

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI
GHANA

Effects of the Rural Enterprise Programme on Women's Livelihood Sustainability and
Poverty Reduction: Case Study of Selected Communities in the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality

by

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DEVELOPMENT

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the Master of Philosophy Degree in Sustainable and Integrated Rural Development and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person or materials which have been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Dr. Prince Osei-Wusu Adjei and children Maurice Osei Adjei and Vanessa Osei Adjei. Thank you for your advice, encouragement, prayers and financial assistance. May God richly bless you.

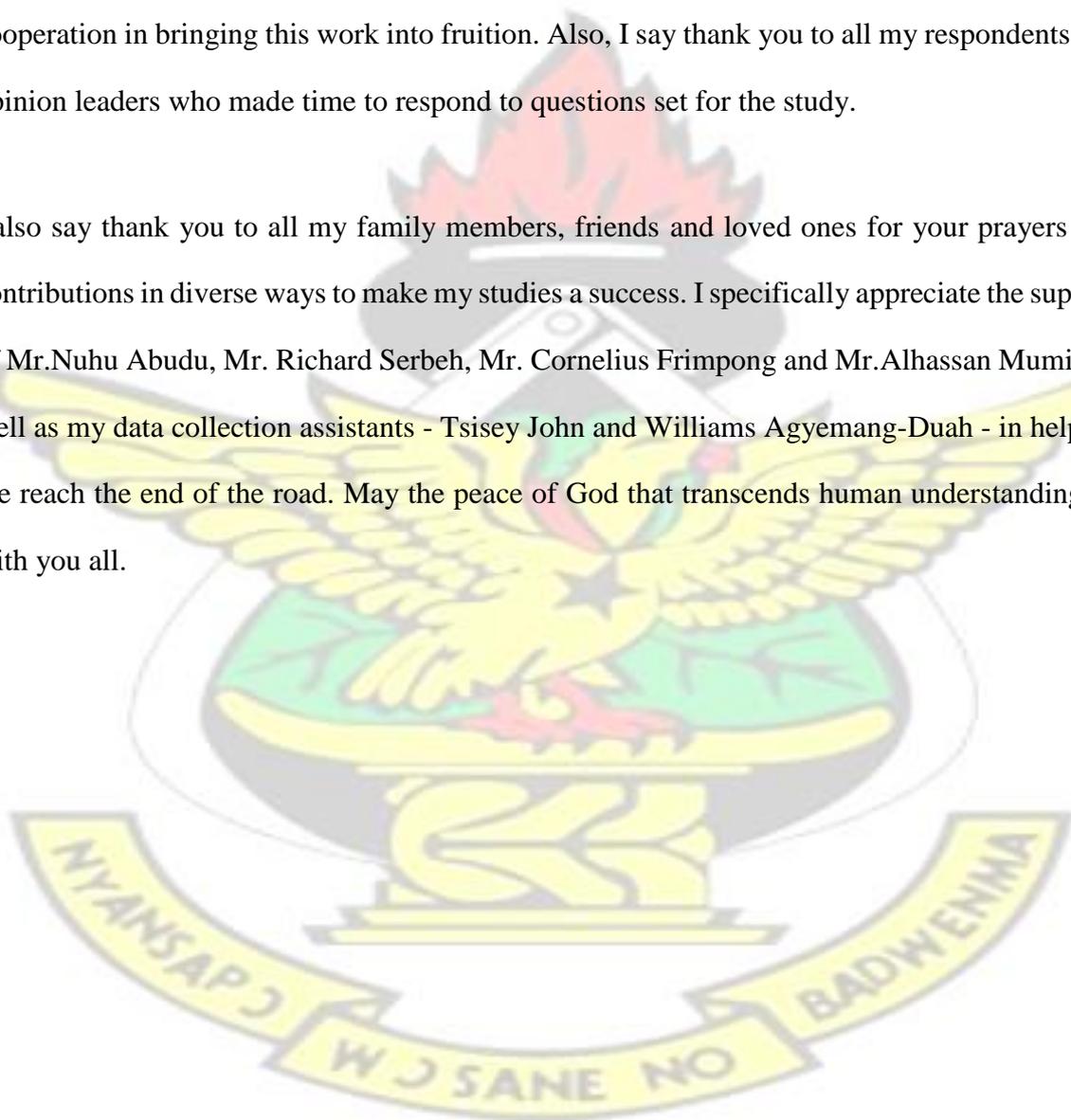
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ABSTRACT

Poverty has become a major rural development problem across the globe with its incidence and severity being high amongst women than men. For over several decades, agriculture has been the main economic activity and poverty reduction strategy for significant number of rural households. However, in the case of Ghana, evidence from the Ghana Statistical Services (GSS) establishes that food crop farmers, mostly rural inhabitants constitute the occupational group with the highest incidence of poverty. Thus, the effects of agriculture on rural poverty reduction and livelihood security have been insignificant partly due to low productivity. Also due to the significant impacts of climate change and land grabbing on rural agricultural productivity in recent times, research has shown that, focusing on agriculture alone cannot engender substantial rural poverty reduction. Thus, rural livelihood and income diversification through the non-farm sector have become paramount for poverty reduction. In 1995, the government of Ghana introduced the Rural Enterprise Project (REP) with support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the African Development Bank. The main objective of the REP is to diversify rural livelihoods through the non-farm sector to support household incomes and rural poverty reduction particularly amongst women. In 2012, the REP entered its third phase and it is now Rural Enterprise Programme (REP). Having run for some time, it is necessary to verify through empirical studies whether the REP's assumed livelihood diversification and poverty reduction intentions are being achieved on the field. Using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and a sample of 125 respondents, this study investigated the perceptions and manifestations of poverty amongst rural women with emphasis on how the Rural Enterprise Programme is affecting the livelihood assets, strategies and the general socio-economic well-being of beneficiary women with focus on selected communities in the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality. This research focused on the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality because it is one of the few Municipalities enrolled into the REP phase III due to the low living standards of its rural inhabitants. This therefore makes the Municipality the ideal location to monitor the acceptability and emerging effects of the REP on livelihood diversification and

poverty reduction. Again, the Municipality itself is gradually getting urbanized and also closer to the Kumasi Metropolis which is largely urban with a lot of small, medium and large scale enterprises already. This necessitates an enquiry into how the REP beneficiary rural entrepreneurs compete and sustain their small scale enterprises within such volatile socio-economic context. The results from the respondents' perceptions and manifestations of poverty support the view that, poverty is a

multidimensional concept with economic, social and political perspectives. Significantly too, with evidence from the beneficiary respondents, this study confirms the viability of the REP intervention in terms of its potentials for socio-economic livelihood diversification and poverty reduction in the rural communities chosen for the study. However, some implementation and institutional challenges affecting the extensive participation of the rural inhabitants were identified based on which some recommendations have been made for improving the impact of the REP on rural livelihood diversification and poverty reduction.

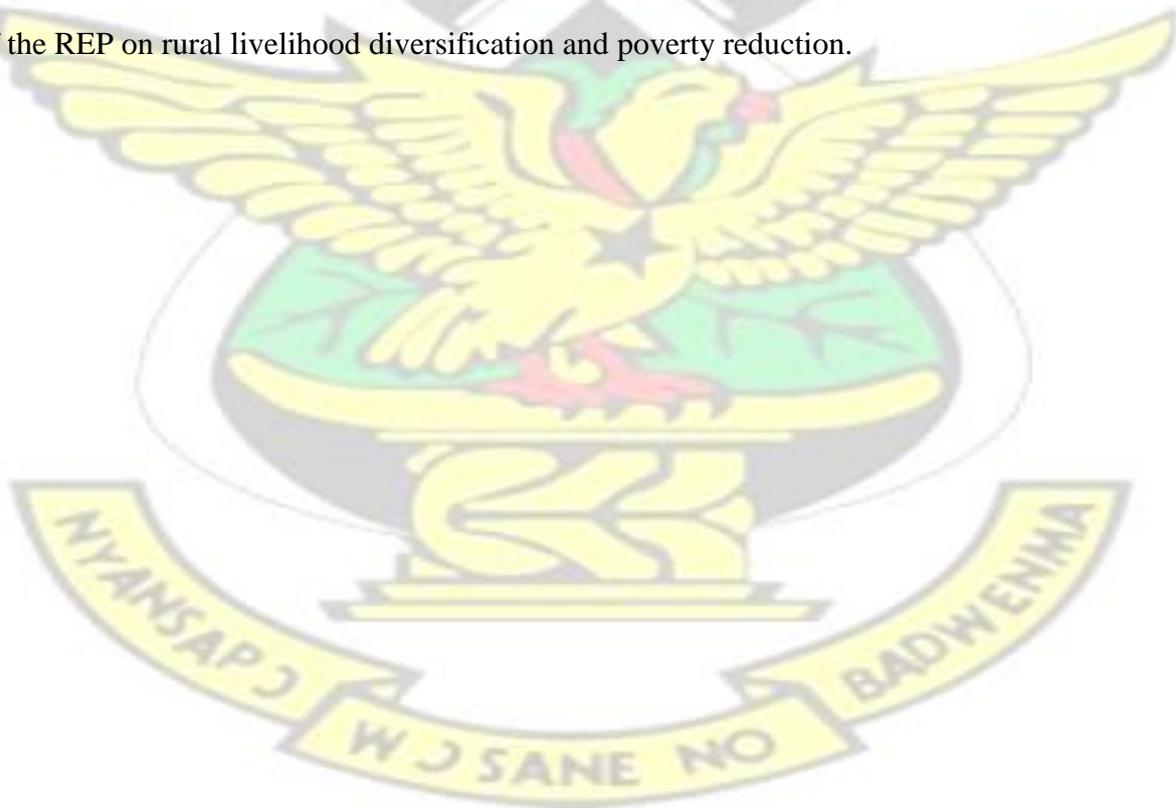


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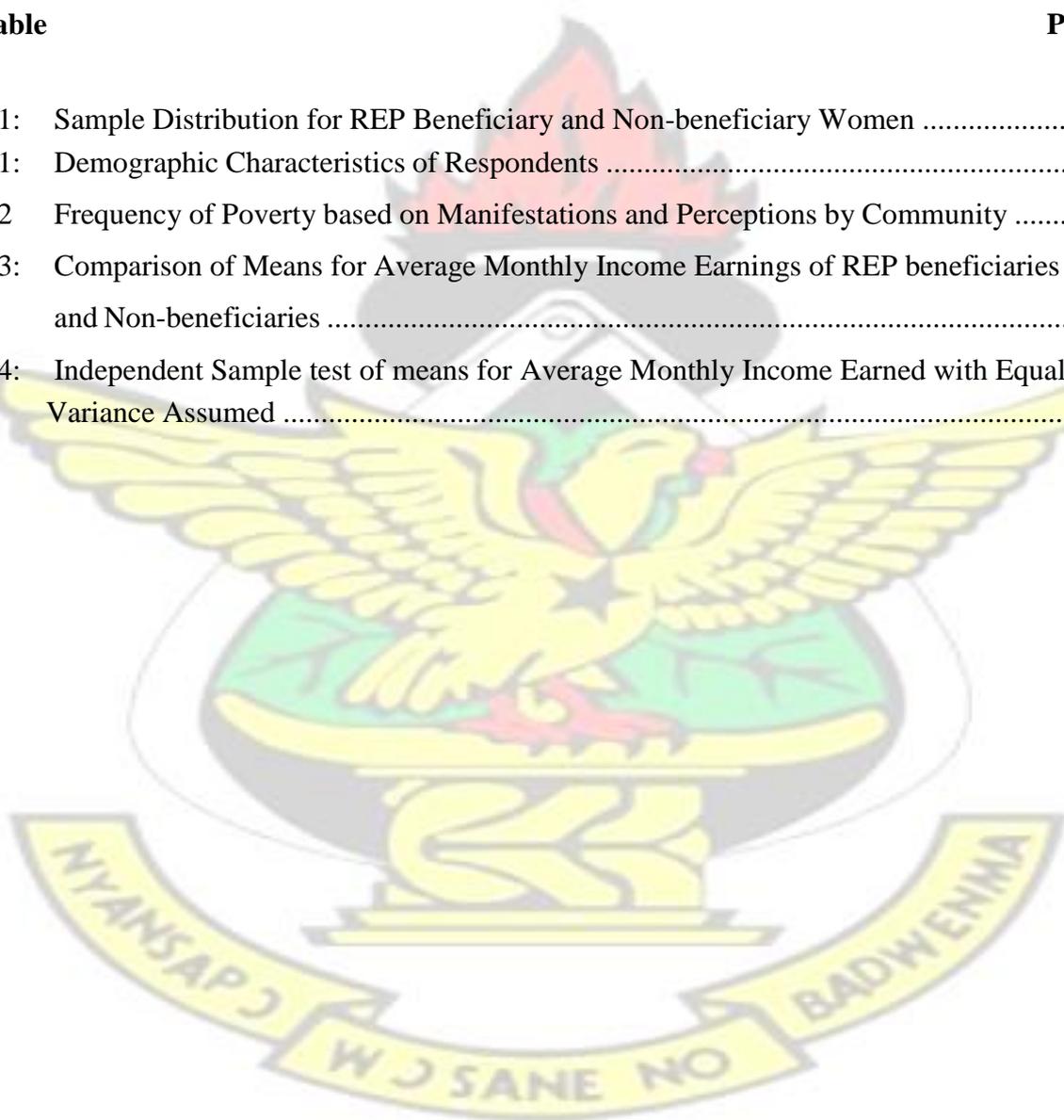
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ACRONYMS

CPRC Chronic Poverty Research Center

GSS Ghana Statistical Service

GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategies
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
IDS	International Development Studies
MMDAs	Metropolitan Municipal District Assemblies
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MSEs	Medium Scale Enterprises
REP	Rural Enterprise Programme
UNDP	United Nation Development Plan
UNO	United Nation Organisation
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
WDR	World Development Report



CHAPTER ONE

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Poverty, perceived as inadequate resources, capabilities and incomes to live in dignity, has become a global plague and a major developmental challenge in many rural communities. Every year millions of people die in deprived communities because they are too poor to experience sustainable living (WHO, 1999; Gordon, 2004; Sachs, 2005; Adjei, 2012). This situation is particularly so in Africa and South-East Asia where overwhelming number of the absolutely poor people reside (Haddad, 1999; Maxwell, 2000). In many cases, social exclusion, hunger and disease occurrence are major manifestations of poverty in many subSahara African countries (Adjei, 2009).

In the sub-Saharan African Region to be more specific, masses of the population continue to live in rural areas deprived of the benefits of socio-economic development and livelihood advances capable of raising their well-being. Adjei (2009) has noted that, by 2025, the rural population of the developing world is projected to increase from 2.92 billion to 3.09 billion and the rural population of Africa is expected to increase from 510 to 702 million by the same period (see also UNO, 1998 cited in Haddad, et.al 1999). Thus, despite the consequences of the phenomenal growth of cities and growing rural-urban migration in the developing world, the rural communities will continue to retain a significant proportion of the population of Africa. More significantly, these rural communities are mostly characterised by absolute poverty and deprivation with limited access to educational facilities, poor housing conditions, depleting natural resources, limited job opportunities, poor drinking water, poor health and nutrition as well as inadequate health service facilities.

A number of studies have shown that, despite the increasing and widespread urban poverty in sub-Saharan Africa in recent times, rural poverty continues to pose difficult developmental challenges for many governments in developing countries due mainly to livelihood challenges and vulnerabilities within the rural milieu (Hellin, et al, 2005; Kakwani, et al, 2005; Kydd, 2002; Marter, 2005). Even more seriously, poverty and livelihood inadequacies in these rural communities are purported to have a 'woman's face.' The implication is that, the incidence and severity of poverty is higher amongst women than men due to women's limited access to livelihood assets and their high levels of vulnerability. In addition, women compared to men often suffer exclusion from socio-economic and political decisions that affect their lives and capabilities to contribute to their households' socio-economic wellbeing. Due to these growing poverty and livelihood sustainability challenges associated with rural communities in general and women in particular, many national governments are pursuing policies and programmes that target rural livelihood diversification and development for poverty reduction and improved well-being in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Ghana is not an exception. Since independence, successive governments of Ghana have focused on agricultural promotion and development as the main strategy for rural poverty reduction and livelihood sustainability. In spite of these attempts, the depths of rural poverty continue to deepen. Due to low agricultural productivity and other associated challenges, the impact of agriculture on rural poverty and livelihood sustainability has been insignificant. As a result, it is assumed that, even with transformative agricultural practices, focusing on agricultural production activities alone may not engender substantial rural poverty reduction due among other things to climate change threats and land grabbing problems and their consequences on agricultural productivity.

Thus, diversifying livelihoods in the rural areas beyond agriculture is becoming increasingly necessary for a sustainable rural economy. For this reason the Government of Ghana introduced

the Rural Enterprise Programme (REP) in 1995 with the intention of diversifying rural livelihoods and achieving sustainable poverty reduction amongst rural inhabitants in general and women in particular. The REP has been implemented for almost two decades in the country and has reached its third phase; hence, its impacts made amongst the beneficiary communities require verification.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT:

In Ghana, like many developing countries, poverty is predominantly a rural phenomenon. Recent report on the Ghana living standards survey indicates a substantial reduction in poverty from 52% in 1992 to 28.5% in 2006 (Adjei et.al., 2012; Nelson, 2008; GSS, 2006; GPRS, 2006; GPRS, 2003). However, the benefits of growth and development accounting for this decline have been urban biased. While urban poverty has been reducing and affecting the general poverty trends in Ghana, rural poverty has been growing worse by increasing from 82.2% in 1992 to 85.7% in 2006 (GSS, 1992; 2000; 2006). It is worth noting that, agriculture remains a very important economic activity worldwide due to its association with food security, employment generation and poverty reduction (see Baiphethi and Jacobs, 2009). In Ghana, agriculture is described as the primary pillar of development - the largest contributor to GDP, providing 45 per cent of all export earnings, 12 per cent of tax revenue, the main employer of the Ghanaian population, supporting at least 80 per cent of the total population economically through farming, distribution of farm produce and provision of other services to the agricultural sector (Duncan, 2004). However, in recent times, the contribution of the agricultural sector to national growth and poverty reduction has been dwindling.

For example, the sector contributed 36.6 per cent of the GDP in 2004, 36 per cent in 2005, 35.8 per cent in 2006, 31 per cent in 2009 and 30.2 per cent in 2010 (Kuwornu et al 2011). Ironically, despite the potential of agriculture in supporting sustainable growth and development, the incidence and severity of poverty amongst rural inhabitants engaged in farming activities are

much higher than its occurrence among other socio-economic groups. About 70% of those living on less than US\$1 a day is located in rural areas confirming poverty as a rural phenomenon. This paradox has often been attributed to traditional agricultural practices and climate change impacts. With these agricultural vulnerabilities, most people in rural areas have been attracted to non-farm micro and small scale enterprises to complement their farming activities. These non-farm activities add value to farm produce and serve as alternative livelihood sources during the off farm and long dry seasons (Kayanula et.al, 2000). Most women, young people and vulnerable male adults, who cannot engage in physically demanding farm work, take up micro and small scale enterprises to sustain themselves and their families. With the growing prominence of the rural non-farm sector as a viable alternative livelihood strategy, successive governments of Ghana have since the 1990s pursued rural diversification and restructuring programmes focusing on non-farm enterprise development in line with the theories of human capital and capability development (Adjei, et. al., n.d). One of such micro and small scale non-farm enterprise development interventions is the Rural Enterprise Programme (REP). The REP phases I (1995-2002) and II (2003-2011) were designed to create competitive rural micro and small-scale enterprises (MSEs) in beneficiary districts backed by good quality, relevant, sustainable and marketdriven business development support services.

The specific objectives of the REP include women empowerment, poverty reduction and livelihood diversification towards rural development. For almost two decades of implementation, the REP has followed the policy assumption that, focusing on direct agricultural activities alone cannot produce substantial rural poverty reduction and support the actualisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in rural Ghana. Hence, the impact of the REP considering its objectives and assumptions requires empirical verification.

The focus of this study on the Ejisu-Juaben Municipal Assembly is important for a number of reasons. To begin with, the Municipality is one of the few Municipal Assemblies enrolled in the

Phase III of the Rural Enterprise Programme, hence monitoring the acceptability by the rural inhabitants and progress of the intervention within the rural setting is necessary. Again, considering that, the Municipality in itself is gradually getting urbanized and also closer to the Kumasi Metropolis which is largely urban, a lot of small, medium and large scale enterprises already exist. These reasons therefore make the Municipality an ideal location to investigate the effects of the REP on the livelihoods and well-being of beneficiaries – particularly women and their households.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. How do women perceive and experience poverty in the study communities?
2. What are the vulnerability scenarios affecting women's livelihoods in the rural areas?
3. How has the REP affected the asset-base and livelihood strategies of women?
4. What mechanisms exist under the REP to support women's livelihood sustainability?
5. What are the effects of the REP on women's productivity levels and capabilities?
6. How has the REP influenced poverty reduction and socio-economic well-being of women in the study communities?
7. What challenges are associated with the implementation of the REP in the rural areas?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

The main objective of the study is to investigate the effects of the REP on the livelihoods of women and their contribution to Households' socio-economic well being. In addition this study is guided by the following specific objectives which were to:

1. Investigate how women perceive and experience poverty and vulnerability in the selected rural areas.
2. Examine how the REP has affected the livelihood assets and strategies of the beneficiary women.
3. Analyze how the intervention has affected the capabilities and productivity of beneficiary women in the rural areas chosen.
4. Examine the effects of the intervention on women's contribution to their households' incomes and access to basic needs.

1.5 PROPOSITIONS:

1. Implementation of the REP strengthens women's asset-base and capabilities for livelihood diversification.
2. Socio-economic empowerment of women engenders improved households' income levels.

1.6 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study is organised into five chapters. Each chapter is also subdivided into different sections and sub-sections. The first chapter focuses on background to the study and highlights the problem statement, research questions, objectives, propositions and organisation of the study.

Chapter two is a review of literature in relation to REP, livelihoods and poverty reduction. The chapter emphasises on poverty definitions, trends and dynamics of poverty distribution, agriculture and poverty reduction, livelihood diversification and poverty, introduction to the rural enterprises programme, description of the REP conceptual framework, and schematic model based on the conceptual framework.

Chapter three focuses on the research methodology and the study area profile. The biophysical and socio-economic characteristics of the study area are also described in this chapter. Chapter four presents and discusses the study results; whereas chapter five provides the summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations.

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CHAPTER TWO

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Grappling with the appalling conditions of the Great Depression, Keynes in “*Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren*” envisioned an end to poverty (Sachs, 2005). In spite of the impressive progress that has been made in some developing countries, particularly China and Vietnam, poverty remains a universal challenge. Many more people are suffering from deprivation of a kind that would have triggered a similar if not a greater concern had Keynes lived into the 21st century. For the developing countries of South Asia and Sub-Saharan

Africa, where the highest proportion of world’s poor is concentrated, the challenge of reducing poverty is particularly daunting and economic growth in these regions has been feeble. Before the inevitable onset of the 2008 financial crises, the number of people defined as living on less than USD 1.25 a day declined from the 1994 figure of 1.8 billion to 1.4 billion (UNRISD, 2010). A careful study of the empirical evidence however has shown that the observed decline was not uniform within and between countries. Although a major breakthrough in poverty reduction was recorded in China, the story in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA), Central Asia and Latin America seemed to be different (UNRISD, 2010). In SSA for example, the number of people in extreme poverty rose from 290 million in 1990 to 414 million in 2010. The consequences of the global financial crisis and the subsequent recession, which per the 2010 World Bank Development Indicators added some 64 million more people to extreme poverty, have substantially increased the challenge of meeting the targets of the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people in extreme poverty. From these statistics, it is evident that poverty continues to be a daunting development challenge for governments in the third world.

This chapter of the thesis provides a review of related literature on women’s livelihood sustainability and poverty reduction. Following these introductory comments, the chapter

proceeds to section two to review the concept and definitions of poverty. Section three examines the trends and dynamics of poverty distribution by taking a look at the rural, urban and gendered dynamics of poverty. Section four takes a look at the various debates surrounding the role of agriculture in poverty reduction. By recognising the weaknesses of policies which rely solely on agriculture for poverty reduction, section five of this chapter focuses on the review of livelihood diversification and poverty reduction with emphasis on non-farm activities in achieving sustainable reduction in the incidence and severity of poverty; whereas sections six and seven provide an overview of the policy prescription for the REP, which is followed with a discussion of the conceptual framework in section eight and a schematic model adapted for this study in the context of the conceptual framework in section nine. The last section of this chapter provides some observations from this literature review section and concluding remarks.

2.2 DEFINING POVERTY

Poverty is a major concern for all stakeholders interested in the development of third world countries. On the policy front, actors have not relented in their efforts to make poverty a part of history. This uncompromising stance has reflected in major policy documents prominent among which are the Millennium Development Goals which provided a common platform for world leaders to clamour for a poverty free world. Despite this universal acceptance of poverty reduction as the single most important goal of development policy, there is little consensus on the definition of poverty. However as Laderchiet. al. (2003) have argued, the success of poverty reduction policies is dependent on what these policies aim at. By implication, there is the need for a concise and clear definition of the term if the world is indeed to be made poverty free.

Earlier discourse on poverty attempted to define the term using the monetary approach. This approach largely favoured by economists - because of its compatibility with the utility maximising behaviour underlying microeconomics – identifies poverty with consumption or income associated with some poverty lines (Laderchi et al, 2003). Thus a person may be said to

be poor when his/her consumption/income falls below a universally accepted level. Adopting the USD 1.25 a day poverty line, some poverty studies show that there are approximately 1.2 billion people in poverty, with majority domiciled in Asia and Africa. The popularisation of the minimum rights approach which called for a certain basic income regarded as a right irrespective of utility provided a basis for adopting the monetary approach as a measure of poverty. Similarly, others found the nobility of this measure in its assumed ability to act as substitute for other welfare indicators. Thus, the use of the income (monetary) approach represented a short cut method of identifying the poor in many fundamental dimensions (Laderchi et al, 2003).

Despite its wide appeal, there is a bundle of evidence questioning the ability of the monetary measure to adequately account for the world's poor. Increasingly, it has been revealed for example that adopting a single poverty line is problematic because the achievement of a particular income level is dependent on myriad of factors such as capabilities, tastes, and prices which differ from one community to another. In addition, the exclusive focus on individual welfare conceals how welfare is impacted by household power dynamics and division of labour. Feminist theorists for example criticised this approach by arguing that the household is a site of contestation and power struggles which suggest that women and other dependents are more likely to suffer deprivation within this sphere.

These criticisms therefore provided enough bases to search for a non-utility based definition that best encapsulates the various perspectives of poverty.

An attempt in this regard was advanced by Sen (1985; 1999) whose pioneering work rescued the poverty debate from income based analysis. As Sen argued, development should be seen as the maximisation of human capabilities and not the maximisation of utility or its proxy, money income. At the heart of this framework is the emphasis on the freedom to live a valued life. Eventually, poverty was defined as deprivation in capabilities, or inability to achieve certain

minimal or basic capabilities, where ‘basic capabilities’ are ‘the ability to satisfy certain crucially important functioning up to certain minimally adequate levels’ (Sen, 1993 cited in Laderchi et al, 2003). Sen’s view shows that monetary resources are a means to an end – enhanced welfare - and therefore should not be considered as the outcome.

Although it represented a major breakthrough in the development literature, the capability definition became a subject of criticism. A major critique advanced against Sen’s definition is his inability to appropriately define basic capabilities (Laderchi, et al, 2003). Similarly basic capabilities may differ across societies depending on age, sex, race and caste. By making these crucial socially stratifying forces a grey area in his theorisation, Sen’s view perhaps represented a simplification of what constitutes poverty.

The lack of emphasis on the socially stratifying forces paved the way for a social exclusion perspective of poverty. Developed in the developed world, social exclusion describes the processes of marginalisation and deprivation that can arise even in rich countries with comprehensive welfare provisions. According to the EU social exclusion is a: ‘process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live (European Foundation, 1995). This view echoes the earlier work of Townsend (1971) who defined deprivation as referring to people who ‘are excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities’. This definition contrasts with the two previous approaches in making a social perspective central –social exclusion is socially defined, and is often a characteristic of groups such as the aged, handicapped, racial or ethnic categories (Laderchi et al, 2003). Although innovative, application of the concept to developing countries poses particular problems to researchers and policy makers. This is because exclusion is an integral part of the organisation of some societies. In the caste system for instance, social exclusion is embedded in the societal fabric and this reduces the applicability of the concept in the Indian society.

The three definitions examined have been severely criticised for being externally imposed and therefore do not take into account the view of the poor themselves. These definitions consequently categorise the poor as passive actors in the poverty discourse. However the participatory approach to defining poverty advanced by Chambers (1994; 1997) sought to correct this misconception by enabling the poor to share their views on poverty. Poverty according to this definition is best chronicled by the poor themselves. This therefore argues against paternalistic income, capabilities and social exclusion definitions which are usually seen as reflecting very little the conditions of the poor.

The forgoing discussion has shown that there may not be any universal definition of poverty. Poverty is not a strait jacket phenomenon and therefore attempt to prescribe a single definition may conceal the various dimensions of the term. This therefore warrants an adoption of a multidimensional approach which minimises the weaknesses and biases associated with any single definition and treat as important the views of the poor themselves. This study therefore was influenced by a multidimensional understanding of poverty with the perceptions of poverty by the rural inhabitants themselves captured as important in the operational definition and analysis of poverty, but also capturing income, capabilities in terms of livelihood assets which also include social perspectives. Thus an attempt has been made to study poverty from a holistic perspective.

2.3 THE TRENDS AND DYNAMICS OF POVERTY DISTRIBUTION

The incidence and distribution of poverty has not been equal within and between countries. Similarly, poverty has been known to affect people differently. This section of the chapter takes a critical look at the distribution of poverty particularly the urban and rural distributions and the gendered dynamics of poverty incidence.

Despite the massive influx of people from rural to urban areas in the last two decades of the 20th century and the insipient emergence of urban poverty in development discourse, poverty perceived as inadequate resources, capabilities and incomes to live a dignified life in rural communities has become a major policy concern. A number of studies have shown that, despite the increasing and widespread urban poverty in recent times, rural poverty seems to be on the ascendancy and continues to pose difficult developmental challenges for many governments in developing countries due mainly to livelihood challenges and vulnerabilities within the rural milieu (Hellin, et al 2005; Kakwani and Subbarao, 2005; Kydd, 2002; Marter, 2005). In the words of Grewal et al (2012), “poverty in developing countries is primarily rural” with nearly 72 per cent of the poor in those countries living in rural areas (IFAD, 2010, cited in Grewal et al., 2012). As Chambers (1997) rightly puts it, while more people are richer beyond any reasonable need for a good life, others (particularly in rural areas) are becoming poorer and vulnerable below any conceivable definition of decency.

In most development models of the post war era, it was illustrated that the benefits of economic growth would inevitably trickle down to all sections of the population. Proponents of the modernisation school of thought for instance demonstrated that women would inevitably benefit from the process of economic growth once the incomes of men increases. Consequently women were allocated a sphere of influence in the private sphere of the household while men enjoyed the privilege of working in the productive sector of the economy.

These models were thus gender blind since they failed to illustrate the persistent inequalities in access to resources for men and women. In addition there is substantial evidence to show that growth has not equally benefited men and women. A well-known critic of the gender blind development models of the post war era was Boserup (1974) who argued that there is no linear relationship between women’s socioeconomic status and men’s income.

As Nayaranet. al. (2000) succinctly argue, poverty is a gendered concept and the nature of gender relations affect women's access to opportunities. By implication, the incidence and severity of poverty is higher amongst women than men due to the former's limited access to livelihood assets and high levels of vulnerability. In India for example, Nayaranet. al. (2000) report that poor women receive lower incomes compared to men for the same work done. According to the US Census Bureau data, poverty rates for women remained at historically high levels in 2013. Nearly six in ten poor adults are women and about six in ten poor children live in families headed by women (Robbins and Morrison, 2014). The unequal access to opportunities in fighting poverty is vividly illustrated by the 2003 Global

Monitoring Report when it showed that "in no society do women yet enjoy equal opportunities as men. Comprising more than 50 per cent of the world's population, women own only one per cent of the world's wealth (UNDP, 2015). Similarly, Leach and Sitaram (2000) have argued that women are disproportionately represented among the poorest in society and therefore need more help in securing sustainable livelihoods. In consequence, if poverty is to be conceptualised as the lack of productive resources, women's proscribed access to resources may suggest that they have been deprived the opportunity to produce their way out of penury. Based on this review, this study was focused on women to examine how the provision of basic productive assets empowers them and act as catalyst for poverty reduction.

2.4 AGRICULTURE AND POVERTY REDUCTION

The precise role of agriculture in economic development and hence poverty reduction has been a longstanding debate among scholars in the development community. Although recently the attention of the world has been shifted towards agriculture in a bid to feed the nine billion people by 2050, views expressed on the agriculture and poverty nexus have been equivocal. The dual economic models pioneered by Lewis (1954) which also gained popularity in the economic

development discourse at a time when most developing countries were on the verge of severing their colonial ties viewed agriculture as a backward unproductive sector from which labour had to be drawn to encourage the growth and development of the dynamic and productive industrial sector (Christiaensen et al, 2010). Not only were agricultural growth rates perceived to be lower than growth rates outside agriculture but also overall productivity growth in agriculture was considered inferior to overall productivity growth in non-agricultural sectors. Largely inspired by Adam Smith, who posited that agricultural productivity was bound to lag behind manufacturing – because of the impediments to specialisation and labour division – (Christiaensen and Demery, 2007) this view perhaps suggests that investment in agriculture is a counterproductive venture which was capable of condemning economies of the developing world to perpetual backwardness. Thus, much of the development economics literature at the time viewed agriculture's best role as supportive of industry which was acclaimed as the sector that held much opportunities for growth. Underlying these economic models was the rational rubric that agriculture would incontrovertibly attain a sunset industry status once these transition economies begin their long awaited industrialization drive. This role of agriculture in Lewis' argumentation coincides with the first two stages (traditional society and preconditions to take off) of Rostow's stages of growth where agriculture was considered the mainstay of the economy although its importance eventually would decline when the society attains a modernised status.

The net effect of these theoretical and empirical formulations was urban biased development planning which squeezed resources (labour and raw materials) from rural areas and heavily taxed agriculture. In policy terms, the slower pace of agricultural growth, its relative decline, and the pessimism about the potentials for technological change in agriculture suggested to some policy makers in the developing world that agriculture should not be given priority in allocating scarce resources (Mellor and Dorosh, 2010).

Contrary to the basic underpinnings of Lewis's dual economy model, alternative views of agriculture as a leading sector began to gain prominence following the seminal contributions of Johnston and Mellor (1961) and Schultz (1964, cited in Christiaensen et al, 2010). In his acceptance speech for the 1979 Nobel Prize in Economics, Theodore Schultz underscored the importance of agriculture when he observed that:

Most of the world's poor people earn their living from agriculture so, if we knew the economics of agriculture we would know much about the economics of being poor" (Schultz, 1979 cited in Cervantes and Dewbre, 2010).

Although these alternative views shared in the slower pace of agricultural growth as posited by Adam Smith, they showed that agriculture might actually yield faster overall economic growth albeit contingent on investment and policy reforms (Christiaensen, et al, 2010). Thus investment in agriculture is therefore not counterproductive as espoused in the "Smithian" perspective on economic growth. This notion therefore seems to illustrate that despite the lack of consensus on what measures are best suited for developing countries in their bid to achieve substantial improvements of their economies, the dominant role of agriculture cannot be overlooked. This important role of agriculture in reducing poverty particularly in developing countries is derived from a number of factors. For example, Grewal et. al. (2012) show that poverty incidence is exceptionally high in developing countries in general and rural communities in particular which rely on agriculture for output and employment; hence, growth in GDP originating from agriculture to a larger extent benefits the poor than growth originating outside the sector(Christiaensen, et al 2010). Besides the poorest households in developing countries have few assets and generally face difficulties in connecting with the non-agriculture sector for income and employment (Grewal et al., 2012). According to Baiphethi and Jacobs (2009), another factor responsible for the renewed interest in agriculture as a viable poverty reduction tool stems from its association with food security. This is particularly critical in countries with highly variable domestic production and foreign exchange constraints in meeting food needs

through imports. By being exposed to recurrent food emergencies and uncertainties associated with food aid, increasing and stabilizing domestic production may be essential for food security.

Many studies provide empirical support for the view that agricultural growth is a major driver of poverty reduction in the developing world. In China for example, agriculture is recognised as having been the major source of poverty reduction in the initial stages of the rural reforms in the 1980s, when a combination of household responsibility system and supportive policies (for example public investments in infrastructure, and research and development) unleashed massive gains in agricultural productivity (Grewal et al., 2012). This assertion is confirmed by Ravallion and Chen's (2007, cited in Grewal et al, 2012) study which found that between 1980 and 2001, the impact of agriculture on head count poverty reduction in China was 3.5 times higher than the impacts of either the secondary or tertiary sectors. Their estimates put the poverty elasticity of growth for agriculture in China at -7.85 while that of the nonagriculture sector was pegged at -2.5. By implication, a 1 per cent growth originating from agriculture brings about 7.85 per cent reduction in poverty whereas the same magnitude of growth resulting from the non-agriculture sector results in only 2.5 per cent reduction in poverty. Similarly, in using time-series and cross section regression analysis, Cervantes and Dewbre (2010) in a study of twenty five developing countries concluded that growth in agricultural incomes play a crucial role in reducing poverty.

In consequence, achieving pro poor growth – that is growth with maximum pay offs in terms of poverty reduction – would necessitate policies and investment that support agricultural development (Kray, 2006; Christiaensen et al, 2010).

In a study in Ethiopia, Mellor and Dorosh (2010) also showed that high rate of agricultural growth has significant positive implications for creating employment. Specifically, Mellor and Dorosh (2010) argue that maintaining a growth rate in agriculture of 6 per cent would provide

enough employment for rapid economic growth and decline in rates of poverty. Empirical evidence shows that agriculture is a major source of livelihood providing jobs for an estimated 2.5 billion of the developing world's population living in rural areas (WDR, 2008). By providing a greater share in employment of the poor and the unskilled workforce, agriculture, directly plays a crucial role in making economic growth more pro-poor. Investing in agriculture may therefore provide a foundation for majority of rural dwellers. The experience of the green revolution in Asia during the 1970s and 1980s where agriculture received a massive transformation through the adaption of science based technology and which subsequently translated into reduced poverty incidence in rural areas justifies the confidence in agriculture as an engine of growth.

In addition to providing employment to low skilled workers, the agriculture sector as Warr (2002) has indicated also contributes significantly to poverty reduction by stimulating growth in the secondary and tertiary sectors. For instance, increased commercial agricultural activities may stimulate the expansion of small food-processing industries, thereby increasing labour mobility from rural to urban areas. In a similar vein, Pack (2009) has argued that, in South Asia, growth in rural incomes and employment propelled by expansion in agricultural productivity gives rise to increased demand for household products and agricultural inputs that can be efficiently produced in rural areas. Pack (2009) therefore seems to suggest that improved agricultural productivity inevitably may signal improved productivity in the nonfarm sector.

Furthermore, agriculture is a major provider of environmental services. The linkages between agriculture and the environment has been a major point of discussion particularly on most environmental fora. With rising resource scarcity and mounting externalities, agricultural production and environmental protection have become closely intertwined. Environmentalists have argued that in using (and frequently misusing) natural resources, agriculture has the potential to create bad environmental outcomes (WDR, 2008). For example, agriculture is seen

as the largest user of water and hence a major contributor to water scarcity and a significant player in underground water depletion. Besides, agriculture's negative effects including agrochemical pollution, soil exhaustion, and global climate change have equally been well noted. This state of affairs has led to calls for slower agricultural development particularly in the developing world. Despite this infamous public image, it must be argued that the solution to agriculture's so-called large environmental footprint is not dependent on slow agricultural development but rather on sustainable production systems (WDR, 2008). On the contrary, agriculture is a major provider of environmental services (generally unrecognized and unremunerated) which inter alia include sequestering carbon, managing watersheds, and preserving biodiversity. Thus in pursuing agricultural growth, there is the likelihood of ensuring environmental and natural resource conservation.

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that from one end of the analytical spectrum where the role of agriculture in long term economic growth was considered less significant, the evidence presented seem to validate the assumptions made by Johnston and Mellor (1961) and Schultz (1964). Owing to the aforementioned importance of agriculture, the World Development Report of 2008 advocated for the reinstatement of the sector at the heart of the development agenda.

Notwithstanding the significance of agriculture as espoused in the preceding section, recent studies have questioned some of its basic assumptions. For instance, Hasan and Quibria (2004) have cautioned against what they term the "misplaced agricultural fundamentalism". By implication, Hasan and Quibria(2004), argue that there is the need for critical assessment of factors such as the number of the poorest of the poor directly engaged in agriculture since agricultural growth may not always benefit all sections of the poor. This recent view emanating from the discourse on agriculture and poverty therefore indicates that the relationship between

agriculture and poverty reduction may not always be linear. While not totally dismissing agriculture's importance, this view clearly underscores the utopianism inherent in the near universal agreement that agriculture by itself is the most potent policy prescription for reducing poverty in the developing world. For example while agriculture took the credit for the drop in the incidence of poverty in South Asia (Grewal et al., 2012), poverty reduction in East Asia resulted from the growth of the industrial sector. The services sector was also at the forefront of the decline in the incidence and severity of poverty in Latin America (Hasan and Quibria, 2004). From these statistics, it may therefore be fallacious to assume that poverty reduction everywhere is the outcome of agricultural growth.

As noted by Loayz and Raddatz (2010 cited in Grewal et al.), the ability of agriculture in reducing poverty is determined by the intensity of unskilled labour use.

While acknowledging that labour productivity gains in agriculture (measured by the value added per worker) played a crucial role in poverty reduction in some parts of Asia between

1993-2002, De Janvry and Soudalet (2010) found that in Latin America and the Caribbean, gains in agricultural productivity did not translate into lower poverty rates because they were capital driven and thereby created fewer employment opportunities for low income earners. Consequently, whether agricultural growth will lead to substantive declines in the rates of poverty may be dependent on the type and intensity of agriculture.

In highly mechanised agriculture, the participation of the poor and unskilled may be minimal. On the other hand in subsistence agriculture, the rate of participation of the poor may be relatively high. Thus, in economies where agriculture growth is highly mechanised as in most parts of Latin America, there will be proscribed employment avenues for the landless poor and hence very little multiplier effects.

A major theme spectacularly evident in the renewed interest in agriculture is the widely held claim that it is the dominant employer of majority of people in the developing world. As shown

by the 2008 World Development report for example, an estimated 2.5 billion of the developing world's 3.5 billion people are engaged in agriculture. These statistics therefore suggest that perhaps it may not be a bad policy option to focus exclusively on agriculture for poverty reduction in the developing world. Despite the assertiveness of this view, recent studies (Grewal et al., 2012) have shown that agriculture may not always be the major employer of unskilled workers. Service sector industries such as domestic and cleaning services in the tourism industry also play a crucial role in unskilled labour employment (Grewal et al., 2012). Suryahadi and Hadiwidjaja (2011) for example points out that, services have been the most important source of poverty reduction in Indonesia.

Agriculture incontrovertibly may therefore not be the major employer of the economically disadvantaged which by implication suggests that poverty reduction policies should emphasise a blend of activities in various sectors of the economy.

Agriculture is essentially weather and climate dependent hence variability in weather and climate conditions may pose a threat to the sector's growth. Over the past two decades, the impact of climate change on agriculture has assumed a central position in most policy and academic debates. From the developed to developing world, policymakers have expressed a major concern about the possible threat of climate change to human survival.

Although this concern has focused on assessing the diverse threats posed by climate change, the impacts on agriculture have been particularly identified as the most serious in terms of numbers of people affected and the severity of the impacts on those least able to cope. The impacts of climate change as shown by Wreford et al (2010) are more likely to be greater in countries heavily dependent on the primary sector largely because of the increase in uncertainty on primary sector productivity. According to Fischlin et al., (2007 cited in Wreford et al,2010), the impact of climate change on agriculture through seasonality, changes in precipitation, and water availability is likely to become significant in the way it affects the livelihood of people.

Considering the proportion of the world's poor in developing countries and the fundamental role of agriculture in such economies, it could be argued that in solely relying on small scale agriculture for poverty reduction, we risk reproducing the misery and deprivation characteristic of the bottom billion. For instance, reduction in water availability in already water stressed areas and increase in the incidence of extreme events such as typhoons and droughts severely affect cereal production (Wreford et al, 2010). Inevitably, the agronomy of such crops may be affected in the long run, leading to acute food shortages and its attendant problems.

Regarding livestock, climate change may affect its productivity by reducing the quality and extent of forage from grasslands which may affect and suppress livestock appetite leading to lower weights (Adams and Hurd, 2002).

Although some studies (e.g. Wrefford et al., 2010; Smit and Skinner, 2002) have been vociferous in advocating for climate change adaptation to mitigate the extent of these uncertainties on livelihood, it is evident that perhaps there is the need to reconsider the misplaced agriculture fundamentalism particularly in developing countries. This stems from the fact that developing countries may be least able to mitigate and adapt to climate change as compared to developed countries.

The net effect has been the clarion call for livelihood diversification in countries least able to tackle the anticipated impacts of climate change on agricultural growth and hence poverty incidence. Support for this view is provided by Block and Webb (2001, cited in Awoyemi, 2005) who argue that a major pathway towards livelihood sustainability is avoiding dependency on a single income source. Owusu and Abdulai (2009) also lend support to this call by arguing diversification into non-farm activities will be crucial in reducing the uncertainties associated with lower agricultural productivity resulting from climate change. The ensuing section examines the concept of livelihood diversification and the prospects it holds for reducing poverty.

2.5 LIVELIHOOD DIVERSIFICATION AND POVERTY

2.5.1 Defining Livelihood Diversification

The concern for sustainable livelihood has led to a burgeoning body of research on livelihood diversification. This interest has resulted in various conceptualisations of the term in poverty research.

Livelihood diversification in the view of Hussein and Nelson (1998) refers to attempts by individuals and households to find new ways to raise incomes and reduce environmental risk, which essentially differ sharply by the degree of freedom of choice (to diversify or not), and the reversibility of the outcome. Specifically, it comprises both on-and off-farm activities which are undertaken to generate income additional to that from the main household agricultural activity via the production of non-agricultural goods and services, the sale of waged labour, or self-employment on small firms, and other strategies undertaken to spread risk. While supporting Hussein and Nelson's argument that diversification entails reliance on diverse economic activities for survival, Ellis (1999) extends the argument by asserting that it includes the construction of different social support capabilities by the poor in order to improve their standards of living.

This new line of thought suggests that perhaps social support mechanisms such as membership of local level associations play a crucial role in ensuring survival in times of difficulties. The role of such ties in easing the economically disadvantaged access to productive resources pays tribute to the importance of social capital in fighting poverty. In a similar vein, Barrett et. al. (2001) have also argued that livelihood diversification evicts the idea that very few people collect their incomes from a single source, hold all their wealth in the form of any single asset, or use their assets in just one activity. Evident in these definitions is the view that perhaps there is a gradual emergence of a world in which poor rural households may reduce their reliance on

a single “traditional” source of income or employment for their survival. Despite these various meanings of the term, livelihood diversification in this study will be conceptualised as a process through which poor households maintain diverse set of portfolios to achieve dignified and improved standard of living.

2.5.2 Livelihood Diversification as a Viable Poverty Reduction Tool

Empirical evidence from different geographical locations indicates that rural households engage in multiple activities and rely on diversified income portfolios (Barrett, et., 2001). Ellis (1999) reports of the ubiquitous engagement of rural households in Sub-Saharan Africa where there is a range of 30-50 per cent reliance on income from non-farm activities. Thus there is a gradual movement towards a world free of total reliance on agriculture for poverty reduction. This view is supported by Dirven (2010) who notes that rural non-farm activities act as the main source of employment for about 45 per cent of rural households in Latin America with women accounting for a greater part of this proportion. Given women’s greater participation in no-farm activities, a growth of this sector may possess positive spill over effects for reducing their deprivation.

Related to the aforementioned, Haggblade (2009) found that non-agricultural earnings across Africa, accounts for about one-third of total income with seasonal non-farm activities acting as major source of employment for rural households in the agricultural year. Particularly in regions with single rainfall regime, non-agricultural activities may to a greater extent provide an important route to escape poverty associated with the lean seasons. As Kayanula and Quartey (2000) have shown, these non-farm activities add value to farm produce and serve as alternative livelihood sources during the off- farm and long dry seasons. For instance, with the contraction of agricultural productivity especially during the long dry seasons, rural households are afforded the luxury to adapt by investing and engaging in non-farm activities such as cloth and leather making. Generally, increased rural livelihood diversification essentially promotes greater

flexibility since it provides rural households more possibilities for substitution between declining and expanding opportunities. Most women, young people and vulnerable male adults take up micro and small scale enterprises to sustain themselves and their families.

According to Ellis (1999) however, the positive impacts of rural livelihood diversification inter alia include but not limited to seasonality and employment, reduced risks, and asset effects.

As Devereux (2009) reiterates, communities most vulnerable to seasonality are rural which derive their livelihoods predominantly from farming. For these households, poverty, hunger and illness are highly dynamic, changing dramatically over the course of the agricultural year in response to production, price and climatic cycles. From this perspective, it is evident that the occurrence of food shortages is typically not the product of occasional disasters but rather the result of recurrent seasonal influences which usually manifest in declining harvest, inadequate availability of food and price hikes. Seasonality as Ellis (1999) argues results in peaks and troughs in on farm labour utilisation due to the mismatch between uneven farm income streams and continuous consumption requirements. The persistence of such seasonal cycles therefore necessitates livelihood diversification into non-farm activities.

Thus when the returns to productive assets (land, labour or livestock) vary across time, individuals may find it beneficial to exhibit diverse activities even if there is complete specialization according to the Ricardian notion of comparative advantage (Barrett, et al., 2001). Income from non-farm activities therefore acts as important safety net for poor rural households caught in the web of seasonal variations in on-farm income and productivity.

Although poverty is in general linked to lack of assets, some studies (Nayaran et al., 2000) have also attributed it to the consequence of loss or division of assets (for example due to inheritance) and hence there is a constant movement of people entering and exiting poverty because of shocks of various kinds. In Tanzania for example, the seizure of lands from women upon the

death of their husbands is a major factor increasing widows' vulnerability to poverty (CPRC, 2004).

Consequently some widows may be poor as a result of expropriation of their productive assets (by inheritance laws) upon the death of their husbands. Protection strategies against such shock-type risks are thus very key in reducing their vulnerability to poverty. The possibility of income diversification and risks reduction is especially important for poor households since it increases their capacity to adopt "non-erosive" (in terms of the environment or their own health) living strategies and to take more rational economic and social decisions (Dirven, 2010). Furthermore, Ballara and Parada (2009, cited in Dirven, 2010) found that rural households engaged in some non-farm activities belong to some welfare systems which by implication suggest that depending on the scope of the welfare systems, such households may be in a better position to cope with the consequences of shocks resulting from unemployment, degeneration in health, old age or death of a breadwinner. Inherently, unforeseen shocks which have played key role in the continuous entry of some people (especially women and children) into transient poverty are more likely to be dealt with when households diversify their income sources.

Furthermore, Ellis (1999) notes that diversification affords rural households the opportunity to put resources into productive use. Cash and other resources obtained from diversification may be used to invest in, or improve the quality of, any asset, for instance, educating children, purchasing equipment that can be used to enhance future income generating opportunities.

This appeal projected by livelihood diversification has had a significant impact on rural poverty reduction policies. With the growing prominence of the non-farm sector in the developing world as exemplified in most theoretical debates, governments have pursued rural diversification policies aimed at the development of non-farm enterprises. Ghana since the 1990s has been a

strong advocate of rural livelihood diversification by incorporating it into development programmes.

One of such micro and small scale non-farm enterprise development interventions is the Rural Enterprise Programme (REP), which is the focus of the ensuing section of this chapter.

2.6 INTRODUCTION TO THE RURAL ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME

During the 1995 World Summit for Social Development held at Copenhagen, poverty eradication was described as an ethical, political and economic imperative, and was subsequently identified as one of the three pillars of social development. Seen as a major threat to human existence, policy makers took a non-compromising stance towards phasing out poverty. Amidst this newly generated poverty reduction euphoria, policymakers conveyed the idea that perhaps a poverty free world was possible; a world in which the only place poverty could be seen is a museum. Poverty eradication has since become the overarching objective of development programmes particularly in the global South. In September 2000, under the aegis of the United Nations, 189 heads of State and Governments unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration committing their nations to a partnership for a “peaceful, prosperous and just world” (IFAD, 2001). Owing to the adoption of this Declaration, developing country governments in unison joined their counterparts from the developed world and other stakeholders in the international community in happily singing the chorus of a poverty free world song.

Although developing countries have made tremendous progress in improving living standards, a sizeable number of people are still trapped in poverty. Data from IFAD (2001) show that, an estimated 1.2 billion people live in extreme poverty (IFAD, 2001). In Ghana, poverty trends have not shown marked differentiation from the trends in other countries within Sub-Saharan Africa. Poverty reduction to a larger extent has been urban biased with rural areas harbouring an increasing number of the poor.

While urban poverty has been reducing and affecting the general poverty trends in Ghana, rural poverty has been growing worse by increasing from 82.2% in 1992 to 85.7% in 2006 (GSS, 2006/ 2000/1992). The introduction of the Rural Enterprises Programme was therefore a consequence of the persistent and increasing rural poverty and the need for rural income diversification due among other things to the potential effects of climate change and land grabbing.

2.7 DESCRIPTION OF THE RURAL ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME

As an integral component of the government of Ghana's efforts to make poverty history, the Rural Enterprises Programme (REP) is an upscale of Rural Enterprises Project (Phases I &II), implemented in 66 districts across the country. The programme aims at mainstreaming within public and private institutional systems the district based micro and small scale enterprise support systems piloted by REP I & II in about 161 MMDAs in all ten regions of the country from 2012 to 2020. This upscaling of REP I & II was influenced by IFAD's 2010 evaluation which confirmed the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the REP model in promoting rural poverty reduction. The body responsible for the implementation of the programme is the Ministry of Trade and Industry which also chairs the Programme's Steering Committee. At the district level, MMDAs are the seat of the programme's implementation and play a central role in coordinating the services, resources and activities of various district level stakeholders in the implementation of REP. This notwithstanding, the Ghana Regional Appropriate Technology Industrial Service, the National Board for Small Scale Industries, the Department of Feeder Roads, the Bank of Ghana and the Association of Rural Banks are also key stakeholders in implementing the programme.

The overarching objective influencing the introduction and popularization of the REP is to increase rural production, employment and income in order to alleviate poverty through the

increased output of small scale non-farm enterprises. Thus, the programme seeks to convey the idea that perhaps, agriculture alone may not be enough to reduce the incidence and severity of rural poverty, hence the need for livelihood diversification by economically disadvantaged households, women and minority groups. In consequence the REP has as its focus equipping this category of people especially women with skills to diversify their sources of livelihood. By focusing on women, the programme seeks to reverse their restricted access to productive assets and vulnerability to poverty. The Gender Strategy of the REP which focuses on supporting rural women's access to productive resources and capacity building therefore provided a bandwagon with enough space to accommodate the company of women interested in escaping grinding poverty which over the years has been an affront to their survival. With over 50 per cent of intended beneficiaries being women, REP has received popular acclamation for its uncompromised stance on reducing women's vulnerability to poverty. To accomplish these benign objectives, the programme emphasized: facilitating access to new technology and business advice; promoting easier access to financial services; improving the efficiency of existing small rural enterprises, supporting the creation of new enterprises, and removing communication constraints through feeder road rehabilitation.

By providing these facilities, project implementers reiterated that all that the rural poor had to do is to take advantage of these facilities, engage in income generating activities and produce their way out of poverty. REP is based on three main building blocks:

1. Access to development services through a district based Business Advisory Centre.
2. Technology transfer through technical skills training and demonstrations, delivered by Rural Technology Facilities.
3. Access of MSEs to rural finance through linkages with Participating Financial Institutions including Rural Community Banks.

Over the years, empirical studies have been undertaken to examine the effectiveness of the model as a poverty reduction tool although the evidence presented still looks vague and require further empirical verifications. In his study of the Asuogyaman District for example, Ayerakwa (2012) showed that REP has made significant contribution towards the reduction of poverty. Specifically, he argues that, the programme has generated 103 jobs and influenced apprenticeship training. In using beneficiaries' sources of income, ability to finance their children's education, seek health care, and housing as indicators of improved well-being, Ayerakwa (2012) found that the REP has significantly improved the standards of living of people who hitherto were neck deep in poverty. Contrariwise it also became particularly evident that a good number of beneficiaries had not seen any major improvement in their living standards.

Similarly, the study revealed that REP's third objective of promoting technology and skills transfer which has been identified as a major key to promote livelihood diversification had not been achieved. In consequence, though the REP holds prospects for reducing the reliance on agriculture in reducing poverty, such failures question the basic underpinnings of the model as a viable poverty reduction tool. However, broader generalization of the impact of the REP and the viability of the model is possible if extensive empirical studies are conducted across several beneficiary districts.

It is only against such extensive evidence-based studies that recommendations can be made to inform the REP policy and programme implementation guidelines.

It was therefore necessary to examine how the REP has affected the livelihoods and poverty situation of beneficiaries in the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality with focus on women. This study thus complements earlier efforts aimed at assessing the viability of the intervention as a rural livelihood diversification and poverty reduction intervention.

2.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The sustainable livelihood framework was adapted to examine the impact of the Rural

Enterprise Programme on women's livelihood sustainability and poverty reduction. The choice of this framework is based on the premise that it provides a holistic analysis of livelihoods and deviates from consumption based approaches (Yeboah, 2010) which formed the basis of the earlier discourse on rural poverty. Moreover, as Scoones (1998) has argued, the framework can be applied to a range of different scale – from individual, to household, to household cluster to extended kin groupings to region or nation with different livelihood outcomes at different levels. These characteristics of the framework make it particularly suitable to this study which seeks to assess livelihood sustainability at the individual and household levels.

At the heart of this framework is the concept of sustainability. Although an integral component of the development literature over the past few decades, the concept of sustainable livelihood has defied a single universal definition and the burgeoning literature on this subject is not particularly clear. As Carswell et. al. (1997) succinctly put it, definitions of sustainable livelihood are often unclear, inconsistent and relatively narrow. Largely inspired by Chambers and Conway (1992), the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) defines livelihood as comprising the capabilities, assets (both material and social) and activities required for a means of living.

A livelihood is therefore sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets while not undermining its resources base. This conceptualisation extends the debate on poverty to include non-income assets which were particularly absent in the earlier conceptualisation of the term.

Scholarship on the livelihood framework has identified five categories of assets namely: financial, human, physical, natural and social; however, political capital is also considered paramount. Financial capital includes money from income, savings, and loans; social capital is made up of the benefits derived from relations and associations. Human capital comprises all human capabilities, which include education, skills, and health of individuals and groups.

Physical capital includes infrastructure, equipment, shelter, and water, and natural capital is the stock of resources from nature, which include land, water, and solar energy. Political capital examines individuals' and groups' power and capacity to influence decisions. The inclusion of political capital in this framework marks a shift from top-down approach to policy making to the bottom-down approach which emphasises individual agency. If poverty, as Nayaran et al (2000) have shown, could be conceptualised as lack of voice, then giving people the opportunity to influence policy may be a priceless policy option that only a few if none can oppose.

The availability and utilization of these assets as Rakodi (2002) opines influence how individuals, families, and groups achieve positive livelihood outcomes. However, access to these assets can be significantly affected by institutional structures and economic processes.

These structures and processes in effect can create assets, for example, government's infrastructure or promotion of human capital via education and technology (DFID 1999).

The adaption of the livelihood framework to assess the dynamics of poverty lies in its inherent ability to examine how the poor perceive themselves, a line of thought similar to the wellbeing approaches advanced by Sen (1997).

Central to this argument is the basic realisation that poverty is not static but dynamic which is better expressed by the people affected. Besides, this framework shows that poverty is gendered and men and women experience poverty differently. Prevailing household division of labour and power dynamics suggests that men and women experience poverty differently.

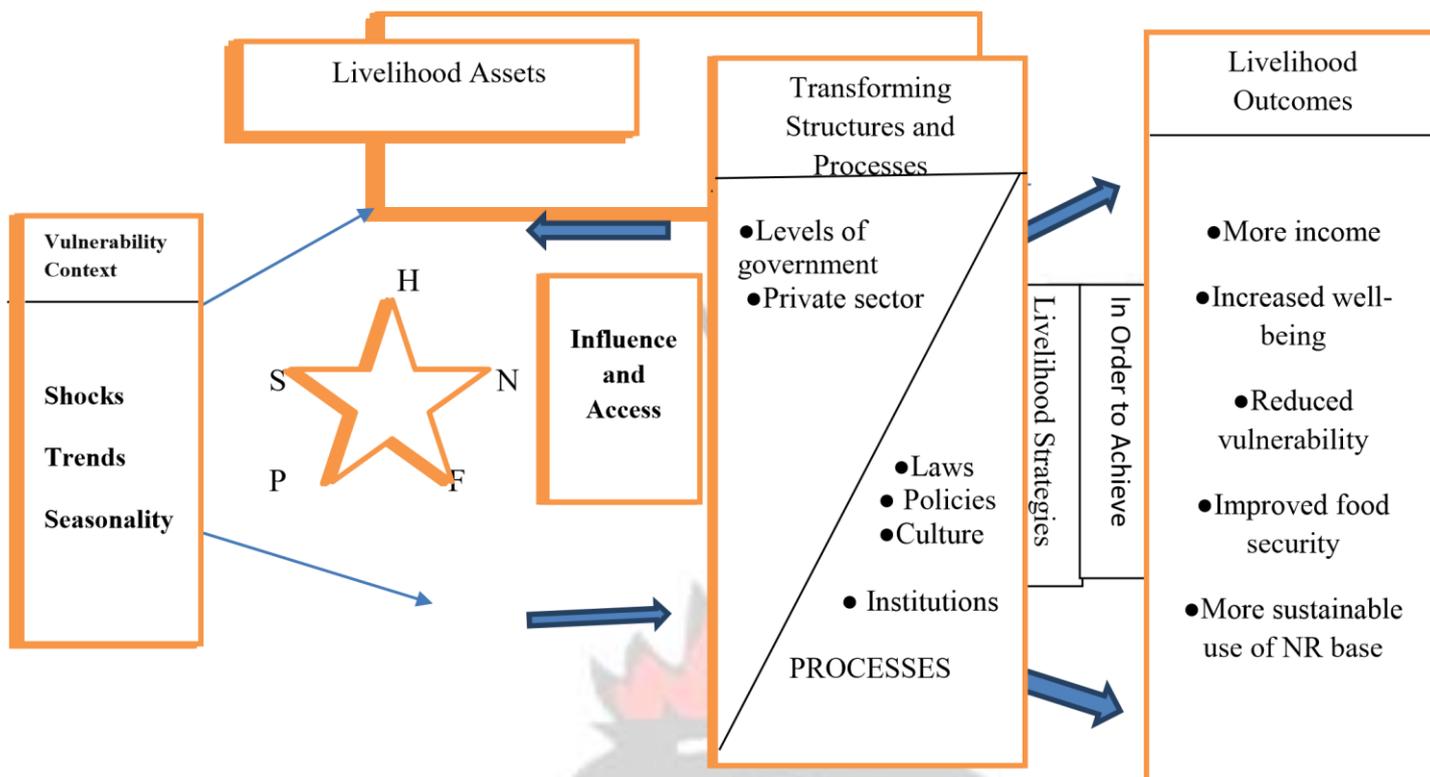
Household division of labour precludes women's engagement in the productive sphere of the economy and this perhaps serves as a breeding ground for the increase in the incidence of poverty among women. The gradual emergence of the "*feminization of poverty*" unto the

development arena is illustrative of the high incidence of grinding deprivation among men and women. In consequence subjecting the poverty discourse to a gender neutral approach may at best conceal the increasing levels of vulnerability encountered by women.

2.9 SCHEMATIC MODEL BASED ON THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The sustainable livelihood (SL) framework proposed by DfID and employed by a number of institutions including the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was adapted as a useful guide for the analysis of the impact the REP has made on the livelihoods and wellbeing of women in the study communities.

The Sustainable Livelihood (SL) Framework generally is proposed as a guide for investigating the resilience of livelihood assets, strategies and outcomes (outputs) under possible and diverse vulnerability contexts. In a much broader sense, The SL framework provides a window for the analysis of linkages between livelihood vulnerability scenarios, socio-economic assets (natural, human, economic/financial, physical and social capital), governance and institutional mechanisms and processes, livelihood strategies (including agriculture and non-farm activities) and livelihood outcomes following specific socioeconomic wellbeing indicators as shown in Figure 2. 1 (DFID, 2000; see also IFAD 2005; Majale, 2002).



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H=Human capital P=Physical capital H=Human capital H=Human capital
H=Human capital P=Physical capital P=Physical capital P=Physical capital
capital
S=Social capital F=Financial capital S=Social capital S=Social capital
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F=Financia F=Financial capital F=Financial capital F=Financial capital
F=Financial capital
N=Natural capital N=Natural capital N=Natural capital N=Natural capital

Figure 2.1: The Sustainable Livelihood Framework (DfID, 2000).

It is noted that, when employing the SL framework, critical questions to be asked are – given a particular context of policy setting, politics, history, agro-ecology and socio-economic conditions that may lead to vulnerability, what combination of livelihood resources (different types of ‘capital’) result in the ability to follow what combination of livelihood strategies, with what livelihood outcomes? Also of particular interest in this framework are the institutional processes (embedded in a matrix of formal and informal institutions and organizations) which mediate the ability to carry out such strategies and achieve (or not) such outcomes. The DfID’s SL framework shown in Figure 2.1 has a number of basic elements with linkages to poverty. The SL framework is found to be suitable for guiding the analysis and results of this study.

However, the original framework shown in Figure 2.1 appears too general for the context of the REP. Hence, it was necessary to modify the framework to make it applicable to the REP in a way that would make its application relevant and well appreciated. The modified version is shown in Figure 2.2.

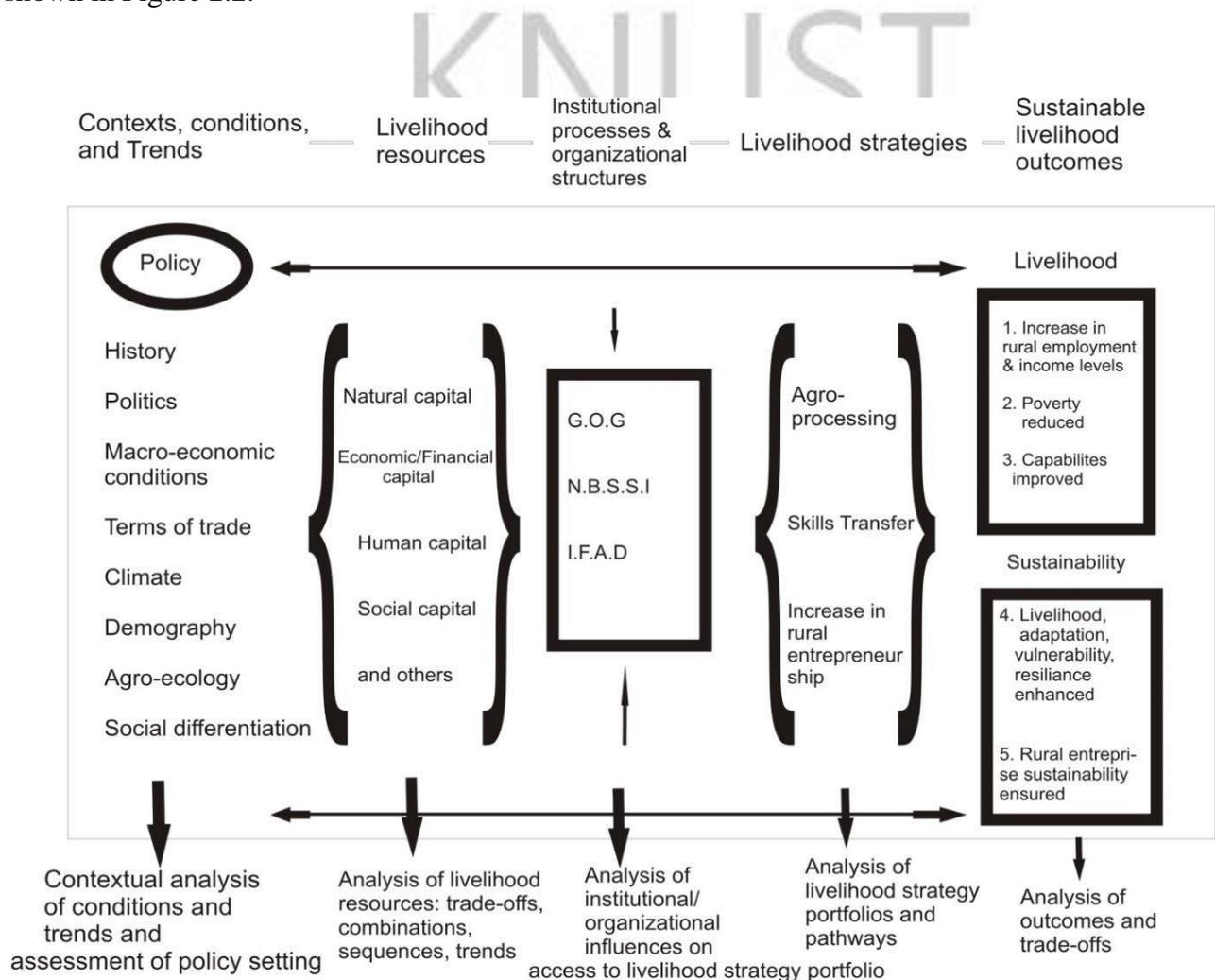


Figure 2.2: Sustainable Livelihood Framework for the REP adapted from DFID, 2000 The nature of the SL framework makes it particularly suitable for this study which aims at investigating the effects of the REP on livelihood sustainability and poverty reduction among women. Also necessary is the need to examine the kind of livelihood assets that beneficiary women receive through the REP, the kind of livelihood strategies that the assets received from the intervention allow the beneficiary women to engage in and the nature of livelihood outcomes

derived from the activities the women engage in as a result of the REP intervention which collectively influence their well-being and household socio-economic situations.

2.10 OBSERVATIONS FROM THE LITERATURE AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter sought to review literature on livelihood sustainability and poverty reduction. As evident in the preceding sections, poverty incidence has not been uniform across regions. The theoretical and empirical review shows that, the poor are increasingly found in rural areas with majority of these being women. This in general has been the outcome of biased and gender blind development models which heavily taxed and extracted resources from rural areas and confined women to the private sphere of the household respectively. The review has shown that despite the bad publicity it received in the development models of the post war era, agriculture has a crucial role to play in reducing global poverty. However this assertion has been critically opposed by some studies (Hasan and Quibria, 2004) which have shown that in relying solely on agriculture for reducing poverty, we risk exposing the poor to uncertainties associated with agricultural productivity. Similarly, the recent imminent impact of climate on agriculture also seems to suggest that it may not be a good policy option to solely concentrate effort on increasing agricultural productivity in a bid to make poverty history. These critiques have subsequently led to the call for livelihood diversification in the global South. Livelihood diversification while helping the poor spread risks also has the potential to provide alternative income and employment avenues which are crucial in equipping the poor fight their way out of poverty. In consequence, livelihood diversification has become an integral component of poverty reduction policies in most developing countries. As its commitment to ending rural poverty, the Government of Ghana introduced the Rural Enterprises Programme (REP) which was an upscale of the Rural Enterprises Project I & II. The ensuing chapter takes a look at the research methods and an overview of the geo-physical and socio-economic characteristics of the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the research methodology adopted in carrying out this study. It discusses the research design, data sources, data type, method of data collection, units of data analysis, sampling techniques, data analysis and presentation. The chapter also describes the biophysical and socio-economic characteristics of the Municipality. The features highlighted include: location, demographic and household characteristics, healthcare services and economic activities.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study made use of a case study research design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. A research design according to Kothari (2004) is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure.

The quantitative method was used because it provided the numbers and figures while the qualitative added value to it through explanation and ensured direct involvement of the researcher in data collection and to have direct contact with respondents. Krueger (1994) as quoted in Sundong (2005) argues that the quantitative approach on one hand is a strong research tool that calls for maximum trust in numbers that equally depicts opinions or concepts. The quantitative approach works best when one wants precise statistical answers to carefully defined questions on topics which are thoroughly understood. Golafshani (2003) explain that quantitative research allows the researcher to familiarize him/herself with the problem or concept to be studied, and perhaps generate hypotheses to be tested.

Nonetheless, Gatrell (2002) contends that a quantitative approach that focuses almost exclusively on aggregate spatial patterns of variables does not actually give attention to what the points or dots on the map or numbers in a table really represent.

The qualitative approach on the other hand uses words and critical observations to express a reality describing people in ordinary situations (Krueger, 1994 cited in Sundong (2005). Sofaer (1999) maintained that qualitative methods are quite useful in constructing or developing theories or conceptual frameworks or in refining theories through preliminary testing. However, in the qualitative method, the challenge is that the interviewer himself is the instrument in the qualitative research. Hence the quality of the research and the subsequent output of the work grossly depend on the in-depth experience, knowledge and skills of the researcher. After assessing the strength and weakness of both qualitative and quantitative methods, it was concluded that, combining the two methods for this study is paramount. Using the qualitative method created the opportunity to assess the perceptions of respondents on poverty, its definition, manifestation and causes as well as the effects of the

REP on their lives. The qualitative approach also helped to obtain in-depth information about REP from the coordinating officials and key informants because questions were asked in an open-ended manner, given the respondents the opportunity to freely express themselves.

3.3 SOURCES OF DATA

The study collected data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of data involved first-hand field data from the respondents. The primary data were collected from the REP officials as well as both beneficiary women of the REP and non-beneficiaries in the selected communities.

In the data collection process too, secondary data were obtained from government agencies, the Municipal Assembly reports , poverty related documents, journals, working papers, books and the records and publications of the government institutions in the selected communities.

3.4 STUDY POPULATION AND TYPE OF DATA COLLECTED

The targeted population included: Business Advisory Head, Municipal Implementation Committee (MIC) and REP facilitators, opinion leaders in the selected communities, women beneficiaries of the REP and non-beneficiaries at Korase, Atia, Nobewam and Apromoase communities in the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality. Data were collected on issues of poverty, livelihood assets and activities as well as socio-economic status of women such as household income and productivity levels and access to basic needs and how these are related to the REP intervention. Data on the challenges associated with the implementation of the REP intervention in the Municipality were also collected.

3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND PROCEDURE

Mixed sampling techniques comprising stratified, purposive and accidental sampling methods were employed for the study. First, the researcher put into three strata all the potential respondents namely: programme officials, REP beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Two main reasons influenced the selection of communities for the study.

First, to examine the effects of the REP, it was appropriate to select communities that had reached their post-adoption stage of the technology and skills transfer intervention, and as a result deriving benefits from the programme. Based on this, six rural communities were arrived at. However, based on the accessibility of the communities and the feasibility of the study, the researcher purposively chose four out of the six communities for the research.

These communities were Nobewam, Apromoase, Atia and Korase all in the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality (refer to Figure 3.1 showing the map of Ejisu-Juaben Municipality with the study communities).

Having chosen the study communities, a purposive sampling approach was again used to identify all the REP beneficiary women in the selected communities estimated to be 70 in number. However, out of the estimated 70 female beneficiaries in the four communities, based on their willingness and availability to be involved in the research process, 60 beneficiary respondents were selected to share their experiences from the REP intervention. Using an accidental sampling method, a corresponding 60 non-beneficiary respondents were also chosen as a control group and a basis for verification of the extent to which the REP intervention has affected the livelihoods and well-being of the beneficiaries. Thus a total of 120 beneficiary and non-beneficiary women were sampled for the study. In addition, using a purposive sampling technique, three programme officials and two traditional authorities (customary chiefs) supervising the implementation of the programme were chosen for indepth interview on the background and policy objectives of the REP intervention to ascertain whether the policy prescription of the REP is actually occurring in the field or not.

In sum, 125 respondents were involved in the study which enabled adequate relevant data collection and thorough discussion of the data collected. The sample distribution has been shown in Table 3.1

Table 3.1: Sample Distribution for REP Beneficiary and Non-beneficiary Women

	Communities				Total
	Aprromoase	Korase	Atia	Nobewam	
REP Beneficiaries	14	17	14	15	60
	23.3%	28.3%	23.3%	25%	100
	14	17	14	15	60

Non- Beneficiaries	23.3%	28.3%	23.3%	25%	100
Total sample	28	34	28	30	120
Total (%)	23.3%	28.3%	23.3%	25%	100

3.6 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

3.6.1 Questionnaire Method

Questionnaires are frequently used in a survey research and consist of series of questions on a topic about which the respondent's opinion are sought (Sommer and Sommer, 1991). Questionnaires were therefore administered to REP women beneficiaries in the various communities for the primary data collection. This was done to solicit data on the kind impact the REP programme has had on the women. Both closed and opened ended questions were asked. The questionnaire was carefully structured and designed according to the objectives of the study. Respondents were visited from house to house in the study communities for adequate and relevant data. In each case, questions were structured and read out to respondents. This was necessary to ensure that data collection process was interactive and that respondents understood the questions put to them. This was also done because majority of the people within the target group were semi-literates; hence, a direct and face to face interaction with them made data collection more efficient and reliable.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion and Interviews

Focus group discussions were conducted with beneficiary women and non-beneficiaries for separate groups at Korase, Nobewam and Apromoase. The discussions focused on issues of productivity, income, access to basic needs as well as manifestations and causes of poverty.

Also the women's livelihood assets and strategies and the effects of the REP on poverty reduction were also discussed to complement quantitative data obtained. In all four (4) focus group discussions were held, two in each of the two communities namely Korase and Nobewam

for both beneficiary and non-beneficiary groups. In each case eight participants were involved. These focus group discussions gave the advantage of encouraging participants to discuss and explore issues among themselves and to share their experiences from their communities and their involvement or non-involvement in the REP intervention. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with the REP officials and other key informants in the study communities for primary data. In effect, the method provided substantial information and provided an opportunity to identify and explore respondents' attitudes towards and experiences from the REP (see World Health Organization, 2005).

The sessions were moderated by the researcher and all discussions were held in the Twi language.

3.7 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

3.7.1 Quantitative Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed with cross-tabulation and chi-square test. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency and percentage charts, line charts were also employed with the aid of the Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS). These tools were employed to organize the research findings. All coded responses were grouped under specific variables.

This method was employed to observe the frequencies and percentages of certain responses under each of the variables. Following the use of Excel software for deriving percentage distributions, all percentages were approximated into whole numbers.

3.7.2 Qualitative Method of Data Analysis

Performing qualitative data analysis basically involves dismantling, segmenting and reassembling data to form meaningful findings in order to draw inferences (Boeije 2010). As such, content analysis based on common themes and direct quotes from respondents were employed in the analysis of the qualitative data. Sarantakos (2005) as quoted in Wahyuni (2012)

observed that a common approach to the interpretation of meanings from textual data is using *content analysis*. Qualitative content analysis concentrates on portraying reality by discovering meanings from the textual data. Wahyuni (2012) maintained that in practice, qualitative content analysis uses a coding method.

Coding refers to the assignment of a code representing the core topic or theme of each category of data to formulate general opinions. Thus, through the focus group discussions, the opinion of respondents on such indicators as poverty, livelihoods and effects of the REP on beneficiary women in the selected communities were transcribed and carefully examined, summarized and presented in words and boxes. Where necessary, photographs were used to give a visual image of the situation being described.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission was sought from the officials of the Municipal Assembly to consult the various officials of the REP. Besides, contacts were made with traditional rulers and assembly men of the selected communities to inform them of the purpose of the study and to seek their consent. All participants gave their consent prior to being interviewed and participation was strictly voluntary. Wahyuni (2012) recommends that the researcher starts off the interview by briefly explaining the aim of the interview and emphasizing the confidentiality, anonymity and the voluntary nature of the study. With the participant's permission, each interview was recorded and treated confidential. To protect the identity of respondents, the study made use of special labels to identify each particular respondent. Again, it must be emphasized that photographs used in this study were all taken with consent of the respondents.

3.9 PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREAS

The Ejisu-Juaben Municipality is one of the twenty-seven administrative and political districts in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The Municipality was created on the eve of the implementation

of decentralized local governance in Ghana in 1988 but it attained a Municipal status in 2006 (Ejisu- Juaben Municipal Assembly, 2010). This section provides the biophysical and socio-economic characteristics of the Municipality . Relevant themes addressed include geographical and socio-economic characteristics which differentiate the

Municipality and study areas from other geographical locations in Ghana. It needs emphasizing that, data for this section were obtained from the Municipal Assembly and Municipal Health Directorate. The section is organized into three interrelated sections. Following these introductory comments is the physical and natural environmental characteristics with emphasis on the location and size, relief and drainage, and vegetation. The second sub - section provides the socio-economic characteristics of the Municipality with focus on the population size, density and literacy rates as well as major economic activities undertaken in the area.

3.9.1 Physical and Natural Environment

3.9.1.1 Location and Size

The Municipality is located in the central part of the Ashanti region and lies between latitudes 1° 15'N and 1° 45'N and longitudes 6° 15'W and 7° 00' W. It shares boundaries with six districts namely the Sekyere East District to the Northeast, Kwabre District to the Northwest, Bosomtwe Atwima Kwawoma and Asante Akim South Districts to the South, Asante Akim

Municipality to the East and the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly to the West. The Municipality covers a total land area of approximately 637.2 sq. km, constituting about 10 percent and 0.27 percent of the Ashanti Region and Ghana respectively.

Figure 3.1 shows the location of Ejisu- Juaben Municipal area in national and regional contexts and the selected communities.

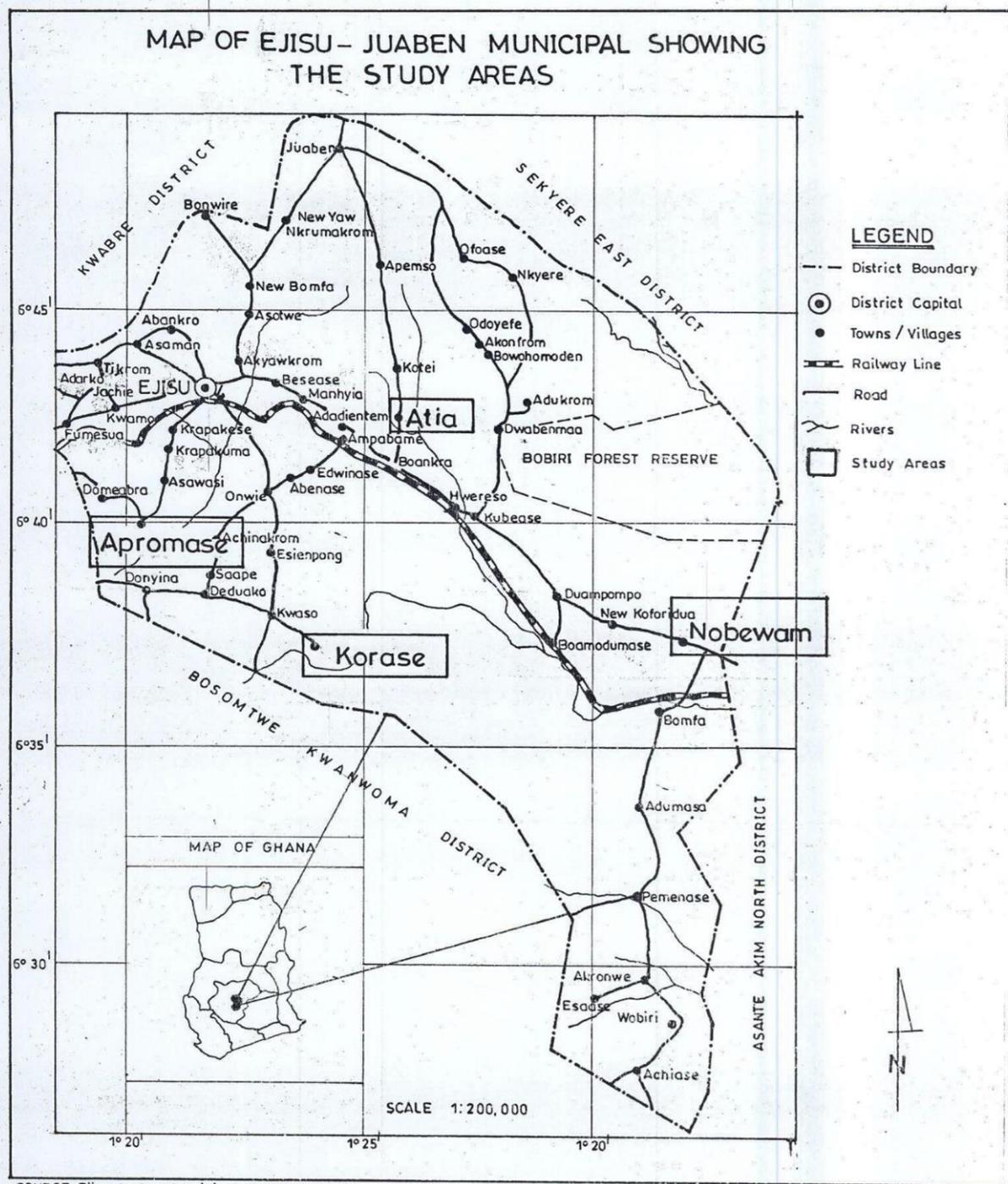


Figure 3.1: Location of Ejisu- Juaben Municipality in National and Regional Context

3.9.1.2 Relief, Drainage and Soils

Generally the topography of the Municipality is undulating, dissected by plains and slopes with heights ranging between 240 meters and 300 meters above sea level. The high grounds are made

up of the Atiwa- Atakpame mountain range. The Oda, Anum, Bankro, Hwere and Baffoe Rivers are the major rivers draining the area. These rivers flow continually throughout the year and serve both domestic and agricultural purposes. Seasonal flooding occurs in the inland valleys and along river basins. The Anum River, during the raining season for instance floods its valleys and this has been a major source of irrigation for rice production at Nobewam for the past few years. Thus, although these seasonal floods pose severe risks to human lives and property, they also present opportunities to farmers (particularly rice and vegetable farmers) in the area to irrigate their crops. The thriving agricultural activities in the area are enforced by the fact that the Municipality has rich loamy soil suitable for cash and food crop production. Major food and cash crops cultivated in the area include cassava, yam, cocoyam, maize, cocoa, oil palm, and citrus.

3.9.1.3 Vegetation and Climatic Conditions

The Municipal Assembly lies in the semi – deciduous rainforest zone of Ghana, characterized by alternating wet and dry periods. The major rainfall regime which signals the onset of the wet season, begins from March to July peaking in July. The minor regime on the other hand begins in September and peters off in November. December to February, a period during which the entire country comes under the influence of the Northeast Trade Winds, is usually dry, hot and dusty. Agriculture in the Municipality is rainfall dependent and therefore seasonal variations may have severe impacts on productivity. The flora is diverse and composed of different species of both economic and ornamental tree species with varying heights. The Municipality is home to the Bobiri Forest Reserve which is renowned for its butterfly species, varied flora and fauna. The Reserve has over the years served as a centre for research into plant medicine and also constitutes one of Ghana’s thriving tourists’ destinations.

Owing to vibrant agricultural activities, the primary vegetative cover has been reduced to secondary forests. Activities such as illegal lumbering and sand mining have also had negative

effects on the vegetation. This is evident at Ejisu, Adadientem, Onwe and Manhyia where the spate of forest destruction has resulted in the growth of grass species peculiar to savannah vegetation.

3.10 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

3.10.1 Population Size, Density and Literacy Rate

The 2010 population and housing census shows that the population of the Municipality is 143,762 comprising 68,648 (47.8%) males and 75,114 (52.2%) females. The data reveals that majority 104,197 (72.5%) of the population are in the rural areas while 39,565 (27.5%) of the population are in urban areas.

The dominance of females may be the result of the increasing outmigration of men in search of paid employment in Kumasi and other cities. The Municipality has a population density of 118 persons / sq km. Generally, literacy rate is high estimated at 72.3 per cent, which is higher than the national average of 57.3 per cent. Out of the literate population, 8.3 percent has attained tertiary education, 12.7 percent senior secondary education, 57.3 percent middle and junior secondary education while the remaining has attained primary and other basic levels of education. This level of literacy is a great asset for skills development and technology acquisition and transfer in the development of the Municipality. However, in the rural communities, literacy rate still remains very low.

3.10.2 Major Economic activities

Data from the Municipal Administration show that 64.3 percent of people above 15 years are self-employed with majority in agriculture. The private informal sector is the largest employer in the Municipality, employing 86.9 percent of the population followed by the public sector with 6.6 percent.

The commercial sector of the municipal economy is dominated by wholesaling and retailing. About 83.4 per cent of the labour force within this sector is into wholesaling while 3.4 per cent and 13.4 per cent are retailers and petty traders respectively. Wholesalers are found in the major urban areas such as Ejisu, and Juaben while the retailers are distributed across the entire Municipality.

In a bid to reduce poverty in the rural areas of the Municipality, the government of Ghana through the National Board for Small Scale Industries introduced the Rural Enterprise Programme in the Municipality. Communities that have benefited from the programme include Apromoase, Nobewam, Atia, Korase, Bomfa, Achiasse and Timeabu. However, Nobewam, Apromoase, Atia and Korase were the four communities involved in this study since they are among the few REP beneficiary communities which have reached their postadoption stages and also due to their easy accessibility. The ensuing chapter takes a look at the presentation and discussion of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the presentation and discussion of relevant data obtained from the field. Data from 120 respondents comprising 60 REP beneficiaries and 60 non-beneficiaries in the four rural communities namely: Atia, Nobewam, Apromoase and Korase in the EjisuJuaben Municipality are analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequencies supported with T-test of significance of means. Information from the key informants including some traditional rulers and officials of the Rural Enterprise Programme (REP) in the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality are also analyzed to support the views of the 120 respondents. This chapter

is organized into five main sections informed by the specific objectives of the study. The first section provides the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Section two discusses the perceptions and manifestations of poverty from the respondents. Section three focuses on how the REP intervention affects the livelihood assetbase and strategies of the respondents using the non-beneficiary respondents as the control group. In section four, the effects of the REP on the livelihood outcomes and poverty are analysed. The fifth section highlights the challenges affecting the implementation of the REP in the study area.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Table 4.1 gives a general description of the respondents' demographic characteristics background. Similar to other rural communities in Ghana, there is generally low level of education amongst the inhabitants of the study communities. About 71 per cent of the respondents has had different levels of basic education with only three per cent having received secondary education. Also, 26 per cent has not had any form of formal education.

Despite their generally low levels of education, it was found that all the respondents were engaged in one economic activity or another. No respondent acknowledged being unemployed. Before the implementation of the REP, the data show that majority of the respondents were engaged in subsistence farming and/or petty trading. The low level of education of the rural women was found to limit their livelihood choices which may negatively affect the welfare of their households. The results further reveal an averagely large household sizes amongst the respondents. From Table 4.1, 55 percent of the total respondents has household sizes close to seven members, whereas 23 percent of the respondents has household sizes close to 10 members. It is worth noting that the large household sizes are as a result of the high number of children born to the women involved in the study.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
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Educational level	Primary	28	23
	JHS/Middle school	58	48
	SSS/SHS	3	3
	No formal education	31	26
	Total	120	100
Occupation	Employed	120	100
	Unemployed	0	0
	Total	120	100
Size of household	2-4	23	19
	5-7	66	55
	8-10	27	23
	10 and above	4	3
	Total	120	100
Number of children	None	6	5
	One	6	5
	Two	22	18
	Three	19	16
	Four	29	24
	Five	18	15
	Eight	20	17
	Total	120	100

Source: Field Data (2015)

The generally low levels of educational attainment, limited livelihood options and promoted large household sizes, it could be inferred that living conditions of majority of the respondents may not be the best.

To empirically ascertain the validity of this inference, the study adopted qualitative and participatory poverty assessment techniques which as research (particularly Chambers, 1997, Narayan et al, 2000 cited in Kyei, 2005) show enable local people to unravel the manifestations and the multi-perspectives of poverty which most often than not have remained a grey area to development practitioners and stakeholders.

4.3 PERCEPTIONS, MANIFESTATIONS AND CAUSES OF POVERTY AMONG WOMEN IN THE STUDY SITES

4.3.1. Perceptions and Manifestations of Poverty

The ways people perceive and define poverty significantly influence the design, acceptability and effectiveness of interventions. In this regard, some poverty studies (Ruggle, 2000; Narayan et al, 2000, Robb, 1999) have revealed that, the use of participatory poverty assessment approach that involves interactions with the local people usually with qualitative methodologies to explore the poor's perception of poverty is significant for a number of reasons. For example, engaging the poor in definitions of poverty based on their own perceptions creates the space for their opinion to be included in national policy and opens up the process of policy dialogue to include a broad section of civil society in the formulation of poverty reduction policies (Kyei, 2004). Significantly too, it is argued that, when the PPA approach is employed, there is often the advantage of understanding poverty from the viewpoint of the poor by focusing on their realities, needs and priorities. This re-echoes the basic argument of Chambers (1997) that, giving the poor a voice in the definition of poverty and analysis of what they know, experience, as well as their needs and wants, is a good opportunity to unravel poverty dimensions which professional development practitioners usually gloss over or misperceive. In support of this claim and from a more empirical perspective, McGee (1998) reiterates that, by giving poor people a stake in poverty reduction policy and programmes from the initial phase of information on the problems, it enhances the likelihood that these will be taken up and will attain their goals (McGee cited in Kyei, 2004).

Considering the strengths of participatory poverty assessment over conventional methods such as the income-based approaches in poverty studies, it was a paramount objective in this study to verify how the target population perceive and experience poverty as well as the causes of poverty in the study sites. The respondents' perception of poverty was conceptualized as 'how they understood poverty'; poverty manifestation implied 'the visible indicators of poverty' and the causes of poverty implied 'why the poor are poor'. The assessment of the causes, perceptions and manifestations of poverty from the respondents were based on the premise that,

the best way to assess people’s socio-economic status and how much means they need to make a living is to ask them (CIHI, 2003).

Box 1 highlights respondents’ perceptions and manifestations of poverty in the rural communities studied. On the perceptions of poverty, the views given by the respondents show the diversity of ways that poverty could be conceptualized. For example, lack of or limited access to regular income, proper nutrition, housing condition, having no decent and sustainable economic activity, limited or no access to social services among others influence how the respondents’ perceive and conceptualize poverty. The association between the perceptions and manifestations of poverty as show in Box 1 is also worth noting. For example, defining poverty as ‘not having any good work to do’, signifies that, the poor are very likely to remain home almost always within the rural setting due to lack of job. In addition, the perception of poverty as limited or no access to social services relates to school dropouts, sicknesses and poor healthcare of children as associated manifestations. Such situations and associated manifestations act as pointers or identifiers of the poor within the rural areas (refer to Box 1).

Box 4.1: Perceptions and Manifestations of Poverty

Perceptions of poverty by the respondents	Manifestations of Poverty
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having inadequate food for the family all the time • Living in a wattle and daub house • Having no money to access basic needs such as healthcare and education for household members • Not having any good work to do to earn adequate income • Inability to clothe one's self and her children decently • Poor people are those having a bad health condition (sickness) • A condition of being defenceless • Lack of strength and skills to work (e.g. old age and sickness) • Inability to afford decent clothing for family members • Lack of money capital to purchase farm inputs • Lack of access to basic social services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often at home due to lack of job • Unable to participate in community programs such as church and funerals • Their children are unable to go to school • Have no parcel of land • Seek no proper medical care when sick • Buy food on credit in most cases • Most often eat once daily • Live in indecent houses • Always begging neighbours items • Owe a lot of people in the community hence feel isolated • Always working for other people on their farms to pay off debt • Have no storage bans • Physically challenged • Practise self-medication most often
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Source: Field Data (2015)

The results from the perceptions and manifestations of poverty by the respondents strongly support the view that, poverty is a multidimensional concept defying a single definition. They further confirm the arguments that, social perspectives are central in poverty conceptualization, hence where social exclusion remain, people become vulnerable to poverty (Laderchi et al, 2003). It includes but more than income poverty which has often been used in numerous poverty studies; and there exist multiple reasons to explain why poverty amongst women in the rural communities is pervasive. These dimensions may include social, which manifests in the limited or no access to social services; economic dimension, depicted by inadequate or no income and/or jobs; political dimension, shown in the condition of being defenceless; and even physical dimension, shown in the conditions of ill health or disability etc. These results also strengthen the view shared by Osman (2003) and Adjei (2008) that, diversity is a major common theme underlying the streams of ideas about poverty. And the diversity is visible in the ways in which people perceive and experience poverty, diversity in the causes of poverty, diversity of how poverty is measured and how poor people strive either to escape poverty or to cope with

it, and diversity of policy interventions needed to combat poverty. In view of this diversity in the perceptions, causes and manifestations of poverty, it could be argued that, the effectiveness of poverty reduction interventions such as the REP lies in its ability to empower the poor in ways that could enable them overcome the multiple manifestations of rural poverty.

Further, based on respondents' perceptions and manifestations of poverty, it became pertinent to verify whether poverty is a common situation in the rural communities studied. In Table 4.2, the results portray an unequivocal affirmation of the prevalence of poverty in the four rural communities selected for the study. Out of the total 120 REP beneficiaries and nonbeneficiaries, it became evident that 22.8 per cent, 27.1 per cent, 25.5 per cent, and 25.4 per cent of respondents in Apromoase, Korase, Atia and Nobewam respectively reported high manifestation of poverty.

Table 4.2 Frequency of Poverty based on Manifestations and Perceptions by Community

		Community				Total	
		Apromoase	Korase	Atia	Nobewam		
Frequency of poverty based on the manifestations and perceptions	High	Frequency	26	31	29	28	114
		Percentage	22.81	27.1	25.5	25.4	100
	Low	Frequency	2	1	0	3	6
		Percentage	33.3	16.6	0	50	100
	Total	Frequency	28	33	29	30	120
		Percentage	23.3	27.5	24.1	25	100

Source: Field Data (2015)

The incidence of poverty in the four communities confirmed by the inhabitants and the REP officials explains their selection as beneficiaries of the REP intervention. With the obvious affirmation of the incidence of poverty in the four communities, the study found it appropriate to examine the causes of poverty in the rural communities in order to bring out the potential conditions that could undermine people's well-being and perpetuate vulnerability amongst women. The results have been presented and discussed in the following section.

4.3.2. Causes of Poverty

One of the crucial research questions that seem to interest development practitioners working on different themes of poverty has been why many rural households are poor. For example, rural poverty studies by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2002) that focused on Eastern and Southern Africa revealed inequitable distribution of land as the primary cause of poverty in the region.

In this study, it was confirmed that majority of the rural women are poor due to their limited access to productive resources needed for a sustainable livelihood activity.

Mention was made of land for agriculture, skills to engage in alternative livelihood activities, assets to facilitate the production of crops, rearing of animals and other economic activities, and financial resources to purchase adequate inputs. Even though this finding adequately supports the IFAD (2002) results from the Eastern and Southern Africa, it was further found that, like its definition, the causes of poverty amongst women in the rural communities studied are multi-layered and also closely interlinked. As shown in Figure 4.1, 49 per cent of the respondents indicated unemployment due to lack of resources to engage in sustainable economic activities as the major cause of poverty among women in the communities studied.

These notwithstanding, laziness, poor health, inadequate income to access basic needs were among the factors highlighted in the communities as contributors to poverty among women in the rural communities.

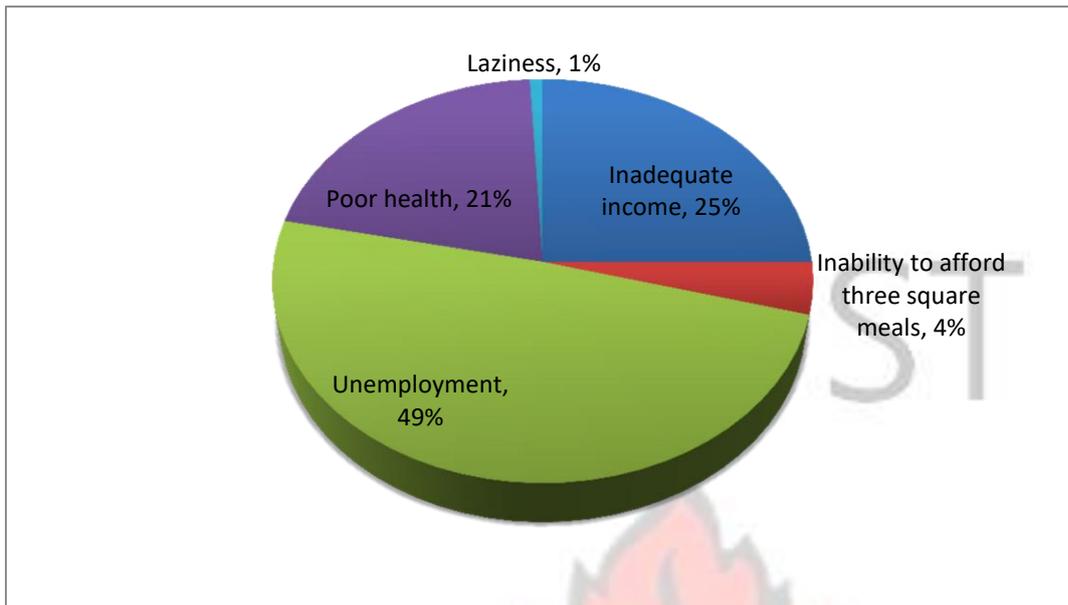


Figure 4.1: Causes of Poverty among Women in the Study Communities

Source: Field Data (2015)

It is important to note that some of the respondents' affirmation of laziness as a cause of poverty among women in the study area gives credence to the Social Darwinian theory of poverty. The Social Darwinian theory explains the cause of poverty in terms of the behaviour and attitudes of the poor themselves (Islam, 2005), and argues that people are trapped in poverty because they are lazy. It further explains poverty as a way of life which is learned by the poor and which culminates in indifference, alienation, laziness, irresponsibility, lack of self-discipline to work hard, plan and save, which ultimately prevents the poor from taking advantage of opportunities that are available to them. However, considering that only one percent of the respondents indicated laziness as a cause of poverty shows that, significantly, the factors that explain why women in the four communities are poor based on the respondents' perceptions, are less of attitudinal or behavioural, than situational. These situations include limited access to resources to engage in productive activities, low levels of education and skills affecting the livelihood options of the rural women, ill health and inadequate incomes to access basic needs which are

also the outcome of limited livelihood options. These are the major factors that create conditions which make women vulnerable to poverty in the study areas. Having identified respondents' perceptions and experiences of poverty, the study sought to examine how the REP remedies these conditions. This is the focus of the ensuing section

4.4 EFFECTS OF THE RURAL ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME (REP) ON LIVELIHOOD ASSETS AND STRATEGIES OF WOMEN IN THE STUDY COMMUNITIES

4.4.1 The REP and Livelihood Assets of Beneficiaries

A number of studies have confirmed that poverty has a 'women's face'. It is estimated that women constitute more than 70 per cent of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty (United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report, 1995).

This very important gender characteristic of poverty is confirmed by the Ghana Living Standards Surveys Four and Five (refer to GSS, 2000/2006) as well as the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I (GPRS I, 2002) and the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II, 2006). These studies have indicated that regions and districts in Ghana with higher incidence of poverty tend to be predominantly rural in nature and often have high female population in the range of 50-52 percent. This feminization of poverty results partly from women's unequal access to economic opportunities specifically productive assets that empower them to engage in livelihood strategies on sustainable bases. Consequently, losses in livelihood outcomes and women's vulnerability to poverty result partly but significantly from inefficiencies in the allocation of productive resources between men and women. Thus, women continue to have systematically poorer command over a range of productive resources. This argument is consistent with the views expressed by respondents as shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.2 represents the various capacity building and skills development programmes introduced through the REP intervention in the four rural communities chosen for the study. It also shows the percentage of women who have benefitted from each of the training packages delivered through the REP in the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality. Data from the selected communities show that the REP is primarily focused on skills transfer and technology adoption. All the 60 beneficiary respondents involved in the study have acquired and adopted at least one technology transferred through the REP training packages for a small scale business development. At Apromoise and Korase communities, the beneficiaries have acquired and adopted soap making technology through the REP; whilst at Nobewam and Atia communities, the women beneficiaries have acquired and adopted the palm oil processing and cassava processing technologies respectively.

Aside technology transfer, beneficiaries were also offered managerial and financial training to enable them improve their asset-base in ways that would sustain their respective enterprises although it must be emphasised that these were demand driven. Figure 4.2 indicates that 63 per cent, 71 per cent and 55 per cent of beneficiaries have respectively been trained in records keeping, group management and product packaging; while 82 per cent, 57 per cent and 52 per cent of beneficiaries have acquired training in financial management, customer care and costing and pricing respectively.

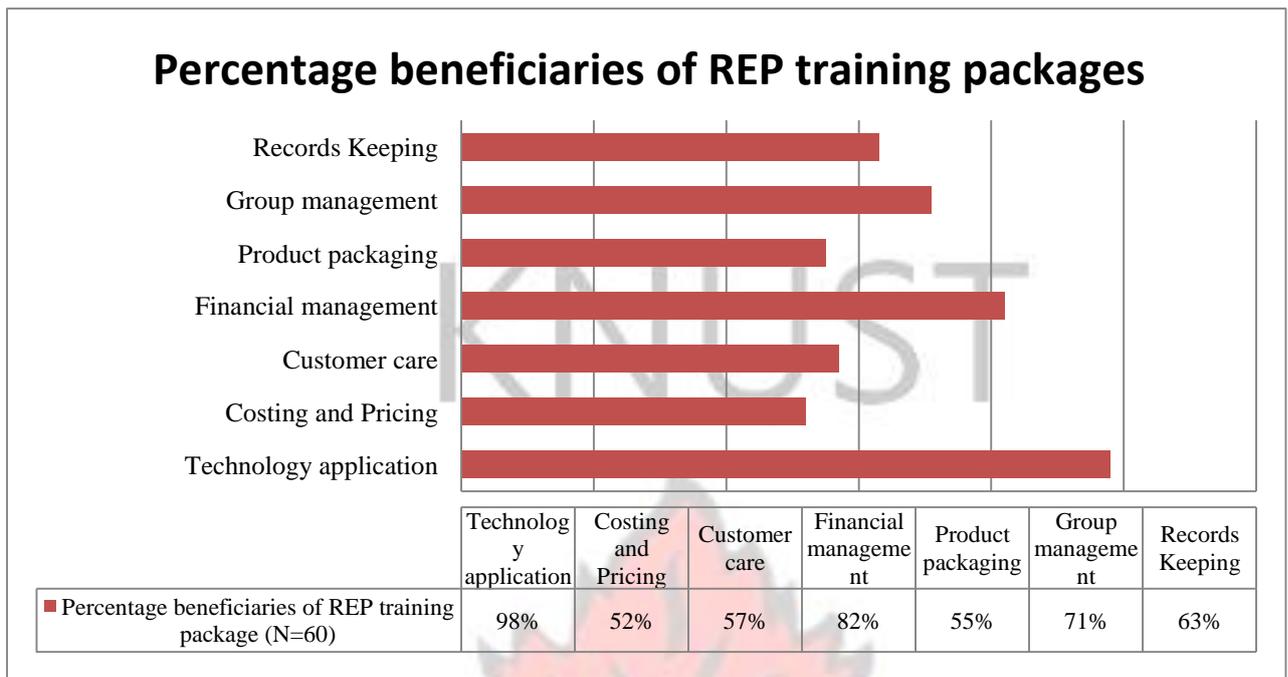


Figure 4.2: REP Training Programmes for Beneficiary Women in the Study Communities.

Source: Field Data (2015)

Figure 4.3 gives the summary of results on the effects of the REP among beneficiaries chosen for the study. These results are based on the beneficiary respondents' self-reported cases and supported with field observations.

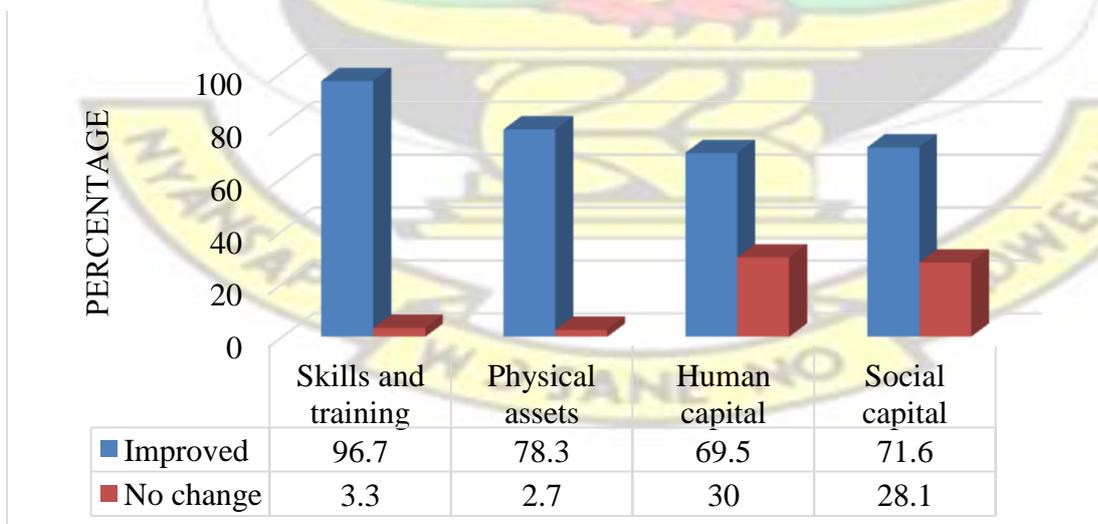


Figure 4.3 Grouped Bar Chart showing the effects of REP on Beneficiaries Asset-base

Source: Field Data (2015)

Figure 4.3 shows that through the REP majority of beneficiaries have seen significant improvement in their skills and knowledge in technology application, human capital (specifically number of employees), social capital and even financial capital. For example, 96.7 per cent, 78.3 per cent, 69.5 per cent and 71.6 per cent of beneficiaries in the four villages studied reported of improvements in their entrepreneurial skills, physical assets, human assets - specifically number of employees - , and their social assets over the past three years after participating in the REP. The beneficiaries linked improved skills and training to the technology transfer component of the REP which has offered varied training programmes such as soap making, palm oil processing and cassava processing. In virtually all the study communities, the REP beneficiaries had organized themselves into groups with selected executives to create credit-worthy associations. These associations have contributed in strengthening women's capacity to acquire loans, engage in asset procurements and provided collective voice in product marketing. It is these associations that have strengthened women's social capital which has subsequently made the acquisition of other assets a possibility. For example, at Nobewam, one of the study sites where all the REP beneficiaries have acquired training in palm oil processing, the beneficiaries have leveraged their collective network through their association to purchase an oil extraction machine, production site, grinding mill and other auxiliary assets for palm oil manufacturing, and also employed three people to help them manage the facility. Similarly at Korase the women have leveraged their group synergy to procure about ten (10) soap making bar boxes, one (1) hydrometer, and a production site for soap making. In an interview with one of the community leaders at Korase, it was revealed that,

‘the REP intervention has created opportunity for some women in my community who were hitherto jobless to acquire entrepreneurial skills and resources that hitherto were very difficult to obtain.....’;

Also a respondent from Nobewam in an interview noted,

‘I have been involved in this palm oil extraction business for some time now, but my involvement in the REP has boosted my productivity and income. This has enabled me purchase a grinding mill and also a piece of land for building a house’.

These observations give credibility to the responses from majority of the beneficiaries that, with the inception of the REP, the social assets, financial assets, skills and training and number of employees (human assets) of the women benefitting from the intervention have seen improvement as shown in Figure 4.3.

As regards the REP’s impact on natural assets acquisition – especially access to land, all the beneficiaries affirmed that, the REP since its inception in the communities has contributed insignificantly to support them in this regard. This is because from the Municipal coordinator of the REP, this falls outside the objectives of the programme.

It should be highlighted that, despite the improved assets status of majority of the REP beneficiaries, there still exist inequities in assets acquisition even among the beneficiaries. For example, some beneficiaries reported experiencing no change in their skills and training, physical, human and social asset-base respectively, even after going through the REP interventions. Majority of those respondents were from Aprozase, one of the study communities where these beneficiaries are not well organized into REP groups to take advantage of the benefits associated with group formation. Against this background, it is worth noting that, the formation of REP groups at the community levels is an important asset in itself

as it creates other asset acquisition opportunities not accessible to those working as individuals.

In general, the REP has had positive effect on the asset-base of most women beneficiaries.



Plate 4.1: An Asset Acquired by the REP Beneficiary Women at Nobewam for Palm Oil Processing

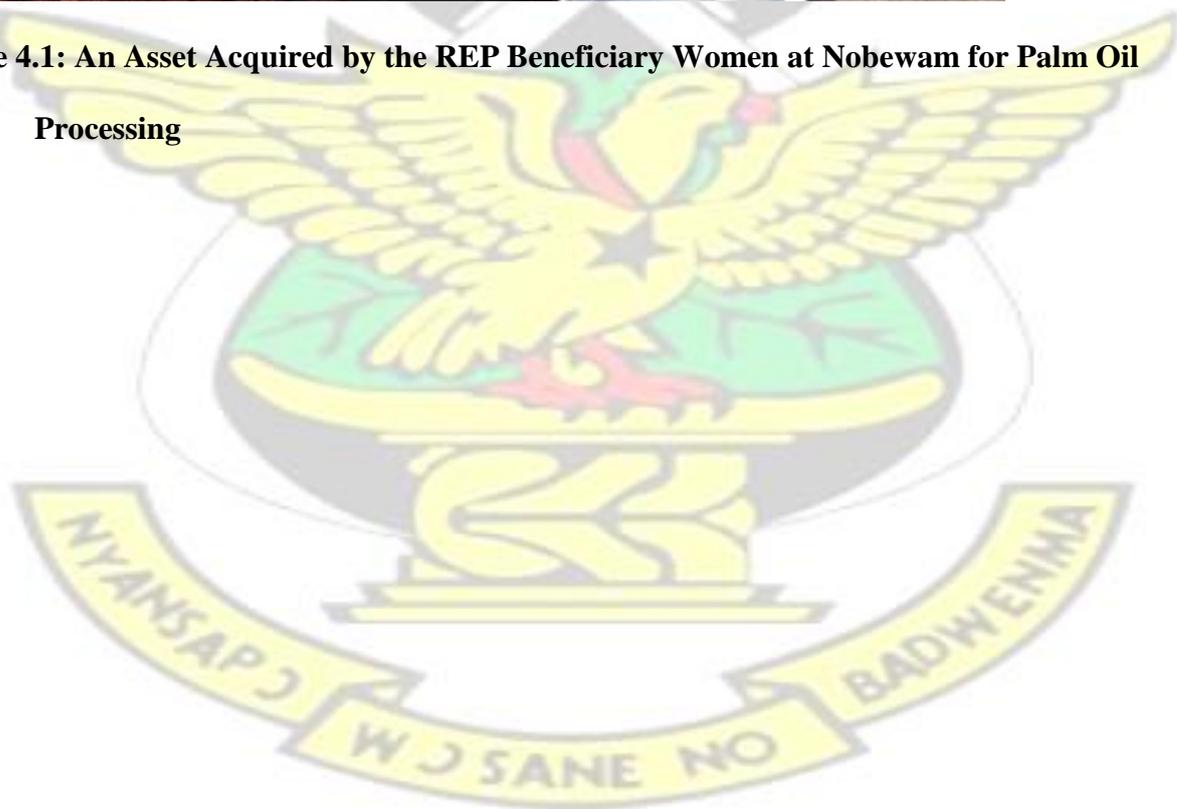




Plate 4.2: A Hydrometer Acquired for Soap Making at Korase

4.4.2 The REP and Livelihood Strategies of Beneficiaries

Results from the study confirm the proposition that, implementation of the REP strengthens women's asset acquisition potentials and capabilities for livelihood diversification. This is because, following the introduction of the REP intervention in the four villages studied, majority of the beneficiaries have been able not only to improve their assets but more so diversified their livelihood strategies and income sources compared to women who are not benefitting from the intervention. This is much pronounced particularly in the case of soap making, cassava processing, and palm oil manufacturing technologies introduced through the REP technology transfer programme to the study communities. It was found from this study that, the support systems built through the various REP training packages for the women have promoted collective asset acquisitions and the development of the small scale manufacturing sector particularly in the areas of soap making and cassava processing as auxiliary livelihood activities, whereas palm oil manufacturing has replaced farming for some beneficiaries as the main

livelihood activity. Generally it was observed that, the gradual diversification of livelihood strategies in the rural setting has been possible with the enhanced asset-base of most of the beneficiaries. These findings support the opinion of Ellis (1999) that, diversification affords rural households the opportunity to put resources into productive use.

The results of the REP technology transfer and training programmes on the main and auxiliary livelihood activities of women in the study communities have been graphically represented in Figures 4.4; 4.5 and 4.6.

Figure 4.4 shows a graphical view of the main livelihood activities of the respondents in the four communities studied and the aggregation of both REP beneficiary and non-beneficiary respondents engaged in each of the livelihood activity. From the results shown in Figure 4.4, the most dominant primary (main) livelihood activity in the four communities taken together is petty trading accounting for about 42 percent of the respondents involved in that sector.

This sector is closely followed by farming as the primary (main) livelihood activity and accounts for about 35 percent of the total number of respondents. The implication is that, about 77 percent of the respondents engage in petty trading and farming as their basic livelihood activities. It should be emphasized that, unlike other rural areas in Ghana where farming occurs as the most dominant livelihood activity, petty trading occurs as the predominant livelihood activity for most respondents in the study area. These results support recent studies by Grewal et al. (2012) as well as Suryahadi and Hadiwidjaja (2011) in Indonesia which showed that agriculture may not always be the major employer of unskilled workers as the service sector such as domestic and cleaning services in the tourism industry and petty trading also play a crucial role in unskilled labour employment.

The reasons explaining the dominance of petty trading are the frequent market days organized at the adjoining towns and also the closeness of the study communities to several urban centres

such as Kumasi, Ejisu and Konongo where the service sector in general and trading in particular has picked pace over farming and manufacturing.

In addition to trading and farming, palm oil manufacturing and food vending (which involve value addition) serve as the main livelihood activity for eight percent and seven percent of the respondents; whereas cassava processing, artisanal activities, and other forms of activities serve as the main livelihood strategies for about 3 per cent each of the total number of respondents (refer to Figure 4.4).

In Figure 4.5 however, distinction is drawn between the percentage of REP beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries engaged in the various livelihood activities common in the study areas. It is observed from the results shown in Figure 4.5 that, petty trading and farming employ significant numbers of both REP beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. However, the manufacturing sector is gradually seeing a boost following the REP technology transfer and managerial training initiatives in the four communities. As shown in Figure 4.5, palm oil extraction has become the main livelihood activity for about 17 per cent of REP beneficiaries. This case is particularly significant amongst the inhabitants of Nobewam where almost all the REP beneficiaries after the technology transfer and managerial training have replaced farming as their main livelihood activity with palm oil extraction. Significantly too, in figure 4.6, the results further reveal that, in addition to their main livelihood activities, about 85 percent of the REP beneficiaries have auxiliary livelihood activities compared to only 33 percent of non-beneficiaries (refer to Figure 4.6). Also the results show that, whereas 35 per cent and 16 per cent of beneficiaries engage in soap making and cassava processing as auxiliary activities respectively, the relatively few REP non-beneficiaries with auxiliary livelihood activities are into farming and trading.

Further, it was observed that few of the REP non-beneficiaries have acquired the palm oil extraction and cassava processing technologies from REP beneficiaries to establish both main and auxiliary livelihood activities (refer to Figures 4.5 and 4.6).

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Main livelihood strategies of Beneficiary and Non Beneficiary Respondents in the study communities

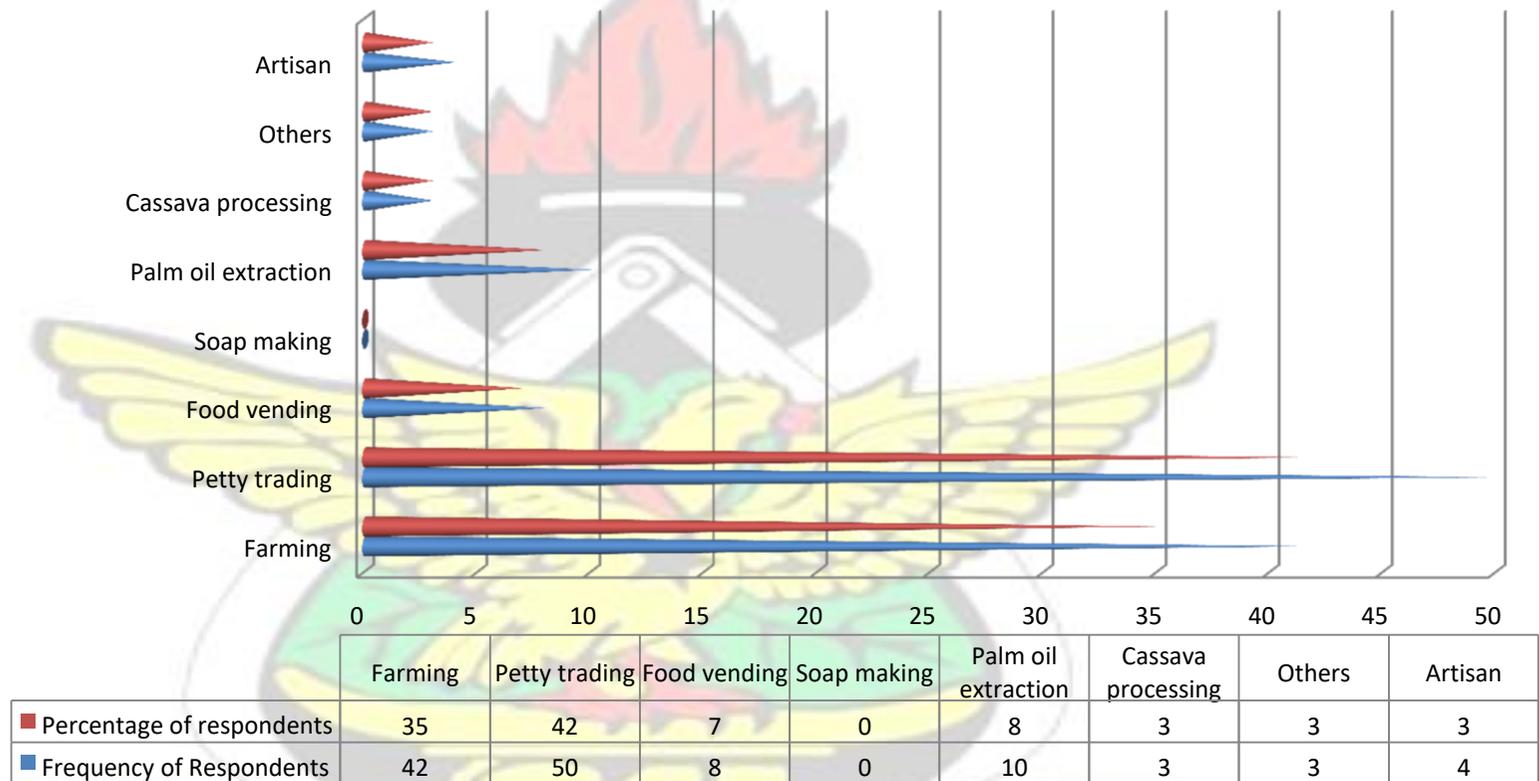


Figure 4.4: Main Livelihood Activities of the Respondents in the Four Study Communities
 Source: Field Data (2015)

Categorization of Main Livelihood strategies of REP beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries

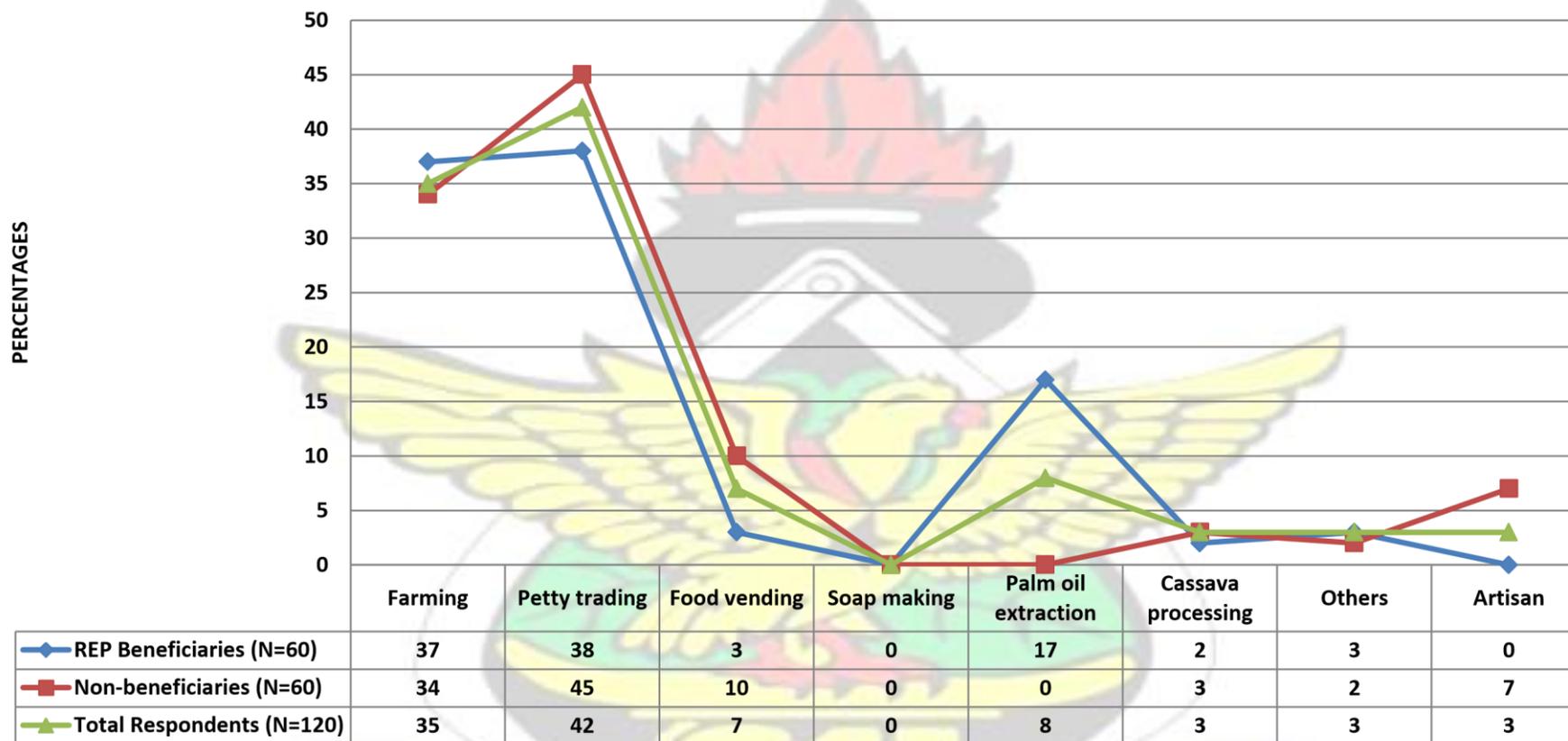


Figure 4.5: Main Livelihood Activities for REP Beneficiaries and Non-beneficiaries in the Four Study Communities

Source: Field Data (2015)

Percentages of REP Beneficiary and Non-beneficiary Women Engaged in Auxiliary livelihood activities in the Study Areas

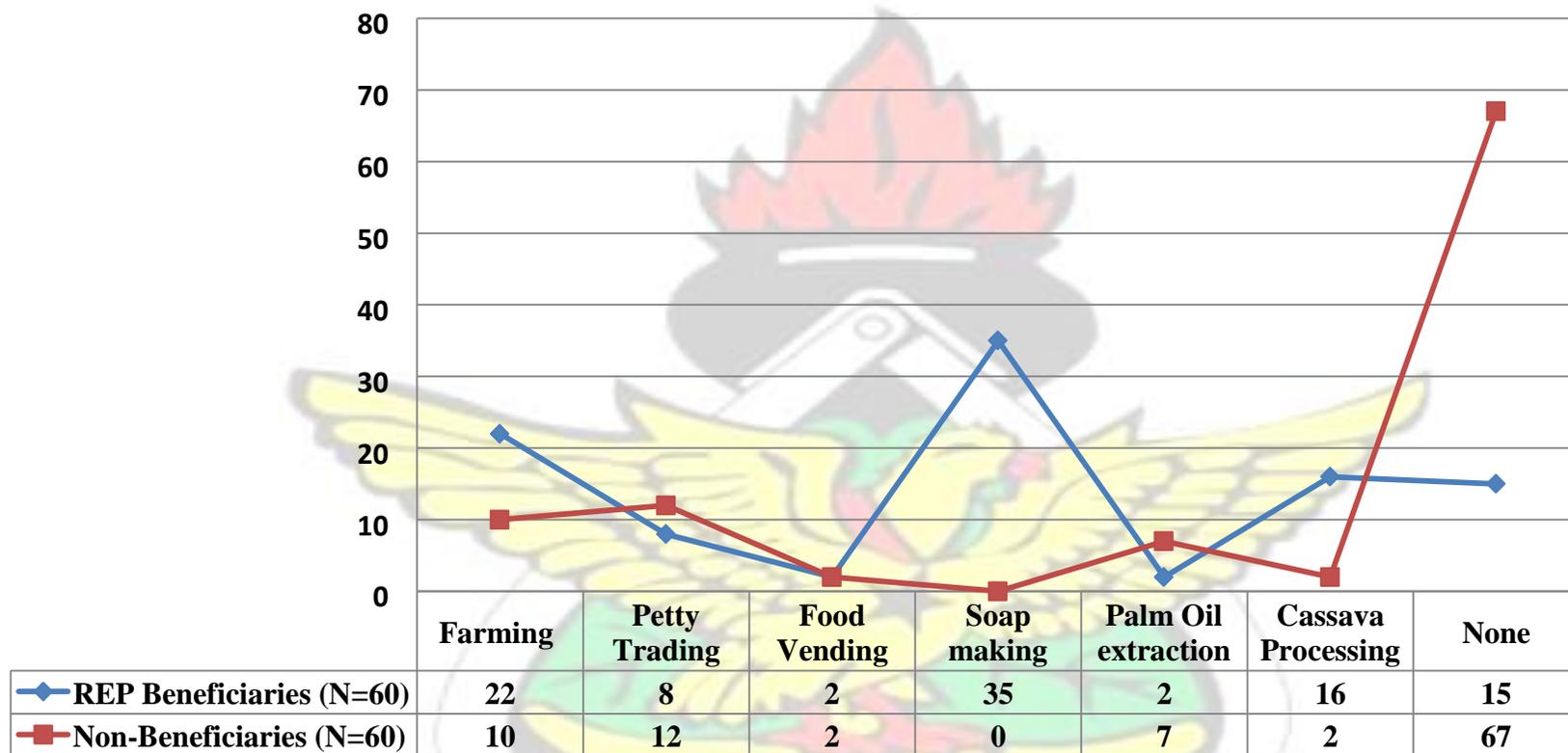


Figure 4.6: Auxiliary Livelihood Activities for REP Beneficiaries and Non-beneficiaries in the Four Study Communities

Source: Field Data (2015)

From the results shown in Figures 4.5 and 4.6, it could be argued that, the REP intervention remains an important vehicle for promoting rural industrialization, income diversification and improving livelihood options for the rural inhabitants. Also it could be argued based on the data that, when the livelihood activities established from the REP interventions are sustained, they are likely to promote technology transfer from beneficiaries to non-beneficiaries within the rural setting, and also transform the rural economy from purely raw material producing environment into an economy in which the inhabitants prioritize value addition through manufacturing



Plate 4.3: Some REP Beneficiary Women at Nobewam Involved in Palm Oil Processing

Source: Field Data (2015)

4.5 THE REP, LIVELIHOOD OUTCOMES AND POVERTY REDUCTION

The view that the dominance of subsistence farming and petty trading in rural areas has a direct effect on poverty situation of households is a well-known one. Having ascertained that REP beneficiaries have the capacity to diversify their livelihood sources compared with nonbeneficiaries it was necessary to examine whether the changes occurring in access to

livelihood assets and strategies impact positively on their livelihood outcomes in terms of household income, access to basic needs, well-being and general quality of life.

First, as regards the quality of life of beneficiaries, it was realized that, there has been significant improvement in the income levels and women's access to basic needs following the implementation of the REP in the study area. The results summarized in Figure 4.7 show that, majority of the beneficiaries 55 per cent, 60 percent, 56 percent, 70 percent and 55 percent respectively have seen improvements in their monthly income, productivity, general well-being, self-satisfaction and community recognition since the inception of the programme in the Municipality in 2012. Whereas four(4) percent of the beneficiaries reported of worsened situation in relation to their general well-being and self-satisfaction; a relatively fewer number of REP beneficiaries are yet to experience improvement in their socioeconomic outcomes.

Data from focus group discussions reveal some reasons accounting for improvements in the socio-economic conditions of most beneficiaries. In a Focus Group Discussion with REP beneficiaries of palm oil extraction at Nobewam on 11th June, 2015, a respondent commented that,

'We were finding it difficult extracting palm oil with ease and less energy, but now the skills and training we received from REP has increased our capacity to improve on our palm oil productivity effortlessly. We also sell more now which has improved our income and many of us now contribute financially to our associations and family well-being which give us joy now compared to four years ago'.

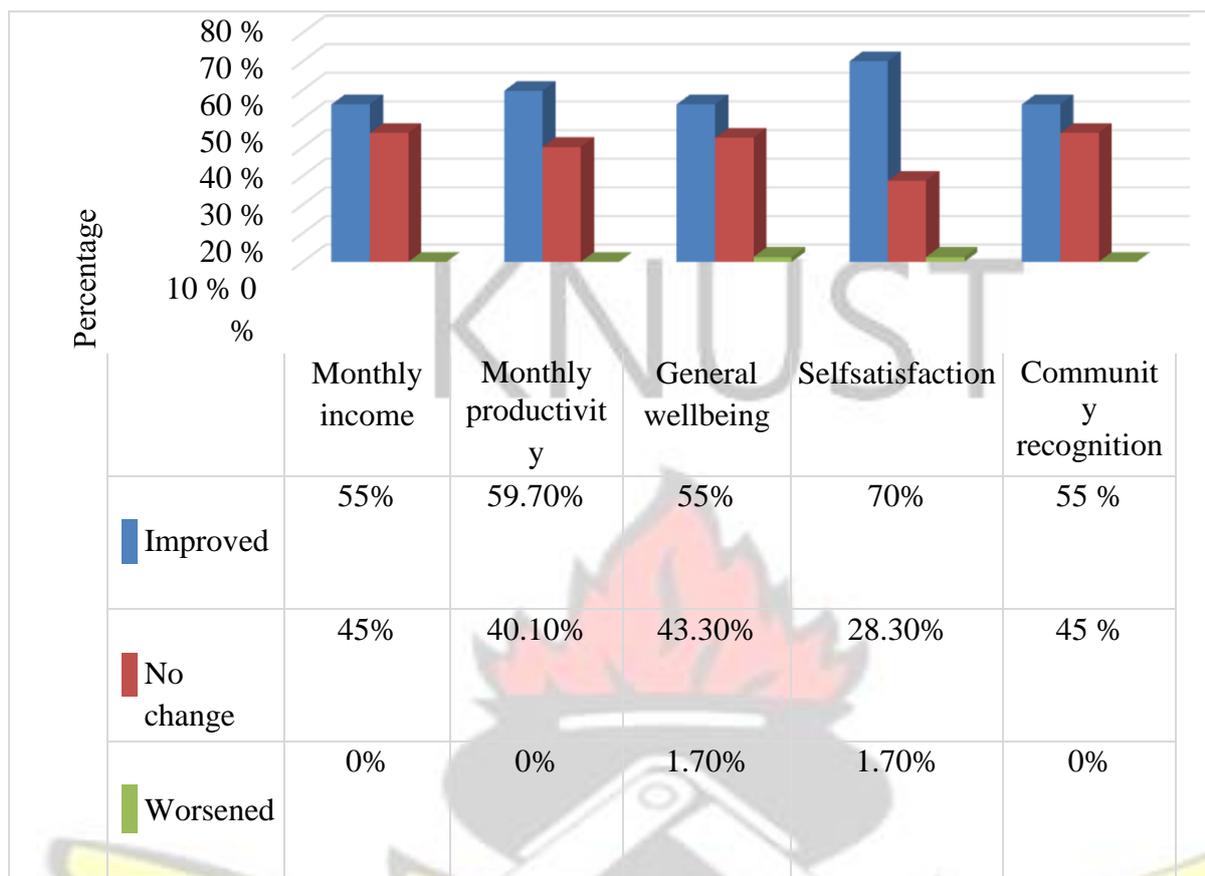


Figure 4.7: REP Beneficiaries Socio-Economic Conditions Outcome

Source: Field Data (2015)

The implications from the results in Figure 4.7 are that, with improved access to appropriate productive assets, women may be able to engage in diverse livelihood activities that create opportunities for reducing vulnerability to poverty and improving socio-economic well-being.

This argument converges with the findings by Rakodi (2002) that, the availability and utilization of livelihood assets productively influence how individuals, families, and groups achieve positive livelihood outcomes. However, access to these assets can be significantly affected by institutional structures and economic processes. Furthermore, observations by Ellis (1999) that, social support mechanisms such as membership of local level associations play a crucial role in ensuring survival in times of difficulties is supported by this study.

The role of such ties in giving the economically disadvantaged access to productive resources pays tribute to the importance of social capital in fighting poverty. This study establishes that,

the REP livelihood interventions have positively affected beneficiaries' income levels with implications for community recognition, social networks and general well-being. Findings from this study also agree with the works of Barrett et al. (2001) who opine that, income from non-farm activities acts as important safety net for poor rural households caught in the web of seasonal variations in on-farm income and productivity.

Moreover the REP intervention was found to have impacted positively the income levels of beneficiaries. As shown in Figure 4.8, most REP beneficiaries have seen improvement in their income levels. For example, there has been a significant reduction in the number of people earning very low monthly income (i.e. earning averagely below GH¢ 200, or not having any monthly earning at all) prior to the adoption of the REP. Also, beneficiaries who earn averagely GH¢300 and GH¢500 a month have their numbers increased from 2 per cent to 23 per cent and 3 per cent to 5 per cent respectively. The data in Tables 4.3 and 4.4 further indicate that, REP beneficiaries enjoyed a significant improvement in their mean monthly income compared to non-beneficiaries and this is shown by the P- value of 0.004 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. The T-test on the mean difference of respondents' average income earned before and after accessing REP interventions showed that, REP beneficiaries had improved earnings of monthly income. It must be noted that there was not a significant difference in the average monthly earnings of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries before the inception of REP in the study area. The results are summarized in Figure 4.8, and Tables 4.3 and 4.4.

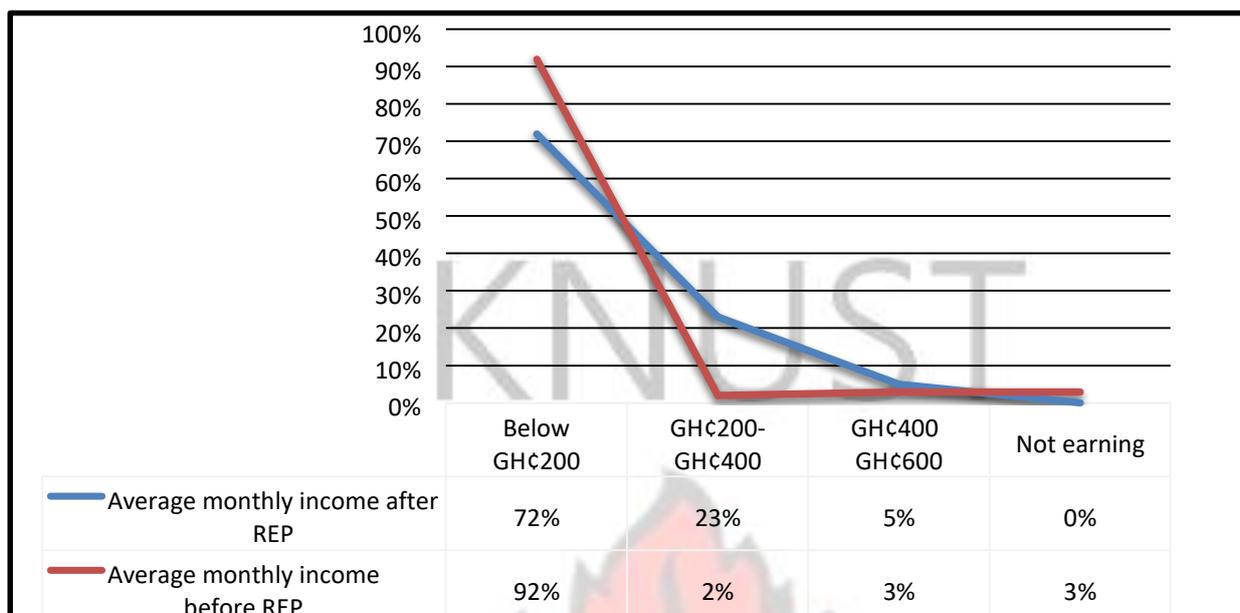


Figure 4.8 Average monthly Earnings of REP Beneficiaries

Source: Field Data (2015)

Table 4.3: Comparison of Means for Average Monthly Income Earnings of REP beneficiaries and Non-beneficiaries

Variable	Respondents category	Frequency	Mean income earned	Std. Deviation
Average Monthly Income Earned after REP	Beneficiary	60	1.33	0.44
	Non-beneficiary	60	1.1	0.572
	Total	120	2.43	1.012
Average Monthly Income Earned before REP	Beneficiary	60	1.25	0.711
	Non-beneficiary	60	1.18	0.968
	Total	120	2.43	1.679

Source: Field Data (2015)

Table 4.4: Independent Sample test of means for Average Monthly Income Earned with Equal Variance Assumed

Variable	t-ratio	Degree of freedom	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference
Income Earnings after REP	2.504	118	0.004	0.233
	2.504	110.628	0.004	0.233
Income Earnings before REP	0.389	118	0.698	0.067
	0.389	117.575	0.698	0.067

Source: Field Data (2015)

Generally, this evidence-based study supports the viability of the REP intervention in terms of its potentials for socio-economic livelihood diversification and poverty reduction in the rural communities chosen for the study. The findings justify the propositions that; implementation of the REP strengthens women's assets acquisition potentials and capabilities for livelihood diversification; and also socio-economic empowerment of women engenders improved households' well-being and quality of life. This is supported by one of the community leaders at Korase when he pointed out that,

'The REP intervention has created opportunity for some women in my community who were hitherto jobless to acquire entrepreneurial skills and resources that were very difficult to obtain. At first I could see children roaming about in these communities every day. But now these women make sure their children are in school so they can also start their soap making business. The REP has improved the quality of life of the beneficiaries, but government needs to do more for them'.

This assertion confirms the positive effects of the REP. Furthermore this concurs with the findings of Ayerakwa (2012) in his study in the Asuogyaman District when it became evident that, the REP has significantly improved the standards of living of people who hitherto were neck deep in poverty. It could therefore be concluded from the forgoing discussion that, using income, access to education, productivity, self-satisfaction and employment as indicators of desirable livelihood outcomes and standard of living, the results confirm a potentially positive impact of the REP on rural households' quality of life particularly amongst women. However, the number of beneficiaries who continue to experience very low socio-economic conditions as shown in Figure 4.7 is very significant (about 72 percent).

This situation is due among other things to the observed implementation challenges that undermine the extensive impact that the REP could make within the rural setting. These are examined in the next section.

4.6 IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES OF THE REP IN THE EJISU-JUABEN MUNICIPALITY

Generally, this study supports the REP intervention in terms of its potentials for socioeconomic livelihood diversification and poverty reduction in the rural communities chosen for the study. Nonetheless, some implementation and institutional challenges were observed that require immediate attention. These include level of awareness of the REP intervention amongst target rural communities in the Municipality; accountability, records keeping and financial misapplication associated with group management; neglect of the service sector, and under-resourced REP Municipal Coordinating office.

4.6.1 Awareness and Low levels of Community Participation in the REP Intervention

One key implementation challenge that undermines massive participation of the inhabitants in the REP technology and skills transfer in the communities studied is the level of awareness. Even though awareness is a major driver of change and influences adoption of new skill and technology as emphasized by previous studies, in the case of the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality, the introduction of the REP technology and skills transfer has not been accompanied with extensive awareness creation, thereby affecting the level of participation of local people in the programme.

(Fazio et al 2013). indicate that, education and awareness of technology is the most frequently cited remedy for the adoption of improved technology. Hence, for a person to adopt an innovation, he or she must first become aware of the practice, obtain information on the cost, how to implement it, and also understand any potential benefits and/or drawbacks of adopting

the technology. The implication is that, rural people's awareness of an innovation together with cost and benefit factors is a motivating factor of change from tradition-oriented less productive techniques in rural settings. This is in consonance with the view that access to information (awareness of new technology) is a key factor leading to the adoption of new technology.

With the REP interventions in all the four communities, it was observed that, the number of beneficiaries averaged about five percent which is significantly low. In a focus group discussion with non-beneficiaries of the intervention at Apromoase, it was emphasized that, majority of women in the community have not adopted the REP technology and management training because they were not aware of its introduction in the community.



Plate 4.4: A Focus Group Discussion on Some Challenges at Korase

Apart from Korase where majority of the respondents including non-beneficiaries of the intervention demonstrated awareness of the REP technology and skill transfer, in the rest of the

three study communities, low awareness rate was recorded amongst the non-beneficiary groups. This supports the observation by Ayerakwa (2012) that, the REP's objective of promoting technology and skills transfer which has been identified as a major key to promote livelihood diversification has not been achieved.

Proper education and information obtained about a new technology will clear all doubts and make it more acceptable to many rural inhabitants. This therefore necessitates intensive educational campaigns in rural communities on the REP interventions, objectives and implementation processes.

4.6.2 Beneficiary Group Management Problems

Group formation has become a needful outcome amongst REP beneficiaries due to its associated advantages of collective asset acquisition, product pricing and marketing r. In view of this, the study found beneficiaries working in groups at Korase, Nobewam and Atia. However, records keeping and accountability challenges coupled with pre-adoption stage technology financing is a major challenge affecting the effective management of the REP

Groups in the communities. During a focus group discussion and an interview section at Aromoase, it was found that due to poor reporting, non-existing accountability procedures and sanction mechanisms, the group initiative has not been operational despite its associated benefits.

Also associated with group management and collective asset acquisition is the problem of pre-adoption assets financing. In all the communities studied, it was realized that the REP beneficiary groups do not have all the required equipment and tools to facilitate their production processes. This is because the financial support expected from government and other stakeholders for assets acquisition and the effective implementation of the transferred technology and skills is deferred to the late post-adoption stage of the REP technology.

Thus, beneficiaries only receive financial support for their small-scale enterprises only when they have reached advanced stages of the post-adoption period and have - through their own initiatives - demonstrated the viability of these enterprises. In order to reach the advanced post-adoption stages, the REP beneficiaries often leverage their group networks to contribute financially towards the acquisition of needed assets to start enterprises.

Considering the incidence of poverty in the communities, mobilizing adequate start-up capital after acquiring the technology and skills becomes a major challenge. This situation may also partly explain the low patronage and commitment of the target group in the REP intervention, as many rural inhabitants are unable to mobilize the required resources to begin their enterprises even if they availed themselves for the REP training. This therefore necessitates the provision of financial support, to beneficiaries at the pre-adoption stages.

4.6.3 Under-resourced REP Coordinating Office in the Municipality

One major operational challenge affecting the REP Coordinating Office in the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality is inadequate financial resources to cater for recurrent expenses. In a phone interview with the REP Co-ordinator for the Municipality, it was realized that, even though the main financiers of the programme namely: Central Government of Ghana and the IFAD regularly fulfil their financial obligations by providing the requisite project funds for the implementation of the community projects, the funds expected from the Municipal Assembly for operational expenses such as payment of electricity bills, fuelling of vehicles, and purchasing of stationery for the effective implementation, monitoring and reporting of performances are often delayed and sometimes not disbursed by Municipal Administration.

This situation creates difficulties for the effective implementation of the intervention and regular monitoring and evaluation. In consequence, commitment of the Municipal Assembly to their financial obligation is therefore important for the success of the programme.

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CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the summary of the study and is organized in three main sections. The first section highlights the specific objectives, methods employed and then provides summary of key findings from the study. Section two provides the conclusion drawn from the study and the limitations encountered during the data collection process. The third section highlights recommendations from the study based on the findings.

5.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This study sought to investigate the effects of the Rural Enterprise Programme (REP) on women's livelihood sustainability and poverty reduction. This was necessary because, empirical and evidence-based study is needed to ascertain whether the programme's goals of promoting livelihood diversification and rural poverty alleviation are evident. The objectives of this study were to investigate how women perceive and experience poverty and vulnerability in the selected rural areas; examine how REP interventions have impacted the livelihood assets and strategies of beneficiaries; analyze how the intervention has affected the income and well-being of beneficiaries. In order to achieve these objectives, a case study design was employed with the focus on the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality. The Municipality was chosen as a case because it

is one of the few Municipalities enrolled into the REP phase III due to the low living standards of its rural inhabitants. In addition, the Municipality has become the ideal location for a number of small scale enterprises and medium scale enterprises due to relatively higher rent values in the Kumasi Metropolitan area.

Both primary and secondary sources of data were employed in this study. The primary data were obtained from the REP beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries sampled from the rural communities as well as the REP officials, whereas the secondary sources included journal articles, reports and related documents on livelihoods and poverty linkages.

Four out of six REP post-adoption communities in the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality namely: Apromose, Korase, Atia, Nobewam were selected for data collection. Within these communities, purposive and accidental techniques (non-probability sampling techniques) were predominantly employed to select a sample of 60 beneficiary and 60 non-beneficiary women respectively. In addition, three programme officials and two key informants were also included giving a sample size of 125 for data collection. Data collection techniques used were survey, interviews, focus group discussions and observation. Quantitative data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics whereas qualitative data were transcribed to support the discussion.

Regarding the perceptions and manifestations of poverty, it was found that there are different ways in which rural women perceive and experience poverty. This implies that there is the need for a participatory approach for poverty reduction interventions to be effective in rural communities. Moreover, it became evident that poverty is not simply about inadequate income. Among rural women, community recognition, access to social services, nutrition and housing conditions, poor health conditions also constitute important dimensions of poverty. The findings support the view that poverty is a multidimensional concept with economic, social and even

political perspectives. It was also found that poverty and vulnerability amongst women are caused by a number of factors including laziness, unemployment, poor health conditions, low levels of education and inadequate access to productive assets.

This study further shows that, through REP interventions, majority of beneficiaries have seen significant improvement in skills and technological know-how, social capital and financial capital. Beneficiaries linked improved skills and training to the technology transfer component of the REP which has offered varied training programmes such as soap making, oil palm processing and cassava processing in addition to financial and business management training. In almost all the study communities, beneficiaries have organized themselves into groups with selected executives to create credit-worthy associations. These associations have strengthened women's capacity to acquire loans, engage in group asset procurements and provided a collective voice in product marketing. The associations have also strengthened women's social capital which have subsequently enhanced the acquisition of other assets

It was found that, support systems built through the various REP training packages have promoted collective asset acquisitions and the development of the small scale manufacturing sector particularly in soap making and cassava processing as auxiliary livelihood activities Palm oil extraction on the other hand had gradually assumed the status of main livelihood activity for some beneficiaries. Besides, some beneficiaries have also succeeded in transferring the skills acquired from the REP interventions to other local people, thereby promoting technology diffusion. Implementation of the REP was therefore found to have strengthened women's capabilities for livelihood diversification. Based on self-reported cases, the results show that following the introduction of the REP, the socio-economic status of most beneficiaries has seen improvement, hence contributing to the reduction of poverty. The results thus confirm the observation by Ayerakwa (2012) in his study in the Asuogyaman District where it was found that REP has positive spill over impact on livelihoods and wellbeing of rural households.

Despite this feel good about the REP, the study found that some implementation challenges affect the participation of majority of rural inhabitants. Among these problems are low awareness rate about the REP in the study communities, beneficiary group management problems and under-resourced REP coordinating office in the Municipality

5.3 CONCLUSION

The results from this study give credence to the Social Darwinian theory of poverty which argues that, people are trapped in poverty because they are lazy. However, since only one percent of the respondents indicated laziness as a cause of poverty the key factors that explain why women in the four communities are poor are less attitudinal or behavioural, but more situational. These situations include limited access to resources to engage in productive activities, unemployment, low levels of education and skills ill health and inadequate incomes to access basic needs.

The data justify the proposition that, the implementation of the REP have positive effect on women's asset acquisition, capabilities for livelihood diversification and socio-economic situation.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY

For the Rural Enterprise Programme (REP) to be beneficial to majority of women in the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality, the identified implementation challenges must be addressed. Based on data collected, the following recommendations may help make this objective a reality.

5.4.1 Intensification of Education for the Rural Communities on the REP Intervention:

The REP coordinating office in the Municipality in collaboration with the Assembly and Unit Committee members of the respective localities must intensify education and create awareness about the programme objectives, implementation processes, and training packages.

Community information centres could be valuable platforms to intensify education.

Awareness creation may encourage mass participation in the communities.

5.4.2 Preparation of Management and Implementation Guidelines for REP Group

Management:

One asset created through the REP is the formation of REP Livelihood Associations at community levels. Even though these associations (groups) have been beneficial to members, issues of accountability and responsiveness remain a challenge. In order to ensure downward accountability and responsible leadership, it is recommended that implementation and management guidelines be prepared through dialogue between REP coordinating officers in the Municipality, elected and appointed local representatives, traditional rulers and REP beneficiaries. These guidelines would enable association members and executives to learn and understand their rights and responsibilities as well as sanctions associated with issues such as incompetence, misapplication of funds. The implementation of such guidelines may encouraged efficient REP group management.

5.4.3 Provision of Support to Beneficiaries at the Pre-Adoption Stage:

It was observed from this study that, some beneficiaries' livelihood situations after the REP intervention have still seen no improvement as a result of lack of financial support to obtain the requisite inputs to start enterprises or adopt the needed technology. This is because financial support from the intervention is often granted to beneficiaries who have advanced into the post-adoption stages of the intervention.

This situation therefore subverts efforts to achieve the goals of the REP. It is therefore recommended that, the REP coordinating office with support from the Municipal administration should provide financial support to beneficiaries at the pre-adoption stages.

5.4.4 Commitment of the Municipal administration to the REP implementation: It was also revealed that the REP coordinating office suffers a short fall in funds for the smooth running of the programme. This situation creates difficulties for the REP coordinating office to support the effective implementation of the intervention regular monitoring and evaluation of the programme. Based on this, it is recommended that the Municipal Administration must be fully committed to the implementation of the REP in the beneficiary rural communities by fulfilling its financial obligation.

5.4.5 Empirical study on the differential impact of the REP for men and women: Even though the REP targets women in most cases, a significant number of beneficiaries are men engaged in male dominated ventures. It is therefore recommended that an empirical study be conducted to examine the impacts of the REP on men's socio-economic status. Considering that this study focused on how the REP affects the livelihoods and well-being of women, it would be appropriate to examine the differential effects of the REP interventions for both men and women to appreciate a holistic position of the linkages between the REP and rural livelihoods. Based on this, the differential impact of the REP intervention for both men and women in the Municipality is suggested for further studies.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS AND AGRIBUSINESS

This is an academic research work in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of degree of the Master of Philosophy. The thesis topic is: **Impact of the Rural Enterprise**

Project (REP) on Women's Livelihood Sustainability and Poverty Reduction: A case study of selected communities in the Ejisu-Juaben District of Ghana. I would be very grateful if you could respond to these questions. Any information given would be well appreciated and all information would be treated confidentially.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Background of Respondents

Beneficiary Non-beneficiary

1. Age of Respondent: a. 18-29 b. 30-39 c. 40-49 d. 50-59 e. 60 and above 2.

Educational Level: a. Primary b. JHS/Middle School c. SSS/SHS

d. Tertiary other (specify).....

3. Occupation a. Employed b. Unemployed

4. If employed, What is your main livelihood activity?.....

5. What other livelihood activity (ies) are you engaged in?.....
6. Marital status? a. Married b. Single c. Widowed d. Divorced
7. Size of household? a. 1 b. 2-4 c. 5-7 d. 8-10 e. 10 and above
8. Head of household a. Father b. Mother c. Husband d. My self e. Others specify
9. Bread winner of household a. Father b. Mother c. Husband d. My self e. Others specify...
10. Number of children a. None b. One c. Two d. Three e. Four f. Five g. Others specify.....
11. What is your average monthly income now? a) Below GH¢200 b) GH¢ 200-GH¢ 400 c) GH¢500-GH¢700 d) GH¢800-GH¢1000 e) Above GH¢1000
12. What was your average monthly income 5 years ago? a) Below GH¢200 b) GH¢ 200-GH¢ 400 c) GH¢500-GH¢700 d) GH¢800-GH¢1000 e) Above GH¢1000

Perceptions and Manifestations of Poverty and Vulnerability among Women in the Study Area.

13. Who do you consider a poor person?
1
4. Are there poor people in this community? a. Yes b. No
15. What makes people poor? a. Inadequate income b. In ability to afford three square meals a day c. Unemployment d. Poor health e. others specify.....

16. What makes women poorer?.....

17. How does poverty manifest among women in this community?.....

18. What conditions in this community can push people into poverty?.....

19. On the average, how many women in the community would you consider poor?

a. less than 10% b. 10-20% c. 20-30% d. 30-40% e. 40-50% f. 50-60% g. above 60%

Rural Enterprise Project and Livelihoods

20. Are you aware of REP activities in your community? a. Yes [] b. No []

21. If yes, are you involved with REP? a. Yes [] b. No []

22. If no, why?.....

23. What is your perception about REP interventions to its beneficiaries towards poverty reduction?

a. Positive impact b. Not sure c. No change

Give reason.....

24. How long have you been involved in REP activities? a. less than 2 years b. 2-4 years c. 4-

6 years d. More than 6 years e. others specify.....

25. Which REP component are you benefitting from?.....

26. What was your main livelihood activity before you participated in the REP intervention?

.....

27. How would you rank your main livelihood activity before participating in the REP intervention?

a. Very poor [] b. Poor [] c. Good [] d. Very good []

28. Give reason(s) for your answer.....

29. How would you rank your main livelihood activity after participating in the REP intervention?

a. Very poor [] b. Poor [] c. Good [] d. Very good []

30. How has your participation in the REP intervention affected your livelihood asset-base in the following areas?

Livelihood Assets/Strategies	Improved	No change	Worsened	Reason/Evidence
Financial capital (loans)				
Skills and Experiences				
Physical assets (tools/machines)				
Human capital (employees)				
Social capital (Networks, association)				

31. How has your participation in the REP intervention affected your socio-economic conditions outcome the following areas?

Livelihood outcome	Improved	No change	Worsened	Reason/evidence
Monthly income				
Monthly productivity				
General wellbeing				

Self-satisfaction				
Nutrition				
Health care status				
Child care				
Respect and dignity				
Community recognition				
Quality of life				

32. In what way(s) would you say the REP intervention has impacted on your capacity to sustain your livelihood and skills built?

(1) improved (2) no change (3) worsened

SKILLS/ASSETS	IMPROVED	NO CHANGE	WORSENERD	REMARK
a. Record/Book Keeping				
b. Proper Costing and Pricing				
c. Customer care				
g. Business Assets				
h. Increased Sales				
i. Increased Production				
j. improved packaging				

33. How secured is your livelihood activity, if REP intervention is withdrawn from this community?

a. Highly secured [] b. Secured [] c. Insecured [] d. highly insecured []

Please give reason (s) for your answer.....

34. How have the following socio-economic indicators changed after your participation in the REP? using a 3 point scale 1= Major improvement 2=Slight improvement 3= No improvement

Indicators	Before REP	After REP	Support from REP
Average monthly income			
Average monthly productivity			
Number of employees			
Financial transfers			
Skills and Training			
Health insurance status			
Employment status			
Monthly savings			

35. What assets were you lacking that you now have after your involvement with REP?

.....

36. Please give reason for your answer.....

37. What business needs is not addressed by the REP that you feel should be addressed?

.....

38. What livelihood needs are not addressed by the REP that you feel should be addressed?.....

39. What challenges do you face as a REP beneficiary?

.....

40. In your view, what should be done to improve the REP?.....

41. How has the REP reduced poverty among women in your locality?.....

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THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR REP

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS AND AGRIBUSINESS

This is an academic research work in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of degree of the Master of Philosophy. The thesis topic is: **Impact of the Rural Enterprise**

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Date of Interview.....

1.Position of respondent.....

2. Since when have you operated in this municipality?.....

3. Who are the main contributors to the implementation of REP II at the Municipal level...?
.....

4. What are the key strategies used by the Rural Enterprises Project in Developing Micro and Small Scale Enterprises?
.....

5. How do you determine BACs activities at the Municipal level?.....

6. How does the project ensure that its activities reach the marginalized (women) in society?.....

7. What role does the Municipal Assembly play in the implementation of REP II?.....
.....

8. Has the staff of the BAC received any training (capacity building) from the REP II? a.Yes []
b. No []. If yes, what are these programmes?
.....

9. What components of REP are being implemented in the

Municipality?.....
.....

10. What are the challenges faced by the REP at the Municipal level?.....
.....

11. How does the project address these challenges?.....

12. How is the project related to the Ministry of Trade and Industry?.....
.....

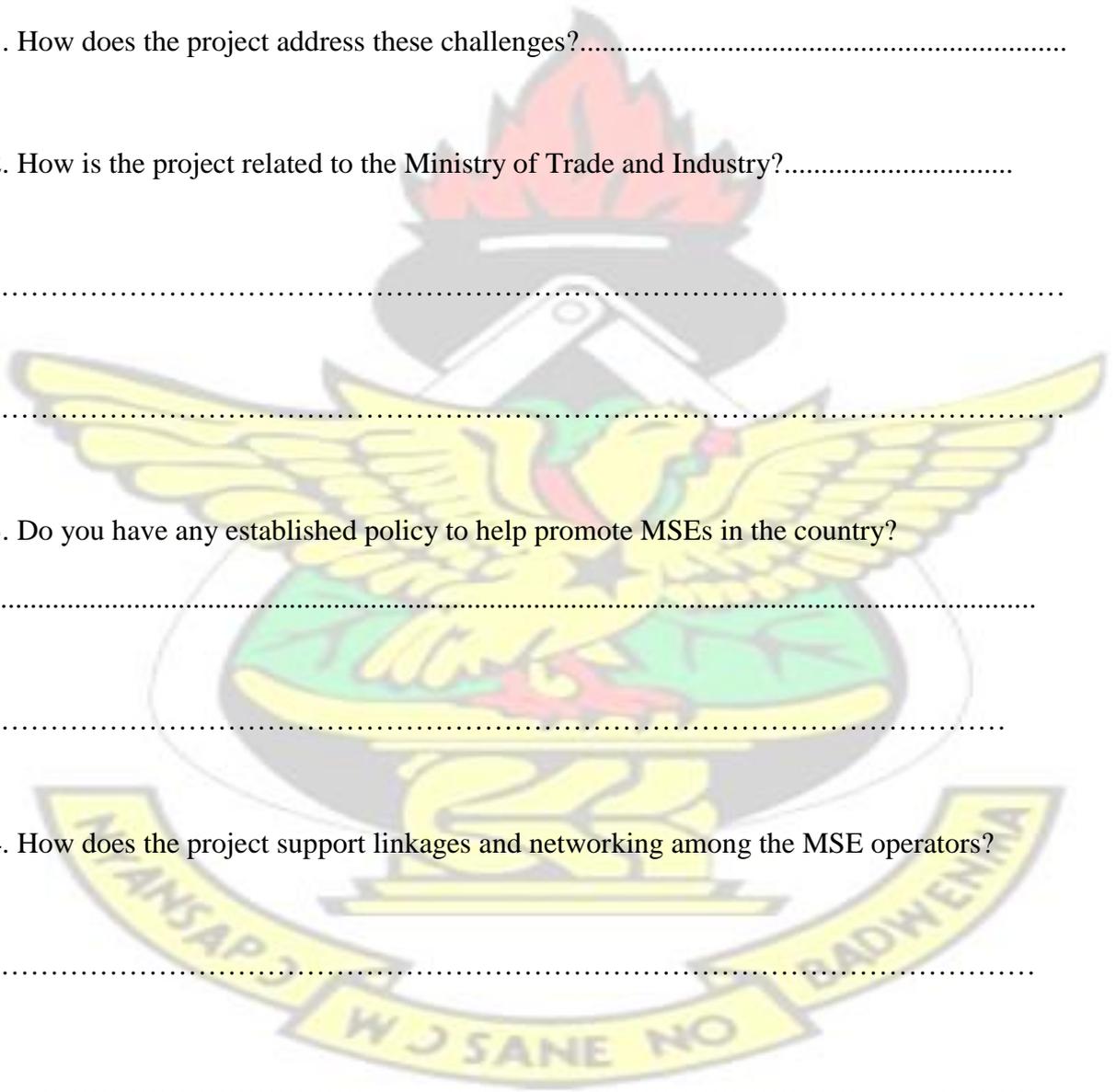
13. Do you have any established policy to help promote MSEs in the country?
.....
.....

14. How does the project support linkages and networking among the MSE operators?
.....
.....

15. Is REP II collaborating with any development organization? a. Yes [] b. No []

b. If yes what are these organizations and in what way?.....

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16. How does the programme contribute to poverty reduction in rural Ghana?

.....

17. What measures have been put in place to sustain project activities after the exit of the REPII?.....

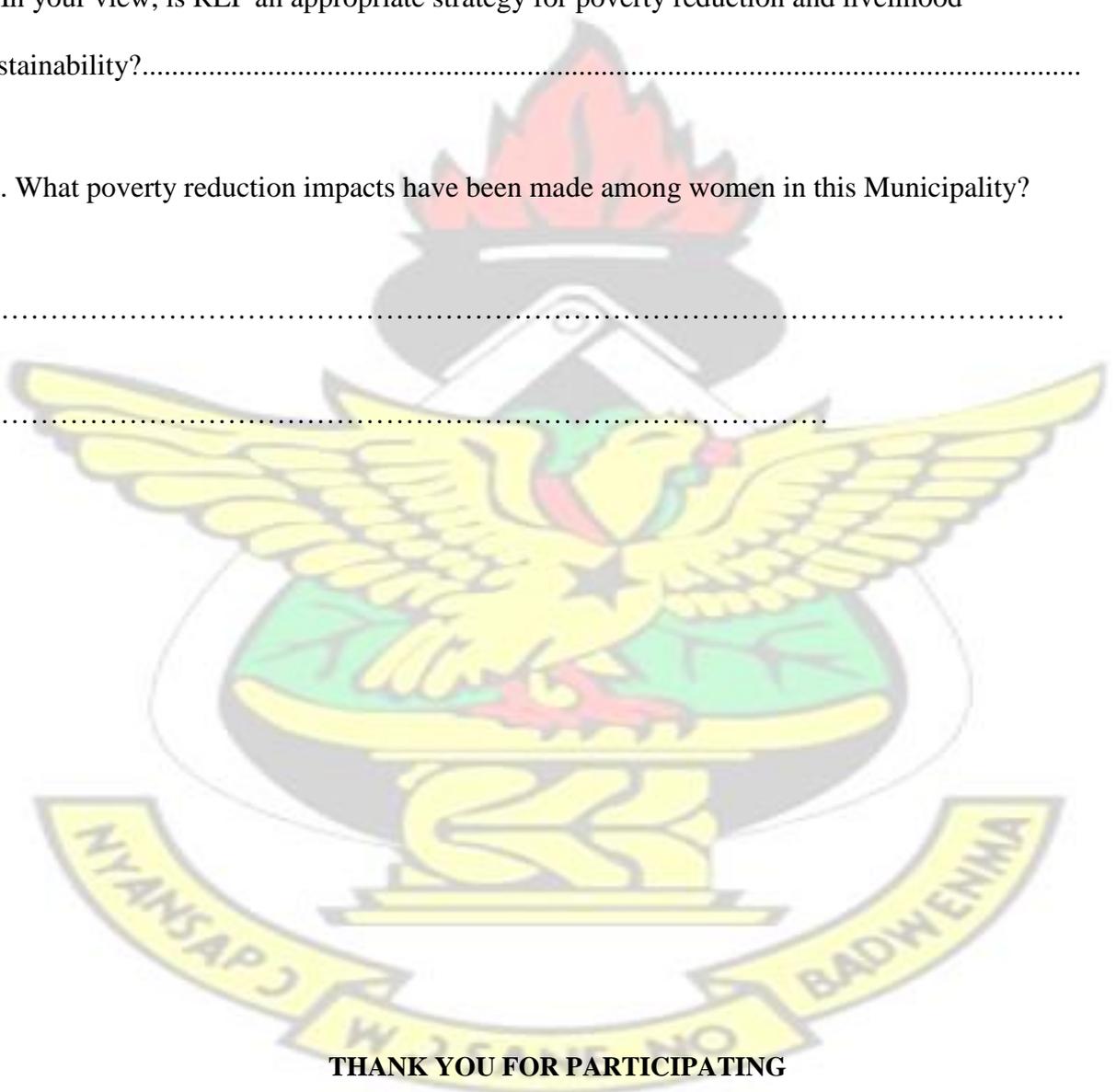
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8. In your view, is REP an appropriate strategy for poverty reduction and livelihood sustainability?.....

19. What poverty reduction impacts have been made among women in this Municipality?

.....

.....



THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING