

**AN ASSESSMENT OF DECENTRALISATION AS A STRATEGY FOR
RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA: A CASE OF AHANTA WEST
DISTRICT**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my work towards the Master of Philosophy degree 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 degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

Rural development has been vigorously pursued in Ghana since the colonial era. In this contemporary era, decentralisation has been adopted to promote development in the rural areas. Authority and resources have been devolved from the central government to Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) which are sub government structures created in 1988. By virtue of their geographical proximity to the grassroots, it was envisaged that these sub-government structures would better understand and respond to the developmental concerns of the local people. Using the Ahanta West District as a case study, this study explores the extent to which the decentralization programme has been an effective rural development strategy.

Secondary data comprised of previous researches and reports. Primary data was collected through questionnaire survey administered to 200 household heads selected by cluster sampling. Data was also collected through face-to-face interviews with six chiefs, six Assembly members, six Unit Committee members and eight officials of the District Assembly. The survey data was analyzed using the Predictive Analytics Software (PASW) whilst the interview data was analysed based on themes developed for the research.

The study revealed that, apart from the provision of basic schools, the contribution of the District Assembly has been woefully inadequate to tackle the myriad of concerns in the settlements. The expectations of basic infrastructure, employment opportunities and improved living conditions have largely not materialized. Decentralisation has also failed to tackle chieftaincy disputes, disunity, apathy and rural outmigration. Major constraints to service delivery are inadequate logistics and funding arising from erratic release of the Common Fund and lack of local revenue base. Another obstacle to progress is the politicization of the programme although it is said to be apolitical

The research contends that policy makers need to have a rethink of the implementation of decentralisation. Enhancing revenue generation through privatepublic partnerships and District Assembly levies, depoliticisation of the programme through the election of the District Chief Executive; as well as massive sensitization on the concept would go a long way to improve the performance of the District Assemblies.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AWDA	Ahanta West District Assembly
BNA	Basic Needs Approach
CHI	CASHPOR House Index
CHPS	Community-Based Health Planning and Services
DA	District Assembly
DACF	District Assembly Common Fund
DMTDP	District Medium Term Development Plan
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Ghana
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GPRS	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy
GREL	Ghana Rubber Estates Limited
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILGS	Institute of Local Government Studies
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JHS	Junior High School
KVIP	Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit
LOGODEP	Ghana Local Governance and Decentralisation Program
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MP	Member of Parliament
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OPD	Out-Patient Department
PASW	Predictive Analytics Software
PNDC	Provisional National Defense Council
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
SHEP	Self-Help Electrification Project
SHS	Senior High School

SLSA	Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa
UC	Unit Committee
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Rural development is the “process of developing and utilizing natural and human resources, technologies, infrastructural facilities, institutions and organisations and government policies and programmes to encourage and speed up economic growth in rural areas to provide jobs and improve the quality of rural life. The process typically involves changes in popular attitudes, customs and beliefs” (Jha and Jha, 2008:1). With this recognition, rural development could increase employment opportunities and reduce socio-spatial disparities to eventually reduce poverty and slow down ruralurban migration.

Despite the unprecedented rates of urbanization in this contemporary era, about 46 percent of the world’s population and 60 percent of Africans live in rural areas (UN, 2014). In Ghana, 49.1 percent of the population lives in rural areas (GSS, 2012). Bird et al. (2002), Fisher (2005) and Anríquez and Stamoulis (2007) have shown that poverty and rurality are positively correlated. A significant majority of the world’s poorer population suffering from high illiteracy rates, low level of life expectancy, high rates of infant mortality, malnutrition and poor quality of life, live in rural areas (Parker, 1995; IFAD, 2010). IFAD (2010) has found that Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest incidence of rural poverty in the world. An assessment of access to services such as education, health, water and electricity in Ghana showed that the proportion of rural households deprived of these services was excessively higher than the urban areas (GSS, 2013a). Rural development therefore is vital to achieving many targets in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which would contribute to improved living conditions in many countries. In fact, national development is slowed down when rural areas are ignored in the development process (Olanrewaju and Falola, 1992).

Decentralisation which involves the transfer of political authority, resources and responsibilities for development planning from central governments to their sub national governments (Brosio, 2000), has become an international policy in many developing countries since the 1970s (Ahmad and Talib, 2011). Decentralisation is being promoted in developing countries by the World Bank because of its prospects for

poverty reduction and economic development (Litvack et al, 1998). The recognition of the failure of the trickle down effects of modernisation and economic growth approaches to development led to the adoption of decentralisation as a tool for rural development. Participation is seen as vital to alleviating poverty and ensuring sustainable development (Khan, 2006).

According to (Oyugi, 2000), every country in Africa has operated some form of local government system with the main aim of strengthening democratic governance and service provision. As part of public sector reforms, Ghana, Nigeria, Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya and Tanzania pioneered its adoption in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Cabral, 2011).

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana mandated the creation of local government systems. As a result, a four tier local government system consisting of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) have been created with the oversight responsibility of ensuring the overall development of the local people and the district as a whole (Local Government Act, 1993). Subsequently, the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) was established by Act 1993 (Act 455) consisting of at least 7.5 percent of national revenues which is to be shared by MMDAs through a formula approved by Parliament¹. Apart from the establishment of the District Assemblies Common Fund, many international and local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have also stepped in to support the District Assembly with funds, build their capacities and collaborate with them to effectively pursue the rural development agenda. Since a major challenge in rural development is the difficulty in providing local goods and services which rural people need, the transfer of power and authority from the central government to local authorities is therefore the most probable way to overcome the challenge and eliminate physical and administrative constraints of development (Ahmad and Talib, 2011). This research therefore examines the effectiveness of the decentralisation strategy following the implementation of the Local Government Act which sought to transfer power, resources and responsibilities from the central government to sub national government.

¹ District Assembly Common Fund, accessed on 12th January, 2015 at <http://www.commonfund.gov.gh/>

1.2 Problem Statement

Stemming from the logic that a decentralized government has a high prospect of achieving rural development targets, Ghana has implemented the decentralisation policy for over two decades. It is envisaged that the MMDAs would better acknowledge and respond to the needs of those at the grassroots in their areas of jurisdictions. The Ahanta-West District Assembly (AWDA) was created in 1988 to provide services mainly in the area of health, agriculture, infrastructural development, skills training, income generating activities, water and sanitation and education in the various communities (AWDA, 2013). In addition, the implementation of decentralised programmes such as the Community-Based Rural Development Project, the Rural Enterprise Project and Rural Electrification Project are notable efforts geared towards rural development.

However, the effectiveness of the programme as a strategy for rural development still remains unclear. Many have questioned the benefit of decentralisation as a poverty reduction strategy in particular and rural development in general (Litvack et al, 1998; Brosio, 2000; Ribot, 2002). Ahwoi (1990) claims that the implementation of the policy in developing countries including Ghana has not had significant impacts on development. Brosio (2000) also argues that the benefits of decentralisation are based on mere assumptions and that there is insufficient evidence of any positive relationship between decentralisation, poverty alleviation and development. His study of decentralisation in Africa revealed that there was a huge gap between theory and the reality on the ground. He further claims that policymakers and proponents of decentralisation have been over ambitious in their expectations on poverty alleviation and rural development in general.

In the Ahanta West District, it seems that decentralisation has not yet brought about the expected benefits of improving the living conditions of the rural people who constitute the majority (70.5%). Preliminary investigations revealed that most roads leading to the rural areas are left in poor state of disrepair and were virtually becoming impassable during the rainy seasons, hence, affecting economic activities and access to facilities like hospitals, postal services and weekly markets which are mostly located in urban areas. The district ranked second with regards to the use of beaches and bushes as means of human waste disposal in the rural areas of the Western Region (GSS, 2013b). There

are about 123 communities in the district but it appears that access to basic facilities and services are skewed in favour of the only four urban communities in the district. This seems to contradict the assertion by Manor (1999) that decentralisation is a major means to counteract urban bias development. A joint study by Coastal Resources Centre and Friends of the Nation in 2010 revealed that, interaction between the local people and the District Assembly was very irregular as most of the Assembly members rarely meet with their electorates. The research also revealed that needs of most of the communities had not been attended to by the District Assembly.

These problems have called for an in-depth research into the extent to which the implementation of the decentralisation strategy has benefited the rural communities who constitute majority of the population in the District. The study focused on the rural areas to examine their problems and needs and identifies the various roles played by the District Assembly to improve upon their living conditions. This assessment is based on the experiences and perceptions of the rural population

1.3 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What has been the contribution of decentralisation programme to improving on quality of life of rural people in the Ahanta West District?
2. To what extent can conditions in the district be attributed to the success or failure of the decentralisation programme?
3. What factors can be attributed to the lack of performance of decentralised units of government in the rural areas in the district?
4. How can the implementation of the decentralisation programme be improved to promote rural development in the Ahanta West District?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The goal of the study was to assess the effectiveness of the decentralisation programme as a rural development strategy in the Ahanta West District.

Specifically, the study was based on the following objectives:

1. To examine the contributions of decentralisation programme to improvement on quality of life of rural people in the Ahanta West District.
2. To assess the extent to which the conditions in the district can be attributed to the success or failure of the decentralisation programme.
3. To identify factors that can be attributed to the lack of performance of decentralised units of government in the rural areas in the district.
4. To make policy recommendations to promote rural development in the Ahanta West District.

1.5 Justification for the Study

A lot of studies on decentralisation focus more on the weaknesses and failures of the decentralisation (Fjeldstad and Semboja, 2000; Rusten et al., 2004; Sulemana, 2009). A study that has among its objectives of assessing the positive impacts of the approach in the rural areas to identify success factors and lessons for the effective implementation of the policy is therefore worth pursuing.

Most studies on decentralisation in the Ahanta West district have focused on revenue and budgeting (Katongo, 1993; Nyarunda, 1993 and Biney, 2010). Since the inception of the district assembly concept in 1988, detailed research has not been carried out on the relationship between decentralisation and development in the rural and deprived areas. This study therefore joins the ongoing debates about competing claims of outcomes of decentralisation using a predominantly rural district as a case study.

The study highlights the outcomes and identifies measures to bolster the concept of rural development. This document provides useful information to policy makers and rural development thinkers and more specifically to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) in Ghana. In addition, findings of the study would provide a data base for further research work.

1.6 The scope of the Study

Conceptually, the study delved into the meanings of development and rural development, their various dimensions and measurements. Since the District Assembly has the primary responsibility of ensuring the development of the district in accordance with the decentralisation concept, the study focused on the roles being played to

improve living conditions of rural people in its jurisdiction. In this regard, the study emphasised on basic needs such as access to infrastructure (schools, roads, clinics and hospitals, water and sanitation facilities), livelihood opportunities as well as levels of citizen participation in decision-making. This approach was not only necessitated by the fact that it is a widely used measure of development but also most of the District Assembly's developmental efforts are geared towards meeting basic needs. However, the research probed into intangible assets which have a fundamental effect on the operationalisation of the District Assembly concept.

Geographically, the study was carried out in the Ahanta West District which is a rural district in the Western Region. The district, having been in existence for about 26 years since its creation in 1988, was deemed feasible for an evaluation of its impact on rural communities. The study covered six rural settlements selected with varying degrees of rurality; determined by their distance from their area council capitals which represent the major towns in the district. This criterion ensured that the various types of rural areas found in the district were represented so as to accurately capture the diverse opinions on the subject matter.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The low literacy level in the district posed a major challenge to the survey as the respondents had to be assisted to fill in the questionnaires. This process took longer than expected. Considering the fact that the research adopted a qualitative-led mixed research strategy, the process of conducting interviews, transcribing and identifying themes for the analysis were all time-consuming. Most of these interviews were conducted in the local language and therefore transcribing the interviews into the English language had to be carefully done in order not to compromise on the reliability of the data.

The dispersed nature of the study communities coupled with poor road network made data collection very tedious. Getting vehicles especially from communities like Yakaw, Nyameyekrom and Tumentu was very difficult. In some instances, enumerators had to wait between 30-50 minutes before getting access to a vehicle. Since some of the interviews were scheduled in the evenings, this was quite challenging.

There were also difficulties getting the respondents for the questionnaires and interviews. Some household heads were not interested in partaking in the survey based on the reason that they were fed up with responding to questionnaires as they have already been engaged in numerous surveys. In Adjua for instance, fishermen refused to respond to the questionnaires until enumerators called on the Assembly man to convince them. With regards to the Local government officials, the enumerators had to contact them several times before finally getting them for the interviews.

In spite of these challenges, the study applied some measures to minimize these constraints to provide opportunities to enhance the findings of the study and to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. In order to address the issue of difficulty in scheduling interviews with some of the Heads of Decentralised Departments, openended questionnaires were given to them to fill and collected later. Again, to address the issue of research fatigue on the part of household heads, the essence of the research with specific focus on the study was carefully explained to them and this aroused their willingness to partake in the survey. Also, in instances where enumerators had to wait for several minutes to access vehicles, they seized the opportunity to interact with some passengers and this gave them a deeper understanding of the development conditions in the communities.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

The study is organised into six chapters. The first chapter gives the background of the study, problem statement, research questions and objectives, justification and the scope of the study. The literature on decentralisation and rural development has been reviewed in Chapter two. It highlighted on the strategies adopted over the years. In chapter three, the methods used to collect and analyse data have been outlined. It highlights the rationale for the adoption of the mixed method research design and explains the sampling methods and processes used in the study. Chapter four analyses the socio-economic profiles of the Ahanta West District and the study settlements. Emphasis is laid on access to basic facilities and services, structures put in place to ensure grassroots participation and the District Assembly's efforts towards rural development. Chapter five presents and analyses the results of the data. Chapter six

reiterates the major findings on the effectiveness of the decentralisation approach to rural development. The chapter ends with policy recommendations to accelerate rural development through decentralisation.

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CHAPTER TWO

UNDERSTANDING DECENTRALISATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores literature on decentralisation and rural development as they constitute the central theme of the study. This is to place the study in a scholarly context by analyzing the various contributions and thoughts with regards to the subject matter from both a global perspective and in the Ghanaian context. Thus, this section provides in-depth understanding of pertinent issues in rural development and its relationship with the decentralisation strategy. Subsequently, lessons are drawn to guide the study in answering the research questions.

The review begins with an evaluation of the various development theories and subsequently analyses the definitions and classifications of rural areas. The concepts of rural development are also examined by assessing the divergent views on its definition and the various approaches adopted over the years. The chapter further reviews decentralisation as a development strategy and presents an overview of its adoption in Ghana. This is followed by an analysis of the concept of participation. The section finally concludes with a conceptual framework of the relationship between decentralisation and rural development.

2.2 Defining Development

The term “development” is complex and highly contested among different disciplines, cultures and people. Surprisingly, although the term has been in existence for about 60 years, there has not been a uniform definition as it is highly determined by whom and where it is used (Rist, 2010). The term has often been used to denote “economic growth, changes in economic structure of production (rising share of industry and services from an agricultural base), spatial distribution of population (increasing urbanisation) and improvements in social indicators such as education and health”(Rauniyar and Kanbur, 2010:5). The meaning and measurement of development has evolved through time and this has led to four different dimensions.

These dimensions according to Bellù (2011: 3) are:

- Economic development which deals with improvements in resources, goods and services to provide additional consumption and investment opportunities for the members of the society.
- Human development on the other hand, focuses on people and therefore lays emphasis on the improvement of the various dimensions affecting the well-being of individuals and their relationships with the society. Areas of concentration are health, education, entitlements, capabilities and empowerment
- Sustainable development considers the long term perspectives of the socioeconomic system, to ensure that improvement occurring in the short term will not be detrimental to the future development potential of the system. Sustainability therefore centres on environment, social and financial factors.
- Territorial development also deals with the development of a specific region (space) achievable by exploiting the specific socio-economic, environmental and institutional potential of the area and its relationships with external subjects.

Examples include rural, urban or community development.

Traditionally, development was viewed from an economic perspective and therefore societies with sustained growth of GNP or per capita were considered as “developed” (Khan, 2006). Dissatisfaction with the impact of economic growth on poverty, inequality and employment called for a rethink of economic growth as a development approach (Todaro and Smith, 2012). Development was therefore redefined to improve access to basic needs which was defined to include access to food, shelter, clothing, basic education, health, potable water, sanitation and participation in decision-making (ILO, 1976). The UNDP’s Human development approach, which was influenced by the Basic Needs approach, later became the development focus in the 1990s (Jolly, 2010). Human development which was defined as “a process of enlarging people’s choices” comprised of three main indicators: Longevity, knowledge and decent living standards (UNDP, 1990:10). In this contemporary era, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been accepted as the yardstick for the measurement of human development in developing countries (Harkness, 2004). The goals include the eradication of poverty and hunger, achievement of universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reduction in child mortality, improvement in maternal

health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development (UN, 2008).

Todaro and Smith (2012: 21) on the other hand indicate that “there are three core values that depict true development: sustenance, self-esteem and freedom”. Sustenance simply means the satisfaction of the basic needs of life: food, shelter, health and protection. With regards to self-esteem, they argue that, the absence or denial of self-respect indicates lack of development since every person strives to achieve self-respect, dignity and honour. Freedom as a core value implies an extended range of choices for societies and their members together with a minimisation of external limitations in the quest to achieve some social goals which is normally regarded as development.

In addition to these internationally acclaimed meanings and indicators of development, others have advocated for the use of subjective measures of well-being and development since the concept varies among individuals. In this case, the individuals are asked about their own well-being (Guardiola and García-Muñoz 2009). For instance, Chambers (1994) advocates for the use of Participatory Rural Appraisal to identify the different perceptions of the poor in developmental issues.

Irrespective of the ambiguity in the term and its various dimensions, it is undeniable that, the main aim of development is to produce something positive and it is therefore often equated with “improvement” (Bellù, 2011). Thus, Williams (2003) is of the view that it is a process of modernising traditional ways of doing things and transforming backward societies into advanced states. Oyugi (2000:4) on the other hand explains that, local people associate development with “modernisation or as the acquisition of facilities associated with modernity”. These viewpoints depict that, the process involves a change from something undesirable to a positive position.

However, these definitions do not show the extent to which a society can be classified as modern or the things associated with modernity or advancement. According to Osae (2009:3), “Ghanaians associate development with the acquisition of services, facilities and infrastructure such as clean and safe water, education, health facilities, roads, and the degree of citizen participation in decision making at the local level”.

From the review conducted above, it is evident that, development is a highly subjective phenomenon and depends on the standpoint from which an individual views the whole concept. The controversies normally centre on what should be its constituents and how development should be approached. In spite of the various controversies surrounding it, it is undoubted that the well-being of people is the end of any development strategy hence it should be people-centred. In this regard, this research was approached from the human development dimension as the main focus was to delve into the well-being of rural people. The territorial dimension was also considered because the study concentrated solely on rural communities by examining the developmental issues in these areas.

Having specified the developmental focus of the research, the need to have a working definition of development could not be overemphasized. In as much as development signifies improvement, it is undeniably that, the provision of basic needs is a core component of many development strategies. This is evident in the formulation of Human Development Index and the Millennium Development goals which all include the basic needs components. As identified by Todaro and Smith (2012), satisfaction of basic needs is a core value of that can never be ruled out in the quest to understand what development actually means. Indeed, the basic needs strategy is recognized as having an advantage over other strategies basically because it is easily understandable and readily operational (Jolly et al, 2010). For the purpose of this study therefore, development is understood as “improving the lives of people by meeting their basic needs”. Areas of focus include education, health, water and sanitation, level of participation and transportation.

2.3 The Concept of Rural Development

Rural development is a subset of the broad term “development” (Singh, 2009: 3). Policies and theoretical thinking on the concept are being constantly modified due to changes in cultural and socio-economic environment (Nemes, 2005a). Notwithstanding, the need for an understanding of what it constitutes as well as a clear demarcation of what it entails for this study are deemed very necessary. The successive sections delve into the definition and classification of the term rural; the meaning of rural development as well as the various approaches that have been pursued over the years.

2.3.1 Rural Areas Defined

In spite of the fact that rural areas have been studied in many countries for decades, there is no single internationally accepted definition of the concept (European Commission, 2012). In the United Kingdom alone, there are more than 30 definitions by different government departments of what constitutes a rural area (Scott et al., 2007). According to the European Commission (2012:15), three main reasons account for the difficulty in defining the term: “The various perceptions of what is rural and of the elements characterizing "rurality" (natural, economic, cultural); the inherent need to have a tailor-made definition according to the "object" analysed or the policy concerned; and the difficulty in collecting relevant data at the level of basic geographical units (administrative unit, grid cell, plot)”.

Population size or density is the most widely used criterion in many countries (Bogdanov et al., 2008). In Ghana for instance, an area with population below 5,000 is described as rural (GSS, 2012). The use of population size however has limitations. Woods (2005) opines that, it neither gives an indication of the function of the settlement and its relation to the surrounding area nor shows a clear boundary between rural and urban areas. For instance, if an area with population of 5000 is urban, then it means that a population of 4999 is rural. Pizzoli and Gong's (2007) study in China and Italy on the significance of using population size alone to classify urban and rural areas revealed that it was not a sufficient criterion. They therefore recommend the use of variables such as “agriculture and economic specialization, human resources and skills, land cover and spatial dimension of social life in combination with or as an alternative to population size. Scott et al (2007:4) also advocate five dimensions of rural. He defines it as an area described as “negative (that is, everything that is not urban); has low population density; extensive land use, strong community cohesion and governance; and engages in primary economic activity”. However, the use of the term negative to refer to a rural area is vague as it does not indicate the specific criteria being used. In addition, there are instances whereby rural and urban areas share common characteristics.

From the review, it is evident that the term rural lacks a uniform definition as it apparently emanates from people's perception, thereby making it complex and multidimensional. However, common features of the locality are often identified and

used to delineate the area. These include population size, economic activity, social and cultural characteristics. Since the use of a single criterion like population size has been proven to be erroneous, the use of other variables in addition to population size is adopted for this study. In the Ghanaian context, a rural area is defined as a locality with a population of less than 5,000. In this study therefore, a rural area is defined as an area with low population size (less than 5,000) dominated by primary economic activities, mostly farming and fishing and has poor infrastructure like schools, clinics, potable water and good roads.

2.3.2 Classification of Rural Areas

Having defined what rural areas are, this section identifies the various types into which they are classified since they are not homogenous. According to Rhoda and Burton (2010), the Mexico National Population Council classifies rural areas into localities near cities, localities near towns, localities near roads and isolated rural communities. Rural localities near cities are located within five kilometres to cities and tend to be similar to urban areas as they can easily access services in the cities within a walking distance of less than an hour. Localities near towns on the other hand, are located within three kilometres to towns and are more rural than communities near cities. Areas near roads although are not located within walking distance to town, can easily get there by bus. The isolated localities are the poorest and the most rural as they are located far away from towns, cities or paved roads. Hence, they are mostly inaccessible areas that lack basic services and are rarely seen by outsiders. This classification is based on distance from major towns and degree of access to basic infrastructure and services. However, other factors such as demographic and economic characteristics are ignored.

From a qualitative perspective Nagy (2009) identifies three types of rural areas based on their integration into the national economy. These are integrated, intermediary and distant rural areas. This categorisation builds upon the classifications mentioned earlier by including population and economic activities. Integrated rural areas are close to the large cities, have tourist sites and are industrialized. They have high population and well developed infrastructure. The main occupation is agriculture although considerable portion of the land is used for industrial production. Some of its population also works in subsidiary firms in the neighbouring cities or in the secondary and tertiary sector. The aged population often moves to this area after retiring.

The intermediate rural areas are at a certain relative distance from the urban centres. They have a lower population compared to the integrated rural areas and the income per head of population is smaller towards moderate. In migration is minimal whilst out migration is high due to relative distance to the urban centres. A large portion of the land has a natural surface and the main economic activity is primary, namely agriculture and fishing although the land may also be used for recreational and tourism activities.

The distant rural areas have the lowest population densities, low income and an aged population. The main economic activity is agriculture, fishing and hunting. The area suffers from high out-migration of its youthful population and migration of people to these areas is almost inexistent. Most of the distant rural area territories are represented by mountains, distant coastal areas and islands and are often inaccessible. Although they might have tourist sites they have poor access to infrastructure and services.

Inferences from the review depict that rural areas differ mainly in terms of their population size, distance to major towns, degree of dependence on primary economic activities and access to basic infrastructure and services. It can however be argued that the overriding factor is the distance from major towns or urban areas. As observed from the various classifications, the degree of closeness to urban areas strongly has an influence on all the other factors identifies above. This is evident by the fact that in the various categories, communities that are closer to urban areas are characterized by high population, high access to facilities and diverse economic activities as compared to the distant or isolated rural areas. This implies that the degree of rurality increases with distance. For ease of differentiation, proximity to the main towns is adopted as the indicator differentiating rural areas in this study. Hence, the three types of rural areas identified in the study are:

- Integrated Rural Areas: Rural communities that are close to major towns
- Intermediary Rural Areas: Rural communities that are of relative distance from main towns
- Distant Rural Areas: Rural areas that are very far away from the main urban centres.

2.3.3 Defining Rural Development

Based on the notion that rural development is a subset of the broad term “development”, Anríquez and Stamoulis (2007: 2) deem it appropriate to define it as “development that benefits rural populations; whereby development means the sustained improvement of the population’s standards of living or welfare”. This therefore depicts that, true development in rural areas is the one that can be sustained. However, this definition needs to be further qualified to clearly specify what standard of living or welfare constitutes. Olayide et al. (1981, cited in Adejuwon and Nchuchuwe, 2012:48) asserts that, it is “a process whereby concerted efforts are made in order to facilitate significant increase in resources productivity with the central objective of enhancing income and creating employment opportunities in rural communities for rural dwellers to remain in the area”. This explains that rural development is a continuous process aimed at achieving a specific goal and not a onetime event. Again, the inference drawn from this definition is that increasing income and employment opportunities are very vital not only to improve upon living conditions but to prevent migration. But then, rural development must constitute the entire range of change that results in a better condition of life both materially and spiritually (Singh, 2009). This implies that it must affect all aspects of rural life constituting tangible and intangible; qualitative and quantitative; material and spiritual factors through concerted efforts and harnessing all available resources. In this vein, it is appropriate for the purpose of this study to define rural development as “the process of developing and utilizing natural and human resources, technologies, infrastructural facilities, institutions and organisations, and government policies and programmes to promote economic growth in rural areas, provide jobs, and improve the quality of rural life in addition to changing popular attitudes, customs and beliefs” (Jha and Jha, 2008: 1).

The foregoing analysis gives a clear indication that rural development is generally accepted to imply improvement in the living conditions of rural dwellers. However, there is an agreement that the main aim should be geared towards attaining a desired outcome in all aspect of rural life. Hence, any strategy devised for rural areas must adopt an integrated approach by harnessing all available resources to ensure increased access to basic facilities, productivity in agriculture, increased income, grassroots

participation and changes in negative customs and beliefs. Rural development also involves the collaboration of both government and the beneficiaries. This requires the establishment of relevant institutions and policies to improve rural life.

2.3.4 Rural Development Approaches

According to Ellis and Biggs (2001), the concept and approach in rural development keeps on changing from decade to decade. After the end of the Second World War, concern over the high rate of poverty in the rural areas led donor agencies to develop specific interventions aimed at rural areas (Parker, 1995). Since then, several approaches have been implemented at different times by various government and other development agencies (see Table 2.1). This section outlines some of the major strategies pursued to improve living conditions in rural areas.

2.3.4.1 Modernisation Approach

This approach emanated from the belief that, rural areas were lagging behind urban centres due to obstacles like “physical remoteness, low accessibility, and the traditionalism of socio-economic and cultural systems” (Nemes, 2005a:6). Although attempts were made to transform the old agricultural patterns into technologically based agricultural sector through information dissemination on more efficient techniques of production such as the use of artificial fertilizers, farm tractors and insecticides, the strategy failed to yield the expected results as it ignored the participation of the rural people (Matunhu, 2011).

2.3.4.2 The Community Development Approach

This approach which was pursued after the Second World War became the main focus of rural development in India and the Philippines and later in Asia, Africa and the west coast of South America (Gow and Vansant, 1981). A government worker from outside the villages lived with the villagers in order to gain their confidence, assist them to identify their felt needs and prepare village development plans for subsequent implementation (Holdcroft, 1976). In the early 1960s, funding for the programme declined due to its perceived failures and the threat of famine in Asia (Mansuri and Rao, 2013).

2.3.4.3 Agricultural Development Strategy

The first paradigm shift in rural development thinking occurred in the 1960s when the role of agriculture and especially small farm agriculture in economic growth and development was highly recognized (Ellis and Biggs, 2001). This was largely stimulated by the Green Revolution which occurred mainly in Asia whereby food production, especially cereal more than doubled between 1960 and 1985 thereby averting famines and starvation in addition to changing the lives of peasant farmers (Rockefeller Foundation, 2006). Subsequently, the importance of agriculture in rural development became the focus in the 1980s and 1990s (Hazell and Haggblade, 1991). Agriculture is still considered to be vital for the success of rural development (Nemes, 2005b).

2.3.4.4 Basic Needs Approach (BNA)

A major concept that changed rural development thinking was the evolution of the people focused development strategy that emerged in the 1970s through the pioneering work of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), dubbed the „Basic Needs Strategy“ (Jolly et al, 2009). Meeting basic needs according to the ILO (1976) entailed providing for the poor in every country, certain minimum requirements of a family for private consumption (adequate food, shelter and clothing) and the provision of essential services (safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport, health and educational facilities). The strategy also included participation in decision-making, fulfillment of basic human rights and improvement in the quality of employment and or conditions of work. However, the basic needs approach fell under criticism that led to its failure. It was argued that basic needs were difficult to quantify and the tradeoffs between improving income equality and reducing savings for investment were not considered (Bagolin, 2004). Notwithstanding, the focus on human capital formation, through the provision of social services in rural areas has been constantly stressed since the 1970s (Anríquez and Stamoulis, 2007). The basic needs concept has influenced the formulation of the human development approach and the Millennium Development goals adopted by the United Nations as the blueprint for development (Jolly et al, 2009). In addition, a variation of the BNA named the Unsatisfied Basic Human Needs approach has been adopted in a number of countries including

Nicaragua and Bolivia as a measure of poverty in terms of people's access to basic needs in areas such as housing, basic services, health and education (Alkire and Sarwar, 2009).

2.3.4.5 Integrated Rural Development

This strategy gained popularity as a result of the growing realization that the Green Revolution and agricultural growth strategies pursued in the 1960s had failed to have a desired impact on poverty (Machethe, 1995). The approach focused on improving income through increased agricultural productivity as well as providing basic services in rural areas (Parker, 1995). In spite of the hope that the adoption of the blueprint approach would enhance rural development, it rather failed as it was top-down in nature. According to the World Bank (1997), most decisions regarding the design and implementation of projects were made by central government officials with no involvement of the beneficiary communities.

2.3.4.6 Decentralisation and Good Governance

Dissatisfaction with the results of centralised planning and administration in the 1970s led to the adoption of decentralisation (Ringo and Mollel, 2014). In this regard, it was envisaged that the devolution of authority to local units of governments that are accessible and accountable to the citizenry, will ensure that the needs and aspirations of local people are met (Johnson, 2001, Maxwell et al, 2001). Decentralisation was therefore considered as the best tool for bottom up participatory development to improve local governance and reduce poverty in rural areas (Ahmad and Talib, 2011). Brosio (2000) argues that, the adoption of the programme has indeed provided the avenue for rural areas to receive much attention. However, the effectiveness of the implementation of this strategy has still not been clarified. Whilst Crook's (2003) study on the pro-poor aspect of decentralisation in African countries showed that decentralisation had had little impact on poverty, the adoption of the approach in Liberia in the 1970s caused a massive improvement in rural areas than had existed before (Klugman, 1994).

Table 2.1: Rural Development Ideas and Timeline

1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Modernisation					
Dual economy model					
„Backward“ agric					
Community development					
approach	Transformation				
	Technology transfer				
	Mechanisation				
	Agricultural extension				
	Growth role of agric				
	Green (start)	revolution			
		Redistribution with growth			
		Basic needs			
		Integrated rural development			
		State agric policies			
linkages		Urban bias			
		Green (continues)	revolution		
		Rural	growth		
			Structural adjustments		
	Free market				
	Retreat of the state				
	Rise of NGOs				
		Rapid Rural Appraisal			
		Women in development			
				Participatory rural appraisal	
Poverty alleviation				Gender & Development	
				Environment & sustainability	
				Poverty reduction	
					Good governance
					Decentralisation
					Sector-wide approaches
					Poverty eradication

Source: Ellis and Biggs, 2001

2.3.5 Rural Development Efforts in Ghana

Just as many development strategies have been launched worldwide especially by international agencies, Ghana has equally made some efforts to address many of the problems confronting the rural parts of the country. The main strategy adopted during the colonial era was the community development approach which was pursued through self-help initiatives and adult education with the aim of motivating rural people to participate actively in community affairs to raise their standards of living to achieving national cohesiveness and development (Boateng, 1986). Subsequently, a variety of strategies have been adopted by various governments.

2.3.5.1 The Social Amenity Approach

The approach which focused on the provision of basic amenities such as potable water, better housing, health centres, schools and sanitation facilities in rural communities was adopted by several governments based on the rationale that rural areas deserved to have some of the facilities enjoyed by urban dwellers (Kudiabor, 1986). However the strategy did not have significant impact basically because it was expensive as it was implemented as a sole strategy without coordination with other productive sectors to ensure the continuous flow of funds to provide the social amenities (Brown, 1986).

2.3.5.2 The Accelerated Project Implementation Approach

Under the leadership of Brigadier Akwasi Amankwa Afrifa in 1968, the Accelerated Project Implementation Approach was adopted with the aim of effectively implementing rural development projects and programmes on time through monitoring bodies at the regional level to report on progress being made on the execution of government development projects as well as serve as a link between central government and private enterprises (Kudiabor, 1986). Again, this strategy proved ineffective for rural development due to the fact that the Regional Planning committees did not have enough authority and funds to adequately address local development issues (Brown, 1986).

2.3.5.3 Integrated Rural Development Approach

This was adopted in the 1970 by the Busia government. The approach focused on improving agricultural production and productivity, in addition to providing basic amenities (Boapeah, 1994). Although the strategy was an improvement on the social amenity approach which only focused on the provision of social amenities to rural communities, the integrated rural development strategy failed due to technical and manpower constraints (Nsiah-Gyabaah, 1998).

2.3.5.4 The Decentralisation strategy

During the era of the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) headed by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, the government embarked on a policy to decentralize decision-making to promote more participatory development at the grassroots (Nsiah – Gyabaah, 1998). With the aim of improving the living conditions of the people to provide a fair and balanced development of the whole country, the local government reform and decentralisation was provided for in the PNDC Law 207 in 1988 (Kyei, 2000). This led to the re-demarcation of the country leading to the creation of MMDA to total up to 110 (ILGS and FES, 2010). Since then, more MMDAs have been added leading to a total number of 216 currently in Ghana. Under the decentralisation programme, emphasis has been placed on the District Assembly as the main instrument to promote socio-economic development in rural areas (Nsiah-Gyabaah, 1998).

The review above clearly indicates that rural development has been a topmost priority in Ghana. Hence, various governments have vigorously pursued this agenda through the adoption of many strategies with limited successes. Over the years, two main factors have been observed to facilitate the achievement of the goals and objectives of rural development. These are the participation of local people in the development process and the adoption of an integrated approach. Decentralisation therefore seems to be the panacea for rural development and has been pursued since 1988. It is envisaged that this strategy will better inform District Assemblies of the needs of local people to effectively respond to them.

2.4 The Concept of Decentralisation

In spite of the numerous researches on decentralisation, academics and professionals have still not been able to clarify the concept because of inconsistent definitions and usage of the term. The different forms, dimensions and meanings assigned to the concept have created a “conceptual muddle” (Schneider, 2003). Decentralisation is often used to refer to different forms of local governance such as elected councils, traditional authorities, decentralised committees and central government’s local representatives (Cabral, 2011). From a broad perspective, it refers to “any act in which a central government formally cedes powers to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political administrative and territorial hierarchy” (Mawhood 1983, cited in Ribot, 2002). However, the specific authority or power ceded must be clearly specified. Hence, Rondinelli and Nellis (1986: 5) define decentralisation from an administrative perspective as „the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and the raising and allocation of resources from the central government and its agencies to field units of government agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, area-wide, regional or functional authorities, or Non-Governmental, private or voluntary organisations”. Better still, the aim for which responsibility or authority is transferred from central government needs to be specified. Agrawal and Ribot (2000:6) define decentralisation based on its aim from a political perspective. To them, since democracy or the desire for humans to have a say in their own affairs is the basic aim of decentralisation, they define decentralisation as “a strategy of governance to facilitate the transfer of power closer to those who are most affected by the exercise of power”

The review of the definitions above reveals that decentralisation generally involves the transfer of authority from the central government to sub-national government. However, details of the kind of authority transferred and the purpose for which it is transferred differs depending on the perspective from which it is being defined. This has therefore led to various definitions of the concept. For instance, whilst Rondinelli and Nellis (1986) approach it from an administrative perspective, Agrawal and Ribot (2000) define it from a political angle. Hence, since the focus of this study is on the developmental aspect of the concept, decentralisation, for the purpose of this study is defined as “a development strategy adopted by governments to promote participatory

rural development through the devolution of authority, resources, tasks and decisionmaking power from central government to sub-national jurisdictions closer to the rural people”.

2.4.1 Rationale for Decentralisation

Decentralisation is believed to offer several benefits to countries that adopt it as a development strategy. This section explores the reasons for the popularity of the programme especially in developing countries as well as the various arguments raised by its advocates.

2.4.1.1 Democracy and Participation

Decentralisation is believed to bring government closer to the local people (Robinson, 2007). Decentralisation is argued to increase accountability since the local people will be able to monitor local officials to help to make them improve upon their performance and reduce corruption (Fritzen and Lim, 2006). Whilst Kauzya’s (2007) study in Uganda, Rwanda and South Africa revealed that decentralisation had enhanced participation of the local people including women, youth and the disabled in decision-making, a study by Ringo and Mollel (2014) in Tanzania showed that decentralisation has not been able to promote citizen participation.

2.4.1.2 Efficiency

This is based on the argument that, through participation by local people, sub-national governments can better understand people’s preferences and respond to their demands (Azfar, et al., 1999). However, Cabral (2011) holds the position that, there is not enough evidence in Africa to show that increased participation in decentralised governments leads to better correspondence between the needs of the local people and public policy. Crook’s (2003) study in Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire revealed that there was lack of congruence between District Assembly investments and the needs of the people.

2.4.1.3 Equity

Decentralisation is believed to provide more equitable distribution in local districts and greater opportunity for the poorest people although there is scant evidence of this in Africa (Ribot, 2002). The rationale is that since local governments are familiar with

local circumstances, they may be in the best position to more equitably distribute public resources and target poverty within their own jurisdictions (Smoke, 2003).

2.4.1.4 Improved Development and Poverty Reduction

In developing countries, decentralisation is considered as a development strategy (Phirinyane, 2009). With greater participation and local democracy, it is assumed that the benefits of local activities may be retained and reinvested in local needs and aspirations as greater participation or representation is believed to lead to more relevant planning processes and the delivery of more useful local services (Ribot, 2002). Although the general consensus is that, there is a weak link between decentralisation and poverty reduction, there are some evidence in India (Kerala State) and East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) that there is a tentative link between decentralisation, increased service delivery and poverty reduction (Olsen, 2007). Jütting et al. (2005) also found that the implementation of the programme in countries such as India (West Bengal), Philippines and Bolivia has had major impact on living conditions of the poor.

2.4.2 Arguments against Decentralisation

Although decentralisation has potential benefits, these benefits are not universally accepted as some have raised concerns about its negative effects. Smoke (2003) however argues that the arguments raised against decentralisation do not justify the adoption of the „centralised“ approach since the negative effects of the programme are not flaws of the concept but rather they emanate from poor design, procedural weaknesses, political immaturity and capacity problems.

Decentralisation is argued to have the potential to create macroeconomic instability if local governments lack fiscal discipline (Grävingholt et al., 2006). Proponents of centralization argue that macroeconomic stabilization may be easier if the budget is centrally controlled than when it is decentralized (Wittenberg, 2003).

Secondly, decentralisation can result in the loss of economies of scale and control over scarce financial resources by the central government since weak administrative or technical capacity at local levels may result in services being delivered less efficiently and effectively in some areas of the country (Neven, 2002).

Finally, decentralisation may provide avenue for the process to be captured by local elites, government officials and private players attempting to retain or gain control of resources (SLSA Team, 2003). Ahmad et al (2005) revealed that in India, the poor and disadvantaged groups are denied access to basic facilities and services.

2.4.3 Success Factors for Decentralisation

Successful decentralisation according to Cabral (2011: 4) is “a process that improves outputs and outcomes at local level, including the volume and quality of public services and reductions in income and non-income dimensions of poverty”. The ingredients for successful pro-poor decentralisation can be grouped into three categories: political, fiscal and administrative (Jütting et al. 2005). Since poverty is a rural phenomenon, the inference is that, the implementation of these three dimensions will ultimately improve upon living conditions in rural areas.

2.4.3.1 Political Factors

The political dimension generally refers to the transfer of decision-making power to lower-level governmental units or to citizens or their elected representatives (Cohen and Peterson, 1996). The aim is to increase participation of the local people to influence local service delivery (Brinkerhoff et al., 2007). Kauzya (2007) notes that decentralisation can only be successful when transfer of power and authority does not go only to the local governments but also to the local people. He therefore indicates that effective political decentralisation must empower local people to exercise their voting power in the choice of their local leaders, have strong influence in decisions that affect their social, political and economic wellbeing and demand accountability from their local representatives.

2.4.3.2 Fiscal Factors

Fiscal Decentralisation focuses on increasing the revenues or fiscal autonomy of local governments through increase in transfer of funds from central government and granting subnational government autonomy over taxes (Falleti, 2004). Devas (2005) points out that, irrespective of the fact that many local government in developing countries have the legal right to impose tax, the tax base is very weak. However, transfer

of funds from central governments combined with the generation of revenue from local taxes have been attributed to the successful implementation of decentralisation in Bolivia and Phillipines (Jütting et al., 2005).

2.4.3.3 Administrative Factors

This aspect relates to the transfer of the responsibility for policy-making, planning and management from central government to sub-national governments (Fritzen and Lim, 2006). Administrative decentralisation is further divided into deconcentration, delegation and devolution. Deconcentration, which is the weakest form of decentralisation involves the “transfer of government functions to decentralized units of government whereby there are no defining policies for sub-national authorities” (Linder, 2002: 7). These responsibilities often include the administration and delivery of social services such as education, health and social welfare (Manor, 1999). In delegation, the central government “transfers functions to organisations such as public enterprises and development authorities, which are neither local governments nor field units of the central government” (UNDP, 2000:31). Devolution which is gives more autonomy to local governments involves the transfer of authority and resources from the central government to quasi-autonomous local units of government (Schneider, 2003). Ensuring an effective decentralisation most importantly requires building technical and managerial capacities at the local level (Cabral, 2011).

2.5 The Evolution of Local Government and Decentralisation in Ghana

The meaning given to “decentralisation” in Ghana covers both the deconcentrated institutions and the decentralized ones (Gilbert et al, 2013). Decentralisation has been implemented in Ghana as an approach to development since 1988 and comprises of political, administrative, decentralized planning and fiscal decentralisation (MLGRD, 2010). Political decentralisation is evident by the establishment of Regional Coordinating Councils, District Assemblies and sub-district structures; Administrative decentralisation by the transfer of staff from sector ministries to local government; Fiscal decentralisation by the establishment of the District Assemblies’ Common Fund and Decentralised planning by making the District Assemblies the planning authorities (Koranteng, 2011). The goals of decentralisation are to “strengthen and expand local

democracy, promote local social and economic development as well as reduce poverty and increase the choices of the people” (MLGRD, 2008:1).

Decentralisation and local governance in Ghana has evolved over time from the colonial era to this current period. Since the colonial era, many governments have struggled with how to strengthen local government and maintain central government’s control (Hoffman and Metzroth, 2010). Surprisingly, most attempts at local government reforms occurred during the military regimes (Koranteng, 2011).

2.5.1 The Colonial Era

Local governance in Ghana existed long before the coming of the Europeans. Communities were governed by the chiefs, which were the heads of government with support from the elders (ILGS and FES, 2010). The British introduced a local government system known as the “indirect rule” from 1878 to 1951 and this marks the beginning of decentralisation in Ghana (Ayee, 2000). Under the indirect rule system, the chiefs, were mandated to maintain law and order in the communities, collect taxes and carry out public works such as the provision of village markets and construction of feeder roads (Taabazuing, 2010). This system of local government was not democratic as the administration was top-down and chiefs were more accountable to colonial authorities than their people (Amanor and Annan, 1999; Nkrumah, 2000).

2.5.2 Decentralisation from 1957 to 1980

Act 54, a new Local Government Act which was established in 1961 divided the country into Cities, Municipal and Local Area Councils (Ahwoi, 2010). However, authoritarianism, politicisation of the councils and the concentration of authority in the centre, resulted in crises in the administration of local government (Kyei, 2000). Recommendations by various investigative commissions led to the establishment of Local Administration Act (Act 359) of 1971 which was implemented in 1974 following a change of government in 1972 (Gilbert et al, 2010). In 1974, an amendment to the 1971 Act, led to the creation of a four-tier local government structure: Regional Councils; District Councils; Area, Municipal, Urban and Local Councils; Town or Village Development Committees (Ahwoi, 2010). Though the aim was to bring decision-making closer to the local people, Kyei (2000) points out that, it was very

doubtful how the government could undertake development of the rural areas by merely deconcentrating its personnel to the districts.

2.5.3 Decentralisation from the 1980s to Date

In 1988, PNDC Law 207 was passed and this led to the establishment of the Assembly system comprising of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MLGRD, 2010). PNDC Law 207 created 110 districts in the country and led to the first local level elections in 1988 and 1989, which has subsequently been held every four years (Crawford, 2004). In 1993, Act 462 replaced PNDC Law 207 and brought a slight change in the local government system, by instituting that membership of the District Assembly should comprise of 70 percent and 30 percent elected and appointed members respectively instead of two-third elected members and the onethird appointed members, (ILGS and FES, 2010). According to Gilbert et al., (2010), since the 1990s, attempts have been made to improve upon the decentralisation system to make the District Assemblies more effective. These include the introduction of the District Assemblies into the 1992 constitution of Ghana and the increase of the District Assemblies Common Fund from 5 percent to 7.5 percent of the portion of tax revenue in 2007.

2.6 Legal framework for Decentralisation and Local Government System in Ghana

The main legal frameworks for the decentralisation policy are the 1992 Constitution of Ghana and the Local Government Act of 1993, Act 462 (MLGRD, 2003). The 1992 constitution, states under article 240(1) that, “Ghana shall have a system of local government and administration which shall as far as practicable be decentralised”. The constitution further makes the District Assembly the highest political authority in the district with deliberative, legislative and executive powers. The Local Government Act (Act 462) of 1993 on its part, clearly states the roles and functions of the various local government units. Some other important legal instruments are the National Development Planning (System) Act, 1994 (Act 480) which emphasizes on the importance of planning for development and provides a legal framework for the implementation of decentralized planning in Ghana; and The District Assemblies

Common Fund Act, 1993 (Act 455) which establishes the DACF as a development fund enshrined in the 1992 constitution of Ghana to be allocated annually by parliament.

2.6.1 Structure of the Local Government System

The Local Government system in Ghana has the following structure: Regional Coordinating Council, District Assembly, Urban or Town or Area or Zonal Council and Unit Committee as shown in Figure 2.1.

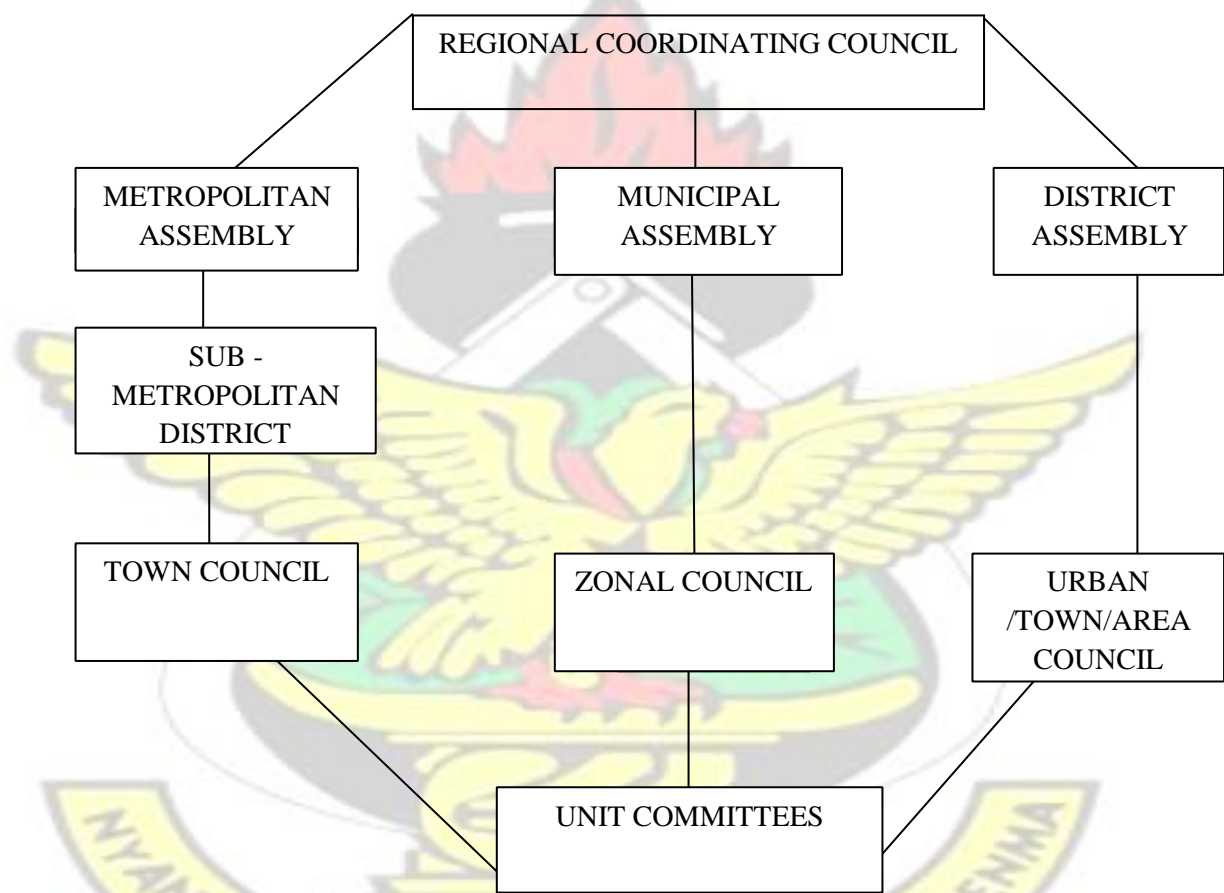


Fig. 2.1: Structure of the Local Government System (Source: MLGRD, 1996)

2.6.1.1 The Regional Coordinating Councils (RCC)

The RCC is established in all the ten regions of Ghana according to the 1992 constitution. The main function of the RCC is to monitor and evaluate the District Assemblies in each region as enshrined in the Local Government Act, 462. Since the

councils were not granted decision-making powers, it makes it easy for the government to decentralize further down to the local level (Kyei, 2000).

2.6.1.2 District Assemblies

The district Assembly falls just below the Regional Coordinating Council and comprises of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). MMDAs are differentiated on demographic basis. A Metropolitan Assembly has a minimum population of 250,000, a Municipal Assembly has a minimum population of 95,000 whilst a District Assembly has a minimum population of 75,000 (Local Government Act 462 of 1993). Since the President is mandated by Act 462 to create districts whenever feasible, the number of District Assemblies has increased from 110 in 1988 to 216 in 2012.

According to the 1992 constitution (section 241), the District Assembly is the highest political authority in the district and has been given deliberative, legislative and executive powers. It is the fulcrum of local governance in Ghana and consists of elected and appointed members headed by a District Chief Executive who is appointed by the president with the approval of two thirds of the Assembly (ILGS and FES, 2010). The functions assigned to the DAs are mostly related to the provision of services at the local level (Kyei, 2000). Some of the functions of the District Assembly as stated in the Local Government Act of 1993 are:

1. To ensure the overall development of the district and prepare and submit district development plans and budgets
2. Formulate and execute plans, programmes and strategies for the effective mobilisation of the resources necessary for the overall development of the district;
3. Initiate programmes for the development of basic infrastructure and provide municipal works and services in the district;
4. Develop, improve and manage human settlements and the environment in the district

District Assemblies have three main sources of revenue: the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) which is the main source, providing a constitutionally guaranteed minimum share of government revenue (not less than 5%); Ceded revenue and the district's own revenue raised through local taxes (Crawford, 2004). In 2007, the DACF was increased from 5 to 7.5 percent of national income (Koranteng, 2011). In 1998, new measures were introduced to earmark 35% of the Common Fund for specific purposes to enable the District Assemblies to improve interventions in rural areas; 20% to support productivity, income generation and provision of employment, 10% to support and sustain community development and 5% for poverty reduction and rural housing improvement (Amanor and Annan, 1999).

2.6.1.3 Sub-district Political and Administrative Structures

The Sub-district structures consist of Sub-metropolitan District Councils, Urban or Town or Zonal or Area Councils and Unit Committees. Crawford (2004) is of the view that the significance and effectiveness of these sub district structures is questionable. The Sub-metropolitan District Councils fall below the Metropolitan District Assemblies. They are established mainly on the basis of the large population sizes of the metropolitan local authorities so as to ensure the effective role of the city administrators (ILGS and FES, 2010).

The Urban/ Zonal/Town/ Area Councils are created based on the size and nature of the settlements and on the Electoral Commission's criteria including identifiable streets, landmarks, and boundaries (Zanu, 1997 cited in ILGS and FES, 2010). The Urban and Area Councils serve as a link between the District Assembly and the Unit Committees (Taabazuing, 2010).

The Unit Committees are at the lowest level and form the basic unit of the Local Government structure. They represent a settlement or group of settlements with a population of between 500-1000 in the rural areas and a higher population of 1,500 in the urban areas (NCCE, 1998:3). The principle of participation and consultation underpins the Unit Committees since they are closer to the people (Kyei, 2000).

2.7 The Concept of Participation

Participation is difficult to define since it is so flexible that it is often used to signify almost anything that involves people (Cornwall, 2008). The World Bank (1996:3) defines participation as “a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them”. Decentralisation and Community Development are the two major ways of inducing local participation (Mansuri and Rao, 2013). Community development approach enables villages, urban neighbourhoods, or other household groupings to manage resources without relying on local government whilst decentralisation promotes citizens’ participation in local government through regular elections, improving access to information and promoting mechanisms for deliberative decision-making.

Although participation was initially perceived as a counter-hegemonic approach to radical social transformation (Leal, 2010), it is now widely accepted that development efforts are more successful when community members are involved in the process (Pieterse, 1998). For instance, studies on the impact of community involvement in health in Nepal revealed high reductions in maternal and infant mortality, larger improvements in health-related behaviors, and greater use of health facilities (Manandhar et al., 2004).

Ahmad and Talib (2011:62) have identified three dimensions of participation:

- What activities do people participate in?
- Who is actually involved in the participatory process?
- How are people involved in participation?

With regards to the “what” dimension, they explain that people’s involvement in projects should be comprehensive from the decision making stage to program implementation and evaluation. Hence, beneficiaries should be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of development projects.

On the “who” dimension, Oakley (1995) has identified two main groups of participants in rural areas: the elites or more powerful group who are normally the major beneficiaries of development programmes due to their influence; and the rural poor who

consist of the excluded and disadvantage groups, who benefit less in rural projects. True participation however should enhance the involvement of the poor and the marginalized in decision- making in order to give citizens greater say in decisions that affect their lives (Mansuri and Rao, 2013).

The “how” dimension refers to the degrees or levels at which people are involved in the participatory processes (Ahmad and Talib, 2011). Pretty’s (1995) typology of participation is adopted for this study. In her typology participation is grouped into seven distinctive types arranged in ascending order of preference. This arrangement therefore clearly depicts a shift from external control to control by the local people (Cornwall, 2008). The levels of participation are presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Level of participation in Development Programmes and Projects

Typology	Characteristics
1. Manipulative participation	Participation is simply a pretence, with „people“s” representatives on official boards, but who are un-elected and have no power.
2. Passive participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.
3. Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decisionmaking, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people“s” views.
4. Participation for material incentives	People participate by contributing resources such as labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. It is very common to see this „called“ participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end.
5. Functional participation	Participation is seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents.
6. Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes.

7. Self-mobilization	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilization may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power.
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Source: Pretty (1995)

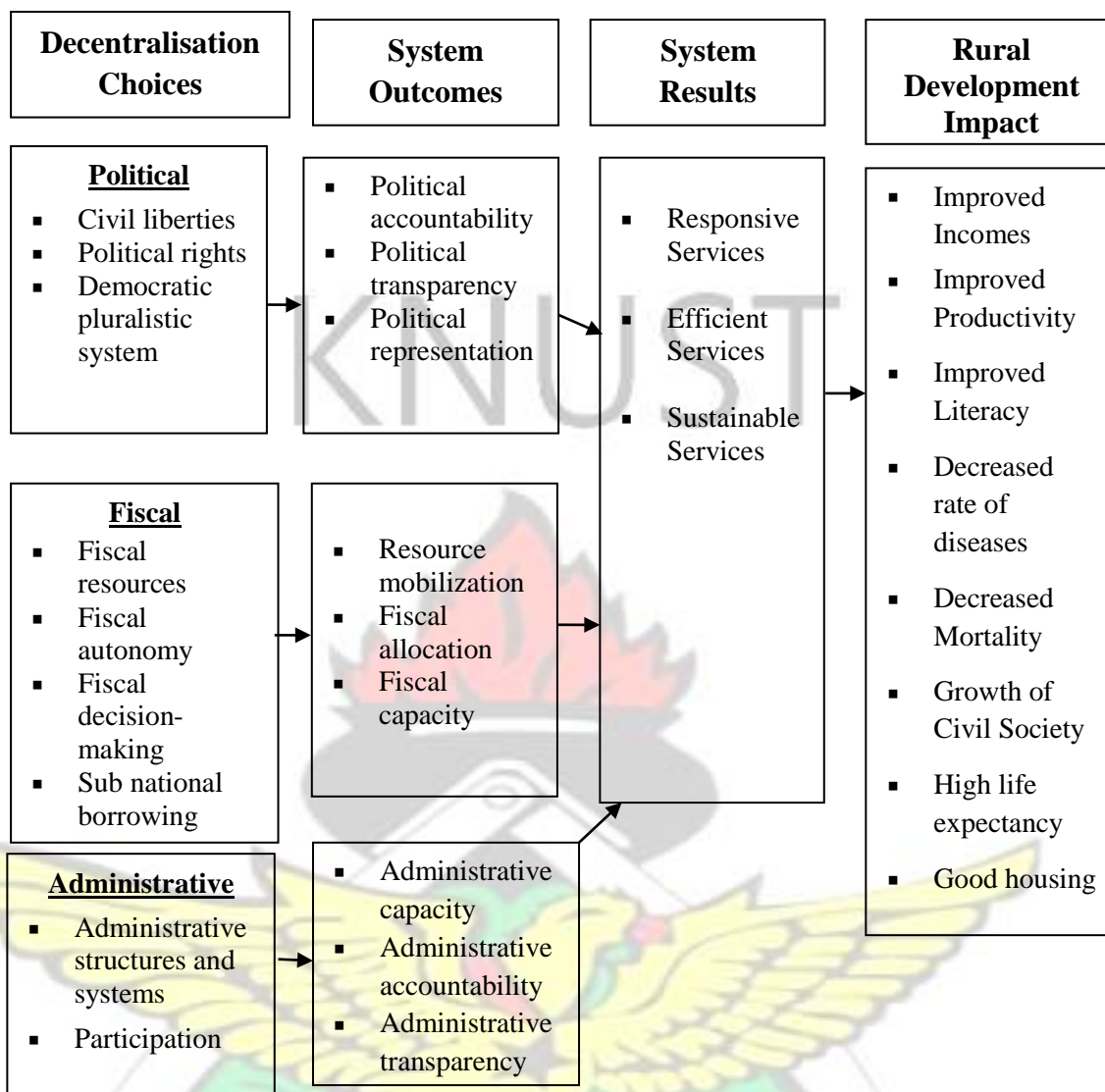
2.8. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is based on the soufflé theory of decentralisation developed by Parker (1995). The theory is based on the soufflé dish; a light and fluffy sweet dish which is very difficult to prepare. The key to having a perfect soufflé is to have a good understanding of what makes the soufflé recipe work. Apart from taking enough care to prepare the soufflé mixture by correctly mixing the eggs and milk, a good soufflé requires an appropriate temperature. Cooking the soufflé at a high temperature will burn the dish on the outside before it is cooked whilst a low temperature will prevent it from rising. Therefore, a perfect soufflé requires the right combination of eggs, milk and appropriate temperature. Just like the soufflé, decentralisation is a complex and difficult phenomenon. Depending on how it is managed, a country can have a positive or negative rural development outcome. If decentralisation is to be pro-poor, responsive to the needs of the rural people and improve their well-being, then, there should be a right combination of the three ingredients for success; which basically refers to the three dimensions of decentralisation: Political, Administrative, and Fiscal (Parker, 1995).

With reference to the Soufflé theory of decentralisation, this study is based on the notion that decentralisation can have positive impact on rural development. The implementation of the three aspects of decentralisation will enable local government (District Assemblies) to effectively respond to the needs and aspirations of the rural people. This is presented in Figure 2.2 below.

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TIME Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework showing the link between decentralisation and rural development (Source: Kerr, 1998)

With reference to Figure 2.2, the decentralisation choices refer to the three dimensions; political, fiscal and administrative which must be transferred to the local government. To ensure a positive rural development outcome, a balanced approach must be adopted in the sense that all three aspects must be implemented concurrently since they are interrelated. Politically, there must be measures in place to ensure civil liberties to encourage civil societies to be involved in the decentralised process in order to promote the interest and political rights of the local people to facilitate their participation in the development process. Fiscally, local government should have fiscal autonomy to raise funds and have the liberty to make decisions with respect to the disbursement of funds to execute planned projects. Administratively, structures must be in place to ensure

clarity of responsibility and relationship between central and local governments. Again, planning and budgeting processes of local government must be participatory to incorporate the views of the rural people. The immediate changes that will result from these decentralisation choices is designated “system outcome”. There would be political representation, accountability and transparency in the sense that local politicians will represent the interest of their local people and will be accountable to their electorates to ensure transparency. Local governments will also have the ability to mobilise resources, and efficiently allocate resources to correspond with the needs of the people. Administrative structures put in place for participatory planning, budgeting and spending will ensure that local managerial and technical expertise is used as well as local knowledge is incorporated into project preparation and implementation. These systems outcomes will enhance service delivery to the rural areas making them responsive to local needs, sustainable and efficient. These services include hospitals, schools, water, sanitation facilities and agricultural extension services to enhance the livelihood of rural people. Responsive, efficient and sustainable services will eventually lead to rural development evident by improved income, productivity, literacy, life expectancy, and decreased mortality.

2.9 Lessons from the Review

Identifying and differentiating between rural communities are vital to the successful planning and development of these areas. Although these localities may be regarded as having common developmental problems, each of them is unique and therefore requires the formulation of specific strategies and policies. The review revealed that rural areas close to urban towns have different developmental concerns from those isolated from major town. For instance, whilst distant communities have high rate of out migration, integrated areas on the other hand witness high rate of in-migration because of their proximity to urban areas. These two communities therefore may require different approaches to address their concerns. Hence, conducting researches in rural areas demands that these various categories are captured to gain an in-depth understanding of the various issues as well as prevent biases in the findings.

Over the years, different strategies have been propounded, abandoned or modified to improve upon quality of life in rural areas especially in Africa. It must however be

recognized that although most of these approaches were abandoned due to limited successes, no approach was a complete failure. Each approach had some positive aspects which were built into new ones. For instance, decentralisation is merely an improvement of the Integrated Rural development approach that was abandoned in the 1980s. The only difference is that decentralisation is participatory unlike the Integrated Rural development approach which operated from a centralised perspective. Again, the basic needs strategy which was abandoned in the 1970s informed the formulation of the Human Development Approach by the UNDP and the Millennium Development Goals which have been adopted as the blueprint for the realization of development target in this current dispensation. It is therefore expedient on researchers to carefully examine various strategies to equally highlight their strengths and limitations to serve as a basis for further improvement.

The literature revealed that previous attempts at rural development did not meet the expected benefits because of the absence of the participation of rural people in development projects. Decentralisation therefore has high potential for the achievement of sustainable rural development as it offers the avenue for people to participate in the development process and articulate their needs to better inform local government for a responsive and efficient service delivery. However, for decentralisation to work, its three dimensions; political, administrative and fiscal must be implemented together. It therefore rests on the willingness of central government to devolve the necessary authority, resources and tasks to local governments.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

As outlined in chapter one, this study assessed the effectiveness of the decentralisation programme as a rural development strategy in the Ahanta West district. The study therefore explored pertinent literature which culminated in the conceptual framework. These analyses highlighted the variables required in the data collection exercise, the

gaps and the need to contribute to the existing literature through this research. This chapter outlines the various steps adopted to collect data (mostly primary) in order to address the research questions outlined in Chapter one. The sources of data, methods of data collection, sample design, data collection instruments, ethical considerations and data analysis techniques are subsequently explained in this chapter.

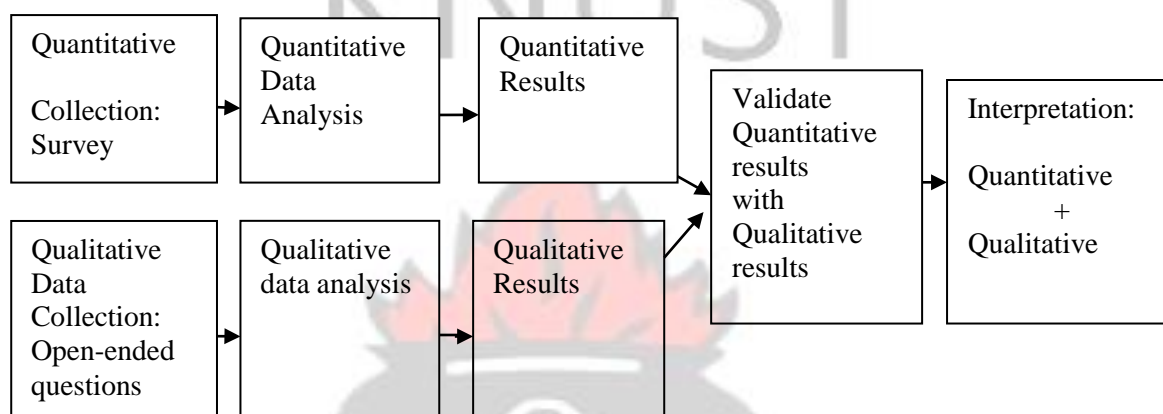
3.2 Reconnaissance Survey

Preliminary investigations were conducted in all the selected communities and the District Assembly. This provided familiarity with the settlements and helped to establish rapport with key officials and traditional authorities. In the process, preliminary secondary data including population and maps were collected from planning officials of the District Assembly. The survey also informed the selection of the sampling design and helped to determine the favourable days and times for the data collection exercise after learning about the occupation and norms in the villages. For instance, in Yakaw, it was revealed that Saturday was not favourable since they were predominantly Seventh Day Adventist worshippers.

3.3 Research Design

The conceptual structure within which this study was conducted consisted of the methods of data collection, measurement and analysis (Kothari, 2004). The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches through questionnaire survey and interviews to comprehensively address the research questions. As Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) point out, the use of mixed methods provide better inferences, present divergent views on a phenomenon and can answer research questions that cannot be answered by using only qualitative or quantitative method. According to May (2001:123), “interviews are used to probe beyond answers and enter into dialogue with the interviewee”. Thus, the study found it useful to interact with rural people for better insights on the assessment of the developmental performance of the decentralisation programme as well as present their feelings and voices in the study. Survey on the other hand, focuses on the “general trend in people’s opinions, experiences and behaviour” (Driscoll, 2011:163). Consequently, in ascertaining community perception and concerns on decentralisation and its developmental role in rural areas, the survey method was also deemed appropriate. Furthermore, it was

adopted to enable the generalisations of findings on the beliefs and opinions of the sample to a wider population (Kasunic, 2005). The survey was cross-sectional in design since it was carried out at just one point in time to present the perceptions of rural people. Data collected from the survey and interviews were analysed separately, validated and combined to answer the research questions. The research design is presented in Figure 3.1



Data

Figure 3.1: Triangulation Design (Source: Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007)

3.4 Data Collection Exercise

Secondary data, collected mostly from the District Medium Term Development Plans (DMTDP), previous researches, articles and reports was solicited to augment and validate primary data by cross verifying information from the primary sources. The research then proceeded to collect primary data through questionnaire administration, face to face interviews and field observation as explained in the subsequent subsections. To ensure validity and reliability of the research, the questions were carefully selected through a thorough review of related literature and discussions with experts in decentralisation and rural development. This was done to ensure that the questions posed were relevant to the research questions. The use of both survey and interviews also enhanced the validity and reliability of the research. A pretest of the questionnaires was also conducted with ten householders in each settlement. The analysis of the pretest highlighted the need to modify certain questions to ensure clarity. The data collection exercise was carried out from 26th February, 2014 to 28th March, 2014. The exercise was done mostly in the evenings when the farmers had returned home. With respect to

Adjua which was a fishing community, the data collection exercises were done on Tuesdays when fishing was traditionally forbidden.

3.4.1 Selection of Study Settlements

The multi stage stratified sampling technique was used to select six settlements for the study. With recognition to the fact that rural areas are not homogeneous, the research categorized the settlements into three based on their degree of remoteness ascertained by the relative distance from the major towns as shown below:

- Integrated Rural Areas: These are settlements that are very close to urban centres.
- Intermediary Rural Areas: These are at certain relative distance to the major towns.
- Distant rural Areas: This consists of settlements that are very far from the major towns.

At the first stage, the 123 settlements in the district were grouped under the six area councils. The names of the six area councils which also represent the headquarters of the councils are Agona Ahanta, Apowa, Dixcove, Abura, Ewusiejo and Busua. With the help of the district map and officials of the Planning Unit who were familiar with the communities, the settlements under each area council were categorized into integrated, intermediary and distant rural areas. Since the headquarters were also major towns in each of the councils, they were used as the reference points to determine the relative distances of all the settlements in their respective area councils. Two settlements were then randomly selected from each category. The selected settlements are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Area Councils and Settlements Selected for the Study

Name of Area Council	Name of Headquarters	Name of Rural Community Selected	Rural Category	Distance from headquarters
1. Agona	Agona Ahanta (District Capital)	Mpanyinasa	Integrated	2km
2. Apowa	Apowa	Adjuah	Integrated	2km
3. Abura	Abura	Tumentu	Intermediary	4km

4. Dixcove	Dixcove (Paramountcy)	Ntakrom	Intermediary	10km
5. Busua	Busua (Paramountcy)	Yarkor	Distant	7km
6. Ewusiejoe	Ewusiejoe	Nyameyekrom	Distant	6km

Source: Author's construct, 2013

3.4.2 Questionnaire Administration

Semi-structured household questionnaires comprising of closed and open questions were used to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data from heads of households (see Appendix 2). The open-ended questions allowed for the in-depth investigation of issues that were not thoroughly captured in the close-ended aspect of the questionnaire. In addition, the semi-structured approach made the survey flexible by enabling respondents to freely express their views and concerns. Close-ended questions were in the form of nominal, ordinal and interval scales to enable the data to be subjected to statistical tools and analysis. Due to the relatively low literacy levels, the questionnaires were administered by four trained enumerators to ensure the reliability of data.

3.4.2.1 Sample Size Determination

The sample size for the survey was first of all determined by the use of the

$$\text{mathematical formula: } n = \frac{N}{1 + N \alpha^2}$$

Where, n is sample size, N is Sample frame, α is the Error margin and 1 is the constant. Using the above formula with 95% confidence level, and a sample frame of 1,523 householders in all six settlements selected for the study, the sample size was stipulated at 317. However, the analysis of the data generated from the pretest on ten householders in each settlement, revealed no significant variation in responses in the settlements. This therefore gave a substantial justification to scale down the sample size to 200. Table 3.2 shows the total number of respondents interviewed in each settlement.

Table 3.2: Sample size for selected communities

Name of Community	Total Number of Households	Number of Households Selected
Adjuah	763	51
Mpanyinasa	256	45

Ntaakrom	200	41
Yarkor	119	25
Nyameyekrom	97	19
Tumentu	88	19
Total	1523	200

Source: Author's Construct, 2013

3.4.2.2 Selection of Household Heads for the Survey

Cluster sampling technique was used to select participants for each settlement. For the purpose of this study, a household was defined “as a person or a group of persons, who live together in the same dwelling, share the same house-keeping arrangements and are catered for as one unit” whilst a household head refers to “the person (Male or Female) who is generally in charge of the economic and social responsibilities of the household” (GSS, 2014:12). The focus on the household heads was deemed appropriate as they were in a better position to provide some insights on the developmental issues in the communities. Their assessment of the performance of the decentralisation structures and their outcomes were vital to cross-check that of the local government officials.

Due to the lack of a sampling frame for households, a house was used as a proxy. Based on a sketch map of each village, blocks of houses were randomly selected and all the houses in the selected blocks were included in the survey. In each of these houses selected at random, the household head was automatically chosen for the survey. In cases where there were more than one household in a house, one householder was randomly selected. The households were numbered and one participant drawn from a bowl.

3.4.3 Face to Face Interviews

Purposive sampling was used to select key respondents from each of the following eight decentralized departments in the district:

- Health, Education,
- Development Planning
- Community Development Department;
- Agricultural Unit,
- District Chief Executive,
- District Coordinating Director □ The Presiding member.

In addition, six Assembly members and six unit committee members representing the settlements were also interviewed. With regards to the Unit committee members, any member who was available and willing to be interviewed was selected. Six chiefs in the study settlements were also selected through purposive sampling. The village chiefs were interviewed on a range of issues including socio-economic development, culture and their opinions about the decentralisation concept. These interviews also served as community entry strategy. The interviews were semi-structured in nature in that, although an interview guide was utilized to guide the discussion, provisions were made to explore other pertinent issues that had not been anticipated in the interview guide (see Appendix 3, 4 and 5). Where necessary, the participants were prompted back to the central question in order to minimize the time spent on each question. Where permission was granted, the responses were recorded and later transcribed and analysed.

3.4.4 Field Observation

In the course of administering questionnaires to household heads, the enumerators also observed the availability of basic amenities in the communities, the condition of these facilities as well as distances to these facilities to validate responses from the respondents. Housing conditions of each respondent were also noted. The observations made in each settlement were recorded in field notes and supported with pictures which were later included in the data analyses. The process, variables and selected participants are summarized in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Data Requirement and Sources

Research Objective	Variables	Units Of Measurements	Data Sources	Method	Tool
Contribution of Decentralisation to quality of life	<input type="checkbox"/> Basic infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> Physical accessibility <input type="checkbox"/> Livelihood	<input type="checkbox"/> Number of projects implemented <input type="checkbox"/> Number of extension services per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly members • Unit committee members • Household head • Chiefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey • Face-to-Face Interview • Observation 	<input type="checkbox"/> Questionnaire <input type="checkbox"/> Interview guide <input type="checkbox"/> Field notes <input type="checkbox"/> Voice recorder
Performance of Decentralisation based on conditions in the settlements	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Accessibility <input type="checkbox"/> Responsiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Community Participation <input type="checkbox"/> Educational level <input type="checkbox"/> Income <input type="checkbox"/> Housing condition <input type="checkbox"/> Community expectation <input type="checkbox"/> Socio-economic concerns	<input type="checkbox"/> Availability of basic infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> Distance to amenities and services <input type="checkbox"/> Condition of amenities <input type="checkbox"/> Level of Participation <input type="checkbox"/> Number of meetings per year <input type="checkbox"/> Number of years in school <input type="checkbox"/> Household expenditure <input type="checkbox"/> Type of building materials and roofing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit Committee members • Heads of Departments • Assembly members • Chiefs • Household heads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey • Face-to-Face Interview • Observation 	<input type="checkbox"/> Questionnaire <input type="checkbox"/> Interview guide <input type="checkbox"/> Voice recorder <input type="checkbox"/> Field notes
Factors Hindering the Performance of Decentralised Units	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Participation <input type="checkbox"/> Motivation <input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Logistics <input type="checkbox"/> Commitment to work	<input type="checkbox"/> Participation level <input type="checkbox"/> Timely release of funds <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of field and office equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Number of meetings per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of Departments • Assembly members • Unit Committee members 	Face-to-Face Interview	<input type="checkbox"/> Interview guide <input type="checkbox"/> Voice recorder

Source: Author's Construct, 2013

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3.5 Ethical Considerations

In order to ensure that participants were not adversely affected as suggested by Orb et al. (2001). The key ethical considerations of this research were informed and voluntary consent, confidentiality of information and the anonymity of participants. A cover letter attached to the questionnaires explained the aims and objectives of the study and assured respondents of their confidentiality and anonymity as proposed by Cresswell (2005). Before embarking on the survey, permission was sought from the District Assembly and the chief of each village. The respondents on the other hand, were made to understand the objectives of the research after which their permission was sought. All the respondents interviewed, freely granted their consent and were not coerced in any way to participate in the survey. Anonymity of respondents was considered by omitting names and assigning codes to questionnaires.

3.6 Data Analyses and Presentation

The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative tools to analyse data obtained from the settlements. Quantitative data, generated from the close-ended questions posed in the questionnaires was collated and presented into frequency tables through the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 16.0. The CASHPOR House Index (CHI) was also used to analyse housing conditions in the settlements.

Qualitative data derived from open-ended questions in the survey questionnaire and interviews was analysed manually through the thematic analysis technique. This technique was considered the most appropriate as it permitted the detailed explanation of the data and presentation of various dimensions of the subject matter through interpretations (Boyatzis, 1998). Hence, the study was able to further unravel the rationale behind the respondents' assertions (Alhojailan, 2012). In accordance to the tenets of thematic analyses, interviews which were tape recorded were first of all transcribed and carefully studied to identify common themes and patterns. The identification of themes was both inductive and deductive. Inductively, the ideas and concepts emerged from the data whilst deductively, some themes emanated from the research questions and literature review. These were subsequently coded and interpreted with illustrative quotes. Field notes generated from observations in the field

in addition to pictures were also regularly reviewed and incorporated into the analyses. The quantitative and qualitative data analysed, were both presented under the main themes generated in relation to the research questions to assess the developmental effect of the decentralisation programme in the rural communities.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PROFILE OF AHANTA WEST DISTRICT AND THE STUDY SETTLEMENTS

This section deals with the analysis of geographical, demographic, political and socioeconomic characteristics of the study area with focus on the rural parts of the district to provide an in-depth understanding of the developmental situations in these areas. The study draws mainly on secondary data obtained from reports and DMTD, augmented with primary data.

4.1 Location and Size

The Ahanta West District is situated at the southernmost point of the country and the entire West African sub-region and lies between latitude 4°45"N and longitude 1°58"W. Its location has therefore paved way for fishing activities which serve as a major source of income for residents of many rural communities such as Adjua, New Amanful, and Cape Three Points which are found along the coast. The district's proximity to the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis enhances its commercial activities as it is about 15 minutes' drive from the capital of the Western Region, Takoradi; about 25 minutes' drive from the administrative capital, Sekondi and approximately 25 kilometres from the central business district of Takoradi. In addition, it has also provided the opportunity for some of the residents to access education and health services in the Metropolis. There are 123 communities with Agona Ahanta as the district capital (AWDA, 2010).

4.2 Decentralisation and Governance

The Ahanta West District was carved out of the Sekondi – Takoradi Metropolitan Authority, now the Sekondi – Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) in 1988 as a result of the Decentralisation policy. The district was therefore among the 110 districts created in Ghana due to its population size. Having been made an autonomous district, the District Assembly was charged with the oversight responsibility for the development of the area in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462). The district is divided into six Area Councils which are further subdivided into 36 electoral areas represented by Assembly members and Unit committees and made up of 52 members, comprising of 36 elected and 16 appointed members (AWDA, 2013). The establishment of the Area Councils is to facilitate grassroots participation in development and governance processes. However, resources required to ensure that they function as mandated are not adequate. For instance, some of the Area councils

are not operating basically due to lack of office accommodation and logistics (AWDA, 2010). This raises concerns for rural development since the structures required to ensure the achievement of the goals of the decentralisation programme exist only in name.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics

The total population of the district is 106,215 representing 4.5 percent of the regional population (GSS, 2012). In comparison to the population of 95,140 in 2000, there has been an increase of about 11,000 people. This is however low compared to the increase of 18,224 and 36,959 recorded in 1984 and 2000 respectively. Details of population growth are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: District Population from 1970 - 2010

Year	Total Population
1970	39,957
1984	58,181
2000	95,140
2010	106,215

Source: GSS, 2002 and 2012

The age and sex distribution shown in Table 4.2 depicts a high percentage of females (52%) than males (48%). The dominance of women cuts across all the age groups except the age cohort of 0-14. The gender composition follows the regional and national trends where there are more females than males. The high economically active population (15-64 years) could put much strain on the District Assembly to focus on the creation of employment avenues to absorb this labour force. The dependency ratio of 84.7 percent implying that 85 persons are being catered for by 100 people in the economically active ages (15-64 years) is higher than the Regional ratio of 74.8 percent. Table 4.2 gives the details of the age and sex composition.

Table 4.2: Population Distribution by Age and Sex

Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
0 - 14	22,157	21,857	44,014	41.4
15 - 64	27,080	30,440	57,520	54.2
65 and Above	1,762	2,919	4,681	4.4

Total	50,999	55,216	10,6215	100
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Source: GSS, 2013b

The district is highly rural going by the criterion that any settlement with a population of 5,000 or more represents an urban area. The rural-urban split is 70.5 percent and 29.5 percent respectively (GSS, 2013b). The number of people in the rural areas is gradually reducing whilst the urban population is increasing. For instance, in 2000 the rural and urban population was 80 percent and 20 percent respectively (GSS, 2002). Although the rate of decline may not be very significant, it is an indication of migration of the rural inhabitants to the urban parts of the district either to seek employment or enjoy services that are not available in their communities. Considering that the urban population is concentrated in only four out of the 123 settlements, pressure would be exerted on facilities in the four communities.

4.4 Economic Profile

The main economic activity is agriculture which employs about 38.1 percent of the population (GSS, 2013). Compared to the 2000 census, where the sector employed 60 percent (GSS, 2002); there has been a decline in the sector. The decline can be attributed to lack of interest in the sector by the youth due to low income accrued from the activity as revealed by discussions with residents of rural communities. This implies that decentralisation has not been able to boost agricultural activities in the rural areas considering that it is the backbone of the rural economy, employing about 57% of the population (GSS, 2013b). Crop farming is the major occupation and the major food crops produced are cassava, plantain, maize, yam, rice and vegetables which are generally on subsistence level on an average farm size of one acre. The small size of land indicates lack of adequate land for farming on large scale to gain adequate income. However, the predominant cash crops: oil palm and rubber are rather grown on a large scale by Norpalm Ghana Limited and Ghana Rubber Estate Limited (GREL) respectively and on small to medium scale by individual farmers (AWDA, 2010).

About 98 percent of farmers in the district depend on natural climatic conditions for cropping, use simple tools such as hoes and cutlasses and practice slash and burn system. Although there are Agricultural Extension Officers mandated to provide training and advisory support to propel farmers to adopt good farming practices, this is

not effectively carried. The Extension officer to farmer ratio of 1:1,986 (AWDA, 2010) is woefully inadequate. Furthermore, the offices are not readily accessible to majority of rural farmers as they are stationed in the major towns in the district. These issues have adverse implications on rural development since the farmers would not be able to increase their yield to have enough to sell after feeding their families.

Fishing is also a very important economic activity mainly for the people at the coastal areas of the District. A lot of fishermen from other coastal areas of Ghana therefore migrate to these coastal areas during the major fishing season between July and September (AWDA, 2010). Major industries in the district are timber firms and sawmills. The district also has agro-based industries; mainly Norpalm Ghana Limited and GREL which produce edible and industrial oil palm and industrial rubber respectively.

4.5 Access to Social Services

Generally, facilities and services are located in the major towns to the neglect of the rural settlements. For instance, a spatial analysis conducted in the district revealed that the provision of services is skewed in favour of the district capital (AWDA, 2010). Some communities especially from the hinterlands therefore have to spend more than one hour within a distance of 36km to access facilities and services at the district capital. Thus, access (measured by travel time) to facilities and services particularly hospital, health centres, second cycle institutions, weekly market, banks, court and extension services is poor.

4.5.1 Education

The district has a number of basic and second cycle institutions but no tertiary institution. Currently, there are a total of 247 schools of which 159 is owned by the government whilst 87 are owned by private individuals. This comprises of 97 Kindergartens, 87 Primary schools, 60 Junior High schools (JHS), two Senior High Schools (SHS) and one Technical/Vocational institute (AWDA, 2013). With the exception of basic schools which the rural communities have been given a fair share, the second cycle institutions are all located in the major towns.

4.5.2 Health

The district has one public hospital located at Dixcove, four health centres, three clinics, 10 CHPS compounds, 95 outreach points and a number of drug stores (AWDA, 2013). The district has two doctors and 110 nurses, which results in a high doctor/patient ratio. The main problems confronting the sector are inadequate health facilities and personnel especially in the remote areas as these personnel refuse to accept postings to such areas without facilities, medicines and medical equipment (AWDA, 2010). The predominant disease in the district is malaria accounting for about 36.3 percent of the Out-patient department (OPD) cases (AWDA, 2013). This may be attributed to the poor hygiene especially in the rural areas.

4.5.3 Water Situation

Boreholes are the major source of water for drinking and domestic use especially for the rural people in the district. Out of a total of 32 percent who rely on boreholes, 30 percent is rural whilst only 2 percent is urban GSS (2013b). Other sources of water in the district are pipe-borne water, streams, wells and sachet water. It is however worth noting that, compared to 2000 where about 35 percent and 1.2 percent of borehole users were rural and urban respectively (GSS, 2002), there has been a drop in the use of the facility in rural areas and a slight increase in the urban areas. The decline could be attributed to the breakdown of boreholes and saltiness of water from the facilities revealed in a research by UNDP (2007). Lack of maintenance of the facility is an indication that the Water and Sanitation Committees instituted in the communities to manage the facilities are not effective.

4.5.4 Sanitation Situation

About 69 percent of the population has access to toilet facilities. However, access to toilet facility is low in the rural areas. Out of the total of 31 percent of the population that do not have toilet facilities, 28 percent is rural (GSS, 2013b). The use of bushes and beaches are therefore the only means of human waste disposal for these people. This has adverse health consequences on the residents as it increases their vulnerability to diseases particularly typhoid and cholera.

Majority of rural households (51.2%) dispose solid wastes at public dumps (open space) whilst the main method of solid waste disposal in urban areas is public refuse containers

(GSS, 2013b). The disparity between the two localities is attributed to the provision of skip containers in only the urban areas. In the district, only four out of the 123 communities: Agona-fie, Agona Nkwanta, Apowa and Dixcove have skip containers (AWDA, 2010). Other major means are burning and indiscriminate dumping which has adverse consequences on humans and the environment.

4.5.5 Transportation and Communication Services

The district road networks are mostly feeder roads. About 85 percent of the roads are unpaved making them inaccessible especially in the hinterlands during the rainy season. The only asphalt road is the section of the Trans West African road that passes through the District Capital; Agona Ahanta. Accessibility to basic facilities is therefore hindered owing to the fact that they are mostly located in the district capital. The poor road surface also hinders the smooth distribution and marketing of goods and services both within and outside the district thus affecting trading activities especially in the rural areas (AWDA, 2010). This could increase post-harvest losses and reduce the income of farmers.

4.6 Socio-economic Characteristics of Study Communities

The six surveyed communities have varying degrees of rurality which was determined by their proximity to their area council capitals; population size of less than 5,000; poor infrastructure and the predominance of primary economic activities: farming and fishing. Adjua and Mpanyinasa are classified as integrated communities due to their close proximity (2km) to the area council capital, (Apowa) and the district capital (Agona Ahanta) respectively. Ntakrom and Tumentu are intermediary communities as they are located at 10km and 4km respectively from their area council capitals whilst Yakaw and Nyameyekrom are distant communities located at 7km and 6km respectively from their area council capitals. The integrated communities have the highest population (see Table 4.3). This is because some workers from the urban centres reside in these settlements and commute from there to the urban areas. Fishing activities carried out at Adjua has also attracted a lot of people to the community.

Figure 4.2 shows the selected settlements.

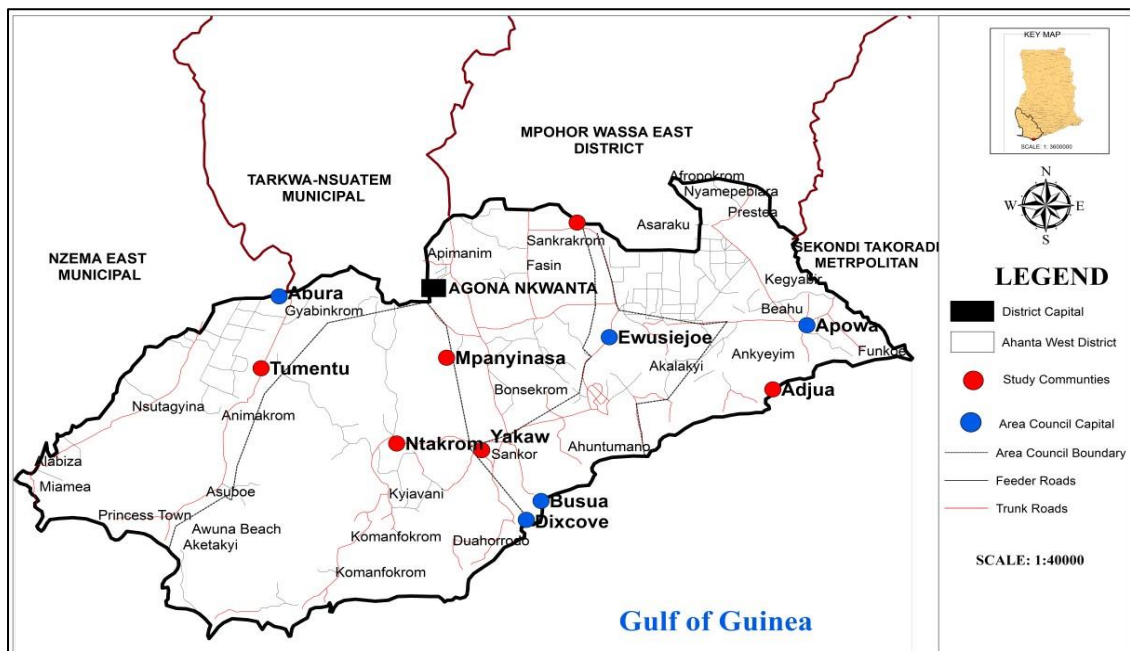


Figure 4.1: The Study Settlements in the Ahanta West District (Source: AWDA, 2013)

4.6.1 Economic Activities

The communities depend heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods. Agriculture is the principal economic activity with farming being the main occupation. However, fishing is the main occupation for residents of Adjua; even here, farming is practiced by many of the residents. This is due to low fish catch which is attributed to restrictions placed on areas within distances from the oil fields. Again, during the lean fishing season, majority of the fishermen switch to farming for survival. Farming in all the communities is mainly carried out on subsistence basis with few people engaged in commercial farming. Oil palm is the major cash crop grown predominantly in Nyameyekrom, Ntaakrom, Yakaw and Mpanyinasa. The large scale cultivation of this crop is influenced by the existence of Norpalm Ghana Limited, an oil palm industry which purchases the products. Palm oil extraction is carried out extensively at Yakaw and Nyameyekrom. Local gin distilling is also carried out by some residents after the palm trees have been felled. Other cash crops include rubber, which is cultivated on a large scale mostly at Tumentu by the indigenes and the Ghana Rubber Estate Limited, coconut and oranges. The major food crop grown on subsistence level in all the communities is cassava. Other crops like tomatoes, plantain and pepper are also grown.

However, in Adjua, tiger nut and groundnut are also cultivated mostly by the women. The economic structure of the communities implies that agriculture is still very important to the rural sector.

4.6.2 Road Infrastructure

Two major roads exist in communities. The integrated communities have trunk roads whilst the rest have feeder roads. Feeder roads in Tumentu and Ntakrom are connector roads as they connect other feeder roads in the district whilst those of Nyameyekrom and Yakaw are access roads, joining trunk roads in the district. The roads in Adjua and Mpanyinasa are partially engineered and fully engineered respectively making transportation easy throughout the year whilst those of the other communities are unengineered making transportation difficult especially during the rainy season. It is therefore difficult for the residents to get public transport especially from their communities to a desired destination. At Yakaw, residents walk for about 12-15 minutes to the main junction before they can get a vehicle. At Tumentu and Nyameyekrom, residents have to wait for about 20 minutes before getting a vehicle since there are only two vehicles operating in these communities. The situation is worse in Nyameyekrom as the vehicles are not only in bad shapes but are also always overloaded with passengers and goods.

4.6.3 Education

All the communities except Mpanyinasa have basic schools located in the community. None of them however has a Senior High School, a Vocational School or a Tertiary institution. Pupils who complete their basic education further their studies in the major towns in the district or in Takoradi. Absence of Senior High Schools could be a disincentive to pupils to aim at furthering their education after completing basic schools. Adjua, Nyameyekrom and Tumentu are the only communities that have all the three levels of basic schools (Kindergarten, Primary and JHS). At Yakaw, there are only primary and JHS and so pupils attend school at the next town which is about 10 minutes' drive away. Ntakrom has only JHS and hence pupils attend kindergarten and primary at the next town, Boekrom, which is about three minutes' walk. Pupils of Mpanyinasa attend all three levels of basic education at Himakrom which is about 3-4 minutes' drive away.

4.6.4 Health

With regards to health facilities, none of the communities has a hospital, health centre, clinic or CHPS compound. There are however drug stores in Adjua and Tumentu. Health needs are therefore catered for at the only hospital at Dixcove, or health centres and CHPS compounds located outside these communities

4.6.5 Water and Sanitation

Boreholes are the main sources of water in all the communities except Adjua where residents use pipe-borne water. Adjua has three standpipes with water supplied from Ghana Water Company Limited whilst the rest of the communities have two boreholes each. However, with the exception of Mpanyinasa and Ntakrom where all the boreholes are functioning, one of the boreholes in Yakaw is broken down whilst all the boreholes in Tumentu and Nyameyekrom are not functioning. Residents of Tumentu and Nyameyekrom therefore use streams as their main source of water. The use of streams makes residents vulnerable to water related diseases such as bilharzia, guinea worm and diarrhoea. Other sources of water are rainwater and sachet water. Maintenance and sustainability of facilities are very poor in the communities.

Sanitation situation is generally poor. Few households have toilets and therefore majority of the residents depend solely on public toilet facilities. With the exception of Mpanyinasa and Tumentu where the KVIP public latrines are in good shape, public latrines in Yakaw and Ntakrom are dilapidated deterring residents from patronizing them. In Nyameyekrom and Adjua, there is no public toilet facility and therefore those without household toilets defecate in bushes and along the beach respectively. None of the communities have refuse containers and therefore use open space as public dump sites. These are burned regularly through communal labour.

4.6.6 Electricity

With respect to electricity supply, all the communities with the exception of Nyameyekrom are connected to the national electricity grid. However, in Mpanyinasa and Adjua, some parts of the communities are without electricity supply. Table 4.3 presents the profile of the selected settlements.

Table 4.3: Socio-economic Characteristics of the Surveyed Settlements

Community	Population	Rural Category			Occupation		Existing Facilities									
		Integrated	Intermediary	Distant	Farming	Fishing	Kindergarten	Primary	JHS	Electricity	Drug Store	Public Toilet	Trunk Road	Feeder Road	Boreholes	Piped Water
Adjua	2,370	x			X	x	x	x	x	x	x		x			x
Tumentu	424		x		X		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Yakaw	398			X	X			x	x	x		x		x	x	
Nyameyekrom	663			X	X		x	x	x					x	x	
Ntaakrom	643		x		X				x	x		x		x	x	
Mpanyinasa	772	x			X					x		x	x		x	

Source: Author's Construct, 2014

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSES OF THE LINKAGES BETWEEN DECENTRALISATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE STUDY SETTLEMENTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the qualitative and quantitative data drawn from the field data collection in the six settlements. This involves a total number of 226 respondents comprising of 200 household heads, six Assembly members, six Unit committee members, six chiefs and eight heads of departments. This analysis is presented based on the research themes which relate to the objectives of the study.

5.2. Socio-economic Characteristics of Household Heads

5.2.1 Age and Sex of Household Heads

Majority of the respondents (43 percent) fell within the age group of 46-60. The age cohort of 18-30 however had the least (13 percent) of the respondents. Females

constituted the majority (53 percent) of all the age groups except the age cohort of 4660. The dominance of females could be attributed to migration of the males to the urban areas for greener pastures. More women therefore bear a greater burden of catering for their households. This therefore could affect their ability to save enough money to enhance their economic activities to improve upon their standard of living. Initiatives geared towards improving livelihoods in the settlements must target the women. Table 5.1 shows the age and sex structure of the respondents.

Table 5.1: Age and Sex Distribution of Household Heads

Age Range (in years)	Male	Female	Total
18-30	10 (5%)	16(8%)	26 (13%)
31-45	24 (12%)	30 (15%)	54 (27%)
46-60	46 (23%)	40 (20.5%)	86 (43%)
60 and Above	14 (7%)	20 (10%)	34 (17%)
Total	94 (47%)	106 (53%)	200 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, March 2014

5.2.2 Sex and Occupation of Household Heads

Majority of the household heads were engaged in farming (40 percent). Economic activities such as fishing and palm wine tapping were solely engaged in by men whilst fish mongering and palm oil extraction were for the women. The economic activities of the respondents show the dependence of rural people on natural resources for their living. Since natural-resource based livelihoods are seasonal, this would affect their ability to have enough money throughout the year to adequately cater for their families. Table 5.2 presents the sex and occupation of the respondents.

Table 5.2: Sex and Occupation of Household Heads

Occupation	Male	Female	Total
Farming	42 (21%)	38 (19%)	80 (40%)
Manual Work	16 (8%)	10 (5%)	26 (13%)
Trading	4 (2%)	21 (10.5%)	25 (12.5%)
Fishing	20 (10%)	0 (0%)	20 (10%)
Fish Mongering	0 (0%)	18 (9%)	18 (9%)
Palm Oil Extraction	0 (0%)	15 (7.5%)	15 (7.5%)

Palm wine Tapping	8 (4%)	0 (0%)	8 (4%)
Unemployed	4 (2%)	3 (1.5%)	7 (3.5%)
Clergy	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)
Total	94 (47%)	106 (53%)	200 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, March 2014

5.2.3 Occupation and Educational Level of Household Heads

Generally, the respondents had low level of formal education. Half (50%) of them had had some level of basic education. However, most of those who were engaged in fishing related activities had never been to school. The low level of education of the farmers could make it difficult for them to read and understand instructions on chemicals and fertilizer applications to increase farm yields. Agricultural extension services are therefore essential to enable them adopt advanced farming techniques. Since education is important for employment (EPEC, 2004), the uneducated ones (43.5 percent) may not be able to get employed in sectors that require formal education. This will therefore affect their ability to get better jobs which would earn them more income to improve their standard of living. Table 5.3 shows the occupation and educational level of household heads.

Table 5.3: Occupation and Level of Education of Household Heads

Occupation	Never Schooled	Basic	SHS / Vocational	Total
Farming	32(16%)	44(22%)	4(2%)	80(40%)
Manual Work	10(5%)	14(7%)	2(1%)	26(13%)
Trading	8(4%)	12(6%)	5(2.5%)	25(12.5%)
Fishing	12(6%)	8(4%)	0(0%)	20(10%)
Fish Mongering	10(5%)	8(4%)	0(0%)	18(9%)
Palm Oil Extraction	9(4.5%)	6(3%)	0(0%)	15(7.5%)
Palm wine Tapping	4(2%)	4(2%)	0(0%)	8(4%)
Unemployed	2(1%)	4(2%)	1(0.5%)	7(3.5%)
Clergy	0 (0)	0 (0%)	1(0.5%)	1(0.5%)
Total	87(43.5%)	100(50%)	13(6.5%)	200(100%)

Source: Field Survey, March 2014

5.2.4 Occupation and Monthly Income of Household Heads

The research used expenditure which is easier to assess as a proxy for determining incomes. Most householders (52 percent) earned a monthly income range of GH¢200-400. Although this implies that they earn above the minimum wage of GH¢7.00, income is just one aspect of measuring deprivation. Intangible measures such as seasonality of farming and incomes as well as chieftaincy disputes all combine to determine levels of deprivation. Majority of the fishermen earned higher income between GH¢400-600. They would therefore be able to get enough money to provide the needs of their households. Table 5.4 shows the occupation and income levels of the household heads.

Table 5.4: Occupation and Monthly Incomes of Household Heads

Occupation	Below 200	200-400	400-600	Above 600	Total
Farming	19(9.5%)	48(24%)	10(5%)	3(1.5%)	80(40%)
Manual Work	5(2.5%)	16(8%)	5(2.5%)	0(0%)	26(13%)
Trading	6(3%)	13(6.5%)	6(3%)	0(0%)	25(12.5%)
Fishing	2(1%)	7(3.5%)	8(4%)	3(1.5%)	20(10%)
Fish Mongering	4(2%)	9(4.5%)	5(2.5%)	0(0%)	18(9%)
Palm Oil Extraction	6(3%)	6(3%)	3(1.5%)	0(0%)	15(7.5%)
Palm wine Tapping	2(1%)	4(2%)	2(1%)	0(0%)	8(4%)
Unemployed	6(3%)	1(0.5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	7(3.5%)
Clergy	0(0%)	1(0.5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(0.5%)
Total	50(25%)	105 (52.5%)	39(19.5%)	6(3%)	200(21%)

Source: Field Survey, March 2014

5.3 Problems in Rural Areas

To gain a deeper understanding of the issues confronting rural areas, the opinions of household heads were sought on the main problems in their communities. The responses gleaned from the survey are presented in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Problems in the Settlements²

Problems	Adjua	Mpanyinasa	Ntakrom	Yakaw	Tumentu	Nyameyekrom	Total
Inadequate water facilities	48	35	26	22	17	15	163
Lack of / Inadequate public toilet	25	28	39	21	0	12	125

² Responses are not mutually exclusive

Limited job opportunities	19	27	25	19	10	8	108
Out migration	9	17	21	19	12	6	84
Lack of market	28	8	15	13	13	6	83
Poor road conditions	21	0	15	12	5	4	57
Lack of electricity	25	21	0	0	0	19	65
Disunity	20	0	30	0	0	0	50
Low communal spirit	15	11	19	0	0	4	49
Chieftaincy disputes	15	0	29	0	0	0	34
Inadequate premix fuel	20	0	0	0	0	0	29
Lack of land for farming	10	5	4	0	7	0	21
Low level of education	6	2	0	0	8	5	21
Poor school building	0	0	0	0	0	16	16

Source: Field Survey, March 2014

From Table 5.5, inadequate water facilities were the main concern as it cuts across all the settlements. This is consistent with Boto et al. (2011) who found that, access to water was a major problem in rural areas especially for the poor. Going by the standard that one borehole or standpipe should serve a maximum of 300 persons (CWSA, 2014), water facilities in Adjua, Mpanyinasa, Ntakrom and Nyameyekrom are insufficient whilst that of Tumentu and Yakaw are adequate. In Adjua, there were only three standpipes with water supply from Ghana Water Company Limited instead of seven needed, whilst Mpanyinasa, Ntakrom and Nyameyekrom had two boreholes instead of three each required. Pressure was therefore exerted on these facilities during social events, especially funeral ceremonies which causes frequent breakdown of the boreholes. In Yakaw, one of the boreholes had broken down whilst in Nyameyekrom and Tumentu, none of the boreholes was functioning. This situation compelled residents to use streams for domestic purposes which made them vulnerable to water-borne diseases. The breakdown of boreholes in rural communities has been identified as a major challenge (UNDP, 2007). In Tumentu, some residents preferred the stream water to the boreholes due to the high iron content. A respondent retorted:

“Madam, I do not find any problem with the use of this stream; in fact, it tastes better than the borehole. This is even the stream our grandparents drank from” (A male respondent).

Although Water and Sanitation Committees (WATSAN) were established to manage the facilities provided by an NGO, World Vision International, most of them were not functioning. Maintenance of the facilities had therefore become the responsibility of Assembly members, Unit committees and the chiefs who often finance it from their pockets. On the other hand, the integrating communities (Adjua and Mpanyinasa) appear to be doing better in terms of maintaining these facilities. In Adjua, the unit committee in charge of managing the facilities used the proceeds from the sale of pipe borne water to pay water bills, maintain the facilities and provide some basic amenities in the community. This shows that communities' willingness to maintaining facilities is critical to achieving development.

Respondents in all the communities except Tumentu expressed concerns over inadequate public toilet facilities in their settlements. As in many rural communities in Ghana, most residents relied on public toilets. Therefore, in communities where there were no public toilets such as Adjua and Nyameyekrom, most of the residents used the beach and bushes respectively as places of convenience. This promotes the growth of disease causing organisms which make residents vulnerable to diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea and typhoid. Diarrhoea diseases are among the top ten diseases in the Ahanta West District (AWDA, 2014). A respondent at Nyameyekrom commented:

“Here, we do not have a public toilet and therefore, the farm which is our source of food also serves as a place of convenience” (A female respondent).

At Mpanyinasa, majority of the residents used the only 10-seater public KVIP toilet. Since only five seats could be used at a time, it was claimed to be inadequate. It was envisaged that the provision of an additional public toilet would be a major relief for them. At Yakaw and Ntakrom, the KVIP public toilet in each of the communities was dilapidated. Hence, some residents preferred to use the bush. The dependence on public toilet facilities in the communities is worrying in the sense that public toilets are not meant for households but for public places such as markets, recreational areas and transport terminals (Planning Standards, 2010). In all the communities the interest was on public toilets rather than household toilets. The management of the public toilets was also poor as no money was charged for its usage. This was due to the fear that people might resort to the bush if they are charged for using the facility. The inference is that, rural people have not well understood the risks that come with using bushes as places

of convenience. Sensitisation by the District Assembly, especially the District Environmental Health Department needs to be intensified.

Limited livelihood opportunities were also identified as the third major problem in all the communities. The respondents felt that their livelihoods were limited to farming and fishing which were seasonal. They therefore argued that the supply of basic infrastructure would expand their livelihood opportunities beyond farming and fishing. The survey further revealed that the youth did not find agriculture lucrative and prefer to migrate to Agona, the District capital or engage in illegal mining activities in Dunkwa, Tarkwa, Prestea and Bogoso. At Yakaw, respondents claimed that about half of the youth had left the community. Outward youth migration does not only pose a risk for high urban youth unemployment (Boto et al, 2011) but also threatens the sustainability of rural areas (Bjarnason and Thorlindsson, 2006). Besides, out-migration had negatively affected communal labour activities as the energetic youth were no longer in the villages to take developmental initiatives. Exploring alternative livelihood sources would therefore be one way to retain the youth in the settlements. The low patronage of the youth in agriculture was attributed to lack of government support especially for farmers. A respondent at Tumentu commented

“Here, the youth do not fancy farming because it is not a lucrative venture. There is lack of government support to boost the activity in rural areas; unlike in the United States where farmers are given subsidies. The situation is even worse for smallholder farmers. Let’s take for example, the celebration of Farmers’ Day in this country. It is only those with big plantations and farm tractors that are awarded” (A male respondent)

This raises questions on the effectiveness of the decentralised agricultural extension services in rural areas which are expected to help these farmers to enhance their livelihood. Farmers claimed that they had not received extension services for over three years. The study found that although there were 13 sub-district offices, extension services to rural areas have been hampered by inadequate funds, staff and field equipment. These officers are therefore not able to effectively discharge their duties to boost agriculture in rural areas to make it attractive to the youth. In most instances farmers were compelled to visit the extension services offices (rather than vice versa) to seek clarifications on the application of chemicals on their farms. The conclusion is that, decentralized extension offices do not necessarily lead to increased interactions

with farmers. The difficulty in acquiring land for farming purposes was also a disincentive to agriculture. As a result of the oil find in the district, the chiefs preferred to sell land for construction of houses rather than leasing it out to the farmers. With an average farm size of 1 acre per farmer, these farmers could not expand their farms. Farmers therefore had to travel for about 3-5 miles in search of land for agricultural purposes. In Tumentu, lack of land for the growing of food crops like cassava was attributed to the large scale cultivation of rubber in the community. In Adjua, the fishermen complained of high cost of premix fuel which had slowed down fishing activities in the community. Since the main factor forcing the youth out of these areas was alternative source of livelihood, it was envisaged that the availability of factories in rural areas would be a major way to retain the youth, boost income and promote development. A respondent from Ntakrom highlighted:

“But for the operation of GREL in the district which employs some members of this community as labourers and rubber tappers, more of the youth would have left for other places” (A male respondent).

Indeed, the two main industries, NORPALM and GREL which have large hectares of oil palm and rubber plantations respectively in the communities employ about 1,500 and 2,500 youth respectively in the district (King, 2010).

In Nyameyekrom, residents were concerned about the bamboo structure serving as a classroom block for the pupils. A six unit classroom block being provided by the District Assembly has been put on hold and therefore the pupils had no option but to attend classes under shed and bamboo structures (See Figure 5.1). More disturbingly, two classes share one room and since there are no partitions to divide the classrooms, the two classes are in opposite directions. Coupled with this is the fact that classes have to end whenever it rains heavily as the rains seep through the bamboo structure. Consequently, pupils may not be able to complete the syllabus and this could affect their performance in examinations. This must be urgently addressed if the District Assembly really wants to promote development in the settlement. However an NGO, Free the Children Organisation, in conjunction with the community is building a JHS block for the pupils.



Figure 5.1: Primary School Structure at Nyameyekrom (Source: Field survey, March 2014)

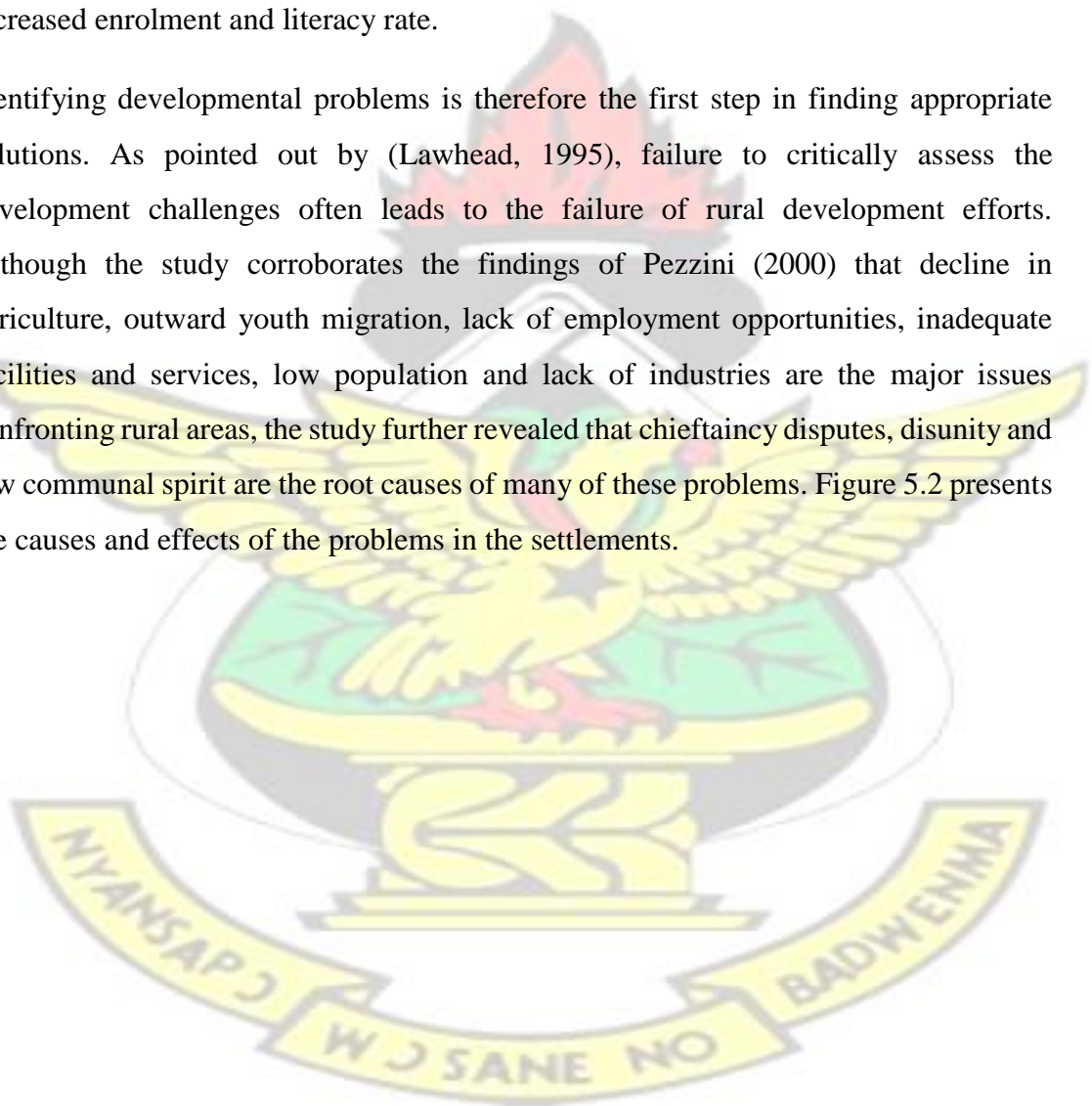
The research also found that decentralisation was not effective without unity of purpose and the lack of consensus on developmental initiatives and projects. The residents were mostly divided along political ideologies even though the Ghanaian form of decentralisation is supposed to be non-political. Similarly, Chieftaincy disputes had divided the community and hindered development. For instance, in Ntakrom, a public toilet which was being constructed with the help of the Member of Parliament (MP) has been suspended. Similarly, a Senior High School which was being initiated by the Methodist church for Ntakrom has been relocated elsewhere because the chiefs could not reach a consensus on the location of the facility. The chiefs were therefore hindering development rather than promoting it.

Similar to the findings in the survey, the interviews revealed that inadequate water facilities were the main concern of the Chiefs, Assembly members and unit committee members. The interview further highlighted on the low communal spirit which had affected self-help initiatives in the settlements. Several factors had accounted for this problem. In Mpanyinasa, some residents were aggrieved that land in the community was sold at the same price to both residents and non-residents, and had therefore refused to engage in communal labour activities. In Ntakrom and Adjua, chieftaincy disputes were the main causes as residents were divided and therefore could not collaborate on

any developmental activities. In Nyameyekrom, on the other hand, the youth had refused to get involved because their football park had been used to construct a school without replacement.

At Tumentu, truancy and teenage pregnancy were the main concerns of the chief. Although the community had all the three levels of basic school (Kindergarten, Primary, JHS), pupils reluctance to attend school because of interest in illegal mining activities and teenage pregnancy had resulted in low literacy rate in the village. This implies that the provision of basic schools alone in rural areas is not a sufficient criterion for increased enrolment and literacy rate.

Identifying developmental problems is therefore the first step in finding appropriate solutions. As pointed out by (Lawhead, 1995), failure to critically assess the development challenges often leads to the failure of rural development efforts. Although the study corroborates the findings of Pezzini (2000) that decline in agriculture, outward youth migration, lack of employment opportunities, inadequate facilities and services, low population and lack of industries are the major issues confronting rural areas, the study further revealed that chieftaincy disputes, disunity and low communal spirit are the root causes of many of these problems. Figure 5.2 presents the causes and effects of the problems in the settlements.



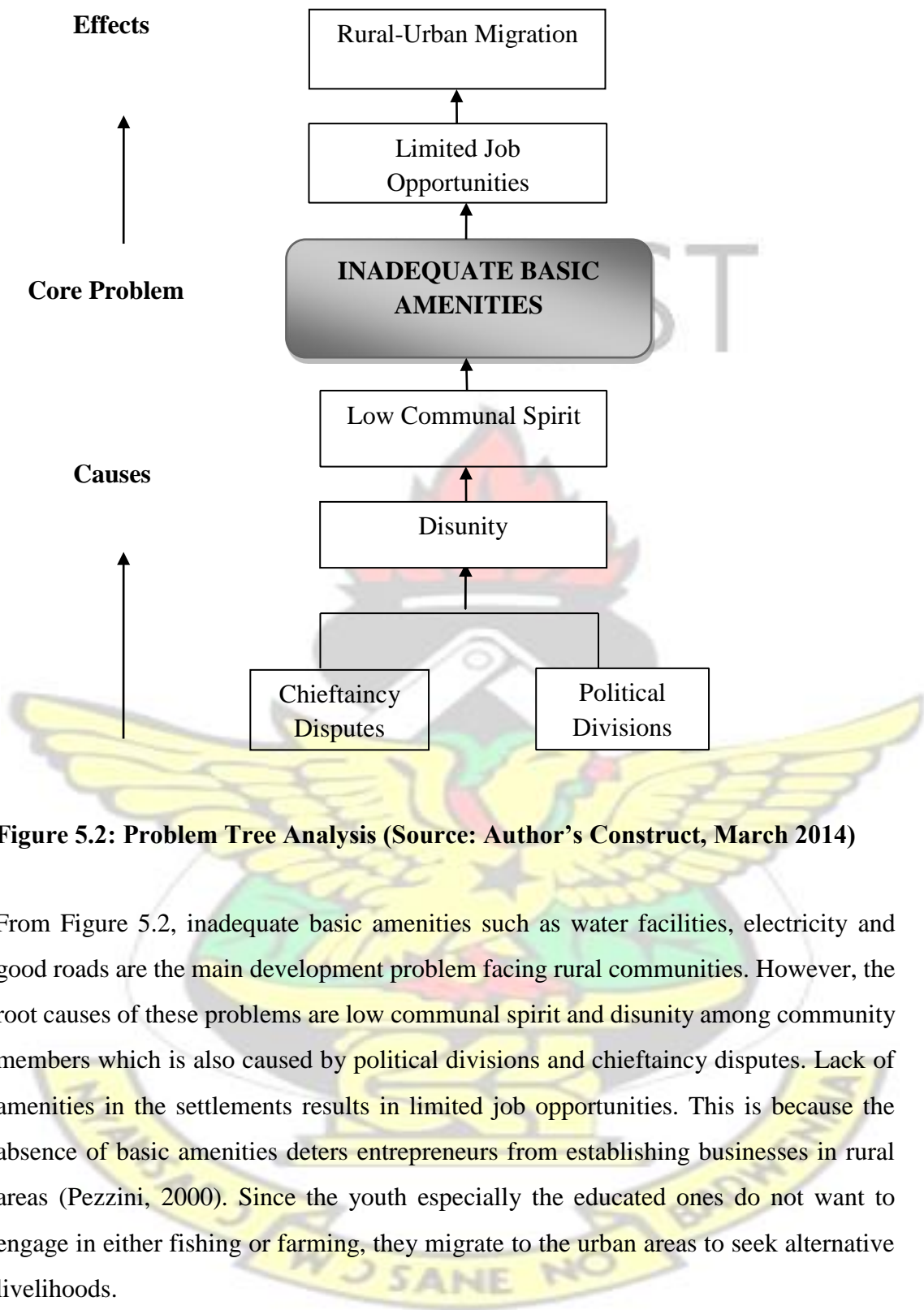


Figure 5.2: Problem Tree Analysis (Source: Author’s Construct, March 2014)

From Figure 5.2, inadequate basic amenities such as water facilities, electricity and good roads are the main development problem facing rural communities. However, the root causes of these problems are low communal spirit and disunity among community members which is also caused by political divisions and chieftaincy disputes. Lack of amenities in the settlements results in limited job opportunities. This is because the absence of basic amenities deters entrepreneurs from establishing businesses in rural areas (Pezzini, 2000). Since the youth especially the educated ones do not want to engage in either fishing or farming, they migrate to the urban areas to seek alternative livelihoods.

5.4 Perception of Rural Development

In Ghana, indicators of development include “the acquisition of services, facilities and infrastructure such as clean and safe water, education, health facilities, roads; and the

degree of citizen participation in decision making at the local level” (Osae, 2009:3). Notwithstanding, Reimer (2002) suggests that, indicators should be frequently evaluated to ensure that they accurately reflect changing conditions in rural areas. In this regard, the study inquired from household heads what constituted rural development from their own perspectives. The study found that, development goes beyond physical indicators to include intangibles like unity and peace. The major indicators gleaned from the survey are summarized in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Development indicators as observed by household heads³

Indicators	Adjua	Mpanyinasa	Ntakrom	Yakaw	Tumentu	Nyameyekrom	Total
Water	48	39	28	19	16	13	163
Toilet	39	41	38	21	8	10	157
School	28	30	24	15	10	16	123
Jobs	24	30	28	17	12	9	117
Electricity	38	29	12	8	10	16	113
Good roads	38	17	20	12	9	8	104
Clinic	24	16	22	17	11	10	100
Market	35	16	15	10	7	4	70
Community centre	8	30	18	10	0	2	68
Unity	24	7	28	0	0	5	51
Football pitch	17	0	5	2	3	4	31
Cleanliness	6	10	5	0	2	0	23
Peace	8	4	10	0	0	0	22
Good housing	5	0	8	4	0	2	19

Source: Field Survey, March 2014

From Table 5.6, potable water was considered the most important indicator. This is because water is a basic necessity of life without which one cannot survive. It was therefore opined that every developed community must have access to clean water. The

³ Responses are not mutually exclusive

ranking of school as the third indicator shows the extent to which rural people recognize the importance of education to the development of their communities. However, non-physical indicators such as unity and peace were also mentioned. These were emphasized more by the respondents in Adjua and Ntakrom which had problems with chieftaincy disputes and political divisions. To them, unity and peace in their communities would signify true development.

The interviews revealed similar indicators as outlined by household heads in the survey. Generally, the emphasis was on amenities such as water, toilet, school, electricity, clinic and good roads. These were however considered basic to every community's development as expressed by an Assemblyman that:

“Education, health care, water and sanitation facilities, good road network and electricity are basic to every community's development irrespective of whether it is rural or urban; hence ideally, each community must have these amenities” (A male respondent).

Although basic amenities were regarded as very important indicators, unity and peace were intangible indicators regarded by respondents especially at Adjua and Ntakrom as the most important indicators. A unit committee member explained:

“Yes, access to facilities is very important but the principal thing is unity; without it, no community can truly develop. When people are united they can collaboratively identify their needs and provide them without even relying on outside help” (A male respondent).

It is also worth noting that only the chiefs mentioned football pitch as a development indicator. This depicts the importance of recreation to the traditional authorities.

Having determined the indicators, it was necessary to find out how respondents perceived their communities. Household heads were therefore asked to rate their communities in relation to whether they are developed or not. It came out from the survey that most of the respondents (59 per cent) perceived their communities as undeveloped. This was the assertion among all the integrating, intermediary and distant rural settlements. Table 5.7 presents the responses.

Table 5.7: Development Status as Perceived by Household heads

Community	Not Developed	Quite Developed	Total
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Adjua	40 (20%)	11(5.5%)	51
Mpanyinasa	41 (20.5 %)	4 (2%)	45
Ntakrom	33 (16.5%)	8 (4%)	41
Yakaw	14 (7%)	9 (4.5%)	25
Tumentu	16 (8%)	3 (1.5%)	19
Nyameyekrom	18(9%)	1(0.5%)	19
Total	118 (59%)	42 (21%)	200

Source: Field Survey, March 2014

The main factor influencing respondents' judgments was the availability of amenities in their communities. Hence, whilst those indicating that their communities were not developed based their argument on the absence of some basic amenities like school, potable water, toilet facilities and good roads, those who said that their localities were quite developed based it on the presence of some amenities which hitherto were nonexistent. A household head commented:

“This community is quite developed in the sense that, previously there was no school but now we have a school” (A female respondent)

In the same vein, majority of the chiefs, Assembly members and unit committee members indicated during the interviews that their communities were undeveloped since they lacked many basic amenities. Hence, the expectation that the District Assembly would provide their needs has not been met. This implies that the District Assembly has not been able to provide basic facilities required to promote the development in these settlements. In an interview with one of the chiefs, he made gestures to indicate that the answer was too obvious and commented:

“Oh, Madam, just take a look around this village and judge whether this community is developed or not; our roads are not tarred, our toilet is spoilt, we do not have a market. In fact, we lack a lot of basic amenities” (A male respondent).

5.5 Contributions of the District Assembly to Development

The opinions of the respondents were sought on the contributions of decentralisation to the improvement of the various settlements. Hence, the householders were asked to rate

the contribution of the District Assembly. The responses from the survey are presented in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Contribution of District Assembly to Development

Community	Not at all	To a Limited extent	To an average extent	Total
Adjua	32 (16%)	15(7.5)	4 (2)	51
Mpanyinasa	43 (21.5%)	2 (1)	0(0)	45
Ntakrom	30 (15%)	11(5.5)	0 (0)	41
Yakaw	7(3.5 %)	12 (6%)	6 (3)	25
Tumentu	11(5.5%)	6 (3)	2 (1)	19
Nyameyekrom	17 (8.5%)	2 (1)	0 (0%)	19
Total	140 (70%)	48(24%)	12(6%)	200

Source: Field Survey, March 2014

As shown in Table 5.8, 70 percent of household heads claimed that the District Assembly had not made any contribution to the development of their communities. They argued that the District Assembly had not been able to provide basic amenities for them in spite of several years of being in existence. In Yakaw however, many of the respondents stated that the District Assembly had made some contributions because the construction of a JHS Block had been financed by the District Assembly. This came as a relief as pupils attended JHS in other communities.

The research found that the main contribution to communities had been the provision of basic schools (see Table 5.9). This is laudable as education and training have been identified as the two most effective tools for poverty reduction and rural development (Atchoarena and Gasperini, 2003). However, the schools lacked other supplementary facilities prescribed by the Planning Standards (2010) to enhance teaching and learning (see Table 5.10). For instance, in Adjua, the District Assembly had supplied computers and their accessories to the basic school for the teaching and learning of ICT although the school lacked electricity supply. The lack of electricity implies that the pupils could not effectively partake in ICT programmes. At Ntakrom, the school is connected to electricity from a neighbour's house in order to enhance learning. In rural Ghana, teachers have complained about the lack of decent accommodation and so have requested for teachers' quarters as an incentive to working in such environments. As expected, most of the schools also lacked teachers' quarters and potable water. These

conditions would deter teachers from accepting postings to the settlements which would impact negatively on education in these rural areas

Another contribution was that some communities had been connected to the national electricity grid through the Self-Help Electrification Project (SHEP). This could provide opportunities for agro processing activities to expand their livelihood opportunities.

The inference is that, the contribution of the District Assembly is geared towards the provision of basic amenities. The District Assembly has therefore not made much effort to improve livelihoods in the settlements. Rural development must therefore go beyond improving access to basic amenities.

Table 5.9: Infrastructure provided by the District Assembly since 2000

Community	Facilities Provided
Mpanyinasa	Community centre (under construction)
Adjua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary and JHS Block • Three Standpipes • Reconstruction of road
Tumentu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic School (JHS is under construction) • Reconstruction of road (under construction)
Ntakrom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JHS Block • Community Centre • Electricity • Teachers quarters
Yakaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary and JHS Block • Electricity
Nyameyekrom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school Block (under construction) • Electricity poles

Source: Field Survey, March 2014

Table 5.10: Condition of School Facilities

Community	Name of School	Existing Facilities	Facilities Needed
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Adjua	Bishop Sam RC Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet Facility <input type="checkbox"/> Electricity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water facility • New Kindergarten block
	Adjua D/A JHS	<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet facility <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers' Quarters (Dilapidated) <input type="checkbox"/> Head teacher's office <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Common Room <input type="checkbox"/> Parking space for vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity • Water facility • New Teachers' quarters • Library • ICT Centre • Science Block with kitchen and Store
Ntakrom	NEKA D/A JHS	<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet facility Shared <input type="checkbox"/> Electricity meter with households <input type="checkbox"/> Parking space for vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity • Water facility • Library • ICT Centre • Teachers' quarters • Science Block with kitchen and store
Yakaw	Yakaw D/A Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/> Electricity <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet facility	Water facility
	Yakaw D/A JHS	<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet facility <input type="checkbox"/> Electricity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water facility • Teachers' quarters • Library • Science Block with kitchen and store
Tumentu	Abaase Tumentu Basic School (Primary School)	<input type="checkbox"/> Borehole (Broken down) <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet facility <input type="checkbox"/> Electricity	<input type="checkbox"/> Borehole

Source: Field survey, 2014

5.5.1 Housing Conditions in the Communities

The District Assemblies through the DACF are supposed to improve housing schemes in rural areas. In 1998, new measures were introduced to earmark 35 percent of the DACF to improve interventions in rural areas which included rural housing (Amanor and Annan, 1999). The study therefore assessed the effect of decentralisation on housing conditions in the communities. Housing condition is frequently associated with poverty in the sense that a good housing condition depicts wealth whilst a poor housing condition depicts poverty. The CASHPOR House Index (CHI), which assesses housing conditions based on the size of the house, structural conditions, quality of walls and roofs was adopted for the assessment. In each community, the housing conditions were ranked using a checklist in accordance to the standards of the CHI (see Appendix 1).

Hence, a total score of 3 or less denoted “Very poor”; 4-6 represented “poor” whilst 7 or more signified “Not poor. The study found that the District Assembly had not made much contribution towards the improvement of housing conditions in the settlements. Table 5.11 shows the result of the analysis.

Table 5.11 Housing Conditions in Communities

Community	Very Poor	Poor	Not Poor	Total
Adjua	9 (4.5)	30 (15%)	12 (6%)	51
Mpanyinasa	14 (7%)	25 (12.5%)	6 (3%)	45
Ntakrom	13 (6.5%)	20 (10%)	8 (4%)	41
Yakaw	9 (4.5%)	10 (5%)	6 (3%)	25
Tumentu	7 (3.5%)	8 (4%)	4 (2%)	19
Nyameyekrom	9 (4.5%)	7 (3.5%)	3 (1.5%)	19
Total	61(30.5%)	100 (50%)	39 (19.5%)	200

Source: Field Survey, March 2014

From Table 5.11, housing conditions of the respondents (50 percent) were generally poor. Most of the houses were made of bricks or mud and roofed with bamboo or leaves whilst others were made of landcrete blocks and roofed with iron sheets. The houses also ranged from small to medium sizes with very few large houses. However majority of these houses did not have drains. The poor housing conditions could increase the risk to a wide range of health conditions such as respiratory infections, asthma, lead poisoning, injuries, and mental health (Krieger and Higgins, 2002). This would affect their health status and prevent them from actively engaging in developmental activities in the community.

5.6 Expectations from the District Assembly

The study also conducted a needs assessment in all the settlements to further deepen understanding on their expectations from the District Assembly. Household heads were therefore asked to prioritise their major needs. From the survey, the most needed facilities were water, toilet, market, electricity and jobs. The prioritized needs are presented in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12: Needs of Study Communities

Community	Population	Existing Facilities	Prioritized Needs
Adjua	2,370	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Standpipes • Basic school (KG, Primary, JHS) 10-seater KVIP (Under construction) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piped water • Electricity • Market • Rehabilitation of Road • Jobs • Premix fuel
Mpanyinasa	772	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 boreholes 10-Seater KVIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boreholes • Electricity • Public toilet • School • Refuse containers • Jobs
Ntakrom	643	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JHS 8-seater KVIP Public Toilet (Dilapidated) 2 boreholes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public toilet • Boreholes • Market • School (Nursery) • Road
Tumentu	424	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Boreholes (Not functioning) 10-seater KVIP Basic school (KG, primary, JHS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boreholes • Clinic • Market • Jobs • Public toilet
Yakaw	398	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Boreholes (one is broken down) 8-seater KVIP public toilet (Dilapidated) Primary, JHS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public toilet • Boreholes • Market • Jobs
Nyameyekrom	663	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Boreholes (Broken down) KG, Primary (Under construction), JHS(Under construction) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boreholes • Public toilet • Completion of Primary school block • Electricity • Clinic

Source: Field Survey, March 2014

Table 5.12 shows that water is a major need in all the settlements which is an indication of the importance of water to rural communities. In accordance to the CWSA standard, Adjua would require 4 additional standpipes whilst Mpanyinasa, Ntakrom and Nyameyekrom would need one additional borehole each. However, in Nyameyekrom, the two boreholes that are dysfunctional need to be repaired to provide water for the community. Although Tumentu does not require additional borehole, due to the fact that one of the facilities has high iron content, it would be necessary for them to get

an additional borehole at a different location in the community. For Yakaw, the two boreholes are sufficient but there is the need to repair the one broken down to ease pressure on the facility currently in use. Notwithstanding, considering the frequent breakdown of boreholes in the settlements, it would be prudent to explore other efficient means of water supply rather than drilling several boreholes for them. Community Water supply system could be considered by the District Assembly as an alternative to boreholes.

Another major need which ran through all the settlements except Adjua was public toilet facility. Since public toilet facilities are not meant for households, it would be appropriate for the District Assembly to liaise with NGOs to support communities to acquire household toilets.

5.7 Participation of Rural People in Development

Since participation is a major objective of the decentralisation programme, the study explored the extent to which rural people participated in decision making. This was vital in the quest to find answers to the research question of examining the extent to which the decentralisation policy has achieved its objective of improving on quality of life in rural areas. The analysis was conducted in relation to the three dimensions of participation: “who participates?”, “what activities do people participate in?” and “how do people participate?” as identified by Ahmad and Talib (2011:62).

In accordance with the Local Government Act, 1993, Assembly members are expected to promote participation of rural people in the District Assembly’s activities. They are therefore required to meet with their electorates before each Assembly meeting to solicit for their views on issues to be discussed as well as give the electorates feedback on their concerns. Since meetings are organized quarterly, every Assembly member is required to meet with the electorates four times in a year. Similarly, unit committees are to initiate discussions on development at the unit level and subsequently make recommendation to the District Assembly in accordance with the LI, 1967 (2010). Household heads were therefore asked of the number of times they usually meet with their Assembly members and Unit committees in a year. The number of meetings held in each community is presented in Table 5.13.

Table 5.13: Number of Meetings between Elected Officials and Electorates

Community	Assembly members	Unit committees
Mpanyinasa	None	None
Adjua	None	None
Ntakrom	None	Twice
Tumentu	Once	None
Yakaw	Twice	Twice
Nyameyekrom	None	Once

Source: Field Survey, March 2014

The results from the survey shown in Table 5.13 indicate that none of the Assembly members ever met with their electorates four times in a year as required. Unit committees on the other hand had also not been initiating discussions with community members as instituted. This showed that local people were hardly aware of the activities of the District Assembly. This is in tandem with the survey findings by Ghana Local Governance and Decentralisation Program (LOGODEP) (2013) that the Ahanta West District does not inform the citizens on decisions of the Assembly and actions taken to address citizens' concerns. From Table 5.13, it is evident that the interaction between elected representatives and the local population is very low or non-existent. In most cases, residents claimed they had never met with their Assembly members ever since they were elected into office. As a result, they were not able to present their needs to the District Assembly. In Yakaw, however, the situation was quite better. Failure on the part of the elected officials to organize regular meetings is an indication of lack of monitoring mechanisms to ensure that they execute their tasks accordingly. Notwithstanding, in situations where the Assembly members and unit committees were resident in the community, the situation was perceived to be quite better. A household head reiterated that:

“We have realized throughout the years that in cases where the Assembly member does not come from the community, his commitment to the community is poor. We have therefore decided that in the next election, we will make sure the Assembly member for the electoral area comes from this area by voting for someone from this community” (A male respondent).

However, it appeared that the situation was no different even when the representatives lived in the communities. Most of the unit committee members lived in their respective communities and yet meetings were rarely held. In Adjua, the Assembly member also resided in the community but had not been able to organize a single meeting since he was voted into office due to chieftaincy disputes and political divisions in the community.

Contrary to the survey, majority of the Assembly members and Unit committee members stated that they meet at least twice in a year with their electorates. The chiefs also revealed that meetings between them and Assembly members were irregular. A chief commented:

“The Assembly members should collaborate with the chiefs for development. Oftentimes, they only acknowledge the immense help of the chiefs during elections when they visit the palace regularly to seek our support. After winning the elections, we seem to be on different paths and do not see them again, especially when they do not reside in the community” (A male respondent).

Stressing on the need for regular interactions between local government officials and community members, a unit committee member stated:

“There is the need for regular interactions between the local government officials and the local people. It is very necessary for the local people to get to know the officials and to establish cordial relationship with them. It is very unfortunate that there are a lot of people in this district who do not even know the DCE or the MP” (A male respondent).

Several factors were identified to be militating against regular interactions between the elected officials and their community members. Lack of collaboration between chiefs and elected officials was cited as the main factor. This issue was a major concern in Adjua and Ntakrom where there were chieftaincy disputes, thereby preventing Assembly members and unit committees from effectively mobilizing community members for meetings or participation in communal activities.

Apathy on the part of community members was also found to be a factor. Majority of community members failed to participate in meetings whenever they were organized.

This was emphasized by an Assemblyman in his comments that:

“In this district, participation of community members in meetings is generally poor; most often, the turnout is very low. For instance, in my community sometimes less than 20 people show up for meetings and this renders decision- making unrepresentative” (A male respondent).

From the responses gleaned from the survey with household heads, community members’ reluctance to attend meetings is attributed to the fact that these meetings are not able to meet their expectations as far as their needs are concerned as found by Asante and Ayee (2008) and Taabazuing (2010). Failure on the part of elected representatives to provide positive feedback on community concerns is therefore a disincentive to participation.

Demarcation of the electoral areas also posed a challenge to the officials. Some electoral areas consisted of about six settlements which were sparsely located thereby inhibiting the free movement of Assembly members and unit committee members between the settlements. This according to Unit committee members was a major reason for their inability to regularly organize communal labour activities in their jurisdictions, since the number was reduced from 15 to 5 members. To enhance the mobility of Assembly members, the District Assembly has provided motorbikes to Assembly members but the problem has not been addressed since they are still not able to maintain regular contact with the electorates. The Assembly members explained that since they are not paid, they are not able to raise money to fuel the motorbikes. This will therefore affect regular information sharing between the District Assembly and local residents, which is necessary to promote the participation of the rural residents in the development process.

5.7.1 Participation in Project Planning and Implementation

A major objective of the public administration reform in Ghana was to promote popular grassroots participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and delivery of those services which go to improve the living conditions of the people to achieve orderly, fair and balanced development of the whole country (Kobieh, 1997). The survey revealed that local people normally partake in only two stages of the project cycle: Needs Assessment and Implementation. Hence, they are often ignored in project planning,

monitoring and evaluation. In most instances, the communities identified the projects and sought the support of the District Assembly through their Assembly members. This was confirmed by a unit committee member that:

“The community is not usually consulted; we rather present our needs to the District Assembly or write to seek their support for the implementation of projects. In most cases, we do not get responses to our requests” (A male respondent).

Community members normally partake in project implementation through communal labour. For instance, in the construction of community centres, the community participated through communal labour whilst the MP or district Assembly provided cement and roofing sheets to aid in the construction of the facility. Also, through the SHEP programme, the local people participated through communal labour to fix the electric poles whilst the district Assembly through the Electricity Company of Ghana connected the communities to the electricity grid. It was however indicated that, in cases where the District Assembly decided on its own accord to implement projects in a certain community, residents were mostly informed through community meetings with the Assembly members or the chiefs. In such instances, traditional authorities were consulted by the District Assembly for the release of land for the execution of the project.

With regards to the category of people who normally partake in the District Assembly’s activities, it was realized that although participation is generally low, the chiefs often have an edge over the local residents especially on issues relating to the implementation of projects in their localities as they were mostly the ones consulted for their opinion and subsequent release of land for the project.

With regards to how the local people are involved in participation, it was discovered that, out of the seven major types identified by Pretty (1995), the common forms observed in the communities were “passive participation” where community members were only informed of the District Assembly’s intentions; “participation for material incentives” in which case rural communities contributed through communal labour, and “self-mobilisation” where the communities themselves identified the projects and sought the support of the District Assembly for their implementation.

5.8 Outcome of Decentralisation in Rural Communities

The views of respondents were sought during the face-to-face interviews on whether decentralisation has been beneficial to rural communities. Most of the respondents (57.7 percent) stated that it has been beneficial. The responses are presented in Table 5.14.

Table 5.14: Perception on the Benefits of Decentralisation to Rural Communities

Responses	Heads of Department	Unit Committee Members	Chiefs	Assembly members	Total
Not Beneficial	1 (12.5%)	3 (50%)	5 (83.3%)	2 (33.3%)	11 (42.3%)
Very Beneficial	5 (62.5)	1(16.7%)	0 (0%)	2(33.3%)	8 (30.8%)
Quite beneficial	2 (25%)	2 (33.3%)	1 (16.7%)	2(33.3%)	7(26.9%)
Total	8 (100%)	6 (100%)	6 (100%)	6 (100%)	26 (100%)

Source: Face-to –Face Interviews, March 2014

It is clear from Table 5.14 that, although decentralisation was perceived to be beneficial, this was mainly the views of the local government officials. Majority of the chiefs (83.3 percent) however thought otherwise.

With regards to its benefits, the arguments advanced by the respondents are presented in Table 5.15.

Table 5.15: Arguments in Favour of Decentralisation

Reasons	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Improved access to facilities and services	8	53.3
Grassroots participation	5	33.3
Correspondence between development projects and community needs	1	6.7
Economic benefits	1	6.7
Total	15	100

Source: Face-to-Face Interviews, March 2014

From Table 5.15, the main argument was that, it has improved access to services and facilities in the district. This is because, previously, most services had to be accessed

either in the national capital or regional capital but with the introduction of decentralisation, these services could easily be accessed at the district level thereby saving time and money. Furthermore, it was pointed out that decentralisation had had a significant impact on the provision of schools and health facilities in the district making these facilities accessible to rural people.

Others were of the view that decentralisation had enhanced the participation of local people in governance through the election of their own leaders. Again, through the Assembly members and unit committees, residents were also informed of the District Assembly's activities. However, the findings from the survey that interactions between elected officials and electorates were poor contradict this assertion.

The study also discovered that decentralisation has been very economical. According to a unit committee member, decentralisation is cost effective as one is not required to pay anything to present his needs or problem. This is illustrated in her fascinating remarks:

“Decentralisation has been very beneficial in the sense that you can easily meet the Assembly member and unit committees to present your problem or settle disputes without paying a dime; unlike the traditional system where you have to present schnapps anytime you go to the chief's palace to discuss your problem”(A female respondent).

In another development, the respondents who indicated that decentralisation has not been beneficial raised several arguments to support their claims. This is presented in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16: Arguments against Decentralisation

Reasons	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Has not adequately provided community needs	6	54.5
Has led to disrespect for traditional authorities	3	27.3
Dwindled Community Participation and Initiative	2	18.2
Total	11	100

Source: Face-to-Face Interviews, March 2014

From Table 5.16, the main argument (54.5 percent) was that the programme has not adequately met the needs of rural people. From the perspective of respondents, rural communities lacked a lot of facilities which the District Assembly had failed to provide. This therefore contradicts the assertion by Smoke (2003) that the needs of local people can better be responded to through decentralisation. This was stressed by an Assembly member that:

“Generally, decentralisation has not been able to improve the living conditions of the rural people except the provision of schools” (A male respondent).

Some of the chiefs were also of the view that community members’ respect for them was deteriorating because of the programme. To them, Assembly members and unit committees are now regarded as the agents of development in the settlements as they relay the needs of community members to the District Assembly. Some even argued that, the Assembly members and Unit committees are sometimes able to enforce law and order on communal labour than the traditional authorities. A chief remarked:

“Now, the Assembly members are seen by some community members as those responsible for the development of the communities; hence, the chiefs are not obeyed. For instance, even if a chief wants to request for facilities for his community from the District Assembly, he has to relay the information through the Assembly member” (A male respondent).

In contrast to the argument that decentralisation had promoted grassroots participation as outlined in Table 5.15 above, some respondents held the view that it had rather dwindled community participation and initiative. Since the programme has been highly politicized, community members had been divided along political lines which had affected their participation in communal activities. Consequently, community initiative has been highly affected as residents no longer take responsibility for their own development but rather depend on the District Assembly. Since the District Assembly does not have the capacity to meet every need, these settlements will remain undeveloped.

5.9 Factors Hindering the effectiveness of the Decentralisation Programme In order to unravel the factors militating against the performance of decentralised units of government, face-to face interviews were conducted with officials of the District Assembly on the subject. Inadequate funds was the main factor identified by 90 percent of the respondents. A summary of the responses is presented in Table 5.17.

Table 5.17: Factors hindering the performance of Decentralised Units of Governments⁴

Factors	Heads of Departments n= 8	Assembly Members n=6	Unit Committee Members n=6	Total n=20
Inadequate funds	8 (100%)	6 (100%)	4 (66.7%)	18 (90%)
Low Communal spirit and participation	6 (75%)	4 (66.7%)	4 (66.7%)	14 (70%)
Inadequate logistics	8 (100%)	1(16.7%)	2 (33.3%)	11(55%)
Lack of motivation	0 (0%)	4 (66.7%)	5 (83.3%)	9 (45%)
Weak understanding of decentralisation concept	2 (25%)	5 (83.3%)	0 (0%)	7 (35%)
politicization	0 (0%)	4 (66.7%)	2 (33.3%)	6 (30%)
Inadequate personnel	2 (25%)	3 (50%)	0 (0%)	5 (25%)
Low commitment to work	0 (0%)	1 (16.7%)	2 (33.3%)	3 (15%)
Weak area councils	1 (12.5%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	3 (15%)
Weak collaboration among decentralised agencies	2 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)
Lack of political will to decentralise	2 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)
Poor monitoring	1 (12.5%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)

Source: Face to Face Interviews, 2014

From Table 5.17, inadequate funds was mentioned by all the heads of departments, all the Assembly members and majority (66.7 percent) of the Unit committee members. Lack of adequate funds had prevented the achievement of the developmental goals of the District Assembly which has the oversight responsibility of promoting the welfare of the people in the district. This is because the District Assembly could not implement its planned projects and activities. Kyei (2000) notes that, the inability of the District

⁴ Responses are not mutually exclusive

Assemblies to promote rural development is as a result of inadequate funds. Funding was not only inadequate but also irregular. It was explained that, the irregular release of the DACF often disrupts the implementation of projects for the year. For instance in 2013, the Agriculture Department had funds only at the latter part of the last quarter disrupting all planned activities especially extension services for the year. However, since the District Assemblies' Common Fund is meant to supplement internally generated funds, it would be prudent for it to intensify its internal revenue generation in order to meet majority of its tasks rather than solely relying on the fund.

The study also found that logistics such as field and office equipment required by the Decentralised units to execute their duties were not adequate. This was pointed out by all the heads of departments. At the Agriculture Unit, the study found that the Unit did not have sufficient field boots, raincoats, flip charts, A4 sheets and vehicles which are required for extension services in the rural areas. Although the department had motor bikes, they were worn out whilst the photocopy machine and printer had broken down for about 5 years. Similarly at the Planning, Education and Community Development Departments, vehicles required for field visit to the hinterlands was a problem. In addition, the offices lacked adequate furniture and computers. This corroborates Sulemana's (2009) finding in the East Gonja District that lack of logistics is a major problem for the District Assembly.

Weak Understanding of Decentralisation Concept especially on the part of the local people was also found to be a major setback. Since most of the resident did not know the roles of the Assembly members and Unit committees, they put unrealistic pressure on these officials to provide their needs at all cost. This pushes some Assembly members to implement project with their personal money when the needs of their communities are not captured in the DMTDP. Coupled with this is the communities' demand for money and favours from Assembly members as they are not aware that they are not paid. An assemblyman vented his frustration when he said that:

"The pressure from community members is so unbearable that I have decided not to go for a second term. I cannot continue to finance projects with my own money, pay school fees and medical bills for community members. Madam, just open my drawer and look at the number of invitations I have to honour. The Assembly member is the first person

community members run to whenever they need help”(A male respondent).

Assembly members and Unit committee members (45 percent) also raised concerns on lack of motivation in terms of allowances and funds for them. Since they were not given funds for community work, it made it difficult for them to meet some basic needs which the electorates expected from them. On the contrary, in Adjua, the unit committee had been able to provide a canteen for the basic school through revenue generated from the sale of pipe borne water in the community. The study further revealed that most unit committee members were not motivated to work whilst others had left the communities to seek greener pastures since they were not paid. This is in consonance with the finding that the performance of Unit Committees in the district is very poor because of the absence of financial rewards and motivations (AWDA, 2006). Based on the argument that some of the electoral areas consisted of several communities, unit committees advocated for logistical support to enable them visit all the communities as mandated. A unit committee member suggested:

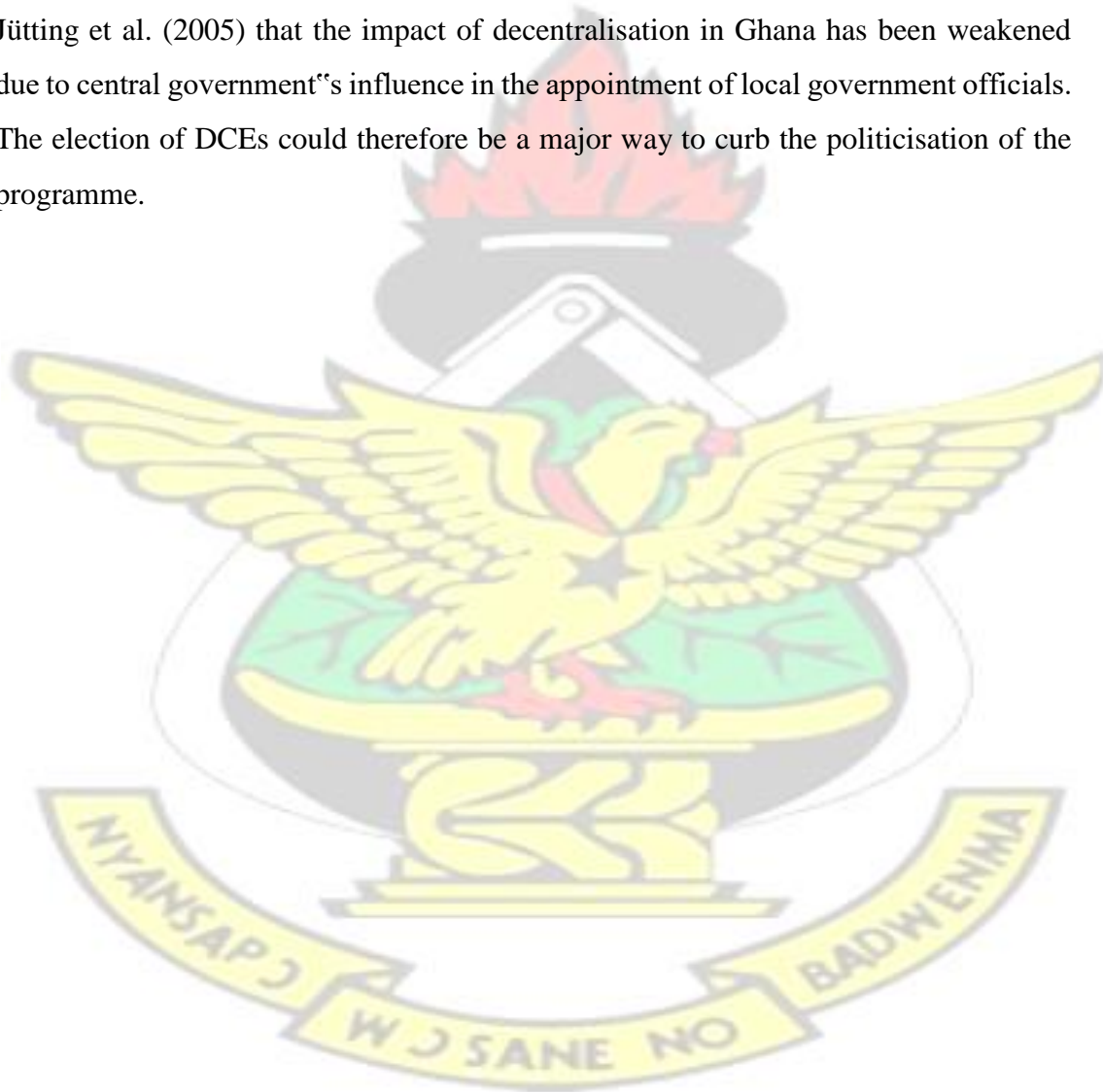
“To make our work effective, we must get the needed support from the District Assembly. Even if we will not be given salaries, at least we must be given the necessary logistics to enhance our work. For instance, since Assembly members have been provided with motor bikes, I suggest that unit committees should be provided with bicycles so that we can regularly visit the communities to execute our duties” (A male respondent).

Assembly members and Unit committee members (30 percent) also laid emphasis on politicisation of the decentralisation concept. It came out during the interview that political favouritism had disrupted the local government structure as the due processes were not followed. Due to politics, it was easier for some Assembly members to lobby for projects for their communities because they belonged to the same political party with top officials at the District Assembly. In the same vein, some community members were able to lobby for projects for their communities without the involvement of the Assembly members. This was emphasized by an Assembly man that:

“Because of politics, a community member can go directly to the DCE to make a request on behalf of the community without following the due process of alerting the Assembly member because they belong to the

same political party. Some of the unit committee members also involve in this act” (A male respondent).

Surprisingly, this was confirmed in Adjua where a community member, by virtue of the fact that he shared the same political affiliation with top officials of the District Assembly had assumed the roles of the Assembly member and was providing the needs of the community making the Assembly man very unpopular. It was therefore argued that freedom of government to make appointments was not helpful as those appointed executed their tasks to please the central government. This confirms the finding by Jütting et al. (2005) that the impact of decentralisation in Ghana has been weakened due to central government’s influence in the appointment of local government officials. The election of DCEs could therefore be a major way to curb the politicisation of the programme.



CHAPTER SIX

EFFECTS OF DECENTRALISATION ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE AHANTA WEST DISTRICT

6.1 Introduction

This study has examined the extent to which the decentralisation programme has transformed the lives of rural people. The research has therefore delved into the developmental concerns in rural communities as well as pertinent issues on the contributions and implementation of the decentralisation programme. This chapter commences with the highlights of the major findings and concludes with recommendations to enhance the developmental prospects of the programme.

6.2 Summary of Major Findings

The analyses showed that the effectiveness of decentralisation programme as far as rural development is concerned depends on the collaboration of four main actors: the central government, rural communities, the District Assembly and traditional authorities. The District Assembly can only devise and implement appropriate and sustainable interventions to address developmental concerns such as lack of basic amenities, rural out migration, apathy and limited livelihood opportunities only through the maximum corporation and participation of community members and traditional authorities in the development process, and the support of central government. The roles of Assembly members and unit committees in ensuring constant information flow through regular meetings with the electorates and traditional authorities are therefore very necessary. This shows that the role of traditional authorities must be clearly defined and integrated into the decision-making process. In the first place government's willingness to totally devolve authority and resources to the District Assemblies is paramount. This includes giving the electorates the opportunity to elect their DCE to make the programme fully non-political as well as ensuring the regular release of government subventions. Adequate funds and resources, competent and motivated staff are all required to enable the District Assembly to properly drive the rural development agenda. The link between decentralisation and rural development is summarized in Figure 6.1.

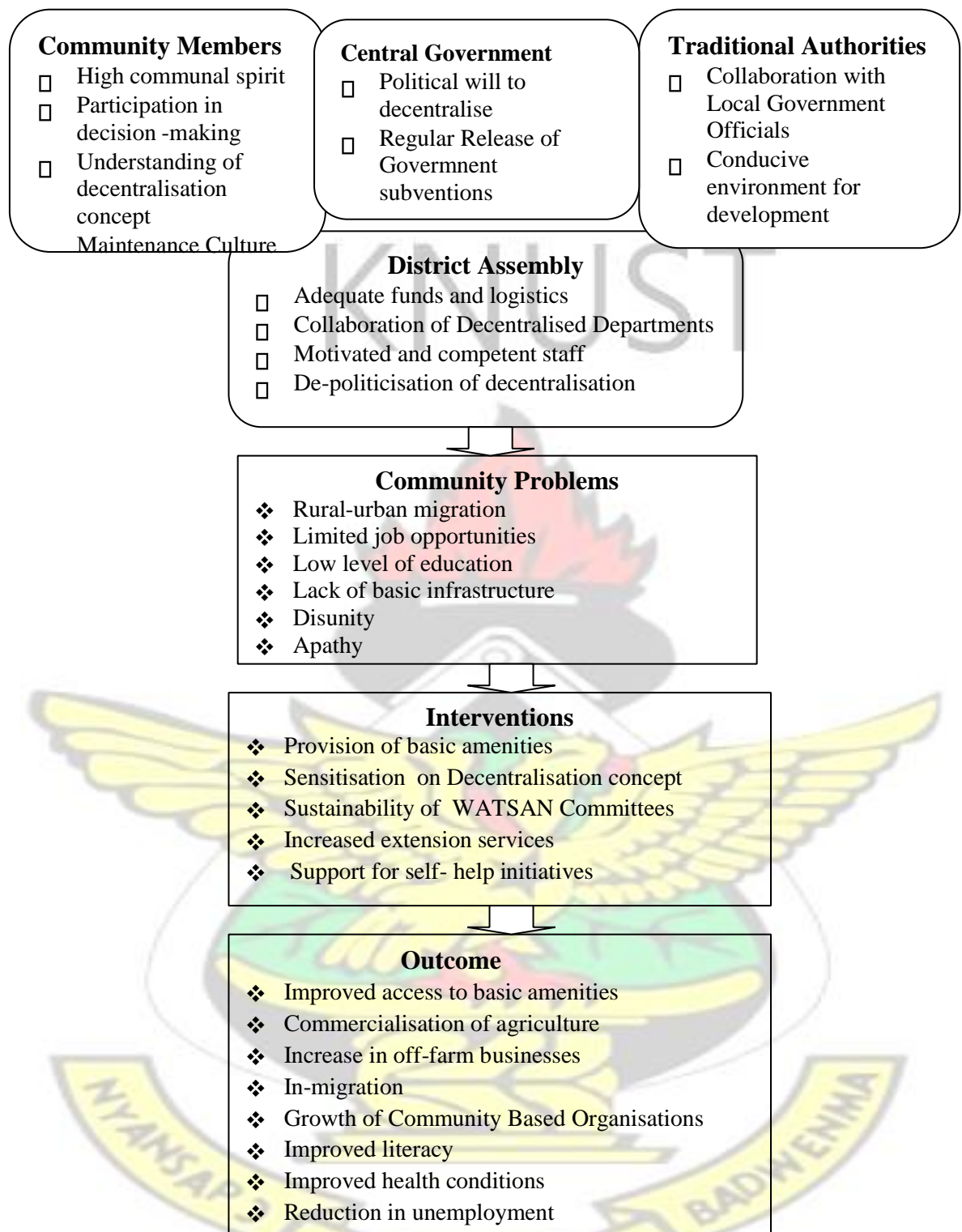


Figure 6.1: The Link between Decentralisation and Rural Development (Source: Author's Construct, March 2014)

6.2.1 Contributions of Decentralisation to Quality of life of Rural People

The main benefit that has accrued to rural areas is the improvement in access to some basic amenities mainly, basic schools and electricity supply. The District Assembly has provided a number of basic schools for the rural areas which is expected to increase literacy rate in the long term and aid in the improvement of living conditions of the people. Again, through the implementation of the SHEP by the District Assembly, some rural communities which were hitherto without access to electricity have now been connected to the electricity grid in partnership with the beneficiary communities. This could also provide opportunity for rural dwellers to engage in agro-processing to enhance their livelihoods. Periodically, the District Assembly has also supported community initiatives by providing building materials such as cements and roofing sheets to aid in the completion of many self-initiated projects which were deemed important in the settlements. However, the contribution of decentralisation to the total improvement of living conditions in rural areas was revealed to be inadequate. For instance, although basic schools have been provided for the settlements, other required facilities such as electricity, library, toilet, potable water and teachers' quarters were lacking in most of the schools. These have therefore been an impediment to effective teaching and learning which may not produce the desired outcome of promoting quality education to improve on the literacy rate. The study revealed that development entails basic amenities, availability of jobs, unity and peace. Hence, it was envisaged that the contributions of the District Assembly would go beyond basic amenities to promote total development in rural areas.

6.2.2 Performance of the Decentralisation Programme Based on Conditions in the District.

The general assertion from the perspective of rural people is that, the implementation of the decentralisation programme has not had any significant impact on the development of their communities. The major criticism raised against the programme was its inability to respond adequately to the basic needs of these communities. Although the District Assembly has made some efforts in ensuring the provision of facilities and infrastructure, such as schools and electricity, community members opined that, these were woefully inadequate as the settlements are undeveloped. The study revealed that the settlements are still characterized by low access to basic facilities

such as potable water, sanitation facilities, electricity, good roads and market; limited livelihood opportunities, poor housing conditions and high out migration. Furthermore, no major contribution has been made to improve agriculture which is the backbone of the rural economy. Decentralisation has also not been able to effectively address developmental concerns such as chieftaincy disputes, disunity and apathy which are the underlying causes of many of the problems confronting rural settlements. Paradoxically, community participation and initiative which once was a distinct feature of rural areas appear to be dwindling owing to the fact that the Assembly members and Unit committees mandated to promote grassroots participation in decision-making and development hardly meet with their electorates. Consequently, most residents are unaware of the activities of the District Assembly. As far as rural areas are concerned, the programme has not been able to achieve its goals of improving democracy and promoting development. Decentralisation has therefore failed as a development strategy in the Ahanta West District.

6.2.3 Factors Hindering the Performance of Decentralised Units of Government The study has revealed both the major and minor factors hindering the effectiveness of the Ahanta West District Assembly. Primarily, inadequate funds was the main factor preventing the achievement of the development targets of the District Assembly especially in the rural areas. Hence, although the District Assembly designs programmes and projects to improve rural life, most of these programmes do not materialize due to lack of funds. Coupled with this is the lack of field and office equipment required to enable the various departments to execute their tasks. The Agricultural unit for instance is not been able to offer extension services required to boost rural livelihoods basically because it does not have the necessary logistics. Apathy and weak understanding of the decentralisation concept on the part of the local people coupled with partisan politics and lack of motivation for elected officials have all hindered grassroots participation which is a major objective of the decentralisation programme. Minimally, inadequate competent personnel to drive the development agenda, low commitment to work and poor monitoring are other factors that had prevented the Ahanta West District from meeting the expectations of the rural people.

6.3 Recommendations

The implementation of the decentralisation programme as a development strategy in Ghana was driven by three main goals: “strengthening and expanding local democracy; promoting local social and economic development; reducing poverty and increasing the choices of the people” (MLGRD, 2008:1). Based on the research findings, these objectives have not been fully achieved. Rural areas in the Ahanta West District are still characterized by poor access to basic facilities and services and limited livelihood opportunities. Furthermore, decentralisation has not been able to promote agriculture which is backbone of the rural economies. Stringent measures are required if decentralisation is to gain back the confidence of rural people who are gradually losing hope that the strategy holds better chances of relieving them of their problems. It is an undeniable fact that decentralisation still has a lot of development prospects as its implementation in countries such as India (West Bengal), Philippines and Bolivia has had major impact on living conditions of the poor (Jütting et al., 2005). The subsequent sections recommend strategies that could be adopted to enhance the performance of the programme.

6.3.1 Improving Livelihoods in Rural Areas

The District Assembly should collaborate with NGOs to promote off-farm livelihood activities such as fish farming and livestock rearing to offer the youth in rural areas a wide-range of job opportunities to curb migration to the urban areas. The District Assembly should also liaise with the chiefs to acquire lands solely for farming purposes to relieve farmers of the difficulty in acquiring land. The land should however be managed by the District Assembly. Also, credit facilities for farmers and fishermen should be provided to boost their livelihoods. This could be done by the District Assembly in collaboration with the rural banks and credit unions. However, it should be flexible for the beneficiaries. The Agricultural Unit must also increase extension services to enable farmers to expand their farms.

6.3.2 Improving Community Participation in District Assembly’s Activities Apart from the failure of Assembly members to organise regular meetings, apathy on the part of community members was identified as a major hindrance to participation. Ensuring

that electorates get feedback on their concerns could be a major way to arouse their interest in community meetings. Quarterly meetings between Assembly members and their electorates must therefore be enforced. Mechanisms such as submission of minutes of meetings to the District Assembly as well as instituting a task force to observe community meetings could be adopted by the District Assembly to ensure that participation of citizens does not become a sham. With regards to the low participation in communal labour, since most of the communities have instituted bye-laws on communal labour such as payment of fines by defaulters, it is recommended that these bye-laws be enforced through the collaborative efforts of traditional authorities and unit committees. This will revive communal spirit in the settlements to reduce over reliance on the District Assembly for developmental projects. Fines collected from defaulters could be used to provide some basic needs of the communities.

6.3.3 Enhancing Collaboration between Traditional Authorities and District Assembly officials

The chiefs are the custodians of the communities and therefore collaboration between them and the District Assembly Officials is very necessary to enable these officials to successfully execute their tasks. Chieftaincy disputes should be resolved by the Ahanta Traditional Council to make it easier for local government officials to partner with the chiefs for development. Subsequently, there should be proper documentation on those qualified to be next of kin in each settlement to curb chieftaincy disputes. In addition, the chiefs could be given the opportunity to appoint some members of the unit committees as was previously done to make them feel involved in the decentralisation process.

6.3.4 Enhancing the Activities of Assembly Members and Unit Committees

The role of Assembly members and unit committees in promoting participation and development at the grassroots cannot be overemphasized. These elected officials must therefore be motivated to execute their tasks. Since unit committees are supposed to aid in revenue mobilization at the local level, the District Assembly could give a certain percentage of the revenue generated by the Unit Committees to them as allowances. By instituting that the amount of allowances earned would be dependent on the revenue generated,

unit committees would be active to collect revenue for the District Assembly. The District Assembly should also give monthly allowance to Assembly members from which they could buy fuel for their motorbikes to facilitate meetings in the electoral areas. The elected officials can also enhance their activities in their electoral areas by liaising with private companies and NGOs to implement projects in their communities instead of solely relying on the District Assembly to capture their community needs in the DMTDP. Assembly members should therefore prepare community development plans for the communities during their tenure of office and collaborate with the residents to solicit for funds from private organizations to implement them. The District Assembly could also institute Best Assembly member and Unit Committee member Awards to motivate the officials to execute their duties accordingly. This could be organized in partnership with private companies or NGOs.

6.3.5 Sensitisation on decentralisation policy

It is evident that there is weak understanding of the decentralisation concept in rural communities which makes it seem that the policy was imposed on them. Massive sensitisation by The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) is therefore required to enable the population to fully understand and embrace the programme. Sensitisation would enable local residents to better understand the roles of the District Assembly officials but also empower them to hold these officials accountable to ensure that they perform their duties as stated in the Local Government Act.

6.3.6 Resourcing the District Assembly

The District Assembly can easily accomplish its tasks if only the required resources are made available. The District Assembly therefore needs to be resourced with adequate funds, field and office logistics. Transfer of funds from central governments combined with the generation of revenue from local taxes has been attributed to the successful implementation of decentralisation in Bolivia and Phillipines (Jütting et al., 2005). The study therefore recommends that Central Government subventions should be regular, whereas the District Assembly should aim at generating more revenue locally to augment central grant. This could be done by instituting a District Assembly levy which would be paid yearly by each resident of the district for developmental activities. The amount to be collected should be determined through a referendum. Additionally

private-public partnerships could be intensified to provide funds for the implementation of the District Assembly's projects.

6.3.7 Eliminating Political Divisions

Depoliticisation of decentralisation could be a major way to curb political divisions and enable local government officials to gain the trust and collaboration of community members. It is therefore recommended that, the DCEs should be elected rather than appointed. This would make the officials more accountable to the local people. The District Assembly should also institute sanctions for Assembly members and Unit committee members who campaign on political platforms. At the community level, it is very necessary for the NCCE to embark on anti-politics sensitisation campaigns to conscientise local people on the need to elect their representatives based on merit and hard work rather than on political basis.

6.4 Conclusion

The research has revealed that the district assembly concept has improved physical access to some basic amenities with the most impact being on the educational sector, evident by the provision of basic schools. Notwithstanding, these benefits are far below the expectations of rural people as far as their development is concerned. From the perspective of rural dwellers, the District Assembly has not made significant efforts to provide them with basic amenities necessary to promote the establishment of businesses or promote agriculture to improve upon their general well-being. The study discovered that, lack of basic amenities such as potable water, toilet facilities, good roads and electricity; apathy, disunity and chieftaincy disputes were the main problems confronting the settlements. This has consequently led to limited job opportunities and high rate of youth migration to the urban centres, thus threatening the sustainability of these settlements. In this regard, the study concludes that the implementation of the decentralisation programme has not been effective in adequately addressing the developmental concerns of rural communities in the Ahanta West District.

Nevertheless, the developmental prospects of decentralisation can be realized if pragmatic measures are undertaken to address the challenges hindering the achievement of the expected benefits especially in rural communities. It is therefore hoped that the

implementation of the recommendations outlined in this chapter would enhance the effectiveness of the programme as a rural development strategy in Ghana.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: CASHPOR House Index

CATEGORY	POINT
Size of Household:	
Small	0
Medium	2
Large	6
Structural Condition:	
Dilapidated	0
Average	2
Good	6

Quality of Walls:	
Poor	0
Average	2
Good	6
Quality of Roof:	
Thatch / Leaves	0
Tin / Iron Sheets	2
Permanent Roof	6

Source: Simanowitz et al., 2000

Appendix 2: Household Questionnaire

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

This questionnaire is to aid in a research on the assessment of the decentralisation policy with respect to the development of rural communities in the Ahanta West District. The study is strictly for academic purposes for the attainment of a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in development studies. I would therefore be very grateful if you could spare me some minutes of your time to respond to the questions. Please be assured that all information disclosed would be confidential and would be used for the intended purposes only.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA	
1. Name of community	
2. Sex of respondent	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Size of household	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Other (Specify).....
4. Age of household head	18-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31-45 <input type="checkbox"/> 46-60 <input type="checkbox"/> Above 60 <input type="checkbox"/>
5. What are the major problems in this community?	
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION	

6. How many times in a year are you involved in meetings at the unit level?	None <input type="checkbox"/> Once <input type="checkbox"/> Twice <input type="checkbox"/> Thrice <input type="checkbox"/>
7. How many times in a year do you meet with the A. Member?	None <input type="checkbox"/> Once <input type="checkbox"/> Twice <input type="checkbox"/> Thrice <input type="checkbox"/>
8. How many times in a year are you involved in meetings at the district level	None <input type="checkbox"/> Once <input type="checkbox"/> Twice <input type="checkbox"/> Thrice <input type="checkbox"/>
9. Do you know of any project implemented in this community by the D. Assembly? If yes mention them.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
10. Before the District Assembly implements project in this community,	Through community meetings Only the leaders are involved The Assembly identifies and implements them <input type="checkbox"/>

how are decisions reached?	Community members are only informed Community members are not consulted at all. Other (specify).....
11. Do you participate in development projects implemented by the D.A? If yes, mention the projects	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
14. How were you involved? (Please tick as many as apply)	Project identification /Needs Assess. <input type="checkbox"/> Project design <input type="checkbox"/> Communal labour <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring & Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Counterpart funding <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify).....

EFFECTS OF DECENTRALISATION ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

15. In your opinion what do you think constitutes "development" in a community?	
16. Would you say that this community is developed? Please explain.	
17. To what extent would you say that the D.A has contributed to the development of this community?	Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> To a limited extent <input type="checkbox"/> To an average extent <input type="checkbox"/> To a large extent <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/>

18. In what ways has the District Assembly contributed to the development of this community?			
19. Which aspect of your life has the District Assembly had the most impact		Education <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> livelihood <input type="checkbox"/> Culture <input type="checkbox"/> Citizen participation <input type="checkbox"/> Water and sanitation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify).....	
20. What are your prioritised needs? (Indicate using 1, 2, 3; 1= Most needed, 2= Needed, 3= Less needed)			
a. School building		g. Market	m. Drains
b. Police station		h. Water	n. Street lights
c. Health personnel		i. Teachers	o. Teachers Quarters
d. Toilet facilities		j. Roads	p. Electricity
e. Refuse containers		k. Hospital/ Clinic	q. Credit facilities
f. Farm inputs		l. Fishing gears	
g. other			
21. To what extent has the District Assembly responded adequately to your needs?		Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> To a limited extent <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/> To an average <input type="checkbox"/> extent <input type="checkbox"/> To a large extent <input type="checkbox"/>	
22. What are your expectations from the D. Assembly?			
HEALTH STATUS			
23. How many times does your household suffer from the following diseases in a year? Use 0=none 1= once 2= twice 3=thrice 4= four times 5=five times			
a. Malaria		e. Skin diseases	i. Typhoid
b. Diarrhoea		f. Eye infections	j. Cholera
c. Tuberculosis		g. Rheumatism	k. Measles
d. Kwashiorkor		h. Bilharzia	l. Anaemia
Other			
24. What are the major challenges in accessing health services?			
EDUCATION AND LITERACY			
27. Educational status of household head		Never schooled <input type="checkbox"/> Primary <input type="checkbox"/> JHS <input type="checkbox"/>	

	Technical <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary <input type="checkbox"/>		
28. What major problems do you face with regards to education?			
WATER AND SANITATION			
29. What is your main source of drinking water	Pipe borne <input type="checkbox"/> Bore hole <input type="checkbox"/> Well <input type="checkbox"/> Stream <input type="checkbox"/> River <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....		
30. Which of these problems do you face with regards to the source of drinking water?	Unhygienic <input type="checkbox"/> High cost involved <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....		
31. How do you dispose refuse in your home	Communal refuse dump <input type="checkbox"/> Bush <input type="checkbox"/> Collected <input type="checkbox"/> Burning <input type="checkbox"/> Burying <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....		
32. What kind of toilet facility does the household use?	WC <input type="checkbox"/> Pan/Bucket latrine <input type="checkbox"/> KVIP <input type="checkbox"/> Pour Flush <input type="checkbox"/> Covered pit latrine <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES			
33. What is your occupation?	unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Farmer <input type="checkbox"/> Trader <input type="checkbox"/> Fishmonger <input type="checkbox"/> Fisherman <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....		
34. If a farmer, mention the crops you grow on your farm			
37. What major problems do you face in your occupation?			
38. What assistance do you receive from the D. Assembly and has it enhanced your occupation in any way?			
39. What is the most needed assistance to enhance your work?			
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE			
40. Is your work the main source of income? If No, what are your other sources of income	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
41. How much do you spend weekly on the following			
ITEM	AMOUNT GH¢	ITEM	AMOUNT GH¢

Health Care		Toilet and Refuse	
Transportation		Water	
Education		Food	
Energy (Elect./Gas/Firewood		Savings	
Other			

KNUST



Appendix 3: Interview Guide for Heads of Departments
KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

This interview is to aid in a research on the assessment of the decentralisation policy with respect to the development of rural communities in the Ahanta West District. The study is strictly for academic purposes for the attainment of a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in development studies. I would therefore be very grateful if you can spare me some minutes of your time to respond to the questions. Please be assured that all information disclosed would be confidential and would be used for the intended purposes only.

1. In your opinion, what would you say constitutes rural development?

.....

.....

.....

2. How has your department contributed to rural development?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Would you say that decentralisation has benefited rural residents? Please explain

.....

.....

.....

4. What are the major challenges that confront you with respect to your activities in rural areas?

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. What do you think are the key factors necessary to enhance your activities in the rural areas?

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.....
.....
.....

6. How easy or difficult is it for rural people to access your services? Please explain.....

.....
.....
.....

7. Do you set specific target for rural areas?

.....
.....
.....
.....

8. What are the major obstacles to the effective implementation of the decentralisation policy?.....

.....
.....

9. What do you think should be done to enhance rural development?

.....
.....
.....
.....

10. Any other comments?.....

.....
.....

Thank you!

Appendix 4: Interview Guide for Chiefs

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

This interview is to aid in a research on the assessment of the decentralisation policy with respect to the development of rural communities in the Ahanta West District. The study is strictly for academic purposes for the attainment of a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in development studies. I would therefore be very grateful if you could spare me some minutes of your time to respond to the questions. Please be assured that all information disclosed would be confidential and would be used for the intended purposes only.

1. Name of village.....
2. In your opinion, what do you think constitutes development?.....
.....
.....
.....
3. Would you say that decentralisation has facilitated rural development?.....
.....
.....
.....
4. How satisfied are you with the level of development of this community? Please explain.....
.....
.....
.....
5. What are the main problems in this community?.....
.....
.....
.....
6. What are the needs of this community?.....
.....
.....
.....

7. To what extent has the District Assembly been able to adequately meet the needs of this community?.....
.....
.....
8. How are you involved in the District Assembly's activities?.....
.....
.....
9. In what ways has the District Assembly contributed to the development of this community?
.....
.....
.....
10. What projects do you think should be implemented by the District Assembly in this community?
.....
.....
.....
11. How many times do you meet with the Assembly member and unit committees in a year?
.....
.....
.....
12. What are the challenges to community participation?.....
.....
.....
13. How do community members participate in development activities by the District Assembly?
.....
.....

14. What would you say about the accessibility and condition of these facilities?	Location (Indicate no if applicable)	Distance to Facility (Time in minutes)	Condition of facility (very poor, poor, satisfactory, good, very good)
a. Health facility			
b. School			
c. Water			
d. Public Transport			
e. Postal services			
f. Toilet facilities			
g. Refuse dump			
h. Market			
i. Bank			
j. Extension Service			
Other			

Thank you!

Appendix 5: Interview Guide for Assembly Members and Unit Committee Members

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

This interview is to aid in a research on the assessment of the decentralisation policy with respect to the development of rural communities in the Ahanta West District. The study is strictly for academic purposes for the attainment of a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Development Studies. I would therefore be very grateful if you can spare me some minutes of your time to respond to the questions. Please be assured that all information disclosed will be confidential and will only be used for the intended purposes.

1. Name of Electoral area.....
2. For how long have you been an assembly member or Unit committee member?

.....

3. What are your roles?

.....

4. What difficulties do you face in the performance of your duties?

.....

5. In your opinion, what would you say constitutes development?.....

.....

6. What would you say about the development of this community? Please explain.

.....

7. What are the main problems in this community?.....

.....

What are the major needs of this community?.....

.....

What has been the contribution of the District Assembly to the following?

a. Education.....

b. Health.....

c. Livelihood.....

d. Water and Sanitation.....

-
- e. Participation.....
-
-
8. How many meetings are held in a year at the district level?.....
9. What normally is the subject matter of these meetings?.....
10. How many times in a year do you meet with the community members?.....
11. What normally is the subject matter of the meetings?.....
12. As an Assembly member, do you have development programmes for your constituency? How do you plan for these programmes?.....
-
-
13. Are some of these projects budgeted for in the MTDP?.....
-
14. To what extent are you able to meet your development targets for the year?.....
-
-
15. Do you receive any assistance from the District Assembly with respect to the implementing your development programmes? Please explain.....
-
-
16. What are the major challenges that confront you with respect to the development of rural communities in your electoral area.....
-
-
-
- In which ways are community members involved in developmental decisions at the District Assembly?.....
-
-
-
17. In what ways are you involved in the implementation of development projects executed by the District Assembly?.....
-
-
18. In your opinion, do you think that decentralisation is the best approach for rural

development?.....
.....
.....

19. What has been the major contribution of the District Assembly to the development of this community?.....

.....
.....

20. Would you say that decentralisation has been beneficial to rural communities?

Please explain.....

.....
.....

What are the major obstacles to effective decentralisation in this district?.....

.....
.....
.....

Thank you!

