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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

ASSESSING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN RURAL ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME IN THE TANO NORTH DISTRICT OF GHANA

BY

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Thesis submitted to the Institute for Development Studies of the Faculty of Social Sciences, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Development Studies.

APRIL, 2018

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:…….

Date……..

Name:

Supervisor's Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing recognition that community participation is a very important element in achieving the goals of the poverty reduction programmes. But is it only in theory or also in practice? This study assessed community participation in the Rural Enterprise Programme (REP) to enhance participation and poverty reduction. A total of 72 respondents consisting of programme beneficiaries, staff of REP and opinion leaders constituted the sample for the study. Data were collected using in-depth interview, key informant and focus group discussion was qualitatively analysed using narrations and documents. The study shows that beneficiaries participated in only implementation and monitoring and evaluation stages and their level of participation was low. Beneficiaries were not empowered to take initiative themselves resulting in a minimal effect of REP on poverty reduction. The sustainability strategies of REP are not effective because beneficiaries were not involved. The study recommends that REP should involve beneficiaries more in their programme. Start up kits should be given to new trainees to enable them put the skills they have acquired into use. Beneficiaries should be involved in the sustainability strategies to make it more effective.

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KEY WORDS

Community participation

Poverty reduction programme

Rural enterprise programme (REP)

Level of participation

Empowerment

Sustainability

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DEDICATION

To my daughter,

Enyam Krystel Attatsi

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AfAD	Africa Development Bank
BAC	Business Advisory Center
CP	Community participation
DA	District Assembly
DCE	District Chief Executive
DFID	Department for International Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSD	Forestry Service Division
GSFP	Ghana School Feeding Programme
GYEEP	Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Programme
IDS	Institute for Development Studies
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
JSS	Junior Secondary School
KITA	Kumasi Institute for Tropical Agriculture
LAEP	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
MSE	Medium and Small-scale Enterprise
NBSSI	National Board for Small Scale Industries
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRP	Poverty Reduction Programme
REP	Rural Enterprise Programme
RTF	Rural Technology Facility
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SSS	Senior Secondary School

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UCC	University of Cape Coast
UN	United Nations

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

"People cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves by participation and co-operative activities which affect their wellbeing. People are not being developed when they are herded like animals into new ventures" (Nyerere as cited in Cornwall, 2000, p.21).

Community participation is not a new concept in the development discourses. Over the past four decades, community participation has been a constant theme in development dialogues. According to Cooke and Khothari (2001), its reemergence in the 1980s signifies recognition of the shortcomings of the traditional 'top-down', externally-driven; 'expert-oriented' approaches to development. As an alternative development approach, community participation advocates that the foremost aim for any development planning and intervention should be the people's needs and that any other developmental concerns should be secondary. People must be given more opportunities to effectively participate in development activities, be empowered to mobilize their own capacity, manage the resources, make decisions and control the activities that affect their lives (Sproule, 1996).

United Nations (1999) sees community participation as the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a community to actively contribute to and influence the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development. Burkey (1993) argues that development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry but about the active involvement and growing empowerment of the people in making decision for their own welfare.

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Development for the benefit of the poor therefore can only occur when the poor themselves control the process through praxis of participation.

Community participation has come to be recognized by all major development organisations including multi-lateral agencies, the United Nations agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as very critical in programme planning and poverty alleviation (Kumar, 2002; World Bank, 1996). Community participation is now regarded as a critical component which could promote the chances of development initiatives being sustainable through community capacity building and empowerment (Botchway, 2001; Lyons, Smuts, & Stephens, 2001). According to Abrams (2001) emphasis on involving beneficiaries in the development process has become almost a requirement in most donor-funded projects.

There is a growing body of evidence that confirms the assertion that community participation in development projects or programmes leads to poverty reduction and sustainable development (Hoddinott, 2002; Narayan, 1995). According to Osei-Kufuor and Koomson (2014), the role of community members in shaping the outcomes of development projects is critical for the success of development intervention and possibly for poverty reduction. A study by Faguet (1997) showed that community participation in poverty reduction projects has greatly improved economic outcomes and helped reduce poverty in Bolivia and Benin.

Without participation the people may only benefit but not develop from a project. Development imposed from outside the local setting, no matter how benevolent and well-intentioned, is ultimately counterproductive. It is not effectively integrated into the world of those people it purports to develop

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(Cusworth & Franks 2013). Community participation in poverty reduction projects or programmes is not only to reverse the existing power relations in a manner that creates agency and voice for the poor but also to allow the poor to have more control over development interventions. It is expected that this will result in the allocation of development funds in a manner that is more responsive to the needs of the poor, better targeting of poverty programmes, more responsive government and better delivery of public goods and services, better maintained community assets, and a more informed and involved citizenry that is capable of undertaking self-initiated development activity (Mansuri & Rao, 2003).

The acknowledgement of the importance of involving all people in the process of development grew out of the recognition that the worlds' poor have actually suffered as a result of development, and that everyone needs to be involved in development decisions, implementation and benefits (Holcombe, 1995). The poor are often left out of the development process, have little incentive to improve their own capacities and gain few opportunities to achieve their full potential.

Community participation in development projects or programmes emphasizes actively involving people and communities in identifying problems, formulating plans and implementing decisions over their own lives (DFID, 2002). By allowing community to participate in the design or planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of rural development projects or programmes, indigenous experience and knowledge could be incorporated in development projects enhancing not only the success of these projects, but commitment to them (Narayan-Parker, 2002).

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The number one reason identified by Baas and Rouse (1997) for the failure of most poverty reduction programme is low level of participation by the poor. They argue that though the ultimate stakeholders in the poverty alleviation process are the rural poor, all too often they are denied a voice in the formulation and even the execution of poverty reduction programmes. Other reasons include; too little attention has been given to building the capacity of the poor, to enhance their power to participate meaningfully in policy formulation. Most poverty reduction programmes have had a single vector of intervention and have failed to confront the multidimensionality of poverty. Priorities usually have been set from "the outside", thus being supply-driven rather than demand-driven and unable to respond to the particular needs and potentials of the poor.

Despite the many reasons and argument outlined for encouraging community participation, strong counter arguments exist. Some authors have pessimistic views of the role of participation. Kelly (2001) recognized that participation is often romanticized as a cure-all and that anything participatory is assumed to be good and empowering. Cleaver (1999, p.597) stated that 'participation has become an act of faith in development; something we believe in and rarely question'. He argued that many claims about participation, most of which assert that it is a good thing, remain unproven. It has also been argued that participation may not only slow down decision-making processes, it may actually lead to complete inaction by taking the place of real change. Others also point to the costs associated with implementing community participation processes as a reason to avoid more robust participation. Usually, there is lack of skilled staff to promote participation. Norman Uphoff (1992) however,

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cautions that the costs of participation should be weighed against the cost of not encouraging and assisting participation.

According to (World Bank, 2002b) participation of stakeholders in the selection and design of projects can improve decision making, strengthen ownership, and help poor and disadvantaged groups. Kaliba (2002) contends that community participation in project initiation, implementation and management, apart from creating a sense of ownership and responsibility within communities, is an important factor in developing an effective and long-lasting project. Community participation is therefore seen as one of the solutions to the problem of project sustainability.

Sustainability is a crucial factor in every project or programme and community participation is an essential condition for sustainability. Community participation has become central to development projects as a means to seek sustainability and equity, mainly for the poor (World Bank, 2002a). Usually, externally-motivated development projects fail to sustain themselves, once the initial level of project support or inputs either diminishes or are withdrawn. Community participation is seen as antidote to this situation in that it can ensure that local people maintain the project dynamics (Oakley, 1991).

Nevertheless, the level of participation of all potential beneficiaries in the need identification, design or planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development projects is ultimately what determines the success of the programme (Kabila, 2002). There are different degrees, dimensions, intensity and levels of participation which are distinguished by researchers and agencies. However, participation can be broadly classified into four main groups; mis-participation, tokenism, less intensive participation, and intensive

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participation. At the level of intensive participation, beneficiaries are empowered, there is less empowerment at less intensive participation level and poor empowerment at the level of tokenism and mis-participation (Anokye, 2013).

Empowerment is the ultimate objective of community participation in poverty reduction programmes. Empowerment is concerned with enabling people to decide upon and to take actions which they believe are essential to their own development. Empowerment as an outcome of community participation encompasses skill development and provisions to enable beneficiaries gain confidence and knowledge to manage issues that shape their lives (Wilcox, 1994). Empowering people by building their capacity increases the likelihood of their participation in community activities. Increased levels of empowerment allow the community to have influence over their own affairs and obtain power over decisions-making, enabling them to move from powerless non-participants to active and effective citizens.

Poverty reduction requires processes that help people to improve their capabilities and functioning. The role of community members in shaping the outcomes of development projects or programme is critical for the success of development interventions and possibly for poverty reduction (Osei-Kufuor & Koomson, 2014). Nelson, Wright, and Lane (1995) argued that the only way to ensure that individuals have the power to attack the root causes of underdevelopment or poverty is to enable them to influence all decisions, at all levels that affect their lives. The participation of the people who are affected by development in general is therefore very important in achieving the goals of the poverty reduction programmes.

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Ghana's embrace of the decentralization concept was to promote popular grassroots participation in the management and administration of local governance institutions for improved conditions of life (Ahenkan, Bawole, & Domfeh, 2013). Article 35(6) (d) of Ghana's 1992 Constitution urges the state to afford all possible opportunities to the people to participate in decision making at every level in national life. This is believed to be an important means to improving the effectiveness of service delivery and empower the local people to participate in the development processes that affect their lives. In recent years Ghana has been described as one of West Africa's development success stories: the country's growth and poverty reduction rates are among the best in the region (IFAD, 2011).

To achieve the aims of poverty reduction strategies in Ghana, some specific programmes aimed at addressing the plight of the poor and the disadvantaged group have been initiated and implemented by government. Rural Enterprise Programme (REP) in 1995, Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) in 2005, Youth Employment Agency (YEA) formally known as Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GYEEDA) in 2006 and Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) in 2008 among others.

Rural Enterprise Programme (REP) is an up-scale of Rural Enterprise Project-Phases I & II (REP-I & II) which were implemented in 66 districts across the country from 1995 to 2011. Based on the good performance and outcomes achieved in the second phase of the Rural Enterprises Project, the Ministry of Trade and Industry has transformed the project into a programme covering all rural districts in Ghana, by mainstreaming it within the public and

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private institutional system from 2012–2020 (IFAD, 2011). REP mainly seeks to improve the livelihoods and incomes of rural poor micro and small entrepreneurs. The development objective is to increase the number of rural Medium and Small Scale Enterprises (MSEs) that generate profit, growth and employment opportunities.

REP is mainstreamed into the decentralized administrative and planning system and implemented at the level through partnership arrangement with participating District Assemblies, the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) and the GRATIS Foundation (REP News, 2011). According to (IFAD, 2011) the current phase of the programme has been characterized by extensive participation of stakeholders. Every stakeholder expected to be involved in the implementation including target beneficiaries were consulted.

Problem Statement

For some decades now, poverty reduction has been an agenda for many including governments, international and national institutions and individuals. Countless strategies, programmes and projects have been designed and continue to target the issue of poverty in developing countries which Ghana is no exception. In Ghana, however it is mostly realized that many of such strategies at completions have either achieved very little in comparison with project's projections and expectations or are abandoned along the way (Ayerakwa, 2012). Some reasons for the continuous failure of poverty reduction strategies in Ghana has been inadequate analysis, involvement of stakeholders and imposition of interventions on beneficiaries (AfDB, 2002).

Though there is a growing recognition that community participation in development programmes leads to poverty reduction and sustainable

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development (Hoddinott, 2002), it has its challenges. Community participation can be costly, time-consuming, labour-intensive, confrontational and can ultimately delay decision-making (National Occeanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 2015). Cernea (1995) stated that real participation in poverty reduction programmes is more myth than reality. Onen (2007) also posited that the term is widely applied in academic and project documents without regard for implementation realities.

REP is one of Ghana's oldest poverty reduction programmes and the key to poverty reduction in Ghana (Ayerakwa, 2012). According to IFAD (2011), REP is claimed to be a success story and role model to other poverty reduction programmes. REP is said to be characterized by extensive participation. All key stakeholders including target beneficiaries were involved in the formulation of the programme at the district levels. The study, therefore seeks to assess how beneficiaries participated in REP; their level of participation and the effect of REP on programme beneficiaries' poverty level.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this study was to assess community participation in REP.

The specific objectives were to

1. Examine the level of community participation in REP;
2. Evaluate the effect of REP on reducing poverty among programme beneficiaries;
3. Discuss the sustainability strategies of REP; and
4. Make recommendations for improving REP.

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Research Questions

1. At what levels do communities participate in REP?
2. What effect does REP has on poverty reduction among programme beneficiaries?
3. What are the sustainability strategies of REP?

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will aid Government and other stakeholders to realize the relevance of community participation; and the necessary improvements needed to increase community participation in poverty reduction programmes to achieve its aims. It will also help policy implementers and development agencies to recognize the communities they seek to develop as development partners rather than a hub for dumping and experimenting poverty reduction programmes.

Furthermore, the study will create awareness among community members and encourage them to participate in their own development thereby contributing towards improving the quality of human lives. The study will add to the existing body of literature on community participation and poverty reduction programmes. The study will also serve as an entry point for further research in areas of community participation.

Delimitations

Ghana since independence has initiated many programmes with the aim of reducing poverty. It will be very difficult for a single study to comprehensively study all poverty reduction programmes. The study therefore focused on REP specifically its participatory nature in the Tano North District

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in the Brong Ahafo Region. The time period under consideration will be from 2012 to date.

Limitations

The study employed the qualitative research method. It used the interview and focused group discussion guide to collect data. For this reason, results obtained cannot be generalized to other poverty reduction programmes but apply to only the programme under study.

Definition of Terms

Community Participation: an active process by which beneficiary or client groups influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish.

Poverty: an unacceptable human deprivation in terms of economic opportunity, education, health and nutrition, the lack of empowerment and security.

Poverty Reduction: collective responsibility to fight all avoidable forms of deprivation. It involves collaboration to:

- make poor people less poor (also referred to as poverty alleviation);
- enable poor people to escape from poverty;
- build institutions and societies that prevent people from becoming poor or from slipping further into poverty

Organisation of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the study by providing the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, and organisation of the study. Chapter Two provides theoretical, conceptual and

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empirical review of existing related literature. Chapter Three outlines the research methods employed for the study. It discusses the research design, study area and gives detailed account of how data was collected and analysed. Results and discussion are presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five gives the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The study seeks to assess community participation in poverty reduction programmes particularly REP. This chapter reviews relevant literature on community participation and poverty reduction. The chapter describes some theories of participation including; Oslon's theory, Buchanan and Tullocks theory, and theory of margin. The chapter also discusses the concept of community participation, benefits of community participation, costs of community participation and the concept of poverty and poverty reduction. The limitation of previous researches as well as lessons learnt was also identified. The chapter ends with conceptual framework for the study.

Theoretical Review

There is no universal valid theory of community participation in poverty reduction programmes. However, there are sets of propositions stating the conditions under which people do or do not participate in collective action. Given that all poverty reduction programmes in general entail some collective action on the part of their target group, it could be argued out that the factors affecting collective action might also influence community participation in poverty reduction programmes. In simple word, the factors that determine community participation constitute a big set of which factors that determine collective action are a subset.

Oslon's Theory

The commonly held view that groups of individuals with common interests usually attempt to work together to achieve them has been challenged

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by Mancus Oslon in 1971. He argues that "...unless the number of individuals in a group is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests" (Olson,1971)

Collective goods once produced, is available to all members of the group. Large organisations cannot support themselves entirely without coercing their members to pay for the collective goods that they provide for them or without some attraction or incentive that will motivate the members to contribute to the establishment and survival of the organisation. The individual member of a large group is too small an entity to have any significant impact on his or her organisation by contributing or not contributing to the maintenance of the organisation, but he or she can share in the benefits of the organisation even if he or she has not contributed anything to bring them about (free riding).

Generally, the larger the group, the less noticeable the actions of its individual members, the higher the transaction cost of bringing them together, and hence, higher the tendency to free ride. This explains why large groups normally fail to provide collective goods for their members. Oslon using two simple tools of economic analysis has shown that some small groups can provide themselves with collective goods without relying on coercion or any positive inducements apart from the collective good itself. This is because in some small groups each of the members, or at least some of them, will find that his personal gain from having the collective good exceeds the total cost of providing the collective good.

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Oslon asserts that the group should be small enough so that the individual actions of any one or more members are noticeable to any other individuals in the group but failed to specify the number of individuals that would make the very small group.

Buchanan and Tullocks Theory

James M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock (1962) have propounded a theory of collective choice that is very similar to Olson's theory. According to them, it can best be classified as being methodologically individualistic. They emphasise on the central role of individual behaviour arguing that a collective action must be composed of individual actions. They asserted that, in view of separate individuals participating in collective actions with different and often conflicting interests and purposes, any theory of collective choice must first attempt to explain or to describe the means through which conflicting interests are reconciled.

A group would choose a collective mode of action when each of its individual members finds it profitable to act collectively rather than individually, that is, when his or her perceived costs are less than his perceived benefits from the collective action. The perceived costs include both external costs and decision-making costs. In their analysis of collective choices and actions, Buchanan and Tullock adopted what they called a "cost" approach. They considered collective action as a means of reducing the external costs that are imposed on an individual by purely private or voluntary actions of other individuals. The proponents argue that the existence of external costs rationally explains the origin of either voluntarily organised, co-operative, contractual arrangements or collective activity.

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Buchanan and Tullock used two cost functions - an external cost function and a decision-making cost function - to determine the "optimal" or most "efficient" decision-making rule for an individual. The external costs are envisioned to be a decreasing function and the decision-making costs as an increasing function, both the individuals required to reach an agreement. Simply put, the external costs are envisioned to decrease and the decision-making costs to increase as the number of members in a group increases. The optimum decision rule for an individual is derived by minimizing the sum of expected external costs and expected costs of decision-making.

The theory makes it clear that the important determinant of the optimal rule or choice is the cost (external + decision-making) and not the size of the group. The theory of collective choice could therefore explain successes in Poverty Reduction Programmes (PRP) where large groups are involved. However, the cost functions employed by Buchanan and Tullock are too simplistic to approximate the real-world cost functions. In the real world, besides the number of persons in a group, there are many other variables such as the heterogeneity of the group, literacy level, dispersal of the members of the group, etcetera, that determine the external costs and the decision-making costs (Singh, 1992).

The Theory of Margin

The theory of margin, a theory of participative behaviour has been propounded by Howard McClusky since 1970 and is very different from the aforementioned theory. He defines margin as a "function of the relationship of load to the power". Load is defined as the “self and social demands by a person to maintain a minimum level of autonomy" and power is described as "resources

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such as abilities, possessions, position, allies, etc. which a person can command in coping with the load" (McClusky,1970p 340).The greater the power in relationship to the load, the more margins will be available. Surplus power provides a margin or cushion to handle load requirements. Margin can be increased by reducing load or increasing power.

From this characterisation of load and power, Lupanga (1988) derived a hypothesis to explain the lack of people's participation in development activities in the Third World. He hypothesised that the majority of rural people in most of the Third World have heavy load and little power to cope therewith and hence they are too preoccupied with mere survival to participate meaningfully in development activities. Meaning the higher the margin between load and power, the lesser the participation in development activities. Should the hypothesis be true, a logical conclusion is that efforts to mobilise such marginal masses to participate in development activities must of necessity, include the reduction of load or rising of their power or both.

Though the hypothesis could explain the lack of people's participation in development activities, it cannot explain why the same people who do not participate in some development activities take part in some other development activities. There are many cases of poor people in developing countries participating in some programmes or adopting some technologies and not participating in some other programmes or rejecting some other technologies. Therefore, there must be some programme-specific or technology-specific factors that affect people's participation.

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Relevance of Theories to the Study

The options (voluntary or involuntary) for the members of a community in which a poverty reduction programme is introduced are either to participate or not to participate. The reviewed theories, theory of collective choice, theory of margin and Oslon theory can help understand the conditions under which people participate and do not participate in collective action. Factors that influence collective action might also influence participation in poverty reduction given that all poverty reduction programmes entail some collective action on the part of the target group.

All these theories explain only an aspect of community participation and cannot in themselves alone provide an adequate and elaborate but complementary explanation of community participation. Oslon theory argues that unless the number of individuals in a group is quite small or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common goal. The Buchanan and Tullocks theory lay emphasis on the central role of the individual behaviour arguing that a collective action must be composed of individual actions. A group would choose a collective mode of action when each of its members finds it profitable to act collectively rather than individually, for example when his or her perceived costs are less than his or her perceived benefits from the collective action. The theory of margin revolves on the hypothesis that the higher the margin between load and power, the lesser participation in development activities.

The purpose of community participation is giving people more opportunities to participate effectively in development activities, empowering

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people to mobilize their own capacities, manage the resources, make decisions and control the activities that affect their lives (Sproule 1996). The task is not to impose participation on unwilling community members but to identify the factors that exclude people when they actively seek to participate. Community members will participate only if they feel that the benefits of the project will accrue to them.

With Buchanan and Tullocks theory highlighting the rational mechanisms underpinning individual decision-making in a collective action contributing to a common good, step can be taken to create awareness about the costs and benefits of participation. Beneficiaries must be assured that they will share in the benefits of the programme. The free rider problem stated in Oslon's theory can be dealt with by providing community members incentives that will motivate them to participate. Also, if the community is very large and heterogeneous, it can be divided into a number of small and homogeneous subgroups and each subgroup randomly assigned a portion of the programme. Provided the poverty reduction programme is divisible.

The hypothesis of the theory of margin assumes that majority of the people have heavy load and little power to cope therewith and hence they are too preoccupied with mere survival to participate meaningfully in development activities. It therefore suggests that efforts to mobilize marginal masses to participate in development activities must, of necessity, include the reduction of power or raising their power or both. The 'power' is seen by the study as empowerment. Beneficiaries must be empowered to participate so that they are able to initiate actions on their own and thus influence the processes and outcomes of development (poverty reduction).

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Concept of Community Participation

Community participation advocates that the foremost aim for any development planning and intervention should be the people's needs and that any other developmental concerns should be secondary. If people's needs are at the centre of development, then people have to identify and prioritize those needs themselves. According to (Nelson et al., 1995) the only way to ensure that individuals have the power to attack the root causes of underdevelopment is to enable them to influence all decisions, at all levels that affect their lives. In community participation, emphasis is laid on involving community members in the entire project cycle from initiation to closure. Very critical for success of any development intervention, possibly leading to poverty reduction is the role of community members in determining the outcome of the development project.

Proponents of community participation argue that indigenous knowledge, skills and practices have the potential to contribute to poverty reduction. Rural people are not ignorant, idle or apathetic, as they are often made out to be but, on the contrary, are resourceful, knowledgeable and hard-working. They have so much indispensable knowledge to contribute to development that it would be a major loss if they are not involved(Oakley, 1991). A study by Agarwal (2001) has shown the existence of indigenous knowledge on health prevention and cure, which should be the basis of health development activities.

Although many development scholars and practitioners agree that Community Participation (CP) is critical in development programmes, very few agree on its definition (Rifkin & Kangere, 2002). Definitions of community participation ranges from people receiving benefits from development

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programmers to people actively taking part in decision making about programme policies and activities.

World Bank, with its experience with Community participation, has given the following definition: an active process whereby beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of development projects rather than merely receive a share of a project's benefits. This definition stresses participation by beneficiaries rather than external personnel and refers to a process rather than a product. The context of participation is the development programme or project.

Paul (1987) provided a similar definition adding the motivation behind participation: "an active process by which beneficiary or client groups influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish". In this definition, the focus is not only on participation of beneficiaries but also their joint or collaborative involvement. This definition of community participation will be adopted for the purpose of this study.

Objectives of community participation

Paul (1987) identified the following five objectives of community participation in the development context;

Empowerment**:** CP in the broadest sense can be seen as an instrument of empowerment. Empowerment has been defined (World Bank, 2002a) as "the expansion of assets of and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives". According to this view, development should lead to an equitable sharing of power and to a higher level of people's participation, in particular the weaker

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groups', political awareness and strengths. Any project or development activity is then a means of empowering people so that they are able to initiate actions on their own and thus influence the processes and outcomes of development.

Building beneficiary capacity: CP may serve a more limited objective of building beneficiary capacity in relation to a project. Thus, beneficiaries may share in the management tasks of the project by taking on operational responsibility for a segment of it themselves. For example, beneficiaries may play an active role in monitoring. Developing beneficiary capacity could also contribute to the sustainability of a project beyond the disbursement period due to the enhanced level of beneficiary interest and competence in project management.

Increasing project effectiveness: CP may contribute to increased project effectiveness. Effectiveness refers to the degree to which a given objective is achieved. Community Participation tends to enhance project effectiveness when the involvement of beneficiaries contributes to better project design and implementation and leads to a better match of project services with beneficiary needs and constraints. According to Oakley (1991) a major reason why many projects have not been effective in the past in achieving their objectives is because local people were not involved. Effectiveness equals the successful completion of objectives, and participation can help to ensure this.

Improving project efficiency: CP may improve project efficiency. Project planning and implementation could become more efficient because of timely beneficiary inputs. CP could be used to promote agreement, cooperation and interaction among beneficiaries, and between them and the implementing agency of the project so that delays are reduced, a smoother flow of project

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services is achieved, and overall costs are minimized. Participation is also cost-effective because, if rural people are taking responsibility for a project, then fewer costly outside resources will be required and highly paid professional staff will not get tied down in the detail of project administration. However, there is accusation that this cost-effectiveness often results in governments and agencies making fewer funds available for development work and indeed transferring the burden of project costs on to local people (Oakley, 1991).

Project cost sharing: Yet another objective of community participation is the desire to share the costs of the project with the people it serves. Thus, beneficiaries may be expected to contribute labour, money or undertake to maintain the project. Self-help groups in low income housing illustrate this objective of community participation. Community participation may thus be used to facilitate a collective understanding and agreement on cost sharing and its enforcement (Paul, 1987).

The World Bank's reasons for community participation are:

1. Local people have a great amount of experience and insight into what works, what does not work and why.
2. Involving local people in planning projects can increase their commitment to the project.
3. Involving local people can help them to develop technical and managerial skills and thereby increase their opportunities for employment.
4. Involving the local people helps to increase the resources available for the programme.

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5. Involving local people is a way to bring about 'social learning' for both planners and beneficiaries. 'Social learning' means the development of partnerships between professionals and local people, in which, each group learns from the other (World Bank, 1996)

In the same vein, Burns, Heywood, and Taylor (2004) gives the following reasons for community participation:

1. Active participation of local residents is essential to improved democratic and service accountability. It enhances social cohesion because communities recognize the value of working in partnership with each other and with statutory agencies;
2. It enhances effectiveness as communities bring understanding, knowledge and experience essential to the regeneration process. Community definitions of need, problems and solutions may be different from those put forward by service planners and providers;
3. It enables policy to be relevant to local communities. It adds economic value both through the mobilization of voluntary contributions to deliver regeneration and through skills development, which enhances the opportunities for employment and increases community wealth;
4. It gives residents the opportunity to develop the skills and networks that are needed to address social exclusion;
5. It promotes sustainability because community members have ownership of their communities and can develop the confidence and skills to sustain developments once the "extra" resources have gone.

Though put in different words, empowerment runs through the three literatures. Paul (1987) used the word empowerment while the World Bank used

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social learning. Burns et al. (2004) put it this way; it gives residents the opportunity to develop the skills and networks that are needed to address social exclusion. Among the many objectives of community participation, empowerment is the ultimate. However, in real life situation these objectives or reasons may overlap. Most poverty reduction projects are deemed to have multiple objectives.

Typology, Intensity of Community Participation

Participation is not one size fits all principle. The level and form of participation varies with the community members' capacity to participate on issues at stake and also the nature of the project or programme (Antwi, 2011; Paul, 1987). According to Norman Uphoff (1997), "There was participation" does not say much, the emphasis should be on what kind of participation .

Paul (1987) distinguished between four levels of intensity of community participation; information sharing, consultation, decision making and initiating action. Information sharing, the lowest level, entails designers and managers of the project sharing information with beneficiaries in order to facilitate individual or collective action. At consultation level community participation rises, beneficiaries are not only given information but consulted on some or all stages of the project. Still a higher level of intensity; decision making occurs when beneficiaries have a decision-making role in matters of project design and implementation. The intensity of community participation may be said to reach its peak at the initiating action level when beneficiaries are able to take initiative in terms of decision or action pertaining to the project. According to Paul, all the four levels can co-exist in a project.

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In order to assess the types and level of participation, Arnstein (1969) suggested an eight level of participation typology called the 'Ladder of Citizenship Participation' as shown in figure 1 below. Arnstein's typology addresses citizen participation as retribution of power that enables the have-not citizens to be deliberately included in decision making. The ladder depicts participation as essentially a power struggle between citizens trying to move up the ladder and controlling organizations and institutions limiting their ascent to the 'top' and barring citizen's ability to claim control or power for themselves.

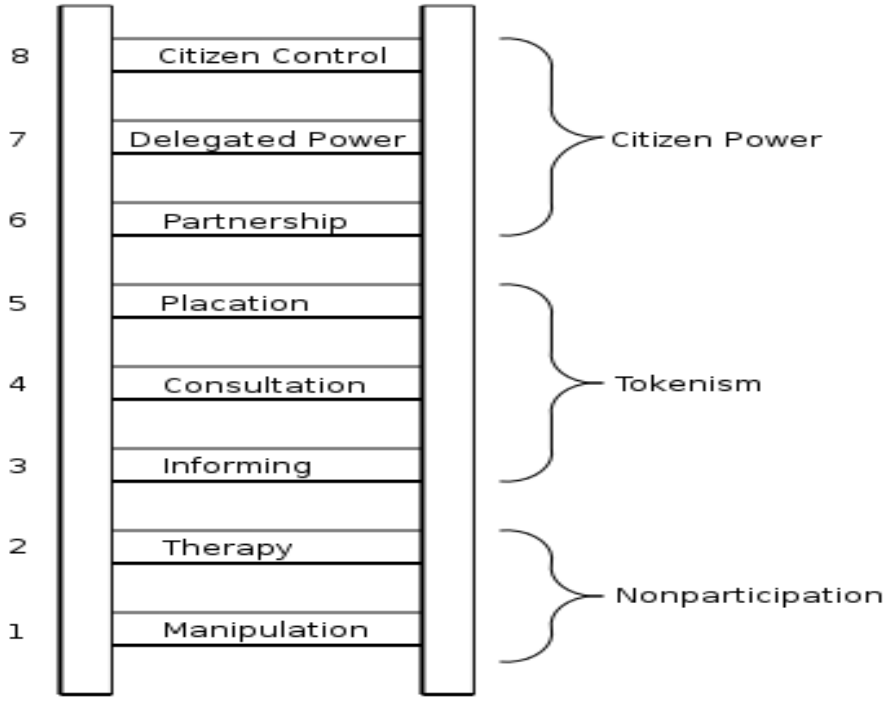

Figure 1: Arnstein's citizen participation ladder (Arnstein, 1969)

The first two rungs (1) Manipulation and (2) Therapy describe levels of non-participation. At this level participation is technically fixed and participants are manipulated or given therapy. At the 'manipulation' level of participation traditional power holders meet the citizens to show that they are participating in the programme. The public is advised and persuaded to adopt specific decision.

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At the 'therapy' level of participation, the public is educated to internalize the status quo (Arnstein, 1969).

Tokenism

The next rungs, (3) Informing, (4) Consultation and (5) Placation is level of 'Tokenism'. At this stage, the public may hear and be heard but there is no assurance that their views will influence decision making. At the 'Information' level there is no ground for negotiation or feedback. Information is one-way, top-down and from decision makers to beneficiaries. The public is informed about research outcomes, design, policy, and solution to their problems. At the 'consultation' level the authority initiates the process and seeks the views or opinions of the public in decision making. However, there is no certainty that their views will be considered. Information flow is two-way, between decision makers and the public. Placation is a higher level of tokenism where the public concerns are heard but the power holders continue to retain the exclusive right to decide (Anokye, 2013).

Citizen Power

The highest level, citizen power comprising the (6) Partnership, (7) Delegated power and (8) Citizen Control rungs entail active involvement of the public in decision making processes. This level allows retribution of power between authority or power holders and the public. Partnership enables equal sharing of power through negotiation and trade – off with authority. At the two top most rungs 'delegated power' and 'citizen control' retribution of power is in favour of the public and they have full managerial power and perform task independently. Arnstein (1969) asserts that though citizen participation is

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citizen power, going through the empty ritual of participation is critically different from having real power to influence the process.

Arnstein's ladder of participation has been criticized by many authors arguing that gaining control cannot be the sole reasons for participation. Choguill (1996) argued that within the development context, residents of low-income communities want more than power. They have dual objectives. They need empowerment to influence decisions which affect them. In addition they want urban services and housing from government which may not have the resources or the will to provide it for them. Being of the view that transferring Arnstein's ladder of participation to the underdeveloped world is far from being perfect, she developed a model for developing countries.

The model is based on progressive improvement of infrastructure with a key element of strategic input of outside assistance, whether it comes from government or non-governmental sources. In accordance with the degree of government willingness in carrying out community mutual-help projects, it begins with the highest level of participation as empowerment through to lowest self-management as shown in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: A ladder of community participation for underdeveloped countries
Source: Choguill (1996)

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Pretty (1995) created seven categories of participation as Pretty's typology of participation is equally normative like Arnstein's ladder of participation; going from 'bad' to 'better' forms of participation. However, while Arnstein (1969) is from the perspective of those on the receiving end, Pretty (1995) speaks more to the user of the participatory approach.

Though the above discussed typologies differentiated kinds and levels of participation, little has been said about who participated, what they participated in and why they participated. According to Chowdhury (as cited in Claridge, 2004) in order to assess the extent of community participation, it is important to point out who participates? What do people participate in? Why do people participate? It is imperative for future typologies to consider these issues.

Benefits of Community Participation

Despite some authors, planners and professionals contest that participation makes no difference in the lives of people, particularly the poor and the disadvantaged, its relevance is well established in the literature. Deguara (2008) posited that community participation has many direct beneficiaries when carried out with a high degree of community input and responsibility. Bamberger (1988) identified the following benefits of community participation;

Involvement of the community at an early stage is likely to improve design by ensuring that full advantage is taken of local technology and knowledge of climatological and topographical conditions and ensuring that the project is fully adapted to the social organization of production. Secondly, Community involvement can ensure a project's social acceptability and can increase the likelihood of beneficiaries participating in the project. Also, community participation may help ensure the more equitable distribution of

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benefits and may ensure that politically or economically weak groups may have access to the project services and benefits.

Another benefit identified is resource mobilization is much easier when beneficiaries are committed to a project and actively involved in its design and implementation. The community resources may be provided in the form of labor, materials, or money. Cost recovery rates are often much higher when the community is actively involved. Lastly, community participation is usually an essential condition for the sustainability of projects especially irrigation projects.

Kumar (2002) also identified four benefits which are not so different from the above. He however added empowerment which was not identified by Bamberger. Community participation ensures efficient utilisation of resources. People work together towards achieving their objectives. Community participation increases effectiveness; projects can be finalised within the time schedule. Also, community participation reduces dependency and increases self-reliance. People would not always look at the government to solve all their problems. Lastly community participation can be a potent way of ensuring the flow of the benefits to the beneficiaries.

In addition to efficiency, effectiveness, self-reliance identified by Kumar (2002), Oakley (1995) added coverage and sustainability.

Coverage: Most government and many agency-directed or supported development projects reach only a limited, and usually privileged, number of rural people. Participation will extend this coverage in that it will bring more rural people within the direct influence of development activities.

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Sustainability: Participation is seen as the antidote to situations where externally motivated development projects fail to sustain themselves once the initial level of project support or inputs either diminish or are withdrawn.

The World Bank's reasons for community participation are:

Community participation increases empowerment. Participation leads to equitable sharing of power with the less powerful so as to take control over resources and decisions affecting their lives. This serves as a catalyst for future development as people can initiate actions on their own and thus influence the processes and outcome of development (Chamala, 1995; Hoddinott, 2002; Paul, 1987). Beneficiary capacity is built as they actively participate at all the project stages and this provides an effective answer to the sustainability of projects beyond the disbursement period. The local control and responsibility of development projects or programmes make the process self-sustaining as the people are committed to the project or programme (Kelly & Van Vlaenderen, 1995; Kolavalli & Kerr, 2002).

The involvement of communities could lower the cost of providing poverty reduction intervention. Communities can share in the project cost by contributing money, labour or materials. A much-cited example is the construction of a sanitation network by the residents of Orangi, a poor urban neighbourhood in Karachi, Pakistan. In the absence of external funding, the design of the sewer network was strongly conditioned by the need to keep costs as low as possible. This served as the impetus to the design of a number of lower cost components Ghafoor as cited in Hoddinott, Adato, Besley, & Haddad (2001).

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Also communities may have means of reducing cost that outsiders do not have as indigenous people are likely to make better economic decisions in their own environment and circumstances (Anokye, 2013; Gow & Vansant, 1983; Hoddinott, 2002; Paul, 1987; Rifkin & Kangere, 2002; White, 1981). Haddad and Adato (2001)found that in public works projects in South Africa, communities had knowledge about local conditions such as safety hazards and vandalism, with relevance for road design.

Greater beneficiary participation enhances effectiveness of anti-poor interventions. It ensures that people organize around needs they consider most important and that the interventions closely reflect the preference of the population. Interventions are designed in tune with the local environment and the benefits get to the intended groups (Claridge, 2004). The participation of the local people brings about 'social learning' for both planners and beneficiaries. Through learning, behaviours and practices are changed and people are freed from dependence on others' skills. Learning also makes people more conscious of the causes of their poverty and how to get out of it (Kelly, 2001).

Costs of Community Participation

Community participation is not a costless process. Despite the above benefits of community participation, it has its costs. It is not necessarily true that all costs are lowered when communities have increased involvement in the design and implementation of interventions.

Time is a frequently mentioned cost of participation. Organizing beneficiaries is time consuming and complex process. Negotiation with beneficiaries can delay project start-up. The factor of time is significant if many groups have to be consulted. In ensuring inclusiveness, equity, and transparency

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and improving quality of decision making, time is consumed. Time is also consumed in building consensus, conflict resolution, and dealing with trade-off and holistic thinking (Armah, Yawson, & Johanna, 2009). For the local people, the cost of active participation can be quite high. Productive time spent on participation is something that often affects the local people, particularly women, who can ill afford to take time away from production to engage in meeting and other participatory processes (McGee & Norton, 2000).

Another cost usually mentioned among participation cost is financial costs. Participatory approaches usually increase the number of managerial and administrative staff required. Participation in practice is usually a slow and uncertain process and is likely to involve more paper work and soul searching. Money is needed in bringing on board all those who have stakes in the decision making process; explaining expected roles of the community and outcome; discussing values, opinion and preferences of community members; and training programmes and awareness creation to build capacity of community members to improve decision-making (Anokye, 2013).

In politically volatile areas, the attempt to involve community organizations may create conflicts that either paralyze the project or create much wider problems. Also, in heterogeneous communities, intra-and-inter-group conflict may result from perceived or real differences. Differences in visions and objectives of participatory process may be a reason for conflict. Community members do not always share common visions or objectives concerning the development of the community. What one group perceives as positive may be to another interest group negative as some forms of development interventions may tend to priorities the interest of one group over the other.

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The project may be co-opted by a powerful economic, social, or political group so that most of the benefits do not reach large sections of the intended target population. Often, it is very difficult to reach the poorest in informal settlements. Initiatives and leadership often come from people with higher economic, social and political status in such communities. These leaders usually play the role of middlemen between the agency and the community limiting participation of the weaker and vulnerable in community affairs. In some cases a small elite group may take control and monopolise community level decision making, obstruct attempts by authorities to engage directly with community members and thus prevent them from participating (Botes & Van Rensburg, 2000; Njoh, 2002).

Usually, costs of participation are weighed against estimated benefits. However, Norman Uphoff (1992) cautions that the costs of participation should be weighed against the cost of not encouraging and assisting participation.

Factors affecting Community Participation

There are many factors that affect community participation in development programmes. Singh (1992) outline five user community-specific factors that determine or influence community participation as awareness, group organisation and leadership, programme benefit and their distribution, values and beliefs of the community, and waiting time of the benefits.

He noted that an important factor affecting the level of beneficiary participation in development programmes is the awareness of the programmes. In rural development programmes, indigenous people do participate simply because they are aware of the need for the intervention, about the programmes of the intervention, the role of the beneficiaries in the programme and about the

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benefits of participating in the programme. However, dispersal of people over large geographical areas, lack of transportation and communication facilities, low literacy rate, lack of relevant literature in vernacular and lack of interest or enthusiasm on the part of agency staff among others are obstacles to the creation of awareness among beneficiaries and thereby enlist their participation.

Community participation literature suggests that for any community to participate in any development intervention, they must be aware of the intervention. This view is supported by Warren (1991) that most famers in diffusion study in Nigeria did not participate in agriculture innovation because they did not have much information on the programme.

Norman Uphoff (1992) differing from this view notes that beneficiaries in most development programmes, do not participate because they are neither informed nor have knowledge of the intervention. He explains that the fact that a beneficiary is made aware of a programme does not mean the individual will be willing to participate. Using an example of agricultural innovation programmes, Uphoff (1991) noted that although project beneficiaries were aware of the innovation, yet few farmers participated in the programme, because they were not willing to adopt the innovation.

Narayan (1995)also found out in a study of 121 water projects that in some development projects beneficiaries are only made aware of the programme but the nature of their participation is not known to them. Byrnes and Byrnes (1987) reported that one factor that greatly influences the willingness of beneficiaries to participate in development projects is their perception about the credibility of the information source to which they have access. For a person's reactions to information provided by a source are

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significantly affected by cues as to the communicator's intentions, expertise and trustworthiness.

Group organisation and leadership is another factor identified as influencing beneficiary participation. According to Singh (1992) formal or informal organisation of the people concerned is a pre-requisite for people participation in development projects. He argued that the availability of good leadership is crucial for organizing beneficiaries, mobilizing their resources, nurturing and sustaining their organisation, liaising with NGOs, enforcing the organisational rules, regulations and sanctions against violations.

Another factor identified as influencing beneficiary level of participation is the perceived programme benefit. The expected benefit of the programme should be substantially higher than the expected private cost of participation if beneficiary participation is to be self-sustainable. Beneficiaries would participate if the intervention provides for the fulfillment of their basic needs (Singh, 1991). Values and beliefs of the community is also a factor identified by Singh (1992) as influencing beneficiary participation. Every community has a set of values and beliefs that is rooted in its tradition, culture and history. These set of values and beliefs govern the attitude and behaviour of members in a particular community including the manner in which they relate to one another and outsiders. As some value and beliefs promote trust, reciprocity, cooperation and resource conservation, others engender competition, conflict and resource depletion.

The last but not the least factor identified by Singh (1992) was the waiting time involved for the benefits. In general, the longer the waiting time and the higher the degree of uncertainty, the lower the motivation of the

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beneficiaries to participate. People will only have interest in participation if they are convinced that the outcome is worth the time and energy invested in the project.

Challenges identified by Singh are all from the part of the beneficiaries however, Kilewo and Frumence (2015) identified challenges from both the side of beneficiaries and the implementing agency. They identified lack of awareness of the programme among community members, lack of communication and poor information sharing between implementing agency and beneficiaries, unstipulated roles and responsibilities of implementing agency, lack of management capacity among agency staff, and lack of financial resources for implementing programme activities as factors that hinder community participation.

Community Participation and the Project Cycle

Projects are the basic instrument through which externally supported development initiatives are generally implemented (Clayton, Oakley, & Pratt, 1997).The natural sequence in which projects are planned and carried out for socio economic development is mostly referred to as the 'project cycle'. Oakley (1988) presents a hypothetical project cycle, which shows the kind of stages at which local communities and beneficiaries might participate. These stages are problem/need identification, design/planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

Over the years there is a growing recognition that active participation of beneficiaries in all the stages of any project or programme is an important pre-requite for the successful implementation of the project or programme (Narayan, 1995). Greater emphasis is being put on increasing the involvement

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beneficial in the entire development process; need identification, design or planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

Project identification phase is the information gathering phase where various aspects of an intended project are assessed. At this stage, a need analysis of beneficiaries could be attempted as a basis for designing the project to match community needs and capacities. The initial ideas that emerge from the identification stage are developed into a coherent form at the design or planning stage. It is important at this stage to consider various options and designs for meeting identified needs.

The implementation stage of a project cycle is when the actual project is carried out. The objective of any development project is to have a project that can be implemented to the benefit of the society and this makes this stage the most important stage in the project cycle. It is at this stage that the largest portion of project or programme funds is disbursed (Cusworth & Franks, 2013) and the people must be involved. The final stage of the project cycle is monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring is an ongoing process during the implementation of the project. Feedbacks in monitoring are used as correction measures to ensure that implementation of projects are in line with project objectives. Evaluation is normally carried out at intervals of the project life. In some cases, it is done after a major stage of a project is completed (Long, 2010).

Ostrom (2000) study of farmer participation in the community management of irrigation structures in Nepal, found out that the project beneficiaries were involved in all the project cycle. He noted that more beneficiaries were involved in the project monitoring and evaluation. Boshielo (1999) also in assessing the participation of beneficiary communities in South

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African land re-distribution noted that beneficiary communities were mostly involved in more than three phases of the project cycle.

Community Participation and Gender

Concepts of 'participation' and 'gender' have been a part of emancipatory discourse and practices for the last decade. Advocates of these concepts are of the view that they allow the representation of the most marginalized groups – women and the poor. It has been argued that participation has also lacked an awareness of gender and gender differences. Efforts to promote participation projects or programmes would appear to offer the prospect of giving everyone who has a stake a voice and a choice (Akerkar, 2010). However, community-driven development that makes claims of 'full participation' and 'empowerment' can turn out to be driven by a particular gendered interests, leaving the least powerful without voice or much in the way of choice. Bringing a gender perspective to bear on the practice of participation in development may assist in identifying strategies for amplifying voice and access to decision making of those who tend to be marginalized or excluded by main stream development initiatives (Cornwall, 2003).

According to Oakley (1991), for most women especially those in the third world, the male-dominated culture and society in which they live are the most formidable obstacles that they face in efforts to be included in development activities. Women confront an extra hurdle such as existing cultural values, which assign women to prescribed roles and do not encourage their prominence in local activities, before they can join men in gaining greater access to development resources. Two strategies have been proposed; preparing women through education to tackle these obstacles and the other directs

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resources at women in the hope that their increasing economic power will lead to inevitable change. This is to challenge the social and cultural practices which hinder their involvement in development.

The Concept of Poverty

Poverty has been and may probably continue for a long time to be one of the key challenges to confront global civilization. Unless one pretends, poverty can be seen everywhere, although the form and nature of it vary from region to region and from country to country (Domfeh & Bawole, 2009). Defining poverty has increasingly become problematic. This is not to say it does not exist, rather it is because perspectives and dimensions of poverty has over the years widen.

For the United Nations (UN) as cited by Gordon, (2006, p.30) "Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation".

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (as cited in Wooward, 2009) viewed poverty as an unacceptable human deprivation in terms of economic opportunity, education, health and nutrition, the lack of empowerment and security and argues that poverty is the inability of people to meet economic, social and other standards of wellbeing. Essaw (2013)

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also defined poverty as: "deprivation in wellbeing and other essential livelihood assets including natural resources, human capabilities, basic physical assets and supportive social system". The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (2003) defined poverty as unacceptable physiological and social deprivation. The definition of OECD will be adopted for the purpose of this study.

Traditionally, the concept of poverty has carried the notion of material deprivation, which at times has been attempted to remedy with economic development or other welfare policies to fulfill basic needs. However, the four definitions go beyond the economic wellbeing to include capability and social exclusion. The definitions by UN, OECD and Essaw have much more in common as they try to give examples of deprivations. The definition of GPRS seems to be too general.

In the poverty literature, three major approaches of defining and measuring poverty have been identified; economic well-being, capability, and social exclusion. The most widely used dimension to define and measure poverty is the economic wellbeing. Three types of economic wellbeing measures run through literature; income, consumption and welfare. The economic well-being approach implies that issues of poverty can be tackled effectively by boosting incomes or consumptive capacities of the poor. The endless argument have been how to achieve this; is it by accelerating economic growth and increasing employment opportunities (World Bank, 2001) or by improving the pattern of income distribution leading to greater equality (Townsend, 2002). Studies have however shown that economic growth does not necessarily result in improvements of the wellbeing of the poor (Friedmann, 1996; Gaiha & Kulkarni, 1998).

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The second approach of defining and measuring poverty; capability focuses on factors other than income, consumption, and welfare. This approach goes beyond the economic wellbeing explanation to look at factors that make individuals not capable to derive sufficient human wellbeing. Sen (1992), defining 'Capability' as the ability to achieve "functioning" or "achievement" argued that in terms of assessing ones living standard what is key is the capability, for instance, to make informed decisions and to live a long healthy life. Better living condition does not necessarily depend on income. Dimensions of one's capacity may include education, health, and others.

Social exclusion is the third approach for defining and measuring poverty. With adequate income and adequate capability to produce certain functioning one may still be poor. For instance, if one is excluded from the mainstream economic, political, civic and cultural activities that are rooted in the very concept of human wellbeing. Therefore, the concept of social exclusion goes beyond economic and capability explanations of well-being. Even though social exclusion has varied definition, it is "the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in society which they live" (UN 2010 p.5). Though this concept is still in its infancy, the connotation of "social exclusion" has broadened over time.

However, excessive focus on social exclusion underscores social order and institutions thus downplaying role of one's economic and individual capacities. In the literature, explanatory power of these three approaches with regard to their association with poverty, has been compared and contrasted, but when integrated will give a holistic understanding of poverty. The meaning of

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the concept of poverty has changed and evolved over time. Participation and membership within a society and not just inadequate income is much of concern.

The Concept of Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction is a global issue and the concern to deal with poverty is as old as development. The reduction of poverty is one of the greatest challenges of our times. Poverty reduction refers to "designing, implementing and targeting appropriate methods to ensure that scarce resources are allocated to activities that are likely to yield the greatest impact on the poor and to decrease their levels of deprivation and vulnerability" (Asante & Ayee, 2008). It is also defined as collective responsibility to fight all avoidable forms of deprivation. It entails making poor people less poor and/or escape from poverty as well as build institutions that prevent people from becoming poor or from slipping further into poverty (Narayan-Parker, 2002).

Poverty reduction is often adjudged in terms of the impact of programme on income and livelihood. But while economic growth may be essential for poverty reduction, there is no automatic relationship between the two since poverty reduction also encompasses the capabilities of the poor to take advantage of the expanding economic opportunities (Lister, 2004). Similarly, the enhancement of human capabilities should also dovetail with the expansion of productivity and earning power. It is important to note that the reduction of income poverty alone cannot be the focus of poverty reduction programmes.

Over the past fifty years, poverty reduction approaches have evolved in response to the deepening understanding of the complexity of development. Initially investment in physical infrastructure was regarded as prime way of reducing poverty. The focus was later shifted to health and education but for

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some time now, community participation has been recognized as an effective way of reducing poverty (Cobbinah, Black, & Thwaites, 2013; Domfeh & Bawole, 2009).

For a long time, poverty has been considered largely as an economic factor and characterized exclusively in terms of low income. In this day and age, however, poverty is understood internationally as a highly complex and multidimensional phenomenon. The poor have limited income and therefore lack basic requirements for attaining material welfare, healthy and adequate nourishment, or social status. However, the improvement of livelihood conditions entails more than provision of food. Equally important factors include equal access to assets for production as well as information, provision of social services such as education, health care and clean water, the reduction of social, regional and local disparities, respect of human rights, promotion of social protection systems, especially for those people being continuously affected by vulnerability and uncertainty and guarantee of inclusive and equal participation in the political decision-making process (World Bank, 2002b).

Though economic growth is vital for increasing wealth of the people in a given country, it is not a sufficient condition for poverty reduction. Where there is extreme unequal allocation of income as well as limited access to resources, the gap between the rich and the poor will widen and continue to widen. Poverty is generally allied with powerlessness and defenselessness, and with exclusion from public life and political decision-making processes. To reduce poverty, the poor, disadvantaged and discriminated groups must be integrated into existing socio-economic systems and ongoing political processes. Empowerment plays a very vital role in this respect. The people

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concerned are thus enabled to participate in processes of social will-power and problem-solving designs.

Empirical Review

A study by Phologane (2014) in South Africa, aimed to evaluate community participation in development projects in Mokgalwaneng Village. The study focused on the nature and extent of community participation in developmental projects implemented in the Mokgalwaneng Village. The methodology used was mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) employing an evaluative study design. Five projects were selected and respondents were sampled purposively, ten from the community and two project officials for each project. Questionnaires were used in data collection. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the quantitative data while the qualitative data was organized into themes.

The study revealed that the majority of the respondents did not participate in the initiation and planning stages of the projects. The study further revealed that no income and low-income, politics, favoritism, long working hours, illiteracy, low self-esteem, lack of training, lack of resources, lack of communication, lack of information and transparency about the projects are the challenges of participation. It is therefore recommended that; the government should support the community at all levels to ensure a strong commitment to development projects.

Maraga, Kibwage, and Oindo (2010) conducted a study to critically analyse community participation in the project cycle of afforestation projects in River Nyanab Basin, Kenya. The study employed the mixed method using structured questionnaires, interview guide and focus group discussion guide for

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data collection. 150 respondents were sampled from a population of 1,928 households using systematic random sampling technique. Data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The study concluded that there was low community participation in the project identification, planning and monitoring and evaluation stages of the afforestation projects. High community participation was only observed in the project implementation stage

A study was conducted by Chifamba (2013) to assess the level of community involvement in rural project cycles. The problem identified was that despite two decades of tireless effort and the adoption of several approaches to raise the development and economic growth of rural areas in Zimbabwe by integrating the rural population, who were largely peasants, into mainstream rural development (through community involvement and participation in rural development projects), the living conditions of the rural poor were still deteriorating.

The mixed method study which employed the exploratory survey study design sought specifically to assess the level of community involvement in rural project cycles; examine the factors that promote and hinder community participation; and to recommend strategies through which effective community participation could be facilitated in rural development process. Eight projects whose nature demanded the local people's participation were randomly selected and data was collected from 254 respondents using structured questionnaires. 25 key informants were purposively selected and interviewed.

The study revealed that there was relatively low degree of community influence or control over organizations in which community members participated, especially given that the services were usually controlled by people

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who were not poor or recipients of services. Community members are usually going through an empty ritual of participation; hence they had no real power needed to affect the outcome of rural development process. The study recommended that community participation should be centered on the role of the community as primary actors who should be allowed and enabled to influence and share the responsibility (and possibly costs) of rural development process.

In their study of reducing poverty through community participation: the case of national poverty reduction programme in the Dangme-West district of Ghana, Osei-Kufuor and Koomson (2014) found that community participation is more effective and has the potential to result in empowerment when the primacy is on training and building the capacity of beneficiaries. The study further found out that there was a significant relationship between beneficiary participation in training and capacity building programmes and the level of participation in poverty reduction programmes. Also, the intensity of beneficiary participation among the sampled communities was found to be high.

The study sought to examine the instrumental use of community participation in the National Poverty Reduction Programme in the Dangme-West district, Ghana to promote participation and reduce poverty. The mixed method study using multi-stage sampling sampled 210 respondents consisting of project beneficiaries and staff of the facilitating NGO, ProNet. Data was collected using interview schedule. Data was analysed using the computer software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and result was presented using descriptive statistics. The study recommends that for poverty

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reduction projects to meet their potential for alleviating poverty, more attention must be focused on periodic skills training and capacity building programmes.

Husseini, Kendie, and Agbesinyale (2016) conducted a study to examine the nature of community participation in the management of forest reserve in the Northern Region of Ghana. Though the forest reserves are said to be managed collaboratively, fringe communities are supposedly involved only in maintenance activities of the reserve boundaries and seedling planting in plantation programmes. For some years now the forest reserves have been threatened by illegal activities and encroachment from the very communities supposed to be helping in managing the reserves. The study therefore sought to; (i) establish the stakeholders in the National Forest Plantation Programme in the Northern Region of Ghana; (ii) determine the forest management practices in the reserves and (iii) establish the nature of community participation in the management of forest reserves.

The study used the mixed method research design combing survey, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. Two reserves were randomly selected from each of the four forest districts. Proportionate sampling was then used to get sample of fringe communities per reserve. Using the Krejcie and Morgan theory, 370 respondents was randomly selected. 87 key informants were purposively selected making a total sample size of 457. The quantitative data was analysed using Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) version 16 software. The data from the in-depth interviews and the focused group discussions were categorized into appropriate themes and analysed through discourse analysis.

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It was revealed just like the other studies reviewed that participation of forest fringe communities in the management of forest reserves ranges from passive to tokenism, meaning that fringe communities have no control over access to resources and management. Their participation is limited to boundary cleaning and providing labour on plantations. The study recommended that Forest Service Division (FSD) is to initiate a formal collaborative agreement with all the user groups: chiefs, assembly persons, farmers, herbalist, women groups, hunters, cattle herders, charcoal, and firewood producers.

Lessons Learnt from Empirical Review

There is a growing body of research on community participation and poverty reduction. These studies have provided very useful insight on level of participation, and sustainability of poverty reduction programmes. Others provide valuable data on the potential of community participation to reduce poverty. The studies have shown that there is a growing recognition of the need to involve the poor in the development process. However, most of the participation in development/ poverty reduction projects occurs at very low levels. Communities do not have control over the process. Also, community members are not usually involved in the initial stages of the project that is in the need identification and designing or planning of the project or programme.

Community participation is more effective and has the potential to result in empowerment when the primacy is on training and building the capacity of beneficiaries. Beneficiaries are most at times willing to participate but are socially excluded by variables such as government policies, bureaucratic obstacles, conflicts arising from political alliances and deeply-entrenched corruption. Beneficiaries are faced with challenges such as no and or low

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income, politics, favoritism, long working hours, illiteracy, low self-esteem, lack of training, lack of resources, lack of communication, lack of information and transparency about the projects. But when their capacities are built they will be empowered to influence and control decision affecting their wellbeing.

Husseini et al. (2016) based their study on collection action of common pool resource theory, rational or collective choice theory and the stakeholder theory. Osei-Kufuor and Koomson (2014) study was underpinned by the collective choice theory, theory of margin and Oslon theory. The three theories together built a strong theoretical framework for the study. The theories explain the conditions under which people participate and the need for participation. This study will apply the collective choice theory, theory of margin and Olson theory to put the study in a theoretical perspective.

All the studies used mixed method (both quantitative and qualitative). Both probability and non-probability sampling methods were employed, specifically multi-stage sampling, stratified random sampling and purposive sampling. The data collection methods used were questionnaires administration, interviewing and focus group discussion with their corresponding instruments; questionnaires, interview guide, and focus group discussion guide. However, this study will go purely qualitative because of the qualitative nature of community participation.

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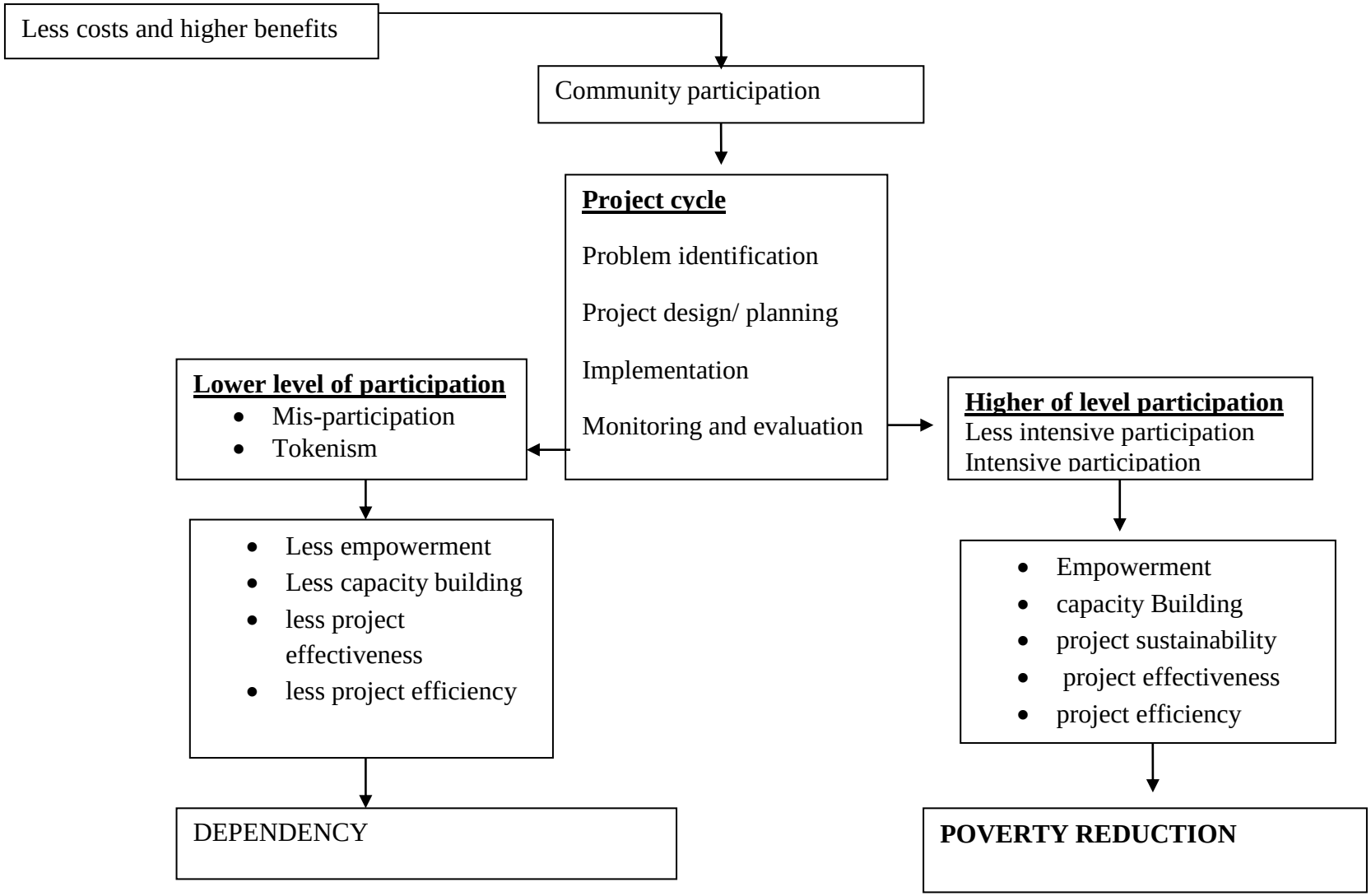

Figure 3: Conceptual framework
Source: Based on Anokye (2013) and Paul (1987)

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The conceptual framework is based on Paul (1987) definition of community participation and the theoretical framework. Paul (1987 p.2) defines community participation as "*an active process by which beneficiary/ client groups influence the direction and execution of development project with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish"*. This definition implies the context of participation is development and the primary focus is on participation of beneficiaries. It refers to community participation as a process and the collaboration involvement of beneficiaries in groups as a hallmark of community participation.

Figure 3 shows that poverty can be reduced through community participation. The linkage between community participation and poverty reduction is seen as a process that begins when community members with a common interest after weighing the costs and benefits of participation decide to take part in a development project. This is explained by the Buchanan and Tullock theory and Oslon's theory that state that people will participate in a collective action when the expected benefits from the collective action exceeds the costs of participation. Also, when rules for preventing free riding and ensuring equitable sharing of benefits and costs of collective action exist and are enforced. And finally, when there is assurance that the expected benefits will actually accrue to the participants. The assumption is that people will participate in any development activity when they are aware of the costs and benefits of the collective action.

In figure 3, participation occurs when beneficiaries decide to partake in a development project after taking into consideration the costs and benefits of

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participation. In this framework participation is seen as a dynamic process. Emphasis is laid on involving community members in the entire project cycle from initiation to closure. Thus, beneficiaries must participate in problem identification, project design or planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The general assumption is that when beneficiaries participate in the different stages of the project cycle, it will lead to empowerment, capacity building, ownership of project, project sustainability and other benefits depending on their level or intensity of involvement or participation.

The levels of participation can be broadly classified as mis-participation, tokenism, less intensive participation and intensive participation(Anokye, 2013).At the low level of participation, mis-participation, participation is misapplied and participants are manipulated or given therapy. At this level empowerment is poor. The next major level tokenism, involves a one-way flow of information, top-down, from decision makers to the public. Empowerment at this level too is poor. At the less intensive level, there is a two-way information flow between authorities and the public but there is no guarantee that the public views and opinions are considered in the decision-making process. Empowerment at this level is low. The highest levels of participation, that is intensive participation, entails the active involvement of beneficiaries in decision-making process. Empowerment is achieved at this level.

When beneficiaries' involvement is at the low levels of participation (mis-participation and tokenism), they are not empowered and their capacity is not built to make decision and take action leading to dependency. However, if beneficiaries participate at the high levels of participation (less intensive and intensive participation), they are empowered and their capacity is built which

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enables them to make decision and initiate action leading to poverty reduction. In the framework, poverty reduction is conceptualized to involve activities that empower beneficiaries to influence and control the processes and outcome of development. Poverty will be reduced when beneficiaries are empowered to influence and control decision, take initiatives, implement action and monitor and evaluate the outcome of poverty reduction programmes.

Summary

Chapter Two reviewed the various theories that underpinned the study. Specifically, the Olson theory, Buchanan and Tullocks theory and theory of margin and were examined. Other conceptual issues such as community participation and poverty and poverty reduction were looked at. In all, the literatures reviewed provided the basis for the conceptual framework that served as a guide to the methodology used for the study.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology employed in carrying out the study on community participation in REP in the Tano North District. The aspects covered included; the research design, the study area, the population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data processing and analysis.

Research design

Research design involves developing strategies for executing scientific enquiry. It precisely specifies what is to be found out and determines the most efficient and effective strategies for doing so (Babbie, 2007). There are various kinds of designs such as qualitative, quantitative and mixed method. To achieve the primary objective of assessing community participation in REP in the Tano North District, the qualitative design was employed.

Qualitative research has the ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. A qualitative method tends to apply a more holistic and natural approach to the resolution of the problem than does quantitative research. It also tends to give more attention to the subjective aspects of human experience and behaviour (Powell and Connaway, 2004).

As the study seeks to assess community participation in REP, the evaluative study design was employed. Evaluative research seeks to assess or judge in some way, providing useful information about something other than might be gleaned in mere observation or investigation of relationships

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(Changing Minds, n.d). Evaluative study design, according to Babbie (2007) is undertaken for the purpose of determining the impact of some special intervention aimed at solving social problems.

Study Area

The Tano North District is one of the twenty-seven Administrative Districts in the Brong- Ahafo Region. It was carved out of the Tano District in 2004 with Duayaw-Nkwanta as its Administrative Capital. The District shares boundaries with Offinso North District to the North- East and AhafoAno North District to the South, all in the Ashanti Region. In the East, it shares boundary with Tano South and on the West with Sunyani Municipality and Asutifi District of the Brong-Ahafo Region. The District lies between Latitudes 70 00′ N and 70 25′N and Longitudes 20 03′ W and 20 15′ W. It has a total land area of 837.4 square kilometers and constitutes about 1.8 percent of the total land area of the Brong Ahafo Region.

The District lies in the semi–equatorial climatic zone and experiences double maxima rainfall regime, from April–June and September–November. The period between December and March is the dry season characterized by harsh harmattan conditions. The district has two main vegetation types, the moist semi-deciduous forest, mostly in the southern and south-eastern parts with gross forest cover of about 157.45sq km of which close to 80 percent (132.52sq km) is covered by the following three main forest reserves: Aparipari, Bosomkese and Omankwayemu Forest Reserves. The second dominant vegetation type is the guinea savanna found in the northern and north western parts.

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The population of Tano North District is 79,973 representing 3.5 percent of the region's total population. Males constitute 49.5 percent and females represent 50.5 percent. There are almost equal proportions of the population living in urban and rural areas. The people are mainly engaged in agricultural forestry and fishery works. Other economic activities include service and sales and craft and related trade. The District has two Traditional Councils, which are both Paramountcies: Duayaw-Nkwanta and Yamfo. Each of these Paramountcies has a number of Divisional Chiefs. These Traditional Institutions are the embodiment of the cultural and social systems of the people and constitute a potent-force in the running and development of the district (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).

Being a new district carved from the Tano District it lacks many infrastructure and social amenities. With the district mainly depending on agriculture, the erratic nature of rainfall pattern has made farming unattractive leaving many unemployed. Regarding poverty, some areas are more affluent than others. Currently four poverty reduction programmes in addition to REP are on-going in the District. These are; Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP), School Feeding Programme, Adolescent Reproductive Programme and Support for HIV/AIDS Vulnerable Groups. Though all are poverty reduction programmes, REP is the oldest of all and participatory in nature. All key stakeholders including target beneficiaries were consulted in the formation of REP programmes. Some of the major settlements in the district are Camp, Teckire, Bomma, Beposo, Adroba and Yamfo as shown in Figure 4.

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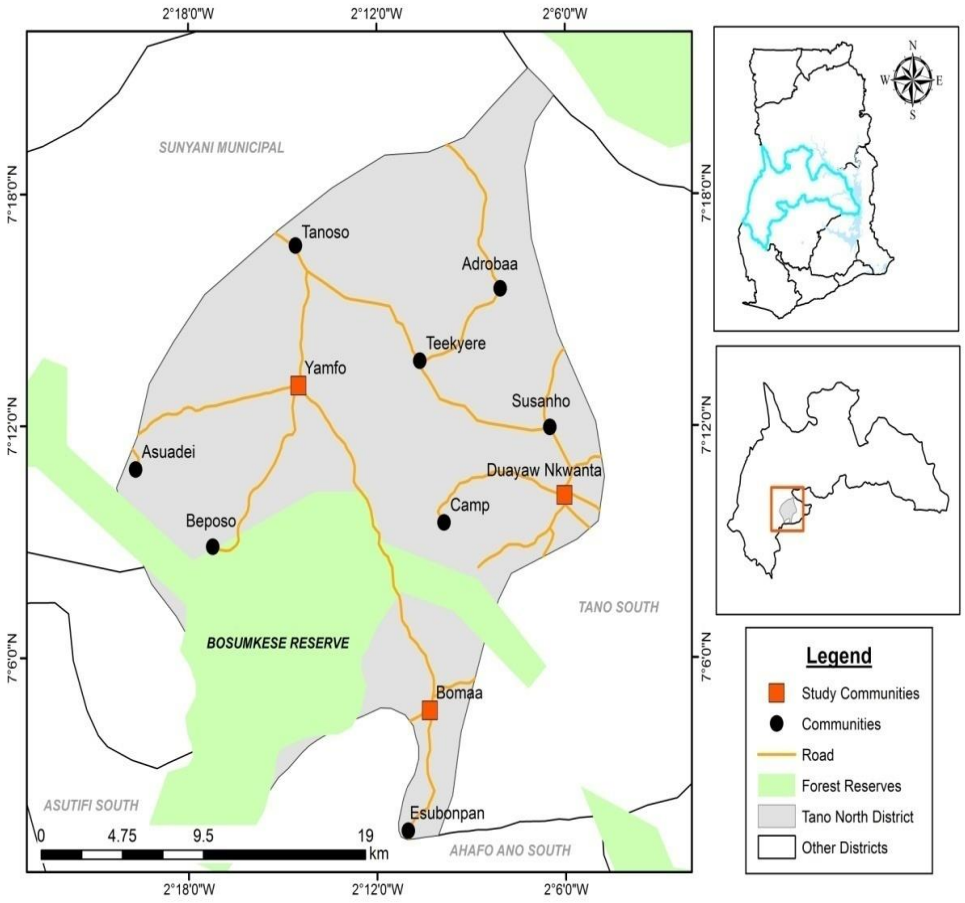

Figure 4: Map of Tano North District
Source: Department of Geography & Regional Planning, U.C.C. (2017)

Target Population

The population for the study consisted of all beneficiaries and implementers (staff) of REP in the Tano North District and opinion leaders in the communities. The opinion leaders included assembly members, unit committee members and traditional authorities.

Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was used to select three communities; Duayaw Nkwanta, Bomaa and Yamfo from the nine communities where beneficiaries were trained. A total of 450 beneficiaries were trained in the nine communities. These three communities were purposively sampled because they have the largest number of beneficiaries. Key informants and opinion leaders were also

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selected purposively. Though purposive sampling is basically less strict and makes no claim for representativeness (Ofori & Dampson, 2011), it was used to gain deeper insight into the phenomenon.

The beneficiaries were then sampled using the snowball sampling. Though contacts of the beneficiaries were taken from the REP office, most of them could not be reached over the phone. Some beneficiaries have relocated therefore could not be contacted and others' contact numbers could not be reached. So, after the initial contacts were made, beneficiaries were asked to recommend other people who benefited from REP who might be willing to participate in the research. The process was continued until saturation was reached.

Table 1: *Types and number of respondents*

Respondents	Duayaw Nkanta	Bomaa	Yamfo	Total
Beneficiaries	23	23	17	63
Opinion leader	3	2	2	7
Staff of REP	2			2
Total	26	25	19	72

Source: Fieldwork, Bensah (2017)

A total of 72 respondents were involved in the study comprising of 63 beneficiaries, two staff of REP and seven opinion leaders as shown in Table 1. The sample size was determined based on theoretical saturation thus when new data no longer brings additional insights to the research questions. In all, 58 interviews were conducted and three focused group discussions were held in the communities respectively (eight participants from each community).

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Data Collection Instruments

Interviews, key person and focus group discussion guides were used for collection of data for the study. Three sets of interview guides were prepared for the beneficiaries, staff of REP and opinion leaders respectively. A focus group discussion guide was also prepared for beneficiaries. The guides were self-developed to comprise questions that solicited information on community participation in REP. The guides were semi-structured and open ended. This was to allow respondents the room to express themselves so as not to restrict the amount of information that they can give.

To ensure that the instrument measures exactly what it is to measure, the items on the guides were grouped under four sections. Each section focused on each objective except section D which addressed the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Section A analyzed the level of participation of beneficiaries. Section B evaluated the effect of REP on poverty reduction among beneficiaries; and section C discussed the sustainability strategies of REP.

The interview guides for the collection of data helped the researcher to gain much more detailed and in-depth knowledge about beneficiary experience to answer the research questions. The interviews permitted face-to-face contact with the respondents and allowed the interviewer to experience the effective as well as cognitive aspect of responses. The interviews also allowed the interviewer to explain and clarify questions, which attracted useful responses. However, the interviews were time consuming and well-qualified, highly trained interviewers had to be employed.

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The use of focus group discussion allowed the researcher to use group dynamics and interaction to generate data and insights that would otherwise not have emerged. The collective activity of debating, arguing, challenging and commenting on others' experiences and viewpoints brought to fore significant perspectives. The data was however difficult to analyse but with the permission of the participants, the interviews and discussions were recorded which aided in filling in missed statements.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected in March, 2017. Each interview lasted about 30-40 minutes and the focus group discussion about an hour and a half all at the convenience of the respondents. Two MPhil colleagues helped as research assistants and three national service personals were engaged as field assistants. The twi language was used to solicit information from the beneficiaries, therefore the quotations that are found in this study were translated into English. The research team faced many of challenges. The REP staff were not available for interviewing though they were informed two weeks earlier. Interview had to be done over the phone after so many calls and in the case of the District Coordinator of REP the interview could not be completed due to her busy schedule. We relied on data from the next in command who was also a respondent. Also, the beneficiaries assumed the team was coming from the government so they were more concerned about pouring out their problems and frustrations than answering the questions. Time was taken to explain to them that we are students and the data is for academic purpose. That yielded little result so we just had to sieve the information needed from the many things that were said.

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Data Processing and Analysis

Data analysis, according to De Vos (2002, p. 340) is "a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the collected data". The aim of analysis is to convert a mass of raw data into a coherent account. Whether the data are quantitative or qualitative, the task is to sort, arrange, and process them and make sense of their configuration. The intention of the researcher is to produce a report that accurately represents the raw data and blends them into a meaningful account of events. This resulted in the answering of the research questions which achieved the objective of the study.

Data collected from the interviewing and focus group discussion were transcribed using Microsoft word. After careful reading, the transcribed data was divided into meaningful analytical units or segments. The study used narrative (data narrated as it is), thematic analysis (data organized into groups on theme basis) and content analysis.

Ethical Consideration

A letter of permission was obtained from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Cape Coast to seek the consent from the Tano North District Assembly and the officials of REP to conduct the study. Respondents' consent was sought for participation in the research. In addition, they were informed of their right to pull out if they felt uncomfortable about any part of the process. Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents' information were ensured.

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Summary

This chapter presented the details of the research design adopted by the study. The research process undertaken incorporated the study area, population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedures data processing and analysis.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The chapter provides the results and discussion of the assessment of community participation in Rural Enterprise Programme (REP). The study employed the qualitative research approach specifically the evaluative design. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, key person interviews and focus group discussions. Both narrative and thematic analyses were used for the first two specific objectives. Content analysis was used for the third specific objective. It covered the demographic characteristics of respondents, the level of participation of beneficiaries, the effect of REP on poverty reduction among beneficiaries and the sustainability strategies of REP in the Tano North District.

Demographic characteristics of beneficiary respondents

The demographic characteristics of the beneficiary respondents examined included sex, age and educational level. Poor people do not necessarily constitute a homogeneous economic and social unit. The poor may share their poverty, but there may be many other factors which divide them and can breed mutual distrust. In respect to this, it is important to be aware of the economic and social differentiation that characterises the rural areas which if misunderstood or inadequately managed, could severely frustrate efforts to promote participation (Oakley, 1991).

Out of the 63 beneficiary respondents 48 are females and 15 males. In Duayaw Nkwanta, the district capital, there were more male (65.22%) than women (34.78%). However, in Bomaa and Yamfo all respondents were females as shown in Table 1. This was because the training was directed towards

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women. This is in line with the goal of REP to increase women economic empowerment thereby reducing the number of women trapped in poverty (IFAD, 2011). For most women in the Third World Countries, the male-dominated culture and society in which they live are the most formidable obstacles that they face in efforts to be included in development activities. Therefore, resources must be directed at women in the hope that their increasing economic power will lead to inevitable change (Oakley, 1991). This is evident in Duayaw Nkwanta when training was not specifically directed, it was male dominated resulting in only a small percentage of women (34.78%) participating.

Table 2: *Sex distribution of beneficiary respondents*

Status	Duayaw Nkwanta		Bomaa		Yamfo		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Male	15	65.22	0	0	0	0	15	23.81
Female	8	34.78	23	100	17	100	48	76.19
Total	23	100	23	100	17	100	63	100

Source: Fieldwork, Bensah (2017)

The beneficiary respondents aged between 23 and 67. About 46.03 percent are between 15-35 years, 41.27 percent are between 36- 55 years and 12.7 percent are above 55years as shown in Table 2. The data shows that the majority of respondents fall within official age of youth (15-35). This is a reflection of REP commitment of increasing youth employment. REP is committed to developing strategic interventions and approaches to attract the youth to Micro and Small-scale Enterprises (MSE) and value chain opportunities, in order to face challenges of unemployment and

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underemployment. This is aimed at tackling the challenge of creating descent job opportunities for the youth or engaging them in some form of skills training to improve their chances of employment (IFAD, 2011).

Table 3: *Distribution of beneficiary respondents by age*

Age (years)	Duayaw Nkwanta		Bomaa		Yamfo		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
15-35	6	26.67	15	66.67	8	47.06	29	46.03
36-55	12	53.33	6	26.67	8	47.06	26	41.27
Above 55	5	20.00	1	6.67	1	5.88	8	12.70
Total	23	100	23	100	17	100	63	100

Source: Fieldwork, Bensah (2017)

Education is an important characteristic that might affect beneficiaries' attitude and the way they examine issues. The educational qualification of beneficiary respondents is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: *Educational distribution of beneficiary respondents*

Education Level	Duayaw Nkwanta		Bomaa		Yamfo		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
None	0	0	2	8.7	0	0	2	3.17
Basic	9	39.13	18	78.26	13	76.47	30	47.62
Secondary	6	26.09	3	13.04	4	23.53	13	20.63
Tertiary	8	34.78	0	0	0	0	8	12.70
Total	23	100	23	100	17	100	63	100

Source: Fieldwork, Bensah (2017)

The data showed that 47.62 percent of respondents had basic education, 20.63 percent had secondary education, 12.70 percent have tertiary education and only 3.17 percent had no formal education. Although almost all beneficiary respondents had some level of formal education, it was mostly basic education. This was especially for respondents from Bomaa and Yamfo who were mainly

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women. Respondents from Duayaw Nkwanta who were mostly men have a higher level of education than their counterparts from Bomaa and Yamfo. All the respondents with tertiary education were from Duayaw Nkwanta and worked mainly as teachers or nurses. It is evident from the data that beneficiaries with higher education (which are from Duayaw Nkwanta) participated at a higher level than those with lower education. This confirms the Nelson and Wright (1995)'s assertion that a beneficiary's level of education to some extent determines the level at which she or he can participate in a poverty reduction programme.

Level of Participation of Beneficiaries

The first specific objective of the study sought to examine the level of participation of beneficiaries. Involving beneficiary community in decision making process over the years has gained an increasing importance as one of the measures of ensuring success of many development programmes or projects (Paul, 1987). To examine the level of participation of beneficiaries, it is necessary to know how awareness about the programme was created. Singh (1992)noted that an important factor affecting the level of beneficiary participation in development programmes is the awareness of the programmes. There are suggestions that, for any community to participate in any development intervention, they must be aware of the intervention (Rifkin & Kangere, 2002; N Uphoff, 1991; Warren, 1991).

Beneficiary respondents were asked how they got to know of REP and how they became part of it. In Duayaw Nkwanta, most of the beneficiaries got to know about the activities of REP through the radio and the associations they belonged to. Announcements were made through the radio by REP officials

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inviting anyone who was interested in being trained in soap making, bead making, baking and confectionery, tailoring, poultry, food processing, beekeeping, rabbit rearing, fish farming, mushroom farming, just to mention a few to come to their office and register. The respondents then took the opportunity and became beneficiaries. A 52-year-old female beneficiary said, "Through the radio- I heard the news and I attended the workshop and after that I joined them".

This was confirmed by a REP official who said that:

> We have sensitization programmes for the communities. Sometimes we go to radio to do advert about REP in the communities. We go to the churches too to make announcement about the programme and we do radio talk show too.

About 78.3% of beneficiary respondents who were already in business heard of REP from their associations. Since most of the beneficiaries were already in business they had their associations where they shared ideas and helped each other, Most of them heard about REP through these associations. A beneficiary had this to say:

> I am a fish farmer so I joined the Fish Farmers Association and REP came in to give training to fish farmers. So, I got to know them that time. They told us the training will help us increase our yields. REP was in existence before I joined (A 52-year-old graduate beneficiary).
>
> I was there when they visited us, Poultry Farmers Association. I think they asked of those who are involved in poultry. And once they visited me on the farm. And through that I got to be with

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> them. I have been with them for five years now (A 48-year-old graduate beneficiary).
>
> Soap makers, we have a youth group meeting so it was the association president who introduced REP to us. They used the registration details we used for our association to register us (A 36-year-old SSS leaver).

REP contacted many Micro and Small-scale Entrepreneurs through their various associations to train them to become more efficient entrepreneurs. Those of them that were not in the group were asked to form a group so that they would be easily accessible. This validates Singh's (1992) assertion that formal or informal organisation of the people concerned is a pre-requisite for people participation in development projects.

In Bomaa and Yamfo however, the stories were different. REP was given a political party colour (was influenced by partisan politics). Most of the beneficiary respondents were not happy about how information about REP was disseminated. Most of them complained bitterly about how what is meant for all can only be accessed by members of a particular political party. In Bomaa participation was on party ticket as awareness was created through party agents. When respondents were asked how they became aware of the activities of REP here are some of their responses;

> A friend called Mary who is an organizer for the political party in power called me and told me that there will be training for soap makers and that if I'm interested and I said yes. The members of opposition parties refused to join because they did it according to party affiliation.

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Another female respondent said

> Someone told me about the training that it would be beneficial. It was the constituency secretary of the ruling party. It looked like it was meant for the party faithfuls.

The programme was hijacked by a particular political party in Bomaa because it was the party in power. The District Chief Executive (DCE), the administrative head of the district, passed the information through his constituency executives limiting participation to only their members. This supports Botes and Van Rensburg (2000) and Njoh (2002) assertions that one cost of community participation is that project may be co-opted by a powerful economic, social, or political group so that most of the benefits do not reach large sections of the intended target population. Often, it is very difficult to reach the poorest in informal settlements. Initiatives and leadership often come from people with higher economic, social and political status in such communities. These leaders usually play the role of middlemen between the agency and the community, limiting participation of the weaker and vulnerable in community affairs. In some cases, a small elite group may take control and monopolise community level decision making, obstruct attempts by authorities to engage directly with community members and thus prevent them from participating.

The study revealed that other members of the community who could have been in dire need of the training did not participate. Some beneficiaries gave account of how some of their friends could not participate because they were known in the community as members of the opposition party. Though they were aware of the programme, they could not participate because they were not

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members of that particular party. According to the beneficiaries for some of them it was out of shame and others out of pride.

This finding validates Upcoff's (1992) argument that the fact that a beneficiary is made aware of a programme does not mean the individual will be willing to participate. Byrnes and Byrnes (1987) reported that one factor that greatly influences the willingness of beneficiaries to participate in development projects is their perception about the credibility of the information source to which they have access. This is because a person's reactions to information provided by a particular source are significantly affected by cues derived from the communicator's intentions, expertise and trustworthiness.

A sub chief from Bomaa, a taxi driver was interviewed as an opinion leader. He said that "I don't know anything about the activities of REP. Though I see their pick-up vehicle around I don't know what they are into". This means there are some other community members who had not heard about the programme at all and for that matter did not participate .This is supported by Warren (1991)finding that most farmers in diffusion study in Nigeria did not participate in agriculture innovation because they did not have much information on the programme.

In Yamfo, awareness was created by the Member of Parliament (MP) for Tano North constituency who is on the ticket of the opposition party. It was made to look like the MP's initiative to help the women in the constituency so the respondents did not know about REP. All that the beneficiaries knew was that people came from Duayaw Nkwanta to train them. Though participation was not limited to only members of her party as in the case of Bomaa,

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respondents had misgivings that certificates were given only to their party faithful.

It is evident from the discussion above that awareness creation was similar in Bomaa and Yamfo but very different in Duayaw Nkwanta. This is due to the fact that Duayaw Nkwanta is the district capital and REP office is located there. Bomaa and Yamfo are quite distant from the district capital because of that, activities of REP are not so vibrant like in Duayaw Nkwanta. For Bomaa particularly, the road network is bad making commuting very difficult. The findings are corroborated by Singh (1992) who identifies that dispersal of people over large geographical areas among others is an obstacle to the creation of awareness among beneficiaries and thereby enlist their participation.

In the case of Bomaa and Yamfo lack of communication is a major obstacle to creation of awareness among beneficiaries. None of the beneficiary respondents ever mentioned hearing the information from the radio or from any REP official. Awareness was created informally that is why it was easily hijacked by a particular party. If REP officials were to disseminate the information themselves or if the information should come directly from the REP officials, everyone would have been given an equal chance of participation. An opinion leader, unit committee member complained; “information did not reach all of us. They came and left before some of us heard it”.

Another obstacle to creation of awareness identified by the study is lack of relevant literature especially in vernacular. There is no available literature on the activities of REP. A visit to the office to get some documents on activities of REP proved futile. All the information gathered were by word of mouth, little

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or no written document was available. According to the REP officials, their office has been without light for some years now and all their information is stack on the computer. To remove this obstacle, Singh (1992) suggested the preparation and distribution of relevant literature in vernacular, use of radio, television, and local press, promotion of traditional modes of recreation and communication.

Though no beneficiary respondent in Duayaw Nkwanta mentioned anything on politics, a sub chief's speech during an interview suggested that REP in Duayaw Nkwanta is not free of party politics. He said;

> If you are not interested in politics that means you are out of it. But we are insisting that they should not put politics into it but the District Chief Executive (DCE) will hijack the whole thing and if you are a REP official and you don't take care they will just … or they send signal to the head office and you will be fired. So, they only fold their hands and allow the politicians to do their own thing. It affects the interest. We are advising them to stop putting politics in this laudable idea.

It is evident that awareness was created one way or the other but beneficiaries were not told their roles in the programme. They were just invited to be trained. This upholds Narayan (1995) finding in a study of 121 water projects that in some development projects beneficiaries are only made aware of the programme but the nature of their participation is not known to them.

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Level of Participation in the Project Cycle

The level of participation of all potential beneficiaries in project cycle of development project is ultimately what determines the success of the programme. Involving the beneficiary community in all the project cycle is geared toward building their capacity and empowering them. Beneficiary capacity is built as they actively participate at all the project stages (Kelly & Van Vlaenderen, 1995). The project cycle comprises the following stages; need identification, design or planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. However according to Paul (1987), the level or intensity of participation may vary at particular stages of the project or programme. Therefore, the level of beneficiary participation should be examined at the various stages.

To examine the level of participation of beneficiaries, Anokye's (2013) reclassification of Arnstein's ladder of participation was used. She reclassified Arnstein's eight rungs broadly into mis-participation, tokenism, less intensive participation and intensive participation as shown in the conceptual framework.

The project cycle begins with need identification, where the beneficiary community is involved in needs assessment, prioritizing of needs and generation of solution. With the help of facilitators, the community identifies and prioritizes needs and states the goals and objectives of the programme or project. During identification, a need analysis of beneficiaries could be attempted as a basis for designing the project to match community needs and capacities

To establish the level of participation of beneficiaries at this stage, the respondents were asked if they were involved at this stage and the role they played. Beneficiaries from Duayaw Nkwanta stated that after the initial training

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they were asked their needs and problems which they told the REP officials. A 55-year-old poultry farmer said "At the beginning they just invited us for the training, but after that, they asked for our needs and views on the programme". However, beneficiaries from Bomaa and Yamfo indicated they were not asked of their needs at all. A 38-year-old soap maker from Bomaa said she wished she was asked of her needs.

It is evident that beneficiaries from the three communities did not participate in the needs identification stage. Though beneficiaries from Duayaw Nkwanta were asked about their needs, it was after the training. Needs identification is supposed to be done before the training so that information gathered will be used in designing the programme to suit the needs of the beneficiaries. The best the information gathered after the training could be used for is to use it for the next training which may be attended by different set of people or beneficiaries. If this continues, beneficiaries will never have the opportunity to participate in the needs identification stage. Participation at this stage is nonexistent.

At the design or planning stage, the initial ideas that emerge from the needs identification stage are developed into a coherent form. This stage involves specification of the project or programme's objectives, activities, outputs and inputs. It is important at this stage that different opinions and designs are considered for meeting identified needs. To ensure that project design reflects the real priorities of beneficiaries, they have to be involved. In South Africa Land Redistribution programme Boshielo (1999) noted that the specific tasks to be performed by the community were identified and incorporated into the programme.

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The study revealed that beneficiaries did not participate at this stage. Beneficiaries did not play any role in the design of the programmes or trainings. They were just informed about the training, its duration and the venue. Beneficiaries believed it was already planned or designed from the top. A 33-year-old graduate beneficiary expressed his frustration:

> No, I don't wish to be part of the needs identification, design and planning stage because I don't know what they have planned in mind. The idea is with them. Why would you be with somebody who has his own idea? After all, when they finish with the planning and they are implementing it they give us two weeks intensive education which is good. It is okay. I wish I would be participating more but that is not the case.
>
> The design stage I did not know anything about it. They just told us that they were going to give us the training for one week. Every day and the kind of food we learned (36-year-old baker from Bomaa).
>
> I only joined at the implementation stage. I didn't hear of them in the beginning. I only heard of their meeting on the radio during the implementation time (A 48-year-old baker from Yamfo).

When the district coordinator of REP was asked how the programmes or interventions were designed she has this to say:

> It was designed in consultation with …… If you want details about the design then you have to go to the project coordinating officer in Kumasi because if I'm giving you information on that it may be scanty. But then it was designed in

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> consultation with stakeholders and collaborators who have an interest in MSE.

Another REP official said;

> It is not us who started REP. We are just implementing it. It is somebody's programme. Government is involved in the programme. It is like NGO but the workers are paid by government. It is REP that gives us the money we use for the training.

This is an indication that even the staff of REP do not know much about the design of REP. This was confirmed by the District Coordinating Director when he said the design of programmes or interventions is a template for all districts. Beneficiaries' participation at this stage is nonexistent. Beneficiaries from the three communities did not participate in the design or planning of the interventions, neither were they informed about how it was done.

According to Paul (1987), the nature of the project or programme and the characteristics of beneficiaries will determine, to a large extent the level of participation. Where complex technologies and their adaptation dominate the design of a project or programme, there may be less scope for the active participation of beneficiaries in design. He nevertheless advocated for the importance of sharing information on the design with beneficiaries in such cases, though decisions on design may be made, or at least dominated, by other actors. However, in the case of REP, beneficiaries were not informed about the design of the programme. This validates Phologane (2014) finding in the evaluation of community participation in development projects in

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Mokgalwaneng Village, South Africa, that respondents did not participate in the initial stages of the projects.

The implementation stage of a project cycle is when the actual programme is carried out. The objective of any effort in project analysis and appraisal clearly is to have a project or programme that can be implemented to the benefit of the society. Thus, implementation is perhaps the most important part of the project cycle. It is at this stage that the largest portion of project or programme funds is disbursed (Cusworth & Franks, 2013) and the people must be involved.

All respondents indicated that they were involved in the implementation of REP. This is supported by Maraga et al. (2010) evaluating community participation in the project cycle of afforestation projects in river Nyando basin, Kenya. They noted that it is at the implementation stage that majority of the community members participated. The implementation is mainly training. The beneficiaries were trained in record keeping, business management, customer care, soap making, food processing, baking and confectionery, fish farming, poultry, beekeeping, carpentry and rabbit rearing. Mostly facilitators or resource are well seasoned professionals. Some of them were beneficiaries who have become service providers and therefore could mentor and impart knowledge gained to others. Given that the facilitators are experienced people, they imparted the beneficiaries with the best practices drawing on their broad knowledge gained from their own experience both failures and success stories.

In Duayaw Nkwanta training was free and beneficiaries were trained in variety of skills. However, in Bomaa and Yamfo beneficiaries were trained only in soap making and baking and confectionery. Probably because all of them

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were women. Beneficiaries in Bomaa were made to pay 5ghc for the accommodation and feeding of the facilitator. In Yamfo, the queen mother of the town provided accommodation and food for the facilitator so beneficiaries paid nothing.

The respondents testified that the trainings were well organized. For most of the beneficiaries, the trainings were participatory, intensive and done at the community level. They were involved in all the learning process. When beneficiaries were asked their role at the implementation stage they indicated that their role was to avail themselves to be trained. They were not involved in deciding how the training was done. A 25-year-old Senior Secondary School (SSS) leaver said "they teach everything so the only thing we do is to be taught". They however allowed us to ask questions and make contributions during the training session. The beneficiaries indicated that the training is the strength of REP.

Beneficiaries participated at a level which Anokye (2013) referred to us tokenism. At this level, the public may hear and be heard. But they cannot be certain that policymakers will heed to their views in the decision-making process. Empowerment is low at this level. The level of participation at this stage is uniform across the three communities. Participation was not influenced by location, gender or level of education. All participants were given the same training irrespective of their level of education.

Monitoring and evaluation is the last stage of the project cycle. Monitoring is an ongoing process during the implementation of the project. Feedbacks in monitoring are used as correction measures to ensure that implementation of projects are in line with project objectives. Evaluation is

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normally carried out at intervals. In some cases, it was done after a major stage of a project is completed.

Majority of respondents at Duayaw Nkwanta indicated that monitoring and evaluation was being done and they are involved. Monitoring and evaluation was done through the phone and visit to the work place. Rep officials call over the phone to ask them how business was going and whether they were encountering any problem. Respondents were also visited at their places of work to make sure they were in business and if they needed any help. Beneficiaries indicated they were not involved in scheduling time for monitoring and evaluation. They usually receive calls from REP officials informing them about when they would be visiting and they did their best to be available. That means monitoring and evaluation was done randomly at the discretion of REP officials. Some respondents also indicated that after the training they were made to evaluate the training session. They were given evaluation forms to fill.

A 56-year-old poultry farmer beneficiary had the following to say

> They will call you that they will visit your farm. If they come they will like to see your records and even the surrounding or the work place. So, if they see something which is not good, they will prompt you and something which is encouraging, they will pat your back that it is good. Apart from them, no one cares about us. They are the only group that shows that kind of interest in our work. Some of these things they give us are free of charge. They visit you, give you advice, counsel you free of charge.

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> They have been visiting us. We usually give our opinion and all of us will discuss it. They will always want to look at your records. Before they go you will learn something new (A 58-year-old fish farmer).

This was confirmed by a REP official

> We will go to their shops, those who have started their business. After the training we call them to ask, have you started the business? The person will say oh I have started. Sometimes we go to the client's workplace to see what they are doing. Sometimes too we do it in our office. We call some of them to come and bring along some of their products for us to see but mostly we do it on the field. We go to their shops, farms, whatever be it.

However, a respondent in Duayaw Nkwanta who is a new trainee in rabbit rearing and had joined REP for six months now had a different view. He expressed this frustration; "I have been calling them to come and see what I have been doing but they have not been coming. They have not been here before".

Most of beneficiaries in Bomaa and Yamfo indicated that monitoring and evaluation is not taking place and for that matter they are not involved. Some complained that since the completion of the training they have not heard from REP officials even though they promised to bring them oven to aid their work. However, their leaders indicated that they are in contact with the REP officials and do call them on the phone when the need arises. But this is not known to the other beneficiaries. Evidence gathered showed that beneficiaries

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from Duayaw Nkwanta participated at the level of tokenism and beneficiaries from Bomaa and Yamfo participated at level of mis-participation. This may be due to the fact the activities of REP started in Bomaa and Yamfo barely two years ago but in Duayaw Nkwanta it started some five years ago. Also, it may be due to proximity. REP office is located in Duayaw Nkwanta and monitoring and evaluation will be easier.

When opinion leaders were asked the role they played, a unit committee member from Bomaa said "When they came, anything they needed like table and chair we provided them". The queen mother of Yamfo said she accommodated and fed the facilitator and bought all the materials for the training. A sub chief of Duayaw Nkwanta said;

> We were encouraging the people to be part. We have a lot of unemployed youth especially the women in dressmaking, tie and dye and soap making. We were encouraging people. For us we are grownups. I'm not going to learn any trade as at now, as I'm sitting here. So, we are encouraging the youth, especially the dropouts, who completed secondary school and cannot continue, those from JSS and our ladies at home. We encourage them to partake in some of their programmes.

Though the broad aim of participation in development projects is to actively involve people and communities in identifying problems, formulating plans and implementing decisions over their own lives (DFID, 2002), beneficiaries were not actively involved in the project cycle. Beneficiaries were involved only in implementation and monitoring and evaluation. This contradicts the finding of Boshielo (1999) who in assessing the participation of

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beneficiary communities in South African land re-distribution programme noted that beneficiary communities were mostly involved in more than three phases of the project cycle.

Beneficiaries participated in two stages and their participation was at low levels. Level of participation varies across the three communities. Beneficiaries in Duayaw Nkwanta participated at a higher level in monitoring and evaluation stage than their counterparts at Bomaa and Yamfo. Nevertheless, general level of participation ranges from mis-participation to tokenism. This is supported by a study by Husseini et al. (2016) who examined the nature of community participation in the management of forest reserve in the Northern Region of Ghana and found that the participation of fringe communities ranges from passive to tokenism. At these levels empowerment is low and the mentality of dependency is not broken as showed in the conceptual framework.

The World Bank (1996) noted that in poverty reduction projects or programmes, it is very useful to evaluate client satisfaction of the training provided. To ascertain beneficiaries' satisfaction, beneficiary respondents were asked how satisfied they were with their level of participation. Though their level of participation was low, majority of the beneficiary respondent said they were satisfied with the level of participation. Just a few of the beneficiary respondents were dissatisfied with their participation. This upholds the finding of Osei-Kufuor and Koomson (2014) in the study of national poverty reduction programme (NPRP) where majority (80%) of beneficiaries were satisfied with their level of participation.

The reasons given by beneficiaries who were dissatisfied with the level of participation were all related to the financial help that was not given to them

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after the training. Majority of the beneficiaries were satisfied because probably they did not understand participation or their right to participate. They were satisfied because the programme met their needs. The training was free and they acquired a lot of skills. A 52-year-old poultry farmer expressed his satisfaction;

> I am satisfied. They are very good. They have given us some handouts. I like the way their workshops were organized. Many people attended and we shared ideas. Not just from the facilitators but from us the farmers, we shared ideas.

However, it seems the satisfaction of beneficiaries are more about the training than their level of participation. Many of the beneficiaries indicated that they will partake in further programmes or projects.

Effect of REP on Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction is the means of lessening poverty and building institutions that prevent people from becoming poorer or slipping further into poverty (Narayan-Parker, 2002). Hence poverty reduction programmes should improve beneficiaries' standard of living. The Rural Enterprises Programme (REP) is part of the efforts of the Government of Ghana to reduce poverty and improve living conditions in the rural areas. The goal of REP is to improve the livelihoods and incomes of rural poor micro and small entrepreneurs. The development objective is to increase the number of Rural MSEs that generate profit, growth and employment opportunities (IFAD, 2011). The effectiveness of poverty reduction programmes depends on their ability to reduce poverty and give livelihood to the poor.

In attempt to know if REP has brought a change or improvement in the lives of beneficiary respondents, they were asked why they joined REP.

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In Duayaw Nkwanta responses given by respondents indicated that 91.7% of them joined because they wanted funds to expand their businesses. About 90.1% beneficiaries in Duayaw Nkwanta unlike those in Bomaa and Yamfo were already in business and needed assistance in terms of finance. 91.7% of the beneficiaries indicated that though they were in business it is on small scale. They have the desire to expand their businesses but attempt to secure loans as individuals have failed. Their expectations were that when they join REP, REP would support them financially or link them up with financial institutions that could give them loans at lower interest rates. These were some responses from the FGD session; "I joined REP because I needed financial support to expand my business but they didn't finance us".

> In the first place, I thought … I have been hearing about them in the news so I thought that they will be able to support us especially financially so that we will achieve our aim of maintaining and expanding our businesses. The aim for joining is the financial support but the help they have given us is inadequate (A poultry farmer).

Some beneficiaries from Duayaw Nkwanta stated that they joined REP because they wanted to acquire new skills, ideas and ways of doing things. A 30-year-old soap maker said "As humans, you have to continue learning. New things are coming up and if you do not upgrade yourself you will be left behind". Though beneficiaries have some basic skills, REP had equipped them with better skills. A beneficiary trained in baking and confectionery said she used to know

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only how to bake sugar bread. But after she had been trained by REP she can now bake variety of bread, cakes and biscuits.

A beneficiary indicated she joined REP because she wanted to participate in their trade fair. According to her, REP organizes trade fairs which give its beneficiaries the platform to exhibit their products. A lot of beneficiaries got big contracts through this which boosted their businesses. Beneficiaries display packaging skills they have acquired through training which attract people to their products.

Most beneficiaries in Bomaa and Yamfo had two goals. To acquire a skill and to be assisted financially to establish a business after acquiring the skill. Most of the beneficiary respondents at the time of training were unemployed. The only job available to most of them is farming which has become an unfavorable venture due to the erratic rainfall pattern. They saw this as an opportunity to get something doing.

I completed Senior Secondary School (SSS) with Home Economics background. I did not have a job and I'm at home but I have an interest of furthering my education so I decided to join them. Because I wanted to have something to do (A 35year old SSS leaver from Bomaa).

I used to collect pastry from someone to sell with my ice cream. I did not know how to do it myself. So, when I heard about the training I decided to join and learn how to do it. But I do only shortbread I do not have the machine to mix the flour (A 30-year-old JSS leaver from Yamfo).

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Beneficiaries' responses also indicated that they were not only hoping to be trained but also to be financially supported to start a business after the training. Many beneficiaries were hoping that REP will not only train them but also give them a startup capital to start a business. A 25-year-old beneficiary from Yamfo said;

> "I did not have any skill then so I needed to acquire a skill. I also wanted a career but financial constrains did not permit me. This quote indicated that the beneficiary was not only looking for a skill but also financial support".

Most of the beneficiaries expressed their feelings about how disappointed they were when REP could not support them financially. About 19% of beneficiaries considered the training a waste as they cannot put it to use. But 44.4% of the beneficiaries however comforted theirselves by saying that they at least acquired a skill. It was free and one day when the opportunity presents itself they can put it to use.

Evidence gathered from the responses of the beneficiary respondents indicated that they participated because of the potential benefit they will derive. This validates the findings of Narayan-Parker and Ebbe (1997) study on the design of social funds that the perceived benefit of a project or programme to beneficiaries were a major factor influencing the participation of almost 90 percent of the beneficiaries.

This is also in line with the Theory of Collective Choice propounded by James M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock in 1962. It argues that a group would choose a collective mode of action when each of its individual members finds it profitable to act collectively rather than individually, that is when his or her

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perceived costs are less than his perceived benefits from the collective action. People will only have interest in participation if they are convinced that the outcome is worth the time and energy invested in the project or programme.

The finding of Singh (1991) that the perceived programme benefit is a factor that influences beneficiary level of participation is established. He suggested that the expected benefit of the programme should be substantially higher than the expected private cost of participation if beneficiary participation is to be self-sustainable. Beneficiaries would participate if the intervention provides the fulfillment of their basic needs.

Beneficiaries were asked if they have achieved their goals. All beneficiaries who had the goal of acquiring skills stated that they achieved their goals. However, beneficiaries with the goal of acquiring financial support said they have not achieved their goals. A beneficiary from Yamfo said "I have not achieved my goal yet because I am not working with it. I am just at home". But most of the beneficiaries who said they have not achieved their goals were grateful for being part of REP because they are better off than when they joined. A beneficiary from Bomaa said "You cannot always get what you want. It is ok".

In investigating the effect of REP on poverty reduction among beneficiaries, beneficiary respondents were asked what specific benefit/ improvements they have derived from the programme. The responses from beneficiary respondents in Bomaa and Yamfo are similar but those of Duayaw Nkwanta are quite different. However, the benefits or improvements derived can be grouped in terms of skill acquired, income, and livelihood according to

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their responses. This emphasizes the fact that poverty reduction is not only about increasing income levels.

Skills Acquired

Skills acquired was the first benefit all respondents mentioned in all the three communities. Capacity building is one of the objectives of community participation identified by Paul (1987). Sen (1999) argues that the objective of development is the expansion of human capabilities rather than economic growth. The following views were shared by beneficiaries on the skills they had acquired.

A 42-year-old graduate poultry farmer said;

> They have increased my knowledge about the business, the poultry farm. That's the best way to adapt in the business. That's the best I have achieved so far. Right now, as I'm talking, the last workshop they gave us training on reducing cost. That means I can reduce my cost to the very low, minimum level. That alone if you quantify it in money terms it is very huge. They have trained me to be able to preparer my own feed. I think that is the most important and better record keeping.
>
> Knowledge they say is power. The knowledge that they have given us is more than money. The little resources you have you can also add it to achieve your aim. Our worry is also cost, expenditure. The cost of operating the business and with what they gave us the cost will come down. When your cost is coming down that means your profit will increase (A graduate poultry farmer).

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A 42-year-old soap maker had this to say:

> It helped me to know how to make several types of soap. For instance, I only know how to make "azuma soap" but now they have taught me how to do key soap, shower gel, BF, parazone, omo, so I think I have achieved some of my goals although financially they have not given me anything. REP has helped me to have varieties because at least if they do not buy "azuma soap" they will buy parazone.

A 27-year-old rabbit rearer

> They sent me to KITA-Kumasi Institute of Tropical Agriculture to learn how to rear rabbit. They were organizing programme for the youth, youths in agriculture so I took part. I have gotten a lot on how to be an entrepreneur. I have gotten a lot of knowledge on how to do my business.

A 48-year-old graduate fish farmer

> They have given training on pond management, record keeping, and business management. Through the training, I think I have done some diversification. At first, I was doing fish farming but now I'm doing piggery and I've also put up a structure to do mushroom and so I hope within this month or early next month I will start. The structure is ready.

Data gathered revealed that the respondents have acquired a lot of skills and knowledge. The skills gained included book keeping, business management tailoring, baking and confectionery, soap making, food processing, beekeeping, carpentry, rabbit rearing, poultry, piggery, hairdressing, mushroom farming,

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fish farming, and bead making. However, respondents in Bomaa and Yamfo were trained only in baking and confectionery and soap making.

Plate 1: A beneficiary proudly showing one of the field assistants his records
Photo credit: Fieldwork, Bensah (2017)

The woman in Plate 2 is a 66 years old poultry farmer who has benefited from REP in Duayaw Nkwanta. He heard about REP on the radio and has been with REP for five years now. He was so happy about the skills he has acquired from participating in REP and he brought out his books to show us how the knowledge has helped him to keep proper records of his business.

Plate 2: A beneficiary making soap
Photo credit: Fieldwork, Bensah (2017)

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The woman in the picture is a 37-year-old soap maker in Duayaw Nkwanta. She is a JSS leaver and was in the soap making business before joining REP. She happened to be making soap when we got to her house to interview her. She told us that though she was already in business before REP, she knows only how to make azuma (a type of soap). But joining REP she has been equipped with a lot of skills that she now does shower gel, parazone, dettol and other varieties of soap.

Income

Though it has been agreed upon that poverty is not all about material deprivation and therefore poverty reduction is not all about increasing income level, income is one of the measures of poverty. Improving the incomes of rural poor micro and small entrepreneurs is part of the goal of REP.

The effect REP had on beneficiaries in terms of income is not clear cut. Some respondents have seen improvement in their income while others have not. Majority of beneficiaries in Duayaw Nkwanta have seen improvement while majority of beneficiaries in Bomaa and Yamfo did not see any improvement. It has been observed that in Duayaw Nkwanta majority of respondent that indicated that their income has increased are male whiles those who have not seen any improvement are female. It can be noticed that women beneficiaries, irrespective of where they are located, have not seen any improvement in their income level. This gives credit to Oakley (1991)'s call that resources must be directed at women because of the male-dominated society in which we find ourselves.

Among those who have seen an increase in their income level, some said it has increased tremendously while others too said the increase is not that much.

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> My income has risen tremendously. They helped me buy machines and business goes on well. It has improved my livelihood. Now I have more workers and apprentices so I'm able to meet deadlines. I now get big contracts because REP has marketed me through their trade fairs (A 52-year-old carpenter).
>
> It has helped me because I have been able to educate my children from the REP idea that helped me to increase my income (A fish farmer beneficiary).
>
> Our worry has always been cost of operating the business and with the training they have given us the cost is coming down. When your cost is coming down that means your profit is increasing. So, profit is high. I am thinking of going for a larger number of birds because the cost has come down. The money I have can take more (A graduate poultry farmer from Duayaw Nkwanta).
>
> My income has risen slightly but not as much as I would have wanted but my livelihood is okay. I bake on small scales.

This may be due to the fact that majority of respondents in Duayaw Nkwanta were already in business and the additional knowledge boosted their income. Some of the beneficiaries too have benefited financially from REP. Loans and grants were given to beneficiaries in business. According to one REP official, you cannot start a business with a loan so loans are given only to those who have started or are in business. Some beneficiaries also took loans from rural banks and microfinance companies. That is not to say all respondents

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already in business have seen an increase in their income. A 54-year-old graduate fish farmer said;

> I can't attribute it much to REP. I'm keeping my books right I know my profit margin is not high because the loan I took is not really much. Only I know how to keep my records and monitor how I go about it. If there is improvement in my life I can't attribute it to REP because it is marginal.

Another contributing factor is their level of education. Beneficiaries in Duayaw Nkwanta all have some level of formal education with the number of beneficiaries with tertiary education almost equal to beneficiaries with basic education. The district coordinator of REP mentioned that they are considering limiting some kind of training especially book keeping to literates because it is very difficult training illiterates.

In Bomaa and Yamfo most of the beneficiaries said their income levels have not improved. This is due to the fact that most of them are not in business. Though they have acquired a lot of skills they are not able to put it into practice because of financial constraints. Most beneficiaries indicated that though they wish to do something with the skills that they have acquired, they do not have the money to do so. Considering that most of them were unemployed before the training it will be difficult to raise the needed money. They indicated that with an amount of thousand Ghana Cedis (they could start a business. Gender may also play a role here. With all of them being women and the fact that poverty is prevalent among women. A respondent from Yamfo poured out her heart.

> We have not been able to gain financially. Our income level is the same because we have not been able to put into practice what

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> we have learnt. We are not benefiting yet. Maybe one day we may use the skills we have acquired that is if we have not forgotten them.

Livelihood

Since studies have shown that economic growth does not necessarily result in the improvement of wellbeing (Gaiha & Kulkarni, 1998), beneficiaries were asked about the improvement in their livelihood. Improvement of livelihood conditions entails more than provision of food. The study considered beneficiaries' ability to pay their wards' fees, money spent on family upkeep, housing and their ability to afford health services and social status.

The study revealed that REP has positively improved the livelihood of some of the respondents and gave others their livelihood strategies in Duayaw Nkwanta but same cannot be said of Bomaa and Yamfo. In Duayaw Nkwanta, beneficiaries indicated that they have seen improvement in their livelihood because of REP. Most beneficiaries said businesses have expanded, they can now pay their children's school fees, and they are respected in the community. This affirms the claim by Matin and Hulme (2003) that programmes should create a platform on which individuals could self-generate and improve on their livelihood.

A 50-year-old carpenter shared his experience.

> My shop was small but now it is big and I have even employed people. I even get bigger contracts through this. I have an annex which is my showroom at Kumasi, St Hubert. We learnt a lot and exchanged ideas. I have won an award Ghana @ 50 Brong Ahafo's best carpenter. Their exhibition also helps a lot. It brings

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> about healthy competition. Now I have been introduced to banks. I can acquire loans from them. I was thinking of a formal job earlier but now that this is successful I no longer do.

A 36-year-old soap maker shared this view;

> I am now able to take care of my children. I pay their school fees, cloth them and take them to the hospital when they are sick. I also trained other people. People now respect me because they come to buy on credit from me.
>
> We are yet to be trained for beads making. But with cutting and pedicure, they have really helped. Now I have various certificates, NVTI part I and II. My income level has risen. I'm empowered with knowledge. Now I even teach others (A JSS leaver hairdresser).

Beneficiaries from Bomaa and Yamfo, just as in the case of income, did not see any improvement in their livelihood. The reason is the same. No financial support to start a business.

> They taught us for nothing because we do not have start-up capital to start. They really did well in training us but there is no improvement in our livelihood because we are not utilizing the art we learned (A soap maker from Bomaa).
>
> So, they came and trained us and left us. Is like taking us to a road and leaving us there. So, they have done the training for nothing because we are not able to utilize it. We have not been able to gain financially because we have not been able to put it into practice. They taught us for nothing because we don't have

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> startup capital to start our own businesses. They really did well in training us but there is no improvement in our livelihood because we are not utilizing the skills we learned (A baker from Yamfo).

The few beneficiaries that had started something also do it on small scales. A baker from Bomaa said "with the skill I have acquired, if I get financial support, I will be in business. This is because the little pastries I prepare sometimes I am able to sell all. But the profit is so small it does not reflect in my life"

Empowerment

Empowerment has been identified by Paul (1987) as the foremost objective of community participation. Community participation, in the broadest sense can be seen as an instrument of empowerment. Any project or development activity is then a means of empowering people so that they are able to initiate actions on their own and thus influence the processes and outcomes of development.

According to Oakley (1995), empowerment should be concerned with enabling people to decide upon and to take initiatives they believe are essential to their own development. It has been revealed that though the beneficiaries have acquired a lot of skills they are not empowered. That is to say that they cannot take initiative by themselves. This can be said especially for respondents from Bomaa and Yamfo. Most of them have not started anything because they are waiting for REP or the Government to help them start their businesses. The quote below from respondents from Boma and Yamfo confirms this.

> I wanted to learn so I could use it as a profession. They have really trained us but it is left with money. Most of us have

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been trained but they are not practicing because there is no money. The purpose is to learn and use it as work but it is left with capital to use in starting (A baker from Bomaa).

I have learnt but I can't use it because I don't have the machines. I'm just expecting that with the knowledge I can do well for myself with sufficient capital (Bomaa).

Most of us are unemployed. That is why some even declined because there was no money to even buy the napkins and tray needed. The lack of financial help has stopped a lot of people from benefiting. We also don't have the machine to mix the ingredients (Yamfo).

I was unemployed so when I heard of the programme I joined. I am still not working. Need some things to work with (Yamfo).

In Duayaw Nkwanta however, majority of beneficiary respondents are already in business and for that matter did not have problem with starting a business as in the case of respondents from Bomaa and Yamfo. But then they are looking up to REP to finance their businesses. Many of them are disappointed in REP because the financial help is not forthcoming. They said they needed about two thousand Ghana Cedis (Gh₵2,000) to hundred thousand Ghana Cedis (100,000) to grow their existing business.

These quotes indicated that beneficiaries are not empowered to take initiatives. As shown in the conceptual framework when community participation is low that is mis-participation and tokenism there is less empowerment which leads to dependencies. Participation helps to break the

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mentality of dependence which characterizes much development work and instead promotes self-awareness and confidence making people examine their problems and to think positively about solution. Participation is concerned with human development and increases people sense of control over issues which affect their lives, helps them learn how to plan and implement projects and programmes (Oakley, 1991).

Beneficiaries were not involved in the initial stages of the programme. They were just invited to come for training and they did. They did not know their responsibilities or roles in solving the problem that they had not identified. They saw it the responsibility of REP who had trained them to establish them. This upheld Nyerere's assertion as cited in (Cornwall, 2000) that people cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves by participation in activities which affect their wellbeing. People are not being developed when they are herded like animals into new ventures. What made it worse is the promise by REP to support them financially which is not forth coming. REP should rather encourage them to start something no matter how small.

The essence of community participation in poverty reduction programmes is to empower beneficiary community to take initiative leading to poverty reduction. In the case of REP, beneficiaries were not empowered to take initiative because their level of participation was low. Therefore, the effect of REP on poverty reduction among beneficiaries was minimal.

Sustainability Strategy of REP

Sustainability is one of the top most concerns in development efforts. The ability of the beneficiary community to sustain the project or programme after implementation is greatly desired. Sustainability refers to continuity and

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sees participation as fundamental to a self-sustaining momentum of development in a particular area. Beneficiaries assume more positive attitudes, learn and develop new skills and take on more responsibility for development initiatives. The objective is to discuss the sustainability strategies of REP.

Claud (1998) suggests that the design of projects should include elements of sustainability at initial stages, to ensure their sustainability. REP has put same strategies in place to sustain the programme. These strategies will be looked at to see how effective they are and how beneficiaries are involved. Some of the sustainability strategies put in place by REP are client ownership, profitable enterprises, cost sharing arrangement, mainstreaming programme activities.

Client Ownership

This strategy is to guarantee entrepreneur demand-driven and participatory approach whereby the clients and their representative institutions (DAs) request for programme services and participate in their design and implementation which will ensure client ownership during implementation. This strategy however cannot be said to be working effectively. Beneficiaries (entrepreneurs) do not determine which training should be given.

In the case of Bomaa and Yamfo, beneficiaries were informed that training will be given in soap making and baking and confectionery. With that the trainings were one year apart. Beneficiaries had no choice but to take what is offered them. In some cases, some beneficiaries partook in both training. In Duayaw Nkwanta, since most beneficiaries were already in business and in groups, REP officials just called to inform them they wanted to give them training in this or that. Beneficiaries did not influence the kind of training given.

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When the district coordinator for REP was asked how trainings are organized, the response was

> We first consult the beneficiaries on their needs and on the need we write proposal for funding for them. At times to the REP office or other collaborators

The response indicated that is what is supposed to be done. But the situation on the ground indicated otherwise.

The beneficiaries or client participation in requested programme services design and implantation to ensure client ownership is missing. The study revealed that beneficiaries are not involved in the design of services rendered to them. Their involvement is only in the implementation where they attend training sessions. Their level of participation is tokenism which does not lead to ownership which inturn will lead to sustainability.

Profitable Enterprises

Under this strategy, REP will enhance the starting and growing of the established businesses through more: (i) reliable start-up kits support; (ii) efficient training, with increased targeting of literate clients. The increased additional income will provide the necessary incentive and motivation for the entrepreneurs to continue to engage in the MSEs. Client entrepreneurs will therefore increasingly value and rely on the services to improve the profitability of their businesses such that they will be willing to pay for the full cost of their provision (IFAD, 2011).

With the provision of reliable start up kit, it is nonexistent. Awareness of this package was created among beneficiaries but it is not forthcoming. Beneficiaries in Bomaa and Yamfo were promised start up kits but the promise

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was not fulfilled. Beneficiaries trained in baking and confectionery were promised one big community oven which all of them could use but it was never given to them. Some beneficiaries expressed their disappointment about the unfulfilled promise. In a focus group discussion session, some beneficiaries shared their disappointments.

> They promised us and failed us. They told us to come for loans. They made us fill forms and go to form queues in Duayaw Nknwanta for days. We borrowed money to use as deposits and we were never given anything. They should always be truthful to us if they say they would give us an oven and credit facilities or capital. They said they will help us expand our businesses but we never saw anything. They made us pick car, paid lorry fare and we were never paid nor was any loan given (FGD session at Yamfo).
>
> They teach us and they do not help us with startup capital so some only learn and remain in their rooms. For instance, it is like completing school and not being employed. So, if they could provide capital along the training it will be very good. After the training, they asked us what we wanted and we said we needed money and the equipment used in mixing flour and they told us ok but then we have not heard from them (FGD session at Bomaa).
>
> We were able to learn but they could not fulfill their promise. They said they will give us money we should have to deposit money we did but the startup capital never came. We

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> were even made to open bank account. They have to do refresher training because most of us have forgotten how to prepare it and there is no capital (FGD session at Yamfo).

In Duayaw Nkwanta, financial support was given to already established businesses in the form of loans and grants. But beneficiaries complained that the money was insufficient to make any impact on their businesses. Some beneficiaries also complained that the repayment arrangement did not favour them. A 66-year-old poultry farmer lamented;

> They should give us long term loans because they give you the loan and expect you to start paying the following month. But if you buy a layer it will take 16 to 18 weeks before they would start laying so how can we repay the loan in the next month.

Efficient training as strategy is in place. Beneficiaries are really being given excellent training. All beneficiaries in the three communities testified that the training was excellent and they have acquired a lot of skills. But the training alone without the startup kit or financial support as planned will not be able to sustain REP. As can be seen from the quotes above, beneficiaries are not self-reliant.

Cost Sharing Arrangement

Continued funding of services that will be initiated by the programme, would be through cost sharing arrangements between relevant implementing agencies and clients on initial cost recovery arrangement to full cost-recovery for services, whereby clients would pay market rates for services received (IFAD, 2011).

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The cost sharing arrangement is not working. Most beneficiaries in Duayaw Nkwanta indicated that the trainings were free. Beneficiaries in Bomaa were made to pay 5 cedis but it was for the facilitator's feeding and accommodation. Beneficiaries in Yamfo paid nothing because the queen mother fed and accommodated the facilitator. However, beneficiaries trained in baking and confectionery both in Bomaa and Yamfoo were made to sell the products made during the training sessions to recover the cost of materials bought for the training. Beneficiaries are not paying for service rendered to them. So, if the continuous funding of the programme is dependent on beneficiaries paying market rates for the services, then there is no future for REP.

Mainstreamed Programme Activities

Another strategy is that the programme activities will be incorporated and mainstreamed by the District Assemblies into their respective development programmes. At the district level, the District Assemblies are the seat of programme implementation and play a central role in coordinating the services, resources and activities of various district level stakeholders in the implementation of REP. The District Assemblies will make budgetary provisions to finance training and overhead costs of the Business Advisory Centers (BACs) and Rural Technology Facilities (RTFs). This strategy is in place.

According to the District Coordinating Director, the District Assembly has a subcommittee for social services that is responsible for REP. The committee makes recommendation to the executive committee which is headed by the District Chief Executive. But it is a political decision making. There are preferences as to which caliber of training to support. He stated that the District

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Assembly does support REP's trainings with startup kit especially for carpenters.

Beneficiaries' Views about the Sustainability of REP

Beneficiaries were asked how they see the future of REP. Responses from the three communities did not differ. Some beneficiaries see the future of REP being bright provided REP would continue with the quality of training they are giving. And also, if new trainees would be given startup capital. A 36-year-old barber said "The future depends on them. Looking at their activities now they have a nice future if they continue with it".

The beneficiaries who think that REP does not have a future attributed it to the inability of REP to provide trainees with financial support. They are of the view that if you train people but the skills cannot be put to use because there is no money to start a business, what future is in that. A 48-year-old graduate poultry farmer was of the view that when people attend meeting and you talk and talk but after the meeting you do not support them financially, they will stop attending meetings. He said "We know people who started with us but are no more coming because they are not getting any help". Some other beneficiaries also shared their concerns;

> The future, I do not see how bright it is because they only train but they do not give capital to start so it is discouraging others from even attending their trainings. No one has ever brought us any money. For instance, during the last training most of the people did not come. We were about 20 but only 6 people came. They were complaining about not getting any financial

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> assistance so they will not be able to utilize the knowledge so they see it as a waste of time (A 33 years old soap maker).
>
> I think very soon they will not get members. It may collapse. They will not get members. As I have said earlier on I've called them several times to come and see what I am doing but they have not come. No monitoring (A 27-year-old rabbit rearer).

These assertions indicated that beneficiaries see the sustainability of REP as the sole responsibility of REP officials. Some even suggested that Government should take over REP to sustain it. Some beneficiaries also suggested that REP should be merged with Youth Employment Agency to sustain it. This is an issue of ownership. The beneficiaries did not feel any responsibility towards the sustainability of REP. The involvement of the people in poverty reduction programme generates a sense of ownership over the programme leading to its sustainability. This dovetails the assertion that community participation in project initiation, implementation and management, apart from creating a sense of ownership and responsibility within communities, is an important factor in developing an effective and long-lasting project (Kaliba, 2002).

Beneficiaries were asked if they can continue if the support of REP is withdrawn. Most of them indicated that with the skills they have acquired they can continue. Some of the beneficiaries said they can continue but it will be difficult and therefore appeal to government to come to their aid when REP comes to an end. A 66-year-old poultry farmer from Duayaw Nkwanta had this to say;

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> The Government should come and help when REP has ended so that they would be able to subsidize the inputs for us because prices are high and we cannot afford it. We are already in work but we have hindrances. There should be continuous education or training so that we can be abreast with new ideas. Sometimes we think is only money but we need training to improve, although money is also important.

A 33-year soap maker from Duayaw Nkwanta

> I will be able to continue if REP should withdraw their support. It is now my job so I will continue to do the work. Because they do not give me money but I am in business. But how to update my skill will be the problem because I cannot get it from anywhere.

Although almost all beneficiaries from the three communities stated that they can continue even if REP withdraws its support, beneficiaries from Bomaa and Yamfo do not sound convincing. Most of them have not started in the first place before talking about continuing it. However, beneficiaries in Duayaw Nkwanta seem to have what it takes to continue with their work without the support of REP.

Summary

This chapter presented the results and discussions of study. The study found out that the beneficiaries participated in two stages of the project cycle; implementation, monitoring and evaluation. And they participated at very low levels. Due to the low level participation of beneficiaries, though beneficiaries acquired a lot of skills, they were not able to take initiatives on their own. The

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effect therefore on poverty reduction among beneficiaries was minimal. Though REP has a number of sustainability strategies, they are not effectively being used.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents summary, conclusions, recommendations of the study and suggestions for further studies. The summary covers what the study set out to do, the methodology used and the main findings of the study. The conclusions were derived from the main findings. They formed the basis of the recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

Summary

The study was undertaken to assess community participation in REP in the Tano North District. The attempt was to assess the level of beneficiaries' participation in the project cycle, the effect of REP on beneficiaries' poverty reduction and the sustainability strategy of REP. REP is a poverty reduction programme with the goal of improving the livelihoods and incomes of rural poor micro and small entrepreneurs.

The study employed the evaluative study design. Purposive sampling technique was used to select three communities; DuayawNkwanta, Bomaa and Yamfo, 7 opinion leaders and two programme implementers for the study. Sixty three beneficiaries were sampled using snowball sampling technique. The data analysis was done qualitatively using narratives and document sources and employing interview and focus group discussion guides which were self-developed.

The main findings of the study were:

Examine the level of community participation in REP

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- Beneficiaries did not participate at the initial stages of the project cycle; need identification and design or planning stage.
- Beneficiaries participated during the implementation and monitoring and evaluation stages. But they participated at a low level (ie mis-participation and tokenism).
- Participation was not uniform across the three communities. Beneficiaries in Duayaw Nkwanta participated at higher level in monitoring and evaluation than beneficiaries in Bomaa and Yamfo.

Evaluate the effect of REP on reducing poverty among programme beneficiaries:

- Beneficiaries acquired a lot of skills but were not empowered to take initiative that will lead to poverty reduction.
- Beneficiaries from Duayaw Nkwanta had seen varying degree of improvement in their income and livelihood. But beneficiaries in Bomaa and Yamfo did not see any improvement in their livelihood and income.

Discuss the sustainability strategies of REP:

- REP has some strategies in place to sustain the programme. But most of the sustainability strategies of REP are not effectively being used.
- Beneficiaries do not have any sense of responsibility towards the sustainability of REP.

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Rural Enterprise Report supervision report IFAD(2015) indicated that the key risks to the achievement of the expected development objectives for REP include:

- Undercapitalization of Rural and Community Banks (RCBs) and difficulties of participating financial institutions (PFIs) in leveraging sufficient liquidity to meet demand for finance.
- Expectations of free training and services that limit the willingness of MSEs to share the costs of BDS and RTF services, thus undermining sustainability.

Which are in line with the findings of this study.

Conclusions

Beneficiaries participated in two stages of the project cycle that is implementation, monitoring and evaluation. However, the level of participation was low. They participated at the level of mis-participation and tokenism. The effect of REP on poverty reduction among beneficiaries was minimal. Though beneficiaries acquired a lot of skills they were not empowered to take initiatives on their own due to the low level of participation. The sustainability strategies of REP were not effective as beneficiaries were not involved. Beneficiaries see the sustainability of REP as the responsibility of REP and Government because of lack of ownership which comes as a result of community participation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following are recommended to enhance community participation in REP.

1. REP should involve beneficiaries at the early stages of their programmes to enhance their level of participation leading to empowerment. REP

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programmes should start with needs identification where beneficiaries identify their needs and help plan how to meet them.

2. The district assemblies, who are the seat of programme implementation and play a central role in coordinating the services, resources and activities of various district level stakeholders in the implementation of REP should try and be politically neutral as much as possible. The right institutions should be used in awareness creation not party executives.
3. REP should incorporate a credit scheme to support new trainees with startup kit or capital. REP could collaborate with micro-finance institutions or credit delivery organizations to assist beneficiaries. But until then REP should stop promising beneficiaries support.
4. Trainees should form associations which will make it easy for them to take loans from rural banks.
5. REP should involve beneficiaries in their sustainability strategies to make them more effective. The sustainability strategies of REP should be discussed at training sessions for beneficiaries to know their roles and responsibilities towards sustaining REP.

Suggestions further studies

The following suggested areas for future research are:

1. How partisan politics influences community participation in poverty reduction programmes
2. The gender dimension of poverty reduction programmes as men and women experience poverty or exclusion different ways.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR BENEFICIARIES

This research is being carried out to assess community participation in poverty reduction programmes particularly REP in the Tano North District in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. This interview is to collect empirical data to help address the study objectives. The study is for academic purpose only and confidentiality and anonymity is assured. You are free to withdraw at any point in time. Thank you for participating in the research by sharing your view.

Section A: Level of participation of Beneficiaries

1. How long have you been in contact with REP?
2. How did you get to know of REP?
3. How do you become part of REP?
4. Did you participate in the project from its beginning to the end?
5. What are the reason why have you/ have you not participated?
6. At which stage did you participate in the Programme? (probe for activities and roles played)
    i. need identification
    ii. design/planning
    iii. implementation
    iv. monitoring and evaluation
7. How satisfied are you with your level of participation?
8. Will you be participating in future programmes?

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Section B: Effect of REP on poverty reduction

9. Why did you join REP?
10. Have you achieved your goal? Explain
11. What specific benefit(s) did you derive from the programme? (Probe for skills acquired, income and livelihood)

Section C: Sustainability strategy of REP

12. How do you see the future of REP?
13. How do intend you to continue this project especially after sponsors or donors phase out?
14. What do you think can be done to continue REP?
15. Mention three things that is working well with REP
16. What could be improved?

Section D: Demographic

17. Gender
18. Age
19. Highest level of education?

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APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAFF OF REP

This research is being carried out to assess community participation in Rural Enterprise Programme (REP) in the Tano North District in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. This interview is to collect empirical data to help address the study objectives. The study is for academic purpose only and confidentiality and anonymity is assured. You are free to withdraw at any point in time. Thank you for participating in the research by shearing your view.

Section B: Level of participation of Beneficiaries

1. What is REP all about?
2. How different or unique is REP from others poverty reduction programmes?
3. How was the communities informed about the programme?
4. To what extent did the community members participate in the following stages? (probe for activities and role played)
    i. need identification
    ii. design/planning
    iii. implementation
    iv. monitoring and evaluation
5. How was community members selected to participate in the project?
6. How does involving the community affect the performance of the programme?

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Section C: Effect of REP on poverty reduction

7. What was the poverty situation of the people in the district before the implementation of REP?
8. How is the community/beneficiaries benefiting from the REP?
9. What impact has the programme had on the beneficiaries?

Section D: Sustainability strategy of REP

10. How sustainable is REP?
11. How was the sustainability of the programme adequately addressed during the designing stage of the project?
12. What strategies in place to ensure future of REP?
13. Do you think the community have been empowered enough to carry on the project activities? Give reasons.
14. To what extent to you think the community sees REP as their own programme?
15. Mention three things that is working well with REP
16. What could be improved?

Section E: Demographic Data

17. What is your job title or designation?
18. What is your role?
19. How long have you been working with REP?

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APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR OPINION LEADERS

This research is being carried out to assess community participation in Rural Enterprise Programme (REP) in the Tano North District in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. This interview is to collect empirical data to help address the study objectives. The study is for academic purpose only and confidentiality and anonymity is assured. You are free to withdraw at any point in time. Thank you for participating in the research by sharing your view.

Section A: Level of participation of Beneficiaries

1. Are you aware of the activities of REP in your community?
2. How was the community informed about the activities of REP?
3. What role do you as an opinion leader play in the design and implementation of REP?
4. At what stage of the programme did the community participated.

   (probe for activities and roles played)

   i. need identification
   ii. design/planning
   iii. implementation
   iv. monitory and evaluation
5. In your opinion, what does the community benefit from participating in the programme?

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Section B: Effect of REP on poverty reduction

6. What was the poverty situation of the people in the district before the implementation of REP?
7. What specific impact(s) have REP had on the beneficiaries.
8. How has that affected the overall socio economic status of the district?

Section C: Sustainability strategy of REP

9. How do you see the future of REP?
10. What arrangements are in place to ensure the continuity of the programme especially after sponsors or donors phase out?
11. What are the arrangements put in place by the district to ensure the success of the programmes?
12. To what extent does the community see REP as their own programme?
13. Mention three things that are working well for REP?
14. What could be improved?

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

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APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR BENEFICIARIES

This research is being carried out to assess community participation in poverty reduction programmes particularly REP in the Tano North District in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. This interview is to collect empirical data to help address the study objectives. The study is for academic purpose only and confidentiality and anonymity is assured. You are free to withdraw at any point in time. Thank you for participating in the research by sharing your view.

Section A: Level of participation of Beneficiaries

1. How long have you been in contact with REP?
2. How did you get to know of REP?
3. How do you become part of REP?
4. Did you participate in the project from its beginning to the end?
5. What are the reason why have you/ have you not participated?
6. At which stage did you participate in the Programme? (probe for activities and roles played)
    v. need identification
    vi. design/planning
    vii. implementation
    viii. monitoring and evaluation
7. How satisfied are you with your level of participation?
8. Will you be participating in future programmes?

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Section B: Effect of REP on poverty reduction

9. Why did you join REP?
10. Have you achieved your goal? Explain
11. What specific benefit(s) did you derive from the programme? (Probe for skills acquired, income and livelihood)

Section C: Sustainability strategy of REP

12. How do you see the future of REP?
13. How do intend you to continue this project especially after sponsors or donors phase out?
14. What do you think can be done to continue REP?
15. Mention three things that is working well with REP
16. What could be improved?

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