

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

**REALITY OR MIRAGE? AN EXAMINATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF DECENTRALIZED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN NADOWLI-
KALEO DISTRICT**

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UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, TAMALE

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KALEO DISTRICT**

BY

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(B.A. Integrated Development Studies)

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNANCE AND
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT OF THE FACULTY OF PLANNING AND
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STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT**

OCTOBER, 2018



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, this is the product of my own research work towards the Master of Philosophy Degree in Development Management. In areas where it is indebted to the work of others, acknowledgement has duly been made. I also declare that this piece of work has not been presented in part or whole elsewhere for the award of any degree.

Candidate's Signature.....

Date.....

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Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines of supervision of thesis laid down by the University for Development Studies.

Supervisor's Signature.....

Date.....

Dr. Francis Nangbeviel Sanyare



ABSTRACT

Both local and international development partners, development agencies and developing nations have all and are still advocating for decentralization as an important mechanism for widening citizen participation in decision making thereby enhancing the provision of socio-economic infrastructure. Decentralization has one of its major objectives as establishing efficient political, planning and administrative institutions at the district level, which would enhance citizen's participation and garner support and resources for district development. After more than two decades into the implementation of the decentralized planning system, the involvement of the local people in the planning process leaves much to be desired. It is against this backdrop that the study was conducted in the Nadowli-Kaleo District of the Upper West Region to ascertain how the decentralized planning concept has been implemented. The study employed the mixed methodology specifically explanatory sequential mixed method. Both structured and semi- structured interviews were conducted to collect required data for analysis. Generally the study revealed that community participation in decision making is very low owing to the fact that needs assessment is hardly done across communities, and public hearings usually seclude the masses and minority groups. Also, the study further pointed out that most of the sub-structures are none functional. This was attributed to lack of logistics and staff to run these structures. Limited awareness level of citizens with regards to their roles in the decentralized planning system due to the inefficiency of some local government officials was also identified as one of the challenges facing the implementation. Based on these findings, the study recommended that strict adherence by the D.A to the procedural spaces for community participation as provided for by Act 480 must be encouraged.



The District Assembly should empower the officials at the sub-structures level by providing them with the necessary logistics. The District Assembly must regularly organize community durbars through the Assembly members and the unit committee members to sensitize community members on their roles, People putting themselves up for elections to public offices at the local level should undergo vetting after which the best candidates would be put up for voting.



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Finally, I appreciate the efforts of all who contributed in diverse ways to the success of this work. I say may God continue to shower His blessings upon you.



DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my wife, Mrs. Betty Madona, for her encouragement during the write up, and my lovely family- Solomon and Sixtus for their tireless efforts and sacrifices throughout my education, which has brought me this far.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the background of the study thus examining decentralized planning (bottom-up) as a panacea to the problems associated with centralized planning (top-down) in Ghana while specifically focusing on the Nadowli-Kaleo District. Essentially, the problem statement, objectives, significance of the study as well as the organization of the various chapters have been captured in this chapter. The chapter ends with a summary of the issues discussed.

1.1 Background to the study

From the late 1980's Decentralization became a very significant dimension of political and administrative reform in most Developing countries. It is supported by a variety of actors ranging from international development agencies to national governments to non-governmental and grassroots organizations, though for different purposes (Agyemang, 2010).

The concept of decentralization has no clear-cut definition. Rondinelli (1981) defines decentralization as the transfer of authority to plan, make decisions and manage public functions from a higher level of government to any individual, organization or agency at a lower level. According to Prathat (2003) decentralization means transfer of certain authority and power in the matter of formulation and implementation of development plans from the highest organization or institution at the national level or state level to organizations or institutions at the sub-state level. To Smith (1985) decentralization implies reducing the concentration of administration at a single center and conferring powers on local government. Often referred to as probably the most comprehensive





conceptualization offered thus far for decentralization, Rondenelli and Cheema (1983) broke the concept into distinct components and argues that perceived in any form, decentralization is usually associated with some form of a transfer of responsibilities for planning, management and resource raising, and allocation from the central government and its agencies to: (a) field units of central government ministries or agencies, (a) subordinate units or levels of government, (c) semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, (d) area-wide, regional or functional authorities, or (e) non-governmental private or voluntary organizations. Deducing from the above it is obvious that the concept of decentralization means different things to different people not only in Academia but amongst practitioners as well.

In Africa, various Countries for instance Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, have implemented Decentralization in various forms. This leads Crawford (2003), to conclude that it is probably difficult to come across a country in West Africa, which does not have a decentralization programme.

Ghana has over two decades embarked on decentralization of decision making, that is moving decision making from the national to the district and community levels – a bottom up approach as enshrined in PNDC Law 207 of 1988 and Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462 (Asante, 2009). The decentralization programme in Ghana has operated on four (4) main inter-related pillars namely, political decentralization, administrative decentralization, decentralized planning and fiscal decentralization (Inter-ministerial Coordinating Committee on Decentralization, 2010). This study seeks to explore one of these four interrelated pillars of decentralization thus decentralized planning.

Decentralized Planning can, thus, be defined as a type of planning where local organizations and institutions formulate, adopt, execute actions and supervise the plan



without interference by the central body (Prabhat, 2003). Reviewed literature suggests that, hitherto, Ghana's approach to planning was national in scope and sectorial in nature normally described as top-down and highly centralized. This approach sought to formulate national development plans from the perspectives of a few staff of ministries and other central government agencies without any consultation. This thus resulted in a number of problems such as projects being abandoned by the people for whom they were built, lack of sustainability among others. The country therefore adopted the decentralized approach to development planning in order to overcome the shortcomings of central/national planning (Tandoh-Offin, 2013). This new system integrates social, economic, political, spatial and environmental facets of development with bottom-up structures. Act 462 of 1993, which amended the 1988 Local Government Law 207 -the law establishing the decentralized local governance system- created what is currently known as the New Local Government System (Kessey, 2001). With this system also comes the New Planning System backed by: the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana; Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462); National Development Planning (Systems) Act 479; National Development Planning Commission Act 480, sections 1, 2 and 9 to 15; Local Government Act 462, Part II; and the Civil Service Law 327, sections 11 to 14 (Inkoom, 2009).

The new planning system in attempting to remedy the drawbacks of the centralized planning model established the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) to guide the planning process in Ghana (Boamah et al, 2013). The commission sets the broad planning policy guideline for planning at the local levels. The Regional Planning Coordinating Units (RPCUs) under the various Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) harmonize the plans from the districts in their jurisdictions (Botchie, 2000). Inkoom (2009, p. 10) succinctly outlines the objectives of the new decentralized

planning system as follows:

“Create an institutional framework for public and community participation in national development to ensure optimal resource mobilization, allocation and utilization for development, provide opportunities for greater participation of local people in development planning and efficient management of local resources, and establish effective channels of communication between the national government and local communities and increase administrative effectiveness at both levels”.

To this end, the Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462 and the National Development Planning (Systems) Act, 1994, Act 480 designate the District Assembly as the planning authority charged with the overall development of the district. This leads Agyemang, (2010) to conclude that, the District Assembly (DA) plays a pivotal role in the decentralized development planning system in Ghana. As the local planning authority, the DA is responsible for the preparation, implementation and monitoring of development plans. It is also in charge of the mobilization and utilization of local resource within its area of jurisdiction for development (Republic of Ghana, 1993).

It is against this backdrop of development planning that this study intends to examine the Ghanaian decentralized development planning system in the context of Nadowli District and establish whether there is a contradiction between reality and established principles.



1.2 Problem statement

In Ghana, the development agenda of the government is carried through the decentralized system of governance where most of the development initiatives have to emanate from the grassroots (Agyemang, 2010). This position was reinforced by the passage of National Development Planning (System) Act, 1994, Act 480, which designates the development planning functions of the planning authorities including District Assembly's (DA's) (Agyemang, 2010). The planning functions and the procedures of the District Assembly as a planning authority are specified in section 2 of the above act. Thus some of these functions include; initiation and preparation of district development plans and settlement structure plans in the manner prescribed by NDPC and ensure that the plans are prepared with full participation of the local community, carry out studies on-development planning matters in the district including studies on economic, social, spatial environmental, sectoral and human settlement issues and policies, the mobilization of human and physical resources for development in the district and initiation and co-ordination of the processes of planning, programming, budgeting and implementation of district development plans, programs and projects (Republic of Ghana, 1992).

The integral part of all these function is community participation which is an essential requirement for the democratization of the planning process. In fact, participation of the citizenry in local Governance therefore became dominant as a way of ensuring greater responsiveness to local peculiarities and achieving better outcomes. Section 3, subsections (1) (2) and (3) of the act (act 480) spelled out the main features of community participation to include; conduction of public hearing by the District Planning Authority on any proposed District development plan and taken into consideration the views expressed at the hearing before the adoption of the proposed



District development plan and also any local community in a district authorized by the District Planning Authority to prepare a sub-district or local action plan under section 5 of this Act is required to conduct a public hearing before the adoption of the proposed sub-district or local plan. In sum, the medium term development plan of every District is supposed to capture the development aspirations of its constituents.

However, after over two decades of decentralized planning in Ghana there seem to be little to show for the involvement of the local people in development planning evidenced by the abandonment of completed DACF projects in several communities in protest by community members against their suitability (Zackaria, 2010). This is echoed by Abbey et al. (2010) as cited in Zackaria (2012) report in a World Bank study of the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) that most people affected by project outcomes are left out of discussions on the whole process. They observed that failure in consulting with community people in most cases has led to investment in projects that communities felt did not meet their needs. This is further exemplified in the fact that, the Nadowli market which has twenty stalls completed years ago has become a “toilet facility” for residents since it is not a suitable place for market women. The weak nexus between community participation and project outcomes in districts is a recurring issue in the Auditor-General of Ghana annual reports. This position is summed up succinctly by Sakyi (2008) as cited in Sanyare (2013) that the very challenges which led to the launch of the decentralisation reforms are still prevalent, and in many cases the beneficiary Districts or communities seems worse off than before the official introduction of the reform.

Juxtaposing all the aforementioned issues with the opportunities afforded the people to participate in the local development process particularly in the formulation of the MTDPs leaves one questioning the true extent of community involvement in the



development process (Zakaria, 2012).

Recent studies of Naku and Afrane (2013), focused on local community development and the participatory approach. Their findings reveal that the effect is minimal as most communities do not see their needs being prioritized by the Assembly. Also, Zakaria (2012), examined decentralization and community participation in the preparation of the Medium Term Development Plan. He concluded that, little space is given to community members to participate in the decision making process thereby making projects unsustainable at the local level. Sana (2011), pursuing a similar objective as Zackaria, looked at how citizens through the decentralized planning concept participate in project planning and implementation in Asutifi District. She found out that although the constitution makes citizens an integral part of the planning process, most of them are denied that opportunity. Her findings also revealed that, the District Assembly is challenged in implementing the participatory aspect of the decentralized planning concept.

Agyemang (2010) investigated the effects of decentralized planning in the provision of health and educational infrastructure. His study revealed that health and educational infrastructure have improved as a result of the implementation of the decentralized planning within the study period. However, Agyemang pointed out that the performance of the two sectors during the period under review could not be exclusively attributed to decentralize planning due to the fact that the provision of health and education infrastructure is not solely done by the Municipal Assembly. Their mother departments, thus Ministry of Education/Ghana Education Service and Ministry of Health/ Ghana Health Service also continue to provide physical infrastructure at the district level and also provide policy directions.



Considering the aforementioned studies, various gaps have been identified both in the literature and the focus/findings of these studies which are: limited contribution to the subject matter from the Northern perspective thereby leaving out the peculiarities of the North, limited examination of the capacity of both the D.A and the communities, limited assessment of the knowledge levels of citizens with regards to their roles and responsibilities in the new decentralized planning concept.

There are several studies done in the realm of decentralization but there has also been an obvious tendency in which most of these researchers approach the subject matter from the orientation of their discipline. An economists, for instance, pay attention to economic and financial aspects of decentralization (Smoke and Kim, 2002), while political scientists emphasize how political autonomy through popular elections is enhanced through decentralization (Rudebeck et al. 1998; Whitehead 2002; Harriss et al, 2004). Although this kind of single-dimensional analysis is needed to an extent, it does not allow one to understand decentralization holistically and since much has not been done and publicly documented in the realm of decentralized development planning especially using an explanatory sequential mix method in the context of Nadowli District, this study intends to fill that void.



1.3 General Research question

How are the local authorities implementing decentralized development planning in the context of Nadowli-Kaleo District.?

1.3.1 Specific Research questions

1. How does the implementation of the decentralized planning concept facilitate community participation in the planning process
2. How well informed are citizen's about their roles and responsibilities with the new decentralized planning system?
3. How is the implementation of the decentralized planning concept facilitating development in the District?
4. What factors impede the effective implementation of the decentralized planning concept in the Nadowli-Kaleo District?

1.4 General objective

To examine how the local authorities are implementing decentralized development planning in the context of Nadowli-Kaleo District.

1.4.1 Specific objectives

1. To examine how the implementation of the decentralized planning concept facilitates community participation in the planning process
2. To determine whether the local people are well informed about their roles and responsibilities with the new decentralized planning system?
3. To assess how the implementation of the decentralized planning concept is facilitating development in the District.
4. To uncover the factors impeding the effective implementation of decentralized planning.



1.5 Relevance of the study

Various governments in Ghana have always made it a primary objective to improve upon the living standards of its citizenry regardless of age, sex, and ethnicity amongst others. In trying to improve upon the standards of living of its people, the government of Ghana introduced the policy of decentralization and for that matter, decentralized planning. Before Decentralized planning was introduced, planning for development was basically from the central government to the local level with virtually no involvement of the local tiers. In order therefore, to get the rural people involved, and to take charge of their own development agenda, the Ghana government in 1988 introduced the decentralized policy and in 1994, through the enactment of act 462 mandated the district planning and coordinating unit of the district assembly, to take charge of planning the development of the districts. (Sulemana, 2009).

In explaining the concept of decentralized planning therefore, it is evident that, its objective is not being achieved as statistics from the auditor general report in 2009 and 2015 indicated that, the very people for whom some projects were built abandoned them.

Motivated by this background this study will identify the bottlenecks and possibly good practices that will improve the implementation of decentralized planning at the local level, particularly the Nadowli-Kaleo District.

Also this study intends to carry out an empirical investigation into what happens at the local level as a way of coming out with some knowledge that may bridge the knowledge gap that exist in the scientific community. This is so because the few studies on decentralized planning such as Zakaria, (2012) and Sana (2011) focused on the participation of the people at the grass root level without considering the capacity of the people to actively participate in the planning process. Tandoh-offin (2013) focused



only on the developmental plans of Ghana since 1992, however the roles and responsibilities of the citizens in the preparation of these plans has been silent. This study therefore filled these knowledge gaps and serves as a useful material to present and future scholars, researchers and students interested in the subject matter. It also serves as a reference point for future development planning scholars and practitioners as it has brought to fore the contextual issues surrounding development planning in the Nadowli-Kaleo District.

1.6 Scope of the study

In terms of content, the study is limited to decentralized planning and not considering other aspects of decentralization such as administrative Decentralization, Fiscal Decentralization, and Political Decentralization amongst others though a mention is made of some.

Also, the study is limited in terms of spatial coverage in the sense that, it was carried out within the context of Nadowli-Kaleo District of the upper West Region. The time duration for this study ranges from September 2014 to July 2016. In this regard, the findings of the study only covers this time period.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The chapter one of the study looks at the background information on decentralized planning system in Ghana, a description of the research problem, the research questions, the study objectives, justification of the study, methodology, scope of the study and limitations of the study.

Chapter two focused on the literature review thus focusing on the general studies on Decentralization and then narrowed down to decentralized planning in Ghana which lays the foundation for the conceptual framework.



Chapter three deals with the methodology, study design, sampling techniques, data collection and analytical methods.

Chapter four is devoted to data analysis, presentation of findings and discussions and chapter five focuses on the summary of the major findings, recommendations and conclusion.

1.8 Limitations

Since the study is limited to only Nadowli District in the upper West Region, it might only be good for inferential purposes since a sound generalization cannot be made about all Districts in Ghana and probably the country at large base on the findings of the study, this therefore makes it difficult for one to know the exact picture of the status of Decentralized Planning in the country. Also, this thesis does not employ a structured theory but have rather advisedly used Arnsteins ladder of participation which is fitting for purposes of explaining the findings of the study.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE CONCEPTS AND NATURE OF DECENTRALIZED PLANNING

2.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the concepts employed in this study. It also draws on various studies done in the field of decentralization and most specifically decentralized planning. It equally establishes a conceptual framework within which community participation in decentralized planning can be analyzed. The chapter starts with definitions of decentralization, types of decentralization (devolution, delegation, deconcentration) the decentralization policy in Ghana, concept of decentralized planning, the existing legal and regulatory framework, the Structure of the decentralized development planning system in Ghana, development planning process at the District level, District Assembly as a Planning Authority and Sub-District structures. The final part deals with the conceptual framework within which decentralized planning can be analyzed.



2.1 Definition of Decentralization

Many countries in the recent past have advocated and adopted decentralization as a means of improving the quality of public services delivery and also as a way of utilizing the knowledge and experience of the vast majority of its populace in the development processes. Most of these countries that sought to promote decentralization made all these efforts based on the assumption that local governments will be more responsive to the needs of the citizens and make their preferences count in determining the type of services to be provided, the level of resources required, and the optimal means of ensuring effective delivery (Robinson, 2007 as cited in Zakaria, 2012). This “seemingly

plausible intent has made decentralization a catchword in today's mainstream development discourse” (Zakaria, 2012; 18).

Decentralization is a complex issue with a myriad of definitions from both practitioners and scholars alike. Smith (1985:5) opined that the concept of decentralization means, “reversing the concentration of administration at a single center and conferring powers on local government”. Rondinelli (1981) observes that decentralization involves the transfer of authority to plan, make decisions, and manage public functions from a higher level of government to any individual, organization or any agency at a lower level. Ahwoi (2006) sees it as a tool of public administration reform that involves the transfer of functions, powers, means, resources, skills, and competence to lower levels of governance, normally, structures of local government. Generally, it can be said to be the transfer of part of the powers of the central government to regional, district or local authorities. A more comprehensive definition of decentralization as a concept is one offered by Rondinelli and Cheema (1983) where they broke the concept into distinct components and argues that perceived in any form, decentralization is usually associated with some form of a transfer of responsibilities for planning, management and resource raising, and allocation from the central government and its agencies to:

- (a) field units of central government ministries or agencies,
- (a) subordinate units or levels of government,
- (c) semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations,
- (d) area-wide, regional or functional authorities, or
- (e) non-governmental private or voluntary organizations

A cursory look at the definitions of the concept suggest that decentralization emphasizes grassroots mobilization and citizen participation in the decision making process geared towards development. The catch phrase that runs through all the



definitions points to the fact that indeed, decentralization is about the people at the grassroots level and their involvement in their development process.

As simple and straight forward decentralization may seem, there are various dimensions to the concept. Some authors term them as types of decentralization while in the view of other scholars, they are forms of decentralization. Various literature have identified and grouped decentralisation into four main forms with some having sub-forms. These include: political decentralization; administrative decentralization with deconcentration, delegation and devolution as its sub-form; fiscal decentralization; and economic or market decentralisation with privatization and deregulation as its most complete form (Schneider, 2003). But Bossert (1998) differs on this as he identifies four distinct forms of decentralization and these include: deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatization. According to Bossert (1998) Deconcentration is defined as shifting power from the central offices to peripheral offices of the same administrative structure. Also Bossert observes that *Delegation* is the shifting of responsibility and authority to semi-autonomous agencies. He sees *Devolution* as shifting responsibility and authority from the central offices to separate administrative structures still within the public administration and *Privatization* as the transfer of operational responsibilities and in some cases ownership to private providers.

On the same thread, Rondinelli (1981) identifies three different modes of decentralization along these lines: deconcentration, delegation and devolution.

Deconcentration, according to Rondinelli (1981) is often seen as the weakest form of decentralization and is used most frequently in unitary states- redistributes decision making authority, financial and management responsibilities among different levels of the central government. It merely shifts responsibilities from central government officials in the capital city to those working in regions, provinces or districts, or it can



create strong field administration or local administrative capacity under the supervision of central government ministries.

Delegation according to Rondinelli (1981) is far more extensive a form of decentralization as compared to deconcentration. Rondinelli (1981) sees it as the transfer of responsibility for decision-making and administration of public functions to semi-autonomous organizations not wholly controlled by the central government, but ultimately accountable to it. Usually there is a great deal of discretionary power in decision making.

Devolution is a third type of decentralization. Under this type of decentralization governments devolve functions; they transfer authority for decision-making, finance, and management to quasi-autonomous units of local government with corporate status. Devolution usually transfers responsibilities for services to municipalities that elect their own mayors and councils, raise their own revenues and have independent authority to make investment decisions. In a fully devolved system, local governments are given a very unambiguous and legally recognized geographical boundaries over which they exercise authority and within which they perform public functions.

In this research, devolution where central government gives up control and resources without restrictions to agencies, actors and institutions at lower levels is the form of decentralization that is most commonly referred to since it underscores Ghana's decentralization, as a means of bringing governance closer to the people thereby ensuring that decisions are based on the needs and interests of citizens (Friss-Hansen and Kyed, 2009 as cited in Zakaria, 2012).



2.2 Decentralized planning Concept

As seen in various definitions, there are many ways through which central government can decentralize decision-making to the people at the grassroots level. One of such ways is through decentralized planning which seeks to consider community participation, involvement of interest groups, horizontal and vertical coordination, sustainability, financial feasibility and interaction of physical and economic planning (Widianingsih, 2005), in development planning processes. Planning can thus be seen as a process that connects scientific and technical knowledge with activities in the public domain to enhance social transformation processes (Friedman, 2000 cited in Widianingsih, 2005). Gyan-Baffour (2003) observes that decentralized development planning involves the institutionalization of bottom-up approach, integrated and participatory development planning processes that facilitate active involvement of all segments of society including identifiable groups, service providers in the public and private sectors, and non-governmental organizations at all levels of the decentralized system. Decentralized planning is premised on the assumption that communities' views having been taken into account, the policy or the projects will respond better to real needs, will fit into a social and economic reality and people, feeling a sense of ownership, will be more compliant to bear the costs (Hoverman and Buchy, 2000). Moreover, it is believed that it can open spaces for citizens excluded from development not only to participate in decision making but also for them to exact performance, transparency and accountability from their local governments (LogoLink, 2002).

In the view of this study, decentralized planning entails the participatory process of local development planning where the felt needs of the people are considered and their knowledge and experiences tapped into towards surmounting their developmental challenges.



2.3 Evolution of the Concept of Decentralized Planning in Ghana

In the mid-1980s, the World Bank through its structural Adjustment Program (SAP) prescribed the Economic Recovery Program (ERP) as mechanisms to reform government institutions for dealing with the downward spiral and set a process in motion to liberalize the economy, ensure social development and long-term growth (Tandoh-Offin, 2013). This period also coincides with what Huntington (1991) as cited in Tandoh-Offin (2013) described as the “third wave of democratization” which resulted in democratic reforms and transitions throughout much of the developing world due to efforts from international actors, reforms in US foreign policy and the demonstration effect. In essence, countries like Ghana responded to the combined effects of the ERP and the call for democratic reforms by first revising the local government institutions to offer avenues for citizen’s participation through the District Assembly concept in 1988 (Tandoh-Offin, 2013). Subsequently, the 1992 constitution was drafted to further strengthen the decentralization process through the newly established local government institutions.

Ghana achieved both economic and political liberalization after the transition to multi-party democratic governance in 1992. Vordzorgbe and Caiquo (2001) contended that the last quarter of the 20th Century saw the emergence of the very institutions that are essential for full democratic liberalization, and institutionalizing good governance, such as a free press and agencies for dealing with serious fraud, lapses in human rights and administrative justice. A significant aspect of the transformations that took place in the last quarter of the 20th Century is decentralization, which began with the District Assembly elections in 1988 in Ghana (Tandoh-Offin, 2013). This transformation agenda gave citizens the opportunity to participate in public decision-making process. The 1992 Constitution clearly spells out the principles of participatory democracy. One



of those principles is expressed in Article 35, Section 6(d) which states: The state shall make democracy a reality by decentralizing the administration and financial machinery of government to regions and districts and by providing all possible opportunities to the people to participate in decision making at every level of national life and in government. (The Republican Constitution of Ghana, 1992).

Other portions of the constitution, intimate the establishment of appropriate independent institutions, such as the following: the National Electoral Commission (NEC), the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), National Media Commission (NMC), the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) (Tandoh-Offin, 2013). These institutions and commissions, among others, were put in place to ensure that the very purpose for which decentralization and participatory democracy were initiated are fully achieved in Ghana. Once these are fully operational, a stronger relationship between participatory democracy and successful economic development will emerge. This is so because of the opportunities both concepts (economic development and democracy) offer for stimulating the essential requirements for development planning in a democratic environment, such as the rule of law, transparency, accountability, and consultation with the people. (Leite, Pellechio, Zanforlin, Begashaw, Fabrizio, & Harnack, 2000).

The processes for creating national development strategy frameworks have also necessitated the setting up of institutions for managing the economy. These development planning systems include a legal framework and a planning institution—the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), and a decentralized planning system (Vordzorgbe & Caiquo, 2001).





2.4 The Decentralization Policy in Ghana

Boakye (2016) opines that, even though the driving force behind decentralization may be positive as people perceive, there are other “push and pull” factors that fuels it. Within the period of 1957 and 1988 efforts were made by successive governments to decentralize authority to the local level (Agyemang, 2010). These efforts of successive governments were in the form of further decentralizing power to the local level in order to ensure the participation of the masses at the grassroots level. Agyemang (2010) observes that, in 1988, the Government at that time made a conscious decision to implement a comprehensive policy to decentralize. So as part of that commitment, the Local Government Law, 1988 was enacted to give legal basis to the decentralization policy. The policy had its major features as shifting from a command approach which was hitherto practiced in Ghana to consultative processes, resources to local government units and resources to the district level. To coordinate all the activities to ensure the smooth implementation of the policy was the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD). As the 1992 constitution became operational, further provisions were made to strengthen the decentralization process to encourage greater participation in governance (ibid). Within this Constitution, there were some major features of decentralized planning some of which include, Local Government Act of 1993, the Civil Service Law of 1993, the National Development Commission Act of 1994, the National Development Planning Systems Act of 1994, and the District Assemblies Common Fund Act of 1993(Mpare, 2007)

2.5 Decentralized Planning System in Ghana

There is a widespread consensus among development professionals, backed by a large body of literature that it is difficult to sustain development unless the needs and priorities of the people concerned are reflected in the plan and programmes (Agyemang,



2010). The decentralized planning system provides freedom and opportunity for the community to participate in the planning process enabling them to identify their basic needs and priorities to be reflected in the plan (Habtamu, 2004 as cited in Aygemang, 2010). Decentralized planning is one of the many ways of decentralizing decision-making from the government to the people. This planning paradigm seeks to consider community participation, involvement of interest groups, horizontal and vertical coordination, sustainability, financial feasibility and interaction of physical and economic planning (Widianingsih, 2005), in development planning processes. According to Friedman (2000, cited in Widianingsih, 2005), planning is defined as a process that connects scientific and technical knowledge with activities in the public domain to enhance social transformation processes. Friedman further argues that planning can be seen as both a social learning and social transformation process. As social learning, planning positions the government as a facilitator. The characteristic of this aspect of planning is learning by doing by people (Widianingsih 2005), which brings 'together interests, strategies, and priorities, between civil and political society' (Goundsmit and Blackburn, 2001: 589). As a social transformation, planning is a political process with a collective ideology (Friedman 2000, cited in Widianingsih, 2005).

Mabiriizi (2001) also contended that decentralized development planning is a continuous inter-disciplinary and participatory process by which the present and future aspirations of the community are systematically translated into reality in accordance with their felt needs. Generally, decentralized planning can be seen as planning at different levels or a multi-level planning. In other words it is a system through which planning is attempted at different administrative and executive levels so that there is greater interaction between the developmental needs and priorities of smaller areas and

different social classes with the sub-national and national levels, development policies and goals. Decentralized planning is neither a substitute to centralized planning nor an exclusive bottom-up process of planning. It is in fact a two-way process which begins both at the top level (national and macro level) as well as at the bottom-level (local level) and merges with one another at a point. If one overlaps the other or if both become parallel then, centralized planning becomes irrelevant just as the bottom up becomes meaningless.

The appeal of decentralized planning resides in the assumption that communities' views having been taken into account, the policy or the projects will respond better to real needs, will fit into a social and economic reality and people, feeling a sense of ownership, will be more compliant to bear the costs (Hoverman and Buchy, 2000). Moreover, it is believed that it can open spaces for citizens excluded from development not only to participate in decision making but also for them to exact performance, transparency and accountability from their local governments (LogoLink, 2002 as cited in Zakariah, 2011)

2.6 Current Decentralized Planning System in Ghana

In the new decentralized development planning system, the districts constitute the main focus of planning action through the DAs (Botchie, 2000). This process provides unprecedented opportunity for the local communities within the districts to participate effectively in the conception, planning and implementation of development programmes and projects (Botchie, 2000).

A major objective of the new decentralized development planning system was to establish efficient political, planning and administrative institutions at the district level, which would enjoy popular support of local communities and facilitate the mobilisation of support and resources for district development. It was also designed to facilitate





explicitly, the transfer of power, the functions, and competence in programme and project implementation from the central government to the district level institutions (Botchie, 2000). In addition, the new decentralised development planning system was expected to enhance effective channels of communication between the national government and the local communities, and also provide opportunities for greater participation of local communities in development planning, effective utilization and management of local resources (ibid). Seen from these perspectives, the new decentralized development planning system involves devolution of central government administrative responsibilities to the district level, promotion of power sharing, rational resource allocation, establishment of adequate capacity at the district level for effective utilisation and management of local resources and reduction of dependence of the district level authorities on the central government (Botchie, 2000)

The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) is responsible for providing guidelines to facilitate the preparation of development plans by the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (DAs) in accordance with Section 1(3, 4), 2 to 11 of the National Development Planning (System) Act 1994 (Act 480). The District Assemblies (DAs) are required to prepare development plans in relation to the Guidelines provided by the NDPC (Sana, 2011). The Ghana local government system (1996) indicates Act 462 and Act 480 designate the District/Municipal/Metropolitan Assemblies as the planning authorities, charged with the overall development of the districts (Sana, 2011)

2.7 Structure of the planning system in Ghana

The decentralized planning system, as outlined by the National Development Planning Systems Act 1994, Act 480, comprises of District Planning Authority at the district level; Regional Coordinating Council at the regional level ; Sector Ministries,

Departments and Agencies; and National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) at the national level (ISODEC, 2004 as cited in Agyemang, 2010).

• ***National Level Planning***

At the national level the body in charge of planning is the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) which is basically in charge of policy formulation, preparation of national development plans and budget, coordination of sectoral ministries/ agencies and the preparation of guidelines for district level planning (Agyemang, 2010). At the national level in addition, line sectoral ministries, departments and agencies also prepare sector plans following guidelines provided by NDPC (ibid). The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFEP) has a special relationship with NDPC with regard to the preparation of Medium Term Framework (Medium Term Expenditure Framework), fiscal and financial strategies with guidelines provided by NDPC (NDPC, 2007 as cited in Agyemang, 2010).

• ***Regional Level Planning***

The RCCs have the task of co-ordinating the development plans and programmes of the district planning authorities and harmonizing these with national development policies and priorities for approval by NDPC They are also expected to provide the district planning authorities with such information and data as are necessary to assist them in the preparation of the district development plans (Agyemang, 2010). It monitors, coordinates and evaluates the performance of the District Assemblies in the region ((Bandie, 2007).

• ***District Level Planning***

The Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assembly is created as an administrative and a development decision-making body in the district and basic units of government assigned with deliberative, legislative as well as executive functions and constitutes as



the Planning Authority for the district. Within the Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assembly, two bodies are in charge of planning (Agyemang, 2010). These are the Town & Country planning Department and Development planning unit (Mpare, 2007).

• ***Planning Units at Regional, District and Sectoral Levels***

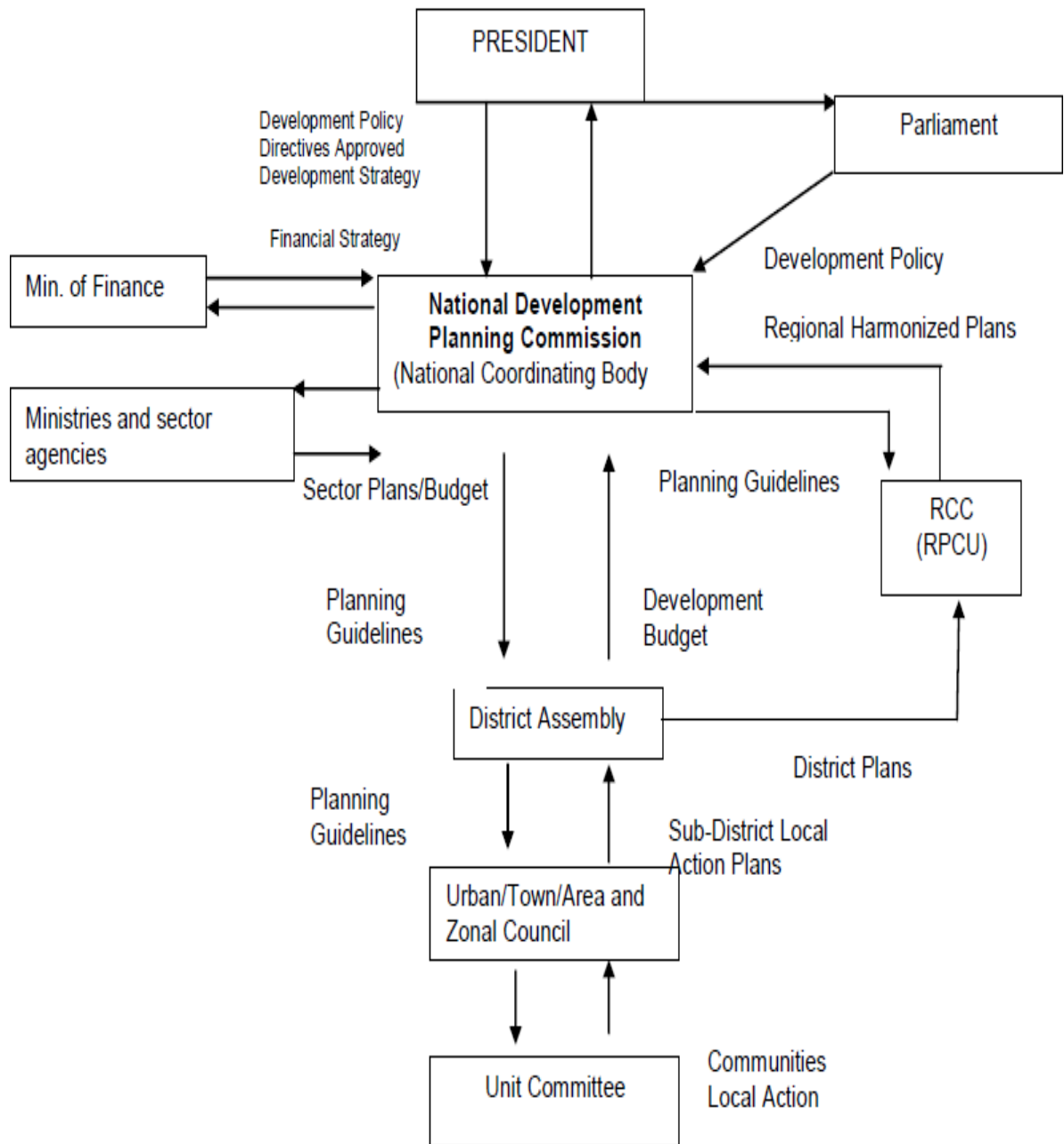
The National Development Planning System Act, 1994, Act 480, which established the decentralized planning system, also provided for the creation of regional Planning Co-ordinating Units for RCCs, District Planning Co-ordinating Units (DPCUs) for DAs, and Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PPMED) for sector ministries (Agyemang, 2010). These planning units for the RCCs and DAs, and the PPMED for the sector ministries perform all the planning functions of the respective planning authorities at the regional, district and sectoral levels (MLGRD, 1996).

• ***The Area Council and the Unit Committee***

Unit Committees are the base structures of the local government system but they are not constitutional planning unit (Bandie, 2007) They are, however, expected to provide inputs, data and proposals through the Area Councils for the District Planning and Coordination Unit (DPCU) to compile the MTDP, which provides the development guidelines for the district (Agyeman, 2010). The structure of decentralized development planning system in Ghana is presented in figure 2.1.



Figure 1.1: structure of decentralized development planning system in Ghana



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Source: National Development Planning Commission (2002)

2.7.1 District Assembly as a Planning Authority

The national development planning system act 1994, act 480 established a decentralized planning system and specifies institutions and agencies which are planning authorities, their functions, roles and procedures (Agyemang, 2010). Every district assembly is established as a planning authority according to sections 46 (1) and (2) of the local

government act, 1993 (act 462). The planning functions and the procedures of the district assembly as a planning authority are specified in section 2 of the above act (Kokor 2001). Agyemang (2010) outlines the planning functions of the D.As as:

- Initiate and prepare district development plans and settlement structure plans;
- Carry out studies on resources mobilization and also the economic, social, spatial, carry environmental issues and policies in the district;
- Initiate and coordinate the process of planning, programming, budgeting and implementation of district development plans programmes and projects of the district are compatible with each other and with the national objectives;
- Integrate and ensure that sector and spatial plans, programmes and projects of the district are compatible with each other and with the national objectives;
- Monitor and evaluate the development programmes and projects in the district.

2.7.2 District Planning Coordinating Unit

For the purposes of subsection (2), there shall be established for each District Assembly a district planning coordinating unit (Constitution of Republic of Ghana, 1992).

According to the 1992 Constitution of Republic of Ghana, a district planning coordinating unit shall comprise the professional staff that the district planning authority requires to ensure that planning functions of the District Assembly are undertaken. In this regard, DPCU's are required to carry out the following task:

- Advise and provide a secretariat for the district assembly in its planning, programming, monitoring, evaluation and coordinating functions.
- Coordinate the planning activities of the sector development related departments/ agencies in the district.



- Synthesize the strategies related to the development of the district into a comprehensive and cohesive framework.
 - Formulate and update district development plans.
 - Provide information required for planning at the national level.
- (Decentralization Policies and Practices, Participants Manual, 1993)

In performing, and coordinating functions, DPCU's are therefore required to play the lead role in promoting the outward-oriented functions of the cities as well as in coordinating the task of the sector departments to meet the demands of citizens for basic services (Act 462: 1993).

2.7.3 Sub District Structures

The sub-district structures were created by Legislative Instrument (L.I 1589) of the Local government Act, 1993 Act 462, Urban, Town and Area councils and the Unit Committees are the lower tiers of the local government system below the District Assembly (Bandie, 2007). The sub-district structures are consultative bodies with no budgets of their own and taxing power (Agyemang, 2010). They mostly carry out functions as delegated by the DA. They provide vital links between the DAs local institutions and resources (ibid). Basically, their major function is to assist the DA in the performance of functions such as revenue collection, prepare and implement local action plans (MLG&RD, 1994 as cited in Agyemang, 2010).

Urban Town/Area /Zonal Councils

These are also found in the Metropolitan and District Assemblies. In the District Assemblies, Town Councils are established for settlements with population between 5,000 and 1500 and Area Councils for a number of settlements/villages which are grouped together but whose individual settlements have population of less than 5,000. The functions of the Urban/Area Councils touch on the daily lives of the people



(Agyemang, 2010). The councils are to organize with relevant organizations congresses of the people in their areas annually to discuss the development of their areas including the raising of voluntary or other contributions to fund the development (ibid). They are allowed to prepare their own local action plan in accordance with the approved district development plan. This notwithstanding, any plan that emanates from them is both subject to a public hearing and approval by the DA (MLGRD, 1994).

Unit Committees

The Unit Committees form the base structure of the new Local Government System. A unit is normally a settlement or group of settlements with a population of between 500–1,000 in the rural areas, and a higher population (1500) for the urban areas (Bandie, 2007). The unit committees comprise ten elected and five appointed members ((Bandie, 2007).). The functions of the unit committee are outlined as follows:

- Monitoring the implementation of self-help development projects;
- Taking lawful steps to abate nuisance;
- Supervision of the staff of the DA assigned duties in its area of authority;
- Assisting to enumerate and keep records of all ratable persons and properties;
- Organizing of communal labour and voluntary work.

The unit committees serve as the focal point where local problems are discussed and are expected to assist the DA in data and information gathering for effective district development planning (Agyemang, 2010). Putting the Legislative Instrument 1589 and the Local Government Act 462, 1993, into perspective, it is clear that the sub-district structures were established to promote participatory democracy where local people (citizens) will be encouraged to get involved in decision-making process of their localities.



2.8 Development Planning Process at the District Level

The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) regulates the development planning process by the issuance of guidelines and Legislative Instruments (LIs) to Regional Coordinating Councils (RCC) and Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies (MMDAs) (Botchie, 2000, ISODEC, 2004). Ayemang, (2010) observes that, the NDPC guidelines set the national development agenda, priorities and strategies for the preparation of Medium Term Development Plans (MTDP) by MDAs, RCCs and MMDAs (ibid). The Commission then organizes orientation training programmes on the planning guidelines for the DPCU members at the district to facilitate the planning process. The planning process has the following as its essential features (ibid):

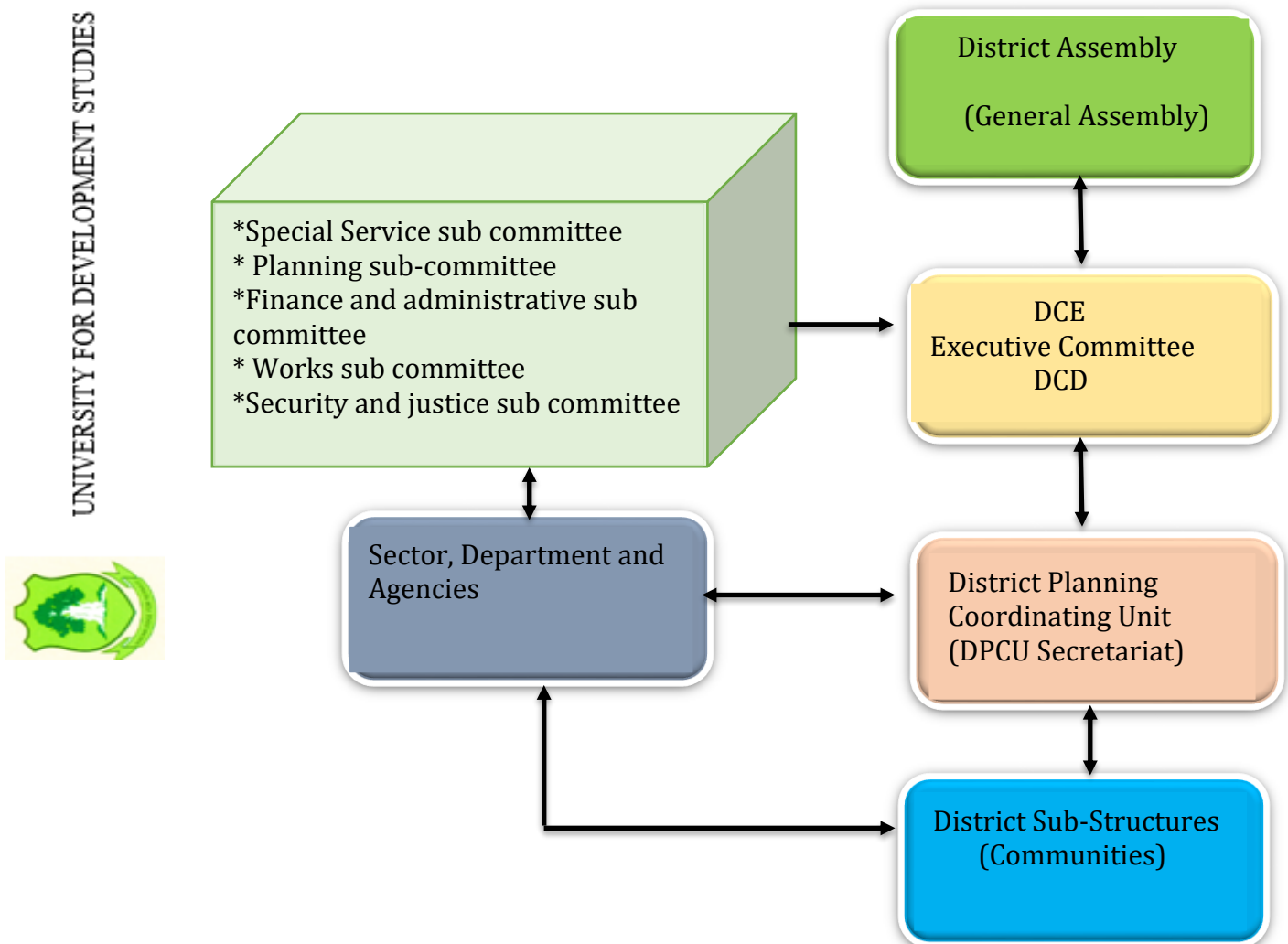
- Planning at the district level starts with the communities' problems, goals and objectives from Unit committee level through the Town/Area/Urban/Zonal Councils to the District Assemblies.
- The sub-committees of the Executive Committee of the District Assembly must consider the problems and opportunities of the communities, define, prioritize and submit them to the executive committee.
- The departments of the District/Municipal/Metropolitan Assembly, sectoral specialists, non-governmental organizations and other functional agencies must confer and collaborate with one another to hammer out the ingredients of the district plan.
- The District Planning Co-coordinating Unit shall integrate and coordinate the district sectoral plans into long term, medium term, short term plans and annual plans and budget for consideration of the executive committee and debate by the District Assembly.



- The approved plan is to be sent to the Regional Co-coordinating Council for co-ordination and harmonization with the plans of the other District Assemblies in the region.

An Analysis of the features show that Ghana’s planning system is bottom up as all plans have to start from the communities (Sana, 2011). This implies that local population are expected to initiate projects depending on their needs and priorities as shown figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Development Planning process at the District Level.



Source: Osei-Owusu, 2008

2.9 Development Planning Process at the sub- District Level

The felt needs and aspirations of community members serve as the basis for the formulation of district plans. The sub-district officials and the Unit Committee

represent the decentralized mechanisms for local development, and together with elected Assemblymen are expected to work to generate, collect and collate local level priorities for the development of the DMTDP (Institute of Local Government Studies - ILGS, 2006). Outputs of data collection and collation at the community level form Community Action Plans (CAPs) (Sana, 2011). The CAPs are basic documents prepared and owned by communities to guide their development process over a period of time and are expected to feed the Area Level Plans (ALPs) at the sub-district councils level, and finally into the DMTDPs at the DAs (Bandie, 2007).

Local Action Plans (LAPs), which are prepared through participatory processes, should be considered as representing community perspective on current needs and aspirations at the sub-district level (NDPC, 2009). In situations where LAPs do not exist, community perspective on current needs and aspiration should be compiled by the DPCU through consultation with the people in the Sub-District Councils (NDPC, 2009 as cited in Sana, 2011).

2.10 Essence of Decentralized development planning

The concept of Decentralized development planning is said to be integrative. This stems from the fact that it gives room for analysis of each development issue from various aspects such as political, social, economic, and environmental domains into a single and holistic task. To serve this purpose, institutions and skilled people at all levels of the society – from community to national level is crucial. Decentralized planning is participatory as it allows community members to identify their problems and to formulate plans aimed at solving those problems. Programmes and projects in the plan which are not executed within the specified time frame can be rolled over and they allow for continuous monitoring and evaluation.



Planning is critical since resources are scarce in relation to human wants and needs. It is therefore necessary to utilize these available resources efficiently and effectively. The fact that resources are limited emphasises the need to involve people in their utilization for the utmost benefits of the beneficiaries. In this regard, the decentralization policy of Government of Ghana becomes very laudable as the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) are required to prepare and implement their development plans to ensure the overall development of their respective areas. Obviously, this enhances sustainability of planned projects. The implication is that for development plans to be successful and sustainable, it is necessary to ensure participation of all people at all times.

Decentralisation is acknowledged to be one of most acceptable forms of governance that allows for greater participation of the citizenry, notwithstanding critics against aspects of its operation (Mensah, 2010). It has assumed greater imperative because of the emphasis on good governance, participatory development, participatory democracy and gender equity (UNDP, 1997). Gender concerns emphasise the need for some committed attention on social and political circumstances that pertain to men and women as a group and the implications of these for gender equity, political empowerment and Development planning (Parpart, 1993). If planning is to be effective then a good plan should be formulated and operationalized with all parties concerned: public officials assisted, local public governmental organizations, private organizations, field organizations, and civil society organizations. The participation of such entities in the planning process is a prerequisite, for without their active involvement, little can be achieved (Mensah, 2010).

2. 11 Participatory Planning

Modern democracies are better described as representative or indirect where citizens' involvement or participation is limited to the act of voting and deciding those who will rule on their behalf (Ahenkan, 2013). Wood (2004) as cited in (Ahenkan et al (2010) opined that this centralizes power into the hands of a few, thereby increasing the likelihood of incongruence between the preferences of citizens and their representatives as well as the possibility of corruption and abuse of power by the government. It also means that all citizens do not have equal opportunity to have their voices heard. This led Forero-Pineda (2001) to make a case that participative theory is about addressing the unequal distribution of power and resources and its effect on the daily lives of people. Citizen participation is therefore fundamental to democracy and considered central to governance and for that matter good governance. UNDP (1997) identifies legitimacy and voice as critical elements of good governance and that participation and consensus orientation are two strands of the element.

Participatory theory aims to enhance the egalitarian redistribution of power, resources and democratisation of the political process at both national and local level. Thus, theorists have argued for a broader involvement of citizens in political systems and decision making (Forero-Pineda, 2001). As captured by Berner (2001) citizen participation in the governance process has become popular and is considered ideal and healthy and that citizen apathy is hazardous to civic health. Berner (2001) warned that whether or not the public uses the opportunity, keeping that option available is important in a democracy. To ensure authentic democracy therefore, citizen participation will ensure that there is a meaningful tying of programs to people (Spiegel, 1968).





Although participatory planning is said to have been christened variously as ‘collaborative planning’, ‘communicative planning’, ‘deliberative planning’, ‘consensus building’ among others, the key essence is the objective to indicate how interactiveness is exuded within the planning processes (Gedikli, 2009). If the end of participatory planning is desirable, it must not be forgotten that the processes of ensuring participatory planning schemes are quite political. Participatory planning though seen as desirous, Healey et al. (2008) doubt if participatory planning has any drastic change effect. They wonder whether it is a strategy by government to reduce civic protest by getting popular participation and if this is so, what benefits will be served? Participatory planning could also be a scheme to take advantage of citizens to reduce costs in pursuance of elites self-serving policies or it serves to legitimize democracy for the elites. Participatory planning have also been conceptualized as a way of “regularizing urban conflicts” (Healey et al. 2008:379). Of course participatory planning has also been attributed to impacts of the “social and environmental movement” of the 1960s which not only opened a new chapter in urban policy both in material and process terms but also came along with a corps of actors amenable to citizens voices, learned and supported their activities (Healey et al. 2008).

Although participatory planning has been considered valuable in principle, there are concerns about its realities and the willingness of actors to adopt it wholeheartedly. Citizens are often denied real influence and seldom their concerns taken onboard as their participation is limited to information and consultation (Monno and Khakee 2012). This situation had been reported to probably be changing slowly in jurisdictions with pressure from donors, civil society and the media. Some arguments suggest that since the ability of citizens to push for more space is constrained, there must be increased

pressure for vertical accountability (Devas and Grant 2003) but this is known to stifle initiatives for more citizens' participation.

Agger and Löfgren (2008) have identified a number of variables in relation to the two elements of process and outcomes of Participatory planning. They argue that assessing participatory planning processes should include an assessment of the variables of broad social grouping representation; right to express opinions; mutual respect by all actors; transparency and availability of information; the right to dissent; and capacity to influence the process. Following from this, they propose a framework for assessing Participatory planning. The "norms" as they call the elements of their framework are access, public deliberation, adaptiveness, accountability, and political identities(Ahenkan, 2010). These norms are assessed along the lines of input-process-outcome stream.

It is important to recognize that if citizens must have a say in how the finances of the local government gets managed, they must as well be able to influence how the planning is done.

Local government expenditure is based upon plans and therefore, if citizens participate in the planning of the district, they invariable will have made significant impact on the preparation of the budget and ultimately, on the expenditure of the district. Multilateral institutions and national governments as well as local government institution are increasingly interested in participatory mechanisms as part of a discourse clustered around public management concepts of good governance and public-private partnerships. From this perspective citizens 'participation is viewed by the World Bank (2005) and Inter-American Development Bank (1997) as a way of increasing governmental accountability and transparency in public affairs in combination with budget strictness (Arhenkan et al., 2013)



2.12 Conceptualizing Community Participation

Participation in development projects and programmes has become commonplace in the development discourse since the 1980s (Zakariah, 2011). The popularity of participation has grown to the point of orthodoxy such that by the early 1990s, there was hardly a major bilateral development agency that would not emphasize participatory policies (Henkel and Stirrat, 2001 as cited in Zackariah, 2011). According to Cooke and Kothari (2001) popularity was in response to the top-down approaches that have driven development in the previous decades. Participation is often prefixed variously such as community, citizen, popular, civic, political, public, etc., to reflect the different contexts in which the term is used. Despite the popularity of the term however, the myriad of meanings attributed to it has left participation a contested concept.

One of the focal areas of contestation of participation in development projects and programmes is the ambiguity in the rationales for participation as carried by the different definitions of participation (Zackariah, 2011)

Paul (1987, cited in FAO, 2007) defines community participation as an active process by which beneficiary or client groups influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view of enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish. This definition however emphasizes the end rationale of participation where people eventually influence the course of their development.

Similarly, Sanyare (2013) observes that participation in decentralised community development goes beyond just political representation to include critically, the direct involvement of rural community members in all aspects of community development. Therefore, participation as a means is a way of organizing people behind the predetermined objectives of development agencies, while as an end, it empowers





people to pursue their own development activities and projects (Parfitt, 2007). Understanding this means-end debate of participation in development forms the backbone of most typologies of participation (Zackariah, 2011).

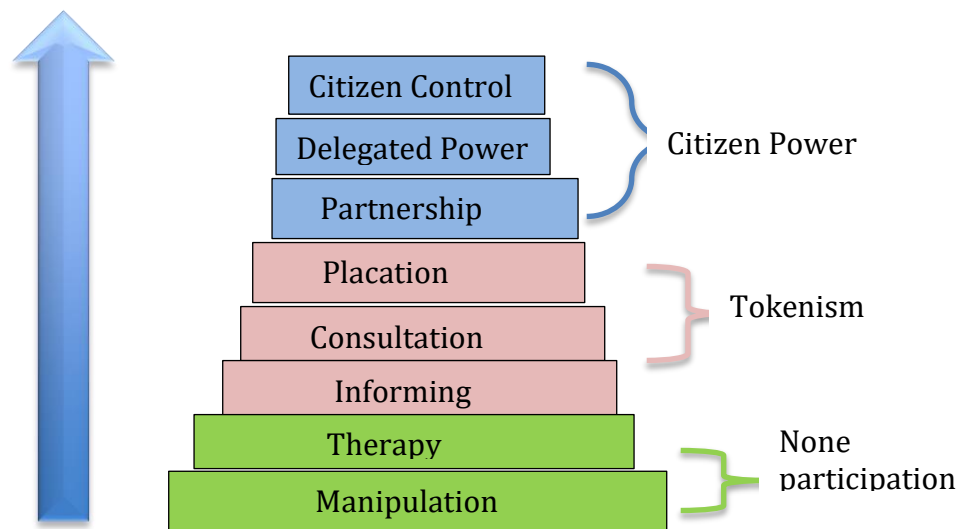
In participatory development processes, the term community relates to a target population or beneficiaries of interventions (Zackariah, 2011). It has a geographical, and sometimes a cultural or an ideological meaning (Hoverman and Buchy, 2001). Community participation seen as a means, merges these different facets of the community, it oversimplifies reality, and it can act as an obstacle to the proper examination of local power systems (Guijt and Shah 1998, cited in Gomez et al., 2010), eventually excluding some segments of the community. On the other hand, community participation seen as an end recognizes existing differences within the community by paying attention to the different groups in the population to avoid excluding some members from participating. In this sense, community participation is seen as a process of development in its own right rather than as a tool for achieving certain goals (Parfitt, 2007). On community participation and how it relates to power in the means-end dichotomy, participation understood as a means is indicative that expressions of power or power differentials between the target population and the development agencies will be left largely untouched (Zackariah, 2011). However, a consideration of participation as an end, suggests a transformation in power relations between development agencies and community, “with the latter empowered and liberated from a clientelist relation with the former” (Parfitt, 2007: 539). In this study, community refers to a group of people living in a defined geographical area.

2.13 Typology of Participation

Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of citizen participation presents a typology of citizen’s involvement in the decision-making process that ranges from total non-participation,

through various degrees of tokenism, on to the highest level of involvement that would result in citizen control of the decision-making process. This provides the framework for analyzing the degree of citizen participation in the planning process in the Nadowli-Kaleo District. The first two levels of the ladder namely; manipulation and therapy represent non-participation. The next three ranks/levels namely informing, consultation and placation show degrees of tokenism in the participation process, while the top three ranks/levels (i.e. partnership, delegated power and citizen control) represent degrees of citizen power. Arnstein (1969) focus was on citizen control of community governance. It is generally agreed that citizen involvement in the planning process provides the opportunity to enhance acceptance of a proposed intervention through information dissemination and education. However, to effectively move up the ladder, a well-designed public participation programme should draw on people’s skills and local knowledge. This can create room for drawing insights on issues, needs, preferences and requirements. Perhaps the greatest benefit of enhanced public engagement is community capacity building, where local residents are empowered to influence public policy. Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of citizen participation is ordered as follows;

Figure 2.3: Ladder of citizen participation



Source: Adopted from Arnstein (1969)

Participation increases the information available to administrators and results in more effective programs. The principal roles of participation are to ensure the efficient implementation of projects and the empowerment of communities to sustain projects as well as to be able to design other projects to improve the quality of life (Krefetz & Goodman, 1973).

What participation entails

Kendie (1997) has argued that while participation has been recognized as essential to the development process in Ghana, this is not likely to happen without certain conditions. Participation requires that there should be a real commitment of politicians and administrators to allow communities to control critical decision-making issues such as needs-assessment. The emergence of strong civil society organizations able to mobilize the people to demand both participation and the rendering of quality services by state institutions is essential for effective participation. The political context in which participation occurs must be opened at all levels. Participation at local levels may produce results, and there are many examples. But the benefits of such local level efforts are not likely to be widespread and sustainable. Sustainability will depend on how permissive macro-arenas of decision-making are to participation. Where participation takes place at all spatial levels, the efficiency and empowerment objectives may be fulfilled. Participation ought not to be only instrumental; it has to be an end in itself.

Participation is enshrined in the 1992 constitution and it is to be actualized through the District Assembly structures, parliament and a host of other institutions designed to educate people on their civic rights and responsibilities or to check excesses in the use of state power. In recent years, several civil society organizations have also emerged both to assist in the development needs of the poor and the marginalized and to build



the capacity of public institutions to deliver development. By 1998, over 800 such non-profit organizations had been registered to operate in Ghana (van Roy, 1998).

It is rare to find development strategy these days which does not refer to community participation. A body of evidence confirms that community participation in the initiation, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation lead to sustainable development (Narayan, 1995). Sustainable development is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987: 43). Policies of developing countries, government and donors, including the government of Ghana have emphasized on increasing the access of the beneficiaries to development services. For communities to continue to develop there is the need to pay more attention to the strategies that will encourage and empower the beneficiaries to manage, maintain and sustain their development, in the absence of development partners.

According to Barry, Stevenson, Britten and Barber (2002), participation is equal rights and justice, inclusive and responsive governance. It refers to respect of laws, together with freedom of speech, information, association and assembly as well as respect and dignity of women. Where citizens can participate in public sphere and make their own contribution towards the common good. It also means being heard and consulted on a regular and confirming basis not merely on election time. It means more than vote. It is the involvement in decision and policymaking by public agencies and officials. It involves the eradication of corruption favoritism, nepotism, apathy, neglected-tape and self-seeking political leaders and public officials. It means democracy that works for all. Much as these definitions may vary in focus and levels of community development, there are some key principles that they have in common. They all agree that



participation is not sought by coercion; it is human centered, involves people in decision-making and collective sharing of the fruit of development interventions.

At least in theory and to certain extent in practice, there has been some emphasis on local participation. Emphasis was particularly given to fostering local institutions to enhance people's participation in the selection, design and management of development projects at the community level. Participation was viewed as an important end in itself; also it was linked to a number of other instrumental values (Griffin, 1989). First, participation in community based organizations could help to identify local priorities so that development projects might better reflect grassroots needs and wishes. Participation in popular organizations and groups, co-operatives, land reform committees, irrigation societies, women organizations might assist in mobilizing local support for development projects and programmers. Thirdly, increased local participation might reduce the cost of many public services and development projects by shifting more responsibility to grassroots organizations. Civil society has emerged as the arena in which development objectives are to be achieved therefore civil societies can exert organized pressure on autocratic state and unresponsive governments to ensure democratic stability and good governance. Civil society institutions have been identified as the vehicles for participation of people and empowerment of them. This has offered challenges to the top-down diffusion of state planning (Mensah, 2010)

2.13.1 Importance of participation

The overriding importance of participation can be realized when in Africa, a charter for popular participation in development and transformation was created at a conference in 1990. Nations cannot benefit without the popular support and full participation of neither people nor can economic crisis be resolved and the human and economic



conditions improved without full and effective contribution, creativity and political enthusiasm of the majority of people (Oakley & Marsden, 1984; Osman, 2009).

Popular participation, in essence, is the empowerment of people to effectively involve themselves in creating the structures, and in designing policy and programmes, which serve the interest of all, as well as effectively contribute to the development process and share equitably in its benefits. There is therefore, the need to open up of political process to accommodate freedom of opinions, tolerate differences, and accept consensus on issues as well as ensuring the effective participation of people and their organization and associations (Pearse & Stifel, 1979).

Popular participation has a number of benefits. First, it mobilises greater resources and accomplishes more with the same programme budget (Mensah, 2010). Second, it is also economically efficient in that it uses generally utilised labour, and to a lesser extent can build upon indigenous knowledge which also tends to be underutilized. Thus, more services are provided at less cost. Third, participation can result in better project design. It ensures that felt needs are served. Presumably, beneficiaries will shape the project to their specific needs in ways that outside planners cannot do. A sense of immediate responsibility and ownership by beneficiaries“ puts pressure on a project is truly worthwhile. Fourth, participation can become a catalyst for mobilising further local development efforts. There tend to be greater spread effects as villagers communicate with kin and associates in other villages. Fifth, it creates local level awareness, competence and capacity where it did not exist before (Finsterbusch & Wicklin III, 1987). Other benefits of participation include the fact that it encourages a sense of responsibility, guarantees felt needs, ensures that things are done in the right way, uses valuable indigenous knowledge, frees people from dependence on other’s skills and makes people aware of the causes of their poverty and what can be done about it.



Participation also increases mutual trust and displays the potentials of the target groups and conveys to planners a better understanding of the problem (Oakley & Marsden, 1984).

2.14. Conceptual Framework

With the literature that has been reviewed thus far, a conceptual framework of analysis is developed. The framework is made up of the basic key words and concepts needed for effective participatory planning as discussed in the literature review. These are explained as follows:

Community education/sensitization: Motivated by Arnstein theory of participation, achieving citizen control of the planning process requires that citizens are sensitized about the planning process and its relevance. This will set the stage or kindle their interest to participate in the process. ***Community participation:*** availability of avenues for community involvement or engagement is a major step towards participatory planning.

Community roles/citizen's rights: NDPC guidelines for plan preparation has provided for citizens to participate in needs assessment, public hearing among others. Citizens exercising these rights cements the concept of participatory planning. Achieving the three listed backed by the necessary resources will actualize a truly **participatory planning process** which will lead to **community empowerment, citizen control** as espoused by Arnstein, **need based interventions** and ultimately **community development**.

Community empowerment; once citizens begin to participate, it will enhance their capacity to fully appreciate the entire process. This will ultimately lead to community



empowerment which will enable citizen's influence the process. It will create room for drawing insights on issues, needs, preferences and requirements.

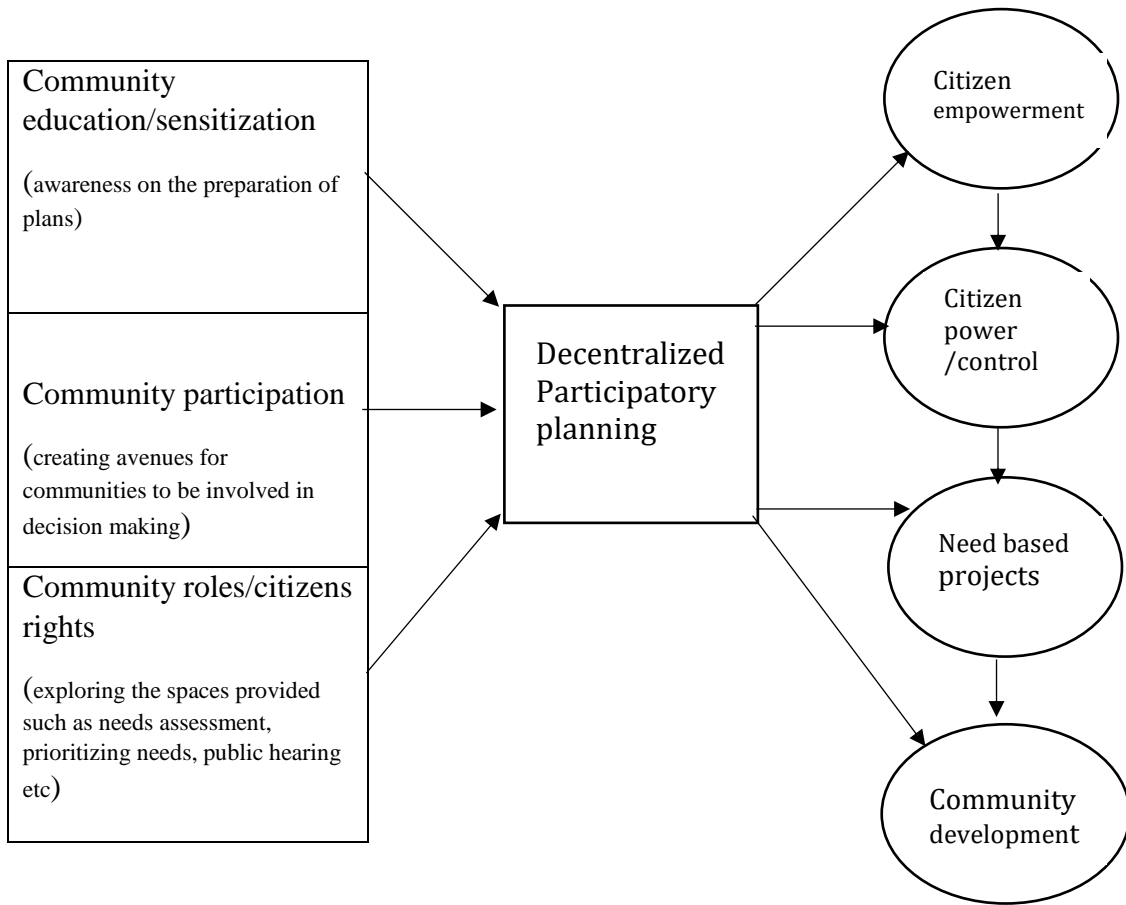
Citizen Control; this will occur when people are empowered to demand participation thereby taken control of governance in their community and taken critical decisions on issues such as needs-assessment, influencing public policy and exacting accountability from duty bearers.

Need based projects: The involvement of citizens in development planning and implementation enables the formulation of realistic plans that are in line with local circumstances and conditions. These will build a sense of ownership among the participants and ensure the sustainability of projects.

Community development: If all the aforementioned conditions are met, there will be a transformation in the socio-economic sectors of the community thus a development driven by the aspirations and needs of the people. Figure 2.4 shows the conceptual framework.



Figure 2.4: Conceptual Framework



Source, Author's construct

2.15 Chapter summary

This chapter reviewed relevant literature pertaining to the topic so as to identify the theoretical gaps which would form the basis for this thesis as well as a framework for the analysis of empirical findings. This chapter provided an overview of Ghana's decentralization and decentralized planning system. It as well delved into the legislative instruments of the sub-structures, their nature and how they serve as mechanisms for participatory local development and within which participation in the DMTDP formulation takes place. The review indicates that, the theme of this thesis lies in the participation of citizens in the planning process and for effective participation to occur, citizens need to be empowered to take control over their governance visa vi critical decision making as captured in Arnstein's ladder of participation. It is clear from the

review that the absence of participation is an affront to the tenets of democracy and for that matter acceptability and sustainability of projects. The conceptual and theoretical framework presented in this chapter provided an understanding in the discussion and analysis of community participation within the confines of decentralized planning in the Nadowli-Kaleo District.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Various theoretical and contextual gaps have been highlighted in the preceding chapter thereby providing a sufficient justification to critically examine the implementation of the Ghanaian decentralized planning in the context of Nadowli-Kaleo District. But subsequent to this, the following research questions were outlined;

1. How does the implementation of the decentralized planning concept facilitate community participation in the planning process?
2. How well informed are citizen's about their roles and responsibilities with the new decentralized planning system?
3. How is the implementation of the decentralized planning concept facilitating development in the District?
4. What factors impede the effective implementation of the decentralized planning concept in the Nadowli-Kaleo District?

This chapter gives an account of the methodology employed in addressing the above stated questions. It starts with the profile of the study area, the research paradigms as espoused by other researchers with regards to the nature of knowledge, research design, methodology adopted, the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches and justification for the preferred approach. It further states the sample size determination, sampling techniques, specific methods and tools of data collection as used in this study.



3.1 Profile of the Study Area

The study was conducted in Nadowli-Kaleo District in the Upper West Region hence the highlights of key selected features that are relevant to the study.

Location and Size

Nadowli /Kaleo District is centrally located in the Upper West region of Ghana. It lies between latitude 11° 30' and 10° 20' north and longitude 3° 10' and 2° 10' west. It is bordered to the south by Wa Municipal, west by Burkina Faso, north by Jirapa District and to the east by the Daffiama Bussie Issa District. It covers a total land area of 2,742.50km² and extends from the Billi Bridge (4km from Wa) to the Dapuori Bridge (almost 12km from Jirapa) on the main Wa – Jirapa Hamile road and also from West to east it extends and bordered by Daffiama Bussie Issa District.

The distance between the District and the regional capital covers about 40 km. The location of the District promotes in international trade between the District and neighbouring Burkina Faso. Figure 3.1 shows the District Map.



Figure 3.1: District Map of Nadowli-Kaleo



Source: PHC, 2010

3.1.1 Population Size and Growth

According to the 2010 population census, the District had a total population of 63,141.

This population compared with the 2000 census figure of 82,716 indicates a growth rate of 1.5% per annum as depicted in the table 3.1.

Table 3. 1: Population sex segregation

Year	Male	Female	Total Population	Growth Rate
1984	30799	34730	65,529	1.5%
2000	39375	43341	82,716	
2010	29,539	33,602	63,141	1.9%
Projected figures				
2011	30,100	34,240	64,340	1.9%
2012	30,672	34,891	65,563	
2013	31,255	35,554	66,809	

Source: Population and Housing Census, 2010

The population figure of 1984 and 2000 includes the then Nadowli district and 2010-2013 includes the new Nadowli-Kaleo district which intends explains the reduction of the population figures.

Table 3.2 : Population by Area Council

Area Councils	Population	Share of district population (%)
Total	63,141	100.0
Nadowli	9,660	15.3
Kaleo	7,324	11.6
Sombo	6,503	10.3
Jang	5,114	8.1
Sankana	6,567	10.4
Takpo	6,693	10.6
Charikpong	7,009	11.1

Source: Population and Housing Census, 2010



Using the 2010 population as the base year and an annual growth rate of 1.9% the population in the District is currently estimated at 66,809. The table above depicts the trend of the District's population growth since 1984. The District share of the region's population is 8.99%.

3.1.2 Age and sex Structure

The age structure shows a high percentage of males than females in the age groups from 0-19 years and more females than males for the group 20 -69 years. In 2000 the male proportion for age group 70-85 years and older was higher than for females. But for 2010 females continue their domination for the age group 70 -85 years and older

3.1.3 Population Distribution by settlement

Going by the national standard for the definition of an urban settlement, none of the settlements in the Nadowli District has attained an urban status. Only Fifteen (13) out of the 81 settlements have populations above 2,000.

3.2 Research Paradigms

Carrying out a research leads to a choice between one of two dominant research approaches to which this thesis is not exempt. This choice is between a quantitative and qualitative approaches or a mix of the two methods (Sanyare, 2013). The ultimate decision of settling for one or both is reflective of the researchers' assumption about reality, which as Crotty (2009:3) cited in Sanyare (2013), suggests is the researchers' "approach to understanding and explaining society and the human world".

Whether consciously or not, every researcher works from some theoretical orientation or paradigm. According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000) Researchers have their own different worldviews about the nature of knowledge and reality that helps them



clarify their theoretical frameworks. Some authors traditionally believe that the world is real and exist independently from us, driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms (Guba & Lincoln, 2003). They are of the notion that there is a singular reality, the one and only truth that is out there waiting to be discovered by objective and value free enquiry. Those who subscribe to this school of thought are often referred to as the positivist.

Another school of thought is of the view that society is complex in nature and cannot be controlled in absolute terms. Those who subscribe to this school of thought are often referred to as constructivist. Constructivist approaches to research have the intention of understanding "the world of human experience" suggesting that "reality is socially constructed" (Mertens, 2005, as cited in Mckenzie 2010, pg 3)

This thesis accepts both positivist and constructivist philosophical stance but it is not particularly committed to a singular one. It is the position of this thesis that researchers can be both objective and subjective in epistemological orientation over the course of seeking answers to research questions. It thus embraces the pragmatic school of thought.

Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality. Pragmatism derives from the work of Peirce, James, Mead, and Dewey (Cherryholmes, 1992). In pragmatism, there is a concern with applications- what works-and solutions to problems (Patton, 1990). So instead of methods being important, the problem is most important, and researchers use all approaches to understand the problem. As a philosophical underpinning for mixed methods studies, Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) and Patton (1990) convey the importance for focusing attention on the research problem in social science research and then using pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the





problem. Pragmatism was adopted because the study sought information believed to be universal and obsolete as well as information that is understood from an individual point of view (personal experience) thus it gathered information from multiple sources as and when it was necessary. For instance, the issue under study is the participation of citizens in the planning processes and since the researcher is familiar with the study area and subject matter, it was safe to pre-categorize some of the responses and seek participant's opinions on them. Outliers or surprising findings from the first phase were further interrogated through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to unearth the rationale behind the issues identified.

So for instance the study sought information about respondent's level of involvement in the planning process and since this was more about themselves, it was quite appropriate to gain knowledge on this through the sharing of their personal experience and feelings in a focus group discussion as well as key informant interviews.

Thus this thesis followed Sanyare (2013) who employed both survey and in-depth interview methods to examine decentralized local governance and community development in Northern Ghana.

This method afforded the researcher the opportunity to gather as much information from all key stakeholders in the planning process thus Assemblymen, Unit committee members, opinion leaders, Area council secretaries, D.A staff and community members using different data collection methods and tools.

3.3 Mixed Method Design

As previously mentioned, this study follows the pragmatic school of thought as its philosophical underpinning which opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as to different forms of data collection and analysis. Motivated by this philosophy, the study employed the mixed method.



The term ‘mixed methods’ has come to be used to refer to the use of two or more methods in a research project yielding both qualitative and quantitative data (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Greene, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Mixed methods research capitalizes on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies by combining approaches in a single research study to increase the breadth and depth of understanding (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner 2007 as cited in Jennifer et’l, 2011).

The use of mixed methods is most suitable when a quantitative or qualitative approach, by itself, is inadequate to develop multiple perspectives and a complete understanding about the research problem (Creswell, 2012). In addition, because utilizing only quantitative methods has the potential to conceal wide variation in the measures of social interventions, Plewis and Mason (2005) suggest that it may therefore be useful to integrate methods that go beyond estimating mean effect to reveal vested meanings and variations. So mixing methods helped the researcher produce a more complete picture and avoided the biases intrinsic to the use of monomethod design (Denscombe, 2008).

3.3.1 Explanatory sequential mixed method

Since the study employed mixed method design thus using both quantitative and qualitative data, the explanatory sequential method was adopted. This allowed one data collection activity to build on the results from the other (Creswell, Plano Clark, et al., 2003). This method started with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, which has the priority for addressing the study’s questions. This first phase was followed by the subsequent collection and analysis of qualitative data. The second, qualitative phase of the study was designed so that it follows from the results of the first, quantitative phase and thus helped explain, or elaborate on the quantitative results obtained in the



first phase. With the qualitative data, the researcher was able to reveal vested meanings and variations which was missing in the quantitative data. For example, the researcher collected and analyzed quantitative data to know whether or not people participate in their community needs assessment. Finding a rather small number to be the ones who participate in these meetings, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the same respondents so as to explain the reason behind the low patronage.

The second, qualitative phase was built on the first, quantitative, phase, and the two phases were connected in the intermediate stage (discussion) in the study. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and their subsequent analysis gave a general understanding of the research problem. The qualitative data and its analysis refined and explained those statistical results by exploring participants' views in more depth (Creswell, 2003; Rossman & Wilson, 1985; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

3.4 Study Population

Based on the fact that, development planning entails a lot, all stakeholders are supposed to be involved in the process particularly community members, assembly members, District Planning and Coordinating Unit members, area council executives and Unit committee members. Samples from this population was obtained for this study. Samples were drawn from these groups using different and interrelated sampling procedures for each.

3.5 Sampling and sample Size Determination

Sampling is concerned with the selection of an unbiased or random subset of individual observations within a population of individuals intended to yield some knowledge about the population under study (Sana, 2011). Nadowli-Kaleo District is made up of seven area councils. In order to have good representation of community members in the District, the study focused on four (4) area councils out of the seven (7) area councils.

The selection was done using simple random sampling technique which takes into account the fact that all the elements in the population get equal chance of being selected. This technique ensured that all the seven-area councils had an equal chance of being selected. The Area councils were given numbers and the lottery method was used to select the four area councils. Simple random sampling was employed so as to reduce cost and time while ensuring a representative sample.

Table 3.3: Area councils selected for the study

Area Councils in Nadowli District	Selected area Councils
Takpo	Nadowli Cherekpong Jang Sombo
Nadowli	
Kaleo	
Jang	
Sombo	
Cherekpong	
Sankana	

Source: field survey, 2016



The following mathematical formula by Slovin (1960) was used to determine the

$$\text{sample size of the community members: } n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where, **n** = sample size -**Number of people to be interviewed;**

N= Sample frame; **Population of study area**, **e**= Margin of error = The margin of error shows the maximum expected difference between the true population parameter and a sample estimate of that parameter. In this study, the margin of error was 5% with a 95% confidence interval. Using the above formula and the 2010 census results for the

four selected area councils as N at 0.05 margin of error with 95% confidence interval, the sample size n is found to be 396. As a result, 396 community members from four area councils were interviewed. These individual sample units were selected randomly from each area council and the questionnaire administered to them. The share of each area council is determined proportionate to the population size. Table 3.4 shows the population of each area council selected for the study.

Table 3.4: Population of each area council selected for the study

Area Council	Population	Number Interviewed
Nadowli	9,660	134
Jang	5,114	71
Takpo	6,693	93
Charikpong	7,009	98
Total	28,476	396

Source: Population and Housing Census, 2010

*Proportionate allocation

3.5.1 Sampling techniques and procedure.

After employing simple random sampling to select the four area councils out of the seven, the study randomly selected individual community members from each of these selected area councils and interviewed them. The population of respondents from each area council was determined proportionate to the population size of each area council. The study also employed purposive sampling technique. The researcher adhering to the objectives of the study, selected respondents who are knowledgeable in the issue under study. This method was employed by this study in the sense that, all the secretaries and chairmen at the various chosen area councils were interviewed thus the chairman, secretary and treasurer. Also all Assembly members for the four area councils as well as unit committee chairmen were selected purposefully. The same tool was employed



in the selection of key staffs of the District Assembly such as the District Chief Executive, District Coordinating Director, District Planning Officer and Budget Officer. These respondents were selected not by a random procedure, but rather were intentionally picked for the study because they satisfy certain qualities which are not evenly distributed in the target population but are unique and of interest to the study. This method as remarked by Maxwell (2005) and cited in Sanyare (2013) helps the researcher to arrive at conclusions that goes beyond averages by drawing views from individuals (local government officials) within a population across the study area. Since these government officials were just a few, it accorded the researcher the opportunity to do an in-depth exploration of the subject matter.

Table 3.5: Distribution of key informants

Key informants	Number of Respondents
District Chief Executive	1
Planning officer	2
District Budget officer	1
District Coordinating Director	1
Assemblymen	12
Chairpersons of Area councils	4
Secretaries of the Area councils	4
Treasurers of Area council	4
Unit committee chairpersons	12
Total	41

Source: Author's construct



3.6 Source, methods and tools of data Collection

Data for the study was collected through different sources using different methods and tools. These are further explained in the preceding text.

3.6.1 Source of data.

Both Primary and secondary sources of data were employed in this study. The collection of data from both sources gave a clearer picture about the operationalization of the decentralized planning process in the District.

3.6.1.1 Secondary data

The secondary data/information gathered from the Nadowli-Kaleo District Assembly include the compiled area council needs and aspirations, invitation letters to public hearings and the district annual and medium term development plans. These documents were useful in addressing the research questions.

3.6.1.2 Primary data

Primary data which is direct data collected or observed from first-hand knowledge was gathered in the field through face to face interviews and focus group discussions. This is further explained in the next sub section.

3.6.1.2.1 Interviews

The interview method that was applied was that of a semi structured interview. This was done so as to give respondents the opportunity to freely express themselves on the issues under study. It also enabled the researcher to come up with follow up questions to the responses been given by respondents. This method was used to gather in-depth information on how the Assembly members, District Assembly staff, unit committee members and officials of the area councils carry out planning at the local level and the challenges they encounter. Information bordering on the involvement of the people,



how public hearings are conducted were all sought using this method. The tool used in gathering this information was a semi structured questionnaire.

On the part of community members, they were interviewed on two phases. In phase one, the researcher employed a structured interview. This was done so as to ensure that each respondent was presented with the same questions in the same order. Also since the researcher is familiar with the terrain and subject matter, it was safe to pre-categorize responses and seek participant's opinions on them so as to enable a statistical estimation of community member's experience within the framework of decentralized planning. The method was used to solicit information on the type of planning meetings community members have been part of, public hearings attended, needs assessment conducted, their roles and responsibilities, their impression about their community's development and the perceived challenges facing the implementation of the decentralized planning policy. Participants were randomly selected from the four area councils and interviewed. The population of respondents from each area council was determined proportionate to the population size of each area council. The main tool used in gathering the data was a structured questionnaire.

3.6.1.2.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus group discussions were also used in gathering in-depth information on the experience of community members with regards to their participation in the planning process. Community members who took part in the first phase of data collection were again invited to participate in the second phase which is the FGD. During the process community members were grouped according to their characteristics. For instance, women who are into agriculture were kept in one group thus 7 people in one group while their male counterparts numbering 8 were also kept in a separate group. This



opened up participants to freely discuss the issues under study and to also interrogate some responses. This method was used in order to reveal the vested meaning behind the statistical data from the first phase. Specifically, respondents gave reasons why there is low participation in needs assessment, low awareness of their roles, low participation in public hearing and the low developmental strides made in their communities. The tool in gathering this data used a semi structured interview guide.

3.7 Data analysis.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was the main analytical tool employed in the analysis of quantitative data collected from the field. The data gathered was first coded, entered into the system and cleaned before running the analysis. In running the analysis, frequencies were chosen and displayed in the form of pie charts, bar graphs, histograms and tables. This gave a general picture and trend of involvement of the people in the planning process.

The findings from the quantitative data aided in the selection of the respondents in the focus group discussions as well as the questions that were posed. The qualitative data was then analyzed using themes.

3.8 Summary of chapter

This chapter gave an insight as to the theoretical perspectives underlying research, methods and techniques of data collection as employed in this study. It pointed out that with a pragmatic orientation, the study adopted the explanatory sequential method under the mixed method design. It also touched on the sampling techniques, the sample units and methods and tools of data collection. It concludes with how the data was analyzed.



CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present, analyze and discuss the empirical findings of the study. For the purpose of clarity, this chapter is arranged in a way that, it addresses the objectives of the study (as stated and arranged in the chapter one), thus; examine how the implementation of the decentralized planning concept facilitates community participation in the planning process, determine whether the local people are well informed about their roles and responsibilities with the new decentralized planning system, assess how the implementation of the decentralized planning concept is facilitating development in the District and uncover the factors impeding the effective implementation of decentralized planning. This ends with a summary of the entire chapter.

4.1 Description of Study Participants

As indicated in the methodological chapter, a total of 396 participants were interviewed in the selected communities while 12 others who were purposively selected served as key informants. The study obtained more responses from the male respondents (202) as compared to the female respondents (194) as shown in table 4.1. Also majority of respondents (68%) have had some appreciable level of formal education which gives them a sense of appreciation of their environment so as to give informed responses. Table 4.1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of these participants in the study.



4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of respondents

Table 1.1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteritics		Frequency		Percentage (%)
Sex distribution of respondents				
Male		202		51
Female		194		49
Total Number of respondents		396		100
Age distribution of respondents				
Range of Age	18-25	26-35	36 – 45	46 - 55
Frequency	74	103	141	78
Percentage%	18.0	26.0	36.0	20.0
Educational Status of respondents				
Options		Frequency		Percentage%
No formal Education		127		32.0
Basic Level		91		23.0
Sec/Tech/O-level/Voc		107		27.0
Poly/Teacher Train./Uni.		71		18.0
Total		396		100

Source: Field survey, 2016

From table 4.1 the gender of the respondents shows that, 51% of respondents were males while 49% were female. Also on the same table it is evident that, majority of respondents fall within the 36-45 age category constituting 36% of total respondents, followed by 26-35 age category thus constituting 26% , 46-55 making 20% and lastly by 18-25 age category representing 18% of the total number of respondents.



In terms of education, majority of the respondents have had some form of formal education, thus 27% have attained secondary/vocational level education, 23% basic level education and 18% have had tertiary level education. Those who have not had any form of education constitute 32% of the total number of respondents. This therefore gives the study the benefit of the views and opinions of respondents with different demographic characteristics thus enriching the discourse.

4.2 Implementation of decentralized planning and community participation in the planning process

Decentralized planning has become in recent times, a matter of worldwide concern whether in developed or developing countries. The involvement of people at the grass root level in the formulation of developmental plans and their implementation is been advocated so as to ensure efficient utilization of resources and also to ensure a more equitable distribution of resources across communities.

The preceding section looks at the implementation of the decentralized planning concept and community participation in the planning process. The views of respondents that is both community members and local officials were solicited to ascertain the reality on the ground.

4.2.1 The implementation of decentralized planning by local officials

There is a widespread consensus among development practitioners and researchers, that it is almost impractical to sustain development unless the needs and priorities of the people concerned are reflected in the plans and interventions of local government. Ahwoi (1996) opined that one of the major objectives for which decentralized planning came into existence was to ensure an efficient political, planning and administrative institutions at the



district level, which would enjoy the popular support of local communities and facilitate the mobilization of support and resources for district development.

The procedural spaces available for the local people to participate in the formulation of their MTDP is based on sections of the Planning Systems Act, Act 480, which borders on participation in Ghana's decentralized planning system.

In an interview with an Official from the Sub District Unit, he had quite a lot to talk about as far as planning is concerned:

“As a unit committee member, we are not supported in any way to organize meetings....but here we sometimes call for meetings and only a few people turn up because people have lost interest in the process since it mostly yields nothing. Community needs since years ago are still left unattended to” (32 year old male, 2016)

As elaborate as the process is, following it by default should automatically produce results that are reflective of community needs. In responses to questions about the mechanism the decentralized departments have put in place to ensure grassroots participation in the decision making process, an Official had this to say:

We reckon the various provisions in the constitution and we try as much as possible to follow them to the latter but more often we encounter difficulties and in the face of such we still do something with the semblance of the prescriptions of the NDPC guidelines. If funds are available, we carry out a sensitization before hitting the communities to assist them identify their needs but in some cases we often ask the Assemblymen to collate their community needs and bring them to us. Well, some do but some too take too long a time to... and by the time they bring them, the plan is already approved and submitted to the RCC (39 years old lady, 2016).

Deducing from this statement, it is not farfetched for one to perceive that, the decentralized departments though interested in addressing community needs, they are not so perturbed if all communities have not brought on board their needs and aspirations but as far as some communities have their needs captured, their mandate in



terms of the planning process is fulfilled. This analogy if anything to go by, lends credence to the earlier respondent who stated that community members have lost faith in the process since their needs are often left unattended. Where as a community happens to have a dormant local government representative, their needs might never eventually get to the MTDP.

The study equally gathered that as crucial as Unit committee members, area council members and Assembly persons are, in the planning process, some do not know their roles and responsibilities. This was made clear and resonated across various local units.

One unit committee chairman had this to say;

“After assuming office, we heard we were going to receive some sought of orientation or training to enable us work well but since that time till now, nothing has happened. I only know our duty is to share health or NGO’s activities information with the people” (44 year old man, 2016)

If the people who are supposed to lead the process are themselves not aware of their roles, then how would such a system effectively deliver what it is expected to do? One of the major roles of the officials at the local units is to raise awareness and educate their constituents as to the relevance of these plans but once they find themselves in a situation where they lack the capacity to do so, such roles perish and the people are left in “darkness”. This thus denies the people the opportunity of getting their needs on board the MTDP.

Notwithstanding this situation, one thing that resonated strongly amongst study participants was the fact that, community leadership either the chiefs and elders or the Assemblymen are usually aware of this process once every four years. So if community needs are to be sent to the Assembly then, they come from these leaders and mostly without the inputs of community members. At one of the local units-area council, a respondent indicated the following





“fine.....the money usually is the issue....so what we do is, we make sure we get all the Assemblymen within our area council informed about the process and we also ensure the information gets down to the chiefs about the preparation of the Area council plans. So those who bring their issues, we include them in the plans. The Assembly gives us a token from the revenue we mobilize to run our activities but to be sincere with you, the money that is generated is often nothing to write home about so at the end what is given to you is something small. So doing things [organizing community meetings to educate the people and come up with their CAPS] the right way is not possible until we have enough revenue. We hardly carry out community sensitization because we do not have the funds” (40 year old male, 2016: emphasis by Author)

Drawing inference from the above statement, one is tempted to say this process cannot be said to be participatory. The very opportunity given the people to participate in the planning process is been denied them. Further information gathered indicates that, these community leaders who are given the information, after deciding what the community needs are, inform the entire community during their community meeting sessions and all they have to do is to listen.

With regards to the issue of whether there is local human capacity to participate in the decision making process and as to whether the sub- structures are functioning, an Assembly official put forward the following response:

I wouldn't say there is enough human capacity but let's say it is case specificin some communities where they have an elite Assembly man, Chief, opinion leaders and some very educated individuals, things are done in moderation [e.g Chaan], we don't end up getting “shopping list” in those communities but whereas these people are lacking, we usually have problems....and most of the communities actually lack these people but you know, NDPC Act says we should consult them so we get the shopping list and we

sieve it in accordance with the guidelines for the plan preparation. The sub structures.....you see is an issue especially the Unit committee, they are just there. Most of them are not really helping us at all but a few of the area councils like Jang, Sankana, Kaleo and Sombo are relatively active (39 year old lady, 2016)

A local unit official in reacting to the same issue stated that;

I must confess, our office hardly opens if not when we hear there is a meeting going to be held there, no one sits there.....for what? There is nothing to do there. (34 year old male, 2016).

Out of the seven area councils, four could be said to be relatively active which implies much is desired. These local structures were set up to act as a development conduit between the people and the District Assembly but per the evidence from the field, it appears these structures are to some extent ineffective in fulfilling their mandate.

Another opportunity given the people to participate in the planning process is the public hearing where a draft of the MTDP is read to the hearing of all for their final inputs before the adoption of the plan.

According to Adams (2004:44 as cited in Zakariah, 2012), 'public hearings, which are usually required by law, allow citizens to comment on a specific issue or proposal before a governmental entity makes a decision'.

Various scholars have contended, that under the right conditions such as the extensive advertisement of meetings and holding those meetings at a convenient time, public hearings can serve as an effective tool for influencing policy and attracting a representative sample of the citizenry (Adams, 2004).

The NDPC mandates district planning authorities to conduct at least two major public hearings in the DMTDP formulation process for citizens to make inputs into the plans before adoption. The first, after the data collection of views and proposals on the



development needs of communities have been collected and analyzed. The second hearing is for the discussion of the draft DMTDP, the outcome of which should conclude the formulation of the plan (Zakariah, 2012)

In furtherance, the NDPC guidelines provides that public hearings should be thoroughly advertised with notices served to the general public at least 7 days prior to the day of the hearing, be it at the sub-district or the district level. Invited participants are also supposed to be given draft copies of the plan 7 days clear to the hearing. Regarding participation in public hearings, the commission envisages the invitation and subsequent attendance of voluntary and youth associations, women groups and all interested persons. However, members of the sub-district, are mandated to attend (Zakariah, 2012)

This public hearing is supposed to take place in two fronts; first at the area council (if they have been tasked to formulate plans) and secondly at the District Assembly. The District Planning Officer outlined how they have often done it in the following:

“We send out invitation letters to the area councils and Unit committee members as well as paramount chiefs, NGOs, Assemblymen amongst a host of several others for the District public hearing but as for the area council one, we invite the Assembly men, chiefs, community members as well as CBOs among others. Participants during these hearings can raise issues of concern and these would be captured in our report which we will send to Accra alongside the MTDP. Mostly we don’t have ordinary citizens participating in the District one” (39 years old lady, 2016)

This narrative regarding public hearing fits into scholars' criticism of public hearings for attracting an unrepresentative sample of the population (Adams, 2004), as well as a means to allow officials to deflect criticism and proceed with decisions that have already been made (Adams, 2004). The DPOs statements suggest that, the District



public hearing is not often opened to all and sundry. The information communication does not follow the NDPC guidelines for holding public hearings. The letters only serve a few people instead of the general public. For a District like Nadowli-Kaleo, it would have been helpful if the information is communicated through radio Tumpani, information service van or radio Upper West which covers the entire District. As for the 7 days period prior to the public hearing, invitation letters obtained showed that the letters were written less than 7 days to the hearing not to talk about the time it takes for the letters to get to the recipients.

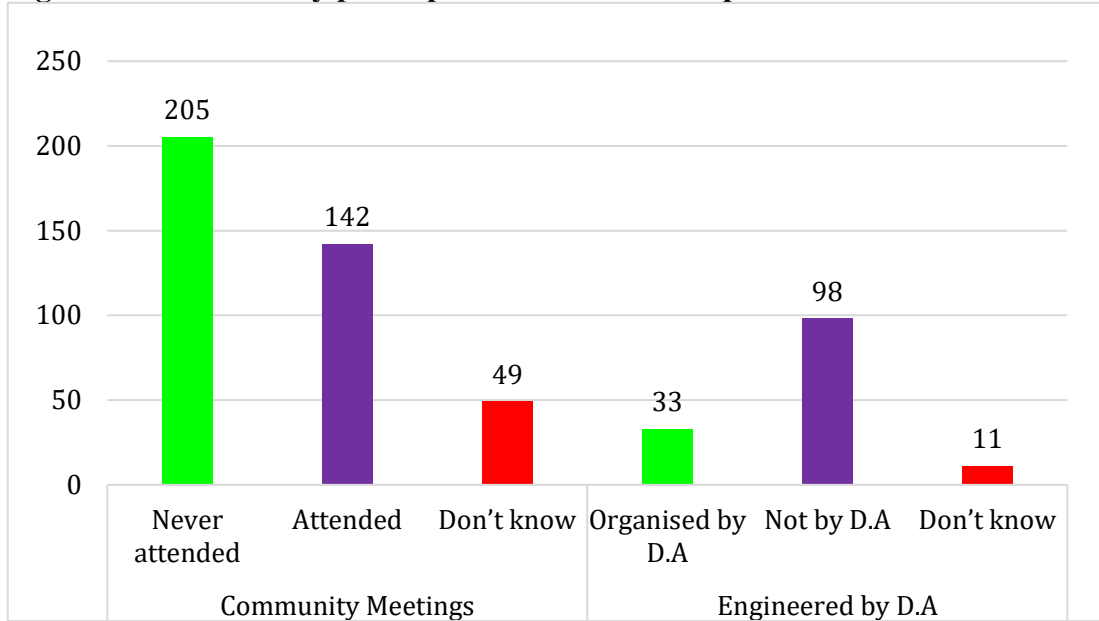
The preceding section focuses on views gathered from community members based on their participation in the decision making process. These views were obtained through a survey.

4.2.2 Community participation in community action plan (CAPS) formulation

The study elicited responses from respondents to establish whether they have attended meetings to plan their community development. Majority of respondents (52%) indicated that they have never attended such meetings, 36% of respondents stated that they have ever attended such meetings while 12% of respondents indicated that they have no idea as to whether they have ever attended one or not. Also, the study sought to know from those who have ever attended such meetings whether the meetings were engineered by the Assembly. Majority of them (69%) indicated that the meetings were not engineered by the District Assembly or its local units but rather by other development partners, 23% of respondents stated it was by the District Assembly and 8% could not tell the brain behind those meetings. This is shown in figure 4.1.



Figure 4.1: Community participation in their action plan formulation



Source: Field survey, 2016

This gives the impression that, the responsibility of local government structures to continually interact with community members through meetings among other interactive sessions is perhaps not fully adhered to or community members have lost interest in meetings organized by local government structures which would technically imply that, true involvement and participation of community members in the planning process is curtailed to an extent.



4.2.3 Community participation in MTDP preparation meetings

The forgone revelation about community’s low participation in their community action plan formulation raises “eyebrows” as to what is currently happening on the ground. Questions were put to respondents (who indicated in figure 4.1 to have participated in community meetings) to elicit their views as to which type of developmental meeting they attended in the past 24 months leading to the preparation of the MTDP. Majority of respondents who constitute 57% of the total respondents indicated that they participated in their community-wide development planning meeting (where needs

assessment is done), 19% stated that the last developmental meeting they attended was the village committee meeting, 12% indicated they attended public hearing at the area council level, 6% stated that they attended the Area committee meeting, 3% attended their local council meeting and another 3% attended unit committee meeting. This is illustrated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Type of MTDP preparation meeting community members attended

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Public hearing	17	12%
Community Development planning meeting	81	57%
Area committee meeting	9	6%
Local council meeting	4	3%
Unit committee meeting	4	3%
Village committee meeting	27	19%
Total	142	100%

Source: Field survey, 2016

This shows that the 142 respondents who indicated they participated in community development meetings actually took part in various stages or levels of planning although the numbers dwindled when it came to committee meetings where most respondents do not have voting rights. But that can be understood in the context of impact or having one’s opinions valued. People might prefer where they can enjoy the full compliments of their right to make inputs as opposed to where you would be seen as an “exalted observer” or perhaps invitations or notices to such meetings are limited to only a few.

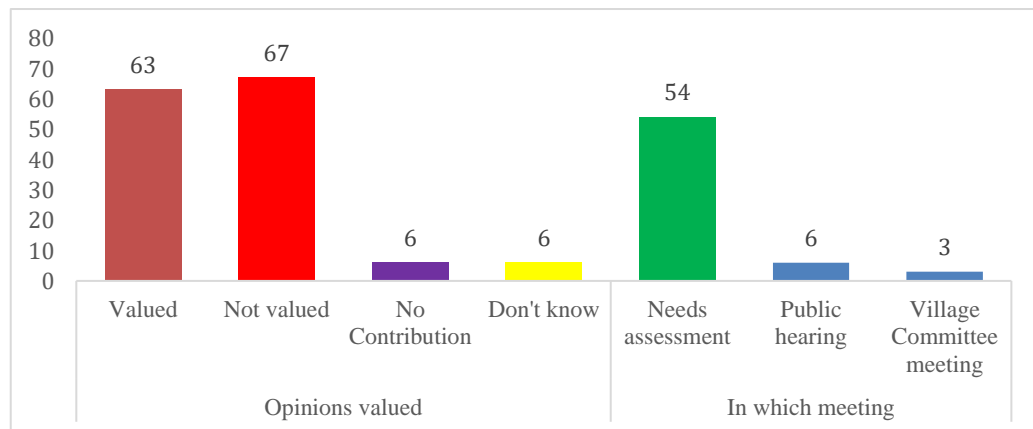


4.2.4 Community perception of whether their opinions are valued during meetings

The study sought to elicit responses from those who participated in meetings organized by local government officials in order to ascertain whether they felt their opinions were valued in those meetings. The survey revealed that 63 respondents constituting 44% of the 142 respondents who attended developmental meetings felt their opinions were respected and valued, out of this 63 respondents, 86% indicated that their opinions were valued during their community development planning meeting/needs assessment, 9% indicated that theirs were valued during the public hearing while 5% indicated that their opinions were valued during their village committee meeting. The rest of the 79 respondents that is 55% indicated that their opinions were not valued while 4% stated that they are not certain as to whether their opinions were valued or not while another 4% of respondents indicated that they did not make any input during the meeting. This is thus illustrated in figure 4.2. This finding (a near majority having their opinions valued) reaffirms the opinion of an Assemblyman who in response to a similar question pointed out that: *“I cannot take anything to the Assembly if it is not from my people. I am there to serve them so their every concern is my work. What they tell me is what I do except it is absurd”* (41 year old man, 2016)



Figure 4.2: Are community opinions valued?



Source: field survey, 2016

Though the study found out that majority of the Assemblymen complained that the D.A notified them late to conduct needs assessment which is impractical to do because they find it difficult reaching out to the many communities under their watch which often compels them to rely on “quick fixes” by calling a few “power holders” in the community to list their needs, a few Assemblymen still manage to do the right thing as this study gathered.

This said, it is important, to let the few who have had the feel of participatory planning actually have good memories of self-worth and importance if they are to be encouraged to be part of subsequent ones.

4.2.5 Critical community members in community plan formulation process

This study also sought to find out whether there are key people at the community level who take development decisions on behalf of the entire community. This is further necessitated by the fact that, figure 4.1 results creates the impression that a good number of respondents (52%) do not participate in the planning process, the study sought to know who takes development decisions on their behalf when respondents are not opportune to do so or perhaps only sit in as “listeners” without having their opinions taken. Most respondents, 27% (107) stated that in terms of decision making, the traditional leaders mostly take decisions on behalf of the community, 25% (99) of respondents were of the opinion that, political leaders such as the Assembly men, Unit committee among others usually take decisions on behalf of the community. The rest that is 24% (95) of respondents indicated that, the District Assembly usually takes decisions on their behalf, while another 24% (95) indicated that the District Assembly together with the traditional leaders usually take decisions on their behalf. This is shown in figure 4.3. This revelation goes to support the earlier findings from the officials who

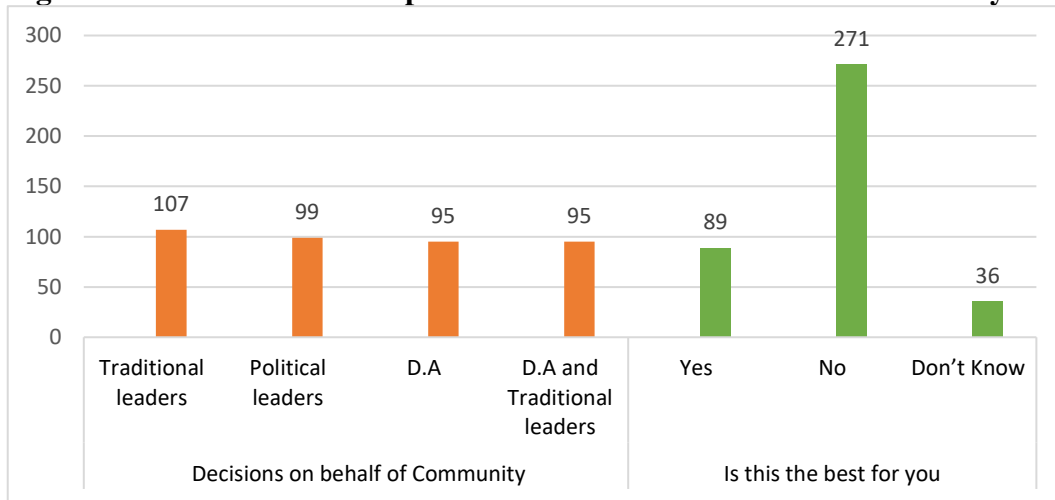


indicated that they try as much as possible to get the information across to the traditional leaders and political leaders to submit their community needs on behalf of their communities.

Further probing revealed that out of the 396 respondents, 89 (22%) were of the opinion that traditional leaders taking decisions on their behalf is the best for them while 271 (68%) respondents indicated that, the best decision making style would be to involve all community members and not resort to the views of only the traditional leaders and the District Assembly or both. The rest of the respondents, 36 (10%) stated that they are uncertain as to which decision making style served or would serve them better. This is illustrated in figure 4.3.



Figure 4.3: Who takes development decisions on behalf of the community?



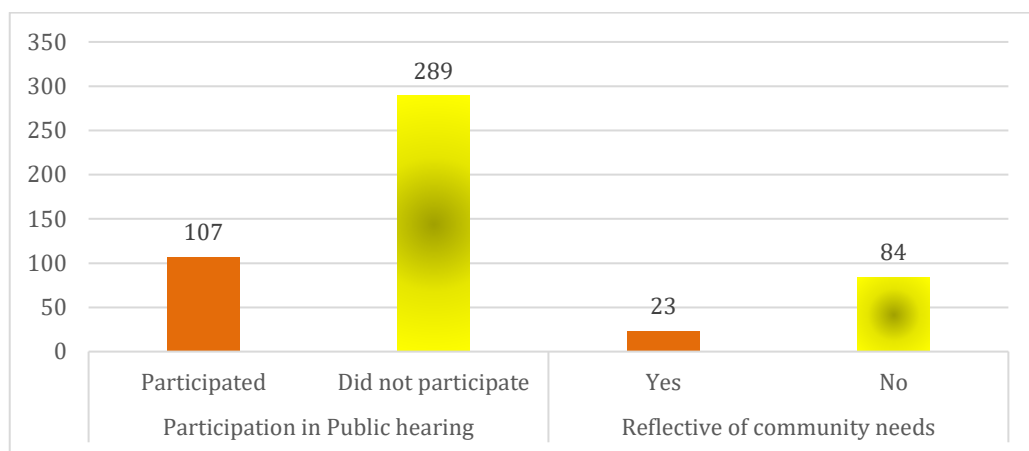
Source: Field survey, 2016

The majority of respondents who indicated that the best would be to involve all community members in a meeting have perhaps realized that, the decisions made by their leadership did not serve the masses but perhaps reflected the interest of the power holders. For a truly participatory process, the voice of the masses should count.

4.2.6 Community participation in Public hearing

The survey sought to unearth respondent's participation in public hearing whether at the area council level or at the District Assembly level. The analysis as shown in figure 4.4 reveals that, majority of respondents (73%) have never participated in any public hearing while 27% indicated that they have ever participated in a public hearing. This corroborates the earlier position of the DPO who stated that, they usually send invitation letters to a few people and as a result only a few people attend such hearings as pointed out by this study. Further questioning revealed that, out of the 107 who have ever participated in public hearing, 84 feel the public hearing did not reflect their community needs while 23 of them indicated that, it reflected their community development needs. Figure 4.4 below illustrates this.

Figure 4.4: Community member's participation in public hearing



Source: field survey, 2016

These public hearings would appear to be an exercise done in fulfilment of their constitutional mandate rather than seeking inputs from community members.



4.3 Citizen’s awareness of their roles and responsibilities in the decentralized planning system.

The new decentralized planning concept has embedded in it, a focus on citizens who are the ultimate beneficiaries of its outcomes. The planning profession itself and those involved in it have come to appreciate the fact that, planning as an activity is a collaborative activity which sees local knowledge from those considered as “lay people” very essential for the sustainability of what the planning profession strives to achieve (Wandera & Afrane, 2013). To this end, citizens have various roles (participate in needs assessment, public hearing, pay taxes among others) and responsibilities as far as decentralized planning is concerned. But in order to carry through with the roles and responsibilities, citizens are required to be knowledgeable about public issues and have the willingness to work toward solution by acting together. This subsection looks at how knowledgeable citizens are in terms of their roles and responsibilities in the decentralized planning system.

The Local government Act, Act 462 which was recently replaced with Act 936 both spell out the functions of the District Assembly to include public education among others. A default execution of this role would raise awareness among citizens and draw their attention to issues of national discourse, their roles and responsibilities and the channels to use in seeking redress.

This study found that, besides one area council, which has its public education and advocacy wing but admitted they have been doing little in terms of awareness creation and advocacy due to inadequate funds, the officials at the Assembly touted their execution of this role as exemplified in this statement:



“If you go through our MTDP you would see public education in there and we have been doing it. We move from community to community with the help of the community development and social welfare department. We do it my brother” (48 year old man, 2016)

This was repeatedly mentioned by other officials at the District Assembly. Upon assessing the MTDP for 2014-2017, quite a number of public education activities were lined up as intimated by the Assembly officials.

One area council chairman added;

“As for this area, the people are well aware of their roles. Our awareness creation meetings are making the needed impact and people are paying their taxes and making demands as well” (47 year old man, 2016)

By engaging community members through regular meetings and sensitization forums as implied from the narratives by the local government actors, it is expected that, the results from these meetings would be an increased awareness of their roles and responsibilities and as such one would expect same to reflect in the preceding section where citizens knowledge of their roles and responsibilities was assessed.

4.3.1 Community Knowledge of functions of the District Assembly

The survey elicited the responses of respondents as to whether they know the functions of the District Assembly. From the data obtained in the field, 87% of respondents were of the view that, in addition to other functions, the Assembly is responsible for providing infrastructure in the District, 80% saw the D.A as an agent of development thus encompassing all else, 60% see the D.A as a unit responsible for public education, 39% consider the functions of the D.A to include the maintenance of law, peace and order, 36% consider mobilization for community development as one of the functions



of the D.A, 29% were of the view that, revenue mobilization is one of its functions and environmental management is seen by 35% of respondents as functions of the D. A. This is thus illustrated in table 4.3. As one would expect, most citizens see the Assembly as an agency responsible for propelling development in their community. Generally the knowledge levels of the functions of the D.A, is fairly good (averagely 52%) as one would expect community members to leverage on this to demand what is rightfully theirs. This finding confirms what an official at the D.A said during an interview:

“As for these people, they all know we are supposed to develop their communities for them so they don’t play with it..... hence the shopping list we receive “(39 year old lady, 2016).

But somehow contrary to the touting by the local government officials, 61% of respondents didn’t know the functions of the D.A include maintenance of peace and order, 65% didn’t know environmental protection is one of the functions of the D.A, 71% were also not knowledgeable of the D.A’s revenue mobilization function.

Table 4.3: Community member’s perception of D.A’s roles

Functions	Frequency	Percentage
Provide infrastructure	344	87%
Agent of development	317	80%
Provide public education	238	60%
Maintain Peace, Law and Order	154	39%
Mobilization of communities for Development	142	36%
Agent for Revenue mobilization	115	29%
Environmental management	75	35%

Source: field survey, 2016



This to some extent contradicts the position of the local government officials who emphatically stated that community members are aware of their roles and responsibilities but it turns out that, majority are only aware of the community development role of the D.A.

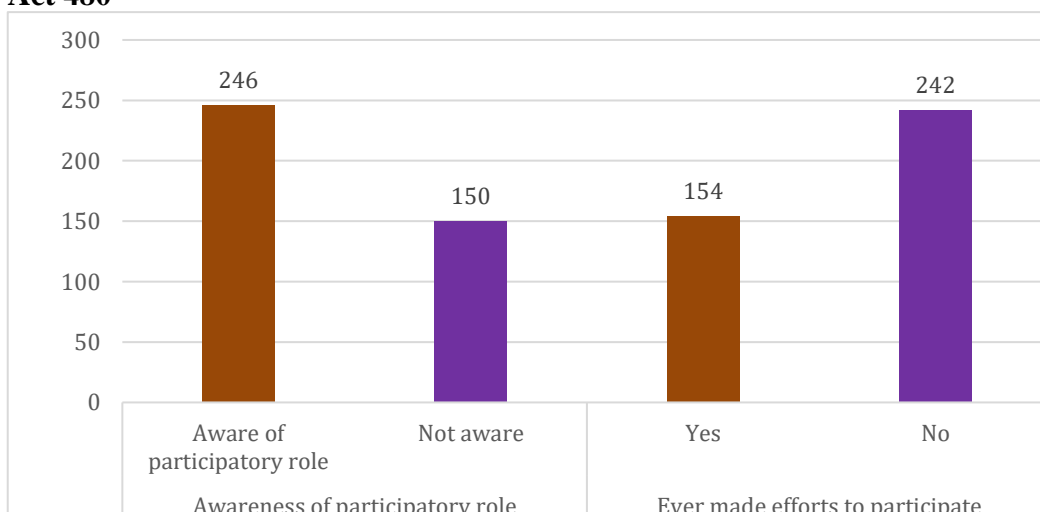
4.3.2 Community members awareness of the participatory planning process

The NDPC Act, Act 480, pertaining to participation in Ghana's decentralized planning system, prescribes the involvement of community members in the planning process. Exploring the reality on the ground, the study solicited responses from respondents to ascertain their awareness of this provision and as to whether, on the basis of this provision, respondents make efforts to participate in the planning process leading to the development of the MTDP. The findings show that, out of the 396 respondents, 62% were aware of the constitutional provision while 38% were unaware of the fact that they are supposed to participate in the planning process.

Further probing revealed that majority of the respondents (61%) have never made attempts to participate in the planning process while 39% have ever made attempts at participating in the planning process. This is illustrated in figure 4.5.



Figure 4.5: Community awareness of their participatory role as provided for by Act 480



Source: field survey, 2016

The evidence from the field though proves that most (246) community members were aware of this provision, one would have thought that on the basis of this awareness, they would try to exercise their civil duty by making efforts to participate in the planning process but contrary to this thinking or expectation, only a few out of the majority make efforts to participate. The question is why?

A possible explanation may be found in 4.2.1 where a sub District level official stated that *“As a unit committee member, we are not supported in any way to organize meetings....but here we sometimes call for meetings and only a few people turn up because people have lost interest in the process since it mostly yields nothing. Community needs since years ago are still left unattended to”* (33 year old male, 2016).

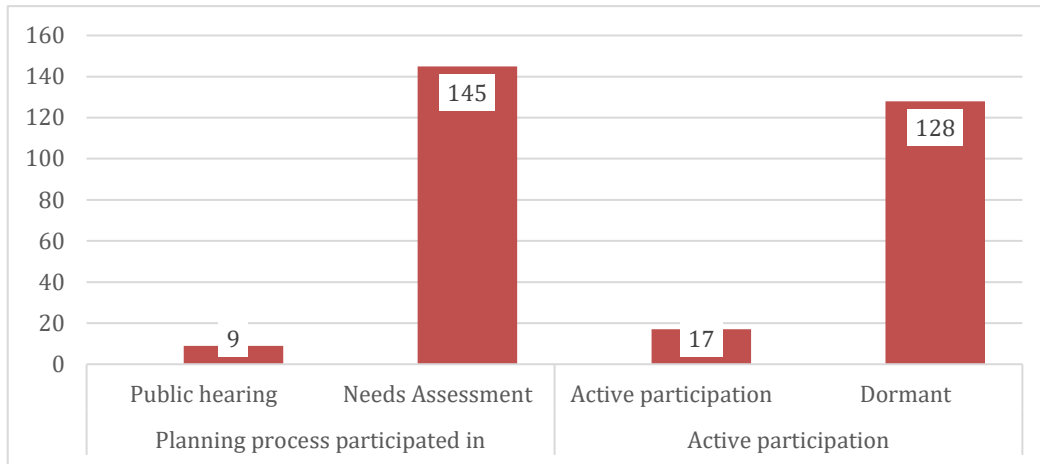
4.3.3 Planning meetings attended by community members

The study further elicited responses from those who made attempts and actually participated in the planning process as to which planning meeting they attended in the last twelve months. Majority of them (95%) out of the 154 respondents indicated that, they participated in their community needs assessment meetings while 5% of respondents who participated in the planning process indicated that they participated in a public hearing.

Probing further, it came to light that, 83% of respondents only sat-in throughout the meeting but did not make any contributions because they felt they did not have to speak while 17% of respondents actually made contributions during the meeting. This is shown in figure 4.6.



Figure 4.6 Development planning meetings attended by community members



Source: field survey, 2016

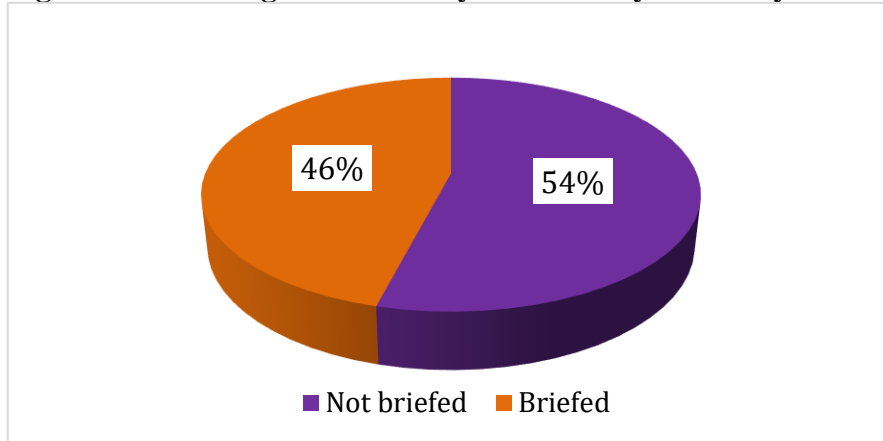
The low active participation of community members reduces their participatory role to that of Arnstein's definition of tokenism which does not constitute enough motivation for people to want to be part of the planning processes.

4.3.4 The conduct of the liaison role of Assembly members

Act 936 (16) (e) enjoins Assembly men to report to their electorates the general decision of the District Assembly and actions the member has taken to solve problems raised by residents in the electoral area. The study revealed that, most of the respondents have never received any report neither have they ever invited their elected Assemblymen to report to them about issues discussed at the General Assembly. Specifically, 54% of respondents said they have never had or invited their Assemblymen to brief them while 46% indicated that they have ever received reports from their Assembly persons. This is shown in figure 4.7



Figure 4.7: Briefing of community members by Assemblymen



Source: field survey, 2016

An interviewee summed up his position as *“I have lived in this community for over thirty years and I have seen Assemblymen come and go but none have ever come forward voluntarily to brief community members. They only come around during election periods and only when we summon or compel them to come around”* (51 year old man, 2016). The very people who are supposed to act as a link between the Assembly and the community members do not appear to play this function optimally. How then will community members stay abreast with discourse at the Assembly level so as to contribute their quota to the development of the District?

4.3.5 Actions taken by community members to get their needs to the D.A

As part of the duties of the Assemblymen as provided for by Act 936 (16) (1) where Assemblymen are supposed to maintain close contact with their electoral area, consult the people of the electoral area on issues to be discussed in the District Assembly, collate their views, opinions, and proposals; present the views, opinions and proposals of the electorate to the District Assembly, this study sought to know the action(s) employed by community members to get their needs to the D.A when the Assemblypersons fail to avail themselves to their constituents. The study revealed that, majority (58%) of respondents do nothing when their Assemblypersons fail to avail



themselves, while 15% indicated that they officially write to the D.A. The rest of the respondents that is 14% indicated that they send a delegation to the Assembly with their needs and 13% said they usually summon them and present their grievances to them. This is illustrated in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Actions taken by communities to get their needs to the D.A

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Officially write to the D.A	59	15%
Send a delegation	55	14%
Summon him and present grievances	52	13%
Do nothing	230	58%
Total	396	100

Source: field Survey, 2016

Going by this finding, a greater number of people would be denied the opportunity to make inputs into the planning process as they may not explore the other options available to them.

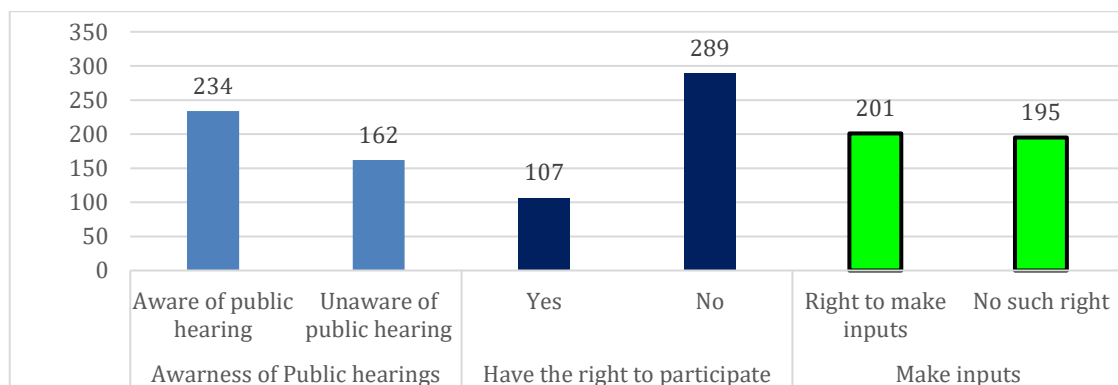
4.3.6 Awareness of community's role in public hearings

In furtherance, the study elicited responses from respondents as to whether they are aware of the fact that the D.A is supposed to hold public hearing to discuss and finalize plans and budget both at the area council and at the District Assembly level. The responses reveal that, majority of respondents that is 59% are aware of this function of the District Assembly, while 41% are unaware of this function of the D.A. Stemming from this, the study probed further to establish whether, respondents feel they have the right to attend public hearings or not. Majority (73%) indicated that they do not have the right to attend because they feel it is meant for only elected Assembly members as



captured in this statement by a respondent “*how can I attend such a meeting? If you go there they will either chase you away or no one would even listen to you so I feel it’s strictly meant for Assemblymen*”(47 year old man, 2016). The remaining respondents (27%) were of the opinion that they have the right to participate in public hearing at the area council level but not at the District Assembly level. As for making inputs during public hearing, majority (95%) were of the opinion that they do not have the right to make inputs while 19 respondents were of the opinion that they can actually make inputs during such hearings. This is illustrated in figure 4.8.

Figure: 4.8: Awareness of community participatory role in public hearing



Source: field survey, 2016

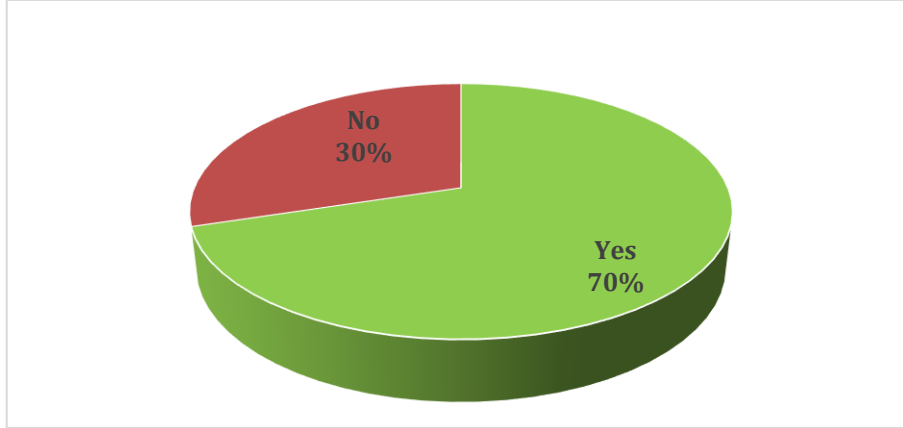
This finding speaks volumes of the depth of ignorance on the part of citizens when it comes to public hearing where plans are supposed to be debated and inputs made before finalization. With this low knowledge level, how would community members press home their demands?

4.3.7 Community’s awareness of their tax obligations

The survey sought to elicit responses from participants to ascertain how knowledgeable they are with regards to their duty to pay taxes and property rates. The findings indicates that, a greater number of respondents (70%) are aware of their responsibility of paying

taxes and property rates while 30% stated they didn't know it was their civic responsibility. This is shown in figure 4.9.

Figure 4.9: Respondents awareness of their tax obligation to the D.A



Source: field survey, 2016

Just as citizens have the right to demand developmental services from their local government, they also have certain responsibilities towards the same. These two elements that is rights and responsibility play complimentary roles to ensure holistic development.

4.4 Perceived effects of decentralized planning on development at the grass root level

The realization of the failures of centralized planning led to the bottom up approach to planning. Botchie (2000) succinctly explained that, the decentralized planning system in Ghana is built on the principle that the development planning process is participatory, integrative, comprehensive, and problem solving process that focuses primarily on the enhancement of the district level development. Hence, the decentralized planning system in Ghana is for the community and therefore everything has to be done to ensure that the sub-structures, thus the Unit Committees, Zonal/Area/Town Councils and the Assembly members as well as the community leadership and members are well integrated into the system to deliver development to the people. Granted that



decentralized planning is carried out to the latter, consequently, there is the expectation of a transformation of the lives of the people at the grass root level. It is expected to deliver tailor made development to the people since interventions would be reflective of community needs and this invariably would lead to a transformation in the lives of the people. A transformation that the people themselves can see and feel for themselves. The preceding section focuses on the perceived effects of decentralized planning on development at the grass root level. The data as presented represents the perspectives of community members who are major stakeholders in the participatory planning process.

4.4.1 Assessment of the performance of the District Assembly by citizens

The study elicited responses from respondents with regards to whether they feel decentralized planning has brought needbased development to their door step. Majority (72%) of the respondents indicated that it has brought development closer to their doorstep while 28% were of the opinion that it has not brought development closer to their doorstep. Further probing brought to the lime light the fact that majority (52%) of respondents feel the local assembly (Unit/area/town council) have not been useful to them in terms of improving their lives while 48% indicated that these local Assemblies have been useful. The 48% who indicated that their local Assembly is been useful to them went further to adduce various reasons for their choice of answer. Thus 58% of the 48% who were of the view that their local Assembly is useful to them indicated that the local Assembly leads in their community development Initiatives, 15% opined that, they provide them with their social amenities, 14% indicated that they lead them in needs assessment in community action plan drawing, while 13% indicated that their local Assembly provides funds for their developmental projects. See table 4.5.



Table 4.5: Citizen’s assessment of the performance of the District Assembly in terms of development

Effects	Freq.	%
Decentralization brought development closer to your doorstep		
Yes	286	72%
No	110	28%
Total	396	100%
Usefulness of local Assembly		
Yes	189	48%
No	207	52%
Total	396	100%
Ways in which local Assembly is useful		
Provision of social Amenities	28	15%
Needs identification and planning	26	14%
Provides funds for Developmental projects	25	13%
Lead community Development Initiatives	110	58%
Total	396	100%
Extent of importance of District Assembly to community development		
To an average extent	162	41%
Not sure	103	26%
To a large extent	87	22%
To a limited extent	75	19%
Total	396	100%

Source: Field survey, 2016

In terms of the District Assembly’s relevance in facilitating development at the grass root level, majority (41%) of respondents feel the D.A is to an average extent is important in their community’s development, 26% were uncertain whether the Assembly is relevant in their community’s development or not, 22% were of the opinion that they District Assembly to a large extent is relevant while 19% indicated that the D.A to a limited extent is relevant in their community’s development.

4.4.2 Effectiveness of District Assembly compared to other agencies

As a body tasked with the overall development of the District, citizens have certain (developmental) expectations from the District Assembly. So comparing the performance of the District Assembly to other development partners, 32% of



respondents view the D.A as the most important development partner, another 32% of respondents are uncertain as to whether the D.A is a more relevant development partner than the other developmental partners, 27% were of the opinion that they are both the same while 9% indicated that the District Assembly is less important as compared to other developmental partners. This is shown in table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Ratings of District Assembly compared to other agencies

Options	Frequency	Percentage
The most important Development partner	127	32%
Not sure	127	32%
Equal to other agencies	107	27%
Less important as other agencies	35	9%
Total	396	100%

Source: field survey, 2016

This gives the impression that the Assembly though had a higher ratings, they have not convincingly discharged their duties leading to the same number of people (127) rooting for them and another (127) uncertain.

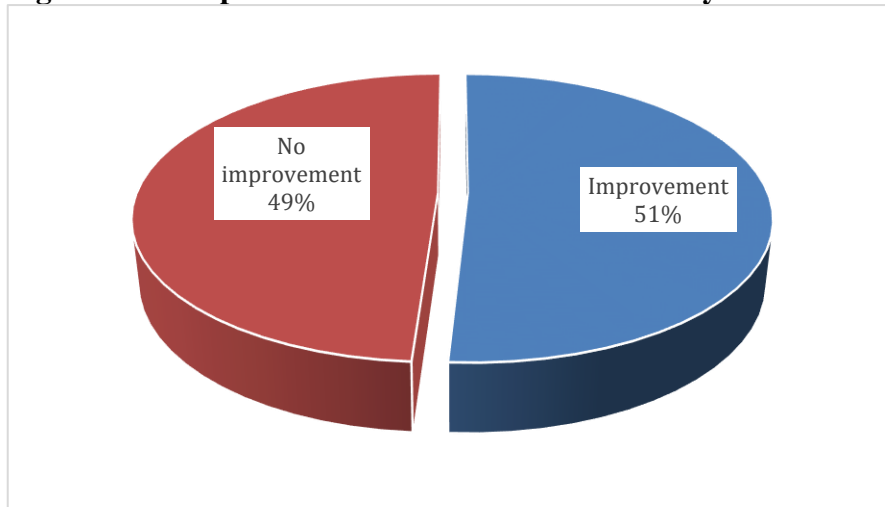
4.4.3 Perceived effect of decentralized planning by community members

Local government has a barrage of duties to its constituents which include the responsibility for the overall development of the district, formulation and execution of plans, programs and strategies for the effective mobilization of the resources necessary for the overall development of the district, promote and support productive activities and social development in the district and remove any obstacles to initiatives and development. The default execution of all these functions should lead to an improvement in the lives of constituents. The data analysis in figure 4.10 presents an



almost split decision amongst respondents when it came to the issue of their lives been improved or not.

Figure 4.10: Improvement in the lives of community members



Source: field survey, 2016

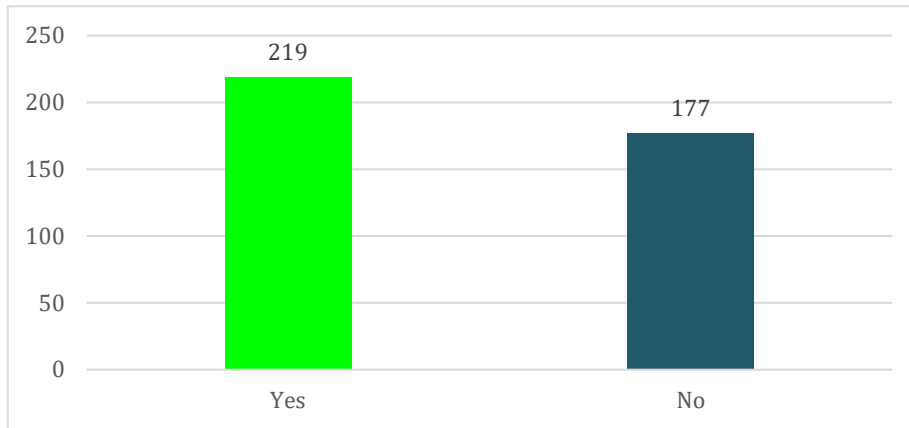
A slight majority of respondents (51%) feel their lives have improved due to the interventions of the local government while 49% were of the opinion that their lives have not been improved by the interventions of local government. This is illustrated in figure 4.10.

4.4.4 District Assembly interventions compared to community needs

The preceding results in figure 4.10 brought to the fore the issue of whether the D.A's interventions are reflective of community's prioritized needs. Act 936 provides that the D.A in coming up with their MTDP should do so in consultation with their constituents such that the communities who are the ultimate beneficiaries will come to embrace the concept and own the process. Once the consultations are done leading to the finalization of the MTDP, the D.A is expected to roll out its interventions based on the captured needs of the people. The data from the perspective of the community members indicates that while some agree that D.A's interventions are reflective of their community needs others feel they are not. This is shown in figure 4.11.



Figure 4.11: Are D.A interventions reflective of community needs



Source: field survey, 2016

Specifically, 177 respondents constituting 45% of total respondents indicated that the interventions are not reflective of their community needs whiles, 219 respondents constituting 55% of total respondents opined that interventions are reflective of their community needs. Figure 4.11 is illustrative of the narrative.

4.4.5 Community priorities in relation to approved plans

To lend credence to the findings as to whether developmental interventions are reflective of community needs, the study compared the approved projects in relation to community aspirations. The review of the medium term plan 2013/17 shows that, out of six community aspirations, two projects, borehole water and a school project were approved in the Tangasie area council. On the other hand, 1 out of 6 community needs in Sankana area were approved. Table 4.8 shows the community needs and the approved projects.



Table 4.8: Community needs versus approved projects

Source: MTDP, 2013/2017

Area Council	Community's prioritized areas	Approved plans
Jang	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inadequate drinking water 2. Poor road network 3. Poor school structures 4. Low electricity coverage 5. Low health service coverage 6. Low extension service 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provision of 6 boreholes 2. Refurbish area council 3. Rehabilitate 2 teachers quarters annually 4. Construct 2 schools 5. Provision of streetlights 6. Equip and Furnish 1 CHPS compound annually 7. Construction of one slaughter house
Sankana	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inadequate water 2. Poor road network 3. Low electricity coverage 4. Poor school infrastructure 5. Dam 6. Poor network coverage 7. Unemployment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provision of 3 boreholes 2 Rehabilitate Area council 3 Rehabilitate and furnish 2 CHPS compounds 4. Erecting of three market shades 5. Construct two CPHS compounds 6. Provision of street lights

From Table 4.8, it is evident that most community needs are not captured in the MTDP and that gives weight to the claim that interventions are not reflective of their community needs and aspirations.

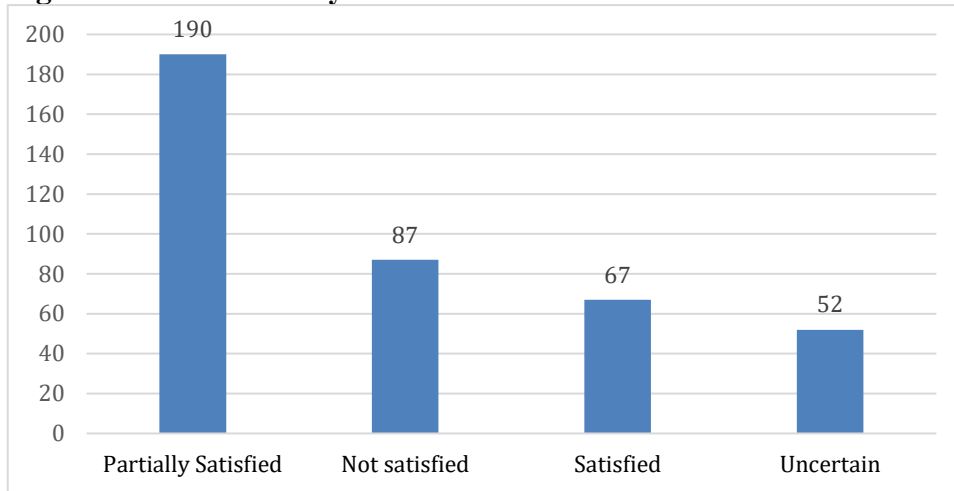
4.4.6 Citizen's level of satisfaction with D.A

In spite of the forgone, a greater number of people (190) feel partially satisfied by the Assembly's performance, 87 respondents were unsatisfied with local governments overall performance, 67 respondents indicated that they are satisfied with their overall



performance while 52 respondents were undecided as to whether they are satisfied or not. Figure 4.12 shows the level of satisfaction of respondents with the D.A's performance.

Figure 4.12: Community member's level of satisfaction with D.A



Source: field survey, 2016

These split decisions are indicative of the fact that, the Assembly needs to do more if their constituents are to appreciate their work.

4.5 Explanations behind key (outliers) quantitative data

This section examines the rationale behind some of the responses that emerged during the analysis of the quantitative data. These nascent issues serve as major highlights which requires an expanded explanation so as to offer the researcher an appreciation of the thinking behind these rather surprising results. To this end, focus group discussions were held with some initial respondents to elaborate on the following which came to the fore after the analysis of the quantitative data:

1. Why don't you take part in the decision making process?
2. What decision making process is best for your community?
3. How do you press home your demands since you are unaware you are supposed to participate in public hearings?



4. Why are you not satisfied with the Assembly's performance?
5. What do you see as obstacles to the performance of the D.A and what should be done about it.

4.5.1 Nature of patronage of the decision making process

To begin with, decentralized planning provides for a bottom up approach to planning thus providing room for the participation of community members in the preparation of their MTDP. Earlier findings (quantitative) revealed that a good number of citizens usually do not take part in the decision making process. This study thus tried to explore the reasons behind the low participation in the decision making process.

One thing that resonated very well among participants was the following: *no one comes to tell us about the formulation of any plan in which we are expected to make inputs.....so we have never known that we are supposed to be part of any process. The Assemblymen and Unit committee members we elect are hardly seen after election.....the unit committee chairman is even better because he is here but as for the Assemblyman, some of us cannot even remember how he looks like...He doesn't come around so how do we uneducated as most of us are know when the Assembly is asking for our needs if these key people do not come to tell us or call us to a meeting to sit down and identify our needs together... (44 year old man, 2016)*

This position sat in well with various groups who appeared a little bit knowledgeable about the entire process and the existence of a document that is supposed to direct the Districts development. The blame was put at the doorsteps of the elected officials who are supposed to act as a link between the community and the D.A. It appears these people hardly hold regular meetings with the community members hence the low level



of knowledge among community members in terms of participation in the MTDP preparation.

Other groups felt differently, although they have fair knowledge of their roles in the preparation of the MTDP, they however feel reluctant in doing so since it yields little to nothing as captured in the proceeding text: *we have lost interest in this thing my son....we hold meetings here regularly but the plans that are submitted to the Assembly never yields anything good for us...We raised issues with lack of potable water in this community....it's been years ago and nothing has happened...one of our sons had to come to our aid.....so as for planning, we have always done it but it yields nothing so we have all lost interest in it....if you do one thing over and over again and it does not give you the desired results, will you continue my son? It is just a total waste of our time that is why we don't participate in these things* (52 year old man, 2016).

The youth group see the plan preparation from a different perspective. They feel skeptical about the plan since in their view, the Assembly especially the political elites have their political interest which overrides that of the prepared plan. So they view the entire exercise as an effort in futility since prepared plans will be pushed aside at the end of the day. One young man who was very passionate about the discussions stated that:

I believe they have their own plans but they only come to waste our time so that when big people come from Accra to find out whether they did the work they were supposed to do, we would be able to say we participated in the process but the truth is, it offers us nothing. It is just an exercise in futility. So I will not waste my time attending D.A planning meetings (30 year old man, 2016).



This finding points to the political influence at the local government level many scholars have written about. This does not auger well for the country as it undermines the role of community members.

4.5.2 Preferred decision making process

The bottom up approach to planning at the local level envisages community participation as one of the key ingredients to plans formulation. Per the NDPC guidelines, the stages are well elaborated but are hardly followed to the latter. From the earlier findings (quantitative), respondents were not satisfied with the existing decision making system. But further discussions during FGD showed that they prefer the involvement of all and sundry. The following statement by an opinion leader amplifies this position: *in this community we have so many people with different needs, so to be able to come up with needs that would take care of all the different interest groups, the decision making process would have to involve all interest group and not just one person or some few people representing the entire community. You know my son that the needs of women are different from us men... and even the youth. So the best for us like I said would be to give all the opportunity to be involved in the process (47 year old man, 2016)*

Lending credence to this statement, some lamented that the existing decision making process is not favorable to the community in its entirety. Their sentiments were to the effect that, those that have always taken decisions in the past on behalf of the entire community have not resulted in the needed development the community have often aspired for. The following statement by a participant in the focus group discussion typifies their feelings:



Those who took decisions for us in the past.....those decisions have not yielded any dividends. The interventions in this community though serves people of this community, were not the priority of the people but that of a select few. You know when you are given the opportunity to ask for something, you would naturally ask for that which will suit you and not the greater good of the people. It will be coincidence when your choice is the people's choice. As for the best decision making process, we all need to participate in it (41 year old man, 2016).

Although the pattern of responses seem to agree with the constitutional provisions which calls for the participation of community members in the decision making process, a few people however disagreed with the involvement of all and sundry. They rather prescribed the involvement of their chiefs and opinion leaders only as opposed to the involvement of the entire community. This position appears to sit well with the tradition and customs of the area where the chiefs and opinion leaders are very much revered and seen as embodiments of wisdom and the mouth piece of the gods. As a respondent succinctly puts it: *the chief and his elders who are blessed with the wisdom of our fore fathers should be made to take decisions on our behalf. They know what our needs are and they are the best people* (40 year old woman, 2016)

Though this position is in contravention with the NDPC guidelines for plans preparation, some groups feel that should hold but the common thread that run through the responses was to the effect that, the best decision making process would be the one that will consider the views of all stakeholders.



4.5.3 Alternatives means used in getting needs into MTDP as public hearing is secluded

From the quantitative data, it came to light that most of the respondents have never participated in public hearing which is a forum for raising and addressing issues emanating from the collated plans. It is also a place where the draft MTDP is validated. During the FGD it came out strongly that once this platform has not been utilized out of lack of information, community members use a range of other options as captured in the following statement: *we sometimes form committees to go to the DCE and lobby directly or even the MP. We sometimes write formally and make follow ups until our issue is attended to. It is really not easy getting your community needs attended to but if you have a good relationship with the DCE, DCD and the PM then you can be sure your community needs would be attended to* (48 year old man, 2016).

Since this “alternative option” involves tact, patience and some lobbying skills which is not a very common trait, others sit and do nothing. The preceding sentence by an elderly respondent corroborates this position: *we just sit and watch events unfold.....we do nothing. They don't treat us as if we are part of the District so we don't even bother ourselves. We are not aware of the public hearings and we are not aware of any plans. Here the Assembly doesn't involve us in anything and since we don't have so many educated people here, I don't think any of us is qualified to go to the District Assembly and talk on our behalf. Illiterates too can't attend such meetings and be given the opportunity to speak so we don't go and we do nothing* (55 year old man, 2016)

Going by this statement, the spaces for community participation as provided for by the NDPC guidelines are not being utilized to the full due to little understanding of the purpose and nature of the public hearing. The interaction between local officials and community members is perhaps non-existent or it is not as empowering as it should be.



4.5.4 Dissatisfaction with the Assembly's performance

With the mandate of the overall development of the District, the D.A has many responsibilities towards the numerous communities under its operational area. So by default, community members look up to the D.A to toss them out of their quagmire but the responses seek to give the impression that, this expectation is not being met by the D.A. To elucidate on the rationale behind their dissatisfaction with the D.A, a respondent had this to say: *We are not satisfied with their performance because they don't involve us in their activities. When we give them our needs....they do nothing about it and no one comes to tell us anything. No meetings, no explanation, no consultation* (52 year old man, 2016)

This response engendered support amongst participants in various FGD. It resonated well with them. Others too though on a similar thread, added specifics to the whole discussion when the issue of their dissatisfaction with the D.A was introduced. The statement below by a participant during the FGD exemplifies the narration:

There are three abandoned projects.....one in this community and the two others in the nearby communities. See how large this community is but we have one borehole. No electricity. They are not helping us develop at all yet they come to us for tax....especially tax on our cows which we walk several miles just to get them water to drink from. They are not responsive to our needs and we are often not regarded as important in anything except when it comes to tax (63 year old man, 2016).

Another participant adds: *if the plan exist (with reference to the MTDP) then I doubt if it is being followed and even if it is followed at all, it means that, what is followed is different from what we present to them as our needs. They come to do "D" when we asked for "B" so we are not happy with them* (39 year old male, 2016)



4.5.5 Obstacles to the performance of the District Assembly and remedies.

The implementation of the decentralized planning system is not without challenges. Even though most community members are not involved in D.A activities but there are certain challenges that the local authorities are facing that are not hidden from the people as one opinion leader remarked during the FGD;

From where we sit, all we hear is that there is no money. They tell us the government is not sending the money for them to execute projects. But as for what should be done, I think they should get the citizens and NGOs to speak out loudly for the government to hear. The revenue mobilization will have to be examined more critically so that the area council people and those collecting the taxes would not squander it (42 year old male, 2016).

Others felt, the low knowledge with regards to the D.A activities is an issue that should be placed squarely at the door steps of their elected representatives who are supposed to act as intermediary between the D.A and community members. They held the view that if such people are up and doing, most community members would come to know more about the planning process. The following statement corroborates the narrative: *the people they call our representatives should be trained to know their work very well. These people are not helping the D.A. I understand our reps are supposed to feed us with every vital information from the Assembly but here is the case nothing of that sort is happening. There are no meetings or any form of regular interaction between us and these people we call our elected representatives.....the area council offices are not working.....nothing at the local level is functioning (34 year old male, 2016).*

Another widely held view during the discussions was the issue of partisan political interest or influence in the day to day activities of the D.A. The head of the District thus





the DCE is a political figure who would easily kotow to the whims and caprices of the appointing authority thus making him a vessel for propagating one's political agenda. In effect, the interest of the people come second and this thus makes it difficult for the D.A to work effectively. To typify this, a participant put it that: *I don't know much about the DA but if you look at things the head of the DA is always a politician who controls and determines the work of the DA..... as a result the work of DA is therefore influenced by the interest of the politicians and work does not go on the way citizens expect the Assembly to work.....also contracts are not given to qualified people but rather to party supporters who can't deliver but rather engage in shoddy work (48 year old woman, 2016).*

In reacting to this, members of the sub-district structures and the DPCU representatives mentioned financial and logistical constraints as the major impediments to involving their constituents in the preparation of the District MTDP. At the Sub-District level, inadequate funds were cited as the rationale behind their inability to involve all interest parties in the preparation of their LAPs. One area council chairman lamented that: *it is not easy to organize communities to be part of the process. It requires a lot of resources which isn't forthcoming. The D.A seem reluctant in releasing money but what is more embarrassing is the fact that, we generate low revenue in this area so the amount we are given to ran our affairs is equally something small (37 year old male, 2016)*

But the D.A officials in reacting to the statement attributed their failure to involve all stakeholders in the plan preparation due to the erratic nature of the DACF. He puts it that: *It is not as if we are not committed to supporting the sub structures but the truth is, we lack the funds to do so. The IGF is often too low to be used for these things so there is an over reliance on common fund which hardly comes in time. We don't have any vehicle for these activities. As for staff, we are not many but I think the current*

number is not very bad and most of them have master's degrees in their field of practice but the major issue has to do with computers, vehicles and the financial muscle (57 year old man, 2016)

4.6 Discussion of findings

The issue in contention in this study revolves around the extent to which local people are involved in the planning process as prescribed in the NDPC guidelines and how efficient this is been done so as to bring about development to the local people. To ascertain the reality on the ground, the study elicited responses pertaining to participation in needs assessment, public hearing, their rights and responsibilities, the perceived effect of the planning system as well as the challenges confronting the planning system.

To begin, with, earlier quantitative findings suggested that the number of people involved in the planning process is very low. Subsequent follow up in the FGD expatiated on this by examining the rationale behind it which revealed that, people have no knowledge of the plan formulation and where there is an appreciation of the process, there is low interest because the process yields nothing in their opinion. This finding has far reaching consequences bordering on sustainability and suitability of developmental interventions. This finding coincides with Wandera & Afrane (2013) who indicated that, there is low involvement of community members in the decision making process. This is in contravention of the constitutional provisions thus instead of the community playing a central role in the process, they are rather left out. It would appear that participatory planning can't be an effective means through which local community needs and aspirations are fulfilled if the spaces for community participation are not implemented to the latter. Abott (1995) opined that participatory community development planning will only operate successfully within the specific environment



where local government is opened for community involvement in decision making. But before there can be improvements in the numbers that participate, in the view of Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) citizen education and awareness creation, training, capacity building and sensitization is crucial and must underpin the search for greater participation and citizen control.

Further to this, community involvement should go beyond mere listening or informing to actual consultation with the ultimate aim of attaining “citizen control”. With the few who got to participate in the planning process, they felt their views were not regarded when it came to the planning process and that mostly the chiefs and other opinion leaders are the only people who have their opinions valued and for that matter end up making decisions for the entire community. This finding is in tandem with Sanyare (2013) who found that the involvement of local people in decision making is a mere platitude or simply to fulfill statutory and sometimes donor demands. This also coincides with Hansen and Askin (2008) who asserted that even though bureaucrats encourage involvement by establishing routines that facilitate community participation in decision making, most of them are ambivalent about utilizing citizen’s inputs. However, literature, has showed that project’s success hinges on the community’s buy in or ownership. And that is possible if they are seen as having influenced the interventions. Only placing value on the opinions of power holders in the community would lead to what Mosse (1994; 520) calls “problematic plans” because the plans are produced in a social context where the influence of power and authority are enormous. Paolo and Abotsi (2011) posited that, chieftaincy excludes those who are not within an ethnic group, so those outside the ethnic groups of the chiefs but with peculiar needs may never have their needs fulfilled or communities without substantive chiefs arising out of conflicts or death may also be left out in the process.





When it came to the people's own preference as to what decision making process best suits them, contrary to the findings of Sanyare (2013) who found that local communities did not perceive their own involvement as very important in the decision making processes, this study found that local people consider their participation as very crucial. This finding goes to lend support to Sana (2011) who found that there is general appreciation among community members of the need to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Subsequent interrogation shed light on the issue that it is only through their participation that real community needs can be identified and solved. There was a widely held opinion that, the stakeholders involved vary and as such all should be given the opportunity to participate as opposed to one or few power holders taken decision on their behalf which often satisfies their personal interest. It would appear that, involving all stakeholders though might be time consuming could yield a lot of dividends. Sana (2011) puts it that participation by the people is seen as a way of expressing themselves and getting their interest represented in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of development interventions.

Also, coming to the issue of community participation in public hearing, the study found that most people do not participate in public hearings. Further investigations revealed that the situation is so because they were either unaware of its existence or when it is held or they did not know who qualifies to participate in it. It appeared that invitations to this forum are limited to some privileged few. Scholars have argued that under the right conditions such as meetings held at a convenient time and advertised extensively, public hearings can be effective at influencing policy and attracting a representative sample of the citizenry (McComas, 2001; Adams, 2004). The final public hearing at the D.A level concludes the MTDP preparation so if public hearings are not extensively advertised-specifically announced 7 days prior to the hearing, then a lot of people would



be denied the opportunity to make inputs in the planning process. This was the situation in the Nadowli-Kaleo District where a few are served notices of public hearing. An act which Herberlein (1976) describes as obscure. This posturing of the D.A confirms scholar's criticisms of public hearings as an exercise for attracting an unrepresentative sample of the population (Heberlein, 1976; McComas, 2001; Adams, 2004), as well as a means of allowing officials to deflect criticism and proceed with decisions that have already been made (Kemp, 1985; Adams, 2004). Adams (2004) further described the process as a mere democratic ritual that provides a false sense of legitimacy. This arbitrary style of going around public hearing cannot serve the purpose for which it was instituted in the first place and does requires a reconsideration of the current state of affairs if progress must be made in that regard. This would at least provide an even playing field for all interested parties to have their issues attended to as opposed to a few with connections at the D.A level having their way through lobbying and other unorthodox means thus influencing management to attend to their needs. Those with unfettered access to the key people at the D.A gets to have their issues addressed where as those with no connections at all, suffer in peril.

Considering the level of involvement of the people in the preparation of the MTDP, it was not surprising to know that participants were unsatisfied with the performance of their local government. During the FGD, it came to light that, the reasons for their dissatisfaction stem from the fact that their needs are often unattended to, they are not involved by the D.A and they are even unaware of the activities of the Assembly. Sakyi (2008) as cited in Sanyare (2013) sums it up succinctly that, the very challenges which led to the launch of the decentralization reforms are still prevalent, and in many cases the beneficiary communities seems worse off than before the official introduction of the reform.

This finding does not only point to low adherence to the NDPC guidelines for plan preparation, it has dire consequences for revenue mobilization and project sustainability. Once the constituents do not feel part and parcel of the process, they are bound to isolate themselves from all D.A activities. Galvanizing support for local government imposed interventions might not come easily.

In examining the shortfalls of the implementation of the participatory planning process, the following issues came to light, weak sub-structures, hijacking of the process by the power holders in the community, low knowledge on the part of unit committee and some Assembly men with regards to their functions, inadequate resources, low knowledge level of community members as well as political interference in the activities of the D.A. With regards to the weak structures at the local level, Aryee and Amponsah (2003) noted that the sub-district structures are facing legitimacy crisis. Robino (2009) also reported a similar perception of non-functional ward committees expressed by civil society organizations in the integrated development planning process of South Africa. The non-functioning of these structures render the spaces for community participation rather closed and invisible to the affected masses (Wumbla and Otten, 2009) in the district. Agyemang (2010) adds that the non-functioning of the sub-structures means ineffective assessment of the needs of the people for appropriate interventions. On the issue of power holders hijacking the entire process, Njoh (2002) advised that participation by the silent camp is an issue development planners must encourage as their participation will give a holistic insight to the needs of the people and galvanize their support in addressing the identified needs.

With the issue of some unit committee members, Assemblymen and other local unit workers lacking the capacity to deliver on their mandate, this study finds that position as rather unfortunate since these people serve as the link between the D.A and the





communities. The low understanding of their functions by they themselves is the final nail to the coffin. At the community level, the unit committee together with other elected representatives are supposed to work together to collect, collate and generate local level priorities for the development of the DMTDP (Institute of Local Government Studies - ILGS, 2006). Once some of them do not understand their roles, how would they effectively educate community members who have low understanding of the planning process? One would feel that it is incumbent on anyone seeking to serve in such public positions to first apprise themselves with the nitty-gritties of the position they seek to hold. Alternatively, an orientation for these people once they assume office will go a long way to enhance their delivery.

The last bit on the political influence lends credence to the observation by Aryee and Amponsah (2003) that in actual practice Ghana's DAs are not free from partisan politics. This revelation not only points to political influences in projects selection and implementation for the DMTDP, but also, it has wider implications for the notion of Ghana's non-partisan DAs system and ought to be expunged or kept on the low as it reduces citizen's confidence in the workability of the plan.

Based on the findings and discussions so far, the study goes ahead to make some recommendations for an improvement in the planning system. Some of them have national policy implications while others require concerted efforts from all stakeholders at the District level. The next chapter addresses these issues.

4.7 Chapter summary

From the various discussions so far it is obvious that participation in projects planning, implementation and management in the Nadowli-Kaleo District is relatively poor due to multiplicity of factors. Discussions in this chapter generally pointed to limited involvement

of citizens in the district's plan formulation. Moreover, citizens perceive the decentralized mechanisms for participatory local development as not functioning and consequently did not see themselves as active participants in the DMTDP formulation. The chapter also shed light on the limited knowledge of citizens with regards to their responsibilities in the planning system. Citizens also pointed out the low level of transformation decentralized planning is bringing to their doorstep. The relevant constraints to participation are also noted in the chapter. The next chapter presents the summary of the entire work, conclusion and recommendations.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a brief summary of the findings of the research work undertaken in this thesis, outlines the major recommendations that will enhance effective implementation of the decentralized planning system and draws conclusions based on the findings. The overall objective of this study is to examine how the local authorities are implementing decentralized development planning in the context of Nadowli-Kaleo District. It sought to examine how the implementation of the decentralized planning concept facilitates community participation in the planning process, determine whether the local people are well informed about their roles and responsibilities with the new decentralized planning system and assess how the implementation of the decentralized planning concept is facilitating development in the District.

The findings are presented based on the specific issues which were analyzed in the previous chapter.

5.1 Summary of findings

The study revealed some key findings that are worth restating in advancing the discourse of decentralized development planning in the study area. Below are the key findings.

5.1.1 Community participation in the planning process

The study discovered that Majority of people do not participate in the decision making process (MTDP preparation). Even the few that participate pointed out that the meetings were engineered by NGO's. Only a few indicated they equally attended meetings engineered by the local government units where needs assessment was done.



The few who participated reported that their views were not valued. Community members indicated that they have lost faith in the process since their needs are often left unattended. The sub structures at the local level appears not to be helping their course. Some Assemblymen and other elected local officials appear dormant and seem not to know their roles which makes it increasingly difficult for community members to have their needs captured in the MTDP. In the event of given the chiefs notices about the needs assessment exercise, information gathered indicates that, some community leaders who are giving the information, after deciding what the community needs are, inform the entire community during their community meeting sessions and all they have to do is to listen rather than make inputs.

In terms of public hearing, majority of the respondents have never participated in any public hearing because the D.A usually send invitation letters to a few people and as a result only a few people attend such hearings as pointed out by this study.

5.1.2 Citizen's awareness of their roles and responsibilities in the new decentralized planning system.

The study found that majority of respondents were aware of the constitutional provision (Act 480) that enjoins citizens to participate in their needs assessment process. Majority however did not know they have the right to attend because they feel it is meant for only elected Assembly members. The study further revealed that a greater part of the few who participate in public hearing only sat-in throughout the meeting but didn't make any contributions because they felt they didn't have the right to speak. The study also revealed that majority of respondents are unaware they can summon their elected Assemblyman to brief them about happenings at the D.A and also task him to take their needs to the D.A. Most Respondents indicated when the Assemblyman fails to honor

their invitation, they do nothing while others indicated that they officially write to the D.A. Others said they send a delegation to the D.A with their needs.

The findings also indicates that, a greater number of respondents are aware of their responsibility of paying taxes and property rates as their civic responsibility.

5.1.3 Perceived effects of decentralized planning on development at the grass root level

The data analysis shows that majority of respondents feel decentralized planning has brought tailor made development to their door step though some were of the opinion that it has not brought development closer to their doorstep. Further probing brought to the lime light the fact that a slight majority of respondents feel the local assembly (area council) have not been useful to them in terms of improving their lives. The rest of the respondents who indicated that their local Assembly is being useful to them went further to adduce various reasons for their choice of answer. These stem from the Assembly leading in their community development Initiatives, provision of social amenities, needs assessment and community action plan drawing and provision of funds for their developmental projects.

In terms of the District Assembly's relevance in facilitating development at the grass root level, majority (41%) of respondents feel the D.A is averagely important in their community's development, 26% were uncertain whether the Assembly is relevant in their community's development or not, 22% were of the opinion that they District Assembly to a large extent is relevant while 19% indicated that the D.A to a limited extend is relevant in their community's development.

So comparing the performance of the District Assembly to other development partners, 32% of respondents view the D.A as the most important development partner, another



32% of the respondents are uncertain as to whether the D.A is a more relevant development partner than the other developmental partners, 27% were of the opinion that they are both the same while 9% indicated that the District Assembly is less important as compared to other developmental partners.

In terms of improvement in the lives of community members, a slight majority of respondents felt their lives have improved due to the interventions of the local government while the rest were of the opinion that their lives have not been improved by the interventions of local government.

There was also a revelation that, 45% of total respondents indicated that D.A's interventions are not reflective of their community needs while, 55% of total respondents opined that interventions are reflective of their community needs.

5.1.4 Factors impeding the implementation of the participatory planning concept

In terms of the factors impeding the planning process, financial and logistical constraints were major impediments to involving their constituents in the preparation of the District MTDP. At the Sub-District level, inadequate funds were cited as the rationale behind their inability to involve all interest parties in the preparation of their Area Action Plan. Also another issue that was thought to be affecting the process is the low knowledge with regards to the D.A activities but this participants insist should be placed squarely at the door steps of their elected representatives who are supposed to act as intermediary between the D.A and community members. They held the view that if such people are up and doing, most community members would come to know more about the planning process.

Another widely held view during the discussions was the issue of partisan political interest or influence in the day to day activities of the D.A. The head of the District thus



the DCE is a political figure who they feel would easily kowtow to the whims and caprices of the appointing authority thus making him a vessel for propagating one's political agenda.

Weak sub-structures, hijacking of the process by the power holders in the community, limited knowledge on the part of unit committee and some Assembly men with regards to their functions were all pointed out as some of the issues hampering the planning process.

5.2 Conclusion

From the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

The rationale for the implementation of decentralized planning system is to enhance grassroots participation in the planning process leading to the provision of basic infrastructure and services that are responsive to the needs of the community but over two decades of implementing decentralized planning, the benefits don't seem to accrue to the people who are at the center of this approach. The current practice does not pave the way for full community participation thereby leaving us in the TOKENISM stage as contained in Arnstein's ladder of participation and this does not help in the realization of the full compliments of community participation. Mostly, communities participate indirectly through their opinion leaders. This poses the questions of whether community thoughts and needs are really represented in the decision making process.

Also, having political appointees interfere and tinker with the implementation of developmental plans, or coheres technocrats to submit to their dictates rather than follow the MTDP just to further their political ambition or that of the appointing authority gives the implementation the semblance of "local centralization of



decentralization”. Local development strategies are then decided on partisan lines which may not serve the interest of the masses.

Under resourced sub-structures coupled with officials who lack the capacity to educate and mobilize community members for plan formulation cannot deliver the envisioned benefits of participatory planning.

5.3 Recommendations

- The D.A should establish and build strong working relations with civil society and private sector actors who constantly have interactions with citizens to infuse in their plans community sensitization with regards to the D.A planning processes. Alternatively, the Assembly can collate the work plans of these civil society organizations and come out with their own schedules to use the platforms created by these institutions to sensitize community members without having to expend so much resources to hold community durbars. D.As can also empower especially local CBO’s to assist communities in coming up with their LAPS which has proven to be very effective. Civil society organizations can equally voluntarily take up this space and sensitize the people about the planning process during their meetings with community members
- District Assembly’s should be mandated to seek the approval of the people at the grassroots level before any project is carried out. By this the Unit committee chairmen, traditional authorities and representatives of the youth, women, physically challenged and men’s groups should accede to documents stating their approval of any development project earmarked for implementation
- The District Assembly must regularly organize community durbars through the Assembly members and the unit committee members to brief the people on the activities of the Assembly and central government policies and programmes and



to also educate them on the planning process. The District Chief Executive must always organize a community tour to various communities in the District to interact with the people to appreciate and understand their problems and concerns at first hand and to plan appropriate interventions to address them.

- The District Assembly should empower officials at the sub-structures level through training, logistics and other resources to enable them function effectively. Office structures should be refurbished and personnel employed to manage these offices. The central government as an interim measure should absorb the payment of allowances/salaries to the proposed three permanent staff of the sub-structures (Town/Area/Zonal Councils) until its final policy statement regarding the issue is made.
- People putting themselves up for elections to public offices at the local level should undergo vetting after which the best candidates would be put up for voting. This would ensure we avoid putting round pegs in square holes. The D.A should always organize orientation sessions for elected members so as to properly situate them in their new roles. This would go a long way to strengthen the link between the people and the D.A.
- Strict adherence by the D.A to the procedural spaces for community participation as provided for by Act 480 must be encouraged. Public hearing should be opened to all and sundry. There should always be extensive advertisement of the activity seven clear days to the event.



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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire guide for local government officials

1. What mechanism has your institution put in place to enhance grassroots participation in the decision making process??

.....

2. Do you think there is local human capacity to participate in the decision making process? (explain answer) If no what is the Assembly doing about it ?

3. Are the sub- structures functioning? Yes () No ()

If no why? If yes how?

4. Is the degree of commitment and assignment of functional responsibilities from the Assembly to the sub structures adequate to enhance their activities (Explain answer)

5. Please list the stakeholders you have been involving in the plan preparation and their specific roles in the process.

Stakeholder	Roles
1.	
2.	

6. Do you conduct public hearings? How are they conducted and who is invited?



7. What mechanisms has your outfit put in place to raise citizen's awareness with regards to their roles and responsibilities in the decentralized planning system?
8. Would you say the decentralized planning concept has enabled you roll out interventions that are reflective of the community needs and aspirations thereby propelling the development of these communities? (explain answer)
9. Do projects earmarked for execution in the DMTDP followed when it comes to the actual implementation? Yes/No? Please explain.
10. Are there factors hindering the effective implementation of the decentralized planning system? (List factors)
11. What in your opinion should be done to solve these problems?



Appendix 2: Questionnaires (COMMUNITY MEMBERS)

SECTION A: RESPONDENT'S PROFILE

1. Age: (1) 16-25 (2) 26-35 (3) 36-45 (4) 46-55 (5) 56 and above
2. Sex: (1) male (2) female
3. What is your highest educational level?
(1) Basic level (2) SSS/O-Level /Vocational (3) Tertiary level (4) No form of education

SECTION B; Participation of local people in District Assembly's planning process

4. Do you hold community meetings to come up with action plans to guide your development process?
 1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Don't Know
5. If yes, are your meetings engineered by the District Assembly?
 1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Don't know
6. If no, which of the following takes decisions with regards to development on your behalf?
 1. Assembly consults community leaders only
 2. The district assembly does it for us
 3. Political leaders only (assembly and unit committee members)
 4. Others (please specify)
7. Do you regard this decision making process as the best for your community?
 1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Don't know

If no why _____

8. Have you ever participated in your community needs assessment sessions organized by the D.A or your assemblyman/Unit committee member?
 1. Yes
 2. No

9. If yes, which of the following meetings did you last take part in?



1. Local council meeting
2. Area committee meeting
3. Unit committee meeting
4. Community forum
5. Village committee meeting
6. Public hearing
7. Other please

specify_____

10. Do you believe your opinions are valued by the assembly during such Assembly related meetings?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Others (please specify)

11. Have you ever participated in any public hearing organized by the District Assembly?

1. Yes
2. No

12. If yes, did it reflect the needs of your community as you presented to your area council/Assemblyman?

1. Yes
2. No

13. What is your description of how local government officials perceive community members during community development decision-making sessions?

1. All community members as important stakeholders
3. They issue commands for the community to adhere to
4. Only community leaders are seen as important
5. Don't know because they don't involve us
6. Other please specify_____

14. Before citing a project in your community, the Assembly does the site selection together with? (**multiple options possible**)

1. The entire community in a forum
2. Community leadership only
3. Political leaders only (assembly and unit committee members)
4. Meeting of various groups
5. No one in the community
6. Others please specify_____

15. Are you allowed to make suggestions to projects designs in your community?

1. Yes
2. No



SECTION C: Community awareness of roles and responsibilities in the new planning system

17. Are you aware of the kind of services community members can access from the district assembly?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

18. How did you become aware of the services that the district assembly is supposed to provide?

1. through community meetings
2. through my close associates
3. Heard about these services on local radio
4. Others please specify _____

20. What do you think are the functions of your D.A towards your community?

1. Agent of development
2. Agent for revenue mobilization
3. Mobilization of communities for development
4. Environmental management
5. Maintain peace, law and order
6. Provide public education
7. Provide infrastructure.
8. Don't know
9. Other please specify _____

21. Are you aware of any local government act that gives citizens the right to participate in the development planning of the District?

1. Yes
2. No

22. Have you ever made efforts to participate in any meeting organized by the D.A as part of its development planning process?

1. Yes
2. No

23. If yes, in which of the following annual development planning processes did you participate in?

1. Project selection
2. Budgetary hearings
3. Public hearing
4. Others (please specify).....



24. Did you actively participate?

1. Yes
2. No

25. If No why?

26. Do you call on your Assembly man to brief you with happenings at the District Assembly?

1. Yes
2. No

27. If yes, how often does your assembly member explain what goes on at the assembly to members of your community?

1. Once every month
2. Once every two months
3. Once every three months
4. after every assembly meeting
5. Never meets the community
6. Other please specify _____

28. Do you know your assembly member is supposed to visit you before assembly meetings in order to seek your opinions about your community development concerns?

1. Yes
2. No

29. If yes, does he come to the community to seek your opinions?

1. Sometimes
2. Always
3. Never
4. Meets with only community leaders
5. Other please specify _____

30. If no, what actions do you take to ensure your concerns gets to the assembly?

1. Send a delegation
2. Summon him and give concerns to him
3. Assembly is officially written to
4. Do nothing
5. Other please specify _____

31. Are you aware the D.A organizes public hearing towards the finalization of the MTDP and the budget as well?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know.



32. Are you aware you can participate in District Assembly's public hearings?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

33. Do you think you have the right to raise concerns during such D.A's public hearings especially when what is presented is not exactly what you presented to you Assembly man?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know.

SECTION D: Effects of decentralized planning on development at the grass root

level

34. Do you feel decentralized planning has brought development close to your doorsteps?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

35. If yes,

how _____

36. If no

why? _____

37. Do you think your area council is beneficial to your community's development?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

38. If yes, in which ways has the local district assembly been of benefit to your community development?

1. Needs Identification and planning
2. Initiates community development
3. Lead community development initiatives
4. Provides funds for developmental projects
5. Provision of social amenities
6. Others Please specify _____

39. Would you regard the district assembly as an important development actor in your community's development?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know





40. If you were to rate the assembly's performance, to what extent is your assembly's important in your community development

1. To a large extend
2. Not sure
3. To a limited extend
4. To an average extend

41. Compared to other local development agents, how would you rate your district assembly as a development partner?

1. The most important development partner
2. Equal to other agencies
3. Less important as other agencies
4. Don't know

42. Compared to other development agencies providing services in your community, how effective would you say the district assembly is?

1. Less effective
2. Not effective
3. More effective

43. In your opinion, has the district assembly helped improved the lives of the people in your community greatly in the last five years?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

44. If yes, in which ways has the lives of your community members been improved through the work of the district assembly?

.....

45. If no why not?

.....

46. Are the interventions of the District Assembly in your community reflective of your community needs and aspirations?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I don't know

47. What is your level of satisfaction with the performance of your local district assembly in terms of your area development?

1. Satisfied
2. Somehow satisfied
3. Not satisfied
4. Don't know

48. Could you please provide reasons for your response above?

Factors impeding the effective implementation of decentralized planning and new insights that will make it more effective.

49. In your estimation what do you think are the factors hindering effective implementation of decentralized planning in the District?

50. What suggestions do you have to the above stated problem(s)

