

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

**EFFECTS OF DECENTRALISATION ON LOCAL LEVEL
DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE YILO KROBO DISTRICT IN
GHANA**

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A CASE STUDY OF THE YILO KROBO DISTRICT IN GHANA

BY

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Name: Elias Kwaku Mensah

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Name: Professor J.V. Mensah

Signature:.....

Date:.....

ABSTRACT

In both developed and developing countries, there has been a contemporary debate on the nature and merits of decentralisation and local government. However, most literature on decentralisation focused more on expectations and discourses than on practices and outcomes. This indicates that a comprehensive empirical rethinking is needed. This study examined the effects of decentralisation on local development in the Yilo Krobo District with specific focus on the capacity of the District Assembly to initiate and implement projects, the extent to which local people have participated in decision making, and the challenges that emerged in the process of completing critical projects.

The study employed the mixed research design through the use of interview schedules for 200 community members, 60 Assembly members, and an interview guide for five staff of the Assembly. In all, 265 respondents participated in the study. Quantitative data analysis was performed using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS), version 17.

The study concluded that delays and restrictions in inflows (central grants) from central governments have affected developmental activities at the local level. Projects initiated and implemented by the Assembly did not meet the critical needs of the local people.

It is recommended that the Assembly should provide a domestic framework to promote the participatory formulation, conceptualisation and operationalisation of local development plans.

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Finally, I express my sincerest appreciation to every individual who has contributed directly or indirectly to the completion of this dissertation.

DEDICATION

To my wife Mary and children Jojo, Andy and Edem, my sister, Madam Comfort Kandah and my mother Seline Semexa.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF ACRONYMS	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Background to the study	1
Statement of the problem	5
Objectives of the study	7
Research questions	7
Scope of the study	8
Significance of the study	8
Organisation of the study	9
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	10
Introduction	10
The concept of decentralisation	10

Benefits of decentralisation	11
Weaknesses of decentralisation	13
Decentralisation and poverty reduction	15
Factors influencing the effects of decentralisation on local level development	16
Political incentives at central and local levels	17
Limited administrative capacity	18
Financial constraints	19
Historical background of decentralisation in Ghana	19
Ghana's local government system	23
Successes of Ghana's decentralisation programme	26
Challenges for Ghana's decentralisation programme	28
Impact of District Assemblies on poverty reduction	30
Basic infrastructure and services	31
The role of central grants in financing local development	31
Types of grant programmes	35
Theoretical framework	36
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	39
Introduction	39
Study area	39
Study design	43
Sources of data	44

Study population	44
Sample and sampling procedure	45
Data collection instruments	47
Pre-test of instruments	49
Ethical consideration	50
Field work and challenges	51
Data analysis	51
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	53
Introduction	53
Demographic characteristics of respondents	53
Effects of decentralisation on local level development	57
Capacity of the District Assembly to initiate and implement projects	60
Participation of local people in development decision-making	65
Challenges that emerge in the process of executing development projects	69
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	74
Introduction	74
Summary	74
Conclusions	76
Recommendations	77
Direction for future research	78

REFERENCES	79
APPENDICES	87
A: Interview schedule for Community members	87
B: Interview schedule for Assembly members	91
C: Interview guide for Key Staff of the Assembly	96

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Major settlements in the district and their population size	42
2 Distribution of sample across selected communities	46
3 Sampling procedure across respondents	47
4 Mean, maximum, and minimum ages of respondents	55
5 Period of Assembly members working with the Assembly	57
6 Capacity of the District Assembly to initiate and complete projects	61
7 District Assembly's capacity to monitor and evaluate projects	63
8 Decision making has been brought closer to the local people	66
9 Frequency of Assembly members meeting the community	68
10 The most challenging phase of district project development identified by the Assembly members	70

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Structure of the new local government system in Ghana	25
2 Location of Yilo Krobo District	41
3 Educational background of respondents	56
4 Significance of the DACF/DDF on development at the local level	59

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DACF	District Assemblies' Common Fund
DAs	District Assemblies
DCD	District Co-ordinating Director
DCE	District Chief Executive
DFO	District Finance Officer
DPO	District Planning Officer
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
IDS	Institute for Development Studies
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
PAF	Poverty Alleviation Fund
PAMSCAD	Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment
PCT	Public Choice Theory
PDCs	People's Defense Committees
PNDC	People's National Defense Council
PPS	Probability Proportionate to Size
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
SHS	Senior High School
SPSS	Statistical Products and Service Solutions
UZTACs	Urban, Zonal, Town and Area Councils

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Apart from the widely debated issues of subsidiarity and devolution in the European Union and states' rights in the United States, decentralisation has been at the center stage of policy experiments for the last two decades in many developing and transition economies like Latin America, Africa and Asia. The World Bank, for example, has embraced it as one of the major governance reforms on its agenda.

Across the world, governments are dealing with the challenges raised by both globalisation and a movement towards democratic systems of governance. In an effort to make the delivery of services more efficient and to bring it closer to the people, many countries have moved to decentralise a range of activities. There is a popular belief among decentralists that if local governments have the power to generate and spend revenue, without relying on central government funding, their expenditure will be pro-poor and will improve the lives of local people. Such views have influenced recent calls for greater decentralisation in developing countries in general and Africa in particular (Obeng-Odoom, 2010). Thus, decentralisation has become an increasingly widespread and significant dimension of political and administrative reform in many developing countries since the late 1980s (Burki & Dillinger, 1999; World Bank, 2000). In Africa, decentralisation is implemented in various forms by governments across the continent, including Ethiopia, South Africa, Uganda, Namibia and Nigeria (Crawford, 2004).

Decentralisation is presumed by Manor (1995) to have a number of benefits, including positive outcomes in both democratic and developmental terms. It is assumed that democracy will be deepened by the extension of political representation to the local level, with democratic processes strengthened through enhanced political participation by local civil society actors. And that benefits in socio-economic development will accrue through local government being more responsive and more accountable to citizens' needs and desires. These two benefits are interlinked in that local-level representation and participation is believed to lead to development planning processes and the delivery of public services that are relevant to the local context (Manor, 1995). Yet, to what extent are such anticipated benefits actually realised?

Decentralisation is any act in which a central government formally cedes powers to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy to achieve grass root development. Manor (1995) identified three main types of decentralisation:

- Administrative decentralisation or deconcentration - the re-location of branches of the central state to local areas, entailing a transfer of powers to locally-based officials who remain part of, and upwardly accountable to, central government ministries and agencies;
- Fiscal decentralisation- the transfer of fiscal resources and revenue-generating powers, inclusive of authority over budgets and financial decisions, to either deconcentrated officials and/or central government appointees or to elected politicians;

- Political decentralisation or democratic decentralisation or devolution of power- the transfer of powers and resources to sub-national authorities which are “(a) largely or wholly independent of the central government and (b) democratically elected”.

Ribot (2001) reluctantly acknowledges fiscal decentralisation as a separate form of decentralisation as it entails a cross-cutting element of both deconcentration and political decentralisation. Manor (1995) on the other hand, defines devolution more narrowly as a transfer of powers from the central state to local elected governments. A further point stemming from this definition is that democratization is not an all-or nothing affair, rather, it is a matter of degree, with associations realising the principles of popular control and political equality to a greater or lesser extent (Beetham & Boyle, 1995). In this respect, local government has the potential to enhance the realisation of democratic principles, given that the selection of representatives and decision-making structures are on a smaller scale and more opened to effective participation. The question remains, whether decentralisation will have positive outcomes for democratisation in a particular country. Clearly, any positive linkage between decentralisation and democratisation depends on the type of decentralisation.

According to Ayee (2000), the history of decentralisation in Ghana is dates back to the introduction of indirect rule by the British colonial authorities in 1878, lasting until 1951. Between 1957 and 1988, efforts were made by successive Ghanaian governments to decentralise authority to the local level. These took the form of regional devolution and district focused public

administration. Progress was minimal until the 1970s, when the decentralised system was reformulated into a four-tier structure consisting of Regional, District, Local Councils and Town and Village Development Committees. The District Councils were made the focal point of local government with administrative and executive power for local level development and governance (Olowu, 2002).

The government of Ghana has been on the path of its current form of decentralisation since 1988. The decentralisation process was kick-started by the enactment of Local Government Law 1988 (PNDCL, 207) now superseded by Chapter 20 of the 1992 Constitution and the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462). According to Chapter 20 of the 1992 Constitution, Ghana shall have a system of local government administration which shall, as far as practicable be decentralised. Parliament shall enact laws and take steps necessary for further decentralisation of the administrative functions and projects of the central government.

The policy to decentralise the system of government administration was designed to strengthen local government and to get the citizenry to participate in governance and the development process at the local level. The thrust of the decentralisation policy was to promote popular participation and ownership of the development process such that within the framework of national policy, all those that will be affected by the outcome of development would participate actively in the development process. Thus, avoiding a situation where a small group of bureaucrats took decisions to the exclusion of those affected by the decisions (Owusu et al., 2005).

The Yilo Krobo District is one of the 21 districts in the Eastern Region of Ghana. It is 69.0 km from Accra (the capital city of Ghana) and about 50.0 km from Koforidua (the regional capital). As part of the decentralisation policy in Ghana, the District Assembly is the highest political and administrative authority in the District. The District Chief Executive (DCE) chairs the Executive Committee, while the various sub-committees are responsible for collating and deliberating on issues relevant to them as the District Assembly may direct, for the purpose of assisting the assembly in its deliberative, executive and legislative functions. Below the District Assembly are the District Sub-structures comprising one Town Council, six Area Councils, and 92 Unit Committees (National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana, 2009).

Statement of the problem

The virtues of decentralisation such as democracy, popular participation, responsiveness, accountability, and equity have resulted in the belief that decentralisation would lead to greater responsiveness to the poor. Since the poor have been excluded from politics and issues that concentrate therefore, do not have adequate access to services, decentralisation is seen as offering greater political participation to ordinary citizens whose “voice” is more likely to increase with concomitant relevance and effectiveness of government’s policies and programmes, especially in poverty reduction efforts (Crook, 2003; Crook & Sverrisson, 2001).

Robinson (2007) notes that many claims are made in favour of decentralisation, ranging from the democratizing having the potential to increase the scope for participation and accountability through to poverty reduction and improved service delivery. Much of the literature and evidence centres on the intrinsic value of decentralisation as a desirable goal in its own right. However, the arguments for the developmental significance of decentralisation rest principally on a series of assumptions and theoretical justifications. Ribot (2001) identified that most literature on decentralisation focus more on expectations and discourses than on practices and outcomes. This indicates that a comprehensive empirical rethinking of development policy in this area is needed.

In Ghana, the use of fiscal decentralisation has been identified as one of the main reasons of the failure of successive local government systems (Kokor & Kroes, 2000). Central government usually transferred functions to the local levels without transferring the proper finance. The District Assemblies' Common Fund (DACF) was meant to address such a deficiency. However, there were many legal requirements and policy directives that limit the ability of District Assemblies to initiate policy and expand the common fund in the priority needs of the people (Kokor & Kroes, 2001). These constraints on the District Assemblies' compromise the ability to deliver development to their areas of jurisdiction. In the Yilo Krob District of the Eastern Region, due to the inability of the District to get funds from central government, the provision of amenities like roads, water among others are limited. Hence the focus of this study was to examine the effects of decentralisation on local level development in the study area.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to examine the effects of decentralisation on local level development, the case of Yilo Krobo District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Assess the capacity of the District Assembly to initiate and implement projects;
- Examine how local people participate in development decision-making in the district; and
- Investigate the challenges that the Assembly encounters in the process of executing developmental projects.

Research questions

To achieve the specific objectives, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- Does the District Assembly have the capacity to initiate and implement projects as expected or assumed in decentralisation?
- Do the local people participate in decision making in the district?
- What are the challenges does the Assembly encounter in executing developmental projects in the district? and
- What recommendations can be made to enhance the effects of decentralisation at the local level?

Scope of the study

The study focused on the effects of decentralisation on local level development with specific emphasis on the ability of the assembly to initiate projects, the participation of local people in decision making, and the challenges the Assembly encounters in bringing developmental projects to the district. The study covers only the Yilo Krobo District of the Eastern Region, which to some extent limits the generalisation of the research findings due to limited resources and time.

Significance of the study

Decentralisation has become a central issue in development discourse in recent times. It is a component in good governance regimes that attracts World Bank's attention. However, the extent to which decentralisation of powers of public decision-making and financing from the centres to local government leads to better delivery of services is yet to be systematically determined from empirical evidence. This study will therefore help explain how development at decentralised levels should be structured and financed. Policy-makers and stakeholders would be able to critically diagnose the effect of specific policies targeted at local level development. On the academic front, the study would add to the existing literature on decentralisation and local governance particularly in Ghana as well as give some directional indicators for future researchers in local government administration.

Organisation of the study

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter One deals with the introduction which covers the background to the study, problem-statement, objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, and significance of the study. Chapter Two is the review of related literature. It reviews literature on decentraliation and financing of development at the local level. Chapter Three presents the research methodology, which details how the study was designed and how data was collected and analysed. Chapter Four presents and discusses the results in relation to the pertinent theories and concepts discussed in the review of related literature. Chapter Five summarises the major findings of the study, presents conclusions and makes recommendations to stakeholders in local development initiative, as well as directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The chapter deals with review of related literature. It reviews the theoretical and empirical literature on decentralisation and its relationship with local governance. Issues reviewed include the concept of decentralisation, benefits of decentralisation, weaknesses of decentralisation, factors influencing the impact of decentralisation on local level development, historical overview of decentralisation in Ghana, successes of Ghana's decentralisation programme, challenges for Ghana's decentralisation programme, impact of District Assemblies on poverty reduction, the role of central grants in financing local development, fiscal decentralisation in Ghana, and the theoretical framework - Public Choice Theory.

The concept of decentralisation

The concept of decentralisation defies clear-cut definition. Rondinelli (1981) defines decentralisation as the transfer of authority to plan, make decisions and manage public functions from a higher level of government to any individual, organisation or agency at a lower level. According to Smith (1985), decentralisation means reversing the concentration of administration at a single centre and conferring powers on local government. In the study of politics, decentralisation refers to the territorial distribution of power. It is concerned with the extent to which power and authority are dispersed through the geographical

hierarchy of the state, and the institutions and processes through which such dispersal occurs.

Smith (1985) further indicates that decentralisation entails the subdivision of the state's territory into smaller areas and the creation of political and administrative institutions in those areas, while decentralisation may cover different alternatives such as devolution, deconcentration of powers, or privatisation. Some of the institutions so created may themselves find it necessary to practice further decentralisation. In this study, decentralisation is considered as the opposite of centralisation or concentration of power and involves the transfer of functions, powers and authority, skills and level of governance from central government to local government structures.

Benefits of decentralisation

The potential benefits of decentralisation have been well documented in the literature. The majority of these benefits can be broadly classified as improved efficiency and effectiveness, governance and/or equity (Ayee, 1992). These benefits, in turn, are often associated with economic development and poverty reduction. They include:

- Improved local economic development and poverty reduction through (a) providing services that serve as production and distribution inputs for local firms and entrepreneurs; (b) contributing to a legal and institutional environment that is conducive for development; (c) coordinating key local

public, private and community actors in creating partnerships that promote development;

- Improved governance because if people see that their interactions with elected decentralised governments will lead to decisions that are more consistent with their desires than those made by higher levels, they feel better connected to decentralised governments.
- Being able to influence public affairs in at least some modest ways that directly affect them and empowers people, giving them a new sense of control and autonomy;
- Improved efficiency because decentralised governments are closer to the people, have good access to local information and understand local context well. If so, they can better identify the mix and level of services that their constituents need than can be discerned from the higher-levels, thus improving allocative efficiency;
- Improved equity because if decentralised governments are familiar with local circumstances, they may be in the best position to more equitably distribute public resources and target poverty within their own jurisdictions;
- Improved responsiveness of government because local representatives are best placed to know the exact nature of local needs and how they can be met in a cost-effective way;
- Enhanced accountability because local representatives are more accessible to the populace and can thus be held more closely accountable for their

policies and outcomes than distant national political leaders (or public servants);

- Political equality derived from greater political participation will reduce the likelihood of the concentration of power. Political power will be more broadly distributed thus making decentralisation a mechanism that can meet the needs of the poor and disadvantaged;
- Political education teaches the mass of the population about the role of political debate, the selection of representatives and the nature of policies, plans and budgets, in a democracy.

Training in political leadership creates a seedbed for prospective political leaders to develop skills in policy-making, political party operations and budgeting with the result that the quality of national politicians is enhanced.

Weaknesses of decentralisation

Although the demand for decentralisation is strong throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, there are serious drawbacks that should be considered in designing any decentralisation programme. First, decentralisation in practice runs up against objections at a political level. Indeed, it is felt that decentralisation dislocates the nation, either by encouraging the appetites of certain regions for autonomy or by encouraging wealthier regions to operate as self-sufficient territories to the detriment of poorer regions (Ayee, 1992). The problem of guarantees remains the issue that divides supporters and opponents of decentralisation (Smith, 1985; Nzouankeu, 1994).

Second, as the wealth of a country is unfairly distributed, decentralisation is likely to accentuate the already precarious imbalance within the state because the poor districts would tend to become even poorer. For poor districts and regions, therefore, autonomy would be void of meaning because they would continue to be dependent on the state. Consequently, decentralisation is not always compatible with planning policies and strategic development projects (Nzouankeu, 1994; Prud'homme, 1995).

Thirdly, decentralisation can lead to increased waste and squandering of public funds. The inexperience of locally elected representatives, the fact that they have received little or no training and the idea that the political ambitions of local politicians will lead to lend more importance to their electoral preoccupation in preference to the interest of the people. Although it must be said that there is an element of truth in certain of these objections, it should not be forgotten that waste is not confined to decentralised units and that the central government is also guilty of waste, often to a greater extent than decentralised authorities (Smith, 1985; Mawhood, 1993).

Fourth, decentralisation is not necessarily linked to democracy because the devolution of power may help to augment the dominance of those who, because of wealth or status, are already powerful at the local level. In other words, it is conceivable, even likely in many countries that power at the local level is more concentrated, more elitist and applied more ruthlessly against the poor than at the centre. As a consequence, therefore, decentralisation does not necessarily imply

greater democracy let alone power to the people. It all depends on the circumstances under which decentralisation occurs (Griffin, 1981).

Fifth, decentralisation might be accompanied by more corruption. If, as is likely, corruption is more widespread at the local level than at the national level, then decentralisation automatically increases the overall level of corruption. This outcome might not be bad in terms of redistribution, because the “benefits” of decentralised corruption are probably better distributed than the benefits of centralised corruption. However, it would certainly increase the costs in terms of allocative efficiency, because it leads to the supply of services for which the levels of kickbacks are higher (rather than those for which there is a demand).

It is also costly in terms of production efficiency, because it leads to corruption-avoiding strategies that increase costs, favour ineffective technologies, and waste time (Prud’homme, 1995).

Decentralisation and poverty reduction

Decentralisation is seen by donors, governments and academics as one of the most important and appropriate strategies that will reduce the levels of deprivation and vulnerability of the poor (World Bank, 2001; Sen, 1999). There are three ways in which decentralisation is linked to poverty reduction (Bird et al., 1995; Bird & Villancourt, 1998). As with many other public services, effective implementation of poverty reduction strategies often requires detailed and specific local knowledge which may be most readily obtainable through a decentralised and locally accountable system of governance. The right kind of decentralisation

will therefore enable local government units to have sufficient technical and financial capacity to carry out their assigned functions. Decentralisation in principle is good and this virtue depends upon political accountability and the inevitable need to strengthen local delivery capacity (Crook, 2003; Bird & Rodriguez, 1999; Crook & Sverrisson, 2001; Ayee, 1995; 1996).

The design and implementation of transfer of financial resources are important factors, for good or for ill, on local spending decisions. Efficient assignment of revenue and expenditure responsibility to different levels of government invariably means that local government units as a group will depend to a significant extent upon transfers from the central government. From this perspective, decentralisation does not mean that the central government plays no role in poverty reduction. But rather, considerable thoughts, efforts, and experimentations will be needed to develop a workable transfer system. Such a transfer should simultaneously accomplish the difficult objectives of providing localities sufficient resources to do what they want to do, while ensuring that what they do is broadly in accordance with national priorities. The interaction between decentralisation and poverty reduction emphasises the importance of transfer design and the desirability of providing for periodic evaluation of that design (Ayee, 1996; Bird & Rodriguez, 1999; Crook & Sverrisson, 2001; Crook, 2003).

Factors influencing the effects of decentralisation on local level development

While decentralisation of service delivery may be attributed to different reasons in different countries, improving service delivery has been a common

factor (Ahmed et al., 2005; Shah & Thompson, 2004). However, decentralisation has not always been effective in improving service delivery by local governments, mainly because of inadequate revenue assignments, inadequate access to financial markets, and lack of necessary administrative capacity on the part of local authorities.

Frequently, decentralisation reforms have implied more responsibilities for local government, but have not increased resources and power. Additionally, many local governments not only have limited resources but work under organisational, institutional and political contexts that are not conducive to the introduction of participatory practices. Most local governments are unlikely to have the capacity to change their development approach with the same speed that policy makers can draft legislation, reformulate programmes and reconsider approaches (Plummer, 1999).

Scott and Jackson (2007) identified three factors that influence the impact of decentralisation on local level development:

- Political incentives at central and local levels;
- Limited administrative capacity; and
- Financial constraints.

Political incentives at central and local levels

The primary factor influencing how decentralisation impacts on local level development is the political context in which reforms are made, both at the central and the local level (Bossuyt & Gould, 2000). At the central level, it is naïve to

assume that officials benignly devolve power and responsibility to lower levels of government, when there is often little incentive to do so. Several case studies show how governments have subverted decentralisation policies to ensure that no real transfer of power takes place and that centralisation is actually strengthened. This obviously impacts upon the potential for decentralisation to bring about improvements in local level development. Ahmed et al. (2005) cite evidence from Indonesia and India of the impact of political capture on local services, while Conyers (2007) identifies similar evidence across Africa. The problem stems from the manner in which elected local government representatives achieve and maintain their political power, which in turn reflects the 'patronage-based' nature of both national and local politics. If services are being delivered in an environment of political patronage, then decisions that could benefit efficiency and equity will be corrupted, and instead be made in favour of a few elites for personal financial or political reward.

Limited administrative capacity

A second commonly cited factor that impedes the ability of decentralisation reforms to result in significant improvements in local level development is limited administrative capacity at local levels. Conyers (2007) comments that administrative performance under decentralised systems of governance is poor. This can be a problem of literacy. Financial literacy is a far bigger problem, for example in Uganda and Tanzania where too few people at the local level had the ability to manage public finances and maintain proper

accounting procedures, resulting in fiscal transfers that were lower than before decentralisation (Ahmed et al., 2005).

Conyers (2007) concludes that the following factors have led to weak administrative performance under decentralisation:

- Inadequate devolution of power, particularly over finance and staff;
- Aque and/or inappropriate systems and procedures;
- Inadequately qualified, underpaid and unmotivated staff;
- Political ‘interference’, corruption and abuse of power; and
- Lack of ‘downward’ accountability.

Financial constraints

A third factor that constrains the potential of decentralisation to improve local level development is a limited supply of financial resources (Cammack, 2006). Local governments are mainly reliant for funding on central government transfers. Ahmed et al. (2005) cite evidence from India that even when transfers are supposed to be formula-driven they are still subject to political influence. Resource distribution across sub-national governments cannot be explained by efficiency and equity considerations alone. Political variables representing the incentives of central political agents are additional and significant determinants.

Historical background of decentralisation in Ghana

The history of decentralisation in Ghana is traced back by Ayee (2000) to the introduction of indirect rule by the British colonial authorities in 1878, lasting

until 1951. During this period, the colonial administration ruled indirectly through the native political institution (i.e. the chiefs), by constituting the chief and elders in a given district as the local authority, with powers to establish treasuries, appoint staff, and perform local government functions (Nkrumah, 2000). Nkrumah also makes the interesting observation that, under indirect rule, downward accountability of chiefs to the people was replaced by upward accountability to the colonial authorities.

The democratic ideals underlying chieftaincy in Ghana, which made chiefs accountable to their people, began to suffer as the recognition by the central government was more crucial to the chief than the support of his people. Thus, there are some echoes here, as well as obvious differences, with regard to in the contemporary period between central and local government in Ghana, dispelling any lingering notions of a necessary association between decentralisation and democracy, and confirming how decentralisation can be used as a political mechanism by ruling political elites to reinforce their control.

In the post-independence period from 1957 onwards, local government was generally weak and subject to the centralisation of power that was typical of the post-colonial state in Africa (Tordoff, 1997). Attempts at decentralisation reforms were introduced at different times, for instance in 1974 under the military regime of Lt. Col. Acheampong, generally characterised by deconcentration, and aimed at strengthening central government control at the local level (Nkrumah, 2000).

A historical aspect was the decentralisation reforms introduced in the early period of Rawlings' populist military rule (1981-92). In 1983, Rawlings' PNDC government announced a policy of administrative decentralisation of central government ministries, alongside the creation of People's Defense Committees (PDCs) in each town and village. The PDCs, made up of local PNDC activists as self-identified defenders of the 'revolution', effectively took over local government responsibilities, though often limited to mobilising the implementation of local self-help projects (Nkrumah, 2000), while the deconcentrated ministries played a more significant role.

Ayee (2000) notes that, despite the PNDC's populist rhetoric, its interest in decentralisation reflected that of previous regimes, an interest in the administrative decentralisation of central government, and not the devolution of political authority to the local level. Additionally, Ayee perceives a key feature of local governance in the pre- 1988 period as a dual hierarchical structure in which central and local government institutions "operated in parallel", but with encroachment at times by better-resourced central government on the roles and responsibilities of under-resourced local government. A number of democratic deficits are identified in current decentralisation reforms in Ghana, and, utilizing Ribot's (2001) analytical framework, conclusions are drawn that decentralisation has not succeeded in "entrusting downwardly accountable representative actors with significant domains of discretionary power. The preliminary findings concerning the limits to democratic decentralisation in Ghana suggest the

hypothesis that such constraints on political decentralisation have negative implications for pro-poor outcomes.

Specifically, the decentralisation programme in Ghana has been designed to:

- Devolve political and state power in order to promote participatory democracy through local-level institutions;
- Deconcentrate and devolve administration, development planning, and implementation to the district assemblies;
- Introduce an effective system of fiscal decentralisation that gives the district assemblies control over a substantial portion of their revenues;
- Establish a national development planning system to integrate and coordinate development planning at all levels and in all sectors;
- Incorporate economic, social, spatial, and environmental issues into the development planning process on an integrated and comprehensive basis (Ayee, 1994; 2004).

In addition to these objectives, the individual Establishing Acts (Legislative Instruments) for each of the District Assemblies, which supplement the Local Government Act (Act 462), include a list of 86 specific responsibilities which include the following:

- To construct and maintain feeder roads, streets, parks and other public utilities;
- To build, equip and maintain primary, middle, secondary and special schools;

- To maintain, as agents of the Ghana Highway Authority, trunk roads lying within the boundaries of their areas of authority;
- To promote and safeguard public health;
- To regularly inspect the metropolitan area for the detection of nuisance or any condition likely to be offensive or injurious to health;
- To establish, install, build, maintain and control public latrines, lavatories, urinals and wash places;
- To establish, maintain and carry out services for the removal of nightsoil from any building and for the destruction and treatment of such nightsoil; and
- To provide, maintain, supervise and control abattoirs.

Some of the objectives of the decentralisation programme seem, however, incompatible. For instance, popular participation has been regarded as militating against local revenue generation and mobilisation on the one hand, and/or demands for increased expenditures on the other hand (Ayee, 2004).

Ghana's local government system

The local government system introduced by the 1988 legislative reforms is a four-tiered structure with a Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) at the top, followed by Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), and the Urban, Zonal, Town and Area Councils (UZTACs). The Unit Committees are at the base communicating directly with the local people. The principal innovations of the new system included creating 110 administrative districts to replace the 65

districts that had existed before and changing the name District Council to District Assembly. In 2004, the government further reviewed the number of assemblies and created a further 28 to enhance decentralisation, resulting in 138 assemblies (Mensah, 2005). In 2008, 32 additional assemblies were further created giving a total of 170 MMDAs. The District Assembly is to be the highest political and administrative authority in each district, with deliberative, executive, and legislative powers. It is responsible for creation of the two lower-level tiers within its jurisdiction: Town or Area Councils and Unit Committees. The Unit Committees are the base structure of the local government system in Ghana and represent the basic unit of planning and political administration (Amadu, 2004).

The Unit Committees provide administrative framework for the management of each community by identifying, discussing, and prioritizing community needs. These needs are then community through the Assembly members to the Assembly where final decisions are made.

Generally, the main objective of the new local government system in Ghana is to ensure that people are directly involved in the decision making process and responsible for their own development. Figure 1 depicts the structure of the new local government system of Ghana.

In the Yilo Krobo District, the District Assembly is the highest political authority in the district. The District Chief Executive (DCE) chairs the Executive Committee. The various sub-committees, which report to the DCE, are responsible for performing the executive functions. Below the district assembly

are the district sub-structures comprising one Town Council, six Area Councils, and 92 Unit Committees.

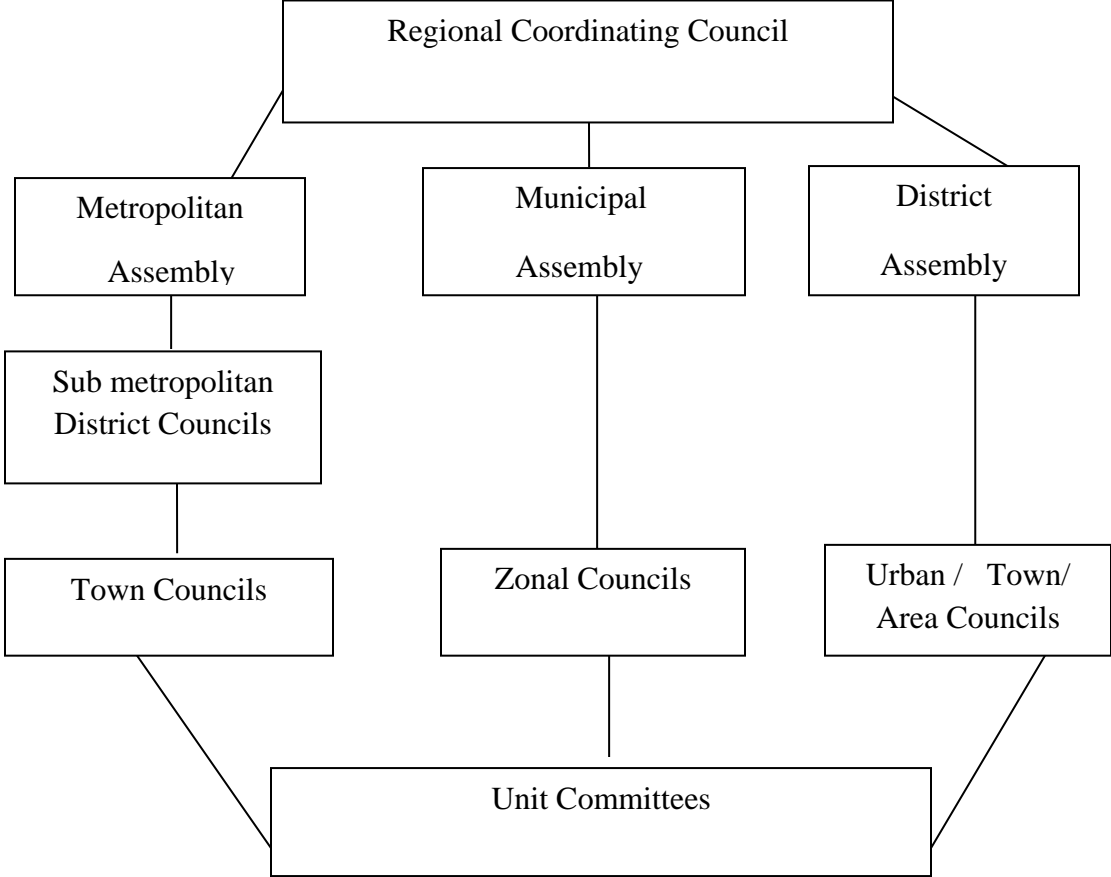


Figure 1: Structure of the new local government system in Ghana

Source: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 1996

The District Assembly also has a membership of 66, with six females and 58 males. Although these substructures are supposed to play very important roles such as resource identification and mobilisation, registration of births and deaths, mobilise communities to undertake local development activities, they are

currently not effective. They do not have the capacity to perform their established functions (Ghana District Repository, 2010).

Successes of Ghana's decentralisation programme

The successes of Ghana's decentralisation programme can be measured against some of the main objectives for which it was implemented. One of the objectives of the decentralization programme is to ensure that people living in the rural areas have access to basic services and infrastructure. Indeed, the District Assemblies (DAs) have undertaken development projects such as the construction and maintenance of classroom blocks, feeder roads, clinics, public toilets, markets and provision of street-lights in previously neglected rural areas that were denied access to these services (Ayee, 1992). Ayee (1996) further noted that some of these projects were sometimes undertaken in collaboration with local and international non-governmental organisations but in this case, the initiations of the projects were mostly through the NGOs. The projects have in turn opened development opportunities in the districts. The improved infrastructure development has improved health and sanitation infrastructure and thereby removed some of the barriers to social and economic development. This notwithstanding, complaints have come from some rural people that most of these services and infrastructure have been concentrated mainly in the district capitals to the detriment of the rural areas (Ayee, 2003).

Another main objective of the decentralisation programme is to allow for participation of the people in their own affairs and therefore empower them. The

activities of DAs have enabled the local people to show some interest in their affairs; a spirit of voluntarism and awareness to develop one's community was therefore created, especially at the initial period of the programme. However, people's interest declined when they realized that their expectations cannot be fulfilled because of the insufficient human and financial resources of the DAs to implement their set development objectives.

In addition, as much as possible, district plans are subjected to public hearing at the sub-district level but the hearing is not attended by most people mainly because of apathy and the inability of the sub-district structures to be in place in some districts due to composition problems. In spite of these hiccups, the DAs have no doubt created a high level of political awareness, which injected some political dynamism with some functionaries of the DAs and electorate demanding greater accountability from the District Chief Executive, Presiding Member and DA members respectively (Ayee, 2004). The issue of poverty reduction is central to the decentralisation programme, even though there is the perception by some people that poverty reduction was not part of the original concept. This perception may be right or wrong. Given the central role of poverty reduction to the decentralisation programme, a number of poverty reduction strategies were introduced. They include the Programme of Actions to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment (PAMSCAD) in 1987, the Productivity and Income Generation Fund popularly called the "District Assembly Poverty Alleviation Fund" in 1996, and the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Funds in 2002. The Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF) is to give the poor access to credit

facilities to use in investment in job creation. From the foregoing, it is clear that the decentralisation programme has achieved marginal successes. This notwithstanding, 51.6 percent of people in 12 districts in Ghana are revealed to have faith in the DAs not only as the appropriate institution for solving community problems, but also hold the key to effective delivery of services and solution to the problems at the grassroots (Ayee & Amponsah, 2003).

Challenges for Ghana's decentralisation programme

Since 1988, the challenges facing decentralisation have been daunting in spite of efforts being made by successive governments to address them. In the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development's (MLGRD), status of Decentralisation Implementation paper in 2002, there are a list of constraints and challenges as well as a number of factors that have impeded previous attempts to strengthen local government capacities and performance.

According to MLGRD (2002), these challenges include agitations for more districts; sectoral conceptual differences in the interpretation of the decentralisation policy and transfer of powers, functions, responsibilities and resources; absence of maps to firmly identify boundaries that will enable DAs to plan for the development of their areas of jurisdiction; the shortage of adequately trained human resources at the local level; inability to make the sub-district structures function because of their size and lack of funds to pay core staff; and the lack of participatory bottom-up planning.

MLGRD (2002) further notes the lack of fiscal decentralisation as a result

of the centralisation of the management of public funds due to existing legislation (Financial Administration Decree, 1979 and Financial Administration Regulations, 1979) and administrative procedure on local government public finance; the lack of management of interface between decentralised public institutions, private sector enterprises and civil society mainly because of the absence of clear-cut regulation, procedure and boundaries of good practices, consultation and communication on the roles of NGOs, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and Community Based Organisations (CBOs).

Apart from these constraints, a number of challenges face the decentralisation programme. They include the following:

- Low level of strong leadership at all levels of decentralisation. The low authoritative responsibility centre for the decentralisation process which plays the role of coordinating, overseeing and monitoring individual and collective efforts of stakeholders across government and to plan and implement decentralisation related initiatives. This has also led to a weak authoritative/common vision and plan for decentralisation process.
- In other words, there has not been a homegrown action plan to promote Ghana's version of decentralisation. This problem may seem to have been resolved with the appointment of a 11 member Presidential Oversight Committee on decentralisation in November 2003; and
- Loss of institutional memory as a result of the change in government in January 2001, which resulted not only in the massive transfer of staff, but

also the replacement of one-third government appointees to the District Assemblies.

Impact of District Assemblies on poverty reduction

According to Ayee (1998), decentralisation has shown that local government officials are likely to be well informed about the plight of members of their community and are therefore able to recognise those who are genuinely poor. Moreover, because poverty in one community may be characterised by different indicators than poverty in another community, a decentralised system may also increase efficiency of access to public goods and services by allowing local authorities to determine the local eligibility criteria. Thus, decentralising the responsibility to access the needs of communities to local administrators should be more accurate and cost effective than a central government agency.

The District Assembly system has greatly enhanced popular participation in local government, and included greater numbers of previously excluded groups, yet the responsiveness of the DAs to popular development needs and to those of the poor in particular has not been good (Crook & Sverrisson, 2001). In a survey of two districts by Crook and Manor (1998), 70 percent of the respondents were of the view that the DA did not respond to their needs, and only 22 percent felt it was better than the previously unelected system.

In the past, general development performance was disappointing with recurrent expenditure dominating capital expenditure in real terms. Currently,

capital expenditure overrides recurrent expenditure and thus the DAs are beginning to be responsive to the needs of the communities.

Basic infrastructure and services

The District Assemblies' Common Fund (DACF) has enabled the districts to provide basic infrastructure in the field of education, health and water and sanitation which had been neglected in the past. Consequently, decentralisation has caused an incremental access of people living in these areas to government resources and services.

Even though the DACF was to enable the districts to provide basic infrastructure and services, the survey by Asante (2003) in four districts revealed mixed results. When respondents were asked to compare the present quality/availability of selected public goods and services (education, health and water) to that of 1994 when budget allocation from the central government to the districts began, most of the respondents were of the view that the health sector had improved, while in the water sector, there had not been any improvement.

The role of central grants in financing local development

A major goal often encountered in literature on developing countries for grant allocations to local governments is to provide an adequate source of revenue for local government activity. The methods of allocating these grants or the structure of the allocation system, indicate specific objectives which are probably the most prevalent in developing countries.

To encourage specific expenditures by local authorities, there is the need to provide grants for particular capital expenditures (e.g. in the case of Ghana, the construction of Junior High Schools Workshops), or grants for certain recurrent expenditures (e.g. payment of salaries of teachers, or maintenance of school buildings and other capital projects), are used when the granting government feels that local governments would be either unwilling, or unable to make such expenditures on their own, or would under allocate funds on such activities. Encouraging specific expenditures is certainly justified when the area or activity is of national or wider local concern. Alternatively, there are also grants that encourage specific types of spending expected to improve overall living conditions of communities in a locality.

To ensure adequate spatial distribution of resources, spatially targeted grants may be based on several different objectives including:

- Preferential treatment of resource-poor or disadvantaged local jurisdictions to ensure that some minimum level of public services could be provided by them. This objective is aimed at achieving horizontal fiscal balance or some equalisation among local units;
- Preferential treatment of areas with greater resource potential likely to speed up the overall national economic growth (e.g. growth poles);
- Grants to particular local units may also be made for specific political reasons such as to win votes during elections, to prevent rebellion or separatist tendencies; and

- Some limited grants might be given to specific areas that might have suffered from a natural disaster (flooding, earthquake etc.) more as a first aid and for reconstruction.

Additionally, financing local level development is to encourage greater revenue mobilisation efforts by local governments. Examples of these types of grants are those allocated on the basis of revenues generated locally (or where this factor is embodied in an allocation formula), or which provide a portion of total costs of capital expenditures to be covered. Finally is to encourage maintenance and rehabilitation of capital facilities. Maintenance are rarely undertaken by several local authorities in any systematic manner as there is often no provision made for this spending in their recurrent budgets. To encourage this type of expenditure or prevent essential local public facilities from being in serious disrepair grants are provided for periodic maintenance and rehabilitation works (Kokor & Kroes, 2000).

As stated earlier, the main objectives of central government grants to District Assemblies in Ghana are not different from those in most developing countries. Objectives of central government grants to the District Assemblies include:

- Financing in whole or in part the cost of local development activities which are of national significance, e.g. the construction of Junior High School workshops as part of the educational reform;

- Encouraging DAs to develop programmes and activities in line with national policy, e.g. for rural electrification scheme, the DAs/communities provide the poles in some instances;
- Stimulating growth in local economies so as to contribute to overall national growth and balanced development among all the districts and regions;
- Controlling expenditures by the DAs to ensure compliance with national fiscal policies;
- Ensuring uniform standard of services;
- Compensating DAs with narrow local resource base for raising internally generated revenue; and
- Assisting DAs to cope with unforeseen short-term difficulties.

Most of these objectives find practical expression in the formula for distributing the District Assemblies' Common Fund among the districts in the country. Elements of the formula are:

- The need factor, which is meant to address current inter-district imbalances in development opportunities due to differential local resource potentials and production capacities;
- The equalising factor, to ensure that each district has access to a specified minimum from the fund to enable some minimum level of services and facilities to be provided by the district;
- The responsive factor, meant to encourage greater revenue mobilisation effort among the districts;

- Service pressure factor, meant to assist in improving and/or expanding existing facilities and services which as a result of population pressure are inadequate or deteriorating faster than anticipated; and
- Contingency factor, which is meant to assist DAs to cope with unforeseen short-term problems.

It should be mentioned here that the District Assemblies Common Fund is restricted to the financing of development projects and activities of the districts approved by the centre. The money cannot therefore be used to finance recurrent expenditure or any other spending not approved by government. Each district is to receive by quarterly installments the total amount accruing to it according to the approved formula for the year. However, the regularity of the transfers to the districts cannot be predicted (Kokor & Kroes, 2000).

Types of grant programmes

Several authors (e.g. Davey, 1984; Devas, 1984; Schroeder, 1987; the World Bank, 1992) have noted that grants may exert many types of effects (i.e. incentives and disincentives) on local government financing depending on:

- The size of the divisible pool (i.e. total amount to be distributed among the local units) is determined;
- The distribution of this amount among recipients (i.e. share allocated to particular local unit) is determined; and
- Whether the grant can be used for general purposes or is restricted to specific purposes.

Based on these characteristics, Bahl and Linn (1991) are quoted in Kokor and Kroes (2000) to have developed a simple typology as follows:

- A. Grant is a shared tax where some portion of tax revenues collected locally are retained by the local unit within whose borders the tax was collected;
- B. Grant is allocated according to some set formula;
- C. Grant is cost reimbursement allocation depending upon the total or part of the amount spent locally by a local unit on projects or salaries;
- D. Grant is distributed in whatever manner the granting government sees fit;
- E. This means that grant types B, C and D are based on a proportion of total national tax revenue which is distributed in different ways among local units of government;
- F. Grant is distributed according to some formula, but the grant pool is usually determined in an ad hoc manner;
- G. Grant is distributed on a cost reimbursement basis; and
- H. Grant is distributed in the same ad hoc manner, as the grant pool is also determined.

Theoretical framework

Whereas much economic analysis either works within a given political framework, or explicitly recommends the political framework which would be optimal, it has become clear that to understand long-term economic development, it is necessary to understand political developments, since they shape the incentive structures for actors across the economy (Andresen, 2008).

The theoretical framework for the study is the Public Choice Theory (PCT). The basic premise of the PCT is that the government is not one body which acts in order to maximise public welfare, but rather a set of diverse agents. A key principle of the theory is that where benefits are concentrated and costs are spread thinly, the incentives are present to obtain knowledge and to obtain transfers via the political process.

According to Machan (2008), the public is a huge group of individuals with a great variety of different interests and just a few common ones, hence politicians and technocrats would have a very hard time, even if they wanted to, to serve the public interest. The manner in which decentralised governments develop and deliver services, and the structure of the local government sector, are matters of concern to all who take an interest in how public sector organisations can achieve effective community outcomes. There has been some recognition of the problem of centralised governance and an analysis of decentralised structures.

Chisolm (1989) for example, has challenged the proposition that decentralisation promotes efficiency, arguing that decentralised organisations create methods of informal coordination. But while informal coordination uses local knowledge, the government agencies themselves are elected by mass democracy and so simply decentralising some programs and operations may not substantially reduce the problem of special-interest influence.

Public Choice theorists argue that political fragmentation enhances choice and efficiency in local government service provision. According to metropolitan government theorists, political fragmentation is the main governance challenge

that city regions face (Barlow, 1991; Hamilton, 1999; Henton, 2001; Lefever, 2001).

Government needs to be decentralised as far as possible to bring decisions to smaller and local jurisdictions. The goal of many decentralisation reforms is to empower local communities through their local governments; to provide a more equitable allocation of resources; and to assure improvement in the delivery of key services, such as education and health care.

In summary, the study used the Public Choice Theory because it functions on the principle that government be decentralised as far as possible to bring decisions to smaller and local jurisdictions (communities). In other words, the theory helped examine how decisions have been brought closer to the local people by assessing the extent to which the Yilo-Krobo Assembly has involved local people in the decision making of their communities as well as the impact of the decentralised process on the development of their communities. Also, the application of the PCT helped explain how political decision-making in the Yilo-Krobo District Assembly results in outcomes that conflict with the preferences of the citizenry of the local people.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the study area and the research methods used in the study by describing the methodological procedures used in conducting the study. The methods explained here include the study design, the study population, the sample as well as the sampling procedure. Also included in the chapter are the instruments for data collection, ethical principles, field work and challenges, and methods of analysing data gathered from the study.

Study area

The study area is the Yilo Krobo District of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The Yilo Krobo District is one of the 21 districts in the Eastern Region. It lies approximately between latitude $6^{\circ}00'$ N and $0^{\circ} .30'N$ and between longitudes $0^{\circ} .30'W$ and $1^{\circ} .30'W$. It covers an estimated area of 805sq.km, constituting 4.2 percent of the total area of the Eastern Region with Somanya as its capital. The district is bounded in the north and east by Lower Manya Krobo District, in the south by Akwapim North and Dangme West Districts and on the west by New Juaben Municipal, East Akim Municipal and Fantekwa Districts. It is 69.0 km from Accra (the capital city of Ghana) and about 50.0 km from Koforidua (the regional capital). The district has a population density of 107 persons per square kilometer. About 68 percent of the people in the district live in rural areas. Thus, the district is predominantly rural, while the average household size for the

district is 4.9 persons (Maks Publications & Media Services, 2006). Figure 2 shows the location of the district.

The district has estimated total road network coverage of 240 km. This includes 80km of first class roads linking up the district capital to Accra, Tema, Koforidua, Ho and Aseewa and Akosombo. There are also about 160kms of feeder roads linking up the market centres and major settlements. Most people in the district especially farmers, however, still trudge to and from settlements and rural fields on footpaths carrying farm produce (Maks Publications & Media Services, 2006).

The district's total population in 2000 according to the Ghana Statistical Service (2000) was 86,107, consisting of 41, 830 males and 44,277 females signifying a 4.1 percent increase over the population in 1984.

With a growth rate of 2.6 percent, the district's population is currently estimated at 97,898. The population in the age group 0-14 accounts for 39.07 percent of total district population. This couple with an 8.45 percent population above 60 years does not only mean a high demand for social services and health facilities, but also high age dependency ratios. According to Maks Publications and Media Services (2006), in the district, about 45.7 percent of the people aged 15 and above can neither read nor write, which is an indication of a high illiteracy rate in the district.

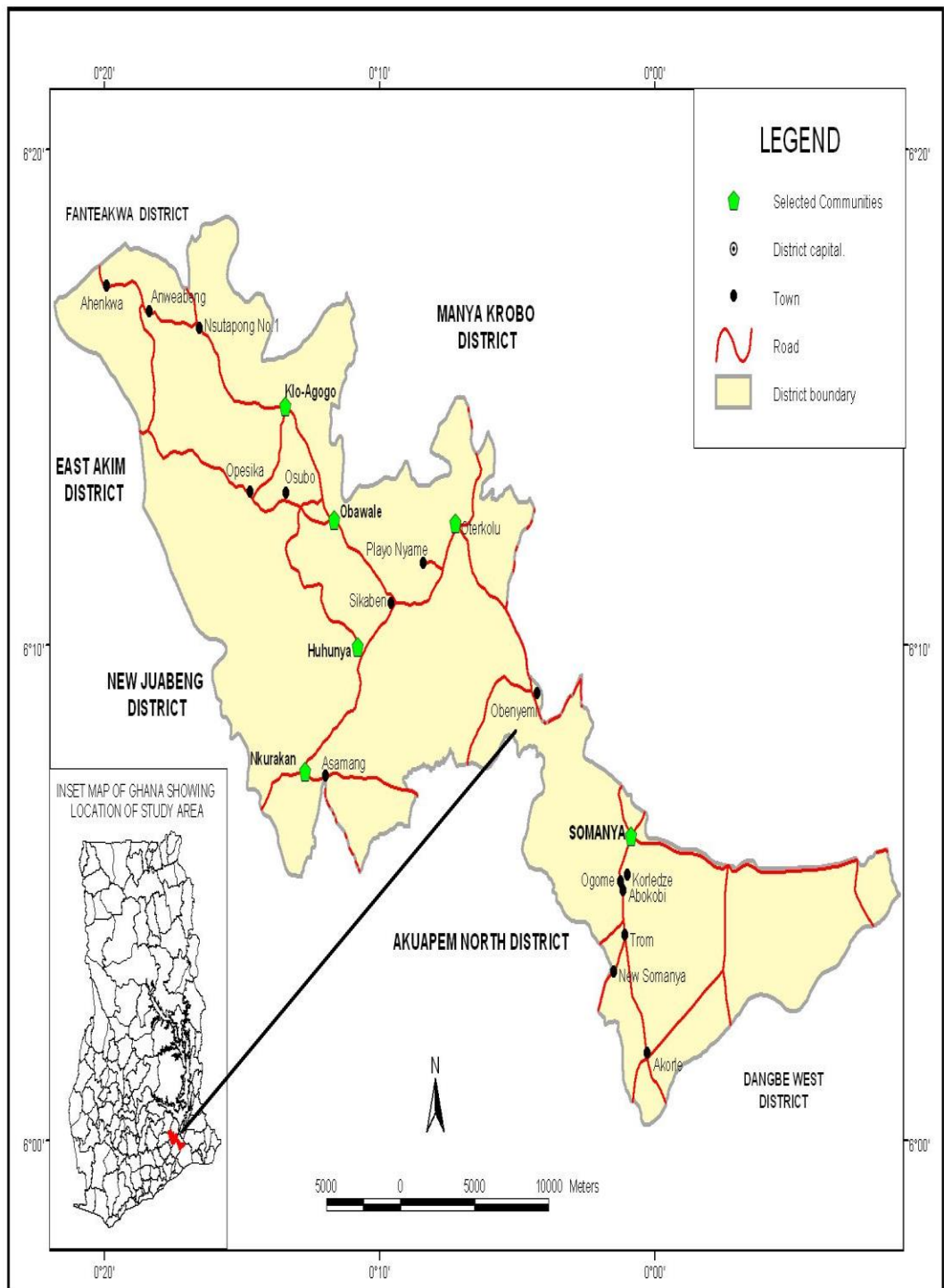


Figure 2: Location of Yilo Krobo District

Source: Cartographic Department, University of Ghana, Legon (2011)

There are 237 settlements in the district. Only 25 settlements have populations up to 500 and above while the rest have populations below 500 people. This makes the provision of facilities and services economically not viable since most of the settlements would not have the required threshold for the provision of such facilities. The only urban settlement in the district is the district capital (Somanya). The gap between the population sizes of Somanya (23, 493) and the three other large settlements (Nkurakan, Obawale and Oterkpolu) combined (8,154) is very wide, and therefore better spatial spread of development intervention is needed to reduce the dominance of Somanya. Table 1 shows the major settlements in the district (Ghana District Repository, 2010).

Table 1: Major settlements in the district and their population size

Settlement	Population size
Somanya	23,493
Nkurakan	4,422
Oterkpolu	1,500
Obawale	2,232
Huhunya	1,153
Klo-Agogo	1,065

Source: Ghana District Repository, 2010

The major economic activities in the district are, agriculture, trading and small scale industrial activities. About 58 percent of the working population is engaged in agricultural activities. Service, trading (commerce), and small scale

industrial activities employ 18.1 percent, 12.9 percent and 7.2 percent of the working population respectively. The district depends largely on central government funds with the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) being the bulk of the funds.

Study design

Burns and Grove (1997) argued that research design is a blueprint for the conduct of a study that maximises control over factors that could interfere with the study's desired outcome. The blueprint and the plan are discussed in this section. The study used the mixed design. This is through combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, and concepts.

Specifically, the quantitative approach was employed through the use of interview schedules for data collection and statistical data analysis. On the other hand, the qualitative approach was used through in-depth interviews using interview guides.

Quantitative designs operate on the principles of inferential statistics (making generalisation from a sample to the entire population under study). As such, the design involves statistical representativeness of the sample, data quality and accuracy estimates, while qualitative designs rarely make explicit claims about the generalizability of their accounts. This makes the design analytical rather than statistical as in quantitative research designs (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001),

The study employed both designs to draw from their strengths and as well minimise their weaknesses. Thus, the mixed design method is to help bridge the

schism between quantitative and qualitative research as Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2004) indicated. In other words, this method allowed the researcher to collect multiple data using different strategies, approaches, and methods in such a way that the resulting mixture or combination is likely to result in complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses.

Sources of data

The study made use of both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was obtained from the field using interview schedules and interview guides. On the other hand, various books, periodicals, reports, internets, journals, websites and other documents were consulted in obtaining secondary data. Thus, secondary data were collected from the District Assembly internal documents and reports on funding sources, revenues and expenditure patterns as well as project documents.

Study population

The study population comprised of settlements with populations of at least 1000 people, and management of the District Assembly. Specifically, the units of analysis include adults (heads of households) in the selected communities, while the unit of analysis for management of the assembly include assembly members, and key staff of the Assembly.

Sample and sampling procedure

The study employed both probability and non-probability sampling in the selection of respondents. Probability sampling was through the multi-stage sampling, while non-probability sampling was via purposive sampling. According to Seidu (2006), purposive sampling helps to select only those variables that relate to the objectives of the study. Five key staff members of the Assembly were purposively selected to respond to the study as key informants. The multi-stage sampling was used in the selection of community members since communities in the district are geographically dispersed. In all, four stages of sampling were done.

In the first stage, settlements with over 1000 population were chosen because they were considered large enough to attract project attention of all types by settlement status. Such settlements constituted the clusters. In all, there were six clusters. Since the settlements (clusters) were of different sizes, the number of community members selected from each settlement was based on Probability Proportionate to Size (PPS). Thus, settlements (clusters) with larger population sizes had greater number of sampling units (community members). Table 2 shows the distribution of the sample across the selected communities.

Table 2: Distribution of sample across selected communities

Community	Sample	Percent
Somanya	70	35.0
Nkurakan	40	20.0
Oterkpolu	30	15.0
Obawale	25	12.5
Huhunya	20	10.0
Klo-Agogo	15	7.50
Total	200	100.0

Source: Author's computation, 2012

The third stage involved identifying households randomly within the selected communities from which respondents were selected. The heads of households were selected using a convenience sampling approach that is touted by Mitchell and Jolley (1996). The Assembly members were selected using a sampling frame (list of assembly members) obtained from the district registrar.

Nesbary (2000) suggests that the larger the sample size, the greater the probability the sample will reflect the general population. However, sample size alone does not constitute the ability to generalise. Patten (2004) states that obtaining an unbiased sample is the main criterion when evaluating the adequacy of a sample. In all, 265 respondents participated in the study and the sampling procedure adopted for each target unit across the sample size are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Sampling procedure across respondents

Respondents	Sample	Sampling procedure
Assembly Staff	5	Purposive sampling
Assembly members	60	Random sampling
Community members	200	Multi-stage sampling
Total	265	

Source: Author's computation, 2012

Data collection instruments

Interview schedules were used to solicit views from respondents on the research questions. Interview schedule was administered through a face-face interview. This was appropriate as most of the study population are illiterates and partial literates who may not understand the content of the interview schedule to adequately respond to the issues. Also, it is to pave way for further probing which enhanced the accuracy of the data collected. However, the administering of the interview schedule to respondents was done with the help of five trained research assistants. The research assistants were trained by the researcher on the purpose of the study, the various items on the instruments, and how questions should be administered.

In all, two interview schedules were designed, one for assembly members and the other for community members. Both interview schedule contained open and closed-ended items with the majority of the items being closed-ended to make data analysis easy. Regarding the close ended questions, respondents were

provided with a set of options (multiple choices) to a question and were to choose from among them, while with the open-ended; respondents provided answers in their own words through writing.

Both interview schedules were also structured into sections with each part focusing on a particular research question. However, the first section of both interview schedules focused on the demographic characteristics of respondents including age, gender, educational background, employment status, and period of working with the assembly for assembly members. The second part of both interview schedules contained items in relation to the capability of the assembly to initiate and implement projects. The interview schedule for community members assessed the capacity of the assembly by using a 5-point Likert Scale with 1 representing a response of “Strongly Disagree” and 5 representing “Strongly Agree”. In this section, respondents were given six variables in relation to the ability of the assembly to initiate and implement projects.

The third section of both interview schedules focused on the participation of local people in decision making, while the fourth part of the assembly members interview schedule was structured around the challenges the assembly encounters in completing developmental projects. Both interview schedule ended by allowing respondents to indicate how the assembly can effectively develop the district and make effective use of funds.

In all, five in-depth interviews were conducted using an interview guide. This was conducted with five selected key staff of the District Assembly. To extensively cover the research questions and objectives of the study, the interview

guide was structured around themes each relating to the research questions. As often associated with un-structured interviews, the questions on the interview guide were structured around opened-ended questions to allow for probing and extensive discussion. Prior to the interviews, participants were informed of the study and their participation. This adequately prepared them to effectively participate in the study. Each interview lasted averagely for 20 minutes. Also, to help in the collection of qualitative data through the interview, digital recorders were used during the interview which was played back during the data analysis phase to help in data transcription. However, the recording was done with the consent of the interview participants.

Pre-test of instruments

To test the validity of the research instruments, pre-testing was done using a sample of 10 respondents from the district capital, Somanya. The pre-test focused on the wording of questions including ambiguity and simplicity. Attention was also paid to whether the questions have a direct link to the study's research questions. The result of the pre-test was analysed after which few revisions were made to the interview schedule and interview guides. The result of the pre-test was not included in the major findings of the study in Chapter Four. Considering the geographical dispersion of the district and the efforts needed to administer the interview schedules as well as conduct interviews, five research assistants were recruited to assist in the field work. To adequately perform the field work, the research assistants were trained on the purpose of the study, the

sampling technique as well as the items on the survey instruments. The training was strongly based on the results of the pre-test and lasted for a day.

Ethical consideration

A letter of introduction was obtained from the Institute for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast, to the management of the Yilo Krobo District Assembly introducing the researcher as a student of the University and should be given the needed support. Community encountering was also done at the community level by paying visit to the chiefs and elders of the selected communities to inform them of the presence of the research team in the communities.

The policy of voluntary participation was strictly adhered to throughout this research. All participants who attended the interviews and responded to the survey interview schedules were informed of the purpose of the research, how information and data collected would be handled and treated with high confidentiality, and that no individual information would be kept once the data is collated. In the same way, as the participants decide to participate, they were free to withdraw and to discontinue participation at any time. That is to say, respondents were also advised that they could withdraw from the study even during the process. With this, the participants were not forced to participate in the research.

Among the significant ethical issues that were considered in the research process include consent and confidentiality. In order to secure the consent of the

selected participants, the researcher relayed all important details of the study, including its aims and purpose. By explaining these important details, the respondents were able to understand the importance of their role in the completion of the research. The confidentiality of the participants was also ensured by not disclosing their names or personal information in the research. Only relevant details that helped in answering the research questions were included.

Field work and challenges

Field work for the study took three weeks (from 6 to 26 January, 2012).

Various challenges were encountered in the field work including:

- The reluctance of respondents to participate in the study;
- Inadequate logistics; and
- Time constraints.

Due to the challenges encountered for the field work, the interviews were not completed early enough for the commencement of the data analysis phase. This delayed the final reporting stage of the work. The reluctance of the respondents to participate in the study was addressed by further explanation of the purpose of the study to the participants.

Data analysis

Data processing and cleaning was done before the analysis. At this stage, the interview schedules and interview guide were checked for completeness to

ensure that the questions have been answered appropriately. Both manual and electronic editing of the interview schedule was done.

The comparative method was used in analysing the qualitative data obtained from the in-depth interviews. This involved reviewing the data line by line in details. As the concept becomes apparent, a code was assigned to that segment of the document. On the other hand, the quantitative data obtained from the interview schedules were analysed using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS), version 17. Descriptive analysis using percentages and cross-tabulations were performed, while results were presented using tables and figures. Inferential statistics using the chi-square was used to test relationships among some key variables and respondents demographics.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The results of the data analysed and discussion of the findings are presented in this chapter. In the discussion, attempts were made to give the possible implications of the findings. The discussion was done in relation to the review of literature in Chapter Two. Thus, the findings of the study were compared to the pertinent theories and concepts discussed in the review of literature.

The results are presented in four sections, where each stage focused on one of the objectives of the study. The first section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Specifically, findings on the capacity of the District Assembly to initiate and implement projects are presented and discussed in section two, while findings on the extent to which the local people participate in developmental decision-making is presented in the third section. The fourth section dealt with the challenges that emerged in the process of completing critical projects in the district.

Demographic characteristics of respondents

In all, 265 respondents participated in the study. This was made up of 200 community members, 60 assembly members and five staff of the assembly. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were analysed in terms of age, sex, educational background, employment status, and period of time stayed in the

district, while period of working with the assembly was examined for assembly members. The essence of the analysis of the demographic characteristics was to put the study into context.

Gender analysis shows that of the 60 assembly members who responded to the study, only 13.3 percent were females. In other words, 86.7 percent of the assembly members were males. This implied that the representation of women in formal political structures and processes remains insignificant. The finding suggests that women face numerous obstacles in achieving representation in governance. There is the need therefore to create enough opportunities for women to actively participate in the decentralisation process at the local level. On the other hand, 51.5 percent of the community members that responded to the study were males, while 48.5 percent were females.

An average age of 31.58 years was identified for the 200 community members who responded to the study, while an average age of 45.62 years was obtained for the 60 assembly members. Table 4 shows the results on the descriptive statistics (Mean, Minimum, and Maximum ages) of the respondents. The ages of the community members ranged from 18 years to 65 years while that of the Assembly members was from 31 years to 57 years.

Further analysis of the ages of the respondents showed that 60 percent of the community members were in their youthful ages (18-35). This implied that the district has a potentially noteworthy and energetic workforce which if properly managed can become a great economic asset for the development of the district.

Table 4: Mean, maximum, and minimum ages of respondents

Types of respondents	Age (Years)			
	Number	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Community members	200	31.58	18.0	61.0
Assembly members	60	45.62	31.0	57.0
Assembly staff	5	46.2	35.0	54.0

Source: Field data, 2012

Seven educational qualification variables were used in determining the educational background of the respondents. This included none (those with no formal education), Basic (Junior High School and Middle School Certificate), Senior High School (SHS), Diploma (HND), First degree, Second degree, and other qualifications. Of the 200 community members, only three percent had at least a first degree, while 67.5 percent had either Basic or SHS educational background. Thus, the majority (74%) of the respondents (community members) had low educational backgrounds. This finding is similar to Maks Publications and Media Services (2006) that in the district, only about 45.7 percent of the people aged 15 and above can neither read nor write, indicating a low literacy rate in the district. The low literacy rate is likely to affect the participation of the local people in local governance.

On the other hand, of the 60 assembly members, 65 percent had at least a Diploma, while 35 percent had at most a SHS educational background. It is important to note that none of the 60 assembly members had a second degree. The low educational background of the assembly members could probably

explain why they are unable to bring development to the district. Figure 3 shows the education background across community members and assembly members.

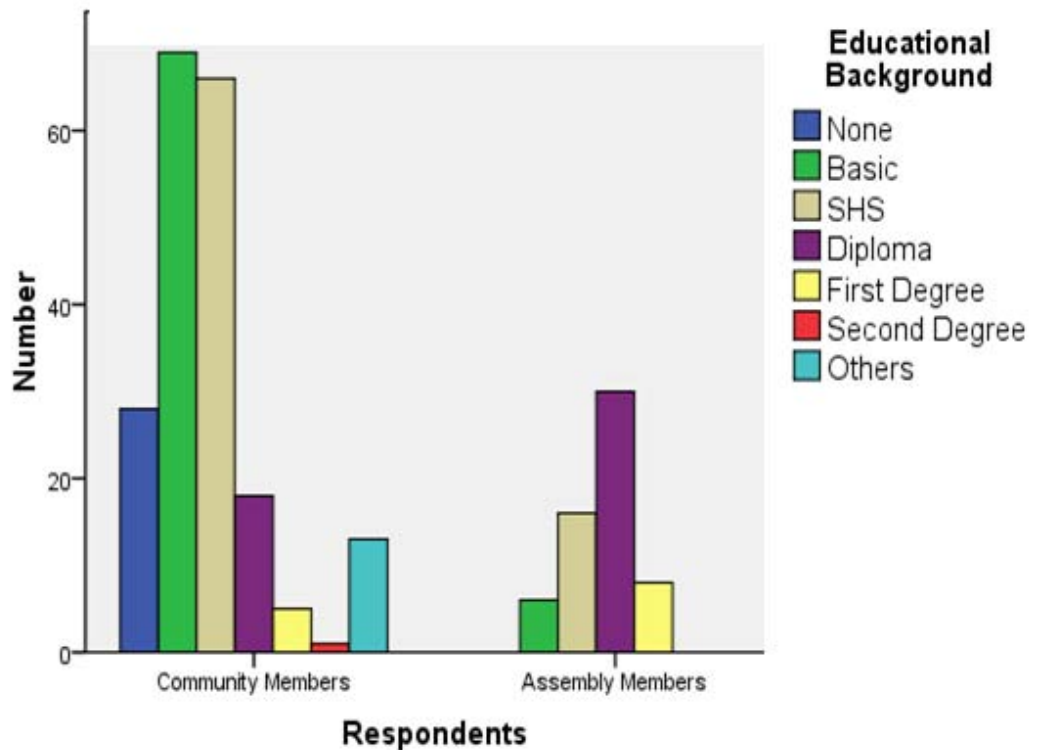


Figure 3: Educational background of respondents

Source: Field data, 2012

In Figure 3, it is noted that none of the assembly members was uneducated. About 35 percent of the assembly members having at most a SHS educational background called for constant upgrading through capacity building programs for assembly members by institutions such as the Institute of Local Government and Studies (ILGS). Analysis on the period for which assembly members have worked with the assembly was also performed. On the average, respondents have worked with the assembly for 6.5 years. Additionally, the

minimum period identified was a year, while the maximum was 14 years. Further recoding of the period for which respondents have worked with the assembly is showed in Table 5.

Table 5: Period of Assembly members working with the Assembly

Period (Years)	Frequency	Percent
1- 4	30	50.0
5-8	9	15.0
9-12	14	23.3
13+	7	11.7
Total	60	100.0

Source: Field data, 2012

Table 5 shows that 50 percent of the respondents have worked with the assembly for 1- 4 years, while the least represented period is 13 years and above. A critical assessment of the results in Table 5 shows that about 65 percent of the respondents are in their second term in office as assembly members. On the average, local people who responded to the study have stayed in their communities for 17 years. This implies that the assembly members could have more experience on the relevance of decentralization for local governance development.

Effects of decentralisation on local level development

In this section, answers to research question one are sought. That is, what

impact is decentralisation having on development at the local level? In exploring the research question, the study examined the impact of the introduction of the District Assemblies' Common Fund, and the recent introduction of the District Development Facility (DDF) having on the developmental activities in the district, the extent to which the various sources of funding available to district including donor support have contributed to solving the developmental challenges in the district, and if the decentralisation process has contributed to developing the district.

Findings from the study showed that the transfer of authority to plan, make decisions and manage public functions from the central government to district assemblies as indicated by Rondinelli (1981) has positively impacted on the development of local communities. The District Assembly Common Fund, District Development Facility and other donor funds which are all as a result of the decentralised process have economically empowered the district assembly to execute developmental projects. According to the DCE:

“Decentralisation has made the development of local communities more practical through the transfer of resources from the central government to the local level”.

This result is similar to Ayee (1992) that decentralisation has improved local economic development and poverty reduction.

Figure 4 shows the responses on the extent to which the introduction of the DACF/DDF have had on the developmental activities of the district. About 66.7 percent of the assembly members who responded to the study have indicated

that the introduction of the DACF/DDF has significantly impacted positively on developmental activities in the district, while 33.3 percent described the impact as marginally significant. It is important to note that none of the respondents was of the view that the DACF/DDF has insignificantly impacted on development.

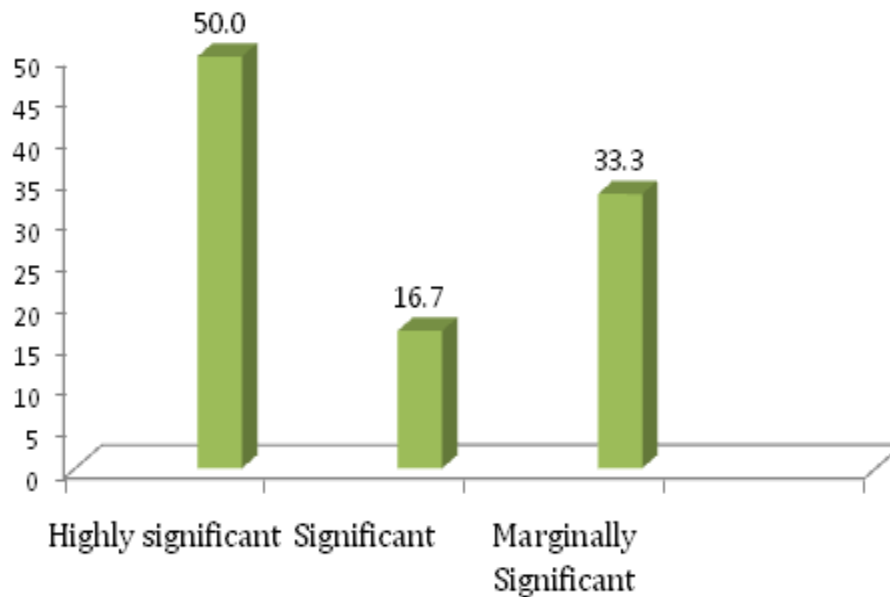


Figure 4: Significance of the DACF/DDF on development at the local level

Source: Field data, 2012

Additionally, the study found out that other sources of funding to the District Assembly including donor support and Internally Generated Fund (IGF) had contributed to solving the developmental needs of the district. Of the 60 assembly members, 83.3 percent attested to this, while only 16.7 percent were of the view that the various sources of funding had to a low extent, solved developmental challenges in the district. This implies that the DACF/DDF which are central government grants have to some extent enabled the district assembly to provide basic infrastructure in the field of education, health, and water and

sanitation as indicated by Asante (2003).

Further assessment showed that other sources of funding like the IGF have impacted significantly on developmental projects than that of the central grants (DACF/DDF). This could be explained by the fact that district assemblies have no total control regarding the expenditure of these grants as their expenditure must comply with the national fiscal policies. The DCD indicated:

“As a result of the constraints attached to the use of the DACF, the district is not fully empowered regarding the use of the fund since projects must be executed in line with the national plan, which sometimes differs from the plan of the district”.

However, it was noted that the central government grants encouraged the DAs to develop programmes and activities in line with national policy.

Capacity of the District Assembly to initiate and implement projects

The section focused on the ability of the assembly to initiate and implement projects which meet the critical needs of the local people, the extent to which the assembly is empowered to initiate and implement projects, how effective projects are implemented, monitored and evaluated, the maintenance of completed projects, and the current state of projects implemented in the district.

Table 6 shows the views of the community members regarding the competence level of the assembly to initiate projects in recent times. Of the 200 community members who took part in the study, over 60 percent (64%) disagreed that the assembly has been competent in initiating very influential projects. Thus

majority of the community members regarded the assembly as incompetent in terms of projects initiation. Additionally, 74.3 percent of the respondents disagreed that projects initiated and implemented by the District Assembly meet the critical needs of their communities. Inferential analysis further showed that the views of local people insignificantly ($\chi^2=64.027$, $p= 0.813$) differed across the years for which they have stayed in their communities.

Table 6: Capacity of the District Assembly to initiate and complete projects

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	47	23.5
Disagree	81	40.5
Indifferent	33	16.5
Agree	20	10.0
Strongly Agree	19	9.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data, 2012

This implied that the projects implemented by the district have not had a significant impact on the local people, which suggests that local people have not adequately been involved in the selection of projects that critically meet their needs, and that the assembly is not adequately informed of the needs of the local people, though further analysis shows that the assembly has been somehow responsive to the needs of the local people. The result is in congruence with

Crook and Manor (1998) who indicated that 70 percent of their respondents felt that the DA did not respond to their needs.

The views of respondents regarding the judicious and effective use of the available sources of funding (DACF, DDF) to the assembly to initiate and implement projects were also sought. Interestingly, 100 percent of the assembly members who took part in the study said funds have been judiciously utilised in project initiation and implementation. In relation to the earlier findings, these results insinuate that, even though the assembly is making judicious use of funds in projects initiation, such projects do not meet the developmental needs of the local people. The study further examined how the assembly determines projects that are more critical to the development of the district. Findings gathered from the interviews with the management of the assembly shows that several mechanisms are explored in the determination of projects. Notably among the mechanisms include:

- The organisation of stakeholders conference including chiefs and community leaders
- The organisation of community outreach programmes on a quarterly basis by the planning division of the assembly

It is however, surprising to note that despite all these mechanisms put in place for the determination of projects by the assembly, projects implemented seemed not to have significant impact on the local people. This could be accounted for by the many needs that bedeviled the district as a rural area. According to a key staff member of the assembly,

“The needs of the communities are so huge. As such, the assembly is sometimes compelled to use its own discretion after consultation with stakeholders in the communities to initiate certain projects”

The maintenance of projects completed was also explored. Almost 50 percent (49.5%) of the respondents said that projects are inadequately maintained after their implementation, while 46 percent agreed that projects are adequately maintained. Also 4.5 percent were not sure whether projects are adequately maintained after their implementation or not. The study further examined whether projects are effectively monitored and evaluated. Table 7 shows the results.

Table 7: District Assembly’s capacity to monitor and evaluate projects

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	52	26.0
Disagree	97	48.5
Indifferent	33	16.5
Agree	18	9.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data, 2012

Table 7 reveals that the majority (74.5%) of the respondents (community members) disagreed that projects are effectively monitored and evaluated by the assembly. It was also noticed from the interviews that the maintenance of completed projects by contracts executed outside the assembly is indeed a challenge to the assembly: in the words of one officer,

“Some contracts are even executed from the national level without the knowledge of the district assembly, and this makes maintenance very challenging especially when the necessary procedures for handing over of projects are ignored”.

This shows that the assembly is somehow constrained in terms of project maintenance and monitoring, supporting Kokor and Kroes (2001) that maintenance are rarely undertaken by several local authorities in any systematic manner as there is often no provision made for this spending in their recurrent budgets.

A critical component to the ability of the assembly to initiate project is empowerment. The study examined the extent to which the assembly has been empowered to initiate and implement projects.

Of the 60 respondents, 31.7 percent indicated that the assembly has been fully empowered, while 66.3 percent said the assembly has been partially empowered. None of the respondents indicated that the assembly has not been empowered. Further analysis shows that there was a significant difference in responses in terms of the educational background of the respondents as shown by the chi-square value of 26.05 at p- value of 0.000 ($\chi^2=26.054$, $p= 0.000$). In an attempt to examine the ability of the district to initiate projects, the current state of projects initiated in the district was investigated. About 62.5 percent of the respondents reported that projects had been fully implemented while 37.5 percent were of the view that the projects had been partially implemented. The following were some of the projects initiated and implemented by the assembly:

- Rehabilitation of educational infrastructure;
- Rehabilitation of markets;
- Construction of roads; and
- The establishment of an educational support scheme to help brilliant but needy students.

Assessment of the projects initiated and implemented by the assembly suggests that decentralised government could be an effective means to deliver basic social services as mentioned by Bossuyt and Gould (2000).

Participation of local people in development decision-making

The section discusses results on the opportunities available for local people to participate in decision making regarding development, the extent to which the assembly involves local people in determining projects that are critical for the development of the district, and the frequency at which assembly members meet members of their communities to discuss developmental issues. The views of community members with reference to improved governance based on the proximity of decision making to the local people were examined. Table 8 shows the results.

Table 8 reveals that, 66.5 percent of the respondents (community members) disagreed that decision making has been brought closer to the local people, while 29.0 percent agreed. The study also examined the extent to which the assembly gets the local people involved in determining projects that are critical to the development of the district.

Table 8: Decision making has been brought closer to the local people

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	33	16.5
Agree	25	12.5
Neutral	9	4.5
Disagree	100	50.0
Strongly Disagree	33	16.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data, 2012

Of the 200 community members, 16.1 percent described the level of involvement as high, 46.2 percent described it as low, while 37.2 percent indicated that the assembly never involved the local people in determining projects that are critical to the development of the district. None of the community members described the level of involvement as very high. The level of involvement is further supported by the data from assembly members, as 43.3 percent of assembly members described the opportunities available for local people to participate in decision making regarding developmental projects in the district as low. This somehow contradicts Ayee (2004) that the activities of DAs have enabled the local people to show some interest in their affairs; a spirit of voluntarism and awareness to develop their communities.

Though 56.7 percent of the assembly members described the opportunities available for local people to participate in decision making regarding developmental projects in the district as high, it could be concluded that the

Assembly has not adequately involved local people in its decision making. This contradicts with the earlier findings on how the assembly determines projects that are critical to the developmental needs of the communities. The contradiction could be explained by the fact that local people have not had an efficient system for articulating their needs and developmental issues. Also is that the sub-structures have not been operationalised as indicated by MLGRD (2002).

The study also examined the extent to which the educational background of local people affects their involvement in the decision making of the districts. A significant result ($\chi^2=132.697$, $p= 0.000$) was found. Of the 74 respondents who indicated that the assembly has never involved local people in decision making, 94.6 percent were either with no formal educational background, or had at most basic. On the other hand, of the 32 respondents who described the level of involvement as high, 84.4 percent had at least HND. The result implied that, the low level of education significantly affects respondents' ability to participate in decision making, and that the highly educated are more likely to participate in decision making. The proposition therefore is that literacy also affects participation of local people in decision making. According to Conyers (2007), most local people are underrepresented in the decentralised systems of governance because of illiteracy.

However, irrespective of the educational background of the respondents limiting their ability to participate in the decision making of the Assembly, 71.4 percent of the Assembly members have indicated that local people are able to make effective use of the opportunities for them to participate. This implied that if

the Assembly creates more available opportunities, local people are more likely to participate in the decision making of the district regarding developmental issues.

To further examine the extent of involvement of local people, the study examined the frequency at which assembly members meet their communities to discuss developmental issues. The majority (76.5%) of the community members reported that the Assembly members did not meet their communities at all as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Frequency of Assembly members to meet the community

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Annually	24	12.0
Semi-Annually	8	4.0
Monthly	15	7.5
Not at all	153	76.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data, 2012

This could be explained by the fact that Assembly members were not adequately resourced to perform their functions effectively. The reason is consistent with the explanation of the District Planning Officer that:

“The lack of remuneration and other logistical constraints limit the assembly members from adequately performing their duties. This somehow affected their role of getting the local people involved in issues regarding developments as it is with some of their

communities. They are not able to meet their community members regularly because of the lack of transport facilities like motor bikes, and other essential remuneration elements”.

According to Conyers (2007), underpaid and unmotivated staff has led to weak administrative performance under decentralisation. About 50.3 percent of the community members did not know of any project implemented by the Assembly. This further supports the fact that Assembly members were not able to meet frequently with their community members to update them of developmental projects.

Challenges that emerge in the process of executing development projects

The section presents results on phases of project development including project initiating, evaluation, implementation, maintenance, and monitoring which have been very challenging. Also, the major developmental challenges confronting the assembly are discussed as well as the challenges assembly members encounter in their function of bringing development to their communities. The section also present findings on how the legal framework affects the implementation and initiating of projects.

The sampled assembly members were asked to identify the most challenging phase of project development to the Assembly. Table 10 shows that project monitoring (36.7%) had been the most challenging phase of project development to the assembly, followed by project evaluation (25.0%). This further supports Kokor and Kroes (2001) that maintenance are rarely undertaken

by several local authorities. On the other hand, project initiating and implementation were the least challenging phases of the project development.

Table 10: The most challenging phase of district project development identified by the Assembly members

Project phase	Frequency	Percent
Initiating	5	8.3
Implementation	8	13.3
Evaluation	15	25.0
Maintenance	10	16.7
Monitoring	22	36.7
Total	60	100.0

Source: Field data, 2012

Table 10 indicates that the assembly had not done much impact analysis of its projects through evaluation. This result is also supported by the qualitative data gathered through interview with management. The Presiding Member of the assembly mentioned:

“Project monitoring is indeed one of the major challenges the assembly encounter, especially when the project is executed by an independent contractor, or the project is initiated from the national level. A typical case was when I saw some pipes being laid in my community without any knowledge of the said project. After interrogating the contractor, I realized that the project was from the

national level; hence it is obvious that monitoring such a project would be difficult”.

The study also identified some lapses in the national guidelines which limit the independence of the assembly in its development project planning and implementation. Major among the lapses is the procurement processes regarding the awarding of contracts. It was noticed that, limitations placed on the assembly to approve certain sums of money contribute to the delay of the execution of projects. Thus limiting the powers of the district tender committee/review board to approve certain contracts, under the provisions of the Public Procurement Act, 2003 (Act 663) to a very large extent affects projects development in the district.

A key officer stated:

“In principles, projects are implemented based on a need. What benefit would a community gain after being challenged with a community-based development process just because the assembly has not been given the mandate to execute projects beyond certain thresholds? Contracts approval by the regional tender committee/review board takes unnecessary delays which significantly affect the developmental agenda of the district”.

Thus, the result of the study suggests that as time passes by, the figures which form the threshold in the Public Procurement Act becomes obsolete, hence limiting the assembly to approve certain sum of contracts rather delays developmental agenda, as approval from the regional tender review boards often

takes lengthy bureaucratic procedures. This result somehow differed from Fumihiko (2001) that decentralisation allowed services to be delivered more speedily than in the case of a centralised administration.

Another major lapse identified was the contingency often attached to projects. It was noticed that the 10 percent contingency is too small to tackle any issue, and that there is no provision that specify in the procurement act to what component of the contingency should be attached to changes in economic indicators such as inflation as well as contingency to the projects itself.

The study noted the following challenges in completing critical projects:

- Inadequate funds;
- Delay of inflows from central government including District Assemblies' Common Fund;
- Land litigation; and
- Several developmental needs of the communities, making the allocation of resources very challenging to the assembly.

The delay in inflow from the DACF could be explained by Section 7(a) of the District Assemblies' Common Fund Act, 1993 (Act 455) which requires the Administrator of the District Assemblies' Common Fund to propose annually for the approval of Parliament a Formula for Sharing the Common Fund to the District Assemblies. Thus going through the due process therefore delays the fund in getting to the assemblies at the right time. This result was supported when respondents indicated that the DACF have had a significant impact on the developmental activities of the district. However, the delays affect the execution

of the project. This result is similar to Ahmed et al. (2005) that even when transfers are supposed to be formula-driven they are still subject to political influence, and that decentralisation has not always been effective in improving local level development by local governments.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings from the study as well as the conclusions, recommendations, and directions for future research. The summary focused on the major findings from the study in relation to the objectives and research questions. Also, the conclusions and recommendations are based on the key findings arising from the study.

Summary

The study focused on the effects of decentralisation on local development with specific focus on the capacity of the District Assembly to initiate and implement projects, how local people have participated in decision making, and the challenges that emerged in the process of completing critical projects.

Data for the study was obtained using structured interview schedules and interview guide. In all, 265 respondents participated in the study from the Yilo Krobo District. This comprised 200 community members, 60 assembly members, and five management staff of the Assembly. Quantitative data analysis was performed using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS), version 17, while the constant comparative method was used in analysing the qualitative data obtained from management.

In relation to the specific objectives, the following major findings were noted:

- The decentralisation process has positively impacted on local level development;
- The restrictions placed on the use of central grants from government somehow negatively affect the developmental plan of the district;
- The Assembly has somehow been competent in initiating critical projects in the district;
- Projects initiated and implemented by the Assembly did not significantly meet the critical needs of the communities;
- Projects were not effectively maintained, monitored or evaluated;
- In general, local people's participating in decision making regarding developmental issues was low though the Assembly had taken some steps to get local people involved in decision making;
- The systems for articulating local people's needs by the assembly in its decision making had not been very effective in obtaining a holistic view on citizens needs;
- The low educational background of community members limited their ability to adequately participate in decision making of their districts;
- Stakeholders conferences, outreach programs are some of the means by which the assembly determines critical projects of the district;
- The major developmental challenge to the Assembly is the delay in release of central grants such as the District Assemblies' Common Fund;

- Project monitoring has been a very challenging component of the project development phase for the Assembly;
- Thresholds in the Public Procurement Act, 2003 has become obsolete in recent times thereby affecting the ability of the assembly to approve many contracts; and
- Approval of projects from the regional tender review board unduly delays project implementation by the district.

Conclusions

By bringing decision making closer to local people, decentralisation is expected to improve governance and local level development outcomes. The study concluded that decentralisation has had some positive effects on local level development. However, the decentralisation process is not yielding the needed results due to political, financial, and administrative constraints of some local authorities. The Assembly has not been more responsive to the citizens' preferences in designing service provision and allocating resources due to the many developmental challenges that confront the district as a rural area.

Local people have not adequately participated in the decision making of the assembly, though the Assembly had been somehow responsive in trying to get local people participate in its decision making processes. Thus, the processes and mechanisms through which the Assembly involves local people in its decision making process has not been very effective. The legal framework regarding the procurement of contracts has not adequately helped the district Assembly in its

quest of developing the district. Also, the study identified limited and delay in supply of financial resources as a constraint to the potential of decentralisation to improve local level development.

Recommendations

Based on the key findings from the study, the following recommendations are made to boost up the effectiveness of decentralisation on the development of projects:

- The Assembly should take into consideration the most pressing developmental problems in the community before initiating projects. It could do this by prioritising projects which will satisfy the majority of the community members;
- Generating greater trust and accountability between itself and its citizens by involving local leaders, entrepreneurs and civic organisations in democratic dialogue and in the workings of local government;
- The Assembly should be encouraged to improve the collection of taxes by widening its tax net to help cushion its financial stand such that even if inflows from central governments are delayed, some projects can still be constituted using the assembly's Internally Generated Funds;
- The administrator of the District Assemblies' Common Fund should review the lapses in getting early parliamentary approval of the yearly formula for sharing the common fund which significantly affects the fund getting to the district assemblies early enough;

- To prevent essential local public facilities from being in serious disrepair, grants should be set aside for periodic maintenance and rehabilitation works by District Assembly; and
- A review of the Public Procurement Act, 2003 is also called for regarding the thresholds, since figures in the Act have become obsolete in recent times.

Direction for future research

Based on the weakness of this study, as well as the major findings emanating, the following recommendations are made for future research:

- Identify factors that influence the effective operationalisation of the sub-structures at the local level of governance ; and
- Examine the role of local government in decentralisation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Dear respondent

This exercise is an academic study aimed at gathering information for a dissertation in Democracy, Governance, Law and Development at the University of Cape Coast. The study seeks to examine the development impact of decentralisation on the Yilo Krobo District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Please feel free to give your frank opinions and confidentiality is assured. All your responses will be treated as purely confidential and will be used only for academic purpose. I shall therefore be grateful if you can spare some of your busy schedule to answer the questions.

Thank You.

Section A: Demographic characteristics

1. Age
(yrs).....
2. Sex....a. Male [] b. Female []
3. Educational background...a. None [] b. Basic [] c. SHS []
d. Diploma [] b. First Degree [] c. Second Degree []
- d. Specify if others.....
4. What is your main occupation if employed?.....

5. For how long have you been staying in this community/district?

Section B: Capacity of the district in initiating and implementing projects

6. Kindly indicate your views on the Assembly capacity in initiating and implementing projects in the district on the scale 1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Indifferent, 4= Agree, and 5= Strongly Agree

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Assembly has been competent in initiating very influential projects in recent times					
Projects initiated and implemented by the district assembly meet the critical needs of the communities					
The Assembly has been very responsive to the developmental					

needs of the local people					
Projects are effectively implemented, monitored and evaluated					
The Assembly has been more responsive and accountable to citizens' needs and desires.					
Projects are adequately maintained after their implementation					

Section C: Local people participating in decision making

7. Decision making has been brought closer to the local people which has

improved governance and service delivery outcomes..a Strongly Agree []

b. Agree [] c. Neutral [] d. Disagree [] e. Strongly disagree []

8. To what extent does the Assembly involve the local people in determining

projects that are critical for the development of the district..a. Very high extent []

b. High Extent [] c. Low extent [] d. Very low extent [] e. Not at all []

9. Do you know of any project implemented by the district Assembly..a. Yes []

b. No []

10. If Yes, kindly name the project

.....

11. List five main development problems of people in your community with the most desired first?

(i) (iv)

(ii) (v)

(iii)

12. How frequent does your Assembly Member come to meet the community?

a. Annually []

b. Semi-Annually []

c. Monthly []

d. Specify if others.....

Kindly indicate any other issue you consider relevant to the study's objectives

.....

.....

Thank you for the co-operation and time

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

Dear respondent

This exercise is an academic study aimed at gathering information for a dissertation in Democracy, Governance, Law and Development at the University of Cape Coast. The study seeks to examine the development impact of decentralisation on the Yilo Krobo District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Please feel free to give your frank opinions and confidentiality is assured. All your responses will be treated as purely confidential and will be used only for academic purpose. I shall therefore be grateful if you can spare some of your busy schedule to answer the questions.

Thank You

Section A: Background characteristics

- 1 Age (yrs).....
- 2 Sex....a. Male [] b. Female []
- 3. Educational background...a. Basic [] b. SHS [] c. Diploma []
b. First Degree [] c. Second Degree [] d. Specify if others.....
- 4. For how long have you been working with the Assembly.....

Section B: Capacity of the district assembly to initiate and implement projects

5. How would you describe the competence of the assembly in initiating and implementing projects?

Initiate projects

Implement projects

- a. Highly competent []
- b. Competent []
- c. Incompetent []
- d. Highly Competent []

- a. Highly competent []
- b. Competent []
- c. Incompetent []
- d. Highly incompetent []

6. In your view, to what extent has the assembly been empowered to initiate and implement projects?

- a. Fully empowered []
- b Partially empowered []
- c. Not empowered []

Kindly give the reason(s) for your choice of answer in question 7

.....
.....

7. Has the District Assembly made judicious and effective use of the available sources of funding to initiate and implement projects?

- a. Yes [] b. No [] c. Not sure []

8. Has your community ever benefited from the DACF in solving any developmental problems? a. Yes [] b. No []

9. If Yes, kindly name the said projects and the cost involve in the project

a. Name of projects.....

b. Cost of project.....

10. How would you describe the maintenance of completed projects in the district?

a. Very satisfactory [] b. Satisfactory [] c. Unsatisfactory [] d. Very Unsatisfactory []

11. What is the current state of projects initiated in the districts?

a. Fully implemented []

b. Partially implemented []

c. Not implemented []

Section C: Challenges that emerged in the process of completing critical projects

12. Which of these phases of project development has been very challenging to the district in recent times? You may tick more than one

a. Project Initiating []

b. Project implementation []

c. Project evaluation []

d. Project maintenance []

e. Project monitoring []

13. What are the major developments challenges confronting the Assembly presently?

.....

14. What impact if any has the introduction of the DACF/DDF has on the district developmental activities?

- a. Highly Significant
- b. Significant
- c. Marginally significant
- d. Insignificant

15. To what extent has the various sources of funding available to the district contributed to solving development challenges?

- a. Very large extent
- b. Large extent
- c. Low extent
- d. Very low extent

16. What are some of the challenges you face in your function of bringing development to your community as an Assembly Member?

.....
.....

Section D: Local people participating in development decision-making

17. How would you describe the opportunities available to local people to participate in decision making regarding developmental projects in the district?

- a. Very High
- b. High

- c. Low
- d. Very Low

18. Have local people participated adequately in decision making regarding the development of the district..a. Yes b. No c. Not sure

19. If Yes from question 20, kindly indicate in what capacity (How does members of beneficiary communities participate in decision-making regarding local projects?

- a. Through Unit Community Hearings
- b. Through their Assembly Members
- c. Through their chiefs
- d. Community dialogue meetings and workshops
- a. Specify if others.....

.....

Section E: Recommendations

22. How can the District Assembly make effective use of funds made available to it for the development of the district?

.....

Thank you for your co-operation

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY STAFF OF THE ASSEMBLY

Introduction

This exercise is an academic study aimed at gathering information for a dissertation in Democracy, Governance, Law and Development at the University of Cape Coast. The study seeks to examine the development impact of decentralisation on the YiloKrobo District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Please feel free to give your frank opinions and confidentiality is assured. All your responses will be treated as purely confidential and will be used only for academic purpose. I shall therefore be grateful if you can spare some of your busy schedule to answer the questions.

Thank You.

Part A: Background characteristics

1. Official title
(District Chief Executive, District Coordinating Director, Presiding Member, District Finance Officer, District Planning Officer)
2. Age:
3. Period of working in the Assembly.....

Part B: Impact of decentralisation on the development of the district

4. What is your view on the impact of decentralisation on macroeconomic performance and local level development?
5. What role is citizen participation and decentralisation having on the developmental plans of the district?
6. In your opinion, what has been the impact of the projects funded by the DACF/DDF on the lives of the people of the district?

Part C: Nature and type of projects consider critical

7. Which areas of development are considered paramount in the developmental agenda of the district?
8. How does the Assembly determine projects that are more critical to the development of the district?
9. What is the nature and types of projects necessary for the development of the district?

Par D: Capacity of the district assembly to initiate and implement projects

10. How would you describe the competence of the Assembly in initiating and implementing projects?
11. How does the Assembly facilitate needs assessment in beneficiary communities prior to project initiation?
12. What is the current state of projects initiated in the districts?

13. How effective is the Assembly in bidding and lobbying for developmental projects?

Part E: Challenges that emerged in the process of completing critical projects

14. In your opinion, how does the national guideline limit the independence of the Assembly in its development project planning and implementation?

15. How has the legal and institutional framework affected the implementation and initiation of projects in the district?

16. What challenges does the Assembly encounter in initiating projects?

17. What challenges does the Assembly encounter in maintaining projects?

Part D: Local people participating in developmental agenda

18. How would you describe the mobilization of community members in sharing their views on development issues in the district?

19. Describe the frequency of public hearing on development plans in the districts

Part F: Recommendations for the effective use of funds

20. How can the Assembly make effective use of available funds for the development of the district?

21. What measures can be instituted to reduce the challenges if any that the assembly encounters in initiating and implementing projects?

Thank you for your time and co-operation