

**ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND
TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES TOWARDS EFFECTIVE
PARTICIPATION IN DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENT**
A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES IN GHANA

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by

PAUL KWAKU LARBI ANDERSON

Supervised by

Prof. Dr. Christoph Strünck

Prof. Dr. Johannes Schädler

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DECLARATION

I, Paul Kwaku Larbi Anderson, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

.....

DATE: MARCH 4, 2021

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“To God be the glory, great things He has done.”

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father, **KINGSLEY ANDERSON**.

ABSTRACT

In recent years, several sub-Saharan African countries have implemented a robust decentralization policy towards governance reformation to enhance civic participation in the decision-making process. Against the background, this study examines civil society organizations and traditional authorities' role toward effective participation in Ghana's decentralization and local government policy. The assumption is that traditional authorities and civil society organizations' legitimacy enable them to play a crucial role in the governance and development discourse. Accordingly, a participatory approach was adopted within a qualitative methodological framework, which informed the case study as the research design type. Data was obtained through a semi-structured interview, non-participant observation, focused group discussions, documents, and material culture analysis. Respondents were purposefully selected from Metropolitan Municipal District Assemblies (MMDAs), Community-based Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and Traditional Authorities from three selected municipalities in Ghana: Nsawam/Adoagyiri, Suhum, and Cape Coast. This study reveals that in addition to the conventional role of civil society organizations and traditional authorities in service areas such as health, education, advocacy, and general community development, they also perform an exceptional function in local governance as an impartial force in providing checks and balances and support on local government functionaries. Thus, their involvement in local government administration in the decision-making and implementation process is vital in enhancing accelerated national development.

In den letzten Jahren haben mehrere afrikanische Länder südlich der Sahara eine robuste Dezentralisierungspolitik zur Reform der Regierungsführung umgesetzt, um die Bürgerbeteiligung am Entscheidungsprozess zu verbessern. Vor diesem Hintergrund untersucht die vorliegende Studie die Rolle zivilgesellschaftlicher Organisationen und traditioneller Autoritäten im Hinblick auf eine wirksame Beteiligung an der ghanaischen Dezentralisierungs- und Lokalverwaltungspolitik. Es wird davon ausgegangen, dass traditionelle Autoritäten und zivilgesellschaftliche Organisationen aufgrund ihrer Legitimität eine entscheidende Rolle im Governance- und Entwicklungsdiskurs spielen können. Dementsprechend wurde ein partizipatorischer Ansatz innerhalb eines qualitativen methodischen Rahmens gewählt, der die Fallstudie als Forschungsdesign prägte. Die Daten wurden durch halbstrukturierte Interviews, nichtteilnehmende Beobachtung, Gruppendiskussionen, Dokumente und die Analyse der materiellen Kultur gewonnen. Die Befragten wurden gezielt aus den Metropolitan Municipal District Assemblies (MMDAs), gemeindebasierten Organisationen der Zivilgesellschaft (CSOs) und traditionellen Autoritäten aus drei ausgewählten Gemeinden in Ghana ausgewählt: Nsawam/Adoagyiri, Suhum und Cape Coast. Die Studie zeigt, dass zivilgesellschaftliche Organisationen und traditionelle Autoritäten nicht nur eine konventionelle Rolle in Bereichen wie Gesundheit, Bildung, Interessenvertretung und allgemeiner kommunaler Entwicklung spielen, sondern auch eine außergewöhnliche Funktion in der lokalen Verwaltung als unparteiische Kraft haben, die die Funktionäre der lokalen Regierung kontrolliert und unterstützt. Daher ist ihre Beteiligung an den Entscheidungs- und Umsetzungsprozessen in der Kommunalverwaltung von entscheidender Bedeutung für die Förderung einer beschleunigten nationalen Entwicklung.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBO	Community Based Organizations
CCMA	Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly
CFI	Civic Forum Initiative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DA	District Assembly
DACF	District Assembly Common Fund
DCE	District chief executive
DDE	District development Facility
DFID	Department for International Development
DMTDP	District Medium Term Development Plan
DPCU	District Planning Committee Unit
ERP	Economic Recovery Program
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
FOAT	Functional Organizational Assessment Tool
GNDAP	Ghana National Decentralization Action Plan
GNDPC	Ghana National Development Planning Commission
GOG	Government of Ghana
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSGD	Ghana Shared Growth Development Agenda
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
IDEG	Institute for Democratic Governance
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MCE	Municipal Chief Executive
MIDA	Millennium Development Authority
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MMDA	Metropolitan Municipal District assemble
MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
NAMA	Nsawam Adoagyiri Municipal Assembly
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

NPP	New Patriotic Party
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAMSCAD	Program of Actions to Mitigate Social Cost of Adjustment
PNDC	Provisional National Defense Council
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMA	Suhum Municipal Assembly
TA	Traditional Authority
UC	Unit Committee
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UTAC	Urban Town and Area Councils
UTAZC	Urban Town Area Zonal Council
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development

CHAPTER ONE

1. AN OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

1.1 Background to the Study

The late twentieth century brought a significant change in global political discourse in what Samuel Huntington (1993) described as the third wave of democratization. The period was characterized by the universal transmission of a new democratic culture that significantly influenced authoritarian governments to adhere to democratic reforms. Cheeseman (2015) points out that the socio-political milieu that characterized the period resulted in the conduct of multi-party elections in several developing countries. The phenomenon in Cheeseman's view created a progressive outlook of a new political and administrative language. According to Badu and Stephen (2010), among the institutional frameworks adopted by several developing countries during that period in the course of governance reformation was a concerted effort to attain a wide-ranging decentralization and robust local government system.

The World Bank (2001) suggests that several developing economies primarily adopted the decentralization policy to enhance widespread participation in the decision-making and implementation process. In addition to that, Martinez-Vazquez (2011) asserts that most developing countries resorted to decentralization reforms to help bridge development gaps by granting more powers, functions, and resources to address local needs. And in the opinion of Ahwoi (2010), the adoption of decentralization and local government policy in developing countries was to augment participatory governance and development at the local level.

Rondinelli (1983) opines that although decentralization is not considered a substitute to centralization, the former aims to help lessen the latter's burden and enhance participation in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, a development assessment report by UNDP (2009) suggests that decentralization and local governance are considered the most effective way to give considerable autonomy to sub-governmental units and institutions at the local level. The intention is to support local initiatives to propel policies meant to address community needs and development gaps.

The onset of the decentralization and local government policy in Africa can be traced to colonial administration and has remained the mainstay of several developing economies' administrative and political structures. According to Ribot (2009), since the 1980s, several Sub-Saharan African countries including Ghana, Senegal, Gabon, Mozambique, and Nigeria have implemented vigorous decentralization policy reforms. Principal among the reforms included arrangements through which considerable functions, power, and authority were transferred to sub-governmental bodies. Ribot explains that the initiative was carried out to enhance widespread participation in the decision-making process. Ultimately, Ahwoi 2010; Badu and Stephen 2010 and Antwi-Boasiako 2014 claim that decentralization and local government policy has mainly taken the form of delegation, devolution, and de-concentration and almost without any exception in Africa. The UNDP (1999) primarily describes decentralization as the practice to ensure good governance and popular participation in the decision-making and implementation process to promote accelerated national development.

According to Ayee (1999), even though decentralization and local government reforms in Ghana were initiated about four decades ago, the inception of an organized local government system can be traced to the "Gold Coast" period, during colonization. That

period saw the introduction of “indirect rule ”by the British colonial administration, which featured native authority arrangements. Richard Crook (2005) points out that the native authority system centered around traditional rulers who were mainly local chiefs. According to Rathbone (2000), during this period, local government developed along two parallel lines. On the one hand, the first was the local government system regulated by a series of municipal council ordinances in the principal municipalities of Cape Coast, Accra, Sekondi-Takoradi, and Kumasi. On the other hand, the second was regulated by native jurisdiction ordinance in the rest of the country by state councils and the native authority system. Nevertheless, Crawford (2009) asserts that the period shortly after the country attained political independence from 1957 to early 1980 saw local governance’s repression as the central government assumes extensive domination.

According to Ahwoi (2010), Ghana embarked on the process of decentralization and local government reforms in 1988 with the passage of Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) Law 207, which re-established the model of Municipal, Metropolitan and District Assemblies (MMDAs). The policy was given credence in 1992 when the country re-legitimized itself and ushered in the fourth republican constitution. The conception of political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization to promote widespread participation in the decision-making process was expressly initiated by this deed. Accordingly, the entire chapter twenty of the 1992 Ghanaian constitution (Article 240-256) is devoted to decentralization and local government policy. It provides guidelines on institutional arrangements, allocation of resources, roles, and responsibilities of key actors and stakeholders in the program structure to demonstrate the country’s commitment to enforcing the decentralization and local government policy. Ahwoi (2010) indicates that the decentralization concept, as implemented in Ghana, has different connotations at various governance levels. He explains that, at the regional level, decentralization

primarily takes the form of de-concentration, where the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) functions as an administrative unit by mediating, coordinating, and harmonizing the functioning of Municipal Metropolitan and District Assemblies (MMDAs). Likewise, it epitomizes devolution at the district level, where the real sense of decentralization is manifested. In this instance, the district assembly is set up as a corporate body and a legal entity to discharge its functions as delegated to it by the central government backed by the constitution. Therefore, the district assemblies have the constitutional mandate to initiate, plan, coordinate and implement policies on behalf of the people within their jurisdiction. Delegation is used to describe the decentralization powers at the sub-district level. For instance, sub-metro, urban/town/area councils (UTAC) and unit committees on the decentralization structure make decisions and take responsibility for their actions based on authority delegated to them by the MMDAs (ILGS & FES, 2010, 2016).

Ahwoi (2010) points out that the primary purpose of the decentralization policy in Ghana is to transfer power and functions from the central government to sub-government units and departments to promote participation in the decision-making process and enhance service delivery for national development. Nevertheless, considering the coexistence of traditional authorities with democratic government structures in Ghana in the mode that Holzinger et al. (2016) describes as dual legal pluralism this study seeks to distinguish between two broad domains; The first is to explore the institutional setup and roles of legal authorities in correlation to Ghana's decentralized local government structures. The second is to examine the roles and involvement of non-state actors such as civil society organizations and traditional authorities in the decision-making and implementation process.

Rathbone (2000) claims that traditional authority in Ghanaian societies is predominantly expressed in the chieftaincy institution. According to Rathbone, as in several African countries, the Ghanaian constitution guarantees the chieftaincy institution. Specifically, Article 270 (1) of the *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana* (1992) states that; “*the Chieftaincy institution, together with its local councils as established by customary law and usage, is guaranteed.*” Additionally, the constitution forbids the legislature from; “*making any law that confers on a person or an institution the right to permit or withdraw recognition to or from a legitimate chief for any purpose whatsoever or in any way that undermines the honor and dignity of the chieftaincy institution.*”

Perhaps this constitutional provision validates the dualization of Ghana’s governance structure, which empowers traditional authorities to occupy a vital position in the country’s administration. Essentially, chiefs occupy two prominent positions in Ghana’s government administration; First is the Chieftaincy institution’s constitution mandate through the national and the regional house of chiefs. Second is the consultative position assigned traditional authority in the appointment of representatives to the local assemblies stipulated in the local government act (Act 462). Notwithstanding the constitutional provisions, literature (Crook, 2005; Odotei, 2006; Ray, 1996) suggests that the traditional authority position is not clearly defined with a definite role in Ghana’s governance system. Thus, Antwi-Boasiako (2013) laments that the traditional chief’s functioning in Ghana’s contemporary governance has been restricted to consultancy on customs and traditions. Although, Honyenuga & Wutoh (2019) and Ayee (2007) suggest that traditional authorities play essential roles in the governance process, such as maintaining law and order in the community, serving as custodians of natural resources, and leading the drive in the general development discourse at the local level.

In the past few decades, several developing economies have witnessed a surge in Civil Society Organizations' activities at various governance levels. According to Cooper (2018), these organizations play a crucial role in contemporary governance as impartial players influencing decision-making and policy implementation. Additionally, the UNDP (2012) claims that civil society organizations play influential roles in promoting activities that improve communities' opportunities to be architects of the environment by positively impacting people's living conditions. Moreover, Abdulai & Quantson (2008) point out that civil society organizations play an essential role in ensuring development in all sectors of a country's economy. The above suggestion indicates that the complementary role of CSOs is vital in supporting the government's effort in addressing community needs and development gaps, especially in areas where resources and means of public expansion outreach are challenging. However, empirical evidence (Badu and Stephen 2010; Antwi-Boasiako, 2010; Kastrati, 2016) reveals uncertainties in the linkage between local government structures and civil society organizations, making it challenging for effective harmonization of their activities.

The assumption is that civil society organizations and traditional authorities as non-state actors play a vital role in promoting democratic participation and ensuring development at the local level. Accordingly, this study seeks to examine Ghana's decentralization policy, the role, relationship, and involvement of Metropolitan Municipal and District Assembly structures, Civil Society Organizations, and Traditional Authorities in local governance towards effective participation in the decision-making process.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The World Bank (2001) asserts that decentralization plays a significant role in enhancing participation in political, economic, and social endeavors in developing countries. The assertion is corroborated by scholars such as Agboyi et al., 2015; Ahenkan et al., 2013; Nadeem, 2016, claiming that decentralization and local government reforms in several African countries have helped to increase democratic participation in the decision making and implementation process. Ahmad and Abu Talib (2011) point out that extensive participation involving multi-actors and stakeholders representing the people in local governance and development impacts the implementation process and its sustainability. Nevertheless, Ahwoi (2010) laments that the introduction of decentralization reforms in Ghana, since the early 1980s, essential actors and stakeholder involvement in the local governance process has not been that effective. According to Ahwoi, this situation does not help the decentralization policy to achieve the desired results, especially in matters relating to identifying and addressing basic community needs and development gaps. Indeed, empirical studies (Antwi-Boasiako 2013; Ayee, 2007; Ahwoi 2000) suggest that reasons for the ineffective involvement of key actors and stakeholders such as traditional authorities and civil society organizations do not dwell on the policy itself but are closely linked to the governance structure and democratic practices at the local level. A closer examination of the governance structure of the decentralization and local government policy in Ghana exposes limited opportunities given to stakeholders and the general public to participate fully in the decision-making and implementation process. The phenomena are in direct contrast to the decentralization and local government policy's objective, which seeks to promote widespread participation at the local level. Wilson (2000) and Mohammed (2013) posit that policymaking and implementation at the local level essentially reflect the views of limited individuals and stakeholders at the expense

of the generality of the populace due to ineffective participation in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, it is assumed that decentralization and local government policy's effectiveness rely significantly on popular participation in the decision-making and implementation process

There abound in literature (Cheema, 1983; Isufaj, 2014; Kessy, 2013; Ahwoi, 2010; Antwi-Boasiako, 2010) analysis of the distinctive features of decentralization that seek to promote widespread participation in the decision-making and implementation process. There is, however, inadequate reflection on how the decentralization policy can promote civic participation through public interest groups, civil society organizations, and local actors in the decision-making and implementation process. A closer look at Ghana's decentralization and local government policy implementation reveals several ineffective established avenues for the involvement and collaboration of stakeholders and local actors in the decision-making process. Even though, aside from their traditional role, Abdulai & Quantson (2008) and Ayee (2007) point out that CSOs on the one hand and traditional authorities on the other perform a conventional function, such as the promotion of social, economic, and political viable ventures and fostering interventions leading to community empowerment.

Thus, considering their status, role, and mandates in the community, this study assumes that effective collaboration with Traditional Authorities and Civil Society Organizations in local governance is essential in promoting widespread participation in the decision-making and implementation process. Additionally, this study hypothesizes a paradigm shift in the governance structure and practice to effectively institutionalize CSOs and traditional authorities' active involvement in the decision-making and implementation process.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study's main objective is to promote a practical understanding of the governance structure and functions of multi-actors and stakeholders in the decentralization and local government policy in order to inspire civic participation in the decision-making and implementation process. Accordingly, the study examines civil society organizations and traditional authorities' involvement in Ghana's decentralization and local government policy in addressing development gaps at the local level. It also seeks to review the extent of participation in the local government's decision-making process as an indispensable foundation for community empowerment. Specific objectives of the study are;

- i. To provide insight into the current governance structure and practice in Ghana's decentralization policy and examine the extent to which it involves multi-actors and stakeholders in the decision-making and implementation process.
- ii. To examine the roles of the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies, Civil Society Organizations, and Traditional Authorities in advancing Ghana's decentralization and local government for national development.
- iii. To identify essential community needs and development gaps and examine the responsiveness of Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies, Civil society organizations, and Traditional Authorities in addressing those challenges.

1.4 Research Question

The study seeks to answer the following overall question; How does the governance structure and practice in Ghana's decentralization and local government policy ensure civic participation in decision-making and implementation?

The overall question leads to the following specific research questions:

- i. What roles do the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Traditional Authorities play in advancing Ghana's decentralization and local governance policy for national development?
- ii. To what extent do the decentralization and local government policy in Ghana ensures the involvement of multi-actors, stakeholders, and the people in decision-making and implementation?
- iii. How responsive are the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and Traditional Authorities in identifying and addressing essential community needs and development gaps at the local level?

1.5 Theoretical framework

For an insightful review of roles of civil society organizations and Traditional Authorities in advancing decentralization and local governance for national development, it is imperative to be guided by a clear understanding of precise theoretical underpinnings. Hence, after a careful examination of the research problem, objectives, and consideration of variables and concepts in related literature, the Governance Theory approach (Vasudha Chhotray & Stoker, 2009a, 2009b; Fukuyama, 2014; Peters, 2012; Rhodes, 2017) is adopted to guide analysis of the study.

According to Rhodes (2017), given the apparent conceptual differences, there are multiple approaches to the broad-spectrum concept of governance. Correspondingly, varied theoretical approaches to governance have been developed, considering there is no consensus on a definite theory. Aptly, the governance theory builds on multifaceted theoretical approaches in diverse perspectives, including stakeholder theory (Mansell, 2015), the institutional theory (Suddaby, 2010; Tina Dacin et al., 2002), and the actor-network theories (Mayntz, 2004).

The interdisciplinary nature of the Governance Theory approach has provided a guiding principle in public administration, notably in development studies, political science, economics, international relations, and most frequently in other fields in the social sciences. The Governance Theory approach has also been used variously in analyzing and discussing private and public sector institutions, describing formal and informal organizational structures and functions and defining the scope of international and local networks (Chhotray & Stoker, 2008; Fukuyama, 2014). Accordingly, the study adopted a governance Theory approach as a guide for a comprehensive review of the involvement of multi-actors and stakeholders in the decentralization and local government policy. It

also guides discussions on the political and administrative environment within which various actors and stakeholders are coordinated in the decision-making process.

The Governance Theory approach is correspondingly embraced as a guide to literature in the analysis of power and authority in relation to the provision of the legal framework within which multi-actors and stakeholders perform their functions in the decentralization and local government process. Principally, the Governance Theory approach serves as a yardstick to the study in order to review the role and relationship between formal and informal state structures. Essentially, it provides a better understanding of the dynamics of public participation and interactions among various actors in a political system. It helps explain the patterns of formal and informal relationships and government trajectories in the development process (Vasudha Chhotray & Stoker, 2009b; Rhodes, 2017).

According to Fukuyama (2014), governance as a concept is a nonspecific term that does not lend itself to a standard definition. However, a common description across literature, despite the varied explanation, portrays governance as a political field and administrative activity involving the answerability of the state in the management of the affairs of the citizenry. Jan Kooiman & Jentoft (2009) observed that governance is creating the conditions for orderly rule and collective action. Resonating with Kooiman & Jentoft, Ndreu (2016) points out that the ultimate goal of government is to create the necessary conditions for organized control and collective action. Ndreu explains that governance is concerned with the practice of collective decision-making for the public good. Assenting with the notion of governance put forward by Ndreu, Duit & Galaz (2008) emphasize that the concept of governance entails the interaction among structures and procedures, which determines how functions and responsibilities are exercised. They explain that the practice of governance involves how formal and informal institutions, as well as actors

and stakeholders, cooperate in the decision-making process to achieve the desired end. Moreover, Heinelt & Hlepas (2006) suggest that the idea of governance refers to procedures put in place to ensure the effective exercise of political, social, and economic power in the management of an institution or a country as a whole.

A United Nations strategy notes on governance for human development cited in a UNDP (2004) user guide on governance indicators defines governance as;

“a system of values, policies, and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political, and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society, and private sector. It is how a society organizes itself to make and implement decisions achieving mutual understanding, agreement, and action. It comprises the mechanisms and processes for citizens and groups to articulate their interests, mediate their differences, and exercise their legal rights and obligations.”

Relatedly, the Commission on Global Governance cited in Keping (2017) describes the concept of governance comprehensively as:

“The sum of the several ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated, and cooperative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest.”

In this case, it can be deduced from the above definitions that the concept of governance is applied concerning power, authority, functions, and interconnections. It is a continuous process that considers diverse interests and addresses them through cooperative action and fundamentally through procedural and substantive approach in scope and coverage.

The emphasis founds the adoption of the governance theory approach by the study on participation, procedural arrangements, power relations, roles, and responsibilities of multiple interdependent actors and stakeholders in the decision-making process. These actors include the Metropolitan Municipal District Assembly (MMDA) structures, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and Traditional Authorities.

Although various Governance Theories have been developed, making them more incoherent and exceptionally wide-open, the diversity allows for broader rationalization, unlike other social theories that focus on a single justification to explore a phenomenon. According to Vasudha Chhotray & Stoker (2009), the Governance Theory approach has its roots in the social contract concept that provides contextual bases on the development of public administration and the correlation between state and non-state actors.

Frederick (1995) and Thrasher (2013) traced the notion of the social contract to the works of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), an English philosopher, and exemplified by John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean -Jacques Rousseau (1712-1978) to scale down the onset of the concept of government. These political thinkers are often credited with the notion of the foundation of the state and governance with different assumptions on nature and form of government. Accordingly, the social contract idea essentially portrays conditions before establishing government (Frederick, 1995; Thrasher, 2013).

According to Thrasher (2013), the formation of the state resulted from an agreement, known as a social contract between the people and rulers. Therefore, the idea behind the social contract aimed at providing the reason why members of the society approve and act under fundamental social order, laws, institutions, and principles. Thrasher (2013) explains that this notion is necessary to overcome the possible conflict that may arise as society grows and the people become interdependent.

Principally, the Governance Theory approach, according to Rhodes (2017), does not only recognize the power of the state but places it at the helm of affairs in the management of public affairs. It emphasizes the role of the state in coordinating and harmonizing the activities of multi-actors and stakeholders as well as informal structures and institutions such as governmental departments and agencies, donors and charity organizations, local government units, businesses, and the private sector. Nevertheless, Isufaj (2014) and Kooiman, (2013) suggest that private sector and informal institutions' involvement in the governance process is voluntary and based on their capacity and interest.

The adoption of the governance theory as a guide to this study is positioned on the five assumptions put forward by Stoker (1998). These are;

- i. Governance refers to a set of institution and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government
- ii. Governance recognizes the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues
- iii. Governance identifies the power dependency involved in the relationship between institutions involved in a collective action
- iv. Governance is about an autonomous, self-governing network of actors
- v. Governance identifies the ability of multi-actors to get things done, which does not rest on the power of government to command or use its authority arbitrarily

On the first proposition, Stoker assumes a clear distinction between government and governance. This proposition is supported by Lievens (2015), with the claim that, there are distinctive features that distinguish the terms "Government" from "Governance" even though they are sometimes used interchangeably. He clarifies that the two terms are not the same as each has a different connotation in the social sciences. According to Lievens,

whereas government symbolizes the entity exerting sovereign power and authority over a defined geographical area, governance is the process of exercising authority to coordinate and control cooperative action. This means that the government is used to symbolize the main actors in a state in a linear representation and mostly applies the top-down approach in the decision-making process. Conversely, governance signifies the process that combines both state and non-state actors in a network model and mostly resorts to a blend of the top-down and bottom-up approach in the decision-making process. Therefore, the idea of governance can be implied to mean cooperation between a state and non-state actor or state-society relation. This form of cooperation is normally characterized by contraction rather than supervision in decentralized formal and informal procedures. (Ahenkan et al., 2013; Ahmad & Abu Talib, 2011).

In broader terms, Maggetti & Trein (2018) describe the government as the attribute of a state together with features such as population, territory, and sovereignty. Government is used in this sense to represent a body of persons vested with the power and authority to manage the affairs of people in a well-defined geographical area such as region, district, municipality, or province. Therefore, government denotes a collective term that stands for a body of persons that acts on behalf of the state. In contrast, governance illustrates multi-actor and stakeholder interactive processes that determine how power, authority, and responsibilities are administered in an administration.

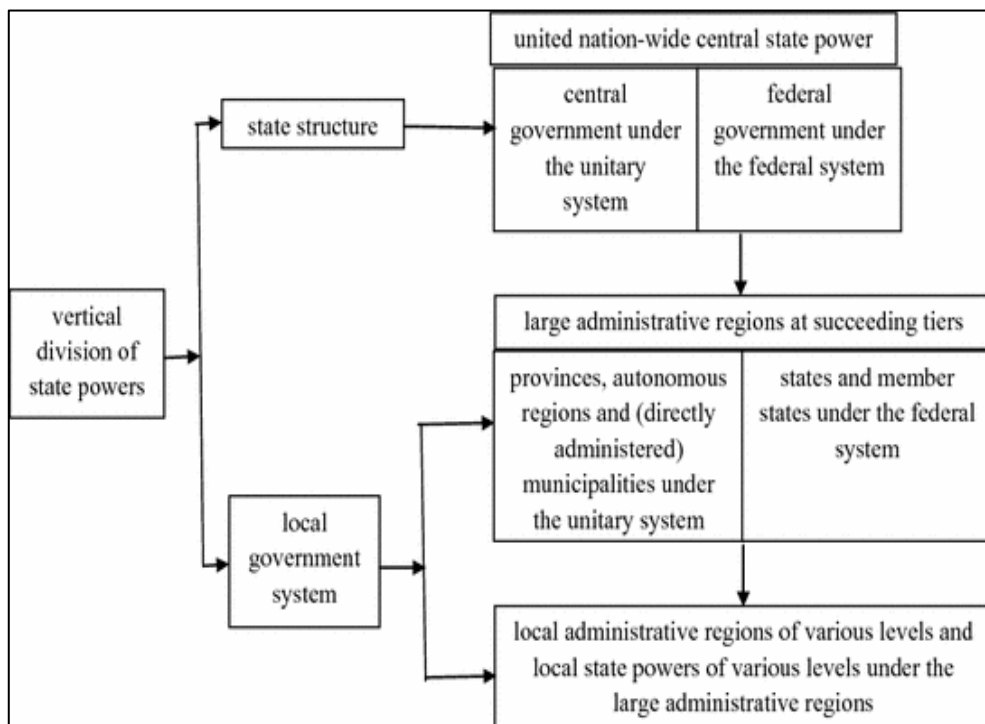
McAuley (2017) categorizes the state into Unitary, Federal, or Confederal and primarily organized with supervision at the national, regional, provincial, district, or local levels with a vertical division of power. McAuley explains that inter-governmental and international organizations governed by agreements among sovereign states constitute government at the international level. This arrangement is followed closely by the

government at the national level, which is composed of central administration in a unitary state or the federal authority in a federation.

Below the national is the regional level, which is made up of the regions and provinces depending on the nature of the state. District and sub-district levels follow the hierarchy, respectively. The lowest level of government is organized to bring decision-making to the local level to be able to develop programs and services with local content to address community needs and development gaps (Ahenkan et al., 2013; Prohl & Schneider, 2009; Schneider, 2003a).

The figure below presents a vertical division of power in a Unitary and federal state structure.

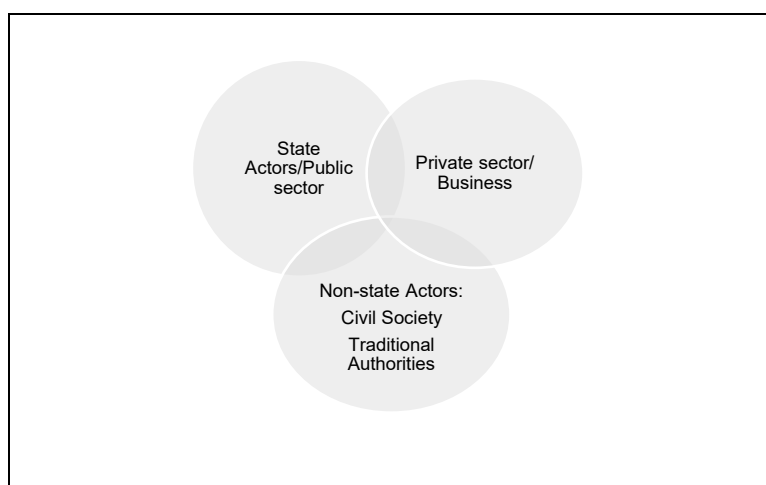
Figure 1: State structure and central division of power



Source: Wang (2019)

Weiss et al.(1985) consider the state as the principal actor providing an enabling environment to facilitate the involvement of other actors in the governance process. The state offers the legal and regulatory framework within which the other actors can operate. The state also provides resources such as infrastructure, expertise, and financial aid to the actors to assist in their general operations. As the principal actor in the governance process, the state actively involves the people through decentralization and local government program. With regard to the function of the state in the governance process, Hewson et al. (1999) reiterate that the state serves as the enabler in the institution of the legal and regulatory framework within which the various stakeholders perform their role and interact among themselves through privatization and administrative decentralization. Therefore, decentralization and local governance provide the avenue for multiple actors, such as civil society organizations and traditional authorities, to participate actively in the decision-making process at the local level. The state also serves as a power provider and coordinator, ensuring smooth operations of actors and stakeholders in the governance process. The figure below represents an overview of key actors in the governance process.

Figure 2: Key Actors in Governance



Source: UNDP (1997)

On the second proposition, Stoker argues that the challenge of legal understanding is the first message of governance. He contends that there is a need to exercise legitimate power in the context of governance instead of naked or authoritarian power by political actors. Thus, we can infer from Stoker's argument that the authority and legitimacy of rulers or government should conform to the constitutional requirement of the state and ensure the widespread participation of citizens in the political system. Invariably, local government and decentralization make this a reality. Over the years, the governance process has concentrated much effort into bridging the gap between the central government and the citizens at the local level (Edwards, 2018; Huxley et al., 2018).

Stoker (2018) also presupposes that authority and legitimacy are very central in any government apparatus. Therefore, political actors must exercise their powers within the limits of the legal procedures of the political system. Stoker emphasizes that governance sometimes lacks the simplifying legitimization (myths) of traditional perspectives of administration, which makes it challenging to act in accordance with the hopes and aspirations of the people.

On the third proposition, Stoker maintains that governance is about limiting the roles and stepping aside of the government's full involvement in the administration and management of the state and delegating more functions and responsibilities to non-state actors, especially the private sector and, more broadly, the citizens. Stoker accordingly explains that a government's ability to tackle social and economic issues in the context of participatory democratic principles shows the effectiveness of the governance process. In Stoker's (1998) view, at its most abstract form, governance is about a modification in the established balance between the state and civil society.

It is essential to specify that the decentralization and local government policy aim at promoting participatory governance by granting power and resources to the people and their representatives to promote widespread participation in the decision-making process. According to Mohammed (2013), effective participation in the decision-making process aims at promoting distinct social, political, and economic development at the local level. Accordingly, the transfer of power, functions, and resources from the central government to the local units and the private sector comes with additional responsibilities. Stoker argues that the dilemma associated with this blurring responsibility is that it creates uncertainty in the thoughts of the public and policy-makers on whom to blame if something goes wrong (Chhotray & Stoker, 2008).

On his fourth proposition, Stoker (2018) identifies what he claims by power dependence in the Governance theory. According to Stoker, a government or an institution's commitment to collective action is dependent on the action and space provided by the main actor in the governance process. Therefore, to achieve the desired goals, organizations have to exchange resources and negotiate common purposes. In this sense, what comes out of the exchange is determined by the resources of participants, the rules of the game, and the contextual background.

The impression from Stoker's argument is that in the context of emerging systems of governance, there is the need for local autonomy that allows for collaborations and cooperation. Thus, local councils (in the Ghanaian case, the municipalities) can demand resources to remain effective but not completely autonomous. This seems very debatable because local authorities must have a certain autonomy level for efficient administrative and fiscal decentralization to thrive for effective local governance. Debrah (2016b) and Wallis (1991) noted that some avenues for central government interference in local

governance, such as maintaining political positions at the various levels of administration, create uncertainties in local ownership of decision-making and implementation. For instance, in Ghana, the head of the local government's unit (The Metropolitan Municipal District Chief Executives) is appointed by the central government.

On the fifth proposition, Stoker posits that the government encompasses self-governing networks, as the ultimate partnership activity of governance. According to Stoker, this partnership is based on a network model of political institutions which eventually leads to the establishment of a system. In Vasudha Chhotray & Stoker's view (2009b), this system is formed on an informal basis for harmonization, without a corresponding command structure. The only dilemma associated with this assumption is that of accountability. According to Stoker, the accountability deficit may be experienced at two primary levels in the Governance Theory perspectives. He attributed the first to the individual constituent elements and the second to those excluded from any form of network. Stoker proposes that a solution to this deficiency of accountability is to steer a network within a given political society with a significant degree of autonomy.

As Stoker identified, this proposition implies that the local government is regarded as a critical avenue for the state to steer and guide development and the political processes at the local level. Thus, a local government must build partnerships, give leadership, protect and regulate its environment, and promote opportunity for all the participants in the decision-making process. Within this assumption, government tasks in the governance process are defined in terms of (De)composition, delegation, and devolution in coordination, collaboration, steering, integration, and regulation. It could be overserved that the propositions put forward by Stoker are more complementary rather than contradictory. Therefore, the governance process entails the institution of the proper

procedures in the management of society's affairs in the regulation of relationships, roles, and responsibilities to promote and protect the interest of the people (Bevir, 2013; Holzscheiter, 2004; Stoker, 2018; Strünck, 2005).

Stoker's five propositions make it implicit that the governance theory applies to several forms of collective action. Essentially, it provides an administrative perspective that presents interactivity within the political society in the sense that no one actor, being an individual, local institutions, or an international organization, has the total capacity and resources to address development issues and aspirations of the people singlehandedly. Additionally, Stoker's propositions presuppose that a well-functioning government must have collaborative channels of participation by both state and non-state actors. This is where decentralization and local government become paramount in the growth of the state's political and socio-economic institutions. Therefore, it is worthy to note that governance is a process with unlimited implication in the relationship between the state and non-state actors through participation in the decision-making process. In this case, decentralization and the local government provide the indispensable avenue for formal and informal institutions to be part of the state's governance process.

Nikolov et al. (2006) emphasized the importance of establishing a good working relationship between the central government and decentralized structures. He claimed that to tackle social, political, and economic issues at the local level; Local government structures must promote and ensure the participation of stakeholders and the people in the decision-making and implementation process. Hence, it is essential to emphasize that, the Governance Theory applies to formal and informal institutional arrangements in the exercise of power and authority, roles and responsibilities, relationships, collaborations, and collective decision-making in policy formulation and implementation to achieve the

desired outcome. The results of which must be of core interests and meet the needs and aspirations of the people.

For assessment purposes on how governments abide by democratic principles, the term “*Good Governance*” is used in contemporary research and development discourse. Thus, governance is assessed based on the tenants of democracy, such as the rule of law, liberty, equality, popular participation, political plurality, and independent media. In this regard, the literature on decentralized governance (Keping, 2017; Litvack, 1998; Smith, 2007; Ong & Fritzen, 2007) connects the idea of good governance to the quality of civic participation. This linkage is based on the assumption that effective decentralization will strengthen local governance by actively involving the local level and allowing them to be part of the decision-making process.

According to Cheeseman (2015), a blend of direct and indirect representation allows people to participate in decisions that affect their lives through universal adult suffrage. In this regard, people are allowed either direct participation or through representatives in the decision-making process. Therefore, democratic governance not only empowers the people to hold leaders accountable but is also given the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process and take responsibility for their welfare.

The UNDP (2004) references good governance as the process of setting up and sustaining a situation for an inclusive and responsive political procedure. Global monitoring and development of governance are constantly carried out by international aid organizations such as the World Bank, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Consideration is given to the realization of measures that are country-specific and suitable to national government and stakeholders

in diverse ways. According to the World Bank cited in Manor (1999) and the UNDP (2009), civic participation, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness are the most effective means of promoting good governance. The World Bank initially coined the notion of good governance in its operational manual titled “*Governance Matters*” cited in Kaufmann et al. (2009). The term has become consistent in the literature related to governance and development (Keping, 2017; Kooiman, 2002; Smith, 2007) and is used mainly with regard to any form of assessment and evaluation of democratic participation. Diamond (2018) points out that the term has since dominated political, administrative, and development literature globally. Conventionally, the idea of good governance is portrayed mainly in the level of civic participation in the decision-making process.

According to O’Toole (2010), the success of public policy depends on the effective participation of actors and stakeholders in the decision-making and implementation process. Thus, of all the features of democracy and good governance, the concept of participation is key to every government. Accordingly, decentralization and local government provide the avenue for popular participation in the decision-making and implementation process. Thus, there is a significant correlation between good governance and decentralization through which popular participation is achieved (Keping, 2017; Majeed, 2011).

Every society’s challenge is to create an enabling environment in the governance system to promote and support sustainable development. Kooiman (2002) suggests that a better governance system can be achieved through effective participation, transparency, and accountability. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the state to institute appropriate measures to ensure that the decision-making and implementation process is based on broad consensus incorporating the views of generality of the people in society.

Majeed (2011) labels a country's governance system as the exclusive preserve of government, organized in a hierarchical order from the national, municipal, district, urban to the local levels. According to Majeed, this creates avenues for actors and stakeholders such as Civil Society Organizations, Traditional Authorities, and community members to play their role in collaboration with the state in the decision-making and implementation process. In this regard, effective participation in the decision-making process is achieved through local government, which derives its authority from the state through decentralization.

The preceding discussions indicate that the governance concept has varied interpretations and comes with multiple theoretical approaches. For instance, scholars such as Rhodes (2017) and Stoker (2018), on the one hand, consider governance as a process involving the public and private sector in the decision-making process based on conventional approaches. On the other hand, Martin Hewson et al. (1999) and Osborne (2010) posit that governance involves a mutual influence in the decision-making process between the state and non-state actors in creating an opportunity for all in a framework of the co-evolutionary relationship.

From this perspectives, this study is guided by the description of governance put forward by Vasudha Chhotray et al. (2009) and supported by Peters (2012), as the interaction among state and non-state actors, public and private organizations, as well as formal and informal institutions in the decision-making and implementation process, to achieve the desired end.

1.6 Structure and Organization of the Study

The study is structured into eight chapters, as follows;

Chapter One: Study outline: This chapter presents the research outline. It commences with an introductory overview of the study's general idea and reveals the underlying statement of the problem. The objectives for carrying out the study and research questions to which the researcher sought to find answers to are delineated in this chapter. Additionally, the theoretical underpinnings, motivation for embarking on the study, and individual chapter outline are expounded in this chapter.

Chapter Two: The Concept, Nature, and Practice of Decentralization: This chapter discusses the meaning, forms, and world views of decentralization, intending to provide a deeper understanding of the concept from different perspectives. Further, the chapter examines the concept, reforms, and policy implementation of decentralization. Current debates and dilemmas in the decentralization policy, contextual issues, and historical evolution are further examined in this chapter.

Chapter Three: Local Government and development in Ghana: This chapter discusses the meaning and concept of local government from a theoretical perspective with the view to probe how local government structures create an avenue for people's participation in governance and development. It also explores traditional authorities and the complementarity of their current role in local governance and development.

Chapter Four: The concept, nature, and Role of Civil society in Local Governance and Development: In this chapter, the literature on the concept of nature and objectives of civil society organizations are reviewed. The chapter also examines the civil society organizations' role in local governance and development as well as the general challenges in their operations.

Chapter Five: Research methodology: The chapter commences with the background information of the study setting in order to provide a contextual appreciation of the research findings. The epistemological, ontological, and research paradigms linking the study are explained here. This chapter also presents a detailed research design type and approach adopted for the study. Additionally, the research methods involving data collection procedure, instrumentations, population, sampling procedure, validity, reliability, and ethical consideration, are elaborated in this chapter.

Chapter Six: Data Presentation and Analysis: This chapter presents data, analysis, and interpretation. It presents and interprets empirical data from the research settings. The presentation and discussions focused on the functioning of the MMDAs and community-based civil society organizations to address the development needs of the people.

Chapter Seven: Discussions of Key findings: This chapter discusses key findings based on the study's objectives. Conclusions resulting from data collection, a review of relevant literature, and general conclusions are dilated in this chapter.

Chapter Eight: Summary and Conclusions: This chapter Summarizes the entire study. It recaps the statement of the problem, the overall objective and indicates how the study addresses it. The summary of findings, general conclusions, and recommendations towards more effective participation and cooperation strategies in the local governance process in addressing the people's development needs is elaborated in this chapter. The chapter concludes the study by putting forward recommendations for possible future research.

1.7 Definition of Terminologies used in the study

The following terminologies and concepts are often used in the study:

Local Government: Antwi-Boasiako, 2014 defines local government as a political subdivision of a nation, established by law with substantial control of restricted affairs, including the authority to impose taxes. The administrative body of such an entity is either elected or locally selected.

Decentralization: Basically, decentralization is described as the act of devolving power and authority from central, sovereign level to subsidiary and diversified levels of the governance arrangement. This implies that the authority to administer an organization or a group of people is in hierarchical order. The study adopts the definition of Rondinelli (1983) as; “*the transfer of power, authority, and accountability for public functions from a central body to subordinate or quasi-independent organizations or the private sector.*”

Civil Society Organizations: According to Paffenholz (2015), Civil society organizations are associations, groups, foundations, unions, or establishments independent of direct governmental influence and supervision. Their main objective is to provide means of interest articulating and vigorously addressing the wide-ranging development needs of society. Civil society organizations include environmental groups, gender groups, farmers associations, faith-based organizations, professional organizations, research institutes, and some non-profit organizations from a broader perspective.

The study restricts the analysis to Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and recognized local groups within the case study settings. DeWiel (2008) describes civil society organizations as a wide range of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a bearing in public life and expressing the interest and values of their members or others, based on social, cultural, political, or religious considerations.

Accordingly, the study adopted the definition of civil society organizations developed by international organizations such as the ILO, IMF, EUROSTAT and put forward by the OECD (2004) as;

“the multitude of associations around which society voluntarily organizes itself and which present a wide range of interest and ties. These can include community-based organizations, indigenous peoples’ organizations, and non-governmental organizations.”

Development: Development is expressed in its entirety in terms of growth, otherwise economic, social, political, or technological advancement. Accordingly, this study adopts Amartya Sen’s capability approach, cited in Cammack (2017) which describes the development in terms of granting freedom of action in the processes that lead to positive change or improvement in people’s quality of life. Additionally, this study consents to the UNDP’s (2010) notion of development as the basis for measuring the human development index (HDI).

Traditional Authority: Traditional Authority is used in the Weberian sense to mean an endorsement derived from tradition and customs. This means the right to rule is per one’s inherited status. In the broader sense, traditional authority includes Monarchies, Autocracies, Emperors, Sultans, Kings, Queens, Chiefs, and Family heads. For this study, traditional authorities are restricted to chiefs and queen mothers. Accordingly, the definition of a chief is stipulated in the Republic of Ghana’s Constitution is adopted for the study. Article 277 of the Ghanaian Constitution defines a Chief as;

“a person, who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as a chief or queen mother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage.”

1.8 The motivation for carrying out the study

The inspiration for carrying out this study is rooted in two primary reflections. The first was the experience I had growing up and working in different rural communities in Ghana, where access to health, education, and essential social services and facilities pose a significant challenge. I also witnessed situations, where programs and projects carried out by the district assembly, philanthropists, or civil society organizations meant to improve upon the living conditions of the people, were either uncompleted, abandoned, or poorly completed as a result of improper coordination or due to power dynamics of local actors. There were instances where the people did not utilize completed projects because the community did not prioritize them. There were indeed more questions than answers. Consequently, I was inclined to research into how to involve the people in the decision-making process to develop local content projects to conform with the people.

My second motivation is embedded in the findings of my master thesis, which examined the collaboration and roles of traditional authorities and local government structures in the decision-making process. It assumed that traditional authorities play significant roles in contemporary democratic structures that blend tradition and modernity in the governance process. The reason being that traditional authorities in Ghana, are considered as 'natural rulers,' and confer on them spiritual powers and legal authority over the people. Thus, enabling the traditional institution to play a crucial role in facilitating local government functions in the development discourse. Findings from the studies revealed an enabling environment for development planning and implementation in communities where there were cordial relations between traditional authorities and local government structures. On the contrary, a dysfunctional relationship between traditional authorities

and local government structures in certain communities served as an impediment to development.

Therefore, I concluded with the assumption that effective participation and collaborative effort of multi-stakeholders and actors such as civil society organizations, traditional leaders, and community members will go a long way to promote good governance and accelerated development. In the absence of that, apathy is induced, especially when the local government's performance is not visible to the people or in a situation where the district assembly frequently blames the central government for the inadequate capacity to perform their functions. This situation mainly causes people's attention to shift from the central government to the local authorities to address their needs. In this regard, I developed an interest in possible future research to review the role of multi-actors and stakeholders, such as the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), Civil Society Organizations, and Traditional Authorities in the decentralization and local government policy in addressing the development needs of the people.

I am confident that the study will assist policymakers, stakeholders, and development partners to develop a robust institutional framework to incorporate non-state actors such as traditional authorities and civil society into the decentralization and local government program in order to formalized and recognized their role and activities to enhance participation in the decision-making process. It will also serve as a yardstick for other municipalities where the study did not cover to take a cue from the correlation between civil society organizations, traditional authorities, and local government structures and its development implications. Additionally, the study will add to the knowledge base on the need to enhance the participation of the people in the decision-making process.

1.9 Summary

This chapter presented an outline of the study. It provided an introductory highlight to the research and an overview of the problem statement, objectives, research questions, and how the researcher intends to address them. The chapter laid the study's foundation by putting together samples of relevant information to give a wholesome synopsis of the study. These included detailed theoretical underpinnings of the research and motivation for carrying out the study. The succeeding chapter builds on this foundation by discussing relevant literature on the concept of decentralization, historical overview, and the role of local government and civil society organizations in Ghana.

CHAPTER TWO

2. DECENTRALIZATION: CONCEPT, NATURE AND PRACTICE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the conceptual framework of Decentralization. It analyzes standard definitions, dimensions, and forms of decentralization. The chapter also delves into distinctive global debates and dilemmas of decentralization and local government. Additionally, it examines governance reforms, policy implementation, and fundamental objectives of decentralization. The intention is to provide a deeper understanding of the concept from different perspectives. The chapter concludes with the decentralization and governance system in Ghana and highlights approaches to policy implementation.

2.2 The Concept, Forms, and Nature of Decentralization

The concept of decentralization does not lend itself to a standard definition due to the differences in political and administrative structures of states as well as the composition and forms of governments and institutions across the globe. In view of that, the concept has been explained variously in literature, for instance, as a terminology (Crook, 1987; Inkoom, 2011), concept (Ahwoi, 2000; Craig, 1981; Mookherjee, 2006) process, (Nkrumah, 1989; Ocampo, 1986; Schneider, 2003a) and as public policy (Ahwoi, 2018; Rondinelli, 1989; Wunsch, 1980).

Accordingly, Ong & Fritzen (2007) and Wilson (2000) suggest that characteristics of the nature, dimensions, and overview of decentralization have resulted in a varying degree of its implementation across countries, making it difficult to compare the degree of execution and prospects. As a result, discussions on decentralization center on the processes involved in devolving power, authority, and resources to sub-units of

administration to promote widespread participation in the decision-making and implementation process.

Purposefully, decentralization is meant to reduce the workload on the central government and to ensure widespread participation in the decision-making process. Notwithstanding, Mookherjee (2006) points out that decentralization is not just about the transfer of power, authority, and responsibility from the center to the periphery but a process of redefining the structures and procedures of governance to bring democracy and development closer to the people, especially at the local level.

Principally, the decentralization concept is expressed in political, administrative, and fiscal dimensions, implying that the implementation of the policy is portrayed variously in different establishments to achieve the desired end. The ensuing has resulted in a vast array of literature on the concept and practice. Nevertheless, there is a general emphasis on the practice that lays the foundation towards the achievement of governance and public sector reforms. Accordingly, in its abstract form, decentralization is defined based on the scholar's background or discipline involved and reshaped in accordance with the practice and world view at the point in time of reference. Even so, scholars such as (Ayee, 2008; Hartmann, 2008; Schneider, 2003) posit an analogous understanding of decentralization and situates prominence on its practice rather than conceptual analysis.

Detailing the practice, Rondinelli (quoted in Smith, 2007) describes the concept of decentralization as the distribution of power, authority, resources, and responsibility for service by the central government to sub-units of administration, departments, and agencies to make decisions and implement policies for the public good.

Ribot (2009) simplifies the definition of decentralization as the transfer of power, authority, and responsibility from a central government to quasi-independent governmental units or the private sector for public functions.

The above definitions reveal that decentralization makes it possible to bring on board not only government institutions but a whole range of actors and stakeholders such as civil society organizations, traditional authorities, religious bodies, international and local aid agencies to work together in various ways for a common purpose (Abdulai & Quantson, 2008; Alper Ozmen, 2014; Cole & Lavoie, 2006; Mindanao, 2012; UNDP, 2008).

In Crook's (1998) view, the decentralization policy makes it possible for public functions and resources to be distributed or transferred from a higher administrative level to a lower authority in a hierarchical order. In this sense, different governments' levels are extensively used in defining decentralization, whereby authority and responsibility for services are transferred from the central government to sub-quasi-independent governmental units and other non-state actors for public functions.

A United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report and publication on governance have contributed immensely to the literature on decentralization by presenting a varying interpretation of the concept as practiced globally. For instance, the UNDP's Assessment of Development Results (2009) refers to decentralized government as the restructuring of authority culminating from a system of shared responsibility between institutions of government at the central, regional, and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity. In this way, the governance system's general quality and effectiveness tend to strengthen the authority and capacity of administration at the sub-national levels. This definition links decentralization to the idea of subsidiarity, which proposes public functions or actions to be executed only within the jurisdiction of exclusive competence.

This means a specific role with its corresponding authority is devolved or delegated in the process of decentralization to a recognized body or body of persons with the required capabilities of executing them.

The UNDP (2008) points out that decentralization concept is complex and comprehensive in such a way that it incorporates global and local entities, actors, and the social sector in general. The global entities include international and intergovernmental organizations. Civil society, individual business, companies, and stakeholders in local governance make up the social actors, while the political economy, social, and cultural environment constitutes the social sector. This assertion is corroborated in the literature (Ahenkan et al., 2013; Edwards, 2018) describing decentralization as facilitating the transfer of political, fiscal, and administrative powers from the center to the peripheries. The UNDP explains that decentralized governance primarily involves elected and appointed national and sub-national bodies with the power and authority to make and implement decisions on behalf of a central body. The implication is that the decentralization process provides the avenue to empower sub-national and district authorities to enhance participation in the decision-making process.

According to Schneider (2003), centralization as the reverse of decentralization is precise in description. He defines centralization as the concentration of power, resources, and authority at the highest administrative level. Schneider explains that the main difference between centralization and decentralization revolves around the position of decision making and the implementation process.

Unlike decentralization, where the authority to make decisions is devolved or delegated to field officers in Sub-autonomous bodies, in a centralized system of administration, personnel in sub-governmental units cannot act or decide on their initiatives. For instance,

in cases where field offices are given the authority to make decisions, they cannot be held accountable for the outcome.

Notwithstanding, decentralization does not aim to weaken central authority but rather to ensure extensive participation in the decision-making and implementation process and to make local government responsive to the people's needs. Heinelt & Hlepas (2006) and Cohen (1999) emphasize that decentralization is not an alternative to centralization. They rather complement each other to determine an effective way of achieving the desired end. For instance, whereas the planning and execution of a local school project or a community road network requires local input with municipal coordination, the conduct of a country in the comity of nations or a foreign policy decision remains the sole prerogative of the central government.

Therefore, it is imperative to ensure a preliminary assessment of the nature of the political, fiscal, and administrative divisions in a country to be able to label the extent of the implementation of the policy. Nevertheless, relevant literature (Huxley et al., 2018; Inkoom, 2011; Ong & Fritzen, 2007; Wilson, 2000) emphasizes decentralization as a practice that facilitates widespread participation in an administrative process but not just a concept for studies.

2.2.1 Characteristics of the Forms and Dimensions of Decentralization

Steiner et al. (2005) classify the concept of decentralization into three main dimensions as Administrative, Fiscal and Political. The dimensions are subdivided into four forms as de-concentration, delegation, devolution, and privatization. According to Steiner, the forms and dimensions of decentralization are determined by corresponding geographical boundaries, resource mobilization, mode of decision making, and principally the type of government or an administrative setup.

The table below expounds on the characteristics of the forms of decentralization.

Table 1: Characteristics of the forms of decentralization

Characteristics	Deconcentration	Devolution	Delegation
Geographical	Operate from regions, provinces, or districts	Operate legally from recognized geographical boundaries called districts	May operate from all levels of government i.e. national, regional, provincial, or district
Decision making	Redistributes decision making authority among different levels of the central government	Decision making is transferred to quasi-autonomous units of local governments with corporate status	Decision-making functions and administration of public functions are transferred to semiautonomous bodies, e.g., public enterprises or corporations not wholly controlled by the central government
Resource Mobilization	Funding comes from the central government i.e. from the Ministries, Departments & Agencies (MDAs) that they fall under	Receive funding from central the government usually backed by the Constitution on, raise its revenues, and have independent authority to make investment decisions	May receive funding support from central government for strategic investment and are also able to charge users directly for using their services in funding their operations
Relation to Central Government	Takes instructions from and report directly to the central government i.e., Ministries, Departments & Agencies	Have independent authority from the central government	Are ultimately answerable/ accountable to central government but enjoys a much flexibility in decision making

Source: (Steiner et al., 2005)

Steiner et al.(2005) link the dimensions of decentralizations to the forms. The table below presents the forms and dimensions of decentralization.

Figure 3: Forms and Dimensions of decentralization

Forms/Dimension	Deconcentration	Delegation	Devolution	Privatization
Administration				
Fiscal				
Political				

Source: (Steiner et al., 2005)

Steiner explains that the typography, dimensions, and forms of decentralization across countries make it difficult to compare the concept and practice. For instance, in some countries, it is not relatively easy to distinguish between the types and dimensions of decentralization due to the disposition of the political system. However, according to Cohen (2002), the effectiveness of decentralization in a country can be determined by the degree of participation in the decision-making process considering the administrative, fiscal and political setup.

Fiscal decentralization: Fiscal decentralization entails the distribution of resources and granting of authority by a central body to sub-units for financial management to enhance the decision-making and implementation process. This involves the authority to raise and collect revenue, make an expenditure, and resource reallocation to sub-national levels of administration. It is very comprehensive and traceable since it has everything to do with budgetary practices.

For local government units to discharge their functions effectively, adequate measures such as the authority to source funding from the central government and generating their revenue are put in place through fiscal decentralization (Ronald Adamtey et al., 2020; Isufaj, 2014; Prohl & Schneider, 2009). Adamtey et al. (2020) suggest that, for effective fiscal decentralization, the following criteria should be applied.

- i. self-financing and cost recovery through consumer, operator, or user charges
- ii. local revenue sources such as proceeds from property rates or sales taxes
- iii. authorization of domestic borrowing and operational central government transfer
- iv. mobilization of local government resources through loans and guarantees and

Political decentralization: According to Rondinelli (1983), political decentralization involves the practice where political power and authority are transferred to sub-national governmental units that are representative and accountable to the people. In Slack's (2014) view, the idea behind political decentralization is giving power to the people and local elected representatives to participate in the decision-making and implementation process. According to Mookherjee (2015), political decentralization entails constitutional amendments and electoral reforms to create space for local participation in the decision-making process. Therefore, political decentralization is established in the devolution of power to elected and empowered sub-national, regional, and local level governance setup.

Devolution: Devolution of power is the practice where responsibility for service, decision-making, resource allocation, and the right to revenue generation is transferred to semi-autonomous governmental units (Conyers, 2007; Steiner et al., 2005). According to Mookherjee (2015), devolution is a dimension of political decentralization, which is usually a constitutional requirement with a legal framework that ensures orderliness, openness, and accountability. It makes it possible for the restructuring of institutions to develop linkages with non-state actors such as civil society and the private sector, thereby necessitating a universal participatory approach to development. The basis of political decentralization is to empower the citizenry and the locally elected representatives in the decision-making and implementation process. Devolution provides a vertical division of power among sub-governmental units with autonomous control to make decisions on local issues.

Administrative decentralization: According to Antwi-Boasiako (2010), administrative decentralization is the practice whereby power, authority, and responsibility for decision-making on service delivery is transferred from the central government to sub-national levels of government agencies and field officers. Administrative decentralization mostly occurs in the form of Deconcentration and delegation.

Deconcentration: According to Rondinelli (1990), de-concentration refers to the transfer of functions, authority, and responsibility from a higher level of governance to a lower level in a hierarchical order. The central government or the higher level retains authority over the component units in a hierarchical order. De-concentration helps to reduce the workload of the central administration, making it possible for them to concentrate on critical national issues while facilitating participation in the administrative process, thereby strengthening democracy at all levels of governance. For instance, the

central government can distribute functions and responsibilities for services in the ministries in the capital city to the regions, provinces, municipalities, and districts under intense supervision by the national government. Ahenkan et al. (2013) point out that the entity at the receiving end of the authority, functions, and responsibilities do not exercise any form of autonomy.

Delegation: According to Rondinelli (1989), a delegation is a form of administrative decentralization in which authority and responsibility are redistributed to local units and agencies that may not be direct branches of the delegating control. In this practice, the central unit is made responsible for and hold accountable to the authority delegated. Delegation of authority is exercised in a system through the creation of semi-autonomous divisions such as public enterprises, local institutions, transportation, housing, health and education services, development cooperation, and specialized services in the component unit. Ahwoi (2018) suggests that the entities at the receiving end can use a wide range of discretions in the decision-making process while exercising their functions.

In his book “Administrative Decentralization, Strategies for developing countries,” Cohen (1999) identified six significant forms of decentralization, which he described as “*Classification Systems and approaches.*” Cohen suggested that distinctions between decentralization and centralization have led to various classifications of devolution, which is being promoted over the years. However, there is a common ground for a practical definition rather than legal effects. He classified decentralization into historical, territorial, valued centered, service delivery, and the single country experienced.

Privatization: According to Shair (1997), privatization is the transfer of management control from the central government to a private person or group of persons. Therefore, privatization concerns itself with the transfer of ownership, support, and limited or

unlimited management control from the public to the private sector. Shair made a clear distinction between privatization and partnership. To him, privatization is a situation where the central government transfers some authority and responsibility for the performance of specific tasks to a private entity. On the contrary, a partnership is a direct or indirect collaboration between government and non-governmental actors such as civil society organizations, traditional authorities, development partners, and stakeholders in the decision-making process. Privatization is, therefore, seen as a way of encouraging the private sector to participate in public discourse. The scope ranges from a partial provision of goods and services to a whole operation of the market to a situation where the central government provides the legal framework.

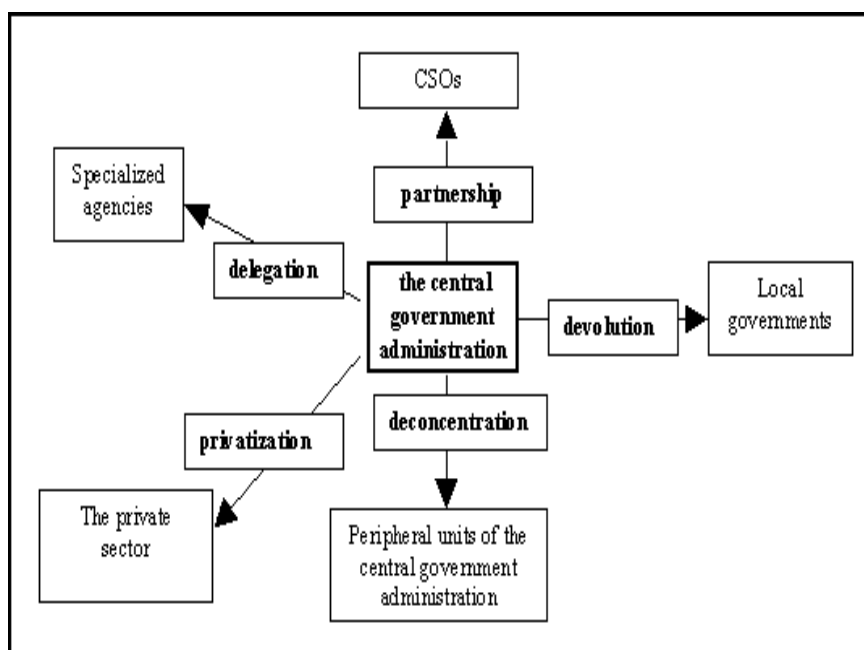
According to Conyers (2007), alternative service delivery (ASD) is a form of public-private partnership implemented in some developing countries in the 1970s and 1980s. The central government used it to transfer programs and services to the private sector in response to pressure from the general public to reduce the cost of public service delivery. This approach to service delivery was seen as a leading outline of decentralization, which has now gain ground in many developing countries. The practice has also recognized the role of non-state actors such as civil society organizations in service delivery in developing countries. The International Labor Organization (ILO, 2001) points out that privatization is considered an essential dimension of decentralization that promotes the participation of businesses and the private sector at all levels of governance. This claim aligns with the world development report by the United Nations (UNDP, 2012), which claims that decentralization provides the best avenue of achieving privatization.

Smith (2007) expanded the forms and dimension of decentralization to include partnership and privatization in addition to devolution, de-concentration, and delegation.

His hypothesis was based on the nature of the relationship and the reason for the transfer of authority and responsibility between the central government and the Sub-autonomous unit.

The figure below presents the model of multi-stakeholder participation in a decentralized governance system. The central administration promotes participation by distributing power, authority, and responsibility to the peripheral units, the private sector, specialized agencies, and other stakeholders through delegation, devolution, de-concentration, and partnership.

Figure 4: Mode Stakeholder Participation in Decentralized Governance



Source: (Smith, 2007)

2.3 Governance Reforms and Decentralization in Africa

The African continent experienced a strong wave of democratization during the last decade of the 20th century after undergoing a long-protracted period of colonization, militarism, and authoritarian rule. The late twentieth century brought a significant change in global political discourse in what Samuel Huntington (1993) described as “*the third wave of democratization*.” Following this third wave of global democratization, governments throughout the continent were compelled to compete against various opposition movements in what Diamond (2018) described as the “*New era of Political Renaissance*.”

The period was characterized by the universal transmission of a new democratic culture sweeping across several developing countries with mounting pressure on authoritarian regimes to adhere to democratic reforms. The phenomena resulted in the conduct of multi-party elections and a fresh outlook of a new political and administrative language. Accordingly, several governments resorted to democratic reforms to involve everyone in the governance process (Crook, 1998; Gyimah-Boadi, 2004; Joseph, 1999).

Gyimah-Boadi (2004) points out that some countries in Africa remain untouched by the new wave of democratization. Nevertheless, few others, such as South Africa, Mauritius, Tanzania, Nigeria, Botswana, and Ghana, were highly influenced by the phenomena. Accordingly, several of these states have constituted constitutions that encourage political pluralism, evidenced by the many democratic elections that have been conducted. Though some of these elections are flawed, on average many of them pass for a true reflection of the representation of the voice of the people (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004; Harding & Stasavage, 2014; Sebudubudu, 2010).

One of the mechanisms adopted in several developing countries in the course of democratic reformation was a concerted effort to implement a wide-ranging and robust decentralization and local government reforms to enhance civic participation to bring governance and development to the local level (Ahwoi, 2000; Gyimah-Boadi, 2003). According to Steiner (2005), the decentralization policy received significant attention in Africa as the most cost-effective way of ensuring co-responsibility between the central government and sub-governmental units in state administration.

Prohl & Schneider (2009) claim that decentralization in Africa can be traced to the inception of globalization when internal and external factors driven by the emergence of inter-governmental organizations with checks on the powers of central governments were at their peak. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the decentralization concept was initiated in the 1950s during the process of decolonization when colonies were given certain powers and authority to administer their affairs in preparation for independence. According to Ahwoi (2010), by the late 1980s, decentralization had taken center stage in the political and administrative discourse, gaining a global prominence in governance structural reforms and administration. Globally decentralization is seen as the best alternative to providing service delivery to the general public in governance and development on political and economic grounds to enable them to neutralize financial inadequacies and ineffective management system (Schneider, 2003b).

In its classical sense, Ong & Fritzen (2007) point out that the decentralization concept principally refers to the distribution of power, authority, and responsibility for service to semi-autonomous units to maintain a decisive role in national administration. Ahwoi (2010) emphasizes that decentralization does not only reduce the workload in the central administration but enables national officers to concentrate on critical general issues while

at the same time encouraging the expansion and diversification of administration to achieve the desired end. Therefore, decentralization helps to develop human capacity and self-respect among the officers in the sub-units by enabling them to make responsible decisions. Decentralization also makes it possible to experiment in the decision-making and implementation process without compromising the whole system on a try-and-error basis. Additionally, effective implementation of decentralization has proven to increase administrative efficiency by reducing unnecessary bureaucratic practices and promotes faster action (Cohen, 2002; Ong & Fritzen, 2007; Rondinelli, 1990).

Implementation of the decentralization policy in many countries in Africa is mainly grounded on political, economic, and social grounds, which makes the size variables such as population, land size, and gross domestic product fundamental. Cheema (1983) suggests that decentralization does not favor countries with a small land size or lesser population with relatively low national income rather than high-income countries with large land areas and populations. Therefore, it is essential to do a wide-ranging comparison and categorization of decentralization across countries to assist in monitoring and evaluation purposes and to help in cross-national learning to facilitate development approaches. Democratic governance indicators are so far the best approaches in providing the context of decentralization in Africa. This includes the United Nations Human development report 2010 and 2016, which shows the issue of deepening democracy in a fragmented world, and the fiscal decentralization indicators project developed by the World Bank, which provides a broader understanding of decentralized governance in Africa (Cammack, 2017; Cheeseman, 2015; Yu, 2000).

2.4 Decentralization and Local Government in Ghana

In Ghana, the political ideology that initiated the reformation in the Decentralization and local governance policy was the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC), a military government led by Jerry John Rawlings (1979 and 1981-1993) to usher the country into democratic governance (Boamah, 2018; R. Gocking, 2005; Jumah, 2011). According to Ayee (2008), local governance at this period sought to devolve power from the central government to local units in the area of policy initiation and implementation to lessen the burden on the central government. Accordingly, a comprehensive local government and decentralization policy was instituted in 1988 with the passage of the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) Law 207 establishing Municipal, Metropolitan, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) with remarkable legislative, executive, budgeting, and planning authority (Ahwoi, 2000; Honyenuga & Wutoh, 2019; Reddy, 2004).

Subsequently, the policy was given credence in the 1992 fourth republic constitution of Ghana when the country was re-legitimized in an election which was won by the National Democratic Congress (NDC) led by Jerry John Rawlings in a contest with four other political parties, including the New Patriotic Party led by Albert Adu Boahen. The policy successively acknowledged political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization as the modes of promoting and consolidating the country's young democracy (Gocking, 2005; Herbst, 1993).

Accordingly, the entire chapter 20 of the constitution is devoted to decentralization and local government, providing guidelines on the institutional arrangements, allocation of resources, roles, and responsibilities of key actors in the program structure to demonstrate the country's commitment to the policy. Additionally, Article 35 of the Constitution,

Subsection (6) outlines the purpose of decentralization and Ghana's local governance system. The constitution (Article 252) further establishes the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) and makes provisions for 10% of national revenue to be allocated quarterly to the fund in order to support and strengthen local governance and development. Besides the constitutional provisions, several enactments such as the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462), which was amended in 2016 (Act 936) was promulgated together with other enactments such as the Local Government Establishment Instrument (1994), District Assemblies Common Fund Act 2003 (Act 435), Civil Service Act 1993 (PNDC Law 327), Local Government Service Act 2003 (Act 656), Institute of local government studies Act 2003 Act (647) and National Development Planning Act of 1994 (Act 480) to provide a legal framework to the policy and practice.

Even though Ghana's local government system can be traced to the pre-colonial era, its implementation was insubstantial. According to Rathbone (1993) during the colonial administration, local government officials were used as conduits by the colonists to reach the local communities. However, local governance gained significant impetus during the post-independence period, where successive governments promulgated specific laws to strengthen the process.

As a result of the relevance placed on participatory governance, the whole section of chapter twenty of the *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana* (1992) is devoted to local governance and decentralization. The chapter uncovers the purposes and the spirit behind local governance and decentralization in Ghana.

Article 240 (1) of the constitution set the basis for local governance and decentralization process in Ghana. It provides the principal legal support to the process of decentralized

local government. It states that “*Ghana shall have a local government and administration system which shall, as far as practicable, be decentralized.*”

Subsequently, a major decentralization policy change was formulated in 2010, which sought to improve service delivery, economic growth, and community empowerment. It was envisaged that effective participation in the decision-making process, coordination, inclusiveness, and collaboration with civil society, especially community-based organizations (CBOs) and stakeholders, will enhance development and ensure accountability in local governance. Accordingly, in 2015, a national action plan and review of the decentralization policy was initiated that led to the formulation of the new local governance Act in 2016 (Act 936).

In Ghana’s decentralization and local government policy, the Metropolitan Municipal District Assemblies (MMDAs) are positioned as the highest political, administrative, and planning body at the local level. Over the years, the district assembly’s system has gone through structural and administrative reforms in order to strengthen its management to adapt contemporary democratic restructurings towards delivering local content in terms of economic development and poverty reduction.

2.4.1 Structure of the Decentralized Governance System in Ghana

Ghana is a unitary state with a multi-party democracy grounded in the 1992 constitution. The country ushered in the fourth republic after more than a decade of military rule under the provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) led by Jerry John Rawlings. The current decentralization and local government policy were initiated by the PNDC regime with the passage of PNC law 207. Subsequent legal backing of the policy was given under the fourth republican constitution. Additionally, national legislations such as the National Decentralization Action Plan (NDAP2004), the local government Act of 1993 (Act 246), and its amendment in 2016 (Act 936) were promulgated to give further support to the policy.

For administrative purposes, Ghana is divided into sixteen regions. Each of the regions is headed by a regional minister, appointed by the country's president and leader. A Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) connects the national and regional governments in each region. The Regional Coordinating Council is constituted by representatives from each district assembly and the regional house of chiefs within the region. Therefore, the district assembly structure consists of the regional coordinating council, a four-tier metropolitan and three-tier municipal district assembly structure. The composition, powers, and function of all the local government structures are prescribed by the *Ghana Local Government Act, 1993(Act 462)*.

The implementation of the decentralization concept has different connotations at different levels of governance in Ghana. It is known as de-concentration at the regional level where the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) coordinates and harmonizes the Municipal Metropolitan District Assemblies' (MMDAs) programs and conveys them to the central government. At the District level, it is called devolution, where a practical implication of

decentralization is established. At this level, the district assembly is set up as a corporate body. The Assembly has the power to discharge its functions as delegated to it by the central government. Delegation is used to describe the Decentralization powers at the sub-district where the Sub-Metropolitan District Assemblies (SMDC) Urban/Town/Area Council (UTAC) and Unit committees on the decentralization structure takes decisions based on the power delegated to them by the district Assemblies (Ahwoi,2010).

In line with Ghana National Decentralization Action Plan, 2015-2019 (MLGRD, 2015), the central government is responsible for the overall national planning, monitoring, and evaluation, whereas the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) coordinate and monitors the regional level as the MMDAs takes over administration at the district level. The MMDAs are therefore considered the pivot of the governance machinery by serving as the central administrative hob of the sub-regional and district structures.

The table below presents the governance structure in Ghana.

Table 2: Governance Structure in Ghana

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT		
President		
Council of Ministers		
Council of State		
Unicameral Legislature		
REGIONAL COORDINATING COUNCIL(RCC)		
REGIONAL MINISTRY (16 REGIONS)		
LOCAL GOVERNMENT		
6 x Metropolitan (Over 250 000 inhabitants)	109 x Municipalities (Over 95 000 inhabitants)	145 x District (Over 70 000 inhabitants)
Sub-metro district council	Zonal council	Urban/Town/Area councils
Town council		
Unit committees:		
In urban areas, about 1500 inhabitants		
In rural areas, about 500–1000 inhabitants		

Source: MLGRD (2010)

2.4.2 The Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)

The *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana* (1992) provides that the power to create new regions is vested in the country's president. Consequently, the local Government Act of 1993 (Act 462) establishes the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC). The regional coordinating council (RCC), according to the Act, is designated as the highest political and administrative body located in each capital of the sixteen (16) regions of the country. It consists of the regional minister as the chairperson, deputy regional minister, presiding members of each district assembly, the municipal or district chief executive of each district within the region, two traditional chiefs from the regional house of chiefs, and heads of decentralized regional department.

The local government of 1993 (Act 462) provides that the RCC performs administrative and coordination functions such as coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating the District Assemblies' performance. An additional responsibility of the RCC is to supervise the use of funds allocated to the District Assemblies, review and coordinate public services in the Region. The RCC is also responsible for a performance planning function conferred on it by Act 462. Moreover, the RCC has the responsibility to ensure security in the region by resolving conflicts, settle disputes, coordinating and harmonizing district development plans and programs (MLGRD, 2010).

Accordingly, a Regional Planning Coordinating Unit (RPCU) is established under the Local Government Act of 1993 (Act 462) as a local advisory body. The RPCU advises the RCC on the co-ordination, monitoring, and evaluation of district development plans on issues relating to development planning in the region, incorporating spatial and sectoral policies. It also provides a secretariat for the RCC to perform its functions as specified under section 8 (1) of the national development planning (Systems) Act, 1994

(Act 480). The planning (Systems) Act stipulates that a regional coordinating council shall perform such planning functions as may be conferred on it by any enactment. Expressly, the Act grants the following planning functions on the regional coordinating council:

- i. Provide the District Planning Authority with such information and data as is necessary to assist them in the formulation of district development plans
- ii. Coordinate the plans and programs of the District Planning Authorities and harmonize them with the national development policies and initiate priorities for consideration and approval by the National Development Planning Commission
- iii. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the programs and projects of the District Planning Authorities within the region
- iv. Act on behalf of the NDPC for such national programs and projects in the region as may be directed
- v. Perform such other planning functions as may be assigned to it by the NDPC

2.4.3 The Metropolitan Municipal District Assembly (MMDA)

Underneath the regional coordinating council is the Metropolitan Municipal District Assemblies (MMDA). The MMDA is the highest political and administrative unit of the local governance structure in each district. The MMDAs are distinguished based on population and demographic features. For instance, a Metropolitan Assembly is a local government area with 250,000 inhabitants, while a Municipal assembly is a one town assembly with a population of over 75,000. A district assembly is a group of settlements with a population between 75,000 and 95,000 (MLGRD, 2010).

The composition of the MMDAs is provided for by the local government act (Act 462) of 1993. It consists of the Municipal/District chief executive, seventy percent (70%) of members who are directly elected by universal adult suffrage in a local assembly election, the member or members of parliament within the district, and up to thirty percent (30%) of the members appointed by the president of the country in consultation with civil society organizations, traditional authorities and interest groups within the district.

In practice, the thirty percent (30%) appointment is made on behalf of the president by the minister of local government in conjunction with the regional minister. The process follows a nomination of the Chief Executive by the president, approval by two-third votes of members of the assembly present, and appointment by the president. The Assembly is officiated by a presiding member who is elected by two-thirds of all Assembly members. This aligns with the *Ghana Local Government Act, 1993(Act 462)* (1993), sections (5, 20,17), and Article 240 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana* (1992), which mandates the legislative arm of government to put in place measures to augment the capacity of local government authorities. Principally to support the local authority to design, initiate, coordinate, harmonize and implement policies and programs with respect

of all matters affecting the people within their areas, to ultimately achieve localization of those activities.

Given the above mandate, the *Ghana Local Government Act, 1993(Act 462)* (1993) and its amendment *Ghana Local Government Act, 2016 (Act 963)* (2016) provides that the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) exercises deliberative, legislative, and executive function in addition to the following:

- i. Responsible for the general development of the district and to ensure the preparation and submission through the RCC development plans of the district to the NDPC for approval.
- ii. Formulate and execute programs and strategies for the effective mobilization of the resources necessary for the overall development of the district
- iii. Advance and support productive activities and social development in the district.
- iv. Initiate programs for the development of basic infrastructure and social services in the district
- v. Responsible for the development and management of human settlements and the environment in the district
- vi. Responsible for co-operation with the appropriate national and local security agencies for the maintenance of security and public safety in the district and ensure ready access to Courts in the district for the promotion of justice
- vii. Promote, sponsor, or carry out studies necessary for the performance of a function conferred by this Act or by any other enactment.

Accordingly, the district assemblies within their areas of jurisdiction are responsible for initiating measures that are necessary and reasonable to execute approved development plans for the district. They do this by encouraging and providing guidance and support to the sub-district local government bodies, public agencies, and local communities to discharge their roles in the execution of approved development plans.

Again, the District Assemblies are responsible for initiating and encouraging joint participation with any other persons or bodies to execute approved development plans. The Assemblies also promote and encourage persons or bodies to undertake projects under approved development plans, assess and evaluate their impact on the community, district, and national economy.

The Assemblies also constitutes a planning authority, performing planning functions assigned to it by the local government act (Act 462, 1993; Act 936, 2016) and the National Development Planning (Systems) Act (Act 480). Other specified enactments by the Assembly includes:

- i. Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1965 (Act 30 I)
- ii. The Auction Sales Act, 1989
- iii. Sections 296 and 300 of the Criminal Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29)
- iv. The Liquor Licensing Act, 1970 (Act 331)
- v. The Control and Prevention of Bushfires Act, 1961 (Act 94)
- vi. The National Weekly Lotto Act, 1961 (Act 94)
- vii. The Trees and Timber (Chain Saw Operators) Regulations, 1991 (L.I 1518)

Under Act 462, a District Assembly is permitted to delegate some of its functions to a sub-metropolitan district council, town, area, zonal or urban council or unit committee, or any other body or person determined by the Assembly. This is referred to as the delegated function of the Assembly. Specific instances are provided in the table below.

Table 3: Delegated functions of the District Assembly

Function	Delegated Authority
Revenue Collection	Area Councils
Sanitation	Urban and Area Council
Supervision of projects	Area council/ unit committee
Development planning and implementation	Area council
Enforcement of by-laws	Area council/ Unit Committee
Population and data collection	Area council

Source: (Ahwoi, 2010)

An executive committee is constituted with legal backing by section 12 of the local government Act (462) of 1993. The committee is supervised by the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE), who is recognized by section twenty (20) (2) of Act 462 as the political and executive head of the Assembly. The Executive Committee operates through sub-committees. A Municipal Coordinating Director (MCD) coordinating all the sub-committee activities. Under section twenty-four of Act 462, the executive committee has other sub-committees responsible for social services, works, justice, security, finance administration, and development planning.

The sub-committees have the added responsibility of putting together specific issues and submitting their recommendation to the Executive Committee of the General Assembly

for approval and subsequent implementation (Section 25 (1)). The Local Government Act (Act 462) establishes thirteen decentralized departments for the MMDAs.

Under section 21 of Act 462, the Executive Committee exercises the executive and coordinating functions of the Assembly. It coordinates the sub-committee's plans and programs and submits them as comprehensive plans of action to the Assembly. It also sees to implementation and resolutions of the Assembly and oversees the administration of the district in collaboration with the office of the Chief Executive.

The executive committee makes recommendations for appropriate actions to the MMDAs concerning the economic, social, spatial, and human settlement policies relating to the district's development. It also initiates plans to implement development programs and projects at the district level and recommends harmonizing activities in the municipality. In furtherance to that, the executive committee recommends the monitoring and evaluation of all policies, programs to the assembly as it develops and executes approved plans of the unit committees and zonal councils within the area of authority of the MMDAs.

Additionally, there are non-decentralized agencies operating in the MMDAs. They include the Judicial Service, Ghana Police Service, Ghana national fire service, Ghana postal service, Ghana telecom company, Ghana water company, prisons service, the electoral commission, non-formal education division, national commission on civic education, land valuation board, stool lands, center for national culture, Commission on Human Right and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Audit Service and National Youth Council.

The table below presents Ghana's decentralized departments, components units, and sub-committees of the MMDAs.

Table 4: Decentralized departments, components units, and sub-Committees

1. Decentralized Departments	Composition	Location in Assembly Sub-Committee
2. Central Administration	Central Admin. MPCU Births & Deaths Information Serv. Statistical Serv.	Executive Committee Finance & Admin. Social Services Development Planning Education Environment & Tourism Revenue Mobilization Women & Children
3. Finance	Controller & Acct. General	Finance & Administration Revenue Mobilization
4. Education, Youth, and Sports	Ghana Education Service Ghana Library Board	Education Sub-Committee
5. Metropolitan Health Department	Ghana Health Service	Social Services
6. Agriculture Department	N/A	Development Planning
7. Physical Planning Department	Town & Country Planning Dept. Parks & Gardens	Development Planning
8. Social Welfare and Community Dev. Dept.	Social Welfare Community Dev.	Social Services Women and Children
9. Natural Resource Conservation Department, Forestry, Game, and Wildlife Division	Parks and Gardens	Development Planning Environment and Tourism
10. Works Department	Works Department Rural Housing	Works
11. Trade & Industry	NBSSI/BAC/ Industry	Revenue Mobilization
12. Transport Department	N/A	
13. Disaster Prevention Dept	Fire Service	Social Services
14. Roads Department	Urban Roads	Social Services

Source: field data (2020)

2.5 Decentralization and public policy implementation framework

A decentralized system of government is a global trend that is practiced in both developed and developing countries with varied approaches, aims, and objectives. Notwithstanding, there is a consensus that portrays the practice as the most efficient way of involving the people in the decision-making and implementation process. In developing countries, decentralization is intrinsically a pro-poor policy aimed at bringing service delivery closer to the people forming the bulk of the population. Certainly, donor agencies, civil society organizations, and development partners encourage governments in developing countries to implement poverty-oriented programs in a decentralized approach (Ahwoi, 2010; Cohen, 2002; Gyimah-Boadi, 2004; Ong & Fritzen, 2007; Rondinelli et al., 1983; Schneider, 2003b).

Ahwoi (2010) and Schneider (2003) considers decentralization as a public policy. They explain public policy as the course of action taken by the government that guides a wide range of related activities in each area of administration. According to Cairney (2020), it is the action or decision taken by the government to address a national concern through a system of rules, regulations, legislations, and mandates instituted through a political process. In Cochran's (2005, 2014) view, public policy entails what is done and what is proposed to be done by the government to address a general concern. Moreover, Anderson (2015) defines public policy in terms of what is nearly done as a deliberate strategy taken by policymakers to find a solution to a problem or a subject of concern. In this regard, policymaking incorporates state and non-state actors such as government officials, agencies, and departments, and non-state actors.

Public policy in contemporary governance, according to Anderson (2015), does not just happen. Instead, public policies are initiated to accomplish specific goals or achieve the

desired end, which may or may not be conducted entirely. Cochran (2014) points out that public policy involves the decisions and actions taken by the government to manage a problem that concerns the general public. This implies that public policy is purposeful and goal-oriented instituted by governments to achieve the desired end. Thus, many governments in developing countries adopted and implemented decentralization as a general policy to bring democracy and development to the local level (Dye, 2005; Gardiner, 1977; Schneier, 1993).

According to DeGroff (2009), the idea and objective of similar policy implementation may vary from country to country depending on the type of government and what it seeks to achieve. Therefore, policy implementation takes various shapes and forms depending on the culture, location, institution, and purpose. According to Dye (2005), policy implementation is a process of working together to achieve purposefully set objectives. Goggin (1990) further explains that policy implementation involves planning, executing, performing, producing, or completing a given undertaking. It comprises actions taken by actors or groups of actors directed towards the attainment of set objectives. The notion of policy implementation was popularized by Wildavsky (1978, 1995).

According to Lester et al. (1987), implementation is considered a vital stage in the policy cycle for playing a pivotal role in transforming an idea or expectation into action to bring the desired change or remedy a situation. This stage in the policy cycle reflects change characterized by the activities involving various levels of agencies, establishments, organizations, and their players. Implementation studies imply the study of the process of change brought about by purposeful action. The policy process entails empirical analysis for policy studies, which is generally theorized based on the policy cycle.

According to Cairney (2020) and Wildavsky (1978), the policy cycle is a framework that provides a better understanding of policy implementation as a stage in relation to other stages. It is portrayed in the following stages in chronological order;

- i. **Agenda setting:** Agenda setting involves recognizing a problem, listing them in order of prominence, and setting issues that need action.
- ii. **Policy formulation:** policy formulation entails negotiations, consensus-building, and passage of legislation designed to remedy a situation. It also involves setting clear-cut objectives and identifying instruments to be used to achieve results.
- iii. **Policy implementation:** this stage involves actions taken to address the issues at stake and translation of the legislation into action to ensure the achievement of set goals.
- iv. **Policy evaluation:** it involves the consideration of the results that have been implemented and measuring the effect of the outcome and coming out with recommendations.

2.5.1 Approaches to Policy implementation

Policy implementation as a study developed extensively and progressively in the 1970s through to the 1990s. The concept and its development have been advanced through three main approaches (First, second and third-generation approaches). These approaches are developed on the nexus of the top-down and the bottom-up models, although no theoretical consensus is conclusive on any of them (Lester et al., 1987; O'Toole, 2010). Proponents of the top-down, as opposed to the bottom-up approach, are divided by the uniformity of empirical approach. The top-down approach, which is dominated by the rational management viewpoint, regards implementation as a product of a vigorous government system, comprising jurisdiction, compulsion, obligation, and conformity to the policy objectives. This viewpoint contradicts the bottom-up approach that proposes the early involvement of the affected people in the policy process, especially at the implementation stage (Ayee, 1994; Goggin, 1987; Lester et al., 1987).

Experts (Goggin, 1987; Lester et al., 1987) later proposed contingency-based models in policy research to draw attention to roles played by intergovernmental organizations and the political environment that influence the implementation process. For instance, Goggin (1990) advocated for an increased democratic approach to the various stages of public policy, giving attention to citizenship participation and consensus-building.

First-generation implementation research dominated the periods of the early 1970s to the 1980s. It was fundamentally based on how a definitive decision was processed at a site or different sites though it was greeted with a high-level of pessimism. The pessimistic feelings arose as a result of several case studies conducted during the period that came out with clear cases of implementation failures. Prominent among them were the works of Pressman and Wildavsky, whose results revealed some teething problems in the policy

implementation process, such as the missing link between policies and the intended outcome of implemented programs (Lester et al., 1987; Wildavsky, 1978).

The first generation saw a systematic effort to scrutinize, analyze, and probe to understand the factors that impeded public policy implementation. The scrutiny revealed that responses to the policy are designed by factors such as size, capacity, relationships, and the complexity of institutions. Theory building was not an integral part of the first generation of implementation studies; however, its most outstanding achievement was the creation of awareness on critical issues to the general public and contributing to literature that formed the basis for the inception of second-generation implementation research (Mazmanian, 1981, 1989; Taylor & Balloch, 2005).

The second-generation implementation researchers focused on theory building and based their analysis mainly on policy and practice relationships. Goggin et al. (1990) point out that the second-generation researchers recognized inconsistencies in the implementation process over time across policies and government entities. Thus, they made strenuous efforts to come out with reasons for the causes of implementation success or failure on a clear-cut standard of policy implementation. In effect, the second-generation researchers occupied themselves with developing an analytical framework and construction of models. This period was met with the debate on the top-down and bottom-up approach to implementation studies. While scholars such as Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1983 and Nakamura and Smallwood, 1980 argued for the top-down approach, others like Lipsky (1983) and Garcia-Molina (2000) proposed a bottom-up approach in direct contrast to the latter.

2.5.1.1 The Top-down approach

The top-down approach is policy-centered based on the viewpoint of policymakers. It holds the view that policymakers set out policy objectives with an effective procedure for achieving them. The crux of this approach is the policymakers' ability to exert control over the implementation process. Proponents of the top-down approach include scholars such as (Eugene, 2000; Mazmanian, 1989; Nakamura, 1980; Wildavsky, 1978). Consequently, the works of Pressman and Wildavsky led to the rational model approach.

Proponents of the top-down perspectives began with the assumption that; policy goals are set by policymakers and therefore play a crucial role in the implementation process. With this background, implementation researchers assumed the responsibility of analyzing means of accomplishing the policy goals. Thus, Wildavsky (1978) labeled implementation as relations between intentions and steps taken to achieve them. Wildavsky contemplated that implementation becomes problematic if the process has to pass through various entities. This was due to the synergism in most implementation settings, especially in federal states, which made them doubt a successful implementation process (Church, 1993; Nakamura, 1980).

In his book *"The implementation game: what happens after a bill becomes a law,"* Eugene (2000) postulated a metaphor to make the implantation process more related to policymakers. He used the metaphor to diagnose social and political actors' roles in the implementation process, thereby advancing the game theory tool's notion to explain implementation. Though his analysis induced the bottom-up approach, he was in no doubt a proponent of the top-down approach as an advocate for design and improvement of implementation by policymakers. Moreover, Eugene posited that the implementation

process will achieve its desired end only if policymakers systematically structure the process in collaboration with beneficiaries.

Maintaining their stand for the top-down approach, Mazmanian (1989) advocated for policy decisions implemented by representatives of policymakers and drew a sharp distinction between policy formulation and implementation. The top-down approach places much emphasis on policymakers and pays no heed to the role and involvement of the people affected by the policy. There was the assumption that policymakers would be able to take full control of the implementation process to achieve their aims. This assumption contributed to the falling out of the top-down approach. There was the notion that it led to authoritarianism and centralization of administration.

Wildavsky (1978) claims that contemporary societies have become more heterogeneous and pressed for more involvement in policies affecting their lives. However, the approach perceived implementation as entirely administrative and disregarded the political aspect. According to Berman (1978), the approach could spark resistance, disregard for authority, and affect sustainability since local actors are not actively involved in the implementation process. He believed that public policy recipients could become an impediment if they are sidelined in the implementation process. Other critics from the normative point of view argued that there are experts among recipients of public policy who might have some form of knowledge of the issues at stake and, therefore, be situated in an excellent position to make contributions to the policy implementation (Berman, 1978a; Elmore, 1996; Moulton, 2017; Nakamura, 1980; Winter, 1983).

2.5.1.2 Bottom-up model in the implementation policy

Theories of the bottom-up perspective of implementation emerged in the 1970s and 1960s in a conscious effort to respond to the top-down approach. Studies revealed a missing link between policy outcome and policy objectives. Therefore, researchers embarked on further studies to review actual proceedings, causes, and effects on the ground. Advocates of this proposition practically began their studies from the bottom to examine actors' role at the receiving level, assuming that they are closer to the problem and might show more concern than the central policymaker. Key proponents of the bottom-up theory included Michael Lipsky, 1980; Hull and Hjern, 1981; Elmore Richard, 1980 and Winter Soren, 2003. The bottom-up approach focuses on the formal and informal relations in the implementation process.

The approach begins with a societal problem centering on the individual at the center stage. Michael Lipsky analyzed the behavior of public sector workers, which he termed 'street-level bureaucrats' in his book *'Street-level bureaucracy: dilemmas of the individual in public services.'* He argued that the street-level bureaucrats are in constant touch with the people and hence understand their needs. Therefore, he recommended the active involvement of street-level bureaucrats not only in the implementation but in the formulation of policies that have a direct impact on the people. He considered their discretionary power as vital to the implementation process (Lipsky, 1983).

Hull and Hjern (1982) claim that the bottom-up approach is used to identify and map out the relationship between the various actors affected in a phenomenon. They emphasized the role of the network of actors in the implementation process and recommended that the effectiveness of any policy implementation depends on both public and private actors.

However, the bottom-up approach has been criticized for ignoring central policymakers' authority, which does not conform to standard democracy.

It is assumed that policy implementation should be carried out by actors who derive their authority from the public and are accountable to the people. Critics such as Matland Richard, who recommended a synthesis of the top-down and bottom-up approaches, argue that street-level bureaucrats' authority is not derived from the people (Lipsky, 1983). He argued that there is no effective mechanism to control street-level behavior and the discretionary authority given to the network of local actors. Lipsky's (1980) idea of local autonomy and its prominence on a network of local actors in service delivery by Hull and Hjern (1982) were criticized for being inconsistent since central actors can still set limitations.

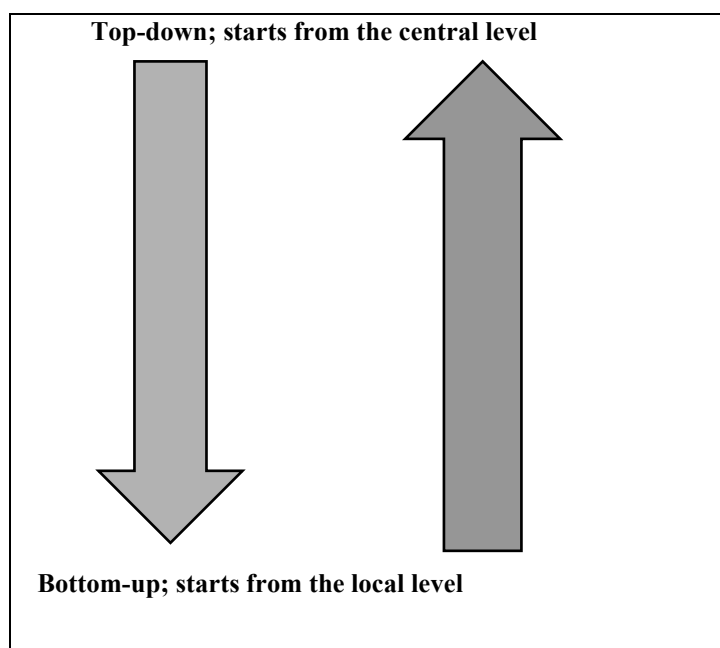
Table 5: Differences between Top-down and Bottom-up approach

Variables	Top-down perspective	Bottom-up perspective
Decision-maker	Policymakers	Street-level bureaucrats
Starting point	Statutory language	Social problems
Structure	Formal	Both formal and informal
Process	Purely administrative	Networking /Administrative
Authority	Centralization	Decentralization
Output/Outcomes	Prescriptive	Descriptive
Discretion	Top-level bureaucrats	Bottom-level bureaucrats

Source; Adapted from(Lipsky, 1983)

The top-down and bottom-up approaches are differentiated on research strategies, methodology, standards of participation, and implementation mode. As the name implies, the top-down approach analyzes policy decisions and implementation in a descending order emanating from the ‘top’ echelon of the political divide ‘down’ to the policy’s recipients. Conversely, the bottom-up analyzes individuals and network of actors at the local level who are directly and indirectly affected by the problem at the ‘bottom’ and convey the decision making and implementation to the ‘top’. Analysis of the top-down approach centers on policy formulation and achievement of policy objectives. In contrast, the bottom-up approach believes that policy formulation cannot be detached from policy implementation to achieve the policy objectives. As a result, the bottom-up approach does not just look at a stage of the public cycle but a holistic process. Nevertheless, both approaches aim at achieving policy objectives, though they tend to ignore reality as put forward by the other.

Figure 5: Outlook of the top-down versus the bottom-up approach



Source: Lipsky (1983)

2.5.1.3 Synthesis of the top-down and Bottom-up approaches

A combination of the top-down and the bottom-up approaches was developed to give a comprehensive overview of the implementation process. Key proponents for the amalgamation of the approaches were Elmore (1996) and Goggin et al. (1990). The approach considered the strengths and weaknesses of the top-down and the bottom-up approaches. With this method, elements of both sides were fused to avoid theoretical variances. Additionally, Elmore propounded the idea of ‘forward and ‘backward mapping’ with the claim that implementation's success depends on the interconnection of both elements. Blending elements of the top-down and the bottom-up approaches ensued in a model grounded on the communication system of the intergovernmental approach. It indicated that several factors come together into play to induce the central government and local bodies to act together in the implementation process. Proponents of the model posit that implementation is effective when policymakers and beneficiaries agree to work together. In support of this model, Grindle (1980) regarded the policy implementation process as more interactive than linear. Like its predecessor, the second-generation model was as well criticized for its approaches. Scholars such as Hjern (1980) and Goggin (1990) criticized it for using several case studies without validation. They argued that both the first and second-generation implementation models could not provide enough grounds for the synthesis approach. The criticisms formed the foundation of the third-generation model.

The third-generation implementation researchers are acclaimed for designing clear and concise theoretical models and operational definitions of concepts and development of implementation indicators. The studies used comparative case studies based on precise hypotheses and data analysis with a suitable qualitative tool or statistical technique and case studies for evaluation (Goggin, 1990; Winter, 1983).

According to Berman (1978b), macro and microanalysis by policymakers were intermingled in third-generation implementation research. The proposed Macro level operates on the structured system. It emphasizes regularities of procedures and the set-up of a separate action in terms of status in the interpersonal network in the implementation process. He observed that organizational decision was influenced by front-runners guided by their self-interest, which normally produces unrealistic results.

Indeed Studies on decentralization in Ghana by scholars such as Ahwoi (2000) and Ayee (2008) affirm progress in implementing the policy since the late 1980s. The policy is considered a measure to empower citizens and bring democracy and development to the local level. However, despite the comprehensive decentralization policy in Ghana, there is still a dominant, top-down approach in the political and administrative system. The complexity of certain political administrations, public actions, participatory decision-making, and governance practice with formal and informal structures call for a cooperative effort. Accordingly, there is the need to adopt a synthesis of the top-down and bottom-up approach to the decentralization policy in Ghana.

2.6 Summary

The chapter delved into the concept, nature, and forms of decentralization. A varied definition of the concept and the different interpretation given its nature and practice has been examined in this chapter. The chapter also reviewed the historical overview of global governance reforms that set the pace for decentralization in developing countries. Moreover, the chapter presented an outline of the decentralized local government system in Ghana. Decentralization as a policy implementation with highlights on the top-down, bottom-up, and a synthesis of both in the implementation process was further examined in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

3. GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature on the contextual overview of governance and democracy in Ghana. It examines the local government institution in Ghana with the view to generate a better understanding of the system and practice. Accordingly, the structure, composition, and roles of Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and their sub-district structures are detailed in this chapter. Additionally, it analyzes the role, participation, and correlation between Traditional Authorities and local government structures. The concluding section of this chapter examines development planning and implementation in Ghana.

3.1.1 Ghana: Country profile

Ghana is located on the west of Africa along the Gulf of Guinea, bordered on the west by Cote d'Ivoire, east by Togo, and north by Burkina Faso. According to the World Population Review (2020), Ghana's population is estimated at approximately 31.4 million based on United Nations data. The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2019) revealed the gender distribution of the population to be 50.9 percent males and 49.2 female with a population growth rate of 2.2 percent. The population is concentrated along the coast and principal cities such as Accra, Cape Coast, Kumasi, Secondi-Takoradi, and Tema, which makes it unevenly distributed. The country's population pyramid is broad base, indicating a young age structure with an estimated 58 percent under 25 years. The total dependency ratio is 73 percent (2016, Est). Notwithstanding, the world Bank places Ghana among the first ten fastest-growing economies in Africa, with GDP growth at 7.1 percent (2019 Est).

The country is heterogeneous, comprising tribes who speak more than fifty (50) languages and dialects. The largest linguistic groups are the Akans, comprising the Fantis along the coast, the Akuapem, Akyem, and Ashantis in the middle belt and forest regions of the country. Others include the Guans on the Volta River plains; Ga and the Ewes in the south and southeast, respectively; and the Moshi, Dagomba, Mamprusi tribes of the northern and upper regions. Though the most widely spoken language is Twi, English is the official and commercial language in the country. English is used as an administrative language and medium of instruction in schools and colleges up to the university level (Arhin, 1995; MLGRD, 2019).

Historically, Ghana, which was known in pre-colonial times as the Gold coast, gained independence from the colonial rule of British administration on March 6th, 1957. Subsequently, the country has passed through three democratic dispensations, all of which were interrupted by military takeovers. However, the country re-legitimized itself through a transition to multiparty democracy that ushered in the fourth republic in 1992, consequently re-establishing firm democratic principles based on a unicameral legislative system with a well-built decentralized hierarchical government structure (Boafo-Arthur, 2007; Nsarkoh, 1994).

The state and governance structure of Ghana is a unitary republic with multi-party democracy. The governance framework takes place in a representative presidential system where the president acts as head of state and head of government. According to Adjetey (2006), the country has upheld a stable democracy based on democratic principles such as the rule of law, universal adult suffrage, and respect for fundamental human rights since the transition to multiparty democracy in 1992.

The Ghanaian constitution was approved through a referendum and promulgated in 1992. The foundation of the constitution is based on English common law with the integration of traditional customary laws. The head of the country is the president. The president is elected by universal adult suffrage for a four-year tenure of office renewable on two terms to act as both the president and head of government. For managerial purposes, the country is divided into sixteen (16) administrative regions, which are subdivided into 260 Metropolitan Municipal District Assemblies (MMDAs) (ILGS & FES, 2016).

The figure below shows Ghana's location on the map of Africa and a map of Ghana showing the country's administrative division.

Figure 6: Location and Map of Ghana



Source: (MLGRD, 2019)

3.2 Ghana's Roads to Democracy

Soon after attaining political independence from the British colonial administration in 1957, Ghana's governance history has been characterized by a cycle of military coups punctuated by short periods of democratic rule. However, since the country ushered into the fourth republic in 1992 after three previous unsuccessful attempts, the government has achieved relative political stability and a good governance record, according to a united nation human development report (UNDP, 2010, 2019a).

The road to Ghana's current fourth republic is very eventful. It all started on March 6th, 1957, when the "Gold Coast" declared political independence from the British colonial administration. The country adopted the name Ghana from an ancient empire to mark the current status and new dispensation of self-government. According to Crook (1987) and Arhin (2002), soon after ushering in the first republic in 1960, the country's democratic governance structure veered into repression when its Westminster-styled parliamentary constitution inherited from Britain was modified to give unlimited powers to the first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Richard Rathbone (2001b) asserts that the situation incurred the people's displeasure, and consequently, a joint military and police coup d'état toppled Nkrumah's administration in 1966 to end the first republic of Ghana.

3.2.1 The first republic of Ghana

Hitherto, the governance structure of the first republic was a constitutional monarchy along with parliamentary democracy with a Governor-General representing the British Monarch as the head of State and Kwame Nkrumah as the Prime Minister. According to Abdulai & Quantson (2008), Ghana's first republic constitution made provisions for promoting good governance through adherence to political and civil liberties, respect for fundamental human rights, and administration of justice. The 1957 independence

constitution (Article 67) made provision for establishing Regional Assemblies from its initial five regions. The regional Assemblies assumed jurisdiction over local government administration in service areas such as agriculture, education, communications, public works, health services, housing, town, and country planning. The Constitution was characterized by mandatory mechanisms such as the requirement for ordinary provisions to be amended through the two-thirds majority of parliament and that of entrenched provisions requiring majority approval of not less than two-thirds of all the Regional Assemblies.

According to Gocking (2005), shortly after taking over the country's administration as the first democratically elected president of the country, Kwame Nkrumah and his CPP government took advantage of its Parliamentary majority and instituted stringent measures aimed at neutralizing opposition to his government. For instance, he spearheaded the passage of the "Alien deportation Act" in July 1957 and, later, the "Avoidance of Discrimination" Act, 1957 (Act 38) in December 1957. These Acts of parliament proscribed the formation of regional and ethnic-based parties. The Preventive Detention Act was passed in 1958, which made it possible to detain up to five years (later extended to ten years) persons suspected of being involved in any activity considered by the government as prejudicial to the security of the country. Similarly, there were other acts supported by constitutional amendments, which rendered the 1957 Constitution insignificant.

Eventually, in 1960, the government proposed a complete overhaul of the 1957 Constitution. The Nkrumah government asserted that the constitution is an imposition of the British administration and therefore tagged it as symbolizing the colonial era's relic. Consequently, the government embarked on a process to promulgate a new constitution.

A National Assembly was constituted after passing the Plebiscite Act of 1960, which empowered it to transform itself into a Constituent Assembly to make proposals for a new Constitution.

Following the results of the April 1960 plebiscite and presidential elections on June 29, 1960, the National Assembly enacted the new Republican Constitution, which came into force on July 1, 1960, to give Ghana a republican status.

Subsequently, the 1960 first republican constitution changed Ghana's parliamentary system into a presidential system that vested significant powers on the President. For example, the President could rule by decree. Also, whenever considered in the national interest, the president could exercise control by legislative instrument, which may alter any legislation other than the 1960 Constitution. Additionally, Article 55 of the 1960 republican Constitution provided that the president's actions and inaction were not subject to judicial review: thus, subjecting Parliament and the Judiciary to Executive control and direction. More so, no provision was made to guarantee and protect fundamental human rights. Instead, the Constitution only provided a nine-point Declaration of Fundamental Principles to be made by the president upon office assumption. Thus, civil and political rights were precariously curtailed. Not these alone, in September 1962, the Parliament passed a private member's motion to make Nkrumah the life president, and Ghana was subsequently declared as a socialist state (Buah, 1977, 2003; R. Gocking, 2005).

Ultimately, in January 1964, a referendum was held, which sought approval from the people for two amendments. The first was to turn Ghana into a one-party state and the second to bestow in the president's enhanced powers. The president's proposed enhanced powers included the ability to dismiss judges of the supreme court at any time and for any reason considered befitting to him. Notwithstanding, the referendum was won by

“Yes” votes, making the CPP the only political party in Ghana by law and Nkrumah, Ghana's lifetime president. Subsequently, Nkrumah dismissed the chief justice, Sir Arku Korsah, and two Appeal Court Judges for acquitting three CPP members alleged to have been implicated in an assassination plot on the president's life. Accordingly, parliamentary and presidential elections slated for June 1965 were canceled, and Nkrumah was nominated unopposed by the CPP's central committee as the president. Subsequently, through a radio announcement, Kwame Nkrumah declared that all the CPP parliamentary candidates are automatically elected (Rathbone, 2000; *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1969, 1970*).

According to Gocking (2005), governance under Kwame Nkrumah at this period was characterized by despotism. He asserts that political and civil liberties were eroded, political patronage, corruption, and mismanagement of state-owned enterprises were the order of the day. Both private and state-owned companies began to operate below their capacity as the government failed to provide them with the required subsidies. Rathbone (2000) points out that, on February 26, 1966, the National Liberation Council (NLC) overthrew the Kwame Nkrumah-led CPP government, abolished the first republican constitution ruled the country by the military decree until 1969.

By November 18, 1966, the National Liberation Council (NLC), according to Buah (2003), had established a Constitutional Commission led by the Chief Justice, Edward Akufo-Addo, to enquire from Ghanaians, the type of constitution to be adopted. To avoid the repetition of the presidential dictatorship that occurred under Kwame Nkrumah's administration, the commission recommended, among other things, a parliamentary system of governance.

According to Boafo-Arthur (2008), one significant feature of the 1969 Constitution that ushered in the second republic was the provision made for a ceremonial president who may not be a member of any political party. The ceremonial president was to be indirectly elected by an electoral college as head of government. Again, even though the National Assembly had absolute authority and control over lawmaking, any Acts of Parliament could only become law unless the president assented to it. The Judicial arm was also charged with justice administration, with its independence insured by the Constitution. There were also essential entrenched provisions to promote and protect all Ghanaians' fundamental human rights and freedoms. Generally, these proposals were intended to avoid arbitrariness, thereby limiting the exercise of executive control.

3.2.2 The second republic of Ghana

In May 1969, the ban on political parties was lifted, with four main political parties emerging to contest the parliamentary election in August 1969. The Progress Party (PP) won with 105 out of the 140 seats to form the government, with Kofi Abrefa Busia as the Prime Minister. The National Alliance of Liberals (NAL) also won 29 seats to create an official opposition. Busia's Progress Party administration was inaugurated on September 3, 1969, to usher Ghana into a second republic. A three-member Presidential Commission comprising of the erstwhile NLC military regime was also formed to perform the president's functions until the election of Chief Justice Edward Akufo-Addo as president to replace the council on August 31, 1970 (Buah, 2003; R. Gocking, 2005).

The Second Republican Constitution represented an excellent prospect for nurturing a functioning democracy in Ghana. Nevertheless, several infractions of the administration dashed most Ghanaians' faith in the system. For example, in 1970, 568 public servants were sacked in the government's public sector retrenchment exercise, which was carried

out in a manner that played to suspicions that most affected workers were opposition sympathizers. Again, the administration's decision not to comply with a court order to reinstate one of the dismissed workers dealt a significant blow to the government's image. Furthermore, in the famous "*J. H. Mensah Affair*," in which contrary to Article 61 of the 1969 Constitution, the finance minister (J. H. Mensah) was found to be engaged by a private business as a director, but despite pressure by opposition elements, Prime Minister Busia refused to discharge him of his duties. More importantly, a censure motion sponsored by the opposition against the Finance Minister was shot down in the National Assembly by 28 to 81 votes. Owusu-Acheampong (1994) asserts that the National Assembly failed to establish the Ombudsman's office as was stipulated in the 1969 Constitution (Articles 100 and 101).

More so, all Busia's appointed ministers of state also failed to declare their assets as a constitutional requirement. Finally, the administration's quest to address economic challenges it inherited made it extremely unpopular following several brutal austerity measures it undertook. For instance, introducing a five percent national development levy on income above a certain level to raise more revenue made it lose the support of its traditional support-base, the middle-class. Again, the national currency and the cedi's devaluation by 44 percent also caused more distrust in the fiscal administration of the government.

Furthermore, the government's various austerity measures and its attempts to control the military, including the introduction of rent on officers' accommodation and import duties on military supplies, created severe tension between the administration and the army. Besides the economic challenges, there were also serious ethnic tensions resulting from fallouts from the 1969 parliamentary election, which primarily reflected the ethnic

(Akan-non-Akan) divisions. Boafo-Arthur (2008) states that, consequently, Colonel I. K. Acheampong and his associates overthrew the government and abolished the 1969 second republican constitution. Summarily, the new military regime, National Redemption Council (NRC), later Supreme Military Council (SMC I & II), arrested and detained over 1300 former political leaders and also banned all political parties. According to Crook (1987), the new military regime rule between 1969 and 1979, after which a constitution drafting committee was set up. Based on the commission recommendations for multi-party democracy, a constituent assembly was established, and a ban on political parties' activities was again lifted.

3.2.3 The third republic of Ghana

The Constituent Assembly came up with the 1979 Constitution, modeled on the American presidential system of government, with strict separation of powers between the Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary. A total of six (6) political parties: People's National Party (PNP), Popular Front Party (PFP), United National Convention (UNC), Action Congress Party (ACP), Social Democratic Party (SDP), and Third Force Party (TFP) were cleared to take part in both the parliamentary and presidential elections held in May and June 1979 respectively. However, before the presidential elections were held, it must be pointed out that on June 4, 1979, the Jerry Rawlings-led Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) staged the bloodiest coup ever in Ghana's history, which was labeled as *"house-cleaning exercise."* The coup makers intended to *"erase all manifestations of corruption, profiteering, or misconduct"* in the previous regimes. The AFRC held power for three months before organizing presidential and parliamentary elections on June 18, 1979, which the Peoples National Party led by Dr. Hilla Limann

won convincingly. On September 24, 1979, he was inaugurated to usher in the Third Republic of Ghana (Oquaye, 1980; Sillah, 1984).

Limann's administration was short-lived as it faced numerous challenges upon assumption of office. First, President Hilla Limann was not that famous in Ghana's political landscape but got the opportunity to lead PNP after his uncle Imoro Igala, a close contender, was disqualified from contesting the 1979 presidential election. He was found guilty of illegal behavior by the Assets Commission of the NLC military regime in 1966. Again, Limann did not command enough support within his party's rank and file, so he could not control and ensure intra-party discipline. Furthermore, the presence of members of the erstwhile AFRC, especially Rawlings, brought considerable pressure to bear on Limann's administration, making it feel as though it was on probation as it was continually charged to promote principles of integrity, accountability, and transparency. Moreover, the public sector was ineffective and paralyzed due to its neglect by a prolonged military dictatorship. Francis Buah (2003) pointed out that, Limann's administration eventually faced numerous economic problems such as a high rate of inflation and low productivity, especially in the Agricultural sector, which led to shortage and hoarding commodities coupled with a high percentage of unemployment.

Consequently, notwithstanding the party's command of the majority in parliament, the people rose against the government, making it extremely difficult for the executives to marshal necessary support to get his budget statement and economic policy approved, which resulted in a government shutdown. The animosity among the party leaders even intensified as they openly accused each other of sabotage. Also, Limann had problems with the military. Some service commanders perceived to be loyal to Rawlings attempted to purge it to assert their control and authority over the service. The milieu resulted in

many serving military officers' dismissal, including the Chief of Defense Staff, Brigadier Nunoo-Mensah. The issue with the military and other actions of the president further politicized the army.

Subsequently, undue tension arose between the military high command and Limann's administration. Moreover, attempts to revamp the economy also failed to yield the intended results as anticipated foreign aid and investment could not materialize. Thus, many sectors of the economy sharply declined. More so, the administration's request for a billion-dollar loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) could not come to fruition because it failed to meet the Fund's conditions before disbursement (Boafo-Arthur, 2007; Buah, 2003; Talton, 2010).

It was against this backdrop of confusion, ineptitude, and ineffective leadership in the governance structure to address these challenges that informed Jerry John Rawlings' return on December 31, 1981, in a military takeover. After taking over, Mr. Rawlings formed the PNDC government, which became the longest-serving military regime in Ghana's political history. The PNDC government, led by Rawlings, ruled for over a decade before organizing a multi-party election in 1993 to transit government to civilian rule. More importantly, the transition to democracy in 1993 was starkly different from previous changes as the PNDC regime transformed itself into a political party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC).

3.2.4 The fourth republic of Ghana

Boadi (2004) states that the early 1990s onward saw the return of multiparty democracy in several African countries and the promulgation of new constitutions to help consolidate democratic governance. According to Huntington (1993), the *third wave of democratization* brought severe pressure on authoritarian leaders to adopt multi-party democratic political systems. Pye (2015) describes this period as “*the global crisis of authoritarianism.*” (Morris & Ojienda (2013) point out that the African continent witnessed, more than ever, agitation for comprehensive constitutional reforms and widespread participation in the decision-making process.

It was during this period that Rawlings found himself as the military leader of the country. Consequently, appropriate measures were instituted by the PNDC government for Ghana to re-legitimize itself. Accordingly, the path was set for conducting a multi-party election in 1992 to usher in Ghana's fourth republic. Unlike previous transitions, Frimpong (2017) and Abdulai & Crawford (2010) assert that the PNDC closely controlled the process and all institutions that supervised the transition process.

Jerry John Rawlings won the 1992 Presidential election and became the first president of Ghana's fourth republic. Notwithstanding the parliamentary majority, he was met with stiff opposition. For instance, the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the largest competitor, made an allegation of widespread malpractices and irregularities during the presidential election and boycotted the parliamentary election scheduled for December 1992. Consequently, only the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and a few independent candidates contested the subsequent parliamentary election. The NDC won 189 out of the 200 parliamentary seats.

Indeed, the fourth republic democratization has been the most extended surviving multi-party democratic rule in Ghana. Since the fourth republic's onset in 1992, seven successful elections have been held, with the eighth (8th) to be held on December 7, 2020. Ghana has also experienced three successful power alternations: 2000, 2008, and 2016 between the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC). This achievement makes Ghana a model democracy and a relatively stable political system in Africa (Abdulai & Crawford, 2010; Debrah, 2016).

According to AfriMAP et al. (2007), several essential provisions and developments, including a popularly elected president and legislature, a two-term limit to presidential tenure, a bill of rights, an independent judiciary, ombudsman, a free media, and the increasing culture of vigilant and vibrant civil society organizations and growing democratic culture are characterized by governance under the fourth republic.

3.3 Local Government and Participatory Development

The UNDP (1997) defines the local government as a subsection of state institutions, systems, and processes that provide direct and indirect services to the people at the local level. In the view of Enderlein et al. (2010), local governance system is executed through a diverse set of political relationships amid various players, formal and informal, regional or locally based, which coordinate affairs at the community level. According to Wallis (1991), local government is a section of the government of a state tasked to address the needs of the people at the grassroots. The implication is that, local government administration is directed by a body of persons that obtain their power and authority from the central government. In Ghana, for instance, local government units are created by the national constitution, which stipulates the structure, composition, and functions.

Principally, the purpose of local government is to enhance democratic participation and accelerated development at the lower levels (Ahwoi, 2000; Nanda, 2006). Additionally, Hewson et al. (1999) point out that the local government is established to formulate a development force encompassing most people in the state, significantly transforming rural communities. In this sense, local governance serves as a medium for a higher level of training, which would result in administrative achievement and inspire the spirit of patriotism in the local community (Boateng, 1957; R Rathbone, 1993).

Muriu (2013) noted that one of the strategies adopted by countries to address poverty in rural communities included creating an avenue for local participation in the decision-making process. Accordingly, in developing countries such as Brazil (B. Cohen, 2017), India (Craig, 1981), and several in Africa (Badu & Stephen (2010) as cited in (Ayee, 2008) depended on local government units to address critical development issues in the rural area to bridge the gap between local and urban dwellers. A situation that has

prompted several developing countries to strengthen local government services to address development challenges. Stacey (2015) added that local government and community-based civil society organizations collaborate to provide the needed resources to promote rural communities' development.

As indicated by Wunsch (1980), development requires an atmosphere of non-rigidity which is inadequately provided in a centralized system of government. Ensuring broader local participation in the decision-making process provides the avenue for the citizens to present their needs and aspirations to the central government through the local representatives. In this case, the local government's effectiveness is guaranteed to solve critical development problems bedeviling the rural communities (Rathbone, 1993; Ahmad & Abu Talib, 2011).

An effective local governance system is imperative in enhancing the well-being of the people as it provides an avenue for the people to be part of the governance process and to showcase some level of control over local affairs and make their views known, especially when they are not interested in a policy initiated by the central government Bangase (2018).

In this way, the people are allowed to be part of the decision-making and implementation process and initiate their programs and policies to address issues that affect them. This can be done through the mobilization of local resources to promote social and economic development and to enhance national unity. It is argued that decentralization enables the poor and the underprivileged in rural communities to obtain a fair share of government policies and engage in decision-making processes on issues affecting their lives. In effect, decentralization promotes widespread decision-making in the development process (AfriMAP et al., 2007; Ahmad & Abu Talib, 2011; Ayee, 1994; Mohammed, 2013).

3.4 Historical Overview of Local Government in Ghana

The emergence of the local governance system in Ghana can be traced to the onset of the British colonial administration, where the colonial administration administered the colonies through heads of local institutions. Pre-colonial Ghana had a structured system of local governance where several communities had an exclusive governance structure before colonialism. In other parts of the continent, the local government system emerged in situations where local communities made efforts to develop their system of administration to embark on self-help projects, while in other places, it evolved based on the pressures emanated from industrialization and urbanization (K. Badu & Stephen, 2010; Buah, 2003; R. S. Gocking, 1994; Sackeyfio-Lenock, 2014).

By 1874, the southern regions of the Gold Coast, now Ghana, have formally proclaimed a British colony. Almost three decades later, in 1902, the kingdom of Ashanti and its dependent regions were brought under the full control of the British Administration. At the same time, the northern regions became a British protectorate. By 1956, the trans-Volta Togoland, the Ashanti, the Fante, and Northern protectorates were merged with the Gold Coast to become the Gold Coast colony, which later gained independence in 1957 under the new name Ghana. Subsequently, in 1900 three chiefs and three other African citizens were added to the legislative council to represent the municipalities of Accra, Cape Coast, and Sekondi. (Arhin, 2002; Ayee, 2008; Boafo-Arthur, 2007; BUSIA, 2018).

According to Crowder (1984), the British Government was represented in the Gold Coast by a governor who was appointed by the colonial administration to oversee the day-to-day administration of the colony. The governor was given the mandate to appoint an Executive and Legislative council to assist him in carrying out his function. The executive council, which was initially made up of Europeans, served as an advisory body and made

a recommendation on laws and taxes subject to the approval of the governor. In contrast, the legislative council was made of some members of the executive council and unofficial members initially appointed by the governor (Crowder, 1984).

By and large, the British adopted an indirect rule system where the colonial government rules the colony through pre-existing local powers, structures, and institutions. According to BUSIA (2018), colonial policies were made by the British colonial governor and implemented by local institutions at the local level under indirect rule. The system, which was first introduced in northern Nigeria in 1945 by Sir Fredrick Lugard, recognized traditional rulers such as Chiefs, emirs, and Clan heads as heads of their respective domains and constituted an integral part of the British colonial administration. (Buah, 2003; Nsarkoh, 1994; Richard Rathbone, 2000).

In the Gold Coast, the indirect rule system redefined the role and powers of the chief. For example, in an instance where a particular chief's loyalty was questionable, a loyal person was appointed as a chief in his stead. Richard Rathbone (2000) indicated that a unit of local governments known as native authorities was introduced in such instances. Asante & Ayee (2010) asserted that the use of parallel traditional chiefs known as native authorities as head of governance structure in some local communities by the colonial government against customs and traditions of the Gold Coast weakened the authority of chiefs and the traditional institutions.

Local governments in the Gold Coast later developed and improved with the passing of ordinances and regulations. As part of efforts to remedy challenges associated with the colonial system of Governance and make local government more resilient, the Municipal Ordinance (1859) was promulgated to establish municipalities in the Coastal towns of Gold Coast. A new ordinance was later passed in 1943 to elect town councilors for

Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, and Cape Coast. In furtherance to that, in 1953, the Municipal Council Ordinance was introduced to give the local government institution some legal backing. Subsequently, the first local government council was commissioned in 1951 after the 1948 disturbances based on the reports by the Coussey committee set up to find out the causes to prescribe a recommendation (Buah, 1977; Gocking, 1994).

Gocking (1994) asserts that the indirect rule system was implemented in collaboration with self-help community groups, farmers unions, and local organizations in a collaborative manner. He pointed out that, even though the local governance system in Africa dates back to the pre-colonial era, concerted efforts toward its reformation were seen in the 1950s after colonialism. According to Nsarkoh (1994), the local governance practiced in the colonial period was more of a concentration of power with the colonial administration than stakeholder participation and local autonomy. Notwithstanding, local governance took a different dimension soon after the second world war and during the struggle for independence.

During this period, the local governance system was weakened with not much authority to function as considerable power was concentrated in the central government. Ahwoi (2010) noted that significant efforts were made in the 1950s onward to promote grassroots participation in local governance, thereby given much attention to the practice. The government at that time, in its quest to enhance public participation in governance, heightened local government laws, which led to the decentralization reforms devolving a considerable amount of the central government power to the local units. Incessantly, since independence in 1957, successive governments have earnestly enrolled several reforms in the local government system in Ghana to promote local development.

Precisely in 1961, a Local Governance Act (Act 54) was passed to initiate a new decentralized and local government system aimed at ensuring a distinctive kind of central and local government institutional arrangements. The central government agencies attracted well-qualified personnel but had less defined responsibility and often referred cases of national interest to the ministries at the center for consideration. As a result, the local government bodies were mandated to perform certain duties for specific localities and worked alongside the central government agencies in their respective locales. They were charged with the provision of municipal services and amenities in their localities without requisite authority and resources for delivery. There were also inadequacies in the right caliber of personnel with the requisite skills and professional expertise. Their inability to raise funds to meet their obligations and attract competent officers rendered them weak and inept. The institution of local government soon after independence, according to Ahwoi (2010), faced the challenge of duplication of functions and overlap of authority.

This duplication of roles slowed development, and disorientation at the local level resulting in a dichotomy in the administrative system brought to bear some attempts in 1971 to reform the institutional structure of local administration in Ghana. Nevertheless, the promulgation of the Local Government Administration Act (Act 359) in 1971 and its implementation dragged on until 1974 due to the sudden overthrow of the Busia-led Progress Party (PP) in 1972. The original act was amended as the Local Government Administration (Amendment) Decree, 1974 (NRCD 258) to create a monolithic and single hierarchy model of the District Councils (DCS), with various mandates: agriculture, administration, education, survey, and town planning, social welfare, community development, public health, engineering, fire service, and sports. Some local councils were also merged later to create larger district councils, thus reducing the

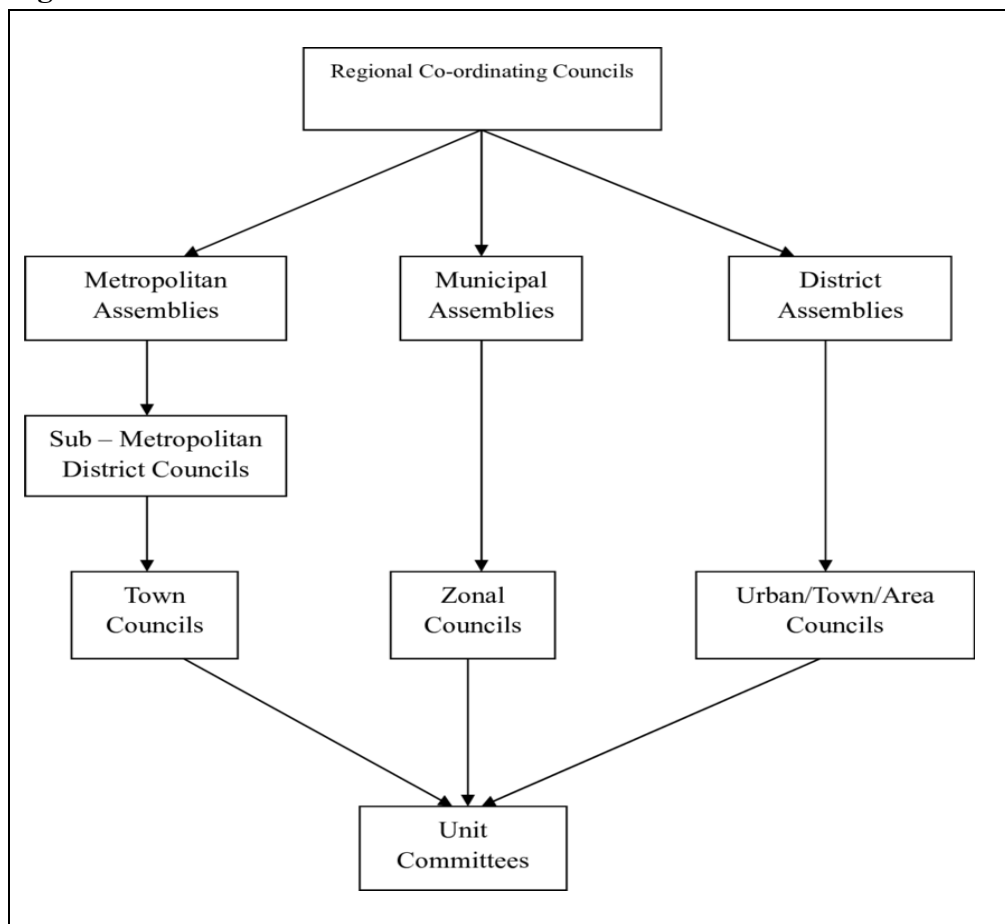
number of District Council areas to only 65. All members were also appointed as District Councilors. The characteristic problem of the 1974 system was that it lacked autonomy, making the DCs more vulnerable and overly dependent on the central government funding and control. The system was also undemocratic as all members were handpicked by the head of state. A complete Decentralization and local governance reforms were subsequently commenced in 1980, with the fundamental objective of devolving central government power to encourage grassroots participation in governance. As a result, more emphasis was granted to local authorities to control a specific portion of the revenue mobilization and create access to the communal involvement of the local resources (Ahwoi, 2010; Ayee, 2008; ILGS & FES, 2010, 2016).

3.4.1 Composition and functions of Local Governance structures

Article 462 of the 1992 constitution empowers the president of the republic to upgrade the status of a settlement into Municipal, Metropolitan, or District per population changes. Previously, the status of many districts had changed since the commencement of the decentralization concept in 1988. For instance, in 1988, 45 new districts were created, increasing the number of districts from 65 to 110 before the first-ever local level elections in the country. Later in 2003, 28 more districts were created by the government to increase the number from 110 to 138. Again, in 2007, the number was increased from 138 to 170 after 32 more districts were created. Furthermore, in 2012, 46 more additions and expansions were made, which lead to a total number of MMDAs from 170 to 216. In 2017, after six more regions were carved out of the existing ten, 32 more districts were created to increase the number from 216 to 254. In 2018, 6 more districts were crafted out of the existing ones bringing the total number of MMDAs to 260 for the 2019 district assembly elections (Ahwoi, 2018; ILGS & FES, 2010, 2016).

The local government structure in Ghana is made up of the regional coordinating council (RCC), a four-tier Metropolitan assembly, three-tier Municipal assembly, urban/ town /area, or Zonal Council (UTZC), and Unit Committee. The table below presents the local government structure in Ghana.

Figure 7: Local Government structure in Ghana



Source: (Ahwoi, 2010)

Table 6: Summary of Regional Breakdown of the current 260 MMDAs in Ghana

REGION	METROS	MUNICIPALITIES	DISTRICTS	TOTAL
Ashanti Region	1	15	27	43
Bono Region		5	7	12
Bono East Region		4	7	11
Ahafo Region		3	3	6
Central Region	1	6	15	22
Eastern Region		13	20	33
Greater Accra Region	2	23	4	29
Northern Region	1	5	10	16
North East		2	4	6
Savannah Region		1	6	7
Upper East Region		4	11	15
Upper West Region		4	7	11
Volta Region		6	12	18
Oti Region		2	6	8
Western Region	1	8	5	14
Western North		3	6	9
Total	6	104	150	260

Source: field data (2020)

3.4.1.1 The Functioning of Local Government Structures in Ghana

The Metropolitan Municipal/District Chief executive (MCE/DCE); Article 243 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana provides for the position of a Metropolitan or District Chief Executive (MCE/DCE) for each district who is appointed by the President of the Nation subsequent to the endorsement of up to two-thirds majority of Assembly members present and voting at the meeting. The chief executive is nominated by the president, approved by two-thirds of the assembly members present and voting, and then formally appointed by the president. The Metropolitan Municipal District Chief Executive (MMDCE) represents the Central Government in the MMDA and acts as the chairman of the executive committee of the Assembly and, as such, presides over their meetings. The MMCE is responsible for the day-to-day performance of the executive and administrative functions of the District Assembly and supervision of the departments of the Assembly. As a representative of the central government, the MMDCE combines political executive and administrative powers. The MMDCE holds office for four years and could be re-appointed for another four-year tenure. The office of MMDCE becomes vacant if a two-thirds majority vote of no confidence is passed against him by all the members of the MMDA. The chief executive can also be removed from office by the President when he resigns or dies.

The presiding member (PM): The constitution (Article 244 (3)) further provides that the District Assembly shall have a presiding member who the Assembly shall elect from among its members by at least two-thirds majority of all the members of the Assembly. The presiding member presides over meetings of the Assembly and performs such other functions as may be prescribed by law. The presiding member holds office for a period of two-year duration and is eligible for re-election. He or She may be removed from office with a vote of no confidence by a two-thirds majority of all Assembly members.

The member of parliament (MP); The parliament of Ghana has a total of 275 members who represent a constituency within the MMDAs. The member of parliament (MP) serves as a link between Parliament and the Assembly. The Member of Parliament is part of the District Entity Tender Committee (DETC). However, the MP is a non-voting member of the Assembly. The MP guide the Assembly on legislation passed by Parliament to ensure that the Assembly's byelaws are not in conflict with national legislation and assist in the identification of problems of their electorates to advocate for their needs in Parliament. The MP also takes the responsibility of briefing the Assembly about proceedings in Parliament at Assembly meetings and provide feedback on projects and programs that are of interest to the MMDA.

Metropolitan Municipal / District coordinating Director (MMDCD): The MMDCD serves as a secretary to the Assembly. He or she is the administrative head of the MMDA bureaucracy and takes responsibility for the execution of the Assemblies' decisions. The coordinating director assists the MMDA in the performance of its duties by running the day-to-day administration of the coordinating directorate of the MMDA and take responsibility for the implementation of the decisions and plans of the MMDA. The coordinating director is responsible for the effective planning, budgeting, observance of financial, stores, and budgetary guidelines. He or she also initiates, executes, monitors, and evaluates development plans, projects, and programs carried out by the MMDA (ILGS & FES, 2010, 2016; MLGRD, 2015).

The Assembly Member (AM): The Assembly Member (AM) serves as a link between the MMDA and the community. He plays a crucial role in community development. The Assembly Member participates in the work and activities of the Assembly, such as attending meetings and contributes to decision-making processes. The duties of the Assembly Member as prescribed by the local government act (Act 462) to include:

- i. maintain close contact with and consult the people of the electoral area on issues to be discussed in the District Assembly and collate their views, opinions, and proposals and present the views, opinions, and proposals to the District Assembly.
- ii. attend meetings of the District Assembly and relevant sub-committees and meet the electorate before each meeting of the Assembly and report to the electorate the general decisions of the Assembly and its executive committee and the actions the member has taken to solve problems raised by residents in the electoral area.
- iii. draw attention in general debate to national policies which are relevant to the subject under discussion and actively participate in the work of the sub-committees of the executive committee.
- iv. bring to bear on a discussion in the Assembly the benefit of the member's skill, profession, experience, or specialized knowledge.
- v. maintain frequent liaison with organized productive economic groupings and any other persons in the district and take part in communal and development activities in the district.

3.4.1.2 The Sub District Structures of the Assembly

The sub-district structures of the MMDAs are the subordinate bodies that perform functions assigned to them by a legislative instrument (LI) that set up the respective district assembly. According to Ahwoi (2010), one of the strategies adopted by the government to address poverty in rural communities is creating an avenue for local participation. As a result, Sub-district structures were created to bring governance to the community level. The Sub-district structures provided for by Act 462 are the sub-metropolitan district council, urban or zonal council, Town or Area council, and unit committee. A town or urban council is created under municipal or district assemblies for an area with a population between 5,000 and 15,000.

In contrast, a zonal council is created for an area with a population exceeding 3,000. These structures are put in place for grassroots mobilization and support for district development initiatives. A sub-metropolitan district is set in a metropolitan assembly with suburbanization and management problems. An area council is established for a group of settlements or villages with a population not exceeding 5,000, while a zonal council is located in a one-town municipal assembly with a population of 3,000 people. A unit committee is established for a rural settlement with a population between 500 and 1000 or 1,500 and over for an urban area. An urban, Town, Area, or zonal council (UTAZ) is made up of not less than ten and not more than 15 members. Up to five members are elected from the assembly and not more than ten representatives of unit committee members with the area of authority.

The sub-metropolitan District Council consists of not less than fifteen (15) and not more than twenty (20) members made up of all elected members of the Assembly in the respective sub-metropolitan district. Other members include up to five (5) members of

the Unit Committees in the sub-metropolitan district serving in rotation for a two-year term. There is restricted tenure, which is to ensure that by the end of a rotation, each unit committee member would have served as a member of the board. Additionally, it ensures equal representation from all the communities and gender balance. Accordingly, it makes provision for not more than five adult residents, the majority of whom are to be women within the sub-metropolitan district appointed by the regional minister in consultation with traditional authorities and other interest groups. The table below presents classifications of MMDAs of the Sub-District structures.

Table 7: Classification of the Sub-District structures

Sub-Structure	Description
Sub-Metropolitan District Councils	Found in Metropolitan Assemblies and established for cosmopolitan areas, with identical urbanization and management problems
Urban Council	Peculiar to settlements of "ordinary" District Assemblies with populations above 15,000 and which are cosmopolitan.
Town Council	Established for settlements with a population exceeding 50,000 people (Metropolis) established for settlements with populations between 5,000 and 15,000 people (Districts)
Area Council	Exists for several settlements and villages which are grouped but whose individual settlements have populations of less than 5,000 people
Zonal Council	They are found in the "one-town" Municipal Assemblies with a population of 3,000
Unit Committees	Rural Areas: Group of settlements with a population of between 500 and 1,000 (rural areas) Urban Areas: Population of 1,500 and above

Source: (ILGS & FES, 2010)

The composition and functions of the Sub- District structures are stipulated under the second schedule of (LI 223) in 2001. These include numbering and keeping records of all rateable properties in its area and collect the fixed rates and fees levied by the Assembly on its behalf. It is also responsible for the day-to-day administration of its areas such as promoting and safeguarding public health and accordingly assigning a medical

officer, health inspector, and other appropriate staff other than semi-skilled and unskilled laborers to its area for the task. The Sub-Metropolitan or the district council creates the avenue for its area to be inspected regularly for the detection of nuisance or any condition likely to be offensive.

The Urban, Town, Area and Zonal Councils (UTAZ) Council, on the other hand, consist of not less than ten (10) and not more than fifteen (15) members to be made up as follows: Not more than five (5) persons elected from among the members of the relevant District Assembly who have been elected from electoral areas within the area of authority of the UTAZ council, except that where the electoral areas within the area of authority with less than five (5) personnel. Other members include all the elected members of the Town Council, and not more than ten (10) representatives from the unit committees in the area of authority of the UTAZ council concerned, elected annually on a rotational basis. Each unit committee member is expected to be represented on the UTAZ council by the end of a rotation. The functions of the UTAZ council are stipulated under the second schedule of LI 1967. These include the following;

- i. ensuring and keeping records of all dateable persons and properties in the urban area, zone, or town.
- ii. assisting any person authorized by the assembly to collect revenues due to the assembly and recommending to the district assembly the naming of all streets in its area of authority and cause all buildings in the streets to be numbered.
- iii. responsible for preparing short, medium, and long-term development plans for the urban area or town for approval by the assembly and proposes to the assembly for the levying and collection of special rates for projects and programs within the urban area or town.

3.4.1.3 The Unit Committee Model

The last on the sub-district structure is the unit committee. A district unit is established for a rural settlement with a population between 500 and 1000 or up to 1,500 for an urban area. The unit committee's composition comprises five (5) persons elected in an election conducted by the electoral commission for a four-year mandate and are eligible for re-election. Initially, the unit committee was made up of 15 members but later reduced to five (5) through a legislative instrument (LI 1867) section 24 (1) in 2010.

Operating at the lowest base of the local government structure, the proximity of the unit committee members to the citizenry places them in a position to play a crucial role in social mobilization. Accordingly, the unit committee members perform the following functions stipulated in the local government act (Act 462);

- i. The unit committee provides the underlying mechanism for local representation and participation. They do this in collaboration with other assembly members in performing their functions at the local level. Essentially, the unit committee provides a focal point for discussion of local matters and makes recommendations to the assembly. Their core mandate is to enforce by-laws and mobilize local resources for development. With this mandate, the unit committee model depicts a bottom-up approach to structural representation from the local level.
- ii. The unit committee model provides avenues for discussing local issues and making recommendations and proposals to the assembly regarding revenue collections and mobilization. Moreover, the committee members assist the assembly in revenue mobilization, organization of communal labor, ensuring sanitation, environmental cleanliness, and educate the people on their rights and responsibilities.

- iii. The unit committee members assist in enumerating and keeping records of all rateables and properties and making proposals to the assembly regarding levying and collecting rates for projects and programs. They also keep records of the registration of births and deaths in the community.
- iv. It is the committee's responsibility to supervise the functioning of district assembly staff, CSOs, traditional authorities, and other stakeholders at the local level as well as see to the implementation and monitoring of community self-help projects.

The presiding member of the unit committee meetings is elected from among its members for meetings, once in a month or in such times as may be established on consensus. A committee member may be removed if pronounced guilty by a court of competent jurisdiction to have committed an incompatible act with their mandate or that discredit the unit. In such a case, the member is removed by a two-thirds majority of registered voters within the unit in an election conducted by the electoral commission for that purpose. Accordingly, unit committee members are expected to develop good working and inter-personal relationship with the community members and key actors as well as stakeholders in local government such as the municipal chief executive (MCE), Members of Parliament, Assembly members, traditional authorities, civil society organizations (Ahwoi, 2010; ILGS & FES, 2010, 2016).

3.4.2 Local government and community participation

Public Participation Continuum analysis was proposed by Ile & Mapuva (2010). They proposed that effective participation of the people in a public program requires a framework that involves multiple techniques. The proposal suggests that the number of people that can be involved in policies is negatively related to the level of active involvement. It argues further that public education, involving the dissemination of information among the people, will reach a larger number of the populace than a mere public partnership with society. The implication is that if effective measures are put in place to involve the people in the decision-making process, it will have a high tendency of motivating them to participate fully and willingly. In this sense, critical governance and development issues could be quickly addressed and help to bridge the development gap in the community (Taylor & Balloch, 2005; Woods, 2000).

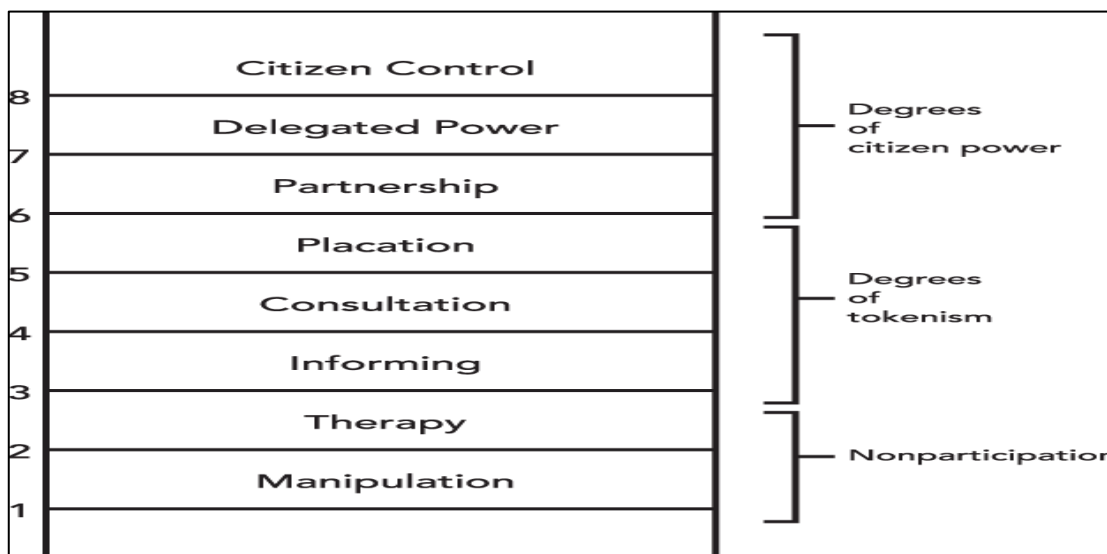
In a like manner, Arnstein (1969), cited in Khisty (1993), posits that effective participation at the local level is essential to an effective democratic process in every nation. Arnstein's proposal attempts to strike the development difference between the system of governance where the citizenry is allowed to participate in governance in terms of redistribution of power from the central government to the local level and the system of governance that excludes the people from participating in the general process of governance.

This proposal employed different models of community participation in national policy. It tried to demonstrate the role expected of the local community in governance. Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation depicts the progression of how the community can participate in issues that affect them. The lower level shows how the community is not granted the opportunity to participate in governance by policy makers.

Level two is degree of tokenism; this is where the community is given a minimal chance to participate in governance activities. The level comprises informing, consultation, and placation. This level gives the impression that some level form of authority is granted to the grassroots, but not power handed over to the powerless. The upper level encompasses partnership, delegated authority, and citizen control. This is where the citizens are given the prospect to participate in governance in equal measure as those with power.

The figure below showcases Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizens Participation.

Figur8: Ladder of Citizens Participation



Source: (Arnstein, 1969) cited in (Khisty, 1993)

Nevertheless, the Arnstein Participation Matrix was criticized by Tritter & McCallum (2006) for being one-dimensional. Tritter & McCallum claim that it failed to incorporate all the processes involved in citizen participation. They indicated that the proposal perceives citizen participation as a linear progression spanning from non-participation to participation. According to Tritter and McCallum, Arnstein’s proposal failed to imbibe the fluctuations in citizens' participation processes.

3.5 Traditional Authorities in Contemporary Governance

According to Boafo-Arthur (2003), traditional authority is a form of governance that is rooted in socio-cultural practices based on an established method of administration by indigenous communities to manage their affairs.

Although indigenous and varied in nature, structure, and composition without a codified statute, the system of traditional authority has persisted alongside contemporary democratic structures for some time now. Conceivably, the persistence of the traditional authority in Ayee's (2007) view is due to their natural claim to legitimacy, which took precedence before the formation of modern states.

In different parts of Africa, certain societies have developed a complex hierarchical traditional authority structure based on inheritance, while others have a simple king-based arrangement. Accordingly, traditional authority is variously referred to as Chiefs, Aristocrats, Kings, Nobles, and so forth in different contexts due to its diverse nature, forms, and practice in different parts of the continent. For instance in Ghana traditional authority is predominantly expressed in the institution of chieftaincy (Arhin, 2002; Grischow, 2008).

Ayee (2007) claims that the chieftaincy institution has lived through contemporary governance and remains a vibrant force in its administrative discourse. In Rathbone's (2000) view, the chieftaincy institution and contemporary government are deemed incompatible due to the right of inheritance to a chief's position by a privileged group. Nevertheless, Odotei (2006) asserts that some people in the local community have a deep cynicism about politicians in democratic systems, which has compelled them to find solace in traditional authorities as *“reassuring rather precisely because of its ambivalent position in what has become the disturbing discourse of failing modernity.”*

3.5.1 Structure of the Traditional Authority system in Ghana

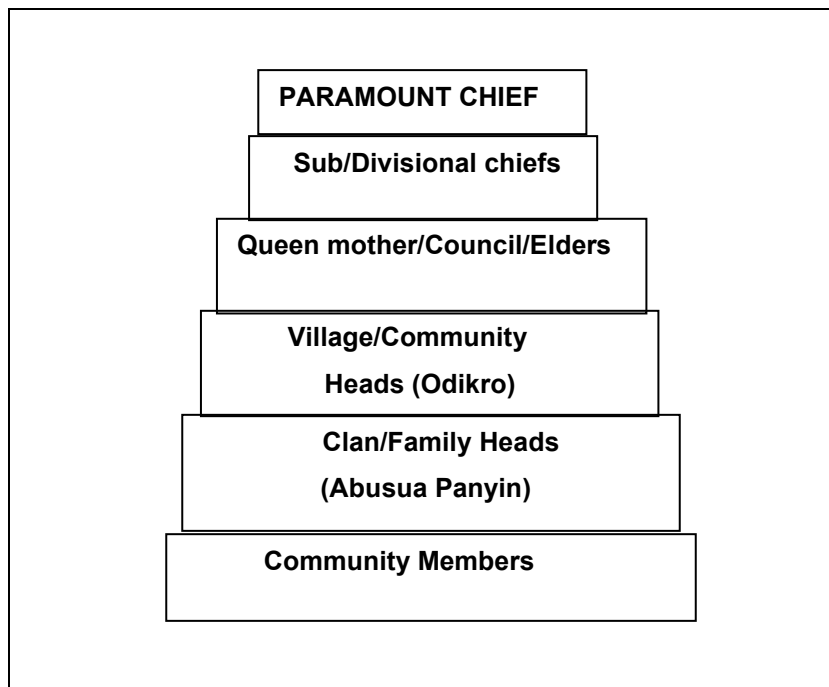
In Ghana, the traditional authority system in the Metropolitan Municipal District Assemblies (MMDAs) have a similar structure although diverse in composition and nature. On top of the structure in a traditional Akan community is the Paramount chief, also known as the '*Omanhene*' in the local parlance. Below the paramountcy are the divisional or sub-chiefs who are primarily semi-autonomous and responsible for the various divisions or units in the chiefdom. The structure also makes provision for district chiefs and herdsmen (*Odikro*) for smaller communities.

According to Odotei (2006), the Akans' traditional authority system is explicit of the role of the divisional chiefs. He explains that each divisional chief's name is derived from a well-defined combat position and role assigned in the paramountcy. The combat role names of the divisional chiefs in traditional Akan Chiefdoms are The Left-wing Chief (*Benkumhene*), Rearguard chief (*Kyidomhene*), Right-wing chief (*Nifahene*), and settlement chief (*Adontenhene*). It is important to note that each division also has a sub-division that extends to the smallest community head known as the *Odikro*.

At the bottom of each Hierarchy of Authority are the Family or the Clan heads. The Authority of a divisional chief extends to several village heads '*Odikro*' within a jurisdiction area. All titled chiefs have a queen mother and council of elders, who form the advisory and kingmakers' board (Asamoah, 2012; Odotei, 2006; Ray, 2004).

The figure below presents the Akan traditional authority structure

Figure 9: Traditional authority structure in the Municipalities

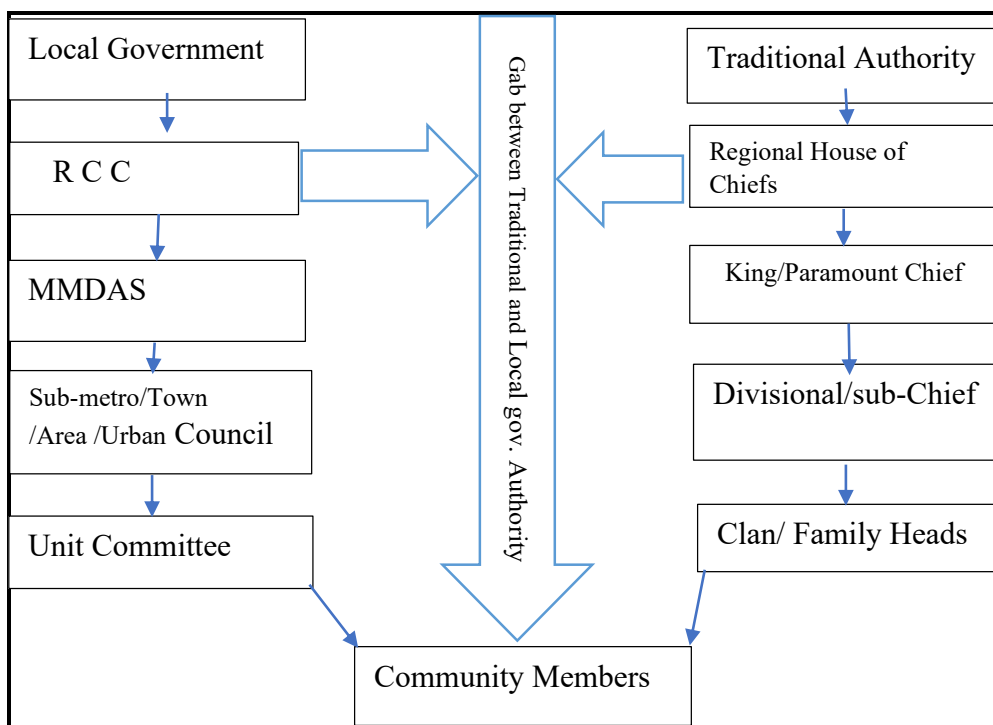


Source: Field data (2020)

3.5.2 Correlation between Traditional Authority and Local government structures

There are two main formal avenues provided by the constitution for traditional authorities to participate and influence Ghana's public policy. The first is through the places reserved for appointed members of the Assemblies, which includes traditional authorities. The second is through the regional and national House of Chiefs, which has representatives in the regional coordinating council (RCC). The Figure below juxtaposes the Traditional authority structure against the decentralized local government structure in Ghana.

Figure 10: Linkages of Traditional authority and local Government Structures



Source: field data (2020)

3.5.3 The Changing Role of Traditional Authorities in Local Governance

According to Ayee (2007), the institution of chieftaincy has evolved from the pre-colonial period through the colonial era to the establishment of party politics within the territory of modern Ghana. Indeed Asamoah (2012) points out that, in Ghana, the traditional institution of chieftaincy dates back several centuries and remains the prime custodian of the Ghanaian culture. He asserts that the institution is much revered and held in awe. Consequently, the institution is perceived as an embodiment of the ancestral spirit, thus serving as a link between the living and the dead. Odotei (2006) claims that the traditional institution provides a renewed sense of belonging and being a powerful agent of social cohesion and harmony.

Odotei (2006) maintains that traditional authorities in some time past were involved in the governance process, taking an active part in community development under the “Native Authority” system during the period of colonization. Comparably, during the post-colonial period, the role of the chieftaincy institution in local governance and development did not contend. Since then, the traditional ruler's office has been transformed as it has performed various functions back from the pre-colonial era through to the colonial period up to these days.

Until recently, however, there has been ineffective participation of chiefs in local governance. Indeed, this could be partly due to the relationship between chiefs and local government structures that has been ill-defined, even though the history of the local authority cannot be completed without the input of the institution of chieftaincy (Ayee, 2007; Kleist, 2011; Ray, 2004; Ubink, 2007).

Before the colonial administration era, traditional rulers had considerable influence. They exercised substantial sovereignty within their jurisdiction areas as their authority in

spiritual and secular matters was not questionable. During the colonial administration, they became virtual sub-agents for the colonial government in community supervision and jurisdictional resolutions. Throughout the period, various legislations and statutes were intermittently enacted by the colonial authority to define the traditional ruler's social and political role in the community (Honyenuga & Wutoh, 2019; Sackeyfio, 2014).

According to Honyenuga & Wutoh (2019) and Ayee (2007), Traditional authorities continue to play a complementary role with the district Assembly in the local community together with their conventional mandate as spiritual heads and custodians of natural resources. Traditional authorities essentially play a lead role in ensuring people's social and economic development in the community. They also serve as arbitrators in domestic matters relating to land, inheritance, and family disputes. Moreover, they represent the people's interests at the regional and national levels and ensure accountability and fairness in the operations of government officials. Furthermore, traditional authorities keep and maintain the traditional heritage and are expected to guard and sustain traditional norms, values, and principles in the community (Grischow, 2008; Ray, 2004; Ubink, 2007).

Without doubt, the role of traditional authorities in local governance is summarized by the king of the Asante kingdom, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, cited in Joseph Ayee (2007) as:

“Our predecessors engaged in inter-tribal wars, fighting for conquest over territories and people. Today, the war should be vigorous and intensive against dehumanization, poverty, marginalization, ignorance, and disease. Chieftaincy must be used to propel economic development through proper land administration by facilitating investments in our communities and through codification and customs and traditions, making it impossible for imposters to get enstooled and create unnecessary situations for litigation.”

It is suggested that (Brobbeey, 2008; Cobb, n.d.; Crook, 2005; Odotei, 2006) democratic governance in Ghana invariably draws its strength from the traditional governance system. Consequently, it is alleged (Brobbeey, 2008; Knierzinger, 2011; Odotei, 2006) that national politics would not be as tolerant today as it was for the community's effective and impartial handling by traditional and local authorities.

Invariably, Article 270 (1) of the 1992 constitution and the chieftaincy Act, 1971 (Act 390) of Ghana recognizes and safeguards the institution of Chieftaincy. Remarkably, the Ghanaian constitution forbids the legislature from making any law that may interfere with the chieftaincy institution. Perhaps this provision serves as the foundation of a parallel governance system at the local level where traditional authority is firmly rooted.

Literature (Holzinger et al., 2016; Ray, 1996; Arhin, 1985; Ayee, 2007; Francis Buah, 2003; Kleist, 2011) indicates that the chieftaincy institution for many years has continued to serve as the embodiment of sacred social and political power of many communities. Even though the chief's role and authority have undergone several changes, the institution has continued to demonstrate remarkable resilience in the community's management. Thus, it remains a significant factor in the governance of the country. Under Article 277 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana, a chief is defined as: *“a person who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as a chief or queen mother following the relevant customary law and usage.”* To clarify the mode of involvement of chiefs in local governance, Article 276 clause one (1) and two (2) stipulates that; *“a chief shall not take part in active party politics; and that any chief wishing to do so and seeking election to represent the people shall abdicate his stool or skin”*. However, *“a chief may be appointed to any public office for which he is otherwise qualified.”*

Nonetheless, it has been argued that the two clauses contradict each other. According to Ahwoi (2010), whereas clause one debarred chiefs from participating in active politics, clause two (2) gives them the mandate to hold public office to which one qualifies. Ironically, most government appointments, especially to the district assembly, are done on partisan consideration. In some cases, chiefs are appointed to public offices based on loyalty to the government rather than merit. Principally, there is no contention over the chieftaincy institution's role and authority as stipulated in the 1992 constitution. Under Article 272 of the constitution, which created the National and regional House of Chief, as a body that represents the interest of chiefs in the country, they perform these functions;

- i. advise any person or authority charged with any responsibility under the constitution on any matter relating to or affecting chieftaincy and the community
- ii. codification of customary law, compilation and interpretation of established rules in line of succession applicable to each stool or skin
- iii. undertake an evaluation of traditional customs and usages to eliminate those customs and usage that are outmoded and socially harmful
- iv. Perform such other functions, not being constituent with any role assigned to the house of chiefs of a region as parliament may refer to it

Ayee (2007) asserts that, with many modern and highly educated individuals now occupying positions as traditional leaders in Ghana, it should be possible for the national government to work with these traditional leaders for the development of the country. Nevertheless, Ray (2003) alleges that both conventional and contemporary institutional frameworks often perceived the traditional establishment as an opposition. In Ubink's (2007) the struggle between the two for socio-political power and legitimacy is seen as a zero-sum game. Whatever authority, a traditional leader wrench from the state is treated as a loss for state leadership.

Adjei et al. (2017) claim that there is inadequate empirical evidence concerning popular perceptions of how traditional leaders, especially chiefs, are supported by elected and appointed government officials in a democratic system of governance. Far from competing with elected leaders, Ayee (2007) suggests that traditional leaders and elected public officials are perceived as two sides of the same coin for the public's regard. Therefore, popular evaluations of both traditional authorities and elected leaders depend on the leader's leadership capacity. It is said that the individual's modernization level plays an essential role in shaping perceptions of the dichotomy of tradition and modernity. Despite the 1992 republican constitution of Ghana guaranteeing traditional chiefs' status and autonomy, Asamoah (2012) asserts that not all Ghanaian social and political order uphold it as legitimate and willing to allow it to function. In a context where the legitimacy of the traditional leaders is not challenged, the mode of selection and how they carry out their functions often generates deep concerns. According to Ayee (2007) and Ahwoi (2000), since independence, chiefs have lost virtually all formal executive, Judicial and corporate functions they exercised before, during, and after colonial administration. Undoubtedly, the traditional leadership role and relationships with the central government in Ghana have changed over the years. Under colonial rule, chiefs become agents of the colonial authorities through the policy of indirect rule. Nevertheless, post-independent governments have been struggling with keeping a balance between tradition and modernity. There is the question of how much social and political space traditional leaders should be given within modern democratic governance in Ghana. Moreover, there are no simple explanations of how to define the role of chiefs and elders in African social and political systems. Individual local context is essential to provide a balanced perspective (Badu, 1977; Brobbey, 2008; Crowder, 1970).

3.6 Local Government and Development planning in Ghana

According to Ahenkan et al. (2013), development planning occurs in diverse modes, and therefore the concept does not lend itself to a standard definition. He explains that in any way one looks at it, development planning involves strategic measurable goals and evaluation criteria that an individual, organization, or community put in place to achieve within a specific time frame. Ramos & Juan (2017) point out that development planning usually includes time-based targets and standards for measuring success or failure. They categorized development planning into the following;

- i. **Personal development plan:** one can make a personal development plan, such as advancing an academic career or drawing up a retirement plan.
- ii. **Professional development plan:** For instance, teachers, lawyers, engineers, bankers write development plans and set goals related to their career.
- iii. **Urban/community development plan:** communities make development plans by initiating actions and interventions to improve their economic, social, cultural, or environmental situation.

Development plans are made for various reasons. For instance, community development plans are made purposely to;

- i. expand participation and satisfy missing needs or resource
- ii. react to proposed changes that are deemed to result in potentially negative consequences for the community
- iii. improve essential social, economic, or environmental development problems

The first development plan in Ghana was put forward by sir Gordon Guggisberg the governor of the Gold Coast in 1919. Guggisberg's plan provided a framework to develop

the Gold Coast up to 1926. The plan was centralized and executed by the British colonial administration without the active involvement of the people. Consequently, the plan was short-lived as it could not address the people's general economic and social concerns until Sir Allan Burns, who replaced Guggisberg as the governor of the Gold Coast, introduced a ten-year development plan that commenced in April 1950.

Unfortunately, the second colonial development plan was short-lived due to the 1951 general elections, which were won by the CPP government led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first elected president of the Republic of Ghana.

Soon after winning the 1951 election, Kwame Nkrumah initiated a 15-year development plan (1951- 1966), sub-divided into a five-year medium-term development plan. As a result of the country's slow pace of development, Nkrumah's plan was terminated to pave the way for a radical approach to development. The CPP government subsequently advanced a seven-year development plan in 1964. Nkrumah's development strategy was to turn Ghana into an industrial hub within the period. The plan, which was aimed at socialist transformation and removal of all forms of colonial remnants, was truncated by the 1966 coup d'état, which removed Nkrumah from office (Ahenkan et al., 2013; Buah, 2003; Nkrumah, 1989; Richard Rathbone, 2001a).

Since then, successive governments have made attempts to formulate and implement development plans and programs in a similar manner aimed at social and economic development. These include the two-year development plan by the national liberation movement (NLM), the one-year development plan by the progress party in 1969, and the five-year development plan by the National Redemption Council (NRC) in 1971.

The successions of development plans were transformed through a pragmatic effort towards national development by the PNDC government to introduce the Economic Recovery Program (ERP) with the World Bank and IMF's support in 1983.

The first phase of the ERP involving rehabilitation and stabilization, lasted three years from 1983-1986, whereas the second phase, dubbed liberalization and growth, spanned 1987-1989. A social intervention policy known as a Program of Action to Mitigate Social cost of Adjustment (PAMSCAD) was initiated to address poverty-related issues arising out of social adjustment (Asaduzzaman, 2020; Gyimah-Boadi, 1993; Nkrumah, 1989).

Interestingly, most of these plans were national in scope but sectorial in nature. They adopted a “Top-down” approach making them highly centralized, and subsequently, many did not see the light of the day. The “Top-down” approach primarily developed plans and programs from stakeholders' perspectives without consulting or involving core groups at the base and mostly beneficiaries of the intended plans making it difficult at the implementation stage. Based on previous project experience, Ghana adopted a decentralized approach to developing programs to curb the discrepancies in centralized planning (Ahwoi, 2010; J. Ayee, 1994; Kingdom, 2017; NDPC, 2018; Ramos & Juan, 2017).

The Ghana National Development Planning Commission (GNDPC) Act (Act 479) was set up under the 1992 constitution and assigned the responsibility to formulate and execute a comprehensive national development plan to advance the country. Other functions of the commissions include preparing a comprehensive national development plan, putting in place strategies for their constant review, and serving as a coordinating body to ensure a decentralized national development planning system by directing development planning of the MMDAs, regional levels, sector agencies, and ministries at

the national level. The first long-term national development plan developed by the commission under the fourth republic was Vision 2020 (1996-2020), which aimed at transforming Ghana into a middle-income country within 25 years. In line with the decentralization and local government program in Ghana, the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) play deliberative, legislative, and executive roles. As a prerequisite, the MMDAs prepare and implement development plans that commensurate with the national development agenda to ensure the district's progress.

Consequently, the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) is required by Sections 1 (3, 4) and 2 - 11 of the National Development Planning (Systems) Act 1994 (Act 480) to issue comprehensive guidelines to the MMDAs and other sectors to prepare their medium-term development plans. So far, five medium-term development plans have been developed and implemented within the vision 2020 agenda since the fourth republic's inauguration in 1992. These are the Ghana Vision 2020 Step I, spanning between 1996 to 2000, followed by the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) I from 2003 to 2005 and later the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) II, which began in 2006 and ended in 2009. The first part of Ghana's shared growth and development agenda was initiated from 2010 until 2013, with the second part continuing from 2014 to 2017. Each development planning had a corresponding and localized district medium-term plan as a requirement of the National Development Planning System Act (Act 480). The plans were consistently developed and implemented by MMDAs to expound their development and action plans according to the national policy aspirations and community needs. Nevertheless, a critical look at the various MTDP noticeably portrays a parallel approach to decision-making and processes dominated by central government agencies (NDPC, 2018).

The national development planning commission (NDPC) has initiated a new long-term development plan to end the “vision 2020” agenda. The current Long-term National development plan (2018-2057) provides high-level goals and targets to guide ten medium-term plans successively, spanning ten national election cycles over 40 years. Each of the MDPs will be reviewed annually and linked with the national budget.

A monitoring and evaluation system has been put in place to enable a review of the plan every ten years to allow for updates in line with new developments. The plan's goals and targets are derived from the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) and African unions agenda 2063 and binding on successive governments. The first medium-term development plan to be developed under the current long-term plan is “Agenda for Jobs,” spanning 2018 to 2021 (Ahwoi, 2010; J. Ayee, 1994; NDPC, 2018).

3.6.1 Development planning and the Sustainable Development Goals

The issue of sustainable development in governance has been in existence for some time now. According to Cammack (2017) and Khan (2008), the term sustainable development implies ensuring the requirement and strategies that will enhance the formulation of joint and all-inclusive policies that will engender participation of various key stakeholders to ensure growth sustainably.

The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), also known as the Brundtland Commission, was formed by the United Nations (UN) in the early part of 1983 to foster a common international approach for pursuing sustainable development agendas. The commission's plans were transformed into administrative action at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which took place in Rio de Janeiro. The conference adopted two influential documents that set a direction for future efforts in sustainable development. The Outline defined the basis of action,

objectives, activities, and means of implementation to pursue sustainable development. It was complemented by the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which specified 27 general principles. The Brundtland Commission (1987) defined Sustainable development as satisfying the present generation's needs, not negotiating the upcoming age bracket's capacity to meet their own needs. The report mentioned all dimensions of sustainable development and suggested mechanisms to address them, utilizing an integrated policy approach (Brugmann, 1996; UNDP, 2003; WCED, 1987; WRI, 1988).

To facilitate development that would be global in coverage, all member countries of the UN adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were part of ideals established globally to improve on the gains made on the MDGs, which ended in 2015. The SDGs were termed; “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” with the object of improving the wellbeing of humankind and the planet also enhance wealth, harmonious continents, and corporation. They were adopted in September 2015 by Heads of States and Governments and High-level representatives in New York at the UN's seventieth anniversary. Sustainable development policies date back to the 1990s, where national sustainable development was born. This resulted in several countries establishing sustainable development councils and ministries.

Several governance strategies ought to be advanced to improve development in a sustainable manner, such as the need for unified strategic objectives that urge all and sundry to be committed to its implementation, which will bring long-term development. Again, sustainable development requires the implementation of integrated and coordinated strategies at all facets of the country's economy. Sustainable development policy sought to solve a wide range of issues bedeviling the country. Stafford-Smith et al. (2017) explain that integrated approaches ought to be both vertical and horizontal.

Vertical integration encompasses political-administrative ranks that include the grassroots, provinces, nationals, and supranational levels, while horizontal integration is termed as the interaction between the various ministries and administrative bodies. In furtherance to ensuring sustainable development, there is the need to bring all stakeholders on board policies and programs that affect them, the general public. Jordan (2008) indicates that sustainable development will be realized if the governance system is done in an interactive manner, where all stakeholders are brought on for the decision-making process.

3.6.2 Development Challenges in Ghana

As a developing country, Ghana is faced with a myriad of development challenges despite being equipped with a variety of human and natural resources. Mkandawire (2007) categories development issues in sub-Saharan Africa into three main themes, thus; the absence of a national development policy that would fuel economic development; ineffective participation in development policies and programs, and inadequate social inclusion interventions in policies churn out by most countries geared toward addressing the development needs of the people.

Specifically, Ahwoi (2010) points out that critical development challenges facing Ghana, in general, include: Weak manufacturing sector, increasing poverty, exclusion, illiteracy, and disease. Ahwoi also identifies an increased urban population, resulting in built-up poverty and tribal intolerance, which emanates from unequal development as well as manipulation by political officeholders.

Despite these development challenges, literature (Jordan, 2008; Mkandawire, 2007) points out that successive leaders have paid inadequate attention to enhancing the socio-economic status of the people but rather concentrate on temporal measures that will

enable them to stay in power. In this regard, most of the policies in developing countries such as Ghana, are geared toward how political office holders could hold on to power than policies that would address the development needs of the people. Nevertheless, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Unctad (2007) claim that most developing countries have put in place measures geared towards their institutions' quality. An example is the effect of a decentralized governance system designed and accorded the capacity to oversee the implementation of complex policies inclined to address the people's development needs.

3.6.3 Functional Organizational Assessment Tool in Local Governance

To ensure the adequate performance of the MMDAs in areas of accountability, efficiency, and service delivery, Ghana's local government system has introduced a performance assessment tool known as the Functional Organizational Assessment Tool (FOAT). The FOAT provides guidance with which the district assemblies are assessed on set targets annually. It is used as a motivation instrument for the MMDAs under which best performing assemblies are rewarded financially through an increase in the District Development Facility (DDF). FOAT is also meant to provide incentives for performance and compliance with the legal and regulatory framework. Moreover, it is used to identify gaps in the performance capacity of the assemblies and helps to establish the link between performance assessment and capacity-building support (MLGRD, 2010b, 2010a).

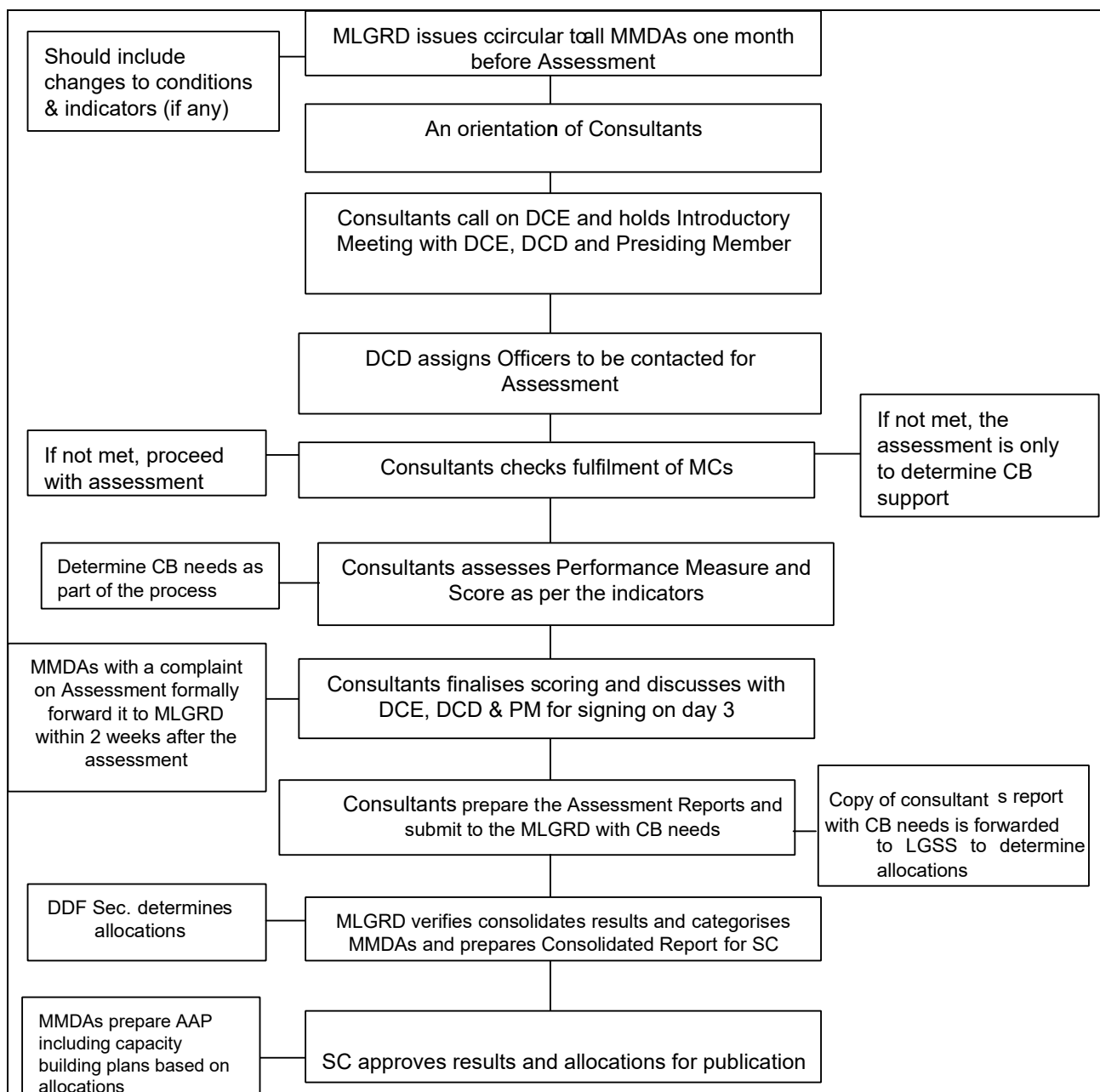
The ministry of local government and rural development (MLGRD) has produced an operational manual for FOAT (2010). According to the operating manual, the MMDAs are strictly assessed against their legal obligations and issues that fall within their direct span of control; Consequently, all indicators are anchored in existing legal, regulatory and policy frameworks. The indicators acknowledge the specific legal, political,

administrative, and fiscal environment in which MMDAs operate and capture both the administrators and the elected representatives in the MMDA structure. It also ensures that the indicators are objectively verifiable and straightforward to assess. That is to minimize discretion in the assessment process.

Accordingly, the assessment process should facilitate a precise translation of identified capacity-building needs into corresponding institutional strengthening requirements. The approach ensures that capacity building is fully integrated into the budgeting cycle of the MMDAs. In the process, the actual assessment is broken down into Minimum Conditions (MCs) and Performance Measures (PMs). Evaluation of the MMDAs over the years indicates a high-performance standard despite limited resources. The MCs are those conditions that an MMDA needs to fulfill to qualify to access the fundamental grant component of the DDF. The MCs are formulated under the following five sub-themes: development planning, financial management and accounting, public procurement, implementation capacity, and functioning of the general assembly.

The performance measures (PMs) are those conditions that will be used to determine each MMDA's allocation of the DDF's performance grant. The PMs proposed in the MLGRD FOAT training manual (2010) provide clear indicators to measure performance are classified under nine sub-themes; management and organization; transparency; openness and accountability; planning system; Human resources management; relationship with sub-district structures; financial management, and auditing; fiscal capacity; Procurement and environmental sanitation management. The figure below represents a flow chart of the district Assembly assessment process (Bangase, 2018; MLGRD, 2010b, 2010a).

Figure 11: Flow chart of the District Assembly’s assessment process



Source: FOAT Manual (MLGRD, 2010b)

3.7 Summary

The chapter examined the governance structure and democracy in Ghana by tracing the historical overview of the current fourth republic's journey. The chapter also highlighted the role and involvement of Traditional Authorities in local government. The literature reviewed by the study revealed that the notion of local government has no universally accepted definition. Nevertheless, the idea is defined by the functions which are carried out by structures of local authorities. Therefore, a local government operates in a local area focusing on managing the locality's day-to-day administration.

In its broad perspectives, the concept and practice of local government are linked to decentralization. In this sense, local government is widely acknowledged as one of the suitable means of achieving decentralization objectives, which entails the transfer of resources, functions, and authority to make decisions and responsibility from the central government ministries, departments, and agencies to component units of dispersed levels. This implies that local government provides the avenue for the people to be part of the decentralization policy.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. THE CONCEPT, NATURE, AND ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature on Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in contemporary governance. It examines the nature, classification, scope, and fundamental objectives of civil society organizations. Information regarding the characteristics of the aspects, dimensions, forms, and world views of civil society is further expounded in this chapter. Additionally, this chapter analyzes civil society organizations' role as non-state actors in advancing decentralization and local government for national development. It concludes with an analysis of the civil society sustainability index for sub-Saharan Africa, focusing on Ghana. The objective is to generate a deeper understanding of civil society organizations' concept, role, and prospect in contemporary governance and development.

4.2 The concept of Civil Society Organization

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are described variously by different scholars depending on context and scope, making it elusive and ultimately challenging to agree on standard description. The apparent semantic and refined confusion possibly emanates from the various forms CSOs take and the diverse activities they perform.

According to Seligman (1995), the divergent views on the nature and scope of CSOs make it challenging to come by a universally accepted definition. Masterson (2006) claims that no generally accepted description could capture civil society organizations' complexity and fluid nature.

Bujra (2003) noted that the notion of “Civil Society” was popularized by the multilateral institutions, bilateral donors, and the UNO, including western Europe and North America, which influentially advocated for values and institutionalization of democratic principles and good governance to incorporate into the political systems of developing economies. As a result, intercontinental organizations such as the ILO, IMF, and EUROSTAT have developed a standard definition and put forward by OECD (2006) journal of development cooperation as;

“the multitude of associations around which society voluntarily organizes itself and which present a wide range of interest and ties. These can include community-based organizations, indigenous peoples’ organizations, and non-governmental organizations.”

Additionally, the World Bank (2000), describes civil society organizations as a wide array of non-governmental and not for profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interest and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations.

Frimpong (2017) asserts that CSOs are sometimes used interchangeably with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), but in effect, NGOs are considered as a sub-set of CSOs. He claims that CSOs are typically independent of direct governmental influence and supervision. Their main objective is to provide means of interest articulation and vigorously address the people's wide-ranging development needs. Other scholars such as (Abdulai & Quantson, 2008; Cooper, 2018; Mohammed, 2013; Van Rooy, 2004) see civil societies as the realm of organized social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, and at least partially self-supporting.

It is often emphasized that even though Civil Society Organizations are independent of the state, they are bound by shared rules and responsibilities. From this standpoint, CSOs are regarded as established groups or entities that are neither in the state nor private sector but are engaged in public activities to advance the interests and values of their members or society at large. Diani et al. (2001) and Edward & Foley (1997) identify civil society's notion as an effort to rethink the bases of social order, placing it as a realm of politics situated between the state and citizenry or, in simple terms, between the government and the governed. According to Seligman (1995), the attractiveness of the concept is its *“assumed synthesis of private, public, individual and social desiderata.”*

The civil society organization's milieu is more in the public space than the private realm of human activity. It is characteristically political in the sense that it involves shared goals, interests, and actions that are often explicitly directed at the state. Therefore, civil society excludes the state, the private individual, as well as family life and inward-looking group activity such as recreation or entertainment (Abdulai & Crawford, 2010; Zaidise, 2008). Accordingly, civil society organizations' definitions often emphasize voluntary associations interconnected with relationship to the state without seeking to share power with the state.

Perhaps the most abridged definition of CSOs is provided by O'higgins (2010) as an organization that works in the arena between the household, the private sector, and the state, to negotiate matters of public concern. In this sense, CSOs include a wide range of institutions that operate at many different levels, ranging from global, continental, national, regional to community-based organizations. Therefore, on the broader sense, civil society organization covers environmental groups, gender groups, farmers associations, faith-based organizations, professional organizations, community groups,

think tanks, advocacy groups, trade unions, academic institutions, research institutes and some non-profit organizations assisting claim holders through facilitating right based advances, partnering and shaping development planning and implementation (Petrie & South, 2014; Abdulai & Quantson, 2008; Frimpong, 2017; Williams & Young, 2012).

For clarification, Diamond (1999) suggested seven broad classifications of Civil Society Organizations to include economic, informational/educational, interest, development, issue-oriented groups. Other scholars such as Frimpong (2017) also classify civil society organizations into humanitarian, research, educational, human rights, and peacebuilding groups. In Chandhoke's (2000) assertion, organizations whose functioning is critical to the state are considered communal CSOs. But no matter the classification system, the importance of civil society in its various guises is increasingly playing a more and more critical role in the governance discourse at all levels, from the international space to the local community (Frimpong, 2017; Kastrati, 2016; Masterson, 2006; Mishra, 2012).

4.2.1 Nature of Civil Society Organizations in the Sub- Saharan Africa

It has become increasingly perceptible in recent years that the effectiveness of efforts in developing countries to achieve sustainable human development goals hinges mostly on the quality of governance in those countries and the extent to which governments interact with civil society organizations to accomplish these goals. Accordingly, effective operations of civil society are critical to the development of participatory and transparent democratic governance.

Mishra (2012) argued that African civil societies, like those in Western societies, evolved from different historical experiences, philosophical and religious backgrounds. There exist minor differences in their perception of what constitutes a civil society. For this

reason, that western colonial administration was instrumental in creating contemporary African societies (Abdulai & Quantson, 2008; Ferrer, 1997; Seligman, 1995).

According to Masterson (2006), nearly all civil society organizations are inclined to democratic principles while supporting the world in diverse ways to promote equality, poverty reduction, and promoting the right and privileges of the vulnerable. He argued that currently, amid the diversity of individual initiatives by development stakeholders, the international community has embarked on significant cross-country initiatives for poverty reduction, informing the strategic framework for economic development in the developing countries.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) emerged in the African sub-region during the struggle for independence and European domination of the continent as a potent force with a well-established legitimacy and far-reaching right of participation in the general political process. They were a more coherent and powerful conduit behind most of the mobilizations during the struggle for independence. It is assumed that they have re-emerged in different forms and worked in various ways within the established political system to ensure accountability, the rule of law, freedom, and justice and ultimately in the consolidation process of democracies in post-colonial Africa (Abdulai & Quantson, 2008; Ghaus-Pasha, 2014; Salamon, 2014; Thomson, 2004).

AfriMAP et al. (2007) noted that a vibrant and independent civil society organization plays a vital role in the democratic consolidation process. This is also emphasized by Leach (2013), who points out that the core of the dilemma of democratic consolidation lies in the role of institutions and actors outside the political-administrative sphere that the politician and the citizenry can agree with and are willing to support.

4.2.2 The fundamental objective of civil society organizations

According to the African Development AFDB (2018), Civil society organizations are set up to perform specific to general functions. Fundamentally, the general purpose for setting up civil society organizations has been identified by Diamond (2018) claiming that civil society organizations are set up fundamentally to provide advocacy programs, such as lobbying governments, businesses, groups, and other international organizations on specific to general issues. They do this with the primary intention of soliciting support to provide alternative services such as schools, health facilities and necessary infrastructure for the local communities.

Other reasons for setting up civil society organizations, according to Larry Diamond, is to increase the participation and the skills of all the various segments of society and instill a sense of tolerance, thrift, and belongingness. Mostly, CSOs serve as an alternative to political parties and can offer a refuge to those who are shut out from their right due to their social and political affiliation.

Moreover, Diamond (2018) suggests that some CSOs are set up to enhance interest groups' power and provide an inclusive common suitable mechanism to achieve a set objective. Accordingly, CSOs help to mitigate the excesses of fundamental extremists who tend to have a narrow view of life in providing a recruiting ground for prospective members on social, political, and economic classes to enhance the quality of participation in government.

4.2.3 Classification of civil society organizations

Civil Society organizations vary in size, composition, organization, policy, and platforms. Their operations range from international non-governmental organizations and mass social media platforms to local community groups. The World Economic Forum (Cooper, 2018; WEF, 2011) puts civil society organizations into categories such as;

- i. Humanitarian organizations such as UNHCR, OXFAM, UNICEF and WFP
- ii. Development partner organizations such as CIDA, AGRA, USAID, and JICA
- iii. Human Rights organizations such as HRW, UNHCR, and Amnesty International
- iv. Peace and justice organizations such as the Catholic worker movement
- v. Interest-based organizations such as Doctors, Nurses and Bar Association
- vi. Self-Help (Community based) organizations
- vii. Advocacy groups such as YMCA, OXFAM, and Action Aid International
- viii. Cultural, Religious, ethnic organizations, and social media movements

4.3 The nature of Civil Society Organizations in Ghana

Ghana has had a very long tradition of engagement with civil society organizations since the pre-colonial period. During this period, CSOs were mainly in the form of community-based organizations (CBO) engaging in local advocacy, mobilizations for communal activities, and protection against encroachment. Missionaries and social work spread simultaneously with the scramble for and petition of Africa between 1881 and 1914. This time on, civil society became more a formidable force against the British colonial administration through protests and civil actions. Key among them in the Gold Coast, now Ghana, were the Fanti confederation (1871) formed to ensure unity and protection for Fanti states and the Aborigines right protection society formed in Cape Coast in 1897

as a protest and anti-British movement against the land tenure system introduced by the colonial government (Gyimah-Boadi, 2003; Wilson, 2000).

Gyimah-Boadi (2003) and Mohammed (2013) point out that, civil society organizations took a new dimension in the form of proto-nationalist movements after the second world war advocating for participation and representation in the general decision-making process. They were a force to reckon with in the struggle for political independence in colonial Africa. CSOs during this period contributed immensely to the independence struggle and were unrelenting in the post-independence struggle towards democratic consolidation.

The number of CSOs in Ghana has grown substantially since independence engaging in a wide range of activities to improve the well-being of the individual. In Ghana, mention can be made of national and local based CSOs such as the Ark Foundation, the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), Send-Ghana, Women in Law and Development in Africa-WILDAF, Private Enterprise Foundation (PEF), Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), among others. One can also observe the emergence of “Think Tanks,” whose research publications, policy reviews, analysis, press conferences as well as releases, and their involvement in public discussions on national issues, go a long way in promoting “*good governance*” and democratic consolidation in Ghana. Critical among them is the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), Institute for Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), IMANI Centre for Policy and Education, African Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP) and faith-based organizations such as the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG), the Catholic Bishops Conference, and Ghana Charismatic and Pentecostal Council (AfriMAP et al., 2007; CIVICUS, 2015; Jumah, 2011; Yarrow, 2011).

4.3.1 Civil Society Organizations, and participation in Local Governance

Woods (2000) outlines seven principles of good governance that are identifiable to be fundamental to the overarching goals of social justice and equality in every society. These are accountability, transparency, responsiveness, equity, inclusiveness, upholding rights, and adherence to law rule. Accordingly, civil society organizations play an important role in advancing good governance and development. Ghaus-Pasha (2014), reiterating the role of civil society in promoting good governance and development, indicated that:

“Civil society can further good governance, first, by policy analysis and advocacy; second, by regulation and monitoring of state performance and the action and behavior of public officials; third, by building social capital and enabling citizens to identify and articulate their values, beliefs, civic norms, and democratic practices; fourth, by mobilizing particular constituencies, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized sections of masses, to participate more fully in politics and public affairs; and fifth, by development work to improve the wellbeing of their own and other communities.”

Contributing to the roles CSOs play in promoting good governance, Hopkinson (2001) added the defense against all forms of human right violations, advocate on behalf of the marginalized, agitating for the abused, informing citizens on their rights and entitlements, and mobilizing public opinions in support of or against government policies, actions or inactions. Consequently, he described CSOs as intermediary organizations mediating between the citizens and the state. In this regard, CSOs promote good governance by tracking resource allocation and utilization, monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation, public sensitization, advocacy, engagement in public dialogues and fora, and monitoring general elections and referenda.

Gyimah-Boadi (2000) added that researching, writing policy briefs, taking part in media discussions, holding press conferences and press releases are other ways CSOs have been contributing to governance and democracy. Sometimes trade unions also embark on public demonstrations to register their opposition to or displeasure against government policies. Frimpong (2017) identified the traditional role of CSOs such as protecting the rights, interests, and liberties of their members and society in general as their contribution to good governance.

Additionally, Chandhoke (2000) pointed out that CSOs perform wide-ranging functions that enable them to adapt to circumstances of socio-political dynamics. According to Chandhoke in contemporary democracies, CSOs play a critical watchdog role over government policies and actions, such as monitoring budget implementation and directly influencing implementation of public policy by acting as primary agents responsible for instituting policy shift and making it a reality on the ground.

Botchway (2018) emphasizes that since ushering in multi-party democracy in 1992, civil society activities in Ghana have developed from projecting and defending individual rights and freedoms to active public policy advocacy programs to correspond with global, national, and local initiatives. Such initiatives include the National Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Millennium Development Goals, and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) which have encouraged and defined the interface between government, donors, and civil society organizations. The process of developing these blueprints exemplifies a strong commitment to decentralized participatory planning with civil society (Azeem & Kuyole, 2016; Botchway, 2018; CIVICUS, 2015; 2013 Frimpong, 2017; UNDP, 2008).

4.4 Civil Society Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa

The tenth edition (2018) of the Civil Society Sustainability Index (USAID, 2019) offers a snapshot of developments in the CSO sectors in thirty-one countries located partly or wholly in Sub-Saharan Africa. The index addresses both developments and impediments in seven key “dimensions.” These dimensions of the civil society sector's sustainability are Legal Environment, Organizational Capacity, Financial Viability, Advocacy, Service Provision, Pectoral Infrastructure, and Public Image.

The Index is intended to be a useful source of information for local and international civil society organizations, governments, multilateral institutions, donors, academics, and stakeholders who want to understand and monitor critical aspects of sustainability in the functioning of the civil society sector. The methodology employed by the Index relied on CSO representatives and researchers, who form an expert group in each country to evaluate and rate the scope of sustainability in the year. The expert group agrees on a score for each dimension, ranging from one to seven as the most enhanced level of sustainability to most impeded in ascending order. The dimension scores are then averaged to produce an overall sustainability score for the CSO sector of a given country. The 2018 index for Sub-Saharan Africa complements similar publications covering other regions, such as the Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia assessing the civil society sectors in twenty-four countries. The CSO Sustainability Index for the Middle East and North Africa covers seven countries, and the CSO Sustainability Index for Asia includes reports on nine countries. The report confirms that the region’s CSOs show great diversity in their strengths and weaknesses but are united in a strong drive to cooperate with governments, international agencies, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders to further their countries’ democratization and socioeconomic development (USAID, 2019).

4.4.1 Analysis of 2018 civil society sustainability index in Ghana

According to the report, civil society organizations in Ghana continued to operate in a favorable climate in 2018, and the overall sustainability did not change with an overall average score of 4.2. The report revealed further that “Advocacy”, the most vigorous dimension of CSO sustainability, improved with increased high-level engagement between CSOs and the government, CSOs’ mobilization of communities to participate in the referendum on the new regions, and their intense lobbying for the passage of the Right to Information (RTI) bill. CSOs’ financial viability declined, mainly because of decreases in foreign funding. The legal environment, organizational capacity, service provision, sectoral infrastructure, and public image of CSOs did not change. According to the report, 7,950 CSOs were registered with the Department of Social Development (DSD) (formerly the Department of Social Welfare), at the end of 2018, compared to 7,851 in 2017 (USAID, 2019).

Legal environment: According to the report, the legal environment for CSOs in Ghana is favorable and did not change in 2018. Even though CSOs are required to register with the Registrar General as non-profit organizations (NPOs) limited by guarantee under the Companies Code of 1963 and then acquire a permit to operate from the Department of Social Development (DSD), the report discovered that most CSOs begin operations before completing the process of acquiring permits, which is technically not permissible. Additionally, the report found out that, even though the registration process for CSOs is generally smooth, the process was hampered slightly in 2018 by several new directives, including the requirement that all citizens to apply for tax identification numbers, which delayed the processing of business registrations. Also, newly registered CSOs were

ensnared by bureaucratic structures as they sought to acquire operating permits from the DSD, which are needed to open bank accounts.

Further, the report revealed that the laws governing CSO operations in Ghana are generally supportive of the Companies Code stipulating the obligations and permissible activities of CSOs. It indicates that CSOs in Ghana have the right to assemble and participate in public protests, debate, and criticize government policies without fear of reprisal. The government does not harass CSOs. However, in 2018, some media wing members of the Right to Information Bill (RTI) coalition were prevented by security personnel from entering parliamentary chambers because they were wearing branded t-shirts. There are inadequate lawyers specialized in CSO affairs in Ghana, but legal counsel is generally available, especially in urban areas (USAID, 2019).

Organizational capacity: The report also highlighted that CSOs' organizational capacity was unchanged in 2018. Most Accra-based organizations engaged in activities aimed at high-level policymakers, while community and rural organizations focus on activities that address local needs. It also revealed that all CSOs have mission statements and objectives since they are requirements for registration. Some CSOs have broad mission statements, which make them eligible for funding in several sectors. Strategic plans have become a standard requirement for funding, and most CSOs follow them, particularly for small and rural organizations. Large and urban CSOs increasingly have well-defined internal management structures. Most CSOs in urban and rural areas have written operating procedures, although smaller organizations do not fully implement them. Conflict-of-interest issues are minimal in CSO operations. The prevalence of project-based funding in the CSO sector makes it difficult for organizations to retain employees or offer them long-term or permanent employment, particularly on terms

comparable to those in the public and private sectors. Larger CSOs offer their staff well-developed job descriptions, contracts, and salaries, but most smaller organizations do not have such practices because of limited capacity and funding. CSOs are more technologically inclined and seek to recruit staff with the skills needed to use new media. All types of organizations use social media in their operations. Urban CSOs tend to have the right essential office equipment, but small CSOs, especially in rural areas, do not have well-equipped offices with computers and essential software. Rising rents undermined CSOs' ability to rent office space in urban centers in 2018 and forced some CSOs to move their offices to peri-urban areas (USAID, 2019).

Financial viability: report showed that the financial viability of CSOs in Ghana declined in 2018, mainly because of decreases in foreign funding. CSOs remain primarily dependent on foreign donors. Most donors have indicated that they will withdraw aid by 2022 when the government hopes to implement its Ghana Beyond Aid policy. This prospect has caused a widespread feeling of uncertainty about funding among nearly all CSOs. For instance, major donors such as the USAID, the Danish government, and others have shifted their focus from aid to trade. The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation provided new opportunities for CSOs to raise funds from UN agencies and other donors. The UN Development Program office in Ghana set up an SDG unit in 2018 to support CSOs working to achieve the goals. Only a few large or urban CSOs have multiple regular funding sources, albeit in the short term. Financial support for smaller and rural CSOs is almost always short-term, activity-based, and limited to one major donor. Local philanthropy is not well developed; Private-sector funding is generally limited; Corporate social responsibility programs are the most common business funding source; Such support is usually one-off.

Except for a few CBOs, CSOs do not usually seek to raise funds from their constituents. Crowdfunding is generally a new idea and not well developed. Although income generation by CSOs is not a generally accepted notion, CSOs may earn revenue from the marketing of services and products such as consultancy and research services. Understanding social enterprises' concept as an alternative or complementary funding source, especially for small CSOs, is growing (USAID, 2019).

Advocacy: In 2018, CSO advocacy improved as CSOs interacted more frequently and at higher levels with all three branches of government, including, for the first time, the judiciary, in which CSOs engaged in discussions about delays in adjudicating cases. At the local level, CSOs mobilized new community groups to support the referendum on creating new regions and lobbied intensively to pass the RTI Bill into law. The expertise of CSOs is valuable to government agencies, and CSOs serve on most public consultative committees, including the Public Interest and Accountability Committee, which monitors the use of the country's oil revenues; the board of the Office of Special Prosecutor, the newly established anti-graft body; and the National Peace Council, which is predominantly composed of CSOs and religious leaders. CSO also participated in public decision-making processes, such as preparing national and district budgets and development planning. Besides, the Ghana Federation of Disability Organizations and other CSOs campaigned for a review of Ghana's disability law to ensure that it conforms to the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Other campaigns included the Stop "Galamsey" project to combat illegal mining, the CSO Platform's efforts on the SDGs, and the Corruption Watch Campaign, which focused on reducing public corruption by ensuring that corruption cases are investigated, suspects are prosecuted, and the state recovers proceeds. Gender-focused CSOs, such as Women in Law and Development, Ark Foundation, and Abantu for Development, met with the women's

caucus to discuss the Affirmative Action Bill's passage. The cabinet reviewed approval during the year. CSOs recognize the importance of a favorable legal regime and tend to be concerned about limitations that new regulations can bring. In 2018, CSOs engaged in several attempts to ensure a clear regulatory framework. For example, a coalition of CSOs working on the NGO Bill started up again and met with officials at the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (USAID, 2019).

Service provision: Civil society organization's service provision was unchanged in 2018. According to the report, CSO service delivery is dynamic, and CSOs operate in almost every sector of the economy. For example, CSOs provide water services to deprived communities, educational materials to schoolchildren in rural areas, emergency and relief assistance, and services related to gender, human rights, and disabilities. Civic Response, a CSO partnering with the Forestry Commission of Ghana, launched the Ghana Timber Transparency Portal in 2018 to make information on logging available to the public. However, the report pointed out that social enterprises are not well developed in Ghana. Still, a few CSOs have established projects to provide, among other things, susu (savings) and lending schemes and market services to farmers and women's groups. For example, SEND Ghana provides loans and extension services to farmers, and the Association of Church Development Projects has a for-profit microfinance institution that offers micro-credit to farmers (USAID, 2019).

Sectoral infrastructure: According to the report, resource centers and intermediary support organizations for CSOs are not common in Ghana. STAR-Ghana and the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) are significant information sources for CSOs, while the African Women Development Fund operates a resource center for gender-focused CSOs. CSOs in Ghana do not have established channels for sharing information

regularly. Because of competition over funding, CSOs tend to operate independently, although they come together to share information on major national policy issues, including RTI, corruption, and peacebuilding. Dynamic groups include the RTI Coalition, Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition, Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition, and SDG Platform. Training packages for CSOs are available at the national level, some for a fee. WACSI organizes paid training for CSOs in Ghana and the West African sub-region. Training centers operated by public and private institutions, including universities, also provide training to CSOs. For instance, the University of Cape Coast offers a full course of study on civil society and CSO management. However, training materials are not available in local languages. Very few CSOs work in enduring partnership with the private sector, other than private media companies (USAID, 2019).

Public image: The public image of CSOs did not change in 2018. According to the report, the media report favorably on CSOs' activities at national and local levels. They regularly call on CSO experts to provide an informed analysis, usually on a pro bono basis. The public generally perceives CSOs positively. In the middle class, there is widespread awareness of the scope of CSOs' activities. However, people in rural areas often misconceive that CSOs are only charitable organizations offering relief and infrastructure support. CSOs' reputation with the government is generally favorable. However, the government occasionally conveys negative views of CSOs, especially when CSO reports are less than favorable to the government.

4.5 Role of Civil Society organizations in contemporary governance

Civil society organizations as monitoring Agents: According to the UNDP (2006), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in monitoring and evaluating development in private and public sectors. This ensures the effectiveness of the governance processes and institution-building by establishing clear links between the past, present, and future interventions and results. For instance, in Ghana Civil society organizations such as the Institute for democratic governance (IDEG), has become a major actor in the monitoring and evaluation of Ghana's democracy in every step of the way and makes an appropriate recommendation to the government. IDEG, in addition to monitoring and evaluating the electoral process, institution has also put political office holders, politicians, civil and public servants, and the general public into scrutiny to ensure the effectiveness of the governance process (Abdulai & Quantson, 2008; IDEG, 2018; World Bank, 2003).

Civic Forum Initiative (CFI): Some civil society organizations in Ghana have come together to form the Civic Forum Initiative (CFI), a broad coalition of civil society organizations with an overall objective of ensuring peaceful and credible electoral management through the active community, citizens' participation and collaboration with relevant state institutions to promote free and fair elections. Over the years, during the electioneering period, the CFI mobilized and trained critical people to serve as voter educators and election observers. The CFI can identify issues and challenges during the general election and provide feedback to the Electoral Commission from its Situation Room. The network is also collaborating with National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) and community radio networks to carry out voter education and ensure that electoral campaigns are issue-based. A remarkable feature of the Civil Society

Organization's participation in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ghana is creating the SDGs- CSOs Platform created by a coalition of Civil Society Organizations in Ghana. The Civil society organization Platform presently coordinates over three hundred group members, including partnerships, associations, unions, community-based organizations, local, national, and international non-governmental organizations, and religious groups. They play a crucial role in monitoring the progress and provide representation to ensure the realization of sustainable development outcomes in service delivery. The Platform reports on their contributions, which seek to fulfill the principles of mutual accountability, peer learning, coordination, and solidarity within the partnership for sustainable development. The platform produces progress report cards on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) based on Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies, groups, and citizens and analyzes them against government records. They use it as a yardstick to hold the government accountable on behalf of the people, thus effectively positioning the SDGs in the public space (Abdulai & Quantson, 2008; CIVICUS, 2015).

Civil Society and policy advocacy: Advocacy here refer to Civil Society Organizations' role in lobbying directly for the policy options they prefer or against those they oppose. This policy positively influences attempts at consolidating democracy in Ghana. These include media campaigns, public speaking, commissioning and publishing research, or conducting exit polls. Consequently, through advocacy, CSOs usually question how policy is administered and participate in the agenda-setting as they raise significant issues. They also propose policy resolutions to the government and eventually open up space for public argumentation. In Ghana, the Civil Society Organization, such as the Center for Democratic Development (CDD), has been working as a member of the

coalition that advocates the right of the disabled people, and it has been able to work to ensure the coming into force of the People with Disability Act.

Moreover, the Coalition of CSOs and the media have been working for the passage of the Right to Information Act, and all these have been possible through advocacy. For instance, IDEG has been recognized both locally and internationally in its role in advocating for Decentralization and local governance in Ghana and engagement with some groups and individuals to ensure sustainable local governance policy. Again, Civil Society Organizations play a lead role by providing independent justifications in the development processes, thereby taking much of the heat from politicians' discussions to spot the critical governance issues. The technical expertise, combined with the presumably impartial political stance, gives assurance to competing parties for fairness (Abdulai & Quantson, 2008; AfriMAP et al., 2007; IDEG, 2018).

Civil Society Organizations and Civic Engagement; Civil Society Organizations in Ghana directly act to fulfill a service need in civic engagement, especially to the marginalized and unprivileged in the community. Consequently, CSOs embark on several activities to promote the well-being of the ordinary Ghanaian in educating the citizenry on some public concern issues and allowing them to seek clarification on such issues. For instance, the center for democratic governance (CDD) and the institute of democratic governance (IDEG) have been organizing parliamentary candidates' debate platforms in every election since 2004 to equip them to make an informed choice. They also engaged in voter education and encourage civic participation by mounting platforms for electorates and community members in selected districts to engage aspiring candidates on electoral issues and their respective roles and responsibilities in community development (Gyimah-Boadi, 2003; Kemmis, 2016).

Civil Society Organizations as Capacity Builders: Civil society organizations provide support to individuals, organizations, communities, private and public institutions to obtain, improve, or retain their skills and knowledge or equip them with the necessary resources to function effectively. Building people and institutions' capacity is essential to ensure citizens' competence and promote sustainable development (Gyimah-Boadi, 2003; Kemmis, 2016).

4.6 Challenges facing Civil Society organizations in Ghana

According to the 2017 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa, 9th edition, which was released in December 2018, CSOs, in general, face several challenges such as funding, inadequate organizational capacities, and human resources.

Principally, financial challenges have been identified as a significant difficulty for the effective operations of CSOs. Mohammed (2013) noted that funding had remained a fundamental challenge to effective civil society organizations, mainly because of heavy donor dependence. For instance, according to the 2017 civil society Sustainability Index, financial viability continues to be an impediment to the operations of CSOs in Ghana and throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Funding is difficult to access, and nearly all CSOs look for multiple funding sources, including untapped local sources. The index acknowledged that CSOs in Ghana remain dependent on foreign funding rather than local sources. CSOs rarely secure financial support from the local people, who are not in the position to support, implying that most project implementation cycles are determined and shaped by external donors. In recent times, funding partners are generally moving from Aid to trade coupled with the current government's own Mantra "Ghana Beyond Aid policy," encouraging traditional donors to withdraw their support for CSOs and shift their focus on trade issues (CIVICUS, 2015; USAID, 2018, 2019).

A classic example is DANIDA, which used to be a considerable funding partner for most CSOs in Ghana but has withdrawn much support in recent years. Arguable what makes it exacerbating is that there is no clear policy to encourage local support for CSOs as local philanthropy sources are limited. Admittedly, corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs are slowly evolving amongst the private sectors. However, their programs usually offer only small amount of funding for projects in areas that businesses choose, typically with a promotional and branding purpose.

Another problem faced by CSOs, in general, is organizational capacity. The problem of funding sustainability eventually impacts the attraction and retention of specialized staff by civil society organizations. Mostly, there is the inability of CSOs to build staff capacity to effectively pursue their research and advocacy activities. The impact of financial challenges is that it creates much uncertainty in the recruitment staff. Because CSOs compete keenly among themselves for the scarce resources available, they often lose the opportunities to build coalitions or partnerships. Stated differently, competition for influence and funding promotes individualism in the operations of CSOs.

Altogether, these challenges further restrain CSO's ability to adopt a more long-term social, economic, and political change approach. More so, there have been significant changes to CSOs staffing due to changes in funding modalities. Staffs of CSOs are not being employed permanently, but rather, contracts are tied to available projects. Due to the challenges mentioned above, and sometimes donor conditionalities, the conditions of staff of CSOs are not adequately met.

Again, it is not uncommon to find in some organizations one person playing multiple roles. This makes it difficult for CSOs to maintain individual professionals and specialization (CIVICUS, 2015; USAID, 2018, 2019).

Closely linked to the above challenge facing CSOs in Ghana is the lack of a well-defined regulatory and legal environment. At the national level, the overarching legislation that provides the basis for the operational autonomy of CSOs is the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. Apart from the Constitution, the Companies Act 179 (1963) (the Companies Act) 259 is the legislation that defines the legal and institutional framework within which CSOs are operating in Ghana. The Code deals with both for-profit and non-profit organizations. Not worth mentioning is that there is no exclusive regulatory framework within which CSOs operate. There are steps in place to enact the new NGOs Bill led by IDEG and other CSOs. The NGO Bill, which is at advanced stages, will offer enough scope and defines the space for CSOs to operate smoothly in Ghana (AfriMAP et al., 2007; CIVICUS, 2015; IDEG, 2018; USAID, 2018, 2019).

Moreover, the Freedom House report on the world (Freedom House, 2019) indicates that democracy is facing challenges over the past decades globally. According to the report, basic tenants of democracy such as the rule of law, free and fair elections, freedom of the press, and respect for minority rights came under attack around the world in 2019. The report stated, among others, that political rights and civil liberties around the world deteriorated to their lowest point in 2017. According to the report, the period was characterized by emboldened authoritarians and struggling democracies accompanied by the withdrawal of the United Nations from its guidance role in the global struggle for human freedom. Even though most African countries have a decline in their democratic credentials, many of them continue to experience a net improvement over the decade. For instance, countries like Gambia and Uganda improved their status from not free to free as a result of the election that saw the installation of a newly elected president and media resilience respectfully. In contrast, countries like Zimbabwe had a decline in its status, according to the 2018 report.

4.7 Summary

The chapter presented a review of relevant literature on the concept and scope of local government in developing countries, emphasizing the Republic of Ghana. The concept and mandate of civil society organizations in democratic participation, emphasizing the complex nature of civil society's definition in various debates and opinions as portrayed in the available literature, was explored. Additionally, the chapter explored the nature, classification, and role of Civil Society Organizations from global and local perspectives. The literature review emphasizes civil society organizations' role and mandate in contemporary governance, principally at the community level. The review concluded with an evaluation of the tenth edition (2018) of the Civil Society Sustainability Index (CSSI) for Sub-Saharan Africa, which offered a snapshot of developments in Ghana's Civil Society sectors.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

For useful data collection, there is a need to design the appropriate document to solicit the respondents' required information. This chapter presents a detailed description of the methodological approach to the study. The chapter commences with the study setting's background information to contextualize data findings. The philosophical underpinnings involving epistemology, ontology, and the choice of paradigms linking the study are explained here. Additionally, the chapter discusses the research approach and design adopted for the study. Methods involving data collection procedure, instrumentations, population, sampling procedure, validity, reliability, and ethical consideration are elaborated in this chapter. The chapter concludes with a discourse on validity and reliability in qualitative research and how these two criteria were met in this study.

5.2 The Research setting

Nsawam/Adoagyiri and Suhum Municipalities, and Cape Coast Metropolitan area are in Eastern and Central regions of Ghana respectively. The three locations were purposefully selected from the 160 Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) of Ghana for the study due to their well-established decentralized local government structures and for being part of the country's oldest instituted Assemblies. The choice of each of the study sites is explained further.

5.2.1 The choice of the Nsawam-Adoagyiri Municipality

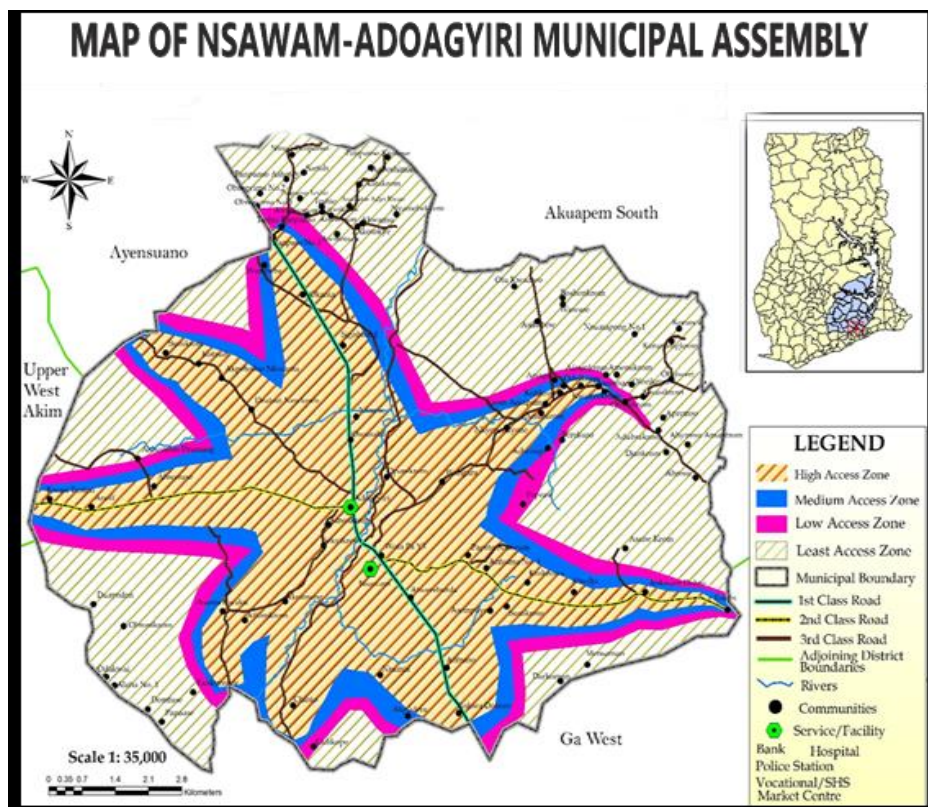
The Nsawam/Adoagyiri Municipal Assembly was established due to the split of the former Akwapim South Municipal Assembly into two by a Legislative Instrument (L.I 2047) 2012. The Municipal Capital was maintained in Nsawam, which serves as a transit town from Accra to Kumasi and the Northern part of Ghana. The proximity of Nsawam to the national capital places it at a vantage point for promoting socio-economic activities. This has resulted in a high living standard in the municipality compared to other parts of the region. The Municipality's settlement pattern is generally linear, with most of the significant neighborhoods located along the Accra – Kumasi, Nsawam - Asamankese, and Nsawam - Aburi highways. The settlement pattern has impacted the distribution of essential social services and infrastructure. The distribution is also tilted towards the settlement pattern, making it somehow difficult for some local communities in the hinterlands to access the necessary infrastructure.

Location and distribution of essential social services and infrastructure depict an uneven growth and development of communities within the Nsawam/Adoagyiri municipality. Even though it can be described as peri-urban, several rural settlements and hamlets are located within the municipality. The urban-rural split is 1:12, indicating that twelve people live in rural areas for every ten people in the urban areas. In the national context, the urban-rural split is 1:18 indicating eighteen people staying in the rural areas for every ten people staying in the urban areas. Hence, the position of the Municipality is better off but needs interventions to urbanize the Municipality to improve access to social services and allocate the effect and impact of poverty (NAMA, 2019; NDPC, 2018).

5.2.1.1 Location of the Nsawam-Adoagyiri Municipality

The Nsawam-Adoagyiri municipality is located between latitude 5.45°N and 5.58°N and longitude 0.07°W and 0.27°W in the South - East of Eastern Region and approximately 23km away from the national capital, Accra, and covers about 175square kilometers of land. Spatially, it is bordered to the South by Ga West and South Municipalities in the Greater Accra Region, to the North by Akwapim South district, to the North-West by Ayensuano district, and to the South - West by the Upper - West Akim District.

Relief features of the Municipality are groups into three main categories: the Densu plains that cover the Western half of the Municipality, the Ponpon narrow Lowland located to the northeast, and the Akwapim-Togo Ranges in the eastern end of the Municipality. The height of the Densu plains where the municipal capital Nsawam is located reaches about 1000 to 5000 feet above sea level. It creates a potential for irrigation and mechanized farming in the Municipality. The Pompom Narrow Lowland reaches between 150 feet and 200 feet above sea level, while the Akwapim-Togo Ranges, which gives a good view of the Accra plains, forms part of the south-east greenbelt and serves as a tourist attraction. River Densu and its tributaries such as Pompom, Ahumfra, Dobro, and Ntua are found within the municipality. The weather situation in the municipality is generally characterized by sunshine in the day, with temperatures ranging between 27°C and 30°C. It is ordinarily cold at night, with temperatures dropping to the minimum. Semi-deciduous forests and Coastal Savanna Grassland are the main ecological zones found in the municipality (NAMA, 2019; NDPC, 2018).

Figure 12: Map of Nsawam-Adoagyiri Minimality

Source: (NAMA, 2019)

5.2.1.2 The settlement pattern in the Nsawam-Adoagyiri Municipality

Utility and social services such as electricity, water, sanitation, telecommunications, schools, and hospitals are essential development indicators. The municipality has a fair distribution of access to these services and facilities; however, many rural communities are still lacking.

The Nsawam Adoagyiri Municipality is estimated to have 86,000 (2010 Population and Housing Census Report) inhabitants with a labor force of 57.4%. The gender distribution of the population stands at 97.1 males to 100 females. In comparison, that of the country is 96.8 males to 100 females comprising 42,733 (49.7%) males and 43,267 (50.3%) females of which the urban population constitutes 50,864 (59.1%) while rural is 35,136

(40.9%). The Municipality is densely populated with 491 persons per square kilometers. The dependency ratio in the rural areas is 78.6 against 55.7 in the Urban areas. Population growth is estimated at 1.6% per annum, which is lower than that of the country at 2.7% but slightly higher than the regional population growth rate of 1.4% per annum. The population increase over time is reflected in the density of population recorded in the year 2010. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2013), the population of Nsawam Adoagyiri municipality, with a land area of 175 sq. km, is 86,000 per the 2010 population and housing census. The table below presents the population growth of Nsawam-Adoagyiri from 1984 to 2010 based on Ghana statistical Service Data. The population density expresses the level of pressure that the sheer size of the population exerts on land. Therefore, the increasing density in time shows the municipal population's growing pressure on the land and its resources. The decrease in the population is a result of the split of the municipality (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013; NAMA, 2019).

Table 8: Population and Growth Rate for the Year 1984, 2000, and 2010.

	Population and Density				
	1984	2000		2010	
	Pop	Pop	Den	Pop	Den
Ghana	12,392,765	19,722,117		24,658,823	
Eastern Region	1,680,890	2,186,557		2,633,154	
Nsawam Adoagyiri	90.752	120,809	300	86,000*	491

Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2013).

The Nsawam Adoagyiri Municipality is characterized by a traditional set-up of ethnic diversity, communal spirit, traditional knowledge, core values, practices, participation, and religious composition. The Municipality is predominated by Akwapim people, who constitute about 63% of the population. Ewes constitute about 9%, Ga-Adamgbes make up 7%, and other Akan groups besides the Akwapims constitute 17%. The remaining 4% are from different tribes, including Northern and other tribes. The dominance of the Akans has created a social cohesiveness, which is ideal for community development. Christianity is the dominant religion in the municipality, constituting 84.2% of the total population, while Islam and traditionalist make up the remaining 8.1% and 1.3%, respectively (NAMA, 2019).

5.2.1.3 Nature of local government in the Nsawam-Adoagyiri Municipality

Decentralized local government structures and procedures in the Nsawam-Adoagyiri Municipality are like any other district in Ghana and were created by the Local Government Act 462 of 1993. However, the municipality was established under the Legislative Instrument (L.I 2047) in 2012. The Municipal Assembly is headed by a Municipal chief executive who serves as the political head and a Coordinating director who acts as the administrative head. There are 44 key members of the assembly, out of which 13 representing one-third are appointed by the president in consultation with the relevant authorities per act 462 of 1993.

The Municipal Assembly is subdivided into four zonal councils, namely, Nsawam, Adoagyiri, Nkyenkyene, and Fotobi, with Nsawam as the capital. There are over 122 communities within the municipality. Just like all others, the Municipal Assembly was instituted to play deliberative, legislative, and executive roles, and as a prerequisite, the municipal structures prepare and implement development plans that commensurate with

the national development agenda to ensure the municipality's progress of the district. The Nsawam municipal Assembly comprises forty-four (44) Assembly Members, two-thirds elected to represent their electoral areas. Simultaneously, the other one-third is appointed by the President, in consultation with Chiefs and local interest groups. The Municipal Assembly is the highest political and administrative authority in the locality.

The local government Act (LG Act.242) of 1993 clarifies that an Executive Committee should perform every district's executive functions. It also makes provisions for sub-committees as its operating arms of the executive committee. The Executive Committee of the Nsawam-Adoagyiri Municipality has several sub-committees with the various Assembly members serving on at least one of them. The chairpersons of the various sub-committees are members of the Executive Committee, which is chaired by the District Chief Executive (DCE), with the District Co-ordinating Director (DCD) acting as Secretary.

The nature of the traditional authority system in Nsawam-Adoagyiri is structured like any other Akan community in Ghana that reflects a typical traditional authority structure in Africa. At the apex of the structure is the Paramount chief, also called the 'Omanhene' in the local parlance. Below the paramount chief are the Divisional chiefs who are semi-autonomous and responsible for the Chiefdom's various divisions. Each division also has a sub-division that extends to the smallest community head known as the Odikro. At the bottom of each Hierarchy of Authority are the Family or the Clan heads. The Authority of a Divisional chief extends to several village heads 'Odikro' who owe allegiance. All titled chiefs have a queen mother and council of elders, who form the advisory and kingmaker boards. Three Main traditional councils can be found Within the Nsawam

Adoagyiri Municipality. Chiefs, as a traditional authority in these communities, are a potent force in the governance of the Municipality. These are:

- i. The Nsawam Traditional area comprising, Djankoma, Adamukrom, Operekrom and Kojokrom communities.
- ii. Adoagyiri Traditional Area comprising, Amoakrom, Owuraku, Akwamu, Kofisah, Okanta, Som and Oblegima.
- iii. Sakyikrom traditional Area made up of Asante-Akura and Fankyeneko communities.

The Municipality host several Civil society organizations whose activities meet the development aspirations of the people. As partners in development, these CSOs have their programs and projects harmonized and integrated into the Municipal Medium-Term Development Plan to ensure the municipality's development. Nsawam, the Municipal Capital, is a peri-urban community and classified under the first order of settlement with facilities such as hospitals, banks, water, electricity, and post and telecommunication services, while Adoagyiri, with a population of about 14,660 as a second-order settlement. The Nsawam Adoagyiri-municipality has enough services to cater to the many third-order settlements such as Sakyikrom, Fotobi, Ankwa Dobro, and over one hundred and thirty clusters of communities (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013; NAMA, 2019; NDPC, 2018).

5.2.2 The choice of the Suhum municipality

The Suhum Municipality was carved out of the former Suhum-Kraboa-Coaltar district in July 2012 under the Local Government Act 462, 1998 by the Legislative Instrument (L.I.) (L.I.) 2048. The municipal capital is Suhum, the primary urban center in the municipality strategically located between the national capital, Accra, and the regional capital Koforidua. Major contemporary settlements are located along the trunk roads linking the municipality and significant cities. Houses are generally traditional compound types except for the developing ones, which have the western kind of houses with modern facilities.

The rural settlements have local architecture and walls, and roofing is generally made of swish/wattle, daub, and thatch. The municipality's primary land uses are agriculture settlements, infrastructure, utility installations, forest, and midlands. The urban centers use the land mainly for commerce, industry, recreation, and public amenities. The rural settlements have a few public structures: schools, clinics, and Cocoa sheds (SMA, 2019).

5.2.2.1 Location of the Suhum Municipal Assembly

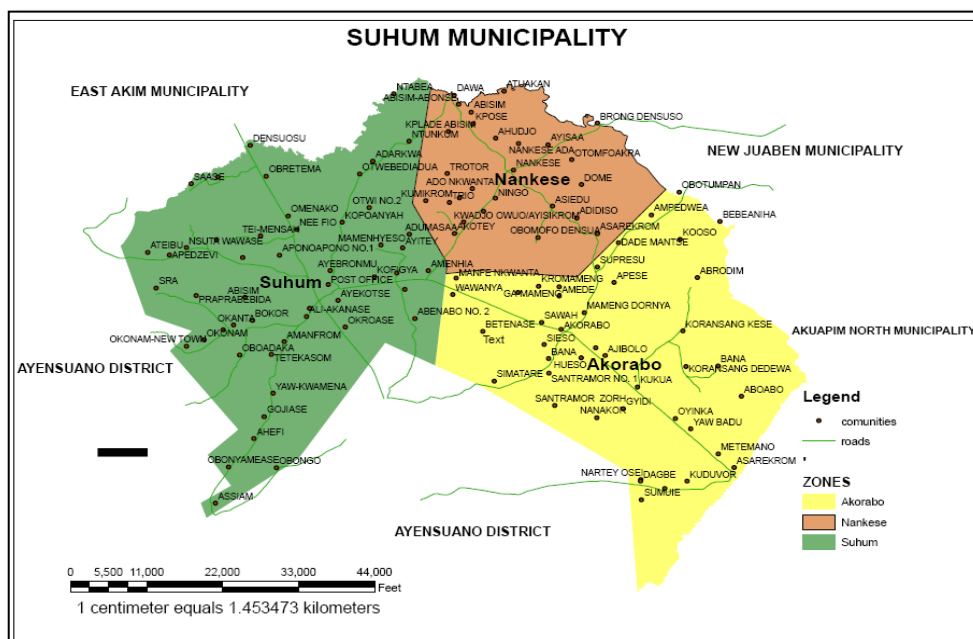
The Suhum Municipality is in the south-central part of the Eastern Region of Ghana and covers about three hundred and fifty-eight square kilometers (358km²). It is bounded anti-clockwise by the New Juaben North Municipality to the north-east, East Akim Municipality to the north, Ayensuano district to the west, and south Akuapim North Municipality to the east. The capital, Suhum, is only sixty kilometers (60km) northwest of Accra on the busy Accra-Kumasi-Tamale-Ouagadougou Highway. Like Nsawam-Adoagyiri Municipality, its location makes it attractive for traders in both primary and manufactured goods and an ideal place for dairy farming because of Accra and Tema's nearness, the largest market in the country. With the completion of the Accra-Apedwa

highway's dualization, the traveling time from Suhum to Accra has reduced to about forty-five (45) minutes.

The climate is mainly tropical, with temperatures ranges from 24⁰C to 29⁰C. The hottest months are March and April, while the coldest months are December and January. Relative humidity, especially in the rainy season, is between 87% and 91%, while in the dry season, it ranges between 48% and 52%.

The municipality falls under the influence of both the southwest monsoon winds and northeast trade winds and is characterized by double maxima rainfall in March to October and November to February, respectively, with the heaviest rain in June. Averagely, the district experiences an annual temperature of 24 degrees Celsius, with usually cold weather and often experiencing relative humidity throughout the year.

Figure 13: Map of Suhum municipal assembly



Source: (SMA, 2019).

5.2.2.2 The settlement pattern in the Suhum Municipality

According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2013), 2010 population and housing census, the Suhum Municipality population was 105,041, representing 3.4% of the population of the Eastern Region. Out of which females represent 51.3% as against 48.7% males. More than one-third (37.8%) of the population is between ages 0-14, while almost half (47.4%) are aged between 15 and 49. Persons who are aged 50-64 years and 65 years and above account for 8.9 percent and 5.9 percent of the population. The Ghana Statistical Service classifies urban areas as communities with 5,000 and above inhabitants and rural areas with less than 5,000 people. Based on the data, only two communities were identified as urban areas in the Suhum Municipality as of 2010. The remaining settlements are considered rural. This implies that the urban communities take 47.5% of the Municipal population against 52.5% for the rural areas. Thus, the Municipality is generally rural in terms of population distribution.

Table 9: Rural and Urban Populations in the Municipality

Settlement	2010 Population	Population in Percentage
Suhum	33,266	37.0
Nankese	5,482	6.0
Total Urban Population	38,748	43.0
Total Rural Population	51,610	57.0
Total Population	90,358	100

Source: (SMA, 2019)

The municipality's rural and scattered nature has resulted in an uneven distribution of social services and infrastructure with a large number sited in Suhum, the municipal capital, Nankese, and Okorase. The municipality is characterized by low housing, insufficient water and sanitation, poor road network, high poverty levels, and predominant agricultural activities. Urban areas, on the other hand, have the features of high utility services like electricity, water waste management, better roads, and telecommunication networks, and the dominance of other sectors such as service, industry, and commerce over agriculture.

Figure 14: Major communities and distribution of services and infrastructure.

Settlements	Population	Primary	Junior High	Senior High	Tech/Voc.	Health		Post Office	Mobile	Fixed	Police	Fire Station	Bank	Hotel/Guest	Electricity	Bi-weekly	Industry
Suhum	33,26	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Nankese	6	*	*					*	*		*		*		*		
Akorabo	5,482	*	*					*	*						*		
Okorase	2,359	*	*	*				*	*	*				*	*		
	2,500																
Brong Densuso	1,344	*							*		*				*		*
Obretema	1,300	*	*						*						*		
Omenako	1,201	*	*						*						*		
Amanhia	1,151	*	*						*						*		
Okanta	705	*	*						*						*		
Densuso	1,101	*	*						*						*		
Adarkwa	919	*	*						*						*		
Supresu No. 2	907	*	*						*						*		
Jato	901	*	*						*						*		
Kukua	899	*	*						*						*		
Koransang	872	*	*						*						*		
Kromameng	833	*	*						*						*		
Abenabo No.2	827	*	*						*						*		
Kwahia	751	*	*						*						*		
Gojiase	723	*	*						*						*		
Kofigya	701	*	*						*						*		

Source; (SMA, 2019).

5.2.2.3 Nature of local governance in the Suhum municipality

The Suhum Municipality was carved out of the former Suhum-Kraboa-Coaltar district in July 2012 under the Local Government Act 462, 1998 by the Legislative Instrument (L.I.) (L.I.) 2048. It is operated within the national decentralization and local governance structures characterized by a three-tier structure created initially by PNDC Law 207 and subsequently adopted by the 1992 Constitution and Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462).

The municipal structure hierarchy comprises the Regional Coordinating Council, a four-tier Metropolitan and three-tier Municipal/District Assembly structure. The Municipal Assembly consists of the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE), 29 elected assembly members (28 males and one female), 14 government-appointed assembly members (12 males and two females), the 1 Member of Parliament (MP) representing the constituency. The Assembly has a presiding member elected from among its members by two-thirds of all the assembly members. The Assembly has 29 Electoral Areas, 29 Unit Committees, and 145 Unit Committee members, three Urban, Town, and Zonal Councils made up of Suhum Urban Council as well as Nankese and Akorabo Zonal Councils.

The Suhum Municipal assembly's main objective is to promote widespread participation in Ghana's decentralization and local government policy. It has, therefore, in the preparation of the district medium-term development plan (MTDP), put in place measures to promote local democratic participation through viable CSOS and stakeholder involvement by expounding and strengthening the roles and relationships between state and non-state actors in the decentralization agenda (SMA, 2019).

The nature of Traditional Authority systems, customs, values, principles, and ways of living are derivatives of the Ghanaian culture, an invincible bond that ties the people

together. One form of authority that possesses all these features is the institution of Chieftaincy. The traditional authority system of the municipality reflects the structure and practice of the Akan people of Ghana. The head of the administration is the Akyem Abuakwa Chiefdom, headed by the Okyehene as the paramount chief in Kyebi. Akyem Abuakwa has five (5) divisions, namely: Adonten, with its seat at Kukurantumi, Nifa, with its seat at Asiakwa, Kingdom, with its center at Wenchi, Gyaase, with its center at Kwabeng and Benkum, with its headquarters at Begoro. Though the Municipality has its traditional council, some of the Traditional Authorities hold allegiance to the Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Council.

Ethnicity in the district is varied with the predominance of Akan (37.4%), Ga-Adangme (25.6%), Guan (17.4%), and Ewe (17.4%). The land tenure system in the municipality differs from what pertains to most parts of the country. Pieces of land are practically owned by individuals and families but collectively retained by the Akyem Abuakwa traditional council.

The major festival of the people in the municipality is the Odwira Festival, which was instituted in the year 2002 upon the elevation of the Suhumhene to the status of Osabarima by the Okyehene. However, settler stock origin people travel to their hometowns to celebrate festivals of their indigenous towns. For instance, the Akuapims in the Municipality travels to Akropong to celebrate the Odwira Festival with their clansmen in September every year (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013; NDPC, 2018; SMA, 2019).

5.2.3 The Choice of Cape Coast Metropolitan area

The Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA) was initially established as a municipal Assembly by LI. 1373 in 1987 and, after twenty years of existence, elevated to Metropolitan status by LI. 1927 in February 2007. It is divided into two sub-Metros Cape Coast, North, and South. Accra's main road to Takoradi, running through the township, virtually demarcates the metropolis into north and south. The Abura part of the road is north, and the opposite side being south.

A significant social consequence of its long and intensive interaction with the European traders was that Cape Coast became a center for the spread of European culture and civilization elements to the rest of the country. It was the center of secondary education. Hence, catechists and teachers' training ground for most of the country before the Catholic and the Basel/Presbyterian missions established themselves in the present Eastern, Volta, Ashanti, Northern, Upper East, and Upper West Regions. It was the breeding-ground of the Ghanaian intelligentsia, the earliest newspapers in the country, and the first nationalist associations and societies.

It was in the vanguard of nationalist agitation in the Gold Coast and its dependencies: the Fanti Confederation of 1870-72 and the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, founded in 1897, were the prototypes of the United Gold Coast Convention (U.G.C.C.), 1947, and its offshoot, the Convention Peoples' Party, the central nationalist movements in Ghana in the twentieth century. It was the home of the earliest experiments in the Municipal government, which began in the 1850s.

Cape Coast was also one of the earliest centers of Ghanaian entrepreneurship. It is in this light that it is suggested that *“anybody interested in a study of commercial ventures among the people of the Gold Coast in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and why they failed to be transformed into industrial concerns, will have to start with the papers of the merchant princes of Cape Coast.”* (CCMA, 2019).

Though it has the appearance of a decayed emporium, its architecture reflects aspects of the Cape Coast people's way of life. It remains an enduring reminder of its vanished status as a frontier settlement once an intermediary between West Africa and Europe. There is undoubtedly more to Cape Coast than its castles and forts (Arhin, 1995).

5.2.3.1 Location of the Cape Coast Metropolis

Cape Coast is of the country's metropolitan areas and the only metropolis out of the twenty-two (22) districts in the Central Region. It lies within latitudes 5° 20' and longitudes 1° 11' to 1° .41' West of the Greenwich Meridian. The Metropolitan area is bounded to the south by the Gulf of Guinea, west by the Komenda Edina Eguafo Abram, East by the Abura Asebu Kwamankese to the north by the Twifu Heman Lower Denkyira District. It occupies approximately 122 square kilometers, with the farthest point at Brabedze, about 17 kilometers from Cape Coast, the capital of the Metropolis and the Central Region.

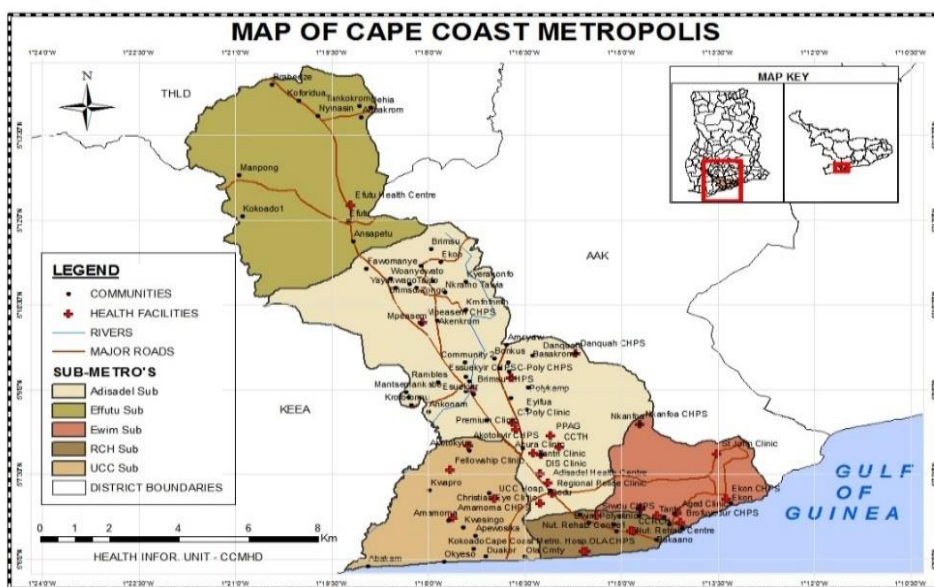
The landscape of the Cape Coast Metropolis is generally undulating, with batholiths as a dominant feature. The slopes of the hills are steep in many areas and tend to affect physical development (construction of houses, roads, etc.), provision of utility and other social services (laying of pipes and telephone lines, etc.), and mobility (human and vehicles). In between the hills are valleys of various shapes, some occupied by rivers and

streams, including the Kakum - the significant stream in the Metropolis. Many of the minor streams end up in wetlands, with the largest draining into the Fosu Lagoon at Nakano. The wetlands are liable to flooding, and, for many of them, the water table is high, averaging just 1.2 meters below the surface. During heavy rains, these wetlands become unusable as farmlands. However, the landscape in the northern parts of the Metropolis is generally low-lying and suitable for crop cultivation.

The Metropolis is drained mainly by the Kakum, which serves as the primary source of drinking water. The Kakum River is dammed at Brimso, a location close to Cape Coast, where the water is treated and distributed to the Metropolis. The river provides for domestic water supply, industrial and agricultural purposes.

Located in Ghana's coastal anomalous zone, The Cape Coast Metropolis experiences high temperatures throughout the year. The hottest months are February and March, just before the primary rainy season, while the coldest months are between June and August (CCMA, 2019; Ghana Statistical Service, 2013).

Figure 15: Map of Cape Coast metropolis



Source: (CCMA, 2019)

5.2.3.2 The settlement Pattern in the Cape Coast Metropolis

The 2010 population census indicates that Cape Coast Municipality has a total population of 169,894, made up of 93,619 females (51.26%) and 89,017 (48.74%).

The urban population is 76.7%, and the rural is just about 23.3%. The rural population is becoming marginalized in terms of development. The whole Metropolis is gradually constrained by land availability for socio-economic development, mainly farming and related activities. The population pyramid indicates that a youthful population primarily characterizes the Metropolis, with people under the age of twenty accounting for some 46.6% of the total population. Females outnumber males in each age-cohort. The aging cohort (i.e., 65+) is relatively familiar with a tapering of the pyramid at the top, signifying a general bell-shaped pyramid characteristic of developing areas. The nature of the population requires that the Assembly undertakes programs and projects which are youth centered. However, this does not preclude programs for the aged, such as social security, pension, and welfare schemes.

The Cape Coast Metropolis has 71 settlements. Cape Coast core area was the only noticeable urban center in the Metropolis in 2010 with 108,374. Ekon (5,506), Nkanfoa (4,683), Kakomdo (7,559) are the other reasonably large settlements but do not possess any urban status as yet. Smaller service centers are also emerging, such as Apewosika (2,792), Ankaful (2,674), Kwaprow (2,917), Esuekyir (1,634), Ebobonko (961), and Anto Esuekyir (3,050). The Cape Coast Metropolis is synonymous with a City District. This is because the Cape Coast core area is the most populous settlement in the Metropolis with a hierarchy of functions that make it the nerve center of economic activity for both the Metropolis and the Region. About 6% of the Metropolis settlements, including Cape Coast, Ekon and Nkanfoa, and Kakomdo account for nearly 85% of the Metropolis

population. Out of the over 70 settlements in the Metropolis, around 54 or 76% of them have populations less than 1,000 persons and account for only 10% of the Metropolitan population. Thirty of the settlements (43%) have populations of less than 100 persons (CCMA, 2019; Ghana Statistical Service, 2013; NDPC, 2018).

Table 10: Ten (10) sampled settlements with a population distribution

Community Name	Total	Male	Female	Households	Houses
Cape Coast	108,374	52,526	55,848	26,956	10,230
Amamoma (Kwesipra)	7,689	4,352	3,337	436	260
Kakumdo	7,559	2,478	5,081	1,333	618
Ekon	5,506	2,810	2,696	1,450	758
Nkanfoa	4,683	2,259	2,424	1,361	728
Akotokyere	3,092	1,556	1,536	744	497
Anto Essuekyir	3,050	1,453	1,597	862	412
Kwapro	2,917	1,668	1,249	572	370
Kokoado	2,870	1,406	1,464	730	249
Apewosika	2,792	1,594	1,198	572	247

Source: (CCMA, 2019; Ghana Statistical Service, 2013)

The Metropolis has a peculiar rural-urban scenario. Cape Coast has been the only urban center in the Metropolis since 1960. By 1984 the district's rural-urban split was 32.3:67.7 as against 71.2:28.8 for the region and 63.1:36.9 for the nation. In the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the rural-urban proportions changed slightly to 30.3:69.7 for the district, 62.5:37.5 for the Region, and 56.2:43.8 for the country. That is, 23% (Rural) and 77% (Urban). Therefore, it means that the Metropolis is more urbanized than the region and the nation, respectively, and, as such, any development plan ought to consider this when formulating activities to address problems (CCMA, 2019).

5.2.3.3 Nature of Local Government in the Cape Coast metropolitan area

The Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA) is the highest political and administrative authority that provides guidance and serves all other administrative authorities in the Metropolis. Under Section 10 of the Local Government act 462 (1993), the CCMA exercises overall deliberative, legislative, and executive functions in the district. It consists of the Metropolitan Chief Executive (MCE) and forty-two members, one each from the district's electoral areas, who were elected by universal adult suffrage. It also includes the members of Parliament for Cape Coast and other appointed members not exceeding 30% of the assembly's total membership and appointed by the President in consultation with traditional authorities and other interest groups in the district.

The Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA) 's legislative and deliberative head is the presiding member elected by the Assembly from among its members every two years. The political and executive head of the Assembly is the Metropolitan Chief Executive. Under Section 20 (2) of Act 462, the MCE is the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Assembly and therefore responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Metropolis. In pursuance of Section 3(3) of Act 462, the Legislative Instrument (1994) 1589 provides sub-metro Councils and Unit Committees as the sub-district community structures, respectively, for the completion of the decentralization program in the Metropolis. The Area Councils' functions include assisting the Assembly in mobilizing local resources and managing environmental issues in the zone. On the other hand, the Unit committees take over all the former Town/Village Committees' functions.

Civil society organizations in the metropolis are mainly community-based. (CBOS) they range from Asafo groups (regular armies), ethnic groupings, clans and benevolent, religious groups, and students' associations. The Non-Governmental Organizations

(NGO's) and Community Based Organizations (CBO's), as they are known now, were relatively few in the country until recently. Some NGOs and CBOs operate in the Cape Coast Metropolis, but their number and their impact on the socio-economic lives of the people compared to other areas of the country are insignificant.

The people of Cape Coast are part of a larger group of people known as Fantes found in Southern Ghana's central part. They are part of a larger ethnic group of people classified as Akans in Ghana. The language spoken by the people is Fante. People who belong to other Ethnic groups are mostly immigrants like the Ewes, Gas, Adas, Krobo, Nzemas, Twi-speaking Akans, and others from Northern Ghana reside in the Metropolis as farmers, fishers, traders, government workers, commercial drivers, and artisans, among others.

The entire Metropolis constitutes one traditional area with the Oguaa Omanhen as the paramount chief. The matrilineal system of inheritance is practiced. The extended family, otherwise known as "abuse" or clan, is based on their social structure. The "odikro" or chief is the political head of a town or village. The main festival celebrated in the Metropolis is the Oguaa Fetu Afahye, which is celebrated on the first Saturday of September every year, and observe by people from all walks of life, both far and near (Arhin, 1995; CCMA, 2019; Ghana Statistical Service, 2013; NDPC, 2018).

5.3 Philosophical Underpinning of the Study

According to Kivunja & Kuyini (2017), the way a study is conducted is informed by the researcher's belief about how knowledge is acquired. Additionally, Creswell (2014) points out that a practical research approach includes strategies and instruments employed to achieve the study's purpose and find answers to the research questions. Accordingly, in searching for the right approach and methodology for this study, I considered a comprehensive analysis of the various philosophical assumptions underpinning research paradigms in empirical studies. An outline of the purpose, objectives, and research questions to be addressed have been elaborated in chapter one of this study. Therefore, this section seeks to explain the philosophical underpinnings of the study and provide a brief overview of the underlying philosophical assumptions.

Kivunja & Kuyini (2017) point out that, philosophical foundation regarding knowledge and how it can be obtained exerts significant influence on the choice of methods and approach to in-depth empirical studies. They assert that it serves as a guide to the research approach and determines the kind of method and instruments used for the study. Therefore, for the researcher to generate such a piece of knowledge, there is the need to analyze the various philosophical and theoretical issues required. Scotland (2012) explains that the main philosophical underpinnings that form the research paradigms are based on epistemology, ontology, and methodology.

- i. **Epistemology:** it concerns itself with how knowledge is acquired. It looks at what constitutes knowledge, how it is acquired, interpreted, and used.
- ii. **Ontology:** is a branch of philosophy that studies beings. It entails the concepts that relate to the nature and essence of existence in the social world.

- iii. **Methodology:** it refers to the general approach to the study, research design, the procedure of inquiry, and methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

According to Kivunja & Kuyini (2017), the two main theoretical issues in research relate to ontology and epistemology. They define ontology as a subdivision of philosophical studies that deals with the nature of existence or reality in the social world. Simply put as the “study of being.” It depicts the assumptions one makes before deciding on the nature and essence or reality of a social phenomenon under investigation. It concerns the suppositions made to deem something as making sense or real. It helps the researcher conceptualize the forms and nature of social reality to inform his knowledge and belief on what can be revealed.

Scotland (2012) claims that the realist and nominalist assumptions form the two main ontological viewpoints about the nature of reality. According to Louis Cohen et al. (2018), the realist believe that social reality exists out there and can be accessed only through scientific means, and that the results being generally objective. However, the nominalist maintains that social reality has no external existence but occurs due to human thinking and experience, making it impossible to be accessed objectively. Sikes (2000) explains epistemology as a branch of philosophical studies that deals with the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired, understood, and re-present. According to her, it examines what is considered knowledge and justification for it. Likewise, Schwandt (2001) points out that epistemology is used to describe how a researcher is acquainted with reality of a phenomenon. Gray (2014) identifies the objectivist, subjectivist and constructivist views as the three main epistemologies foundations in research that can help a researcher comprehend the nature of knowledge and the correlation between the researcher and the researched. This enables the researcher to take a position in the study

context to discover new ideas or fill a gap in the existing literature to contribute to knowledge.

Objectivists believe that reality exists independent of the researcher and can only be discovered through a scientific approach. This perspective is grounded in the belief that knowledge can indeed be discovered when all elements of human biases are removed and that an observer is not influenced by the observed. Thus, it cannot change the outcome of what is being observed. The objectivist epistemological position is linked to the realist ontological assumptions. On the contrary, the constructivist suggests that meaning is constructed but not discovered with the assertion that subjects can construct different meanings concerning the same or similar phenomenon. The constructivist epistemology is associated with the nominalist ontological position (N. K. Denzin et al., 2006; Gray, 2014; Egong G Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Moreover, to the subjectivist, knowledge is a product of human construction and that, meaning can be imposed on the observer by the object of study. Though subjectivists accept external reality, they perceive knowledge as subject to influence by the observer with the notion that in as much as the observer can be influenced by the observed, so the entire observation can be affected by the observed. However, Guba & Lincoln (1994) expanded the elements in the theoretical issues to include methodology, which entails the general approach to the study. These elements provide basic assumptions, beliefs, and values as a foundation for developing a research paradigm. The assumptions help to position the significance of a research problem to assist one to make an informed decision on which approach to embark on to arrive at a solution.

5.3.1 The Research Paradigm Debate

A paradigm is a set of assumptions about how an issue of concern to the researcher should be approached. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2005), a research paradigm serves as the network that unites the researcher's ontological, epistemological, and methodological beliefs. In the view of Creswell (2014), it is the basic organized rules that guide a researcher's inquiries. To develop a profound research design, the researcher must select a research paradigm consistent with his beliefs about how knowledge is generated. Kivunja & Kuyini (2017) have identified the positivist, interpretivism, or constructivist and the critical paradigms as guides to scientific research.

5.3.1.1 Positivist epistemology

The positivist paradigm is grounded in realist ontological and objectivist epistemological assumptions. According to Guba & Lincoln (1994), the implication is that the positivists perceive reality as existing independently of the researcher and advocate that knowledge can only be discovered through the scientific method. Van Kemenade & Hardjono (2019) claim that the positivist sees the researcher and the researched as objective entities and that meaning can only be discovered in an object of study but not in the mind of the researcher; thus, all that the researcher must do is to obtain the meaning through the research object or situation. Positivism relies on experimentation, observation, and experience as the basis for acquiring knowledge. Therefore, a study that adopts this paradigm will be contingent on deductive logic, formulation, hypothesis testing, use of operational terms, statistics, and extrapolation to conclude (Crotty, 1998).

According to Leong (2014), one of positivism's main originators was Auguste Comte, a French philosopher (1798-1857) in rejection of metaphysics with the assumption that reality can only be revealed through the scientific approach. His assumption was based

on the assertion that human behavior is well understood through observation and reason, while actual knowledge is obtained after careful observation and experimentation. It formed the positivist claim that reality can be empirically observed and justified with logical analysis. The primary aim of the positivist is to make predictions and present explanations grounded on the quantifiable result.

The methodological approach associated with the positivist paradigm includes surveys using primary and secondary data, cross-sectional, longitudinal, and experimental studies. The positivist applies empiricism and generalization postulations. Empirical deductions entail collecting verifiable empirical data backed by an applicable theoretical framework that supports the analyses of a formulated hypothesis in scientific research. With generalization, according to Djamba & Neuman (2002), the positivist suggests that through inductive inference, the result of empirical findings in a single study context can be applied in similar situations. This implies that a pro-positivist study's finding is not limited to a singular setting but could be applied to other situations. According to Creswel (2014), the positivist believes that a similar conclusion is made even if different researchers embark on a study using a precise statistical analysis to examine a sizable sample. Though the positivist believes in generalization, they admit that knowledge is the product of social construction. Since the positivist researcher uses predictions and generalization, qualitative data analysis methods such as standardized tests, standardized observation tools to describe a phenomenon, and closed-ended questionnaires are often employed (N. K. Denzin et al., 2006; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Krauss, 2010).

I think the positivist paradigm fails to disclose other ways of reasoning, limiting innovation and critical thinking to address societal problems. Knowledge could be constructed and developed in various ways. The researcher should be given options for

exploring other means of obtaining knowledge, which might provide evidence to address our society's multiple problems. Therefore, I subscribe to Louis Cohen et al. (2018) claim that the researcher and the researched cannot remain independent in every instance. I also agree with the criticism of the generalizability assumption of the positivist paradigm for not representing a probability sampling of the population and the assertion that it is not possible to use the same method to study the natural world and the social world since the social world is not valueless and that it is challenging to elucidate casual nature. To my understanding, the positivist paradigm is more applicable to the physical world than the social world (Golfashani, 2003; Krauss, 2010; Louis Cohen et al., 2018).

According to Leong (2014), Post-positivism emerged from positivism during the 20th century through similar ontological and epistemological assumptions but with slight modifications. Guba & Lincoln (1982), explain that the post-positivist ontological position moves slightly from strict realism to critical realism and claims that it is not common for the researcher to perceive natural causes with their efforts accurately. Proponents of the paradigm argue that, though reality can be constructed subjectively, the meaning is attained socially through experience.

Proponents of Post-positivism such as Wahyuni (2012) challenge the claim that absolute truth can be discovered through science in modern societies. Instead, discoveries are approximation that takes us closer to reality. The post-positivist subscribes to the principle of falsification, which holds that scientific theories cannot be proven to be true except when several attempts to disprove them have failed to be accepted tentatively. With this logic, every scientific statement is tentatively true. They also believe that empirical data is not enough to understand scientific theories (Crotty, 1998; Leong, 2014).

The Post-positivist paradigm is founded on objectivist epistemology and critical realist ontology. Critical realism accepts the positivist claim of rigor, precision, logical analysis, and evidence-based solution but not limited to physical observation alone as propounded by positivism. The post-positivist believes that, though reality exists out there, it must be subject to critical examination to claim and achieve a better understanding of it. The post-positivist combines some qualitative and quantitative methods in its methodological approach to address some fallouts of the positivist paradigm. The post-positivist approach supports the positivist claim of generalization but considers knowledge as a product of social conditioning.

Constraints of the positivist and post-positivist paradigms led to the advancement of alternatives such as critical and constructivist paradigms (Bryant, 1985; Leong, 2014; Ziegelmeier, 1942).

5.3.1.2 The Critical paradigm

The critical paradigm, also known as critical theory or the transformative paradigm, is grounded in historical realism. According to Egong G. Guba & Lincoln (1994), historical realism holds that realities are socially created entities under internal manipulations. Critical paradigm scholars seek to investigate social inequalities issues and address political, social, and economic concerns that confront society. In the quest to reshape society by addressing injustices confronting humanity and improve the social justice system, it is sometimes referred to as the transformative paradigm (N. K. Denzin et al., 2006).

The critical paradigm assumes a transactional epistemology that recommends interaction between the researcher and participants. This epistemology embraces subjectivism based

on real-world sensationalism connected to societal ideology. According to Louis Cohen et al. (2018), what constitutes knowledge is control by authorities in the societal setting who advocate for that knowledge. Thus, those who control power and authority resort to manipulations to maintain their domination over the people. Critical realists claim that social reality is historically constructed and reshaped by those in authority to maintain control over the people.

Proponents of critical realism acknowledge the impediments on people's ability, especially the underprivileged, to change their social, economic, and political conditions. These impediments can be exposed to critical research by engaging participants in awareness creation to transform the social order (Scotland, 2012)

Methodologically the critical theory is focused on the interrogation of values and assumptions, exposing domination and injustices, and appealing to social order (Crotty, 1998). The critical theory allows the researcher and participants to work together to unveil a social reality and analyze it critically to recreate knowledge and understanding. Therefore, participants are involved in the entire research process, from designing the research questions through data collection to analysis, discussion of findings, and recommendation (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Scotland, 2012).

Critical discourse analysis, ethnography, and action research are some of the critical theory approaches. Simultaneously, open-ended interviews focused on group discussions and an open-ended questionnaire are some of the methods used, which usually generate qualitative data. Benaquisto & Babbie (2002) view the critical theory as exposure and liberator of historical inaccuracies and organizational value-biases in a social phenomenon. This reveals that the critical theorist's intention is not only to expose and

understand a phenomenon but to be involved in bringing about change. Egong G. Guba & Lincoln (1994) identify the following attributes of the critical theory:

- i. Located in historical realism and respect for cultural norms
- ii. Critical realist ontology and subjectivist epistemology
- iii. It concerns itself with the setup of power relationship in the society
- iv. It views research as a social construction rather than a discovery
- v. It uses ethnomethodology, which situates knowledge in social and historical settings
- vi. Application of action research and the utilization of the participatory approach

5.3.1.3 The interpretive/constructivist paradigm

The interpretivism or the constructivist paradigm, also known as the phenomenological approach, rooted in German idealism, emphasizes the individual and interprets the world around him. Djamba & Neuman (2002) trace interpretivism to the works of Max Weber (1864-1920) and Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911). Wilhelm Dilthey cited in Djamba & Neuman (2002), distinguished between natural science and human science. He explained that whereas natural science is based on abstract explanation (*Erklärung*), human science is founded on understanding (*Verstehen*). Weber posits that people resort to definitions, justification, interpretation, and rationalization of their day-to-day actions in their quest to make meaning of the world around them. According to O'Donoghue (2007), Interpretivism focuses on the researcher's perspective rather than the researcher. Thus, the interpretive holds that reality is socially constructed. This explains why the Interpretive paradigm is sometimes used interchangeably by some scholars with the Constructive paradigm. Strauss & Corbin (2008) assert that a study located in the constructivist paradigm does not necessarily precede a theory but follows it to ground on

the data gathered by the research work. The Interpretive paradigm is grounded in subjectivist epistemology, relativist ontology, and naturalist methodology (Egong G Guba & Lincoln, 1994; O'Donoghue, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

Assuming subjectivist epistemology implies that the researcher will derive meaning from the data gathered through personal logic and cognitive analysis through interaction with participants. This means the researcher can construct knowledge socially based on the experience of reality in a natural setting. This suggests the researcher and the researched are not separate entities since they interact through conversation, interview, talking, listening, writing, and recording researched data. Therefore, interpretivism employs methodological approaches such as case study, ethnography, grounded study, action research, and participatory inquiry. Assuming the relativist ontology implies that the interpretive believes a phenomenon has multiple realities that can be explored and reconstructed through interaction between the researcher and the researched or participants. It maintains that reality is socially constructed but not discovered. Accordingly, several interpretations can be made from a single phenomenon depending on the researcher's context (N. K. Denzin et al., 2006; Egong G Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The implication is that the researcher can develop distinct meaning based on an understanding of a social phenomenon. Gray (2014), a proponent of subjectivism, points out that, even though the meaning is imposed on actors by the object, participants can construct their knowledge. Levers (2013) added that, with the interpretive paradigm, the reality could be organized through a purposeful interaction between a researcher and the researched-on consent in the researched socio-cultural context. However, Ryan (2018) points out that the interpretation of social reality is often similar but not necessarily in the same manner since people can experience a similar situation in several ways. This is in

direct contrast to the objectivist viewpoint, which claims that social reality exists independent of the researcher and can be discovered objectively through a scientific approach. Therefore, the interpretive paradigm understands the world from subjective lenses and seeks explanations regarding participants rather than the observe.

Table 11: Characteristics of the positivist and interpretive paradigms

Features	Positivist paradigm	Interpretivist paradigm
Ontology	Real reality exists; however, the researcher and the researched are independent entities	Multiple realities exist, making the researcher and the researched inseparable (life-word ontology)
Epistemology	Objectivity: Reality exists objectively beyond the human mind	Subjectivity: Reality is subject to interpretation
Methodology	Quantitative approach (statistics and content analysis)	Qualitative approach (phenomenology and hermeneutic language)
Research object	The research object has innate qualities that exist independent of the researcher	The research object is interpreted and meaning derived by the researcher.
Reality/ truth	The correspondence theory of truth	Intentional fulfillment of truth
Reliability	Replicability (results can be reproduced)	Interpretive awareness (subjective analysis of results)
Validity	Certainty (data truly measure reality)	Defensive claims to knowledge of reality
Evaluation criteria	Generalizability - validity, and reliability	Describing various perspectives accurately -Triangulation

Source: (Egong G Guba & Lincoln, 1994)

5.3.2 The Choice of Research Paradigm

To enable me choose among the various research paradigms, I considered the philosophy and practice of each of the paradigms connected with what I intend to find out in this study. The result of my study is to generate knowledge that will be useful to the people and add up to existing literature on the need for an institutional framework to involve civil society organizations and other non-state actors in the decentralization and local government process for accelerated development: Thus, my desire to combine research with development activities that can result in improvement in the living conditions of the people at the local level. I intend to contribute to an evolving and more effective human development centered on decentralization and local government system to improve the living conditions of the people in the community.

The role of multi-actors in decentralization and local governance in a unitary state like Ghana is best suited to a qualitative interpretive approach that can generate understanding of critical issues by reducing the gap between the researcher and participants. In this case, the essential participants include community-based civil society organizations, traditional authorities, and the decentralized local government structures involved in the day-to-day administrative process. Therefore, research into decentralization, local government, and participation needs to look at those technical aspects and the social impact and sustainability concerning the people at the community level. This is an approach to which the interpretive research paradigm is ideally suited for. The interpretive paradigm assumes relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology, focus on exploring the complexity of a social phenomenon to gain understanding. The purpose of social research in the interpretivism paradigm is to recognize and interpret phenomena, occurrences, causes and effects, experiences, and social structures and their impact on society.

I believe that social reality is subjective and can be reconstructed by participants' experiences and insights and the aims and values of the researcher. As proposed by Wisker (2001), I share the principles of interpretivism in her postgraduate research handbook, which describes the social world as “*a construct and given meaning by the researcher.*” In this regard, the researcher plays a key role by being part of what is observed, driven by interest and curiosity.

Based on my philosophy about the nature of reality and knowledge claim and after careful analysis and comparison of the various research paradigms' philosophy and practice against my values, I realized the interpretive paradigm resonates well with this study. I, therefore, opted for the interpretive paradigm as the philosophical guide to this study. Suffice to say that there is the need to tap into the feature of other paradigms in a complementary manner, and due diligence is made (Egong G Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Krauss, 2010; Levers, 2013).

5.4 Research Methodology

In searching for the right methodological approach for the study, I familiarized myself with a comprehensive analysis of philosophical assumptions underpinning different research paradigms that conform to my philosophical perspective of knowledge of reality and how it is accessed. According to Guba & Lincoln (1982), fundamental philosophical underpinnings that form the basis of research paradigms relate to epistemology, ontology, and methodology. Therefore, after a careful analysis of the research paradigm debate, I opted for the interpretivism paradigm grounded in subjectivist epistemology, relativist ontology, and naturalist methodology (Creswell, 2014; Djamba & Neuman, 2002; Remenyi, 2013). Section (5.4) provides a detailed analysis of the philosophical underpinnings of this study.

Based on the philosophical assumptions, the choice of paradigm, the purpose of the study, aims and objectives, and research questions to be addressed, I employed a qualitative research approach, which informed my choice of case study as the study's research design type. The choice of the case study design enabled me to delve deeper into the complexity of the social phenomena that underpin the study. Moreover, the approach enabled the researcher to answer the *why's* and *how's* of social concern and obtain experienced - evidence that is hard to realize through the quantitative method. Denzin et al. (2006) explain that the qualitative method enables the researcher to analyze a situation descriptively and making interpretations in its natural environment by making sense of a phenomenon through participants' explanations and observable meanings.

Accordingly, I employed interviews, observation, and focused group discussions as the source of primary data collection instruments. Further data was sourced from strategic planning documents and meeting minutes from the case study organizations, documents

review, scholarly articles and online publications, material culture, and a review of relevant literature. I also embarked on a five-month study visit to the research setting to conduct interviews and observations. Respondents were purposefully sampled from Civil Society Organizations, Traditional Authorities, and officials from the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assembly structures. A purposeful sampling technique was used based on observable characteristics. Detailed reasons for the selection of each of the municipalities are expounded in chapter five-under research setting.

Although the history of Ghana's decentralization and local government process goes beyond 1988 in terms of content, analysis and discussion of the role of the metropolitan municipal and district assemblies, civil society organizations, and traditional authorities are restricted to the fourth republic of Ghana. The reason being that this period according to Ahwoi (2000) and Ayee (1999), has witnessed rigorous efforts at ensuring democracy and good governance by strengthening popular participation through decentralization and local governance to enhance accelerated development at the local level. This is manifested in the passage of the *Ghana Local Government Act, 1993(Act 462)* (1993), which replaced the PNDC law 207, followed by the local government legislative instrument of 1994 (LI 1589) and subsequently the *Ghana Local Government Act, 2016 (Act 963)* (2016) making the fourth republic more elaborative on the process than any other period in history. Nevertheless, a historical overview of local governance will be analyzed to take a cue from the past.

5.4.1 Qualitative Research Approach

A research approach is made up of the strategies and the procedures for a study covering the stages from philosophical assumptions to comprehensive data collection methods, analysis, and interpretation. It is determined by a researcher's philosophical assumptions that match the research design and the methods he intends to employ for the collection of data, analysis, and interpretation (Strauss & Corbin, 2008; Wisdom & Creswell, 2013).

In searching for a suitable approach for the research, I considered current debates on a wide range of philosophical assumptions, my philosophy about reality, how knowledge is obtained, my experience, and how I intend to embark on data collection. I also took into consideration the research problem at stake. Thus, I employed the qualitative research approach to delve deeper into the complexity of the social phenomena that underpin the study. Qualitative research is a social research procedure that focuses on the way people construct and interpret their experiences and opinions about a phenomenon. The approach enables the researcher to answer the *why's* and *how's* of social concern and obtain evidenced-based experiences that are hard to realize through the quantitative method. Denzin et al. (2006) explain that the qualitative method enables the researcher to analyze a situation in its natural environment by making sense of a phenomenon through interpretation and meaning expressed by participants. This means qualitative data present reality, subject to the interpretation by the researcher using descriptive analysis. In this regard, the researcher does not impose his assumption, beliefs, or concepts on the research instead of the phenomenon.

According to Carter et al. (2014), qualitative research is fundamentally an inductive means of organizing data into themes and identifying patterns among them. In their book, "*Designing qualitative research*," Marshall & Rossman (2016) suggest that for a

qualitative researcher to gather data for a study effectively, one must spend some time in the research setting, observe directly or indirectly, conduct an in-depth interview and analyze secondary documents. Observation and interviews are highly recommended in the qualitative inquiry approach. It enables a researcher to explore a natural environment and engage participants and focus groups directly or indirectly affected by the social concern researched. Qualitative research employs multiple methods to collect data. This means that a researcher can resort to instrumentations, such as interviews, questionnaires, and observation schedules, to collect data in a single study. This process facilitates triangulations, which also serves as a means of validation. Unlike quantitative research which is number-based and employ statistical tests for analysis which generally generate fixed responses, the qualitative research approach is text-based without statistical test and produce structured or unstructured responses (Creswell, 2014; Gering, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Obeng, 2016; Strauss & Corbin, 2008; Wisdom & Creswell, 2013). The table below provides additional differences between qualitative and quantitative research approach adapted from Creswell (2013) and Cohen et al. (2018).

Table 12: Differentiating qualitative and quantitative research

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH
Subjectivity: describes the phenomenon from the viewpoint of respondents	Objectivity: presents observed effects of a phenomenon as interpreted by the researcher
Develop concepts in the form of ideas to be substantiated by interaction with objects and participants	Develop concepts in the form of measurable variables
Data is collected in words, images and through observation	Data is obtained in the form of numbers
Data analysis is organized into themes and categories for logic and consistency	Data analysis uses tables and charts which relates to the hypothesis
Employ focus groups discussions, in-depth interviews, and reviews of documents as methods of data collection	Employs Surveys, structured interviews and observations, and reviews of documents for statistical information
Answers research question	Test hypothesis
Less generalizability	More generalizability

Source: Wisdom & Creswell (2013) and Louis Cohen et al. (2018).

Notwithstanding the differences and similarities, some scholars have advanced the integration of aspects of qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches in a single inquiry to obtain a comprehensive and concerted utilization of data to deal with a complex phenomenon. This approach is termed a mixed methods research design. The mixed-methods approach combines subjective and objective views of reality, intending to integrate general and individual situations in a specific context. The result is always a mixture of statistics and qualitative data analysis (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013; Louis Cohen et al., 2018; Gray, 2014; Obeng, 2016). The selection of qualitative approach for the study is informed by my choice of ontological and epistemological assumption, which is derived from the nominalist school of thought and subjectivist epistemology linked to the interpretive paradigm as explained under theoretical and philosophical issues in section 5.3 of this study.

5.4.2 Research Design

According to Creswell (2014), a research design is a type of inquiry located within qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods that provide specific direction for research procedures. In the view of Yin (1981), the research design serves as the logic linking the study's purpose and the research questions to data collection and analysis procedures. He explained that the research design is dependent on the selected paradigm. Therefore, based on my selection of the interpretive research paradigm coupled with the study's objectives and my personal experiences, I adopted a participatory approach that informed my choice of case study action research as the study's research design type.

Wahyuni (2012) describes a case study as a comprehensive study of a definite unit of a general phenomenon to generalize the entire unit's results. On the other hand, action research seeks to improve practice by actively involving respondents in the data

collection process. Moreover, Hamel (2000) explains a case study in her postgraduate handbook as a strategy for doing research that involves an empirical investigation of the contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context using multiple evidence sources. Benaquisto & Babbie (2002) assert that a case study is an in-depth investigation of a single instance of some social phenomena such as a village, a family, or a juvenile gang. In support of this assertion, Remenyi (2013) maintains that a case study can be used for ethnographic, evaluative, educational, or action research. Nevertheless, the case study design has been traditionally criticized for lacking objectivity, rigor, and accuracy compared to other qualitative and quantitative designs in the social sciences (Babbie, 2005).

Robert Yin (1981), an American social scientist who has written extensively on case study research, states that a case study is an empirical investigation into a contemporary social phenomenon in its real-life situation. He explains that the case may refer to an event, phenomenon, an individual, or a unit of inquiry studied in its natural setting. This accounts for the reason why a researcher should be judicious in the articulation and implementation of a chosen research design.

Despite cynicism about the case study approach, it is widely used because it offers understandings lacking in the other designs. For instance, Remenyi (2013) maintains that the case study design emphasizes the description and exploration of a phenomenon that is not seen in other research designs. He explains further that, since the case study is narrow in focus, the researcher can provide detailed information on the subject under study. In the view of Creswell (2014), case studies allow for a combination of objective and subjective data for in-depth analysis. To him, a Case study allows the researcher to collect data in a natural setting with minor or no influence on respondents. Hence, the

outcome of events portrays a true reflection of the case under study. Yin (2014) points out that a case study presents a single entity out of a whole with well-defined borders within which the researcher can set limitations. In support of this view, Creswell (2014) claims that a case study is a form of research design in a qualitative study that may be an object of a review or a result of an investigation. According to Benaquisto & Babbie (2002), a case study fundamentally deals with an in-depth investigation of a single instance of some social phenomenon, such as a village, a family, or juvenile gang.

In his book, "*Selection of a Research Approach*," Creswell (2014) agreed with the immense contribution of Yin (1981) and identified some key features of case study stressing its reliance on in-depth investigation built on descriptive analysis on specific case scenario with boarded or well-defined parameters. He concluded that a case study enables the researcher to focus on a particular social phenomenon for an in-depth empirical examination that requires a small sample size for data analysis. Essentially, a case study is mainly used to answer "*how*" and "*why*" questions, which require exploratory and descriptive analysis, mostly for evaluation purposes. This enables the researcher to conduct investigations in the context he believes to be relevant to the phenomenon under study. A variety of case study designs can be used depending on the context and what is being investigated. Stenhouse (1981) maintains that a case study can be used for ethnographic, evaluative, educations, or action research. According to Yin (1981), a case study can be exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. He explains that the type or form of a case study will depend on the size, interest, intensity, and purpose of the inquiry, which can be a single or several cases. Stake (1995) categorizes case studies as instrumental, intrinsic, and collective. He explained that, whereas an intrinsic case study is done to understanding an actual occurrence, an instrumental case study uses a single case in a general situation. In contrast, a collective case study uses more than one

case in a single study to unravel a phenomenon. Based on the epistemological standpoint of the researcher, a case study may have a different approach. Therefore, based on the interpretive paradigm choice and my quest to understand a distinctive social value, I opted for an intrinsic case study approach. The reason is that the case setting was selected not because it represents the entirety of the phenomenon but because of its exceptionality, which is of interest to the researcher. Reasons for the choice of the research setting are already explained in section 5.2.

Despite some identifiable limitations and traditional prejudices about using the case study method, such as not conforming to generalizability, not lending itself to numerical analysis, and being complex in nature, it is considered one of the best qualitative designs. Methodologist such as Creswell, Stake, Yin, and Merriam claim that case study;

- i. Enables the researcher to investigate a contemporary issue in its real settings.
- ii. It facilitates exploring the unexpected and the unusual. Thus, it enables the researcher to identify the processes involved in casual relationships.
- iii. Data collected is in-depth compared to the other research designs. Primary data collection instruments include interviews, observations, and document review.
- iv. Case study lends itself to the use of multiple sources of data and techniques. Data collection is mainly qualitative; however, it can also be quantitative in an exceptional situation.
- v. Triangulation is one of the greatest strengths of a case study as compared to other designs. Triangulation combines evidence from different sources to validate a discovery or the outcome of a study.

According to Denzin et al. (2006), action research, which is popularly referred to as community-based studies or cooperative inquiry, relatively involves respondents in the data collection process to arouse consciousness, commitment, and appreciation to the research findings. Accordingly, action research is conducted to bring about the desired change to improve practice. This is done by assembling respondents directly affected by the phenomenon to share viewpoints and suggest a way forward. In this perspective, action research stimulates the dual commitment of the researcher and respondents (Costello, 2007; Dick, 2011).

According to Parkin (2009), action research is conducted to change a specific context to improve practice. Therefore, action research was chosen to investigate non-state actors' role in the decentralization and local government and its impact on the community. Combining the principles of a case study and action research was substantial for the inquiry as the concern's limitations were clearly defined. Consequently, an outlined solution is determined, and a recommendation is made for the corresponding implementation. Principally, the study adopts a participatory, descriptive, and exploratory approach.

5.4.3 Strategies adopted for Data Collection

The study adopted a qualitative case study approach guided by the action research methodology. The guiding principles of action research require a participatory approach throughout the research process. Strategies adopted for the process include the following:

Planning stage: Since the study site is in Ghana, and I reside in Germany, I needed to crave the indulgence of potential respondents for the study. As a result, the planning stage involved consultation with key stakeholders in local governance such as officials of the municipal assembly, traditional authorities, opinion leaders, and community-based civil society organizations to solicit their input in the generation of research questions and data collection instruments that would reflect the objectives of the study and address the concerns of the people. This was done to make the study practical and participatory and get the people committed to implementing recommendations and results. In the end, I was able to develop a link with the social research network in the study setting that was useful during the field study stage.

Field study stage: I spent five months in Ghana for the field studies stage. During the period, I identified and trained three research assistants, each from the case study site, in the data collection techniques I intend to employ for the study. The three research assistants were involved actively throughout the data collection process. An introductory letter was sent to the municipal assembly to request authorization to embark on field studies involving interviews, observation, and focused group discussions within selected municipalities. With approval from the assembly, the field study was conducted between February and June 2020.

5.4.4 Instruments for data collection

For significant data collection, there was a need to design the appropriate document to solicit the respondents' required information. Accordingly, the study adopted the data triangulation method (Carter et al., 2014; Denzin et al., 2006; Hamel, 2000), which combines multiple data sources to view the strengths and weaknesses. Notwithstanding, each is counterweighed by the other. Consequently, I adopted data source triangulation Carter et al. (2014) using a semi-structured interview, participant observation, and focused group discussions. Data source triangulation enabled me to collect information from different people, including district assembly members, traditional authorities, opinion leaders, and community-based organizations, which added multiple perspectives to the study and assisted in data validation. Accordingly, data triangulation, document review, and material culture were employed for additional data collection and analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

5.4.5 Pre-test of the data collection materials

There was the need to pretest data collection materials to identify problem areas and prevent, if not minimize, the burden on respondents and make sure that it works for the intended purpose. Since I am temporarily based in Germany as a student whilst the study site is in Ghana, I decided to conduct a pre-test of my data collection materials with study mates and colleagues in Germany to save cost. For that reason, two pretesting trials of the data collection materials were conducted with colleague researchers at the center for the evaluation of social services (ZPE) university of Siegen. Colleagues from our research team and a visiting Doctor from the University of Ghana, Legon, carried out the interview and assisted in managing all other documentation and data collection materials. The pretest of the interviews, which were conducted in British English, was administered to

the colleagues who simulated local government officials, traditional authorities, opinion leaders, and representatives of community-based civil society organizations. Procedures for translation and transcription of the interview and field notes were also incorporated into the pretest section. The outcome of the pre-test enabled me to adjust the wording and the format of the interview in the final schedule. It also helped in the test analysis of the validity and reliability of the data collection method. I spent a total of five months in Ghana to conduct the final schedule of the interview. Prior notices were issued to the respondents to solicit their informed consent before I arrived in Ghana. The interviews were conducted in both English and Twi, a local dialect that is commonly used in the case study sites and the official language in Ghana, respectively. With the permission of respondents, the interviews were recorded and later transcribed, summarized, coded, and analyzed qualitatively. Transcription of the audio was done verbatim to include word-for-word quotations and description of key features, body language, and general mood during the interview.

5.4.6 Data collection procedure

- i. **Individual Interview:** The study adopted data source triangulation using individual interviews (IDI), observation, and focused group discussions to obtain information from respondents. In Fontana & Frey's (2000) opinion, individual interviews (IDI) are one of the best tools for gaining insight into people's perspectives in an in-depth study. The individual interview was structured and in-depth, which helped me to probe further while not going offline for the study. It also helped the respondents to stay focused. The interview's conversational nature was appropriate and effective because the respondents felt free to share their views on the topic. The interview section again helped me to elicit information from the direct person-to-person encounter.

For effective communication, an interview guide that specifies vital issues and topics related to the research question was developed. The interview guide was designed to implore respondents' personal experience and perspectives on the role of civil society organizations in local planning and development in Ghana within Nsawam-Adoagyiri, Suhum, and Cape Coast municipalities in the Eastern and Central regions of Ghana. The study aimed to review and make recommendations for improving the responsiveness of municipal, metropolitan, district assembly (MMDA) structures and its collaborative effort with community-based organizations and local actors to work together to develop the community. (See interview guide in the appendices).

- ii. **Observation:** non-participant but direct observation is adopted for the study. According to Marshall & Rossman (2016), observation allows for an organized description of events and behavior in the research setting. This enables the researcher to describe experiences and the current situation from his perspectives, using all his five senses simultaneously. With observation, the researcher can get a personal, vivid description of the problem under study. Having lived and worked in Nsawam for more than a decade, I decided to spend five months on my field studies. During his period, I participated actively in the every-day life activities of the people and events such as town-hall meetings, communal labor, stake-holder consultation meetings with the district assembly, and taking note of key observable occurrences and procedures to generate data for the study. Occasionally, I traveled to Cape Coast and Suhum to spend some time on the observation. As a participant-observer, I learned about the activities of the people I was observing in their natural setting. It also provided me with the context within which I developed my sampling guidelines and interview guides.

The field observation was guided by the table below:

Table 13: Observation template used for the study

WHAT TO OBSERVE	LOCATION	TYPE OF OBSERVATION
The functioning of district assembly structures in the local government system	Suhum/ Cape Coast and Nsawam/Adoagyiri Municipalities	Direct observation
Functioning of NGOs and community based civil society organizations	Suhum/ Cape Coast and Nsawam/Adoagyiri Municipalities	Direct observation
The extent to which District Assemblies relate with the local people and community based Civil society organizations in local engagements	Town/hall meetings in purposefully selected communities in the municipalities	Participant Observer
Relationship between the local government structures, CSOs, and Traditional Authorities	Suhum/ Cape Coast and Nsawam/Adoagyiri Municipalities	Direct observation
How do the District Assemblies involve the people and stakeholders in the decision-making and implementation process?	Suhum and Nsawam/Adoagyiri Municipal assembly	Direct observation

Source: Field data (2020)

iii. **Focused group discussion:** Focused group (FG) discussions were used to elicit groups of respondents' views. Three separate focus group discussions were conducted to bring the respective themes of the interviews and observations into a group setting. The three separate groups consisted of Traditional Authorities, Civil Society Organizations, and decentralized local government officials. There were an average of eight (8) respondents in each group. Members of the focused group were purposefully selected based on their special ostensible knowledge and observable attributes. The main reason behind the focused group discussions was to clarify the understanding and conceptualization of the decentralization and local government process and the functioning of the MMDA structures. Additionally, the focused group discussions were meant to explore group

reaction to specific issues such as the interaction processes and unanimity in identifying vital development issues, community needs, and aspirations. Each of the participants was asked the same question in turns, and in some cases, they were allowed to deliberate on issues in pairs. This approach encouraged participation, instructiveness, and expressive discussions, which enabled the researcher to get an insightful perspective on the subject matter.

The focused group discussions, which lasted between 50-60 minutes, were conducted in the local dialect (Twi) and interspersed with the English language. With the permission of the respondents, the discussions were recorded for transcription. For accuracy and reliability, feedback sessions were organized intermittently, and in some situations, respondents made corrections to misinterpretation of their views by the moderator. This was worthwhile during the presentation, interpretation, and analysis of data for the study.

iv. **Document's review (secondary data collection);** Secondary data sources were derived from books, articles, online resources, and publications by the Ministry of Local government and rural development, the Ghana statistical services, and the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. Other strategic documents that provided relevant information include:

- i. District Assembly Common Fund Act 1993, (Act 455)
- ii. Guide to District Assemblies in Ghana (1st and 2nd editions). Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), Ghana
- iii. Local Governance Act 1993, Act 462
- iv. Local Governance Act 2016, Act 936
- v. Local Government (department of district assemblies commencement instrument, 2009 (L.I. 1961)

- vi. Local Government establishment Instrument 1994 (L.I. 1589)
- vii. Local government service performance contract between MCEs and MCDs from 1st January to 31st December 2020
- viii. Local Government services Act of 2003
- ix. Medium-term Development Plan of Nsawam-Adoagyiri, Suhum, and Cape Municipal assembly Coast (2018-2021).

5.4.7 Population and sampling procedure for the study

Based on the objectives of the study, the targeted population was selected from critical stakeholders in local government and rural development, community-based civil society organizations, traditional authorities, and opinion leaders aged 18 and above. Since all these people could not be reached simultaneously, I used a purposive and convenient sampling procedure in selecting respondents from the population. Purposive sampling was highly based on my judgment as an alternative to randomization. According to Creswell (2014), purposeful sampling's strength lies in selecting information-rich participants for a study. The information-rich respondents are those who can provide a great deal of insight about issues of central importance to the purpose of research (Patton, 2014; Creswell, 2013).

The relatively large number of the targeted population in the sites and the complex nature of information required informed the choice of purposive and convenient sampling procedures. The procedure allowed me to identify key stakeholders in local government with diverse knowledge, skills, and experience for the interview and focused group discussions which brought different perspectives to the study. In all, thirty (30) respondents were selected from the three study sites for a one-on-one individual interview. The divisions are as follows: three (3) Municipal chief executives (MCE),

three (3) Municipal coordinating directors (MCD), and three Municipal development planning officers (MDPO) representing the Nsawam-Adoagyiri, Suhum, and Cape Coast Municipalities who willingly agreed to share their views, experience and knowledge to the study. Other respondents purposefully selected for the study were three (6) community-based civil society organizations, three (3) opinion leaders, six (6) assembly members, and three (3) unit committee personnel from each study of the three municipalities. One (1) Paramount chief representing traditional authorities was conveniently selected from each municipality for an individual interview. Three communities in each of the three municipalities were selected based on their attributes for the study. A convenient sampling strategy was used in selecting community-based organizations and traditional authorities for the interview and focused group discussions, which were least desirable as it sampled those who are not only interested but convenient. I used this procedure because I had limited time to complete the study. Therefore, informants were selected based on their characteristics, skills, and knowledge as they relate to the research questions being investigated. My primary concern here was to explore individuals in their natural context and had little interest in generalizing the results beyond the purpose of the study. The table below presents the sampling guideline used for the study. The respondents gave consents to the use of audio recording and direct quotations (Etikan, 2016; Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

Table 14: Sampling framework used for the study

Classification of Respondents		Number selected from each Municipality	Total number interview	Focused Group Discussion	Sampling method
1	District assembly structures		9		Purposive
	Municipal chief executive	1			
	Municipal coordinating	1			
	Director, Planning officer	1	6		Convenient
	Assembly members	2			
	Unit committee members	1	3		Convenient
	Government officials	N/A	N/A	1	Purposive
2	Civil Society organizations	2	6	1	Purposive
3	Traditional Authorities			1	
	Paramount chiefs	1	3		Convenient
	Members of the community	1	3		Purposive
TOTAL			30		

Source: Field data

5.4.8 Data analysis

As a qualitative study (Denzin et al., 2006; Fontana & Frey, 2000), data were mainly obtained from semi-structured interviews, observation, focused group discussions, and document analysis. The qualitative data provides an in-depth description of the situation. The study also made use of excerpts from strategic documents including the constitution of Ghana and local government acts. Strauss & Corbin (2008) explain that qualitative data usually exists in the form of text; it could also be in a non-text format such as tables, pictographs, audio, or video recordings.

Accordingly, framework analysis of data during and after the data collection process was adopted. During the analysis, data collected were sifted, carted, and sorted according to the study's main objectives. Thematic framework analysis involving familiarization with

the transcript of the data collected, identifying themes, indexing, and interpretation is employed by the study (Ritchie & Spencer, 2010).

The discussion and analysis of data were conducted under four main themes, namely:

- i. Roles of Metropolitan Municipal District Assembly (MMDAs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and Traditional Authorities in local governance.
- ii. Labeling essential governance and development challenges in the municipalities
- iii. Responsiveness of the MMDAs, CSOs, and Traditional Authorities in addressing governance and development challenges in the Municipalities
- iv. Engagement and interaction of MMDA structures with key community actors and stakeholders in the decision making and implementation process and the impact on the development of the Municipality

The initial analysis was done together with respondents on the field to have a fair and unbiased assessment of the situation. After that, a more detailed analysis was done with the support of the research assistants. Throughout data presentation, analysis, and discussions, direct quotes from respondents are intermittently used to accentuate validating feedbacks. Moreover, follow-ups visits, and telephone calls were made where appropriate for further clarification. Nsawam-Adoagyiri, Suhum, and Cape Coast's medium-term development plan for 2018- 2021 and relevant assembly reports were adopted and used for analysis.

Ethical considerations, Validity, and Reliability

Considerations of ethical issues are essential and must be prioritized after sampling participants for a study. Ethical Issues that I took into consideration when selecting respondents for the study were;

- i. getting access to and obtaining informed consent
- ii. safeguarding confidentiality and anonymity
- iii. ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the respondents and the researcher.

Informed consent means that the participants were given information about the procedure and risks involved in the study and were informed that their participation is voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from the study without repercussions. Golfashani (2003) noted that *“The notion of informed consent implies that researchers can anticipate the events that will emerge in the field about which those to be observed are to be informed.”*

The study, is compassionate, implying that some of the targeted participants, especially politically inclined government officials might feel reluctant to participate. The sensitive nature of the study made seeking of permission from the Municipalities for a one-one-one interview somehow difficult. Accordingly, an introductory letter was sent through the municipal coordinating director to the respondents to solicit their informed concern with an assurance of confidentiality of information provided and protection of each participant’s anonymity. The assurance of confidentiality and anonymity in the introductory letter partly read;

“... I would like to assure you that the data and information gathered are strictly for academic purposes. As such, your confidentiality and anonymity (if you wish to maintain anonymity) are fully guaranteed. You are purposefully selected for this interview to share your knowledge, opinions, and contributions to the research. Therefore, your voluntary involvement is highly appreciated. Please answer and share your comments where applicable.”

Qualitative research, unlike quantitative, does not lend itself to a statistical calculation of validity and reliability. Primarily these Scholars (Gray, 2014; Louis Cohen et al., 2018; Schwandt, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 2008) believe that qualitative researchers look for the same results through various methods.

According to LeCompte & Goetz (1982), validity in qualitative research concerns how relevant, accurate, and truthful a research finding is for the desired outcome. This involves processes, tools, and choice of methodology and design appropriate for answering the research question. The effectiveness of assessing the validity of a research finding depends on the research's theoretical issues. Essentially, it relates to the researcher's ontological and epistemological perspectives (Gray, 2014; Cohen et al., 2018).

Reliability in scientific studies is concerned with how a research finding is consistent, stable, and repeatable. This implies the ability of the research methods employed to yield the same desired results consistently over a testing period. In this case, the researcher should be able to use the same or comparable methods to attain the same or comparable results anytime within a given period (Cohen et al., 2018).

One of the greatest threats to the validity and reliability of research is the issue of a margin of error. The margin of error determines the level of validity and reliability of research

findings. The greater the margin of error, the less accurate and reliable the research findings are. Therefore, researchers must put in their maximum effort to eliminate, if not reduce, the extent margin of error to the barest minimum to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of research findings (Cohen et al., 2018).

The most common sources of error I decided to address in this study were the researcher, respondents, the social context, and the methods used for the data collection and analysis. Various techniques and strategies were put in place at the planning and implementation stages of the study to address possible occurrences of the error to ensure validity and reliability of the study. As part of the study program, I took part in courses on research methodology and attended Doctoral colloquiums, which equipped and encouraged me to be more objective about the phenomena under study. My familiarity with the research setting also enhanced the data collection process and procedure. I have lived and worked in the community for some time and well abreast with the language, culture, and situation of the people. This enabled me to get closer to the respondents, thereby moving from a stranger to a trusted friend during the data collection process. However, this knowledge and relationship did not affect my behavior, feelings, and responses concerning that of the respondents during the interview and observation period.

Again, to enhance the validity of the responses in the interview, I made the respondents understand the problem, purpose, and objective of the study. Before each interview, I introduced myself first and stated the reason why I was conducting the study and how I intended to collect my data, and what I will do with the data collected. The background information and assurance of confidentiality made respondents more willing and consistent in their responses.

Another vital consideration of the validity and reliability of data was the social context within which the study was being conducted. Humans, by nature, are known to behave differently under different circumstances. I was mindful of these instances during the interview and observation period and was able to make valid comparisons and similarities before concluding (Golfashani, 2003; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982).

I took into consideration the physical, social, and interpersonal contexts during the data collection process. The privacy of respondents was respected in cases where they refused to answer specific questions or did not want to be overheard by others. Mostly validity and reliability depend on the ability of the researcher to reconstruct an original strategy for the research potential. Precisely all the procedures used for the data collection and analysis have been described in section 5.4.3 of the study.

5.5 Limitations and challenges of the study

The study reviewed civil society organizations and traditional authorities' role towards effective participation in local government to enhance national development. The sensitive nature of the study triggered a fundamental challenge in the data collection process. The first challenge was the means of obtaining primary data. As a qualitative case study, the primary data source was semi-structured interviews and focused group discussions. However, it was observed that some respondents were reluctant to express themselves freely, apparently for fear of the outcome of divulging confidential information. Consequently, the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity of participants motivated them to express their views willingly during the individual interview and focused group discussions.

The other challenge was managing the expectations of the respondents. Some participants expected monetary reward after granting interviews. However, after explaining to them

that the research is purely for academic purposes and comes with no monetary gains and that the outcome will go a long way to benefit the entire municipality, they pledged their voluntary support and cooperation. Nevertheless, each of the participants was presented with a souvenir as a token of appreciation for their time and effort. Again, due to logistics and time constraints, the study could not cover the remotest communities within the municipalities. Moreover, the study was restricted to three municipalities out of the current 160 MMDAs in the country, to which a broad generalization might be inappropriate. Nevertheless, the homogenous nature of the municipalities selected for the study and the purposive sampling technique made the study achieve its intended objective.

5.6 Summary

The chapter provided a contextual background of the study setting. Afterward, the epistemological and ontological assumptions that deal with the nature of existence or reality in the social world are presented in various research paradigms. After a meticulous evaluation, the study opted for the interpretive paradigm as a philosophical guide to study. Within the choice of the interpretive paradigm, the study employed a qualitative research approach to delve deeper into the complexity of the social phenomena that underpin the study. Consequently, a participatory approach was adopted, which informed the choice of case study action research as the research design type for the analysis. The chapter also elaborated on the choice of methods, data collection procedure, pretest of data collection materials, ethical considerations and concluded with validity and reliability.

CHAPTER SIX

6. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents empirical data, analysis, and interpretation. It provides practical evidence of the roles of Metropolitan Municipal District Assembly (MMDAs) structures, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and Traditional Authorities in local governance and development. The study is conducted in the Nsawam-Adoagyiri, Suhum Municipalities, and Cape Coast Metropolis in Ghana's eastern and central regions, respectively. Primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, observation, and focused group discussions, whereas secondary data was obtained through field notes and document review. The presentation of data and analysis is done under four main themes of the study, namely:

- v. Roles of Metropolitan Municipal District Assembly (MMDAs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and Traditional Authorities in local governance.
- vi. Labeling essential governance and development challenges in the municipalities
- vii. Responsiveness of the MMDAs, CSOs, and Traditional Authorities in addressing governance and development challenges in the Municipalities
- viii. Engagement and interaction of MMDA structures with key community actors and stakeholders in the decision making and implementation process and the impact on the development of the Municipality

6.1.1 Socio-demographic features of respondents

In all, thirty (30) respondents were selected from the three study sites for a one-on-one individual interview. The divisions are three (3) Municipal chief executives (MCE), three (3) Municipal coordinating directors (MCD), and three Municipal development planning officers (MDPO) representing the Nsawam-Adoagyiri, Suhum municipalities, and Cape Coast Metropolis. Other respondents purposefully selected for the study were six (6) representatives of civil society organizations operating within the municipalities, three (3) opinion leaders, six (6) Assembly members, and three (3) unit committee personnel. One (1) Paramount chief representing traditional authorities was conveniently selected from each of the municipalities for an individual interview. The respondents willingly agreed to share their views, experience, and knowledge of the subject in the study. A total of three (3) communities in each of the three municipalities were selected based on their attributes for the study. In addition to that, three separate focused group discussions were organized with local government officials, representatives of civil society organizations, and traditional authorities whose mandate falls within the Municipalities. Each group consisted of eight (8) participants.

The participants' biodata was requested to be able to indicate their socio-demographic characteristics since these features and attributes had an impact on their responses. For the study, background information requested from participants included their age, gender, academic qualification, and employment status. The analysis was represented in frequencies and percentages, and output was depicted in tables. The distribution of sociodemographic characteristics among the study participants is presented in table 14.

In the course of the presentation and discussions, direct quotes by respondents have occasionally been used to make an emphasis. For verification of the one-on-one

interview with the respondents, an observation by the researcher, field notes, and medium-term development plans, 2018-2021 of the Nsawam/Adoagyiri, Suhum, and Cape Coast Municipal Assemblies was adequately reviewed and analyzed. The actual names of respondents are disguised in the presentation and discussions to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

On the gender distribution of respondents, the groups were made up of nineteen (19) representing (63.3%) males and eleven (11) representing (36.7%) females. Table 13 presents the gender distribution of respondents.

Most of the age distribution groups comprised nine (9) participants representing (30%) aged between 26-35 years, followed by seven (7) participants representing (23.3.2%) who were aged between 46-55 years. Six (6) respondents representing (20.0%). were above 55 years. The rest was made up of five respondents representing (16.7%) aged between 36-45 and three (3) others, representing 10% between 18 and 25 years.

Regarding the educational background of the respondents, most of them (14) representing (46.70%) have studied related subjects of the study or had earned a tertiary education (Bachelors), while seven (7), representing 23.3%, had obtained a post-graduate degree. Five (5) respondents representing 16.7%, had a secondary or senior secondary school leaving certificate, and the remaining four (4) had a high national diploma or related qualification.

The table below presents the distribution of gender, age, and educational background of respondents purposely selected for the study.

Table 15: Distribution of gender, age, and educational background of respondents

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender Distribution of respondents</i>		
Male	19	63.3
Female	11	37.7
Total	30	100
<i>Age (years) Distribution of Respondents</i>		
18-25	3	10
26-35	9	30
36-45	5	16.7
46-55	6	23.3
Above 55	7	20
Total	30	100
<i>Educational Background of respondents</i>		
Secondary Education	5	16.7
National Diploma	3	13.3
Bachelor's degree	14	44.7
Post Graduate Degree	7	23.3
Total	30	100

Source: Field data (2020)

As regards the occupation status of respondents, a total of thirty (30) respondents were purposefully selected from among the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assembly structures, Civil society organizations, and Traditional authorities whose mandate falls within Municipalities. Out of this number, three (3) participants representing 10.0% each were Municipal Chief executives, Municipal Coordinating directors, development planning officers, unit committee members, traditional authorities, and opinion leaders. One (1) respondent each was selected from Nsawam Adoagyiri, Suhum, and Cape Coast municipalities. The rest were six (6) representatives of community-based organizations and six (6) assemblymen representing 20% each, of which two (2) apiece were selected from each of the three municipalities. Table 16 presents the employment status of respondents.

Table 16: Occupational status of respondents

Status	Frequency	percentage
CSO representative	6	20.0
Opinion leader	3	10.0
Assemblyman	6	20.0
Unit committee member	3	10.0
Traditional authorities	3	10.0
Development Planning officer	3	10.0
Municipal Coordinating director	3	10.0
Municipal chief executive	3	10.0
Total	30	100

Source: Field data (2020)

6.2 Roles and Involvement of Multi-Actors and stakeholders in the Municipality

The objective of this section sought to examine the roles of the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies, Civil Society Organizations, and Traditional Authorities in advancing Ghana's decentralization and local governance for national development. Article 240 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana mandates the local government authorities to plan, initiate, coordinate, manage, and execute policies regarding all matters affecting the communities within their areas of jurisdiction. Accordingly, the local government of 1993 (Act 462) sets out the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies' functions. The Act put it, in a nutshell, the role of a district Assembly as being responsible for exercising political and administrative authority in the district and providing guidance, giving direction, and supervising the other administrative authorities in the community.

This places a responsibility on the Assembly to put forward, stimulate, and implement plans for the district's development. Nonetheless, according to Ahwoi (2010), the decentralization and local government policy recommend that development planning and service delivery remain a shared responsibility. Consequently, respondents were initially asked to share their knowledge, understanding, and views on the implementation of the decentralization and local Governance policy and then identify the role of the Metropolitan Municipal District Assembly structures, Civil Society Organizations, and Traditional Authorities in local governance and development in Ghana.

Respondents shared their experiences and varied views to the discussions. For instance, Opare, a principal officer of the municipal assembly sharing her knowledge and expertise on the decentralization and local government system in Ghana, asserted in an individual interview that, through the decentralization and local government policy, the central government had assigned authority and functions to the local assemblies to take their own

decisions and raise money to address development challenges in the community. According to her, the system is guided by a legal framework that serves as a benchmark on how the Assembly discharges its functions and responsibilities. She referred to chapter 20 of the 1992 Constitution as the legal basis for the decentralization policy, which according to her, is supported by an act of Parliament, such as the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 246) and 2016 (Act 936) and indicated that the powers of the assemblies are derived from these legal frameworks. She mentioned some key actors in the Assembly, such as the Municipal chief executive, Presiding Member, Assembly, and Unit committee members and their role in the local governance structure. Additionally, she declared that;

“for instance, the coordinating director of the assembly is the secretary to the Assembly, and the assembly is the highest decision-making body in the Municipality. The assembly comprises of the MCE, the Elected Members, appointed members, not exceeding 30 percent of the total membership of the assembly, the MPs within the Municipality. A presiding Member is a person who presides/ chairs the meetings of the assembly. The Assembly is responsible for the overall development of the municipality.”

Apraku, an Assemblymember in one of the municipalities' electoral areas, added that decentralization and local governance is a good step in Ghana's democratic process. It is a way of getting everyone on board in the governance process. He explained that;

“hitherto, one would have to travel from the local community or the village to the regional or national capital for almost to get access to a government official to present a development need through him to the government. Centralization, as cumbersome as it was, was slowing down development, especially at the local level. With the advent of the decentralization policy, every local assembly is required to undertake its projects after consideration by the assembly and passed through their budgets.”

In his concluding remarks, Apraku cited some completed and ongoing development projects, which he attributed to the success of the decentralization and local government system for bringing governance and development to the local communities.

The knowledge and experiences shared by Ekow, an opinion leader in one of the municipalities, indicated respondents portrayed their understanding, experiences, and appreciation of the contribution of the decentralization and local government system and the role of the MMDAs to the development of the community. He pointed out that;

“Decentralization in Ghana over the years has improved. In the past, when Ghana was not very democratic, planning and decision-making were more of a top-down approach. With coming into being of the decentralization program, there is bottom-up, grassroots participation in the decision-making process. When we attend town hall meetings, they ask us of our needs and send our responses to the government to address it for us.”

Responding to the same question to solicit his views on the decentralization and local government process, Jacob, a representative of a civil society organization, affirmed that:

“In my experience, working in the communities, we found that the local government paves the way for the CSOs to work in these communities. Even though the country has decentralized the districts, most of the time, they still refer CSOs to the central government for processes concerning documentation of our operations, and this sometimes causes delays in getting requests approved.”

This assertion was corroborated by another respondent who claimed to have worked with the municipal assembly for more than a decade. After demonstrating her understating of the decentralization and local government system, she touted the Assembly for bringing development to his community. She specifically mentioned putting up infrastructures

such as school buildings, health posts, and road constructions as the central role of the Assembly in the Municipality. She proclaimed that;

“Before the introduction of the decentralization Programme, everything was done at the center (Accra) and sent down to the various assemblies. This, I believe, was not acceptable. With the inception of the decentralization program, everything is done here at the assembly level. The Assembly decides what she wants, how to use the monies allocated to them, and make a decision on projects that meets the need of the people. Not necessarily the officials at the assembly, but also with significant contributions from the locals through the zonal councils, unit committees, which interacts and deliberate with the assembly to plan and then take it to the district level for approval.”

She spoke vehemently against the centralization of development planning, which to her amount to the imposition on the people. She alleged that most development projects implemented before the decentralization policy could not be sustained because they were imposed on the people. To her, the national decentralization policy has been the most effective way of ensuring sustainable development.

Akosua, who has also worked with the assembly for the past six years, did not hesitate to share her prior knowledge, understanding, and experiences about the Decentralization and local government system with the researcher. According to her, the decentralization process is a way of transferring power and responsibility for service, from the central government to subunits to ensure the people's active involvement, including herself, in the development of their communities. She stated that through town hall meetings and stakeholder consultations, governance and democracy are brought to the local level. She admitted that there are advantages and disadvantages to this, but the benefits override the negatives as the people are always delighted to be part of the discussions of issues

concerning them. She claimed that programs and projects are no longer imposed on the people as they used to be. The communities now have the advantage of being part of the decision-making process, and mostly the local government officials are responsible for their roles at the local level.

Another respondent, called Oparebea, also claimed to have worked directly with the decentralization process since its inception in the 1980s, shared her experience and understanding with the researcher. She describes her knowledge and expertise in the decentralization process as fairly good after working with the decentralized ministries, departments, and regulatory services directorate for some time. According to her, she has served on several executive committees in the assembly and has a fair idea about how the decentralized structures operate. To her, the main reason behind the program is that some decisions and responsibilities can best be handled at the regional and local level and a way of promoting participation by involving everyone in the decision-making and implementation process.

Relatively, each respondent exhibited knowledge of the essential functions of the principal actors of the Assembly, giving evidence of projects carried out to completion by the assembly. Other participants also exhibited a broad knowledge and understanding of the functions of the Assembly in general. Ampofo, one of the respondents, stated that:

“the assembly has helped to provide water, schools, and many other facilities in response to petitions they received from different communities within the municipality. For example, the assembly recently provided a Six Unit Classroom block in my community (Okanta) to provide and expand access to education.”

Other participants also exhibited a broad knowledge and understanding of the functions of the Assembly in general. James suggested that:

“The Assembly is responsible for the overall development of this community. They have to come out with ideas about what will make the community look like the city and do it. When the people also need things like school, Hospital, or Market place the Assembly have to provide it. The Assembly also has to protect us from bad people and give us work. Because the MCE represents the president so he can tell us to provide us with work to do so that we can get money to pay our taxes, and the government will get money to develop the country.”

A paramount chief representing traditional authorities in the municipalities shared his views in an individual interview. Initially, the chief arranged to grant the interview through a linguist as custom demands but later offered to speak directly to the researcher after anonymity and confidentiality assurance. Sharing his knowledge and experiences on the decentralization and local government system in the Akan language (Fante -twi) interspersed with British English, Nana I made the following highlights;

“Local government means a particular kind of governance structure whereby there is a center, which is in Accra though, but there is further division up to every locality to feel part of the governance process. It means the powers which were concentrated at a center in the president have been brought down to the ordinary person to be a part of the process regardless of wherever the people find themselves. Various issues are discussed at the local levels and then taken up to the Regional Coordinating Councils before taking to the national level.”

Gathering insights from responses in the individual interviews revealed that respondents have fair knowledge and understanding of the decentralization and local government

process and showed appreciation for its resolve to bring governance and development to the local level.

The study corroborated the individual interview with secondary data analysis, including the local government Acts (246 and 2016). As stipulated in Section one (1) of the Local Government Act of 1993 (Act 62) under which the MMDAs operate. The Acts empower the Assembly with deliberative, legislative, and executive functions in addition to formulation and implementation of medium-term plans that commensurate with the national development agenda. The Ghana National Development Planning Commission (GNDPC) is required by Sections (1) of the National Development Planning (Systems) Act 1994 (Act 480) to issue a comprehensive guideline to the district assemblies to prepare a medium-term development plan in consultation with traditional authorities, civil society organizations and other stakeholders in the Municipality.

The local government structures' expected roles are stipulated by the local government act of 1993 and 1996 Act 462, and 936 respectively, were theoretically found to be relevant and consistent with all aspects of local development. For instance, the study found out that social services such as primary education were entrusted to the MMDAs while the central government exercise responsibility from the tertiary level. Similarly, the MMDAs take charge of providing basic social amenities and ensuring the welfare of the people at the local level.

The functions of the Area Councils include assisting the Assembly in mobilizing local resources as well as managing environmental issues in the zone. On the other hand, the Unit committees take over all the former Town/Village Committees' functions. They also assist the assembly to; mobilize local resources, monitor the implementation of development projects, organize communal and voluntary work, make proposals for the

levying and collection of rates through the Area Council, as well as supervise the staff of the Assembly assigned duties in its area of authority. The composition, structure, and functions of the MMDAs are elaborated in section 3.4.1 of this study.

Another dimension of this objective was to find out the role of Civil society organizations and traditional rulers in the selected municipalities. From the responses, it was observed that Traditional Authority, which is according to Ayee (2007) is expressed predominantly in the chieftaincy institution, is revered in the municipality for its significant role in local administration. The study observed that most of the functions of the traditional ruler fall under the perimeters of economic, social, and political dimensions and subjects related to legislative, judicial, religious, and cultural issues. Some respondents believed that, under their position as natural rulers, Chiefs occupy a pivotal position in the country and play a vital role in the decision-making process at all levels of governance through the national, regional, and district houses of chiefs.

A paramount chief in one of the municipalities indicated in an individual interview that in addition to being responsible for the land and natural resources as his customary role within the areas of jurisdiction, a traditional ruler performs other functions such as promotion and sustenance of customs and cultural values, peace, and unity among the people in the community. He added that;

“Traditional authorities ensure the safety and security of the community. They also mobilize the people to embark on development projects in addition to the settlement of disputes and acts in partnership with the metropolitan Municipal District Assembly to contribute to service delivery in the community.”

Other respondents also expressed their views on the role played by traditional authorities in contemporary governance and development in individual interviews. An official of the municipal assembly had this to say;

“Traditional authorities, especially the chiefs, play a vital role in the social-political and economic affairs of the community. In economic terms, the chief holds all the land in his jurisdiction under his control and is responsible for ensuring its allocation and efficient use for the development of the community. In religious affairs, the chief serves as a link between the people and our ancestors, and in contemporary governance, he serves as a link between the community and the District Assembly.”

In a focused group discussion organized for traditional authorities in one of the municipalities respondents unanimously agreed that the sub-chief provides support for the paramount chief in administering the people in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

One of the traditional authorities pointed out that;

“Even though the role of chiefs in contemporary local governance and development has changed over the years, people are of the view that the communities still appreciate the role and kind of leadership traditional authorities provide at the local level. The chiefs are there to bring the people together and see to their welfare. Just as one cannot bypass the thumb and tie a knot, the chief cannot be overlooked when it comes to the development of the community.”

On the role of civil society, organizations' responses from respondents presented a wide range of activities from the national, through the regional to the district level in the promotion of inclusiveness and development. Respondents indicated that civil society organizations play a vital role, such as engagement in community development, advocacy, empowerment, and skill development at the local level, where the study places much emphasis. Other respondents also touted civil society for their active role in

providing infrastructure, rural shelter, and social services and protecting the interest of minority groups and the vulnerable such as women, children, and organizations people living with disabilities. In furtherance to that, the study inquired from respondents about how the civil society organizations, especially community-based groups, are contributing to the development of the municipality. An official of the Municipal assembly stated that:

“The Civil society organizations, especially the community-based ones, most often organize the community members or the local people and sensitize them on their rights and responsibilities as citizens and make them hold duty-bearers accountable. For instance, the ARK foundation has formed groups within the community to report on issues related to child abuse, discrimination, and other forms of disrespect for fundamental human rights and demand for justice. Other organizations are also supporting in various ways, such as assisting the people to be active citizens in participating and demanding development within their communities.”

A representative of one of the civil society organizations in the municipality had this to say about the role of civil society organization in local governance and development.

“The organization I represent, for instance, operates in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). We focus on changing social norms and values that limit access to SRHR services and information through strengthening health services to offer young people the sexual and reproductive health care they need without judgment or bias, including access to long-acting contraceptive methods and comprehensive sexuality education. Our outreach activities target in- and out-of-school young people, community members, and service providers. We also connect young advocates and policymakers to foster supportive policies that promote young people’s health and rights.”

Information gathered from another focused group discussions with representatives of civil society organizations presented an overwhelming performance in the areas of lobbying, advocacy, and policy influencing at the regional and local levels. All participants were of the view that the role of civil society organizations at the local level has been intensely related to promoting democratic governance, development, and service delivery. Community-based organizations have been organizing the people, especially in rural settlements, and help them gain access to essential services such as water, primary health care, and education. Moreover, it was deduced from the discussions that civil society organizations play a vital role in promoting local interest, democratic governance, human rights, and justice. They also undertake advocacy and ensure the accountability of public officials at the local level. This information paved the way for the researcher to probe further into measures laid down by the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies to identify and address community needs and aspirations under the decentralization and local government policy.

6.3 Governance and Development Issues in the Municipalities

The objective of this section sought to identify in general terms governance and development challenges confronting the Municipalities as well as measures put in place to address them. Accordingly, respondents, especially local government officials, were asked to identify critical governance and development challenges confronting the Municipal Assembly and the municipality in general.

Siaw, a local government official, mentioned getting access to land for development projects or any other economic venture as one of the leading development challenges in the municipality. He asserted that the cumbersome nature of the land tenure system in the municipality, especially when one is looking for a place to put up a structure such as a

school or health facility, is a problem to the municipality or venture into economic activity is a problem in the municipality. Siaw indicated that;

“The main occupation of the people here is agriculture. However, getting access to land for farming is a major problem in this community. Even getting land for the Municipal Assembly to embark on a development project is a problem. Mostly the Assembly has to liaise with traditional authorities to assist with litigation-free land for development projects. This is because individual landowners are usually unwilling to release their privately own lands for such purposes. It will cost you so much money to buy land for private use.”

The land tenure system is about how land is owned in the community. The study found out that land in the municipality is in the custody of traditional authorities in their areas of jurisdiction. Each parcel of land is owned by kinship groups, clans, or families in the communities. Therefore, one can acquire a piece of land through family heads, “odikro” or divisional chiefs. For farming purposes, a piece of land is mainly acquired through the shared tenancy, where a third of harvested products goes to the owner of the land by way of agreement to get access to a parcel of land. In some instances, people also hire or rent a plot of land for some time. In this case, you use the land for the intended purpose for the entire duration. Another way of acquiring land in present-day Ghana is to buy it from the respective family heads or sub-chiefs. There are instances where the community, through the traditional authorities, donate parcels of land to the MMDAs for development projects. It becomes an obstacle where the MMDA needs a specific location for a project, and access is denied by the landowners.

Annan, a local government official, also indicated that problems facing local governance administration are varied though some are community specific. He listed essential development challenges in the community and submitted that, though the Assembly and

the local authorities have put in place measures to address them, they are not satisfied at the rate of progress. He asserted that;

“In terms of general development challenges, my community has challenges with the poor nature of our road, school buildings, health facilities, and poor sanitation. Falling standards of education and unemployment are some of the major development challenges in the municipality. We have so many of them, but I think the ones I mentioned are the major ones.”

Johnson, a representative of a community-based civil society organization in Cape Coast, identified unemployment, poor sanitation, inadequate assistance to needy but brilliant students, human resource challenges, and low physical access to health care facilities in the rural areas as the most significant development challenges facing the local assembly. He also lamented the ineffective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the assembly structure. He emphasized that:

“even though there are various facilities in the villages, the human resources to run these facilities are not available. The communities are faced with challenges such as unemployment, poor sanitation, inadequate assistance to needy but brilliant students, human resource challenges, and low physical access to health care facilities in rural areas. Lack of personnel means the communities are unable to access these facilities. The Assembly is also not creating enough avenue for people with disabilities to be part of the decision-making process.”

Aboagye, on his part, considers inadequate Internally Generated Funds (IGFs) by the Assembly as a significant challenge to the development of the municipality. He claimed that the municipality has many development challenges, and the assemblies share of the common fund is not enough to address these challenges. There is a need for the Assembly to generate its funds through taxes, fines, and rates. Yet, the assembly finds it

difficult to generate enough funds from these sources. He also bemoaned the lack of educational facilities and settlement infrastructure in most communities within the Municipality. Aboagye declared that;

“The Municipal allocation of the district assembly common fund (DACF) is not enough to address the development needs of the municipality. The Assemble itself is unable to generate enough own funds (IGF) to supplement the DACF. So, the assembly itself has financial difficulties. Again, in the current situation, most of the schools within the municipality do not have furniture. In some of the areas, classroom buildings are a major challenge, while a lack of enough CHIPs Compounds also continues to serve as a challenge in the health sector. In terms of sanitation, refuse containers continue to pose a challenge for the assembly. The area is noted for its farming activities, and during seasonal farming, machines and equipment like tractors are usually not available to the farmers. This causes delays for the farmers to plant their crops. The feeder roads within the municipalities are also not in good shape.”

In a similar assertion that corroborates the statement above, Kofi, an assembly member of the Nsawam Adoagyiri municipal assembly, indicated funding as their main challenge. He expressed worry about the assembly’s inability to raise enough funds to complete development projects even though the assembly has all the structures in place and liaise with other stakeholders and development partners. He observed that;

“the assembly's primary funding source has been from the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF), which is not regularly forthcoming. The funds are supposed to be released to the assemblies quarterly, but the reality is that these funds are usually not released on time.”

He further enumerated the development challenges in the municipalities that need urgent attention, such as unemployment, poor road infrastructure, low agricultural production, and poor sanitation. He also identified illegal sand winning as a challenge in the Nsawam

Adoagyiri municipality in addition to encroachment on lands and the land guard phenomenon as a result of land litigation. He reiterated the Assembly's financial difficulties as the fundamental development challenge in the municipality. However, he was quick to blame the Assembly for poor accountability and expenditure management and inadequate monitoring and evaluation. He claimed that:

“The community has several development challenges such as poor road network decreasing in the labor force due to rural-urban migration, poverty, lack of access to education, infrastructure, land guard and agricultural related issues. The Assembly has so many things that have been planned with the people and other stakeholders, which is dully captured in the Medium-Term Development Plan, but due to financial constraints, these projects are not being executed. Indeed, in some cases, the funds for the 1st Quarter are usually in arrears up to the third quarter within the year. This adversely affects the project implementation of projects within the district. Another funding source has been the District Performance Assessment Tool (DPAT), which is much regular and reliable. However, there are poor accountability and expenditure management as well as inadequate monitoring and evaluation by the assembly.”

Akosua brought a different dimension to the problems of the community. She claimed that the major problem facing the assembly has to do with the activities of contractors who win bids to execute development projects. She claimed that the contractors are expected to start the projects with their funding until a certain level before being paid, but the experience has been that most contractors usually do not have the initial capital to commence projects leading to delays in executing projects. The issue sometimes leads to uncompleted projects or delays in the execution of projects. Some projects like school buildings are haphazardly done, which do not meet the national standard.

Nana II representing the traditional authority in the municipality made it clear that problems facing the municipality are numerous. She enumerated them as uncompleted and weak decentralized structures, corruption, poor sanitation, inadequate infrastructural development, poor health facilities, unemployment, lack of credit facilities, among others. Despite these development issues identified, his main concern was the lack of representation and involvement of traditional authorities in the local government structure. He averred that there is excessive politicization in the local government structure, which to him is retarding the development of the municipality.

“The partisan nature of the assembly means that even when some chiefs are selected to the assemblies, it is done solely under partisan considerations which did not auger well for the development of the assemblies. This has affected the role of the traditional authorities in the Assemblies. Politicians only come to the traditional authorities during elections and such occasions that they require help from the traditional authorities. But the reality is that even the president himself when coming to our place needs us to inform and mobilize our people for the presidential visit.”

Focused group discussions with local government officials revealed some factors militating against the municipalities' local government system. These include the Assemblies' inability to raise enough internally generated funds (IGF) and therefore rely primarily on the district assembly common fund (DACF). The study also revealed uncompleted decentralization structures and insufficient understanding of the decentralization processes, and lackadaisical attitude of some local government officials in the exercise of their duties.

Furthermore, the study discovered undue political interference in the role of sub-committees of the Assembly. For instance, in places where the Assemblymen of the unit

committee members are perceived members of a particular political party, their views are truncated when their party is not in power. As a result, the sub-committee is unable to effectively influence the decision of the assembly leading to the inability of the actual community needs and aspirations to be addressed. The study identified the following critical development challenges faced by the municipal assemblies from the individual interviews and observations. The table below presents a summary of the pressing development challenges under six (6) thematic areas.

Table 17: Summary of key development issues identified in the Municipalities

Key Thematic Areas	Fundamental development issues identified in the Nsawam-Adoagyiri, Suhum, and Cape Coast Municipalities
Decentralized structures and Functions	Uncompleted Decentralization/weak structures Insufficient understanding of the decentralization processes Weak administrative capacity
Accountable and good Governance	The inability of the Assembly to generate enough local revenue. Low accountability and expenditure management. Inadequate monitoring and evaluation Lackadaisical attitude towards development needs.
Human resource development.	Inadequate resources to the vulnerable and the excluded Limited access to credit facilities. Inadequate assistance to needy but brilliant students low physical access to health care in rural areas.
Infrastructure human settlements, and	Poor sanitation, roads, and drainage system Inadequate enforcement of planning regulations Insufficient access to potable water. Inadequate educational/residential infrastructure
Collaboration and participation	Inadequate database on the operations of community-based organizations Limited interactions between Assembly members and the communities Poor communication and organizational skill of CSOs Irregular engagements with stakeholders
Health and sanitation	Unhygienic marketing environment. Land tenure system. Inappropriate disposal of waste.

Source: (Field data, 2020)

6.4 Community Needs, Constraints and Potentials in the Municipalities

To be able to evaluate the responsiveness of the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies, Civil Society Organizations, and Traditional Authorities to the community needs and aspirations to improve upon the living conditions of the people, the objective of this section sought to identify community needs constraints and potentials in the Municipalities. Consequently, the study explored significant development needs and aspirations vis-à-vis key community needs and aspirations in the municipalities.

Answering a question on how contacts are made with the people in identifying the community needs in the Municipalities, Joana, a principal officer of the Municipal Assembly, explained in an individual interview that, when preparing their municipal medium-term development plan (MTDP), need assessment is formulated where the critical needs and aspirations of the people are captured through community engagements and factored in the annual action plan to address the general needs of the people within the Municipality. Joana disclosed that;

“The Annual Action Plan contains projects and programs seeking to address the needs of the people. All these projects have a source of funding that is attached. However, the assembly is usually constrained by funding issues due to irregular and erratic flow of revenue, which restrains the assembly from having a definite timeframe to respond to the needs of the people. It all depends on the funds available.”

Generally, community needs, and aspirations were gathered from respondents through an individual interview, focused group discussions, town hall meetings, community durbars, and follow-up visits. A total of thirty (30) respondents who were sampled for the individual interview and three separate focused group discussions with local government officials, Traditional Authorities, and representatives of Civil Society Organizations

revealed that infrastructure, road network, sanitation, and employment were the major issues that cut across the various communities in the municipalities. The distribution of the responses was represented by 18 (60.0%), 24 (80.0%), 23 (76.7%) and 28 (93.3%) respectively. Only less than 7% of the sampled populace revealed that infrastructure, road network, sanitation, and employment were not a major development need in the municipality. Overall, participants indicated that employment was one of the major development needs of their community. The distribution of the major development needs in the municipality is summarized in the table below.

Table 18. Distribution of significant development needs in the municipality

<i>Major development needs</i>	<i>Frequency (n)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Infrastructure		
Somewhat needed	8	26.7%
Mostly needed	18	60.0%
Not at all needed	4	13.3%
Road network		
Somewhat needed	4	13.3%
Mostly needed	24	80.0%
Not at all needed	2	6.7%
Sanitation		
Somewhat needed	6	20.9%
Mostly needed	23	76.7%
Not at all needed	1	3.3%
Employment		
Somewhat needed	2	6.7%
Mostly needed	28	93.3%
Not at all needed	0	0.0%

N=30: Source: Field Data (2020)

Additionally, community needs, and aspirations were also gathered through individual interviews, focused group discussions, town hall meetings, community durbars, community visits, and a review of the 2018-2021 medium-term development plan of the assemblies.

The table below samples community needs in the three municipalities through interviews and focused group discussions, which were later validated by the presiding member and development officer at the various Municipality assemblies.

Table 19: Summary of community needs and aspirations in the municipalities

NSAWAM ADOAGYIRI	SUHUM	CAPE COAST
Employment/Industrialization	Reduce risk associated with Agric production	Employment/Industrialization
Intensify Agric extension service/ Agro base support	Intensify Agric extension service/ Agro base support	Facilitate the creation of an enabling environment to enhance industrial growth
Provision of access/motorable roads/drains and maintenance	Provision of access/motorable roads/drains and maintenance	Provision of access/motorable roads/drains and maintenance
Provision of market facility	Provision of market facility	Provision of market facility
Provision of potable water	Land tenure system	Land tenure system
Provision of health facility	Provision of health facilities	Provision of streetlights
Provision of farm inputs	Provision of farm inputs	Provision of farm inputs
Control indiscriminate refuse dump	Control indiscriminate refuse dump	Control indiscriminate refuse dump
Leveling of durbar grounds	Provision of durbar grounds	Upgrade of durbar grounds
Provision of refuse containers/authorized dumping site	Provision of footbridge and desilting/dredging of drains	Stable macro-economic conditions

Source: Field data (2020)

The next was a compilation of development gaps, potentials, opportunities, and constraints in the municipalities based on individual interviews, focused group discussions, and review of secondary documents such as the medium-term development plans (2018-2021) accessed from the case study municipalities. The table below presents the identification of potentials, opportunities, and constraints in the municipalities.

Table 20: Potentials, opportunities, and constraints in the municipalities

Development Gap	Potentials	Opportunities	Constraints	Challenges
low-income levels of people in the Metropolis, especially the rural and urban poor, by promoting small scale agro-processing industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Availability of fertile land for individual and commercial farming. -Possibility for the construction of fish landing Port and large-scale fishing ventures -Presence of World Heritage sites for tourism. -Availability of large lagoon for inshore fishing - Presence of Agricultural fabrication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Availability of credit facilities -Local Training Institutions -Availability of Poverty Reduction Funds Donor Funds -Subsidization of agricultural inputs (e.g., pre-mix fuel) - Presence of Hotels and restaurants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Land Tenure System and over-reliance on subsistence farming. - Inadequate security for Tourists. -Harassments of Tourists -Inadequate market structures - Post-harvest losses due to inadequate storage facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Unfavorable pricing policy. - Income from Tourists being paid into the consolidated fund - High cost, irregular and inadequate supply of agricultural inputs -High cost of transportation due to lousy transportation system in the country
low access to credit facilities in the Municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existence of Banks and Micro-credit institutions -Existence of Poverty Alleviation, Fund (DACF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existence of Micro Credit Programs and Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Poor financial management of the people and the inability to repay loans granted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Untimely release of funds (DACF) - High-interest rate and difficult collection requirement
Inadequate farming and fishing inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability Markets for fish and food crops - Indigenous skills and experience of farmers and fishermen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of new fishing law - Subsidization of inputs (e.g., pre-mix fuel. And fertilizers) - Existence of shops that deal in Agric inputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Poor financial management and inability to pay for goods and services granted on credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Irregular and inadequate supply of agricultural inputs
Low delivery of quality and inadequate school infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High population of school children - Sponsorship of Teacher Trainees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability of funds (DACF, GET Fund, HIPC, and Donor Funds - F-CUBE Policy - Best Teacher Award Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refusal on the part of the citizenry to participate in the provision and maintenance of facilities - Irresponsible parenthood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Untimely release of funds - Inadequate residential accommodation for teachers - Refusal of some public servants accept postings to rural areas
Low delivery of quality health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political willingness to improve health facilities - Availability of Health Facilities in the Metropolis - Availability of Health Training Institutions in the Metropolis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability of specialized hospitals with competent staff in the Metropolis - NGO/and Donor support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inadequate funding - Inadequate residential facilities for health staff - Poor attitude to work - Refusal of health personnel to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor attitude of people towards Health Care issues - Superstition on the part of the people towards certain diseases

	- Availability of competent and dedicated health personnel	- GoG Health Policies on providing accessible and affordable health care (CHPS and NHIS Policies)	accept postings to rural areas	- Spiritual and traditional healing practices among the local population - Brain Drain of Medical Professionals
Increasing opportunities for people to get employment by providing the youth with technical and vocational skills	- Youth Employment Programme in the Metropolis - Existence of Poverty Alleviation Fund	- National Youth Employment Programme - Availability of Donor Fund	- Unwillingness on the part of the youth to learn a trade - Inadequate funds	- Untimely release of funds
gender equity in the provision of goods and services	- High caliber of women in District Assembly - Existence of NGOs / CBOs in the area of Gender	- Promulgation of protective laws on women and children	Low Involvement of women in Decision making	- Cultural, Religious and Traditional influence on women
Identification of children in Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL), rehabilitate and ensure their return to school, and provide employable skills to affected children.	- Existence of Child Labour Committees in the Metropolis and Communities -	- Availability of Policies and Laws on Children	- Irresponsible parenthood - Inadequate Funding	- Untimely release of funds - Lack of appreciation of child issues and effects on development by community members
Provision of opportunities to people with disabilities to engage in productive ventures	- Existence Social Welfare Department in the Metropolis	- Availability of relief funds, DACF, HIPC, and Donor / NGO Assistance	- Lack of data on the physically/mentally challenged	- Inadequate policy / Laws on the Physically/Mentally Challenged - Attitudes of parents/relatives of physically/mentally challenged
Gaps in accountability between the assembly and the citizenry	- Cooperating Traditional Authorities / Opinion Leaders - Vibrant Assembly Members - Existence of Decentralized Departments and Agencies - Existence of CSOs	- Existence of Media such as FM Radio Stations to disseminate information - Support from GoG and NGOs	- Low Fiscal Decentralization - Inadequate Office and Residential Accommodation - Inadequate Funding	- Untimely release of Funds from GoG, Donor Agencies, etc. - Apathy amongst some community members
Gaps in communication between the assembly and private sector	- Potential Private Sector to tap resources from - Cooperation from Community members and Traditional Authorities - Existence of NGOs and CBOs to provide assistance	- Private Sector and NGOs to provide technical and technological support - Support from GoG, NGOs, and Donor Agencies	- Dwindling Communal Spirit - Inadequate Funding - Unwillingness on the part of some community members to participate in the provision maintenance of public facilities - Non-payment of levies and taxes	- Untimely release of Funds from GoG, Donor Agencies, etc. - Apathy amongst some community members
Nonfunctioning of sub-district structure The weak financial base of the assembly Weak management capacity of the assembly	- All Decentralized Departments in place in the Metropolis - Cooperating staff of the Decentralized Departments	- National Decentralization Policy (New Local Government System)	- Inadequate Office accommodation to house all Decentralized Departments in one office block in one place - Inadequate Funding and logistics support	- Parent Ministries holding on to Departments at the District level - Slow pace of the Decentralization Process

Source: MTDP (2018-2021) Cape Coast, Suhum and Nsawam Adoagyiri

6.4.1 Responsiveness of District Assembly, Civil Society Organizations, and Traditional Authorities in addressing community needs and aspirations

The objective of this section sought to determine the responsiveness of the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assembly (MMDAs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and Traditional Authorities in addressing community needs and development challenges in the Municipalities. Respondents were initially asked to identify who is responsible for addressing the specific community need and aspirations of the people. The majority of the respondents believed that, when it comes to addressing the development issues in the communities, there are key actors in the municipality such as the Member of Parliament and the municipal chief executive who are responsible. In contrast, few others cited the President of the republic, traditional authorities (Chiefs), and Civil society organizations. This is what Danquah, one of the respondents, had to say:

“It is the responsibility of the Municipal assembly to see the development of the communities. We have an MP; We have an MCE. They represent the government, so when we tell them our problems, and they talk to the government to come and solve them for us.”

On the contrary, a top official of the Assembly in an individual interview pointed out that it is the Assembly’s responsibility to address the development challenges identified. He added that the responsibility is on all stakeholders encompassing the assembly structures, both elected and appointed, community members, traditional authorities, and civil society organizations (CSOs) to work together to develop the municipality. She believes that civil society organizations play key roles in addressing development challenges in the municipality. According to her, the community-based organizations and NGOs have no political affiliations and are well in tune with the people. She claimed that CSOs think of the people more than the government officials who work at assembly. She averred that:

“When there is a problem in a community, people feel free to inform NGOs because they don’t do politics. They also go to the communities and get the people to participate and include them in the decision-making process. For instance, GIZ helps the assembly towards revenue mobilization. The traditional authority also gets involved in the annual review processes of the assembly and therefore is an integral part of the assembly. There are also other organizations, e.g., From the University of Ghana, who come to assess the inclusive participation of People with Disabilities and minority groups.”

Aboagye, another respondent, who is an assembly member, proclaimed that:

“The Municipal assembly and the government of the day are responsible for addressing development challenges in the municipality. It is the responsibility of the MCE, MP, and the assembly members, as well as other stakeholders. The major stakeholders are the assembly members from the various electoral areas. They also include the government appointees, the Traditional Authorities, the Non-Governmental Organizations who work within the municipality, such as the Blue Skies and the Ark Foundation. The traditional authority is the custodians of the land. They usually release lands for every development project. The NGOs also support our development efforts by providing schools, chips compounds, and water facilities al for the development of the communities.”

Jacob, a representative of a community-based organization in Cape Coast, chose to grade the level of responsiveness of the assemblies towards the needs of their communities. According to him, *“on the scale of 1-10 with ten being the highest, I will say 4. The local assembly is not as in a hurry compared to the other organizations in these communities.”*

Commenting on the responsiveness of the MMDAs in addressing the development needs of the people, Annan, a principal officer of the Assembly, had this to say;

“the assembly has been responsive, but not too responsive to the needs of people due to certain challenges. In the Amamfour Brofoyeduru community, they needed the CHIPs Compound, the assembly took it upon itself to construct one, but it was challenged with regards to land at the place. So, the community came up with a suggestion that there was a space at an existing post office which was utilized for the intended purpose.”

Oparebea, a principal officer of the Nsawam Adoagyiri Municipal Assembly, stated that:

“the assembly has been responsive in addressing the needs of the people. For instance, in some communities such as Asante Akuraa, they have a CHIP Compound, being financed by the Government of Australia and facilitated by the Ark Foundation of Ghana. The assembly has been able to put up a building to be used as a Community Health Centre with the Ark Foundation's support. The assembly facilitated to ensure that the project was brought into those three communities. The assembly has also supported parts of the common fund to have the building completed. The assembly has also been collaborating with other CSOs with their fundraising activities by writing letters of introduction for organizations such as Ark foundation to seek funds. Through the DIPATs, the assembly has been able to address some of the assembly's needs, like the Courts, District, Magistrate, and High Courts, which were part of the initiatives to make sure that justice is available to all citizens. Additionally, several boreholes have been constructed in different communities within the municipality.”

Kofi, an assemblyman in one of the communities, claimed that the assembly is constantly in touch with Unit Committee Members, Traditional Authorities, Religious bodies, Business owners, and community-based organizations to address development challenges, community needs, and aspirations of the people. This was corroborated by Siaw, an official of the Suhum municipal assembly, who provided some pictorial evidence of the Assembly's work towards responding to the needs of the people in the

assembly. The assembly has helped to provide water, schools, and other needs of the communities to him. An example of such responsiveness to the communities' needs was providing a Six-unit classroom block in a small community called Okanta to address an urgent educational infrastructural challenge. In contrast, Apraku, an assembly member representing an electoral area in one of the municipalities, maintained that the Assembly does not show much commitment when it comes to addressing the development needs of the communities. He claimed that most of the communities rely on NGOs and philanthropists. Some Traditional authorities also do well when it comes to addressing the people's community needs and aspirations. He contended that financial difficulties restrain the assembly from meeting the communities' demands as expected. Explaining his point further, he said,

“It all has to do with financial challenges. Most of the challenges that the assembly faces are usually not addressed or are delayed in time due to inadequate IGF for the Assembly. The assembly’s responsiveness to the problems and needs of the community rest on the availability of funds. However, the challenges, the assembly has been able to put up certain projects; there is a school building in my electoral area, Pampaso Kuro Kese. The project began about four years ago. But it was stalled for various reasons, but with the coming into office of the current government, the classroom has been completed.”

6.4.2 Engagement of Civil Society organizations, Traditional Authorities, and community members in the decision-making and implementation process

The objective of this section sought to find out how the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) structures engage and interact with Civil Society organizations (CSOs), Traditional Authorities, and members of the community in the decision-making and implementation process. Specifically, it sought to find out the nature of governance practice at the local level and how it promotes popular participation and involvement of key actors and stakeholders in the decision-making and implementation process. The reason being that the local government and decentralization process itself develops on the prospects of participation by devolving power and resources not only to the local units of administration but the private sector as well. (Ahenkan et al., 2013).

The study adopted participation in the sense where the individual or recognized groups are allowed to be actively involved in the decision-making and implementation process. Effective community participation ensures sustainable development as the people feel part of the decision-making process and are willing to provide its sustenance. The local people's involvement, especially the vulnerable, ensures the implementation of pro-poor policies and equitable distribution of resources in the decision-making process. In the decentralization and local government process avenues for citizens, participation includes town hall meetings, stakeholder engagement, communal labor, and assembly-community activities per sections 16 and 18 of the local government Act of 993 (Act 462). Therefore, respondents were asked to specify the various avenues and frequency they have had interactions with the Assembly in the decision-making and implementation process.

Saw, a principal officer of the Municipal Assembly, made the following observations:

“decentralization is about the devolution of powers. The process allows the local population to play key roles in governance to enhance local development. It also allows empowered citizens to engage the assembly in the development process. Decisions are made with the active participation of the electorates and the local population. The current decentralization allows for a bottom-up approach to decision-making. The assembly encourages active participation through the committees and the sub-committees.”

He further described the planning part of the decentralized administration system's encompassing nature at the municipal assembly.

“The planning and budgeting unit, which some people refer to it as the engine of the assemblies, is where the actual technical work is done. In our case, we have twenty-three (23) members, drawn from experts from the assembly, representatives of community-based organizations, traditional authorities, and other recognized groups within the municipality. This is where development planning starts. The various groups meet their respective groups. The plan should encompass the views from all these cross-sections of society. Assembly members also represent the various electoral areas.”

Whereas all the members of the assembly as well as the representatives of Community - based civil society organizations gave fairly positive responses and indicated that in their observations, everyone who matters in the community is involved in the decision making and implementation process, Traditional Authorities interviewed expressed displeasure at the low level of consultation and avenues for interaction between traditional leaders and the MMDAs in recent years.

A paramount chief in one of the Municipalities made the following remarks in an individual interview:

“you see how we are all praising decentralization and the local government system for ensuring that the people's basic needs are well taken care of. We, the chiefs, used to be the foundation of local government some time ago, but what do we see now? Before the decentralization program, the powers of the chiefs have been taken away, making the traditional authority less effective in the local governance process. The government people want to do everything on their own and then just come here to make announcements.”

However, he was quick to add that some appointments to the assembly by the central governments are made in consultation with the traditional authorities, but that is not enough. In his concluding remarks, he acknowledged that though most of the powers of traditional authorities have been taken away with the introduction of the decentralization and local government policy, they have not entirely lost their relevance in local administration. *“We still play a vital role in the development of the community,”* he observed.

Contributing to a focused group discussion to specify the various avenues and frequency in which the Municipal Assembly structures interact with traditional authorities in the decision-making and implementation process, a paramount chief commented that;

“Nowadays, the consultation is only in books. They only come here to tell us what they have done or intend to do. Do you call that consultation? The assembly consults the chiefs only when they need land for a project or when land ownership is in dispute. The assembly has become too political, and if you don't belong to their party, they don't know you.”

It was observed that the Assembly officials, during the individual interview, appeared to be using their knowledge of the local government act to answer the questions. Meanwhile, in reality, things did not appear to be so. How the assembly engages and interacts with community members, opinion leaders, and traditional authorities from observation of the study appears not quite impressive. In some cases, the assembly's decisions were communicated to the people during community engagements instead of involving them in the process. The top-down approach was being used by the assembly more than the bottom-up.

Nevertheless, an assemblyman praised the assembly for always consulting them anytime they want to embark on a community project. He especially commended the member of parliament for the area and the District Chief Executive (DCE) for coming to the community's support anytime they present their needs. He emphasized that:

“In my community, we have a good working relationship with the assembly. Whenever we realize a specific need for the community, we inform the assembly through the appropriate committee leader, who in turn inform the assembly. Sometimes the MP or the DCE will come to the community to acquaint himself with the situation, and within a short period, the problem would be solved. I remember in one of our community meetings, we all agreed on the need for a kindergarten to be added to the school here. As an assemblyman, I informed my PM, who asked me to write, to write. I did, and within six months, three classroom blocks were added to the existing for the KG.”

6.5 Objectivity in addressing development needs in the Municipalities

The objective of this section sought to examine how the assemblies ensure objectivity in addressing community needs and aspirations to ensure that developments are evenly distributed across the municipality. This was to assess the perceived political interference and central government control in local governance.

Aboagye, Assembly Member of an electoral area in the Nsawam Adoagyiri Municipality, pointed out that there is a conscious effort to distribute resources within the Municipality. He indicated that;

“the assembly usually sends teams of planning officers to the various communities, for the community members to lay down their demands, according to a scale of preference. During Town hall meetings, the community members usually vote on the issues, and the one that gets the most support gets done by the assembly.”

This assertion was corroborated by Siaw, an official of the Suhum Municipal Assembly, who maintained out that the assembly tries various means to satisfy every electoral area's demands fairly when it comes to distributed development projects. He said:

“It is important to acknowledge that the assembly members represent their electoral areas, and thus, they engage in deliberations and bring the assembly to appreciate the needs and concerns of their local communities. These concerns and deliberations must usually be captured in the assemblies' plans, but in cases where there are emergencies, the assembly responds quickly. This means that everything depends mostly on the activeness or responsiveness of the assembly members in bringing issues to the assembly.”

Akosua, an officer of the Suhum Municipal Assembly, added that the assembly over the years relies mostly on IGF, Government subvention, and support from development partners for their projects and programs. She had this to say:

“normally, for the assembly to decide which community to provide what depending on the issue at hand based on need assessment. This must ultimately reflect in the medium-term development plan of the assembly. As much as possible, whenever there is funding available, the assembly tries to execute projects where it is usually needed.”

Oparebea, a principal officer of the Nsawam Adoagyiri Municipal Assembly, had this to say;

“the assembly normally undertake periodic stakeholder consultation for the assembly to come up with an action plan and during this process, the assembly meets people within the various communities, and they come up with their needs which are prioritized. Based on the stakeholders meeting and concerning the Action Plan, and we go by the action plan, and as and when resources are available, we get them fixed. We also encourage individuals to help address some of the challenges.”

The study observed that the assembly undertakes the “community needs assessment” in every community in participatory and inclusive avenues. With the need assessment procedure, the assembly creates various platforms for opinion leaders, assembly members, traditional authorities, community-based organizations, unit committee members, marginalized and disadvantaged groups such as the people living with disabilities (PLWDs) to present their challenges, needs, and aspirations. The assembly prioritizes the community needs, settles on the peculiarity, and captures them within the municipality's Medium-Term Development Plan. Within the year, each community will have at least a project to address their specific needs. That is the strategy adopted by the assembly amid limited resources to address people's needs and aspirations.

Joana, an official of the Nsawam Adoagyiri municipal assembly, shared her experience in conducting the need assessment procedure in a deprived community within the municipality. She stressed that;

“When the assembly went there to conduct the need’s assessment, we observed that portable water was a major challenge in that community through various needs were presented. The assembly prioritized the need for potable water for the community in the action plan of the assembly. With a follow-up by the assembly member, within six (6) months, a borehole was drilled for the community with funding through the DPAT funding.”

The district performance assessment tool (DPAT) is a diagnostic instrument for assessing the performance of the MMDAs to determine the possible allocation of the district assembly common fund (DACF) and responsiveness factor grant (RFG) to the various assemblies. DPAT was instituted with development partners to harmonize support for local government and decentralization programs. When asked if there was a laid-down rule for the distribution of resources, all respondents replied in the affirmative. One of the respondents explained that every electoral area has its needs captured in the municipal assembly's medium-term development plan. Though the assembly plans to distribute the resources evenly, it is generally based on the municipal assembly's need’s assessment as the highest political and admirative body with executive and legislative authority. She emphasized that, whereas one community needs a classroom unit, another needs community-based health planning and service (CHIPS) compounds, while others may need ICT Centers or a market. This is the reason why the assembly needs to do a needs assessment to prioritized resources.

Kofi, an assembly member of the Nsawam Adoagyiri municipal assembly, had this to say;

“There is a conscious effort at a fair distribution of resources within the Municipality. The Assembly usually sends teams of planning officers to the various communities, then they lay down their demands, according to a sale of preference. They vote on the issues, and the one that gets the most support gets done by the assembly.”

However, Apraku, a unit committee member, had a different view of the issue. This is what he had to say:

“We are in the community, and we know our needs, but whenever we say it to the assembly, they come and do a different this. In my neighborhood, we needed a place for the market to stop the people from selling on the streets. We had a meeting with the assembly and told them this, but can you believe it? They came and asked the chief for land to build a community library. They said one NGO wants to make it for the community. They don’t listen to the people. They just do what pleases themselves.”

Akosua, an officer of the Suhum municipal assembly, also had this to say;

“Everything is centered on the planning, which is captured in the Medium-Term Development Plan. The Assembly must draw its plans out of the limited resources to be able to come out with projects. Before coming out with the plan, the assembly usually has to meet with the communities and engage them through a community interface meeting and ask for their pressing needs. The assembly does its assessment of the community needs and identifies the most pressing and the most feasible need to put into action.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS

7.1 Introduction

This study examines civil society organizations and traditional authorities' role toward effective participation in Ghana's decentralization and local government policy. This chapter presents discussions on the key findings of the study.

7.2 Local Government and Governance practice at the local level in Ghana

The UNDP (1997) describes the concept of governance as the exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage the affairs of a country. It comprises mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences. Nonetheless, in any way one looks at it, the idea behind governance denotes the exercise of power and authority regarding how a country, society, or institution organizes itself. In the view of Vasudha Chhotray et al. (2009), the ultimate goal of governance is to create the necessary conditions for organized control and collective action. According to Rosenau (2018), the governance of a country is understood to be the exclusive preserve of government and is structured into levels such as the national, provincial, urban, or local in a hierarchical order depending on the form of state.

In evaluating the performance of decentralization and local government programs in Ghana, Ayee (2008) noted that an effective and accountable local government depends on the effectiveness of administrative, fiscal, planning, and political decentralization. He argued that these elements are evident in the 1988 local government reforms and given credence in the 1992 Constitution. However, a special authority granted the president

under the constitution, such as the power to dissolve non-performing District Assemblies and to appoint Metropolitan Municipal or District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) and 30% of Assembly members, undermine the system. Moreover, control of finances, human resources, and implementation of the District Assemblies' composite budget make political, administrative, fiscal, and planning mere decentralization cosmetic. Thus, arguably, the centralized nature of Ghana's decentralization policy has resulted in the marginal achievement of policy expectations. Therefore, the various DAs should strive to devise innovative means to generate more funds internally to make them financially viable to effectively, efficiently, and responsively execute numerous development projects they undertake as well as insulate them from central government control and manipulation.

As already indicated in the literature review (see section 3.4 of this study) Ghana's decentralization and local government history is a long and checkered one, dating as far back as pre-colonialism. The current and most extended surviving system began in 1988, with the promulgation of the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) Law 207, which was later replaced under the fourth republic by Ghana's 1992 Constitution and the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462, as amended in 2016 by Act 936).

Though the local government system has made several strides, the study revealed that the current arrangement with the practice of the appointment of Metropolitan Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) and 30% of all Assembly members by the President is inconsistent with democratic principles. According to Sackey (2012), democracy is built on free, fair, and universal adult suffrage in the governance process, making the election of leaders fundamental to followers. Accordingly, the right to directly elect MMDCEs by the people at the local level has a significant impact on the

power relations and practical cooperation of actors and stakeholders in the local governance process.

The study observed that the appointment of the chief executive who represents the central government at the local level with the responsibility to supervise the day-to-day administration of the municipality and the president's concurrent power to remove him undermines democracy. Data analysis indicated further that people should be given the mandate to choose their leaders and be actively involved in the decision-making process. Additionally, it was discovered that poor remuneration of Assembly and Unit Committee members located underneath the local government structure and the main point of contact in the community obstruct effective participation, resulting in a low caliber of human resources. Literature review (Ahwoi, 2010; IDEG, 2018; ILGS & FES, 2010, 2016) indicates that the election of principal local government officials would ensure grassroots democracy, accountability, and nurturing of local political actors' future national leadership positions.

The discussion about elections of the chief executive and remuneration for Assembly members and subunits structures has broad backing of key actors and stakeholders in local governance such as civil society organizations and traditional authorities. However, the main challenge relates to the nature such elections should take. While one school of thought advocates for non-partisan elections, others discourage multiparty participation with the argument that Article 55 (3) of the Republic of Ghana's Constitution excludes political parties from participating in local governance. Empirical evidence from the CDD/Afrobarometer (2017) survey report shows that more than two-thirds (69%) of Ghanaians agree that MMDCEs should be elected by universal adult suffrage rather than being appointed by the president. However, it was observed that a

slim majority (51%) of Ghanaians think the election should be non-partisan, just like that of the local government councilors, while a sizeable minority (41%) prefers partisanship election (Ahwoi, 2010; CDD/Afrobarometer, 2017). Arguably, Debrah (2016) points out that how the District Chief executive, Assembly members, and the unit committees are chosen may profoundly impact representativeness, responsiveness, accountability, legitimacy of local government, and distribution of power and resources.

Though agreeing to the proposal for the local officials' election, the two leading political parties in Ghana, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), have taken a diverging view on the mode of election. While the NPP supports political parties' participation and representation in local governance by ensuring the election of all principal officials at the local level on a multiparty basis the NDC advocates for non-partisan elections. In its 2020 Manifesto, the NDC presented a proposed mode of elections of MMDCEs and has with the ceding of thirty percent (30%) non-elective Assemblymember positions for chiefs and traditional authorities.

Several reasons have been accounted for in the non-partisan elections at the district and sub-district levels in Ghana's local governance. For instance, it is argued that the idea of electing MMDCEs, particularly on a partisan basis, would be impractical as a result of the antagonistic nature of partisan politics in the country, while others think it will instead lead to healthy competition (AfriMAP et al., 2007; IDEG, 2018). The study observed that local elections riddled with ethnic sentiments and other sectional cleavages such as clientelism and nepotism and the strong party affiliation at the community level in Ghana are likely to strengthen these other ties such as ethnic and regional solidarities, as claimed by Ronald Adamtey et al. (2020). Mohammed (2018), supporting this assertion, observed that, since independence, ethnic politics in Ghana despite severe vacillations in different

regimes and ideological predictions have come to play increasingly prominent roles in the political landscape. Contrary to this assertion is the claim that multiparty elections in Ghana would also mean a significant loss of political control at the local level. For many, competitive multiparty politics will enable all political parties to access the government executive arm at the local level. Further, this will allow them to gain experience in local democracy and nation-building (Ahmad & Abu Talib, 2011; Hooghe & Marks, 2003).

Making the position of DCEs, membership of District Assemblies and other sub-unit structures elective by significantly amending Article 55 (3) would boost the quest for democratic devolution in Ghana. This may significantly result in more power and resources being devolved to MMDAs. This would consequently promote inclusion by opening the executive arm of government to all political parties, promote effective and inclusive local economic development, deepen democracy, and promote greater accountability. Similarly, proponents of the partisan local elections suggest that an end to the President's power to appoint all DCEs and 30% membership of District Assemblies will promote inclusiveness as other political parties will vie for these positions. This may potentially reduce the cyclical electoral fears and threats of violence as there will be a change in the dynamics of local politics as alliances and coalitions are built by parties if they do not win the majority of the votes to enable them to govern at the local levels (R Adamtey, 2014).

Another dimension observed in the local governance system was remuneration for Assembly members, which was a significant concern raised in focused group discussions. It was observed that Assembly members rely on sitting and transportation allowances as the only source of compensation for their work. As a result, Assembly members' position does not attract people with the requisite skills and knowledge required to perform their

respective roles efficiently. This affects the quality of debates in the General Assembly as the few literate Assembly members who understand the local government system tend to control deliberations in the house.

7.2.1 Role of Civil Society Organizations in Contemporary Governance

Since the inception of Ghana's fourth republic in 1992, the country's adherence to the tenants of democracy and good governance practice has created an enabling atmosphere for civil society organizations' operations. As a result, civil society organizations' functioning has in recent years expanded from local activism and service delivery to the promotion of inclusiveness, advocacy of public policy in line with universal initiatives such as the attainment of sustainable development goals and national poverty reduction strategies. In this regard, civil society organizations' inputs to the development process continue to receive international and local donor support (MLGRD, 2010a; NDPC, 2018; United Nations, 2015).

From literature, (See chapter four of this study) no definition can capture the complex nature of Civil Society Organizations (CSO). The study, therefore, limited the notion of CSOs to Community Based Organizations engaging local government structures with the view to work with them to fill the gaps, address challenges and provide remedial solutions for development issues. The study sought to clarify the roles and mandate of MMDA structures, community-based organizations and promote participation in the decision-making and implementation process.

Empirical evidence (AfriMAP et al., 2007; Bofo-Arthur, 2008; CDD/Afrobarometer, 2017) suggests that central governments in most African countries continue to allocate more of their national budget to local authorities to facilitate the functioning of civil society organizations and the private sector in providing improved and focused support

to both national and local development. This implies that civil society organizations are gradually emerging as influential pressure groups capable of functioning in collaborating with the state in the development management process and yet constituting a supervisory body for the diligence of the governance function.

Set up for specific purposes and often as specialized bodies, Gyimah-Boadi (2000) opines that CSOs are positioned to augment the governments' capacity to develop people-tested policies, design and formulate realistic programs and actions and implement development activities. The African Charter for civic participation in development and transformation cited in Cole & Lavoie (2006) recognizes the need to support civil society organizations to contribute to the local governance and development.

The study observed that civil society organizations operating at the local level, especially the rural-based groups, represent several community-based organizations in Ghana. They mainly focused on improving the individual's well-being through social and economic gains and service delivery at the local level. A general assessment of these organizations revealed vital issues such as low staffing, low financing, low organizational capacity, and sometimes resort to informal practices. Nevertheless, most of them have not developed fully to engage the government on critical development issues.

All respondents interviewed showed awareness of the operations of several community-based organizations in the municipalities. Leading community-based civil society organizations identified by respondents in the Municipalities included the West Africa Health and Education Foundation, the Ark Foundation, Zongo Youth Association, Youth Advocates Ghana, Transforming Lives Organization, and Youth for Rural Development.

The study further inquired from respondents about civil society organizations' impact on local governance and development in the municipality. This is what Joana, an officer at the Nsawam Adoagyiri Municipal assembly, had to say;

“The CSOs organize the community members / the local people and sensitize them on their rights and responsibilities as citizens and make them hold duty-bearers accountable, especially ARK Foundation, which has formed groups within the community report on issues and demand for their rights. The CSOs can make people active in asking questions and demand development within their communities. They keep the assemblies in check.”

The study categorized civil society organizations' operational areas into four main themes; advocacy, public sensitization and education, capacity building, and communal service. The study's findings indicated that most community-based organizations are actively involved in public sensitization and education, followed by advocacy and collaborative services. Only a few of them were seen to be engaged in capacity building. This is what Peter, one of the representatives of a CSO, had to say when asked about their contribution to the community's development.

“We have conducted several community sensitizations and education on HIV, sexual, and reproductive health issues and runs its scholarship project targeting orphans and vulnerable children in schools. About 38 children in primary and senior high schools have benefited directly from the scholarship program. YAG has also facilitated dialogue and interaction between citizens and local government institutions to improve service delivery.”

It was observed that most of the Civil society organizations engaged in public sensitization and education. In an individual interview with some representatives of community-based organizations, it became clear that CSOs choose programs based on

the people's needs. According to the respondents, local-based organizations are formed to address local problems, such as the need to sensitize and educate the people on a wide range of issues affecting their daily lives.

Nevertheless, it was observed that the operations of some of the community-based organizations are influenced by funding. As a result, some of them choose to operate in rural communities and on projects that are likely to attract donor support. Interestingly, representatives of the community-based organization interviewed confirmed that they are open to a wide range of activities so long as donor support is available.

Additionally, the study sought to ascertain the extent to which the organizations have defined their objectives, vision, mission statement, and strategic plan to guide their operations. All CSO representatives indicated that they have continuously updated their strategic plans to suit the community's current demands. This is what one of the representatives had to say;

“One of our objectives is to empower the people to take part in the decision-making process and hold duty-bearers accountable to ensure equitable and sustainable services for children and the youth. Our quest is to create a society where the youth and young adults can take an active part in the decisions- making process on issues that affect their lives to enable them to enjoy their full potentials and assume responsibilities as accountable citizens. Our primary goal is to transform the livelihood of the people, especially the youth, by improving access to information and enhance participation in sexual and reproductive health, education, and livelihood programs.”

When asked how the organizations coordinate and harmonize their activities with the MMDA development plans, one of the representatives of the CSOs gave this response:

“Our organization engages the assembly in any project related to the work of the assembly. This includes an invitation to speak in events organized by our organizations, sharing of project reports or newsletters.”

It became clear from observations that every initiative by the CSOs needs prior approval of the assembly before it can be carried out. As the highest political and administrative authority, the municipal assembly is responsible for the municipality's general development. Hence no activity can be carried out at the blind side of the assembly within the jurisdiction.

It was observed that though there were other community groups such as organizations of people living with a disability, small-scale farmers, and fishers' associations, respondents could not embrace the broad and complex nature of civil society organizations based on their knowledge and understanding. For instance, most participants did not agree to include tribal groups, market women associations, gender advocates, and other marginalized groups as part of CSOs. However, the 2018-2021 medium-term development plan of the municipalities captured CSOs to include traditional Asafo companies, tribal groups, religious bodies, and NGOs fighting for recognition and inclusion in the national development agenda.

The study found out that Civil Society Organizations purposefully engage communities in the Municipalities to find the needs of the people and development gaps that need to be filled to spur the demand side to exact results as well as claim initiatives to achieve

progress for the nation. They do this by playing a representation role and provide a voice for the local people.

It was observed that, the main avenue through which civil society organizations in the municipalities are able to identify and present needs and aspirations of the community and minority groups such, women, children and people living with disabilities, is advocacy for improved access to public service delivery and support.

Generally, the civil society organization was discovered to serve as a crucial link between the central and local governance structures in addressing social, political, and economic issues and providing perspectives on realities on the ground, thereby acting as mediators by facilitating the definition of localized priorities and using this information to influence policy. Some locally based Civil society Organizations were discovered to be involved in national policymaking and implementation using real-time grassroots perspectives to finetune strategies to address development gaps. In all these, it was realized that effective collaboration with the Assemblies in such roles helps to strengthen a multi-stakeholder approach in local governance and development.

7.2.2 Civic Participation in Local Governance and Development

Fundamentally, Ghana's decentralization and local government policy aim at ensuring civic participation and impartial involvement in the decision-making process. (Ahenkan et al. (2013) assert that citizenry's participation in decision-making and implementation process is an integral component in ensuring sustainable development. Additionally, Samah & Aref, (2009) suggests that citizens' involvement in decision-making is one of the fundamental parameters that induce development. Citing Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation Samah & Aref argues that greater participation of the citizenry in public policy enhances its effectiveness in the decision-making and implementation process.

The UNDP (2019) claims that equitable participation in the governance process is necessary for ensuring overall progress in the community and the realization of all forms of human rights. Other studies (Crook, 1998; European Commission, 2014; Muriu, 2013; Samah & Aref, 2009; World Bank, 1996) contend that the involvement of the local people in a decision that affects them is imperative to achieving sustainable development in a country. According to Samah & Aref (2009), people can be actively involved in the development process when given the opportunity through the local governance system. Nevertheless, according to Abdulai & Crawford (2010), effective participation is determined by the people's willingness to participate and express themselves freely. The implication is that the people would be fully involved if the system is collaborative and provides enough avenues for participation. That means, local government system should be devoid of bottlenecks as far as practicable to encourage the fully participate of the people in the decision-making process.

Ahenkan et al. (2013) suggest that indigenous people's involvement in the decision-making process is the best way to redress conflict and ensure efficient planning and

implementation of policies. This view is corroborated by Ahwoi (2018), who pointed out that the fundamental purpose of the decentralization and local government policy seeks to transfer power and functions from the central government to the component units to enable the people at the local level to be part of the decision-making process.

Despite the benefits derived from civic participation in local governance as claimed by Ahenkan et al. (2013), Muriu (2013) points out that the participation of the people in local governance in most developing countries, such as Ghana, is low due to a lack of interest, apathy, and inadequate avenues for citizens to participate. Muriu explains that, is not surprising that most development programs fail the sustainability test due to ineffective local participation in the decision-making and implementation process. He claims that, even though the public is the target of information at the lower level, it turns to be the reverse at the upper level.

This study sought to find out the extent of participation of actors and stakeholders in the decision-making process. Accordingly, respondents were asked to indicate some of the avenues available for engagement in the decision-making process in local governance. Response from the District Assembly officials indicated that institutional mechanisms for interaction and engagement of the people and key stakeholders in local governance are fully utilized.

In contrast, the study observed that the District Assembly official was very diplomatic in their responses as their reactions were more theoretical than practical. Mostly, their responses were based on the Local Government Act's provisions (Act 463) as the case rather than what is happening on the ground. For instance, even though the Assembly is obliged to organize frequent town hall meetings specifically at the beginning of the first and third quarter of the year to brief and solicit the views of the people on current

happenings, it was observed that this was not the case. The study revealed that town hall meetings were mainly organized once a year and sometimes not throughout the year.

Responses from three separate focused group discussions with local government officials, civil society organizations, and Traditional Authorities confirmed the situations. It was observed that the Assembly has not put in place an effective institutional mechanism to engage key actors in the decision-making process. This is contrary to the assertion in the DMTDP (2018-2021) of the assemblies that platforms such as public planning hearing, public budget hearing, Stakeholder/Ratepayer Fee -Fixing Consultation, and Town Hall Meetings are frequently organized within which the assembly provides an opportunity for popular participation in the development planning of the municipality.

Consequently, a distribution of the prevalence rate of respondent's interactions with the Assembly structures in their day-to-day activities was evaluated. It was manifested from a direct interview and focused group discussions that some participants had zero interaction with some of the Assembly structures in their day-to-day activities. Some respondents stated that they seldom interact with the municipal Assembly or any of its structures to share their ideas on the municipality's development. Some pointed out that key officials of the Assembly, such as the Municipal chief executive, are always busy to the extent that one hardly meets him at the office. Even though others conceded that the assembly has occasionally organized public forums, they did not include one-on-one interactions with the assembly structures.

Regarding interaction with the presiding member, it was revealed that, though some of the respondents claim to have had contacts, the interaction was low. On the contrary, most of the respondents disclosed that they had had an average interaction with the assemblyman of their community and good interaction with traditional authorities. The

findings revealed that traditional leaders, followed by assembly members and Unit committee members, are more accessible to community members with easy interaction relating to the community's activities than top-ranking Assembly officials.

Again, the study discovered that the Assembly seldom involves other stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, in the design and monitoring of programs and projects. The level of interactions with civil society organizations was discovered to be very low as there are no institutional mechanisms to foster their engagement and interactions. Most participants believed that the municipal assembly less often involves stakeholders during the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs and projects. More of such responses came from a representative's civil society organizations and traditional authorities.

Furthermore, the general relationship between the Assembly and the civil society was noted as average according to most responses, while the remaining others stated that the relationship was unsatisfactory. Additionally, the interaction between MMDA structures and CSO in designing programs and projects was not often as expected, just as evaluating programs and projects and monitoring programs and projects.

Again, the study explored the prevalence with which the Municipal assembly seeks the views of traditional authorities and members of the community on issues affecting the community. Whereas all respondents of the Metropolitan Municipal District Assemblies interviewed agreed that the assembly provides several avenues for traditional authorities to take an active part in the local governance of the municipalities, the traditional authorities gave a contradictory view.

Nana III, a traditional authority in the Suhum municipality, had this to say:

“as for me, I don’t call it consultation. It is information. The assembly only informs us about the decision they have already taken. The fact is if you don’t show a sign of allegiance to the government, you are seen as an opponent. Partisan politics has clouded the administration of the assembly.”

The above statement shows the resentment of some traditional authorities in local governance.

The relationship between the MMDAs and traditional authorities, according to Adjei et al. (2017), is restricted mainly to *“consultations on the release of land and participation in ceremonial functions.”* A quick assessment of the issue of consultation and participation of traditional authorities in local governance confirmed that there is no formal structured and reinforced arrangement that seeks to promote partnership and collaboration between the two institutions. The traditional institution (chieftaincy) itself is bedeviled with a persistent dispute on intermittent succession lines, which has created friction among traditional rulers at the local level. This fuels the perception that; the disputes could be transferred to the local assembly with traditional authorities' representation. As a result, even though successive governments have realized the enormous contributions of traditional authorities in local governance, not much commitment is demonstrated to institutionalize their role and representation in the decision-making and implementation process. The inadequate recognition of traditional authorities has resulted in a strained relationship with MMDA structures.

Generally, the study's findings revealed a low level of interaction between Metropolitan Municipal and District Assembly (MMDA) structures, civil society organizations, and Traditional Authorities vis-à-vis planning, implementation, evaluation, and monitoring of development projects. Some respondents, mainly traditional authority, disclosed

during the focused group discussions that the MMDAs do not (less often) involve stakeholders when it comes to planning and implementing programs and projects.

Additionally, close to half of the respondents indicated that the municipal assemblies rarely interacted with community members in planning and implementing programs and projects. One respondent indicated that most projects are practically imposed on the people by the assembly. This view ties with Ayee's (1994) view suggesting that decision-making on development planning and implementation has seen little or no participation from the people who, in the long run, tend to be the beneficiaries. As a result, the people, in most cases, refused to identify themselves with and claim ownership of programs and policies that did not involve them, which undermines sustainable development.

Furthermore, the study found situations where there are social barriers or inadequate information, knowledge, and understanding of the subject matter to be challenging in local government administration. In some instances, the representatives of certain groups participate on behalf of the members, which has the disadvantage of some interest not being adequately represented. This study posits that participation must be safeguarded by both the individual and in groups and not only by representation.

Not these alone, it was also revealed that the Assembly rarely interact with vulnerable groups such as people living with disability in the planning and implementation of programs and policies at the local level.

Variables on the social exclusion filter mainly on economic, educational, political, social, organizational, religious, and environmental perspectives are explored to thoroughly review local development's participation matrix.

The table below gives an in-depth description of the social exclusion filter to explain the patterns of participation of multiple actors in community projects and decision-making.

Table 21: A social exclusion filter for participation in community activities

Variable	Participation at the community level	Participation at the individual level
Economic	Level of economic development Level of inequalities, Employment patterns, and distribution, Living standards	Income/consumption Assets (land, capital) Level of poverty Employment status and related time availability
Social	Social norms and networks, Societal fragmentation (ethnicity, gender, disabled people, etc.) The traditional system of decision-making Community organization and hierarchy	Position in society and social role, Personal rivalries Ethnicity Isolation "outcast." Gender Membership of Community- Based-Organizations or other networks
Political	Level of politicization and risk of political hijacking Political fragmentation Influence and power of interest groups	Political stance/belief Level of political power Civic engagement and role
Religious	Religious fragmentation Influence of religious leaders Degree of the intervention of religious leaders in community decision-making	Religious objection to the project, Degree of trust in religious leaders
Physical	Physical infrastructures and accessibility Transport system and cost Electricity, Telecommunications, ICT	Geographical location Time constraints Access to services (price and distance)
Environmental	Presence and impact of external bodies (NGOs, expatriates, etc.) Institutional and vulnerability context, Informational flow	Relationship with NGO staff Past experiences with similar Projects access to information
Organizational	Presence and impact of external bodies, institutional and vulnerability context, and inflow	Relationship with NGO staff, experience with similar projects, access to information.

Source: Field data (2020)

The indication is that any of the variables or a combination of them either inspires or discourages actors in a particular community from participating in local-level activities. The perception in some communities is that consideration is given to prominences such as economic status, social roles, political factors, and educational levels of the people before deciding on who to either involve or exclude from participation in the decision-making and implementation process.

It is important to note that, people are rational actors and commit to effective participation in community development projects when given the opportunity, especially on a notion that the project will serve their needs either in the short or long term.

Notwithstanding, the study revealed that civil society organizations in the municipalities do commit to participation and support the decentralization process any time they are provided with an avenue to be involved and are convinced that the outcome will significantly benefit the community. In this regard, participation in local governance integrates the concept of social exclusion into a more systematic, comprehensive, and dynamic framework that makes it easy to identify individuals, groups, and other players in the community who are likely to either participate or distance themselves from participating in community activities.

Principally, the participation of community members, key actors, and stakeholders in decentralization and local governance is essential if the entire system is to be as effective and efficient as intended to be. This is because the Ghanaian decentralization and local governance process are built on a synthesis of the top-down and bottom-up nexus.

7.2.3 Contemporary role of Traditional Authorities in Local Governance

Traditional authorities play an essential role in the administration of local communities. As indicated in literature (see section 3.5 of this study) traditional authority in Ghana is expressed in the chieftaincy institution, which is recognized by the constitution. The traditional chiefs are considered natural rulers, making them administrators as well as spiritual and traditional heads, thus wielding remarkable powers over the people in the community. Arhin, (1985) claims that, in several Ghanaian communities, traditional authorities' activities in the provision of education, social and economic development, and infrastructure have helped increase their recognition in recent times. For instance, much can be said in Ghana about the educational, infrastructural, and scholarship funds that some prominent traditional authorities have initiated. According to Ray (1996), traditional authorities in their capacity as community leaders invariably perform the following functions:

- i. They mediate between the government (central/local government) and the people and play a lead role in fighting against inequality and social injustice.
- ii. They play a leadership role in keeping the people up to date with contemporary issues and organization and mobilization of the people for communal activities
- iii. They serve as arbitrators and counselors on all issues of social concern for the public good.
- iv. They play roles as guardians of traditional heritage, which permits them to guard, protect, and sustain traditional norms, beliefs, ethics, values, and principles.

Perhaps the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the great king of the Asante kingdom cited in Ayee (2007), summarizes the contemporary role of Traditional Authorities in the following statement;

“Our predecessors engaged in inter-tribal wars, fighting for conquest over territories and people. Today, the action should be vigorous and intensive against dehumanization, poverty, marginalization, ignorance, and disease. Chieftaincy must be used to propel economic development through proper land administration by facilitating investments in our communities and through codification and customs and traditions, making it impossible for imposters to get enstooled and create unnecessary situations for litigation.”

One-on-one interviews and focused group discussion with Traditional Authorities revealed that some Traditional leaders have instituted various projects in collaboration with the Assembly to promote the development of their communities. For instance, the study revealed that the Paramount Chief of Cape Coast has initiated an educational fund to support brilliant but needy students in the metropolis. Other sub-chiefs have replicated this endeavor in the municipality to enhance academic development. It was discovered that some paramount chiefs had also ventured into general economic developments to establish support programs for local farmers, fishermen, and other local businesses. Such action in the past, according to Arhin (1985), would have attracted destoolment.

The abovementioned is evident in the changing role of traditional authorities that needs the cooperation and collaboration of the Assemblies to make them more efficient and relevant in local governance.

7.3 Engagements in addressing development issues in the Municipalities

From the interview, focused group discussions, and observation, the responsiveness of MMDAs, and other stakeholders in addressing community needs and aspirations were ascertained. Most of the participants disclosed that the MMDAs are least responsive when addressing the communities' development needs. Others believed that the MMDAs have not done enough to address the needs of the vulnerable, especially people living with a disability (PLWD). This assertion is confirmed by empirical studies (Agyire-Tetteh et al., 2019) with the claim that most MMDAs in Ghana have not instituted adequate measures for the inclusion of vulnerable groups such as people living with a disability in the decision-making and implementation process.

Again, a more significant proportion of the responses explicated that the MMDAs were less effective in helping the municipality overcome its development challenges. In contrast, others were convinced that the CSOs were somewhat effective in helping the municipality overcome its development challenges. Yet few others considered traditional authorities as instrumental in assisting the municipality in addressing their development challenges. The distribution of the MMDAs, CSOs, and Traditional authorities' responsiveness in addressing development challenges in the municipality is presented in the table below.

Table 22: Responsiveness in addressing development issues in the community

<i>Institutions</i>	<i>Not responsive</i>	<i>Somehow responsive</i>	<i>Very responsive</i>
MMDAs	4	10	16
CSOs	5	18	7
Traditional authorities	0	10	20

Source: Field data (2020)

Further, participants were asked to indicate the institutions they look up to regarding addressing the community's development needs. As per the participants' preference, the institutions were arranged in this order: MMDAs > Traditional authorities > CSOs/NGOs. About 46.7% of the respondents revealed that they are most likely to look up to MMDAs to address the community's development needs, 26.6% disclosed that they are more likely to wait on traditional authorities to address the development needs of the community. In comparison, more than half of the study participants (about 23.3%) stated that they would instead look up to CSOs and or NGOs to address the community's development needs. The overall distribution is summarized in Table 3.

Table 23: Institutions likely to address the development needs of the community

Institutions	Percentage			
	likely	More likely	Most likely	Not at all
MMDAs	13.3	40.0	46.7	0
CSOs/CBOs	23.3	30	33.3	13.3
Traditional Authorities	73.3	26.6	0.0	0.0

Source; Field data (2020)

The *Ghana Local Government Act, 1993(Act 462)* (1993) stipulates that community needs and aspirations identified should first be channeled through the appropriate sub-committee for consideration and then send their recommendations to the executive committee for onward submission to the assembly for final deliberations for its acceptance or rejection. This is a clear indication of the adaptation of the bottom-up approach to the decision-making and implementation in the decentralization and local government process (Ahwoi, 2010; J. Ayee, 1994; Hull, 1982; Lipsky, 1983).

Using this approach, it was expected that the unit committee decision would significantly shape the final decision of the assembly in the identification and addressing of community needs and aspirations at the local level. However, the study discovered that in practice, this did not correspond to reality. The sub-committees are not very active as expected. The elected members are only active during elections. They seem to be in a position only in theory but not in practice. In pursuance of Section 3 (3) of Act 462, the Legislative Instrument (1994) 1589 provides for establishing sub-Metro Councils and Unit Committees as the sub-district community structures, respectively, for the completion of the decentralization structure. These structures are, however, not yet established. The district assembly is structured to perform its functions through the Executive Committee and its sub-committees.

The study observed that the Cape Coast Municipal Assembly has two (2) Sub-Metropolitan Councils, 45 Electoral Areas, and Unit Committees. In contrast, the Nsawam Municipal assembly has two (2) Zonal Councils, namely the Nsawam and Adoagyiri Council Whereas the Suhum Municipal Assembly, has 3 Urban, Town, and Zonal Councils, 29 Electoral Areas, 29 assembly members, and 145 Unit Committee members (CCMA, 2019).

7.3.1 The Medium-Term Development Plan

One of the approaches adopted by the local government's ministry in Ghana to address its development needs is to prepare and implement a comprehensive medium-term development plan. Themes for the district medium-term development plan's preparation are principally derived from the country's national development planning agenda and consideration for applying local content in the implementation process. Accordingly, since the inception of the fourth republic in 1992, the MMDAs have consistently been preparing and executing a four-year Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) to elucidate their development agenda and programs of action in line with national policy aspirations and community needs. According to the MLGRD, (2010b) and NDPC (2018). There have been six medium-term development plans under the decentralization and local government program in the fourth republic of Ghana. These are:

- i. Ghana vision 2020. The first step (1996-2000)
- ii. Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) I. (2002-2004)
- iii. Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy GPRS) II (2006-2009).
- iv. Ghana shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) I (2010-2013)
- v. Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) II (2014-2017)
- vi. Agenda for Jobs (2018-2021)

Critical analysis of the various MTDP in Ghana since the inception of the fourth republic in 1992 noticeably portrays a parallel approach to decisions and processes primarily dominated by the central government agencies. Also, though most of the policies are national in scope, they are sectoral and apply a top-down approach.

The current medium-term development plan (MTDP) is prepared under the medium-term national development policy framework 2018-2021, which defines a comprehensive

national development plan to facilitate the preparation of the district medium-term development plans under Sections 1 of the National Development Planning (System) Act 1994 (Act 480), regulation 2016, LI 2232, Sections 83 ((1a-h), 3, 4) and 86 (1-4) of the Local Government Act, 2016 Act 936.

The study's findings revealed that the Assemblies have adopted a more decentralized participatory approach with civil society organizations and traditional authorities to plan and implement the district medium-term development plan (DMTDP). This has enabled them to achieve some level of success in fundamental thematic areas such as poverty reduction, good governance, sustainable development, human resource development, and improvement in the echelons of private sector growth, sanitation, and health care.

Nevertheless, the study revealed excessive politicization in the national development planning system inhibiting development in some communities. For instance, though successive governments envisage Ghana similarly transforming into a developed state, they disagree on approaches to attaining the desired status. This has resulted in national development planning initiated along with political party manifestos. For instance, the Ghana vision 2020 initiated by the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government, the first step (1996-2000) was truncated by the government of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) with the introduction of Ghana poverty reduction strategy I and then Growth and poverty reduction strategy II (GPRS I and II 2003-2009) for political reasons (ILGS & FES, 2010, 2016; MLGRD, 2010b; NDPC, 2018).

7.3.2 Resourcing Local Government through Fiscal Decentralization

According to Ahwoi (2018), fiscal decentralization entails transferring funds and granting authority from the central government to local government units to raise and spend revenue. In the view of Isufaj (2014), fiscal decentralization thrives on effective political and administrative decentralization. Awortwi (2016) points out that through fiscal decentralization, the metropolitan, municipal, and district assemblies are granted the authority to raise funds to address the people's development needs to wean them from over-reliance on the central government and donor support.

Accordingly, the local government system in Ghana provides several avenues for raising revenue for accelerated decentralization. For instance, the MMDAs are allowed under Act 462 to raise funds through internally generated funds (IGF) such as fines, rates, licenses, rent, and taxes to undertake projects and programs. Other sources of funding provided for by the constitution are the District Assembly Common fund under Act (ACT 455), the District Development Facility (DDF), grants, and central government transfers.

The fund aims to support the implementation of development projects by the MMDAs and pave way for development priorities on the principle of subsidiarity. Additionally, the constitution provided for the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) to empower the local government system to accelerate decentralization. The DACF is established under Article 252 of the 1992 constitution. The article provides that;

“there shall be a fund to be known as the District Assemblies Common Fund. Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, Parliament shall annually make provision for the allocation of not less than five percent (5%) of Ghana's total revenues to the District Assemblies for development, and the amount shall be paid into the District Assemblies Common Fund in quarterly installments”.

The Article further instructs that the sums of money accruing to the District Assemblies in the Common Fund shall be distributed among all the District Assemblies based on a formula approved by Parliament.

Additionally, a district assembly's common fund administrator is appointed by the President with parliament's approval. Accordingly, Article 252 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana provides that “*the parliament shall take appropriate measures to prescribe the functions, terms of conditions, and tenure of office of the Administrator of the District Assemblies Common Fund*”. Moreover, the article states that “*nothing in this chapter or any other law shall be taken to prohibit the state or other bodies from making grants-in-aid to any District Assembly.*”

Local government officials interviewed alluded that even though the DACF fund is not enough, it has contributed to the municipality's infrastructural development. They also identified business operating license fees, charges, and introductory rates as a significant IGF source to the assembly. However, it was revealed that a considerable constraint to determine a course of action to raise revenue for the MMDAs is the lack of data on revenue mobilization in the local government system.

It was observed that there are severe imbalances in the regional distribution of resources in the decentralization and local government system due to the location and availability of natural resources in the locality. The phenomena explain why some assemblies can generate more IGF than others. For instance, historical and several tourist sites in the Cape Coast Metropolis, such as the Elmina Castle and the Kakum National Park, fetches more IGF out of tourism for the Assembly than other MMDAs. This phenomenon has a significant impact on development in less endowed Municipalities.

Though the DACF was seen as the most reliable source of revenue to the MMDAs, it was observed during an individual interview and focused group discussions with officials of the Assembly that there is a frequent delay in the disbursement of the fund, which has negative repercussions on the preparation and execution of DMTDP. One top official of the MMDA lamented that there are instances where their share of the common fund is delayed for more than a year resulting in the suspension of critical projects.

Other respondents alleged political interference and, in some cases, misapplication and financial malpractices in the disbursement of the DACF. They, therefore, called for effective monitoring and evaluation of the allocation and use of the funds. The study observed that the degree of knowledge of community members of the DACF was low. Most of the respondents interviewed and those who expressed their opinion in the focused group discussion had little experience about the amount, disbursement process, and utilization of the DACF. Even some of the Assembly officials interviewed whose responsibility is to disseminate information about the fund lacks necessary information such as disbursement and utilization guidelines. Most of the assemblymen, government officials, and traditional authorities in separate focused group discussions could not identify specific projects financed by the DACF. With this inadequate information and knowledge about the primary source of revenue to the MMDAs, stakeholders and community members are not in a better position to demand proper accountability, which does not support participatory democracy.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a synopsis of the study. It recaps the study objectives, literature, data findings, and presents overall conclusions of the study. This chapter ends the studies by putting forward recommendations for possible future research.

8.2 Summary of the study

Ghana's decentralization and local government policy seek to devolve power, resources, functions, and responsibility from the center to the peripheries of governance to promote widespread participation in the decision-making and implementation process. The policy presupposes that a synergy of local actors, stakeholders, and the people is essential in identifying and addressing community needs and development gaps. The implication is that, for local governance to be effective, there is the need to ensure the full participation of essential actors, stakeholders, and the people in the decision-making process.

Based on the literature reviewed (Asante & Ayee, 2010; Antwi-Boasiako 2013; Ayee, 2007; Ahwoi 2000; Crook, 2005; Odotei, 2006; Ray, 1996), traditional authorities and civil society organizations operating at the local level were identified as important actors and stakeholders collaborating with decentralized local government structures (MMDAs) to ensure community empowerment and development. Works of literature reviewed points out that local actors and stakeholders play an essential role in promoting democratic participation, community empowerment, and ensuring localization and development sustainability. Accordingly, an institutional framework to ensure the effective participation of local actors, stakeholders, and the people in the decision-making

and implementation process is vital to ensure effective community empowerment and development. In addition to that, considering the impact of local actors and stakeholders such as traditional authorities and civil society organizations in promoting endogenous and sustainable development, it is imperative to ensure their full participation in the decision-making and implementation process. The reason being that effective participation in the decision-making process is paramount to safeguard the localization and sustainability of development projects and programs at the local level,

Accordingly, this study sought to provide insight into governance structure and practice in Ghana's decentralization policy and examine the extent to which it involves multi-actors and stakeholders in the decision-making and implementation process.

This study also examined the functioning of Metropolitan Municipal District Assemblies (MMDAs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and Traditional Authorities in advancing Ghana's decentralization and local government for national development.

Additionally, this study scrutinized essential community needs and development gaps and examined the responsiveness of the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies, Civil society organizations, and Traditional Authorities in addressing those challenges.

The opening chapter presented an outline of the study with an introductory highlight on the overview of the problem statement, objectives, research questions, and how the researcher intends to address them. It laid the foundation by putting together samples of relevant information such as a detailed theoretical underpinning to give a wholesome synopsis of the study. The succeeding chapter presented a conceptual framework of the decentralization policy. It analyzed some standard definitions, dimensions, and forms of decentralization. It delved into the current debates and dilemmas and reviewed the

literature on world views, governance reforms, and efforts to implement decentralization with the fundamental objective of transferring power authority and resources to the sub-units of administration to promote popular participation in the decision/making process. That was done to provide a deeper insight into the concept from different perspectives. This was followed by scrutinizing the local government institution in Ghana to grasp the system and practice. Accordingly, the structure, composition, and role of Metropolitan Municipal District Assemblies (MMDAs) and their sub-district structures were detailed. The study also examines the correlation between traditional authorities and local government structures in contemporary governance. The section was wrapped up with an analysis of development planning in Ghana and its implication on local governance.

The literature review concluded with an analysis of the concept, nature, scope, objectives, and role of Civil Society organizations (CSOs) in governance and development. The civil society sustainability index for sub-Saharan Africa and general challenges facing civil society organizations were also examined.

The methodology employed for data collection was based on the philosophical and theoretical assumptions grounded on the study's main objectives. Consequently, a qualitative methodological approach (Babbie, 2005; Weinberg, 2002) was employed for data collection, which informed my choice of case study action research as the research design type. The Nsawam-Adoagyiri, Suhum Municipalities, and Cape Coast Metropolis in the Eastern and Central regions of Ghana were purposefully selected from among the current 260 Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies as the case study sites. The three locations were purposefully selected for the study due to their well-established decentralized local government structures and being among the country's oldest instituted local assemblies. Four main qualitative methods of data collection instruments, Interview,

Observation, Focused group discussion, and Analysis of documents and material culture, were used to gather data for the study. Based on the study's objectives, the targeted population was purposefully selected from the MMDA structures, community-based civil society organizations, traditional authorities, and opinion leaders. Since all these people could not be reached simultaneously, I used a purposive and convenient sampling procedure in selecting respondents from the population. Purposive sampling was highly based on my judgment as an alternative to randomization (Creswell, 2014; R. Yin, 2014).

In all, thirty (30) respondents were selected from the three study sites for a one-on-one individual interview. The divisions are as follows: three (3) Municipal chief executives (MCE), three (3) Municipal coordinating directors (MCD), three (3) and three Municipal development planning officers (MDPO) representing the Nsawam-Adoagyiri, Suhum, and Cape Coast Municipalities who willingly agreed to share their views, experience and knowledge to the study. Other respondents purposefully selected for the study were six (6) community-based civil society organizations, three (3) opinion leaders, six (6) assembly members, and three (3) unit committee personnel. One (1) Paramount chief representing traditional authorities was conveniently selected from each municipality for an individual interview. Additionally, three separate focused group discussions were organized with representatives of MMDAs, CSOs, and traditional authorities.

8.2.1 Summary of Findings

Data findings and analysis from the study revealed that in addition to the conventional and complementary role of Civil Society Organizations and Traditional Authorities in service areas such as health, education, advocacy, and general community development, they also perform a dimensional function in local governance. The dimensional functions include acting as an impartial force in providing checks and balances on the functioning of local government structures and often involved in the planning and implementing programs and activities aimed at addressing development gaps, community needs, and aspirations of the people.

The study observed that civil society organizations and traditional authorities' critical characteristics, such as their unique actor-based nature, political neutrality, and closeness to the people, put them in a better position in the decision-making process to produce better results at the local level. As a result, the nature of the relationship between Civil society organizations, Traditional Authorities, and local government structures has a bearing on establishing accountability and sustainability of excellent service delivery (Boafo-Arthur, 2007; D. Inkoom, 2011; Ubink, 2007).

It was also discovered that there were flourishing numbers of Civil society organizations operating at the local level across the country and previously a no-go-areas of outer interest due to what the study termed as the donor factor. There was a clear indication from the observation that most civil society organizations are operating not for the people's interest but for the funding that follows it. More generally, it was observed that there is no proper governmental support for the broader range of activities engaged in by Civil society organizations. In areas where there was informal national support for Civil society organizations, it was discovered to be limited to organizations implementing

specific service delivery activities, especially in advocacy, sensitization, and related activities on health, education, water, and sanitation. Respondents representing Civil society organizations in focused group discussions and individual interviews suggested the need to consider funding of their activities through an independent mechanism free from political influence and national control.

Again, it was observed that civil society organizations (CSOs), primarily Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), have not fully developed their capacities in terms of resourcefulness, such as financial capabilities, information dissemination, technical viability, and policy advocacy. In this regard, CSOs need reinforcement to enhance their effective participation in the decision-making process. That will enable them to continue to act with one accord to increase their coordination and organization level in the national development discourse.

Moreover, it was discovered that the relationship among the CSOs operating at the local level was not the best due to the inadequate network coordination arrangement in most of their activities. Primarily, this resulted in duplication of activities and domination by well structures organizations. This study observed that the situation made it difficult for unfledged CSOs to participate fully in the decision-making process or work effectively in collaboration with local government structures and other stakeholders.

A review of the 2019 civil society sustainability index (Majeed, 2011; USAID, 2019) indicated an enabling environment in Ghana in areas such as the overall political, social, legal, and economic conditions under which civil society organizations operate. The index suggests that Ghana's governance system adheres to democratic principles such as the rule of law, respect for fundamental human rights, and freedom as the opening of political prearrangements allows for multi-party democracy.

The next issue considered was a review of the role and nature of traditional authorities' involvement in decentralization and local governance. The study observed that the chieftaincy institution, which Ayee (2007) describes as the embodiment of traditional authority in Ghana, plays a vital role in contemporary governance and development. The description by Ayee is without exception to arguments that traditional governance has outlived its usefulness. In Ubink's (2007) view, the traditional institution has endured African societies' status quo, especially in Ghana, and cannot just be relegated to the background. According to Ubink, traditional institutions in African societies are still a vibrant force in the development discourse, considering their proximity to the people and their changing role in contemporary governance.

Findings from this study indicated that, hitherto, there was little, if any, effective participation of traditional authorities in the local governance system in Ghana. The ineffective participation of traditional authorities was partly due to ill-defined formal roles and uneven power relations between chiefs and local government structures. Additionally, there was a lack of consistent policy implementation of the decentralization program by various political administrations soon after independence. However, decentralization and local governance reforms in Ghana's fourth republic have been assuring with legislative enactments. For instance, essential functionalities and their roles are well defined and supported by the local government act (Act 462), 1993 and its amendment act (Act 936), 2016. Yet, the policy maintains some level of inadequacies in ensuring traditional authorities' effective participation in the decision-making process.

In an individual interview, followed by focused group discussions, traditional authorities complained of their inadequate representation in the MMDA structures, dissuading them from effective participation in the decision-making process.

It was revealed that tense relationships existed between local government officials and traditional authorities in some communities where they felt sidelined by the government. In specific communities, some form of suspicion and mistrust among traditional authorities and the local government officials were observed. For instance, in certain communities, some traditional authorities and local government officials are perceived as a puppet of politicians and engaged in executing a political party agenda. The study observed that though some of these alleged suspicions can be proven, others are unfounded. Yet, the allegations result in strained relationships and discourage effective participation in the decision-making process.

Again, in a focused group discussion, traditional authorities (Chiefs) complained of a lack of formal consultation in the appointment of the District Chief Executive (DCE), the thirty percent (30%) members of the Assembly, and other government appointees to the unit committee. A paramount chief in one of the municipalities intimated that traditional authorities are only informed after the appointments are made and that the idea of consultation is only taking place on a theoretical but not practical basis. The study found this assertion does not denote a good correlation that can lead to effective participation. Perhaps too many chieftaincy disputes in certain traditional communities observed by the study and corroborated by traditional authorities in the focused group discussions do not create the avenue for effective participation in the decision-making process.

The study observed that formally, traditional authorities (Chiefs) play a consultation role in the thirty percent (30%) appointment of the Metropolitan Municipal District Assembly. In the same way, at the sub-district level, the legislative instrument (LI 1589) of 1994 that created the Urban, Town, Area and Zonal Councils (UTAZC), which is the base of local government administration, does not make provisions for the representation of

traditional authorities (Chiefs) in the structure. Instead, it only provides for the consultation of chiefs in the appointment of unit committee members.

The study revealed this mandate is backed by Ghana's local government act of 1993 (Act 462), which provides that chiefs occupy two prominent positions in Ghana's government administration; First is the Chieftaincy institution's constitution mandate through the national and the regional house of chiefs. Second is the consultative position assigned traditional authority in the appointment of representatives to the local and sub-units of the assemblies stipulated in the local government act. The implication is that a legal provision guarantees traditional authorities' representation in local governance. Thus, the local government act (Act 462 of 1993 and its amended Act in 2016 (Act 936).

However, the study revealed that the representation is inadequate as the local government Acts makes provisions for only two chiefs elected from the regional house of chiefs to serve on the Regional Coordinating Councils (RCC). Additionally, there is no formal representation corresponding to the Metropolitan Municipal District Assembly (MMDA) structures. Nevertheless, despite the grievances and misgivings expressed by chiefs in an individual interview and focused group discussions about setbacks in their quest to be actively involved in the decision making and implementation process, it became clear that there is a cordial relationship between traditional authorities and local government structures in most communities within the case study municipalities.

Another aspect of this study reviewed the medium-term development plan (MTDP) of the MMDAs to ascertain their responsiveness to the community needs and development gaps in the municipalities. A focused group discussion with local government officials revealed that avenues such as planning and budget hearing, stakeholder/ratepayers, fee-fixing consultation, town hall, and community meetings provide the opportunity for

community participation in the decision-making process. These forums also allow the people to present community needs and aspirations to be factored into the medium-term development plans. Through these avenues, individuals and groups with diverse needs and interests enjoy the community's total social space.

In a related development, the study discovered that the participation of vulnerable groups such as people living with disabilities due to specific social and physical barriers is not active. It was observed that, for several years, cultural values, and prejudice, have resulted in marginalization, exclusion, and discrimination against people and groups based on income level, ethnicity, gender, disability, and sexual orientation. Consequently, vulnerable groups and people living with disabilities in the community are often isolated from the local level's decision-making. Notwithstanding, UNDP (2017) states that a person with a disability has equal rights, obligations, and duties to participate in society's development. The study observes that the MMDAs have assigned the social welfare department responsible for issues concerning people with a disability in Ghana. Yet, the broader participation of persons living with disabilities in the decision-making process was discovered to be woefully inadequate.

Generally, findings from this study suggest that Ghana's decentralization and local government policy have not created a well-suited environment for the people and their representatives, such as traditional authorities and civil society organizations, to participate effectively in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, civil society organizations and traditional authorities play significant roles in promoting good governance and enhancing civic participation in the decision-making process. Thus, their involvement in local governance is vital in augmenting participation in the decision-making and implementation process.

8.3 General Conclusions

The study reviewed the role of civil society organizations and Traditional Authorities in Ghana's decentralization and local governance system. A literature review on the subject matter revealed that the concept had gained recognition globally, considering the UNDP and the World Bank's assessment of decentralization as an inevitable approach to promoting democratic participation and good governance. Scholars such as Ahwoi, 2010; Asante & Ayee, 2010; J. Cohen, 2002; Mohammed, 2018; Nadeem, 2016; D. Rondinelli, 1983 have written extensively on decentralization and opine that it is the best way of promoting participation in the decision-making process and thereby ensuring service delivery in addressing development gaps, especially at the local level. Accordingly, the UNDP (2009b), the World Bank (2001), and the ILO (2001) have in various ways encouraged governments, especially in developing countries, to adopt the policy as a way of enhancing participation in the decision-making process. Indeed it is generally accepted that decentralization is a steady approach of ensuring participatory governance, accelerate development, and localizing projects by integrating diverse actors in a heterogeneous society while using scarce resources more efficiently (Ahwoi, 2010; Inkoom, 2011; Ong & Fritzen, 2007; Schneider, 2003a).

The current decentralization and the local government system in Ghana were introduced in 1988. The policy is given a comprehensive legal framework by devoting the entire chapter 20 of the 1992 fourth republican constitution to spell out the practice. Moreover, the local government Act (Act 462) and its amendment Act of 2016 (Act 963), and the common fund Act (Act 455), 1993 were later passed to assign functions, responsibilities, and resources to the Metropolitan Municipal District Assemblies. Asante & Ayee (2010) reiterated that local governance sought to devolve power from the central government to

local units to initiate and implement policy on behalf of the people. The idea behind the local government system is to promote and ensure people's total well-being at the local level. This is done by taking up responsibility for delivering a wide range of services such as regional planning and development, safety and security, promotion of public health, sanitation, education, housing and utilities, welfare services, and infrastructure provision and maintenance. The emphasis on the decentralization and local government policy in the study was on its elaborative participatory governance and collaborative strategy that promotes a more equitable development that meets the people's needs at the local level.

An examination of complementarity and contemporary role of civil society organizations and Traditional Authorities in the decentralization and local government policy revealed that their involvement and collaboration with local government structures in the decision making and implementation processes do not only ensure accountability but promotes stability and participatory governance as an essential element of democracy. Therefore, a synergy of MMDA structures, Traditional authorities, and Civil society organizations are crucial for stimulating democratic governance and accelerated development at the local level.

8.3.1 Recommendation for possible future research

The study's findings indicated that the decentralization and local government policy practically ensure responsibility, efficiency, accountability, and widespread participation in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, the governance practice at the regional and district levels appears to deprive most people at the local level of key democratic principles of universal adult suffrage. This is depicted in the appointment of the regional minister and the Metropolitan Municipal District Chief Executive by the president of the republic as well as the requirement for individual public officeholders to be answerable to the central government. Scholars (Agboyi et al. 2015; Ahwoi, 2000; Inkoom, 2011; Ayee, 2013) of the decentralization, local government, and public administration in Ghana have criticized the practices as contravening the democratic principle of universal adult suffrage at the local level. Indeed, allowing the local people to elect their leaders will go a long way to ensure localization of development projects as leaders will tend to be more accountable to the people than the central government. Further research could explore the governance practice at the local level to delve into the prospect of the people electing their leaders in a democratic process.

Again, the study established that decentralization and local government are undoubtedly the most efficient means of ensuring multi-actor participation to bring governance and development to the local level and hold leaders accountable to the citizenry. A balance of the top-down and bottom-up approaches to policy implementation indicated several factors come together into play to induce the central government and local bodies to act responsibly in the decision-making process. This included effective participation of civil society organizations, especially community-based groups, which were revealed to have excellent prospects to foster accountability, objectivity, and responsiveness considering

their position as impartial actors in local governance. However, the study revealed that civil society organizations need strong financial viability to build compelling institutional capacity and effective organizational arrangements to succeed in their operations. Accordingly, this study recommends further research on interventions and mechanisms to enhance civil society organizations' capacity to promote accountability of public officials in governance and development.

Additionally, due to their contemporary roles such as enforcing bylaws, settlement of disputes, promoting and sustaining traditional values, customs, as well as collaborating with government officials to ensure good governance and development, traditional authorities have positioned themselves as partners in development. Accordingly, this study recommends further research to explore prospects of dual legal pluralism in local governance, considering the peaceful coexistence of traditional authorities with democratic governance structures in most communities in Ghana.

Furthermore, findings from the study point towards significant gains made by the Assemblies in tackling community needs and development challenges since the inception of Ghana's fourth republic. This progress is relatively attributed to the consistent preparation and implementation of medium-term development plans by the district Assemblies in line with the national development planning agenda with relevant actors and stakeholders such as civil society organizations and traditional authorities in consultation with the people in the decision-making process. However, it was observed that more could be achieved if the governance practice in the country mandates political parties to prepare their manifestos to reflect the country's long-term as well as the medium-term development plans.

Again, the study observed that the development trajectory in the country is not consistent as political parties that win elections and form the government to manage the affairs of the country are eager to implement policies based on their party manifestos and campaign promises, which are not sustainable and incongruent with the national development agenda. Accordingly, future research could be conducted to examine how political parties could develop their manifestos and campaign promises in line with goals set in the national long-term and short-term development plan.

Lastly, the coronavirus outbreak globally and covid-19 pandemic in mid-2020 and the ensuing preventive measures to stop the spread of the virus such as restriction on public gathering, quarantine, and social distancing rubrics have brought to bear the importance of enhancing digital transformation. Accordingly, governments and global partners for development are looking for secured digitalization avenues of engaging the people in the decision-making process. According to the United Nations (2020) global e-governance survey, digitalization presents great potentials for enhancing civic participation in the decision-making process. This possibility is exclusive of the conventional avenues for civic participation in local governance in developing economies, which rely primarily on physical and social contact. Therefore, this study recommends possible future research on practical avenues of enhancing citizens' participation in the decision-making process through digitalization especially in developing economies' local governance processes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Introductory Letter for Informed Consent

Faculty I, Department of Social Science

in co-operation with the Centre for Planning and Evaluation of Social Services (ZPE)

under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Johannes Schädler and Prof. Dr. Christoph Strünck, University of Siegen, Germany.

Dear Respondent,

I write to seek your permission (for an interview / take part in focused group discussions).

The interview/focused group discussion is intended to provide firsthand information for a Doctoral dissertation titled **“Role of Civil Society Organizations and Traditional Authorities Towards Effective Participation in Decentralization and Local Government.”** The study is conducted within the Nsawam-Adoagyiri, Suhum, and Cape Coast municipalities in Ghana.

You are purposefully selected for this interview/focused group discussions to share your knowledge, opinions, and contributions to this study. Therefore, your voluntary involvement is highly appreciated.

I want to assure you that comments, opinions, and information divulged during the interview/focused group discussions are strictly for academic purposes. Nonetheless, your confidentiality and anonymity (if you wish to be anonymous) are fully guaranteed.

Please fill in your biodata to indicate your consent. Thank You.

Sincerely,

Paul Anderson,

The University of Siegen-Germany.

Appendix B: Biodata / Consent Form

- i. Name.....(optional)
- ii. Location (Municipality/Community)
- iii. Gender.....
- iv. Age.....(optional)
- v. Status/Occupation.....
- vi. I hereby give my consent to be an interview: Yes..... No.....
- vii. I hereby give my consent to contribute to focused group discussions. Yes.... No....
- viii. Signature.....

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

A. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAKEHOLDERS AND POLICY-MAKERS

(Members of Parliament (MP), Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) Municipal Coordinating Director (MCD) Traditional Authorities (TAs) Presiding Member (PM)

Section I: Functions and Responsiveness of local government structures to the development needs of the people

1. Could you briefly tell me about yourself?
2. What has been your significant experience with the decentralization and local government policy in Ghana so far?
3. (a) Can you please describe the economic development situation in the municipality?
(b) Which activities drive the development of the municipality?
(c) Which of them do you consider as a critical contributor to the municipality's development?
4. How does decentralization policy influence the activities of local governments in local planning and development in the municipality?
5. How would you describe the responsiveness of the municipal assembly in addressing the development needs of the people? Could you provide any evidence to support your claim?
6. (a) In what ways does your office ensure development cooperation in the municipality?
(b) Are you able to provide any evidence of that?

Section II: Contributions of CSOs to local government and development

7. (a) Are you able to identify any civil society organizations working at the local level to develop the community? (b) In what ways are they (as listed in 6a) contributing to the development of the municipality?
(c) How would you assess their contribution to the development of the community?

Section III: Interactions between MMDAs, CSOs, and community members.

8. (a) Can you please describe the relationship between your leadership and local government structures in the municipality regarding decision-making and implementation?
(b) How does this relationship enhance the development of the municipality?
(c) How does this relationship impede the development of the municipality?
9. How would you describe the relationship between the municipal assembly structures and CSOs?
10. What avenues does your office provide for development cooperation with CSOs and the community?
11. In performing their functions, how do the CSOs and recognized groups in the municipality, in turn, cooperate with your office for development cooperation?
12. (a) How would you assess the results of the collaboration with CSOs in the execution of the development project?
(b) can give any physical evidence?
13. What would you recommend for effective collaboration in the decentralization and local government program to enhance participation and development cooperation with CSOs?

B. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR OFFICIALS OF THE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

(Office staff, Development officer, Assembly Members (AM), Unit Committee Members)

Section I: Functions and Responsiveness of local government structures to development needs.

1. Could you briefly tell me about yourself?
2. What has been your significant experience with the decentralization and local government policy in Ghana so far?
3. What would you say is the primary development challenge in the municipality?
4. Who would you consider as responsible for addressing this development challenge mentioned above?
5. (a) How responsive has been the municipal assembly in addressing the development needs of the people?
(b) Are you able to provide some physical evidence to that?
6. What are some of the efforts made by the assembly to ensure even development of the municipality?
7. What significant challenges are faced by the assembly in addressing development challenges in the municipality?
8. (a) Which other actors/stakeholders are involved in local planning and development in the municipality?
(b) What role do each of the actors listed (in 3a) play in local planning and development?

Section II: Contributions of CSOs to local government and development community

9. What comes to mind when you hear the name Civil society organization?
10. (a) Are you able to identify any CSO in the municipality involved in local planning and development? (b) In what ways are they contributing to the development of the municipality?
(c) Can you provide any evidence of how they contribute to the development of the municipality?

Section III: Interactions between MMDAs, CSOs, and community members.

11. (a) In performing your functions, how often do you interact with civil society organizations and members of the community (b) How would you assess the quality of your interactions with the CSOs? (C) what are some of the other CSOs you can identify in the Municipality?
12. How would you describe the relationship between the municipal assembly and civil society organizations in the municipality?
13. In what ways do you collaborate with CSOs and community members in planning and implementing local development projects?
14. In what ways do the CSOs and recognized groups in the municipality, in turn, collaborate with your office in their activities?
15. How would you assess the results of collaboration with CSOs to execute local development projects in the municipality?

C. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CSOs (Community based organizations)**Section I: Functions and Responsiveness of local government structures to development needs.**

1. Can you briefly describe yourself?
2. What would you consider as the significant development challenge in the municipality?
3. Who would consider as responsible for addressing the challenge mentioned above?
4. What has been your (organization's) significant experience implementing the decentralization and local government policy in Ghana so far?
5. (a) How does the municipal assembly assist you in your activities? (b) In which exercises of the local government have your organization been involved? (specify) and how do they promote local development?
6. Can you identify any local government structure in the municipality and its functions?
7. (a)How responsive have the local government structures been in addressing the people's development needs? (b)Are you able to provide some physical evidence of that?

Section II: Contributions of CSOs to local government and development

8. Can you describe the objectives, mission, and vision of your organization briefly?
9. (a) What are some of your organization's significant contributions to the development of the municipality? (b) Can you provide evidence (from any community) of how your organization contributes to the municipality's development?

Section III: Interactions between MMDAs, CSOs, and community members.

10. How often do you interact with district assembly structures (MMDAs) in performing your functions, and how would you assess the quality of the interactions?
11. What are some avenues the municipal assembly engages you in development planning and implementation? Any concrete examples?
12. (a) How would you describe the relationship between your organization and municipal assembly?
(b) Are you able to provide some physical evidence to that?
13. How does your organization coordinate and harmonize your activities with local governments in development planning and implantation?
14. What measures would you recommend for effective collaboration with the municipal assembly to enhance development cooperation?

D. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY**Section I: Functions and Responsiveness of local government structures to development needs.**

1. Can you briefly tell me about yourself?
2. (a) what has been the major development challenge in this community? (b) how have the challenges been addressed in terms of using local resources?
3. What has been your significant experience with local government (Municipal assembly) in this community?
4. (a)How responsive have the local government structures been in addressing the people's development needs? (b)Are you able to provide some physical evidence of that?
5. (a) What specific program or activities have the municipal assembly initiated to address the community's development challenges?
6. (a) Apart from the municipal assembly, which other stakeholders are involved in the development planning and implementation in this community? (b)Are you able to provide some physical evidence of what each of them has done for this community?

Section II: Contributions of CSOs to local government and development

7. Can you identify any civil society organizations / NGOs working operating within the municipality?
8. Do you have any idea how they are operating in the municipality?
9. Can you provide some physical evidence to show how they (CSOs) contribute to the municipality's development?

Section III: Interactions between MMDAs, CSOs, and community members.

10. In what ways do civil society organizations involve you and other community members in their programs of activities to develop the community?
11. How do you see the interaction between civil society organizations and the municipal assembly in the planning and implementing development projects?
12. In your assessment, what are the development implication of the relationship between the community and the Municipal assembly and CSOs?
13. Between civil society organizations and the district assembly, which of them do you look up to most to promote your development interest and why?
14. What measures would you recommend for effective collaboration with the municipal assembly to enhance development cooperation?