

**POVERTY ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES OF DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES: A CASE
STUDY OF THE SEKYERE EAST DISTRICT ASSEMBLY IN THE ASHANTI REGION**

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the M.A and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degrees of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents; Shiekh Abdul Mumin Mohammed and Aunt Rebecca Ankrah and all the Abdul Mumin's Family of Asokore Zongo.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Title Page.....	i
Declaration.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Tables.....	xi
List of Figures.....	xii
List of Plates.....	xiii
Abstract.....	xiv

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Statement of Problem.....	6
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	8
1.4 Justification and Significance of the Survey	8
1.5 Limitations.....	9
1.6 Organisation of the study.....	10

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 History and Definitions of Poverty.....	11
2.3 The Concepts and Measurements of Poverty.....	16
2.3.1 Absolute Poverty.....	16

2.3.2 Relative Poverty	16
2.3.3 Measurements of Poverty	18
2.4 Decentralisation	20
2.4.1 Objectives of Decentralisation	21
2.4.2 Decentralisation and Poverty Alleviation.....	22
2.5 Poverty Alleviation Strategies.....	24

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STUDY AREA

3.1 Data Collection.....	28
3.1.1 Sources of Data.....	28
3.1.2 Methods of Data Collection.....	28
3.1.3 Sampling Technique.....	29
3.1.4 Data Analysis	31
3.2 Hypotheses.....	31
3.3 Profile of Study Area.....	32
3.3.1 Climate and Vegetation.....	37
3.3.2 Relief and Drainage.....	39
3.3.3 Soils and Agricultural Land Use.....	40
3.4 Demographic Characteristics.....	41
3.5 Social Services.....	43
3.5.1 Education.....	43
3.5.2 Health Facilities.....	45
3.6 Economic Activities.....	47
3.7 Administrative Set Up of the District.....	48
3.7.1 The District Assembly.....	48

3.7.2 The Committee System.....	48
3.7.3 Departments.....	49
3.7.4 Sub-Districts Structures.....	50
3.7.5 Traditional Set Up.....	51
3.8 Poverty Profile and Mapping in the District.....	52

CHAPTER FOUR: POVERTY ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES OF DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES

4.1 Introduction.....	55
4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.....	55
4.1.2 Age of Respondents.....	56
4.1.3 Occupational Distribution of Respondents.....	56
4.1.4 Perception of Poverty by the Educated People.....	56
4.1.5 The Rural Poor's Perception of Poverty.....	57
4.1.6 Causes of Poverty in the District.....	58
4.2 Poverty Alleviation Strategies of the Sekyere East District Assembly.....	59
4.2.1 Provision of Social Amenities and Infrastructural Development.....	60
4.2.2 Scholarship Scheme for the needy but Brilliant students.....	64
4.2.3 Micro-credit Financing.....	65
4.2.4 Assistance to the Physically Challenged.....	67
4.2.5 Water and Sanitation.....	69
4.2.6 Agricultural Activities.....	70
4.2.7 Assistance to Farmers.....	71
4.2.8 The National Youth Employment Programme.....	72
4.3 Sources of Funding for the Assembly's Poverty Alleviation Programmes	75

4.4 Assessment of Performance of the District Assembly.....	76
4.5 Agents of Poverty Alleviation	76
4.6 Current State of Poverty in the District.....	78
4.7 Participation of Local People in Decision Making.....	79
4.7.1 Level of Involvement of the Rural Poor in Decision Making.....	80
4.8 Challenges encountered by the District Assembly.....	81
4.9 Awareness of activities of the District Assembly.....	84

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction.....	87
5.1.1 Summary of Findings.....	87
5.1.2 Perception of Poverty by the Educated People and the Rural Poor.....	88
5.1.3 Poverty Alleviation Programmes of the District Assembly.....	89
5.1.4 Non-Governmental Organisations in the District.....	89
5.1.5 Challenges faced by the Assembly.....	90
5.2 Conclusions.....	91
5.3 Recommendations.....	93
5.3.1 Capacity Building by NGOs.....	93
5.3.2 The District Assembly.....	94
5.3.3 Sensitization Programmes by Opinion Leaders and Community Members.....	94
5.3.4 Action against Loan Defaulters.....	95
5.3.5 Improving Agriculture.....	95

REFERENCES.....	97
APPENDICES.....	101
APPENDIX 1.....	101
APPENDIX 2.....	101
APPENDIX 3.....	101
APPENDIX 4.....	102
APPENDIX 5.....	103
APPENDIX 6.....	104
APPENDIX 7.....	104
APPENDIX 8.....	105
APPENDIX 9.....	107
APPENDIX 10.....	107
APPENDIX 11.....	108
APPENDIX 12.....	108
APPENDIX 13.....	109
APPENDIX 14.....	109
APPENDIX 15.....	109
APPENDIX 16.....	110
APPENDIX 17.....	110
APPENDIX 18.....	111
APPENDIX 19.....	111
APPENDIX 20.....	112
APPENDIX 21.....	113
APPENDIX 22.....	114

APPENDIX 23.....	118
APPENDIX 24.....	119

KNUST



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
3.1: Agricultural Land Use in the District.....	40
3.2: Population Densities for the District, Regional and National.....	41
3.3: Age Structure of Population	42
3.4: Health Facilities in the District.....	45
3.5: Average Income in the District.....	53

KNUST



LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
3.1: Study Area in National Context.....	33
3.2: District Map of Ashanti Region locating Sekyere East District.....	34
3.3: District Map of Sekyere East.....	35
4.1 The Current state of Poverty in the District.....	79

KNUST



LIST OF PLATES

Plate	Page
1: Six Apartment Teachers Accommodation at Dagomba	61
2: Children at Seniagya formally attended School under a Tree.....	62
3: Seniagya School now has a building with a library, stores and offices.....	62
4: Some Wheel Chair donated by the Assembly together with World Vision.....	69
5. A Mechanized borehole at Akokoaso.....	70
6: Six Apartment Teachers' Accommodation at Seniagya by World Vision.....	77

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ABSTRACT

Poverty has become a major global challenge. The 2007 Human Development Report (HDR) from the United Nations Development Programme has noted that, ‘there are still around one billion people living at the margins of survival on less than US\$1 a day with 2.6 billion people living on less than US\$2 a day’ around the globe. These increasing trends in poverty around the world require the implementation of policies and programmes to alleviate poverty and improve the living standards of the poor. The issue of poverty alleviation is central to the decentralisation programme. One of the objectives of the decentralisation programme is to ensure that people living in the rural areas have access to basic services and infrastructure. A number of poverty alleviation strategies were introduced in Ghana since the 1990s and various policies and programmes have been implemented towards poverty alleviation by District Assemblies with the promulgation of PNDC Law 207. The Sekyere East District is one of the poorest Districts in the country with a high rate of unemployment. This is an indication that measures should be put in place to check poverty level in the District. The objective of this study was to assess the various poverty alleviation strategies of the Sekyere East District Assembly in a community-based sample of 200 respondents who were randomly selected from five communities in the district. Questionnaires were administered to respondents and interviews were also conducted where necessary for data collection. The data gathered from the field was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for windows. Evidences from the study have established the commitment of the District Assembly to provide the rural poor with social amenities and infrastructure, assist farmers with farming inputs and credit facilities, employ more people under the youth employment programme among others. However, this notwithstanding, it was found out that poverty in the District is still high. This requires the Assembly to channel a lot of its resources to enhance and improve the livelihoods of the poor in the District.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is important to recognise that poverty defies precise definition. A general view held in most perceptions of poverty remains the notion of 'lack of' or 'deficiency'. But beyond that, there is hardly any unanimity as to what constitutes poverty (Kyei, 1999). Poverty is deprivation of those things that determine the quality of life, including food, clothing, shelter and safe drinking water, but also, such "intangibles" as the opportunity to learn and to enjoy the respect of fellow citizens (World Bank, 2007).

In the major study of global poverty, the 2007 Human Development Report (HDR) from the United Nations Development Program notes that, " There are still around one billion people living at the margins of survival on less than US\$1 a day, with 2.6 billion (40% of the World's population) living on less than US\$2 a day". For much of the 1990s and early 2000s, it was understood that roughly half of humanity had been living on about US\$2 a day (Shah, 2008). The previous link to a Bretton Woods Project article that, "preliminary recalculation of global economic output excluding differences in domestic prices and currencies, released by the World Bank in December 2007, may undermine the much-trumpeted claims that globalisation has reduced the number of people living in extreme poverty" (Shah, 2008).

More than a billion people still live on less than US\$1 a day (World Bank, 2001). The majority of the world's poor people are women and children. Most of these reside in rural areas (Shah, 2008). More than 110 million children of school age do not attend school (Shah, 2008). Easily preventable diseases (pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria and

measles) account for the death of nearly eleven million children under the age of five each year. Between 600 million and 700 million children (about 40% of all those in the developing world) are poor (World Bank, 2001). Around the world, 27000 – 30000 children die every day and this is equivalent to 1 child dying every 3 seconds and 20 children dying every minute (World Bank, 2001). The silent killers are poverty, easily preventable diseases and other related causes (Shah, 2007). People are hungry not because of lack of food, or over population, but because they are too poor to afford food (Shah, 2007). Politics and economic conditions have led to poverty and dependency around the world (Shah, 2007). Addressing world hunger, therefore, implies addressing world poverty as well. If food production is further increased and provided to more people while the underlying causes of poverty are not addressed, hunger will still continue because people will not be able to purchase food (Shah, 2008).

The World Bank defines extreme poverty as living on less than US\$1 a day, and moderate poverty as less than US\$2 a day; they estimated that ' in 2001, 1.1 billion people had consumption levels below US\$1 a day and 2.7 billion lived on less than US\$2 a day (Chen and Ravallion, 2007). The proportion of the developing world's population living in extreme economic poverty fell from 28% in 1990 to 21% in 2001(Chen and Ravallion. 2007). However, much of this improvement has occurred in East and South Asia. In East Asia, the World Bank reports that 'the poverty headcount rate at the US\$2 a day level is estimated to have fallen to about 27% down from 29.5% in 2006 and 69% in 1990' (World Bank, 2007). However, other regions have seen little change. In the early 1990s the transitional economies of Eastern Europe and Central Asia experienced a sharp drop in income. Poverty rates rose to 6% at the end of the decade before beginning to recede (Chen and Ravallion, 2007).

Tackling global poverty therefore demands a multi-pronged approach. Manifestations and dimensions of poverty are many and initiatives must address interwoven but distinct issues such as children's rights, women's right, epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, access to clean water and sanitation, and preservation of natural resources (Shah, 2008).

In Africa, the incidence of poverty is very great. Almost half of Africa's population is deemed to live in absolute poverty and most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa suffer extreme poverty and hunger (World Bank, 2007). The life expectancy in some parts of Africa is reducing by almost twenty years as a result of the spread of AIDS. In Sub-Saharan Africa, life expectancy stood at forty years, more than two decades lower than the East-Asia (Sachs et al., 2005). Gross Domestic Product (GDP per capital) shrank by 14% and extreme poverty increased from 41% in 1981 to 46% in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2004, increasing the number of people living in poverty from 231million to 318 million (World Bank, 2007).

In Ghana, the 2000 Population and Housing Census suggests that there are approximately 18.4 million people (Dake, 2003). Out of this the population defined as poor are 8, million that is, citizens who cannot afford both nutritional requirements and essential non-food needs (Dake, 2003). The Late Kwadwo Baah Wiredu, (the then Minister of Finance and Economic Planning) gave an overview of poverty trends in Ghana. He said, "I am very much delighted to be with you this morning to launch *The Report on the Pattern and Trends of Poverty in Ghana between the years (1991 – 2006)*. It is the third report emanating from the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) on Poverty Trends in Ghana (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2007).

Governments in Ghana since the 1990s have implemented various policies and programmes all geared towards the reduction of poverty and improvement in the

livelihoods of the citizenry. Guiding the implementation of these policies and programmes are some key policy documents namely; The Vision 2020, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy One (GPRS I) and the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Two (GPRS II). Unlike the GPRS I issued in 2003 which focused on the anti-poverty objective of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the GPRS II's central focus is geared towards an accelerated growth of the economy so that Ghana can achieve middle income status within a measurable plan period (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2007).

This shift in focus was based on the fact that Ghana appears to be on course to meet the MDGs target and for that matter acceleration of economic growth will permit us to implement them even more vigorously. Indeed the statistics and indicators from the report look quite encouraging and invigorating. The indications are that, the country is making a major progress in arresting poverty. Based on the Ghana Living Standards Surveys (GLSS 3/4/5) results, I am pleased to note that at the national level, poverty level has reduced from 51.7% in the 1991/92 to 28.5% in the year 2005/06" (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2007).

Decentralisation has been considered by many as one of the most important strategies in public sector reform agenda (Ayee, 2003). This is because donors and governments in Sub-Saharan Africa have considered decentralisation as a strategy that will bring service delivery closer to consumers, improve the responsiveness of the central government to public demands and thereby reduce poverty, improve the efficiency and quality of public services and empower lower units to feel more involved and in control (Ayee, 2003). In 1988, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) launched a major decentralisation programme with the promulgation of PNDC Law 207 (Ayee, 2004). The initiative for the programme was inspired by the government's

political philosophy of “Power to the People” and its structural adjustment programme (SAP) whose principles concern the role and responsibilities of the state and the expanding role of the private sector, both in the sense of private commercial entrepreneurship and voluntary community initiatives (Ayee, 2004). Power has been devolved to District Assemblies to enhance service delivery for poverty alleviation and since 1992 it has channelled not less than 5% of national revenue to these Assemblies for development (Kyei, 2008).

The issue of poverty reduction is central to the decentralisation programme. Given the central role of poverty reduction to the decentralisation programme, a number of poverty reduction strategies were introduced. They include the “Programme of Actions to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment” (PAMSCAD) in 1987, the Productivity and Income Generation Fund popularly called the “District Assembly Poverty Alleviation Fund” in 1996 and the “Highly Indebted Poor Countries” (HIPC) Funds in 2002 (Asante, 2003). Effective implementation of poverty reduction strategies often requires detailed and specific local knowledge which may be most readily obtainable through a decentralised and locally accountable system of governance (Asante, 2003).

The right kind of decentralisation will therefore enable local government units to have sufficient technical and financial capacity to carry out their assigned function on the assumption that people should get what they want rather than what someone else wants them to want (Ayee, 2004). Poverty reduction programme like other programmes, should reflect local and regional variations in preferences where appropriate (Crook, 2003). From this viewpoint, decentralisation in principle is good and this virtue depends upon political accountability and the inevitable need to strengthen local delivery capacity.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Poverty has been associated with denial of opportunities and choices in accessing basic needs such as education, health and shelter. It is also associated with gender, inequality, lack of dignity, and poor governance (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2007). Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, therefore, has become the international community's foremost development objective. The overriding target adopted in 1996 even by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation of the Economic Community Development (OECD) and endorsed by the international community is to reduce the incidence of poverty in developing countries from 30 to 15% by the year 2015 (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2007).

The successes of decentralisation programme can be measured against some of the main objectives for which it was implemented. One of the objectives of the decentralisation programme is to ensure that people living in the rural areas have access to basic services and infrastructure (Ayee, 2003). Indeed, the District Assemblies (DAs) have undertaken development projects such as the construction and maintenance of classroom blocks, feeder roads, clinics, public toilets, markets and provision of street-lights in previously neglected rural areas that were denied access to these services (Ayee, 2003). Some of these projects were sometimes undertaken in collaboration with local and international non-governmental organisations.

The projects have in turn opened development opportunities in the Districts. The improved infrastructural development led to improved health and sanitation and thereby removed some of the barriers to social and economic development. This notwithstanding, complaints have been received from some rural people that most of these services and infrastructure have been concentrated mainly in the district capitals to the detriment of the rural areas (Ayee, 1996). However, people's interest declined

when they realised that their expectations cannot be fulfilled because of the incapacity of the District Assemblies, which lacked the human and financial resources to implement their set development objectives. The Poverty Alleviation Fund especially is to give the poor access to credit facilities to invest in job creation. Even though this is a laudable scheme and has assisted hitherto vulnerable groups like women in small-scale industries, it has failed to yield any results. What has accounted for this failure? The Sekyere East District is one of the poorest Districts in the country with a high rate of unemployment. About 47% of the total population earn below the average income of GH ¢ 162.50 whilst about 24% of the population fall within the average income bracket of GH ¢ 150.10 - GH ¢ 175.00 (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). It is also revealed that 29% of the population earn more than the average income and more than 40% of the people also earn less than the average income. This is an indication that, greater number of the population are poor (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008).

This obviously requires the implementation of policies and programmes to reduce poverty and improve the living standards of the poor. This study therefore investigated the various poverty alleviation strategies and interventions of the Sekyere East District Assembly and the impact (if any) on the poor people in some communities in the District.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this research was to examine the effectiveness of poverty alleviation strategies of the Sekyere East District Assembly.

The specific objectives were to:

1. Examine the nature and perceptions of poverty in the Sekyere East District.
2. Assess the participation of the local people in decision making and policies for poverty reduction in the Sekyere East District.
3. Identify the challenges facing the Sekyere East District Assembly.
4. Identify appropriate policy recommendations for effective poverty reduction in the Sekyere East District.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SURVEY

This project was undertaken to satisfy academic requirements, intellectual curiosity and to gain research experience. Most poverty alleviation programmes do not take into account issues the poor view as constituting poverty. According to Beck (1994) “If the poor are viewed as statistics, figures and ciphers, then the policy that is formulated to alleviate poverty will, in all likelihood, follow suit and be more relevant to the manipulation of statistics than to the needs of people” (Beck, 1994 cited in Kyei, 1999). The report of this research was significant to the Sekyere East District Assembly since its findings helped in getting a better way of alleviating poverty in the District. The findings have also assisted the District Assembly to involve the people at the grassroots in decision-making because it is the people who know and understand what constitute poverty for them. Besides, the study has again aided the District

Assembly to find ways of empowering the people to fight poverty by engaging themselves in income generating activities.

1.5 LIMITATIONS

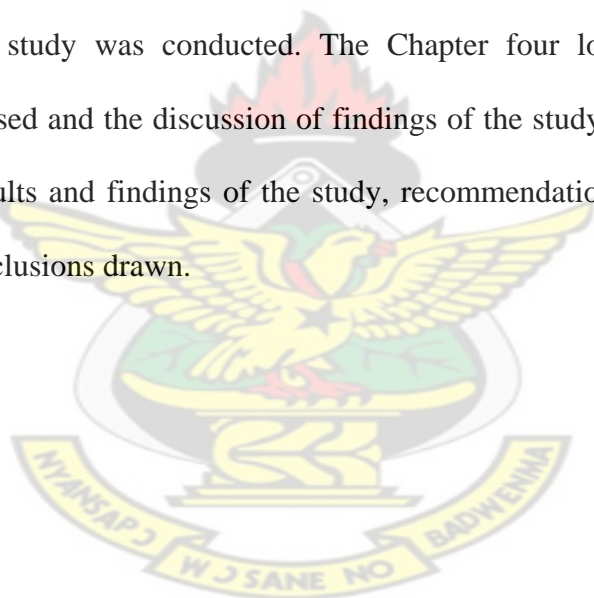
The main constrain of this work was limited coverage of the entire District since the research was carried out in two main towns and three other villages within the District. The researcher had to depend on the poverty profile of the District to select endemic areas so as to make the outcome of the research fairly representative of all communities in the Sekyere East District. The study was also carried out within a limited time and this was due to lack of resources and logistics since the researcher was a student. However, the researcher had to raise some resources to help him carryout the research. Other limitations included reluctance on the part of some respondents to even collect the questionnaires, let alone respond to it and the belief that the researcher was using them to secure finance from some non-governmental organisations.

The researcher had to provide explanation to the respondents to the effect that, he is a student and the research was only an exercise to satisfy academic requirement and get research experience. The researcher sometimes had to convince the personnel officer of the District Assembly to travel with him at his own cost to the communities and provide explanation to the respondents. This was because these officials have established longtime relationship with the respondents due to various poverty reduction programmes of the Assembly. In some cases too, the researcher had to offer money to respondents before getting information. Furthermore, some of the respondents also had difficulty in understanding some of the questions. The researcher

had to explain some of the questions to the respondents with caution to avoid the possibility of bias and make the findings of the research credible.

1.6 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study was organised in five chapters: Chapter one focused on the background to the study, the problem statement, the objectives of the study, statement of justification of the study, the limitations and the organisation of the study. Chapter two also reviewed relevant literature concerning the study topics while Chapter three dealt with methodology of the study and provided an in-depth background to the Sekyere East District where the study was conducted. The Chapter four looked at how data collected was analysed and the discussion of findings of the study. The final Chapter summarises the results and findings of the study, recommendations are made where necessary and conclusions drawn.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviewed relevant literature on the nature and perceptions of poverty, participation of local people in decision making and policies for poverty reduction, challenges in the District and appropriate policy recommendations. Other topics included the concept and objectives of decentralisation and the link between poverty and decentralisation.

2.2 History and Definitions of Poverty

Poverty was only identified as a serious social issue during the latter part of the industrial revolution, in the 19th century. With the onset of wealth and the creation of the middle class, poverty and inequality became serious issues that were expressed in many ways such as in books by Charles Dickens (Walt, 2004). The study of poverty during that time was mainly from a social welfare perspective. For example in 1892, Godard defined poverty as,

“an insufficiency of necessities or more fully as an insufficient supply of those things which are requisite for an individual to maintain himself and those dependent upon him in health and vigour and the degree of poverty will obviously be determined by the extent of the insufficiency. Of course, this leads to the further question as to what things are requisite and it must at once be stated that there is no sharply defined line between necessities and unnecessaries... Obviously, however, an adequate supply of wholesome food and suitable clothing, and a sanitary

dwelling, with sufficient sleeping apartments, are amongst the first requisites. To these must be added the means of obtaining some amount of education. Recreation and also leisure to enjoy it ... And freedom...”

(Godard, 1892 cited in Walt, 2004).

During the 20th century, poverty became more of an economic development issue, with Mencher (1967) describing that “poverty must be kept independent of the variety of social and economic problems with which it may be associated.” This resulted in a change of definition of poverty. The measurement of poverty became the overriding influence in defining poverty (Walt, 2004).

The work of some scholars on the issue of poverty, especially on poverty in the developing world, has reopened the issue that poverty is more of a social welfare issue than purely an economic development issue (Walt, 2004). The definition of poverty has shifted back to social welfare as this definition of poverty clearly illustrates:

“Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not being able to go to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom.” (Walt, 2004).

The challenge that confronts professionals, academics, policy makers and all others involved in fighting poverty therefore is the issue of accurately measuring poverty within the multi-dimensional framework.

The concept of poverty lacks objective definition. It is however, a question of relative incomes (Dake, 2003). But Kyei, (1999) is of the view that, it is only when people compare their level of living with reference to a group of higher incomes or status of

living that they feel relatively poor. According to Walt (2004), poverty is linked to starvation, severe malnutrition, illiteracy, substandard clothing, and housing among others. The poor perceive poverty as isolation from the community, lack of security, low wages, lack of employment opportunities, poor nutrition, poor access to water, having too many children, poor education opportunities and misuse of resources among others (Walt, 2004). The non-poor see poverty as lack of income as a result of the bad choices by the poor. It is therefore not easy to get a precise definition of poverty to suit every situation (Walt, 2004).

However, as pointed out by Gibson (2001), people may in a given period of time be poor either because their mean quantitative proxy indicator for poverty such as income, consumption expenditure or calories fall below the national average (or poverty line) or because they have suffered a temporary shortfall in consumption or income. In other words households or persons may be poor at a point either due to inter-temporal variability in consumption or income which is considered as “transient”, or because of the persistence of income or consumption expenditure below the poverty line, also considered as “chronic poverty” (Gibson, 2001).

Appiah-Kubi (2003) had observed that, for effective poverty reduction programmes, it is important to know not only those who are currently poor but also those who are vulnerable to poverty. According to the World Bank (2000) defining poverty solely as being deprived of money is however, not sufficient. Social indicators and indicators of risk and vulnerability must also be considered and understood to obtain a clear picture of poverty. The World Bank (2001) further maintains that vulnerability analysis is crucial for understanding poverty in so far as it helps to identify the characteristics of those impoverished households that lack the means to ascend the economic ladder and to tailor human development policies to their specific needs. It also helps to quantify

not only the existing poor but also those in danger of becoming poor in the future and identifies a comprehensive set of sources of vulnerability of this group.

Chambers (1995) has however, combined all these dimensions of poverty when he declared that poverty refers to lack of physical necessities, assets and income; it include but is more than, being income poor. In addition to income, Chambers has enumerated the following as capturing some of the realities of the poor, in particular the characteristics of the poor in rural areas:

Social inferiority – including gender, caste, race and ethnic group or being a 'lower' (poor person) in terms of class, social group or occupation or even inferiority linked with age as with children.

Isolation – which refers to being peripheral and cut off, example living in a remote area and off-road, isolated in communication, lacking contact and information including not being able to read, isolated in terms of lack of access to social services and markets; and isolated in relation to lack of social and economic support.

Physical weakness – that is disability, sickness, pain and suffering.

Vulnerability - not the same as income-poverty or poverty more broadly defined. It means lack or want but exposure and defencelessness.

Seasonality – in tropical seasonality many adverse factors for the poor may coincide with the rains. For example, hard agricultural work, shortage of food, scarcity of money, indebtedness, sickness and diminished access to services.

Powerlessness – the poor are often powerless; often physically weak and economically vulnerable, they lack influence. Subject to the power of others, they are easily ignored or exploited.

Humiliation – self respect with freedom from dependence is perhaps the dimension most overlooked and undervalued by professionals, since it does not lend itself to measurement (Chambers, 1995 cited in Kyei, 1999).

Participation of the poor has also been underscored to be another critical dimension of poverty. Barrett and Carter (2006) contend that, in developing a definition of poverty that is applicable to the social development of people in the 21st century, participation of the poor is extremely important, since only they would know what they consider to be poverty. Once such a definition is developed, methods must be developed to measure the current status, so as to determine whether future policies to address poverty are effective or not. A clearly defined definition of poverty would also help to identify the best intervention strategy in the fight against poverty, focusing effort and resources where it is most effective (Barrett and Carter, 2006).

But as Katsiaouni (2003) puts it, “a process for participation does not ipso facto lead to empowerment and to be consulted does not mean that one’s voice has weight in decision taken”. Khan (2003) and Katsiaouni (2003) argue that one way of achieving this is through “engaged governance” whereby an attempt is made through new forms of collaboration between citizens, groups and the public sector to link social capital into the development and management process of a country.

These different definitions of poverty contributed to the establishing the importance of taking account of the multi-dimensional character of poverty and of not allowing it to be understood simply in terms of income and consumption level alone.

2.3 Concepts and Measurements of Poverty

Poverty can be measured in terms of absolute or relative poverty (Walt, 2004).

2.3.1 Absolute Poverty

Absolute poverty refers to a set standard which is considered overtime and between countries. An example of an absolute measurement would be the percentage of the population eating approximately 2000-2500 calories per day (Chen and Ravallion, 2007). According to Kyei (1999) 'an absolute poverty threshold is determined using a living standard indicator and is fixed over the entire domain of the poverty comparison'. However, in the opinion of Ravallion (1992) an absolute poverty comparison will deem two persons at the same real consumption income level to both be either 'poor' or 'not poor' irrespective of the time or the place being considered.

Measuring poverty by an absolute threshold has the advantage of applying the same standard across different locations and time periods, making comparisons easier (Chen and Ravallion, 2007). On the other hand, it suffers from the disadvantage that any absolute poverty threshold is to some extent arbitrary; the amount of wealth required for survival is not the same in all places and time periods. For example, a person living in far northern Scandinavia requires a source of heat during colder months, while a person living on a tropical island does not (Chen and Ravallion, 2007)

2.3.2 Relative Poverty

Relative Poverty views poverty as socially defined and dependent on social context. Income inequality is a relative measure of poverty. A relative measurement would be to compare the total wealth of the poorest one-third of the population with the total

wealth of the richest 1% of the population (Chen and Ravallion, 2007). However, according to Barrett and Carter (2006) clearly, relative poverty can only be defined in terms of the society or class to which it refers or in relation to a general standard of living and an accepted quality of life. In many developed countries the official definition of poverty used for statistical purposes is based on relative income (Robert and Kirk, 2004). As such many critics argue that poverty statistics measure inequality rather than material deprivation or hardship (Robert and Kirk, 2004). For instance, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 46% of those in poverty in the U.S. own their own home with the average poor person's home having three bedrooms with one and a half baths and a garage (Robert and Kirk, 2004).

Relative poverty measurement can sometimes produce odd results. For example, if the median household in a wealthy neighborhood earns US\$1 million each year, then a family that earns US\$100,000 would be considered poor on the relative poverty scale even though such a family could meet all of its basic needs (Barrett and Carter, 2006). At the other end of the scale, if the median household in a very poor neighborhood earned only 50% of what it needs to buy food, then a person who earned the median income would not be considered poor on a relative poverty scale even though the person is clearly poor on an absolute poverty scale (Barrett and Carter, 2006). Measures of relative poverty are almost the same as measuring income inequality: If a society gets a more equal income distribution, relative poverty will fall (Barrett and Carter, 2006).

Following this, some argue that the term *relative poverty* is itself misleading and that *income inequality* should be used instead. They point out that if society changed in a way that hurt high earners more than low ones, then relative poverty would decrease but every citizen of the society would be worse off. Likewise in the reverse direction,

it is possible to reduce absolute poverty while increasing relative poverty (Barrett and Carter, 2006).

2.3.3 Measurements of Poverty

Each country measures poverty according to its level of development, societal norms, and values. Because of these differences, the poverty level may change from country to country; thus, there is no uniformity in the poverty line (World Bank, 2001). Ellen (2006) however, perceives poverty line as a measure of the amount of money a government or a society believes is necessary for a person to live at a minimum level of subsistence or standard of living. Essentially, a poverty level was determined by figuring out how much a family needed to maintain a minimally adequate diet. The United States government adopted this standard with minor yearly adjustments and has used it ever since (Ellen, 2006).

The establishment of a poverty line has political implications. Poverty lines are established at given point in time and they are usually adjusted minimally on a yearly basis (World Bank, 2007). The question of who to count and what to count remains important because a poverty line reveals what a country does and does not do in addressing the needs of its poor citizens (World Bank, 2001). The World Bank uses poverty lines that are set at US\$1 and US\$2 per day. It was estimated that in 1998, 1.2 billion people worldwide had consumption levels below US\$1 a day and about 24% of these people lived in the developing world (World Bank, 2001). It has further been estimated world wide that, 2.8 billion people lived on less than US\$2 a day (World Bank, 2001). For the purposes of analysis, the World Bank uses the poverty lines that are based on the norms for respective countries.

Others, such as economist Ellen, argue that the poverty measure is too low as families spend much less of their total budget on food than they did when the measure was established. Moreover, federal poverty statistics do not account for the widely varying regional differences in non-food costs such as housing, transport and utilities (Ellen, 2006). Recent work on poverty analysis has nonetheless underscored inherent methodological complementarities between qualitative and quantitative approaches in (cross-sectional) poverty analysis. Ongoing debates over causes, effects and best ways to measure poverty directly influences the design and implementation of poverty reduction programmes and is therefore, relevant to the fields of international development and public administration (World Bank, 2007).

In a nutshell, there are several ways of measuring poverty. The measurement of the United State is based on how much a family needed to maintain a minimally adequate diet. According to Ellen the measurement is based on how much a society believes is necessary for a person to live at a minimum standard of living. However, the World Bank believes that measurement of poverty depends on the level of development and societal values. This study therefore adopted Ellen's measurement which looks at the amount of money a society believes is necessary for a person to live at a minimum standard of living. This is because for the poor, it is not about whether the food is balanced diet or not, it is about getting satisfied at a certain point in time.

It can therefore be said that, in developing a definition of poverty that is applicable to the social development of the people, different dimensions such as vulnerability, physical disability, powerlessness, voicelessness and more importantly, participation of the poor is extremely important since the poor would know what they consider to be poverty. Once such a definition is developed, methods must be developed to measure the current status so as to determine whether future policies to address

poverty are effective or not (Appiah-Kubi et al., 2005). A clearly defined concept of poverty would also help to identify the best strategy in the fight against poverty, focusing efforts and resources where it is most effective (Walt, 2004).

2.4 Decentralisation

The concept of decentralisation defies clear-cut definition. Rondinelli (1981) defines decentralisation as the transfer of authority to plan, make decisions and manage public functions from a higher level of government to any individual, organisation or agency at a lower level. Smith (1985) sees decentralisation as “reversing the concentration of administration at a single centre and conferring powers on local government”. According to Katsiaouni (2003) decentralisation is about the ceding or transferring power from central government to sub-national entities including regional and local authorities which have some spatial or geographical jurisdiction.

But Mawhood and Davey (1980) are of the view that, the concept of decentralisation has evolved overtime and has acquired several shades of meaning. ‘Classic’ decentralisation according to them is based on five principles:

1. Local authorities should be institutionally separated from central government and assume responsibility for a significant range of local services (primary education, clinics and preventive health services, community development and secondary roads being the most common).
2. These authorities should have their own funds and budgets and should raise a substantial part of their revenue through direct local taxation.
3. Local authorities should employ their own staff although in the initial stage the regular civil service staff could be employed temporarily.

4. Councils predominantly composed of popularly elected representatives, should govern the authorities internally.
5. Government administrators should withdraw from executive to advisory and supervisory role and this has rarely taken place (Mawhood and Davey, 1980).

In addition, the Africa Governance Forum (V) Concept Paper (2002) has also identified decentralisation as a gradual process and is expected to enhance the opportunities for participation by placing more power and resources at a closer, more familiar and more easily influenced level of government. In an environment with poor traditions of citizens' participation, decentralisation is perceived to be an important first step in creating opportunities for citizen-state interaction.

2.4.1 Objectives of Decentralisation

The objectives of decentralisation include participation, empowerment, accountability, decongestion of the national capital and effectiveness in checking the rural-urban drift (Ayee, 2004). Specifically, the decentralisation programme has been designed to:

1. Devolve political and state power in order to promote participatory democracy through local-level institutions.
2. Deconcentrate and devolve administration, development planning and implementation to the District Assemblies.
3. Introduce an effective system of fiscal decentralisation that gives the District Assemblies control over a substantial portion of their revenues.

4. Establish a national development planning system to integrate and co-ordinate development planning at all levels and in all sectors (Ayee, 2004).

According to Adablah (2003) and Mani (2003), the case for decentralisation can in fact be made on many grounds:

1. Local authorities tend to act more in line with local preferences and conditions and their response to local needs is more expeditious.
2. Decentralisation provides opportunities to marginalized segments of the population such as women and minorities to participate at the local level, enabling a more sensitive approach to policy formulation and implementation.

Ayee (2004) is of the view that, decentralisation has shown that local government officials are likely to be well informed about the plight of members of their community and are therefore able to recognise those who are genuinely poor. Moreover, because poverty in one community may be characterised by different indicators than in another community, a decentralised system may also increase efficiency of access to public goods and services by allowing local authorities to determine the local eligibility criteria (Ayee, 2004). Thus, decentralising the responsibility to access the needs of communities to local administrators should be more accurate and cost effective than a central government agency (Ayee, 2004).

2.4.2 Decentralisation and Poverty Alleviation

According to Dake (2003) no one common definition of poverty is accepted by all countries. Generally, poverty is defined as the state of being destitute or deficient in

money or means of subsistence (Dake, 2003). The World Bank also defines extreme poverty as living on less than US\$1 a day, and moderate poverty as less than US\$2 a day, estimating that in 2001, 1.1 billion people had consumption levels below US\$1 a day and 2.7 billion lived on less than US\$ 2 a day (Chen and Ravallion, 2007).

The sustained interest in decentralisation, since independence in Africa, is an indication that, in principle, it holds promise to involve local people in the development process (Kyei, 2008). Decentralisation may empower minorities and vulnerable groups to get involved in the development process at the local level (Kyei, 2008). Crook and Sverrisson (2001) had observed that the virtues of decentralisation such as democracy, popular participation, responsiveness, accountability and equity have led to the belief that decentralisation will lead to greater responsiveness to the poor. Since the poor have been excluded from politics and therefore inaccessible to public goods and services, decentralisation is seen as offering greater political participation to ordinary citizens whose 'voice' is more likely to increase with concomitant relevance and effectiveness of government's policies and programmes, especially in poverty reduction (Crook and Sverrisson, 2001).

With decentralisation and participatory governance, local governments in Ghana were made responsible for the overall development of their respective areas of jurisdiction with the ultimate objective of improving on the quality of life of the people (Manor, 1997). The ultimate and compelling objective behind improving upon the quality of life of the people is the reduction of poverty. A close correlation can therefore be drawn between decentralisation and poverty reduction. Decentralisation promotes good local governance where people are empowered and given the resources and capacity to perform the function of developing their localities (Manor, 1997).

Conyers (1985) has however, noted that decentralisation may not alleviate rural poverty, especially if it is captured by the elites (Conyers, 1985 cited in Kyei, 2008). In the same vain, a number of scholars have warned against an excessive enthusiasm and pointed out significant problems in decentralisation. Katsiauni (2003) lists the dangers of decentralisation as: macroeconomic mismanagement, corruption, bloated bureaucracy and worsened inequity between one region and the other.

In conclusion, it can be said that effective implementation of poverty reduction strategies often requires detailed and specific local knowledge which may be most readily obtainable through a decentralised and locally accountable system of governance (Ayee, 2004). The right kind of decentralisation will therefore enable local government units to have sufficient technical and financial capacity to carry out their assigned functions on the assumption that people should get what they want rather than what someone else wants them to want (Crook and Sverrisson, 2003). Poverty reduction programme like other programmes, should reflect local and regional variations in preferences where appropriate (Adablah, 2003; Mani, 2003). From this viewpoint, decentralisation in principle is good and this virtue depends upon political accountability and the inevitable need to strengthen local delivery capacity.

2.5 Poverty Alleviation Strategies

Poverty is a world-wide problem. It is, however, more predominant in developing countries where about 80% of the poor live. The strategy for alleviating poverty has over the years changed focus in tandem with changes in development paradigms. For instance, the “trickle-down” approach to development was based on the assumption that the poor would benefit from economic growth, while the “empowerment” paradigm believes that

the poor in society can best be helped by getting them involved in decision making and implementation of development activities (Nkum, 1998).

The recognition of poverty as a major problem in Ghana dates as far back as the early 1970's when the economy started to decline. When the economy reached its lowest ebb in 1982, the Economic Restructuring Programme (ERP) was initiated. The Economic Restructuring Programme is known to have rather aggravated the poverty situation, especially of the very poor households. It needs to be mentioned that the early recognition of poverty as a development problem led to the inclusion of poverty alleviation packages in all the national plans of Ghana since the 1970's, with the exception of the Economic Restructuring Programme. For instance, the formulation of the Medium - Term Development Plan (1996-2000) for Ghana placed emphasis on poverty alleviation as the paramount focus of the programmes (Ghana, 2002).

According to the International Monetary Fund report (2000), the 7-Year Development Plan in Ghana was initiated in 1964 as the first integrated and comprehensive economic plan in Ghana's development administration history towards poverty alleviation. The main objectives were to accelerate economic growth, start a socialist transformation of the economy and remove all vestiges of colonial structure of the economy.

The next most significant historical programmatic effort in national development was the two-phased Economic Recovery Programme involving stabilization and rehabilitation, liberalization and growth that was initiated in 1983 with the support of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The major objectives were to arrest the severe economic decline of the 1970s and improve the social and overall well being of Ghanaians, particularly the under-privileged, deprived and vulnerable. The Economic Recovery Programme provided the impetus for a long-term growth approach to development that laid the basis for the development of the

National Development Planning Framework that was the pre-cursor to the Ghana Vision 2020 (IMF, 2000)

Cromwell et al. (2005), argues that Poverty Reduction Strategies were introduced by the Bretton Woods institutions in 1999 as a new form of conditionality for accessing debt relief and concessional loans. Since then, Poverty reduction strategies have evolved into wider policy tools, adopted and transformed by the governments of developing countries worldwide. In 1999, the Bretton Woods institutions introduced Poverty Reduction Strategies as a condition for eligibility to the debt relief resources under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative (Birdsall, Williamson et al. 2002). The strategies were seen as vehicles for creating national commitment to poverty reduction so as to preclude disbursement of Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) funds without a reasonable guarantee that they would be used appropriately (Bwalya et. al., 2004). Poverty reduction is the designing, implementing and targeting appropriate methods to ensure that scarce resources are allocated to activities that are likely to yield the greatest impact on the poor and to decrease their levels of deprivation and vulnerability (World Bank, 2001; Sen, 1999).

In order to guide and co-ordinate the implementation of measures aimed at alleviating poverty, many governments in developing countries have sought assistance from development agencies, especially the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), to formulate action plans on poverty alleviation. In recent years many development agencies from the industrialised countries have been collaborating with one another to assist governments of the less developed countries in implementing their poverty alleviation programmes (Nkum, 1998).

In many instances poverty alleviation programmes in less developed countries appear to be donor-driven. Quite a number of these programmes also appear to have been hijacked into the ineffective bureaucratic red tape of governments. In some cases the programmes

have become fertile grounds for consultants and Non Governmental Organisations to reap windfalls of personal and professional gains. The effect of all this is that many poverty alleviation programmes have only helped to make the rich richer (Nkum, 1998).

According to Kyei, (1999), the design and ultimate implementation of poverty alleviation programmes is shaped and directed by the understanding of poverty among those designing and implementing the programmes. Such perceptions of poverty determine the appropriate strategies selected to eradicate it (Mullen, 1996 cited in Kyei, 1999).

The District Assembly is the foremost decentralised political institution responsible for identifying poverty problems at the local level and for implementing policies and strategies that address the problems. The District Assembly has as its poverty alleviation strategy as: the provision of social services and infrastructure, which are basically lacking in rural areas and which show such differences between rural and urban areas. Projects undertaken by the District Assemblies include the construction and maintenance of feeder roads, school classroom blocks, clinics and provision of water, electricity and Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit latrines (KVIPs).

The livelihood of the people is still not high on their agenda. What the District Assembly has consistently failed to recognise is the fact that the push to provide social services is not matched with efforts to ensure accessibility by the poor people. The provision of these social services to some extent becomes a blessing and at the same time a curse: a blessing because the people appreciate the fact that there has been a relative increase in the number of projects in the districts even though they are not evenly distributed. A curse because they are not easily accessible to the poor people (Kyei, 1999).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STUDY AREA

3.1 Data Collection

3.1.1 Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data were collected for the study. The Primary data were obtained from field observations, interviews with selected respondents and opinion leaders who work closely with the Sekyere East District Assembly such as the unit committee members, Assembly members and volunteers. Secondary data on the other hand were obtained from the Assembly's records and publications, journals, working papers, books and the internet.

3.1.2 Methods of Data Collection

Questionnaires were administered for the primary data collection since most of the sampled population were literates. Both closed and opened questions were asked. The questionnaires were carefully structured and designed according to the objectives of the study. The researcher took time to explain each question to respondents who were finding difficulty in understanding some questions without influencing their responses in any way. This was to avoid the likelihood of bias and to make the findings of the study credible. Interviews were also conducted and observations made where necessary. The interviews were conducted with Staff of the Sekyere East District Assembly, Staff of World Vision International and the Adventist Development Relief Agency (non-governmental organisations working in the Sekyere East District) Opinion Leaders and Members of the five communities in the study areas which included Effiduase, Asokore, Akokoaso, Seniagya and Dagomba. These study areas

were chosen based on the poverty profiling of the Sekyere East District Assembly as endemic areas. The profile identified key poverty problems in these areas as high illiteracy rate, large family size, unemployment, high birth rate, poor road network and poor access to social amenities and services. The occupation of most people in these selected areas is farming and others especially the women engaged themselves in petty trading to earn livelihood.

3.1.3 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique employed in this study was the random sampling for the target population. Random sampling technique was used because it gave everybody an equal chance of being selected and therefore avoided the likelihood of bias (Opoku, 2002). Further more, since every subject has an equal chance of being selected, any extraneous variables to be controlled would be randomly distributed among the various groups in the sample. Also the researcher realised that, improper sampling could lead to difficulties in the analyses of data and wrong inferences being drawn. As such, the random sample technique was employed because it assisted the researcher to avoid such difficulties.

The targeted population included Staff of the Sekyere East District Assembly, Staff of Non-Governmental Organisations working in the District, Opinion Leaders and Members of the five communities in the study area including Seneagya, Akokoaso, Dagomba, Effiduase and Asokore. Out of this targeted population, a sample size of 200 was randomly selected. The sample size of 200 (180 respondents from 5 communities, 10 from decentralised departments of the district Assembly and 5 each from the non-governmental organizations working in the district; World Vision and

Adventist Development Relief Agency) was used for the study. The district was divided into two (2) zones of two (2) Town/Area Councils each for zones A and B out of the eight (8) Town/Area councils. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the Town/Area Councils. The Town Councils for (Zone A) were Effiduase Town Council and Bodomase Area Council while Asokore Town Council and Seniagya Area Council constituted (Zone B). From the Town/Area Councils so selected; five (5) communities were also selected. These included two (2) communities from the Seneagya Area Council; Seneagya and Akokoaso, one (1) community from Effiduase Town Council; Effiduase, one (1) community each from Bodomase Area Council and Asokore Town Councils; Dagomba and Asokore respectively. These communities were selected because they were identified as endemic areas according to the poverty profiling of the district. Thus five (5) communities were selected for the survey.

In addition, ten (10) decentralised departments were selected through purposive sampling from among eleven (11) in the district. These departments which were Ghana Education Service, Social Welfare and Community Development, Ministry of Agriculture, District Health Directorate, Disaster Prevention, Planning, Finance, Natural Resource Conservation, Works and the District Assembly are seen to be directly involved in the socio-economic development of the district. The heads of the selected departments were used for both the administration of the questionnaire and interview. The number of respondents selected was a fair representation of the people in the district since respondents were drawn from the town councils in the district.

3.1.4 Data Analysis

The Data collected was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows (version 11.0; spss Inc, Chicago) and Excel for Windows (version 6.1; Microsoft Corp. Redmond, WA) and statistical significance was defined as a P-value of < 0.05 . The Chi-square was used to test awareness creation in poverty alleviation activities of the District Assembly and awareness of activities of government institutions and non-governmental organisation in the District. Statistical tools such as bar graphs and tables were also used to describe variables and where necessary photographs were employed to give a visual image of the situation being described. Interviews and questionnaire methods were also employed in the analysis in order to get a vivid understanding of the situation.

3.2 HYPOTHESES

1. **H₀:** Activities of the District Assembly have created awareness in helping to solve the poverty problem in the Sekyere East District.
H₁: Activities of the District Assembly have not created awareness and helped in solving the poverty problems in the Sekyere East District.
2. **H₀:** Government institutions and other organisations have been good collaborators in solving the poverty problem in the Sekyere East District.
H₁: Government institutions and other organisations have not been good collaborators in solving the poverty problem in the Sekyere East District.

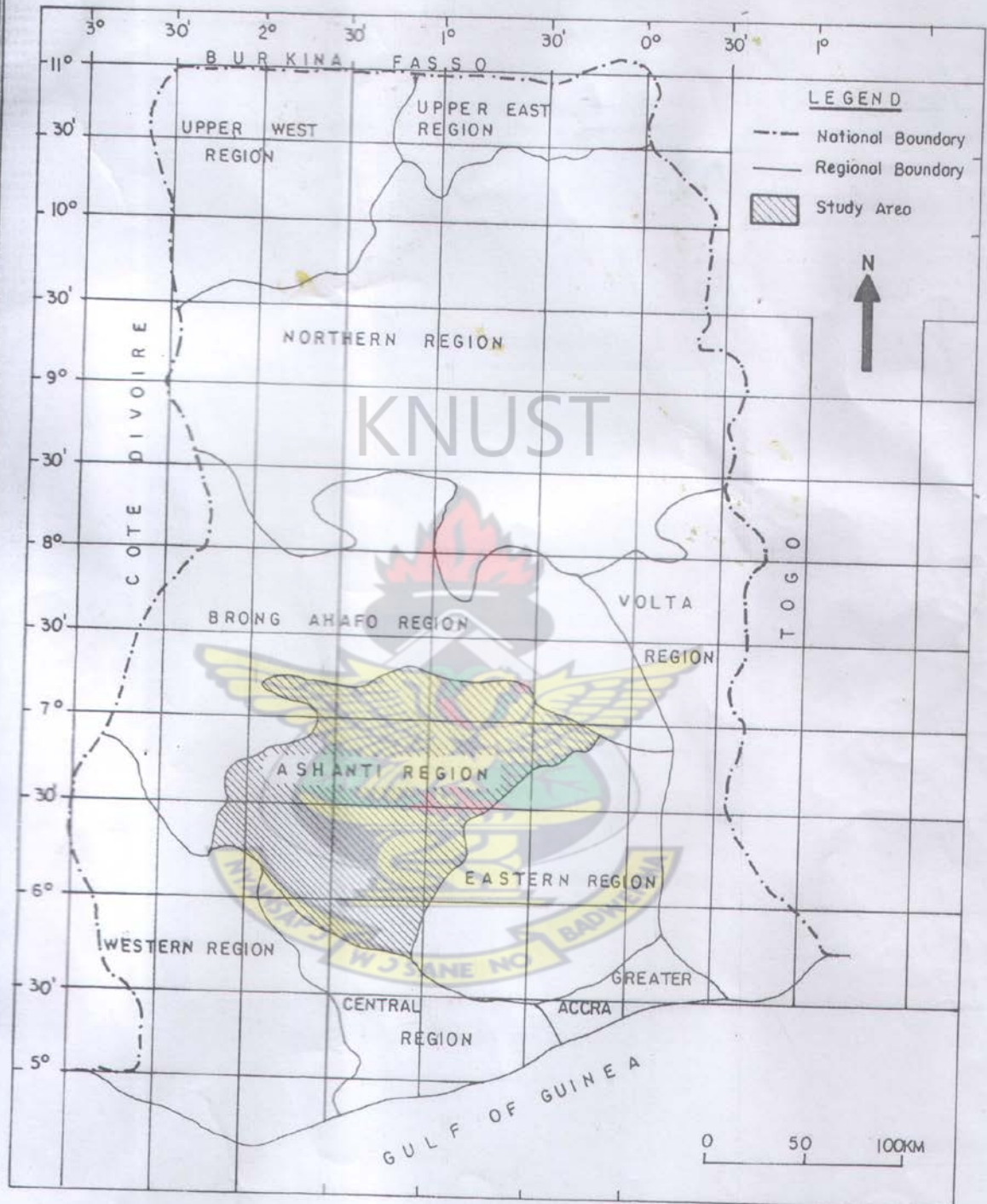
3.3 Profile of the Study Area

The Sekyere-East District was created in 1988 and is one of the twenty-one Districts in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. It has Effiduasi as the District capital. Located in the North-Eastern part of the region, it lies approximately between Latitude $6^{\circ} 45'$ - $7^{\circ} 32'$ North and Longitude $0^{\circ} 22'$ West (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show the map of the Sekyere East District in both national and regional context while Figure 3.3 shows map of Sekyere East District.



FIG. 3.1

STUDY AREA IN NATIONAL CONTEXT



SOURCE SEKYERE EAST DISTRICT ASSEMBLY (2008)

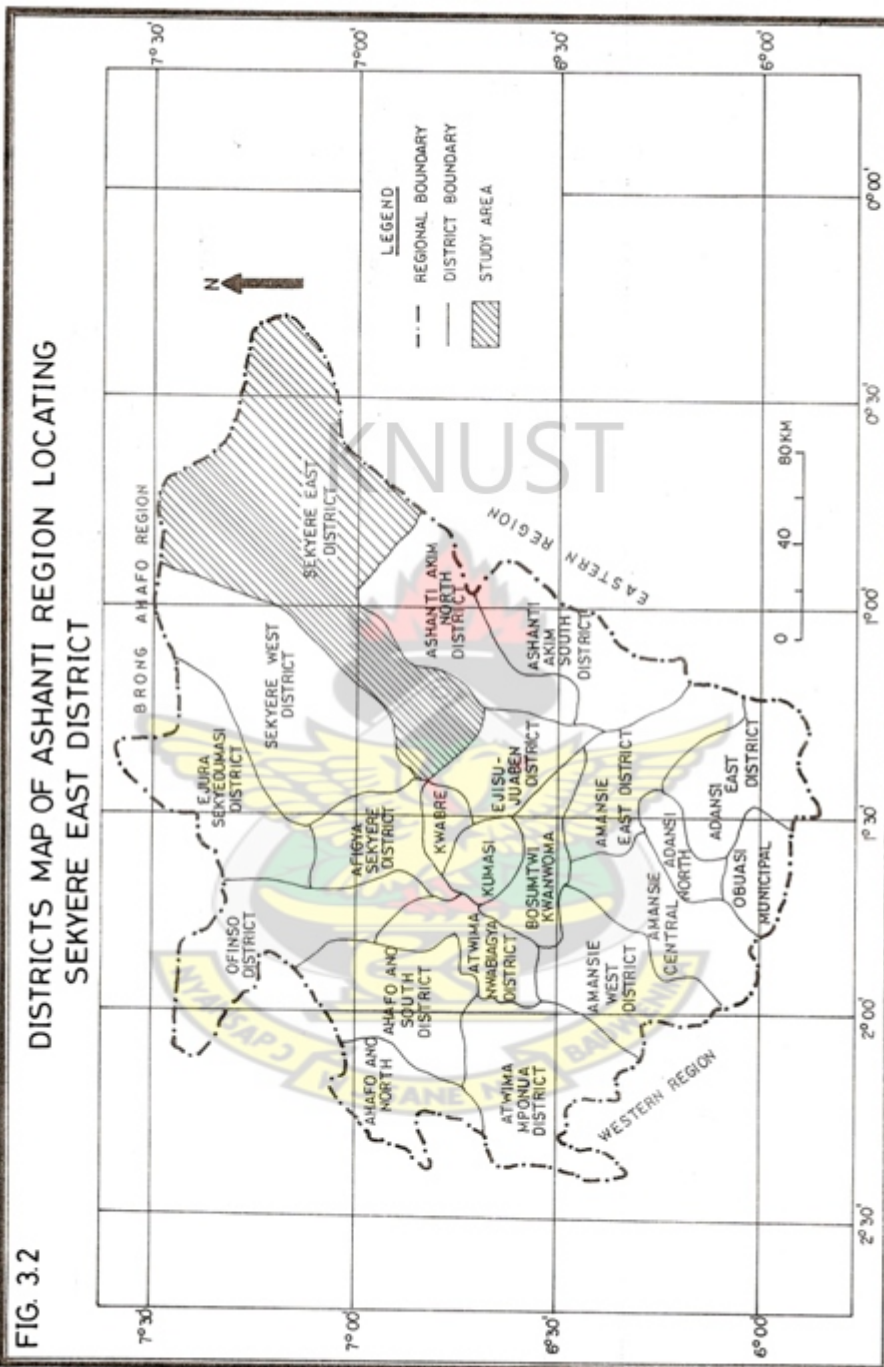
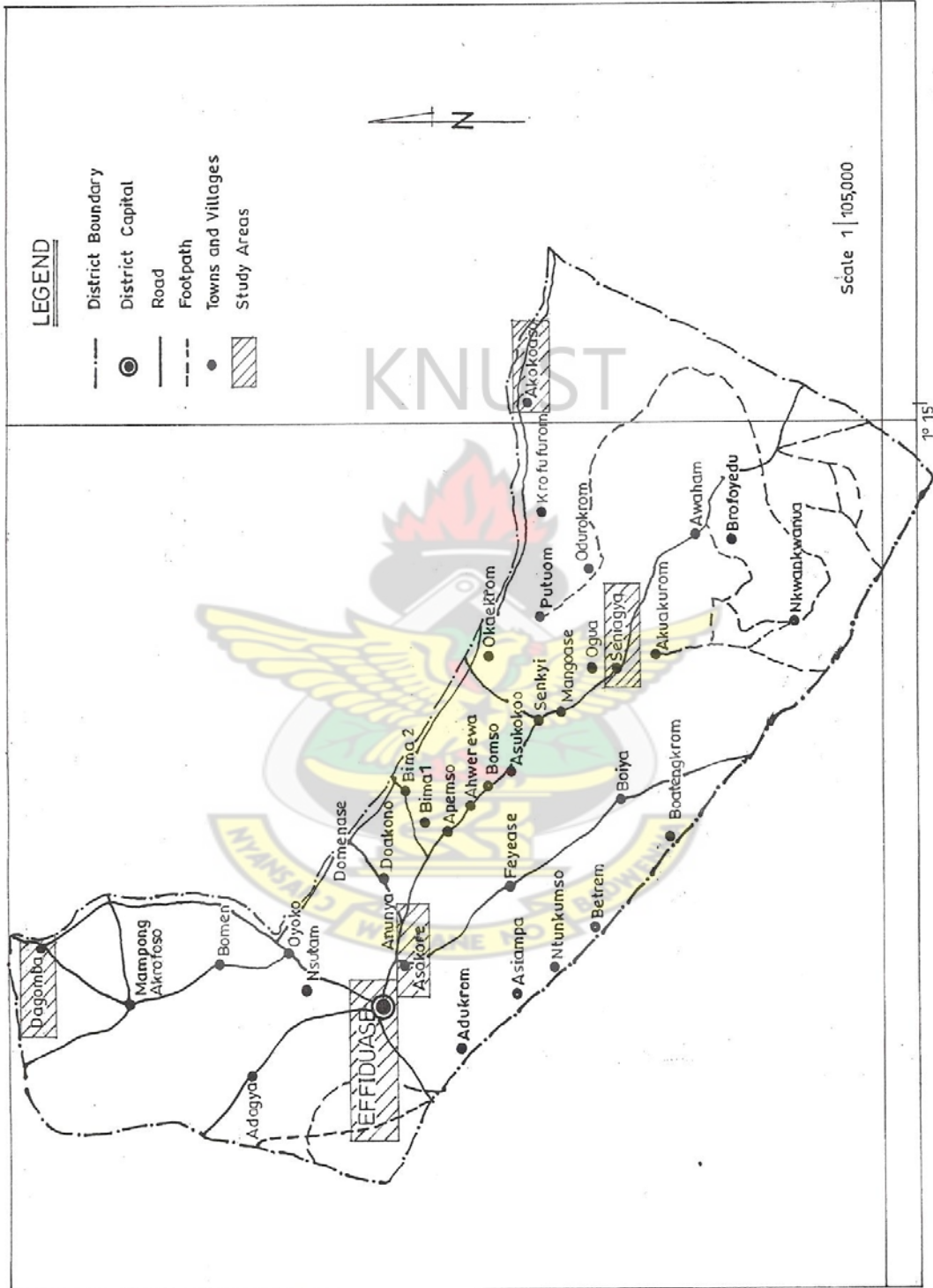


FIG. 3.3



SOURCE: Sekyere East District Assembly

The District shares common boundaries with some Districts in Ashanti Region. They include Afigya Sekyere to the West-West, Sekyere-West to the West, Ashanti-Akim-North to the South-East, Ejisu-Juaben to the South-West and Kwahu North District in the Eastern Region. Sekyere-East District is the largest of all the twenty-one Districts in the Ashanti Region and covers a total area of about 4231.48 Sq Km. The District has forty-eight Electoral Areas, three Town Councils at Effiduasi and Asokore and six other Area Councils at Oyoko, Anyinofi, Ahinsan, Bodomase, Senchi and Seniagya. It also has one Parliamentary Constituency that is Effiduasi-Asokore Constituency and 124 Unit committees in the District. The District has 136 settlements of varying sizes. Out of this figure, 55 of the settlements are located in the Afram Plains portion of the District (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008).

The Sekyere East District is located near to Kumasi, the Ashanti Regional Capital and that development has trick-down to the District. The location of the District near to Kumasi had made educational facilities and information easily accessible to the youth. Some of these youth have had their tertiary education in Kumasi and after their course; they have gone back to the District and helped in the development of the District. The District is also the largest of all the twenty-one District in the Ashanti region and is obviously endowed with vast land for agriculture, which has been and continues to be the backbone of the District's economy.

The District is endowed with abundant natural resources especially fertile soils for the production of a variety of crops like cocoa, maize, oil palm and vegetables. Some of the economic activities identified in the District are crop farming and agro-processing. These resources have been harnessed and channeled into productive ventures and that has accounted for some of the development projects in the District. It has again led to poverty reduction at least in the peri-urban towns like Effiduasi and Asokore because

some of the people are engaged in income generating ventures. For instance large quantities of palm oil and palm kernel oil are extracted at Effiduase and Asokore, whilst Bodomase and Woraso are noted for the production of vegetables.

3.3.1 Climate and Vegetation

The climate conditions in the District conform to the general conditions that prevail within the middle belt of Ghana. Monthly mean temperature is about 26° C, although some areas record lower figures. Maximum temperatures of between 29° C and 31° C are recorded in March and April, whilst minimum temperatures of 21° C and 23° C are experienced in August. Double maxima rainfall is experienced in a year. The major rainy seasons start in April and ends in July whilst the minor seasons begin in September and end in early November. June is the wettest month of the year (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). Rainfall distribution is not even in the District and it is heavier in the southern parts than in the northern parts. The relative low-lying nature of the northern parts accounts for floods that occur during the rainy season. Humidity is high during the wet month of the year and low during the dry months. Relative humidity within the District averages about 80% in the southern part and 60% for the northern portion (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008).

The southern part of the District is covered with moist semi-deciduous forest. Within this area can be found the Boumfum Forest Reserve and the Boumfobiri Natural Reserve. Extensive burning has virtually destroyed the Boumfum Reserve. Some areas of the reserve have however been replanted with teak. The northern part is generally covered with guinea savanna and consists of short deciduous fire resistant trees. The bottom lands, flood plains of the larger rivers, streams and swampy sites

within the areas are covered with dense stands of Anthropogenic Chloral Association of Forests. Basically, the vegetation consists of transitional and forest zones. The transitional zone covers 70% and the forest zone 30%. Riverine forest also occurs along the Afram River and streams of the savanna zone (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008).

The District is endowed with immense natural resources in the form of arable lands, forests and wildlife. The total arable land in the District is about 15,000 hectares, representing about 1.6% of the regional total of 960,000 hectares (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). The exploitation of the arable land in the District to meet socio-economic needs of the inhabitants has adversely affected the already fragile environment. Uncontrolled bush burning and excessive felling of trees for charcoal burning is fast threatening the bio-diversity, thus putting the fertility of the soil at risk and reducing potential resources for future generations. The felling of trees for charcoal burning is affecting the vegetation and it is fast generating into secondary forest and derived savannah. Logging in the District is another serious threat to the environment. The destruction of farm lands coupled with the removal of both larger and smaller trees has also destroyed the forest eco-system.

The Sekyere East District Assembly had to put some measures in place such as arresting chain-saw operators so that the already poverty situation in the District is not exacerbated by this development. The District is also endowed with many tourist sites. One of such sites is the Bomfobiri Wildlife Sanctuary. It was originally part of the Boumfum Forest Reserve which was gazetted as a totally protected wildlife area in 1975 (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). The Bomfobiri Sanctuary which covers an area of about 4921 hectares has several species of buffaloes, monkeys, bush dogs and crocodiles in the Ongwam River (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008).

Unfortunately, due to lack of resources, the District Assembly has not been able to develop the area to attract tourists. Consequently, the Assembly is losing a lot of resources which could have been generated to ameliorate the condition of the poor.

3.3.2 Relief and Drainage

The District is divided into two by a scarp running westwards. The southern portion of the scarp has undulating characteristics, with the highest portion around Kumawu. The northern portion is generally low-lying with an average elevation of between 100-150 metres above sea level. In the south-west of the northern portion is the dissected back slope of the Wenchi-Koforidua scarp with hills up to 330 metres. Overlooking the Onguram and Boumfum valleys is a gentle slope which extends to the north-east, rising to 105 metres above the Afram flood plains (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008).

Across the Afram Rivers lies the Afram-Obosom divide with a scarp overlooking the Afram River which rises to 180 metres above sea level. Behind the divide is a large undulating area which slopes to the Sene-Volta and Obosom rivers between 90 and 150 metres above sea level. The northern part of the District which lies within the basin of the Volta River is drained by Afram, Ongwam and Boumfum Rivers. Most of these rivers are seasonal in nature. They overflow their banks during the rainy season and may disappear entirely in the dry season. Even in the case of river Afram it may become a chain of pools during the dry season (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). The physical and natural environments imply that, the rivers and the streams in the District cannot be relied upon for any meaningful irrigation agriculture due to their seasonal nature. The effects of human activities such as bush burning and felling of

trees on the environments are alarming. This notwithstanding, the soils found in the District are good for agriculture which could go a long way to ensure supply of food and reduced poverty among the people in the communities.

3.3.3 Soils and Agricultural Land Use

The soils found in the District can be grouped according to the geological formation from which they have developed. The four main geological formations are Granitic, Birrimian, Voltaian and Alluvium rocks. According to the District Agricultural Directorate, out of the total land area of the District (4,231.48 Sq Km), savannah woodland covers 1,692 Sq Km, annual crops 846.3 Sq Km, wild reserves 42.3 Sq Km, tree crops 126.9 Sq Km and unreserved forest 42.3 Sq Km (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Agricultural Land Use in the District

Land Use	Area (Sq Km)	Percentage (%)
Savannah woodland	1,692.6	40
Bush Fallow and others	1,269.4	30
Forest Reserve	211.6	5
Annual Crops	846.3	20
Wild Reserve	42.3	1
Tree Crops	126.9	3
Unreserved Forest	42.3	1
TOTAL	4,231.4	100

Source: Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008.

Human activities such as bush burning and excessive felling of trees have exposed the top soil to erosion. This development has affected the fertility of the soil leading to reduction in food production.

3.4 Demographic Characteristics

The 1984 population census indicated that, the District had a total population of 83,771. This figure, however, increased to 157,396 in 2000, showing an increase of 88% over the sixteen year period and increasing at a growth rate of 3.5 (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). The increase was due to the increased number of settler farmers from Northern Ghana into the Afram plains portion of the District, rapid urbanization of towns like Effiduasi and Asokore and the easy accessibility from these towns to Kumasi (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008).

In 1970, the population density for the District was 13.2 persons per Square Kilometer, while the regional and national figures for the same year stood at 14.1 and 79.3 persons per Square Kilometer respectively (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Population Densities for the District, Regional and National

ENTITY	POPULATION DENSITY 1984	POPULATION DENSITY 1994	POPULATION DENSITY 2000
NATIONAL	51.6	69.0	79.3
REGIONAL	86.0	69.1	148.1
DISTRICT	21.1	28.0	37.4

Source: Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008.

A household survey conducted by the District Assembly in 2007 revealed that Females constitute about 49.3% of the total population whilst the male population forms about 50.7% (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). This distribution conforms to the regional distribution pattern of 50.3% males and 49.7% females. This, however, deviates from the national distribution figure of 49.5% males and 50.5% females (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). The population of the District can be described as youthful with 46% under the age of 15. Table 3.3 shows 4.2 of the

population is above the age of 64 and 49.8% are between the ages of 15 and 64 (see Table 3.3). The dependency ratio is 1: 0. 99. This ratio is above the national figure of 1:0.88.

Table 3.3 Age Structure of the Population

Age Group (Years)	Population	Percentage (%)
0 – 14	6,279	64.0
15 – 64	6,798	49.8
65+	573	4.2
Total	13,877	100.0

Source: Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008.

The 2002 population for the District indicates that the labour force (15 – 64) years are about 78,383 and constitute about half of the total District population of 157,396 (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). This implies that when there is full employment in the District about 78,383 would be engaged in some form of employment. The (15 – 64) and the (0 – 14) age groups together would constitute a potential labour force for the District in future if properly harnessed (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). As a predominantly farming area, the District is a receiver of migrants. Annually, a large number of people from the Brong Ahafo and the Northern regions of the country migrate to the District, particularly in the Afram Plains portion of the District to do farming and to breed cattle. The migrant farmers constitute a large proportion of the population.

Again, improvement in the road and transport sector which allows for easy accessibility from Kumasi into towns like Effiduase, Bodumase and Asokore and others has compelled people who, hitherto were living in Kumasi to migrate to these towns and commute from there to Kumasi for business transactions, thus leading to rapid urbanization in the District. The population growth rate of 3.5% per annum is

higher than both the regional and the national figures (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). There is the urgent need for the intensification of educational programmes on family planning in order to reduce the high growth rate. High population leads to extreme poverty because the dependency ratio and the cost of living are high. There is also pressure on available social amenities and infrastructural facilities such as water, electricity, hospitals and classrooms.

If poverty is to be reduced in the District, this issue of population growth must be tackled with all the urgent attention it requires because the poverty alleviation strategies becomes meaningless if the population continue to increase without a corresponding increase in the social amenities and other services provided by the District Assembly to reduce poverty in the District. The large proportion of the population in the (0 – 64) years is an indication of a large potential labour force for the District if given the needed training and guidance into income generating activities (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). If the youth are engaged and provided with jobs, it goes a long way to lessen the burden on the Government and the society. By so doing, poverty would be reduced in the District. The large pool of youth in the population also calls for the provision of socio-economic facilities and services to train the people and reduce pressure on existing facilities.

3.5 Social Services

3.5.1 Education

The socio-economic development of any people is largely affected by their educational system and the facilities available. The Sekyere East District has a number of educational facilities but are only concentrated in the south-western portion

of the District to the disadvantage of the north-eastern (Afram Plains) portion. The District has 108 Pre-Schools, 129 Primary Schools and 65 Junior High Schools (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). From 2001 up to 2005 enrolment at the pre-school level increased by 33%, Primary School 16% and the Junior High School level 14% (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). The overall increase in basic school enrolment particularly in the Pre-School level keeps on increasing. This may be due to the Capitation Grant and the Government policy on Education which is Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE).

The District also has three Senior High Schools; Dadease Agricultural Senior High, Effiduase Senior High and the Ahmadiyya Senior High School. Between 2003 and 2005, the total enrollment in these schools increased from 3045 to 3780 (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). This increment in School enrolment at the basic and Senior High level places a huge burden on the District Assembly to provide extra infrastructural facilities such as classrooms, toilet facilities and pipe borne water. This also implies that the District Assembly must factor this increment into their budget which calls for an adjustment to be made in the Assembly's budget to cater for the increment. It also means that the District Assembly should expand the Scholarship Scheme to cater for this increment for the needy but brilliant students in the District. Expansion should also be made on the Micro-credit Scheme of the Assembly to accommodate parents of school pupils who are not engaged in any income generating activities if poverty is to be reduced.

3.5.2 Health Facilities

For effective management, the District has been demarcated into five Sub-Districts. They are Effiduase and Asokore, Mponua, Bira-Onwam, Kumawu and Afram Plains. There are fourteen government and non-government health facilities in the District. The Hospitals are Effiduase District Hospital, Asokore Ahmadiyya Hospital and Oyoko Wesphalian Hospital. The last two Hospitals are non-governmental. Government Health Centres in the District are located at Woraso, Banko, Akokoaso, Okaikrom and Anyinofi. Other non-governmental Health Centres are at Seniagya, Drobonso and Sekyere (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 Health Facilities in the District

CATEGORY	HOSPITAL	HEALTH CENTRE	MATERNITY	TOTAL
GOVERNMENT	1	6	-	7
NON-GOVERNMENT	2	3	2	7
TOTAL	3	9	2	14

Source: Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008.

The District Health Insurance Scheme started operation in 2004 and as at November 2006 the Scheme had registered 68,000 people representing 43.2% of the District total population of 157396 (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). Over 25,000 people throughout the District have been provided with Identification Cards and are benefiting from the Scheme (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). This 25,000 people were made up of 3,113 fully paid contributors, 1,598 Social Security and the National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) contributors, 815 Pensioners, 2665 above 70 years and 16,809 under 16 years (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). These people qualify to access health care anytime they fall sick. As at the end of 2004, the Scheme

has collected a total amount of one hundred and ninety thousand cedis (GH ¢ 190,000.00) (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). Grants received by the Scheme from the Health Insurance Council is one million, seven hundred and sixty four thousand, sixty four cedis (GH ¢ 1,764,64.00) by the close of 2005 (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). However, the Scheme has been facing challenges some of which include the fact that, there is poverty among majority of the people. Due to poverty, the people find it difficult if not impossible to pay their premium. This situation is even worse in three of the study communities; Akokoaso, Dagomba and Seniagya. This obviously placed another burden on the District Assembly to assist people who could not afford to pay for their premium.

The provision of sanitary facilities in the District has not kept pace with the rapid population growth particularly in the major settlements like Effiduase, Asokore and Bodomase. Toilet facilities are inadequate in almost every community in the District. Over 80% of Houses in the District do not have latrines and about 50% of the communities do not have communal latrines (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). Bathrooms are normally embodied in the building plan and where there are no bathrooms, improvised structures have been erected just behind the houses.

The resultant problem created by the bathrooms is that, waste water is not channeled into any proper drainage system and this serves as breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Hence, the most common disease in the District is Malaria (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). Keeping the environment clean and healthy is a serious challenge in almost all the communities in the District. Quite a number of people in the District litter refuse and human excreta around in the communities and along the paths and roads. This situation has made the District prone to epidemics such as Cholera anytime there is an outbreak. Only a few larger settlements have organised refuse

dumps. Some of the communities such as Akokoaso and Seniagya resort to water from streams, ponds, rivers and self constructed dams for domestic use. Some of these rivers, streams and ponds are also used by animals like grazing cows and sheep. These exposed the communities to diverse water related and water borne diseases such as Guinea worm disease.

These developments have placed a greater challenge on the District Assembly as the Assembly engaged the services of a private refuse collectors called Zoom Lion to assist in cleaning the environment. The District spends an estimated amount of GH ¢ 5,000.00 every month for this purpose (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008).

3.6 Economic Activities

The District is endowed with abundant natural resources especially fertile soils for the production of a variety of crops like cocoa, maize, oil palm, vegetables, rice and plantain. The major economic activities identified in the District are crop farming, wood carving, charcoal burning and agro-processing (palm-oil, palm-kernel and gari). Settlements like Anyinofi, Drobonso, Dagomba, Dawia, Hamidu, Fumsua, Mempeasem and other settlements in the Afram Plains portion are noted for the production of maize, rice, yams, plantain and charcoal.

However, due to the inaccessibility of the place, these produce cannot reach the distribution centre in the District. The area cannot be reached easily because of poor road network, poor road linkages and absence of mode of transport in certain areas. The vast land in the area and its potentials serve the adjoining districts thus denying the District of potential revenue. In the south-western part of the District, cocoa is dominant in all the settlements. Large quantities of palm oil and palm kernel oil are

also extracted at Effiduase and Asokore whilst Bodomase and Woraso are noted for the production of vegetables such as tomatoes, cabbage and onion. Cane products are also produced massively at Sekyere and Banko (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008).

3.7 Administrative Set Up of the District.

3.7.1 The District Assembly

The District like any other governmental institution has legislative, deliberative, executive and administrative structures and functions. The District Assembly by the mode of its creation and responsibilities has a governance role, service delivery role, planning and community development role and above all, a regulatory role (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). These roles are performed through established institutional structures and key personnel. The Sekyere East District is the highest political and administrative body in the District. It is made up of seventy-two members; forty-eight elected, twenty-one appointees, one Member of Parliament for Effiduase/Asokore constituency and a District Chief Executive (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). The Assembly exercises political and administrative authority in its area of jurisdiction. It provides guidance to and supervises all other administrative authorities in the District (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008).

3.7.2 The Committee System

The District Assembly operates through a committee system with overlapping membership except that the Presiding Member of the District Assembly is not a member of the Executive Committee (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). The

principal committee of the District Assembly is the Executive Committee which is responsible for the performance of the executive and administrative functions of the Assembly. The Executive Committee which is made up of 24 members, co-ordinates plans and programmes of the sub-committees and submits these as comprehensive plans of action to the Assembly (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). It also implements resolutions of the Assembly. The Executive Committee is chaired by the District Chief Executive who is the District representative and appointee of the Government though his appointment has to be confirmed by two-thirds majority of the members of the General Assembly present. The Executive Committee has these sub-committees:

- Development Planning Sub-committee
- Social Services Sub-committee
- Works Sub-committee
- Justice and Security Sub-committee
- Finance and Administration Sub-committee
- Such other Committees and Sub-committees as the District Assembly may determine (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008).

3.7.3 Departments

There are also departments which serve as Technocrats/Expertise base for the Assembly through the provision of technical advice and active participation during the planning and implementation of development programmes and projects of the

Assembly. The departments under the District Assembly as provided under the Local Government Act, Act 462 include:

- General Administration
- Finance
- Education, Youth and Sports
- Agriculture
- Physical (Spatial) Planning
- Social Welfare and Community Development
- Natural Resources Conservation; Forestry, Game and Wildlife Division
- District Health Department
- Works
- Industry and Trade
- Disaster Prevention (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008).

The Assembly does not have the full complementary staff as the Department of Trade and Industry does not exist in the District. Also the physical planning department lacks substantive staff. Those working there now are officers from Ejisu–Juaben District Assembly who have oversight responsibility in Sekyere East District.

3.7.4 Sub-District Structures

The District Assembly has nine Town/Area Councils and 124 Unit Committees who facilitate effective communication between the Assembly and the local people (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). The Sub-structures oversee the activities of

the Unit committees as well as assist the Assembly in the administration of the Town and Areas. The eight Town/Area Councils in the District are:

- Effiduase Town Council
- Asokore Town Council
- Bodomase Area Council
- Anyinofi Area Council
- Akwamu Area Council
- Bira-Onwam Area Council
- Sekyere Mponua/Seniagya Area Council
- Senchi-Nyamfa Area Council (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008).

The Sub-structures are still not functioning due to lack of personnel to man the offices and most importantly they lack office accommodation.

3.7.5 Traditional Set Up

There is only one Paramount Chief in the District. This is the Asokore Traditional Area. The Paramount Chief is the head of the traditional area and is known as the 'Omanhene'. The implementation of the laws on customs, taboos and setting of moral behaviour are combined in him. Under the Omanhene are divisional chiefs. There are wings or sub-chiefs that assist the paramount chief in the performance of his duties. These sub-chiefs are the Kontihene, (Chief's Deputy), Akwanmuhene, Adintehene, Nifahene, Benkumhene, Kyidomhene, Gyaasehene and Sanaahene. In some cases Nsumakwaahene and Nkosuohene also exist in the traditional set-up. In the District,

there are leaders of the various clans, lineages and families (Abusuapanin). They help the town or village chief in performing his duties. They settle family disputes and are the custodians of the family lands and properties.

As an institution, the District Assembly represents the Central Government at the local level with the Paramount Chief also representing the people in the locality. The District Assembly should be accountable to the people it serves and as such consult the Paramount Chief on any developmental activities through the District Town Councils. This ensures that resources and developmental projects are shared equally among the various communities within the District.

3.8. Poverty Profile and Mapping in the District.

In 2004, the Assembly prepared a poverty profiling mapping document for the District. The document provided an invaluable insight into how poverty manifests itself among the different socio-economic groups in the District and how poverty is spatially distributed in the District. Views of stakeholders collected on poverty, its manifestations, causes, constraints and potentials when analysed helped the Assembly to come out with various District specific pro-poor interventions. The study revealed that poverty in the District manifests itself when there are low income levels, malnourishment, unhygienic environment, deprivation of education and other amenities.

It was also shown that poverty in the District is caused by large family sizes, lack of employment and employable skills, lack of credit and ready market for produce. This development calls for education on family planning methods by the District Assembly to reduce family sizes and sensitize the people on the need to keep their environment

clean so as to minimise the possibilities of disease outbreak. The District Assembly also has a duty to provide job opportunities to the people particularly, the youth to help reduce unemployment and to provide more social amenities and medical facilities.

The composite poverty map has shown that there is uneven distribution of population and facilities in the District. The south-western portion is densely populated and has most of the facilities whilst the northern and central parts of the District are sparsely populated and deprived of most facilities. A socio-economic survey conducted by the District Assembly in 2002 revealed that the average income in the District is GH¢ 162.50 per annum as against GH¢155.30 per annum in 2002 (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5 Average Income in the District

Income Bracket(GH¢)	Proportion of population in Sectors				Percentages (%)
	Agriculture	Commerce	Manufacturing	Services	Total
(10.00s)					
1 – 25	-	-	-	-	-
25 – 50	-	-	-	-	-
50 - 75	-	-	-	-	-
75 - 95	-	-	-	-	-
95 - 100	8	-	-	-	8
100-125	11	-	-	-	11
125-150	25	-	-	3	28
150-175	14	3	5	2	24
175-200	4	6	2	2	13
200-225	4	7	1	-	12
225-250	1	3	-	-	4
TOTAL	67	19	8	6	100

Source: Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008: Average Income: GH¢ 162.55

From the survey 47% of the total population earn below the average income of GH¢162.50 whilst about 24% of the population fall within the average income bracket of GH¢ 150.10 - GH¢ 175.00 It was also revealed that 29% of the population earn more than the average income as indicated in Table 3.5. More than 40% of the people earning less than the average income is an indication that, a greater number of the population are relatively poor. This calls for the implementation of policies and programmes that will help the people to create wealth and reduce poverty thereby improve standards of living of the rural poor.



CHAPTER FOUR

POVERTY ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES OF DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses and analyses field data gathered from Effiduase, Asokore, Seneagya, Dagomba and Akokoaso in the Sekyere East District. The chapter captures aspects such as the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the rural poor's perception of poverty, the District Assembly Staff's perception of poverty, causes of poverty in the District and poverty alleviation strategies of the District Assembly. Other aspects include participation of the rural poor in decision making and project implementation, challenges encountered by the Assembly, assessment of the Assembly's poverty alleviation activities, agents of poverty alleviation and current poverty situation in the District. The results and findings have been presented in tables and bar charts.

4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The number of male respondents interviewed at Asokore outnumbered that of females that is 18 males and 12 female respondents. This large number of males was probably due to the fact that most of the men dominate the development agenda and were therefore, everywhere trying to make ends meet. The study showed a similar trend at Effiduase with 26 and 14 respondents being males and females respectively. These are the two peri-urban towns in the district. At Seneagya, the females rather dominated constituting 29 as against 23 male respondents. This might perhaps mean that the females work more than the males and are therefore, active in the villages than the men. At Akokoaso the same pattern was observed with 24 females and 16 male

respondents. Dagomba, which is a typical farming community rather had the males dominating with 21 as against 17 female respondents (refer to appendix 1)

4.1.2 Age of Respondents

From the study, majority of the respondents were between the ages (40 – 50) constituting 36.8%. Those who were 50 years and above formed 7.6 %. Also, those between the ages of (29 – 39) and (18 – 28) constitute 35.6 and 19.9 % respectively. This shows that the active working age group constitutes 72.4% (that is 35.6 and 36.8%) which by far outnumber those of 50 years and above who are the elderly. However, most of these active youth were unemployed (refer to appendix 2)

4.1.3 Occupational Distribution of Respondents

It was also found out from the study that 20.6% of the respondents are government workers while 14.4% are unemployed. Students and self employed constituted 15.1 and 13.6 % (refer to appendix 3). It therefore, means that if poverty is going to be reduced in the district then the question of unemployment should be addressed by the District Assembly by creating alternative income generating activities to improve the livelihood of the poor in the community.

4.1.4 Perception of Poverty by the Educated People

Poverty was generally perceived by the District Assembly Staff and the Staff of World Vision International and the Adventist Development Relief Agency (both NGOs in the District) as lack of necessities of life including food, shelter and clothing. Poverty was also perceived to be lack of employment and inability of one to pay his bills; medical and utilities, living below the acceptable minimum standard of the society and inability to attain higher education. Poverty was further identified to

be a situation whereby people are not able to cater for their wards in terms of paying fees and lack of skills to work to earn a living (refer to appendix 4).

The educated people have important roles to play as far as the development of the District is concern. The District Chief Executive for instance is the Government representative at the local level and is entrusted with ensuring the provision of infrastructure and social amenities to the deprived and poor communities in the District together with other appointed officials. What is perceived as poverty provides the basis on which policies are designed to meet poverty alleviation goals (Kyei, 1999). Therefore, the design and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes were based on how these elites perceived poverty and not on the perception of the rural poor. This probably accounts for the failure of most poverty alleviation programmes by District Assemblies.

4.1.5 The Poor's Perception of Poverty

The rural poor in the study areas rather perceived poverty to be lack of money and assets (*wun ni agyapadie*), living below the minimum standard of living, powerlessness (*wun ni tumi*) and voicelessness (*wuntumi nkasa*). The rural communities also perceived poverty as an individual's inability to secure employment, laziness, physical and mental incapacitation. Lack of participation in poverty alleviation activities and programmes was also identified as another dimension of poverty (refer to appendix 5).

However, there were some differences in the perception of poverty between the educated people and the rural poor. The elites see poverty as lack of money, inability to attain higher education and employable skills to work, living below the minimum

accepted standard in the community, unable to afford the basic necessities of life, unable to cater for one's family and inability to pay for utility and medical bills. The poor in Asokore, Effiduasi, Seniagya, Akokoaso and Dagomba in the Sekyere East District established the fact that poverty is being excluded from development activities and projects because people think you have nothing to offer, inability of one to work to cater for one's family, visually impaired, dumb and deaf. They also identified inability to afford three square meals a day and to cater for one's medical bills to be other dimensions of poverty (refer to appendix 6).

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4.1.6 Causes of Poverty in the District

Some of the causes of poverty as identified by the educated community in the District are lack of lucrative jobs and money to sufficiently cater for one's family, lack of education (technical and vocational) and lazy attitudes on the part of the youths to work to earn a living. Other causes include lack of industrial establishment to train and provide jobs for the people, lackadaisical attitudes of workers towards their jobs and rural-urban migration (that is migration of the youth to the urban centres in search of white collar jobs).

They also brought to the forefront the fact that the District is typically a farming area with most of the people engaged in farming and depending on it for their livelihoods. These farming activities are mainly done on subsistence level with little or nothing to take to the market. The rural poor also identified the causes of poverty in the District to be lack of jobs and money, inability to go to school to a higher level and laziness among other things. The poor community in addition indicated lack of capital and access to loan facilities to engage in small scale enterprises and lack of ready market

for their farm produce such as cassava, plantain, and maize as other causes of poverty in the District. However, there was some level of unanimity with regards to unemployment and access to education as major causes of poverty in the District amongst them (refer to appendix 7).

Therefore, the authorities at the District Assembly should look at what the poor identified as the causes of poverty in their communities and address it as such instead of designing poverty alleviation programmes based on their own perception of poverty.

4.2 POVERTY ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES OF THE SEKYERE EAST DISTRICT ASSEMBLY.

What is perceived as poverty provides the basis on which policies are designed to meet poverty alleviation goals (Kyei, 1999). Therefore, based on the perceptions of poverty by the District Assembly's Staff as illustrated in table 6, the Assembly outlined the following as development interventions in their 2006-2009 development plans for Effiduase, Asokore, Dagomba, Akokoaso and Seniagya.

- Improve road accessibility and network, upgrade the Health Centre, provide boreholes and potable water facilities. Provision of electricity, improve educational facilities such as provision of accommodation for teachers, provide agricultural extension services and credit facilities to farmers. The Assembly also identified the following interventions for the two peri-urban towns in the study area; Effiduasi and Asokore; intensification of family planning education, educating the youth on social vices and improve housing conditions for Medical Officers.

In addition, the following strategies were also identified by the District Assembly to combat poverty throughout the District;

- Provision of social amenities and infrastructural development
- Micro-credit financing (Poverty Alleviation Fund)
- Yearly allowances and distribution of wheel chair to the physically challenged
- The National Youth Employment Programme
- Scholarship scheme for needy but brilliant students
- Development of agricultural activities
- Assistance to farmers in the form of Micro-credit, Farming inputs and Acreages of land.

4.2.1 Provision of Social Amenities and Infrastructural Development.

The Assembly from 2001-2007 provided fourteen (14) communities with new classroom blocks, libraries, teachers common room, stores and offices. It has also provided some nurses quarters and constructed new clinics and health centres in some of the villages where health facilities are lacking. The Effiduase health centre has also benefited from the construction of a new doctor's bungalow and quarters for nurses. Provision of electricity, toilets facilities and maintenance of feeder roads were also given much attention (refer to appendix 8).

Sample of photographs showing a six apartment teachers' accommodation built by the Assembly at Dagomba in Plate 1, Plate 2 shows the deplorable condition of school children having their class under a tree at Seniagya while Plate 3 shows a new school built by the Assembly for the comfort of the children.

Plate 1. Six Apartment Teachers' Accommodation at Dagomba



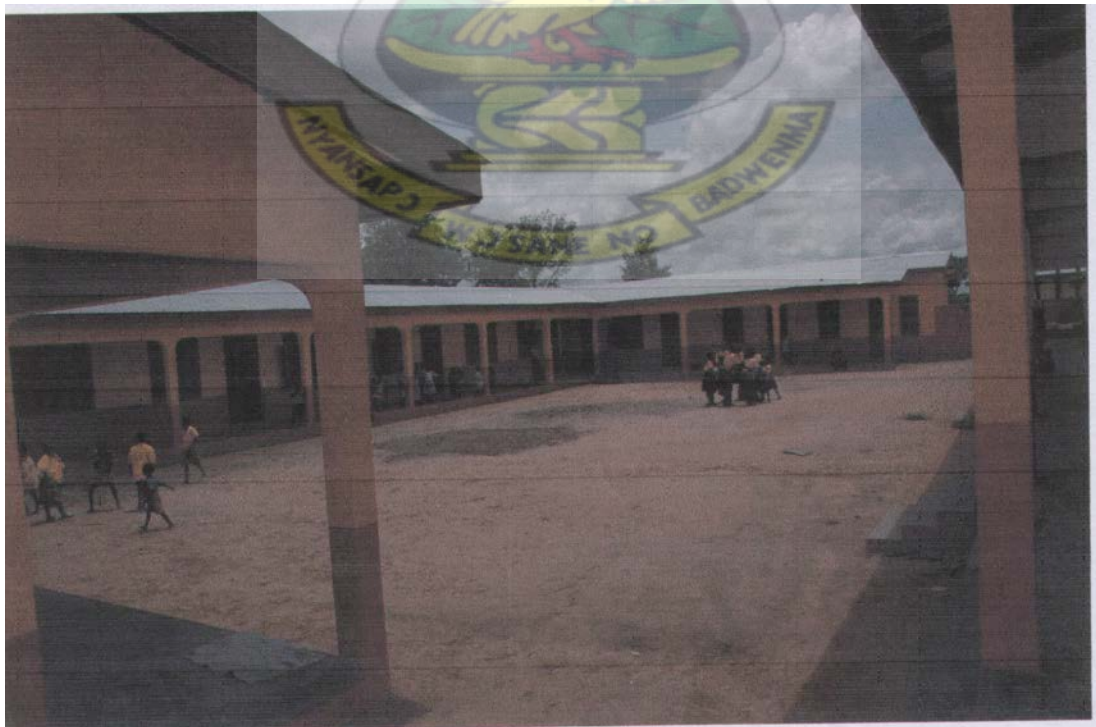
Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Plate 2. Children at Seniagya formally attended school under a tree



Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Plate 3. Seniagya School now has a Building with Library, Stores and Offices.



Source: Field Survey, 2008.

The role of infrastructure development and socio-economic services cannot be overlooked in the development of rural areas and communities. But these alone cannot alleviate the deteriorated poverty condition of inhabitants in the various communities. The respondents in Asokore, Effiduasi, Seniagya, Akokoaso and Dagomba in the Sekyere East District established the fact that, though provision of infrastructure is not bad yet improvements in their livelihoods is an indispensable poverty reduction strategy which is mostly overlooked by those in higher positions. For instance one opinion leader at the Dagomba community lamented in an interview:

“Officer, do we eat or drink a house; we want money for our pocket to take care of our children and start some business” (May, 2008).

This statement points out to the fact that though infrastructure is important to the rural poor yet improving their livelihoods through the creation of employment avenues so that they can work and earn a living is more important. In addition, it can also be deduced that, the poor are not consulted in poverty alleviation projects. It is the poor who knows how they feel and the kind of interventions that would alleviate their deplorable condition as a popular adage says:

"One who wears the shoe knows better where the shoe pinches".

If the poor are viewed as statistics, figures and ciphers, then the policy that is formulated to alleviate poverty will, in all likelihood, follow suit and be more relevant to the manipulation of statistics than to the needs of people' (Beck, 1994 cited in Kyei, 1999).

4.2.2 Scholarship Scheme for the Needy but Brilliant Students

The District Assembly as part of its contribution to education has set up a Scholarship Scheme for needy but brilliant students in the District. This is supposed to lessen the burden on their parents and offer an opportunity for students to climb up the educational ladder. Education, according to the Assembly, could be a way of alleviating the sufferings of the rural poor in the community. The criterion used in selecting beneficiaries was purely academic performance. The Scheme started operating in the 2004/05 academic year with beneficiaries given GH ¢20.00 each year. However, the amount increased to GH ¢ 50.00 and GH ¢ 100.00 for second cycle students and tertiary students respectively in the 2006/07 academic year. The fact that a person is a beneficiary does not automatically mean that the person will continue to enjoy it, rather it depends on a person's academic performance.

However, the amount of money given to students was woefully inadequate considering the current economic situation in the country. This amount of money cannot pay fees for even a term let alone feed the students as one beneficiary of the Ahmadiyya Senior High School in Asokore complained in an interview at the school. This situation was attributed to the financial position of the Assembly.

One problem identified by the Personnel Officer of the Assembly in an interview at Effiduase was that, it was very difficult to identify students who were genuinely poor and needed assistance. The Assembly ended up giving scholarships to those who were not in need at the expense of the needy but they are working out modalities to correct this anomaly, the Personnel Officer added. He gave instances of some few students whose parents are well to do but because of party affiliation, they were granted the assistance.

4.2.3 Micro- credit Financing

The Assembly has also been given loans to poor people in the communities who satisfy their requirement under the Assembly's Micro-credit loan Scheme. This is in line with the Assembly's goal of providing working capital for the people in the communities so that the people can start businesses of their own and become self employed. This would probably get the people out of the perpetual poverty cycle and by so doing alleviate the sufferings of the poor by improving their standard of living. About 15% of the Assembly's Common Fund is allocated yearly to serve as a revolving capital from which loans are given to farmers, small scale businesses, and market women.

The study shows that, the Assembly is committed in releasing funds to individuals and groups to either start a business enterprise or expand existing ones. The amount of loan given to a beneficiary depends on the individual's amount requested and the ability to pay within the stipulated period. Apart from individuals, group of people were also given the loan in the name of the group. The amount of loan ranges between a minimum of GH. ¢100.00 to a maximum of GH. ¢1000.00 and GH. ¢100.00 – GH. ¢1500.00 to an individual and a group of individuals respectively. A few individuals and group beneficiaries interviewed at various communities including Asokore, Effiduase, Akokoaso, Seniagy and Dagomba indicated the kind of investments the facility was used for.

Some used the facility to start small businesses such as selling pure water, selling credit cards for all the networks and opening of cosmetics shops. Others also engaged in vegetable farming, cultivation of cassava and maize among others. This initiative by the Assembly is very laudable but the question still remains, how many of the extremely poor and vulnerable benefited from these facilities? Obviously

identification of the extremely poor is a major issue in the District. The Assembly should be able to gather accurate information on those who are poor in the District. Hence, these facilities end up in the possession of the very people who are not in need of it. The worse sometimes is the fact that the modalities for selecting beneficiaries are not open and transparent. The tradition has always been that party faithfuls and sympathizers who are not poor are granted these facilities and recovering it becomes a problem as the District Budget Officer at Effiduase in 2008 observed in an interview:

"We are always faced with the problem of loan recovery since 2005 to date and about 65 – 75% of all loans granted end up becoming 'gift'".

When asked as to whether legal actions are taken against defaulters and potential defaulters, he said:

"My brother if you want a pre-mature transfer, then you can proceed and summon defaulters to appear in court".

In other words any official of the Assembly who tries to retrieve these loans by resorting to court of law will be transferred because most of the defaulters are party faithfuls who were closely linked with the top bureaucrats.

Therefore, it is evidently clear from the study that although these facilities were granted yet the purpose was not achieved due to the fact that political figures, influentials, and bureaucrats exercise political leverage on development agenda of the Assembly. It is also evident from interviews conducted during a field survey with beneficiaries numbering 10 at Effiduase and Asokore (5 individuals from each town) that the facility has in one way or the other assisted some of them to start a business or expand existing ones. According to a respondent interviewed at Asokore Zongo, she said;

“the money has helped me very much, I am now able to look after my two daughters in Ahmadiyya School and Dadease School”.

However, they also admitted that the facility is too meager and sometimes if you are not cautious, you would end up squandering the money and appealed to the Assembly to increase the loan amount.

4.2.4 Assistance to the Physically Challenged.

The Department of Social Welfare as one of the decentralised departments has been charged in the District to champion the course of the vulnerable. In a field survey conducted in the five study areas during this research, it was revealed that a total of 61 people at Effiduasi have difficulty in walking, seeing and hearing. There was a similar pattern at Asokore with a total of 58 people who have difficulty in walking, seeing and hearing. Seneagya, Akokoaso and Dagomba also had a total of 34, 19 and 41 respectively. In all, a total of 213 people from the survey have difficulty in walking, seeing and hearing (refer to appendix 9)

It therefore implies that if the Assembly wants to tackle poverty problems in the District, the issue of vulnerability is very crucial. Vulnerability analysis is crucial for understanding poverty in so far as it helps to identify the characteristics of those impoverished households that lack the means to ascend the economic ladder and to tailor human development policies to their specific needs. It also helps to quantify not only the existing poor but also those in danger of becoming poor in the future and identifies a comprehensive set of sources of vulnerability of this group (World Bank, 2000).

The study shows that the Assembly is committed in releasing funds to alleviate the plight of the physically challenged and the vulnerable in the District under a special programme, 'Assistance for the Physically Challenged' and ' Allowance for the Physically Challenged' by granting them some assistance in the form of Wheel Chair and money. From interviews and interactions with nine (9) beneficiaries at Effiduase and Asokore (five from Effiduase and four from Asokore), it was evident that this assistance from the Assembly has brought tremendous improvement in their living conditions. Out of the nine individuals interviewed, one was a staff at the social welfare department, two (2) were also second year students at the Westphalian Vocational School at Oyoko, the others engaged themselves in Kente weaving to earn livelihood at Effiduase and Asokore.

The students indicated that these allowances have assisted them in buying materials needed for their studies and also pay their fees. Those engaged in kente weaving also maintained that these allowances have helped them increase their revolving capital and expand their business which earn them not less than GH ¢ 350.00 a week. However, some of them expressed reservations about the yearly interval which to them was too long and that at least quarterly would have been quite good. The Assembly in collaboration with the World Vision International has also donated some Wheel Chair to the Physically Challenged in the District (see Plate 4).

Plate 4 Wheel Chair donated by the District Assembly in collaboration with the World Vision International.



Source: Field Survey, 2008

4.2.5 Water and Sanitation

The Assembly believes that water is life, water is health and water is development. Hitherto, some of the communities such as Akokoaso and Seniagya resorted to water from streams, ponds, rivers and self constructed dams for domestic use. Some of these rivers, streams and ponds are also used by animals like grazing cows and sheep. These exposed the communities to diverse water related and water borne diseases. The Assembly in collaboration with the World Vision International has therefore made considerable investment in the form of water and sanitation in direct response to eradicate Guinea Worm diseases in the District. Ninety-nine boreholes have been drilled in 48 communities and two have been mechanized in Akokoaso and Seniagya (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). (See plate 5)

Plate 5 A Mechanized Boreholes at Akokoaso



Source: Field Survey, 2008

In an interview with one opinion leader in Akokoaso, he underscores the importance of the mechanized borehole but added that, because of lack of culture of maintenance, the mechanized borehole is broken down. They have now decided to sell the water to the people so that they can raise some money to maintain the borehole

4.2.6 Agricultural Activities

Over 60% of the total population in the District are engaged in agricultural production. Both food and cash crops are cultivated by the farmers in the District (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008). Between 2005 and 2007, the number of farms visited increased from 2106 to 3210 with corresponding increase in the number of farmers trained from 8,212 to 11273 (refer to appendix 10).

The extension training services covered techniques such as filling of land, row planting methods, fertilizer application, correct spacing, number of seed per till,

timely weeding, improved seeds and mode of weedicide application (Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008).

4.2.7 Assistance to Farmers

The Assembly in June 2006 acquired 200 acres of land at Dagomba for the cultivation of Soya beans. The land was cleared, ploughed, harrowed and allocated to farmer groups to plant the Soya beans. Some facilities for accommodation, water and sanitation as well as warehouses were provided at the site for farmers. However, a cross section of beneficiaries interviewed at Dagomba said that, the programme has failed due to the fact that, the amount of money given to them was woefully inadequate and therefore they could not do anything meaningful with the money. The Assembly has also distributed an amount of about two hundred thousand Ghana cedis (GH ¢ 200,000.00) with farming inputs valued at GH ¢ 400.00 to vegetable farmers in the District from the District Assembly's Common Fund (DACF) to cultivate and produce tomatoes, okro, garden-eggs, onion, pepper and crops like maize, rice, oil palm and Soya beans in the early part of 2007 at Dagomba, a typical farming community in the District.

In an interview with a section of these farmers at Dagomba with regard to their income level, benefit derived from this facility and the challenges they encountered during the farming season, the farmers admitted receipt of the assistance and that the facility, according to them was used in purchasing fertilizers, insecticides, high yielding seeds of maize, rice, cassava, Soya beans, oil palm and vegetables and spraying machines. The beneficiaries were however, quick to concede that the amount of money given was too small due to the fact that labour and farm inputs were costly

and post-harvest losses were also incurred. Other challenges encountered by these farmers were poor road network as the road to the nearest market centres, that is, Effiduase and Asokore were not tarred and hence, caused delay especially during the rainy season, ready market for their produce was also a problem.

The farmers admitted that middle men and women were also dictating prices to them, as such, they were not getting value for their produce. Farming was also at the subsistence level due to lack of adequate credit to expand their farms and acquisition of land was costly. However, the farmers were grateful to the District Assembly for at least assisting them with some credit facilities as this loan has assisted them to increase their acreage from the previous four (4) to five (5) and others six (6). It has also helped their income level to go up from the previous GH¢50.00 to between GH¢70.00 and GH¢80.00 in a month even though it has not solved their poverty problem.

4.2.8 The National Youth Employment Programme

Under the Youth Employment Programme, the Assembly recruited and sponsored 1000 youth in the early part of 2007 and another 132 Rural Education Volunteers and auxiliary nurses were also recruited, trained and posted to Effiduase, Asokore, Seniagya, Akokoaso, and Dagomba, all in the District. In the early part of 2008, a total number of 2112 were also registered for the programme out of which only 504 were employed and the remaining 1608 were not employed (refer to appendix 11 and 12).

Out of the 504 youth recruited in 2008, only 372 were engaged in various agricultural activities at Akokoaso and Dagomba. Another 890 youth were engaged to produce

maize, with 170 in cassava production, while 180 were to produce soya beans at Seniagya and Asokore. 36 and 78 youth were also engaged by the Assembly to produce rice and grass cutter respectively with 18 youth in snail production at Dagomba (refer to appendix 13).

These youth in agriculture were supposed to be given a loan of GH ¢ 100.00 each to start the programme. However, eight and five of these youth interviewed at Akokoaso and Dagomba respectively said they were not given the money and that has brought the whole programme to a standstill and they do not even know when the programme would be continued. However, a visit to the District Personnel's Office at Effiduase revealed that, the money was released to the Assembly in the last quarter of 2007 but it has been used for a different purpose.

A section of some auxiliary nurses were interviewed at the Effiduase Health Centre and the Seniagya Clinic respectively. A respondent stated:

"Although people see us working, we are suffering because our so called allowances do not come monthly".

The respondents said also that, their meager allowances of GH ¢ 75.00 come twice or trice every six months and they sometimes have to fall on relatives, and friends for survival. However, the respondents maintained that the programme has brought drastic improvement in their standard of living. This was due to the fact that, the respondents were able to cater for themselves and even give their ageing parents some money for food. A respondent in an interview at the Effiduase Health Centre said that,

"Officer I have been able to save some money amounting to GH ¢ 400.00 intending to further my education at the nursing training and I am still saving more".

Four teaching Assistants on the programme were also interviewed at Hamdaniyya Islamic Primary (1) at Asokore Zongo, the Ahmadiyya Primary (1), the Asokore Methodist Primary (1) and the Effiduase Presbyterian Primary (1). They also shared similar sentiments although their monthly allowances range between GH. ¢ 45.00 and GH. ¢ 50.00 which was quite lower as compared to their counterparts in the health sector. However, all these respondents admitted that this has not alleviated their poverty situation.

A cross section of respondents in the communities in the study area; Asokore, Seniagya, Dagomba, Effiduase and Akokoaso were asked to assess the Youth Employment Programme. Out of the 200 respondents, 76 respondents representing 35.6% responded to very good, 77 respondents representing 36.8% responded to good. 34 and 13 respondents representing 19.9% and 7.6% responded to poor and very poor respectively (refer to appendix 14).

It obviously means from appendix 14 that, a total of 153 respondents (that is 76 and 77) representing 72.4% (that is, 35.6% plus 36.8%) were very optimistic that the programme was beneficial to the youth. Most of the respondents believed in the adage that, *“the devil finds work for the idle hand”*. They were of the opinion that, despite the challenges and constraints of the programme, at least *'half a loaf is better than none'* and no matter how long their allowances delayed, it will certainly come one day. It therefore gives whoever is involved in the programme, the hope and courage of endurance. These moves by the Assembly are meant to put the youth in employment and to reduce poverty among the youth and improve the standard of living of the extreme poor in the community but this has not been achieved so far.

4.3 Sources of Funding For the Assembly's Poverty Alleviation Programmes

The major sources of income to the Assembly are Internally Generated Fund (IGF), Government's Grants, the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) and the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Funds. The Internally Generated Fund is made of rates, fees and fines, licenses, rents, investments and miscellaneous (refer to appendix 15).

Since 2002, the major single source of revenue to the Assembly has been from Government Grants which have increased from 95% in 2004 to 97% in 2005 as indicated in appendix 15. The implication is that without Government Grants the Assembly cannot undertake any meaningful development in the District. From 2003 to 2006, the District received a total sum of GH ₵56,866,199 in grant to undertake development programmes and projects. The Grants were in the form of District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) for the Assembly's Members of Parliament (MPs), Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Fund, Community Water and Sanitation Programme (CWSP 11), Promotion of District Capitals (PRODICAP), Quality Infrastructure Projects for Schools (QUIPS), Cocoa Disease Spraying and Village Infrastructure Project (VIP) (refer to appendix 16).

A total Government Grant of GH. ₵56,866,199 was spent on priority programmes and projects under the thematic areas of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Programme (GPRS1) (refer to appendix 17). Out of the total grant of GH ₵56,866,199 received by the Assembly between 2003 and 2006, a total of GH ₵55,214,852.14 was spent on projects and programmes meant among other things to alleviate poverty in the District. Apart from Grants, the Assembly has not been able to generate enough revenue from its own resources for any meaningful development programmes and projects.

4.4 Assessment of performance of the Assembly in poverty alleviation activities

The Sekyere East District Assembly is obviously playing its part in the provision of social amenities and infrastructural facilities. This is evident throughout the studied communities in the District as 120 (55.6%) respondents interviewed rated the performance as good while another 53 (27.4%) rated the performance as very good. In all, 173 (that is 120 plus 53) out of a total of 200 respondents representing 83.0% (that is 55.6% plus 27.4%) were of the view that the Assembly is doing well with only 27 respondents representing (17.0%) who indicated the performance to be poor (refer to appendix 18).

These initiated projects include the provision of social amenities and infrastructure facilities, provision of bore holes for communities without access to potable water, electricity, construction of feeder roads, markets centres, toilets, classrooms, clinics, nurses' quarters and doctors' bungalows. Respondents admitted that even though the utilization of these facilities has brought burden on them in terms of paying utility bills; water and electricity, markets tolls and rent advances yet the benefits in terms of healthy living condition, easy access to medical facilities, potable water devoid of water borne and related diseases among others far outweigh the disadvantages.

4.5 Agents of Poverty Alleviation in the District

Apart from the District Assembly, the study also found out that there were few Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) operating in the District to help alleviate poverty. These NGOs were the World Vision International (WVI) and the Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) who were mainly engaged in training farmers on cultivation of high yielding cereals, construction of classroom blocks,

teachers'accomodation and nurses' quarters, construction of latrines, sponsoring children of HIV/AIDS victims to enroll in Primary and Senior High Schools (see plate 5).

Plate 5 Shows a Six Apartment Teachers' Accommodation built by World Vision International at the Seniagya Community.

Plate 5 Six Apartment Teachers' Accommodation at Seniagya Community.



Source: Field Survey, 2008.

They were also engaged in educating nursing mothers on exclusive breastfeeding and providing antenatal care for pregnant women among others. In addition these organisations distributed some uniforms to school pupils and this gesture from these

organisations have in one way or the other assisted the poor in the community (refer to appendix 19 and 20).

A cross section of respondents interviewed at Seniagya, Akokoaso and Effiduase admitted that the activities of these NGOs have really helped them as one respondent who is HIV/AIDS victim in Akokoaso said:

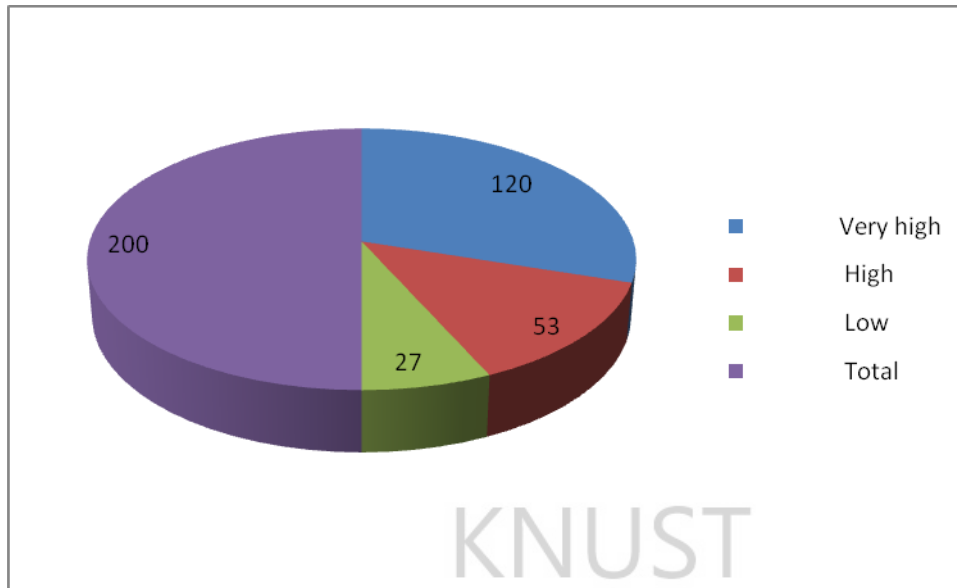
“I am grateful to them for sponsoring my son and daughter to attend school. They have also helped me to buy anti-retroviral drugs and that is why am still alive today”.

Other NGOs identified in the District were the Community Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP) which works closely with the District Assembly in the provision of infrastructure development and other amenities, and the Social Investment Fund (SIF). It is however, interesting to note that the SIF for instance has even no office in the District.

4.6 Current State of Poverty in the District

The State of poverty in the District as indicated by the data gathered from the field suggest that despite all the efforts by the District Assembly in alleviating the sufferings of the rural poor, poverty is still high in the District currently. Out of the 200 respondents interviewed, 53 respondents representing (27.4%) confirmed that, poverty level is currently very high while 120 representing (55.6%) of the respondents indicated that poverty is still high in the District. 27 respondents representing (17.0%) were however, of the view that the current state of poverty is low (see Figure 4.1)

Figure 4.1: The Current State of Poverty in the District.



Source: Field Survey, 2008

Majority of the respondents were of the view that poverty is still on the ascendancy in the District. Drastic measures therefore, need to be put in place to deal with the situation by the District Assembly and other development partners and donor agencies before the situation get out of hand.

4.7 Participation of Local People in Decision Making and Project Implementation .

The involvement of local stakeholders in the process of developing their own territory is a prerequisite for sustainable growth. Bringing local stakeholders in a policy dialogue through a Local Forum helps to build trust, encourages innovation and promotes the creation of social networks and activities. Most importantly perhaps, the involvement of stakeholders fosters social cohesion, thereby decreasing the risk of further conflict (Asante, 2003). The experience of People's Participation in Programmes has demonstrated that true participation is possible only when the rural

poor are able to pool their efforts and resources in pursuit of objectives they set for themselves. But As Katsiaouni (2003) puts it, “a process for participation does not ipso facto lead to empowerment and to be consulted does not mean that one’s voice had weight in decision taken”. Khan (2003) and Katsiaouni (2003) argue that one way of achieving this is through “engaged governance” whereby an attempt is made through new forms of collaboration between citizens, groups and the public sector to link social capital into the development management process of a country.

4.7.1 Level of Involvement of the Rural Poor in Decision Making and Project Implementation

The findings of the study suggest that there is a certain level of involvement of the rural poor in decision making and project implementation. Out of the 200 respondents interviewed, 2.3% of the NGOs Staff in the District upheld the view that the communities were certainly involved in decision making and policy implementation while 97.7% indicated that the poor were not involved. Furthermore, 29.8% of the opinion leaders and community members also confirmed that the poor were involved in decision making while 70.2% of the community members indicated that the poor were not involved in any decision making (refer to appendix 21).

It can be inferred from appendix 21 that the design and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes is done with limited involvement of the rural poor. The ambiguity around whether decentralisation helps the rural poor is due to the fact that policy makers and bureaucrats continue to exercise control and dominate the development agenda. There is little inclination towards the involvement of the rural poor in the development process (Kyei, 1999). Majority of the respondents were of the view that lack of participation of the poor in the development agenda has

adversely affected their living condition and has led to a misplaced priority by the District Assembly.

4.8 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE SEKYERE EAST DISTRICT ASSEMBLY.

Challenges are bound to happen in every sphere of human life and so is the case of the District Assembly. These challenges can be attributed to internal and external factors some of which are due to the bureaucratic nature of the Central Government activities, the lapses in the structures of participatory democracy at the grass root as well as from the local people themselves. The failure of some of the farming projects due to natural factors such as rain failure, high rate of loan defaulters in the communities and lack of regular maintenance of the few boreholes that have been drilled. Other major challenges identified relate to the attitude of the people towards the repayment of loans from the Poverty Alleviation Funds (PAF) given to them to establish and expand their business. The worse sometimes is the fact that the modalities for selecting beneficiaries are not open and transparent due to the tradition that, party faithfuls and sympathizers who are not poor are granted these facilities.

Others who were committed to repay the loans complained bitterly about the short duration for repayment that is, within twelve (12) months period and the 10% interest rate charge on the loan. The District Assembly also finds it difficult to have a 100% recovery rate of the loan since some of the beneficiaries fail to provide their accurate personal information. As a result others are prevented from benefiting from the loans. The few, who benefited, do not get the full amount they request for which

increasingly makes it difficult to use the meager amount received for the intended purpose.

Untimely release of funds from the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) from the Central Government through the administrator of the Common Fund for development projects was another major hiccup bedeviling the District Assembly in its efforts to perform its function in line with objectives to alleviate poverty in the District. The major aspects of the Assembly's budget on developmental projects depend on this source of funding, the frequent delays in its release has incapacitated the Assembly in carrying out development projects outlined for Poverty Alleviation Programmes.

In an interview with the Planning Officer at his office in Effiduase during the research, it was revealed that, in almost all the activities of the Assembly, all stakeholders like the Ghana Private Road and Transport Union (GPRTU), Trade Associations, operators of restaurants, barkeepers, beauticians and other identifiable bodies were made an integral part of the discussion. They express their opinions on the rates and fees to be charged in the incoming year. By so doing, they make important inputs into the budget. The citizenry are also involved in programmes and projects implementation. The chiefs, opinion leaders, unit committee members and beneficiary communities are also involved in meetings, projects inspection, monitoring and evaluation. To inform the people on the activities and performance of the Assembly so that they in turn can express their views on the activities of the Assembly particularly on issues that are of concern to them, public hearing and People's Assemblies were organised in the District as and when it is necessary.

On the issue of loan defaulters, the Budget Officer who was interviewed at Effiduasi emphasised the fact that, the Assembly is committed in finding all means available to

retrieve the loans from the defaulters even if it means summoning them to court. However, he stressed that one must tread cautiously and must also be careful and tactical in dealing with this issue as it is a delicate one. This is because most of these defaulters are party faithfuls and sympathizers and have link with the politicians. He also reiterated the fact expressed earlier by the Planning Officer to the effect that, if you try summoning these defaulters to the court, you might end up being transferred. According to the Personnel Officer too in an interview at Effiduase, the Assembly has also observed that, the loans given to the people in the community end up in wrong hands. Therefore, they were working out modalities such as gathering information and data on the people in the community so that the poor can be identified and provided with assistance.

Concerning the failure of some farming projects, the Personnel Officer on his part attributed it to natural factors such as inadequate rainfall when he granted the researcher audience at his office in Effiduasi. This, he stressed was obviously beyond the Assembly. However, the Personnel Officer assured the researcher that, the Assembly is trying hard to put in place some irrigation facilities so that in case of rain failure, farmers can depend on the irrigation facility to cultivate their crops. He emphasised the need to protect agriculture as it has been and continue to be the backbone of the Sekyere East District's Economy.

On his part, the Sekyere East District Chief Executive reiterated the fact that bureaucracy at the national level is a major issue and steps were far advanced to at least minimise it and ensure timely release of funds for development activities of the District. This was said in an interview with him at Effiduase; the District capital. He also hinted that, some of the loan defaulters have been summoned to appear in court to answer charges on why they defaulted in repayment of the facility granted them.

Meanwhile a visit to the Effiduase Circuit Court confirmed that four individuals from Dagomba and Asokore were served with writ of summons as at October 2008 to appear in court according to the Sekyere East District Circuit Court Registrar. The District Chief Executive further admitted that the Assembly was to be blamed for not supervising maintenance of the few boreholes drilled and that officials responsible have been reprimanded and ordered to ensure weekly maintenance of the facilities. Furthermore, he had ordered that, the modalities for selecting beneficiaries of Scholarship and Micro-credit Scheme must be made transparent and that, names of prospective beneficiaries should be submitted to him for cross checking and subsequent approval before final disbursement.

4.9 Awareness of the Activities of the District Assembly in Poverty Alleviation

The test of the hypotheses was done using the author's field data on the level of awareness of District Assembly's activities and the awareness of the activities of government institutions and other organisations in the District. A non parametric test (a chi-square test) was run using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software with 1 degree of freedom and 95% confidence level (that is 5% error level).

Frequencies

Activities of the District Assembly have created awareness of poverty in the District.

Attributes	Observed N	Percentages (%)
Yes	154	77
no	46	23
Total	200	100

Government institutions and other organisations have become good collaborators in solving poverty problem in the District.

Attributes	Observed N	Percentages (%)
Yes	159	79
No	41	21
Total	200	100

Test Statistics

Attributes	Activities of the District Assembly have not created greater awareness and helped in solving the problem of poverty in the Sekyere East District	Government institutions and other organisation have not being good collaborators and helped in solving the problem of poverty in the District.
Chi-square a,b	58.320	69.6620
df	1	1
Asump. Sig.	.000	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. minimum expected cell frequency is 41.8.

b. 0 cell (.0 %) have expected cell frequency less than 5. minimum expected cell frequency is 100.0.

The chi-square test gave the results for the hypotheses that activities of the District Assembly have not created awareness and helped in solving the problem of poverty in the Sekyere East District as 58.320 with 1 degree of freedom. This value is greater than the critical chi-square value of 3.84* with 1 degree of freedom at 5% error level.

The second hypotheses that government institutions and other organisations have not being good collaborators and helped in solving the problem of poverty in the District also gave a result of 69.6620 at 1 degree of freedom which is also greater than the critical chi-square value of 3.84* with 1 degree of freedom at 5% error level.

Note: * was read from a chi-square distribution table.

From the test result it can be concluded that a null hypotheses that the activities of the District Assembly have created the awareness of poverty and helped in solving the problem of poverty in the District should be rejected and the alternative hypotheses that the activities of the District Assembly have not created awareness and helped in solving the problem of poverty in the District be accepted. Also the null hypotheses that government institutions and other organisations are good collaborators in solving poverty problem should be rejected and the alternative hypotheses be accepted. It therefore, implies that government and other organisations have not being good collaborators in solving poverty problems in the District.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the main findings of the study, recommendations made where necessary and conclusions drawn based on the findings.

5.1.1 Summary of Findings.

The research assessed the Poverty Alleviation Strategies of District Assemblies (DAs). The study also sought to specifically examine the activities of the Sekyere East District Assembly in alleviating poverty in the District, the impact of such activities on the living conditions of the rural poor, the rural poor's perception of poverty and the District Assembly Staff's perception of poverty. Other aspects include the involvement of the rural poor in decision making and project implementation and assessment of the efforts of the Assembly in alleviating the sufferings of the rural poor in the District.

To achieve these set of objectives, five (5) study areas; Asokore, Effiduase, Dagomba, Seniagya and Akokoaso were chosen out of five Town/Area Councils based on the Poverty Profile of the Sekyere East District Assembly as endemic areas. The profile identified key poverty problems in these selected areas as high illiteracy rate, large family sizes, unemployment, high birth rate, poor road network and poor access to social amenities. Questionnaires were administered to 200 respondents selected from the five (5) communities; Effiduase, Asokore, Seneagya, Akokoaso, and Dagomba, the World Vision and the Adventist Development Relief Agency and 10 decentralized departments in the district. The Two hundred (200) respondents were selected using a simple random sampling technique, data gathered were analysed using the Statistical

Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows (version 11.0; spss Inc, Chicago) and Excel for Windows (version 6.1; Microsoft Corp. Redmond, WA) and statistical significance was defined as a P-value of < 0.05 . A non parametric test (a chi-square test) was run using the SPSS software with 1 degree of freedom and 95% confidence level (that is 5% error level) to test the Hypotheses. Statistical tools such as bar graphs and tables were used to describe variables and where necessary photographs were employed to give a visual image of the situation being described. The major findings from the data gathered are the following:

5.1.2 Perception of Poverty by the Educated and the Poor People

Staff of the District Assembly shared their perceptions about poverty. They viewed poverty as lack of employment, inability to afford the basic necessities of life; food, shelter and clothing, inability to also cater for a person's family and not able to pursue education to a higher level among others. Similarly, the rural poor communities also shared almost the same sentiments but were quick to add vulnerability that is physical and mental incapacitation and lack of participation of the rural poor in poverty alleviation programmes as other dimensions of poverty.

However, there existed differences in perception between the educated community and the rural poor as to what actually constitute poverty. The educated community design poverty alleviation strategies based on how they perceived poverty issues. What is perceived as poverty provides the basis on which policies are designed to meet poverty alleviation goals (Kyei, 1999). So was the case with the educated community who have narrowed poverty to their perception and design policies and

programmes to meet it; that is provision of social amenities and infrastructural facilities. The deplorable living condition of the rural poor was given less attention.

5.1.3 Poverty Alleviation Programmes of the Sekyere East District Assembly

Evidences from the study areas showed that the District Assembly is at least trying its best to provide the poor with social amenities and facilities such as classroom blocks health facilities, rehabilitation of some feeder roads and connecting some of the villages to the national grid and other services which could make life meaningful for them. The Scholarship Scheme for the needy but brilliant students has assisted a lot of students through high schools and the tertiary institutions. The Yearly Allowances and the Wheel chair package for the physically challenged in the Sekyere East District have also improved the conditions of the physically challenged.

The Youth Employment Programme, notwithstanding its challenges has helped the youth to channel their energy and time into income generating activities. The Micro-credit scheme has assisted the rural poor to engage in income generating activities to raise productivity. What was lacking was identification of the poor, paying attention to the deplorable conditions of the poor, and their involvement in decision making and project implementation.

5.1.4 Non-Governmental Organisations in the Sekyere East District

It was found out that there were a few Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as the World Vision International, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), the Community Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP) and the Social Investments Fund (SIF). These organizations were involved in activities

like training farmers on cultivation of high yielding seeds, infrastructural development and sponsoring children of HIV/AIDS victims to enroll in schools. In addition, these organisations distributed some uniforms to school pupils and this gesture have in one way or the other assisted the poor in the studied communities including Effiduase, Dagomba, Asokore, Seneagya and Akokoaso (refer to appendix 19 and 20). These organisations were doing the best they could with the expectations that the District Assembly would double its efforts in an attempt to alleviate poverty in the Sekyere East District (see Plate 4). The activities of the NGOs have really helped the rural poor in some of the communities (refer to page 77).

5.1.5 Challenges faced by the Sekyere East District Assembly

However, the Sekyere East District Assembly in its quest to perform its responsibilities encountered a lot of challenges. These challenges can be attributed to internal and external factors some of which were due to the bureaucratic nature of the Central Government's activities, the lapses in the structures of participatory democracy at the grass root as well as from the local people themselves, delay in the release of funds from the Central Government due to probably bureaucratic formalities. The Internally Generated Fund (IGF) was also woefully inadequate due to the fact that a greater percentage of it goes to perhaps recurrent expenditure of the Assembly.

The (IGF) and the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) were the only major sources of income for the Assembly and any delay especially in the release of the Common Fund to the Assembly would obviously have a negative impact on the Assembly's quest to provide the people with developmental projects. The failure of

some of the farming projects were also due to natural factors such as rain failure. The study also found out that improvement in the living condition of the rural poor has not been fully achieved. According to the United Nation Human Development Index (HDI), for a country to achieve this target; inequality between the rich and the rural poor must be bridged, unemployment and access to basic necessities of life; food, shelter and clothing must also be addressed.

Furthermore, there was high rate of loan defaulters in the communities and lack of regular maintenance of the few boreholes that have been drilled. Other major challenges identified relate to the attitude of the people towards the repayment of loans from the Poverty Alleviation Funds (PAF) given to them to establish and expand their business. The worse sometimes is the fact that the modalities for selecting beneficiaries are not open and transparent because party faithfuls and sympathizers who are not poor are granted these facilities.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

Evidences from the study have really established the commitment of the District Assembly to provide the rural poor with social amenities and infrastructure, health care facilities to make them realise their objectives in life. What is however, lacking is the commitment of the Assembly towards identification of the poor and their involvement in decision making and project implementation. It would be unfair to conclude that the District Assembly has not put much effort in providing the people with developments. Again, it is imperative to also admit that the poverty alleviation strategies of the Sekyere East District Assembly have had a certain level of impact on the living condition of the poor (refer to Chapter Four). However, having provided all

the infrastructure, granted all the loans, assisted farmers with inputs and credit facilities, granted scholarships to needy but brilliant students, poverty is still high in the District. Effective ways should therefore be found to regulate the priorities of the Assembly in improving the livelihoods and living conditions of the rural poor through income generating activities. This must therefore take precedence over any other activities of the Assembly if indeed poverty is to be alleviated. After all, it is when the child in the classroom gets food to eat that he or she can effectively concentrate on learning.

The report of this research was significant to the Sekyere East District Assembly since its findings helped in getting a better way of alleviating poverty in the District. The findings have also helped the District Assembly to involve the people at the grassroots in decision-making. Besides, the study has again assisted the District Assembly to find ways of empowering the people to fight poverty by engaging themselves in income generating activities.

The main constrain of this work was limited coverage of the entire District since the research was carried out in two main towns and three other villages within the District. The study was also carried out within a limited time and this was due to lack of resources since the researcher was a student. Other limitations included reluctance on the part of some respondents to collect the questionnaires and the difficulty in understanding some of the questions. The researcher in trying to surmount these limitations had to carefully explain some of the difficult questions to the respondents without influencing their response in any way. Sometimes too, the researcher had to offer some respondents money to get information.

The findings of the study really justified the objectives and the hypotheses of the study. This is because the study found out that the elites designed poverty alleviation programmes based on how they perceived poverty and not on the perception of the rural poor. The study among other things also found out that the rural poor were not involved in programmes meant to alleviate poverty. It is also evident from the study that the activities of the District Assembly have not created awareness and helped in solving poverty problems in the Sekyere East District.

These findings reaffirm the fact that further research is needed on the need to involve and allow the rural poor to participate in poverty reduction programmes. In developing a definition of poverty that is applicable to the social development of the people, participation of the poor is extremely important, since only they would know what they consider to be poverty (Walt, 2004). Once such a definition is developed, methods must be developed to measure the current status, so as to determine whether future policies to address poverty are effective or not. A clearly defined definition of poverty would also help to identify the best intervention and strategy in the fight against poverty, focusing efforts and resources where it is most effective.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 Capacity Building by Non Governmental Organisations

It is recommended that the non-governmental organizations working in the district (NGOs) should intensify their education and training programmes in the District to enable their activities to be understood more by the people especially the illiterate population who are more vulnerable to poverty. An important and crucial aspect of poverty alleviation strategy is to transfer skills and knowledge to different groups in

the district. Typical capacity enhancement topics should include: building hope for a better future; community decision-making; group formation; holding local government (District Assembly) accountable; gender equality, enhanced role of women; local fund raising; networking and credit management.

5.3.2 The District Assembly

The District Assembly should try and meet the people in open fora and People's Assembly regularly to continuously and routinely interact with the people and work on their concerns. The District Assembly should hold frequent interactions and meetings with the substructures to improve communication and collaboration in the development process. Also in areas like Effiduasi and Asokore where community centres are available, negotiations should be made for such places to be used as resource centres for community interactions. This will assist foster the bond of unity between the Assembly officials and rural communities to enable them share ideas and help each other in various vocations.

5.3.3 Sensitization Programmes by Opinion Leaders and Community Members

The opinion leaders and community members who attend workshops and seminars should be encouraged to organise such seminars and workshops in their various communities to enlighten the people about the need to be educated and to work. The Chiefs and Assembly members of the various communities should use their positions in their communities to mobilize people for educational fora and workshops to sensitize the rural poor on poverty issues and how to put themselves into income generating activities to better their livelihoods.

5.3.4 Action against Loan Defaulters

The Sekyere East District Assembly should adopt certain measures and mechanisms to ensure that those who come for loans do pay it back so that other prospective beneficiaries can also get access to it. The Assembly can send writ of summons through the District Circuit Court to loan defaulters to appear before the Court and answer charges brought against them. This would serve as a deterrent to would be beneficiaries. The Assembly should be seen as an arm of Government charged with the responsibility of bringing development to the people at the local level. The loan given to beneficiaries must be increased significantly by the District Assembly looking at the economic situation of the country and beneficiaries must be supervised to utilize the loan judiciously to enable them repay to keep the scheme running.

5.3.5 Improving Agriculture

The Sekyere East District Assembly should also concentrate much on agriculture as it forms the backbone of the District's economy. The major occupation of the people in the study areas is farming. The Assembly should channel a lot of its resources to enhance agricultural productivity. This could be done by providing the farmers with credit facilities with flexible terms of payment, provide them with high yielding seeds and fertilizers to help them move from subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture.

In addition to agriculture, the Assembly can provide employment avenues and opportunities to the youth through the development of tourism potentials in the District. The District is endowed with many tourist sites. One of such tourist site is the Bomfobiri Wildlife Sanctuary. It was originally part of the Boumfum Forest Reserve

which was gazetted as a totally protected wildlife area in 1975. The Bomfobiri Wildlife Sanctuary which covers an area of about 4921 hectares has several species of buffaloes, monkeys, bush dogs and crocodiles in the Ongwam River. This could possibly be done in collaboration with the Ghana Tourist Board to develop the area. The revenue generated here could form part of the Internally Generated Fund (IGF) and could be channelled into improving the living conditions of the rural poor.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Sex Composition of Respondents

Locations	Male	Female	Total	%
Asokore	18	12	30	15
Effiduase	26	14	40	20
Seneagya	23	29	52	26
Akokoaso	16	24	40	20
Dagomba	21	17	38	19
Total	112	88	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Appendix 2 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 - 28	34	19.9
29 - 39	76	35.6
40 - 50	77	36.8
50+	13	7.6
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Appendix 3 Occupational Distribution of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Civil Servants	45	20.0
Unemployed	31	14.4
Farmers	62	28.4
Students	33	15.1
Self Employment	29	13.6
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Appendix 4 District Assembly Staff's Perception of Poverty

Respondents	Meaning of Poverty
The District Personnel Officer	When one cannot afford the required basic necessities of life; food, shelter, and clothing.
The District Engineer	When there is unemployment and at the same time people are not able to cater for their wards in terms of paying fees, providing food for the family and other necessities.
The District Budget Officer	A situation whereby people cannot afford to pay for their medical and utility bills, afford the basic necessities such as food and shelter.
The District Secretary	Living below the acceptable minimum standard of the society. Lack of skills to work to earn a living.
The District Messengers and Drivers	Unable to attain higher education, unemployment, not able to pay for health facilities, and cannot afford basic requirements of life; food, shelter and clothing.

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Appendix 5 The Poor's Perception of Poverty

The Communities	Meaning of Poverty
Effiduase	Lack of assets, inability to afford basic necessities of life; food, clothing and shelter, unable to pay for medical facilities, inability to attain higher education and lack of employment.
Asokore	Lack of assets, laziness, voicelessness, living below accepted minimum standard of living and isolation from poverty alleviation programmes.
Dagomba	Lack of money, laziness, unemployment, inability to afford basic necessities of life; food, shelter and clothing, lack of participation in developmental activities, voiceless and powerlessness.
Seniagya	Lack of Money, lack of participation in poverty alleviation projects, inability to afford two square meals a day, unable to pay your wards fees and not able to pay for medical bills and physical weakness.
Akokoaso	Lack of participation in poverty alleviation programmes, unemployment, inability to afford food and shelter, unable to pay medical bills, school fees, higher education, unable to defend oneself, lack of voice to air grievances, physical and mental incapacitation.

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Appendix 6 Differences in Perception of Poverty between the Poor and the Educated

The Rural Poor's Perception of Poverty	The Educated Community's Perception of Poverty
Lack of participation in poverty alleviation and developmental project.	Lack of Money, employment and employable skills.
Lack of voice to air their views and grievances.	Inability to attain higher education and employable skills.
Inability of one to afford three square meals a day.	Inability to attain the basic necessities of life; food, shelter and clothing.
Inability to cater for one's medical bills	Unable to afford medical bills, school fees and cater for your ward.
Physical weakness; sickness, pains, visually impaired, deaf and dumb.	Living below the accepted minimum standard of living

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Appendix 7 Causes of Poverty in the District.

The Educated people in the Community	The Poor people in the Community
Lack of lucrative job and money which would sufficiently cater for one's children.	Lack of jobs and money
Lack of industrial establishment to provide jobs and training to the youth to acquire employable skills and inability to be educated to a higher level.	The poor road network to the market centres hinders ready market for their produce.
Agriculture is based on subsistence level (that is from hand to mouth)	Lack of capital and loan facilities to start small scale businesses
Lackadaisical attitude towards jobs, laziness and lack of education.	Inability to pursue education to the highest level.
Rural-urban migration; most of the youth who are energetic to provide both skill and unskilled labour to the farmers have migrated to the cities in search of white color jobs which are not in existence.	Farming as a major economic activity in the District is not lucrative. Assistance to farmers is not sufficient and only a few farmers have access to it.

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Appendix 8 Some of the Developmental Projects from 2001 up to 2007.

LOCATION	PROJECT	FUNDING SOURCE	REMARKS
Effiduasi	Construction of 1 No 12 seater Aqua privy toilet	HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries)	Completed
	Construction of faecal sludge Treatment facility	DACF (District Assembly's Common Fund)	On – going
	Construction of 3-unit classroom block, office, store and toilet facility	HIPC	Completed
	Construction of 3 room Doctor's Bungalow	DACF	Completed
	Construction of 2 Bedroom Semi-detached Nurse Quarters	DACF	Completed
	Paving of GTZ Market	DACF	Completed
	Construction of metal barrier(Effiduasi-Kumasi)	DACF	Completed
	Construction of 4-unit concrete culverts and Drilling of 1 No Borehole fitted with pump	DACF/HIPC	Completed
Asokore	Construction of 1 No 3-unit classroom block for Ahmadiyya Primary School	HIPC	Completed
Seniagya	Construction of 1 No 3-unit classroom block, office, store and Toilet Facility	HIPC	Completed

Asokore	R/C Classroom block up drading of 7.5km Feeder road	CBRDP /DACF (community based rural development project)	Completed
Akokoaso	Construction of 1 No 3- unit classroom block with ancillary facilities	HIPC	Completed
Dagomba	Construction of Maternity block	DACF	On-going
Akokoaso	Construction of 6 classroom blocks	DACF	Completed
Seniagya	BS-1-Classroom block	GETFUND (Ghana education trust fund)	Completed
Asokore	Construction of 1 NO 4- unit Teachers Accommodation	MP's Common fund	On-going
Seneagya	Construction of school building with a library,stores,headteachers office and teachers common room.	DACF	Completed
Dagomba	Construction of 1 No 20- seater Vault Chamber Toilet	CBRDP/DACF	On-going
Dagomba	Construction of six apartment teachers accommodation	CBRDP/DACF	Completed
Asokore	Rehabilitation of 1 No 8- unit Primary School block	MCA (millennium Challenged Account)	No-going

Source: Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008.

Appendix 9 Frequency of Physically Challenged in the Study Areas.

	Effiduasi	Asokore	Seniagya	Dagomba	Akokoaso
No. of people with difficulty in walking	30	33	8	11	10
No. of people with difficulty in hearing	12	15	4	5	6
No. of people with difficulty in seeing	19	10	22	25	3
Total	61	58	34	41	19

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Appendix 10 Agricultural Extension Services (Visits).

Year	Farm visits	Farmers Visited	Farmers Trained	Field Days Held
2005	2106	10684	8212	577
2007	3212	16650	11273	683
TOTAL	5,318	27,334	19,485	1,260

Source: Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008.

Appendix 11 Number of Youth Registered

Modules	Number Registered	Male	Female	Total
Youth in Agric.	345	200	145	345
Trade & Vocation	72	26	46	72
Community Protection	121	78	43	121
I. C.T.	61	29	32	61
Waste/Sanitation	61	32	29	61
Teaching Assistants	1000	620	380	1000
Health Extension	452	114	338	452

Source: Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008.

Appendix 12 Number of Youth Employed

Modules	Number employed	Male	Female	TOTAL
Youth in Agric	190	105	85	190
Waste/Sanitation	41	31	10	41
Teaching Assistants	162	114	48	162
Health Extension	111	8	103	111

Source: Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008.

Appendix 13 Number of Youth engaged in various Agricultural Activities

Type of Agricultural activity	Number of Youth engaged
Maize	890
Cassava	170
Rice	36
Soya Beans	180
Grass Cutter	78
Snail Rearing	18

Source: Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008.

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Appendix 14 Assessment of the Youth Employment Programme

Respondents	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Very Good	76	35.6
Good	77	36.8
Poor	34	19.9
Very poor	13	7.6
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Appendix 15 Proportion of Major Sources of Revenue to the District Assembly

YEAR	2002(%)	2003 (%)	2004 (%)	2005 (%)
IGF	15	4	5	3
Government Grants	85	96	95	97
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

Source: Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008.

Appendix 16 Government Grants to the Assembly, 2003 - 2006

GRANTS	2003 (Amount in GH ¢)	2004 (Amount in GH ¢)	2005 (Amount in GH ¢)	2006 (Amount in GH ¢)
MPs Common Fund			272,208	403,729
HIPC FUND		4,793,892	5,404,070	5,508,780
CWSP II		829,932	537,114	1,413,919
PRODICAP		118,117		
QUIPS		99,360		
SPRAYING COCOA				958,218
VIP		384,030		
DACF	2,980,000	4,292,000	4,421,831	5,792,000

Source: Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008.

Appendix 17 Expenditure Distribution According to Priority Areas of the GPRS1

SECTOR	2003 Amount in (GH ¢)	2004 Amount in (GH ¢)	2005 Amount in (GH ¢)	2006 Amount in (GH ¢)
Micro/District Economy	85,000	50,000	40,000	414,000
Production & Gainful Employment	33,600	1,643,024	1,670,000	1,428,218
Human Resource Development	566,634	652,780	1,140,000	1,460,000
Special Programmes for the Vulnerable & the Excluded	135,000	90,000	430,000	155,000
Good Governance	758,671	933,251	1,180,054	1,957,000

Source: Sekyere East District Assembly, 2008.

Appendix 18 Showing Assessment of the Performance of the Assembly

Grade	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Very Good	120	55.6
Good	53	27.4
Poor	27	17.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Appendix 19 World Vision International Activities in the District.

NGOs	ACTIVITY
World Vision International	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Four (4) children of an HIV victim enrolled in primary school at Dagomba and one child at Opoku Ware Senior High. 2. Two hundred and forty-three (243) children – 109 girls and 134 boys enrolled in four different Senior High Schools and one girl in Teacher Training College. 3. Two thousand and thirteen primary school pupils in five zones benefited from school uniform distribution. 4. Construction of six classroom block with stores, common rooms and libraries at Seniagya. 5. One hundred and twenty eight nursing mothers educated on exclusive breast feeding in Seniagya and Asokore 6. Eighty pregnant women benefited from antenatal care through the provision of Gift in Kind (GIK) food supplement drugs. 7. A six (6) apartment teacher's accommodation constructed and completed at Seniagya and one TB training centre also constructed and completed at Effiduase.

	<p>8. Three thousand and seventy farmers from Dagomba, Asokore, Effiduase, Dagomba and Akokoaso were trained in cultivation of high yielding cereals from comper demonstration</p> <p>9. Three thousand farmers benefited from participatory cassava breeding programme in Seneagya – a forty plot cassava demonstration farm with 40 varieties of cassava established at Dagomba.</p>
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Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Appendix 20 Adventist Development Relief Agency Activities in the District

NGO	ACTIVITY
Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA)	<p>1. A six unit classroom, stores and libraries constructed at Dagomba for hundred children.</p> <p>2. Twenty two (22) latrines with drops holes constructed at Seniagya, and Akokoaso.</p> <p>3. One hundred and twenty farmers have being facilitated to construct crapes for storages.</p>

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Appendix 21 Level of Involvement of the Poor in Decision Making and Project Implementation

	NGOs Staff and Related Workers		Opinion Leaders and Community Members		District Staff	Assembly
ANSWER	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
YES	4	2.3	51	29.8	15	100
NO	10	97.7	120	70.2	0	0
TOTAL	14	100	171	100	15	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

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APPENDIX 22

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

TOPIC: Poverty Alleviation Strategies of District Assemblies: A case study of the Sekyere East District Assembly

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SEKYERE EAST DISTRICT ASSEMBLY STAFF

SECTION A:

General Information of the respondents

1. Name.....
2. Sex Female ☐ Male ☐
3. Age 18 – 28 ☐ 29 – 39 ☐ 40– 50 ☐ 50+ ☐
4. Religion Christian ☐ Muslim ☐ others, specify
5. Occupation.....
6. Position (post).....
7. Marital status Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed ☐
8. Do you work with the District Assembly? Yes ☐ No ☐
9. If yes, how long?.....years

SECTION B:

10. What is poverty?
.....
11. What are the causes of poverty in the
District?.....
.....
12. Is the poverty level in the district very high? Yes ☐ No ☐
13. Do you know of any poverty alleviation strategies in the district? Yes ☐ No ☐
14. If “yes”, mention some of them,
.....

15. How effective are these poverty alleviation strategies?

.....

16. Is the District Assembly adopting and implementing them? Yes ☐ No ☐

17. How would you describe poverty level in the district?

Very high ☐ High ☐ Low ☐

18. Is poverty having any effect on the people in the District? Yes ☐ No ☐

19. If yes, to what extent will you rate the effect of poverty on the people in the District? Very High ☐ High ☐ Low ☐ Very Low ☐

20. Do you think it can be controlled? Yes ☐ No ☐

21. If “yes”, how?.....

22. If “No” why?.....

23. What has been the role of the District Assembly in trying to reduce poverty in the District?.....

24. Do you know of the existence of some NGOs in the District? Yes ☐ No ☐

25. If “yes”, are they involved in the process of poverty alleviation in the District?

Yes ☐ No ☐

26. If “yes”, to what extent will you describe their level of involvement?

.....

27. Mention some of the activities embarked upon by these NGOs with regards to poverty alleviation in the District.

.....

28. Will you say these activities are effective? Yes ☐ No ☐

29. If “yes”,
how?.....

30. If “No”,
why?.....

31. What are some of the challenges faced by the Assembly in its attempt to implement poverty alleviation policies in the district?.....
32. How can the Assembly deal with some of these challenges?.....
33. Do you know any other organization or government institution working in the district to help the rural poor? Yes ☐ No ☐
34. Would you say the activities of the Assembly have created poverty awareness in the district? Yes ☐ No ☐

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APPENDIX 23

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

TOPIC: Poverty Alleviation Strategies of District Assemblies: A case study of the Sekyere East District Assembly

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR OPINION LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

SECTION A:

General Information of the respondents

1. Name.....
2. Sex Female ☐ Male ☐
3. Age 18 – 28 ☐ 29– 39 ☐ 40– 50 ☐ 50+ ☐
4. Occupation.....

SECTION B:

5. What is poverty?.....
6. Do you know of any poverty alleviation programmes by the Assembly in the District? Yes ☐ No ☐
7. If yes ,name some
8. How effective are these programmes in helping the rural poor?.....
9. Are these programmes having positive impact on the poor? Yes ☐ No ☐
10. If yes, to what extent would you describe the level of impact?
Very High ☐ High ☐ Low ☐ Very Low ☐
11. Are the poor involved in decision making and policies formulation that are meant to alleviate poverty in the District? Yes ☐ No ☐
12. How would you describe poverty level in the District?
Very High ☐ High ☐ Low ☐
13. What are the causes of poverty in the District?.....

.....

14. How would you describe the performance the assembly in poverty alleviation

Very Good ☐ Good ☐ poor ☐

15. Do know of the existence of any NGOs in the District? Yes ☐ No ☐

16. If yes, name some of them.....

17. Are they involved in any activities that are meant to alleviate poverty in the District? Yes ☐ No ☐

18. What is the main occupation of the people in the community?.....

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APPENDIX 24

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

TOPIC: Poverty Alleviation Strategies of District Assemblies: A case study of the Sekyere East District Assembly

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAFF OF NGOs

SECTION A:

General Information of the respondents

1. Name.....
2. Sex Female ☐ Male ☐
3. Age 18 – 28 ☐ 29– 39 ☐ 40– 50 ☐ 50+ ☐
4. Occupation.....
5. Position.....

SECTION B:

6. What is poverty?.....
7. How would you describe poverty levels in the District?
Very High ☐ High ☐ Low ☐
8. What would you say account for answer in (7)?.....
.....
9. Are you involved in any programme that is meant to alleviate poverty in the District? Yes ☐ No ☐
10. If yes, name some of them.....
11. Would you say these programmes have helped in improving the condition of the poor in the District? Yes ☐ No ☐
12. Do you work in collaboration with any Government organization?
Yes ☐ No ☐

13. If yes, name some of them.....

14. Do you know of any programme embarked upon by the District Assembly to alleviate poverty in the District? Yes ☐ No ☐

15. If yes, name some of them.....

16. How do you assess the performance of the assembly?

Very good ☐ good ☐ poor ☐

17. Are the members of the community involved in policy formulation, and decision making with regards to poverty alleviation strategies in the District?
Yes ☐ No ☐

18. In your opinion how can poverty be alleviated in the District?

.....

