

**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**A STUDY ON DISTRICT ASSEMBLY COMMON FUND AND POVERTY  
REDUCTION IN RURAL GHANA; A CASE STUDY OF ASUNAFO NORTH  
MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY**

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ADMINISTRATION DEGREE.**

**AUGUST, 2018**

## DECLARATION

### Candidate declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that not part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

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.....  
Signature

**9<sup>th</sup> August, 2018**  
Date

### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of work laid down by the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Certified by

Dr. George M. Bob-Millar

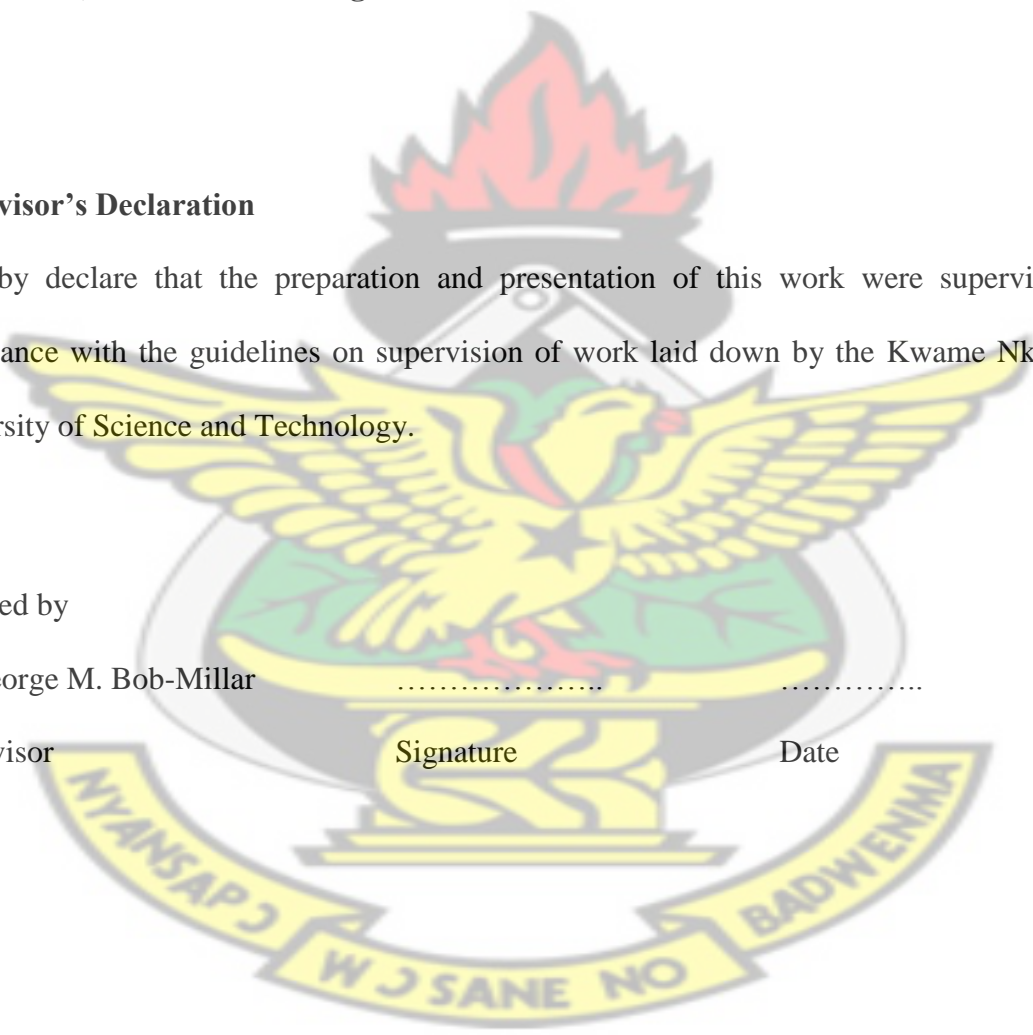
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Supervisor

Signature

Date



## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Ayishetu Sulemana, my children Abdul-Hanan, Latifatu, Ussiph, Ruhianatu and my parents who helped me to complete this project.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

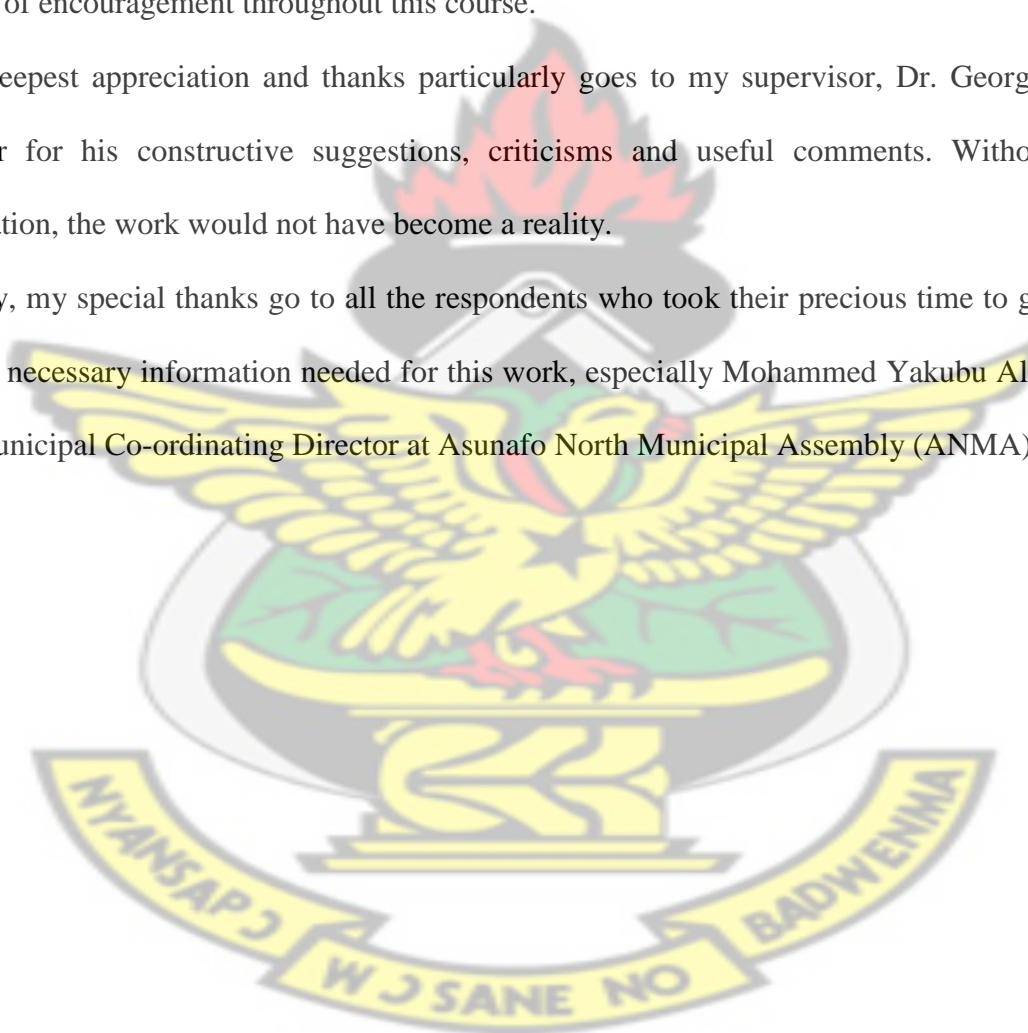
First and foremost, my gratitude to Allah the Most Gracious for giving me the Courage, Strength and Ability to bring this work to a final stage.

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## ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to assess the District Assembly Common Fund and Poverty Reduction in Rural Ghana with a specific focus on the Goaso Municipal Assembly. The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative approach to data collection. The researchers used stratified and random sampling technique with a sample size of ninety-two (92) and the data for the study was basically primary.

The findings revealed that the Municipal Chief Executives (MCEs) who are to be managers at the Municipal level are not but rather occupied on workshops and meetings, most of which may not be productive and relevant to their duties. The researcher also found out that, District Assemblies do not involve the beneficiary communities in the selection, design, and implementation of development projects. This has led to the abandonment of some projects in the selected communities. Lastly, the researcher found out that, those in remote communities within the districts still lacking basic social amenities such as good school infrastructure, libraries, hospitals, potable water and electricity hence a bad impression by the people in relation to the developments taking place in the education, health, water and electricity sectors owing to lack of funding, limited managerial skills and too much interference from the Municipal level.

The study recommends that the District Assembly together with its stakeholders must sensitize the public on the Public Private Partnership policies of the government for active private sector participation in the development management of facilities like stores, public toilets, guesthouses, water supply systems and possibly property rate revenue collection. Also, proposals need to be developed or prepared and presented to development partners and other potential funding sources to solicit their intervention in district development.

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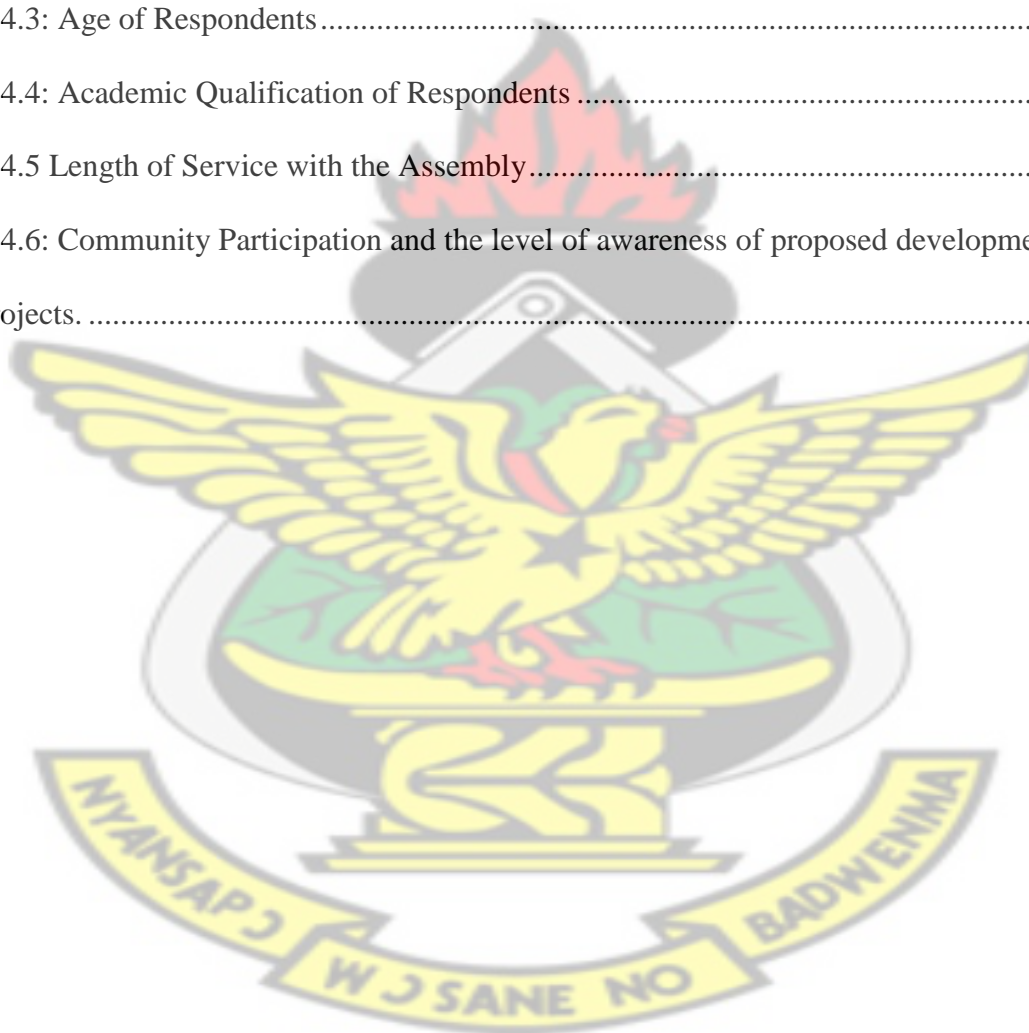
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS



ANMA	Asunafo North Municipal Assembly
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CF	Common Fund
DACF	District Assemblies 'Common Fund
DAs	District Assemblies
GLSS	Ghana Living Standard Survey
GPRS I	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I
GPRS II	Growth and Poverty Reduction II
IGF	Internally Generated Fund
MCD	Municipal Coordinating Director
MCE	Municipal Chief Executive
MCEs / DCEs	Metropolitan/Municipal/District Chief Executive
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MFO	Municipal Finance Officer
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal, District Assemblies
MPO	Municipal Planning Office
MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
NGOs	Non- Governmental Organizations
NYEP	National Youth Employment Programme
PRF	Poverty Reduction Fund

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Background to the Study

Local governments have since been agents of local development in which the people in the local areas are given greater opportunities to influence policies and programs that directly affect their well-being. Most public policies are thereby implemented with the aim of reducing poverty levels. However, many countries especially developing ones are bedeviled with many problems. One key area among them is the issue of financing the local development to limit rural poverty. Many countries, especially developing ones have not been able to resolve this issue adequately, due to the inability of the central governments to provide financial resources to the local authorities due to budgetary constraints (Kessey, 1995). Most developing countries lack financial resources to match with new responsibilities as poverty continues to deter rural areas of which the reason arises from unfitting public policies and ill-formulated programs and projects, which have both tend to ruin rural communities (World Bank, 2001). Rural poverty in developing countries is a complex phenomenon, which includes low income, unequal access to means of production, to health and education facilities, food insecurity and low nutritional status, natural resource degradation, as well as low empowerment (Crook; Sverrison, 2001).

In Ghana, poorness is a multi-dimensional and distinct phenomenon and the dimensions of no material possessions can be categorized into three main facets; income or consumption dimension, access to social services dimension and participatory dimension of poverty. The social service access dimension of poverty is where there is a lack of access to health care, education, good drinking water, decent housing and sanitation.

The participatory dimension of poverty includes lack of audience and political rights. People who want the ability to participate in decisions that affect their lives directly but lacks this avenue consider this as a sense of helplessness and fundamental characteristics of poorness (Ayee, 1997). In terms of economic activity, poverty is the highest among food crop farmers with about 59 percent living below the poverty line. Other categories that are relatively poor include export farmers (39%) and private informal employees (25%) (Ghana Statistical Service, 1998). Most rural people do not have access to quality drinking water and sanitation and enrolment level is relatively low. The use and access to health facilities are generally low due to low income and absence of these facilities in the rural areas (NDPC, 2003). The inability of successive governments to ensure efficient financing of the local development has increased poverty in the rural areas (Ayee, 1995).

However, in an attempt to reduce the problem, the government of Ghana introduced a development fund in 1994 known as the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) so as to encourage local governments and intensify government's commitment to decentralization in general and fiscal devolvement. The fund complements the internally generated funds of the District Assemblies and is meant for the development of the rural areas to reduce poverty among the people. The District Assemblies' Common Fund (DACF) is a pool of resources created under Article 252 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana of which five (5) percent of the national revenue approved by Parliament is set aside to be shared among all District Assemblies in Ghana.

However, this has been increased to 7.5 percent beginning from the 2008 fiscal year. The amount is paid into the DACF account in quarterly installments. Over the last decade, this enabled the government to transfer a lot of funds from its coffers for local development and poverty reduction.

Five criteria have been concocted in respect of sharing this amount among the District Assemblies. These include the need to redress existing imbalances in development, incite and encourage DA's to mobilize resources for addressing environmental abjection caused by pressures on existing services because of the increased population; and cater for unforeseen developments. The weights assigned to each factor are as follows: the need factor 35%, equalization 30%, responsiveness factor 20%, service pressure 10% and miscellaneous factor 5%, which is used to cater for contingent developments in the districts and the MP's allocations (Songsore, 2003). The District Assembly Common Fund is designed basically for social infrastructural projects such as classroom blocks, clinics, provision of water and sanitation facilities, credit support and facilities for good governance (Songsore, 2003). Even though these social infrastructures are necessary for poverty reduction efforts, they are not sufficient to improve the overall livelihoods of the local communities in the districts. As a result, the MAs have been directed to spend 20 percent of the Common Fund allocations on income-generating ventures to improve incomes of the local population. In 1994, the allocation and utilization of the fund greatly enhanced the effort of the government to reduce poverty in the local areas. The operation of the fund in the country over the last decade saw most development projects being executed to raise the standard of living in rural areas. Health facilities, School blocks, scholarships for needy pupils and students, provision of clean water, electricity, markets, street lights among others were provided.

However, the general indication about the fund is that it has not been properly utilized and managed to more Projects and Programmes to reduce the poverty levels in the rural areas (Ayee, 1995). Even though some scholarly works have been done in Ghana on uses of the fund including (Ayee 1995; 1996, 2003; Songsore, 2003). These studies did not critically examine specific poverty reduction programmes at local level. This study seeks to bridge the gap in poverty reduction programmes and will hopefully add to the existing literature, as it

looks at the local fund in a specific way, from how the local Assembly fund contributes to poverty reduction in the Asunafo North Municipal Assembly of the Brong Ahafo Region.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

Ghana is a country with relatively low per capita income of which most people have a low standard of living. The country is predominantly agricultural with over 60% of its population found in the rural area (National Population and Housing Census, 2000). The sharp difference between rural and urban Ghana reflects the imbalance in the development framework of the country which has been tilted in favour of the urban areas. There is a huge flight of resources from the rural areas to the urban centers directly and indirectly. All characteristics associated with poverty generally are identified in rural areas of Ghana. These include wretched housing, pitiful water supply, low level of education, poor health service, and a high level of vulnerability of the people.

According to the National Population & Housing Census in 2000, the Asunafo North District had one hundred and forty-six (146) communities that are characterized by poor level of education, poor housing facilities and high level of unemployment, poor road network and limited access to good health facilities. In education, the district has three Senior High School located at Goaso and Mim, with most of the communities having basic schools up to the Junior High School level. A large number of schools going children are outside the school because of poverty. In fact, the district lacks economic activities of any significance, from which the people could earn income on a sustainable basis. With the realization that poverty is acute in rural areas, several strategies are being evolved by the District Assembly to correct this. A few far-reaching interventions have been put in place to ensure that the Assembly is well resourced financially, to overcome poverty.

Furthermore, studies on DACF and poverty reduction have predominantly been done in advanced and developed countries, therefore very few works on literature can be linked to the subject under study. It is on this basis that pushed the study in assessing DACF and poverty reduction in Rural Ghana with a specific focus on the Goaso Municipal Assembly.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

### **General Objective**

With reference to the problem statement and research questions, the general objective of the study is to assess District Assembly Common Fund and poverty reduction in rural Ghana with a specific focus on the Asunafo North Municipal Assembly.

### **Specific Objectives**

The study sets out to achieve the following specific objectives.

- i. To examine the criteria adopted by the Assembly in selecting communities who benefit from its Poverty Assuagement Programmes.
- ii. To assess the extent to which provided under the DACF has improved the living conditions of the people.
- iii. To analyze the Assemblies allocations of DACF and its impact on mobilization of traditional sources of revenue.
- iv. To examine the priority areas of the Assembly's poverty reduction programmes and its sustainability.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

These research questions would help the researcher answer questions relating to the study.

The questions the study sought to answer are;

- i. What criteria does the Assembly adopt to select poor communities to benefit from its Poverty Assuagement Programmes?

- ii. To what extent have the projects provided under the DACF improved the living conditions of the people?
- iii. How has the Assembly's allocations of DACF affected the mobilization of the traditional sources of revenue?
- iv. What are the priority areas of the Assembly's poverty reduction programmes and how are they sustainable?

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDA's) is tasked to reduce poverty under the Local Government Act, 1993. There is the need to assess the performance of the MMDA's towards this agenda. This study may be of need to policy makers in the local government. Future researchers would use as a source of reference especially research topics relating to DACF. Additionally, the study would give an insight into the operation of the DACF particularly in poverty reduction programmes in the Municipality.

#### **1.5 Definition of Terms**

Poverty is described as either 'relative' or 'absolute'. Relative poverty is the situation whereby minimum basic needs for human survival such as food, shelter and clothing are barely met. It is a standard measure of deprivation by people and the nation (Seregeldin, 1989).

**Poverty reduction** refers to the designing, implementation and making of appropriate techniques to provide resources to be allocated to the poor to increase their standard of living (World Bank, 2001; Sen, 1999).

**District Assembly's Common Fund** is a pool of resources that requires Parliament to make provision for annual allocations of not less than five (5 %) percent of the overall tax revenue

to be set aside for sharing among all the District Assemblies for development (DACF Act 455, 1993).

### **1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

This study is an academic work which seeks to provide academia and scholars as well as the business groups and citizens of developing countries especially Ghana with important insight into the extent to which reliance could be placed on the CF. This research will cover the Asunafo North Municipal Assembly where rural poverty is currently on-going. This study will try to know the extent to which the District Assemblies Common Fund had attempted to alleviate rural poverty within the selected district, and an evidence of a reduction, stagnancy, or an increment would be hunted thereof.

A major limitation of this research work was time, the researcher did not have enough time to enable the researcher to expand the sample population for the administration of the sample tool. Also, the researcher did not find it easy combining work, studies, academics and the long essay. In addition, the researcher had to persuade the respondents to obtain the requisite information for the study and inadequate funds since all the cost of the entire project work was financed by the researcher. In conclusion, however, the above limitations never affected the outcome of the study.

### **1.7 Organisation of the Study**

The study is distributed into five chapters.

Chapter one spells out the overview of the study including the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study which includes, general objective and specific objectives, research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms, scope of the study and the limitations the study encountered.

Chapter Two contains an in-depth review of literature relating to the study. Chapter three deals with the strategies used to cover the study area, study design, case study, study population, sampling procedures and rationale, sample size and justification and method of data collection (sources of data, data collection technique and data collection instruments).

Chapter Four devotes to the analysis on data acquired from the findings and discussion of the results based on the research questions.

Chapter Five contains the summary of findings, conclusions from the findings and recommendations by the researcher.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews basic literature that are relevant to the research. The impact of DACF on poverty reduction is vital for economic development in Ghana. Consequently, there are comprehensive literatures dealing with the local government in relation to economic development. The researcher has therefore reviewed some of these studies which are based on historical and contemporary points of view.

#### 2.1 The History on financing the Administration of Local Government in Ghana

According to Ahwoi (2010), Local governance did not start with the convergence of the Europeans to the then Gold Coast but rather the communities had their way of governing itself. In the community, the chief is the head of government but they played a less prominent role upon the arrival of the Europeans in the then Gold Coast. Their arrival made the administration of Local Government centered more on the chiefs by handpicking power exercising people to help them exert law and order. In addressing the inadequacies identified by the Coussey Committee in 1949, the first Local Government Ordinance was commissioned in 1951.

He further stipulated that twenty (20) years after the commissioning, another Local Administration Act in 1971, Act 359, was introduced which spelt out the powers of the Prime Minister to the Regional Chief Executives to head the Regional Councils. In 1974, an amendment was made to the 1971 Act which created a four-tier structure to the Local Government. This amendment was the last major change in the Local Government system of

Ghana until the current dispensation of Local Government established by the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) Law on decentralization (Ahwoi,2010).

The search for financing local government administration to reduce rural poverty in Ghana started with the traditional system of local administration which made traditional paramountcy a basic unit of administration and development. The traditional councils' revenue included charges placed on commercial activities such as farming activities, logging and small-scale mining, incomes from commercial ventures and traditional court fines (Abayie,1998). However, revenues generated from these sources were not enough and above all revenues raised were usually spent on the personal emolument of the chiefs and his council of elders. This is because there were no serious commitments towards public welfare spending since there was no distinction between personal incomes of the chiefs and that of the paramountcy's revenue Korboe (1998).

In attempt to streamline the collection of taxes, the colonial administration established the native treasuries which were manned by appointed native revenue collectors. However, this move was seriously obstructed by the traditional councils and the people Acheampong (1994). Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's led government capitalized on the already established control of local councils and manipulated the situation to his political advantage by increasing the number of the councils to 183. The main significant development was the abolition of the reserve seats for the traditional authorities and many conflicts among the council members due to top variances in the political inclination. As a result, there was no local self-government under this regime and this did not promote local development and poverty reduction (Dei,1992).

## **2.2 The Concept of DACF**

According to Dondieu (2001), District Assemblies were financed by the traditional sources of revenue but these sources were inadequate and hence the introduction of the concept of Ceded Revenue by the PNDC law 2007 of 1998. Under Ceded Revenue, District Assemblies is independent but most of them could not even pay their employees hence the establishment of the Common Fund to cater for the financial deficiencies.

### **2.2.1 The Legal Framework**

The District Assembly's Common Fund 1993 Act 455 states that "the name of the fund is District Assembly Common Fund and consist of monies allocated by parliament in addition to the interest that had accumulated from the investment made on the fund". Also, the Administrator of Common Fund upon receipt of five (5%) percent of the government's total revenue in quarterly installments on an approved formula from parliament pays it to the District Assemblies. According to the Daily Guide on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2007, there has been an increment on DACF with approval from parliament from 5% to 7.5% to fulfill governments agenda in reducing poverty. The Ministry sought for an upward adjustment of the rate of which a comprehensive development approach would be in creating employment avenues and provision of social amenities in the rural areas.

### **2.2.2 Distribution of DACF**

According to Rogars and Rosamblanm (1999), the issue of distribution of resource between the centre and the periphery is always a complex one in any society. They emphasized that it is even more complex in transitional societies where there is often a shortage of resources at the central level. In their view, this has certainly been the case in Sierra-Leone over sometime where there had been a steady concentration of powers and authority over

resources leading to conflicts which had both geographic and ethnic implication on the issue of who is going to get what and how?

In the words of Nongroff and Johnson (1987), financial autonomy is the most important aspect of successful decentralization. Authority is commonly delegated to local organizations in senegal, but they are given the adequate resources to cater for their new function effectively and efficiently. Due to this there are no prospects for rural development. In their opinion the involvement of the council in productive project only seems possible through external financing.

Ahwoi (1992) argues that in Ghana, the strategy has been for the government by means of concept of ceded revenue to distribute funds to District Assemblies. According to him this had been found to be much more reliable than the get-in-aid which was not tied to any specific sources of national revenue but dependent on how much could be granted at any time. In his submission, the constitution provides a distribution obligation by providing for the establishment of District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) into which allocation of not less than 5% of the total country revenue would be made in favor of district assemblies. Hence, it makes the allocation of revenue to District Assemblies a better one over the ceded revenue; this is indeed in favor of the District Assemblies.

### **2.3 Concept of Decentralization**

Fiscal decentralization is one of the main causes of the failure of successive local government systems in Ghana. The problem of inadequate financial resource is common among district authorities which makes it more difficult for them to deliver and maintain the expected volume and standard socio-economic services to the localities. However, it may be argued that if responsibilities and tasks are to be decentralized, then they must be accompanied by a corresponding fiscal reform to strengthen local government finances. There has been the tendency to exaggerate the difficulties of decentralizing central government's fiscal policy

and thus justifying centralized fiscal control. Nonetheless, given the numerous responsibilities assigned to local authorities in Ghana, this shows the necessity to grant some level of fiscal empowerment to all local governments in less developed countries. They should not be kept as spending agents of the central government. It is against this background that the DACF was introduced in Ghana as part of efforts to operationalize decentralization and to address the perennial problem of inadequate finance for local development (Asibuo and Nsarkoh, (1994); Kessey ,1995).

Decentralization is the passing on of authority to plan, make decisions and manage public functions from a higher level of government to any individual, organization or agency at a lower level (Rondinelli, 1981). Diana (1993) identified in her research work that between the years 1950 and 1960 the decentralization program was closely related with respect to Anglophone African countries and the adoption of it has improved the control and coordination of the program and has increased the satisfaction of the programs. The District Assembly Common Fund concept was brought up in relation of a discriminatory system which includes a scourge of deprivation, especially in rural areas where poverty is dominant. Misappropriation of development funds in rural areas has been a canker in the country and the situation had been worsening of which some include lack of adequate socio-economic and physical facilities in rural areas. Rural development has to do with the modernization of the economy to upgrade the living standards of the people (Wood, 1986). According to him local government are needed to aid in the management of social amenities, like health facilities, good sanitation etc. Also, he suggested that, Agencies centered in Accra are to bring efficient and effective ways that would bring about an improvement in alleviating poverty.

### **2.3.1 Measurement on the Benefits of Decentralization**

According to Grain (1970), policy makers might compare satisfaction levels in different geographical area. In his conclusion, he said, that areas receive low poorer quality service in

relation to reporting lower overall satisfaction in their area. He concluded that although such procedure may seem sensible, they are unprofessional and potentially void.

### **2.3.2 Decentralization as Efficiency**

Azfar (2001) said decentralization has gradually emerged as a development strategy. Decentralization serves as a means for the state for providing more efficient services and can increase the efficiency of the responsiveness of government to issues (Gordor, 1983). According to Shar (2004), decentralization is advocated claiming; lower tiers of the state can deliver services in relation to development more effectively and efficiently than the government because they are close to the people who use and benefit from them. Greater response is attained because of the reliable information about local preference, needs and conditions. Decentralization is also supposed to allow local resource to be mobilized more effectively. Basically, decentralization is expected to reduce expenditure and contribute to programmes of fiscal restraint.

### **2.3.3 Decentralization and Accountability**

Accountability is the idea that must be in the mind of every person who is in power. They must be available to give accounts in the sense of explaining and justifying their actions and should suffer any penalties if any should their actions be found inappropriate or abusive (Goetz, 2001). Accountability is claimed to be the most crucial element in successful decentralization either for interventions underpinned by efficiency or by empowerment arguments (Manor, 1999). The World Bank report (1999) states that financial accountability is a main factor of success where a central government maintains a credible policy against bailouts, it forces sub-national governments and their lenders to live with the consequences of their decision (Deininger and Mpunga, 2005). They become accountable for their borrowing and lending.

However, other forms of accountability exist. Craig, (2003) identifies three accountability mechanisms in decentralization interventions:

- a. Horizontal accountability to other state actors, such as units and levels of government.
- b. Vertical accountability, accountability to actors outside the state such as individual citizens, the media or civil society organizations.
- c. Downward accountability refers to accountability to the public or citizens.

Decentralization reforms in Africa emphasized upward accountability to the central government, while downward accountability remained weak at its best and it increases misappropriation of public funds (Craig, 2004).

#### **2.4 The Concept of Poverty**

Poverty is part of the world, even though in the developed world an assumption holds that everyone is able; most of the people are living on the streets because of poverty (Goetz, 2001). Developing countries that find themselves in all kinds of economic blander have less to write about on the issue of poverty, as most of them live on less than a dollar a day (Smith, 1985). World Bank (2000), views poverty as the economic condition in which people lack sufficient income to obtain certain minimum levels of health services, food, housing, clothing and education which are generally seen as vital to ensure standardized living. According to Ahwoi (1998), what is considered adequate, depends on the average standard of living in a society and the perception of the individual. Dzradosi (2000), defined poverty as a state of livelihood that can best be described by the accounts of those experiencing it. This presupposes that only those who feel what it means to be poor can best describe what poverty is. This makes definition of poverty quite relative since no one is every satisfied with this level of living in economic sense (Seregeldin, 1989).

### 2.4.1 Dimensions of Rural Poverty

At the heart of every human experience is the desire to survive and increase, to live without fear, hunger or frustrations (Dei, 1992). Rural poverty is responsible for nearly 63 percent of poverty worldwide, reaching 90 percent in China and Bangladesh and between 65 and 90 percent in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2001). All groups of the rural poor are vulnerable to serious risk owing to changes in weather, markets, investment, and public policy (Ravallion, 1998). In almost all countries, the conditions- in terms of personal consumption and access to education, health care, potable water and sanitation, housing, transport, and communications faced by the rural poor are far worse than those faced by the urban poor (Luzzi et al, 2006). It is of importance to recognize that poverty dare a precise definition because it is a multi-dimensional concept. Participatory poverty assessments reveal the many dimensions of poverty (Bibi, 2005). These include vulnerability, gender differences, crime and violence, seasonality and powerless. The words destitution, ill-being; powerlessness and vulnerability are frequently used in conjunction with poverty and that the conceptual differences have become blurred (Ravallion, 1996). There have been many attempts at coherent definition within numerous poverty studies. However, perhaps inevitably, no single accepted definition exists reflecting the variety of approaches available to social scientists (Chambers, 1997; Ravallion, 1992). In Ghana conscious efforts at reducing poverty began in the early 1980s following the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme and later the decentralization concept in 1987. In 2002, Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) was also adopted to address especially, the rural folk have not been reduced substantially. Households and communities are characterized as poor based on lowness of income, malnutrition, ill-health, illiteracy, lack of access to safe water and sanitation facilities, and general insecurity (Ravallion, 1996).

## 2.4.2 Poverty Reduction Programmes

Poverty reduction refers to the designing, implementation and finding appropriate methods to make sure that the scarce resources are allocated to activities that would be of great impact to the poor and decrease their levels of deprivation and vulnerability (World Bank, 2001). The definition of poverty is multi-dimensional as the current thinking on what constitutes poverty has evolved and broadened. During the 1980s and 1990s, however, poverty measures expanded to include non-monetary aspects such as primary education, basic health, life expectancy, empowerment, vulnerability, voice and participation (Sen, 1999). To ensure there is no misappropriation of funds allocated for the public resources, a follow-up is usually undertaken. The central government's fund allocation on the budget towards education has reduced since the 1990's (ISSER, 1999). This has exerted a lot of pressure on district assemblies to provide more educational facilities to meet the ever-growing demand of these facilities in the rural areas. The insufficient nature of the common fund has prevented the Assembly to provide enough of these social services to improve upon the living conditions of the people. It is essential that new emphasis on poverty alleviation be founded on a careful and unbiased on the effects of macroeconomic conditions of the area. It is precisely for this reason that the new policy orientation towards poverty reduction can succeed only if it leads to rapid and sustained growth and job creation (World Bank, 2001). It is in line with this argument that the District Assemblies were directed by the government to use 20% of their shares of common fund as poverty reduction fund to expand job creation through credit support for small scale enterprises and farmers in the districts. However, this laudable policy intervention could not achieve its intended results as the funds were poorly managed by most district assemblies. The government had to scrap it in 2007 and used the fund to support the Youth Employment Programme. This view has also been discussed in the data analysis section of the study.

## 2.5 Conceptual Framework

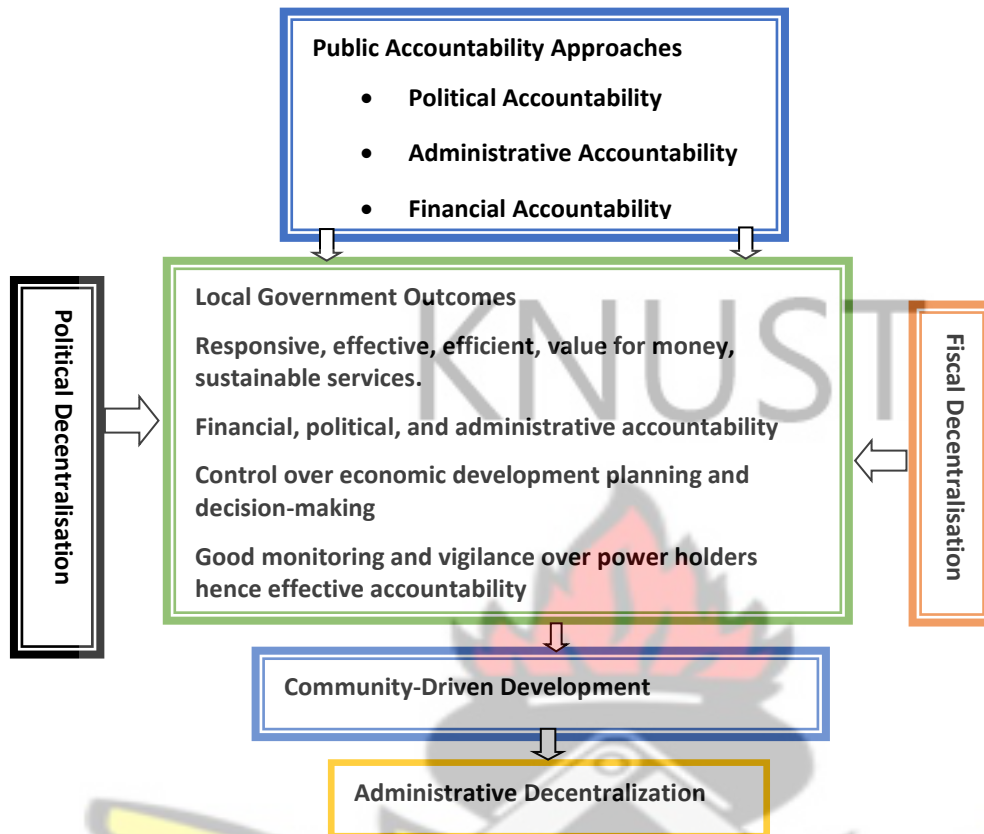
A conceptual framework is described as a narrative presentation that highlights the essential things to be studied and identifies the existing relationship between them (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This depicts the link between decentralization and poverty reduction. Jong et al, (1999) cited in (Steiner, 2005) said decentralization can achieve poverty reduction through the following positive linkages;

Firstly, decentralization leads to participation of locals in decision making process. This may give them access in producing goods and services and the power to impose taxes to raise revenue for local development.

Secondly, decentralization also ensures accountability from the local officers. This is because it enables the people to have voice or power to hold the local people accountable for decisions or actions taken due to the closeness of the people to the local officers. This may lead to access to improved social services/ infrastructure and increased or equitable income be assured. According to Steiner (2005), this can bring about poverty reduction. Although the framework that was adopted for the study was very comprehensive, and in many respects fits into this study, certain weaknesses was identified. Thus, the weaknesses are highlighted. First, the framework neglected the fiscal aspect of decentralization by relegating it to the background.

It was redesigned to include the fiscal aspect of decentralization. Local governments have full discretion only when decision-making power includes authority over fiscal matters (Bird, 1999). Local governments must possess the power over financial resources including tax-raising power and expenditure responsibilities. Thus, the framework over-emphasized political and administrative aspects of decentralization to the neglect of fiscal aspect. The researcher therefore, redesigned the framework to properly suit the study.

**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework**



Source: Author's Conceptual Framework, 2018

Governance and decentralization are interrelated such that decentralization is an important way of enhancing good governance. Decentralization can be political, administrative and fiscal or market- focused. Political decentralization provides the citizens or their elected representatives' the power in public decision making and more influence in the formulation and implementation of policies. Administrative decentralization is mostly the delegation of duties of the management of certain public funds from the central government and its agencies to units of government agencies, subordinate units or levels of government (Agrawal & Ribot, 2007).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The aim of the study is to assess District Assembly Common Fund and poverty reduction in rural Ghana with a specific focus on the Asunafo North Municipal Assembly.

Research methodology is the way in which researcher finds out information and it describes how the research will be conducted or how it was done (Kitchin and Tate, 2000). This chapter looks at the methodology adopted in carrying out the study, namely the type of research, population, sample and sampling technique, data collection and method of data analysis.

#### **3.1 Type of Research**

The case study design was used in the study because this method is mostly used for intensive study of individual units and since multiple sources of evidence is required for the study, case study approach appeared more appropriate to address the objectives set.

. By adopting this method, a single entity or phenomenon is explored, bounded by time and activity (Yin, 2003).

#### **3.2 Study Population**

The study is limited to Asunafo North Municipal Assembly at Goaso in the Brong Ahafo Region. In this study, the population consisted of mostly workers, staff and selected communities in the Asunafo North Municipal Assembly.

#### **3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique**

This study employed stratified and simple random sampling technique. Stratified random sampling is a probability sampling method which involves dividing the population into strata based on a criterion and randomly selecting a sample from each stratum to form the total and final sample for the study (Creswell, 2003). Population is said to be the aggregation or the totality of all members or units from which information could be obtained (McCulloch,

2004). A population could further be defined as a set of units under consideration and can be people, objects or events (Belli, 2008). The population studied included the staff of Asunafo North Municipal Assembly totaling one hundred and twenty (120) that are involved in the administration of the DACF.

**Table 3.1: Asunafo North Municipal Assembly Population Size**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Population Size (N)</b>
Central Administration	13
Finance	11
Youth and Sports	10
District Health	10
Agriculture	10
Physical Planning	10
Social Welfare and Community Development	12
Natural Resources Conservation	11
Works	13
Industry and Trade	10
Disaster Prevention	10
<b>TOTAL (N)</b>	<b>120</b>

*Source: Field Survey, June 2018*

In accordance with Krejcie Morgan (2008), a population of  $N = 120$  has a sample size  $(n) = 92$ . The researcher therefore sampled ninety-two respondents according to the strata. The sampling technique being employed is the stratified random sampling which gives the researcher the opportunity to divide the population into various stratum and apply one method of sampling throughout all the strata (NEA Research Bulletin, 2010).

**Table 3.2: Asunafo North District Assembly Sample Size**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Sample Size (n)</b>
Central Administration	11
Finance	9
Youth and Sports	7
District Health	7
Agriculture	7
Physical Planning	7
Social Welfare and Community Development	11
Natural Resources Conservation	8
Works	11
Industry and Trade	6
Disaster Prevention	8
<b>TOTAL (n)</b>	<b>92</b>

*Source: Field Survey, June 2018*

### **3.4 Data Collection**

#### **3.4.1 Sources of Data**

Both primary and secondary data was used in the study. Primary data was gathered through the administration of questionnaires, observations and interviews to gather information from respondents within the Asunafo North Municipal Assembly.

Secondary data on DACF and poverty reduction in rural areas was also obtained from books, articles, journals, unpublished thesis, and the internet etc.

#### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

Considering the study objectives and components, the primary and secondary data is collected for analysis on the study. In gathering the primary data, face to face structured interview and observation under the guidance questionnaires is adopted in the data collection.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedures**

The questionnaires were designed and redesigned as to check whether they exactly tend to answer the research questions or not. Then, the questionnaires and structured interview questions were given to the colleague for collegian comments. After making some modifications, these data collection tools were given to the supervisors for further rearrangements and comments. The purpose of the project was explained to the officials as the meeting commenced and the questionnaire delivered to the one in charge. An agreement was made on the collection of the questionnaire in a week ultimatum after completion but it's unfortunate it turned out to be two weeks before the researcher got hold of it. A focus group discussion was later held with the leaders some people of the communities.

### **3.7 Method of Data Analysis**

Responses from the field was carefully and systematically processed and analysed using tables and Microsoft Office Excel Package.

### **3.8 Geography of the Study Area**

Goaso is a town in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana which approximately lies between latitude  $6^{\circ}48' 0''$  and  $13''$  North  $2^{\circ}31' 0''$  West. Asunafo North Municipal is one of the twenty-seven (27) districts in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. This Municipal Assembly was established by Legislative Instrument 1418 of 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1882. The Municipal was created when the then Asunafo District was divided into two in 2004. The Legislative Instrument that established the Municipal Assembly is LI 1873 of 2008. The land size of the Municipal is  $1,412.0\text{km}^2$  with  $578.63\text{ km}^2$  massively taking over by forest reserves. Out of 100 percent the Municipal Area forms about 3.5 percent of the regional land area of  $40,095\text{km}^2$ .

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

#### 4.0 Introduction

The chapter discusses the data which were gathered from the field through questionnaires administered, interviews conducted, observations, discussions, telephone conversations and face to face conversations with respondents on the study. Data was analyzed based on the objectives used in deriving the questions that were used in the questionnaires and this was presented in frequencies.

#### 4.1 The Questionnaire Return Rate

The researcher administered 92 questionnaires to the Municipal Assemblies including the Assembly members and selected communities.

The response rates is shown in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1: Questionnaire Return Rate**

Responses	Number issued	Number collected	Returned Rate
M.C. E	1	1	1
M.C. D	1	1	1
M.F. O	1	1	1
M.P. O	1	1	1
M.E. D	1	1	1
Assembly Members	5	5	5
<b>Selected Communities</b>			
Kasapin	22	22	22
Fianko	20	20	20
Bitre	20	20	20
Goaso	20	20	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>

**Source: Field data, June 2018.**

The results from Table 4.1 above shows a higher number of questionnaire return rate. Respondents contributed immensely in the study which provided (100%) of both the

Administrative Heads of Department and the selected communities hence a good response for analysis of the variables under study.

## 4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section shows the background of respondents that participated in the research topic. Key variables considered were gender, age, academic level, and working experience,

### 4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

This section talks about the respondent being a male or a female. The research focused on the gender of the respondents to know the effect of the gender on the study after administering the 92 questionnaires to them.

The distribution of gender is shown in Table 4.2 below.

**Table 4.2: Gender of Respondents**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Male	74	80.4%
Female	18	19.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Source: Field data, June 2018.**

Out of the total respondents of the study, 74 (80.4%) were males whilst 18 (19.6%) were females. This was because the males dominated the study. Despite the large difference between the male and female respondents, this did not in any way influence the outcome of the study.

### 4.2.2 Age of Respondents

Analysing the data obtained from the questionnaires, the respondents were classified into four age groups: between 20-29 years old; between 30-39 years old; between 40-49 years old; between 50-59 years old. The age range does not exceed 60 years because that is the

mandatory age for civil and public servants to retire under the labour laws of Ghana. Below is a table that explains the age grouping of the respondent.

**Table 4.3: Age of Respondents**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
20-29 years	8	8.7%
30-39 years	24	26.1%
40-49 years	58	63.0%
50-59 years	2	2.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Source: Field data, June 2018.**

From Table 4.3 above, 58 (63.0%) of the respondents were above forty (40) years but below fifty (50) years implying the maturity and level of experience with relation to life issues Assembly. 32(34.8%) of the respondents were above twenty (20) but below 40 years and 2(2.2%) were between 50 and 59 years.

#### **4.2.3 Qualifications of Respondents.**

This section focused on the educational background of the respondents. The study focused on master's Degree, First Degree, Diploma and others. Table 4.4 summarises the responses from the respondents.

**Table 4.4: Academic Qualification of Respondents**

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Masters	8	8.7%
Degree	57	62.0%
Diploma	24	27.2%
Others	2	2.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field data, June 2018**

Table 4.4 above shows that 8(8.7%) of the respondents had Masters, 57(62.0%) of the respondents had degree which is the majority, 24(27.2%) had Diploma in their various fields of study and 2 (2.2%) were SHS leavers.

#### 4.2.4 Respondents Length of Service

The study wanted to know the length of service of the respondents in working at the assembly.

Table 4.5 below shows the responses from the respondents.

**Table 4.5 Length of Service with the Assembly**

Length of Service (years)	Frequency	Percent
1-5	49	53.3%
6-10	42	45.7%
11 and above	1	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Source: Field data, June 2018.**

Table 4.5 above shows that 49(53.3%) of the respondents had worked below six years which is averagely acceptable per the years. The remaining 43(46.7%) of respondents had worked more than six years implying that their level of maturity in experience with relation to the length of service.

### 4.3 General Objective: To Assess DACF and Poverty Reduction in Rural Ghana with a Specific Focus on the Goaso Municipal Assembly

#### 4.3.1 The Basis of Rural Poverty

The basis of rural poverty in the Asunafo North District were central to the study. All respondents agreed that socio-economic development in the district is necessary for reducing poverty hence a suggestion for the development of an institutional framework that is appealing to socio-economic development was proposed. In a focus-group discussion, the

respondents agreed that an increment in employment and labor productivity will provide the link between economic growth and poverty reduction in the district. In reducing poverty, they added that it is essential to enhance the capacity of the district assembly to provide employment under decent working conditions. 95% of the respondents were of the view that equitable access to appropriate technologies, markets, extension services and credit facilities in the district will play a key role in this regard.

#### **4.3.2 Project Selection and Approval**

Project selection and approval is very critical in the community's acceptance of a project and programmes and in ensuring effective poverty reduction process (Kyei, 2001). It has been observed throughout the country that some communities have failed to use certain markets, classroom blocks, KVIPs, among others. This practice does not ensure proper utilization of the district assembly common fund to reduce poverty levels in the communities. According to the Municipal Chief Executive, development projects are selected based on the felt needs of the beneficiary communities. However, he claimed that the Assembly through the Unit Committees, Urban or Zonal Councils and the Assembly Members informed the communities of proposed projects before they were executed. He insisted that in most cases the project must fall within overall policies and programmes of the central government's poverty reduction strategies such as Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy programme. However, the chiefs and opinion leaders, men, women and the youth of the respondent in the four communities were not happy with the level of involvement of the people in selection and approval of projects. Focus group discussions were held in separate communities to ascertain the extent to which the Assembly involved the people in selection and implementation of projects. In a focus group discussion with chiefs and opinion leaders at Bitre, the researcher finds that, the market sheds were not being used by the community. It was however, learnt that the main reason why the community rejected the market was where the Assembly had

located the project. The respondents said the market place was far away from the community and that the buyers preferred buying from sellers who sold in front of their houses. They also said, the demarcation of the market to the sellers was not the appropriate way. Out of 20 sheds, only 5 sheds were being occupied by sellers. A pepper seller remarked;

***“We have decided to use the market but others have refused to sell in the market. They sell their wares in front of their houses and in the streets. The chief should force them to come and sell in the market else we will also go back to sell in the streets because the people do not want to come to the market.”***

It was observed that most buyers did not buy from the market but from streets and in front of houses. The market was empty at time the researcher visited there.

At Goaso, the respondents said that though they were not informed, the library project was useful and could help to raise the level of education in the community. However, they expressed worry about the inability of the Assembly to provide adequate furniture and books in the library.

At Fianko the respondents said they liked the classroom project. It was learnt that the project was their priority project and that they believed that the project would help their children to get quality education.

At Kasapin, the respondents comprising 16 persons of the youth group and 10 persons from men group said that they did not like the KVIP because the project was not properly constructed. However, the chiefs and opinion leaders group made up of 20 said they liked the toilet but no arrangement had been made by the Assembly to keep the place clean. A young man lamented, ***“we preferred the bush to this toilet, because in the bush there is fresh air, and it was observed that most of the people did not use the project due the bad nature of it.”***

This, therefore, invalidates the proposition that communities are involved in the selection and implementation of common fund projects.

### 4.3.3 Contract Awarding Process

The Assembly's contract awarding process is based on Act 663, which is strictly followed because the Assembly has a procurement plan. The District Tender Board has the District Chief Executive as its chairman. Other members include the District Co-ordinating Director, Presiding member, Finance Officer and Planning Officer. On the awarding process, the Assembly first advertises for the projects for interested contractors to bid for them. The Assembly will then select the contractor with good track record and has tax payment certificate. The Assembly uses the least cost concept to select the winner for the project. On the project costing, a prototype design of the project is first obtained for appraisal. After this 10 percent cost margin is added to offset inflation and 10 percent cost component for contingency. But the planning officer complained,

***“I do not understand why in some instances the contractors were able to quote exact sum conceived by the District Tender Board and stressed that there was something fishy in the contract award process. This practice results in the delays, shoddy works and high contract sums for common fund projects in the district”.***

The communities also complained about shoddy works of some contractors working on common fund projects as well as the high contract sums of certain projects. Table 4.2 shows synoptic view of some selected projects and their costs, which have raised concerns by some of members, staff and the people in the communities. Also shown below are pictures of those projects. Although the study could not prove any alleged corrupt practices regarding the contract awarding process, high costs and poor execution of common fund projects have undermined the efforts of the Assembly to use the fund judiciously in the development of the rural areas.

## **4.4 Problems Encountered When Assessing District Assembly Common Fund and Poverty Reduction in Rural Ghana**

### **4.4.1 Inadequate Capacity Building and Training**

Inadequate training workshops and capacity building exercises for the staff and various members of the Assemblies has been some of the factor affecting the utilization of the common fund. It is unfortunate that close to about two and half decades of the District Assembly inception; most assemblies have recruited human resources at both levels to utilize the fund as expected but no regular on the job training has been effected. The Co-ordinating Director said that most of the staff posted to the Assembly were reluctant to take up such appointments due to the lack of basic facilities. An observation mas was that, the Assembly was lacking adequate, experienced and efficient human resources to manage the common fund and internally generated fund due to absence of capacity training exercises.

### **4.4.2 Over-Reliance on the Common Fund**

It was observed that the Assembly collects less than half of the national cake but because of its over-reliance on the DACF, any delay in payment delays any ongoing or planned projects. According to the District Finance Officer the Assembly's revenue performance was not encouraging as the annual locally generated revenue hardly meets the recurrent expenditure of the Assembly. The absence of reliable data on commercial and economic activities, obsolete valuation on immovable property, inadequate low level of public education on the Assembly's rate imposed and inadequate supervision and monitoring of collectors and other revenue staff were some of the problems identified as hindering its revenue mobilization efforts. This has put a lot of pressure on the common fund, which makes it difficult for the Assembly to undertake more projects to meet the needs of the rural people.

### **4.4.3 Central Government Interference**

Since the introduction of the District Assembly concept as a core of the decentralization program it has been facing implementation difficulties (NDPC, 1998).

The inadequate provision of legal framework to support fiscal decentralization has been one of the challenges that has made fiscal decentralization slow as MDAs still retain large fiscal decision-making powers at the expense of the MMDAs. The central government interference on the fiscal functions of the Assembly's with deductions from the former weakens the latter's strength in meeting needed resources of the people. According to the Municipal Planning Officer, central government directives regarding the use of the common fund poses difficulties to the Assembly's poverty reduction efforts. Every year the Assembly prepares its budget based on the information received from the common fund secretariat regarding the district's share of the fund but because of the deductions from the central government the budget will be thrown out of gear. This means that most of the projects and programmes earmarked by the Assembly hardly see their implementation. According to the planning officer the DACF is meant solely for development projects and programmes in the district but at times some government directives for deductions from the DACF for certain programmes are inappropriate. Since the Assembly finds it difficult to raise substantial funds from its internal sources due to the high poverty levels of the people such deductions should be made with great circumspection. The practice has deprived the Municipality of a lot of money to undertake more development projects to reduce poverty.

## **4.5 Solutions Which Will Help When Assessing District Assembly Common Fund and Poverty Reduction in Rural Ghana**

### **4.5.1 Community Participation**

Participation is often seen by many institutions as a free labour or help by the people of an area for the implementation of imposed projects (Mulwa, 1994:16 cited in Kyei, 2001).

Participation simply means being involved in activities with other people either in contribution of material or financial resources. The Municipal Assemblies has to involve the various communities in most of its activities especially when the benefit will be of importance to the communities so that they can know the loop holes and any solution found before it gets out of hand.

During an in-depth interview with the planning officer, he stated that:

*Because there was restriction on government funding for the provision of basic social amenities, the Assembly encourages the people to provide labor as local counterpart funds for certain projects. This ensures that people commit themselves to the project for cost-effectiveness. In other projects the people are made to pay some amounts towards the cost of the projects as a means of ensuring their commitment and sharing of the cost of the projects.*

This strategy is not without problems. Communities like Kasapin, Fianko, Goaso, Bitre found it difficult to pay the counterpart funds due to poverty.

Several rural areas lack one form of social amenities or the other because the Assembly is demanding their counterpart funds as a condition to benefit from certain development projects. At Kasapin, the Assemblyman intimated that the people had been asked to pay Forty Pesewas (GHC 0.40) per facility use in the community. But most of the people have refused to pay. The study however, learnt that decision was not communicated to the people at the initial stage of the implementation of the project. Some of the people believed that the amount that they were being asked to pay was designed by some officials of the Assembly to suit their personal interest.

The planning officer claimed that the Assembly involved the people in the selection and implementation of development projects through their Assembly members. However, it was observed that the people were demanding genuine participation in which they want to take

part in the sharing of power and scarce resources, control their own intentions and living conditions.

At Bitre, the respondents in a focus group discussion were very much worried about inability of the Assembly to inform them before constructing the market which according to them was not their priority. An opinion leader in the community even described the market as “*useless*” because the people were not using it.

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**Figure 4.1: An image showing the market at Bitre**



**Source: Field data, June 2018.**

In a focus group discussion with a youngman at Bitre, shouted;

***“We don’t hear anything. All that we normally see is when the project is being constructed. At times they bring their own workforce and this practice deprives some of us of jobs to earn income. All that we want from the Assembly is for them to discuss with us any project or programme it wants to undertake in our communities so that we can share ideas together. We are not satisfied with projects the Assembly has so far undertaken. We need***

*good drinking water, place of convenience and access to credit to undertake income generating activities and sanitation facilities.”*

At Goaso the Assembly has managed to put up a library, which was funded from the common fund. The project was completed in 2010, but it was not being used by the people at the time of the research. It was learnt that the people had been asked to provide furniture and books as their counterpart fund to the project. In a focus group discussion, the groups, men, women, chiefs and elders, complained the participants were not informed about this arrangement and that they were not ready to contribute to the project. This is invalidating the proposition that the people are consulted or involved in the selection and implementation of projects. The participants in the four communities such as the men, youth and women group said they were not aware or informed before certain projects were undertaken. However, unit committees and assembly members in the communities said the Assembly informed them of proposed projects before they were undertaken.

**Table 4.6: Community Participation and the level of awareness of proposed development projects.**

<b>Communities</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Aware</b>	<b>Not Aware</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Kasapin	32	12	20	34.8%
Fianko	25	8	17	27.2%
Goaso	15	10	5	16.3%
Bitre	15	10	5	16.3%
Assembly Members	5	5	0	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data, June, 2018.**

Table 4.6 above shows that 45 persons representing 48.9 percent said they were aware and participated during the implementation whilst 47 persons representing 51.1 percent said they were not aware during the implementation of such projects. This supports the reason why the

people in the communities have rejected certain projects funded by the common fund. This also invalidates the proposition that was made earlier on that there is no consultation between the Assembly and the beneficiaries of proposed development projects. It meant the Assembly informed only the chiefs and some opinion leaders and assembly and unit in the communities on proposed development projects and not the people.

#### **4.5.2 Project Management**

In the case of project management, completed projects were normally handed over to the beneficiary communities to manage. Depending on the type of the project they were either handed over to the communities in which the projects were found or according to the Planning Officer projects that required the payment of user fees like KVIP and water were being managed by the communities themselves. However, it was observed that people in the communities were not paying the user fees charged on some of the facilities. At Kasapin, the Assembly man intimated that each house was supposed to pay 0.40 pesewas, but they had refused to pay. Sometime the toilet needed repairs, but they found it very difficult to get money to carry out the repairs. People were reluctant to pay for the public toilet user fee.

*Respondents in Kasapin however said that, the projects were provided by the government and there was no need for them to pay for the use of the facility.* It was observed that the refusal of the people to pay for the user fee was because of the inability of the Assembly to involve the people in the selection and implementation stages of the facility as well as the poverty situation in the communities.

In conclusion, it may be observed that the institutional inefficiencies had resulted in the inability of the Assembly to reduce poverty levels in the rural communities. It had undermined the efforts of the Assembly to provide more projects because the problems had deprived her of significant revenue.

### 4.5.3 Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Project monitoring and evaluation is a need to ensure that common fund projects are completed at the right time and of good quality. In view of this, the Assembly has set up an internal project monitoring and evaluation team whose mandate is to visit project sites regularly or at least monthly to ascertain how the implementation of the projects is progressing. The team consists of the Municipal Chief Executive, Municipal Coordinating Director, Municipal Planning Officer, and Municipal Finance Officer.

It was however observed from the field that; the team did not make follow ups in most of the projects executed in the rural areas to assess whether the objectives of the projects were attained and whether benefits were sustainable. An officer at the Assembly therefore retorted; *“this is what normally happens which has resulted in most projects not being ever monitored during their implementation stages. The result is shoddy works undertaken by the contractors”*.

The study learnt that it was due to lack of means of transport, which prevented them from visiting project sites regularly to appraise the projects. The planning officer, however, maintained that they mostly relied on the Assembly members and artisans in the rural areas to monitor the projects and report their findings to the Assembly but an observation was made such that most of these assembly members and the artisans in the rural communities did not have the capacity to monitor development projects to ensure quality work. For this reason, most common fund projects fast deteriorate after their hand over to the communities.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter addresses the summary of the research findings, presents conclusion on the research and suggest the appropriate recommendations to help reduce poverty in rural areas specifically in the Asunafo North Municipal Assembly.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

This analysis focused on assessing DACF and poverty reduction in Rural Ghana with a specific focus on the Asunafo North Municipal Assembly, Goaso. The study was limited to only four (4) districts (Kasapin, Fianko, Goaso, and Bitre) within the Municipality. The sample selected were the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE), Municipal Planning Officer (MPO), Municipal Finance Officer (MFO), Municipal Director of Education, and Municipal Director of Health. It also included the Assembly Members. So, at the district level a total of ninety-two (92) respondents were considered. The main tools used for data collection is the questionnaire and the interview guide. A face to face interview and focus -group discussion in their local dialects was adopted when the study found most of the respondents to be illiterates and not fluent in the English language. Responds from the questionnaires and interviews were analyzed through the quantitative and qualitative approach respectively.

From the study, it came out that, the interest in effective fiscal decentralization was relatively low. That notwithstanding, majority of the populace within the municipality agreed that awareness creation on DACF was needed since they relied on Assembly Members' for information on DACF projects and its preparation, which is deemed very ineffective.

Also, the provision of social amenities and the creation of job opportunities was a path when taken could exert an enormous impact on poverty reduction. From the views of the

respondents, the study revealed that district assemblies must adopt strict adherence to procedures for the disbursement and utilization of DACF. Through all thick and thin, respondents brought to book that they were indeed convinced with the efforts put in by Asunafo North Municipal Assembly in tackling rural poverty.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

This study managed to raise concerns about the effective use of the Assembly's share of the fund over the years. The people are demanding accountability and transparency in the use of the fund. The rural areas especially, still lack social services and infrastructural facilities which have affected their living conditions. The projects have been provided in favour of the urban centers. Yet the problem of non-involvement of the communities in decisions, which affect their lives, has led to several common fund projects not being patronized by some communities in the district. The non-transparency in the contract award system and lack of monitoring by the assembly present serious challenges to the fund and poverty reduction. The effect of this has been high contract sum as well as shoddy works of common fund projects. The deductions from the Assembly's share of the fund over the years have significantly reduced the quantum of fund, which was expected to reach the Assembly. This means that the Assembly did not have control over a significant proportion of its common fund allocations. This practice always affected the effort of the Assembly to provide more development projects and Programmes to reduce poverty in the rural areas.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the results from the questionnaires and the discussion made above, the following recommendations were made:

Awareness creation about the DACF through the radio stations, information centers and other mediums such as social gatherings to the people in the rural areas should be done on regular basis. This will aid the people in the area get more knowledge about it and therefore provide

any form of help to support when the projects commence since they know the benefits they will get after its completion.

The Ministries must ensure compliance of the laid down procedures in the allocation of DACF by MMDA's. The discrepancies resulting from the actual and budgeted allocations of DACF can be minimized if strict measures are put in place such that they follow what is stated in the budgets and not otherwise. The uneven distribution of resources and funds misappropriation will be minimized.

Community sensitization programs with relation to DACF taking into consideration its purposes for the local people should be done thoroughly so that they may have a prior knowledge of what the fund is really used for. This step will boost the morale of the rural areas in aiding to the community development projects.

To ensure sustainability and community ownership of DACF projects, District Assemblies should increase community participation at all stages of the project implementation since communities are now not satisfied with their level of participation in DACF projects.

The public procurement Act should be amended to give room for MMDAs to procure goods and services as well as assets and insist on regular audits as a means of monitoring.

Finally, future researchers should conduct similar research in other municipal assemblies within or outside this region, since the findings of this research work are only applicable to the Asunafo North Municipality.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

#### INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE LEARNING (MPA)

#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE MUNICIPAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### QUESTIONNAIRE ON DISTRICT ASSEMBLY COMMON FUND AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN RURAL GHANA: A CASE STUDY OF GOASO MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about your perception on District Assembly Common Fund and Poverty Reduction in Rural Ghana. A Case Study of Goaso Municipal Assembly. The information will be treated with absolute confidentiality and is only meant for academic purpose.

**INSTRUCTION:** Please tick the applicable response.

#### Section A

#### Demographic Data

1. Gender a. Male  b. Female
2. Age a. 20-29  b. 30-39  c. 40-49  d. 50-59  e. 60-69  f. 70 & and Above
3. What is your highest academic level?  
(i) Diploma  (ii). Degree  (iii) Masters  (IV) PhD  (v) Specify if any
4. Please indicate your working experience  
(i) 0-5years  (ii) 6-10 years  (iii) 11-15years  (iv) 15-20  (v) over 20 years
5. How long have you been a worker in your current position?  years.

6. How do you perceive poverty?

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7. How do you assess the living conditions of the people with the introduction of the DACF in the rural areas?

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.....

8. How does the Assembly select development projects funded under DACF?

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.....  
.....

9. Do you involve the local communities in the selection and implementation of projects funded under DACF?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

10. Do you take into accounts the perspective of the poor and the vulnerable in the selection of projects?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

11. What are the Assembly's priority areas as regards to poverty reduction?

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12. How do you select projects to ensure equitable development of the rural communities?

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13. Which areas in the Municipality are development projects found?

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14. In your estimation, how many poverty related projects have the Assembly undertaken since the introduction of the DACF?

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15. How many of these projects are found in the urban centres?

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16. How many are in the rural areas?

.....

17. How does the Assembly collaborate with other decentralized departments in its poverty reduction efforts?

.....

.....

18. Do you provide poverty reduction fund to the people in the rural areas?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

19. If yes, what criteria does the Assembly use to disburse poverty reduction fund?

.....

20. What percentage of DACF goes into poverty reduction fund?

.....

21. When is poverty reduction funds disbursed?

.....

.....

22. Does the assembly encounter problems in the repayment of the funds?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

23. Has the poverty reduction fund impacted on the living conditions of the people in the rural areas?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

24. If yes, can you please explain your answer?

.....

.....

.....

25. What are the other challenges facing the poverty reduction fund in the Municipality?

(i) .....

(ii) .....

(iii) .....

26. Does the Assembly have qualified staff to ensure efficient utilization of the poverty reduction fund?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

27. Please suggest some measures towards improving poverty reduction through DACF?

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28. Does the Assembly often organize in service training for the staff to build their capacity?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

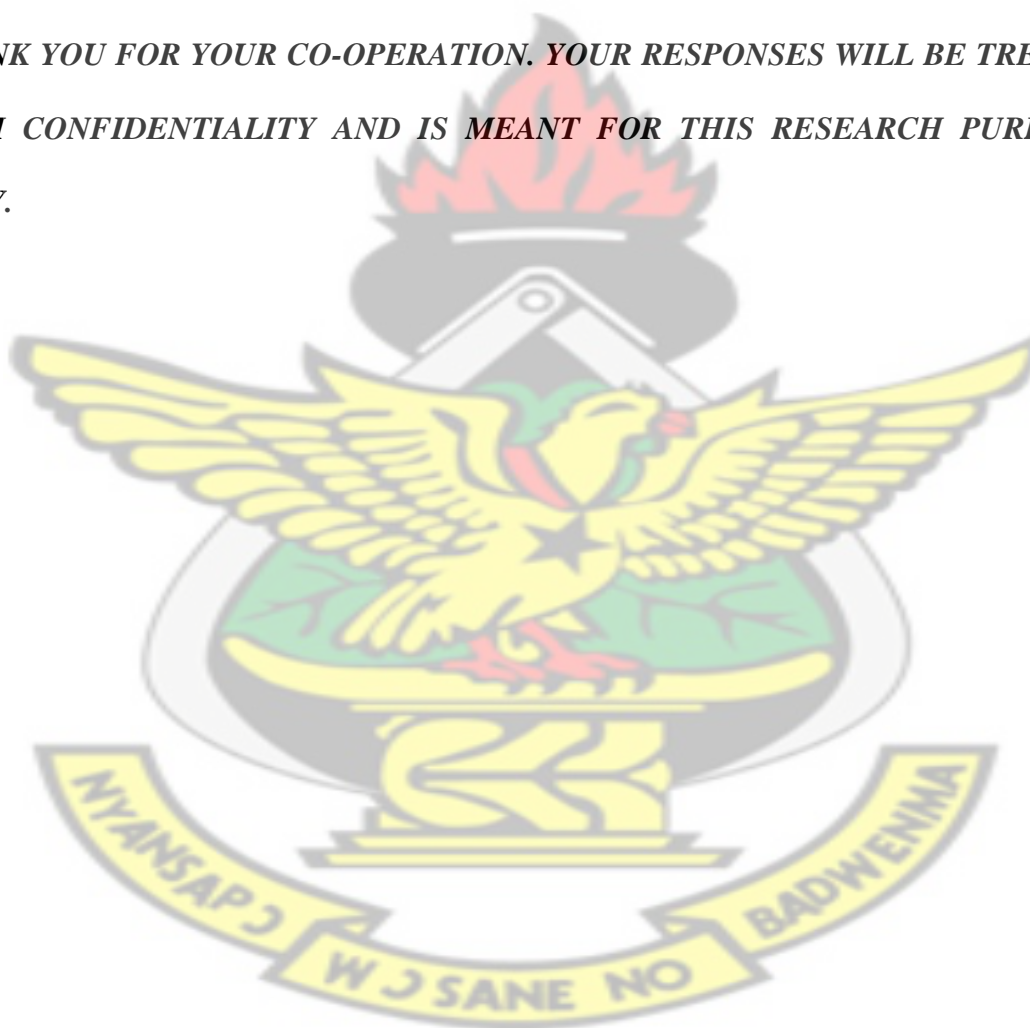
29. How do you select development projects funded by the DACF in the rural areas?

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30. How do the central government directives affect the utilization of the DACF?

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***THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION. YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE TREATED WITH CONFIDENTIALITY AND IS MEANT FOR THIS RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY.***



**APPENDIX B**

**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE LEARNING (MPA)**

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON DISTRICT ASSEMBLY COMMON FUND AND POVERTY  
REDUCTION IN RURAL GHANA: A CASE STUDY OF GOASO MUNICIPAL  
ASSEMBLY**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about your perception on District Assembly Common Fund and Poverty Reduction in Rural Ghana. A Case Study of Goaso Municipal Assembly. The information will be treated with absolute confidentiality and is only meant for academic purpose.

**INSTRUCTION:** Please tick the applicable response.

**Section A**

**Demographic Data**

1. Gender a. Male  b. Female
2. Age a. 20-29  b. 30-39  c. 40-49  d. 50-59  e. 60-69  f. 70 & and Above
3. What is your highest academic level?  
(i) Diploma  (ii). Degree  (iii) Masters  (iv) PhD  (v) Specify if any
4. Indicate your working experience  
(i) 0-5years  (ii) 6-10 years  (iii) 11-15years  (iv) 15-20  (v) over 20 years
5. How long have you been a worker in your current station?  years.
6. How do you perceive poverty?  
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.....

7. How were projects executed in Rural Ghana before the introduction of the DACF?

.....  
.....  
8. What types of projects were implemented in the Municipality before the introduction of DACF?

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9. How does the Assembly select projects funded under the Common Fund?

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10. What is the nature of projects being undertaken by the DACF?

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11. How are these projects distributed in the district?

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12. Is the nature of distribution in favour of the urban or rural areas?

.....  
.....

13. Are there poverty reduction programs in the Municipality and do you consider the perspectives of the poor and the vulnerable? (i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

14. If Yes, please how is it done?

.....  
.....

15. What is the nature of projects are sited in the rural areas?

.....  
.....

16. What percentage of the DACF goes to rural areas by way of development projects?

.....  
.....

17. What percentage of the DACF goes into urban areas in terms of development projects?

.....  
.....

18. What factors determine the allocation of development projects in the Municipality?

.....  
.....

19. Does your outfit consult the departments to factor the needs of the people in planning?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

20. What are the criteria for selecting people who benefit from poverty programme in the rural areas?

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.....

21. In your estimation, do you think the Assembly is doing better in planning to reduce poverty?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

22. To what extent is poverty reduction programmes sustainable?

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23. What impacts has the DACF got on the internally generated fund of the Assembly?

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24. How does the central government directive affect planning activities of the Assembly?

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25. What challenges do you face in planning of poverty reduction programmes for rural areas?

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26. What are some of the solutions to the challenges you face in planning of poverty reduction programmes for rural areas in the districts?

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***THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION. YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE TREATED WITH CONFIDENTIALITY AND IS MEANT FOR THIS RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY.***

## APPENDIX C

### KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

#### INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE LEARNING (MPA)

#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE MUNICIPAL FINANCE OFFICER

#### QUESTIONNAIRE ON DISTRICT ASSEMBLY COMMON FUND AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN RURAL GHANA: A CASE STUDY OF GOASO MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about your perception on District Assembly Common Fund and Poverty Reduction in Rural Ghana. A Case Study of Goaso Municipal Assembly. The information will be treated with absolute confidentiality and is only meant for academic purpose.

**INSTRUCTION:** Please tick the applicable response.

#### Section A

#### Demographic Data

1. Gender a. Male  b. Female
2. Age a. 20-29  b. 30-39  c. 40-49  d. 50-59  e. 60-69  f. 70 & and Above
3. What is your highest academic level?  
(i) Diploma  (ii). Degree  (iii) Masters  (iv) PhD  (v) Specify if any
4. Indicate your working experience  
(i) 0-5years  (ii) 6-10 years  (iii) 11-15years  (iv) 15-20  (v) over 20 years
5. How long have you been a worker in your current station?  years.

6. What were the sources of funds for development before the introduction of the D.A.C.F.?

- (i) ..... (ii) .....  
(iii) ..... (iv) .....  
(v) ..... (vi) .....

7. Does the Assembly still rely on these sources?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

8. What problem is associated with these sources of funds?

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9. What was the contribution of these sources to the development of the Municipality?

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10. What was the percentage of this fund into education, health, sanitation, poverty reduction from 2013 to 2017?

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11. Did the central government control the utilization of the assembly's revenue during this period?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

12. What has been the Municipal share of the common fund from 2013 to 2017?

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13. What is your view on the Municipal share of DACF over the years?

.....

14. What has been the financial position of the assembly with the introduction of the DACF?

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.....

15. Does the Assembly receive the full Common Fund allocations for the Municipality?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

16. What percentage is deducted at source?

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17. How has the pattern of release of the DACF affected the Assembly's Programmes?

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18. What is the pattern of expenditure since the introduction of the D.A.C.F.?

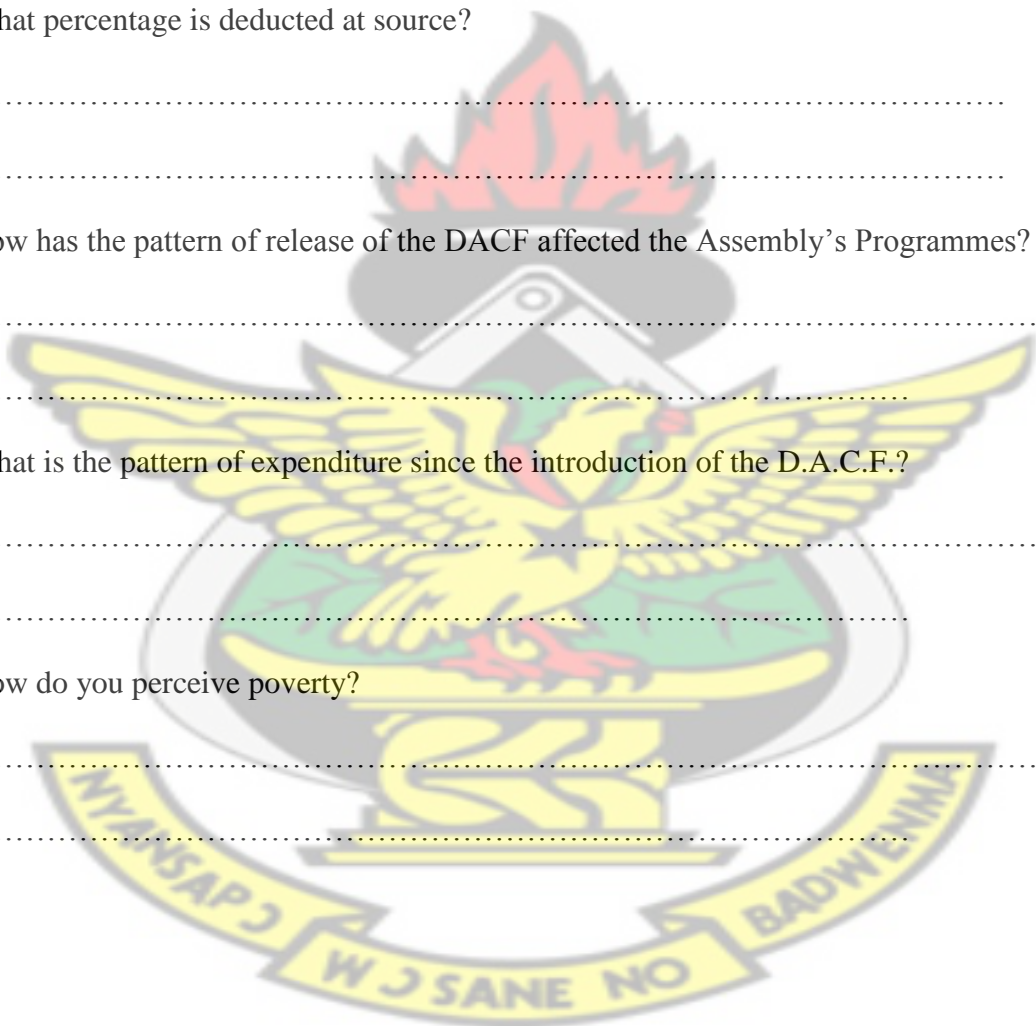
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19. How do you perceive poverty?

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19 (A) What are some of the strategies that the Assembly have put in place towards poverty reduction in the Municipality?

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19 (B) what are some of the prospects or challenges to those poverty reduction strategies?

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.....

19 (C) What suggestion(s) do you have on some of the challenges on poverty reduction in the district?

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20. What measures do you suggest for improving poverty levels of the rural folks?

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21. Do you prepare composite budget?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION. YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE TREATED WITH CONFIDENTIALITY AND IS MEANT FOR THIS RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY.***

## APPENDIX D

### KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

#### INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE LEARNING (MPA)

#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SELECTED COMMUNITIES

#### QUESTIONNAIRE ON DISTRICT ASSEMBLY COMMON FUND AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN RURAL GHANA: A CASE STUDY OF GOASO MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about your perception on District Assembly Common Fund and Poverty Reduction in Rural Ghana. A Case Study of Goaso Municipal Assembly. The information will be treated with absolute confidentiality and is only meant for academic purpose. Please do not write your name.

**INSTRUCTION:** Please tick the applicable response.

#### Section A

#### Demographic Data

1. Gender a. Male  b. Female
2. Age a. 20-29  b. 30-39  c. 40-49  d. 50-59  e. 60-69  f. 70 & and Above
3. What is your highest academic level?  
(i) Diploma  (ii). Degree  (iii) Masters  (iv) PhD  (v) Specify if any
4. Indicate your working experience  
(i) 0-5years  (ii) 6-10 years  (iii) 11-15years  (iv) 15-20  (v) over 20 years
5. How long have you been a worker in your current station?  years.
7. Do you have any idea of the D.A.C.F?  
(i) Yes  (ii) No
9. How does the Assembly get funds to undertake development in your area?

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10. What projects have been implemented in your community by the Assembly?

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11. What do you think these projects are meant for?

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12. Does the Assembly involve you in the selection and implementation poverty reduction projects?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

13. In your view does the Assembly ensure equitable distribution of development?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

14. How do you perceive poverty?

.....  
.....

15. Are you aware of the Assembly's poverty reduction strategies?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

16. What has been the impact of these projects on your living conditions?

.....  
.....

17. Do you accept the Assembly's poverty reduction strategies?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

18. Are the poverty reduction measures adequate to improve your living conditions?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

19. In your view what should have been done to ensure effective poverty reduction?

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20. What is the major occupation of the people in your community?

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21. In your estimation what is your annual income?

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22. What form of assistance have you obtained from the Assembly to enhance income generation activities?

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23. Does the assistance come in time?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

24. How do you utilize such money?

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25. How have these projects been able to reduce your level of poverty?

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26. What suggestions do you have concerning poverty reduction strategies in your community?

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***THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION. YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE TREATED WITH CONFIDENTIALITY AND IS MEANT FOR THIS RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY.***

