UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

EFFECTS OF GHANA'S DECENTRALISATION PROGRAMME AND

CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING ON SERVICE

DELIVERY IN THE GA WEST MUNICIPALITY

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BY

SARAH NAA LANKAI ANYAGRE

Thesis submitted to the Department of Integrated Development Studies, School for Development Studies of the College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy degree in Development Studies.

FEBRUARY 2020

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

Candidate's Signature: ………………………… Date…………………………

Name:……………………………………………………………….

Supervisor's Declaration

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

Principal Supervisor's Signature: ………………… Date………………………

Name:…………………………………………………………………..

Co-Supervisor's Supervisor's Signature:……………………Date……………

Supervisor's Name:………………………………………………………..

ABSTRACT

Decentralised system of governance provides structures and legislations which promote community participation in decision-making which in turn affect service delivery and promote local development. This study examined local government structures and how they facilitate citizens' participation in decision-making regarding service delivery in Ga West Municipality in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. A total of 393 respondents formed the sample; 345 community members, 18 community informants and 30 Assembly members in the Ga West Municipality. Structured interview schedule was used to collect data from community members and questionnaire from Assembly members. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also held. Data were presented using frequency tables, percentages and cross tabulation. Regression analysis was used to examine the relationships among the variables. The study reveals that local government structures were formed but citizens' involvement in identification of projects, planning, implementation and monitoring of such projects and project maintenance were minimal and their influence on decision-making and service delivery was negligible. There was no regular meeting between Assembly members and communities. Community members were not aware of any formal channels of communication in providing information and feedback. It is therefore recommended that Municipalities should involve citizens in the policy making and implementation process not only because of good governance but also to receive input for increasing the quality of local policies.

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DEDICATION

To my children: Ethel, Pamela, Maxwell, Emmanuel and Prince Anyagre

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DA	District Assembly
DACF	District Assembly Common Fund
DAO	District Assembly Officer
DCE	District Chief Executive
DMTDs	District Medium-Term Development Plans
ILGS	Institute of Local Government Studies
MA	Municipal Assembly
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal, District Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
NALAG	National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PDCs	People's Defence Committees
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
SMC	Supreme Military Council
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WDCs	Workers Defence Committees

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Decentralisation is seen as an important mechanism for strengthening local democracy and improving service delivery. Dolisca (2006) has argued that no matter how well-regulated the democratic process; any concentration of power can lend itself to arbitrary and undemocratic behaviour. In many cases, decentralisation has been through deconcentration of power by its transfer from the central to the local governments. The transfer of power to the local level enables local governments to exercise four important functions: multi functionality which takes a broad range of activities, discretion which enables them to adapt programmes to suit local needs, revenue mobilisation which can strengthen local autonomy and representation through direct grassroots elections.

Decentralisation is common in several countries and the magnitude of its implementation have made decentralisation a key global trend in public administration and management in the last three decades (Smoke, 2003). In a World Bank policy research paper on decentralisation and service delivery, it was observed that in the period 1980–2005, over 75 countries had attempted to transfer responsibilities of the state to lower tiers of government. Decentralisation is thus, a fairly old concept, and because of the expectation that it enhances local democracy and local development, it has assumed an increasingly widespread and significant dimension of political and administrative reform in many developing countries since the late 1980s.

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Decentralisation is supported by many stakeholders ranging from international development agencies to national governments through to non-governmental and grassroots organisations. 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 (Crawford, 2004). With people as the focus, decentralisation efforts now have citizens' empowerment and participation in decision-making at their core. Community participation is seen as a form of development strategy used to ensure that people in the community are actively involved in taking decisions that affect them. This participatory development approach was considered necessary to encourage community members to discuss their problems and come out with plans and programmes that would satisfy their needs and aspirations.

In the seventies, several governments embarked on decentralisation policies and programmes. These were very pronounced in Kenya and Tanzania in Eastern Africa; Sudan in Northern Africa; Zambia in Southern Africa; and Ghana, Nigeria and Mali in Western Africa. Most of the decentralisation programmes of the seventies, however, were characterised by many problems. The main causes of the failure of decentralization, according to Olowu and Wunsch (2004), were that central government leaders were reluctant to share power with local authorities. Also, local government institutions were not adequately equipped in terms of administrative capacity to plan, manage, and adequately utilise resources available for local development. Furthermore, the move to decentralise power was

not participatory. It was planned from the centre, monitored by the centre and did not involve or engage the local people or their leaders. The latter remained recipients of policies and resources and did not get to control them.

Following the failure of earlier experiments on decentralisation, there has been a new wave of decentralisation all over the continent. Local government reforms have been characterised by serious attempts to empower local governments to take control of planning, service delivery and revenue collection. Oates (1972) in his decentralization theorem posits that local government and community leaders, being close to the people would obtain better information about basic needs, tastes and preferences; hence would be in a better position to identify and address their specific needs than would remote central government or other external actors.

In recent time, development practitioners have recognised the importance of local government as providers of local services and valuable partners in community development. Smoke (2003) states that with the shifting emphasis in development objectives and strategies towards promoting more socially equitable economic growth and meeting the basic needs in developing countries; widespread participation in decision-making is considered essential to the development process. Decentralisation has been advocated as a way of eliciting that participation.

As a means to effective decentralisation, citizen participation improves service delivery by affecting its key determinants including allocative efficiency, accountability and reduction of corruption, and equity. It enhances allocative

efficiency by providing the means for demand revelation thus matching of allocations to user preferences. On accountability and reduction of corruption, citizen participation facilitates information dissemination and increases public awareness on the actions of government. Inclusion of the marginalized and the poor in decision-making would lead to pro-poor policies hence ensuring equitable service provision. In the light of these, citizen participation in decentralised service delivery has been increasingly supported so as to provide the necessary impetus to keep local government focused on the objectives of decentralisation.

The concept of participation originated as a result of the failure of top-down approaches to development where projects were implemented from outside without consulting and involving the beneficiary communities. This situation has led to the provision of projects by governments and donors that did not reflect the needs of the citizens. Community participation in decision-making therefore, gives people a sense of ownership and ensures that projects and services provided are acceptable, appropriate and sustainable. Experience has shown that projects that are executed without the involvement of community members are bound to fail. This is because lack of community support and opposition from community leaders discourage the citizens from contributing and patronising the projects or services provided. The lack of or minimal participation of users in the planning, design construction and management of the system is considered the main reasons for this failure (Koomson, 2008).

Participation implies action by the people to solve their own problems. It can be understood in terms of activities performed by the communities in

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development projects. This includes assessment of local situation, definition of the problem, sharing responsibilities in project implementation, evaluation and modification to satisfy community needs (Hataya, 2007). Within the communities, sharing responsibilities often vary for example; some communities contribute only labour for running the project while others contribute financial and material resources. Adato and Haddad (2002) show that once localities receive funding for a project, the next part of the process occurs when decisions are made as to which people in the community receive the job.

The quest for a human centered approach to development that aims at strengthening citizen participation has led to the desire for bottom-up approaches to planning and decision-making where people are made to voluntarily involve themselves in making and implementing decisions that directly affect their lives. Karol Wojtyla's theory of participation, as cited in Mejos (2007), argues that participation ensures that persons fulfill themselves as they work towards the common good; a good which is shared by two or more persons in the community. He emphasised the common good by person, where a person does not wish for his good only but also the good of others.

Thus decentralisation initiatives and policies that ignore community members and their leaders are not likely to be successfully operationalised or sustained as they would lack community inputs, local taste and preferences which are critical for community level development. Local government and community leaders collectively perform functions of mediating and initiating self-help projects and facilitating the organisation of the local people to undertake active

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part in the development processes in communities. They establish channels of collaboration and accountability as well as networking among the actors of the decentralisation process.

Citizens' participation in governance and public service delivery is increasingly pursued in a bid to improve the performance of governance. Indeed, improving delivery of public services continues to be a key objective that has occupied the agenda of public administrators and researchers. Citizens' participation, according to Devas and Grant (2003), is the ways by which citizens exercise influence and control over the decisions that affect them. Faced with constraints and failures of centralized service delivery, especially at the local level, governments have turned to decentralised mechanisms of service delivery (Bardhan, 2002).

Citizens' participation is increasingly becoming a core aspect of decentralisation reforms which entails the transfer of administrative, fiscal and political powers and functions of the central government to lower governments. In this context, participation can be direct or indirect. Direct participation, the focus of this study, occurs where citizens –individually, or in various forms of self-organisation are actively engaged in the decision-making processes on matters affecting them. Indirect participation is where citizens express their preferences through their elected and other representatives.

Kauzya (2007) categorized citizens' participation into vote and voice. Vote is the means through which citizens select their representatives at the local level. Decentralisation facilitates this by putting in place structures that allow

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citizens to exercise their voting power with limited hindrance or interference from the central government. Participation in terms of voice is where citizens have the opportunity to influence the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of decisions that concern their socio-politico-economic wellbeing and to demand accountability from their local leaders.

World Bank (2004) argues that the call for increasing citizen participation related to local governance is threefold. Firstly, it is argued that it will improve the efficiency and efficacy of public services. Secondly, it is meant to render local government more accountable. Finally, it should deepen democracy as it will reinforce representative democratic institutions with participatory forms of governance.

The degree of popular participation in development programmes is a major determinant of success or failure but what makes participation a success is still a mystery. Studies have shown that levels of participation may differ among people based on their socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, household size and income (Dolisca, 2006). Knowledge is another factor that affects people's participation in development projects. People cannot be expected to get involved when they are not aware of the cost and benefits associated with their participation. Some studies have shown that the information people have about development programmes makes them more positive in their views and this contributes to participation in community development.

Based on these expositions, it can be said that unless governments can effectively respond to citizens' priority needs, they lack legitimacy. They

therefore need assistance to improve the knowhow and financial resources of local government so they can deliver services to the community's satisfaction. According to Asante (2000), Ghana has over two decades embarked on decentralisation of decision-making that is moving decision-making from the national to the district and community levels, a bottom-up approach as enshrined in PNDC Law 207 of 1988, The Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462 and subsequently, Act 936 of 2016. The broad objectives of the decentralisation and local governance system are to promote power sharing, rational resource allocation, and installation of adequate capacity at the district level for effective and efficient management, accountability, responsiveness, checking of rural-urban drift and also reduce the reliance of local governments on central government. Again, decentralisation emphasized the role of District Assemblies (DAs) and their communities in development decision-making in order to achieve localisation of development (Kokor, 2004).

In 1988, Ghana embarked on the implementation of a comprehensive policy to decentralise the system of governance with the enactment of a new PNDC law 208 on Local Government, under the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) which was a military regime (Goel, 2010). The thrust of the policy was to promote popular participation and ownership of the machinery of government by shifting the process of governance from command to consultation processes, and by transferring power, authority and functions, competence and means/resources to the district level (Goel, 2010).

The local government system of Ghana consists of a Regional Coordinating Council, a four-tier Metropolitan and a three-tier Municipal/District Assemblies Structure. The District Assemblies (DAs) are either Metropolitan (population over 250,000), Municipal (population over 95,000) or District (population 75,000 and over). A Metropolitan, Municipal, District Assembly (MMDA) is responsible for the overall development of the district. District Assemblies have legislative and executive functions and they formulate and implement a medium-term plan (usually five years) and budget, both subject to approval by the central government. DAs have the overall responsibility to co-ordinate, integrate, and harmonise the activities of all development agencies in the district inclusive of central government ministries, departments and agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (Asante, 2000).

Grassroots level constitutes two-tier sub-district structure namely; Zonal and Town/ Area Councils and Unit Committees (UC) performing duties delegated to them by the Assemblies but without budgets of their own. UCs cover settlements of about 500-1000 people in rural areas and around 1500 in urban areas acting as a link between the remotest rural locations at the grassroots to district levels (Crawford, 2004). There is no doubt, therefore, that the current local government system in Ghana is a comprehensive administrative system in which functions, powers, responsibilities and resources could be transferred to the central government units, that is the District Assemblies. Furthermore, it provides an elaborate framework for the enhancement of popular participation at the local

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level and also provides machinery for economic and social development (Ayee, 2000).

The 1988 decentralisation programme of the Rawlings` regime was received with enthusiasm and it awakened the spirit of self-help and 'awareness' among communities. The District Assemblies are physically closer to the people and their development problems than central government. It is therefore required that the assembly members should, theoretically, routinely identify their problems and attempt to solve them. It was initiated to promote popular grassroots participation in the administration of the various areas concerned from the standpoints of planning, implementation, monitoring and delivery of those services which go to improve the living conditions of the people and the orderly, fair and balanced development of the whole country (Botchie, 2000).

Communities accepted the fact that they were responsible for the development of their areas. In order to effectively undertake poverty alleviation activities, District Assemblies are required to co-ordinate district level sectoral programmes/projects directed towards poverty alleviation, with support of donors, Non-Governmental Organisations and Community-Based Organisations and private sector enterprises (Ayee, 2000). The Local Government Act, 2016, Act 936 and the National Development Planning (Systems) Act, 1994, Act 480 designate the District/Municipal Assembly as the planning authority; charged with the overall development of the district. The District Assembly (DA) is a vital pivot in the decentralised development planning system in Ghana. As the local planning authority, the DA is responsible for the preparation, implementation and

monitoring of development plans. It is also in charge of the mobilisation and utilisation of local resource within its area of jurisdiction for development.

Based on these expositions, it can be said that decentralised democratic governance is one sure way of ensuring equitable distribution of national resources and the promotion of local participatory development. Local government in Ghana has used decentralisation as a mechanism for accelerating local development; the goal of the Medium-Term Development Plan of Ga West Municipality for example is to improve livelihoods in the district through increased citizenry participation, public-private sector partnership, and food security and employment generation activities. This goes in line with the global efforts of ensuring that people fully participate in meeting their needs. Through decentralisation, it is believed that government will be better aware of local needs and priorities and that local community would have more opportunities to influence how government funds are used. In addition, government services will be nearer to the people and people would have the opportunity to take part in formulating decisions that affect their livelihoods (Crawford, 2004).

It must be emphasized that the basic ingredient in Ghana's decentralisation programme is community participation (Bardhan, 2002). A process by which people are enabled to become actively and genuinely involved in defining the issues of concern to them, in making decisions about factors that affect their lives, in formulating and implementing policies, in planning, developing and delivering services and taking actions that can bring change in their lives (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2006). Involving people in identifying their needs, planning and taking

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actions can result in better and more creative decision-making resulting in a more responsive and appropriate service delivery. Communities that engage their citizens and partners in the community development raise more resources, achieve better results and develop in a more holistic and more beneficial way (Khisty, 2006).

The District Assemblies (DAs) are the human institutions created and empowered to give expression to these assumptions. They create a forum at the district or local level when a team of development agents, the representatives of the people and other agencies agree on development problems of the district and decide on the combined actions necessary to benefit the local people. This is a shared responsibility of central government; local government; NGO's and the people who are the beneficiaries of development. These units/players must be linked and knitted closely.

Despite the various structures and legislations that have been provided to foster community participation, there were evidences that showed that the decentralisation programme in Ghana faced some challenges. The people at the local level were not involved in the decision-making processes at their District Assemblies though the decentralised system provided structures and channels for community participation. This study therefore seeks to examine whether decentralised governance in Ghana has enhanced local participation in decision-making on service delivery in project identification, planning, implementation and evaluation in the Ga West Municipality. This can be critically assessed through

the power dynamics and interplay of decentralised governance and participation in the district assembly system.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the brilliant aims and objectives of decentralisation and its strong emphasis on community participation in service delivery to ensure community development, it has not always contributed effectively to the solution of a variety of community problems. The decentralisation system in Ghana provided various structures and legislation to promote local governance with a development agenda where most of the development initiatives occur from the grassroots. The local government Act of 2016, Act 936, initiated a shift in the structure of government where central government devolved the responsibility of decision making, policy formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development projects to local government. The law established Urban, Zonal, Town Councils and Unit Committees as the lower tiers of administrative decision-making body in the decentralised development planning in Ghana.

To this end, the District Assemblies (DAs) were made responsible for the overall development of the districts for the formulation of programmes and strategies for effective mobilization and utilization of all resources at the district level. The Unit Committees are the base structures of the local government system and are expected to provide inputs, data, and proposal through Area Councils for planning and development of the communities. The development process starts with the participation of local communities in the identification of

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problems and determination of needs and aspiration from the unit committee level through Urban/Area/Zonal Council to the DAs.

Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006) found some evidence about the relationship of decentralisation and water services. He analysed 121 completed rural water supply projects, financed by various international donor agencies in several countries. His results showed that projects that have high participation of local communities in project selection and design were more likely to be maintained in good condition.

In Ghana, Kokor (2004), explained that as a result of limited experience of the local government structures in the actual operation of the system, the potential of the new development system which seeks to involve the citizens in the provision of socio-economic infrastructure in the local communities are not fully achieved yet. In another study, Thomi (2000) found that 3,482 households in 8 districts in Ghana were asked whether their Assembly Members organise meetings with their electorates, 48.1 percent of the respondents did not know about such meetings. Similarly, although there has been an increase in the share of the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) from 5 percent to 7.5 percent of the total national fiscal revenue, which is the major source of revenue from the central government to local government for development projects and programmes, majority of the local people are not aware of its usage.

In Ghana, it appears most projects have been designed and implemented with little or no involvement of the beneficiaries. My observations suggest that the Ga West Municipality has been grappling with the problem of how to involve

the people effectively in the decision-making process using the district assembly structures that are provided. The inability of the Assembly to involve the people prevents the inhabitants from deriving the benefits necessary for the speedy development of the area and this has created a gap between the people and the Assembly to the extent that their involvement in the decision-making process has been affected.

It has been observed that calls for more participatory forms of governance and service delivery have often fallen short of the great expectations that precede them (Kokor, 2004). In some communities, projects formulation and implementation can be questionable, given the fact that there are instances where projects meant for the development of communities have been abandoned or completed but are either not being utilized or underutilized by the intended beneficiaries. A case in question is a market facility built for the people of Amasaman in the Ga West Municipality. The researcher observed that this facility is lying idle with some stores being occupied by squatters while traders do brisk business in unapproved places within the community including the streets and lorry parks. Such a situation suggests that the community members might have had little input in either the planning or execution of such projects in the communities.

The impression is that these conditions are due to the weakness of local governments in responding to the challenges posed by participatory community development. For instance, the District Based–Community Water and Sanitation Programme (2010) of the Ga West District Assembly indicates that water supply

has been a major problem of the district with few communities having access to portable water notwithstanding the fact that the Weija Water Reservoir and Treatment Plant that serves about one-half of the population in Accra is located in the Ga West District. However, only about a third of the over 300 rural communities in the district has access to boreholes and hand-dug wells whilst as much as 35 percent of the settlements depend on dams, dugouts, and streams. It is uncertain to what extent the people have been involved in determining their priorities and why certain vital needs such as water is lacking. What this means is that though scarce resources are allocated to the districts for the provision of public services, it seems the local people are not involved in the decision-making process.

A number of studies have been conducted in districts, metropolis and municipalities in Ghana (e.g., Kokor, 2004; Thomi, 2000). However, it appears little is empirically known in areas like Ga West Municipality where the researcher has made some observations. In view of these practical challenges of decentralisation and participation at the district level, coupled with the limited nature of this type of studies, it is important to investigate the relationship that exists between local government and the citizens in project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as the dynamics that are at play in the decision-making process at the local level.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess Ghana's decentralisation programme in relation to the level of citizens' participation in decision-making regarding service delivery in Ga West Municipality in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Assess the utilisation of the local government structure(s) to facilitate citizens' participation.

2. Examine the level of peoples' participation in Municipal Assembly's activities towards the provision of services.

3. Examine the attitude of local government towards citizens' participation in decision-making using the sub-structures.

4. Examine the perception of people about the present system of local government on service delivery.

Research Questions

Based on the above objectives, the following research questions are formulated:

1. How does the local government structure facilitate citizens' participation?

2. What is the level of peoples' participation in Municipal Assembly's activities towards the provision of services?

3. What is the attitude of local government towards citizens' participation in decision-making using the sub-structures?

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4. What is the perception of people about the present system of local government on community development?

Hypothesis

H_0: Community participation in projects and developmental activities will not significantly influence service delivery in Ga West Municipality.

H_1: Community participation in projects and developmental activities positively and significantly influence service delivery in Ga West Municipality.

Significance of the Study

This study examines the utilization of local government sub-structure to encourage peoples' participation in local governments and analyse local participation in decision-making on service delivery with regard to project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Through citizens participation, local government can achieve a more meaningful democracy in its areas of jurisdiction and this may translate into a more active and engaged citizens in local governance.

Citizens participating in local governance can benefit from effective management because local government works to reach consensus on its activities. Also, increase in citizens' participation will create resources for development through private-public partnership. The study under consideration can help enlighten both citizens and the local government functionaries on how to seek and achieve peoples' participation in decision-making, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development projects at local level. It will help in

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capacity building of institutions at the local level and the empowerment of the people.

The study will also contribute to the existing knowledge on citizens' participation in local government in Ghana. This will inform the central government of how citizens want to participate in local governance, the challenges ahead and how to deal with them. The study will again be of benefit in providing strategies to assist in strengthening the position of local governments, realizing the opportunities for participatory development, and improving communities for economic development activities. The study will also add to the existing body of knowledge on decentralisation and local government.

Delimitations of the Study

The scope of the study is defined by the theories and concepts underlying the study and the spatial coverage in line with research philosophy. In terms of major theories and concepts, the study focused on decentralisation, participation and community development. Local governments and their perceived roles in local development in relation to people's participation are also discussed. The specific spatial focus of the study is the Ga West Municipality in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The municipality is one of the oldest districts in the country, created in 1988 and is one of the seven districts in the Greater Accra Region with its capital being Amasaman.

The study did not make use of the entire population, that is, all the staff at the District Assembly and entire selected communities. This is likely to affect the external validity of the study. Also due to the nature of the study, the resource

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available and the time frame within which the study was carried out, only one district was used for the study.

Organisation of the Thesis or Report

The thesis is divided into six main chapters. Chapter One deals with the background to the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the study, and organisations of the study. Chapter Two traces the efforts at decentralisation and the emergence of local government in Ghana. Chapter Three reviews theoretical conceptual literature on decentralisation, development, rural development, citizen participation, rural development approaches and a conceptual framework. Chapter Four dwells on the methodology which entails the study area, the research design, population for the study, sampling procedures, sources of data and research instruments, ethical issues, pilot study, fieldwork, and data processing and analysis. Chapter Five and Six focuses on the results and discussions of findings. Chapter Seven, deals with the summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter Summary

Chapter One deals with the background to the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the study, and organisations of the study. The next chapter traces the efforts at decentralisation and the emergence of local government in Ghana from a historical perspective to date.

CHAPTER TWO

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNITY

DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

Introduction

To get a better understanding of decentralisation and local government system in Ghana and how it has influenced development at the local level, it is necessary to undertake a historical overview of the system. This is to serve as the basis for subsequent analysis and discussions

This chapter therefore, traces Ghana's journey towards decentralisation with particular concern for ways in assessing local citizen's participation in local decision-making and how local actors could promote socio economic development and political accountability in local government. The rest of the chapter looks at the development of decentralisation in Ghana from colonial times, through independence and under other successive governments.

Secondly, the current local government system which came into effect in 1988 with the promulgation of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Law 207 as enforced by the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana and their accountability mechanisms will be considered. The chapter finally explains the constraints of Ghana's current decentralised local government system.

Decentralisation is not new in Ghana. Local government existed before the advent of the colonial central government administration. However, this section discusses the evolution of the decentralised local government under the colonial era to the present-day decentralisation policy reforms in Ghana.

Decentralisation in Ghana – Historical Context

Ghana's decentralisation policy dates back to the colonial days and has been inundated with often repeated and unsuccessful efforts to decentralise power and resources to the local level and therefore decentralisation initiatives in Ghana are embedded in the country's history. The system of decentralisation has moved from one policy and structure to another depending on which government was in power.

Local Government under the Colonial Era: Chieftaincy and the Indirect Rule

Ghana was known as the Gold Coast until it gained independence from the British government on March 6, 1957. The central institution around which the Gold Coast was administratively organised was chieftaincy. This was an elective and limited magistracy which the colonial administration found to be useful as a "foundation on which to build the future" (Ayee, 2000).

In 1878, the British government introduced a local administrative system that centered on customary law and some hand-picked chiefs or units of local royalty, popularly termed the "indirect rule". This was the first Native Jurisdiction Ordinance passed in 1878 which lasted until 1944. 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" (Crawford, 2004, p. 6).

Nkrumah (2000) states that under indirect rule downward accountability of chiefs to their subjects 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 (Nkrumah, 2000).

This situation seeks to support the widely held view that the local level has over the years looked up to the central in decision making, development interventions and controls. This is because central control of the local government bodies is intricately woven in the historical development of the local governance system of the country. This is also the case because over the years central governments have been interested in using local governance to reinforce their dominance at the local level. In the post-independence era of 1957 onwards, decentralised local governance was generally weak and subject to the centralisation of powers synonymous with the post-colonial state in African countries (Crawford, 2004).

According to Ahwoi (2010), the native authorities were not democratic but they were representatives of the British colonial authorities as they were handpicked. Their main interests were to assist the British colonial government to administer law and order with limited participation in local administration. The local government system under the colonial indirect rule had three tiers – the national level, provincial level and district level. At the national level were four institutions, namely the offices of the governor and colonial secretary and the

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executive and legislative councils. The governor was head of the executive and normally, the president of the legislature. Supreme control over the civil service, the courts, the police, and the army were under the governor who was accountable, not to the people they ruled, but to the British Crown.

In an effort to effectively finance the operations of local authorities, Native Treasuries were established to raise head taxes (poll taxes). The native authorities collected taxes, which were used for development programmes such as construction of schools, health centers, wells and latrines, roads and bridges. Apart from the provision of social facilities, it also ran municipals buses and built hostels for destitute as well as community centers. The poll tax could not yield the needed revenues mainly because of the people's unwillingness to pay. The unrelenting pressure for the payment of the tax was one of the causes of riots in 1948, which led to the eventual breakdown of the alliance between the colonial government and the traditional rulers.

The after-effects of the riots resulted in the colonial administration's desire to establish an efficient and representative government in the country. The Watson Commission, which was a parliamentary select commission was appointed in 1948 from the British parliament to find the root causes of the 1948 riots and make recommendations to forestall a similar occurrence in the future. This commission was headed by Andrew Aikeen Watson. The Commission found a large number of political, social, and economic causes for the disturbances (Ayee, 2000).

Among them were the following: the commission observed that the Native Authorities were ineffective and inefficient and had outlived its usefulness in the face of rapid social and economic changes taking place. They also realized the feeling of political frustration among the educated Africans who saw no prospects under the existing conditions. The commission was of the view that with the spread of liberal ideas, increased literacy rate, and closer contact with political development in the other parts of the world, the rule through the chiefs was not required.

It was also observed that administration was highly centralised and the government was remote from the people. The commission concluded that a substantial measure of constitutional reform was necessary to meet the legitimate aspirations of the indigenous population and thus made detailed recommendations. It therefore recommended the devolution of authority through the establishment of Regional Councils for Ashanti, the Colony, and the Northern Territories (Crawford, 2004).

The British government was of the view that the recommendation of the Watson commission should be considered by a representative of the public in the Gold Coast. In view of this, a committee of forty Gold Coast Africans was setup chaired by Justice Coussey and reported on the 17th August 1949. The committee recommended the establishment of a representative basis of all bodies responsible for the government of the Gold Coast from the smallest local council to the central bodies where policy was made for the whole country. It also recommended that local authorities were to have an elected majority while at the

centre a legislative assembly was proposed. All members were to be elected either directly or indirectly by popular vote. The British government in 1949 responded favourable to the recommendation and a new constitution came into force on the 1st January 1951.

The Coussey Committee was of the view that there was the need for a modern local government system with wide spread local participation at the grassroots level however; it recommended that in the interest of continuity, chiefs should be retained in the new local government system. Ahwoi (2010) asserts that the Coussey Committee recommended a new system of local government based on democratic representation, where local authorities were to have a majority of elected councilors. The committee proposed a maximum devolution of powers by the Central Government to four Regional Administrations that were to be established. It proposed a three-tier system of local government. Class A authorities with a population ranging from 100,000-200,000 constituted the highest tier of local authority and they were to perform local functions to satisfy the interest and needs of the locality.

The next level was Class B Councils exercised limited authority in urban areas, with population ranging from 50,000-100,000. A Class C, authorities formed the lowest level and was for areas with population between 25,000 and 50,000. They were to perform limited local functions in their areas of jurisdiction under the direct supervision of the Class A authorities. Based on deliberations by the Legislative Council on the Coussey Proposals, an Order-in-Council of 1950 granted internal self-government to the Gold Coast. The Local Government

Ordinance, passed in 1951 introduced modern representative local government based on the British model.

Elected Local Government System under Ordinances and Local Administration Acts

The colonial government accepted the recommendations of the Watson Commission. Accordingly, elective representation was introduced into local administration in Ghana. Acts were enacted to effect this policy change. Essentially, two systems of local administration evolved – one under the colonial administration in 1953, the Municipal Council Ordinance was passed following the report of the Coussey Committee. The Municipal Councils set up under the Ordinance consisted of five – six members elected by the electorate and one-six nominated by the State Councils concerned. The Ordinance established Municipal Councils for Accra, Kumasi, Cape Coast, and Sekondi-Takoradi (1951 – 1960), and the second under the Nkrumah administration (1961 – 1966).

The First Local Government Ordinance

Ideas from the Watson Commission were later embodied in the first local government ordinance of 1951, and the Municipal Councils Ordinance of 1953, which were passed by the colonial administration.

The 1951 Local Government Ordinance put the district councils, generally, in the hands of elected majorities and accepted the fundamental function of local government as the provision of services. The new local government then had two-thirds elected and one-third traditional members. The

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district commissioners became government agents who acted as liaison officers between the Ministry of Local Government and the Local Councils and saw that the policies of the central government were carried out effectively by officers and members of the councils.

Under these Ordinances, four municipal councils, 26 upper-tier authorities (District Councils) and 252 Lower-tier ('Local' and 'Urban' councils) were established in the country. Thirty-one of the lower-tier authorities had population of less than 5,000; the smallest being less than 1,000, while 75 had a population of between 5,000 and 10,000. Two-thirds of the members of the councils were popularly elected, and the other one-third represented traditional authorities. Local and urban councils were the basic development units for the provision of local services, such as primary education, sanitation, and market places.

In order to establish effective machinery at the local level for development purposes, the 1951 plan proposed that grants-in-aid finance should become an important feature of the financial structure at the village and district levels. Initially, two types of grants were contemplated: (a) capital grants, for the establishment of new authorities and (b) recurrent grants for development work included in the Plan. The central government was committed to providing £700,000 annually for development projects to all district councils to boost their financial base. Progress was made during this time in terms of grassroots development, especially in the fields of road construction, school buildings and primary medical facilities. The local authorities matched the grants and other contributions in the form of either money or communal labour (Ayee, 2000).

A major defect, however, of the 1951 system was that many of the units were not only small in area and population, but also in resources, including finance. The councils were thus later found to be too unwisely and economically unviable. Most of them could not provide the development needs of the people, as envisaged to the extent that most council after paying their staff's salaries and wages, had virtually nothing left for the provision of essential services for which they were established.

The failure of the 1951 system necessitated the appointment of the Greenwood Commission in 1957, in its report, the Greenwood Commission made two main recommendations:

Local government should continue to be democratic in form and should perform as wide a range of functions as lies within its capacity; it must also finance its services as far as possible out of resources at its disposal, and that undue dependence on Central Government should be avoided

The Greenwood Commission recommended the transfer of powers and functions of the small units to the larger bodies. This development meant that the 26 District Councils became the effective units of local government. Membership of the councils was by election from the lower councils on which the district councils were financially dependent. The main function of the district council was to undertake development projects and provide major services, such as road maintenance and health services, and to maintain law and order (Crawford, 2004).

The Greenwood Commission also recommended that each of the existing six regions at the time should become the effective local authority for major

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services, leaving the 252 lower councils with minor powers and rating functions. it produced councils which were too large and remote from the people. The result was the people's refusal to pay basic rates to the councils. People tended to identify themselves more with their villages/towns rather than with the councils.

The 1951 Local Government Ordinance stipulated a four-tier system of local government. As illustrated in Figure 1, at the lowest local government level was the Town, Village and Area Councils.

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│  Minister for Local Government  │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
              │
     ┌──────────────────────┐
     │ Regional Administration │
     └──────────────────────┘
              │
        ┌──────────────┐
        │ District Council │
        └──────────────┘
              │
     ┌────────────────────────┐
     │ Local and Urban Council  │
     └────────────────────────┘
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  ┌───────────────────────────────────┐
  │ Town, Village and Area Committees   │
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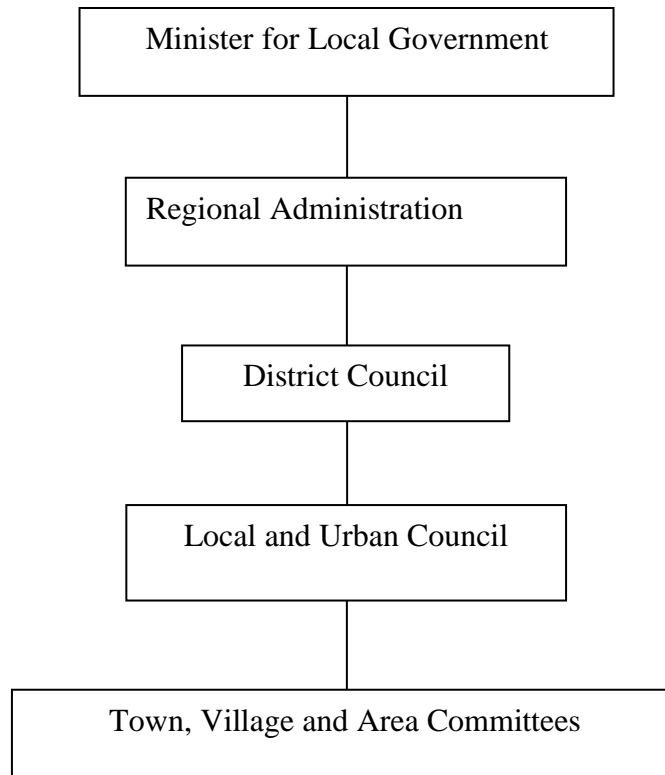
Figure 1: Structure of Local Government Under the 1961 Ordinance

Source: Ayee (1994)

Basically, they were responsible for mobilizing the local communities for communal labour and other self-help projects. They will then report through the Local and Urban Councils to the District Council, which was the highest decision-

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making body at the District level. At the regional level was the regional administration; however it was considered as part of the local government. Under the Local Government Act of 1951, the local government system consisted of 26 district councils and 252 local councils

The first elections for the new local government councils came off in 1952 and the new local authorities comprised two-thirds democratically elected and one-third traditional membership throughout the country. This structure however, resulted in frequent quarrels between the elected and the traditional members of the council. The colonial administration adopted this form of dual representation in order to avoid ethnocentric conflicts and confrontation between itself and the traditional councils. With the frequent conflicts and confrontations between the two parties the structure therefore could not effectively function in practice. Such was the state of the local government system when Ghana attained independence on March 6, 1957.

Local Government after Independence: The First Republic

Ghana's political independence in March, 1957 did little to change the political structures established by the colonial administrators. In this era, development activities were mostly initiated and implemented by the centre with little involvement of the local units. Large scale industrial activities were planed and implemented by the centre with little or no participation of the people who were to benefit from these projects. In this way, the ability of the local citizens to be encouraged to initiate development from within was weakened thereby creating a form of dependency tendency on the centre for all the needs of the

people. As a result, many studies have described post-independent decentralisation as ineffective and therefore the search for an appropriate local government continued in Ghana. This is evidenced by the number of commissions and committees which were appointed by successive governments during the post-independence period (see Table 1).

As shown in Table 1, within a period of 25 years (i.e. between 1957 and 1982), there were as many as ten (10) Commissions/Committees that were set up by different governments to inquire into the local government reforms in Ghana. It is striking to note that with the exception of SMC1, the other three governments had three Commissions/Committees each that they set up. What is quite common among the various reports that were issued by the Commissions/Committees was the recognition of the chiefs' role in local government, although not all the governments implemented the finding's reports.

Nkrumah's CPP government resented the role of chiefs as they were regularly branded as imperialist collaborators. This did not encourage the chiefs to be on the local councils; rather, it encouraged a form of central control through the appointment of district commissioners who represented the head of state at the local level.

Table 1: Commissions and Committees on Local Government Reforms in Ghana, 1957-1982

Regime	Head of State	Year	Name of Commission/Committee
CPP	Dr. Kwame Nkrumah	1957	Greenwood A.F.
CPP	Dr. Kwame Nkrumah	1958	Van Lare
CPP	Dr. Kwame Nkrumah	1965	Boison
NLC	Gen. J. A. Ankrah	1967	Mills-Odoi
NLC	Gen. J. A. Ankrah	1968	Akuffo-Addo
NLC	Gen. J. A. Ankrah	1968	Siriboe
SMC1	Gen. I. K. Acheampong	1974	Okoe
PNDC	Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings	1982	Kufour
PNDC	Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings	1982	Sowu
PNDC	Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings	1982	Kaku-Kyiamah

Source: Ayee (1994)

The consequences of the central control of the local councils were that the traditional authorities' became inactive, local councils were weak and the local people very apathetic to local matters.

This turbulent history suggests that the transformation of chieftaincy in Ghana was not the result of the kinds of organic change which result from the varied processes of modernization (Ayee, 1994). It was to a large extent the product of a battle for control of the countryside which was won by the governing political party. This explains the state of local government and its implications for citizens' participation of the local representatives under the Nkrumah CPP

government before he was overthrown. Thus as a result, many studies have described post-colonial decentralistion as ineffective, which resulted in many regime changes through military coups after Kwame Nkrumah was over thrown in 1966.

Local Government under the Succeeding Governments: Post First Republic

The National Liberation Council

The overthrow of the CPP government through coup d'état on February 24, 1966 ushered in the National Liberation Council (NLC). Although a number of factors were attributed to the overthrow of the Nkrumah government, Ayee (1994) argues that the prolonged period of economic difficulties, accompanied by increasing encroachments on civil liberties and over-centralisation of government machinery led to the overthrow of Nkrumah's CPP government. What this means is that the problems that confronted the CPP government regarding effective decentralisation contributed remarkably to its overthrow. In view of this, the NLC introduced some measures so as to restore the image of the local government institutions. The guiding decentralisation policy of the NLC was not only to lay firm foundations for a sound and effective system of government, but also to ensure effectiveness in the economy and the developmental agenda of the country.

Consequently, the NLC passed Decree No. 26 of 1966 which collapsed the large number of former administrative districts to a new total of 47. The structure of the local government under the NLC consisted of a 4-tier system. It has the regional committees of administration on top in each of the nine regions at the time. As Ayee (1994) observes, a further boost to decentralisation was the

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institutionalisation of a broad-based but non-political planning committee in each region in October 1967. Below the regional committees were the district councils, local and urban councils and the town and area committees. Besides the town and area councils, the three above them were entirely left in the hands of civil servants to operate. This era brought in bureaucrats into political positions as the regional and district administrative officers replaced the ousted regional and district commissioners.

However, Ayee (1994) notes that the structure of the local government was overly bureaucratic for good government were preferred over representation or participation. This was because there was no elected membership to any of the councils. That was the state of the local government in Ghana until August 22, 1969 when the Second Republican Constitution was introduced.

The Progress Party – The Second Republic

The Second Republic under Prime Minister Dr. K. A. Busia and his Progress Party (PP) government continued with the system that was operated by the NLC with the recommendations of the Mills-Odoi and Siriboe Commissions' reports that had been incorporated in Chapter 16 of the 1969 Constitution. The 1969 Constitution provided a three-tier local government structure which consisted of regional, district and local councils.

In 1971, the PP government passed a new Local Government Act (Act 359) and this was intended to change the perception of local government that had primarily become an administrative function. The Act 359 of 1971 provided for partially elected membership of local councils and appointed members by the

traditional authorities. It was designed to have a political direction. The district elections were to be based on the philosophies of the political parties. Consequently, during the district elections, for the first time, political parties contested. However, this politicisation was criticised on the basis of the fact that the Busia government could manipulate the system of local government to its political advantage (Ayee, 1994).

Although the PP government was committed to rural development and accepted decentralisation in principle, it was noted that it did not demonstrate the political will and commitment necessary to make it work. The argument was that although Dr. K. A. Busia was an ardent critique of Nkrumah's centralisation of power and authority whilst in exile in Britain, within two years in office, his liberal democratic tendencies were replaced by increasing evidence of a return to centralisation. It was also claimed that the decentralisation policies of Busia's administration also followed that of his predecessors since the policies were not only aimed at administrative decentralisation but also at central control of the local government units.

In the case of Busia's PP government decentralisation policy, the fact that the discharge of the functions of the district council was subjected to the general guidance and direction of the Minister of Local Government acting through regional councils as well as the appointment of Chairman of the district council by the Prime Minister pointed to an attempt by the government to control the local government machinery. As a result, there was no effective, accountable and elected political authority established at the district level to oversee the structure.

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With the semblance of Nkrumah's over-centralisation of power, coupled with economic crises at the time, and the devaluation of the currency of Ghana by 44 per cent in 1971 culminated in increased consumer prices and unrest, and these events triggered the coup of January 13, 1972.

The National Redemption Council and the Supreme Military Council (1&2)

The second military coup in Ghana toppled the PP government and led to the establishment of the National Redemption Council (NRC) on January 13, 1972 under Col. I. K. Acheampong. It was during this military regime that the government tried to empower the locals (Nkrumah, 2000).

Over the years various attempts at decentralisation were made with the first major attempt made in 1974 under Lt. Col. Acheampong. The system under Acheampong was, however, characterised by deconcentration aimed at strengthening central government control of local government bodies (Nkrumah, 2000). On assumption of power, the NRC government provided a structure of local government that was a four-tier system. Unlike the Busia government's three-tier system, the NRC went back for the recommendations of the three post-1966 coup commissions. What this meant was that the local government structure had moved from the 4-tier Nkrumah's CPP through the 3-tier Busia's PP back to 4-tier in Acheampong's NRC government, decentralisation policy reforms. That came about as a result of the promulgation of the Local Government Decree (NRCD 258) of 1974 which sought to reactivate the regional and district councils.

The four-tier system consisted of regional councils; district councils; area/city, municipal, urban, local councils; and the town/village development

committees. The membership of the district councils was entirely a non-elective one; two-thirds of the councilors were central government nominees while the other third represented the traditional authorities. This local government composition of 1974 was meant to take away or minimize the politicization of the local councils as provided in Busia's local government Act (Act 359) of 1971. It was also because political parties had been banned during the military rule of Acheampong. However, a critical assessment of the 1974 system also showed many problems. Ayee (1994), notes that the intent of the decentralisation policies of the NRC seemed to appear to enhance control of the system which was similar to that of the CPP and PP manipulations.

The consequence of this was that the involvement of local representatives at the local level was virtually non-existent. It is important to note that this was the first time the title District Chief Executive (DCE) came into the local level of government as the title District Administrative Officers (DAOs) who were chairpersons of the District Councils in the 1971 Act changed. On July 5, 1978, the NRC which had transformed itself midway into the Supreme Military Council (SMC) was overthrown in a palace coup and replaced by the SMC2 under General Akuffo.

To give effect to decentralisation policy, the SMC2 government promulgated a new Local Government (Amendment) Decree, SMCD 194 of 1978. Although SMC2 retained the local government structure of SMC1 as a four-tier, the decree provided that the district councils should consist of two-thirds of the members elected, while the remaining third should be chosen by traditional

authorities. A very significant event that happened during this period was the November 1978 district council elections that took place for the first time in over twenty years in Ghana.

Although the voter turn-out in the elections was as low as 18.4 percent as national average, it had a major impact on decentralisation and national politics. Ayee (1994) observes that the local government elections which were held were an indication of the commitment of General Akuffo to offer Ghanaians some form of political decentralisation. However, before the scheduled September 1979 general elections could take place, the SMC2 regime was also overthrown, after less than a year in office, by the Flt. Lt. J. J. Rawlings' Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) on June 4, 1979.

The AFRC did not play any meaningful role regarding the decentralisation policy reforms since their primary interest, according to the Chairman of the AFRC, was only to supervise the transition to a democratic multi-party system in a transparent manner. Barely four months in power, had the AFRC returned Ghana to Constitutional rule with the promulgation of the Third Republican Constitution on September 24, 1979. This Constitution re-introduced the Presidential system of government.

The People's National Party – The Third Republic

President Hilla Limann and his PNP government came into office as the first president under the Third Republican Constitution of 1979. To ensure effective conduct of government business, the 1979 Constitution provided for the decentralisation of public administration machinery to the regions and the

districts. The rationale of the drafters of the 1979 Constitution was to provide for an effective local government. This is contained in Article 7 of the 1979 Constitution that Ghana shall:

> *"Decentralise the administrative machinery to the regions and districts in order to permit, to the extent […] consistent with sound and effective administration and control the transaction of government business at the regional and district levels"* (Republic of Ghana, 1979).

As consistent with earlier local government structures, this Constitution also provided for a three-tier structure of Regional, District Councils and the Town/Village/Area Committees. The provisions in the Constitution were consolidated by the Local Government (Amendment) Act (Act 403) of 1980. According to the Act, the Regions were to be headed by Regional Ministers (RM) appointed by the President and at the district level a clerk to the district council as well as an elected chairman and vice-chairman for the council.

As a major departure from the previous local government structure, the DCE was no longer the chairman of the district councils but the council continued to consist of two-thirds of members elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage and one third of the members appointed by the traditional authorities. To show its commitment to decentralisation policy reform, the PNP government in August 1981 announced that it would create 40 more districts to bring the total number to 105. However, the decentralisation policy reform of the PNP government did not see the light of the day when the government was toppled.

Therefore, the total number of districts remained 65 as they were in 1974. On December 31, 1981, the Third Republican Constitutional arrangement was also abrogated by the coup d'état of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), again under Flt. Lt. J. J. Rawlings but the search for an appropriate decentralised local government system in Ghana continued.

The Provisional National Defense Council

The history of contemporary decentralisation in Ghana is credited to the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) regime under Jerry John Rawlings' administration that saw decentralisation and the devolution of power as key means of introducing popular democracy and fostering local governance. "Power to the people" was a popular slogan used by the PNDC during the December 31, 1981 revolution. To pursue its populist policies form of "people's democracy", "participatory democracy", or "power to the people", the PNDC established People's Defence Committees (PDCs) and Workers Defence Committees (WDCs). The PDCs and WDCs were the organs that the PNDC used to promote popular participation in both the urban and rural areas of Ghana as well as among workers (Adedej, 2001).

Assibey-Mensah (2000) argues that after the passage of the 1987 Local Government Law (PNDC Law 207), 110 District Councils and their respective District Assemblies (DAs) were set up to ensure local participation in the decision-making process. This led to the formation of the defunct People's Defence Committees (PDCs) in communities to identify each area's needs instead of relying on the central government to make every decision and to solve every

problem from Accra, the seat of government. Research has shown that the PDC concept created grassroots interest in local government as district elections during the PNDC regime were the highest ever recorded for the decades in the late 1980s. He also noted that official reports indicated that 58.9 percent of registered voters cast their ballots in the local elections and the turnout was the highest of any district level election over the past 30 years.

The PDCs, made up of local self-identified defenders of the PNDC revolution, effectively took over local government responsibilities, though they were often limited to mobilizing and the implementation of local self-help projects while the deconcentrated ministries played a more significant role. Ayee (2000) sees a key feature of local governance through the PDCs in the pre-1988 period as a dual hierarchical structure in which central and local government institutions operated in parallel but with overlaps at times by the better resourced central government on the roles and responsibilities of the under-resourced local organisation. In fact, the PDC concept of decentralisation became the legitimate revolutionary political institution under the PNDC administration.

Some studies have shown that local participation ensures a more direct form of democracy in which the views of the local people can be heard thus the PNDC used the PDCs and the Workers Defense Committees (WDCs) to make decisions in the local communities and work places. They took part in the decision-making process at the grassroots level in the rural areas and work places with the aim of bringing development and improvement in the lives of the people. Given the theoretical bases of decentralisation, it was believed that these groups

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would unlock the virtues and intelligence of the people at the grassroots level and foster good governance and promote social capital (Deborah, 2009, p. 281).

The Rawlings administration planned to transfer both fiscal and political responsibilities from the capital to all the districts and municipalities in the country. This was based on the Local Government Law decreed under the PNDC and was aimed at introducing fiscal balance between the central government and the districts by transferring power to the district level, the PNDC government was making government more responsive to local communities. The PNDC government introduced a legislative reform, the Local Government Law (PNDC Law 207) in 1988 which led to the creation of 110 districts within the ten regions with a non-partisan District Assembly (DA) election held for the first time in 1988-89 under the PNDC and subsequently every four years (1994, 1998 2002, 2006, 2010). The law provides in part that two-thirds of the DA members should be elected on individual non-partisan basis and the one third appointed by the central government in consultation with the chiefs.

After over a decade of military rule under the PNDC (1981-1991), the Ghana constitution provided a transition from military rule to a multi-party democracy which authorized a reform in the 1988 Local Government Law that consolidated the aims of decentralisation within the context of liberal democratic constitution. In fact, the policy objectives of the PNDC decentralisation programme of 1988 were geared towards both political and administrative decentralisation, a departure from those of previous governments. The objectives

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include popular participation, efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, responsiveness, stability, and issues of development.

The Current Local Government Reforms - Under the Fourth Republic

Ghana's current decentralisation reforms started in the late 1980 with the objectives of devolving political power in order to promote participatory democracy through local level institutions by devolving administration, development planning and implementation to local government units. This was to promote participation, transparency, accountability and to incorporate economic, social and environmental issues into the planning processes of local communities in an integrated way. In addition, it was to introduce an effective system of fiscal decentralisation to give local government adequate resources and revenue for the development of their communities.

Upon coming into force of the Fourth Republican Constitution on January 7, 1993, it became clear that the District Assemblies required a Constitutional provision that would provide the essential building blocks towards achieving decentralisation and guarantee that the minimum gains of decentralisation under the PNDC government were not eroded (Ahwoi, 2010).

The objectives of decentralisation were laid down in the 1992 constitution of Ghana (chapter 20) under decentralisation and local government. The constitution states in Article 240[1] that local government and administration are to be decentralised, and that the functions, powers and responsibilities and resources should be transferred from central government to local government constituencies (Article 240[2]). The independent role of local government was

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provided for in Article 240 [2b], which states that measures should be taken to enhance the capacity of local government authorities to plan, initiate, co-ordinate, manage, and execute policies in respect of matters affecting the local people.

The constitution also emphasized the principles of participation in local government and accountability to the people in Article [2e], which states that to ensure accountability of local government authorities, the people in a particular local government area shall as far as practicable be afforded the opportunity to participate effectively in their governance. The broad framework for decentralisation as provided in Article 240 (2) of the 1992 Constitution in summary states that:

1. Functions, powers, responsibilities and resources should be transferred from the central government to local government units;

2. Measures should be taken to enhance the capacity of local government authorities to plan, initiate, coordinate, manage and execute policies in respect of matters affecting the local people;

3. Local government units should have sound financial bases with adequate and reliable sources of revenue;

4. Local government staff must be controlled by local authorities; and

5. There should be popular participation in local decision-making.

These key issues in the 1992 Constitution show government commitment to decentralisation. The Metropolitan Assembly is established for districts with a population of 250,000 and over whilst the Municipal is established for single compact settlements with population of 95, 000 and over. The District Assemblies

are established for geographically contiguous area with population of 75,000 and over. What this means is that the population threshold of 1988 was the criteria used in the creation of the MMDAs. With the coming into force of the 1992 Constitution, the PNDCL 207 was repealed and a new Local Government Law (Act 462) of 1993 was passed by the Parliament of Ghana.

Ghana's Parliament passed the Local Governance Amendment Bill, 2017, into Law (Act 936 of 2016), to empower the President to appoint and revoke the appointments of his Appointees. The Bill restored the Presidents' discretionary power to revoke the appointment of government appointees to District Assemblies and appoint competent people who can work to support his vision. The Bill will also speed up the appointment processes to enable District Assemblies perform effectively and forestall further delay of appointments to District Assemblies. However, there is no provision in Act 936 enabling the President to revoke the appointment of his Appointees as provided under Article 249 of the 1992 Constitution, which states that 'subject to any procedure established by law, the mandate of a member of a District Assembly may be revoked by the electorate or the appointing body.'

The Act 936 of 2016 harmonises five existing legislations on local governance and provides a one stop shop document on all local governance issues. Following the passage of the consolidated Local Governance Bill in 2016 (Act 936), the Local Government Act 1993 (Act 462) was repealed. Apart from that amended section which I described as problematic, there are others which I also find disturbing. Not only do some of the provisions appear problematic but

have actually turned upside down laws, conventions and practices known to govern the public services of Ghana since the advent of the 1992 republican constitution.

First to look at is Section 67 (1) of Act 936. It states "The President shall, in accordance with article 195 of the Constitution, appoint other staff of the Local Government Service that are necessary for the proper and effective performance of the functions of the Service." Ordinarily, there is nothing wrong with this provision. And in fact, it is more consistent with the constitution. But upon a careful analysis and reading section 67 (1) with other provisions of the Act, two problems become apparent. The first is that the drafters or should I say parliament did not mean to say "...APPOINT OTHER STAFF OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE..." but rather appoint other staff OF THE OFFICE OF THE HEAD of the Local Government Service. One can conclusively come to this conclusion if you look at the context in which 67 (1) is situated and also reading sections 66 (1), 75 (2), 76 (2), 79 (2) and the other sections that make provisions for appointments into the Local Government Service.

To be clear with the above assertion, one needs to note that there is a difference between "Office of the Head of Local Government Service" previously known as the Local Government Service Secretariat (LGSS) and "Local Government Service". The former is a subset of the latter and hence appointing staff into the latter covers that of the former. The second problem is a derivative of the first. The omission of these six (6) words (i.e. of the office of the Head) in the crafting of section 67 (1) has created room for conflict, confusion and/or

contradictions because the president is appointing staff and at the same time the Head of Service too is appointing as is evident in sections 75 (2), 76 (2), 79 (2), and 175 (3). It is also important to note the language of sections 194 (2) and 195 (2). Whiles section 67 (1) says "The President shall..." these two other provisions uses "The President may...". Yet all are appointments into the Local Government Service.

Placing all the above in the context of the 1992 constitution and what pertains in the Public Services of Ghana raises much bigger problems. The question is, is it in the place of the Head of Local Government Service to appoint staff of the Local Government Service especially Category "A" and "B" as known in the Public Services of Ghana? I will attempt to answer this question by looking at the 1992 republican constitution and some provisions of the Public Services Commission (PSC).

Act 936 clearly recognises Article 195 (1) of the constitution which states "Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the power to appoint persons to hold or to act in an office in the public services shall vest in the President, acting in accordance with the advice of the governing council of the service concerned given in consultation with the Public Services Commission." Any other time the constitution makes provision for appointments to be made by other persons in the public services other than the President, the responsibility falls on the governing board and not the Head or CEO or Chairman or Managing Director or whatever the case maybe. The only exception being Article 148 where appointment to judicial office is vested in the Chief Justice but even that is subject to the approval

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of the President. The Clerk and other staff of the Parliamentary Service are appointed by the Parliamentary Service Board not the speaker of Parliament or one other individual (See Article 124 (4)). Other officers and employees of the Electoral Commission are appointed by the Commission and not the Chairman of the Commission or the electoral commissioner (See Article 53). Other relevant provisions in the constitution to this effect are Articles 170, 189 (2), 226 and 238 which deals with appointment of staff of other public service organisations.

Following carefully the provisions of the constitution on this matter, one would realise that there is a clear intention to desist from vesting power of appointments into the public service to individuals heading public service organisations. Taking heed from the constitution, the Public Services Commission has meticulously provided for how appointments should be done in the Public Services through various circulars and recently, the Human Resource Management Policy Framework and Manual for the Ghana Public Services. The provisions by the Public Services Commission in accordance with its mandate attempts to give meaning to words "acting in accordance with the advice of the governing council of the service concerned given in consultation with the Public Services Commission" as contained in Article 195 (1). The provisions clearly put the appointment of Category "A" and "B" posts in the hands of the President. Even for posts below Category B, the Head of organisation only issues the appointment letters but the appointment is done by the governing boards. In fact, in the Civil Service which until recently the Local Government Service was part,

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it is the Civil Service Council that offers appointments and not the Head of Civil Service.

It is in the light of the above, that I find Section 75 (2) and other such provisions of Act 936 explicitly vesting power of appointment in the Head of Local Government Service quite problematic. In the face of Article 195 (1) of the 1992, Section 75 (2) of Act 936 mandatorily states "The District Co-ordinating Director SHALL (emphasis mine) be appointed by the Head of the Local Government Service on the advice of the Council acting in consultation with the Public Services Commission." I stand to be corrected but I see section 75 (2) and the other such provisions as void.

I recognise and appreciate the provisions of Article 195 (2) of the 1992 constitution and the language of this provision cannot be used to justify this apparent inconsistency. It is a discretion given to the President and that discretion, in my considered opinion, cannot be legislated away by an Act of parliament just like that. If the framers of the constitution had wanted to give parliament the power to legislate such discretionary power of the President away, they would have expressly said so. Rather, it says "The President MAY (emphasis), subject to such CONDITIONS AS HE MAY THINK FIT (emphasis), delegate some of his functions under this article by DIRECTIONS IN WRITING (emphasis) to the governing council concerned or to a committee of the council or to any member of that governing council or to any public officer." Discretion varies as the conditions dictate and the discretion of one president cannot be binding on the

other even though they are both expected to be fair and candid. And this, Article 195 (2) recognises.

Not even the Public Services Commission Act of 1994, Act 482 attempted to legislate away this power and discretion of the President. Section 8 of Act 482 which talks about appointments of Public Officers maintains the provisions of Article 195 of the constitution and adds in section 8(3) that the governing councils of the public services shall consult the Commission in matters of appointments of persons to hold office in the relevant public services except otherwise provided in the Constitution.

To conclude, let me make it clear that I am one of those with the view that the President virtually appointing everyone in the Public Services is awkward and non-productive. But I will also be the last person to advocate for such powers to be taken from the President and given to an individual as Act 936 seeks to do. And if the above is anything to go by, then Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah should be turning in his grave by now because this is not what he meant when, on that faithful day, he said "...after all, the black man is capable of managing his own affairs."

Structure of the New Local Government System

In terms of the structure of the local government system in Ghana, the Constitution retained the four-tier system for the Metropolitan Assemblies and three-tier for Municipal and District Assemblies respectively. The three tier structure of the sub-national government was created at regional, districts and sub-district levels. As illustrated in Figure 2, the current (new) local government

structure is made up of a Regional Coordinating Council, a four-tier Metropolitan, and three-tier Municipal/District Assembly respectively.
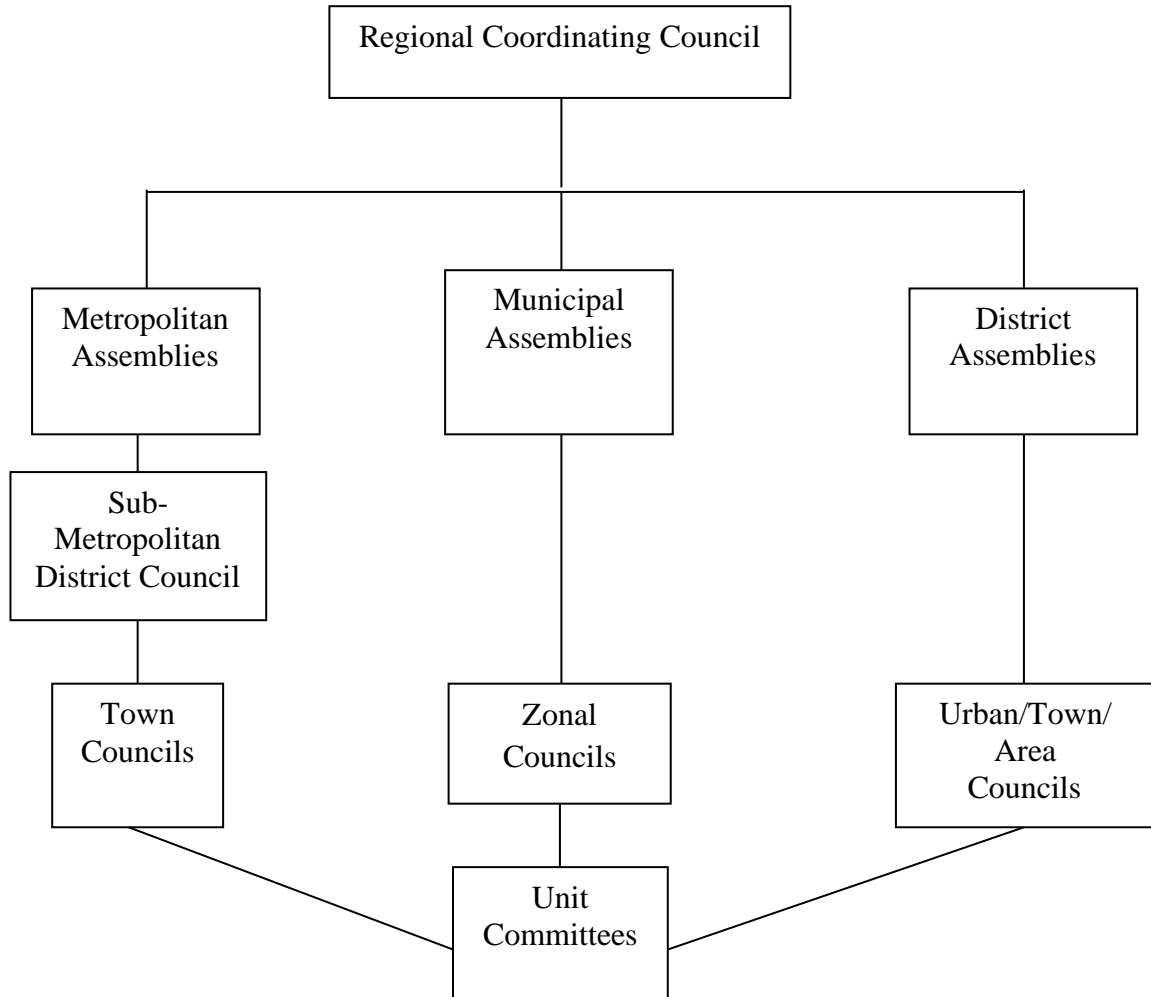
Figure 2: Structure of the New Local Government System in Ghana

Source: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (1996)

This comprises the Regional Coordinating Council, District Assemblies, and other structures below the districts. The Metropolitan and Municipal District Assemblies are the key focus of this study as they are the main local government institutions and the highest political authorities in the districts with deliberative, legislative, and executive powers.

The Regional Coordinating Councils

There are ten Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs), one in each of the ten regions in Ghana. The regional coordinating council is an administrative and coordinating body rather than a policy making body. Its functions are to monitor, coordinate and evaluate the performance of the district assemblies in the regions. It is also to monitor all funds allocated to the district assemblies by any agency of the central government and to review, and coordinate public services. It has the mandate to perform other functions assigned to it by or under any enactment. A Regional Coordinating Council is headed by the Regional Minister who is appointed by the President of the country. The council consists of the Regional Minister as Chairman and his Deputy or Deputies also appointed by the President; the Presiding Members and the MMDA Chief Executive of each MMDA Assembly in the region; two chiefs from the Regional House of Chiefs; and the Regional heads of the Departments of the Regional Coordinating Council who have no voting rights.

The Regional Coordinating Director is the secretary to the Council. The RCCs also co-ordinate the plans and programmes of the MMDAs and harmonise them with national development policies and priorities to become a regional development plan.

The Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies

The district assemblies in Ghana are either metropolitan with a population of about 250,000; municipal with a population of about 95,000 or district with a population of about 75,000. The structure began with three metropolitan

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assemblies, four municipal assemblies, and one hundred and three district assemblies in 1988. The MMDAs consist of MMDCEs appointed by the President, elected Member(s) of Parliament representing constituency or constituencies in the district, 70 per cent of members directly elected by universal adult suffrage on non-partisan basis, and 30 per cent of members appointed by the President in consultation with the chiefs and other interest groups.

The MMDCEs, appointed by the President are approved by two-thirds of the members of the MMDA present by voting, the Presiding Member (PM) of the MMDA, who is the chairperson, is elected from among its members by a minimum of two-thirds of all the members of the Assembly. The PM convenes and presides over the meetings of the Assembly and also acts as the chairman of the Public Relations and Complaints Committee of the Assembly. The functions of the Presiding Member have been likened to those of the "Speaker" in a national legislature. The PM is expected to be the first recipient of the district internal audit reports on a quarterly basis and the first to check on the financial prudence of the Assembly. He is also the chairman and signatory to funds under various poverty reduction programmes in the Assembly.

Currently, the number of districts in Ghana has been increased from 110 to 170 within the 10 administrative regions. There are 6 Metropolitan, 40 Municipal and 124 District Assemblies totaling 170 as of 2010. The main objectives for the increase was to improve administration; deepen democracy and governance; ensure equitable distribution of national resources at the local level and to accelerate overall national development. A metropolitan/municipal/district

assembly is created as the focal point for administrative and developmental decision-making in the district and as the basic unit of government administration. The assembly is headed by a chief executive who is appointed by the President and approved by at least two-thirds of the membership of the assembly.

The Sub-Metro/Urban/Zonal/Town/Area Councils

These are subordinate bodies of the district assemblies. They perform functions assigned them by the assemblies or those delegated to them.

 The Sub-Metropolitan District Councils exist only in the Metropolis and the arrangement is dictated by the complex and peculiar socio-politico-economic characteristics, urbanisation and management problems which confront the Metropolitan Assemblies. The peculiarities in the Metropolitan Assemblies render the Sub-Metros with slightly different structures. The urban councils are peculiar to settlements with a population of about 15000 and which have cosmopolitan characteristics, with urbanisation and management problems though not of the same magnitude of the metropolitan areas.

The Zonal Councils exist in the Municipal Assemblies where the establishment of town/area councils will pose problems of parallel administrative structures. They are based on the following criteria: commonality of interest, a population of about 3000, and identifiable streets and other landmarks as boundaries. Zonal councils consist of not less than fifteen and not more than twenty members. These members comprise not more than five persons elected from among the members of the Municipal Assembly, not more than ten

representatives from the Unit Committees and not more than five persons resident in the area.

The Town Councils exist in the metropolitan and district assemblies. They are set up for settlement of a population between 5,000 and 15,000. Area council exists for a number of settlements and villages that are grouped together but whose individual settlements have a population less than 5000 in the districts. They cover areas which are predominantly rural communities and at times identified with a particular traditional authority. Area councils are viewed essentially as rallying points of local enthusiasm in support of local government systems.

Unit committees are mostly settlement or a group of settlements with population between 500 and 1000 in the rural areas and a population of 1500 in the urban areas. They are in close contact with the people and play important roles of organizing the people for communal work, education, environmental cleanliness, and other self-help projects. The Unit Committee, which is the first point of contact with the local people, consists of not more than fifteen members made up of ten elected persons ordinarily resident in the unit and not more than five other persons resident in the unit and nominated by the DCE on behalf of the President. For more effective functioning of the Unit Committees, LI 1967 of 2010 reduced the total number of unit committees in Ghana from 16000 to 5000.

Functions of the District Assemblies

The District Assemblies are given a wide range of powers by the 1992 constitution and the Local Government Act of 1993 within their designated geographical areas. They are the central institutions within the district, responsible for planning, implementation and management of development programmes. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana provides the legal basis for the functioning of the District Assembly as deliberative, legislative and executive body. They have administrative authority, planning authority, development authority as well as budgeting and rating authority. Specifically, since the MMDAs are designated as the highest political, administrative, planning and rating authorities, the Local Government Act, (Act 462) of 1993 section 10 of the 1992 constitution provide the functions of the district assemblies as follows:

1. Be responsible for the overall development of the district and to ensure the preparation and submission through the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) for the approval of the development plan and budget by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) to the minister of finance for the district;

2. Formulate and execute plans, programmes and strategies for the effective mobilization of the resources necessary for the overall development of the district;

3. Promote and support productive activity and social development in the district and remove any obstacles to initiative and development;

4. Initiate programmes for the development of basic infrastructure and provide municipal works and services in the district;

5. Be responsible for the development, improvement and the management of human settlements and the environment in the district;

6. In co-operation with appropriate national and local security agencies, be responsible for the maintenance of security and public safety in the district;

7. Ensure ready access to the courts and public tribunals in the district for the promotion of justice;

8. Initiate, sponsor or carry out such studies as may be necessary for the discharge of any function conferred by the act or any other enactment; and

9. Perform such other functions as may be provided for under any other enactment.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the Assemblies have an important task to perform as agents of development in their areas of jurisdiction and particularly as the highest political authorities at the local level. In doing that, the Assemblies work through the Executive Committee, five mandatory Sub-Committees, and any other Sub-Committee of the Executive Committee that may be deemed necessary for their work as well as the decentralised departments.

Similarly, the Local Government Act, (Act 936) of 2016 section 12 of the 1992 constitution provide the functions of the district/municipal assemblies as follows:

1. A District/Municipal Assembly shall

    a. Exercise political and administrative authority in the District/ Municipal;

    b. Promote local economic development; and

    c. Provide guidance, give direction to and supervise other administrative authorities in the District/Municipal as may be prescribed by law.

2. A District/Municipal Assembly shall exercise deliberative, legislative and executive functions.

3. Without limiting subsections (1) and (2), a District/Municipal Assembly shall

    a. Be responsible for the overall development of the District/Municipal;

    b. Formulate and execute plans, programmes and strategies for the effective mobilisation of the resources necessary for the overall development of the District/Municipal;

    c. Promote and support productive activity and social development in the District/Municipal and remove any obstacles to initiative and development;

    d. Sponsor the education of students from the District/Municipal to fill particular manpower needs of the District/Municipal especially in the social sectors of education and health, making sure that the

sponsorship is fairly and equitably balanced between male and female students;

e. Initiate programmes for the development of basic infrastructure and provide municipal works and services in the District/Municipal;

f. Be responsible for the development, improvement and management of human settlements and the environment in the District/Municipal;

g. In co-operation with the appropriate national and local security agencies, be responsible for the maintenance of security and public safety in the District/Municipal;

h. Ensure ready access to courts in the District/Municipal for the promotion of justice;

i. Act to preserve and promote the cultural heritage within the District/Municipal;

j. Initiate, sponsor or carry out studies that may be necessary for the discharge of any of the duties conferred by this Act or any other enactment; and

k. Perform any other functions that may be provided under another enactment.

4. A District/Municipal Assembly shall take the steps and measures that are necessary and expedient to

a. Execute approved development plans for the District/Municipal;

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b. Guide, encourage and support sub-District/Municipal local structures, public agencies and local communities to perform their functions in the execution of approved development plans;

c. Initiate and encourage joint participation with other persons or bodies to execute approved development plans;

d. Promote or encourage other persons or bodies to undertake projects under approved development plans; and

e. Monitor the execution of projects under approved development plans and assess and evaluate their impact on the development of the District/Municipal and national economy in accordance with government policy.

5. A District/Municipal Assembly shall co-ordinate, integrate and harmonise the execution of programmes and projects under approved development plans for the District/Municipal and other development programmes promoted or carried out by Ministries, Departments, public corporations and other statutory bodies and non-governmental organisations in the District/Municipal.

6. A District/Municipal Assembly in the discharge of its duties shall

a. Be subject to the general guidance and direction of the President on matters of national policy; and

b. Act in co-operation with the appropriate public corporation, statutory body or non-governmental organisation.

7. Public corporations, statutory bodies and non-governmental organisations shall co-operate with a District/Municipal Assembly in the performance of their functions.

8. In the event of a conflict between a District/Municipal Assembly and an agency of the central Government, public corporation, statutory body, non-governmental organisation or individual over the application of subsection (5), (6) or (7), the matter shall be referred by either or both parties to the Regional Co-ordinating Council for resolution.

9. The Instrument that establishes a particular District/Municipal Assembly or any other Instrument, may confer additional functions on the District/Municipal Assembly.

Meetings of District/Municipal Assembly (Act 936 of 2016)

1. A District/Municipal Assembly shall meet at least three times in a year.

2. Matters for decision by the District/Municipal Assembly shall be determined by the votes of the majority of members present and voting.

3. In the event of equality of votes, the Presiding Member shall have a casting vote.

4. The validity of proceedings of a District/Municipal Assembly shall not be affected by a vacancy among its members or by a defect in the appointment or qualification of a member.

5. A District/Municipal Assembly may at any time summon any public officer in the District/Municipal to attend any of its meetings to provide information or assistance as the District/Municipal Assembly may require.

6.   The Minister shall develop Model Standing Orders for the conduct and proceedings of District/Municipal Assemblies.

Participatory Governance at the Local Level (Act 936 of 2016)

A District/Municipal Assembly shall enable the residents and other stakeholders in the District/Municipal to participate effectively in the activities of the District/Municipal Assembly and the sub-District/Municipal structures of the District/Municipal Assembly. The District/Municipal Assembly shall cause a public announcement to be made at least ten working days before the first day of submission of the draft by-law or the fee-fixing resolution to the *District/Municipal Assembly for the first time.*

District/Municipal level stakeholders may

a. Participate in the deliberative function of the District/Municipal Assembly by the publication of a draft by-law or fee-fixing resolution in a media of mass communication in the District/Municipal that includes radio, the print media, notice boards on the premises of the District/Municipal Assembly and in the major towns and settlements in the District/Municipal, before the commencement of proceedings on the draft by-law or fee-fixing resolution;

b. Make representations to the District/Municipal Assembly through the Secretary to the District/Municipal Assembly on any provision of the draft by-law or proposal in the fee-fixing resolution;

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c. Appear before a sub-committee of the Executive Committee to which a draft by-law or fee-fixing resolution is referred to make an oral representation;

d. Attend the proceedings of the District/Municipal Assembly as observers when a draft by-law or fee-fixing resolution is being debated;

e. Disseminate the by-law or fee-fixing resolution as widely as possible and play an advocacy role on the contents of the by-law or fee-fixing resolution after the enactment of the by-law or the adoption of a fee-fixing resolution.

Modalities and platforms for participation

A District/Municipal Assembly shall facilitate the establishment of a structure for stakeholder participation that may include the following:

a. Information communication technology-based platforms;

b. Town hall meetings;

c. Budget preparation and validation fora;

d. Notice boards announcing jobs, appointments, procurement awards and other important announcements of public interest;

e. Visit to development project sites; and

f. Other avenues for the participation of the people.

The Legal Framework for Decentralisation and Local Government

The main legal framework underlying decentralisation and local government system in Ghana are provided by the 1992 constitution and the Local

Government Law, Act 462 of 1993 which has its basis from the PNDC Law 207 of 1988.

Apart from that, the 1992 Constitution of the country states under Article 240 (1, 2 and 3) that, Ghana shall have a system of local government and administration which shall as practicable as possible be decentralised. It shall have a system of decentralised local government which shall have the following features: parliament shall enact appropriate laws to ensure that functions, powers, responsibilities and resources are transferred from the Central Government to local government units and shall by law provide all necessary measures to enhance the capacity of local government authorities to plan , initiate, coordinate, manage and execute policies in respect of all issues affecting the people in that locality. Again, article 241 sections 3 of the constitution stipulate that, the District Assembly shall have the highest political authority in the district and shall have deliberative, legislative, and executive powers.

The constitution of Ghana sets out clearly the main features of the decentralisation and local government. These are extensively provided for in two main chapters, Chapters 6 and 20 of the Constitution. Whilst chapter 6 deals with the Directive Principles of State Policy, chapter 20 on the other hand deals with decentralisation and local government.

Other pieces of legislation on decentralisation and local government include: the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) Act, (Act 479 of 1994); National Development Planning (Systems) Act, (Act 480 of 1996); Civil Service Law (PNDCL 327); Local Government (Urban, Zonal, Town Councils

and Unit Committees) (Establishment) Instrument, LI 1589; District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) Act, (Act 455 of 1993); District Assemblies Election Act, (Act 473 of 1994); Local Government Service Act, (Act 656 of 2003); Local Government (Departments of District Assemblies) (Commencement) Instrument (LI 1961 of 2009); and LIs establishing each of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies and their Model Standing Orders.

Also included in these legislative frameworks of the decentralisation process are the Institute of Local Government Act, (Act 647 of 2003); Financial Administration Act, (Act 654 of 2003); the Internal Audit Act, (Act 658 of 2003): and the Public Procurement Act, (Act 663 of 2003). These three important legislations (Acts 654, 658 and 663 all of 2003) were sought among others to enhance efficiency, accountability, and transparency in the management of resources in the public sector including the local government.

Accountability Mechanisms in the District Assembly

Although, there are limited accountability mechanisms in the DAs, the 1992 Constitution makes some provisions to shape the performance of the actors of the Assembly. For example Article 240 section 2 (e) states that:

> *"To ensure the accountability of local government authorities, people in particular local government areas shall, as far as practicable, be afforded the opportunity to participate effectively in their governance"*

This provision in the 1992 Constitution has several implications. One of such is the effective participation in the governance at the local level involving

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the planning process, decision-making and implementation of development projects, particularly in relation to the needs of the local people. The Assemblies are required to develop a 5-year District Medium-Term Development Plans (DMTDPs) based on development priorities generated from the communities through the substructures. What this means is that, the planning process must be conducted with inputs generated through consultative meetings or public hearings.

However, Ofei-Aboagye (2008), states that such public hearings have not been effectively conducted, either through lack of technical capacity of district officials, time or resources. To ensure participation and accountability of the DAs to the local citizens, a set of responsibilities have been assigned to the members of the DAs. They are required to:

1. maintain close contact with their electoral area, consult their people on issues to be discussed in the DA and collate their views, opinions and proposals;

2. present their views, opinions and proposals to the DA;

3. attend meetings of the DA and meetings of sub-committees of which they are members;

4. meet their electorates before each meeting of the DA;

5. report to their electorates the general decisions of the DA and its Executive Committee and the actions that they had taken to solve problems raised by residents in their electoral areas;

6. maintain frequent liaison with organised productive economic groupings and other persons in the district; and

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7. take part in communal and development activities in the district (Source: Republic of Ghana, 1993).

The DA members are required to discharge their responsibilities with due regard to the national interest and the interest of the people in their districts. As to whether these participatory and accountability mechanisms have been followed or not remain largely unknown (Ofei-Aboagye, 2008; Deborah, 2009).

Decentralisation and National Level Institutions

At the national level, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) is the institution responsible for formulating and carrying out the current decentralisation policy reform. The MLGRD also operates as the link institution between the local government and international donors in their decentralisation support to Ghana. It is the secretariat for coordinating the decentralisation policy implementation.

However, the implementation and effective coordination of the policy require multi-institutional participation. Apart from the actual implementation, a wide range of relevant actors are required to generate policy insights and provide policy advice and direction. There are central government and non-governmental institutions that play a significant role in the implementation of decentralisation policies, with some institutions established by the 1992 Constitution. Among the institutional actors are the ILGS, NALAG, Local Government Service, and Office of the District Assemblies Common Fund, National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) and the Chieftaincy Institution (Adedeji, 2001).

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Types of Decentralisation

There are no prescribed rules and regulations governing the decentralisation process. Decentralisation tends to take different forms in different countries according to the objectives driving the change in structure of government. Different forms of decentralisation include political, administrative, fiscal and market decentralisation. It is necessary to make distinction between the various types of decentralisation in order to understand the dimensions to successful decentralisation and to find out need for coordination among them.

Political decentralisation

Political decentralisation may mean a different thing to different people. According to Dahal, Uprety and Subba (2002), political decentralisation is the process of shifting from the central government to the local government and communities, the power to choose the political leadership and representatives; and power and authority to make social, political and economic decisions. Rizal (2001) defines political decentralisation as the correlate of democracy and is based on internal party democracy as well as democratisation of state, de-concentration of wealth and social power and in creation of civil society through mass mobilisation and mass participation in the institution of representative bodies. He cites the objective of political decentralisation as to increase the efficiency of local political unit; increase the participation of the citizen through empowerment; and provide more freedom of choice in the process of electing the matter which is of their primary concern.

Political decentralisation can support democratisation by giving citizens, or their representatives, more influence in the formulation and implementation of policies. However, it is often associated with pluralistic politics and representative government. Thus, decentralisation is conceptualised on the belief that election of the local representatives allows the citizens to have a better knowledge of their political representatives and also the elected officials to have a better knowledge of his constituent's needs and desires. Also, if more people are involved in the decision-making, rather than the decisions being taken by the national political authorities, the decisions will be better informed and more relevant to diverse interests in society.

Political decentralisation requires structural arrangement that goes beyond putting in place local governments. It requires a combination of vertical and horizontal decentralisation in which the vertical decentralisation transfers power and authority from central to local government and the horizontal decentralisation empowers the local communities and enables them to receive and utilise the powers transferred to them.

Devolution is considered a form of political decentralisation. Devolution refers to the full transfer of responsibility, decision-making, resources and revenue generation to a local level public authority that is and fully independent of the devolving authority. Units that are devolved are usually recognized as independent legal entities and are ideally elected.

Sylvian (2002) cites devolution as the transfer of responsibilities for decision-making and administration of public functions to local governments who

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elect their own functionaries and councils and have independent authority to make investment decision. Thus, devolution creates and strengthens the government institutions at the local level by devolving powers and functions to them. In this kind of system, the local government has lawfully recognised geographical limitations within which they work out their authority and carry out public function. Rizal (2001) identifies the essence of devolution process as the decentralisation of power and authority of decision-making to the districts, villages and towns, thus enabling the growth of autonomous units of self-governance.

There is a comprehensible and legally recognised geographical limitation for the local governments within which they exercise authority and carry out public function. Local government has corporate standing and the authority to secure resources to carry out their tasks; it should be an institution that provides the local citizens with the services that meets their requirements. Also, the local citizens should have some influential power over it and devolution is a system in which there are mutually beneficial and coordinated relationships between the governments both at the local and central levels.

Thus, in devolution, the local governments have the responsibility to decide which services should be provided on the priority basis and to whom. Devolution sets the basis for political decentralisation. Through devolution, the government at the central level relinquishes certain tasks or forms new government units that are outside its direct control. Devolution is inferred as one of the best forms of decentralisation. Here the local bodies have legal existence to

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exercise their own choices of decision-making concerning their own needs and aspirations. There is minimal or no control from the centre.

It is through devolution that the local capacities and knowledge are best used as devolution provides opportunity for the effective participation of the local people in the local decision-making process through their own local government institutions elected by themselves. Thus, this ultimately leads to proper administrative, political, and economic system management. It results in improved allocative efficiency as it opens the systems to the influence of the beneficiaries of the services delivered. However, Siddiqui (2005) states that devolution is incapable of serving the underprivileged if they do not participate and if they are not empowered. Thus, he suggests certain conditions and reforms to be made for the success of the system of devolution.

Political decentralisation, unlike administrative decentralisation, is not concerned primarily with increasing efficiency, improving service delivery by the government, removing bottlenecks and reducing delays and increasing the ability to recover cost, but it is concerned with the devolution of power to the grassroots and leading to the formation of local level governments (Kauzya, 2007). Thus, political decentralisation often requires constitutional or statutory reforms, the development of pluralistic political parties, the strengthening of legislatures, creation of local political units, and the encouragement of effective public interest groups (Adhikari, 2006).

However, the political decentralisation, despite a range of positive trends, cannot be a panacea. It would rather be presented as solution to larger number of

problems. Political decentralisation often fails to achieve its objectives because of the complex phenomenon involving many geographic entities like the international, national, sub-national and local levels and the social factors like the government, the private sector and civil society. Further, political decentralisation often fails in the absence of efforts towards strengthening of accountable local government institutions and developing popular participation. It is unlikely that decentralisation of the state will be accompanied by increased political power of the people if people do not exercise democratic control over the central apparatus of the state.

Political decentralisation can also result in loss of control over scare financial resources by the central government and loss of economies of scale. The weak administrative and technical capacities at the local and field levels may result in services being delivered less effectively and efficiently in some parts of the country. Equitable distribution of the services becomes difficult as administrative responsibilities may be transferred to the local levels without adequate financial resources. Political decentralisation can be time intensive activity if it aims at strengthening democracy and empowering citizens as it has to be a process-oriented activity. Thus, territorial unity and a minimum level of political stability should be present for any policy of political decentralisation (Smoke, 2003).

Administrative decentralisation

Generally, administrative decentralisation is the process of transfer of planning, financing and management responsibilities and functions from the

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central government, regional governments and its agencies to local governments, semi-autonomous public authorities and regional or functional authorities. According to Smoke (2003) administrative decentralisation redistributes responsibility, authority and financial resources for providing the public services among the different levels of government. Thus, administrative decentralisation divides the labour through functional differentiation and claims bureaucratic accountability to the people at the lower level than to the superiors by the structuring of rules, procedures, and institutions.

As far as development is concerned, administrative decentralisation is the most practiced and accepted form of decentralisation. Administrative decentralisation has been used by developing countries and nations in transition as strategy for addressing critical governmental needs like more effective and efficient production, delivery of public goods and services, improved governance, increased transparency and accountability. Administrative decentralisation has forms: de-concentration, and delegation, and privatization and they have different characteristics (Ahwoi, 2000).

De-concentration is the process of redistribution of the decision- making authority, financial authority and management responsibilities among the different levels of central government. The Decentralisation Thematic Team (World Bank, 2004), states that deconcentration creates strong field administration or local administrative capacity under the supervision of central government ministries. The specific functions and tasks of the central administration staff are transferred to the staff stationed in the lower level governments within the national territory.

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The managers of these lower/field level governments and agencies have authority for autonomous decision-making as the staff, equipment, vehicles and budgetary resources are transferred to the regional and district offices. Thus, it enables the local and field level offices to efficiently and effectively carry out the tasks through timely decision and reasonable latitude of flexibility and discretion as per the local needs and conditions. The primary objective of deconcentration is to improve the production efficiency of the administration with an improvement in the impact of the services delivered as second priority (Crook, 2003).

However, the Decentralisation Thematic Team (World Bank, 2004) also admits that in de-concentration, the central government agencies in the capital city simply shift their responsibilities to the regional, provincial and district offices. Despite the shift of financial and management responsibility to these offices, the appointments, salaries and assignments of the local administrative leaders were dependent on the central government. To this, Rizal (2001) also affirms that de-concentration does not allow adequate freedom to the local units to take initiatives and decision without the consent of central government. The field and local level agency just acts as the agents of the central government and does not have any autonomous status. Siddiqui (2005) states that de-concentration is a less desirable option as it retains central control and direction. He further states that de-concentration will trouble the activities at the local level if there is a poor quality of bureaucracy. De-concentration is not a widespread type of administrative decentralisation. However, it is commonly practiced in the developing countries.

Delegation is more common form of administrative decentralisation. It is through delegation that a central government transfers the decision-making responsibility for public function to semi-autonomous organisations which are not fully controlled by the central government, but they are ultimately accountable to it (Olowu, 2001). Delegation is the transfer of administrative and decision-making authority for the carefully spelled out task from the government to the semi-autonomous organisations. In delegation, the functions are transferred to the functional and regional development authorities and the special project implementation units with the consideration that these units would take up their budgeting, personnel recruitment, procurement, contracting and other matters reasonably free of central government regulations. It is also done with the consideration that these functional units would perform as the agent of the state while performing prescribed functions, with ultimate authority remaining with the central government (Siddiqui, 2005).

Delegation is a way to balance local and national government interest. According to Sylvian (2002), governments delegate responsibilities when they create public enterprises; special service districts; housing authorities; special project implementation units; semi-autonomous school districts and transportation authorities. These organisations usually have high discretionary power in decision-making and are often free of the limitation of regular civil service personnel and they can even collect user fees. Delegation does not restrict to the national service delivery, it can also be adopted by any level of government. However, Kauzya (2007) also insists that delegation can be troublesome if there is

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no local accountability in the organisation to which the delegation has been made and if the delegated organisations tend to be adherent to the higher-level bureaucrats and political leaders despite their stated legal position.

Economic decentralisation outlines the intervention of government for decentralising economic planning and development functions with the ultimate goal of utilising country's resources fully for maximum and low inflationary outputs with efficiency and economy. Economic decentralisation assures citizen's sovereignty in the choice of goods and services through the market mechanism. The key components of economic or market decentralisation are privatisation, deregulation and denationalization (Helmsing, 2003).

Privatization involves the shift of responsibility of functions from the public to the private sector. It allows functions that had been primarily or exclusively the responsibility of government to be carried out by businesses, community groups, cooperatives, private voluntary associations, and other non-governmental organisations. Privatisation includes the various ways in which the private sector takes up the functions that were previously carried out by the government (Siddiqui, 2005). Privatisation allows the private sectors to take up those functions that were monopolised by the government. The provision and management of the public services and facilities are contracted out to the commercial enterprises. Privatisation transfers the responsibilities to provide services from public to both profit and non-profit making private sectors through the divestiture of state-owned enterprises. It finances the public sector programmes through the capital market (Helmsing, 2003).

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Privatisation also helps in expanding the wealth and realising extensive private ownership in society, curbing inflation, raising extra revenues for the government, eliminating hidden unemployment and reducing the power of public employee unions. Privatisation is generally favoured by the donors. However, Siddiqui (2005) states that privatisation can increase the level of exclusion of the under privileged people through new pricing policies in discriminatory market. It can lead to distortion of the intended beneficial effects by the rent seeking rich in control of the economy. He further argues that privatisation without adequate regulations can also lead to loss of quality.

Deregulation is generally adopted because in deregulation, there are fewer and simpler regulations which will lead to a raised level of competitiveness, thus resulting in higher productivity, more efficiency and lower overall prices. It also erupts because the bureaucratic control over policy breeds bribery, corruption, commission and patronage and thus encumbers the growth of productive economic activities. Deregulation eases the private sectors to participate in the service provision by reducing the legal constraints on them. It encourages competition among the private sectors for the services that had been previously monopolised by the government. Deregulation permits the elimination of entry barriers and other price control and thus, allows the market to respond to people's need (Crook, 2003).

Denationalisation is a form of privatisation that engages selling to the private sector, the government owned enterprises or government owned assets used in producing goods and services (Siddiqui, 2005). Denationalisation also

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encompasses demunicipalisation and other forms of destatification. Privatisation and deregulation have been commonly practiced alternatively in developing countries. Local governments are also privatising by contracting out service provision or administration.

Fiscal Decentralisation

Fiscal decentralisation comprises the financial aspects of devolution to regional and local government. Fiscal decentralisation generally refers to the process of changing the source and distribution of resource availability at the local levels of governments. Fiscal decentralisation system defines how and in what ways the revenues and expenditures are organised among the different levels of government in the national polity. For the local governments to fully deliver the potential benefits of decentralisation, they need to be financially empowered, thus fiscal decentralisation is seen as the empowerment of communities and citizens by fiscally empowering their local governments (Offei-Aboagye, 2009).

Davey (2003) states that fiscal decentralisation covers two interrelated issues: the first being the division of revenue sources and spending responsibilities between the different levels of government and the second being the amount of discretionary power given to the local and the regional governments for determining their revenues and expenditures. These combined dimensions have a major impact on the reality of decentralisation in its broader political and administrative sense. He further states that the amount of power and responsibility the regional and local governments actually exercise depends significantly on ranges of public services they finance; the adequacy of the

revenues to take up these responsibilities; the amount of the choices they have in apportioning their budget to the desired/required services; and the availability of the authority to determine the rates of their taxes and charges.

Fiscal decentralisation is also not a perfect form of decentralisation as it also has its negative aspects. Kolstad and Fjeldstad (2006) state the negative aspects of fiscal decentralisation as: decentralisation may lead to inefficient decision and use of resources if there are positive or negative externalities present between regions or if the fiscal functions have economies of scale or scope. The opponents of fiscal decentralisation states that there will be high risk of escalating the national inequity if too much fiscal decisions are transferred to the local governments and the central government may be left with few policy instruments to correct this. The local government often lacks the capacity to handle the tasks transferred by the fiscal decentralization (Manor, 2001).

Thus, to curve these risks, Smoke (2001) lists out some key elements that should be included in a good fiscal decentralisation programmes: sufficient enabling environment; assignment of the local government with appropriate set of local revenue source; and establishment of adequate intergovernmental fiscal transfer system; and establishment of adequate access of local government to development capitals. Thus, these elements would enable an effective and efficient fiscal decentralisation system.

Benefits of Decentralisation

The effects of decentralisation on society are often contested. If well-designed and implemented, it is argued that decentralisation could have a positive impact on local communities. According to Crook and Sverrisson (2001), decentralisation advocates argue that decentralised governments are more responsive to the needs of the poor than central governments and thus are more likely to conceive and implement pro-poor policies. Shah (2006) shares similar views as Crook and Sverrisson (2001) to the extent that if the local government is sufficiently autonomous, it does not need to seek approval from the central government and therefore can make and implement decisions more rapidly and responsively than central agencies.

This positive attitude to decentralisation results from the fact that well-managed decentralisation brings about improved efficiency, improved governance, improved equity and improved development and poverty reduction (Saito, 2003). Apart from the fact that decentralisation brings government closer to the people, it also creates a more open political system, promotes participation and improves the controlling function held by the local levels, enhances state capacity and increases effectiveness as well as efficiency. Moreover, decentralisation can improve information provision, local revenue maximisation and accountability. Overall, the potential benefits of decentralisation can be categorised in terms of political values, governance values, and efficiency values (Olowu, 2001). The above classification of the benefits of decentralisation parallels that of (McCarthy, 2004) and focuses on governance, society and

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development. Due to the contextual nature of decentralisation, however, its benefits are not automatic (Olowu, 2001).

Asante and Ayee (2003) argue that if "devolution" and "delegation" are carried out properly, they can make development programmes effective. However, decentralisation in developing countries has mostly taken the form of deconcentration. In Ghana, one major act of "devolution" was the creation of the district assemblies and the transfer of resources and power to these local governments. However, this does not mean that decentralisation has improved the efficiency of the administration of rural development. As suggested by some authors in the literature, the benefits of such decentralisation have been mostly enjoyed by the dominant power groups (Beall, 2005). According to Beall (2005), genuine decentralisation of resources and power cannot take place at the local level unless the entire structure of development planning changes. In decentralised power structure, plans are formulated by the rural people at the grassroots and not imposed from above.

Decentralisation of power can facilitate empowerment of people. Some writers suggest that local communities should be empowered and that this is likely to result in sustainable development. The features of normal bureaucracy which include centralisation of authority, especially financial control and standardisation of rules, recommendations and actions may not facilitate the empowerment of people. Hence, it is felt that the participation of beneficiaries in the formulation, implementation, and maintenance of programmes is necessary (Sharma, 2000).

The justification of the local community's participation is based on the arguments that local people organised best around the problems they consider most important such as in assessing needs and finding solutions; local people make rational economic decisions in the context of their own environment and circumstances providing appropriately for the risks associated with the change; and that local participation also ensures voluntary commitment of resources and local control over the quality and distribution of benefits (Balogun, 2000).

Participation is currently a key aspect of most discussions on decentralisation and is often uttered in the same sentence. Participation is believed to help legitimise the planning process and the state as a whole (Conyers, 2000). Decentralisation is argued for on the grounds that 'public participation and citizen involvement in programmes is a good in and of itself'. Participation of rural populations has become a core principle in natural resource management, and more recently decentralisation has become a commonly cited means of achieving it.

Although decentralisation may not be a panacea for all the public sector ills in the developing world, and of Africa in particular, Smoke (2003) states that there is a general consensus that if well-designed and implemented, it can, together with local governance, be one of the essential axes of development policy in Africa. Nevertheless, there are risks which may impede the successful implementation of the decentralisation process.

Challenges of Decentralisation

If not well-managed, decentralisation has several drawbacks. Prud'homme (1995) argues that the dangers of decentralisation can include increased regional disparities and difficulties in implementing macro-economic policies. Regarding the increased regional disparities, Prud'homme (1995) pointed out that because decentralisation measures can adversely affect the distribution of equity, a substantial body of public finance literature holds that the redistribution of income should remain a responsibility of the central government. To this end the central government must control a large share of taxes and public expenditures as some regions are well-off whilst others are poor. The latter greatly affects fiscal policy and allocative efficiency gains are significantly reduced. Furthermore, there is more concentration on demand efficiency rather than supply efficiency, and production efficiency suffers from lack of economies of scale due to the small size of the local jurisdictions.

Moreover, in terms of equity, decentralisation of resources is invariably regressive as a result of reductions in central government expenditure relatively, and greater bargaining by more powerful and richer sub-national authorities, poorer and weaker regions are often left in weaker financial positions. Another problem resulting from decentralisation is 'elite power capture' by local elites who use the new powers to their benefit and not for the benefit of the rest of the community and corruption becomes rampant at the local government level (Olowu, 2001; Crook, 2003). It must be acknowledged also that due to inequalities of wealth and power at the local level, local elites may be less pro-

poor than those at the national level and therefore could usurp the decision-making process and use it to their advantage.

Further, according to Helmsing (2003), the local authorities often lack the means to sustain economic activity due to the fact that their increased responsibilities have not been matched with adjustments in revenue powers or transfers from the central government. This situation is equivalent to 'decentralising poverty' as pointed out by Prud'homme (1995). Other risks, which could undermine the successful implementation of the decentralisation process in developing countries, relate to corruption at the local level, the administrative and management systems in place and due to the fact that councilors normally want to play a populist game, especially when elections are imminent, and thus may not be willing to pass by-laws that propose to increase or introduce local taxes.

Accordingly, these issues could consequently lead to revenue minimisation instead of maximisation. There is, however, additional controversy as to whether or not these disadvantages are inherent flaws of decentralisation. It has been suggested that controls from both above and below could be a remedy for the general mismanagement at the local level (Olowu, 2001). This mismanagement could also be alleviated through information and encouragement. Further, Prud'homme (1995) has suggested that inter-governmental transfers from the central government can be a remedy for some of the problems associated with decentralisation, such as those relating to inter-regional or inter-personal equity and macro-economic stability.

Definition of Local Government

Despite the fact that the local government discourse has been in the limelight for a long period of time, it has defied a common definition. Though practitioners, authors and academics alike have given different forms of definitions for this concept, they all agree to a point on some basic common concepts that help explain what local government is and entails. The United States Agency for International Development [USAID] (2004) defines local government as a political sub-division of a nation which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs including the powers to impose taxes or to exact labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally.

Also, local government is viewed as a system of territorial unit with defined boundaries, a legal identity, an institutional structure, powers and duties laid down in general and special statutes and a degree of financial and other autonomy. Shah and Shah (2006) also see local government as the authority constitutionally empowered to raise and spend money for local purposes and which has responsibility for government at the grassroots or local level, especially on matters within its jurisdiction.

From the foregoing discussions, local government in this study is considered as all sub-national units of government below the central government that have legal personality, specified powers to perform certain specified functions, involves effective citizen participation, and having a substantial

budgeting and staffing autonomy in the promotion of the development of its area of jurisdiction.

Since the last two decades, the need for strong decentralised local government has received considerable attention globally. This has been attributed to the realisation that the centralised authority that characterised Africa in the 1960s and 70s has been ineffective in promoting political stability and national development (Ribot, 2001). Various governments in Africa, faced by their inefficiencies in their centralised rule looked for other options. They hoped to find solace in local participation in decision-making. This led to various local structures for local development.

According to Rondinelli (2002), the method was to create a mixed authority for operating local services and investing in local development – variously called people's executive councils in the Sudan, development committees in Tanzania and the district assemblies in Ghana. These local governments were to use the authority granted them to raise funds, draw development plans and budgets for implementation. These became the lowest level of government which collect taxes, provide a limited range of services for their citizens, and represented by some elected personnel and career civil servants.

Broadly defined, Rondinelli (2002) points out that local government is a unit of government that has its own budget and a separate legal existence, with authority granted to it by the central government to allocate substantial material resources on a range of different functions. In sum, local government is understood as a geographically defined sub-national unit of government legally

created by the central government which has powers to plan, budget and implement its own decisions within the laws of the state and may consist of elected and/or appointed members and public officials.

Shah (2005) pointed   some of the critical characteristics of local government across a wide range of countries: its own budget (balance estimates of revenue and expenditure, a separate bank account, with the cheque-book held by an employee of the local authority (not a central civil servant); a separate legal existence (corporate status, often with a common seal, power to sue and be sued, power to hold land and property as its own not in the name of central government); the authority to allocate substantial resources (quantity of finance handled, number and qualifications of the staff employed, power to decide over expenditure, power to vary revenues and decision over staff appointments, promotion, discipline); a range of different functions (the function can vary widely, but a single purpose) and the decision made by representatives of local bodies (Hyden, Court, & Mease, 2004).

These general characteristics of local government as observed by Shah (2005), is inherent in the political and administrative decentralisation policy reforms that transfer varying amounts and combinations of functions, responsibilities, resources, political and fiscal autonomy to lower tiers of the state. However, it is to be noted that in practice some of these characteristics are missing in many African countries. For example, in Ghana, although local authorities must have authority for decisions over staff appointments, promotion and discipline, it is however not the case. Except the very junior staff like

labourers and drivers, the local government staffs are recruited by the central government as well as their promotions. This suggests that staff of different departments look up to their parent organisations for their career progression and this might have consequences on their working relations with the DCE as well as other local representatives and the local citizens.

Responsibilities of Local Governments

Local governments are seen as the handmaidens of a higher government order (Shah, 2007). They are seen to be extensions of state or national governments and act on behalf of these higher levels of government. In many cases, especially in a unitary state system, policy development, standards of service and policy performance are determined at the national level. The local governments are then to carry out oversight implementation at the local level.

In the promotion of local economic development, local government within this style are seen to implement policies, programmes and projects on behalf of these higher orders of government. From this, it could be deduced that local governments are not autonomous and only exist to advance the interest and wishes of higher levels of government. This may affect adversely the participation of the local people and local institutions in local decision-making and issues directly influencing the development of the local area. Also, programmes and projects that may be implemented may not be in the interest of the local people as their needs may not be captured in the process and adequately catered for. This notwithstanding, the standards of service and policy performance determined by the centre may serve as a check on the activities of the local governments. This

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can help keep the local governments to pursue agenda not outside the national interest.

Again, local governments have the responsibility as independent facilitators of creating public value (Addo-Deku, 2012). This places significant emphasis on the government as an agent of the people to serve public interest and create public value which indicates measurable improvements in social outcomes or quality of life. This concept is directly relevant to local and municipal services, for which it is feasible to measure such improvements and have some sense of attribution.

This is useful in evaluating conflicting and perplexing choices in the use of local resources and in defining the role of local governments. The role of public managers in local governments in this direction is to tap local free resources and push the frontiers of improved social outcomes beyond what may be possible with meager local revenues. Thus, public managers create value by mobilising and facilitating a network of service providers beyond local government.

This responsibility makes it mandatory for local governments to seek the interest and welfare of the local people. It has the right to use resources at its disposal for the good of all. This has the potential of improving bottom-up decision-making. In this sense, local leaders can be held more accountable for the development of local areas and the use of resources. Despite this, individual capture of these institutions disallows them to function within this frame. A few elite within the local governments in many cases manipulate the use of these

resources to their advantage neglecting the mass majority. Also the use of these resources to create public value is fraught with corrupt practices (Ahwoi, 2010). Again, measurable improvements in social outcomes may be minimal as local governments have inadequate capacity to provide adequate services. This then calls for the facilitation of stakeholder involvement in the development process by the local government (White & Gasser, 2001).

The local governments are again expected to facilitate network forms of local governance (Shah, 2005). They have the opportunity to play a catalytic role in facilitating the roles of both interest-based and hope-based networks in improving social outcomes for local residents. To play such a role, local governments must develop a strategic vision of how such partnerships can be formed and sustained. In doing this, they should separate policy advice from programme implementation and assume a role as purchasers of public services but not necessarily as providers (Ahwoi, 2010). Local government may have to outsource services with higher provision costs and subject in-house providers to competitive pressures from outside providers to lower transaction costs for citizens. The question one needs to ask is that, are local governments really doing this? They assert themselves to an extent that other players are not willing to join hands together with them in local level development.

These other stakeholders see them as institutions filled with bureaucracy, corrupt practices and lack of transparency. This then may influence, negatively, the ability of local governments in carrying out this responsibility. Though this responsibility advocates that the local government should be a purchaser only of

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public goods, it may be suicidal in certain cases where local areas lack the kind of resources which may be attractive to private service providers. It is therefore necessary for local governments to consider their peculiar situations and advice themselves (Ahwoi, 2000).

Moreover, the local governments are to advance their self-interest. This is because as institutions involved in policy formulation and implementation, it is expected to use opportunities and resources to advance it. This should lead to the good of the local area it oversees. But on several occasions, this interest of local governments has overshadowed that of their local areas whereby local leaders have captured these institutions to their benefit. Also, local governments tend to exploit local people through high levels of taxation leading to the collapse of economic entities. Though these responsibilities seem to be separate and distinct, local governments carry out a mixture of them.

In sum, this is to reveal the ability of LGs to act generally as catalysts to economic and social development. This general notion of the contribution of LGs in socio-economic change will provide a basis for the evaluation of LGs in Ghana if they are structured to function in an adequate manner and if their performance meets the expected standards.

Rationale for Local Governments

According to Shah and Shah (2006), decentralised decision-making and a strong role for local governments in local development is supported by many accepted theories on the grounds of efficiency, accountability, manageability, and autonomy. In the first place, Shapiro (2003) identifies two principles of

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jurisdictional design. He states that the closer a representative government is to the people, the better it works. Also, people should have the right to vote on the kind and amount of public services they want. In the light of these principles, decision-making should occur at the lowest level of government consistent with the goal of allocative efficiency (Janda, 2005)

Furthermore, the decentralisation theorem advanced by Oates (1972), proposes that each public service should be provided by the jurisdiction having control over the minimum geographic area that would internalise benefits and costs of such provision. Because local governments understand the concerns of local residents, local decision-making is responsive to the people for whom the services are intended, thus encouraging fiscal responsibility and efficiency, especially if financing of services is also decentralised. It is also of the view that unnecessary layers of jurisdiction are eliminated while inter-jurisdictional competition and innovation is enhanced (Shanmugaratnam, 2001).

An ideal decentralised system ensures a level and combination of public services consistent with local people's preferences while providing incentives for the efficient provision of such services. The final theoretical support in the discussion is based on the subsidiarity principle. By this principle, taxing, spending, and regulatory functions should be exercised by lower levels of government unless a convincing case can be made for assigning them to higher levels of government. This principle evolved from the social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and was first proposed by Pope Leo XIII in 1891. Subsequently, Pope Pius XI highlighted the principle of subsidiarity as a third

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way between dictatorship and a laissez-faire approach to governance. This principle is the polar opposite of the residuality principle typically applied in a unitary country, where local governments are assigned functions that the central government is unwilling or thinks it is unable to perform (Janda, 2005).

The above supports the view of Oyugi (2000), that all problems are not central problems and that the results of the problems not central in their incidence require decision at the place where the incidence is most deeply felt. This suggests that local governments are established to help solve local problems where the impacts of these problems are heavily felt. It is also envisaged to manage local affairs and ensure that the basic needs of local people are met. Local government also provides the framework within which local human and material resources could be mobilised for development at the local level. It also exists to promote the delivery of effective and efficient public goods and services at the local level. To the central government, it serves as a bridge against excessive centralisation of government and helps to decongest issues that are essentially local and to facilitate local governance at the local level.

Local leaders are prone to better understand local situations, and local governments, especially mayors, if provided with adequate resources and autonomy can provide critical leadership concerning decisions on resource allocation. Their day-to-day knowledge of local resources, local needs and other community factors provide them with insights and capacity for making sound and more timely judgments than central governments. Citizens look to their elected officials for immediate responses to their problems. In many arenas, local

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governments execute certain expenditure programmes better than national governments due to their physical proximity to the community which gives them a better capacity to determine and assess local interests and requirements (Grooten, 2004).

This highlights the advantages inherent in local level decision-making, service delivery and control. The capacity of LGs to mobilise local resources cannot be over-emphasized because they can more accurately reflect local priorities, they can also, more accurately, develop a sense of accountability among their constituencies. More still, LGs ensure that local processes are democratic and good democratic practice at the local level greatly improves construction, reconstruction and service delivery. Attuned to voters' needs and reactions, local governments have the potential to build community consensus around controversial issues, including infrastructure building, and other environmental programmes.

Ribot (2001) supported local governments by indicating that to achieve a social and general economic growth requires a spreading of effort so that local communities and individuals can participate to bring under ideal conditions, energy, enthusiasm and most important of all, local initiatives to the working out of opportunities for local development activities. In this sense local authorities provide the opportunity for local people to participate in local decisions and local schemes within the general national policies and to act above all as local centres of initiative and activity conducive for development. From these, local governments should ensure local development within the frame of social,

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economic, and environmental development and better local governance (Kolavillir and kerr, 2002).

In both developed and developing countries, local government institutions have the potential in raising agricultural and industrial production in the collective action of managing scarce resources and other local institutions and the informal sector to organise themselves for effective economic activities. They play an important role in meeting the needs of the informal and private sectors by creating the enabling environment for them to operate and create jobs for the local people which in a way lead to a reduction in the poverty levels of the local people. Some local governments are also into the direct provisions of services that create jobs and income for the local people (Olowu, 2004; Hussein, 2003).

The Institute of Local Government Studies

Ghana's decentralisation policy arrangement has benefited immensely from the establishment of the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) in May 1999. Its primary function is to sustain and coordinate capacity-building initiatives in the MMDAs (Ofei-Aboagye, 2008). The Institute's mandate covers all functionaries in local government and institutions that work in partnership with the district assemblies. Therefore, it also relates to local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), central government departments and foreign organisations. The Institute has three main departments: education and training; research, advisory services and consultancy; and information and documentation services. This is an innovation since all over Africa; inadequate human and financial resources have been identified as one of the major concerns to decentralisation.

Inadequate skilled staff at the local government level puts a limit on the amount of intervention that local governments can embark on successfully and also implies that important aspect of accountability such as keeping the books in order, refining policies or designing new ones cannot be undertaken successfully.

The National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana

Originally known as the National Association of Local Councils, NALAG was established following the restructuring of the local government system in 1988. Its mandate includes:

1. Promoting the development of local government administration in Ghana;

2. Protecting the rights, privileges and interests of all District Assemblies;

3. Assisting in maintaining high standards of local government administration and service delivery;

4. Providing a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas; and

5. Co-operating with other bodies and agencies both national and international

In fact, NALAG operates as a non-partisan association that seeks to promote the welfare of all member MMDAs (local authorities). Membership of NALAG comprises all the District/Municipal Assemblies established under the Local Government Act, Act 936 of 2016. Even though the executives of NALAG include regional representatives, it is far removed from the assemblies by virtue of the fact that they do not have regional and district secretariats.

The Local Government Service

Established by the Local Government Service Act of 2003, Act 656, the object of the Service is to secure the effective administration and management of local government in Ghana. Apart from Ghana Civil Service, this Act creates a Service whose membership comprises persons holding non-elected office in the Regional Coordinating Councils and the MMDAs, sub-Metropolitan District Councils, the Urban, Zonal, Town, and Area Councils, the Secretariat of the Local Government Service and employees of the Local Government Service. The non-elected office holders refer to the staff of the RCCs and the MMDAs. However, the position of government appointees of the MMDAs remains unclear since they seem not to belong to the Local Government Service.

The Service is governed by a body of 15 members referred to as the Local Government Service Council. As spelt out in Section 4 of the Act, the Service is to provide technical assistance to DAs and RCCs in order to enable them effectively perform their functions, and also conduct organisational and job analysis for those institutions. Although this can be seen as an acceptance of the state's commitment to decentralisation as a development tool, other scholars such as Ahwoi (2010) argues that the Service has many re-centralising features, which are inconsistent with the constitutional provisions of decentralisation. He further argues that the Service strengthens the control of the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development not only over the Local Government Service Council but also over the District Assemblies.

Much as one cannot deny Ahwoi (2010)'s argument, the establishment of the Local Government Service when performing its functions effectively, might reduce the participation and accountability challenges that face the DAs. This is because all the staff of the Assembly will now become appointees of the Service and therefore belong to the local government. There is also the possibility of reducing the prevailing problem of dual allegiance of staff; for instance the staffs of the Finance Department of the DAs are under their parent Ministry of Finance instead of the Local Government.

National Development Planning Commission

The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) provides guidance and assistance to the DAs in the preparation of their district medium-term development plans (DMTDPs). The guidance describes the format of the district development plans containing the district programmes and projects using the mechanism of the composite budget.

The Office of the Administrator of the District Assemblies' Common Fund

The Office of the Administrator of DACF is attached to the President's office but works directly with the Minister for Local Government and Rural Development. It has the practical task of disbursing funds on a quarterly basis to each of the districts in Ghana. It also reviews the annual formula to determine the distribution of the District Assemblies Common Fund among the 170 districts with reports submitted to Parliament for consideration and approval. The Office in accordance with Section 9 of the DACF Act 1993, Act 455, then issues the

Guidelines for Utilization of the DACF in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and in accordance with the decision of the Cabinet. The guidelines for the utilisation of DACF serve as control as well as DAs use of funds in line with national priorities.

In section 125 of the 2016 Act 936 stated that

1. In accordance with Article 252 of the Constitution there shall be a Fund to be known as the District Assemblies Common Fund.

2. The District Assemblies Common Fund consists of (a) moneys allocated by Parliament; and (b) any interests and dividends that accrue from the investments of moneys from the Common Fund.

3. The allocation made by Parliament shall be paid into the Common Fund in quarterly installments.

4. The moneys that accrue to the Common Fund shall be distributed among the District Assemblies on the basis of a formula approved by Parliament.

5. The Administrator of the Common Fund shall submit proposals for the formula to Parliament for consideration within three months after the end of each financial year. Parliament to make allocations to District Assemblies for development 126.

   i. Parliament shall annually allocate not less than five per cent of the total revenue of the country to the District Assemblies for development.

   ii. The total revenues of the country includes the revenues collected by or accruing to the central Government other than foreign loans

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and foreign grants, non-tax revenue, petroleum revenue paid into the Petroleum Holding Fund under section 3 of the Petroleum Revenue Management Act, 2011 (Act 815) and revenues already collected by or for District Assemblies under any enactment.

iii. The Minister shall, in consultation with the Minister responsible for Finance, determine the category of expenditure of the approved development budget of District Assemblies that must in each year be met out of amounts received by the District Assemblies from the District Assemblies Common Fund.

The Traditional Authorities (Chieftaincy Institution)

The institution of chieftaincy in Ghana has been recognized as a powerful institution since the colonial days. The traditional authorities who represent the chieftaincy institution are not only the custodians of the land but also they settle disputes and are regarded as the spiritual leaders of the society. The idea that the chief *represents* his people is not based on Western representational government that presupposes free elections and universal suffrage; rather, it is grounded on a social and moral order of representation vested in the office he occupies (Ahwoi, 2010). Their primary role pertains to their function as custodians of "traditional" resources, institutions, and values. The traditional authorities are found in almost every hamlet, village, town and the city in Ghana. Territories of similar traditional roots form paramountcies which are headed by paramount chiefs.

The paramount chiefs have bodies known as the Regional and National House of Chiefs respectively, established by the Chieftaincy Act of 1971.

According to the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, Chiefs cannot engage in active party politics, although the meaning of "active" party politics still remains unclear. Notwithstanding whatever interpretation one gives to it, because of the traditional powers that the traditional authorities hold often influence who becomes an assembly member or even a Member of Parliament, particularly in the rural communities.

In reality, local representatives and MPs pay homage to traditional authorities as a way of lobbying them and their subjects (people) for support particularly during political campaign for elections. To the extent that local representatives at the DAs often consult their chiefs before they could contest for DA elections. A domain, in which chiefs have lost influence however, is the adjudication of many civil cases hitherto adjudicated at Chiefs palace but currently often at the DAs for arbitration.

This erodes chiefs' traditional powers and also erodes their financial basis because finances that normally would have accrued to them by way of fines during arbitration are no longer paid to them. With the 1992 Constitution barring the chiefs in engaging in active politics, one will argue that there is the need for a common platform of various chiefs at the local level beside the paramount/ traditional areas where local issues are held.

Community Development in Ghana

During the first development decades of the 1950s and 1960s, community development (CD) was actively promoted throughout the developing world as part of the state building process and as a means of raising standards of living by

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governments and by the United Nations through its affiliated institutions as part of independence and decolonization movements in Africa (Briggs & Mueller, 1997). During this period, community development programmes were established by the state to mobilize people in the local communities. Wharf (1999) notes that in Anglophone Africa, community development during the first half of the twentieth century was informed by the dominant modernization development theory. Provision of infrastructure was perceived as the means of modernizing the so - called primitives of the less developed realm of the world. Hence, the Gold Coast government-initiated steps in the early 1940s to promote community development. This effort culminated into the setting up of the Community Development Department by the state in 1948 to focus on rural development.

In Ghana, over 50 years of development aid, strategies and efforts have apparently not succeeded in improving the standard of living of the majority of the population (Briggs & Mueller, 1997). The attempts by government, the IMF and the World Bank, over the last three decades, to implement programmes, policies and strategies designed to halt the declining trends of poor living standards of the people and create a conducive atmosphere to take –off to sustained economic growth and prosperity was achieved with minimal success.

In the 1980s and 1990s, governments in sub-Sahara Africa, including Ghana, increasingly downsized core public service operations, experimented with alternative ways to deliver services, and down-loaded many services from government to communities, civil society organizations and individuals through the decentralization concept (Kokor, 2004). CD programmes received substantial

support from governments and donor agencies. Therefore, many governments promoted development projects that aimed at environmental security, social renewal, and income generation (Cohen, 1996). The goals of these projects were to address the poverty, hunger, disease, and apathy that were endemic among the rural and urban poor. Attempts were made to encourage citizens' groups, communities, churches, and NGOs to participate in the projects that could best be handled at the grassroots level.

Over the past years, local communities have responded in large numbers to some successful CD programmes that governments and Non-government organisations (NGOs) initiated in the area of health and family planning, education, agriculture, and infrastructure etc. For example, in the 1990s the Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment (PAMSCAD) – which the Provisional National Defence Council established (PNDC) – aimed, among other things, at developing and rehabilitating rural housing.

Historical Perspective on Community Development in Ghana

CD in Ghana dates back to 1948, after the Second World War when the British colonial regime established the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development (Alsop & Nina, 2005). The growth of CD during the 1950s was one of the most important factors in the social and economic development of the country. The efforts of politicians, civil servants, and churches – all struggling to define an effective CD program for the country –traditional local leaders contributed through their often-superior knowledge and skills in the area of village development (Alsop & Nina, 2005).

Community Development (CD) gained considerable impetus in the colonial era for a number of reasons. The first reason relates to the success of the farmers' co-operatives that had been established between 1929 and 1931 (Brown, 1986). Most of the cocoa farmers who belonged to cooperatives relied on traditional techniques of self-help and mutual aids (called nnoboa) to prepare the cocoa beans for fermentation and drying. Also, basic services and infrastructures in rural areas (such as clinics, schools, feeder roads, and water) were poor. Their poor condition necessitated a CD strategy that relied on indigenous resources. Adult literacy was promoted through CD campaigns. The programme captured the enthusiasm of the 'educated few' in the villages – including teachers, clerks, and store-keepers – and persuaded them to act as volunteer teachers.

Another important CD educational program was the self-help village projects initiative, which responded to the people's desire for concrete results in the form of community facilities and services such as schools and clinics. One of the most popular projects was the Henderson Box. This was a tank that stored water that had been directed from a stream through concrete channels into a coarse filtration tank containing sand and stone (Sautoy, 1960).

Through literacy education and adult education, community development became a useful instrument for extension campaigns. Hence, extension campaigns introduced new and improved techniques designed to enable people, to improve their general standard of living through their own efforts (Sautoy, 1960). Other government agencies adopted this approach as well. In 1953 the Department of Agriculture asked Community Development staff for help in disseminating

information on rice growing, the use of fertilizer, and the production of manure for mixed farming. Also, workers were taught adult education techniques and the principles and practice of Community Development. For example, they learned agriculture, basic building techniques, and the use of visual aids. In addition, rural training centres in the country providwed refresher courses. It was as a result of this that the National School of Social Welfare in Panfokrom, near Accra, conducted courses on basic building techniques, on how to conduct literacy days, and on public speaking.

Nkrumah gave CD top priority after the Convention People's Party won the general election and assumed power in 1952. In adopting the guidelines of universal education program that had been developed by the colonial administration six years before independence, a detailed plan was formulated and tabled in the legislative assembly in 1952 and approved unanimously (Alsop & Nina, 2005). The plan stressed literacy education and self-help among the population and signalled the government's readiness to collaborate with those who sought to help combat illiteracy in the country (Sautoy, 1960). An experimental mass-education team, which was based at the School of Social Welfare in Accra, established a curriculum that included group discussion, drama, physical training, first aid, and music.

However, after independence, the Community Development department found itself caught in a political crossfire as government and ideologies began to change rapidly. As a result, most of the functions and structures of Community Development dramatically changed over time, though the approach remains the

same. Nkrumah turned the Community Development operation into an arm of the new Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, with the goal of establishing co-operatives that would conform to the government's socialist policies (Brown, 1986). Despite all this, community development programs such as self-help projects, adult education, and women's work and extension campaigns continued to be promoted. It is important to state that the ousting of Nkrumah's administration by the National Liberation Council (NLC) and the subsequent transfer of political power to Busia's Progress Party (PP) in 1968, did not significantly change the community development agenda and programmes.

During the early months of the National Redemption Council (NRC) administration, which ousted the Busia government in 1972, CD programs became more popular; the regime heavily promoted self-reliance and established programs such as Operation Feed Your Self and Operation Free the Industries (Donkor & Lea, 1980). In the urban areas, people began to plant cassava, plantain and vegetables in their backyards, while in the rural areas people increased their production. However, because of administrative mismanagement, the self-help ideology did not last long. The Third Republic, under President Limann, did not make any major changes to Community Development.

When the Provisional National Defence Council Party (PNDC) under J. J. Rawlings came to power in 1981, the Community Development department was separated from Social Welfare and placed under the Ministry of Local Government (Jefferies, 1992). The goal of the separation was to bring together departments that promoted local development so that the local people and their

communities could have more input into decision-making and benefit directly. The prevailing conditions of poverty, disease, and apathy have led, in recent years, to the development of associations, groups, and NGOs. Among these associations, are women's groups, producers' and traders' associations, environmental organizations, and church groups, which aim to empower the poor and develop intermediate organisations. It is interesting to note that among the domestic NGOs, the Ghana Rural Reconstruction Movement has been very active in promoting adult education and self-help village projects; it also provides extension services to farmers (Gorman, 2011). In various localities in Ghana, there is an emerging proliferation of informal networks and organisations, which are involved in various aspects of Community Development initiatives (Kendi & Guri, 2006).

Participation in Community Development

Given that CD aims at invoking collective interests and aspirations for both individual and group benefits, participation is the driving force of CD. However, the pursuit of community participation, whether as a demand of citizenship or a strategy of governments or organizations, has a peculiar intrinsic value if community members are to own and sustain development. The quest for encouraging and promoting community participation has engaged the attention of several academics and development practitioners. Participation means different things to different people, but essentially it has to do with involving the people, who would be eventually affected by the same decisions, in contributing in making, implementing and monitoring those decisions. Numerous attempts have

been made to define participation, although it is generally recognized that "participation defies any single attempt at definition or interpretation" (Oakley 1991, p. 6). For instance, the stream of development thinking points to participation as a process of empowering those who were previously excluded from achieving power; that is, 'power' in terms of access to, and control of the resources necessary to protect livelihood (Flecknoe & Neil, 1994).

The Human Development Report (UNDP, 1999) echoes the imperative of people participating in their own development, remarking that people's participation is becoming the central issue in the face of current challenges for development. As a means, the concept leads to efficiency, effectiveness and equity when community members are allow to take part in project conception, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The ultimate end of this process is that beneficiaries become empowered and self-reliant in the quest for developing themselves and the entire community. One analyst emphasizes the central position that participation occupies in development when s/he notes that,

> "*Participation is concerned with human development and increases people's sense of control over issues which affect their lives, helps them to learn how to plan and implement and, on a broader front, prepares them for participation at regional or even national level. In essence, participation is a 'good thing' because it breaks people's isolation and lays the groundwork for them to have not only a more substantial influence on development, but also a greater independence and control over their lives*" (Oakley, 1991, p. 17).

Generally, communities in less developed countries like Ghana, believe in participation and for that matter project of common interest are communally executed. An example is the "nnoboa" system among the Ashanti and "Kotaar" among the Dagaaba. However, whether the community will be effective in initiating and participating in CD as a programme depends on the community dynamics and the culturally arranged leadership. The bottom line, however, is that to be effective, participatory initiatives must include a sharing of power: participation implies a more active form of public involvement, where decisions are taken jointly between the community and decision-makers. In Ghana, the government and nongovernmental organizations have always facilitated communities to participate in local governance, natural resources management and other social project management either through the community representatives or the entire community members (Kendie & Guri, 2006).

Contemporary Community Development Practice in Ghana

The Ghana government (under the various regimes), the community members themselves, and NGOs have promoted the CD practice in several ways since independence in 1957. Preceding governments in Ghana through the Department of Community Development have played a central role in the exercise of CD work. In the past three decades or more, government has been the sole initiator of community development work (Songsore, 2003). For instance, in the early months of the NRC administration, CD activities were very prominent. It promoted self-reliance through the Operation Feed Your Self programme where individual farmers and farmers' associations increased their production levels.

Since the PNDC era, decentralisation concept has been central in the promotion of community development in which local leadership takes active part in the local development projects, such as: schools, clinics, water points, KVIP construction, and road construction and maintenance among others (Shapiro, 2003).

This decentralized institutional arrangement operates in tandem with the Department of Community Development. However, public sector led CD initiatives have suffered in Ghana due to mismanagement, coup d'états, and politicization of such programmes (Rondinelli, 2002). Sometimes, the practice of CD is also community led. In Ghana CD work has brought many communities together and made them stronger. As self-driven concept (CD), community leadership (especially in the form of the chiefs and Assembly members) often mobilizes their people to undertake communal work to meet the needs of the community members. Such initiatives often include local roads construction, clearing weeds and forests in the community, enacting and enforcing traditional byelaws and so on (Rapley, 1997).

Also, such initiatives include social capital issues such as the coming together to mourn and bury the dead of one's family member. Some of the community self-driven initiatives often attract government's and/or NGOs' interests in coming to support the communities (Ouedraogo, 2005). For example, the Nandom traditional area in the Upper West Region of Ghana has passed bye-laws banning bush burning for over 15 years now. The government and the Care International, an NGO, have given their support for the initiative. It is important to note that the CBOs and other indigenous established power structures influence

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the mobilization of the community members for work. Several NGOs, CBOs, Faith-Based Organizations actively engage in CD work. Their approach is often to facilitate the process so that the beneficiary communities can lead the development process (Olowu, 2004).

Chapter Summary

In sum, this chapter has given a historical account of the development of decentralised local government in Ghana. It has shown the various stages and attempts of the decentralisation policy reforms and local government in Ghana. The picture so far shows that decentralisation is a process that has unfolded gradually over a long period of time. The decentralisation history of Ghana since the colonial era is a story of repeated efforts at (re) centralising power instead of decentralising power and resources to the sub-national level. This has at various times resulted in struggle for power between the central government and traditional authorities that generally tended to marginalize the role played by the traditional authorities. The persistent power struggle and lack of political accountability of the governments resulted in numerous military take over which affected the attempts at decentralisation and local government reform.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana has provided practical frame work that shows the country's commitment to decentralisation. The District Assembly is the institution within the district which is responsible for planning, implementation and management of development programmes and therefore has the task of seeing to the progressive development of communities under their jurisdiction. There are also other relevant actors that generate policy insights and provide advice and

direction to the District Assemblies apart from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development which is responsible for formulating and carrying out the current decentralisation policy reform.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL, CONCEPTUAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents the review of theoretical and conceptual issues related to this current study. Specifically, it includes: theories of decentralisation and participation, conceptual issues such as benefit of decentralisation, challenges of decentralisation, local government, the concept of development, citizenship participation in service delivery, participatory strategies, factors influencing community participation and a conceptual framework for the study as well as the summary of the chapter.

Theoretical Review

Theorem of Decentralisation

The decentralisation theorem proposed by Oates (1972 cited in Shah, 2006) asserts that each public service should be provided by the jurisdiction having control over the minimum geographical area that would internalize benefit and cost of such provisions. This is because:

1. Local government understands the concern of local residents;

2. Local decisions making is responsive to the people for whom the services are intended and thereby has the potential to promote accountability;

3. Unnecessary layers of jurisdiction are eliminated;

4. Inter-jurisdictional competition and innovation is enhanced.

The decentralisation theorem assumes that the central government has an informational disadvantage in that it is insensitive to geographical varying

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preferences. The informational advantage of local authorities over central government with regard to local conditions and preferences can lead to an improved political accountability, and enhance participation.

In matters of governance the world over, decentralisation has been at the centre stage of policy experiments in a number of developing and transition economies in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The World Bank has embraced it as one of the major governance reforms on its agenda. For its many failures, centralized states have lost a great deal of legitimacy, and decentralisation is widely believed to promise a range of benefits. It is often seen as a way of reducing the role of the state in general by fragmenting central authority and introducing more intergovernmental competition and checks and balances. It is viewed as a way of making government more responsive and efficient.

Oates (1972) asserts that decentralisation can make governments more responsive to the governed by increasing citizen participation and governmental accountability while improving efficiency and equity in service delivery. There is the assumption that local government and community leaders being close to the people would obtain better information about basic needs, taste and preferences, hence would be in a better position to identify and address their specific needs than would a remote central government or other external actors. Faguet, (2008) argues that local governments are susceptible to elite capture, and also lack adequate technical, human, and financial resources to provide a heterogeneous range of public services in a reasonable efficient way that is also responsive to local demand.

The theory of decentralisation, referred to as fiscal federalism in Oates (1972) states that decentralisation is to be preferred when tastes are heterogeneous and there are no spillovers across jurisdiction. Bardhan (2002) argues that with spillovers and no heterogeneity, a central government providing a common level public goods and services for all localities is more efficient; with spillovers, decentralisation leads to under provision of local public goods as local decision makers do not take into account benefits going to other districts. The issue of spillovers is relevant to investment in certain areas, like highway transport and communication, public research and extension, and controlling pollution or epidemics. But it is less relevant when the public goods are more local, as in local roads, minor irrigation, village health clinics, sanitation, and identification of beneficiaries of public transfer programmes.

Decentralisation is linked to the principle of subsidiarity in the distribution of functions between the state and other communities. The principle of subsidiarity which evolved from the social teachings of the Catholic Church proposed taxing functions, spending and regulatory functions that should be exercised by lower levels of government unless a convincing reason can be made for assigning them to a higher level of government.

The principle of subsidiarity requires that the state should not assume tasks that other communities can perform adequately for themselves. This shows that a state may act when a local community is unable to adequately fulfill its necessary functions. The state has a duty to offer communities such help as is needed in order for the communities to adequately realize their needs. By so

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doing, the state achieves its end as well. Therefore, the state should aim at empowering communities to be themselves - which means acknowledgement of a substantial measure of autonomy on their part.

Although subsidiarity can be an upward or downward transfer of functions, the emphasis is on the autonomy of lesser communities that need help from above when they cannot adequately fulfill their necessary functions. The state needs to engage in a range of legitimate activities as warranted by the principle. These include the creation of necessary legal, economic, social and moral conditions without which local communities will not flourish. Subsidiarity supports a dispersal of authority as close to the grassroots as good governance allows.

Theory of Participation

Theories of community participation have received a considerable academic attention and have been a source of debate since the 1960s. The review intends to provide a brief overview of some of the most prominent theories which have been put forward as a means of understanding and appraising participatory structures and practices. The theory of participation underpins this study.

Participation is a positive relationship between persons because it allows the person to experience himself existing and acting together with others. According to Karol Wojtyla's theory of participation, (cited in Mejos 2007), participation is the ability to exist and act with others in such a way that in this existing and acting we remain ourselves and actualize ourselves, which means our own I's. Mejos (2007) asserts that the ability to participate points to the fact that a

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person can enter into an interpersonal relationship with other persons and at the same time fulfill himself in his actions.

Participation allows the realization of oneself as well as the realization of the community. As the antithesis of alienation, which Wojtyla describes as the separation of things that naturally belongs together, participation allows the person to fully experience himself as well as to experience the humanity of other persons. Participation points to the fact that human beings tend towards self-fulfillment and fulfill themselves by existing and acting together with others. In this way the common good and the individual good meet in the person and he seeks them not alone but together with others.

Participation is not simply the fact of being physically present to one another in a group activity. It is possible that people exist as a group yet pursue goals individually or in isolation. Participation points to the positive recognition of the common good by the person. A person does not wish for his good alone but also wish for the good of those that are around him. It allows him to open up himself to others and also allow others to share their humanity with him. In a society every member has a task to fulfill and these tasks contribute to the growth and development not only of its members but also the group. Participation ensures that persons fulfill themselves as they work towards a common good. The common good does not refer to one single and fixed object but rather refers to a good which is shared by two or more persons (Willer, 2009).

Participation takes different forms. Wojtyla terms them as authentic and inauthentic attitudes. The authentic attitudes of participation are solidarity and

opposition. Solidarity means a constant readiness to accept and to realize one's share in the community because of one's membership within the particular community. It expresses the unity of the parts (members) in their pursuit of the common good. People who are linked together in the attitude of solidarity know that they are members of a group and that they have to work together to achieve the good of the group. Opposition here means to oppose something for the sake of the common good. In the name of genuine participation, one opposes what is or what one judges to be contrary to the common good. Opposition does not mean the denial or the withdrawal of the person in pursuit of the common good but is as a result of their recognition of the common good. The attitude of solidarity and opposition are ways by which a person, in his recognition and willingness to participate, contribute to the promotion of the common good. His task is to ensure that he plays his part in the achievement of the common good (Mejos, 2007).

The inauthentic attitudes of participation are conformism and non-involvement. Conformism portrays a tendency to comply with the accepted customs and to resemble others. It is a tendency that is neutral, in many respects positive, constructive and creative. While conformism may contribute to the achievement of the common good, the main problem is that people do not appreciate the value of their work. There are many reasons why people conform but all of them show that there is no unity but only uniformity; people adopt themselves to the demand of the community in a superficial way for purposes of gaining some immediate advantages or avoiding opposition. Thus, the conformist

is a person who submits to the pressure of others and at the same time withdraws from the community (Mosley et al., 2001).

Non-involvement is a withdrawal that lacks the active concern of participation and is characterized by indifference to the common good. It is a substitute to the authentic attitude because they do not find value in both solidarity and opposition. Non-involvement is a way by which a person abstains from participating in the community and shows a disinterested attitude towards participation in the achievement of the common good. The inauthentic attitudes results in fragmentation of society and people become apathetic and disinterested in community issues other than their own (Kolstad & Fjeldstad, 2006).

Thus, participation leads to the establishment of harmony between persons. In a community where people participate in the pursuit of the common good, they contribute to the growth and development of the people. A community that is built on the participatory efforts of the people for the common good is a community that brings persons closer to their fulfillment. Participation makes it possible for everybody to experience each other as a neighbour and a member of the community. This shows that a person is not only capable of participating in the community of existing and acting persons but also of his ability to participate in the humanity of others (Khisty, 2006).

Mejos (2007) is of the view that Wojtyla's theory of participation is not a political philosophy but aims at an outline or a guide by which political systems could follow so as to prevent any danger or threats to humanity. It can be said that participation sustains and enriches the interpersonal relationship between persons

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and makes it possible for all men to share in the common humanity of others. This recognition leads to the formation of a community where everyone is a neighbour.

Collective Action Theory

In many societies, natural resources such as water, forest, fish stocks, water bodies, etc. are often held as common property and are collectively managed. The concept of common property, also known as "collective goods", refers to something that is used as if it belongs to all members of a group. The group may be small or large and no member of the group can be excluded from the use of the resource. Collective action is where individuals undertake collective effort based on mutual interest and expectation of mutual benefit. The collective action theory deals with identifying and evaluating solution to the collective action problem or the free–rider problem. The collective action problem emerges in a group setting where all individuals can materially benefit by not contributing to the group. However, when all individuals withhold contribution, collective action fails, and all are worse off (Willer, 2009),

The "Free riding" theory as developed by Olson (1965), deals with the conditions under which individuals will behave in order to achieve common goals and those which make collective action possible. The basic premise is that as public goods are non-exclusive, individuals then have an incentive to take a free ride - that is, they will use the good without contributing to its production or management. Free riding theory relates to a situation where once a collective good is provided, the benefit will be available to all. It assumes that individuals based their decisions mainly on self-interest and cost benefit analysis. Under this

condition, nobody will pay the cost of establishing and maintaining the collective resource or good unless some interested individual anticipate a personal benefit higher than these cost. Where an individual does establish the good, he will only be interested to do so at a level to supply his individual needs and not to the level that will be optimal for the whole group of users.

Others will not accept the cost of managing the resource or increasing its quality or quantity, because the cost of doing this will exceed the additional benefits to what they have already from what the most interested individual has provided them with. The theory implies that it is only when the costs are shared in the same proportion as the benefit is the quantity of collective good optimized.

According to Willer (2009), the solution to preventing free riding and promote collective action is to introduce motivation to contributors and punish free riding through administration of selective incentives. Selective incentive encourages contributions to collective action and discourages free riding. Olson (1965) argues that selective incentives are essentially side payments (or punishments) to encourage contribution to public goods. Examples include paying blood donors, "I Voted" stickers given out to voters, tote bags and bumper stickers given to public television donors etc.

Willer (2009) presents a novel approach to the solution of collective action problem based on social status as a selective incentive. The status theory of collective action asserts that status serves as a selective incentive motivation contribution to the group, and that group members receive status to the extent that they demonstrate group motivation through their behaviour.

Some past research in the status characteristics theory tradition supports the status theory of collective action. Willer (2004) showed in a series of experiments on task groups that low individuals, such as women in a predominantly male group, advance in status through high-quality suggestions on group tasks. However, this relationship between high performance and status attainment was mediated by the degree of group motivation displayed by the women. Women who presented themselves as highly motivated group achieved increased status as a results of their high performance, while high-performers who did not make efforts to appear group motivated did not improve their status. This research suggests a relationship between the degree to which a group member is perceived by others to be group motivated and her status standing.

Research on the relationship between power and status suggest support for the notion that appearing group motivated can help individuals gain status in groups. Willer (2009) found that more powerful individuals gain status in the eyes of observers of their power use, but only when they avoid being perceived as selfish. In this experiment, only powerful actors who did not appear to capitalize on a structural advantage gained status through power use. Power users in networks that hold obvious structural advantages were seen as more selfish and gained less status.

Willer (2004) conducted two experimental studies showing that actors in high power positions who made philanthropic contributions to a common pool benefiting the participant improved their status standing in the eyes of the participants. However, power users who refused contribution did not gain any

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more status than that accorded to low power actors. This research indicates that apparent group motivation is an important mediator of the relationship between power and status, and may itself exert a main effect on status standing.

The free riding theory assumed self-centered individual behaviour towards the use of public good. In this vein it is rational for individual to free ride. A rational self-centered individual will not contribute willingly to achieve their common or group interest; instead, they prefer to let others pay the cost of goods that will benefit everyone. The theory excludes the possibility of group solidarity. Individuals may engage in collective action even if they expect no personal benefit.

Olson (1965) has challenged the generally held view that a group of individuals having common interest usually work together to achieve them. He argues that unless the number of individuals in a group is small or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, rational, self-interested individual will not act to achieve their common or group interest. The larger the group the less noticeable the actions of its individual members, the higher the transaction cost of bringing them together and therefore the higher the tendency to free ride. This shows why large groups frequently fail to provide collective goods for the members.

Olson has shown that certain small groups can provide themselves with collective goods without relying on coercion or any positive inducement apart from the collective good itself. In some small groups, each of the members or at least some of them will find out that their personal gain from having the collective

good exceeds the total cost of providing the collective good. The theory does not specify the number of individuals that would make a small group but asserts that the group be small enough for the individual action of any one or more members to be noticed by any individual in the group.

Other researchers have been less positive about the effect of group size. Agrawal (2000) posits a curvilinear relationship between size of group and collective action in light of his study of community forest regimes in India. He states that on one hand, if the group is very large, transaction cost and conflict may arise. On the other hand, if the group is too small, it is difficult to generate the resources needed to engage effectively in collective action related to forest. Thus moderately sized group are more able to solve these problems when related to the governance and management of natural resources. To Olson, despite the free rider problem, voluntary groups can provide collective goods in a variety of areas including education, labour union, and natural resource.

Critics such as Heckelman (2004) argue that problems of collective action emerge when there is inadequate information and conflicting interest, or because of the nature of the good. Despite considerable efforts in identifying factors that affect collective action, no consensus exists about the role played by size and heterogeneity of group. While group size influences interaction of local citizens, small groups are just a segment of the population and their goal may differ from that of the general society (Cleaver & Frank, 2005).

The degree of voluntary cooperation together with monitoring of free riders to ensure collective action plays an important role in the success of service

delivery. For a sustainable collective action in project management, there is the need to establish and understand resource ownership status, institution of common rules and the involvement of defined sensitized stakeholders, especially local communities of their roles in the development process.

In this study, community involvement in decision-making with regards to the production of the common good to satisfy the local people is to be assessed. The attitudes of local government in providing support practices that increase citizen's input into decision-making, establishing mechanism through which citizens can get access to information, voice out their preferences and participate directly in project; strengthen their demand for accountability and help improve service delivery. Much of the literature on fiscal federalism relates to the efficiency of decentralised governance structures in the light of its role in the delivery of public services.

Relevance of the Theories to the Study

The decentralization theorem emphasises the notion that governments ought to be more responsive to the needs of the citizens by increasing citizen participation and accountability while improving efficiency and equity in service delivery (Oates, 1972). There is the assumption that local government and community leaders being close to the people would obtain better information about basic needs, taste and preferences, hence would be in a better position to identify and address their specific needs than would a remote central government or other external actors. In the case of this study, decentralization was a major concern to the researcher. The theorem explained how decentralization is

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supposed to improve citizen participation and service delivery. This link is what is investigated in the study. In connection to this, highlighted on the need to employ Karol Wojtyla's theory of participation and theory of collective action (free riding). Participation is not simply the fact of being physically present to one another in a group activity. It is possible that people exist as a group yet pursue goals individually or in isolation through collective effort. Participation contributes to the promotion of common good. The theory of participation is relevant to this study in the sense that people within the Ga West Municipality are required to collectively make efforts geared towards the development of various projects scheduled to take place. It is of essence to state that the people through participation involve themselves in decision-making to contribute to service delivery. To this end, the theorem of decentralization and participation theory explains the underlying problems for carrying out this study. The theories also help put the study in context.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Decentralisation

Many scholars have tried to conceptualise decentralisation and have remarkably treated the problem of conceptualising decentralisation. A number of articles and books bear the explanatory success. Decentralisation means different thing to different people. Politicians, administrators and development professionals use the term decentralisation in various ways and there is no definite standard definition. Thus, there are many definitions of decentralisation brought out by different scholars. However, all of them convey the same meaning.

Cheema and Rondinelli (1983) define decentralisation as the devolution of responsibilities for management, planning, and resource raising and allocation from the central government to the units of the central government ministries or agencies at the field level; subordinate units of government; corporations; functional authorities; private or voluntary organisations; and non-governmental organisation.

Correspondingly, the UNDP (1999) also defines decentralisation or decentralizing governance as the process of authority restructuring whereby it creates a system of co-responsibility between the regional, local and central levels of governance institutions and this is in accordance with the subsidiarity principle. Decentralisation is associated with subsidiarity concept in which the functions need to be devolved to the lowest level of social order that is competent of accomplishing them. Thus, it increases the overall effectiveness and quality of the governance system and it also boost the sub-national government's authority and capacity. They further state that decentralisation escalates the voices of the people in all the decisions; supplements people's capacity development; increases the responsiveness of the government; and enhances the transparency and accountability and thus, it contributes towards strengthening good governance.

Rizal (2001) identified the two fundamental dimensions of decentralisation as: decentralisation as means - where decentralisation is the process of transferring functions and power from the central government to the local government units and organisations; and decentralisation as a philosophy; where decentralisation entails the sharing of power and functions between and

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among the various levels of governments and enables them to identify and respond to the local needs and priorities, mobilise and allocate resources and deliver services.

Rizal (2001) further states three principal objectives of decentralisation as following: enhance national development throughout the country especially in the under-developed regions and areas; enable equal sharing of development responsibilities for the central and local authorities and equal bearing of the national burden of managing and exercising functions related to national development. In addition, enlarge the government capability and capacity to deliver better services to the people and to enrich their knowledge, skill, ability and competency allied with the development related to public and non- public organisations and local government institutions.

Thus, all the definitions of decentralisation propounded by the various scholars and writers passed on same connotation and conclude that decentralisation brings government closer to the people and empowers people to participate in and influence the decision made with their close community.

The Concept of Development

Development is a holistic concept that touches on every aspect of human life in cultural contexts. It evolves from the collective experience of a society and reflects societal values and preferences. Pearce (1990) argues that since development is a value word, implying change that is desirable, there is no consensus as to its meaning. He contends that development depends upon what social goals are being advocated.

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Development is conceptualised in terms of production and consumption of the material things of life - a process that recreates the industrialised world. Its emphasis is on economic growth or the process whereby the real per capita income of a country increases over a long period of time. This is emphasized as the primary objective of development because a continuous growth of the economy is a pre-requisite for poverty eradication, although there are other objectives such as distribution (Rapley, 1997).

This concept advocates rising net income accompanied by reduction in poverty, unemployment and social inequality as well as the satisfaction of basic needs for the marginalized (Ikeanyinonwu, 2001). Development is therefore seen as modernisation of economic structures through heavy industrialisation, with agriculture providing the big push.

There is considerable consensus that development should include the process of satisfying basic human needs - food, shelter, clothing and security among others. These should be attained not as goodwill gestures from the government but primarily through people's efforts; hence their right to work, access to gainful employment, resources and decision-making powers are conceptual elements of development.

Beyond the satisfaction of basic needs, there is also a commonly accepted meaning of development especially in the context of local level development in Africa. For the local politician and the common man, development is about "modernisation" or the acquisition of facilities, services and infrastructure associated with modernity (Oyugi, 2000). These include clean and safe water

supply, health services, basic education, good roads, electricity, industries and employment, or generally referred to as "the good things of life " (Korten, 1990).

In recent times, more illuminating literature on development studies have steered away from the more banal definitions of development which use indicators like growth rates of gross national product and average per capita income to one emphasizing attempts at reducing poverty, unemployment and inequality. According to Peet and Hartwick (1999), development is a process of change through which a society evolves the values, political leadership and other forms of social organisation necessary to mobilize and utilize resources in such a way as to maximize the opportunities available to the majority of its members, for realization to the fullest possible extent of their potential as human beings. Development must serve the interests of the majority; no society is perfectly homogenous: all are composed of competing interests and social change must benefit some and harm others. But on balance, it must be interests of the majority that are advanced (Songsore, 2003).

There appears to be conceptual differences in the above perspectives of development, and as such, there is the need for a common understanding of the meaning of development to be able to relate it to micro and small scale industries" objectives. These differences, notwithstanding, there is a commonalty in what development is about: people, wealth creation or production, human welfare and human rights, poverty reduction, improving the people's productive capacity; employment provision, satisfaction of basic needs, provision of basic facilities,

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access to resources and opportunities for participation in decision-making (Lowe, Edwarsa, & Ward, 2001).

While not ignoring any of these attributes of development, in the context of this study, development is seen mainly in terms of the provision of or access to facilities, services and infrastructures because through these, other development objectives at the local level can be achieved. Secondly, this is the area where the local government, through legislation and planning, is expected to contribute to rural development in Ghana (Ikeanyionwu, 2001). Also, in developing countries where government continues to be the dominant player in development, provision of facilities will create the enabling environment for development to take place especially in the locality and this constitutes the facilitating role of the state.

The study of socio-economic development stands out to be an interdisciplinary venture. The concept of development is ambiguous because it is subject to a wide range of usages, varying from discipline to discipline. The word implies a positive change, progress, transition, and economic expansion, a move from the simple to the complex, from the inferior to the superior and from worse to better. Chambers (1983) defines development as implying 'good change'. Though the definition of development may not be uniform, it is generally associated with a positive connotation – progress: directed at efforts aimed at improving conditions of life.

Development can either be a gradual historical process of change - immanent development, referring to a spontaneous and unconscious process of change; or a planned rapid change, 'intentional development' (Mohamand, 2005),

which forms the deliberate policies and actions of the state or development agencies – deliberate efforts to attain higher levels in relation to set objectives.

It is focused on poverty alleviation throughout the world and has been the concern of the global community. Focus has especially been on how to help developing countries to attain a certain level of development. It entails an effort to combat impoverishment, exploit alternative livelihood strategies (especially in the rural areas where the main source of livelihood is agriculture).

Though development is intended for the well-being of all in society (raising the standards of living, poverty alleviation), Woods (2000) contends that some people end up being the losers of such processes. This happens when a peoples' way of life is altered for the worse. In this same line of thought, development is referred to as a process where resources are put to 'better use', the phrase 'better use' is varied depending on who is concerned as resources put to use may be advantageous to some and disadvantageous to others. Such resources include natural resources, technology and capital.

Reflecting this view therefore, Wunch (2001) notes some general points about the idea of development: it should be an all-encompassing change, not just an improvement in one direction; it should be a process which builds on itself where change is continuous and where improvements proceed previous improvements; and it should be a process that occurs at the social level and in the individual human being at the same time (human development).

Chambers' (1983) explanation for the third point is that changes in society have implications for the people who live in that society, and in the same light

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changes in how people think, interact, make their livings and their perceptions form the basis for change in society. This is rooted on the premise that socio-economic change shapes and is shaped by individual perceptions, beliefs, cultural patterns, economic organisations, methods of production and distribution, socio-political arrangements and the international economy. Implicitly, human development or human capital which is a function of human freedom also boosts societal development.

Rural Development

As a concept, it connotes overall development in the rural areas* with a view to improve the quality of life of the rural people. In this sense, it is a comprehensive and multidimensional concept and encompasses the development of agriculture and allied activities – village and cottage industries and crafts, socio-economic, infrastructure, community services and facilities, and above all, the human resources in rural areas (Cheema & Rondinelli, 1983). As a phenomenon, it is the result of interactions between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural, institutional factors. As a strategy, it is designed to improve the economic and social well-being of a specific group of people – the rural poor. As a discipline, it is multidisciplinary in nature representing an intersection of agricultural, social, behavioural, engineering, and management sciences (Cheetham, 2002).

In the words of Chamber (1983), "Rural Development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves

helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of rural development. The group includes small scale farmers, tenants, and the landless".

According to Agrawal (2000), rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of rural poor. The UNDP (1999) defines Rural Development as a process of change, by which the efforts of the people themselves are united, those of government authorities to improve their economic, social and cultural conditions of communities in to the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national programme. The UNDP further indicated that rural development is a process of bringing change among rural community from the traditional way of living to progressive way of living. It is also expressed as a movement for progress.

Thus, rural development may mean any one of these, depending upon our focus. To avoid ineffective floundering among the myriad definitions we shall define rural development as a process of developing and utilizing natural and human resources, technologies, infrastructural facilities, institutions and organizations, and government policies and programmes to encourage and speed up economic growth in rural areas, to provide jobs and to improve the quality of rural life towards self-sustenance (Songsore, 2003). In addition to economic growth, this process typically involves changes in popular attitudes, and in many cases even in customs and beliefs. In a nutshell, the process of rural development must represent the entire gamut of change by which a social system moves away

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from a state of life perceived as ―unsatisfactory‖ towards a materially and spiritually better condition of life (Smith, 2007).

Rural development is a process of providing opportunities, services and amenities to the rural people so that they can improve their social, economic, political, cultural and physical well-being and environmental consciousness (Biekart, 2005). Rural development is a desired state for people residing in the rural areas. It is characterized by increased agricultural productivity and incomes, good governance, improved people empowerment, good health and nutrition, has dignity and honour to live in a sustainable environment and free society. Saito (2003) defined rural development as follows: A process through which rural poverty is alleviated by sustained increase in productivity and incomes of low-income rural workers and households (USAID, 2004). A process of change among hundreds of thousands of rural people … development refers only to those changes which are seen as desirable among rural people who are changing (White, 2000).

Local Level Development

The definition of local development is very important in this study, as well as what constitutes local level. The term local has been defined as something "characteristic of or associated with a particular locality or area; concerned with or relating to a particular place or point in space; affecting or confined to a limited area or part" (The Collins English Dictionary; 1995). The conception of what is local therefore depends on the degree of what is directly shared among the inhabitants and which directly concerns or affects a specific area rather than a

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region or nation as a whole. The individual household or family constitutes the basic social unit, which expands to larger forms of social and spatial organisations such as the village, community or town, district, region, nation and even the international community. From this sociological perspective, the sense of identity and affection diminish with the expansion of the social unit and also with the increasing problems of human organisation and collective action (Kulipossa, 2004)..

What is local or what constitutes local level varies from one context to another. It depends on the size, population density, geographical and settlement pattern, historical and cultural affinity, political and administrative arrangements of peoples and countries. When viewed from above, various levels of social and spatial organisation for decision-making emerge from the international level through the national to regional and individual household levels. There is consensus that the international, national and regional levels do not constitute what is local because these levels do not command the sense of identity, oneness, affection and ownership inherent in a local unit. In Ghana, Kokor (2001) identifies local level as the District (group of communities), Area Councils, and Urban, Town, Zonal and Unit Committees as that defined under the Ghana's New Local Government System. In the context of this study and within the spatial, politico-administrative organisation in Ghana, local level refers to the area from local government level down to the individual household level.

Hence, local level development refers to the development taking place from the local government level down to individual households where group or

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collective action is intensified with common identity; and sense of ownership and oneness. For instance, on one hand, a feeder road, which connects communities to the district headquarters, is of local concern because it affects the accessibility of those communities to the rest of the district and generates a feeling of ownership and affection from within the locality. On the other hand, a highway road network that links several states or regions is not of local concern because it does not directly affect any particular locality or group of localities, and does not fall directly within the purview of local government responsibility.

Many development actors operate at the local level in Ghana including the national/state governments, the local government, and community or town development unions, community-based organisations, churches, the local private sector and NGOs. The local government is at the centre of local development and has the constitutional responsibility to plan, implement, organise and co-ordinate development action at the local level, for which public fiscal resources are decentralised. The study is limited to the activities of institutions promoting micro and small-scale industries to promote development at the local level.

Sustainable development is defined as a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments and the orientation of technological development and institutional changes are in harmony, and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations NDPC (2009). Sustainable development is now widely accepted as a new paradigm of decision-making for all sections of any society within the development process. It provides a framework for working together to expand economic opportunities, to

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rebuild communities, to envision a better society and make it a reality for future generations. It therefore seeks to ensure the participation of all in any development project. Sustainable communities can only be achieved through a people-centered development that is built on the values and cultures of the people. A people-centered development calls for an active and mutual self-help amongst people working together in their common struggle to deal with common problems confronting them.

Citizenship Participation in Service Delivery

Decentralisation is often associated with virtues like participation in governance and development that can improve the well-being of citizens (Smith 2007). The assumption is that decentralisation will empower people to participate in decisions that affect them, thus enhancing accountability and improving service delivery (Golooba-Mutebi, 2005). Participation means involving people in project implementation. Here, decisions about a project are taken by the development agent and the beneficiaries are asked to participate in the implementation such as by providing cheap labour. For Cornwall and Gaventa (2006), participation is a mere involvement or co-optation. Here people are merely consulted in the decision-making process, but do not influence the outcomes of such decisions. Blair (2000) sees participation as a means of empowering people. Here, people are actively involved in decision-making and have the power to influence the outcomes of such decisions, as well as taking part in their implementation. In this regard, people are empowered to take control of their destiny (Hussein, Faham, & Darynish, 2006).

The first two interpretations of participation are considered a form of tokenism rather than furthering real participation, since people are merely involved but cannot influence decisions (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2006). Consequently, such tokenism has little benefit in local governance and development, since people cannot influence decisions that reflect their priorities and neither can they demand accountability from various service providers (Golooba-Mutebi, 2004). Real participation in governance or development means going beyond tokenism to empower people to influence decisions and to take control of their destiny. In this way, everyone is given a stake, a voice and a choice.

Arnstein (1969), cited by Khisty (2006) defines citizens' participation in terms of the degree of actual control they have over policy decisions. Arnstein (1969) and Khisty (2006) argue that without actual redistribution of power, citizen participation is an empty ritual, and that the only way of achieving any significant social reform is to encourage citizens to operate as high up the ladder as possible. It is clear, therefore, that participation connotes power sharing, making its realization complex. Those with institutional or structural power, like decentralised structures may be reluctant to devolve their decision-making powers to those they serve. As pointed out by Cooke and Kothari (2001: 14), proponents of participatory development have generally been naïve about the complexities of power and power relations which underpin much of participatory discourse. Participation that fails to address such a power imbalance by allowing for greater involvement of community members to influence decisions that affect them is not

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likely to offer much in terms of furthering the community development process (Biekart, 2005).

In recent times, "participation" has become a fashionable word that many development agencies and local government units profess to use, even though each uses the word "participation" on their own terms, with a different understanding and application (Biekart, 2005). For some people, the word "participation" is used merely as rhetoric to reflect political correctness, or to satisfy some donor conditionality, but without really applying participatory practices whereby citizens can exercise real control in the decision-making process.

Cleaver (2002) discusses that participation is a tool for achieving better project outcome, equity and empowerment. He argues that community participation can be analysed as a process which enhances the capacity of individuals to improve their own lives and facilitate social change to the advantage or disadvantage of marginalized groups. White (2000) analysed the variety of forms and interest in participation and categorised them to include efficiency, cost-means sustainability and empowerment. Interest in any project will typically involve a mixture of these different variables which may change overtime.

Furthermore, Golooba-Mutebi (2004) questions the assumption that people are willing and have the capacity to participate in public affairs and that the only requirement is that there are opportunities for their participation. His study of local councils in Uganda showed that the initial enthusiasm for people to

participate in local council meetings faded over time due to participation fatigue and doubts about the utility of such participation. Pryor (2002) observed similar apathy on the part of parents to participate in their village school management at Akurase, a village in Ghana, due to doubts about the relevance of the school to their welfare. Cooke and Kothari (2001) contend that the motivation for people to participate in public decisions or not is poorly understood. For example, participation in some communities may be alien to the prevailing development culture, and people may fear to speak publicly in the presence of their leaders.

The other critique of participation is the likelihood of raising unrealistic expectations among community members (Guijt, 2003). Such members often have high expectations when participating in development related discussions, which may not be realistic. If this situation is not well managed, it could easily lead to disillusionment when, after a process of participation, these expectations are not met. This concern is valid, since researchers encountered such high expectations from some community members during their research. They wanted to see immediate tangible benefits from their participation in a research.

Thus, participation denotes people's involvement in the implementation process of targeted projects or programmes even though it does not truly reflect the spirit and depth of community participation. Thwala (2001) emphasizes that getting people involved in a project is not a task but the pillar of social development. It is a process through which people spend efforts to influence decision-making that affects them. It consists of the various forms of direct public involvement where people individually or groups can exchange information,

express opinion, articulate interest and have the potential to influence decision on outcomes of specific project. In this study, community participation refers to the collective efforts of people who live in a specific locality and exercise their right to make decisions about issues of concern to them and to the development of their locality. These include identifying problems, developing action and putting them in place and following through (Cheetham, 2002)

Given the complexity of decentralisation and its links with participation and development, as discussed above, it is recognized that decentralisation is a multi-dimensional process which takes place within a particular political context and therefore evolves differently in different countries depending on the context (Smoke, 2003; Dauda, 2006). Understanding the local context and taking this into consideration in the decentralisation policy therefore holds the key to its success in terms of community development and poverty reduction. As a result, the dominant top-down development paradigm has been replaced with a more bottom-up perspective which focuses on territory, diversity and the optimisation of local resources (Theron, 2005).

Participation is a central feature of decentralisation, in terms of both what it is seeking to achieve and how that is achieved. As a means to an end, participation involves harnessing local people's resources and support as an input into a programme on the assumption that this will improve its effectiveness and efficiency. The measures taken are then more likely to address local needs and to be better adapted to local circumstances, and the external resources applied can better complement and help mobilise local resources (Oxhorn, 2004). The

efficiency of the participation will be judged by the material outcomes of the programme. Such promotion of local participation as a means to achieve developmental goals is often referred to as community development. However, participation can also serve as an end in itself, with the overall purpose being to strengthen the capacity of local people to participate, whether in the economic or political sphere or both, as the only sure way of overcoming their dependency or marginality. This involves a fundamental reinterpretation of what development is about.

According to Mannion (1996), two factors should be taken into account in order to ensure typical local participation and make operational the bottom-up approach to development: the extent to which local people have the capacity and skills to contribute to the development of their own area; and the opportunities they are given to express themselves through meaningful involvement in the development process.

The capacity of the local people must be built or developed. Capacity building is the strengthening of the knowledge, skills and attitudes of people so that they can establish and sustain their area's development. Capacity building therefore includes: the individuals and groups living in the target area, and the institutions that support them. It is a gradual and complex process aimed at upgrading the local physical and human resource bases - a type of investment, in other words. For them, the term applies to the capacity of an entire local population, rather than just individuals, to contribute to local development, and it can be enhanced through improving skills, encouraging new forms of

organisation, stimulating new forms of linkages between groups and public agencies, and by enabling individuals and organisations to be more flexible and adaptable to changing situations (Ostrom, 2004; Ouedraogo, 2005).

Implicitly or explicitly, the promotion of local participation is a challenge to established structures of political representation and how these are embodied within government. On one hand, the instrumental notion of participation (i.e. participation as a means) implies that existing structures of functional representation, usually organised on an indirect, national and sectorial basis, are inadequate to convey the needs of particular areas or social group.

On the other hand, the promotion of local participation as an end in itself carries a more fundamental challenge to formal democratic structures. This is not always acknowledged which is one reason why such initiatives often fail. What drives them is captured partly in the notion of subsidiarity with its implication that decisions should be taken at the lowest possible level. Subsidiarity, however, is about choosing the most appropriate tier of government at which to take particular decisions, while participation involves the establishment of informal structures and procedures that are additional to, and in many cases separate from, local government. This may reflect the weakness or insensitivity of the formal local structures of elected representatives, officials and councils. In some instances the promotion of local participation may help to reinvigorate those structures but in others the intention may be deliberately to by-pass them (Golola, 2003).

A number of commentators have pointed to the complicity of national governments and the European Commission seeking to shape local structures to

their own ends (Balogun, 2000). More generally, the official emphasis on community-based solutions has been associated with the curtailment by the state of many local services. Even so, the emergence of new modes of informal and voluntary participation which outwit existing state structures is seen by some commentators as part of a process of local democratic evolution towards more direct, inclusive and cooperative forms of political expression.

Participatory Strategies

Fundamentally, therefore, participation raises the issue of power and its redistribution. Local groups cannot gain control without others losing some. Participatory strategies can be distinguished according to how much or how little control they concede. In principle, the pursuit of participation as a development objective should involve a greater transfer of power than when it is used as a means of development planning or implementation.

The most celebrated model of different levels of community participation is that proposed by Arnstein (1969) who studied citizen involvement in planning in the USA. She formulated an eight-step ladder of participation, depicted in Figure 3, which reaches right up to full citizen control. The lower steps though, are essentially non-participative and, characterised as *'manipulation'* and *'therapy'*, are little more than public relations exercises. The next step, *'informing'*, represents the most important first step to legitimate participation, but typically the flow of information is one way without opportunity for feedback. *'Consultation'* is the next step and might, for example, involve attitude surveys, neighbourhood meetings or public enquiries. Arnstein was skeptical about the

practical merits of this level of participation, suspecting that the tendency was for consultation to be used merely as a window dressing ritual. *'Placation'* comes next on the ladder of participation and this involves the co-option of hand-picked local 'worthies' onto committees to advise on plans or projects, but the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice is retained by the power-holders or 'officials'.

At the next stage of participation, that of *'partnership'*, power is redistributed through negotiation between local citizens and power-holders, and planning and decision-making responsibilities are shared through, for example, joint committees. *'Delegated power'* represents the next step. Here citizens hold a clear majority of seats on committees with delegated powers to make decisions. Finally, the highest level of participation identified by Arnstein is *'citizen control'*, when citizens exercise full control over the planning, policy-making and management of a programme, with no intermediaries operating between the citizens and the source of funds.
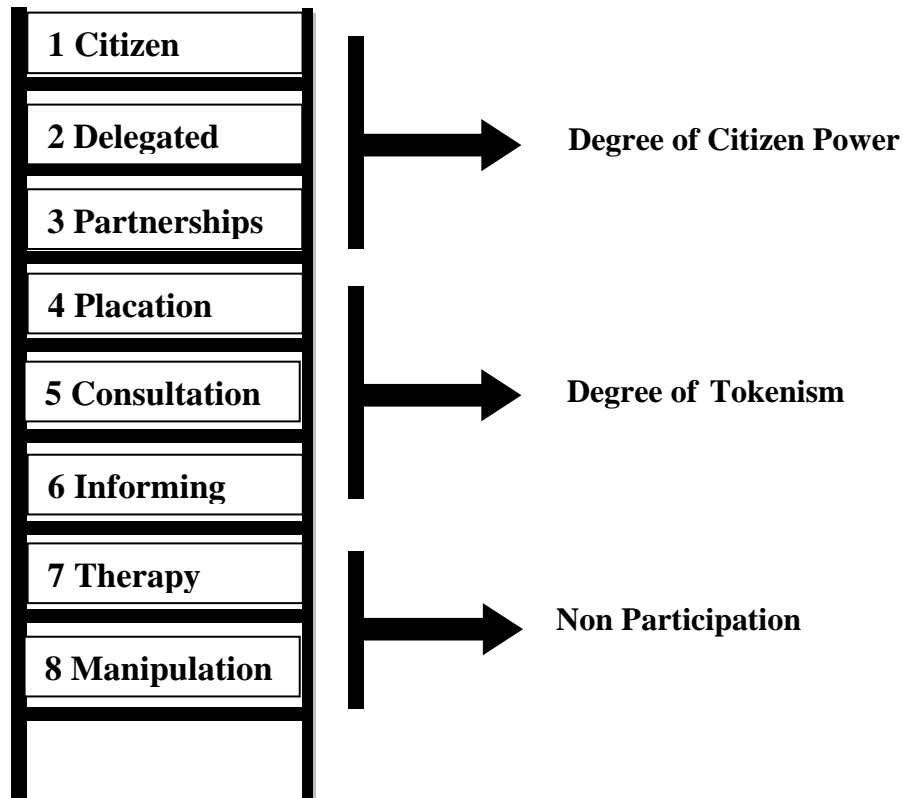
Figure 3: Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

Source: Arnstein (1969 cited by Khisty, 2006)

It may not be possible, however, to involve the whole community in the planning and execution of local development projects. As Moseley, Cherrett and Cawley (2001) point out, "the scale of such involvement is too massive and the public in any case is made up of many different people with different interests, priorities and resources". Moreover, only a few people have the time, resources and inclination to commit themselves to lengthy involvement. There is therefore another dimension to the redistribution of power besides that between state agencies and local communities, namely the way in which participatory structures and procedures affect the power relations within communities and localities.

Following the diverse interpretation of participation, various typologies and indicators of community participation have also been devised depending on the nature of the activity as well as the responsibilities and the people involved. However, the specific degree of participation of various stakeholders is determined through a negotiation process. According to Thwala (2001), participation approaches should aim at empowering community members and building their capacity. This implies putting beneficiaries at the centre of the decision-making process to drive the process according to their own needs and priorities. The importance of this lies in the assertion that the longer people stay in a community the better they are associated with greater sense of familiarity with community needs and priority (Addo-Deku, 2012).

Kaliba and Norman (2004), categorise indicators of community participation into seven. These are communication of community preference, information sharing, willingness to participate, representation, responsibility, authority, and decision-making. They believed that these indicators help to assess conditions relating to sustainability and the success of development projects. However, Hjortso (2014) indicates that community participation should undergo four levels of participation that are non-mutually exclusive. These are information sharing, consultation, decision-making and initiating action.

Information sharing is the minimal level of participation and often consists of a little more than having people informed about decisions on the project. It is a one-way flow of information or a unilateral announcement of procedure or outcome from the proponent of the development project to the public without

listening to their response. The proponent only provides sufficient relevant information about the project such as the benefit of the project, cost of implementation and possible risk factor of the project to the beneficiaries. Nonetheless, stakeholders have no opportunity to influence the procedure or outcome (Fiallo & Jacobson, 1995).

Consultation is a two way flow of information between proponents and the public that may not necessarily impact decision making. It involves inviting people's views on the proposed action and engaging them in a dialogue. Depending on the project, Thwala (2010) indicates that various methods used during consultation include public hearing, public meetings, public displays, field trips, site visits, letter request for comments, material for mass media and response to public inquiries. In view of the people's response, problems or solutions may be modified.

Decision-making is a higher level of participation where individuals or groups have the authority and responsibility to take part in decision-making. The project should encourage a maximum number of people in the participation of development of the project. Such involvement should give the participant, whether individuals or groups fully inclusive in the design, organising and implementing activities or workshops in order to create consensus, ownership and action in support of local development (Kapoor, 2002).

Finally, initiating action is the highest level of participation where people take it upon themselves to initiate new actions. Participation is also seen as organised efforts within institutions and organisations to increase stakeholder's

access and control over resources and related decision-making that contribute to sustainable livelihood. Participation is also seen as an interactive process involving the continuous re-adjustment of relationship between different stakeholders in a society in order to increase stakeholders control over development issues that affect them. The first categories exercise influence and are referred to as low participation while the latter two exercise control and are referred to as high participation. For collaborative efforts in participation in decision-making regarding service delivery, it is necessary to state that they are indicators that promote the development of society (Kaliba & Norman, 2004).

Importance of Participation

Although some authors contest that participation makes no difference, the importance of community participation is well established in the literature. Community participation is useful in order to implement development projects more effectively. The participatory approach has also been perceived as making service provision more efficient and accountable and therefore as a step towards achieving good governance (Brett 2003). There is support for the idea of participation as a good thing although the effectiveness of the participatory approach in terms of its impact on poverty and its ability to improve the social conditions of the poor has begun to be widely questioned.

Devas and Grant (2003) identified efficiency benefits from participation, stating that 'involving stakeholders and empowering community participants in programmes at all levels, from local to national, provide a more effective path for solving sustainable resource management issues'. Participation enhances project

effectiveness through community ownership of development efforts and aids decision-making.

Lawrence and Deagen (2001) identify four affirmations that summarize the importance of participation in development: People organise best around problems they consider most important. Local people tend to make better economic decisions and judgments in the context of their own environment and circumstances; Voluntary provision of labor, time, money and materials to a project is a necessary condition for breaking patterns of dependency and passivity; and The local control over the amount, quality and benefits of development activities help to make the process self-sustaining.

Hjortso (2004) identifies a number of beneficial reasons for community participation: with participation, more will be accomplished, and services can be provided more cheaply. Participation has an intrinsic value for participants. It is a catalyst for further development; encourages a sense of responsibility; guarantees that a felt need is involved. It ensures things are done the right way; uses valuable indigenous knowledge; frees people from dependence on others' skills; and makes people more conscious of the causes of their poverty and what they can do about it (Hiakey & Mohan, 2004).

Botchway (2001) identifies that policies that are sensitive to local circumstances will not only be more effective in taking the uniqueness of local social structure, economy, environmental, and culture into account, but also, through the involvement of the local community, will be more likely to be successful in their implementation. Communities that have a say in the

development of policies for their locality are much more likely to be enthusiastic about their implementation. Golooba-Mutebi (2004) found that participation has a role in enhancing civic consciousness and political maturity that makes those in office accountable. Thus, community participation in decision-making gives the people a sense of ownership and ensures that projects and services provided are acceptable, appropriate, and sustainable.

Factors that Influence Community Participation

The call for local people's direct involvement in development activities is not without challenges. The degree of popular participation in development programmes is a major determinant of success or failure but the factors that make participation efforts successful still remains a mystery. There are conditions under which increased citizen participation in local governance leads to improved service delivery. The capacity of citizens is an important factor. Their education, the socio-economic status, their networks are all important factors in determining whose voice gets heard and what decisions get adopted. Knowledge is an important factor that has an effect on people's participation. People cannot be expected to exhibit positive attitude towards development projects if they are not aware of the benefits and cost associated with their participation. Some studies have shown that knowledge about programmer issues make people show more positive attitude in their views (Doliscia, 2006).

An attitude is a hypothetical construct that represents an individual's degree of like or dislike for an item. Attitudes are generally positive or negative views of a person, place, thing or event (Kraft & Gillman, 1996). They are

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generally viewed as one's relatively enduring affective, cognitive and behaviour disposition towards various aspects of the world including persons, events and subjects. It is believed that attitude change is necessary before other behaviour modification can take place. Kraft and Gillman (1996) were of the view that people with negative attitudes toward governmental involvement with development programmes were less likely to participate in water quality incentive programme.

Rishi (2007) states that understanding attitude is one of the central concerns in social life and is vital to bring desired change in behaviour, social actions of people or programmes directed by their attitudes. By knowing people's attitudes, it may be possible to do something about the prediction and control of their behaviour which may be ultimately useful for the successful implementation of programmes. Shahroudi and Chizari (2008) in their study found that there is significant and positive relationship between people's attitude and their participation in programmes.

Vicente and Reis (2008) observe that expressing positive attitude towards recycling and information are important factors in explaining recycling participation. They outline that; individuals will enter into and maintain a relationship as long as they can satisfy their self-interest and at the same time ensure that their benefit outweigh the cost. In terms of continuing relationship, they believe that individuals will try to maintain those exchanges which prove to be more rewarding in the past, to break off those which proved to be more costly than rewarding and to establish new relationships which have a good chance of

being more rewarding than costly. In fact, fulfillment of a motivational desire, after need satisfaction has occurred, there is no further motivation for gratifying that need. Many studies have shown the importance of people's previous experience on the desire to participate in the current project (Kukumba & Nsingo, 2008).

Whilst participation may sound attractive at a theoretical level, some writers question its utility and feasibility on various grounds. In the first place, participation may require that people sacrifice their time at the expense of investing their energies in other beneficial livelihoods (Cooke & Kotahari, 2001; Golooba-Mutebi, 2004). Additionally, Cooke and Kotahari (2001) argue that the use of terms such as "community participation" tend to mask power relations within the community, as well as biases in interests and needs, based on factors like ethnicity, sex and age. For example, in some communities, tradition does not permit women to talk publicly in the presence of men, as the women are expected to listen and the men to decide on their behalf. Such a power imbalance is not readily visible during community meetings, and what could pass as a participatory community decision, is likely to be the decision of a few dominant people.

Information – its quality, accessibility, accuracy-is also a key determinant in ensuring effective citizen participation. This is the conclusion that Devas and Grant (2003) made in their study of citizen participation in local government in Kenya and Uganda when they wrote that 'information needs to be shared widely and strategically'. Other factors that they find critical are committed local

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leadership and external pressure from the civil society organisations, the central government and development partners.

This is in agreement with the findings of Yang and Pandey (2011) who established that public management factors matter in citizen participation. They find that key aspects of public management such as the level of red tape, elected official support, hierarchical authority and transformational leadership are key to determining the impact that citizen participation has on service delivery. Particularly, they established that red tape and hierarchical authority are negatively associated with participation outcomes. Positive outcomes are associated with elected official support, transformational leadership of the chief executive officials, and the participant competence and representativeness. These variables were found to be significant even when participant competence, representativeness and involvement mechanisms are controlled (Imparate & Ruster, 2003).

It thus occurs that effective participation is a factor of interrelated variables. All these factors point to the need for intentional collective action and will of both the government officials and the citizens in making participation work. This is possible only where government officials and citizens agree. It is only in such an environment that citizen's preferences are likely to be taken seriously.

Empirical Review

In addition to theories espoused by scholars, there are many empirical works and practical application of these theories which illustrate the efficiencies and deficiencies envisaged within decentralisation systems globally. In this section, attempts are made to evaluate empirically, the impact of decentralisation on the delivery of social services in some developing countries. Even though decentralisation experiments are ongoing in many countries, hard qualitative evidence on their impact is rather scarce. However, there are a number of scattered studies that are arranged in terms of the nature of empirical methodology followed.

Bardhan (2002) discusses two success cases of decentralisation in Latin America and gives some evidence on the "before- after' comparison of service delivery outcomes. One of such cases is about participatory budgeting in municipal government in the city of Porto Alegre in Brazil; the other is the post 1994 decentralisation initiative in Bolivia.   In the case of Porto Alegre, assembly meetings of local citizens and neighborhood associations in different regions discuss investment priorities, review accounts, and elect representatives to a city wide council that allocates available resource across wards show impressive results. Between 1989 and 1996, access to basic sanitation (water and sewage) as well as enrollment in elementary or secondary schools nearly doubled while increasing revenue by 48 percent (Santos, 1998). Although it is difficult from this study to isolate the impact of participatory budgeting reforms from those of other ongoing changes, it seems likely that there has been a substantial impact on the

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pattern of resource allocation across localities, particularly to poor ones, and in the lessening of the misappropriation of resources.

Faguet (2001) finds that public investment in education, water and sanitation increased significantly in three-quarters of all municipalities, and investments responded to measures of local needs; for example, the expansion in public education spending was larger on average in municipalities with a lower literacy rate or with fewer private schools. Faguet's analysis is in terms of levels of public spending rather than outcome variables like school enrollment or school performance or access to water and sanitation services.

Thwala (2010) found some evidence about the relationship of decentralisation and water services. He analyses 121 completed rural water supply projects, financed by various international donor agencies in several countries. His results showed that projects that have high participation of local communities in project selection and design were more likely to have water supply maintained in good condition. In other words, projects with more decentralised decision-making were more likely to be sustained than projects with centralized decision making.

It is usually argued that local government has an information advantage over upper-tier government. This is because local government has more incentive to use local information than national government since local government is answerable to the local electorate while national government has wider constituencies, where local issues may get diluted. In theory, participation in

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information flow and in decision-making is required to develop a feeling of ownership of projects, a sense of responsibility and commitment.

Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006) state that free flow of information about the functioning of government, and about the entitlements and allocations at the local level have been associated with better targeted delivery of benefit. It is important that information campaigns about resources allocated to local level government and how they have been spent and audited (if there are provisions of periodic independent audit account) be made available to the public through public hearings, town hall meetings etc. McCarthy (2004) show that in Brazil the release of audit report on local government expenditure of federal transfers had a significant impact on the incumbent mayors' electoral performance, and this impact was more pronounced in municipalities where local radio was present to divulge the audit information.

According to a survey about the effect of National Community Water and Sanitation Programme (NCWSP) commissioned by the World Bank, both men (90%) and women (87%) said they were well informed about the capital cost and the cost involved in the operation and management associated with technology options. Approximately, two-thirds, say two or more options were explained to them. About 95 percent of all groups said that the community took the decision about the installation of the water facility, while three- fourth said that the community decided on the technical option. Satisfaction with location was reported to be 93 percent for poor households and about 88 percent for non-poor households (World Bank, 2004).

Bratton, Lewis and Gyimah-Boadi (2001) also contend that local governments have the ability to provide services more efficiently and cheaper compared to central governments. Citing the example of El Salvador, the analysis points to the fact that many public works were implemented by municipal governments at costs from 'one-third to two-thirds lower than when the same types of works were executed by central government agencies. The reasons for this include: greater control over work crew, closer supervision, and shorter travel distances to work sites, scrutiny by the electorate and greater accountability by elected and appointed local officials.

A survey undertaken by Das Gupta, Gauri and Khemani (2004) in the Nigerian States of Kogi and Lagos, covering 30 local government, 252 public primary healthcare facilities and over 700 healthcare providers; presented evidence that intergovernmental fiscal relations have an important effect on local accountability and ultimately on health service delivery. The study found a wide spread situation of non-payment of public health facilities' personnel, which led to lower quality of service (e.g., higher doctor absenteeism, lower drug availability). Moreover, they argued that this situation cannot be explained solely by lack of financial resources available for health services to local government but rather by lack of local accountability on those resources. This study suggests that conditional transfers, which are the main source of local health spending, may be damaging local accountability because the public does not hold local officials accountable for those resources.

Although local government and the local people are involved in the development processes, there is the ever-present danger of capturing of local institutions by the elite interfering with delivery of services to the poor and misappropriating and diverting funds to non-target groups. Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006a) developed an analytical framework that formalized the trade-off between centralised and decentralised service delivery systems. They were of the view that decentralisation, by shifting control from the central bureaucrats to the local government, typically tends to expand service delivery; and authority goes to those more responsive to user needs. But with capturing of local government, in the sense of elites receiving a large weighted sum of welfare, there is the tendency for local government to over provide services to local elites at the expense of the non-elites. This however, would depend on the degree of fiscal authority of the local government.

Even though the extent of capture of government at different levels is crucial in understanding the likely impact of decentralisation initiatives, the extent of capture of local government by local elites depends on levels of social and economic inequalities within communities, traditions of political participation and voter awareness, transparency in local decision-making processes, government accountability, media attention and other factors. These factors vary widely across communities and countries as documented in numerous case studies (Conning & Kevane, 2001; Crook & Manor, 1998). Galasso and Ravallion (2005) found that intra-village targeting of food for education programmes in Bangladesh was in villages with greater land inequality. Of course, there can also be elite capture at

the higher levels of government, but some people suspect that such capture is more at the local level.

On the other hand, Wong (2007) indicates that if local elite cannot capture the provision of public services, there is sometimes the opposite danger in their seceding from the system, and without their political support the institutional machinery of service delivery may collapse. This happens when leadership, organisational resources, and expertise are currently provided by the elite in the local institutions. Where this occurs, there is the tendency for the rich to turn to private schools and health clinics for their families and their exit play havoc with the condition of public schools, health clinics and other social infrastructure in both rich and poor countries. This may happen when institutions of local democracy vary widely across areas, or because richer areas have more influence or lobbying power with higher authorities who allocate resources across areas.

One of the few existing empirical studies on the effects of decentralisation and health across countries, Khaleghian (2003) evaluates the impact of decentralisation on immunization rate using panel time-series data set of 140 low- and middle-income countries from 1980 to 1997. He finds that in the low-income group, increased decentralisation is associated with higher coverage. Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006) found in their study of local government in rural West Bengal that while intra-village distribution of benefits was relatively equitable, there was significant regression in inter-village allocation of benefits. They are also of the view that there are differential degrees of public vigilance over different types of service delivery programmes.

In their study of the nature of leakage from decentralised anti-poverty programmes in West Bengal villages, they found that in the local government distribution of 'private' goods like subsidized credit or subsidized agriculture inputs, targeting was on average substantially pro-poor and the leakage was small but in the use of more 'public' fiscal grants there is evidence of significant local capture in village allocations. Thus, capture is about diversion of programme benefits away from the intended beneficiaries through influencing and distorting the decision-making process. Capture need not reduce long term public investment, but the benefits of that investment go only or mostly to the elites and powerful in the community

Schwartz, Guilkey, and Racelis (2002) analysed audit-line annual expenditure report for about 1600 local governments in the Philippines before and after the decentralisation process started in 1994 using panel data. The study also combined these data with secondary census and demographic data in order to examine changes in the level and composition of local government health expenditures and the impact of these expenditures on the consumption of public health goods and services before and after decentralisation.

The results suggested that per capita expenditure in health increased immediately following devolution and continued to increase in 1995 and 1998 compared with per capita expenditure levels of prior years. They state that per capita increases appear to be more pronounced for provincial expenditure than for municipal expenditures, properly because more costly responsibilities in hospitals were devolved to provincial governments. The results also suggest that local

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governments, which had discretionary authority over unconditional transfers, allocated increasing shares of total resources to health at the expense of other locally provided government services following the decentralisation process.

There is evidence that some historically disadvantaged groups in society are not encouraged to participate in decision-making. There is quantitative evidence on the impact of mandated representation of women in leadership in local government in India. Since 1998, one-third of all positions of chief of the village council in India has been reserved for women. Only women may be candidates for the position of chief in a reserved village council and the council selects the later randomly. Taking advantage of this random assignment, Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2001) have measured the impact of this political reservation policy on the outcome of decentralisation with data collected from a survey of all investment in local public good, made by the village councils in one district in West Bengal. They found out that the women leaders of village councils invest more in infrastructure that is directly relevant to the needs of rural women, like drinking water, fuel and roads and that village women are more likely to participate in policy making process if the leader of their village council is a woman.

Lessons from the Review

All the empirical studies of decentralisation and participation by the various scholars and writers conclude that decentralisation brings government closer to the people and empowers people to participate in and influence the decision made to develop their community. With the spread of education,

information, and economic growth, the ability for people to participate and contribute meaningfully to the public goods and projects development of their communities would enhance the provision of basic social services. Local governments have the ability to provide services more efficiently and cheaper compared to central governments. The reasons for this include: greater control over work crews, closer supervision, and shorter travel distances to work sites, scrutiny by the electorate and greater accountability by elected and appointed local officials.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 4. Based on various views from literature, the key theories guiding the study were the theorem of decentralisation, participation theory and collective action theory. The theories help in understanding the interaction and relationship between decentralisation and participation practices on service delivery in MAs. These interactions are indicated by arrows from the decentralisation theorem and other theories namely the theory of participation and the collective action theory. Key arrows are directed from each of the sub-components (practices) to service delivery and how it influences community development.

The decentralisation theorem proposed by Oates (1972) cited in Shah (2006) asserts that each public service should be provided by the jurisdiction having control over the geographical area that would internalise the benefits and cost of such provisions. This is because local government understands the concerns of local residents; local decision-making is responsive to the people for

whom the services are intended for and thereby has the potential to promote accountability.

Decentralisation increases citizens' participation while improving efficiency and equity in service delivery. According to Karol Wojtyla's theory of participation (cited in Mejos 2007), participation is the ability to exist and act with others in such a way that people remain themselves within this active process. The ability to participate points to the fact that a person can enter into an interpersonal relationship with other persons and at the same time fulfill himself in his actions. Thus, participation allows the realization of oneself as well as the realization of the community. In society, every member has a task to fulfill and these tasks contribute to the growth of and development not only of its members but also the group. Thus, participation ensures that individuals fulfill themselves as they work towards the achievement of a common good. This has been identified as the potential factor influencing service delivery at the Municipal Assemblies.

The concepts advanced in this chapter in addition to the main ones already discussed include the devolution of political, administrative and fiscal functions and responsibility of central government to local government, the municipal as the local level of study, roles, and the involvement of other actors in the process by the main actor under study.

"Collective goods" theory refers to something that is used as if it belongs to all members of the group. Collective action is where individuals undertake collective efforts based on mutual interest and expectation of mutual benefit. The collective action theory deals with identifying and evaluating solution to the

collective action problem or the free-rider problem. The collective action problem, according to Oslon (1965), emerges in a group setting where all individuals can benefit by not contributing to the group. However, when all individuals withhold contribution, collection action fails. The basic premise is that as public goods are non-exclusive, individuals then have an incentive to take a free-rider-that is, they will use the good without contributing to its production or management as they base their decision mainly on self-interest and cost benefit analysis.

To overcome this problem and prevent free-riding to promote collective action, Willer (2009) suggested the introduction of motivation for contributors and punishment for free riders through administration of selective incentives. To encourage citizens to participate in the production of public goods which benefit all, there is the need to motivate them to participate in decision-making on community projects from identification stage through planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
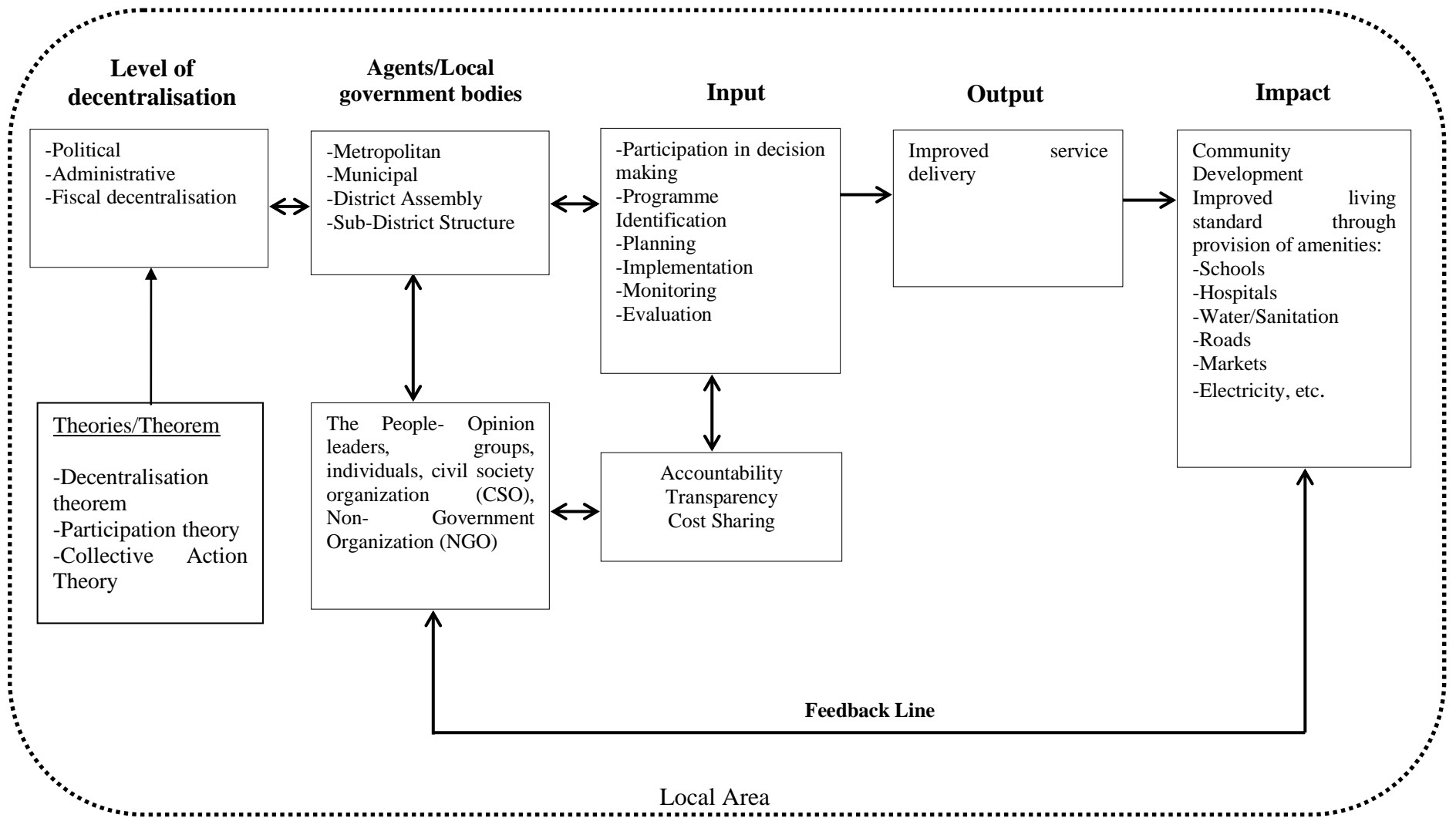
Figure 4: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's construct

The line from the impact back to the main actor indicates the feedback link within the process to the local government. This feedback may be acted upon in enhancing its ability in the process. The feedback is likely to include what the local government did well and needs to be improved upon or what it failed to do or did wrongly and needs to be addressed well in future times as it continues with the process. All these take place in the local area. The line delineating the local area in the diagram above is in broken lines indicating that the local level is not closed, but opened to the outside environment where other non-local actors can also get involved in the process.

The literature reviewed so far indicates that the effectiveness of any community participation initiative depends on the extent to which it facilitates the involvement of the citizenry to positively influence the outcome of development efforts. These include empowerment of citizenry to perform particular roles. Citizen participation was taken as the input factor that influences the determinants of decentralised service delivery outcomes. In this approach, local government body collaborates with the people, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector to furnish better social service access to communities.

In an effective and efficient decentralised system that supports participatory processes, the people who are the key actors on the ground must be encouraged and empowered to make inputs in the form of their needs and concerns through their elected representatives up the local structure. Citizen participation is operationalized in terms of the mechanism or instruments through which people have a voice relating to the stages of service delivery that is

planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This involves the extension, to which citizens' needs expressed in proposals are reflected in decisions and final service provided. It is expected that through participation by citizens, local government has better knowledge of the preference of the people and therefore can vary services to suit the demand of the people. Efficiency and equity would be greatly impacted if citizens' participation occurs at the planning and implementation stages as compared to the monitoring and evaluation stages.

Community's roles are crucial in the process of articulation of their needs into real demand and in the process of negotiation and participation in project design, implementation, and monitoring. The elected representatives at the local level, through deliberations analyse the decisional inputs from the people and come out with the best outcome. These decisions are implemented by the district/municipal official in collaboration with the people and other stakeholders to bring about local development.

The people are made aware of Inputs that could not be implemented through information flow and feedback by their representatives. Issues that are not considered in decision-making can be used for re-planning of other projects. Civil society organisations also play important roles at the grassroots by influencing policies and keeping local government officials on their toes to ensure that the people's interest is protected. This can improve performance and sustainability of policies, programmes and projects especially at the local levels. All these notwithstanding, there are certain factors and conditions in the environment within which decentralisation operates and all these should be factored into the

process. These include accountability, transparency, the potentials and resources within the environment that influence its activities and cost sharing.

Accountability is imperative to make public officials answerable for government behaviour and responsibility to the people (individuals, communities and private stakeholders) from whom they derive their authority. It is the practice where service delivery agents make public and are held responsible for their actions. In this case it is the extent to which officials of local government give account to the citizens on the resources at their disposal and how they have been used in service delivery. Where those charged with service delivery apply all resources for the intended purposes then transparency through information sharing would be achieved. Transparency is necessary and it is about the availability of information to the general public and clarity about government rules, regulations, and decisions.

Enhanced citizen participation can strengthen accountability. In so doing, citizens should have accurate and assessable information about local government, about available resources, performance, service level accounts and other financial obligations. This can bring about cost recovery which refers to the extent to which service provided can meet their cost. It can be achieved through cost sharing, charging of the full cost of service provided or by optimal application of the resources available so that no debt occurs. This is an outcome of how consumers are willing to pay for services provided. It has been observed that households are likely to be more willing to pay for and maintain services that match their

demand. Cost recovery is most effective in an environment where citizen's choices are adhered to and where there is transparency.

In this study, the local government which is the main actor, in Figure 5, indicates the decentralised structure that should be met if it is to carry out its participatory service delivery effectively and successfully. This model describes the developmental participatory processes and the extent to which the various stakeholders are involved in the decision-making and planning process at the local level. The application of inputs from the people through consultation, their involvement in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects are likely to bring about improved service delivery and a change in development status of the local area and this is indicated by a line of impact.

The study focused on the interaction and influence of each of these sub-components in order to achieve their positive influence on the service delivery system of the decentralised structures of the DAs in Ghana. Improving service delivery is a cardinal pillar in local governance and participation models have thus been revolving around to engender efficient and effective service delivery.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviews empirical data on decentralisation and peoples' involvement in development activities that concern them. It also discusses the conceptual framework which establishes the relationship between the theories and concepts underpinning the study. The next chapter looks at the research methods employed for the study. This chapter discussed the theories that underpin the study. The theory of decentralisation proposed by Oates (1972) assumed that local

government and community leaders being close to the people would obtain better information about the basic needs, taste and preference hence would be in a better position to identify and address their specific needs than would remote central government or other external actors. According to Karol Wojtyla's theory of participation, cited in Mejos (2007) participation is the ability to exist and act with others in such a way that in this existing and acting we remain ourselves and actualize ourselves. Finally, collective action theory proposed by Olson (1965), asserts that collective action is where individuals undertake collective efforts based on mutual interest and expectations of mutual benefits. These theories established the relationship and benefits derived where local government and the people work together toward the achievement of a common goal.

The chapter also discussed conceptual issues related to the study such as concept and types of decentralisation, benefits of decentralisation, challenges of decentralisation, citizens' participation, participatory strategies, importance of participation and factors influencing participation.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter gives a description of the research design used for the study. It describes the various procedures and processes, which were employed to collect empirical data, and the method of analysis employed. It consisted of the study design, study area, study population, sampling and sampling procedure, research instrument, data collection procedure, data processing and analysis, and chapter summary.

Research Approach

The conflict about which methodology is the best choice for a researcher is as old as the methodologies themselves. Though there is growing awareness among social scientists that epistemological and ontological commitments may be associated with certain research method, the borderlines are not deterministic. Depoy and Gutlin (1998) assert that it is becoming increasingly important to combine both ideologies and their attendant methods because such an approach offers the distinct advantage of better understanding the phenomenon under study and helps in evening out the negatives of each while complementing the respective strengths.

Bryman (2004) exemplifies this fact that while qualitative interviews may reveal a predisposition towards or a reflection of an interpretativist and constructionist position, this is not always the case. Notwithstanding the many differences between the two research strategies, there are many examples of

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research that transcend the distinction. The inference is that the debate over 'quantitative-qualitative' dichotomy is perhaps over blown because "even the self-confessed paradigmatic extremists do not consistently hold to one position or the other" (Esterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 2002). This gives a good reason for the study's attempt to use the multi-purpose strategy approach (triangulation), whereby a combination of focus group discussions, structured interviews schedule, questionnaire administration, historical and documentary methods are employed.

The research design employed for this study therefore, is a mixed method which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. Priority was given to the quantitative data which guided the study while the qualitative data was embedded to seek information at different levels of stakeholder's involvement and to bring out hidden information based on their interest and perception on community participation in decision making. The mixed methodological approach seeks to integrate quantitative and qualitative data to obtain a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. The methodology for this study permits triangulation of the data collected to improve the validity of the finding and enables inference from the result. Questionnaire administration, structured interview schedule and focus group discussions were methods used to collect data for the study as they focused on connecting ideas to understand cause and effect as well as how stakeholders meet to interact and make decisions on community development (Casley & Kumar, 1988).

As literature indicates, the study represents a participatory approach involving community members in the governance of their locality by which they express their needs and get involved in the decision-making process for the development of their community as well as the betterment of their wellbeing. The analysis of current challenges and prospects of community participation in the decision-making process of service delivery in the Ga West Municipality required detailed understanding of the reality on the ground from the view point of community members and other stakeholders. The study requires an in-depth knowledge of the interest of the people, their capacity to support and influence the decision-making process which require both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The disadvantage of mixed methods is that it requires training in both methods and may be costly as researchers may have to work in multiple teams.

Theoretical Perspectives of the Research Design

The theoretical perspectives that have influenced the structure, process and direction of social research are many and diverse. However, two perspectives, or paradigms (positivist and interpretive), and their respective quantitative and qualitative methods provide the theoretical basis for the methodologies employed in this study. The Positivist and Interpretive Perspectives

Positivism is a system of philosophy based on experience and empirical knowledge of natural phenomena. Positivists see social sciences as an organised method for combining deductive logic with precise empirical observations of individual behaviour in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws that can be used to predict general patterns of human activity (Jaeger, 1988).

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Positivist researchers prefer quantitative data and often use experiments, surveys, and statistics. They seek rigorous, exact measures and "objective" research, and they test hypothesis by carefully analysing numbers from the measures. Critics, however, charge that positivism reduces people to numbers and that its concerns with abstract laws or formula are not relevant to the actual lives of real people (Ezeani, 1998).

On the other hand, interpretive approach is a systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social world. It is concerned with how ordinary people manage their practical affairs in everyday life, or how they get things done. Interpretive researchers often use participant observation and field research.

These techniques require that researchers spend many hours in direct personal contact with those being studied. Others analyse transcripts of conversations or study video tapes of behaviour in extraordinary detail. As a result of the similarities and differences in the nature and principles of these perspectives, two major methodologies, *quantitative* and *qualitative*, have emerged in the social sciences, each of which contains certain theoretical and methodological principles. Qualitative method of approach is mainly descriptive and involves the collection and analysis of data that is concerned with meanings, attitudes and beliefs, rather than quantitative method that results in numerical counts from which statistical inferences can be drawn. Quantitative and

qualitative methodologies can be employed, not as opposing, but rather complementary methodologies.

Study Design

The study design that was used in this study is descriptive survey design. The purpose of descriptive surveys, according to Ezeani (1998), is to collect detailed and factual information that describes an existing phenomenon. This form of research is quite common, in most cases as a preliminary study or an exploratory study, but also as an independent investigation; it aims to describe social systems, relations, or social events, providing background information about the issue in question as well as stimulating explanations. Also, this study design is appropriate for the study because it will help in analysing the information provided by the respondents through the use of questionnaires. The descriptive method is concerned with the conditions or relations that exist such as determining the nature of prevailing conditions, practices, and attitudes.

Characteristics of the Study Area

The Ga West Municipality is currently one of the seven districts in the Greater Accra Region with its capital being Amasaman. Ofankor, Medie, Adjen Kotoku and Pokuase are some of the major towns found in the municipality. The Municipality lies within latitude 50º 481 North, 5º 291 North and longitude 0º 81 west and 0º 301 West respectively and occupies a land area of 284.01sq km. It has been, however, zoned into six zonal councils for effective administration. These are Pokuase, Mayera, Ofankor, Ayikai Doblo, Kotoku and Amasaman zonal councils.

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The population of the Municipality was projected to be 243,724 in 2010 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010) but as of the year 2008, the population of the area was 183,000 (Ga West Municipal Health Management Team, 2010). The Municipality remains predominantly peri-urban and urban with a population growth rate of 3.4 percent in the year 2010. The reason given was the proximity of the area to the capital city. The population is mainly concentrated along the peri-urban areas of the municipality particularly on the border with the Accra Metropolitan Assembly and Ga East District Assembly. The 2010 population figure of 243,724 showed a density which was much higher than the national density though lower than that of Greater Accra Region (with 895.5 persons per sq. km). This implies great pressure on resources including water.

Characterized by a large proportion of children, the population of the area has a small portion made up of elderly persons who are sixty years and above. The proportion of the population under 15 years in the year 2010 was 34.8 percent which was an indication of high fertility. Made up of about 50.2 percent males and 49.8 percent females, the sex ratio is rated at 99.1 females to a 100 males (Ga West District Assembly, 2010).
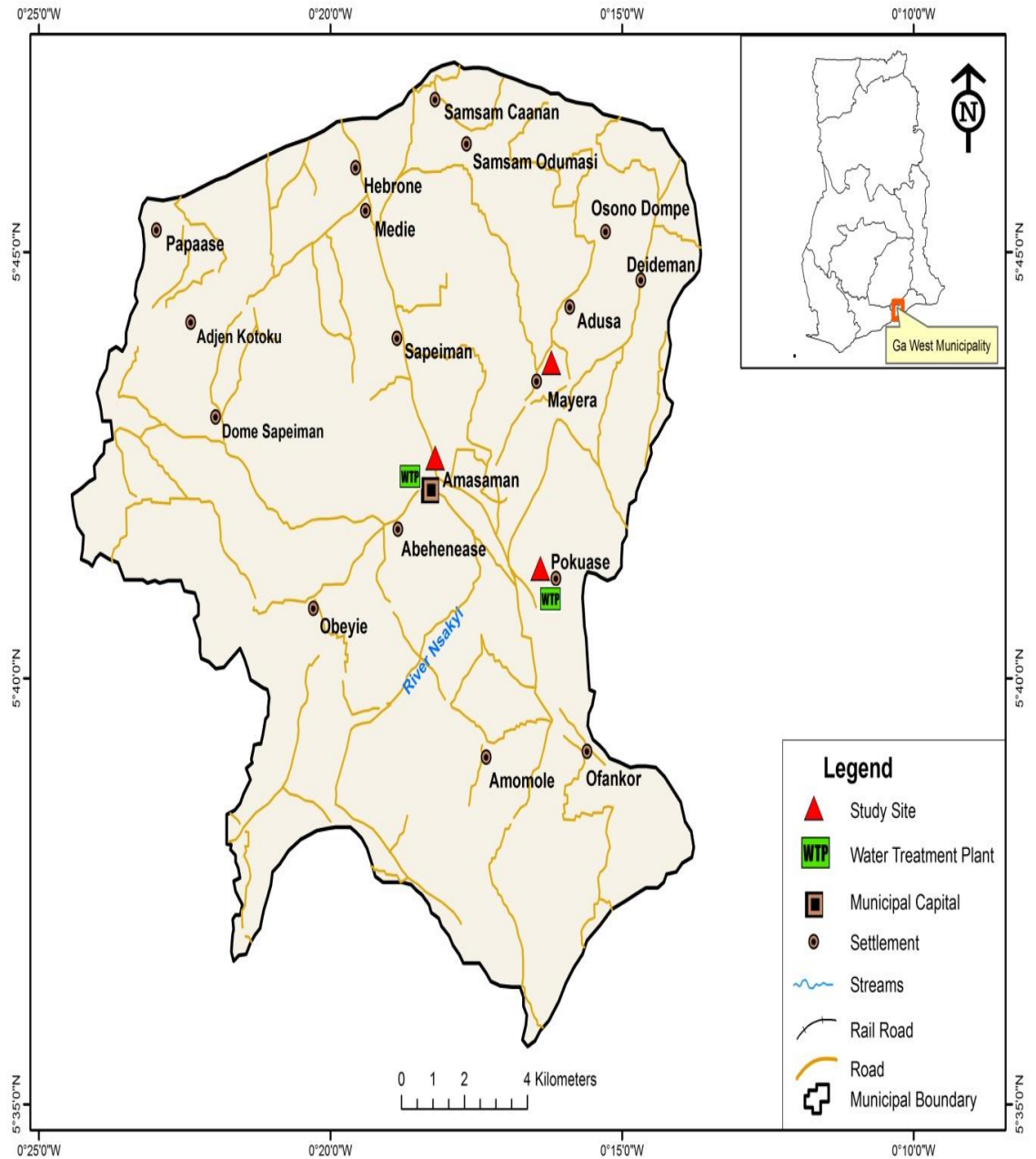
Figure 5: Map of Ga West Municipality with Selected Communities Involved

in the Research

Source: Ga West District Assembly (2014)

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The municipality is made up of a land area consisting of gentle slopes which are spread together with plains in most of its parts. Much of the land is generally undulating and less than 76m (250ft) above sea level except for those areas around the Akwapem and Weija hills creating valleys. Some of these slopes in the area are mostly formed over the clay soils of the Dahomeyan gneiss. The soils found in this municipality are rich in sandstone and limestone which are also a good source of materials for the construction industry. This explains why there are illegal sand winning activities in these areas.

The major rivers that flow through this municipality are the Densu, and Nsakyi rivers. Densu, which is the larger of them drains down from the Eastern Region through the western portions of the district to Ga South Municipality where it enters the sea. It is also the major supply of water to most of the people in the municipality and its neighbouring communities and serves as a natural boundary between Ga West and Ga South municipalities.

The municipality lies within the coastal savannah agro-ecological zone and has a bi-modal rainfall pattern with an annual mean ranging from 790mm on the coast to 1270mm to the extreme north. The annual temperature ranges from 25ºC in August to 28ºC in February and March-- a condition that allows for farming activities and some rearing of animals (Ga West District Assembly, 2010). The bi-modal rainfall pattern enables some households in the municipality to depend on rainwater as their main source of water for the home. This reduces cost and time in accessing water for household use.

Because of the age structure of the population of the municipality which has more people dependant on the few work force, there is less economic development. Few members in the communities in the municipality are farmers and petty traders. Farmers in this municipality take advantage of the headquarters of the Plant Protection and Regulatory Directorate, sited in Pokuase which is a town close to the municipal capital, for assistance in the use of agrochemicals and what to cultivate. However, quite a number of the population is also involved in the formal sector occupation such as teaching and administrative work.

The municipality has been able to establish some health facilities over the past few years in order to cater for the increasing population. There have also been various fora and educational programmes held to educate people on specifically nutritional issues. This was used as a measure to reduce the incidence of malnutrition and increase nutrition rehabilitation. Malaria and other skin diseases remain at the top of the top ten diseases in the municipality. Among the most endemic diseases in the municipality are schistomiasis, tuberculosis and buruli ulcer with the highest reported cases in 2004 being buruli ulcer, though it has reduced since 1999. According to the 2010 annual report of the Ga West District Assembly, there is the high prevalence of buruli ulcer, yaws and schistomiasis making them a major concern which is a result of inadequate potable water in the municipality. The major health facilities in this municipality are the Amasaman and Oduman health centres located in the Amasaman community which, according to estimation, covers one hundred and fifty two settlements.

Though the land area is perceived mainly as occupied by the Ga ethnic group, the national census conducted in the year 2010 showed that the predominant group was the Akans who made up 44.3 percent of the population, followed by the Ewes (25 percent) and the Ga-Dangme (19.1 percent), (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Because much of the land in this municipality was originally owned by the Ga tribe, the Homowo festival which is a traditional festival of the Gas is celebrated in the middle of every year by all resident Gas. Other traditional customs of the Gas in this area are to allow the goddess of the water bodies to rest on Saturdays. This helps to check the use of water from such rivers and as well help protect the environment around water resources. Though this custom has become outmoded, it was previously a way of protecting the environment by the early settlers of the land.

Study Population

In this study, the target population comprises the total number of citizens in the Ga West Municipality who are 18 years and above and Municipal Assembly members. The Municipality is made up of six (6) zonal councils, three of these zonal councils were involved in the research.

Sample Size Determination

Sampling is necessary because in dealing with large numbers of respondents, there is the need to get a fair representation of the people since everybody in the population cannot be studied. However, the question about the right sample size in quantitative research is one that concerns not only the

beginner but also any social investigator. In simple terms it refers to basic questions such as, how large or small must the sample be for it to be

The key is that most sample size decisions do not focus on estimates for the total population; rather, they are concentrated on the minimum sample sizes that can be tolerated for the smallest subgroups of importance (Tuffuor, 1996). From the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that there is seldom a definite answer about how large a sample should be to any given study. Therefore, in view of the limited time and resources available, the researcher would go by the estimation of subgroups to arrive at a sample size of the key informants. The sample size for the household survey was determined by the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for sample size determination. Therefore, from the figures given by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the target population of 10,549 requires a sample size of 345 at 95 percent confidence level with 5 percent margin of error. The Table for estimating sample size was used because the target population was known, which made it possible to determine the sample size for the study. In addition to the 345, 18 discussants were selected to participate in focus group discussions. Table 2 depicts the composition of the sample size used. The assembly members were 30 and they all participated in the study.

Table 2: Composition of Sample Size

Community	Population	Sample	Percentage
Pokuase	7,869	273	79
Amasaman	1,913	54	16
Mayera	767	18	5
Assembly Members	-	30	-
Discussants	-	18	-
Total	10,549	393	100

Source: Ghana Statistical Service, 2010

Sampling Procedure

Sampling is a process of selecting units of people or organisations from a population of interest for a study in order to make a fair generalization of the result back to the population from which they are chosen (Trochim, 2006). The probability method was used to sample respondents at the community level, purposive sampling was used to select focus group discussion members, and census was used to include all assembly members.

Two out of six communities were randomly selected through the lottery procedure where the names of the councils were written on pieces of papers and two picked (i.e., Pokuase and Mayera) together with the municipal capital (i.e. Amasaman) was purposefully selected. The simple random sampling technique was used because the communities were given equal chances of being selected for the study. These are Amasaman, Pokuase, and Mayera. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select the Amasaman community which has been the municipal capital since 1988 and has the seat of administration in the Ga West Municipality.

According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2014), there are 55,913 households in the Municipality. Out of this, 345 households participated in the study. This number of households were used because the sample size for the community members. As a result, only one person within a particular household was allowed to participate in the study. This was done with the idea that people within the same household were more likely to hold similar perception in terms of the issue under investigation. Hence, it might be needless and repetitive of fact if people within the same household respond to the instrument.

Within each community, three cluster of areas were created (i.e. south, middle and north clusters). This demarcations or clustering of the communities was done with the aid of the assembly members. This was to ensure that the sample becomes a fair representation of the entire community. Approximately equal number of households was selected from each cluster. Taking Amasaman, for instance, 18 households were selected from each cluster, 6 households from each cluster in Mayera, and 91 households from each cluster in Pokuase. At the end, 273, 54 and 18 households were selected in Pokuase, Amasaman and Mayera respectively. Within each community or cluster, participants were rolled-in for the study based on convenience. That is, in each house visited, household representatives who were present, available, willing, 18 years and above, and have lived in the community for 2 years or more, were allowed to participate in the study. Convenience sampling technique was used because of the absence of sampling frame and unplanned structure of the settlement. This made it difficult to use any probability sampling technique.

For the 18 community discussants (6 from each of the communities included in the sample), purposive sampling technique was used to select them for the study. The community elders were contacted to select six informants within the community who have interest in community development projects.

In addition, the assembly members of the selected communities and officials of Municipal Assembly were involved in the study through census. This technique was necessary because the assembly members were not many and thus, the need to involve all of them. Again, the assembly members was involved because they provided meaningful information for the assessment of Ghana's decentralisation programme and community participation in decision-making on service delivery in the locality.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Two data collection methods were employed in the study. These were survey and focus group discussion. Survey was employed because of the need to sample large proportion of people within communities to participate in the study. Surveys are advantageous in terms of generalizing the findings of a study from a sample to the population. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also held to supplement the data from questions. The FGD was conducted to complement the responses of the main respondents in the survey and it also allowed great flexibility in the questioning process. Sarantakos (1997) suggests that FGDs, due to the group environment, allow significant points of view to be presented in a real, emotional and summary form as spontaneous expression. The focus group

discussion also provided significant information about the study object and explained trend variances, reasons and causes through the views of respondents.

The instruments used for data collection were structured interview schedule, questionnaire and focus group discussion guide. Questionnaire and structured interview schedule were used to collect data from the survey. These served as the main data collection instruments because they are very effective for securing factual information about practices and conditions of which the respondents are presumed to have knowledge and for enquiring into opinions and attitudes of the subjects. Another reason for choosing questionnaire and structured interview schedule was that they are easy to fill and takes little time as compared to other instruments like the interview guide. Finally, when dealing with large number of respondents, questionnaire is the best and appropriate technique. The questionnaires and interview schedules comprised both close and open-ended questions.

In the case of open-ended questions, the respondents are free to formulate their own answers the way they consider to be the most appropriate, in their own way and in their own words. The close-ended questions were used because, the responses were fixed and the respondents were expected to choose the option within which he or she agreed most. Open and close ended questionnaire and structured interview schedules were developed and used. The structured interview schedule was administered to the residents and the questionnaire to Municipal Assembly members in the municipality.

Both interview schedule and the questionnaire were organised in sections. The first part of the instrument requested respondents to provide demographic data such as age, gender, level of education, number of years lived in the community etc. Section 'B' looked at the utilization of local government structures for community development. On one hand, Section 'C' looked at the participation of community members in the decision-making to contribute to development projects. Section 'D', on the other hand, considered the attitude of local government towards community participation in decision making. Lastly, section 'E' looked at the perception of community members about the present system of local governance and citizens' participation in service delivery.

Table 3: Detailed Information on Data Collection Method and Instrument

Target Population	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Instrument	Type of Data Obtained
Community members (households)	Survey	Structured interview schedule	• Utilisation of sub-structure to facilitate citizen participation • Levels of people participation in decision making • Attitude of local government toward peoples' inclusion in decision-making on service delivery • Perception of people about local governance and participation in community development
Assembly members	Survey	Questionnaire	• Utilisation of sub-structure to facilitate citizen participation • Levels of people participation in decision making • Attitude of local government toward peoples' inclusion in decision-making on service delivery • Perception of people about local governance and participation in community development
Community level representatives	Focus group discussion	Focus group discussion	• Utilisation of sub-structure to facilitate citizen participation • Levels of people participation in decision making • attitude of local government toward peoples' inclusion in decision-making on service delivery Perception of people about local governance and participation in community development

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Pre-test of Questionnaire/Interview Schedule

Pre-test is a small scale trial of the data collecting instrument to determine the clarity of questions and whether the instrument elicits the desired information (Polit & Beck, 2006). Pilot testing helps in making an instrument reliable as it shows the degree of consistency that the instrument or procedure demonstrates. The term pilot testing refers to mini versions of a full-scale study (also called feasibility studies), as well as the specific pre-testing of a particular research instrument such as questionnaire or interview schedule (Baker, 1994). One of the advantages of conducting a pilot testing is that it might give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated. Pilot test is important for the following reasons:

1. Developing and testing adequacy of research instruments,

2. Identifying logistical problems using proposed methods,

3. Determine what resources (finance, staff) are needed for a planned study,

4. Estimating variability in outcomes to help determining sample size.

This pilot test was conducted in the Cape Coast Metropolis in the Central Region using 20 citizens including the assemblyman-- selected from Mpeasem-- a rural community in the Cape Coast Metropolis. All the respondents were purposively sampled. This was because the respondents were in a position to provide desired information for the study. This was evident from my initial interaction with them. Copies of the questionnaire and structured interview schedule were administered personally. The researcher, therefore had the

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opportunity to establish rapport with the respondents, explained the purpose of the study and meaning of items that were not clear to some of them.

The data collected were tallied to summarize the responses and to establish relationship(s). As have been earlier indicated, the community was selected for proximity and more importantly because it has similar characteristics to the communities that formed the population for the study. The rational for the try-out was to revise the questionnaire used in the study to make it more specific and effective in soliciting the needed responses. This helped the researcher to identify possible problems, which might be encountered in the study, as well as to develop a reliable pattern for coding the responses and to draw up procedures for data collection. The structured interview schedule was found to be reliable because of its high reliability co-efficient ratio of 0.817 using Kuder-Richardson 21, which is a measure of internal consistency. The questions were found to be useful for the study.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection is a systematic process in which the researcher collects relevant information to achieve research objectives. The instruments used to collect data depend on the research design since both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. In this study, survey, structured interview and focus group discussions were both employed.

Prior to the beginning of data collection, a visit was made to the selected communities to identify and familiarise with people in the communities in which respondents for the study were selected. Five field assistants were recruited to

assist in the data collection. They were trained and briefed by the researcher on the modalities of administering the instrument. This action was in line with Creswell (2007), who suggested that training was necessary where data collection involved more than one investigator because it helped in the standardization of the procedure.

The training took two days and included practice sessions. This ensured detection of flaws in the style of questioning and also allowed clarity, consistency as well as credibility of information collected. The field assistants selected could speak at least two Ghanaian languages to cater for the diverse local languages taking into consideration the large number of immigrants from other localities. The languages considered were Ga, Akan, Ewe and Hausa. The researcher being a Ga did not need an interpreter since she could speak Twi as an additional Ghanaian language.

In the communities, three area demarcations were made using the roads. In the rural communities, foot paths and other landmarks served as means of demarcation. In the communities, the field assistants started the data collection process after completing the community entry process. In the household, a member of the household was randomly selected for the study. In some few cases where there was no one at home, the researcher visited the house on other occasions until a member was met at home. This strategy was adopted because it ensured that a member of the household had an equal chance of being sampled. In the course of administering the data collection instruments, non-literate

respondents were assisted by reading and explaining the questions out to them and the responses recorded.

In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of different perspectives on community participation in decision-making on service delivery, three focus group discussions (FGDs) of six members were purposively selected and organised, one FGD for each community. Each meeting lasted about two hours with about ten minutes break. A focus group discussion guide was developed to facilitate discussion and to bring out critical issues that were directly relevant to the research topic. The meeting proceedings and discussions were recorded by two field assistants and backed by tape recordings with permission of the members in all the three meetings to help the researcher to fill in missed statements. The FGDs afforded the researcher the opportunity to ask relevant questions and propose key recommendations. During the sessions, participants expressed their opinions freely and had the chance to confirm feasibility of some suggestions. The reaction of each person encouraged others to speak out and fill in the gaps (i.e. providing more clarification to earlier responses of thers). Findings from the focus group discussions were used to substantiate the findings from the structured interview guide and questionnaire.

Data Processing and Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis were required. The variables for this study are nominal which represents categories that cannot be ordered and which values have no mathematical interpretation and ordinal, reflect quantity but numbers assigned to cases only specify the order of cases and so

measures levels and degrees. Therefore, quantitative analysis was achieved using data generated from individual structured interview schedule of selected communities and questionnaire from assembly persons. The data was organised into various themes and categories (five sections based on the research questions and the purpose of the study) such that each section provides answers for each of the research questions.

Prior to coding and tabulating the questionnaire and structured interview guide for analysis, all the items were checked. This was to help the researcher see if instructions have been followed uniformly and whether all items have been responded to. The responses to the questionnaire and interview schedule were then coded by assigning numbers to the various categories of responses for the purpose of analyses.

A short list was prepared from a master of responses for the open-ended items in order to get the key responses that were given by the respondents. This was followed by a preparation of a sheet showing the coding scheme. This provided a guide for the interpretation of the variables in the analysis. After checking incomplete and inaccurate questionnaire and structured interview schedule, the items on the instrument were transferred to a spread sheet software Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) version 16. The data was then checked by examining them for any errors and then finally analysed. Descriptive analysis was then achieved by generating frequency tables, percentage and cross tabulation of some of the variables to present the outcome based on the objective of the study. Further, influential analysis such as correlation analysis and

regression analysis were done to study the relationships among the variables. The results from the focus group discussions were categorized into appropriate themes and analysed through discourse analysis. The hypothesis was tested using regression analysis using 95% confidence interval.

Ethical Consideration and Community Entry Protocol

Besides dealing with the technical side of this study–with the issues of research design, data collection and analysis– there is another dimension to research that has to be considered, namely: the moral or ethical dimension. Just as practical considerations can prevent researchers from implementing the ideal research design or obtaining as large or diverse sample as desired, so can ethical considerations constrain scientific enquiry. According to Singleton, Straits and Straits (1993):

> Ethics may prohibit researchers from using experimental treatments that could harm research participants from asking questions that would prove extremely embarrassing or threatening, from making observations that would deceive or place subjects under duress, and from reporting information that would constitute an invasion of privacy.

However, several authors are of the view that the ethical issue of harm is much less a problem for survey researchers and participants (Neuman, 2003; Sarantakos, 1997). This study is designed in such a way that it would not pose any threat whatsoever or have the potential of posing any threat to the respondents.

The second ethical consideration in research is that of informed consent. For moral and legal reasons, respondents should not be coerced into participating in social research. Not only must subjects understand that their participation is voluntary, they must also be given enough information about the research to make an informed decision about whether to participate or not. In other words, researchers must obtain an explicit or implicit informed consent of their subjects to take part in an investigation.

The issue of informed consent was catered for in this study by making sure that the respondents for the study are briefed to know the purpose of the research. The Assembly Members were contacted through the Presiding Member of the Assembly. The researcher first contacted the Presiding Member with an introductory letter from the Institute for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast. With the help of the Presiding Member, the researcher took time to explain the purpose of the study to the Assembly Members and other executives.

The right to privacy is the individual's right to decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent his or her attitude, belief and behaviour will be revealed. Social research presents many possibilities for invading the privacy of research participant, and it is essential that researchers be sensitive to the ways in which their actions can violate this basic right. No matter how sensitive the information, however, ethical investigators protect the right to privacy by guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality. Obviously, information given anonymously secures the privacy of individuals, but this safeguard is usually possible in survey research using self-administered questionnaire without

attachment. This is exactly what this study did. Besides, unless the respondent was illiterate, he/she was given the opportunity under guidance to answer the questionnaire personally. Subsequently, the report of the findings did not include names of respondents or anything that could lead to their identification.

To ensure ethical conduct of the study, the following principles were observed. According to Creswell (2007), researchers require permission to collect data from individuals and sites. This permission could be got at three levels: from individuals who are in charge of the sites, people providing the data and from campus-based institutional review boards (IRB) in this study the researcher sought and obtained permission to conduct the study from the Municipal Assembly with an introductory letter from the office of the Director, Institute for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast. Permission was also sought from the traditional leaders of the selected communities through the assembly person who led the researcher to observe the right community entry protocol.

In this study, questions were constructed carefully to avoid intrusion of respondents' privacy. The purpose and benefits were also explained to them. Respondents were informed that there would be no benefits in terms of money to participant. However, future benefits were that the findings and recommendations from the study could provide information for improvement in communities' participation in decision-making in the study area and in the country as a whole. The respondents were also made aware that they were free to choose to participate or otherwise. They were informed that data would be reported in a thesis that would be available in the libraries of the University of Cape Coast.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research methods used for the study. Questionnaire, structured interview schedule and focus group discussions guide were used for collecting the data from the field. The study used primary data collected from the various communities where a sample size of 345 community members and 18 community informants were selected in addition to 30 assembly persons from the municipality. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used. Furthermore, the study adopted the inductive and deductive research approaches. Lastly, the data were analysed using the Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) software, version 16.

CHAPTER FIVE

UTILISATION OF GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES AND CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN PROJECTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the study based on the field data collected. In discussing the results and their implication for decentralised governance and participation in decision-making on service delivery at local level development, due reference has been made to the relevant literature review and the conceptual frame work that guide this study. The chapter is divided into sections. The first section presents the demographics characteristics of the respondents, followed by the analysis on two key issues on: (a) the utilisation of the local government structure to facilitate citizens' participation, and (b) the level of people's participation in District Assembly activities towards the provision of services.

Demographic Information of Community Members and Assembly Members in Ga West Municipality

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents i.e. community members and assembly persons studied. The importance of presenting the demographic data was part of an attempt to understand the respondents, who they are, their interest and what inspires them. Social and economic characteristics can contribute to understanding of community involvement in the decision-making process on service delivery. Alienation as a result of social exclusion is related to a person's social class, educational status

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living standards and other characteristics. As such, the demographic information of respondents were considered. From literature, these variables have been found to influence people's perspectives on participation in decision-making as well as holding public officials accountable for their actions.

Community Members Demographic Data

The study surveyed some demographic data from the community members which include age, gender, educational background, and the number of years community members have been living in the communities. Data, as shown in Table 3, revealed that the largest proportion of the community members were between 20 and 30 years of age (65.8%), and about 25.2 percent were between the ages of 31-40 years. Few respondents were between 41-50 years (4.9%), 51-60 years (3.2%), and above 60 years (0.9%). It is evident that the greatest proportion of the community members are in their active age and thus, would have interest in participating in community development.This shows that the participants could be relied upon to provide relevant information on decentralization and participation in decision-making on service delivery to draw conclusion.

Again, more males (53.9%) than female inhabitants (46.1%) participated in the study. The sex representation in this study was unequal and this suggests that the responses might be dominated by male inhabitant (Boateng, 2009). However, it can be said that the females were fairly represented and had equal chances of having their voices heard in the decision-making process and implementation of policy at the local government level.

Table 4: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (Community Members)

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age		
20-30yrs	227	65.8
31-40yrs	87	25.2
41-50yrs	17	4.9
51-60yrs	11	3.2
61yrs and above	3	0.9
Sex		
Male	186	53.9
Female	159	46.1
Educational Background		
Not been to school	125	36.2
Primary	62	18.0
Middle School	7	2.0
JHS	71	20.6
SHS	45	13.0
Training College	21	6.1
Polytechnic	11	3.2
University Degree	3	0.9
Years in Community		
2-10yrs	246	71.3
11-20yrs	70	20.3
21-30yrs	20	5.8
31-40yrs	3	0.9
41-50yrs	4	1.2
51-60yrs	1	0.3
61yrs and above	1	0.3

Source: Field Data (2017)

It appeared that the largest proportion of the community members in Ga West Municipality who participated in the study had not had any formal education (36.2%). Other respondents reported they had primary (18%), JHS (20.6%) and SHS (13%). It was evident that very few of the respondents had tertiary education such as training college, polytechnics and university degree (Table 4). It is possible that this relatively high illiteracy level of respondents may affect their ability to participate effectively in a collaborative process, as their ignorance may be capitalized upon by the few literate members to their advantage. The data on educational attainment of the majority of the respondents create the impression that the level of literacy of the respondents may have an impact on participants' ability to understand issues that are discussed at council meeting and contribute meaningfully to policy decisions on identification, implementation and evaluation of projects as discussions are done in English.

Speaking to the educational level of the community members, Kukumba and Nsingo (2008) assert that the pathetic socio-economic position of the rural people which is usually associated with low level education, high illiteracy rate, poor infrastructure and communication obstruct their civic competence which in turn reduces their meaningful participation in project development. Education affects the way people think, behave and solve problems since it broadens one's perspectives on issues and provides greater opportunity to contribute to community development. This implies that policy decisions on service delivery would be left in the hands of the few educated elite to determine projects that would satisfy the needs of the elite.

Further evidence suggests that over 71 percent of the community members had lived in the community between 2-10 years now. About 20.3% also reported to have stayed in the community between 11-20 years. Less than 10% of the community members had stayed in the community for more than 20 years (Table 4). A quick reference to the age of the respondents in Table 4 reveals that most of the members had lived their entire lives in the respective communities. This indicates that the greater part of the respondents, if not all, have been living in the communities long enough to be interested in participation and to provide needed information for the research. This has implications on the validity of the responses they provide for this study.

Demographic Data of Assembly Members in Ga West Municipality

Just like the community members, the demographic information of assembly members was solicited. These include age, gender, educational background, and the number of years as an assembly member. This provides an insight into the kind of responses provided. These information comprised age, gender, educational background and years of service as assembly member.

As shown in Table 5, the assembly members were found in the age categories of 29-35 (36.7) and 36-42 years (36.7%), although others were above 42 years (26.6%). The result indicates that the age spread of respondents were from 29 years to 56 years. The wide spread of age of respondents shows that contrary to the perception that the youth are often marginalised in the decision-making process, it can be said that all working age groups have been represented and their views and preferences can be relied upon to provide needed information

on decentralization and participation in decision-making on service delivery and to draw conclusions.

Table 5: Demographic Characteristics of Assembly Members in Ga West Municipality

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age		
29-35yrs	11	36.7
36-42yrs	11	36.7
43-49yrs	4	13.3
50-56yrs	4	13.3
Gender		
Male	26	86.7
Female	4	13.3
Educational Background		
SHS	6	20.0
Diploma	14	46.7
Training College	6	20.0
University Degree	4	13.3
Years as Assembly Member		
1yr	15	50.0
2yrs	2	6.7
4yrs	7	23.3
6yrs	5	16.7
7yrs	1	3 .3

Source: Field Data (2017)

Regarding gender, more male (86.7%) assembly members than females (13.3%) participated in the study. This disparity plausibly reflects the attitude of females towards issues they consider as politics yet this is a fair representation of the gender profile of the assembly persons. The educational background of the

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assembly persons was also considered. Again, diploma certificate holders were popular among the assembly members (46.7%), 20 percent reported holding SHS certificate, 20 percent had attended teacher training college and 13.3 percent were university graduates. The information on the educational attainment of the respondents show that the participants were literate and their level of literacy may have a positive impact on their ability to participate effectively in the decision-making process and implementation of policy at the local government level.

Finally, Table 5 revealed another trend of results on the number of years assembly persons have been working in their capacities. Half of them (50%) indicated they have been in office for one year since municipal assembly election was held quite recently in 2016. Nearly 6.7 percent had been in office for two years, 23.3 percent for four years, 16.7 percent for six years and 3.3 percent has been in office for seven years. It can be deduced that all the respondents are liable to provide relevant information for the study because they all had much experience in the decentralization system.

Utilisation of Local Government Sub-structures for Community Development in Ga West Municipality

This section presents the first objective of the study and answers the research question one. Specifically, it indicates how local government structures are being utilized for effective community participation in the decision-making process on service delivery. From literature review and conceptual framework, the sub-structures were created by Legislative Instrument (L.I.1589) of the Local Government Act, 2016 Act 936, which outlines that Urban, Town and Area

Councils and the Unit Committees are the lower tiers of the local government system below the Municipal Assembly. They are to provide an important link between the Municipal Assembly, local institutions, resources and the local communities. Basically, their major function is to assist Municipal Assembly (MA) in the performance of functions such as revenue collection, prepare and implement local action plans (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 1994).

The unit committees are in a close contact with the people; in an effort to deepen the decentralization process and facilitate grassroots participation in decision-making on the provision of basic infrastructure. The functions of the sub-structure are crucial to the development of the local areas; citizens are to participate during the planning, implementation, monitoring and implementation through membership in the project committees to ensure that projects are completed as expected by the community to meet their needs and aspiration. The community members and the project committee have the responsibility to ensure that all requirements of the projects were met. In view of this, the study sought to find out whether the sub-structures including town, area councils and unit committees which serve as conduit for the development of the local areas were set up and functioning as expected by utilizing the assembly's structures to encourage the people to participate in the development of their communities.

Decentralized service delivery is premised on the fact that lower levels of government have information necessary to enable better matching of services with citizen's needs and preferences. This section of the report on the utilisation of

local government sub-structures for community development has been structured into sub-themes with the aim of providing a decent view of the results under the first objective. It is important to emphasize that the analysis reflect the responses of community members and assembly members as well. These sub-themes comprised: Awareness of municipal projects undertaken and decision making; involvement of community members in developmental projects; sub-structures in the decision-making process within the community; and assembly members view on the utilisation of sub-structures.

Community Members' Awareness of Municipal Projects Undertaken and Decision- Making in Ga West Municipality

Community members were required to provide information regarding their awareness of a project, the kinds of projects, and their awareness of those who decides on the choice of site for projects. Responses are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Community Members' Responses on the Awareness and Kinds of Projects Undertaken in the Community in Ga West Municipality

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Community Members awareness of projects		
Yes	343	99.4
No	2	0.6
Kinds of Projects* (multiple response)		
Education-School Block	247	26.2
Health Facility	179	19.0
Agriculture	10	1.1
Water and Sanitation	165	17.5
Roads	209	22.1
Police station	68	7.2
Post Office	66	7.0

Table 6 continued

Decision of site for Development Projects		
Assembly Person	125	36.2
Community	40	11.6
Chief	52	15.1
Municipal Chief Executive	128	37.1

Source: Field Data (2017)

Evidence, as shown in Table 6, indicates that community members in Ga West Municipality, in most cases, were not aware of on-going projects (99.4%). The community members, however, alluded to the fact that some projects have been undertaken although they were unaware of the development and decisions surrounding these projects. Projects mentioned included educational school blocks (26.2%), roads (22.1%), health facility (19%), and water and sanitation projects (17.5%). Other projects reported by the community members were police stations, post offices and agriculture projects (Table 6). It is believed that these projects have become visible to community members because they have been completed, and probably in use, or work is still in progress. However, community members were unaware of projects which have not started.

Community members in Ga West Municipality claimed that decision to select a site for project was dominated by Municipal Chief Executive (37.1%) and assembly persons (36.2%). It appeared decisions sometimes involved chiefs (15.1%) and community members (11.6%); this was to a very little extent (Table 6). This presupposes that the actual people (i.e. chiefs and community members) who would be using these projects had little to say on the project. On the other side of the coin, it appeared that DCE's and assembly persons make decisions on

projects because they were following due process because sites for development projects are often demarcated by town and country planning. In the midst of this, community members and the chiefs are the custodians of community lands and it is prudent to consult and involve them in the decision-making process on service delivery that takes place at the local level.

Involvement of Community Members in Development Projects in Ga West Municipality

This section presents how assembly persons involved community members in development projects. Issues here bothered on the design and implementation of projects, the role of inhabitant and assembly members. These views are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Design, Implementation and Role Played by the Community Members in Community Projects in Ga West Municipality

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Design and implementation of Projects		
Yes	102	29.5
No	243	70.5
Role Played by Community Members*		
Project Identification	14	10.7
Communal Labour	86	65.6
Project Monitoring	11	8.4
Project Maintenance	20	15.3
Community Members Involvement in Project		
Contact them for their needs		
Yes	161	46.7
No	184	53.3
Consider their views for projects		
Yes	156	45.2
No	189	54.8

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Table 7 continued

Provide feedback after assembly deliberations		
Yes	161	46.8
No	183	53.2
How often assembly members hold meeting		
Monthly	49	30.4
Every Quarter	62	38.5
Once a while (no definite pattern)	50	31.1

*multiple response
Source: Field Data (2017)

Table 7 illustrates the views of community members on the design and implementation, their role played in projects and their involvement in projects in Ga West Municipality. The results show that community members, in most cases, do not play any role in the design and implementation of projects (70%). Nevertheless, they sometimes contributed to the project through communal labour and project maintenance. To a very small extent, project identification and project monitoring were also roles played by some community members. This shows that citizens' involvement in identification of projects which meet their needs, monitoring such projects and project maintenance was minimal. Their influence on decision-making on service delivery is equally negligible. The lack of or minimal participation of users in the planning, design, construction and management of the system is considered the main reasons for failure of the system (Koomson, 2008).

Focus group discussants were of the view that Assembly persons decided who to invite to consultative meetings which enable them to avoid those they do not want because they might speak out and oppose them. They were of the view that decision-making is not transparent as most decisions are held behind closed

doors and as such there is lack of publicly available information on project identification, account and budget. Ofei-Aboagye (2008) states that such public hearings have not been effectively conducted either through lack of technical capacity of municipal officials, time or resources.

Decision-making is a higher-level participation where individuals or groups have the authority and responsibility to take part in making decisions that affect them. Community participation in decision-making can be successful when participation is interactive and at a high level on the participation ladder which requires an effective two-way channel of communication between local government and community members. In this study, Arnstein's ladder of participation was used to ascertain the level at which community members are involved in local governance. The majority of community members should be encouraged to participate in development projects either as individuals or in groups for total inclusion in the identification, organizing and implementation activities in order to create consensus ownership in support of local development.

From the respondents' view, authorities in several instances, do not contact the inhabitants on what they need (53.3%) and consider their views (54.8%), and do not even provide feedback to them after major decisions taken in their absence (53.2%). There appears to be a gap between local officials and community members. Decentralization is to ensure that citizens living in each municipal of jurisdiction participate in a number of ways at different levels. The consultative meeting held annually in each assembly was to provide a local platform to identify priority projects to be implemented.

Focus group discussants believed that some of the assembly persons have limited knowledge and skills in effective communication to occupy such position and to interact with them. They said that the elites, who are better educated, dominate the decision-making process at all levels. Although the ordinary people are willing to speak out and contribute to the decision-making process, they are often sidelined. Decentralisation is based on the assumption that it will result in decisions that reflect local needs and priorities. However, most of the unit committees offer few opportunities for citizens to participate and decisions are made behind closed doors with minimal contact with the people. Crawford (2004) asserts that policy makers and development planners sometimes tend to ignore the needs of the people and specific groups or lump the needs of community members, men and women together without a thorough analysis of their needs.

The views of community members on how often Assembly persons held meetings are also presented in Table 7. It was reported that the assembly members, most of the times, had meetings every quarter (38.5%) of the year (Table 7). To some of the community members, meetings were held once in a while (31.1%) or even monthly (30.4%). The responses from the study revealed that the decentralisation system, to some extent, is not working effectively because the people are not involved in the decision-making process. Focus group discussants were of the view that unit committee members who have future political ambition try to involve their community members in the decision-making process to prepare the grounds for future political ambition. The lack of interaction between assembly persons and their constituencies could have led to

some community member's inability to be involved in the decision-making process. This undermines the basis of the decentralisation programme (Kokor, 2001).

Sub-systems in the Community and their Involvement and Functions in Project Developments in Ga West Municipality

The views of respondents on whether Unit Committees and Town/Area Councils are available in their communities, the roles they play and the suggestions to improve their performance in the communities are presented in Tables 8 and 9.

Table 8: Unit Committee and Town/Area Councils' Involvement of Community in Development Projects in Ga West Municipality

Issues	Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Have Unit Committee and Town/Area Councils	288	83.5	57	16.5
Unit committees get community concerns to Assembly	232	67.2	113	32.8
Involvement of people in planning and decision-making process	161	46.7	184	53.3

Note: Freq. indicates frequency, and % indicates percent (n=345)
Source: Field Data (2017)

Results, in Table 8, show that the communities in Ga West Municipality had unit committees and town councils (83.5%). Respondents further indicated that although concerns of the assembly were sought from the community (67.2%), inhabitants were not involved in the planning and decision-making process (5.3%). Focus group discussants indicated that some community members in Ga

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West Municipality were of the view that participation means participating in decision-making on planning and implementation through their representatives whom they have democratically elected to represent them and to make their voices heard. Although those elected are responsible for decision-making, yet they need the input on a range of views of their community members.

This contradicts the fundamental idea of the decentralisation theorem which is to bring governance closer to the people for local government to gain more information and knowledge concerning local needs and also to enable local government work better and tailor interventions to respond to local needs (Crawford, 2004; Crook, 2003; Oates, 1972). The principle of decentralisation brings decision-making to the people thereby giving them greater opportunity to have their voices heard. However, the institutional obstacles to voice of the people are greater at the local level than at national level. This results in making decisions that are of interest to the local people doubtful. Table 9 throws more light on the role of unit committees and town council members.

Table 9: Role of Unit Committees and Town/Area Council Members

Items	Frequency	Percent
Roles of unit committee and council members		
Organise meetings to discuss development issues	67	23.3
Inform community of government policies	79	27.4
Promote peaceful co-existence	58	20.1
Organise communal labour	37	12.8
Communicate community needs to assembly	33	11.5
Plan development projects with community members	4	1.4
Involve people in decision-making process	10	3.5

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Table 9 continued

Suggestions to improve unit committee and council functions		
Proper supervision and accountability	45	18.6
Visiting communities instead of sitting in the office	39	16.1
Forming of small committees to encourage Participation	41	16.9
Selecting competent people to assembly	35	14.5
Involving all stakeholders in decision making	30	12.4
Education/empowerment of people to take up responsibility	22	9.1
Stop politicising community issues	30	12.4

Source: Field Data (2017)

The views of respondents' awareness of the roles played by Unit Committees and Town /Area Council members in Ga West Municipality are presented in Table 9. It was evident that the major roles of the unit committees and town councils (from the view of community members) were to inform community of government policies (27.4%), organise meetings to discuss development issues (23.3%) and promote peaceful co-existence. Other roles reported included organising communal labour, communicating community needs to assembly, planning development projects with community, and involving people in decision-making process.

It can be said that there is some positive interactive process between the people and the sub-structure of the decentralised system as the people are aware of the various roles they play. Community members are also aware of the benefits to be derived from constant interaction and communication and thus, would be interested in involvement in local governance. Information flow creates an environment characterized by trust and openness which facilitate effective

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communication. This indicates that unit committees, town and area councils in the study area were operational.

Analysis from the results in Table 9 portrays some suggestions of the community members in Ga West Municipality to improving the functions of unit committees and council functions. Prominent among the suggested solutions were that the municipal assembly members should do the following: proper supervision and accountability, forming small committees to encourage participation, visiting communities instead of sitting in the offices, and selecting competent people to assembly. Other suggestions were involving stakeholders in decision making, stop politicizing community issues and educating people to take up responsibility.

The study shows that lack of management capacity particularly in participatory skills among assembly members in Ga West Municipality was a common concern raised by respondents. The respondents noted that lack of capacity building programmes contribute to inactiveness of people in performing their roles and responsibilities. Participatory issue in decentralization is the lack of capacity characterized by insufficient human resources, inadequate training, and poor management as well as insufficient management system and procedure. In this study, we have found that most of the members of the communities had basic education, which seems to be insufficient to make them competent without exposing them to appropriate capacity building programmes through training in performing their roles.

The capacity of citizens participating in decision making is an important factor. Their education, their socio-economic status, their networks are all

important factors in determining whose voice gets heard and what decisions get adopted.   Knowledge is an important factor that has an effect on people's participation. People cannot be expected to exhibit positive attitude towards development projects if they are not aware of the benefits and cost associated with their participation. Some studies have shown that knowledge about programmer issues make people show more positive attitude in their views (Doliscia et al., 2006).

Assembly Members Views on the Utilisation of the Sub-structure in Ga West Municipality

This section continues to present the discussion of objective 1 in relation to responses from the assembly members in Ga West Municipality on whether projects reflect needs and how, function of sub-structure, as well as the reasons for non-function of sub-structure. Tables 10 and 11 throw more lights on the views of the assembly members on the issue.

Results in Table 10 show the views of assembly members in Ga West Municipality on whether projects were provided for communities and whether these projects reflected the needs of community. The assembly members in Ga West Municipality believed that projects were provided for the community (93.3%) and as a matter of fact affirmed that these projects, to a greater extent, met the needs of the community members (93.3%).

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Table 10: Projects Provided and Whether Projects Reflect the Needs of the Community Members in Ga West Municipality

Issues	Frequency	Percentage
Projects provided for communities		
Yes	28	93.3
No	2	6.7
Projects meet needs of community members		
Yes	28	93.3
No	2	6.7
Assembly persons' views on ways projects reflect needs of community members		
Provide transparency and accountability	4	14.3
Projects improve living standard of the people	8	28.6
Light gives security at night	4	14.3
Create confidence in assembly members	3	10.7
People get more involved	9	32.1

Source: Field Data (2017)

Expanding on this idea, the assembly members claimed that the ways in which projects reflected the needs of community members manifested in a number of ways: people get more involved in projects; projects have led to improvement in peoples' living standards; ensures transparency and accountability; and providing security at night.

Additional information were sought from the assembly members on the activeness of unit community and area councils, functions of the sub-structure, and their satisfaction with sub-structure of unit committee in Ga West Municipality. Responses are presented in Table 11.

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Table 11: Assembly Person's Views on the Functions of Sub-structure in Ga West Municipality

Issues	Frequency	Percentage
Unit committee, town and area councils formed are active		
Yes	12	40.0
No	18	60.0
Substructure working		
Yes	28	93.3
No	2	6.7
Satisfied with functions substructure		
Yes	14	46.7
No	16	53.3
Reasons for not satisfied with sub-structure		
Not active in community	4	22.2
No regular meetings	5	27.8
Misuse of funds	2	11.1
Not well resourced	5	27.8
Playing politics	2	11.1
Functioning of sub-structure		
Hold regular meetings	2	14.3
Play active role in community development	2	14.3
Liaise with assembly	4	28.6
Mobilise funds for development	2	14.3
Sensitise community on government issues	2	14.3
Help maintain peace and order	2	14.3

Source: Field Data (2017)

Responses from the assembly persons, as shown in Table 11, revealed that unit committee and area councils in Ga West Municipality were not active (60%) despite the fact that sub-structures were in place working. The assembly members therefore registered their dissatisfaction with the functioning of sub-structures (53.3%). This finding is in line with the views expressed by focus group discussants that municipal assembly officials were often reluctant and at times not

interested in involving the people in their activities because of fear of being allegedly accused of corruption. This attitude of the people emanates from the presumption that public officials are corrupt and dishonest and, therefore, any information is incorrect and insufficient for public use. Such notion is presumed as creating apathy among the people with regard to government projects.

Pryor (2002) observed similar apathy on the part of parents to participate in their village school management at Akurase, a village in Ghana, due to doubts about the relevance of the school to their welfare. Cooke and Kothari (2001) contend that the motivation for people to participate in public decisions or not is poorly understood. For example, participation in some communities may be alien to the prevailing development culture, and people may fear to speak publicly in the presence of their leaders.

The study revealed that sub-structures within the community in Ga West Municipality are not well resourced, organised irregular meetings, inactive, and misused funds (Table 11). This follows an earlier assertion of assembly members that they were dissatisfied with the functioning of sub-structures in the community. These factors, especially the lack of funds for example, contributed to the failure of the committees to function as per government guidelines. It was learnt that lack of autonomy at the lower level in controlling budget and their annual plans has partly contributed to the failure to manage properly the collection of user fees and other internally generated funds. Furthermore, lack of funds allocated for organizing meetings between assembly and community members largely contributed to poor performance of their activities. These results

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are similar to those found in FGDs which pointed out that the capacity of such committees to perform their functions was constrained by inadequate resources as the people often demand to be served some water or food after meetings in addition to other logistics needed for holding meetings.

The success of decentralization will depend on the capacity of municipalities and urban governments to raise their own revenue and use it efficiently in the provision of services. However, the generation of local revenue is limited, with local governments largely depending on central government financial transfers. It should be pointed out that the most daunting challenge facing decentralisation as a framework for service delivery is a lack of capacity and personnel at sub-national government level to exercise responsibility for service delivery. The lower-level governments lacked the ability to manage public finances and maintain proper accounting procedures.

According to the assembly members in Ga West Municipality, the sub-structures have responsibilities to be carried out such as liaising with the assembly, mobilising funds for development, sensitising community on government issues, and playing active role in community development (Table 11). This shows that assembly persons are conversant with their roles and responsibilities in participatory decision-making on service delivery.

It is important that local governments involve communities in Ga West Municipality in participatory planning, budgeting and in local decisions. This can be achieved through involving the communities in local policy formulation which can be adopted at national level thus, guaranteeing a bottom-up approach in

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governance and management. Devas and Grant (2003) identified efficiency benefits from participation, stating that 'involving stakeholders and empowering community participants in programmes at all levels, from local to national, provide a more effective path for solving sustainable resource management issues'.

Participation of People in Community Development Projects through Decision-making in Ga West Municipality

This section presents the second objective of the study in relation to people's participation in decision-making on development projects. As indicated in literature and illustrated in conceptual framework, participation of respondents was seen as a prerequisite for decision-making. Arnstein's ladder of participation (Fig 3) provides the analytical framework. The section is categorised into sub-themes to make the presentation very clear.

Involvement/ Participation in Decision-making on Projects in Ga West Municipality

This section of the report focuses on the involvement in decision-making on projects in Ga West Municipality. Table 12 shows the details of the result.

Table 12: Community Members' Involvement in Decision-Making Process

Issues	Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Community members' involvement in decision-making process				
Municipal assembly contribution towards Participation	238	69.0	107	31.0
Involvement in preparation of development Plan	45	13.0	300	87.0
Development plans reflect community Interests	239	69.3	106	30.7
Involvement in implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of projects	50	14.5	295	85.5
Are there mechanisms to promote Town meetings and public hearings?	151	43.8	194	56.2
Are there community meetings to discuss development issues?	183	53.0	162	47.0

Source: Field Data (2017)

Table 12 depicts the views of community members in Ga West Municipality on their involvement in decision-making process. Community members averred that municipal assembly contributed towards participation (69%), however, community members were not involved in the preparation of development plan (87%). Although community members in Ga West Municipality claimed they were not involved in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of projects (85.5%), they believed that development plans reflected community interest (69.3%). It was reported that community discussions on development issues in Ga West Municipality were, to some extent, present (53%)

but mechanisms were not in place to promote town meetings and public hearings (56.2%).

In this study, Arnstein's ladder of participation was used to explore the level at which the people participate in the decision-making process. Arnstein (1969), cited by Khisty (2006) defines citizens' participation in terms of the degree of actual control they have over policy decisions. Arnstein (1969) and Khisty (2006) argue that without actual redistribution of power, citizen participation is an empty ritual, and that the only way of achieving any significant social reform is to encourage citizens to operate as high up the ladder as possible. It is clear, therefore, that participation connotes power sharing, making its realization complex. Those with institutional or structural power, like decentralised structures may be reluctant to devolve their decision-making powers to those they serve.

The study reveals that community members in Ga West Municipality were not involved in the preparation of development plans, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects which according to Arnstein's ladder of participation, involvement of the citizenry in these activities shows real participation and it is at this level of participation that the people own the process and contribute towards its maintenance. The focus group discussants agreed with this finding and observed that community members in Ga West Municipality were not aware of projects during the planning and implementation stages. Though assembly members say that participation in local governance is the people's right, yet their needs and priorities are not sought and they get little information about which

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project is to be constructed. Sometimes the people hear it as rumors until the projects start. Through involvement in the process of implementation, the people acquire skills and capacity for collective action that can enhance prospects for continued progress with democratic decentralization.

These capacities can extend democratic governance beyond the programme sites through demonstration effects, constituency mobilization, and confidence building. Citizen participation consists of ways citizens influence and control decisions that affect them. However, local government has not moved beyond consultation towards direct form of influence on policy decisions, planning implementation and evaluation of projects. Thus participation, instead of being democratic is often manipulated from the top with few individuals making decisions for the communities.

Participation in development activities and mode of participation among community members in Ga West Municipality were sought. Responses to this effect are organised and presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Community Members' Participation in Development Activities in Ga West Municipality

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Participation in Development Activities		
Yes	187	54.2
No	158	45.8
Mode of Participation		
Through communal labour	93	49.5
Attending community meetings	46	24.5
Supervision of developmental activities	16	8.5
Clean-up exercises	9	4.8
Contribution of money	8	4.3
Educating the people on sanitation	16	8.5

Source: Field Data (2017)

Results in Table 13 reflect the participation of community activities in project development and the mode of participation. In declaration, the largest proportion of the community members in Ga West Municipality indicated that they participated in development activities (54.2%). Further analysis indicated that participation in these development activities were in the form of communal labour, attending community meetings, supervision of development activities and education of people on sanitation. Other reported modes of participation in projects in Ga West Municipality were engagement in clean-up exercises and money contributions.

As indicated in the conceptual framework, genuine participation is critical for effective service delivery. The study found that the people were involved in activities other than participating in decision-making on project planning, implementation and monitoring. Their level of involvement may be described as non-participation or as mere tokenism according to the Arnstein's, ladder of participation rather than furthering real participation, since people are merely involved in communal labour but cannot influence decisions (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2006).

Consequently, such tokenism has little benefit in local governance and development, since people cannot influence decisions that reflect their priorities and neither can they demand accountability from various service providers (Golooba-Mutebi, 2004). Real participation in governance or development means going beyond tokenism to empower people to influence decisions and to take

control of their destiny. In this way, everyone is given a stake, a voice and a choice.

Organising Committee Meetings in Ga West Municipality

This section of the report provides information on the organisation of community meeting in Ga West Municipality. The analysis of the result is shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Community Members Responses on Issues Regarding the Organisation of Community Meetings in Ga West Municipality

Issues	Frequency	Percentage
Who organises meetings		
Chief	17	6.1
Assembly persons	165	58.9
Community leaders	92	32.9
Chairman of landlords association	6	2.1
Issues discussed at meeting		
Needs of the people	54	30.2
Sanitation and health issues	44	24.5
Contribution towards projects' maintenance	26	14.5
Provision of development projects	25	14.0
Security in the community	30	16.8
Why assembly persons not calling meeting		
Community meets and gives feedback to assembly persons	55	43.3
Do not come when invited	20	15.7
Lack requisite skills	11	8.7
Failed to solve previous problems	23	18.1
Differences in political affiliations	18	14.2

Source: Field Data (2017)

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Results in Table 14 describe issues surrounding the organisation of community meetings in Ga West Municipality, what subjects are normally discussed at meetings and reasons why assembly persons do not call for meetings. As far as the community members in Ga West Municipality are aware, meetings were usually organised by assembly persons (58.9%) and community leaders (32.9%), and in rare cases organised by chiefs (6.1%) and chairman of landlords association. It was obvious that although assembly persons held meetings, other groups in the community also organised the communities to discuss issues concerning the development of the community.

Issues discussed at meetings, according to the community members, bothered on the needs of the people, sanitation and health issues, security concerns, project maintenance and provision for development projects. Responses from focus group discussants indicated that community members do not often attend meetings in their locality because their views are not taken serious as they are regarded as illiterates thus, have nothing to offer for policy decisions. Golooba-Mutebi (2004) questions the assumption that people are willing and have the capacity to participate in public affairs and that the only requirement is that there are opportunities for their participation. His study of local councils in Uganda showed that the initial enthusiasm for people to participate in local council meetings faded over time due to participation fatigue and doubts about the utility of such participation. Lack of enforcement to compel citizens to attend meetings and be involved in decision-making, render the bottom-up participatory process near impossible to prioritize community needs

and budget preparation for local government projects. It may not be possible, however, to involve the whole community in the planning and execution of local development projects.

As Moseley and Cherrett (2001) point out, the scale of such involvement is too massive and the public in any case is made up of many different people with different interests, priorities and resources. Moreover, only a few people have the time, resources and inclination to commit themselves to lengthy involvement. In earlier discussions, it was found that the assembly persons did not hold meetings with community members. The community members, from their view, understood that assembly members do not call for meetings due to a number of reasons: community will meet and provide feedback to assembly persons (43.3%); failure in solving previous problems (18.1%); failure of assembly members honouring the call of community members (15.7%); and differences in political affiliations (14.2%) (Table14).

Focus group discussants revealed that attending meetings and taking part in the decision-making process is time wasting and energy consuming because whatever they say will not change anything the local officials want. The community members therefore, have lost interest in the participatory process since they do not have the power to ensure that their opinions are taken into consideration and integrated into the information for decision-making.

Provision of Information by Assembly Members in Ga West Municipality

The study explored the procedures and channels for obtaining information, analysis of data on whether community members in Ga West Municipality received information from assembly members and how they received information. Results from Table 15 shows that most of the respondents (57.7%) did not receive any information from their assembly persons although 42.3% admitted having received such information.

Table 15: Information Received and Ways Information is Received from Municipal Assembly

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Information Received from Assembly Members		
Yes	146	42.3
No	199	57.7
Ways Information is Received		
From contractors	26	13.0
From billboards	59	29.5
From radio	34	17.0
From grapevine	76	38.0
Letters from assembly	5	2.5

Source: Field Data (2017)

Table 15 depicts some means by which community members in Ga West Municipality obtained information on development issues. It was instructive to note that most people in Ga West Municipality claimed they receive their information from grapevine (38%) while others stated billboards (29.5%), radio (17%), contractors (13%) and letters from assembly (2.5%) as their mode of obtaining information from the assembly.

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The focus group discussants opined that they did not know of any formal procedure or mechanisms for obtaining information on development projects. Information according to them, was often received from friends of local council members, builders at the sites of projects or neighbors whose source of information you cannot verify. Others said that they have observed notices pinned on notice boards at the entrance of the assembly office but they were unable to read them. Besides, there was no assembly officials to explain issues to them so they ignored them. Information is essential to engage communities in local governance and on service delivery; when citizens lack information about what local governments are doing, they are powerless to move beyond being passive recipients of whatever public officials provide them.

A participant observed that the central government is interested in improving their living conditions but the assembly officials do not deliver the information to the local people because they do not want to involve them in the decision-making. Access to information is important in empowering citizens to exercise some degree of control over resources and policy decisions. Accurate information enables people to articulate their views, enter into dialogue about decisions that affect them and hold local government accountable for their actions.

For information to be meaningful, it should be relevant and provided on time at no cost to the recipient. Valuable information should be disseminated from both the general public and local government for the purpose of engagement in decision-making. Some focus group discussants said they lack access to

information which hinders their involvement in the decision-making process on government-initiated projects. They stated that most of the youth in their communities are unemployed yet, when casual labour are needed to work on community projects they do not hear of it; the few who hear may be friends and relatives of assembly members. They revealed that information is available to a few people who are relatives, friends or close associates of politicians or the elites in their communities.

The World Bank (2004) opined that to have effective citizen's participation, valuable information has to be disseminated and this should come from the general public and the government, in the absence of valuable information, citizen participation in service delivery may not be attainable. Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006) state that free flow of information about the functioning of government, and about the entitlements and allocations at the local level have been associated with better targeted delivery of benefit. It is important that information campaigns about resources allocated to local level government and how they have been spent and audited (if there are provisions of periodic independent audit account) be made available to the public through public hearings, town hall meetings etc.

Factors Influencing Participation in Decision Making in Ga West Municipality

Analysis of data on factors that encourage community members in Ga West Municipality to participate in the decision-making process and what hinder their involvement are presented in Table 16.

Table 16: Factors that Influence Community Members Participation in Decision Making in Ga West Municipality

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Factors that encourage participation		
Regularly meetings with community members	75	21.7
Transparency and accountability	73	21.1
Provision of prompt feedback to community	63	18.3
Supervision/monitoring of projects	105	30.5
Effective communication with the people	29	8.4
Challenges to participation		
Assembly members do not visit communities	57	16.5
Low commitment by the people	61	17.7
Lack of information from assembly	49	14.2
People do not have the time	52	15.1
No venue for meetings	28	8.1
Inadequate logistics	35	10.1
Corruption of assembly officials	22	6.4
No transparency/accountability	12	3.5
Political marginalization	29	8.4

Source: Field Data (2017)

Table 16 reflects responses from community members in Ga West Municipality on the factors which encourage and hinder participation in decision-making on community projects. Surprisingly, the respondents believed that supervision/monitoring of projects (30.5%), regular meetings with community members (21.7%), and ensuring transparency and accountability (21.1%) were the factors cited as the major factors which encourage participation. Other factors like provision of prompt feedback to community and effective communication with the people were also stated as factors promoting participation in decision making. However, the study has established that access to information is limited and even

sources of information and channels to receive information about government projects are not known to most community members.

Focus group discussants observed that government officials and assembly members are not interested in providing meaningful information for fear of being asked questions bordering on accountability of public funds. Lack of transparency and openness create suspicion and the people become skeptical about the intention of government officials concerning the provision of development projects. This resentment emanates from the presumption that officials are corrupt and dishonest and thus any information they give is incorrect and not useful for meaningful decision-making or for public consumption.

The study identified hindrances to effective participation in decision-making; the views of respondents are presented in Table 16. According to the community members, a number of factors were believed as hindrance to their participation in decision making. These factors included: low commitment by the people (17.7%), irregular visit to the community by assembly members (16.5%), people do not have time (15.1%), and lack of information from assembly members (14.2%). Some respondents were also of the view that factors such as inadequate logistics, political marginalisation, corruption of assembly officials and no transparency/accountability. Moreover, this study found out from the focus group discussants that the assembly persons did not conduct their scheduled quarterly meetings as per the establishment (MLG 462).

This finding agreed with the observation by Ahwoi (2010), that some Assembly members have not been interacting with community members and in

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some cases the people do not know their assembly members. This undermines the basis of the entire decentralisation process. Participants mentioned two main reasons for failure to conduct the meetings, namely, lack of budget to finance the meetings and lack of timetable and knowledge on how often they are supposed to meet. These factors contribute to poor information sharing among committee members on all issues pertaining to participation in the decision-making process related to developing their communities. They revealed that lack of meeting allowances has a significant effect on committee functioning.

Focus group discussants expressed their concern about the level of embezzlement, bribery and corruption in the municipality. They stated that local government officials collude with contractors and suppliers to supply sub-standard materials and provide shoddy work which deteriorates after a short while to the detriment of the satisfaction of the people. They also said that even when there is money for tendering roads, information for bidding does not get to most of the people except those close to the authorities who hear of such information or those willing to pay their way through the process. Thus, the authorities choose the process of participation and decide whether the people in general should be involved. Some of the participants also said they have no time.

Analyses of Assembly Members Views on Citizens' Participation in Ga West Municipality

This section presents the analyses on the views of Assembly members with regards to the participation of people in decision-making to contribute to

development projects. Specifically, the result on the mechanism in place to facilitate participation in decision-making is presented in Table 17.

Table 17: Mechanism in Place to Facilitate Community Members'
Participation in Decision Making

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Stakeholders forum	8	26.7
Public information centre	8	26.7
Beating of gong gong	2	6.7
Form sub-committee	6	20.0
Landlords association	2	6.7
Personal contacts	2	6.7
No mechanism	2	6.7
Total	30	100.0

Source: Field Data (2017)

Table 17 represents views of assembly members in Ga West Municipality on the mechanisms used to involve community members in the decision-making process. While the majority of the assembly members reported stakeholder's forum (26.7%), public information centre (26.7%) and form sub-committee (20%) as mechanisms to put in place to facilitate participation in decision making, others believed that measures such as beating gong gong, landlords association, and personal contacts, are necessary in facilitating participation in decision making.

The findings indicated that assembly persons in Ga West Municipality meet with their communities to interact with members. This is contrary to the views to community members who said there was poor communication and information sharing between assembly persons and the people in all subjects related to community development. The study shows that community members

have partial or no information related to the development and implementation of facilities planned, which may be due to lack of joint decision-making or planning meetings between the assembly and the people. Poor communication and information sharing has resulted in poor involvement of the people in identification and implementation of development projects. Evidence from focus group discussion shows that community members were unable to participate fully in decision-making including monitoring of service providers and types of services provided because there was poor communication from the assembly to the community with regards to services provided to the community.

Focus group discussants said that even when they attend consultative meetings, the terms used by assembly persons are so technical that they find it difficult to understand and to contribute to assembly discussions. They pointed out that some unit committee members lack the literary skills and capacity to utilize information during planning and monitoring of projects and to enhance their participation. They said that because of their deficiency in knowledge and skills, they did not see the need to attend assembly meeting as it is a waste of time. Failure to understand and utilize information negatively affects service delivery as community members cannot use available information to hold service providers and assembly officials accountable. Invariably, community members cannot influence decisions on service delivery per their absence from assembly meetings.

In further analysis, views of assembly members were sought on the participation of community members on development projects in Ga West Municipality. Table 18 presents the details of the result.

Table 18: Municipal Assembly Members' Views on Participation of Community Members in Development Projects

Issues	Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Involvement in identification, implementation, and monitoring of development projects	12	40.0	18	60.0
Community members have capacity	10	33.3	20	66.7
Briefing of electorate of assembly meetings	30	100.0	-	-
People call to discuss issues of concern	30	100.0	-	-

Note: Freq. indicates frequency, and % indicates percent (n=30)
Source: Field Data (2017)

Results in Table 18 show that the majority of the community members in Ga West Municipality were not involved in the identification, implementation, and monitoring of development projects (60%). It was made clear, however, by the assembly members that community members have the capacity to participate in the study (66.7%). It was found that electorates were briefed of municipal assembly meetings (100%) and thus, people call to discuss issues of concern (100%).

Results make it clear that assembly persons said they give feedback to community members through their local council after assembly deliberations and the people call on them to discuss issues although the community members said otherwise. However, majority of the assembly persons agreed with community members that they are not involved in project identification, implementation and

monitoring. They also agreed that the people lack the capacity to participate in decision-making on service delivery.

The analysis shows that community members and government officials value participation but involvement of community members in decision-making is minimal which is limited to mere consultation and is often not binding, without much involvement in need identification, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Cleaver (2002) discusses that participation is a tool for achieving better project outcome, equity and empowerment. He argues that community participation can be analysed as a process which enhances the capacity of individuals to improve their own lives and facilitate social change to the advantage or disadvantage of a marginalised groups. With limited or no information on what is being done by local government means that the people would not know how and when to be involved thus, making individual community members input of little effect. From the study, community members are not regarded as integral part of governance and do not significantly influence important decisions affecting their communities.

Table 19 represents assembly members' views on reasons for non-involvement of the people in the decision-making process. While large proportion of the assembly members believed that community members in Ga West Municipality did not involve themselves in project development because decisions on project are made by higher authorities (30%), others too were of the view that lack of information also resulted in non-involvement of citizens (23.3%). It was reported that busy schedule, community problems not solved, and

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distance of meeting places also served as reasons for non-involvement of community members in Ga West Municipality.

Table 19: Municipal Assembly Members' Views on Reasons for Non involvement of Community Members in Community Projects

Issues	Frequency	Percentage
Decision on projects are made from above	9	30.0
Lack of information to community members	7	23.3
Busy schedule	2	6.7
Community problems not solved	2	6.7
Distance of meeting place	2	6.7
No response	8	26.7
Total	30	100

Source: Field Data (2017)

Further, the study shows that the community members in Ga West Municipality provided little or no input to the decision-making process as most decisions are taken or manipulated from the top. This state of affairs shows the powerful role and authority to approve or otherwise of the policies and plans of the bureaucrats. The assembly members seem to have information and trusted by the community members hence their views are held in high esteem. When the municipal administration is able to win their support by explaining to them the rationale behind certain policies and programmes, they buy into the idea and approval is given. By that, they are automatically involved in the process of deciding which facility goes where and which activity is carried out and at which location.

This contradicts the collective theory of Olson (1965) who opined that when resources are collectively owned and managed; individuals undertake collective efforts based on mutual interest and expectation of mutual benefit. The quality of service delivery hinges on the extent to which participatory decision includes inputs from the people which can lead to better decision-making.

Participation thrives on creating opportunities for action where local politics and responsibilities are clearly defined. However, the study shows that participation rather than being democratic is manipulated from the top with powerful elites imposing decisions on the people. During the FGDs, there was widespread dissatisfaction concerning the lack of voice in service delivery. The participants expressed the view that there is no transparency as most decisions are taken behind closed doors by the politicians and the people are misled to think that they can create an impact. The concept of people's voice implies an engagement with local government that moves beyond consultation to a more direct influence on policy decision-making.

Table 20: Municipal Assembly Members Responses on Who Takes Decision on the Type of Community Projects

Issues	Frequency	Percentage
Planning committee	6	20.0
Municipal chief executive	12	40.0
Input from community	5	16.7
Member of parliament	2	6.7
General assembly	5	16.7
Total	30	100.0

Source: Field Data (2017)

Table 20 presents results on the views of municipal assembly members in Ga West Municipality on who takes decision on the projects for the communities. According to them, decisions were taken by the municipal chief executive (40.0%) and in some cases the planning committee (16.7%). Other assembly members averred that decisions are also made by general assembly (16.7%), inputs from community (16.7%) and Member of Parliament (6.7%). On the whole, decisions on the type of project for a community is taken by those in political authorities with little input from the community. According to Beall (2005), genuine decentralisation of resources and power cannot take place at the local level unless the entire structure of development planning changes. In decentralised power structure, plans are formulated by the people at the grassroots and not imposed from above.

According to Biekart (2005), participation means involving people in project implementation. Here, decisions about a project are taken by the development agent and the beneficiaries are asked to participate in the implementation such as by providing cheap labour. For Cornwall and Gaventa (2006), participation is a mere involvement or co-optation. Here, people are merely consulted in the decision-making process, but do not influence the outcomes of such decisions. However, Blair (2000) sees participation as a means of empowering people. Here, people are actively involved in decision-making and have the power to influence the outcomes of such decisions, as well as taking part in their implementation. In this regard, people are empowered to take control of their destiny.

According to Asante (2000), Ghana has over two decades embarked on decentralisation of decision-making that is moving decision-making from the national to the municipal and community levels, a bottom-up approach as enshrined in PNDC Law 207 of 1988 constitution, Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462 and subsequently, the Local Government Act, 2016, Act 936. The broad objectives of the decentralisation and local governance system are to promote power sharing, rational resource allocation, and installation of adequate capacity at the municipal level for effective and efficient management, accountability, responsiveness, checking of rural-urban drift and also reduce the reliance of local governments on central government. Again, it emphasized the role of Municipal Assemblies (MAs) and their communities in development decision-making in order to achieve localisation of development (Kokor, 2004). Effective participation in public service delivery means the inclusion of community members directly in the identification, implementation and monitoring of development projects which has impact on better public service delivery, quality assessment and satisfaction with service delivery. In effect, participation occur when community members are invited to participate and a two-way communication channels are initiated where anyone can be involved or represented in the decision-making or service provision process.

CHAPTER SIX

ATTITUDES OF AUTHORITIES AND PERCEPTION OF CITIZENS OF

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the last two objectives of the study. The analysis focused on the attitude of local government towards citizens' participation in decision-making and the perception of people about the present system of local government on service delivery. In discussing the results and their implication for decentralised governance and participation in decision-making on service delivery at local level development, due reference has been made to the relevant literature review and the conceptual frame work that guide this study.

Attitude of Local Government Officials Towards Community Participation in Decision-Making on Development Projects in Ga West Municipality

This section addresses the study's third objective which is based on the attitude of local government officials towards community members' participation in decision-making. An attitude is a hypothetical construct that represents an individual's like or dislike for an item. Attitudes are generally positive or negative views of a person, event, place or thing which affects a person's behaviour (Kraft & Gillman, 1996). Mejos (2007) stated that participation takes different form; the authentic and inauthentic attitudes. The authentic attitude of participation is ways by which an individual in his recognition and willingness to participate contributes to the promotion of the common good. The inauthentic on

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the other hand, is a withdrawal that lacks the active concern of participation and is characterised by indifference to the common good. It is a way by which a person abstains from participating in the community and shows disinterested attitude towards participation in the achievement of the common good. The views of community members on the attitude of local government on their participation are presented in Table 21.

Table 21: Attitude of Local Government Officials towards Community Participation in Ga West Municipality

Issues	Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Community members like assembly officials	218	63.2	127	36.8
Assembly officials respect views of community members	139	40.3	206	59.7
Officials create enabling environment for participation	152	44.1	193	55.9
Assembly system improves transparency and accountability	185	53.6	160	46.4
Community members agree with decisions of assembly members	223	64.6	122	35.4
Ever participated in public hearing organised by assembly	75	21.7	270	78.3
Willingness to contribute towards provision of projects	316	91.6	29	8.4

Note: Freq. indicates frequency, and % indicates percent (n=345)

Source: Field Data (2017)

The views of community members in Ga West Municipality on the attitude of local government officers towards their participation in decision-making are presented in Table 21. The majority of the respondents were of the view that community members like the presence of assembly members (63.2%)

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although (36.8%) of them opposed that view. For some of the respondents, this opinion was untrue (40.3%). On whether community members agree with decisions of assembly members, most respondents were in affirmation to that (64.6%). Community members indicated that the local government officials did not create enabling environment for their participation in decision-making (55.9%) (Table 21). However, majority of the respondents (53.6%) were of the view that the assembly system improves transparency and accountability.

The decentralised system is mandated to organise public hearing to inform and interact with the people. A greater percentage (78.3%) of the respondents from the communities in Ga West Municipality posited that they never participated in the public hearing organised by the assembly. Respondents were also assessed on their willingness to contribute towards the provision and maintenance of development projects. Surprisingly, over 90% of the community members expressed their willingness to contribute to provision and maintenance of projects.

The study shows that though the people desire to relate mutually with local government, the officials do not create the enabling environment for their involvement. From literature and the conceptual framework, the creation of enabling environment for community participation, transparency and accountability is necessary to influence people's interest to participate in decision-making on service delivery. Shahroudi and Chizari (2008) in their study found that there is significant and positive relationship between people's attitude and their participation in programmes. This positive attitude to decentralisation results

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from the fact that well-managed decentralisation brings about improved efficiency, improved governance, improved equity and improved development and poverty reduction (Saito, 2003). Apart from the fact that decentralisation brings government closer to the people, it also creates a more open political system, promotes participation and improves the controlling function held by the local levels, enhances state capacity and increases effectiveness as well as efficiency (McCarthy, 2004).

This kind of relationship requires respect for people's views, constructive communication, willingness to invest personal effort, working together and taking responsibilities for the development of their localities. Apart from the fact that decentralisation brings government closer to the people, it also creates a more open political system, promotes participation and improves the controlling function held by the local levels, enhances state capacity and increases effectiveness as well as efficiency (McCarthy, 2004). Communities that participate in shared governance enhance trust in their leaders by working together to create such climate free of intimidation, fear, coercion and criticism.

Adding to the response in Table 21 which the community members claimed they were willing to contribute to the community development projects, result in Table 22 depicts the form of contribution community members are willing to do.

Table 22: Contributions Community Members are Willing to Make to Community Development in Ga West Municipality

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Cash donation	84	26.6
Payments for utility maintenance	71	22.5
Involvement in decision-making process	71	22.5
Offer communal labour	51	16.1
Organise evening classes for children of community members	39	12.7
Total	316*	100.0

*Multiple response (n=345);

Source: Field Data (2017)

Results in Table 22 indicated that most of the community members in Ga West Municipality were willing to contribute to community project through cash donations (26.2%), payment for utility maintenance (22.5%) and involvement in decision-making process (22.5%). Other community members indicated that they are willing to contribute through communal labour (16.1%) and organise evening classes (12.7%) for children of community members in Ga West Municipality. This study found that low levels of education among community members contributed to low awareness on the theme of participation in decision-making and implementing development plans. Given the low level of education for most of the community members, it was difficult for them to analyse issues and fully participate in planning of development activities. High level of education among key actors increase confidence and influenced participation in decision-making in community development activities and intervention. In many areas, local

governments execute certain expenditure programmes better than national governments due to their physical proximity to the community which gives them a better capacity to determine and assess local interests and requirements (Grooten, 2005).

Assembly Members Views on the Attitude of Local Government towards Community Members' Participation in Ga West Municipality

This section addresses the study's third objective relating to assembly members. The views of assembly members on the attitude of local government towards community members' participation are presented in Tables 23 and 24.

Table 23: Assembly Members Views on Willingness of Community Members to Contribute to Projects in Ga West Municipality

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Assembly members views of community members willingness to contribute to projects		
Willingness to offer Contribution		
Yes	30	100.0
No	-	-
Kinds of contribution community members make		
Fetching water, sand, etc	8	26.7
Communal labour	11	36.7
Cash donations	4	13.3
Offering land for projects	5	16.7
Monitoring of projects	2	6.7

Source: Field Data (2017)

Similar questions regarding the willingness of community members in Ga West Municipality to contribute to community development projects were posed to assembly members. A summary of the responses are presented in Table 23. The

assembly members confirmed that community members were willing to contribute to community projects (100%). Further analysis, as shown in Table 23, found that community members contributed to community projects mostly through communal labour (26.7%). Other forms of contributions found were fetching water and sand, offering land for projects, cash donations and monitoring of projects.

Findings from both community members and assembly persons in Ga West Municipality show the people's willingness to participate in terms of contributions to the development process. However; the concept of participation in service delivery is not achieved by only receiving contributions in the form of cash donations, communal labour and payment for utility maintenance but also through decision-making, planning, implementation and monitoring of development projects.

Local participation should consist of element of local initiatives emanating from the community. When community participation does not comprise bottom-up elements, the enthusiasm and interest of the people are lost. The lack of participation, according to Kauzya (2007), does not instill a sense of ownership in the people. This sense of ownership is important for the sustainability and interventions after external donor support ceases.

Findings show that although community members in Ga West Municipality are willing to be involved and to contribute their quota towards the development of the municipality, the attitude of assembly members towards their involvement were not encouraging enough. This finding was supported by Kraft

and Gillman (1996) who found out that people with negative attitude towards government's involvement with development programmes were less likely to participate.

In Table 24, the views of assembly members on the ways or the channels of information delivery to community members about development projects have been presented. After finding out that community members are willing to contribute to community development projects through a number of ways, it is important to examine the ways in which information about projects get to the community members. This is important since community members can contribute only when they have information on the projects.

Table 24: Assembly Members Views on Channels of Information Delivery to Community Members about Development Projects

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Meeting with assembly persons	7	23.3
During implementation of projects	7	23.3
Through the grapevine	7	23.3
During projects identification	2	6.8
Information van	7	23.3
Total	30	100

Source: Field Data (2017)

On the channels utilised by community members to obtain information on development projects, various means were cited as shown in Table 24. Prominent among these were: meeting with assembly persons either through community or some other engagements with assembly persons (23.3%); from grapevine whether information is gained through rumors and gossips from the top managements or elsewhere (23.3%); information disseminated by the information services

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department through their information van (23.3%); and during the implementation of the projects where the project becomes visible for people to see (23.3%). It was also indicated that information was also delivered during the project identification process.

Because projects identification was not a popular channel of communication, it suggests that residents were not involved in developmental activities. This shows that assembly persons have the attitude of not keeping the community members involved in development activities right from the identification stages. Karol Wojtyla's theory of participation cited in Mejos (2007) states that participation is the ability to exist and act with others in such a way that there is a positive relationship between persons as it allows a person to experience himself existing with others. A participant enters interpersonal relationship with others and fulfills his action; emphasizes the common good by persons where a person does not wish for his good only but also the good of others. In society, everyone has a task to fulfill and these tasks contribute to the growth and development of not only its members but also the group.

The Perception of Community Members about the Present System of Local Governance and Community Members Participation in Service Delivery

In order to establish how communities participate in the decentralisation process, it was necessary to find out the community members perception of decentralisation. Understanding participation requires an understanding of the perceptions and expectations of potential participants. From literature and the conceptual framework (fig 4), it is important that all stakeholders participate in

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the decision-making process at all level; these include all community members, opinion leaders, non-governmental organisations, civil society and assembly officials. Relevant considerations include the information to which community members have access, their understanding of their rights and ability to act to realise them and their perceptions of service quality and concerns, which may differ from those reported through formal data systems.

Effective participation can be seen as a prerequisite for "ownership" of specific programmes, motives for participation (which again may vary between stakeholder groups) are likely to be significant for understanding ownership. For instance, voluntary participation may be a marker of stronger ownership (in the sense of commitment) compared to participation that is dependent on the provision of particular side-benefits such as payments. This section addresses the study's objective four which is based on the perception of the people concerning the local government and community members' participation.

Table 25: Perception of Community Members about Local Government Officials Towards Community Participation

Issues	Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
The assembly has capacity to mobilise human resource for development	163	48.7	177	51.3
The assembly has capacity to mobilise financial resource for development	182	52.8	163	47.2
The assembly is interested in community members participation in development projects	2 3	6.7	3 22	93.3
Local government system has improved service delivery	291	84.3	54	15.7
Municipal assembly is functioning effectively	123	35.7	222	64.3
Assembly members are committed to their responsibility	96	27.8	249	72.2

Source: Field Data (2017)

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The perception of community members about local government officials towards community participation is presented in Table 25. From the respondents' view, the assembly has less capacity in mobilizing human resource (51.3%) even though 48.7% believed the assembly was capable. In terms of financial resources, it was indicated however that the Ga West Municipal the assembly has the capacity to mobilise funds for various projects (52.8%). This view was opposed by some of the respondents (47.2%). Respondents strongly agreed that the assembly is not interested in community members' participation in development projects (93.3%) in Ga West Municipal Assembly. The community members perceived that local government system has improved service delivery (84.3%) even though the municipal assembly is not functioning properly (64.3%). From their view, assembly members were not committed to their responsibility (72.2%).

The study reveals that people see decentralisation as bringing development in terms of improved service delivery to their areas. They do not see decentralisation as transfer of power, resources and decision-making from the central government to local government of which they are part. Many are yet to perceive decentralisation as a break of concentration of government authority and its related functions from the centre to the localities and their inherent activities. The focus group discussants said that many people at local level lack the ability to hold local leaders accountable for what they have done or what they did not do.

The findings of the study further revealed that the assembly lacks the capacity to mobilize the necessary human resources for community development. The necessary capabilities involve skills that may not be strong among local

officials due to their level of education. They would be called upon to conduct town or neighborhood meetings, explain policies and options, mediate conflicts, and work toward consensus. Local Government capacity alone cannot ensure that local discretion will result in choices that are citizen-responsive or democratic. It may simply enhance the power of local elites without checks and balances across levels of government. It is clear that the interests and strategies of political parties, politicians, bureaucrats, and community activists will influence prospects for community empowerment.

The study also shows that the respondents perceived that the assembly has the capacity to mobilise financial resources for development. Ahwoi (2010) states that Municipal Assemblies (MAs) are often heavily dependent on financial resources from central government and are thus, politically controlled by central government. This makes MAs susceptible to financial constraints when central government changes funding policies or delay funding to local government. Limited resources of MAs have been cited by Ahwoi (2010) as grave limitation on the performance of municipal assemblies. The results of participation can be assessed in relation to the degree to which community members or service users can be judged as exercising effective control over decision-making, the extent to which accountability is achieved, or improvements in service delivery in general.

Table 26 presents some suggested ways to get people involved in decision making.

Table 26: Suggested Ways to Get People Involved in Decision Making in Ga West Municipal Assembly

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Regular meetings to identify people's priorities	103	29.9
Involvement of people in planning projects	90	26.1
Providing information on assembly activities	50	14.5
Implementing the people's views	47	13.6
Use of suggestion box	25	7.2
Open forum	30	8.7
Total	345	100

Source: Field Data (2017)

The community members recommended ways in which they could be involved in decision-making as presented in Table 26. Noticeable among the ways suggested were organising regular meetings to identify people's priorities (29.9%) and involvement of people in planning projects (26.1%). Other measures which were suggested include providing information on assembly activities (14.5%), implementing the people's views (13.6%), open forum (8.7%) and using suggestion box (7.2%).

Community members desired to be more involved in decision-making through regular community meetings with assembly persons to identify people's priorities, plan development projects together, and have access to information on assembly's activities. The suggestions are in agreement with Shazh (2007) that the more people are involved and actively participate in decisions that affect them, the more likely local government officials listen and tailor their interventions to their needs.

Additional analysis, as provided in Table 27, throws more light on the advantages of having local government and performance of the local council on community development. To many who perceived local government as useful and advantageous, their reasons have been cited in Table 27 and 28.

Table 27: Community Members' Views on Advantages of having Local Councils

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Community members' views on advantages of local government		
Officials more accountable to community members	70	20.2
People participate more in community activities	20	5.8
More funds for community development	106	30.6
Collective responsibility	33	9.5

Source: Field Data (2017)

For majority, local governance system makes more funds available for community development (30.6%). Others posited that in local governance system, officials are more accountable to community members (20.2%), there is collective responsibility (9.5%) and people participate more in community activities (5.8%). According to Crawford (2004), participation entails the sustainability and effectiveness of local government in providing opportunities for community members to participate in the political life of their communities. The assertion that decentralisation will be more responsive to the needs of the people and premised on the notion that participatory form of local government activities will offer more than just greater effectiveness in promoting development (Shah, 2006).

Table 28: Performance of Local Council in Ga West Municipality

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Performance of Local Council		
Poor	64	18.6
Average	224	64.9
Good	57	16.5
Reasons for poor or average performance*		
Insufficient financial resources	135	39.0
Lack of qualified manpower	62	17.9
Lack of democratic practices	151	43.6
Lack of interest by assembly and community	166	48.0
Misuse of allocated funds	104	30.1

Source: Field Data (2017);
*Multiple response

Results, as shown in Table 28, found that the performance of local councils were rated on the average (64.9%). While 18.6% of community members, from their view, believed that the local council has performed poorly, 16.5% also noted that the local councils' performance was good. The result seems to say that community members believe that assembly members are performing below the expectation of the people whom they represent. This unfortunately shows that most of the zonal councils and the unit committees are not functioning effectively. Thus, in the absence of effective sub-structures, the assumption that the community's needs and priorities would be assessed and reflected in the development plans could not be fully realized.

The respondents gave the following reasons for poor or average performance of local government as listed in Table 28: lack of interest of both assembly and community members for the performance of the assembly in involving the people in the decision-making process by assembly and community

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members (48.0%); lack of democratic practices accounted for the poor performance of local government (43.6%); insufficient financial resources (39%); misuse of allocated funds accounted for their performance (30.1%); and lastly lack of qualified manpower (17.9%).

Golola (2003) observed that inadequate human and financial resources have been identified as one of the major concerns to decentralisation. Inadequate skilled staff at the local government level puts a limit on the amount of intervention that local governments can embark on successfully. The study also revealed that the non-functionality of assembly members was due to their level of education - as most of them are semi-illiterates and therefore could not make useful contribution to the decision-making process. Focus group discussants were of the view that the system is allegedly affected by corruption, improper accounting procedures, job for the political boys and limited capacity to monitor the activities of the assembly persons. They were of the view that due to lack of recognition and motivation, most of the unit committee members were not committed to their duties and as such the municipal assembly by-passed them in the decision-making process.

The study also investigated whether projects were abandoned in the communities and the possible reasons for their abandonment. Respondents' views are presented in Table 29. For majority of the community members, projects were not abandoned (53.3%). Other community members, however, held a different view indicating that some projects have been abandoned (46.7%).

Table 29: Municipal Assembly Members' Responses on Abandoned Projects and Reasons for Abandoning those Projects

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Abandoned projects		
Yes	161	46.7
No	184	53.3
If yes, reasons for abandonment		
Lack of financial support	30	8.7
Change of municipal chief executive	52	15.1
Change of government	32	9.2
Corruption on the part of officials	22	6.4
Contractors not getting access to funds	12	3.5
Poor management of resources	8	2.3
Poor project sites/location	8	2.3

Source: Field Data (2017)

To many who agreed that some projects were abandoned in their communities, a number of reasons were ascribed to that. This is presented in Table 29. The majority of the respondents believed that change of Municipal Chief Executive is the prime cause of abandoning projects (15.1%). This mostly happens where the new Municipal Chief Executive is not interested in the projects. Other respondents cited reasons such as change of government (9.2%), lack of financial support (8.7%), corruption on the part of officials (6.4%), and Contractors not getting access to funds (3.5%). About 2.3% of community members also posited that poor management of resources and poor project location (2.3%) were behind the reasons why projects are abandoned.

On the whole, majority of the respondents noted that development projects in their communities were abandoned due to change in government, lack of financial support, corruption of government officials and poor management of resources. According to Ahwoi (2010) the assembly operates mainly with the

Municipal Assembly Common Fund and Internally Generated Funds. However, delays in these and inefficiencies in revenue mobilisation at local level constitute serious constraint on the functioning of municipal assemblies.

Again, respondents' perception on the effective functioning of the municipal assembly is presented in Table 30.

Table 30: Effective Functioning of Ga West Municipal Assembly

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Effective functioning of assembly		
Yes	123	35.7
No	222	64.3
Reasons for not functioning effectively		
Lack of interest by the people	53	23.6
Peoples' views not respected	47	20.9
Insufficient financial resources	45	20.0
Lack of qualified personnel to deliver service	32	14.2
Lack of communication between assembly and Community	23	10.0
Interest of community not catered for	25	11.1

Source: Field Data (2017)

Table 30 depicts the views of respondents on the effectiveness of the municipal assembly. A greater proportion of the community members indicated that the assembly was ineffectively functioning (64.3%). About 35.7%, however, stated that the assembly was functioning effectively. A follow-up analysis revealed that majority of the respondents rated the assembly as ineffective because people did not have interest in the assembly (23.6%), people's views are

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not respected (20.9%) and insufficient financial resources (20.0%). Some respondents were also of the view that lack of qualified personnel to deliver services (14.2%), lack of communication between assembly and community (10%) and interest of community not catered for (11.1%), are reason ascribed to the poor functioning of the municipal assembly.

The participatory process becomes an issue where participants lack competence and skills. When the people lack knowledge in the matter under discussion or consideration, it becomes impossible for them to provide useful information and show interest in decision-making. Ahwoi (2010) opines that the assembly persons' concerns generally border on being under-resourced to perform their primary task as being the liaison between the assembly and the people. This hinders their capacity to function effectively.

From the views expressed in Table 30, it can be said that the municipal assembly is not working in accordance with the mandate of participatory decision making. Focus group discussants were of the opinion that some of the assembly persons are not well educated to understand some of the procedures, language and content of information at assembly meetings to enable them give feedback to the people they represent. Lack of feedback affects community's contribution during planning, implementation, monitoring of community projects and accountability from service providers.

Data designed to explore perception of community members on assembly members' commitment to their responsibilities and the way forward is presented in Table 31. For the majority of the community members, the assembly members

are not committed to their responsibilities (72.2%). Some of the community members, nevertheless, stated otherwise indicating that the assembly is committed to its responsibilities (27.8%).

Table 31: Community Members' Responses on the Commitment of Municipal Assembly Members to their Responsibilities

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Assembly committed		
Yes	96	27.8
No	249	72.2
Suggestion to improve performance for MCE		
Proper supervision and accountability	45	18.6
Visit communities, not sitting in the office	39	16.1
Formation of small committees to encourage	41	16.9
Participation		
Selection of competent persons to assembly	35	14.5
Involvement of all stakeholders in decisions	30	12.4
Education/empowerment of the people	22	9.1
Stop politicizing community issues	30	12.4

Source: Field Data (2017)

Table 31 further presents information on the suggestions for Municipal Chief Executive to improve performance. The following suggestions were given to improve their performance: proper supervision of assembly persons and hold them accountable for their actions (18.6%), the formation of small committees to encourage more participation (16.9%), and regular visit to communities to interact with the people instead of sitting in their offices (16.1%). Others also suggested the selection of competent persons to the assembly, involvement of all

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stakeholders in the decision-making process, stop politicizing community issues, education and empowerment of both assembly members and the community. General politicization of service delivery is seen as a challenge impeding public participation in local government.

Perception of Assembly Members on Involvement of Community Members in Ga West Municipality

This session of the study shows assembly members' perception of local government involving community members in decision-making on service delivery. Their views are presented in Tables 32 to 34.

Table 32: Assembly Persons' Views on Abandoned Projects in Ga West Municipality

Issues	Frequency	Percentage
Abandoned projects		
Yes	16	53.3
No	14	46.7
Reasons for abandoned projects		
Projects not captured in budget	4	25.0
Lack of Funds to complete projects	6	37.5
Change of government	4	25.0
Corruption on the part of parliamentarians	2	12.5

Source: Field Data (2017)

Table 32 depicts assembly persons' views on abandoned projects. While majority of the respondents indicated that projects are abandoned (53.3%), others were of the view that projects in Ga West Municipality have not been abandoned (46.7%). To many who believed that there were abandoned projects, they gave the

following reasons: lack of funds to complete projects (37.5%), projects not captured in budget (25%), change of government (25%), and corruption on the part of parliamentarians (12.5%).

Results in Table 32 show consistent response from the community members and assembly members in Ga West Municipality that lack of funds, changes in government and corruption are the alleged reasons for project not being completed. The local government often lacks the capacity to handle the tasks transferred by the fiscal decentralisation (Ouedraogo, 2005). According to Helmsing (2003), the local authorities often lack the means to sustain economic activity due to the fact that their increased responsibilities have not been matched with adjustments in revenue powers or transfers from the central government.

Assembly persons' view on the benefit of participation of community members in community project is presented in Table 33.

Table 33: Assembly Persons' Views on the Benefits of Participation

Issues	Frequency	Percentage
Participation beneficial?		
Yes	28	93.3
No	2	6.7
Benefits of participation		
People know their rights and demand them	7	25.0
Peoples' needs are satisfied	7	25.0
Transparency and accountability	2	7.1
People get informed of government policies	3	10.8
Consensus building and collective responsibility	7	25.0
Build peoples' confidence	2	7.1

Source: Field Data (2017)

Table 33 depicts the views of assembly persons on the benefits of participation. The assembly members indicated that participation is beneficial to the development of the entire community (93.3%). To the majority (93.3%) who advanced that participation is beneficial, the following benefits were stated: people know their rights and demand them (25%), peoples' needs are satisfied (25%), and consensus building and collective responsibility (25%). Other respondents were of the view that participation of people in community projects improved transparency and accountability, people get informed of government policies and helps build people's confidence.

On the whole, assembly members are aware that for the development of their communities, there is the need to meaningfully involve the community members in decisions. Shapiro (2003) states that the closer a representative government is to the people, the better it works. Also, people should have the right to vote on the kind of public services they want. In the light of these, decision-making should occur at the lowest level of government consistent with the goal of allocative efficiency (Janda, 2005).

Further analysis was conducted on the views of assembly members on hindrances to participation and ways participation can be improved. The detailed result is shown in Table 34.

The assembly members believed that participation in projects by community members was poor. It was found, in Table 34, that a number of factors served as hindrance to peoples' participation in decision making. These factors include: lack of proper channels of communication (20%), sub-structure not well

resourced (13.3%), decision-making from above (13.3%), lack of remuneration/motivation (13.3%) and apathy on behalf of assembly members (13.3%). Other hindrances to people participation were also mentioned as delay of common fund, conflict of political interest, not following due process and lack of knowledge of decentralization.

Table 34: Assembly Persons' Views on Hindrances to Participation and Ways to Improve Participation

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Hindrance to participation		
Lack of proper channels of communication	6	20.0
Delay of common fund	2	6.7
Conflict of political interest	2	6.7
Not following due process	2	6.7
Sub-structure not well resourced	4	13.3
Decision-making from above	4	13.3
Lack of remuneration / motivation	4	13.3
Apathy on behalf of assembly members	4	13.3
Lack of knowledge of decentralization	2	6.7
Assembly persons' views on ways to improve participation		
Prompt release of common fund	4	13.3
Remuneration package for assembly members	6	20.0
Capacity building	6	20.0
Effective monitoring mechanism	2	6.7
Election of DCE by the people	2	6.7
Well defined channels of communication	6	20.0
Avoidance of partisan politics	4	13.3

Source: Field Data (2017)

It is important to state that proper channels of communication enable the public to access information to increase their participation. Access to accurate,

clear and relevant information enables the community members to know about issues which are essential to their lives such as their basic rights, entitlement, availability of basic services and work opportunities.

The assembly members perceived that the lack of knowledge and understanding of decentralisation where decision-making is from below and not from above is due to political interference which is a hindrance to people's participation and that plausibly has led to apathy among both assembly members and the people. The decentralisation theorem advanced by Oates (1972) proposes that each public service should be provided by the jurisdiction having control over the minimum geographic area that would internalise benefits and costs of such provision. Because local governments understand the concerns of local residents, local decision-making is responsive to the people for whom the services are intended, thus encouraging fiscal responsibility and efficiency, especially if financing of services is also decentralised. The assembly members were of the view that periodically, community members were provided with feedback on service delivery through their local councils who convene meetings at their locality.

Table 34 further presents assembly persons' views on ways to improve participation. Among the responses, remuneration package for assembly members (20%), well defined channels of communication (20%) and capacity building (20%) were mentioned as the prominent ones. Other respondents also suggested that to improve participation, there should be prompt release of the common fund (13.3%) and avoidance of partisan politics (13.3%). To some respondents there

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should be effective monitoring mechanism and election of the MCE by the people in order to improve participation. The results suggest that the municipal assembly needs to strengthen capacities of the sub-structure in terms of training and logistics for effective participation in decision-making, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development projects.

Participation approaches should aim at empowering community members and building their capacities and putting them at the centre of the decision-making process to drive the process according to their needs and priorities. The study revealed that in Ghana, mechanisms are in place to facilitate community participation in the decentralisation process. These mechanisms have conditions attached to the fact that any developmental initiative in the municipal should be participatory under the local councils.

The above supports the view of Oyugi (2000) that all problems are not central problems and that the results of the problems not central in their incidence require decision at the place where the incidence is most deeply felt. This suggests that local governments are established to help solve local problems where the impacts of these problems are heavily felt. It is also envisaged to manage local affairs and ensure that the basic needs of local people are met. Views gathered from the communities are supposed to be channeled through the councilors at lower local levels to higher local councils from where they are incorporated in the municipal plan. The whole process, in effect, is to be participatory. The local government Act 462 also dictates and presupposes participation of the people in the decentralisation process. There is a clear framework of the local government

structure to facilitate the participation of the community members in the decentralization processes.

However, it is one thing having legal framework in place and another to have them function. Evidence from the study reveals that community meetings where participatory planning and most decisions are made are rarely held. On the few occasions when meetings were held, the politicians and elites dominated as most decisions had already been taken behind closed doors and community inputs had no impact. The participatory process where views are supposed to be collected from communities at the lowest level and channeled through local councils to be incorporated into the municipal plan was often over looked. This is often done to meet demands of international agencies and central government and decision-making becomes top-down instead of bottom–up.

When community members agreed that they participate in the development activities of their communities they meant offering communal labour including fetching water, collecting stones and blocks during construction of school buildings, hospitals and making cash contributions. This shows that they have a narrow understanding of the concept of participation in the decentralisation process. This is a means of getting certain activities done using cheap labour available in abundance in local communities. Effective participation consists of empowering community members to own the development process.

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Influence of Community Participation in Service Delivery in Ga West Municipality

The study further tested for the hypothesis "Community participation in projects and developmental activities will not significantly influence service delivery in Ga West Municipality". This was done using regression analysis. Before the analysis, four assumptions were tested which include: normality, linearity, multicollinearity, autocorrelation. None of the assumptions was violated. This section presents the regression results concerning the effect of Ghana's decentralisation programme and community members' participation in decision-making on service delivery. Thus, Table 35 presents the results of the effect of Ghana's decentralisation programme and community members' participation in decision-making on service delivery. From Table 35, the coefficient of the statement "contact by the assembly persons of community for their priority or needs" is 0.016 which is positive and statistically significant at 10 percent significance level. This implies that 1 percentage point increase in the contact made by the assembly persons in relation to the needs of community members will increase the service delivery by 0.016 percentage point holding all other factors constant. This implies that as community members are consulted for their needs, service delivery will be very smooth since the people are involved in any decisions concerning the development of the communities. This result is in line with a study by World Bank (2004) on National Community Water Sanitation Programme which observed that involving community members in decision-making and consulting them for their needs will improve service delivery.

Furthermore, the coefficient of the statement "Involved in preparatory of municipal assembly's development plan" is 0.011 which is positive and statistically significant at 1 percent significance level. This implies that 1 percentage point increase in the "Involved in preparatory of municipal assembly's development plan" in relation to community members will increase the service delivery by 0.011 percentage point, holding all other factors constant. This finding implies that as community members are involved in the preparatory stage of the assembly development plan, service delivery will be facilitated to the extent that, in the end the necessary services to the community members would be effectively done. This result is in line with a study by Bardhan on decentralisation in Latin America that engaging community members in the preparation of municipal assembly's development plan improves service delivery.

Table 35: Influence of Community Participation on Service Delivery

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	T-Stat.	P-value
Contact community for their priority or needs	0.016	0.009	1.778	0.052*
Involved in preparation of municipal assembly's dev't plan	0.011	0.003	3.667	0.003***
Officials create environment for involvement	0.017	0.010	1.657	0.098*
Capacity to mobilize human resources for dev't	0.019	0.008	2.375	0.022**
Improves transparency and accountability	0.024	0.010	2.421	0.016**
Committed to responsibility of unit committees	0.070	0.010	7.000	0.000***
Involved in implementing, monitoring evaluating of projects	0.002	0.013	1.538	0.154

$R^2 = 0.612$

Note:***, **, and * represent significance levels at 1%, 5%, and 10% respectively
Source: Field Data (2017)

From Table 35, the coefficient of the statement "Involved in preparation of municipal assembly's development plan" is 0.011 which is positive and statistically significant at 1 percent significance level. This means that 1 percentage point increase in the statement "Involved in preparation of municipal assembly's development plan" in relation to the priority of the needs of community members will lead to an increase in service delivery by 0.011 percentage point holding all other factors constant. This, by implication, indicates that, as community members are genuinely involved in the preparation of development plan, effective service delivery would be the end result since the people will give their contributions as to how the projects should be implemented for the benefit of the whole community. This result is in line with a study by World Bank (2004) on National Community Water Sanitation Programme which observed that involving community members in decision-making, and consulting them for their needs will improve service delivery.

In addition, the coefficient of the statement "Officials create environment for involvement" is 0.017 which is also positive and statistically significant at 10 percent significance level. This implies that 1 percentage point increase in the "officials create environment for involvement" in relation to community members will increase the service delivery by 0.017 percentage point holding all other factors constant. This finding implies that creating an enabling environment for community members in development projects enhances service delivery. Therefore, decentralisation and involvement of community members in decision-

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making are key to effective service delivery in our various assemblies (Bratton & Gyima-Boadi, 2001).

Moreover, the coefficient of the statement "Capacity to mobilise human resources for development" is 0.019 which is also positive and statistically significant at 5 percent significance level. This implies that 1 percentage point increase in the "Capacity to mobilise human resources for development" in relation to well-being of the community members will increase the service delivery by 0.019 percentage point holding all other factors constant. This finding implies that capacity building is very important in service delivery. Thus, the finding indicates that when mobilisation of human resource for community development are effective, service delivery also improves. This result is in line with a study by Hussein (2003) that the mobilization of human resource in is key in community development projects and service delivery.

Further, in Table 35, the coefficient of the statement "Improves transparency and accountability" is 0.024 and is positive and statistically significant at 5 percent significance level. This indicates that 1 percentage point increase in the "in the improvement transparency and accountability" also in relation to well-being of the community members will increase the service delivery by 0.024 percentage point, holding all other factors constant. This finding implies that capacity building is very important in-service delivery. Thus, the finding indicates that when transparency and accountability are ensured in our various assemblies, service delivery to the communities will be very effective. This result is in line with a study by Deborah (2009) in Ghana who found that

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transparent and accountable governance results in community members participation, effective service delivery and willingness of community members to contribute towards development projects.

Finally, in Table 35, the coefficient of the statement "Committed to responsibility of unit committees" is 0.070 and is positive and statistically significant at 1 percent significance level. This indicates that 1 percentage point increase in the "Committed to responsibility of unit committees" also in relation to well-being of the community members will increase the service delivery by 0.070 percentage point holding all other factors constant. This implies that if unit committees are fully committed to their responsibilities in terms of helping community members to get involved in decision making, effective service delivery will be the end result. Thus, the finding indicates that decentralisation and involvement of community members in decision-making can facilitate service delivery in communities. This result is in line with a study by Ikeannyionwu (2001) who stated that decentralisation and involvement of community members in decision-making can facilitate service delivery in communities.

Chapter Summary

The analysis of data and discussions reveal that unit committees and town/area councils are established in the communities. However, they did not often involve community members in the planning and decision-making process as no regular meetings were organised between assembly members and community members and therefore, their concerns were not considered. Decisions on type of project for the community were taken by those in political authority

with little input from the people. According to the respondents, they were not contacted for their needs and priorities and were not given feedback after assembly deliberations. It is important for community members to know that their inputs are being received and used after they have identified their needs. Assembly persons must give feedback to the people so that they know that their inputs are regarded as valuable and are being used.

In participatory decision-making, all stakeholders have the right to be heard, have their views considered and express their feelings, offer knowledge and information to the process. Data indicates that participation of community members in decision-making is minimal. The people are involved in activities other than participation in planning, implementation and monitoring stages of local service delivery. They are often involved in fetching water and stones, and other communal labour during building of community projects which have little benefits in local governance since they cannot influence decisions.

The study also found out that low level of education among community members contributes to low participation in decision-making and implementation of development plans. Low level of education makes it difficult for the people to analyse issues and participate in decision-making. In this regard, there are ways in which the inputs from participants may be sought and used in the process. As the community members become experienced in participatory methods, decision-making may shift with time from top-down across a range of optional ways of working together to the level of true collaboration. The chapter further presented the results of both correlation and regression analyses which showed an

association between decentralisation programmes of Ga West Municipality,

community members participation in decision-making and service delivery

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of key findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Summary

The study which was a descriptive survey was designed to assess Ghana's decentralisation programme and citizens' participation in decision-making on service delivery in the Ga West Municipality in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The assumption was that the decentralised system provided structures and legislations to promote community participation in decision-making that affects service delivery and promote local development. The study therefore looked at local government structures to see how it facilitates citizens' participation, the levels of peoples' participation in municipal assembly activities towards provision of services, the attitude of local government towards peoples' involvement and the perception of the people about local governance and participation in community development.

There were two main categories of respondents, namely: 345 community members and 18 community informants from three sampled communities in the Ga West Municipality and 30 assembly members. In selecting the respondents, emphasis was placed on community members who are eighteen years and above. This is because such respondents gave necessary information for the study. Both random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select respondents.

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Random sampling was employed to select 345 community members and purposive sampling was used to select community informants and census was used to include all the assembly persons.

Open and close-ended questionnaire and structured interview schedule were developed and used. The structured interview schedule was administered to the community members and the questionnaire to Municipal Assembly members in the municipality. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were also held to supplement the data from the questionnaire and complement the responses of the main respondents in the survey.

This is a mixed method study in which both quantitative and qualitative data analysis were required. The data was organised into various themes and categories (five sections based on the research questions and the purpose of the study) such that each section provides answers for each of the research questions. Descriptive analysis was then achieved by generating frequency tables, percentage and cross tabulation of some of the variables to present the outcome based on the objectives of the study. Further, inferential analysis like regression analysis was done to study the relationships among the variables. The results from the focus group discussions were categorized into appropriate themes and analysed through discourse analysis. . The responses provided formed the bases for the findings, conclusion and recommendation for the study.

Based on the objective one, the main findings of the study are as follows;

- The study revealed that local government structures in Ga West Municipality are formed for effective community participation in the

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decision-making process on service delivery. Unit committees and Town/Area Councils were formed in their communities.

- Majority of the community members in Ga West Municipality were aware of development projects such as schools, roads, health facility, light, market etc. in their communities and identified assembly persons as main channels for sending their concerns to the assembly. The study reveals that though there are unit committees and town /area councils in the communities, most of the people, were not involved in the planning and decision-making process and therefore their concerns were not considered.

- It was found that the community memebers in Ga West Municipality were not contacted for their needs; their views not considered and were not given feedback after assembly deliberations. There was a lot of distance between local officials and community members. Some community members were of the view that participation means participation through their representatives whom they have democratically elected to represent them and to make their voices heard. Although those elected are responsible for decision-making, yet they need the input on a range of views of their community members.

- Though unit committees and town councils in Ga West Municipality are formed, they are not active in the communities and therefore, the people are not satisfied with the functions of the sub-structure. Municipal assembly officials were often reluctant and at times not interested in involving the people in their activities because of fear of being accused of

corruption. This attitude of the people emanates from the presumption that public officials are corrupt and dishonest and therefore any information is incorrect and insufficient for public use.

Findings based on the stated objective two are as follows:

- The community members in Ga West Municipality were not involved in the preparation of development plans, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects Community members were not aware of projects during the planning and implementation stages. Though assembly members were of the view that participation in local governance is the people's right yet they get little information about which project is to be constructed. Sometimes they hear it as rumors until the projects starts.

- The study found that there is no regular meeting between the municipal assembly persons and the communities in Ga West Municipality and therefore the people lack the necessary information they need to be involved. The study also revealed that the people perceived attending meetings and taking part in the decision-making process as time wasting and energy consuming because whatever they say will not change anything the local officials want.

- The community members in Ga West Municipality were not aware of any formal channels of communication and procedures established by the assembly to involve them. The people were involved in activities other than participating in decision-making on project planning, implementation and monitoring.

- Community members in Ga West Municipality were of the view that regular meetings with assembly persons, transparency and accountability, prompt feedback from assembly, and effective channels of communication are factors that would encourage their participation. However, the study has established that access to information is limited. Sources of information and channels to receive information about government projects are not known to most community members.

Findings based on the objective three are as follows:

- From the study, community members in Ga West Municipality are not regarded as integral part of governance and thus not significantly influencing important decisions affecting the communities. Further, the study shows that decision on the type of project for a community is taken by those in political authorities with little input from the community. The community members provided little or no input to the decision-making process- as most decisions are taken or manipulated from the top.

- The study shows that though the people desire to relate mutually with local government, the officials in Ga West Municipality do not create the enabling environment for their involvement in projects. This study found that low levels of education among community members contributed to low awareness on the theme of participation in decision and implementing development plans. Given the low level of education for most of the community members, it was difficult for them to analyse issues and fully participate in planning of development activities.

- Findings from both community members and assembly persons in Ga West Municipality show the community members were willing to participate in terms of contributions to the development process. The study reveals that local government officials were perceived as not interested in community members' participation in development projects as their right in the decentralization process.

Findings based on objective four are as follows:

- The community members in Ga West Municipality perceived decentralisation as bringing development in terms of improved service delivery to their areas. They do not see decentralisation as transfer of power, resources and decision-making from the central government to local government - of which they are part. Many are yet to perceive decentralisation as a break of concentration of government authority and its related functions from the centre to the localities; and their involvement.

- The findings of the study show that the municipal assembly lacks the capacity to mobilize the necessary human resources for community development. The study shows that lack of management capacity particularly in participatory skills among assembly members was a common concern raised by respondents. The respondents noted that lack of capacity building programmes contribute to inactiveness of people in performing their roles and responsibilities.

- The study also shows that the assembly has the capacity to mobilise financial resources for development but, the Ga West Municipal Assembly are often heavily dependent on financial resources from central government and are politically controlled by central government. The study shows that respondents want to be more involved in decision-making through regular community meetings with assembly persons to identify people's priorities, plan development projects together, and have access to information on assembly's activities.

- It was found that community members in Ga West Municipality believe that assembly members are performing below the expectation of the people whom they represent. The respondents gave the following reasons for poor or average performance of local government. They cited lack of interest of both assembly and community members for the performance of the assembly in involving the people in the decision-making process, lack of democratic practices accounted for the performance of local government, that the assembly was not functioning effectively because of insufficient financial support however, misuse of allocated funds accounted for their performance and that the assembly lacked qualified manpower to put into effect the decentralisation procedures.

- The people were of the view that the system is affected by corruption, improper accounting procedures, job for the political boys and limited capacity to monitor the activities of the assembly persons. The study also shows that development projects in the communities in Ga West

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Municipality were abandoned due to change in government, lack of financial support, corruption of government officials and poor management of resources.

- The study established that there is lack of communication between assembly and the communities in Ga West Municipality. The people were of the view that to improve the performance of the system, there should be proper supervision of assembly persons to hold them accountable for their actions; the formation of small committees to encourage more participation; and regular community visits by assembly persons to interact with the people instead of sitting in their offices. Also, competent persons should be selected to the assembly, and decision-making process must involve all stakeholders. Additionally, they suggested that politicizing issues must be stopped.

- Community members in Ga West Municipality agreed that there should be remuneration package for assembly members, capacity building to equip unit committees and zonal councils with knowledge and skills on the decentralisation process. There should be well-defined channels of communication, avoidance of partisan politics. It also emerged that MCEs should be appointed by the people through voting. Finally, there should be an effective monitoring mechanism to regulate the activities of the sub-structure. The study reveals that the municipal assembly needs to strengthen capacities of the sub-structure in terms of training and logistics

for effective participation in decision-making, planning, implementation monitoring and evaluation of development projects.

Conclusions

The conclusions of the study are based on the specific objectives of the study namely: utilization of local government sub-structures to facilitate community members participation in decision-making; the level of people participation in the Ga West Municipal Assembly activities; attitude of local government towards community members participation in decision-making; and the perception of people about the present system of local government on service delivery.

Conclusions on utilization of local government sub-structures to facilitate citizens' participation in community projects were that community members have had minimal influence on decentralised service delivery in the localities. Decision-making involving the people in the communities has been limited due to inadequate utilization of the sub-structure established in the decentralised local governance. Inadequate resources have rendered the sub-structure ineffective as there is minimal interaction between community members and unit committee members.

Conclusions on the level of people participation were that the people were involved in activities other than participating in decision-making on project planning, implementation and monitoring. The level of their involvement may be described as non-participatory or as tokenism.

Participation of community members in decision-making, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects may be rhetoric - as there is little efforts or commitment to act on the preference of citizens' needs. Although the Unit Committees are the closest local structure for the community, the active involvement of citizens are very low in areas such as citizen's initiatives, promoting the interest of citizen's in drafting decisions and policies, as well as encouraging the people to work in groups.

On attitude of local government towards citizens' participation in decision-making, it can be concluded that Assembly members are skeptical about the involvement of citizens in the functions of the local governance. Lack of awareness of the operations of the sub-structure, non-availability of relevant information, and inadequate capacity of the people to participate has hindered citizen's input to the process. Where local governments have close interaction with citizens with regard to decision-making and service provision, stronger relationship is built and cooperation, trust and accountability are enhanced.

Conclusion on the perception of people on the present system of local government on service delivery, the citizens perceived that they were not regarded as integral part of local government and has no significant influence on decisions affecting their communities. However, community members perceived that local government system has improved service delivery in their localities.

This conclusion notwithstanding, it must be said that the MMMAs have definitely ushered into governance a process towards greater institutionalization of citizens' voice in decision-making, a bottom-up activity that would be difficult

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to reverse in the future. It has firmly established a structure of participation in local governance that needs to be built upon by involving the people in planning and implementation of citizens' participation programmes. It is worth noting that the establishment of structures and units of the municipalities are not sufficient factors for activation of citizens' participation. To a large extent, it depends on the ability of the staff of local government to actively employ variety of strategies to involve citizens in the decision-making process.

In order to ensure participation of citizens in decision making, there is the need for local government at the municipal level to serve as conduits to liaise between the people and local government and put to use communication channels established by the system to involve the people in local government activities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made to ensure a more effective participation of community members in decision-making. At the Municipal Assembly level, the Municipal Chief Executives and Coordinating Directors should:

1. Educate local government staff and community members about the benefits of participation and the importance of working together in addressing community issues.

2. Encourage local government officials to travel throughout their constituencies to hold meetings and better engage with the people. They should provide citizens with up to date information on policies and activities in ways the people can understand and also ensure that their

voices are heard. In this way, they would be more knowledgeable to be involved in issues that concern them.

3. Local government officials should ensure regular communication between the general publics and themselves. They should integrate and enhance innovative communicative tools such as email, Facebook, WhatsApp to supplement stakeholders meetings, discussions and conferences.

4. Improve the capacity of staff at the MAs to effectively utilize the established channels of communication for effective participation of community members

On the part of the Assembly members, the study proposed that:

1. They should work hard to strengthen the interaction between them and their constituencies. Assembly Members should provide adequate information and timely feedback to citizens in the process of citizen engagement in decision-making.

2. They should push for legislative reforms to provide adequate incentives by central government to attract the necessary skilled human resources to the Municipal Assembly. The local government should put in place programmes/policies that encourage skilled persons to relocate to low literacy areas to increase equality and standard of living of all citizens.

At the national level, it is recommended that Ministry of Local Government should:

1. Ensure that Municipalities involve citizens in the policy making and implementation process not only because of good governance but also to receive input for increasing the quality of local policies.

2. Establish small municipal authorities or small territorial units where committee members can easily meet and interact with assembly persons as the size of the territory has direct impact on participatory activities of people in local government. Where there are large municipalities, community members do not show interest in local government activities. However, in small communities it is easier to rally community members for community activities.

3. Ensure continued civic education on the benefits of devolution to encourage community participation. Considering the low literacy levels of the people in the community under study, it is important for local government to empower the community members with knowledge and skills to enable them participate effectively in the decentralisation process.

4. Government and elected officials are accountable to the people; to ensure this, there should be a strong central government system in place to hold local government accountable for their actions.

5. Advocate for the enforcement of the constitutional amendment spelling out sanctions against officials who fail to perform their responsibilities.

6. Civil society and non-governmental organisations are encouraged to create awareness and promote participation in decision-making

7. Process and disseminate information in form and structure understandable to citizens.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study made critical contribution to participation in local governance in the MAs of Ghana and its links to improvement   in service delivery for citizens. The study shows that inequalities exist with regard to the participatory process of decision–making on service delivery and this can be explained to some extent by the weak link between the operation of the sub-structure of local governance and the citizens.

In addition, some detailed analysis of citizen's participation in project identification, planning, implementation and monitoring of development projects have been added to the methodology for assessing decision-making on service delivery for the development of the communities. The study has produced a comprehensive conceptual frame work that shows the nature of the participatory complexities to serve as a guide to the involvement of citizens in the decision-making process to improve services provide.

Finally, the study has added to empirical literature on people's participation in decision concerning their lives and the development of their communities for the improvement of standard of living of all citizens.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the researcher's efforts to conduct a thorough study, some challenges were faced. The study sampled three out of the six communities in the municipal for the study. Even though in terms of research this is a good sample, one can argue that it could be difficult to generalise the result to cover all the MAs in Ghana. This can also be attributed to the fact that the communities where data were taken from were fast growing communities as such the findings of the study might be limited to such communities. Again, although the level of community participation of community members was low, the study did not clearly establish whether this was so for male and female community members.

The study relied mainly on the memory and perception of respondents as a proxy to assess citizen's participation in the decision-making process using the decentralised sub-structures. Respondents might be unable to accurately recall exactly from memory to give exact responses to the questions. This may have some element of subjectivity and over exaggeration. However, the large sample size adopted for the study could increase objectivity.

Suggested Area for Further Research

Although the study was able to establish that some community members are not involved in decision-making on service delivery, the study could not ascertain the actual involvement of females and minority groups in decision-making because majority of the decision-makers were males. Further studies could be carried out on gender specific involvement in local government and their ability to hold leaders accountable.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR COMMUNITY

MEMBERS

This study seeks to Ghana's decentralisation programme and citizen participation in decision-making on service delivery in the Ga West Municipality as part of a PhD programme at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Cape Coast. You are invited to take part in the study by responding to the questionnaire or interview schedule. Please be informed that any information you give will be strictly for research purposes only and will be handled in a confidential and professional manner.

Section A: Demographic information of respondents

A. Age of respondent…………………………………..

B. Gender   a. male [   ]   b. female [   ]

C. Level of education:

I have not been to school   2 primary 3 middle   4 JHS   5 secondary   6 training college 7   polytechnic   8   university

D. For how long have you been living in this community? ....

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Section B: Utilization of local government structures for community development

1. Do you know of any District Assembly project in your community in the last five years?

    A Yes   [ ]   B No   [   ]

2. If yes what kind of project is it?

    A. Education – school block   [   ]

    B. Health facility   [   ]

    C. Agriculture   [   ]

    D. Water and Sanitation   [   ]

    E. Roads   [   ]

    F. Others (specify)   [   ]

    Who decided on the site for the development project(s) in the area?

    (a)District Assembly member (b) Community (c) Chief (d) DCE

    (e) Others, please specify

3. Did you play any role in the design and implementation of the project?

    A. Yes [   ]   B. No [   ]

4. If yes what role did you play?

    A. Project identification   [   ]

    B. Communal labour   [   ]

    C. Project monitoring   [   ]

    D. Project maintenance   [   ]

    E. Others (specify)   [   ]

5. In your opinion, does the district assembly contribute towards ensuring that the local   people participate in the development process of their communities?

    A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

    a.   If yes, please specify the participating mode.

    A. Consultation   [   ]   B. Exchange of ideas   [   ]   C. Project identification [   ]   D. Implementation [   ]   E. Monitoring [   ]

6. What factors if any, do you think encourage your participation in development

    process?……………………………………………………………………

    ……………………………………………………………………………………

7. Do the district assembly members contact the community for their priorities or needs?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

8. Do the district assembly officials seek the views of members of the community before choosing projects?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

9. Do you have Unit committee and Town /Area Council members in your community?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

10. If yes what do they do?

    ………………………………………………………………………………

    ………………………………………………………………………………

11. Do you think that the establishments of the Unit Committees and Town/Area Councils have enabled you to get your community's concerns to the Assembly?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

12. If yes, how is this achieved?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

13. Does the Assembly member maintain regular contact with you to solicit your views on District Assembly deliberations? A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

14. If yes, how often does he organise such meeting?

…………………………………………………………………………

15. Are the Unit Committees and Town/Area councils able to involve the people in the planning and decision-making processes at the local level? A. Yes [   ]

B. No [ ]

16. If yes, to what extent?   A. They involved them partially

B. They are fully involved

17. What suggestions do you have to improve the function of the Unit Committees and Town/Area councils to effectively involve the people?

………………………………………..………………………………………….

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

Section C: The participation of people in decision-making to contribute to development project

18. Are you involved in the preparatory of the District Assembly`s development plan?

A. Yes [   ]   B. No   [   ]

If yes, how are you involved?

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19. Do you believe that the plans that were prepared by the assembly have included the interest of the community?   A. Yes [   ]   B. No [   ]

20. Were you consulted during the selection, design and implementation of the projects?   A. Yes [   ]   B. No [   ]

   If yes, what is the nature of the consultation?

A. Through the radio B. Open forum with assembly member

B. District Assembly Official   E. Others, please specify-----------------------

21. How do you get your concerns/problems to the district assembly for attention?..

   …………………………………………………………………………………

22. Does the Assembly have a mechanism that promotes town meeting and public hearing? ? A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

23. Do you normally meet as a community to discuss development issues of your area?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

24. If yes, how often do you meet? A. Very regularly B. Regularly

   C. Not regularly   D. I can't tell

25. Who organises such meetings? A. Chief   B. Assembly member

   C. NGO   D. community leaders E. others-------------------------------------

26. If assembly member, what exactly do you discuss?-------------------------------

   ----

27. If not assembly member, why doesn't he call meetings? -------------------------

   ----

28. Do you receive information from the Assembly through your Assembly member?   ?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

29. If no, how do you receive information from the District Assembly about projects in your area? A. Contractor B. Bill board C. Radio   D. Letter from district assembly   E. others, specify …………………………………………..

30. Does the assembly have the capacity to mobilize human resources in order to improve   local development?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No. [ ]

31. Does the assembly have the capacity to mobilize financial resources in order to improve local development?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

32. Do you think that community members should participate in development activities of their communities?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

33. How would you like to be involved in the decision-making process of the district assembly? ………………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………

34. Personally, did you participate in any of the developmental activities in your community?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

35. If yes, how? Please specify …………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

36. Are you involved in the implementation monitoring and evaluation of development projects?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

37. Is citizen participation in local governance being encouraged in your municipality?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

38. Please give reasons for your answer ………………………………………..

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…………………………………………………………………………………

39. What are the challenges to people's participation in you community?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

Section D: The attitude of local government towards community participation in decision making

People in my community like the presence of the district assembly officials.

A. Yes [ ]   B. No [

District assembly officials respect the views of the people in the community.

A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

District assembly officials create an enabling environment for effective involvement of the people in the community   A Yes [   ]   B   No   [   ]

40. The district assembly system improves transparency and accountability

A Yes [   ]   B   No [   ]

41. Members of my community often agree with decisions of local government officials.   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

42. Did any of the assembly members contact you to seek your views on your social needs?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

43. If yes, who did?   A. Assemblyman [ ]   B. Unit committee [ ]   C. Others (please specify) …………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………..

44. What organisation has your municipal council formed to encourage your participation in development activities?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………

45. Have you ever participated in public hearing organized by the Municipal Assembly during the preparation of the Medium Term Development Project Planning?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

46. Are you willing to contribute something towards the provision of development projects in your area?   A Yes [   ]   B No [   ]

47. If yes, what kind of contribution are you willing to make?

....

....

Section E: The perception of community members about the present system of local governance and citizen participation in service delivery

48. Do you see the local government system as an improvement on service delivery in your community?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]   C. Don`t know   [ ]

49. If yes, indicate if there was any specific advantages in the local government system

A. Officials are more accountable to villagers. [ ]

B. People participate more in the activities of the community. [ ]

C. More funds for rural development. [ ]

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50. What major government community development projects are present in your community? Please state

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

51. How do you assess the overall performance of your local council in community development?   A. Poor [ ]   B. Average [ ] C. Good [ ]   D. Very good [ ]

52. If poor or average, what do you think is the main reason?

A. The district assembly did not provide any service delivery to the community [   ]

B. Insufficient financial resources [ ]

C. Lack of qualified manpower   [ ]

D. Lack of democratic practices   [ ]

E. Lack of interest by people (assembly members and community) [ ]

F. Misuse of allocated funds [ ]

G. Others…………………………………………………………………

53. Are there abandoned projects in your community? A Yes   [   ] B No   [ ]

54. If yes what are the reasons for that?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

55. Which group of people do you think have benefited from development projects in your community?

A. The elites/rich people   [ ]

B. Assembly members   [ ]

C. Villagers   [ ]

D. Others……………………………………………………………

56. Are the municipal assemblies functioning effectively?   A. Yes   [ ]

B. No [ ]

57. If no, give reasons

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

58. Is the degree of commitment and assignment of responsibilities from the Municipal Assembly to the Unit committee and Town /Area Council members adequate to enhance their activities?   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

59. If no, what do you think should be done?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

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APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY OFFICIALS

This questionnaire is on Ghana's decentralisation progragamme and citizen participation in decision-making on service delivery in the Ga West Municipality as part of a PhD programme at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Cape Coast. You are invited to take part in the study by responding to the questionnaire. Please be informed that any information you give will be strictly for research purposes only and will be handled in a confidential and professional manner.

1. Position of respondent

    ………………………………………………………………………

2. Age …………………………………………………….………………...

3. Gender   A. male [   ]   B female [   ]

4. Highest qualification of respondent ………………………………………..

5. How long have you been an assembly member? ………………………….

6. Which sub-committee do you belong to? ………………………………….

7. Have you been able to provide development project(s) for your electoral area? ………………………………………….

8. What mechanism has your institution put in place to facilitate grass root participation in decision-making process?

    …………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………

9. Are the sub-structures of the assembly working?   A. Yes [   ]   B. No [   ]

10. If no, why?

    …………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………

11. Are the beneficiary communities involved in identification, selection,

    planning, implementation and monitoring of development projects?

    A. Yes   [ ]   B. No   [ ]

12. If yes, do they have the capacity?

    …………………………………………………………….……………….…………

    ……………………………………………………………………………

13. If no, why are they not involved?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

14. Do you brief people in your electoral area about deliberations?

     A yes   B   No

15. Do people from you locality call on you to discuss issues of concern to

    them?..

16. Can you describe how you get the input of your electorate for your District

    Assembly deliberations?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………

17. Who decides on the projects that are provided in your area?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

Please indicate the number of projects provided within the last five (5) years

		Role Played by Stakeholder		
Project	**Year**	**Community**	**Unit committee**	**Zonal council**

18. Do the projects being implemented by the District Assembly reflect the needs and aspirations of the people? A   yes   B   No

19. If yes, in what way?...

    …………………………………………………………………………………

20. Are there abandoned projects in you electoral area? A Yes [   ] B No [   ]

21. If there are, then give reasons why?...

    …………………………………………………………………………………

22. Are unit committees formed and active in all localities in your municipality?

    A.   yes   B.   no

23. Are you satisfied with the present functioning of the Assembly sub-structures in your locality?   A.   yes   B.   no

24. If yes, in which way?..

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

25. How do your people learn about development projects for their area?

………………………………………………………………………………

26. Does the community offer any contribution towards the provision of these projects?

   A.   yes   B.   no

27. If yes, what kind of contribution?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

28. Do you think that the participation of the citizenry in local governance can bring about any benefits to the municipality?

   A.   yes   B. no

29. If yes, please state the benefits?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

30. What do you think are the factors hindering effective implementation of decentralization planning in the municipality?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

31. What do you think should be done

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE WITH KEY INFORMANTS

1. Designation of respondent

    ………………………………………….………………………………….

2. Occupation of respondent

    ……………………….……………………………………………………….

3. Gender

    …………………………………………………………………………………...

4. Age of respondent.

5. Highest qualification of respondent

6. How long have you stayed in your community?

7. Does your assembly encourage community participation in its activities?

8. Do your assembly members meet you before and after their ordinary meetings?

9. Are the assembly members able to express your concerns to the Assembly?

10. Do you think decentralization has brought governance closer to the people?

11. If yes, in what ways?

12. Is no, what need to be done to bring governance closer to the people

13. Are you involved in the decision-making process on issue concerning the provision of basic socio-economic infrastructure in the municipality?

14. If yes, at what stage were you involve?

15. If no, what can be done?

    Is the municipal assembly functioning effectively?

16. If no, why?

17. Are assembly members committed to their responsibilities to enhance community participation?

18. Do you think there is local human capacity to participate in the decision-making process?

19. If no, what should be done?

20. How do you participate in the provision of social service in your community?

21. Do you participate in the preparation of Medium Term Plans for the Municipality?

22. What role do you play and at what st

23. Have you ever participated in public hearings organized by the Municipal Assembly during the preparation of Medium Term Development Project Planning?

24. Are you involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes and projects in your district?

25. Are there any benefits for involving local communities in the decision-making process?

APPENDIX D

CORRELATION MATRIX

Correlation Matrix Table

	Have unit committee and Town/Area council in community	Substructure sends concerns to the Assembly	Contact community for their priority or needs	Views sorted before choosing projects	Involvement in preparatory of district assembly's dev't plan	Involved in implementing, monitoring, evaluating projects	Officials respect views of community members	Officials create environment for involvement	Capacity to mobilize financial resources for dev't	Committed to responsibility of unit committees
Have unit committee and Town/Area council in community	1									
Substructure sends concerns to the Assembly	.055	1								
Contact community for their priority or needs	.088	.145**	1							
Views sorted before choosing projects	.012	.212**	.224**	1						

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Involvement in preparatory of district assembly's dev't plan	.033	.124[*]	.086	.046	1					
Involved in implementing, monitoring, and evaluating projects	.006	.147[**]	.226[**]	.139[**]	.354[**]	1				
Officials respect views of community members	.027	.184[**]	.126[*]	.103	.076	.239[**]	1			
Officials create environment for involvement	.065	.196[**]	.223[**]	.179[**]	.124[*]	.265[**]	.483[**]	1		
Capacity to mobilize financial resources for dev't	.064	.094	.036	.160[**]	-.030	-.105	.074	.080	1	
Committed to responsibility of unit committees	.015	.034	.119[*]	-.044	.144[**]	.130[*]	.172[**]	.205[**]	.005	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Data, Anyagre (2017)