members in pro-poor programme participation. Following this are the conclusions on the thesis based on the findings and discussions, the recommendations and the implications for theory, practice and future research, as well as the contributions that this thesis makes to the body of knowledge.

Chapter six is followed by the bibliography and attachments in appendixes.

CHAPTER 2

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON PRO-POOR INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews and analyses the literature on community participation in pro-poor intervention programmes². The topic starts by introducing the broad lines of the debate on participation in general, before focussing more on rural community participation in development programmes and poverty analysis. In addition, the topic discusses the strengths and weaknesses of participation tools in poverty reduction programmes and the search for alternative ways for new approaches to poverty analysis towards genuine community participation in development interventions. Further to this, the review delves into the importance of participation in pro-poor intervention programmes among the rural poor. In addition, the review discusses some established ways in which community participation in development programming and the interplay between benefactors and beneficiaries³ can bring out successful programme implementation and sustainability in rural communities.

2.2 Historical perspective on community participation and pro-poor intervention

In their modern form, the concepts of community development and community participation took shape in the 1950s (Chowdhury, in Middlemiss, 2009). From the situation in the 1950s, when community development was perceived to be synonymous with community participation, the situation has now

²Pro-poor intervention programmes refer to the transformative social and economic institutions, infrastructures, relationships and processes in any given community, such as. agricultural and economic growth, the generation of new employment, the improvement of health, nutrition, housing, broadened opportunities for all individuals at the community that enable them to realise their potentials through education and a strong voice for all the rural people that shape the decisions and actions affecting their lives, through well planned and implemented activities at the community level and aimed at reducing either income or knowledge based poverty among the people within the community.

³*Development beneficiaries* are all community members including “*peasant families*” (peasants are the majority of humankind, yet in spite of their numbers they are the least understood and little is known about their responses to development assistance) who receive development aid; while *benefactors* refer to the donors (international agencies, local financial institutions and bilateral governments) who give grants for development activities.

changed from being only participation oriented to one in which there appears to be no clear understanding of the relationship between the two (Abbott, in Middlemiss, 2009). Clearly, this impacts or changes the perception of what constitutes community participation and development.

It is therefore vital to pay closer attention to who is participating, in what and for whose benefit. The utilization of non-professionals through citizen involvement mechanisms to address social problems has become more a common place (Kaufman and Poulin, in Middlemiss, 2009) in community interventions. Community participation in development dates back to the 1970s when it was seen as an important component of rural development and basic needs strategy. It was in 1973 under the leadership of Robert S. McNamara, that the World Bank adopted “new directions” in rural development policy with community participation as one of the key elements. In his policy speech, McNamara said, “No programme will help small farmers if it is designed by those who have no knowledge of their problems and operated by those who have no interest in their future” (McNamara, 1973:26). Following this strong call by the World Bank leader, the Bank started to implement its “new directions” agenda in a new styled package named “integrated rural development” (IRD) programme from 1974. Thence, participation often featured in programmatic papers of many international development agencies. Later on in the 1980’s participation became a popular discourse of grassroots self-reliance and self-help activities, particularly with NGOs. NGOs filled in the space when government agencies were retreating on their efforts on rural development interventions, as a consequence of the neo-liberal reforms, such as economic recovery programmes (ERPs) and structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) laid down by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank as conditions for loans by the developing countries of the south. However, in the 1990’s participation saw a shift from being a grassroots oriented self-help intervention phenomenon to a much larger embrace of social, economic and political life globally. “Participation came then to be seen as a tool towards important policy objectives such as “empowerment” (Narayan, 2002:14), “good governance” (Laderchi, 2001:3) and “conscientisation” (Freire, 1997:70), that requires the poor to become aware of their conditions through a “totality of reflection and action” (Mefalopulos, 2008:54), while maintaining, at least in theory a role as an end in itself.

2.3 Participation explained

Internationally, resources for social welfare services are shrinking. Population pressures, changing priorities, economic competition, and demands for greater effectiveness are all affecting the course of social welfare (Barr, 2003:227). The world over, public institutions appear to be responding to the calls voiced by activists, development practitioners and progressive thinkers for greater community

participation in making the decisions that matter and holding governments to account for their intended commitments. Yet what exactly ‘participation’ means to these different actors can vary enormously. Vagueness about what participation means may have helped the promise of public involvement to gain purchase, but it may be time for more of what Cohen and Uphoff (in Cornwall, 2008:11) term ‘clarity through specificity’ or put differently, defining in clear terms the distinct roles and functions in the participatory process, for participation to realize its democratizing promise of holistic partnership between development actors and beneficiaries.

No consensus exists around a common definition of participation: it varies depending on the perspective applied. Some stakeholders (Tuftte and Mefapulos, 2009:4), define participation as the mobilization of people to eliminate unjust hierarchies of knowledge, power, and economic distribution. Others (Mefalopulos, 2008:54) define it as the reach and inclusion of inputs by relevant groups in the design and implementation of a development project. These examples represent two of the main approaches to participation: *a social movement perspective* and *a project-based or institutional perspective*. These perspectives share a common understanding of participation as the involvement of ordinary people in a development process leading to change. Their scope and methods, however, may differ.

From the institutional perspective mentioned above, participation may be used as a tool to achieve a pre-established goal defined by someone external to the community involved. For the social movement mentioned above, participation itself can be a goal as an empowering process. There is, however, growing consensus for active participation in the early stages of a development project or programme, both in research and design of interventions. This participatory goal setting does not secure a continued role for participation in the stages of project implementation. It only indicates that with ownership in setting goals, a sustained process with relevant outcomes and impact will be possible.

While the debate goes on, for purposes of this study, the author proposes a definition of community participation in line with Koelen and Van der Ban (2004:138), as ‘a process whereby community members take part in the identification of their needs, setting priorities, identifying and obtaining means to meet those priorities, including the development, implementation, and evaluation of those means in terms of their outcomes’. First of all, this definition sees community participation as an active process in which beneficiary groups influence the direction and execution of a development project to enhance their well being in terms of income, personal growth, self reliance or other values they cherish. Second, the focus is on the participation of beneficiaries, and not that of government personnel or of donor staff or their subsidiaries. People (beneficiaries) are the object of development and it is their involvement in

the direction and execution of projects which is of paramount concern of community participation in this thesis context.

From an academic or pragmatic viewpoint, participation is an instrument for improving the quality of research or the effectiveness and usefulness of a community based project by laying the path for planned activities.

According to Laderchi (2001:3), the participatory discourses are shielded in three conflicting “tributaries” which try to shape the way participation has been redefined overtime and the continuous understanding of the elements of participation and their influence throughout its evolution. These discourses include self-determination, efficiency based, and the emphasis on mutual learning. These three ways of thinking reflect participation as a process *by* the people to whom development project and programmes are aimed, through their personal and collective commitment and conviction on an identified need which they have to take action in order to address, or *for* the people as in the case of development agency taking the initiative and often limiting participation to consultation with the communities and not necessarily planning and implementing with them (often the case in Ghana by both government and non-governmental organisations), or *with* the people, in which community members are involved in the identification of need (Bhatt and Tandon, 2001:301) and the approaches needed to address such a need, the sources of means needed to address the need and the people who are to implement the activities involved at meeting the demands of the need.

The three tributaries of participation manifest in the operations of some development agents. Other development organisations embrace the idea of assisting community members to create awareness on their needs and the strategic ways of addressing them, while some others concentrate on the adoption of the neo-liberal reforms, such as structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes imposed by the development agencies of the north on countries of the south (Chossudovsky, 1997:34), roll back of state efforts on participation in development and rather pin their efforts firmly on the mainstream development partners such as the IMF and the World Bank on one hand and the Paris and London clubs on the other.

In another dimension, similar to Laderchi’s propositions of participation, White, et al (1994:16) images participation as a kaleidoscope in the sense that it can be mutable, illusive and fragile. Others such as Rifkin (1985), Bamberger (1991:281-284) and Pretty (1996:15-20) see participation in a triad conceptual form. The first is that participation is the *active* involvement of the project beneficiaries (the

community members) in identifying, planning, implementing, managing and evaluating projects in a systematic and sustained way. Active in this context signifies that the community beneficiaries are not just included in the project phases, but are directly “involved in influencing and sharing control over initiatives and decisions that affect them” (Dulani, 2003:3). Put differently, the community members are not brought in to legitimate the participation process while still remaining passive and silent contributors, but are now co-equally engaged actively in all the deliberations and implementation of decisions of the project. The second is that participation involves *choice*. In the words of Rifkin (in Dulani, 2003:3), participation is “the right and responsibility of people to make choices and therefore, explicitly or implicitly, to have power over decisions which affect their lives”. The project beneficiaries’ active involvement would only manifest in the type of participation they choose to have. Where beneficiaries are simply informed of decisions already made for them “does not entail choice, and hence, is not participatory” (Dulani, 2003:3). The third is **effective** participation in the programme processes. The active involvement and choice exist when local people have the opportunity to make vital choices. In this way the community poor would play an effective role in the participatory process, taking control as well as being empowered in the process.

In addition, participation has been variously described using specific terminologies to qualify the type of community involvement in pro-poor activities. Some of these include “genuine participation” (White, et al, 1994:16); “self-mobilisation” (Pretty, 1994), in which the local people take control of the development process, and “passive participation” (Rifkin, 1985); “tokenism” (Hart, 1992); “manipulated participation” (Bordenave, in Dulani, 2003:3) and “pseudo-participation” (White, et al, 1994:16-17), which means the community poor merely legitimate the type of participation, but the control and decision making process of the project rest with the development actors and the community elites. The people’s participation is limited to that of passive listening.

However, the central problem appears not to lie in the definition or understanding of participation per se, but rather in the context in which it is used and communicated. Implicit in the definition, explanations and varied understanding of the term participation as expressed, is the element of being an activity or a process. In development discourse, participation is defined and utilised to connote both a process and an outcome. Participation however creates dialogues and enhances the confidence of benefiting participants. These processes could be empowering or disabling. In other words, depending on who implements the participatory process, it may be advantageous (empowering) or have negative consequences on the beneficiaries (disable their efforts and contribution). Therefore, this study defines

participation as a process, which enables a dialogue among local people who construct a narrative meaning of what participation is to them for the subsequent interpretation by outsiders.

2.3.1 Critique of participation

Community members' participation is a voluntary activity and involves equipping the participants with proper knowledge and training in which they are equally gratified. However, it is worthy to note that full participation by all stakeholders in any step of the process is not possible and, in some cases probably not entirely desirable. It is used frequently and within a diverse array of contexts but without explanation; consequently its meaning has become rather blurred (Chiweza, in Jacobs, 2010:382). In a similar vein, Amanda (2000:1) has argued that the blanket use of the term 'participation' has masked the heterogeneity evident in its realisation in practice. This is because consistency in approach cannot be assumed across all details of the participatory process of ideas initiation, planning, implementation and evaluation. Decision-making control is theoretically held and commonly believed by development interventionists to move to local or grassroots levels through participation.

For some situations and technical issues, it would not make sense to broaden the participatory decision-making exercise. If priorities are decided in a participatory manner and there is a broad consensus, for example, to build a school in a certain spot, there is no need to involve all stakeholders in the technical decisions concerning the type of concrete, bolts and other technical specifications for construction. Unless there are people familiar with different technical engineering specifications, general participation would only delay the process and would not benefit the end result. In general, however, an overall participatory process (at least in key steps) is relevant to ensure transparent leadership and management of a school or other infrastructure project, including securing equal access to the school according to agreed policies and pricing.

Rahman (in Amanda, 2000) argues that participatory tendency must be dealt with at the level of methodology and should focus on what he describes as the process of animation. Animation refers to the process of empowering people to regard themselves as the principal actors in their lives, in order for them to unlock states of mental dependence and apathy and to exercise their creative potential in social situations. Animation implies a process of learning through participation, during which control of the process by the facilitator is relinquished to the subjects. According to Rebien (in Amanda, 2000:2-6), it appears, participatory approach has failed to consider that active participants may challenge the way in which the evaluation is organised and hence participation may be considered as a means to ensure the acceptance of the evaluation. The important distinction between participation as a means and as an end

is made by Oakley (1991). Participation as a means implies that it is to be used to achieve some predetermined goal or objective and is a short-term exercise. Oakley contrasts participation as a means with participation as an end, which implies an 'unfolding process' that serves to develop and strengthen the capabilities of the participants to engage in initiatives.

Whilst the arguments in favour of participatory approaches are persuasive, Dudley (in Amanda, 2000:2) questions their practical value in community development discourse: 'Community participation may have won the war of words but, beyond rhetoric, its success is less evident'. This lack of evident success has been the result of a general challenge to make explicit the nature of participation and what participation seeks to achieve. Cleaver (1999:1) argues that despite the claims for participation, there is little evidence of the long term effectiveness of participation realistically improving the material base of the community vulnerable members or serving as a strategy for social change. One concern is that the development agencies are implementing participatory practices in ways that serve their own agendas but make the community members to believe that it is the panacea to enhancing the image of the people or the community in which they live. This is what Cleaver (1999:1) describes as "an act of faith of development". Some sweeping critiques see the idea of participatory development as flawed, idealistic, naïve (Christens & Speer, (2006) and tyrannical (Cleaver, 1999) for the following three main deductions:

First, the tyranny of dominance of multinational agencies and funders exists just beneath the rhetoric and practices of participation and addresses the enduring decision-making control held by agencies and funders. Second, the emphasis on participatory practices obscures many limitations and manipulations that suppress local power differentials; in fact, participatory practices sometimes contribute to the maintenance and exacerbation of local power differentials. This is a group level tyranny and addresses the well-known social psychological dynamics of group functioning which are largely ignored in the participation discourse. The third form of tyranny addresses the dominance of the participatory method, noting that the overwhelming acceptance of participation, particularly the goals and values expressed, has limited dialogue and even consideration of other methods for cultivating development. The traditional critique of development was that outsiders and experts set the agenda and made the decisions and that participation was an antidote to this power. At the level of multinational agencies and funders, however, participation is synonymous to central planning. Many international agencies (such as Catholic Relief services, World Vision International and Action Aid) and funders justify participatory processes by noting the efficiency and productivity with which participatory methods advance the goals held by development organisations. In corporate parlance, participation saves "transaction costs". So, despite the

participatory rhetoric, the status quo of top-down planning is maintained, though Chambers (2005) creates the impression that participation spans a range of levels from low to high. Examples of low levels of participation include: the provision of information to people or communities and high levels of participation is: where people actually exercise the power of decision-making. After their input is taken into account, however, they do not need to be directly involved in decisions, especially technical ones that might go beyond their specific interest or knowledge. Capacity building to develop people's confidence, self-esteem and understanding supports their empowerment and participation. It is not the same as skill development to equip people to work in the way that agencies traditionally worked. Perhaps it is in this considerable dilemma, Dulani (2003:4) attempts an adjectival qualification of explanation as an "active involvement..." process. Though Dulani's view tends to throw a little light on just what is involvement and participation by describing participation as active involvement, what *active* stands for in the expressed opinion is still cloudy. The meaning of active is not well explained. Thus participation is still a process that is not entirely available for absolute community engagement as the term may suggest.

While allowing for stakeholders' participation, a development planner or project manager must balance inclusiveness with time, resources, interests and knowledge of individuals and groups related to the intended change. Key stakeholders affected by the change should have the opportunity to participate in the entire decision-making process defining the needed change. Thus, as regards Rebien's first criterion, the researcher concludes that the notion of *offering* participants active roles is weak, because it does not recognise ingrained tendencies towards independence of participants from external sources of expertise in order to make participation work in reality. Therefore, it requires recourse to methodological support, such as that offered by Rahman's process of animation.

2.4 Community participation

In the light of these discussions, community participation has been referred to as comprising two key terminologies (Schmidt and Rifkin, 1996:346); notably, "community" and "participation" According to them (Schmidt and Rifkin 1996), community refers to a "specific group of people with shared interests living in a defined geographic area". Shared interests in this context may mean ancestral linkage or lineage, cultural background or occupational similarities (such as in the tools, energy sources, and other artefacts a group of people employ in production, wealth creation and the kinds of economic activity in which they are engaged are intimately connected with their cultural organisations and behaviour patterns developed by or characterised by them). Schmidt and Rifkin definition of community is not enough. It fails to take into consideration divides within the community and unequal power relations (Ellis,

2005:4). At the community level, culture and tradition are strong elements and define the general cohesion and identity of people within the community. These elements define power relations and gender divide, prescribing the various roles for the members of the community.

Given Schmidt and Rifkin's definition of community and the elaboration above on participation, Dulani (2003:4) offers a comprehensive definition of community participation as; "The active involvement of local communities in development initiatives, where specified groups, sharing the same interests or living in a defined geographic area, actively pursue the identification of their needs and establish mechanisms to make their choice effectively". In other words community members have to identify their own needs, recognise the challenges involved in achieving their felt needs and genuinely seeking appropriate means aimed at addressing them. In this way, as Dulani sees it, the community members would be seen as being participatory in the processes of development activities geared towards poverty reduction within their own area and for their ultimate benefit. Below is Pretty's participatory typology in a form of a ladder which defines different types of participation and gives the characteristics of each category.

2.4.1 Participation goals

Empowering goal: Furthermore, the fundamental aim of empowering people to handle challenges and influence the direction of their own lives is inherent in participation. In Deepa Narayan's definition of empowerment, participation becomes a turning point: "Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives" (Narayan 2006:5). Narayan's perspective is the institutional one, where participation for empowerment is about strengthening the people's capacities and the demand side of governance. The World Bank, in the participation source book (1996) defines participation as "a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources that affect them". The concept of empowerment from the periphery to the centre or put differently, from the rural communities to the economically endowed urban centres is lost if participation is influenced by implementing stakeholders more than the beneficiary stakeholders or the community members.

Political goal: The causes of many such failures were ascribed to the limited understanding of local context and the insufficient involvement of local stakeholders. In addition, misunderstandings and differences in perceptions about key problems often led to limited political buy-in and faulty project design. By actively engaging stakeholders from the start and by seeking a broader consensus around

development initiatives, participatory communication has begun to be considered a crucial tool to avoid past mistakes. Many conflicts and obstacles can be prevented if addressed in a timely fashion. Moreover, genuine participation increases the sense of project ownership by local stakeholders, thus enhancing sustainability. On one hand, communication practitioners might have a more complex process to take into account the many viewpoints to be reconciled, but on the other, they are likely to gain some extra benefits. For example, communicating project objectives and outputs might become redundant because stakeholders will already be aware, many of them will already consider the initiatives their own, will become actively engaged in the project.

Voice Goal: Participatory communication's value, however, is not only considered because of the better results it can yield. People's participation is also considered a right of its own by an increasing number of NGOs, international organizations and UN agencies. In this respect participatory communication fulfils a broader social function, providing a voice to the poorest and the most marginalized of the people around the world. By engaging all relevant stakeholders, participatory communication becomes a tool that helps alleviate poverty, mitigates social exclusion, and ensures priorities and objectives are agreed to and refined by a wider base of the constituencies. This process enhances the overall results and sustainability of any development initiative.

2.4.2 Stages of Participatory Development

Participation in each project issue can be divided into stages, and this division facilitates assessment of when and to what degree a participatory approach is relevant. From an institutional perspective, there are four key stages of a development project (Tufté and Mefapulos, 2009):

1. **Research Stage** is where the development problem is accurately defined. All relevant stakeholders can be involved in this process. The research around the development problem can include studying previous experiences, individual and community knowledge and attitudes, existing policies and other relevant contextual information related to socio-economic conditions, culture, spirituality, gender, etc.
2. **Design Stage** defines the actual activities. A participatory approach helps to secure the ownership and commitment of the communities involved. Active participation by local citizens and other stakeholders aims to enhance both the quality and relevance of the suggested interventions.
3. **Implementation Stage** is when the planned intervention is implemented. Participation at this stage increases commitment, relevance and sustainability.
4. **Evaluation Stage** participation ensures that the most significant changes are voiced brought to common attention and assessed. For a meaningful evaluation, indicators and measurements should be

defined in a participatory process at the very beginning of the initiative involving all relevant stakeholders.

2.4.3 The participation types

Cutting across the distinctions of participation as a goal versus participation as a tool used in specific project stages allows different perceptions of participation to be identified. Each of the categories below refers to different levels of participation and communication (Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009:18; Mefalopulos 2008:91ff; Pretty in Dulani, 2003:4-5). When initiating a development project or program, it is useful to clarify what perception of participation will guide the strategy conceptually. Stretching the concept, Pretty (in Dulani, 2003:4-5), positions participation in a seven-step ladder as shown in table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 The participation ladder

Typology	Characteristics
1. Passive participation	People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement by an administration of project management without listening to people's responses.
2. Participation in information giving	People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, and research findings are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.
3. Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted or answering questions, and external people listen to views. These external professionals define both problems and solutions, and may modify these in the light of people's responses. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
4. Participation for material incentives	People participate by providing resources, such as labour, in return for food, cash and other material incentives. However, the people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.
5. Functional participation	People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement does not tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may become self-dependent.
6. Interactive	People participate in joining analysis, which leads to action plans and the

participation	formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. Participation is seen as a right, and not just a means to achieve project goals. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures.
7. Self-mobilisation	People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used.

Adapted from Pretty (in Dulani, 2003:5)

The top tier of the ladder represents the narrowest type of community participation. The middle tier represents a gradual widening of the participatory space and the seventh and lowest rung on the ladder represents the highest level of community participation. The seventh level is the ideal and the most significant form of community involvement in pro-poor programming that manifest their collective desire to take control of the matters affecting their lives.

In a similar vein, Mefalopulos (2008:91ff) summaries the types of participation into four as follows:

- **Passive participation** is the least participatory of the four approaches. Primary stakeholders of a project participate by being informed about what is going to happen or has already happened. People’s feedback is minimal or nonexistent, and their participation is assessed through methods like head counting and contribution to the discussion (sometimes referred to as participation by information).

- **Participation by consultation** is an extractive process, whereby stakeholders provide answers to questions posed by outside researchers or experts. Input is not limited to meetings but can be provided at different points in time. In the final analysis, however, this consultative process keeps all the decision making power in the hands of external professionals who are under no obligation to incorporate stakeholders’ input.

- **Participation by collaboration** forms groups of primary stakeholders to participate in the discussion and analysis of predetermined objectives set by the project. This level of participation does not usually result in dramatic changes in what should be accomplished, which is often already determined. It does, however, require an active involvement in the decision-making process about how to achieve it. This incorporates a component of horizontal communication and capacity building among all stakeholders-a joint collaborative effort. Even if initially dependent on outside facilitators and experts, with time collaborative participation has the potential to evolve into an independent form of participation.

■ **Empowerment participation** is where primary stakeholders are capable and willing to initiate the process and take part in the analysis. This leads to joint decision making about what should be achieved and how. While outsiders are equal partners in the development effort, the primary stakeholders are *primus inter pares*, i.e., they are equal partners with a significant say in decisions concerning their lives. Dialogue identifies and analyzes critical issues and an exchange of knowledge and experiences leads to solutions. Ownership and control of the development processes⁴ rest in the hands of the primary stakeholders (the community members).

The succeeding paragraphs discuss some basic participatory tools mostly employed by interventionists in pro-poor programmes at the community level to either create awareness on how to facilitate the struggle against their internal and external oppression or to assist rural and poor communities with vital infrastructural and socio-economic micro support to ease their level of suffering and lack.

2.5 Participatory tools in community participation

2.5.1 Origins of participatory tools

Some of these methods originated from anthropology, while some take their roots from the University of Chiang Mai in 1978 in the Southeast Asia. The rapid rural appraisal (RRA) now referred to as *relaxed rural action* (Chambers 2006:4), since its promotion in the 1980s from the University of Khon Kaen in Thailand brought innovation and inspiration to the development discourse. The term PRA was first used in Kenya and India around 1988 and 1989. “Some of the early PRA in Kenya were linked with the production of village resource management plans and rapid catchments analysis” (Chambers, 2006:4). From 1989, PRA spread with many innovations and applications in India and Nepal.

2.5.2 Participatory tools

Participatory tools such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA), participatory learning and action (PLA); participatory poverty assessments (PPA) and participatory action research (PAR) have been used to offer much policy-making process in community development. Participatory action transforms the interest of civil society organisations, stimulates and assists people’s struggles. Participatory action research is based on the “premise that the ordinary people are knowledgeable about their social realities

⁴The adoption of community participation including its meaning to different agents and how it creates new spaces for dialogue, acceptability, learning, much awareness creation and transformation of community behaviours and attitudes in a variety of unexpected ways in the development chain.

and capable of articulating their own knowledge” (Bhatt and Tandon, 2001:301). The heart of participatory action research (PAR) is the identification and application of people’s knowledge about their needs and the various strategies they employ to meet such needs (details under 2.5.3 below).

Participatory rural appraisal evolved from rapid rural appraisal (RRA, a set of informal techniques used by development practitioners in rural areas to collect and analyze data). Rapid rural appraisal developed in the 1970s and 1980s in response to the perceived problems of outsiders missing or miscommunicating with local people in the context of development work.

The roots of participatory rural appraisal techniques are traced to the activism and the adult education methods of Paulo Freire and the study clubs of the Antigonish Movement (Chambers, 1983). The collective consensus was, an actively involved and empowered local population was essential to successful rural community development. Chambers, a key exponent of PRA, argues that the approach owes much to "the Freirian theme that poor and exploited people can and should be enabled to analyze their own reality." (Chambers, 1997:106)

By the early 1980s, there was growing dissatisfaction among development experts with both the reductionism of formal surveys, and the biases of typical field visits. In 1983, Robert Chambers, a Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies (UK), used the term *Rapid Rural Appraisal* to describe techniques that could bring about a 'reversal of learning' (Chambers, 2006). Two years later, the first international conference to share experiences relating to RRA was held in Thailand (Proceedings on PRA, 1985). This was followed by a rapid growth in the development of methods that involved rural people in examining their own problems, setting their own goals, and monitoring their own achievements. By the mid 1990s, the term RRA had been replaced by a number of other terms including ‘Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)’ and ‘Participatory Learning and Action’ (PLA).

Chambers (1993) calls PRA a “new professionalism” for development but acknowledges that the significant breakthroughs and innovations that informed the methodology were not his, but evolved from the ingenuity of development practitioners in India, Africa and elsewhere. Practitioners such as James Mascarenhas, Parmesh Shah, Meera Kaul, John Devavaram, among others in India collaborated with Chambers to explore emerging techniques and tools. These pioneers spread the notions of PRA to Africa and elsewhere. In Africa, the methodology took roots in Kenya through the enthusiasm of some advocates, notably, Charity Kabutha, Daniel Mwayaya; South Africa (Kamal Laldas Singh and others), Zimbabwe (Sam Chimbuya, Saiti Makuku) and in Ghana (Tony Dogbe). This enthusiasm consequently propelled Chambers to source funding for South-South Exchanges which eventually internationalised

the PRA community of practice. Kamal Laldas Singh joined Chambers at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and supported his efforts in catalysing the South-South and in-country networking which encouraged reflection and learning amongst practitioners (Singh, 2001:163-175).

PRA for example provides a way that enables poor people to have a voice (details under 2.5.3 below). Besides, it gives them the opportunity to express and analyse their problems and priorities. PRA tends to generate important and surprising insights into community priorities and their most wanted needs, contributing towards policy formulation and implementation, which better serve the needs and aspirations of the community poor. PRA can and does challenge the perceptions of those in authority about rural people's needs, priorities and capabilities in development planning and programming. Accordingly, PRA can change attitudes of development actors and reverse any agenda that best serve target community needs (Chambers, 2006:3). The purpose of PRA is to enable development practitioners, government officials and local people to work together in order to plan context-appropriate programmes that would facilitate information sharing among all stakeholders.

2.5.3 What are PRA, PLA, PPA and PAR?

2.5.3.1 PRA

According to Chambers, (1996:1), "PRA can be described as a family of approaches, methods and behaviours that enable people to express and analyse the realities of their lives and conditions, to plan themselves what action to take, and to monitor and evaluate the results". The key elements of PRA in this description are the methods used and most importantly, the behavioural and attitudinal elements of those who facilitate it. PRA could be described as a methodological framework used to obtain, assess and analyse relevant information and priority key problems, identifying and planning possible concrete actions that would stimulate discussions within the shortest possible time. PRA imbibes much stronger community participation and can be defined as a semi-structured process of learning from, with and by rural people about rural conditions. In other words, PRA is a methodological approach, an assessment and learning process that empowers community members to analyse their situation, create the information base they need for participatory planning and action and develop a common perspective on resource management at the community level. The emphasis is on people as "actors or doers" and not merely as "respondents and recipients" (my emphasis). In other words, PRA considers that the multiple perspectives that exist in any community are represented in the analysis and that community members take the lead in evaluating and finding solutions to their situation. In PRA, data collection and analysis

are undertaken by local people, with outsiders facilitating rather than controlling the processes (Chambers, 2005:131). In other words, outsiders may participate in providing technical information but they should not take charge of the process. Therefore PRA is focused not only on the data-gathering aspects, but on the presentation and analysis of information to and with the community. It is usually considered an initial step in a process of participatory planning and action. PRA is more than a method. It assumes, in addition, an eclectic situational style (the humble, learning outsider) that is distinguished at its best by the use of local graphic and visual representations created by the community that virtually legitimize local knowledge and promote shared knowledge among community members.

PRA is spreading very fast as a potent tool for community participation in development programmes. According to Neubert (2000:10), “participatory approaches intervene in social fields, which also constitute political arenas at the same time.” This process points to the fact that participation is linked to differentiation and inequality. The question is who participates and at what level? As already indicated, PRA is a model for the community for the community members to identify, decide and plan solutions for their situations. It is a technique that builds on RRA but goes much further. PRA adds five key concepts more, deriving principally from South Asia (Chambers, 2006). These five key additional concepts are:

- **Empowerment.** Knowledge is power. Knowledge arises from the processes and results of a community research that through participation, come to be shared with and owned by local people. Thus, the professional monopoly of information used for planning and managing decisions, is broken. New local confidence is generated, or reinforced, regarding the validity of their knowledge, increasing the assimilation of external knowledge more easily.
- **Respect.** The PRA process transforms the researchers into learners and listeners, and thus increases the respect of researchers for local intellectual and analytical capabilities. Local people are so clever they can make their own bar charts, draw their own plans and reflect on their needs and aspirations that will have a collective positive impact on their livelihood and development and this should be respected by researchers and development actors.
- **Localization.** The extensive and creative use of local materials and representations encourage visual sharing and avoid imposing external representational conventions on the community members. Thus PRA enhances local acceptability of development issues and leads to local ownership of resources.
- **Enjoyment.** When PRA is well done, it constitutes an avenue for fun. The emphasis is no longer on "rapid" but on the “process” that results in satisfaction to both community members and researchers.

- **Inclusiveness.** PRA is all encompassing and leads to an enhanced sensitivity, through attention to the process of inclusivity or put differently, the process involving all categories of community members, the marginal and vulnerable groups, women, children, aged, and destitute, among others.

On the participatory dimension, PRA can be applied in ways that are more or less participatory. PRAs in which community members take full control of the process are at one extreme of the participatory continuum. Many PRAs fall short of this participation “ideal,” however, and involve a more limited form of community participation. PRA, in particular, puts a high premium on the active participation of the population and good PRAs will seek to maximize this participation and the empowerment or ownership that goes along with this.

PRA methods are now increasingly used in both rural and urban situations. These have drawn on many long-established traditions that have put participation; action research and adult education at the forefront of attempts to liberate and emancipate disempowered people.

Local people, using the methods of participatory inquiry, have shown a greater capacity to observe, diagram and analyse than most professionals have expected. In some programmes this has led to local people conducting investigations without outsiders being present (Shah, 1992). Here, participatory PRA techniques become the locally owned means to collective action.

The importance of PRA which makes it well-suited as a learning and problem-solving tool for the rural poor are:

- It encourages group participation and discussion
- The information to be processed is collected by group members themselves
- It is presented in highly visual form, usually out in the open and on the ground, using pictures, symbols and locally available materials
- Once displayed, the information is “transparent rather than hidden” - all members can comment on it, revise it and criticise it. This assists in cross-checking and verifying collected data.

PRA is an exercise in communication and knowledge transfer. Regardless of whether it is carried out as part of project identification or appraisal or as part of country economic and sector work, the learning-by-doing and teamwork spirit of PRA requires transparent procedures.

In referring to Pratt's (2001) suggestion, Chambers (2006:3) points out that PRA gives a better meaning when we say "participatory reflection and action" rather than say participatory rural appraisal. The reason is that participation does more than just appraisal. In fact, it empowers and reinforces a critical self-awareness, personal behaviour, participatory relationship and engagement with action. Chambers (2006:3) therefore redefines PRA given emphasis on relationships and its reflective participatory approach in contrast to the rural connotation. He sees PRA as "a growing family of approaches, methods, attitudes, behaviours and relationships to enable and empower people to share, analyse and enhance their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, monitor, evaluate and reflect". Participatory learning and action is sometimes used interchangeably with PRA, as both tools place emphasis on a learning process evolving from the rural community members.

2.5.3.2 PLA

According to Chambers (2007), Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) can be defined as

"a growing family of approaches, tools, attitudes and behaviours to enable and empower people to present, share, analyze and enhance their knowledge of life and condition and to plan, act, monitor, evaluate, reflect and scale up community action." PLA just as PAR, is a form of action research and is a practical, adaptive research strategy that enables diverse groups and individuals to learn, work and act together in a co-operative manner. It focuses on issues of joint concern, identify challenges and generate positive responses in a collaborative and democratic manner. Put differently, PLA is an iterative and organic process which encourages stakeholders to engage in cycles of research, co-analysis, reflection and evaluation together over time (Chambers, 1997). Kumar (2002) therefore sees PLA as an approach for learning about and engaging with communities which combines an ever-growing toolkit of participatory and visual methods with natural interviewing techniques and is intended to facilitate a process of collective analysis and learning.

The PLA methodology evolved from less inclusive but related approaches to participation known as rapid rural appraisal (RRA) and participatory rural appraisal (PRA). RRA and PRA were developed in the 1970s to provide alternative methods of data collection beyond traditional anthropological ethnographies and large-scale surveys. This family of related approaches has evolved over time to emphasize local empowerment and to provide an alternative to extractive data gathering.

By the 1990s, PRA and PLA approaches had reached a global audience. PLA approaches have been used in over 100 countries around the world and piloted by a variety of institutions including government ministries, international non-profits, and donor agencies. PLA tools continue to be invented

or implemented in creative new ways, with some international organisations even using them internally to empower their employees.

The underlying principle behind PLA methodology is to engage the full participation of people in the processes of learning about their needs and opportunities, and in the action required to address them. By empowering participants to creatively investigate issues of their concern, the approach challenges preexisting biases and conceptions about participants' knowledge. As such, it can also offer opportunities for local people to mobilize for joint action. While the particular methods used can vary, all the tools are defined by interactive learning, shared knowledge, and an adaptable, yet structured analysis. The PLA framework of joint analysis and interaction between stakeholders and participants promotes a focus on communal learning.

Below are the main PLA principles which, Yetter, (2012) espouses to address best practices of the approach.

1. Bias Explicit: Every individual maintains a unique worldview that is shaped by a confluence of factors including, but not limited to, culture, upbringing, religion, and perceived injustices. As such, every person maintains a distinct set of biases, which play a role in how an individual acts, thinks, and perceives the world around himself / herself. The best PLA facilitators make their biases explicit rather than trying to suppress them, ensuring that their biases have less influence on the outcomes of the PLA activity.

2. Triangulation: It is best to use as many tools as possible while diversifying team members and data sources to cross check information and neutralize biases. By triangulating information, facilitators are also able to capture a greater quantity of information.

3. Optimal Ignorance: Extensive rich, varied, and interesting data can be captured from PLA tools. However, collecting only the most necessary information saves time and resources.

4. Appropriate Imprecision: PLA methodology emphasizes the 'big picture' or trends across data. Facilitators should focus on identifying these trends rather than on precision in the design and application of the PLA tools.

5. Multiple Perspectives: Inherent to the PLA methodology is the practice of valuing all participant perspectives and exploring different worldviews. It is important to seek out diversity and analyze anomalies rather than to oversimplify complexity.

6. Group Learning Process: A PLA approach to a project should involve a group learning process that mirrors the interactions and reflects the complexity seen in the community. As a result, group learning and instruction will be iterative, changing as people's perceptions evolve. It is important to remember that communities will not necessarily have homogeneous opinions.

7. Context Specific: All PLA approaches and tools should be flexible enough to adapt to a variety of contexts. Designing and adapting methods to the local situation cultivates buy-in among community members

8. Facilitating Empowerment: The ultimate aim of the PLA methodology is to facilitate local empowerment. The facilitator's role, then, is to foster this transformation among participants, rather than to dominate the activity.

9. Leading to Change: The PLA process should elicit learning and debate about the change that needs to happen among a given population. These discussions should change individual and group perceptions as well as the population's readiness for action.

Use: The approach has been used, traditionally, with rural communities in the developing world. There it has been found extremely effective in tapping into the unique perspectives of the rural poor, helping to unlock their ideas not only on the nature and causes of the issues that affect them, but also on realistic solutions. It enables local people to share their perceptions and identify, prioritise and appraise issues from their knowledge of local conditions. More traditional, extractive research tends to 'consult' communities and then take away the findings for analysis, with no assurance that they will be acted on. In contrast, PLA tools combine the sharing of insights with analysis and, as such, provide a catalyst for the community themselves to act on what is uncovered.

PLA is highly relevant for the field of implementation science because it is a pragmatic multi-perspective research methodology. This means that it can be used to address practical problems, to focus on solutions to those problems and to explore issues from a variety of points of view. This process enables stakeholders to achieve their goals for practice and/or policy. This process is often enabled by researcher/facilitators who encourage stakeholders to engage in a PLA 'brokered dialogue' (Kane & O'Reilly-de Brún, 2001). PLA dialogue supports stakeholders to overcome problems or barriers that they encounter during the implementation work. PLA enhances coherence, cognitive participation,

collective action and reflexive monitoring; PLA techniques can be used to stimulate creative thinking and identify solutions to any problems and barriers that may arise.

In this dialogue, key stakeholder groups are encouraged to listen to, and learn from, each other's knowledge and perspectives. Stakeholders will have time to consider which initiatives are particularly relevant to them and they will be encouraged to choose one initiative to implement in their local setting. Trust, rapport and mutual respect are essential for a PLA dialogue and, when present, can lead to productive exchanges whereby all types of knowledge and expertise become explicit and valued. Because of its underpinning ethos of inclusion, PLA is particularly suitable for engaging with 'hard-to-reach' groups (e.g., migrant service users) and addressing cross-cultural issues, both of which are important in community activities, (O'Reilly-de Brún, & de Brún, 2010).

2.5.3.3 PPA

Effective participatory development requires an enabling environment to thrive. According to Cornwall (2000:23), participatory development “is in itself productive changes in the relationships of local people with those beyond the project interface...and attempts to bring policy-making closer to those affected...beyond the project domain”. Cornwall sees the tools of participatory policy to be an effective initiative that would give the voiceless the chance to explore ways that would enable them to present their feelings and concerns within the development process. One of such tools given closer attention to by Cornwall is participatory poverty assessment (PPA). According to Booth et al (1998:5), “by giving expression to the many different dimensions of deprivation and to what poor people themselves say about what causes them to remain poor, PPAs have the potential both to give us a fuller understanding of poverty, and to make it more difficult for poverty to be ignored or side-lined by politicians and other decision-makers”. The focus of PPAs has been on producing information for policy-makers and in a way helping to engage the rural poor in defining their own agenda for change, particularly when PRAs are used in PPAs.

Robb (1999:xii) argues that PPAs respond to the challenge of inclusion by directly representing the views of the poor to policy-makers. Robb's claim presupposes that the poor people's voices that emerge in PPA reports presented are authentic versions of what the poor really want. Cornwall (2000:24) disagrees with this claim and argues that it would be disingenuous to think that the views of the poor are directly and factually represented in reported documents; the reason being that those who process and editorialise PPA reports are completely differentiated from PPA facilitators. Whether the views of the poor are raised in PPA reports would depend on the agency of those who shape this process and on their

understanding of the poor and the needs of the poor. Participatory tools such as PPAs “attempt to understand poverty dimensions within the social, cultural, economic and political environment of a locality” (David, Holland et al, 1998:52).

The livelihood approach acknowledges the fact that the poor are not a homogenous mass nor are they always merely weak, passive recipients of government handouts. According to Helmore and Singh (2001, in Hall and Midgley, 2004:7), the poor “also have strengths, assets and capacities that may be mobilised for proactive participation in the development process”. By, “the development process”, Helmore and Singh refer to participation of the poor in development programmes to be from the identification of need to the implementation of activities to meet that need and includes the evaluation of progress of such programmes. It is probably in this consideration that the World Bank scaled up PPAs as a complement to their poverty assessments though initially intended for small projects.

2.5.3.4 PAR

According to Cooke (2001:104), participatory action research (PAR) is another tool that enables the poor and oppressed “to become aware both of the structural sources of their own oppression and of how their own views of the world and thought processes” influence their well-being. By thought processes, Cooke tries to evoke the sense of gender discrimination, which has been a hallmark of cultural and social discrimination against women in northern Ghana. Cooke maintains that with the awareness created as a result, the oppressed group in question will take a collective and secure position to challenge the causes of their oppression. PAR is a collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings and begins with a research topic of importance to the community with the aim of combining knowledge and action for social change to improve the community (Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003). In other words, PAR is an approach to research in communities that emphasizes participation and action. PAR seeks to understand and improve the world by changing it through collaborative and reflective action and participation. In another vein, Green et al, (2003:419) see PAR as “a systematic inquiry, with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied, for purposes of education and taking action or effecting change.” However, collaborative research with people who have a history of marginalization is possible only on the basis of trust (RATH, 2012). This trust must be allowed to develop; it builds on long-term, honest relationships that draw a balance between closeness and distance as described by DENTITH et al (2012)., empathy, and emotional involvement.

At the heart of PAR is the notion of collective, self reflective inquiry that researchers and participants undertake, so they can understand and improve upon the practices in which they participate and the situations in which they find themselves. The reflective process is directly linked to action, influenced by understanding of history, culture, and local context and embedded in social relationships. BORG et al. (2012) note: "Reflexivity requires the researcher to be aware of themselves as the instrument of research. This is a particularly important issue for action researchers who are intimately involved with the subject of the research, the context in which it takes place, and others who may be stakeholders in that context."

In other words, PAR emphasizes collective inquiry and experimentation grounded in experience and social history. Reason and Bradbury, (2008:1) assert that within a PAR process; "communities of inquiry and action evolve and address questions and issues that are significant for those who participate as co-researchers". The process of PAR should be empowering and lead to people having increased control over their lives (Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003, Grbich, 1999).

According to Rahman (1991:4), the "domination of masses by elites⁵ is rooted not only in the polarisation of control over means of material production, but also over means of knowledge production, including control over social power to determine what is useful knowledge". For the proponents of PAR, power is understood as a relation of knowledge and its production compares to the production of material and social relations (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001:73). This eventually contributes to the building and enhancing the capacities of the rural people, particularly through their active participation in development activities.

PAR practitioners make a concerted effort to integrate three basic aspects of their work: participation (life in society and democracy), action (engagement with experience and history), and research (soundness in thought and the growth of knowledge) (Chevalier and Buckles, 2013:1). Rahman,

⁵The word "elites" is used here to describe those community rural people who are less poor and more influential. They include progressive farmers, village leaders, headmen, traders, religious leaders, teachers, paraprofessionals and other educated persons. It is they who receive and speak to the visitors, they who articulate the community's interests and wishes; their concerns which emerge as the community's priorities for development; it is they who receive a greater portion of attention, advice and services of the visitors (Kinyashi, 2006:3; Chambers, 1983:18).

(2008:49) emphasizes that "Action unites, organically, with research" and collective processes of self-investigation. The way each component is actually understood and the relative emphasis it receives varies nonetheless from one PAR theory and practice to another. This means that PAR is not a monolithic body of ideas and methods but rather a pluralistic orientation to knowledge making and social change (Brown, in Brown and Gaventa, 2010:5-28).

PAR is a source of discovery and creation, thus unfolding in a central space in which "what is" can only be defined in the context of "what should be" (Toulmin and Gustavsen, 1996:181-188). In other words, when PAR is defined in the context of *what should be*, entails an element of participatory options and therefore offers opportunity to others to contribute to the relevant issues on the ground. Therefore, *What is*, as used in this context, signifies a definite approach which has evolved out of the findings of practitioners on a particular given area and so gives very little space for extended contribution by all shades of people (Fals Borda, 2001:32).

PAR principles also form the basis of "empowerment evaluation" Fetterman et al, (1996) that argue that the evaluation of community participation should include those whose livelihoods and health are being promoted (Rootman I, Goodstadt M, Hyndman M. et al, 2001). While there has been some debate about the distinctiveness of empowerment evaluation (Patton, 1997) it certainly strives to be more democratic, to build capacity, to encourage self determination and make evaluation less expert driven.

The role of PAR is to empower rural people through the construction of their own knowledge, in a process of "action and reflection or conscientisation" (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001:73). According to Rahman (1993:169), "there is no doubt that the growing cooperation system in participatory development is not merely a theoretical concern today but is a part of, and is being further stimulated by, the advances grassroots work of this nature is making on the ground". PAR is not just a quest for knowledge; it is also "a transformation of individual attitudes and values, personality and culture, an altruistic process" (Fals Borda, 2001:32). Despite such initiatives that have had some influencing impact on grassroots communities, it cannot be said to be near the macro-direction of the poor rural communities in general in Ghana, in so far as institutions with social and political power over national policy, control resources and development strategy issues. The resources indicated in this context may include land, forest, water, electricity, credit and lobbying power of which the ordinary community members have little or no access to. As a result, the rural poor are "handicapped in their effort to take initiatives to improve their own lives" (Rahman, 1993:169). Therefore PAR necessarily involves

democratisation. According to Fals Borda (2001:32), participatory democracy inspires a new humanism that is politically committed to social justice and objective participation.

In an extensive synthesis of community-based and participatory action research literature, Israel et al (1998) propose the following key principles that can be taken as a starting point but are by no means definitive to understanding PAR:

1. **Recognises community as a unit of identity.** This research should work explicitly with communities, which may be defined by a geographic area, or defined as a community of identity that is geographically dispersed but members hold a sense of common identity and shared fate.
2. **Builds on strengths and resources within the community.** This research should explicitly identify, support and reinforce social structures, processes, and knowledge already existing in the community that help them work together to improve their lives.
3. **Facilitates collaborative partnerships in all phases of the research.** This research should involve community members in every phase they want to participate in, including but not limited to: problem definition, data collection, interpretation of results, and application of the results to address community concerns. This may involve applying skills from outside the community, but should focus on issues identified by the community and create situations in which all parties can truly influence the entire research process.
4. **Integrates knowledge and action for mutual benefit of all partners.** Though the research project itself might not include a direct action component, all parties must have a commitment to applying the research results to a social change effort intended to benefit all partners.
5. **Promotes a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequalities.** This research should recognize the inherent inequalities between marginalized communities and researchers, and attempt to address these by emphasizing knowledge of community members and sharing information, resources and decision-making power. Israel et al offer the example that researchers learn from the knowledge and local theories of the community members and community members acquire further skills in how to conduct research.
6. **Involves a cyclical and iterative process.** This research should involve trust-building, partnership development and maintenance in all phases of the research.
7. **Disseminates findings and knowledge gained to all partners.** This research should disseminate information gained in a respectful and understandable language that acknowledges all participants contributions and ownership of the knowledge production.

Despite these laudable uses of PAR and other participatory approach tools in community driven development (CDD) as driving seats of development efforts, some development scholars (Mefalopulos, 2008, Narayan, 2002, World Bank, 2008, Wilkins, 2000) opine that these participatory approach tools have systematically neglected communication in a dialogic way. The emphasis on participation in development also implies increased attention to communication, because, as the World Bank (2008) puts it, there can be no participation without some level of communication. In other words, the added emphasis on participation helps to mainstream communication in many initiatives, and at the same time promotes a more dialogic and a two-way conception of communication, taking into consideration dialogue and a balanced share of perceptions and knowledge. UNDP has over the years been an advocate for broadening the conception of development beyond economic dimensions (Mefalopulos, 2008), to include the idea that stakeholders should be engaged in development initiatives from the very beginning and play an active role throughout the process.

2.5.3.5 Factors distinguishing PRA from PAR

Participatory Action Research (PAR), which owes more to a radical activist tradition from the work of Paulo Freire and others in Latin America, derives some of its rationale from awareness that PRA, for all its emphasis on participation, capability building, ownership of knowledge and empowerment, is still fundamentally an extractive and intellectual exercise. The benefits PRA brings to local communities can be intangible and even disappointing. PAR, by contrast, works directly with local political/development capacities to bring real, visible organizational structures, effective local advocacy, and a durable change in power relations with the centre. PAR is a more activist approach, working to empower the local community, or its representatives, to manipulate the higher level power structures. If it can avoid the danger of entrenching a self-interested local elite, and address honestly the long-term choices that must be made on resource utilisation, perhaps PAR has the most potential of all the methods described to secure the resources for sustainable livelihoods. PAR can empower a community, entrench local elite, right a wrong or totally mess things up. It depends on the extent of awareness and political savoir faire of the supporting outside organization. PAR-type approach has become a desirable one as it seeks to mobilize actual resources in follow-up exercises to produce durable change at the community level.

PAR differs from conventional research in three ways. Firstly, it focuses on research whose purpose is to enable action. Action is achieved through a reflective cycle, whereby participants collect and analyse data, then determine what action should follow. The resultant action is then further researched and an iterative reflective cycle perpetuates data collection, reflection, and action as in a corkscrew action.

Secondly, PAR pays careful attention to power relationships, advocating for power to be deliberately shared between the researcher and the researched: blurring the line between them until the researched become the researchers. The researched cease to be objects and become partners in the whole research process: including selecting the research topic, data collection, and analysis and deciding what action should happen as a result of the research findings. Wadsworth⁷ sees PAR as an expression of “new paradigm science” that differs significantly from old paradigm or positivist science. The hallmark of positivist science is that it sees the world as having a single reality that can be independently observed and measured by objective scientists preferably under laboratory conditions where all variables can be controlled and manipulated to determine causal connections. By contrast new paradigm science and PAR posits that the observer has an impact on the phenomena being observed and brings to their inquiry a set of values that will exert influence on the study. Thirdly, PAR contrasts with less dynamic approaches that remove data and information from their contexts. Most health research involves people, even if only as passive participants, as “subjects” or “respondents”. PAR advocates that those being researched should be involved in the process actively. The degree to which this is possible in health research will differ as will the willingness of people to be involved in research

For academics, dilemmas arise in the use of PAR because it is time consuming and unpredictable, unlikely to lead to a high production of articles in refereed journals and its somewhat “messy” nature means it is less likely to attract competitive research funding (Kavannagh, Daly & Jolley, 2002).

The ability of a researcher to engage with communities and bring about real change to their quality of life and health status rarely counts. The global research community is already being urged to adapt its grant assessment methods and its assessment of research performance to ensure that the engaged processes typical of PAR are valued and encouraged (McCoy D, Sanders D, Baum F. *et al*, 2004).

Participatory Action Research is fine if you understand the local power structure and the issues. It is best reserved for situations where the external agent is aware of the potential for damage, both to themselves and, more importantly, to the disempowered in the community. It also works best where the external agency has a clear status and relationship with the community and can command resources for a long-term commitment.

Therefore, when using the mass media messages as the main source of communication, it is expected that these messages can “originate from the people themselves” (Mefalopoulos, 2008:5) rather than from “outside experts” (Mody, 1991). This will go a long way to enhance the understanding of the direct beneficiaries of development interventions “since participation requires increased influence and control

and ...increased empowerment in economic, social and political terms” (UNDP, 1993:21). This means that the local people will have the power to take part in decision making process since power can be conceived as the ability to shape social context (Wilkins, 2000).

Therefore, community members’ participation is highly vested in their knowledge of participation, what and how to participate in and the opportunity to make good this knowledge that will enhance their participation in the development of activities for their collective good. According to Rahman (1993:40), there could be danger of apathy if there is a continued domination of organisations over people even with their consent, as this is likely to create vested interests in the organisation as such, and to consolidate the power and privilege of such interests. It is in this vein that it is argued (Hayward, 1998, Mefalopulos, 2008) that if interventionists continue to downgrade the community members in the development process, order would snap in the long run and the community members would not only be asking questions about participating in development activities that benefit them, but would fight it. As Selener (1997:23) puts it, “such action against power of the dominant classes is challenged, as the relatively powerless begin to develop their own awareness of their reality and to act for themselves”. By acting for themselves, community members would be setting themselves free from the oppression of expression. Freedom, in the opinion of Hayward (1998:21), “is the capacity to participate effectively in shaping the social limits that define what is possible”. If this expanded view of freedom signifies power to the rural poor, then it can also more evidently, situate knowledge as a resource in the power field. Knowledge, just as any resource, “determines definitions of what is conceived as important, as possible, for and by whom” (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001:72). In other words, the control of knowledge productions determines the limits of possibilities which can be imagined or acted upon. Put differently, such limits can define the levels of co-production with others or broaden the boundaries of such productions, based on the premise that democratic participation in knowledge production can expand the boundaries of people’s action.

2.5.4 Participatory methodologies

These include role-plays or “popular theatre” (Chambers, 2006:3), REFLECT (Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques), planning for real, stepping stones, appreciative inquiry and training for transformation. When these processes are combined, there can be “sharing without boundaries” (Chambers, 2006:3). Empowering the community poor and marginalized is all it takes to make a good PRA. Development actors should therefore not only act as teachers or transferors of technology, but also act as conveners, catalysts and facilitators. The role of development actors is to enable the local rural community members to do their own appraisal, concrete analysis, presentation,

planning and take the action that meets their aspirations. When development interventionists come to the realisation that the poor, rural, marginalized, vulnerable and voiceless community members can do it on their own, this would mean a confidence booster and a trust on their capabilities. The abilities of the community members would confront with the development powers that would enable them participate in the actions and activities of poverty alleviation.

Chambers (2006:4) has identified three common elements of PRA approach and they include:

Critical self-aware responsibility: individuals and community membership responsibility and judgement through the support of facilitators, with self-critical awareness and coping with or embracing errors throughout the process.

Equity and empowerment: a commitment to collaborative equality, empowering those who are marginalized, excluded, and deprived, particularly women.

Diversity: recognition and celebration of societal differences in diversity.

These elements would combine to afford the rural community members the confidence to confront the development powers and contribute meaningfully to the development agenda.

Participatory research challenges power dimensions in three ways (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001:74):

Knowledge-as a resource that affects decisions;

Action-which looks at who is involved in the production of such knowledge; and

Consciousness-which looks at how the production of knowledge changes the awareness or worldview of those involved, as figure 1 below illustrates.

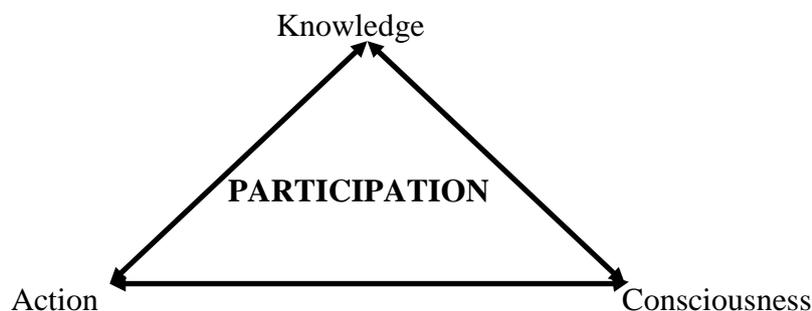


Figure 2.1 Dimensions of participatory research (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001:74)

2.6 Theoretical framework of community participation and poverty reduction

According to Bradshaw and Burger (2005:52), public participation is a concept that is firmly rooted in political philosophy. That is to say, public participation leans on public democracy, which seeks to involve wider sections of the population directly in decisions affecting them (Bradshaw and Burger, 2005:52; Cochrane, 1986:51; Dahl, 1990:62). Barber, (in Bradshaw and Burger 2005:51) describes this form of participatory democracy as “strong democracy”. That is to say, the citizens are actively involved in the most pertinent powers of governing the sectors and programmes that directly affect their well-being. According to Cornwall (2000:5), to make a difference therefore, “participatory development must engage with questions of difference: to effectively tackle poverty, it must go beyond the poor as a generic category, and engage with the diversity of women’s and men’s experiences of poverty and powerlessness”. In other words, Cornwall would want a kind of participatory development that takes into consideration all shades of views and experiences across the gender divide in any given community and across cultures in which, such developmental activities are carried out.

In this consideration, Guijt and Kaul Shah (1998:1) observe that despite the claims of inclusiveness advocated by development practitioners about participation in development, “the language and practice of participation often obscures women’s world, needs and contributions to development, making equitable participatory development an elusive goal”. Guijt and Kaul Shah’s opinion is suggestive of the active participation of women in the community development agenda.

True public participation⁶ in community level poverty alleviation and development is “one of the most important socio-political phenomenon of our times” (Agunga, 1990:137) which involves a collective interest. In other words, participation enables decision makers establish “the point of sustainability for each project by contributing essential local knowledge and wisdom to project planning and design, and by clarifying the degree to which stakeholders are willing to accept or live with the trade-offs” (Greyling, 2002, in Bradshaw and Burger 2005:48). By involving all stakeholders at every stage of any intervention at the community level, the interest of the direct beneficiaries (community members) will be such that they will continue to maintain and care for whatever development activity they have been assisted with.

⁶True public participation means the actual and significant involvement of the community in deciding, implementing and evaluating the programmes and activities that benefit them in their community or in their country as citizens.

In addition, Narula and Pearce (1986:36) maintain "... that development programmes should improve the quality of life for specific persons and that the planning and implementation of these should be carried out with the people rather than for them". The argument suggests that public participation should not be limited only to a therapy invitation by development agents to community members after the crucial decisions have already been made. Rather, community members should be directly involved in expressing their views on crucial development planning and design issues. Paul (1987, in Agunga, 1990:137) adds that participation signifies the "voice" of the people in the activities that affect them in either a positive or a negative way. Greyling (1998:5), points out that participation is not about building consensus; rather, it is aimed at "generating a diversity of opinions and views". It is suggestive that divergent views that might arise from the participation of community members will enhance efficiency and determine their readiness for the programmes that may be implemented. In other words, public participation can forestall community conflict and mitigate the cost of programme implementation and sustainability. Bradshaw and Burger (2005:48) put it, failure to involve the community members "during participation process may contribute to creating a conflict environment" that will eventually undermine intended goals of development within the community.

It is argued (Chambers, 2005:130) that Third World governments adopted the notion of community participation for two reasons. First, accepting popular participation was a precondition for receiving an integrated rural development (IRD) loan, and secondly, they saw their rural development programmes particularly the agricultural extension systems, ineffective and needed an alternative communication strategy. The "training and visit" approach, a principal component of the IRD, promised not only a means of unifying the fragmented extension systems of these countries but also to involve the local people in the development process (Agunga, 1990:139). Based on the preconditions laid by the World Bank for loans and development countries acceptability of popular community participation in development programmes, one would expect that participation over the last three decades would be more developed. However, the situation seems different and Agunga (1990:139) poses the question "why is there no participation in spite of the advocacy for it?" This and similar questions will be dealt with in chapters six and seven in the thesis. Below, I discuss the issues of change and development as understood by the poor in rural communities and their levels of participation in development activities within their local communities.

2.6.1 Preliterate communities and participation in development programmes

Change and development are arguably two key words that define the life-world of poor rural communities. According to Coetzee and Graaff (1996:40), change is a movement away from

“primitivity in the direction of control” and development as a gradual process of reducing problems and suffering of people in relation to their physical and social environment. In other words development provides a fundamental element aimed at improving the well-being of people in conditions of life. It is probably in this conception that Western people tend to express their perception of development in terms of a continuum. These two ends of the continuum include the concepts of traditionality on the one hand and modernity on the other (Coetzee and Graaff, 1996:40). Traditionality may mean a stage of restriction to progressive ability to solve social problems and control the physical environment. Modernity on the other hand is viewed to be associated with qualitative characteristics such as rationality, freedom and progressive actions.

It is argued that participation in development programmes by the poor, by and large depends on their levels of deprivation of socio-economic resources as well as their contribution to development planning. According to Chambers (2005:45), deprivation as perceived by the poor includes varied dimensions. These dimensions lingers not only on the lack of income and wealth “but also social inferiority, physical weakness, disability and sickness, vulnerability, physical and social isolation, powerlessness and humiliation”. In practice, non-involvement of community illiterate and poor beneficiaries in development programmes exacerbates poverty in decision making and partnership. In other words, community members are not given the opportunity to explore their assertive potentials in, not only as contributors to decisions, but also partners in other programmes that benefit them.

In a situation where community members are tactically excluded from planning and implementation of developmental activities, it is argued, they are simply viewed as “little vessels... arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them” until they become full to the brim (Dickens, in Chambers, 2005:60). As a result, the upper-lower structure of relationship translates into provider-consumer relationship. Community members just receive whatever is provided, whether good or bad, whether understood or not, whether suitable for their personal and collective interest or not. It is given and should be taken (Ansa, 2006:7).

Development practitioners and fieldworkers develop their own operational interpretation of both villager needs and project goals, and their own strategies of intervention, which are sensitive to the managerial and institutional environment as well as the village contexts in which they work (Arce and Long, in Mosse, 2001:24). It is intimated that any participatory project that has diverged from considering community options and analyses the problems confronting the community members “will have limited

impact, miss opportunities, or, at worse, by mis-specifying, the problem, contribute to an aggravation of poverty or environmental decline” rather than mitigating them (Mosse, 2001:25).

Clayton, Oakley and Pratt (1997:1) note, “the notion of people’s participation is now widely recognised as a basic operational principle of development programmes and projects”. Put differently, participation within the development cooperation “has shifted from margins to the mainstream” (Cornwall, 2000:5). In other words, participatory approaches to poverty reduction in poor communities is being well-communicated to all stakeholders and particularly drawing attention to issues leading to a consensus building on it. It is widely accepted that participatory approach to development intervention in a given setting, has grown beyond mere conceptualisation to a crucial discourse and a practical process in community development agenda worldwide. Further to this, Boltvinik (2006:4) affirms that when people participate in the solution of their problems, success is easier to attain. Success here may refer to the ultimate attainment of needs. The changing relation between resources and needs through the life cycle and other risk factors can cause households or communities to fall, temporarily or permanently, into poverty. Participation by the poor beneficiaries in development programmes therefore could be the preferred option as opposed to the assumption that development practitioners and service providers know what is right for the poor and that poor people have poor ways of defining their needs, as Fellmann, Getis and Getis (1990:310) would comment.

2.6.2 Importance of public participation in pro-poor interventions

The importance of public participation goes beyond giving communities space to make comments on already planned programmes that benefit them. Participation should include giving the poor as Burkey (1993:56-60) sees it, greater control over their own life situation, and access to resources for their development, influence in the decisions affecting these resources and the opportunity to positively influence the course of events. Community participation in development is central to the community ability to sustain development needs of its members.

Development programmes does not depend only on funds, but also on sustainability. According to Bernard Woods (in Agunga, 1990:140), “Development funds have been abundant, so much such that shortcomings in development have not stemmed from lack of money. Generally, the best technical expertise available has been employed, and the best known economic and fiscal policies have been advocated and where possible, applied. Yet solutions to the self-sustaining development needs of the majority of the people in Africa have remained elusive”. One is inclined to attribute Woods elusiveness of development in Africa and other developing countries to the lack of appropriate policy

implementation or low-level of community participation in existing pro-poor programmes. It is argued that the involvement of intended development beneficiaries in planning their own development destinies make them responsible people and also determines the success of the development programmes, particularly at the community level (Boltvinik, 2006:4).

Scott-Villiers (2004:199-209) sees responsible well-being to be based on self-awareness towards a desirable end for development, which is largely achieved through individual learning. “This is about each individual within their sphere using the space around them to consider both the without and the within and in so doing making their work and its relationships a little more enjoyable and congruent, a touch more energised and spiced with an edge of questioning and creativity”. Responsible well-being is a phrase that invites further definition. There are some questions involved in this and include, what is and who defines responsibility? What is and who defines well-being? Chambers (2004:33) thinks that the “poor, weak and marginalized should analyse and express what matters to them, what for them is ill-being and what well-being, what for them would make a difference. The challenge is to make space for them to do this, to amplify their voices, to listen, hear, understand and then act”. When community participation goes beyond involvement to deciding and controlling development programmes by the community members themselves in a responsible manner, then participation becomes an ultimate satisfactory instrument for community well being.

Beierle (1998:4-5) encapsulates the importance of public participation in what he describes as “social goals”. These goals include the following:

1. Educating and informing the public; according to Taylor and Fransman (2003:8), “a basic concept of learning and teaching participation is that individuals participate in generating their own personal theories which are relevant to their own context”. Based on this, Chambers (2004:32) notes how experiential learning and reflection can lead normally and naturally to seeing and perhaps, interpreting things in new ways, evolving out of the personal practice of people involved, and build a grounded confidence on which further learning can grow.

2. Incorporating public values into decision making; community participation in development activities brings into focus the notion of the relationship between self and society. Voluntary involvement in community programmes is an important science for definitions of self esteem and self-identity in developing communities. Community participation results in better decisions (Smith, 2007:2) in that community members are more likely to accept such decisions as beneficial to them. Besides, public values in community development are not just about community organisation but also about institutional

change. Incorporating community values in decision-making process identifies and sets out the community's agenda (Crowley, 2005:7). Pro-poor programmes grow and flourish when communities see changes to which they have contributed their views, skills and resources adequately and appropriately.

3. Improving the substantive quality of decisions; community participation in pro-poor activities serves to check and balance political activities at the community level. Partisan political favours, pork-barrelling and nepotism are some negative examples that can mar decision-making at the community level which can generate unchecked political behaviour. Accordingly community participation in the decision-making process reduces the likelihood of community leaders making self serving decisions with development actors on behalf of the whole community. Finally, community participation provides a source of special insight, information, knowledge and experience, which contributes to the soundness of community solutions (Christensen and Robinson, in Smith, 2007:2). The end result is an emphasis on problem solving to eliminate deficiencies in the community, to make desired changes towards poverty reduction and to minimise deprivation.

4. Increasing trust in institutions; Cahn and Camper (in Smith, 2007:2) suggest that merely knowing that one can participate promotes dignity and self-sufficiency within the individual. In addition, it taps the energies and resources of individual citizens within the community and legitimises the programme, its plans, actions and leadership. The community members maintain trusts and confidence in all the support institutions.

5. Reducing conflict; Giddens (2001:669) observes that society is essentially full of tensions and even in situations that are considered stable manifests "an easy balance of antagonistic groupings". To prevent a potentially explosive situation in which the hungry⁷ goes against the greedy⁸ there is the need to reduce conflicts in development institutional setting. Hall (2002:59) admonishes that "conflict per se, will be detrimental to the organisation if it is not resolved". The implication is that though conflicts offers good chances for genuine participation to occur for the empowered community poor, there is an urgent need to resolve them immediately as they occur or reduce their occurrence to the barest minimum. In an instance where conflicts are unresolved or allowed to escalate, it can potentially lead to what Fakade

⁷ The hungry in this context refers to the poor and marginalized people within the community.

⁸ The greedy in this context describes the behaviour of development actors and their tactical exclusion of the poor in participating in pro-poor activities.

(1994:61) describes as “over politicising development efforts”. In this regard, Scheidtweiler (in Kyessi, 2002:73) contends that through dialogue and cooperation between community level groups and development practitioners, genuine development can be achieved.

6. Achieving cost effectiveness; The World Bank argues that combating poverty involves much more than fostering sound market-oriented growth, “it involves

- Enhancing the capabilities, particularly in education and health, that are fundamental to well-being and that, moreover, make it possible for people to participate,
- Promoting people’s empowerment; their influence over their political, social and economic environment is of basic direct importance to well-being and to the process of participation,
- Providing protection against economic, political, social and natural vulnerabilities, including those arising from market reforms” (Collier et al, 2000:36).

When poverty reduction strategies are tailored wholly to include all the parameters proposed by the World Bank as stated in Collier et al, then, poverty reduction would go beyond cost, in terms of economic cost, to the maximisation of financial and human resources that will promote an effective management of and reduction of poverty in a larger scale. In this consideration, Chambers (1997:1, 14) continue to argue that “huge opportunities exist to make a difference for the better”. The challenge is how to harness personal, professional and institutional influences to frame what he describes as a “practical paradigm for knowing and acting and changing how we know and act, in a flux of uncertainty and change”. He adds, “The potential for deliberate, chosen change is there”. What is needed is how to make the most out of what we can have and can do.

According to Saxena (1998:111), “the essence of participation is exercising voice and choice and developing the human, organisational and management capacity to solve problems as they arise in order to sustain their improvements”. By “voice and choice”, Saxena implies the opportunity to speak and be heard by others in a participatory development process. In this way, participation in itself becomes a capacity building activity that can enhance the skills and sense of community ownership and responsibility. In this light, Hall (1993: xvii) notes, “Participatory research is fundamentally about the right to speak” and be listened to as another crucial element in participatory development. The opportunity to speak and be heard transforms the world in which poor people find themselves. Freire (1997:70) argues, “the word is not the privilege of some few persons, but the right of everyone”. This is to say, the opportunity to speak out becomes a task of all persons and makes meaning in dialogue, which

is a necessary element to empower stakeholders through “meaningful and sustainable change” (Mefalopulos, 2008:55) for a better and just society.

Participation is a means that focuses on its ability to stimulate people to deliver more effective development. According to Chambers (1994:961) and Cooke (2001:103), participation leads to better planning, implementation, monitoring, investigation, training and action, while Acharya et al (in Cooke 2001:103) add “evaluation” to the list. A participatory development places human persons and communities as part of their world. In other words, a participatory perspective enjoins the community members to be both situated and reflexive, creating an inquiry of knowing and enhancing capacity, which is culturally framed and nurtured (Reason and Bradbury, 2001:6).

In addition, participatory decisions in development programmes are seen to be more informative, because the ideas and energy on which it is based are as a result of a collective activity between interventionists and participants. Participatory action builds a sense of commitment and embraces local knowledge particularly during the implementation of planned programmes.

In another sense, the participatory orientation gives new impetus to the development of local ingenuity especially when local people play a significant part in “interpreting, applying and sometimes inventing methods themselves” that otherwise would have been shelved if not given the opportunity to do so (Chambers, 2005:131).

2.7 The reality of community participation

It is argued (Hall and Midgely, 2004:45) that the difference between a system dominated, and in fact, dependent on central and local government and one based upon the individual small farmer and small businessperson in any given country, is the regard for common interest in the application of the principle of participatory development. The poor people need “partnerships with governments to solve many livelihood and community problems...in equal partnership. Equality, however, does not translate into doing half the work, but rather a partnership of mutual respect, with each partner contributing resources appropriate to particular problems and contexts” (Narayan, Chambers, Shah and Petesh 2000:212).

In the quest for socio-economic development in view of reducing poverty in deprived sections of the country, quick and creative proposals to donor agencies are implemented soon after receipt of funds in order to meet time limits. For instance, from 1994-1999, the government of Ghana under President J.J. Rawlings implemented rural projects under the national institutional renewal programme (NIRP) with

funds from the Japanese government (Aryeetey, 2006). This was hurriedly carried out in several communities in northern Ghana without consensus planning with local government officials, (personal knowledge of the case under review). The consent of benefiting communities was equally not sought, their participation in such decisions was probably not thought of or that their opinions did not matter much to the implementers. When it came to the time for evaluation of the progress made so far on the implementation of the programme in 1999, government realised then that the programme had not met set objectives, and so had failed in every respect to meet needs of the community members. During the briefing sessions to prepare the interviewees and the survey coordinators on key issues before commencement of the survey, the facilitators told the interviewees that they were required by order from above (that is from government) to document only the positive aspects of the evaluation survey and nothing more or less. It was a directive and therefore non-negotiable. The probability was that they were afraid of the risk involved in making the negative aspects of the implementation process public. Though there was a form of participation, the argument is whether or not there was any partnership. The participants at the initial stage were government agents responsible for administering the institutions intended for the renewal process. Accordingly, the form of participation in that regard was non-community participatory. It seemed that the remote objective of government at the time was to hide under the NIRP to get money for other ulterior motives that probably could not be supported by the funding, a situation of robbing Peter to pay Paul, one would say. According to Kothari (2001:142), “they become social agents and actors by subverting the power of development and disrupting participatory discourses”. The whole process was “highly ritualised and fraught with political significance around what foreigners can and cannot see” (Irvine, Chambers and Eyben, 2004:5). The argument is that the government had to create a constraining political environment and behaviour designed to please the funding partners or perhaps even gain more funding from them with less regard to the effect that it had on the beneficiaries.

It is therefore suggested (Aryeetey, 2006) that the government’s action was tantamount to the view that deprivation of the majority is necessary so that the wealth of a few is made possible. It is probably in a similar consideration that Galeano (1997:215) argues that “in order that a few may consume still more, many must continue to consume still less”. The failure of the system in attacking the manipulative causes of poverty, as seen in the narration above, turns to fight instead, the poor, “while the dominant culture, a militarised culture ...worships the violence of power” as (Galeano, 1997:216) argues on, as the system is manipulated through corrupt practices and pillaging the resources of the poor. The rural poor look up to government to provide services fundamental to their well-being (Narayan, et al, 2000:266); instead, government actions do not empower the very people looking up to it. Empowerment

does not condone oppressive and deceptive government. It does not involve an oppressive exercise of power but it mobilises productive government machinery that produces maximal opportunities for a moral self-governments as Quaghebeur and Masschelein (2003:7) point out. The impression given underscores the steaming desire for money for other activities and it does not matter how it is acquired.

It is arguably clear, that money has become the sole measure of value and its acquisition is advancing policies that are deepening social and environmental disintegration everywhere. Money, it is argued, “champions the values that demean the human spirit, it assumes an imaginary world divorced from reality, and it is restructuring our institutions of governance in ways that make most fundamental problems more difficult to resolve. Yet to question its doctrine has become virtual heresy, invoking risk of professional censure and damage to one’s career in most institutions of business, government, and academia” (Korten, 1995:69). It is therefore suggestive that corrupt practices, of course, could not be discussed with third parties, such as the mass of the people in the view of gathering public opinion on matters that would not be the primary objective, even though the donors gave funding for the purpose that was not to be. In this consideration, White (in Cooke and Kothari, 2001:132) comments, “what began as a political issue is translated into a technical problem which the development enterprise can accommodate with barely a falter in its stride”. By *falter in its stride*, White implies the weakening of the pace and actions of government towards the poor owing to a continuous subversion of public funds meant for the development of the poor rural people into unplanned projects based on political interest.

It is suggested (Korten, 1995:68) that the model of socio-economic development paraded by government and other development actors in developing countries is fashioned beyond the aspirations of the poor. Von Lieres (1999:140) argues that grassroots politics must go “beyond the dominant western liberal conception as an individual bearer of rights and include a wide range of more substantive contents” that would embrace the realities of the poor. Korten (1995:250) observes, “Western-styled development has created a void in their self-perceptions and a greed for material wealth. The more government becomes involved in village activities for the sake of development, the less, villagers feel inclined to help themselves”. This is to say community members are more likely not to consider whatever development initiative planted or given them as worthy enough to be theirs and so would not bother to care for it as much as they would have done if they had been involved in the process from the very beginning.

This by no means implies that the rural poor do not accept change. On the contrary, the community poor who are beneficiaries of development programmes do not refuse to accept change. The change they want is one which can help them to enhance their inborn and cultural capacities: change that “could leave

them free to change the rules and the contents of change, according to their own culturally defined ethics and aspirations” (Rahnema, 1997:384). In the light of this, one would agree with Hall and Midgley (2004:5) when making reference to Murray, that public assistance (in this case government support) exacerbates the problems that such support is intended to solve and subsequently leads to the creation of a “permanent, poor underclass”. In other words, the poor continue to be poor because they look to receiving support at all times instead of striving on their own in the way that is most suitable to meet their needs.

It is in this consideration that Neubert (2000:10) concludes, “If the population could decide on development activities on its own, it would avoid the failures made by development planners”. With participation, maladapted decisions are hindered and pave the chance for increased sound solutions. The scope of sharing of experiences and the possibility of adopting bad decisions in the interest of poverty alleviation will be minimised with the participation of the target people, the community. As Narayan, et al (2000:212) rightly note, “Poor people know their needs, problems and priorities”. What the poor need is partnership and inclusion, not development hampers.

The collective sustainability of poverty reduction programmes in rural communities is not only for the poor and excluded communities but also for the relatively fast developing and not yet excluded. This process depends on creating an institutional and value framework that advances the restoration of inclusion and community ingenuity in all aspects of the programming phase, that is, identification, implementation and evaluation.

Rural poverty is not overcome by the pro-poor donations that the community members receive alone, but includes concerted involvement of the target group in participating in the decisions that affect them most. The former Tanzanian President, Julius Nyerere argues, “If the people are able to develop they must have power. They must be able to control their own activities within the framework of their village communities.... and participate not just in the physical labour involved in economic development but also in the planning of it and the determination of priorities” (Hope, 1996:104). Projects of genuine social and economic value are most likely to be identified, planned and developed if rural people are given the opportunity to play a decisive role in choosing them. In similar view Korten (1995:262) argues that “healthy societies depend on healthy, empowered local communities that build caring relationships among people and help us connect to a particular piece of the living earth with which our lives are intertwined. Such societies must be built through local-level action, household-by-household and community-by-community. Yet we have created an institutional and cultural context that

disempowers the local and makes action difficult, if not impossible". Rahnema (1993:128) thinks that in a situation where change is "disregarded or artificially served from it, organised forms of participation or mobilisation either serve illusory purposes, or lead to superficial and fragmented achievements or no lasting impact on people's lives". These concerns imply that in cases where people's involvement in poverty reduction programmes is perceived as faked in order to gain either financial support or satisfy donor conditions could imprint a distorted, non-purposive and negative impact in the minds of the community members.

According to the World Bank (2001:108-112), the failure in development programming is clearly attributed to lack of political will and/or skill in fostering pro-poor political coalitions. The question is why is the government not willing to fulfil their political promises to the people who brought it to power? According to Korten (1995:266), "professional charities have even made money the measure of our compassion". Defining poverty in terms of the creation of wealth, development organisations become entrapped in a downward spiral of increasing the alienation of the poor from living and from creating a development consciousness in them. As Heller (2001:152-158) notes, neither the state nor any development agent can be an actor for a "sustained transformative projects", rather what is required is an "ecology of agents" that blends "the institutional capacities of the state and the associational resources of civil society".

By training the poor on inclusion in development programmes to uplift their livelihoods, development actors tend to make the poor seem as if their purpose is to consume rather than contribute to or create the goods for consumption (Rahman, 1993:213). It is therefore necessary to adhere to Hope's warning that "unless efforts are made to widen participation, development will interfere with man's quest for esteem and freedom from manipulation" (1996:104). Hope argues in the affirmative for optimum participation by community members in development programmes and to make it a cardinal strategy in the planning process. This will avoid the selfish sentiments and manipulative activities of "people who can" (McKay and Aryeetey, 2004:44) phenomenon.

The policy implementers and development actors are the knowledge-makers (Calas and Smircich, 1999:649). As knowledge-makers, it is questioned (Hall, Gillette and Tandon, in Reason and Bradbury, 2001:6; Ansa, 2006:7) whether development interventionists can be neutral and disinterested on matters of community participation, and follow a specific political process institutionalised in favour of the privileged. The privileged in other words, refers to the powers or sponsors behind the initiatives of development activities. According to Rappaport (1985:20-1), "government need neither be the enemy

(as conservatives argue) nor the solution (as the liberals argue). Rather, government can provide resources, listen and monitor for equity". The notion of equality does not imply consensus but a reflection on equal terms the values and aspirations of the people, which underpin the democratic interaction (Hickey and Mohan, 2003:40) among community beneficiaries and pro-poor initiators.

Cooke (2001:107) argues that cultural values, individual propensity for risk taking and diffusion of responsibility account for risky and imagined shift in the attitudinal dynamics of community members' participation in development. Cooke's assertion suggests that while individuals would enhance their level of prestige and cultural identity in the larger group by taking risk in either accepting or not and influencing the larger group to follow suit, the actual sharing of responsibility within the larger community means that individual accountability for a given decision is blurred. In a sense, community participatory phenomenon tends to confuse rather than empower the people in defining their needs and being part of the solution. In a similar view, Cooke and Kothari (2001:1) question whether the phenomenon of participatory development in donor-driven programmes and projects can actually be considered participatory. To them, participatory development facilitates tyranny as it "employs illegitimate and /or unjust exercise of power" instead of increasing the "involvement of socially and economically marginalised peoples in decision-making over their lives" (Guijt, 1998:1). Yet, this recognition and support that participatory development was and has been intended, for the greater involvement of local people's perspectives, knowledge, priorities and skills, as an alternative to donor-driven and outsider-led development may be far from the actual. The community poor people find themselves only as workers in a community project instead of owners of such supposed pro-poor intervention. Cooke and Kothari describe this scenario as a form of "promoting and perpetuating the received wisdom" (2001:1).

However, Cooke (2001:108) argues that imagined and risky shift are probabilities and have to be set against the claims made for participation as a means, possibly for it being effective in analysis, planning and action, and as empowerment, in the sense of giving people control over their own development needs. He questions whether "participants control increases when they are put into a situation leading them to commit to more risky decisions than otherwise would have been the case?" It is suggestive that control of participants may not necessarily increase or decrease for that matter, but in a community based participation, it is argued that participants may not want to lose the resources they assume the interventionists have under their control, or do not want to incur the displeasure of elders, family members or neighbours who have the power to visit real or imagined consequences on them. In this consideration, Chambers (1997:89) argues that in community based participation there is a potential for

practitioner and beneficiary to engage in what he describes as “mutual deception”. Arguably, one is tempted to allude to the Abilene paradox (Cooke, 2001:108-112) which suggests that community participation in pro-poor intervention programmes does not necessarily constitute a remedy; indeed, it suggests that face-to-face interaction between practitioners and beneficiaries can make things worse. The Abilene paradox suggests that those who regard empowerment and control as a way of conscious raising implies that it could lead a “group to say what it is they think you and everyone else want to hear, rather than what they truly believe” (Cooke, 2001:111).

Thus, the implication is that community members who are the direct beneficiaries of pro-poor intervention programmes may fall short of their level of analysis, planning and evaluation or even their commitment if they collude to make decisions they know are wrong and dangerous for the realisation of the common interest.

One of the ideological premises of the community in pro-poor intervention programmes is that community participation is investment in people (Chambers, 2005), which in itself is productive by nature. This is because, it increases the size of the divergent views, enriches the pool of common decisions, adds to the net well being of society, and therefore is of potential benefit to everyone involved. In a healthy development policy framework, investment in human beings is productive. However, in cases where community participation is only on paper, it becomes counter-productive. Participation of community members contributes to enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of investment and promotes the processes of democratisation and empowerment (Clever, 2001:36).

It is therefore argued that the understanding of participatory development does not signify a “reified existence out there, but is constructed by a cadre of development professionals, be they academics, practitioners or policy makers, whose ability to create and sustain this discourse is indicative of the power they possess” (Cooke and Kothari, 2001:15). This calls to mind questions such as Chambers “whose reality counts?” (1997), which suggest that there are contrasting versions of reality which actually define the applications of the ideas of participatory development and who still are engaged in constructing a particular reality. Stirrat (1997) describes this form of participation “neo-colonialist”. Stirrat fears stems from the fact expressed in Chamber’s “whose reality counts” where it is suggested that the development practitioners attempt to justify their existence and the reasons behind their interventions by constructing a particular form of reality. A reality, it is assumed to suggest that poor community members of the world are victims of a disciplinary bias as they engage in the participatory process.

2.8 Community participation and development

The theoretical debates of the 1970s led to an increasing concern among some alternative development theorists such as Paulo Freire. This concern was fully adopted by the ILO in 1976 during their formulation of their basic needs approach (Burkey, 1993:30-31). According to this group of theorists, development is identified largely in relationship to physical assets and the continuous flow of both economic and social goods and services including healthy living standards, human development and job creation (Catholic Relief services, 2005:6), and include a healthy belief system, literacy rate, the availability of choice and the ability to make informed choices (Wombeogo, 2005:117). However, manoeuvres by community members through their collective self-identity reflect deep conceptualisations of popular aspirations, such as taking control of what they need, being active doers and not only participants in their own search for life and building of a peaceful and mutual community, are also viewed as authentic development processes. Rahman (1993:134) enquires whether “people mobilising themselves, inquiring, deciding and taking initiatives of their own to meet their felt needs, is only to be regarded as a matter of the means of development and not as an end in itself”. In other words Rahman views the little contribution of community members in the development process as concrete ends and not only means or tools to achieving results. Put differently, the process of participation and the resulting levels of empowerment are seen to be more important than the actual product.

The proceeding paragraphs discuss the need for community participation in pro-poor intervention programmes in general and in the northern sector of Ghana in particular.

2.9 The need for community participation in pro-poor intervention programmes

Community participation in poverty reduction programmes makes them construct meaning of their own life worlds. According to Romm (1996:162), “the sociological focus on the way that humans construct meaning does not imply dissolution of the social structure into so-called micro processes of social interaction between persons. Rather, it implies an insistence that everything in society - from developing computers to adaptation to drought - is rooted in the fact that people construct their life-worlds by assigning meaning to their world”. In other words unlike animals whose world is ready made and their responses to the world environment are instinctively driven “there is no ready-made world for humans” (Coetzee & Graaff, 1996:162).

The way and manner the world environment should look like and what a given community space can provide for its inhabitants, comes about through a life-long creation by the people with a firm determination to be part of its history. Community developmental processes should maintain a character

of inclusion, taking into consideration the socio-cultural reality of the people (Thirlwall, 2002:43; Ayaga, 2000:28). The need to include community members in poverty reduction programming and implementation raises an issue of quality acceptability and meaning, which has been subject to divergent views. McIntyre (1995:217) argues that for a better qualitative relationship in participatory development, development actors should employ the “dialogical interventionist approach”, that means an approach that is characterised by the process of dialogue. McIntyre views dialogical encounter as a bolster to social justice that would create what he describes as a “fairer” route to the development of human and social relations.

Speaking of dialogue, Hölscher and Romm (in Coetzee & Graaff, 1996:162) suggest that the fundamental feature of the consciousness of “*Homo Dialogicus*” is the ability to accept and come to terms with opposing constructive views. Failure to come to terms with opposition, Hölscher and Romm (in Coetzee & Graaff, 1996:162) opine, “leads to rigidification of human existence”. Put differently, failure to accept opposition makes humans seem like animals or even inanimate objects whose world is created for them without their active participation in doing so. Accordingly, unless development assistance and policy reforms are informed by local realities and the people who experience them daily in their strides to alleviating poverty, the tendency may be that it will not be successful or sustainable (Middlemiss, 2009:56, La Voy, 2006:1). Therefore, community participation in anti-poverty programmes describes both the end and the means; both the kind of results sought, and the way that providers of development and humanitarian assistance, must nurture in order to create a positive impression on the lives of the community beneficiaries.

In the words of Yunus (1996:104), “all people are endowed with incredible potential. But for the poor and the small producers this potential remains unexplored”. The point of Yunus seeks to magnify the challenge that local poor people’s participation in development interventions is often ignored particularly in programmes meant for them. Therefore, the local talents that could have been tapped to give the programme a good and acceptable finish is lost to neglect. Castells (2000:17) views the neglect of community members in development activities as a denial of information. Accordingly, Castells maintains that “information and knowledge have always been critical components of economic growth, and the evolution of technology has indeed largely determined the productive capacity of society and standards of living, as well as social forms of economic organisations”. Taking a cue from Castells assertion, it means that poor community participation in poverty reduction programmes can be as a result of poor information flow from the development practitioners to the community members.

In his view, Yunus maintains that, poverty has come not as a result of the poor. Rather, the institutions and policies that the opinion leaders, such as governments and non-governmental organisations built around humanity have created it. Accordingly, Yunus (1996:104) cautions that “unless these [policies] are redesigned and alternative institutions and policies are made, poverty will continue to flourish”.

A close examination of the macroeconomic and structural adjustment policy contents of poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) of Ghana from 1996-2009 shows that there is no fundamental departure from a kind of policy framework one may describe as a poverty consensus talk show. In the sense that current policy advice continues to contain elements of strategic options towards poverty reduction and economic reforms designed to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, but all these pieces of advice have not made up for the shortcomings in socio-economic policies towards poverty reduction (UNDP, 2003), rather poverty promotion or poverty that flourishes Yunus (1996:104).

There are clear limits to what policy aspirations of the poor can contribute directly to the formulation of effective poverty reduction strategy. The poor tends to understand their own context and often takes options to meet their alternative needs. When the poor are given alternatives and positive encounters with development authorities, they consider their participation as well recognised. In this consideration, UNCTAD (2002:15) recommends that “the aspirations of the poor should be translated into the actual formulation of economic policies through a viable system of representative democracy” in all developmental programmes. By a viable system of representative democracy, one is tempted to think in the direction of a working form of leadership where voices and opinions from all shades of people count. This is the ideal. However, information on the ground at the community level, and perhaps at national level does not seem to suggest that this form of idealism exists. It is the opinions of those who wield power and responsibility at the community that matter most and seem to have very little on democracy.

Accordingly, the current approach emphasising poverty reduction appears to be based on the premise that good, well developed poverty reduction papers and their rapid integration into the global economy through donor agencies, hold the key to fast and sustained reduction to poverty and economic growth. Domestic policies are not only determining factors of resource generation needed for rapid accumulation of wealth and the eradication of poverty. They also depend on external donor constraints and conditionality. Crucial to government approach to poverty reduction in rural communities of northern Ghana is the difficulty of reconciling country ownership and community participation. In other words, when projects are initiated by either the central government or through the local government subsidiary, there seems to be a tendency to claim ownership of such a project in line with the donor source, where

the necessary funds were acquired to realise the project's establishment and completion. A clear example is a public toilet in Nadowli one of the study areas, where the government agency labels on the walls "GoG HIPC benefit", without any recourse to the toil and sweat of the community members. The community expected the project to be named "Nadowli HIPC benefit project" instead. This is particularly important where conditions are attached to aid and debt reduction in Ghana. Some of these conditions attached to aid include the heavily indebted poor countries initiative (HIPC) and structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). According to the World Bank (2001:82), "heavily indebted countries in Africa spend more than a third of their national budgets on debt service and less than a tenth on basic social services". To reverse this scenario, UNCTAD (2002:26) suggests that current spending on poverty reduction programmes should be raised without incurring increases in debt. In other words, government has to generate more resources internally to increase expenditure and reduce borrowing from donor countries in order to minimise poverty levels. This will subsequently reduce its accumulated debt burden.

In this regard, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2002:9) argues further that progress in international efforts to alleviate poverty will depend on how international cooperation is able to resolve the problems associated with protectionism, aid and debt as to improve domestic policies, institutions and governance in developing areas. The underlying reasons are that these issues have not been properly addressed.

The poor are not necessarily asking for alms or handouts. They are asking for similar opportunities, such as good drinking water, affordable health and education services, credit schemes and jobs, prevailing in the towns and cities and enjoyed by other segments of the society. To make this request realistic, donor countries and benevolent others, had in June 2005 written off 100 percent of the debt of Ghana along with seventeen other African poorer countries (Daily Graphic, June 2005). The money that would have gone towards servicing debt should now be used to uplift the conditions of life and work of the poor in the deprived rural communities and should be done with the participation of the community members and according to their needs at the present time. All policies endorsed at local, national and international level for the poor must empower and not ignore them. The poor and the rural dwellers are often regarded as the bottom people, yet these rural people are potentially the engines of sustainable economic and political progress and stakeholders in civil society.

Escobar (1995:6) sees development as a cultural space. In other words, "development is a space for the interplay of cultures, practices and values. Through this interplay, development's meanings emerge and

shape those who are located within this space” (Leroke, 1996:237). What is hardly noticed is the power of culture (or the way of life of the people) (Akerkar, 2001:5-6; Jolly, 2002:7) when development and relief agents view the poor. Majority of outsiders who work in the communities often view the traditions and culture of rural community members, particularly in northern Ghana as remote and unproductive (Wombeogo, 2005:125). Some of the development actors only realise how important it would have been if the culture and opinions of the people were sought, when the programme has already failed and possibly created an uneasy space for the participants (Kelly, 2003:2). It is therefore very important for development administrators and relief agents to have faith in the capabilities of each individual member in the communities in which they work. Yunus (1996:104) concludes, “let us accept the fact that each human being is capable of ensuring his or her human dignity if we only create supportive environment” or “safe spaces” as Kelly (2003:2) views it, to allow such talents to be put to use. This is an indication that people should be given the opportunity to participate in taking decisions that affect them.

2.10 Indigenous knowledge and practice of participation in community development in northern Ghana

Indigenous knowledge according to Millar, Apusigah and Boonzaaijer (2008) refers to local or home-grown knowledge and practice that have evolved over the years and have been handed down from generation to generation through apprenticeship and oral tradition. In other words, it is knowledge and practice from within the people themselves. Indigenous knowledge and practice (IKP) seeks to embrace rural people’s own development efforts recognised and integrated with outside know-how and resources.

Rural people in Ghana participate in the development enterprise in their communities in several respects. Some of these aspects include education on health issues, good governance, labour during infrastructural development activities, food security and socialisation of the family and society, among others (Bruce, 2009). Agricultural production is the main occupation of the rural population of northern Ghana; some strategies are put in place aimed at increasing production and incomes in order to contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable food security for rural households. In this vein, rural people participate in training and activities that are provided to increase their awareness on new techniques of agricultural production.

Participation of rural people in the development activities of their communities means the involvement of all the people (Chambers, 2006, Mefalopulos, 2008,). Millar, Apusigah and Boonzaaijer (2008) see it as those whose basic needs and aspirations depend on the decisions about the availability of resources and entitlement to such needs. Participatory development includes equitable sharing and control,

division of labour, common sharing of development resources, a common platform for decision making, taking responsibility and being accountable to all the community needs.

In addition, the involvement of community members in good governance is highly pronounced in Ghana (Gbedemah, Jones and Pereznieta, 2010) in general and northern Ghana in particular. In as much as Ghana is a nation state and governed through a president and state parliament, the traditional organisation of its people is based on ethnic, kinship lines and social relations, which continue to grow from strength to strength against modern forms of governance (Nugunya, 2009). These social relations define the instinctive communal resource management patterns and group decision making processes (Millar, et al, 2008) of the people. In all rural communities of Ghana, the traditional system runs side by side the formal democratic systems of governance (Aryeetey, 2006). For instance, the area councils and district assemblies on one hand and the traditional system of government on the other, work hand-in-hand in the service of the people within their respective catchment areas. Though the people pay allegiance to central government and its grassroots branches, more attention of the people is paid to the traditional governments as they are closer to the people than the formal democratic systems.

Furthermore, traditional health delivery system has a holistic approach (Emeagwali, 2003) which is largely explored by community clientele to uncover some mystic reasons behind the health-illness continuum and successes of some people and not everyone. In other words, traditional medicine goes beyond the boundaries of the physical body into the spiritual. This implies that traditional medicine is in contrast to bio-medicine, which views the body in its individual parts and in terms of health and disease continuum. Unlike bio-medicine, African traditional medicine views the body in a mind-body-spirit continuum where health and disease systems are dealt with using holistic strategies that offer, to a considerable extent, multiple treatments (Assimeng, 2010). Several techniques in use by rural people in Ghana include all culturally specific and psychologically important manoeuvres, such as hydrotherapy, heat therapy, spinal manipulation; quarantine, bone-setting and minor surgical procedures. Incantations and other devices of psychotherapeutic dimensions are often applied (Boonzaaijer and Apusigah, 2008:49). These forms of traditional people's participation in the health delivery process contribute significantly in the development agenda of northern Ghana in particular and other parts of Ghana in general.

The hope of generating development dynamism in Ghana therefore, is through stimulation of local people to mobilise social energy and resources that will draw community initiative and provide

complementary skills in planning and execution of development programmes. The next points delve into community mobilisation and development.

2.11 Summary of theoretical framework reviewed

This section is a summary of the theoretical framework reviewed in this study under chapter two. As a background, the literature captures the historical perspectives of participation dating back from the 1950s (Chowdhury, in Middlemiss, 2009) through the 1970s (McNamara, 1973:26), under point, 2.2. “Participation was seen as a tool towards “empowerment” (Narayan, 2002:14), “good governance” (Laderchi, 2001:3) and “conscientisation” (Freire, 1997:70). Participation as a concept has varied understanding by different scholars in the subject matter. The theory espouses two main explanations to it. These include (Tufte and Mefapulos, 2009:4), define participation as the mobilization of people to eliminate unjust hierarchies of knowledge, power, and economic distribution while Mefalopulos, (2008:54) define it as the reach and inclusion of inputs by relevant groups in the design and implementation of a development project. These examples bring out two main approaches to participation: *a social movement perspective* and *a project-based or institutional perspective*. These perspectives signify participation as the involvement of ordinary people in a development process towards change. However, no consensus exists on a common definition of participation as it varies depending on which perspective is applied.

Criticism on participation has been around the fact that consistency in approach cannot be assumed across all aspects of the participatory process in terms of ideas initiation, planning, implementation and evaluation and therefore masks the heterogeneity evident in its realisation in practice (Amanda, 2000:1). This is because decision-making control is more theoretical than practical with the common belief by development interventionists that this can reach the grassroots levels through participation.

In addition to the above paragraphs are goals of participation. These goals are empowerment, political and voice goals (Narayan, 2006, point 2.4.1). The literature discusses participation process and the various types of participation such as passive, active and consultative participation, among others. Further to this, the stages of participatory development are discussed. These stages are research, design, implementation and evaluation stages (Tufte and Mefapulos, 2009) and are described under point 2.4.2.

The literature discusses participatory tools in community participation process. Four main tools namely PRA, PPA, PLA, PAR have been explained in detail under point 2.5.3. The application and uses of these

tools in the participatory discourse for effective community participation in development interventions are equally explained in detail under each tool. Participatory methodologies such as popular theatres, role plays, REFLECT, planning for real, stepping stones, appreciative inquiry and training for transformation are well explained in the theory. Significantly, the theory looks at the need for public participation in pro-poor interventions at the community level. Examples are that participation is a means that focuses on its ability to stimulate people to deliver more effective development and participation leads to better planning, implementation, monitoring, investigation, training and action.

The reality of community participation is, as Neubert (2000:10) puts it, “If the population could decide on development activities on its own, it would avoid the failures made by development planners”. Community members own decisions on what they want and how they want it done or achieved can play a significant role in meeting community needs more effectively and efficiently.

Furthermore, there is need for community participation in pro-poor intervention programmes. Rahman (1993:134) sees the contribution of community members in the development process as concrete ends and not only means or tools to achieving results. Thus, making them to construct meaning of their own life worlds and better qualitative relationship in participatory development, which enhances dialogue and learning togetherness. These tenets when not explored by development actors, can lead to loss of local talents that would have been tapped to give the programme a good and acceptable finish. This form of neglect is viewed as a denial of information to the community members participating in development activities (Castells, 2000:17).

Finally, community members employ indigenous knowledge and practice of participation in community development in northern Ghana, (details under point 2.10).

The next paragraph is a conclusion to chapter two.

2.12 Conclusion

Whether considered selectively or collectively, the analysis in this chapter suggest that there are limitations to community zeal to be totally involved in development activities in their local communities on one hand and what can be achieved through participatory development on the other hand. The chapter argues that community participation in development programmes enhances local peoples’ control and enhances ownership. Besides, participation promotes a sense of dignity and fulfilment within the individual and legitimises programme plans, actions and leadership among the participants. With this at the background, this chapter equally suggests that it is not completely true that community based participation can achieve that much. Indeed, participation can be tyrannical and non productive.

So far, the discussions in the broad lines of participatory development taking into consideration the arguments for and the descending fears of participation calls for a local level of situational analysis of rural poverty and various attempts made to address it as pertains in Ghana. Thus chapter 3 discusses the situational context of Ghana poverty issues and the developmental interventions put in place and implemented and aimed at addressing such challenges.

CHAPTER 3

GHANA: A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF POVERTY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter traces Ghana's poverty trends with a special focus on its economic transition and social welfare from the 1990s. The chapter provides a platform for further discussion on the general poverty characteristics of Ghana and an in-depth analysis of the poverty situation in each region. It is suggestive that rural poverty is still a pervasive phenomenon particularly for the savannah belt of Ghana. The reason for the poverty incidence along the savannah belt of Ghana is that the three regions involved (Upper East, Upper West and Northern) are benefiting little from Ghana's economic growth and poverty reduction experience of the 1990s (Nkum, in Wombeogo, 2005). This chapter uses households⁹ rather than population to describe poverty intricacies. It is generally assumed that the head of the household is the manager of the household who ensures that the needs and wellbeing of members are addressed satisfactorily. It is based on this assumption that heads of households are considered key when analysing issues at the micro level (Mote, 2005:29). Generally, rural households tend to be larger than urban ones and male-headed households larger than female-headed ones. As we delve deeper into the various paragraphs and sections of the chapter the relevance of household and household headed families are discussed in relations to poverty distribution in Ghana. For a start, the chapter looks at the economic trends in Ghana and how that translates into poverty distribution and its impacts on people. This is followed by the general overview of poverty in Ghana and the perspectives of the nature of poverty and suffering in Ghana as indicated in the proceeding paragraphs.

3.2 Economic Development since Independence

At independence, Ghana had a substantial physical and social infrastructure and \$481 million in foreign reserves. The Nkrumah government further developed the infrastructure and made important public investments in the industrial sector. With assistance from the United States, the World Bank, and the United Kingdom, construction of the Akosombo Dam was completed on the Volta River in 1966. Two U.S. companies built VALCO, Africa's largest aluminium smelter, to use power generated at the dam (Ghana Government, 1995). Aluminium exports from VALCO used to be a major source of foreign exchange for Ghana. The plant, which closed for production in May 2003, was sold to the Government of Ghana in October 2004, and subsequently reopened on a reduced scale in September 2005. This was

⁹Households in this context refers to a person or group of persons living together in the same house or compound, sharing the same housekeeping arrangements and being catered for as one unit.

because the then government could not raise the needed financial support to engage in large scale production (SEND-Ghana, 2010).

Drawing inferences from the work done since independence on the development agenda of Ghana by the then governments, one is at a lost whether Ghana as a country drew any economic benefit from companies such as the VALCO to enhance both rural and urban development to benefit the larger populace. The Volta Aluminium company was sold to Ghana only in 2004 from its inception. This happened when the initial owners, for that matter, thought they were no longer making profits possibly due to rising cost of electricity, the erratic electricity supply and / or government interferences. The factory was closed down at first as earlier indicated and later turned around and sold to the government of Ghana. The falling cocoa prices and the fast depletion of the country's foreign exchange reserves, made the government to resort to supplier credits to finance many projects. By the mid-1960s, Ghana's reserves were gone, and the country could not meet repayment schedules. The National Liberation Council responded by abandoning unprofitable projects and selling some inefficient state-owned enterprises to private investors (SEND-Ghana, 2010). On three occasions, Ghana's creditors agreed to reschedule repayments due on Nkrumah-era supplier credits. Led by the United States, foreign donors provided import loans to enable the foreign exchange-strapped government to import essential commodities (SEND-Ghana, 2007). It seems that the US government at the time of Nkrumah, though played a significant part in mitigating the economy of Ghana, had a deep imprint on the hardships in the mid-1960s. In addition, the US government seemed to have aided the subsequent overthrow of Osaegyafu Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana in 1966 through a military coup d'état (Bureau of African Affairs, USA Embassy, Ghana, 2006).

Aryeetey and Fosu (2003) documented that from 1969 -1972, Prime Minister Busia's government liberalized controls to attract foreign investment and to encourage domestic entrepreneurship. Investors were cautious, however, and cocoa prices declined again while imports surged, precipitating a serious trade deficit. Despite considerable foreign assistance and some debt relief, the Busia regime also was unable to overcome the inherited restraints on growth posed by the debt burden, balance-of-payments imbalances, foreign exchange shortages, and mismanagement (Aryeetey, 2006).

Although foreign aid helped to prevent economic collapse and the subsequent improvements in many sectors of the economy, this did not immediately result into growth (CDD-Ghana, 2008). The economy stagnated in the 10-year period preceding the National Revolutionary Council (NRC) takeover in 1972. Population growth turned upside down the modest increases in gross domestic product. Consequently,

real earnings declined for many Ghanaians during the period as a result of the coup d'états and the subsequent unrest during the period (SEND-Ghana, 2007). To restructure the economy, the NRC, under General Acheampong (1972-78), undertook an austerity programme that emphasized self-reliance, particularly in food production. These plans were not realised, however, primarily because of post-1973 oil price increases and a drought in 1975-77 that particularly affected northern Ghana. The NRC, which had inherited foreign debts of almost \$1 billion, abrogated existing rescheduling arrangements for some debts and rejected other repayments. After creditors objected to this unilateral action, a 1974 agreement rescheduled the medium-term debt on liberal terms. The NRC also imposed the Investment Policy Decree of 1975, effective, January 1977, which required 51 percent of Ghanaian equity participation in most foreign firms, but the government took 40 percent in specified industries, while many shares were sold directly to the public (Aryeetey and Fosu, 2003).

Continued mismanagement of the economy, record inflation (more than 100 percent in 1977), and increasing corruption, notably at the highest political levels, led to growing dissatisfaction among the people of Ghana. The post-July 1978 military regime led by General Akuffo attempted to deal with Ghana's economic problems by making small changes in the overvalued Cedi and by restraining government spending and monetary growth. Under a one-year standby agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in January 1979, the government promised to undertake economic reforms, including a reduction of the budget deficit, in return for a \$68 million IMF support programme and \$27 million in IMF Trust Fund loans. The agreement became inoperative, until after the June 4 coup that brought Flight Lieutenant Rawlings and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) to power for 4 months (DASF, 2005).

In September 1979, the civilian government of Hilla Limann inherited declining per capita income, stagnant industrial and agricultural production due to inadequate imported supplies, shortages of imported and locally produced goods, a sizable budget deficit (almost 40 percent of expenditures in 1979), high inflation (Ayemadu, 2010), "moderating" to 54 percent in 1979, an increasingly overvalued Cedi, flourishing smuggling and other black-market activities, high unemployment, particularly among urban youth, deterioration in the transport network, and continued foreign exchange constraints (Bureau of African Affairs, USA Embassy, Ghana, 2006).

Limann's People's National Party (PNP) government announced yet another (2-year) reconstruction programme, emphasizing increased food production, exports, and transport improvements (Aryeetey and Fosu, 2003). Import austerity was imposed and external payments arrears cut. However, cocoa

production and prices fell, while oil prices soared. According to Aryeetey (2006), there were no effective measures taken to reduce rampant corruption and black marketing at the time. This idea of black marketing was a form of buying and selling under cover and attracted prices far above stipulated government rates, hence the businesses done in secret.

When Rawlings again seized power at the end of 1981, cocoa output had fallen to half the 1970/71 level and its world price to one-third the 1975 level. By 1982, oil constituted half of Ghana's imports, while overall trade contracted greatly. Internal transport had slowed to a crawl, and inflation remained high. During Rawlings' first year as head of state, the economy remained stagnant (Aryeetey, 2006). Industry ran at about 10 percent of capacity due to the chronic shortage of foreign exchange to cover the importation of required raw materials and replacement parts. Economic conditions deteriorated further in early 1983 when Nigeria expelled an estimated 1 million Ghanaians who had to be absorbed by Ghana's ailing economy (Hutchful, 2002). All these economic challenges were partly due to mismanagement of economic resources, poor salaries to civil servants, causing a massive drift of skilled human resources to Europe and the USA, among others.

In April 1983, in coordination with the IMF, the PNDC launched an economic recovery programme, perhaps the most stringent and consistent of its days in Africa, aimed at reopening infrastructure bottlenecks and reviving moribund productive sectors, such as agriculture, mining, and timber. The largely distorted exchange rate and prices were realigned to encourage production and exports. The government imposed fiscal and monetary discipline to curb inflation. Through November 1987, the Cedi was devalued by more than 6,300 percent, and widespread direct price controls were substantially reduced (Manuh, Gariba and Budu, 2007:20-21).

The economy's response to these reforms was initially hampered by the absorption of one million returnees from Nigeria, compounded by the decline of foreign aid and the onset of the worst drought since independence, which brought on widespread bushfires and forced closure of the aluminium smelter and severe power cuts. In 1985, the country absorbed an additional hundred thousand (100,000) expellees from Nigeria. In 1987, cocoa prices declined again; however, infrastructure repairs, improved weather, and producer incentives and external support revived output. During 1984-88 the economy experienced solid growth for the first time since 1978. Renewed exports, aid inflows, and a foreign exchange auction eased hard currency constraints (Hutchful, 2002).

Since an initial August 1983 IMF standby agreement, the economic recovery programme, supported by three IMF standbys and two other credits totalling \$611 million, as well as \$1.1 billion from the World Bank, and hundreds of millions of dollars more from other donors, brought relief to the economy of Ghana (World Bank, 2000). In November 1987, the IMF approved a \$318-million, 3-year extended fund facility. The second phase (1987-90) of the recovery programme concentrated on economic restructuring and revitalizing social services. The third phase (which began in March 1998) focused on financial transparency and macroeconomic stability. Despite all these external financial support, Ghana's economy saw very little upward growth (Manuh, et al, 2007:20).

Ghana opted to seek debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) programme in March 2001 and reached a decision point in February 2002. Ghana, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank Group's International Development Association (IDA) agreed in February 2002 to support a comprehensive debt reduction package for Ghana under the enhanced HIPC Initiative (IDA, 2002). Ghana reached HIPC completion point in July 2004 and total relief from all of Ghana's creditors will be approximately \$3.5 billion in over 20 years' period (SEND-Ghana, 2010). The Government of Ghana, working with multilateral lending institutions, developed a detailed plan to use funds made available through debt relief under the enhanced HIPC Initiative for increased expenditures on education and health programmes to improve services and infrastructure in the rural sector, and improved governance. This saw a 20 percent increase in the "enrolment of 6-11 year old pupils between 2004 and 2006" and a narrowing disparities in primary enrolment rates between the most "deprived districts and others" on one hand and "between male and female pupils' enrolment" on the other hand being a component of the Multi donor budget support (MDBS) programme (CDD/ODI Briefing Paper, 2007). A portion of the relief will be used to further reduce the heavy burden of domestic public debt. As part of the agreed plan, Ghana in 2002 and 2003 raised electricity, fuel, and municipal water rates to market prices, and took additional revenue-enhancing measures (such as, more taxes) to stabilize its fiscal position. In addition, Ghana raised pump prices for gasoline, kerosene, and diesel in February 2005. According to Darlan and Anani (2005), a key goal for the government remains oil sector deregulation.

In August 2006, Chief Executive Officer of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Ambassador John Danilovich and the then Ghanaian Minister for Public Sector Reform Papa Kwesi Nduom signed a \$547 million compact, or agreement, between MCC and the Republic of Ghana. The five-year, \$547 million pro-poor grant, the largest to date for the agency, is expected to benefit more than one million Ghanaians and aims to improve the lives of the rural poor by raising farmer incomes through private sector-led agribusiness development (World Bank Group, 2004, UNDP, 2005).

Ghana's stated goals (GoG, 2012; GPRS II, 2005:x) are to accelerate economic growth, improve the quality of life for all Ghanaians, and reduce poverty through macroeconomic stability, higher private investment, broad-based social and rural development, as well as direct poverty-alleviation efforts. These plans have the full support of the international donor community (CDD-Ghana, 2009). Privatization of state-owned enterprises continues, with over 300 of about 350 parastatal enterprises sold to private owners. Other reforms adopted under the government's structural adjustment programme include the elimination of exchange rate controls and the lifting of virtually all restrictions on imports. The establishment of an interbank foreign exchange market has greatly expanded access to foreign exchange.

The government repelled (or dropped by legislation) a 17 percent value-added tax (VAT) shortly after its introduction in 1995 because of widespread public protests. The government reverted to several previously imposed taxes, including a sales tax, and reintroduced a 10 percent VAT in 1998 after an extensive public education campaign (GPRS II, 2005). The VAT was raised to 12.5 percent in 2000. The government added a 2.5 percent National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) levy on top of the VAT in August 2004 (SEND-Ghana, 2009). The expectation of many Ghanaians on the introduction of the NHIS has been a fairer and faster health care service. However, the NHIS is beset with some challenges, such as limitation on the drugs and medications that can be absorbed by it, slow and cumbersome ways of accessing ones particulars at the health facilities before receiving medical attention, narrowing of the scheme to districts and regions of origin or registration and the poor decentralisation process of the NHIS offices throughout the districts of Ghana. This notwithstanding, the scheme is one of the welcoming policies Ghana has had in recent years. In this vein, one might argue that the people of Ghana did not protest against the introduction of another 2.5 percent tax in addition to the 12.5 percent VAT already borne by workers, because of their understanding on the benefits of the NHIS.

Ghana experienced a slow but steady rate of economic growth, despite a decline in the two major export commodities, gold and cocoa in the world market, since the early 1990s. Poverty fell from 52 percent in 1991/1992 to less than 40 percent in 1998/99 (Canagarajah and Pörtner, 2003). Despite this modest fall in the general poverty indicators, poverty continues to be widespread in rural than in urban areas: rural poverty fell from 63.6 to 49.4 percent and urban poverty from 27.7 to 19.4 percent between 1991 and 1999 period (GPRS II, 2005). Although Ghana remains close to the bottom 3rd of the world's poorest countries in the Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme (62/103 in 2005 and 58/102 in 2006 (UNDP, 2007), preliminary findings of the 5th round of the Ghana Living

Standards Survey (GLSS5, 2006) indicate that poverty in Ghana has dropped from 51.7 percent in 1991 to 28.6 percent as at 2006. Over the period poverty incidence declined in eight of the ten regions and increased in two. Accra and the Upper West regions recorded 5 percent and 84 percent poverty incidence respectively in 1999 and this rose to 12 percent and 88 percent respectively by 2006 (GLSS, 2006).

According to CDD-Ghana (2009), Ghana is on its way to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) that is halving poverty by 2015. Despite the seemingly progressive improvements in poverty decline, it has not been uniformly distributed countrywide. The three northern regions, namely, Northern, Upper East and Upper West, (as indicated on the administrative regional map of Ghana below) have experienced virtually no noticeable improvements in wealth creation, but rather seen increases in poverty as compared to the rest of the seven regions of Ghana (Wombeogo, 2005; GLSS5, 2006; World Bank, 2010:55). The World Bank's generalised poverty indicators, show that a third of Ghanaians are estimated as being poor, based on indicators such as expenditure patterns, trading patterns, housing type, access to clean water and sanitation, health, nutrition, education and food security (World Bank, 2010:55). In Ghana, poverty is categorised into upper level and lower level poverty (Canagarajah and Pörtner, 2003). The upper level (the poor) consists of people with incomes of up to 100 US dollars per annum and the lower (the extremely poor) comprises those with incomes below 80 US dollars per annum. About 44 per cent of Ghanaians since 2005 received incomes below the poverty line and about 27 per cent of the population has incomes below the extreme poverty line (GPRS policy, 2001:10; Nkum, in Wombeogo, 2005:21). World Bank (2009), as part of efforts towards Millennium Development Goal (MDG 1) reported that 48 percent of the working population from 15 years plus earned incomes below the extreme poverty bracket.

3.3 General overview of economic trends in Ghana

General economic trends from the 1990s have seen a mixture of characteristics of increasing and decreasing poverty levels in Ghana. Certain areas of Ghana experienced growing and deepening incidence of poverty, with evidence of intensification of vulnerability and exclusion¹⁰ among certain

¹⁰Defining vulnerability and exclusion (GPRS II, 2005) – **Vulnerability** is a state of deprivation based on poverty or lack of enjoyment of other rights and entitlements and hence leads to the exclusion of the disadvantaged groups of men, women and children and persons with disability from active participation. Exclusion on the other hand is a multidimensional word which distinctive features may include inability

social groups in the savannah and transitional zones in northern Ghana and in some coastal areas in Greater Accra and in the Central regions (GPRS II, 2005) of Ghana.

The economic mainstay of Ghana is mainly agricultural, the majority of the workforce engaged in subsistence farming. Cash crops consist primarily of cocoa and cocoa products, which typically provide about two-thirds of export revenue, timber products, coconuts and other palm products, sheanuts (which produce an edible fat), and coffee. Ghana also has established a successful programme of non-traditional agricultural products for export including pineapples, cashews, and pepper. Cassava, yams, plantains, corn, rice, peanuts, millet, and sorghum are the basic foodstuffs. Fish, poultry, and meat also are important dietary staples and widely consumed by all classes of people in Ghana.

Gold, timber, cocoa, diamond, bauxite, and manganese exports are major sources of foreign exchange. An oilfield which is reported to contain up to 3 billion barrels (480,000,000 m³) of light oil was discovered in 2007 (Ofosu-Appiah, 2008) in the Central region of Ghana. Oil exploration is ongoing and, the amount of oil continues to increase. It is anticipated by the government and people of Ghana that the oil find will employ over a million people following its initial harvesting of the first oil in March, 2011 (SEND-Ghana, 2010).

The domestic economy continues to revolve around subsistence agriculture, which accounts for 50% of GDP and employs 85% of the work force, mainly small landholders. On the negative side, public sector wage increases and regional peacekeeping commitments have led to continued inflationary deficit financing, depreciation of the Cedi, and rising public discontent with Ghana's austerity measures (Aryeetey, 2006).

Ghana's industrial base is relatively advanced as compared to many other African countries, (the photograph below depicts a scene of the advancing industrialisation of Ghana's capital, Accra). Industries include textiles, steel (using scrap), tires, oil refining, flour milling, beverages, tobacco, simple consumer goods, and car, truck, and bus assembling plants. Tourism has become one of Ghana's largest foreign income earners, ranking third in 2003 at \$600 million, (Aryeetey and Ofosu, 2003) and the Ghanaian Government has placed great emphasis on further tourism support and development (Aryeetey 2006).

to participate in decision making in political, and socio-economic and cultural affairs; and the inability to compete or participate in an event due to discrimination.

Figure 3.1 Makola Market in Accra



This notwithstanding, one of the most significant influences on the performance of the economy of Ghana in the last decades is derived from the greater interaction between it and other economies mainly through trade and bilateral cooperation between the Ghana Government and other countries such as Malaysia, China, the European Union and the USA, just to mention some of them (World Bank, 2000). The level of cooperation is manifest in the erection of the informal trading hub (the Makola Market as depicted on the picture above), which was variously supported by multinational organisations and partner countries such as China and Malaysia. Globalisation is a major player in the economy and the society of Ghana. However, this influence has been observed not only in the area of external trade only, but includes capital flows, aid, technology transfer, and international migration (SEND-Ghana, 2009). While it might be argued (Imoro, Ahorlu and Koka, 2009) that globalisation, in this context could be a potential source of wealth creation for both rural and urban people for that matter. Some of the reasons deduced include, limited spread of accrued benefits of globalisation to the larger population of Ghana; for instance, jobs created as a result of the global economy gain were limited and linked to the export sector of the economy. This called for a limited view of the globalisation gain to be on technology transfer and absorptive capacity of the local people (Imoro, Ahorlu and Koka, 2009). In a way, this narrowed the interaction between the external sector and the livelihoods of people; a clear example is that of the mining sector, which attracted the largest share of foreign capital inflows (Aryeetey, 2006:2).

It is however worth noting that growth in earnings of the mining and quarrying sectors does not necessarily mean an improvement in the livelihoods of rural mining communities, in the sense that surface mining requires highly specialised skills which many rural communities are deprived of. Many of these skills are recruited outside the mining communities with the community benefiting from only

unskilled jobs with relatively low returns. In addition to the recruitment procedure, as observed by Aryeetey and Fosu (2003) are the negative externalities from mining activities such as environmental and societal effects that affect the people in the rural communities. This, in effect renders the people in the communities more susceptible and vulnerable to poverty. Accordingly, it will not be unreasonable to surmise that mining has led to income inequalities especially in mining communities of Ghana.

It is not clear whether the processes of globalisation can lead to rural impoverishment; however, there is considerable discussion on some possibilities linking globalisation to poverty in this area. Kellick (2000:4) suggests that though difficult to draw clear cut conclusions, “it is nonetheless possible, in principle, to identify a range of channels through which the various aspects of globalisation are liable to change the welfare of the rural poor...” As the processes of global interaction among economic agents gather pace, there is increasing interaction among institutions that either facilitate the growing production interdependence and capital flows or seek to mitigate the consequences of such activity in various communities, observed, Aryeetey (2006). In general, as noted by Aryeetey (2006) on the argument that globalisation and its adverse effects on the poor is based on the fact that the poor are usually not equipped to take advantage of whatever opportunities that are created out of growing trade and capital flows. Considering that globalisation creates both opportunities and risks, it is evident that while the risks may permeate rural societies more readily in view of the sparseness of infrastructure and mechanisms for coping with such risk, their ability to capture the benefits from trade openness could again be compromised by non-preparedness. In other words, they may not be economically, technically competent, technically knowledgeable in the field of trade dynamics and psychologically ready to enter into risk-taking ventures at a given time.

3.4 Rural poverty in Ghana

Poverty in rural Ghana is a serious phenomenon, because most people in rural Ghana, as Ofosu-Appiah (2008) describes it, are living with “poverty that kills”, (this implies endemic poverty in which people suffer lack or shortage of essential commodities for survival such as food, water and shelter year round). This scenario seems entrenched among the people living in the rural environs of Ghana and which seems to have no hope of immediate abatement.

Section 3.5.1 in chapter three of this thesis indicates that 30 percent of the poor in Ghana are in the three northern regions, including the Upper East, Upper West and Northern. If this percentage is anything to go by, then issues on poverty in the three most poverty stricken regions of the north of Ghana need a different approach from the current poverty reduction strategies where funds are sourced from both local

and international financial institutions to support some few projects and hoping that will yield the needed means to deal with the poverty situation of northern Ghana. Accordingly, the government of Ghana has passed into law the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA), which is aimed at offering an alternative approach to dealing with the poverty situation and the underdevelopment nature of that part of the country (SEND-Ghana, 2010). This is intended to provide in a proactive way more resources in order to speed up the needed material and human resources that will mitigate the levels of deprivation.

Poverty in rural northern Ghana is entrenching mass migration of energetic young people into the cities and fuelling lawlessness and violence (SEND-Ghana, 2010). Economic crisis, high inflation, unemployment, lack of credit facilities to engage in productive ventures, and an unpredictable, politically-driven educational system that fails to respond to and meet the needs and aspirations of the modern global economy are pitching millions into poverty (Oxfam, GB, 2008). The educational system in Ghana as a whole changes each time a different political party comes to power. It happened with Jerry John Rawlings' regime of NDC (1) from 1992-2000 (Aryeetey, 2006); John Agyekum Kuffour's regime under NPP from 2001-2008 (SEND-Ghana, 2009) and it is happening under John Evans Atta Mills' regime of NDC (2) from 2009-2012 (SEND-Ghana, 2010). Poverty alleviation is therefore one cardinal policy towards achieving sustainable development goals.

Poverty is characterised by a lack of access to essential goods, services, assets, credits, and opportunities to which every human being is entitled to. Everyone should be free from hunger (Sen, 1999; UNDP, 2010), should be able to live in peace and should have access to basic education and primary health care. Poor households need to sustain themselves by their labour and be adequately rewarded and should have reasonable protections from external shocks. In addition, individuals and societies that are poor tend to remain so if they are not empowered to participate in the decisions that shape their lives. Majority of people living in rural Ghana fit into the World Bank classification of extreme poverty (Ofosu-Appiah, 2008). Extreme poverty defined by the World Bank as getting by on an income of less than one US dollar twenty-five cents (\$1.25) a day, means that households cannot meet basic needs for survival. They are chronically hungry, unable to get health care, lack safe drinking water and sanitation, cannot afford education for their children and perhaps lack rudimentary shelter - a roof to keep rain out of their huts - and basic articles of clothing like shoes. All these played out in my daily interactions with many people living in the rural areas in northern Ghana, notably, Mankarigu, Namoaligo and Nandom, and I saw it firsthand. Nowhere is this trend as acute as in Northern Ghana. Credit facilities for the rural poor, seem to be dwindling and many children of school going age are not in school (Ofosu-Appiah, 2008) because

they cannot afford to be there, they lack access to good drinking water, and primary health care. Rahnama (1993:159) describes this circumstantial poverty as destitute and imposed poverty, which hurts, degrades and drives people into desperation. In other words, poverty and the poor are associated with a state of want, with deprivation; “such deprivation is related to the necessities of life” (Boltnivik, 2006:2), such as food, shelter and security, to mention some of them.

While economic indicators such as the rate of inflation (9.5%) and economic growth rate of (2.4% of GDP) of Ghana continue to improve (SEND-Ghana, 2010), there is still a high proportion of the population living in poverty; in the three regions of northern Ghana. This is to buttress the point that growth alone is not enough to ensure substantial and sustainable poverty reduction. It has been noted that poverty declines faster in communities where the distribution of income becomes more equal than in communities where it becomes less equal. Thus, if poverty reduction is taken as a measure of development effectiveness, then the development effectiveness of growth efforts varies with levels of inequality (Narayan, 2002:5). It is quite intriguing that Ghana, having been one of the pioneering developing countries to adopt the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank structural adjustment policy (Aryeetey, 2006), still have majority of her people living below the poverty line. The policy was meant to revamp the economy and reduce poverty. Since 1983, however, millions of people in Ghana, especially the northern part of the country, continue to wallow in abject poverty, deprivation and neglect (Ofosu-Appiah, 2008).

Poverty in Ghana is prevalently rural. Seventy per cent (70%) of the country’s poor people live in rural areas (Aryeetey, 2006, UNDP, 2009b), where they have limited access to basic social services, such as safe water, good road network, electricity and telephone services. The incidence of poverty is highest in the northern part of the country (Ofosu-Appiah, 2008). The disparity has widened the income gap between people in the south, where there are two growing seasons, and those in the drought-prone northern plains (Aryeetey and Fosu, 2003, IFAD, 2013). Rural poverty remains widespread in the dry savannah region that covers roughly two thirds of Ghana's northern territory. While Ghana's overall poverty rate has declined, the three regions in the north have seen only marginal decreases. Poverty rates in the north are two to three times the national average, and chronic food insecurity remains a critical challenge there (IFAD, 2013).

Poverty is associated with limited opportunities and choices (Chambers, 2005) in accessing basic needs such as education, health and shelter. It is also associated, with gender, inequality, lack of dignity, low self-esteem particularly in women and poor governance (Boonzaaijer and Apusigah, 2008). Eradication

of extreme poverty and hunger, therefore, has become the international community's foremost development objective (UNDP, 2009b). The overriding target - adopted in 1996 by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation of the Economic Community Development (OECD) and endorsed by the international community - is to reduce the incidence of poverty in developing countries from 30 to 15 percent by the year 2015 (UNDP, 2009a). This is widely thought (World Bank Group, 2010) to be achievable and indeed, an altogether commendable goal.

Furtherance to the discussion under this section, the researcher looks at the concept of poverty and a working definition of poverty as seen under point 3.4.1 below.

3.4.1 The concept of poverty and a working definition of poverty

The concept of poverty and definitions of 'the poor' vary in accordance with the perspective and objective of those doing the defining. Recognition that defining poverty in traditional consumption and expenditure terms is insufficient on its own to address the needs of the poor themselves has led to the inclusion of human and social welfare indicators in development indices and poverty alleviation programmes. Further, self-characterisation of poverty, gathered from the poor themselves, has become increasingly central to sector and programme planning, with the recognized aim of including these 'voices of the poor' not only in terms of illustrating their needs, but in an interactive process of planning for development. Nkum & Ghartey, (2000) characterise the poor and the state of poverty in Ghana as follows:

- Inability to afford needs (food, shelter, clothes, health care and education)
- Absence of economic indicators, jobs, labour, and crop farms, livestock, investment opportunities
- Inability to meet the following social requirements: paying development levies, funeral obligatory dues and participating in public gatherings
- Absence of basic community services and infrastructure such as health, education, water and sanitation, toilet facilities, access roads, among others

The multi-dimensionality of poverty clarified by the Nkum and Ghartey study (2000) reflects the broader work carried out across several communities of northern Ghana and the entire country where poverty or ill-being is identified as being complex and interwoven, including a material lack and the need for shelter, assets and money. These are often characterised as Narayan et al (2000:21) by hunger, pain, discomfort, exhaustion, social exclusion, vulnerability, powerlessness and low self-esteem. In

other words, poverty is identified as a composite of both personal and community life situations where on a more personal level, poverty is reflected in an inability to gain access to basic community services.

Perceptions of well-being and poverty in Ghana vary between rural and urban areas and between men, women and youth. Whereas the rural poor identify issues such as food insecurity, inability to have children, disability and ownership of property, urban dwellers emphasise lack of employment, the unavailability and inadequacy of social services, skills training, capital and so on as being linked to poverty and well-being levels (Appiah, 1999, Nkum & Ghaty, 2000). In general, the concerns of men are related to social status and employment, for women, the general welfare of their children and family, and the youth, capital to invest or undertake economic activities.

The next paragraph gives a working definition of poverty and the poor as pertains in northern Ghana. There are a plethora of definitions and approaches to poverty that reflect the huge diversity of approaches to development and addressing the issue of poverty.

- \$1.25 USD a day – World Bank (2010) definition
- Lack of freedom, agency, capacity or choice –Sen (2000) definition

Some of the biggest challenges with defining poverty are building a definition that is comparable and measurable, but also multidimensional and participatory. Many typical definitions of poverty lack an analysis of inequality, vulnerability and the broader local and international context. They don't necessarily reflect all the shades of poverty, all the contributing factors and all the consequences. The researcher argues that they often do not give lots of insights into the realities of living in poverty or the causes of poverty particularly in reference to rural areas.

In northern Ghana the poor is seen in the context of the following characteristics; the inability to afford a meal a day, cannot afford essential basic services (healthcare, education, social obligations, not included in decision making within the community or decisions and opinions not necessary to the rest of community members no matter how brilliant they may seem), deprivation, diminished opportunities and high degree of vulnerability. In another context, a poor person may not necessarily mean one without money or food, but one who is incapable of bearing children. A man or woman may be rich in terms of material wealth, but may be considered poor because they have no children of their own. On the basis of these continuous imprints of poverty affecting rural community members of northern Ghana, they have a strong perception that poverty and well-being are at the behest of God or nature.

One stark commonality of all these definitions is that they all focus on what people lack. Not on what enriches their lives. One that may or may not live on less than \$2 a day is a happy, healthy person. For all the people that live on \$1.25 a day, still lack in terms of money or other things. In Ghana, the sense of community is very essential in overcoming poverty. This critical component of community is rarely reflected in these definitions of poverty.

Consequently, Satterthwaite (2004) notes, the use of income or expenditure as determinant of the poverty line within the context of the widely accepted view of poverty as a multi-dimensional is problematic. This is because income measures do not provide a full picture of the „command of resources“ that an individual or household possesses (Boarini & d'Ercole, 2006), as income measures tend to neglect the ability of individuals and households to borrow, to draw from accumulated savings, and to benefit from help provided family and friends, as well as consumption of public services such as education, health and housing. The largest contributor to non-monetary poverty in Ghana is education, and specifically, household deprivation in primary school completion (GSS, 2013:57). Therefore, in the light of the criticisms of the monetary poverty measurements, non-income indicators such as access to three meals a day, health, education, housing, farm lands, among others, are increasingly considered in the measurement of poverty.

It is based on this considerable fact that Townsend (2010) maintains that people are rich or poor according to their share of the resources and opportunities that are available to all. He further opines that individuals and families whose resources, over time, fall short of the resources commanded by the average individual or family in the community in which they live are in poverty, whether that community is a local, national or international one.

Poverty is characterised by a lack of access to essential goods, services, assets, credits, and opportunities to which every human being is entitled to. Everyone should be free from hunger, should be able to live in peace and should have access to basic education and primary health care.

Thus the poor are those who are chronically hungry, unable to get health care, lack safe drinking water and sanitation, cannot afford education for their children and perhaps lack rudimentary shelter- a roof to keep rain out of the hut- and basic articles of clothing like shoes.

3.4.2 *Ghana's rural poor*

Poverty is deepest among food crop farmers. Poor food crop farmers are mainly traditional small-scale producers. About six out of ten small-scale farmers are poor, and many of them are women. Despite the efforts of the government, which works with development partners such as International Food and Agricultural Development (IFAD) to reduce poverty in the country, small-scale farmers, herders and other rural people in Ghana remain poor. Women are among the worst affected (Ofosu-Appiah, 2008). More than half of women who are heads of households in rural areas are among the poorest 20 per cent of the population – the poorest of the poor. Women bear heavy workloads. They are responsible for 55 to 60 per cent of agricultural production (Benning, 2010). Women work at least twice as many hours as men, spend about three times as many hours transporting water and goods, and transport about four times as much in volume (Narayan and Petesch, 2002). Yet they are much less likely than men to receive education or health benefits or have a voice in decisions affecting their lives. For them, poverty means high numbers of infant deaths, undernourished families and poor access to education by children and limited health and life insurances, among other deprivations (ClayDord Consult, 2004).

The aged and the disabled, as well as people with HIV/AIDS and other chronically sick people, are another face of the rural poor. Many have no means of support or have exhausted their resources to pay for medical care. Migrants also are seriously affected by poverty, particularly those who immigrate from neighbouring towns and villages to Talensi and Nabdam communities, where two of the study areas are located, for *gallamsay* (small scale mining) activities. During field studies, the researcher realised, based on the information gathered from some of the respondents that those who do not get some of the gold dust go through difficult times. In times like that some of the females of all status engage in a form of prostitution to make a living.

3.4.3 *Where are Ghana's rural poor people?*

The poorest areas of Ghana are the savannah regions of the north, where many rural poor people face chronic food insecurity. In the northern part of Ghana, poverty often has a hold on entire rural communities. Livelihoods are more vulnerable in those regions, and all the members of the community suffer because of food insecurity for part of the year. The three poorest regions, the North, Upper East and Upper West, occupy the parts of Ghana bordering on Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Togo. In the Upper East region almost nine out of ten people live in poverty. More than eight out of ten people in the Upper West region are poor. In the Northern region, poverty affects seven out of ten people, and slightly less than half the population of the Central region is poor.

The Upper East and Upper West regions are covered by Sahel savannah in the north-east and grassland savannah in the north-west. There is one short rainy season, followed by a long period of dry weather influenced by the dry harmattan wind (North-west dry and hazy winds) from the Sahara Desert. Farmers live generally at the subsistence level, and farming is confined mainly to the short rainy season. In the dry season farmers can cultivate land only under irrigation. Most farmers are idle during this period, and many able-bodied young people migrate to other parts of the country to earn an income.

Throughout Ghana, rural people cope with poverty in various ways, finding individual solutions to the problem. Men take off-farm employment, women carry on small-scale trading, and families reduce cash spending, which may mean taking children out of school.

3.4.4 Why are rural people poor in Ghana?

Ghana's economy which is largely agro-based has in the past been characterised by high rates of inflation, continuous depreciation of the cedi, dwindling foreign reserves, an excessive public debt burden and fluctuating growth (SEND-Ghana, 2010). Extensive implementation of liberalisation and adjustment policies in the 1980s produced some growth in services and mining but did little to induce and sustain growth in agriculture and manufacturing (UNDP, 2010). Both growth and incomes remained stagnant, resulting in deepening poverty (Bruce, 2009).

In rural Ghana, the economy is 97% agrarian and subsistence (immediate family consumption and survival activities) in nature (Aryeetey, 2006, SEND-Ghana, 2010). Small-scale farmers rely on rudimentary methods and technology and they lack the skills and inputs such as fertilizer and improved seeds that would increase yields. Because of erosion and shorter fallow periods, soil loses its fertility, posing a long-term threat to farmers' livelihoods and incomes. Increasing population pressure leads to continuous cultivation in the densely inhabited Upper East region and a shorter fallow period in the Upper West region, causing further deterioration of the land.

The Ghana Statistical services (GSS 2010:89) intimates that a negligible number of farms (only about 6,000 out of several million) have access to irrigation. Land ownership and land security are regulated by complex systems that vary widely. Poor farmers are without market and rural infrastructure which they desperately need for storing, processing and marketing their products.

There are significant barriers to utilisation of health services in the Northern Region. Occupying about 30% of the land area of the country and holds over 5000 settlements (GHS, 2007:5). These settlements

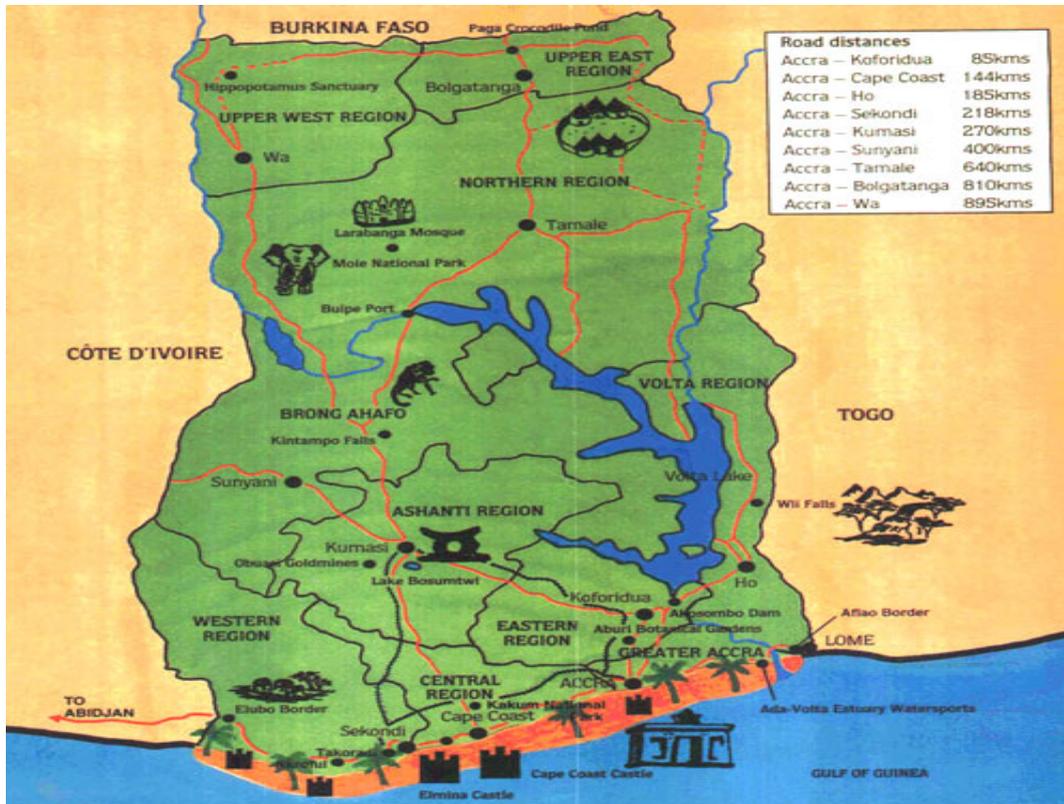
are simply too far from health referral facilities (polyclinics and hospitals). This situation is exacerbated by the poor road network within the region. The Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) strategy is one that the Health Sector in the three northern regions of Ghana is promoting to address the issue of inadequate geographical access. However, there are still challenges with the CHPS concept as fewer health workers accept postings to these centres located in the hinterlands. The utilisation and access to the National Health Insurance Scheme is still low in the northern sector as compared to the southern sector of Ghana (GHS, 2009:7). These challenges increase the poverty burden among the people in the three northern regions of Ghana, particularly in the rural areas of the regions where access to essential services is very difficult. The researcher's personal experience of some of these areas (because the researcher lives there) shows that some of these essential services are not readily available to those who need them.

Table 3.1 Population indicators of Ghana and rural poverty statistics

Population indicators of Ghana and rural poverty statistics	
Total population (million), 2003:	20.7
Rural population density (people per km ²), 2003:	307.1
Number of rural poor (million) (approximate):	6.5
Poor as % of total rural population, 2000-01:	49.9
GNI per capita (US\$), 2003:	320.0
Population living below US\$1 a day (%), 1998-99:	44.8
Population living below US\$2 a day (%), 1998-99:	78.5
Population living below the national poverty line (%), 1998-99:	39.5
Share of poorest 20% in national income or consumption (%), 1999:	5.6
Source: World Bank (2004)	

These indicators on table 3.1 evidence the fact that though Ghana's population increased from 20.7 in 2003 to 24.6 in 2010 (GSS, 2010), the population living below the national poverty line of \$1.25 has not seen significant improvement since 1999. In 2009, 35.6 percent of the Ghanaian population lived below the poverty line (UNDP, 2010).

Figure 3.2 Administrative regions of Ghana



This apart, the distances between each of the regions is another source of worry. Food stuff, agricultural and socio-economic experiences are not easily shared inter-regionally due to the prevailing poor road network and cost of transportation. These tend to contribute to the poverty levels among people in already poorer sectors of the country particularly in the three northern regions of Ghana. The administrative regional map of Ghana depicted above, shows clearly, the kilometric distances of the regions from each other.

In furtherance to the above information on the regional imbalances and challenges, table 3.1 below shows that Ghana as a country is ranked 130 among 180 countries in her human development index (HDI) with and HDI value of 0.47 (UNDP, 2010). The literacy rate of Ghana’s population from 15 years and above is 66 percent of total population. On the health front, under five mortality rate is 76/1,000 live births and maternal mortality ratio is 560/100,000 live births (Global Footprint Network, 2008).

In addition, the World Bank (2010:87) reports that Ghana spends 50 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) to export goods and services to the international market and imports 75 percent of GDP from the international community. This implies Ghana has a trade deficit of 25 percent of her GDP. In another development, Transparency International (2010:23) corruption perception index puts Ghana in the 62nd position out of 180 countries with a CPI value of 4.1. Ghana therefore is certainly among seemingly corrupt countries to a certain degree in Africa and the world at large.

These facts put Ghana in a struggling position in general and the already struggling parts of the country, notably the northern sector of Ghana at a more disadvantaged position.

3.5 The perspectives of the nature of poverty and suffering in Ghana

By way of introduction, this section deals directly with the core basic necessities of bread and butter issues that help to enhance life and promote health. Examples include food, water, shelter, sanitation and rights (including the right to food and income security, employment, right to education, right to health, right to life and personal security and conflicts resolution). The rest are the right to be heard, the right to equity: gender and diversity, and other players like the government and NGO policies for development and employment. Generally, the lack or inadequate supply of these, largely account for how people describe and measure poverty in Ghana.

3.5.1 The face of food, income insecurity and poverty distribution in Ghana

The benefits of poverty reduction are not evenly spread across the country. For instance poverty in the Greater Accra region is said to be doubled from 5.2 percent in 1999 to 11.8 percent in 2006 (GLSS, 2006). According to the GLSS 5 report, the poor continue to be concentrated in the rural sectors of the country, especially those areas in the three northern regions. The three northern regions of Northern, Upper East and Upper West are said to house the poorest 30 percent of the population of Ghana (GLSS 5 report, 2006). Harold (2002) indicates that "Almost 90 percent of the people in the Upper East Region are poor. All except 10 percent of the people in the Upper West Region are poor" The situation has remained the same. The GLSS 5 (2006) reports indicate that the Upper East and Upper West Region have "...seen little poverty decline and are still, by far, the poorest regions in the country..."

Poverty in these three northern regions is characterized by chronic food insecurity and the inability of many households to access life-enhancing social services such as health care and education. Poverty in the three northern regions means the people do not have enough food to eat. Poverty in this category refers to poor income security and food insecurity among the people under discussion. For most

households in the Upper East and Upper West regions, this poverty actually means they have not enough to eat three times a day for 6-7 months in the year in good years, when the food barns run empty from February through August – a period that has become known as “the hungry season”.

Indeed, the GLSS 5 report of a shift towards worsening urban poverty in places like Accra is not totally unrelated to the stagnation and/or worsening of the poverty levels in these regions. It could in fact be the push factor driving urban poverty in Accra and the other urban areas. Indeed, urban poverty is an exported phenomenon resulting from intensified rural-urban out migration, especially of the youth who are seeking exits out of rural poverty in urban settings. And the three northern regions have the highest statistics of out migration of their populations. For instance, the 2000 Population and Housing Census reports that 49.8 percent of all natives of the Upper West Region live outside the region (GSS, 2002). It is also observable that the bulk of the poor in the urban areas of southern Ghana are predominantly located in slum migrant communities popularly known as the ‘*zongos*’, which house predominantly people of the northern descent, as well as immigrants from other countries to the north of Ghana. Available statistics (Twum-Baah, 2002) indicate that these *zongos* in all major cities are the most economically, (in terms of jobs and infrastructure) and socially deprived areas countrywide. Formal educational institutions usually underserved them, and children in these areas have very limited access to secular education. Access to the necessities of life such as decent housing, health care, water and sanitation facilities, roads, reliable electricity, among others, is either non-existent or usually poorly provided. Hence, the incidence of poverty in urban areas does not only replicate rural poverty; above all, it takes on an ethnic characteristic.

The complexities of human settlements in Ghana at both the urban and rural areas, seems to give poverty another dimension, a religious face. The incidence and persistence of poverty is observed to be chronic and most endemic in the predominantly Islamic regions and/or communities in Ghana. Regionally, “the Northern, Central, Upper East and Upper West Regions, [have been] identified as poor in the 1999 GLSS report (Twum-Baah, 2002:3). Incidentally, “...42.7 percent of the population in the three northern regions profess affiliation to Islam as a religion” (Pul, 2003:94) with as many as 56.1 percent of the population in the Northern Region, 32.2 percent in the Upper West and 22.5 percent in the Upper East professing to the Islamic faith (Twum-Baah, 2002:95). Central region, which ranks fourth in the regional distribution of poverty, is also home to a large population professing the Islamic faith. In other words, both rural and urban poverty tend to be concentrated in the predominantly Moslem communities.

But the incidence of poverty has an age and gender bias as well; due largely to a combination of cultural and socio-economic factors (Twum-Baah, 2002). By age, younger people below the age of 30 and older people above the age of 60 are more likely to bear the brunt of poverty, largely because of their limited access to gainful employment. Conditioned by ill-preparedness of the youth for the job market due to the kind of educational qualification acquired (for instance, arts as against technical or vocational), the majority of rural youth who find employment in agriculture unattractive have found their ways into the urban areas in search of non-existent jobs. Many have found life in the streets selling anything or doing menial jobs for a living a better alternative to working on the farm. Rural migrants who skip the urban areas usually find their ways into mining communities where risky but potentially lucrative small scale mining goes on unbridled (Pul, 2003).

Women are also more likely to be poor than men. Although they constitute about 52 percent of the agricultural labour force and produce about 70 percent of total crop output, they have limited ownership and control over productive resources such as land (Aryeetey, 2006). According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census, only 26 percent of women are farm owners or managers. Women also face considerable institutional obstacles in gaining access to credit and other support services for their farm and off-farm income generation ventures.

Despite these challenges, the ingenuity of women is often the only source of solace and livelihood for many a household when the food stores are empty for much of the year. In northern Ghana, the number of temporary female headed households increases sharply during the long dry seasons and/or in times of severe food shortages as their male partners tend to out-migrate to the south ostensibly in search of cash and food for the families. This is so because, the male partners, culturally are the main bread winners and heads of the family. In a desperate search for resource power to maintain their families, these male partners go the extra mile to make sure this happens.

3.5.2 Key drivers of food, income insecurity and inequality in Ghana

Failures of the agricultural sector are major drivers of poverty in Ghana. Agriculture is the highest contributor to Ghana's GDP (GPRS II, 2005). Ghana's agriculture sector is dominated by cereals which contribute 20 percent of the overall contribution to GDP. Maize, rice, millet and guinea corn contributes over 60 percent and the remainder for the rest of the cereals. Other crops include cassava, yams, cashew nuts, sunflower and pineapples, among others. Apart from the staple crops are cocoa (contributing 3percent of value added and one of the main areas of Ghana's foreign exchange earner). As a whole, the agriculture sector provides employment for more than 60 percent of the population (GPRS II, 2005: x). More than 75

percent of employed persons aged 15 years and above in the three northern regions are engaged in agricultural activities, making the sector account for more than 95 percent of household incomes. In recognition of this, the GPRS II sees agriculture as the engine of growth, as government expects it to “provide the necessary inputs for a vibrant agro-processing industrial sector in the medium term by 2010” (Oxfam GB, 2008)

Despite the hope and reliance on this sector to power Ghana’s poverty reduction strategy, agriculture remains largely a subsistent rain-fed food cropping activity that continues to rely mainly on the hoe and cutlass as the major agricultural production technology. The Food and Agricultural Sector Development Policy (FASDEP, 2002), which provides the main framework of the Government of Ghana’s efforts to address food insecurity, especially regarding the development of the agricultural production in the poorest parts of the country, notably, the three northern regions and the Central region.

Unfavourable land tenure systems, especially those for agricultural purposes, remain major obstacles to increasing food and cash crop production in many areas, especially the northern sector of the country. It is argued by Miller, Apusigah and Boonzaaijer (2008) that by and large, agricultural land tenure arrangements are still based on uncodified and incongruent customary laws and practices, which make it “impossible for enterprising farmers to acquire land” (Pul, 2003) for a) commercial production and/or b) long term investment planning and management. For instance, the share-cropping systems practiced in the Northern Region, which has the largest landmass in the country, is a major discouragement to large scale cropping. The absence of any legal framework governing lease arrangements for agricultural land also discourage long term investments in the development of land, especially those for perennial cash crops on plantations. As a result, agriculture remains a subsistent, extractive, and environmentally unfriendly activity. Besides land tenure has become a source of conflict, especially in northern Ghana. Land in northern Ghana is regarded as an essential asset not only for productive and economic reasons, but includes the fact that it is the embodiment of gods and ancestors and must be protected and maintained for posterity. When land is encroached upon it has the potential to generate conflict and confrontation among the people.

Limited infrastructure for food production and marketing also increase the vulnerability of agricultural entrepreneurs within the Upper East, Northern and Upper West regions of Ghana, the specific regions in which this study is being conducted. When farmers manage to produce despite the constraints of land and inputs, the underdevelopment of the agricultural market, due to the limited development of farm-to market transportation and marketing networks and the limited availability of agro-processing outlets (SEND-

Ghana, 2008) contribute to high rates of post harvest losses, which dampen any urge for increased investments for improved production and productivity in the agriculture sector.

In some cases, one would argue that double-edged government policies such as the liberalisation of the markets have denied local farmers access to inputs at affordable prices while increasing the non-competitiveness of the local farmers through the admission of heavily subsidised imported agricultural products into the local markets (World Bank Group, 2010). The poultry and rice industries are major examples, but it must also be noted that it is probably easier for one to buy an apple not grown in Ghana on the streets of the major towns in the northern sector of Ghana in particular than one would get an orange or a banana to buy at the same price produced by the local people themselves (Aryeetey, 2006)

Government policy in relation to indigenous cash crops appears ambivalent, to say the least. While considerable investments have gone into supporting the production of cocoa and other non-traditional products, little effort has been put into the development of other equally viable indigenous commercial crops such as *sheanuts* and *dawadawa* (or locust bean).

Food and income insecurity is structurally and psychologically created in many cases (Bening, 2010), as the poor utilization of available food resources constitutes a major driver of food, income, and health insecurity for many households in the country. In general poor rural households are conditioned to aspire to a breakfast of tea, eggs, bread, and butter instead of a porridge of locally cultivated crops such as millet and fonio, even though the latter is a high fibre cereal that also “contains 8–11 percent protein with high levels of methionine and cystine, thus serving as an excellent complement to legumes” (Gopalan, 2001). A snack of widely available bambara beans would provide a meal of “high biological value since it contains...about 18 percent protein [with] relatively high leucine, lysine and theonine” (Gopalan, 2001). Imported apples are more readily available and used as snack foods than locally grown oranges and bananas. Among the youth, eating French fries and hamburgers is more desirable than fried yams and *kosi*, the local bean cake.

3.6 The Face of employment in Ghana

According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census (GSS, 2000), 80.4 percent of the population works in the private informal sector alone. Of this percentage, the agricultural sector, including fishing, accounts for 52.3 percent. Less than 10 percent work in the private sector (7.8 percent) the public sector (5.9 percent). By place of abode, close to 90 percent of all rural dwellers in Ghana are active to some

extent in the agricultural sector, with an estimated 60-70 percent of rural dwellers depending exclusively on agriculture as their source of livelihood. This means that only a third of rural dwellers engage concurrently in farm and non-farm activities to secure their livelihoods. The non-farm private informal sector activities are largely in the construction, food processing, small scale manufacturing and artisan trade sectors.

Aryeetey (2006) has identified that employment in the private informal sector has many faces. By gender, 75.60 percent of the male and 85.10 percent of the female working population in the country is employed in this sector. Overall, 90.2 percent of working women in the three northern regions are engaged in the private informal, as compared to the 84.8 percent of men in these regions who find themselves in this sector.

Disaggregated by region, the three northern regions have higher than average percentages of their working populations engaged in the private informal sector, with an average of 87.4 percent of the populations in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West earning their living from this sector.

By sector of employment, while men dominate the construction and roadside manufacturing activities, women tend to migrate toward the food processing, petty trading and itinerant market traders, providing essential services in the farm to market food distribution sub sector. Indeed, the trend is towards an increasing participation of women in the informal trade sector. In 1988, 9 percent of Ghanaian women reported trade as their main industry, with 34 percent reporting it as their secondary industry. By 1992, however, "...these percentages increased to 12 (main industry) and 41 percent (secondary industry) respectively." (Newman and Canagarajah, 2000:13)

Employment status and sector of employment are both important determinants of poverty in Ghana, especially since they also tend to be conditioned by geographical location. Recent studies in Ghana and Uganda have established that engagement in "Non-farm sectors such as petty commerce, wage employment, transportation, and construction, [whether as full time or part time] have been linked to lower poverty levels in recent work". Indeed, engagement in "...non-farm alone or non-farm as the main occupation shows the lowest levels of poverty overall" (Newman and Canagarajah, 2000:2).

Furthermore "...the importance of non-farm participation to poverty reduction differences is associated with gender. We find that women are increasingly active in the non-farm economies of Ghana and that this participation is linked to greater reductions in poverty for women than for men." (Newman and Canagarajah, 2000:2) The rate of reduction in poverty is also gender correlated, as "poverty rates fell

most rapidly among female heads engaged in non-farm” activities in Ghana (Pul, 2003). In Ghana, female heads experienced greater reductions in poverty than men in all categories and greater reductions in poverty levels for female heads with some connection to non-farm activities than those without such connections. The study showed that poverty levels in northern Ghana among female heads in agriculture from 1990-2009 dropped by 31 percent, and for men it dropped by 18 percent. For female heads in non-farm during the 1990, 35.3 percent, 2000, 37.6 percent and 2009, 39.1 percent were employed in the non-farm sector only. Subsequently poverty fell by 37 percent and for men, it fell by 32 percent. In the combination of agriculture and non-farm, poverty for female heads fell by 35 percent, and for males it fell by only 14 percent. (World Bank Group, 2010).

Despite the overwhelming evidence that the private informal sector holds the key to doors out of poverty for many households, the sector receives little attention in public policy formulation and implementation for a number of reasons. First, the sector is not well organised and therefore has no unions to fight for inclusion in the labour general policy framework; secondly, there is no identifiable government agency for informal sector workers and finally, the different categories of informal sector work are not sectionalised for the purpose of identification and mobilisation of support for policy issues.

3.6.1 Key drivers of employment in northern Ghana

Agriculture, the main source of employment in northern Ghana remains seasonal activity dependent on the rainfall cycle. This engenders cyclical poverty, as long periods of hunger quickly succeed the short periods of plenty in the short spell after harvests. The poor farm to market distribution networks due to poor infrastructure often create the paradox of plenty when food often rots in landlocked farms, especially in the middle and southern belts while families in the north and urban centres of the south go hungry.

The private informal sector holds the key to accelerated exit from the poverty bracket, as demonstrated above. Unfortunately, operators in the private informal sector continue to be marginalized from mainstream economics and politics. On the economic platform, they have very limited access to financial services from the formal sector banks. Although banks now compete to launch microfinance products as part of their portfolios, there is virtually no change in the stringent conditions that still keep the poor out of their doorways (DASF, 2007:20)¹¹. In other words, despite the demonstrated resilience

¹¹In a study of more than 300 private sector entrepreneurs in northern Ghana, DASF found that loans from banks accounted for only 1.6 percent of financing for start up capital of the private informal sector

of this sector in keeping the economy of most African countries afloat when the public sector fails, they are still considered non-bankable. Consequently, nearly all operators in this sector have to rely on personal savings, loans or grants from family members and friends to start up their business¹².

The majority of informal sector workers operate from appalling environments, due to the limited infrastructure support to this sector. The creation and transmission of knowledge within the sector is unstructured and largely uncoordinated, as most people learn their trades through not moderated apprenticeships. Hence, limited professionalism in product and service development and delivery limit the potentials for growth. Horizontal and vertical linkages within the sector with the formal sector are also limited.

3.7 Health and environmental sanitation

3.7.1 Access, quality and distribution of health care delivery in Ghana

The health and environmental sanitation of the people are linked to the general state of development in Ghana. The government seeks to improve (Bening, 2010) the performance of the health system and through linkages with other sectors of the economy such as the agriculture, housing and education, to reduce population growth rate, reduce levels of malnutrition, increase female education, increase access to water and sanitation, and to reduce poverty. The health sector has been the focus of several policy initiatives over the last 10 years. There have been stagnations or declines in key health sector indicators such as infant and under five mortality rates. Since 1998, the under-five mortality rate has remained at 110 per 1000 live births while infant mortality rates increased from 61 per 1000 live births in 1998 to 65/1000 in 2003, 71/1000 in 2006 and 30/1000 in 2009 (World Bank, 2010). Preventive and easily treatable diseases still account for childhood deaths: malaria (26 percent), pneumonia (18 percent) and diarrhoea 18 percent), and neonatal factors (38 percent) (Oxfam, 2008)

organizations – (DASF and Tools for Self Reliance, Baseline Study on Capacity Development for Private Informal Sector Businesses in Northern Ghana, 2007, p.20ff.)

¹²Foreign direct remittance from families and friends is one major source of funding for operators in this sector. It is estimated, for instance, that the bulk of the US\$467.7 million from non-resident Ghanaians that flowed into the country in 2004 – (Daily Graphic “Foreign Remittances Rake in \$1bn... In 5 Months” posted on the web at www.ghanaweb.com: General News of Friday, 13 August 2004).

It is also acknowledged by some health workers that most deaths in hospitals and health facilities are preventable through proper medical care (Tamale teaching Hospital Annual report, 2010). However overworking of existing staff, frequent strike actions by medical staff, and sometimes sheer negligence of duty have contributed to high rates of deaths in hospitals. Unfortunately, as Imoro, Ahorlu and Koka (2009) notes; existing legal framework and cultural mindsets does not encourage enforcement of professional ethics and responsibilities for due care and diligence among health professionals.

Investments in the prevention of HIV infections have, however, yielded some positive results over the years. The Ghana AIDS Commission reports that data from sentinel surveys of HIV prevalence from 1998 indicated a gradual reduction in the prevalence rates across board from a peak of 3.6 percent in 2003 to 2.7 percent in 2005, after it had increased from 2.4 percent in 1994 to 4 percent in 1998 and down to 3 percent in year 2000. Despite the downward trend, it is noteworthy that 20 out of the 40 antenatal clinic sentinel sites reported prevalence rates above the national average of 2.7 percent, with two of them reporting rates higher than 5 percent in the 2005 survey (Ghana AIDS Commission reports, 2006).

Rural-urban differentials have been minimal, as data from the last three years indicate little difference between rural and urban sites. By location, the Eastern Region has the highest prevalence rate of 4.7 percent, (down from 5.3 percent in 2002), followed by the Ashanti Region. The Northern Region reports the lowest rate of 1.2 percent. By age, the 45 – 49 age groups recorded the highest mean HIV prevalence of 5.0 percent (GLSS, 2005, Ghana AIDS Commission, 2002)

Poverty is a major driver for the prevalence of HIV infection in rural areas, especially in the north, where HIV infection is associated with migrant youths, who travel outside their home areas in search of economic activities during the off-farm seasons.

Access to water and sanitation services is central to the promotion of good health and support of productive activities, especially of women. However, although a combination of programmes has increased availability of water for domestic use in many communities, access to water and sanitation facilities is still very low in Ghana, especially in the rural areas of northern Ghana (Pul, 2003, Oxfam, GB, 2008). Overall, only 50 percent of the population has regular access to potable water in Ghana. This translates to 75 percent of urban dwellers having access to potable water (even if this is not regular) as compared to only 12 percent of rural dwellers having access to water from stand alone sources, including boreholes and hand-dug wells. With respect to sanitation, only 42 percent of urban dwellers

have access to sanitation facilities, compared to only 11 percent of residents in rural areas who have access to sanitation facilities (Oxfam, GB, 2008).

In most cultures, the collecting of water, environmental cleanliness around households, and the disposal of domestic waste are defined as the responsibilities of women and children. Consequently, in poorer segments of cities and in rural areas women bear the brunt of provisioning water for domestic use and ensuring that the garbage is gathered and disposed of. In northern Ghana, for instance, it is estimated that “women spend 70 minutes a day collecting water compared with 50 minutes of their male counterparts”¹³

3.7.2 Structure of health system in Ghana

The Ministry of Health and the Ghana Health Service are said to be the institutions responsible for the health of the people of Ghana. The Ghana Health Service and Teaching Hospital Act 525, 1996 established the Ghana Health Service (GHS) as part of the health sector reforms and accordingly charged the two institutions with the policy formulation and implementation of services in government health facilities at regional, district and sub-district level, respectively (GSS, 2005:71-74). The operations of the GHS are monitored by Health Council that reports directly to the Minister for Health.

3.7.3 Key drivers of poor health and service inequality

Several factors account for the deterioration of health sector performance despite the increased investments from government. First, the sector experiences massive brain drain as health professionals of all categories, especially doctors and nurses, leave the country (Bening, 2010) for greener pastures in Europe and North America. Second, a disproportionately high number of the remaining staff is concentrated in Accra and other urban areas. Consequently, there is a dire shortage of staff of all professional categories to assure quality health care delivery, especially in the rural areas. Third, frequent and protracted strike actions of the remaining health workers of all categories regularly shut down health service delivery points across the country. These shutdowns do not only deny people access to the care they need; they have gradually engendered a loss of confidence among the general population in the capacity of hospitals, clinics and related care centres to cater to their health care needs. Consequently, as the GLSS 5 reports (GLSS, 2000), there has been a significant increase in the number of people turning to private pharmacies and roadside chemical sellers for medical consultation and prescriptions instead of going to the hospitals and clinics. In rural areas where pharmacies and chemical

¹³The Parliament of Ghana News at <http://www.parliament.gh/newsdetails.php?id=0204>

shops do not exist, uncertified traditional herbalists, spiritualists, and itinerant sellers of both western and traditional herbal preparations constitute the major health care delivery points for the people.

Fourth, the implementation of the National Health Insurance scheme is suffering from bureaucratic inefficiencies. Since its launch in 2005 only 34percent of the population nationwide has been registered under the scheme with only 18percent having cards that entitle them to free medical care as of February 2007.¹⁴ This means that access to health services remains poor to the rural majority. Part of the challenges facing the implementation of the NHIS, especially in rural areas is the over politicisation of the health insurance scheme, which labelled it as an NPP government propaganda tool for which members of other political persuasions were discouraged from patronising.

Fifth, the prevalence of preventable diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea, and pneumonia, malnutrition, among others is evidence that there has been little change in public attitudes, behaviours and tastes to personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, and healthy eating habits. Increases in malnutrition and other diet related diseases, for instance, are due to the mal-education of the public on good nutritional practices that has fostered inappropriate eating habits which favour high carbohydrate intakes and foreign foods to the neglect of healthy local alternatives. For instance, fonio, which is “one of the most nutritious and the world’s fastest maturing cereal” (Pul, 2003), and capable of growing anywhere in the harsh climatic conditions of the north is cultivated only marginally. The Bambara groundnut, which can also be widely grown in the north and is rich in protein (24 percent), with higher levels of essential amino acid methionine than most other grain legumes, remains under-developed and under-utilised as food crop (Pul, 2003). Health and extension education programmes promote the production and consumption of cabbage, lettuce and other exotic vegetables over indigenous ones such as *nkontomire*, *moringa*, *pumpkin* leaves, among others, creating the paradox of plenty in which food crops well adapted to the local environment remain neglected while households go malnourished.

3.8 The face of educational opportunities and inequalities

The government of Ghana subscribes to the Education for All (EFA) initiative, (MOEYS, 2005:10) which seeks to accelerate the achievement of gender parity in access to education by the end of 2005 and achieve gender equality by 2015. In accordance with this objective, the government of Ghana, NGOs and other donors have tried various strategies (SEND Ghana, 2009) to support the Free Compulsory

¹⁴The Parliament of Ghana News at <http://www.parliament.gh/newsdetails.php?id=0204>

Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme under the Government's Education Strategic Plan (ESP).

While enrolment rates in schools have increased nationwide, gender disparity persists, with girls generally recording lower gross enrolment rates than boys across board. For instance, the "... National Gross Enrolment Ratios (GER) of girls at primary and JSS for the year 2002/03 were 72.5 percent and 59.3 percent. The indication is that about 27 percent of the girls are denied their rights to primary education. The JSS situation is worse; more than 40 percent of the girls are not having this right fulfilled" (UNICEF, 2004:1). Overall, it has not been possible to reach the targeted gender parity index of 1.00 by 2005, as the gender parity index for 2004-05 school year remained at 0.93 (MOEYS, 2005:16). Disaggregated by region, the Northern Region scores the lowest parity in GER, recording a primary school GER for girls of 57.2 percent in the 2002/03 school year compared to the national GER of 72.5 percent for girls for the same period. This further compares with the GER of 32.9 percent for girls at the JSS level in the same school year against the national average of 59.3 percent for the period.

Access and participation in schools, also has a gender face, as girls have additional hindrances to access and participation when school environments are not conducive to their needs, that can be classified as follows:

- *Interrupted Participation of Girls:* Girls of the puberty age tend to miss out of school during their menstrual cycles when school environments do not provide toilets and other privacy facilities. FAWE found that in one school in Ghana, girls who needed to change their sanitary pads while in school had to use the only toilet in the head teacher's office. In cases where such inconvenient facilities are not even available, the option for girls in their menstrual cycles is to stay out of school. In such cases, FAWE estimates that one week missed out of school per month translates into 25percent total time loss in the school year for girls (FAWE, 2001).
- *Lower Retention Rates for Girls:* Apart from loss of school time, interrupted participation contributes to higher dropout rates for girls, especially as they progress towards the higher levels of basic education. UNICEF (2005) recorded a primary school retention rate of 62.4 percent for children enrolled in Primary 1 in the 1997/1998 academic and tracked to the 2002/2003 school year when they were in Primary 6. Again, the Northern Region falls behind the pack, with a 51.3 percent retention rate for girls progressing from P1 in 1997/98 to P 6 in the 2002/2003 School year.

- *Lower Transition Rates for Girls:* Similarly, the Northern region recorded a 77.2 percent transition rate for girls moving from P6 to JSS1 in 2002/03 academic year in comparison with the national transition rate of 91.6 percent for girls in the same year.

3.9 Key drivers of education problems and inequality

While confirming the enrolment, retention and transition rates from the national study, a limited study on gender parity in three districts of the north isolated several factors that explain the causes for the tilt in gender disparity on the above indicators against girls¹⁵. Although the study found that logistical challenges such as distance of community from school, existence of physical barriers such as rivers and hills across school paths were important barriers, household economic imperatives and socio-cultural factors constituted the major barriers to female education. On the economic front, poor rural households consider education as a family investment that must yield positive net returns to the family in the long. Hence in cultural contexts where girls marry out of their biological families, investments in the education of girls are often considered a waste, due to the belief that “...*educating a girl is like watering another man’s garden.*”(FAWE, 2001:9)¹⁶ Several respondents from the Bongo district echoed the sentiments when they argued that there is a “negative attitude of parents towards girls’ education” as “Most parents do not value the education of girls”, since “some parents conclude that there is no benefit in girls’ education”. Consequently, “most parents withdraw girls from school to offer assistance to their mothers”, to use the words of a respondent from the Lawra district (DASF, 2005:56).

Responses from community interviewees in the same study also held that socioeconomic pressures on girls also predispose them to early stoppage of school. According to interviewees in the Savelugu-Nanton district, for instance, the “*Kayayo*” factor has been associated with the fact that “girls want to go

¹⁵The study was conducted by Development Alternatives Services Foundation (DASF) under contract and sponsorship of the Northern Network for Education and Development (NNED), the Netherlands Development Cooperation (SNV) and the Commonwealth Education Fund in the Savelugu-Nanton district in the Northern Region, Bongo in the Upper East and Lawra in the Upper West Regions.

¹⁶Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) “Girls’ Education And Poverty Eradication: FAWE’s Response” Presented At The Third United Nations Conference On The Least Developed Countries 10-20 May 2001 Brussels, Belgium, p.9

to “*Kayayo*” because of “the love for flashy things [which] makes women more vulnerable to ending their school”, to borrow the words of respondents in this district. In a similar vein, girls in the Bongo district were said to be susceptible to stopping “... school due to teenage pregnancy when parents can’t provide their needs”. In the Lawra district, a similar blame the girl child view was expressed when a respondent noted that: “girls like quick money”

Incidentally, across board, parents asserted their belief and support for the education of girls but blamed girls themselves for their high dropout rates from schools. Very few mentioned the socio-cultural factors such as the pressure on girls to marry early as a major driver of low participation and completion rate for girls as compared to boys, especially at the upper primary levels. Similarly, the pressure to have girls serve as housemaids, nurses for their younger siblings and/or outright participation in adult economic activities alongside their mothers and aunties were not mentioned as major challenges to the education of girls.

A research conducted by DASF (2005) identified that another major driver for lower than expected parity indices for enrolment, attendance, transition and completion rates for girls relate to the quality of education that children receive, especially in the rural areas, where schools are under-resourced in terms of staffing, equipment, infrastructure and furnishing. In this context where education is considered as an investment, the perceived short term labour benefits of girls’ contribution to household livelihoods such as helping with household chores, taking care of siblings or working along their mothers in apprenticeships often outweigh the long term returns on investment on the education of girls (Pul, 2003).

3.10 Right to Life and Security

3.10.1 Key drivers of food security vulnerability and risk (natural)

As indicated above, rain fed agriculture remains the major source of food and incomes for most households, especially in the rural areas. Hence, the unreliable rainfall patterns across the country, and most especially in the northern parts, have often led to massive crop failures, as uncontrollable floods frequently follow long spells of droughts. Ironically, Government policy for the agricultural development of the north still focuses largely on promoting rain-fed agriculture, despite the shifts in climatic conditions that make this option unviable. As a result, nationwide, less than 10 percent of agricultural production comes from irrigated large scale commercial sources (Pul, 2003).

In the urban areas, especially Accra, the slum areas inhabited by the poor are often the scenes of the worse casualties when floods inundate the businesses and houses of the slum dwellers. In the forest and savannah areas of the Ashanti, Brong Ahafo and the three northern regions, annual bushfires during the dry harmattan season constitute a major threat to livelihoods of farm families, as they often destroy homes, crops, and livestock of farmers. In a research report World Food Programme (WFP, 2011) identified food insecurity among some 1.2 million and another 2 million people who had inadequate consumption patterns in Ghana's entire population. The study revealed a worrying trend of 34 percent, 15 percent and 10 percent of the people of Upper West, Upper East, and Northern Regions with inadequate consumption patterns respectively.

In an instance of limited insurance policies for the poor, sporadic interventions by the Government, faith-based organisations, and the NGO community often constitute the only means of securing some form of food and livelihood security for victims of natural disasters. In many cases, households that are at the brink of breaking out of the poverty cycle are rapidly reduced to absolute poverty as a result. Limited capacity for alternative income generating ventures during the off-farm season restricts the ability of households to access food from the markets when their barns run empty.

Another cause for food insecurity vulnerability is tradition and culture. Bening (2010) observed that some traditional beliefs and cultural practices constitute obstacles to development in northern Ghana more than the inadequacy or mismanagement of the physical and economic factors. For instance, among the people of Namoaligo in Talensi traditional area in the Upper East region of Ghana quarrelling is forbidden during the farming and weeding of *sullenpea* a protein rich legume in the pea family, because those who go contrarily to it stand the curse of the gods. This tradition restricted the cultivation of this crop significantly.

3.10.2 Key drivers of employment vulnerability and risk (natural)

Due to the limited investment in the development of irrigation facilities, more than 90 percent of farmers (Pul, 2003) are seasonally unemployed during the long dry seasons.

In the event of natural disasters, the urban unemployed and informal sector actors have a greater exposure to risk of collapsed livelihoods due to the weakened social safety nets characteristics of the rural settings that have served to cushion many a needy person from total destitution. The curtailment of electricity supply due to the fall in water levels in the Akosombo dam, for instance, is impacting heavily on the productive activities of small and micro enterprises in the private informal sector that depend on access to power for their businesses.

3.10.3 Key drivers of health vulnerability and risk (natural)

Disaster-induced health problems are relatively small in the country as a whole. Even in the cases of floods, risks associated with the contamination of water sources are quickly contained, since the flush floods tend to subside rapidly. Consequently, outbreaks of cholera and dysentery as a result of contaminated water sources from floods have been minimal.

Recalcitrant behaviours therefore remain the major cause of vulnerability to health, especially among the poor, since preventable diseases such as HIV, malaria, and pneumonia constitute the major health problems of the poor.

3.10.4 Key drivers of education vulnerability and risk

In a resource poor environment, education holds the key to social mobility out of poverty. Ribes (1981:10) has asserted that the purpose of education and training for individuals, communities and nations is the same. It is as he puts it “to enable every individual to meet his basic needs and become self-supporting by drawing on the experience of older generations; to facilitate and deepen his social adaptation and social relationships on a basis of reciprocity; to enable him to find methods of self-expression in keeping with his personality, to shoulder his responsibility to develop his innate qualities, and so far as possible, to become master of his own destiny”. Education is indeed a key that unlocks opportunities for development at all levels. For instance, “each year of schooling for men and women increases wages by 10-20 percent and farm output by up to 5 percent” (USAID, 2002). In addition, education is known to contribute directly to increasing productivity of families, as a farmer with four years of education is 9 percent more productive than a farmer without an education (Pul, 2003, World Bank, 2002). One additional year of schooling increases an individual’s output by 4 percent to 7 percent (World Bank, 2002).

Since agriculture is the main source of income for most farm families, limited access to good quality education increases their vulnerability to external shocks. It is observed (Bening, 2010) that the general outcry in northern Ghana in particular of the falling educational standards may be an indication that the educational system is providing information but not imparting knowledge. For women, six years of primary education has the added benefits of reduced fertility rates, child mortality and morbidity rates, as well as, maternal mortality rates.

Unfortunately access to good quality education in poor rural areas in the north of Ghana is very limited, despite the efforts of government and NGOs due to factors associated with the poor provisions of basic resources for rural schools, as well as schools within catchment areas of urban slums. Consequently, the poor are usually ill-equipped to confront the effects of natural disasters (Pul, 2003). Far back as 2000, it was reported (GLSS, 2000) that the Upper West region was the poorest region in Ghana. It lags behind other regions in its progress in education, health and infrastructure resulting in high levels of poverty (Imoro, Ahorlu and Koka, 2009)

3.10.5 Key drivers of gender-based vulnerability and risk

Geographically, rural communities, especially those in the forest belt and northern areas of country have greater exposure to risks associated with natural disasters than their urban counterparts. Being predominantly agricultural people, unpredictable rainfall patterns jeopardises their livelihoods.

3.11 Conflict Reduction

3.11.1 Key Drivers

This section discusses the nature and contribution of conflicts to the underdevelopment of northern Ghana and who can or can be heard in matters relating to conflict and conflict transformation.

3.11.1.1 Nature and distribution of Conflicts

In the midst of entrenched and protracted violent conflicts in West Africa, Ghana has been touted as a peaceful country that has not witnessed any large scale civil war, despite the plethora of coup d'états and military misrules since independence. Within the country, however, recurrent incidences of localized violent conflicts emanating from land and chieftaincy disputes do exist. Of the 10 regions, the Northern Region in particular is home to the majority and the worse conflicts in the country. Since 1986, for instance, the region has witnessed no less than ten violent intra and inter-ethnic conflicts that have resulted in the loss of life and property and the deepening of social dislocation and poverty. The worst of these was the 1994/95 interethnic conflict that pitched different coalitions of the 17 ethnic groups in the Northern Region against each other, culminating in at least 2000 recorded deaths and the displacement of more than 200,000 persons internally and into neighbouring Togo (Oxfam, 2009). The 2001 intra-ethnic war among the Dagombas resulted in the murder of the paramount chief of the Dagombas and 40 others, by official counts, and had similar destabilizing effects on the livelihoods of the people in this region and beyond (Aryeetey, 2006).

The Volta region comes second in the recurrence of violent inter-communal conflicts. Notable among these are the more than 80 years old conflicts between the Pekis and Tsitos, the Nkonyas and the Alavanyos. Similar protracted conflicts between the Ningos and Shais in the Greater Accra Region and the people of Tuobodom and Techiman in the Brong Ahafo still have embers that could re-ignite at the least provocation (Oxfam, G.B., 2008).

Central to the causes of these conflicts are issues of political and economic security. Although political recognition and claims of rights to self-rule under the traditional authority systems manifest themselves as the immediate causes of inter ethnic conflicts, beneath the surface are grievances related to land ownership and usage rights. In the northern region for instance, of the 17 indigenous groups in the Northern Region, five (Dagombas, Gonjas, Nanumbas, Mamprusis, and more recently the Mos) have asserted their right to rule over all the other ethnic groups. This has translated into the assertion of their titles to all the lands over which they have declared their suzerainty. The concomitant effect is that all other ethnic groups living in these areas are considered settlers or strangers, who must pay annual cropping fees to their overlords, often amounting to a third of whatever farm produce the settler farmers are able to raise in a year (Ayaga, 2003)

Resentments of the settlers to such land usage arrangements often provide the platform or the coalescing of ethnic sentiments that have fuelled and sustained interethnic divisions and/or boiled up into open conflicts within communities, resulting in frequent disintegration and dislocation of communities in the country (Asenso-Okyere, Twum-Baah and Kasanga, 2000:7-9)

The struggle for power that has characterized intra-ethnic chieftaincy succession disputes also finds its rooms in the economics of power. In the north, the right to rule confers on the ruler the right to appropriate and sell land for housing and commercial purposes, or the right to demand tributes from settler farmers through an intricate web of subordinate chiefs. Hence, economic interests, more than culture and tradition dictate the urge to fight to be chiefs (MOFA/IFAD, 2001).

Though men constitute the fighting forces, women and children bear the brunt of conflicts more than men. They are the immediate victims of displacements from their communities, as they often have to flee to safer havens. The risk of rape of women is higher in times of conflict (Kambonga, 2004). They become the de facto heads of households while their men are at the war front, and when they do not return alive, this role becomes a permanent one. The loss of support in provisioning for household needs

creates additional burdens for widowed women who frequently have to contend with discriminatory customary practices that effectively worsen their poverty situation (Ofosu-Appiah, 2008).

3.11.1.2 Drivers of conflicts in Ghana

The poverty dimension of ethnic conflicts manifests itself in many ways. In all the conflicts unemployed young men constitute the fighting forces, while women and children bear the brunt of the social and economic costs of the wars. Many of these have been ill-prepared for the job market that is further diminished by the frequent upsurge of violence that greatly heightens insecurity for investors and other businesses (Asare, 2003).

The mutually reinforcing relationships between poverty and conflict in the Northern Region is further manifested in the fact that despite the relative endowment and geographical centrality of the region which makes it a perfect growth point economically (Aryeetey, 2006), very few investors have considered it a destination of their businesses. As a result, citizens of the northern region remain trapped in poverty and wars (Pul, 2003), as their natural resources lie under-exploited for poverty reduction.

In northern region of Ghana, most of the conflicts have been directly or remotely related to intra and inter ethnic competition for control over natural resources such as land and associated farming rights, water resources and water rights, national and local political power and recognition that create access to, and control over enclaves of natural resources (Kambonga, 2004).

3.12 Right to be heard

The culture and traditional norms prevailing in Northern Ghana shows that in matters of decision making that entails concrete issues involving elders (particularly male elders), women and the youth are usually not expected to make their opinions clear and loud unless asked to do so. Even then, their decisions and opinions stand a higher chance of being suppressed and not heard irrespective of how good they might seem. This is a peculiarity among the people of northern Ghana, but seems to cut across the entire spectrum of Ghana. In northern Ghana, traditional power is enshrined in the norm that men hold the key to authority. This authority rest on a power that is understood as a relationship of 'A over B', in which power is the ability of A (the relatively powerful person or agency) to get B (the relatively powerless person or agency) to do what B might not otherwise do (Dahl, in Reason and Bradbury, 2001:70). In northern Ghana as a whole, there are clearly recognised issues in a relatively open system in which there are established decision-making arenas. If certain voices (women and the youth) are

present in a community specified forum where decisions are to be made, their participation is interpreted as their own thick-headedness and a sign of disrespectfulness.

3.12.1 Who can or cannot be heard

The right to be heard in public decision making processes is conditioned by gender, age, and in some cases, ethnicity and social status, as outlined below.

3.12.1.1 Rights of Women to be heard – Although women constitute the backbone of the economy at all levels, as far as the target communities and districts are concerned, they are grossly under represented at the decision making tables in the family, community, district and national levels (Wombeogo, 2005, Kunfaa, Dogbe, MacKay and Marshall, 2001)

Outside the domain of politics, women are still under represented in the leadership of both formal and informal sector civil society groupings in Ghana (Kunfaa, et al, 2001). For instance, in the trade unions, “Women are underrepresented in the unions with an estimated share of 9-10 per cent in total membership. This is substantially below women's share of formal sector employment, which is about 25 per cent” (Anyemedu, 2010).

3.12.1.2 Rights of Youth to be heard – Similarly, the youth in rural northern part of Ghana are usually uninvited (that is not formally requested to make their ideas felt in discussions or decisions on development implementation plans for their communities) to decision making forums at the national and continental level (Kunfaa, et al, 2001). This refers particularly to decisions on matters concerning any developmental activity planned to be implemented within their immediate environs.

3.12.1.3 Rights of Children to be heard– they are to be seen, not heard. Therefore children, even in family settings, seldom have a say in decisions that affect their lives. Consequently, parents often arbitrarily decide whether or not to send their children to school; the type of school they should go to, or the types of vocations their children must pursue (SEND-Ghana, 2010), irrespective of the expressed or tacit interests of the children. Among the Dagombas, for instance, the practice of sending girl children to their paternal aunts for training has fostered, in part, the high rates of virtual child labour in these communities, where the girls are often made to work along their aunts in the latter’s trades (UNICEF Ghana, 2009).

3.13 Conclusion

Poverty in Ghana has always had its different faces ranging from economy to individual and household poverty. The situation in Ghana is a little complicated. The face of poverty is not uniform regionally and depending on whether one has a job or not, individuals face poverty differently. Since colonial times, northern sector of Ghana has always been regarded as the poorest part of Ghana. Development attention is less paid to the north of Ghana leading to widespread economic and social development disparities. Political will, poor education and poor initiative on the part of the people of northern Ghana seem to play a crucial role in the level of impoverishment. Despite the large oil deposits discovered and is being drilled in Ghana, the situation of poverty mitigation is yet to be realised.

In the succeeding chapter, I discuss the research methods and techniques used in gathering data, analysing the data and compiling the thesis.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design of the thesis which is basically a blend of observational and descriptive, qualitative and quantitative, cross-sectional and longitudinal survey. However, the research design is primarily qualitative. In addition, is a description of both the logic of the approach to research, and the details of how that logic has been applied. Furtherance to this is an explanation of the logic of enquiry that the thesis uses, recognising the influence of four approaches to or strategies of research: induction, evaluation research, case study research and qualitative research. An explanation is made on the use of methods in detail, including the nature of data collection and analysis of the final sample. A convenient sampling method was used in the community and district selection process. However, the respondents were selected at random. This sampling method was employed to make sure that relatively all communities with similar developmental orientation and programmes being implemented or had been implemented within the period of five years and above as at 2007, were included in the study. In addition, the respondents were randomly selected in order to make sure that all the people residing within the communities had an equal opportunity of being interviewed without any recourse to specifications, class, educational background or social standing.

The proceeding paragraphs of this chapter detail the methodology, the study design, the study locations and the profile of the eight communities selected from the three northern regions of Ghana comprising, Upper East, Upper West and Northern regions. Finally, a comment is made on the sampling frame, sampling technique, the sample size, the limitations and ethical considerations.

4.1.1 Methodology

The research employed a qualitative approach and a descriptive survey to gather data. A descriptive survey was selected because it provides an accurate portrayal or account of the opinions and knowledge of the community members involved in the study. This methodology is based on a critical assessment of realism which Dean et al (2005) stratifies into real, actual and empirical layers. Stratification is a method of sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller groups known as strata. Stratification was formed based on community members' shared attributes or characteristics. Each stratum was taken in a number proportional to the stratum's size as compared to the population. The main advantage with stratification is how it captures key population characteristics in the sample. This method produces characteristics in the sample that are proportional to the overall population.

These three strata of reality reveal the depth of critical realism. Sayer (1999:10) explains these as follows: the 'real' is both whatever exist, regardless of whether it is an empirical object or not, and the real of objects which have certain structures and causal powers. In terms of this thesis the real is represented by the Government agencies and NGOs, the projects they run, the communities involved and the potential for participation by community members in poverty reduction (causal power). For Sayer the 'actual' is "what happens if and when those [causal] powers are activated" (Sayer, 1999:12). In this thesis the actual refers to the events (or levels of participation) stimulated by the different case studies under consideration as well as the means or mechanisms by which these events come about. Finally, for Sayer, the 'empirical' refers to the domain of experience, and, as such, the experience of either real or actual strata (Sayer, 1999:13). In this thesis the empirical is represented by participants' experiences of the government and NGOs, the particular project involved and the process of participatory engagements by community members that this brought about. The empirical is the stratum that the researcher is able to access directly through interaction with participants of these projects and their level of participation in contributing to poverty reduction. This empirical stratum forms only part of reality, and allows only indirect access to real and actual strata. It means that this work can claim only to provide a mediated view of reality, which is constructed through interaction with multiple empirical sources.

Various writers have noted the appropriateness of the critical realist methodological perspective for the social sciences (Gandy, 1996; Woodgate and Redclift, 1998; Carolan, 2005a) and for research in practice or value-based topics (Robson, 2002). The methodology is mainly considered useful because it provides an opportunity to link the realms of developmental programmes and beneficiary communities in research.

4.1.2 Research strategy and approach

Here, in the thesis is explained the strategy and approach to research, including the influence of four major bodies of the methods literature to the overall direction of research. First the research takes an inductive approach to theory, aiming to create an impact on theory in the area of community participation in existing projects in northern Ghana (4.1.2.1). Second, evaluation is used as a research strategy or 'logic of enquiry' that structures the research by providing a logic of causation, influencing the choice of methods, and providing a set of sensitizing concepts for collection and analysis (4.1.2.2).

Third and fourth, the researcher use case study and qualitative approaches in this thesis, and these are explained, contextualised and justified in turn here (4.2 and 4.3).

4.1.2.1 Induction

The research took what is commonly known as an inductive approach. Inductive approach was chosen because the research was exploratory and attempted to create a new impact on theories to explain the influence of government and NGOs interventions at community level on community participation. Note that not all writers call this process 'inductive', and in Blaikie's rather more subtle characterisation of research strategies this approach would come somewhere between 'retroduction' and 'abduction' (Blaikie, 2000:101). Retroduction refers to a research strategy which tries to "discover underlying mechanisms to explain observed regularities" (Blaikie, 2000:101) and which tests evidence for these mechanisms in an iterative way. Abduction is a research strategy which aims "to describe and understand social life in terms of social actors' motives and accounts" (Blaikie, 2000:101). In this thesis two principles, namely, looking for regularities in development actors' motives and accounts of their involvement in poverty reduction through intervention projects have been used.

4.1.2.2 Evaluation as research strategy

In this thesis I am using an evaluation research strategy. Since the thesis attempts to uncover the activities, characteristics and outcomes of a particular type of intervention (community-based poverty reduction projects and people's participation) in order to improve the understanding of such interventions, evaluation research seems to be an appropriate strategy. Weiss (1998) sees a key purpose of evaluation as 'understanding social intervention', using evaluation as an opportunity to develop theory about a type of intervention which is challenged by the ever-changing nature of conditions. The research is based on the 'realistic evaluation' approach of the social policy writers Pawson and Tilley (1997). As such, this section starts with the outline on realistic evaluation approach in more detail, and then contrasts it to other models of evaluation and an explanation on how it has been used in the research.

4.1.2.2.1 Realistic Evaluation

Pawson and Tilley start from the premise that an intervention can have different effects on the beneficiaries and according to the particular individual, institutions and infrastructure, and the options available to the development actors involved. This approach is further explained as follows: "...programmes work (have successful 'outcomes') only in so far as they introduce the appropriate ideas and opportunities ('mechanisms') to groups in the appropriate social and cultural conditions" (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:57). In their view, an outcome occurs as a result of a combination of contextual factors existing in the specific instance of a programme's implementation, and mechanisms stimulated within those contexts. The three concepts are defined in more detail as follows:

- The context is: “the prior set of social rules, norms, values and interrelationships ... which sets limits on the efficacy of programme mechanisms” (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:70)
- A mechanism refers to: “how programme outputs follow from the stakeholders’ choices (reasoning) and their capacity (resources) to put these into practice” (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:66).
- An outcome is: “the change in rates which evaluation research will try to discern and explain” (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:74).

4.1.2.2.2 Evaluation in this research

Pawson and Tilley’s ‘realistic evaluation’, has guided the strategy in this thesis in several ways. First, the logic of the model of evaluation research that Pawson and Tilley propose permeates my research. This includes their model of causation and their perception of how change happens in society. Finally the concepts of context, mechanism and outcome are used as a sensitising framework for data collection and analysis (Blaikie, 2000; Robson, 2002).

In their view research seeks to uncover the choices made by participants that lead to changes in practice, and the contexts in which those choices are enabled to occur. They argue that the entrenched division between qualitative and quantitative research is unhelpful, and that to provide a new focus on how to choose methods, researchers should be guided by the needs of theory (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). In the social science literature much energy has been expended on discussing the differences between and the relative merits of qualitative or quantitative strategies. Some authors set these up as two opposing paradigms of how to do research (Guba and Lincoln, 2005) although there is an acknowledgement that the distinctions between the two may not be as great as we tend to think (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Rather than entering into this debate, Pawson and Tilley argue that the main driver for methods choice should be how those methods add to the efforts to build theory around the area in question. In the research this has been a useful starting point for choosing methods.

4.2 Case study approach

Case studies are often associated with qualitative methods, although many authors agree that this is a rather crude characterisation of the approach (Hammersley, 1992; Blaikie, 2000; Yin, 2003). Indeed, what defines a case study is its focus on a particular social phenomenon, not the methods it uses (Blaikie, 2000).

4.2.1 Case study literature

A case study research approach is one of many potential research approaches that could be taken, and, as such, needs justifying here (Blaikie, 2000). In his book on case study research, Yin suggests that such an approach is particularly appropriate when research questions are asking ‘how’ or ‘why’ a phenomenon occurs (Yin, 2003). In other words, research that focuses wholly or partly on process is well suited to case studies as it "allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin, 2003, 2).

Generalisation in case studies is a different kind of generalisation than that seen in experimental or survey research. As Yin puts it: "in doing a case study, your goal will be to expand and generalise theories (analytical generalisation) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisation)" (Yin, 2003, 10). In practice this means that researchers engaged in case study research use this in particular to explore the general, and in doing so question existing theories. This can be a revealing process, and represents an important contribution to theory. As Flyvbjerg puts it:

"...researchers, who have conducted intensive, in-depth case studies, typically report that their preconceived views, assumptions concepts and hypotheses were wrong and that the case material has compelled them to revise their hypotheses on essential points" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, 235).

So while it is clear that something can be learned from case study research, crucially, a case study strategy allows for a certain type of generalisation ‘analytical’ and not another ‘statistical’. As such, the outcome of research of this type is not ‘rule-based knowledge’ as Flyvbjerg calls it, but rather a linking of concepts into process theories based on the observations made of reality. Importantly then, case studies are able to tackle causal explanations for phenomena, but such causal explanations go beyond the linear models used in survey or experimental research (Yin, 2003). This fits well with the understanding of causal explanation used in this thesis.

4.3 Case studies in this research

In this research, three case studies of sustainability projects run by community-based organisations of the eight study communities were followed aimed at changing participant practice. In Stake’s terminology the case studies drawn upon in this thesis are instrumental rather than intrinsic: the idea of studying them is mainly to draw generalisation about the common theme (the influence of the poor in pro-poor activities in northern Ghana) “not to gain a better understanding of a specific case” (Stake, 1995).

All projects studied were based in the north of Ghana. This was mainly for convenience and proximity reasons as the researcher is located in this area. Since such projects are common throughout northern Ghana, this did not cause any problems in finding cases, as it was relatively easy to find examples of each kind of project in the near vicinity. In addition, this does not reduce the generalisation of the cases, since similar cases can be found across the whole of Ghana under similar conditions.

4.4 Study design

The study is primarily qualitative and descriptive longitudinal survey but with some quantitative approaches in the data collection process. This was carried out from 2007 to 2011 to obtain similar outcomes from dissimilar activities. This type of design was chosen because it is relatively inexpensive and can be conducted over an extended period of time. Longitudinal surveys collect data about the same individual community at different points in time, allowing the opportunity to track change at the level of the individual community or household. Longitudinal surveys play a major part in developing an understanding of social change, including such things as the participation of individuals in community projects, the role of education in community mobilisation and social mobility, the impact of family situations on child development and how periods of unemployment affect individual and household welfare (Middlemiss, 2009, 84). The research areas are quite spatial, though linked in socio-economic and cultural outlook. I had to adopt this method to enable me reach at least all selected districts and communities in each of the regions under discussion and to obtain similar outcomes as much as possible. Obtaining similar outcomes was particularly important because it would give an indication of how similar activities carried or being carried out in other communities of northern Ghana have been done, with or without much participation of community members across genders and ages. This would enable appropriate generalisations (Stake, 1995) to be made on the levels of participation in development activities by community members in northern Ghana.

The information from these discussions was used to guide the formulation of the questions for data gathering for the survey. The study adopted the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) method to implement a stratified random sampling scheme. A two-stage cluster procedure with community sections and households within each section as the two levels sampling units was adopted. The sample size depended on the number of households within each cluster at each section as the intention was to interview all these households ($n = 250$). A matching household sample size from the same community was randomly selected.

4.5 Methods of data collection

The study employed multistage methods in data gathering process. First stage: - interviews; preference for interview was given to sections of the community with developmental projects either completed or on-going within them. Prior to the interview sessions, a census was conducted in all the communities, recording all sections of the community with completed or continuous projects. From this list, communities were randomly selected. A total of eight communities were selected from three districts in the three regions of northern Ghana for interviewing and from which data was gathered for the study.

Second stage: - questionnaire; the study largely used a semi-structured questionnaire consisting of sixty-nine (69), open and close ended questions. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rank some intervention projects in descending order from 9 to 1 showing a reverse of the direction of the ranks. With descending, the largest value receives a rank of 1, the next largest value receives a rank of 2, and so on signifying the quality of their priority (example is seen in Table 5.12). Ranking of the questionnaire was essential in order to give the respondents the opportunity to sort out the projects or interventions that best fitted into their personal and collective scheme of priority of benefit to them as a community. While the questionnaire was written in English, the interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in the ethnic languages by trained interviewers well vested in the various local languages, culture and sensitivities of the communities. The local languages included the following, Talen, Dagaari, Dagbani and Manpruli spoken in the communities selected for the study. The objective here was to investigate whether there was a measurable difference in knowledge, attitude and practice concerning community involvement in development activities taken place or have taken place in their communities within the study period. In general, the study aimed to investigate whether community involvement or non-involvement has any impact on their behaviour and willingness to participate in a community-based programme towards poverty reduction.

Third stage: - Focus group discussions (FGD); Prior to the community-wide survey a series of focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in all eight communities comprising opinion leaders, Assembly members, Chiefs and elders of each of the communities, men and women across all ages. The tools used to conduct the FGDs were open-ended questionnaire and opinion sharing on prior knowledge of intervention projects in each of the target communities. The groups involved were homogenous in composition and each of the eight communities had their own FGD. The focus group discussion is a rapid assessment, semi-structured data gathering method in which a purposively selected set of participants gather to discuss issues and concerns based on a list of key themes drawn up by the researcher (Kumar, 1987). This is a qualitative research technique, originally developed to give

marketing researchers a better understanding of data from quantitative consumer surveys (Krueger, 1988). FGD is widely used by development practitioners in obtaining insights into target audience perceptions and opinions on developmental projects and activities being or have been implemented within their localities. In addition, it is a cost-effective technique suitable for eliciting views, opinions, needs, problems and reasons for certain practices of community beneficiaries, clients and stakeholders. According to Debus (1988), FGD provides a fast way to learn from the target audience.

The researcher specifically used FGD technique to understand the reasons, values and impact of activities of development practitioners concerning the following parameters in the development discourse on the lives of community beneficiaries.

- Project processes (the management, the partnership and the delivery);
- Stakeholders and end-users' role and level of involvement in the project process;
- Expectations and aims of various stakeholders being involved in the project;
- Feedback on the project, particularly feelings about the project outcomes and outputs;
- Potential impact of the project on individuals and the community at large;
- What worked well and what didn't work and why;
- How the project processes could have been improved;

Data collection tools used in the study also included the following; reference to secondary sources such as textbooks, internet, journals and reports of selected NGOs. These tools were used as sources of information for literature review, to gather information or data from the selected communities and to solicit clarity on development activities and planned programmes ongoing or completed within the target communities in order to compile this thesis. The following organisations were principally used during the data collection process; UNDP, UNESCO and other NGO operating in the regions, notably, Catholic Relief services (CRS), Action Aid (a UK based NGO), working in Ghana, World Vision International (WVI), Ghana and Plan Ghana. These NGOs were selected because I have worked with some either as a full time programme officer (CRS) or as a consultant in baseline surveys (WVI, Ghana). It was also based on their presence and activities at the selected communities for the research. The designated Programme Officers and Field Officers were interviewed at the listed international organisations. These designated officials are the prime personnel responsible for direct implementation and supervision of programme activities at the community level. They have first hand information on community needs and the levels of participation in community development activities. I sought a verbal permission from the sectional Directors to use their reports and related documents from their libraries to help in my data gathering process.

4.6 Study area

The study was conducted at the northern part of Ghana. The northern part of Ghana was purposefully chosen for the study because, evidence from previous surveys such as GDHS (2003), GSS (2008) indicate that the three northern regions comprising the Upper East, Upper West and Northern, are the poorest in Ghana (Ofoso-Appiah, 2008). Out of each of these three regions, eight communities were selected for the study and include Nandom, Jirapa, Namoaligo, Kotintabig, Chiana, Jawani, Nalerigu and Mankarigu.

4.6.1 Profile of research communities

4.6.1.1 Nandom

Nandom is 100 kilometres away from the Upper West capital, Wa. Nandom has a renowned hospital which is a host to medical specialists such as orthopaedics and neurologists. It has a well endowed Senior High School, 15 basic schools and a rich traditional authority. It is relatively rich with several employment avenues for qualified working class youth. There are three dominant religious groupings common among the people of Jirapa; viz. Traditional, Islam and Christian, the most dominant among the people in Nandom. The people of Nandom speak Dagaare, enjoy drinking Guinness beer and the local drink (Pito). The people of Nandom most important delicacy is the dog meat.

4.6.1.2 Jirapa

Jirapa is located at the southern end of the Upper West regional capital, Wa. It is 220 kilometres away from Wa and 406 kilometres from Tamale, the northern regional capital. Jirapa is endowed with very important health institutions such as a midwifery training college, a nurses training college and a community health nurses training school. It has a Senior High School situated in the centre of the town. One remarkable tourist attraction is the Jirapa Naa (Chief) palace which is beautifully situated on top of a hill looking down the entire town. It is a home for missionaries in the past and present. It is suggestive looking at the development pattern of northern Ghana that the missionaries played a key role in the infrastructural development of the town and the Christian character that is very pronounced among the people. There are three dominant religious groupings common among the people of Jirapa; viz. Traditional, Islam and Christian, the most dominant among the people in Jirapa. The language spoken in Jirapa is Dagaare. Just like the people of Nandom, the people of Jirapa, dog meat is their most important delicacy.

4.6.1.3 Namoaligo

Namoaligo dates back to prehistoric days. The exact age of the community is not documented. It is one of the biggest communities in the east of Talensi and has a population of approximately 2000 people. It is 30 kilometres from the regional capital of Upper East, Bolgatanga and 11.25 kilometres away from the district capital, Tongo. The people speak Talen and are predominantly traditional believers. Christianity and Islam are growing steadily among the people. Some parts of the community possess electricity but no pipe borne water facilities. Community members rely on boreholes and hand-dug wells for their source of drinking water. There are five boreholes in the entire community and several private hand-dug wells are dotted within it.

The community is largely traditional and is ruled by a chief and clan leaders. Informal gold mining activities take place in the area (popularly called *gallamsay*) and draw many youth, both male and female, towards that sector. This apart, the inhabitants basically undertake subsistence farming and petty trading in local goods and communal service provision. The community has no sanitary facilities and human excreta are disposed off through the free-range system (or in the bush and on the farm lands around the houses).

Employment and income levels are almost non-existent, except for those who engage in petty trading in the local markets. There is no road network through the centre of the community and the only accessible routes are paths created by the community members that link them to other neighbouring communities. A clinic and a church are situated in the community. The community clinic is well built and serves the community and other surrounding communities. As there is no school in the community, children attend a near-by community's school a few kilometres away.

4.6.1.4 Kotintabig

This is one community that falls within the Nabdam section of the Talensi-Nabdam district in the Upper East region of Ghana. It is a small community with a spatial population size of 2350. The community is 75 km away from Nangodi and 25 km away from Sekoti, the two sub district areas within the section of the Nabdam catchment area of the Talensi-Nabdam district. It has a school, a small clinic and five boreholes which provide drinking water for the people and their animals. There is no access road from the road linking Nangodi to Sekoti to Kotintabig. Apart from subsistence farming and a few teachers and community health nurses, there are no other opportunities for the indigenous inhabitants to exploit. The people speak Nabit and are predominantly traditional believers. Christianity and Islam are growing steadily among the people.

4.6.1.5 Chiana

Chiana is located between Navrongo and Builsa to the south, Tumu to the West and Navrongo to the north. It is approximately 21 kilometres from Navrongo and 100 kilometres away from Tumu in the Upper West region of Ghana. It has a population of about 2000. It is known for its rich culture and traditions. It used to be a slave trading town during the colonial times and so has some important slave sites for tourist attractions. It has one of the finest local architectural designs particularly in housing. There is a Senior High School in the area in addition to 4 basic schools dotted around the town. There is a health centre in the town that takes care of the health needs of the people. The people speak Kassem and are predominantly traditional believers. Christianity is highly practised, with Islam still growing steadily among the people. The main source of potable drinking water is from boreholes and hand dug wells dotted around the town.

4.6.1.6 Jawani

Jawani is a small but densely populated community (about 1500 people) in relation to the size of the area. It is located in the East Mamprusi district of the Northern region, approximately 20 kilometres from Nalerigu, the second biggest town in the district and 27.5 kilometres from Gambaga, the district capital. There is no access road to Jawani from any of these towns and the area is far removed from any source of modern services. The people speak Mampruli and are predominantly traditional believers. Christianity and Islam are growing steadily among the people. A vast majority of the people are engaged in subsistence farming and includes crop and animal farming. There is a borehole that serves the community with drinking water and some households have their own private wells outside their homes. A community clinic and school have been built with local material and are supported by NGOs such as CRS and WVI. A common market exists where people trade in local food and non-food items, among others.

4.6.1.7 Nalerigu

Nalerigu is relatively a large town and is the traditional seat of the Nayire, the king of Mamprugu and the embodiment of northern traditional chieftaincy authority. It is bordered by Gambaga to the south, Nakpanduri to the north, Jawani to the East and Garu to the West. It is very rich in traditional culture and festivals, particularly, the Damba cultural dance festival celebrated annually throughout Mamprugu. It is the seat of the traditional king makers that enskin paramount and selected divisional chiefs in some key communities of Northern and Upper East regions of northern Ghana. The people speak Mampruli and predominantly practise the Islamic religion. Many practise the traditional and Christian religious

faiths too. Nalerigu is a host to a private and renowned hospital established by the Basel Baptist Missionaries, a Senior Secondary School, two guest houses or hostels and other privately owned infrastructure dotted around the town.

The people engage in subsistence agriculture for their livelihood. However, the town has an ancient market which draws lots of people from neighbouring communities and towns to it. Thus, a substantial number of people, particularly women and the youth are engaged in informal sector activities such as petty commerce in various goods and services including livestock and imported clothing, among others.

4.6.1.8 Mankarigu

Mankarigu literally means over-matured okra. The community is surrounded by the Daboya River which stretches from Daboya in the northern region through Fumbisi in the Builsa district in the Upper East region of Ghana. It is bordered by Daboya to the south, Fumbisi to the north, Fufulsu to the South-west and Tamale to the east. It is about 150 kilometres from Soale through Daboya. The land is largely sandy and gets soaked during the rainy season. The people speak Gonja and predominantly practise the Islamic religion. Some practise the traditional and Christian religious faiths too. Mankarigu has a community clinic that meets the health needs of the people. There is a community school built by the government of Ghana. Mankarigu has a rich agricultural resource and produces largely maize and yam.

4.7 Sample frame

A sample was done for this study for the following four major reasons:

First, it is usually too costly to test the entire population. The government of Ghana spends millions of Ghana Cedis to conduct a Census every ten years. While the Ghana government may have that kind of money, most researchers do not, hence the need to sample the population for the purpose of this study.

The second reason to sample is that it may be impossible to test the entire population with limited resources for a restricted purpose such as finding out people's direct and indirect involvement in development activities taking or have taken place in their communities. Hence there was need for the researcher to sample the population in order to make inferences on the results accordingly.

The third reason to sample is that testing the entire population often produces errors (Middleweis, 2009:55). Thus, sampling may be more accurate.

All members of each of the eight communities from the northern regions of Ghana constituted the sample frame.

4.7.1 Sample size

A total of eight communities from three districts of the three northern regions were selected for the study. The sample size was ten percent of the total population of each of the communities involved. This was done at random and households involved were picked coincidentally and not in any define order or numbers.

4.7.2 Sampling procedure / techniques

Each region proposed three districts each and these were grouped according to population size as documented by the Ghana Statistical Services (GSS, 2012) as seen below:

- 5000 -15000
- 15001 -250000
- 250001 – 350000 or more

Pieces of papers were made for the total number of districts. Twenty four papers were labelled with the name of communities from all the three districts. All the papers were stirred in a bowl and the community representatives were made to pick one in two sessions. The communities that picked were used for the study. The various ages and gender of respondents were arrived at during the sampling process. The sampling process for the community selection was explained to the representatives that were present to carry out the picking. The researcher had two main reasons for making the community members do the picking from the sample bowl which eventually were used for the study. These were, first, for the community members to see that the selection was free of bias by the researcher and second, this was to enlist their fullest participation in the process. It was extremely difficult to tell those community representatives whose communities were not selected that there would not be part of the study. The researcher took time to explain to the representatives the purpose of the selection process. The researcher told them that the communities selected would be used for the study and that the research was for academic purposes and would not attract any form of immediate monetary or developmental projects during the study. This explanation was necessary as some of the community members thought the researcher was coming with some material resources for their respective communities. In that case communities that were not selected would be disadvantaged accordingly. So it was necessary to disabuse their minds of this perceptual thought. The researcher however, assured them that though their communities would not be directly studied within the confines of the research, the final report would be made available to them as well. This appeased them and they accepted the fact that the report would be read by them just as the studied community members.

4.7.3 Data analysis

Data collected was analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Graphs, charts and tables were used to represent results/findings where appropriate. Qualitative and descriptive approach was used during the analytical process to draw meaning and understanding to quantitative analysis of graphs, tables and charts presented.

4.7.3.1 Study variables

These include the dependent and independent variables as indicated below.

4.7.3.1.1 Dependent Variables

Knowledge and attitude towards development initiatives in selected communities

4.7.3.1.2 Independent variables

The independent variables in this thesis included, personal data, identification of projects/programmes, local participation in planning and implementation; benefits derived from community development projects and community efforts in project sustainability.

4.8 Validity and Reliability

Validity in research refers to the consistency of, and extent to, which the data collection tool measures what it intends to measure. The questions were carefully set to reflect the objectives of the study. Upon cross-examination of the questions by the thesis promoter, equivocal questions were restated clearly. Further corrections were made before the final questions were printed out. Lessons learnt from the pre-test were used to make the necessary modifications/amendments to improve the reliability and validity of the data collection tools, so that research findings could be safely relied on for generalisations on the target population.

Content validity was addressed by explaining the questionnaire to those who could not read and understand the English language to maintain consistency in the use of the language. In furtherance to this, an experienced development interventionist and other experts in the field of community development were asked by the researcher to go through the questionnaire before it was given to the respondents to address the face validity. The instruments were purposely pre-tested in a pilot study involving 10 respondents who were outside the target population but with similar environmental conditions as the study areas in order to assess their clarity, precision and reliability in collecting information on the variables intended to be investigated. It was this process that modifications in the

questionnaire were performed to improve its accuracy. The researcher went through the questionnaire before it was given out. The questionnaire was made easy for reading and understanding. All these measures combined, increased the accuracy or reliability and validity of the study and the data generated.

4.9. Ethical considerations

For ethical reasons and formalities, official letters were served to the District Chief Executives or District Directors. Also, before data collection, the objective of the research was explained to respondents to seek their consent, which was freely granted verbally. The respondents were assured by the researcher and the research team that confidentiality would be strictly adhered to. Though anticipated, refusals and withdrawals were not experienced during the preparatory period or during the study itself.

4.10 Limitations

The researchers throughout the study tried to apply rigorous control factors that could validate and allow generalisation of the results. However, generalisation of these results is subject to the following possible and not exclusive limitations:

1. The views of community members outside the selected communities were not represented in this study because they were not selected, though they might have had some ongoing pro-poor interventions. This deprived the researcher some enhancement on the study if the views were captured.
2. It would have been more appropriate to select from all districts in the three northern regions. However due to financial constraints only eight communities from three districts in the three northern regions of Ghana were used.
3. Thus with forty-nine (49) districts in the three northern regions, though the districts have a lot in common in terms of geographical location, socio-economic conditions and politico-religious orientation, a study of three out of forty-nine was a serious limitation in terms of proportionality. Accordingly, this made generalisation of data and findings across the entire northern sector of Ghana problematic.

4.10.1 Reflections on challenges encountered during the study

The study itself was very challenging taken into consideration the terrain of the study areas, distances from one region to the other and the nature of the road network linking each of the study communities to the district capitals. The road network in northern Ghana linking districts and regional boundaries are in

a whole in deplorable state. Travelling from one place to the other was extremely tasking. On one occasion from Namoaligo in the Talensi district of the Upper East region to Jawani in the East Mamprusi district in the northern region, the researcher's vehicle broke down at a village called Dagbiriboari. In this village, there was no auto-mechanic, no electricity supply, no restaurants and no accommodation for guests. The researcher stayed in the car till the next day. It was later during the day that a community member of that village offered his motor-bike for the researcher to travel 45km back to the district capital at Gambaga to solicit help from auto-mechanics who then came and repaired the vehicle for the researcher to continue the journey to Jawani.

This apart, the study was quite expensive in monetary terms. The researcher underestimated the travel cost and the use of interpreters at some point, accommodation, boarding and feeding, among others.

One other significant challenge encountered was poor communication network services in some of the communities studied. At Jawani, Mankarigu and some parts of Namoaligo, it was just impossible using mobile phone to communicate. The network services were basically absent. On one occasion, in three days at the Jawani, we could not communicate with anybody outside the community. It was very frustrating, to say the least. It was so challenging that when the researcher needed a mechanic to come and assess his car he could not make a phone call for support due to network difficulties. Poor communication network at some of the study communities was a serious challenge and contributed in reducing the efforts of the researcher. Reaching respondents on phone to solicit further information for the study was grossly hampered as a result of the poor network connectivity.

Though the respondents were willing participants, they wanted some monetary compensation for their efforts, particularly the opinion leaders that were involved. This had a significant financial burden on the researcher.

4.11 Assumptions

The study assumed that the selected communities have benefited or are benefiting from either Government or NGO some form of development intervention within the past five years of the data collection period to enable the respondents offer meaningful responses to the questionnaire. This was validated based on the raw selection process by the district leadership as per the researcher's request for communities benefiting from or have benefited from pro-poor intervention programmes.

In addition, the study assumed that there is or was participation and bilateral communication among the interventionists and the community beneficiaries. This will enable an assessment on the levels and

quality of the participation and communication process, the type of intervention and the rationale behind it.

4.12 Conclusion

The chapter outlined the research design of the thesis which blends observational and descriptive, qualitative and quantitative, cross-sectional and longitudinal survey into a collective whole. A convenient random sampling method was used in the community, district and respondent selection processes. A comprehensive profile of each of the selected communities is presented on 4.6.1. A sample size of eight communities from three districts of the three northern regions was selected for the study. Qualitative and descriptive approach was used during the data analysis of graphs, tables and charts presented. The study variables were categorised into dependent (knowledge and attitude towards pro-poor interventions) and independent variables (sex or gender, status in community, the level of participation and reasons for doing so, the religious denomination and the ethnic background). The study assumed that the selected communities have benefited from some pro-poor interventions, participated in such projects and there was bilateral communication among the interventionists and the community members benefiting from the interventions.

In chapter five following, the research results or findings are presented, inferences are made on the findings depicted on tables as prevails in the researched communities and presents a platform for further discussion of the findings in the thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter five deals with the presentation of data and analysis made in the form of respondents' responses on tables, key outcomes and discussion on the views and remarks gathered from the research findings. Eight communities (section 1.1) in the northern sector of Ghana were selected to participate in the research. Below is a presentation of the detail responses on tables and graphs.

5.1.1 Information of respondents according to regions and communities

Table 5.1 Age of respondents

Age of respondents	UWR communities		UER communities			NR communities		
	Nandom	Jirapa	Namoaligo	Kotintabig	Chiana	Jawani	Nalerigu	Mankarigu
20-29	30	39	50	45	45	39	55	48
30-39	18	54	45	37	30	25	34	50
40-49	25	48	25	33	57	14	54	37
50-59	15	34	21	24	35	15	35	33
60+	12	25	9	11	33	7	22	32
Total/community	100	200	150	150	200	100	200	200
Total/Region	300		500			500		

Figure 5.1 DISTRIBUTION OF THE AGES OF RESPONDENTS IN THE UPPER WEST REGION (Nandom, Jirapa)

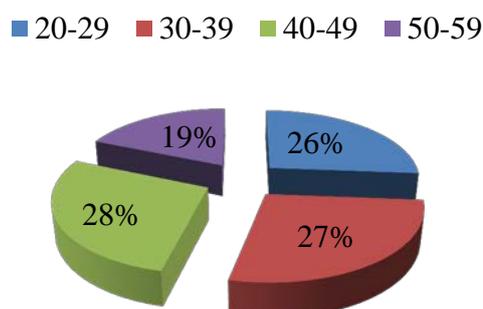


Figure 5.2 DISTRIBUTION OF THE AGES OF RESPONDENTS IN THE UPPER EAST REGION (Namoaligo, Kotintabig, Chiana)

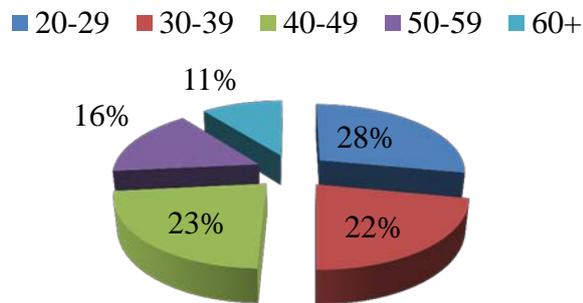
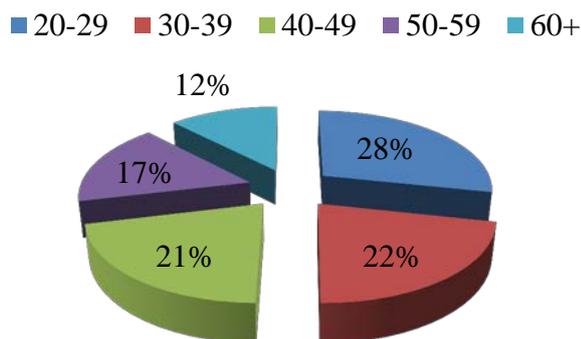


Figure 5.3 DISTRIBUTION OF THE AGES OF RESPONDENTS IN THE NORTHERN REGION (Jawani, Nalerigu, Mankarigu)



A quick glance at the age groupings of respondents depicts an interesting spread of the ages that formed the core of the respondents as illustrated on figures 5.1-5.3. Approximately, 75.7 percent of respondents fell between the ages of 20-49 in each of the eight communities of the three regions under study. Importantly, the respondents fell within the working class of 20-60 years. The age bracket was very significant as majority of respondents fell within the active working class and would benefit directly from any development activity within the communities understudy.

Table 5.2 Gender of respondents

Gender of respondents	UWR communities		UER communities			NR communities		
	Nandom	Jirapa	Namoaligo	Kotintabig	Chiana	Jawani	Nalerigu	Mankarigu
Male	65	105	65	78	123	63	150	93
Female	35	95	85	72	77	37	50	107
Total	100	200	150	150	200	100	200	200

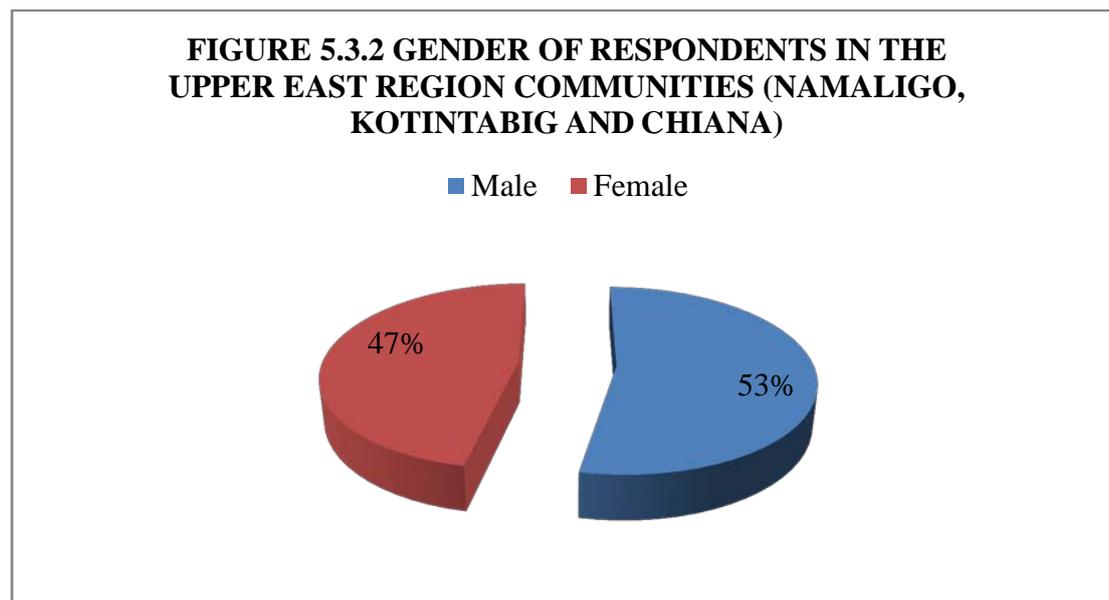
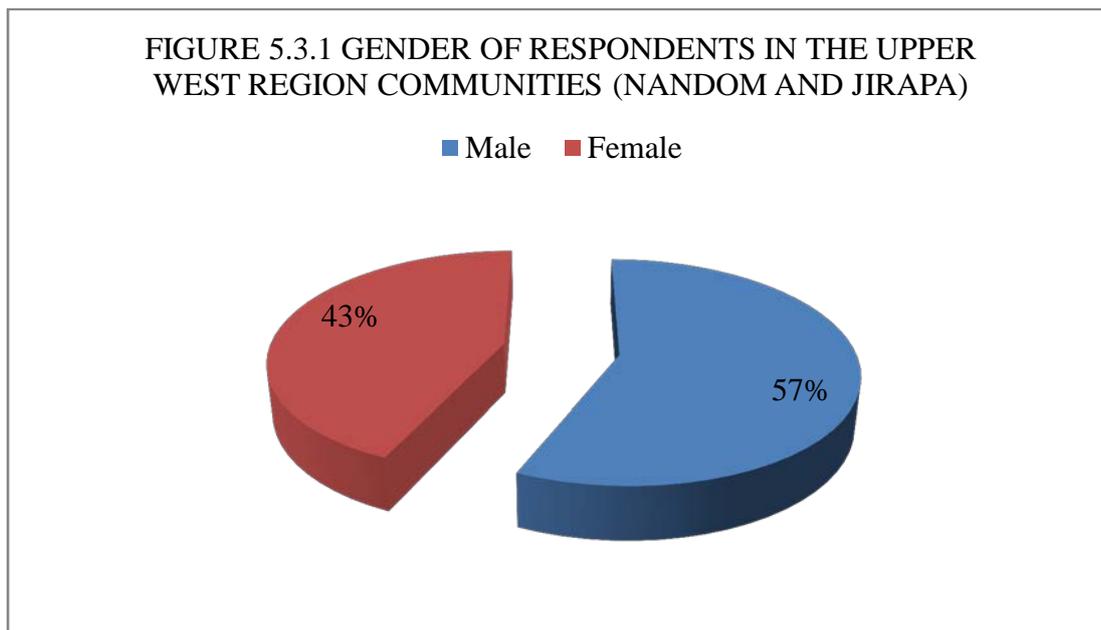
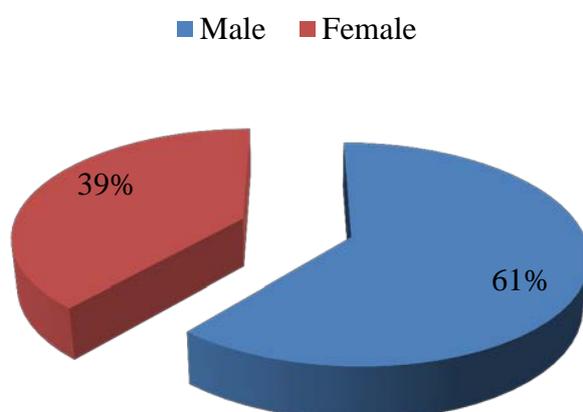


FIGURE 5.3.3 GENDER OF RESPONDENTS IN THE NORTHERN REGION COMMUNITIES (JAWANI, NALERIGU AND MANKARIGU)



The figures above indicate that 57 percent of all the respondents in the three regions of northern Ghana were male. Apart from Mankarigu in the Northern region (NR) and Namoaligo in the Upper East (UER) region where female participants dominated their male counterparts (Table 5.2), the rest of the six communities in the three regions were dominated largely by males. This suggests that either the males are more susceptible to calls for meetings or that women are somehow not interested much in attending such forums or are either busy with their daily chores or discouraged by their male spouses from participating in such social events. Interestingly, an informal discussion with women on the field indicated that spousal discouragement from community events of such nature and male dominance over all issues within the community were the main causes of women limited participation in community forums.

Table 5.3 Economic sector

Economic sector	UWR communities		UER communities			NR communities		
	Nandom	Jirapa	Namoaligo	Kotintabig	Chiana	Jawani	Nalerigu	Mankarigu
Farming	60	110	95	100	110	72	110	135
Teachers	9	19	6	10	30	4	56	7
Nurses	6	11	4	2	14	1	18	3
Civil servant	2	10	1	2	11	0	9	3
Agriculture extension	3	10	3	3	9	1	13	5

NGO work								
-local	4	6	8	3	8	2	9	2
-International	6	9	3	1	4	1	5	4
Petty trading	35	75	67	56	79	34	45	59
Other	8	11	7	6	13	5	10	12
	133	261	194	183	278	120	285	230

FIGURRE 5.4.1 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THE PUBLIC ECONOMIC SECTOR IN THE UPPER WEST REGIONAL COMMUNITIES (NANDOM AND JIRAPA)

■ Farming ■ Teachers ■ Nurses ■ Civil servant ■ Agriculture extension

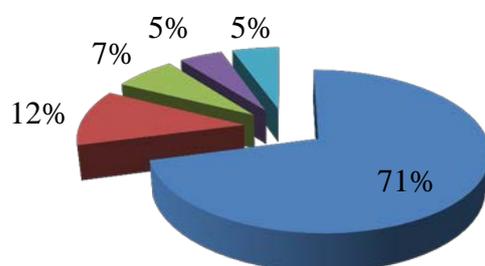


FIGURE 5.4.2 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THE PUBLIC ECONOMIC SECTOR IN THE UPPER EAST REGIONAL COMMUNITIES(NAMOALIGO, KOTINTABIG AND CHIANA)

■ Farming ■ Teachers ■ Nurses ■ Civil servant ■ Agriculture extension

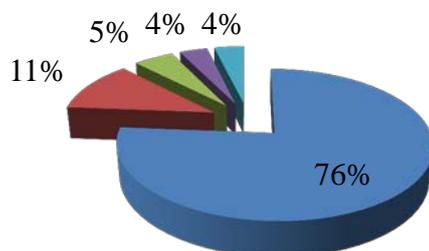


FIGURE 5.4.3 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THE PUBLIC ECONOMIC SECTOR IN THE NORTHERN REGIONAL COMMUNITIES(JAWANI, NALERIGU AND MANKARIGU)

■ Farming ■ Teachers ■ Nurses ■ Civil servant ■ Agriculture extension

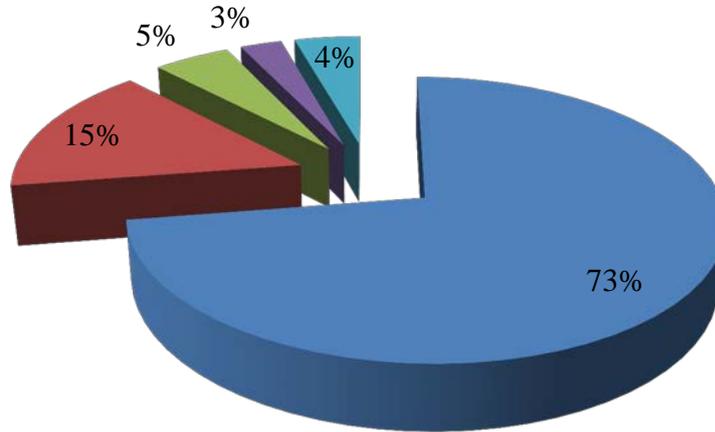


FIGURE 5.4.1.1 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THE NGO ECONOMIC SECTOR IN THE UPPER WEST REGIONAL COMMUNITIES (NANDOM AND JIRAPA)

■ local ■ International ■ Petty trading ■ Other

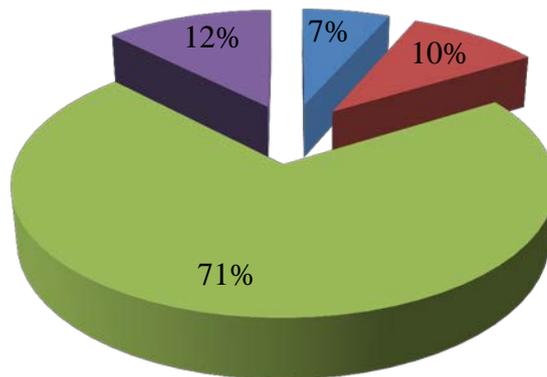


FIGURE 5.4.2.2 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THE NGO ECONOMIC SECTOR IN THE UPPER EAST REGIONAL COMMUNITIES(NAMOALIGO, KOTINTABIG AND CHIANA)

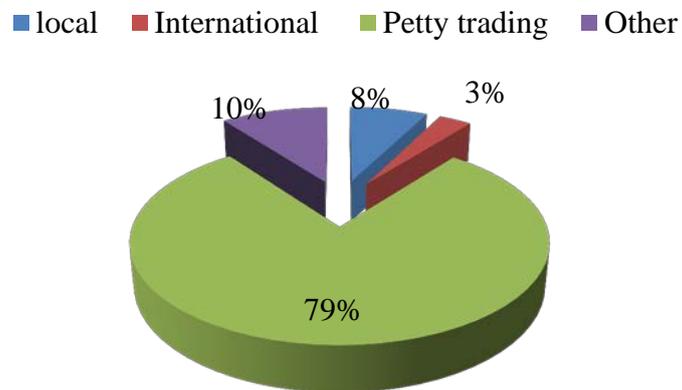
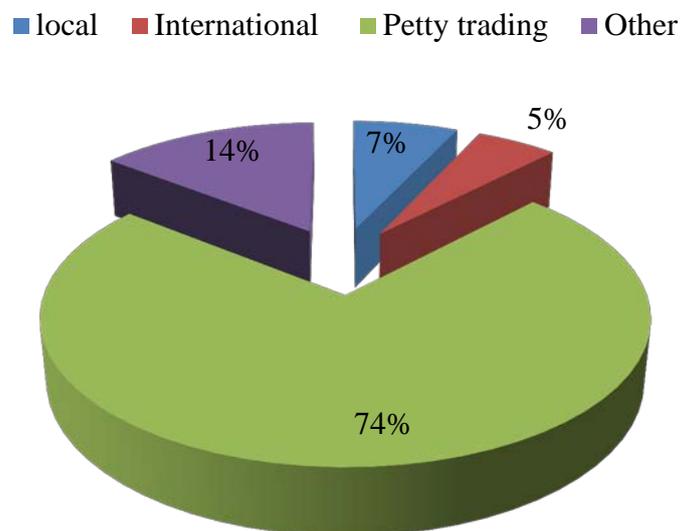


FIGURE 5.4.3.3 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THE NGO ECONOMIC SECTOR IN THE NORTHERN REGIONAL COMMUNITIES(JAWANI, NALERIGU AND MANGARIGU)



The figures (5.4.1-5.4.3) above indicate that 74 percent of respondents engaged in farming as their main economic activity across the three northern regions of Ghana. This almost equalled petty trading, as shown on figures 5.4.1.1-5.4.3.3 of a little over 74 percent. It appears that some of those who engaged in other economic sectors overlapped in other sectors as well, particularly in petty trading in the local markets of the three northern regions in particular and even throughout the major towns all over Ghana.

The patterns of economic activity of respondents indicate that majority of people at the three northern regions engage in farming as the dominant economic activity. Petty trading is a significant economic sector of the people of the north of Ghana. Perhaps the influence of petty trading in this research could suggest reasons why over 65 percent of the working masses in Ghana are found in the informal sector of the Ghanaian economy (Wombeogo, 2005, SEND-Ghana, 2009).

Table 5.4 Educational level of respondents

Level of education	UWR communities		UER communities			NR communities		
	Nandom	Jirapa	Namoaligo	Kotintabig	Chiana	Jawani	Nalerigu	Mankarigu
Elementary/ Junior High School	25	22	25	15	35	19	55	28
Secondary/ Senior High School	22	65	40	17	43	15	24	23
Tertiary	15	43	22	12	17	0	14	0
Non-formal	25	24	41	65	45	25	55	67
Illiterate	13	46	32	61	60	4	32	82
	100	200	150	150	200	100	200	200

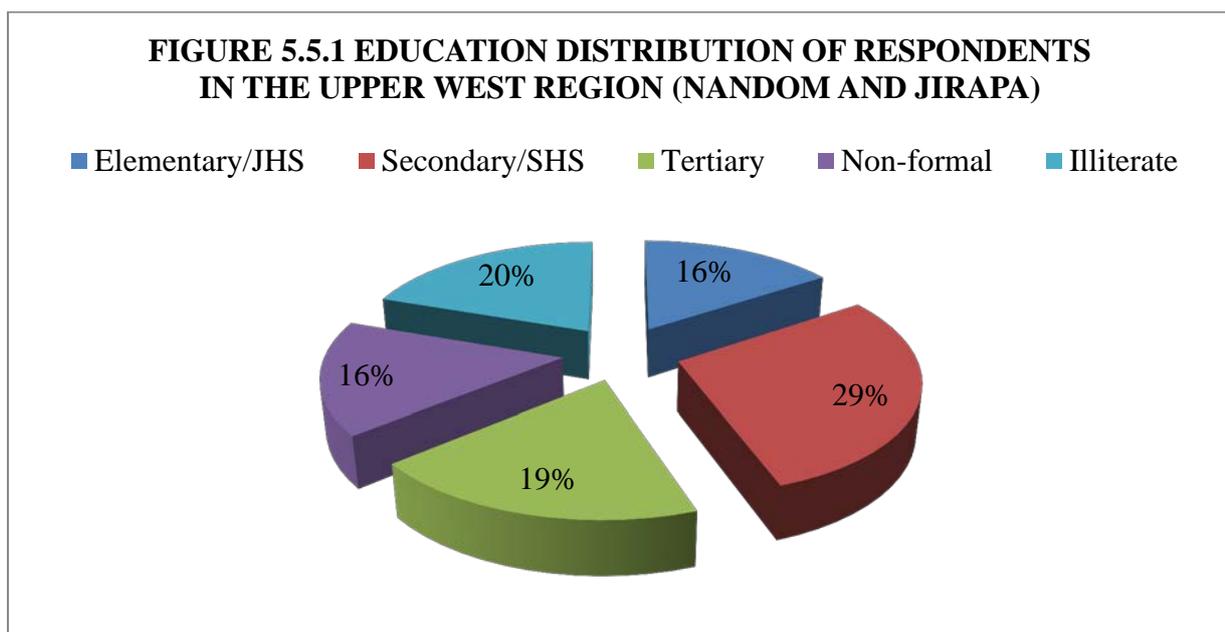


FIGURE 5.5.2 EDUCATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THE UPPER EAST REGIONS (NAMOALIGO, KOTINTABIG AND CHIANA)

■ Elementary/JHS ■ Secondary/SHS ■ Tertiary ■ Non-formal ■ Illiterate

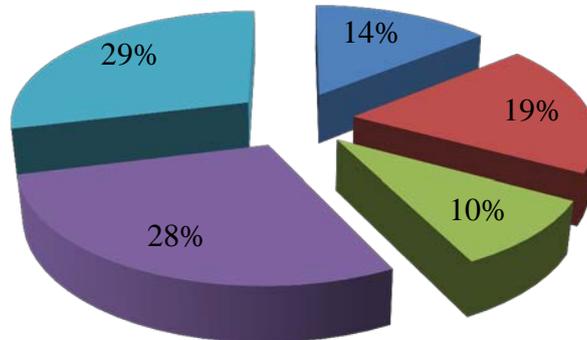
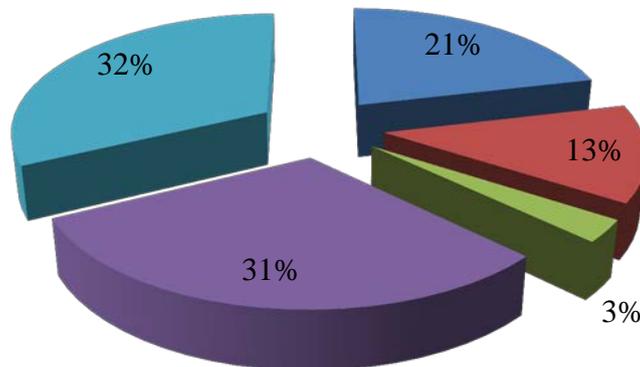


FIGURE 5.5.3 EDUCATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THE NORTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES (JAWANI, NALERIGU, MANKARIGU)

■ Elementary/JHS ■ Secondary/SHS ■ Tertiary ■ Non-formal ■ Illiterate



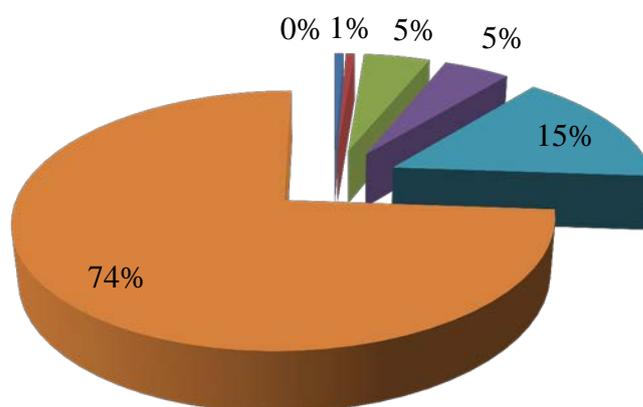
The educational levels of respondents as shown above signify that a large number of rural dwellers in the communities of northern Ghana are illiterate as evidenced by the numbers of responses on the column marked illiterate or non formal (54.92%). The educated population only outweighed the illiterate population in communities such as Nandom and Jirapa of the Upper West region where school going seems to be highest at basic and secondary levels (GES, annual report, 2009).

Table 5.5 Social status of respondents

Social status	UWR communities		UER communities			NR communities		
	Nandom	Jirapa	Namoaligo	Kotintabig	Chiana	Jawani	Nalerigu	Mankarigu
Chief	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Assembly Man/woman	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Youth Leader ¹⁷	5	10	4	9	15	14	12	22
Women's Leader	5	10	4	9	15	14	12	22
Clan elder	22	25	8	15	28	12	34	42
Ordinary Resident	66	163	133	115	140	58	140	112
	100	200	150	150	200	100	200	200

FIGURE 5.6.1 DISTRIBUTION BY STATUS OF RESPONDENTS IN THE UPPER WEST REGIONAL COMMUNITIES (NANDOM AND JIRAPA)

- Chief
- Assembly Man/woman
- Youth Leader
- Women's Leader
- Clan elder
- Ordinary Resident



¹⁷ Leader here refers to a key opinion member recognised by a specified group, such as youth or women

FIGURE 5.6.2 DISTRIBUTION BY STATUS OF RESPONDENTS IN THE UPPER EAST REGIONAL COMMUNITIES (NAMOALIGO, KOTINTABIG AND CHIANA)

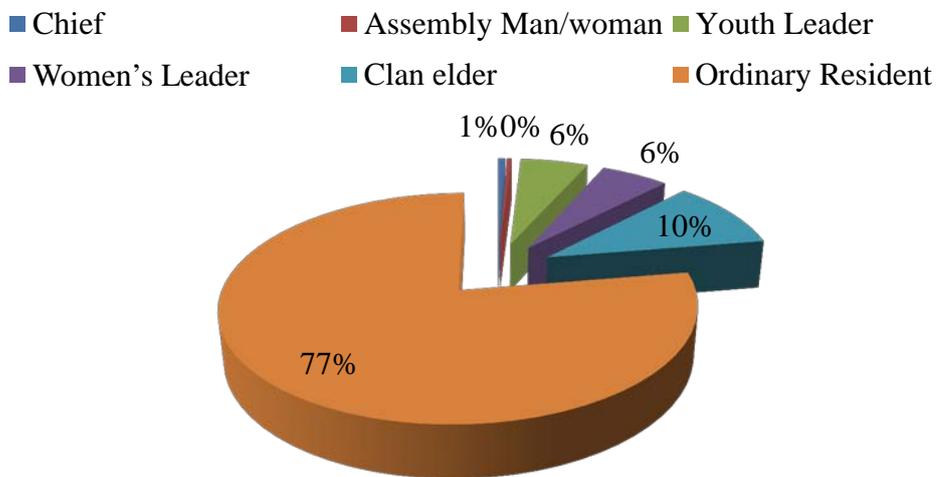
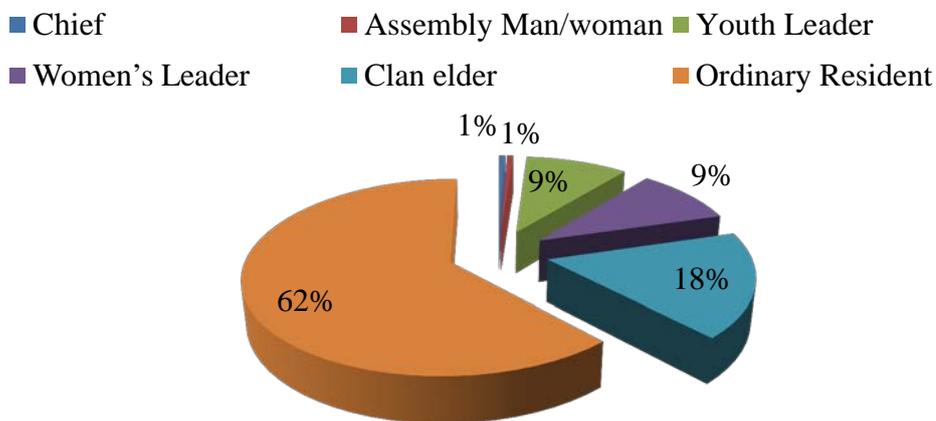


FIGURE 5.6.3 DISTRIBUTION BY STATUS OF RESPONDENTS IN THE NORTHERN REGIONAL COMMUNITIES (JAWANI, NALERIGU AND MANKARIGU)



On the social status of respondents, over 92 percent were ordinary citizens of the various communities under study. That is, those who were not holding any recognisable positions within their respective communities at the time of the research. During the focus group discussions community citizens contributions to the discussions outweighed their leadership, this might indicate the vested interest of community members in participating in issues affecting or can influence their general wellbeing.

However a significant observation of the various respondents' social standing in their communities seems a little surprising that all shades of community authority down to the ordinary person had been covered despite not being purposively selected. The respondents' distribution in this part is significant for analysis later on in the proceeding chapters of the thesis.

Table 5.6 Religious affiliations

Religion of respondents	UWR Communities		UER communities			NR communities		
	Nandom	Jirapa	Namoaligo	Kotintabig	Chiana	Jawani	Nalerigu	Mankarigu
Moslem	24	45	20	35	33	59	80	88
Christianity	45	59	60	39	63	10	41	28
Traditional	21	56	49	62	89	36	64	67
Other	10	40	21	14	15	5	15	17
	100	200	150	150	200	100	200	200

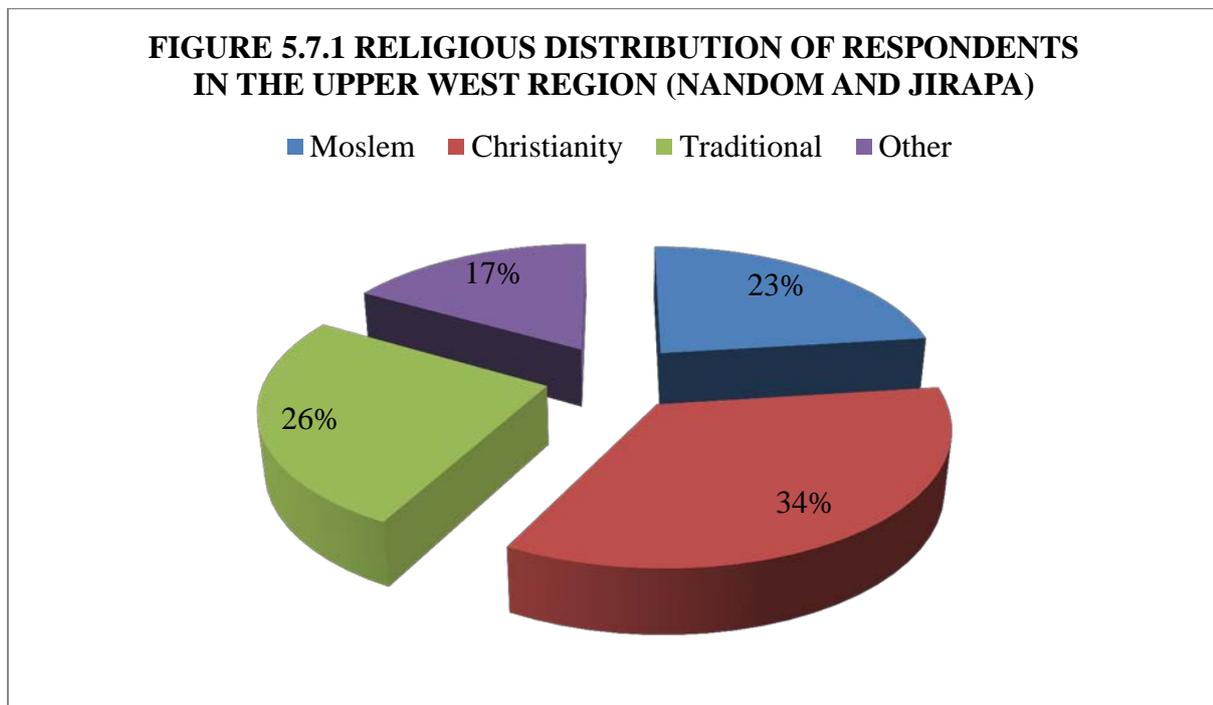


FIGURE 5.7.2 RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THE UPPER EAST REGION (NAMOALIGO, KOTINTABIG AND CHIANA)

■ Moslem ■ Christianity ■ Traditional ■ Other

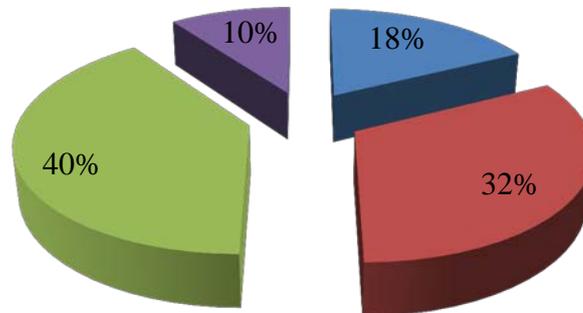
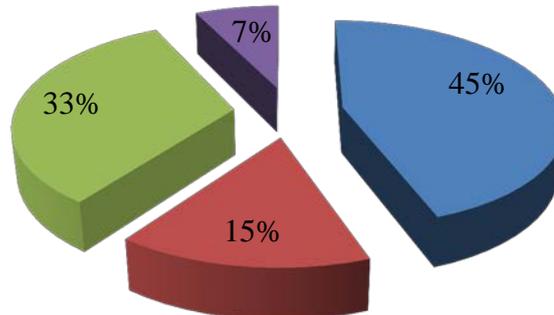


FIGURE 5.7.3 RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THE NORTHERN REGION (JAWANI, NALERIGU AND MANKARIGU)

■ Moslem ■ Christianity ■ Traditional ■ Other



Religion seems to be a significant part of the people's existence. Christianity appears to be dominant in Upper West and East and lower in northern regions; while Islam or Moslem religion is highly dominant in northern more than the two Upper regions. Furthermore, the traditional religion is still highly regarded and practiced widely (but to some extent not openly), among the generality of the people of northern Ghana. Yet, some respondents did not belong to any of the three religious organisations listed. It was not clear which type of religious sect they belonged to. However, not indicating any of the identifiable religious groups suggests that there could be some other religious organisations that are hidden or highly secretive and not acclaimed as a recognisable religious group by their own merit. In

other words, some people regard themselves as non-aligned to any of the faiths listed. It could suggest that some (both Muslims and Christians) alike could engage in other forms of secretive religious sects of which they would not like to be identified openly with.

Religion plays a significant part in the lives and associations of the people of northern Ghana. For instance, Muslims would ask for permission to pray during meeting sessions irrespective of what is discussed whenever it is time to pray. Christians would not attend a meeting called during prayer periods on Sundays. These two prominent religious groupings dominate the people’s lives and hence influence the way the community members respond to participatory interventions on selected times and days. In a similar vein any intervention that may have a negative impact on their religious beliefs would attract very little attention or participation from community members. Thus religion plays a significant role in the way people participate in pro-poor interventions in northern Ghana.

Table 5.7 Knowledge of respondents on existing/on-going programmes/projects in their communities

Knowledge level of respondents	UWR Communities		UER communities			NR communities		
	Nandom	Jirapa	Namoaligo	Kotintabig	Chiana	Jawani	Nalerigu	Mankarigu
Yes	92	197	138	141	157	97	170	178
No	8	3	12	9	43	3	30	22
Total	100	200	150	150	200	100	200	200

FIGURE 5.8.1 KNOWLEDGE OF RESPONDENTS IN THE UPPER EAST REGION ON EXISTING/ON-GOING PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES (NANDOM AND JIRAPA)

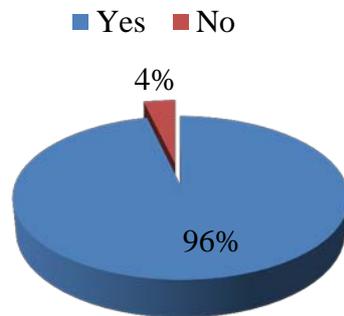


FIGURE 5.8.2 KNOWLEDGE OF RESPONDENTS IN THE UPPER WEST REGION ON EXISTING/ON-GOING PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES (NAMOALIGO, KOTINTABIG AND CHIANA)

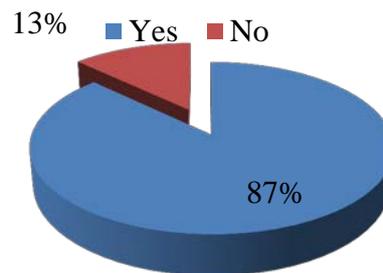
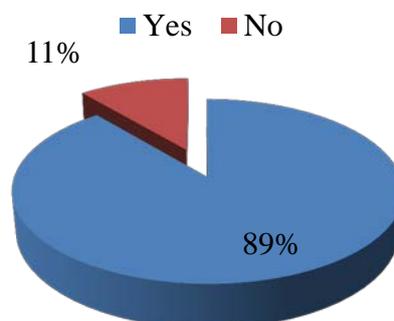


FIGURE 5.8.3 KNOWLEDGE OF RESPONDENTS IN THE NORTHERN REGION ON EXISTING/ON-GOING PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES (JAWANI, NALERIGU AND MANKARIGU)



The table depicts a scenario in which a vast majority (over 80 percent) of respondents had a considerable level of knowledge of the existence, preparation for or ongoing pro-poor programmes within their respective communities. In other words, majority of people were aware of programmes in their communities intended for their collective development and improvement in their lives. However, in a focus group discussion held at Namoaligo, Kotintabig and Mankarigu indicated that the extent of knowledge and the levels of engagement in harnessing that knowledge into development activities needed to be properly coordinated in order to offer the people some amount of understanding and involvement. The youth at Mankarigu, during a focus group discussion, articulated that the youth are equally voiceless on matters that affect their lives and have no representation in formal decision making forums at the household, community, or even district and national levels. Contribution of their labour to household and communal work is often the only form of participation they have as security for household and community livelihoods. It is through strikes and demonstrations that they get any hearing from the public and development practitioners. Even then, that is usually reserved for the institutionalized youth groups such as student unions and movements. Outside this category, as Pul (2003) puts it “the youth are only seen but not heard”. In other words, the presence of the youth is not frowned upon, but by and large, their views are not readily counted.

Table 5.8 Programmes undertaken to improve community life

Programmes To improve community life programmes	UWR communities		UER communities			NR communities		
	Nandom	Jirapa	Namoaligo	Kotintabig	Chiana	Jawani	Nalerigu	Mankarigu
Schools	58	78	0	56	59	0	77	45
Roads	0	0	0	0	4	0	33	0
Dams	0	5	0	4	45	0	2	0
Agro forestry	5	9	10	15	13	0	55	44
Farm credits	15	4	11	45	33	79	64	77
Borehole /well	0	4	89	34	2	67	22	3
Grinding mills	6	13	78	3	0	55	4	5
National Health Insurance	34	57	45	65	72	76	70	55

Scheme								
Family planning	56	68	75	58	82	77	83	69
Others	5	10	8	14	14	10	21	32

FIGURE 5.9.1 DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAMMES TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY LIFE IN THE UPPER EAST REGION(NANDOM AND JIRAPA)

- Schools
- Roads
- Dams
- Agro forestry
- Farm credits
- Borehole /well
- Grinding mills
- NHIS
- Family planning
- Others

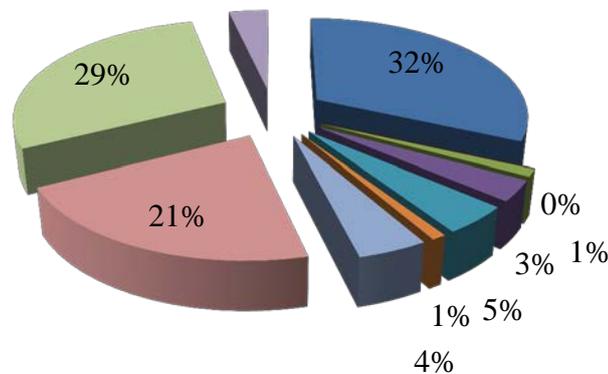


FIGURE 5.9.2 DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAMMES TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY LIFE IN THE UPPER WEST REGION(NAMOLAGO, KOTINTABIG AND CHIANA)

- Schools
- Roads
- Dams
- Agro forestry
- Farm credits
- Borehole /well
- Grinding mills
- NHIS
- Family planning
- Others

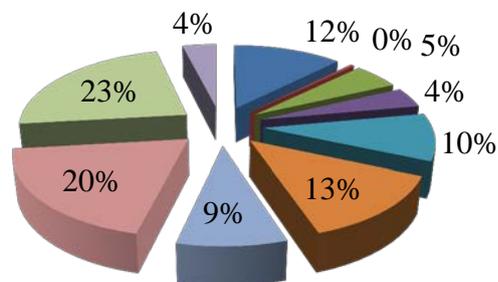
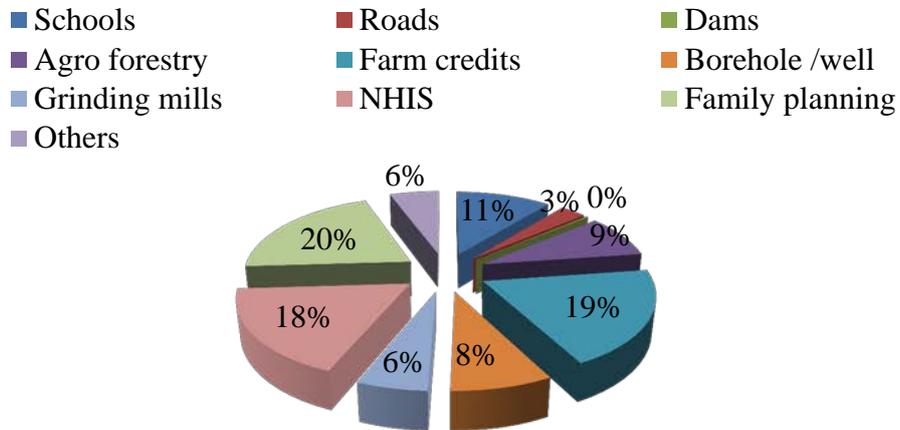


FIGURE 5.9.3 DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAMMES TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY LIFE IN THE NORTHERN REGION(JAWANI, NALERIGU AND MANKARIGU)



Apparently on table 5.8 above, two out of eight communities did not benefit from schools infrastructure, while six communities did not experience road construction taking place. However, all communities have benefited from programmes such as farm credit schemes, National health insurance schemes (NHIS) and family planning education, taking place; and seven out of eight benefited from boreholes which provided quality source of drinking water. These programmes indicate that some developmental activities take or have taken place within the study communities in order to improve life.

Table 5.9 Respondents who participated in discussions organised by NGO

Respondents who participated in development discussions	UWR communities		UER communities			NR communities		
	Nandom	Jirapa	Namoaligo	Kotintabig	Chiana	Jawani	Nalerigu	Mankarigu
Response								
Yes	72	117	98	101	147	79	100	186
No	28	83	52	49	53	21	100	14
	100	200	150	150	200	100	200	200

FIGURE 5.10.1 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSIONS IN THE UPPER WEST REGION (NANDOM AND JIRAPA)

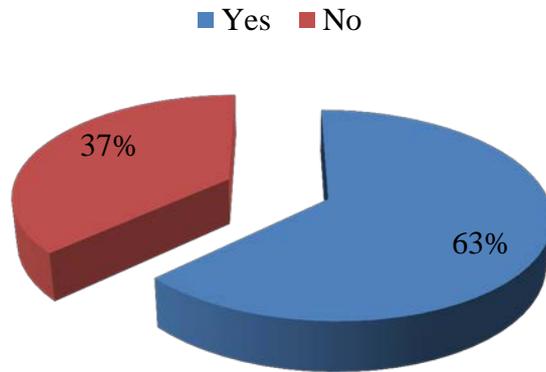


FIGURE 5.10.2 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSIONS IN THE UPPER EAST REGION (NAMOALIGO, KOTINTABIG AND CHIANA)

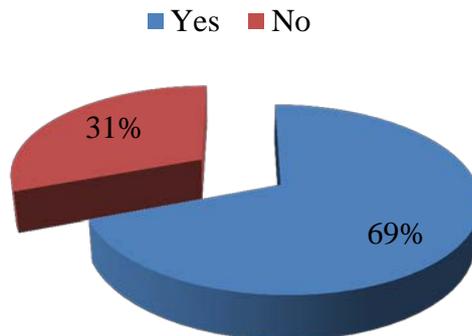
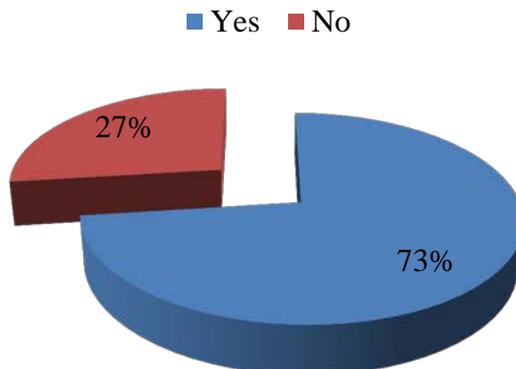


FIGURE 5.10.3 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSIONS IN THE NORTHERN REGION (JAWANI, NALERIGU AND MANKARIGU)



The responses indicate that an average of 68.3 percent of community members participated in programmes organised by pro-poor agents as evidenced by community responses on the table above. This implies 32.7 percent did not participate in same or similar activities organised by the implementing agencies for either one reason or the other as evidenced by some on table 5.10 below.

Table 5.10 Reasons giving by respondents who participated in discussions organised by NGO as compared with discussions organised by government agencies

Reasons for NGO as compared with government	UWR communities		UER communities			NR communities		
	Nandom	Jirapa	Namoaligo	Kotintabig	Chiana	Jawani	Nalerigu	Mankarigu
Motivation (Money and certificates)	50	100	55	85	110	55	100	120
Punctuality	6	15	15	10	15	12	5	10
New knowledge	14	25	20	10	15	13	25	15
Proper integration	10	20	25	15	20	10	35	25
Deliver on promise	20	40	35	30	40	10	35	30
Total	100	200	150	150	200	100	200	200

FIGURE 5.11.1 REASONS FOR RESPONDING TO NGO AS COMPARED WITH GOVERNMENT DISCUSSIONS IN THE UPPER WEST REGION (NANDOM AND JIRAPA)

- Motivation (Money and certificates)
- Punctuality
- New knowledge
- Clear understanding for proper integration
- Potential to deliver on promise

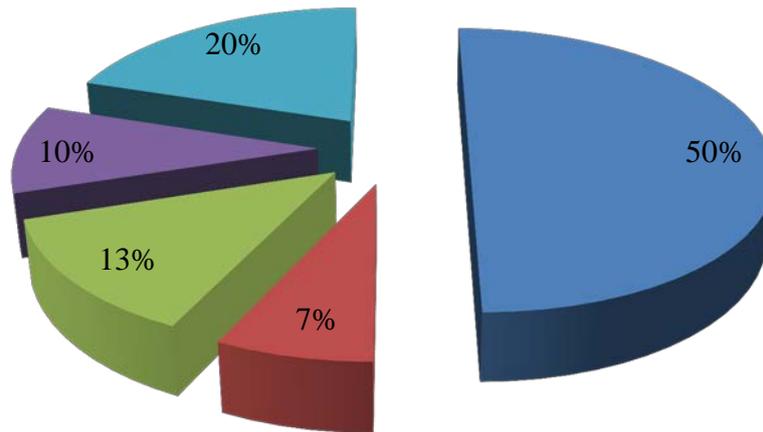


FIGURE 5.11.2 REASONS FOR RESPONDING TO NGO AS COMPARED WITH GOVERNMENT DISCUSSIONS IN THE UPPER EAST REGION (NAMOALIG, KOTINTABIG AND CHIANA)

- Motivation (Money and certificates)
- Punctuality
- New knowledge
- Clear understanding for proper integration
- Potential to deliver on promise

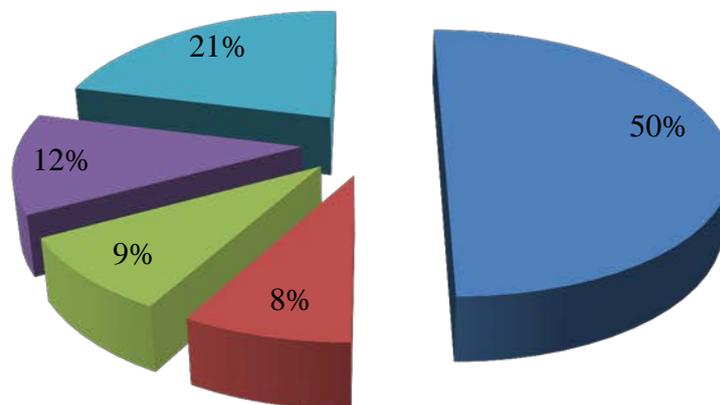


FIGURE 5.11.3 REASONS FOR RESPONDING TO NGO AS COMPARED WITH GOVERNMENT DISCUSSIONS IN THE NORTHERN REGION(JAWANI, NALERIGU AND MANKARIGU)

- Motivation (Money and certificates)
- Punctuality
- New knowledge
- Clear understanding for proper integration
- Potential to deliver on promise

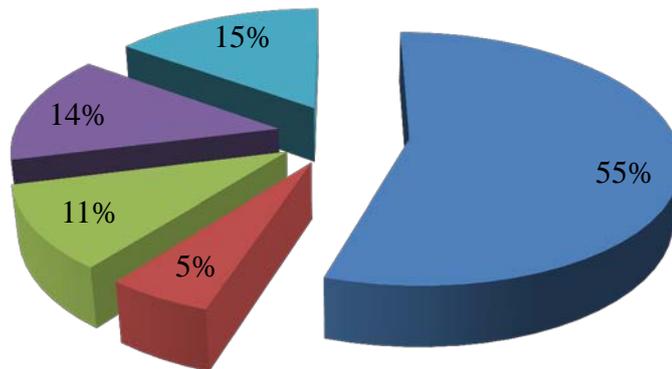


Table 5.10 indicates that apart from Namoaligo, all other communities under study responded 50 percent or more to NGO calls to discussions based on monetary and other incentives and 30 percent or more attributed their willingness to participate in discussions called by NGOs to a perceived view that NGOs deliver on promise as compared to government agencies. However, approximately 12 percent of the reasons giving by community members' willingness to participate in NGO discussions were based on new knowledge acquisition and 6.6 percent were based on punctuality to activities in relationship to government related agencies. 12 percent of the reasons were for the fact that NGOs give clear understanding for integration. The rest of the respondents in this regard cared little about new knowledge or clear understanding for integration, what mattered most was the level of motivation they got from NGOs as compared to similar activities by government agencies.

Table 5.11 Institutions and projects undertaken by government and NGOs and the response to calls by community members to participate

Institution /respondents participation	Upper West region Communities				Upper East region communities						Northern Region communities					
Institution	Nandom		Jirapa		Namoaligo		Kotintabig		Chiana		Jawani		Nalerigu		Mankarigu	
responses	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Government	20	80	34	166	28	122	45	105	71	129	39	61	95	105	98	102
NGO	97	3	179	11	132	18	135	15	176	32	191	9	188	12	192	8
Total	100		200		150		150		200		100		200		200	

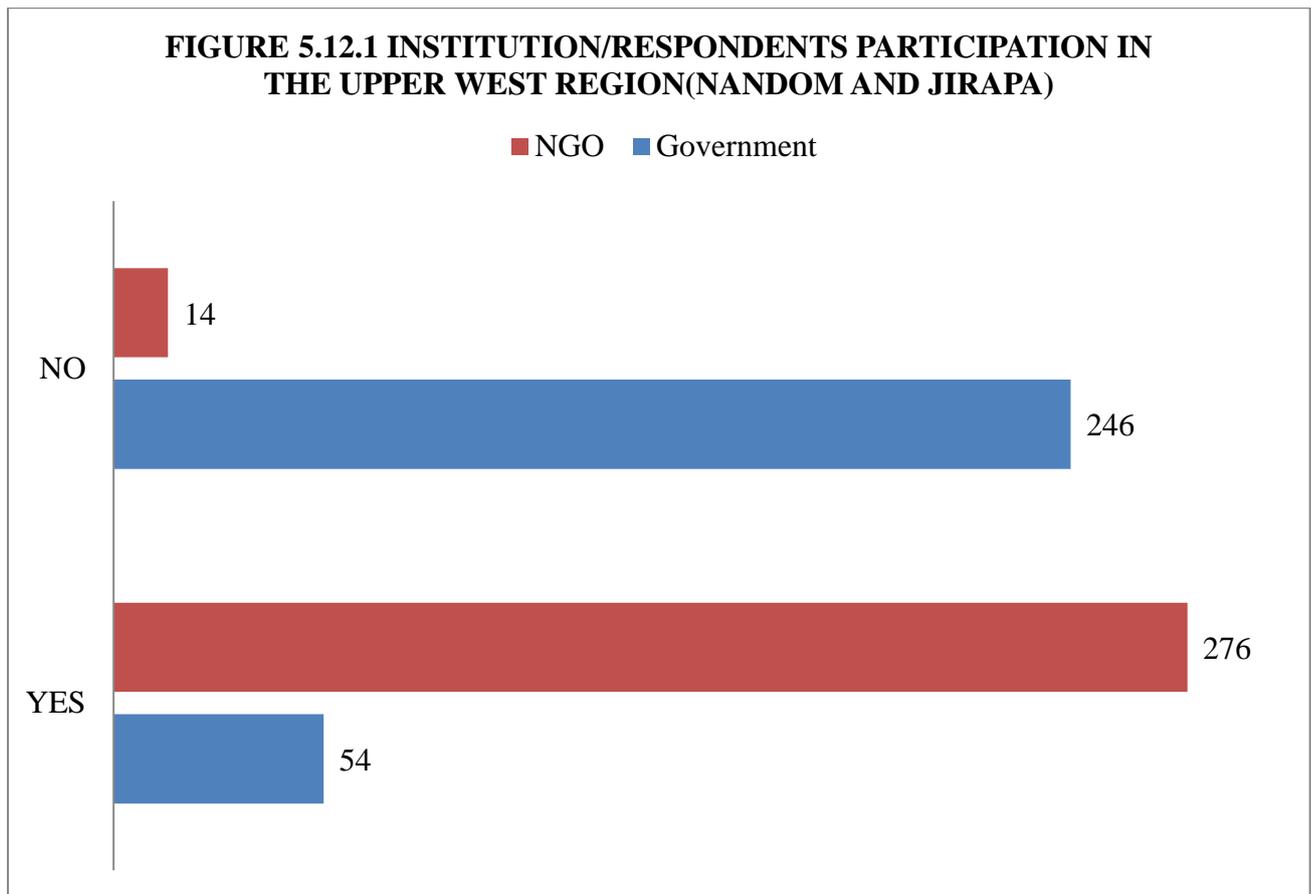


FIGURE 5.12.2 INSTITUTION/RESPONDENTS PARTICIPATION IN THE UPPER EAST REGIONS (NAMOALIGO, KOTINTABIG AND CHIANA)

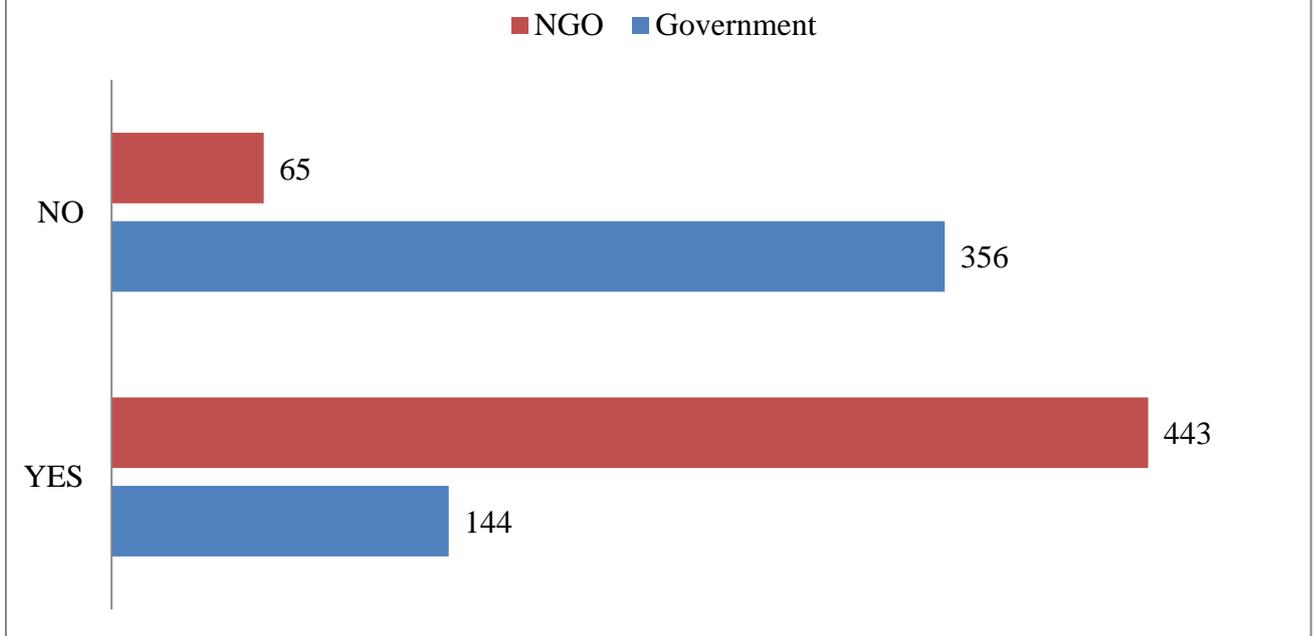


FIGURE 5.12.3 INSTITUTION/RESPONDENTS PARTICIPATION IN THE NORTHERN REGIONS (JAWANI, NALERIGU AND MANKARIGU)

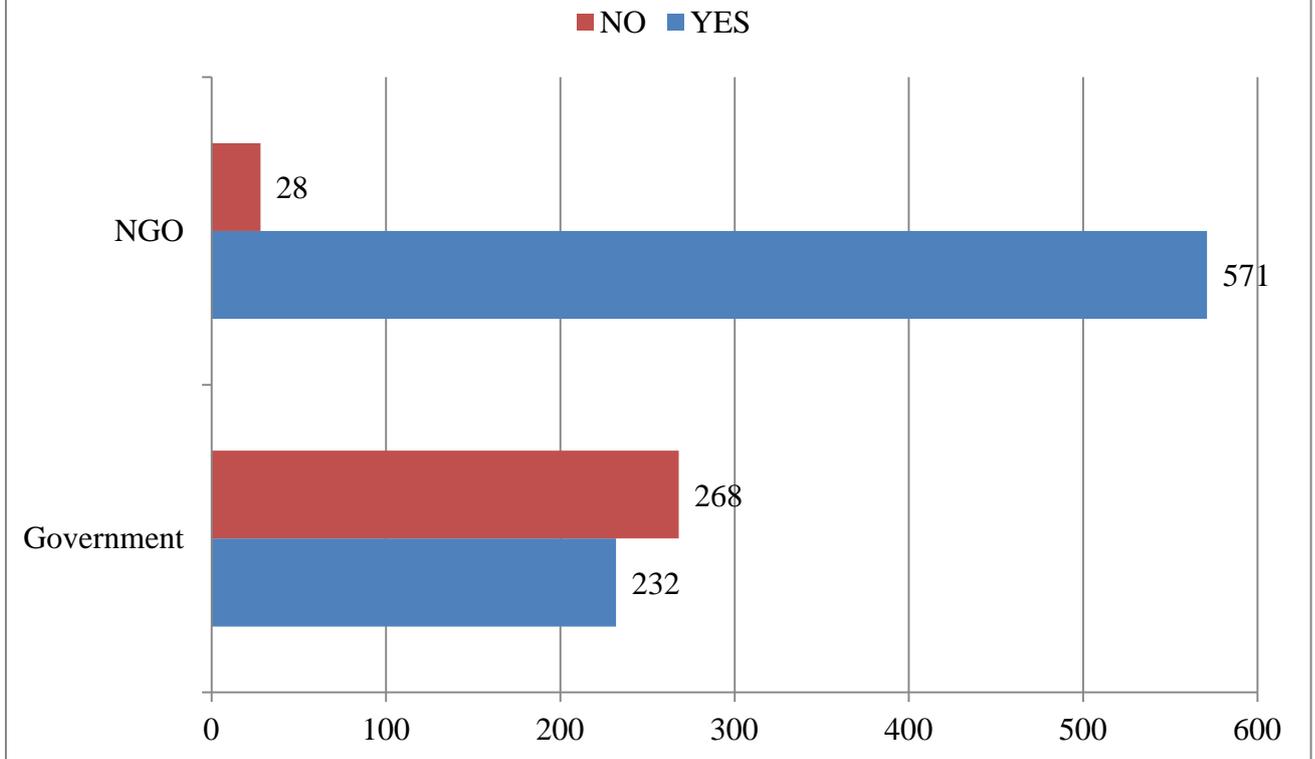
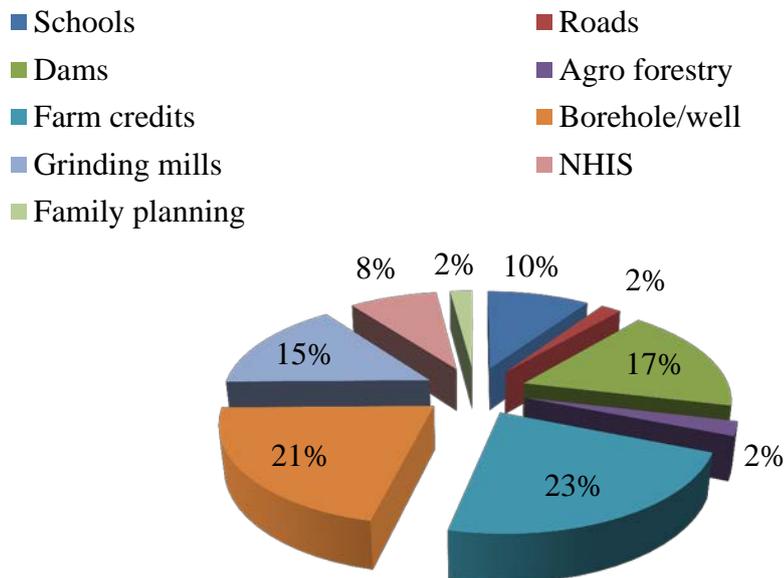


Table (5.11) suggests that many communities prefer to respond to NGO's call to participate more than government agencies' call. The evidence from table 5.11 shows that 88.7 percent of respondents from Upper East region, 93.3 percent from Upper West region and 95.2 percent from Northern region prefer NGO activities to those government agencies. Some reasons were given for this inclination towards NGOs and include, allowances received from the NGO for participating in their developmental discussions and interventions, lunch packs for participants each time, and courtesy and respect accorded by the officials to the people; perceived satisfaction by the community members of intervention activities carried out by the NGO in their respective communities as compared with those initiated by the local government agencies.

Table 5.12 Projects community derived the most benefit ranked in a descending order using 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1

Projects	Ranking	No of respondents
Schools	5	502
Roads	1	100
Dams	7	925
Agro forestry	3	124
Farm credits	9	1200
Borehole/well	8	1125
Grinding mills	6	800
NHIS	4	432
Family planning	2	110

FIGURE 5.13 PROJECTS COMMUNITY DERIVED THE MOST BENEFIT



61 percent of respondents believed that farm credits, boreholes/wells and dams give them maximum benefit than the rest as evidenced by the highest ranking (9, 8 and 7) as seen on table (5.13) above. These were followed by grinding mills and schools respectively. NHIS and agro-forestry were next in the ranking. Ideally, in rural communities, farm credit forms a significant support to boost their farming activities and borehole/well provides quality water for both human and animal consumption. Family planning and roads were ranked exceptionally low as compared to the rest of the projects. Roads are scarcely constructed in many rural communities within the target regions of the north and that account for the low ranking in their benefit to community members. Family planning is considered inappropriate by some communities of northern Ghana. This was verbalised by some respondents during a focus group discussion at Kotintabig community as follows: “it teaches us how to limit the number of children our wives should give birth to; though we do not like it, we do not prevent them from telling us”. This is an instance where people participate in an event just to satisfy the organisers or their chief or opinion leader though they may not subscribe to the essence of the information given. The community members might have responded to the call to participate as indicated on table 5.8 above in a discussion on family planning, but in reality, they came as a sign of respect or by coercion. In that respect, participation cannot be said to have occurred, as their total involvement in the discussion and implementation of processes towards achievable results had not been clearly demonstrated by the people.

Table 5.13 Levels at which community beneficiaries participate during pro-poor development interventions

Levels of participation	UWR communities		UER communities		NR communities			
	Nandom	Jirapa	Namoaligo	Kotintabi	Chiana	Jawani	Nalerigu	Mankarigu
Idea initiation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Planning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Preparation for implementation	0	5	0	4	0	0	0	0
implementation	70	105	79	75	111	79	55	86
Monitoring/evaluation	10	65	55	45	48	10	64	67
Sustainability process	14	20	12	24	37	11	71	46
None of the above	6	5	4	6	4	0	10	1
Total	100	200	150	150	200	100	200	200

FIGURE 5.14.1 LEVELS AT WHICH COMMUNITY BENEFICIARIES PARTICIPATE DURING PRO-POOR DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS IN THE UPPER WEST REGION (NANDOM AND JIRAPA)

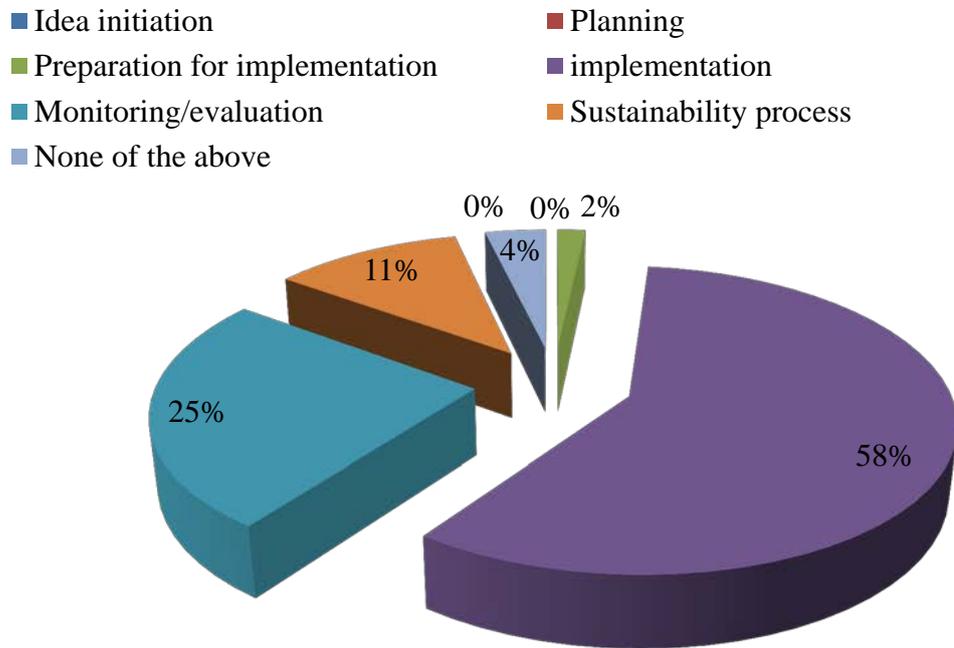


FIGURE 5.14.2 LEVELS AT WHICH COMMUNITY BENEFICIARIES PARTICIPATE DURING PRO-POOR DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS IN THE UPPER EAST REGION (NAMOALIGO, KOTINTABIG AND CHIANA)

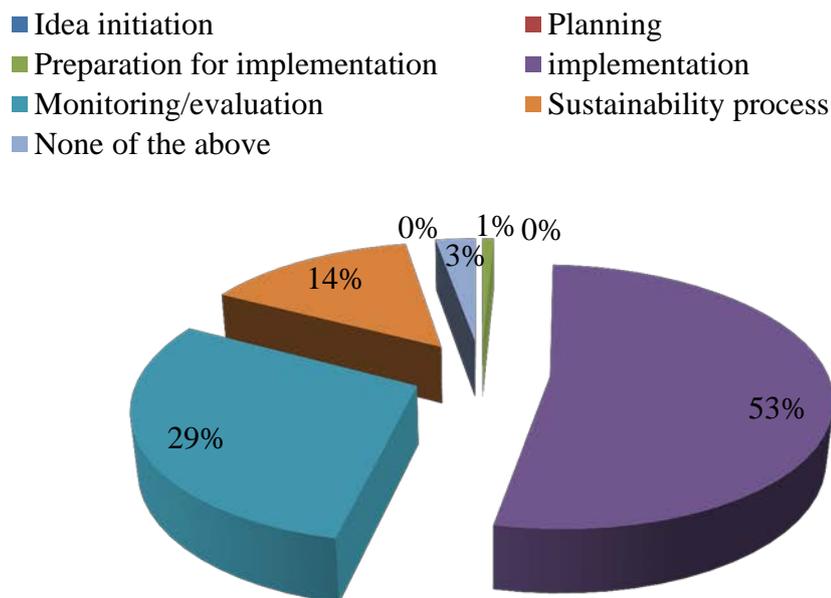
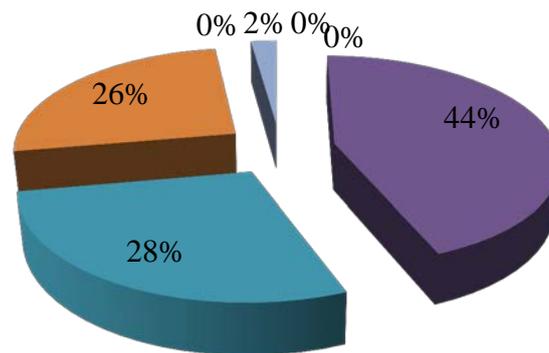


FIGURE 5.14.3 LEVELS AT WHICH COMMUNITY BENEFICIARIES PARTICIPATE DURING PRO-POOR DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS IN THE NORTHERN REGION (JAWANI, NALERIGU AND MANKARIGU)

- Idea initiation
- Planning
- Preparation for implementation
- implementation
- Monitoring/evaluation
- Sustainability process
- None of the above



The table above indicates that 53% of respondents strongly affirm that community participation in northern Ghana is much felt during the implementation phase. Clear indicators are Chiana, Jirapa and Mankarigu communities. Apart from implementation phase, monitoring and evaluation follows closely in terms of community level participation. A deduction from the figures on table 5.13 and figure 5.14.1 to 5.14.3 indicates that implementation and monitoring and evaluation are the stages of the development process where community effort and presence are felt by the programme interventionists as compared to the others.

5.2 Analysis and presentation of focus group data

5.2.1 Introduction

The focus group discussions were presented in the form of questions and answers format. The responses given by the respondents were analysed qualitatively in a form of descriptions and inferences made on the various responses. The data was divided into two; institutional (5.2.2) and community focussed (5.3.1-5.3.3) catalogued along the breakdown of communities from each of the three districts of each of the three regions of northern Ghana.

5.2.2 Discussion with CRS director on overseas development assistance

In a face to face interview with the Head of Programmes of CRS (2010 personal interview in Tamale), the researcher posed a question to him based on a study of a World Bank report (2001:108-109) on bilateral and multilateral overseas development assistance to government and non-government organisations for development activities in developing countries including Ghana. According to the report, direct overseas development assistance for pro-poor activities, "...is at best around one-fifth" of total amount allotted by the funders.

The question: Where do the four-fifths go? Who decided how that four-fifth, the largest part of the funding for community development, must be spent?

Answer: He answered the question with a practical example from his outfit (CRS, Ghana) that out of a four million US Dollar grant to CRS from 2002 – 2007 to implement child survival project activities in selected districts of the three northern regions of Ghana, at the close of the project period the amount actually spend on the communities was less than six hundred thousand US Dollars. When probed further on what the rest of the money was used for, he mentioned without being specific that a good chunk of the money was used in paying salaries and taking care of the expatriate staff. The remainder of the money was used to pay local staff salaries, acquire four wheel land cruiser vehicles and used for administrative and institutional upkeep.

The following paragraphs detail the demographic breakdown of participants into male and female participant responses and some of the communities used for the study for the community breakdown for the focus group discussions.

5.3 Demographic breakdown of participants in the focus group discussions

Each of the communities had at least one focus group discussion during the study and one from each region is captured here for the purpose of discussion and analysis.

5.3.1 Namoaligo community (Upper East region)

Why is that more men and not women usually respond to questions posed by researchers?

Responses: (female) - the men are the heads and unless they are not there, women respond to issues or provide answers only when authorised by men within the community setting (***this respond was agreed upon by almost all the women questioned***)

Who decides who should participate in a particular activity in the house and why?

Responses: (female) - *Within the house, it is the man (in this case the husband or the elder male child in the absence of the father). Our culture has made it so and we just abide by it since time immemorial.*

Why is it that the beautiful project that has been established in your community is rarely utilised?

Responses: *you see, (a female respondent explains), sometimes we do not know what they do, I mean the people who come to establish the projects. We see it as development and we just look on; they finish and go and we wait for them to come back and use their thing. We are not always sure what we should do exactly. Ah well, they might have explained to the men and the assemblyman. As for us, we are yet to be told what to do. We are afraid to go near for fear that we might be arrested should something go wrong.*

Were you asked to decide what type of project you needed before such a project was initiated in your community and how was it done?

Responses: (both male and female) - *Nobody asked us for our opinion. They only asked us to come out in a particular day and carry some gravel for a toilet building at the community clinic. It was a local announcement which involves calling house to house and the message is relayed in a similar way until all houses are covered within the community.*

What are your general impressions about the way projects or interventions are established in your community?

Responses: (Female) - *we need to be told whenever there is the need for us to support and they should make sure the men are aware before hand to give us permission to support fully.*

Responses: (male) *those who bring the money and implement the projects, they should ask us for us to decide what we want. We see them come only to say that they are doing things that no one knows who says they should do them.*

5.3.2 Mankarigu community (Northern region)

Why is that more men and not women usually respond to questions posed by researchers?

Responses: (female) - Men speak first. No woman can just start talking when the men have not yet spoken. They are our husbands and they brought us and so we cannot talk unless they take the lead

Who decides who should participate in a particular activity in the house and why?

Responses: (female) - It is always the men because they are the landlords

Why is it that the beautiful project that has been established in your community is rarely utilised?

Responses: (male and female) - We don't know. They have not told us to use it and we do not know who owns it. Until our husbands or the assemblyman tell us what use it and what for, we wait till then.

Were you asked to decide what type of project you needed before such a project was initiated in your community and how was it done?

Responses: (both male and female) - No one consulted us, and we have never known how they arrived at that

What are your general impressions about the way projects or interventions are established in your community?

Responses: (females) - you should tell them (the developers) to always ask us the women to decide what we want so that they provide for us.

Responses: (Males) - we are not always consulted. They bring their money and start to work and only invite us for meetings; we go, sit and listen (the words of men).

5.3.3 Jirapa community (Upper West region)

Why is that more men and not women usually respond to questions posed by researchers?

Responses: (both male and female) - only the men must respond to questions posed from outsiders

Who decides who should participate in any a particular activity in the house and why?

Responses: (both male and female) - it is only the men who must decide because they are heads

Why is it that the beautiful project that has been established in your community is rarely utilised?

Responses: (male and female) - we were not told when and what to use it for. We are not that interested in this project. You know, they did not listen to our views, let them have their project.

Were you asked to decide what type of project you needed before such a project was initiated in your community and how was it done?

Responses: (Both males and females) - Yes, but they refused our suggestions and did their own thing

What are your general impressions about the way projects or interventions are established in your community?

Responses: (Male) - what we want is that they should respect our opinions in matters that they say are for our benefit. If not what is the use coming to waste our time attending meetings and talking about issues that they care less about.

Responses: (female) - we need water and food and not long talk about the how and what of things. Tell them when they come they should remember to give us money for food or show us how to get some of their money type to develop ourselves.

5.3.4 Inferences from focus group discussions

Drawing inferences from the focus discussions, one thing that cut across clearly is that participation in community intervention activities has different understanding to different people. For instance, across the community focus discussions in each of the three regions; it is evident that community members' views were rarely adopted for intervention. Despite the fact that some community members wished for some other projects apart from what the development interventionists planned, they went ahead with their plans regardless of what meant good for the people who would benefit from their activities.

Further to this, the focus group discussions revealed some level of commonality across the geographical boundaries of the three northern regions. It is apparent that men are ultimately dominant in matters of family and household affairs and for that matter are dominant in decision making and resource

acquisition for the family. Though it was not indicated that women do not have a say in developmental issues in the community, the focus group discussions and the views expressed by some of the women in the discussions, reveal that women can only play an active role after men have done so or have granted them permission to do so.

Based on the researcher's working experience in northern Ghana, the expressed views of the people interviewed lend credence to what actually happens between development actors and the community members who are direct beneficiaries of pro-poor intervention process. The researcher hereby defines a position in this perspective and that is, participation as defined by scholars of community participation does not actually take place as it should. Many development actors do not consult the community members for their needs nor do they reveal to the people where and how they come by project funds. In addition, what should be done with the funds and who should benefit what and how much of it are not declared. The community members are merely recipients and ultimate consumers and not planners nor executors of planned activities. Community members are asked to be involved and not to take active part in the process of project intervention from the scratch. The researcher has worked with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Linkages Ghana, Oxfam BG, Ghana and PARDA Ghana. The experience in all these organisations has been a participation that involves the people where and when they (the development actors) need them and not that they take active part in deciding, planning, executing and evaluating the process of intervention. Participation as a process of community development is not functional in its form but modified to suit the whims and caprices of most development organisations as they work with the community members to address poverty issues among them.

These exposures clearly show how the challenges of the poor continue to be the farms of the rich and influential development practitioners. In other words, the wealth of the poor has become the building blocks of the rich. The rural community poor or the critical reference group (Wadsworth, 1998:11) conventionally participates least in development programmes that are largely intended to target their unmet needs. An approach in this fashion is an act of working down. That is to say a non-progressive act that may result in negative returns for or negative impact on, the target group. Indeed, the critical reference group in poverty reduction activities could lead to improved relevance of the inquiry to those who not only share in the problem, but also are challenged by it. In this consideration, Wadsworth (1998:11) believes that members of critical reference groups who have created a problematic situation "are in the most strategic position to work on its improvement". In other words, the community members who face the challenges of poverty can best come up with concrete and strategic ways to deal with their situation as they see it.

5.4 Findings

The concluding findings of the study are the following:

First, 61% of respondents give high priority preference to farm credit support, clean water sources in the form of boreholes/ wells and dams for dry season irrigation and for watering of domestic animals. Besides, the major economic sector of the respondents from the eight studied communities of northern Ghana is farming (table 5.3, page 122). The table shows that over (65%) of all respondents indicated farming as the economic sector in which they make their livelihood. According to the respondents, they gain maximum benefit from these interventions more (table 5.12, page 143 and figure 5.13, page 144).

Second, 92.4% of respondents from the eight communities tend to participate more in activities organised by non-government organisations (NGOs) for personal gain and motivation in the form of monetary and other incentives. 95.2% of them were from the Northern region, 93.3% from the Upper West region and 88.7% from the Upper East region, while 12% of respondents prefer NGOs to government activities because NGOs gives clear understanding for integration more. Some other reasons deduced from the responses and participation behaviour of the respondents in their choice of which meetings they attend or not, include respect for the people, motivation and rapid execution of projects initiated at the community level by NGOs more than government led initiatives. Evidenced of these are outlined on table 5.10 and figures 5.11.1 to 5.11.3 (pages 138-140).

Third, 53% of respondents of the eight selected communities of northern Ghana participated more actively in pro-poor interventions at the implementation stage of the participation process (that is, when development actors require communal labour support), the monitoring period and the evaluation stage (table 5.13 in page 144, figures 5.14.1 to 5.14.3 in pages 145-147). The project initiation, planning, and resource mobilisation stages are done solely by the development actors, void of the community members input or active engagement.

Fourth, is the low investment in the area of school, road and dam projects in the study communities. The research has revealed that out of eight communities, only two benefited from either a school or road project and only three out of the eight communities benefited dam projects (table 5.8, page 134 and figures 5.9.1 – 5.9.3, pages 135-136).

Fifth, males dominate females in community participation in pro-poor intervention activities in the selected communities of northern Ghana. Table 5.2 and figures 5.3.1 to 5.3.3 have indicated that 57%

males, against 43% females participated in activities organised by development actors at the community level (pages 121 – 122).

Sixth, in general the thesis has identified during focus group discussions that there are power imbalances and negative influences by stakeholders when it comes to pro-poor interventions in northern Ghana (as is demonstrated in figure 6.1).

The discussions made by participants for the focus groups threw more light on the various concerns expressed by each of the respondents and provided some level of clarity on the study. The researcher therefore draws a conclusion on chapter five which captures the findings and presentation of findings and then the inferences from the analysis of findings on point 5.5 below.

5.5 Conclusion

The research examined levels of involvement available, those community members participating and the support and opportunities available to community members to participate in pro-poor activities meant for their collective benefit. Finding things out in order to make change was a common goal of this thesis. Chapter gives results on various aspects including projects of benefit to the respondents, the levels of education and participation in pro-poor intervention activities and the preference of one development actor more than the other. The chapter also contains the findings which are a summary of the outcomes from the results as evidenced at 5.4 above. Development actors, based on the results and findings as contained in this chapter, have acknowledged that, while the purpose, objective and expected outcomes of a participation process are initially undertaken by the organisation that initiates the process, it is also imperative that these are sufficiently flexible to allow community participants to comment on.

Chapter six below provides a platform for further elaboration on the research findings which discusses the findings in line with the research questions and set objectives of this thesis.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION ON RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

Chapter six captures three key aspects of the study. These are the discussion segment, the conclusions and the recommendations that the researcher makes for those who read it. For clarity and emphasis on the direction of the discussions, the research questions are restated here and the discussion on the findings is pivoted around the analysis as in chapter five. Below are the research questions restated.

1. Is community participation practically explored in pro-poor programmes as the main objective of development practitioners?
2. Does community participation in existing development programmes offer any opportunity to development actors¹⁸ to identify local knowledge and talents?
3. Does participation reflect the power of the local people as Mosse (2006:16) opines?
4. In which way do community members understand the values and expectations set by development practitioners in relation to poverty reduction within their communities?
5. Finally, what levels of participation do local communities and development actors expect of each other in order to play a collective role towards the achievement of development goals that will directly benefit the recipients?

The above questions are discussed under the following sub-headings.

6.2 discusses how community participation is viewed in pro-poor programmes by development actors and answers question 1, making use of the related findings from chapters five with case study analysis on case 2 under 1.2.2; 6.3 discusses issues related to questions 2 and 4 which deals with the role of community participation in identifying local knowledge, talents and the values and expectations of development practitioners towards pro-poor programmes and case analysis of case 3 under 1.2.2; and 6.4 discusses questions 3 and 5, which deals with gender, power, educational level and contribution of community members in pro-poor programme participation with case study analysis on case 1 under 1.2.2.

¹⁸ Development actors- refers to both non-governmental and governmental development agents who assist either directly or indirectly with development activities aimed at reducing poverty in rural communities.

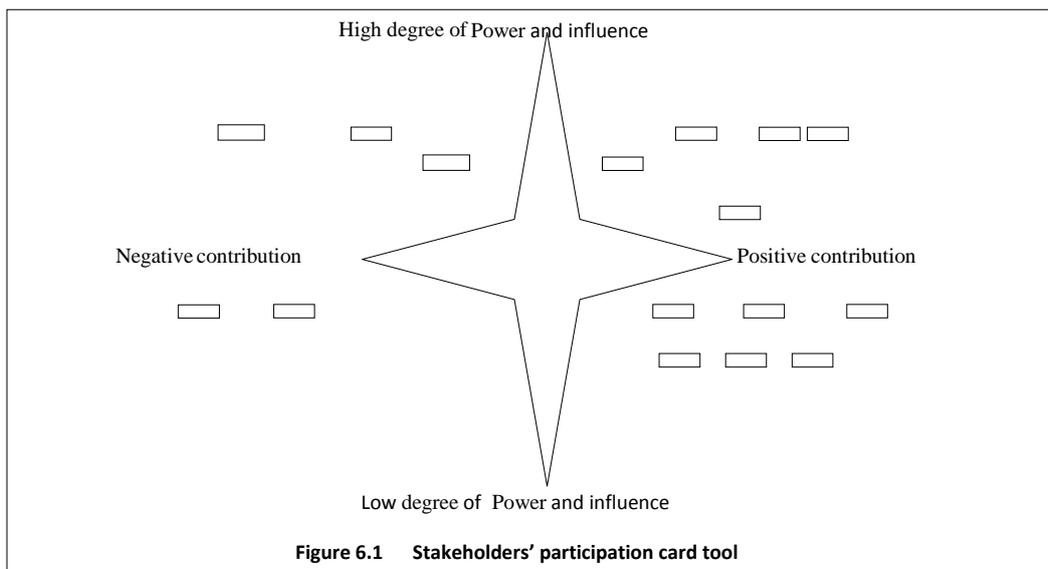
6.2 How community participation is viewed in pro-poor programmes by development actors

This section discusses research question one which intends to explore the way development actors view community participation in pro-poor programmes. The research has identified from the communities studied that indeed development activities take place in the communities. These interventions are carried out by both government agencies and non-government organisations and are aimed at improving life and engendering participation in the community beneficiaries. This is evidenced by the responses of respondents from the studied communities as outlined on table 5.8 in chapter five of this thesis. Though community members take part in activities organised by development actors, rarely do they articulate their own views about the impending intervention or question the development actors and offer alternative intervention needs. The community members often keep silent during meetings of this sort, leaving very little room for the development actors to appreciate their opinions. For example, the youth at Mankarigu and Jawani, during a focus group discussion, alluded to the fact that the youth are voiceless on poverty reduction matters that affect their lives. They believe that in formal decision-making forums at the community, or even district and national levels they are not appreciated by elders and some development actors. Pul (2003:94) intimates that “the youth are only seen but not heard”. In other words, the presence of the youth is not frowned upon, but by and large, their views are not readily counted.

In terms of participation, community members only become active when it comes to contribution of their labour to communal work. The views and suggestions of community members sometimes are ignored which often provokes a war of silence. Under case study 2 (1.2.2), in Jawani - Kambago community in the northern region of Ghana a school building project was initiated by an NGO. The community members wanted a cement concrete building, but the NGO used gravel to build the school using local building methods. Though the people did not prevent the NGO from going ahead with the project they were not happy that the NGO personnel refused to consider their views on reasons for wanting a concrete block building to using local resources and methods for the school for fear that it might collapse during the rainy season. The people of Kambago were vindicated as the school collapsed when the rains set in. This cost money and human time spent in constructing the project. So when there is no active participation on the part of the community members or when their views are not considered, projects are likely to fail as evidenced in the Jawani-Kambago community school project. The indigenous people of Jawani in the northern region of Ghana attribute a great deal of value to silence as a way to manifest their opposition to an issue. Silence in meetings and committees at the community level can be both a form of protest and low levels of education of key participants in such forums. For instance, in table 5.4 (page 126) above, between 13 and 41 percent of respondents were illiterates. This

means, they have never been to school and so could neither read nor write. The implication here is that their level of understanding of and contribution to planning of activities would be highly curtailed. However, sometimes, silence could be an expression of alternative opinions of intervention in the lives of the community members, but they find it difficult to express such views or fear that the development actors may go away with their support. In the words of Mefalopulos (2008:123) “if words gain the consensus, silence can express the dissent”. In other words, silence does not always mean that people have agreed, understood and accepted the message or not, but is a key code of expressing disagreement or disappointment at the information possibly as mere rhetoric with limited transformative actions.

It is, however, important to say at the outset that the idea of limited participation in pro-poor decisions and development interventions has truncated the opportunities of beneficiary communities to fully participate in issues initiated for their collective good. This emerged from the accounts of those from the studied communities and is not simply about inequality of opportunity, poverty or life chances alone, it is related to all of those things such as participation in defining the needs and aspirations of local beneficiaries during initiation through to implementation of development activities and access to goods and services within their respective communities. Using the stakeholders’ participation card tool as part of the focus group discussion sessions, members of Jawani, Mangariku and Namoaligo communities arrived at the following conclusions on the scale as seen below. Their demonstration depicted a scenario where participants tried to reduce the power imbalances and negative influences by stakeholders in community development process.



The process involved given the stakeholder participation cards randomly to everyone in the group. The participants were asked to place these cards at the point on the matrix (figure 6.1) that they felt was appropriate. Once the participants had placed their cards, the whole group then stood back and looked at the picture presented. Individuals then asked for blank cards on which they wrote their own stakeholders and place them on the matrix. Each participant could question the placing of up to two cards and that could provoke a discussion. After 20 minutes, each participant was allowed to move one card if he or she wished. The new picture was assessed and this was followed by a discussion based on this picture to illustrate who had or was perceived to have power, and who did not. It also illustrates who is felt to be sympathetic and supportive and who is not. The purpose of the tool was to get the group to focus on how to reduce the level of power of some stakeholders and increase the power of others and to shift those stakeholders who were thought to be negative.

The illustration depicts that in their quest to participate, community members suffer both external and internal or as Oforu-Appiah (2008) describes it “societal and personal” constraints respectively and thereby lose the opportunity to take active part in the issues and projects that benefit them directly. This results directly from the negative power influence of various stakeholders other than the community beneficiaries in the development chain.

The proceeding paragraphs, discuss questions two and four as indicated under point 6.3.

6.3 The role of community participation in identifying local knowledge, talents, the values and expectations of development practitioners towards pro-poor programmes.

Participation in matters of human development is not only a right, but also a responsibility. According to Cornwall, et al (2004:9) “finding more about who is participating, what dialogue actually means in practice, the extent to which participation involves broad-based involvement or remains a specific, technical issue is important-but also a challenge”. It is a challenge in the sense that who participates where and why, as indicated on tables 5.8, 5.9 and 5.10 (pages 134-139) in chapter five of this thesis and how much people participate in development discourse are intriguing phenomena (fascinating issues) for development activists. Participation therefore challenges the consciousness of development practitioners and community beneficiaries to engage in the participatory development process voluntarily and as part of their responsibility, in order to offer direction on what to do or not to do, a reflection on what Chambers (2004:10) describes as “the practical meaning of participation”.

Based on the notion of responsibility, “outsiders” (Chambers, 2005:131), or development practitioners who are not direct members of a given community, “frequently have unrealistic expectations about the propensity of poor groups to contribute resources and to take part in participatory exercises, especially in the project management phase” (Hall and Midgley, 2004:101). If there was a development that used less involvement of the rich and the community development interventionists or actors or “outsiders” as Chambers (2005) calls them, and rather included more of the community members themselves, it would give the community members the opportunity to define how and why development activities (planning, resource mobilisation process, implementation and sustainability) should go. Hall and Midgley (2004:101) observation on how planners often ignore the need for proper incentive structures put in place in return for community support without creating long term dependence accentuates appropriately in the findings from the study. During the research, (tables 5.10 and 5.11, pages 139-141) it was discovered that often times NGOs offer some appreciation in the form of tangible incentive packages such as certificates of recognition, T-Shirts or any other gifts, no matter how small such gifts might seem to deserving community participants. These gifts serve as an encouragement to the community members to do more for the success of the programme as well as demonstrate that the recipients are worthy and have the potential to contribute for the continuation and ownership of the projects for a considerable length of time. This was however minimal if not, absent in government initiated interventions.

On the other side of the issue, it is a fact that community participation in some respects can actually cause a disappointment and could eventually lead to disempowerment instead of generating participants’ ingenuity. The links between donors’ decisions and procedures and those of the participatory work of their partner NGOs or government agencies seem distant from beneficiary communities’ perspectives. In the sense that, what is expected of the NGOs and government agents to implement in communities most often are incongruent to the needs of community members. For instance, table 5.11 illustrates the way the target communities (Namoaligo, Mankarigu and Jawani) respond to the call to participate in planning their community development projects. According to Crewe and Harrison (1998:70-71), development partnership is “a process of cooperation between equals” implying that “those on the receiving end of aid are portrayed as if they were on equal terms: they are partners-with implicitly the same objectives, and the same ability” (Crewe and Harrison, 1998:71) to articulate ideas and actions as the donors and main stakeholders of community development.

Evidence from the research (case 3, under 1.2.2) indicates a small scale irrigation dam project initiated by the Member of Parliament for Jirapa. The intention of the project was to offer the youth an

opportunity to remain in Agriculture all year round. Good as the intention of the Member of Parliament seemed at the time, the youth paid no heed to it and migrated to the southern parts of Ghana during the dry season. The reasons gathered by the researcher were that the community wanted the dam sited at a different place where in their opinion had enough arable land for dry season farming than where the Member of Parliament sited the dam project. All appeals from some community members not to site the project at where it was failed. Consequently, the people refused to utilise the dam to meet the original intentions of the dam which was for small scale irrigation farming during the dry season. Thus the intention behind the construction of the dam for dry season farming, to minimise rural urban migration and increase rural food security had been forfeited. This case indicates that community members when given the opportunity to fully participate in deciding the best options for poverty reduction at the end become the instruments for sustainable development.

Once more, the findings agree with Chambers (2005:131) intimation that “local people have capabilities of which outsiders” (such as development practitioners) “have been largely, or totally, unaware of”. Evidence on table 5.13 indicates the various categories of projects that community members showed vested interest in participating and the benefits they derived from them. Development practitioners ought to listen to the poor, instead of, as Dorothee Fiedler of the German Ministry for Development Cooperation (BMZ) puts it “... telling them what should be done to improve their situation” (in Irvine, Chambers and Eyben, 2004:28). Accordingly, “in a world of big money and multi-million dollar compensation packages, greed is a worker who wants a living wage” as Korten, (1995:291) describes it. The issues of involvement in deciding the future and poverty alleviation become subdued as community members fix their eyes on the bread now and not how that bread should come to them and for how long. The poor overlook their concerns on participation and rights, and concentrate on receiving what is given to them in order to satisfy their immediate needs rather than on how the giver should have carried out the process or what to do in order to receive desired needs in future. What can be deduced from this perception is that the levels of poverty, the quantity of grants and development intervention issues and how these are communicated to the target beneficiaries create misunderstandings in the minds of many. Thus, participation to the community members in northern Ghana would mean receiving what is given and doing what one is asked to do, then get something as a result. This is often the perception as verbalised by some community respondents during a focus group discussion session at Nadwoli, one of the study communities.

The next section (6.4) addresses questions three and five.

6.4 Gender, power, educational level and contribution of community members in pro-poor programme participation

Community participation offers possibilities for developing what Wenger, et al (2002:27) describe as “community of practice”¹⁹. Participation is a development alternative that puts the human interest first. In the view of Korten (1995:262), “There are human alternatives, and those who view the world through the lens of the human interest have both the right and the power to choose them”. By alternatives Korten would perhaps be referring to the choices of engaging beneficiary communities in poverty reduction programmes and either succeed or fail with them to do so. Those who choose the former will not only be right by doing so, but also has the power to do so, for the power belongs to the people. So by choosing the interest of the people over and above organisational bureaucracy is power in itself.

On table 5.13 (page 144) on the level of participation in chapter five, idea initiation and programming planning stages took place without any involvement of the target community beneficiaries. It was during the implementation stage (table 5.13) that a significant representation of community membership is recorded. For instance, 27.5 percent of respondents in Nalerigu and 55.5 percent in Chiana communities intimated that they participated in planned programmes directly implemented in their communities for their benefit. However, monitoring and evaluation and sustainability process fell below 50 percent in all the study communities. Clearly, community participation seems more appreciated by development interventionists more at the implementation stage. This puts the community members in a position of recipients, more than active contributors and collaborators to their social mitigation process in development interventions.

There is substantial agreement (Narayan, 2002:6) that approaches giving poor people more freedom to make economic decisions will enhance development effectiveness at the local level in terms of design, implementation and outcomes, as evidenced on table 5.13 in this thesis. In empowering the poor to participate effectively in driving the wheel against poverty in their local communities is a form of investment (Chambers, 2005), releases the developmental energies of the people and help to propel pro-poor growth. In addition, empowering local people enhances citizen inclusion and participation at the

¹⁹According to Wenger, et al, community of practice constitutes three fundamental elements: a domain of knowledge, which defines a set of issues; a community of people who care about this domain: and a shared practice that they are developing to be effective in their domain. (2002:27).

grassroots and ensures that basic services reach poor people and has the potential of lowering operation and maintenance costs as compared to top-down development approach at the community level.

The importance of participatory local planning in development management and implementation is widely recognised (Chambers, 2005, World Bank, 2000). The relationships and trust formed amongst a group provide a context for learning. This could lead to the production of knowledge through participatory processes. For instance, community participation suggests that communities cannot be built without the popular support and the full participation of their people and that people's involvement or participation results in the democratisation of the development process (Wunsch and Olowu 2000). Marginalisation of people's participation in the formulation of public policies might have exacerbated the persistent socio-economic crisis which Ghana faced throughout the 1980s, with the consequential ever-growing concern and preoccupation by governments with short-term crisis management. Participatory local planning basically asks development planners, practitioners and researchers to give up what they have up till now erroneously considered their fundamental prerogatives: to define problems and to solve them (Mikkelsen, 1995) and to instead reorient grassroots development strategy based largely on addressing problems and aspirations identified by the poor themselves with a management structure in which they have confidence.

Kothari's (2001:151), view on the general laxity among development practitioners to recognise or acknowledge the capacity of individuals and groups to retain information, knowledge and values, and act out a performance in order to present themselves in a variety of ways lends credence to findings from the communities studied as indicated on table 5.11 in chapter five. In a focus group discussion in Jawani, one of the study communities, some members thought that some development interventionists do not actually involve them in planning and sourcing for funds for intervention in their communities. They (the community respondents) viewed this behaviour as "hiding the sources and amounts involved" in such interventions from them. In consequence, the non-involvement of the community membership in poverty programmes becomes a predatory system that eats out the very purpose of the donor funds. In the long run, it may make responsible communities become defiant, rather than being beggars and sober recipients of charity. In a way, this can be likened to what Harrison (1993:220) calls "concentration without centralisation", which, in my view implies the manner in which development agents invest their efforts at pro-poor interventions on what they would gain rather than centring their efforts on what will benefit the community with their concern and participation.

The more influential pro-poor interventionists would actually concentrate power to themselves (Mefalopulos, 2008:54-56), in the face of perpetuated poverty, than alleviating it. The reason deduced might be that those who engage in resource-intensive poverty reduction activities depend on these same resources for their own survival and therefore have an interest in the existence of poverty rather than its eradication (Ostrom, 1990:13-15). Granted that the development practitioners and the beneficiary communities all benefit from a common interest as deduced, then the success of pro-poor intervention can only be more meaningful if both parties take part in owning it through their mutual participation and dynamic dialogue. Studies (Johnson and Forsyth, 2002:1593; Bromley, 1992:4-12; Ostrom, 1990:30; Wade, 1988:183-184) have shown that individuals are more likely to maintain and conserve resources when they believe they will reap the long-term benefits of conservation and restraint.

However, outright restraint from not engaging community beneficiaries in the participatory process could betray the trust of community members and in a short time; some participants could choose to opt out of the participatory process completely. A clear example is manifested in the construction of the area council at Namoaligo-Tindongo electoral area one of the studied areas, where the placement of the area council was contested by majority of the communities involved, yet the government agents still sited it where they deemed fit (Case study 1, under 1.2.2). Consequently, the council has not been put to its intended use since. This is a situation that the poverty alleviation process can best be described as standing in a reverse order, where the promoters of poverty alleviation rather than the community poor benefit. Table 5.9 of the findings in chapter five provide evidence in this scenario, where majority of respondents said farm credits and boreholes/wells give them maximum benefit than the rest of interventions outlined. This has been so because in rural communities farm credit is a significant support for farming activities and borehole/well provides quality water for both human and animal consumption. Besides, these interventions benefit them in a more direct manner and enhance the possibility of ownership as propagated by development interventionists in the course of their community development work.

In community pro-poor intervention, interventionists treat the community as a single entity. It is not a single entity – it comprises many different overlapping communities. Even where community participation strategies are successful, as in the case of Nandom and Chiana as evidenced on table 5.13, some communities may be privileged and others excluded. Once institutions are formed, “they are not neutral instruments, but mechanisms through which durable patterns of inequality are produced and reproduced” note, Heller and Mahoney (2003:29). It is important that the voices of all communities and their members are heard, appreciated and some implemented as generally agreed upon. The idea of

inequalities in pro-poor interventions is not merely an abstract one. It comes from eliciting the voices of people in the eight study communities of northern Ghana that are hardly heard in rural development discourse and intervention. This group of people are often discussed in relation to services – as recipients, non-recipients and potential recipients (Narayan, 2002). Sometimes some category of the community poor are “hard to reach” (the uneducated, unemployed and youth) and become “chronically and socially excluded” (the homeless, the elderly and feeble-bodied, women and children), (Oxfam, 2008), for example, are forgotten during planning and resource disbursement in the development chain process.

Clearly community development initiatives trying to upgrade living conditions require the active participation of all people across the gender divide, notably the involvement of women. A sharp break from traditional constraints to women’s participation in community activities is highly encouraged. Women in northern Ghana are motivated by the calls of development practitioners from both government agencies and non-government organisations to participate with men in the village general assembly at all levels of discussions and activities which is often shied upon under ordinary traditional levels particularly in Muslim communities in the Northern region of Ghana. During some group discussion sessions at Mankarigu during the collection of information for this thesis, some women responded with alacrity to this new opportunity of equal participation at all levels of community development and deliberations. The women particularly perceived it as a positive turn of affairs or as Gupta, Grandvoinet & Ramoni, (2003) put it “a driving force of change” for a better and more inclusive development approach. This awaking and self motivation propelled the women to engage meaningfully in the discussions that day. In a way to sustain the motivation of the women in community discussions and participation in development activities in their communities, the research team, following a focus group discussion, admonished them to always attend community meetings whenever they were called and encouraged their husbands to participate as well. By so doing, their husbands would begin to appreciate the fact that women just as with men have a lot to contribute, be it ideas or manual labour to enhance community development.

A major development challenge facing northern Ghana today is; how the poor and developing communities can make their settings more conducive to growth and poverty reduction. The World Bank Group (2004:26) has observed that growth alone is not enough. The poor and vulnerable may not be able to share in growth’s benefits if they lack the skills to find gainful employment or if the areas in which they live are cut off because of poor infrastructure. Investments in education and basic infrastructure – delivered by institutions that serve the poor well – can ensure that the benefits of growth are broadly

shared and that inequalities in income, assets and access do not increase. This is a cardinal element for better development outcomes. For any collective action to succeed, the skills and knowledge of key actors are necessary to play their roles effectively. However, in public service delivery to the poor at the community level, the actors involved (policy makers, service providers and beneficiaries) seldom share the same educational background in governance principles and cultural values (Darlan and Anani, 2005:2) and hence poses a limitation for actors (here the community members) with low levels of education and understanding to effectively and efficiently take an active part in the process. Historically, pro-poor interventions are led by people who seek to improve the lives of others but who do not have significant experience of poverty themselves (Salim, in World Bank, 2000:48). This is still a strong tradition that is difficult to challenge. The research has illustrated how development outcomes in the three northern regions of Ghana are shaped by the nature of government and non-government institutions, as well as by the type of political regimes and administrative organisation that exist. Here we focus on a subset of issues related to improving service delivery at community level, and more broadly to helping rural communities achieve a transition from present circumstances to better-functioning institutional settings.

Communities are characterised by a dense network of multi-stranded relationships, the dynamics of which can obstruct or facilitate development. Community active participation in the development process has several advantages and includes direct knowledge of the situation (despite asymmetries in information between members), vested interest in implemented projects and a direct stake in the outcomes (table 5.12, page 144). On table 5.12, the various responses from the communities are indicative of the interventions that will enlist the utmost participation of the people. Local information can be put to good use in many ways for planning and implementing programmes, though care must be exercised to avoid “negative outcomes” (Tendler, 2000). Local information can also be very useful in monitoring the use of program funds and of service delivery. This is especially strong when those being monitored have close ties to the community; sanctions for offences are hard to ignore when they come from people with whom one necessarily has multi-stranded and longstanding relationships.

It is argued (World Bank Group, 2004:32) that the possibility for generating developmental state-community synergies is greatly enhanced by interventions which reduce serious power imbalances within communities, for example through land reform, tenancy reform, and developing non-crop sources of income. This reduces poor people’s dependence on local elites, helping to prepare communities in initiating collective action, and collaboration amongst themselves as well as with government agencies. Insufficient resources in Ghana, is one debilitating factor against people’s effective participation in

development oriented infrastructural or knowledge based intervention programmes. Bastos (2004:19) argued that resource-poverty inhibits effective participation in the living standard predominating in society. Although community members may be poor and need help, they do not want to be excluded from the acts that will bring them the ultimate assistance. They want to participate in defining the type of assistance suitable and relevant to their needs as evidenced on tables 5.9, 5.10 and 5.12. Community members' participation is a voluntary activity and involves equipping the participants with proper knowledge and training in which they are equally gratified. It is the active involvement of members of a particular community in all aspects of developmental procedures (planning, decision-making, implementation, evaluating and monitoring). There is therefore need for pro-poor interveners to create a congenial environment to initiate the involvement of different willing communities, as much as possible in the participatory process.

The appeal of participatory local planning and implementation can, therefore, be summed up as follows: "no development programme, however grand, can succeed unless the local people are willing to accept it and make an effort to participate" (Makumbe, 1996:12). This involvement of the local people throughout all the important junctures of the project cycle makes it possible to utilize their knowledge about local conditions to solve local problems more efficiently and effectively. Development problems should not be defined by experts in isolation but should be based on dialogue with the affected parties (Mikkelsen, 1995, Osman, 1997).

Full community engagement in the participatory discourse in pro-poor interventions is of the highest consideration and should be practiced locally and internationally. It can be appreciated that the cost of not involving rural communities in programme development and poverty intervention could be the collapse of community initiatives, ecological devastation, human and social fragmentation and spiritual impoverishment (Reason and Bradbury, 2001:4). Human development is more than income (Ellis, 2005, Chambers, 2004). It is about widening people's choices to lead lives they value (Chambers, 2005, Bastos, 2004). This means expanding the capabilities of people to live long, healthy and creative lives, to acquire knowledge, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living, and to enjoy dignity, self-respect, and the respect of others. Accordingly, it pays for us to think in new ways (Bateson, 1972:423). Failure to enlist community support in defining their poverty issues and eradicating the instigating factors, would be repeating what Reason and Bradbury describe as the "errors built into our ways of thinking, and their consequences for justice and ecological sustainability" (2001:4), otherwise referred to by Bateson as "epistemological errors of our time" (1972:424). The errors of Bateson's time are still glaring at us in this present time in several respects such as reasons for

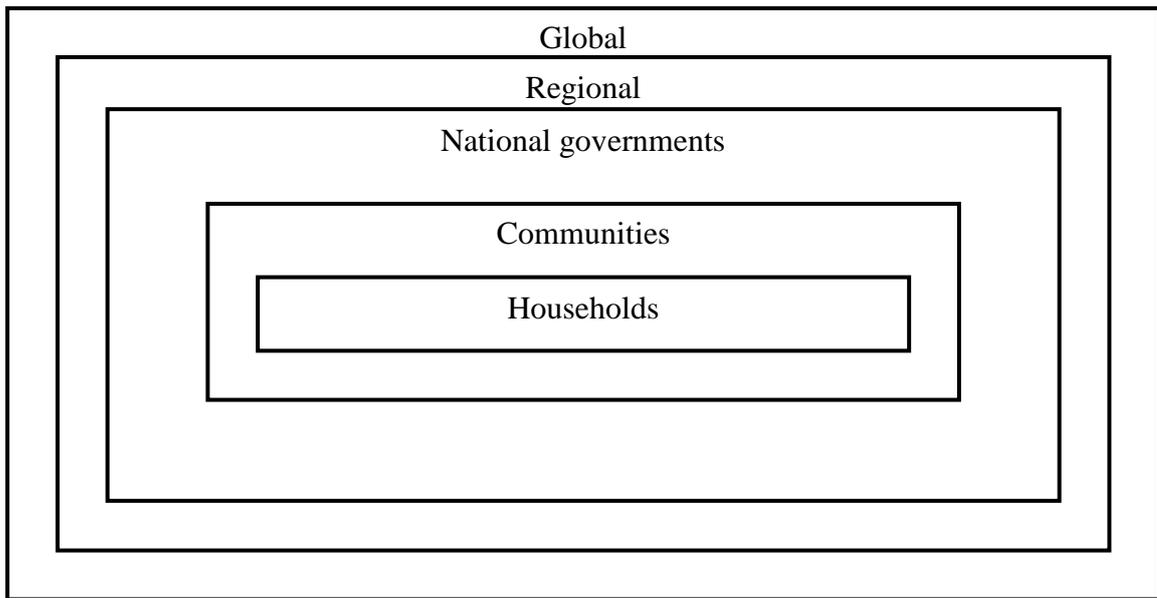
political and ethnic tensions, increasing poverty and social inequality (Hall and Midgley, 2004:45), and poor involvement of community members in pro-poor interventions, among others. The challenge for government and development actors is to ensure that rural communities become active participants in whatever programmes that are intended for them. Mosse (2001:10) therefore sees participatory development as the incorporation of local people's knowledge into programme planning. Making use of the knowledge of local rural people reflects the power and instinctive ingenuity of community members at every stage of the development process, from need identification to implementation and evaluation of the programmes.

Ribes (in Bening, 2010) observed that if development is to fulfil people's expectation it cannot be patterned on an outside model. It must be achieved in accordance with the goals and methods freely chosen by each society. This needs care to ensure that the transfer of knowledge in the social and human sciences, as in technology, do not impede local initiative, but, on the contrary, help it get off the ground. In communicating development issues in northern Ghana, for instance, it is envisaged that rural people are at the centre of any given development initiative (Bening, 2010) and view planners, development workers, local authorities, farmers and rural people as *communication equals* (Salim, in World Bank, 2000:49), who are committed to mutual understanding and concerted action on equal terms.

Communication is vital to stimulate people's participation and community mobilization, decision-making and action, confidence building, awareness raising, sharing knowledge and changing attitudes, behaviour and lifestyles; improve learning and training and rapidly spreading information; to assist with programme planning and formulation; to foster the support of decision-makers. In this process all actors may be innovators, intermediaries and receivers of information and knowledge.

The figure below explains the following core issues: the top block (global) refers to the international donor fraternity, the next block (regional) refers to donor community within the continent and the next three blocks play a dual role that is both as a beneficiary and benefactor. The third block from the top (national governments) represent beneficiaries, for instance, this is where the government of Ghana benefits from the regional and global donor community and at the same time service the needs of communities and households which are the pillars of communities, in which case, the national government become a benefactor to the communities and the households who are the final beneficiaries.

Figure 6.2 The beneficiaries and benefactors paradigm



The core beneficiaries of pro-poor interventions are members of the household, which subsist within the community as depicted on the figure above. It also shows that there are powers that hold the key to the programmes that would facilitate poverty reduction drive within the community and which empowers the household. These powers are the NGOs, the government and the global community blocs. Though central and prime intended beneficiaries, communities and households are reduced to consumers rather than producers. They are taught how to eat fish rather than how to fish and in which water bodies to fish and which not.

Interestingly, when it comes to accountability, as noted by Darlan and Anani, (2005:3) what was not done during the implementation of programmes (community participation) is what is reported first. The implication is that though these development actors know the values of participatory actions towards poverty reduction they seldom practice it.

6.5 Conclusions, implications and recommendations

6.5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws a conclusion on the thesis. As a result, a summary of the objectives and the main problem the thesis seeks to solve have been repeated here for clarity and easy reference in this process. These are as follows: the main objective of the study is to explore and influence policy on how community participation in pro-poor interventions can situate beneficiaries to discover and commit

themselves to what they need and want for the future in northern Ghana. It includes the primary and secondary objectives which address the research problem and are as follows;

1. To explore the theoretical basis of community participation and poverty reduction activities, with emphasis on northern Ghana
2. To describe and analyse current participatory practices and to identify the reasons for those practices.
3. To explore possibilities on how community members can make their own decisions on what they want implemented for their benefit through available activities and interventions in eight selected communities in northern Ghana.

This study focuses on the problem that the participation of the poor in pro-poor interventions at the community level in northern Ghana, appear to be minimal or non-existent. As a result care and utilisation of development interventions by the direct beneficiaries of such interventions tend to be poor. Pro-poor intervention at the community level seems to be delivered poorly and without the direct participation of community members themselves through the participatory process and are often viewed by the community members as the property of the development actors and not they, the community members who are the direct beneficiaries.

This section seeks to outline the implications of the thesis for theory, practice and policy formulation and further research in the area of shattered opportunities, hopes and aspirations of the poor, taking into consideration their level of participation in pro-poor development interventions and the contribution of the thesis to the body of knowledge. It concludes with the recommendations.

6.5.2 Implications for theory

Most of the emerging pro-poor interventions in the rural areas of northern Ghana are borrowing the development strategies of other already existent agencies that have been doing work with rural people over time. Participatory development can be of significant value in building rural capacity for, and in the study of, efforts in support of sustainable pro-poor development. Presented are two models in relation to the thesis topic: firstly a model of 'what participation occurs' and secondly a model of 'how participation occurs' in northern Ghana. These two models relate back to the specific literature on this kind of intervention, as well as the more general literature on community participation in pro-poor interventions in northern Ghana with inferences from the findings of this thesis.

6.5.2.1 What participation occurs

Changes in community participation in pro-poor intervention depends on the participation history, and the level and nature of their involvement in the community development interventions in question. Participatory initiatives in development are meant to be all inclusive, particularly considering the cultural and economic realms of rural community members in northern Ghana. Community participation in pro-poor development activities fosters sustainable development in that it facilitates space for dialogue and enhances confidence of the community members. Additionally, it makes rural dwellers develop an attitude of personal and collective inquiry into the alternative ways to overcome poverty. Bradbury (2001, 312) sees this form of inquiry as a process of technological innovations that aid the poor to seek a sustainable state through their active engagement in development interventions. In other words, such process interventions can alleviate the silent personality clashes between development actors and community beneficiaries through work which recognises that people matter. However, based on the findings of this thesis, community members' participation occurs more during the implementation (that is when development actors require communal labour support), the monitoring period and the evaluation stage. The project initiation, planning, and resource mobilisation stages are done solely by the development actors, void of the community members input or active engagement. Accordingly, for development to play its historical role of empowering the poor and vulnerable groups of society, it should be based on participation. Participation is seen as a collection of genuine processes of dialogue and interaction and thus replaces "subject-object relationships between interveners and the intervened, thereby enabling the oppressed to act as the free subjects of their own destiny" (Rahnema, 1993:120-121). It is in this consideration that Mefalopulos (2008) concludes that projects initiated without the participation of the community members in the decision-making process, could lead to failure. Based on the study, the researcher concludes that participation in pro-poor interventions in northern Ghana is poorly done and consequently is the main reason for the poor outcomes of community project interventions.

6.5.2.2 How participation occurs

It has now been established (7.1.1.1) 'what participation occurs', and most importantly that the intensity of changes in community participation in pro-poor intervention issues that a person experiences depends on their participation history, and the level and nature of their involvement in the community development interventions in question. The next step is to explain 'how participation occurs'. In order to do this, the researcher has reviewed the results and analysis of chapters five (results) and first part of six (on discussions).

Creating mutual respect and appreciation among participants (development actors and community beneficiaries), and also between humans and nature is important in order to arrive at a subject-subject horizontal relationship or what Heller (1989:304) calls “symmetric reciprocity”. In Heller’s view, the purpose of participatory development as a key social science discourse is to set people free. That is, it has a liberating power, as it makes humanity to view the poor as resourceful, value-laden and economically correct despite their current circumstance of poverty.

Participation is often described as spanning a range of levels (Chambers, 2005), from low to high participation as indicated in chapter two of this thesis. Examples of low levels of participation include: information gathering from people or communities and provision of information to people or communities. Examples of high levels of participation are: taking part in referenda or involvement in forums where people actually exercise the power of decision-making. Indications from findings of this research have shown that communities in northern Ghana have the passion to respond to invitations to attend community forums on developmental issues. However, table 5.10 clearly shows that community members had various reasons for accepting such invitations. Based on the reasons given by the respondents for preference for NGO led meetings as against government led calls, the ultimate intervention objective of general enhancement of community livelihood seemed to be missing. Accordingly, there is need to draw a clear distinction between community involvement and community participation (Craig, 1995). At the lower end of the spectrum, community involvement does not necessarily confer a decision-making capacity on the community members, but giving them the opportunity to have access to information concerning impending or progressing initiatives within their own communities. At the higher end of the spectrum, community participation enables community views to be sought and community representatives to be included in decision-making processes. Participation and the engagement of communities is a key principle underpinning community development. In the context of pro-poor strategy, community development is a process that activates, encourages and supports groups of people experiencing poverty to join together in activities that promote their common interest, support and improve their communities, and, which support them to influence and to have a say in policies that affect their wellbeing directly.

If groups working with people experiencing poverty interpret a process to be about decision-making while others interpret it to be about information giving or an exchange of views, false expectations and frustration are likely to emerge. For example, on table 5.11 respondents preferred to attend forums organised by NGOs to those by government agencies. It is possible with such an occurrence, to lead a risk of institutional mistrust and cynicism between the development agents and the community

beneficiaries. The implementation of participatory guidelines considering the voices and rights of the community members' effective involvement is particularly relevant to minimising this risk. This is manifested in table 5.9 where 93 percent of the respondents were willing to participate in meetings and related activities of NGO rather than in government led initiatives (Table 5.11).

For development action to succeed, the key actors must possess the skills and knowledge required to play their respective roles, particularly in public service delivery to the poor at the community level, where the actors involved (policy, service providers and beneficiaries) seldom share the same educational background in governance principles and cultural values (Darlan and Anani, 2005:2). Historically, pro-poor work has also tended to be led by people who seek to improve the lives of others but who do not have significant experience of poverty themselves (Salim, in World Bank, 2000:48). This is still a strong tradition and can be difficult to challenge. On table 5.13, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and sustainability meetings seemed to have attracted more participation from community members as compared to preparation phases of projects. This could mean that community members find such meetings more participatory. In a one on one discussion during field gathering of data, some participants at Namoaligo community mentioned that whenever they (community members) were given the opportunity to contribute their knowledge; it encouraged them to constantly make extra efforts for the success and sustenance of projects undertaken in their communities. This attestation by the people of Namoaligo throws light on Sarvaes (2003:20) assertion that the successes and failures of most development projects are often determined by two crucial factors: community and people's participation (the level of cohesion among the people in a defined location called community and their full participation in making sure implemented projects benefit them as desired).

6.4.3 Implications for policy and practice

This section explores how participation can be used by development organizations, ranging from international agencies to civil society organisations. Within this landscape of organisations, participation is an essential tool in pro-poor interventions projects in several respects and includes:

- **Providing basic services effectively** – Mechanisms of public or private service provision, including health, education, transport, agricultural extension and water, entail strategies that are affordable and inclusive even of marginalized groups.
- **Pursuing advocacy goals** – Collection of data from ordinary citizens feeds their voice into policy formulation processes. A key element to achieve this input is support of civil society and local governance initiatives, such as popular participation in public budgeting and individual and community

empowerment programs that strengthen the voice of marginalized groups. Furthermore, advocacy has grown significantly in recent years as an NGO activity.

■ **Monitoring progress towards goals** – These activities include self-reporting schemes and direct community involvement in monitoring processes.

■ **Facilitating reflection and learning among local groups** – Opportunities for dialogue, learning and critique become central elements in evaluating a project or programme in which field workers collaborate with local people living on or near programme sites to assess linkages between the process of project implementation and the subsequent impacts in terms of programmes adoption by the communities. The study (table 5.8-5.11) found that implementation of the project was substantially greater when participation in planning and implementation was interactive and interdisciplinary between government extension workers and local people, and was less when participation was simply consultative. This explains the fact that though there is wide acceptability of the effectiveness of participatory approaches among development practitioners, still there is an ongoing debate in literature which expresses doubt that mere participation in development initiatives cannot in itself guarantee that the poor will be able to voice their concerns, given the “polycephalous nature of the existing institutional landscape” (Mosse, 2001; Cleaver, 2001, Kinyashi, 2006:3).

Since 1992 poverty has continued to be a major rural phenomenon, with rural poverty running three times as high as urban poverty (Aryeetey, 2006). The savannah zone, however, has a heavy concentration of both urban and rural poverty, suggesting that this zone has seen very little of the benefits of Ghana’s economic growth. Extreme poverty again is concentrated in the savannah zone, and in this instance also in the coastal zones, where extreme urban poverty has seen almost no change at all. It is also worth noting that although overall poverty has seen some decline, the depth of poverty has virtually remained stable. The depth of extreme poverty has in fact increased. The Central, Northern, and Upper East regions have experienced poverty increases, as has the Upper West region, where the increase is a reflection of the worsening welfare situation of female-headed households the situation is more precarious. In the Eastern region, where poverty has fallen slightly, female poverty has increased. Women in Ghana face multiple constraints. The Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS, 5), reported that women spend an average of 6.3 hours per day on household activities, as compared with 4.2 hours for men. Women’s access to and control of assets and productive inputs is a major challenge: although their role in agriculture is important, their productivity is constrained by limited access and ownership of land and credit or inputs (ISSER, 2007). This clearly shows that women are vulnerable and tend to be the primary victims of poverty.

In terms of agriculture, export farmers have enjoyed the greatest gains in their incomes, while food crop farmers have been less fortunate (Canagarajah and Pörtner, 2003:63-65). In the Upper West, the extreme poverty of food crop farmers has intensified. These findings are evidence of the non-systematic patterns of the linkage between agriculture and poverty in rural Ghana (GSS, 2008). As a measure of welfare, ownership of durable goods has in general increased, but here again the rural–urban dichotomy is evident: few rural households own durable goods in any significant amount. Examination of other welfare indicators, such as accessibility to potable water and toilet facilities, show that there have been some improvements overall, but again there are differences in the relative changes for rural–urban areas and poor–non-poor households (UNDP, 2009).

Though programme monitoring and evaluation (PME) have been done in the communities, the affected beneficiary communities did not fully comprehend the processes involved. The community members only responded to questions posed to them by the monitoring and evaluation team without offering any counter questions that would have helped to shape their understanding on whether implemented projects imbibed their participation. Thus their level of participation in the PME process was more or less passive. The issue could have been that the monitors and evaluators assess the impact of the projects implemented in the communities without actually explaining to the understanding of the participants what their actions at the time meant to the community members.

In view of the foregone discussions people’s participation without being accompanied with clear understanding in the processes leading to institutional change, could yield more or less the same result as that of non participation. Bromley, (1998:87), suggests that the poor remain poor because the institutional arrangements rendered them poor before the development intervention, and there are durable pressures – and nontrivial individuals - to make sure that the mere advent of a ‘development project’ does not somehow upset the institutional arrangements that created the current structure of economic advantage in the first instance.

In such a situation, introducing participation in the same institutional framework will benefit the minority who are able to manipulate any intervention coming on the way to their locality (Kinyashi, 2006:4). Mosse and Cleaver, (2001), rightly said “unmitigated participation holds the risk of confirmation of the pre-existing power structure and often leads to capture by local elites”. In other words, the educated and much influential people within the community dominate and control decisions and power and not necessarily the general masses of the people’s leadership.

In order to realise this vision of participation, capacity building must go beyond a narrow focus on technical skills to those of political analysis for assessing contexts, risks, power, and underlying causes of a problem. Challenging attitudes and values of subordination and developing critical consciousness and a willingness to act on issues are additional components. Capacity building also includes tapping sources of inspiration and hope and strengthening skills for designing and implementing a range of action strategies. Among these are organising approaches, leadership development, information-gathering, media work, education efforts, joint planning and agenda-setting processes, conflict management, as well as ways to directly engage with state or corporate institutions such as advocacy, public accountability sessions and lobbying.

In addition to the points above, is to schematically relate participation with a comprehensive communication strategy that would facilitate the involvement of all stakeholders, including community beneficiaries in all development activities. Increase general public awareness and an interest in all pro-poor and economic growth programmes in Ghana. In this context the communication means effective and organised system of exchange of working information (announcements, materials, suggestions and comments, among others) between actors. It is preferable that the information designated to broad audience (for example announcement about or invitation to a working meeting or debate) be distributed to stakeholders through: the preparation of the Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth Programme in Ghana; the Mass media, both print and electronic, such as the television, radio and newspapers and the Internet (web based forums/discussion, moderated mailing lists). The main drawback of the internet is that it won't be equally accessible to all participants (in the urban and rural parts of the country and the message is not readily translated into languages in a voice form for those who can neither read nor write). However, the internet can be indispensable for: quick and easy dissemination of materials, public discussions and for ensuring transparency and accountability

The provision of communication, at least on the basic level, is a primary responsibility of the development agents; however for full scale communication additional resources/assistance is required from both the agents of development and the beneficiaries alike. Efforts to strengthen local capacities do not only ensure public accountability, but also in turn become a means for rural people to influence policy-making and the form in which poverty alleviation programmes should be implemented in the communities for their ultimate benefit. As Abbot and Guijt (1997:9) suggest, there is the need for a shift “away from externally controlled data-seeking programmes towards the recognition of locally-relevant processes for gathering, analysing and using information”. Participation should highlight the importance

of context –social, political and value systems. In this way, the collective embodiment of the people’s life and work are catered for and their sense of dignity enhanced positively.

6.5.4 Areas for further research

There is need to review Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) of Ghana, taking into consideration regional emphasis and actual implementation processes of planned activities. By this it might be possible for one to advocate for allocated resources for pro-poor development in poorer sectors of Ghana as planned in the PRSP. The Government of Ghana has prepared a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) as a basis for future development assistance from multilateral and bilateral donors. To augment the understanding of the policy challenges that beleaguer Ghana, there is need also to undertake to produce background papers on understanding the causes and consequences of the endemic poverty prevailing in northern Ghana and opportunities for change; on the benefit incidence of public expenditure, and on tracking public expenditure flows. It is clear that it is not only tracking financial inflows and outflows that can visibly revert to the endemicity of poverty in northern Ghana, but substantial progress in health, education, and social services broadly is required to improve the welfare and living conditions of the poor throughout the three northern regions of Ghana.

Further to this are, delving more into specific sections of planned pro-poor development activities for instance, in rice production versus maize or guinea corn production in northern savannah lands; the attitudes of health professionals towards the poor and the impacts on ensuring a healthy nation for wealth creation and poverty alleviation towards enhancing opportunities, in northern Ghana, in particular. For instance, it is documented (Canagarajah and Pörtner, 2003:63-65) that Ghana is ninth among Sub-Saharan African countries in per capita public spending and has the third-lowest mortality rate for children under five years of age. It also has the third-highest life expectancy. However, these national statistics conceal the regional disparities in quality of service that pervade the health system in Ghana (World Bank, 2001). Further to this, health expenditures are substantially pro-poor, but since 1992 they have become less so: the poorest 40 percent receive less than 25 percent of health benefits. The number of people who do not use doctors increased from the period 1998/99 to 2008/09 and to the point where more than 75 percent of people do not consult a public health facility even when they are ill. Despite the fact that many people are registered with the national health insurance scheme (NHIS), the annual renewal rate is abysmally low. This is true for all urban and rural households, except the wealthiest urban households, as they are accorded some higher respect by the larger society and the fact that they have the resources to renew their NHIS as and when it is due.

It is not enough therefore to simply share information or plant a school or clinic building in a community and then walk away. Nor will economic growth alone solve the problem. The failures that add up to poor participation by community members in pro-poor development interventions are pervasive, identification of need to planning, institutional consultation to community involvement and from resource mobilization to project implementation in single or multiple economic sectors such as agriculture, health, education and nutrition, extension services, sanitation, local government, commerce and transport. An effective response to a challenge this broad cannot be narrowed to a single intervention, discipline or institutional mandate. It will take a coordinated response across sectors and with a wider participation of both benefactors (funders and implementers) and community beneficiaries in the intervention process.

6.6 Contribution of thesis to the body of knowledge

This thesis is set to contribute significantly to the theory and practice of development and the discipline of development studies in the following ways;

It offers an opportunity to identify, analyse and to propose ways and means by which outsider interventions can lead to pro-poor development in northern Ghana. In addition, it shapes the understanding of the theoretical implications of how outsiders view the possibilities and limitations of promoting genuine and all-inclusive participation of the poor in pro-poor development interventions, (tables 5.7, 5.10 and 5.11).

It also illustrates the point that local community members and their parallel institutions can be an obstacle to participation of the community poor in pro-poor development activities. In addition, the thesis seeks to demonstrate how community poor view development interventions in their communities and what they possibly consider beneficial as compared to the intentions of the interventionists (Table 5.12).

Beneficiaries of development interventions preferred more of what would benefit them directly in the short term than long term benefits. On table 5.10 and 5.11, it is evidenced that community pro-poor intervention as part of a general scheme of community development has a dynamic dimension. This dynamism is human centred more than resource and infrastructural provisions.

The fact that community development beneficiaries do not respond to ideas and information shared by development practitioners does not mean acceptability or ignorance, but perhaps a signal of some form of respect or non readiness for such projects at the point in time (6.4).

In addition, the thesis has identified that community members in northern Ghana participate in developmental activities when implementers are ready to motivate them (in cash in the form of money or kind in the form of certificates, T-shirts, shoes or mobile phones) on the spot or when such projects border more on their main occupational areas, for instance, farming, petty trading or health care needs that they otherwise would have requested for assistance.

In addition, this thesis has identified that misguided policies (structural adjustment programmes) contribute largely to poverty and household insecurity in northern Ghana. This is often due to weak institutions and non-involvement of the direct beneficiaries in pro-poor interventions, unequal power relations, trapped vulnerable groups, notably subsistence farmers, the landless poor, many women and children, in a vicious cycle of deprivation, food insecurity, low human development, and skewed allocations of national revenue and foreign aid that overshadow agriculture, nutrition and education.

Another contribution of this thesis is the manifestation that pro-poor intervention patterned on an outside and subjective model are unsuitable pro-poor intervention in the study communities of northern Ghana. For it to be achieved, the goals and methods may be freely chosen by each community through their concerted participation at all levels of the intervention chain (reference is made to point 6.4). Although community members may be poor and need help, they do not want to be excluded from the acts that will bring them the ultimate assistance. They want to participate in defining the type of assistance suitable and relevant to their needs (tables 5.9, 5.10 and 5.12).

In addition, the thesis emphasises equality for interventionists and community members to share mutual understanding on issues of development activities on equal footing. It portrays that participatory communication in development entails a two-way process in equal dimensions. The implementers' inception or conceptual ideas are put forward to community members who interrogate them and intend make inputs. The collective consensus is tabled as a developmental agenda for funding and implementation.

Besides, it sees development to be more of a participatory nature with a bottom-up approach as against a non-participatory one with a top-down approach in particular where beneficiaries become recipients with little or no input to key decisions and conclusions on development activities.

Finally, community beneficiaries' participation in pro-poor intervention enhances community development in that it boosts confidence and willingness to own and sustain projects and minimises conflicts, dissent and builds the capacity (in terms of knowledge and skill) of the community members in particular. When the priorities and perceptions of the poor are examined and amplified, effectiveness in poverty alleviation will be greater as it addresses issues the poor identify as constituting poverty and which satisfy their needs.

6.7 Conclusions on the thesis

From the initial programmatic endorsements of participation in the 1970s to the widespread adoption of participatory processes today, intended to initiate new dynamics of change and empowerment, the language and methods of participation seem to have entered the centre of development thinking and practice. The research has shown that participation is a portmanteau term which covers a number of different things both in theory as a concept and the tensions surrounding the way it is interpreted by different agents. The use of participatory methods in the analysis of poverty through the process of participation in pro-poor activities is another aspect contributing to the variations in the understanding and interpretation of the term participation.

The central challenge faced in using participatory methods for poverty analysis is implicit in moving participatory techniques from the project level to policy processes. While in fact there have been examples of participatory processes which have greatly contributed to the debate on participation at both local and national level, many examples of cosmetic participatory approaches to development, used for extractive purposes and without a commitment to empowering local people to have a greater say in policy processes, have been identified. Criticisms challenging the idea of participatory methods as accurate and appropriate research tools for pro-poor development analysis have been discussed. In the light of these debates, a move to new and integrated frameworks for the analysis of poverty and how the poor should participate in defining their options for sustained livelihoods seem almost inevitable.

This thesis has discussed issues about participation in community pro-poor interventions in northern Ghana. The discussions have situated participation as a vehicle for community members to make and influence decisions and transfer political power from those who wield it to the grassroots through

planning, analysing and implementation in order to better the lives of citizens. The study was conducted in eight communities, namely, *Nandom, Jirapa, Namoaligo, Kotintabig, Chiana, Jawani, Nalerigu and Mankarigu*, of the three northern regions of Ghana. The focus of the study is on the rural poor and rural pro-poor intervention issues and activities.

The main objective of the thesis is how community beneficiaries can situate, discover and commit themselves to what they need and want for the future through their participation in development interventions in northern Ghana.

In addition, the study categorises the entire thesis into six chapters with each chapter dealing with a specific activity. Chapter one discusses the introductory parts, two looks at the literature of participation, three analyses poverty situation in Ghana, four discusses the methods used in data gathering and processing, five contains the results, six discusses the results or findings and the conclusions, implications and recommendations.

Data collection tools used in the study included the following; reference to secondary sources such as textbooks, internet, journals and reports of selected NGOs as sources of information for literature review, in order to compile this thesis.

The major findings of the thesis are restated here as follows;

The study has indicated that 61 percent of respondents give high priority preference to farm credit support, clean water sources in the form of boreholes/ wells and dams for dry season irrigation and for watering of domestic animals. Besides, the major economic sector of the respondents from the eight studied communities of northern Ghana is farming (table 5.3). The table shows that over (65%) of all respondents indicated farming as the economic sector in which they make their livelihood. According to the respondents, they gain maximum benefit from these interventions more (table 5.12 and figure 5.13, page 144).

Furthermore, the thesis has revealed that 92.4 percent of respondents from the eight communities tend to participate more in activities organised by non-government organisations (NGOs) for personal gain and motivation in the form of monetary and other incentives. 95.2 percent of them were from the Northern region, 93.3 percent from the Upper West region and 88.7 percent from the Upper East region, while 12 percent of respondents prefer NGOs to government activities because NGOs gives clear understanding for integration more. Some other reasons deduced from the responses and participation behaviour of the

respondents in their choice of which meetings they attend or not, include respect for the people, motivation and rapid execution of projects initiated at the community level by NGOs more than government led initiatives. Evidenced of these are outlined on table 5.10 and figures 5.11.1 to 5.11.3 (pages 139 - 140).

In addition, 53 percent of respondents of the eight selected communities of northern Ghana participated more actively in pro-poor interventions at the implementation stage of the participation process. Monitoring and evaluation of development activities is another stage that community involvement and participation are visible (table 5.13, figures 5.14.1 – 5.14.3 in pages 146-147).

The research has identified that there is low investment in the area of school, road and dam projects in the study communities. The research has revealed that out of eight communities, only two benefited from either a school or road project and only three out of the eight communities benefited dam projects (table 5.8, figures 5.9.1 – 5.9.3, pages 134 - 136).

In general, the study shows that males dominate females in community participation in pro-poor intervention activities in the selected communities of northern Ghana. Table 5.2 and figures 5.3.1 to 5.3.3 have indicated that 57% males, against 43% females participated in activities organised by development actors at the community level (pages 121 – 122).

Following the recap of the findings is the discussions on the results which has been categorised or grouped into three sub headings as follows, 6.2 discusses how community participation is viewed in pro-poor programmes by development actors and answers question 1, making use of the related findings from chapters five; 6.3 discusses issues related to questions 2 and 4 which deals with the role of community participation in identifying local knowledge, talents and the values and expectations of development practitioners towards pro-poor programmes; and 6.4 discusses questions 3 and 5, which deals with gender, power, educational level and contribution of community members in pro-poor programme participation

What this thesis suggests is social enablement, described by Sourbati (2012) as preventing exclusion by providing access, and enabling inclusion by providing opportunities to participate in social processes. Meaningful engagement by development actors in pro-poor interventions is contingent on efficient access to the participatory channels by all and having the right information and capacity to participate at each stage of the intervention process. Access and capacity can serve to distinguish those who have and

those who lack these abilities; thus, they can highlight or aggravate existing inequalities and be part of the solution machinery through effective capacity building process. Thus if pro-poor intervention is to fulfil people's expectations it cannot be patterned on an outside and subjective model alongside the understanding and plans of development actors more. It must be achieved in accordance with the goals and methods freely chosen by each society and people through their concerted participation at all levels of the intervention chain.

The view is that participation seeks to give people a sense of belonging and ownership, a sense of being creators, people able to identify their needs and capable of being able to take collective actions aimed at getting possible solutions to their unmet needs. Additionally, participation enhances the capacities of participants reflexivity, "that is, the ability to reflect on and to be aware of one's own behaviour and its impact on other people and on the dynamics of the social and professional situations in which one is located (Cornwall, et al 2004:5).

In concurrence with Wangari Maathai when she says, "I believe that the world has moved closer to oneness and more people see each other as one with the other...it is possible to have new thoughts and new common values for humans and all other forms of life" (Maathai, 1992:27).

Figure 6.3 People in poverty feel their lives are a series of no entry signs



Community participation in development initiatives can improve strategies for addressing poverty and promoting social justice and therefore offers considerable promise of taking the poor out of hopelessness as depicted on the picture below. However, as the nature of poverty, inequality and governance shifts, it becomes imperative that strategies link rights, development and participation with a deeper understanding of power and social change to ensure that such promises are fulfilled through a total engagement of the beneficiaries of pro-poor interventions.

The topic: “*The influence of the poor in pro-poor activities: a case study of community participation in development intervention programmes in Northern Ghana*” was selected because it offered an opportunity to identify, analyse and to propose ways and means by which outsider interventions can lead to pro-poor development in northern Ghana. In addition, it shapes the understanding of the theoretical implications of how outsiders view the possibilities and limitations of promoting genuine and all-inclusive participation of the poor in pro-poor development interventions. It also illustrates the point that local community members and their parallel institutions can be an obstacle to participation of the community poor in pro-poor development activities. In addition, the topic tends to demonstrate how community poor view development interventions in their communities and what they possibly consider beneficial as compared to the intentions of the interventionists. This point is clearly illustrated in chapter five of the thesis.

6.8 Recommendations

In northern Ghana, women participation in decision making in the areas of community participation as compared to men is minimal. This thesis recommends that for effective community education and participation, gender based forums should be organised at the community level to enhance gender specific participation and contribution in pro-poor interventions even if it is meant for everyone in the community. In northern Ghana, women participation in pro-poor interventions has been minimal as compared to that of men (table 5.2), unless otherwise an activity is designated for women. Accordingly, participation by both men and women will enhance commitment among all members of the community and ensure sustainability of implemented projects for the benefit of the people over a sustained period of time.

This study has identified that farming or for that matter agriculture is the main economic sector (74%) of the people under study (table 5.3) and recommends that government and non-government interventions at the community level should focus more on agriculture activities such as education on farming techniques, seed technology and provision of enhanced farm equipment to improve farm yield and

encourage many more youth to take up to agriculture to boost food production and food security in the northern sector of Ghana.

Table 5.4 in this thesis shows a significantly large illiterate (those who cannot read and write) population in the study communities of northern Ghana (54.92%); This study therefore recommends that government revisits its free compulsory education policy for all school going children and expand its school feeding programme to cover all the eight communities of northern Ghana to improve education enrolment particularly at the basic and senior high school levels so as to reverse the increasing tide of illiteracy in northern Ghana in future.

This thesis recommends that proper coordination of development interventions should be done at the community level by development actors. Table 5.3 indicates that the community members have a wider knowledge of pro-poor interventions in their respective areas. However, the extent of knowledge and the levels of engagement in harnessing that knowledge into development activities are poorly coordinated by development actors and that does not offer the people some amount of understanding and involvement, particularly the youth in pro-poor interventions in their communities meant for their benefit.

The thesis recommends that Government comes out with a policy that will enable community members to demand for the right to take active part at all stages of the participatory process irrespective of the agent implementing the intervention. The findings in table 5.7 depict a scenario of knowledge of interventions without a corresponding direct participation in the initial stages of such interventions. This thesis therefore recommends strongly that development agents should create a participation space or adequate opportunities for development beneficiaries to make or debunk critical decisions on development interventions at the initial decision stage of the participatory process and not only at the implementation stage (Table 5.13). This will enhance their livelihoods at their consideration through understanding, ownership and sustainability of development interventions at the community level, and influence or transform systems and institutions that affect their lives. Besides, they will see participation as a lateral process with both development actors and beneficiaries at equal footing, exercising a bottom-up as against a top-down approach where beneficiaries become recipients with little or no input to key decisions and conclusions on development activities at the community level. In addition, participatory communication in development entails a two-way process in equal dimensions, where interventionists and beneficiaries share a mutual understanding on issues of development activities on equal footing. This will enable them to participate in the strategic interventions at all levels of the participatory process

beyond perfunctory (just a matter of duty or obligatory) consultations at the implementation stage to being actively involved in agenda-setting, decision-making and structures that have a bearing on their social wellbeing.

Government and non-government actors who engage in pro-poor interventions in northern Ghana should build capacity of local people from the area. Table 5.8 shows that various stakeholders are making efforts in educational infrastructure in rural communities of northern Ghana, however, there is relative silence on human resource capacity building to man the educational facilities in these rural areas. Therefore in order to ensure improvement in education and other developmental activities that needs expertise in various fields, government and NGO development interventions should gear their efforts towards more capacity building of indigenous members of the communities to ensure sustainable human resource to manage whatever development investment at the community level.

This thesis recommends that government agencies such as metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies collaborate more effectively with NGOs in their respective areas in pro-poor interventions in northern Ghana. Table 5.9 and 5.11 indicate that community members in northern Ghana work favourably with NGOs better than government institutions engaged in similar activities. The findings shows that NGOs deliver on promise while government agencies most of the time do not keep their promises to the people. If government agencies and NGOs collaborate for the benefit of the poor, their collective efforts will yield positive results.

The thesis recommends that development actors (government and non-government agencies) involved in pro-poor interventions should take into consideration most desired needs of community beneficiaries. A community development coalition body could be instituted by government or a as pressure group to ensure that community development actors put into practice beneficiary needs and views through their active participation. Community members tend to participate in interventions they derive the most benefit and these interventions such as farm credits for agricultural purposes and the provision of drinking water sources (boreholes and hand dug wells) have been identified as some of these beneficial activities for community members in northern Ghana (table 5.12). Active community participation in activities they deem beneficial can enhance sustainability and ownership of intervention projects at the community after development actors have pulled out their support.

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APPENDIX 2: COPY OF OFFICIAL LETTER TO DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES



UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (UDS)

School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS)

P O Box 1350

Tamale, N/R. Ghana

TEL: 0242 388 584

29TH September, 2007

To whom it may concern,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND FOR INFORMATION SUPPORT

I am Michael Wombeogo, a Doctoral student in Development Studies, at the University of South Africa. I am currently a lecturer at the University for Development Studies and I am conducting a study into the participation of community members in pro-poor development interventions in their respective communities in northern Ghana. I wish to do the selection of at most three communities from three districts of each of the three northern regions of Ghana. Your district is one of the three districts selected for the study.

I am therefore by this letter craving your kind indulgence to assist me make selection of three communities within your district where development activities or programmes have been carried out since the past five years or are still in progress. In addition to this, I shall be grateful if you and / or your staff could assist me with any relevant information needed as may arise for the purpose of this study. May I assure you that the information in relation to this study is purely for academic purposes and your identity or information provided will not be used in any way that will compromise your dignity and integrity.

Should you have any questions or clarification concerning this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above address at your earliest convenience.

While thanking you and counting on your kind support, I humbly give you my assurance in the highest consideration.

Yours faithfully,

M Wombeogo

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ON

“THE PARTICIPATION OF THE POOR IN PRO-POOR ACTIVITIES: A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES IN NORTHERN GHANA”

INTRODUCTION

I am Michael Wombeogo, a Doctoral student in Development Studies, at the University of South Africa and I am conducting a study into the influence of community members in pro-poor development interventions in their respective communities in northern Ghana. The information in relation to this study is purely for academic purposes and your identity will not be used in any way that will compromise your dignity. I therefore appeal to you to answer the following questions as candidly as possible.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Instructions

1. Where alternatives have been provided please tick the number only.
2. For other questions please write your answers in the space provided.

SECTION 1: Personal data

1. Sex:

- Male [1]
- Female [2]

2. Age in years:

- 20-29 [1]
- 30- 49 [2]
- 50-59 [3]
- 60 and above [4]

3. Occupation:

- Farming [1]
- Government work [2] Specify type.....
- NGO work [3] Specify type.....
- Petty trading [4]
- Other [5] Specify.....

4. Level of education:

- Elementary/JSS [1]
- Secondary [2]
- Tertiary [3]
- Non formal [4]
- Illiterate [5]

5. Position:

- Chief [1]
- Assembly man [2]
- Youth leader [3]
- Clan elder [4]
- Ordinary resident [5]

6. Religious background:

Christian	[1]
Moslem	[2]
Traditional religion	[3]
None of these	[4]

SECTION 2: Identification of projects/programs, local participation in planning and implementation

7. Do you know of projects or programmes being undertaken by institutions to improve the quality of life of the people of your community?

Yes	[1]
No	[2]

8. If “Yes” to question 8, what projects/programmes have been undertaken to improve life in your community?

Schools	[1]
Roads	[2]
Dams	[3]
Agro forestry	[4]
Farm credits	[5]
Borehole/ well	[6]
Grinding mills	[7]
NHIS	[8]
Family planning	[9]

Other (specify).....

9. Are you privileged to take part in a discussion organized by any organisation before a project is established in this community?

Yes	[1]
No	[2]

10. If “Yes” to question 7, what were some of the things discussed?

.....

.....

 11. If “No” to question 8, did other local people take part in deciding the nature and location of the projects in this community?

Yes [1]

No [2]

12. If “Yes” to questions 8 and/or 9, tick the institution that undertook the project and whether some community members participated or not in deciding about the nature and location of project.

Projects	Government	Participated	Didn't	NGO	Participated	Didn't
Schools						
Roads						
Dams						
Agro forestry						
Farm credits						
Borehole/well						
Grinding mills						
NHIS						
Family planning						

13. Identify the groups and/or individuals that participated. Tick the appropriate group in the table provided below.

Projects	Chiefs [1]	Assembly men[2]	Youth leaders[3]	Clan elders[4]	Women's groups[5]	Religious Orgs.[6]	General Public.[7]
Schools							
Roads							
Dams							
Agro forestry							
Farm credits							
Borehole/well							
Grinding mills							
NHIS							
Family planning							

14. Rank these projects in an ascending order using 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 based on the one that the community derives the most benefits.

Projects	Ranking	No of respondents
Schools		
Roads		
Dams		
Agro forestry		
Farm credits		
Borehole/well		
Grinding mills		
NHIS		
Family planning		

15. Do you agree that your participation in planning and implementation of projects led to improvement in the lives of people in your community?

- Strongly disagree [1]
- Disagree [2]
- Agree [3]
- Strongly agree [4]

SECTION 3: Benefits derived from community development projects

16. School:
- Many children in school now [1]
 - Distance to school has been shortened [2]
 - Many literates in the community than before [3]
 - Some of our children are doing government work [4]
 - Others (specify) [5]
17. Roads:
- Has made our journeys shorter [1]
 - Our foodstuff doesn't get bad in our village [2]
18. Dams:
- Source of domestic water [1]
 - Source of water for irrigation [2]
 - Source of water for animals [3]
 - Source of water for local industries [4]
 - Reduced migration among the youth and women [5]
 - Other (specify)
19. Agro forestry:
- Gives employment to our people [1]
 - Source of fuel wood [2]
 - Makes the community look beautiful [3]
 - Reduced burden of long journeys to fetch wood [4]
 - Reduced out-migration [5]
 - Others (specify).....
20. Credits: Provides money for our farming activities [1]

	Provides money for small-scale businesses	[2]
	Provides chemicals and fertilizers for farmers	[3]
	Made many people and the youth to farm	[4]
	Increased agricultural productivity	[5]
	Reduced out-migration	[6]
	Others (specify).....	
21. Borehole/ well:	Source of domestic water	[1]
	Source of water for irrigation	[2]
	Source of water for animals	[3]
	Source of water for local industries	[4]
	Reduced incidence of waterborne diseases	[5]
	Others (specify).....	
22. Grinding mills:	Reduces women's domestic or household chores.	[1]
	Gives income to women's groups	[2]
	Gives income to church group	[3]
	Gives income to youth group	[4]
	Others (specify).....	
23. NHIS :	Enables us to meet health costs of families	[1]
	Our children do not die as they used to	[2]
	We do not see it operating in our community	[3]
24. Family planning:	Has reduced the number of children per woman	[1]
	It is not practiced by people of this community	[2]
	It has made it easy to take care of our children	[3]

25. Identify by a tick the group(s) which benefits from each of the projects

Projects	Beneficiaries					
	General public	Youth group	Religious group	Women's group	Opinion leaders	Rich and literate
Schools						
Roads						
Dams						
Agro forestry						
Credits						
Borehole/well						
Grinding mills						
NHIS						
Family planning						

SECTION 4: Community efforts in project sustainability

26. Which of these projects do the local people assist in maintaining?

- Schools [1]
- Roads [2]
- Dams [3]
- Agro forestry [4]
- Farm credits [5]
- Borehole/ well [6]
- Grinding mills [7]
- NHIS [8]
- Family planning [9]

27. How do they sustain the project?

- Schools.....
- Roads.....
- Dams
- Agro forestry

- Farm credits
- Borehole/ well
- Grinding mills
- NHIS.....
- Family planning.....

28. What is generally the degree of project sustenance when community members are part and parcel of planning and implementation in this community?

- Poor [1]
- Average [2]
- Good [3]
- Excellent [4]

29. Tick the degree of sustenance for each of the projects in the table below

Projects	Degree of maintenance			
	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Schools				
Roads				
Dams				
Agro forestry				
Farm credits				
Borehole/well				
Grinding mills				
NHIS				
Family planning				

30. What reasons make local people patronize and maintain projects that they take part in its planning and implementation?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

31. What religious beliefs and social barriers prevent you from contributing to the sustenance of some of these projects?

- Schools.....
- Roads
- Dams
- Agro forestry
- Farm credits.....
- Borehole/ well
- Grinding mills
- NHIS.....
- Family planning.....